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Gennady Zyuganov as Politician and Ideologist

The reestablishment of the CPRF and its success in the Duma elections of 1995 focused universal attention on its leader, Gennady Zyuganov. The 1996 presidential campaign transformed him into a political figure of national importance. In all opinion polls the previous year he was invariably listed as one of the four or five most influential politicians in Russia. His position and importance in the Russian Communist movement was the result of his role as an ideologist, one aspiring to map out new ideological terrain not only on social questions but in the sphere of nation-building and state structure as well.

I first became acquainted with Zyuganov in late 1990 at one of several meetings of leaders of the Russian Communist Party with people's deputies of the RSFSR and party activists. I was drawn to these conferences by a historian's curiosity as well as my great concern for the fate of our country in my capacity as a people's deputy, a position to which I had just been elected. It was at that time, in the winter of 1990–91, that destructive processes in the party and the country were starting to build up quickly. Top leaders of the Russian Communist Party, who had lost any illusions about perestroika, progressive

reform, and the new thinking much earlier than those in the Central Committee of the CPSU, still were uncertain how to proceed. Almost all the leaders of the RSFSR Communist Party were already in opposition to Gorbachev, but they were even more opposed to Yeltsin and the "democrats" around him, who were in power in the Russian Federation. What to do? How to conduct oneself in this two-sided oppositional position? No one had the answers to these questions.

The second time I met Zyuganov was on a day quite memorable for all of us, August 19, 1991 (the first day of the attempted coup against Gorbachev). We met in a mountain park at Kislovodsk. It turned out that we were vacationing in neighboring sanatoria. Our conversations of course turned on the events in Moscow, which were a complete surprise for both of us. During the next few days, up to August 23, we continued to encounter one another in Kislovodsk. On the morning of August 24 I flew to Moscow for a session of the Supreme Soviet (in which I was a people's deputy).

The impression I had of Zyuganov was of a strong, energetic, and well-educated man. He was at ease in conversation and tended to listen rather than try to impose his point of view. In his way of talking and addressing others, there was none of the self-importance one so often encountered among party officials. He was often harsh in his articles or speeches of that time, but not in conversation. Even later, when Zyuganov attended the first congresses of our Socialist Party or when we met at congresses of people's deputies of the Russian Federation, he was calm, even cheerful; I never saw him angry or rude. Somehow or other he easily withstood criticism from his rivals or his colleagues—something especially notable at the sessions of the Constitutional Court.

Zyuganov's biography is not rich and eventful. He was born at the end of 1944 in the village of Mymrino, in the Khotynets district of Oryol province. "I come from a family of three generations of teachers," he has written. "Some were party members, some were not, but there were two special things: everyone in my family worked from morning till night; and practically everyone took part in the defense of the Fatherland. Many of them didn't come back; my father lost his leg at Sevastopol; and none of them were ever investigated or put on trial" (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 11, 1993).

In one of his interviews a third feature of the Zyuganov family was noted: They were pure Russian, "pure as spring water."

"In our village the cock's crow reached three provinces—Oryol, Bryansk, and Kaluga. It was the edge of the mixed zone of forest and steppeland. Beyond us stretched the forests of Bryansk. It's the area between the Oka and Volga rivers, the area from which the Russian people came" (Zyuganov, *Drama vlasti*, Moscow, 1993, p. 3).

In his family's tradition the Great Patriotic War was the main event. The fighting hit the Oryol region hard, both when it went from west to east (during the German invasion) and when it went from east to west (as the invaders were driven out). After completing school, Zyuganov taught for a year, then took up studies at the physics and mathematics department of the Oryol Teachers Institute. After his second year he was drafted into the army, and served in an intelligence unit dealing with radiological, chemical, and bacteriological warfare. In 1966, while in the army, he joined the CPSU. After graduating from the Oryol Teachers Institute, Zyuganov briefly taught mathematics there, but party work occupied much of his time and soon became his profession.

His party career went in a perfectly straight line: he was first secretary of a district committee of the Komsomol (Young Communist League) in Oryol, then first secretary of the Komsomol city committee, then first secretary of the Komsomol for all of Oryol province; subsequently he became second secretary of the CPSU's city committee in Oryol, after which for nearly a decade (1974–1983) he was head of the propaganda and agitation department of the party's Oryol province committee. During that time he graduated from the Academy of Social Sciences under the CPSU Central Committee, defending his dissertation in philosophy. The purpose of that academy was to train cadre for the Central Committee apparatus, and in 1983 Zyuganov began work in Moscow as an instructor in the Central Committee's Ideological Department. He was a diligent worker and soon became head of one of the sectors in the Ideological Department.

In 1989, four years into the Gorbachev era, he was appointed to a high post in the Central Committee apparatus: deputy head of the Ideological Department. The head of the department was Aleksandr Yavovlev, a secretary of the Central Committee and at that time a close ally of Gorbachev. By then Zyuganov had traveled widely within the USSR. He drafted memoranda for the Central Committee analyzing the situation in Central Asia, in the Baltic region, and in the

Caucasus. These were the years of perestroika, which the Central Committee apparatus accepted without any enthusiasm.

> I saw everything from the inside, wrote memoranda to the higher-ups in which I asserted that because of what Gorbachev had initiated perestroika was turning into 'perestrelka' (a shooting match). For which I was reprimanded, including by the Politburo. Specifically I wrote that there was going to be war in Tadzhikistan and in the Caucasus, that there would be serious upheavals in other regions, that prices would rise to ten times their former level . . . as a result of the last-named item Gorbachev became highly allergic to me. Of course, our country was ripe for reform. Even Kosygin, back in 1965, had begun some. . . . But for reform to succeed there needed to be a capable team in charge, a clear program, a refined methodology, and powerful levers of information that would make it possible for the people to participate in the reforms. In addition, the social gains of our society needed to be preserved, everything that our citizens had suffered to achieve. Gorbachev had none of that and did none of that. His talents had not shone brilliantly in his less responsible posts; as the highest leader of the state he simply fell on his face.
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> (*Delovoi mir*, April 8, 1995)

As a rule the people who worked in the Central Committee's Ideology Department and International Department were quite well trained and well informed. But discipline in the CC was stricter perhaps than in the army. Initiative and independence were not encouraged. Thus, for many Central Committee apparatchiks the establishment of a separate Communist Party of the Russian Federation in 1990 was doubly important; it opened up possibilities for independent political work.

Zyuganov was elected a member of the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party and Central Committee secretary in charge of ideology. The apparatus of this new party was small, as were its possibilities. It was at this time that Zyuganov began developing his new conception of Russia's path to socialism, in which the issue of a national-patriotic orientation played an important part. In late 1990, as we have said, the crisis in the USSR intensified rapidly—an economic cri-

sis interwoven with a crisis of power and ideology. Gorbachev's authority plummeted. There was a mounting wave of criticism of the "center," including from regional party leaders. Several publications by Aleksandr Yakovlev sought to reply to these criticisms. In one interview Yakovlev commented on "the danger from the leadership and apparatus of the Russian Communist Party for the implementation of perestroika along the indicated course." On May 7, 1991, the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published an "Open Letter" from Zyuganov to Yakovlev "in regard to his recent statements and not only those." Zyuganov's letter, to which the newspaper added the flashy headline "Architect Beside the Ruins," attracted quite a bit of interest and was widely discussed in all party organizations and government structures.

Although Zyuganov's letter referred only to Yakovlev, who was then a senior adviser to President Gorbachev, everyone understood that the president was its real target. Neither Gorbachev nor Yakovlev undertook to answer Zyuganov publicly. Several newspapers did try to answer him, but they were not very convincing, for none of them spoke of perestroika's "successes." The main argument in one newspaper was that Yakovlev, "one of our best and brightest minds," was being attacked by "a petty functionary no one has ever heard of, who by some incredible chance has risen to the top in the scandalously established hierarchy of leaders of the Russian Communist Party."

The political scientist Aleksei Kiva agreed: "Yes, we are standing in the ruins, but they are the ruins of a totalitarian, inhuman, antidemocratic system."

"The architect faces the task of reconstructing a prison as a temple. How can this be done without destroying the prison walls and ceilings? Marxism-Leninism itself teaches that in order to construct a new social order, it is necessary first to destroy the old one" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 22, 1991). This was a peculiar logic. A prison could be reconstructed to serve as a temple without destroying its walls and ceilings, just as under Stalin many churches were turned into storehouses for grain—or into prisons.

