

RUSSIA'S COMMUNIST OPPOSITION BECALMED:

The KPRF and the Election of 1989

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Abstract

The Russian electoral cycle of 1999-2000 was a crucial phase in the consolidation of a post-Soviet political order in the Russian Federation. It climaxed in the lopsided victory of Vladimir Putin, Boris Yeltsin's last prime minister and heir apparent, in the presidential vote of March 26, 2000. That result was heralded on December 19, 1999, in the election of deputies to the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly.

In their finale to the third national parliamentary campaign since the demise of the Soviet Union, Russians installed a corps of lawmakers markedly more inclined than their predecessors to cooperate with the executive branch. The 1999 election results also gave Yeltsin confidence that his chosen successor would win the 2000 presidential vote. To help the cause, Yeltsin resigned on New Year's Eve, making Putin acting president and pushing the presidential election ahead by four months. At one stroke, the fading elder statesman gave his client the luxury of launching a drive for public validation fortified by the advantages of incumbency. The early election also allowed Putin to take advantage of the political momentum established by his surrogate party, Yedinstvo, in the parliamentary vote.

Our premise is that the 1999-2000 elections are a tale of opportunities blown as well as of opportunities seized. Integral to the chain of events was the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) squandering the chance for political advancement opened up by the economic woes of the 1990s, which attained new heights of misery after the August 1998 financial meltdown. If a few short years before the party had resembled an army on the march, at a minimum able to block initiatives by its adversaries and at a maximum a pretender to supreme power, it cast a less awesome shadow after the votes of 1999 and 2000.

The dawn of the Putin era found Russia's communist opposition a protest movement becalmed, its cadres frustrated and its prospects uncertain. In the sections below we will review the KPRF's campaign philosophy and preparations and analyze its inability to bring about in deeds the political breakthrough it sought in words — a breakthrough the revamped post-communist parties of East European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania engineered some time ago. Leftist parties in many parts of the region have returned to power in the second or sometimes third electoral cycle, but Russia's communists have not. Why? The discussion has implications for the role of the KPRF and the evolution of Russian politics.

Introduction

The Russian electoral cycle of 1999-2000 was a crucial phase in the consolidation of a post-Soviet political order in the Russian Federation. It climaxed in the lopsided victory of Vladimir Putin, Boris Yeltsin's last prime minister and heir apparent, in the presidential vote of March 26, 2000. That result was heralded on December 19, 1999, in the election of deputies to the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly.¹ In their finale to the third national parliamentary campaign since the demise of the Soviet Union, Russians installed a corps of lawmakers markedly more inclined than their predecessors to cooperate with the executive branch. A hastily assembled pro-Kremlin bloc, Yedinstvo (Unity), captained by Emergencies Minister Sergei Shoigu and buoyed by an endorsement from Putin, gleaned almost one-quarter of the party-list ballots. When the legislature convoked in January, Yedinstvo would have no trouble finding allies on the Duma benches.² The 1999 election results also gave Yeltsin confidence that his chosen successor would win the 2000 presidential vote. To help the cause, Yeltsin resigned on New Year's Eve, making Putin acting president and pushing the presidential election ahead by four months.³ At one stroke, the fading elder statesman gave his client the luxury of launching a drive for public validation fortified by the advantages of incumbency. The early election also allowed Putin to take advantage of the political momentum established by his surrogate party, Yedinstvo, in the parliamentary vote.

The twin elections revolved to a considerable extent around the calculations and behavior of the winners, chiefly Putin and Yedinstvo, the most recent and the most adept of Russia's "parties of power."

¹The Duma is the dominant of the two houses, in that all draft bills of federal laws must originate there. Members of the upper house, the Federation Council, are appointed by regional governments.

²See Thomas F. Remington, "Coalition Politics in the New Duma," in Vicki L. Hesli and William M. Reisinger, eds., *Elections, Parties, and the Future of Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2002).

³Yeltsin's second term was not due to expire until July 2000, but the chronically ill president had been pondering resignation for some time. "The [December] voting results," Yeltsin wrote later, "confirmed the main thing I had been thinking about nonstop for weeks: there is an enormous reserve of trust in Vladimir Putin! In essence, people in December had already voted for the new president, had supported 'his' bloc." Boris Yel'tsin, *Prezidentskii Marafon* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AST, 2000), p. 390. The centrality of the Duma election to Yeltsin's deliberations was underlined in Colton's interview with Valentin Yumashev, confidant and ghostwriter to Yeltsin, on January 29, 2000.

It is through their eyes that the story has been told until now.⁴ We take a different tack in the present report, turning the spotlight on the main losers in the process. Specifically, we focus on the Russian political left and most squarely on the principal neo-communist party, the KPRF (Communist Party of the Russian Federation).

Our premise is that the 1999-2000 elections are a tale of opportunities blown as well as of opportunities seized. Integral to the chain of events was the KPRF's squandering of the chance for political advancement opened up by the economic woes of the 1990s, which attained new heights of misery after the August 1998 financial meltdown. If a few short years before the party had resembled an army on the march, at a minimum able to block initiatives by its adversaries and at a maximum a pretender to supreme power, it cast a less awesome shadow after the votes of 1999 and 2000. The dawn of the Putin era found Russia's communist opposition a protest movement becalmed, its cadres frustrated and its prospects uncertain. In the sections below we will review the KPRF's campaign philosophy and preparations and analyze its inability to bring about in deeds the political breakthrough it sought in words — a breakthrough the revamped post-communist parties of East European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania engineered some time ago. Leftist parties in many parts of the region have returned to power in the second or sometimes third electoral cycle, but Russia's communists have not. Why? The discussion has implications for the role of the KPRF and the evolution of Russian politics.

We streamline the presentation by concentrating on the Duma election. Three months in advance of the presidential vote, it laid bare the underlying strengths and weaknesses of the KPRF. At campaign's end, Putin — a functionary from the security apparatus almost unknown to the populace when Yeltsin made him premier the previous August — already stood head and shoulders over all Russian politicians in popularity.

⁴See Timothy J. Colton and Michael McFaul, "Reinventing Russia's Party of Power: 'Unity' and the 1999 Duma Election," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 16, no. 3 (July-September 2000), pp. 201-224; Richard Rose, Neil Munro, and Stephen White, "How Strong is Vladimir Putin's Support?," *ibid.*, vol. 16, no. 4 (October-December 2000), pp. 287-312; and Peter Rutland, "Putin's Path to Power," *ibid.*, pp. 313-354.

Public opinion polls disclosed that a substantial plurality of prospective voters fancied him as president; the chairman of the central committee of the KPRF, Gennadii Zyuganov, was a distant second.⁵ A countrywide post-election survey conducted under the supervision of the two authors in the six weeks after the December vote yielded similar findings. Repeat conversations with most of these same panelists after March 26 showed what cross-sectional surveys could not, namely, the follow-up behavior of Russian citizens. Nearly 80 percent of those who earlier signaled their intent to vote for Putin and for Zyuganov acted accordingly in the polling booth.⁶

For all practical purposes, the spring election, and along with it the succession to Yeltsin, were sewn up by the time the Duma votes were tallied in the early winter of 1999-2000.⁷ The acting president's nonchalance at the time comports with that diagnosis. In a Kremlin variation on the Rose Garden strategy in American politics, Putin stayed with his official rounds and off the campaign trail. After Yedinstvo's strong showing and the KPRF's disappointing performance in the 1999 vote, the only question remaining after December was whether he would win in the first or second round. It took only one round.

⁵See the summary of polls by VTsIOM (the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion) in Rose, Munro, and White, "How Strong is Vladimir Putin's Support?," pp. 288-293. Of voting-age Russians questioned by VTsIOM in December, 50 percent intended to vote for Putin and 13 percent for Zyuganov; 21 percent did not intend to vote or did not know how they would vote. Two percent voiced an intention to vote for Putin in the August VTsIOM poll. Putin eclipsed Zyuganov in the October poll.

⁶These data come from a unique three-wave panel survey conducted during the 1999-2000 electoral cycle. To the best of our knowledge, no Russian or foreign research team did comparable research in which citizens in a national sample were interviewed on successive occasions. The work was funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. A total of 1,919 voting-age Russians were first interviewed between November 13 and December 13, and 1,842 of them were reinterviewed after the Duma election, between December 25 and January 31. A third wave, involving 1,748 first- and second-wave respondents, was completed in April-May 2000, soon after the March 2000 presidential election. Respondents were selected in a multistage area-probability sample of the population aged eighteen and over, with sampling units in thirty-three regions of the Russian Federation. The work was carried out by the Demoscope group at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by Polina Kozyreva and Mikhail Kosolapov, with methodological and logistical assistance by Michael Swafford. Descriptive statistics derived from these survey data are weighted in this report by household size, to correct for the under-representation of persons in small households generated by the sampling method. Respondents were asked in December-January if they intended to cast a vote for president and if so to choose from among a list of six possible presidential candidates — Putin, Zyuganov, Sergei Kiriyenko, Yurii Luzhkov, Yevgenii Primakov, and Grigorii Yavlinskii. Seventy-nine percent of those who said they intended to vote for Putin, and who subsequently did vote in the presidential election (N = 806 weighted cases), reported after March 26 that they had indeed voted for him; for Zyuganov, the proportion was 77 percent (N = 252 weighted cases).

⁷"The December 1999 Duma election, and not the March 2000 presidential poll, was the key electoral event in Putin's rise." Rutland, "Putin's Path to Power," p. 324.

Gauging the KPRF's Performance

For the communists, the election news was by no means all bad. There was reassurance in the fact that, relative to other parties and forces, the KPRF remained a power to be reckoned with. In the party-list half of the Duma election, it received 24.38 percent of the valid votes cast on December 19, about 1 percentage point more than Yedinstvo; the proportional-representation formula then awarded it 67 (30 percent) of the 225 seats assigned, 3 more than Yedinstvo's allotment. The KPRF also elected 46 of the 225 deputies chosen in territorial districts, again the most of any slate. This lifted its elected Duma contingent to 113 deputies, or one-quarter of the total. Yedinstvo grabbed 73 seats, the OVR (Fatherland-All Russia) coalition headed by Yevgenii Primakov 68, and a smattering of smaller parties fewer than 30 each; political independents added up to 114.⁸

A ray of comfort could be wrung from the 2000 presidential campaign, too. If little suspense lingered about who would win, Gennadii Zyuganov's solid second-place finish was also a foregone conclusion. Zyuganov collected 29.49 percent of the valid votes on March 26, quintupling the third-place finisher, Grigorii Yavlinskii of the Yabloko party.

