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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, 1993 - 2008.

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of Philosophy (Ph.D.) to the

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANM	Armenian National Movement
APF	Azerbaijan Popular Front
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CC CPSU	Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CIM	Communist Initiative Movement
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPBM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
CPE	Communist Party of Estonia
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPLat	Communist Party of Latvia
CPLith	Communist Party of Lithuania
CPN	Communist Party of the Netherlands
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CPRom	Communist Party of Romania
CP RSFSR	Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPT	Communist Party of Turkmenistan
CPU	Communist Party of Ukraine
CSDP	Czech Social Democratic Party
DCK	Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan
DLA	Democratic Left Alliance
FCP	French Communist Party
HSP	Hungarian Socialist Party

HSWP	Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
ICP	Italian Communist Party
KSCM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
LCP	Lithuanian Communist Party
LDLP	Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
LSDP	Lithuanian Social Democratic Party
NCP	Norwegian Communist Party
NPUR	National Patriotic Union of Russia
NRB	New Russia Barometer
NSF	National Salvation Front (Romania)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCRM	Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova
PDL	Party of the Democratic Left (Slovakia)
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism (Germany)
PDSR	Party of Social Democracy in Romania
PUWP	Polish United Workers' Party
RCWP	Russian Communist Workers' Party
SCP	Spanish Communist Party
SDPR	Social Democracy of the Polish Republic
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
VTsIOM	Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research
VKP(B)	All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
VLKSM	All-Union Lenin Komsomol



## ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the development of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), from its foundation in 1993 to the Presidential election of 2008. The study begins with a discussion of the context of change for the CPRF in the post-Soviet world from the perspective of political transitions of other communist parties and their development in the post-Soviet world. The final years of the party's predecessor, and that predecessor's collapse contribute a sense of perspective to the party's development and this is followed by a consideration of the need for ideological change in order to transform the party, the electorate's support for the CPRF in recent parliamentary elections and the political views of members of a branch of the party with particular emphasis on the opinions of younger members: those who may be guiding the party's development in the future.

How does the transformation of the CPRF compare with that of other communist parties in the region? Organisational change, including the inheritance of political control and resources by former communist parties in some countries where they were in power, has greatly aided some parties in their return to government while the lack of such advantages has hindered others. The ban on the party in Russia adversely affected the unification of communists in Russia from 1991 to 1993 while the CPRF's counterparts in other countries faced no such difficulties. The electoral successes of other communist and former-communist parties serve to highlight the increased problems the CPRF faces after the splits the party has undergone in recent years. Ideological change across the post-communist world has been very varied in terms of moves towards social democracy, towards nationalism or the retention of a more orthodox communism depending on the local circumstances in individual countries.

How has the legacy of the CPSU influenced the formation and development of the successor party? The origins of the CPRF can be seen in the divisions that formed in the CPSU in its final years. The scale of ideological change in the final years of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union can be seen in the radical differences between the 1986 Party Programme and 1991 draft Programme. Documents from the era reveal a failure to understand the depth of the reaction against communism in Eastern Europe and what it could mean for the Soviet Union as well as concern about the effects of *glasnost* on support for the regime and the thinking behind attempts to use electoral change to increase the party's legitimacy. These changes did not have the anticipated effect for the CPSU and resulted in the loss of party control over those elected and over electors with the

formation of platforms in the CPSU and parties outside the CPSU leading the way to the demise of the party.

When the ideology a party represents appears to have been comprehensively rejected, how does that party reposition itself in the political landscape in order to survive? With the election of a new leader prepared to lead the party in a new direction, the CPRF has recast itself as a nationalist party that sees communism as a Russian tradition. Zyuganov's repositioning of the party has been characterised by the acceptance of democracy, which has arguably kept the CPRF in the public eye as the party has been represented in every Duma since 1993, and the search for means of uniting various political groups under a broad 'patriotic' banner in order to return the party to power at the head of a coalition. Zyuganov's reworking of communist theory includes a heavy reliance on geopolitics to argue for the re-establishment of the Soviet Union and support for the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian culture as cornerstones of the patriotic cause.

Which members of the Russian electorate now define themselves as communist? The party's relationship with the electorate is examined through the results of public opinion surveys conducted just after the 1999 and 2003 Duma elections to see what views communist voters hold in common and whether it is possible to determine what political opinions can be said to predict a vote for the CPRF. A CPRF supporter could be predicted to be older and with more strongly held political views than the average Russian citizen. As many previous studies have found, age is clearly one of the most significant factors in predicting support for the CPRF but this factor is outweighed in these surveys by party identification and ideological conviction. If a voter identified with a political party and an ideology, there was a greater probability that that voter supported the CPRF than any other political party.

Are members of the party able and willing to defend the change in direction of the party leadership? Interviews with members of the St Petersburg branch of the CPRF indicated that members were willing to accept the nationalist stance of the party as a temporary necessity to extend electoral support for the party. In view of the fact that party membership has fallen drastically in recent years, members were asked what was drawing them to join the CPRF or remain in the party when others had left. With an ageing and falling membership, the Komsomol is playing an important role by recruiting young people to the party. Members were asked for their views on the possibility of the party changing course and their attitudes to Zyuganov's leadership. However, with support for the party from the electorate in decline, party members were divided about what they felt needed to change.

This thesis concludes that the party remains popular with a minority of voters who were impoverished by the transition and that the current strategies of democratic participation and a nationalist stance have been accepted by the membership as the achievement of communism is seen as a very distant prospect. The party, however, still believes that communism is inevitable.

## INTRODUCTION

The fortunes of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation have reflected those of Russia's political and economic transition from 1991 onwards. There have been two phases of development in the post-communist era for the CPRF: advance under the Yeltsin regime while political parties proliferated and competed on a more even footing and the media was less restricted; and then decline under the Putin regime as the economy improved, the media came under increasing political pressure and the country moved towards a 'managed democracy'. With its origins in the conservative faction that formed in the CPSU in its final years, the party had to find a new direction in a society that had just rejected communism but has the CPRF succeeded in leading the opposition or is it more interested in preserving its privileged position in parliament? Has it adopted the role of 'nominal opposition' rather than fighting without compromise against restrictions imposed on opposition parties and society as a whole in order to avoid being excluded from the political process?

Traditional reasons for studying political parties have been the consideration of their role in bridging the gap between society and government in modern democracies,<sup>1</sup> their importance for the functioning of parliaments in uniting politicians behind common policies and ideological goals, their organisation of the agenda of parliaments and their determination of parliamentary procedure.<sup>2</sup> In Eastern Europe, the study of political parties and their development had the further significance, in the early years of the political transitions, of being used to determine the extent to which new party systems were truly pluralist.<sup>3</sup> However, in Russia's 'managed democracy' there are elections and a choice of parties but the choice of parties is determined by the elite's manipulation of party alternatives through the creation of new parties designed to split existing ones and be loyal to the existing regime, resulting in the choice in elections being between party labels rather than policy alternatives.<sup>4</sup> While the CPRF has presented the electorate with a clear set of policies, the party has struggled to remain distinct from other parties in recent years as others have also adopted a 'patriotic' profile.

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<sup>1</sup> Dellenbrant, J. "Parties and Party Systems in Eastern Europe" in White, S., Batt, J. and Lewis, P. (eds) *Developments in East European Politics*, Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke, 1993, p.148

<sup>2</sup> Olson, D. & Mezey, M., "Parliaments and Public Policy" in Olson, D. and Mezey, M. (eds) *Legislatures in the Policy Process: The Dilemmas of Economic Policy*, CUP, Cambridge, 1991, pp.1-24.

<sup>3</sup> Pridham, G. "Political Parties and Their Strategies in the Transition from Authoritarian Rule: the Comparative Perspective" in Wightman, G. (ed.) *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: Post-communist Politics in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria*, Edward Elgar, Aldershot, 1995, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Golosov, G. "The Structure of Party Alternatives and Voter Choice in Russia: Evidence from the 2003-2004 Regional Legislative Elections", *Party Politics*, vol.12, no.6, 2006, p.721.

Along with Yabloko and the LDPR, the CPRF is one of only three parties to contest every Duma election since 1993. Political parties in Russia are different from those in Western Europe because most parties have formed, merged, renamed, disappeared and reappeared under new names with great frequency in the early post-Soviet period, and to some extent they are still doing so. In this respect, the CPRF stands out for being very consistent. The CPRF, unlike many smaller parties, has a clear and fairly consistent programme and does not exist purely for the interests of its leaders, as some of the smaller parties have appeared to do, many parties being formed just before elections and disappearing soon afterwards. While the majority of Russian voters have no stable party or ideological identification<sup>5</sup> CPRF voters, by contrast, have the strongest affiliation with their party of any group of voters.

Political parties are not static organisations, but change of ideology or of internal organisation, however, do not 'just happen'.<sup>6</sup> While revolutions have changed the ideological orientation of the former ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe, ideological change in Western European parties has usually resulted, in recent times, from electoral defeat, leadership change and change of dominant faction within a party.<sup>7</sup> For the CPRF, ideological change resulted in initial electoral success followed by decline as the political situation changed and the party was unable or unwilling to adapt while recent electoral defeats have led to splits rather than any re-evaluation of the party's ideology or replacement of the current leadership.

The fates of the former ruling communist parties have been very varied with some returning to power as social democratic parties and others remaining relatively unreformed. The successful adaptation of several of these parties has depended on whether the leadership before and during the political transition was composed of people prepared to sacrifice the ideology for which their party had existed and present the party as reformed.<sup>8</sup> Such an outcome has been possible because, although these parties were generally considered to be strongly united organisations, they did contain several factions, some of which were already calling for change in the political system<sup>9</sup> in the late 1980s. Along with the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova, the CPRF is one of the

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<sup>5</sup> Anohina, N. and Meleshkina, E. "The Political Attitudes of Russian Voters" in Gel'man, V., Golosov, G. and Meleshkina, E. (eds.) *The 1999–2000 National Elections in Russia: Analyses, Documents and Data*, 2005b, Sigma, Berlin, 2005, p.123.

<sup>6</sup> Harmel, R., Heo, U., Tan, A. & Janda, K. "Performance, Leadership, Factions and Party Change: an Empirical Analysis" in *West European Politics*, vol.18, no.1, 1995, p.2

<sup>7</sup> Harmel et al, 1995, p.1

<sup>8</sup> Ishiyama, J. "Communist Parties in Transition: Structures, Leaders and Processes of Democratization in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Politics*, vol.27, no.2, 1995, p.148.

<sup>9</sup> Waller, M. "Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-Democratization?" in *Party Politics*, vol.1, no.4, 1995(a), p.467.

least reformed communist parties in Eastern Europe. Both were banned after the fall of the Soviet Union but the CPRF has failed to achieve the levels of parliamentary representation of the CPRM due to the very different political and economic circumstances in Russia from those in Moldova.

During the fifteen years' existence of the CPRF, many articles and books have been published about the party. This thesis adds to the existing literature such as Urban and Solovei's *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads* and March's *The Communist Party in Post-Soviet Russia* by considering how the political context for the party has changed in recent years. As the reach of democracy in Russia has diminished, so the CPRF has found its room for manoeuvre curtailed. As the CPRF has been forced to reach an accommodation with the new regime so as to avoid being forced out of existence, so its membership has declined and it has been obliged to accept funding from distinctly un-communist sources. In the light of the splits in the party that have occurred in recent years, this thesis complements the existing works by considering the future for a much diminished communist party in Russia.

Chapter 1 discusses the context of change for the CPRF in the post-Soviet world, considering the other former communist parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in terms of organisational change, their inheritance from the previous regimes, which in some cases included the retention of political control and resources by former communist parties. The activity of communists in Russia from 1991 to 1993, during the ban, while waiting for a legal opportunity to found a successor party to the CPSU provides an indication of the determination of believers to keep hope of a communist future alive in the early post-Soviet era. However, the splits and divisions in the CPRF after the party repeatedly failed to win the Presidency show that democratic centralism can not deal permanently with frustration with the current leadership and electoral strategy. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the CPRF's and others' attempts to use coalitions as methods of returning to power and how ideological change across the post-communist world in terms of moves towards social democracy, towards nationalism or the retention of a more traditional communist outlook has benefited certain parties depending on the local political and economic circumstances. The evolution or disappearance of communist parties in Western Europe is also considered along with some discussion of the newer parties in Eastern Europe that formed or re-formed at the end of the communist era as an indication of a general ideological shift towards the centre in recent times.

The sharp fall in membership at the end of the communist era has been a major feature of organisational change for these parties as those on the right left parties that remained communist while those on the left deserted parties that moved towards social democracy. Whilst these parties

are now more united in terms of their members' support for the ideology, further divisions still exist in many countries over the national composition of electoral alliances the parties have formed. There is notable variation across the Russian Federation in terms of allegiance to the CPRF leadership in Moscow and the electoral alliances forged with regional CPRF branches contesting elections in alliance with different parties across the country. Communist parties have endured as organisations but their goal now is to retain or regain power, rather than the violent overthrow of the existing political order. Across the region, communists are still in power but communism, in general, is not as former communist parties have become competent political actors in a multi-party environment.

Chapter 2 looks at the final years of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) using documents from the end of the communist era, the 1986 Programme and 1991 draft Programme to examine the events which shaped the formation of the CPRF. The effects of *glasnost* on the media and the Politburo's reaction to the demise of communism in Eastern Europe are considered as well as electoral change in the Soviet Union as an attempt to increase the party's legitimacy and the unintended consequences this had in terms of the loss of party control over those elected and over electors. These were major factors in the growth of open divisions in the party that led to the formation of platforms in the CPSU and the formation of parties outside the party. The battle between reformers and conservatives is illustrated well in the formation of a Communist Party of the RSFSR within the CPSU that was, effectively, the predecessor of the CPRF. Conservative concerns that were articulated via this party continue to be seen in today's successor

In considering the final years of the CPSU, this chapter makes use of *Fond '89* which includes a wide range of documents which are copies of papers held in the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Modern History and the Center for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation. Documents in the collection reveal the nature of the changes in policy and the difficulties the party faced as it underwent reform from a revolutionary, vanguard party, designed to lead the proletariat eventually to communism, towards becoming a parliamentary party and from a socialist political and economic system towards a market economy. These documents also indicate the difficulties encountered by the party with respect to the unexpected results of electoral reform, the divided support within the leadership for democratisation and the inability on the part of some of the leadership to accept the loss of support for the party.

Chapter 3 considers Zyuganov's philosophy and its relationship to traditional Marxism and socialism. His writing is interesting in light of the fact that some of his pronouncements are directly opposite to what would normally be expected of a communist. Zyuganov's plans for returning the

CPRF to power centre on the adoption of nationalism as a means of uniting various groups under a broad 'communist' banner. His argument for the restoration of the USSR is justified with geopolitical arguments about Russia's 'right' to extend its borders outwards towards Europe in one direction and Asia in the other. This new direction is based on the merging of communist and nationalist theories and the unification of traditionally left-wing and traditionally right-wing ideas in Zyuganov's writing replaces calls for the unification of the working classes across national boundaries with calls for saving the nation from catastrophe. It is this move towards more nationalist policies that Zyuganov sees as making the party electable.

This shift in philosophy also accommodates religious belief in the form of Russian Orthodox Christianity, as support for Russia's national church is vital if claims of patriotism are to be believed. To convince his readers, Zyuganov now argues that communism and Christianity are compatible and that both are part of the 'Russian tradition'. He now dates the emergence of the communist idea as far back as the birth of the Christian era, with which he claims it is linked, rather than to the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848. The defence of Russian culture forms part of Zyuganov's attack on the media and the internet for what he sees as their bias against traditional Russian culture and promotion of Western values in a conspiracy with the government against true patriots. In recent years, Zyuganov has expanded his theories to include linking international terrorism to a new 'Coalition against Capitalism' as he now sees Islamic countries as natural allies in a battle with the West against globalisation. In common with other left-wing parties, the CPRF has also belatedly adopted environmentalism in an attempt to attract younger members.

Chapter 4 discusses the party's relationship with the electorate through an analysis of surveys conducted just after the 1999, 2003 and 2007 Duma elections. Using the *New Russia Barometer VIII*, *New Russia Barometer XII* and *New Russia Barometer XVI*, the chapter examines which indicators of communist support have changed between these elections by considering support for communist ideology, ages of voters in comparison with support for the CPRF, economic status, support for the restoration of the USSR and the influence of the media. A logistic regression analysis of those factors that were shown to most influence support for the CPRF indicates to what extent they can predict whether a vote will be cast for the CPRF. All surveys included questions on employment, followed by sections asking respondents' opinions on economic matters, politics, voting and parties, views of life, international relations and social structure. This chapter looks at the support of the electorate for the CPRF and its policies and assesses the level of support for the party before Putin was elected President to that after his election: an event which has clearly had an impact on the communist vote.



Parties have very limited influence in Russia as a result of the political system adopted in the 1993 constitution. While parties may claim to act on behalf of social groups, they have very little power to effect changes on those groups' behalf as the strong powers granted to the president are not subject to party control and parties have very limited ability to influence government policy.<sup>10</sup> How then does an opposition party like the CPRF retain support? Various studies have shown that age, economic status, occupational status and residence in smaller towns or rural areas are significant factors in voters deciding to vote for the CPRF. Bearing these studies and their sometimes contradictory findings in mind, the analysis in this chapter compares the communist vote in the 1999 Duma election with that in 2003 and 2007 and finds that communist voters are not, in fact, the most severely disadvantaged people in Russian society.

Chapter 5 analyses interviews with members of the St Petersburg branch of the CPRF. The development of the branch in St Petersburg from the ban to July 2003. Views on social democracy and the party's adoption of patriotism as well as attitudes to Zyuganov's leadership and the current election strategy. What motivates today's members of the CPRF? Are they long-term supporters of communism and former members of the CPSU or are they new converts to the cause? Are the majority older citizens or are younger voters joining the party, as the leadership claims? Has the social composition of the party changed? Does the party have an active membership or are members generally passive? How much influence do rank-and-file members have on decision-making within the party and has their influence grown in comparison with what it was in the CPSU?

This chapter also considers the relationship of the party to its youth organisation and the differences in the 'reformation' of the two organisations. As it was possible to interview a number of young Komsomol members this chapter also includes a discussion of the future direction of the party as the younger members will be leading the party through any changes in policy and ideology in years to come. This chapter asks whether there is any sense of members wanting to move towards social democracy or back to revolutionary tactics and whether there is a full acceptance of democratic means of attaining power.

By way of limitations, this thesis does not include a discussion of the CPRF's work in the State Duma and on specific legislative questions due to reasons of space and also due to the party's now limited ability to influence such legislation. Neither is internal organisation dealt with here in detail, in part as several other, published, texts have covered this area and in part as responses to questions put to activists in the party on internal change for Chapter 5 indicated that little change

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<sup>10</sup> Pammett, J. & DeBardeleben, J. "Citizen Orientations to Political Parties in Russia", Research Note, *Party Politics*, vol. 6, no.3, 2000, p.374.

had taken place. Potential rivals to Zyuganov for the leadership and the various splits that have occurred are dealt with only briefly as are the different factions within the party as Zyuganov has succeeded in remaining leader despite numerous challenges over the years and factions that have left the CPRF have notably failed to challenge the party significantly at subsequent elections. The main threats to the CPRF now come from groups that never belonged to the party.

Finally, the conclusion looks at prospects for the future of the party and finds that the party remains popular with a minority of voters who have been impoverished by the transition. While the adoption of patriotism has been popular with the electorate, this change in the party's strategy has not been enough for the party to retain, never mind extend its support. The party has clearly failed since its early electoral successes to move with the times and adapt its policies and tactics to deal with the changing political situation, in particular the adoption of patriotic rhetoric by United Russia and other parties. While communism has not been abandoned altogether, it is now seen as a very distant future aim. Members appear to have accepted democratic elections but see the current ideology as a necessary compromise.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE CPRF IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POST-SOVIET WORLD

#### INTRODUCTION

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) survived its counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe by almost two years beyond the 1989 revolutions but its successor, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), whilst returning to the political scene in 1993 with considerable support from the electorate, has seen its appeal decline in recent years. The fates of the former ruling parties have been very varied with some returning to power as social democratic parties and others remaining relatively unreformed. After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 ex-communist parties have been “faced with the necessity of altering themselves from essentially instruments of social, economic and political control into electorally competitive parties”.<sup>11</sup> Most have broadly achieved this and been re-elected in democratic elections as either communists, socialists, social democrats or democrats, overcoming the initial communist/anti-communist political cleavage that so strongly divided the early post-communist societies of Eastern Europe.

The diversity in outcomes for former communist parties across the post-communist space has been considerable with some, such as the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova remaining a communist party while the Hungarian Socialist Party adopted social democracy. The CPRF, by comparison, has retained much of its communist rhetoric while adopting a patriotic stance. The parties’ successful adaptation has depended largely on whether the leadership before and during the political transition was composed of reformers prepared to sacrifice the ideology for which their party had existed and present the party as reformed.<sup>12</sup> This has been possible for many because, although these parties were generally considered to be strongly united organisations, they did contain several factions, some of which advocated reform of the political system.<sup>13</sup> Further issues which dictated the success or failure of the communist parties in the early post-communist era were to what extent they retained control over the resources, in particular property and media, that they had commanded during communist rule and as well as a preparedness to negotiate during the

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<sup>11</sup> Ishiyama, J. “Communist Parties in Transition: Structures, Leaders and Processes of Democratization in Eastern Europe”, *Comparative Politics*, vol. 27, no 2, 1995, p.148.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Waller, M. “Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-Democratization?” in *Party Politics*, vol. 1, no 4, 1995(a), p.467.

transition period and a willingness to sacrifice democratic centralism has served many formerly communist parties well.

This chapter considers the CPRF in the context of political change across the former communist world, looking at organisational continuity and ideological change among the communist successor parties of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well as their electoral successes, the coalitions they have formed and the splits and divisions that have hampered progress for some. The communist and social democratic parties of Western Europe are also considered briefly as part of the context of ideological change on the left in recent decades as is the competition the communist successor parties face from new parties in Eastern Europe, the similarities between changes in Eastern Europe and those in Western Europe in terms of increased media influence on elections, declining party membership, lack of trust in parties and the rise of the far right are also considered. However, it is the specific context for the CPRF in Russia's 'managed democracy' (where there are elections and a choice of parties but the choice is determined by the elite's manipulation of party alternatives)<sup>14</sup> that has determined an outcome unlike that for any other successor party.

## ORGANISATIONAL CONTINUITY

Various arguments about what determines the outcome of political transition for the former communist parties have been suggested, including the actions of former communist party leaderships at the time of the revolutions, the nature of the individual transitions and the nature of the previous communist regimes themselves. All these factors appear to be relevant when discussing the development of former ruling parties in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Poland and Hungary, where the former regime had already implemented reforms to pacify a potentially powerful anti-communist uprising, the parties were able to discard their old ideologies quickly and adopt a social democratic programme,<sup>15</sup> while in Russia, hardliners were the dominant force during the formation of the post-Soviet party, a year and a half after the end of communist rule. Although the CPSU had been in the process of reforming the economy, the factions in favour of reform left the party, to found other political movements rather than trying to turn the CPSU into a party of the centre left.

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<sup>14</sup> Golosov, G. 'The Structure of Party Alternatives and Voter Choice in Russia: Evidence from the 2003-2004 Regional Legislative Elections', *Party Politics*, vol.12, no.6, 2006, p.721.

<sup>15</sup> Kitschelt, H. "Constraints and Opportunities in the Strategic Conduct of Post-Communist Successor Parties: Regime Legacies as Causal Argument" in Bozoki and Ishiyama *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2002, p.19.

Lipsett and Rokkan ask which conflicts came first (within a national community) and which came later as a means of defining political parties and party systems.<sup>16</sup> What replaced these cleavages after independence from the Soviet Union? Which conflicts came first and which came later? Which ones proved temporary and which ones secondary?<sup>17</sup> In Russia, the communist/ anti-communist cleavage remains while this cleavage in the other republics of the former Soviet Union has remained in some and been replaced in others with a pro-Russia/anti-Russia cleavage with the division following similar lines to the pro-European (or pro-Western) versus pro-American views. Cleavages along ethnic lines have also become durable in some former Soviet Republics.

Writing of the ethnoregionalist parties of the European Union, De Winter and Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro note that “European integration strikes at the heart of the cleavage (the ethno-territorial or centre-periphery cleavage on which this party family is grounded, i.e. the empowerment/disempowerment of higher levels of decision-making in the centre and the regional periphery).”<sup>18</sup> In a study encompassing 21 states, Tossutti notes that the empirical evidence shows how cultural and territorial identities have not just been able to withstand the pressure towards international standardisation but to thrive in such circumstances. Since 1945, 197 new ethnic, religious and regional political parties have been established in 21 Western countries. While the CPSU attempted to impose a degree of standardisation on the USSR in the interests of ideology and economic progress, here also, ethnic and territorial identity became a driving force towards independence<sup>19</sup> and it was this centre-periphery cleavage that accelerated the demise of the CPSU.

The suspension of the activity of the Communist Party of the RSFSR imposed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1991 was followed by a ban on the party’s activity on 6<sup>th</sup> November that year as the Supreme Soviet of the USSR suspended the activity of the CPSU across the Soviet Union. Communists appealed to the Constitutional Court to overturn the ban on the party and the court suggested that former party leaders Mikhail Gorbachev, V. A. Ivashko and Valentin Kuptsov should represent the CPSU but Gorbachev and Ivashko declined, leaving Kuptsov, who had

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<sup>16</sup> For literature on political parties and electoral strategy, see: Duverger, M. *Political Parties*, Methuen, London, 1964; Sartori, G. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976; Ware, A. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996; Mair, P. *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997 and Lipset, S. and Rokkan, S. (eds.) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1967.

<sup>17</sup> Lipset, S. and Rokkan, S. (eds.) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1967, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> De Winter, L. and Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro, M., “European Intergration and Ethnoregionalist Parties”, *Party Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 2002,p.484.

<sup>19</sup> Tossutti, L. “How Transnational Factors Influence the Success of Ethnic, Religious and Regional Parties in 21 States”, *Party Politics*, vol.8, no.1, 2002, p.52.

become leader of the CP RSFSR just two weeks before the coup, to defend the party.<sup>20</sup> The CPSU by this time had split into its national components, which each took different political directions.

The day after the ban on the CP RSFSR came into effect was the anniversary of the October Revolution and tens of thousands of people voluntarily marched through the streets of major Russian cities to mark the event rather than out of requirement, as in previous years.<sup>21</sup> Within days of the ban coming into effect, activists were organising various new communist parties. The Russian Communist Workers' Party was formed in November 1991 in Yekaterinburg by 500 delegates to the founding congress, of whom only 16 were workers, although the party declared that it should have a working-class membership.<sup>22</sup> The Russian Party of Communists was established at a congress in Zheleznodorozhe outside Moscow in December 1991 by the centrists of the co-ordinating council of the Marxist Platform in the CPSU and was attended by delegates from St Petersburg, Chelyabinsk and Ryazan. The Socialist Workers' Party was founded in autumn 1991, and the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which held its founding congress in St Petersburg with delegates from across the former Soviet Union, was established in September 1991.<sup>23</sup>

In late 1992, the Constitutional Court found that the ban on the CPSU and the CP RSFSR had been legal but not the ban on the primary party organisations. Effectively, the party was able to rebuild itself from its grass-roots, some branches of which had still been functioning long after the ban (such as the branch in St Petersburg, discussed in Chapter 5) and so were well placed to recommence work. The CPRF declared itself the linear successor to the CP RSFSR at its founding congress which it designated the Second Extraordinary Congress of the party<sup>24</sup> in February 1993 and elected Gennady Zyuganov as leader so indicating a decisive shift in direction to attract nationalists to the communist cause. During the ban Zyuganov was elected chairman of a revived co-ordinating council of People's Patriotic Forces of Russia, took part in the right-wing Russian National Assembly as one of its co-chairmen, and in 1992 he helped to found and became a co-chairman of, the National Salvation Front.<sup>25</sup> He has been described as a "shrewd political organiser and adept propagandist"<sup>26</sup> and "a compromiser intent on gaining power within the system first and then

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<sup>20</sup> Feofanov, Y. "The Establishment of the Constitutional Court and the Communist Party Case", *Review of Central and East European Law*, vol.19, no.6, 1993, p.624.

<sup>21</sup> Urban, J. and Solovei, V. *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1997, p.11.

<sup>22</sup> Lentini, P. 'Post-CPSU Communist Political Formations', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol.8, No.4, 1992, pp.281-82.

<sup>23</sup> op. cit., p.282.

<sup>24</sup> Urban, J. and Solovei, V. *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1997, p.50.

<sup>25</sup> op.cit., pp.47-48.

<sup>26</sup> op. cit., p.37.

changing it by means of the system's own institutions".<sup>27</sup> His leadership of the party in the early post-Soviet period resulted in a degree of success in uniting the 'patriotic left' but such unity is becoming more elusive.

The party aimed to unite many of the various groups that had been formed during the ban and the wish for unity for its own sake amongst communists has been described as a greater catalyst for unity rather than the threat of democratic competition<sup>28</sup> due to the long history of democratic centralism in the party. However, unity has not been total as several small communist parties to the left of the CPRF remained separate from the main successor party and in recent years, those on the right of the CPRF have begun to leave to form separate parties. Also, regional organisations of the party were sometimes slow to join the CPRF, such as the branches in Tatarstan and Yakutia which only joined the main organisation in 1997.<sup>29</sup> However, the party leadership in Tatarstan also split in 1997 with only the minority remaining loyal to Moscow.<sup>30</sup> The party did, however, succeed in uniting those who had been waiting for the legal possibility to form a successor to the CPSU, such as many of the early members of the CPRF who had been members of the Russian Communist Workers' Party (RCWP) during the ban (discussed further in Chapter 5).

Changes to the legal status of political parties in Russia over the years since the end of CPSU rule have been substantial. The registration of new parties began in 1991 when many only had a few hundred members. Parties were to have to goals of participation in elections and government, a programme which should be published and the right to nominate candidates and campaign on their behalf.<sup>31</sup> Parties at this point needed 100,000 signatures to participate in Duma elections.<sup>32</sup> In 1993, proportional representation was introduced as an incentive to stimulate party participation in the elections and party development.<sup>33</sup> While elections in the early 1990s were determined by the electorate, under Putin, they became more predictable, less competitive and so less meaningful. Changes that Putin has made to the political system have made Russian politics less pluralist and contributed to the decreasing significance of elections for Russian politics.<sup>34</sup> In December 2004,

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<sup>27</sup> Cichock, M. "The Russian Left in Transition" in Bukowski, C. and Racz, B. (eds) *The Return of the Left in Post-Communist States: Current Trends and Future Prospects*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1999, p.22.

<sup>28</sup> March, L. *The Communist Party in Post-Soviet Russia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002, p.40.

<sup>29</sup> Cichock, M., 1999, p.25.

<sup>30</sup> Sakwa, R. 'Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol.14, No.1&2, 1998, p.138.

<sup>31</sup> White, S. *Russia's New Politics: The Management of a Postcommunist Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.37.

<sup>32</sup> op. cit., p.38.

<sup>33</sup> McFaul, M. "The Electoral System" in *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, eds. White, S., Gitelman, Z. and Sakwa, R., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005, p.67.

<sup>34</sup> op. cit., p.61.

President Putin signed amendments to the law on political parties, the main innovation of which was to raise the minimum number of members for each party to 50,000 across Russia. More than half of the regional branches must have no fewer than 500 members each, while the remainder of the regional branches should have a minimum of 250 members each. Parties had until 1st January 2006 to comply with the new rules. If they failed to reach these levels of membership, they were to have another year to make the transition from a political party to a public association.<sup>35</sup> This now clearly threatens the survival of the CPRF.

Across the post-Soviet world, the relatively high membership of the reformed communist parties, in comparison with their new competitors, their assets in terms of finance and property, and their nationwide organisation show that they are still effectively traditional mass parties.<sup>36</sup> This contrasts with the new type of party that their competitors formed in the early post-communist era due to lack of resources, comparatively few members and changes in the way elections were fought. However, former communist parties are now losing their advantage in terms of mass membership and the CPRF attracted few entirely new members to begin with, the vast majority having been former CPSU members.<sup>37</sup>

Whilst the former communist parties were discredited as a result of their previous monopoly on power, they did, however, have skills that they could transfer to the new political order. Some had negotiated their way through the transition and some had initiated reforms so could plausibly claim to be committed to democracy and declare their competence to govern.<sup>38</sup> There was far less change in Romania and Bulgaria than in Hungary and Poland, for example, as the parties were never forced out of power so were not obliged to develop new and responsive programmes. Instead they were able to offer material incentives to their supporters in order to secure votes.<sup>39</sup>

The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) remained in control with a coup from within. As the party had co-opted dissenting groups in the past and also previously initiated limited reforms, the successor party had a number of experienced politicians from various backgrounds who were able to assume leadership of the new party.<sup>40</sup> The BSP did not dissolve and kept its membership and changed its name by referendum of the membership and the new party retained its predecessor's

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<sup>35</sup> Radio Free Europe, [www.rferl.org/content/article/1143307.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143307.html), 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, P. (ed.) *Party Structure and Organisation in East-Central Europe*, Edward Elgar, 1996, p.16.

<sup>37</sup> March, L. "The Pragmatic Radicalism of Russia's Communists" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.174.

<sup>38</sup> Grzymala-Busse, A. *Redeeming the Communist Past: the Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002a, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> op. cit., p.124.

<sup>40</sup> op. cit., pp.267-68.



property, state resources and control of the media. Similarly, in Romania the communist party remained in power via a ‘palace coup’ by communist and military officials. The National Salvation Front (NSF), as the successor organisation was known, also retained control of the state administration and media and the property of the Romanian Communist Party.<sup>41</sup> In Albania, the communist party also remained in power and there was no change of leadership and the party did not reform and so kept its membership,<sup>42</sup> only changing its name in June 1991 from the Albanian Party of Labour to the Socialist Party of Albania (SPA).<sup>43</sup>

The BSP tried to keep part of the legacy of its communist predecessor which can be seen in the continuity of its leadership, social base and organisation. It faced a very weak opposition at the end of 1989 and the party was able to take a leading role in the reform process by organising the Round Table talks in early 1990 which led to the first phase of democratisation. The party contained sufficient reformers to initiate the necessary organisational and ideological changes that would enable the gradual social-democratisation of the party. There were internal struggles as different factions disputed the path of transformation the party was following but the leadership managed to avoid any splits and the party won an absolute majority in the first post-communist elections in 1990.<sup>44</sup> Many of its supporters from before the transition are still prepared to vote for the party. It has over 300,000 members and 10,000 branches throughout the country, despite a post-communist ban on work-place organisation.<sup>45</sup>

Like the CPRF, the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) was reformed in 1993 and soon became the largest party in the country and is one of the most unreconstructed successor parties.<sup>46</sup> The CPU calls for social and public ownership of property, nationalisation and collective farming.<sup>47</sup> During the ban on the party’s activity, those more inclined to compromise joined the Socialist Party of Ukraine set up in October 1991 along with those waiting for the CPU to be reformed.<sup>48</sup> Others formed small far left parties.<sup>49</sup> The CPU sees itself as a continuation of the old party and calls for the

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<sup>41</sup> op. cit., p.269.

<sup>42</sup> op. cit., 2002, p.270.

<sup>43</sup> op. cit., 2002, p.271.

<sup>44</sup> Karasimeonov, G. “Parliamentary Elections of 1994 and the Development of the Bulgarian Party System” in *Party Politics*, vol. 1, no 4, 1995(b), p.586.

<sup>45</sup> Waller & Karasimeonov, 1996, p.139.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson, A. “The Communist Party of Ukraine: From Soviet Man to East Slavic Brotherhood” in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.209.

<sup>47</sup> Chotiner, B. “Organisational Strength Divorced from Power: Comparing the Communist Parties of the Russian Federation and Ukraine” in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.410.

<sup>48</sup> Wilson, 2003, p.212.

<sup>49</sup> op. cit., p.213.

voluntary restoration of the USSR.<sup>50</sup> It remains loyal to the memory of the CPSU and defends the Soviet Union in nationalist terms, avoiding specifically Ukrainian nationalism and, from a nationalist perspective, supports the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.<sup>51</sup>

In Poland, when the Democratic Left Alliance (DLA) coalition was formed in July 1991, it included various trade unions and left wing parties.<sup>52</sup> Much of the property of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) was confiscated but the Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (SDPR) managed to retain some buildings in which the party set up offices and much of the funds of the previous party.<sup>53</sup> The party also had state funds that were allocated to political parties and was able to rely upon membership dues and funds donated by West European social democratic parties. The SDPR may not have had much more money than its new, non-communist competitors but it did build a better infrastructure early in the post-communist era and the party was also able to rely upon members to deliver leaflets and campaign for candidates.<sup>54</sup>

The Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) did not have its assets confiscated as it donated 90 percent of them to the state in 1990<sup>55</sup> while in Czechoslovakia, the party and its successor in Slovakia were required to hand over all their funds. In Bulgaria, the BSP also fared better and was able to put its financial resources into new companies and so avoid losing its assets in the transition.<sup>56</sup> The retention by former communist parties of financial and organisational assets from before the revolutions is significant because it is these resources that gave them considerable advantages over their new competitors in elections in the early post-Soviet era.

The HSP has a strong continuity of personnel with its predecessor, especially among the leadership<sup>57</sup> however, the rank and file members had to actively join the new party.<sup>58</sup> Although it is a strongly united party, it has been the diversity of opinion tolerated within the HSP that has enabled it to attract a broad range of voters. While there was internal debate within the party, the leadership

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *op. cit.*, p.221, p.225.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Markowski, R. "The Polish SLD in the 1990s: From Opposition to Incumbents and Back" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.51.

<sup>54</sup> Curry, J. "Poland's Ex-Communists: From Pariahs to Establishment Players" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Morlang, D. "Hungary: Socialists Building Capitalism" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.64.

<sup>56</sup> Waller, M. and Karasimeonov, G. "Party Organisation in Post-communist Bulgaria" in Lewis, P. (ed.) *Party Structure and Organisation in East-Central Europe*, Edward Elgar, 1996, p.139.

<sup>57</sup> Bozoki, A. "The Hungarian Socialists: Technocratic Modernization or New Social Democracy?" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.94.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

kept control of party policy<sup>59</sup> and maintained strong party discipline in the parliament, in comparison with the new parties.<sup>60</sup> While the Workers' Party was the ideological successor to the old communist party, the HSP was its legal successor which meant that the HSP has the former party's assets.<sup>61</sup> Members of the HSP had generally been members of the communist predecessor and were mostly middle class, urban, educated and older than voters for other parties in the early post-communist era and voters for the HSP tended to be former communist party members or had relatives who had been members.<sup>62</sup>

The HSP is also considered to be closer in the composition of its membership to a social democratic party based on the new middle classes, as in Western Europe, than a typical workers' party.<sup>63</sup> The party also managed to appeal to manual workers, pensioners, public-sector employees and pensioners in the 1994 election by promising more social protection along with gradual reform but without losing the votes of the middle class.<sup>64</sup> The HSP spent its time in opposition defending the interests of the working classes in an attempt to broaden its support and reduce the support for the smaller left-wing parties.<sup>65</sup> The party also maintained a strong presence in the countryside and small towns, unlike the newer parties<sup>66</sup> which has enabled the party to remain a truly national party rather than one based largely in the capital.

The Central Asian branches of the CPSU have followed very similar paths since 1991. The parties largely kept the old ideology and symbols of communist rule along with the former parties' leaders and members.<sup>67</sup> In all the Central Asian republics, except Kyrgyzstan, the Soviet-era leadership remained in power with the former communist party first secretaries becoming the new presidents and establishing authoritarian regimes.<sup>68</sup> The communist parties did not disappear in spite of the ban imposed after the coup and remained mass parties that continued to run their respective countries<sup>69</sup> while the new communist parties that have been formed by people still committed to communist ideology are very small. At the last congress of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan in

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<sup>59</sup> Morlang, D., 2003, p.71.

<sup>60</sup> op. cit., p.69.

<sup>61</sup> op. cit., p.64.

<sup>62</sup> op. cit., p.67.

<sup>63</sup> Agh, A., "Partial Consolidation of The East-Central European Parties: The Case of the Hungarian Socialist Party" in *Party Politics*, vol. 1, no 4, 1995, p.499.

<sup>64</sup> Morlang, D., 2003, p.77.

<sup>65</sup> op. cit., p.69.

<sup>66</sup> op. cit., p.70.

<sup>67</sup> R. McChesney: *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, Princeton, 1996, p.147, quoted in Melvin, 2004, p.140, endnote 23.

<sup>68</sup> Babak, V. "The Formation of Political Parties and Movements in Central Asia" in Ro'i, Y. *Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia*, Frank Cass, Abingdon, 2004, p.147.

<sup>69</sup> op. cit., pp.156-57.

December 1991, the party renamed itself the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan. The new party adopted new policies but it has not changed its style of rule and is the only legal party in the country.<sup>70</sup> There was a similar change in Uzbekistan where the Communist Party of Uzbekistan became the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan<sup>71</sup> and retained the structure, membership and party functionaries (of the CPSU) and methods of work.<sup>72</sup>

In Kazakhstan, the former communist party renamed itself the Socialist Party and became one of the largest in the country but in October 1991, the Kazakhstan Communist Party was also reconstituted by members who had not agreed to the renaming and change in direction. The former communist party supported market reforms while the refounded communist party opposed them. In Kyrgyzstan the communist party was also reconstituted in 1992 as the Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan (PCK) and enjoyed fairly broad support.<sup>73</sup> It attacked the government's economic reforms and called for a return to state control of key sectors of the economy and for regulation of prices. The party still has a nationwide network of members and is supported by industrial workers, pensioners, war veterans and some of the urban intelligentsia but not by young voters.<sup>74</sup> In Tajikistan the communist party was reconstituted in 1992 but reformers failed in their attempts to change the party. Nevertheless, it remains popular and is the largest and best organised party, however, the ruling party is the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan which has a similar programme to that of the new communist party.<sup>75</sup>

As a result of the ban, the CPRF had to re-register members. The problem of declining membership led the Third Congress of the party to lower the minimum age for membership from 18 to 16 and the number of years a sponsor of a new candidate must have known the candidate from three years to one.<sup>76</sup> Whilst initially the largest party in Russia, the CPRF has since been overtaken by United Russia in terms of size of membership. The leader of United Russia, Boris Gryzlov, declared in Moscow in March 2006 that the party had over 1 million members.<sup>77</sup> CPRF membership in 2006 stood at 184,000 members, having lost 21,000 members in 2005 and gained only 9,800. With over 48 percent of members over 60 and the average age of CPRF members at 58, the party could soon have a problem as 50,000 members are now required by law in order for a party to

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<sup>70</sup> op. cit., p.158.

<sup>71</sup> Anderson, J. *The International Politics of Central Asia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1997, p.81.

<sup>72</sup> Babak, 2004, p.157.

<sup>73</sup> ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Abazov, R. "The Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan, February 2000", *Electoral Studies*, vol.22, no.3, 2003, p.548.

<sup>75</sup> Babak, 2004, p.158.

<sup>76</sup> Cichock, M., 1999, p.23.

<sup>77</sup> RFE/RL, Newslines, [www.rferl.org/newsline](http://www.rferl.org/newsline), 07/03/06.

exist.<sup>78</sup> This is a problem also faced by the Communist Party of Ukraine which was overtaken in terms of membership and size by the United Social Democrats in the late 1990s.<sup>79</sup> In common with many other communist parties in the region, members are generally retired and many are unemployed.<sup>80</sup>

The Czech communist party did not ask its members to re-register. The membership of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (CPBM), like that of many former communist parties, is composed largely of retired people and as a result of difficulties in attracting younger members, the membership is declining.<sup>81</sup> In Slovakia, the Slovak part of the former communist party was not formally dissolved but members were required to register as members of the new party in the hope that more orthodox members would not join the now social-democratic Party of the Democratic Left (PDL).<sup>82</sup> By comparison, communist successor parties in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia generally have larger memberships than their competitors and these memberships are spread more widely across the republics than those of the newer parties. They also inherited the property of the old communist parties so are better equipped than their competitors.<sup>83</sup>

Those in East Germany who had joined the communist party for career purposes and hardline communists left the party at the end of the communist era, along with many industrial workers. A vast majority of the members, most of whom were members of the old party, support the new left-socialist leadership.<sup>84</sup> They are generally old and concentrated among the intelligentsia in former East Germany with around 90 percent having been members of the communist predecessor and around four fifths of the membership over 60 yet the party is still the largest in East Germany.<sup>85</sup> However, the profile of those who vote for the PDS is quite different from that of the members as the party draws electoral support almost equally from different age groups. Also, East Germans who vote for the PDS are generally better educated than those who vote for other parties and a larger

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<sup>78</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol. 58, No.25, 2006, p.7.

<sup>79</sup> Wilson, 2003, p.214.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Hanley, S. "The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia after 1989: 'Subcultural Party' to Neocommunist Force?" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.154.

<sup>82</sup> Waller, M. "Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-Democratization?" in *Party Politics*, vol. 1, no 4, 1995(a), p.477.

<sup>83</sup> Herzig, E. *The New Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1999, p.35.

<sup>84</sup> Oswald, F. "The Party of Democratic Socialism: Ex-Communists Entrenched as East German Regional Protest Party" in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 12, no.2, 1996, p.191.

<sup>85</sup> Baylis, T. "Political Adaptation in Germany's Post-Communist Party of Democratic Socialism" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.141.

proportion of white-collar workers support the party than blue-collar workers and the party also benefits from the support of the unemployed.<sup>86</sup>

Many new political parties have come into existence in Eastern Europe and Russia since the end of communist rule and nearly as many have disappeared again. This was a widely expected development as a result of the transition from authoritarianism towards liberal democracy.<sup>87</sup> Another common theme throughout Eastern Europe despite the proliferation of parties, was the deep distrust of political parties as a result of the decades of one-party control of society.<sup>88</sup> The word 'party' was associated with oppression to such an extent that many new political groupings in the early post-communist era chose to call themselves by other names: 'movement' and 'union' occurring frequently.

The new parties in Eastern Europe are generally 'cadre' parties consisting of a small number of leaders in parliament and the presidential offices rather than the mass parties characteristic of Western Europe.<sup>89</sup> While these new parties lack the identifiable social base of traditional West European parties, it is shared cultural identities that unite these 'elite parties of professionals' and those who vote for them in elections, rather than a clear ideology or set of socio-economic interests.<sup>90</sup> Parties representing ethnic minorities, such as the Movement for Rights and Freedoms representing the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, are the most obvious exception to the vague, mass-appeal cadre parties as they tend to have clearly defined constituencies, whereas the 'cadre' parties do not.<sup>91</sup>

New parties in Eastern Europe had been expected to develop in the same way as those in western democracies but they are developing in very different circumstances from those in which western parties developed. The 'cadre' model is very suitable for the new parties of Eastern Europe as it solves the problem of representing social and economic groups while these groups and their social values are still evolving.<sup>92</sup> If parties are directing their appeals to the electorate as a whole rather than to any specific group, they will not be limiting the level of support they may receive.

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<sup>86</sup> op. cit, p.142.

<sup>87</sup> Gebethner, S. "Parliamentary and Electoral Parties in Poland", in Lewis, P. (ed.) *Party Structure and Organisation in East-Central Europe*, Edward Elgar, 1996, p.121.

<sup>88</sup> Pridham, G. "Political Parties and Their Strategies in the Transition from Authoritarian Rule: the Comparative Perspective" in Wightman, G. (ed.) *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: Post-communist Politics in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria*, Edward Elgar, 1995, pp.11-12.

<sup>89</sup> Olson, D. "Party Formation and Party System Consolidation in the New Democracies of Central Europe" in *Political Studies*, vol 46, no 3, 1998, p.445.

<sup>90</sup> Lomax, B. "Obstacles to the Development of Democratic Politics", *Journal of Communist Studies*, vol. 10, no 3, 1994, p.84.

<sup>91</sup> Olson, 1998, p.447.

<sup>92</sup> op. cit., p.446.

This tactic has been described as a source of continuity with the East European “tradition of the ruling party” with activists from the old regime continuing political participation in the new regime in new parties.<sup>93</sup>

The large membership of mass parties is not needed by these new parties as the party elite communicates with and mobilises its supporters via the mass media instead of through the more traditional channels of the party’s organisation and membership.<sup>94</sup> Instead, the active membership often consists of little more than the professional political elite of the party at a national and local level.<sup>95</sup> In Hungary up to 1994, for example, the parties with the largest mass membership were often also those with the lowest electoral support, having their base in particular sectors of society rather than appealing to the electorate as a whole (the HSP was a notable exception). The most popular party in Hungary during 1992 and 1993, the Alliance of Young Democrats, had the smallest active membership of all the major parties.<sup>96</sup> A system based on such parties can be described as an elite democracy as opposed to the classical mass democracy as these parties are not democratically run or controlled by their members, but by a small group of professional party managers able to manipulate the decision-making processes.<sup>97</sup>

Organisational development was slow to take place in Bulgaria with the establishment of stable national and local organisations and branches only achieved by the BSP by 1996.<sup>98</sup> Anti-communism was the unifying aim of all the early opposition groups in Bulgaria but this unity only lasted until the first free elections of 1990.<sup>99</sup> However, the anti-communist opposition was led largely by former communists. This situation arose because there was no long tradition of opposition to the regime in Bulgaria as there had been in most other East European countries, the Bulgarian Communist Party having enjoyed a greater degree of legitimacy than many of its counterparts abroad. Opposition, to a large extent, came from reform communists within the party. These people went on to lead some of the most anti-communist parties and even replaced the leaders of some new parties who had been victimised by the communist regime.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Lomax, 1994, pp.84-85.

<sup>95</sup> *op. cit.*, p.85.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Lomax, 1996, p.39.

<sup>98</sup> Waller & Karasimeonov, 1996, p.136.

<sup>99</sup> Karasimeonov, G. “Differentiation Postponed: Party Pluralism in Bulgaria” in Wightman, G. (ed.) *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: Post-Communist Politics in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria*, Edward Elgar, 1995(a), pp.156-57.

<sup>100</sup> *op. cit.*, p.157.

In Eastern Europe, among newly-formed political parties, a failure to unite where different parties have had similar ideologies has been a common theme but with parties remaining “important for recruiting members to parliament and ministers in government but in many respects they seem to be a declining force”.<sup>101</sup> Another common occurrence throughout Eastern Europe since the end of communist rule is that either supposedly national parties do not have branches throughout the country, sometimes with none outside the capital at all, or the coalitions that they join are not uniform in all regions of the country.

There has also been a change in the electorate as the working class shrinks and therefore a loss of old constituencies in the East. While party membership has fallen in both Eastern and Western Europe in recent decades, parties continue to rely on their membership levels at least to give the impression that they are mass parties and so present an image of being a legitimate channel for representation due to the size of their support from the electorate.<sup>102</sup> In Eastern Europe, amongst the newer parties, the battle was more for votes than for members with those parties which failed to attract votes in the founding elections subsequently disappearing. In Hungary, the party survival rate in the late 1990s was 90%; in Poland it was 72% but in Russia the party survival rate was only 53%.<sup>103</sup>

The opposition to the ‘idea of party’ seen in the formation of many political groups in Eastern Europe that refused to use the word ‘party’ in their name and tried to find alternative forms of organisation, through collective leadership, for example, can also be seen in various social movements in Western Europe. The Greens in Austria, as in some other countries, see themselves as the ‘antithesis’ of traditional parties. They try to avoid use of the term ‘party’, they do not require formal membership or payment of a fixed membership fee but that ‘participants’ believe in the Greens’ goals and will actively campaign for them and there is a strong emphasis on internal party democracy.<sup>104</sup>

As in Eastern Europe, there has been a decline in party membership in most countries in Western Europe but many parties still rely on membership numbers to maintain the impression of being mass parties and also for legitimacy as political actors.<sup>105</sup> Anti-party feeling in the West is

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<sup>101</sup> Kavanagh, D. “Power in the Parties: R. T. McKenzie and After” in *West European Politics*, vol. 21, no.1, 1998, pp.41-42.

<sup>102</sup> Mair, P. “Party Organisations: From Civil Society to the State” in Katz, R. and Mair, P. (eds) *Change and Adaptation in Party Organisations in Western Democracies*, Sage Publications, London, 1994, p.15.

<sup>103</sup> Golosov, G. “Who Survives? Party Origins, Organisational Development and Electoral Performance in Post-Communist Russia” in *Political Studies*, vol. 46, no 3, 1998, pp.511-12.

<sup>104</sup> Katz, R. and Mair, P. (eds) *Change and Adaptation in Party Organisations in Western Democracies*, Sage Publications, London, 1994, p.58.

<sup>105</sup> Mair, 1994, p.15.



often led by a sense that while “the parties may become more privileged, they also become more remote.”<sup>106</sup> The emergence of ‘anti-party’ politics is one of the most significant changes in party politics to take place in the West in recent years. Its defining features are a growing scepticism about the integrity and honesty of politicians and those associated with the party in central office; the attempt to mobilise opposition to all established alternatives, as they are seen to have failed; and the emergence of new extreme right wing forces in most Western democracies as a result of a slow down in economic growth and the perceived inability of policy-makers to make any significant changes in an internationally determined economic order together with increased racism.<sup>107</sup>

The French National Front, the National Alliance in Italy, the Republicans in Germany and other parties have benefited greatly in elections from this rising tide of racial intolerance.<sup>108</sup> There have been new parties set up which have combined a racist agenda with regionalism, anti-politics and opposition to taxation policies. Similarly to the Greens, these parties have often “constructed themselves in opposition to the existing parties and the wider model of party politics that the dominant parties represent”.<sup>109</sup> One of the characteristics of party politics in France in recent years has been the decline in the ability of long-established parties to mobilise voters. Challenges to these parties include emergence of small parties and protest groups, the huge loss of members to these groups and the growth of dissidence in the ranks of the larger parties.<sup>110</sup> ‘Quality of life’ or ‘post-material’ issues, those of ecology, feminism and pacifism seem to have cut across traditional political and economic cleavages and greatly contributed to an erosion of the established bases of party support.<sup>111</sup> The Social Democratic Party in Germany lost many members to the Greens in the 1980s. It was argued by party activists that these people, supporting environmentalist, pacifist and feminist concerns had felt under-represented in a party tightly controlled by leaders who had little interest in these issues.<sup>112</sup>

Organisational changes in political parties in Western Europe have included the professionalisation of the work of the party in central office. This is now being carried out by consultants instead of party bureaucrats and activists, as in the past.<sup>113</sup> Electorates have also become

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<sup>106</sup> op. cit., p.19.

<sup>107</sup> ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Taggart, P. “New Populist Parties in Western Europe”, *West European Politics*, vol. 18, no 1, 1995, p.34.

<sup>109</sup> op cit., p.48.

<sup>110</sup> Appleton, A. “Parties Under Pressure: Challenges to ‘Established’ French Parties”, *West European Politics*, vol. 18, no 1, 1995, p.53.

<sup>111</sup> op. cit., pp.53-54.

<sup>112</sup> Koelble, T. “Economic Theories of Organisation and the Politics of Institutional Design in Political Parties”, *Party Politics*, vol.2, no 2, 1996, p.255.

<sup>113</sup> Mair, 1994, p.13.

more socially and culturally homogenous and less controllable by parties and it is this that has led largely to recent organisational changes. As television became central to political competition, it changed parties' electoral campaigns and their organisation with the mass media driving parties towards personalised campaigns, which have become candidate-centred as well as issue-orientated.<sup>114</sup> By contrast, in Russia the CPRF relies heavily on its members to spread the communist message via door to door campaigning even though other parties in Russia rely mainly on the media. Reliance on this rather old fashioned form of campaigning is likely to be a problem for the party as its membership is in decline. The media have also been dominated by United Russia, the new 'party of power' so the CPRF has had little choice in its campaign methods.

Between the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War, communist parties in Western Europe were represented in many governments. They enjoyed their greatest levels of support at this time as a result of their participation in the wartime resistance movements. However, this (limited) support for socialism faded with the onset of the Cold War<sup>115</sup> and as a consequence, some communist parties decided to assert their independence from Moscow, the first being the Danish Communist Party in 1958.<sup>116</sup> While the 1989 and 1991 revolutions in Eastern Europe and Russia were also major catalysts for change in the West European communist parties, an attempt to regain support had been made in the late 1970s with 'Eurocommunism'. 'Eurocommunism' represented a break with the past as those parties that took this route opted for democratic practices over revolutionary means to achieve socialism. The November 1975 Rome declaration of the Italian and French communist parties accepted the "democratic functioning of the State, the plurality of political parties, the right to existence and activity of opposition parties, ... the free formation of majorities and minorities and the possibility of their alternating democratically".<sup>117</sup> This acceptance of elections and democracy did not take place in the CPRF until 1993, with the election of Zyuganov.

In Italy, opposition to the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 had led to increasing criticism of the Soviet Union by the Italian Communist Party (ICP) and by the mid 1970s, the idea of political pluralism became acceptable.<sup>118</sup> The ICP lost over 2.3 million votes in national elections between 1970 and 1989. Of particular concern to the ICP was the loss of support among young

<sup>114</sup> Panebianco, A. *Political Parties: Organisations and Power*, CUP, 1988, p.266.

<sup>115</sup> Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.2.

<sup>116</sup> op. cit., p.4.

<sup>117</sup> Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.xviii.

<sup>118</sup> Gundle, S. "The Italian Communist Party and the End of 'Really Existing Socialism'" in Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.15.

voters and in the areas that had traditionally supported the party in central Italy and in the northern cities where the industrial working class was concentrated. The decline in support was largely attributable to the party's failure to adapt its programme and take into account the economic changes which had resulted in a smaller working class.<sup>119</sup> The ICP was voted out of existence by the delegates to its twentieth Congress in 1991 and a Democratic Party of the Left was approved in its place.<sup>120</sup> Individual liberty, democracy, the environment and women's rights featured prominently in the new party's statutes whereas references to Marx, Lenin, the class struggle and the overthrow of capitalism were absent.<sup>121</sup> Such references are also very few in CPRF documents.

Communist Refoundation was formed in Italy a few weeks after the dissolution of the ICP. One opinion holds that this is a new communist party and the other holds that it is a more orthodox remnant of the old ICP. The leaders of Communist Refoundation were pro-Soviet members of the old ICP so the image of the party is somewhat tarnished<sup>122</sup> but not so tarnished that it could not hold power as a junior partner in a coalition government and bring that government down, in 1998, through the withdrawal of its support. Massimo D'Alema, the leader of Democratic Party of the Left, the largest party in parliament, became the new Prime Minister, as head of a new coalition including the newly formed Party of Italian Communists,<sup>123</sup> a break-away group from Communist Refoundation.<sup>124</sup>

'The British Road to Socialism', which rejected revolution for change by legal and democratic means, was the attempt by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1951 to replace Lenin's 'State and Revolution' with a set of policies more in tune with post-war opinion in Britain.<sup>125</sup> However, neither Marxism-Leninism nor democratic-centralism were rejected in this document which proposed parliamentary and extra-parliamentary change instead of revolution.<sup>126</sup> Of those who left the CPGB, the Marxist-Leninists formed the New Communist Party in 1977 and militant industrialists formed the Communist Party of Britain in 1987.<sup>127</sup> By 1987 the

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<sup>119</sup> Daniels, P. and Bull, M. "Voluntary Euthanasia: From the Italian Communist Party to the Democratic Party of the Left" in Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.2.

<sup>120</sup> Eubank, W., Gangopadachay, A. and Weinberg, L. "Italian Communism in Crisis: A Study in Exit, Voice and Loyalty" in *Party Politics*, vol. 2, no 1, 1996, p.57.

<sup>121</sup> op. cit., p.56.

<sup>122</sup> Bull, M. "The West European Communist Movement in the Late Twentieth Century", *West European Politics*, vol. 18, no 1, 1995, p.91.

<sup>123</sup> *The Scotsman*, 22/10/98.

<sup>124</sup> op. cit., 17/10/98.

<sup>125</sup> Hudson, K. "Communist and Former Communist Organisations in Britain" in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 10, no 4, 1994, pp.97-98.

<sup>126</sup> op. cit., p.97.

<sup>127</sup> op. cit., p.98.

Eurocommunists had reached a position where they dominated the leadership and in 1991 brought about the dissolution of the party and formed the Democratic Left movement in its place.<sup>128</sup>

### IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE / CONTINUITY

The communist parties of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have followed very varied paths of development and some have been very successful at regaining power in only a very short time since they were overthrown. There have been three main tendencies in the process of becoming re-electable, each of which has depended on the political and economic circumstances of the individual countries: social democratisation has been followed by the former communist parties of Hungary and Poland as there was considerable support for a move towards the centre; the adoption of nationalism in countries where there are ethnic tensions such as Serbia or patriotism in Russia as a national defence of communism; and a restatement of socialist or communist aims where there has been an economic decline as in Albania and Moldova. The ideological origins of the CPRF and external constraints prevent the party from abandoning communism and Zyuganov now writes of 'socialised capitalism'.<sup>129</sup>

Why has the CPRF not moved towards social democracy? The term means different things to different people. Giddens defines social democracy as moderate, parliamentary socialism built upon consolidating the welfare state.<sup>130</sup> Kitschelt defines social democracy as a generic concept covering a broad cohort of parties that run under socialist, labour and social-democratic labels<sup>131</sup> but defines socialism as more uncompromising than social democracy in its call for the priority of collective decision making and formal organisation over markets and individual liberty. While socialists believe in a large-scale reorganisation of society, social democrats mistrust grand theories and advocate incremental trial-and-error social change. Socialism is concerned with the redistribution of property rights as the key problem of justice while social democrats believe that equality should be pursued within the limits of efficiency; inequality being acceptable to social democrats as long as it helps the worst-off in society to improve their lot, provided a minimum standard of living guarantees the primary goods underlying human dignity and self-respect to all citizens.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> op. cit., p.99.

<sup>129</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol.42, 2006, p.9.

<sup>130</sup> Giddens, A. *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, p.4.

<sup>131</sup> Kitschelt, H. *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, CUP, 1994, p.1.

<sup>132</sup> op. cit., pp.258-59.

Some parties that would never define themselves as social democratic (such as the Communist Party of India) pursue social democratic policies while some self-defined social democratic parties (such as the Labour Party of New Zealand) have implemented neoliberal, free market programmes.<sup>133</sup> The traditional model of social democracy had a large role for the state in economic life including an extensive public sector and state regulation of a mixed economy, the pursuit of equality and justice through high and redistributive taxes, the promotion of full employment and strong links with trade unions. However, after the economic problems of the 1970s, social democratic parties dropped their (theoretical) commitment to replace capitalism with socialism, accepting their role was remedial rather than transformational.<sup>134</sup> This lies at the heart of why the CPRF cannot change as they are unable to relinquish their commitment to a communist future.

Social democracy stands for a balance between the market and the state and between the individual and the community and a compromise between an acceptance of capitalism as the only reliable mechanism for generating wealth and a desire to redistribute wealth according to moral rather than market principles.<sup>135</sup> Some socialists have used the term ‘social democracy’ as a term of abuse, implying unprincipled compromise or betrayal.<sup>136</sup> Social democracy is historically very weak in Russia as social democracy is too socialist for the democratic pro-reformers and too democratic for the socialists.<sup>137</sup> Russian communists found social democracy to be too close to democracy and preferred nationalism to democracy.<sup>138</sup> As March notes, since the range Zyuganov’s support was much narrower than Yeltsin’s (and later Putin’s), if he had run as a social democrat he was more likely than his opponent to alienate his core electorate.<sup>139</sup> Communists, by nature, see their party as having as ‘divine’ right to rule as they ‘lead the working class’ and as a result, there is a tendency to take worker support for granted. They are unable to adapt to social democracy as they have criticised it so completely in the past and see it as a betrayal of communism.

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<sup>133</sup> Sandbrook, R., Edelman, M., Heller, P. and Teichman, J. *Social Democracy in the Global Periphery: Origins, Challenges, Prospects*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.12.

<sup>134</sup> *op. cit.*, p.14.

<sup>135</sup> Heywood, A., *Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2002, p.57.

<sup>136</sup> *op. cit.*, p.58.

<sup>137</sup> March, 2002, p.25.

<sup>138</sup> March, 2002, p.187. It is also worth noting, in the light of the limited support for A Just Russia, despite much assistance from the Kremlin: “The polarised nature of the Russian electorate needs to be taken into account. Social democracy is a compromise between the values of state socialism and liberal democracy. But, since the polarised electorate saw such subtleties as either too close to state socialism or to liberal democracy, there was little electoral space for genuine social democracy despite the paradox that, in economic terms at least, much of the Russian electorate is social democratic, favouring a mixed economy and an interventionist state.” March, 2002, p.188.

<sup>139</sup> March, 2002, p.188.

The CPRF is still a programmatic party while other Russian parties are much more dominated by the personalities of their leaders. Although this has given the party a stable electorate it also causes problems for the CPRF in broadening its support,<sup>140</sup> which now seems to be in serious decline anyway. The continued use of democratic centralism and replication of the organisation of the CPSU with the Chairman, Zyuganov, Deputy Chairmen, the Presidium, the Central Committee and the primary party organisations and a membership that is largely inherited from the party's predecessor, give the party a greater degree of organisational continuity than some of its more-reformed counterparts in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.<sup>141</sup>

The CPRF has become the party of the relatively deprived (see Chapter 4 for details) as did the PDS in former East Germany and also in common with the CPRF, many of the PDS's members are retired with over 50 percent of PDS members over 60.<sup>142</sup> The former communists are losing their traditional constituency and, although the PDS claims to represent the working class, changing concerns among the electorate have necessitated a greater emphasis on environmentalism and the problems facing former East Germans; a direction also taken by the CPRF in the search for the youth vote, in terms of environmentalism, and the nationalist vote, in terms of support for the rights of Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics.

The CPRF has not remained in power despite a considerable change in ideology. It is, however, difficult for the party to abandon communism and doubtful that it would yield the desired electoral results if the party did. While Chotiner claims that "there are no appreciable extra-organisational barriers for a move by the CPRF to the moderate left",<sup>143</sup> the organisation itself was formed as a reaction against the moves towards social democracy led by Gorbachev at the end of the Soviet era and the support for social democracy in Russia is minimal as seen in election after election where social democratic parties fail to achieve representation in the Duma. By contrast, the communist parties in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia, did not give up power and remained the ruling parties for several years after the end of the communist era through the adoption of nationalism and the continued control of the national media.

The CPRF promotes the achievements of the CPSU during the Second World War as a means of defending communism and to promote their patriotic stance. In Chapter 5, it will be seen

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<sup>140</sup> March, L. "The Pragmatic Radicalism of Russia's Communists" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.171.

<sup>141</sup> *op. cit.*, p.172.

<sup>142</sup> Segert, D. "The PDS: Regional Party or a Second Social-Democratic Party in Germany?" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.171.