At that time, however, Zyuganov kept the pressure on, intensifying his criticism. This was when he drafted a public protest against perestroika, which was published in July 1991 under the title "A Word to the People." It was cosigned by a number of conservative, pro-Stalin, and "patriotic" Communists. Even today Zyuganov considers the

"Word to the People" a work of great importance. He included the full text of it in his book *The Drama of Power* (*Drama vlasti*).

Its concluding section states in part: "We are appealing to representatives of all professions and social classes, all ideologies and faiths, all parties and movements. . . . Let's wake up, come to our senses, and stand up, young and old, for our country. . . . We are starting a movement of all the people, calling on all who recognize the terrible disaster that has befallen our country: join our ranks."

Few responded to this call. All sorts of appeals to the people were being made in June and July 1991 by dozens of politicians and political groups. Yeltsin, who on July 10 had been triumphantly proclaimed president of the RSFSR, issued many appeals to the people for support. Gorbachev appealed to CPSU members and to all Soviet citizens to support the party's new program (adopted in the summer of 1991) and the new union treaty. A month later the number of appeals increased manyfold. August 1991 had come.

The "Word to the People" was greeted with a flood of invective. Its authors were accused of provocation. For the most part they had no authority. Like Zyuganov, most were known only among relatively small circles. The text consists mostly of fiery accusations and emotional statements, rather than logical arguments or specific proposals. People held many different views on Russia's past history. It was no easy task for any one group to unite them under its leadership.

Later on, some political writers in the camp of the "democrats" made a connection between the "Word to the People" and the August coup attempt by the so-called State Committee for the State of Emergency. In August 1994 several CPRF newspapers published the "Word to the People" together with and alongside of Decree No. 1 of the State Committee. "Read the State Committee's action program calmly," wrote *Pravda Moskvy* (no. 3, 1994), "and tell us what there was in it that did not correspond to our country's best interests." This is a strange request. There were of course many tempting promises and reasonable recommendations in the State Committee's Decree No. 1. But who believed in promises by then? Hardly anyone was willing to follow Gennady Yanaev, Boris Pugo, and Valentin Pavlov as leaders. The State Committee took measures not only against the elected leadership of the Russian Federation (Yeltsin and his supporters) but also against the Russian Communist Party, toward whom all the top leaders of the CPSU, not just Yakovlev, had been hostile. The

Russian Federation's declaration of sovereignty was far more divisive for the Soviet Union than similar actions by Estonia, Georgia, or Armenia, but most of the Communist representatives in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR supported that declaration.

Zyuganov returned to Moscow from Kislovodsk in late August or early September. The Communist parties of the Soviet Union and the RSFSR had by then been outlawed and their offices ransacked, including of course Zyuganov's. He did not participate in any of the attempts begun then to establish new Communist parties, although he followed these efforts closely. In December 1991 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was dissolved, bringing with it the danger of a partial breakup of the Russian Federation. This prompted a number of politicians and public figures to form the Council of People's Patriotic Forces (Russian initials, SNPS, for Sovet Narodno-Patrioticheskikh Sil). People of many different views joined the Council—from Communists to some recently formed "councils of the nobility." Zyuganov was elected chairman of the SNPS. It had a variety of aims—to help patriots in prison, to intervene in various ways in defense of the national interests of the Russian state, and to defend socially weak groups in the population, especially the intelligentsia.

In the winter of 1991–92 Zyuganov could be found in attendance almost everywhere—at congresses of people's deputies of the RSFSR, at congresses of commodity producers, or entrepreneurs, at congresses of Russian writers. He also attended the first congress of the Socialist Party of Working People (of which I was a leader) and many conferences of the "Communists of Russia" group in the Russian Supreme Soviet (which met in the Russian White House).

To earn his living in this period, according to his own account, he compiled various reports, prognoses, and analytical memoranda. Many of these were sold to clients under various pen names. I have no doubt that such memoranda were professionally produced. People working for the CPSU Central Committee were taught how to do such things well. Confusion reigned at that time among many of the Russian Communists. They were accustomed to being in the ruling party and didn't know how to function as oppositionists. The new ruling groups and government organizations energetically recruited among former Communist cadre. At the beginning of 1991 no fewer than 300 people's deputies of the RSFSR considered themselves members of the Communist parliamentary group. At the end of that year

only 60 remained, and even they did not function as any sort of real opposition to the Yeltsin government. Many of them voted to grant Yeltsin emergency powers and to ratify the treaty dissolving the Soviet Union. The mood among people's deputies began to change during the spring of 1992, and by summer more than half the deputies were backing one or another opposition group.

At that time Zyuganov did a lot of work at the Russian Supreme Soviet and the Constitutional Court, but his main arena of activity in 1992 was with the large national-patriotic groups and associations that arose then. He took part in the First Congress of the Russian National Assembly (Russky Naordny Sobor), headed at that time by KGB General Aleksandr Sterligov. Three co-chairmen of the organization were elected: Gennady Zyuganov, the Siberian author Valentin Rasputin, and Pyotr Romanov, director of a major chemical complex in Krasnoyarsk. The documents of this organization included a call for the restoration of the Russian state with its 1914 borders and the elimination of autonomous non-Russian territorial units. Non-Russian nationalities should be assured of cultural autonomy only. Socialism was rejected. "Instead of the twin evils of 'savage capitalism' and utopian socialism, the Assembly (Sobor) chooses a 'third way,' the path of rationally combined administration, state regulation of the economy and market mechanisms, and the gradual transformation of property relations and all social institutions on the basis of national interests and priorities" (*Pravda*, June 16, 1992).

The Sobor addressed itself above all to the Russian population and could hardly expect that non-Russian nationalities of the RSFSR or the former USSR would support its program of creating a unitary state "on the foundation of Russian Orthodox values." The appeals of this Russian nationalist organization found little response even within the Russian population. No mass movement emerged to follow this group of would-be leaders.

In October 1992 Zyuganov helped found the National Salvation Front, which was more of a mass organization than the Sobor, with more radical methods of struggle. People's deputy Ilya Konstantinov was elected coordinator of the Front, and among its co-chairmen were Zyuganov, Mikhail Astafyev, Albert Makashov, Vladimir Isakov, and Sergei Baburin. Zyuganov also became a member of the editorial board of the newspaper *Den*, which in 1994 changed its name to

Zavtra. Also toward the end of 1992 Zyuganov joined the Organizing Committee for the Reestablishment of the Russian Communist Party.

In the preparations for the "Refoundation Congress" of the CPRF there was no discussion of who its future leader might be. Some members of the Organizing Committee thought the party head should be Valentin Kuptsov, who had been elected first secretary of the Central Committee of the CP RSFSR to replace Ivan Polozkov, when the latter resigned and in fact abandoned political activity. Kuptsov, however, proposed a collective leadership. The delegates didn't go along with his proposal. They were in a very radical mood, and on a motion by Albert Makashov they elected Zyuganov chairman of the CPRF. During the evening before the vote a number of Zyuganov supporters were busy urging the delegates to vote this way. But there was no contest. Zyuganov was elected almost unanimously, and Kuptsov became first deputy chairman. Since then Zyuganov's energies have been mainly devoted to the CPRF, which quickly became the strongest and most widely ramified political organization in Russia.

The October days in Moscow in 1993 were a serious test for the CPRF. Zyuganov and his party of course supported Khasbulatov and Rutskoi from the very beginning of the confrontation. But this support was not unqualified. Zyuganov insisted that the use of force by either side should be emphatically ruled out. He visited the White House many times. When "peace talks" began Zyuganov supported this initiative. None of the CPRF leaders took part in the demonstrations of October 2 and 3. On the contrary, on October 3 Zyuganov met with Khasbulatov in an attempt to persuade him to renounce any military move against the Kremlin, the Ostankino television tower, or any other strategic objective. Several times on October 3 Zyuganov spoke before audiences of many thousands, arguing that any foray from the White House would be used by the authorities as an excuse to bombard the building, disperse its defenders, and eradicate the surviving institutions of Soviet power in Russia. Zyuganov later said he had reliable information on this matter.