KPRF performance is less impressive if viewed dynamically (see Table 1). The party embarked from a low point in the maiden election to the State Duma in December 1993.⁹ Dissolved by presidential decree when the Soviet regime crumbled in 1991, it had been reconstituted, with Zyuganov at the helm, only in February of 1993.¹⁰ In October 1993, on the heels of the violent clash between Yeltsin and the

⁸These are the final totals, as of the completion of repeat elections in nine territorial districts in March and August 2000. The actual size of the KPRF "fraction" (caucus) in the Duma as of February 2000 was eighty-nine deputies, or considerably fewer than were elected on the party ticket. This was because several dozen KPRF deputies, in most cases with the consent of the party, sat in other leftist fractions, notably the Agroindustrial group (which had forty-one members in February 2000). The Yedinstvo caucus had eighty-one deputies in February, but worked closely with two groups banding together nonpartisan deputies elected in the territorial districts (People's Deputy, with fifty-eight members, and Russia's Regions, with thirty-eight). It was primarily Yedinstvo's and Putin's demonstrated political strength that led the nonpartisan legislators to seek harmonious relations with the Kremlin.

⁹In retrospect, the 1993 Duma vote looks like an aberration caused by the unique circumstances of that year. Although the electoral rules were different and the communists were also organized differently, communist electoral totals in the 1990 vote to the Congress of People's Deputies approximate the 1995 and 1999 showings.

¹⁰On its reconstitution, see Joan Barth Urban and Valerie Solovei, *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).

Congress of People's Deputies, it was momentarily banned again; it competed for the first Duma without laying the groundwork and with many members advocating a boycott.¹¹ Russia's most militant communist groups, such as Viktor Anpilov's Working Russia, did boycott the campaign. Partly to insure themselves against disqualification, a number of communist leaders organized the Agrarian Party of Russia (APR) as an alternative party; several senior communists from the congress, including Vladimir Isakov and Ivan Rybkin, ran and won on the APR ticket.

Between 1993 and 1995, the KPRF regrouped and rebuilt its organization. The 1995 election gave proof of the payoff to this work as the party came up just shy of doubling its portion of the party-list vote and acquired the biggest caucus in the assembly.¹² The resurgence allowed a KPRF parliamentarian and former editor of *Pravda*, Gennadii Seleznev, to capture the post of speaker of the Duma in January 1996. In that summer's presidential election, Gennadii Zyuganov, his nomination papers filed by a KPRF-dominated umbrella group, mounted a fierce challenge to Boris Yeltsin.¹³ Polling almost one-third of the popular vote in the first round, he forced the incumbent into a runoff in which his vote share inched over 40 percent. The KPRF appeared to be a party on the move.

In December 1999, it registered only marginal progress over 1995 in the popular vote count. That decline, the technicalities of the PR formula, and diminishing success in the territorial districts translated into a forty-three-deputy reduction in the KPRF caucus. Although Seleznev was returned as speaker, more and more the Duma was to dance to the Kremlin's tune. Back in the running for president in 2000,

¹¹See Timothy J. Colton and Jerry F. Hough, eds., *Growing Pains: Russian Democracy and the Election of 1993* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998).

¹²KPRF deputies after the 1993 election totaled 41, third behind the liberal Russia's Choice bloc (65 deputies) and the nationalist Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (64). As a result of the 1995 election, KPRF numbers in the Duma swelled to 157, or 35 percent of all deputies. As noted above, exact numbers of deputies affiliated with party fractions in the Duma fluctuate and are affected by complex intergroup bargaining. For background, see Thomas F. Remington, *The Russian Parliament: Institutional Evolution in a Transitional Regime, 1989-1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), chap. 7, and Richard Rose, "How Floating Parties Frustrate Democratic Accountability: A Supply-Side View of Russia's Elections," in Archie Brown, ed., *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 215-224.

¹³On Zyuganov's campaign, see Michael McFaul, *Russia's 1996 Presidential Election: The End of Polarized Politics* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1997), chap. 3.

Zyuganov saw his percentage of the vote drop 3 points, and he lacked the strength to push Putin into a second round, as he had done with Yeltsin in 1996.

Taking the 1999 and the 2000 popular votes together, the happiest face one can put on the KPRF's showing is that it more or less held its own in the electoral jousting. On the negative side of the ledger, there is no denying the party's loss of momentum. In contrast to the static KPRF vote, two spanking new political formations forged in the buildup to the 1999 election — Yedinstvo and OVR — took half again as many party-list votes as the communists and elected twenty-eight more deputies. And in March 2000 the electorate awarded Putin, who during the 1996 presidential campaign toiled in obscurity in the St. Petersburg mayor's office, 18 million more votes than the KPRF designee, Zyuganov.

The 1999-2000 outcome looks more mediocre still when gauged against the prior expectations of the KPRF leadership and many independent observers. Vladimir Putin's conquest of power was so swift and so complete that it is necessary to remind ourselves that it was prefaced by a crumpling of confidence in his patron, Yeltsin, and in the stumbling economic, social, and political reforms enacted by Russian governments over the course of the 1990s.

Yeltsin, it will be recalled, dismissed his long-serving prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, in March of 1998, in an atmosphere of dwindling credence, at home and abroad, in Russia's economy. Chernomyrdin's replacement, the youthful Sergei Kiriyenko, attempted in vain to implement a package of remedial measures. In August 1998 a run on the ruble and Russia's default on its sovereign debt triggered Kiriyenko's resignation and the most serious financial crisis in Russia's brief post-communist history.¹⁴ After an abortive attempt by Yeltsin to reinstate Chernomyrdin (foiled by the KPRF bloc in the Duma), the president was compelled against his wishes to appoint Foreign Minister Yevgenii Primakov (a member of the Soviet Politburo in the late 1980s) to head a new left-of-center government.

¹⁴On the causes and consequences of the 1998 financial crash, see Anders Åslund, *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Chrystia Freeland, *Sale of the Century: Russia's Wild Ride from Communism to Capitalism* (New York: Crown Books, 2000); and Juliet Johnson, *A Fistful of Rubles: The Rise and Fall of the Russian Banking System* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

Undertaking to work in concert with the Duma, Primakov named a KPRF frontbencher, Yurii Maslyukov (a onetime chairman of Gosplan, the USSR's industrial planning agency), as first deputy prime minister in charge of economic coordination and of resurrecting what Primakov and the KPRF similarly couched as "the real economy."¹⁵ At the time, Yeltsin seemed so vulnerable that a move to impeach him gathered steam in parliament and there was talk of constitutional amendments to curb executive power, a pet idea of Zyuganov's suddenly attractive to non-communists.¹⁶ Meantime, bank insolvencies and the devaluation of the ruble bred widespread hardship, and the wealthy "oligarchs" — who had bankrolled Yeltsin's re-election bid in 1996 and enjoyed significant political influence since then — teetered on the brink of ruin.¹⁷ Understandably, pessimism was rampant in liberal, reformist, and business circles. For the KPRF, the doors to the Kremlin seemed to be swinging open.

How, then, was it that the gates swung shut and the KPRF today finds itself as remote as ever from a jubilant return? The answers lie in unproductive wrangling within the leftist camp, in abrupt shifts in the Russian political environment, and in the party's unwillingness to shed baggage from its past.

Coalitional Maneuvering and the Wider Political Context

The KPRF had never possessed a monopoly on the far-left band of the Russian political spectrum. Three other socialistic slates sallied forth in the 1995 State Duma election and reeled in more than 10 percent of the popular vote. The bellicose Communists and Laboring Russia for the Soviet Union, led by Viktor Tyul'kin and Viktor Anpilov, fell just shy of the 5 percent barrier for apportionment of seats in the

¹⁵A measure of Yeltsin's desperation at the zenith of the governmental crisis of August-September 1998 was that before Primakov agreed to serve as prime minister Yeltsin (in Primakov's retelling of it) consented to the appointment of Maslyukov to head the cabinet. Yevgenii Primakov, *Vosem' Mesyatshev Plyus . . .* (Moscow: Mysl', 2001), pp. 10-11.

¹⁶Interview with Zyuganov by Véronique Soule in *Paris Liberation*, October 29, 1998, carried on Johnson's Russia List. The KPRF was not the only political force that proposed constitutional amendment. The most comprehensive and thoughtful plan is in Viktor Sheinis, "Konstitutsiya i Zhizn'," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, January 27, 1999, p. 3. Sheinis was a member of the liberal Yabloko faction in the Duma. Even Vladimir Ryzhkov, the head of the pro-presidential grouping Our Home Is Russia, favored constitutional limitations on presidential power.

¹⁷See David Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001).

Duma. The more softline Agrarian Party of Russia, which had made it over 5 percent in 1993, still got 3.85 percent of the popular vote in 1995. The Power to the People faction, a vehicle for Nikolai Ryzhkov, a former prime minister of the USSR, and neo-nationalist Sergei Baburin, polled less than 2 percent. In the 1996 presidential campaign, Zyuganov prevailed upon the KPRF's rivals on the left to subscribe to his anti-Yeltsin coalition, dubbed the Bloc of Popular and Patriotic Forces. The bloc purported to speak for 126 organizations.¹⁸

Many participants came away convinced that leftist unity and collaboration with Russian nationalists — the unholy marriage of “red and brown,” as liberals phrased it — would henceforth be the key to electoral success. The 1996 bloc reorganized itself as the Popular-Patriotic Union of Russia and, with Zyuganov's blessing, took the lead in lending assistance to gubernatorial candidates of a communist bent.¹⁹ Conspicuous in the union were figures who did not hold a KPRF membership card. The best known was Aleksei Podberëzkin, a university dean and the founder of the Spiritual Heritage movement. He made no secret of his desire that the more overtly nationalistic Popular-Patriotic Union supercede the KPRF as Russia's pre-eminent opposition party. Duma Speaker Seleznev and Viktor Zorkal'tsev, a senior KPRF politico, aligned with Podberëzkin, while Zyuganov's second secretary, Valentin Kuptsov, was cool to the concept. Zyuganov himself equivocated.²⁰

In November 1998, heartened both by Yeltsin's retreats and by the respect granted the KPRF by Prime Minister Primakov, Zyuganov declared that the Communist Party would fly solo in the forthcoming national elections, eschewing a repeat of the 1996 attempt to bring all leftist and “patriotic” groups under one roof. An ancillary motivation for Zyuganov was to erect a firewall between the party and ultranationalists like Al'bert Makashov, a retired army general and member of the KPRF's Duma

¹⁸McFaul, *Russia's 1996 Presidential Election*, p. 37.

