

# A Russian Trump?

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*Do you remember the terrible onslaught of the mainstream media on presidential candidate **Donald Trump** in 2016? Dozens of revelations about his fake hair, pussy grabbing, tax avoidance and what not; dozens of public polls proving that the nation wanted Hillary and hated Trump, opinion pieces convincing you that only racist white trash could think of voting for him. They even printed that Time weekly (or was it Newsweek?) cover with a **Madam President!** greeting. And then came the day of counting.*

This development comes to my mind as I follow the incessant attacks in the Russian media and social networks on presidential candidate **Paul N. Grudin** (usually nicknamed Gru). Russian state-owned TV is supposed, by its charter, to play a neutral role in the election campaign. They did it for a week after his name was entered into the race. In that week's time, Gru's rating skyrocketed and almost reached that of President Putin. This was an unexpected turn of events for the Kremlin, whose political witch-doctors expected Gru to make a modest showing and to improve the doubtful legitimacy of the forthcoming elections.

When they recognised the magnitude of their mistake, they gave a command to their obedient TV channels, and Gru became the target of their daily attacks. Out of eight candidates, Gru is the only one who gets negative coverage. About him, they speak bad or nothing, just like about Trump in the US in his time.

A veteran candidate, the old Nationalist Zhirinovskiy gets plenty of time on the TV, for he has only one message, *Down with Gru*. His wild attacks on Gru are broadcasted in every election campaign program every evening on the TV.

There is a spoiler, a tiny 'Russian Communists' Trotskyite party, whose only purpose in life is to steal votes from the mainstream Communist Party (KPRF). It is a virtual party that disappears after elections to come back to life before new elections. Some innocent souls in the Russian hinterland vote for them being convinced that this is *the* Communist Party. They are violently anti-Gru, and post like mad in Facebook their denunciations of the not-quite-communist Gru.

However, Gru is not a run-of-the-mill communist candidate. A successful manager of an agricultural holding called *Lenin Sovkhoz*, he is a good example of Russian industrialists otherwise called 'Red directors', that is managers of Soviet factories and enterprises who adjusted to the new system. They are producers of goods for local consumption, and their interests do not coincide with those of the Putin (or Yeltsin) oligarchs. Those oligarchs made their fortunes by importing consumer goods and exporting raw materials; they are the base of Putin's power.

The producers, both industrialists and agriculturalists, want more protectionist measures

and cheaper credits, they want to boost the buying power of ordinary Russians, that is increase salaries and pensions. Their fortunes lie with the fortunes of the ordinary Russian workers. They are dissatisfied with President Putin, and even more with his government led by Mr Medvedev.

Gru became the candidate for a plethora of political organisations from the Left and from the Right; he is supported by [Russian Nationalists](#), though his main alliance is with the KPRF (the mainstream Russian Communist Party). He is a combination of Sanders and Trump, for workers, against immigration, for protective trade barriers and low-cost credits for small producers. A self-made-man of the upper-middle class, not a billionaire, but definitely a wealthy man, he does not scare middle-class Russians who would be afraid to support a real red-in-tooth-and-claw Communist.

Though the official prediction group, the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, VTSIOM (ВЦИОМ) [claims](#) 70% of electorate will vote for Putin and only 7% for Grudinin, the feeling on the ground is very different. There are a few sites allowing people to express their preference by “voting”; a biggish site of this sort is [this](#) where out of 180,000 voters 60% preferred Gru, and only 30% voted for President Putin. On other sites, Gru gets anything from 30 to 80 per cent of the vote.

It is difficult to predict the result, and it is still over a month until election day, but VTSIOM’s assessment appears too low to justify the ferocious campaign against Gru. If he were about to get 6-7%, the top wheeler-dealer, the presidential administration, would not bother and would not activate its troll factories and fake social network accounts to stop Grudinin. It seems that man has a chance to win the battle, that is if the elections are reasonably fair.

Putin has been a good president, and a popular one, but he has his limitations. He still feels obliged to keep the Deal he made with the late President Yeltsin; he still keeps fighting the Soviet memory, he is surrounded by his buddies who roll in cash; he does not support local production except for the weapons industry. While he was good for a long while, there is a feeling that the country is ripe for a changing of the guard.

A teacher in the preparatory school may be wonderful, but sooner or later, the child should move on, to new teachers. Gru is the first man who has excited the Russians since 1996, and he is likely to make a strong bid.

