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Russian Politics in Transition: Political Parties and Organizations in Russia and the Murmansk Region

Jan Åke Dellenbrant, University of Umeå
Oleg Andreev, Murmansk Advanced Teachers' College

In this article the development of new political organizations in Russia is discussed. The authors acknowledge the fact that the new parties and organizations are still weak and not well organized, but they nevertheless play a significant role in the preservation of democracy in Russia. Several stages in the party creation process can be discerned. Before the 1991 attempted *coup d'état* the Communist Party of the Soviet Union still played a dominant role, while a number of smaller political organizations emerged. After the dissolution of the CPSU, the centre groupings dominated the political scene. Gradually, the level of political polarization increased, as evidenced by the 1993 elections which spelled victory for the post-communists and ultra-nationalists. Using Sartori's definitions, the authors analyse the parties and organizations with the help of a left–right continuum, which portrays some differences in Russian politics without covering all cleavages. The important regional differences in party formation are illustrated with empirical data from the Murmansk region. During the Gorbachev period a number of informal organizations emerged which gradually developed into parties critical of the CPSU. Initially, social democratic organizations were strong on the Kola Peninsula, but they declined in importance due to internal disagreement. In the 1993 elections, the largest parties in this region were the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party and the market-oriented Russia's Choice. In Russia as a whole, the post-election period manifested itself in increasing political polarization and successive retreat from the market-reform policies. Clearly, the road to a well-functioning system of parties in Russia is still a long one.

Introduction

It is no exaggeration to state that the present political situation in Russia is characterized by extreme complexity. Gorbachev's politics of *glasnost*, *demokratizatiya* and *perestroika* increased the level of personal freedom and attempts were made to reorganize the political system and the economy. However, the reforms also resulted in a number of problems, such as an increase in national conflicts, the disruption of the economy, and a shortage of food and industrial goods. Eventually, the whole Soviet state collapsed.

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Gorbachev pursued a policy of decentralization of the state and economic power, including the transfer of political power from Moscow to the republics and regions. This resulted in the proclamation of independence

by all 15 former Soviet republics in the 1988–90 period. This process towards total disintegration of the Soviet state was accelerated by the attempted *coup d'état* in Moscow in 1991.

The adoption of the new Union Treaty, which was planned to be signed on 20 August 1991, did not take place because of the coup. The last Congress of the USSR People's Deputies gathered at the end of August 1991. The Congress succeeded in adopting an important resolution. It was a resolution to the effect that a new unity – replacing the USSR – might come into existence in the future. It was definitely clear, however, that this would not be an authoritarian Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, consisting of 15 formally independent, but in reality powerless republics. It would not be a federation, but a confederation. Gorbachev wanted to create a new Union of Sovereign States, including 10 or, possibly, 12 republics. The result of this process was, however, the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In a later section we will look more closely at the political development of the CIS and especially at the appearance of informal democratic organizations.

Some Theoretical and Methodological Remarks

In this article, we aim at classifying the Russian political parties and to assess their role in the democratization process. In particular, we will analyse the parties during three contemporary periods: in the Russian Federation before the attempted *coup d'état* of 1991; in the Russian Federation after the coup; and, finally, in Russia after the collapse of the USSR. We also include a section on party politics on the regional level, using empirical data from the Murmansk region. These analyses are made against the background of the changes in the status of the USSR and the states which came into existence after the USSR.

A continued democratization in Russia requires a stable political system and a successful economic transition. To achieve this, well-functioning political parties and an efficient party system are required. Western experience shows that political parties are usually the most suitable intermediary structures for articulating and aggregating the interests of the people. In his well-known study of parties and party systems Giovanni Sartori proposed a simple definition of political parties:

> A party is any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or nonfree) candidates for public office (Sartori 1976, 63).

Sartori's broad definition is especially suited to Russia. Here not only organizations that label themselves parties, but also broader movements,

uniting several parties, looser political groups and trade unions, are components of the political system.

Thus, it is no easy task to classify political parties and movements in Russia. The political consciousness of the Russian people has been distorted as a result of the long authoritarian rule. It seems useful, at the present stage of analysis, to use the traditional classification of political parties and movements according to the left–right political spectrum. This implies the existence of the following major tendencies in Russian politics:

(1) Extremely left-wing political tendencies such as communists of various kinds;
(2) left-wing tendencies, e.g. socialists and social democrats;
(3) centre political forces, for instance liberal democrats;
(4) right-wing oriented forces, such as conservatives and Christian democrats;
(5) extremely right-wing tendencies including fascists and racist organizations.

All of these five main political orientations exist now in Russia. A similar scheme of analysis is used by Galina Luchterhandt, who divides the Russian spectrum into four tendencies: socialist, general democratic, radical anti-communist and national patriotic (1992, 398). By and large, both these categorizations seem to correspond closely to the left–right continuum.

There are also other dimensions in Russian politics. Nationalism and ethnicity play an important role. The relationship to the former CPSU is another dimension to be considered. Nevertheless, it is possible roughly to integrate these dimensions into the left–right continuum.

The data for this article have been sought from various party programmes, articles in journals and newspapers. An analysis of these documents has not been carried out previously. Both authors of this article have also participated in party meetings in Russia. One problem with the party programmes used is that they sometimes do not state clearly the real goals of the party or organization. In these cases supplementary information has been sought. Some organizations have also been in the process of creation, which has led to difficulties in assessing their policies. By combining different sources these difficulties have, on the whole, been solved.

The Multi-Party System During the Gorbachev Period

Before the start of *perestroika*, real participation in politics was the privilege of the members of the Soviet Communist Party. The Communist Party was

the "leading and guiding force of the Soviet Union" according to the Constitution. The new party leaders, however, realized during the Gorbachev period that the communists had exhausted this leading role and that no further progress could be attained until the one-party system had been dissolved.

In March 1990, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies decided to change Articles 6 and 7 of the USSR Constitution. Out of a total of 2250 deputies 1817 had voted for the abolition of the articles which secured a leading and guiding role for the Communist Party. They were also in favour of allowing the creation of new parties (*Izvestiya sovetov narodnykh deputatov*, 15 March 1990). On 12 June 1990, the first People's Deputies Congress of the Russian Federation adopted the declaration of state sovereignty of the RSFSR that "Russia guarantees that all political parties can take part in governing the state and society on an equal basis" (*Vedomosty syezda narodnykh deputatov RSFSR*, 1990, no. 2). Futhermore, in October the USSR law on social organizations was adopted (*Pravda*, 16 October 1990).

The political spectrum in Russia was diverse and fragmented. New forces had been coming on to the political scene, and different parties had held their constituency congresses and mass movements had been created. By the end of 1990 more than 20 political parties and movements had been created in the Soviet republics.

Russia was still only in the very initial stage of the creation of a multiparty system. The experiences of Greece, Portugal and Spain, which passed from authoritarian rule to democracy in the 1960s and 1970s, show that during this process tens and sometimes even hundreds of political parties are created. Later these parties unite into blocs or into parties. Similar processes are taking place in Russia.

First, we would like to suggest a classification of the parties and movements in Russia before the August 1991 coup (Appendix 1). In order to explain this scheme further, we indicate some major characteristics of these parties and movements.

The extreme left in Russia before the coup was represented by the *Workers' United Front*. Its leaders were Richard Kosolapov, a former editor of the CPSU Central Committee Journal, *Kommunist*, and Aleksei Sergeyev, a former candidate to the vice-presidency of Russia. The members of the Front represented the orthodox communist outlook. The main points of its economic programme were the equality "of all forms of ownership possible under socialism", with state ownership prevalent in the major sectors. The Front advocated central planning with some market elements. Only individuals and families should be allowed to run private business, not joint stock corporations. In politics, it supported a leading and guiding role for the Communist Party and worked against the intro-

duction of a multi-party system. In 1989–90, this grouping organized a large number of meetings in Moscow and St Petersburg to support Marxist–Leninist policies for Russia (*Moscow News*, 1990, no. 37, 10; Koval 1991, 372–375).

In May 1989, Nina Andreyeva, a teacher from St Petersburg, organized a new extremely left-oriented group, *Unity for Leninism and Communist Ideas*. This group favoured state ownership of the means of production and the abolition of private property. The group supported old Stalinist ideas, and a return to the political life of the 1930s and 1940s (*Argumenty i fakty*, 1991, no. 6).