<sup>143</sup> Chotiner, 2002, p.417.

that respondents deeply regretted the anti-patriotic rhetoric of the Yeltsin years, as they saw it, and felt that patriotism had been demonised. Zyuganov has expressed concerns that the CPRF is not seen as sufficiently nationalist by the electorate now in the face of competition from United Russia and the LDPR.<sup>144</sup> In St Petersburg, respondents for Chapter 5 spoke of the CPRF being 'patriotic' long before other parties adopted this outlook.

Elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, the successor to the Communist Party of Moldova, the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) was returned to power in 2001 partly as a result of severe economic problems in Moldova and the previously governing parties' failure to deal with those problems.<sup>145</sup> The party programme is still Marxist-Leninist but also refers to 'reformed socialism' and the party has taken a patriotic stand.<sup>146</sup> The PCRM no longer emphasises class issues or internationalism.<sup>147</sup> Like the CPRF, the party is able to rely upon its nationwide network of local organisations for campaigning, an advantage not available to other parties.<sup>148</sup>

Nationalists were able to mobilise mass popular support against the communist parties of the Caucasus in the late 1980s as the nationalists had done in the Baltics against Russian domination.<sup>149</sup> The post-Soviet situation for the communist parties in the Caucasus was largely determined by the Soviet past - the mass killing of civilians in Azerbaijan and Georgia by Soviet troops radicalised the opposition and greatly limited the communist parties' ability to compromise in order to stay in power.<sup>150</sup> Communists in the late Soviet period formed the national elites that were held together by a shared interest in retaining control over economic and social advantages rather than a commitment to communism.<sup>151</sup> All three republics have a range of political parties representing diverse ideological platforms but they tend to be small organisations that do not play a prominent role as a result, mainly, of each republic having a presidential system.<sup>152</sup>

In Armenia, there was a process of dialogue in 1989 and a transfer of power from the communists to the nationalists. However, the Armenian National Movement (ANM) included many Communist Party members and after the ANM had been elected to government in 1990, various former communists held ministerial posts in the nationalist government.<sup>153</sup> In Armenia, while the

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<sup>144</sup> The Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, vol.42, 2006, p.9.

<sup>145</sup> March, 2005, pp.4 & 34.

<sup>146</sup> op. cit., pp.4-5.

<sup>147</sup> op. cit., p.6.

<sup>148</sup> op. cit., p.19.

<sup>149</sup> Herzig, 1999, p.6.

<sup>150</sup> op. cit., p.15.

<sup>151</sup> op. cit., p.20.

<sup>152</sup> op. cit., p.34.

<sup>153</sup> op. cit., p.13.

nationalists took power at the national level, communists still head major enterprises and run much of the regional and local administrations adopting nationalism where expedient.<sup>154</sup>

In Azerbaijan the communist authorities tried to suppress the nationalist Azerbaijan Popular Front (APF) but the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled the APF to seize power in 1992 in a coup.<sup>155</sup> There were no parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan between the election of the Supreme Soviet in 1990 and November 1995 so the Soviet era parliament remained in place all that time but a smaller National Council of half former communists and half representatives from other groups took over dealing with national matters.<sup>156</sup> The Azerbaijan Communist Party was registered in spring 1994<sup>157</sup> but was prevented from running in parliamentary elections after 5,000 of the signatures on its petition lists were declared invalid.<sup>158</sup>

In Georgia, the communists made concessions to the nationalists but did not succeed in entering into dialogue with the opposition. Instead, the Georgian Communist Party adopted many of the nationalists' policies.<sup>159</sup> A national movement was elected to power in October 1990 in the parliamentary elections which were followed by the election of a nationalist president in May 1991. This was followed by a military coup in 1992 after which Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia to serve as head of the state council formed by the leaders of the coup. A new parliament was elected in October 1992 and Shevardnadze was elected as head of the government.<sup>160</sup> After the 1992 elections, various political groups claimed to be successors to the Communist Party of Georgia. These included the Communist Workers', the Union of Communists and the Stalin Society which all merged to form the United Communist Party. Remaining independent from this new group were the Communist Party and the Stalin Party as well as other left wing groups.<sup>161</sup> One of the parties set up and registered in 1992 was the Democratic Union, composed largely of former communists and lead by Avtandil Margiani, a former leader of the Communist Party of Georgia.<sup>162</sup>

In East-Central Europe, the first political cleavage to develop was that of communism versus anti-communism and this dominated the first, and sometimes subsequent, elections in most countries. While in Poland and Slovakia other political cleavages survived the communist years,

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<sup>154</sup> op. cit., p.21.

<sup>155</sup> op. cit., pp.13-14.

<sup>156</sup> Altstadt, A. "Azerbaijan's Struggle Toward Democracy" in Dawisha, K. and Parrott, B. (eds) *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp.124-25.

<sup>157</sup> op. cit., p.148.

<sup>158</sup> op. cit., p.148.

<sup>159</sup> Herzig, 1999, p.14.

<sup>160</sup> Slider, D. "Democratization in Georgia" in Dawisha, K. and Parrott, B. (eds) *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.156.

<sup>161</sup> op. cit., p.164.

<sup>162</sup> op. cit., p.178.



reformed 'historical' parties have generally not been successful as they were absent from the political scene for so long. Divisions closer to the standard left-right political cleavages over economic reform emerged later as it became obvious that there were going to be losers in the economic transformation as well as winners which gave the communists in Russia and the reunited Germany, for example, a new cause and a new, if smaller, constituency as those who lost out as a result of the transition became a focus for calls for the return of socialism.

Resistance to change characterised the Russian communists but in Poland and Hungary, the ex-communist parties along with the social-liberal parties were actually the instigators of change.<sup>163</sup> They were more willing than some of their counterparts in other countries to introduce reforms as they needed to legitimise their new parties, the communist regimes of Poland and Hungary, together with those in the Baltics, having been perceived as imposed by the Soviet Union, to a greater extent than those in other countries.<sup>164</sup> In Poland and in Hungary the ruling parties had voted to dissolve themselves. However, of all the ex-communist parties these are the most radically different from their predecessors with a degree of membership discontinuity as well as what are, officially, new political organisations.<sup>165</sup>

In the Czech Republic and Lithuania the former communist parties each faced a strong social democratic competitor, the Czech Social Democratic Party and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP), which may partially explain the absence of a name change for the CPBM as the party needs to maintain a separate identity from its new rival. The historic Czech Social Democratic Party continued to dominate the democratic left until 1998 but after this time the economic problems and failures of minority governments led to an increase in support for the CPBM<sup>166</sup> which has accepted parliamentary democracy, private property, the market economy and the rule of law.<sup>167</sup> The revived social democratic parties fared badly, except in the Czech Republic and Lithuania, and when the electorate in each country became dissatisfied with economic reforms, the social democratic parties did not benefit but the communist parties did, often achieving substantial parliamentary representation in the second round of post-communist elections as dissatisfaction with economic reform led to nostalgia for the former economic stability.

The reform of the ex-communist parties of Central and Eastern Europe has largely been achieved by a move away from communism and towards social-democracy. None of the successors

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<sup>163</sup> Agh, 1997, p.428.

<sup>164</sup> Ishiyama, J. "Communist Parties in Transition: Structures, Leaders and Processes of Democratization in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 27, no 2, 1995, p.159.

<sup>165</sup> Agh, 1997, p.435.

<sup>166</sup> Hanley, S., 2002, p.141.

<sup>167</sup> op. cit., p.152.

to the communist parties, not even the CPBM, has called for a return to communism<sup>168</sup> and all the former communist parties, including the CPBM, are thought to be genuinely committed to the market reforms and pluralist democracy that they now advocate<sup>169</sup> as opposed to the change of policies being simply an attempt to retain or regain power. Of the most reformed successor parties, the Polish party emphasised its managerial skills and the Hungarian party emphasised its ability to govern competently, arguing for the reforms to continue but with greater care for those who were disadvantaged by them.<sup>170</sup>

In Slovakia, the PDL gradually transformed itself into a modern social democratic party but it has never managed to win more than 15 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections and therefore has been unable to govern as the major party in any coalition.<sup>171</sup> Its loss of support is partly a result of the more hardline regime (than Poland or Hungary) and partly the fact that other left wing parties adopted parts of the PDL's programme.<sup>172</sup> The HSP adopted social-democracy in place of communism and declared its support for the European integration process<sup>173</sup> and has been described as the first of the ex-communist parties to transform itself into a party of the modern European Left, its success being a result of the fact that it had already become a social democratic party, so monopolising the left wing of the party spectrum before other parties were able to develop.<sup>174</sup>

As in the case of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), it was reformers in the PUWP who led the party away from communism and towards the European Left.<sup>175</sup> The DLA, an electoral alliance whose largest member was the SDPR, formed in 1990 following the dissolution of the PUWP and claimed to support political pluralism and parliamentary democracy and oppose the clericalisation of social life.<sup>176</sup> While the SDPR tends to direct its appeals towards industrial workers, pensioners and others who have fared badly in the transition, the party has been able, at the expense of ideological coherence, to attract a wide variety of supporters. By continually stressing its

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<sup>168</sup> Waller, M. "Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-Democratization?" in *Party Politics*, vol. 1, no 4, 1995(a), p.478.

<sup>169</sup> Agh, 1997, p.428.

<sup>170</sup> Grzymala-Busse, 2002, pp.169 & 171.

<sup>171</sup> Fisher, S. "The Troubled Evolution of Slovakia's Ex-Communists" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.116.

<sup>172</sup> op. cit., pp.116-17.

<sup>173</sup> Agh, 1997, p.430.

<sup>174</sup> Ishiyama, J. "The Sickle Or The Rose? Previous Regime Types and the Evolution of the Ex-Communist Parties in Post-Communist Politics" in *Comparative Political Studies*, vol.30, no.3, 1997, p.321.

<sup>175</sup> Ishiyama, 1997, p.321.

<sup>176</sup> Lewis, P. "Poland's New Parties in the Post-communist Political System" in Wightman, G. (ed.) *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: Post-communist politics in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria*, Edward Elgar, 1995, p.39.

commitment to economic reform it has, like the HSP, been able to gain the support of many businessmen.<sup>177</sup>

In Poland, the DLA won the 1993 elections as a result of its ideological reformation, its organisational strength and the fact that the right had tried to blame declining living standards on the communist past.<sup>178</sup> After 1993, the emergence of the Union of Work gave the SDPR a left-wing competitor. The party was formed by left-wing members of Solidarity (the former opposition movement during the communist era) and reformers from the PUWP. This party claimed specifically to represent those who had lost out under economic reforms<sup>179</sup> however, the DLA won the presidency in 1995 and 2000. In 1997, although the DLA increased its share of the vote, it lost control of parliament because the previously divided right united to form a coalition<sup>180</sup> but won the 2001 parliamentary elections. The DLA registered as a party in April 1999 and moved away from Marxism and towards the centre.<sup>181</sup> The new party deliberately set out on a social democratic path benefiting from the advantages of experience of organising and loyal members working for the party.<sup>182</sup>

In Germany, the PDS differs from its communist predecessor in its organisation, its programme and its leadership.<sup>183</sup> There is continuity between the PDS and its predecessor in terms of legal identity, membership and to some extent, ideology.<sup>184</sup> It became the largest party in East Germany after the March 1990 elections, however, after reunification, was reduced in the December 1990 elections to a minor party with support limited to former East Germany and Berlin.<sup>185</sup> The PDS managed 16.4 percent of the vote in the GDR's first democratic election but lost support as unification approached and afterwards, obtaining only 11.1 percent of the vote in the elections following reunification. However, with rising unemployment in the East, the party began to regain support.<sup>186</sup>

Before reunification, the PDS claimed to be a reformed socialist party and benefited from the support of those concerned about the consequences of reunification<sup>187</sup> but afterwards, there was a

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<sup>177</sup> Ishiyama, 1997, p.323.

<sup>178</sup> Curry, 2003, p.41.

<sup>179</sup> op. cit., p.43.

<sup>180</sup> op. cit., p.33.

<sup>181</sup> op. cit., p.45.

<sup>182</sup> op. cit., p.26.

<sup>183</sup> Oswald, 1996, p.191.

<sup>184</sup> op. cit., p.174.

<sup>185</sup> Bortfeldt, H. and Thompson, W. "The German Communists" in Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.145.

<sup>186</sup> Baylis, 2003, p.141.

<sup>187</sup> Bortfeldt & Thompson, 1993, pp.144-45.

move away from Marxism-Leninism and towards social-democracy.<sup>188</sup> The fact that the programme still includes references to Marx and Lenin makes reform appear limited.<sup>189</sup> In common with the CPBM and the LSDP, the party has a large social democratic competitor so environmentalism and feminism feature prominently in the new philosophy of the PDS, a trend in common with reformed communist parties in Western Europe.<sup>190</sup> The PDS criticises the injustices of capitalism in particular, unemployment and reductions in welfare provision and the disadvantages that East Germans face.<sup>191</sup>

The BSP has abandoned democratic-centralism in favour of internal democracy and allows factions to exist within the party (such as the Union for Social Democracy and the Marxist Platform).<sup>192</sup> The BSP began a review of its policies while it was losing members in large numbers and decided to include reform communists and those in the party who were prepared to support social democracy in the leadership. The centrists gained control of the party and marginalised the Marxists and social-democrats<sup>193</sup> and managed to avoid the party splitting. It retains a strong organisational structure, considerable resources and a functioning press<sup>194</sup> but lost the 1997 elections. The BSP tried to transform itself into a party capable of representing the interests of a wide spectrum of people, including workers, the middle class and the new capitalists. However, it is often characterised as the party of the new business class which emerged from the political elite of the previous regime.<sup>195</sup> The party remains deeply divided and despite commitments to market reforms and democratic socialism and the marginalisation of hardliners, the party leadership has generally followed a middle course, avoiding complete rejection of the past.<sup>196</sup>

In countries where the population is divided along ethnic lines, nationalism also forms a part of the new identity of the former communist parties. In Yugoslavia, the SPS, the ex-communist party, has turned into an extreme nationalist party, promoting Serb interests, violently, against those of Muslims and Croats. The SPS claimed in its programme to be working towards Serbia being a socialist republic. The party won elections in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1997 but from 1992 onwards had to form coalitions in order to govern. In 2000, it was defeated by the Democratic Opposition of

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<sup>188</sup> op. cit., p.145.

<sup>189</sup> Oswald, 1996, p.174.

<sup>190</sup> Minnerup, G. "German Communism, the PDS and the Reunification of Germany" in Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.194.

<sup>191</sup> Baylis, 2003, p.150.

<sup>192</sup> Waller & Karasimeonov, 1996, pp. 139-40.

<sup>193</sup> Karasimeonov, 1995(a), pp.164-65.

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Kassayie, B. "The Evolution of Social Democracy in Reforming Bulgaria" in *Journal of Communist Studies*, vol. 14, no 3, 1998, p.111.

<sup>196</sup> Ishiyama, 1997, p.319.

Serbia.<sup>197</sup> Without the violence, in the Baltics, in the early 1990s, the former communist parties or new 'successor' communist parties, have presented themselves as the representatives of the Russian minorities<sup>198</sup> in order to achieve the same result.

Programmatic renewal has also been taking place in Western Europe, particularly among social-democratic parties, to compensate for changing electorates and changes in the way elections are fought. Centralisation and democratisation also form a major part of the debate on party development in Western Europe. Non-communist parties of the left faced similar problems in the 1980s to those facing Western communist parties, these being loss of electoral support, identity crisis and the need to find a new programme.<sup>199</sup> This new programme has been found, by the end of the 1990s in a general shift to the centre on the part of West European social-democratic parties.

During the 1980s and 1990s, social-democratic parties have changed more in terms of ideology than at any time since World War II as social democracy has moved beyond the debate over resource distribution to address the organisation of production and the conditions of consumption in advanced capitalist societies.<sup>200</sup> Social security, full employment and income equality, formerly the primary concerns of social-democratic parties, are now taking second place in the programmes of West European centre-left parties to environmentalism, support for increased market competition, citizens' autonomy and protection from state surveillance which are promoted as possible means of increasing their share of the vote.<sup>201</sup> The traditional social democratic concerns were undermined by mass unemployment, industrial restructuring and the rise of the new right. Confronted with poor electoral results, a growing middle class and declining working class, social democratic parties had little choice but to reassess their policies.<sup>202</sup> One example of the result of these pressures has been the rewording by the British Labour Party of clause 4 of the party constitution, a clause of great importance to many party members, which stated the party's commitment to the public ownership of the means of production. After many of Britain's utilities had been privatised, the Labour Party clearly felt that this clause had to be reformed if the party was to have a realistic chance of winning future elections.

The Norwegian, Dutch and British Labour Parties have all had to deal with the same problems during their respective policy reviews. All were closely identified with the public sector,

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<sup>197</sup> Brankovic, 2002, p.206.

<sup>198</sup> Ishiyama, J. "Communist Parties in Transition: Structures, Leaders and Processes of Democratization in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 27, no 2, 1995, p.153.

<sup>199</sup> Bull, 1995, p.94.

<sup>200</sup> Kitschelt, 1994, p.2.

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Taylor, A. "Trade Unions and the Politics of Social Democratic Renewal" in *West European Politics*, vol.16, no.1, 1993, pp.148-49.

the trade unions and the welfare state, associations that they wished to alter. The Norwegian Labour Party began its reorientation in 1981 after electoral defeat and focused particularly on finding a broader social base that would include other groups besides trade union members.<sup>203</sup> In the case of the Dutch Labour Party, their report in 1991, 'A Party to Vote For' stated that it was no longer possible to sustain a mass party in an individualistic society and highlighted the fact that the party's close identification with the welfare state was increasingly problematic as the state was being asked to cut back while still functioning efficiently.<sup>204</sup>

Of transitions from communism made by parties in Western Europe, the same trend is noticeable away from socialism and towards social-democracy and the pacifist, environmentalist and feminist concerns of recent decades as has been noticeable in the non-communist parties of the left. The Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) is notable particularly for its ideological transformation that anticipated Gorbachev's 'perestroika' by several years.<sup>205</sup> The new declaration of principles made in 1984 was characterised by the acceptance of multi-party politics and the existence other conflicts in society besides that between capital and labour, the rejection of the identification of state with party and state policy with a specific ideology.<sup>206</sup> Although Marxism had not been specifically rejected,<sup>207</sup> the result of this reformed ideology was to split the party: hardliners left the CPN to form the League of Communists of the Netherlands, however, the CPN merged with Green Left in response to the events of 1989 and 1991.

The move towards environmentalism was echoed in Norway where both the Norwegian Communist Party (NCP) and Marxist-Leninist Red Electoral Alliance fought the 1989 election as members of the 'Solidarity and the Environment' umbrella organisation.<sup>208</sup> By 1990, the NCP had become the Left-Socialists and were campaigning primarily as an environmental party with socialism taking second place.<sup>209</sup> However, in Finland and Sweden the communist parties did not move quickly enough to distance themselves from their discredited counterparts in Eastern Europe and lost much of their electoral support to new environmental movements in the 1980s.<sup>210</sup> While a change of name had been planned before 1989 by communist parties in both countries, it was not

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<sup>203</sup> Heidar, K. "The Norwegian Labour Party: 'En Attendant l'Europe'" in *West European Politics*, vol.16, no.1, 1993, p.66.

<sup>204</sup> Wolinetz, 1993, p.106.

<sup>205</sup> Voerman, G. "Premature Perestroika: The Dutch Communist Party and Gorbachev" in Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.165.

<sup>206</sup> op. cit., p.166.

<sup>207</sup> ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Arter, D. "Post-Communist Parties in Finland and Scandinavia: A Red-Green Road to the 21st Century" in Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.33.

<sup>209</sup> op. cit., p.36.

<sup>210</sup> op. cit., p.35.

until 1990 that the Swedish Left-Party Communists became the Leftist Party and the two Finnish communist parties, along with their umbrella organisations merged into the Leftist Alliance.<sup>211</sup>

Other communist parties in Western Europe have shown far less inclination towards reform. The freedom to express dissident opinion was denied and democratic-centralism reaffirmed in the Spanish Communist Party (SCP) in the early 1980s<sup>212</sup> but after a dramatic decline in electoral support and a great loss of members, there were a series of ideological swings and conflicting programmatic declarations<sup>213</sup> which alienated many remaining supporters.<sup>214</sup> After the acceptance of parliamentary democracy and the monarchy the SCP, by 1994, had effectively become another leftist 'catch-all' type party and as such participates in the United Left electoral coalition.<sup>215</sup>

In the opinion of the French Communist Party (FCP), the reason the communist regimes of Eastern Europe were unsuccessful was not because they were socialist but because they were insufficiently so.<sup>216</sup> The FCP had never had any major reformist tendency, there had been little support for 'Eurocommunism' or a 'Third Way' and there had been much enthusiasm for the Soviet Union.<sup>217</sup> There was a similar attempt to resist reform in the face of communist collapse by the Portuguese Communist Party and despite dissent within the party, Marxism-Leninism and democratic-centralism were still defining characteristics of the party in the 1990s.<sup>218</sup>

However, it is the decline of the FCP that shows the most parallels with that of the CPRF. In particular, the FCP clings to democratic centralism and, whilst it was once the dominant party on the far left in France, the decline of communism in France has led to challenges to the FCP on the far left.<sup>219</sup> The small political parties in competition with the FCP could be compared with those that challenge the CPRF in terms of the larger parties failure to draw support from the far left and cover the ideological territory that the smaller parties represent. The FCP's electoral performance has been influenced greatly by its Leninist origins and these origins have shaped its political choices.<sup>220</sup> By the 1970s, the party was facing a reorganised Socialist Party whose leadership was determined that a

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<sup>211</sup> op. cit., p.31.

<sup>212</sup> Heywood, P. "The Spanish Left: Towards a 'Common Home'" in Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.64.

<sup>213</sup> Amodia, J. "Requiem for the Spanish Communist Party" in Bell, D. (ed.) *Western European Communists and the Collapse of Communism*, Berg Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1993, p.103.

<sup>214</sup> op. cit., p.103.

<sup>215</sup> Heywood, 1994, p.72.

<sup>216</sup> Morris, P. "The French Communist Party and the End of Communism" in Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.46.

<sup>217</sup> Bell, 1993, p.53.

<sup>218</sup> Patricio, M. and Stoleroff, A. "The Portuguese Communist Party: *Perestroika* and its Aftermath" in Bull, M. and Heywood, P. (eds) *West European Communist Parties After the Revolutions of 1989*, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994, p.107.

<sup>219</sup> Bell, D., "The French Communist Party within the Left and Alternative Movements" in *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol.12, no.1, 2004, p.23.

<sup>220</sup> Raymond, G. *The French Communist Party During the Fifth Republic*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005.

successful electoral strategy would overshadow ideological convictions.<sup>221</sup> The socialists succeeded in appealing to the growing middle classes as well as the more financially secure sections of the working class, adapting to changes in the composition of French society that the communists could not or would not see. The FCP was overtaken in terms of support and membership by the Socialist Party as the CPRF has been by United Russia.

The party's support base remains employees of heavy industry as it has been unable to draw support from elsewhere.<sup>222</sup> However, as with the CPRF in recent Russian elections, the loss of support for the communists in the 'Red Belt' (around Paris) was noticeable by 1981.<sup>223</sup> By the 1990s, the party was aiming its appeal at a left which did not exist, it overestimated the revolutionary nature of the workers and underestimated their support for reform.<sup>224</sup> The party remained focussed on support from the industrial sector as Western Europe was moving towards a post-industrial economy with the result that it ceased to be a national party.<sup>225</sup> The party's decline is to some degree due to the continued use of democratic centralism as this hinders the party from expressing changes of opinion in society.<sup>226</sup>

The FCP is largely unchanged as a Leninist party with a hierarchical and sizeable but rigid organisation<sup>227</sup> and the party also faces a challenge from the far right which has taken over some of the communists' former areas of support in the electorate.<sup>228</sup> The party is also constrained in its ability to change by the need to balance the demands of hardliners and modernisers.<sup>229</sup> In an attempt to modernise the party's ideology, references to collective ownership, central planning and working class (or rather party) supremacy have been dropped in favour of left-wing patriotism. Also in common with the CPRF, the party specifically rejected social democracy and reform<sup>230</sup> and as did a notable section of the CPRF, the FCP supported the conservatives in the CPSU at the time of the 1991 coup.<sup>231</sup>

The experience of democratic centralism in the French and Italian communist parties has been very different with the Italian version having moved away from the Leninist model while the French version did not. As a result, the Italian party was able to be more flexible in its approach to

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<sup>221</sup> op. cit., p.3.

<sup>222</sup> op. cit., p.30.

<sup>223</sup> op. cit., p.71.

<sup>224</sup> Bell, D. and Criddle, B. *The French Communist Party in the Fifth Republic*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, p.104.

<sup>225</sup> op. cit., p.115.

<sup>226</sup> op. cit., p.225.

<sup>227</sup> op. cit., p.25.

<sup>228</sup> ibid.

<sup>229</sup> op. cit., pp.27-28.

<sup>230</sup> op. cit., p.28.

<sup>231</sup> op. cit., p.119.



social change. Democratic centralism was not criticised in the French party while the party was electorally successful but has been questioned since the decline began. It has been argued that it is too late by this stage for a communist party to abandon democratic centralism once activist support has waned, the leadership is under threat and the party has lost public support.<sup>232</sup> The decline of the class that the party claimed to represent, in common with other left wing parties, has led to the decline of the party. Any left wing party that leaves behind its Leninist structure and beliefs is no longer communist.<sup>233</sup> This was understood well by those interviewed for Chapter 5 and explains, in part, the opposition to social democracy within the communist movement. Those left wing parties that have been able to reinvent themselves are those that never claimed to be communist or where the leadership and members have been able to abandon their emotional attachment to the ideology. Raymond notes that a decision to join the FCP was not like joining any other political party and acquiring a set of beliefs, it was an act which defined one's being.<sup>234</sup> This is also the case with the CPRF as demonstrated by interviewees in Chapter 5. It was commitment to and belief in the cause that motivates members first and foremost, rather than a wish to progress up the political ranks.

### ELECTORAL SUCCESS AND COALITIONS

After their initial defeats in the first post-communist elections, the ex-communist parties in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe achieved good results in the second round of post-communist elections. By this time, however, many communist-successor parties were far from being communist in their ideology and were moving towards the centre of the political spectrum. These parties were then re-elected as the economic reforms caused hardship to many and voters wished to return to the greater financial security of the recent, communist past. Elsewhere in post-communist Europe, communist-successor parties were not re-elected and began to form coalitions in order to increase their chances of being returned to power. This is a tactic Zyuganov adopted, as will be seen in Chapter 3, early in his leadership and it remains a central part of his vision for the party.

The Communist Party of Lithuania (CPLith) had declared its independence from the CPSU as early as 1989 but the party split internally. The CPLith had split in 1989 into the independent Lithuanian Communist Party (CPLith) and the LCP(CPSU). To the party's advantage was the fact that the reform communists within the LCP had been supported by the opposition forces which

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<sup>232</sup> op. cit., p.226.

<sup>233</sup> op. cit., p.230.

<sup>234</sup> op. cit., p.121.

enabled them to take control of the LCP in 1988.<sup>235</sup> Renamed in December 1990, the successor to the CPLith, the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDLP) returned to power in the 1992 elections to the Lithuanian parliament. The party dropped any reference to Marxism-Leninism<sup>236</sup> and adopted nationalism in terms of support for Lithuanian independence which became an important part of the party's appeal to the electorate.<sup>237</sup> The LDLP presented itself to the voters as a party that could effect reform at a manageable pace<sup>238</sup> and in 1992, the LDLP was still Lithuania's largest party with 15,000 members.<sup>239</sup>

In the 1990s, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP), a revived historical party, became the LDLP's greatest competitor on the left. In 1993, the LDLP leader, Algirdas Brazauskas was elected President but was defeated in the following elections in 1996, a loss attributed to many of the party's working class and rural dwelling supporters not bothering to vote.<sup>240</sup> The LDLP and the LSDP fought the 2000 elections as a coalition. and the parties merged in 2001 to become the Social Democratic Party.<sup>241</sup> The two parties found common ground on welfare, privatisation and education issues.<sup>242</sup> In common with other former communist parties, voters for the LDLP tended to be older and from the rural population.<sup>243</sup>

In Hungary, although younger, reformist members who took over the leadership of the party<sup>244</sup> were successful in returning the HSP to power, in 1994 the HSP formed a coalition government with the Free Democrats in order to indicate their intention to continue democratic reforms and also in order to avoid a monopoly on power.<sup>245</sup> The party was defeated in 1998 but after electing a new leader and former finance minister from outside the party to be the candidate for Prime Minister,<sup>246</sup> the party returned to government in 2002 with the Alliance of Free Democrats as its coalition partner.<sup>247</sup> As a result of ideological change, the HSP was able to portray itself as the

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<sup>235</sup> Krupavicius, A. "The Post-communist Transition and Institutionalization of Lithuania's Parties" in *Political Studies*, vol. 46, no 3, 1998, p.473.

<sup>236</sup> Janusauskiene, D. "The Metamorphosis of the Communist Party of Lithuania" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.234.

<sup>237</sup> op. cit., p.236.

<sup>238</sup> Clark, T. and Tucker, R. "Lithuania Beyond the Return of the Left" in Bukowski, C. and Racz, B. (eds) *The Return of the Left in Post-Communist States: Current Trends and Future Prospects*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1999, p.53.

<sup>239</sup> Krupavicius, A. "The Left-Wing Parties in Lithuania, 1990-2002" in Curry, J. and Urban, J. *The Left Transformed in Post-Communist Societies: The Cases of East-Central Europe, Russia and Ukraine*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Oxford, 2003, p.108.

<sup>240</sup> Clark and Tucker, 1999, p.46.

<sup>241</sup> Janusauskiene, 2002, p.224.

<sup>242</sup> Krupavicius, 2003, p.130.

<sup>243</sup> Janusauskiene, 2002, p.236.

<sup>244</sup> Morlang, D., 2003, p.68.

<sup>245</sup> op. cit., p.75.

<sup>246</sup> op. cit., p.88.

<sup>247</sup> op. cit., p.61.

party of business in Hungary.<sup>248</sup> The CPRF has also tried to attract support from business but this has not resulted in the same degree of electoral success as the CPRF has consequently alienated many of its supporters and handed ammunition to its opponents.

In Poland the SDPR, as part of the DLA, formed a government with the Polish Peasants' Party (which had been incorporated into the communist regime in the past) after the 1993 elections.<sup>249</sup> The former communist trade union also mobilised members to campaign for the SDPR which enabled the party to appear to have a permanent presence in the community rather than a temporary campaign just before elections.<sup>250</sup> Unlike Hungary, however, there was considerable fragmentation in Poland with three leftist parties and the SDPR forming an 'external' coalition of leftist groups in an electoral coalition as opposed to Hungary's 'internal' coalition of factions inside the party.<sup>251</sup> The SDPR did not benefit from the support of reform circles that gave the HSP its mass base<sup>252</sup> and so needed to join a coalition, for this reason as well as the fact that the left was split. That coalition, the DLA, varied in its composition across the country but often included a communist trade union, the reconstituted Socialist Party, the socialist youth movement and co-operative and women's groups.<sup>253</sup> In 2001, the DLA coalition won the parliamentary elections because it appeared competent, professional and united, in comparison with the former governing parties.<sup>254</sup>

As in Russia, the Ukrainian successor party was refounded by activists in 1993.<sup>255</sup> In the parliamentary elections of 2002, no party won a majority but for the first time, the CPU did not have the largest number of seats, with around half the total they received in the 1998 election.<sup>256</sup> In 2006, the CPU formed a coalition with the Socialist Party and the Party of the Regions and, initially, Our Ukraine.<sup>257</sup> The CPU also faced 'spoiler' parties sponsored by President Kuchma,<sup>258</sup> in much the same way as the CPRF has faced those sponsored by President Putin. Forming coalitions helped the party retain a substantial political presence. This tactic has also served the SDL in Slovakia well

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<sup>248</sup> op. cit., p.93.

<sup>249</sup> Waller, M., 1995(a), p.475.

<sup>250</sup> Curry, 2003, p.38.

<sup>251</sup> Agh, 1997, p.436.

<sup>252</sup> Ishiyama, 1997, p.322.

<sup>253</sup> Lewis, 1995, p.39.

<sup>254</sup> Millard, F. "The Parliamentary Elections in Poland, September 2001", *Electoral Studies*, vol.22, no.2, 2003, p.367.

<sup>255</sup> Chotiner, 2002, p.398.

<sup>256</sup> Birch, S. "The Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine, March 2002", *Electoral Studies*, vol.22, no.3, 2003, p.528.

<sup>257</sup> RFE/RL, Newslines, 20/10/06.

<sup>258</sup> Wilson, 2003, p.230.

after uniting in a coalition for the 1994 elections with three smaller left-wing parties to try to ensure that collectively they would succeed in achieving representation in the parliament.<sup>259</sup>

No coalitions were needed by the successor parties in Moldova or Albania. The PCRM, won parliamentary elections in 2001 and 2005 and the party's first secretary, Vladimir Voronin has served twice as President of Moldova having only entered the post-Soviet parliament in 1998.<sup>260</sup> The party succeeded in being re-elected in 2005 as a result of economic growth attributed to the party's actions and also due to the opposition being divided.<sup>261</sup> By contrast, the Albanian Party of Labour remained in power through the first elections in March 1991 by retaining control of the media and intimidating the opposition and remained in power until 1992. The opposition Democratic Party won the second elections in 1992 and 1996 but the 1997 election, which was called due to near-anarchy resulting from the collapse of pyramid investment schemes, was won by the SPA successor party.<sup>262</sup> The SPA won again in 2001 and has succeeded in restoring law and order and improving the country's infrastructure.<sup>263</sup>

The CPBM was the second largest party in the 1992 elections and the third largest in the 1996 elections. In 1995, the party defined its medium-term goal as the formation of a broad left-wing, patriotic, anti-right wing coalition government of the left.<sup>264</sup> This gives the party something in common with the CPRF as both parties are unable to return to power without a coalition. In the 2002 parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic, the CPBM gained seats and a 7.5 percent increase in its share of the vote on the 1998 result and benefited from a low turnout.<sup>265</sup> The Czech Social Democratic Party (CSDP) moved from the left to the centre over the course of the 1998 to 2002 parliament<sup>266</sup> but lost the protest votes it had secured before to the CPBM in 2002 especially in areas of high unemployment.<sup>267</sup> The CPBM's increase in popularity from 1998 onward was helped by the disappearance of the far-right Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, some of whose voters switched to the CPBM.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Fisher, 2002, p.125.

<sup>260</sup> March, 2005, p.34.

<sup>261</sup> op. cit., pp.27 & 34.

<sup>262</sup> Szajkowski, B. "The Parliamentary Elections in Albania, June-August 2001", *Electoral Studies*, vol.22, no.2, 2003, p.361.

<sup>263</sup> op. cit., p.366.

<sup>264</sup> Hanley, S., 2002, p.158.

<sup>265</sup> Plecita-Vlachova, K. & Stegmaier, M. "The Chamber of Deputies Election, Czech Republic 2002", *Electoral Studies*, vol.22, no.4, 2003, p.776.

<sup>266</sup> ibid.

<sup>267</sup> op. cit., p.777.

<sup>268</sup> Hanley, S., 2002, pp.162-63.

Zyuganov's decision to persuade the party to participate in the 1993 elections rather than remaining an extra-parliamentary force has proved to be a sound decision as many of those communist formations that did not take part in the first elections have since disappeared. In 1995, the CPRF lost some of the left-wing party list vote to three parties that failed to gain representation - the Communists and Labour of Russia for Restoration of the Soviet Union bloc, the Agrarian Party and the Power to the People! bloc - a total of 10 percent that could have guaranteed them a further 40 seats and a majority in the Duma.<sup>269</sup> Despite the clear need for a broad coalition, the left still failed to unite for the 1999 elections with five blocs competing - the CPRF, Communists and Labour of Russia for Restoration of the Soviet Union, Stalinists for the Restoration of the USSR, Party of Peace and Unity and the Movement in Support of the Army.<sup>270</sup> The end of co-operation between the CPRF and the Agrarians also reduced support for the CPRF as in the 1993 and 1995 elections the parties had co-operated in forming their party lists in order not to compete against each other.<sup>271</sup>

The CPRF has formed coalitions such as the National Salvation Front (1992) and the National Patriotic Union of Russia (NPUR), which Zyuganov leads (formed in 1996) and in which other parties are always junior partners. Sometimes local alliances differ from those existing nationally as in Altai in 2003, the CPRF and the Agrarians formed the 'For Our Altai - CPRF, APR, National Patriotic Union of Russia!' Bloc despite the alliance between the two parties having ended nationally and the National Patriotic Union having ceased to exist over four years earlier.<sup>272</sup> The CPRF's attempts to form coalitions, however, have been a little misleading as the Communist-Nationalist bloc was never as broad a coalition as it tried to appear.<sup>273</sup>

During the 1996 Presidential campaign, the opposition to Yeltsin complained of unfair practices during the campaign, in particular the government's near monopoly on the electronic media and the regularly repeated claims that Zyuganov intended to return to the worst excesses of the Soviet era. This greatly boosted Yeltsin's support and won him the reluctant support of many anti-Yeltsin and undecided voters that the 'people's patriotic' bloc had tried but failed to attract.<sup>274</sup> Yeltsin benefited from a temporary alliance of oligarchs due to concern that a communist victory

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<sup>269</sup> Chernyakhovsky, S. "The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)", *Primer on Russia's 1999 Duma Election*, eds. McFaul, M., Petrov, N., Ryabov, A. & Reisch, E., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1999, p.77.

<sup>270</sup> op. cit., p.78.

<sup>271</sup> Wegren, S. & Konitzer, A. "The 2003 Russian Duma Election and the Decline in Rural Support for the Communist Party", *Electoral Studies*, vol.25, no.4, 2006, p.685.

<sup>272</sup> Golosov, G. 'The Structure of Party Alternatives and Voter Choice in Russia: Evidence from the 2003-2004 Regional Legislative Elections', *Party Politics*, vol.12, no.6, 2006, p.716.

<sup>273</sup> Urban, and Solovei, 1997, pp.170-71.

<sup>274</sup> op. cit., p.173.

would lead to their downfall. This gave the Yeltsin campaign the benefit of substantial extra financial and administrative resources. Yeltsin presented the election as a referendum on continued reform as opposed to a return to communism yet he also appropriated communist themes in an attempt to draw support away from Zyuganov.<sup>275</sup> Zyuganov and the CPRF made their biggest mistake by assuming from the result of the 1995 Duma election that ‘anti-communist’ sentiment was waning and that general opinion was moving to the left and that they just needed to consolidate the left wing share of the vote and win the support of the non-communist opposition with patriotism. This, however, was at the expense of trying to appeal to centrists and democrats. This move enabled Yeltsin to wage his successful campaign against Zyuganov as a referendum on a return to communism. The CPRF’s unwillingness to work with centrists and any social groups that they saw as ‘bourgeois’ led to poor electoral tactics. Zyuganov had little understanding of the centrists while Yeltsin had access to data from several polling organisations which enabled his campaign to carefully target swing voters. Zyuganov campaigned in areas with already high nationalist and communist support while Yeltsin spent much time visiting key marginal regions.<sup>276</sup>

The CPRF’s misreading of the electorate was also due to their economic determinism which led them to believe that the 1995 leftward turn of the electorate was permanent and the party only had to wait for power to come to it by default. Zyuganov’s electoral message was incoherent as he sought to broaden the communist-nationalist coalition but avoid alienating the party’s core support and coalition partners. He was vague about such topics as the renationalisation of private property and so the electorate didn’t know what to expect from a communist victory, which played into Yeltsin’s hands.<sup>277</sup>

The CPRF has used coalitions, narrow as they may be, well at the local level. Between 1995 and 1998, the CPRF candidates ran in 69 regional legislative elections and won seats in 55 regions.<sup>278</sup> In some regions from 1995 to 1998 the RCWP has co-operated with the CPRF, to the extent of forming formal coalitions in Kemerovo, Sverdlovsk oblasts and in St Petersburg, and in others it has run candidates against those of the CPRF while in other regions, the CPRF and the Agrarians worked together.<sup>279</sup> The CPRF and its sympathisers controlled a third of regional legislatures in 1999.<sup>280</sup> In one of the first post-Soviet local elections, in Penza, the CPRF won 40 of

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<sup>275</sup> March, 2002, p.182.

<sup>276</sup> op. cit., pp185-86.

<sup>277</sup> op. cit., pp187-89.

<sup>278</sup> Golosov, G. ‘From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995 – 1998’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1999, vol.51, no.8, p.1336.

<sup>279</sup> op. cit., p.1339.

<sup>280</sup> Chernyakhovsky, 1999, p.79.

the 45 seats in the regional assembly.<sup>281</sup> In Pskov, a region that had been supportive of the CPRF, an alliance in 1996 between the CPRF and the right wing Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), led to the LDPR candidate beating the incumbent, a Yeltsin appointee.<sup>282</sup> In the 2000 regional elections many incumbents were communists and as incumbents tended to do well in many regional elections as a result of resources already available, many communists were returned to power.<sup>283</sup>

However, by the end of 2003, many regional executives that had previously been sympathetic to the CPRF or indifferent, had aligned themselves with United Russia so reducing the CPRF's access to administrative resources.<sup>284</sup> Many governors had defected by 1999 as the CPRF had been unable to provide benefits for traditionally communist regions.<sup>285</sup> The last gubernatorial elections were held in December 2004 and were largely won by United Russia and incumbents. The regional elections of 8<sup>th</sup> October 2006 resulted in considerable losses for the CPRF. In the Presidential election of 2000, the party gained votes outside the traditional Red Belt, with gains in the far East, West and East Siberia, the North and the North Caucasus, however, there were losses in the Red Belt, south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>286</sup>

There was an overall decline in support for the CPRF in 2003 but a particularly marked decline in support in regions where there were a higher than average percentage of the working population engaged in agriculture - in indicator of support in previous elections.<sup>287</sup> According to national opinion polls, the party's support had been in decline in the period before the 2003 election<sup>288</sup> and during the election the CPRF had far more competition than previously from national-patriotic parties, in particular Motherland and United Russia where before the CPRF had been the party that had monopolised this stance.<sup>289</sup>

## SPLITS AND INTERNAL DIVISIONS

In Chapter 5, respondents spoke in 2003 of their satisfaction with Zyuganov as a leader in terms of his being able to keep the party united. Since interviews were conducted, however, splits in the party have led to a decline in membership in stark comparison with the more reformed HSP. Unlike the CPRF, the HSP has been particularly successful, managing to keep the various left wing

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<sup>281</sup> Marsh, 2002, p.122.

<sup>282</sup> op. cit., pp.123-24.

<sup>283</sup> op. cit., p.124.

<sup>284</sup> Wegren & Konitzer, 2006, p.687.

<sup>285</sup> March, 2006, p.435.

<sup>286</sup> March, L., 2003, pp.190-91.

<sup>287</sup> Wegren & Konitzer, 2006, p.683.

<sup>288</sup> ibid.

<sup>289</sup> op. cit., p.684.

factions it contained united within the one party so preventing a proliferation of parties on the left.<sup>290</sup> The reformers gained increasing influence in the HSWP towards the end of the 1980s and entered round-table negotiations with the opposition<sup>291</sup> with the new party coming into existence before the end of communist rule rather than as a reaction to the collapse of socialism.<sup>292</sup> Unlike the CPRF, the HSP was able to avoid becoming either the party of former apparatchiks or the party of the losers of the social transformation as this role was taken on by a small group of HSWP members who formed a new party, now called the Workers' Party.<sup>293</sup>

Particularly in 1990, there was an enormous growth of new political parties in Czechoslovakia. These parties split, merged, changed their names and their ideologies as frequently as their counterparts in neighbouring countries.<sup>294</sup> Most major parties suffered splits over organisational matters as well as programmes and in some cases these splits changed the political orientation of the party. In other cases small parties had the foresight to form coalitions or join larger parties to avoid failing to reach the five percent threshold in elections for parliamentary representation.<sup>295</sup> In the years immediately following the transition, there was very poor parliamentary discipline with parties forming temporary coalitions on individual bills. The CPBM was the only exception to this lack of parliamentary discipline which had left the government unable to rely on a fixed majority in parliament.<sup>296</sup> Over time, however, a degree of discipline has been established as the management of parliamentary parties has become more centralised and voting has become more predictable on important issues.<sup>297</sup>

In Romania, no party claimed to be the successor to the Communist Party of Romania (CPRom). There was no negotiated transition, the NSF, a group of dissidents and communists who had fallen out of favour with the previous regime took power claiming to be leading the revolution.<sup>298</sup> Members of the NSF did not generally see themselves as members of a communist

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<sup>290</sup> Agh, 1997, p.436.

<sup>291</sup> Cox, T. & Furlong, A. "Political Transition in Hungary: An Overview", *Journal of Communist Studies*, vol.10, no 3, September 1994, p.4.

<sup>292</sup> Agh, 1995, p.492.

<sup>293</sup> Agh, 1995, p.494.

<sup>294</sup> Kroupa, A. and Kostecky, T. "Party Organisation and Structure at National and Local Level in the Czech Republic Since 1989" in Lewis, P. (ed.) *Party Structure and Organisation in East-Central Europe*, Edward Elgar, 1996, p.89.

<sup>295</sup> Kostecky, T. "Changing Party Allegiances in a Changing Party System: the 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections in the Czech Republic" in Wightman, G. (ed.) *Party Formation in East-Central Europe: Post-communist Politics in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria*, Edward Elgar, 1995, p.79.

<sup>296</sup> Kopecky, 1996, p.85.

<sup>297</sup> op. cit., p.86.

<sup>298</sup> op. cit., p.131.



successor party<sup>299</sup> although members of the new NSF had generally been members of the CPRom<sup>300</sup> and the NSF took ownership of the property of the CPRom including the media.<sup>301</sup> The local NSF committees that were formed were led largely by the same communist officials who had led the local CPRom organisations.<sup>302</sup> After promising it would not stand in the parliamentary elections it was organising, the NSF changed its mind and, as a result of monopolising government resources and the media, the NSF won.

The NSF lost support by 1992 and split into two parties - the NSF and the Democratic National Salvation Front (DNSF) neither of which developed a clear programme.<sup>303</sup> In 1993, the DNSF merged with three much smaller parties to form the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR). The PDSR and Iliescu were voted out of power in 1996.<sup>304</sup> From 1996 the PDSR began to redefine itself as a party of the centre left.<sup>305</sup> In Romania, there was no social democratic tradition and when the successor party adopted a new ideology, it was social democracy that was chosen with no understanding of the ideology but the end result was populism and nationalism.<sup>306</sup> The PDSR in Romania claimed to be a social democratic party but its election platform in 2000 was critical of the market economy and was nationalist.<sup>307</sup> The PDSR and the Romanian Democratic Party merged in June 2001 to form the Social Democratic Party and formed a coalition with the Humanist Party of Romania in 2004 - the National Union Electoral Alliance - and in 2004, the alliance gained the largest number of seats of any group in the new parliament.<sup>308</sup>

While the CPRF should now be more united as various factions on the right have left the party this also poses the problem that the core of CPRF supporters must be growing smaller as a result of the splits. Duma Speaker, Gennadii Seleznev, formed the 'Rossiya' group within the party in May 2000, considered to be either as a result of pressures within the party for a move towards social democracy or as a result of personal ambition encouraged by the Kremlin.<sup>309</sup> Seleznev was expelled from the Party in May 2002 for refusing to resign in protest as Duma Speaker when other

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<sup>299</sup> Mungiu-Pippidi, A. "The Romanian Postcommunist Parties: A Story of Success" in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, pp.201-02.

<sup>300</sup> op. cit., p.191.

<sup>301</sup> op. cit., p.193.

<sup>302</sup> Harsanyi, 1999, p.132.

<sup>303</sup> op. cit., p.142.

<sup>304</sup> op. cit., p.147.

<sup>305</sup> op. cit., p.151.

<sup>306</sup> Mungiu-Pippidi, A., 2002, p.190.

<sup>307</sup> Murer, 2002, p.379.

<sup>308</sup> Downs, W. & Miller, R. "The 2004 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Romania", *Electoral Studies*, vol.25, no.2, 2006, pp.412-13.

<sup>309</sup> Sakwa, R. "The Russian CPRF: The Powerlessness of the Powerful", *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds A. Bozoki and J. Ishiyama, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2002, p259.

Communist Deputies were removed from their posts on Duma Committees. The following September, he was elected head of the Party of Russia's Rebirth but his electoral Bloc, Party of Russia's Rebirth-Russian Party of Life, received only 1.9% in the 2003 Duma elections.

Various splits have been reported in the successor organisation to the Soviet era communist youth movement which, like its predecessor, is known as the Komsomol. There was a split with the CPRF in 1997 after which the CPRF founded a Union of Communist Youth in 1999<sup>310</sup> and the leader of the Komsomol in 1999, Igor Malyarov, left the group to join the youth movement of United Russia.<sup>311</sup> The splits and reformations must surely be as regional as the alignments of the regional CPRF organisations as the Komsomol group in Moscow that Malyarov was said to be leading after the split with the CPRF declared its support for Putin<sup>312</sup> while in St Petersburg the Komsomol was aligned with the CPRF in 2003 (see interviews in Chapter 5) and had been for some years.

There have been various challenges to Zyuganov's leadership of the CPRF over the years, the most serious of which was in 2003 before the 2004 Presidential election. This challenge was avoided by putting forward Nikolai Kharitonov as the Presidential candidate for the CPRF. At the conference in December 2003, delegates voted for Nikolai Kharitonov, proposed by the leadership, to be the Presidential candidate against Gennadii Semigin.<sup>313</sup> In mid 2004, a few days before the 10<sup>th</sup> Party Congress on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, a group of members held an alternative plenum at which they elected Vladimir Tikhonov, Governor of Ivanovo oblast leader of the party. They then held their own congress but the Ministry of Justice recognised the original CPRF's Congress as that of the true CPRF in August.<sup>314</sup>

Semigin, a businessman, had been appointed Duma Deputy Chairman and Executive Secretary of the NPUR coalition of which the CPRF was a member, the NPUR having been resurrected in September 2000.<sup>315</sup> This appointment was meant to increase the CPRF's ability to influence the Kremlin but in fact had the reverse effect as Semigin increased the Kremlin's ability to influence the CPRF by funding the NPUR's regional leaders (who were often also the CPRF's regional leaders) and the party's regional press with Kremlin funds.<sup>316</sup> Zyuganov accused Semigin of trying to 'buy' the party's regional secretaries while Semigin predicted that Zyuganov would be

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<sup>310</sup> March, 2006, p.447.

<sup>311</sup> *The Moscow Times*, 26/01/00, [www.dlib.eastviewcom/sources/article/jsp?id=224755](http://www.dlib.eastviewcom/sources/article/jsp?id=224755).

<sup>312</sup> RFE/RL, Newline, [www.rferlorg/newline](http://www.rferlorg/newline), 20/03/00.

<sup>313</sup> RFE/RL, Newline, 29/12/03.

<sup>314</sup> Wegren & Konitzer, 2006, p.688.

<sup>315</sup> March, L., 2003, p.195.

<sup>316</sup> March, 2006, p.436.

replaced at the next party congress.<sup>317</sup> The Presidium of the CPRF voted on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004 to expel Semigin, claiming he was causing dissent in the party's ranks and undermining its reputation. Semigin formed a new party in August 2005 called Patriots of Russia. After a meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004, six members of the party's Central Committee called on Zyuganov to resign, blaming him for the party's poor election results in 2003 and for discrediting the party by establishing links with oligarchs and their organisations, such as Boris Berezovsky, Aleksei Kondaurov and Sergei Muravlenko (at Yukos), TNK and Bank Neftyanoi<sup>318</sup> and the casino owner, Vladimir Semago (and Semigin was also said to have bought his place on the CPRF electoral list).<sup>319</sup>

Semigin claimed that around 100 people took part in the alternative plenum that elected Vladimir Tikhonov leader of the party. At the official plenum, Zyuganov declared that only the presidium of the party's Central Committee could call a plenum and that they were all present at the official meeting.<sup>320</sup> There were press reports of Kremlin manipulation of the 'split'<sup>321</sup> and support for Tikhonov.<sup>322</sup> In the 40 regional plena held after the 'split', all those regions voted to support Zyuganov and local party officials who supported Tikhonov were forced to give up their posts or were expelled. Such competing congresses were also seen with the Liberal Russia party, the Party of Pensioners and the Agrarian Party - very useful for the Kremlin as the Justice Ministry then decides which congress was the legitimate one.<sup>323</sup> Tikhonov was contacted by President Putin after the alternative congress and Tikhonov reported that he had not ruled out finding compromises with the presidential administration.<sup>324</sup>

The CPRF then had a funding crisis as Semigin was funding the new party rather than the CPRF. The new group planned to take CPRF property such as furniture and computers from party offices as it was registered in the names of individuals rather than the party.<sup>325</sup> They formed the All-Russian Communist Party of the Future and intended to join the National Patriotic Union of Russia coalition.<sup>326</sup> Over the course of 2004, the CPRF expelled six Duma deputies for participation in the founding of the new party.<sup>327</sup> The All Russian Communist Party of the Future managed to recruit several CPRF regional organisations and, apparently, 51,000 members, however, the party was not

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<sup>317</sup> RFE/RL, Newswire, 19/05/04.

<sup>318</sup> op. cit., 01/06/04.

<sup>319</sup> March, 2003, p.173.

<sup>320</sup> RFE/RL, Newswire, 02/07/04.

<sup>321</sup> op. cit., 07/07/04.

<sup>322</sup> op. cit., 14/07/04.

<sup>323</sup> op. cit., 21/07/04.

<sup>324</sup> op. cit., 26/07/04.

<sup>325</sup> op. cit., 23/08/04.

<sup>326</sup> op. cit., 13/09/04.

<sup>327</sup> op. cit., 22/09/04.

registered by the Ministry of Justice as it did not qualify due to having too few regional organisations. The party joined the Patriots of Russia movement in October 2004.<sup>328</sup>

The CPRF then suffered from competition on the left in terms of a national-patriotic competitor in Motherland and several former CPRF members or sympathisers stood for election on Motherland's party list, including Sergei Glaz'ev.<sup>329</sup> Motherland merged with the Party of Pensioners in August 2006, in what was seen as an attempt by the Kremlin to create a stronger party that could draw support away from the CPRF and part of an attempt to manufacture a two-party system in which two 'establishment parties' compete with each other.<sup>330</sup> In October 2006, These two parties also merged with the Party of Life, to form A Just Russia political party.<sup>331</sup> Where Motherland aimed to draw national-patriotic support away from the CPRF, A Just Russia has been created to draw socialist support away and to that end, the new party identifies itself as socialist.

A Just Russia's website speaks of the challenges posed by globalisation and terrorism and the party's claim to refuse to tolerate hunger and poverty in the world. Their attempt to cover the same political ground as the CPRF also extends to their claim that one half of the world prospers to the economic and ecological detriment of the other as this echoes the CPRF's accusations of exploitation by the 'Golden Billion' (see Chapter 3). The party further shadow's the CPRF's pronouncements through remarks on tension between those countries that export raw materials (ie Russia) and those that import them (the subtext should be read as 'Russia is being robbed by the West'). The party places considerable emphasis on the preservation of jobs and social protection of the vulnerable and investment in infrastructure.<sup>332</sup> In the 2007 Duma election, A Just Russia, despite considerable help from the Kremlin, polled worse than the CPRF. The party is trying to merge with as many leftist groups as it can and the suspicion is that the Kremlin hopes to merge the CPRF into A Just Russia.<sup>333</sup>

## CONCLUSION

While the CPRF is the successor to the longest-lived communist party which ran the longest-lasting communist regime, it cannot now return to power under present political conditions in Russia, in contrast with other communist and former communist parties of the region. It is not just Russia's 'managed democracy' that hinders the party as the CPRF has also been out-manoeuvred.

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<sup>328</sup> March, 2006, p.438.

<sup>329</sup> op. cit., pp.440-41.

<sup>330</sup> RFE/RL, Newswire, 29/08/06 and 30/08/06.

<sup>331</sup> op. cit., 30/10/06.

<sup>332</sup> [www.spravedlivo.ru](http://www.spravedlivo.ru), accessed on 11/05/09.

<sup>333</sup> [www.rferl.org/content/Russias\\_Mouse\\_That\\_Roared/1183293.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Russias_Mouse_That_Roared/1183293.html).

The political space on the left it could move into is too crowded and social democracy is not an option as it lacks support from the electorate. Over the course of fourteen years, the CPRF has gone from electoral success to electoral decline with the prospect for a return to power, even if Zyuganov or a future leader can unite the left, now looking unlikely.

The most profound effect of the transition for the former ruling parties has been the extent of anti-communist sentiment which shaped party formation and development and electoral strategies in the years immediately following the transition.<sup>334</sup> The ideological shift away from communism for many has increased the competition ex-communist parties face as the ideological space they are entering is already filled, in Western Europe and the Czech Republic, by social-democratic parties. However, communists were mostly stronger organisations than their rivals and returned to power quickly after rejection. Across the region, communists are still in power but communism, in general, is not. Former communist parties have become competent political actors in a multi-party environment.

Factions existed in all the different communist parties of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. They were not monolithic and some factions favoured reform. The faction that favoured reform took over in Hungary, the faction that opposed reform in Russia. The CPRF became a very different party from the HSP as its reformers left the party to found new parties instead of trying to move the CPSU towards the centre ground. Former communist parties across the region united believers and non-believers, the ideologically-motivated and careerists so there was a sharp fall in membership at the end of the communist era - those on the right left parties that remained communist while those on the left deserted parties that moved towards social democracy. Whilst the parties are now more united in terms of their members' support for the ideology, further divisions still exist in many countries over the national composition of electoral alliances the parties have formed. There is notable variation across the Russian Federation in terms of allegiance to the CPRF leadership in Moscow and the electoral alliances forged with regional CPRF branches contesting elections in alliance with different parties across the country.

Communist parties have endured as organisations but their goal now is to retain or regain power (at least in the short term). The achievement of communism has been abandoned either altogether or has been relegated to a very distant future task. Environmental circumstances dictate whether a communist party can return to power as all returns to power by communist parties are due to the specific conditions of that party's change and the particular political conditions in that

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<sup>334</sup> Pridham, 1995, p.9.

country. Reasons for the return of the communist parties are sometimes the financial and organisational strengths of the former ruling parties against those of their main rivals and (in the early post-communist era) the greatly needed administrative capabilities of the ex-communist party cadres for the functioning of society.<sup>335</sup> As this chapter has shown, the role for communist parties in the modern world now revolves almost as much around a defence of national interests as around a defence of the interests of the working class, despite the fact that this undermines the international message of communism.

There has been much ideological change on the left in general with a marked move towards the centre ground. In Western Europe, many communist parties dissolved themselves while socialist parties have also moved towards the centre. West European communist parties were changing anyway with a few exceptions but this process speeded up, to the point of dissolution for some, with the 1989 revolutions. The one exception has been in Italy where they have been coalition-formers in the recent past along with the senior partner in the coalition - the former communist party - the Party of Democratic Socialism.

The CPRF adopted patriotism as a defence of communism and therefore of Russian history and what Russia had achieved in the twentieth century. The manner in which the CPSU ended and the Soviet Union disintegrated, with increasing nationalism in many republics and opposition to rule by Moscow combined with a loss of status for Russia led to a defensiveness amongst some of the electorate that the CPRF successfully exploited in the first years of its existence. It is this defence of the communist past that now characterises the CPRF, in stark contrast to many more forward-looking ex-communist parties. The following chapter considers the end of the CPSU through a consideration of programmatic renewal in the party's final years, the reaction to the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, the formation of platforms in the CPSU, the formation of parties outside the CPSU and the creation of a Russian Communist Party. These developments shaped the successor party and determined the early course of its development.

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<sup>335</sup> Ziblatt, D. "The Adaptation of Ex-Communist Parties to Post-Communist East-Central Europe: a Comparative Study of the East German and Hungarian ex-Communist Parties" in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 31, no 2, 1998, p.124.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE LEGACY OF THE CPSU

While the CPRF has not achieved the same degree of electoral success as many of its counterparts elsewhere in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it has nevertheless played a significant part in political developments in the Russian Federation. The CPRF's calls for the restoration of the Soviet Union and efforts to increase Russia's status abroad first appealed to an electorate that regretted the nation's loss of prestige and later influenced the policies of other political parties. By continuing along the same nationalist path as its predecessor, the CPRF has survived as the strongest opposition party in Russia. The nationalist origins of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation can be seen in the manner of the demise of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The degree of change that took place in the CPSU in the six years from Gorbachev's election as General Secretary in 1985 to August 1991 brought about the coup by conservatives who saw their party, their ideology and their empire (the Soviet Union) slipping away from them. The battle between reformers and conservatives is illustrated well in the formation of a Communist Party of the RSFSR within the CPSU that was, effectively, the predecessor of the CPRF. Conservative concerns that were articulated via this party continue to be seen in today's CPRF.

The final years of the Soviet Union, under Gorbachev's leadership, were years of economic crisis, rising unemployment and, eventually, political chaos. The increasing possibilities from the late 1980s to voice dissent enabled the open expression of nationalism across the republics. This became a deeply divisive force which led, in large part, to the end of the Union. A climate of growing despair and depression pervaded society as old certainties and the stability of the past disappeared to be replaced by shortages of food and other basic goods. Concerns about pollution of the environment were increasingly expressed and Gorbachev's failed campaigns against alcoholism and corruption together with the long-running housing crisis also led to further disillusionment with the communist regime. The programme of economic reform was overtaken by political and economic disintegration. Problems arose from the attempt to democratise the political system at the same time as launching an economic reform programme – both of which took place during an economic crisis.

In considering the final years of the CPSU, this chapter makes use of *Fond 89* which includes a wide range of documents which are copies of papers held in the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History and the Russian State

Archive of Contemporary History. Documents in the collection reveal the nature of the changes in policy and the difficulties the party faced as it underwent reform from a revolutionary, vanguard party designed to lead the proletariat eventually to communism, towards becoming a parliamentary party and, as Gorbachev's reforms moved the USSR from a socialist political and economic system, towards a market economy. These documents also indicate the difficulties encountered by the party with respect to the unexpected results of electoral reform, the divided support within the leadership for democratisation and the inability on the part of some of the leadership to accept the loss of support for the party. Concerns about the loss of legitimacy for the party as fewer workers were being elected and about control over the media and deputies newly elected to the Soviets being weakened are also evident. Many of these documents are copies of reports to the Central Committee by various departments and individuals, minutes of meetings and letters by ministers on political matters which reveal the manner of the disintegration of the CPSU.

*Fond 89* shows the Politburo and the CPSU facing the challenges of democratisation and the realisation that power was slipping away from them. Many of these documents share common themes such as the fear of the party hierarchy that break-away groups from the CPSU, in particular the Democratic Platform, would succeed in their attempt to gain ownership of a proportion of CPSU funds in terms of membership dues and property in the form of party publishing companies and possibly television stations. The documents studied from *Fond 89* cover the formation of platforms within the CPSU, the formation of new parties outside the CPSU, the loss of CPSU power through increasingly free elections, the formation of a Russian Communist Party within the CPSU, the CPSU's evaluation of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe – which strongly indicated their failure to accept the rejection of communism as an ideology, the referendum on a renewed Union and the break up of the Soviet Union. This chapter begins with a comparison of the 1986 Programme and the Draft 1991 Programme which also indicate direction of policy changes in the years covered by the documents from *Fond 89* and articles from the party journal *Kommunist*, and the consideration of a move towards social democracy on the part of Gorbachev and his supporters. The roots of the CPRF can be seen in the conservative opposition within the CPSU to Gorbachev's reforms and ideological shift away from traditional Marxism-Leninism towards the end of the Soviet era.

#### THE 1986 AND 1991 PROGRAMMES

To put the scale of the evolution of policy into context, it is helpful to compare the 1986 Programme of the CPSU with the draft Programme of 1991 which cover the same time period as the



documents studied from *Fond 89*. The 1986 Party Programme was approved by the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU in March that year but by the end of the Soviet era, the July 1991 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU had approved a radically different Draft Programme to be discussed by the party. This was the sixth version of the Draft Programme that had been released for discussion after the June plenum and it is believed to have been written under Gorbachev's direct supervision.<sup>336</sup> The Central Committee approved the Draft almost unanimously in a resolution that stated that it was "an acceptable basis for additional work and discussion"<sup>337</sup> which would indicate that there was fairly widespread support in this body for a move towards social democracy by this time, if only to save the party in the face of growing opposition. The Programme was due to be adopted by the party at the 29th Congress, scheduled for November 1991 which never took place as the party had been suspended following the August coup and banned on 6<sup>th</sup> November by decrees from Russian President, Boris Yeltsin.<sup>338</sup>

The difference in tone between the two programmes, written just five years apart, is considerable and represents a recognition of the new political reality after the rejection of communism in Eastern Europe and the diversity of political opinion already apparent in the Soviet Union by this point. The assertion of the inevitability of the triumph of communism in the 1986 Programme gave way to an admission in 1991 that the party needed to reform and that democracy should have been indivisible from socialism from the start. The 1986 Programme refers to "revolutionary struggle" and "the building of socialism" and describes the CPSU as a "worthy successor to the ideas of the socialist transformation of society proclaimed in the first programmatic document of the communists - the Communist Manifesto, to the unfading exploit of the heroes of the Paris Commune and to the revolutionary traditions of the international working class and of the Russian revolutionary democratic movement."<sup>339</sup> The "world historic mission of the proletariat as the creator of the new, communist system" and the claims of the existence of "objective laws of social development", discovered by Marx and Engels and their "theoretically proved ... inevitability

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<sup>336</sup> Mann, D. "Draft Party Programme Approved", *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, vol.3 no.32, August 9, 1991(b), p.1.

<sup>337</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> The end of the CPSU is discussed in detail elsewhere. See for example: Hill, R. "The CPSU: Decline and Collapse", *Irish Slavonic Studies*, Vol. 12, 1991, pp.97-120; Hill, R. "The CPSU: From Monolith to Pluralist?", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.43, No.2, 1991b, pp.217-35; White, S. "Rethinking the CPSU", *Soviet Studies*, vol. 43, no.3, 1991, p.405-28; Harasymiw, B. "Changes in the Party's Composition: The 'Destroyka' of the CPSU", *Journal of Communist Studies*, vol. 7, no 2, 1991, pp. 133-60; Robinson, N. "Gorbachev and the Place of the Party in Soviet Reform, 1985-91", *Soviet Studies*, vol.44, no.3, 1992, pp.423-44; di Leo, R. "The Soviet Communist Party 1988-91: From Power to Ostracism", *Coexistence*, vol. 29, 1992, pp.321-34; Rees, A. (ed.) *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray*, London, Macmillan, 1992; Harris, J. *Subverting the System*, Rowman and Littlefield, Oxford, 2004 and White, S. "Communists and Their Party in the Late Soviet Period", *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol.72, 1994, pp.644-63.

<sup>339</sup> White, S. *Soviet Communism: Programme and Rules*, Routledge, London, 1989, p.41.

of the collapse of capitalism,”<sup>340</sup> however, are replaced by a more cautious tone in the 1991 draft Programme.

