

**Toward an Uncivil Society?
Contextualizing the Recent Decline of
Extremely Right-Wing Parties in Russia**

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1990s, the relative weight of ultra-nationalist parties in Russian parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics has, after reaching a certain peak in the mid-1990s, declined. The paper argues that this trend can, for a number of reasons, not be taken as proof for a lasting evaporation of right-wing extremist ideas from high politics in Russia. In particular, parallel developments within the voluntary sector, namely the emergence of a multifaceted uncivil society, suggest that Russian right-wing extremism may currently experience a period of transition rather than decay. The example of the rise of the notorious neo-fascist Alexander Dugin from a lunatic fringe publicist to a highly placed political advisor with close links to both, the legislative and executive branches of the Russian state, in 1998-2001, is used as an illustration that radically anti-Western ideas will continue to have an impact on Russia's elite thinking, and policies.

Introduction

This paper uses some findings of research into non-Russian civil societies and ultra-nationalisms as well as selected examples of non-party Russian right-wing extremism to illustrate that the relative decline in radically nationalist party politics towards the end of the 1990s should not be seen as an unequivocal indication that “anti-liberal statism”¹ has lost its appeal in Russia. It also attempts to show that the considerable diversification in the non-governmental, not-for-profit sector of Russian society since the mid-1980s² cannot be regarded as exclusively beneficial in terms of Russia’s polyarchic consolidation, and further democratization.³ Not only is a Russian “civic public”⁴ or “civic community”⁵ developing only slowly. Some of the more significant pre- and post-Soviet groups, movements, and trends within the Russian voluntary sector are unsupportive, or explicitly critical of liberal democracy. A number of major non-state institutions and networks in Russian society contain ultra-nationalist, fundamentalist, and, partly, proto-

¹ This is the (arguably improvable) concept that is used in the pioneering article by Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, “The Weimar/Russia Comparison,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1997): 252-283.

² For the early period, see Anne White, *Democratization in Russia Under Gorbachev, 1985-91: The Birth of a Voluntary Sector* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999). “Today the number of public organizations registered with the Russian Justice Ministry is approximately 300,000 of which, according to estimations by experts, circa 75,000 are active.” Elke Fein, “Zivilgesellschaftlicher Paradigmenwechsel oder PR-Aktion? Zum ersten allrussischen ‘Bürgerforum’ im Kreml,” *Osteuropa* 52, no. 2 (2002): 158-179, here 160.

³ My taxonomy here draws on the conceptualization, proposed by Robert A. Dahl, of democracy as constituting not only an ideal-typical notion, but an ultimately utopian project. Dahl, in my understanding, applies the term “polyarchy” to those regimes that, even if by necessity representing only incomplete implementations of the democratic ideal, are fundamentally inspired by it. Democratization is, within this terminological scheme, seen as a continuous, potentially infinite process. Cf. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). A democratization breakthrough that marks a qualitative change from a non-polyarchic to a polyarchic regime might then have to be labeled “polyarchization.” From the above use of the labels also follows that I regard Russia as having already made this qualitative change – a view, to be sure, that many observers would regard as debatable.

⁴ Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 221.

⁵ Robert D. Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

fascist⁶ sub-sectors that question using the construct “civil society” to designate them. These organizations’ or groupings’ primary function is less — or not at all — to enhance peoples’ inclination and ability to participate effectively in political activities that could promote further democratization. Instead, they provide — sometimes expressly so — a medium for the spread of radically particularistic world views, ascriptive notions about human nature, and illiberal or/and bellicose political ideas, as well as an organizational training ground for potential political activists holding such ideas.⁷

The paper is divided in two parts. The first argues the necessity of continuing attention to Russian right-wing extremist tendencies in general,⁸ and to such trends in civil society, in particular — in spite of an apparent recent decline of extremely right-wing parties. It does so by referring to both, certain particulars of Russian politics today, and some analogies from contemporary West European history. It specifically addresses the issue of an adequate interpretation of the altogether paltry performance of the four major ultra-nationalist parties, the *LDPR*, *RNE*, *KPRF*, and *NBP*,⁹ and their frequent failures to achieve high offices during

⁶ For lucid definitions of fascism, and its proper and diminished sub-types, such as proto-fascism, see Roger D. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁷ The construct “uncivil society” was introduced to the study of Russian ultra-nationalist tendencies seemingly by Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Stephen E. Hanson, “Paths to Uncivil Societies and Anti-Liberal States: A Reply to Shenfield,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1998): 369-375. There is also a newsletter called *(Un)Civil Societies* available via Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

⁸ Most of the relevant secondary literature published on the subject until 1996 is reviewed in Andreas Umland, “Pravyi ekstremizm v postsovetsoi Rossii,” *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost’*, no. 4 (2001): 71-84; for a shorter English version, see *idem*, “The Post-Soviet Russian Extreme Right,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 44, no. 4 (1997): 53-61. For large data bases on the subject (with further links), see the sites of Moscow’s Panorama Agency <http://www.panorama.ru:8101/works/patr/>, and Antifashist Public Foundation www.aha.ru/~ofa/Oglav_1.htm. Primary sources links on the web are listed at www.patriotca.ru. I am grateful to Robert C. Otto for pointing me towards the latter site.

⁹ *LDPR* – *Liberal’no-demokraticheskaya partiya Rossii* (Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia), a misnamed ultra-nationalist, populist parliamentary party founded in 1990, led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and present in the State Duma since December 1993. *RNE* – *Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo* (Russian National Unity), a neo-Nazi, para-military, extra-parliamentary party founded in 1991 by Aleksandr Barkashov that split into several groups in the fall of 2000. *KPRF* – *Kommunisticheskaya partiya*

elections in the 1990s. It argues that their leaders' party-building efforts have, from their inception, been hindered by certain fundamental inconsistencies in these parties' public image. In assessing the recent decline of right-wing extremist party politics in Russia, it refers to the experience of pre-Nazi Germany that faced the disappearance of most of its antisemitic parties, but not of antisemitism around 1900. It further notes that specific attention to non-party activities on the extreme right has been called for by scholars of contemporary Western ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism too. It finally introduces the distinct phenomenon of "groupuscules" which have become prominent in post-war international right-wing extremism, including Russia.

The second part contains a short description of one particular sphere of Russia's emerging uncivil society as an illustration for the above issues: intellectual centers. It briefly introduces various think tanks paying special attention to the network of publishing, educational and other institutions created by Aleksandr Dugin. This overview will focus less on the specifics of the ideas of these groupings than on their organizational capacity, spread, and increasing presence in Russian society in the 1990s. The conclusions summarize the findings.

Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Communist Party of the Russian Federation), the major successor organization of the CPSU founded in 1993, led by Gennady Zyuganov, and a major player in the State Duma since December 1993. *NBP—Natsional-bol'shevistskaya partiya* (National-Bolshevik Party)—a radical extra-parliamentary neo- (but not mimetically) fascist party founded in 1993 as the National-Bolshevik Front by Eduard Limonov and Aleksandr Dugin (who later departed from the party).

The paper does thus not represent a comprehensive estimation of the current strength and reach of uncivil society in Russia. However, the sophistication, organizational capacity, and deep infiltration into mainstream social institutions of some of the groupings chosen here as illustrative examples should be sufficient to indicate that, for the foreseeable future, right-wing extremist ideas will continue to play a role in Russian politics independently of the individual fates of such figures as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Aleksandr Barkashov, or Eduard Limonov.

I. Civil Society's Relevance for Right-Wing Extremism Studies

There is a multitude of factors that have inhibited the emergence of a fully-fledged post-Soviet party system, in general,¹⁰ and the growth and rise of ultra-nationalist parties, in particular, in Russia. Among the reasons for the latter is a notion often invoked by Russian observers that, supposedly, there is a peculiarly Russian antipathy against ultra-nationalist ideas. Whether this is an appropriate interpretation or not, the relatively poor performance of many extremely right-wing individuals, and parties in Russia's elections so far can, for the below reasons, not be seen as indicating that the prospects of ultra-nationalist politics in Russia are principally negligible.

The first argument proposed here focuses on general features of the extreme right throughout the 1990s. It might be called "hermeneutic" in that it refers to some particulars of Russian nationalist discourse. The second argument concerns the decline of right-wing extremist support in the late 1990s; it is historical-analogical in that it points out some peculiarities in the development of historic German ultra-nationalism as being suggestive for an adequate assessment

¹⁰ M. Steven Fish, *Democracy from Scratch: Opposition and Regime in the New Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), and *idem*, "The Advent of Multipartyism in Russia, 1993-1995," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11, no. 4 (1995): 340-383.

of current Russian trends. The third argument can be seen as interpretative and conceptual; it refers to some recent trends in the study of Western right-wing extremism. It suggests that, for an adequate assessment of the strength and spread of ultra-nationalist ideas in, especially post-war, modern societies, close attention has to be paid to groupings and tendencies outside the strictly electoral realm.

I.1 . Some Peculiar Dilemmas of Russian Ultra-Nationalist Politics in the 1990s

Concerning the limited electoral success of right-wing extremist parties or politicians during the last decade in Russia, it is noteworthy that all four major political organizations that promoted ultra-nationalist ideas of various types and took, to various degrees, part in elections, the *LDPR*, *RNE*, *KPRF*, and *NBP*, suffered from certain basic impasses rooted in their particular history or leadership:

First, Vladimir Zhirinovskij, the supreme, dictatorial leader of the *LDPR*,¹¹ has a Jewish father.¹² Though Zhirinovskij cannot be regarded as being Jewish in any meaningful sense, and though he sees himself as being fully Russian, his family background constituted a principal predicament for Zhirinovskij's acceptance by many right-wing extremist politicians, intellectuals, activists, and voters.¹³ Some prominent figures in the extreme right, such as the former editor of the prestigious *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Military-Historical Journal) Viktor Filatov, to be

¹¹ Andreas Umland, "Wladimir Shirinowskij in der russischen Politik: Einige Hintergründe des Aufstiegs der Liberal-Demokratischen Partei Rußlands," *Osteuropa* 44, no. 12 (1994): 1117-1131.

¹² Though this had been common knowledge in the Russian public since the early 1990s, it is significant that Zhirinovskij himself recently admitted the fact in public. See *International Herald Tribune*, 18 July 2001, 5. I am grateful to Professor Marshall I. Goldman for bringing this to my attention.

¹³ The negative PR effect of Zhirinovskij's antics has often been over-rated by Western and Russian observers according to whom he, accordingly, should have disappeared from politics long ago. Zhirinovskij is consciously playing the role of the traditional Russian figure *yurodiv* (a clown expressing

sure, did seemingly not regard Zhirinovsky's ancestry as being by itself, or at all a problem, and co-operated or still co-operate with him. However, it seems not too far-fetched a speculation that a majority of Russia's ultra-nationalists would regard the idea of a Russian president with a Jewish father as undesirable (to say the least).¹⁴

Second, the party that came to occupy most of the lunatic fringe section, i.e. the explicitly anti-systemic, counter-cultural, violence-prone, outermost right niche, of the Russian party spectrum was the *RNE*.¹⁵ This party used prominently (though not exclusively) some barely modified German Nazi symbols, such as the swastika and Roman salute, as well as ideas, such as biological racism. I will not go here into the details of the various problems that an as explicitly neo-Nazi profile as the *RNE*'s would encounter everywhere in the world (including Germany), and did encounter in Russia.¹⁶ It may suffice to say that this particular characteristic predestined the *RNE*, from its creation, to political isolation, and, arguably, eventual failure. When, in autumn 2000, the *RNE* finally fell apart, one of its major successor organizations identified its desire for a

folk wisdom), and has explicitly defended his theatrical style as necessary to keep people's attention. See Martin A. Lee, *The Beast Reawakens* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company, 1997), 323-325.

¹⁴ A 1994 *NBP* document, for instance, speaks of the "Israelites of the *LDPR*." See Vladimir Pribylovsky, ed., *Russkie natsionalisticheskie i pravoradikal'nye organizatsii, 1989-1995: Dokumenty i teksty*. 1st Vol. (Moscow: Panorama, 1995), 185.