### **The Russian Left is Different.**

Grudinin has the support of the left and of the right; of workers and of managers; of communists and of nationalists. How could this happen? The main reason is that the Russian Left is quite different from the European Left. The Russians are Bolsheviks. The Western Left is predominantly Menshevik.

Historically, the Russian Social Democrats were [divided](#) into Bolsheviks, the Majorites, and Mensheviks, the Minorites. The actual argument that divided the Social Democrats into these majority and minority groups is of little importance now and of even less relevance. Nowadays, the Majorites are the Left for the Majority, while Minorites are the Left for Minorities.

The Russian Left is the force for the majority, for the workers, for the natives. The Western Left is for gender, ethnic, religious minorities. If you’d ask a Western worker about the Left,

he will probably tell you: the Left is not for us, they care only for gays and migrants who take our jobs.

Mensheviks are (and were) better for Jews, as Jews are the ultimate minority. Bolsheviks accepted Jews as individuals and equals, not as a separate and preferred minority group. Bolsheviks fought against the Bund, the Jewish Social Democrats, while the Mensheviks joined with the Bund.

Stalin observed (and Trotsky quoted that in his book on Stalin):

“the majority of the Menshevik group were Jews. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik group were ethnic Russians. In this connection a Bolshevik observed in jest that the Mensheviks constituted a Jewish group while the Bolsheviks constituted a true-Russian group and, therefore, it wouldn't be a bad idea for us Bolsheviks to organise a pogrom in the Party”.

While being comradely to Jewish comrades, Stalin effectively de-Jewified the Russian Communist Party by bringing in many ethnic Russian workers and peasants. He treated the Jews as just one of the tribes populating Eurasia, not as the Chosen Ones. This is the sin of Stalin in Jewish eyes, and that is why they condemn him now.

The Jewish influence in the Western Left has survived all these years and even outlived the massive Jewish involvement with the Left. After 1968, the Jews en masse departed to new pastures, but their influence lingered, entrenching the Jewish-friendly Menshevik tendency. They adapted the Western Left to fit their preferences and made it suitable for cohabitation with the elites. Along the way, they had lost their working class support, but they were more interested in keeping with the rulers.

The Jewish-run Mensheviks fit perfectly into the oligarchy. They believe that Anna and Susan Wojicki, the former wife of Sergei (“Google”) Brin and her sister, are unhappy discriminated women, unlike welders and auto mechanics, who are white men, the patriarchal lords of the world.

The Bolsheviks struggle for women's equality is exemplified in free kindergartens, and the Mensheviks, in reserved places for women in the directorships of large companies.

Mensheviks are concerned about the rights of transgender people to a urinal of their preference. The Bolsheviks are concerned about the right of workers to work, to a decent wage, to their share of natural resources. You can easily understand what sort of Left is preferred in the eyes of mainstream media and their billionaire owners.

Migrants provide another cause of distinction. The Western working class achieved much during the years of the Cold War, when the Western ruling class had to compete with the Communists for workers' loyalty. Now the rulers are eager to void these achievements - and the easiest way is through population replacement by the massive importation of migrants and refugees. For this purpose, Capital is waging wars in the Middle East and fanning strife in Africa, and they facilitate the refugees' flight to Europe and America.

The Mensheviks, that is the Western Left, support migrants against the indigenous population, in the name of their anti-racism and internationalism. However, for all practical

reasons they do the work for their masters, because migrants are easier to manipulate, they help to lower salaries, to undermine the workers' organisations, and to destroy natural solidarity.

The Bolsheviks are against the causes of mass migration, against the use of migrants and refugees to the detriment of the indigenous population. This is the position of the Russian Communists, whose anti-migration rhetoric is so outspoken that even Trumpists would find it too brusque.

Mr Grudin in has a history of anti-immigration demands behind him. He calls for enforcing a visa regime with the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, as now their working migrants do not need a Russian visa. He insists that every working migrant should be given the same salary as a native Russian worker, the idea being that in such conditions there will be less demand for migrants' labour. Perhaps it makes sense to hire inexperienced dirt-cheap Tajik migrants, but if for the same price you can hire a qualified Russian worker, you will probably employ the latter.

Grudin in's suggestions are anathema to the neo-liberal Kremlin. Putin keeps the doors of Russia wide open for immigration, to the detriment of native workers. If the immigration flow has decreased it is mostly the result of Rouble's depreciation.

