

Perestroika and the Challenge of Democracy in Russia

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Abstract: The period since the onset of perestroika is examined as a single process in which a number of fundamental metapolitical factors are identified. These processes transcend the specific personalities of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin, yet shape and constrain their leaderships. Path dependency is important, but cannot be entirely determining. Postcommunist restorationism shares some features with earlier restorations but its focus on the rebirth of politics and a set of normative values is distinctive. Charismatic leadership cannot be taken in isolation and is a crucial factor in helping shape the character of institutions and the state. The appropriation of the concept of civil society in postcommunist Russia differs from its practices in Central Europe, as does the relationship between the state and regime. Two types of politics can be identified, the ideological and the axiological, but the triumph of the latter in the exit from communism has not allowed the displacement of sovereignty, typical of the Soviet period, to be transcended.

Key words: axiology, charismatic leadership, civil society, Gorbachev, ideology, metapolitics, path dependency, perestroika, postcommunist restoration, Putin, regime, sovereignty, state, Yeltsin

Russia has been engaged in a process of accelerated change for two decades. The process began as the reform of the Soviet system, dubbed *perestroika* (reconstruction) by Mikhail Gorbachev, and developed into the revolutionary transformation of that system followed swiftly by catastrophic breakdown, accompanied by the disintegration of the country. For an emerging Russian government, the challenge was to establish the institutions of the polity, the sinews of a national identity, the framework for a political community, and the foundations of a market economy. In the decade and a half that has passed, Russia has at best had mixed success in achieving these goals. The aim of this article is to examine the degree to which the processes that operated during perestroika shaped the postcommunist Russian system.

This article focuses on a number of key dimensions of political life that emerged out of perestroika and still impose their imprint on contemporary politics. The focus on elements of path dependency allows us to achieve a broader appreciation of political processes in the two decades since the onset of perestroika. I will not devote attention to institutions as such, although clearly the emergence, for example, of an executive presidency in 1990 marks a crucial turning point. Rather, this article looks at what can be called the metapolitical issues that continue to shape current affairs. *Metapolitics* are the processes that lie between the civilizational attributes of a particular society, including political culture, and the everyday conduct of political life. As with so much in contemporary Russia, there often appears to be a “second reality” behind the formal development of institutions and policies. My purpose here is to identify some of those realities as well as the roles they have played in Russian politics. At the same time, by constructing the article this way, there will be an inevitable tendency to highlight the features of continuity, although there are clearly substantial differences even, or perhaps especially, at the level of metapolitics, in the periods associated with the three leaders who have dominated the politics of the country since 1985—Mikhail Gorbachev (1985–91), Boris Yeltsin (1991–99), and Vladimir Putin (2000–). At various points, I will note, but not develop, these elements of disjuncture. The focus will be on the continuity of overarching political processes.

Postcommunist Restoration

Gorbachev’s perestroika began the process of restoring the great disruption represented by the October 1917 revolution. In many respects, 1985 is comparable to the beginning of other great restorationist periods in history, notably 1660 in England after Cromwell’s Commonwealth and 1815 in France after the Revolution and Napoleonic empire. After the period of crisis comes to an end, there is a striving for “normality,” a theme that was particularly accentuated under Putin. At the same time, Gorbachev did not begin by repudiating the achievements of the Bolshevik revolution, and thus perhaps a better comparison is with 1794 and Thermidor, rejecting the excesses of Robespierre’s (or Stalin’s) dictatorship but striving to salvage what was perceived to be the rational and progressive elements of the revolution.

Gorbachev realized that the system was suffering from major problems, with declining economic growth, stultifying secrecy in scientific and political life, and with politics dominated by an increasingly dysfunctional elite.¹ Gorbachev believed

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that the old system remained viable and only needed to be reformed to be able to enter the world as an alternative to capitalist modernity. By starting a “revolution within the revolution,” Gorbachev hoped to save the essentials of the system, especially the leading role of the party and the planned economy.² Gorbachev was the last exponent of “reform communism,” the program of communist revival that had been attempted twenty years earlier by Alexander Dubček in Czechoslovakia under the slogan, “Socialism with a human face.” The Prague Spring of 1968 was crushed by Soviet tanks in August of that year, and twenty years later, Gorbachev sought to rebuild what the Soviet Union itself had destroyed earlier.