Anpilov's supporters and some of Zyuganov's allies in the National Salvation Front were too radically minded and would not listen to Zyuganov. General Albert Makashov also refused to heed Zyuganov's advice. Late in the evening of October 3, when bloody clashes had already begun at Ostankino and the Moscow mayor's office had been captured, Zyuganov asked for and received permission to appear on

television. He appealed to all participants in the confrontation to abstain from any further use of force. But "revolutionary ardor" carried the day, and the tragic results are well known. When martial law was introduced in Moscow the CPRF was temporarily banned and Zyuganov went into hiding for several days. But the authorities had no grounds for banning the CPRF permanently.

Not only did the CPRF avoid destruction in October 1993 but in the Duma elections in December that year it achieved a substantial success. A strong and influential CPRF group was formed in the Duma, with Zyuganov and Kuptsov at its head, and the party found it had significant new opportunities for legal activity.

The work of the CPRF and Zyuganov in the Duma was quite successful. Zyuganov has often said that the Duma was really a screen for one-man rule by a president intent on destroying Russia. But he has also noted that the Duma can function constructively as both a legislative and a representative body. At any rate the Communists were very assiduous about attending all Duma sessions. Both as a Duma delegate and as leader of the CPRF Zyuganov traveled around the country a great deal and spoke before the most varied audiences. During the course of a year he visited forty or fifty different regions of Russia. This was of great importance in helping to establish local party organizations.

As a result of the very intense activity of the CPRF and of Zyuganov in particular, and because of the continued worsening of the economic situation in Russia, increased crime, and general instability in society, not to mention the war in Chechnya, the political influence of the CPRF rose dramatically. In the Duma elections of 1995, as we have seen, the CPRF emerged confidently as the main winner.

It was evident to all political observers that if the presidential elections were held, the CPRF and its allies would be the chief opponents of the Yeltsin regime. In 1994–95 Zyuganov himself replied in the negative when asked if he would run for president. But on February 15, 1996, an all-Russia conference of the CPRF officially nominated him as the party's candidate, and he immediately emerged as the favorite in all the polls.

Zyuganov's energetic participation in the election campaign, his numerous appearances before the most varied audiences, his replies to questions, and his effective polemics all made it possible for observers to assess his capacities as a politician and his potential as a leader. His

speeches held the attention and won the approval of sympathetic audiences, but he did not arouse his listeners. His answers to questions rarely drew applause. I never observed the kind of enthusiasm that was frequently seen during Yeltsin's speeches in 1989–90, or in 1996 when Lebed spoke.

Zyuganov himself says, "I am not a charismatic person." One might add that he is also not demagogic—in either the positive or the negative sense of the word. Andrei Fyodorov, of the Political Research Foundation, who knows Zyuganov well, wrote at the beginning of the 1996 campaign:

> Zyuganov today bears little resemblance to the man he was two or three years ago. Today he is above all a self-confident politician who thinks out his steps with care and precision. He no longer needs to prove his legitimacy or the legitimacy of the Communist Party—society's change of mood in that respect is evident.
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> But one thing has remained unchanged—Zyuganov still has no charisma in the traditional sense of the term. Some other politician might turn himself inside out trying to achieve charisma. But not Zyuganov.
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> Zyuganov has the backing of the most numerous and best organized political party in Russia. Therefore he doesn't have to be overly concerned with charisma. The press seizes upon his every word, and his frequent appearances . . . to judge from opinion polls, have had a palpable effect.
>
> (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 20, 1996)

Miroslav Buzhkevich, a political commentator, appraised Zyuganov's personal qualities this way:

> Zyuganov is not hasty about making decisions; he is undeniably thoughtful and reflective. He is not a poseur, although he knows how to present himself and his party in a favorable light. He is harsh but not noisy and obstreperous like Zhirinovsky. About such people it is said: they make their bed softly but sleep hard. A real fighter in debate, he is never at a loss for words, but he cannot be called a fanatic. His views and convictions are fully formed. He does not retreat from them, although he knows how to tack and veer. He is far sighted. The CPRF already has a shad-

ow cabinet, a Zyuganov team, which would go with him to the Kremlin if he won the election. . . .

Objectively the CPRF leader is in a better position than his main opponent. For now he is not under the gun because of promises he failed to keep. And he has an ace up his sleeve—the only party in Russia with a real mass membership and a reliable organizational structure.

(*Delovoi Mir* [Business World], March 2, 1996)

ZYUGANOV'S IDEOLOGY: GENERAL FEATURES

For the mass audience in Russia, the general impression a politician makes is very important. The ordinary voter does not study party programs or election campaign literature or read the books written by the leading candidates, like those by Yeltsin, Zyuganov, and Lebed in the last few years.

However, for political observers and commentators, for party activists, for journalists and scholars who help shape public opinion, the ideologies of the leading politicians are also quite important. What do they think about Ukraine, Transcaucasia, Kazakstan, and Central Asia? What about Russia's relations with the West? What are their priorities in domestic and foreign policy? What are their views on such questions as private property and religion, the army, the mass media, democracy, problems of ethnic relations?

It is not easy to evaluate or study Yeltsin's ideology, which is subordinated to the pragmatic consideration of holding onto power. To remain in power, Yeltsin is willing to alter many, if not all, his ideological priorities. Zyuganov, however, as the leader of a Communist Party, cannot allow himself that kind of latitude. His statements on prime questions of political theory are fairly consistent. In the 1996 election campaign he continued to expound many of the same views on social and national questions that he had in 1991–92. This consistency does not, however, mean he has a unitary conception. His views are eclectic. He borrows something from Lenin, something from the Russian religious philosopher Ivan Ilyin, something from Marx and something from the Russian nationalist writer Aleksandr Prokhanov, something from Stalin and something from the German geopolitical theorist Karl Haushofer.

Zyuganov enthusiastically accepts some of the ideas of the nineteenth-century writer Constantine Leontiev, advocate of a strong monarchical state, a fixed hierarchy of social castes, and strict religiosity as well as some of the ideas of Lev Gumilyov, a contemporary Russian thinker and ethnographer who has studied the fates of many past civilizations on the territory of today's Russia. Zyuganov mixes certain ideas taken from Marxist doctrine or the works of Lenin with concepts of official patriotism and Russian nationalism that are alien to classical Marxism. In Zyuganov's writings, some very modern ideas on humanity's need for "sustainable development," as proposed by Valentin Koptyug, vice president of the Russian Academy of Sciences, alternate with the conception of Moscow as "the third Rome," as presented by the abbot Filofei in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Zyuganov makes no attempt to tie all these heterogeneous ideas into a single internally consistent system—an impossible task anyway. Nor does he try to go very deeply into any particular aspect of this hodgepodge ideology, for that might lead him into a blind alley or cause his none-too-stable ideological construction to fly apart.

In replying to critics of his theoretical "system," he usually resorts to superficial historical analogies. In 1992 he wrote: "Certain objections are made against our views, not without malice. 'Excuse us,' they say, 'but you are proposing to unite that which cannot be united—democracy, socialism, and the Russian idea.' History gives quite a few examples of things that, it seemed, could not be united, but that *were* united when the need for self-preservation arose. Who would have thought in 1933 that the anti-Hitler coalition could have been created, when the U.S., England, and France, on the one hand, and the USSR, on the other, were separated by a chasm of irreconcilable interests?" (see Zyuganov, *Drama vlasti* [The Drama of Power], Moscow, 1993, p. 63).

This analogy is wrong. There have been many coalitions of various kinds in history among governments with differing regimes and ideologies. The most unusual pairings of political partners are possible. One example is the "right-left" coalition at the heart of the opposition to Yeltsin in 1992–93. In forming coalitions, the various parties do not renounce their own ideologies or political platforms. On the other hand, it is impossible, for example, to unite Christianity, Judaism, and

Islam into a single whole, even though certain general historical and epistemological roots can be found in common for all three religions.

Nevertheless, Zyuganov does try to unite things that really cannot be united, and his books, pamphlets, articles, and interviews contain many completely contradictory assertions.

In all fairness we must admit that Zyuganov does not try to impose his ideology on others; it is not obligatory even for members of the CPRF. He seems to regard his ideas for the most part as provisional constructs. He doesn't exaggerate the theoretical merits or achievements of himself or his party. Noting how important it is that a new philosophical and historical theory be fashioned, Zyuganov has commented that "the CPRF has already accomplished something in this regard . . . , but an integrated, scientifically grounded theory of how the future of Russia will be shaped, one that breaks with the obsolete past but at the same time preserves traditionalism and acknowledges Russia's exceptional uniqueness, has not yet been created" (see Zyuganov, *Rossiya—Rodina moya* [Russia—My Motherland], Moscow: Informpechat, 1996, pp. 285–86).