¹⁵ John B. Dunlop, "Alexander Barkashov and the Rise of National Socialism in Russia," *Demokratizatsiya* 4, no. 4 (1996): 519-530; Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Aleksandr Barkashov and Russian National Unity: Blackshirt Friends of the Nation," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 4 (1996): 625-639; Vyacheslav Likhachev and Vladimir Pribylovsky, eds., *Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo: Istoriya, politika, ideologiya. Informatsionnyi paket* (Moscow: Panorama, 1997); William D. Jackson, "Fascism, Vigilantism, and the State: The Russian National Unity Movement," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 1 (1999): 34-42.

¹⁶ Andreas Umland, "The Pseudo-Threat of Russian Neo-Nazism: Symbolical and Ideological Handicaps of the *RNE*," Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

fundamental change in the symbolism and ideology of the party away from Nazism to a more traditional russocentric profile as a reason for its rift with *RNE*-founder Aleksandr Barkashov.¹⁷

Third, the political profile of the *KPRF* — if indeed one regards its ideology as essentially right-wing and extremist¹⁸—remains fundamentally compromised by ideological inconsistencies stemming from its originally left-wing roots.¹⁹ This is in spite of the CPSU's impregnation with crypto-nationalist ideas already under Stalin,²⁰ and the sophistication of the gradual switch to an increasingly explicit ultra-nationalist course represented by the ever more elaborate russophile ideology developed in the numerous publications of its political leader and major ideologist, Gennady A. Zyuganov.²¹ Zyuganov's increasingly bold, undisguised adoption of the ideas of prominent Russian and European right-wing thinkers, including, for instance, the émigré monarchist political theorist Ivan A. Il'in (1883-1954), has led him to move the *KPRF* in a more and more obviously non- and even, implicitly, anti-communist direction.²² This, notwithstanding, the party has not repudiated its role as the main successor organization of the CPSU. It is thus seen by leading right-wing spokesmen (few women are to be found in this spectrum), and, presumably, a considerable number of nationalist voters as not only being responsible for many of

¹⁷ It is for these reasons that it seemed to me that, in some surveys of the Russian extreme right, rather too much attention has been paid to the *RNE*. See, for instance, Stephen D. Shenfield, "The Weimar/Russia Comparison: Reflections on Hanson and Kopstein," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1998): 355-368; and *idem*, *Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 113-189 and 264-266.

¹⁸ For an interpretation that somewhat departs from such labeling, see Robert C. Otto, "Gennadii Zyuganov: The Reluctant Candidate," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 5 (1999): 37-47.

¹⁹ Andreas Umland, "Post-Soviet Politics: A History Still Beginning," *Patterns of Prejudice* 34, no. 2 (2000): 132-134.

²⁰ Frederick Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

²¹ Although now somewhat outdated, a still valuable summary is Veljko Vujčić, "Gennady Zyuganov and the 'Third Road'", *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12, no. 2 (1996): 118-154.

²² An interpretation that, in contrast, emphasizes the coherence in Zyuganov's agenda as important for his success in party-building is Stephen E. Hanson, *Ideology, Uncertainty, and the Rise of Anti-System Parties in Postcommunist Russia*. Studies in Public Policy Number 289 (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1997).

Russia's misfortunes in the 20th century. It is, correctly or not, perceived as not representing a genuinely anti-universalist party that, moreover, has an ideological heritage going back to the theories of a German Jew. At least, as long as the party keeps the attribute "Communist" in its name, it will remain vulnerable not only to liberal, but—what is more important—also nationalist critique referring to its Marxist roots, and Soviet past.²³

A fourth, lesser known, but, at least, temporarily important ultra-nationalist group that seemed to be on the rise in the late 1990s,²⁴ and will play some role below, is the National-Bolshevik Party *NBP*. This party belongs, as the *RNE*, to the counter-cultural, expressly anti-systemic current in Russian ultra-nationalism. In spite of its distinctly novitistic profile, this party is too still bound to refrain from violating some basic strictures of the political spectrum it aims to occupy in order to achieve larger support. In other words, it has to remain within some basic ideological fix-points of right-wing extremism in order to gain wider acceptance among nationalist voters. The *NBP* faced, in this regard, not only the dilemma that its eccentric leader, the novelist Eduard Limonov, had spent a large part of his earlier life in the West. Before becoming involved in politics, Limonov had described his sexual encounters with men in the United States in his infamous novel *Eto ya, Edichka* (Its me, Eddie).²⁵ A comment of the leading

²³ This vulnerability became relevant in the 1996 presidential campaign when Yel'tsin (though being himself a former CPSU apparatchik) was able to launch a sophisticated negative campaign against the *KPRF*-leader that referred to Russia's Soviet past. See Michael McFaul, *The 1996 Russian Presidential Elections: The End of Polarized Politics* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1997).

²⁴ Markus Mathyl, "Die National-Bolschewistische Partei als Beispiel der Radikalisierung des russischen Nationalismus," *Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik* 9, no. 2 (1997): 7-15; 10, no. 1 (1998): 23-36; *idem*, "Hammer und Sichel in der Fahne Hitlers," in: Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Jugendkulturen, Politik und Protest: Vom Widerstand zum Kommerz* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 2000), 211-37; Andrei Rogachevskii, "The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief History," Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Society for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

²⁵ Among the early activists of the *NBP*, there was also the "ideologist of militant homosexuality, the journalist Yaroslav Mogutin." Pribylovsky, ed., *Russkie natsionalisticheskie i pravoradikal'nye organizatsii*, 177.

nationalist writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn may suffice to illustrate the dominant view in mainstream Russian nationalist intellectual circles on Limonov: “a little insect who writes pornography.”²⁶

These characteristics constituted profound discrepancies in the profile of the ultra-nationalist parties mentioned here. One should, therefore, be cautious to infer from the relative electoral impotence of organized political ultra-nationalism in Russia in the 1990s a general lack of political prospects for extremely right-wing ideas in Russia in the new century.

I. 2. Evaluating Declining Ultra-Nationalist Parties: Some Lessons from German History

Not only was the Russian extreme right inhibited by the above intricacies from the outset. Its political fortunes seem to have, after reaching a certain peak in 1993-1995, been further dwindling in recent years. First, Zhirinovskiy's electoral support decreased in the 1996 presidential (5.7%) and 1999 State Duma elections (6%), and, especially, in the 2000 presidential elections (2.7%—the lowest result he ever received in federal elections). Second, the nationalist Agrarian Party that was prominent in post-Soviet Russia's first parliaments, and had received considerable support in the first multi-party parliamentary elections of 1993 (7.9%) has since then become an, at best, second-rate political factor. Third, the large difference between unpopular Boris Yel'tsin's and little-known Vladimir Putin's outcomes, on the one side, and Zyuganov's results in the 1996 (second round) and 2000 (first round) presidential elections, on the other, has also been interpreted to signal the fading of a serious anti-liberal alternative in Russia. Since, moreover, the *KPRF* has been relying heavily on elderly voters, a future decline of the party might be merely a

²⁶ As quoted in Lee, *The Beast Reawakens*, 313. For further details on Limonov, see Andrei Rogachevskii, “Dangerous Liaisons: Eduard Limonov and Ataman Krasnov,” in: P. Pesonen, Yu. Kheinonen and G.V.

matter of time (in spite of some surprising gains in opinion polls in 2001 and 2002). Fourth, the *RNE* split in autumn 2000 into several minor organizations.²⁷ Last but not least, *NBP*-leader Limonov has, at the time of the writing of this paper, been in prison for illegal ownership of weapons for several months.²⁸ Is right-wing extremism dead in Russia?²⁹

A glance on the history of ultra-nationalist movements elsewhere would caution against a quick answer. For instance, modern German political antisemitism is marked by a fundamental discontinuity—one could say: paradox—in its history that might be suggestive for an evaluation of the current fall of Russian radically nationalist parties. At the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, the young German party system experienced a significant change by the descent of its most explicitly antisemitic components.³⁰ Only a few years before, some seemingly vigorous ultra-nationalist parties, founded during the 1870s-1880s, had been on the rise, and, together with the increasingly antisemitic Conservative Party, won a majority in the 1893 *Reichstag* elections.³¹ Also, a multitude of antisemitic literature had been circulating in Germany for more than two decades at this point.³² Yet, “[t]he electoral fortunes of the antisemitic parties, other than the

Obatnina, eds., *Modernizm i postmodernizm v russkoi literature i kul'ture*. Studia Russica Helsingiensa et Tartuensa 5 (Helsinki: Slavica Helsingiensa, 1996), 419-439.

²⁷ Vyacheslav Likhachev, “Chto predstavlyaet soboi Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo kak organizatsiya,” Paper presented (by Vladimir Pribylovsky) at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

²⁸ Andrey Mukhin and Natalya Rostova, “Eduard Limonov popal iz bani v ‘Lefortovo,’” *Segodnya*, no. 82 (14 April 2001): 3.

²⁹ A leading Russian specialist on Russia’s ultra-nationalist scene comes in summer 2001 to the conclusion that “the time of the national-radicals is over.” Vyacheslav Likhachev, “My i nash diagnoz: Radikaly nachinayut i proigryvayut,” *Obshchaya gazeta*, no. 24 (14 June 2001): 15. I am grateful to Robert C. Otto for sending me this article.

³⁰ Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

³¹ Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 75.

³² Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Antisemitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 245-272.

Conservative Party, declined in the first decade of the twentieth century.”³³ Otto Kulka specifies that

the diminishing importance of the antisemitic parties towards the end of the nineteenth century [...] does not indicate a parallel decline underlying their critique of Judaism. Rather it suggests the penetration of this criticism into the ideologies of most of the large political parties at the end of the imperial age and during the Weimar era.³⁴

What is even more relevant for the present analysis is that the latter development was, in the words of Daniel Goldhagen, “true not only of political institutions but also of the Tocquevillian substructures of society, the associations that provided the staging ground for people’s political education and activity.”³⁵ Werner Jochmann even writes that “a wealth of examples shows how, in the [18]90s, antisemitism infiltrated in this way into every last citizens’ association, penetrating folk clubs and cultural societies.”³⁶ Peter Pulzer warns that an emphasis on the overall meager direct political influence of the German antisemitic parties and their leaders at this time would miss the point: “Thirty years of incessant propaganda had been more effective than men thought at the time; antisemitism was no longer disgraceful in wide social and academic circles [...]”³⁷

Goldhagen concludes that

the decline of the antisemitic parties was therefore not symptomatic of a decline in antisemitism, for these particular parties had already performed their historic role of moving antisemitism from the street and the beer hall’s *Stammtisch* into the electoral booth and the seat of parliament, into, in Max Weber’s formulation, the house of power. The antisemitic parties had rendered themselves moot. They could quietly disappear, leaving the political terrain to more potent successors who were fit for the next upsurge in antisemitic expression and activity.³⁸

³³ Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, 76.

³⁴ Otto D. Kulka, “The Critique of Judaism in Modern European Thought: Genuine Factors and Demonic Perceptions,” in: Robert S. Wistrich, ed., *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism and Xenophobia* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 197-209, here 204-205.

³⁵ Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, 72.

³⁶ Werner Jochmann, “Structure and Functions of German Anti-Semitism, 1878-1914,” in: Herbert A. Strauss, ed., *Hostages of Modernization: Studies on Modern Antisemitism, 1870-1933/39* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 52-53.

³⁷ Peter G.J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria* (New York: Wiley, 1964), 300.

³⁸ Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, 76.

It would be clearly misleading to draw far-reaching parallels between the type, salience and radicalness of antisemitism in pre-Nazi German and post-Soviet Russian society. Nor would it be adequate to claim that exactly the same process of transfer of ultra-nationalist ideas from waning fringe parties to the political mainstream as well as to civil society sectors is taking place in Russia today. However, this example—and there were more such cases in pre-fascist Europe—illustrates that a deterioration of the electoral and organizational performance of right-wing extremist parties cannot in every case be seen as an unequivocal indication of a diminishing appeal of their ideas. It also indicates that attention to developments within civil—and not only political—society may assist in drawing a fuller picture of the spread, nature, and radicalism of anti-democratic ideas in a given country.