The *Russian Communist Party* was established in June 1990 shortly before the 28th Congress of the CPSU. At the constituent congress of the new party, Ivan Polozkov was elected first secretary. All the members of the CPSU, living in Russia, automatically became members of the Russian Communist Party. Thus, more than 15 million people were registered as members of this party in 1990. The leaders of the Russian Communist Party were all typical representatives of orthodox communism (*Pravda*, 22 June, 24 June and 7 September, 1990). In 1990, this party was an extremely important force in Russia, but after that time its strength declined.

The *All-Union Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists* was a small organization in Russia. It concentrated its activities to the big cities of Moscow, St Petersburg, Ekaterinburg and others. This group displayed a high degree of activity. The main points in its economic programme were the exchange of commodities without middlemen and the organization of the economy on the basis of workers' self-management. This group referred to the ideas of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. Some anarchists were elected into local soviets, for instance in Moscow, although, in general, anarchism is not a strong force in Russia (Koval 1991, 256–261).

Since 1985, the former CPSU leaders Gorbachev, Yakovlev, Shevardnadze and others have developed their policies in the direction of the European social democrats. They were among the first communists to speak about individual freedom, human rights, market economy, and later about a multi-party system. They dissociated themselves from the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat and favoured the idea of the division of power. These ideas were also supported by the delegates to the 28th Congress of the CPSU. This indicates that the union level leaders of the CPSU were moving towards social democracy, while the leaders of the Russian Communist Party stayed as before with an extremely left-oriented policy.

There were also two somewhat less important parties belonging to the left wing. These were the Social Democratic Party of Russia (SDPR) and the Republican Party of Russia (RPR). The Social Democratic Party was created in the spring of 1990. Its theoretical programme was highly similar

to that of the West European social democrats (Koval 1991, 122–127). The estimated number of party members was 20000. The leaders of this party were Oleg Rumyantsev, Russian People's Deputy, and Aleksandr Obolensky, former USSR People's Deputy.

The members of the Republican Party were originally members of the Communist Party. They supported the position of the so-called democratic platform of the CPSU. After the 28th Congress they left the Communist Party and organized their own party. The leaders of this party were the Russian People's Deputy Lysenko and the former USSR People's Deputy Sulakshin. The programmes of these two parties are highly similar (*Materialy uchreditelnogo syezda Respublikanskoi Partii Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 1991, 54). The question of their unification has been discussed on a number of occasions. However, several social democrats would not agree to join a party containing a large group of former communists. The left-wing parties also included a small Socialist Party (one of leaders of which was Boris Kagarlitsky) as well as several minor socialist groupings (White 1991, 275 ff.).

There were over ten parties in the centre grouping, the biggest being the *Democratic Party of Russia*, headed by Nikolai Travkin, with a membership of about 40000. The inaugural congress of this party took place in May 1990. The Democratic Party was a typical liberal party favouring private ownership, a multi-party system, limitation of powers, etc. (*Demokraticheskaya gazeta*, 1991, no. 6). The other parties of the political centre had quite similar programmes. The personal relations between the party leaders influenced the parties' activities to a high degree. The former leaders of the Democratic Party, Salje, Konstantinov and Ponomarev, who were all Russian People's Deputies, organized their own *Free Democratic Party*. Kasparov and Murashov left Travkin's party and formed their own party which is called the *Liberal Conservative Union*. There were also two constitutional parties, both considering themselves to be the real heirs to the Russian Cadet (Constitutional Democratic) Party from the beginning of this century (White 1991, 269–276).

The centre also included the *Peasants' Party* headed by the former USSR People's Deputy, Chernichenko, and the *People's Party*, headed by the former investigator from the USSR prosecutor's office, Timur Gdlyan, as well as other parties (*Demokraticheskaya gazeta*, 10 November 1990).

Furthermore, there were two more parties whose leaders considered themselves to belong to the liberal tradition. One of these was the Democratic Union Party. However, the position of this party was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, the major points of its economic programme had a liberal orientation. A radical reform of the economy was advocated instead of partial reforms as well as unconditional rights of private ownership. It also supported the free transfer of land to those who worked it

(*Partiya Demokraticheskiy soyuz. II syezd. Dokumenty* 1989, 12; Koval 1991, 184–90, 270–277; *Svobodnoe slovo*, 12 February 1991). On the other hand, this party was similar to the extreme left with respect to its political methods: unauthorized meetings, scandals, vicious public newspaper attacks, etc.

The second party which claimed to be liberal was the *Liberal Democratic Party* of the USSR, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a former candidate to the presidency of Russia. According to his own views, he is "a nationalist and a patriot". For all practical purposes, this is an extremely right-wing party, rather than a liberal party (Koval 1991, 184–90; *Izvestiya*, 14 August 1991; *Kommersant*, 1991, no. 40).

Apart from the Liberal Democrats, the right wing of political parties was represented by the *Russian Christian Democratic Movement*, headed by the Russian People's Deputies Viktor Aksyutich and Gleb Anishenko. This organization had about 15000 members (Koval 1991, 137–149; *Demokraticheskaya gazeta*, 20 February 1991). There was also a *Conservative Party*, led by Uboshko, different pro-monarchist groups and others. The right-wing parties and groups were generally weak and did not play an important role in Russian politics.

Historically, there have been practically no organized fascist groups and parties in Russia. However, in the period 1988–91 some chauvinistic groups with an anti-semitic orientation emerged. Of special importance were the different nationalistic groups with the name of *Pamyat* or Memory (Koval 1991, 291–300). One of the leaders of this movement was Konstantin Ostashvily who died in prison after being sentenced for anti-Semitic activities.

The development of a multi-party structure in Russia had a number of special characteristics:

(1) Many of the parties that held their constituent congresses in Moscow in 1990 did not aim at organizing their activities in the Soviet Union as a whole. Instead, they confined their actions to the Russian Republic. They also declared that they supported the right of nations to self-determination. Some parties were, however, organized at the all-union level. In addition to the CPSU, these were the United Workers' Front, the Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation, the Liberal Democratic Party of the USSR and some other very small political parties and groups.
(2) The number of party members in the Russian Communist Party – which was the main party organization of the old structure – had been reduced. The Russian Communist Party leaders Polozkov and Antonovich did not enjoy any popular support. Nevertheless, the Russian Communist Party possessed a considerable force before the coup. The new Russian Communist Party had clear possibilities of becoming a major party in

the future. Former communists had a strong position in the Russian Parliament. They have also had a large majority in many local councils. For example, more than 80 percent of the deputies of the Murmansk regional council were former communists before 1991 (*Polyarnaya pravda*, 6 June 1990).

(3) All the new parties in Russia were small, the membership ranging from 100 to somewhat more than 10000. It seems unlikely that the membership of the new parties will grow rapidly. Many Russians are tired of political activities and are only concerned with material wealth. Other Russians want to be neutral with regard to political parties. This is especially typical of former communists. During 1990, the CPSU had lost more than one-and-a-half million members. About 90 percent of these persons did not join any other party.

Probably, there will never again be such giant parties in Russia as the CPSU. Instead, it is more likely that there will be relatively few party members and a larger number of supporters. A sociological investigation carried out in 1990 indicated that only one percent of the population wanted to join the new parties, while some 62 percent were supporters of political parties (*Dialog*, 1990, no. 17). Hence, a number of political organizations do not call themselves parties, although they take an active part in elections and political campaigns.

(4) A further characteristic of the emerging multi-party system in Russia is the frequent creation of different unified blocs of parties and political groups. In the autumn of 1989, the *Interregional Association of Democratic Organizations* was formed in Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg). The main purpose of this association was to unite all the oppositional forces to the Communist Party (Tolz 1990, 72–83).

In February 1990, the first meeting of the *Russian Democratic Forum* was held. The Russian Popular Front and other radical democrats participated. In June 1990, the *Centrist Bloc* of political parties and movements was formed. This was done on the initiative of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union and the Union of Democratic Forces. As this bloc and, in particular, the Liberal Democratic Party leader Zhirinovsky supported the introduction of the anti-constitutional state of emergency and the creation of the Emergency Committee they had little support among the population.

The *Democratic Russia Movement* became an important force in Russian politics in the 1990–92 period. It was formed in Moscow in October 1990. The Russian Social Democratic, Republican, Democratic, Free Democratic and Christian Democratic parties, the Historical Society Memorial, the Democratic Writers' Society of *Shchit* (Shield) and several other organizations joined it (Koval 1991, 305-311). The formation of Democratic

Russia was particularly important as a counter-force to the Russian Communist Party.