Nevertheless the current ideology of the CPRF and its leader needs to be analyzed. Without pretending to do this thoroughly or entering into an exhaustive debate with Zyuganov, I outline below some of his more important ideas, many of which have found expression in the CPRF program.

Russia as Exceptional and Unique

Central to all of Zyuganov's ideological constructs is the idea that Russia is a society that has taken shape in historically unique and exceptional ways, as a "special civilization that has taken various governmental or state forms at various times, with varying borders and with varying sociopolitical structures, but always remaining ineradicably unique (*samobytny*—being unto itself, one of a kind) and internally, spiritually self-sufficient" (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 17, 1996).

"Russia is an autonomous economic organism, distinct from the Western free-market model" (Zyuganov, *Rossiya i sovremennyi mir*, Moscow: RAU Corporation, 1996, p. 20).

This definition lacks concreteness and does not answer the question, Which Russia should one seek to restore and defend? It is well

known that Zhirinovsky thinks in terms of a Russia with the borders it had in 1913—plus Alaska, plus new territory extending southward to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, a Russia divided into provinces that would be called *gubernia*s, as under the tsars, and without any autonomous non-Russian national republics, provinces, or districts. For Solzhenitsyn, on the other hand, Russia ought to be a single Slavic state uniting Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians, but not the Baltic region, Central Asia, or Transcaucasia. For Boris Mironov, leader of the Russian Patriotic Party, Russia is above all a national state, created by and for the Russian nation.

What does Zyuganov think about all this? He does not want to restore the borders of 1913. For him, Finland, Poland, and Manchuria are not part of Russia, although they came under the domination of the Russian empire. On the other hand, the entire Caucasus region in his view is part of Russia. As for Central Asia, he holds his tongue, but he sharply criticizes the constitution of Tatarstan, which declares that Tatarstan is "a sovereign state, an entity under international law, associated with the Russian Federation." To recognize constitutions with such wording in Tatarstan, Chechnya, or Tuva is, in Zyuganov's view, for Russia to fall apart. But is it true, as he says, that Armenia, Georgia, and Chechnya are the "heirs and continuators of the thousand-year traditions of Kievan Rus and the Muscovite state"?

Aside from that, how are the traditions of the Muscovite state to be reconciled with those of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? How is the Islamic land of the Uzbeks to be included as part of the "unique organism" of Russia?

Zyuganov often repeats Ilyin's formulation regarding "the younger brothers of the Russian nation who as a result of mutual spiritual understanding have created a cultural and linguistic unity."

For Zyuganov, the fact that Russian civilization is "the result of the activity of the Russian nation should not be offensive to the Jew or the Yakut or the Cherkessian because the basis for the well-being of all the peoples who have linked their fates with Russia is the vital force of 'the Russian idea' " (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 17, 1996).

I will not go into the losses suffered in the realm of language and culture by the Jews, Yakuts, and Cherkessians, losses that could have been avoided while maintaining the integrity of Russia. Instead I will ask how two ancient civilizations, those of Armenia and Georgia (which existed thousands of years before the rise of the Kievan state

or the Muscovite grand duchy) can be included in a single "Russian civilization" or "Russian idea"? As for Tatars and Kazakhs, whom Zyuganov includes among "the younger brothers of the Russian nation"—won't they regard his version of "Russian civilization" as insulting and unacceptable? Why should Chechens or Lezghians consider themselves "younger brethren" relative to Russians?

We could go on with such questions, but Zyuganov avoids answering them, preferring vague generalizations about Russia's "self-sufficiency."

The Soviet Union was broken up and destroyed first of all because of a clumsy and mistaken policy toward non-Russian nationalities and because of nationalist movements that consequently arose. Similar processes and movements are continuing within the Russian Federation. The unity of the Russian Federation can and should be strengthened and many ties with former Soviet republics can and should be restored, but this can't be done with slogans about "Holy Russia." Ideas and solutions of quite a different kind are needed.

Official Patriotism

This concept is an extension of Zyuganov's notion of Russia's uniqueness and is virtually the central component of his world outlook. He writes:

> "The state cannot live without an ideology. And if it is impossible to restore that by which society was guided in the last several decades, then it is necessary to create something new on the basis of traditional spiritual and cultural values. The Russian idea, supplemented by the current realities of life and the social conquests of socialism, achieved during the seventy years of Soviet rule—those are the components of the new state ideology that can be called the ideology of official government patriotism."
>
> (*Pravda Rossii* [Russia's Truth], April 6, 1995)

Zyuganov often repeats: "For me the most important party is Russia." According to him, the Soviet state was the logical continuation of the Russian empire, which had taken shape over the course of centuries. It is therefore necessary, in his opinion, to reexamine all previous dogmatic interpretations of the history and nature of the Russian state, reject-

ing the negative appraisal of such terms and concepts as "autocracy" and "empire."

It is a commonly understood fact, however, that negative attitudes toward the Russian autocracy and empire became firmly lodged in the consciousness of many generations of Russian revolutionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Such attitudes were dominant in the outlook of Russia's great writers, from Pushkin and Lermontov to Tolstoy and Nekrasov. For Zyuganov this doesn't matter. They were all terribly wrong, he claims.

> They tell us that *empire* and *government power (derzhava)* mean an all-powerful bureaucracy, suffocating censorship, and an absence of elementary liberties. That they represent the violation of national sensibilities, contempt for the individual, and a trampling underfoot of the natural standards of human coexistence. Lies! Empire is the historically and geopolitically predetermined form of the development of the Russian state. It is . . . the framework of a great power encompassing a multitude of variegated tribes and peoples, bound by the unifying force of a common, advanced culture, by a consciousness of the equality of all before the law and the supreme power of the state . . . Russia from ancient times was aware of itself as the heir and preserver of the imperial heritage. "Moscow is the third Rome." With this extremely precise formulation the abbot Filofei as long ago as the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century expressed the centuries-old continuity of the Russian state idea.
>
> (Zyuganov, *Derzhava* [The Mighty State], p. 15)

Zyuganov is enthralled not only with the formula "Moscow, the third Rome." He often cites another celebrated formula: "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality." Zyuganov writes:

> In the thinking of the latest interpreters of the formulation "Moscow, the third Rome," the historical movement from Rome through Byzantium to Moscow represented a consistent coming-into-being (*stanovlenie*) of the three fundamental principles of the imperial state system: the unity under law and under the power of the state that characterized Rome was enriched by the moral-spiritual, Christian unity of Byzantium, and finally achieved perfection in the national-popular unity of Muscovite

> Rus, Russia. This was expressed in the formula Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality, which was put forward a century and a half ago by Minister of Education S. S. Uvarov.
>
> (Zyuganov, *Rossiya—Rodina moya*, pp. 224–225)

This line of argument is not very convincing. What national-popular unity or equality of all before the law can you speak of in regard to Muscovy or the tsarist empire? Zyuganov himself admits that the formulas he cites were controversial and that their critics in the Russian revolutionary-democratic press were justified. In the tradition of the Russian democratic movement of the nineteenth century, Count Sergei Uvarov (1785–1855) was customarily regarded as one of the most reactionary ideologues of the tsarist regime. Does it make sense to try now to revive his "theory of official nationality," which he presented in a memorandum to Tsar Nicholas I in 1832 and which, after receiving the tsar's approval, he sought to make the basis of a rigidly reactionary educational system for Russian youth?

Zyuganov thinks this is a good thing to do, and he defends Uvarov's "theory" with hardly any change of emphasis from that of its originator. Zyuganov even describes Uvarov's formula as "ingenious." "Autocracy," Zyuganov writes,

> is the principle of state structure which assumes full sovereignty and political independence in concert with the conscious aims of a great power. The grand dukes of Muscovy began to refer to themselves as "autocrats" precisely at the time when Russia had finally become a country freed from foreign influences. For many long centuries, autocracy became the only possible principle for gathering together a country characterized by exceptional variety.
>
> (Zyuganov, *Derzhava*, p. 17)

As was to be expected, Zyuganov's concept of official state patriotism was most sharply criticized by other Communists of many different tendencies. One of them, Mikhail Antonov, writing in *Pravda* (April 26, 1994), expressed the view that the CPRF, if it followed Zyuganov's proposals, would inevitably cease to be the vanguard of Russian working people, their leader and defender, and would become a national-patriotic party, a nationalist party loyal to the government, one that many of the wealthy "new Russians" would be willing to support. Others among Zyuganov's opponents have asked,

If patriotism is love for one's country, then what is official state patriotism? Love of the state? What state? How can one love a *state*, anyhow?