It is concern with democratic reforms and their progress in a “difficult and contradictory manner” along with reference to social, political, economic and inter-ethnic tensions that introduce the 1991 Programme. An objective valuation of the past and present is described as necessary along with a “realistic programme of action ... of consistent progress towards a humane, just and democratic society”.<sup>341</sup> The declaration of “necessary and radical renewal of the party itself and a new understanding of its role and place in society”<sup>342</sup> contrasts sharply with the previous Programme’s confident claim that the CPSU was “leading the Soviet people along the course of communist creative endeavour ...”.<sup>343</sup> The stated intention for the Programme to “answer the questions of the moment, to serve for the ideological basis of consolidation of communists of all sides of the socialist spectrum”<sup>344</sup> acknowledges the change in policy to end the negative portrayal of social democracy.

In several articles in *Kommunist* in 1991, the idea of a change of direction towards social democracy was discussed. A recent growth of interest in the traditions and values of social democracy was remarked upon and the need for communists to compare social democracy with the path that they had been following and to see what they could learn in the interests of furthering perestroika.<sup>345</sup> In an article in July 1991, it was pointed out that the “new spectrum of political powers” in Eastern Europe by this time were characterised by “the weakening position of left-wing parties and movements” and that a “notably diverse and intense battle has developed between the different political wings” and “important features of the situation appear to be widespread growth of an anticommunist mood in the countries of the region and the ‘repudiation of socialist values’”,<sup>346</sup> which reflects what must have been a growing understanding in the CPSU that it was the political system which had lost support. An article from the following issue asked whether “[a] new conception of socialism, worked out in the process of perestroika, allows a clear social-economic demarcation between socialism and communism, taking into account not only the experience of our country but also development of the socialist movement throughout the world,”<sup>347</sup> implying that the

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<sup>340</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz, *Kommunist*, no12, 1991, p.3.

<sup>342</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> White, 1989, p.41.

<sup>344</sup> Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz, 1991, p.3.

<sup>345</sup> Neymark, M. & Yastrzhembskii, S. “KPSS i sotsial-demokratiya: novye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii”, *Kommunist*, no 8, May 1990, p.38.

<sup>346</sup> Krasnov, Yu. “Vostochnaya Evropa: novyi spektr politicheskikh sil”, *Kommunist*, no10, July 1991, p.99.

<sup>347</sup> Oizerman, T. “Izmenyaetsya li marksistskoe ponimanie sotsializma?”, *Kommunist*, no11, July 1991, p.26.

party sought to minimise the differences between the movements.

In the first issue of *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, which replaced *Kommunist*, the party's theoretical journal, immediately after the August coup (and in which articles that had already been submitted had not been re-written to take into account the new political conditions), an article considered the new draft Programme. Deep concern was noted on the part of communists about moves towards social democracy by the CPSU. The perception of social democracy in negative terms as a result of "ideological stereotypes" of the Stalin era "when social democrats were considered to be ... irreconcilable opponent[s]"<sup>348</sup> was something the article aspired to change. It noted that the old perceptions had continued up to the present in the minds of many party members which had resulted in a "fundamental review of approaches to the social democratic movement."<sup>349</sup> The article concluded that the danger for the Communist Party was not in any move towards social democracy but rather in allowing the "real chance to overcome the enormous inflicted damage of the split to slip away and to slow down the formation of an international co-operation of left-socialist powers".<sup>350</sup> Indeed, despite claiming to see a need to work with other left-wing groups, communists in St Petersburg, interviewed for the fifth chapter of this thesis, continued to view social democracy in a very negative light.

It is a measure of how far the leadership of the Communist Party had moved away from the idea of the party automatically knowing what was right (as demonstrated by the tone of the 1986 Programme) that by Spring 1991, the Central Committee was instructing the Departments of Organisation, Ideology, Humanities, Public Organisations and Socio-economics and Politics to look for inspiration for party organisation to opposition powers and make recommendations to the Central Committee. They were to "learn the tactics" of these parties and study their "ways and methods of acting".<sup>351</sup> There were no directions as to which parties were to be studied but clearly those that were successful in gaining and retaining power, were primarily of interest rather than those representing a similar ideology.

While the earlier Programme claimed that the CPSU had been and would continue to be a party of Marxism-Leninism and of revolutionary action,<sup>352</sup> the 1991 draft referred to the CPSU as a

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<sup>348</sup> Galkin, A. & Krasin, Yu. "O mnimyykh opasnostyakh sotsial-demokratizatsii", *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, no 13, August 1991, p.4.

<sup>349</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> *op. cit.*, p.13.

<sup>351</sup> *Fond 89*, 1/5/18, p.1, dated 10/04/91. References to documents from *Fond 89* are listed in the form reel/*opis/dokument*. Page references are those given to documents by the compilers of *Fond 89*, not the original page numbers of the documents as the individual sections frequently include several separate but related documents and the new page numbers are consecutive from one document to the next.

<sup>352</sup> White, 1989, p.42.

party of social progress, democratic reforms, social justice and values common to all mankind, of economic, political and spiritual freedom.<sup>353</sup> While the 1986 Programme promotes the working class (and no other), the 1991 draft offers protection for the working class, in whose name, it reminds readers, the party was formed, during the “transition to the market”, but also specifically promises protection for the interests of the intelligentsia, women and ethnic minorities<sup>354</sup> indicating a change of emphasis which could be considered consistent with moves towards the CPSU becoming a parliamentary-type party which would require it to have broad support and the recognition that groups other than those the party defined primarily as workers, also had rights.

The 1986 Programme claimed that “[t]he Marxist-Leninist theory of building the new society has been verified in practice on an international scale, socialism has asserted itself on vast expanses of the earth and hundreds of millions of people are following the road of creating a communist civilisation. More and more nations are losing their confidence in capitalism; they do not wish to associate their prospects of development with it and are persistently searching for and finding ways for the socialist transformation of their countries.”<sup>355</sup> While five years later, and two years after the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe, the 1991 draft reflected the new political reality: it stated that the CPSU did not idealise the past but neither did the party renounce it.

Gorbachev’s avoidance of the official drafting commission set up by the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress in order to oversee the writing of the draft has been attributed to a wish to split the party into social democrats and conservatives with Gorbachev leading the social democratic successor to the CPSU. The outcome of such a split would have given Gorbachev a reformist support base that would have enabled him to challenge Russian President, Boris Yeltsin.<sup>356</sup> However, the conservatives decided to accept the draft at the July plenum with the intention of challenging it at a scheduled 29<sup>th</sup> Congress in the autumn. Gorbachev’s attempt to provoke a split by drafting a programme that he knew the conservatives would not accept failed as the conservatives decided not to challenge the draft immediately and as the coup, two weeks after publication of the draft, effectively ended the CPSU.<sup>357</sup>

As early as 1987, in a speech to the Central Committee, Gorbachev had referred to the need for ‘democratisation’ of the political system in order to achieve economic reforms<sup>358</sup> but this was in

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<sup>353</sup> Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1991, p.3.

<sup>354</sup> op. cit., p.11.

<sup>355</sup> White, 1989, pp.48-49.

<sup>356</sup> Sandle, M. “The Final Word: The Draft Party Programme of July/August 1991”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.48, no.7, 1996, p.1141.

<sup>357</sup> ibid.

<sup>358</sup> White, S. “Rethinking the CPSU”, *Soviet Studies*, vol. 43, no.3, 1991, p.407.

the context of the existing system. However, with the advent of his policy of *glasnost* (openness) which changed Soviet society in terms of what could be said and published, by the time of the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress, in 1990, with communism rejected across Eastern Europe and platforms coalescing in the CPSU for the first time since 1925, he declared that the CPSU would in future seek to remain the ruling party through winning majority support in elections. The Congress itself was divided with Democratic Platform members calling for the CPSU to become a parliamentary party competing in a multi-party political system while the conservatives called for it to remain a Leninist, vanguard party.<sup>359</sup> Just over a year later the CPSU ceased to exist, banned after the coup which hoped to halt the move towards social democracy and the break-up of the old Soviet Union. Only two and a half years later, shortly after the ban on the lowest levels of the CPSU was lifted, did the conservatives manage to form a successor party.

#### REACTION TO THE DEMISE OF COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

Both the documents in *Fond 89* and articles in *Kommunist* show that the CPSU reacted to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe by blaming the East European communist parties. The blame for the fall of communism in the region was placed on the “authoritarian-bureaucratic regimes” in *Kommunist* in an article which acknowledged dissatisfaction with the ideology and noted the emergence of “slogans of renewal” including the word ‘socialism’ in a negative context in Eastern Europe, giving the examples: “Freedom, not socialism!”, “Socialism no longer!” and “No socialist experiments!” The authors of this article asked whether this signalled the breakdown of the socialist idea or just a temporary ‘allergy’ to anti-democratic regimes which called themselves socialist.<sup>360</sup> That it had become possible, by May 1990, to ask openly whether socialism was breaking down and to suggest that the breakdown of socialism was even possible (even if the authors were trying to suggest that it had not), is a measure of the extent to which Gorbachev’s policy of *glasnost* had progressed. However, this article refers to these countries, as a group of *socialist* states which were enduring “a crisis which a few people evaluate as ‘the end of socialism’”<sup>361</sup> which indicates that at this stage the party was still denying the extent of what had clearly already happened.

By comparison, an article in the same journal, just four months later admitted that the “difficult transformation” in Eastern Europe was from authoritarian single-party regimes, “operating under the flag of socialism (which was in fact not built), to pluralist parliamentary democracy, to

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<sup>359</sup> White, S. “The Politics of the XXVIII Congress” in Rees, A. (ed.) *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray*, London, Macmillan, 1992c, p.35.

<sup>360</sup> Volkov & Krasin, 1990, p.8.

<sup>361</sup> op. cit., p.18.

civil society and to a market economy”<sup>362</sup> and that it was time for socialists to reorganise their ranks and adapt to new conditions.<sup>363</sup> By July 1991, it was being reported in *Kommunist* that the number of members of communist parties in Eastern Europe had fallen by more than a third from 1990 levels<sup>364</sup> so admitting that there had been a loss of support for communism in Eastern Europe, rather than just a loss of support for those who had been in power. The party had finally accepted, perhaps in the face of growing pluralism in Russia by this time, that many voters really did want to choose parties other than the one that had claimed to govern in their interests for so long.

A report to the Central Committee dated April 1990, “On the line of the CPSU on measures in support of Communist and Workers’ Parties in East European countries”, noted that the majority of East European communist and workers’ parties were in a state of deep ideological crisis and organisational disorder as a result of the swift political change in these countries.<sup>365</sup> In an article published in *Kommunist*, nearly a year after the rejection of communism in Eastern Europe, it was claimed that the Communist leaders had discredited the idea of socialism in the eyes of the majority of workers, the intelligentsia and the young.<sup>366</sup> It was also noted that the “weight of former mistakes” and “gravity of responsibility for deformation in socialist construction” was so great that none of the communist parties, with the exception of the Bulgarian party, had been able to survive and as a result they all had to undergo a deep transformation.<sup>367</sup> It was not until September 1991, however, that an article was published in *Svobodnaya Mysl’* debating whether or not socialism had any future.<sup>368</sup>

The loss of the ‘buffer zone’ between the Soviet Union and Western Europe concerned the CPSU greatly. In a report to the Central Committee on a meeting of the Politburo on 2nd January 1990 ‘On events in Eastern Europe and the position of the USSR’ the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the KGB and the International Department were instructed to analyse the defence situation and make suggestions to the Politburo on what should be the furthest concessions the USSR should agree to in disarmament negotiations in order to guarantee the safety of the Union.<sup>369</sup> The resolution of the Secretariat ‘On the development of the situation in Eastern Europe and our policy in this region’ noted that real or potential threats to the military security of the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe were inadmissible and that the region must remain free of any foreign

<sup>362</sup> Musatov, V. “Transformatsiya levyykh sil vostochnoi Evropy”, *Kommunist*, no13, September 1990, p.113.

<sup>363</sup> op. cit., p.114.

<sup>364</sup> Krasnov, Yu. “Vostochnaya Evropa: novyi spektr politicheskikh sil”, *Kommunist*, no10, July 1991, p.99.

<sup>365</sup> *Fond 89 3/9/103*, p.2, dated 05/04/90.

<sup>366</sup> Knyazev, Yu. “Demokraticheskie revolyutsii v vostochnoi Evrope”, *Kommunist*, no14, September 1990, p.110.

<sup>367</sup> op. cit., p.115.

<sup>368</sup> See for example Mezhuiev, V. “Est’ li budushchee u sotsializma?”, *Svobodnaya Mysl’*, No.14, 1991, pp.6-18.

<sup>369</sup> *Fond 89, 3/9/62*, p.1, dated 02/01/90.

bases and military powers.<sup>370</sup> In turn the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe was to be carried out with the maximum precautions for the safety of the military personnel leaving the region, which suggests that attacks on the Soviet Army as they left Eastern Europe were feared. The resolution also stated that the USSR was interested in the peaceful development of Eastern Europe and the transformation of the former communist countries into a “region of stability and co-operation with constant progress towards a united European space” and the participation of the USSR in that space. As these countries were investigating the possibilities of establishing close links with what was then the EEC and other Europe-wide organisations and co-operation with NATO, the promised co-operation and the proposed “united European space” which would include the Soviet Union may have been an attempt to limit the influence of the West in the region.

Concern was expressed in a resolution of the Secretariat ‘On the development of the situation in Eastern Europe and our policy in this region’ about the threat of ‘Balkanisation’ of inter-state relations in the region, that regional conflicts might arise and a ‘belt of instability’ be created along the western borders of the Soviet Union.<sup>371</sup> It was also feared that there was a serious danger that relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would further suffer as a result of the “authoritarian and nationalistic tendencies” which were emerging in the former communist countries and the effect the move away from communism might have on the Soviet Union. The continued existence of the USSR as a unified state, especially after recent events in the Baltics, the possibility of future claims on CPSU property and funds by republican parties declaring independence from Moscow and even of calls for the re-drawing of the Union’s internal borders were also reported as matters for concern.<sup>372</sup> Concern was expressed that these states should not become an external catalyst for national separatism and “centrifugal tendencies” in the Soviet Union and that they should not become sources of anti-Soviet feeling or conductors of political power with plans to redraw the political map of Europe.<sup>373</sup> The resolution promised a new era of co-operation on the part of the Soviet Union in European politics. In order to guarantee the interests of the USSR in Eastern Europe the decision had been taken that considerable value should be attached to existing and potential co-operation between the CPSU and other political parties in Eastern Europe, where these parties were influential.<sup>374</sup>

The resolution also noted “the stormy character of change” in the region which “urgently

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<sup>370</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.1, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>371</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.7, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>372</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.1, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>374</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.2, dated 22/01/91.

demanding a new interpretation of the Soviet Union's interests, aims and strategies in the region". The reorientation of trade links with Eastern Europe towards Western markets was reported to involve greater difficulty than had previously been expressed by the party.<sup>375</sup> The resolution noted that Eastern Europe was the Soviet Union's natural market for its industrial products, for foreign investment, "enterprise and other economic activity" and that in the context of market reform the region's significance for the Union would increase.<sup>376</sup> It seems from this resolution that the party had underplayed the importance of Eastern European markets for the Soviet economy. The view was expressed that the Union's main economic interests in the region should remain protected for the foreseeable future in order to "strengthen internal measures for the stabilisation of the national economy of the USSR."<sup>377</sup>

As well as political links, it also highlighted the concern about the USSR's continued cultural presence in the area and the promotion of the Russian language, noting that there should be no economising on funding for this policy as "we are talking about capital for the future".<sup>378</sup> This concern with Russian culture and language was also evident in the CP RSFSR and, since its formation, has been a defining feature of the CPRF (such concerns were expressed by interviewees in St Petersburg for Chapter 5). Concern was expressed that although the old system had collapsed in Eastern Europe, it had not yet been replaced with a new one and that loss of interest in the region on the part of the Soviet Union was perceived to be the case by the West. The view was expressed that this was not so despite the "huge material and spiritual investment" on the part of the Soviet Union having ended.<sup>379</sup> The region's "geopolitical, historical-political and ethno-cultural" links with the Union were to remain one of the most important considerations for Soviet politics according to the resolution, despite political relations having deteriorated and the outlook for the future, with the election of governments hostile to the Soviet Union, being regarded as bleak.<sup>380</sup>

### THE EFFECTS OF GLASNOST'

For most of the duration of the Soviet Union, the media were strictly censored. All forms of media were controlled by the party, editors had to be approved by the party, newspapers, journals and television stations were told what they should report and how.<sup>381</sup> *Glasnost'* was not an entirely

<sup>375</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.6, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>376</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22 p.8, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>377</sup> ibid.

<sup>378</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>379</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.6, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>380</sup> op. cit., 7/20/22, p.7, dated 22/01/91.

<sup>381</sup> White, S. *Communism and its Collapse*, Routledge, London, 2001, pp.7-8.



new idea - it had already been mentioned by Brezhnev - apparently meaning that the authorities should inform the public about decisions which they had already taken, in order to keep the public informed about the activities of the party.<sup>382</sup> This idea was revived by Gorbachev, becoming a policy of ‘openness’ intended, for example, to help expose inefficiency in the economy in order to help drive economic reform and by 1986 including political reform as well.<sup>383</sup> By 1989, however, demands for greater political choice and greater freedom of information led to *glasnost*’ gradually becoming equated with, and later superseded by, the idea of freedom of speech.<sup>384</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1990 a law “On the Press and Other Media of Mass Information” came into effect. This law effectively legitimised the voicing of anti-communist views and officially removed the media from communist party supervision with the result that censorship officially ended (with a few exceptions) and the law allowed for the private ownership of newspapers, radio and television stations, provided they registered with the state.<sup>385</sup> Problems arose for the Politburo with the results of *glasnost*’ as some members could not accept that, given greater freedom to report more widely on elections and other events, the demands and promises of alternative candidates were being reported and voters were believing whatever they chose.

Various documents in *Fond 89* consider the effects of changes in the media resulting from *glasnost*’ and the increasing concern that power was slipping away from the CPSU towards other political organisations. Frolov - a member of the Politburo and chief editor of *Pravda*, complained to the meeting of the Politburo on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1990, that too much attention was being paid to “Democratic Russia and others” (the various platforms that were forming in the CPSU - discussed below) by the media which amounted to publicity for their causes<sup>386</sup> and similarly, there appears to have been concern that the party was losing control over the release of information to the public and that information was being released as it became available rather than after CPSU approval. Vorotnikov complained that the television programme ‘Vremya’ had named “some comrade Ruzhitskii” as an RSFSR People’s Deputy. He complained that there was no basis for any such declaration on television, then confirmed that this candidate had indeed been elected and that this would be confirmed by the Central Electoral Commission shortly when that organisation published the list of elected deputies.<sup>387</sup>

As late as March 1990, when this meeting was held, there seems to have been a lack of

<sup>382</sup> Benn, D. “*Glasnost*’ and the Media” in *Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics*, second edition, 1992, p.181.

<sup>383</sup> op. cit., p.183.

<sup>384</sup> op. cit., p.181.

<sup>385</sup> op. cit., p.190.

<sup>386</sup> *Fond 89* 15/42/26, p.15, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>387</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.4, dated 22/03/90.

acceptance of the effects of *glasnost*'. V. A. Kryuchkov - a member of the Central Committee and Chair of the KGB - informed the Politburo of his seemingly contradictory ideas on the press. He praised *Pravda* for improving and becoming more interesting (but without specifying what he felt made the publication more interesting than it had been in the past) and reported that he understood that interest in *Pravda* was increasing but then criticised the paper for not keeping to what he called "an accurate orientation" and for a lack of clarity about the political orientation of the writers. He complained in particular that it was impossible to tell whether an author was supporting a left- or right-wing point of view. He concluded by saying that *Pravda* "must give a clear line on all matters."<sup>388</sup> Other concerns raised about the media included a report to the Central Committee, also in March 1990, which expressed concern that *Pravda* should retain its role in "strengthening [the party's] ideological-political influence on the masses" during the "process of root transformation of all spheres of life of society ... and the renewal of the party, its style and methods of its activity".<sup>389</sup>

In a report to the Central Committee in April 1990, "On the reorganisation of the work of television and radio broadcasting", V. A. Medvedev, a member of the Politburo, Yu. A. Manaenkov, a Central Committee Secretary and M. F. Nenashev, Chairman of the State Committee for the Press, noted that radio and television were not only the means of mass information, but also the most important instrument of protection of society and state interests and assistance in guaranteeing law and order and peace in the Soviet Union. They remarked that "[i]n society there is an intense battle between different organisations and groups for influence on television and radio broadcasting"<sup>390</sup> and that the absence of "legislatively strengthened norms and rules" for journalists working in radio and television, particularly programmes going out live, was preventing the effective regulation of the broadcast media.<sup>391</sup> This "intense battle" may have been a reference to Democratic Russia's potential to gain control of television in Leningrad after its successes in the elections. Nenashev informed the meeting of his concerns about sharing power with Democratic Russia, he urged serious consideration of who would head the militia, television and radio. He suggested that a decision be made as to what extent the Leningrad television station was regional and to what extent all-Union and said that the majority (but did not say a majority of whom) were in favour of defining it as All-Union television,<sup>392</sup> presumably to ensure continued CPSU control of the station and therefore control of the output.

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<sup>388</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.17, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>389</sup> op. cit., 3/9/90, p.2, dated 29/03/90.

<sup>390</sup> op. cit., 2/8/73, p.6, dated 25/04/90.

<sup>391</sup> op. cit., 2/8/73, p.7, dated 25/04/90.

<sup>392</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.17, dated 22/03/90.

Nenashev also explained that there was a difficult situation in Moscow as Central television had effectively got seven deputies in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR including three people who worked for the current affairs programme 'Vzglyad'.<sup>393</sup> Nenashev continued by recommending a reconsideration of electoral law. He explained to the meeting that in America there was a very clear position on such matters "I am not exaggerating", were his precise words, (suggesting that foreign experience of elections was so far removed from electoral experience at home that he wasn't expecting those listening to believe him), as he told the meeting that those who worked in the media in America were barred from standing for election and even from participating in the election campaign. Whereas in Russia, they could be, and were, deputies. "They will become completely uncontrollable"<sup>394</sup> was his next remark, indicating that the party was still aiming to direct those who had been elected rather than allow them to act independently.

This was not the only opinion expressed on the subject. In a further discussion of Leningrad television later in the meeting, it was suggested that the party should withdraw from its role at the station. Medvedev pointed out to the meeting that the country was standing on the threshold of multiparty politics and that maybe they should not be hindering this development but going into the process recognising that it would bring "greater political clarity" and "far clearer demarcation of powers".<sup>395</sup> However, no support was registered in the minutes for this suggestion. The CPSU had enacted electoral changes but could not accept the outcomes of those changes as though the party had not expected to lose power, perhaps just a few deputies. It seems that the voters were still expected to vote the 'right' way, even when they had a choice. They were not expected to choose 'against' their interests.

V. A. Ivashko, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party and member of the Politburo, used the phrase "I am telling you openly and directly" to preface his remark that workers were not interested in political struggle, which suggests that this subject had not been fully addressed before. Ivashko explained that he felt it was necessary for him to say this as the current conditions allowed for "confrontation and dissemination of all kinds and for many unfounded rumours to circulate".<sup>396</sup> He went on to describe a particular situation in Ukraine where someone, whom he described as looking like a "solid, intelligent person", had stood in front of a metro station in Kiev and yet had told people not to vote for Ivashko as he had "sold his dacha for 200 thousand" and passers-by had come up to this person and asked him for further details. It appears Ivashko

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<sup>393</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> *op. cit.*, 15/42/26, p.27, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>396</sup> *op. cit.*, 15/42/26, p.11, dated 22/03/90.

meant this as an example of, as he saw it, the “slandorous remarks” being made by “any unprincipled person”.<sup>397</sup> The reason, then, according to Ivashko for workers not standing for parliament and not voting in the numbers that they had done previously appears to have been the negative propaganda against the regime. One remark from an interviewee in Chapter 5 refers to workers not being interested in politics as a particular problem for the CPRF.

Outside influence on events within the Union evidently worried the CPSU leadership as well. A report to the Central Committee, dated 15th March 1991, by the Department of Ideology and the International Department on the reports by western radio stations on the activities of opposition groups in Russia noted that on 25th February, on Voice of America, the co-chairmen of the Republican Party of the Russian Federation - Lysenko and Sulakshin had set out their party's programme in detail, appealed to communists to leave the CPSU and join their party instead. It was also noted (presumably with some concern) that the telephone number for people to contact them if they wanted to join the party had been advertised twice during the radio programme. According to the report the co-chairmen admitted making statements criticising the CPSU, President of the USSR and the Union government.<sup>398</sup> The rest of the report covered concern about the nature of broadcasts in Russian on Voice of America, the BBC and Radio Free Europe because of their coverage of the work of opposition parties. However, by this time the law “On the Press and Other Media of Mass Information” had been effective for seven months meaning that such coverage was perfectly legal.

Further political change was clearly envisaged before the demise of the CPSU but because of the coup, this further democratisation could not be implemented. A resolution of the Secretariat in April 1991 instructed the Department of Ideology to prepare a survey on “Foreign experience of the functioning of a state federal system” to be sent to party committees.<sup>399</sup> An article in *Kommunist* in June 1991 discussed the idea that an important precondition for stability in the USSR was inclusion in the world community<sup>400</sup> and the need for such inclusion may have influenced the leadership's move towards social democracy and away from communism. An article in the first issue of *Svobodnaya Mysl'* mentioned three fundamental reorganisations of the CPSU: firstly, an end to totalitarianism in the party and society; secondly, an end to the discredited nomenklatura and a reduction in the apparat for the transformation of the CPSU into a strong democratic party and, thirdly, the development of clearly divided legislative, executive and judicial powers.<sup>401</sup> Had the

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<sup>397</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>398</sup> *op. cit.*, 1/2/15, p.3, dated 15/03/91.

<sup>399</sup> *op.cit.*, 1/5/18, p.2, dated 10/04/91.

<sup>400</sup> Zakharov Yu. “Peremeny v vostochnoi Evrope i novye myshlenie”, *Kommunist*, No.9, 1991, p.114.

<sup>401</sup> Voz'mitel', A. “Krizis v Partii”, *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, no 13, August 1991, p.21.

coup not taken place when it did, this article would have been published while the CPSU was still in power.

### LOSS OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER THOSE ELECTED AND ELECTORS

In January 1987, Gorbachev proposed to the Central Committee that one-candidate elections should end and the first elections with more than one candidate took place the following June. In September 1987, Gorbachev announced publicly the new doctrine of 'socialist pluralism' - that public opinion did not have to appear completely unanimous any longer<sup>402</sup> and in the following elections to district, city and regional soviets 57 per cent of the newly elected deputies in the Russian Republic were not party members - a surprise result for the CPSU.<sup>403</sup> Before the electoral law of 1988 was passed, there were no more candidates on the ballot paper than there were seats available but it was possible to vote against a candidate or candidates by crossing their name(s) out but this required the use of a polling booth whereas an unmarked ballot paper counted as a vote in favour.<sup>404</sup>

A draft Resolution of the Central Committee of February 1987 on elections to the Soviets of Peoples' Deputies included in *Fond 89*, began the process of making Soviet elections more democratic and slightly less of a foregone conclusion. In this resolution the established practice, in which electors could take their ballot papers straight to the ballot box, as an unmarked paper counted as a vote in favour of the candidate, was criticised. It was strongly recommended that this practice be replaced by electors having to go to the polling booth in order to mark their papers in secret. It was noted that this meant alteration of the location of the booth in polling stations and that an improvement in construction of the booths would be necessary. It was further suggested that the marking of ballot papers on behalf of electors who did not turn up to vote be forbidden as such a practice led to a distortion of the actual picture of participation of electors in elections.<sup>405</sup>

This significant step along the path to democratisation was followed by various political reforms including, eventually, the rewording of Article 6 of the Constitution which guaranteed the CPSU's monopoly on power to allow other parties to exist. The article in the January 1990 edition of *Kommunist* tried to justify the party's past undemocratic actions, noting that the CPSU was "brought into political crisis by its transformation from a political party into a state structure" and

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<sup>402</sup> Benn, 1992, p.185.

<sup>403</sup> Mitchel, R. & Arrington, R. "Gorbachev, Ideology and the Fate of Soviet Communism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol.33, No.4, 2000, p.465.

<sup>404</sup> White, S. *Gorbachev and After*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992a, p.32.

<sup>405</sup> *Fond 89* 1/4/1, p.4, dated 11/02/87.

that this transformation had already occurred by the end of the 1920s. The article also noted the probable inevitability of such a development in “conditions of a totalitarian structure with a single party system”.<sup>406</sup> It mentioned the “highest level” of the party having recognised that the process of democratisation of the party was well behind the democratisation of society and that the Central Committee had noted on 18th July that year, that the source of the crisis was not the party itself but its “outdated style and methods of work”.<sup>407</sup> In view of the demise of communism in Eastern Europe and increasing opposition to its own rule in the Soviet Union, the CPSU was becoming acutely aware of the belated need to justify its actions to the population.

Politburo member V. I. Vorotnikov informed a meeting of the Politburo on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1990, that about 70 per cent of the electorate had taken part in the elections on 18th March 1990 for the Congress of Peoples’ Deputies of the RSFSR.<sup>408</sup> He also pointed out that a sharp drop had been noted in the number of women, workers and kolkhoz workers elected and that a further problem had arisen in the form of organisations being represented by more than one deputy. Vorotnikov is reported as having said: “we had determined that any one organisation might nominate only one candidate but ‘Argumenty i fakty’ has got 5 deputies in the Supreme Soviet because they were nominated by different organisations, that is by enterprises, scientific collectives and higher education establishments.” Moscow State University had also ended up with high representation.<sup>409</sup> Once again, there is a sense of political events running out of the party’s control.

Later in the meeting there was a debate about whether the election of workers was more important for legitimacy for the party or the election of business directors and others who represented the direction in which the economy was being reformed. Ivashko informed the Politburo that 85 per cent of the deputies elected to the Supreme Soviet in Ukraine were communists, of which 75 per cent were what he described as “our people”. He asked where the votes and support of the workers had gone, appearing to complain that over a quarter of the deputies were “big leaders” - enterprise directors - representing the party in the Supreme Soviet. However, this was something that a previous speaker, A. V. Vlasov, USSR Minister of Internal Affairs, Chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers and candidate member of the Politburo, seemed to consider a good idea, saying that the parliament in Russia consisted of “well qualified people”, including 22 per cent of those elected being enterprise directors, directors of organisations, kolkhozes and infrastructure and 12 per

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<sup>406</sup> Dorokhina, N. “K problemam demokratizatsii. Prodolzhaem obsuzhdenie”, *Kommunist*, no1, January 1990, p.11.

<sup>407</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>408</sup> *Fond 89 15/42/26*, p.1, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>409</sup> *ibid.*

cent being representatives of science.<sup>410</sup>

This was a problem that had also been raised three months earlier. The report to the Politburo in December 1989, “On measures to improve the work with People’s Deputies from the number of workers”, by V. Yarin (a People’s Deputy) noted the difficulty posed by the low number of workers elected.<sup>411</sup> Yarin noted that in the course of the electoral campaign it had become clear that “... under new conditions, the biggest difficulty in the battle for the democratic mandate is with representatives of different categories of the intelligentsia ... As a result ... only 18 per cent of deputies are workers.” The new dominance of the intelligentsia in elected bodies reflected a general change taking place in the party at this time as the CPSU was losing its presence in the industrial sector in 1990 in terms of members and becoming a party of the intelligentsia and bureaucrats.<sup>412</sup>

Yarin went on to explain that workers were having difficulties understanding matters being discussed in the Supreme Soviet and advised that it was the responsibility of the Communist Party to help them by appointing a team of communist consultants to help the recently elected workers. He suggested that the lack of assistance available to workers had “serious consequences for their popularity with the electors”<sup>413</sup> which indicates a perception that if workers can be made to appear more competent, more of them would be elected. Frolov asked the meeting if Soviet power in Russia could still be considered worker-peasant power to which Vorotnikov replied that workers and peasants made up 6.7 per cent of those elected to the higher organs of power, not counting kolkhoz directors. Gorbachev asked whether it was possible to consider government in Russia to be ‘worker-peasant government’, to which no direct answer was offered. It was clear that communists were no longer in power but, according to the minutes of this meeting, no one was prepared to acknowledge this directly.

There appears to have been a lack of understanding that voters did not want to vote for the CPSU anymore or an inability to believe that voters would choose ‘against’ their interests by not choosing the CPSU. Vorotnikov told the meeting that the electors faced difficulties in deciding who to vote for as ballot papers listed as many as twenty-eight candidates in some areas. He remarked that “it was simply a lottery” as to who won the elections as sometimes people were confused by the large number of candidates.<sup>414</sup> He also remarked that there was much pressure and influence exerted on electors (presumably by other parties engaging in electoral campaigning), “which influenced the

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<sup>410</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.9, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>411</sup> op. cit., 3/9/76, p.3, dated 12/12/89.

<sup>412</sup> Harasymiw, B. “Changes in the Party’s Composition: The ‘Destroyka’ of the CPSU”, *Journal of Communist Studies*, vol. 7, no 2, 1991, p. 143.

<sup>413</sup> *Fond 89*, 3/9/76, p.3, dated 12/12/89.

<sup>414</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.1, dated 22/03/90.

electorate”.<sup>415</sup> Again, the way Vorotnikov’s remarks were phrased appears strange. What did he think was the point of electoral programmes, if not to win the support of the electorate for one candidate at the expense of the others? He reminded the meeting that this “pressure and influence” broke the “Law on Elections”,<sup>416</sup> however, the election laws for the Congress of People’s Deputies permitted campaigning on the part of all candidates. Article 38 stated that the programme of candidates to become people’s deputies of the RSFSR was to set out their proposed future political intentions once elected and the only limitations in the laws on the contents of the programme were that candidates must not support violent change of the constitution, war propaganda or calls for racial, inter-ethnic or religious intolerance, calls to break the law or infringe the rights of citizens.<sup>417</sup> Article 39 stated that candidates were allowed five agents to help with carrying out their electoral campaigns, to assist with “agitation” for the candidate’s election as a deputy.<sup>418</sup> Article 40 stated that organisations that had nominated a candidate would not be hindered from campaigning on that candidate’s behalf. They were also guaranteed the right to campaign for or against candidates at meetings, in newspapers and on television and radio.<sup>419</sup> It is hard to believe that Vorotnikov was not familiar with the new law.

There was further concern that of the 1029 deputies, about 20 per cent were considered to be supporters of Democratic Platform, with a further 10 per cent considered to be wavering supporters, according to Vorotnikov. He also accused the “democratic powers” of openly breaking the laws by calling for a boycott of the elections.<sup>420</sup> Vorotnikov pointed out that Moscow and Leningrad seemed to be their centres of influence and that other areas had not seen similar defeats of communists. Gorbachev asked if it were possible to come to the conclusion that the working class in Moscow already supported their ideas - Vorotnikov replied that it seemed so.<sup>421</sup>

Yu. A. Prokof’ev - First Secretary of Moscow City Branch - informed the meeting of the Politburo of the CC CPSU on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1990 that 69 per cent of those elected to the Supreme Soviet were party members, 58 per cent of those elected to the Moscow Soviet and 64 per cent to the regional Soviets. He remarked that only 21 of the 64 people elected to the Supreme Soviet supported the position of the party, the other 43 were supporters of ‘Democratic Russia’ and of those 43, 23 definitely did not support the party, 7 were in the ‘Democratic Platform of the CPSU’, 7 were

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<sup>415</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.2, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>416</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.1, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>417</sup> *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR*, 1989, no.44 St.1306, p.892.

<sup>418</sup> op. cit., p.893.

<sup>419</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> *Fond 89* 15/42/26, p.2, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>421</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.3, dated 22/03/90.



members of the group 'Moscow Elector' or 'Memorial' and 4 were social-democrats. Prokof'ev told the meeting that it was the opinion of some (but he did not specify who) that 'Democratic Russia' was a just pre-electoral bloc and that how they would vote and which programme they would support remained to be seen.<sup>422</sup>

Another indication of the vastly different experience of elections in the Soviet Union from that in democratic systems is provided by the following exchange on the promotion of under-represented ethnic groups in elections. Gorbachev asked at the meeting of the Politburo of the CC CPSU on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1990 if this promotion had finished everywhere, to which Vorotnikov replied that it had not. There had been a problem in the national-territorial okrug of Kabardino-Balkaria. Vorotnikov informed the meeting that the situation was now difficult (although it appears from the minutes that this promotion *had* ended in the region) as all the deputies elected were Kabardinians. Negotiations had taken place with the first secretary, Kotovii, who suggested he be given a quota for Balkars. Vorotnikov had explained to him that this could not be done any more and told the Politburo that it was necessary to educate the electorate to choose the sort of candidates who would win.<sup>423</sup> In comparison with earlier comments, this indicates either an understanding of, or acceptance of, the fact that the results could not be manipulated in a democratic election although, understandably in view of ethnic tensions in the Union, it also shows the wish still to direct the electorate towards making the "correct" choices for electoral candidates.

Ivashko noted that the party's fortunes were very uneven in the elections. He informed the Politburo that in Ukraine, many party organisations were not sufficiently prepared for electoral competition and so meetings were being held with secretaries of raikom parties later that month to explain to them that it was necessary to "fight for real" which suggests that it had not been realised by some regional committees how much effort was needed in elections when alternatives to the Communist Party were available. However, in some oblasts, where the party had previously been encountering difficulties, the reverse was true and communist candidates had won. Ivashko explained: "[p]arty organisations were beginning to compete and were doing so competently, they had been asking themselves how they should act and devising campaigning methods."<sup>424</sup> He continued by saying that serious consultation was going on within the Communist Party in Ukraine as to their future course of action and they had decided not to hinder the creation of other political parties. The Ukrainian Communists had come to the conclusion, he said, that opposition to the

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<sup>422</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.7, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>423</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.3, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>424</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.11, dated 22/03/90.

formation of other parties would only strengthen their authority.<sup>425</sup>

### FORMATION OF PLATFORMS WITHIN THE CPSU

As well as a growing sense of loss of control over the electoral process, the CPSU began to lose control over its own members. While democratic centralism had been an important mechanism for controlling any dissent for decades, in the past it had been backed up by a more totalitarian regime. Democratic centralism "... provided for full discussion of issues until a decision was reached; after that, there was to be no further debate, and action on implementing the decision was required of all members and organisations",<sup>426</sup> however, by 1989 *glasnost* had reached the point where it had become possible to express a range of opinions and as a result, divisions had increased within the party to the point of platforms forming within the CPSU.

The Democratic Platform was the first faction to be established in the party since factions were banned in the 1920s. It was based on the 'Communists for Perestroika' Moscow Party Club which had been set up in April 1989. A year later similar clubs existed in all republics of the Soviet Union and in over a hundred cities, an All-Union Co-ordination Council had been formed and a newspaper established - *Democratic Platform* - with a circulation of 50,000.<sup>427</sup> The Democratic Platform held its first conference in Moscow on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 1990 which was attended by party members from 13 Soviet republics. This conference adopted a charter which called for a transition to a multiparty parliamentary political system,<sup>428</sup> a demand that would have been completely unthinkable just over a year earlier. Other factions formed and it has been suggested that with eight different "strands of opinion" having been identified in the party at the end of 1989 and three groups having published their programmes or platforms, the CPSU could effectively be seen as a "pluralist institution" by this time.<sup>429</sup>

A report to the Secretariat "On the faction 'Communists for Democracy'" by the deputy manager of the Department for Organisation gives details of the formation of the faction at the Third Extraordinary Congress of the People's Deputies of the RSFSR on 3rd April, 1991.<sup>430</sup> The faction had declared its formation to be the result of disagreement with the "destructive and inflexible position of the parliamentary group Communists of Russia" and its strategic aim to become a mass,

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<sup>425</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>426</sup> Hill, R. "The CPSU: From Monolith to Pluralist?", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.43, No.2, 1991b, p.218.

<sup>427</sup> Gill, G. *The Collapse of a Single-Party System*, CUP, Cambridge, 1994, p.122.

<sup>428</sup> White, S. "Background to the XXVIII Congress" in Rees, A. (ed.) *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray*, London, Macmillan, 1992b, p.20.

<sup>429</sup> Hill, R. "The CPSU: Decline and Collapse", *Irish Slavonic Studies*, vol. 12, 1991a, pp. 109-10.

<sup>430</sup> *Fond 89*, 1/4/30, p.2, dated 15/04/91.

social-political organisation. The faction anticipated an all-party discussion of confidence in the leadership of the CPSU, an extraordinary meeting of the Congress of the party and re-election for the current leadership of the CP RSFSR (see below).<sup>431</sup> The report noted that in defiance of the statute which forbade factions, the group intended not to leave the party but to “carry out their destructive work in remaining members of the CPSU.”<sup>432</sup> The report noted deep concern at the formation of this faction, comparing it with the “destructive activity of ‘Democratic Platform in the CPSU’ and other groups, which had arisen on the eve of the 28th Congress”.<sup>433</sup>

A resolution of the Secretariat, dated August 1990, “On recommendations to party committees in connection with the claims of representatives of the Democratic Platform” took a very conciliatory tone. It was reported that many members were leaving the party for various reasons, a particular worry having been the numbers of members in scientific-research institutes and colleges of further education where there were “many hesitating people”.<sup>434</sup> It was considered necessary to “show tact and understanding towards each communist supporter of the Democratic Platform,” many of whom were reported sincerely to want the renewal of party life and were thought to be prepared to work for the renewal of the CPSU rather than genuinely wishing to leave it. It was suggested that they be supported and their views respected, that they should be actively included in party work as their radicalism was expected to have a positive effect on party reform. The level of support for the Democratic Platform was unclear but the importance of “establishing dialogue with doubting communists” was emphasised in order to discourage them from leaving the party.<sup>435</sup>

There were two very pressing reasons for the CPSU leadership to discourage Democratic Platform members from leaving the party. The first was the steady fall in CPSU membership in the final years of the party’s existence and hence the party’s income from membership dues and the second was the Democratic Platform’s claims to a share of CPSU property. There was a debate within the Platform because some members were concerned that the Platform might lose any claim to party assets if members left the CPSU so some called for a split in the CPSU rather than for members to leave the party. At the Platform’s second conference on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June 1990, however, it was decided that if the platform’s proposal to transform the CPSU into a democratic, parliamentary party was not accepted by the party then the platform should leave and set up a

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<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> *op. cit.*, 1/4/30, p.4, dated 15/04/91.

<sup>433</sup> *op. cit.*, 1/4/30, p.3, dated 15/04/91.

<sup>434</sup> *op. cit.*, 2/8/69, p.2, dated 27/08/90.

<sup>435</sup> *op. cit.*, 2/8/69, p.3, dated 27/08/90.

separate party.<sup>436</sup>

A report by the sub-Department of Propaganda of the Ideology Department “On the visit by V. I. Belov and V. N. Lysenko, People’s Deputies of the RSFSR, to Blagoveshchensk and Irkutsk as representatives of the Democratic Platform” at the end of July 1990 claims that the basic motive for the meetings was criticism of the CPSU. The party was criticised for being a totalitarian type of party and the apparatus was accused of trying to preserve its monopoly on power and doing all it could to curtail *perestroika*.<sup>437</sup> The report lists the following as typical extracts from the meetings: that members of the Democratic Platform left the CPSU as the 28th Congress showed that the party was incapable of reforming itself; that statements at the Congress claiming that the majority of Democratic Platform members did not support the proposal to leave the CPSU were just provocation orchestrated by the leadership; support was voiced for Yeltsin, who was described as a “wise political actor and consistent democrat”; and that the aim of the Democratic Platform was to encourage opposition to the “all-powerful apparatus of the CPSU”.<sup>438</sup>

The writers of the report also noted that direct questions from the floor were not answered directly or that answers were ‘very evasive’ although the report lists none of the questions that were asked and gives no example of ‘evasive’ answers.<sup>439</sup> It was reported that the leadership of Democratic Platform felt that this would subsequently allow them to officially demand the division of property of the CPSU and that a proportion of it be handed over to the Platform and that membership dues paid by Democratic Platform members from the time of registration of members of the Platform in the CPSU up until the time the Platform would separate from the CPSU be handed over to the Democratic Platform. It was assumed by the leadership of the Platform that the funds they wished to claim could be transferred into the Platform’s bank accounts in Moscow or the regions. Their main claims on CPSU property are reported to have focused on Communist Party publishing companies, which the Democratic Platform claimed should be nationalised, and on the buildings for which the Communist Party did not pay taxes to the Soviets.<sup>440</sup>

This is one of the main issues which emerges from the *Fond 89* documents studied: the preoccupation of the Democratic Platform with obtaining a share of CPSU property and the preoccupation of the leadership of the CPSU with preventing them from doing so. According to the report by the Department of Ideology’s Sub-department of Propaganda to the CPSU Central

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<sup>436</sup> White, 1992 b, p.22.

<sup>437</sup> *Fond 89*, 2/8/31, p.1, dated 06/08/90.

<sup>438</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>439</sup> *op. cit.*, 2/8/31, p.2, dated 06/08/90.

<sup>440</sup> *ibid.*

Committee “On the visit of representatives of the Democratic Platform to Blagoveshchensk and Irkutsk”, it was seen to be necessary to redefine the party’s position on property and party work before too much criticism could be levelled at it on these counts by the Democratic Platform. The report noted that local party committees believed that action was necessary to ‘set the record straight’, as they saw it, in terms of the Democratic Platform’s programme. Above all, they saw a clear position on the property of the CPSU, especially its publishing industries and the role of party organisation in the army, MVD, KGB and workers’ collectives as being most necessary in the circumstances. It was suggested in the report that these questions be addressed at a Central Committee Plenum, before the start of the conference being held by Democratic Platform supporters.<sup>441</sup>

Whilst the resolution of the Secretariat “On recommendations to party committees in connection with the claims of representatives of the Democratic Platform” claimed that the illegality of the property claims of Democratic Platform should be made clear in party organisations,<sup>442</sup> it was conceded, however, that organisations and citizens, claiming property of the CPSU, had the legal right on the basis of article 29 of the Civil Code and other acts to bring the matter to court. However, by law 10 per cent of the value of the property under dispute had to be paid in state tax and the resolution pointed out that the money would be forfeited whether the claimant won or lost the case.<sup>443</sup>

### FORMATION OF PARTIES OUTSIDE THE CPSU

With the adoption of the law on political parties on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1990, it became possible for parties other than the CPSU to exist legally and they began to form very quickly after this law was passed. The potential of the new parties that began to form outside the CPSU to threaten its position, especially after defeating communist candidates in local and republican elections in 1990, concerned the party to the extent that a lengthy Politburo meeting was devoted almost entirely to analysing the problems which had arisen due to the loss of communist control of the city Soviets in Moscow and Leningrad. Prokof’ev noted that the Communist Party’s opponents had presented a “very attractive but entirely unrealistic” programme to the electorate.<sup>444</sup> This programme, which had led to the loss of CPSU control of the city Soviets in Moscow and Leningrad, had been the work of the coalition “Democratic Russia”. Prokof’ev noted at the meeting that there were people who were said to have

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<sup>441</sup> op. cit., 2/8/31, p.1, dated 06/08/90.

<sup>442</sup> op. cit., 2/8/69, p.4, dated 27/08/90.

<sup>443</sup> op. cit., 2/8/69, p.5, dated 27/08/90.

<sup>444</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.8, dated 22/03/90.

joined Democratic Russia just to get elected as a deputy.<sup>445</sup> Frolov asked why the party was losing prominent people; he feared that this sustained loss would ruin the party. He pointed out that 20 per cent of deputies were party and Soviet employees and that it was no victory when the party apparatus or workers involved in running elections won and that it was clear to him that old cadres had to be removed more energetically, if not entirely from power and that the party was suffering because of the type of members who were being elected. He remarked that if anyone who thought that the CPSU differed notably from communist parties in Eastern Europe they were mistaken and that if some kind of open voting went ahead then, membership of the party would be revealed to be in serious trouble.<sup>446</sup> Clearly it was recognised by this point that people had joined the party for reasons other than ideological conviction and that it was necessary for the party to find strong candidates who would be seen as effective and competent deputies.

Prokof'ev informed the Politburo that two weeks earlier he had held a meeting in Moscow to try to avert a possible split in the local party organisation. He had recommended at that meeting that a political platform be formulated for the Central Committee democratisation of the party was the preferred solution of the Politburo to the present difficulties, rather than a split. Prokof'ev reported that this was agreed in principle and two representatives from Moscow Higher Party School had been appointed to work jointly on this proposed platform. Prokof'ev also remarked that a meeting of Moscow Higher Party School had been held on 18-19th March at which opinion on the future of the party was divided (60 people had participated altogether of whom 36 were members of Soviets from over 20 cities). At this meeting Yu. N. Afanas'ev, Editor of *Kommunist* and the first prominent person to resign from the CPSU in April 1990, T. Kh. Gdlyan, a lawyer who investigated high level corruption and was expelled from the CPSU later in 1990, I. Chubais, a member of the Democratic Platform, and N. V. Ivanov, a lawyer, also expelled from the CPSU later in 1990, had insisted that the party should split immediately (before the 28th Congress), that they should leave the party, declare the existence of a new party and so attract new members. They felt they had to leave the CPSU in order to increase their influence considering their presence in the Communist Party to be a hindrance.<sup>447</sup> The manoeuvring for members and property of the CPSU began in 1990 as some CPSU members had the foresight to realise that the party was going to split and that multiparty elections, as were about to happen in Eastern Europe, were inevitable in the Soviet Union too.

The Democratic Platform left the CPSU and some CPSU members were expelled for

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<sup>445</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.9, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>446</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.15, dated 22/03/90.

<sup>447</sup> op. cit., 15/42/26, p.28, dated 22/03/90.

supporting the platform. Members then formed the Republican Party of the Russian Federation (RPRF) and held a Constituent Conference in Moscow on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1990 and declared the new party in favour of a market economy and social democracy.<sup>448</sup> A report to the Central Committee, by I. Polozkov - member of the Politburo and leader of the CP RSFSR, dated December 1990, informed the Committee of the founding congress of the RPRF. The report noted the average age of those joining the party as 36-50 and the fact that many were well educated, that they were “representatives of middle layers of the scientific-technical intelligentsia” and that the majority were former CPSU members.<sup>449</sup> Grave concern was noted at the RPRF’s anticipated ability to deepen opposition between the Russian government and that of the Soviet Union.<sup>450</sup> The report noted that in spite of the party’s small membership, it represented a serious danger to the CPSU in that its strength was electoral competition, its leaders used “pseudo-Marxist terminology”, were strong supporters of human rights and publicised their “irresponsible” activity in the media. As a remedy to the adverse effect of this party on support for the CPSU a discussion in the media of problems with the RPRF’s programme (and of the programmes of other parties) was proposed in order to show how they would not solve the most urgent social and economic problems.<sup>451</sup> The CPSU leadership was concerned that the party was losing some of its most able members to an organisation that it could see was going to create further division in the rapidly disintegrating Union.

Another major cause for concern was the republican communist parties that broke away from the CPSU or split into pro- and anti-independence parties. This happened in all three of the Baltic states and their bases of support declined drastically.<sup>452</sup> The Georgian and Moldovan parties also left the CPSU<sup>453</sup> and in most of the other republics Marxist platforms and platforms calling for reforms had been established by July 1991.<sup>454</sup> The splits were driven by competition from nationalist platforms and parties in each of the republics that quickly drew considerable support.

Again, the division of property and income became an issue for the party. A resolution of the Secretariat, from August 1990, “On details of the meeting and discussion of party assets with Communists and workers in the Lithuanian SSR” noted that the separatist leadership deliberately postponed the negotiations in the hope of the situation in Russia worsening, attempting also to gain

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<sup>448</sup> Gill, 1994, p.145.

<sup>449</sup> *Fond* 89, 4/11/68, p.1, dated 14/12/90.

<sup>450</sup> *op. cit.*, 4/11/68, p.3, dated 14/12/90.

<sup>451</sup> *op. cit.*, 4/11/68, p.5, dated 14/12/90.

<sup>452</sup> Rees, A. “Nationalities Policy” in Rees, A. (ed.) *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray*, London, Macmillan, 1992a, p93.

<sup>453</sup> White, 1992a, p.255.

<sup>454</sup> Mann, D. “Divisions Within the Communist Party Intensify”, *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, vol.3 no.30, July 26 1991(a), p.6, footnote 24.

the maximum amount of time for preparing legislation directed at the “further destruction of the economic and legal basis of the Soviet socialist state of Lithuania, and namely: the continued denationalisation of the means of production, the forced de-collectivisation of the economy and full dismantling of Soviet power and restoration of a totalitarian bourgeois dictatorship in Lithuania.”<sup>455</sup>

A report was submitted to the Central Committee, dated 4th July 1991 (only a month and a half before the coup) by the Organisation Department and by N. Kruchina, the business manager of the Central Committee “On the question of registration of the Communist Party of Estonia (independent).” The report stated that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Republic was considering the question of the application of the Communist Party of Estonia to be registered as the CPE (independent) and declared the legal successor to the Estonian Communist Party which had been founded in 1920. The report stated that the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the republic on the registration of CPE(independent) was in contradiction to the law “On the unification of citizens” (art.26) and constituted “a unilateral exit ... from the CPSU.”<sup>456</sup> However, the law on the formation of political parties had already been passed by this time and this represents another instance of the CPSU trying to avoid adhering to a law that it had enacted. The report declared the CPE leadership’s actions illegal in terms of Estonian law and that this action infringed the political interests of communists who wished to retain ideological and organisational unity with the CPSU.<sup>457</sup> Again property considerations were a matter of concern with the report declaring the impossibility of the CPE using any CPSU property after the split had taken place.<sup>458</sup> It was argued that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Republic had unlawfully taken upon itself the function of determining the legal successor to the CPE and that it was not correct to consider the registration of the party as the legal successor to the CPE founded in 1920 on either a legal or factual basis.<sup>459</sup>

Despite a similar split in Latvia, a resolution of the Secretariat, dated 1st August 1991, “On the work of the Communist Party of Latvia in conditions of political opposition” noted that the CPLat had overcome the split in its ranks despite being in opposition and facing an anticommunist campaign in the republic, was still capable of political action and had begun to carry out a renewal of its programme. The resolution noted that the party still campaigned for a socialist Latvia and the

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<sup>455</sup> *Fond 89, 1/5/2, pp.2-3, dated 29/08/90.*

<sup>456</sup> *op. cit., 7/20/73, p.1, dated 04/07/91.*

<sup>457</sup> *op. cit., 7/20/73, p.2, dated 04/07/91.*

<sup>458</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>459</sup> *ibid.*



interests of workers and rights of citizens.<sup>460</sup> Communist deputies were campaigning actively against the adoption of “anti-popular laws”, making alternative suggestions, using the platform of parliament for propaganda and to defend the ideas of the party and maintain close links with electors.<sup>461</sup>

However, after this positive assessment the Secretariat recommended various measures to the Central Committee of the CPLat and party committees of the republic to increase the efforts for overcoming “crisis phenomena” in the party. The CPLat was instructed to strengthen the party in organisational terms; restructure the style of work of party committees; support the “flourishing perestroika movement for national rebirth of Latvia”; strengthen important relations to Latvian language and culture and local traditions; actively campaign against nationalist extremism and for freedoms for citizens; to show enthusiasm for the strengthening of an atmosphere of real democracy in the republic and about international agreement and agreement between people.<sup>462</sup> The party was also to “urgently become familiar with the tactics of blocs and unions”<sup>463</sup> and pay particular attention to electoral campaigns suggesting that the central leadership felt that the republican party was losing elections, at least partly through incompetent campaigning.

Whilst political change in Eastern Europe had not resulted in intervention by the Soviet Union, internal threats to the Union, most evident in the Baltics, resulted in violent repression in Lithuania and concern that what had happened in Eastern Europe could happen next to the Soviet Union. A resolution of the Secretariat from February 1991 “On information of Central Committee departments on the situation in the Baltic Republics” recognised that the Baltic crisis had entered a “new and dangerous phase” for the Union.<sup>464</sup> “... [N]ew, anti-Soviet regimes have come to power, exploiting slogans of democratisation, *glasnost*’ and ideas of national revival, in their practical activity they have done nothing positive.”<sup>465</sup> The resolution reiterated the declaration of the January 1991 Political Statement of the Control Commission: “the time has come for each person to be conscious of the civil and moral choice: whether to uphold the noble aims of renewal of society, the movement of a single country, peace in our multinational home or be silent and connive at the infringement on life and safety of people or, worse, help kindle the fires of inter-ethnic and social tension ...”<sup>466</sup> By this time, however, the Baltic parties had split and lost support to the nationalist

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<sup>460</sup> op. cit., 7/20/78, p.1, dated 01/08/91.

<sup>461</sup> op. cit., 7/20/78, p.2, dated 01/08/91.

<sup>462</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>463</sup> op. cit., 7/20/78, p.3, dated 01/08/91.

<sup>464</sup> op. cit., 1/5/12, p.2, dated 07/02/91.

<sup>465</sup> op. cit., 1/5/12, p.3, dated 07/02/91.

<sup>466</sup> op. cit. 1/5/12. p.8, dated 07/02/91.

oppositions.

### THE CREATION OF A RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

There had been no Russian communist party separate from the CPSU since 1925 (except for the existence of a Bureau of the Central Committee for the RSFSR in the CPSU from 1956 to 1966)<sup>467</sup> but the increasing nationalism in the other republics of the USSR, especially the Baltics, led some Russian conservatives in the CPSU to see the formation of a Russian communist party as a possible focus for Russian national concerns (such as the preservation of the Union, and therefore Russia's influence and status) as well as a potential mechanism for opposing Gorbachev's increasingly radical reforms. The United Front of Labour (UFL), a faction formed inside the CPSU and organised from Leningrad (and which combined Marxism-Leninism with Russian nationalism), was one of the conservative groupings that demanded the creation of a Russian communist party along with the Communist Initiative Movement (CIM), a group which the UFL had also helped to found<sup>468</sup> for the purpose of organising a Russian communist party. After the CPSU had been banned in Russia, following the coup, the UFL and CIM founded the Russian Communist Workers' Party - a group to which many who later joined the CPRF belonged during the period of the ban on party activity, as noted by two interviewees in Chapter 5. It is thus possible to see the line of development of the CPRF from a particular section of the CPSU in Russia.

Gorbachev had opposed the creation of a Russian communist party for fear of increasing separatist tendencies in other republics but he came to see a need for a separate Russian communist party to counterbalance the anti-communist tendencies amongst those elected to the Russian Congress of People's Deputies and to Yeltsin (who had left the CPSU at the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress in July 1990), who had been elected Speaker of the Congress.<sup>469</sup> In the election for Speaker, Yeltsin beat Polozkov, the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of Krasnodar Communist Party (who was later elected leader of the new CP RSFSR), and Vlasov, RSFSR Prime Minister, who had been Gorbachev's choice.

The March 1989 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU had authorised the Russian Bureau to convene a Russian party conference to prepare for establishing a Russian communist party in acceptance of pressure for greater recognition of Russian national interests by the end of 1989. However, the Russian Bureau failed to lead the process at sufficient speed for many nationalists in the party as the CPSU leadership at that time did not want to see a Russian party

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<sup>467</sup> Hough, J. & Fainsod, M. *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p.676.

<sup>468</sup> Urban, J. & Solovei, V. *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads*, Westview Press, 1997, pp.18, 15, 16.

<sup>469</sup> Urban and Solovei, 1997, p.38.

established, fearing the creation of a rival centre of power.<sup>470</sup> There was a change in attitude on the part of the CPSU leadership as a result of the popular campaign for a Russian party and from a perception that the CP RSFSR could prove to be a conservative balance to the views being expressed by Yeltsin.<sup>471</sup> The intended creation of a Russian Communist Party was debated by the Central Committee on 7th June 1990 and the increased interest of the CPSU leadership in creating a Russian party with some speed can be seen from a report submitted to the Central Committee by Medvedev, G. P. Razumovskii, a Central Committee Secretary and candidate member of the Politburo and Manaenkov. The report stated that a new Secretariat had been created consisting of 18 people and its recommendations were adopted at a Central Committee meeting the following day.<sup>472</sup> The authors of this document suggested that the situation had arisen where communists of the Russian Federation now believed the immediate creation of a Communist Party of Russia to be useful and that it was necessary to take a decision on this matter at the next Conference of the CPSU. The authors argued that it would be expedient to consider including a motion at the conference on the possibility of giving the Russian Conference of the CPSU the status of Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Russia.<sup>473</sup>

This same document indicated also that there was concern for the new party to at least appear to be representative of the party as a whole as the document stated that the social composition of the leading organs was, through a process of consultation on candidacies, to reflect the social composition of the Communists of Russia.<sup>474</sup> It was clearly feared that the organisation could become a vehicle for one tendency in the party and, while counterbalancing the anti-communist views being expressed in the Congress, also act as an opposition to reform.

The CP RSFSR did indeed become a conservative-dominated party and a focus for Russian communists with a republic-level leadership that was strongly opposed to further democratisation and any radical economic reforms. Urban and Solovei contrast the position of the CP RSFSR's leadership with that of the CPSU with its range of views from traditional Marxism-Leninism to social democracy (by 1991).<sup>475</sup> The fears expressed in the report discussed above, proved well-founded. The party was finally established on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1990. There was agreement on the organisational form the party should take. In the words of a member of the Central Committee, it was decided that "It must be a party of the Leninist type, built on Leninist organisational and

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<sup>470</sup> Gill, 1994, p.126.

<sup>471</sup> op cit., p.128.

<sup>472</sup> op cit., p.140 and footnote 141, page 140.

<sup>473</sup> *Fond 89*, 2/8/72, p.1, dated 07/06/90.

<sup>474</sup> op cit., 2/8/72, p.2, dated 07/06/90.

<sup>475</sup> Urban and Solovei, 1997, pp.37-38.

ideological principles, free from social-democratic tendencies in the programme and in activity”.<sup>476</sup> However, the party had great difficulty agreeing on a programme. The first draft programme was published in August 1990 and a second draft programme published in October, 1990.

The nationalist ideology of the CPRF can be seen in the origins of the CP RSFSR as the Russian nationalist organisations that had been formed in the late 1980s were seen by the leadership of the CP RSFSR as being the key to gaining new support and as early as 1990, the CP RSFSR was already trying to unite nationalists and communists with the aim of saving the Soviet Union.<sup>477</sup> It was soon clear that Polozkov was concerned with the survival of Russia as a nation rather than the aim of achieving communism and, by the autumn of 1990, he was calling for a “union of patriotic and democratic forces in the name of the Fatherland”, similar to the pronouncements of the Writers’ Union with which Polozkov and Zyuganov, a member of the Politburo and Secretariat of the CP RSFSR and the future leader of the CPRF, worked to try to increase support for the renewed Union.<sup>478</sup>

Zyuganov’s tactics for maximising support for the CPRF were also evident in the actions of Polozkov during his leadership of the CP RSFSR. At the November 1990 plenum of the CP RSFSR, Polozkov declared that the party had agreed to suspend the political struggle in the hope of saving Russia (and preserving the Soviet Union).<sup>479</sup> Polozkov had already declared the CP RSFSR ready to work with the Russian Orthodox Church at a conference in February 1991 entitled “For a Great, United Russia!”<sup>480</sup> Further, in a speech to the party’s Central Committee the following March, Polozkov referred to Lenin as having implemented a programme of national salvation.<sup>481</sup> All of which indicates a considerable ideological continuity from the CP RSFSR to the CPRF.

However, the inability to agree on a final programme and elusive party unity led to Polozkov’s replacement at the party’s Central Committee plenum in early August 1991<sup>482</sup> by V. A. Kuptsov, CPSU Secretary with responsibility for mass organisations. This leadership was short-lived as the coup two weeks later followed by the ban on party activity ended the CP RSFSR until the verdict of the Constitutional Court that the CP RSFSR’s primary party organisations could resume activity on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1992. The nationalist direction of the movement was continued

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<sup>476</sup> Osadchii, I. *Dramaticheskie stranitsy istorii: kak i pochemy sozdavalas’ kompartiya RSFSR (1990 - 1991 gg.)*, Moscow, ITRK, 2001, p19.

<sup>477</sup> O’Connor, K. *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution*, Lexington Books, New York, 2006, p.223.

<sup>478</sup> op. cit., pp.224, 225 and .226.

<sup>479</sup> quoted in O’Connor, 2006, p.221.

<sup>480</sup> O’Connor, 2006, p.227.

<sup>481</sup> quoted in O’Connor, 2006, p.224.

<sup>482</sup> Gill, 1994, p.152.

after the ban by Zyuganov. In January 1992, Zyuganov was elected chairman of the co-ordinating council of the People's Patriotic Forces of Russia, in June 1992, he became a co-chairman of the right-wing Russian National Assembly and in October 1992, Zyuganov was involved in the founding of the National Salvation Front and also became one of its co-chairmen.<sup>483</sup> The CPRF became the largest of the post-CPSU communist parties and claims to be the legal successor to the CP RSFSR.

### THE USSR REFERENDUM

As seen above, the future of the Soviet Union depended on the new Union agreement in order to appease republican parties by reducing Russia's dominance of the Union. A referendum was conducted throughout most of the USSR on March 17<sup>th</sup> 1991 on the preservation of the USSR as a Union of Soviet *Sovereign* Republics. Gorbachev had proposed holding a referendum on the renewal of the USSR as the Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics in December 1990 in an attempt to "speed up the signing of a new Union Treaty".<sup>484</sup> With several republics already having declared independence, the existing Union was already falling apart and the party risked being left with a much smaller union of states grouped around Russia if it refused to cede at least some power to the other republics. The revised draft was to give the republics a much greater say in policy making, their ownership rights were to be strengthened and the republics were to be responsible for deciding on their own mechanism for seceding from the Union, rather than that power being held by the all-Union parliament<sup>485</sup> as a recognition that the Union could not be sustained in its current form.

In an attempt to strengthen public opinion in favour of the new Union, *Kommunist* had published an editorial article in February 1991, in the run-up to the referendum, entitled "Why We Need the Union" arguing that continued unification of the fifteen republics was in the interest of all the republics and that it was impossible to carry out reforms in one republic as they would only work if carried out on an all-Union basis.<sup>486</sup> A positive result in the referendum was in the interests of the CPSU for two reasons: firstly, as it probably would not have been able to continue to exist in the same form if the USSR disappeared; and secondly, as was already clear, the end of the Union would result in loss of status for Russia internationally.

The Resolution of the Secretariat "On the plan of action of the Secretariat of the Central

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<sup>483</sup> Urban and Solovei, 1997, pp.47-48.

<sup>484</sup> Sheehy, A. "The All-Union and RSFSR Referendums of March 17", *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, vol.3 no13, March 29 1991, p.2.

<sup>485</sup> Sheehy, A. "Revised Draft of the Union Treaty", *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, vol.3 no12, March 22 1991, p2.

