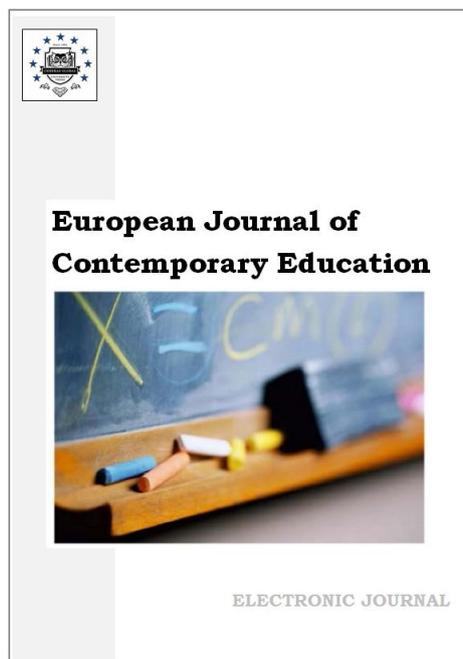




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A History of Cherkas Global University Press: The Vestnik Leib-Gvardii Newspaper (1992–1997)

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Abstract

This work explores the history of Cherkas Global University Press. Its primary focus is on the history of the making of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper, the first periodical published by this publishing house.

The principal source used in the work is materials from the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper, which was published intermittently from 1992 to 1997. Overall, 14 issues of the newspaper were released.

Methodologically, use was made of content analysis with the aim of selecting from the entire material published in the newspaper specifically that which deals with the work of its editorial board. External and internal critical evaluations were also conducted of the issues of the newspaper as a historical source.

The monthly newspaper *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii*, established in 1992, was the starting point in A.A. Cherkasov's creation of his own publishing house, which today is known as Cherkas Global University Press. This publishing house has evolved over the 30-year period from an editorial board handling a single newspaper in the city of Sochi (Russia) to a major academic publishing house with a few dozen journals that is based in Washington, DC (USA).

The external and internal critical evaluations of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* revealed that the newspaper went through brisk development in the period from 1992 to 1997. It enjoyed improvements in print quality, more specifically in terms of the technical handling of layout. As early as 1996, A.A. Cherkasov began to enlist on a regular basis the services of third-party specialists to assist the editorial board. Overall, the production of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper is a worthy exemplar of publishing a noncommercial newspaper in the 1990s.

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Keywords: newspaper, *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii*, period 1992–1997, small-circulation press, publishing house, Cherkas Global University Press, *Journal History and Historians in the Context of the Time*.

1. Introduction

The first issue of the monthly newspaper *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii*, which would be published intermittently from 1992 to 1997, was released on August 1, 1992. The newspaper was the official organ of the Semyonovsky Leib Guard Regiment military patriotic club, based in the city of Sochi (Russia). In charge of both the club and the newspaper was Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov, who was 18 at the time. The present work will explore the history of this newspaper and examine its editorial board.

2. Materials and methods

The principal source used in the work is materials from the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper, which was published intermittently from 1992 to 1997. Overall, 14 issues of the newspaper were released. The issues were numbered in a continuous fashion – the first issue came out in August 1992, and the last one, Issue 14, was released in April-May 1997. The newspaper was published on four A4 pages. At different times different rubrics were used in the newspaper, like official documents, local news, articles, and reports. The newspaper carried sources of private origin (e.g., reminiscences by war veterans) and interesting materials from ‘The White Book of Russia’ and ‘A Catechism of Monarchism’ and devoted a fair amount of attention to the activity of a Sochi-based military historical society.

Vestnik Leib-Gvardii is the earliest periodical produced by the founder of Cherkas Global University Press, Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov.

Another source employed in the present work is ‘Cherkas Global University (1992–2022): A Collection of Documents’ ([Cherkas Global University...](#), 2022).

Use was also made of sources of private origin, namely A.A. Cherkasov’s reminiscences regarding the circumstances surrounding the creation of this newspaper and photographs from his personal archive ([Personal Archive of A.A. Cherkasov](#)).

Methodologically, use was made of content analysis with the aim of selecting from the entire material published in the newspaper specifically that which deals with the work of its editorial board. External and internal critical evaluations were also conducted of the issues of the newspaper as a historical source. The present work is structured in chronological order, which helps present the work of the editorial board in historical sequence.

3. Discussion

The production of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper is an exemplar of publishing a noncommercial periodical in Russia in the 1990s. The historiography on the subject is limited.

One of the first recorded mentions of the newspaper dates back to 2019, the year marking the 20th anniversary of the research and pedagogical activity of the newspaper’s founder, Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov. That year scholars V.V. Tarakanov and S.D. Ludwig released the article ‘Aleksandr Cherkasov: A Scholar, Publisher, and Organizer of Research Collaborations (To the 20th Anniversary of the Scholar’s Research and Pedagogical Activity)’, which devotes some attention to the experience of publishing the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper ([Tarakanov, Ludwig, 2019](#)).