In an international perspective, the Democratic Russia Movement was an exceptional phenomenon. It united major political orientations that usually do not cooperate. In most countries social democrats, liberals, conservatives and Christian democrats act independently. However, in Russia these groups agreed to join forces.

The Political Situation after the Coup in August 1991

The attempted *coup d'état* resulted in a number of changes in the Soviet Union and Russia. The functioning of the USSR was profoundly changed and the relationship between political forces in Russia was completely altered. When the country's leading politicians gathered in Novo-Ogaryovo, near Moscow, on 23 April 1991 to sign the first Protocol of the Presidents, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic was still in existence. However, during the three days that the country lived under the Emergency Committee, the edifice fell apart. This chaotic state of affairs was interrupted on 2 September, when the "ten plus one" solution was proposed in order to try to stop the country from collapsing altogether. This solution prescribed a loose confederation of ten republics, excluding the Baltic Republics, Georgia and Azerbaidzhan, into a new union (*Izvestiya*, 3 September 1991).

After the ill-fated coup major changes occurred in the political spectrum of Russia. The various programmes, declarations and statutes of the new political organizations and parties were highly confused. Many Russians asked themselves if the political parties could play a role in the improvement of their lives. Comparatively few Russians have had the energy to study the different positions of the political parties. The political apathy of the people was increasing. Only on two occasions – during Yeltsin's campaign for the Russian presidency and during the defence of the Russian parliamentary building in 1991 – was the degree of political participation high.

It is still an open question what kind of multi-party system will develop in Russia. Party systems may, of course, differ depending on different traditions and historical conditions. One possible classification of party systems is the following:

(1) A multi-party system without a ruling party monopoly, e.g. in Italy, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden.
(2) A multi-party system with a ruling party monopoly, e.g. in Japan before 1993, France under General de Gaulle and in India before the present time.

(3) A two-party system consisting of non-socialist parties, e.g. the USA.
(4) A two-party system, consisting of non-socialist and social-democratic parties, e.g. in Great Britain, Germany.
(5) A one-party system in some countries with authoritarian political regimes, e.g. Gabon, Zaire, Cameroon and the USSR before 1990.

The recent events in the countries of Eastern Europe show that different paths may be followed. In most cases parties of a liberal and democratic orientation have increased their support after the defeat of the Communist or "workers" Parties in the first real elections. The defeat of the Communist Parties in the elections may be preceded by a party split as in Hungary and Poland, or by a change from orthodox communist to social democratic orientation as in Bulgaria and the former GDR, or by mass secession of the party membership as in Romania.

By October 1991 the number of parties had decreased (Appendix 2). The anarchists represented the extreme left wing. The activities of communist organizations were suspended. According to Yeltsin's edict a special investigator was appointed to examine the participation of the Communist Party's leadership in the coup. This investigation is not yet finished. However, the party's possessions were nationalized very quickly. The party buildings, garages, printing houses, hotels, etc., were transferred to the local soviets.

The Party's archives were closed and sealed and then transferred to the Russian State Archive. Many ordinary members of the CPSU left the party. President Gorbachev left the post of General Secretary and called for the dissolution of the CPSU Central Committee. In practice, the Central Committee was dissolved and then the complete disbandment of the Soviet Communist Party began.

In July 1991, prior to the coup, the members of the Russian Communist Party, headed by Aleksandr Rutskoi, Russia's Vice-President, gathered for their own congress. At this congress they formed a new Communist Party, which they named the *Democratic Party of Russian Communists* (*Sovetsky Murman*, 14 September 1991). They decided to remain in the CPSU, together with Gorbachev, but to struggle against the Russian Communist Party, the leader of which was Ivan Polozkov. As a result Rutskoi was expelled from the Russian Communist Party.

After the failed coup, the Russian Ministry of Justice registered this new Communist Party on 29 August 1991. In the autumn of 1991, it held its first party congress. Its new name became the *People's Party of Free Russia* (*Argumenty i fakty*, 1991, no. 43).

In the left, central, and right wings there were the same parties and movements as before the coup, plus the organizing committee of the Democratic Reforms' Movement. In July 1991, more than one month

before the coup, a declaration was published with the intention of creating a *Movement for Democratic Reform* (*Izvestiya Sovetov narodnykh deputatov*, 3 July 1991). This declaration was signed by nine well-known politicians and economists, *inter alios* Arkady Volsky, the chairman of the Industrial Union of the USSR, Aleksandr Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze, both former members of the Political Bureau of the Soviet Communist Party, Gavriil Popov and Anatoly Sobchak – the mayors of Moscow and St Petersburg – and a number of other important politicians.

This movement might have become an important force. It might have gathered the progressive-minded former communists and become a moderate social democratic movement (according to the international classification) or even a social liberal movement.

There have been severe problems in the Democratic Russia Movement (*Moskovskie novosti*, 1991, no. 43). One of the main tasks of this movement was to fight the monopolistic role of the CPSU. However, once the activities of the CPSU were suspended, the question arose whom should they now fight? In November 1991 the Congress of Democratic Russia decided to continue its existing democratic policies.

After the coup a new political situation was created. Three forces had the potential to dominate the political scene at this point: (1) the Movement for Democratic Reform – to the left; (2) Democratic Russia – in the middle; and (3) the Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky's party) – to the right.

Even if the role of Zhirinovsky were not exaggerated at this point in time, one must not forget that eight million Russians voted for him during the presidential elections.

Political Movements in the Murmansk Region

In this section we will narrow the perspective and concentrate the analysis to one region, namely the Murmansk region. The establishment of informal political movements in the Murmansk region became possible mainly because of a change in the internal policy of the Soviet Communist Party. This policy was implemented soon after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985. The politics of *perestroika* and *glasnost* paved the way for the creation of new political organizations and parties.

As mentioned already, before *perestroika* began, participation in formal politics was the privilege of the Soviet Communist Party members. Nevertheless, small groups of "free thinkers" or "dissidents" participated in politics. In general, these people suffered greatly from political oppression. In the Murmansk region the dissident movement was not widely developed. Only a few individuals participated, and they were successfully monitored by the KGB.

There are several reasons why the dissident movement was not very well developed in the Murmansk region. One is the relatively high standard of living in Murmansk at that time. Another is its remoteness from the industrial and intellectual centres of the Soviet Union, and a third is its isolation from democratic experiences abroad.

During 1986, independent organizations began to appear all over the country. These groups were created by initiatives from below and not from above. However, on the Kola Peninsula, informal organizations only started to appear a year later, in 1987. This was because of the conservatism and political apathy of the population. The first informal organization in the region was the *Society for the Support of Perestroika*. This society was created in June 1987 by employees at the Institute of Polar Geophysics in the city of Apatity. Its leader was Aleksandr Obolensky, a former People's Deputy of the USSR. By 1988 the Society had already ceased to exist.

The first informal organization in the city of Murmansk was the discussion club *Citizens' Initiative*. It was formed in April 1988 and reorganized into a socio-political club in November of the same year. This was one of the first officially registered independent political groups in Russia. Today the club has about 40 members.

In 1989, a number of new informal organizations were created. By the summer of that year there were already more than 20 such organizations, mainly with political, historical-educational and ecological orientations (*Neformaly – kto vy?* 1989, 10–15; Andreev 1991, 24; *Sovetsky Murman*, 30 April 1991). In Murmansk there was the *Memorial Society*, the political clubs *Initiative Youth Association* and the *Union for Social Help and Rehabilitation*; in the city of Apatity the *Socio-Ecological Committee*, the *Social-Democratic Club*, the *Memorial Society*, the *Active Position Club*; in the city of Kirovsk the group *Renovation*; in Kandalaksha the groups *April* and *Forum*; in the town of Monchegorsk the group *Action*, and others.

Some organizations existed for only a short time. For instance, the *Moscow News Readers' Club* was closed one month after its opening. Others were transformed. The most typical example is the *Active Perestroika Supporters' Club*, which became first the *Social Democratic Club* and was then subsequently changed to the Murmansk City Organization of the Russian Democratic Party.

The "informals" had a natural desire to unite and to look for common views. Two attempts to form a *Murmansk Popular Front* failed in October 1988 and November 1989. An important stage in the creation of an independent political movement was the constitutional conference of the *Murmansk United Democratic Movement*, which was held in November 1988. Representatives of nine regional socio-political groups joined the movement, elected a Coordinating Council and decided to take united action.

