

The Communist Parties of Russia and Ukraine on the Eve of the 1999 Elections

Similarities, Contrasts, and Interactions

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For both the Russian Federation and Ukraine the year 1999 will be critical, with the Ukrainian presidential contest forthcoming in October, the Russian State Duma elections scheduled for December, and even the duration of Boris Yeltsin's presidential term in doubt. In both these linchpin Slavic states, the mainstream post-Soviet communist parties command the largest representation in parliament and stand poised to challenge the current political establishment. In Russia, the powerful Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is itself challenged on its left by the more radical and ideologically orthodox Russian Communist Workers' Party. Similarly, in Ukraine, the post-Soviet successor Marxist groups include not only the large Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) but also the influential Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU) and the small, dogmatic Progressive Socialist Party. This study focuses on the CPRF and the CPU, particularly the contrasts between them.

At the outset it should be emphasized that in both Russia and Ukraine the difficulties of the transition from a command to a market economy—the halving of industrial output, sharply curtailed social safety nets, pockets of desperate impoverishment, and widespread socio-psychological disorientation—have had a notable impact on the thinking of the post-Soviet communists. From their perspective, many of the ideological tenets associated with Marx's analysis of capitalism, for example, concentrations of great wealth atop steep income differentials, democracy as a facade for rule by capitalist oligarchs) have been corroborated by the bitter realities of the new order. Much like their distant Bolshevik predecessors or the nonruling communists of Depression-wracked Europe and early postwar France and Italy, the present-day communists in Russia and

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Ukraine are for the most part true believers. While most of them concede that there were problems with the former Soviet system, they blame the fall of communism not on defects inherent in socialism but on foreign subversion, aided by self-serving opportunists who rose within the CPSU nomenklatura during the Brezhnev era.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation

After the official bans on the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party, prompted by the failed August 1991 coup against Gorbachev, a half-dozen or so successor left-wing organizations were founded in the Russian Federation during late 1991 and 1992. Often led by activists from the much factionalized CPSU of the 1989–91 period, these new formations spanned the political spectrum from the far left to the center left. The largest among them were the radical Russian Communist Workers' Party (RCWP) of the "two Viktors," Tyulkin and Anpilov, and the reformist Socialist Labor Party of Lyudmila S. Vartazarova and Roy Medvedev (the Soviet-era dissident historian). The Russian Constitutional Court's late 1992 lifting of the ban on the grassroots "primary party organizations" of the former communist parties paved the way for the mid-February 1993 "revival-unification congress" of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF). The CPRF, in turn, quickly absorbed most of the members of the Socialist Labor Party and entered into a tense, polemical rivalry with the extremist RCWP, leaving the rest of the successor communist groups to dwindle in significance and membership.¹

The activist core of the CPRF has been from the start an eclectic group. As I will elaborate below, by mid-1998 its cohesion was seriously undermined by multiple fissures and public polemics. Party documents describe the CPRF as the successor to both the CPSU and the latter's upstart antireformist offshoot, the Russian Communist Party (founded in mid-1990). However, many of the more hardline elements of the short-lived Russian Communist Party declined to join the CPRF. The latter's leader, Gennady A. Zyuganov, espouses a kind of ethnocentric Russian nationalism that is sharply at odds with traditional Marxism-Leninism as well as with the official Soviet doctrine of proletarian internationalism. At the same time, the CPRF's elite includes two additional tendencies, one attuned to the Gorbachev initiatives of the mid-to-late 1980s and thus incipiently social democratic, and the other adamantly Marxist-Leninist in orientation. For analytical purposes, we label members of the more moderate group "Marxist reformers" and those of the second one "Marxist-Leninist revivalists."²

Zyuganov himself inclines toward a blend of Marxist reformism (tolerance of a mixed economy and organized religion, acceptance of electoral politics and political pluralism) with his own unique brand of Russian ethno-culturalism (characterized by glorification of Great Russian statehood, traditionalist social values, and above all the idea of the population's ingrained collectivist spirit—denoted by the term *sobornost* and associated with both the peasant communitarianism of tsarist Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church). The CPRF chairman's bridging of at least two of the three major tendencies within the CPRF elite

has facilitated his leadership of the party as a whole and, until recently, enabled him to contain its centrifugal tendencies. On the other hand, the Marxist reformers have found common ground with the Marxist-Leninist revivalists in opposing Zyuganov's Great Russian ethno-cultural exceptionalism.

Eclecticism in Theory, Moderation in Practice

The program officially adopted at the Third CPRF Congress in January 1995 was the result of a year-long process during which the above three proto-factions submitted competing drafts and amendments, engaged in intense debates, and worked out compromises on the basis of feedback received from lower-level party activists, whose views spanned a far broader spectrum, from ultra-left to pragmatic reformism.³ The final version of the program set forth an explanation of the Soviet collapse, a Marxist-Leninist analysis of current conditions in Russia and the world, a statement of the CPRF's ultimate goals of socialism and the (voluntary) reestablishment of the USSR, and a lengthy road map of how to get from the present to that "bright future."⁴ Briefly, it attributed the dissolution of the Soviet Union to subversion by hostile foreign forces and domestic traitors (led by Gorbachev). It described the contemporary world as dominated by global capitalism, with the "golden billion" in developed countries exploited by the pressures of credit card consumerism, rather than subsistence wages, and the peoples of the third world condemned to ever-greater misery through neocolonialism and resource depletion.

According to the program, this "exploitation of man by man" could be overcome only under socialism, the development of which was to be achieved in three stages. During the first stage, the CPRF's eventual conquest of majority support by legal, constitutional means and subsequent creation of a "government of people's trust" would solve Russia's mounting socioeconomic crisis by means of government regulation of the economy, the reestablishment of a social safety net, strict enforcement of the law, and an end to presidential rule. The program devoted considerably less attention to the second stage, but affirmed that social ownership of the means of production would gain ascendancy over private ownership. It said still less about the third stage of full-blown socialism, a replay of former Soviet leaders' persistent ambiguities on the subject.

The ideas of the Marxist reformers, such as support for law, competitive elections, and a mixed economy, predominated in the resolution of the party's second, so-called revival-unification congress in early 1993. This was consistent with overall public sentiment in what were still the salad days of the post-Soviet order.⁵ But it was also the dictate of party-building. For the CPRF's organizers were seeking to draw into their ranks the bulk of the moderately inclined Socialist Labor Party. One year later, however, when the process of drafting an official CPRF program began in earnest, popular disillusionment with the Yeltsin regime was intensifying due to the autumn 1993 shelling of the Russian parliament, the continuing economic downslide, and "nomenklatura privatization." The moderate Marxist reformers thus took a back seat to the Zyuganov nationalists and the Marxist-Leninist revivalists in the debates over successive program drafts.

In early autumn 1994, Zyuganov authored a draft program for discussion by

all party organizations. In numerous sections he articulated two key postulates: first, that Russia's unique, historically ingrained, ethno-cultural character predisposes her to socialism; and second, that Russia and the United States are fated by geopolitics to be permanent rivals in the global arena.⁶ Yet in the program's final form, approved at the January 1995 Third CPRF Congress, these particular tenets of Zyuganov's world view were watered down or omitted. Instead, an updated mode of Marxist-Leninist analysis prevailed.

Apparently the leadership as a whole had decided to gear the official CPRF program to the thinking of the party's rank-and-file members, who were more likely to be attuned to the ideas of the Marxist-Leninist revivalists than to Zyuganov's ethno-cultural exceptionalism or the incipiently social democratic views of the Marxist reformers. Circumstantial evidence suggested, however, that this decision was based on tactical calculation rather than widely shared conviction. In the top CPRF leadership bodies confirmed by the January 1995 congress, Zyuganov-style nationalists and Marxist reformers were much more prominent than the Marxist-Leninist revivalists.⁷

Following Zyuganov's defeat in the mid-1996 presidential elections, there were moves to rethink the CPRF program, to devise a document befitting a "contemporary party of socialist orientation," one that would give lie to the pervasive media caricature of the communists as orthodox revivalists.⁸ Nevertheless, at the Fourth CPRF Congress, in April 1997, the party's 1995 program was reaffirmed with only minor revisions. Even those limited "additions and changes" had the effect of maintaining a balance between the views of the Zyuganov group and those of the Marxist-Leninist revivalists rather than strengthening the position of the moderates.⁹ Zyuganov's formal report to the congress, moreover, had a notably radical and activist cast. While conceding that the preceding two years had been devoted to the party's consolidation, he proclaimed that the forthcoming period would see the CPRF advance to a position of "responsible" but "irreconcilable" opposition to the Yeltsin regime.¹⁰

On the other hand, the personnel changes enacted at the April 1997 congress did not notably alter the correlation of forces that had prevailed in the party's Presidium since January 1995.¹¹ In short, the Marxist reformers continued to exert a more direct impact on routine party policy than Zyuganov's impassioned exhortations to the congress or the essentially unchanged Marxist-Leninist revivalist program would suggest. As in 1995, this discrepancy was partly the result of the ongoing divergence between the party's leadership and its grassroots members. Indeed, the latter were becoming ever more impatient and radicalized by the conjunction of Russia's unabated economic depression with Yeltsin's prolonged health problems and the consequent political stalemate in the highest reaches of government. But the gap between the CPRF's rhetoric and the actual conduct of its leaders, particularly in the State Duma, also came from the fact that the major proto-factions continued to share a commitment to acting according to "constitutional and legal norms," at least during the party's projected "first stage" on the path to socialism. Such observance of the democratic rules of the game perforce shifted the burden of day-to-day directives to the Marxist reformers.