The article ‘INCFAR: Characteristics and Challenges (A Fifth Anniversary Tribute)’, written by V.V. Tarakanov and M.A. Ponomareva, touches upon the production of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii*, too ([Tarakanov, Ponomareva, 2019: 989](#)).

In 2021, G. Rajović ventured to view *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* as a historical source ([Rajović, 2021](#)). The author shared the following conclusion: “Over the period of its existence, the newspaper enjoyed considerable improvements in quality, with permanent rubrics appearing. In addition, the newspaper published exclusive information about local conflicts that took place in the USSR and member countries of the Warsaw Pact” ([Rajović, 2021: 96](#)). All this made the newspaper a valuable source on the development of civil society in southern Russia in the mid-1990s.

That same year, the history of Cherkas Global University was explored by K.V. Taran, who, too, devoted some attention to the production of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* ([Taran, 2021](#)).

A mention of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* is made in I.Yu. Cherkasova's 'Cherkas Global University (1992–2022): Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow', an article celebrating the 30th anniversary of Cherkas Global University (Cherkasova, 2022).

4. Results

The first issue of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper came out on August 1, 1992. Here is how its founder, A.A. Cherkasov, remembers the circumstances around the creation of the periodical: 'In 1991, right after the breakup of the USSR, I set up a military patriotic club in the city of Sochi. However, with me being just 17 years old in 1991, things were developing quite slowly. After a series of failed attempts to attract friends and acquaintances into the club I realized that it needed a mouthpiece of its own, one that would be distinguished by permanence (periodicity) and serve as a calling card for our organization' ([Memories of the military-patriotic club / Personal Archive of A.A. Cherkasov](#)). The result was the launch of a newspaper published on four A4 pages. Initially, *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* was conceived as a noncommercial publication, meaning it was to carry no advertising. At the time the newspaper was launched, its founder, Aleksandr Cherkasov, was 18 years old. Three weeks after the release of the first issue, A.A. Cherkasov was one of the delegates to the First All-Russian Monarchical Congress, held in Taganrog (Russia) from August 22 to 23, 1992. There is a photograph of a group of delegates to the Congress including A.A. Cherkasov ([Figure 1](#)).



Fig. 1. Group of delegates to the First All-Russian Monarchical Congress (August 22, 1992)
A.A. Cherkasov is upper left

All text in the initial issues of the newspaper was handwritten ([Figure 2](#)), as during the Soviet period it was very difficult to obtain a typewriter (each typewriter had to be registered with the KGB).

The newspaper was replicated in an original way. Starting in 1989, at the age of 15, A. Cherkasov worked at the Sochi Concrete Products Plant, which had an ERA electric photocopier for use by the Design Department. It was a large camera designed to photograph large-sized images and print them. Up to 1991, it was prohibited to use it for external orders. Things changed later on, with the use of this kind of equipment finally ceasing to be controlled by the government. In the end, all issues of the newspaper for 1992–1993 were duplicated using the machine.

