

Alexander Barkashov and the Rise of National Socialism in Russia

JOHN B. DUNLOP

Alexander Barkashov, the leader of the neo-Nazi Russian National Union, was born in Moscow in 1953, the son of a blue-collar father and a mother who was a nurse. The roots of both of his parents' families are in the Moscow oblast. Barkashov has given conflicting accounts of his childhood and youth; in a mid-1993 interview that appeared in *Izvestiya*, Barkashov stated that he and his mother were abandoned by his father, and that he came under the influence of his maternal grandfather, who had served in the Communist Party *apparatus* at the time of Stalin's anti-cosmopolitan campaign. As Barkashov recalled during the interview, his grandfather "told me in detail about the harm that the Jews were bringing to the Russian people. The old man was wise: he warned me against all contacts with Jews."¹ There is thus a direct link between Stalin's harsh anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s and present-day Russian neo-Nazism.

Barkashov graduated from secondary school in Moscow oblast in 1971 and then served in the Soviet armed forces from 1972-74. The available sources offer contradictory accounts concerning where and in what capacity he served. According to the newspaper *Moskovsky komsomolets*, Barkashov was a corporal in the army special troops (*spetsnaz*) assigned to help the Egyptians at the time of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.² Barkashov's wife, Valentina Petrovna, on the other hand, has said that her husband attended a school for sergeants in the Baltic and then served with the anti-aircraft defenses of the Byelorussian Military District.³

Following his discharge from the army, Barkashov worked for more than a decade as an electrician at a Moscow power plant. In the evenings, he trained in the martial arts and then became an instructor of karate. Soon fitness-conscious and action-oriented young men were flocking to Barkashov to acquire the skills he had to impart.

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In 1985, the year of Gorbachev's accession, Barkashov and one hundred of his karate students joined Dimitry Vasilev's extremist Russian nationalist organization, Pamyat. Rising rapidly, Barkashov became a member of the Pamyat central council in 1987 and was then named Vasilev's deputy for security, ideological work, and education of youth. In October of 1990, however, Barkashov broke sharply with Vasilev and founded a competing organization, the Russian National Union (*Russkoe natsionalnoe yedinstvo*—RNYe). The declared aim of this organization was to protect Russians and Slavs from deadly enemies at home and abroad, especially from the perceived tentacles of an all-pervasive world Jewish conspiracy.

In early 1995, Vasilev observed of Barkashov: “[H]e’s a very limited person. We kicked him out for his Nazi ideas. And he’s a KGB agent.” Barkashov, for his part, maintains that Vasilev was the one with links to the KGB.⁴ My suspicion is that both may be telling the truth.

For three years, from October 1990 to October 1993, Barkashov's organization experienced steady if not spectacular growth. In 1991, shortly before the August coup, he, like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, issued an appeal for emergency rule to be introduced by the Soviet government throughout the country.⁵ Two years later, on 27 July 1993, Barkashov's neo-Nazi organization was officially registered as a “social-political movement” by the Justice Department of the City of Moscow.⁶ The RNYe also began to publish a newspaper with a print run of 10,000 copies, entitled *Russkii poryadok* (Russian Order), which was officially registered with the authorities. By June 1993, the organization had established ten regional filials in the provinces, the most important of which were in Petersburg and Krasnoyarsk. Some *soratniki* (co-combatants, or comrades-in-arms) of the RNYe reportedly fought as volunteers in Trans-Dniestria and Abkhazia, as well as in Bosnia, on the side of the Serbs.