The main purpose was said to be to support far-reaching democratic changes on the basis of the human rights, freedom, humanity and social justice. The United Democratic Movement took an active part in the election campaign of the USSR People's Deputies, Obolensky and Zolotkov. Members of the Citizens' Initiative Club revived the tradition of holding informal manifestations (in Russian – meeting – *maiovka*) on 1 May 1989; they introduced appeals to the first Congress of the USSR Peoples' Deputies and took other public action. The Active Supporters of Perestroika Club held an unauthorized meeting in support of the Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan.

In 1990, two significant events influenced the independent political movement. In March 1990, the *Democratic Elections – 90 Union* was formed in Murmansk to mediate campaigns in the elections to the Russian People's Congress and to the local soviets. Members of this union were the Citizens' Initiative Club, the Support Committee for Deputy Aleksandr Obolensky, the city Memorial Society, the regional Union of Cooperators, the city club of the Democratic Platform of the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Club, the Society for Social Help and Rehabilitation, the ecological group Green Branch and the City Society for Invalids. Four of the eight Russian People's Deputies elected from the region succeeded as a result of the support of the pre-election union. The success in the elections of the local soviets was very modest, however. Only 20 percent of the deputies in the local soviets were elected from the Democratic Elections' Union.

After the pre-election campaign, the new transformation process could clearly be seen. Many of the socio-political organizations became local branches of parties (Appendix 3). Thus, in April 1990, the constitutional conference of the regional Social Democratic Organization was held; in September 1990 the regional organization of the Democratic Party of Russia was created; the Murmansk party group of the Democratic Union was announced, and in November 1990 the Murmansk city group of the Republican Party of Russia was formed. This party corresponds to the former Democratic Platform outside the CPSU.

The parties in the Murmansk area are still small. For example, in the Murmansk regional organization of the Social Democratic Party there were in 1991 about 300 members, in the Democratic Party 200 members, in the Republican Party there are 150 and in the Democratic Union 30 members (*Sovetsky Murman*, 22 January and 26 February 1991).

In November 1991 a decision was made to establish the Democratic Russia Movement of the Murmansk region. The founders were 15 organizations, out of which five were party organizations: the city organizations of the Murmansk and the Apatity Social Democratic Party, the Murmansk city organization of the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Democratic Union Party; six deputies' groups from the cities of Murmansk,

Monchegorsk, Kirovsk, Apatity as well as from the Murmansk regional soviet of People's Deputies; four socio-political organizations: the Citizen Initiative Club, the Committee for the Support of Deputy Obolensky, the Memorial Society and the group Info-20.

It was stated in the conference declaration that the regional Democratic Russia Movement was created "with the objective of overcoming the economic crisis as fast as possible". This crisis was seen as being caused by the state monopoly control over the means of production. The elimination of the Communist Party's monopoly on power was the primary objective of the movement. The secondary objective was the re-establishment of human rights in order to achieve the moral restoration of society (*Murmansky stroitel*, 28 November 1990).

In the statutes of the regional movement it was stipulated that the local democratic groups supporting Democratic Russia would have collective membership of the movement. Membership on an individual basis would also be allowed. Members of the CPSU would be permitted to join Democratic Russia. The regional movement would be led by a council of representatives. In this council, one member was to be elected by each collective member organization.

The future activities of the movement were also discussed at the conference. First and foremost among these would be support of the draft Constitution of the Russian Federation. This draft was proposed by a working group of the Russian Constitutional Commission, headed by Boris Yeltsin.

The independent political movement in the Murmansk region has passed through the following four initial stages of development:

(1) 1987–88: the emergence of informal political societies, groups and clubs.
(2) Late 1988–early 1990: the creation of the Murmansk United Democratic Movement and the pre-election Democratic Russia-90 Union.
(3) April–November 1990: the creation of the regional party organizations, based on societies, groups and clubs.
(4) Late 1990–1992: the establishment of the Democratic Russia Movement in the Murmansk region as a union consisting of a number of local parties, deputies' groups and democratically oriented political formations.

The significant feature of the development of these informal political movements was the move away from collaboration with the CPSU in the *perestroika* process to opposition against the CPSU in all aspects of social life. Democratic Russia wanted to be a constructive force, an opposition, that might compete with the communists in a parliamentary fight for power.

During the 1991 coup, the regional Democratic Russia held a three-day

meeting in Murmansk against the Emergency Committee supporting the Russian leadership and Yeltsin. The same position was taken by the regional KGB, the militia and the City Council of People's Deputies. The regional Communist Party and the Regional Council of People's Deputies did not make any firm decision concerning the coup.

As a result of the coup, the activities of the Communist Party were also suspended in the Murmansk region. It appeared, however, that the democrats were not ready to take over the leadership in the region, as they lacked experienced politicians. Almost all the People's Deputies and bureaucrats in Murmansk were formally independent, as they were earlier members of the Communist Party.

In September 1991 symptoms of a paralysis of power began to appear. The Regional Council of the People's Deputies could not take decisions, since more than 60 deputies did not appear at the meetings. After this many democrats proposed that power should be transferred from the soviets to the governor of the region and to the mayors in the cities. The soviets should concentrate on budgetary work and the appointment of key personnel. According to this proposal the regional and municipal leaders should also be elected by the population through direct elections.

The Political Situation after the Collapse of the USSR

After the dissolution of the USSR it was generally expected that many problems would be easily solved. However, numerous political and economic difficulties still remain – and new problems have appeared.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a consequence of the development of the Soviet political system which, through its complete neglect of political freedom and democracy, caused its own political bankruptcy. What might have replaced the old system was a confederation of independent states, i.e. the former union republics. However, the republican leaders have chosen to go their own way and create independent states, to remove Gorbachev from his post, and to break definitely with what they label the "Bolshevik Empire".

A democratization of the whole country might have been possible, but new leaders came to power with support from their own republics which strengthened the centrifugal trends. Because of the resistant attitude of the leaders of the former union republics it was not possible to reach agreement on the new Union Treaty.

From December 1991 the political situation changed rapidly. On 8 December, the three leaders of Belorussia, Russia and the Ukraine signed an agreement concerning the establishment of the Commonwealth of Inde-

pendent States (CIS). Then, on 21 December, in Alma-Ata the declaration on CIS was adopted and signed by the leaders of eleven independent states (former union republics). Georgia did not sign, however. The President of the USSR was not invited to this meeting, although he had prepared an appeal for the preservation of the Union of Sovereign States. Shortly after this, on 25 December, President Gorbachev announced his retirement. On 31 December, 1991, the leaders of the CIS states and governments met again in Minsk to confirm the fact that the USSR had ceased to exist (after 69 years) and had been replaced by the CIS (*Izvestiya*, 10 and 24 December 1991; *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 1 January 1992).

After the collapse of the USSR one can witness a drastic regrouping of forces in Russia (Appendix 4). New political movements and coalitions were formed. Following Yeltsin's decree of 6 November 1991 on the suspension of the Communist Party both in the USSR and in Russia, new communist parties began to appear. Among these were the *All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks* (formerly Unity for Leninism and Communist Ideas), the *Russian Communist Workers' Party* and the *Russian Communist Party*, all of which can be labelled neo-Bolshevik. Eurocommunist-oriented parties have also emerged: the *Communist Union* and the *Workers' Socialist Party*, the latter regarding itself to be the real heir to the CPSU. The main goals of these parties are the restoration of the USSR and the revival of Soviet power in the whole territory of the former USSR. The parties objected to the economic reforms launched by Yeltsin and Gaidar. They were also opposed to the reduction of state ownership of property and to the whole privatization process (*Argumenty i fakty*, 1992, nos. 43–44).

Yeltsin's decision to suspend the whole CPSU was somewhat questionable, since the majority of the party members neither participated in nor supported the August 1991 coup. The participation of CPSU leaders in the activities of the Emergency Committee still has to be assessed by the court. It seems, in fact, that Yeltsin acted illegally when not waiting for the results of the investigation of the actions of the Emergency Committee. However, the vast majority of Russians found Yeltsin's decree warranted, since they were dissatisfied with the Communist Party. Nevertheless, Yeltsin's behaviour could be regarded as setting a dangerous precedent for the future, possibly even for himself. He acted in a similar way to Lenin in 1918 when he prohibited the party of Left Socialist Revolutionaries after the July coup attempt.

