

Will Glazyev Lead Russia Out of Crisis?

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

As the parliamentary elections, due to be held at the end of 2003, loom larger on the horizon, to be followed by Presidential elections in 2004, the political scene in Russia has become more and more lively. Attention is focussed especially on the future of the “opposition forces” centered on the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), which is still by far the largest single political organization in the country.

In the recent period, attempts have been made to build a much broader political movement, integrating not only the “left” forces of the CPRF, the Agrarian Party, etc.; but also increasingly politically active sections of the Russian Orthodox Church, scientists and intellectuals, major sections of the military and security forces, industrialists, and regional leaders, who regard themselves simply as patriots and defenders of Russia as a nation, but who do not necessarily share the Marxist or other traditional left “ideology.” In the effort to organize these latter forces, the Popular Patriotic Union of Russia—(Narodno-Patriotichesky Soyuz Rossii, NPSR), formed in 1996 and currently allied with the CPRF—is destined to take on a reinvigorated and expanded role. Given the mood in the Russian population, an alliance around the CPRF-NPSR could potentially win an overwhelming victory in the parliamentary elections, transforming the political geometry.

Rising more and more to a position of national leadership, in this context, is Sergei Glazyev. The brilliant 41-year-old economist and Duma Deputy once served as Minister of Foreign Economic Relations (1992-1993) under Boris Yeltsin; later as a key adviser to the late Gen. Alexander Lebed at the Russian National Security Council (1996); and until last Spring as Chairman of the Duma Commission for Economic and Business Policy. Glazyev, who is not a member of the Communist Party but was elected as part of the CPRF slate, is the best known and most outspoken critic of the neo-liberal “reform” policies of Gaidar, Chubais, and the present Kasyanov government. His book on the destruction of Russia’s economy under these policies, *Genocide: Russia and the New World Order*, was published in 1998 and brought out in English by *EIR* the following year.

Leader Emerged From Apparent Defeat

While favoring the development of private enterprise in Russia, Glazyev insists on the urgent need for large-scale state-directed investments into the productive base of the

economy. He emphasizes infrastructure and the so-called “science-intensive” areas of industry, reorganization of the banking and credit system, protectionist and related measures to defend and mobilize the national economy. In June 2000, Glazyev, who has studied and discussed the work of Lyndon LaRouche and his collaborators for many years, invited LaRouche to Moscow to address a special Duma hearing on the crisis of the global financial system.

Over the last half year, Glazyev’s prominence on the Russian political scene has grown dramatically. From merely a well-known economist and outspoken parliamentary voice, Glazyev has come to be regarded as an emerging national leader, with the potential to become Prime Minister or even President of the country.

This process began, ironically, with an apparent defeat, when Glazyev was removed from his post as Chairman of the Duma Economics Committee in May, as part of an overall “coup” against opponents of the government’s “free trade” economic policy in the Duma committees. This followed President Vladimir Putin’s annual address to the nation, which was extremely weak on economics and widely read as a signal that Putin would do nothing to change the basic direction of economic policy.

The speech was a stunning disappointment to those who had earlier seen signs that the President was seriously considering a shift in policy, along the lines proposed by Glazyev. Indeed, Putin had, not long before that, met with Glazyev and his mentor, Academician Dmitri Lvov. Putin had commissioned, via his newly founded State Council, the drafting of an alternative economic program, the Ishayev Report, of which Glazyev was one of the principal authors (see *EIR*, March 2, 2001).

Following the May “coup” against him in the Duma, Glazyev issued a programmatic political statement, published in the Russian military-connected intelligence weekly *Zavtra*, declaring that “nothing positive can be expected from the President,” given his current policy orientation and weakness in the face of the so-called oligarchs.

Glazyev proposed launching an all-out mobilization of “patriotic forces” in Russia to build up an independent political force in the country, able to force a change in policy. He emphasized the necessity, given the totally deadlocked situation in Moscow, of shifting the emphasis of political organizing “into the regions” of Russia. In June, he personally spearheaded that mobilization, by declaring his candidacy for



Sergei Glazyev

governor of the Krasnoyarsk region, after the sudden death of its governor, Glazyev's former chief at the National Security Council, General Lebed. Arriving as a complete outsider, and faced with the region's highly corrupt local political machines backing his opponents, Glazyev understood that he had no real chance of winning the election.