In the spring of 1992, Barkashov, while continuing to hold the post of “chief *soratnik*” of the RNYe, also became a member of the central council of the newly founded Russian National Assembly (*Russkii natsionalny sobor*), whose principal leader was retired KGB major general Alexander Sterligov. In mid-1994, Barkashov confided to an interviewer that the KGB's Fifth Directorate had played a key role in setting up this organization. Eventually, Barkashov severed ties with the Russian National Assembly, and he now speaks contemptuously of its leader: “All his life, [Sterligov] was a Communist, a KGB man, and suddenly he became a Russian nationalist. . . . Why? Because a certain group of politicians standing behind him understood that that tendency [i.e., Russian nationalism] is inevitable.”⁷

The October Uprising

The great Russian political crisis of September-October 1993 served to catapult Barkashov and his organization to a position of national notoriety. On 21 September, President Yeltsin dissolved the Congress of People's Deputies and the Russian Supreme Soviet and announced new parliamentary elections for the month of December. Not long afterwards, an estimated 100-200 neo-Nazi *soratniki*, headed by Barkashov, appeared at the Russian White House to offer their

services to the building's defenders. A number of the *barkashovtsy*, it should be noted, were reserve officers in the Russian military, and at least some were reportedly still on active duty. All members of the RNYe had received intensive training in marksmanship and were, of course, well trained in the martial arts. After a brief bout of indecision, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi made the RNYe, who were dressed in crisp uniforms with a swastika (the so-called left swastika) sewn on the sleeve, equal in status to a military organization and granted them the right to bear arms. The neo-Nazis were then directly subordinated to Rutskoi's "defense minister," General Vladislav Achalov, a former commander of Soviet paratroops, and assigned such tasks as protecting the Rutskoi "power ministers," guarding the money and food supplies of the White House, and watching over underground passages by which intruders could penetrate the building.⁸

The *barkashovtsy* had come to the White House from a so-called "nest," located in Room 105 of the Sverdlovsk District Soviet in Moscow, a body closely allied with the Russian Supreme Soviet under Ruslan Khasbulatov. The spacious RNYe office in this building, adorned with a two-meter-long swastika, had been given to the organization by A. Semenov, chairman of the district soviet, a former high-ranking jailer at Butyrky Prison in Moscow. In exchange, Barkashov's men carried out guard duties at the building.⁹

On 3-4 October 1993, the *barkashovtsy* saw action in fighting that brought the country close to the brink of civil war. Two RNYe *soratniki*, both of them reserve officers in the Russian military, were killed in the fighting, and eleven were wounded. (Barkashov and his newspaper maintain that these two "martyrs," Captain Dmitry Marchenko [b. 1965] and Major Anatoly Sursky [b. 1947], were in fact "ritually murdered" by Jews allied to the Yeltsin forces.) Barkashov has claimed sole credit for the 3 October armed seizure of the mayor's office, adjacent to the White House. He has recalled that Rutskoi appealed four times to his organization, shouting, "*Barkashovtsy*, my heroes, your time has come."¹⁰ By contrast, Barkashov seeks to downplay his men's involvement in the storming of the Ostankino Television Complex, presumably because that effort resulted in failure.

Barkashov has stated that he was in the White House with General Achalov and the other Rutskoi "power ministers" when the special unit Alfa arrived to arrest them. Since his name was not on the Alfa arrest list, he was permitted to leave the building.¹¹ Later that month, however, a new Russian procurator general made up for this oversight, issuing an order for Barkashov's arrest and initiating criminal proceedings against the RNYe.

Barkashov's name stood third on the procurator general's arrest list, following those of putsch leaders Viktor Anpilov and Ilya Konstantinov, both of whom were quickly located by the police. For three months, however, the authorities were unable to find Barkashov, even though he was apparently hiding out in Moscow or Moscow oblast. During the course of an admiring interview with Barkashov, Alexander Prokhanov, editor of the influential rightist weekly *Zavtra*, recalled: "I remember how terrible it was to learn that Anpilov had been taken. . . . They took Konstantinov. . . . And I remember that everyone was asking: 'And Barkashov?' 'What about Barkashov?' 'No, Barkashov has not been taken.'"¹²