I. 3 . Civil Society’s Role in Democratic Transition, Consolidation, and Breakdown

Not only can declining nationalist parties, in a certain context, create misleading impressions about a population’s propensity to support anti-democratic politics. In some recent research, there has been also some serious questioning of the contribution of a strong civil society to the creation and fortification of polyarchies. Whereas a mainstream approach—sometimes called “neo-Toquevillian” and principally inspired by Robert Putnam’s seminal study *Making Democracy Work*—assumes an important positive effect of civil society on democratization, some dissenting voices have argued that a strong civil society may have only limited relevance for certain attempts to establish polyarchies, or may, in particular circumstances, even contribute to the break-down of unconsolidated polyarchies. For instance, Omar G. Encarión showed in a recent paper that “[...] Spain constructed a viable and very successful new democracy with a notable deficit in civil

society development as reflected in the absence of the conditions most conducive to the production of social capital.”³⁹ In as far as Spain constitutes “the paradigmatic case for the study of democratic transitions,”⁴⁰ and as it has been said that, for Eastern Europe, “the optimistic scenario is to retrace the path of Spain,”⁴¹ this finding, if correct, should have significant consequences for our understanding of how polyarchies emerge.

What is even more relevant for the present context is that another paradigmatic case for the comparative study of regime change, namely the fall of the German Weimar Republic in 1930-1934, is marked by the presence and active involvement of, by both historical and comparative standards, an exceptionally varied and thriving voluntary sector.⁴² As Sheri Berman has noted,

in contrast to what neo-Toquevillian theories would predict, high levels of associationism, absent strong and responsive national government and political parties, served to fragment rather than unite German society. [...] Weimar’s rich associational life provided critical training ground for eventual Nazi cadres and a base from which the National Socialist Workers’ Party (*NSDAP*) could launch its *Machtergreifung* (seizure of power). Had German civil society been weaker, the Nazis would never have been able to capture so many citizens for their cause or eviscerate their opponents so swiftly. [...] [T]he *NSDAP* rose to power, not by attracting alienated, apolitical Germans, but rather by recruiting highly activist individuals and then exploiting their skills and associational affiliations to expand the party’s appeal and consolidate its position as the largest political force in Germany.⁴³

The peculiarity of German civic associations of this time was that, instead of representing indicators for the depth of the democratic inclinations of the German population, they grew

³⁹ Omar G. Encarión, “Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy in Spain,” *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 1 (2001): 53-79, here 55.

⁴⁰ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 87.

⁴¹ Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 8.

⁴² Peter Fritzsche, *Rehearsals of Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁴³ Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401-429, here 402, 408.

during periods of strain. When national political institutions and structures proved either unwilling or unable to address their citizens' needs, many Germans turned away from them and found succor and support in the institutions of civil society instead. [...] This growth of associations during these years did not signal a growth in liberal values or democratic political structures; instead, it reflected and furthered the fragmentation of German political life and the delegitimization of national political institutions.⁴⁴

A somewhat similar argument has been made for the case of Northern Italy where the post-World War I Fascist movement too emerged from a relatively well-developed network of civil society institutions⁴⁵ (thus calling into question Putnam's famous thesis⁴⁶).

These findings seem to indicate that the role civil society plays in a regime change is conditioned by the concrete political circumstances, such as the strength of political institutions, as well as—not only the nature, but also—the degree of legitimacy of the existing political regime. Berman concludes that, “[p]erhaps, therefore, associationism should be considered a politically neutral multiplier—neither inherently good nor inherently bad, but rather dependent for its effects on the wider political context.”⁴⁷

A partial solution to the dilemma of the simultaneously democratization-furthering and—inhibiting role that civil society may play can be found in analyses that tried to distinguish between different types of civil society institutions—most importantly between those that have democratic and anti-democratic inclinations.⁴⁸ For instance, the most prominent of the rapidly growing organizations within the voluntary sector of the Weimar Republic were the various

⁴⁴ Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” 411, 413.

⁴⁵ William L. Eubank and Leonard Weinberg, “Terrorism and Democracy within one Country: The Case of Italy,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 1 (1997): 98-108.

⁴⁶ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*.

⁴⁷ Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” 427.

⁴⁸ Ami Pedahzur, “The Potential Role of ‘Pro-Democratic Civil Society’ in Responding to Extreme Right-Wing Challenges: The Case of Brandenburg,” Paper presented at the 97th Annual Convention of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 30 August - 2 September 2001.

nationalist associations that became popular after World War I. These nationalist associations are best viewed as

symptoms and agencies of change. They were formed as distinctive organizations within a space which the difficulties and obsolescence of an older mode of dominant-class politics had opened up.⁴⁹

Non-party institutions such as these nationalist associations were not only peculiar in that they came to substitute political parties—a pattern that, since World War II, has become again relevant in, among other countries, Germany.⁵⁰ They should also be seen as not representing manifestations of civil society proper, but as constituting “uncivil groups,”⁵¹ or “uncivil movements.”⁵²

This issue has been recently specifically addressed in a paper by Ami Pedahzur and Leonard Weinberg that proposed to introduce the previously known, but hitherto insufficiently elaborated concept of *uncivil* society in the comparative study of right-wing extremism.⁵³ Pedahzur and Weinberg observe that, since the early 1970s, non-party forms of linkages between state and society have become more prominent in general, and argue that not only civil society proper has thus gained importance. Non-party challengers of democracy, i.e. various permutations of uncivil society, too have—whether as substitutes for strong right-wing extremist parties,⁵⁴ or as

⁴⁹ Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), XIX; as quoted in Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” 411.

⁵⁰ Kay Lawson and Peter H. Merkl, eds., *When Parties Fail: Emerging Alternative Organizations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Encarión, “Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy in Spain,” 67-68.

⁵² Leigh A. Payne, *Uncivil Movements: The Armed Right Wing and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

⁵³ Ami Pedahzur and Leonard Weinberg, “Modern European Democracies and Its Enemies: The Threat of the Extreme Right,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 2, no. 1 (2001): 52-72.

⁵⁴ Uwe Backes and Cas Mudde, “Germany: Extremism without Successful Parties,” *Parliamentary Affairs* 53, no. 3 (2000): 457-468.

complementary players of anti-democratic political actors—become more relevant in established democracies.

I. 4 . Electoral vs. Other Activities of the Western Extreme Right Today

Already before these theoretical arguments were made, attention to the non-party realm has been called for in empirical research on recent developments in German and other Western ultra-nationalisms. In explicit distinction to Herbert Kitschelt who focused in his path-breaking book on the New Radical Right in Western Europe of the 1970s-1990s mainly on political parties,⁵⁵ Michael Minkenberg in his subsequent comparative study of right-wing radicalism in post-1968 Germany, France and the US, for instance, considers, apart from parties, a wide variety of groups within uncivil society.⁵⁶ These include intellectual circles, sub-cultural milieus, religious organizations, youth gangs, publishing houses, and other institutions. Minkenberg's attention to these phenomena is not only useful in that it provides the basis for a more adequate assessment of the penetration of right-wing radical ideas into society—especially with regard to those countries that have not experienced as impressive surges of radically right-wing parties as, for instance, Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*), Italy (*Alleanza Nazionale*), or France (*Front national*). Minkenberg also addresses, more adequately than Kitschelt, the fact that activists espousing such ideas have been using different strategies in promoting their views depending on the particular socio-political contexts, cultural traditions and legal-institutional settings within which they

⁵⁵ Herbert Kitschelt in collaboration with Anthony J. McGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). Another more recent, important book that, although displaying a less narrow approach to the radical right's ideology than Kitschelt's study, also largely limits itself to the analysis of political parties espousing ultra-nationalist ideologies is Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2000).

⁵⁶ Michael Minkenberg, *Die neue radikale Rechte im Vergleich: USA, Frankreich, Deutschland* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998).

operate.⁵⁷ Minkenberg, for instance, notes that, in the US, certain xenophobic and fundamentalist groups have, instead of forming their own parties, used Republican front organizations to penetrate the state via the GOP.⁵⁸ In Germany, a “New Right” discourse on national history and identity has become influential in public debates.⁵⁹ Instead of engaging in party-building, this section of the German radical right has had considerable success in affecting German political culture in general,⁶⁰ and the agendas of the moderate right-wing parties, in particular.⁶¹ The “New Right” has done so, moreover, quite consciously by way of adopting the well-known Gramscian notion of the necessity for an ideological group to achieve first “cultural hegemony” in a society in order to acquire subsequently political power.⁶² On the territory of the former “German Democratic Republic” too, to the surprise of many observers, right-wing radical parties have, with

⁵⁷ Andreas Umland, “Srvavritel’ny analiz krayne pravykh grupp na Zapade: Po povodu knigi M. Minkenberga,” *Politicheskie issledovaniya*, no. 3 (62) (2001): 174-179.

⁵⁸ See also Michael Minkenberg, *Neokonservatismus und Neue Rechte in den USA: Neuere konservative Gruppierungen und Strömungen im Kontext sozialen und kulturellen Wandels* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1990); and *idem*, “Die amerikanische konservative Revolution: Radikale Rechte und Republikanische Partei am Ende des Jahrhunderts,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1996): 45-53. A further case study is Russ Bellant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and the Republican Party: Domestic Fascist Networks, and their Effect on U.S. Cold War Politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991)

⁵⁹ Armin Pfahl-Traughber, *Konservative Revolution und Neue Rechte: Rechtsextremistische Intellektuelle gegen den demokratischen Verfassungsstaat* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1998).

⁶⁰ Wolfgang Gessenharter, *Kippt die Republik?: Die Neue Rechte und ihre Unterstützung durch Politik und Medien* (München: Knauer, 1994); Claus Leggewie, *Druck von rechts: Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* (München: Beck, 1993); Kurt Lenk, *Rechts, wo die Mitte ist* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1994).

⁶¹ See also Elmar Wiesendahl, “Verwirtschaftung und Verschleiss der Mitte: Zum Umgang des etablierten Politikbetriebs mit der rechtsextremistischen Herausforderung,” in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer, ed., *Das Gewalt-Dilemma* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 115-137; and Hans-Martin Lohmann, ed., *Extremismus der Mitte: Vom rechten Verständnis deutscher Nation* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994).

⁶² Alex Demirovic, “Kulturelle Hegemonie von rechts: Antonio Gramsci – gesehen von der ‘nouvelle droite,’” *Die neue Gesellschaft: Frankfurter Hefte* 37, no. 4 (1990): 352-357; Armin Pfahl-Traughber, “‘Gramscismus von rechts’?: Zur Gramsci Rezeption der Neuen Rechten in Frankreich und Deutschland,” *Blick nach rechts*, no. 21 (28 September 1992): 3-5. In fact, it might be this openly admitted strategy rather than any particular ideological prescription that constitutes the most important common denominator of the various sub-groups within the “New Right,” and delineates it from other forms of right-wing extremism.

some notable exceptions,⁶³ not fared well in elections so far. Yet, East German ultra-nationalism has become disturbingly strong on the grass-roots and sub-cultural levels, and, especially, in the youth scene.⁶⁴

I. 5 . The Groupuscule

An important sub-sector of post-war uncivil society—namely the multitude of minuscule and relatively closed ultra-nationalist and often fascist groupings across the world—has recently, been conceptualized in a novel, and, it appears, heuristically fruitful way by Roger Griffin as “groupuscules.”⁶⁵ Distancing himself from approaches that have dismissed this spectrum of small extremist groups as hardly worth studying,⁶⁶ Griffin argues that there is a certain sub-category of minor ultra-nationalist groupings that should, in spite of their unimpressive magnitude, be taken seriously as objects of study in their own right. This class would include such organizations as the Groupe Union Défense, White Aryan Resistance, or European Liberation Front.⁶⁷ These particular groupings that Griffin labels “groupuscules” have either, after an unsuccessful performance in electoral contests, left high politics, but continued to thrive as parochial associations. Or they were never conceived to become fully-fledged parties in the larger public realm, and constituted, from their inception, relatively clogged organizations serving mainly the

⁶³ Andreas Umland, “A German Le Pen?” *Patterns of Prejudice* 35, no. 4 (2001): 91-93.

⁶⁴ Burkhard Schroeder, *Im Griff der rechten Szene: Ostdeutsche Städte in Angst* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997); Bernd Wagner, *Rechtsextremismus und kulturelle Subversion in den neuen Ländern* (Berlin: Schriftenreihe des Zentrums Demokratische Kultur, 1998).