In the West, these ideas of limiting migration belong fully to the realm of the Right, or even the Alt-Right. They are described as "populist", meaning they are popular but disapproved by the ruling elites. The Western Left has been manipulated into an unpopular position, while the popular ('populist') ideas have been transferred to the Right.

In Russia, the Russian Communists did not follow the path of the Mensheviks. They made all sorts of compromises, but they always stayed for the workers. They do not fight for gays, migrants and upper-class feminists. They make allies with the producers and against the rentiers and bankers.

Perhaps the Russian Communists will show the way to their Western comrades as they did a hundred years ago. These two branches of the world Left movement have had a checkered history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the new-born Russian revolutionary movement was keen to learn from the West; the Russian Narodniks went on a pilgrimage to visit Marx in London seeking his advice. The Western revolutionaries of that time (including Marx) were as distrustful of Russians as Robert Mueller or John McCain. They thought Russia was so backward and so reactionary that a Russian progressive Left was an impossibility.

And then something unexpected had happened. When the guns of the First World War struck, only the Russian Left, led by **Vladimir Lenin**, did not lose their heads, but led their country to the victory of socialist revolution. After 1917, for many years the Russian Left was the guiding star for the world Left.

The Russians paid heavily for their cutting edge achievement, while the European peoples became the main beneficiaries of the October Revolution. They've got all the Russians fought for, for free. Their leaders were afraid their workers would go over to the Communists; and thus the welfare state came into being.

Eventually, both branches of the Left forgot their history. The Western Left forgot their victories were due to the Red Army's might, and they proudly preached the new-fangled

theories of Euro-Communism. The Russians, always eager to learn a new trick, fell for it, and dismantled the socialist state, sincerely expecting they would live as good as Swedes. The end was gruesome: the Russians were plunged into long years of depopulation and de-industrialisation, while the flagship of the Western left, the huge Euro-Communist parties of France and Italy disappeared. Swedish socialism has almost perished.

Over the years, the Western Left virtually disappeared, and its place was taken by the pseudo-left, who appropriated the name of the historical Left parties. Capital raised in its secret labs this poisonous pseudo-Left, with one supreme goal in mind – to make the very name of communism obnoxious and repelling.

For the Bolsheviks, the Good Ones were workers, they were the salt of the earth. Everyone could join this class by identifying with workers. The Menshevik pseudo-left has offered a shortcut to join the Good Ones: Identity Politics. You are Good if you are discriminated against. If you are black, you suffer discrimination, even if you are an Obama. If you are a woman, you suffer discrimination. If you like BDSM, you are discriminated against. If you are a migrant, you are discriminated against. If you are a Jew, a Soros or a Rothschild, you are still suffer discrimination, for just half a century ago your grandfather was not allowed to join a country club.

For Bolsheviks, discrimination is not the most urgent problem. They are surely against discrimination; but it takes a backseat after the really important question: labour/capital relationship. When the working people win, discrimination will vanish, they say. By keeping the eye on this most important bottom line, the Bolsheviks are the greatest natural enemies of the 1%.

The cause of socialism was defeated in 1991, no doubt, but it is not the first defeat. In November 1941, when the German troops reached the outskirts of Moscow, it also appeared socialism had been defeated. However, in 1945 socialism rebounded. Since 1991, the winner, Capital, claims its victory is irrevocable and irreversible. It is, they say, the end of history.

But victories and defeats can be reversed. The Soviets did not know that. They believed that “the victory of socialism is inevitable because it is progressive.” Perhaps in the long run it is inevitable, but it can happen in a thousand years, and meanwhile a nuclear war or biological experiments can exterminate the human race.

The most basic ideals of French Republic – democracy, liberty, equality – were defeated by Napoleon, by the Bourbons, by Orleans, but they rebounded.

Nothing is inevitable. The Soviet Bolsheviks believed in inevitability – and lost; while their adversaries just fought hard, not giving an inch – and won. Their attitude should be emulated. The people of the West are ready for the real-Left turn. Recent successes of Jeremy Corbyn in England, of Bernie Sanders in the US, of Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France prove it. They are soft, but hard ones will come, too.

This is not the beginning of the end of the cruel man-eating neo-liberalism and its Menshevik allies, but this is the end of the beginning in the universal battle for socialism, as Churchill said of the British victory over the Germans at El Alamein. The light at the end of the tunnel is already visible. And then the Russian Communists will again become the beacon for the workers of the world.

Gru's success can change a lot of things. His worldview has many points in common with Donald Trump. In a month's time, we shall know how far this Russian Trump has succeeded in advancing.

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