On 22 December 1993, however, in the early hours of the morning, Barkashov was, it appears, shot while walking down a street in Moscow or Moscow oblast. Much about this episode remains unexplained and murky, and some have even suggested that Barkashov shot himself as a publicity stunt, but the wound was a serious one, rendering such an explanation unlikely. It has likewise been claimed that Barkashov accidentally shot himself during a drinking bout with comrades. Since the RNYe had numerous enemies in Moscow, a large number of organizations could also have done the deed. Barkashov contends that it was the Ministry of Internal Affairs' special forces who shot him. My sense is that the shooting was probably the work of representatives of Russian organized crime, perhaps individuals involved in a "turf war" with the RNYe over the lucrative security and protection business.

Placed in a hospital under an assumed name, Barkashov was located by the MVD after a week and immediately put under arrest. His period of captivity was, however, of short duration, since in February 1994 the newly elected State Duma amnestied him and all the leading figures of the August 1991 and October 1993 putsches. Barkashov unexpectedly found himself a free man.

The Russian National Union Today

There exist widely differing estimates concerning the present membership of the RNYe. In January 1995, Barkashov asserted that his organization had 15,000 *soratniki* located throughout Russia, with a total of 1,500 in Moscow, divided into ten subunits.¹³ An informational document (*spravka*) issued by the Russian secret police, the FSB, which was published in May 1995 claimed that the RNYe had only 2,000 members Russia-wide, with more than one hundred of them living in Moscow and Moscow oblast. The same document maintained that the RNYe had thirty regional filials, with those in Primorye, Krasnodar krai, and Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, Perm, Vladimir, Kaluga, and Kaliningrad oblasts being the most significant. (The RNYe organizations in Krasnoyarsk and Petersburg were, oddly, not mentioned by the FSB.) The print run of the organization's newspaper, *Russkii poryadok*, was estimated to have reached 400,000 copies by August 1994.¹⁴

Asked to comment on the FSB's figures, a leading independent analyst, Vladimir Pribylovsky, thought that the membership figures cited were too low.¹⁵ Pribylovsky estimated that the RNYe had some 5,000-6,000 members throughout the Russian provinces and some 500-600 in Moscow and Moscow oblast. The print run mentioned by the FSB for *Russkii poryadok*, on the other hand, was, Pribylovsky said, much too high. It was surely not 400,000, nor even 160,000, a figure cited by some other sources. (It should be noted that individual issues of *Russkii poryadok* do not identify the newspaper's print run.)

How does the RNYe support itself and its activities? Both the Moscow units and those located in the provinces earn significant sums of money, as we have seen, by providing security and bodyguard services to individuals and organizations, most of them of a right-wing political hue. The organization has also reportedly been the beneficiary of a so-called "black cashbox" (*chyornaya kassa*) main-

tained by former officers of the USSR KGB, who dole out laundered and otherwise concealed monies of the former Soviet Communist Party.¹⁶ The RNYe's centrally located office on Ilinka, close to Red Square, was apparently rented with funds coming from this "cashbox."¹⁷ This same "cashbox" has been used to assist Zhirinovskiy's proto-fascist Liberal Democratic Party and Sterligov's Russian National Assembly.¹⁸

As far as their regular activities are concerned, RNYe members continue relentlessly to train in the martial arts and in marksmanship, but they also seek to develop their minds by reading approved literature. Among the works read and studied by *soratniki* and by candidates for membership in the organization are Barkashov's book, *Azbuka russkogo natsionalista* ("The ABC's of a Russian Nationalist"), published in 1994, consisting of select articles from *Russkii poryadok*; Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*; academician Igor Shafarevich's *Russophobia*; and select writings of *Zavtra* editor-in-chief Alexander Prokhanov.¹⁹ For relaxation, the *soratniki* are wont to listen to recordings of SS marching songs or to attend a concert of the music of Richard Wagner.