⁶⁵ Roger Griffin, “Net Gains and GUD Reactions: Patterns of Prejudice in a Neo-fascist *Groupuscule*,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 33, no. 2 (1999): 31-50; *idem*, “From Slime Mould to Rhizome: An Introduction to the Groupuscular Right,” ms, Oxford Brookes University, 2002, draft for a paper forthcoming in *Patterns of Prejudice* (2003). I am grateful to Professor Griffin for sending me, and letting me quote from, his yet unpublished paper.

⁶⁶ Martin Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the Right in Europe, 1919-1945* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), 112.

small circle of its members and supporters. Although some of these groupuscules call themselves “parties,” they should be conceptualized as belonging, at best, to a diminished sub-type⁶⁸ of the generic political party.

[T]he term “groupuscule” is being used [...] to refer to a political organization which by the standards of national party politics has minute active membership, and may have an extremely low or non-existent public profile, yet is a fully ripened fruit within its own ideological vine-yard. [...] Its diminutive size, marginality, and relative inconspicuousness bestow on it qualities which suit the purposes of its organizers.⁶⁹

It is thus not useful to consider groupuscules solely as the remnants of abortive attempts of party-building. Instead, they should be regarded either as a peculiar sub-sector of uncivil society, or as representing hybrid phenomena fluctuating between political and civil society—the latter, shifting pattern being typical of a number of voluntary sector organizations in modern societies, in general.⁷⁰

The form of the groupuscule has been chosen by many extremely right-wing activists in the West, as they had to adapt to an increasingly depoliticized and “de-nationalized” public in the post-World War II context. The groupuscules thus largely define themselves by their “renunciation of any aspirations to create a mass membership base, appeal to a wide political constituency in the general public, or to enter into alliances or compromises with other political actors in the pursuit of maximum influence.”⁷¹ Instead, groupuscules have taken the form of cadre organizations run by small elites of activists, which keep

⁶⁷ The *NBP* spoke highly, and later apparently became a member of the international network of the European Liberation Front. See Pribylovsky, ed., *Russkie natsionalisticheskie i pravoradikal'nye organizatsii*, 186-187.

⁶⁸ On the concept of “diminished sub-type,” see David Collier and James Mahoney, “Conceptual ‘Stretching’ Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis,” *American Political Science Review* 87 (December 1993): 845-855; and David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics* 49 (April 1997): 430-451.

⁶⁹ Griffin, “From Slime Mould to Rhizome,” 3.

⁷⁰ Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 224.

⁷¹ Griffin, “From Slime Mould to Rhizome,” 8.

alive the prospect of having an impact on society by remaining open to linkages with kindred spirits on the extreme right and publicizing its existence through effective propaganda directed at the chosen few. [The Internet, moreover] allows the creation of a “virtual community” [...] cocooning its members against contacts with the outside world [...]. [E]ach groupuscule, no matter how small, [can] act as a nodal point in a vast, constantly evolving network of extremist organizations of far greater significance than the sum of its parts: the groupuscular right. [...] [P]erhaps the most important aspect of the groupuscular right for political science lies [thus] in the structure it has come to adopt in order to act not as a single corporate body, but as a network of ideological formation and activist coordination made up of self-contained grouplets. [...] Cumulatively these “groupuscules” can be conceived as constituting a new type of political subculture or actor, the “groupuscular right,” which has an aggregate substance, influence, and longevity disproportionate to the size, impact, and stability of any of its components.⁷²

The importance of the individual groupuscule stems not only from being embedded in a larger network of similar components, but also—resembling the function of many other civil society organizations—from its potential as a training ground and educational institution for future political activists. The groupuscule

can have a formative impact on the careers of particular individuals in search of grand narratives and total truth by playing a crucial role in transforming ill-defined resentments into a personal sense of higher mission to “do something about it.” In extreme cases the groupuscule has made decisive contributions to turning a disaffected loner into a fanatical “lone wolf” ready to carry out ruthless acts of terrorism at symbols of society’s decadence whatever the cost in human life, as Timothy McVeigh and David Copeland dramatically illustrate.⁷³

For the case of Russia, this category of groupings within the ultra-nationalist spectrum has, as will be illustrated in a forthcoming article by Markus Mathyl in *Patterns of Prejudice*,⁷⁴ been clearly relevant too (see below). It seems recently to have gained recently further importance when a new Law on Parties was adopted. The law requires that political parties that wish to register as such with the Justice Ministry have to document, apart from other things, significant organizational capacity (membership, regional organizations) across Russia. As this official registration is

⁷² Griffin, “From Slime Mould to Rhizome,” 2, 8-9.

⁷³ Griffin, “From Slime Mould to Rhizome,” 9.

⁷⁴ Markus Mathyl, “Die National-Bolschewistische Partei und ‘Arktogeja:’ Zwei neofaschistische groupuscules im postsowjetischen Raum,” unpublished manuscript, Technische Universität Berlin, 2001.

indispensable to take fully part in high politics, and especially in elections, the high threshold for registration created by the new Law on Parties has pushed dozens of political organizations that explicitly regarded themselves as power-seeking organizations into the non-electoral realm where most of those that continue to exist as organized groups will, in the foreseeable future, presumably, remain locked. Adopting a backstage/groupuscular, rather than public/electoral strategy may constitute a pragmatic option for many extremist organizations if they want to continue having, at least, a minor impact in today Russia. Above all, it might be a way a to survive organizationally, and remain prepared for situations that would allow them to re-enter high politics.

Griffin's concluding remark in his first publication on this issue concerns the Western context, but is, at least, equally relevant for Russia. The groupuscular right

is a political force which guarantees that if conditions of profound socio-economic crisis were ever to emerge again in the West's democratic heartland to make mass support for revolutionary nationalism a realistic possibility, then many countries would have not only the dedicated cadres prepared to lead it, but a plentiful reserve of ideological resources to fuel it.⁷⁵

II. Ultra-Nationalist Intellectual Centers in Contemporary Russia

Below, I survey briefly one specific sphere of Russia's uncivil society: its think-tanks (in Russian: *mozgovye tsenry* = "brain-centers") and theoretical circles, and their propaganda, publishing and educational activities in Russia.

II. 1 . Manifestations of Uncivil Society in Contemporary Russia

There are a number of further phenomena in Russian uncivil society that would be worth considering in connection with the argument of this paper. These include, among others:

- (a) the infiltration of established civil society institutions, such as the trade union movement, with anti-democratic ideas of various kinds,⁷⁶
- (b) the emergence of a number of new volunteer, grass-roots and self-help organizations, such as various ecological groups, anti-drug initiatives, or child-support organizations,⁷⁷ that, in spite of owing their existence to liberal democracy, do not promote, or even explicitly reject its normative foundations,⁷⁸
- (c) certain tendencies in the Russian Christian-Orthodox churches and especially within the Moscow Patriarchy,⁷⁹
- (d) many of the new or revived Russian Orthodox brotherhoods,⁸⁰
- (e) the ultra-nationalist sections of the neo-pagan movement,⁸¹

⁷⁵ Griffin, "Net Gains and GUD Reactions," 46.

⁷⁶ Vladimir Marakasov, "Cherepovetskii poligon," in: Vladimir Ilyushenko, ed., *Nuzhen li Gitler Rossii?: Po materialam Mezhdunarodnogo foruma "Fashizm v totalitarnom i posttotalitarnom obshchestve: ideynye osnovy, sotsial'naya baza, politicheskaya aktivnost,"* Moskva, 20-22 yanvarya 1995 goda (Moscow: PIK, 1996), 60-62; Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 142-143.

⁷⁷ *Dvizhenie "V zashchitu detstva: My v otvete za budushchee. Materialy vserossiiskoi konferentsii "Iсполnit' dolg pered budushchim" (8 aprelya 2000 g.)* (Moscow: Mysl', 2000).

⁷⁸ Stephen D. Shenfield, "The Movement 'In Defense of Childhood,'" *JRL Research and Analytical Supplement*, no. 4 (January 2002): 2-3.

⁷⁹ Paul D. Steeves, "Russian Orthodox Fascism After Glasnost," Paper presented at the Conference on Faith and History, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 8 October 1994, <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/rusorthfascism.html>; John B. Dunlop, "The Russian Orthodox Church as an 'Empire Saving' Institution," in: Michael Bordeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 15-40; Leonid Stonov, "The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Promoting Antisemitism and Religious Persecution," in: Nikolai Butkevich, ed., *Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions, 1998-1999* (Washington, DC: Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, 1999), 23-25; Shenfield, "The Russian Orthodox Church," in his *Russian Fascism*, 60-72; Aleksandr Verkhovskiy, "Religioznaya ksenofobiya," in: Aleksandr Verkhovskiy, Vladimir Pribylovskiy and Yekaterina Mikhaylovskaya, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiya v rossiiskom obshchestve* (Moscow: Panorama, 1998), 168-89; *idem*, "Tserkov' v politike i politika v Tserkvi," in: Aleksandr Verkhovskiy, Yekaterina Mikhaylovskaya and Vladimir Pribylovskiy, *Politicheskaya ksenofobiya: Radikal'nye gruppy. Predstavleniya liderov. Rol' tserkvi* (Moscow: Panorama, 1999), 60-122; *idem*, "Russian Orthodoxy in the Russian Ultra-Nationalist Movement," Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, 15-18 November 2001.

⁸⁰ Oxana Antic, "Revival of Orthodox Brotherhoods," *RFE/RL Research Report* 1, no. 11 (13 March 1992): 62; Stella Rock, "'An Aggressive Faith:' Extreme Nationalism in the Russian Orthodox

- (f) a large part of the Cossack movement (containing some primary examples of “uncivil movements”⁸² in Russia),⁸³
- (g) the ultra-nationalist hard-rock and punk scene,⁸⁴
- (h) the fast growing skin-head movement,⁸⁵

Brotherhood Movement,” Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

⁸¹ Viktor Shnirel'man, *Neoyazychestvo i natsionalizm: Vostochnoevropeyskii areal*. Issledovaniya po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi etnologii 114 (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1998); Victor A. Shnirelman, *Russian Neo-Pagan Myths and Antisemitism*. ACTA 13 (Jerusalem: The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 1998); Viktor Shnirel'man, “Gde lezhat istoki ‘Mirovogo zla’?: Neonatsizm v rossiiskoi massovoi literature,” *Diagnoz: Antifashistskoe obozrenie*, no. 4 (May 1999): 14-15; *idem*, ed., *Neoyazychestvo na prostorakh Evrazii* (Moscow: Bibleysko-bogoslovskii institut sv. Apostola Andreyana, 2001); A. Shcheglov, *Vozvrashchenie bogov: Politicheskaya sotsiologiya neoyazychestva* (Moscow: Probel, 1999); Vladimir Pribylovsky, “Russkoe neoyazychestvo – kvazireligiya natsionalizma i ksenofobiya,” in: Verkhovskiy, Mikhaylovskaya and Pribylovskiy, *Politicheskaya ksenofobiya*, 123-133; *idem*, “Neoyazycheskoe krylo v russkom natsionalizme,” Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

⁸² As defined by Payne, *Uncivil Movements*.

⁸³ A.P. Andreev and E.V. Panasyuk, “Kazach'e dvizhenie,” *Politicheskie issledovaniya*, no. 3 (15) (1993): 57-61; Aleksandr Mukhin and Vladimir Pribylovskiy, *Kazach'e dvizhenie v Rossii i stranakh blizhnego zarubezh'ya (1988-1994 gody)*, 1st Vol. (Moscow: Panorama, 1994); T.V. Tabolina, *Panorama sovremennogo kazachestva: istoki, kontury, tipologizatsiya*. Issledovaniya po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi etnologii 58 (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1994); Aleksandr Verkhovskiy, Anatoly Papp and Vladimir Pribylovskiy, “Irkutskoe kazach'e voysko,” “Kubanskoe kazach'e voysko,” “Soyuz kazakov voyska donskogo,” and “Soyuz kazach'ikh voysk Rossii i zarubezh'ya,” in their *Politicheskii ekstremizm v Rossii* (Moscow: Panorama, 1996), 97-102, 175-185; Georgi M. Derlugian and Serge Cipko, “The Politics of Identity in a Russian Borderland Province: The Kuban Neo-Cossack Movement, 1989-1996,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 8 (1997): 1485-1500; Shenfield, “The Cossack Revival Movement,” in his, *Russian Fascism*, 74-81;

⁸⁴ Thomas Cushman, *Notes from the Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russian Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Leonid J. Ivanov, “Die patriotische Gegenkultur,” in his, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow: Wurzeln-Hintergründe-Trends der sich formierenden Gruppierungen – Perspektiven für die Zukunft* (Passau: Wissenschaftsverlag Rothe, 1996), 88-91; Markus Mathyl, “Das Entstehen einer nationalistischen Gegenkultur im Nachperestroika-Rußland,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 9 (2000): 68-107; Aleksandr Aksel'rod, Lev Krichevskiy and Vyacheslav Likhachev, “Antisemitizm i ksenofobiya v molodezhnoi kul'ture,” *Antisemitizm i ksenofobiya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Informatsionno-analiticheskii byulleten'*, no. 7 (October 2000) (<http://www.panorama.ru:8101/works/patr/bul/bul07.zip>).

