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Strength in diversity: multiple memories of the Soviet past in the Russian Communist Party (CPRF), 1993–2004

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This paper investigates collective memory of the Soviet experiment in the narratives of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), in the period of 1993–2004. My research finds that ideological differences within the CPRF led to the creation of multiple and contrasting depictions of the Soviet past in the discourse of its leaders. Challenging dominant assumptions, I argue that these differences did not conflict and undermine one another, but were structured to strengthen the public appeal of the CPRF. The paper adds empirical findings to the study of the CPRF and of collective memory at the (so far underdeveloped) level of public organizations. The paper also challenges the prevailing assumption that diverging historical narratives necessarily imply conflict and contestation.

Keywords: Communist Party of the Russian Federation; CPRF; memory; memory wars; Soviet history; factionalism

Introduction

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) was created on the basis of the Soviet Communist Party, inheriting the latter's organizational structure and a substantial portion of its membership base. Instead of breaking with the past and refashioning the party along social democratic or populist lines, the CPRF chose to uphold and even strengthen the association with its predecessor and the Soviet past. This paper investigates memory of the Soviet period in the discourse of the CPRF, against the backdrop of the party's internal ideological cleavages, in the period of 1993–2004.

Previous scholarship has identified three competing ideological factions within the CPRF: "orthodox Marxist–Leninist" revivalism, "social democracy," and statist "nationalism." My research finds that factional leaders mobilized multiple and contrasting narratives of the Soviet past in support of their respective ideological visions. The paper addresses the way in which these different narratives managed to coexist within a single organization pursuing shared political objectives. It analyzes the discursive structures employed in order to maintain party unity and prevent differing understandings of Soviet history from undercutting one another's validity. Challenging dominant assumptions, I argue that multiple narratives strengthened the electoral draw of the CPRF, enabling it to reach out to more diverse groups among the electorate and to appeal on several levels of authority.

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In making this argument, the paper advances memory scholarship in two major ways. Firstly, it contributes empirical findings at the (so far underdeveloped) level of public organizations; previous research on Russian memory politics has focused on the role of the state and on popular culture. Problematically, this has bypassed other important sources of collective memory. As the largest nongovernmental public organization in Russia at the time, the CPRF was also important in fashioning collective memory and offering a counter-narrative to the regime's perspective on the past. At the height of its power, with half a million members and ownership of more than 470 newspapers (Cherniakhovskii 2003, 116), the CPRF had a sizable effect on Russian memory discourse, which must be appreciated. Secondly, the paper makes a *theoretical* contribution, specifically, in challenging the dominant understanding that diverging historical narratives necessarily imply conflict and contestation. This assumption has largely arisen due to an undue focus on the Russian regime, which has aggressively employed collective memory to legitimate its hold on power and construct a specific idea of nationhood (framed against the Other). This paper, however, contends that different interpretations of the past can also be a source of political *unity* and strength. After surveying the literature and introducing the methodology, I will establish the basic necessity for factional unity. I will then outline the different factional narratives and the way they supported contrasting ideological visions. I conclude by analyzing the ways in which divergent factional narratives *minimized* clash and worked in unity to *maximize* public appeal for the CPRF.

Research context and methodology

Collective memory is highly significant in the topography of contemporary Russian society, especially given the reordering of "values … identities … institutions and policies … morality, social relations, and basic meanings" precipitated by the post-Soviet transition (Smith 2002, 4). Analyzing the relationship of memory to sociocultural and political developments in Russia, studies have focused on either "official" or "public" memory (alternatively referred to as memory-production from "above" and "below," or collective memory of the "state" and the "people").[1] Somewhat problematically, the literature on "official memory" has overwhelmingly interpreted all forms of institutionally driven memory (i.e. museums, memorials, official holidays, commemorative place-names, history textbooks, etc.) as derivatives of state policy, creating the misleading appearance that the state was the *only* institutional player in the creation of memory.[2] However, despite its dominance, the state did not have a monopoly on memory (particularly in the period of 1993–2004). It was constrained by limited finances, weak and fragmented bureaucracies, and the existence of important elites outside the state-controlled system, who had significant scope for maneuver and even confrontation. Finally, some public organizations, including the CPRF, had sufficient resources to influence political developments, including the field of memory politics. Redressing the lacuna in scholarship, this paper will offer a more sustained engagement with the CPRF's role in collective memory formation.[3]

The undue focus on the Russian state has also produced a somewhat restricted *theoretical* understanding of the role of collective memory. Specifically, narratives of the past are assumed to be essentially *antagonistic*, that is, necessarily clashing with one another in support of different, competing ideologies. This view, understandably, arose from the turbulent, conflict-ridden scene of post-transition Russia and, specifically, the aggressive use of memory by the Russian state/regime against its ideological opponents.

Scholars concur on the twin uses of memory for the Russian state: the legitimization of the ruling elites and the formation and reproduction of a national identity (Forest and

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Johnson 2011, 270; Linan 2010, 171; Morozov 2009, 4; Sherlock 2007b, 205; Smith 2002, 4; Torbakov 2011, 210–211). In both senses, memory is implicitly treated as an antagonistic force. Legitimization involves crafting a historical narrative that leads the public to support the current rulers and their policies in the "contest for power and property" (Bordiugov 2010, 89). In Russia, this use of collective memory is particularly salient given the sometimes tenuous democratic legitimacy of the government (Sherlock 2007a, 184). More importantly, Russian leaders are forced to fight against a liberal counter-narrative, which raises unpleasant questions about the continuity of the regime with its Soviet predecessor. Thus, for instance, Anne Applebaum argued that "former communists [such as Putin] have a clear interest in concealing the past: it tarnishes them, undermines them … even when they had nothing to do with past crimes" (quoted in Sherlock 2007a, 156).

An equally salient function of collective memory, scholars have argued, is its role in nation-building. Shared memory is a crucial ingredient of public identity; by manipulating memory, the regime can indirectly mold public opinion in line with a given notion of what the nation-state should look like. In Russia, this is especially important given the changed understanding of nationhood as a result of Soviet collapse. It is compounded by Russian feelings of being born into a threatening environment (especially given perceived Western hostility) and the attendant need to circle the wagons around a narrative reinforcing a strong and independent nationhood (Solonari 2009, 844–845; Torbakov 2011, 210–212).

In both these cases, legitimization and nation-building, scholars have treated historical narratives as *antagonistically* mobilized against one another. In these analyses, the framing is always dialogical: scholars position the Putinist historical narrative in opposition to the revisionist/liberal critique, present nationalist discourses as fighting cosmopolitan/supranationalist identities, and so on. While the "antagonistic conception" of collective memory may be an accurate representation of certain dynamics within *state* commemoration, it is problematic to apply state-centric lenses to *all* cases of institutionally driven collective memory. It is one thing to recognize the existence of conflict; it is another to study collective memory with a preconceived *expectation* of conflict. It seems that the very title of the recent "Memory at War Project" at the University of Cambridge betrays this widespread assumption. This paper challenges the conception that diverging historical narratives necessarily imply conflict and contestation, by focusing on the case of the CPRF.