<sup>486</sup> Nash kommentarii "Pochemu nuzhen soyuz", *Kommunist*, no3, February 1991, p4

Committee of the CPSU on the realisation of tasks resulting from the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU: Political results of the USSR referendum and tasks of party organisation”<sup>487</sup> of April 1991 covers the CPSU’s reaction to the referendum results. A wide range of orders to various departments dealt with many problems. The document gives the impression of a well co-ordinated, but perhaps desperate attempt (with a heavy burden placed on the Department of Ideology) to try to convince the population that a renewed Union, in the form envisaged by the CPSU, was in their interests.

Part I of the document is a set of practical measures to do with interpreting and publicising the results of the referendum. An improvement in economic conditions was obviously considered necessary to increase support for the signing of the new treaty as the Departments of Organisation, Ideology, Socio-economic Politics and Agrarian Politics were to recommend that party committees pay particular attention to the implementation of urgent measures in the economic sphere, connected with the reconstruction of economic links, increasing manufacturing output, the strengthening of order and the introduction of “other stabilising measures” with immediate effect.<sup>488</sup> What precisely these measures were is not specified but in the section of the document on “aims for creating an anti-crisis programme”, the same departments and the Department of National Politics were ordered to spend the months May to August of that year organising, with the assistance of party committees, a constant review of the reforms being carried out on retail prices and measures to protect the population from the increases; to carry out an analysis of the agreement concluded between union republics; to prepare an analysis of the economic and social consequences of the actions of extremist powers which are leaving the USSR’s separate republics, and send them to party committees for the purpose of informing the population.<sup>489</sup> Declining living conditions were clearly feared to be reducing support for the intended future Union.

The Departments of Organisation, Ideology, Humanities and others were all recommended to analyse the reasons for the comparatively low support for the idea of preserving the Union among the population in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Sverdlovsk and Rostov-on-Don - the Resolution of the Secretariat of the CC CPSU called on the above departments to work with local party committees and learn the tactics of the opposition<sup>490</sup> as the CPSU was aware that it needed to counter the views being put forward by new organisations that were already more experienced than the party in competing for public attention. There was also to be an on-going campaign combining “all forms of

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<sup>487</sup> *Fond 89*, 1/5/18, dated 10/04/91.

<sup>488</sup> *op. cit.*, 1/5/18, p.1, dated 10/04/91.

<sup>489</sup> *op. cit.*, 1/5/18, p.2, dated 10/04/91.

<sup>490</sup> *ibid.*

mass-political propaganda and teaching work” by the Department of Ideology to emphasise the necessity of preserving the renewed USSR, and the signing of a new Union agreement and the Department was also to have a series of articles published in various party publications in April and May which were to evaluate the referendum results, and the importance of the will of the majority of the people in the renewal of the USSR. Reports to this effect were also to be broadcast on television and printed in local newspapers.<sup>491</sup> While support for a renewed Union was in doubt in the last days of the Soviet Union, it will be seen in Chapters 3 and 5 that the voluntary reunification of the Soviet Union is now a goal of not just the CPRF but also of some of their political opponents who hope to capitalise on nostalgia for Russia’s former super-power status.

The second section of the document focused on the work on preparations for the conclusion of the new Union Agreement. The Department of National Politics and Department of Legislative Initiatives and Legal Matters were to consider possible amendments to the Agreement on the Union of Sovereign Republics at the April meeting of the Central Committee Secretariat.<sup>492</sup> Regional conferences were to be organised on the theme “Russia - consolidating power of the USSR” by the departments of National Politics, Organisation, Ideology, Humanities, the Institute of Theory and History of Socialism and the Academy of Social Sciences in conjunction with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the RSFSR in April and May.<sup>493</sup> The document conveys a sense that the party was aware that power was slipping away and Russia might need to function without most of the other republics.

Preparations were clearly underway for dealing with a negative result. The Central Committee instructed the Social-Economic Commission to spend April to June 1991 preparing recommendations and analysis for party committees of the political consequences of the destruction of the single financial credit and banking system of the country and the necessity of restoring and strengthening the functioning of the unified state as an important economic foundation and also on the realisation of CPSU policies on the transformation of state forms of property.<sup>494</sup> They were also to study the work of party committees on “the party guarantee of implementing the conversion of defence production, the social protection of workers and to present their results to the Central Committee of the CPSU and prepare suggestions for the realisation of measures for the social protection of the population in the conditions of transfer to a market economy.”<sup>495</sup> However, the

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<sup>491</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>492</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>493</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>494</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> *ibid.*

party was clearly unwilling to abandon the planned economy altogether as the Department of Agrarian Politics was charged with spending the rest of 1991 conducting seminars with the secretaries of party committees and leaders of Soviets and agro-industrial organs on “the role of special-purpose programming in conditions of a market economy.”<sup>496</sup>

It was in an earlier resolution of the Secretariat from November 1990, “On information for party committees ‘on the idea of a new Union agreement’”, the passing was noted of a resolution at the 28th Congress on paths to voluntary union, peace and agreement between peoples that, while not actually recognising that the former Union was *not* voluntary, it was stressed that the intended next one should be. The resolution noted that “[a]n appeal from the Central Committee to party committees, letters and statements of citizens, appearing in the media, prove that the majority of people see that the Union agreement is the only possible way to prevent a further escalation of tension, to create the necessary conditions for the growth of the democratic transformation ... guaranteeing real sovereignty for the republics.”<sup>497</sup> However, in view of the unpopularity of the economic reforms and increased ethnic tensions in the final years of the Soviet Union, this could be seen as the reverse of what was happening, particularly in the Baltics, where leaving the Union came to be seen as the answer to people’s concerns.

The end of the Soviet Union is summarised well by Mitchell and Arrington: “[s]ome of the Union republics were willing to support a restructured union based upon real federalism (the so-called Novo-ogarevo scheme) and four republics agreed to sign a new union treaty at a ceremony in Moscow on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1991. The coup of August 1991 was spurred by the prospect of this agreement, which was seen as marking the end of the Soviet Union. However, this was not the only precipitator of the coup. In July, Gorbachev had persuaded the Central Committee to approve a new Draft Programme for the party. The Draft Programme rejected Marxism-Leninism and endorsed the principles of private property, freedom of religion, and a pluralistic political system. For the coup-makers, the prospect was that of a loose federation with no basis whatever in Marxist-Leninist ideology.”<sup>498</sup> So ended the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with conservatives trying to prevent the loss of its founding ideology and the loss of territory that added to Russia’s status.

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<sup>496</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>497</sup> *op. cit.*, 4/11/23, p.2, dated 05/11/90.

<sup>498</sup> Mitchell & Arrington, 2000, p.471. Whilst this quotation is included here as a succinct summary of the manner of end of the Soviet Union, there is some confusion over dates and numbers of signatories. According to White, a draft of the new Union Treaty was due to be signed on 20<sup>th</sup> August, not the 18<sup>th</sup>. In the end, there were 11 states that signed up to the new Commonwealth of Independent States on 21<sup>st</sup> December in Alma Ata (White, 1992d, pp.6-7). Willerton notes that ten states were willing to sign up to the Novo-ogarevo draft, not four Willerton, 1992, p.59).



## CONCLUSION

Various documents from *Fond 89* demonstrate through the orders to departments and the records of discussions that took place that the party was well aware of its rapid loss of authority and legitimacy towards the end of its tenure, however, there had been a failure to face reality soon enough. The lack of recognition of the demise of communism in *Kommunist*, in which an article referred to the East European states as socialist even in May 1990 and suggested the loss of support for communism was only temporary, reflects this state of denial. There was clearly a degree of unwillingness in the party to accept the overthrow of communism in Eastern Europe as being a rejection of communism itself, rather than just a rejection of the parties that had been in government in the region and a failure to accept that the end of the communist-led regimes in Eastern Europe could lead to the end of the CPSU. The movement in political orientation of reformists in the party was considerable over the final years of the Soviet Union as the increasing number of articles in the party's theoretical journal on the merits of social democracy show but by this time the CPSU was running to catch up with the rest of Soviet society.

The leadership of the CPSU lost control over the membership of the party in its final years as a result of changes in the law that it had itself enacted. By allowing a choice of candidates in elections followed by a choice of political direction represented by different candidates at elections combined with the policy of *glasnost* gathering pace and being extended beyond what the party had intended as it became possible to express and discuss different opinions and eventually criticise the CPSU, the party unwittingly brought about its own demise. Despite the new choices available in elections, the CPSU clearly expected the voters to choose the party that claimed to govern in their name and, as can be seen from the documents considered above, there was a failure to understand that voters would use the choices given to them rather than vote for the CPSU despite that choice so the expectation that the party's legitimacy would be increased in the face of political choice led instead to a loss of power as opposition groups were elected in large numbers to the surprise of the party leadership. *Fond 89* reveals a sense of events taking over and moving reform forward faster than had been intended leaving the CPSU leadership to catch up and by the end of the Soviet era, it can be seen that the fight was about retaining power rather than preserving the ideology.

The ideological origins of the CPRF can be seen in the demise of the CPSU as the conservative reaction to reforms introduced by Gorbachev and his supporters. CP RSFSR and its opposition to moves towards social democracy and its aim to save Russia and the Soviet Union, as Russia's empire, make it the forerunner of the CPRF. The CPSU was losing elections in its final years but the CPRF was winning them from 1993 onwards, showing that there was still support for

communism in terms of ideology and as a Russian national tradition. As the CPSU gave up its Leninist party organisation it began to lose control but the CPRF, adopting the Leninist model was competing successfully against a fragmented opposition<sup>499</sup> in its early years. The CPSU effectively abandoned democratic centralism as it began to allow a diversity of opinion in the party but the CPRF adopted this element of party organisation immediately and it has been retained. As will be seen in chapter 3, the CPRF has rejected any move towards social democracy as outlined in Gorbachev's final draft programme, the hated ideology that it blames for the demise of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>499</sup> op. cit., p.473.

## CHAPTER 3

### ZYUGANOV'S PHILOSOPHY

While the first concern of the CPRF was to reject Gorbachev's attempt to move the CPSU towards social democracy in favour of calls to save the nation, many other issues and concerns raised towards the end of the communist era are still present in the writings of the present leader and in the new programme. Fears about the presence of 'foreign powers' in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence voiced by the CPSU leadership as Union republics began to demand independence are now regular features of Gennady Zyuganov's writings, in particular since East European and former Soviet countries have joined NATO. Concerns raised by the CP RSFSR about Russia's cultural presence in Eastern Europe and the promotion of Russian language and culture are another of Zyuganov's main themes. However, the building of communism now takes a very distant place in the list of party priorities behind restoring Russia's status as a superpower in a multi-polar world.

In the fifteen years that he has been leader of the CPRF, Zyuganov has written a substantial number of books and articles, and interviews with Zyuganov about his political beliefs have appeared in Russian newspapers on numerous occasions. Although there have been several leadership challenges in recent years, Zyuganov has so far survived all of them and, in view of the fact that the social democratic tendency within the party has recently been reduced with the departure of Gennady Semigin and Vladimir Tikhonov, it can be assumed that the membership is broadly supportive of the left-patriotic direction in which Zyuganov has led the party. Due to the adoption of patriotism as part of the new ideology some of his pronouncements are, however, directly opposite to what would normally be expected of a communist party leader. This chapter includes an examination of Zyuganov's views on Marxism and socialism, nationalism, geopolitics, religion, the media, Zyuganov's thoughts on returning the CPRF to power, restoring the USSR and the CPRF's influence in the world communist movement and the left in general now that the party's influence in Russia is waning.

This new direction is based on the merging of communist and nationalist theories, the continuation of a trend seen in the CP RSFSR. The unification of traditionally left-wing and traditionally right-wing ideas in Zyuganov's writing replaces calls for the unification of the working classes across national boundaries with calls for saving the nation from catastrophe. It is this move towards more nationalist policies that Zyuganov sees as making the party electable. The focus for Zyuganov and the party now is on finding a way to regain power rather than preserving the ideology. Although communism has not been abandoned altogether, it's achievement is seen as a

very distant future event.

Born in 1944, Zyuganov was a teacher of mathematics and physics in Orel and worked for the Komsomol and CPSU from 1968 until 1983. From 1983 to 1990, he worked for the Propaganda and Ideology Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. A founder member of the CPRF, he was elected its first, and so far only, leader in 1993 and convinced the party that it should participate in the December 1993 elections to the State Duma. He has led the CPRF in the Duma since that election and through the 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007 Duma elections and twice stood for election to the presidency of the Russian Federation, losing in the second round to Boris Yeltsin in 1996 and in the first round to Vladimir Putin in 2000. He did not stand in the presidential election of 2004 as it was clear he could not win against Putin and a heavy defeat could have triggered another challenge to his leadership from within the party. In his place, Nikolai Kharitonov won 13.7 per cent of the vote.

In the introduction to his autobiography, *My Russia*, Zyuganov claims to have been born at what he describes as the “birthplace of the Russian nation”, on the border of the steppe and forest between the Oka and Volga rivers.<sup>500</sup> He also claims “I am a communist and for this choice I will not apologise. I joined the party for ideological reasons,”<sup>501</sup> in order to distinguish himself from those who joined the CPSU for career reasons. He informs his readers that he worked his way up the ladder of the CPSU Central Committee and claims that as deputy chief of the CPSU Department for Ideology, where he worked on Russian matters, he actively supported the idea of creating a separate Communist Party of the RSFSR as a means of safeguarding Russia’s national interests.<sup>502</sup>

He also claims that, as Ideology Secretary, he welcomed perestroika and claims he did his best “to facilitate its advent” (despite now being deeply critical of Gorbachev), as he could see that the Soviet model of socialism “was in need of a qualitative change”.<sup>503</sup> This shift in philosophy now also accommodates religious belief in the form of Russian Orthodox Christianity, as support for Russia’s national church is vital if claims of patriotism are to be believed. To convince his readers, Zyuganov now argues that communism and Christianity are compatible: “the communist idea, which is over two thousand years old, most profoundly expresses people’s needs and hopes. It is in accord with the Russian traditions of communality and collectivism, which meet the fundamental

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<sup>500</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Drama vlasti*, Informpechat’, Moscow, 1993, p.3.

<sup>501</sup> op. cit., p.27.

<sup>502</sup> Zyuganov, G. *My Russia: the Political Autobiography of Gennady Zyuganov*, ed. Vadim Medish, M. E. Sharp, New York, 1997b, p.4.

<sup>503</sup> op. cit., p.5.

interests of my country.”<sup>504</sup> He now dates the emergence of the communist idea as far back as the birth of the Christian era, with which he claims it is linked (see below), rather than to the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848.

## MARXISM AND SOCIALISM

When asked, in 1994, if the party was going to change its name (after other parties in Eastern Europe had done) as some voters saw the word ‘communist’ in negative terms, Zyuganov replied that he did not have a problem with the word and that people were no longer judging politicians by their labels but by their minds.<sup>505</sup> However, this retention of the term ‘communist’ in the party’s title seems incongruous in the context of some of Zyuganov’s remarks, particularly those on the party’s representation of the working class. As seen in Chapter 1, many other communist parties have changed their names to replace the word ‘communist’ with ‘socialist’, the two other notable exceptions being the CPBM, which has a social democratic competitor, and the recently electorally successful PCRM.

Zyuganov’s revisionist view of Russian and Soviet history encompasses some unusual ideas for a communist. When writing that the October 1917 revolution was not a “Bolshevik experiment”, as some writers have claimed, but a huge scale “forced step” which the people of Russia took despite the preconditions for socialism not having been met, he claims they took this chance out of the necessity of “national-state survival” when Russia was facing economic collapse, territorial disintegration and the bourgeois government was unable to function.<sup>506</sup> The first part of this reasoning, that the revolution was about the survival of the nation and the state, is the opposite of what Marx and Lenin envisaged and of what the communists at the time declared: that the working people had taken power as the first stage of an international, proletarian revolution. Even when it became clear that the revolution was not spreading abroad, as predicted, there was still no declaration that its real aim had been to save the state. However, in line with traditional communist thinking, Zyuganov does claim that the revolution was accomplished by the working people.<sup>507</sup>

In another departure from the standard communist view of the 1917 Revolution, he claims that many Russians always considered Russia to be their “beloved native land” rather than seeing it as part of the new political structure that became known as the USSR and that they fought for this Russia in the civil war as patriots rather than for socialist reasons. Zyuganov contrasts this with the

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<sup>504</sup> op. cit., p.3.

<sup>505</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Za gorizontom*, Informpechat’, Moscow, 1995a, pp.125-26.

<sup>506</sup> op. cit., p.64.

<sup>507</sup> ibid.

views of those who considered Russia to be only a “bundle of brushwood for the bonfire of world ‘permanent’ revolution” and a “testing ground for brutal experiments, inexhaustible reserves of raw materials and ‘human resources’”.<sup>508</sup> This implies that Zyuganov sees Lenin and other prominent Bolsheviks as having betrayed Russia by not seeing the country primarily as a great nation. He claims that the Revolution was not an experiment in *Za gorizontom* but also refers to “brutal experiments” in the context of the Revolution in *Derzhava* so reducing the clarity of his argument (these two books were written only around a year apart).

For Zyuganov, Russia differs economically from Western Europe and he claims that the ‘free market’ is inappropriate for Russia.<sup>509</sup> He writes that “Russia has always had its own path. It is chosen not from books but from centuries-long tradition and from life. Life tells us that today we have only one way forward. This is the road to socialism. The road to the restoration of Soviet power. The road to the revival of a Union state.”<sup>510</sup> His argument runs that socialism is the natural choice for Russia in order to create a just society, provide free education and medicine and guarantee work and a fair wage to all workers and that government should be via soviets in order to protect citizens’ rights.<sup>511</sup> He argues that the Soviet Union should be restored “[i]n order to revive a strong power so we can all live in a respected country. To reunite the divided Russian people. To restore the historical brotherhood of nations. In order to protect our borders and interests in the world”<sup>512</sup> rather than to reunite the proletariat of the former Soviet Union. He writes this in answer to his own question: why does *Russia* need a Union?<sup>513</sup>

In contradiction of the traditional communist position on the international solidarity of the working class, Zyuganov goes so far as to claim that “the Marxist-Leninist idea of class struggle was directly counter to the interests of the Russian people, united as they were by shared cultural-historical bonds.”<sup>514</sup> In further recognition of the need to promote the party’s patriotic policies, the 2003 Election Platform speaks of the party’s intention to “protect the culture, language, beliefs and customs of all the peoples of Russia.”<sup>515</sup> However, the Party Programme of 1995 refers to the party as being “faithful to the interests of the working people”<sup>516</sup> and also reaffirms more traditionally

<sup>508</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Derzhava*, Informpechat’, Moscow, 1994a, p.34.

<sup>509</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Osnovnye Tendentsii I Mekhanizm Sotsial’no-Politicheskikh Izmeneniy v Sovremennoi Rossii* (Abstract of PhD Thesis), Moscow State University, 1995d, p.17.

<sup>510</sup> CPRF *Za Vlast’ Trudnogo Naroda!*, 2003 Election Platform, www.cprf.ru, accessed on 11/12/03.

<sup>511</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>512</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>513</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>514</sup> Urban, J. and Solovei, V. *Russia’s Communists at the Crossroads*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1997, p.105.

<sup>515</sup> 2003 election platform.

<sup>516</sup> *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 1995, www.cprf.ru/party/program, accessed on 06/07/06.

communist concerns such as the establishment of popular power or self-rule by the people, the right to work, free education and medical treatment, decent accommodation, and “an end to the exploitation of man by man and all types of parasitism, ... the equal rights of nations, the friendship of peoples”, “socialism in its renewed and future constitutional forms” and “communism as the historical future of mankind.” Less usual, until recently, for a communist party are the references to the need for “ecological safety”, patriotism as party policy and “the unity of patriotic and international authority”.<sup>517</sup>

Zyuganov explains in *Za gorizontom* (1995) that Russia’s current internal difficulties are the result of antagonism between ruling regimes which aspire to destroy Eurasian civilisation and the remaining population.<sup>518</sup> This implies that he believes the class struggle in today’s Russia takes a distant second place to a struggle between leaders. However, a class-based interpretation of the world is obviously not entirely redundant as Zyuganov also writes that “the class approach remains valid even today for the examination of key problems, especially in the spheres of production, employment, social security, foreign policy and international relations.”<sup>519</sup> It would seem that the class approach is still valid so long as it does not interfere with Zyuganov’s geopolitical theories.

His reasoning for finding a new perspective on Russia’s difficulties is that by the end of the 20th century there were more factors affecting modern reality than at the time when Marx, and later, Lenin were writing. The main reason for this, he asserts, is the influence of “inter-civilisational relations” on world development which, according to Zyuganov, were only just taking shape in Marx and Lenin’s time and only emerging in their “final system-formational contours” towards the end of the twentieth century.<sup>520</sup> Use of the word ‘final’ shows Zyuganov’s continued belief in the communist idea of a linear development of history: that there is an ‘end point’ to be reached at which time the development of society will cease as it will have reached a fully developed state. His argument that “class antagonism is absorbed into inter-civilisational and within-civilisational relations to some extent, but not completely, and this has reduced its confrontational components”<sup>521</sup> is perhaps an attempt to explain why the anticipated worldwide, proletarian revolution did not happen and why the CPRF is not expecting it in the foreseeable future.

Zyuganov considers the faults of the Soviet era to date from the 1960s onwards<sup>522</sup> and writes of the “crisis of de-industrialisation”<sup>523</sup> in the late 1980s. In reference to the success of reforms in

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<sup>517</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.8.

<sup>519</sup> *op. cit.*, p.7.

<sup>520</sup> *op. cit.*, p.8.

<sup>521</sup> *ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>522</sup> *op. cit.*, p.6.

China, he notes that Gorbachev did not achieve anything similar and that workers' collectives, party organisations, economic leaders and large sections of the intelligentsia were discouraged from taking an active part in the renewal of society and that this role was taken by a "limited circle of leading personalities ... 'national fronts', national-egoists, an elite of 'informal associations'".<sup>524</sup> It is this failure, as he sees it, to involve the party in the reform process that led to the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Zyuganov's current view of communism is demonstrated clearly by his view of the coup of 1991 and his participation in this failed attempt to stifle democracy. Zyuganov usually refers to the coup as the "so-called coup" and throughout his writing the word coup, in terms of the events of 1991, is referred to in inverted commas.<sup>525</sup> This implies he considers it not to have been an illegal action. He writes that the coup was long expected before the actual attempt<sup>526</sup> and explains away the failure of the coup leaders by saying that they were too early. He writes that from the start it was only "window dressing" and was carried out in a timid and indecisive manner and that the organisers never planned it seriously. Despite this criticism of the leaders and organisation of the coup, Zyuganov was involved in drafting the *Word to the People* (a document published in 1991 calling on all sections of society to work together to save the Soviet Union from impending disaster). Zyuganov writes that it was assumed by the coup leaders that "a demonstration of decisiveness and power on its own" would save the Soviet Union if 'stabilisation measures' were introduced.<sup>527</sup>

The banning of the CPSU in the aftermath of the coup is an action Zyuganov sees as having been mistaken and divisive. In his speech to the Constitutional Court in 1992, as part of the investigation into the legality of the ban, Zyuganov said he wished to speak of the "state CPSU" and of the role of the judicial process in the possible deepening of the split in society if the party continued to be banned. Zyuganov recounted the USSR's achievements and noted that other states had followed the USSR's example.<sup>528</sup> He admitted that the CPSU had made mistakes and attributes them to the long-term monopoly of political power, the party having lost the experience of political competition, having lost sight of the "real values" and the support of the masses, allowing incompetent careerists to progress up the party ranks.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, p.20.

<sup>524</sup> op. cit., p.30.

<sup>525</sup> see for example, Zyuganov, 1995d, p.38.

<sup>526</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Uroki Zhizni*, Russian House, Moscow, 1997a, p.155.

<sup>527</sup> op. cit., p.156.

<sup>528</sup> Zyuganov, 1993, p.83.

<sup>529</sup> op. cit., p.87.



In Zyuganov's view it was not the party as a whole that had been at fault, but the "anti-national regime" of Gorbachev. It was this widely held "anti-regime" feeling that led to the formation of the National Salvation Front, of which the CPRF is a member, along with various right-wing and other left-wing groups. The "Political Declaration of the Left and Right Opposition," of September 1992, which Zyuganov signed in his capacity as president of the Union of National Patriotic Forces of Russia, showed that the left and right had found a degree of common ground in calling for measures to be taken to avoid an economic crisis. This document called for: increases in production and consumption of domestically-produced goods; the restoration of state co-ordinated agricultural production; the restoration of the link between prices and wages; the programme for 'landslide' privatisation to be stopped; investment in agricultural production; increased state regulation of the economy to bring about economic stabilisation; and a more general call for an end to the "threat of mass hunger and total economic collapse".<sup>530</sup> The declaration also called for the re-establishment of the USSR, a united defence policy for the restored Union, recognition of private property, the creation of a "real system of popular power" and freedom of choice between political parties. In 2003, the CPRF called for the unification of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine into a single state<sup>531</sup> as a scaled-down version of the dream of a restored Union.

On the question of why socialism was rejected in 1991 and why the USSR collapsed so quickly afterwards, Zyuganov writes that people will seek answers to these questions for many years. However, he claims that the Russian people never renounced socialism but were "deceived by demagogy and false promises."<sup>532</sup> In *Derzhava* (1994), he writes that a thorough analysis of the causes of the crisis in the model of socialism which developed in the USSR is both needed and expected of the CPRF by communists abroad. They are further expected, he writes, to make a new contribution to the theory of socialism,<sup>533</sup> thereby attempting to justify the move away from orthodox communism.

In *Uroki zhizni* (1997), in the chapter entitled 'The Lesson of Mass Organisation', Zyuganov writes of privatisation, criminality and poverty as being the results of the fall of the USSR instead of the promised freedom and prosperity.<sup>534</sup> He complains that another result has been international wars involving a million people and he claims that the only way to "end this madness" is to create a durable political organisation, in effect recreate the Soviet Union, that would be able to express the

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<sup>530</sup> op. cit., pp.93-94.

<sup>531</sup> 2003 election platform.

<sup>532</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Znat' i deistvovat': otvety na voprosy*, Paleya, Moscow, 1996a., p.11.

<sup>533</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Derzhava*, Informpechat', Moscow, 1994a, p.20.

<sup>534</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.265.

interests of all those who want to halt the “downward spiral in which Russia finds itself” in order to prevent catastrophe. He further claims that without the “activity of national-patriotic powers” Russia will be doomed to failure.<sup>535</sup> In this respect, the Programme at least partially coincides with Zyuganov’s writings in that it refers to the need to “unify a social-class and national liberation movement into a single mass opposition movement”.<sup>536</sup>

Zyuganov refers to overcoming the economic crisis in 1996 as being a difficult process requiring the “mobilisation of all resources” in his pamphlet, *Znat’ i deistvovat’* (1996). When asked if this “mobilisation of all resources” is to be aimed at enabling a return to socialism, he replied that it is. He claims that he is not alone in thinking that such a move is necessary but that the “history of mankind” in the 20th century indicates a necessity of moving “forward to socialism”. He claims that the “positive experience” of socialism was not rejected but “attentively and critically analysed” for better use in the future.<sup>537</sup> However, just on the following page he writes that “[e]ven our ideological opponents cannot understand why we destroyed what was working well.”<sup>538</sup> The form of socialism that Zyuganov calls for the reconstitution of is one “free of deformations, fatal mistakes and including all that is progressive that has been worked out by mankind in the modern era”<sup>539</sup> but again, no concrete details are offered. In writing that socialism was “[w]orking well” and that there were “fatal mistakes” Zyuganov contradicts himself.

Zyuganov writes that by mid-1991 “[t]he party had, if not everything, then almost everything necessary for the efficient management of the economy and society as a whole. ... [but] its central organ turned out to be decidedly lacking in energetic and purposeful political will. The attempt to fill in this gap, the creation of the CP RSFSR, did not have the expected effect. It did not have enough time”.<sup>540</sup> However, as seen in Chapter 2, the assumed reason for the CPSU leadership agreeing to the formation of the CP RSFSR was not just a result of the popular campaign for a Russian party but also an expectation that it could provide conservative opposition to the views being expressed by Yeltsin. Zyuganov also writes that “[f]urther, the CP RSFSR was acting in the most difficult conditions. Against it, with the blessing of the Politburo of the CC CPSU, was concentrated the fire of practically all mass media and its leading body was discredited.”<sup>541</sup> How the CP RSFSR would have achieved, given more time, what the CPSU failed to achieve in many

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<sup>535</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>536</sup> *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, [www.cprf.ru/party/program](http://www.cprf.ru/party/program), accessed on 06/07/06.

<sup>537</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.10.

<sup>538</sup> *op. cit.*, p.11.

<sup>539</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>540</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, p.33.

<sup>541</sup> *ibid.*

decades, Zyuganov does not explain.

In terms of reform of the party, he writes that work on the draft programme of the CPRF was difficult but that such difficulty was to be expected. He writes of overcoming and exorcising “theoretical stereotypes” that held a “death-like grip of dogmatism” over some communists.<sup>542</sup> Theory and practice were clearly not compatible in Zyuganov’s eyes as he sees this as having led to inflexibility. In *Za gorizontom*, Zyuganov writes that “[t]he party succeeded for the most part in overcoming the sectarian position caused by the aspiration to express narrow class interests.”<sup>543</sup> If he really means the party is to move away from just representing the working class, this represents the single most significant shift in policy as the *Communist Manifesto*, the founding document of communist thought, begins: “[t]he history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”<sup>544</sup> and continues: “[i]n the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, [communists] point out and bring to the fore the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.”<sup>545</sup> While the CPSU claimed to represent all sections of society from late 1930s onwards, as separate classes were deemed to no longer exist, the 1986 Programme still referred to the ‘working class’. The incompatibility of nationalism and communism at the level of their most basic unit, class or nation, appear to be irrelevant to Zyuganov, instead he focuses on animosity to the West, liberal democracy and capitalism and belief in collectivism and authoritarianism in the search for cross-class unity.<sup>546</sup>

When asked if the CPRF considers itself a party of the working class, Zyuganov replied that it does because the majority of its members are working class as are those who vote for the electoral bloc of which the party is a member.<sup>547</sup> He defines the working class broadly to include pilots and computer operators as well as people working in heavy industries and he claims that “scientific-technical progress long ago united the work of the [industrial] worker with intellectual work”.<sup>548</sup> It is clear the party needs to redefine the ‘working class’ for the 21st century as the working class, and therefore its traditional support base, is shrinking as patterns of employment change. He claims that “workers, that is people living on account of their work, are interested most of all in the building of a society of social justice as is called for by the CPRF.”<sup>549</sup> If workers are all people who “live on

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<sup>542</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.73.

<sup>543</sup> op. cit., p.4.

<sup>544</sup> Marx, K. and Engels, F. *The Communist Manifesto*, Translation by S. Moore, 1888, Penguin Books, London, 1985, p.79.

<sup>545</sup> op. cit., p.95.

<sup>546</sup> March, L. *The Communist Party in Post-Soviet Russia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002, p.104.

<sup>547</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.32.

<sup>548</sup> ibid.

<sup>549</sup> ibid.

account of their work” then that must be most of the population and if their greatest interest is in building the kind of society that the CPRF wants to see built, then this raises the question as to why the CPRF has not already been elected to government. The Programme also includes a definition of the working class to include “a considerable part of the engineering-technical intelligentsia”.<sup>550</sup>

Zyuganov writes of the progressive movement of history having a cyclical character which seemingly contradicts his (implied) ideas, outlined earlier, on the linear development of history. The exact way Zyuganov phrases this in Russian is “cyclical-undulating spiral character,” a phrase which has no sense but which the Programme expresses as: “[c]ommunists believe that the historical process happens in evolutionary and revolutionary forms.”<sup>551</sup> Zyuganov writes of various thinkers over the centuries acknowledging that such cycles occur over decades and centuries.<sup>552</sup> If there are such cycles, this implies that society is destined to go through phases of communism and non-communism: that there will be a return to communism only for it to be rejected again. If this were to be the case, Zyuganov has answered his own question about why socialism was rejected - it came to the end of a historical cycle. There is a clear lack of logic and coherence in his reasoning.

Writing in 1997, Zyuganov claims that “[s]ocialism in its Russian form promoted the preservation of the integrity of the state and its transformation into a world power ... but as we know, the Russian form of socialism has serious defects ... Consequently, in the 1970s and 1980s, the national economy of the USSR began to display signs of stagnation. This occurred because the rigid system of state ownership of all property, including so-called ‘co-operative’ ownership, stifled incentives in commerce and manufacturing, delayed the introduction of new technologies and destroyed the motivation to work.”<sup>553</sup> He also argues that “monopolistic state ownership contributed to the creation of a rigid political system which, by the end of the 1980s, encompassed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and various bodies of Soviet power. A virtual merging of party and state had taken place, permeated by a uniform ideology. Thus, a consummate political-managerial system throttling any attempts to change the status quo developed with self-preservation as its basic function.”<sup>554</sup> He does not indicate how his acknowledgement of defects in the ‘Russian form’ of socialism fits with his continuing support for the idea of moving forward to socialism or whether a variety of forms of property ownership would be retained once communism had been achieved or if such a move would be a temporary measure and how party and state would be kept

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<sup>550</sup> Party Programme, 1995, p.102.

<sup>551</sup> op. cit., p.97.

<sup>552</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.10.

<sup>553</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.94.

<sup>554</sup> op. cit., p.95.

separate in a future socialist state. Later works, discussed below, indicate some consideration of these issues.

He claims that Russia operates according to different economic laws from those governing economic activity in the West.<sup>555</sup> Zyuganov sees the suggestion that all countries are doomed to follow the same path of capitalist development as misguided and that their own circumstances can dictate otherwise. He writes that “[t]he history of our party is witness to the fact that communists have obtained real achievements exclusively when and where they have followed objective logic and necessities of development of the country, society and state, when they have relied on the national soil, soul and the distinctiveness of the peoples of the Union. And, conversely, in those conditions when they permitted themselves to be fascinated by distracting constructions, success ceased to accompany them.”<sup>556</sup> This concentration on national development as opposed to international co-operation between the working classes of different nations provides considerable reason for questioning retention of the term ‘communist’ in the party’s title.

In terms of the reform of the economy, Zyuganov certainly appears to be in favour of increased competition: “[i]nside our country the state form of ownership, in essence, became a monopoly in the whole vast USSR, effectively liquidating any basis for competition and competitiveness and turning them into mere formalities. As a consequence, the natural, objective source of progress within the social system disappeared.”<sup>557</sup> Zyuganov also writes of a move away from a planned economy and a reliance on state controlled industries. He refers to the term ‘market economy’ as being “greatly compromised”, saying he prefers to speak of a mixed economy “which develops according to objective laws and is most acceptable for our national form”.<sup>558</sup> How a mixed economy will develop according to “objective laws” that are known in advance, he declines to explain.

In reply to the question of whether he would reject the market economy on coming to power, he replies that while the “negative effects” of state regulation of the economy must not be forgotten, it does have beneficial effects as well such as investment, credit and tax systems.<sup>559</sup> As investment and credit and tax systems also exist in a market economy, Zyuganov does not succeed in making a case for a planned, mixed economy being better than a market economy. He also suggests that he would keep the market economy but re-introduce some elements of state planning but once again,

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<sup>555</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.166.

<sup>556</sup> op. cit., p.173.

<sup>557</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.103.

<sup>558</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.14.

<sup>559</sup> op. cit., p.15.

there is no explanation of how this is to work in practice. He also talks about the “development and effective co-operation of different forms of ownership”<sup>560</sup> without saying whether this means retaining privatisation where it has already occurred but does make clear that he no longer opposes private property as he promises that the population would not have their flats and allotments that they had bought confiscated nor would they lose the shares they had acquired in privatised companies.

He writes: “[n]ow the main work of the Great October – the world socialist system – is experiencing a period of defeat and failure. But the idea of socialism, which materialised with the October Revolution, is alive and it wins over more and more new millions of people on all continents.”<sup>561</sup> These remarks are included in a pamphlet published in 1997 but Zyuganov did not inform his readers who the new millions being won over to socialism are. He continues: “[t]he twentieth century was the century of the Great October. The 21st century will allow the accomplishment of its immortal ideals.”<sup>562</sup> It seems that Zyuganov does not consider that one of the most momentous events of the late 20th century was the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the “immortal ideals” of the October Revolution have already been rejected once. He writes that: “[o]ur slogan is not ‘Back to Socialism!’ but ‘Forward to Socialism!’”<sup>563</sup> but once again, no analysis is offered of how the revolution is to succeed next time round. These declarations would indicate another area of agreement with the 1995 Programme (which notes that the battle between capitalism and socialism has not been concluded<sup>564</sup>), however, Zyuganov continues in the same book, a matter of a few pages later, to praise the 150 years’ old ideas “Moscow is the third Rome” and “Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality” of the minister of enlightenment, S. Uvarov, looking backwards to an old imperial Russian philosophy. What he looks to, whether forwards or backwards, is hardly socialism as it has been known in Russia and Eastern Europe but this justification for communism, whilst as old as communist ideology, is nationalist.

As the CPRF’s influence in Russia decreases, Zyuganov writes that “[t]he Russian Communist Party successfully increased its prestige and influence in the left wing anti-globalist, anti-imperialist movement. ... Tens and hundreds of meetings with foreign delegations and politicians, discussing international problems, making joint presentations - these are an important

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<sup>560</sup> op. cit., p.9.

<sup>561</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Oktyabr’ i sovremennost’*, Inform-Znanie, Moscow, 1997d, p.34.

<sup>562</sup> op. cit., p.35.

<sup>563</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.27.

<sup>564</sup> *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, accessed on 06/07/06.

part of the everyday work of the CPRF.”<sup>565</sup> By 2006, the CPRF was having to turn its attention abroad in order to appear influential. In a clear denial of reality, Zyuganov also writes that “[t]he CPRF is now situated in the ascendant and in the position of deciding serious matters. It is a very effective political organisation, which actively protects freedom of speech, democracy, the rights of citizens and the best traditions of Russian social and political life. It is clear that the political influence of the party is growing.”<sup>566</sup> However, in Russia’s ‘managed democracy’ the CPRF is very limited in its ability to influence policy-making, no matter what the party may have decided on ‘serious matters’ and the influence of the party is in fact declining, not growing.

In a rare criticism of Putin, Zyuganov claims that “[t]he current regime is unable to protect the interests of Russia. Every day this becomes more obvious. Putin is occupied with travelling all over the world, meeting and holding negotiations with our geopolitical enemies, creating the impression of apparently raising the prestige of Russia, as if succeeding in securing some kind of concession to our benefit.”<sup>567</sup> However, Russia’s influence is increasing along with the prices of oil and gas, irrespective of the number of meetings Putin holds with foreign heads of state. Whilst not invited to meetings with Russia’s “geopolitical enemies” Zyuganov travels abroad to meet the leaders of left-wing movements trying to raise the prestige of the CPRF. He writes: “socialist countries today form a system, playing a visible role in the world. China, Vietnam and Cuba: the countries of Latin America are fighting American globalisation. We communists are by no means alone in the world.”<sup>568</sup> The “new millions” being won over to communism that Zyuganov referred to in 1997 but did not name, he now sees as the people of South America, but this shift to the left that he writes about is notable on one continent, not “all continents” as Zyuganov insists.

His 2006 work, *Zashchishchaya Nash Mir: O Vneshnepoliticheskoi Deyatelnosti KPRF*, begins with a lengthy evaluation of the achievements of Russia during the Second World War and recounts the history and achievements of communism in general and Russian communism in particular. The second section “The Battle Against Worldwide Anticommunism” attacks the actions of the Council of Europe which Zyuganov interprets as anti-Russian. References to Marx, Lenin and the Communist Manifesto are more numerous than in earlier works but there is little change in his arguments as the title of the conclusion: “Time to Change Course”, refers to the world, not the party. “Yes, the international range of contacts of the CPRF is broad and the forms of co-operation are

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<sup>565</sup> Zyuganov, *Zashchishchaya Nash Mir: O Vneshnepoliticheskoi Deyatelnosti KPRF*, ITRK, Moscow, 2006, p.4.

<sup>566</sup> op. cit., p.128.

<sup>567</sup> op. cit., p.16.

<sup>568</sup> op. cit., p.131.

varied. And all these possibilities for its expansion are vast”<sup>569</sup> is, perhaps, an admission that the CPRF now needs to look abroad for support for socialism.

## NATIONALISM

One of Zyuganov’s themes that he returns to regularly, and which forms a central theme of *Geografiya pobedy* (1997), is that of Russia being a unique civilisation. This is a theory with a long history, acknowledged by Lenin in his work “On the National Pride of the Great Russians,” in which he also described nationalism as “a broad and very deep ideological current”.<sup>570</sup> Zyuganov writes of a ‘national idea’ being necessary “which can turn into material power and unite around it all healthy patriotic powers in society”<sup>571</sup> as a means to rebuild Russia. While patriotism is now clearly one of the most effective methods of appealing to voters who regret Russia’s loss of superpower status, this emphasis on a people uniting around a ‘national idea’ suggests that Zyuganov no longer sees communism as sufficiently attractive an ideology on its own to be strong enough to return the party to power.

Zyuganov, and others in the CPSU were already writing nationalistic calls to the people before he became leader of the CPRF and their ‘Great Russian’ nationalism was already evident in 1991 in the document *Word to the People* which begins: “Dear Russians, Citizens of the USSR, Compatriots!”<sup>572</sup> He and his co-authors call on Russians before other ethnic groups in the USSR. It continues “[w]e turn to you with words of the utmost responsibility, to turn to the representatives of all professions and classes, all ideologies and beliefs, all parties and movements for all our differences are nothing before the general misfortune and pain, before our love for the Homeland, which we see as united, indivisible, unifying fraternal peoples in a powerful state, without which we would have no existence under the sun”.<sup>573</sup> In a similar way, the Party of Democratic Socialism in Germany has become a representative of East German interests<sup>574</sup> and the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova claims to be the “party of Moldovan statehood and patriotism” and now speaks of national identity while reducing references to internationalism and class interests.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> op. cit., p.232.

<sup>570</sup> Davis, H. *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1967, p.xi.

<sup>571</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.165.

<sup>572</sup> Zyuganov, 1993, p.41.

<sup>573</sup> ibid.

<sup>574</sup> Segert, D. “The PDS: Regional Party or a Second Social-Democratic Party in Germany?” in Bozoki, A. and Ishiyama, J. (eds.) *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, M.E. Sharp, London, 2002, p.183.

<sup>575</sup> March, L. *The Moldovan Communists: from Leninism to Democracy?*, Studies in Public Policy, no.405, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2005, pp.5-6.



The most important contributions to current Russian right-wing thought have also influenced Zyuganov, *Russofobiya*, by Igor Shafarevich, and *Postperestroika*, by Sergei Kurginyan<sup>576</sup> and CPRF appeals to patriots during 1991 led to the convening of the CP RSFSR sponsored conference “For a Great, United Russia” that brought together several future coup leaders, conservative writers and the representatives of about forty ‘patriotic’ cultural and political organisations, from neo-communist to monarchist groups to further the goal of communist and nationalist unity. The establishment at this conference of a “Co-ordinating Council of Patriotic Forces,” headed by National-Bolshevik Eduard Volodin and Zyuganov, was one of the first steps towards long-term, close co-operation between left and right in Russia.<sup>577</sup> Zyuganov claimed in an interview in *Den* in November 1991 that “no party in the future would enjoy mass support if it stayed indifferent to the national idea”.<sup>578</sup>

Zyuganov writes that the ‘Russian idea’ is stronger than any other ideological or philosophical ‘scheme’. So does he see it as being stronger than communism? He writes of the reunification of the ‘red’ and ‘white’ ideals, ‘red’ being social justice, which Zyuganov says means “before God, all are equal” - one of many religious references in the context of socialism - and the ‘white’ being ‘national-intelligent statehood’. He claims that Russia “finally finds the longed-for social, inter-estate, inter-class agreement and sovereign power bequeathed by tens of generations of ancestors ...”<sup>579</sup> This “inter-class” agreement being nationalism. Zyuganov needs this “inter-class agreement” to be found without a socialist revolution because he has accepted a democratic route back to power.

Zyuganov writes that the “‘ideology of patriotism’, can become not only a reliable philosophical basis of a functioning state mechanism of Russian power, but also lay the theoretical and philosophical preconditions of policy formation for Russia as a powerful alternative centre of world influence capable of embodying justice and self-government by the people.”<sup>580</sup> Zyuganov’s ideas are a mixture of pre-Revolutionary Russian political thought, communism and ‘Great Russian’ nationalism and he writes of “national reconciliation”, saying that necessary preconditions include the changing of the “socio-economic course” and developing a “national-state doctrine” that takes into account the “thousand year experience of Russian statehood” and that it is clear that Russia can

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<sup>576</sup> Vujacic, V. “Gennadii Zyuganov and the ‘Third Road’”, in *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol.12, no.2, 1996, pp.118-54, p.124.

<sup>577</sup> op. cit., pp.133-34.

<sup>578</sup> op. cit., p.136.

<sup>579</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.172.

<sup>580</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, pp.9-10.

not overcome the economic crisis without reverting to socialism.<sup>581</sup> He writes that “[i]t is necessary to look closely at our own history and understand the world significance of the thousand-year Russian statehood and to try to understand the depth of its meaning over the centuries which inspired our ancestors to works and exploits of state construction”.<sup>582</sup>

Zyuganov claims that Russia, in terms of ideology, represents the traditions and values of communality, collectivism, “state self-sufficiency” and the “aspiration to embody the highest ideals of good and justice” and that Russia is an “autonomous mechanism” that is distinct economically from the West and its “free market model” of development. He writes that “[t]he foundations of Russian statehood have always been and still remain a great-power thinking, formational diversity, nationality, spirituality and patriotism, all of which is contained in the collective concept of the ‘Russian idea’”.<sup>583</sup> The ‘Russian idea’ is, according to Zyuganov, one that is applicable to all the nationalities that he sees as rightfully belonging under Russia’s influence and therefore, sets all these people at odds with the West and capitalist forms of economic development. These people of the “Eurasian bloc” are also, in Zyuganov’s view, happy to be led by Russia in opposition to the West and capitalism.

He recognises the identification of communism with nationalism in the minds of many Russians as he writes of ‘millions of honest communists,’ those “who saved the world from fascism and brought Russia to the level of one of the greatest powers in the world” so seeking to retain the support of those who feel betrayed by the post-Soviet governments.<sup>584</sup> This approach recognises that for many, particularly older Russians, the CPSU had positive as well as negative associations. As well as being identified with “the brutality of the Soviet years” the party is also associated with the “achievement of industrialisation, victory over Nazi Germany, superpower status, and the development of a modern, urbanised and literate society.”<sup>585</sup> It has been noted that this is probably the main reason why Zyuganov has resisted suggestions that the party change its name as the term ‘communist’ is associated with an era of great pride in the Russian nation and its achievements.<sup>586</sup> It will be seen in Chapter 5 that these views are indeed held by the party members in St Petersburg who were interviewed.

Despite the attachment, among large sections of the population, to the name and what it

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<sup>581</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.118.

<sup>582</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.29.

<sup>583</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.120.

<sup>584</sup> Zyuganov, 1993, p.34.

<sup>585</sup> Sakwa, R. “Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.14, no.1&2, 1998, pp.128-157, p.145.

<sup>586</sup> Lester, J. “Overdosing on Nationalism: Gennadii Zyuganov and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation”, *New Left Review*, no.221, January-February 1997, p.40.

represents, it has been necessary in the post-communist era for the party to engage in ideological renewal as it could not hope to achieve much support in elections if it only represented a return to the recently-rejected political system of the past. The party also faced a problem with the majority of the reformers having left the CPSU to join the democratic parties. This absence of reformers within the new CPRF combined with the sense of loss of national status in Russia with the end of the Soviet Union has led to the CPRF adopting its present nationalist stance. In an attempt to claim patriotism for the communists, Zyuganov declares the ‘democratic opposition’, another group referred to in inverted commas, deceived no one with its ‘decorative patriotism’, however, patriotism has been recognised by most political parties in Russia as one of the key factors necessary for attracting support.<sup>587</sup> Zyuganov regrets his inability to make the CPRF’s patriotism clear earlier as he writes that the adoption of nationalistic policies was opposed by “frightened ‘extremist-Bolsheviks’” in the party.<sup>588</sup> He refers to the Zhirinovskiy/LDPR electoral campaign as “literate and energetic”<sup>589</sup> and claims the democrats were defeated because the electorate saw their ‘patriotism’ as shallow whereas Zhirinovskiy’s and the communists’ was stronger which led to their success. Zyuganov writes that the communists’ success was the result of their being able to adapt to the changing situation.<sup>590</sup>

Zyuganov is in favour of a ‘national-liberation’ movement in his most recent writings but where other nationalities have sought independence and defence of their national interests, he is deeply disapproving, especially if the countries concerned were once part of the USSR: “the aggressive separatism of the border regions ... the January events in Lithuania ... the hysteria of the ‘democratic’ press, the defamation of the army and loss of all strategic allies”<sup>591</sup> he writes of the demonstrations in Vilnius in 1991. Had ethnic Russians been shot in a similar situation, no doubt their separatist intentions would not have been ‘aggressive’, the ‘events’ would have been a ‘massacre’, the reaction of the press would not have been ‘hysterical’ and ‘democratic’ would not have needed quotation marks. Later, when the Baltic nations sought recognition for past oppression, he wrote that: “[f]rom September 2005 in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe began the rise of a regular anticommunist scenario. On the initiative of delegates from the Baltic States and with the support of right-wing conservative parties of Europe, a discussion of the report “The Need for International Censure of the Crimes of Communism” took place, the

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<sup>587</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.8.

<sup>588</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>589</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>590</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>591</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, p.38.

recommendations of which were prepared for approval ...[and]... passed at the end of January 2006.”<sup>592</sup>

The idea that Russians are oppressed by their own government in 2006, long after Putin and United Russia had adopted a patriotic stance, is one that Zyuganov has been unable to relinquish: “Russophobia has become the official ideology of the ruling regime, the main instrument of the destruction of the country. This is a dangerous form of extremism and nationalism.”<sup>593</sup> He continues: “[t]he present line of the Kremlin is the path to new loss and humiliation. The CPRF and all patriotic powers of Russia declare that it is time to stop and stand up for the position of firm defence of our national interests.”<sup>594</sup> How the government is undermining national interests he declines to explain.

The fear of the destruction of the Russian nation is a concern that recurs in much of Zyuganov’s work. In *Derzhava* (1994), he speculates about two possible paths of future development for Russia. The first he defines as “cosmopolitan and stateless” which he claims will lead towards “rigid political, ideological, economic and informational unification within the framework of the ‘New World Order’”. While Zyuganov writes that any movement towards integrating Russia into a ‘single world community’ must be welcomed, he nevertheless feels that it will only lead to material prosperity for the ‘active’ part of the population and ultimately, is unpatriotic.<sup>595</sup> In an interview with A. Prokhanov, editor of *Zavtra*, and published in *Za Gorizontom* (1995), Zyuganov reminisces about the *Word to the People* which, he recalls, they wrote together. He speaks about how relevant it is to the current situation in Russia and how what they anticipated would happen three years before this interview, has now happened. He speaks of how he does not understand why their compatriots “are ... blindly ... destroying our long-suffering great homeland” and asks why the people did not heed their warning.<sup>596</sup>

The second model, however, he describes as ‘national’ and ‘historically distinctive’ and this model assumes that “the process of global geopolitical unification of peoples and states” is misguided in its attempts to establish a “planetary dictatorship” of the ‘developed’ minority over the ‘backward’ majority.<sup>597</sup> Instead, Zyuganov writes that “[h]ealthy and stable international, inter-state relations are possible on the basis of constructive joint action of distinctive national cultures which determines the balance of interests and powers in the international arena”. Zyuganov writes that in

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<sup>592</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.62.

<sup>593</sup> op. cit., p.15.

<sup>594</sup> op. cit., p.235.

<sup>595</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.110.

<sup>596</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.128.

<sup>597</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.110.

order not to be drawn into the “fatal whirlpool of the ‘new world order’” Russia needs to follow its “rich patriotic, spiritual experience and its distinctive basis of moral-religious and social-political way of life.”<sup>598</sup> He writes that “[t]his model has nothing in common with xenophobia nor with aggressive nationalism nor with arrogant pride as it is often represented.”<sup>599</sup> Instead, Zyuganov claims to see this model as a positive way of refuting the policies being pursued at the time, which he saw as dooming the country to loss of sovereignty and its people to loss of spirituality, the disintegration of the national culture and loss of a sense of national awareness.

Zyuganov claims the traditional, European uses of the terms ‘left’, ‘right’ and ‘centre’ are less relevant in the Russian context<sup>600</sup> and under this pretext calls for coalition government or a government of national trust to save Russia. Whilst coalitions have been seen as useful tools by communist parties in the past to enable the communists to gain power, Zyuganov calls for unity based on patriotism rather than the emancipation of the working classes. The 2003 Election Platform calls for citizens of Russia to unite: “[i]n the face of the threat of colonialism and the extinction of our country, we, workers and peasants, engineers and academics, teachers and doctors, entrepreneurs and managers, artists and students, people of various views and beliefs, representatives of various parties and movements, have united in the National Bloc of the CPRF.”<sup>601</sup> Despite attributing blame for the problems in the CPSU to those who joined the party for career reasons, Zyuganov calls for those who do not believe in communism to join communists in a campaign to install the CPRF in power.

In acknowledgement of the fact that his ideas stray quite far from conventional Marxism, Zyuganov asks whether it is permissible, from a Marxist point of view, to speak of different types of civilisation, their cultural and historical uniqueness and their differing paths of development. He arrives quickly at the conclusion that it is no contradiction in speaking of different types of civilisation within the context of the development of mankind ‘in its movement towards communism,’ as he must, if he wishes to continue to combine communism with his claim that Russia is a unique civilisation. His personal experience of difficulties in trying to convince people of the merits of communism after its collapse seems to be one reason for his change in philosophy. This is suggested by his remark that at public rallies people have stopped indicating their support for what they had been hearing if he has, as he puts it, “repeated the stereotypical slogans of recent

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<sup>598</sup> op. cit., p.111.

<sup>599</sup> ibid.

<sup>600</sup> op. cit., p.112.

<sup>601</sup> 2003 election platform.

times”.<sup>602</sup> Young communists in St Petersburg also spoke of the need to find new methods of engaging people in political debate (see Chapter 5).

Although it is argued that Zyuganov has led the party in a radically new direction, to what extent do his ideas really constitute a deviation from the policies of the CPSU? Anti-Westernism and various other beliefs and values that include the idea of a third road to the modern world (neither capitalist nor socialist), may unite right-wing nationalists and communists,<sup>603</sup> however, as far as the communists are concerned, this ‘third road’ appears to be a temporary measure aimed at the eventual achievement of communism in the long term. The unity of far-left and far-right in search of the ‘third road’ has in fact been seen before and been seen outside Russia and Eastern Europe on the basis that ‘red-brown’ coalitions have a precedent in “the many conversions from the socialist left to the nationalist and fascist right in early 20th century Europe” as, amongst others, Mussolini was originally a socialist and that Hitler and the early Nazis learned some of their propaganda techniques from the left.<sup>604</sup> This alliance with the right, whilst genuine in terms of nationalist views shared by both sides, is no doubt viewed as another temporary measure on the road to communism. Having gained power, communist parties have a long history of suppressing former coalition partners.

Within Russia, also, nationalism has a long history of being accommodated alongside official communist ideology. According to Lester, “[f]or all the internationalist rhetoric of Soviet Communists, few observers have ever really questioned the predominance or prioritising of a nationalist agenda.”<sup>605</sup> As regards Zyuganov’s repositioning of the CPRF on more nationalist ground, it could be argued that it is difficult to criticise the communists for theoretical deviation from Marxism because of the lack of a definable Marxist theory of nationalism to deviate from.<sup>606</sup> However, Zyuganov’s idea that Russia is a unique civilisation that will lead others in a campaign against capitalism differs significantly from the traditional Marxist view of all nations being equal and the move towards communism being led by the working class across national boundaries.

It was argued by Marx that a true community could be realised only when classes have been abolished and the state as such had disappeared and also that nationalities were destined to disappear along with classes.<sup>607</sup> Yet Zyuganov writes that “[o]f course, class interests cannot coincide everywhere and all the time. But these differences were and must become anew a source for constructive social dialogue, as the engine of rational state reform, and not of discord, revolt and

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<sup>602</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.168.

<sup>603</sup> Vujacic, 1996, p.120.

<sup>604</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> Lester, 1997, pp.36-37.

<sup>606</sup> *op. cit.*, p.39.

<sup>607</sup> Davis, 1967, p.6.

war”<sup>608</sup> rather than the “... violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie [that] lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat”<sup>609</sup> that Marx and Engels had in mind.

When Marx and Engels wrote of the ‘withering away of the state’, what they intended was the disappearance of the state as a coercive mechanism and as the instrument of the dominating class: the bourgeoisie. The nation was expected to continue and assume the role of a unit around which an international society of the future was to be constructed.<sup>610</sup> However, presumably there was not meant to be competition between nations as, according to the *Communist Manifesto*: “In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.”<sup>611</sup> Zyuganov, however, writes of a division between East and West in terms of a clash of civilisations and traditions rather than a division between classes that crosses national boundaries.

Whilst Engels wrote that great national states in Europe are “the unavoidable precondition for the harmonious international co-operation of the peoples” under the rule of the proletariat,<sup>612</sup> Marx and Engels defended the ruthless expansion of imperialism, provided that it led to economic development,<sup>613</sup> until they became committed to the idea of proletarian internationalism, from which point onwards they usually described nationalism as ‘narrow’.<sup>614</sup> Lenin also tended to look on nationalism as a bourgeois prejudice, writing in his ‘Critical Remarks on the National Question’ in December 1913 that Marxism was “incompatible with nationalism” and in 1914 that the proletariat’s task was to “fight against all nationalism, and above all against Great Russian nationalism”.<sup>615</sup> Zyuganov has not been alone, however, in ignoring Lenin on this matter.

Over the seventy-four years’ existence of the Soviet Union, theory and practice have not always coincided. Expediency has led the CPSU to adopt patriotism on a number of occasions, notably, with the increasing aggressiveness of the fascist powers, the Soviet government began to stress the importance of love for the ‘Soviet fatherland’<sup>616</sup> and with the German invasion of Russia, the Marxist, internationalist tone of Soviet propaganda was replaced with Russian nationalism (“the

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<sup>608</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.298.

<sup>609</sup> Marx & Engels, 1968, p.102.

<sup>610</sup> Davis, 1967, p.15.

<sup>611</sup> Marx & Engels, 1968, p.102.

<sup>612</sup> Davis, 1967, p.13.

<sup>613</sup> op. cit., p.14.

<sup>614</sup> op. cit., p.74.

<sup>615</sup> op. cit., p.199.

<sup>616</sup> Mamatey, V. *Soviet Russian Imperialism*, D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., Princeton, 1964., p.40.

‘Second Imperialist War’ was transformed in Soviet propaganda into the ‘Great Patriotic War’<sup>617</sup>; and in the victory celebrations at the end of the war, Stalin focused on the ethnic Russians for special praise. Mamatey writes that “[h]enceforth, their primacy as the ‘oldest brother in the family of Soviet peoples’ was explicitly recognised. The theory that ‘Soviet patriotism’ differed from ‘bourgeois nationalism’ was maintained, but the content and symbolism of Soviet patriotism were simply expressions of Great Russian nationalism.”<sup>618</sup> Zyuganov now refers to ethnic Russians as the ‘Big Brother’ in the family of Russian peoples (see below).

The rise of the Russian nationalist movement from the 1950s onwards was the combined result of “the reinvention of the Russian national identity by a group of intellectuals in search of new political ideals in the aftermath of the Twentieth Party Congress and of a decades-long policy pursued by the CPSU, which actively supported this reinvention in order to gain a new basis of political legitimacy.”<sup>619</sup> The Soviet regime spent decades encouraging the very people whose ideas represented a direct challenge to its official ideology because of the important role nationalist intellectuals played in post-Stalinist communist society and those intellectuals were regarded as crucial to the communist regime because of their role as creators of national symbols and myths.<sup>620</sup>

As the leader of an organisation that was not fundamentally different from its predecessor (the CP RSFSR), it was not a drastically new direction that Zyuganov introduced. As noted earlier, Zyuganov had worked in the propaganda department of the CPSU. This department had developed links with the Russian nationalist intellectuals over several decades, a consequence of which has been Zyuganov’s belief that Russian communists could retain power only if they adopted a Russian nationalist ideology.<sup>621</sup> While Zyuganov may have been inspired by the events in Serbia (and was a staunch defender of the memory of Milosevic)<sup>622</sup>, where the ruling party became the only communist party in Eastern Europe to stay in power by adopting a deeply nationalist platform, it was in December 1990, at the Seventh Congress of the RSFSR Writers’ Union, where Zyuganov first indicated his reasons in calling for the ideological transformation of the CP RSFSR: the unification of all opponents of reform.<sup>623</sup>

Zyuganov asks in *Globalisation and the Future of Mankind*: “[i]s mankind doomed to the

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<sup>617</sup> op. cit., p.54.

<sup>618</sup> op. cit., p.92.

<sup>619</sup> Brudny, Y. *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, p.3.

<sup>620</sup> op. cit., p.15.

<sup>621</sup> op. cit., p.255.

<sup>622</sup> “We reject the assertion that Milosevic died from natural causes. It was definitely a crime. He was in fact killed in prison.” Zyuganov, 2006, p.144.

<sup>623</sup> Brudny, 1998, p.255.



dismal fate which the Western creators of the New World Order and the ideologists who serve their interests are planning for us? Of course not! There is no such thing as fatal inevitability in history.”<sup>624</sup> Unless that inevitability involves an outcome that Zyuganov sees as desirable as he also quotes Lenin on the “inevitable advent of socialism”.<sup>625</sup> He further writes that “[t]he West seems to imagine that with the advent of globalisation it has found a way of outwitting history and stopping it in its tracks. This is nonsense and very dangerous nonsense at that.”<sup>626</sup> Zyuganov’s ‘history’ is clearly meant to be future development, not past development and its direction is inevitable only for the communists.

In characteristic denial of the facts, Zyuganov writes that “[t]he most important factors in the [Second World War] victory were the friendship and brotherhood of nations. All nationalities of the Soviet Union arose for the protection of the homeland.”<sup>627</sup> In Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, and amongst the Russian peasantry, the Nazi invasion was initially welcomed by some under the mistaken impression that it would result in national sovereignty, the reopening of the churches and the dissolution of the collective farms.<sup>628</sup> Zyuganov needs to convince his readers that all nationalities in the former Soviet Union were willing participants in that Union and would wish to see it restored. To this end, he tries to assure readers that other nationalities would not be oppressed: “[i]nternational means between nations, so that abolishing or denying national identity is no part of it. Internationalism, indeed is unimaginable without patriotism. Internationalism grows on the basis of peoples’ influencing and co-operating with each other, of cultures and languages enriching each other, of co-operation between national economies.”<sup>629</sup> However, “internationalism” growing as a result of “peoples’ influencing and co-operating with each other, of cultures and languages enriching each other” is, judging by comparison with Zyuganov’s other writings, intended to convey the idea of other nations accepting Russian culture, language and leadership. Zyuganov has moved a long way from the traditional communist view that patriotism was a problem that hindered the development of unity between the working classes across national boundaries. Instead, he writes of removing the class boundaries within nations to “... open a broad highway to truly national unity and free national development.”<sup>630</sup>

However, this “free national development” is for Russia to lead and other nations to follow.

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<sup>624</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Globalisation and the Future of Mankind*, Translation by A. Tait, 2003, Russian Panorama, Moscow, 2004, p.162.

<sup>625</sup> op. cit., p.167.

<sup>626</sup> op. cit., p.195.

<sup>627</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.59.

<sup>628</sup> Hosking, G. *A History of the Soviet Union*, Fontana Press, London, 1990, p.270.

<sup>629</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, p.175.

<sup>630</sup> ibid.

In recent years, Zyuganov's work has concentrated more and more on the reformation of the Soviet Union, again under the leadership of Russia. In a chapter of *Globalisation and the Future of Mankind*, entitled "Big Brother Returns", Zyuganov writes that "[t]he main body of the new Union will consist of the two million-strong, united, three branches of the great Russian people, to whom all those who are ready to connect their future, can join." He continues, "You see, so much irritation and sarcasm has been poured on us by haters of the Russian people, in recent times, deriding and discrediting [Russia's] role as 'big brother' in the united family of our peoples! And what of it? Ten years have passed and now it is clearly obvious: 'big brother' will return. For without Russian national revival neither economic, political nor spiritual revival of the majority of peoples of the 'post-Soviet states' is possible."<sup>631</sup> Zyuganov cannot be unaware of the use of the term 'Big Brother' by George Orwell in his novel *1984*, to describe an unseen and all-powerful dictator as he cites Orwell when refuting the idea that his novel was a criticism of communism (it is in Zyuganov's view in fact a criticism of state monopoly capitalism)<sup>632</sup> and yet Zyuganov sees the term in a very positive, even glorious light when he applies it to ethnic Russians and their relation, as he sees it, to Ukrainians and Belarusians and Moldovans. Zyuganov claims "[t]he anti-Utopias of Orwell, Huxley, Zamyatin and many less gifted authors paint a portrait not of socialism, but of features of state monopoly capitalism transferred to the future and reduced to absurdity."<sup>633</sup> An official party document on nationalism even claims that only the unification of Belarus and Ukraine with Russia in the Soviet Union guaranteed the protection and independence of their cultural identity and the unification of Russia with Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan protected those peoples from the actions of "aggressive neighbours".<sup>634</sup>

One further aspect of the CPRF's ethnic Russian nationalism is anti-semitism, an undercurrent in Zyuganov's writings that has been noted by various writers.<sup>635</sup> Zyuganov writes that the CPRF is considered an anti-semitic party but makes excuses for the party instead of dealing with the issue: "Here we need to consider who exactly is calling the CPRF an anti-semitic and nationalist party. As regards nationalism, I have already explained my point of view - these are accusations to stop the growth of the national-liberation movement in Russia. As concerns the accusations of anti-semitism, this is a secret from no one that it is the well-tested weapon of Zionists. And when such accusations are put forward by the media controlled by Gusinsky, Berezovsky, Friedman,

<sup>631</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Globalizatsiya i Sud'ba Chelovechestva*, Molodaya Gvardiya, Moscow, 2002, p.376.

<sup>632</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, 185.

<sup>633</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>634</sup> "Pozitsiya KPRF po Natsional'nomu Voprosu", *KPRF v Rezolyutsiyakh i Resheniyakh S'ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TsK (1999-2001)*, ITRK, Moscow, 2001, p.228.

<sup>635</sup> See, for example, Scanlan, 1996, p.40 and p.42 (see footnote 5). Clark, 2006, pp.15-25, March, 2002.