¹⁹Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov, “Russian Electoral Politics after Transition: Regional and National Assessments,” *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, vol. 38, no. 9 (November 1997), pp. 507-549.

²⁰McFaul interview with Aleksandr Lebedev, deputy chairman of Spiritual Heritage, September 22, 1999. One issue on which Zyuganov did not hesitate to act was that of the formation of multiple “platforms” within the KPRF. In May 1998 he squelched an attempt by a “Leninist-Stalinist” faction to draw up an alternative program while remaining within the KPRF. See RFE/RL Newline, May 25, 1998.

caucus, who had been emboldened by the August financial crash to vent raw chauvinistic and anti-Semitic sentiments.

In the months to come, Zyuganov and his lieutenants wavered. They toyed in the spring of 1999 with a “three-column” offensive, whereby the KPRF, in league with friendly organizations, would sponsor a trio of electoral blocs — “orthodox,” “enlightened nationalist,” and “radical nationalist” — all as a ploy to net as much as possible of the opposition vote. After some bickering, the KPRF high command upheld unilateralism, satisfied that the anti-Yeltsin mood was so pervasive that the party could afford not to compromise. In registering its electoral slate in July 1999, it affixed the nondescript label “For Victory” (*Za Pobedu*), but did not conceal that the list was very much the creature of the KPRF and that anyone aspiring to join it as a candidate would have to meet stiff conditions.

Some previously autonomous politicians (Ryzhkov, for instance) swallowed these terms. Others went their own way, often departing in a sour mood. The fringe leftist parties in the hunt for votes thus leaped from three in 1995 to six in 1999: Podberëzkin’s Spiritual Heritage;²¹ Communists and Toilers of Russia for the Soviet Union (led by Tyul’kin); the Stalinist Bloc for the USSR (headed by Anpilov); the tiny Party of Peace and Unity (Sazhi Umalatova) and All-Russian Political Party of the People (Anzori Aksent’ev-Kikalishvili); and the Movement in Support of the Army (its list topped by Viktor Ilyukhin, a KPRF leader, Duma committee chairman, and comrade-in-arms of Makashov’s, whom Zyuganov was glad to be rid of).²²

The posturing and skirmishing on the left was a huge distraction for the Zyuganov team. Adamant that the political tide was flowing in their favor and that their primary task was to reinforce the KPRF’s

²¹Podberëzkin was one of those most aggrieved at the KPRF, since he and his staff had provided so much of the intellectual support for Zyuganov’s 1996 presidential campaign and for KPRF election activity since that time. See the press conference with Podberëzkin and Mikhail Delyagin, director of the Institute of Problems of Globalization, National Press Institute, August 18, 1999 (transcript translated and distributed by the *Federal News Service*).

²²In negotiations with Ilyukhin, Zyuganov offered no more than enrollment in the KPRF national list, at the party’s discretion, of several members of the Movement in Support of the Army. These inflexible demands “served for the [KPRF] leadership as a guarantee that undesirable allies would not wind up in its ranks” for the campaign. Sergei Chernyakhovskii, “Kommunisticheskiye Ob’edineniya,” in Michael McFaul, Nikolai Peterov, and Andrei Ryabov, eds., *Rossiia Nakanunye Dumskikh Vyborov 1999 goda* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1999), p. 100. A similar line was taken with hard-core Marxist groups.

primacy among socialist-inclined organizations and citizens, they did not begrudge the effort. The rebuke of Makashov indicated a nervousness in the upper echelons of the KPRF about the petty politics of the leftist camp, and the invective spewing from it, perhaps being injurious to the party in the wider political arena. Though not blind to the risks, KPRF decision makers sorely underestimated them. They passed the year between the August panic of 1998 and the kickoff of the Duma campaign in September 1999 in a mood of self-absorption and complacency about electoral success falling into their lap — all but guaranteed, so they thought, by the tribulations of Yeltsin and his entourage.

The returns on December 19, 1999, were to show the limitations of this blinkered mindset. While the KPRF did augment its share of the popular vote by several percentage points, thereby gaining a step or two on its leftist brethren, the combined share of all of the socialistic parties was to *fall* significantly, from 32.84 percent of the party-list votes for four parties in 1995 to 28.43 percent for seven parties in 1999. The party, in other words, received a slightly larger slice of a shrinking pie. Its electoral blueprint was deficient from the start, in that it encompassed no device for appealing to voters not predisposed toward the post-Soviet left. The fixation on relations with the squabbling sects in the party's home neighborhood was an escape from the more daunting challenge of reaching out to political players closer to the ideological center.

Of the centertropic allies on the horizon, the most promising was without a doubt the prime minister of the federation from September 12, 1998, to May 12, 1999 — Yevgenii Primakov. On the day that Yeltsin sacked him, Primakov was the most admired political figure in the country. He had guided Russia calmly through belt-tightening and the worst of the economic downturn. Once out of government and recuperated from back surgery, he let it be known that he would entertain proposals from parties and blocs girding for the imminent elections.

Zyuganov promptly expressed his support in principle for Primakov occupying the top spot on the KPRF list. The proposal, either naive or insincere, was a non-starter. Primakov was interested in government, not in opposition, and would only have warmed to a KPRF initiative which made overtures to a broad coalition of actors. As he recalls in a memoir, “The only variant I considered possible for me

was to take part in the elections to the State Duma at the head of *a centrist or left-center movement which unified a number of organizations.*²³ The ex-premier quickly spurned Zyuganov and turned his attention to more flexible negotiating partners, gravitating to Yurii Luzhkov, the formidable mayor of Moscow. On August 18, 1999, it was announced that Primakov would head up the Duma list of the OVR bloc, a joint venture of Luzhkov's Fatherland movement and All Russia, an alliance spearheaded by a group of powerful governors and republic presidents. The KPRF opened its official campaign the next month with an anti-Primakov barrage, a decision which cannot have sat well with many of its supporters.

Submergence of the KPRF's campaign in an expansive center-left coalition would have had serious consequences for the party. On the one hand, it would have been obliged to drop its go-it-alone attitude and revisit many cherished policy positions. Most likely, Zyuganov's personal leadership would sooner or later have been open to question. In the summer of 1999, everyone assumed that Primakov planned to run for president the following year. Had this happened, Zyuganov surely would have lost his second chance to stand for president.

On the other hand, all signs are that the cooption of Primakov, and of the others (like Mayor Luzhkov) who might have come in on his coattails, would have been an electoral godsend for the left. Such a broad-based alliance would have tugged the leftist opposition within Russia closer to the center, a repositioning that many of the more successful leftist parties in the post-communist world made earlier in the decade. A poll by the VTsIOM agency in July 1999, shortly before Primakov threw in with Luzhkov, showed that his decision to do so would shave about 6 percentage points off the KPRF's total vote.²⁴

Some communists deemed the fallout from Primakov's defection to be more detrimental than that. A secretary of the KPRF Central Committee, Viktor Peshkov, estimated privately in September 1999 that the absence of Primakov as the head of a left-of-center grouping made it very difficult for the KPRF

²³Primakov, *Vosem' Mesyatsev Plyus . . .*, p. 216 (emphasis added).

²⁴*Vlast'*, no. 31 (August 10, 1999), p. 20.

to win new voters beyond the party's core electorate.²⁵ An immediate outgrowth of the Primakov-Luzhkov entente was a damaging split in the leftist Agrarian Party, which backed Zyuganov in 1996 and if united might have bestowed valuable aid on the KPRF in 1999, particularly in races in rural districts, and afterward in the Duma. Some Agrarians, among them leader Mikhail Lapshin and most of the party's regional bosses, followed Primakov into OVR. A rump group headed by Nikolai Kharitonov, chairman of the Agrarian faction in the 1995-1999 Duma, joined forces with the KPRF.²⁶

The Primakov mini-drama was but one piece of a tidal change in Russian politics which crested in mid-summer of 1999. The backdrop was the first hint of economic stabilization, as Russia began to profit from the surge in world oil prices and the possibilities for lucrative import substitution spawned by the devaluation of the ruble. The Yeltsin camp, paralyzed since the black days of August 1998, swung into action in May. A galvanizing event was the president's dismissal of Primakov and his selection of Sergei Stepashin as prime minister. Shortly afterward, the bill of impeachment of Yeltsin died in the Duma. In early August came the incursion of Chechen rebels into Dagestan and the hostilities that within weeks would ripen into the second Chechnya war.

August 9 brought the most fateful move: Yeltsin cashiered Stepashin, considered weak and ineffective by him and his retinue, and nominated his new favorite, Vladimir Putin, to be prime minister. In putting Putin forth, he explained that he wanted Putin to succeed him as president upon termination of his second term. The Putin appointment coasted through the Duma on August 16. Putin's boldness in responding to the incursion into Dagestan and the subsequent terrorist attacks against apartment dwellers in Moscow and elsewhere spurred his spectacular rise in popularity. All the preconditions of the Yedinstvo phenomenon and the triumph of Putin were in place.

²⁵McFaul interview with Peshkov, September 23, 1999.