⁸⁵ Hilary Pilkington, “Farewell to the *Tusovka*: Masculinities and Feminities on the Moscow Youth Scene,” in: *idem*, ed., *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia* (London: Routledge, 1996), 236-263; Verkhovskiy, Mikhaylovskaya and Pribylovskiy, “Skinkhedy (britogolovye),” and “‘Skinny,’” in their, *Politicheskaya ksenofobiya*, 40, 56-59; Aleksandr Tarasov, “Offspring of Reforms – Shaven Heads Are Skinheads: The New Fascist Youth Subculture in Russia,” *Russian Politics and Law*

- (i) the multitude of ultra-nationalist World Wide Web sites,⁸⁶
- (j) a number of organizations calling themselves “parties” that should, however, be conceptualized as hybrids between proper political parties, on the one side, and groupuscules (as introduced above) on the other, including, perhaps, the *RNE*,⁸⁷ and *NBP*,⁸⁸ and that thus fulfill both functions in this political spectrum (with the groupuscular one often being the more, or even only important aspect of their activities), as well as some further groupings constituting proper groupuscules (as defined above) that do not fall in any of the other categories listed here;⁸⁹
- (k) ultra-nationalist tendencies in visual arts;⁹⁰ and
- (l) the, under both the Czarist and Soviet rule, enormously important nationalist literary scene with its well-known “thick journals.”⁹¹

39, no. 1 (January-February 2001): 43-89; Valery Solovei, “Zuby drakona: Molodezhnyi radikalizm – rezerv ‘bol’shoy’ politiki,” *Vek*, no. 17, 27 April 2001; Shenfield, “The Skinheads,” in his, *Russian Fascism*, 81-84; N.N., “Molodezh’ i natsional-ekstremizm,” at: http://www.aha.ru/~ofa/9_1_vstup11.htm; Aleksandr Aksel’rod, Lev Krichevsky and Vyacheslav Likhachev, “Skinkhedy (britogolovye): Neonatsistskoe molodezhnoe dvizhenie,” *Antisemitizm i ksenofobiya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Informatsionno-analiticheskii byulleten’*, no. 12 (supplement) (April-May 2001) (<http://www.panorama.ru:8101/works/patr/bul/bul12dop.zip>).

⁸⁶ Aleksandr Verkhovskiy, “Ekstremisty i radikaly v russkoi seti,” at: <http://www.panorama.ru:8101/works/patr/extr.html>.

⁸⁷ Likhachev, “Chto predstavlyaet soboi Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo kak organizatsiya.”

⁸⁸ Mathyl, “Die National-Bolschewistische Partei als Beispiel der Radikalisierung des russischen Nationalismus;” *idem*, “Hammer und Sichel in der Fahne Hitlers;” and Rogachevskii, “The National-Bolshevik Party (1993-2001).” The groupuscular rather than party-character of the *NBP* is documented in Eduard V. Limonov’s autobiographical *Anatomiya Geroya* (Smolensk: Rusich, 1998). See also Mathyl, “Die National-Bolschewistische Partei und ‘Arktogeja;” and A. Toporova, “‘Natsboly’ v Sankt-Peterburge: obrazy i povsednevnost’,” in: V.V. Kostyusheva, ed., *Molodezhnye dvizheniya i subkul’tury Sankt-Peterburga (sotsiologicheskii i antropologicheskii analiz)* (Sankt-Peterburg: Norma, 1999), 117-127. I am grateful to Andrei Rogachevskii for sending me the latter article.

⁸⁹ Perhaps, some of the well-researched various *Pamiat’* groups, as well as their successor organizations would, apart from a number of other similar groupings such as the Right-Radical Party of Sergey Zharikov, fall in this category. For a recent survey that lists further putative groupuscules, see Alexander Verkhovskiy, “Ultra-Nationalists in Russia at the Onset of Putin’s Rule,” *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 4 (2000): 707-726.

These certainly significant phenomena are largely ignored here not only in view of lack of space, but also because they have, partly, been subject to, at least some, scholarly scrutiny before. In a number of cases, already considerable research has been done on these phenomena. That seems to be less the case with regard to the intellectual centers in general, and their institution-building, networking and propaganda efforts in particular. The concise summary of some activities in the latter realm below is meant to complement somewhat previous content analyses and interpretations of the publications of these individual centers, and suggest stronger attention to the issue of how industrious, successful and influential organizations these centers actually constitute (and not only what their ideas are about) in future research.

II. 2 . Sergey Kurginyan's *ETTs*

There have been several networks of nationalist intellectuals in post-war Soviet Russia within the dissident scene, and, more importantly, around the semi-official "thick-journals."⁹² Some articles and books published in these frameworks gained relevance for the formulation of the programs of the newly emerging nationalist parties in Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and even as

⁹⁰ E.g. Michael Hagemester, "Occult Motifs in the Art of the Russian Radical Right: Ilya Glazunov's 'Grand Experiment,'" Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001.

⁹¹ Katja Lebedeva and Hans-Jürgen Lehnert, "Neoslawophile contra Westler: Neue alte Polarisierungen in der russischen Kultur," *Berliner Debatte INITIAL*, no. 6 (1992): 11-16; Andreas Umland, "Die Sprachrohre des russischen Revanchismus," *Die Neue Gesellschaft: Frankfurter Hefte* 42, no. 10 (1995): 916-921; Kathleen Parthé, "Chto delaet pisatelya 'russkim?': 'Rusifikatsiya' russkoi literatury posle 1985 goda," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 1 (1996): 83-120; *idem*, "The Empire Strikes Back: How Right-Wing Nationalists Tried to Recapture Russian Literature," *Nationalities Papers* 24, no. 4 (December 1996): 601-624; Henrietta Mondry, "'Political Philology': Nationalism in the Russian Literary Press (1993-1996)," in: Vladimir Tikhomirov, ed., *In Search of Identity: Five Years Since the Fall of the Soviet Union* (Melbourne: Centre for Russian and Euro-Asian Studies, University of Melbourne, 1996), 133-142; Ivanov, "Die Patrioten und die Kultur," in his, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*, 63-88; David Wells, "War and National Memory: Nationalism in Contemporary Russian Literature," *Political Crossroads* 6, no. 1/2 (1998): 129-138; Wendy Slater, "The Patriots' Pushkin," *Slavic Review* 58, no. 2 (1999): 407-427.

more broadly spread seminal texts in general political discourse.⁹³ However, eventually many writings of these publicists and novelists became outdated when the Russian political system, and society transmuted ever more deeply. Although most of the important Soviet-era “thick journals” kept and keep appearing, some new initiatives by often, until then, unknown intellectuals have since 1990 gained prominence too. These included the following institutions:

- Aleksandr Podberezkin’s *RAU-korporatsiya* (Russian-American University Corporation; perhaps, the most important in this list),
- Yevgeny Troitsky’s Association for the Complex Study of the Russian Nation,
- Sergey Shatokhin’s and Yevgeny Morozov’s International Institute of Geopolitics,
- the Moscow Historical-Politological Center attached to the ultra-nationalist party *Russkii obshchenatsional’nyi soyuz* (Russian All-National Union),⁹⁴
- General-Major Konstantin Petrov’s Popular Movement “*K bogoderzhaviyu*” (Towards God’s Rule),⁹⁵
- Igor Dëmin’s Orthodox-Monarchic Analytical Center “*Al’fa & Omega*,”⁹⁶ and

⁹² Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁹³ Robert Horvath, “The Specter of Russophobia,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 25, no. 2 (1998): 199-222.

⁹⁴ Ivanov, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*, 347-363.

⁹⁵ Verkhovsky, Mikhaylovskaya and Pribylovsky, *Politicheskaya ksenofobiya*, 28. The “*K bogoderzhaviyu*” group also calls itself the “Internal Predictor of the USSR,” and includes former *LDPR* State Duma Deputy Yuri P. Kuznetsov and the former theorist of the Russian Communist Labor Party Ye.G. Kuznetsov. See, Andreas Umland, “Vladimir Zhirinovskii in Russian Politics: Three Approaches to the Emergence of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, 1990-1993,” unpublished Dr.phil. dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin 1997, I.3.5., and III.5.4.2.; and Shnirelman, *Russian Neo-Pagan Myths and Antisemitism*, 26. An anonymous *Elementy* (see below) book reviewer of this group’s main text, *Mërtvaya voda* (Dead Water, edited by Ye.G. Kuznetsov), while pointing to its numerous pathologies, also reports “the serious approach that [this book] encounters not only in patriotic circles, but among rather highly placed figures of the state too.” See N.N., “Monstruositas,” *Elementy*, no. 8 (1996/97): 110. Another book by this group that has seemingly gained some readership, and somewhat resembles Aleksandr Dugin’s major publication project “The Foundations of Geopolitics” (see below) is Yu.

- Oleg Bakhtiyarov's Center "*Perspektivnye issledovaniya i razrabotki PIR*" (Future-Oriented Analyses and Projects).⁹⁷

These centers are not only peculiar for their relative novelty. They are also clearly under-researched so far—an omission that, especially with regard to Podberezkin's productive *RAU-Korporatsiya*, constitutes an unfortunate state of affairs.

Among the first of the new intellectual centers that did attract some attention of Western scholars was the International Foundation "*Eksperimental'nyi tvorcheskii tsentr ETTs* (Experimental-Creative Center)" established, in 1989, by the USSR Council of Ministers,⁹⁸ supported by the CPSU's Moscow organization, and headed by the mathematician, former research fellow of the Moscow Geological Institute, certified theater director, one-time advisor to Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov and CPSU Moscow organization head Yuri Prokofiev, and 1990 Patriotic Bloc candidate Sergey Ervandovich Kurginyan (b. 1946).⁹⁹ The think-tank had, according to one source, in 1991, a yearly budget of approximately seventy million rubles,

Kuznetsov and V. Nikol'sky, *Vvedenie v teoriyu natsional'noi bezopasnosti: Problemy bezopasnosti russkogo naroda i sovremennost'* (Almaty: Vernyi, 1999).

⁹⁶ "Alpha & Omega's" major activity in 1994 constituted the publication of the book series "Ethnic History" that included historic and contemporary antisemitic and racist pamphlets with suggestive titles including V.A. Prussakov's "Fascism and Jews," "New Empire," and "Portraits Against the Background of the Swastika," S.G. Antonenko's "Aryan Russia," Ya. Davis's "Judaism," A. Shmakov's "The Secret International Government," A.P. Pyatkovsky's "A State in the State," A. Lipardin's "Equal Rights and the Jewish Question," A. Mel'sky's "At the Roots of the Big Hate," and P. Tulaev's "The Conservative Revolution in Spain." For some reason, the series also included Theodor Herzl's "The Jewish State." See, Sergey G. Antonenko, *Rus' ariiskaya (Neprivychnaya pravda)*. *Etnicheskaya istoriya* 2 (Moscow: Pallada, 1994), 90-94.

⁹⁷ Ivanov, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*, 347-363.

⁹⁸ According to one source, the creation of *ETTs* was "one of the first activities of V. Pavlov who took the office of the prime-minister of the country." *Komsomol'skaya pravda* quoted in Sergey Kurginyan, *Sed'moi stsenarii: Posle putcha*, 2nd Vol. (Moscow: Eksperimental'nyi tvorcheskii tsentr, 1992), 8.