Abramovich and so on, it remains simply to ask: did you expect otherwise?”<sup>636</sup> Notably, Zyuganov was also slow to condemn anti-semitic remarks by CPRF Duma Deputy Albert Makashov in 1998<sup>637</sup> and there are references in Zyuganov’s own writings to a “mercantile, oceanic, cosmopolitan oligarchy” that are interpreted as being coded anti-semitic remarks.<sup>638</sup>

## RELIGION

In the words of the *Communist Manifesto*: “[l]aw, morality, religion, are to [the proletariat] so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.”<sup>639</sup> However, Zyuganov has moved away from the traditional atheism of the CPSU and now includes religion as an important factor in the development of the Russian state. He notes the importance of the conversion of Slavic tribes to Christianity in 988 in contributing to the emergence of a stable Russian state and the formation of the “unique ethno-political society that is known to the world as the ‘Russian people’.”<sup>640</sup> He further claims that “every important period of Russian history has coincided with stages of the spiritual development of Russia” from that time onwards.<sup>641</sup> It is a measure of how far he has moved away from the old communist terminology that he refers to the 21st century of the “Christian era” rather than “our era” (the Soviet alternative) as being a turning-point in the development of mankind.<sup>642</sup>

It was not Zyuganov, however, who initiated the change of direction in communist policy to support the Russian Orthodox church. Religion came to be seen as an important part of the nationalist agenda that the communists could not ignore if they wished to rebuild their support. In 1989, the United Workers’ Front and the Russian nationalist intelligentsia formed an anti-perestroika alliance to fight the 1990 election to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, after which both groups played a significant part in assisting the nationalists and opponents of perestroika in the CPSU apparatus with the creation of the CP RSFSR.<sup>643</sup> Ivan Polozkov, who was elected leader of the CP RSFSR, gave an interview in which he expressed Russian nationalist views on various topics, in particular, he proposed an alliance between the CP RSFSR and the Russian Orthodox

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<sup>636</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, pp.142-43.

<sup>637</sup> Buzgalin, A. “Anti-Semitism: The Tragic Consequence of a Crisis in the System”, *The Jamestown Foundation Prism*, 12/11/98, No. 24.

<sup>638</sup> Scanlan, J. “The Russian Idea from Dostoevskii to Ziuganov”, in *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.43, no.4, 1996, p.40, footnote 5.

<sup>639</sup> Marx and Engels, (trans. 1888), 1985, p.92.

<sup>640</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.119.

<sup>641</sup> op. cit., p.120.

<sup>642</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.3.

<sup>643</sup> Brudny, 1998, pp237-38.

Church, which he described as the party's "natural ally in the struggle to enforce morality and prevent inter-ethnic conflict", the first time this view was voiced by a high-ranking communist official.<sup>644</sup> Zyuganov's support of the Russian Orthodox Church, and other religions which enjoy widespread support in Russia, is a continuation of a trend that had begun on the left before the formation of the CPRF and an aspect of Russian nationalism that he cannot afford to ignore if he wishes to claim that the CPRF is a patriotic party.

In *Znat' i deistvovat': otvety na voprosy*, published before the presidential elections in 1996 to try to dispel fears of what the CPRF would do if Zyuganov were elected president, Zyuganov replied to the question of how he views religion by saying that a politician who does not understand the "colossal role" which religion has played in Russia, and the uniqueness of the Orthodox faith, does not understand Russia itself and therefore cannot lead Russia out of its crisis.<sup>645</sup> As a nationalist, he also supported the Orthodox church against the "invasion of foreign cults"<sup>646</sup> which, in an attempt to discredit the regime of the time, he claimed the government was supporting. Zyuganov has written of his opposition to programmes on television about or, as Zyuganov claims, promoting, other religions and cults which are non-Orthodox branches of Christianity.<sup>647</sup>

Again, in *Uroki zhizni*, Zyuganov returns to religion, writing of having studied the Bible and the Koran (the latter when studying the Caucasus). He claims that while the history of the Caucasus can be understood properly without a thorough knowledge of the Koran, Russian history is only clear in the light of understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>648</sup> However, he praises other religions besides Christianity, writing that religion provides a source of tradition that enables society to function in a constructive manner.<sup>649</sup> When writing about a reorientation of foreign policy towards China and the rebuilding of Russian society, Zyuganov also refers to Confucianism in very positive terms. He notes that Confucianism always valued very highly "intense systematic work", self discipline and the ability to work collectively,<sup>650</sup> and praises its emphasis on respect by citizens for the state and care of citizens by the state, respect for the old and the importance of hierarchy in society. Respect for the old would be popular with the party's older supporters but 'hierarchy in society' is surely out of step with traditional communist philosophy. Harmony in social relations, discipline and order being priorities along with care of 'the fortress of the family'. He claims these

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<sup>644</sup> op.cit., p.251.

<sup>645</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.35.

<sup>646</sup> op cit., p.36.

<sup>647</sup> Zyuganov, 1993, p.164.

<sup>648</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.308.

<sup>649</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Geografiya pobedy: osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki*, [s.n.], Moscow, 1997c, p.197.

<sup>650</sup> op. cit., p.192.

are the reasons for the ‘phenomenal success’ of the countries of Eastern Asia in economics and technology.<sup>651</sup>

He has similar praise for Islam with respect for the old and care of the young being “natural behaviour for a Muslim” singled out for praise again along with collectivism taking priority over individualism which, Zyuganov claims, leads to great attention being paid to social justice.<sup>652</sup> Zyuganov argues that such religious traditionalism is necessary for Russia at the beginning of the new (Christian) millennium, that there must be a return to full-scale national spiritual traditions and that only these can guarantee the “necessary moral and philosophical base for a strategic jump into the ‘post-industrial’ world”. Here he returns to communist era terminology with the idea of ‘jumping’ into another economic stage of development. It is also significant that there is a sizeable Muslim population within Russia, and of course within the borders of the former USSR, which Zyuganov hopes to reconstruct.

Zyuganov has found a new nationalist cause in the defence of the Russian Orthodox church. he writes that: “[t]he main educator of the people, apart from school, has always been the church. As a result, the policies of the state must be directed towards supporting the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional Russian faiths by strengthening spirituality and morality in society.”<sup>653</sup> However, the replacement of the role of the Communist Party in educating the population with the role of the church is no doubt a temporary shift in policy aimed at securing the nationalist vote. Zyuganov writes that religion is an ancient form of ideology and that the ancient religions are under threat from American globalisation,<sup>654</sup> a new theme in Zyuganov’s writing that he now links with most aspects of his earlier writings. However, Zyuganov’s new-found approval and defence of major religions practised in Russia does not extend to Judaism and his approval of Islam seems to be based largely on the idea that Islamic countries are ideal partners for Russia in the campaign against capitalism.

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<sup>651</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>652</sup> *op. cit.*, p.200.

<sup>653</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Postizhenie Rossii, Mysl’*, Moscow, 2000, p.505.

<sup>654</sup> Zyuganov, 2002, p.336. One rather bizarre aspect of Zyuganov’s support for the Russian Orthodox church involves one his many conspiracy theories, this one more extreme than most. Zyuganov criticizes the present regime’s attempts to introduce individual taxon numbers for citizens which, he claims, is seen by religious believers as the first step on the path to a global electronic network that would exert financial control over all those who pay tax. He explains that a significant part of the Orthodox priesthood view this move as “the construction of a worldwide electronic concentration camp” due to the use of barcodes including the number 666, which Zyuganov reminds the reader, is considered by Christians to be the sign of the devil and, he claims, is due to cause a serious conflict between religious believers and the state taxation officials. Zyuganov, 2002, p.240.

## GEOPOLITICS

Geopolitics has influenced much of Zyuganov's work and he uses various geopolitical theories to justify his change in emphasis from the inevitable unification of the working class across national boundaries to the necessity of Russia's national survival and geopolitical development. Geopolitics can be defined as the study of factors that determine the control of territory by one political power or another, that affect the competition between political powers for the control of that territory and which often lead to the suggested redrawing of national boundaries to represent perceived 'true' boundaries of nations according to geographical features such as rivers and mountain ranges, population distribution and language groups. Zyuganov claims that "the historical experience of Russia, situated at the meeting-point of European and Asian types of civilisations and appearing naturally to be the core of Eurasia, [and] in many ways unique"<sup>655</sup> makes Russia ideally situated to control the Eurasian landmass. He writes that Russia could guarantee a "balance of interests" in a multi-polar world<sup>656</sup> and that since the demise of the USSR, Russia poses a threat to the "aspirations of the USA to world domination" and as a result the USA believes Russia must be broken up<sup>657</sup> as a state as it occupies such a geographically important region.

In his thesis, Zyuganov writes that "Russia is an exponent of cultural-historical and moral traditions, with fundamental values which are collectivism, state self-sufficiency and aspiration to the embodiment of higher ideals of good and justice."<sup>658</sup> His book, *Geografiya pobedy* (1997), combines his geopolitical theories with these ideas on nationality and the 'Russian idea' - a term coined by Fyodor Dostoevsky in 1860 and promoted by him and the religious philosopher Vladimir Solovev and banned during the Soviet era.<sup>659</sup> In this book, Zyuganov considers in detail various theories put forward by western and Russian exponents of geopolitics about which countries are destined to 'rule the world'; he then continues by applying various parts of these theories that fit his own, to Russia and its current difficulties. In one chapter, entitled 'Science or Mythology' (which is an indication of the difficulty Zyuganov is aware of in getting geopolitical ideas taken seriously in Russia where the Soviet regime tried to discredit them),<sup>660</sup> he writes that geopolitics has been ignored in Russia for a long time, that it has been interpreted as "an exclusively ideological

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<sup>655</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, p.9.

<sup>656</sup> op. cit., p.61.

<sup>657</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.7.

<sup>658</sup> Zyuganov, 1995d, p.17.

<sup>659</sup> Scanlan, J. "The Russian Idea from Dostoevskii to Zyuganov", in *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.43, no.4, 1996, pp.35-42.

<sup>660</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.312.

phenomenon, as an ‘ideological guarantee of internal politics of the imperialist state’”.<sup>661</sup> He explains that geopolitics was discredited by representatives of the ‘German school’ in the thirties who used it to justify Nazi Germany’s expansionist aspirations.<sup>662</sup> Zyuganov is careful about whose theories he expresses agreement with but the detail in which he describes the ideas that fit his own view of Russia’s destiny indicates to the reader with which theories Zyuganov is clearly in agreement.

Zyuganov recounts the work of German geographer Friedrich Ratzel who suggested that “the state has a tendency to grow into a ‘natural space’ and this eagerness [of the state] can only be satisfied in the borders of continents”.<sup>663</sup> Zyuganov does not offer support or criticism of Ratzel’s work, it is merely included in his survey of geopolitical thinking but this idea would, however, confirm Zyuganov’s view of Russia’s territory being larger than its current borders (with references to the territory of the former Soviet Union as ‘Russia’). Zyuganov’s deliberate confusion of the two and his increasing calls through his later works to revive the Soviet Union on a voluntary basis along with specific remarks about Russia occupying the heartland of the ‘Eurasian space’ (see below) indicate that Zyuganov agrees with the idea of Russia occupying a larger area than currently encompassed by its present borders. Zyuganov regrets the loss of influence over territory outside Russia since 1989 under the “Gorbachev team” and the “Yeltsin team” and the reduction of what he refers to as “state safety” (by which he implies the loss of the ‘buffer zone’ of Eastern Europe) to a previously unseen level.<sup>664</sup> He writes with concern or amazement that Russia’s external borders are now very similar to the borders of Muscovite Rus’ at the beginning of the 17th century.

He also gives a résumé of the ideas of Halford MacKinder, a British geographer, whom he describes as “the father of the Anglo-American school of geopolitics”, who used the phrase ‘pivot area’ to describe Eurasia (a term used by Zyuganov in relation to Russia) in his paper for the Royal Geographic Society in 1904 entitled ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’. Zyuganov notes that MacKinder was worried that, as he saw it, Russia occupied the strategic position in the ‘pivot area’ around which, he believed, the “historical process” develops. He felt that “no social revolution can change its relation to the great geographical borders of its existence”.<sup>665</sup> Zyuganov does not make a case for or against these theories but he pays considerable attention to them and they do seem to have informed his thinking on the subject as he has adopted MacKinder’s view of Russia occupying

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<sup>661</sup> Zyuganov, 1997c, p.9.

<sup>662</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>663</sup> Zyuganov, 1997c, p.26.

<sup>664</sup> *op. cit.*, p.131.

<sup>665</sup> *op. cit.*, p.32.

a strategically important area of the globe.

Zyuganov claims that (after class conflict has been accepted as its most fundamental element) analysis of geopolitics from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century was central to Marx's and Lenin's methodology.<sup>666</sup> He goes on to write that geopolitics is an important element of "practically all realistic theories of world politics".<sup>667</sup> He argues that the class approach is still valid but also that geopolitics is a necessary theory to aid further understanding of the current political situation.<sup>668</sup> He writes that geopolitics must consider all factors which permit the control of space and lists these as economic, geographical, natural resources, military, transport, demographic, religious and ethnic factors<sup>669</sup> rather than just those which fit with traditional communism.

His interpretation of Marx's view that class divisions are the decisive political cleavage in society incorporates some strange and contradictory ideas. While he claims the 'class approach' of traditional communism is still valid, he puts greater emphasis on national divisions. He writes that the CPRF "is the party of the working people, Soviet state patriotism, social justice and communist aims and ideas"<sup>670</sup> but this sits rather uncomfortably with some of his other statements, especially with the move away from more orthodox positions on class conflict. Zyuganov writes that the main influences on world politics are geopolitical, resulting from tensions between the rich North and impoverished South and conflict between different ethnic and religious groups and cultures.<sup>671</sup> Not only does he *not* list class conflict as the first, most significant and most divisive schism but he does not list it in the communist sense at all. Instead he lists socio-economic tensions as the division between north and south rather than between the ruling classes and the oppressed workers. However, elsewhere he considers geopolitics and class conflict to have a more equal influence: "[t]oday, not only relations between classes but also relations between civilisations lie at the heart of the dynamic and development mechanisms of socio-political change."<sup>672</sup>

In *Uroki zhizni* (1997), Zyuganov claims that from a geopolitical perspective, Russia is the most important guarantor of stability between competing global powers, that it forms a 'safety device' which discourages 'world powers' from upsetting the carefully balanced 'large spaces' and

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<sup>666</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.7.

<sup>667</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>668</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>669</sup> Zyuganov, 1997c, p.76.

<sup>670</sup> Zyuganov, 1995a, p.76.

<sup>671</sup> *op. cit.*, p.29.

<sup>672</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.103.



from attempts to create a uni-polar world.<sup>673</sup> Zyuganov argues that with the end of the “bipolar mechanism for regulating international affairs”, which was determined by the Cold War, a new configuration of forces has taken its place composed of a larger number of participants. He sees the new arrangement as defined primarily by the USA, Western Europe (“in which a united Germany is not quite accommodated”, according to Zyuganov), Russia, which he describes as still a great power despite the internal instability it faces, and he goes on to mention China, Japan, Brazil and “Arab countries”.<sup>674</sup>

He continues by claiming that geopolitics rather than ideology has been the main cause of tension between Russia and her enemies. He writes that “the battle with the Soviet Union” was not really about opposition to communism and that this was just the excuse used to disguise the aim, as Zyuganov sees it, of humiliating Russia as a historical and geopolitical rival.<sup>675</sup> This rivalry is a result, in his view, of Russia in its various incarnations as Muscovite Rus’, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union (disregarding the inclusion of other countries in the last political entity), forming the main pivot of the “huge Eurasian space”.<sup>676</sup> In a similar vein, Zyuganov claims the “New World Order”, a phrase used since 1991 to characterise world politics after the fall of communism, “is aimed at establishing a global dictatorship of the West to preserve the illusion of its political, economic and military leadership.”<sup>677</sup>

Zyuganov writes of the formation of a multi-polar world and claims that today the world is in a transition phase: “politics in Russia must be aimed at the strengthening of the multi-polar world in opposition to the formation of a uni-polar world, that is in fact a dictatorship of the USA and NATO. Russia must support the aspirations of Germany, France, Japan and other countries to free themselves from the guardianship of the USA, to become independent centres of power which control near-civilisational regions.”<sup>678</sup> He feels that Russia is further threatened by the eastwards expansion of NATO and that Russian politicians were shocked by this move on the part of NATO to expand into former USSR territory. He assumes that such moves to expand NATO show the USA and its allies were not fighting totalitarianism but “all along were hard pragmatists, not giving a half-kopec for their previous verbal promises and wishing to extract the maximum advantage from the temporary weakness of what was yesterday a formidable opponent.”<sup>679</sup> He goes on to complain that

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<sup>673</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, pp184-5.

<sup>674</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.97.

<sup>675</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.267.

<sup>676</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>677</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.128.

<sup>678</sup> Zyuganov, 1997c, p.243.

<sup>679</sup> *op. cit.*, p.140.

“NATO strategy in its actions is led not by abstract ‘ideals of democracy’ but by concrete geopolitical conceptions.”<sup>680</sup> What else Zyuganov expected is unclear as this action fits with his own view of the ‘purpose’ of geopolitics - ‘natural’ geopolitical expansion is acceptable to Zyuganov where it concerns Russia but not when it relates to the USA.

He writes that “[t]he main strategic aim of American-style globalisation is to prevent the unification of fraternal nations into a single state”<sup>681</sup> which ignores the fact that many nations in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe actively sought both independence from that union and alliances with NATO and the EU. Zyuganov also claims that “[p]ractically none of the former Soviet republics has real sovereignty. Under the pretext of the ‘war on terror’, the Americans and their NATO allies rule the territory of the Caucasus and Central Asia and dominate the ports and air space of the Baltics and Crimea.”<sup>682</sup> While there may be an element of truth in this interpretation, such a change in alliance has been achieved by agreement rather than hostile military invasion. Zyuganov writes that “[t]he so-called post-Soviet space is non other than the historical Russian state, which existed here for hundreds of years. Therefore Russia simply must play not only a large role but a defining role here.”<sup>683</sup> He is so convinced of his geopolitical theories that Russia has the right to dictate how these countries are run (as they form part of the same land-mass that Russia also occupies) that he cannot accept the idea that they have the right to choose their own political allegiances. The claim that the “geopolitical successor of the Russian Empire was the Soviet Union” was stated in the 1995 Programme<sup>684</sup> and is therefore not just Zyuganov’s own personal belief but held more widely in the party.

He claims Russia’s enemies are trying to draw Russia into disputes with Ukraine over Crimea, with the Islamic world over Chechnya and unleashing a wave of religious extremism to gain power in the Central Asian states and trying to hinder Russia from forming a partnership with China.<sup>685</sup> However, ‘Russia’s enemies’ are only occasionally identified in his earlier works (and not at all in this instance) by references to the USA and NATO. By 2002, however, when *Globalizatsiya i sud’ba chelovechestva* was published, the USA and the West in general were regularly identified as Russia’s enemies. Zyuganov argues that if Russia’s enemies succeed in these aims, then Russia will be mired in regional problems for many years and will “lose any geopolitical perspective,” by

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<sup>680</sup> op. cit., p.141.

<sup>681</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.9.

<sup>682</sup> op. cit., p.19.

<sup>683</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.141.

<sup>684</sup> Party Programme, 1995, p.103.

<sup>685</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.268.

which he presumably means international influence.<sup>686</sup>

Zyuganov's solution to this dilemma is for Russia to undertake a new "gathering of the lands" in order to re-establish a new "union state" on the territory of the former USSR or the peaceful and voluntary integration of the "post-Soviet space" and restoration of control over what he refers to as the "heart of the world" (an area which covers Eurasia or Makinder's 'pivot area') as the only alternative fate he can see for Russia is one of "degradation" and colonialism.<sup>687</sup> He claimed to oppose the land reforms that were proposed in the 1990s on the grounds that Russia risks loss of sovereignty over her own territory if the land is sold to foreigners.<sup>688</sup> It is Russia's existence as an independent state and the Russian people - a "spiritual society of many centuries' existence" - that are due to disappear from the face of the earth if Zyuganov's recommended action is not taken.<sup>689</sup> He has written that Russia must "... begin the process of reunification. First of all, this concerns Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan."<sup>690</sup> He claims that Russia is a 'complicated ethnic community' the nucleus of which consists of great-Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians so he clearly sees not just 'Russia' as extending beyond its current geographical borders but also argues that its population does as well to strengthen his territory-based reasoning for Russia reacquiring its empire.

Zyuganov writes of the failure over several years to "neutralise" separatist tendencies in the CIS and that the ethnic conflicts in Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia and Pridnistria can only be resolved within a renewed Union.<sup>691</sup> This argument does, of course, ignore the fact that these ethnic tensions existed during the Soviet era and many decades' rule by Russia in the past could not resolve these matters but Zyuganov insists that there was no ethnic conflict in the USSR.<sup>692</sup> Zyuganov also writes that: "[t]he real threat to the national and territorial integrity of Russia is not terrorism as such, but a fight between the criminal oligarchic gangs of the centre and the regions. It is they, not the various nationalities, who are waging a fratricidal imperialist war to carve up and share out Russia."<sup>693</sup> For Zyuganov's theories about Russia's mission to lead other nationalities against the West to be potentially viable in practice, he needs the ethnic minorities to want to be led by Russia and not in fact want independence as such aspirations do not fit with his vision for Russia.

On restoring the USSR, Zyuganov quotes N. Danilevsky's *Russia and Europe* (1869) to

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<sup>686</sup> Zyuganov, 2002, p. 58.

<sup>687</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.268.

<sup>688</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.25.

<sup>689</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.295.

<sup>690</sup> op. cit., p.304.

<sup>691</sup> Zyuganov, 2002, p.371.

<sup>692</sup> op. cit., p.302.

<sup>693</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, p.157.

support his claim that Russia, as the “centre of Eastern Orthodox civilisation” should establish a “Russian Big Space” by “gathering” other neighbouring states together to help construct a “multi-polar world system”. Far from leading to ethnic and political conflict, Zyuganov considers that “internal contradictions” in the Big Space “will be overcome on the basis of a synthesis of millennial spiritual traditions and the technological achievements of the twenty-first century.”<sup>694</sup> Which, of course, ignores the fact that Russian leadership of the USSR and the technological achievements of the twentieth century did little, if anything, to overcome “internal contradictions” the last time such a geopolitical exercise was undertaken. Again, Zyuganov sees religion rather than class interests as being the unifying force.

Zyuganov writes that, from a geopolitical point of view, Russia’s current weakness is the result of two main factors. The first of these is the loss of control or influence over the former Soviet republics and Eastern Europe (or the “territory of the continental Eurasian Heartland,” as he calls it) which he feels plays into the hands of Russia’s traditional enemies as this area is part of the ‘pivot’ geopolitical area and in this capacity can “hinder the expansion of the Atlantic bloc”. The second reason he gives is the same aspirations but in the other direction - those of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and others to join “a military-political bloc directed against Russia” which would locate the “strategically important region of Eastern Europe” in the “zone of control” of that military-political bloc which would be a major step on the path to “American world hegemony”.<sup>695</sup>

Zyuganov complains that from the second half of the 1980s, the result of the “anti-national, anti-state policies” of the Gorbachev and then Yeltsin governments has been a colossal loss to Russia of territory in terms of the other states of the USSR and the former communist states of Eastern Europe as a sphere of influence.<sup>696</sup> Zyuganov claims that all Russian geopolitical doctrines from ‘Moscow - the Third Rome’ to the doctrines of Stalin and Brezhnev have been focused on achieving self sufficiency for the state and creating a ‘large space’ around Russia of “strategic allies”.<sup>697</sup> Whether or not these ‘strategic allies’ choose to fulfil that role, their agreement with Russian aims is always assumed. These ‘strategic allies’ are now, as they have been in the past, other nations, rather than the working classes of those nations.

Zyuganov writes that the threat of loss to Russia of state sovereignty and national independence is more real now than ever before. He cites the “Yugoslav tragedy” as evidence that the West is determined to attack the East and claims that the “Imperialist powers” of the USA and

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<sup>694</sup> op. cit., pp.99-100.

<sup>695</sup> Zyuganov, 1997c, p.142.

<sup>696</sup> Zyuganov, G. *Postizhenie Rossii, Mysl'*, Moscow, 2000, p.504.

<sup>697</sup> op. cit., p.503.

NATO will make Russia's revival impossible. He writes that all responsible Russian politicians should jointly formulate a military and "geo-strategic" programme to guarantee Russia's national safety by limiting America's expansion towards world domination,<sup>698</sup> in other words, limit NATO's expansion eastwards into formerly communist states. Zyuganov writes that the banners of the demonstrators against the war in Yugoslavia which proclaimed that: "Clinton is the Hitler of today!" and "NATO = Fascism" were not emotional overstatements but in fact fully reflected the actions of the USA and NATO in the Balkans which mirrored the actions of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.<sup>699</sup> Whilst he is obviously writing for the domestic, Slav, audience, his claims indicate a considerable lack of perspective and, in trying to further rally opposition to NATO, Zyuganov asks when Russia will follow Serbia and Iraq by being attacked for failing to follow a political path acceptable to the West.<sup>700</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE NEW COALITION AGAINST CAPITALISM

Zyuganov claims that international terrorism has become a fashionable term in recent times and that in the Soviet era, the USSR did not apply the term terrorism to national liberation movements but the West is now imposing its rules on the rest of the world which force Russia to fight against those powers that might potentially be its allies.<sup>701</sup> He further claims that the USA is the main international terrorist in the modern world, having "perpetrated any number of acts of flagrant terrorism".<sup>702</sup> Whilst many anti-globalisation protesters as well as communists might sympathise with this view, it is a strange remark from a leader of a political party who would be president, made in a translation of one of his books aimed at the English-speaking world (so presumably America in particular) when he is also concerned by the Western influence on Russian media that results in regular criticism of him and his party.

Zyuganov links the increase in international terrorism to global, geopolitical, economic, legal, racial and religious causes but asserts that the main cause is the collapse of the USSR which led, he writes, to a fundamental destabilisation in world security, a power vacuum over the area formerly in Russia's sphere of influence, and "dangerous illusions in the USA regarding the possibility of advancing rapidly towards achieving its goal of world hegemony."<sup>703</sup> On international terrorism, Zyuganov writes that it is a force within Imperialism, a form of 'New Imperialism'

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<sup>698</sup> op. cit., p.206.

<sup>699</sup> op. cit., p.216.

<sup>700</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, p.50.

<sup>701</sup> Zyuganov, 2001, p.305.

<sup>702</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, p.139

<sup>703</sup> op. cit., p.154.

against the 'Old Imperialism'. He writes: "... terror against individuals and particular targets has become mass and indiscriminate terror, an instrument by which the exploiting classes can intimidate and demoralise the popular masses." He sees all terrorism as state-sponsored terrorism, writing that "[t]he intelligence services acquire terrorist organisations both by means of penetrating them and by means of creating them. Terrorists are always acting in one way or another under the control of the intelligence services. There are no grounds to suppose this was not the case in respect of so immensely complex an operation as the air attack of 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001."<sup>704</sup> He does not say which intelligence service he thinks orchestrated this event.

He writes that mankind needs to establish a common front against terrorism but that this can only be done on an anti-imperialist, anti-globalist basis or it will fail.<sup>705</sup> Zyuganov writes that Russia does not have the power to prevent the expansion of NATO but does have the power to direct China and the Islamic world in their opposition to the West.<sup>706</sup> Zyuganov writes that Russia should be answering the challenges of the modern world by providing a model of stable development and fighting for a multi-polar world.<sup>707</sup> Zyuganov has moved away from focusing directly on purely Russian concerns towards a focus on wider modern concerns such as ecology and the supply of raw materials, although from a Russian, nationalist perspective. In globalisation, he has found a new cause that unites people across national boundaries: he writes that "[w]hat we need now is the creation of a broad alliance of anti-globalists, a kind of anti-globalist International."<sup>708</sup>

Another of Zyuganov's favourite themes is the idea of the 'Golden Billion' of rich Westerners draining the East of raw materials and natural resources<sup>709</sup> and the moral, cultural and intellectual inferiority of the West as a whole, in comparison with Russia's superiority in these areas. He writes: "[t]he methodological deficiency and amorality of the ideology of globalisation is most clearly evident in the concept of the Golden Billion, a new master race comprising the population of the leading capitalist countries irrespective, be it noted, of their moral, cultural or intellectual level."<sup>710</sup> Russia, in Zyuganov's view is a superior civilisation that must lead the fight against globalisation and the greed of the West.

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<sup>704</sup> op. cit., p.145.

<sup>705</sup> op. cit., p.160.

<sup>706</sup> Zyuganov, 2000, p.504.

<sup>707</sup> op. cit., p.506.

<sup>708</sup> op. cit., p.196.

<sup>709</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, pp.67-68.

<sup>710</sup> op. cit., p.55.

## THE MEDIA, THE INTERNET AND RUSSIAN CULTURE

Zyuganov writes that over the course of the last ten years, there has been a progressive collapse in the integrity of Russia as a subject of world history and culture, however, he continues by claiming that all great civilisations have faced such a catastrophe and the “enigmatic Russian soul” manages to preserve its individuality and that Russian civilisation is unique and has repeatedly survived and miraculously revived and will do so again.<sup>711</sup> Zyuganov dates the beginning of this collapse to the late 1980s and Gorbachev’s policy of glasnost’, which led in time to the possibility of questioning the Soviet past. He writes: “[b]efore the power of the Soviet state could be broken, social consciousness had to be destabilised and the traditional system of values wrecked. Television proved itself fully up to this woeful task. It became a force which undermined people’s ability to think rationally, spearheaded a devastating attack on moral standards, and acted as a tool for destroying the cultural kernel of our society. This was achieved by ‘exposing’, debunking, deriding and vilifying all the values, symbols and heroes of the Soviet era. The moral and psychological defences of Russian society were seriously compromised as a result.”<sup>712</sup>

Zyuganov regrets the decline in broadcasting adaptations of Russian classical literature on television and their replacement with Western popular culture which, he claims, is aimed at creating a ‘universal culture’.<sup>713</sup> He writes that, on returning to power, the CPRF will “revive ... respect for the Russian language and culture and for the languages and cultures of the peoples of Russia”<sup>714</sup> and “ban the propaganda of violence and depravity from our television screens.”<sup>715</sup> These views were repeated by respondents in St Petersburg (see Chapter 5). Zyuganov also writes of a “malign feature” of the “neo-liberalism of the 1990s” being “[t]he replacement of natural, traditional language with neo-liberal ‘newspeak’, which completely distorts the meaning of key concepts and words.”<sup>716</sup> Whilst this is probably a reference to the invasion of English words into the Russian vocabulary, ‘newspeak’ is not the only reference to 1984 that Zyuganov makes, as noted above.

Zyuganov also writes of the “takeover of the main Soviet mass media by a pro-Western russophobic grouping”.<sup>717</sup> “In today’s society, the mass media are beginning to play a role very different from their former, auxiliary role. They are becoming a geopolitical factor in their own

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<sup>711</sup> Zyuganov, 2000, p.363.

<sup>712</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, pp.28-29.

<sup>713</sup> Zyuganov, 2002, p.332.

<sup>714</sup> Party Programme, 1995, p.112.

<sup>715</sup> 2003 election platform.

<sup>716</sup> Zyuganov, 2004, p.56.

<sup>717</sup> op. cit., p.91.

right, capable of exerting real influence on the historical destiny of a nation.”<sup>718</sup> Whilst the Russian media are clearly strongly biased against the CPRF (a bitter complaint of many of the party members interviewed for Chapter 5), the heavily censored Soviet-era media did not play anything approaching an “auxiliary role” in Soviet society but conversely, was used as a tool of propaganda by the communist regime. Access to information and control over broadcasting are clearly dangerous only in the hands of non-communists in Zyuganov’s view.

While he praises the approaching knowledge-based economy, Zyuganov fears voters’ access to knowledge. Television in Russia changed after the reduction in Soviet-era censorship and while using the internet to advance his own party’s cause, he fears access to Western- and specifically American-based sources of information and entertainment. He writes: “[t]he electronic mass media are a potent weapon for influencing mass thinking, a means of waging the most dangerous type of modern warfare: conceptual war. They must be rigorously controlled by society.”<sup>719</sup> What Zyuganov does not explain is how he imagines “society” would arrive at a collective agreement as to how the internet should be controlled and whose views “society” would collectively decide to suppress through that control.

While Zyuganov concludes that a knowledge-based economy could “overcome deficiencies in the present system”,<sup>720</sup> he also raises concerns about the use of the internet, claiming many users become unable to distinguish fact from fiction and that the “dictatorship of the [American] mass media” is directed towards mental reprogramming of the outlook and sense of identity of whole peoples and continents, and thus a frightening new aspect of globalisation.<sup>721</sup> He continues by noting that “[t]oday, owning information and directing its flows are prerequisites for establishing totalitarian control and achieving world domination.”<sup>722</sup> Zyuganov does, however, see a positive outcome of internet use in the organisation of collective action against globalisation which results in mass demonstrations at meetings of the WTO, IMF and G8<sup>723</sup> (or the G7, as he still insists on calling the organisation in 2002, despite the fact that Russia has participated fully in the group since 1998), organisations which Zyuganov blames for the adverse effects of globalisation.

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<sup>718</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>719</sup> *op. cit.*, p.135.

<sup>720</sup> *op. cit.*, p.23.

<sup>721</sup> *op. cit.*, pp.26-27.

<sup>722</sup> *op. cit.*, p.27.

<sup>723</sup> *op. cit.*, p.200.



## ZYUGANOV'S PLANS FOR RETURNING THE CPRF TO POWER

It has been suggested that the CPRF has perhaps reached the limits of its electoral support<sup>724</sup> and the leadership of the party has recognised this possibility because, as a means of returning the CPRF to power, Zyuganov is now an advocate of coalition government. The CPRF is a member of the coalition bloc National Patriotic Union of Russia and it was as leader of this bloc that Zyuganov stood as a candidate in the 1996 presidential elections, instead of as leader of the CPRF. Zyuganov writes of “broadening the social base of the opposition” and of getting this broad coalition into power by means of winning elections.”<sup>725</sup> He refers to this broad coalition he hopes to create as one of “national-patriotic powers” but “social base” implies other classes – not just the working class.

Zyuganov devotes an entire section to coalition government in Russia in his pamphlet *Oktyabr' i sovremennost'*, published in 1997. He advocates the unification of Russian political parties “according to interests” to deal with the difficult economic situation Russia faces to create the possibility of forming a coalition government.<sup>726</sup> He notes that over the last decade, since the end of the “world system of socialism”, coalition governments have been a regular feature of East European politics and that around half of the countries of Europe had coalition governments at the time of writing and that successful coalition governments have existed and do exist in some Asian countries.<sup>727</sup> However, he makes no mention of coalitions being brought down when they cease to agree on fundamental issues.

Zyuganov noted in 2002 that it was Lenin who suggested the “excellent idea” of a union with non-communists, without which, Zyuganov argues, there can be no successful movement forward.<sup>728</sup> One of the problems the party faces in its quest to return to power is that of a serious decline in membership. When questioned about the ageing membership of the CPRF in the light of Lenin’s assertion that the communists were the party of youth, Zyuganov replied that wisdom gained through experience and veterans who had defended the country were the “golden fund” of the party. Nevertheless, he maintained in 2002 that the “basic nucleus” of the party’s members were of an ‘active age’ and that in the near future a ‘worthy place’ would be held in the party by the young.<sup>729</sup> By 2008, however, Zyuganov had admitted that only between 5 and 7 percent of the

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<sup>724</sup> Vujacic, 1996, p.151.

<sup>725</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.23.

<sup>726</sup> Zyuganov, 1997d, p.110.

<sup>727</sup> op. cit., p.126.

<sup>728</sup> Zyuganov, 2002, p.234. Such references to Lenin have become more numerous in recent books after many works hardly mentioned Lenin at all.

<sup>729</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.34.

party's members were under 30.<sup>730</sup>

Coalitions, however, would help the communists overcome the problem of a declining membership and insufficient support from voters. However, the CPRF has yet to find coalition partners that are able to return the party to power. According to Party Programme, potential allies in the “national-liberation battle of the Russian people” are “political parties of socialists, centrists and followers of the democratic spectrum, progressive and progressive patriotic movements ... [as well as] ... unions, workers’, peasants’, womens’, veterans’, youth, employers’, enlightened and creative organisations, and religious unions of all traditional confessions”.<sup>731</sup> How democratic and religious organisations would fit into the distant future communist state once they had fulfilled their function of returning the communists to power, unsurprisingly, is not discussed.

Zyuganov also praises the coalition format of government as a tool for dealing with crisis as in Great Britain during the Second World War with the participation of representatives of all leading parties. Zyuganov also refers to the experiences of France and Italy during the same period - cases where the governments included both conservatives and communists.<sup>732</sup> As a method of dealing with national crises, he considers coalition government ideally suited to Russia's current situation. The idea of co-operation between different parts of the ideological spectrum is continued in his thinking elsewhere. He refers to competing factions in Russia being ‘artificially polarised’ according to established ideology and argues that a realignment of the political spectrum is possible.<sup>733</sup>

Zyuganov writes that the party is ready to co-operate with “those representatives of power who show sincere care for the country and work on the principles of respect for the law, following the path of genuine democracy”,<sup>734</sup> rather than oppose them. The pamphlet that contains these remarks was published in 1996 in time for the presidential elections and this comment is designed to show that the party has no plans to cause disruption and also to emphasise their new-found support for democracy to a sceptical electorate. When questioned as to the CPRF's actions on coming to power and whether this would entail reprisals against political opponents resulting in civil war, Zyuganov replied that the party is against civil war and repression and that multiparty politics and a democratic social structure are well established in Russia now – which suggests he would not seek to dismantle the multiparty system. “It is the people who will remain in power through democratic

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<sup>730</sup> *Curent Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol.12, 2008, p6.

<sup>731</sup> Party Programme, 1995, p.106.

<sup>732</sup> Zyuganov, 1997d, p.128.

<sup>733</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.54.

<sup>734</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.16.

elections” he claims.<sup>735</sup> The Party Programme refers to power in the hands of the people, but again, this is not to be achieved through revolution but by “recognising constitutional power of the working majority, unified through Soviets and other forms of democratic self-government by the people”.<sup>736</sup> The party would return to power as part of a coalition and then form a government of national trust.<sup>737</sup>

When asked what resources are available to the National Patriotic Union of Russia to enable it to carry out its programme, Zyuganov replied that its main resource was the working people who retain the wish to protect the spirit of collectivism.<sup>738</sup> However, the CPRF does not have the close links to the workers’ movements that its predecessor had.<sup>739</sup> Zyuganov speaks of the restoration of the Soviets and “other forms of popular power”,<sup>740</sup> and puts considerable emphasis on the wish to avoid civil war and revolution. He writes that “we consider that a modern political party can not be extremist, can not call the people to the barricades, when it is not ready for this and when any attempt to erect such barricades only leads to bloodshed.”<sup>741</sup> This idea of a peaceful transfer of power is, of course, a long way from the revolutionary words of Marx and Lenin. He writes of ‘national reconciliation’ as a means of overcoming the economic crisis “developing a national-state doctrine that takes into account the thousand-year experience of Russian statehood” and claims that this can only be achieved by returning to socialism.<sup>742</sup>

Zyuganov deals with the obvious lack of unity in the communist movement in Russia since 1991 by claiming that plurality of opinion and party organisation began within the communist movement itself before 1991. In *Derzhava*, he writes of the “four years’ experience of multi-party politics”,<sup>743</sup> writing that there are important differences of theory, strategy and tactics between the communist parties that have existed since 1991 but that such differences need not hinder co-operation between the different communist parties. He refers to such co-operation taking place already in the regions and to the need for co-ordinating bodies in the regions to oversee the organisation of ‘joint action’.<sup>744</sup> He writes that “such organs must exist ... to bring joint use, not foist tactics on the party which are unacceptable to it”,<sup>745</sup> which suggests that Zyuganov sees these

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<sup>735</sup> op. cit., pp37-38.

<sup>736</sup> *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, [www.cprf.ru/party/program](http://www.cprf.ru/party/program), accessed on 06/07/06.

<sup>737</sup> Party Programme, 1995, p.112.

<sup>738</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.43.

<sup>739</sup> Pirani, S. “‘State Patriotism’ in Gennadii Zyuganov’s Politics and Ideology”, *Slovo*, vol.10, no.1/2, 1998, p.184.

<sup>740</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>741</sup> Zyuganov, 1997a, p.312

<sup>742</sup> Zyuganov, 1997b, p.118

<sup>743</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.182.

<sup>744</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>745</sup> *ibid.*

potential co-ordinating bodies as a means of asserting CPRF control over other, smaller communist parties as he points out it must not hinder the CPRF but he makes no mention of the agreement of other parties.

Zyuganov writes of the necessity of having plans both for action in the event of coming to power and in the event of remaining in opposition. In the event of remaining in opposition, Zyuganov writes that the party must have a real possibility of influencing the social and political situation.<sup>746</sup> The potential threat of civil war and how such a war could be avoided (and maybe also the fear that the threat of such a war could turn the electorate against the CPRF) is something that Zyuganov pays considerable attention to. He writes that “civil war is not our choice”.<sup>747</sup> Zyuganov seems to see this threat of civil war as being the consequence of the exhaustion of economic resources and of a “spontaneous anarchic riot” which would constitute a “war of all against all for the redistribution of the remaining social wealth”.<sup>748</sup> He writes that in this case, if it is not possible to avoid such a war, then the party will try to organise and direct it for the benefit of the workers interests and for the “protection of the state and stabilisation of society”.<sup>749</sup> How a civil war can be ‘directed’ for the ‘stabilisation of society’ is, unsurprisingly, not explained. He emphasises that this is still a scenario that they wish to avoid as that there would be no winners but that the party is obliged to be prepared for such an outcome of the economic crisis. He claims, however, that it could be avoided by “the restoration and strengthening of civil peace” and a transfer to the socialist path of development and further, he argues, this alternative is in the interests of the vast majority of the people.<sup>750</sup>

As well as arguing that this impending civil war can be avoided firstly by the transfer to socialism and secondly by forming a broad social and political coalition of left, centrist, patriotic and democratic powers, Zyuganov feels such action would be powerful enough to “neutralise and morally isolate the ‘party of civil war’”, by which he seems to mean the Yeltsin government. This coalition is to be brought to power by electoral success or “by other peaceful, non-violent means”,<sup>751</sup> but what these non-violent means could be if not elections, again is not specified. He writes of avoiding violence and of respecting democratic norms but this precludes revolution. It seems he does not want to rule out the option of seizing power in the event of a total breakdown of central government control during an economic crisis.

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<sup>746</sup> Zyuganov, 1994a, p.174.

<sup>747</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>748</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>749</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>750</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>751</sup> *ibid.*

Zyuganov's policy choices (choosing to lead the party in legal, democratic and parliamentary means of gaining power instead of following the route of smaller communist groups of extra-parliamentary activity, non-participation in elections and calls for revolution) can be credited with improving the fortunes of the CPRF as it went from being banned to being a sizeable faction in the first Duma.<sup>752</sup> The financial advantages associated with being a Duma faction enabled the party to strengthen its regional network<sup>753</sup> and distance itself from the extreme opposition which tended towards violent street demonstrations.<sup>754</sup> The party continues to benefit from participation in democracy (in contradiction of its revolutionary roots) and even retains considerable, though much diminished, support despite competition from Unity and then United Russia in Duma elections and this party's adoption of a strongly patriotic stance.

An ageing membership and reduced support for the party raises the question of whether it can return to power, even as part of a coalition. Undeterred, Zyuganov insists that the party's 184,263 members verified by the Ministry of Justice "... do not include the hundreds of thousands of our supporters and activists who actively support the party but for various reasons do not form part of the membership".<sup>755</sup> He claims that in 2005 over 3 million people joined protests organised by the CPRF, including 3,000 pioneers at the 7<sup>th</sup> November celebrations, and 20,000 people joined the party a third of whom Zyuganov describes as 'young' and he dismisses accusations of the CPRF being a 'party of pensioners' as the "banal ideological weapons of the 'party of power' in battle against us."<sup>756</sup> Zyuganov also claims that 15 to 20 percent of electors are supporting the party in local elections including educated people as well as workers<sup>757</sup> but this percentage only serves to confirm the party's reduced political status.

In order to make the party more acceptable to some of those who focus on the negative aspects of the former regime, Zyuganov has realised he needs to reform elements of the party's organisation. When asked about the privileges enjoyed by the old nomenklatura under the communist regime and whether such a privileged hierarchy could arise again under any future socialist government, Zyuganov replied that participation in his electoral bloc did not entail any material benefits and that those who were in the CPSU for such benefits are now mostly supporters or members of the anticommunist and anti-patriotic camp.<sup>758</sup> However, since the accusation of

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<sup>752</sup> Urban & Solovei, 1997, p.97.

<sup>753</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>754</sup> Devlin, J. "Slavophiles and Commissars" in *Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia*, Macmillan, 1999, p.175.

<sup>755</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.127.

<sup>756</sup> *op. cit.*, pp.128-29.

<sup>757</sup> *op. cit.*, p.136.

<sup>758</sup> Zyuganov, 1996a, p.30.

selling places on its list of candidates for the Duma elections for high prices to businessmen in order to fund its election campaigns, the CPRF's intended return to power itself appears to be more important to the party than how they get there.

Although one former member of the party claims that many members of the Russian intelligentsia have become active campaigners with the CPRF as a result of disappointment with Russia's politics,<sup>759</sup> the CPRF was reportedly slow to get its activists out on the streets in the 2008 regional elections while United Russia had been busy for weeks. The CPRF only put in an appearance in the last few days of the campaign and, according to one commentator, was relying on the electorate still voting for the party out of tradition and nostalgia for the USSR. The same analyst reports that local and regional committees of the CPRF had not been holding meetings with electors and not sending activists door-to-door in the campaign.<sup>760</sup> If the party is now losing its one previous advantage over United Russia that was not affected by the conditions of 'managed democracy' – the ability to get activists out to campaign at election time – then the party is indeed facing a difficult future.

The Draft Programme of spring 2008 notes that the results of elections appear to be planned, which brings the main official document of the party up to date in terms of recognising changed political circumstances, even if it cannot prove this claim. However, it also states that the country is in the grip of a severe systemic crisis and that there is a deepening abyss between rich and poor, that people are losing their social-economic and civil rights and that the majority of the population is being proletarianised, that there is growing indignation towards and opposition to the ruling regime. Whilst an argument could be put forward about the erosion of civil liberties, the clearly deliberate blindness to the changing economic circumstances in Russia in recent years and the popularity of the Putin and Medvedev regimes, implies that the party is trying to convince itself of its continued relevance in very changed economic circumstances from those in which it began.

## CONCLUSION

Since the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, there has been a general shift towards the centre and an acceptance of democratic forms of government on the part of left-wing parties and the CPRF is no exception with Zyuganov defending the CPRF's participation in parliament.<sup>761</sup> Movement away from communism and towards social democracy has perhaps been

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<sup>759</sup> Zhitnukhin, A., *Gennadii Zyuganov*, Molodaya Gvardiya, Moscow, 2007, p.337.

<sup>760</sup> "KPRF Zabludilas' vo Vremeni", *Pravda*, [www.pravda.ru/politics/elections/regional/286959-kprf\\_region-0](http://www.pravda.ru/politics/elections/regional/286959-kprf_region-0).

<sup>761</sup> Zyuganov, 2006, p.132.

strained recently with the loss of some of the social democratic tendency in the party but Zyuganov's underlying message hasn't changed. What has changed in his later books, is not his argument but the evidence cited to reinforce his views such as appearance of new socialist regimes in South America and the anti-globalisation movements that have mobilised thousands against certain aspects of capitalism. The waning influence of the CPRF in Russia has led Zyuganov to concentrate in his latest work on the party's links with foreign organisations in order to try to give the impression of continuing relevance but he frequently fails to deal with reality and persists in a view that government of Russia and beyond is the party's 'right': he writes that "[t]he CPRF is the party of the future"<sup>762</sup> and that "[w]e act in the interests of the majority."<sup>763</sup> However, the party is now in serious decline.

Although it did effectively 'win' the 1995 and 1999 Duma elections, as Russia has a presidential system of government, any electoral success in the Duma is limited in its effect if the party cannot also win the presidency, something the CPRF has failed to do in every presidential election since the end of the Soviet era. However, through the merging of nationalist theories with communism, Zyuganov took the CPRF to a level of parliamentary representation that provided considerable influence. If it were not for Zyuganov and those in the party who share his views on participating in the democratic process, the CPRF would have had no representation in the Duma at all and would have been limited to extra-parliamentary political activity. While the move towards nationalism was needed to draw more support from voters, it is perhaps more a change in the scale of adherence to nationalism than a *complete* change of direction since the CPSU also relied on nationalism to rally support for various policies. However, the emphasising of nationalist policies by the communists has taken on a much greater prominence since Russia's loss of superpower status and the success of other political parties that claim to be 'patriotic'.

After publishing several books throughout the 1990s that hardly mentioned Lenin, Zyuganov has made far more references to Lenin in his recent works. Other changes in later books include a focus on globalisation, terrorism and the benefits and evils of the internet and television. Whilst adapting much of what he writes to accommodate changes in the modern world, he fails to adapt to Putin's election and the appearance of United Russia, the CPRF's strongest competitor. His recent works, whilst still critical of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, make very little mention of Putin, which is perhaps understandable since the president and the party that supports him have adopted patriotism and calls for the restoration of the Soviet Union and these are hardly policies the CPRF can abandon

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<sup>762</sup> 2003 election platform.

<sup>763</sup> *ibid.*

in search of a new place in the Russian political spectrum.

Zyuganov continues the apocalyptic phraseology of communism in predicting “planetary catastrophe” in the same way as Marx and Lenin predicted revolution but the tone of his writing is perhaps one of the greatest similarities with the party’s former philosophy rather than its content. He still writes using Cold War era terminology and still sees Russia’s traditional opponents as enemies in the same way they were seen in Soviet times but now Zyuganov calls for an international coalition against globalisation instead of a proletarian revolution. Since these changes in ideology are quite considerable for a party that still calls itself ‘communist’, the following chapter asks to what extent the party has retained the support of the voters and whether it is possible to predict whether a voter will support the CPRF based on their political views. Since the party has moved away from calling for a proletarian revolution, do its supporters still consider themselves communists?



With Zyuganov's change of direction for the party, have voters responded to the nationalist calls of the CPRF? Although the party achieved good results in the 1995 and 1999 elections with more seats than any other party, the decline in support for the party at the 2003 Duma election currently shows no sign of being reversed, with the number of seats won in the 2007 election representing only a slight improvement. This chapter looks at the electorate and the CPRF and its policies and assesses the competition the party faces for votes by considering the communist vote in 1999, 2003 and 2007 based on survey research to judge the change in the level of support for the CPRF before Putin was elected President to that after his election (an event which has clearly had an impact on the communist vote) and that at the end of his tenure. The chapter examines which indicators of communist support have changed over the course of these elections.

Although it falls a long way behind United Russia in terms of representation in the Duma, and there are two other parties with not much lesser representation in the present Duma, the CPRF is still routinely described as Russia's only real opposition party.<sup>764</sup> Along with Yabloko and the LDPR, the CPRF is one of only three parties to contest every Duma election since 1993. Political parties in Russia are different from those in Western Europe because many parties have formed, merged, disappeared and reappeared under new names with great frequency in the early post-Soviet period, and are still doing so. The CPRF is one of a small number of exceptions and, unlike many other parties, has a clear and fairly consistent programme and does not exist purely for the interests of its leaders, as some of the smaller parties have appeared to do, being formed just before elections and disappearing soon afterwards. While the majority of Russian voters have no stable party or ideological identification<sup>765</sup> CPRF voters, by contrast, have the strongest affiliation with their party of any group of voters, as will be seen from the surveys analysed in this chapter.

Parties have limited influence in Russia as a result of the presidential system adopted in the 1993 constitution. While they may claim to act on behalf of social groups, parties have little power to effect changes on those groups' behalf. Parties have limited ability to influence government

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<sup>764</sup> See, for example, Rabotyzhev, N. and Solov'ev, E. "Ot Lenina k Danilevskomu: Metamorfozy Geopoliticheskikh Vozzrenii KPRF", *Polis*, no.2, 2007, p.125.

<sup>765</sup> Anohina, N. and Meleshkina, E. "Election Results and Voting Behaviour" in Gelman, V, Golosov, G. and Meleshkina, E. (eds.) *The 1999-2000 National Elections in Russia: Analyses, Documents and Data*, Sigma, Berlin, 2005a, p.123.

policy<sup>766</sup> although the President is accountable in various ways such as to a party-based majority in the Duma. This limitation has resulted in voters often preferring to identify with political leaders rather than ideologies and party symbols.<sup>767</sup> How then does an opposition party like the CPRF retain support? Previous studies, discussed below, have shown that age, economic status, occupational status and residence in smaller towns or rural areas are significant factors in voters deciding to vote for the CPRF.<sup>768</sup> Bearing these studies and their findings in mind, the analysis below compares the communist vote in the 1999 Duma election with that in 2003 and 2007.

## METHODOLOGY

There was very little public opinion survey research under the communist regime and what did take place in the 1960s was not of representative samples of the population as a whole and mainly concerned attitudes to work in order to find ways of increasing productivity. The only other surveys of note were conducted involving those who left the Soviet Union after the Second World War and during the 1970s.<sup>769</sup> However, in recent years, there have been many studies of public opinion in Russia and many of those have included opinions of respondents on the former and present regimes, former communist party membership and attitudes to the present communist party as well as other political organisations and voting preferences.

In order to consider the change in levels of support for the CPRF from 1999 to 2007, this chapter looks at factors affecting the three Duma elections during this time and the many previous studies of support for the communist party then, using the survey results of the *New Russia Barometer VIII (NRB VIII)*, *New Russia Barometer XII (NRB XII)* and *New Russia Barometer XVI (NRB XVI)*, looks at those indicators of support discussed in the previous literature to determine to what extent they can predict whether a vote will be cast for the CPRF. The *NRB* is a 'barometer' as many questions are repeated from one survey to the next in order to determine the direction of change in public opinion. The surveys included questions on employment, followed by sections asking respondents' opinions on economic matters, politics, voting and parties, views of life, international relations and social issues. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with around 2,000 participants chosen at random across the Russian Federation including smaller towns and rural areas as well the large cities. The first *NRB* was conducted in January 1992, the eighth just after the 1999

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<sup>766</sup> Pammett, J. and DeBardeleben, J. "Citizen Orientations to Political Parties in Russia", Research Note, *Party Politics*, Vol 6, No. 3, 2000, p.374

<sup>767</sup> Anohina and Meleshkina, 2005a, p.111.

<sup>768</sup> These studies are discussed in detail below, see also the bibliography.

<sup>769</sup> Wyman, M. *Public Opinion in Postcommunist Russia*, Macmillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke, 1997, pp.3-4.

Duma election, the twelfth just after the 2003 Duma election and the sixteenth just after the 2007 Duma election. The surveys relate to different populations of voters so changes in support are an indication of trends, rather than direct comparisons.

The *New Russia Barometers VIII* and *XI* were devised by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde and were conducted by the Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM) in 2000 and VTsIOM-Analytica in 2003, now known as the Levada Centre. The Centre for the Study of Public Policy is now based at the University of Aberdeen and *NRB XVI* was conducted by the Levada Centre on behalf of the Department of Politics at the University of Glasgow. Field work for *NRB VIII* took place between 13<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2000 and for *NRB XII* between 12<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003. *NRB XVI* was conducted during January and February, 2008. The universe for the surveys was the adult population of Russia over 16 years for the 2000 survey and over 18 years for the 2003 and 2008 surveys excluding soldiers, convicts, the homeless and those temporarily away from home.<sup>770</sup>

VTsIOM divided Russia into 10 regions for the first stage of the sample and, using population statistics, assigned a number of interviews to each region in proportion to its share of the total Russian population. For *NRB VIII*, 107 settlements were chosen in total, belonging to 38 subjects of the Russian Federation, including 33 oblast centres, 43 cities and towns and 31 villages. Within these settlements, 195 primary sampling units were selected which resulted in an average of ten respondents per unit. Households were selected by a random route method in which the interviewer called at every *n*th house from a random starting point. Within each household, one individual was selected as a respondent on the basis of a gender by age by education grid based on official statistical data. In total, 4,326 addresses were visited and of these, 3,055 had an occupier who met the sampling requirements, of these, 2,003 agreed to be interviewed, with the total number of respondents being 1,940 after the exclusion of those under 18. The sample was then weighted according to gender, age and education in order to make it representative of the Russian population as a whole.<sup>771</sup>

For *NRB XII*, the sample was distributed among seven federal regions and then among five types of settlement proportionate to the number of residents 18 years old and over. 100 urban and rural locations were chosen proportionate to the population (66 urban and 34 rural) in 39 of Russia's 89 subjects. Primary sampling units were then randomly selected from polling districts in urban

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<sup>770</sup> *New Russia Barometer VIII*, Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM), 2000, pp70-72; *New Russia Barometer XII*, Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VTsIOM), 2003, pp44-46, *NRB XVI*, Technical Report.

<sup>771</sup> *NRB VIII*, pp.70-72.

settlements and villages in rural districts which resulted in around ten respondents per sampling unit. The random route method was used, as described above, and 2,022 addresses were visited from which 1,601 people who met the sampling requirements completed the interviews. The results were then weighted to match the Russian population as a whole.<sup>772</sup>

For *NRB XVI*, the sample was representative of the urban/rural division of the Russian population chosen firstly from seven territorial regions representing the regions of Russia and each region was represented in the sample proportionally according to its population size. Secondly, the sample was chosen from among six strata of population centres ranging in size from villages to cities of over one million inhabitants. Again, the random route method was used to identify households at which the interviewer would call but the ‘last birthday’ approach was employed for selecting respondents within a household. As with previous surveys, the results were then weighted to match the Russian population as a whole.<sup>773</sup>

For further details of the method of conducting the surveys, see *Russia Between Elections*, pp.70-72, and *New Russia Barometer XII*, pp.44-46. Details of the method used for conducting the survey in 2008 were obtained from the technical report accompanying the survey. The coded data was provided for this chapter by the Department of Politics, University of Glasgow.<sup>774</sup> The total number of voters for the CPRF in *NRB VIII* was 279, in *NRB XI* there were 179 and in 2007 there were 203 CPRF voters, this represents 14.4 percent, 11.2 percent and 10.2 percent respectively of the total samples.

Initial analysis below, using crosstabulations, is then followed by logistic regression models for each survey, which enables the testing of the dichotomous outcome variable, in this case a vote for the CPRF against all other outcomes in each of the Duma elections. The outcome variable for each year was recoded with 1 representing a vote for the CPRF and 0 representing a vote for another party or for ‘against all’, an abstention or a refusal to answer the question. The predictor variables entered were also recoded to be dichotomous with responses coded 1 for the anticipated preference amongst communist voters and 0 for all other responses.

Why include those who did not vote in the variable ‘non-CPRF’? Those who do not vote often hold negative opinions of political parties generally and of certain parties in particular.<sup>775</sup> In a study that compared voter preferences in the 1993 and 1995 Duma elections, orientation to party

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<sup>772</sup> *NRB XII*, pp.44-46.

<sup>773</sup> Technical report for *NRB XVI*.

<sup>774</sup> The technical data for *NRB VIII* may be consulted at [www.data-archive.ac.uk](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk), Study Number SN4550.

<sup>775</sup> Miller, W., White, S. and Heywood, P. “Political Values Underlying Partisan Cleavages in Former Communist Countries”, *Electoral Studies*, vol.17, no.2, 1998, pp.199.

was found to result from interest in politics and belief in the meaningfulness of elections.<sup>776</sup> Therefore, as CPRF voters have strong links to the party they support, as will be seen from the regression models below, this is anticipated to differentiate CPRF supporters from those who did not vote as well as those who voted for other parties. In 2005, it was found that in Russia, those who did not vote were only half as likely as voters to be a member of a political party<sup>777</sup> and non-voters were also found to be younger.<sup>778</sup> Those who voted 'against all', when this was an option, were also found, in 2008, to be younger and also more likely to live in urban areas and were more highly educated.<sup>779</sup> As CPRF voters are anticipated from existing literature to be older, classifying non-voters as non-CPRF is anticipated to make any differences of opinion between the two groups clearer.

### THE 1999, 2003 AND 2007 DUMA ELECTIONS

Less than a year after its formation, the CPRF had gained third place in the 1993 Duma election behind Russia's Choice and the LDPR, or fourth place if independents are counted as 146 SMD seats, or 32.5 percent of the vote, went to candidates who stood as independents. In 1995, the CPRF gained the highest percentage of votes and 157 seats, just over one third of the total. This put the party ahead of independents, with 77 seats, Our Home is Russia, with 55 seats and the LDPR, with 51. Again in 1999, the CPRF effectively won the election with 113 seats, however, independents gained 114 but many of these deputies joined other parties between the election and the Duma's first meeting. Unity came second with 73 seats and Fatherland third with 68. In 2001 Unity and Fatherland had merged to form United Russia which resulted in a gain of 81 seats over their combined total for 1999, if votes for its two predecessors are combined. In 2003, the CPRF came a distant second, with 52 seats, behind United Russia with 222 seats and 49.3 percent of the vote. Motherland and the LDPR came third and fourth with 37 and 36 seats respectively. Independents won 68 seats (15.1 percent of the vote) but this number was reduced to 23 by the opening meeting of the new Duma as many independents had joined the United Russia faction. In 2007, the CPRF was once again a distant second with 57 seats.

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<sup>776</sup> Pammett and DeBardeleben, 2000, p.373.

<sup>777</sup> White, S. and McAllister, I. "Turnout and Representation Bias in Post-Communist Europe", *Political Studies*, vol.55, no.3, 2007, p.589.

<sup>778</sup> op. cit., p.596.

<sup>779</sup> McAllister, I. and White, S. "Voting 'Against All' in Postcommunist Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.60, no.1, 2008a, p.67.

Table 1: CPRF Results for Duma Elections From 1993 to 2007.

	<u>Seats: Party List</u>	<u>Seats: SMD</u>	<u>Total Seats</u>	<u>Percentage of Seats</u>
1993	32	16	48	10.7
1995	99	58	157	34.9
1999	67	46	113	25.1
2003	40	12	52	11.6
2007	-	-	57	12.7

Source: adapted from [www.RussiaVotes.org](http://www.RussiaVotes.org)

In 1993 and 1995 there was a strong correlation between the percentage of the vote for the CPRF (and other left wing parties) and voter turnout. This correlation was lower in 1999 and in 2003 the decline was greatest in regions where the CPRF had been strongest with the CPRF being the party most seriously affected by the drop in turnout.<sup>780</sup> In 1999, turnout was 61.7 percent and in 2003 it was 54.7 percent.<sup>781</sup> Also, in 2003, 23 percent of those who voted for the CPRF in 1999 did not vote.<sup>782</sup> One possibility is that the CPRF is losing votes as economic conditions in Russia improve and that the good result for the party in 1999 was partly due to the economic problems of 1998. If this is indeed the case, then the CPRF vote may be in permanent decline if the Russian economy continues to improve.

The total percentage of the vote won by the CPRF increased from 1993 to 1999 but then fell noticeably in 2003. The combined party list and SMD percentage of the vote for the CPRF in each election from 1993 to 2003 was 7.4, 17.5, 18.9 and 11.7 percent. In 2007, when all seats were elected by proportional representation, the CPRF won 12.7 percent of the vote. Although the party increased both its share of the party list and SMD vote in 1999, it gained only one quarter of the seats in the Duma, instead of the one third share it gained in 1995. The party

<sup>780</sup> Clem and Craumer, 2004, p.250.

<sup>781</sup> [www.russiavotes.org/2003result.htm](http://www.russiavotes.org/2003result.htm).

<sup>782</sup> Myagkov, M., Ordeshook, P. and Shakin, D. "Fraud or Fairytales: Russia and Ukraine's Electoral Experience", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2005, vol.21, no.2, p108.

gained 4.3 percent more of the vote in 2003 than it did in 1993 but received only four more Duma places than it had ten years earlier. In 2007, the party only increased the number of seats it won by 5 and this was largely as a result of changes in electoral law that increased the threshold for representation from 5 percent of the vote to 7 percent, so denying smaller parties seats. However, the greater problem for the party is the considerable loss of support it has encountered in recent years.

This drop in support has been due in part to the appearance of other left wing parties aimed, with probable assistance from the Kremlin, at splitting the communist vote. In 1999 there were two parties aimed at splitting the left wing vote - the Socialist Party of Russia and the Russian Socialist Party,<sup>783</sup> neither of which succeeded in gaining representation in the Duma. In 2003 the Kremlin is thought to have assisted with the creation of Motherland, assisted the already existing Party of Pensioners and supported Gennady Seleznev's Revival of Russia movement to reduce support for the CPRF.<sup>784</sup> The party has also suffered from the lasting popularity of Unity and later United Russia. Whilst not at all similar to the CPRF in terms of ideology, United Russia has, however, adopted the CPRF's patriotic stance with much success.

The switch from the CPRF to other parties from 1999 to 2003 resulted in a total of 5.5 million votes for Motherland (and also some switching to the LDPR). Some voters also switched to the Agrarian Party which received 2.2 million votes (but only two seats) and the Pensioners' Party, which increased its support from 1.3 million votes in 1999 to 1.8 million in 2003 (resulting in one seat in both elections).<sup>785</sup> The CPRF lost around half its 1999 party-list vote and party-list votes for the left as a whole dropped from 1999 by 1.8 million votes with the CPRF losing 8.5 million votes.<sup>786</sup> This led to greater co-operation on the left as the CPRF and Motherland agreed in August 2004 to co-ordinate their work to maintain a viable opposition to United Russia in the Duma.<sup>787</sup> Glaziev, Motherland's leader at that time, only received 4.1 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential election, and the successor party, Fair Russia, did not put forward a candidate in the 2008 Presidential election.

Although its share of the vote has fallen, the CPRF does at least seem to be able to rely on a committed core of supporters. 68 percent of the CPRF vote was constant from 1993 to 1995 and the party had doubled its vote. Although the party also lost 32 percent of those who had

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<sup>783</sup> Gel'man, V., Golosov, G. and Meleshkina, E. (eds.) *The 1999-2000 National Elections in Russia: Analyses, Documents and Data*, Sigma, Berlin, 2005, p.40.

<sup>784</sup> Sakwa, R. "The 2003 - 2004 Russian Elections and Prospects for Democracy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.57, no.3, 2005, p378.

<sup>785</sup> Clem, R. and Craumer, P. "Redrawing the Political Map of Russia: The Duma Election of December 2003", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2004, vol.45, no.4, pp.247.

<sup>786</sup> op. cit., 2004, p.246.