The electoral achievements of the CPRF in the mid-1990s generated substantial scholarly interest in the party, in Russia and abroad.[4] One of the most salient insights into the CPRF (and the most relevant to this study) is that despite the party's official pronouncements, it was far from monolithic. Urban and Solovei's pioneering study first pointed to the party's internal cleavages. They argued that the CPRF, as successor to the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), inherited an ideologically heterogeneous membership base, which had drifted even farther apart during the period of the constitutional ban (August 1991–November 1992) (1997b, 48–49).[5] The typology developed to classify the CPRF's main ideological factions – "orthodox Marxist–Leninists," "social democrats," and "nationalists" – has remained paradigmatic (Urban 2000).[6]

My research uses this factional triad as an analytical prism through which to interpret memory in CPRF discourses. Narratives of Soviet history, found in each faction's discourse, are counter-posed with their respective ideological tenets.[7] "Factional discourse" is treated as the entire body of public pronouncements (articles, speeches, radio interviews, books, etc., which I collected until analytical saturation) made by representative leaders of respective factions, in the period of 1993–2004. These "representative leaders" are chosen by triangulating previous literature. In order for a leader to be deemed representative of a given faction, at least three scholars would have classified

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him in the same way, as an "orthodox Marxist–Leninist," "social democrat," or "nationalist."[8] This triangulation method ensures that the ideological position of these figures is clear, internally consistent, stable, and representative. Furthermore, being recognized by multiple researchers, one can assume that they played a *leading* role in the formulation and dissemination of their ideological discourses, setting the tone for their adherents.[9] The period under scrutiny (1993–2004) is chosen as the time when the CPRF featured the greatest ideological diversity. The next section will account for the gradual disappearance of factionalism by 2004, and evaluate the contrasting, centripetal tendencies that held these groups for more than a decade.

CPRF factionalism and memory

As stated above, the three factional tendencies evident in the CPRF were present in the late CPSU (and its short-lived Russian wing, the KP RSFSR). When the ban on the Communist Party was lifted in 1993, organizers of the re-foundational congress pleaded for unity over ideological purity, reaching out to all Communist cells (which had, by then, drifted even farther apart) (Devlin 1999, 163; March 2002, 34–36; Sakwa 1998, 139; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 50–51). During the congress, a complicated three-way compromise emerged, with leadership positions largely captured by social democratic and nationalist wings, and the party program reflecting traditional orthodox Marxist–Leninist positions (Devlin 1999, 162; Flikke 1999, 277; Kholmskaia 1998, 559; March 2002, 35).

Thereafter, factional conflict remained in a constant, undeclared tug-of-war. Putting on a front of unity, the party campaigned on mixed slogans and (often contradictory) promises. Short of a majority in parliament, and having lost the presidential elections to the far-from-popular Yeltsin, by 1996, it was evident that Communists would remain out of power indefinitely. If the CPRF was to have a say in government, it had to compromise: exchanging parliamentary support in return for a say in legislation, higher financing, freedom from harassment by the regime, and so on. (March 2001, 273–274, 2003, 173; Pluzhnikov and Shevchenko 2008, 81; Sakwa 1998, 135–136; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 162).

This "growing into power" strategy turned out to be particularly favorable to CPRF "nationalists," eventually creating the context for their domination of the party. Prominent "social democrats," the most eager to work with the regime, took the posts of Duma speaker, committee chairs, and even ministerial officials. Indeed, their zeal frequently provoked tensions: breaking ranks to endorse Sergei Kirienko as prime minister, Masliukov accepting a cabinet position despite an explicit CPRF presidium prohibition, and so on (Urban 2000, 15). At the same time, the "growing into power" strategy irked the orthodox Marxist–Leninists, who saw little gains from compromise with the regime, either for themselves personally or for their social constituents (dying Soviet industries, youth, the unemployed and retired, etc.).

The "nationalist" leadership responded with a dual strategy. On the one hand, they cracked down hard on organized dissent. Orthodox Marxist–Leninist leaders were sidelined at events, the "Leninist–Stalinist Platform" was banned, the Central Committee purged, and the largely orthodox Komsomol youth wing marginalized (Hashim 1999, 85; Sakwa 2002, 259, 262; Urban 2000, 16). At the same time, nationalists tried to placate orthodox party members and supporters by periodically returning to radical slogans and (symbolic) oppositional gestures: impeachment attempts, wrangling about the budget and appointments, and restoration of Soviet national symbols (March 2001, 274, 2002, 236; Otto 1999, 42). Nonetheless, rocking the boat with even this rhetoric was sufficient to strain the partnership with

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the regime, which "social democrats" were loath to jeopardize. Forced into a showdown, the CPRF voted to expel prominent social democrats (March 2003, 193–194; Sakwa 2002, 259–260; Volokhov 2003, 90).

On 11 September 2004, an attempted leadership coup resulted in a party split and the creation of the rival VKPB. While the conflict itself was not ideological, it also drained the CPRF of several oppositional leaders and members (Cherniakhovskii 2007, 302–303). The CPRF remained caught in the bind between orthodox Marxist–Leninist radicalism and the pragmatic left-centrism of the social democrats. With the "growing into power" strategy failing to satisfy all but the nationalists, the ablest leaders of the orthodox and social democratic factions left to seek their fortunes outside the CPRF.

Given these contradictions, it comes almost as a surprise that the CPRF managed to hold together for more than a decade. Several strategic rationales for unity have been posited.[10] Firstly, whatever chances the CPRF had of achieving power rested with its size and ability to remain unified, particularly when faced with social isolation and a hostile regime (Devlin 1999, 161; March 2002, 27; Urban 2003, 245–246; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169). Secondly, the party leader Gennadii Ziuganov (a "nationalist") was himself a valuable asset, being the only CPRF politician with country-wide name-recognition and a following (Kholmskaia 1998, 578; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 170). Thirdly, and most importantly, the diversity of the CPRF allowed it to appeal to several groups of voters at once, facilitating a "catch-all" electoral strategy (Flikke 1999, 293; Ishiyama 1997, 316, 1999, 107; March 2002, 119, 265).

Finally, and of particular importance to this paper, factions within the CPRF shared a very valuable resource, without which electoral success would be difficult – popular acceptance as the successor party to the CPSU. Firstly, this allowed the CPRF to take advantage of popular nostalgia (Duncan 2000, 130, 137; Lester 1997, 36; March 2003, 172). The party was thus able to significantly capitalize on the economic "losers" of transition (generally, those who remained employed in state-funded sectors: defense, health, education, etc. and pensioners) who looked back to Soviet times as "objectively" better (Devlin 1999, 173; Hashim 1999, 78; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 15). Moreover, the CPRF could appeal on more emotional levels even among groups that did not lose economically. Secondly, being the ideological successor to the CPSU allowed the party to capitalize on the myths and discourses built up during the Soviet era: anti-Westernism, Russian nationalism, class discourse, and so on (Duncan 2000, 133). These meant that, to an extent, the CPRF had an advantage in communicating/arguing/defending its ideology: many facets of its discourse were already commonly accepted, thanks in part to long-standing Soviet socialization. Thirdly, framing the party as successor to the CPSU automatically made it the object of traditional loyalties (Cherniakhovskii 2003, 18; Devlin 1999, 173; Flikke 1999, 276; Lester 1997, 36; Sakwa 2002, 243; Urban 2003, 258). As experience showed, other Russian Communist parties failed to establish their genealogical roots in the popular mind and remained very far behind the CPRF in both membership and votes. Fourthly, taking up the cause of the wronged CPSU (and indeed, the entire Soviet order) gave the CPRF a valuable resource for criticizing the ruling regime, whose current power had much to do with their behavior during collapse. Thus, for instance, Yeltsin's signing of the Belovezha Accords (which dissolved the Soviet Union) served as one of the foundations for the (unsuccessful) CPRF-sponsored impeachment bill of 1999.