To be sure, the specific public policy orientations of the three groups sharply diverged. The Marxist reformers were evolving in the direction of post-World War II European social democracy, with its commitment to multicultural, universalist norms and its acceptance for the long term of a mixed economy in which government intervention and social welfare guarantees tempered the impact of market mechanisms. The Marxist-Leninist revivalists remained convinced that only socialism, *qua* extensive government planning and public ownership of the means of production, offered promise of a just society, and they continued to extol Lenin and his paramount creation, the USSR. The Zyuganov nationalists, in contrast, sought to rebuild the military might as well as industrial base of Great Russia, reverse the “Americanization” of its popular culture, and reindulge what they perceived as the traditional Russian ethno-cultural mores of collectivism and “clean living.” In the short term, however, both the Marxist-Leninist revivalists and the Zyuganovists acquiesced in the reformist strategy of gradualism and legality on the path to government power.

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Throughout 1997 the communist deputies in the State Duma thus participated in the normal give-and-take of parliamentary politics, seeking compromises when feasible (as in October of that year, when agreement was reached on round table talks, top-level consultations between opposition and regime, and the like) rather than votes of no confidence in the government of Prime Minister Viktor S. Chernomyrdin. One astute observer of Russian opposition politics described the CPRF’s overall conduct from mid-1996 until late 1997 as a “historic compromise,” an allusion to the Italian Communist Party’s policy during the 1970s of parliamentary support for a center-right government in Italy as a means of achieving legitimacy and eventual partnership in a coalition government.¹² Others spoke of the CPRF’s conduct as a kind of “within-system [*sistemnaya*] opposition.”¹³ Whatever the label, the party’s behavior was more like that of a normal parliamentary opposition than that of an anti-system revolutionary movement.

The CPRF Central Committee’s “Colonization” of the State Duma

Here a brief digression is in order regarding the symbiotic relationship that has developed between the CPRF’s formal party organization, on the one hand, and the parliamentary factions, or caucuses, on the other. In the Soviet era, the CPSU Central Committee bureaucracy in Moscow was the locus of party decision making and intraparty communications as well as the source of funding for local and regional cadres; the parliament was a rubber stamp that played primarily an agitprop role. In contrast, the communist faction offices in the Russian Duma have taken over most of the logistical functions of the Soviet-era Central Committee headquarters.

Indeed, the parliamentary offices of newly elected communist deputies, with their state-provided support staffs and modern communications equipment—telephones, fax machines, computers—were the engines behind the initial rebuilding of the party's nationwide organization after the autumn 1991 ban on CPSU activity was lifted. This quickly became evident following the December 1993 Duma elections in Russia. Grassroots party activists from the Soviet era often took the initiative in reconstructing local party committees. But it was the interaction between those organizations and their respective parliamentary deputies that fostered the creation of the new communist party networks.¹⁴ In this process the significance of the lower-level party units relative to the Central Committee was considerably enhanced. For one thing, they were transformed into election campaign headquarters in which innovation, familiarity with problems in the localities, and the ability to reach out to uncommitted voters—or the absence thereof—could make or break the political careers of communist candidates.¹⁵ This was especially the case in areas of genuine electoral competition, that is, beyond the left-wing rural enclaves of Russia's red belt. In short, the relationship between the local and regional communist organizations and the national-level party elite became one of mutual interdependence, a far cry from the strictly top-down hierarchical structure of the old pre-Gorbachev CPSU.

As material resources and political clout shifted from the traditional communist party leadership organs (Central Committee and Presidium/Politburo) to the parliamentary faction, the overlap between Central Committee membership and deputy status became pronounced. The CPRF, in selecting candidates for the 1995 Duma elections, took care to place prominent members of the party hierarchy high on its regional party lists, even if individuals widely known to the general public also ran in single member districts.¹⁶ Given the 1993 electoral law stipulating the distribution of one-half of the 450 Duma seats according to proportional representation, members of the party elite were more likely to win a place in the new legislature. And as a result of the excessive number of political organizations fielding candidates on the party-list ballot (43 in all), combined with the 5 percent threshold for a share of the seats allotted by proportional representation, the CPRF's tactic paid off handsomely. If we take as an example the top party leadership designated at the Fourth CPRF Congress in April 1997, fully one-half of the full members of the Central Committee (71 of 146), five candidate members, and five members of the party's less-prestigious but still important Central Control and Auditing Commission held the position of Duma deputy. All but three of the thirty members of the CPRF's newly appointed Presidium and Secretariat were also Duma deputies.¹⁷

Furthermore, the CPRF acquired substantial influence in the Duma's Agrarian and People's Power groups, due in large part to the disproportionately large number of seats awarded to the CPRF as a result of the 1995 elections. Although the CPRF received only 22.3 percent of the party-list vote, it acquired twice that proportion of seats in the Duma, since only four parties altogether (the CPRF, Yabloko, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's party, and the pro-government Our Home Is Russia bloc, representing about 50 percent of the total popular vote) managed

to pass the 5 percent threshold for a share of the proportional representation allotment. As a result, the communists, initially with 157 deputies out of 450, agreed to “subsidize” the creation of two additional left-wing factions (35 were required to register a party group) by loaning some of its “surplus” deputies to the Agrarians and People’s Power bloc. Thus, as of December 1997, almost one-half of the latter group and two-fifths of the Agrarians were individuals elected on the CPRF ticket.¹⁸

This gave the CPRF considerable leverage over its Duma allies, provided the deputies loaned to them observed the Leninist principle of strict party discipline, to which the party’s statutes still paid lip service. To what extent they actually did so is not easy to ascertain with precision, particularly on secret ballots. Moreover, a number of deputies elected on the CPRF party lists were not actually “card carrying” Communist Party members (Zyuganov’s long-time associate, Alexei I. Podberyozkin, was a prominent case in point), and they were not bound by the rule of democratic centralism. But by early 1998 the question had become moot because the cleavages within the CPRF itself had begun to spin out of control. Party discipline thus was decisively undermined, a subject to which we shall now turn.

The Impact of Growing CPRF Fissures on the Party’s Duma Deputies

From the January 1994 convening of the State Duma (newly established by the 1993 “Yeltsin” constitution) until the end of 1997, the CPRF faction was unrelenting in its criticism of government policy but accommodating on those few issues that came within the constitutional purview of the Duma, such as approval of the annual state budget. During the tenure of the body elected in December 1993, this was partly attributable to the CPRF’s relative weakness (its faction numbered only 45 deputies, just 10 percent of the total) and partly induced by memories of the violent October 1993 confrontation between the defenders of the disbanded Congress of People’s Deputies and Yeltsin’s armed forces. Even after the December 1995 parliamentary elections when, as detailed above, the CPRF faction’s clout dramatically increased, the exigencies of the mid-1996 presidential contest led the communists to project a public image of compromise and moderation. Yeltsin’s decisive defeat of Zyuganov, in an election that was free if hardly fair (given the Yeltsin campaign’s enormous advantages in terms of finances and media access), resulted in continuing CPRF accommodation. Thus on 10 August 1996, Chernomyrdin was reconfirmed as prime minister by 314 to 85, with three abstentions, in a secret ballot; the following December, in an open ballot, over half of the CPRF deputies supported the draft 1997 budget, while only 44 voted against it.¹⁹ Thereafter, about one-third of the Communist deputies voted in favor of the draft budgets for 1997 and 1998 during the successive Duma readings, in ballots that the party faction left up to the discretion of the individual deputies.²⁰