After five months of deliberation, the Constitutional Court of Russia announced its verdict on the controversial issue of Yeltsin's banning of the Communist Party after the 1991 coup. The verdict was very carefully worded. According to the Court, Yeltsin had had the right to ban the leading bodies of the party. On the other hand, it was not within his authority to disband the local branches of the party. Local branches across

the country have received the right to start court proceedings to regain party property (*European*, 3–6 December 1992).

The ruling by the Constitutional Court might become a further reason for the different communist parties and groupings to come together. They have possibilities of even creating a unified party in opposition to Yeltsin. The election results in Lithuania in November 1992, where the post-communists under Brazauskas gained power, and similar results from the September 1993 elections in Poland might also serve as a source of inspiration for Russian communists. Also, the experiences from Bulgaria show that post-communist parties can stay in power. However, deep theoretical and personal disagreement among the communist-oriented groups have so far made a party unification impossible.

The question arises if there is a real possibility of the former communists returning to power. In some Russian regions this possibility might exist, since in these regions between 40 and 80 percent of the members of elected bodies were former Communist Party activists.

It is quite another question whether the Russian citizens would accept the communists back in power. According to a poll among 1105 individuals in thirteen Russian cities organized by the newspaper *Moscow News* in February 1992, 56 percent of the respondents were against having the communists back in power, 15 percent were indifferent and 16 percent would accept provided that it would solve the major social problems, 6 percent were in favour and 7 percent would not answer (*Moscow News*, 1992, no. 9).

During 1992, different pro-communist movements (United Workers' Front, Ours, Working Moscow) held meetings in Moscow. At these meetings demands were raised for the reintroduction of central economic planning, the rejection of bourgeois democracy, the reunification of the USSR, and bringing Yeltsin, Gorbachev and others to court for causing the collapse of the USSR.

In October 1992, a new pro-communist movement appeared, the *National Salvation Front*, which included more than 40 parties and organizations. The leaders were Mikhail Astafiev and Aleksandr Prokhanov and other well-known nationalists and patriots. They considered themselves to be in both political and spiritual opposition. They also called for civil resistance to the government. This was the reason for Yeltsin's decision to eliminate this front in the same way as he did with the CPSU (*Izvestiya*, 30 October 1992; *Pravda*, 27 October 1992).

Political chauvinists on the extreme right also participated in these meetings, thereby preparing for a "red-brown coalition". In some cases the extreme right has also joined forces in practical work with the extreme left, and the possibility that they will form temporary unions cannot be precluded (*Time*, 7 December 1992). Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal

Democratic Party, called for the restoration of the borders of the Russian Empire as they were at the end of the last century. According to Zhirinovsky, the Baltic states, Finland, Poland and Alaska are legitimate parts of Russia.

Russian left-wing parties were still influential. In the Russian Parliament there were 100 members of the People's Party of Free Russia, nine members of the Republican Party, five Social Democrats and 10 left-wing supporters without any party affiliation.

The fragmentation of the political centre can also be observed. In December 1991 the Democratic Party of Russia and a number of other small parties left the Democratic Russia Movement. They organized a new bloc called *Narodnoe soglasie* (Public Agreement) which favoured the adoption of a new Union Treaty and the creation of a new union. This bloc existed for only a couple of months, however. The Democratic Party lacked a parliamentary organization, although it had 12 members who were deputies in the Parliament. The popularity of the Democratic Russia Movement has decreased, although its parliamentary organization was strong in the period before the 1993 elections.

Before the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies, which took place in December 1992, a new centrist bloc appeared called the *Civic Union*. The major leaders of this group were Volsky and Vladislavlev. This union favoured privatization of parts of the state-owned property as advocated by some factory managers. They supported the market economy but with firm state regulation (*Izvestiya*, 24 November 1992). This group had a strong position in the Congress and contributed to the changes in the Russian cabinet in December 1992.

In November 1992, the Russian President Boris Yeltsin proposed the formation of a new party or movement which would support his policies, particularly the radical economic reform programme, and also prevent the return of Russia to authoritarianism. Although Yeltsin was not a member of Democratic Russia, this movement supported his coming to power. However, Democratic Russia was disintegrating towards the end of 1992 with decreasing influence as a consequence. The former Russian State Secretary, i.e. the main coordinator of the policies of the Russian ministries, Gennady Burbulis, was at the head of a committee seeking to organize a new centrist or liberal movement in support of Yeltsin. The movement aimed at uniting All-Russian committees of reform supporters who were in favour of further market reforms. The new movement was initially called *Democratic Choice*, and in 1993 the name was changed to *Russia's Choice* (*International Herald Tribune*, 30 November 1992).

In December 1991 the congress constitutional of the movement *Democratic Reform of the Former Republics of the USSR* was held in Moscow. In January 1992, the *Russian Movement for Democratic Reform* held its

constitutional congress in Nizhny Novgorod. Gavriil Popov was elected chairman of the movement. According to the programme and documents adopted by the congress this was not a Social Democratic movement as was earlier declared but a Liberal movement, supporting the development of private business and protecting the major interests of the state industry (Rahr 1992, 23 ff.).

At the beginning of 1992, the Russian right-wing parties reorganized. In February the Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces was held in Moscow. Christian Democrats, different pro-monarchist organizations, and Cossack groups took part in this meeting. However, they had very few representatives in the Parliament.

In general, the percentage of deputies (at any level of public organization) belonging to a party was relatively low, since most of the deputies who used to be members of the suspended Communist Party were considered to be non-party members. In the Supreme Soviet of Russia, there were organizations representing various autonomous nationalities, various professions, etc. At the end of 1992 there were 14 factions in the Russian Parliament. Many of them had similar goals. Most of the factions supported some kind of market economy but sought different ways of achieving the economic transition. In contrast to West European parliaments, the factions were not directly supported by political parties. There were also three larger factional blocs: *Russian Unity*, which consisted of communist-oriented deputies; the *Civic Union*, which tried to establish a compromise between the reform-oriented politicians and those who advocated a slower pace of reform. The third factional bloc was the *Coalition for Reform* which consisted of deputies from Democratic Russia and the Radical Democrats. They strove for the demonopolization of the economy and wanted to stimulate the creation of a Russian middle class (*Polyarnaya pravda*, 17 November 1992). The issue was later raised of whether in future elections all candidates should run under a party label.

The political situation on the Kola Peninsula after the collapse of the USSR was more stable than in other parts of the country such as St Petersburg and Moscow. The standard of living declined drastically in the North as a result of cuts in salaries and bonuses as well as high prices for consumer goods. A wave of migration out of the Russian North had already started.

There were no extreme left and right movements in the Murmansk region. There was one Eurocommunist organization called *Socialist Choice*. The left wing was represented by the organizations of the People's Party of Free Russia, the Republican Party and two Social Democratic organizations which were at loggerheads with each other. The centre forces were organized in the regional organizations of the Democratic Russia Movement and the Russian Democratic Party and in the city organizations of the

Democratic Union Party as well as the Party for Economic Freedom. The main right-wing organization was the *Union of Cossacks* in Murmansk. All the parties were weak, and small in terms of membership. The provision of food supplies for the winter appears to have been the main political issue (*Rybny Murman*, 20 November 1992; Appendix 5).

What was the popular Russian attitude in 1992 to the government under Yeltsin's leadership? According to a poll the following answers were given to the question, "If there were meetings against the government which side would you support?": 16 percent supported the Russian government, 17 percent opposed the government, 13 percent considered such meetings impossible, 12 percent would not say which side they were on and 43 percent would not interfere. Like earlier polls, this particular one also revealed that the political situation in Russia was very frail and unstable (*Moscow News*, 1992, no. 2).

Political Organizations in the Wake of the Elections

The entire year of 1993 was marked by increasing infighting between different kinds of democratic organizations and pro-communistic forces. The economic situation steadily worsened. Yeltsin and his supporters decided to continue the far-reaching economic changes. But the Supreme Soviet of Russia with Khazbulatov as a leader rejected the idea of a new Constitution. In the spring 1993, another constitutional crisis between executive and legislature powers in Russia occurred.

It was obvious that Russia needed new elections. Therefore, it was decided to organize an All-Russian referendum on the economic policies of Yeltsin and about early elections of President and Parliament. President Yeltsin was victorious in this referendum, held on 25 April 1993. More than 60 percent of the electorate indicated support for Yeltsin personally and for his economic policy. But less than 50 percent of voters advocated the idea of new elections to both the presidency and the Supreme Soviet (*Moscow News*, 30 April 1993).