Zyuganov has not entered into this theoretical discussion. He contends that if the CPRF is not to become a party of "pensioners and supporters of the nomenklatura," a mere leftover of "the heritage of the past," it must be made a party of "Communist supporters of the state" (*kommunisty-derzhavniki*). "The new Communists," he writes,

> are different from their arrogant and stagnant predecessors of the nomenklatura. With the aim of restoring the collective (*soborny*) unity of society, they have rejected the extremist thesis of class struggle, which threatens to tear apart the body of the nation with internal conflicts and divisions. Thus, a decisive step has been taken toward ideological healing. . . . The chief advantage of the new ideological and political platform of the Communists . . . which allows them to look to the future with confidence, is their firm adherence to the ideals of social justice and social equality, which is in profound harmony with the traditional values of the structure of our national life, the life of the people.
>
> (*Derzhava*, p. 127)

The logic of this sudden shift from the ideals of Count Uvarov to those of equality and justice is not at all clear. It is to be achieved, according to Zyuganov, by means of "dialectical unity, mutual tolerance, and constructive compromise." Along this path of "the unity of opposites" we encounter the concept of people's power (*narodovlastiye*) which would seem to stand in obvious contradiction to the ideal of autocratic power.

"People's Power"

Stalin's version of socialism and Brezhnev's "actually existing socialism" discredited the very concept of socialism in the minds of many. By the same token the "democratic" reforms of the last few years have discredited the very concept of democracy for many. Zyuganov rarely uses the term "democracy' but he writes at length about the establishment of "people's power" in Russia: "The decisive condition for preserving and strengthening the Russian state system," he writes, "is the

restoration of people's power—rule by the overwhelming majority of the working population" (*Derzhava*, p. 65).

What we have in power in Russia today, Zyuganov says, is a criminal comprador bourgeoisie and a bureaucracy interconnected with it. But these circles lack any justifying principle for their rule. They have produced nothing but declining living standards, social divisions, war, and civil war. They must be removed from power.

As for those in the section of the entrepreneurial class who think in terms of state interests, according to Zyuganov, they face a choice: "either to agree to the leading role of the toiling classes in the effort to save the country, or to end up in the camp of traitors to the fatherland." "People's power" is not just rule by the people. "We must now speak as loudly as possible," Zyuganov writes, "although at one time people were ashamed to speak of it—about the role of the Russian people in the great family of Soviet peoples, their role in the formation and preservation of the state system. In their collective (*sobornoi*) completeness the Russian people are the state preservers of the Russian state principle, its primary vehicle and main defender" (*Derzhava*, p. 69).

The "Russian Idea" and the Russian Nation

Zyuganov's concepts of "the Russian idea" and the Russian nation are closely linked with his notions of official state patriotism and of Russia as a "unique civilization." Ever since the many-years-long debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers in the nineteenth century, arguments over "the Russian idea" or "the question of Russia" have persisted. So many different notions have been advanced in this regard that simply listing them would require too much space and time. Zyuganov's conception is of course a compilation from various, disparate sources. Unlike Vladimir Solovyov, whom Zyuganov so admires, he interprets "the Russian idea" in its much narrower aspect—the particular features and fates of Russians as a nation.

Zyuganov cannot find words enough to describe the lofty qualities, the uniqueness of the Russian people and their self-concept (*samosoznanie*). The Russian nation arose, as he sees it, not only on the basis of an ethnic community of ancient Slavic tribes but also as a community on a loftier, more spiritual plane. For example:

> Hence, in many respects our "universal humanness," our national quality of patience, the absence of ethnocratic tendencies in our state structure, the celebrated qualities of "the Russian soul" which remain incomprehensible to the West even today: mercy, compassion, and patience combined with amazing sturdiness, courage, and capacity for self-sacrifice. . . . Over the course of many centuries, the Russian has striven to embody in all aspects of his being the ideals of holiness and purity of heart . . . the universal maxims of morality.
>
> (*Derzhava*, p. 34)

Another example:

> The adoption of Christianity, which united the freedom-loving Polyane, Drevlyane, Krivichi, Vyatichi, Radimichi [Slavic tribes that came under the rule of Christianized Kievan Rus] . . . laid the basis for the formation of that unique ethno-political and spiritual-ideological community that is known to the world by the name of the Russian people. . . . We are an idealist people, a dreamer people, a people performing heroic feats and exploits, often guided in our practical activity not by considerations of reason, advantage, or sober calculation, but by bursts of passion of incredible force. Sometimes these have brought Russia to the heights, to pinnacles of nearly unimaginable self-denial, self-sacrifice, heroism, and holiness.
>
> (*Veryu v Rossiyu* [I Believe in Russia], Voronezh, 1995, pp. 43–44)

Far be it from me to dispute these lofty sentiments. But I have no desire to counterpose the Russian people to the other nationalities of Russia or of the former USSR or of other countries. In speaking of the uniqueness of the Russian nation, are we implying that other nations don't really measure up as ethnic groups? When we say that the Russian people are not deformed by the lust for consumerism, have not been spoiled by "a well-fed Paradise," doesn't this imply that other populations have been spoiled, are living without ideals, and regard nothing as sacred? Zyuganov of course is not trying to insult the French or the Germans. He speaks of "Westerners" in the abstract, people who lack Russian spirituality, concerned only with satisfying their sensual desires and therefore incapable of self-limitation based on moral criteria.

What does the "holiness" of the Russian people refer to? For Aleksandr Prokhanov, one of Zyuganov's friends and colleagues, it is a synonym for being chosen by God. "Divine Providence," Prokhanov writes, "chose Russia as the land and the people for whom Love and Truth would become the main reason for existence. . . . We are united in the National Patriotic Assembly of Russia [Russian initials, NPSR], where to the howling of demons, among traitors and executioners, we continue the work entrusted to us of saving and restoring Russian civilization" (*Zavtra*, 1996, No. 31). For the Communist Zyuganov this kind of explanation for the NPSR, which was founded on his initiative, is unacceptable. But he himself far too often speaks of the "holy" Russian people and the "foreign devils" of the West.

For many radical nationalists, to be Russian means to have purely Russian blood, several generations of purely Russian descent. For Russia, with its long and complicated history of the intermixing of nations, this kind of approach is dangerous. Zyuganov, as a shrewd politician, rejects it. "Being Russian today," he writes,

> means feeling with one's heart an affinity (*prichastnost*) with the profound culture of our Fatherland, the inexhaustible thirst for justice and righteousness (*pravednost*), the willingness for voluntary sacrifice, qualities that over the course of many centuries helped Russia to survive, amazing the world with its heroism, majesty, and long suffering. This road is open to all, regardless of what 'nationality' may be recorded in their passport. At its heart lie not common ties of blood, but mighty brotherhood of the spirit.
>
> (*Rossiya—Rodina moya*, p. 231).

Nevertheless, many of Zyuganov's statements indicate that those who are Russian by heredity, "by blood," are more Russian than the others. His pamphlet *Beseda na Puti k Svyatyne* [Conversation on the Road to a Holy Place], published by the Electoral Foundation of Candidate for President of the Russian Federation, G. Zyuganov (Moscow, 1996), carries the heading "I Am Russian by Blood and by Spirit."

National feelings are powerful forces that can be constructive or destructive. The Russian Federation remains a multinational state and cannot therefore be based on "the Russian idea," although it cannot ignore Russian national sensibilities either. Arguments to the

effect that Russians constitute 83 percent of the population mean little. More than half the territory of the Russian Federation is occupied by nationalities who do not consider themselves Russian and who identify themselves with their native territories (Tatarstan and Yakutia for example). It is impossible to rally the populations of former Soviet republics around "the Russian idea," although the CPRF considers that one of its chief aims. The tragic lesson of the war against Chechnya, whose population constitutes less than one percent of the Russian Federation, should be taken under advisement by all who wish to construct a Russian Federation on a basis of peace and harmony.

Zyuganov tries to blend "the Russian idea" with the idea of socialism. He has often said that "the Russian idea is a profoundly socialist idea." In the nineteenth century the Narodniks made the same contention, using different terminology and citing native traditions of communal ownership of land in the Russian countryside. On the other hand, Zyuganov emphatically rejects internationalism, which in his opinion masks "indifference to the fate of Russia itself and willingness to sacrifice the age-old special qualities of the Russian people and their national interests to the Moloch of world revolution" (*Derzhava*, p. 127).

