

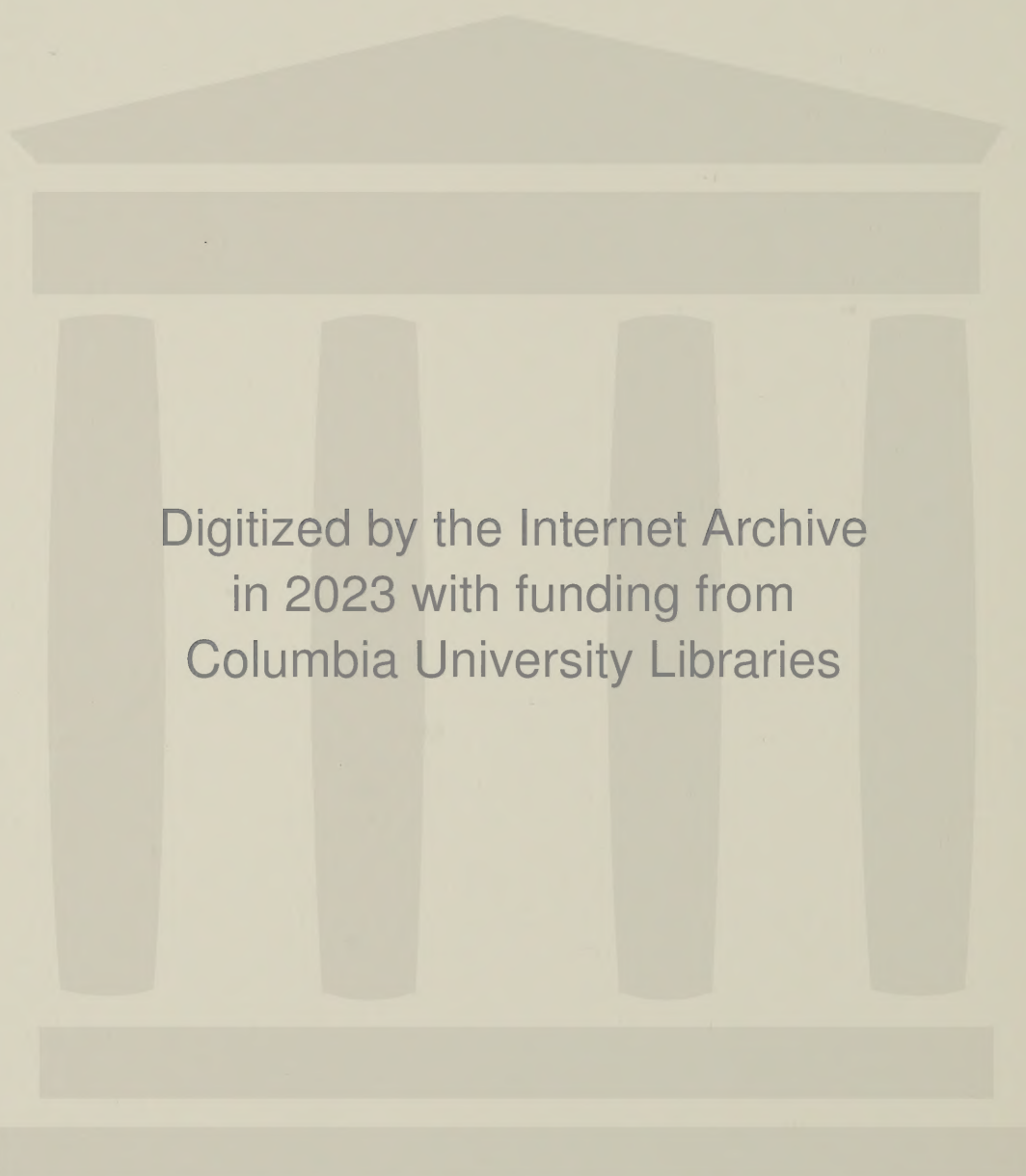
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THE RISE OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE 1993 ELECTIONS

Peter Lentini and Troy McGrath

The comparatively strong showing in the 1993 parliamentary elections of the right-wing nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), headed by the outspoken iconoclast and rising media star Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, has been the subject of much recent concern within Western diplomatic, political and even academic circles. Actually, the success of the LDPR and the lackluster performance of the reformist elements most supported in the West should not have been such a great surprise. That a significant portion of the dispirited and economically battered Russian electorate found something appealing in the unrealistic/utopian promises and xenophobic rationalizations of the LDPR, the stock in trade of many nationalist and populist movements, should have been no surprise at all. Moreover, the LDPR's history as one of Russia's longest standing political parties, its organizational capacities and previous campaign experience added to its success at the hustings.

Unfortunately, though not uncharacteristically, the West (and for that matter many Russian politicians and journalists) viewed the electoral campaign through rose-colored glasses, unable to predict or comprehend the appeal of a politician like Zhirinovskiy. Press coverage in the West and Russia presented an exaggerated picture of support for both the Russia's Choice bloc, as well as for

President Yeltsin. Nearly every reference to the October crisis in Moscow labelled Yeltsin's forces as pro-reform and democratic, and the Parliamentarians as anti-government, anti-reform forces, attempting a *coup d'état*. This penchant for black-and-white characterizations with clearly defined "good guys" (read, democrats) and "bad guys" (read, anti-reform, anti-free market) obscures the complex range of issues and views currently marking Russia's political landscape. It is this same narrow approach to politics in Russia that exaggerated the alleged support and stature of Gorbachev and his reforms to the extent that many were surprised by his rapid eclipse from power. It is truly ironic that Russian autocrats such as Yeltsin and Gorbachev are more popular in the West than in Russia itself.

The relative success of the LDPR in the December elections has produced something of a chain reaction (or over-reaction) of doomsday scenarios that allude to a nuclear Evil Empire's rebirth and the rise of a new Hitler. The comparisons with the rise and intensity of the nationalist forces of Hitlerite Germany and contemporary Serbia are legion, the analysis behind them superficial and uninformed. To begin with, the LDPR won only 5 constituencies of the 66 it contested (in all there were 225 constituencies contested, 219 of which were decided on December 12) and were awarded approximately



one-quarter of the seats allotted to parties (59 of 225) for the Duma. Furthermore, the LDPR came away with virtually no support in the upper house of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council. Taken together with the constitutionally strengthened presidency and autocratic tendencies of Boris Yeltsin, the 14% LDPR representation in the Duma (64 of 450 members) seems less threatening than one would expect from recent reports.