After the referendum it became clear that national crisis was more or less insoluble. The political parties and organizations acted differently after this referendum. The Democratic Russia Movement, the Economic Freedom Party and other democrats demanded that President Yeltsin make maximum use of his victory. First, the President should carry out a tougher monetary policy. Secondly, they believed that Yeltsin must resolve the issue of Vice-President Rutskoi and dissolve the Congress of People's

Deputies. They intended to work for an early election of the whole body of People's Deputies (*Dvizhenie Demokraticheskaya Rossiya. Informatsionny byulleten*, 1993, no. 2, 1–2).

The National Salvation Front and the Russian People's Union claimed that the national crisis could only be resolved after the ruling group headed by Yeltsin was removed from power. The Russian Christian Democratic Movement and the Democratic Party of Russia suggested a solution of the crisis through early elections of both the President and the Parliament. Many political forces actually suggested new parliamentary elections, and the formation of three pre-election blocs was announced in the summer of 1993.

A presidential bloc was formed, which at that time was called the *Bloc of Reformer Forces*, with Yegor Gaidar and Gennady Burbulis as leaders. This bloc was joined by activists from the Democratic Choice and the Democratic Russia movements as well as from the Social Democratic Party of Russia and a part of the Republicans under the leadership of Pyotr Filippov.

A second bloc was the *Civic Union* with Arkady Volsky and Aleksandr Rutskoi as leaders. This bloc included the People's Party of Free Russia, the Socialist Party of the Working People, the Union for Revival of Russia and the Social Democratic Centre (led by Oleg Rumyantsev).

The third force was the *National Salvation Front* which contained different kinds of communists and nationalists. Other parties were trying to act independently, such as the Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party (*Moscow News*, 25 June 1993, 3).

But the conflict between the executive and the legislature gradually grew worse. It was even feared that there could be a breakdown of the whole Russian Federation at this point in time. Yeltsin signed a decree in September 1993, where he decided to terminate the activity of the Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet of Russian Federation (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 23 September 1993, 1). Yeltsin decided to organize a new election on 12 December 1993 to a new Russian parliament. The new parliament was to consist of two chambers: the Federation Council and the State Duma.

Ruslan Khazbulatov and Aleksandr Rutskoi as well as a number of Supreme Soviet deputies did not accept the call for new elections. They decided to discharge Yeltsin from the presidential post and to appoint Rutskoi as acting Russian President. After this the events began to develop dramatically, which resulted in the serious confrontations in Moscow on 3–4 October.

After the unsuccessful *coup d'état* in Moscow a number of pro-communist organizations were prohibited, e.g. the National Salvation Front, the Officers' Union, the Russian Communist Workers' Party and Russian Unity

(*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 6 October 1993, 3). These extreme communist-chauvinist organizations were permanent opponents of Yeltsin during the whole of 1993. The May Day celebrations in Moscow were marred by bloody clashes, the first of this kind in several decades. And then on 3 October the leaders of the communists and nationalist led their followers to the barricades with arms in their hands.

On 4 October the All-Russian Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research held a telephone poll among Moscovites. A total of 860 persons were questioned on whom they trusted most in Russia. The answers were the following (*Moscow News*, 8 October 1993, 1):

- The President and the government 71 percent
- The Supreme Soviet 4 percent
- Neither of them 19 percent
- Difficult to say 6 percent

President Yeltsin received full support from the foreign leaders. After some weeks he met with a new attitude from regional and local soviets. Initially, almost all these leaders were against Yeltsin's decree about constitutional reform, but then they changed their position in favour of Yeltsin.

When a number of regional leaders supported the Supreme Soviet, Yeltsin adopted a new decree about necessity of reform of regional bodies of self-government (*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 12 October 1993). The main task was to replace the large soviets, which were often working without quorum, with new legislative bodies consisting of a smaller number of deputies.

A few days later President Yeltsin decided also to organize elections to the Upper House of Parliament – the Federation Council – and a referendum concerning the adoption of the new Russian Constitution on the same day as the elections to the State Duma, 12 December 1993 (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 19 October 1993). In mid-October the nomination of candidates was started. A process of formation of new pre-election political blocs was set in motion.

One of the first political blocs to be organized was *Russia's Choice*. This is a pro-government bloc with Yegor Gaidar at its head. At the constituent congress it was announced that this bloc would try to gain more than 50 percent of the seats in the Parliament, and that the bloc supported far-reaching market-oriented reforms (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 19 October 1993). The congress selected 243 candidates to its electoral list. Several government members could be found on the party list of Russia's Choice: Gaidar, Shumeiko, Kozyrev, and Chubais.

There are several centrists in Russia today. One is the *Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms* with Anatoly Sobchak and Gavriil Popov as

leaders. They advocate a reconsideration of Russia's economic policies, including agrarian reform and reduction of taxes for long-term investment projects. (*Izvestiya*, 1993, 13 October 1993).

Another important force is the *Civic Union for Stability, Justice and Progress*. The current leaders of this union are Arkady Volsky, Nikolai Bekh, and Aleksandr Vladislavlev. One former leader of this movement was Aleksandr Rutskoi. The Civic Union is following a centrist road. The party list of this union includes representatives from the Russian Union of Industry Managers, the Association of Russian Entrepreneurs, the Russian Social Democratic Centre, and some trade unions (*Izvestiya*, 1993, 14 October 1993).

A new liberal electoral bloc, *August*, appeared during the autumn of 1993. The initiator of this bloc was the Party for Economic Freedom and its leader Konstantin Borovoi. They support the governmental programme on economic reforms and appeal for broad widespread privatization.

Another new organization is the *Yavlinsky–Boldyrev–Lukin Bloc*. This bloc, led by the well-known economist Grigory Yavlinsky, supports the governmental economic reforms but requires a more skilful implementation of the changes (*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 29 October 1993, 3).

Some of the political parties decided to run on separate lists in the elections and not to join any pre-election blocs. The *Democratic Party*, led by Travkin, decided to nominate 200 candidates to the federation party list for the State Duma. According to Travkin, the Democratic Party supported evolutionary reforms in contradistinction to Russia's Choice, which was said to advocate revolutionary reform (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 1993, 16 October 1993, 1).

The constituent congress of the *Party for Russian Unity and Accord* was held in the middle of October in Novgorod. The leadership of this party includes Sergei Shakhrai, Aleksandr Shokhin, Ramazan Abdulatipov, and Oleg Soskovets. This party is the second leading government party after Russia's Choice. The former party is trying to unite regional and local interests with the interests of the federation. It advocates moderate economic reform without elements of shock therapy (*Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 20 October 1993, 2).

Before the elections it was obvious that the *Russian Communist Party* led by Gennady Zhuganov had the possibility of gaining electoral support of the same magnitude as that of the post-communist parties of Poland and Lithuania. Some small communist parties were abolished after the events of 3–4 October; others decided not to participate in the elections.

In general, the Russian left faced a difficult situation before the elections. Internal disagreements within the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party of Free Russia concerning the attitudes to Yeltsin's reforms were counterproductive in the election campaign. Only the *Workers' Socialist*

Party decided together with some small organizations to join the opposition against the government.

A number of right-wing parties were active before the elections. The *Russian Christian Democratic Movement* – led by Yury Vlasov and Victor Aksyutits – and the *Christian Democratic Party* – with its leader Aleksandr Chuyev – advocated a policy of human rights based on Christian values (*Murmansky vestnik*, 30 October 1993, 3).

The *Russian Liberal Democratic Party* and its leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky were not as aggressive as during earlier election campaigns. However, a strong opposition against the government was announced by the leaders of this party. According to the Liberal Democrats the Western economic model was not suited to Russia. Furthermore, the Liberal Democrats opposed the "Western policy of dictation". They also wanted to confiscate property from the mafia as well as from corrupted bureaucrats. The aggressive tendencies of this party were most clearly revealed in the demands for "active protection" of the Russians within the whole territory of the former Soviet Union (*Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 15 October 1993, 2).

In the Murmansk region, the political parties and movements remained roughly the same as before the events of October 1993. The political situation on the Kola Peninsula was more stable than in the rest of the country. Popular apathy was also higher than in Moscow or St Petersburg. Democratic Russia and the Socio-political Committee of Russian Reforms supported Yeltsin's draft of a new Russian Constitution. The Murmansk organizations of the Russian Communist Party and other small pro-communist-oriented groups advocated the adoption of the new Constitution drafted by the Parliament.