That, however, was not the real purpose of his intervention. He used the race to develop a new electoral strategy for the CPRF-NPSR, centered on presenting to the population a clearly articulated, concrete program for the economic reconstruction of the region, backed up by "binding agreements" by candidates and officials, to carry out the program. Based on this tactic, and a very active election campaign, Glazyev gained third place in the first round on Sept. 8, with a stunning 22% vote, ahead of several well-known and popular local figures, and not far behind the two leading candidates.

Russian Campaigner for Individual Creativity

This unexpected result set off a political earthquake in Moscow, with even liberal newspapers such as *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and *Izvestia* declaring Glazyev a new leader of the national opposition. Now, little more than two months later, a new phase has evidently begun, with an intensive series of media appearances and declarations by Glazyev and other figures close to the CPRF-NPSR—and an obvious escalation of counter-operations against them. On Nov. 21, Glazyev issued a long, programmatic policy declaration for the CPRF-NPSR, entitled "No Room to Retreat!", which is being serialized in the newspaper *Pravda*. Beginning with an analysis of the situation in the country, Glazyev declares that the 2003 parliamentary elections present the "last chance" to save the nation from total economic and social disaster, resulting from the irreversible loss of scientific-technological and industrial potentials.

"The future of the nation lies in our hands," he writes, denouncing attempts to weaken and split the CPRF-NPSR, and calling for more forces to coalesce around a program to rebuild the country. In a remarkable analysis of the mood in the Russian population, Glazyev emphasizes that the overwhelming majority would support the kind of program he proposes, but that the mass media and other forces have created an array of myths and appearances—a "virtual reality"—which confuses and disorients a large part of that potential base. That includes, for example, what Glazyev calls "the myth of division of politics into 'left' and 'right.'" To win, "we must tell the truth," he insists, polemically attacking the rigidity and dogmatism of the Communist Party, and telling it to put away impotent clichés about "class struggle" and take real responsibility for the country as a whole.

Victory, he says, requires uniting the population around the ideas of social justice, economic development, and scientific-technological progress, "which is impossible without the free exercise of individual creativity and the creation of the conditions for realizing the creative potential of each person."

A Strong Military Voice

A few days before the appearance of Glazyev's declaration, one of the most respected figures in the Russian military, Gen. Leonid Ivashov, published a devastating attack on the present government and its policies, in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. "The state is presently not able to solve even a single problem concerning the national security of Russia," Ivashov declared. Nothing effective had been done, he charged, to counter the Bush Administration's new doctrine of "pre-emptive war," nor to rein in Israel, nor to stop the spread of the U.S. military presence into Central Asia.

Echoing Glazyev earlier, Ivashov said no positive initiatives could be expected now from the Kasyanov government, nor even from Putin himself, whom Ivashov charged with trying to divert attention from the real problems facing Russia's national security. Ivashov reminded his readers that, according to the Russian Constitution, power resides with the people, implicitly demanding a political mobilization of patriotic opposition forces in the country.

In the middle of this heated-up situation, the notorious "oligarch" Boris Berezovsky, living "in exile" in London, has launched an obvious attempt to coopt and split the CPRF-NPSR, and to counter the programmatic strategy of Glazyev. In an article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, entitled "An Alliance of the Communists and Liberals," Berezovsky—who has been on a public rampage against Putin—proposed a "dirty deal" between the two sides to win the parliamentary elections, hinting unmistakably that he would finance it! At the same time, he demanded the CPRF reject an alliance with "certain circles in the NPSR which are well known to be working as a Trojan Horse for the Kremlin." This may well refer to Glazyev himself. He is extremely outspoken in his criticism of present policies, but has refrained from personal attacks against Putin, insisting on a "positive opposition" that places the well-being of the nation first, and defending the state against destabilization.

The day after Berezovsky made his shameless "offer," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* published a stinging rejection of it by the Chairman of the Communist Party, Gennadi Zyuganov, who said, "Yes, we are ready for alliances, but not with the people who are destroying our country." On the other hand, two weeks earlier, the chief editor of the nationalist *Zavtra*, Alexander Prokhanov, strangely decided to fly to London to conduct a sensational interview with Berezovsky. Later, apparently, at least two CPRF deputies also went to meet Berezovsky, suggesting that Byzantine maneuvering and dirty deals are being attempted.

Glazyev has remained aloof from all of this, noting that some deliberately circulated discrediting rumors—to the effect that he had received money from Berezovsky—are nothing but an obvious attempt to undermine his growing authority and support in the country. The coming months promise to be very interesting, indeed.