⁹⁹ Jeff Gleisner, "Russia's Post-Industrial Patriots," *Russia and the World*, no. 17 (1990): 19-24; Alla Černych, "Sergej Kurginjan: Das siebente Szenarium," *Berliner Debatte INITIAL*, no. 3 (1994): 61-64.

and about 2,000 employees who included, apart from up to one hundred political analysts,¹⁰⁰ “mainly programmers, physicists, biologists, and constructors.”¹⁰¹ At this time, the *ETT*s was described as “the think tank of the [ultra-conservative] deputy group ‘*Soyuz*’” of the USSR’s Congress of People’s Deputies.¹⁰² Later, Kurginyan created special appendices for the spread of *ETT*s’s ideas: in 1992, the Inter-Regional Club “*Postperestroika*” which is also the title of Kurginyan’s group’s best-known book,¹⁰³ and, in 1994, the elite club “*Soderzhatel’noe edinstvo*” (Substantive Unity) that included, among its more than hundred members Valery Zorkin, Oleg Shenin, Vladimir Kryuchkov, Nikolay Ryzhkov, and Aleksandr Sokolov.¹⁰⁴ At the moment of its foundation, the Center represented “the most serious attempt to revise official ideology into a nationalist creed.”¹⁰⁵ It subsequently developed geopolitical models, reform programs, and schemes for the fight against increasing crime. Among other things, it published a draft proposal for a new CPSU platform in July 1991, and contributed to the economics section of the program of the ultra-nationalist National-Republican Party of Russia of Nikolay Lysenko. In the early 1990s, the liberal press called Kurginyan “our Soviet Grigory Rasputin,” “mysterious advisor for

¹⁰⁰ Sergey Kurginyan, *Sed’moi stsenarii: Do putcha*, 1st Vol. (Moscow: Eksperimental’nyi tvorcheskii tsentr, 1992), 116.

¹⁰¹ Alexander Yanov, *Weimar Russia – And What We Can Do About It* (New York: Slovo-Word, n.d.), 274.

¹⁰² *Nezavisimaya gazeta* as quoted in Kurginyan, *Sed’moi stsenarii*, 1st Vol., 6.

¹⁰³ Sergey E. Kurginyan et al., *Postperestroyka: Kontseptual’naya model’ razvitiya nashego obshchestva, politicheskikh partii i obshchestvennykh organizatsii* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990); Victor Yasman, “Elite Think Tank Prepares ‘Post-Perestroika’ Strategy,” *Report on the USSR* (24 May 1991): 1-6; Paul Bellis and Jeff Gleisner, “After Perestroika: A Neo-Conservative Manifesto,” *Russia and the World*, no. 19 (1991): 19-24.

¹⁰⁴ S.B. Chernyshev, “Ot ‘penovedeniya’ k institutu budushchego: Sergey Ervandovich Kurginyan,” in: S.B. Chernyshev, ed., *Inoe: Khrestomatiya novogo rossiiskogo samosoznaniya* (Moscow: Argus, 1995), 52-54.

¹⁰⁵ Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 252.

the Kremlin leaders,”¹⁰⁶ and “the last mystical hope of the neo-Bolsheviks, savior of the CPSU, [and] theoretician of communism as a new religion.”¹⁰⁷

Since 1993, Kurginyan’s *ETT*s publishes, apart from other things,¹⁰⁸ the high-brow journal *Rossiia XXI* (Russia in the 21st Century) with contributions from a variety of, mainly, nationalist authors including the prominent publicist Ksenya Myalo.¹⁰⁹ The basic idea of Kurginyan’s grouping seems to be that the world is divided into individualistic and collectivistic civilizations with Russia belonging to the latter type. The Communist Party needs to ally itself with the Orthodox Church, and to reject the introduction of Western institutions.¹¹⁰ Kurginyan wanted, as he announced in 1991, to make his contribution to this process by way of “creating an alternative national elite.”¹¹¹ Some worth-noting peculiarities in Kurginyan’s approach have been his gloomy warnings about the possibility of a fascistization of Russia,¹¹² his radical critique of Dugin (see below),¹¹³ and his negative attitude towards Germany, a country that, at least, in the 1990s, was seen as the preferred partner for Russia by most Russian nationalists—whether moderate or extreme.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁶ As quoted in Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 274.

¹⁰⁷ *Sobesednik* as quoted in Kurginyan, *Sed’ moi stsennarii*, 1st Vol., 6.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. Sergey Kurginyan, *Rossiia: Vlast’ i oppozitsiia* (Moscow: ETTs, 1993).

¹⁰⁹ Ivanov, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*, 349-350.

¹¹⁰ Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, 253-254.

¹¹¹ As quoted in Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 274.

¹¹² One should not be misled by such a stance of Kurginyan as his ideas can be interpreted as being close to proto-fascism themselves. See A. James Gregor, “Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 1 (1998): 1-15.

¹¹³ It might be added that there are a number of fundamental similarities in Kurginyan’s and Dugin’s world-views. See V.L. Tsymbursky, “‘Novye pravye’ v Rossii: Natsional’nye predposylki zaimstvovaniia ideologii,” in: Tatyana I. Zaslavskaya, ed., *Kuda idet Rossiia?: Al’ternativy obshchestvennogo razvitiia*, 2nd Vol. (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1995), 472-482, here 478 and 481.

¹¹⁴ Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 273, 296.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Kurginyan's foundation constituted the most significant clearly nationalist think-tank, and novel publication center (along with the older "thick journals"). However, it has since seemingly lost most of its nimbus as well as its impact on the Russian elite.

II. 3 . The Dugin Phenomenon

A more steadily influential institution on the far right fringe among the new think-tanks, throughout the 1990s, was the Analytical Center of the most important post-Soviet ultra-nationalist weekly *Den'* (The Day) which started appearing regularly in January 1991, and was later re-named into *Zavtra* (Tomorrow). The newspaper also calls itself "organ of the spiritual opposition," and is edited by the engineer, novelist, publicist, and former Asia-Africa correspondent of the high-brow weekly *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Literature newspaper) Aleksandr A. Prokhanov (b. 1938).¹¹⁵ For his previous glorification of the Soviet Afghanistan adventure, and general militarism Prokhanov was labeled, among others, the "nightingale of the General Staff." Among the Center's aims were to introduce via *Den'/Zavtra* to nationalist intellectuals new trends in Russian and foreign right-wing thought, and to analyze the current power structures as well as to provide interpretations of their activities from a "patriotic" point of view.¹¹⁶ The newspaper *Den'/Zavtra's* major aim was and is to bring together various brands of Russian ultra-nationalism, and induce their coordination and unification. The weekly included, at one point or another, most major Russian opposition figures of the 1990s (with the notable exceptions of Zhirinovskiy, Barkashov and Limonov) on its editorial board including above mentioned Dugin, and Zyuganov.

¹¹⁵ Stephen Shenfield, "Making Sense of Prokhanov," *Détente*, no. 5 (1987): 28-29, 51; Karla Hielscher, "Konturen der 'geistigen Opposition' im heutigen Rußland: Alexander Prochanow und die Zeitung der Neuen Rechten Djen," *Die Neue Gesellschaft: Frankfurter Hefte* 39, no. 5 (1992): 443-449; and Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Aleksandr Prokhanov: The Last Soldier of the Empire," in his, *Politics and Personalities: Key Actors in the Russian Opposition* (Oslo: PRIO, 1996), 91-108.

Prokhanov has been a driving force behind various broad alliances of, and ideological innovations (including the spread of Eurasianism¹¹⁷) in, the Russian extreme right.¹¹⁸

One of this Center's initially most prolific contributors, erudite theorists, and industrious publicists has been the previously mentioned mysticist Aleksandr Gel'evich Dugin (b. 1962).¹¹⁹ In Alexander Yanov's words, "having nearly monopolized the central periodical of the opposition [in mid-1992], *Den'*, Dugin was halfway to elbowing Kurginyan out of the opposition's intellectual leadership."¹²⁰ In spite of Dugin's, already in the early 1990s, notable publicistic successes within the far right, the study of the ideas, entourage and activities of this non-conformist writer has for a long time been seen as the domain of an exclusive group of students of Russian sub-cultures, lunatic fringe politics, and occultism with a taste for the bizarre.¹²¹ However, the establishment, in 2001, of the Socio-Political Movement "Eurasia" (see below) under Dugin's leadership represents merely the latest peak in a chain of consequential initiatives by him throughout the 1990s. Perhaps, counter-intuitively to many observers of Russia, the content, spread and reception of Dugin's quixotic ideas are becoming relevant for an adequate assessment of mainstream Russian political, social and cultural trends too.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Ivanov, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*, 350-351.

¹¹⁷ For a recent update, see Dmitry V. Shlapentokh, "Eurasianism: Past and Present," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30 (1997): 129-151.

¹¹⁸ Verkhovsky, Papp and Pribylovsky, *Politicheskii ekstremizm v Rossii*, 284-286.

¹¹⁹ Wayne Allensworth, "Eurasia, Prokhanov, Dugin, and Den," in his *The Russian Question: Nationalism, Modernization, and Post-Communist Russia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 243-262.

¹²⁰ Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 279.

¹²¹ This is, to be sure, not a problem peculiar of contemporary Russian studies. As Roger Griffin mentions in his introduction to the groupuscular right: "Scholarship of this type [i.e. research into groupuscules] requires a passion for the recondite, the arabesque and the Byzantine which is not part of the staple qualities of the university-trained political scientist." Griffin, "From Slime Mould to Rhizome," 4.

¹²² Andrey Mishin, "Geopolitika i ezoterika: Kto vy gospodin Dugin," at: <http://www.raven.kiev.ua/DOSSIER/7.2000/dugin.htm>; and Ilan Berman, "Slouching Toward Eurasia?" at: <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol12/berman.html>.

Dugin's writings have become already the subject of several content analyses.¹²³ Although Dugin has, especially recently, tried to present his agenda as a variety of, or, even, as mainstream,

¹²³ E.g., in chronological order: Nikolai-Klaus von Kreitor (who later became a member of *Elementy's* editorial board), "Elements of the New Russian Nationalism," *Telos* 26, no. 2 (96) (1993): 61-64; Karla Hielscher, "Der Eurasismus: Die neoimperiale Ideologie der russischen 'Neuen Rechten,'" *Die Neue Gesellschaft: Frankfurter Hefte* 40, no. 5 (1993): 465-469; *idem*, "Die Eurasien-Ideologie: Geschichtsmymen der russischen 'Neuen Rechten,'" *Glaube in der 2. Welt*, no. 7/8 (1993): 25-30; Françoise Thom, "Eurasianism: A New Russian Foreign Policy?" *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 2 (26) (1994): 65-77; Petra Gebhard, "Eine Brücke zwischen Europa und Asien: Die Lehre der Eurasier in der gegenwärtigen Diskussion um die russische Identität," unpublished M.A. thesis, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 1994, 35-71; Tsymbursky, "'Novye pravyye' v Rossii;" Michael Hagemester, "The Revival of Eurasianism," Paper presented at the 5th World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 6-11 August 1995; *idem*, "Eurasierium und Nationalismus," Paper presented at the workshop "Der russische Nationalismus im europäischen Kontext: Wurzeln und Erscheinungsformen," Internationale Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, Vienna, 15-16 December 1995; A.B. Shatilov, "Geopoliticheskaya model' klassicheskogo Evraziistva i ee sovremennyye mifologicheskyye interpretatsii," in: A.P. Logunov and T.V. Evgen'eva, eds., *Sovremennaya politicheskaya mifologiya: Soderzhanie i mekhanizmy funktsionirovaniya* (Moscow: RGGU, 1996), 78-90; Ilya Vinkovetsky, "Eurasianism in Its Time: A Bibliography," in: Ilya Vinkovetsky and Charles Schlacks, Jr., eds., *Exodus to the East: Forebodings and Events. An Affirmation of the Eurasians* (Idyllwild, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1996), 143-155; Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, "Political Implications of the Early Twentieth-Century Occult Revival," in: Rosenthal, ed., *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 379-418; A. Tsygankov, "Hard-line Eurasianism and Russia's Contending Geopolitical Perspectives," *East European Quarterly* 32 (1998): 315-324; Hildegard Kochanek, "Die Ethnienlehre Lev N. Gumilevs: Zu den Anfängen neu-rechter Ideologie-Entwicklung im spätkommunistischen Rußland," *Osteuropa* 48, no. 11/12 (1998): 1184-1197; Nikolai von Kreitor, "Dugin, Russian Geopolitics and the New World Order," in: *Dugin Aleksandr Gel'evich: Diskussiya*, at: <http://www.zhurnal.ru:8085/5/d.duginbio.htm> (25 September 1999): 3-8; Gasan Guseynov, "'Misterii Evrazii' A. Dugina," in his *Karta nashey Rodiny: Ideologema mezhdru slovom i telom* (Helsinki: Institute for Russian and East European Studies, 2000), 95-96; Yu.V. Tikhonravrov, "Russkaya geopolitika," and "Zaklyuchenie" in his *Geopolitika: Uchebnoe posobie* (Moscow: INFRA-M, 2000), 230-258; Leonid Luks, "Der 'Dritte Weg' der 'neo-eurasischen' Zeitschrift 'Elementy' – zurück ins Dritte Reich?" *Studies in East European Thought* 52, no. 1-2 (2000): 49-71; L. Lyuks, "'Tretii put', ili Nazad v Tretii reikh?" Translated by A.V. Markin, *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 5 (2000): 33-44; Shenfield, "Dugin, Limonov, and the National-Bolshevik Party," in his, *Russian Fascism*, 190-220; John B. Dunlop, "Alexander Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," unpublished manuscript, Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 2001; Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Russian Nationalism Today: The Views of Alexander Dugin," *Contemporary Review* 279, no. 1626 (2001): 29-37; Alan Ingram, "Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in Post-Soviet Russia," *Political Geography* 20, no. 8 (2001): 1029-1051; Stefan Wiederkehr, "'Kontinent Evraziia': Alexander Dugin's Reading of Classical Eurasianism and Geopolitics," Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001; Markus Mathyl, "Alexander Dugin and the National-Bolshevik Party: Between the Search for a 'Russian Socialism' and International Fascism," Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Arlington, Virginia, 15-18 November 2001; *idem*, "Die National-Bolschewistische Partei und 'Arktogeja.'" The following outline is based on these texts.