This is not to discount the potential problems that might arise from a LDPR-led opposition, which could tie up government programs and incite further defections from the "reformist" camp. But Zhirinovskiy's party has thus far exhibited a greater organizational sense that portends to a greater degree of party loyalty and unity, which could strengthen its influence. Nevertheless, with Russia's Choice fielding the largest bloc of deputies (30 constituencies, 40 party seats) and the strong showing of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (16 constituencies and 32 party seats), as well as the enormous number of non-party deputies (approximately 130), the alignment of political forces is presently difficult to assess. The myriad of potential combinations that will attempt coalitions in the next few months and the redefinition of the actual powers of the parliament suggest a political system that may remain in turmoil for some time rather than one on the verge of xenophobic nationalist unity.

We hope to shed some light on the increasingly murky political situation in Russia, particularly upon the disruptive effect of Zhirinovskiy and the LDPR, by providing some background information on the party, its leader, and the election itself. First, we provide a short history of the party, a biography of Zhirinovskiy, some biographical information on the candidates who stood for the LDPR, and the LDPR's political program. The strength and makeup of the LDPR will then be assessed in comparison with the other parties represented in the new parliament. This is followed by an analysis of the strong showing of the LDPR and an assessment of its future in the Russian political scene.

LDPR and Its (Often Tactless) Leader, Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovskiy

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), until 1992 the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, dates back to 1988. A loose association in 1988 that was organized formally in December 1989, the LDPR held its first congress on 31 May 1990 in Moscow. The LDPR was registered by the USSR Justice Ministry on 12 April 1991, but this registration was annulled by the Russian Justice Ministry in August 1992 because of falsified membership data. The party, however, was given papers to re-register, re-submitting them in October 1992 under the name of the Liberal Democratic Party. The party was re-registered on 14 December 1992. After its third congress (April 1992), the party claimed to have over 80,000 members and in December 1992, its leaders boasted of numbers between 80,000 and 100,000.¹

The LDPR has several strong centers of support within (and in some cases outside) the Russian Federation. Its largest organizations are located in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Taigil, Smolensk, Belgorod and Krasnoyarsk. At the end of 1992 the LDPR had 33 city organizations, including 9 located outside Russia's borders, and an additional 46 strong centers including 10 outside Russia. In addition to its regional structures established in all the other republics of the former USSR, the LDPR maintains illegal party organizations in the Baltic states and Ukraine. The party also has branches in Austria, Hungary, Germany (Munich) and Finland, and maintains close ties with Liberal Democratic Parties in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland and Sadaam Hussein's Baath Party.²

While the party can certainly be grouped among nationalist or patriotic parties, it is worth noting that two recent Russian compilations did not classify it as such. For instance, Vladimir Pribylovskiy groups the LDPR among the *nepostoyannyye* (inconsistent), that is, parties and movements that "opportunistically change their ideological orientations."³ Another source places it in the cate-

1 On the formation, registration, as well as early membership figures of the LDPR see the following: A.S. Barsenkov, V.A. Koretskii and A.I. Ostapenko, "Liberal'no-Demokraticeskaya partiya Rossii" in *Politicheskaya Rossiya segodnya: Ispolnitel'naya vlast', konstitutsionnyi sud, lidery partii i dvizhenii* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1993), pp. 404-0; V.G. Gel'bras, et. al., *Kto est' chto* (Moscow: Catallaxy, 1993), pp. 233-39; A. Ostapchuk, E. Krasnikov, M. Meier, *Spravochnik politicheskie partii, dvizhenia i bloki sovremennoi Rossii*, (Novgorod: Leta, 1993), pp. 84-86. For early information in English on the LDPR, see Stephen White with Peter Lentini, "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," in Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.), *New Political Parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Essex: Longman, 1991), pp. 271-72.

2 Ostapchuk, et al., op. cit., and Gelbras, et. al., op. cit., p. 233.

gory of "democratic" parties and blocs.⁴ This should come as no surprise, since its chairman has attempted to be all things to all people, frequently changing his political positions and blurring his background and ethnic origins.

The party's leader, Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovsky is currently one of the most colorful (and controversial) politicians in contemporary Russia.⁵ Zhirinovsky was born 25 April 1946 into a large family in Alma-Ata, where he lived until he completed secondary school. His father, Volf Andreyevich Zhirinovsky, a jurist in the Directorate of the Turkestan-Siberian railroad, died as a result of an auto accident when Zhirinovsky was very young. With his nose to the (relatively anti-Semitic) populist political winds, Zhirinovsky was loath to admit (at least during the campaign) that his father was Jewish, though only a few years ago Zhirinovsky was an active member of the official Soviet Jewish organization. Recently, however, Zhirinovsky's tune has changed on this score, and in an 11 January 1994 interview with the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*, he asserted that he had never hidden the fact that his father was Jewish.⁶ His mother Aleksandra Pavlovna (née Makarova) was a housewife who died 29 May 1985.

After leaving Alma-Ata, Zhirinovsky continued his studies and performed his compulsory military service. In 1964 he enrolled in Moscow State University's Institute of Asia and Africa. After graduating with distinction, he entered the evening division of the university to pursue an advanced degree. At this time he completed a course in the Department of International Relations in the Marxism-Leninism Institute. He later went to Turkey as a student (*stazher*), and is said to have worked in 1970 as a translator at a metallurgical combine in Iskanderun. During this time he was arrested for conducting "communist propaganda" and was immediately deported as a result of these activities. Some sources, however, state that during this pe-

riod he served his two-year tour of military duty in the Transcaucasian military district, reputedly achieving the rank of lieutenant. Zhirinovsky purportedly began legal studies after his military service. In addition, he is said to be competent in English, German, French and Turkish.