According to a former member of the RNYe counterintelligence section, who later broke with the organization, the *barkashovtsy* engage in preparing lists of enemies to be arrested and executed when the militants come to power; they collect information on a wide range of individuals; and they seek through dissemination of propaganda to prepare the population at large for the introduction of "iron order." The organization also, the former member reported, owns and operates sports halls, offices, cars, trucks, boats, sewing workshops (for the production of RNYe uniforms), printing presses, bunkers, and special isolators (to hold future prisoners). In addition, it maintains caches of money, weapons, and fuel. Among the attractions of the organization for young Russian men are said to be "free food, free instruction in 3-4 kinds of combat, a free uniform, and free trips about Russia." A member of the organization also ceases to feel isolated in society, becoming part of a "wolf pack."²⁰

Until 1995, members of the RNYe at times cooperated with other extremist organizations in Russia. According to the above-cited FSB *spravka*, that practice has now been abandoned, at least on the part of the Moscow-based leadership of the organization. A perusal of recent issues of *Russkii poryadok* reveals sharp attacks on all rivals, real or potential, of the RNYe: for example, Zhirinovskiy, General Alexander Lebed, General Boris Gromov, Genady Zyuganov, and all monarchists.

The Ideology and Program of the RNYe

The ideology and program of the RNYe are, like those of Hitler and the German National Socialist Party, insane and genocidal. As the instance of Hitler demonstrated, however, insane and genocidal programs can in fact be rigorously applied. Since Barkashov's ideas and prejudices have been taken over virtually wholesale

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from the German Nazis—and since those ideas and prejudices are well known—a detailed discussion of them should not be necessary. I will therefore limit myself to highlighting a few of the RNYe programmatic positions. In one area—that of religion—Barkashov’s stance, as we shall see, diverges notably from that of his mentor, Hitler, resembling that of Corneliu Codreanu, the charismatic leader of the interwar Romanian fascists, who was strangled by gendarmes loyal to King Carol of Romania in 1938.

At the center of the RNYe program lie twin obsessions with race and conspiracy. It is these obsessions that render the RNYe especially dangerous from a political perspective. The Russian ethnos, in the RNYe view, must harshly assert itself as the ruling people of the Russian Republic to protect Russians from lethal internal and external enemies. In 1917, the RNYe contends, in a fiendish plot orchestrated by Jewish bankers in New York, Jewish Bolsheviks seized power in Russia. Citing A. Diky’s anti-Semitic classic, *The Jews in Russia and the USSR* (1976), Barkashov maintains that of the 556 persons who took over the top party and state positions in the new Bolshevik state, a total of 448 were Jews, with most of the rest being “Latvians, Armenians and so forth.” “There were practically no Russians” among the early Bolshevik leaders.²¹

These so-called genocidal Jews who had seized power in Russia, according to the program, then set about uprooting Russians and Slavs in vast numbers, eventually slaughtering some one hundred million of them. While this crime was being perpetrated, a healthy development was, by contrast, occurring in Germany, where a vibrant German National Socialist movement had come to power under Adolf Hitler. Determined at all costs to thwart this development, the Jewish financial oligarchy of the United States and Great Britain organized the Second World War in order to prevent the rebirth of the German nation. Cunningly, the Jews of New York and London succeeded in pitting two brother Aryan peoples, the Germans and Slavs, against one another. The end result of this plot was the utter destruction of German National Socialism and the continued enslavement of the Russian and Slavic peoples of the USSR.