²⁶Before the split, the Agrarian leadership had voted in July to compete as an independent bloc. Avtandil Tsuladze, *Bol'shaya Manipulyativnaya Igra: Tekhnologii Politicheskikh Manipulyatsii v Period Vybor 1999-2000 gg.* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2000), p. 129, and *RFE/RL Newslines*, September 24, 1999. Although the Agrarians fell short of the 5 percent barrier for entry into the Duma as a party list in 1995, they managed to form a Duma caucus when victorious deputies, most of them elected on the KPRF ticket, reclassified themselves as Agrarians in order to facilitate the stratagem.

One of the few bits of the Russian political scene not to be in motion was the KPRF. The avoidance of complete economic collapse, Primakov's exit, the defeat of impeachment, the imbroglio in Chechnya, the emergence of Putin — each of these developments caught Zyuganov and the men around him unawares. They were at their most myopic on the last, pivotal point. After fighting tooth and nail in 1998 to veto the comeback of the bland Viktor Chernomyrdin, they saw fit in 1999 to put up no more than token resistance to Putin, the Yeltsin acolyte who was to strike up an almost instant rapport with the populace.

With Zyuganov's consent, the KPRF caucus took no position on the nomination, and many communist deputies welcomed it.²⁷ Putin was, after all, an alumnus of the KGB, an institution still revered by communist traditionalists. The KPRF's election strategy did change some in response to these significant developments in Russian politics. But the net effect was to bring it back full circle to an approach very similar to the campaign of 1995. Everything hinged on the party ensconcing itself as the authentic tribune of the Russian left and on training its guns on Yeltsin and his record. KPRF generals were mobilizing their troops to fight the last war, not the current one.

Loyalists, Converts, and Novices

As an index of electoral accomplishment, the raw vote count from December 1999 is ambiguous. It incorporates a slender KPRF edge over 1995 in the party-list voting, yet at the same time marks the blunting of the party's ballot-box momentum and the dashing of inflated hopes of success.

Individual-level data help us delve beneath the surface and trace the flow of the vote over time. Voting choice in survey research is revealed in respondents' retrospective recall of their behavior. That information may hypothetically be distorted by faulty or dishonest memory. There is, nonetheless, no reason to suspect that such problems will be more pronounced in Russia than in other countries. Further

²⁷Fifty-two KPRF deputies voted against the nomination, 32 voted in favor, 4 abstained, and 41 did not participate in the vote. Putin received 233 votes, only 7 more than necessary for confirmation. Had the 32 Communists who supported him voted nay, the nomination would have failed. Roll call information kindly supplied by Thomas F. Remington of Emory University.

imprecision can creep into estimates from avoidable or unavoidable sampling error, which may result in over- or under-representation of subsets of the population. The methodological controls now built into the highest-quality survey work in the former Soviet Union minimize the danger of such error.

Table 2 lays out some basic facts about continuity and change from 1995 to 1999, as illuminated in our poll of the Russian electorate. The summary figures in column 8 cover all twenty-six parties and blocs entered in the 1999 Duma race; columns 1 through 6 are for the half-dozen parties that cleared the 5 percent threshold and were awarded a quota of seats — the leftist KPRF; the pro-Putin Yedinstvo; Primakov and Luzhkov's OVR; the liberal SPS (Union of Right Forces) and Yabloko slates; and Vladimir Zhirinovskii's erratically nationalistic LDPR (Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia), enrolled due to procedural irregularities as the Zhirinovskii Bloc.

Column 7 refers to the twenty parties and quasi-parties that missed the 5 percent cut. We can be more certain about behavior in 1999 than about 1995, since information about the latter is piped through four years of memory and about the former through a few weeks only. Insofar as errors from recall or sampling method will tend to affect the voters for all parties more or less symmetrically, we can reliably use the data to paint a general picture.

For all parties in the field combined (see column 8 in Table 2), about 30 percent of 1999 voters in our survey sample voted for the identical party they recalled favoring in the 1995 Duma election. Rather more, 45 percent, said they had voted in 1995 for a different party list than the one they selected in 1999. Twenty percent had abstained in 1995 or exercised the option of voting against all parties and quasi-parties in either 1995 or 1999. And 6 percent of 1999 party-list voters had been less than eighteen years old in December 1995 and hence ineligible to vote for the Duma at the time. No question, the Russian electorate at the end of the 1990s continued to be typified by enormous flux and inconsistency.

Equally evident from Table 2 (columns 1 to 7), the behavioral mix varied appreciably across the political parties. The KPRF was one of only a pair for which a majority of 1999 supporters (63 percent, in this instance) were holdovers from 1995. This was 34 percentage points above the average for the electorate. The flip side of the coin was that the KPRF was far less proficient than average at courting the

previous supporters of other parties, those who earlier were underage, those who did not vote in 1995, or those who previously voted against all parties on the ballot. Twenty percent of 1999 KPRF voters had voted for some other party in 1995 (25 percentage points less than the average) and 16 percent had been ineligible or abstained in 1995 (10 points less than the average).²⁸

Only Yabloko, one of just four parties to have taken part in all Russian parliamentary elections since 1993, exhibits a profile comparable to the KPRF's, with 62 percent of its 1999 supporters having also voted for it four years before. Besides Yabloko and, in a limited way, the LDPR, the non-communist parties rarely received votes from prior supporters. Indeed, for the second- and third-running contestants, Yedinstvo and OVR, there were no 1995 loyalists to be retained, because these organizations did not debut until 1999. All non-communist parties except for Yabloko relied much more heavily than the KPRF on defectors from other parties. And, again with the sole exception of Yabloko, political novices (1995 nonparticipants and new voters) were fewer and farther between for KPRF supporters in 1999 than for those who voted non-communist.

All of which is to say that Secretary Peshkov's glum forecast — that the KPRF would nail down its traditional electorate but do indifferently everywhere else — was borne out with a vengeance. Table 3, subdividing 1999 voters by experience in 1995, drives the point home. In December 1999, 70 percent of all loyalists in the electorate, persons who voted for the same party list as in December 1995, were KPRF voters. The Communist Party had no competition in this category from its toughest rival, Yedinstvo. But only 14 percent of converts, individuals who switched parties between 1995 and 1999, were KPRF voters; Yedinstvo alone had almost 40 percent of the voters in this category.

Among electoral novices, the KPRF was again outclassed, its voters accounting for a paltry 20 percent of all persons in this class. On its own, Yedinstvo surpassed the KPRF by 38 percent to 13 percent

²⁸These differences are greater when KPRF voters are compared to all other voters rather than to the average for all voters. For non-KPRF voters, repeat voting for the same party weighs in at 13 percent (50 percentage points less than for the KPRF), voting for a different party the two years at 57 percent (37 points more), and ineligibility or nonparticipation in 1995 at 30 percent (14 points more).

among citizens who voted against all the parties in 1995, 33 percent to 25 percent among 1995 abstainers, and a crushing 42 percent to 12 percent among new voters.

KPRF executives in 1999 were solicitous of demographic constituencies where the party had lagged behind in 1995-1996, i.e., in the more urbanized areas and especially in younger age groups, and were upbeat about the inroads they would make there. New campaign images reflected this new focus. For example, in one well-circulated poster and leaflet, Zyuganov was photographed in a colorful, urban setting with a group of Russian youths, under the slogan, “With Zyuganov life will work out!” (*S Zyuganovym Zhizn’ Naladits’ya!*).

The fruits of the party’s labors (see Table 4) were disappointing. Both of the surveys drawn upon here somewhat exaggerate the KPRF vote, but they do by almost equal amounts (6 or 7 percentage points), which ought to make inter-election comparisons reasonably accurate. In terms of community size, there was no systematic displacement of the KPRF vote from one Duma election to the next. But neither were there any inklings of the party making headway among big-city dwellers between 1995 and 1999. Instead, the 7-point increase in third-quintile communities, and lesser increases in the smallest and second-smallest quintiles (villages and small towns and cities), connote a mild backsliding.

The data on the age structure of the vote prompt a less guarded conclusion. Russians born after 1959 were about 5 percentage points less likely to vote for the KPRF in 1999 than in 1995; in all older age ranges, citizens were more likely to vote KPRF in 1999 than they would have been in 1995, by margins running from 3 points to 7 points. The average KPRF voter in December 1995, born in 1944, was fifty-one years of age; in December 1999 the average KPRF voter had been born in 1943 and was fifty-six years old.²⁹

On the rural-urban continuum and more emphatically on the generational dimension, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation was pointed in 1999 in *the opposite direction* to the one its

²⁹During that same four-year interval, the average age of non-KPRF voters went up by two years, but the gap between KPRF and non-KPRF voters increased, from seven years in 1995 to ten years in 1999. The average age of 1999 KPRF voters who had not voted for the party in 1995 was fifty-four, or almost as old as those who recalled having voted for it in 1995.

leaders and organizers mapped out before the campaign. The party's standing waxed among the groups in which it had already been highest and waned in the social segments where it was striving for greater respectability.

What fouled the KPRF's dreams of electoral advancement? We explore possible answers in two categories: the message enunciated by the architects of the party's 1999 campaign, and the means they employed to sell it to would-be voters.

Ideology and Campaign Message

As in past electoral campaigns, the KPRF was at pains to crank out elaborate statements of its positions on public issues. Its keynote document in 1999 was a manifesto with the stirring title "Stand Up, Giant Land!" (*Vstavai, Strana Ogromnaya!*). Zyuganov and his running mates and aides released a steady procession of bulletins and canned interviews. Sergei Glaz'ev, a thirty-nine-year-old economist who favored the general principle of market reforms and years before was a minister in Yegor Gaidar's liberal cabinet, had Zyuganov's ear on economic questions. His recruitment for eighth spot on the party's national list of candidates was one token of the willingness of the KPRF to tone down its traditional hostility to private property and the market. Another was the purge of Marxist zealots from the KPRF slate. One more was the acceptance of the pragmatic actions of the KPRF's Yurii Maslyukov (and his protector in the prime minister's office, Primakov) following the 1998 economic crunch.