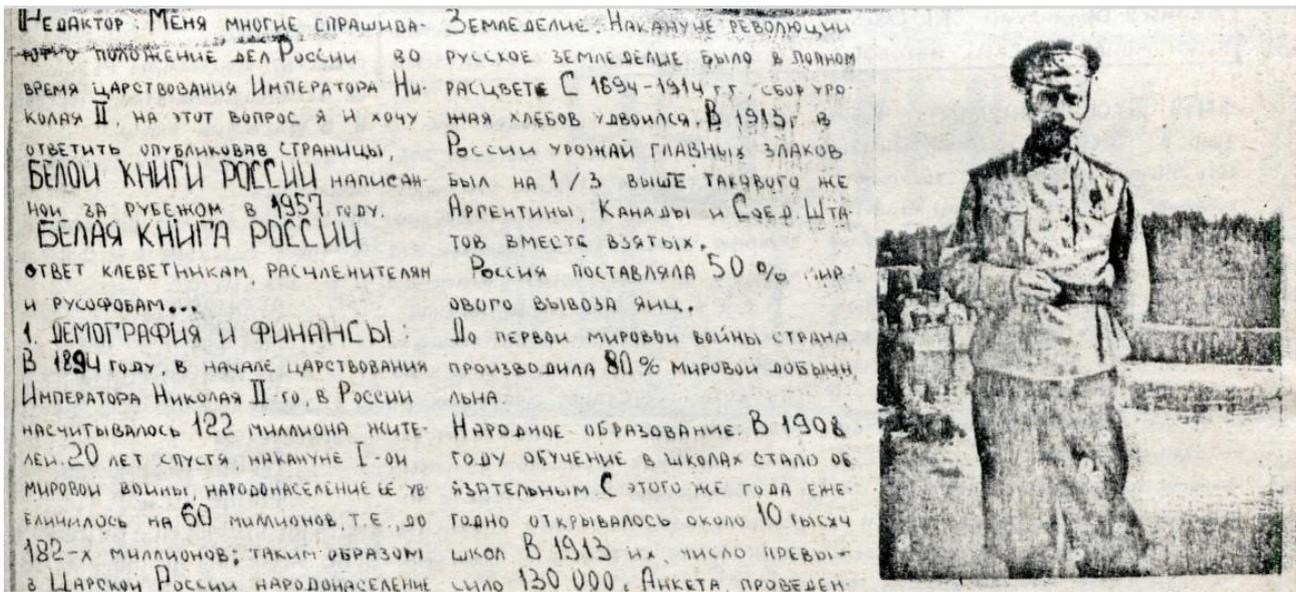


Fig. 2. Sample handwritten text from the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper (Issue 2 (September) for 1992)

As early as its second issue (September 1992), the newspaper began to publish interesting materials from ‘The White Book of Russia’ focused on the reign of Emperor Nicholas II (Figure 2).

Keen to do something about the newspaper’s handwritten text, A.A. Cherkasov managed to purchase a 1960s typewriter in November 1992. Despite the lacking quality of output on the typewriter, the newspaper was now no longer a periodical composed of handwritten text (Figure 3).

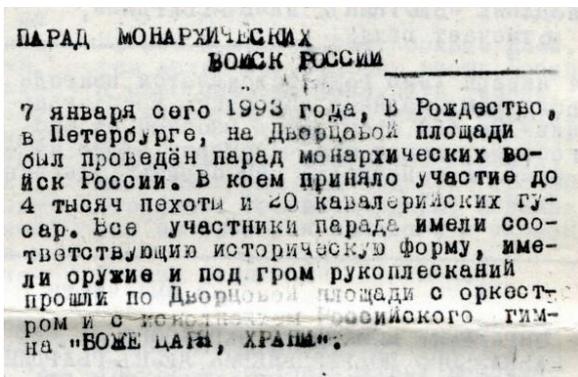


Fig. 3. Sample typewriter-typed text in the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper (Issue 6 (January) for 1993)

In the first issue, the section about the periodical itself listed only the organizer – the Command Council (Figure 4).

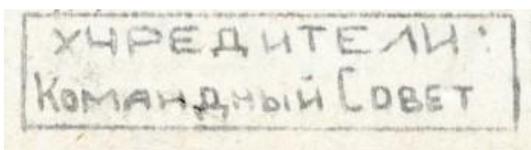


Fig. 4. Information about the organizer in Issue 1 of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1992

However, as early as its second issue, the newspaper began to list the mailing address for correspondence as well – ‘A. Cherkasov P.O. Box 1334 Sochi 354003’ (Figure 5). The post office

box was set up by A.A. Cherkasov to enable two-way communication between the newspaper's editorial board and its readers. The newspaper was distributed to monarchical organizations across Russia and abroad, as well as among colleagues and like-minded people across Sochi.

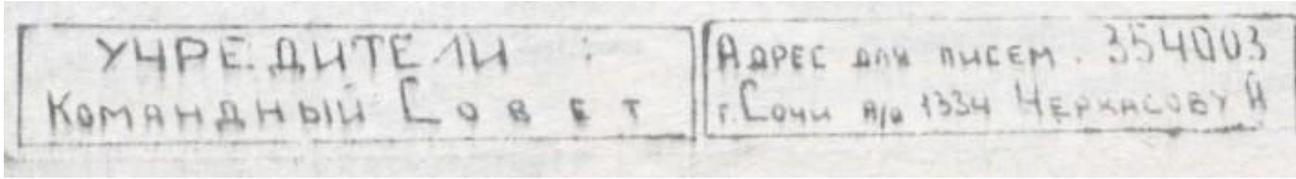


Fig. 5. Information about the organizer and the mailing address for letters published in Issue 2 of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1992

As of the sixth issue of the newspaper (January 1993), its organizer was the reserve platoon of the Semyonovsky Leib Guard Regiment (Figure 6).



Fig. 6. Information about the organizer and the mailing address for letters in Issue 8 of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1993

The ninth issue of the newspaper (April 1993) was released with the reserve platoon as its organizer as well. At that point, the publication of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* was put on hold.