Today, following Gorbachev’s perestroika and the fall of the Communists, Russia remains under the dire threat of extinction. The “international financial oligarchy,” directly ruled by Jews from Israel and the United States, seeks rapaciously to plunder Russia’s natural wealth and to turn its people into cheap manual labor deprived of any rights. That the United States is ruled by Jews is self-evident to Barkashov, who observes that “the pro-Zionist coalition in the U.S. Congress has reached 75-80 percent of the senators and approximately 60 percent of the members of the House of Representatives.”²² A certain Jim Warren, a self-declared “American nationalist” and leader of the League for the Defense of Christians USA, confided to *Russkii poryadok* during a visit to Russia that the United States was indeed harshly ruled “by anti-national forces.” As “proof,” Warren cited the alleged fact that “in Clinton’s government, Jews and Negroes make up 55 percent of the total.” “American nationalists,” Warren noted, were pinning their hopes on like-minded brethren in Russia. “Never lose your faith in God,” he exhorted, “in yourselves, or in your people. . . . God is with us.”²³

Faced with murderous enemies directed by diabolically clever Jews living in Israel and the United States, Russians, Barkashov and the RNYe believe, must get serious about national self-defense and self-preservation. "Russia," Barkashov proclaims, "will be reborn today not as a 'common economic space' but as a metaphysical essence—a bulwark of God manifested in the world for the last battle with absolute evil, with the devil and his offspring—chimerical, theomachistic Western civilization, headed by Israel and the USA." This epic struggle will on a symbolic plane be represented by a contest between "the swastika—the symbol of God," and the Jewish star, which is also the red communist star, representing "the Devil, Lucifer, and the Anti-Christ." Under the sign of this evil star "about 100 million Slavs were shot and tortured in the camps."²⁴

While the threat is vast and grim, hope, Barkashov proclaims, must not be abandoned. The RNYe seeks to "select out the most volitional, the boldest, the strongest and the most self-sacrificial Sons of the Russian Nation" to do battle with the fearsome world Jewish conspiracy.²⁵ Only a young national elite, born of the Russian nation, can save Russia from enslavement. For this reason, the RNYe is focusing its recruitment efforts on men in the military, on blue-collar workers, and on unorganized young people.

The RNYe must, of course, assume power before it can begin implementing its program. Once they have come to power by deposing "democrats" and other ruling elements, the *barkashovtsy* plan to seal Russia off from the rest of the world. "Close the borders," Barkashov urges, "for five years. As Stalin did in his time. Live by our own resources, our own forces. Buy nothing from them [i.e., the West], and sell them only what is profitable to us."²⁶

The Russian parliament and democratic institutions are to be suppressed, and glasnost extinguished. It is at this point that Russia's restive and obstreperous minorities can be brought to heel by the dominant Russian ethnos, which according to the RNYe makes up 85 percent of the republic's population. For Jews and gypsies living in Russia, there is to be no future; for them, there awaits a new Holocaust, a new Final Solution, swiftly and ruthlessly administered by the RNYe. This is made clear in secret documents adopted by the organization.²⁷

The other ethnic minorities of Russia will fare only marginally better. Russia is to be transformed into a unitary state, and the tsarist *guberniya* system revived. (This is also a key point in Zhirinovsky's program.) All autonomous republics and other autonomous entities formed to represent the minority peoples of the former Soviet Union are to be abolished. People of Central Asian and Caucasus background living on Russian soil will be expelled back to their homelands. (Like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Barkashov does not want the full Soviet Union restored—only those areas that are largely peopled by "triune" Eastern Slavs.)²⁸ The estimated "80,000 criminal Chechens" dwelling in Russia are to be rounded up and interned.²⁹ Like Zhirinovsky, the *barkashovtsy* have been ardent supporters of the war effort in Chechnya; separatist moods among Russia's minorities are to be crushed by force.

Additional heavy restrictions are to be placed on Russia's non-Slavic minorities. Since ethnic Russians make up 85 percent of the republic's population, they

must, by law, Barkashov asserts, make up at least that percentage of all state and social structures, the mass media, cultural organizations, and so forth. Because the Russian birth rate is currently low, the minority peoples of the republic must be prohibited by law from having a higher birth rate than Russians.