Most eye-catching in the economic sphere was how the KPRF came out with affirmation after affirmation of the importance of property rights. Just before the 1999 vote, Mikhail Dmitriev, a liberal economist and staunch anti-communist, could write the following:

In 1995, a major aim of the CPRF [KPRF] was to alter the outcome of privatization . . . The Communists' long-run goal was complete renationalization . . . Between 1995 and 1996, a major shift has taken place. The main focus is now on improving corporate governance. All parties, including the CPRF, seek to increase protection of shareholders' rights. The CPRF and Fatherland-All Russia continue to claim that the outcome of privatization was unjust, but they

propose limited actions via courts against individual violations of the privatization rules rather than administrative redistribution of property. In one of the most dramatic turnarounds since 1995, the CPRF is now talking about how to enforce property rights and provide effective protection of the private property which was acquired “honestly.” The CPRF explicitly accepts that where competition exists, private property should be the dominant form of ownership. Although the CPRF continues to support collective ownership, it now defines this term as it is defined in Western economies, meaning private, employee-owned firms. The CPRF's economic program supports state ownership only for natural monopolies and enterprises in need of long-term restructuring.³⁰

Another Russian observer, perusing several KPRF leaflets recommending a lighter tax burden on small business, quipped that the communists were beginning to sound like U.S. Republicans.³¹

And yet, it was hardly true that the KPRF wholly severed its state-socialist roots. For one thing, its roster of candidates, despite the shunning of the most truculent elements, did have slots for veterans whose qualms about the party's rapprochement with capitalism were no mystery to the most casual witness.³² For another, the party's approbation of private property and markets was qualified by an abiding conservatism on various hot-button issues, most obviously the privatization of land. Populism was a constant motif in KPRF publicity, as the party called for compulsory reductions in the prices of industrial commodities, energy, and transport.³³

³⁰Mikhail Dmitriev, “Party Economic Programs and Implications,” in Michael McFaul, Nikolai Petrov, Andrei Ryabov, and Elizabeth Reisch, eds., *Primer on Russia's 1999 Duma Elections* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), pp. 38-39.

³¹Tanya Krasnopevtsova, “Comparing Party Platforms,” *Russia's 1999 Duma Elections: Pre-Election Bulletin*, no. 1 (Moscow: Carnegie Center, December 2, 1999), p. 5.

³²Examples on the national list and its regional sublists would be Vasilii Starodubtsev (governor of the Tula region), Valentin Chikin (editor of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*), Anatolii Luk'yanov (erstwhile speaker of the Soviet parliament), Svetlana Goryacheva (deputy Duma speaker), and Valerii Saikin (formerly director of ZIL, one of the largest factories in the Soviet Union, and mayor of Moscow).

³³KPRF, *Vstavai, Strana Ogromnaya!* (Moscow: ITRK, 1999), p. 12; Krasnopevtsova, “Comparing Party Platforms,” p. 5.

More than that, the sweetly reasonable spirit of the verbiage on economic theory evaporated when the topic turned to the practice of the transition to the market in Russia. Taking a leaf from the presidential campaign of 1996, KPRF literature excoriated Yeltsin, his administration, and the business elite for causing the economic and social degeneration of Russia. “Thieving oligarchs” had propped up a “criminal dictatorship” whose policies had produced “millions of unemployed, poor, homeless, and destitute” people. One party pamphlet vowed to “return property stolen by ‘reformists’ to the people” and to “put strategically important sectors under state control.”³⁴

The party’s reworked economic program was not an empty or opportunistic gesture. In fact, its main propaganda salvos subordinated economic policy to positions taken on a welter of noneconomic issues which reverberated passionately with KPRF cadres and candidates — issues of national identity, integrity, and self-assertion. As often as not, the campaign message in 1999 was more nationalistic than communistic in tenor.³⁵

Tellingly, the “Stand Up, Giant Land!” proclamation was subtitled “An Appeal to the Patriots of Russia,” not to Russia’s communists, leftists, or proletariat. The historical antecedent which KPRF promotional materials evoked in 1999 was World War II (the Great Patriotic War, in Soviet and now Russian parlance), not the Bolshevik Revolution. The cover page of “Stand Up, Giant Land!” was imprinted with Joseph Stalin’s famous salutation to his compatriots after the Nazi invasion of 1941: “Comrades! Brothers and Sisters!”

In flyers and other campaign information the KPRF chanted a mantra of “five words of hope”: *spravedlivost’* (fairness or justice), *derzhavnost’* (statehood), *narodovlastiye* (people’s power), *dukhovnost’* (spirituality), and *patriotizm* (patriotism). None of these terms are of Marxist or Leninist derivation, and the last three sound an unabashedly nationalist chord.³⁶ Although the KPRF pledged to

³⁴KPRF, *Vstavai, Strana Ogromnaya!*, p. 4; Krasnopevtsova, “Comparing Party Platforms,” p. 4.

³⁵For discussion of the antecedents to this dualism, see Geir Flikke, “Patriotic Left-Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2 (March 1999), pp. 275-298.

³⁶KPRF, *Vstavai, Strana Ogromnaya!*, cover page, p. 7.

safeguard the rights of ethnic minorities, it gave the Great Russian (*russkii*) majority unabashed pride of place. “Enemies of Russia,” went one pamphlet, “are trying . . . to annihilate our culture. We shall put an end to the russophobic practice of the [Yeltsin] regime. The Russian (*russkii*) man, now humiliated and [lied to] . . . shall claim the place that he deserves.”³⁷ In a bizarre pose for an ideological descendant of the “scientific atheists” who ruled the USSR, Zyuganov wooed Russian Orthodox believers, arguing that the Orthodox Church has to play a critical role in Russia’s revival.

Mining the same nationalist vein, the KPRF tirelessly enunciated stock anti-American and anti-NATO slogans and demanded closer Russian ties with Iran, Iraq, and Libya. It offered to work to “remove all obstacles to the unification of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.”³⁸ In several texts, it portrayed the Western powers as co-conspirators in Russia’s degradation. Noting the influx of food imports into Russian cities (without mention that it had lessened since August 1998), one leaflet concluded darkly, “Therefore, it is not just coincidence that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the U.S.A., Germany, and other states all impose on us, in an increasingly ultimatum-like form, their schemes for undertaking reforms in the interests of foreign capital.”³⁹

Any party’s stance on a political issue, moderate or extreme, will directly influence voting in a democratic election only inasmuch as citizens correctly perceive that stance and that it jibes with their preferences on the issue.⁴⁰ In the case of the Russian Duma election of 1999, we have abundant information about the preferences of citizens themselves. In our survey of the electorate, we asked dozens of questions about economic, socioeconomic, constitutional, and foreign policy issues. It is not so easy to uncover what individuals take the issue positions of parties and candidates to be. The sheer multiplicity of the contenders, especially in a society with as undisciplined a party system as Russia’s, necessitates a

³⁷Quoted in Sergei Chernyakhovsky, “The Communist Party of the Russian Federation,” in McFaul et al., *Primer on Russia’s 1999 Duma Elections*, p. 79.

³⁸Quoted in Krasnopevtsova, “Comparing Party Platforms,” p. 5.

³⁹KPRF, *Programma Vosstanovleniya I Razvitiya Ekonomiki Agropromyshlennogo Kompleksa Rossii* (Moscow: ITRK, 1999), pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰Political scientists often refer to this mode of thinking about voting as the “spatial” approach.

labyrinthine series of questions about voter perceptions. Time-consuming interrogation like this may drain the patience of the respondent and so must be utilized gingerly by the researcher.

We made room in our pre- and post-election interviews for linked questions about citizen opinion and the positions imputed to political parties on three broad policy issues — economic reform, the shape of Russia’s political system, and Chechnya. The questions delving into party positions taken addressed the six parties that received more than 5 percent of the vote and Viktor Chernomyrdin’s Our Home Is Russia, the predecessor to Yedinstvo as the pro-governmental party of power.

The dilemma of economic reform had been front and center in Russian politics since 1991, and of all matters on the national political agenda it was the one where the KPRF had been most diligent in trying to mitigate its longstanding reputation for rigidity. The nature of the country’s political system, like overhaul of the economy, was at root a choice about regime change. The KPRF, again, had updated its image by singing the praises of pluralism and democracy, although Zyuganov’s remarks on the stump were also laced with tender references to values of the authoritarian Soviet period.

Moreover, the symbolic trappings of the campaign, redolent of 1995-1996, had a distinctly Leninist and neo-Soviet flavor. Chechnya is of special interest because this was the issue Yedinstvo and then Putin were to ride to power in 1999-2000 and because, more than economic or political reform, it was charged with the nationalist passions so dear to the leaders of the KPRF. The party took a two-pronged stand. While denouncing Yeltsin and his advisers for allowing things in the North Caucasus to get out of hand, the KPRF essentially supported the government’s pursuit of the war effort and firmly opposed Chechen independence.

The first column of Table 5 summarizes the distribution of mass opinion on the three issues around the time of the Duma election. On economic affairs,⁴¹ the fiasco of 1998 had strikingly not

⁴¹The body of the question read: “Some people say Russia committed a huge blunder by beginning market reforms. They maintain that these market changes caused great damage in that most people have not gotten anything out of them. They believe that Russia should return to a socialist economic system. Other people think that under socialism the economy worked very poorly and it was necessary to change it. They believe that temporary hardships for most people are unavoidable in any reform, but, if we turn Russia into a prosperous country, it is necessary to deepen and accelerate market reforms. What do you think?”

unleashed a stampede toward anti-market positions. The options endorsed by the most citizens in 1999 was continuation of market reforms in a “less painful” manner; about as many counseled a wholesale or, more frequently, a partial restoration of socialist practice; fewer than 10 percent wanted marketization to be accelerated.

On political regime,⁴² the modal position was for a democratized version of the Soviet system, with about equal numbers championing either an unreformed Soviet system or a more liberal arrangement (the present political system or a Western-type democracy). On Chechnya,⁴³ opinion was polarized; about 45 percent of Russians favored or strongly favored keeping the republic in the federation “at all costs”; about 35 percent were willing to let it exit.