Various distortions and perversions of the idea of internationalism have certainly occurred in our history. But must the very idea of internationalism therefore be rejected? To be sure, the present humiliated position of the Russian people, the Russian nation, and its growing dependence on Western countries and the International Monetary Fund give rise to feelings of protest that are national as well as social in character. But every form of nationalism conceals substantial dangers within itself. How can the energies of national protest be accumulated without their taking the bloody course followed in Yugoslavia? That problem has not been resolved by Zyuganov or the other ideologues of the CPRF.

The Special Role of the Orthodox Church

Many Communists are divided over the question of the role of the church. One of Zyuganov's ardent supporters, Natalya Morozova, wrote in her "Urgent Appeal to the Future Communist President."

> Gennady Andreyevich, we believe in you. Only, please don't repeat the mistakes of the past. I personally am sure that you will succeed in maintaining loyalty to basic Communist principles. . . . What I find sickening, though, is your playing around with the church. How can you shut your eyes to the sinister role of the church in the downfall of our country? Why, it is a kind of vampire, sucking away material resources from our impoverished country—and the last vestiges of reason from our people. The classical Marxists were a hundred times correct: "Religion is the opium of the people!" . . . Is it really the business of Communists to support the pernicious influence of the church? Is it not the outright duty of the Communists to expose and denounce the role of the church as an accomplice of the criminal regime?
>
> (*Vernost*, 1996, no. 14.)

Zyuganov decidedly disagrees with such views. Even Yegor Ligachev declared that the Communists and the church should not only coexist but cooperate. Zyuganov goes further. Socialist ideas and values, he says, are very close to Christian values. For example, the idea of social justice is an earthly, secular manifestation of the "heavenly" truth that all are equal in the eyes of the Lord. "It is time that we recognized," Zyuganov writes, "that precisely the Russian Orthodox Church has been the historical support and expression of 'the Russian idea' in a form polished to perfection by ten centuries of our Russian state system."

> The counterposing of science to religion, accompanied by the use of force, has done no one any good. It is time for even the most militant atheists to understand that there are various forms of cognition, of knowledge of the world. Each of them has its own irreplaceable qualities and characteristics. To cut off any one of them artificially impoverishes the spiritual condition of the nation as a whole.
>
> (*Derzhava*, p. 32)

"Without the extremely high level of morality of the Orthodox Church," Zyuganov wrote elsewhere, "it would have been impossible for our people to survive the numerous burdens that have fallen to their lot."

> It would be appropriate to point out to some of my opponents who still insist on characterizing religion as 'opium,' as deception of the people, and who consider it inexpedient to cooperate with the church, that one cannot help admitting the obvious: despite the energetic struggle against religion during the Soviet era, there was no success in the attempt to 'sweep the minds' of the people clean of it. Many people were baptized or married or observed other religious rituals and celebrated church holidays. Why reject or fight against something that the people hold onto so dearly? Isn't it better to take an attitude of respect and understanding toward the people's faith? Wherever I have had occasion to meet with officials of the Russian Orthodox Church, I have met sympathy and support.
>
> (*Rossiya—Rodina moya*, p. 277)

This is an understandable position, although in a number of cases it has led Zyuganov to idealize Russian history and the role of the church in our history. He writes, for example, that the vast expanses of Russian civilization "were not appropriated the way it was done in the New World. We went forward not with the sword, but with the cross" (Ibid., p. 279). Any historian could easily show that we "went forward" with both the cross and the sword. To the east, to the south, and to the west. Or with the Red Star and the sword.

The Oneness of "Reds" and "Whites"

The Russian civil war, as Zyuganov sees it, was a tragedy that disrupted the unity of the people and the continuity of Russian history. The time has come, he believes, to heal that division. There is no need to inquire who was right or wrong. "Having united the 'Red' ideal of social justice and the 'White' ideal of a nationally conscious state system, perceived as a form of existence of the centuries-old sacred values of the people, Russia will find at last the longed-for social harmony between classes and social groups, as well as the mighty power of the state bequeathed to us by dozens of generations of our forefathers" (*Derzhava*, p. 27).

This solution is required by the current threat to the very existence of the Russian people, who have become superfluous on their own territory, who have been separated by absurd, even criminal borders, who

have been deprived of a healthy state system, and who are being deafened by the propaganda of the officially controlled media. What is happening to the Russian people, says Zyuganov, is genocide. All patriots must therefore unite, as during the Great Patriotic War against Hitler's Germany when Stalin appealed to the lessons and values of Russian history and received the support of the Orthodox Church and a section of White emigres. "We made a huge mistake," Zyuganov writes, "when we acted as though before 1917 there was 'no history,' nothing but evil . . . They are trying to drive us into the same blind alley today, only with the signs reversed—as though *after* 1917 there was 'no history,' nothing but a great black hole. This too is an unparalleled lie! . . . It can be countered effectively only by recognizing the historical unity of Russian life in all its tragic and heroic many-sidedness" (*Derzhava*, p. 41).

Slavic Unity

Zyuganov condemns the destruction and disintegration of the Soviet Union, which had been a powerful state, the successor to the Russian empire. Within Russia, as within the Soviet Union, as many as 130 nations and nationalities had been united. But the core of the state had been the unity of the Slavic populations, through which lies the road to the revival of a Great Russia. "What do we mean when we speak of 'Great Russia'?" Zyuganov asks.

> By this I mean the Russian state, which undeniably includes within its borders all the territories on which there lives a compact Russian or Russian-speaking population; a state founded on the inseparable fraternal unity of the Great Russians, the Little Russians, and the Byelorussians, as well as all the tribes and nationalities that voluntarily wish to adhere to such a union. I do not think its borders will differ essentially from those of the USSR.
>
> (*Derzhava*, p. 43)

"Two Parties" Inside the Soviet Communist Party

Zyuganov urges his supporters not to delve into the ancient history of the party and the country, since differing interpretations could divide patriots and hinder the struggle against the current "regime of occu-

pation." But Zyuganov himself is quite free in giving his appraisals of past events and periods in our history. He has nothing to say about its dark sides; that is not a subject of discussion for today, in his view. But he cannot ignore the massive criticism of the mistakes and crimes of the Soviet era that has poured forth in the last ten years and that for the most part is based on undeniable factual documentation.

In his address to the Constitutional Court Zyuganov sought to evade this criticism with the concept that there really were "two parties" inside the Soviet Communist Party. He has often returned to this theme—for example, in an interview that appeared in *Pravda* September 10, 1993:

> In the USSR there was not one, but two parties, and a stubborn struggle went on between them, never dying down for an instant. The fact that they were formally united within a single organization does not change the essence of the matter, because they had different ideologies, different goals, and different political and national priorities.
>
> To the first party belonged Sholokhov and Korolyov, Zhukov and Gagarin, Kurchatov and Stakhanov. Also belonging to it were the greater part of the ordinary or run-of-the-mill administrators and apparatchiks of the party, who unfailingly gave their all in our country's most difficult days. Most importantly, it was this party that the fighters on the front of the Great Patriotic War joined by the thousands, and it was to this party that there belonged millions of hard-working patriotic people whose heroic labors turned this country from an ash heap into the greatest power in the world. For all of them the USSR, as the historical heir of Russia, was the Fatherland, beloved and dear to their hearts. . . . This is the party of which we consider ourselves the heir.
>
> There was another party in the Soviet Union. Numerically it could not compare with the first, but in its political weight and influence at the highest echelons of power it was disproportionately large and often decisive. To it belonged those for whom "this country" and "these people" were just an arena for realizing their own inordinate ambitions and power-hungry drives, a testing ground for adventuristic social experiments. This was the party of Trotsky and Kaganovich, of Beria and Mekhlis, of

> Gorbachev and Yeltsin, of Yakovlev and Shevardnadze. We do not wish to have anything to do with this party.

It is generally recognized that within the Bolshevik party even before the 1917 revolution there was an organization of professional revolutionaries that stood over and above the mass of rank-and-file party members. After the Bolsheviks came to power this division persisted in the form of an apparatus of professional party leaders (the nomenklatura), on the one hand, and the mass of the rank and file, on the other. But Zyuganov is not talking about this division between the leadership and the rank and file. Most of the present CPRF leaders came directly from the former apparatus of the CPSU; they themselves belonged to the nomenklatura.