Among the CPRF’s rank and file members, however, the Duma faction’s persistent nonconfrontation with the Yeltsin government was generating dissent, fueled by anger over the vast disparities in wealth, regional pockets of abysmal poverty, and persistent nonpayment of wages to government workers as well as many others in privatized but unstructured enterprises. Zyuganov’s early Octo-

ber 1997 call for a vote of no confidence in the Chernomyrdin government was reflective of this malaise and elicited broad support among the CPRF's allies in the Duma. On 8 October the parliament voted "380 to zero with five abstentions to declare the government's performance during the first nine months of 1997 'unsatisfactory.'"²¹ A week later, however, as parliament was poised to vote on the no confidence motion, Yeltsin agreed to a number of procedural concessions by phone, and after the Duma took a recess, the CPRF faction moved to postpone the final vote until 22 October.²² The upshot was a compromise whereby Yeltsin agreed, in exchange for withdrawal of the motion of no confidence, to consult regularly with the prime minister and the speakers of the Duma and Federation Council as well as to conduct roundtable talks with government and parliamentary representatives on a series of major policy issues.²³ A semblance of harmony was restored, but within the CPRF pressures began to mount behind the scenes for a more confrontational policy. Significantly, during the brief Duma recess on 15 October, communist deputies solicited the views of their local party leaders regarding the postponement of the no confidence vote. There is some evidence that very mixed views were received.²⁴

By the winter and spring of 1998, the militants within the CPRF's ranks and even in the Central Committee were beginning to express public opposition to the party's policies and to Zyuganov in particular. Yeltsin had not made good on his promises of consultation with the legislators, economic indicators were worsening, wage arrears continued. The tenuous equilibrium among the CPRF's elite proto-factions thus began to give way to open cleavages, as each reacted differently to growing societal unrest and Yeltsin's peremptory dismissal of Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and his cabinet in late March.

Paradoxically at first glance, the Marxist reformers, foremost among them CPRF First Deputy Chairman Valentin A. Kuptsov, called for strict discipline among the party's ranks as well as within the CPRF's Duma faction—especially with regard to the party's opposition to confirmation of the new prime minister designate, Sergei V. Kirienko.²⁵ This effort to keep the lid on internal party disagreements was logical in view of the fact that they were the group most threatened by the party's incipient centrifugal tendencies; for on their own they would have nowhere to turn but to the fragmented, ill-defined, and historically weak Russian center-left.

In contrast, the most militant supporters of Marxist-Leninist revivalism began to voice in public views that were close to those of the CPRF's archrival, the Russian Communist Workers' Party (which had won 4.5 percent of the votes in the 1995 parliamentary election). In other words, the extremists among the Marxist-Leninist revivalists could count on a potential organizational refuge in case of a schism within the CPRF. Accordingly, in early 1998 they penned an open letter "To the Communists of Russia," signed by, among others, four members of the CPRF Central Committee,²⁶ in which they lambasted Zyuganov for unmitigated ideological deviationism; accused him, along with the communist speaker of the Duma, Gennady N. Seleznyov, and other communist deputies of violating the party's official program through their compromises

with the Chernomyrdin government; and called for “a purge of turncoats from the leading organs of the CPRF.”²⁷

It was against this backdrop that, following the 23 March dismissal of the Chernomyrdin government, the drama over the confirmation of Kirienko as the new prime minister played itself out. The first of the three confirmation votes constitutionally permissible (before obligatory dissolution of the Duma and the calling of new elections) was surprisingly indecisive. Two hundred twenty-six votes were required for acceptance or rejection of Kirienko’s candidacy, but on 10 April some 100 deputies opted not to take part in the secret ballot. There were only 143 votes for and 186 against Yeltsin’s nominee, with 5 abstentions. Rumor had it that the CPRF Central Committee, in a closed meeting on 2 April, was divided over what position to take.²⁸ But prior to the second round of voting on 17 April, Zyuganov announced that a decision by the leadership of the People’s Patriotic Union of Russia (essentially a CPRF front organization) to vote against Kirienko was obligatory for all communist deputies.²⁹ The battle lines were clearly hardening, and in the second vote—an open ballot—an overwhelming 270 deputies voted against Kirienko, with only 115 in favor and 11 abstentions. Of the 133 deputies composing the CPRF faction, 121 voted against the president’s candidate, 2 for him, and one abstained, while some 62 members of the Agrarians and People’s Power group, that is, the overwhelming majority, also voted against Kirienko, and only 9 voted for him.³⁰

The CPRF and its allies were now faced with the choice of whether to vote against Kirienko a third time, on 24 April, and thereby invite dissolution of the Duma and new parliamentary elections. At this point Zyuganov reiterated his opposition to Kirienko, baldly asserting the left opposition’s readiness for new elections, while the communist speaker of the Duma took the opposite position.³¹ Seleznyov argued on Russian Public Television that “Russia will not forgive us if we sacrifice the State Duma over a nomination for the prime minister,” and he vowed to argue before an upcoming emergency session of the CPRF Central Committee that the party did “not have the right” to “leave Russia without a legislative assembly.” He also cited the high cost of holding new parliamentary elections at that time.³² Seleznyov’s views notwithstanding, the Central Committee resolved on 23 April that all communists must vote against Kirienko and, in case of a decision to hold a secret ballot, should simply not participate.³³

As it turned out, on 24 April some communists did pick up ballots, and an as yet undetermined number of them voted in favor of Kirienko, thereby contributing to a decisive outcome of 251 to 25 in favor of his confirmation. Some observers have argued that the Zyuganov leadership circle engineered this result by secretly arranging that certain communist deputies would vote yes.³⁴ The implication was that Zyuganov’s public opposition to Kirienko’s candidacy was simply a smokescreen to placate the party’s increasingly vocal militants, while he in fact hoped to avoid the incalculable consequences of the Duma’s dissolution. This interpretation is doubtful on several grounds. First, it assumes either that the CPRF deputies *qua* Central Committee members still remained, in April 1998, a largely compliant group amenable to manipulation by the top leadership or, alter-

natively, that they were prepared to go to any lengths to protect their perks of public office. More importantly, it fails to account either for the magnitude of the communist vote in favor of Kirienko (which reportedly also came as a shock to Zyuganov)³⁵ or for the anguish and soul-searching experienced by some of those CPRF deputies who consciously defied party discipline to vote for him.³⁶

Be that as it may, the vote on Kirienko further intensified the cleavages among the communists. The militant Marxist-Leninist revivalists now sought to form a “Leninist-Stalinist platform in the CPRF.” However, a brief and unscheduled (*vneocherednoi*) Fifth CPRF Congress, abruptly convened on 23 May 1998, refused to sanction the creation of “political platforms” of any kind,³⁷ and the party Presidium

“The depth of the CPRF’s fissures would become publicly apparent only in July 1998.”

subsequently dissolved the offending “Leninist-Stalinist platform.”³⁸ It seems that at this point the Marxist reformers, the Zyuganov nationalists, and indeed the more moderate Marxist-Leninist revivalists joined forces to repudiate this blatant challenge from the extremists.

Meanwhile, the Zyuganov group itself began to split three ways. On the eve of the Fifth

CPRF Congress, Alexei I. Podberyozkin, long an advisor to Zyuganov and an articulate champion of “Great Russian” state power, openly called for the removal from the CPRF leadership of the “odious” party bureaucrats represented by “Kuptsov and his entourage.”³⁹ And in early July he became a co-founder of a new, center-left oppositionist Union of People’s Power and Labor, headed by Andrei Nikolaev, the former head of the Federal Border Service and a Duma deputy.⁴⁰ If Podberyozkin took a moderate tack, Viktor I. Ilyukhin, outspoken communist chairman of the Duma’s Committee on Security, moved in the direction of heightened militancy. On 22 June 1998, Russian wire services reported him as saying that the CPRF had the right to use “illegal” as well as legal means against the Yeltsin regime, since criminals “must be fought with whatever means [are] at one’s disposal, not those the regime itself had imposed.”⁴¹

While Zyuganov, unlike Ilyukhin, continued to express his commitment to working within “legal and constitutional norms,”⁴² he, too, shifted to more resolute opposition to the Yeltsin regime. In an interview published in *Sovetskaya Pravda* on 12 May 1998, Zyuganov castigated those “ideologists of a ‘within-system opposition’” (read Marxist reformers) who found it hard to adjust to this new situation. Even more striking was his impassioned reiteration of his own particular brand of Russian ethnocentrism. In a thinly veiled gibe at the Jewish origins of certain members of various pro-Yeltsin circles, he accused the regime of squeezing out ethnic Russians (*russkie*) from positions in government, science, medicine, culture, and diplomacy and forcing them to struggle for their very survival. Zyuganov thereupon designated the slogans of a “national liberation strug-

gle and resistance to genocide,” the “integrity of Russia,” and the “Russian idea,” as the banner around which the “overwhelming majority of the people regardless of ideologies and class interests” would unite. And he implied that all of the above notions amounted to a “new political doctrine,” a new conception of “Russian (*ruskii*) socialism.”