Memory was therefore an important shared resource. This and other strategic considerations were powerful enough to hold the CPRF together for more than a decade. As the rest of the paper will argue, while this did not prevent the crystallization of diverging narratives

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of the Soviet past, they were structured to minimize conflict and to maximize CPRF support among the electorate.

Orthodox Marxist–Leninist narratives

Orthodox Marxist–Leninist leaders represented the remnant of true believers in the Soviet system and were linked to groups that lost the most in the post-Soviet transition – the military, Communist intelligentsia, and heavy industry. These groups could not hope for a restoration of their status through anything short of restoring the Soviet status quo ante. The "orthodox" platform flowed out of this, and was supported by a developed historical narrative.

Firstly, orthodox discourse operated within the traditional Marxist–Leninist ideological framework. Above all else, this meant an emphasis on class as the primary analytical tool and a commitment to traditional Soviet dogmas (Hashim 1999, 85; Levintova 2012, 732; March 2002, 57; Sakwa 1998, 139, 2002, 244). The everyday realities of the 1990s were used as the greatest argument for the continued relevance of Marxist–Leninism, as the restoration of capitalist relations was concomitant with impoverishment, social stratification, and an overwhelming feeling of powerlessness for many Russians. Yet, the idea was pressed further. By mobilizing Soviet history, orthodox members argued that the mindful and correct application of Marxist–Leninist doctrine correlated with the entire record of Soviet development. While the CPSU was from the start ideologically contaminated with Trotskyism and social-liberalism (Kosolapov 2001; Makashov and Prosvirinii 1999), where "true" socialist methodology and theory were applied, as under Stalin, the country achieved its best results: industrialization, victory in the Great Patriotic War, the creation of the socialist world system. However, after Stalin's death, the party's leadership lost its ideological purity and strategic vision, degenerating into populism, narrow-minded dogmatism, and Trotskyism (Iliukhin 1995, 17–19; Kosolapov 2000, 33–34, 2001). This resulted in weakened class consciousness and a distorted perception of Marxism–Leninism among the public (Kosolapov 2000, 480; Kosolapov et al. 1998). Soviet development lost its momentum and ultimately resulted in the events of 1991 (Kosolapov 1998; Kosolapov, in *Biulleten' Levogo informtsentra* 2000).

Secondly, orthodox members believed in the superiority of the Soviet system, advocating for its restoration in a basically unmodified form (Ishiyama 1997, 316, 1998, 76–77; Levintova 2012, 732; March 2002, 57, 2003, 177; Volokhov 2003, 90). In short, orthodox members subscribed to the basic Marxist–Leninist understanding that the shift to socialist relations of production is accompanied by a qualitative jump in productive potential, and a reorganization of politics allowing workers' control over their lives. This was understood as a teleological certainty: the October Revolution was a step forward in human development, while the restoration of capitalism was a step backward. Within this schema, orthodox narratives simply supplied comparisons between Russia under socialism and under the present capitalist regime, across a wide range of categories (economics, social justice, security, international standing, democracy, bureaucratic transparency, and national harmony). Makashov's laconic statement is illustrative of this crude argumentation: "never were the Russian armed forces as powerful as under the Soviet Union; well, what else do you need?" (Makashov 1997). *All* disparities between the idyllic Soviet past and current Russian realities were assigned to the systemic shift from socialism to capitalism (as opposed to, say, current policy errors, or the costs of transition, etc.). In an implicit recognition of the cherry-picked and dubious nature of the comparisons, orthodox Marxist–Leninists also constructed apologetic narratives in response to criticisms launched against the

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negative features of the Soviet regime (particularly the Stalinist period, ravaged by a string of revelations since *glasnost'*). Orthodox Marxist–Leninists countered with an array of rhetorical techniques: denial, instrumental justification (e.g. the Stalinist terror was necessary to rid the country of traitors, motivate rapid development, and win the war [Kosolapov 1998, 2001]); shifting blame (e.g. the murder of innocents was the doing of careerists, dilettantes, and fifth-columnists in the NKVD, whom Stalin duly punished [Kosolapov 1998, 2001]); counter-factual justification (no suitable alternatives existed); redirection (e.g. the Gulag is not so remarkable compared to the current number of prisoners in Russia or the USA [Iliukhin 1998a; Kosolapov 2001]); and *ad hominem* attacks against accusers (e.g. Khrushchev settled personal vendettas with his XX Congress speech [Kosolapov 1998, 2000, 22, 2001]). Indeed, it was largely *Stalinism*, "the best system of government" (Kosolapov 2001), that orthodox Marxist–Leninists proposed to restore, advocating for the planned, autarkic economy, "improved and humanized" purges (Kosolapov 2001), military power, and strong central government (preferably extending to former Soviet states).

In arguing that the Soviet Union was a superior system, orthodox Marxist–Leninists inadvertently provoked a difficult question – why did the system fall apart, if it was so potent, progressive, and popular? The answer to this conundrum was that the Soviet collapse was a result of the *subjective* actions of the topmost political leadership (both unintended and intentional), rather than *objective* reasons (Iliukhin 1995, 134; Luk'ianov 2001; Makashov 1997). Since Stalin's death, the ineffective, fatuous, and cowardly Soviet leaders allegedly committed grave errors in both economic and nationality policy. Through turning a blind eye to corruption, indigenizing republican leadership and increasing their power, and eventually embarking on perestroika, they created a "shadow national bourgeoisie" and then sat by idly as it took power (Bindiukov quoted in Safronchuk 2000; Iliukhin 1995, 17–19; Kosolapov 2000, 498, 518).

In doing so, Soviet leaders (particularly those stoking nationalism at the republican level) were driven by the desire for more power and personal property (Bindiukov 1999; Iliukhin 2004; Kosolapov and Khlebnikov 1999). Often, these ambitions bordered on *treasonous activity* in collusion with Western imperialist powers, who had always sought the elimination of their socialist competitor (Bindiukov 2004, 53–55; Kosolapov 1996, 2004, 384). Indeed, Western strategy had involved inserting a fifth column into the Soviet leadership and forging ties with Soviet shadow capital, top officials, the criminal underworld, and "agents of influence" (Bindiukov 2004, 218–219; Iliukhin 1995, 17–19; Kosolapov and Khlebnikov 1999).

This leader-centered narrative carried a dual purpose. It dispelled the idea that there were *systemic* reasons for collapse, thereby squaring the superiority and progressiveness of Soviet socialism with its sudden and total collapse. Yet, it also depicted the Soviet system as the *natural* and *legitimate* form of government, chosen and supported by the people, but wrested from them by a narrow group. Therefore, the people were framed as *victims*, who always believed in the Soviet system all along, and not as those who made the *choice* to do away with it. Thus, it was often underscored that the Union Treaty of 1991, the Belovezha Accords, the recognition of Baltic independence, and so on, were *illegal* acts on the part of the leadership – in contravention of the March 1991 referendum.