In December 1996, the publication of the newspaper was resumed. This was preceded by a period of serious organizational work. During this time, the organization had its second team formed in Sochi. Concurrently, such teams were also formed in other regions of southern Russia. This resulted in the formation back in 1994 of the Southern Russia District of the United Imperial Corps, established in August 1992 via a decision made at the First All-Russian Monarchical Congress. The district was headed up by A.A. Cherkasov, a third-year student in the Faculty of History and Philology at the time. In December 1996, the role of the organizer of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* shifted to the Staff of the Southern Russia District (Figure 7).

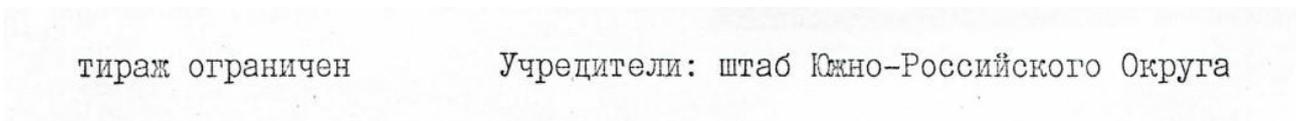


Fig. 7. Information about the organizer in Issue 10 of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1996

The newspaper became the official organ of the Southern Russia District of the United Imperial Corps (Figure 8).

It is also to be noted that by 1996 the city of Sochi already had in use the latest Xerox copiers, employing which both helped ease the copying process and, most importantly, enhance print quality.

In the fall of 1996, A.A. Cherkasov undertook another attempt to create a military historical organization in the city of Sochi. By that time, he had at his disposal a few classrooms and a gym, which enabled him to attract new members into the organization via its initial ones. One of its new members was a law student named Elena Khramova, who would go on to join the editorial board of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* as Layout Editor.



Fig. 8. The front page of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1996.

On December 4, 1996, during the celebration of the 304th anniversary of the Semyonovsky Leib Guard Regiment, Elena Khramova was awarded a certificate of acknowledgement as a member of the Sochi team (Figure 9).



Fig. 9. E.A. Khramova being awarded a certificate of acknowledgement on December 4, 1996

As early as the 11th issue (January 1997), E. Khramova joined the newspaper's editorial board (Figure 10).

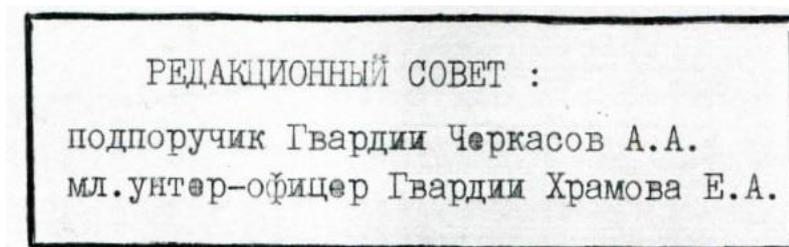


Fig. 10. Information about the editorial board of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of 1997

The 12th issue of the newspaper came out with a modified front page – it carried the emblem of the Southern Russia District with the foundation year on it (1994) in place of the double-headed eagle (Figure 11).



Fig. 11. The front page of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of February 1997

Both the emblem and the front page came out improved in the next, 13th, issue of the newspaper (Figure 12).



Fig. 12. The front page of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper of March 1997.

No more modifications would be made to the publication's front page up until the cessation of its publication in May 1997.

The period 1996–1997 witnessed the publication of a large amount of local material in *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* (e.g., material dealing with loaded marches, theoretical courses, and production of specialized literature). During that time, Sochi was visited by regional representatives of the Southern Russia District to study the best practices of the Sochi-based organization. One of those visits resulted in a photograph being taken of members of the

periodical's editorial board engaged in the discussion of the possible content of its March issue (Figure 13).



Fig. 13. A.A. Cherkasov and E.A. Khramova photographed while discussing a new issue of the *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* newspaper on February 16, 1997

The above photograph, which shows members of the editorial board of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* engaged in a work-related activity, is the earliest documented evidence of this kind of activity taking place in what would subsequently be known as Cherkas Global University Press. Today, almost all of the issues of *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* (12 out of its 14 issues) are available at the Library of Congress and are part of certain regional archives and museum collections in Russia.

In May 1997, following the release of its 14th issue, *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii* ceased to be published. A few years later, in 2003, the publication was resumed again, but the name was changed to *History and Historians in the Context of the Time*. The journal with this name is still published today by the publishing house Cherkas Global University Press.

5. Conclusion

The monthly newspaper *Vestnik Leib-Gvardii*, established in 1992, was the starting point in A.A. Cherkasov's creation of his own publishing house, which today is known as Cherkas Global University Press. This publishing house has evolved over the 30-year period from an editorial board handling a single newspaper in the city of Sochi (Russia) to a major academic publishing house with a few dozen journals that is based in Washington, DC (USA).

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