The depth of the CPRF’s fissures would become publicly apparent only in July 1998, as a result of the internal party crisis sparked by Yuri Maslyukov’s agreement to become minister of trade and industry in the government. Maslyukov, the last head of the Soviet central planning agency (Gosplan) under Gorbachev, was a member of the CPRF Central Committee and chairman of the Duma’s Economic Policy Committee until his appointment to the cabinet. Before agreeing to accept the new position he stipulated certain conditions, to which Kirienko gave his oral consent, namely, that he be given oversight of arms trade and the defense industry, including nuclear weapons and the space industry, and that his ministry become the chief government organ for the coordination of state orders with regard to both federal and regional needs. His goal, as he put it in a letter to his party comrades, was to “protect industry and the defense complex from further destruction.”⁴³

Maslyukov joined the Kirienko government on 23 July, one day after the CPRF Presidium had voted unanimously against such a move.⁴⁴ He thus defied party discipline to serve the public interest as he understood it. Soon, however, it became clear that the CPRF as a whole was deeply divided over this issue. According to an official party announcement accompanying the publication of Maslyukov’s letter, the discussion in the Presidium had been sharp indeed. Yuri Belov—the Leningrad *obkom* secretary and a militant nationalist long associated with Zyuganov’s views—had gone so far as to threaten to call for a Central Committee vote of no confidence in the Presidium should it vote in favor of Maslyukov taking the cabinet post.⁴⁵ Then, a few days later, the CPRF Central Committee’s ideological department issued a statement on behalf of first deputy party chairman Kuptsov. It bluntly stated that “‘negative views were coming in’ from many local party organizations, but at the same time representatives of the VPK [military-industrial complex] and a number of governors support Yu. Maslyukov.”⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Maslyukov reportedly claimed that “half the members of the Communist faction in the State Duma” supported his decision.⁴⁷ Kuptsov, in the statement cited above, had announced that a definitive decision regarding the “Maslyukov affair” would be reached in the middle of August at a special session of the Central Committee. The die was thus cast for a decisive showdown over the conflicting requirements of communist party discipline and an individual legislator’s own perception of his duty to constituents and country. In the end, of course, the political-economic whirlwind that struck Russia in mid-August 1998 pulled the CPRF’s chestnuts out of the fire, enabling the party to defer resolution of this cardinal question.

Yeltsin’s sudden dismissal of Kirienko and reappointment of Chernomyrdin as acting prime minister on 23 August, a week after the devaluation of the ruble, led to a brief flurry of speculation regarding the possibility of a political truce

between the executive and legislative branches of government. An agreement, which would have provided for the Duma's confirmation of Chernomyrdin in exchange for strengthened parliamentary powers, including oversight over other cabinet appointments, was actually initiated by Chernomyrdin and the Duma and Federation Council leaders on 30 August. However, Zyuganov quickly retracted the CPRF's initial approval of the arrangement.⁴⁸ The next day, the first vote on Chernomyrdin's confirmation went decisively against him, by 253 to 94,⁴⁹ and a week later he was defeated by an even larger margin, 273 to 138, with one abstention.⁵⁰ Zyuganov's early backing for some kind of deal was consistent with his October 1997 maneuvers in support of an executive-legislative compromise. Nevertheless, in view of the growing militancy throughout the CPRF so pointedly illustrated by the "Maslyukov affair," there was plainly no way to buck the groundswell of opposition to the return of Chernomyrdin—especially in the face of the by then manifest failures of the government he had headed for five years.

It remained to be seen whether the premiership of Yevgeny M. Primakov, whom the Duma factions overwhelmingly endorsed for the position just days later, signaled the beginning of a new era in post-Soviet Russian politics or simply a transition to the parliamentary elections in December 1999 and presidential race scheduled for the year 2000. Whatever the case, with regard to the coming electoral season it was difficult to imagine a replay of the CPRF elite's smooth coordination of the party's 1995 Duma campaign or united left-wing support for a second presidential bid by Zyuganov.

The Communist Party of Ukraine

The Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) differs fundamentally from the CPRF. First of all, it is flanked on its right by the sizable and influential Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), whose leader, Alexander A. Moroz, was speaker of Ukraine's parliament, the *Verkhovna Rada*, from mid-1994 through spring 1998. The very existence of the SPU—which (with its Peasant Party allies) won about 8.5 percent of the votes in Ukraine's March 1998 parliamentary elections and which claims a membership of some 30,000 (compared to the CPU's 140,000)⁵¹—sharply contrasts with the situation in Russia, where the center-left of the political spectrum is populated by numerous splinter groups with insignificant followings and negligible organizational structures. Second, within the CPU there is no explicit nationalist tendency comparable to Zyuganov's ethnocentric Great Russian fixation. Nationalism and communism occupy polar extremes in contemporary Ukraine, geographically as well as politically. Ethnic Ukrainians in the western regions incorporated into the USSR as a result of World War II tend to be profoundly anti-Russian and anticommunist. Inhabitants of the eastern and southern regions are more likely to be of mixed ethnic heritage or of Russian origin, nostalgic for the USSR, and pro-communist. In central Ukraine the population seems to be of two minds, proud of their newly won independence and ambivalent toward postcommunist Russia, but divided between left and center-right in political orientation. These circumstances have had a profound impact on the Communist Party of Ukraine. On one hand, the political space occupied in the

CPRF by social democratically inclined Marxist reformers has been preempted by the Socialist Party of Ukraine. On the other, the anticommunist political forces of the western and central regions of the country have claimed as their own the banner of ethno-cultural Ukrainian nationalism; in any event Zyuganov's overtly Russocentric nationalism would plainly not sit well even with left-leaning ethnic Ukrainians. As a result, although the CPU, from its founding in mid-1993, has had close links to its Russian analogue, its publicly articulated political profile most resembles that of the CPRF's Marxist-Leninist revivalists.

In both Ukraine and Russia, the late August 1991 ban on the CPSU led many committed yet reform-minded activists to participate in the creation of new left-wing organizations, such as the Socialist Party of Ukraine or Russia's Socialist Labor Party. Ultimately, however, the Socialist Labor Party could not compete with the reconstituted CPRF, whereas the Socialist Party of Ukraine found a natural niche among pro-independence, Europe-oriented Marxist reformers. Headed since its founding in September 1991 by Moroz, who was a member of the CPSU's Democratic Platform in the final days of the USSR, the SPU espouses a modified Marxist (not Leninist) world view.⁵² But in actuality it performs "the social democratic task" in Ukraine, advocating a mixed economy with substantial government regulation and a strong social safety net in a democratic and neutral Ukraine. Although Moroz participated in the June 1993 founding congress of the CPU, he and some thirty thousand party members have retained their allegiance to the SPU.⁴

Soviet-Era Orthodoxy in Theory, "Sovereign Communism" in Practice?

The long-time head of the CPU, Petr N. Simonenko, played a key role in the party's formation. In contrast to Zyuganov, who was active in numerous right-wing nationalist groups prior to the founding of the CPRF, Simonenko, formerly second secretary of the CPSU party organization in the heavily industrial Donetsk region, devoted himself to the reestablishment of a communist presence in Ukraine. He chaired the organizational committee for the two-stage All-Ukrainian Conference of party activists, which met first on 6 March 1993, and then on 19 June 1993 when the conclave reconstituted itself as the First Congress of the CPU.⁵⁴ Simonenko was thus plainly in line to be elected the new communist party's first secretary.

After winning a respectable plurality in the 1994 parliamentary elections (as of late that year, 84 communist deputies out of a possible 450 were chosen in single-mandate districts), the CPU convened its Second Congress in March 1995 to approve the draft of an official party program. Given the CPU's affinity with the CPRF's Marxist-Leninist revivalists, the programs of the two parties have much in common—although in the Ukrainian document there is not a trace of Slavic, let alone Ukrainian or Russian, ethno-cultural exceptionalism.⁵⁵ Socialism is defined as the end of "the exploitation of man by man," the reestablishment of the "collective ownership of the means of production," and "state regulation of the economy." This goal is to be achieved in three stages, with the first anticipating cooperation with other democratic forces in the electoral arena, but the third

guaranteeing tolerance toward believers and “members of different social organizations” only insofar as they respect “the struggle for socialism and the reestablishment of the fraternal union of peoples [read USSR].”⁵⁶ As in the CPRF program, the demise of the USSR is blamed on foreign plots and domestic traitors (the Gorbachev team) rather than any inherent defects of socialism. And democratic centralism constitutes the crux of the new party statutes. The CPU, in its program, seemed to opt for the strategy of a parliamentary path back to Soviet-style socialism and a reconstituted USSR.