Given the fundamental incompatibility of orthodox goals with those of the ruling regime, the faction lobbied the CPRF to pursue an unequivocally confrontational stance toward the government, in both parliamentary and street politics (March 2002, 57, 78; Otto 1999, 42). They mobilized a number of historical parallels, of which the most important was the rhetorical linking of the ruling regime with the forces that destroyed the Soviet Union. Indeed, Orthodox Marxist–Leninists predicted a second round of national

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disintegration (Bindiukov 1998; Iliukhin 1998b). They thus put pressure on the CPRF leadership to abort the "growing into power" strategy and challenge the regime head-on. Drawing on pre-1917 Bolshevik experience, they argued for revolutionary radicalism, which had been an essential part of Communist identity (Avaliani, in *Kemerovskii oblastnoi komitet KPRF* 1998; CPRF 1998). Orthodox Marxist–Leninists reminded Communists that the CPSU had already been betrayed by its top echelon (Avaliani 1998; Avaliani, in *Kemerovskii oblastnoi komitet KPRF* 1998; Makashov 1998), and warned CPRF leaders to listen to the radical party masses.

Social democratic narratives

Social democrats also mobilized historical narratives to support their ideological program. Social democrat leaders were primarily mid-level party *managers* in Soviet times, and continued in this trajectory, enjoying close relationships with the powers-that-be: managing the CPRF's relationship with business sponsors and carrying out constructive work in the parliament and (in the case of Masliukov) government. Their jobs demanded compromise and the avoidance of strict dogmas.

It is therefore unsurprising that scholarship has noted an overwhelming pragmatism in social democratic ranks (March 2002, 103; Sakwa 1998, 139, 2002, 245; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 23; Volokhov 2003, 88–89). In contrast to orthodox Marxist–Leninists, social democrats were highly ambiguous in their assessment of the Soviet past, seeking to distance the CPRF from the worst features of the former regime, while capitalizing on the propaganda value of its achievements. Social democrats mercilessly criticized the CPSU's incurable dogmatism, which had restricted thought and decision-making, and resulted in political and economic stagnation (Kuptsov 1999, 2001b, 94; Mel'nikov 2000b). Openly rejecting the quest for ideological purity, social democrats instead stood for "creative Marxism" (Kuptsov 2001b, 165, 2003), which, not coincidentally, freed social democrats to act in ways at odds with Soviet traditions.

Indeed, the faction saw a return to the Soviet past as neither realistic (Mel'nikov 1995; Seleznev 2000) nor desirable, and stood for a quasi-social democratic platform. Specifically, they supported a mixed market economy (Ishiyama 1997, 316, 1998, 76–77; Levintova 2012, 732; March 2002, 57, 103; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 59). Rhetorically, this firstly involved demonstrating the problems of the uncontrolled market as it currently existed in Russia, in contrast to Soviet achievements. In fact, it was argued that what resulted from Soviet collapse and Yeltsin's reforms was quite apart from a *true* market economy, which still remained to be properly built (Masliukov 1999). Similar to orthodox Marxist–Leninists, social democrats highlighted the USSR's significantly higher levels of financing for education, scientific research, health care, social security, and culture, as well as its greater GDP (Masliukov 2000; Mel'nikov 2000a; Seleznev 2002). However, while noting these positive features, social democrats were unceremonious in criticizing the Soviet command system as a whole. While initially useful, the plan progressively stifled individual initiative and creativity (Kuptsov 2001b, 95; Masliukov 1996; Seleznev, Tsoi, and Frants 2000, 28–32), labor remained alienated (Kuptsov 2001b, 93), efficiency dwindled (Seleznev, Tsoi, and Frants 2000, 37–40), and management techniques stagnated (Seleznev, Tsoi, and Frants 2000, 43). Thus, Masliukov reassured the public: in the case of CPRF electoral victory, "there will be no fixed pricing, shortages, empty shelves, no queues, ration tickets and cards … no confiscation and nationalization of private property" (Masliukov quoted in RIA 1996).

Social democrats' support for democracy entailed rolling back the power of the state (through decentralization, independent media and judiciary, support for parties) and

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defense of basic rights and freedoms (Levintova 2012, 732; March 2002, 56–57; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 59). This was supported by a rhetorical model similar to their defense of a mixed economy. On the one hand, social democrats denounced post-Soviet Russian governance as retaining the worst features of the Soviet regime. The new regime was criticized for *failing* to break with the past; indeed, "the old monopolism was replaced by a new one – more aggressive, impatient, and corrupt" (Mel'nikov quoted in *Pravda Rossii* 1998). On the other hand, social democrats were equally critical of Soviet governance. Supplanting the division of powers and rule of law with "revolutionary expedience" resulted in arbitrariness and created the preconditions for the Red Terror, Stalinist show trials, and hounding of dissidents; it was only from the mid-1980s that legality "started to become the main regulator of social interactions" (Seleznev 1997, 50–52). From the beginning, the Soviets were placed under strict party control and never "developed as a true form of workers' power" (Kuptsov 2001b, 94; Seleznev 1997, 50, 2001). The nexus of power shifted to the nomenklatura, which lost touch with the people and failed to protect their interests (Kuptsov 2001b, 93–94; Seleznev 1996).

Nonetheless, the social democrats' platform was modeled in part on preserving the best features of the past, especially "collectivism, brotherly help, social security for workers, and democracy" (Kuptsov 2001b, 164–165). Here, they looked especially to the example of pre-revolutionary Bolsheviks, who allegedly supported civil society (Kuptsov 2001a), and their involvement in the Duma (Seleznev 2001). Nonetheless, Soviet forms of governance were not to be resurrected. Thus, social democrats' use of memory was significantly less complex than the multifaceted narrative of orthodox Marxist–Leninists. Historical allusions were employed in promising the best of the Soviet experience and in distancing social democrats from the crimes and problems of the Soviet past.

Nationalist narratives

CPRF "nationalists" utilized an elaborate set of historical narratives to support their program. In a bargain to reinvent Communism for the public, they aimed to harness the mobilizing potential of nationalist rhetoric. The faction's theoretical foundation was the so-called "Russian idea," which posited the "natural" features of Russian-ness, such as collectivism, messianism, spirituality, and so on as the basis for political normativity (Devlin 1999, 164–168; Flikke 1999, 275, 289–290; Hashim 1999, 84; Ishiyama 1996, 168; Kholmskaia 1998, 569; Levintova 2012, 732; Sakwa 1998, 140; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 76). This was implicitly posited as a substitute for Marxist doctrine, which "being a foreign importation, turned out to be in several ways inapplicable to Russia, and, moreover, is now outdated" (Belov quoted in Arsen'ev 1997). Thus, nationalists engaged in a general polemic *against* Marxist theory, arguing that its concepts cannot adequately explain history, including Soviet history; patriotism, not class, was the driving force of historical development (Belov 1996a, 1997; Ziuganov 1998d). They also argued that Soviet ideology and the Soviet leadership never fully espoused Marxism in the first place, so the nationalist wing of the CPRF was not advancing anything revisionist or controversial (Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 52, 59; Ziuganov 1998d). The nationalist project, therefore, depended on demonstrating that Soviet history encapsulated the "Russian idea:" a set of natural, time-honored Russian political practices/institutions that included, but were not limited to, class justice/equality in the Marxist sense.

Bolshevism was victorious in Russia because it expressed the "Russian idea" – it promoted collectivism (in line with *obshchina* psychology and traditions), social justice, and a strong Union (Belov 2000b; Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 52; Ziuganov 1998b, 13–14).