From the metapolitical perspective, perestroika reflected typical elements of a restoration in the naturalistic reading of history—an approach to history shorn of the emancipatory impetus with which it had been endowed since the Enlightenment. In other words, Gorbachev’s reforms represented the beginning of the establishment of the politics after the end of history.³ His politics were torn by a dualism in that they looked both to the emancipatory potential of Prague Spring-type reform politics while they repudiated the conceptual basis of a revolutionary socialist transcendence of capitalist “normality.” Although one of the theorists (and Gorbachev’s interlocutor since their student days together in the early 1950s) of the Prague Spring, Zdeněk Mlynář, insisted that it was impossible to make Leninism democratic, Gorbachev remained loyal to the Bukharinist vision of a democratic Bolshevism and thereby missed much of what was important about the program of “socialism with a human face.”⁴

Gorbachev provoked a turn (revolution) of the wheel, as one form of government gave way to another, but his agenda ultimately was restorationist rather than emancipatory. The nature of what he began could only be gauged later, after the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. As Kosík, a witness to the events, notes, the experience of 1968 has the distinction of having been repudiated twice by mutually opposed sets of victors: those who imposed “normalization” with the help of Soviet tanks after August 1968, and the designers of the new world order after 1989.⁵ The point here is that Gorbachev’s vision of perestroika was not a reprise of the substance of the Prague Spring, although emotionally he retained an affinity with its aspirations, but ultimately a rejection of the attempt to give autonomy to the socialist components of a postcapitalist vision of an alternative modernity.⁶

If we regard the politics inaugurated by Gorbachev as a type of restoration, a number of consequences follow. The first is the repudiation of revolutionism, the conscious use of violence to achieve desired political goals. This was quite explicit in Gorbachev’s own thinking. Even though he called perestroika a “revolution within the revolution,” the logic of his argument was the transcendence of revolution as a method of political change. Oleg Rummyantsev noted that “revolutionism is a tragic legacy for twentieth-century Russia,” derived from Lenin and developed by Stalin. Bolshevik revolutionism foreclosed the possibility of reforms, and indeed, “reformism,” a theory of moral limitations, became a dirty word.⁷ Gorbachev restored the spirit of reformism, and to the end he remained a partisan of “communist reformism.” The contradiction between communism, as the aspiration

to achieve the revolutionary transcendence of capitalist society, and reformism, as the recognition that revolution was not, per Marx, immanent in capitalist development, was not overcome. Gorbachev never quite defined the features of what a reform communist system would look like, but it was clear that he was no longer thinking in Leninist terms and had accepted the justice of Eduard Bernstein's revisionist arguments.⁸ Thus, the logic of restorationism repudiates revolution as a method and legitimates reformism, however ambivalent that reformism would be in a system created to achieve revolutionary socialist goals.

A further aspect of postcommunist restorationism as a political practice is a degree of reassertion of a Kantian ethic. Colburn notes that revolutions, like nationalism, have a weakly developed ethical-philosophical dimension.⁹ Whereas wars are regulated by certain rules of engagement and conduct, these rules are lacking in civil wars, of which revolutions are the sharpest expression. The moral absolutism of revolutions—like the primordial rights often associated with a particular nation—is reinforced by analyses that focus on deterministic or structural theories while denigrating the moral constraints of the human agency that makes the revolution. The appeal to historical necessity and the ultimate benefit of the revolutionary process to the masses negates the value of the individual human being. Traditional class-based analyses of revolutionary action have neglected the political-ethical context of the human agency at the heart of the revolutionary process. In this sense, perestroika was conducted under the banner of neo-Kantianism. It is this strand that was formalized in the language of human rights and reflected the universal principles at the root of perestroika. A fundamental intellectual source of perestroika was the human-rights agenda incorporated into the third basket of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975 and supported vigorously by Gorbachev at the Vienna CSCE follow-up conference in the late 1980s. By no means the least important consequence was the universalization of these principles.¹⁰