But who qualifies as a Russian or “triune” Slav? That question, obviously, is one of riveting concern to the racially obsessed RNYe leadership. To become a member of the RNYe, one must first prove that one is a “racially pure Slav,” free of the smallest “admixture” of Jewish, gypsy, Caucasus, or Central Asian blood. Such mongrels cannot in any sense be considered Aryan Slavs.³⁰ The difference between being recognized as a Slav or as a non-Slav in a state run by the RNYe would clearly be immense. The organization has pledged to spare no effort to protect the Russian “gene pool,” which has allegedly been put in direct danger by the world Jewish conspiracy.

Politically, as has been noted, the RNYe would establish an authoritarian state shorn of a parliament and other democratic institutions. Great emphasis would be placed on propaganda, which would be conducted in the crass German Nazi manner. In economics, a mixed system would be introduced, including a large state sector, but also a private sector protected by the state from foreign competitors. Foreign policy would be aggressively “defensive.” “Russia has no friends” is a constant RNYe refrain.

The RNYe as Avenging Christian “Reapers”

In their views on religion, as has been indicated, the *barkashovtsy* diverge notably from the ideas of Hitler and the German National Socialists and draw close to those of Corneliu Codreanu, founder of the interwar Romanian Legion of the Archangel Michael and of the Iron Guard organization.³¹ An article on Codreanu appeared in *Russkii porjadok*, and more pieces on him and on his ideas have been promised for the future.³² In his pseudo-Orthodox mysticism, replete with visions and revelations, Barkashov does remind one somewhat of Codreanu. For example, in his 1994 book of essays, Barkashov relates how he and his *soratniki* attended a religious ceremony conducted on the occasion of the transfer of the relics of St. Serafim of Sarov back to Diveevo in 1991. While the church bells chimed, Barkashov and those present, he writes, saw a mystical “rose-colored and absolutely geometrically correct” swastika appear in the cloudless sky. An eighty-five-year old elder or *starets* then proceeded to bless Barkashov and his followers, saying, “You are needed, you are reapers (*zhnetsy*).”³³ Indeed, the RNYe could in the future serve as reapers in a most bloody harvest.

While he is a self-declared Christian, Barkashov evidences little attachment to the majority of the bishops of the present-day Russian Orthodox Church whom his organization dismisses as “for the most part Zionist-Masons.”³⁴ The *barkashovtsy* were outraged at the neutral stance taken by Patriarch Alexi II and other church leaders at the time of the “October events” of 1993. “Have you forgotten, Holy Fathers,” the RNYe newspaper asked indignantly, “what faith you serve, and have you forgotten what people—what faith and what nationality—crucified the Son of God, Jesus Christ?” A reference was then made to Jewish rit-

ual murders allegedly perpetrated against Orthodox Christians.³⁵ The anti-Semitic Metropolitan Ioann of Petersburg, the second-ranking hierarch of the Russian Church until his death in November 1995, who publicly defended the authenticity of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was, on the other hand, warmly praised by Barkashov as “the incarnation of our spiritual strivings.”³⁶

An article by a certain “Captain S.V. Rogozhin” that was included in Barkashov’s book *The ABC’s of a Russian Nationalist* asserts that Jesus Christ, his mother Mary, and all of the disciples (except Judas Iscariot) were not Jews, but in fact Galileans, a non-Jewish people.³⁷ The “Basic Principles of the Program of the Movement,” which is also included in Barkashov’s book, emphasizes that freedom of religious expression will be tolerated in Russia “only in that measure to which it strengthens the spiritual forces of Russians.”³⁸

Could the RNYe Come to Power?