His personal life has generated some controversy. For instance, one biographical source cites that Zhirinovsky has a wife, Lyudmila Nikolaevna and a son, Igor, born in 1972.⁷ Nevertheless, in a pre-election edition of the newspaper *Yuridicheskaya gazeta* his wife is notably absent from family photographs contained in one section, and is not even mentioned.⁸ Whether or not Zhirinovsky is a "family man" in the (often hypocritical) tradition of Western political candidates is speculative, though his passion for politics seems to be voracious. Indeed, according to Russian journalist Galina Labzina, Zhirinovsky allegedly stated he had little interest in women, claiming that they distracted him from politics. Labzina recounts that when he addressed voters at a polling station on election day in French, he admitted that he had experienced an orgasm voting for the LDP.⁹

Zhirinovsky's political activities are also somewhat of a mystery. Recently, St. Petersburg Mayor and former Russian Democratic Reform Movement (RDDR) election leader Anatoly Sobchak accused Zhirinovsky of holding the rank of KGB captain. Moreover, according to Sobchak, Mikhail Gorbachev mentioned to him that the Politburo selected Zhirinovsky to be an initiator of a "directed" Soviet multi-party system, a point Gorbachev later denied.¹⁰ Major Russian biographical handbooks provide conflicting accounts of his participation in the informal movement and the founding of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union. A. S. Barsenkov and his co-authors claim that Zhirinovsky's political work began in the late 1960s, and that his support for a multi-party system can be traced to 1977, although they provide no informa-

3 Vladimir Pribylovskii, *Slouar' novykh politicheskikh partii i organizatsii Rossii* (Moscow: Panorama, December 1992), 4th ed., p. 176.

4 See Ostapchuk, Krasnikov and Meier, op. cit.

5 The following biographical material on Zhirinovsky was compiled from the following sources: A. S. Barsenkov, V. A. Koretskii, A. I. Ostapenko, op. cit., p. 300-2; Vladimir Pribylovskii, *Sto politikov Rossii: kratkii biograficheskii slouar'*, (Moscow: Panorama Group, July 1992), p. 16; N. Poroshina (ed.), *Kto est' kto v Rossii i v blizhnem zarubezh'e* (Moscow: Novoe vremya, 1993), p. 245; Vladimir Zhirinovskii, "Ya odin iz vas. Ya takoi zhe, kak vy," *Iuridicheskaiia gazeta*, nos. 40-41, pp. 8-9.

6 RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 7, 12 January 1994.

7 N. Poroshina, op. cit., p. 245.

8 See, "Ya odin iz vas. Ya takoi zhe, kak vy," *Iuridicheskaiia gazeta*, nos. 40-41, pp. 8-9.

9 Galina Borisovna Labzina, "I Will Protect Russians" (translated by Elizabeth Walsh and Irina Manaková), *Prognosis* (Prague), 24 December-6 January 1994, p. 4.

10 Anatolii Sobchak in *Chas pik*, no. 1 (1994), quoted in Victor Yasmann, "Sobchak Alleges Zhirinovsky has KGB Links," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 7, 12 January 1994. Gorbachev's retort (extracted from *Izvestiya*, 13 January 1994) is cited in the same author's "Gorbachev Rebuffs Sobchak on Creation of Zhirinovsky's Party," *ibid.*, no. 11, 18 January 1994.

tion on his activities. They further state that he worked in the Committee for the Defense of Peace from 1988 to 1991, where he headed the juridical service for the publication *Mir*.¹¹ Some of this information is corroborated by noted Russian political analyst Vladimir Pribylovsky, who also mentions Zhirinovsky's involvement with *Mir*.¹²

Pribylovsky and the collective of Barsenkov, Koretsky and Ostapenko agree, however, that it was not until 1988 that Zhirinovsky became an active participant in the informal movement and the development of "proto" parties. For instance, Zhirinovsky was a participant in Democratic Union's first congress and also signed the draft program of the Social Democratic Party, widely distributed among Moscow informal groups, though he never joined the party. Whereas Barsenkov, Ostapenko and Koretsky state that in May 1988 he became politically active when he participated in the founding of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, Pribylovsky asserts that in the autumn of 1989, Zhirinovsky joined forces with Vladimir Bogachev of the Democratic Party and Lev Ubozhko (the latter went on to found the Conservative Party)—both of whom were previously expelled from Democratic Union.¹³

Zhirinovsky and Bogachev then founded the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and together with 13 others formed the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union. In June 1990 Zhirinovsky became one of the initiators of the formation of a Centrist bloc of parties and movements in which the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union was associated with several other smaller parties. The party soon split and the section of the party led by Zhirinovsky eventually became registered. Zhirinovsky was accused by the leader of the Centrist bloc, V. Voronin, of changing the party's rules and Central Committee composition during the registration process. Thereafter a group of the party calling itself the LDP Russia accused Zhirinovsky of imperial intentions and dictatorial manners.¹⁴

The Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union nominated Vladimir Zhirinovsky as its candidate for the post of president of the RSFSR in 1991. Zhirinovsky was registered as a candidate by the IV

Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR and his nomination was supported by nearly 500 deputies. (The Congress's decision was needed because Zhirinovsky could not collect the required number of signatures to get on the ballot.) His vice-presidential running mate was CPSU member A. Zavidya, president of the Galland concern. Zhirinovsky came in third place in the 12 June 1991 elections, collecting 7.8% of the vote.¹⁵

His pre-election platform emphasized such issues as ceasing anti-communist disorder, introducing order in the country, reviving the economy within a 2-3 year period, taking the national question from the agenda and rejecting the national-territorial division of Russia. He repeatedly inveighed against the "menace of relations" with the Baltic republics and Moldavia. As his means for accelerating the economy, Zhirinovsky proposed a re-scheduling/renegotiation of debts, thereby shifting relations with all countries into channels of mutual economic advantage. He stated his support for all forms of property (private, state and cooperative) and strengthening their "normal development" through a regulated tax system. Further, he rejected all limitations hindering the development of enterprises. In conjunction with his economic proposals, Zhirinovsky advocated the creation of a multi-party system, maintaining the territorial integrity of the former USSR, guarding Soviet geopolitical interests in the world, and introducing a professional army.¹⁶

Zhirinovsky's attitude towards the August 1991 *coup* attempt was rather ambivalent, if not opportunistic, as evidenced by the following statement:

"At 9:00 a.m. on August 19th, the people sitting in the Kremlin had legal power—therefore we supported their program... I underline program! But when the President (of the USSR) returned, we changed our position and supported the legal power of the President who had returned to his post."¹⁷

Many claim that Zhirinovsky harbors a negative attitude towards the Yeltsin government and the "democratic" forces of reform. Indeed, Zhirinovsky maintains that these democratic forces are involved in dirty work and that they saved the LDPR from

11 Barsenkov, et. al. op. cit.

12 V. Pribylovskii, op. cit., p. 16.

13 A.S. Barsenkov, et. al, op. cit.; V. Pribylovskii, op. cit.

14 A. S. Barsenkov, et. al, op. cit.

15 "Soobshchenie tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii po vyboram Prezidenta RSFSR," *Izvestia*, 20 June 1991, p. 1.