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Stalin was the ultimate champion of a nationally oriented Marxism, promoting state patriotism (Belov 1999d, 2003a; Ziuganov 2002c), traditional family values (Belov 2003a), rapprochement with the Orthodox Church (Belov 1999c; Ziuganov 1996c, 36, 1999c), self-sufficiency, military security, and strong leadership (Belov 1999c, 1999d; Shabanov, Sokolov, and Sivkov 1997, 172–173).[11]

The answer to how and why the Soviet Union ultimately derailed from the "Russian idea," degenerated, and ultimately collapsed, was provided by the nationalists' so-called "two parties" narrative. Unlike the largely unrepentant orthodox Marxist–Leninists, CPRF nationalists recognized the unpalatability of several facets of the Soviet experience, more in line with social democrats. Nonetheless, the "two parties" narrative rhetorically mirrored orthodox Marxist–Leninist explanations. Certain CPSU leaders were blamed for aberrations from the "Russian idea," usually for morally suspect reasons. Allegedly, they formed a "party within a party" of sorts, standing in contrast to and in conflict with the "patriotic" wing.

For instance, we learn that the vulgar class approach (manifested by Trotsky) led to "barracks socialism;" various "cruelties," including anti-Cossack campaigns, Civil War concentration camps, hostage executions, and planned starvation; anti-religious and class repression; and the Gulag (Belov 1996b, 1997; Ziuganov 1994, 18–19, 1999c). More prominent, however, was the discourse explaining the "other party" through moral lenses. In the nationalist view, Soviet achievements resulted not from discrete policies, but because these policies unlocked Russians' *patriotic spirituality* – the true wellspring of success (Ziuganov 2000b, 2000c). Conversely, Soviet decline was the consequence of declining spirituality, immorality, and "godlessness" (quoted in Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 53–54; Peshkov et al. 1998, 7–8). This moral lens colored nationalist attacks on their (historical) opponents: Trotsky, Khrushchev, and particularly the "renegades … foreign agents, dissidents, parts of the denationalized intelligentsia" "artists, demagogues, intriguers, careerists, and those refusing to serve the Fatherland" who were the democratic reformers of *perestroika* (Belov 1999c, 2000b; Ziuganov 1995a, 35–36). The later had a "maniacal desire for power" (Ziuganov 1995a, 35–36), were greedy (Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 4–5; Belov 1996b, 2000b), duplicitous (Belov 2004; Peshkov et al. 1998, 26; Ziuganov 1996c, 11), and Russophobic (Belov 2001a). The "two parties" narrative, moreover, was often overlaid with anti-Semitism, where the "other party" was depicted as largely Jewish.[12]

The "two parties" narrative carried out a number of functions. Firstly, it rescued the image of iconic leaders of the nationalist camp (specifically, Lenin and Stalin). Secondly, while assenting to popular grievances against the Communists, it eliminated any corporate responsibility that party members had. The anti-Semitic narrative, furthermore, pointed to national identity as a site of conflict, and the salience of spiritual resources (i.e. the "Russian idea"). It also legitimated a discourse of national liberation – if only Russians could throw off the yoke of Jews/traitors to the West, then Russia would revert to its "natural" form of government, socialism.

A number of concrete policy preferences flowed out of the "Russian idea," in which statism as the guarantor of Russian development was arguably the most central (Devlin 1999, 168; Flikke 1999, 289; Kholmskaia 1998, 569; March 2002, 56; Sakwa 1998, 140; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 23, 76). Nationalists aimed to recreate several features of Soviet statehood: a strong, centralized executive, extensive military power, and international prestige. The Soviet federative model, however, was criticized for laying the basis for secession (Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 34; Ziuganov 1996b, 1998a) and subjecting Russians to reverse discrimination (Ziuganov 1998a, 2002c). What Stalin correctly understood – and what had to be restored – was the special position given to Russians as the

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main link in a strong centralized state (Belov 1999b, 1999d; Ziuganov 2001a). Nationalist discourse *did* refer to other facets of the Soviet experience for emulation: achievements in education, science, technology, culture, and economy. Yet, in all of these spheres, the measurement criterion for success was national *prestige*: Soviet performance vis-à-vis the world, and the world's recognition of Soviet superiority. Taken together, the underlying thrust of the statist vision was that socialism was not a goal, but a facilitator of state development.

Secondly, nationalist focus on geopolitics set up Russia as a supra-national, pan-Slavic center for counter-balancing and containing the West (Devlin 1999, 164–168; Flikke 1999, 291; Levintova 2012, 732; March 2002, 111–113; Sakwa 1998, 139–140; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 99–103). This hinged on the belief in a timeless geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West. The West had meddled in Russia from the very beginning of the Soviet period: fomenting revolution against the tsar (Ziuganov 2002a, 118), launching an intervention against the Bolsheviks to dismember Russia under the guise of Wilson's Fourteen Points (Belov 1999d; Ziuganov 2000d, 248, 2002a, 119–120). World War II represented yet another instance of Western aggression on Russia as a geopolitical formation (not, as in orthodox Marxist–Leninist accounts, because of its socialist system) (Belov 1996b, 1996c; Ziuganov 1995a, 23). In the Cold War, the West carried out an ideological attack, a "psychological, informational, and intellectual war" on the Soviet Union, in the hope of destroying it from within (Belov 1996a; Shabanov, Sokolov, and Sivkov 1997, 278), which together with the recruitment of a fifth column within the Soviet elite, ultimately prevailed. Historical narratives thereby supported nationalists' platform of Russian rearmament and a strong foreign policy, in the face of a timeless Western threat. Secondly, the narrative offered an explanation for the fall of the Soviet Union, which shifted blame farther from the Communist camp. Thirdly, the narrative confronted Communism's unpopularity as a fait accompli, but trivialized it as a result of Western ideological mystification.

Nationalists were pragmatic in their support for a mixed economy (Flikke 1999; Ishiyama 1996, 168, 1997, 316; March 2002, 56, 2003, 178; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 59). As in social democratic narratives, it was frankly admitted that return to the old style of economy was neither possible nor desirable (criticism of the Soviet economy did not, however, prevent nationalists' frequent comparisons of Soviet abundance to Russia's current conditions) (Ziuganov 1998c). While social democrats had no qualms about openly criticizing the Soviet policies as mistaken and breaking with past dogmas, nationalists expended great effort to show that the command economy *was* appropriate at the time, although it was now outdated. Moreover, nationalists engaged in interpretive acrobatics to show that a mixed economy would be ideologically unproblematic from the Communist standpoint, specifically pointing to the precedent of Lenin's New Economic Policy (Belov 2000a; Ziuganov 2004).

Finally, nationalists stood for compromise and collaboration with the regime, and cross-class alliances (Devlin 1999, 161; Flikke 1999, 289–292; Hashim 1999, 84; Kholmskaia 1998, 570; March 2003, 178; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 76). Nationalist disavowal of violent means, and political confrontation in general, can be summed up in Ziuganov's oft-quoted statement that "Russia has exhausted its capacity for revolutions" (1996a, 54–55). Pre-empting accusations of weakness and corruption, nationalist strategy was twofold. On the one hand, their rhetoric criticizing the government rose to a vitriolic pitch. In this respect, historical comparisons were mobilized to smear government policy and officials, usually with accusations of fascism. On the other hand, nationalists welcomed anyone acting in the national interest, however loosely defined. Openness to compromise

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was grounded in Ziuganov's calls to reunite the "red" ideal of social justice with "white" ideal of love for the Fatherland (1994, 40, 1995b, 272). Allegedly, the two principles became disastrously uncoupled during the Civil War (Ziuganov 1994, 18; 2000d, 311, 2002c), and it was only under Stalin that a (brief) rapprochement was reached – immediately increasing unity and state power (Belov 1999d, 2003a; Ziuganov 2000d, 247). At the same time, class conflict – traditionally so central to Marxist analysis and political action – was markedly de-emphasized. The October Revolution was deliberately emptied of its revolutionary content, and Lenin's "realism" was accented (Belov 1999d; Ziuganov 1997, 259, 2000d, 314–315). Thus, memory was mobilized to smooth out incongruences between former Communist self-representations and the collaborationist stance of CPRF nationalists, and to provide a normative justification for this policy.