During the debates over the draft program at the CPU’s March 1995 congress, however, a wide diversity of views was expressed, some of which were not at all consistent with the above formulations. The first secretary of the Donetsk region’s communist party organization, Georgy V. Buiko, was sanguine about this situation, calling “such stormy debates” completely normal. At the same time, Boiko emphasized a formula coined by Zyuganov at his party’s January 1995 congress and reiterated ever since by moderate CPRF deputies in private conversations, namely, that the post-Soviet communist parties must move “not back to socialism but forward to socialism,” and he stressed the need for communist deputies elected at all levels to learn to work in absolutely new conditions.⁵⁷ In a similar vein, the CPU’s regional first secretary in Luhansk, Petr O. Kupin, insisted that CPU deputies work for parliamentary compromises and “economic reform laws” in the interest of Ukraine and the people, noting the successes achieved in this regard in China and East Central Europe.⁵⁸

If Kupin, a Central Committee member, and Boiko, who was elected to the Presidium at the March 1995 congress, represented the CPU’s moderate wing, others took much more hardline positions. The first secretary of the Kharkov regional organization, Leonid P. Strizhko, took issue with the draft program’s projected three-stage scenario, arguing that “there cannot be today some kind of intermediate amorphous-democratic stages on the path to socialist development.”⁵⁹ And Alexander V. Bondarchuk, a representative from the All-Ukraine Union of Workers, dubbed the “parliamentary path . . . utopian and to a significant degree an empty waste of time and energy.” He thereupon insisted that the party “sharply activate revolutionary forms of struggle.”⁶⁰

On the other hand, Alexander M. Voznyuk, a delegate from the western region of Rivne, took the opposite point of view in what amounted to a plea for unity of action between the CPU and the Socialists. After warning against “any manifestation of adventurism [and] . . . voluntarism,” he asserted (to the accompaniment of “noise in the hall”) that even to speak of the reestablishment of the USSR was “premature,” and he reminded his listeners that “differences between communists and socialists in the mid-1930s was one of the reasons for the beginning of the Second World War.”⁶¹

This obvious pluralism of views ran counter to the orthodox Marxist-Leninist cast of both the new CPU program and Simonenko’s subsequent reports to official party gatherings. Indeed, at the Third CPU Congress in mid-October 1997, on the eve of the election campaign for the March 1998 parliamentary contest, the first secretary went so far as to denounce “the virus of ideological pluralism” as the cause

of the CPSU's downfall.⁶² Recourse to such a dogmatic formulation may have been designed, at least in part, to draw a demarcation line between the CPU and its Socialist electoral rivals while also attracting the support of the radicalized industrial workers of eastern Ukraine. Whatever the case, the CPU leadership's forbearance toward divergent views among the party's regional first secretaries indicated that they were not inflexibly hardline, as did Simonenko's disparagement at the Third Congress of some party members' "unfounded" criticism of others for "revisionism, nationalism, and so forth."⁶³

To be sure, there were limits to this tolerance, as illustrated by the party's castigation of the communist deputies in the Rada who in June 1996 voted in favor of the presidentialist constitution drafted by the government of President Leonid Kuchma.⁶⁴

In his report to the Third Congress, Simonenko called this a gross violation of party discipline and spoke of the deputies' "personal responsibility" for facilitating the passage of the "anti-people's bourgeois Constitution."⁶⁵

Moreover, just as Zyuganov spoke of a shift to "irreconcilable opposition" to the Yeltsin regime at the CPRF's Fourth Congress in April 1997, Simonenko summoned his comrades to a "broad offensive" against the Kuchma regime at the CPU's October 1997 congress. He outlined an electoral platform based on the party's orthodox 1995 program, that is, a "transitional period" of three to four years patterned after Lenin's NEP, to be followed by the establishment of the "leading role of socialist forms of management," including a "planned economy."⁶⁶ He also quoted Lenin in support of the CPU's insistent goal of the reunification of Ukraine and Russia within a reconstituted USSR, and he called for the adhesion of Ukraine to the recently established (but organizationally hollow) Union of Belarus and Russia.

At the same time, Simonenko's references to Soviet restorationism involved two sharp departures from the CPRF's approach to that goal. On one hand, he broadened the scope of Marxist-Leninist revivalism to include repeated evocations of "proletarian internationalism" as well as praise for the Soviet custom of holding frequent "international meetings of communist and workers' parties" on issues of common interest. On the other hand, he extolled this role of the Union of Communist Parties-CPSU.⁶⁷ Oleg S. Shenin, the Soviet communist party's last organizational secretary, founded the CPU-CPSU in March 1993 to serve as the nucleus of a reconstituted CPSU. However, he and the CPRF leadership were in fact barely concealed rivals, with Shenin's group aligned with the radical Russian Communist Workers' Party on many political and ideological questions.⁶⁸

At first glance, Simonenko's outspoken support for what sounded like Soviet-style proletarian internationalism smacked of unreconstructed old thinking. But

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it may also be understood as a conscious attempt by the Ukrainian communist leader to avoid guilt by association with Zyuganov's Great Russian ethno-cultural exceptionalism. In other words, upholding the banner of internationalism was one way for the CPU to straddle the fence between two equally virulent if politically antithetical forms of ethnocentrism, one espoused by Zyuganov and the other by Ukraine's anti-Russian nationalists.

There is yet another way to interpret Simonenko's brand of internationalism, particularly his interest in "international communist meetings of communist and workers' parties." In his report to the Third CPU Congress, he was presumably alluding to the type of international communist meetings that had taken place during the Brezhnev era. But at those meetings of ruling and non-ruling communist parties the unanimity rule had prevailed. In fact, that de facto veto power, particularly as exercised during the prolonged negotiations leading to the pan-European communist summit conference in June 1976, had enabled the Euro-communist-autonomist entente of the Italian, French, Romanian, and Yugoslav parties to win the day vis-à-vis Moscow on a number of key issues. The 1976 pan-European communist party conference signaled the triumph of "sovereign communism." It is thus likely that what the CPU leadership really had in mind was not the resurrection of the old Soviet Union but a new kind of eastern Slavic union in which the parity and sovereignty of each member state would be guaranteed.

The mid-July 1998 issue of the CPRF's *Pravda* published two articles dealing with Ukraine that lend credence to the above speculation. The first, which appeared on the front page, explicitly criticized the CPU faction in the Rada for going along with the ratification of the spring 1997 Russian-Ukrainian Treaty signed by Yeltsin and Kuchma, (a step that the Duma had thus far declined to take). According to the *Pravda* commentator, the Ukrainian comrades' support for ratification was a "tactical error" on the grounds (again spelled out) that the treaty delimited the Russian-Ukrainian border, thereby complicating the eventual reunification of the two states.⁶⁹ These passages appeared in a piece that not only hailed the union of Belarusian and Russian enterprises and cities "of the red belt," and quoted Zyuganov as saying that Russia was the "chief integrating center" of the union. The other article, on an inside page but even more cutting, contained a veiled admonition to the CPU to follow the path of their distant predecessors who had chosen, in 1918, to become an autonomous formation within the Russian Communist Party (bolshevik) rather than a separate (*osobaya*) formation.⁷⁰

Here an important caveat is in order. While both *Pravda* and *Pravda Rossii* are officially designated CPRF newspapers, neither falls under direct control of the party's Presidium—in sharp contrast to former Soviet practice. The ideological secretary, Alexander A. Kravets, has responsibility for day-to-day oversight of the party press, but the various items published under individual bylines reflect only the opinions of the journalists who write them.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the author of any given article doubtless expresses the views of the proto-faction within the CPRF with which he or she identifies. With regard to the specific *Pravda* pieces cited

above, we may assume that they represented the thinking of the Zyuganov circle of nationalists as well as some of the Marxist-Leninist revivalists.