16 See A. S. Barsenkov, et. al, op. cit., pp. 301-2.

17 Ibid.

having to compete against a ruling party. The policies of the Yeltsin government merely fanned the flames of his political ambitions, and Zhirinovskiy continued his quest for elected office in the period before the October 1993 crisis and the sudden calling of parliamentary elections. In January 1993, his bid for mayor of Moscow was defeated by Yury Luzhkov; he was subsequently one of 34 candidates for chief of the Moscow city administration.¹⁸ However, it was only during the last month of 1993 that Zhirinovskiy secured a place in the Russian political limelight.¹⁹

Program and Candidates for the LDPR in the 1993 Election

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia collected 153,000 signatures supporting its list for the December 1993 elections to the State Duma and fielded 147 candidates on its All-Federal list, while it contested 66 constituencies.²⁰ Heading the list were its chairman, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, sociologist and LDPR Higher Council Member, Viktor Kobelev and engineer and St. Petersburg LDPR Regional Organization director Vyacheslav Marychev. Other candidates on the list included leaders of its regional organizations, the famous "psychotherapist" (the television hypnotist) Anatoly Kashpirovskiy, ecologist Mikhail Lemeshev, and the chief editor of *Yuridicheskaya gazeta*, Oleg Filko.²¹

According to its pre-election program, entitled "What We Offer,"²² the LDPR set forth both a program minimum and a program maximum. Its program minimum included three main provisions. First, the LDPR intends to end any financial assistance to foreign countries. This precludes assistance for the "starving" countries of Africa, for earthquakes or torrential floods in Central Asia or the Caucasus, or "for the economic mess in Ukraine and Georgia." The party claims that this position

does not come from a lack of desire to assist these countries. Rather it is based on a standpoint of economic expediency—it being simply "impermissible" to help other countries at Russia's expense. By following such a formula, the LDPR asserts, Russia's standard of living will improve by "no less than one-third."

Second, the LDPR calls for a halt to the conversion of the defense industry. In addition, the party advocates continuing to supply the world market with Russian arms. Implementing this policy will allegedly improve Russia's economic position by "another 30%." Third, the LDPR intends to wage a "decisive battle" with crime in Russia by "the most effective means." While these means are not explained, the LDPR claims that by attacking organized crime, mafia activities will be finished off "within several months" and the "5,000 on Russian territory" will be destroyed. Not surprisingly, this victory will bring about another 30% improvement in economic conditions. The program further states that if these three points are fulfilled, "within three to four months we will live two times better."

The LDPR also proposed a 10-point "Program Maximum" that is intended to help Russians even further.²³ The party considers it necessary to end the flow of Russian refugees and to cease economic cooperation with those countries from which they were forced to flee. The program points specifically to the problems encountered by Russians in Azerbaijan, where, it notes, "only 100,000 of the 500,000 Russians remained," emphasizing their property losses and difficulties encountered upon entering Russia. Moreover, the LDPR states that it is therefore necessary "to present a tough political and economic ultimatum to Azerbaijan, and to all other regions violating the rights of Russians." These measures will strengthen Russia's morale and economy, however no percentage gain is given.

A second point mentioned in this section aims to prohibit non-Russian citizens from trading goods in Russian cities and villages, stressing that foreigners

18 "Zaiavlenie kandidatov na post glavy Moskovskoi gorodskoi administratsii," in *Glasnost'*, 8-14 April 1993, p. 2.

19 It is significant that despite a relatively high degree of name recognition, Zhirinovskiy was tied in the 112-113 positions as one of 1993's leading Russian politicians. See, "Vox Populi 'Oni delali, chto khoteli a my - chto mogli,'" *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 January 1994, p. 1.

20 "Obshchefederal'nyi spisok kandidatov ot izbiratel'nogo ob'edineniia 'Liberal'no - demokraticeskaya partiya Rossii', vydvinyutykh kandidatami v deputaty Gosudarstvennoi Dumy resheniem Vysshogo Soveta LDPR ot 3 noiabria 1993 goda" (hereafter, *Obshchefederal'nyi spisok*) in *Iuridicheskaya gazeta*, nos. 40-41 (1993), pp. 6-7; "Spisok kandidatov ot LDPR v Gosudarstvennyu Dumu po odnomandatnym izbiratel'nyim okrugam," *ibid.*, p. 7 and Interfaks, "Blok i partii, predstavshie spiski kandidatov v Tsentrizbirkom," *Izvestiia*, 9 November 1993, p. 2.

21 Iana Meteleva, Dmitrii Orlov and Lyubov' Tsukanova, "Izbiratel'nye bloki: kto yes' kto'," *Rossiiskie vesti*, 11 December 1993, p. 2; see also, "Obshchefederal'nyi spisok," in *Iuridicheskaya gazeta*, nos. 40-41 (1993), pp. 6-7.

22 For the contents of the "Program Minimum," see "Chto my predlagaem: predvybornaya programma LDPR," in *Iuridicheskaya gazeta*, nos. 40-41 (1993), p. 4.

23 For the contents of the "Program Maximum," see *ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

get rich through this speculation. In the party's view, this will improve the economic situation, enabling Russian manufacturers to lower their prices and sell their own goods without fear and blackmail. This will narrow sharply the ground for criminal inclinations. The third point of the program continued the economic promises, heralding the necessity to turn the tax system to the producer's favor immediately. The highest taxes must consist of no more than 40% of income, thereby providing a serious stimulus for Russian industrialists and all forms of property development.