Minimizing conflict, maximizing appeal

The dominant scholarly understanding holds that historical narratives function to support given political ideologies/programs, mobilizing memory against competing ideologies/programs in the conflict-ridden, antagonistic political sphere. As demonstrated above, orthodox Marxist–Leninist, social democratic, and nationalist narratives were indeed substantially different, supporting the factions' ideological viewpoints. However, due to various strategic considerations, open factional confrontation was undesirable, as it threatened to jeopardize party unity and render party-public communication incoherent. As I will show, historical narratives were structured in a way that *minimized* conflict among them, and *maximized* the appeal of the CPRF to wider audiences.

Firstly, despite diverse political programs, all factions exhibited a common conservative approach, which several scholars have pointed to as the main unifying force in the party (Cherniakhovskii 2003; March 2003, 276; Sakwa 1998, 142–144). All factional discourses valorized memory as such, endorsing the idea that the "good" features of the Soviet past must be respected and retained in Russia's development, while overcoming the "bad" through reforms.[13] As the previous discussion has shown, what was seen as "good" or "bad" differed significantly among factions. However, from the standpoint of the subject, the particular intricacies of historical assessments – and their ideological implications – were rather secondary to the conservative stance itself. Thus, for instance, all factional discourses held up the Soviet Union's transformation from a rural backwater into an industrial superpower, in (implicit and explicit) comparison to Russia's industrial crisis. What was secondary was the specific assessment of the *means* of Soviet industrialization. Was full nationalization of the economy necessary? Was the credit for successful industrialization due to Stalin? Were the policies used to achieve industrialization now outdated, or could they be reapplied? Did the Stalinist mode of industrialization plant a structural time bomb in the Soviet economy? These were far-removed, almost scholastic questions, answers to which were in the details. However, the primary feature of CPRF discourses – the promise to preserve the "good" features of the Soviet Union – stood in stark contrast to the regime's attempt to bury the entire Soviet experience.

Secondly, a key feature minimizing friction was the orientation of factional narratives not against one another, but against a shared enemy – the Yeltsin/early Putin regime, and its Western supporters. Broadly speaking, this aggressive stance grew out of common CPRF understandings of memory politics in the final years of the Soviet Union. All factions held that the Soviet collapse was at least partially an outcome of ideological warfare/propaganda/psychological attacks on Soviet citizens, of which "blackening" and rewriting of history was a key feature (March 2002, 53). Specifically, they pointed to perestroika's defamation

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of the entire Soviet experience (Belov 1996a; Ziuganov 1997, 263–264), whipping up of minority secessionism through historical revisionism (Iliukhin 1995, 128–129; Ziuganov 1997, 263–264), shaking the regime's ideological foundations (Belov 1998a, 1999a), and sowing "social disorientation and paralysis of attentiveness" in the Soviet people (Kosolapov and Khlebnikov 1999). It was this confusion that facilitated the collapse of the Soviet Union, socialism, and Communist Party rule.

In CPRF views, the campaign against Soviet history did not stop there, but was taken up by the new ruling regime. It used references to the Gulag, goods shortages, and so on, as well as accusations of Soviet herd mentality to continue to discredit the CPRF, its supporters, and the socialist option (Bindiukov and Lopata 1999, 78; Kosolapov 1998; Ziuganov 2003a). The regime also attacked the Soviet past to distract attention from its own inadequacies and crimes (Kuptsov 2001b, 156; Kosolapov 1998), and to clear the way for foreign values and development models (Belov 1998a; Kosolapov 1997, 2000, 531). The West was seen as an important party in this crusade against "proper" memory, both in the 1980s and currently. Russian history textbooks financed and published by the Western philanthropic Open Society Foundation were often cited as evidence of Western pressure on Russian collective memory (Bindiukov and Lopata 1999, 87; Luk'ianov 1999, 268; Ziuganov 1996c, 36). These were said to glorify the USA and American globalization by sidelining Russia's national history, minimizing the Soviet contribution to victory in World War II, and depicting Russian history as a series of totalitarian regimes (Belov 1998b, 2001b, 2003b). Thus, all factional narratives were framed in opposition to the "enemy" narratives of the Russian regime and the West, not in conflict (or even dialogue) with one another.

Thirdly, suffering from lack of clarity, historical narratives were structured in a way that masked inconsistencies among factions. For instance, Ziuganov talked about various "internal, external, objective, and subjective factors" that led to the Soviet collapse (Ziuganov 1996c, 10). I found no consistency either within Ziuganov's writing, or among other nationalists, on what these major and minor causes were (although general trends could be deduced, as shown above). As it stood, any causal dynamic proposed by a given faction could be relegated to secondary status in another's narrative. This meant that there were no contradictions per se, only differences in emphasis.

The use of conspiracy theories gave history an aura of nebulousness and inscrutability. It suspended expectations of the "reasonable," allowing any conjectures to take off with significantly reduced standards of evidence. Any apparent contradiction among factional narratives could be "explained away" in a much easier way; misfits, and the lack of any immediate explanation, were already proof that "something was up." Thus, the lack of clarity in the factional narratives worked to significantly reduce conflict among them.

Fourthly, the development of historical narratives by various factions was not institutionally coordinated. The CPRF never attempted to centrally manage or otherwise reconcile the various narratives (Peshkov 2014). On first glance, this may appear to have left unchecked the potentially destabilizing and contradictory distance among factional narratives. While this is true, to an extent, the previous discussion has shown that this was not as problematic as one may have expected. What a non-interference policy *did* prevent, however, was the crystallization of historical memory as a divisive and hyper-politicized issue within the party, a site of endless polemics, political machinations, and so on. Memory was thus turned into a non-issue from the united-party standpoint; factions were free to resort to memory as they wished but would not directly attempt to influence the party line on history. The party itself stayed away from explicit historic pronouncements (in its united statements), but when it did not, as with ideology, they "reflect[ed] the

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complex intra-party ideational and political balance, of which any sudden and serious disturbance could potentially provoke a serious conflict, if not a split, within the party" (Urban and Solovei 1997a, 25).

Fifthly, factions shared a common memory hardware. Alexander Etkind has conceptualized collective memory as consisting of software and hardware. In this perspective, software (i.e. school curricula, media discourses, inscriptions, etc.) is "anchored by [hardware such as] monuments, memorials, and museums" (Etkind 2004, 40). While hardware does not *produce* collective memory itself, being ephemeral without the interpretive power of software, it does exercise constraints over the way memory is presented, and is therefore a consensus-building force.

Unlike Russian society in general (which Etkind characterized as generally lacking in hardware), the CPRF *did* possess hardware, specifically, that was left over from Soviet times. The party sacralized several Soviet monuments, urban spaces, and symbolic cities, by giving speeches from these sites (Makashov, for instance, campaigned under the Lenin monument in Ekaterinburg [Politicheskie Partii 2000]), holding demonstrations in these spaces (e.g. November 7 and May Day rallies on Red Square), and launching initiatives in symbolic locations (handing out party membership cards, and launching a "public accountability" campaign by the Mamaev Mound in the former Stalingrad [Ziuganov 2000a, 2002b]).