The previously mentioned independent scholar Vladimir Pribylovsky has observed, correctly in my opinion, that the RNYe, whatever its public claims, has little chance of coming to power through the ballot box. The organization’s extreme ultranationalism and overt racism have, the Russian polls show, limited appeal for the contemporary electorate. It should be noted, however, that in a March-April 1995 Russia-wide survey taken by the polling organization VTsIOM, which asked respondents the question, “Which party is likely to win the next Duma election?” the *barkashovtsy* came in third with 11.4 percent, trailing only the Communists (29.7 percent) and Zhirinovskiy’s party (18.8 percent), and ahead of Grigory Yavlinsky’s Yabloko (11.2 percent) and Yegor Gaidar’s Russia’s Choice (10.8 percent).³⁹ The RNYe, however, decided not to compete as an organization in the December 1995 Duma elections. Barkashov announced in October 1995 that he had decided to run for a single-mandate seat in the December 1995 Duma elections, but later that month declared at an RNYe party conference that he would in fact not be running because he considered such an effort beneath his dignity. On 29 January 1996, Barkashov announced that he would be seeking the Russian presidency in the June elections.⁴⁰ His bid for the presidency collapsed when he failed to submit a signature list to the Central Election Commission by the 16 April deadline; two days later NTV reported that Barkashov was supporting Yeltsin for the presidency and was warning that the election of Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov would lead to civil war.⁴¹

The RNYe’s best chance to achieve power, Vladimir Pribylovsky believes, would be through some form of military coup.⁴² But is there a chance of such a coup being successful? The RNYe has, of course, been actively and intensively courting the military since its founding in 1990, and it does apparently include in its number a significant number of retired military personnel and at least some officers and soldiers on active duty. A letter to *Russkii poryadok* from a Colonel V.I. Terentev of the Paratroops, an officer with the General Staff, asserted in 1994: “In the General Staff, a majority of the officers read your newspaper *Russkii poryadok*, and many in the high command share your views.”⁴³ Barkashov has asserted that the RNYe counts active army generals

among its *soratniki*.⁴⁴ At a conference that I attended in Moscow in January 1995, Sergei Yushenkov, the reform-minded chairman of the defense committee of the State Duma, noted that the RNYe maintained that it had regimental army commanders among its membership but added that he, Yushenkov, had never encountered such people in the military.

All of the RNYe boasts concerning successful penetration of the military may be so much eyewash and hogwash. It is worth noting, however, that in the previously cited FSB *spravka*, it is reported that the newspaper *Russkii poryadok* is in fact physically produced on the printing presses of the Krasny Voin publishing house of the Moscow Military District.⁴⁵

“Until recently, the approach of the Yeltsin leadership toward the RNYe was a generally hands-off attitude with occasional spasms of apparent favoritism.”

Until recently, the approach of the Yeltsin leadership toward the RNYe was a generally hands-off attitude with occasional spasms of apparent favoritism. Thus when, in the spring of 1994, the pro-democracy weekly *Moscow News* published a critical article on the subject of the *barkashovtsy*, the Russian Procuracy “instead of investigating the RNYe

began to investigate the work of *Moscow News* and even discovered serious errors.”⁴⁶

By the spring of 1995, however, this approach may have undergone revision. One evening that spring, a group of fit, heavily armed men showed up uninvited at the RNYe headquarters in central Moscow. The surprised *barkashovtsy* were forced to lie down on the floor and were handcuffed. Barkashov was then roughly interrogated at the point of an automatic weapon, and an amateur videotape was made of the proceedings by the intruders. The uninvited guests described themselves as “fighters for an anti-fascist military organization” and forced Barkashov cravenly to ask forgiveness of all “Jews, Arabs, and Negroes.” A copy of the videotape was subsequently sent to *Moskovsky komsomolets*, which published the text of the conversation that had taken place between the intruders and the RNYe. The clear-cut aim of the incident, the newspaper concluded, was to discredit Barkashov and his organization. But who were the intruders? The newspaper believes that they were in fact armed professionals attached to President Yeltsin’s Security Service, and I agree that this interpretation seems to make the most sense.⁴⁷

This dramatic spring 1995 incident underlines what should be self-evident, namely that the strength of today’s neo-Nazis lies in the self-imposed weakness of the Russian state, which could cast the RNYe aside like rag dolls if it so chose. The *barkashovtsy* are unquestionably promoting ethnic, racial, and religious discord in Russia, punishable offenses under the Criminal Code. If the Russian state were to summon the will to uphold the law against the RNYe, a potentially genocidal organization, it could easily accomplish that task.