It is perhaps points 4 and 5 that will trouble many individuals and countries (as well as the IMF) concerned with market restructuring and international economic integration. The LDPR calls for "a step backward" on the road to reform in order to strengthen the state sector, to introduce state orders, and to establish ties between enterprises. In addition, the program states that "it is expedient to withhold payments on our debts to foreign states, especially in those cases when it will not lead to any complications for our country." Moreover, under no circumstances, the LDPR feels, should Russia assume the responsibility of paying even a part of the USSR's debts for those other states currently

greater educational opportunities for Russian students and significantly improving the economic and psychological aspects of life (point 8).

The ninth point of the Program Maximum maintains the usefulness of reducing significantly the privileges and advantages of various categories of bureaucrats. In addition to assisting the country, these measures will ease the burdens for a narrow circle of people—invalids, families with many children, single mothers, the elderly, or people suffering from illness. By cutting back on privileges to others, claims the LDPR, Russia can economize on the means which now are spent "uncontrollably and wastefully."

The final point deals with the quantity and quality of the military establishment. LDPR advocates reducing "superfluous" personnel and materials, but not in the "disorganized and destructive manner" which it alleges is currently taking place. The LDPR feels it is necessary to reduce the officer corps, but not send them into retirement; rather the party supports transferring them to the internal forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, law enforcement organs, or to the system of the Ministry of Security. In addition to their program statements, the LDPR also has definite visions for Russia's in-

Table 1. LDPR Candidates According to Age Group

Age Group	List Candidates (No.)	List Candidates (%)	Constituency Candidates (No.)	Constituency Candidates (%)
30 and under	28	19.0	15	22.7
31-40	34	23.1	17	25.8
41-50	55	37.4	22	33.3
51-60	21	14.3	6	9.1
61 and older	9	6.1	6	9.1
TOTAL	147	100	66	100

striving to shift this burden on Russia. Points 6 and 7 further elaborate the LDPR's economic philosophy, calling for the support of both the state and of entrepreneurs in areas such as space research, stimulating not only defense industries, but other sectors of the economy. Next is a call to cease temporarily the export of those goods and raw materials which Russia itself needs—timber, oil, metals, foods and furs. By keeping in the country half of what Russia exports, the people "will dress better and live better." This economic saving can be supplemented by reducing the non-hard-currency training of foreign students, thereby providing

internal construction, for instance, its desire that Russia return to its 1900 borders; and if this is not feasible, then the 1977 Soviet borders. In addition, the LDPR wants to restructure Russia's present territorial divisions into 40 to 50 *gubernii*, which would have complete self-management. This, the party claims, would improve the economic situation.

As stated above, the party fielded 147 candidates on its federal list and contested 66 seats in the single mandate constituencies.²⁴ Like most parties or blocs competing for seats in the State Duma, LDPR's candidates were overwhelming male, ex-

cluding the Women of Russia bloc, which ran 36 female candidates on its all-federal list. There were only 9 women (6.1%) on the LDPR's all-federal list (5 of whom were elected); and in only 4 of the 66 districts in which the LDPR competed were women put forward. No women, however, were elected.²⁵

Table 1 contains data on LDPR candidates according to their age distributions. These figures indicate that LDPR's contestants were relatively youthful: more than 40% of its federal list candidates were 40 years or younger; the largest group of candidates fall in the 41-50 category (37.4%); about 6% were of retirement age. Among the candidates who stood in the constituencies, those between the ages of 41-50 were once again the most numerous, comprising about one-third of the competitors. Nevertheless, it appears that certain age

groups were favored and found themselves on both the list and in the districts: half the candidates aged 31-40, nearly 54% of the candidates under 31 and nearly two-thirds over 61.

Data on LDPR candidates' occupations according to industrial sector are contained in table 2. It is necessary to note, first of all, that this data is somewhat dubious. Russian journalists Yana Meteleva, Dmitry Orlov and Lyubov Tsukanova pointed out that "in violation of the Statute on Elections [the party] indicated the candidates' *professions* not *positions*" (emphasis added). Also, this federal list of candidates is littered with economists or professors whose place of work is not specified. These factors lead the authors to wonder about the extent to which some of these candidates may have been unemployed, despite the fact that only one of the

Table 2. LDPR Candidates According to Occupation.

Occupation	List Candidates (No.)	List Candidates (%)	Constituency Candidates (No.)	Constituency Candidates (%)
Agriculture	3	2.0	1	1.5
Creative Intelligentsia	13	8.8	5	7.6
Education	8	5.4	3	4.5
Entrepreneurs	9	6.1	3	4.5
Finance	17	11.6	7	10.6
Industry	31	21.1	13	19.7
Law	8	5.4	4	6.1
Media	10	6.8	6	9.1
Health	5	3.4	3	4.5
Military	9	6.1	4	6.1
Party Officials	3	2.0	3	4.5
Science	16	10.9	7	10.6
Service Sector	6	4.1	3	4.5
Others	9	6.1	4	6.1
TOTAL	147	100	66	100

24 Data from authors' personal database derived from "Obschchefederal'ny spisok" and "Spisok kandidatov ot LDPR v Gosudarstvennyu Dumu po odnomandatnym izbiratel'nyim okrugam."

25 For a comparison of the representation of women under the previous system, see Peter Lentini, "A Note on Women in the CPSU Central Committee, 1990," *Europe-Asia Studies* (formerly *Soviet Studies*), vol. 45, no. 4 (1993); as well as Peter Lentini, "Women and the 1989 Elections to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies," *Coexistence*, which will be published in March 1994.

147 candidates is listed as "temporarily not working."

The highest number of LDPR's federal list and constituency candidates were drawn from several sectors of the economy. The largest group was drawn from industry, with a sizable number of engineers included among its ranks. In addition, there were 17 individuals (11.6%) who had some type of background in finance. The sciences, the creative intelligentsia, the media, security forces, and entrepreneurs were also represented in large numbers. It should also be noted that 15 of the party's candidates held some type of party office. Nevertheless, only three had a party office listed as their *sole* occupation. Zhirinovskiy himself was entered as a jurist first and then Chairman of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia. Competing in the constituencies were 60% of the federal list candidates who worked in media, 43% from science, 41% each from the industrial sector and finance. Nearly three-quarters of the individuals on the list holding some party office stood as candidates in the districts.