All the same, it may be inferred from the criticism and innuendoes contained in the above-mentioned *Pravda* articles that for Simonenko proletarian internationalism and international communist meetings were code words for “sovereign communism” rather than reintegration into a Moscow-dominated eastern Slavic state. The CPU’s stance on the sensitive issue of Ukrainian language usage tends to further corroborate this view. At the CPU congresses, delegates spoke at their own discretion in either Ukrainian or Russian, while in the Rada the communist deputies alternately used both languages. For instance, Simonenko would deliver a speech one day in Russian, the next day in Ukrainian.⁷²

The CPU Faction in the Ukrainian Rada

The CPU turned out to be the front-runner in the March 1998 elections to the *Verkhovna Rada*. Much to the surprise of many observers, the communists won more than 24 percent of the party-list vote, outpolling by some 15 percent their nearest competitors (the Rukh nationalists and the Moroz Socialists garnered some 9.5 and 8.5 percent of the votes respectively, with all of the others falling below 5.5 percent). However, although the elections were conducted according to procedures similar to those in effect in Russia since autumn 1993, a 4 percent rather than a 5 percent threshold was required to qualify for a share of the 225 seats based on proportional representation. This turned out to be an important distinction. Whereas in the 1995 Russian Duma elections only four parties, totaling about 50 percent of the vote, broke the 5 percent barrier, in the 1998 Ukrainian contest eight parties, with some 66 percent of the total vote, reached the 4 percent threshold (although only five won more than 5 percent). Therefore, in contrast to the CPRF, which with 22.3 percent of the votes received 99 of the 225 seats allocated on the basis of proportional representation, the CPU with more than 24.5 percent of the party-list vote received only 84 seats in the analogous distribution.

Nevertheless, when the new parliament convened, the CPU faction numbered 119 as a result of communist seats won in single-member districts and the adhesion of several deputies elected as independents. Moreover, the same overall correlation between Communist Party leadership organs and parliamentary factions held true in Ukraine as in Russia. Thus, fifteen of the eighteen members of the CPU Presidium and Secretariat appointed at the party’s October 1997 congress and eighteen of twenty-five obkom first secretaries were elected deputies in the March 1998 Ukrainian vote for the new Rada, with more than one-third of the 139 full members of the Central Committee also holding that position.⁷³ In considering these numbers one should bear in mind that there are, relative to total population, more national-level deputies in Ukraine than in Russia (the parliaments of both number 450 seats) and fewer territorial units (27 Ukrainian regions compared to 89 in Russia).

At the same time, there was a cardinal difference between the communist parliamentary factions in Russia and Ukraine. In contrast to the Duma’s left-wing groups, which might be described as having a molecular structure, insofar as they

comprised proto-factions within factions, in the Rada as constituted after the spring 1998 elections the various party groups could be compared with billiard balls. For the most part they were self-contained and mutually exclusive units. Thus, while the CPU and socialist factions entered the newly elected Rada as potential allies on many legislative issues, they remained clearly differentiated from one another in terms of organizational loyalty. This had not been the case in the previous Rada, in office from 1994 to 1998. With all deputies elected in 1994 from single-member districts and the CPU only recently reconstituted, there was less central communist coordination of individual candidacies and less cohesiveness in the subsequently formed CPU faction in the Rada. This was illustrated

“The trauma of the battle for the speakership, despite the relatively successful outcome for the Left, seems to have had a sobering effect on the CPU.”

by the divisions that developed among the CPU deputies during the June 1996 deliberations and voting on the new constitution of Ukraine.

To return to the Rada elected in 1998, the Socialist-Peasant Party bloc numbered 35, while the anti-Kuchma “Hromada” group led by former prime minister Pavlo I. Lazarenko had 39 members.

The four center-right factions had 185 deputies, including many who had run as independents in single-member districts. And Sumy regional leader Natalia M. Vitrenko’s maverick Marxist-Leninist formation, the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, had 17 members. With 36 deputies still listing no affiliation, the Supreme Rada convened on 14 May 1998 with a total of 431 accredited lawmakers (that number increased to 441 by mid-July as various legal disputes over individual election district results were resolved).⁷⁴

The stage was thus set for the saga of the Rada’s speakership election. In a confrontation involving presidential ambitions and personal vindictiveness superimposed upon the left-center-right political cleavages, there were twenty separate sets of nominations and ballots over a period of eight weeks. Since an absolute majority of 226 votes (of the legally prescribed 450 parliamentary deputies) was required, the center-right deputies from Rukh, the Greens, former President Leonid Kravchuk’s United Social Democrats, and Kuchma’s People’s Democrats boycotted many of the successive ballots in an effort to block the election of a leftist speaker. Above all, they opposed the reelection of Moroz, who was poised to challenge Kuchma in the autumn 1999 presidential race.

Thus, amid emotional polemics, belligerent outbursts, and accusations of vote-buying on all sides, one after another leading contender failed to achieve the necessary majority although Simonenko mustered a high of 221 votes (twice); former President Kravchuk, 193; Lazarenko, 177; Moroz, 212; and two People’s Democratic Party candidates, Ivan S. Plyushch and Alexander M. Bandurka, 205 and 222, respectively.⁷⁵ In the end, Alexander M. Tkachenko—a member of the

Socialist-allied Peasant Party, former deputy speaker under Moroz, and Soviet Ukraine's last minister of agriculture, was elected with 232 votes on 7 July. Although positioned on the left, Tkachenko was reportedly a pragmatist rather than an ideologically committed leader in the manner of Moroz, not to mention Simonenko.⁷⁶ In a further jolt to the center-right, the post of first deputy speaker went to Simonenko's deputy and CPU second secretary, Adam I. Martinyuk by a vote of 270 to 23, while on the same ballot United Social Democratic leader Viktor V. Medvedchuk was chosen deputy speaker.

The trauma of the battle for the speakership, despite the relatively successful outcome for the left, seems to have had a sobering effect on the CPU, judging from Simonenko's report to a Central Committee plenum on 11 July 1998. The first secretary reflected on the party's need to improve its analytical grasp of the proper tasks to pursue under existing political conditions, to extend its influence among grassroots workers and to support their mounting spontaneous strikes, to recruit more young people into its ranks while carefully reviewing the roster of current members, and to refine its coalition-building methods in the Supreme Rada.⁷⁷ In the latter regard, Simonenko cautioned against undue tactical compromises with the bourgeois parties but also had some harsh words for the CPU's Socialist allies: "In the documents of the last . . . congress, the SPU says nothing about the class contradictions in present-day Ukraine and does not set forth the goal of a struggle against capitalism for socialism and Soviet power." Rather, he continued derisively, the Socialists backed a broad coalition of variously oriented forces "for the joint creation of a strong, economically developed society where each honest person will feel free and comfortable." Not only that, but they look upon this goal as the "the Ukrainian national idea."⁷⁸ All of this, he concluded, bespoke either "naivete or deception," either of which boded ill for a serious working relationship with the Socialists in the newly elected Rada.

An accompanying plenum resolution asserted that "only the ouster of the [anti-people's] regime from power by constitutional means, . . . [and] the return of the country to the socialist course of development can save Ukraine from a catastrophe." And it called for "irreconcilability toward bourgeois ideology and conciliationism, uncompromising opposition to the slightest deviation from the norms of party unity, . . . single-mindedness in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society, [and] readiness to give to the party all one's strength and if need be also one's life."⁷⁹

Simonenko, however, seemed to have a much more realistic understanding than the resolution suggested of the daunting tasks that lay ahead, particularly if the CPU was to build an effective parliamentary coalition. But the acid test of the Communist Party's political acumen would be its ability (or lack thereof) to reach an agreement with Moroz's SPU on a common opposition candidate for the rapidly approaching presidential elections in October 1999. On the latter score there seemed, as of autumn 1998, to be some grounds for optimism, given the broad public respect Moroz had garnered as Rada speaker from 1994 until spring 1998 and Simonenko's restraint, however cautiously formulated, regarding the prospect of a Russian-Ukrainian union.

* * * *

In view of the diversity of political profiles detailed in this article, the likelihood is dim indeed that the post-Soviet communist movements in Russia and Ukraine will ever voluntarily reunite into a cohesive, disciplined organization on the pattern of the former CPSU. They cannot even manage to agree on a common line of action within their own national borders. As we have seen, the apparent unity of the Communist Party of Ukraine is a result of its regional and ethnic compactness and its rivalry with the center-left Socialist Party of Ukraine rather than to any inherent uniformity of views in the ranks of the CPU itself. The emergence of a charismatic demagogue capable of imposing dictatorial rule on one or another eastern Slavic state cannot, unfortunately, be precluded. And in that sad eventuality, if recent developments in Belarus are any indication, self-serving elements within the communist as well as other political movements would doubtless bandwagon to the side of such a figure. But in the more likely case of the gradual economic integration of the former Soviet Slavic republics on a pattern resembling the European Union, we can anticipate their respective communist parties to exhibit the same uneasy “unity in diversity” that characterized the international communist movement in the last decades of the Soviet Union. For—as the tempestuous history of the USSR’s relations with its East European clients suggests—having once been masters in their own house, there is no reason to expect a communist party in any eastern Slavic state, whether in opposition or in power, to willingly relinquish its sovereignty.