The division Zyuganov has in mind is of a different kind: the honest and good Communists were one party; the bad ones were another. He does not care to specify which "party" Lenin belonged to, or Stalin, and he barely mentions Khrushchev or Brezhnev.

From this point of view the CPRF is not just the successor of the CPSU, but in essence a new party in which only the "good" element from the former CPSU may be found. The "bad" element joined Yeltsin's circle or found posts in the new non-Communist government.

The "two parties" conception also finds reflection in the CPRF program, which states that a final line of demarcation has been drawn between the two component parts of the former Communist Party and that only "healthy elements" have entered the CPRF. This concept may be convenient for avoiding responsibility in regard to the mistakes and crimes of the former leadership of the USSR and CPSU, but it is too primitive and unconvincing.

Zyuganov's Attitude Toward Stalinism

Zyuganov is quite consistent in pursuing the line that to avoid conflicts within the CPRF or between that party and its allies, it is necessary to abstain from judgments about the past. While hardly ever mentioning Brezhnev or Khrushchev, he does quote Lenin—infrequently—and sometimes even Marx. But he makes no assessment of Lenin or Leninism, thereby frequently provoking criticism from party veterans. He very rarely expresses himself on the question of Stalinism either, explaining that he had no personal experience of the Stalin era. "I

grew up after the war," he often says, "and in my time there was no repression." Of course there was repression under Stalin after World War II—except, as Zyuganov would have it, in the villages of Oryol province where he grew up.

Zyuganov knows about the crimes of the 1920s and 1930s and takes a negative view of them. Here are some quotations from scattered articles or interviews:

"As early as the 1950s our party condemned the repression."

"We have known everything. Businessmen were suppressed, churches and the estates of the gentry were destroyed, the intelligentsia were persecuted, the relics of saints were dug up, entire nationalities were declared enemies. Today we rehabilitate people and we repent, but at the same time we create new enemies. Pick up the newspapers of the 1930s—isn't there the same tone, the same kind of arguments, the same intolerance and incitement to violence?"

"The situation today is reminiscent of the eve of 1937, when the entire people was drawn into the rivalry among Bonapartist groups, and the blood of the best and most talented sons of Russia flowed in rivers."

"During the twentieth century we have passed through the crucible of civil war and repression, suffocating ideological dogmas and spiritual genocide."

Zyuganov draws a sharp distinction between the Stalin of the 1920s and 1930s and the Stalin of World War II and after, when he began to act and speak like a patriot and a man loyal to the state (*derzhavnik*), when he made peace with the church and acknowledged the greatness of the Russian people, "first among equals."

In Zyuganov's view, if Stalin had lived five to seven years longer, he would have made his "ideological perestroika" irreversible and would have restored the Russian spiritual and governmental tradition.

A close look at the main policies Stalin followed from 1945 to 1953 is enough to refute these assertions. Moreover, Zyuganov makes no objection to an increasingly insistent tendency expressed in *Zavtra*, where he is on the editorial board, in *Pravda Rossii*, whose editorial board he heads, in other CPRF papers, and in such allied papers as *Sovetskaya Rossiya*—a tendency to rehabilitate Stalin and Stalinism and to flagrantly falsify history. He has repeatedly stated his willingness to compromise for the sake of unity against today's *bespredel*, the prevailing criminal disorder and rampant lawlessness. But even compromise has its limits. I am sure that

the eulogies to Stalin in the Communist press repel far more people than they attract.

Socialism

Zyuganov never misses a chance to mention his commitment to socialism: "I favor clearly stated conceptions. At the core of our national goals will be the ideas of brotherhood, justice, humanism, Russian spirituality and loyalty to the state (*derzhavnost*). This fully corresponds to the ideals of socialism" (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, September 20, 1994).

In speaking of socialism, Zyuganov rarely refers to Marx or Lenin. He does not try to analyze the evolution of socialist ideas, merely commenting occasionally in passing on the need to renounce concepts that are "a century old" or "two centuries old," to abandon "that uncompromising Communist orthodoxy by which an outlived dogmatism managed to preserve itself, blocking the development of constructive possibilities and the potential for a scientific socialism" (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, April 26, 1994).

"Without the socialist idea," he argues, "without the 'socialization of life,' that is, establishment of the primacy of social interests, there is no way out of the difficulties confronting the world today. Without that, both Russia and our planet as a whole are doomed" (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 11, 1993). At the same time, Zyuganov stresses that he is far from being an apologist for the model of socialism that arose in the USSR. There is a need, he says, for a new conception of socialism to be created, for a new contribution to be made to the theory of socialism, to outline a new economic and social profile—a twenty-first century socialism based on postindustrial information technology and new models of production and consumption (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, March 17, 1994).

Zyuganov summed up his outlook in a very concise formula: "Not back to socialism, but forward to socialism." In explaining his concept of socialism, he does not analyze class conflicts in Russian or Western society. He does not of course deny the existence of classes or of class struggle, but he obviously rejects the Marxist notion that all social problems must be viewed from the standpoint of class interests and class struggle. For Zyuganov, national interests take primacy. He does not accept Marx's dictum that the workers "have no fatherland."

Rather than enter into debate over such questions with the "orthodox" Marxists, Zyuganov simply waves them aside. "To defend Russia, to save the people from genocide," he says, "is much more important than to maintain one's ideological purity" (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 11, 1993).

Zyuganov's Renunciation of Revolutionary Violence

Zyuganov advocates fundamental changes in economic and social life, a changed constitution, and the restoration of Soviet power. But since 1992 he has stated more than once that "Russia has exhausted its capacity for revolutions." In a *Pravda* interview (August 10, 1994) he said: "The number one thing that we reject . . . is the revolutionary way of solving problems. The situation in our country, the existing systems of technology, the abundance of especially dangerous types of production and explosive materials—all these make it impossible for any party to use such methods to assert its dominance. That would be an adventure that would end in disaster."

Such statements have provoked criticism by some party theoreticians. Sergei Kara-Murza sought to instruct Zyuganov, in the pages of *Pravda* (October 12, 1994), on the concepts of revolution and the revolutionary method by giving examples of peaceful revolution. Without engaging in polemics, Zyuganov altered his terminology. In his articles and interviews in 1995–96 he said "Russia has exhausted its capacity for civil wars" and declared that in our programs and in our practical activity, we should renounce "revolutionary violence." Logically he also rejects the call for a dictatorship of the proletariat, which is still found in the documents of more radical Communist groups. When he is reminded that this is one of the most important elements in the teachings of Marx and Lenin he simply asserts that "any dictatorship—whether of the proletariat, the landed gentry, or the bourgeoisie—bodes no good" (*Delovoi Mir*, April 8, 1996). Why argue, he adds, with those who "remain stuck in the last century and will never make the leap into the present."

Social Democratic Ideas

It has often been said of Zyuganov that when speaking to Western audiences he sounds like a social democrat, but when speaking in the

cities of Russia he sounds like a nationalist and supporter of a strong Russian state. These charges are not really fair, because some social democratic conceptions do find a place in Zyuganov's ideology (although not a big one, thus far). His renunciation of revolutionary violence and the dictatorship of the proletariat are examples of social democratic views that he shares. He and the program of his party also accept pluralism and a mixed economy. (See *Pravda*, August 10, 1994.)

He has hardly ever commented on questions concerning the international Communist or Social Democratic movements. He is completely absorbed with Russian problems,. Nevertheless in several interviews he has stated emphatically that he is not a Social Democrat and that "Social Democracy has no support and no future in Russia" (*Argumenty i Fakty*, 1996, no. 15, p. 9).

Sustainable Development

Of all contemporary social theories Zyuganov refers most often to that of sustainable development, which has become widespread in recent years. This theory does not ask the question, Socialism or capitalism? It was originated and promoted by a number of Western scientists and scholars. In Russia it has been popularized especially by Valentin Koptyug, vice president of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of its Siberian Division (in Novosibirsk). His field of specialization is chemistry, and he is also a member of the Central Committee of the CPRF.

The theory advocates changing the very concept of "progress" and renouncing unrestrained consumerism. Nature's resources and potential are limited, and the human race is starting to destroy the natural basis of its own existence. The character of development must be changed and the utilization of natural resources worldwide must be brought under control. Such relatively new disciplines as demography, ecology, and futurology find expression in this theory. A major world conference on problems of sustainable development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, attended by several thousand scientists, government officials, and social activists.