The LDPR in the 1993 Campaign to the Russian State Duma

The strong showing of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia can be traced in good measure to an effective campaign effort, particularly the party's utilization of the media.²⁶ In fact, the LDPR used 149 minutes of paid air time on the Ostankino and Rossiya channels, exceeded only by Russia's Choice and the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (PRES).²⁷ On 30 November 1993, the LDPR presented a party political broadcast on the Rossiya channel devoted mainly to agricultural issues. Zhirinovskiy started the program by boasting about the specialists and academics on his team. He then "turned the show over" to the candidates appearing with him, Aleksandr Kozyrev, Mikhail Lemeshev and Mikhail Sidorov. During the course of the broadcast, Lemeshev spoke about the mistake of talking about social protection without considering agrarian workers' views. He pointed to other countries' experiences of subsidizing agricultural sectors and spoke of the need to invest more in

Russia's agricultural sector, reminding his audience that the population's health is related to food problems and that land is Russia's "greatest national heritage and salvation." Zhirinovskiy then spoke of the capabilities of his fellow party members, assuring the Russian electorate that the only way of improving agriculture and developing the rural infrastructure was to vote for the LDPR. He emphasized that neither the Peasant Party (competing in the election as part of Russia's Choice) nor the Agrarian Party could defend adequately the rights of the agricultural workforce, but that the Liberal Democratic Party would.

Even more important, however, than the actual message Zhirinovskiy touted was his confident style and ease with the cameras and audience. When cameras focused on Zhirinovskiy during the speeches of his fellow party members, he appeared to be very much involved in their speeches, nodding his approval of their ideas and proposals.²⁸ In addition, he knew how to perform vigorously and confidently before the cameras. Stylistically, he differed radically from those candidates who spoke nervously and apprehensively of the many problems facing the Russian citizenry. Zhirinovskiy's performances played well with the general public looking for entertainment as much as for political information, particularly when compared to the stiff and unappetizing approaches of other candidates and blocs. The actress Natalya Gundareva, for example, one of Women of Russia's three leading candidates, was surprisingly bland. She "read badly and kept her eyes on the paper the whole time" during her spot on the second channel.²⁹

At times Zhirinovskiy's style either shocked viewers or got people's attention. In one speech, he spoke for several minutes in Turkish. In another more controversial televised performance, he described Russia's experience under Communist rule with sexual metaphors, characterizing the Bolshevik Revolution as the rape of the country. The Stalin period was likened to homosexuality, because men were killing other men and the population did not grow. The Khrushchev years, characterized by internal fiddlings and systemic playing about without actually producing anything, were compared to masturbation. Unsympathetically (though not en-

26 Zhirinovskiy's television and radio speech schedule is published in "Vystupleniia lidera LDPR V. V. Zhirinovskogo po radio i televideuiyu," *Iuridicheskaia gazeta*, nos. 40-41 (1993), p. 16.

27 "Za politiki pokupali efir," *Izvestiia*, 10 December 1993, p. 4.

28 These examples were taken from the LDPR's party political broadcast on the Rossiya channel, 11:35 p.m., 30 November 1993.

29 Ivan Rodin, "Zakonchilas' vtoraiia nedelia teleagitatsii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 7 December 1993, p. 2.

tirely unjustly), the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras were categorized as periods of impotence.³⁰

Regardless of its supposed lack of political sophistication, Zhirinovskiy's party campaigned intelligently. The LDPR used the expensive Russian airwaves well and frequently, causing many Russians to believe that either the LDPR has large financial reserves and/or is supported by rich benefactors working behind the scenes. Moreover, the LDPR actually canvassed efficiently during the weeks preceding the elections, something many of the other parties failed to do effectively. Zhirinovskiy would make statements on television one evening; the next morning and afternoon LDPR workers were out on the streets hustling support, coordinating their activities with recent broadcasts. In addition, the LDPR drew upon its previous election campaign experience, gained while supporting Zhirinovskiy as a presidential candidate in 1991 and more recently in his 1993 local electoral bids in Moscow.

The LDPR also carefully targeted their constituencies, with a substantial portion of them standing in the border areas of Russia, the Urals and remote areas of Siberia and the Far East. Although the party competed in less than one-third of the constituencies, it conducted comprehensive campaigns in several areas. For instance, the party contested every district in Vologda, Kamchatka, Kostroma, Kursk, Orlov, Pskov, Tambov and Yaroslavl regions and the Koryak autonomous district. They contested nearly every seat in both Moscow city and Moscow *oblast*—areas of major support. The LDPR also fielded candidates in half the constituencies in St. Petersburg, the Republic of Komi, Republic of Udmurtiya, Krasnoyarsk, and Stavropol districts, Belgorod, Vladimir, Voronezh, Ivanovsk, Kirov, Penza, Ryazan, and Chita regions.³¹

The Election Results

While most observers of the elections seemed to have rather positive feelings about how the elec-

tions were conducted, publicizing the results certainly gave rise to more conflicting emotions. Following the traditions of both the American and British political broadcasting, the Russians attempted to hold a night-long television special devoted to reporting official results as they were tabulated. Quite early in the evening, about 9:45 p.m., the program reported an announcement by Vladimir Shumeiko that the Constitution had been adopted and that the election results for the Federal Assembly would be forthcoming. However, announcers were later requested to postpone their reading of the results, presumably because the results were an affront to the existing powers. Indeed, due to the failure of the show's presenters to provide accurate and prompt electoral information, the Central Electoral Commission issued a statement claiming that it was not involved in any way in the delays.³² In addition, at 2:00 a.m., 13 December, while waiting for results, LDPR leader Zhirinovskiy and leader of the People's Party of Russia Telman Gdlyan were involved in a heated discussion ending in Zhirinovskiy striking his debating partner in the back of the head.³³

When preliminary results were published in the newspapers of 13 and 14 December, it was obvious that the anti-Yeltsin opposition had fared much better than most observers expected. The headlines of the next few days were typical of the charged atmosphere resulting from the elections. *Vechernyaya Moskva*, for example, ran the following headlines on 13 December: "It looks like we've woken up in a new state. Russia's new Constitution has been adopted. The Communo-Fascist success is on the democrats' consciences."³⁴ *Nezavisimaya gazeta's* 14 December issue showed the four strained faces of the various democratic blocs' leaders—Gaidar, Yavlinsky, Sobchak and Shakhrai. The ITAR-TASS news agency reported that the top vote getters in four major regions were the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Russia's Choice and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.³⁵ Table 3 contains regional preliminary election data for the party list seats.