NOTES

1. For an in-depth treatment of these developments, see Joan Barth Urban and Valery D. Solovei, *Russia’s Communists at the Crossroads* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), chs. 2–3. Gennady Zyuganov, at the April 1997 party congress, claimed 540,000 members for the CPRF (*IV Sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Moscow, 1997], 33) although other ranking members of the CPRF Presidium estimate total party membership as ranging anywhere between 500,000 and 550,000 members; J. B. Urban’s conversations at the State Duma in Moscow, November 1998. The CPRF had long since established party committees in all eighty-nine territorial units of the Russian Federation, while Zyuganov reported that by 1997 there were 27,000 primary party organizations. *Pravda Rossii*, 15 April 1997, 1.

2. See Urban and Solovei, *Russia’s Communists*, 55–60 and 98–105. When Nikolai G. Bindiukov, CPRF secretary in charge of international ties, reviewed *Russia’s Communists at the Crossroads*, he did not dispute the authors’ depiction of these proto-factions; see Byndyukov and Petr Lopata, “Put vybran, neobkhodimo uspešno ego proiti,” *Dialog* 10 (October 1997): 41–48.

3. Chapter 6, *Russia’s Communists*, passim.

4. *Programma Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Moscow: Informpechat, 1995).

5. This was suggested by the April 1993 referendum in which, with a voter turnout of over 64 percent, about 59 percent expressed support for Yeltsin’s leadership.

6. *Russia’s Communists*, 133–34.

7. *Ibid.*, 149–59.

8. This view was articulated with particular forcefulness by CPRF first deputy chairman, Valentin A. Kuptsov, at a central committee plenum in August 1996; *Russia’s Com-*

munists, 181–83.

9. Text in *IV Sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii: 19-20 apreliia 1997 goda (Materialy I dokumenty)* (Moscow, 1997), 74–92

10. “Rossiia budet velikoi i sotsialisticheskoi: Politicheskyy otchet Tsentralnogo Komiteta IV sezdu Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Doklad tov. Zyuganova G.A.,” in *ibid.*, 7–36.

11. For example, Ivan I. Melnikov replaced Aleksandr A. Shabanov as deputy CPRF chairman, but both men were reportedly Marxist reformers. Nikolai G. Binkyukov, a Marxist-Leninist revivalist, was shifted from the position of secretary in charge of ideology to secretary in charge of international linkages with other left-wing parties, in which capacity he reported directly to Melnikov. One of Zyuganov’s speechwriters, Aleksandr K. Frol’ov, was elevated to the Presidium, while reserve General Mikhail S. Surkov, a figure with no distinct political profile, was moved from the Presidium to the Secretariat to oversee party ties with the military. The new members of the Presidium are listed in *ibid.*, 113–17.

12. Valerii Solovei, “Kommunisticheskaya i natsionalisticheskaya oppozitsiia v kontekste postkommunisticheskoi transformatsii Rossii,” in *Rossiia Politicheskaya*, ed. Liliia Shevtsova (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998), 195–272 at 248–49.

13. *Ibid.*, 254.

14. Urban and Solovei, *Russia’s Communists*, 50, 138–39, 147. In the Russian Duma, the law allows a deputy to employ between one and five assistants. The CPRF has determined that each communist deputy would have five assistants, one in Moscow and the other four in the regions, all of whom have the right to free public transport, rooms in the parliament or local administrative buildings, access to state working documents, and so forth. The assistants in the localities double in effect as party officials, acting as raikom, gorkom, obkom, or reskom secretaries. With their salaries paid from the state budget (which in 1998 allotted some 3,000 new rubles per month for this purpose to each deputy, or the equivalent of about \$500 per month before the mid-August 1998 devaluation of the ruble), the 800-odd assistants to the communist deputies form a key component of the organizational core of the party. Since 1996, the CPRF has had a separate building in Moscow to house its Central Committee offices, fully equipped with modern communications facilities and even a small adjoining hotel. However, given the large number of Central Committee members who are also Duma deputies, top party leadership meetings continue to be held in the parliament building as a matter of convenience. This information is based on my conversations with ranking CPRF Duma deputies in Moscow, November 1998.

By way of concrete illustration, according to discussions by Urban and Solovei at the CPRF’s Ivanovo region office in June 1996 and December 1997, the secretary directly in charge of the obkom office was also the assistant to her electoral district’s Duma deputy (and obkom first secretary), Vladimir Ilich Tikhonov. As of December 1997, the obkom secretary in Ivanovo received a monthly state salary of 1,300,000 old rubles (about \$215 at the then rate of exchange); she then turned over 200,000 rubles from her salary to the CPRF. During my informal conversations at the Ukrainian Rada in May 1998, deputies and their assistants described a roughly similar situation, although not in such detail. In contrast to the CPRF, the CPU headquarters in Kiev, located in a small, cramped, and sparsely furnished two-story building in the old city, appeared to be ill-equipped to serve as the standby nerve center of a mass nationwide political organization.

15. Four days before the first round of the 1996 presidential election, the Ivanovo obkom office was a beehive of activity by volunteers who distributed photocopies of campaign fliers published in the central pro-CPRF press (*Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Pravda*) and posters hand made out of glossy, creatively doctored up left-overs from the pro-Yeltsin “Our Home Is Russia” 1995 Duma race.

16. Urban and Solovei, *Russia’s Communists*, 159–62.

17. For the composition of the CPRF’s leadership organs, see *IV Sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 108–17. The author compared this to the persons listed

in a breakdown of the Duma fraction memberships made available by a CPRF deputy in December 1997.

18. At the Fourth CPRF Congress in April 1997, a total of 173 Duma deputies were identified as having been elected on the CPRF ticket (the increase since 1995 being due to victories in various by-elections); see the stenographic account of the Fourth Congress in *Kommunist* 4 (July-August 1997): 102–05. Comparing that list to the breakdown of Duma faction memberships as of December 1997 (see note 17), one can establish that the CPRF “loaned” seventeen deputies to the People’s Power group and fourteen to the Agrarians.

19. For these figures, see the unpublished paper by Richard Sakwa, “Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia,” 1997, 6, 17.

20. This judgment is based on J. B. Urban’s conversations with ranking CPRF Duma deputies in Moscow, November 1998. The Duma passed the 1998 budget in the final reading by 252 to 129 with two abstentions; *RFE/RL Newslines*, 2, 43, Part I, 4 March 1998.

21. *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 1, No. 135, Part I, 9 October 1997.

22. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, No. 140, Part I, 16 October 1997.

23. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, No. 144, Part I, 22 October 1997.

24. In Ivanovo, for example, the secretary in charge of the obkom office was able to reach fourteen out of a total of twenty-five raikom secretaries, eight of whom opposed postponement of the no-confidence vote and six supported it; my conversations at the Ivanovo obkom office in December 1997.

25. On Kuptsov’s stance, see his interview in *Pravda Rossii*, 3–9 June 1998, 1–2.

26. Tatyana A. Astrakhankina, Teimuraz G. Avaliani, Albert M. Makashov, and Leonid N. Petrovsky.

27. “K Kommunistam Rossii,” *Duel*, (March 1998); text republished in *Sovetskaia Pravda: Obsor oppozitsionnykh izdaniy*, (1998): 1–2.

28. See *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, 6 April 1998, as cited in *Raznogolositsa*, 6–12 April 1998, 61.

29. Reported by S. Aksenov, *Kommersant Daili*, 16 April 1998, as cited in *Raznogolositsa*, 13–19 April, 101.

30. *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 21 April 1998, as cited in *Raznogolositsa*, 4 (1998): 127. CPRF Duma speaker, Gennady N. Seleznev, did not take part in the vote, while Yuri D. Maslyukov and Oleg A. Shenkarev (who was soon to leave the CPRF) voted in favor of Kirienko and Dar’ya A. Mitina, the youngest member of the CPRF faction, abstained, reportedly out of solidarity with Kirienko’s youth; J. B. Urban’s conversations with ranking CPRF Duma deputies in Moscow, November 1998.

31. *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 77, Part I, 22 April 1998.