Column 2 of Table 5 sets forth the issue positions survey respondents believed the KPRF as a party stood for in 1999. It telegraphs vividly the problem Zyuganov and his colleagues faced in redrawing the face of the organization. On economic and political reform, the modal response was to place the KPRF well on the left flank of the mainstream, and in a much less accommodating location than KPRF propaganda had attempted to locate it. Although KPRF utterances in 1999 repeatedly recognized the importance of markets and private property, almost 70 percent of citizens felt that the KPRF wanted to return the socialist economic model or to retain important ingredients of it for the time being. Only about 45 percent of individuals adhered personally to those positions. Fifty-seven percent of Russians believed that the KPRF supported an unreformed Soviet political system, as against 25 percent who wanted such a result to come about. On policy toward Chechnya, our respondents attributed a relatively hardline outlook to the KPRF. But almost 40 percent could not say what the KPRF’s line on Chechnya was at the time.

All this makes comprehensible the voting patterns tabulated in the third column of Table 5. In only two opinion categories was support for the KPRF more than 5 percent above the mean for the whole

⁴²Question: “What kind of political system, in your opinion, would be most appropriate for Russia?”

⁴³Question: “There is . . . discussion today about the problem of Chechnya. On this question . . . people’s opinions are very diverse. And what do you think about the Chechnya problem? Use a scale where ‘1’ denotes that Russia should keep Chechnya at all costs and ‘5’ denotes that it is necessary to let Chechnya leave Russia.”

survey sample. In both of those niches — among voters enamored of full-blown socialist economics and an unreformed Soviet political order — the attitude most conducive to voting KPRF was the most backward-looking one possible.

On Chechnya, the flat distribution of voting across categories of the attitudinal variable bespeaks the fundamental irrelevance of the KPRF to the problem. The clustering of KPRF votes among economic and political reactionaries, and the absence of an association with opinions on Chechnya, testify that the communists in 1999 failed to persuade the Russian public that the party had turned a corner. On the economy and the political system, the sources of the interference were most likely the memory of Soviet rule and the multiplicity of voices within the KPRF. On Chechnya, the KPRF was trumped by Putin's (and implicitly Yedinstvo's) ability to speak for the government and thus to rally the population around the flag at a time of troubles.

Another way to frame issue politics and voting is to sidestep value preferences and relate electoral choice to assessments of issue competence — the perceived capacity of politicians to manage a policy problem, regardless of their substantive views on it. We asked survey informants in the post-election interview to say which if any of the parties “would do the best job” of handling each of a half-dozen public issues. The six issues were providing social guarantees to the population, improving the economy, safeguarding human rights and democratic freedoms, dealing with the problem of Chechnya, promoting Russia's international interests, and combating crime and corruption.

On any one issue, a citizen who trusted the KPRF to master the problem was very likely (the probability was in the vicinity of 80 to 90 percent) to vote KPRF in 1999. The odds were especially auspicious if the citizen had voted for the party in the previous Duma election, in December 1995. As can be seen in Table 6, a Russian who had voted KPRF in 1995 and thought the party the best qualified to cope with the given issue had a roughly 95 percent chance of voting KPRF in December 1999. If he had not voted KPRF the last time, but did see the KPRF as the most proficient at dealing with the issue, the probability of voting for the KPRF hovered around 85 percent. Citizens who had voted KPRF in 1995 but did not happen to evaluate the KPRF as the most credible on an issue still had a fighting chance (the range

is 42 percent to 56 percent in Table 6) of repeating as a KPRF voter. Finally, individuals who neither voted KPRF in 1995 nor saw the KPRF as the best party in 1999 had almost no chance (6 to 10 percent) of casting a vote for it in 1999.

Past voting experience did not only condition 1999 electoral choice. It affected the very issue-related variable under examination — the citizen’s perception of competence on the policy question. And it did so in a way that once again underscores the persistent difficulty the KPRF had in bursting through to new sections of the electorate, over and above the loyalists who had sided with it in earlier elections. As Table 7 shows, the experience of voting KPRF in 1995 greatly inflated the likelihood that someone would in 1999 perceive the KPRF as being the best party on economic revival, protection of rights and freedoms, and Chechnya. Approximately one-half of all 1995 KPRF voters saw the party four years anon as the best suited to deal with these public issues.

Outside of this nucleus, among individuals who had not voted KPRF in 1995, the percentages on issue competence dipped into the teens. On each of the three issues brought up in Table 7, Shoigu and his amorphous Yedinstvo crew did far better than the KPRF among these voters, impressing 19, 18, and 35 percent of them, respectively, that they would perform best. On economics and civil rights, the gap between Yedinstvo and the KPRF was narrow. On the burning issue of Chechnya, the disparity was three-to-one.

Spreading the Word

Whatever the content of the KPRF’s programmatic message, campaign managers needed to find or devise channels for disseminating it and selling it to possible supporters. On this score, the party had a preconceived notion of how to proceed, so deep-set that it was an article of faith among KPRF officials. It wagered on a labor-intensive style of campaigning harkening back to the agitprop traditions of the Soviet Communist Party, but also having much in common with what Pippa Norris characterizes as the “premodern campaigns” that were the norm in the industrial democracies until the 1950s. In a premodern campaign, as Norris writes, political organization “is based upon direct forms of interpersonal

communications between candidates and citizens at the local level, with short-term, ad-hoc planning by the party leadership” and a reliance on “relatively demanding political activities like rallies, doorstep canvassing, and party meetings.”⁴⁴

The backbone of the KPRF’s premodern campaign machine was its rank-and-file membership, whom it claimed to total 530,000 in 1999.⁴⁵ Branches of the party existed in all eighty-nine units of the Russian Federation, war-torn Chechnya included. Unpaid volunteers rang doorbells, placed telephone calls, distributed leaflets, and stuffed mailboxes with flyers. In some regions, the KPRF kept lists of the names and addresses of known supporters, giving them priority in canvassing. All party cardholders were exhorted to press their family members and neighbors to vote for KPRF candidates.

KPRF strategists were much enamored of old-fashioned factory and town-hall meetings with candidates, as had been the case earlier in the 1990s. Duma deputies and candidates were required to attend such rallies in their home districts and to be on call for travel to events elsewhere.⁴⁶ Zyuganov logged more kilometers than anyone else. The party also banked on the support of pro-KPRF “red governors” and legislators in the provinces. Spokesmen for the KPRF hierarchy estimated that up to one-third of Russia’s regional governments were under the party’s sway.⁴⁷

The communications medium of choice in the premodern KPRF campaign was the communist-oriented press. Three Russia-wide newspapers with stable readerships aimed at party loyalists and sympathizers in 1999: *Pravda*, the authoritative organ of the party (with a circulation of 40,000 copies); *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (allegedly printing 300,000 copies daily); and *Zavtra* (claiming a circulation of 100,000). Four hundred and seventy local newspapers were either owned by the KPRF or considered

⁴⁴Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 137.

⁴⁵There were sixteen self-described KPRF members in our survey sample, or 0.8 percent of the total. If the party’s claims were accurate, its membership would have amounted to about 0.5 percent of the entire electorate in 1999.

⁴⁶This point was stressed in McFaul’s interview with Ivan Mel’nikov, a member of the KPRF leadership, on November 17, 1999.

⁴⁷Chernyakhovskii, “Kommunisticheskiye Ob”edineniya,” p. 106; McFaul interviews with Viktor Peshkov, November 16, 1999, and campaign consultant Maksim D’yanov, February 24, 2000.

loyal to the cause.⁴⁸ Unlike other Russian parties, the KPRF owned the presses that printed its campaign materials and allied newspapers.

In a “modern campaign,” to quote Norris, political work is “coordinated more closely at a central level by leaders, advised by external professional consultants like opinion pollsters” and seeing “national television [as] the principal forum for campaign events, supplementing other media.”⁴⁹ The KPRF dabbled in modern techniques in 1999, but only dabbled. Unlike 1995, when it spent pennies on television advertising, it devoted some resources to the medium. Its Moscow office commissioned four national television ads and thirty clips with a regional focus. It also took advantage of the free television and radio time provided to all parties and candidates. At the initiative of Viktor Peshkov, the KPRF invested in focus groups and opinion polls to refine its campaign tactics and missives.⁵⁰

Compared to other contestants, the KPRF’s ventures in modern-style campaigning were timid. National television was a minuscule part of its effort, rendering it pretty well invisible to analysts sitting in Moscow (to say nothing of the Russian hinterland). More than any other major party, the KPRF restricted itself to in-house campaign expertise and seldom hired outside consultants. So sparing was it in its resort to modern campaign techniques that some long-time KPRF advisers were to abandon the party in disgust after the 1999 campaign.⁵¹ Nor could the communists count on their opponents to give them backhand publicity by smearing the party on their own electronic billboards.

Ironically, KPRF campaign officers construed the dearth of criticism as a liability.⁵² During the 1996 presidential race, Yeltsin’s ceaseless broadsides against Zyuganov accentuated the KPRF’s stature as the leading opposition party. In 1999 those who controlled government television channels ORT and

⁴⁸Chernyakhovskii, “Kommunisticheskiye Ob”edineniya,” p. 107.

⁴⁹Norris, *A Virtuous Circle*, p. 139.

⁵⁰McFaul interview with Viktor Peshkov, November 16, 1999.

⁵¹After the March presidential election, many of these campaign experts joined forces with Gennadii Seleznev to form a new left-of-center movement, Rossiya.

⁵²McFaul interviews with Ivan Mel’nikov, November 17, 1999, and Viktor Peshkov, December 16, 1999.

RTR were obsessed with discrediting Fatherland-All Russia, while privately-owned NTV and Luzhkov-controlled TV-Center reserved their most scathing commentary for the Kremlin and Yedinstvo. National media outlets barely reported on the KPRF campaign. They rarely denounced it, either — they simply ignored it.⁵³ For some Russians, it seems, the implication was that it made no difference what the KPRF said or did.

At a more profound level, the KPRF's quest to deliver its campaign message rested on flawed axioms and intelligence about what its own supporters were up to. Party strategists took it as a given that habitual and prospective communist voters were a breed apart, uniquely accessible through premodern methods and not much attuned to the slick artifacts of the television studio.