After Yeltsin's decree on reform of representative bodies of power and bodies of self-government the head of the Murmansk regional administration, Komarov, decided to terminate the activities of the regional and local soviets on the Kola Peninsula. The chairman of the regional Soviet, Yevdokimov, protested this decision at the prosecutor's office (*Sovetsky Murman*, 12 October 1993, 1). This was made without success, and several People's Deputies decided to stop their activities.

In the Murmansk region as well as in Russia as a whole, the preparations started for the December elections. A number of new pre-electoral blocs appeared. The Murmansk communist organizations and several trade unions were opposed to new elections. But, subsequently, they changed their position and organized their own electoral bloc against what they called the capitalist reforms of Yeltsin.

The regional organizations of the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Social Democratic Party – all members of Democratic Russia – signed an agreement about cooperation in the pre-electoral period. This agreement was signed in mid-September 1993. The bloc supported Yeltsin's

reforms in principle (*Sovetsky Murman*, 17 September 1993, 2). But the parties failed to agree on what lists to run. As a result, the Social Democrats and the Republicans walked out of Democratic Russia and organized the electoral bloc *Murman – Future for All* (*Murmansky vestnik*, 29 October 1993).

Also, a number of centre-oriented electoral blocs appeared on the Kola Peninsula. The All-Russian Association of Private Enterprises initiated the formation of a regional branch of *Russia's Choice*. A major aim of this regional organization was to support the private sector on the Kola Peninsula, where more than 90 percent of the enterprises were still under state ownership (*Sovetsky Murman*, 15 October 1993, 1). Another liberal centre bloc was the *Citizens' Consent* (*Grazhdanskoe soglasie*), created by the Association of Managers of State Industrial Enterprises and the Kola Association of Business Cooperation with Foreign Countries as well as other business organizations. The members of this bloc appealed for a clear social orientation of the market reforms with special reference to the difficult conditions of the Russian North (*Sovetsky Murman*, 15 October 1993, 1). Some former deputies of the regional soviet organized a Murmansk branch of the Party of Russian Unity and Accord. Although newly started, this party was characterized by a high degree of political professionalism (*Murmansky vestnik*, 30 October 1993, 1).

For parties to participate in the elections it was necessary to obtain at least 100 000 supportive signatures. Individual candidates were required to ascertain support from one percent of the voters in the district, usually some 4000 to 5000 signatures. Out of 35 parties and blocs only 21 were able to gather enough signatures.

The 1993 Elections and Beyond

A total of 13 electoral blocs and parties managed to collect the necessary number of signatures from the Russian people, viz. 100 000 signatures (*Moscow News*, 12 November 1993). Eight blocs aiming at electoral participation were turned down by the Central Electoral Commission on the ground that they allegedly falsified signatures.

Two left-wing parties – according to the classification used earlier in this paper – were allowed to take part in the December 1993 elections, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its ally the Agrarian Party. No party ran under the label of social democracy in the elections. However, shortly before the elections three blocs were organized which had elements of traditional social democratic ideas, viz. support of social security, aid to invalids, women and children as well as claims for environmental action. These blocs were called *Women of Russia*, *Dignity and Mercy*, and the *Constructive Ecological Movement Kedr* (Cedar).

A number of centre-oriented organizations appeared in the 1993 elections. These were the *Democratic Party of Russia*, the *Russian Democratic Reform Movement*, the *Civic Union for Stability, Justice and Progress*, the *Yavlinsky–Boldyrev–Lukin Bloc*, and a new organization called *The Future of Russia – New Names*. All of these blocs supported the continuation of market economic reforms, albeit with differences in nuances concerning the strength of state control of the reform process.

During the election campaign, the leaders of *Russia's Choice* stressed the necessity of far-reaching market reforms. In this respect, Russia's Choice was portrayed more as a right-wing party than a centre party. As earlier in 1993, the *Liberal Democratic Party* represented the extreme right wing.

Out of the 54.8 percent of voters who participated in the referendum on the new Constitution, 58.4 percent – about 33 million persons – voted in favour of the Constitution, and 41.6 percent voted against (*Polyarnaya pravda*, 25 December 1993). Consequently, in the first Russian referendum on a fundamental law, the country received a Constitution with strong presidential powers. It could be supposed that many voters sought a remedy to the anarchic state of affairs in Russian politics with a strong executive power.

The results of the elections to the Federal Assembly, especially those to the State Duma based on party lists, spelled victory for the ultra-nationalists under Zhirinovsky. Russia's Choice and the Communists came second and third. The Russian Democratic Reform Movement, the Civic Union, Dignity and Mercy, Kedr and Future of Russia were unable to pass the 5 percent threshold.

Due to the fact that the Liberal Democrats did not possess as many popular leaders at the regional and local levels, the ultra-nationalists gained comparatively fewer seats in the single-mandate districts. In Table 1, voter turnouts are recorded as seats and percentages for both party lists and as totals for the Duma (*Rossiiskie vesti*, 29 December 1993, and 10 January 1994).

At the time of elections, 130 of the deputies (29.3 percent) were not members of any party. This could, quite naturally, change during the mandate period. Only 444 out of 450 parliamentarians were elected. In the Chechen Republic no elections took place, and in Tatarstan the elections were not adequately organized.

A number of reasons could be listed in order to explain the relative victory for the Liberal Democrats in the election. First and foremost, the reform-oriented parties were severely split among themselves. The leaders of these parties promoted solely their own party interests. Secondly, the neglect of social welfare under the economic transformation led a number of Russians to vote for Zhirinovsky as a protest against the rapid reforms.

Table 1. Distribution of Seats in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly.

Party/Organization	Party list	%	Total	%
Eurocommunist				
Communist Party	32	14.2	47	10.6
Agrarian Party	21	9.3	33	7.4
Left				
Women of Russia	21	9.3	23	5.2
Dignity and Mercy	0	–	2	0.4
Centrist				
Democratic Party	14	6.2	15	3.4
Civic Union	0	–	1	0.2
Russian Democratic Reform Movement	0	–	3	0.7
Yavlinsky-Boldyrev-Lukin Bloc	20	8.9	26	5.8
Russian Unity and Accord	18	8.0	19	4.3
Future of Russia	0	–	0	–
Right				
Russia's Choice	40	17.8	66	14.9
Extreme right				
Liberal Democratic Party	59	26.2	64	14.4
Other parties	0	–	15	3.4
Independent	–	–	130	29.3
Total	225	99.9	444	100.0

Sources: ITAR–TASS, 25 December 1993; Tolz 1994; *Rossiiskie vesti*, 29 December 1993 and 10 January 1994.

Thirdly, Zhirinovsky and his associates conducted a good election campaign, using, in particular, the television medium in a clever way.

In the Murmansk region, the results of the elections differed somewhat from those of the whole of Russia. In Murmansk the Liberal Democratic Party received 21.6 percent of the votes, Russia's Choice 20.7, the Yavlinsky Bloc 12.5, Women of Russia 6.9, the Democratic Party of Russia 6.2, Russian Unity and Accord 5.6, and the Communist Party 5.0. Other electoral blocs received less than 4 percent. The Communists and Agrarians received far less support in the Murmansk area as compared to Russia as a whole. The sympathies for Zhirinovsky's and Gaidar's parties were approximately the same in Murmansk and in Russia. Only 51.1 percent of the voters participated in the elections, and 69.2 percent voted affirmatively for the new Constitution (*Polyarnaya pravda*, 25 December 1993).

There are clear indications that the new Parliament will be even more difficult to manage for President Yeltsin than the Supreme Soviet, as radicals to the left and to the right received strong support. It will be extremely difficult to create majority coalitions in the Duma. Even a

coalition of reform-oriented parties – Russia's Choice, Unity and Accord, the Yavlinsky Bloc, and the Democratic Party – seems highly questionable due to internal discord.

The outlook for the Communist Party appears to be better. It already has an understanding with the Agrarians. Besides, the Communists can join forces with the Democratic Party as well as with the Women of Russia, the Civic Union and other centrists and independents. There is also a distinct possibility of future cooperation between the Communists and the ultra-nationalists – which of course would be disastrous for the market economic reforms.