30 The authors wish to acknowledge Dr. Daphne Skillen for bringing these examples to their attention.

31 Based on the authors' database. See also, "Analitycheskii Tsentr administratsii Prezidenta RF po obshchei politike, Karty znaiut vse," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 4 December 1993, p. 2; "Spisok kandidatov ot LDPR v Gosudarstvennu Dumu po odnomandatnoi izbiratel'nyin okrugam," *Iuridicheskaiia gazeta*, nos. 40-41, p. 7; "The 55th Parallel," *The Economist*, 25 December 1993-7 January 1994, p. 28.

32 "Zaiavlenie Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii po vyboram v Sovet Federatsii i po vyboram v Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu Federal'nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii," 13 December 1993, no. 139. This appears in *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 14 December 1993, p. 1.

33 The text of the argument (transcribed from dictaphone notes) appears in Otdel prestupnotsi and Otdel operativnoi informatsii KD, "Vladimir Zhirinovskii udaril Tel'mana Gdlyana," *Kommersant*, 14 December 1993, p. 14. This incident is also mentioned in the Korotko column of *Nezavisimaiia gazeta*, 14 December 1993, p. 2.

34 The headlines in Russian read as follows: "Pokhozhe, my prosnulis' v drugom gosudarstve. Novaia konstitutsiia Rossii priniata. Uspekh kommuno-fashistov na sovesti demokratov."

Table 3. Regional Preliminary Election Data.

	Northern Russia	Southeast Russia	Urals	Siberia & Far East
LDPR	26.6%	18.3%	15.1%	14.4%
Russia's Choice	21.2%	16.1%	20.7%	14.6%
Communist Party of Russian Federation	8.6%	10.5%	12.0%	18.3%

Source: Itar-Tass, "Predvaritel'nye itogi vyborov," *Vecherniyaya Moskva*, 13 December 1993, p. 1.

Table 4 contains final election results to the State Duma. As the data indicates, no party or bloc won an absolute majority in the lower house. In fact, the largest proportion of elected deputies won as independents (129 or 28.7%). Among electoral associations Russia's Choice has the largest number of deputies in the Parliament—70 (15.6% of the seats). The table shows that Russia's Choice was most successful in constituencies. However, nearly one-third of the Parliament can be deemed hostile to Yeltsin or "democratic reforms," confirming the initial shock of the preliminary results. The Liberal Democrats gained the largest share of voter support

for the party lists—59 seats (22.8% of the votes in this category). In addition, the Communist Party of Russia (KPRF) controls 10.7% of the seats, while the Agrarian Party of Russia won 7.3% of the mandates. Despite its careful targeting, the LDPR won only 5 constituency seats (2.2% of the districts), including Zhirinovsky's Moscow *oblast* seat, calling into question the party's overall popularity outside of Zhirinovsky's influence.

The obvious question is why the elections turned out the way they did. We can suggest several major factors that may explain, in part, why the Liberal Democrats performed much better than people ex-

Table 4. Final Results of the Elections to the Russian State Duma, 12 December 1993.

Party	PR List Votes (%)	PR List Votes Seats (No.)	Constituency Seats Won (No.)	Total Seats (No.)	Total Seats (%)
Russia's Choice	15.4	40	30	70	15.6
L DPR	22.8	59	5	64	14.2
Communist Party of RF	12.4	32	16	48	10.7
Agrarian Party of Russia	7.9	21	12	33	7.3
Yabloko Bloc	7.8	20	3	23	5.1
Civic Union	1.9	0	1	1	0.2
Democratic Party of Russia	5.5	14	0	14	3.1
Dignity and Charity	0.7	0	2	2	0.4
Russian Unity and Accord	6.8	18	1	19	4.2
Women of Russia	8.1	21	2	23	5.1
Russ. Democratic Reform	4.1	0	4	4	0.9
Parties Not Listed Above	—	—	14	14	3.1
Independent Candidates	—	—	129	129	28.7

Source: Adapted from "The Final Tally," *The Economist*, 8 January 1994, p. 30.

pected.³⁶ One factor to note is that political parties such as the LDPR and KPRF—not movements or coalitions like Russia's Choice or Yabloko—had political experience and established networks which they used to their benefit during the campaign. Moreover, Zhirinovskiy's party, unlike most of its electoral opponents, is a genuine political party. Over the years it has developed party unity, structures and goals that other electoral blocs had to create in a very short time. In contrast, most of LDPR's opponents were diverse coalitions hastily brought together for the elections. Thus, they lacked the organizational skills and networks upon which the LDPR could draw.

The various "democrats," that is, the more market-reform elements of the political spectrum, were certainly not as well organized and disciplined. In particular, Russia's Choice proved unable to sort out initial differences.³⁷ Nevertheless, it appeared that Russia's Choice had made some effort to unite the democratic forces. Members of the bloc's executive committee published in *Argumenty i fakty* a constituency-by-constituency list of their candidates and like-minded reformist contestants from RDDR, the Yavlinsky-Boldyrev-Lukin (Yabloko) bloc, PRES and the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR) and urged voters to use this document as a selection guide.³⁸ In addition, there were far too many chiefs and not enough Indians representing the democrats. The list for Russia's Choice, for instance, was littered with ministers and Yeltsin's administrators. While democratic forces attempted to form electoral alliances, their inability to present a united front allowed the Communist Party and the LDPR, as well as a number of independent candidates, to obtain large shares of votes and hence a significant number of seats in the Duma.³⁹ The role that will be played by independent candidates (approximately 130 of 450) and parties represented in the Duma by a single member (about 15) is as yet unclear. The formation of the New Regional Policy bloc, consisting of 65 independent Duma deputies, might signal the development of another power center or at least another significant force in the already confusing power structure.⁴⁰ Yeltsin's electoral fiddling also weakened the democrats. Ad-