In truth, our survey data demonstrate that communist voters in 1999 did not engage with the campaign very differently from the backers of other parties. Contrary to KPRF myth, KPRF voters indulged more frequently than other citizens in only one active form of premodern campaigning — attending a rally or meeting — and performed at exactly the average level in terms of public “agitation” for their favored party and in attempting to convince someone else how to vote (see Table 8).

All in all, only 12 percent of all survey respondents who voted for the KPRF national list reported dropping in on a rally or meeting during the campaign, 24 percent tried to steer someone else's vote, and a trifling 2 percent agitated for the party. Outright members of the KPRF were overrepresented among KPRF voters who agitated for a party or tried to convince someone how to vote (for the KPRF, presumably), but were still a minority in both these categories of activists — one-third of the agitators and only 6 percent of those who attempted to affect a compatriot's vote. Consonant with the party's aging

⁵³OVR campaign strategists believed that the downplaying of the KPRF reflected a deliberate Kremlin strategy to ensure that the communists finished first or second in the Duma vote, on the assumption that Zyuganov would be easier than Primakov to defeat in the presidential election. McFaul interview with Sergei Mndoyants, deputy chairman of the OVR campaign, September 22, 1999.

electoral base, KPRF activists were noticeably older than those who did similar service on behalf of other parties.⁵⁴

Statistics on passive participation in the campaign are if anything more at odds with the KPRF's self-image (see Table 9). An overwhelming majority of KPRF voters (94 percent) were never contacted by canvassers for any party; 1 percent, that is all, were canvassed by a representative of the KPRF. The only passive activity (on which we collected survey information) where a majority of KPRF voters took part was reading a local newspaper during one week of the Duma campaign, and even by this yardstick KPRF partisans participated at the national average.

Most of the time, the individuals who voted for the KPRF slate were left untouched by the party's efforts — 12 percent received KPRF materials in their mailboxes, 17 percent came across leaflets and posters on the streets, 30 percent were approached by someone else seeking to influence their vote, and 29 percent read a national newspaper. The party's effort was not particularly well targeted, either, as eventual KPRF voters were two-and-one-half to three-and-one-half times more likely to be canvassed or exposed to the briefing materials of *other* parties in the course of the campaign than to get this treatment from the KPRF. Incredibly, not one of the members of the KPRF in our survey sample recalled being canvassed by the KPRF during the Duma campaign or receiving a large quantity of its materials in the post; one-quarter of the communists whom we polled said they had seen a lot of KPRF leaflets and posters.

Pro-communist governors, another much-touted vehicle for premodern influence, scarcely impinged on citizens' consciousness in 1999. All told, 7 percent of KPRF voters were aware of their governor having endorsed the party. Almost all of these individuals were located in five regions (Altai, Chelyabinsk, Krasnodar, Tambov, and Tula).⁵⁵ KPRF voters were about four times as likely to believe

⁵⁴KPRF voters who attended a rally or meeting during the campaign averaged fifty-two years of age (vs. forty-four for the supporters of other parties who did the same). KPRF and non-KPRF agitators were on average sixty and forty years old. For trying to influence another person's vote, average ages were fifty-five and forty-six.

⁵⁵Eighty-seven percent of KPRF voters who believed their governor had endorsed the party were located in these five regions, with the largest concentration being in Krasnodar krai. The percentage was slightly lower among non-KPRF voters, where the biggest concentration was in Tambov oblast.

their governor had endorsed some other party than that he was pro-KPRF; three-quarters were unaware of any allegiance on the part of the regional governor.

As for the vaunted pro-communist press, it got through to a negligible share of its intended audience. When questioned about media intake in the pre-election interview, a mere 4 percent of our respondents who ultimately decided in favor of the KPRF's candidate list said they had read *Pravda*, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, or *Zavtra* during the preceding week.⁵⁶ The same four national newspapers, all of them dating back to the Soviet era and none of them pro-KPRF — *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, *Argumenty i Fakty*, *Trud*, and *Moskovskii Komsomolets* — led in popularity among KPRF and non-KPRF voters alike.⁵⁷

Where, then, did communist voters obtain the bulk of their campaign-relevant information? The answer is crystal clear: the median KPRF voter was *as dependent as all other voters on modern, broadcast means of political communication*, and expressly on television. In all five categories for which we have survey data (see Table 10), KPRF supporters were found almost precisely at the national mean for all voters. And, by every indicator we have, their exposure to modern-style electioneering occurred at a high level.

About 90 percent of KPRF voters watched the daily television news once or more during the week of the campaign in which they were interviewed (55 percent watched it each day of that week) and considered television to be their basic medium for the provision of political information. About 80 percent viewed weekly newsmagazines on television and recalled seeing the parties' televised ads during the Duma campaign. About 70 percent said they watched the television news attentively.

The cold reality of Table 10 is starkly at variance with the assumptions of the KPRF leadership in 1999. At party headquarters in Moscow, staffers clung to their fond and largely fictional vision of a

⁵⁶One percent of individuals who eventually voted for another party had read one of the three newspapers. The average for all voters was 2 percent. For members of the KPRF, the average was 19 percent.

⁵⁷*Komsomol'skaya Pravda* was the most popular national newspaper among KPRF voters (8 percent exposure in the week before the pre-election interview) and non-KPRF voters (12 percent), followed for both groups by *Argumenty i Fakty* (8 percent and 11 percent). For KPRF voters, *Trud* ranked third and *Moskovskii Komsomolets* fourth; for non-KPRF voters, the order was reversed.

robustly grassroots campaign in which a legion of activists showered voters with visits and printed materials. On the ground, pro-KPRF Russians received their most regular exposure to the campaign from the same mass-media sources as their countrymen did. In this virtual war of pictures and words the KPRF was at an immense disadvantage, especially when trying to attract new voters.

The party did not, of course, have the financial resources readily at the disposal of establishment-based and business-friendly blocs like Yedinstvo and OVR. But it made little concerted effort to fill its campaign war chest, either. Had the party's attitude toward television been less lackadaisical, it could conceivably have rustled up some of the funds needed, be it donations from the rank and file or from businesses willing to share their wealth as a hedge against a communist comeback. With or without extra rubles, it could have been more receptive to independent consultants and have made more entrepreneurial use of the free air time provided it on both television and radio.⁵⁸

Only well into the campaign did KPRF officials realize that, paid and unpaid ads aside, they were being ignored in the news coverage of the big television networks. A more lively and a more inventive KPRF campaign might have made it harder for TV anchors to pass over the party in silence. Either a neo-Stalinist crusade or a forward-looking social-democratic strategy would have been newsworthy and might have compelled other players to respond with anti-communist barbs, as had happened in the 1995-1996 electoral cycle. Zyuganov's ponderous fine tuning of the party's customary doctrine inspired neither loathing nor affection.

As its high rate of retention of past supporters shows, the KPRF's near-absence from the television screen in 1999 was not enough to precipitate massive erosion of its political base. The problem was with converts and novices, not loyalists. To the limited extent that the KPRF had renovated its

⁵⁸We asked our survey respondents if there were any advertising clips they "especially liked." Five percent of all voters mentioned KPRF ads and 19 percent mentioned those of other parties. Only 13 percent of KPRF voters said they had especially liked the party's clips; an equal percentage said they had liked the ads of *other* parties. About 20 percent of Yedinstvo voters mentioned Yedinstvo ads as being especially good, but Yedinstvo did not rely nearly as much as other parties on advertising, since it got such favorable coverage in the news reports of state television.

electoral message, Russians who voted for other parties in previous elections, or who were newcomers to electoral activity, had few avenues for getting acquainted with the message.

As noted above, two in five participating voters could not tell survey workers what the position of the KPRF was on the war in Chechnya. On the economy and the nature of the political system, citizens consistently ascribed more hidebound positions to the party than its leaders were on record as wishing to project. And on high-salience issues it was hard for the KPRF to convey the impression to outsiders that it would be competent as a governing party to deal with the problem. The KPRF's approach to the media, in short, was a recipe for holding onto its extant circle of supporters, not enlarging it.

Conclusions

For the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the parliamentary election of December 1999 was at best a mixed success. As in 1995, the KPRF could be proud that it emerged with the largest number of votes cast for its candidates' list, the largest number of deputies elected in the districts, and the largest caucus in the new Duma. These achievements, however, must be balanced against a leveling out in the party's mass support, a downturn in the size of its Duma contingent, the birth of serious partisan foes (Yedinstvo, above all), and the amazing ascendancy of Vladimir Putin, a political neophyte and protégé of the despised Boris Yeltsin who came to power owing absolutely nothing to the KPRF and the left. The presidential contest of March 2000, in which Putin so unceremoniously disposed of Gennadii Zyuganov, ratified the verdict previewed in December. In both contests, the KPRF was still a fixture of the national political scene, but no longer, if it ever was, an insurgent force, shaping and defining the scene.

The KPRF's performance is all the more unimpressive when we bear in mind the extraordinary crisis that beset Russia's regime at the end of the 1990s. The communists did not script that crisis; nor were they responsible for the eventual countervailing trends which helped Yeltsin and his designated heir pluck victory from defeat. They did not capitalize on the economic emergency and, after it peaked, they did little to halt the deterioration in the party's fortunes contrived by the Kremlin and its allies. The KPRF did an excellent job in the Duma election of retaining loyalists, besting all other parties in that regard; it

did a poor job of luring converts and novices into the fold. In the big cities and among the young, where the party counted on shoring up its standing, it finished worse than in 1995; it made gains among peasants, small-town dwellers, the middle-aged, and the elderly, precisely the constituencies where it was already overrepresented.

The KPRF electoral machine stalled in part because those in the driver's seat deluded themselves into thinking that the road to electoral success lay through outfoxing other leftist parties and factions and the nationalist movements which shared their anti-Western animus. Overestimating the far left's electoral strength as well as the appeal of nationalist slogans, they sank too little effort into extending bridges toward more centrist coalition partners and pools of support. A turning point was Zyuganov's failure to reach a deal with Yevgenii Primakov, which coincided in time with the promotion of Putin to prime minister and the eruption of the second Chechen war.