“Eurasianism” or “neo-Eurasianism,”¹²⁴ and “geopolitics,”¹²⁵ his ideas constitute not only radicalized permutations of these schools of thought. Dugin’s views owe, in fact, more to the German inter-war “Conservative Revolution,” and further international sources of mystical, occult, proto-fascist and conspirological thought including, for instance, Hermann Wirth, Julius Evola, Jean Parvulesco, and Aleister Crowley. He thus writes not merely about certain contradictions between Western civilization and “Eurasia” as, for instance, Kurginyan does. Instead, he draws the picture of an ancient conflict between Atlanticist Sea powers (“thallocracies”), going back to the sunken world of Atlantis and now headed by the “mondialist” United States, on the one side, and the Eurasian land powers (“tellurocracies”), originating with the mythic country of “Hyperborea” and now having as its most important component Russia, on the other. According to Dugin, the secret orders of these two antagonistic civilizations have been in an age-old struggle that is now entering its final stage. This demands Russia national rebirth via a “conservative” and permanent revolution¹²⁶ informed by the ideology of “National Bolshevism” and an exclusively “geopolitical” approach to international relations, creating a “New Socialism,” and implying territorial expansion as well as the creation of a Eurasian bloc of fundamentalist land powers (including a traditionalist Israel!) against intrusive, individualist Anglo-Saxon imperialism.

Ideas such as these should not, as already indicated, lead one to dismiss lightly Dugin as hardly constituting a relevant political phenomenon. Early on in his career, the future major post-

¹²⁴ See Jens Fischer, *Eurasismus: Eine Option russischer Aussenpolitik?* (Berlin: Arno Spitz, 1998).

¹²⁵ Assen Ignatow, “Geopolitische Theorien in Rußland heute,” *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für internationale und ostwissenschaftliche Studien*, no. 17 (1998); Tikhonravov, “Russkaya geopolitika;” and Vladimir Kolossov and Rostislav Turovsky, “Russian Geopolitics at the Fin-de-siecle,” *Geopolitics* 6, no. 1 (2001): 141-164.

Soviet ideologist was already exceptional in that he—apparently determinedly so—sought contacts with leading Western right-wing extremist intellectuals. During a visit to Western Europe in 1989, he had met a number of well-known ultra-nationalist European publicists including Alain de Benoist, Jean-François Thiriart, and Claudio Mutti who later, together with other, similarly oriented theorists, visited him in Moscow, and participated to one degree or another in his various projects.¹²⁷

In many regards, in the early 1990s, Dugin's activities resembled those of the above listed and some other intellectuals. He was building up his own research and publication center, and trying to propagate his ideas among ultra-nationalist political organizations, and further potential supporters in such spheres as the military, secret services, and academia. The two principal institutions that Dugin founded in 1990-1991, and that later continued to be his main instruments for spreading his views were the Historical-Religious Association *Arktogeya* (Northern Country; which also functions as a publishing house),¹²⁸ and the Center for Special Meta-Strategic Studies, a think-tank. Numerous institutions such as these sprang up in Russia in the early 1990s; many of them have since vanished, and thus came to represent mere footnotes in post-Soviet Russia's early history.

Yet, not only were Dugin's various publications,¹²⁹ especially his new journal *Elementy: Evraziiskoe obozrenie* (Elements: Eurasian Review; 9 issues published in 1992-8)¹³⁰ as well as

¹²⁶ Aleksandr Sherman, "Vstupim v real'nost' stol' udivitel'nyu, chto malo ne pokazhetsya: Interv'yu is Aleksandrom Duginym (Natsional-bol'shevistskaya partiya)," at:

<http://www.zhurnal.ru:8085/5/duginsh.htm>, 5.

¹²⁷ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 192.

¹²⁸ See <http://www.arctogaia.com/>

¹²⁹ Dugin's books all published in Moscow under the imprint of *Arktogeya* include *Misterii Evrazii* (1991, 1996), *Puti Absolyuta* (1991), *Konspirologiya: Nauka o zagovorakh, tainykh obshchestvakh i okkul'tnoi voine* (1992/93), *Giperboreiskaya teoriya: Opyt ariosofskogo issledovaniya* (1992/93 (1993), *Konservativnaya revolyutsiya* (1995), *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti: Pravoslavnyi ezoterizm* (1996), *Tampliery*

some other periodicals,¹³¹ more original, and widely read in nationalist circles than the drier—if, partly, not less numerous—works of other publicists such as Kurginyan¹³² (not the least, because of the frequent contributions by, or references to, inter- and post-war Western authors in Dugin’s journals and books). Dugin’s approach was, as Markus Mathyl has pointed out,¹³³ also exceptional in that his circle quickly managed to establish ties with the counter-cultural youth scene, especially with nationalist rock- and punk-musicians such as Egor Letov, Sergey Troitsky, Roman Neumoev, the late Sergey Kurechkin, and others.¹³⁴ In recent years, moreover, the Dugin circle has become exceptional in that it has created a sophisticated, inter-connected set of World Wide Web sites¹³⁵ that offer most of the circle’s publications, above all Dugin’s books, in electronic form.¹³⁶

In the mid-1990s, Dugin seems to have followed a dual strategy of, on the one side, affiliating himself to, and trying to impregnate with his ideas, the most radical anti-systemic segments in Russia’s emerging uncivil society, and, on the other side, entering Moscow’s political establishment, and gaining a wider readership beyond the narrowly neo-fascist support. Thus, for instance, Dugin, somewhat paradoxically, was, in 1993-1998, a co-founder, leader as well as

proletariata: Natsional-bol'shevizm i initsiatsiya (1997), *Konets sveta: Eskhatologiya i traditsiya* (1998), *Nash put': Strategicheskie perspektivy razvitiya Rossii v XXI veke* (1999), *Absolyutnaya Rodina: Puti Absolyuta. Metafizika Blagoi Vesti. Misterii Evrazii* (1999), *Novyi universitet* (2001, with Yevgeny Golovin and Yuri Mamleev), and *Russkaya veshch': Ocherki natsional'noi filosofii*, 2 Vols. (2001).

¹³⁰ See <http://elem2000.virtualave.net/>

¹³¹ Further periodicals edited by Dugin included *Milyi Angel*, *Evraziiskoe vtorzhenie*, and *Evraziiskoe obozrenie*.

¹³² Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 275.

¹³³ Markus Mathyl, “Die Konstruktion eines Feindes: Antisemitismus und Antiamerikanismus in Aleksandr Dugins Neo-Nationalbolschewismus,” Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the German Society for East European Studies “Vorurteile als politische Barrieren,” Göttingen, 7-8 March 2002.

¹³⁴ Mathyl, “Das Entstehen einer nationalistischen Gegenkultur im Postperestrojka-Rußland.”

¹³⁵ E.g. <http://www.geopolitika.ru/>, <http://www.resist.gothic.ru/>, <http://A.webring.com/hub?ring=traditio&page=1&list>, <http://A.webring.com/webring?ring=traditio:list>.

major ideologist of Eduard Limonov's expressly revolutionary, above mentioned National-Bolshevik Party¹³⁷ while, at the same time, appearing on national radio and TV,¹³⁸ publishing in the high-brow liberal newspaper *Nezavisimaya gazeta*,¹³⁹ and reading lectures on philosophy, world history, and international relations ("geopolitics"), at, among other institutions, the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The contradiction in Dugin's simultaneously groupuscular¹⁴⁰ and Gramscian strategy¹⁴¹ was resolved in 1998 when Dugin and a group of his supporters left the *NBP*, and, instead, established themselves, at first, as an advisory group to, and, later, as an analytical division at no lesser an institution than the office of, the Speaker of the Russian State Duma Gennady I. Seleznev.¹⁴² A year before, in 1997, Dugin had published the first edition of his, perhaps, most influential work "The Foundations of Geopolitics"¹⁴³ that quickly sold out, acquired the status of a seminal study, and became a text-book at various Russian higher education institutions. It is a book that earned him wide attention in not only the nationalist section of Russia's elite, and, perhaps, the sympathy of Seleznev. By 2000, this work had gone through four editions (all of which were apparently snapped up quickly),¹⁴⁴ and become a major political pamphlet with a wide readership in academic and political circles.¹⁴⁵ Probably, in connection with these trends,

¹³⁶ E.g. <http://www.arctogaia.com/public/texts.shtml>. I am grateful to Robert C. Otto for drawing my attention to this site.

¹³⁷ Aleksandr Verkhovsky, "Sobach'ya starost'," *Novoe vremya*, no. 6 (2636) (1996): 10-12.

¹³⁸ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 193.

¹³⁹ See Dugin, *Tampliery proletariata*, 324.

¹⁴⁰ Mathyl, "Die National-Bolschewistische Partei und 'Arktogeya.'"

¹⁴¹ Mathyl, "Alexander Dugin and the National-Bolshevik Party."

¹⁴² The official title of the institute attached to Seleznev's office, and headed by Dugin is: Center for Geopolitical Expertise of the Expert-Consultative Council on Problems of National Security at the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

¹⁴³ Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii* (Moscow: Arktogeya, 1997).

¹⁴⁴ Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Myslit' prostranstvom*, 4th edn (Moscow: Arktogeya, 2000).

¹⁴⁵ See Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 199; and Ingram, "Alexander Dugin," 1032.

Dugin's presence in mainstream Russian media and conferences has increased dramatically since 1998. In September 1998, Dugin launched an, apparently so far abortive, attempt to establish his own "New University."¹⁴⁶

Dugin's most important project bringing him even broader attention in the press was the foundation of the Socio-Political Movement "Eurasia" in spring 2001.¹⁴⁷ Dugin's earlier affiliations with the General Staff Academy, and office of the Speaker of the State Duma may have been seen as, by itself, constituting merely temporary, if not accidental, phenomena. With the foundation of "Eurasia,"¹⁴⁸ the Dugin phenomenon, however, has, arguably, made a qualitative leap from the footnotes to the major plot of post-Soviet Russian history. What might be most significant about "Eurasia" is, perhaps, less that its foundation was evidently supported by the Presidential Administration (i.e. it is, most probably, a project advanced by the Kremlin's notorious "political technologist" Gleb Pavlovsky¹⁴⁹), and that it claimed over fifty regional organizations, and about 2,000 activists at its first congress in April 2001.¹⁵⁰ One may not even regard the presence of such a high religious figure as Talgat Tadzhuddin, the Chief Mufti of the Russian Muslim Spiritual Directorate, or of high representatives of Christian-Orthodox, Jewish, and Buddhist religious organizations in the Movement's Central and Political Councils¹⁵¹ as its

¹⁴⁶ See <http://universitet.virtualave.net/>.