<sup>787</sup> Riggs, J. and Schraeder, P. "Russia's Political Party System as a (Continued) Impediment to Democratization: The 2003 Duma and 2004 Presidential Elections in Perspective", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2005, p149.

voted for the party two years earlier, the proportion that it had retained was considerably higher than that for other parties that contested both elections.<sup>788</sup> In studies conducted after the 1995 Duma elections 71 percent of those who voted in the 1995 Duma election, and could remember how they had voted in 1993, had voted for a different party the second time while this figure would most likely be between 15 and 25 percent in an established democracy.<sup>789</sup> While voters for other parties were far more likely to have voted for a different party in 1995 from the one they voted for in 1993, almost three quarters of CPRF voters supported the party in both elections. 60 percent of voters had changed not just party but partisan family and three quarters of those who changed did so from government and centrist parties but only one quarter from the socialist parties.<sup>790</sup>

According to *NRB VIII*, conducted less than a month after Putin had become acting President, those who had voted for the CPRF were less united in their support for the party leader than Unity supporters were for Putin (Unity had declared support for Putin although he was not a member of the party). When asked whether they would vote for Putin or Zyuganov in a second round runoff for President, 75 percent of CPRF voters responded that they would vote for Zyuganov and 23 percent that they would vote for Putin. Of those who had voted for Unity, 92 percent declared their intention to vote for Putin in an anticipated second round and only two percent for Zyuganov. A total of 57 percent of all those questioned indicated that they would vote for Putin and only 20 percent for Zyuganov. The group that was the second most likely to support Zyuganov was not voters for any of the other parties but those who had not voted in the Duma elections, with 14 percent reporting that they would vote for the CPRF leader.<sup>791</sup> The CPRF clearly faces a problem in motivating some of its potential supporters to actually vote.

Another factor in the CPRF's loss of support could be related to the party's choice of candidates. As the party that claims to represent the working class, the CPRF has taken a risk in giving places to businessmen on the SMD ballot. Of the candidates selected for the SMD seats, only seven of the top 18 positions on the CPRF list for the 2003 election were CPRF members<sup>792</sup> while the party allocated some of the most winnable seats to businessmen. Accepting financial support from some businessmen alienated some of the CPRF's core supporters and gave the party's opponents ammunition to use against it in the election.<sup>793</sup> It has also been reported that

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<sup>788</sup> Wyman, M. "Developments in Russian Voting Behaviour: 1993 and 1995 Compared", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.12, no.3, 1996, p.278.

<sup>789</sup> Colton, T. *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia*, Harvard University Press, London, 2000, p.9.

<sup>790</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>791</sup> *NRB VIII*, 2000.

<sup>792</sup> Sakwa, 2005, p.377.

<sup>793</sup> *op. cit.*, p.378.



the party sold these places on its party list,<sup>794</sup> as other parties have, and continue to do. Yukos is reported to have paid the CPRF 30 million dollars for places and individual businessmen are reported to have paid between one and three million dollars each.<sup>795</sup> According to Volokhov, a former member of the party and the author of a book that is very critical of Zyuganov, the costs of places on the party list for the CPRF for the 1999 Duma election were 1.5 million dollars per place for positions 5 to 12, and 1 million dollars per place for positions 13 to 25.<sup>796</sup>

In 1995, the CPRF had treated the Duma election as a presidential primary but knowing that Zyuganov could not win the 2000 presidential election, the CPRF treated the 1999 election as an opportunity to consolidate its dominant place on the left and as an opportunity to be a major force in the next Duma.<sup>797</sup> In the 1996 presidential election, the vote was *against* Zyuganov but in the 2000 presidential election, the vote was *for* Putin.<sup>798</sup> Zyuganov made a tactical error in the 2000 presidential campaign in maintaining an anti-Yeltsin position, opposing the consequences of Yeltsin's rule instead of re-positioning the party's policies to oppose Putin<sup>799</sup> and with 12 percent of CPRF voters in 1999 choosing to vote for Putin in 2000,<sup>800</sup> this would indicate that there has been a considerable shift in public opinion in Russia away from the communist party and its leader. Putin won almost a quarter of the votes in 2000 from those who saw themselves as communists<sup>801</sup> and 19 percent of the CPRF vote in 1999 went to United Russia in 2003.<sup>802</sup>

The fact that Russia still has a developing party system and a short history of a civil society with alternatives to the CPSU is probably a factor in voter preferences largely being decided as a result of approval or disapproval of party leaders.<sup>803</sup> Support for the CPRF was decided largely before the campaign began in 1999, in contrast with other parties, and the low level of wavering in support for the CPRF during the campaign indicates that the campaign itself had little effect on the party's popularity and also, in comparison with other parties, it failed to attract more than ten percent of undecided voters during the campaign.<sup>804</sup> Communist party voters had made their decision to vote for the CPRF generally very much earlier, before the campaign began in 2003. By contrast, Unity's/United Russia's lack of an ideology has appealed

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<sup>794</sup> *Kommersant*, 08/09/03, p.2.

<sup>795</sup> *Izvestiya*, 23/09/03, p.3.

<sup>796</sup> Volokhov, A., *Noveishaya Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii 1990-2003*, Impeto, Moscow, 2003, p.74

<sup>797</sup> Brudny, Y. "Continuity or Change in Russian Electoral Patterns? The December 1999 - March 2000 Electoral Cycle", in *Contemporary Russian Politics*, ed. A. Brown, 2001, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.157.

<sup>798</sup> Gel'man et al. 2005, p.27.

<sup>799</sup> Hesli, V. "Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in Russia: The Political Landscape in 1999 and 2000" in Hesli, V. and Reisinger, W. *The 1999 - 2000 Elections in Russia*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 2003, p.5.

<sup>800</sup> Brudny, 2001, p.174.

<sup>801</sup> Rose, R. and Munro, N. *Elections Without Order: Russia's Challenge to Vladimir Putin*, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.185.

<sup>802</sup> Myagkov et al., 2005, p.107.

<sup>803</sup> Miller et al, 1998, p.130.

<sup>804</sup> Brudny, 2001, p.160.

to voters of all political beliefs, including those who describe themselves as communists. The approval of communists is partly what helped Unity to victory in 1999 and Putin to victory in 2000, providing him with a majority in the first round of the presidential election.<sup>805</sup>

Interestingly, 14 percent of those questioned in *NRB XII* who did not vote in the 2003 Duma election reported that they would support Zyuganov in a Putin/Zyuganov second round run-off for the presidential election, which would suggest that the link between support for communism and making the effort to vote may be weakening. By 2007, at the end of Putin's second term, the picture had changed considerably. Only 53 percent of those who had voted for the CPRF in the Duma election reported that they would vote for Zyuganov in the following Presidential election. 19 percent reported that they would vote for Medvedev and 15 percent that they didn't know how they would vote. Again, the second most likely group to vote for Zyuganov was those who had not voted in the Duma election but, in 2007, this was only 4 percent. Of United Russia voters, 81 percent reported that they would vote for Medvedev and only 1 percent for Zyuganov. 14 percent did not know how they would vote. Of those who claimed not to remember how they had voted, 59 percent reported that they would vote for Medvedev.

In 2007, the CPRF came second with 57 seats and 12.7 percent of the vote - almost 50 percent less than United Russia, which gained 315 seats. The only other parties to enter the Duma were the LDPR, with 40 seats and Fair Russia, with 38 seats.<sup>806</sup> Again, there were accusations that voting had not been entirely free and fair. Although the Russian Central Electoral Commission invited the OSCE and other organisations to send observers to monitor the election, no delegation was sent as many observers had been denied visas.<sup>807</sup> The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) did send a mission which praised various technical improvements but criticised several issues, including the bias of state-run television towards United Russia and the harassment of opposition parties.<sup>808</sup>

## THE COMMUNIST VOTER AND THE CPRF

Conclusions drawn from the first *New Russia Barometer* in 1992 indicated that former members of the CPSU were more politically active, were more likely to be male, were more affluent than those who had not been members of the party and better provided with consumer goods.<sup>809</sup> However, these material advantages have largely changed and CPRF members have

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<sup>805</sup> Rose and Munro, 2002, p.185.

<sup>806</sup> [www.russiavotes.org](http://www.russiavotes.org), accessed on 02/05/08.

<sup>807</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>809</sup> White, S. and McAllister, I. "The CPSU and Its Members: Between Communism and Postcommunism", *British Journal of Political Science*, 1996, vol.26, no. 1, p.114.

since generally been found to be less affluent than other sections of Russian society. As early as 1992, it was found that older people were more likely to still consider themselves members of the party with younger people and religious believers more likely to have left. Further, those older people who still considered themselves members, were more likely to have negative feelings towards economic reform. Although noticeable, the differences between former members and non-CPSU members, at this stage, were not found to be substantial.<sup>810</sup>

In a study that compared the 1993 and 1995 Duma election results, the CPRF was by far the most distinctive party in Russia and despite the CPRF doubling its vote from 1993 to 1995, a development that might have been expected to lead to a less clear electoral profile, the CPRF's voters continued to share common political beliefs in terms of attitudes to the past and present.<sup>811</sup> CPRF voters in 1993 and 1995 were also more likely to have been members of the CPSU than voters for other parties. The former CPSU voters who then voted for the CPRF were found to agree largely with what the CPSU represented but those who were CPSU members but later voted for other parties did not.<sup>812</sup>

The question 'were you a member of the CPSU or was another in your family a member of the CPSU?' has been asked throughout the *NRB*, since 1992. The percentage of respondents who are former members of the CPSU and who vote for the CPRF had almost doubled over the course of these three surveys while the number of respondents reporting that they voted for the party has decreased noticeably. This may be an indication of an ageing group of supporters and more committed believers still voting for the party while those who are less convinced of the benefits of communism have left to support other causes. While inclusion in exploratory models for the logistic regression did not yield statistically significant results for 1999 and 2003, by 2007, former membership of the CPSU was a significant indicator of support for the CPRF.

Whilst many CPRF members are former CPSU members, former CPSU membership does not predict present membership or even support for the CPRF as many people joined the CPSU to gain the material and educational and career advantages that the party could confer on members, as well as those who joined out of ideological conviction. Having been a member of the CPSU is not a good indication of political views as many former CPSU members are now members of the new regime and political parties other than the CPRF.<sup>813</sup> The logistic regression models below for 1999 and 2003 do not include former CPSU membership as CPSU membership was found in initial, exploratory versions of the regressions to be far greater for

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<sup>810</sup> op. cit., p.112.

<sup>811</sup> White, S., Rose, R. & McAllister, I. *How Russia Votes*, Chatham House Publishers, Inc., New Jersey, 1997, p.233.

<sup>812</sup> op. cit., p.145.

<sup>813</sup> op cit., p.243.

non-CPRF voters than for those who had voted for the party and therefore had a considerable negative impact on the explanation of the CPRF vote.

Table 2: Former CPSU Membership by Percentage in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<u><b>1999</b></u>			<u><b>2003</b></u>			<u><b>2007</b></u>		
	<u>Member</u>	<u>Another</u> <u>in Family</u>	<u>No One</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Another</u> <u>in Family</u>	<u>No One</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Another</u> <u>in Family</u>	<u>No One</u>
<u>CPRF</u> <u>Voters</u>	<b>18.8</b>	24.5	56.7	<b>28.5</b>	21.8	48.6	<b>34.0</b>	24.1	40.4
<u>All Others</u>	9.5	27.9	62.0	8.6	18.8	66.0	7.7	16.9	64.8

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

The change in the levels of academic attainment of CPRF voters over the eight years between elections to the Duma might perhaps reflect the dwindling core of supporters the party has being those who benefited most in educational terms from their involvement with the party under the Soviet regime. Respondents for Chapter 5 were keen to emphasise the opportunities available in Soviet times (although these were claimed to have been available to all citizens, equally). While there had been over a third fewer CPRF voters with higher education than non-CPRF voters in 1999, numbers were almost equal in the later survey. Consequently, higher education was omitted from the regression calculations as it was found in exploratory work to reduce the accuracy of the regression models in predicting whether a respondent in the surveys voted for the CPRF.

From 1999 to 2007, there is a considerable variation in terms of educational attainment among CPRF voters. Respondents who voted for the CPRF were twice as likely to have higher education by the time of the third survey as those asked in the first while amongst others there was an increase of slightly under 3 percent. As these are different samples, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from the changes over the years in the academic attainments of CPRF voters. Although the change is notable, education does not form part of the regression model as it did not produce statistically significant results for any of the models.

Table 3: Support for the CPRF by Level of Education by Percentage in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<u><b>1999</b></u>			<u><b>2003</b></u>			<u><b>2007</b></u>		
	<u>Up to</u> <u>Completed</u> <u>Secondary</u>	<u>Secondary</u> <u>plus</u> <u>Vocational</u>	<u>Higher</u> <u>Education</u>	<u>Up to</u> <u>Completed</u> <u>Secondary</u>	<u>Secondary</u> <u>plus</u> <u>Vocational</u>	<u>Higher</u> <u>Education</u>	<u>Up to</u> <u>Completed</u> <u>Secondary</u>	<u>Secondary</u> <u>plus</u> <u>Vocational</u>	<u>Higher</u> <u>Education</u>
<u>CPRF</u> <u>Voters</u>	62.7	28.3	<b>9.0</b>	42.9	42.3	<b>14.7</b>	51.2	31.0	<b>17.7</b>
<u>All Others</u>	53.9	30.4	15.7	36.0	48.0	16.3	40.0	40.6	19.4

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

## IDEOLOGY

Unsurprisingly, when asked about their political views in 1992, those who had been members of the CPSU were much more positive about socialism and Marxism-Leninism than those who had never joined the party.<sup>814</sup> Socialist values have frequently been found to be correlated with class, age and also negatively correlated with education.<sup>815</sup> However, one study also found that it was liberal values rather than the expected authoritarian values that indicated support for the CPRF<sup>816</sup> and after accounting for these liberal values, the influence of nationalism, economic pessimism, age and education proved to be of much lesser influence.<sup>817</sup> Findings from a series of interviews conducted in 2001 in Moscow and Russia's 'red belt', where voters tended to favour communist and nationalist candidates, indicated that those who favoured non-democratic alternatives to democracy generally had minimal education and were the respondents most likely to be living in the most difficult economic circumstances. Those in favour of reducing freedoms were still in favour of personal freedoms but failed to see that some institutional reforms would be unlikely to protect those freedoms and were unaware of the fact that their choices were contradictory.<sup>818</sup> 'Restoration of the USSR' and 'return to the economic system of the past' are two variables used in the regression models below to test whether authoritarian values do or do not differentiate the communist voter from the rest of the electorate.

With a clearly defined ideology, in comparison with most other parties, supporters of the CPRF know what they are voting for, unlike supporters of Unity/United Russia, a party which has made a point of declaring that it has no ideology and whose voters do not hold any set of political opinions that define them as a group apart from supporters of other political parties but rather reflect the political views of Russians as a whole.<sup>819</sup> Several studies have argued that the Duma elections indicate that Russian political parties do have distinct social bases of support determined by age, education, residence, gender, economic conditions and voters' ability to adapt to socio-economic changes and that these social bases of party support have been clear since the first post-Soviet elections and have grown and also become more varied over time.<sup>820</sup>

From a survey conducted in 1996, it has been found that committed communists had quite different political beliefs from the rest of the electorate and 44% of the electorate claimed never to have believed in communism or to have been a party member, 28% claimed to have

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<sup>814</sup> op. cit., 1996, p.118.

<sup>815</sup> Miller et al., 1998, p.201.

<sup>816</sup> op. cit., p.204.

<sup>817</sup> op. cit., p.205.

<sup>818</sup> Carnaghan, E. *Have Your Cake and Eat it Too : Tensions Between Democracy and Order Among Russian Citizens*, Studies in Public Policy, No. 352, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 2001, pp.35-36.

<sup>819</sup> Anohina, N. and Meleshkina, E. "The Political Attitudes of Russian Voters", in Gelman, V, Golosov, G. and Meleshkina, E. (eds.) *The 1999-2000 National Elections in Russia: Analyses, Documents and Data*, Sigma, Berlin, 2005b, p.139.

<sup>820</sup> see, for example, Brudny, 2001, p.177, Whitefield, 2001, p.236.



believed in communism in the past but not been a party member and one third of those questioned who *had* been party members claimed never to have believed in communism anyway. It has also been found that belief in communism does influence voting and that the effect of communist ideology on voting is considerable.<sup>821</sup> Another survey found that nearly a third of those who were never members of the CPSU and do not believe in communism normally abstain (whereas those who had been members of the CPSU and abstained from voting tended not to have believed in communism) but current believers and members of the CPRF were three times less likely to abstain.<sup>822</sup>

From the table below it can be seen that in 1999, when asked how they would define the ideology they supported, 91 percent of CPRF voters replied 'communist'. The second largest category of CPRF supporters replied 'none' - 4.7 percent and only 1.4 percent replied 'social democratic'. Among non-CPRF respondents, the largest category was those who replied that they had no political outlook - 40 percent. The second largest group at 20.7 percent was those who replied 'right wing' and the third, at 12.6 percent of the sample, was the group of non-CPRF voters who replied 'communist'.

How did those who had not voted CPRF vote who said 'communist'? And what about the 40 percent who said 'none'? Did they vote for Unity? Further analysis of the vote shows that of those who identified themselves as communists, 253 voted for the CPRF, 17 for Unity, 18 for Fatherland - All Russia, 13 for Communists, Workers of Russia, For the Soviet Union and smaller numbers for other parties. In total 335 respondents identified themselves as communists of which 253 constitutes 75.5 percent so one quarter of those who claimed to be communists felt that the CPRF did not sufficiently represent their views at the time of the 1999 Duma election. Of those who voted for the CPRF but did not identify themselves as communist, 13 reported having no ideology and four replied that they were social democrats. Smaller numbers of respondents identified themselves with other ideologies. Of those who voted for Unity, as well as the 17 who identified themselves as communists, 95 said they identified with a right wing ideology, and 79 replied that they had none.

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<sup>821</sup> McAllister, I. and White, S. "To Vote or Not to Vote: Election Turnout in Post-Communist Russia" in Wyman, M., White, S. and Oates, S.(eds) *Elections and Voters in Post-Communist Russia*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1998, pp.31-32.

<sup>822</sup> op. cit., p.32.

Table 4: Table showing the relationship between ideology and voting in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<u>1999</u>			<u>2003</u>			<u>2007</u>	
	<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<u>All Others</u>		<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<u>All Others</u>		<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<u>All Others</u>
Communist	<b>91.0</b>	12.6	To the Left	<b>46.4</b>	6.3	To the Left	<b>30.5</b>	6.0
Soc. Democrat	1.4	8.5	To the Centre	5.0	19.0	To the Centre	4.4	10.4
Right wing	0.7	20.7	To the Right	4.5	9.8	To the Right	5.9	10.4
Other	2.2	18.2	Unknown / No answer	28.5	31.0	Unknown / No answer	36.0	31.5
None	4.7	40.0	No interest	15.6	33.8	No interest	23.2	41.79

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

For *NRB XII*, the equivalent question asked respondents about their political orientation with the possible responses: 'to the left'; 'to the centrist party'; 'to the right'; 'not interested in politics' and 'don't know'. The nearest equivalent to 'communist' was 'to the left' and 46.6 percent of CPRF-voting respondents chose this category - slightly less than half of all those who voted for the CPRF. The second largest category, at 26.8 percent, was those who replied that they did not know what their political outlook was and the third category, 15.6 percent of CPRF voters, replied that they had 'No interest in politics'. CPRF voters who chose 'to the left' in 2003 were outnumbered by those who chose other categories, unlike in 1999 when CPRF voters were almost unanimous that they were 'communists'. For non-CPRF voters, support for right wing ideologies had declined by half. The combined percentage of those who did not know what their political outlook was or had no interest in politics was 62.1 percent - an increase of 22.1 percent from those who replied 'none' in 1999.

There were 198 respondents who claimed to hold a political orientation to the left and 179 respondents claimed to have voted for the CPRF in 2003 but the overlap between 'to the left' political orientation and 'voted for the CPRF' was less than half. Of those who reported having a left wing political orientation, only 83 (42 percent) voted for the CPRF, 33 voted for Motherland, 27 did not vote, 25 voted for United Russia and 18 for the LDPR. Of those who voted for the CPRF, as well as the 83 who replied that their political orientation was 'to the left', 48 of the CPRF's voters did not know what their political orientation was, 28 replied that they were not interested in politics, nine reported a centrist orientation and eight replied that their political orientation was 'to the right'. Of those who voted for United Russia in 2003, 198 reported a centrist orientation, 182 replied that they did not know what their political orientation was, 182 replied that they were not interested in politics and 61 that their political orientation was 'to the right'. United Russia changed from being mostly identified with the right (as Unity) to being mostly identified with the centre ground of Russian politics, if anything at all.

The results for 2007 show that there has been a decline by one third in those responding that they identify with the *expected* category - 'to the left' with only 31 percent choosing this answer and those responding 'no interest' has increased by nearly five times. Responses for 'unknown' or 'no answer' are now notably greater than for 'to the left'. Of all possible answers, 'to the left' received the fewest responses in the survey as a whole. The option 'to the left' was the choice of 6.7 percent of those who voted for United Russia but with a 32.3 percent saying 'don't know', lower than the 34 percent for the CPRF. While 23 percent of those who voted for the CPRF said they had no interest in politics, 30 percent of United Russia voters fell in this category. Further analysis of voting preferences reveals that 70 percent of all those surveyed

responded that they either had no interest in politics or they did not know what their political orientation was.

So why, when the CPRF is one of the most ideologically coherent parties, did some CPRF voters reply ‘not interested in politics’ or ‘don’t know’? There is some confusion as to what constitutes left and what constitutes right in Russia, partly because the communists became the conservatives overnight when the Soviet Union collapsed. The CPRF has appealed to nationalists in its aim to strengthen Russia’s standing internationally, which may have further added to any existing confusion, as well as calling for increased levels of employment and better health and education,<sup>823</sup> more traditionally left-wing concerns. Left-wing politics are clearly not necessarily associated with the CPRF but of all ideologies or political outlooks, the CPRF has by far the closest linkage of any party with an ideology, in the minds of the electorate.

Does support for the CPRF translate into support for a return to the communist system? From the table below it can be seen that there is limited support even among those who vote communist for a return to the past political and economic system and between 1999 and 2007, those who did not vote communist have become much clearer that they would not restore the former economic regime while the CPRF voters are now slightly more divided but the number that would definitely *not* restore the communist regime has almost trebled. With only 47.7 percent in 1999, 40.2 percent in 2003 and 40.4 percent in 2007 convinced that they would restore the former economic and political system, the CPRF has not even been able to convince a majority of its voters that the party represents an economic and political system that should be implemented again.

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<sup>823</sup> White, S., Munro, N. and Rose, R. “Parties, Voters and Foreign Policy” in Hesli, V. and Reisinger, W. *The 1999 - 2000 Elections in Russia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p.60.

Table 5: Table showing the relationship between support for a return to the past economic system and voting in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<b><u>1999</u></b>				<b><u>2003</u></b>				<b><u>2007</u></b>			
	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Generally</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Entirely</u> <u>Disagree</u>
<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<b>47.7</b>	35.1	11.5	5.0	<b>40.2</b>	35.8	14.0	6.7	<b>40.4</b>	29.6	13.3	13.3
<u>All Others</u>	12.9	19.8	31.9	33.2	10.2	14.4	23.1	45.8	6.7	13.0	22.8	48.1

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

The CPRF, despite Zyuganov's insistence that the party would move forward to socialism and not backward, is now having to deal with appealing to voters, 70.9 percent of non-CPRF supporters and 26.6 percent of its own supporters, who would not want the economic system that the party represents restored. It has frequently been noted that when Russians speak approvingly of the past, this does not translate into a wish to return to Leninist rule<sup>824</sup> but what is often meant is a return to a time of greater economic security and, in the minds of communists, a Russian national tradition that should be preserved.<sup>825</sup> In a study that covered the communist successor parties of Ukraine and the Czech Republic as well as the CPRF, it was the economic and social aspects of the transition, in particular rising unemployment, inflation and perceived social insecurity along with socialist values (such as support for state welfare and collectivism) that were found to lead to a return to support for left-wing parties,<sup>826</sup> rather than a wish to return to the communist system in its entirety.

## GEOGRAPHY

There are several geographical factors that affect the communist vote. Communist parties in Eastern Europe have generally been strongest where those countries have a 'red belt' of industrial or agricultural regions where they have been able to benefit from protest votes against democratic and market reforms.<sup>827</sup> Much research has focused on the support for the CPRF south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel where it is generally found to be strongest. However, the idea that the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel represents a political division in Russia – north tends to be pro-reform and the south, anti-reform – has been found to be too simplistic for finding underlying factors that affect the communist vote as the composition of this 'red belt' changes from one election to the next.<sup>828</sup> These factors include the impact of urbanisation levels and the concentration of resources (Moscow and St Petersburg being north of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel).<sup>829</sup>

The CPRF vote has been strongly correlated with the rural electorate<sup>830</sup> but some researchers have found that this link is eroding. While the CPRF expanded its appeal beyond the 'red belt' south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel from the 1995 election to the 1999 election,<sup>831</sup> seventeen of

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<sup>824</sup> see for example Rose and Munro, 2002, p.79.

<sup>825</sup> March, L. "For Victory? The Crises and Dilemmas of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2001, p.264.

<sup>826</sup> March and Mudde, 2005, p.29. March, L. and Mudde, C. "What's Left of the Radical Left? The European Radical Left After 1989: Decline and Mutation", *Comparative European Politics*, 2005, vol.3, no.3, pp.23-49.

<sup>827</sup> March and Mudde, 2005, p.29.

<sup>828</sup> Clark, 2006, p.16.

<sup>829</sup> Medvedkov et al., 1996, p.80. Medvedkov, Y., Medvedkov, O. and Hudson, G. "The December 1993 Russian Election: Geographical Patterns and Contextual Factors", *Russian Review*, vol. 55, no. 1, 1996, p.80.

<sup>830</sup> Clark, 2006, p.21.

<sup>831</sup> Ishiyama, J. "Elections and Nationalisation of the Vote in Post-Communist Russian Politics: A Comparative Perspective", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.18, no.3, 2002, p.37.

the 'red belt' regions accounted for just over 4 million of the 8.5 million votes that the CPRF lost in 2003. Part of this loss is attributable to the erosion of support for the CPRF in rural areas to other parties.<sup>832</sup> Like the communists, Agrarian voters were also found to be on lower incomes and were less educated than the average voter and while the CPRF continued to attract votes from older people, those on lower incomes and agricultural workers, the correlations were lower in 2003 than in 1999.<sup>833</sup> Of the 15 regions in which Motherland took over ten percent of the vote in 2003, in 11 of those, the CPRF lost over ten percent of the vote.<sup>834</sup> In Moscow and Moscow Oblast, Motherland received 1 million votes and the CPRF lost 600,000.<sup>835</sup> In the North Caucasus, the CPRF lost over a million votes from 1999 to 2003 and Motherland gained almost half a million.<sup>836</sup>

There is a relatively higher share of the working-age population in urban areas than in rural areas as these regions are home to more of the young and the retired and it has been found that there is a strong correlation between regions that vote communist and regions with an older, more rural, more agrarian and less educated population.<sup>837</sup> Russia's ageing population has implications for future elections as a result of the strong correlations between older voters and more agrarian or rural populations which are reinforcing the existence of the 'red belt'<sup>838</sup> which may in turn reinforce communist support. Whilst geographical factors are clearly significant in determining support for parties of the left, town size was not included in the regression models below as results for the individual surveys indicated that town size was not significant in indicating the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF in these two surveys when included in exploratory regression models and the size of the two samples are too small for any results to be reliable.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA

Issues in the 2003 election included the increasing state domination of the national media, especially with the state takeover of TVS, the last of the formerly non-state national television stations.<sup>839</sup> Russia has a pluralist, but not an independent, press in so far as a broad range of political opinions and interests are represented but this pluralism is the result of different groups owning newspapers (and formerly, television stations) as money in Russia is

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<sup>832</sup> Clem and Craumer, 2004, p.253.

<sup>833</sup> op. cit., p.254.

<sup>834</sup> ibid.

<sup>835</sup> op cit., p.255.

<sup>836</sup> ibid.

<sup>837</sup> Heleniak, T. "Geographic Aspects of Population Aging in the Russian Federation", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol.44, no.5, 2003, p.342 and p. 327.

<sup>838</sup> op. cit., p.325.

<sup>839</sup> Clark, W. "The Russian Election Cycle, 2003 - 2004", *Electoral Studies*, vol.24, no.3, 2005, p512.

made through connections in government.<sup>840</sup> This pluralism, however, disappears when those groups feel threatened, as in the 1996 presidential elections.<sup>841</sup> One researcher notes that: “[a] necessary precondition for the media to function autonomously is their guaranteed access to (political and economic) information and transparency of governance. Worldwide, a correlation can be seen between press freedom and transparency, and between transparency and democracy.”<sup>842</sup> Access to that information is limited in Russia to those media outlets in favour with the government, despite the fact that the right to information is included in Article 29 of the 1993 Constitution.<sup>843</sup> Communists interviewed for the following chapter complained of difficulties in getting the party’s policies represented accurately in the media and as long as the media are not independent, the problem is likely to result in a further decline in the communist vote.

Those who decided how to vote from watching state television were more likely to support Unity in 1999 and United Russia from 2003 and less likely to vote communist.<sup>844</sup> In 1999, except for age, socio-economic status had little impact on voting. Older voters were more likely to vote for the CPRF or Fatherland - All Russia while younger voters preferred Unity or the Zhirinovsky Bloc.<sup>845</sup> Economic attitudes also influenced the vote, especially for the communists but the greatest influence was the media: state-controlled television on the vote for Unity and Fatherland-All Russia; and commercial television on the vote for Yabloko.<sup>846</sup> State television’s promotion of pro-Kremlin parties in the 2003 election had a serious detrimental effect on opposition parties<sup>847</sup> and the communists were “ignored or vilified” by the media.<sup>848</sup>

Although television coverage of the election clearly had an impact on the communist vote, the attack on the CPRF in the broadcast media was combined with other forms of advertising. A survey of media coverage, party platforms, and political advertising showed that several parties (particularly Motherland and the LDPR) campaigned to win the votes of former communist party supporters through claims of the CPRF having acquiesced to business interests and claims by those parties they better represented the interests of workers, pensioners and those

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<sup>840</sup> de Smaele, H. “In the Name of Democracy: The Paradox of Democracy and Press Freedom in Post-Communist Russia” in Voltmer, K. (ed.) *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2006, p.50.

<sup>841</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>842</sup> *op. cit.*, p.51.

<sup>843</sup> *op. cit.*, p.51-53.

<sup>844</sup> White and McAllister, 2006, p.221.

<sup>845</sup> White, S., Oates, S. and McAllister, I. “Media Effects and Russian Elections, 1999 - 2000”, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol.35, no. 2, 2005, p.203.

<sup>846</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>847</sup> White, S. and McAllister, I. “Politics and the Media in Post-Communist Russia” in Voltmer, K. (ed.) *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2006, p.221.

<sup>848</sup> Oates, S. “Where’s the Party? Television and Election Campaigns in Russia” in Voltmer, K. (ed.) *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2006, p.157.



living outside the big cities.<sup>849</sup> When asked about the media in the *NRB* surveys considered here, however, communist voters were not remarkably different in their views from the rest of the electorate.

In 1999, Unity's greatest increase in support came after Putin's endorsement of the party which attracted 53 percent of Unity's support as these voters had been undecided before this endorsement.<sup>850</sup> In 2003, United Russia's influence over the media was considered so substantial (along with other complaints about irregularities in the counting of votes) that Yabloko and the CPRF co-operated to try to get the results overturned.<sup>851</sup> The variable, 'television coverage', is included in the regression models below, as media coverage of elections and the CPRF in general was an issue raised by many respondents in the following chapter.

The questions asked varied from one survey to the next. In 1999, respondents were asked whether they considered coverage of the Duma election to have been biased and in 2003, the question related to whether the media could be trusted to represent the respondents' views. Contrary to expectation, the CPRF's voters did not perceive television coverage of the 1999 Duma election to have been biased as much as those who did not vote for the party. In 2003, surprisingly, CPRF voters were twice as trusting of television to represent their interests as non-CPRF voters, although the total percentages for both groups were low in comparison with those who did not trust the media. In 2007, the most similar question asked whether television coverage of the election had been fair. The most comparable results are those for 1999 and 2007 as the questions were the most similar and results for the CPRF had hardly changed in terms of considering television coverage of the election to be biased. The most sizeable difference between CPRF voters and others was in 2007 with 41.9 percent of CPRF voters considering television coverage to be unfair and 60.9 percent of non-CPRF voters. This was the reverse of the anticipated outcome and did not produce statistically significant results in trial versions of the logistic regression. Instead a question on the fairness of the vote was included which better differentiated CPRF voters from others.

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<sup>849</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>850</sup> Brudny, 2001, p.163.

<sup>851</sup> Riggs and Schraeder, 2005, p.147.

Table 6: Perceptions of CPRF and Non-CPRF Voters of Bias in Television Coverage of the Duma Elections by Percentage in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<u>1999</u>		<u>2003</u>		<u>2007</u>	
	<u>Biased</u>	<u>Not (Very) Biased</u>	<u>Does Not Trust</u>	<u>Trusts</u>	<u>Unfair TV Coverage</u>	<u>Fair TV Coverage</u>
<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<b>41.4</b>	58.6	<b>84.9</b>	15.1	<b>42.9</b>	41.9
<u>All Others</u>	38.1	62.0	92.3	7.7	26.0	60.9

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

## AGE AS AN INFLUENCE ON VOTING

Younger communists interviewed for the following chapter rejected assertions in the media and accusations from other parties that the CPRF was a party of pensioners. However, the average age of members in 2003, was 55, according to the party<sup>852</sup> and three years later, two thirds of CPRF voters were found to be over this age.<sup>853</sup> The party increased its share of the vote among voters under 30 and the better educated from 1993 to 1995<sup>854</sup> but appears to have lost support among younger voters in subsequent elections. Older voters were more likely to support the CPRF in all three surveys and younger voters were more likely to support Unity in 1999 and United Russia in 2003, the Union of Right Forces and the LDPR<sup>855</sup> so there are clearly generational differences in party support. In 2008, Zyuganov admitted to the party's Central Committee that 85 percent of the membership were either pensioners or approaching retirement and only 5 to 7 percent of the membership were under thirty.<sup>856</sup>

The crosstabulation for CPRF vote by age, below, shows how the CPRF vote has altered in the eight years between the three surveys. Although the CPRF voters declined from 14.4 percent of the sample in 1999 to 11.2 percent of the sample in 2003, of this decline, the greatest loss was in the age group 18 to 39 (a six percent loss) with a loss of less than one percent in the 40 to 59 age group and an increase in the percentage of CPRF voters in the 60 to 95 age range of just over seven percent. Although the number of voters for the party was considerably lower in the second sample, the percentage in the middle age range has hardly declined. The party is noticeably less popular with the young and the proportion of the vote it receives from pensioners has increased from just over twice the percentage that voted for other parties (or did not vote) in 1999 to over two and a half times as many in 2003.

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<sup>852</sup> *KPRF: Partiya Budushchego*, [www.kprf.ru](http://www.kprf.ru), accessed September 2003.

<sup>853</sup> Munro, N. *Russia's Persistent Communist Legacy: Nostalgia, Reaction and Reactionary Expectations*, Studies in Public Policy No.409, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Aberdeen, 2006, p.24.

<sup>854</sup> Wyman, 1996, p.282.

<sup>855</sup> White and McAllister, 2006, p.221.

<sup>856</sup> Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, vol.12, 2008, p.6.

Table 7: Breakdown of Support for the CPRF by Age Group by Percentage in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<u>1999</u>			<u>2003</u>			<u>2007</u>		
	<u>18-39</u>	<u>40-59</u>	<u>60-95</u>	<u>18-39</u>	<u>40-59</u>	<u>60-95</u>	<u>18-39</u>	<u>40-59</u>	<u>60-95</u>
<u>CPRF</u>	17.3	39.2	<b>43.2</b>	11.2	38.5	<b>50.3</b>	10.4	36.6	<b>52.8</b>
<u>Voters</u>									
<u>All Others</u>	48.9	30.6	20.5	43.7	36.6	19.7	46.4	36.7	16.9

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

The share of pensioners in the population as a whole (or those classified as 'older than working age') has decreased from a high of 30.1 million in 1995 to 29.1 million in 2005, back to close to the percentage of the population that were classed as over the working age in 1992.<sup>857</sup> However, this percentage is forecast to increase again over the next few decades. This increasing number of pensioners (as a proportion of the population as a whole) may mean a maintenance of the CPRF's levels of support as voters' concerns change as they age. Kiewiet and Myagkov found that voters approaching retirement age during the 1990s were more supportive of the communists than those who were already pensioners. They consider this to result from extra loss during the transition as both groups lost their savings to inflation but those not yet retired also lost their jobs in many cases.<sup>858</sup> They also note that Zyuganov received almost exactly the same level of support from pensioners in the 2000 presidential elections as in 1996 despite the considerable replacement of individual pensioners who had reached retirement age over the course of the four years between the elections.<sup>859</sup>

While Kiewiet and Myagkov found that the persistence of the correlation between old age and communist support could be attributed to voters approaching retirement over the last ten years becoming more supportive of the CPRF than the previous cohort of pensioners,<sup>860</sup> this finding is not confirmed by the results of the *NRB* studies considered here and this trend would be unlikely to continue if economic conditions improve further. Generational differences in voting have been noted by various authors with particular reference to political socialisation having been different for younger citizens than that for older citizens.<sup>861</sup> An earlier study aimed to determine whether any generational differences in former communist societies could be explained by national, educational or life-cycle causes, and also found that approval of the communist regime varied by generation with higher approval in older generations (the older the voter, the more likely they were to approve).<sup>862</sup> If the pattern Kiewiet and Myagkov found is one that does continue, then the CPRF should have a steady replacement of older supporters over the next few years, however, this does not, at present, appear to be a likely scenario.

By 2007, there had been an increase of 9.6 percent in voters for the CPRF being over 60. The numbers across the three surveys in the 40-59 age range grew by 6 percent from 1999 to 2003 and then stayed fairly stable. However, there was a decline of nearly 7 percent amongst the youngest group, with the greatest change in this group occurring between 1999 and 2003.

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<sup>857</sup> *Rossiia v Tsifrah: Ofitsial'noe Izdanie*, Statistics of Russia Information and Publishing Centre, Moscow, 2006, p.28.

<sup>858</sup> Kiewiet and Myagkov, 2002, p.48.

<sup>859</sup> op. cit., p.47.

<sup>860</sup> op. cit., 2002, p.48.

<sup>861</sup> see, for example, McAllister & White in Wyman et al, 1998, p.25.

<sup>862</sup> Rose, R. & Carnaghan, E. 'Generational Effects on Attitudes to Communist Regimes: A Comparative Analysis', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 1995, vol.11, No. 1, p.40.

Although the decline in younger supporters seems to have slowed down, it has still dropped over the eight years by almost 7 percent. According to these surveys, there has been no replacement of the same numbers in the 40-59 age group and there has been an increase of 9.6 percent in CPRF voters of 60 and over

## ECONOMIC STATUS

One study of communists in the early post-Soviet era found that those who still considered themselves to be CPSU members were most likely to oppose reform<sup>863</sup> and another found that despite the CPRF being a very different party from the CPSU, its supporters, and even more so its members, tended to be those with a positive attitude towards the former regime. Before 1999, voters for the CPRF in the 1995 Duma election mostly described their economic situation as having worsened and/or felt that the economic outlook was poor.<sup>864</sup> As it became increasingly clear with the passage of time that there would be no return to the former regime, Zyuganov focused on the consequences of the economic transition to attract votes from those who had been disadvantaged by the transition, in particular those who suffered from rising inflation, unemployment and diminished social services.<sup>865</sup> However, he failed to address the change in support for the regime since Putin's election, probably resulting in the CPRF's poor results in the 2003 Duma election.<sup>866</sup>

The social composition of the party has changed considerably over the years. In 1982, the CPSU claimed that 43.7 percent of its members were working class<sup>867</sup> but by 1990, the party was only claiming 27.6 percent of the membership to be working class and 40.5 percent were described as white-collar workers.<sup>868</sup> 12 percent of the CPRF membership were described as workers in 2003, 12 percent as peasants, 20 percent students, 46 percent 'white-collar workers, et cetera' and 10 percent 'others'.<sup>869</sup> With such a low percentage of workers in the party, the CPRF can hardly claim to be the party of the working class.

The percentage of the population as a whole engaged in industrial work, and therefore the party's assumed natural constituency, has fallen considerably in recent years from 29.6 percent of the population in 1992<sup>870</sup> to 17.3 percent in 2005.<sup>871</sup> However, it is not just personal economic circumstances that affect support for the party as one study found that the relationship between

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<sup>863</sup> White and McAllister, 1996.

<sup>864</sup> Colton, T. "Economics and Voting in Russia", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 1996, vol.12, no.4, pp.300-301.

<sup>865</sup> Rose and Munro, 2002, p.180.

<sup>866</sup> Sakwa, 2005, p.397.

<sup>867</sup> *Nekotorye Dannye*, 1982, p.36, quoted in Hill, R. and Frank, P. *The Soviet Communist Party*, Third Edition, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1986, p.36.

<sup>868</sup> "Informatsiya i Khronika: partiinaya statistika", *Izvestiya TsK KPSS*, 1990, no.4, pp.113-15.

<sup>869</sup> *KPRF: Partiya Budushchego*, [www.kprf.ru](http://www.kprf.ru), accessed September 2003.

<sup>870</sup> *Rossiia v Tsifrakh*, 2003, p.79.

<sup>871</sup> *Rossiia v Tsifrakh*, 2006, p.84.

economic development and voting was very clear as richer regions registered more votes for Yabloko and poorer regions registered more for the CPRF.<sup>872</sup> An article published in 1997 also noted that the communist vote depended heavily on the state of the economy rather than any ideological commitment to communism.<sup>873</sup> This could explain the much higher vote for the CPRF in 1999 than in 2003 as the state of the economy changed considerably between the two Duma elections.

The association between class and voting preferences between 1993 and 1996 was found to have changed significantly between 1993 and 1996, increasingly indicating a strong class-vote alignment and some signs of class realignment. Class position and a voting preference for Yeltsin or Zyuganov increased markedly.<sup>874</sup> In 1993, the only distinction that was significant in terms of voting preference was entrepreneurs but by 1996, there was a clear left/right division between manual workers/peasants and entrepreneurs/intelligentsia/managers<sup>875</sup> as a joint effect of the electorate becoming more economically differentiated and politically sophisticated that influenced the relationship between class and voting preference.<sup>876</sup> The CPRF will now need to convince manual workers and peasants that it does indeed represent their interests. As will be seen below, not all those who identified themselves as communists in 2003 were convinced that the CPRF best represented their views.

In a survey of 800 rural households, Wegren found that the CPRF's support is not as strong as has frequently been argued on the basis of these voters having a lower income: "[c]ommunist support does not appear to be economically motivated, nor a result of alienation".<sup>877</sup> However, this contradicts most previous and subsequent studies as well as the views of activists in St. Petersburg interviewed for the following chapter. Wegren found that communist supporters were, on average, seven years older than non-communist rural dwellers, with the communists having a mean age of 57, tending to be less well educated by 1.4 years fewer of education than their non-communist counterparts and, surprisingly, that communist supporters were not significantly disadvantaged economically, which contradicts not only previous research but also some of the data that Wegren presents.

Wegren found that differences in income were explained by communists being older and that younger, non-communists were more able to take advantage of new business opportunities.

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<sup>872</sup> Anohina and Meleshkina, 2005a, p.118.

<sup>873</sup> Aidinov, Y., "The Red Belt: Myth or Reality?", *Russian Social Science Review*, vol.38, no.4, 1997, quoted in Clark, 2006, p.23.

<sup>874</sup> Whitefield, S. and Evans, G. "Class, Markets and Partisanship in Post-Soviet Russia: 1993-96", *Electoral Studies*, vol.18, no.2, 1999, p.162.

<sup>875</sup> op. cit., p.165.

<sup>876</sup> op. cit., p.173.

<sup>877</sup> Wegren, S. "The Communist Party of Russia: Rural Support and Implications for the Party System", *Party Politics*, vol.10, no.5, 2004, p.566.

However, Wegren also found that the average income for communist supporters was lower than that for non-communists because 64 percent of the communists were pensioners or unemployed and that the retired were more likely to support the communists than any other party.<sup>878</sup> Wegren then compares just the *employed* communists in the sample with the employed, unemployed and retired non-communists and concludes that the communists have a higher average monthly income than non-communists. However, as the unemployed and retired constitute 64 percent of the communist supporters in this sample, both this comparison and conclusion are problematic. A more valid comparison would be of the income of employed communists and employed non-communists. Also Wegren notes that the difference in monthly income between communists and non-communists “is around ten dollars, hardly a huge difference.” However, when that is the difference between 59 dollars per month (for Unity supporters) and 49.75 dollars per month,<sup>879</sup> that difference is in fact considerable. Wegren also notes that older voters depend more heavily on state benefits but if this is the case, with 64 percent of communists retired and unemployed and an average age of 57, how can communist voters not be “significantly disadvantaged economically”?<sup>880</sup> However, the survey data from 2001 that Wegren presents do show that those on the very lowest incomes were more likely to vote for Unity than for the CPRF.<sup>881</sup>

By 2007, the composition of the vote for the CPRF has changed very little over the eight years between the first and last surveys considered here. The differences were more noticeable in the ‘others’ categories with a decline of 58 percent among pensioners and an increase of almost 9 percent in the employed category. The CPRF was found in one survey to have increased its support between 1993 and 1995 amongst most groups in Russian society and went from being ‘the party of ‘losers’ of the transition’ to representing those who were comparatively deprived - those who felt they had lost status since the end of the Soviet era such as managers, the military-industrial complex, educational and white-collar workers.<sup>882</sup> However, these voters were the most marginalised being on lower incomes than other voters, being residents of rural areas and less educated and living in the ‘red belt’ south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>883</sup>

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<sup>878</sup> op. cit., p.571.

<sup>879</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>880</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>881</sup> op. cit., p.573.

<sup>882</sup> March, 2001, p.268.

<sup>883</sup> op. cit., p.269.



Table 8: Employment Status of CPRF Voters by Percentage in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

	<b><u>1999</u></b>			<b><u>2003</u></b>			<b><u>2007</u></b>		
	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Outside</u> <u>Workforce</u>	<u>Pensioners</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Outside</u> <u>Workforce</u>	<u>Pensioners</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Outside</u> <u>Workforce</u>	<u>Pensioners</u>
<u>CPRF Voters</u>	32.0	8.6	<b>59.4</b>	29.1	11.8	<b>59.2</b>	31.5	10.0	<b>58.6</b>
<u>All Others</u>	50.2	20.8	29.0	54.3	17.6	28.2	59.1	17.7	23.2

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

From 1999 to 2003, the increase in support from the unemployed, as seen in the table above, would indicate that it is again those most disadvantaged economically who are now supporting the CPRF, however, as will be seen below, the regression models do not fully confirm this assumption. However, from 2003 to 2007, there was a slight decline in this category. Overall, by 2007 there had been little change in the distribution of employment status among CPRF voters but among non-CPRF voters, there were 9 percent more employed and 6 percent fewer pensioners. Kiewiet and Myagkov note that as Russian pensions are indexed to inflation, although pensions are low, they are not in fact much lower in real terms than they were before reforms began<sup>884</sup> so it is difficult to determine whether the CPRF is representing the deprived or the relatively deprived. The logistic regression models below indicate the latter.

## GENDER

Women were outnumbered by men in the CPSU by slightly more than two to one<sup>885</sup> and the first *NRB* survey in 1992 found that ordinary members of the recently disbanded party were more likely to be male but in 1996, another study found that activists were almost as likely to be female as male.<sup>886</sup> Ten years later, the tendency for supporters of communism to be male continued with one study finding that male voters were more likely to support the CPRF and female voters to support United Russia.<sup>887</sup> While women in Russia were found to generally support left of centre views on economic policies in the late 1990s, they were not found to support nationalist or statist policies to the same degree.<sup>888</sup> Is the CPRF, therefore, not so appealing to women if the focus of their campaigning is on so-called patriotic issues? Is the party missing the votes of women that it might otherwise gain if it changed the focus of its campaigning?

There were clear differences in support for the CPRF in terms of gender of voters in 1999 and 2003. A greater percentage of women voted for the party than men in 1999 but in 2003, the percentage of men and women voting for the CPRF was roughly equal. As the surveys questioned different voters, it is not possible to tell if those who voted for the CPRF in 1999 have switched to one particular party in 2003 or to various parties but it is possible to say that there has been a noticeable change in support for the party from 1999 to 2003 in voting by gender. Interestingly, crosstabulations of gender and party support for 1999 and 2003 contradict existing

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<sup>884</sup> Kiewiet and Myagkov, 2002, p.48.

<sup>885</sup> *Izvestiya Tsk KPSS*, no.4, 1990, p.113.

<sup>886</sup> White and McAllister, 1996, p.105.

<sup>887</sup> White and McAllister, 2006, p.221.

<sup>888</sup> Reisinger, W., Miller, A. and Hesli, V. "Ideological Divisions and Party-Building Prospects in Post-Soviet Russia" in Wyman, M., White, S. and Oates, S.(eds) *Elections and Voters in Post-Communist Russia*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 1998, p.157.

research that considered support for the CPRF by gender, showing that in 1999, 44.1 percent of the sample that voted for the CPRF was male and 55.9 percent female while in 2003, 51.1 percent of the sample that voted for the CPRF was male and 48.9 percent female. By 2007, 51.7 percent of those who voted for the CPRF were female and 48.3 percent were male. Of those who did not vote for the CPRF, 54.7 percent were female and 45.2 percent were male. There has been a slight decline in support for the CPRF from women over the eight years covered here but the difference between support from women for the CPRF and for other parties in 2007 was only 3 percent and so gender was found not to be statistically significant in trial versions of the logistic regression models below.

### RESTORATION OF THE USSR

While the USSR as a concept has remained popular among Russians generally throughout the post-Soviet era,<sup>889</sup> a study in 2001 found that those who regret the passing of the USSR are more likely to hold illiberal views in general<sup>890</sup> but, as was seen above, the holding of such views does not necessarily indicate support for the CPRF as communists have also been found to hold liberal political opinions. The first study mentioned above also found that voters who did not regret the passing of the USSR were more likely to hold pro-Western and pro-market views in the first half of the 1990s so it is anticipated that communist voters, who are less likely to hold pro-market views, also regret the end of the Soviet Union.<sup>891</sup> The questions on this issue in *NRB VIII* and *NRB XII* were different and it should be noted that the question in 1999 asked about the unification of all the states of the CIS into one unitary state while the 2003 survey asked about the desirability of restoring the Union. The matter of restoring the USSR was not raised in the earlier survey. These questions are included here as restoration of the USSR is an important issue for communists and one mentioned by respondents for the following chapter.

There was an increase from 1999 to 2003 of just over seven and a half percent in CPRF voters who would definitely restore the USSR and a decline of 12 percent in voters for other parties and non-voters who were less convinced the Union should be restored or were opposed to such a move. Although the number of people voting for the CPRF declined considerably from one survey to the next, the CPRF voters were more united by 2003 in their conviction that the Union should be restored. This may perhaps be a result of support for the party being reduced to a smaller core of committed communist believers. Conversely, amongst non-CPRF voters there has been a decline of 12 percent in those who would definitely like to see the USSR restored.

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<sup>889</sup> White, S. and McAllister, I. "Dimensions of Disengagement in Post-Communist Russia", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.20, no.1, 2004, p.82.

<sup>890</sup> Whitefield, S. "Partisan and Party Divisions in Post-Communist Russia", in *Contemporary Russian Politics*, ed. A. Brown, 2001, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.239.

<sup>891</sup> *ibid.*

This is a little surprising as many politicians, including President Putin, who has been very popular with the electorate, have expressed regret at the disintegration of the USSR and also because the Union is associated with a time when Russia was more influential internationally which appeals to many voters who regret Russia's loss of status since the end of the Cold War. However, as will be seen from the logistic regression models below, regret at the passing of the USSR is not associated clearly with support for the CPRF as this variable did not produce a statistically significant result.

In 2007 the question was "do you agree 'it is a disaster that the Soviet Union no longer exists'?" and the number of those in agreement took the CPRF result almost back to where it was in 1999. It should be noted that the questions were all worded differently and therefore the answers are not directly comparable but there is, however, a clear difference between CPRF voters and those who voted for other parties. 'Don't know's', not counted above, were 11 percent for non-CPRF voters in 2007 but only 1.5 percent for CPRF voters. For supporters of other parties and none, there was a steady and considerable decrease in support for restoration. Is this a result of greater nationalism among CPRF supporters? One aspect in the declining support among other groups for the restoration of the USSR may be the cost as Russia's economy is growing while the economies of some of the smaller nations that had been members of the Union are not.

Table 9: Table showing the relationship between support for the unification of the CIS (1999) / the restoration of the USSR (2003) and voting by percentage.

	<u>1999</u>		<u>2003</u>		<u>2007</u>	
	<u>Agree Completely</u>	<u>All Other Responses</u>	<u>Agree Completely</u>	<u>All Other Responses</u>	<u>Agree Completely</u>	<u>All Other Responses</u>
<u>CPRF Voters</u>	<b>63.3</b>	36.7	<b>70.9</b>	29.1	<b>65.5</b>	33.0
<u>All Others</u>	46.3	53.7	34.3	65.7	24.9	63.28

Sources: *NRB VIII*, *NRB XII* and *NRB XVI*.

## LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The above-mentioned studies, combined with the crosstabulations above and research for the subsequent chapter identify the choice of predictors for the logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression is used in order to compare the vote for the CPRF with that for other parties and with non-voters using several possible indicators of support for the party. One logistic regression model is presented below for each survey to compare changing indicators of support for the CPRF over eight years.

Age, perhaps the most universally agreed influence on the CPRF vote in the existing literature on the party, is included in all three models. 'Age 60 to 95' was included as not only does the majority of the literature cited above indicate that CPRF voters tend to be older members of Russian society but interviewees and several email respondents questioned for the following chapter noted that the majority of the party's support came from pensioners. This variable was retained in all the final regression models.

Based on research conducted in St. Petersburg for the following chapter, 'age 40 to 59' was included in exploratory models to test the assertion of one respondent that people in their forties and fifties were joining the party in greater numbers in more recent times and also the work of Kiewiet and Myagkov (published in 2002 and covering voting in the 1991, 1996 and 2000 presidential elections). This variable has been retained for the regression model presented here for 1999 but is not included in the 2003 or 2007 models due to reducing the probability of a respondent having voted for the CPRF in earlier, exploratory work.

'How honest do you consider television coverage of the election?' was included as media coverage of the elections was found to be the greatest influence on the vote in 1999. In 1999 the question asked was: 'would you say that the Duma election was fair in: ... b) television reporting of the campaign? Answers were coded 1 for 'not at all' and 0 for all other responses. State-owned television was also found to have had a very detrimental effect on support for opposition parties in 2003 and so is included in the second regression model. CPRF voters are thus anticipated to trust the media less than others as the media ignored or criticised the party during the course of both elections. In 2003, the question was: 'to what extent do you trust each of the following institutions to look after your interests: ... h) national television?' Answers were coded 1 for 'does not trust' and 0 for 'trusts' and 'neutral'. In 2007, this variable did not produce statistically significant results for the CPRF and so was not included in the final model.

'Earn enough' in 1999 and 'income' for 2003 have been included in the regression models as economic status, the state of the economy and impoverishment have all variously been found to

affect support for the CPRF. 'Earn enough' in 1999 and 'income' in 2003 were included in the regression models as not only does the existing literature note the importance of economic disadvantage but interviewees cited insufficient income as an issue on behalf of the impoverished members of Russian society who had lost out under the transition. For *NRB VIII*, the question was worded 'do you earn enough from your main job to buy all you really need?' Responses were coded 1 for 'definitely not enough' and 'not enough' and 0 for 'just enough' and 'definitely enough'. For *NRB XII*, the question was 'to which group would you say you belong?' and answers were coded 1 for 'we barely make ends meet; not enough money for food' and 'enough money for food, but buying clothes difficult' and 0 for 'enough money for food and clothes, but durables such as TV a problem', 'can easily buy durables, but not very expensive things' and 'we can even afford to buy expensive things such as a flat'. There were no positive responses at all from any group of voters for this last category. Income did not produce statistically significant results for the 2007 survey. Instead, a question where respondents were asked 'how satisfied are you with your life?' is entered into the model. The variable was recoded 1 for 'totally unsatisfied' and 'mostly unsatisfied' and 0 for all other responses.

The variable 'blame transition' is entered in the 1999 model, however, there was no equivalent variable in the 2003 survey. In 1999, 'blame transition' has a positive effect on predicting a communist vote but is not statistically significant. The question asked 'who is to be blamed for our economic problems and to what extent? ... h) transformation from socialist to market economy.' Answers were coded 1 for 'mainly' and 0 for 'to some extent', 'not much' and 'not at all'. In 2007, respondents were asked 'how satisfied are you with the way things are going in the country?' The variable 'country satisfaction' was coded 1 for 'totally unsatisfied' and 'mostly unsatisfied' and 0 for all other responses.

One particular concern of the party members interviewed for the following chapter was the loss of 'equality' since the end of CPSU rule. A variable that could be equated with a sense of loss of equality between citizens since the end of the communist era was sought in both surveys as this loss was frequently cited by interviewees as a grievance. The closest question in *NRB VIII* was 'Compared to the old regime before perestroika, would you say today that: ... f) the government treats everybody equally and fairly?' Those who responded 'much worse than before' were coded 1 and other responses - 'a little worse', 'better than before' and 'much better than before' were coded 0. For *NRB XII* the question that most closely enquired about equality was: 'do you think state officials treat every citizen equally?' Responses were coded 1 for 'usually not' and 0 for 'not very often', 'fairly often' and 'almost always'. In 2007, there was no variable measuring a sense of

equality other than the question which asked for a sense of to what extent the Duma vote had been fair. The question asked ‘to what extent do you consider the Duma election to have been conducted fairly?’ Answers were coded 1 for ‘not very fair’ and ‘not fair at all’ and 0 for all other responses.

Ideology is also considered to be an important indicator of support for the CPRF as the party has a coherent and stable set of policies that are easily identifiable by the electorate in comparison with those of many other parties. CPRF supporters have also been found to hold different political beliefs from the rest of the electorate so ideology should be a good indicator of support for the party. ‘ideology’ in *NRB VIII* and ‘Ideology’ in *NRB XII* reflect the strength of conviction of respondents in St Petersburg that communism should be the future and not just the past. In 1999, the question was ‘what broad political outlook are you most inclined to favour?’ Possible answers were coded 1 for ‘communist’ and 0 for ‘right wing’, ‘social democratic’, ‘great power patriot’, ‘environmentalist’, ‘other’ and ‘none’. In 2003, the survey asked ‘which party or political force do you most sympathise with?’ Responses were coded 1 for ‘to the left’ and 0 for ‘to the centre’, ‘to the right’, ‘no interest in politics’, ‘don’t know’, and ‘refused to answer’. In 2007, the question was identical to that in 2003 and was recoded in the same way.

Political convictions are also represented in the inclusion of variables ‘identify with party’ for 1999 and ‘party usually support’ for 2003 as the CPRF is one of the longest-standing political parties of the post-Soviet era and respondents in St Petersburg generally indicated a long-standing and strong association with the party and party identification has been found to be strongest amongst communist supporters.<sup>892</sup> In 1999, the question asked ‘do you identify with any political party?’ Answers were coded 1 for ‘yes’ and 0 for ‘no’. In 2003, *NRB XII* asked ‘do you support any political party?’ and responses were coded 1 for ‘yes’ and 0 for ‘no’. For the 2007 survey, equivalent questions did not produce statistically significant results for the CPRF, possibly as a result of voters’ strengthening identification with United Russia.

Restoration of the USSR was cited by various email respondents for the following chapter as a desirable event. This variable was included in the 2003 model, however, this question was not asked in *NRB VIII*, discussion of the restoration of the Union has only become more widespread comparatively recently. The closest equivalent in the 1999 survey enquired whether respondents felt that living standards would be higher if all the countries of the CIS were joined together in a single unified state. The question was: ‘some people say that the living standards of this country would be better if all the territories were joined together in a single unified state. But others say that this

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<sup>892</sup> Pammett and DeBardeleben, 2000, p.380.



would cause political trouble or be bad for our economic conditions. What do you think?' Responses were coded 1 for 'much better off in a single state' and 0 for 'somewhat better off in a single state', 'wouldn't make any difference', 'somewhat worse off in a single state' and 'much worse off in a single state'.

Whilst this question does not reflect the sense of nationalist pride that tends to be associated with a wish to restore the USSR, it does, however, suggest to the respondent the idea of a unitary state which would cover much, but not all, of the same territory as the USSR, and therefore should appeal, in theory, to the communist voter as CPRF politicians have spoken for longer than many others of the desirability of restoring the USSR. This variable is therefore included for comparison with the 'restore USSR' variable in the 2003 model. The 2003 question asked 'what form of relations between republics of the former Soviet Union would you prefer?' Answers were coded 1 for 'restore USSR' and 0 for 'keep CIS in its current form', 'unite willing republics more closely', 'closer ties with all former republics as in the European Union', 'independence for all republics' and 'don't know'. In 2007, respondents were asked 'do you agree that it is a disaster that the Soviet Union no longer exists?' The variable 'disaster Soviet Union no longer exists' was recoded 1 for 'entirely agree' and 0 for all other responses.

In 1999 respondents were asked: 'there are different opinions about the nature of the state. To what extent do you think: a) it would be better to restore the communist system?' Answers were coded 1 for 'completely agree' and 0 for 'generally agree', 'somewhat disagree' and 'generally disagree'. In 2003, the most comparable question was worded: 'which historical path should Russia follow?' and the possible replies were coded 1 for 'return to the path of the Soviet Union' and 0 for 'generally the path of European civilisation in the modern world', 'follow its own special path' and 'difficult to say'. In 2007, respondents were asked 'what do you think the most acceptable political system is for Russia?' and the variable 'restore communist system' was entered in the regression model. The variable was coded 1 for 'the Soviet system as it existed in our country before perestroika' and 'the Soviet system in a more democratic form' and 0 for 'the political system which exists today', 'democracy as in the West', 'don't know' and refusals to answer.

Two other variables that contributed to the correct prediction of a communist vote were also included in the 2003 model. 'Outside workforce' was included as there has been an increase in support for the CPRF from the unemployed. The responses were coded 1 for all those not employed or categorised as pensioners and 0 for employed respondents and pensioners. 'Putin approval' was also included for 2003 to judge what CPRF voters think of the President whom members of the CPRF in St Petersburg accused of stealing their party's policies. Putin's appropriation of

‘patriotism’ and the policies associated with this stance in Russia, was a major cause of complaint of the communists in St Petersburg, interviewed for the following chapter. The question was ‘do you approve of the performance of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?’ Answers were coded 1 for ‘no’ and 0 for ‘yes’ and ‘no reply’. This variable was also included in 2007.

Besides age, the other characteristic universally agreed to define the majority of CPRF members is pensioner status. This variable was not included in any regression model below due to problems with multicollinearity with the age variable ‘age 60 to 95’, and for the 1999 model ‘age 40 to 59’ as many Russians retire in their late fifties. This assumption was confirmed by an early exploratory regression model. When the ‘pensioner’ variable was entered into another exploratory model instead of the age variables, less of the variance in the vote was explained for both years than when including age variables instead of the ‘pensioner’ variable.<sup>893</sup>

Table 10: Logistic Regression estimates for 1999 showing parameter estimates (and standard errors).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>
Age 60 to 95	0.698**	0.262
Age 40 to 59	0.626**	0.235
CIS Unification	-0.151	0.189
Equality	-0.093	0.183
Earn Enough	0.364	0.212
Blame Transition	0.081	0.203
TV Coverage of Election	0.079	0.183
Ideology	3.808*	0.242
Identification with Political Party	0.994*	0.200
Restoration of Communist System	0.485**	0.190
Constant	-5.190	0.334
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Cox and Snell)	0.320	

Source: *NRB VIII*. \*Statistically significant at p<0.001, \*\* statistically significant at p<0.05, one-tailed.

<sup>893</sup> This may be a result of respondents categorising themselves as ‘employed’ rather than ‘pensioner but still working’.

Table 11: Logistic Regression estimates for 2003 showing parameter estimates (and standard errors).

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<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>
Age 60 to 95	0.747**	0.240
Outside Workforce	0.778**	0.369
Restore USSR	-0.019	0.247
Equality	0.177	0.262
Income	0.111	0.227
Restore Communist System	0.375	0.256
Ideology	1.053*	0.245
Party Usually Support	4.810*	0.397
Approval of Putin	-0.664*	0.296
Does Not Trust TV	0.295	0.355
Constant	-5.388	0.474
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Cox and Snell)	0.291	

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Source: *NRB XII*. \*Statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , one-tailed.

Table 12: Logistic Regression estimates for 2007 showing parameter estimates (and standard errors).

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>
Age 60 to 95	1.191*	0.186
Disaster Soviet Union No Longer Exists	0.839*	0.188
Disapproval of Putin	0.862*	0.222
Restore Communist System	1.326*	0.209
Member of CPSU	1.139*	0.211
Ideology	1.083*	0.232
Timing of Electoral Decision-Making	0.076*	0.182
Fair Vote	0.389**	0.189
Life Satisfaction	0.183	0.203
Country Satisfaction	0.272	0.207
Constant	-4.397	0.206
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Cox and Snell)	0.185	

Source: *NRB XVI*. \*Statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , one-tailed.

For 1999, 32 percent of the variance is explained, for 2003, 29 percent of the variance is explained and for 2007, 18.5 percent of the variance is explained. For 1999, the classification of cases was 85.7 percent correct before the inclusion of predictor variables and 90.6 percent correct after predictor variables had been added to the model. For 2003, the classification of cases was 91.1 percent correct before the inclusion of predictor variables and 93.6 percent correct after their inclusion. For the 2007 study, the classification of cases was 89.9 percent correct before the inclusion of predictor variables and 92.1 percent correct after their inclusion. This represents an improvement in prediction of 4.9 percent for 1999, 2.5 percent for 2003 and 2.2 percent for 2007.

Not all the predictor variables are significant in the model, however, they do improve the prediction of a vote being cast for the CPRF.<sup>894</sup> Nevertheless, in keeping with the principles of

<sup>894</sup> "... the fundamental reason for developing a model is to provide as clear a description as is possible with the available data of the associations between outcome and covariates. If entering an additional term into the model improves our estimates of the relevant associations then we should put that term into the model regardless of its statistical significance." Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989, p.117.

logistic regression, there are still a small number of predictors.<sup>895</sup> Where  $B$  values are positive, they indicate an increase in the likelihood of a 'yes' answer and when they are negative, they indicate a decrease in the likelihood of a 'yes' answer when respondents were asked if they had voted for the CPRF in the most recent Duma election preceding the survey.<sup>896</sup> The model for 1999 misclassified 35 cases, the 2003 model misclassified nine cases and the model for 2007 misclassified 65 cases.