Although the party did unburden itself of extremist candidates and dilute some of the more doctrinaire of its broad programmatic stands, it cleaved to orthodox positions on certain specific issues and on many points spoke in a shrill tone reminiscent of the fire-breathing campaigns of days gone by. On Chechnya, the urgent agenda item of 1999, it did not distinguish itself from government policy. The KPRF hawked a program which in its totality most Russians perceived as out of date and divorced from their daily concerns. It faltered at convincing citizens other than communist loyalists that it could be trusted to deal with the foremost challenges facing Russian society. The problem of the unpalatable message was exacerbated by the KPRF's choice of instruments for communicating it. The party by and large stuck with premodern campaigning methods in which it did not have nearly the superiority its leaders thought it did, bypassing the modern, television-based techniques to which its supporters were just about as thoroughly exposed as other citizens were.

Zyuganov and his brain trust, which contains skilled and thoughtful people, shrug off the experience of 1999-2000, say they have learned the appropriate lessons, and insist that the next time things will be different, beginning with the election of a KPRF majority in the Duma campaign scheduled

for late 2003.⁵⁹ We do not share this view. An unreformed KPRF in all probability has no future in the civic life of the new Russia beyond struggling to perpetuate its present, circumscribed role. Its chances of actually governing, as opposed to finding fault with those who do, have never looked dimmer.

Only radical surgery would save it from this fate. To discard its Leninist style and symbols, acquire a new animating vision, adopt modern political technologies, hammer out multiparty electoral coalitions, and invite the support of alienated social groups would not come cheap. It requires the kind of rupture with the past that most Soviet bloc communist parties underwent at the end of the 1980s and that the KPRF has always frowned upon. If European social democracy is where a reborn party must go, it cannot realistically set sail in that direction without changing its name and charter, accepting the inevitability of the angry exodus of many of its most dedicated members, and, as a first step, deposing an entrenched and dutiful leader.

Finding enough communists willing to pay the price for so wrenching a round of change might not be enough, since other forces in Russia's evolving political system may not care to play along. As much as for anyone, the ongoing presence of a big, inert, and nonthreatening communist party is a bonus for Russia's second president, his disciples in Yedinstvo, and his design for instituting "managed democracy." It would not be surprising if Putin and company threw the KPRF just enough crumbs to maintain the status quo within the party, thereby assisting them in preserving equilibrium in the wider political order. This way, a party which traces its roots back to the Bolsheviks, the revolutionaries whose political children and grandchildren took the path of conservatism in the mature Soviet regime, would in a strange twist of history become a conservative force in the politics of the post-Soviet state.

⁵⁹Colton conversation with Leonid Dobrokhotov, adviser to Zyuganov, September 24, 2001.

TABLE 1. KPRF Performance in Russian National Elections, 1993-2000

Election	Percent of valid votes received^a
State Duma, December 12, 1993 — national party list	12.40
State Duma, December 17, 1995 — national party list	22.73
President, June 16, 1996 — first round — nominee Gennadii Zyuganov	32.49
President, July 3, 1996 — second round — nominee Zyuganov	40.73
State Duma, December 19, 1999 — national party list	24.38
President, March 26, 2000 — nominee Zyuganov	29.49

a. Omits spoiled ballots, but includes valid ballots cast against all parties or presidential candidates.

Source: Central Electoral Commission figures, as reported in Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 231-235, and www.russiavotes.org.

TABLE 2. Continuity of Voting Experience, 1995-1999, by Party List Voted for in 1999 (Percentages)^a

Experience in 1995	Party list voted for in 1999							
	KPRF	Yedin-stvo	OVR	SPS ^b	Yabloko	LDPR ^c	Minor party	ALL PARTIES
Voted for the same party as in 1999	63	0	0	11	62	34	20	29
Voted for a different party than in 1999	20	64	75	58	15	32	56	45
Voted against all parties	1	4	7	2	4	4	0	3
Abstained	13	22	14	15	16	17	22	17
Underage	2	10	4	14	4	13	1	6

a. Total N = 1,134 weighted cases. Omits respondents who voted against all parties in 1999 and voters who claimed to have voted in 1995 or 1999 but could not recall how.

b. Continuity is with two of SPS's antecedent organizations in 1995 (Russia's Democratic Choice and Common Cause).

c. For procedural reasons, the LDPR list in 1999 was labeled the Zhirinovskii Bloc.

**TABLE 3. Continuity of Voting Experience, 1995-1999,
by Experience in 1995 (Percentages)^a**

Party list voted for in 1999	Experience in 1995				
	Voted for the same party as in 1999	Voted for a different party than in 1999	Voted against all parties	Abstained	Underage
KPRF	70	14	13	25	12
Yedinstvo	0	37	38	33	42
OVR	0	20	28	10	9
SPS	4	12	6	9	23
Yabloko	16	2	9	7	4
LDPR	5	3	6	4	9
Minor party	6	11	0	12	1

a. Total N = 1,134 weighted cases.

TABLE 4. Age, Community Size, and the Vote for the KPRF Party List, 1995 and 1999 (Percentages)

Social category	1995 ^a	1999 ^b
Mean for entire sample	29	31
Community size (quintile)		
Smallest	39	41
2	37	39
3	24	31
4	29	26
Largest	16	17
Year of birth		
Before 1930	45	49
1930s	42	46
1940s	31	34
1950s	22	29
1960s	20	15
1970s and 1980s	18	13

a. Total N = 2,114 weighted cases. Data from the panel survey utilized in Colton, *Transitional Citizens*.

b. Total N = 1,403 weighted cases.

TABLE 5. Citizen Opinions, Issue Positions Imputed to the KPRF, and Voting Choice, 1999 (Percentages)

Issue and position	Opinion^a	Position imputed to KPRF^a	Voted KPRF within opinion category^b
Economic strategy^a			
Return to the socialist economy	19	45	57
Retain for the time being important elements of socialism	24	23	34
Continue market reforms, but less painfully	43	5	20
Deepen and accelerate market reforms	8	1	11
Don't know	8	25	28
Preferred political system^b			
Soviet system we had before perestroika	25	57	64
Reformed Soviet system	41	24	29
Current political system	13	3	4
Democracy of the Western type	9	0.3	2
Don't know	12	15	6
Chechnya — 5-point scale^a			
1 — Keep it at all costs	32	39	35
2	12	10	21
3	14	5	26
4	6	1	35
5 — Let it leave Russia	28	6	31
Don't know	8	38	32

a. Among all respondents who were asked the question. Questions about the economy and Chechnya asked in the pre-election interview (N = 1,919 weighted cases). Question about preferred political system asked in the post-election interview (N = 1,846 weighted cases).

b. Only for individuals who voted for a party in the State Duma election (N = 1,403 weighted cases).

TABLE 6. The Vote for the KPRF Party List in 1999, by Evaluations of KPRF Issue Competence and Vote in 1995 (Percentages)^a

Experience and evaluation of KPRF competence	Issue		
	Economic revival	Protect rights and freedoms	Chechnya
Voted KPRF in 1995			
Saw the KPRF as the best party 1999	93	97	96
Did not see the KPRF as the best party 1999	42	46	56
Did not vote KPRF in 1995^b			
Saw the KPRF as the best party 1999	81	84	88
Did not see the KPRF as the best party 1999	6	8	10

a. Citizens who voted for a party in the 1999 Duma election only (N = 1,403 weighted cases). Questions about issue competence asked in the post-election interview.

b. Includes citizens who in 1995 voted for a party other than the KPRF, voted against all parties, abstained, or were underage.

TABLE 7. Voter Evaluations of KPRF Issue Competence in 1999, by 1995 Voting Experience (Percent Who Believe the KPRF Can Handle the Issue Better than Any Other Party)^a

Issue	Voted KPRF in 1995	Did not vote KPRF in 1995	All voters
Economic revival	58	17	26
Protect rights and freedoms	51	14	23
Chechnya	41	11	18

a. N = 1,403 weighted cases.

**TABLE 8. Active Participation in Premodern Campaign Activities,
1999 (Percentages)^a**

Activity	KPRF voters	Voters for other parties	All voters
Attended a rally or meeting	12	5	7
Agitated or otherwise helped in the organization of a party's campaign	2	2	2
Tried to convince someone else how to vote	24	22	23

a. N = 1,403 weighted cases. Questions about participation asked in the post-election interview.

TABLE 9. Passive Participation in Premodern Campaign Activities, 1999 (Percentages)^a

Activity	KPRF voters	Voters for other parties	All voters
Was canvassed in person or by telephone ^b	6	7	6
By KPRF representative	1	1	1
By representative of other party	3	4	4
Received materials in mailbox ^b	53	63	60
Many from KPRF ^c	12	16	14
Many from other parties ^c	41	44	43
Encountered leaflets and posters ^b	52	60	58
Many by KPRF ^c	17	15	16
Many by other parties ^c	43	50	48
Someone else tried to convince respondent how to vote	30	37	35
Read a national newspaper during one week of campaign	29	38	35
Read a local newspaper during one week of campaign	55	54	54
Aware that governor endorsed a party	25	35	32
Endorsed KPRF	7	6	7
Endorsed another party	18	29	25

a. N = 1,403 weighted cases. Questions about canvassing, materials, and leaflets and posters asked in the post-election interview. Questions about newspaper readership asked in the pre-election interview.

b. Total is not the exact sum of the KPRF and non-KPRF components because of (1) rounding error, (2) inability of some respondents to recall the party in question, and (3) multiple positive responses.

c. Respondents were asked if they had received or encountered such materials, and then asked to mention the parties' whose propaganda they had seen "most often" (*chashche vsego*).

TABLE 10. Participation in Modern Campaign Activities, 1999 (Percentages)^a

Activity	KPRF voters	Voters for other parties	All voters
Watched some daily television news during one week of campaign	92	92	92
Watched weekly newsmagazines during one month of campaign	82	83	83
Watched television news quite or very attentively	69	67	68
Television is basic media source of information about political events	89	89	89
Saw parties' advertising clips during campaign	79	83	81

a. N = 1,403 weighted cases. Questions about frequency and attentiveness of television viewing asked in the pre-election interview. Questions about basic media source and advertising clips asked in the post-election interview.