The results of the elections to the Upper House of the Federal Assembly, the Federation Council, also display some unexpected features. More than 80 percent of the parliamentarians are without party affiliation. A large group of representatives consists of enterprise directors and members of local executive agencies (*Trud*, 12 January 1994).

A number of independents in the parliament have no clear political orientation and have no connection with any factions. The uncertainties in this respect are sometimes referred to as a "deputy morass". The share of this morass fluctuates from one-third to half of the members of the Federal Assembly. It is clear that unpredictability will characterize the new parliament (*Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 January 1993).

The elections revealed a definite change in public opinion. The extremists on both the left and the right wings were the victors of the elections. The outlook for the necessary consensus in politics therefore seems bleak.

Conclusions

There is a high degree of fluidity and uncertainty in the Russian party system. One might well characterize it as a party system in the making. In the peripheries, as exemplified in this article on the Murmansk region, the road to a system of well-functioning parties is even longer.

Clearly, the lack of democratic traditions makes it difficult to develop the new parties. Many new politicians' major political experience comes from the Communist Party. The absence of democratic traditions also explains part of the polarization in politics. The politicians are not used to making compromises and adjustments. This polarization is, however, a factor that could endanger the whole democratic system. Particularly worrying are the activities of the so-called red-brown coalition of communists and ultra-nationalists. Furthermore, the development after the 1993 elections indicates that the reforms will be carried out at a slower pace than earlier.

It would be wrong to conclude that the political parties in their present stage of development constitute a stabilizing factor in the democratic

system. The parties will need more time for consolidation and organizational development.

However, even if the parties are still in the making, they play a decisive role in Russian politics. Their activities inside and outside the Parliament will be crucial for the preservation and strengthening of Russian democracy.

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Appendix 1

Major Parties and Movements in the Russian Federation Before the 1991 Coup

1. Extreme Left
Unity for Leninism and Communist Ideas (Andreeva)
Workers' United Front (Kosolapov, Popov, Alekseev)
Russian Communist Party (Polozkov)
All-Union Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (Isaev, Shubin)

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1 a. Eurocommunist
Platform of the CPSU's Central Committee (Gorbachev)
Democratic Party of Russian Communists (Rutskoi)

---

system. The parties will need more time for consolidation and organizational development.

However, even if the parties are still in the making, they play a decisive role in Russian politics. Their activities inside and outside the Parliament will be crucial for the preservation and strengthening of Russian democracy.

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---

1 a. Eurocommunist
Platform of the CPSU's Central Committee (Gorbachev)
Democratic Party of Russian Communists (Rutskoi)

---

2. Left
Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (Rumyantsev, Obolensky)
Social Democratic Association of the USSR
Republican Party of Russia (Lysenko, Sulakshin, Shostakovsky)
Socialist Party of the USSR (Kagarlitsky)

3. Centrist
Democratic Party of Russia (Travkin)
Free Democratic Party of Russia (Salje, Ponomarev, Konstantinov)
Constitutional Democrats /two parties/
Peasants' Party of Russia (Chernichenko)
People's Party of Russia (Gdlyan, Borodin)
Liberal Conservative Union (Kasparov, Murashov)
Democratic Union Party (Novodvorskaya)

4. Right
Russian Christian Democratic Movement (Aksyutich, Anishchenko)
Conservative Party (Uboshko)
Russian Party (Korchagin)
Different pro-monarchist groups

5. Extreme Right
All-Union Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky)
National patriotic groups of Pamiat/Memory/

Appendix 2

Major Parties and Movements in Russia After August 1991

1. Extreme Left
The activities of communist organizations were suspended
Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists

1 a. Eurocommunist
Democratic Party of Russian Communists

2. Left
The same parties as before the coup
The Organizing Committee for the Movement for Democratic Reform

3. Centrist
The same parties as before the coup
Democratic Russia Movement

4. Right
The same parties as before the coup

5. Extreme Right
The same parties as before the coup

Appendix 3

Parties and Movements in the Murmansk Region Before the 1991 Coup

1. Extreme Left
Regional organization of the Russian Communist Party
Murmansk organization of Anarchists

1 a. Eurocommunist
The Murmansk group of the Democratic Party of Russian Communists

2. Left
The regional organization of the Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation
Murmansk city organization of the Republican Party of the Russian Federation
The Murmansk City Club, Citizens' Initiative

3. Centrist
Regional organization of the Democratic Party of Russia
City organizations of the Democratic Union Party in Murmansk and Severomorsk

4. Right
Orthodox Fraternity of Cyrillus and Methodius

5. Extreme Right
No parties and organizations

Note: In the Murmansk region there was a regional organization, the Democratic Russia Movement, which united all new non-communist parties and organizations.

Appendix 4

Major Parties and Movements in Russia After the Collapse of the USSR (At the End of 1992)

1. Extreme Left
National Salvation Front (Astafiev, Prokhanov)
United Workers' Front, Ours, Working Moscow
All-Union Party of Bolsheviks (Andreeva)
Russian Communist Workers' Party (Tiulkin)
New Russian Communist Party (Kryuchkov)

1 a. Eurocommunist
Communist Union (Prigarin)
Workers' Socialist Party (Medvedev)

2. Left
Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (Rumyantsev)
Republican Party of the Russian Federation (Lysenko)
People's Party of Free Russia (Rutskoi)

3. Centrist
Civic Union (Volsky, Vladislavlev)
Democratic Party of Russia (Travkin)
Russian Movement for Democratic Reform (Popov)
Democratic Russia Movement (Afanasiev)

4. Right
Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces (Christian Democrats, pro-monarchy groups, Unions of Cossacks, etc.)

5. Extreme Right
Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky)
Different groups of Pamiat (Memory)

Appendix 5

Parties and Movements in the Murmansk Region at the End of 1992

1. Extreme Left
No parties and organizations

1 a. Eurocommunist
Regional movement of Socialist Choice

2. Left
Two local organizations of the Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation
Murmansk regional organization of the People's Party of Free Russia
Murmansk city organization of the Republican Party of the Russian Federation

3. Centrist
Murmansk regional organization of the Democratic Russia Movement
Murmansk regional organization of the Democratic Party of Russia
Murmansk city organization of the Democratic Union Party
Murmansk city organization of the Party for Economic Freedom

4. Right
Union of Cossacks of Murmansk

5. Extreme Right
No parties and organizations

Appendix 6

Major Electoral Blocs and Movements in Russia After the October Events 1993

1. Extreme Left
A number of communist organizations were prohibited or suspended

1 a. Eurocommunist
Russian Communist Party (Zhuganov)
Russian Union of Ordinary People (Baburin)

2. Left
Workers' Socialist Party (Vartazarova, Medvedev)
Women of Russia (Fedulova)

3. Centrist
Civic Union for Stability, Justice and Progress (Volsky)
Party for Russian Unity and Accord (Shakhrai)
Yavlinsky–Boldyrev–Lukin Bloc
Russia's Choice (Gaidar)
Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms (Popov, Sobchak)
Bloc August (Borovoi)

4. Right
Russian Christian Democratic Movement (Vlasov, Aksyuchits)
Russian Christian Democratic Party (Chyuev)
Union of Cossacks of the Russian Federation (Naumov)

5. Extreme Right
Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky)
The activities of Russian Unity were stopped

Appendix 7

Parties and Movements in the Murmansk Region at the End of 1993

1. Extreme Left
No parties and organizations

1 a. Eurocommunist
Regional organization of the Russian Communist Party

2. Left
Murman – Future for All

3. Centrist
Murmansk regional organization of Russia's Choice
Murmansk regional organization of the Party of Russian Unity and Accord
Murmansk regional organization of the Democratic Russia Movement
Regional bloc Citizens' Consent

4. Right
No parties and organizations

5. Extreme Right
No parties and organizations

Appendix 8

Major Electoral Blocs and Movements in Russia After the December 1993 Elections

1. Extreme Left
A number of communist organizations were prohibited or suspended

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1 a. Eurocommunist
Russian Communist Party (Zhuganov)
Agrarian Party (Lapshin)

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2. Left
Dignity and Mercy (Frolov)
Women of Russia (Fedulova)

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3. Centrist
Democratic Party (Travkin)
Civic Union for Stability, Justice and Progress (Volsky)
Party for Russian Unity and Accord (Shakhrai)
Yavlinsky–Boldyrev–Lukin Bloc
Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms (Sobchak)
Future of Russia – New Names (Lashevsky)

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4. Right
Russia's Choice (Gaidar)

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5. Extreme Right
Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky)