NOTES

1. In *Izvestiya*, 30 July 1993, 5. For Barkashov's biography, see also *Trud*, 5 November 1993, 5; *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 5 March 1994, 4; *Moskovskie novosti*, 15, 1994, 7A; and *Russkii poryadok*, nos. 4–5, 1994, 1.
2. *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 6 October 1993, 4.
3. *Shchit i mech*, 3, 20 January 1994, 3.
4. In *The Economist*, 28 January 1995, 21–23.
5. *Izvestiya*, 30 July 1993, 5.
6. See *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 5 May 1994; 1 and 11 May 1995, 2.
7. *Inform-600 sekund*, 002, July 1994, 4–5.
8. See *Izvestiya*, 5 January 1994, 7, and 25 March 1994, 5.
9. *Izvestiya*, 6 October 1993, 1.
10. In *Megapolis-ekspress*, 12, 6 April 1994, 7.
11. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 4 March 1994, 4.
12. In *Zavtra*, 12, March 1994, 1–2.
13. *Moskovskie novosti*, 15–22 January 1995, 4.
14. For the FSB spravka, see *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 11 May 1995, 2.
15. *Ibid.*
16. See *Ogonek*, 11, March 1995, 18–20.
17. In *Prizyv* (Vladimir), 22 March 1995, 2, 3.
18. *Ogonek*, 11, 1995, 18–20.
19. See *Novoe vremya*, 35, 1994, 14–17, and *Izvestiya*, 18 August 1994, 5.
20. In *Izvestiya*, 18 August 1994, 5.
21. Alexander Barkashov, *Azbuka Russkogo Natsionalista* (Moscow: Slovo-1, 1994), 28 and 75.
22. *Ibid.*, 11.
23. *Russkii poryadok*, 3, 21 May 1993, 2–3.
24. Barkashov, *Azbuka*, 59 and 65–66.
25. *Ibid.*, 46.
26. *Inform-600 sekund*, 002, July 1994, 4–5.
27. See *Moskovskie novosti*, 15, 1994, 7A.
28. See Barkashov's comments in *Stavropolskaya gazeta*, 27 September 1994, 1.
29. *Moskovskie novosti*, 15–22 January 1995, 4.
30. *Moskovskie novosti*, 15, 1994, 7A.
31. On Codreanu, see F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 181–93, and Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1965), 501–74.
32. *Russkii poryadok*, 2–3, 1994, 8.
33. Barkashov, *Azbuka*. . ., 96–98.
34. *Moskovskie novosti*, 15, 1994, 7A.
35. *Russkii poryadok*, 9, 1993; 1, 1994, 7–8.
36. *Inform-600 sekund*, 002, July 1994, 4–5. On the late Metropolitan Ioann of Petersburg, see my essays, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an 'Empire-Saving' Institution" in Michael Bourdeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 15–40, and "Orthodoxy and National Identity in Russia" in Victoria Bonnell, ed., *Identities in Transition: Gender, Class, Religion, Nationality and Politics in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Berkeley, CA: Center for Slavic and East European Studies, forthcoming 1996).
37. Barkashov, *Azbuka*, 68–71.
38. *Ibid.*, 99–104.
39. See *Transition*, 8 September 1995, 32–35.
40. *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 20 October 1995, 3, and *OMRI Daily Digest*, 30 January 1996.

41. *OMRI Daily Digest*, 19 April 1996.
42. *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 11 May 1995, 2.
43. *Russkii poryadok*, 2–3, 1994, 4.
44. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 5 March 1994, 4.
45. *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 11 May 1995, 2.
46. *Moscow News*, 50, 16–22 December 1994, 12.
47. See *Moskovsky komsomolets*, 5 May 1995, 3.