The model for 1999 indicates that 'ideology' and 'identify with party' are the two most statistically significant predictor variables - a result that is mirrored by the model for 2003, in which the variables 'ideology' and 'party usually support' were the most statistically significant. In both models the next most significant predictor variables were the age categories: 'age 60 to 95' and 'age 40 to 59' for 1999 and 'age 60 to 95' for 2003, showing that the CPRF is clearly losing support among younger voters, a point seen very clearly in the crosstabulation, above. The model for 2007 had eight statistically significant variables. The seven most significant were 'age 60 to 95', 'disaster Soviet Union no longer exists', 'disapproval of Putin', 'restore communist system', 'member of CPSU', 'ideology' and 'when chose party voted for'.

Restoration of the communist economic and political system, unsurprisingly, had a positive impact on the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF in all three years. This variable measured the probability of a vote for the CPRF coming from those who were convinced that restoring the communist system was the right way forward against those who were not convinced and those who were opposed to this course of action. In 1999 this variable was statistically significant but in 2003, the significance had decreased noticeably. However, in 2007 this variable was statistically more significant than in 1999. The most likely reason for the increase in those who voted CPRF who were absolutely convinced that the former system should be restored is that there is now a smaller core of committed supporters voting for the party than there was in 1999 when the party attracted wider support.

'Unification of the CIS' was not significant in improving the prediction of a CPRF vote in 1999 and actually had a negative impact on the probability that a voter supporting this policy would vote for the CPRF. 'Restoration of the USSR' in 2003 also had a negative impact on the prediction of votes for the CPRF and was, in fact, statistically the least significant variable in 2003. The idea of

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<sup>895</sup> "The traditional approach to statistical model building involves seeking the most parsimonious model that still explains the data. The rationale for minimising the number of variables in the model is that the resultant model is more likely to be numerically stable, and is more easily generalized. The more variables included in a model, the greater the estimated standard errors become, and the more dependent the model becomes on the observed data." Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989, pp.82-83.

<sup>896</sup> "The  $B$  values ... are equivalent to the  $B$  values obtained in a multiple regression analysis. These are the values that you would use in an equation to calculate the probability of a case falling into a specific category." Pallant, 2005, p.168.

restoring the former Soviet Union is popular among non-communists as well as communists due to the nationalist importance attached to Russia's status as a super-power during the Soviet era and the loss of large territories when that era came to an end. This much wider support from the population as a whole is the most likely explanation of these variables' negative impact on the prediction of a communist vote.

'Earn enough' in 1999 and 'Income' in 2003 were included as CPRF members in St. Petersburg spoke of the poorest people not earning enough to live on in the context of the need for a communist government to solve this problem. Whilst both had a positive effect on prediction of a CPRF vote, neither of these variables were statistically significant, with the significance declining noticeably in 2003 from a level in the previous survey that was fairly close to being statistically significant. Sufficient income therefore appears to be a far less reliable indicator of communist support than it has been in the past. 'Life satisfaction' helped to predict the CPRF vote in 2007 but was not statistically significant.

The 'equality' variables, whilst not directly comparable, as the questions were different in the separate surveys, surprisingly have a negative impact on the prediction of a CPRF vote in 1999 but a positive impact in 2003 and a positive and statistically significant impact in 2007, which would indicate that concerns about equality are widespread in Russian society and not an issue that the CPRF has been able to capitalise on to the degree that the party might have expected since it is characterised as representing the 'losers' in the economic transition. However, the increasing statistical significance of this variable indicates that CPRF voters feel more disadvantaged in 2007 than the average voter in 1999.

A perception that television coverage of the 1999 and 2003 elections was biased also has a positive effect on the prediction of a communist vote but again, neither the 1999 nor the 2003 variable were statistically significant, suggesting that the perception of bias in the broadcast media is widespread and not limited to CPRF supporters. Television viewers in Russia are clearly aware of bias in media coverage of elections, whatever their political affiliation. This variable was not included in the 2007 model as it reduced the percentage of the communist vote that was correctly predicted by the model.

In 2003, there were two other significant variables. The first, 'outside workforce' has a positive effect on the prediction of a communist vote and is statistically significant (whereas it had not been so in 1999 when included in exploratory models). The second, 'Putin approval' has a substantially negative effect on the prediction of a communist vote but this result is also statistically significant indicating that CPRF voters approve of Putin despite accusing him of stealing some of

their party's policies. By 2007, however, disapproval of Putin had a positive effect on the prediction of a communist vote and was also statistically significant indicating a decline in CPRF voters' good opinion of the President.

In 2003 *NRB XII* respondents were asked 'when did you choose the party you voted for?' When added to trial regression models, to test whether the time when voters made their decision differentiated communists from other voters, this variable was statistically significant and increased the variance explained by the model. However, the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was not statistically significant with this variable entered in the model and problems of multicollinearity arose with the variable 'party usually support', which better predicted the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF. This factor has been found to distinguish CPRF voters from supporters of other parties but the variable "party usually support" had a *B* of 5.20 and "when chose party" had a *B* of 3.29 when both were included in a preliminary regression model so "party usually support" was retained in the version reported here as it resulted in a higher *B* score and a statistically significant Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test. However, in *NRB XVI*, 'how long before the election did you decide which party you would vote for?' gave the anticipated result and is included in the logistic regression model for this year.

In 2007, the high number of statistically significant variables would indicate that those who vote for the CPRF are a fairly homogenous group holding similar views. However, the large number of misclassified cases indicates otherwise. Former membership of the CPSU and the timing of electoral decision-making were the two new variables in this model that had not been retained in either of the previous final models but did not just help explain the CPRF vote in 2007 but were also statistically significant. Of those survey participants correctly classified, the views held by these CPRF voters indicate a longing for a return to the economic stability of the past.

It is likely that the models could be generalised to the population as a whole as firstly, there is considerable continuity from 1999 to 2007 in terms of the same variables correctly predicting a communist vote and some continuity with the same variables being statistically significant which would indicate that the models are probably an accurate reflection of the populations surveyed and, secondly, the 2007 model reflects the loss of support for the CPRF as more traditional communist views, in particular restoration of the communist system, predict more accurately the difference between those who voted for the CPRF and those who did not as these views are held by a smaller core of consistent supporters who have not deserted the party.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the logistic regression models above, a CPRF supporter could be predicted to be older and with more strongly held political views than the average Russian citizen. As many previous studies have found, age is clearly one of the most significant factors in predicting support for the CPRF but this factor was outweighed in the first and second surveys by party identification and ideological conviction. If a voter identifies with a political party and an ideology, there was a greater probability that that voter will support the CPRF than any other political party. By 2007, however, age 60-95 was one of the seven most statistically significant factors in determining whether a voter was most likely to be cast for the CPRF.

In 1999, the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF was most clearly influenced by a voter's ideology and identification with a political party. Of secondary, but still significant, importance was their age, with those 60 and over only slightly more likely to be CPRF voters than those from 40 to 59. Of least concern to a CPRF voter in 1999 was blaming the economic transition for Russia's problems, fair treatment of all citizens from the government as a measure of equality and that television coverage of the 1999 Duma election was biased. Whilst 'equality' had a negative effect on the prediction of a vote being cast for the CPRF, 'blame transition' and 'television coverage' had positive effects on the prediction of a CPRF vote but none of these variables were statistically significant.

In 2003, again it was ideology and the strength of identification with a political party that most readily indicated the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF. Age 60 and over was the next most reliable indicator of communist support followed by strong disapproval of President Putin and then lack of employment (excluding pensioner status). Of least concern to a CPRF voter in 2003 (in comparison with other variables) was the absolute necessity of restoring the USSR, which had a very low statistical significance, followed by being on an extremely low income. Concerns about equality and the fairness of television coverage of the 2003 Duma election also failed to noticeably differentiate CPRF voters from supporters of other parties and non-voters.

In 2007, age was of considerably greater statistical significance. Ideology and disapproval of President Putin continued to be statistically significant with the addition of a wish for the Soviet Union to be restored along with the communist economic system, former membership of the CPSU and how long ago voters made their electoral decisions. The fairness of the vote in the 2007 Duma election was also statistically significant, but to a lesser degree. The only two variables which helped explain the vote but were not statistically significant were satisfaction with the way direction in which the country was being led and voters satisfaction with their own lives.



The above analysis indicates agreement with the findings of the study by Kiewiet and Myagkov that pensioner support for the CPRF is holding up from one election to the next despite the replacement of individual pensioners over the four years between elections so there are new pensioners choosing to vote for the CPRF as voters' concerns change as they age. However, the surveys analysed here do not confirm Kiewiet and Myagkov's finding that voters in their forties and fifties are turning to the CPRF, they in fact indicate the reverse and therefore also contradict the assertion of an interviewee in the following chapter that voters in this age range are joining the party in greater numbers than before. More generally, the above analysis confirmed the findings of White and McAllister (2006) that older voters are more likely to support the CPRF. The findings from *NRB VIII* and *NRB XII* also indicate that it is not the *most* disadvantaged economically that are the CPRF's supporters but the *comparatively* disadvantaged. The results of the survey discussed above also indicate agreement with Rose and Munro (2003) that CPRF voters tended to be those with a positive attitude towards the former regime. However, the analysis above also shows that whilst CPRF voters might have strong ideological convictions, they were not by any means convinced that they wish to see a return to the former regime.

As has been shown, there is no majority in favour of a return to the past economic and political system which raises a problem for the party in that its name and policies are associated in the minds of the electorate with a system that the majority do not wish to see restored. The argument that it has been 'ideological extremism' that has fuelled the growth of the CPRF since 1993 and that Zyuganov cannot now discard this ideology without alienating many activists and supporters<sup>897</sup> is probably true but equally, while 'patriotism' as an idea is popular with the electorate, the CPRF's patriotism has not been enough for the party to retain, never mind extend, its support. Davidheiser argued in 1998 that if the CPRF continues to work with nationalists and the ideology moves towards national socialism then the party will remain in permanent opposition and may not survive but that if the party joins forces with moderates and moves towards social democracy, it might gain sufficient support to govern.<sup>898</sup> However, the general antipathy towards social democracy in Russia, and hostility to social democracy among communists, is well documented and it is unlikely that such a move would be successful for the party. The argument that since the 2003 election the CPRF cannot continue with the same leader and programme if it is to regain support<sup>899</sup> appears well-founded,

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<sup>897</sup> Hanson, S. *Ideology, Uncertainty and the Rise of the Anti-System Parties in Post-Communist Russia*, Studies in Public Policy, No 289, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 1997, p.27.

<sup>898</sup> Davidheiser, 1998, p.268.

<sup>899</sup> Sakwa, 2005, p.387.

particularly in light of the party's depleted membership. The party's continued failure to reverse this trend is further evidence that a new leader is needed after 15 years.

This raises the question of which direction the CPRF should move in, if indeed the party has any room for ideological manoeuvre. As will be seen in Chapter 5, there is a lack of support for social democracy among members of the CPRF in St Petersburg and the more extreme left wing political positions are already well covered by smaller parties which have consistently failed to attract sufficient votes at elections to gain representation in the Duma. As Russia has a presidential system and the Duma wields little power, a majority in the Duma would still not be sufficient to move Russia towards communism as the CPRF would need to win the presidency as well. Although the results show that there is considerable support for traditionally communist ideas among CPRF voters, they also reflect the unwillingness of the majority of the population to elect Zyuganov or his party as already seen in the Duma and presidential elections which preceded these surveys.

Although the CPRF's web-site claimed that in 2001, around 20,000 people joined the party,<sup>900</sup> the party only claimed to have 184,000 members in 2006,<sup>901</sup> a considerable fall from the 500,000 members the party claimed to have in 2003. The party is particularly unable to appeal to large enough numbers of young people to replace its older supporters in sufficient numbers as they die. Ultimately, as party identification and the strength of that identification have been shown to increase with age, it may be difficult to attract the support of the young anyway. However, with a leader who is unpopular in comparison with the recent and current Presidents and very unpopular with the young, it is difficult to see how the CPRF can attract new support while Zyuganov remains.

With almost 85 percent of its voters being pensioners, the CPRF is very much the party of the old. This may, however, not be quite the problem that it first appears as almost all projections, Russian and non-Russian, of the future population of Russia indicate a declining and ageing population and the proportion of elderly is projected to increase by 12 percent to 24.8 percent by 2015.<sup>902</sup> The results of an ageing population will be greater pressure on the country's pension system and a greater tax burden on the shrinking working-age population<sup>903</sup> which, all combined, may increase support for the CPRF if the party focuses on pensions and care for the elderly and if generational experiences do indeed lead retiring Russians to support the CPRF, there is a potentially increasing number of voters for the party over the next few years.

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<sup>900</sup> Obukhov, S. "2001 - The Year of Putin's Capitulation Before Bush's 'Party of War' and the Oligarchs", [www.kprf.ru/news.htm](http://www.kprf.ru/news.htm), 07/01/02, p.2.

<sup>901</sup> *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, vol.58, no.25, 2006, p.7.

<sup>902</sup> Heleniak, T. "Geographic Aspects of Population Aging in the Russian Federation", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol.44, no.5, 2003, p.343.

<sup>903</sup> Heleniak, 2003, p.345.

The CPRF's voters are generally the most ideologically committed of any party's supporters but do the party's voters compare with the CPRF's membership in other ways? The next chapter focuses on interviews and email correspondence with members of the St Petersburg branch of the party to find out whether they hold the same views as the voters, how they compare in terms of age with the voters and what their motivation was for joining the new party after the demise of the CPSU. A consideration of the views of members of a local branch of the party enables an assessment to be made of what issues members feel the party needs to address in order to deal with declining support. The CPRF was still claiming over half a million members at the time fieldwork in 2003 was undertaken,<sup>904</sup> however, the party clearly faces a problem with a dramatic decline in membership as the figure noted above clearly illustrates.

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<sup>904</sup> *KPRF: Partiya Budushchego*, [www.kprf.ru](http://www.kprf.ru), accessed September 2003.

Are the views of voters for the CPRF similar to those of the party's members? Based on fieldwork undertaken in June and July, 2003, this chapter looks at the views of grass-roots members and activists in the St Petersburg branch of the party to see what those views can tell us about the nature of communism in Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main aspects of the party's development are considered following interviews with members of the local branch of the CPRF in the city. How was the party in St Petersburg reconstituted after the ban? What motivates today's members of the CPRF? Are they long-term supporters and former members of the CPSU or are they new converts to the cause? Are the majority older citizens or are younger voters joining the party, as the leadership claims? Has the social composition of the party changed? Are members generally working class or do they tend to be representatives of other classes? Does the party have an active membership or are members generally passive?

Following on from Chapter 3, which considered the views of the party leader, it is possible to discuss whether there is a division between what the leadership in Moscow is saying and publishing and the views of a group of ordinary members outside the capital. Are rank-and-file members satisfied with Zyuganov as leader or do they perceive another within the leadership as having better prospects for success in presidential elections or making a better leader? How much influence do rank-and-file members have on decision-making within the party and has their influence grown in comparison with what it was in the CPSU?

This chapter also considers the relationship of the party to its youth organisation and the differences in the 'reformation' of the two organisations. As it was possible to interview a number of young Komsomol members this chapter also includes a discussion of the future direction of the party as the younger members will be leading the party through any changes in policy and ideology in years to come. This chapter asks whether there is any sense of members wanting to move towards social democracy or back to revolutionary tactics and whether there is a full acceptance of democratic means of attaining power.

## METHODOLOGY

Interviewees were contacted by email from entries on the website guest-book of the St Petersburg branch of the CPRF at [www.cprf.spb.ru/nforum/index.php](http://www.cprf.spb.ru/nforum/index.php) where members of the party and members of the public had posted messages. Over forty emails were sent to all the possibly suitable interviewees explaining that the author was looking to interview members of the CPRF in

June and July, 2003. Potential interviewees were chosen on the basis of what they had written (if their posts were pro-communist, or at least not anti-communist and on the basis of their contact details – if their email address indicated a St Petersburg location or if no location was obvious). This approach elicited around twenty responses of which three led to meetings. The total sample of interviewees and respondents was twenty-two including seventeen interviewees and five email-only responses. Other interviewees were friends and colleagues of initial contacts or those of later interviewees. Interviews were tape-recorded or recorded as notes and interviews were later transcribed. All respondents were informed that their responses would be anonymised. It was on this condition that many respondents agreed to the interviews being recorded. All preliminary emails and interviews began with an explanation of the academic nature of the research and an assurance that the author's aims were entirely neutral and that there was no pro- or anti-communist bias to the study.

Preliminary questions were designed to find suitable respondents and eliminate those from the study who were not communists at all or supporters but not members of the party or not based in St Petersburg. Respondents were asked if they had been members of the CPSU or the Soviet-era Komsomol. If they were members, or just supporters of the CPRF, and, if members, when they had joined and why they had joined the party. The first section of the study asked about the specific nature of the party in St Petersburg, numbers of members, ages of members, numbers of branches and how candidates were selected for elections. Respondents were asked if they knew how the transition had taken place from the CPSU to the CPRF in St Petersburg and they were also asked if they knew how the party was preparing for the gubernatorial elections in September and the Duma elections in December 2003 in order to elucidate present campaigning tactics.

The second section of questions related to views about the past and present situation of the party. To try to determine what it was about the previous system that people might want to recreate, they were asked what they perceived as having been the advantages of the socialist system. Respondents were also asked if they felt that there had been any disadvantages to the socialist system in order to determine what exactly they would like to see recreated, if in fact it was the socialist system of the past in its entirety or just some aspects of it. In order to gauge whether there was any support in the St Petersburg branch for a move towards social democracy, respondents were asked what they understood social democracy to be and how they understood it to differ from communism. The discussion of social democracy was phrased in an indirect form for the reason discussed below.

In the third section of the survey, respondents were asked about their views on the future

development of the party and its ideology. One way of trying to determine to what extent they agreed with Zyuganov's re-orientation of the party was to ask if respondents were in total agreement with the direction in which Zyuganov was leading the party or if they felt that there was another tendency within the party, with which they agreed more. The hope was that, if they were unhappy with the present course, respondents would name a prominent member of the party associated with a different strand of opinion. To determine to what extent members in St Petersburg were in agreement with the changes made by Zyuganov to the direction in which the party is moving, respondents were asked whether they felt that the party ideology significantly differed from traditional Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet doctrine of proletarian internationalism. Respondents were also asked what future direction they felt the party should take. This was a further attempt to test for any inclination towards social democracy or a more orthodox form of communism and any dissatisfaction with Zyuganov's political leadership.

The problems the author encountered with this approach to finding interviewees were quite varied. Many respondents to the St Petersburg site turned out to be living in other cities. Some responses to initial enquiries appeared not to be from the people the author had tried to contact (presumably as a result of shared email addresses) as posts on the guest-book had been pro-communist but responses were anti-communist and indicated offence at the assumption that the writer supported the CPRF. Some responses were anti-British, for example, the war in Iraq was mentioned as a reason for not speaking to the author. There were also replies that were bizarre and surreal (one respondent answered all questions in terms of the weather) but fortunately also a good number from generally young people who were delighted that someone was interested in their country and what they believed.

There was no response from the Central Office of the party which mirrored attempts by a postgraduate student at the European University in St Petersburg to help the author. Having undertaken similar work, this student tried on several occasions to contact people she had interviewed in order to ask them if they would also speak to the author but with no response. She also advised the author that she had encountered several difficulties in interviewing communists and recommended firstly, not to mention social democracy and secondly, definitely not to ask about party funding as both these topics, in her experience, would draw the interview to a very rapid close. As a result of this valued advice the author rephrased questions on moves towards social democracy.<sup>905</sup>

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<sup>905</sup> Thanks to doctoral student Natalia Zhidkova at the European University in St Petersburg who had already conducted interviews of a similar nature for her valued advice.

As a foreigner researching the development of communism in Russia, the author encountered two opposing assumptions about the present study. Non- and anti-communists assumed that the author was a communist and could not understand why someone would be studying the CPRF if they were not. Those communists who were hostile largely assumed that, coming from Western Europe, the author was anti-communist and that the intention was to portray Russian communists in a negative light. One respondent to the initial email enquiry replied that he would only speak to the author if she were a communist. This respondent was not interviewed. Younger communists were far more prepared to talk and, in a few cases, were surprisingly frank about the party's present difficulties and were far more accepting of a foreigner wanting to find out about their beliefs.

Over half of those interviewed were under thirty-five whilst the older members were mostly in their fifties and sixties, with two exceptions: one in her forties and one probably in his seventies.<sup>906</sup> All of those who were new to the party (had not been members of the CPSU) were the members of the Komsomol. The one exception was the new member in her forties. Older interviewees had all been members of the CPSU. Ten respondents were female and twelve were male. Younger respondents tended to be students and with one studying journalism and two working at the editorial offices of a journal, there was a slight bias towards media-related employment but no conclusions should be drawn from this due to the size of the sample. It is, however, worth noting in the light of the party's complaints for several years now about the portrayal of the party on television. Many interviewees had higher education and many of the older interviewees were mostly retired.<sup>907</sup> Email-only responses were all from younger people in employment or at university.

There was a noticeable difference between the views of members and non-members which marked the communists out as holding different views from the rest of society. These differences mostly related to the belief or otherwise that the end of the Soviet Union had been a backward step. A number of respondents were communists but were not asked to participate in the study as they were not members of the CPRF. However, several were keen to make their views known and sent detailed email responses. These people had many views in common with members of the party with the one notable exception that where members felt betrayed by the 'democrats' non-member

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<sup>906</sup> Precise ages of interviewees were not asked as part of the study so all references to ages are approximate except where interviewees volunteered this information.

<sup>907</sup> Again, data on education and occupations was not collected systematically but the information was frequently volunteered by respondents, in this case the information was offered as an example of the opportunities available 'to all' in the Soviet era.

communist respondents felt betrayed by both the post-communist regime and the CPRF.<sup>908</sup> All felt betrayed by Gorbachev and the late-Soviet era CPSU.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRANCH IN ST PETERSBURG

In 1992, after the Constitutional Court declared the ban on the lower levels of the party's organisation to have been illegal, the party began to rebuild itself from below. As the ban on work-place based party cells remained, the CPRF formed regionally-based organisations. The Second Secretary of the CPRF in St Petersburg told the author that despite the ban he had never stopped working for the party. In his own words "[i]t was as though there was no break". He claimed that his was the last regional committee of the CPSU in Russia to be shut down, in April 1992, seven months after the ban came into effect and afterwards he formed a communist movement which became instrumental in the founding of the city branch of the CPRF in St Petersburg. Officially, the party was founded at a Congress in Moscow in February 1993 and data from the author's interviews show that during the eighteen months between the ban being imposed and the reformation of the party, members of the CPRF were far from inactive.

In St Petersburg, the author was told the party has District Branches in all eleven regions of the city with between 200 and 600 members each split among typically five or six Primary Organisations.<sup>909</sup> The total city membership is claimed to be near 5,000 with seventy to eighty percent of members under the age of seventy. It is not a very active membership but apparently, members can be motivated to join election campaigns. There are young people in the party in St Petersburg but one respondent pointed out that the party refers to people in their forties and fifties as young members.<sup>910</sup>

The role of party members has changed in St Petersburg since the role of the party has changed – as the party is no longer running the economy but competing for power with other

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<sup>908</sup> Responses from non-member communists: "I am not a member of the CPRF, I am a member of the CPSU. I joined the Communist Party out of conviction and not for the benefit of my career, as many backward types of traitor to Communism and Russian interests, such as Gorbachev, the disgrace to Russia - alcoholic Yeltsin and overwound Putin. I continue to consider myself a member of the CPSU because I am convinced that all will turn full circle and the CPSU and USSR will be reborn anew. I have not become a member of the CPRF as I consider their politics to be social-democratic rather than communist. However, I vote regularly for the CPRF as today there is no other real and credible opposition to the anti-people regime of Russia ... Russia will wake from this nightmare and become powerful and more beautiful again!" Response received on 18/06/03. Another non-communist respondent had been about to join the CPSU at the time the party was banned: "I am not a member - I support the CPSU but not the CPRF. Communism is an inescapable stage of human development and at the moment this is ever more clear. I was in the Komsomol and due to join the CPSU. ... Stalinism ... transformed Russia from a peasant state into a superpower ... social democracy is a cancer ... Zyuganov is a thief, stealing the communist 'brand'. He cannot be called a communist. T'yulkin is closer but he does not demonstrate as clear a manner of campaigning as 'Grandfather Lenin'." Response received on 22/06/03.

<sup>909</sup> Interview 25/06/03 (respondent 1)

<sup>910</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).



political parties. However, in small cities in agricultural regions, such as Uryupinsk, the CPRF retains some of the secondary functions of the CPSU by being involved in running the city's education system, initiating city improvements and generally fulfilling the role of structures of civil society.<sup>911</sup> In the larger cities, such involvement is unheard of as the respondent below describes as those who ran the economy as part of their political duties left the party.

“Of course it has changed much because the CPSU was in fact the leading state organ. [The party] dealt with all social and economic questions ... all the administration. I was recently talking to our former party comrades who worked for the CPSU in the factories and so on. They told me what they had dealt with: big economic questions - completion of the plan ... a factory that couldn't fulfil the plan was in trouble but today, many of the people who took those decisions are old and retired. Now the majority of the people who were in the upper echelons of the leadership and had experience, they of course, have left politics. They have gone into business. They, and all their experience and connections have gone into business, and they are very high up now, they have a lot of money, they have many factories and they are simply not interested in politics. They now have enough money to buy themselves political influence. This is what happened to those who were good political leaders, and those who were not, went [back] into politics. This is what happened with the democrats and the communists. As a result, many people joined the party who are not very well suited to politics. This is why we are still not in power!”<sup>912</sup>

Again, it is worth noting the difference between large cities and some smaller towns and cities where the CPRF still provides a career path in public service as, with reference to Uryupinsk, “[t]he ideological component of [C]PRF activity does not prevent most local activists from joining. Many of them have no political preferences or consider ideology something not linked to their everyday activities.”<sup>913</sup>

As communism for many in Russia represents the past and a failed economic experiment that has little relevance in the twenty-first century, the author was interested to know what inspires people to join the CPRF when the ideological battle has been declared lost and a market economy has been embraced throughout the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. When young communists were interviewed in St Petersburg in June and July 2003, typical answers to the question ‘why did you join the party?’ were “it is the only party which really reflects the interests of the people”<sup>914</sup> and “I joined in the interests of Russia.”<sup>915</sup> Another respondent replied that “I joined the CPRF in winter 2002. I joined because I consider the present [economic] course to be a dead end

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<sup>911</sup> Kurilla, I. ‘Civil Activism without NGOs: The Communist Party as a Civil Society Substitute’, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.10, No.3, 2002, p.394.

<sup>912</sup> Interview 23/07/03.

<sup>913</sup> Kurilla, I. ‘Civil Activism without NGOs: The Communist Party as a Civil Society Substitute’, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.10, No.3, 2002, pp.397-98 with reference to Uryupinsk.

<sup>914</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

<sup>915</sup> Interview, St Petersburg, 11/07/03.

and destructive for Russia and I have not seen another [party] that is capable of changing it or of significantly correcting it". This was an interesting response as it was from the woman in her forties who had not been a member of the CPSU and had only recently joined the party because she saw it as the best chance of improving the economy rather than joining United Russia, despite Putin's popularity and her support for his aim of building a strong state.

The social composition of the party has also changed over the years since the end of the Soviet Union. The author's research revealed that members of the party interviewed in St Petersburg consider few members of the party to be working class in the original sense of the term but the industrial working class was 29.6 percent of the population in 1992<sup>916</sup> and had fallen to 17.3 percent in 2005.<sup>917</sup> Members of the Komsomol who were interviewed also tended not to be working class in the traditional sense. One member who was actively involved in recruitment gave an illuminating response when asked what percentage of the party in St Petersburg are considered to be working class. After a pause for reflection, the respondent replied:

"The exact percentage, I can't say but there are few workers. If you don't count those who are *nonworking* class [unemployed] ... those who were working class are now old. That is *workers* in St Petersburg are now few in number because there is far less heavy industry than there was. ... and those workers that there are work twelve or more hours a day and after work they drink vodka and don't want to know of anything else. That is *active* workers, those who are *socially* active, those who are receptive to communist ideology, are very few."<sup>918</sup>

Although the percentage of working class members has fallen substantially, the CPSU was also not an exclusively working class party either. Only 45.5 per cent of new members were classified as workers in 1989 and only thirty per cent of the total membership were considered to be workers (the term 'workers' covering many categories) at this time.<sup>919</sup> Also, in 1989, the intelligentsia formed forty-four per cent of the total membership.<sup>920</sup> Zyuganov now defines the working class broadly to include such people as pilots and computer operators as well as people working in heavy industries and he claims that "scientific-technical progress long ago united the work of the [industrial] worker with intellectual work".<sup>921</sup>

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<sup>916</sup> *Rossiia v Tsifrakh*, 2003, p.79.

<sup>917</sup> *Rossiia v Tsifrakh*, 2006, p.84.

<sup>918</sup> Interview 15/07/03.

<sup>919</sup> Harasymiw, B. 'Changes in the Party's Composition: The "Destroyka" of the CPSU', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol.7, No.2, 1991, p.137.

<sup>920</sup> Harasymiw, B. 'Changes in the Party's Composition: The "Destroyka" of the CPSU', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol.7, No.2, 1991, p.138.

<sup>921</sup> Zyuganov, G. (1996), *Znat' i deistvovat': otvety na voprosy*, Paleya, Moscow, p.32.

On the question of how the transition from the CPSU to the CPRF took place in St Petersburg, the Second Secretary remarked that the most significant change was in terms of the size of the party. "They closed the party. If the party is closed, what can be done? ... There were almost 19 million members and now there are half a million. How did 19 million become half a million? The answer is very simple: there were members of the party who weren't communists."<sup>922</sup> He continued by quoting Lenin on the need for a small committed party of activists. With the exception of a few changes to comply with the Law on Political Parties, the structure of the party remains practically unchanged from that of the CPSU. A few name changes have taken place such as District Organisation changing to District Branch but the structure of the party nationally and in the regions and cities remains unchanged.<sup>923</sup>

When asked whether the rights and obligations of members have changed, one respondent replied that in principal they had not.

"According to the statutes, no. Members of the party are people who pay the subscription regularly, although, there is no way of verifying anyone's real income, it relies on honesty. Officially the subscription is one percent of the income of the party member. ... it is necessary to attend party meetings, [members] must not break the [party] statutes, that is, not do anything against the agreed party line. Party members may, well, have the right, to discuss any matter of party life, including discussion of their opinions, which they may put forward, up until the taking of a final decision. That is, in discussion ... after a final decision, discussion has to end - even if there is disagreement."<sup>924</sup>

The Second Secretary of party had been an active member of the CPSU since 1981. In reply to the question of when he had joined the CPRF, he replied: "I created it. I alone, without hesitation, restored the party from the first day. We established it immediately after the Constitutional Court [ruling] - from the first day."<sup>925</sup> When he was asked about the break in party activities between 1991 and 1993, his answer was that:

"... I had been an active party worker for 10 years before 1991. I began [my career in the CPSU] in a factory committee, [and rose through the ranks] to become a member of the Raikom. The Raikom closed only in April 1992. In August 1991 the party was disbanded but my Raikom, my *raison d'être*, closed only in April 1992. That is, for half a year I worked in the last Raikom in Russia to be closed. Well, after that we created a movement of communists ... more than a thousand people ... and we already had the structure in place by the time of the Constitutional Court and it was possible to organise through signatures, through decisions, by decrees ... by the time of the decision we practically had an organisation already in existence. ... We went to the Congress in Moscow [1993]. Yes, they

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<sup>922</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>923</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>924</sup> Interview 09/07/03.

<sup>925</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

made things difficult for us and for colleagues in other communist parties - there were many nuances which are specific to Russia. Well, that is how we recreated the party.”<sup>926</sup>

Other responses, however, contradicted those of the Second Secretary and showed that the (re)establishment of the party had not been the work of one man alone:

“We have Yuri Belov ... who was the last Secretary of the City Organisation of the CPSU, he was one of the recreators of the CPRF, *one* of them. Of the other creators and people who now, in fact, lead the party, on the basis of communist leaders of the CPSU of the districts of the city, of the larger factories, of the schools, ... of those who led the City CPSU, there remains only Belov. The rest, all have remained in the shadows, they have not joined the official party. But in personal contacts and personal links, they all help, well, many of them do.”(respondent 1)<sup>927</sup> ... “Particularly, they differ from the leaders of the Komsomol, who, after that, became managers of banks and factories. Before this, they remembered, as we say, their old comrades and if those old comrades called by for a cup of coffee, politics could be openly discussed. But officially, of the old guard, only one has survived. Now, he doesn’t lead, his health has been failing since 1991. Because of this he has left the leadership and fulfils the role, we joke, of Deng Xiaoping, in China. That is to say, a deeply respected person, whom we go to for advice, but who does as he pleases.”(respondent 2)<sup>928</sup>

A similar situation is reported to have arisen in Samara oblast, where the local leader (in 1997), V.S. Romanov, had also assumed a ‘charismatic aura’.<sup>929</sup> This respondent’s answer indicates that there is a clear generational differences between young and old ex-communists - the young ones left to take up new careers while older ones remain involved, sometimes in an unofficial capacity.

Respondents who had been involved in reconstituting the party were asked about the difficulties faced in setting up the party again after the two year break between 1991 and 1993. Most respondents replied that the task had indeed been difficult. One of the most detailed responses indicated that anti-communist propaganda had been one of the toughest obstacles.

“It was. The difficulties were as follows: firstly, from 1991 to 1993, the new regime unleashed such a powerful wave of anti-communism that, from the point of view of the [new] regime, directed at the young, which did not give a general explanation of history but took, in principle, the line of the Bolshevik’s opponents. [They said] ‘Everything that happened before we came to power was bad. Now we are here, everything will be good. We bring good fortune.’ ... television, newspapers and fashionable magazines all agreed that this would be the case. Young people believed this propaganda. ... Up to 1991, there was the Soviet Union, there was the party, but in the campaign against them, everything was destroyed. Up to 1993 people were told that the Soviet Union was bad, communism was bad, the KGB was bad and the new regime said they would do things better and the people, of course, believed them. Some people were suspicious but people who had participated in the

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<sup>926</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>927</sup> Interview 24/07/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>928</sup> Interview 24/07/03 (respondent 2).

<sup>929</sup> Matsuzato, K. ‘The Split and Reconfiguration of Ex-Communist Party Factions in the Russian Oblasts: Chelyabinsk, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Tambov and Tver (1991–1995)’, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.5, No.1, 1997, p.68.

last regime, First Secretaries and so on were the people who were criticising the old regime ... time passed and people saw that what had been promised had not appeared. Sceptics began to complain - factories had been closed and so on, children were losing consciousness at school from hunger, people were hungry. The nation became exasperated. But the propaganda that communism was very bad continued and continues up to the present although it has abated. Then people said 'Well, we are hungry, unemployed, the country is falling apart but still the communists are bad. We do not want the communists back. But the democrats are bad too. All are bad.' Then some people started to say 'Yes, the CPSU and Soviet Union made a number of mistakes. And there were mistakes. These mistakes must never be repeated, but the basic direction was correct. It was simply necessary to correct these mistakes. We consider that we should create the Communist Party anew and these calls [to join the party] which we give are not backward looking.' It would cost those welded to the current government dearly to admit this. [We need] a return to a defined *parallel* line, and not backwards and movement towards social security for society."<sup>930</sup>

The Second Secretary told the author that the majority of current CPRF members in St Petersburg - and certainly almost all of the older ones - are former members of the CPSU.<sup>931</sup> The Second Secretary's response to the question of whether former CPSU members had joined other parties during the 'break' before going on to join the CPRF was that they had. Of those who had joined other parties, most had been members of the Russian Communist Workers' Party and some had joined the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) – VKP(B).<sup>932</sup> The former held its founding congress on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1991 in Yekaterinburg. It was attended by 500 delegates of whom sixteen were 'workers' and three were farmers and stated its aims as having a primarily working-class base and opposition to social democracy.<sup>933</sup> The VKP(B), formed at a founding Congress in St Petersburg on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1991, was attended by around 200 delegates from across the former USSR<sup>934</sup> but, according to the Second Secretary was not a registered party. Although, or maybe because, members left to join the CPRF, the Russian Communist Workers' Party has co-operated with the CPRF in several elections but this has not been a nationwide agreement. The parties formed coalitions in St Petersburg and in Kemerovo and Sverdlovsk oblasts in the 1990s but in other regions its candidates have run against those of the CPRF.<sup>935</sup>

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<sup>930</sup> Interview 12/07/03.

<sup>931</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>932</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>933</sup> Lentini, P. 'Post-CPSU Communist Political Formations', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol.8, No.4, 1992, p.281, p.282.

<sup>934</sup> Lentini, P. 'Post-CPSU Communist Political Formations', *Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol.8, No.4, 1992, p.288.

<sup>935</sup> Golosov, G. 'From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995 – 1998', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.51, No.8, p.1339.

Membership of the CPRF is considered to be generally quite passive with the majority of members only mobilised at election time to encourage friends and neighbours to vote.<sup>936</sup> Meetings are attended by the much smaller number of activists. When asked whether members of the CPRF have more influence on party activities than they did in the CPSU, responses from different participants in the study were very similar in that all replied that there had been little change. However, one respondent offered further explanation:

“No, except for the fact that the CPSU was a large party so there was less influence for individuals. There is only more in the CPRF because the party is far smaller. More people are heard but many don’t want to be. They are happy to let the leader take decisions and follow instructions. However, those that want to make suggestions are listened to. But good suggestions are few, unfortunately.”<sup>937</sup>

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PARTY?

When asked why they had joined the party, all respondents spoke of a sense of patriotism and of the growing gap between rich and poor. “I joined in the interests of Russia”<sup>938</sup> was a typical initial response. Interviewees would then explain more specific reasons for joining, some of which were personal or family experience of hardship. The above respondent expressed concern at the “lack of direction among young people for rebuilding Russia’s economy”<sup>939</sup> as a reason for joining the party. Another respondent told the author of personal experience and national economic difficulties as an inspiration for joining the party:

“...Our first task, already by 1993, when the economic situation was very bad, our first task was to save society, first of all, from wild civil war because, ungoverned, hungry workers simply come out onto the streets and there have been such situations. ... In any case, it is necessary to reestablish state industries. In the past we had the industries but, under the name of privatisation, there was a great theft of state property and industries ended up in the hands of private citizens, maybe 10 or 20 people at most. They practically ruined these industries. My father worked, my mother worked, both in huge factories, powerful factories, in the beginning, they stopped paying them their wages, then they explained that there were no jobs for them anymore. They bankrupted the factory. Then, say, Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov bought the factory for kopecks. ... Under the planned economy, the factories didn’t make a profit but the system worked and provided work for people. Once the planned system broke down, the factories were privatised. ... and on this wave of national indignation, at that moment, the CPRF appeared. People came from the CPSU, almost out of the blue. They came to us from what we call the ‘patriotic movement’, this is a very complicated movement. It is a very strange union of people who consider themselves at the same time monarchists, fascists, very confused people but unsatisfied with the existing expression [of patriotism]. They all had

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<sup>936</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>937</sup> Interview 09/07/03.

<sup>938</sup> Interview 11/07/03.

<sup>939</sup> Interview 11/07/03.

their own ideas. Such was the patriotic movement involved in the events at the White House in 1993, well, some of these people were the rebuilders of the Communist Party.”<sup>940</sup>

There seemed to be a sense of a lack of direction without the socialist system that members felt could be regained through the re-establishment of a socialist system: “[t]he advantages [of the Soviet era] were that we were citizens of a large multinational country and we had convictions and aims.”<sup>941</sup> It was also felt that those who sought money and power had brought the country to its present economic difficulties.<sup>942</sup> One respondent referred to Russia having had to contend with “aggressive Western countries” with the results being that Russia had to invest heavily in defence and freedom for the Russian population had to be curtailed. This same respondent, in common with others, also cited problems with the party in the late Gorbachev era which were seen to have led to a reduction in “progress” and the upper levels of the CPSU becoming unjustifiably rich.<sup>943</sup>

Another respondent referred to the Soviet education system as having been one of the best in the world, equipping children with not just knowledge but also the inclination to be industrious for the sake of the country and not for personal gain.<sup>944</sup> This was a theme that ran through many of the interviews and was frequently mentioned in emails. In the words of another respondent: “The aim of the communist system was caring about people. Humanity was the main focus of our education. Money wasn’t important. And people were friendly, different nations didn’t have conflicts. We had a great aim – happiness for everybody! We created a strong government, we didn’t have an elite class.”<sup>945</sup>

“Society was led by the party. The party organised everything. To a certain degree, the system worked. The problem was that party and state were fused. If this had not happened, if the state had been separate, then such repression, political pressure on freedoms, these things would not have happened, there would have been no need. In this the party was not correct but it was inescapable. ... If someone opposed the party, then he opposed the system. If someone wanted to destroy the party, that meant he wanted to destroy the system, because the party was joined to the state, the two were linked. The state was protected by the party and simple people still confuse the party and the state and communism. ... Because of this, of course, freedoms were few. So few that because of this freedom of thought, freedom of association, freedom of action, because there was this unified mechanism, these freedoms were denied. I can’t say that it could have been otherwise, because Russia and the Soviet Union more so, was too big a country that it wasn’t possible to lead, I believe, in principle, it isn’t possible to lead it with democratic methods. That is, democracy is present, but it is limited, namely because the country is so large. It is too diverse ... nature is too diverse,

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<sup>940</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>941</sup> Email response 1, 10/06/03.

<sup>942</sup> Email response 1, 10/06/03.

<sup>943</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

<sup>944</sup> Email response 5, 26/07/03.

<sup>945</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

some parts of the country are hot, some are cold, how would it be possible to get people in a democratic system to work in the north of Russia? Well, for money, maybe, if it was very much indeed. And if a large amount of money was not paid, people simply would not go. That is, as a result of having such a big country, it is necessary to use other methods. Not that I'm saying it has to be prisoners driven there, no, that is not necessary, but to lead the country by democratic means was not possible.”<sup>946</sup>

Although some of the younger members had only been small children at the end of the CPSU's time in power, young party members spoke of the wonders of the Soviet past: the educational and career possibilities enjoyed, they believed, by all; the lack of any economic elite in society, as far as they could see (although there were benefits for party members which were not generally enjoyed by others); and the aim of constructing a just society as they felt the lack of any laudable communal aims in the post-Soviet era.<sup>947</sup> The respondent who spoke of personal experience of parents being made unemployed due to factories having closed told the author that it was the security of the former economic system that members missed particularly and the greater social equality of the past.<sup>948</sup> Those who had been members of the CPSU could also have expected good careers, even coming from a peasant background.

“... there was a high aim – to construct a *just* society, which would profit not private financial interests but the common good, moreover, not only and not so much material interests. In this future society, everyone could expect to work according to their ability and vocation. At the same time, there must be material comfort, but this must not be the single or even main criterion of human prosperity. This was accomplished, to a degree, in practice. For example, my mother, [who was] the daughter of poor peasants, received a good higher education and became an aviation engineer ... I defended my thesis and at the same time it was possible to study music and to buy and read a large number of books, to subscribe to several so-called ‘thick [literary] journals’, to travel around cities and all of my country and many others. And my situation was by no means unique, it was absolutely typical – it was the experience of millions, well, ‘under communism’.”<sup>949</sup>

Some respondents also mentioned cultural achievements which they felt had not continued, or had even been reversed since the end of the Soviet Union. One was convinced that Western propaganda had taught people in the West that the USSR had produced nothing of cultural value and also complained of the domination of Western music and films on Russian television since the end of the Soviet era.<sup>950</sup> Many felt the sharp decline in living standards was the highest price Russian society was paying for the end of CPSU rule. These views, however, also highlighted an ignorance or denial of the social problems of the Soviet era, such as housing shortages. Those who complained

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<sup>946</sup> Interview 22/07/03 [1].

<sup>947</sup> Interviews 29/06/03 and 11/07/03.

<sup>948</sup> Interviews 26/06/03, 29/06/03 and 11/07/03.

<sup>949</sup> Interview 25/07/03.

<sup>950</sup> Email response 5, 26/07/03.



of Western propaganda against the Soviet Union had also accepted Soviet propaganda that the Soviet Union had resolved inter-ethnic conflict and solved most social problems.

“During the ‘communist’ era in the USSR, science and culture developed strongly and practically every family subscribed to several newspapers and journals, people could afford to go to the theatre, museums, cinema, trips to the countryside, every family could give their children a good education and vocational training of their choice. Of course, there were families where a parent was an alcoholic or were not interested in their children’s future, but even these children could ‘chose their own fate’, the state helped single-parent families, paid child benefit, provided bigger flats to large families and so on. In short, the state was social - now it is anti-social. We are experiencing an enormous social degradation – tens of millions cannot afford not only cultural activities but basic medication and even to live with heat and light and this in a country where winter lasts for half the year. Medication is horrendously expensive and 37 million people live on less than subsistence wages, who cannot afford medicine at all, or in the best case, take the very cheapest medicines instead of the most effective ones. Here, the consumption of meat, vegetables and fruit, milk and cheese has fallen by half while the consumption of bread and potatoes has increased. Books, visits to the theatre and to museums have all become unaffordable luxuries.”<sup>951</sup>

To be a communist, particularly a member of the Komsomol, is to be inherently honest, it would appear from several responses. To be concerned with money, to be a member of another party, to be unpatriotic (by not being a communist), to be associated with Gorbachev or to have been involved in the dismantling of the old regime is to be dishonest, in the opinion of many party members. The emphasis on ‘honesty’ dates from the Soviet era<sup>952</sup> and the perception that democrats, in particular, lied to the nation in the early 1990s about what Russia could expect from capitalism. One seventeen year-old respondent replied that: “I have been in the Komsomol for one year. Our organisation is not very big but our members are honest and don’t think about money. They love Russia. I will join the CPRF when I am 18, in October. I will join the party because it is the only party which really reflects the interests of the people.”<sup>953</sup>

Membership of the CPRF now signifies acceptance of democracy and a route back to power, in the minds of members at least, through elections. No respondent at any point (with the one exception of a non-member who was not included in this study) suggested that an undemocratic seizure of power was ever likely on the part of the CPRF. One respondent was even keen to draw attention to the CPRF’s participation in the introduction of democracy to St Petersburg:

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<sup>951</sup> Interview 25/07/03.

<sup>952</sup> The programme of the 20th Congress of the Komsomol declared that “[i]t goes without saying that the Komsomol is a remarkable and powerful organisation. The millions of young people it unites honestly fulfil their Komsomol and civil duties”. Il’inskii, I. *Ustremennost’ v budushchee: uchashchimsya o XX s’ezde VLKSM*, Prosveshchenie, Moscow, 1988, p.5.

<sup>953</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

“... Since the advent of the new Communist Party, there has been no rejection of the understanding of democracy, understanding of the freedom of speech, things which it is not possible to reject ... of course not. This has been proposed by one of the recreators of the CPRF, Yuri Belov, the last leader of the Leningrad Communist Party. He left the Smolny [Institute] in 1991. He in fact gave the Smolny its new democratic regime. And he instituted the new ideas which raised the CPRF in 1993. These ideas of state socialism, well, as it was then said ‘with a human face’. That is, in fact, it was recognised that, yes, we had not achieved communism, but this aim is a very distant prospect. There is an inclination to say that it is a romantic dream. Although adults well understand that we will not live to see it. It is a very distant dream. Now, from the existing conditions, we can only build state socialism.”<sup>954</sup>

Membership of the party also signifies a deep pride in the achievements of the Soviet Union. Industrialisation and the transformation of Russia from an agricultural society into a world superpower in a few decades and how this had enabled Russia to survive the Second World War were the achievements most often cited as examples of the party’s successes. The following response was in reply to a question about disadvantages of the Soviet era, asked in the hope of eliciting replies that would indicate what respondents would wish to see recreated in any future socialist state and what they would not. Answers, many of which were similar to the one below, showed that the economic system was greatly missed as it had enabled Russia to increase its standing in the world but there were hints that people should not have to suffer in return for economic progress in any future socialist state.

“... ideal societies do not exist. For example, all Russian modernisation – including that which took place in the Soviet era – took place at the expense of villages, peasants and generally were tough in several senses. In principle, this was inescapable – Russia is a truly cold and very large country, surplus product from any industry is necessarily small by comparison with any other country ... but maybe it could have been managed with less cruelty. In any case, the country was turned from a peasant country into an industrial one, creating a powerful military industry in 13-15 years from around 1928 to 1941, and in this time military industry doubled beyond the Urals and in Central Asia – when it became clear that the greater part of European Russia would be occupied, and in order that everything would be done as quickly as possible, but also ‘lightly’. It is possible to give examples of many other disadvantages in this life, but the main one, in my opinion was the gradual post-war degeneration of the ruling CPSU elite. Up until the war, we practically had no alternative – everything dictated one aim: how to rebuild the country, in order that in the inevitable and approaching war, the country would survive and remain independent. And after approximately 1951 –53, this task was safely achieved and options were then available – what next? Where next? What aims to set? And how to realise them? Well, the elite or upper levels of the CPSU and their analysts were unequal to the task – from here grew the roots of our present situation.”<sup>955</sup>

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<sup>954</sup> Interview 24/07/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>955</sup> Interview 25/07/03.

Like Zyuganov, this member was critical of the last years of the CPSU. This era of the CPRF's predecessor was seen as not being part of the history of the 'real' party. The comment that 'ideal societies do not exist' raises the question of what the respondent expects the anticipated future communist society to achieve. When asked if, or when, there is a communist system again in Russia, do you think it will be as before or different, all respondents replied that they anticipated differences. In the words of one respondent: "[t]he mistake before was that the party and the state became joined. The party must be separate from the state. People must in the first place feel free. This means that the party must not implement policies against any political views and then there will be no need for opposition to the party or to the state."<sup>956</sup> Whilst all respondents who expressed a view on the need for civil liberties indicated that they were in favour of such freedoms in any future socialist or communist state, there was frequently an assumption that lack of oppression would lead to an acceptance of or agreement with communist aims.

### MEMBERS' AGE

As with all political parties, there is a need for younger members as the party's membership is ageing. Although CPRF members tend to be older citizens, a study published in 2002 found that amongst new members, rather than increasing numbers of pensioners, it was workers and the unemployed who were approaching retirement age who were more likely to be joining the party.<sup>957</sup> This mirrors what young communists told the author in St Petersburg: that young members are not joining the organisation in large numbers but that people joining in their forties and fifties were noticeably more numerous in recent years.<sup>958</sup> A response from a new member in her 40s indicates that her reasons for joining the party were Russia's current economic problems:

"I was in the Komsomol, like almost all young people then but I was not in the CPSU. Generally, until 1988 I was not involved in politics. I became interested in politics in the autumn of 1988 as the following spring there was informal voting ahead of us and I did not understand for whom I should vote intelligently. From that time and until this day, I have not stopped being interested in [politics] and even, in some measure, have participated in it ... I joined the CPRF in winter 2002, that is one and a half years ago. I joined because I consider the current [political] course to be a dead end and destructive for Russia and I have not seen another power [party] capable of changing it or even of significantly correcting it ... So this is why I joined the CPRF and in the interests of Russia."<sup>959</sup>

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<sup>956</sup> Email response 4, 25/07/03.

<sup>957</sup> Kiewiet, R. and Myagkov, M. (2002) 'Are the Communists Dying Out in Russia?' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, p.48.

<sup>958</sup> Interview, 26/06/03.

<sup>959</sup> Interview 22/07/03[2].

Approaches to answering questions on the declining/ageing membership differed from disarming frankness to outright denial of any recruitment problem. When asked about the difficulty in signing up young members, the Second Secretary avoided the question by feigning offence and pretending he thought the author was implying he was old as this is a sensitive subject for the party. What the author had hoped to find out was whether the need to find two sponsors who are already members of the party to support an application to join was a barrier to young people joining the party. As the majority of existing members are apparently pensioners or approaching pension age young people might not know any existing members if they did not have older relatives who were already members of the party. However, in the interests of continuing the interview, it wasn't really possible to press the subject any further and the Second Secretary did offer a description of the ages of members of the Executive of the City Committee:

“There is no such difficulty! What is *young*? I am fifty-three - am I young? Do I look young? I consider myself young! We have even younger people in the leadership - the highest leadership in our region, members of the City Committee Executive - young people, who not only joined the party without problems but who are already elected to the leadership. Today we have in the leadership, the highest of any working organ which works between plenums - this is the Executive of the City Committee - it has today eleven people. We have one of seventy or seventy-one, several in their fifties, some in their sixties and three in their thirties. This is normal - we have had people of all ages for a long time. People want us to have problems, that we lose young people, that we have problems with young people.”<sup>960</sup>

Aware of the likely perceptions of a foreigner, one party member replied to the initial email asking about membership of the party that: “I am not alone and a dying breed – my wife and three of my sons share my convictions!”<sup>961</sup> However, at the regional party office on Shkolnaya Ulitsa, set up to run the campaign for the gubernatorial and Duma elections, younger members were particularly noticeable. A member of the Komsomol explained the reason for younger members being comparatively prominent in the party leadership:

“Young people, of course, fly to the top, simply because they have more energy, greater strength, ah ... older folks sit lower down the organisation in the lower primary organisations and say “Well, yes, this is all good”, “This is correct”, “We’ll vote for this and you go out and work”. Therefore, although the number [of members] is large for the [size of] the city, it is not in fact felt in the city. It is felt only at election time when this body of experienced, older people start urging their family, friends and neighbours to vote, because in Russia, it is the case that experienced people, especially veterans of the war are by far more socially active than the young. They are prepared to defend their beliefs whether communist or non-

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<sup>960</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>961</sup> Interview 24/07/03 (respondent 1 initial email contact 15/06/03).

communist, they are prepared to engage with anyone: neighbours, people in the street, ... in this respect they are very energetic.”<sup>962</sup>

One recent study found that voters approaching retirement during the 1990s were more inclined to support the CPRF than those who had already retired. The authors of this study attributed this change in preference to workers approaching retirement being more adversely affected by the economic transition than those who had already retired as those who had been working lost not just their savings but their jobs as well and, unlike younger workers who lost their jobs, had fewer opportunities to retrain for the skills required in the new economy.<sup>963</sup>

It has been written that “... the CPRF is largely made up of non-enterprising and unimaginative people who remained in the Communist Party after their more daring and pragmatic comrades had gone. ... To all intents and purposes, today’s CPRF is a party not of revolutionaries but of unemployed has-been apparatchiks.”<sup>964</sup> While this certainly seems from the fieldwork discussed above to be true in part, it is not the whole story. While the Second Secretary appeared to fit this description, there were many new, young members joining out of ideological conviction (though not anticipating a revolution). Although those over fifty far outnumber younger members, the younger members interviewed in 2003 were enthusiastic campaigners for a more just society and convinced of the correctness of the party’s direction so are likely to be enthusiastic members for some years to come.

While Matsuzato writes that “[t]he conventional wisdom that most activists of the left-centrist opposition – in particular the Communist Party of the Russian Federation ... – are pensioners is somewhat inaccurate,”<sup>965</sup> he justifies this statement not in terms of the ages of current activists but in terms of them not being “average pensioners”. After the party was banned, these people’s lifetime’s work was questioned and they were then driven to defend what they had done throughout the course of their careers. However, these people are still notables in their respective local communities and are still able to mobilise voters.<sup>966</sup>

While young supporters do exist, the CPRF is probably exaggerating their numbers. At the 2003 conference celebrating the tenth anniversary of the CPRF, Zyuganov denied that the party’s

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<sup>962</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>963</sup> Kiewiet, R. and Myagkov, M. ‘Are the Communists Dying Out in Russia?’ *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 2002, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp.39-50.

<sup>964</sup> Wishnevsky, J. (1999) *The Evolution of the Russian Communist Party: The Regional Focus*, Jamestown Foundation, Washington DC, p.4.

<sup>965</sup> Matsuzato, K. ‘The Split and Reconfiguration of Ex-Communist Party Factions in the Russian Oblasts: Chelyabinsk, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Tambov and Tver (1991–1995)’, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.5, No.1, 1997, p.56.

<sup>966</sup> Matsuzato, K. ‘The Split and Reconfiguration of Ex-Communist Party Factions in the Russian Oblasts: Chelyabinsk, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Tambov and Tver (1991–1995)’, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.5, No.1, 1997, p.56.

members were mostly pensioners. The Moscow City branch of the party reported an increase of 1,000 new members including between 700 and 800 students and an overall lowering of the average age of members as older communists died<sup>967</sup> but these figures have not been independently confirmed. As a rough indication of the numbers of young activists: at the Third Congress of the Russian Komsomol, it was claimed that 266 delegates had been elected to attend the event from 79 of Russia's 89 regions and a total of 251 actually attended<sup>968</sup> and in terms of total numbers of members of the Komsomol, it was claimed in 1997 that there were 21,000.<sup>969</sup> In 2000 it was reported that the Komsomol had 35,000 members.<sup>970</sup>

### THE KOMSOMOL

The party's youth movement, the Union of Communist Youth – Russian Federation, better known by the abbreviation of its Soviet-era predecessor, the Komsomol, is a comparatively small but active organisation that aims to continue many of its predecessor's traditions. The Komsomol had been an important institution throughout the Soviet Union; most young people were members, they undertook voluntary work, took part in marches and rallies and encouraged others to participate in officially sanctioned political activities. Those who were ambitious went on to join the CPSU where they could expect better career prospects and benefits not available to those outside the party. The young people who are drawn to the party, mostly new recruits who had never been members of the Soviet-era Komsomol, as opposed to the older members of the CPRF, nostalgic for the economic security of the past, are joining what has been derided as a 'party of pensioners', against the prevailing trends amongst the young in 2003 either to support President Putin or to abstain from voting and interest in politics altogether.

Along with the CPSU, the Komsomol vanished in 1991 not to re-appear until around 1994. According to one interviewee, the organisation has also been re-established in the majority of the other former Soviet republics but with varying degrees of success.<sup>971</sup> However, two completely different trajectories can be seen for the 'reformation' of the CPRF and the Komsomol. The reformation of the CPRF is perhaps somewhat predictable – those who were truly committed believers just started meeting again as soon as possible after the Constitutional Court lifted the ban on the party's activities. However, the Komsomol took an entirely different route, reforming as a

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<sup>967</sup> 'Communists Say They're Getting Younger', *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2003/02/140203.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2003/02/140203.asp).

<sup>968</sup> 'Informatsionnoe soobshchenie o III S''ezde SKM RF', [www.cprf.ru/skm/news/8382.shtml](http://www.cprf.ru/skm/news/8382.shtml).

<sup>969</sup> 'Communists to Launch Anti-Yeltsin Petition Drive,' *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/04/300497.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1997/04/300497.asp).

<sup>970</sup> Zakatnova, A. 'Karmannyi Komsomol Zyuganova', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (online version), 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2000, [www.ng.ru/printed/politics/2000-10-31/3\\_pocketkomsomol.html](http://www.ng.ru/printed/politics/2000-10-31/3_pocketkomsomol.html).

<sup>971</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

series of independent organisations and joining under the Communist umbrella only quite some time later.

A response from a member of the Soviet era Komsomol, who had joined the organisation two years before it was ‘liquidated’<sup>972</sup> and had been instrumental in re-orientating the new organisation in St Petersburg towards the CPRF, describes the process by which the organisation moved towards its present role as the youth movement of the CPRF. The local branch joined the CPRF separately from the national leadership so in the past, there must have been a phase when different branches were affiliated to at least two different parties.

“I joined in 1994. One year after the party had been created. Before that, I had been one of the *recreators* of the Russian Komsomol. VLKSM [All-Union Lenin Komsomol] was liquidated. On the basis [of the VLKSM], in 1993 the [Russian] Republic Komsomol was created. That is, the Komsomol of the former Union Republic. Not everywhere [in the former USSR], but several were created, including the organisation in Russia. It is called the RKSM: Rossiiskii Komsomol.<sup>973</sup> I was one of the creators in our city, Petersburg. When it was recreated, it was quickly orientated towards the RCWP [Russian Communist Workers’ Party].<sup>974</sup> This is a more left wing party than the CPRF. It was the only worker party in Russia at that time. Simply because at that time in Russia, the CPRF did not exist. It was reconstituted then by the Court, later, after that we reconstituted the Komsomol. And, a year later, Working Russia was working with worker parties ... and we met young people - a young person in the CPRF ... at the Congress they invited our leader to the Congress in Moscow and we, by chance, met a communist from Petersburg. We talked and decided that their work was more interesting than that of the worker parties. And so, through independent contacts, we were by chance, shall we say, convinced. I consider that we are a free youth organisation that was at that time convinced [to join the CPRF]. This same process took place in the leadership of the Russian Komsomol ... they were also convinced ... and after some time, the Russian Komsomol became, in fact, the youth organisation of the CPRF.”<sup>975</sup>

This respondent described the formation of Komsomol movements in other areas of Russia. In the Urals and Siberia particularly, the organisation had been recreated on an informal basis as independent groups in different regions, some affiliated to Working Russia and some to other independent workers’ organisations and small, unregistered socialist parties. She described how the reformation of the Komsomol across Russia on the basis of the Soviet-era predecessor had been influenced by many groups but that the new youth organisations had been approached by the CPRF and invited to affiliate with their Komsomol and by so doing, the CPRF.

Neither the reformation of the Komsomol nor its realignment with the CPRF has been uniform as some regions are still aiming to reform a Komsomol in order to create a youth movement

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<sup>972</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>973</sup> The CPRF website refers to the organisation as the SKM-RF.

<sup>974</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1)

<sup>975</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

for their branch of the party. In St Petersburg, the Komsomol was reorganised ‘from below’ by young people who wanted to be active in politics. However, in some regions it is being re-organised ‘from above’ by members of the CPRF with the aim of giving young people something to do in an attempt to discourage them from engaging in criminal activities.<sup>976</sup>

The Komsomol is holding apparently non-political events, such as camping trips (St Petersburg) and musical events (in Moscow) in the hope of attracting new members and being able to spread the word to a new and, sometimes, unsuspecting audience.<sup>977</sup> One Komsomol leader who was responsible for working with young people outside the party explained that her aim in organising the above-mentioned camping trip (to Poligrad, a small town near St Petersburg) had been partly to combat the anti-communism of the 1990s. She explained that there was a very great difference between her generation and her parents’ generation as resentment for the blockade of St Petersburg during the Second World War was stronger among the older generations as her generation’s grandparents had had to live through it and in the past, this was one of the causes that had drawn young people to the party. Although school textbooks contained details of the blockade, students generally had a very poor understanding of history, in her view. She remarked that as the old films about the blockade weren’t shown on television anymore, people don’t remember the blockade and so the party in St Petersburg has lost one of its strongest factors in recruitment.

The students on this camping trip were taken to see a monument of a woman partisan holding a sub-machine gun (apparently the largest statue in the region) and as a result, it was implied, of the students having consumed a fair amount of alcohol and the gathering darkness, the statue appeared particularly imposing and the students felt moved to listen to the stories of a war veteran who just happened to be passing.<sup>978</sup> The author was not told that any of these students had subsequently joined the party, but the respondent felt that at least some degree of anti-communist propaganda had been reversed as the students now understood the party’s role in resisting the blockade. This respondent (also quoted below) was in her twenties and very clearly experienced in defending the party and promoting its policies among young people. She was clearly aware of the apathy and cynicism towards politics among young people not just in Russia (she also spoke of Western Europe) and as a result was finding different ways to get the communist message across:

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<sup>976</sup> See for example ‘Bid to Revive Komsomol in Chally’, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/reports/tb-daily-report/2001/08/0-090801.asp](http://www.rferl.org/reports/tb-daily-report/2001/08/0-090801.asp).

<sup>977</sup> This corroborates interview-based research undertaken by L. March in Moscow in 1998 to the effect that the CPRF had recognised that the party needed to find new ways to work with young people which avoided the use of ideological slogans. See March, 2002, p.152. Camping trip in St Petersburg, Interview 26/06/03, respondent 1.

<sup>978</sup> Interview 26/06/03.



“... Young people, even our supporters, ... [interruption] ... a young person, even if he has fixed views, here I am speaking not just of communists but of young people generally in Petersburg, in central European Russian towns, young people are very apolitical, extremely apolitical and even if people have some of the more insistent political convictions, they are not prepared to and do not want to see the sense in evangelical activity. They will say “I am a Red ... ” or “I am a democrat ...” or “I am a fascist ...but that’s me. And what are you? This doesn’t interest me.” Of course, there are people who try to convince others [of their views], but amongst young people, this is uncharacteristic. Amongst my acquaintance, there are people who are completely opposed to doing this. ... The older generation will of course put their opinions forward and try to convince others. This is why we communists rely so heavily on our grandmothers and grandfathers. ... [With] young people you have to try to get ideas across in a different way ... they turn away from anything communist and anything political in general. People don’t believe [propaganda] ... You need to explain things to young people not directly in words, but in actions. Invite them to some activity or to a show maybe and then, gradually tell them, explain to them what you want [to say], why you want to say it, exactly how it works in principle, is the same as all other political expressions.”<sup>979</sup>

From interviews and discussions with non-communists during the course of undertaking this study, it is apparent that society is largely polarised into communists (or communist sympathisers) and anti-communists. The most common of the, apparently rarely held, alternative views was the absence of party-political convictions. One email respondent, who was not interviewed as he turned out not to be a communist, despite having posted a message on the CPRF’s internet guest-book, informed the author that he did not agree with the holding of political opinions.<sup>980</sup> This is probably an indication of the legacy of the CPSU and the idea that one party unites all the people whereas the existence of many is seen to divide the people.

The respondent responsible for convincing young people to join the party spoke of her own reasons for joining the Komsomol:

“At the time of the Soviet Union, I was a child, I didn’t understand how everything was controlled, in particular, to what degree our way of life was led in relation to the Communists. ... .. And I was sceptical about Soviet propaganda, as everyone was. Not long ago I saw a film that was quite clearly propaganda, it was, of course, a Soviet film, about the history of a Siberian village from the Revolution to the present [time at which the film was made]. It was about the Revolution, the Civil War, Collectivisation, the film was very powerful and I remembered seeing this film during the time of the Soviet Union. It was [part of] a series on the Great Patriotic War, about how this small Siberian village became the new location for a huge factory from near Moscow that was relocated there during the War and the local communist leaders organised the rebuilding in less than two weeks, well, ten days. When I was a child, I saw this as a boring industrial theme, that some factory had been moved somewhere, but now that I work for the party, I saw a political situation, I saw what powerful people they were. This was absolutely true. They were just simple communists, following orders. Of course, it was hard, they hardly slept for ten nights. Now people would

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<sup>979</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>980</sup> Response received on 27/06/03.

have to be paid a lot of money to do this. Then, they just went, they got up and went, they were hungry, and for ten days they built [the factory]. They built it in a field, simply in a field, and the same workers from Moscow came, from Leningrad, who came from comfortable flats with heating and water to live for 24 hours a day in a field, without anything. What supported them? They were supported by that same system which works so well in wartime conditions, in conditions of stress. This system is prepared to work in stress situations ... but in peace time, it begins to diminish. So, to say what was good, what was bad, I don't know. That is, maybe, when life in the country has become better, maybe in that situation the system must be developed. Namely, because, the country had been constructed, practically, as an anti-stress system. And when a situation arises when it is necessary to mobilise this huge territory, this huge nation, there will be problems [without communism], there will be contradictions and divisions between different national groups. Mobilisation can only be undertaken in such a severe system.”<sup>981</sup>

“Now people would have to be paid a lot of money to do this” acknowledges that it was the totalitarian Soviet system that mobilised people to do whatever it required and that without it, the ‘power’ of the local communist leaders that the respondent so admired would have been much less.