ministrative impediments reducing the number of hard left and right opposition groups participating in the elections, especially the 100,000 signatures necessary to get on the ballot, channeled extremist votes either toward the KPRF or the LDPR.⁴¹ Therefore, the barriers intended to strengthen democratic forces actually weakened them, dividing their votes among four main blocs—Russia's Choice, Yabloko, RDDR and PRES. Moreover, the Russian democrats were fed up with infighting and their lack of political progress. Several long-standing democrats with whom one of the authors spoke in Moscow, active for years in Democratic Russia and other democratic initiatives, simply refused to vote. Conversely, the opposition was mobilized and the election returns amplify this statement. Evidently not enough democrats took seriously the warning published in *Izvestiya* the day before the elections:

To refrain from participating in the election signifies, willfully or unwillfully, to open a path to those politicians who again promise the people a Communist paradise, and to those who promise free vodka and intend to restore the historical borders [of Russia].⁴²

There were other reasons for the opposition's success at the polls. Zhirinovskiy's party, for instance, for the most part did not become involved in political struggles during both the Soviet period and more recently, focusing instead its activities on building a political party. In addition, Zhirinovskiy remained largely on the sidelines during the recent power struggle between President Yeltsin and Parliament. Therefore, the LDPR did not carry negative political baggage into the December elections like some politicians and coalitions.

Implications and Conclusions

The opposition's success and its potential impact on Russian domestic politics generate several reasons for concern for the Russian President and the non-opposition forces. Within the Parliament itself, Zhirinovskiy's party will probably have the neces-

36 For an earlier version, see Peter Lentini, "Zhirinovskiy is a Cause for Alarm," *Prague Post*, January 5-11, 1994, p. 17.

37 Sander Thoenes has noted that Democratic Russia's candidates, nominally part of Russia's Choice, actually competed against Russia's Choice candidates in several constituencies. See his "Disunion Threatens Russia's Choice," *The Moscow Times*, December 4, 1993, pp. 1-2.

38 A. Murashev and A. Sobianin, "Kandidaty 'Vybor Rossii,'" *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 49 (1993), p. 9.

39 See, for instance, Evgenii Ianaev, "Ob'edinit'sia demokratam poka ne udalos'," *Kommersant*, 3 December 1993, p. 4.

40 ITAR-TASS quoted in Vera Tolz, "State Duma Elects More Committee Chairmen," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, no. 12, 19 January 1994.

41 Iurii Buida, "Russkii noiabr'. Opozitsionnost' ukhodit v modu," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 December 1993, pp. 1, 3.

42 "Vash golos mozhet reshit sud'bu Rossii," *Izvestia*, 11 December 1993, p. 1.

sary discipline to obstruct reform proposals, making things difficult in the policy-making arena. In early January 1994, for example, the LDPR pushed to make 50 deputies the minimum number of representatives required to register an official group in Parliament (a number achieved only by LDPR and Russia's Choice); a compromise figure of 35 deputies was ultimately accepted.⁴³ In addition, LDPR deputies chair the largest number of committees, including labor and social welfare, ecology, industry and natural resources and its deputy chairman, Aleksandr Vengerovsky was elected deputy speaker of the Duma on 17 January 1994.⁴⁴ The democratic forces were lumped together for the election from diverse political currents and it is doubtful that these coalitions will last. The democrats are also divided between "statists" supporting the status quo and "oppositionists" desiring change from outside the government, a division that will potentially strengthen the opposition.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the rise of the opposition may be the long overdue swift kick in the pants the democrats need to put their differences aside and integrate their efforts towards common goals.

The means in which deputies were elected (either in constituencies or on party lists) may affect parliamentary unity and how the legislators cast their ballots. The opposition forces were more successful on the federal list than in the constituencies. Among the 145 deputies elected to the State Duma from the LDPR, KPRF and APR, 112 (77.2%) won seats through the party lists. Selected for their offices by the party hierarchy, these deputies owe their immediate loyalties to their parties, not constituents. By contrast, a lower proportion of democrats entered the Duma through the party list seats (78 of the 116 deputies or 67.2%). Moreover, 42.8% of Russia's Choice candidates were elected in constituencies. These democratic representatives cannot ignore their constituents' interests even if they conflict with the party/bloc line. This struggle between democratic party/bloc and constituent loy-

alties may, at some point, reduce the democrats' chances for parliamentary unity and effectiveness. There are a number of factors that could make the opposition's threat less immediate; none, however, look overwhelmingly promising. First, shortly after the elections KPRF leader Zyuganov stated that he was unwilling to cooperate with Zhirinovskiy to form a coalition.⁴⁶ More recently, Zhirinovskiy stated that the LDPR will not seek a firm bloc with any other faction.⁴⁷ This of course might change, but the difficulty the LDPR will have in forming and cementing coalitions should not be underestimated. Second, the new Constitution grants the President significant powers, making him virtually unimpeachable. Parliament, by contrast, will be weaker than its predecessor, serving principally to approve the government (which, incidentally, did not resign before the elections, but is currently resigning rapidly as this paper is being written). The new Constitution also grants the President power to dissolve Parliament, thereby increasing his political strength. Finally, Yeltsin could rule by decree for the next two years and simply bypass the Parliament. While these variants may inhibit the possibilities of a strong opposition, they will do little to create a democratic system with stable mechanisms of checks and balances.

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43 Wendy Slater, "Chaotic Opening Session of State Duma," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, no. 7, 12 January 1994.

44 Interfaks and Reuters reports quoted in Elizabeth Teague, "LDP Fails to Win Top Posts," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, no. 11, 18 January 1994.

45 The authors wish to acknowledge Richard Sakwa for this insight.

46 Evgenii Ianaev, "Deputaty budut igrat' po prezidentskim pravilam," *Kommersant*, 14 December 1993, p. 1.

47 Alexander Rahr, "Zhirinovskiy Prepares For Parliament Work," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, no. 6, 11 January, 1994.

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