Many scientists with leftist views, like Koptyug, seek to employ the concept of sustainable development as an argument in favor of socialism, for only a worldwide socialist planned economy would be capa-

ble of rationally combining the interests of particular countries, humanity as a whole, and individual needs.

Many of the radical nationalists—Prokhanov's group, for example—strenuously object to Russia's accepting the concept of "sustainable development." They criticize the "globalists" of Novosibirsk. Worldwide environmentalist projects, as they see it, would only strengthen world regulatory bodies and other agencies of control and ultimately lead to a world government that would be dominated by the wealthier Western countries. "Sustainable development is a trap for Russia," they argue. (See *Zavtra*, 1996, no. 10.) Zyuganov disagrees. Here is his view (as expressed in *Rossiya—Rodina moya*, pp. 160–161):

> It is impossible to solve an entire complex of problems facing humanity today if Western consumer society is to become the global model for development.
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> The capitalist form of progress has reached the limits of its possibilities. The model for production and consumption must be changed; the vector along which scientific and technical progress is to travel must be redefined. The overall body of ideas aiming toward this goal and the projects being undertaken in many countries come under the generally accepted heading of "sustainable development." Whatever the specific technical or organizational details connected with this theory, its social content and the world-historical mission of making it a reality are connected, in our opinion, with socialism and communism in their contemporary meaning, which naturally follows from the urgent objective needs of world development.

The West as Russia's Enemy

Zyuganov does not try to analyze situations in detail in the various countries of the capitalist West. They cannot be a model for Russia even if they have achieved significant success in economic, scientific, and technical development, in solving social problems, in education and health care, or in controlling the activities of monopolies. Of course, to the extent possible, anything valuable or useful that has been created by Western civilization should be borrowed. But it should not be forgotten, in Zyuganov's view, that the wealthy Western

countries are for the most part enemies of Russia, its geopolitical, ideological, and economic adversaries. The better Russia understands this, the better its cooperation will work out with Western countries in areas where that is possible and desirable. Cooperation with the West requires a clear and basic knowledge of the hidden springs and levers by which those countries are ruled. Western democracy is in many respects just a screen concealing the real sources of influence and power.

Zyuganov singles out one of these forces: "An ever more perceptible impact on the world outlook, culture, and ideology of the Western world," he has written,

> is beginning to be made by the Jewish diaspora, whose influence is constantly growing. . . . The Jewish diaspora, which has traditionally controlled the financial life of the continent, as its "own market" has grown, has become a kind of holder of the "controlling block" of shares in the whole economic system of Western civilization. The motifs of the "chosen people," of "a higher calling" to rule the world, and of their own exceptional status—which are typical of the religious beliefs of the Jews—these motifs are beginning to have a substantial effect on Western consciousness. . . . Under these circumstances . . . Slavic civilization acquires special significance.
>
> (Zyuganov, *Za gorizontom* [Beyond the Horizon], Moscow, 1995, p. 18)

During the Russian presidential campaign of 1996 these statements were widely publicized with a great deal of commentary by virtually all the democratic and independent newspapers. The strength and influence of Jewish capital in the West does not have to be proved. But it is far from being "the holder of the controlling block of shares" either in the U.S. economy or in those of Western Europe or Japan.

A Secret World Conspiracy

In discussing the reasons for the downfall of the Soviet Union and the CPSU, Zyuganov hardly ever talks about the deep internal contradictions of Soviet society, and the multinational Soviet state, which were never more than partially resolved and which in many respects have

continued to deepen. Zyuganov's criticism is directed above all at the defective and harmful or even criminal methods employed by the leadership of the party and the country which came to prevail in the Gorbachev era and are continued in the work of the "conscienceless, unprincipled, and traitorous regime of politicos and hustlers which has been established on the ruins of the Soviet empire."

The destruction of Russia is not simply the result of ever growing internal contradictions that its leaders could not manage to overcome and that ultimately sundered the unity of the party and the country. The defeat of Russia was the result of a prolonged, well-planned, and ruthless struggle conducted by the anti-Communist and anti-Russian forces in the West, above all in the United States, which after World War II became not only the leader of the capitalist world but also the chief geopolitical opponent of the USSR. It was in the United States that the cold war strategy against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries was elaborated; it was there that military confrontation against the USSR was worked out and the arms race, so ruinous for the USSR, was planned, along with various forms of ideological and psychological warfare against Russia. Enormous forces and resources, both material and intellectual, were mobilized for this struggle. "After the basic conceptual postulates relating to the destruction of the USSR were formulated in America, they were assigned to hundreds of research institutions, and the corresponding programs were developed" (*Drama vlasti*, Moscow: Paleus, 1993, p. 76).

Such assertions are hardly original. The Western campaign against the USSR and CPSU is easily documented. At the very beginning of his presidency, for example, Ronald Reagan declared that the West would not simply contain Communism but overcome it; it would not simply nail Soviet Communism to the wall, but would get rid of it altogether. Khrushchev had made similar belligerent statements. During his visit to the United States, he made his famous prediction, "We will bury you." The conflict was two-sided, and the responsibility for the cold war, the arms race, and the tension in international relations lies with both the capitalist West and the socialist East. For decades this struggle was depicted for Soviet citizens as a battle by the forces of decaying imperialism against the forces of progress and socialism. Zyuganov adds some new elements to this picture. In the struggle against Soviet Russia, in his opinion, the United States never acted entirely on its own.

"Look closer," he says,

> it is not really the government at all [that was doing this], but an immensely overgrown industrial-commercial corporation. It does not have its own national interests as such. It uses this term, the 'national interest,' to conceal the lust of the international financial oligarchy, in whose hands the political, military, and economic might of America serves merely as an instrument for achieving its own selfish goals and serving its own clan-connected interests. The cosmopolitan elite of international capital—that is the real behind-the-scenes director responsible for Russia's time of troubles!
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> (*Pravda*, July 3, 1993)

Zyuganov does not stop here. Both the United States and the "cosmopolitan elite of international capital" have existed for more than 200 years, but the struggle to remove Russia from the historical scene has gone on for more than a thousand. According to Zyuganov, Western governments and the transnational banking and finance corporations are ultimately only "obedient transmitters of an aggressive and relentless anti-Russian policy." The source and inspiration for this age-old policy is hidden somewhere behind the scenes. It is a secret world conspiracy (*Mirovaya Zakulisa*) that seems to have established its rule throughout the world and to have created supranational bodies of political, economic, and military power. "This maniacal idea," Zyuganov writes, "has an ancient history, closely linked with the development of secret political societies, religious sects, and mystical beliefs. Only at the end of the twentieth century has it attained the possibility of practical realization owing to the scientific and technological advances and objective processes of global economic integration.

"Only awareness of this alarming fact can give clarity and purpose to the patriotic movement for the revival of a nationally conscious Russian state system" (*Pravda*, July 3, 1993).

But what clarity and purpose can there be in fighting mystical beliefs and secret religious sects?

Zyuganov's theory of a secret world conspiracy is very important to him, for he returns to it constantly, explaining in detail the methods and techniques, the "algebra of politics," that the "director behind the scenes" employs with perfect mastery, a "director" for whom even the Communists "at the dawn of their existence were loyal allies."

(*Derzhava*, p. 53.) How can we cope with these all-powerful secret organizations if they have already brought all the Western countries, including the United States, under their control?

> The world conspiracy has taken decisive action in forming a harshly centralized system of coercive control over the development of human civilization. . . . This plan represents something more complex and multifaceted. In seeking to draw historical analogies, we cannot fail to recognize that in essence it is a worldwide Messianic eschatological religious project which, in its dimensions, the extent to which it has been thought out, and its thoroughness of preparation, goes far beyond the planetary utopias known to history—whether those of the Roman imperium of Tiberius and Diocletian, the Abassid caliphate, the Protestant fundamentalist movement in Europe, or the Trotskyist daydreams of World Revolution.
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> The ideologists of one-worldism (mondialism) are themselves convinced that what is involved is the imminent arrival of a Messiah who will establish on earth the laws of a perfect religion and be the founder of a "golden age" for all humanity under the rule of a single Worldwide Supergovernment.
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> (*Pravda Rossii*, April 13, 1995)

Zyuganov's doctrine cannot be proven or refuted. One can either believe in it or not. For my part, I am unable to place any credence in this secret world conspiracy with its mystical director behind the scenes.