Factions also exhibited unity in the defense of Soviet hardware. Thus, for instance, all leaders opposed the initiative to remove Lenin from the Mausoleum (although on different grounds). Hardware was also defended from other "users." For instance, CPRF leaders protested rock concerts being held on Red Square (Iliukhin, in *Biulleten' Levogo Informtsentra* 1998; Seleznev 1999; Ziuganov 1999b). Thus, while hardware failed to "anchor" memory to a united perspective (as Etkind would expect it to do), its common use and defense nonetheless sent a strong *visual* signal to the public, reinforcing the *appearance* of a party united in its attitude toward the past, and thus minimizing the *perception* of inter-factional conflict.

I would now like to turn to the way in which factions maximized appeal among the electorate. In this respect, scholarship has already contributed a general insight into CPRF factional discourses – that the party was characterized by "division of labor," several "faces," and a "catch-all" electoral strategy (Flikke 1999; Ishiyama 1997, 316, 1999, 107; March 2002, 67). Effectively, this meant that the party channeled different discourses toward various groups in order to widen its appeal. For instance, it spoke in a radical language to its committed, traditionalist membership base, but presented itself as a party of "responsible government" to the wider public, the regime, and foreign partners (March 2001, 269–271; Pluzhnikov and Shevchenko 2008, 113–117).

Audience-differentiation of memory discourse happened on a number of levels. On the factional level, for instance, social democrats were more likely to be engaged with youth. Seleznev headed the *Rossiia* social movement with a large youth presence, while Mel'nikov was the CPRF secretary on youth relations. Their critical (and, from the perspective of orthodox Marxist–Leninists, perhaps iconoclastic) attitude spoke to youthful rebelliousness and reinforced the image of a hip, modernized CPRF – an image that was *not* presented to the party's older supporters. On the level of individual leaders within a given faction, one can also trace a differentiated approach. For instance, within the nationalist camp, Ziuganov was much more constrained as a party leader and could not afford to make radical statements. His nationalist rhetoric was (somewhat) more restrained, his books/articles had academic pretensions (including references to Western thinkers) (Devlin 1999, 170; Sakwa 1998, 140, 2002, 245–246). By contrast, nationalists Belov and Shabanov, who wrote for narrower party audiences, dabbled in anti-Semitic narratives of Soviet history, appealing

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to fringe groups without risking a controversial media storm for the party. Memory discourse also varied according to the context a leader operated in. Thus, for instance, Seleznev's (1997) academic treatise on constitutional law directly challenged Soviet legal nihilism. When speaking in his capacity of chairman of the Duma, however, his comments rarely made any reference to Soviet history. Finally, when in the capacity of leader of the *Rossiia* social movement, Seleznev clearly demonstrated the desire to capitalize on memory, for instance, in handing out commemorative "60 Years of Victory" medals to veterans, three years before the anniversary itself (Demidenko, Sigida, and Chernega 2002). Thus, we see that different historical narratives, each presented to specific audiences, potentially increased overall CPRF appeal.

Multiple factional narratives also allowed the party to appeal to individuals on different levels of authority. In an almost uncanny way, the narrative styles of orthodox Marxist–Leninists, social democrats, and nationalists line up with the three Weberian ideal types of authoritative discourse. Traditional authority "rest[s] on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them" (Weber 2013, 215). This characterizes well the rhetorical style of orthodox Marxist–Leninists narratives. Aside from retaining the Soviet interpretations of history, orthodox discourse replicated well-worn Soviet dogmas, terminology, slogans, and so on, the recital and repetition of which were as important as the specific arguments made. A similar devotion was exhibited in keeping Soviet ideology pure. Any revisions would "[place] doubt on the fundamental truth of the teaching … on which the CPRF is based on" and were therefore *a priori* unacceptable (Kosolapov 2000, 480). Calling for *loyalty* to traditional, time-honored institutions and rulers required presenting the CPRF as an unreconstructed CPSU and showing that the timeless Soviet ideology and institutions indeed remained timeless, and could be restored once again to their traditional spheres.

By contrast, rational authority, "rest[s] on a belief in the legality of enacted rules," which are normally established "on the grounds of expediency or value-rationality," and have a strong "utilitarian tendency" (Weber 2013, 215–217, 226). Rational authority valorizes "technical qualifications" and "specialized knowledge" (Weber 2013, 221, 225). Similarly, social democratic discourse largely appealed on the basis of technocratic/pragmatic argumentation. This was reflected in their critical, de-ideologized stance toward the Soviet past, the dogmas and precedents of which were not to hold back current policy. Only the institutions and practices that really did work in the Soviet Union were to be copied; most was to be disregarded, as in any case Western social democracy *worked better* and was more up-to-date. Social democratic leaders tended to come from administrative/managerial backgrounds and continued in these capacities through Duma committee work and ministerial appointments. This bolstered their claim to "expert" status and technocratic impartiality, furthering their public appeal on the level of *rational authority*.

Charismatic authority, finally, "rest[s] on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person, of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber 2013, 215). That Ziuganov and his nationalist clique did not fit this typology, perhaps despite their aspirations, is evident. However, the emotional appeal that characterizes the charismatic leader's "maniac passion" can be seen clearly, as can the subject's acceptance of charismatic authority due to "enthusiasm … despair and hope" (Weber 2013, 242). Indeed, CPRF nationalists appealed, in large part, on the level of *emotion*. Nationalist memory discourse exploited romantic themes of courage, glory, tragedy, doom, selfless love, cruelty, hatred, and so on. If orthodox Marxist–Leninists utilized the whole spectrum of Soviet language, dogmas, and rituals, nationalists recognized

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that most were dead and called upon only the most emotive ones. Unsurprisingly, national symbols featured overwhelmingly: World War II national-liberation slogans, the red banner of victory, and so on (Ziuganov, in *Biulleten' Levogo Informtsentra* 2000; Ziuganov 1999a, 2000e). Secondly, the dominant rhetorical framework was of a Manichean struggle of good against evil (Russia vs. West/Zionism/cosmopolitanism, patriots vs. traitors, Communists vs. fascists, etc.) (March 2002, 75). This discourse was often overlaid with quasi-religious rhetoric. Nationalists spoke of the "commandments of Great October" (Ziuganov, in Monitor Polit.Ru 1999), the "spirit of victory" (Ziuganov 2003b), and the "struggle of spirituality against godlessness" (Shabanov and Terekhov 1994, 53), and even *prayed* for "the souls of the departed" Soviet leaders (Ziuganov 2001b). Gorbachev's destruction of Soviet statehood was compared to Jesus's condemnation by the Sanhedrin; but Communism, like Jesus, would rise again (Shabanov, Sokolov, and Sivkov 1997, 91). Finally, nationalists also played on existential insecurity by holding *personal meaning* hostage to continued faith in the Soviet past: if the Soviet experience was as awful as some suggested, then the whole Soviet experience was meaningless, taunted Belov (1996c). Thus, orthodox Marxist–Leninists, social democrats, and nationalists appealed to the electorate on different levels of authority. Not only would this reach wider demographics, it would also be more powerful at interpellating the subject, having them accept the party on all the levels of their psyche, at all times, moods, and contexts.