In the few comments that have been made in existing literature on the relationship between the CPRF and the Komsomol, it has been suggested that there was a nationwide split in the 25,000-member organisation in 1999 and that a new organisation was formed “uniting several small organisations”<sup>982</sup> or that a complete split with the CPRF occurred in 1997 and the organisation transferred its support first to the radical Stalinist Bloc, led by Anpilov, and later to Unity and President Putin.<sup>983</sup> However, these reports appear to focus on the actions of Igor Malyarov, First Secretary of the Komsomol during the late 1990s, and a few of his colleagues. Malyarov stood for election in the 1999 Duma elections for the Stalinist Bloc and later worked to set up ‘Walking Together’ with two other former members of the Komsomol.<sup>984</sup> There was no indication from interviews conducted with members of the Komsomol in St Petersburg for this study that any split affected the organisation as a whole and it would appear that whatever splits have taken place have been limited to a few members who have spoken to Western media and implied that the whole organisation was following them in a new direction.<sup>985</sup>

As a result of the move towards what has been described as ‘authoritarian democracy’ and

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<sup>981</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>982</sup> Sakwa, R. “The Russian CPRF: The Powerlessness of the Powerful”, *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds A. Bozoki and J. Ishiyama, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2002, p262.

<sup>983</sup> March, L. ‘For Victory? The Crises and Dilemmas of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation’ *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.53, No.2, p.269.

<sup>984</sup> Lambroschini, S. ‘Russia: Putin’s Unity Group Attractive to Both Right and Left’, *Johnson’s Russia List*, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2000, No.4113. See also ‘Komsomol Opts for Putin’ *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/03/200300.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/03/200300.asp).

<sup>985</sup> ‘Komsomol Opts for Putin’, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/03/200300.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/03/200300.asp), ‘Communists to Improve Outreach to Youth’, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/1998/02/160298.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1998/02/160298.asp), ‘Zyuganov Unpopular with Russian Youth?’ *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/04/1-rus/rus-260499.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/04/1-rus/rus-260499.asp)

“the dominance of the ruling elite on the political scene and in traditional media,”<sup>986</sup> Russian political parties are having to use the internet as it is free and, as yet, not controlled by the state. The Komsomol is becoming adept at circumventing the problem of state controlled media through their website guest-book, from which participants in this study were contacted. The site is actively used by members of the Komsomol in an attempt to counteract the state-sponsored propaganda in other media by debating political matters with supporters and opponents of communism alike. Some writers (members of the party) are very active on the local branch’s website, replying to queries and dismissing the arguments of those respondents who are clearly anti-communist.

Despite the limited access to the internet outside Moscow and St Petersburg, this form of communication is vital for the party as it is uncensored (even by the party, in the case of apparently not censoring the content of the internet guest-book during 2003). An indication of how seriously this form of communication is taken by the CPRF can be seen in the results of a study of political parties’ websites in Russia and Ukraine which found that in both countries the Communist Party websites were the highest quality party websites in terms of user friendliness, updatedness and accessibility.<sup>987</sup>

Along with more modern methods of communication, the Komsomol is also engaged in more traditional campaign methods: on-street campaigning; handing out ‘agitation-literature’; door-to-door campaigning and putting up posters for local communist candidates.<sup>988</sup> This was one area where, until recently, the CPRF had an advantage in terms of the numbers of activists the party could mobilise to undertake these tasks. Since the advent of United Russia, and the accusations of abuse of administrative resources by that party, in terms of the employment of people to distribute election materials on their behalf,<sup>989</sup> this advantage has diminished.

The Komsomol has tried to broaden its appeal to young people with the adoption of anti-globalisation as an aspect of communist beliefs. The Komsomol participated, along with other groups, in the “Anti-Capitalism 2002” campaign in Russia<sup>990</sup> which enabled them to campaign on an issue that is generally popular with young people regardless of which political party they support or whether they support any political party at all. Like the CPRF, the Komsomol can be pragmatic and is prepared to work with other ‘left’ and ‘patriotic’ groups where they share aims. They see their

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<sup>986</sup> Semetko, H. and Krasnoboka, N. (2003) “The Political Role of the Internet in Societies in Transition: Russia and Ukraine Compared”, *Party Politics*, Vol.9, No.1, p.93.

<sup>987</sup> Semetko, H. and Krasnoboka, N. (2003) “The Political Role of the Internet in Societies in Transition: Russia and Ukraine Compared”, *Party Politics*, Vol.9, No.1, p.83.

<sup>988</sup> ‘Molodezh’ - Za KPRF!’, [www.cprf.ru/skm/news/20958.shtml](http://www.cprf.ru/skm/news/20958.shtml).

<sup>989</sup> Interview, St Petersburg, 26/06/03.

<sup>990</sup> ‘Uchastie SKM RF v Massovykh Meropriyatiyakh i Protestnykh Aktsiyakh’, [www.cprf.ru/skm/news/5326.shtml](http://www.cprf.ru/skm/news/5326.shtml).

mission now as saving Russia, rather than immediate world-wide proletarian revolution.

Another challenge facing the party in terms of recruitment of younger members is the youth organisation Walking Together, a youth movement set up to support President Putin and in competition with the Komsomol. ORT (television) news on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 showed members of Walking Together starting a voluntary work group in the form of the Komsomol with red, white and blue patterned neck scarves in imitation of the Soviet Komsomol's red scarves and undertaking work to help the elderly. The organisation led a march of reportedly 10,000 young people in support of President Putin and "its participants committed themselves to 'no swearing, respect for the elderly and love for the President.'"<sup>991</sup> Komsomol members in St Petersburg complained that supporting Putin was at that point very 'fashionable' amongst the young and Walking Together has clearly been set up to provide an alternative 'patriotic' youth organisation to the Komsomol.

There is an enormous difficulty in attracting new members, especially amongst the young as many are not interested in politics, and supporting President Putin, the author was told, is considered very fashionable (these interviews were conducted before the 'orange revolution' in Ukraine which has since inspired youth groups such as 'Walking Without Putin' to campaign against media restrictions). Yet another pro-Putin youth group, Nashi (Our People), set up in 2005, is considered to be an attempt to avert an 'Orange Revolution' in Russia as anti-government youth groups were instrumental in the overthrow of unpopular governments in Ukraine in 2004 and Georgia in 2003.<sup>992</sup> One member of the new organisation was quoted at a training session as saying "People today are far too interested in money ... I think that is wrong. There are more important values in life like self-respect and love for your country".<sup>993</sup> Views almost identical to those expressed by young communists in this study thereby showing the difficulty the Komsomol faces in attracting new members when other youth organisations are also concerned with 'saving Russia'.

Although effectively a separate organisation, the Komsomol membership is counted as part of the total of CPRF members in order to boost the number of young members. This can be seen in the statistics the party quotes of 18 to 24 year olds that it claims are party members.<sup>994</sup> However, there seems to be little consistency in the age at which Komsomol members can join the CPRF with some interviewees claiming they joined the party when they were 18 and others saying that they

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<sup>991</sup> '10,000 Putin Youth Demonstrate For President', *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2001/05/1-rus/rus-090501.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2001/05/1-rus/rus-090501.asp)

<sup>992</sup> BBC News at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4491633.stm>.

<sup>993</sup> BBC News at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4491633.stm>.

<sup>994</sup> "KPRF - partiya budushchego" presentation to Vybory 2003 pre-electoral exhibition, Moscow, September 2003.

could not join the party at that age.<sup>995</sup> There would appear to be regional variation in minimum ages for membership of the two organisations as the respondent who replied that he could not join the party as he was only nineteen, was not from St Petersburg.

## VIEWS ON SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

It is argued that the CPRF's evolution conforms to the general pattern of communist parties that are no longer primarily concerned with the defeat of capitalism in that there is a strong tendency for them to become defenders of traditional national culture against the effects of capitalism and globalisation.<sup>996</sup> That is not to say that the defeat of capitalism is off the agenda, this is far from the case, it is just that this is now considered to be a far longer term task than was originally envisaged. Interviewees spoke of communism being achieved in the *very* distant future. However, with one partial exception, CPRF members in St Petersburg saw no need to alter their political outlook. One respondent explained why, in her view, social democracy had not replaced communism as the ideology of the CPRF. Her argument was that, as Russia had no middle class of any size, social democracy was irrelevant to Russia.

“Well, I could begin like this: at the start of the 1990s, there was an anti-communist hysteria in Russia. There was a strange switch. The democrats became the ‘left’ wing and communists became conservatives so people began to see them as ‘right’ wing. There was no way to create a new social democratic party. ... [The respondent mentioned Gorbachev’s party and its failure in previous elections] ... To explain this is difficult, everybody says this: there is no simple explanation, in Russia there is no niche for social-democracy. In Russia, no one needs social-democracy. How is this the case? It is difficult to explain but we don’t have a middle class. We have the poor and aggrieved and they are in opposition. They see the current regime as wholly bad. Then there are those who now live very well, they have a lot of money, have their own businesses, they have no problems, they can solve any problem with money and they need those who can protect the existing situation. They need the ‘right’, namely the liberal right, not conservatives, but liberals who introduced the current policies and continue these policies up to now.”<sup>997</sup>

The views of a seventeen year-old would-be member were typical in that she saw no way in which social democracy could resolve Russia’s economic problems. Whilst admitting that communism had its detractors, she felt that social democracy was simply alien to Russia.<sup>998</sup> The views of the new member in her forties, however, were the only indication from any participant in the study that social democracy could even be considered as a viable course for the CPRF. When

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<sup>995</sup> Email response from would-be member of the party.

<sup>996</sup> Sakwa, R. “The Russian KPRF: The Powerlessness of the Powerful”, *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds A. Bozoki and J. Ishiyama, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2002, p.247.

<sup>997</sup> Interview 15/07/03.

<sup>998</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

asked how she considered social democracy to differ from communism, she replied:

“I seriously don’t know this. I think that social democracy allows private material interests not only in practice, but as the greatest core of existing society – that is social democracy simply endeavours to reduce the negative social consequences of capitalism, not encroaching on its foundation, its sense. Social democracy agrees that the world and historical process are governed by capital and linked with these values or stereotypes whereas communists do not agree with this. However, in a concrete situation, communists can take a social democratic position – *as the only one possible in that situation*. However, the root question – should there be a market, should capital dictate all areas of life and all values in place of all social institutions – communists decide in principle otherwise: no, not a market. Someone here [in Russia] called the great anti-globalisation action ‘Peace, Not Trade’. I am convinced that communists are fully in agreement with this and that social democracy is not convinced [of this].”<sup>999</sup>

This was the only respondent included in the study who acknowledged the possibility of the CPRF moving towards social democracy, albeit for purely practical reasons, and this would only be a temporary shift and communism would still be the long term aim, in this respondent’s view. The only respondent to recommend a change of ideology to social democracy was also a former member of the CPSU who had not joined the CPRF (and therefore was not interviewed).<sup>1000</sup>

The Second Secretary when asked if he thought that the ideology of the Party today differs greatly from traditional Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet doctrine of proletarian internationalism, replied: “[n]ot at all. Absolutely not. In what way does it differ? Well, we have travelled a bit further. After Marx, there was Lenin, after Lenin, Stalin and Stalin achieved further development. ... Well, everything Marx wrote, he wrote in Germany, and he could not, did not live long enough, nor did Lenin or Stalin, to answer every question. And there are national differences as well ...”<sup>1001</sup>

Whilst no respondent criticised Stalin, none of the interviewees went so far as to praise him either but the claim that Stalin achieved ‘further development’ of communism was the nearest any respondent came to praise. Other respondents alluded to ‘mistakes’ of the past but did not specify what these were. However, from the contexts, excesses of the Stalin era could sometimes be inferred. On the whole, Stalin was seen by members and non-members alike as having achieved the transformation of Russia from an agricultural state to a superpower and having led Russia to victory in the Second World War.

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<sup>999</sup> Interview 22/07/03 [2].

<sup>1000</sup> His suggestion that the CPRF adopt a social democratic orientation was accompanied by the acknowledgement that the party would lose supporters as a result but he was also convinced that it would be able to attract new ones to replace them. Email received on 19/06/03.

<sup>1001</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

The Second Secretary respondent to the question on what direction the party ideology should take in the future by arguing that changes to the ideology would change the nature of the party and therefore should be avoided.

“Only in terms of explanation ... with the outcome of continuing practical work. It is possible to spend half a year theorising and ‘correctness’ could be debated for a lifetime. ... and if practical work leads to lack of ‘correctness’ then it is necessary to think again. [Practical work needs to develop] far more than ideology because if you reconsider [the ideology] then it becomes another party in the sphere of politics and economics, yes?”<sup>1002</sup>

Members of the Komsomol, however, considered that the ideology should develop over time but that debates over ideology should not risk divisions within the party as unity in the face of competition was far more important. Although the second respondent in the interview quoted below referred to a ‘dialogue’ with society, there was also a sense that this ‘dialogue’ was intended to be closer to the ‘explanation’ of the ideology that the Second Secretary referred to than the two-way discussion that is stated below.

“[respondent 1]... it is difficult to say ... from opinions and ideology there are various movements in the party, various tendencies, all of which are communist, in Marxist terms, in the understanding of the Marxist idea ...what is important is the saving of the party ... problems can arise if one movement claims “I am more correct”, “I am more communist and you are less communist, less correct” - the party will collapse, as happened with the Soviet Union.”<sup>1003</sup>

“[respondent 2] As the situation in our country changes, so ideology has to change. ... ... Ideology will be the path for life. In any case, dialogue with society is necessary. It needs to be understood that Marxism is, of course, not the only philosophical method ... although Marxism sustains the method.”<sup>1004</sup>

The fact that there has been such a noticeable move by the CPRF away from internationalism (despite the insistence to the opposite of the Second Secretary) and revolution raises the question of to what extent it is communism that party members are really trying to implement in terms of what the party currently stands for. As can be seen from the interviews quoted above, however, this shift has not encouraged members in St Petersburg to consider a move towards social democracy. Communism is now seen by both the CPRF and the Komsomol as a very distant prospect but, true to Marxism-Leninism, an inevitable one nevertheless.

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<sup>1002</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>1003</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>1004</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

## ATTITUDES TO ZYUGANOV

Amongst members, there was a very high degree of loyalty to Zyuganov and it was only in initial contacts with people who turned out not to be members of the party that any genuine criticism could be found.<sup>1005</sup> There was a reluctance to question Zyuganov's leadership and a sense of obligation, on the part of those who were members, to appear united when talking to an outsider. Those who were supporters were more willing to criticise but there was no sense of any serious support for any other possible leadership figure. In one interview with two members of the Komsomol, Zyuganov's leadership was praised in so far as he appeared able to unite the different factions of the party. However, the second respondent noted that Zyuganov was not a charismatic leader of the order of Lenin, Castro or Che Guevara.<sup>1006</sup>

It has been suggested that "Zyuganov's leadership and approach were probably the only way to ensure both the unity of the CPRF and its predominant position in Russia's party system".<sup>1007</sup> This view also appears to be held by the party members. In reply to the question "do you agree with the tendency in the party that Zyuganov represents or is there another tendency within the party that you agree with more?" respondents were generally unwilling to admit to internal divisions in the party and typically said that talk of divisions was unhelpful. None admitted to supporting any tendency within the party. Many refused to criticise the leader but there were a small number of more open responses, for example: "[i]t is sad but there are a lot of tendencies and provocateurs in the party and it is difficult to be strong in such a situation. I do not agree with everything that Zyuganov says and would prefer another leader but we don't have such an opportunity at the moment. He is a clever and honest man but I know that we need another leader who is better at P.R."<sup>1008</sup> There was much talk of honesty, as communists, especially Komsomol members, were seen as being inherently honest by party members and the democrats were seen as having lied to the whole of Russian society in the early 1990s about Russia's future prosperity.

When asked whether they agreed with the political views of Zyuganov or if there was someone else in the leadership with whom they agreed more, one of the two re-founders of the Komsomol replied that "[w]ell, I would be a bit more radical, myself. But if I were Zyuganov's age, maybe I would be following the same path as him, I don't know. The direction I think is right."<sup>1009</sup>

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<sup>1005</sup> Response from non-member: "I was not in the CPSU but I was a member of the Komsomol ... I do not agree with Zyuganov, apart from him there are other people in the party who are younger and with more initiative." 01/07/03.

<sup>1006</sup> Interview 26/06/03 [respondent 2].

<sup>1007</sup> Sakwa, R. "The Russian CPRF: The Powerlessness of the Powerful", *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds A. Bozoki and J. Ishiyama, M.E. Sharpe, London, 2002, p260.

<sup>1008</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

<sup>1009</sup> Interview 26/06/03.



In an attempt to clarify their views on Zyuganov's leadership the author asked whether these respondents considered Zyuganov to be a good leader. The first respondent replied that 'good' was difficult to define but that Zyuganov led the party well - a remark which the second respondent qualified by saying that he led the Party *sufficiently* well.<sup>1010</sup> The second respondent replied that, to outsiders, it might look as though the leadership have become democrats, to which the first respondent hastily added "[i]n appearance, in appearance."<sup>1011</sup> The second respondent continued by explaining that there is a persistent political search for the best way forward. Zyuganov was further considered to be a useful leader in that he had been able to increase party finances.<sup>1012</sup>

The only member interviewed who was prepared to hint at another leader, albeit one who had been a member of another party, was the comparatively new member in her forties. However, she also saw a need for unity and keeping the present leadership whilst dealing with more urgent matters:

"It is not a matter of tendencies. I do not agree with the present level and quality of specific work – but, you see, the leader answers for that. I think that the party needs now a leader-organiser, who can obtain greater activity and energy from the CPRF. I am not ready to name straight away such a leader – this must be the result of discussion in the party – but there are excellent organisers in the party ... We must move away from the edge, to deal with the most urgent matters first, there is no alternative – and only then can we start to think about long term ideology. This is why I think we need a leader-organiser. ... the party of Glaz'ev ... true, it has only just been set up, but it is led by one of the most talented and honest of our economists – pro-market but also in favour of controls."<sup>1013</sup>

Some responses such as "I do not agree with all tendencies in the party"<sup>1014</sup> betrayed a lack of understanding of how political parties function in democracies. Another respondent replied that ideology was very much a secondary matter to saving the nation:

"We have, Russia has, so many absolutely immediate urgent tasks that there is no time for me to think about ideology. We have a catastrophic situation in, firstly, science – middle aged and pre-pension; secondly in industry – 60-70 per cent of basic resources/workforce are physically and morally worn out; thirdly, in demography – a very high mortality rate in the active ages, especially for men, they are not surviving, on average, to reach their pensions – 58 years is the mean duration of their lives; fourthly, in defence and military industry - ... our 'defence' works almost only as export and defends foreign armies; fifthly, in agriculture and food production – around 50 per cent of our food provision is supplied by imports, that is we have lost independence [self sufficiency] and many other things."<sup>1015</sup>

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<sup>1010</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>1011</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>1012</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>1013</sup> Interview 22/07/03[2].

<sup>1014</sup> Email response 2, 19/07/03.

<sup>1015</sup> Interview 25/07/03.

... while another respondent saw ideology as being very important, especially for her generation, but again, secondary to saving the nation: “[o]ur party must be strong and united. About the new ideology – it is our question – the question for young people. But the main thing is to save Russia and unite all the people who love Russia. It is simple, when the country has a lot of problems, for people to unite on the basis of nationality but we are for internationalism and will not change our position.”<sup>1016</sup> When asked about divisions within the party most of those interviewed stressed the need for unity and none were willing to criticise the leader directly. March refers to the ‘cult of unity’ within the party<sup>1017</sup> which results from the adherence to democratic centralism. Questions on the use of democratic centralism by the CPRF were met almost with surprise by interviewees as if there were no reason to doubt its continued use.

When asked if an envisaged future communist system would be similar to the socialist system of the past, the two leaders of the Komsomol were convinced that it would be different. This far distant future society would differ from its socialist predecessor because the party had now renounced its monopoly on power, on property and on ideology. The second respondent remarked that “[a] monopoly on power, doesn’t even need a party ... Putin is purging the media so that United Russia can do whatever it needs to monopolise the political field.”<sup>1018</sup> However, it was not clear how either respondent envisaged a future communist society operating under conditions where power was shared between different groups.

The CPRF is a broad coalition encompassing those prepared to accept the existence of private ownership of property and a mixed economy as well as those who argue for complete renationalisation.<sup>1019</sup> Zyuganov has been working since the party’s formation to broaden the communists’ support base further by forming coalitions outside the party with various nationalist organisations such as the National Salvation Front. The party’s leadership is very aware of the limits of the support for the CPRF so despite divisions within the party, the national-communist or statist-patriotic ideology is tolerated, at least for the time being, by those who would follow another course.

## CURRENT ELECTION STRATEGY

Of particular interest when questioning interviewees about the upcoming elections was the method used to select candidates for elections, in light of the fact that claims have been made that

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<sup>1016</sup> Interview 29/06/03.

<sup>1017</sup> March, L. *The Communist Party in Post-Soviet Russia*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002, p.58.

<sup>1018</sup> Interview 26/06/03.

<sup>1019</sup> Ishiyama, J. “The Sickle or the Rose? Previous Regime Types and the Evolution of the Ex-Communist Parties in Post-Communist Politics”, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1997, p.315.

businessmen have been able to purchase places on the CPRF party list in some elections.<sup>1020</sup> However, it would appear that little has changed since Soviet times, as far as people knew or were prepared to describe to an outsider. The Second Secretary described the method of candidate selection:

“[Candidates are chosen] Very simply! Primary organisations within the city make their suggestions, we consider these. We meet at the party office, consider them all, discuss them, talk with the candidates, then discuss them again and at the Plenum - a full meeting of the Committee - then we vote by a show of hands - who is for and who against. ... We take the decision here in our region. The local list is our business but the central list [decided centrally?] ... the single mandate ... is our decision.”<sup>1021</sup>

An illuminating response was also provided by one of the leading members of the Komsomol.

“[Candidates are chosen] By various means. Firstly, there are members of the party. As a rule, this takes place all from the primary organisations. If there are suitable people there in the primary or city branches they can put forward their comrades and in the leading organs of the party and for elections at any level it begins in the primary organisations ... The City organs of power elect to the Republic level organisation and to the State Duma. ... And the party also selects people who are non-members. It is possible to put forward or support those who are not members. Here the procedure is different - here the candidate presents himself ... And then there is consideration of our leading organs, discussion takes place, as ever. Well, often as not, if it is a very big election, discussions take place in the primary organisations, will we support this person or not, these conversations take place about the whole rank put forward by the CPRF and other organisations. We have very many of these discussions. Will there be a bloc? Should there not be a bloc? With whom will we form a bloc? Who will we admit into the bloc? All this is of course set out in the statutes. That is it is decided there. And discussion takes place about businessmen and about famous people, [who want to stand for election as communists], politicians representing the little parties ...”<sup>1022</sup>

As the party is still deciding whom it will allow to join its ‘bloc’, it is still assuming a ‘leading role’ where it can. However, the party realises it needs to co-operate with other parties if it is to increase its influence. Golosov notes that between 1995 and 1998, the CPRF selected candidates to run in sixty-nine regions but that it was not necessarily the CPRF’s party name on the ballot in regional elections as some of the communist parties in the national republics were independent from the national organisation.<sup>1023</sup> The CPRF has formed coalitions with other left-wing and nationalist parties during this time, particularly with the Agrarian Party and the Russian Communist Workers’ Party, often as the Popular Patriotic Union of Russia and CPRF candidates

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<sup>1020</sup> March, 2003, p.173.

<sup>1021</sup> Interview 04/07/03.

<sup>1022</sup> Interview 18/07/03.

<sup>1023</sup> Golosov, G. ‘From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995 – 1998’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.51, No.8, p.1336.

have also run under the name of the Komsomol.<sup>1024</sup> The party has also supported non-party members for election under the CPRF name in Primore, Kursk and Saratov and Amur Communists ran without the CPRF name on the ballot while the party still gained a majority in the region's assembly.<sup>1025</sup>

In terms of the St Petersburg gubernatorial elections in September 2003, concerns were raised about the influence of central government, media manipulation by central government, electors being away at dachas over the summer (and therefore out of reach in terms of campaigning) and abuse of administrative resources by United Russia.<sup>1026</sup> The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) expressed more concern over the fairness of the 2003 Duma and 2004 Presidential elections than any they had monitored in the past. Concerns included the denial of access to meeting places for opposition candidates and detention campaigners by the police. The OSCE also raised concerns about the lack of free access to the media for opposition parties.<sup>1027</sup>

The responses to questions about preparations for the December 2003 Duma elections all raised the same issues. There was much concern about the eroding class base of support for the party as traditional industrial jobs vanish ...

“We are seeing interest from people with higher education. Workers are fewer [in the party] but they are fewer in number now anyway. We no longer have a proletariat. And no doubt in the near future, there won't be one either. Because of this, there is little interest in the working class ... We need a working class, this is the basis [of the party] but everyone understands that there is almost no proletariat to organise, this is stupid, unfortunately.”<sup>1028</sup>

Although the perceived scale of the problems faced depended on the proximity of the respondent to active campaigning as “[p]reparations for elections are better than before. There is noticeable work by PR specialists”<sup>1029</sup> was a response from a member who was far less active in day-to-day organisation and campaigning than many of those interviewed. While one Komsomol member, in reply to a question about how the party was preparing for the Duma elections in December 2003, openly admitted, without any prompting, that the party was facing serious difficulties due to declining numbers of activists and ageing activists:

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<sup>1024</sup> Golosov, G. ‘From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995 – 1998’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.51, No.8, pp.1336-38.

<sup>1025</sup> Golosov, G. ‘From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995 – 1998’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.51, No.8, p.1338.

<sup>1026</sup> Interview 19/07/03.

<sup>1027</sup> [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/01/1947\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/01/1947_en.pdf), [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/06/3033\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/06/3033_en.pdf).

<sup>1028</sup> Interview 12/07/03.

<sup>1029</sup> Email response 2, 19/07/03.

“Badly, ... our support has dropped to a lower level than last year. In principle we are losing members ... the older generation are gradually dying so the percentage of older voters [who are likely to vote for us] is decreasing, [however] people in their forties and fifties are beginning to vote for us and here we have a persistent, healthy growth [in the communist vote]. These people in their forties and fifties are particularly of interest to us. Notably, these are not workers, they are intelligentsia. They are middle-level managers, scientists.”<sup>1030</sup>

However, another respondent was confident that at least in the countryside, the CPRF could rely on support as a matter of course: “... outside the cities, in the countryside, the population, it could be said, of this group, it is a separate question, their relation to the communists ... they are accustomed to thinking well of the communists. There is a tradition - my father voted for them and his father too so I will as well.”<sup>1031</sup>

Another respondent replied that preparations for the 2003 Duma election were only just beginning around the time of the interview. He replied that there would be a congress at which decisions would be taken about the national list of candidates; pre-election staff and so on and that closer to the election the party would prepare to take part in the work of “*each* electoral commission and will not allow the infringement of the registration of votes.”<sup>1032</sup> One respondent replied, when talking about the party as a whole that “[o]ur people can reach every elector with banners, leaflets, loud speakers ... our members stand at metro stations and other points of transport ... we can reach all the adult population.”<sup>1033</sup>

The members of the Komsomol were acutely aware of the difficulties the party was facing, not just that year, but as their support base grows older and younger voters do not remember the perceived advantages of the old economic system ...

“We are trying to work with young people. Despite the large number of young people in the city, young members of the party are few. With the aim of changing this, I am leading the work with young people in our city organisation. The work is difficult. With young people the work is naturally difficult. But my personal task is to raise interest in our mission. To return to a situation where there is interest in the party and to liquidate the influence of the Yeltsin-era propaganda that communists are old, going senile, evil, well, that they are crazy old folks, boring, ill people sitting in meetings. My task is to explain to young people that this is absolutely untrue. I realise that these young people won’t be voting for another four or five years yet but they will be voting next time [2007 Duma election].”<sup>1034</sup>

The CPRF is also having to deal with many other parties encroaching on its new, patriotic, electoral space. The party claims to have been the first to adopt ‘patriotism’ as part of its ideology

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<sup>1030</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>1031</sup> Email response 3, 24/07/03.

<sup>1032</sup> Interview 11/07/03.

<sup>1033</sup> Interview 19/07/03.

<sup>1034</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

and to have been followed by most other parties once this tactic was seen to attract voters. The greatest problem in this respect is United Russia:

“... Putin is very fashionable, because he has, in fact, very adroitly taken the ideas of the CPRF. He talks of the rebirth of Russia, but an *imperial* rebirth of Russia. He talks of us needing to become a leading world power. He has criticised the dissolution of the Union. He plays on the collapse of the Union in every way possible, practically speculates on it. And in this way, he has stolen the initiative from the communists in terms of ‘patriotism’ ... During the Yeltsin era, the word ‘patriot’ was an obscenity. It was said that a patriot was a fascist. Putin has turned this round. Now, many parties do not have their own programme or platform and don’t know in what way Russia should move forward so they say that their action is simple – ‘We are like Putin’ ... People see Putin as such an intelligent and fashionable person, for simple electors and as a result of this, they begin to see a convergence between the communists and Putin and begin to say they are the same.”<sup>1035</sup>

The second respondent in the above interview remarked that people in Russia tend to have a sense of loyalty to whoever is in power simply because of their position and that in this respect, Russians differ from populations of (other) European states. The first respondent replied that the state was seen as the ‘father’ in Russia and added that this was a result of the country’s history and climate so people will support the President out of a sense of duty as they *want* to believe him. Both respondents then went on to discuss Putin’s and United Russia’s use of ‘public relations’ and the government’s monopoly on the broadcast media and how this adversely affected the CPRF in terms of difficulty in getting their message across and propaganda employed against them.<sup>1036</sup>

The manipulation of election results is one of the considerable challenges the communists now face. The Moscow Times reported in September 2000 that enough falsification of the vote in the presidential election had occurred to put the legitimacy of the vote in doubt. The worst allegations included the theft of 88,000 votes in Dagestan from other candidates which were subsequently given to President Putin and the addition of 1.3 million voters to the electoral roll nationwide, the majority of whom, the paper claimed, were fictitious.<sup>1037</sup> While the communists’ frequent complaints of electoral foul play may be exaggerated, they are not unfounded. International election monitors criticised the biased campaigning of both the December 2003 Duma elections<sup>1038</sup> and the presidential election in March 2004 as well as irregularities in the counting of the vote in

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<sup>1035</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondent 1).

<sup>1036</sup> Interview 26/06/03 (respondents 1 and 2).

<sup>1037</sup> Moscow-Based Newspaper Challenges Presidential Election Results, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/09/110900.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/09/110900.asp)

<sup>1038</sup> OSCE/ODIHR “Russian Federation Elections to the State Duma, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003”, *OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report*, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw, Poland, 2004a.

one quarter of all counts that were monitored in the presidential election.<sup>1039</sup>

An even greater challenge, however, is media manipulation and what the communists see as President Putin having taken over much of their political space through the adoption of ‘patriotism’ and calls for the restoration of Russia’s Cold War era levels of influence.<sup>1040</sup> Putin has also gradually reduced the opposition’s opportunities to communicate with the public through the state take-over of independent television stations. These stations now broadcast the government line on most issues. Zyuganov must surely regret his declaration in 2002 that state television “must serve executive power.”<sup>1041</sup> Now that all national television stations are controlled by the state, there is a serious problem for the CPRF as the majority of references to the party on television tend to be negative, such as the regular claims that the CPRF is a party of pensioners<sup>1042</sup> and, in common with other opposition parties, they cannot get a balanced view of their policies across to the electorate. The communists now find themselves in the kind of situation their opponents were in for the duration of their seventy-year rule.

## CONCLUSION

While the party’s membership is largely composed of people of, or near, retirement age this does mean that with over half the respondents in this study under 35, the sample is not particularly representative. It is, however, particularly interesting, as these are some of the people who will be guiding the future direction of communism in Russia. Those members interviewed were not working class in the traditional sense, partly due to retirement after having lost their former jobs and partly due to having office-based jobs in the case of younger respondents rather than industrial jobs, but they were actively campaigning for the rights of workers and the disadvantaged with the aim of achieving a communist state at some distant point in the future.

The acceptance of democracy marks a significant shift in party strategy away from its revolutionary origins. This seems, as far as it is possible to tell from this fieldwork, to have been accepted by party members. No one interviewed in St Petersburg questioned the acceptance by the party of elections as the route back to power and no interviewee even mentioned the violent overthrow of the existing order.

Support for social democracy is not only absent among members of the party interviewed,

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<sup>1039</sup> OSCE/ODIHR “Russian Federation Presidential Election, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004”, *OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report*, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw, Poland, 2004b.

<sup>1040</sup> Interview, St Petersburg, 26/06/03.

<sup>1041</sup> Anchorman Considering ‘New’ Career in Politics, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/09/120900.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2000/09/120900.asp)

<sup>1042</sup> ‘Zyuganov Says Media Tried To Hide Growing Support For Communists’, *RFE/RL*, [www.rferl.org/newsline/2001/11/091101.asp](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2001/11/091101.asp)

but these members voiced very strong opposition to the idea of social democracy so there is little prospect at the moment that there will be a move in the future from younger members of the party to change the political orientation of the party away from communism and towards the centre ground. Overall, there was not much sense of a need for a change of direction. The interviewees and survey respondents who were party members were all in close agreement about the future course of party strategy – onwards to the distant goal of communism. With one quarter of the country's wealth now held by around one hundred people, the CPRF was benefiting from disenchantment with market reforms and the rapid privatisations of the early 1990s that enabled a few to accumulate enormous wealth.<sup>1043</sup> As a result of continued poverty and unemployment, the party members interviewed saw no need for a change of direction in 2003.

Considering the organisation has reformed again from below, as has the Komsomol, a considerable degree of unity was reached very quickly. March has referred to an "ideology of organisation" as being vital in uniting the CPRF in its adherence to communism and communists perceiving themselves as a "moral community" of believers, attaching great importance to party discipline, respect for higher authority and an aspiration for consensus.<sup>1044</sup> This was evident from the interviews conducted.

The evidence that people in their forties and fifties are turning to the communists in St Petersburg (one new member in her forties and data from one of the best-informed interviewees) supports the work of Kiewiet and Myagkov who observed this phenomenon in the generation currently of these ages, although the sample for this chapter is small. The largest age group in the party however, is still those who are retired but whilst this section of the membership is generally considered to be quite passive, these older members will campaign actively for the party at election time and are generally considered to be the party's greatest asset in this respect.

The younger members in the Komsomol also play an important role in election campaigns, recruitment, raising awareness and encouraging youth participation in politics, although its degree of success is difficult to judge and the organisation is comparatively small. In St Petersburg and elsewhere, where the Komsomol was organised 'from below' as an organisation *of* young people rather than 'from above' as an organisation *for* young people, it can be described as a small but dynamic group fighting against the 'fashion' of President Putin and for what its members see as a more just society. Whilst traditional campaign methods are still being used, those members with

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<sup>1043</sup> Mitchel, R. & Arrington, R. "Gorbachev, Ideology and the Fate of Soviet Communism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol.33, no.4, 2000, p.469.

<sup>1044</sup> March, L. 'For Victory? The Crises and Dilemmas of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.53 No2, p.265.



internet access are now turning to the internet to get their message across as television and radio stations are state controlled. Despite the discouragement of manipulated media and election results and the 'unfashionable' image of the CPRF, the members of the Komsomol are enthusiastically engaging in modern methods of communication and agitation to keep political debate alive, from the communist perspective, on the internet and on the streets when other forms of communication are censored.

To what extent has the party changed? The acceptance amongst both leadership and membership of multi-party competitive elections despite media bias in recent years towards the ruling party means that the CPRF has moved a long way from its revolutionary origins and now full participation in elections by the CPRF is seen by all respondents as the only realistic option for regaining power. There was also an acceptance that any future communist state would have to be different from the USSR with a far greater degree of freedom for its citizens. When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the old system, responses reveal that it is the security of the former economic system that members wish to see recreated, not the entire system itself with restrictions on freedoms. There was also an acceptance that times had changed and that party policy had to reflect this and that the attainment of 'true' communism was a very distant prospect indeed but an inevitable one, nevertheless.

## CONCLUSION

The origins of the CPRF can be seen in the divisions that formed in the CPSU in its final years. The foundation of the CP RSFSR was a reaction to the reforms that Gorbachev introduced and it was as a reaction to those reforms which brought about the end of the communist regime that the CPRF was founded. With the discarding of democratic centralism, the officially united CPSU allowed the formation of platforms within the party and later the formation of parties in opposition to the CP RSFSR as the admission that the party needed to reform replaced the assertion of the inevitable triumph of communism. The change in tone of programmes from 1986 to 1991 as Gorbachev tried to move the party towards social democracy in an attempt to preserve the party in fact led to the coup as hardliners acted to try to prevent the signing of a new Union treaty that would have allowed republics to secede from the USSR and to prevent the adoption of the draft programme. In 1986, the CPSU was a party of Marxism-Leninism and revolutionary action but by 1991, according to the new draft programme, it was a party of social progress, democratic reforms and economic, political and spiritual freedom. However, the attempt to preserve the party's communist ideology backfired and, as a result of the coup, the CPSU was banned.

The fall of communist regimes across Eastern Europe in 1989 did not provide the impetus for change in the CPSU that the party needed were it to have any chance of surviving. Although the party lasted a further two years beyond the end of communist control of many of the Soviet Union's neighbours, it did not survive the wave of growing nationalism in many Soviet republics and the efforts of reformers to democratise Russia's political system. The end of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ban on the activity of the CPSU resulted in the formation of several small communist parties in Russia and the newly independent republics. An unavoidable delay in forming a successor party to the CP RSFSR until 1993 meant that the CPRF had difficulty in uniting the various elements of the left but the decision to participate in elections and the strategy of adopting nationalism to broaden the party's potential support made the CPRF the largest party on the left and led to the electoral successes of 1993, 1995 and 1999. The electoral decline in 2003, however, was due to several factors including the party's ageing membership and problems in attracting younger members, the improving Russian economy and the competition the party is facing from increasingly well-organised and well-funded opposition with the result that the long-term survival of the CPRF now looks uncertain.

## IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

The leadership of the CPSU lost control over the membership of the party in its final years as a result of changes in the law that it had itself enacted. With democratisation the party unwittingly brought about its own demise as it became possible to express different opinions and eventually to criticise the CPSU. Despite the new choices available in elections, the CPSU clearly expected the voters to choose the party that claimed to govern in their name and there was a failure to understand that voters would use the choices given to them rather than vote for the CPSU. The expectation that the party's legitimacy would be increased in the face of political choice was misplaced as multi-candidate elections led instead to a loss of power as opposition groups were elected in large numbers, to the surprise of the party leadership. The CPSU was well aware of its rapid loss of authority and legitimacy towards the end of its tenure, however, there had been a failure to face reality soon enough. There was clearly a degree of unwillingness in the party to accept the overthrow of communism in Eastern Europe as being a rejection of communism itself, rather than just a rejection of the parties that had been in government in the region and also a failure to accept that the end of the communist-led regimes in Eastern Europe could lead to the end of the CPSU.

However, it is clear that there was considerable support for communism in terms of what it achieved for Russia as the demonstrations on the first post-Soviet anniversary of the October revolution brought thousands out on to the streets voluntarily, showing that there were many people prepared to support a renewed communist party. The CP RSFSR, in its opposition to moves towards social democracy and its aim to save Russia and the Soviet Union (as Russia's empire), made it the forerunner of the CPRF. The CPSU was losing elections in its final years but the CPRF was winning them from 1993 onwards, showing that there was still support for communism in terms of ideology and as a Russian national tradition.

The old CPSU split into its national components, which have each taken different paths. In Central Asia the successor communist parties are small and largely ineffective but it is the former CPSU national elites and effectively the former national communist parties that are running the independent states. The former ruling parties became new ruling parties after name changes and the new communist parties were formed by those who were still believers in communism who left the ruling parties. Similarly, in the Caucasus the former communists are also largely still in power, but not the former communist parties. As in Central Asia, the successor communist parties are largely groups that split from the ruling parties. It is former communists now in power who have adopted the nationalists' policies and the reformed communist parties are small and exert little influence.

There has been a break with classical Marxism for most former communist parties across Central and Eastern Europe but different parties have followed very different paths. The former communist parties of Hungary and Poland are now social democratic and have been re-elected to govern several times. In the Baltics, the section of the Lithuanian party that broke away from the CPSU adopted social democracy and was elected to govern and later merged with its revived historical social democratic competitor. Dissatisfaction with economic reform led to nostalgia for the former economic stability and allowed the former communist parties to return to power as experienced economic administrators, as the new parties had no experience of government.

While the first political cleavage to develop was that of communism versus anti-communism and this dominated the first, and sometimes subsequent, elections in most countries, many reform movements suffered from a loss of purpose after their aim was achieved. Some found new causes but the loss of momentum after their initial aim of defeating communism had been achieved paved the way for the return of reformed communist parties. In Poland and Slovakia, however, other political cleavages had survived the communist years yet in other countries, reformed historical parties returned to find their constituencies erased by the long period of communist rule and many revived social-democratic parties fared badly, with the notable exception of the Czech Republic. Divisions closer to the standard left-right political cleavages over economic reform emerged later as it became obvious that there were going to be losers in the economic transformation as well as winners.

In Albania and Bulgaria, socialism has been the successful adaptation strategy for former communist parties. The partially reinvented communist parties have been re-elected to resolve the problems resulting from the economic reforms that were instituted by the non-communist governments that followed their departure. The former Albanian Party of Labour is now the Socialist Party of Albania. It remained in power until 1992 when it was defeated but was returned to power in an early parliamentary election in 1997 as a result of economic chaos. The party restored order and was re-elected in 2001. In Bulgaria, the communist party changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party and was elected to govern in 1994. The party lost parliamentary elections in 1997 but returned to power in 2005 as part of a broad coalition.

Parties that have retained their communist ideology, such as the Ukrainian, Moldovan and Russian parties have also experienced some electoral successes. The most successful has been the relatively unreformed Moldovan communist party which has been re-elected to govern twice, in 2001 and 2005, on the basis of Moldova's parliamentary system of government rather than a presidential system, such as those in Ukraine and Russia. In the Czech Republic the CPBM, which

also still adheres to Marxism-Leninism, has experienced an improvement in its electoral fortunes in recent years, despite facing competition on the left from a social democratic party. The CPRF faces no such competition and yet has felt the need to adopt nationalism in an attempt to broaden its support base, a tactic seen among various former communist parties.

Reformers in the CPSU left the party to form new, non-communist parties while those who formed the CPRF were committed communists in the Soviet era. However, it is hardly traditional communism that forms the ideology of the new party. All former communist parties, even those that have reformed the least, now accept democracy and elections as their (potential) route back to power rather than revolution along with various compromises with the post-Soviet reality such as the existence of private property. Whilst several still retain the title 'communist', they have designated the achievement of communism as a very distant aim.

There has been a change on the left in general following the end of the Cold War with a move in Western Europe towards the centre ground and the dissolution of many West European communist parties, while on the right, Western Europe has also seen the return of nationalist parties. Some former communist parties merged with green parties while others, such as the CPGB, dissolved themselves. In Italy, the Italian Communist Party was dissolved and the more moderate Democratic Party of the Left was formed in its place. Hardline, pro-Moscow communists formed Communist Refoundation and a splinter group from this party, the Party of Italian Communists, joined the Democratic Party of the Left (the largest party) in a coalition government in 1998.

Those successor parties in Eastern Europe that have been the most successful have been those that have adopted social democracy, where there has been support for social democracy, and those that have adopted socialism or communism, where the economy has failed or nationalism, where there has been a sense of loss of national pride or heightened ethnic tensions. By the end of the Soviet era, it can be seen that the fight was about retaining power rather than preserving the ideology. This is a theme that has continued in the post-communist era with many communist parties leaving Marxism-Leninism behind in favour of policies that will help return them to power. The acceptance of democracy marks a significant shift in these parties' strategies away from their revolutionary origins – a change which seems to have been accepted by those who have remained party members. No one interviewed in St Petersburg questioned the acceptance by the CPRF of elections as the route back to power and no interviewee even mentioned the violent overthrow of the existing political order.

Can the CPRF change its ideology to return to power? Support for social-democracy is not only absent among members of the party interviewed in St Petersburg, but these members voiced

very strong opposition to the idea of social democracy. Support for social democracy as an ideology is also traditionally very low in Russia as a whole so there is little prospect at the moment that there will be a move in the future to change the political orientation of the party away from communism and towards the centre ground. Since the interviews were conducted, those in the party who have tried to lead such a change have either been expelled from the party or have left. Overall, there was not much sense of a need for a change of direction in St Petersburg. The interviewees and survey respondents who were party members were all in close agreement about the future course of party strategy – onwards to the distant goal of communism. As a result of continued poverty and unemployment, the party sees no need for a change of direction. However, the economy is growing stronger so depriving the CPRF of its main argument that capitalism is impoverishing the majority.

This raises the question of which direction the CPRF should move in, if indeed the party has any room for ideological manoeuvre as there is a lack of support for social democracy among members of the CPRF and the more extreme left wing political positions are already well covered by smaller parties which have consistently failed to attract sufficient votes at elections to gain representation in the Duma. Although the results in Chapter 4 show that there is considerable support for traditionally communist ideas among CPRF voters, they also reflect the unwillingness of the majority of the population to elect Zyuganov or his party as already seen in the Duma and Presidential elections which preceded these surveys. The party also faces the further problem of being unable to appeal to large enough numbers of young people to replace its older supporters in sufficient numbers as they die. Ultimately, as party identification and the strength of that identification have been shown to increase with age (as discussed in Chapter 4), it may be difficult to attract the support of the young anyway but with a leader who is unpopular in comparison with the current President and very unpopular with the young, it is difficult to see how the CPRF can attract new support while Zyuganov remains the leader.

The CPRF is far from united internally, having various tendencies, described in different terms by different writers, though not organised platforms, in the party. The former communist parties had united believers and careerists as well as pro-reform and anti-reform factions so when the parties reformed in the early 1990s, they were left with a more committed membership. The CPRF achieved an apparent unity under Zyuganov and members interviewed in St Petersburg in 2003 felt that his ability to unite the party (until that time) was Zyuganov's main strength as a leader. Despite internal divisions over the future course of the CPRF, democratic centralism enabled a considerable degree of unity to be reached. One idea that does help unite the various tendencies in the party is that of 'honest communists' expressed in Zyuganov's writings and by the members

interviewed in St Petersburg. This is how the present members of the party see themselves and those who belonged to its predecessor for reasons of ideological belief and not for material benefits. By this description, current members exclude former leaders such as Gorbachev, Yeltsin, other 'traitors' and supporters of other ideologies or political views. Apparent unity has been needed for the party to be taken seriously enough to be elected to the Duma but, as the party has failed to adapt to changing political circumstances, such as Russia's improving economy and competition from an increasingly powerful Kremlin-sponsored party, divisions have become more apparent and those who have disagreed with Zyuganov have left with CPRF membership now declining to a small core of supporters.

### NATIONALISM

Nationalism has been adopted by many post-communist parties in an attempt to survive and salvage something for their respective nations from the communist past. While the CPRF has focused on the fall of the Soviet Union as a matter of lost national pride for Russia, other successor parties have taken a more extreme approach. In Romania, the communist party claimed to have adopted social democracy but in fact splintered into several nationalist parties which were variously returned to power after the fall of communism but with none claiming to be the successor party to the widely hated former communist party. In Yugoslavia, extreme nationalism on the part of the former ruling communist party kept the same leaders in power through several years of genocide following the end of the communist era.

Nationalist movements mobilised against the CPSU in some republics, notably in the Baltics, Armenia and Georgia. Towards the end of the Soviet era, as it became possible to discuss national grievances against the CPSU, such as the opinion that Soviet rule was a foreign occupation, nationalism became a mobilising force that hastened the end of communist rule. Communist parties in some of the non-Russian republics were obliged to adopt a nationalist stance against Russia so as not to appear 'unpatriotic'.

Patriotism was adopted immediately by the CPRF on its founding but now all Russian parties have since realised that there is much support to be gained by declaring a nationalist stance and the CPRF has lost its earlier electoral gains now parties such as United Russia have taken advantage of the sense of injured national pride capitalised on so early in the post-Soviet era by the CPRF. Whilst internationalism in the party has not disappeared completely, those interviewed in St Petersburg believed either that the USSR and super-power status should be restored for nationalist

reasons or that patriotism was a necessary policy for the party for the present in order to gain support from as wide a range of voters and potential coalition partners as possible.

As Russia has a presidential system of government, any electoral success in the Duma will be limited in its effect if the CPRF cannot also win the Presidency, something it has failed to do in every Presidential election since the end of the Soviet era. However, through the merging of nationalist theories with communism, Zyuganov took the CPRF to a level of parliamentary representation that provided considerable influence. The subsequent decline in the party's electoral success from the 2003 Duma elections onwards, however, is currently looking difficult, if not impossible, to reverse and is probably due, in part, to the adoption of a patriotic stance by United Russia and endorsement of that party by President Putin. While the move towards nationalism was needed to draw more support from voters, it is perhaps more a change in the scale of adherence to nationalism than a complete change of direction since the CPSU also relied on nationalism at times to rally support for various policies.

Zyuganov's views vary depending on his audience, inevitably, as he has a balancing act to perform in terms of appealing to factions within the party, the members and potential voters and those groups that he is trying to draw into a 'patriotic coalition' with the CPRF. Zyuganov's writings are contradictory and, at times, bizarre for a communist but after publishing several books throughout the 1990s that hardly mentioned Lenin, Zyuganov has made far more references to Lenin in his recent works. However, he continues to write of 'inter-class agreement' and Russia as a unique civilisation. Other changes in later books include a focus on globalisation, terrorism and the benefits and evils of the internet and television, but until 2006, Zyuganov did not even begin to write of the challenges the party faces from Putin and United Russia. Even in his most recent work, he only deals with these subjects very briefly and does not address how the CPRF should respond to successful, 'patriotic' competition. Patriotism is hardly a policy the CPRF can abandon in search of a new place in the Russian political spectrum and it is failing to adapt to the new political reality as the party does not know how to deal with a 'patriotic' President and 'patriotic' parties that are in opposition to the CPRF. Putin is perhaps difficult for the communists to criticise in this respect as he has spoken of the fall of the USSR with regret so the party focuses its attention on the regime in general.

Zyuganov continues the apocalyptic phraseology of Communism in predicting "planetary catastrophe" in the same way as Marx and Lenin predicted revolution but the tone of his writing is perhaps one of the greatest similarities with the Party's former philosophy rather than its content. He still writes using Cold War era terminology and still sees Russia's traditional opponents as enemies



in the same way they were seen in Soviet times but now Zyuganov calls for an international coalition against globalisation instead of a proletarian revolution. Since the economy has stabilised, he writes of needing to 'improve' capitalism in the short-term. It is left to the party programme and election platforms to refer to the working class and the need for better state welfare provision.

To try to justify his nationalist theories, Zyuganov refers to various writers on geopolitics. He sees 'Russia' as not being confined to its present borders but extending to those of the former USSR, and even beyond. Such geopolitical theories lead Zyuganov to propose a new alliance of Russia, China and the Islamic world against the West as he writes of there being a clash of civilisations in East and West as opposed to a class war in an attempt to forge a broad coalition of communists and nationalists. This coalition would, on gaining power, restore Russia's super-power status and work for a voluntary restoration of the USSR. The CPRF has moved away from traditional communism like other parties in former communist countries and Zyuganov now writes in defence of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the October 1917 Revolution as an attempt to save the Russian state, not as the first step of a proletarian revolution.

### ORGANISATIONAL CONTINUITY

There is no single classification that describes all transitions that the post-soviet states have undergone but one characteristic that many post-Soviet states have in common is that former communists are still in charge. The communists in some countries still have stronger organisations than their rivals and were returned to power quickly after their initial rejection in the first post-communist elections. Communist parties have proved to be very successful political organisations and while across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, former communists and former communist parties are still in power they are not, generally, governing as communists (with the exception of Moldova). Some former communists are now governing as democrats, such as those in Hungary and Poland, and some as autocrats in Central Asia and Belarus. Ideological divisions had always existed in the individual communist parties, a fact that became clearer toward the end of the communist era when the faction that took over the former communist party determined its future electoral success or failure. The faction in favour of reform took over in Hungary and Poland and the faction that opposed reform, in Russia.

The CPRF has replicated the structure of the CPSU in Russia and while the CPSU effectively abandoned democratic centralism as it began to allow a diversity of opinion in the party, the CPRF adopted this element of party organisation immediately and it has been retained, with the aim of keeping greater control over the members. With many new parties across Eastern Europe

since the end of communist rule, supposedly national parties do not have branches throughout the country, sometimes with none outside the capital at all. Former communist parties, however, tend to be the largest in terms of membership and had an early advantage in being national parties, having branches throughout the country. The CPRF benefited from such a national structure as some branches, such as that in St Petersburg, carried on working anyway for a considerable time after the ban and were able to reform quickly once the ban on local branches was revoked.

Some communist parties in Eastern Europe just changed their names and kept their membership while others reformed completely, requiring members to re-register. Many kept some of their predecessors' property and therefore some material advantages over their newer competitors. The organisational and administrative experience of the communists gave them an advantage in the early post-communist years as the new parties led by anti-communist campaigners lacked the administrative experience of the communists. The communist parties, however, still had many of their members with many years of organisational experience to rely on. The CPRF needed to re-register members as a result of the ban but still had the advantage of being the largest party by a sizeable margin for many years and while having lost much of its property, was able to rely on the members to campaign for the party in elections, an advantage that new parties did not have outside Moscow and St Petersburg.

Not all successors have formed just one, united party. In Russia this was as a result of the ban on the party and the subsequent delay in forming a successor party as, with over two years between the ban being imposed and it being revoked, various small communist parties appeared in the intervening period with the result that the CPRF was unable to unite all communists in the one party. The party has tried various coalitions to unite communists and nationalists to fight elections as part of a common front but these have always involved the CPRF dominating the coalition rather than seeking compromises. Whilst the party managed considerable cooperation with the Agrarian Party in the 1995 Duma elections, such cooperation has not been achieved at subsequent elections and the party faces growing competition, not just from small parties to its left but also new left-patriotic groups that are appealing to the traditional CPRF voters.

The CPRF had been relatively united until Gennady Seleznev's expulsion in 2002 resulted in the formation of the Party of Russia's Rebirth, Gennady Semigin's expulsion in 2004, after which he formed the Patriots of Russia bloc and the formation of the All-Russian Communist Party of the Future by others who opposed Zyuganov's leadership in 2004. However, there had been considerable variation across the Russian Federation since the party was formed in terms of allegiance to the Moscow organisation as the Tatarstan branch of the party, for example, only

officially joined the national organisation in 1997 (as discussed in Chapter 1). The party has also experienced considerable regional variation in electoral alliances formed across the country with some regions continuing to form local coalitions with the Agrarians long after national-level cooperation ceased. The Komsomol apparently underwent two waves of splits from the CPRF but it is not at all clear that these splits were uniform across the nation as reports of splits relied on the declarations of the Moscow-based leadership of the Komsomol which has declared that members are following the leaders to other parties, despite the fact that little has since been heard of the former Komsomol leaders who led the splits. Some St Petersburg Komsomol members interviewed for this thesis had been with the CPRF since 1994, which suggests some regional variation in the divisions that have occurred in the youth section of the party.

The endurance of the former communist parties as organisations is one of the most striking aspects of the post-communist era but these parties have changed beyond recognition ideologically, having either abandoned the achievement of communism altogether or relegated such an achievement to the very distant future. However, in organisational terms, there is far greater continuity with the past as the CPRF, along with most other communist successor parties, has formed a traditional mass party, in contrast to many new parties in Russia and Eastern Europe that have formed small parties that rely on media campaigns to communicate their message, rather than relying on a large and active membership, as Western political parties are increasingly doing as their memberships fall. The CPRF has lost members rapidly though as it has an ageing membership and has difficulty in attracting younger members as it cannot offer the same benefits that its predecessor could. The benefits can now be offered in part, in terms of career advancement, by United Russia, the party that has overtaken the CPRF in terms of size of membership.

Although it has gained control of various regions, the CPRF cannot currently return to power as the party is too weak to win a parliamentary majority and Russia has a presidential system, so the CPRF would also need to win the presidency in order to effect any considerable change. The CPRF has been out-manoeuvred by United Russia's adoption of a patriotic stance and the presidential administration which is increasingly sponsoring splinter parties and new left-patriotic parties to split it or draw support away from the communists. With the political space it could move into on the left already occupied by smaller parties and social democracy not an option, the party may become far more reliant on finding compromises with potential coalition partners than it has been in the past.

## MEMBERS AND VOTERS

Does the membership of the party reflect the social profile of the party's voters? Are they the deprived or the relatively deprived? The statistical analysis of the vote for the CPRF in the 1999 and 2003 Duma elections conducted for this thesis revealed that a CPRF supporter could be predicted to be older and with more strongly held political views than the average Russian citizen. As many previous studies have found, age is clearly one of the most significant factors in predicting support for the CPRF but this factor was outweighed in the surveys considered here by party identification and ideological conviction. If a voter identified with a political party and an ideology, there was a greater probability that that voter would support the CPRF rather than any other party.

In 1999, the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF was most clearly influenced by a voter's ideology and identification with a political party. Of secondary, but still significant importance, was their age, with those 60 and over only slightly more likely to be CPRF voters than those from 40 to 59. In 2003, again it was political orientation and the strength of identification with a political party that most readily indicated the probability of a vote being cast for the CPRF. Age 60 and over was the next most reliable indicator of communist support followed by strong disapproval of President Putin and then lack of employment (excluding pensioner status).

Of least concern to a CPRF voter in 1999 were blaming the economic transition for Russia's problems, fair treatment of all citizens from the government as a measure of equality and belief that television coverage of the 1999 Duma election was biased. As respondents in St Petersburg complained of increasing inequality in Russia, it was surprising that voters for the CPRF did not feel more strongly about this issue than members. It is possible that members are more concerned with highlighting the gap between rich and poor as a major issue for the population in order to sustain a belief in the inevitability of the triumph of communism.

While concerns about equality and the fairness of television coverage of the 2003 Duma election also failed to noticeably differentiate CPRF voters from supporters of other parties and non-voters, of least concern to a CPRF voter in 2003 (in comparison with other variables) was the absolute necessity of restoring the USSR, which had a very low statistical significance, followed, interestingly, by being on an extremely low income. Members in St Petersburg aspired to represent the poorest and most disadvantaged in Russian society but one admitted that those in the direst circumstances had little interest in politics. Those interviewed were not working class in the traditional sense, partly due to retirement after having lost their former jobs and partly due to having office-based jobs in the case of younger respondents rather than industrial jobs, but they were

actively campaigning for the rights of workers and the disadvantaged with the aim of achieving a communist state at some distant point in the future.

Are younger voters turning to the CPRF as they approach retirement? The surveys analysed here do not confirm Kiewiet and Myagkov's finding that voters in their forties and fifties are turning to the CPRF, they in fact indicate that they are not and therefore also do not confirm a national trend in the assertion of an interviewee in St Petersburg who reported that voters in this age range were joining the party in greater numbers than before. The CPRF's supporters were generally older, and more so with the second survey, and were comprised of the *comparatively* economically disadvantaged rather than the *most* disadvantaged. CPRF voters also tended to be those with a positive attitude towards the former regime. However, the analysis also shows that whilst CPRF voters might have strong ideological convictions, they are not by any means convinced that they wish to see a return to the former regime.

Although the party increased its share of the vote among voters under 30 and the better educated from 1993 to 1995,<sup>1045</sup> it has since lost that momentum and with at least 60 per cent of its voters being pensioners, the CPRF is very much the party of the old. The largest age group in the party is also those who are retired but whilst this section of the membership is generally considered (by interviewees for the fieldwork) to be quite passive, these older members will campaign actively for the party at election time and were considered by respondents to be the party's greatest asset in this respect. There is, however, another aspect to the ageing membership of the CPRF as projections of the future population of Russia indicate a declining and ageing population and the proportion of elderly is projected to increase by 12 percent to 24.8 percent of the Russian population by 2015.<sup>1046</sup> The results of an ageing population will be greater pressure on the country's pension system and a greater tax burden on the shrinking working-age population<sup>1047</sup> which, all combined, may increase support for the CPRF if the party focuses on pensions and care for the elderly and if generational experiences do lead retiring Russians to support the CPRF, there is a potentially increasing number of voters for the party over the next few years.

Younger voters for and members of the CPRF share the characteristic that both groups are very few in number. The commitment of younger members to the cause, however, is not in doubt and they provide an important alternative image of the party, even if it is one that is infrequently

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<sup>1045</sup> Wyman, M. "Developments in Russian Voting Behaviour: 1993 and 1995 Compared", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.12, no.3, 1996, p.282.

<sup>1046</sup> Heleniak, T. "Geographic Aspects of Population Aging in the Russian Federation", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, vol.44, no.5, 2003, p.343.

<sup>1047</sup> Heleniak, 2003, p.345.

seen. The younger members in the Komsomol play an important role in election campaigns, recruitment, raising awareness and encouraging youth participation in politics, although their degree of success is difficult to judge and the organisation is comparatively small. In St Petersburg and elsewhere, where the Komsomol was organised 'from below' as an organisation *of* young people rather than 'from above' as an organisation *for* young people (which has been the case in some regions), the organisation is actively campaigning for what its members see as a more just society. Whilst traditional campaign methods are still being used, the Komsomol is now turning to the internet to get its message across as television and radio stations are state controlled. Despite the discouragement of manipulated media and election results and the 'unfashionable' image of the CPRF, the members of the Komsomol are enthusiastically engaging in modern methods of communication and agitation to keep political debate alive, from the communist perspective, on the internet and on the streets when other forms of communication are censored.

As has been shown, there is no majority in favour of a return to the past economic and political system which raises a problem for the party in that its name and policies are associated with a system that the majority of the electorate do not wish to see restored. The party needs to attract younger members to replace the older membership as older members die. Even if the Russian population is ageing the party still needs new intakes of pensioners to keep the membership at a level where the party is still able to campaign during elections. With restricted access to the media for parties the presidential administration wants to limit, door-to-door campaigning is still important for the party.

### THE FUTURE OF THE CPRF

To what extent has the party changed? The acceptance amongst both leadership and membership of multi-party competitive elections, despite media bias against the communists, means that the CPRF has moved a long way from its revolutionary origins and full participation in elections by the CPRF was seen by all respondents for Chapter 5 as the only realistic option for regaining power. There was also an acceptance that any future communist state would have to be different from the USSR with a far greater degree of freedom for its citizens. When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the old system, responses revealed that it was the security of the former economic system that members wished to see recreated, not the entire system itself with restrictions on freedoms. There was also an acceptance that times had changed and that party policy had to reflect this and that the attainment of communism was a very distant prospect indeed but an inevitable one, nevertheless.

While the adoption of patriotism has been popular with the electorate, the CPRF's patriotism has not been enough for the party to retain, never mind extend its support. The party has clearly failed since its early electoral successes to move with the times and adapt its policies and tactics to deal with the changing political situation, in particular the adoption of patriotic rhetoric by United Russia and other parties. The CPRF has been unable to distinguish its brand of patriotism from those who have sought to copy the party or to discredit the patriotic stance taken by others. With the political space to its left already occupied by several small parties that fail to register a significant share of votes and the well-documented antipathy towards social democracy in Russia, especially among communists, it is unlikely that any move towards either the left or the centre would be successful for the party.

Although the CPRF has suffered some recent setbacks the 2007 election, with new electoral rules, was predicted to benefit the CPRF. The new electoral rules for 2007 included all seats in the 2007 election being elected from party lists alone, rather than the mixed system used in previous elections and the increase in the threshold for eligibility for seat allocation from five percent of the vote to seven percent, which was designed to exclude many minor parties from the distribution of seats with parties that clear the threshold gaining a larger share of the seats than the percentage of the vote they received, after minor parties have been excluded.<sup>1048</sup> This was predicted to lead to an increase in parliamentary representation for the CPRF, however, the actual election results were: United Russia - 64.3 percent and 315 seats; the CPRF - 11.57 percent and 57 seats; the LDPR - 8.14 percent and 40 seats and A Just Russia - 7.74 percent and 38 seats. This represented only a very minor gain for the CPRF and the party is challenging the results, which it claims are falsified. The share of the vote the party claims it should have received is ten percent higher than that declared in the official results.<sup>1049</sup>

There have been an increasing number of challenges to Zyuganov's leadership with the most serious so far in 2004, after the party failed to win the Presidency for the third time. The party had at least recognised that Zyuganov could not win against Putin in 2004 and so offered the electorate a different candidate for the Presidential election thereby avoiding an overwhelming defeat for the present leader. Zyuganov did, however, stand in the 2008 Presidential election and although not competing directly against Putin, his main competitor, Dmitry Medvedev, who was always expected to win since his candidacy was endorsed by Putin. The fourth attempt to win the Presidency ended in predictable failure with Medvedev winning 70.28 of the vote and Zyuganov achieving the expected

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<sup>1048</sup> [www.russiavotes.org](http://www.russiavotes.org).

<sup>1049</sup> RFE/RL Newline, [www.rferl.org/newline](http://www.rferl.org/newline), 10/12/07 and 05/12/07.

second place with 17.72 percent, according to official results, which the CPRF disputes.<sup>1050</sup> Foreign media carried numerous reports of intentions to falsify the vote in both the parliamentary elections of 2007 and the Presidential election of 2008 involving pressure on public sector workers to vote for United Russia and then Medvedev and through the falsification of official turnout.<sup>1051</sup> Although the deviation from democratic norms was considered to be considerable in both cases, this is not considered to have altered the outcomes of either election in terms of who won. However, since Zyuganov did not achieve even a close second place, whether according to the official results or the party's own estimate of support, perhaps the party will finally replace him but even so, it is difficult to see how any new leader would be able to reposition the party to enable it to build stronger coalitions and extend its support.

The ideology that inspired the October Revolution survives, popular with a small minority, but the successor to Lenin's revolutionary party is no longer revolutionary and no longer really communist as it aims to 'improve' capitalism. While communism has not been abandoned altogether, it is now seen as a very distant future aim. Members appear to have accepted democratic elections but see the current ideology as a necessary compromise. The re-adoption of democratic centralism succeeded in uniting the party in its early years but external pressures and a failure to keep up with political developments have led to the recent splits and loss of support. The successor to the party that once aimed to bring about a worldwide, proletarian revolution now largely represents those who lost their status in society with the end of the CPSU, rather than the working class.

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<sup>1050</sup> RFE/RL Newline, [www.rferl.org/newsline](http://www.rferl.org/newsline), 10/03/08.

<sup>1051</sup> see for example "Kremlin Planning to Rig Election", [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), 29/02/08.



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