¹⁴⁷ See <http://eurasia.com.ru/>

¹⁴⁸ Marina Latysheva, "Putin i bezdna," *Versiya*, no. 19 (29 May – 4 June 2001) (<http://www.agentura.ru/text/press/2001/bezdna.txt>).

¹⁴⁹ I am grateful to Robert C. Otto for highlighting this link to me. See, for instance, Andrey Kolesnikov, "Posle podvodnoi lodki: Na katastrofakh otrabatyvaetsya informatsionnaya politika," *Izvestiya*, no. 161 (29 August 2000): 3.

¹⁵⁰ Andrey Levkin, "Chto takoe 'Evraziya,' kazhdyi (poka?) ponimaet po svoemu," at: <http://www.smi.ru/2001/04/24/988131062.html>.

¹⁵¹ Maksim Shevchenko, "Podderzhivaet li Patriarkhiya radikal'nykh sionistov?" *Nezavisimaya gazeta: Religii*, no. 8 (25 April 2001): 1; Dmitry Radyshevsky, "Soiuz ravvinov s kazakami," *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 15 (10 April 2001): 13; Grigory Nekhoroshev, "'Evraziitsy' reshili operet'sya na Vladimira Putina," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, no. 73 (24 April 2001): 2; and Victor Yasmann, "The Rise of the Eurasians," *The Eurasian Politician*, no. 4 (August 2001): 1

most significant characteristic (as these figures may have been told to enter Dugin's organization by the Kremlin, or may regard "Eurasia" mainly as an instrument to further their social careers, and not as an organization fully expressing their world views, and political aspirations).

What to this observer appears as the most momentous feature of "Eurasia's" founding congress on 21 April 2001 was the presence of a prominent Russian political theorist, Aleksandr Panarin (b. 1940), and a well-known TV journalist of Russia's First (and most far-reaching) Channel *ORT*, Mikhail Leonte'v, who became a member of the Movement's Central Council.¹⁵² Professor Panarin is the Chair of Political Science at the Department of Philosophy of Moscow State University,¹⁵³ and thus holds one of the most important posts in the Russian social sciences community. Leonte'v, by one source called "the president's [i.e. Putin's] favorite journalist,"¹⁵⁴ is the infamous founder, editor-in-chief, and major anchorman of the acerbic daily political prime-time show *Odnako* (However).

Presumably, for neither of these two well-established figures in Russian society, an affiliation with an organization such as "Eurasia" is a necessity in terms of their respective careers in academia or journalism. Instead, it seems that they may have been genuinely attracted to Dugin and his ideas. With such prominent personalities and prolific commentators in their own right at Dugin's side, one can infer that Dugin has advanced considerably in making inroads in

(<http://www.cc.iyu.fi/~aphamala/pe/issue4/yasmann.htm>). I am grateful to Robert C. Otto for sending me the first three articles, and Michael Hagemester for providing me with a copy of the latter source.

¹⁵² According to some press reports, Panarin also entered the 13-member Central Council, "the organ that [...] directs the work of the Movement." However, he does not appear in the list of Central Council members published on the Movement's WWW-site: <http://eurasia.com.ru/syezd.htm>. (I am grateful to Robert Otto for bringing this site to my attention.) In any way, insofar as Panarin is, in distinction to Leonte'v, prominently present in "Eurasia's" publications on the WWW, the below argument applies to him too.

¹⁵³ See on Panarin's ideas Vesa Oittinen, "Eurasismus – eine Integrationsideologie für Rußland?" *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, no. 11 (1994): 1379-1386, here 1385-1386.

mainstream Russian politics, elite thinking, and society as a whole. It is especially dismaying that a scholar like Panarin would, by way of affiliating himself to an organization headed by Dugin, seemingly acknowledge the intellectual leadership of Dugin (who only recently was awarded a Candidate of Science degree by Rostov State University). It is to be expected that Dugin's approval by Panarin will further boost the status of *Arktogeya's* numerous extremely anti-Western publications, and promote their usage by educational institutions, above all universities.

Whereas it would be too early to speak of a principal contamination of Russian civil society resembling that of the German voluntary sector during the Weimar Republic, the example of Dugin's ascent shows that political liberalism and ethical universalism seem to be beaten in retreat in Russia. Though Dugin is by no means yet a widely known figure among ordinary Russians, he has become a major actor on

what Thomas Metzger calls "the ideological marketplace," the flow of information and ideas, including those, which evaluate and critique the state. This includes not only independent mass media but the broader field of autonomous cultural and intellectual activity: universities, think tanks, publishing houses, theaters, filmmakers, and artistic performances and networks.¹⁵⁵

Whereas the West European "New Right," above all the French "*Nouvelle Droite*" and German "*Neue Rechte*", have now, inspired by the famous Gramscian theory, for almost three decades been, with only limited success, trying to erode liberalism's hegemony in mainstream Western political thinking, Dugin, Panarin, as well as some other publicists may well be on their way to re-orient post-Soviet Russia's inexperienced social, cultural and political elites towards a new anti-Western utopia.

¹⁵⁴ *Obshchaya gazeta* quoted in Mavra Kosichkina, "Putin's New Style: Moderation and Precision, Against the Backdrop of a 'Soviet Mentality' Renaissance," *Politruk*, no. 56 (6 June 2001): 2 (<http://www.wps.ru:8101/chitalka/politruk/en/20010606.shtml>).

¹⁵⁵ Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 222.

III. Summary

The fact that ultra-nationalist political blocs or politicians had so far only limited electoral appeal and organizational success can, in view of the weighty dilemmas the parties currently occupying this spectrum face, be neither taken as a proof for some fundamental lack of susceptibility of the majority of Russians to extremely right-wing ideologies, nor be interpreted as an indication of some principal incapability of Russia's ultra-nationalist forces to eventually convert putative, potential popular support into political power. One might even argue that such figures as Zhirinovskiy and Barkashov had a beneficial effect on Russia's democratization as they quickly occupied the intra- and extra-parliamentary fascist niches¹⁵⁶ in the political spectrum in the early 1990s, and thus may have helped to prevent the rise of a leader with an, in Russian nationalist terms, more acceptable family back-ground than Zhirinovskiy's, and a party with less offensive political symbols than the *RNE*'s.

In Russia today, we could be observing a somewhat similar development as that described above in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Germany. Opinion polls tell us that the Russian population has made a fundamental shift from a largely pro- to a predominantly anti-Western, especially anti-American stance in the course of the 1990s.¹⁵⁷ Notably, many of those Russian voters who can be otherwise characterized as liberals have, in the late 1990s, especially in connection with NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe and bombing of Yugoslavia, become critical, if not dismissive of the West.¹⁵⁸ In spite of these trends, Russian right-wing extremist

¹⁵⁶ Andreas Umland, "Zhirinovskii as a Fascist: Palingenetic Ultra-Nationalism in the Ideology of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia," Paper presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 30 August - 2 September 2001.

¹⁵⁷ Interfax, 12 February 2002, and 12 March 2002.

¹⁵⁸ William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives, 1993-2000* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

parties have, at the same time, either lost electoral appeal (*LDPR*), fallen apart (*RNE*, *NBP*), or remained unable to reach beyond a circumscribed electorate (*KPRF*).

The above sketch of the impressive rise of Aleksandr Dugin from a lunatic fringe figure to a highly placed political advisor and ideologist as well as some other developments outside party politics, such as the rapid growth of the skin-head movement, give, however, reason for pause. They illustrate that organized Russian ultra-nationalism might, after a certain peak in the mid-1990s, currently experience not its endgame, but an interregnum, a phase of re-definition and formation of its position, image, strategy and structure.¹⁵⁹

Russian right-wing extremist party politics may, to be sure, remain unable to overcome its above listed dilemmas in, at least, the near future. It is worth noting, however, that when in the past both pre- and post-war ultra-nationalist parties rose, they repeatedly did so suddenly moving from—sometimes total—obscurity to considerable popularity within only a few years. When this happened, it was also often the case that an uncivil society had done some ground-work before. The German “Conservative Revolution” of the 1920s,¹⁶⁰ and the French post-1968 “*Nouvelle Droite*”¹⁶¹ are only the most prominent examples of an elaborate intellectual preparation of a subsequently rapid rise of an ultra-nationalist party (i.e. the *NSDAP* and *Front national*).¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Roger D. Griffin, “Interregnum or Endgame?: Radical Right Thought in the ‘Post-fascist’ Era,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 5, no. 2 (July 2000): 163-178.

¹⁶⁰ Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993).

¹⁶¹ Roger D. Griffin, “Plus ça change!: The Fascist Mindset behind the *Nouvelle Droite*’s Struggle for Cultural Renewal,” in: Edward Arnold, ed., *The Development of the Radical Right in France, 1890-1995* (London: Routledge, 2000), 217-52.

¹⁶² “The new generation of *FN* [France’s *Front national*] leaders has more or less successfully evaded the disgrace and stigma that adhere to the history of the French extreme right in the popular imagination. The work of a movement that came to be known as *Nouvelle Droite* was crucial in allowing young right-leaning intellectuals to gain legitimacy and to distance themselves from groups with disreputable histories [...]” Douglas R. Holmes, *Integral Europe: Fast-Capitalism, Multiculturalism, Neofascism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000), 78.

These observations may be interpreted to have the following implications for research into contemporary Russian right-wing extremism. Although ultra-nationalist party politics is unlikely to remain as relatively insignificant as it is today, the currently still prominent, above listed parties may not be able to overcome their handicaps soon. It is thus unclear who could emerge as a possible leader in the future, and which party might be able to take advantage of Russia's already substantial, and, perhaps, further growing anti-Western electorate. Under these circumstances, this paper's call for greater attention to Russia's uncivil society might not only be adequate in terms of the apparently growing relevance of this object. It might, for the time being, also be a pragmatic approach: As far as we do not yet know whether, how and when Russian ultra-nationalist political society will overcome its various impasses, certain findings on Russia's uncivil society might be of a more lasting relevance than further research into its volatile party system.

The four right-wing extremist parties introduced here have already been scrutinized to some degree.¹⁶³ Sometimes, the particulars of their development have, as in the case of Kitschelt's focus on radical right-wing *parties* in Western Europe,¹⁶⁴ been presented as telling us the whole, or main story of the extreme right in Russia today.¹⁶⁵ This would, in view of the above

¹⁶³ E.g. Verkhovsky, Papp and Pribylovsky, *Politicheskii ekstremizm v Rossii*; Ivanov, *Rußland nach Gorbatschow*; Vera Tolz, "The Radical Right in Post-Communist Russian Politics," in: Peter H. Merkl and Leon Weinberg, ed., *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 177-202; Allensworth, *The Russian Question*; Judith Devlin, *Slavophiles and Commissars: Enemies of Democracy in Modern Russia* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999); Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*.

¹⁶⁴ Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe*.

¹⁶⁵ Christopher Williams and Stephen E. Hanson, "National-Socialism, Left Patriotism, or Superimperialism?: The Radical Right in Russia," in: Sabrina Ramet, ed., *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989*. With an afterword by Roger Griffin (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 257-278; and Veljko Vujačić, "Serving Mother Russia: The Communist Left and Nationalist Right in the Struggle for Power, 1991-1998," in: Victoria E. Bonnell and George W. Breslauer, eds., *Russia in the New Century: Stability and Disorder?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 290-325.

contextualization, be misleading. As long as Russia's public consciousness remains dominated by widely spread anti-Western stereotypes, and penetrated by cryptic and sometimes not so cryptic nationalist and racist ideas, it is to be expected that these attitudes will find organizational expression. At least, for the near future, we should expect to find these institutional manifestations not only, and, perhaps, not so much in the realm of political society as in the voluntary sector.¹⁶⁶ In view of this, Russia's growing uncivil society might currently constitute one of the most promising topics for students of Russian ultra-nationalism and associationism alike.

¹⁶⁶ See the contributions to Lawson and Merkl, eds., *When Parties Fail: Emerging Alternative Organizations*.