Conclusion

Aside from filling the empirical gaps, this paper challenged the assumption that differing memory narratives are necessarily antagonistic/conflictual. I demonstrated that subordinated to the need for inter-factional unity, divergent CPRF narratives were structured in a way that *minimized* conflict. Furthermore, being targeted at various audiences, and appealing on several levels of authority, they *maximized* public appeal, facilitating the party's "catch-all" electoral strategy.

If different narratives of the past may work as instruments for political cooperation, not confrontation, the greatest implication is that memory is an even *more* powerful political tool than previously imagined. Aside from carrying out an ideological "attack" on other positions, memory can be used to build *hegemony*. That is, memory has a capacity for building complex political alliances that, by combining diverse ideologies and interests and subsuming them under a common goal, attain the capacity for dominating divided societies.

By 2004, the CPRF had split; this solidified the nationalist leadership's hold over the party, and factional differences effectively disappeared, as did the dynamic described in this paper. At the same time, the reader may have noticed that narrative strands presented above have by no means vanished from the Russian political scene (and their genealogical roots can probably be traced to the CPRF). When considering the multiple historical narratives circulating in Russian society today, it also may be rewarding to investigate whether they too undergird a complex *hegemonic* system, rather than supporting respective political actors.

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Notes

1. Scholarship is schematized according to this binary in Buldakov (2003, 11), Kalinin (2013, 259), and Kelly (2014).
2. The fixation on the Russian state is, to an extent, understandable. The leadership's toughening stance in domestic and international politics has been accompanied by an offensive in the politics of memory. The state has progressively tightened access to the archives (Adler 2001, 299–300; Etkind 2004, 56; Khazanov 2008, 305) and placed pressure on alternative historical viewpoints. Scholars have worriedly referred to the "Presidential Commission to Oppose Attempts at the Falsification of History" (active 2009–2012) (Benn 2011, 710; Kalinin 2013, 262; Linan 2010, 169; Morozov 2009, 2; Torbakov 2011, 210). These dynamics have been coupled with the state's larger financial capacity for the building of museums, monuments, and so on and legal prerogative for creating education curriculum in schools (Adler 2005, 1001; Etkind 2004, 56).
3. Notable exceptions to the state-centrism implicit in the literature are a handful of studies that examine the "Memorial" society and the Orthodox Church. A few works mention in passing the CPRF's stance on and role in Russian collective memory (Forest and Johnson 2002; Smith 2002; Shlapentokh and Bondartsova 2009; Slater 2004). However, even in these studies, the party is treated as monolithic, and there is an undue emphasis on the specific views of its First Secretary Gennadii Ziuganov (which are not shared by the majority of party members).
4. In presidential and parliamentary elections since 1994, the CPRF consistently placed second. By the end of the 1990s, the party was in the process of (partially) diversifying its electorate and membership, and it appeared that the CPRF would remain a part of the Russian political landscape (as it has, however limitedly).
5. Since the XXVIII CPSU Congress, these had even been formalized as "platforms" (Urban and Solovei 1997b, 11–29).
6. Among several explicitly subscribing to this typology (under identical or similar labels), see Devlin (1999, 161–170), Kholmskaia (1998, 565–569), Levintova (2012), and Sakwa (1998, 38–42, 2002, 244–247). A slightly different approach has been advanced by March (2001, 2002, 2003). While assenting to Urban and Solovei's arguments, March contended that the more important cleavage in the party was the difference between party "radicals" and "moderates." However, the distance between the two positions is not great. Firstly, March himself noted that "radicals" tended to support "orthodox Marxist–Leninist" ideology and "moderates" to embody the "nationalist" and "social democratic" tendencies (March 2002, 55–56). Thus, a three-way cleavage is merely simplified to a binary in March's work. Secondly, the different schema are largely an outcome of the analytical emphasis accorded either to concrete stances on political issues (March) or to abstract ideological worldviews (Urban and Solovei). Because this paper focuses on ideology, it is justified in using the more nuanced typology advanced by Urban and Solovei.
7. In doing so, I subscribe to the prevailing functionalist paradigm: in the final analysis, I assume that collective memory functions in support of a given ideological worldview.
8. Representatives of the "orthodox Marxist–Leninist" trend were *Anatolii Luk'ianov* (Devlin 1999, 161; Ishiyama 1997, 317; Levintova 2012, 742; March 2002, 57; Sakwa 1998, 139, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 24; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169), *Richard Kosolapov* (Hashim 1999, 85; March 2002, 37, 57; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 59; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169), *Nikolai Bindiukov* (March 2002, 57; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 154, 187), *Al'bert Makashov* (Devlin 1999, 161; March 2002, 37, 58; Sakwa 1998, 142; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169), *Viktor Iliukhin* (Ishiyama 1997, 317; March 2002, 58, 238; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169; Volokhov 2003, 90), and *Teimuraz Avaliani* (Hashim 1999, 85; Kholmskaia 1998, 565; March 2002, 58; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169).

   "Social democratic" representatives included *Valentin Kuptsov* (Devlin 1999, 161; Kholmskaia 1998, 565; March 2002, 35, 56; Sakwa 1998, 139; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 55, 59; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169), *Gennadii Seleznev* (Devlin 1999, 161;

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Kholmskaia 1998, 565; March 2002, 56, 238; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 24; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169; Volokhov 2003, 89), *Ivan Mel'nikov* (March 2002, 56; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 24), and *Iurii Masliukov* (Devlin 1999, 161; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban 2000, 15; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169).

"Nationalists" included *Gennadii Ziuganov* (Devlin 1999, 161; Flikke 1999, 277–278; Ishiyama 1996, 151; Kholmskaia 1998, 565; March 2002, 35, 56; Sakwa 2002, 245; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 55), *Iurii Belov* (Kholmskaia 1998, 565; March 2002, 56; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997b, 55), *Aleksandr Shabanov* (March 2002, 56; Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 24), and *Viktor Peshkov* (Sakwa 1998, 142; Urban and Solovei 1997a, 24; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 169).

9. One can assume that CPRF leaders were also "heard" by the Russian public. As a perusal of my bibliography demonstrates, many sources came from the pages of central newspapers (especially *Pravda* and *Sovetskaiia Rossiia*, whose circulation in the 1990s numbered up to half-million each [Petrova 2010, 71–73]) and major radio stations (such as *Ekho Moskvy*). As previously stated, the CPRF also had a developed network of regional press, which republished important statements.
10. The Soviet political culture of passivity and subordination to leadership also rendered open challenges to authority (and especially splits) very unlikely (Sakwa 2002, 260; Tarasov, Cherkasov, and Shavshukova 1997, 170).
11. In their reverence for Stalin, nationalists bore some resemblance to orthodox Marxist–Leninists. Unlike the latter, however, they saw the Stalin regime as embodying *national* traits, not the strictures of Marxism–Leninism.
12. "Zionists" were blamed for the purges, the Gulag, the anti-religious campaigns, corruption, and even the Nazi invasion of the USSR (Belov 1997, 1999b; Shabanov and Terekhov 1994; Shabanov, Sokolov, and Sivkov 1997).
13. Even the social democratic faction, with its rhetorical emphasis on reform, pragmatism, and re-updating, was careful to keep one foot in the past. They emphasized that their revisions were of a technical nature, as they were not abandoning Soviet *values*. Illustratively, the reform effort itself was justified by appealing to "creative Marxism," itself a well-worn Soviet concept.

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