32. Quoted in *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 75, Part I, 20 April 1998.

33. For the text of the Central Committee resolution, see *Pravda Rossii*, 29 April–5 May 1998, 1.

34. See, for example, G. Cherkasov, *Kommersant Daili*, 28 April 1998, as reported in *Raznogolositsa*, 40.

35. Estimates regarding the number of communists who broke ranks to vote for Kirienko ranged from Zyuganov’s own figure of twelve (*Moskovsye Novosti* 16 [1998]) to a figure of some twenty-five to forty (*Argumenty i Fakty* 18 [1998]); see *Raznogolositsa* 5 (1998): 41. Since the vote was by secret ballot, all of these figures are the result of speculation. Still the differences in the figures may relate to the distinction between those deputies elected on the communist ticket who are not “card-carrying” CPRF members and those who are both CPRF deputies and party members. The former are not obliged to observe party discipline although they normally choose to do so; information provided during my conversations with ranking CPRF Duma deputies in Moscow, November 1998. Prominent communist deputies who admitted to voting for Kirienko include Gennady N. Seleznev, Yuri D. Maslyukov, and Duma deputy speaker Svetlana P. Goryacheva. Zyuganov’s long-time associate but noncommunist member of the CPRF faction, Alekei Podberezkin, also voted in favor of Kirienko.

36. See, for example, Svetlana Goryacheva’s interview in *Pravda*, 9 July 1998, 1–2, in

which she recounted the physical and psychic stress to which she was subjected because of her breach of discipline. Her reasons for taking that step were similar to those cited above by Seleznev in his mid-April interview on Russian Public Television. The capstone of her interview, however, was her delineation of her public policy positions: preferential credit and tax subsidies favoring domestic Russian products over foreign imports; government regulation of energy prices; progressive taxation; free medical care, education, and so forth. These policies may be considered social democratic but certainly not communist in character.

37. Reported to journalists by Zyuganov on 23 May 1998; see *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 98, Part I, 25 May 1998.

38. Report by Zyuganov to a CPRF plenum on 20 June 1998; see *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 118, Part I, 22 June 1998.

39. Podbereykin's open letter to the CPRF leadership is quoted in Anatolii Baranov, "Ne vypast by iz istorii," *Pravda piat*, 23 May 1998.

40. *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 130, Part I, 9 July 1998.

41. Quoted in *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 119, Part I, 23 June 1998.

42. *Ibid.*

43. For the text of Maslyukov's letter and conditions, see *Pravda*, 28–29 July 1998, 1.

44. *Pravda*, 24 July 1998, 1.

45. This disclosure appeared in *Pravda*, 28–29 July 1998, 1.

46. "Reshenie—za plenumom TsK KPRF," *Pravda*, 30 July 1998, 1.

47. *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 2, No. 141, Part I, 24 July 1998.

48. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, No. 167, Part I, 31 August 1998.

49. The breakdown by party faction of the first vote was reported by *Reuters*, 31 August 1998, and reprinted in *Johnson's Russia List*, #2338, 1 September 1998.

50. For the breakdown by party faction of the second vote, see *New York Times*, 8 September 1998, A12.

51. At the Third CPU Congress in October 1997, chairman Petr Simonenko put the party membership at 140,000 and the number of primary party organizations at 5,172, of which 1,375 were in workplaces. *Komunist* 42 (October 1997): 7–8.

52. "Osnovy vnutrennei i vneshnei politiki Ukrainy (Proykt Sotsialisticheskoy Partii Ukrainy): odobreny na zaklyuchitelnom egape VI sezda SPU 13 iyunia 1998 goda," published in the SPU weekly, *Tovarishch* 26 (June 1998) 1, 3–4. Cf. *Programa Sotialistichnoi Partii Ukraini* (Kyiv, 1995). The 1995 program was written in part by the dogmatic Marxist-Leninist economist, Natalia M. Vitrenko (who was later expelled from the SPU), which accounts for the more orthodox tone of the latter document.

53. See my interview with Vladimir V. Kizima, SPU secretary in charge of theoretical analysis and strategy, Kyiv, 26 May 1998. The membership of the SPU numbered about 90,000 in September 1991 but dropped to 30,000 when the CPU was formed in March 1993.

54. *Partiia Kommunistov Vozrozhdaetsya: Dokumenty i materialy vtorogo etapa vseukrainskoi konferentsii kommunistov i sezda kommunisticheskoi partii Ukrainy, 19 iyunia 1993 goda* (Kherson, Ukraine: 1995), *passim*.

55. *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Ukrainy: Preniata II (XXX) sezdom Kompartii Ukrainy, 12 marta 1995 goda* (Kiev, 1995), *passim*.

56. For the latter limitation on freedom and "pluralism," see *ibid.*, 31.

57. I had access to the unpublished stenogram of the Second CPU Congress at the party's headquarters in Kiev, 1–2 June 1998; for the above, see cassette 4, side A, 5–9.

58. *Ibid.*, cassette 2, side B, 38–47.

59. *Ibid.*, cassette 5, side A, 1–4.

60. *Ibid.*, cassette 3, side B, 1–3.

61. *Ibid.*, cassette 7, side A, 8–12.

62. Text in *Komunist* 42 (October 1997): 3–8 at 6.

63. *Ibid.*, 8. Simonenko's tolerance of diversity is also suggested by the reportedly coop-

erative nature of his dealings with the Socialist leaders, the results of which, however, are hampered by his inability to persuade more than 30 percent of the CPU to follow him in this regard.

64. The final vote, taken under the government's threat of a popular referendum that would have undermined the parliament's prerogatives and prestige, was 315 in favor, 36 against, 12 abstentions, and 30 nonvoters at a time when the communists numbered 87 out of a total of 415 deputies; a two-thirds majority of the 450 potential seats in the Supreme Rada (301 votes) was required for ratification of the new constitution. For details, see Kataryna Wolczuk, "The Politics of Constitution Making in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 118–38 at 128, 134.

65. Text in *Komunist* 42 (October 1997): 5.

66. *Ibid.*, 7.

67. *Ibid.*, 6.

68. *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads*, 110–16. The depth of the CPRF-Shenin enmity was confirmed during my mid-1997 interviews with Shenin at his party headquarters (27 June 1997) and Nikolai G. Bindyukov, CPRF secretary in charge of links with other leftist parties, in State Duma office (30 June 1997). Bindyukov described how Shenin's UCP-CPSU had sponsored an international meeting of communist parties just days before the CPRF's Fourth Congress and then Shenin himself had refused to attend either the CPRF-sponsored gathering of guests from eighty-two foreign parties the day after the Fourth Congress, let alone the congress itself.

69. Vladimir Dekterev, "Porozn' my obrecheny pogibat'," *Pravda*, 14–15 July 1998, 1. CPRF deputies, including those among the top leadership, are divided on the issue of the recreation of a unitary eastern Slavic state, with some insisting on commitment to this goal and others conceding that any attempt to reunite Ukraine and Russia would lead to civil war in Ukraine; my conversations with ranking CPRF Duma deputies in Moscow, November 1998.

70. Viktor Drozd, "Inogo net puti . . .", *ibid.*, 2.

71. Information provided by Ivan I. Melnikov, CPRF deputy chairman, on 13 November 1998 in the office of the Duma Committee on Education and Science. Both Melnikov and Nikolai G. Bindyukov (the latter in a conversation on 12 November 1998) cited one particular case in which the CPRF Presidium voted against publication of a controversial article (dealing with the divided Belarusian communist movement); but the *Pravda* editorial board nonetheless published the article.

72. This assessment is based on my reading of the unedited stenographic account of the Second CPU Congress and my observations of Rada sessions in late May and early June 1998.

73. The new CPU Presidium and Secretariat members are named in *Komunist* 42 (October 1997): 1; the composition of the Rada elected in spring 1998 is listed, by faction affiliation, in *Tovarishch* 22 (May 1998): 2. For the election of CPU obkom secretaries as deputies, see *Komunist* 32 (August 1998): 3. The CPU faction rose from 119 to 120 deputies by late July, as local electoral disputes were resolved.

74. See *Tovarishch* 22 (May 1998): 2.

75. I observed the speakership election process from the balcony of the parliament during the week of 24 May; ongoing accounts of the prolonged crisis may be found in the widely respected Kiev daily, *Den*.

76. Olga Len and Vladimir Solotorev, "Rebyenok parlamentskoi blokady," *Den*, 11 July 1998, 4.

77. Text in *Komunist* 29 (July 1998): 3–4.

78. *Ibid.*, 3.

79. Text in *ibid.*, 5.