The post-1991 system took the repudiation of emancipatory revolutionary principles to its logical conclusion, while embracing the universalism entrenched in the principles of capitalist democracy. Thus, 1991 rather than 1985 represents a full-blooded restoration but perestroika, regardless of its internal conflicts, prepared the way. Of course, this restoration operated at the metapolitical level, since there has been no serious attempt to restore the institutions of the pre-1917 regime, although there has been talk of restoring the monarchy and there has undoubtedly been an attempt to knit the threads of historical continuity. This has been most vividly demonstrated by Putin's eclectic use of symbols from Russia's three political orders of the twentieth century: the two-headed eagle of the autocracy, the tricolor of Russia's brief democratic interregnum in 1917, and the red flag of the Bolshevik era.¹¹ All restorations are syncretic, but in Russia, this has been used deliberately by leaders, and particularly Putin, to reconcile the various historical eras and thus to contribute to nation building.

Charismatic Leadership

In his *Sociology of Charismatic Authority*, Weber noted the role that charismatic leadership plays in times of crisis when old orders have broken down.¹² The

nascent new order is given legitimacy from the authority emanating from the leader's personal gifts, as interpreted by his or her followers. In the case of perestroika, the breakdown in politics and institutionalized authority was compensated by personalized leadership. Although Leonid Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders were elevated in various types of personality cults, there was always a recognizable systematic administrative process that built the foundation of their power. However, as Gorbachev's reforms intensified, the collective legitimacy derived from the rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was diminished, and from 1988 its institutional structures were dismantled.¹³ Gorbachev's institutional position became more anomalous; hence, his attempt to shift the basis of his authority from the party to the state and the creation of an executive presidency in 1990.

Gorbachev played a crucial role in initiating and pushing forward perestroika, although his advisor, Anatoly Chernyaev, probably goes too far when he argues:

“Institutions were only as influential as the personal relationships between their heads and Yeltsin.”

All epochal changes in the history of humanity are prefigured by powerful ideological currents, mass movements, influential organisations or political parties. . . . There was nothing like this at Gorbachev's disposal. He *alone* did it. And he alone decided on it, placing himself at great risk, putting in doubt the successful political and material prospects that awaited him.¹⁴

Chernyaev identifies the isolation in which Gorbachev's leadership found itself, and thus his personal choices were repeatedly decisive in shaping the political agenda, and his personal characteristics stamped the epoch. He was, as Archie Brown has argued, a transformative leader.¹⁵ The negative side of this was not only deinstitutionalization but also chronic institutional confusion, as in the relationship between the CPSU and the new legislatures and state institutions in general, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Department of the CC-CPSU, the Politburo and the Presidential Council, and so on. Yeltsin's statecraft developed and intensified these systemic weaknesses, and increasingly took on neomonarchical features. His presidential administration, especially when his bodyguard Alexander Korzhakov was riding high, resembled the court of some medieval potentate, with the swirl of intrigue, the discrediting of opponents, the spying on officials,¹⁶ and the rising and falling of favorites. Institutions were only as influential as the personal relationship between their heads and Yeltsin. The role played by the “family”—court oligarchs, favored insiders, and literal family members—was particularly pronounced after 1996. Yeltsin's neomonarchism was reflected in his personalized conduct of regional affairs and foreign policy. One of the central elements of Yeltsin's statecraft was his ability to win the trust of foreign leaders and institutions that supported him for fear of

worse to come.¹⁷ This deinstitutionalization was born during perestroika and was exacerbated by Yeltsin's personal characteristics.

Yeltsin's leadership underwent a profound institutional evolution—from leader of the Moscow Party Organization in 1986–87, to outsider in disgrace in 1988, to leader of the “democratic forces” in 1989–91, to popularly elected president of Russia in June 1991, to legatee of the strong presidential powers enshrined in the December 1993 constitution—accompanied by deep personal changes in the man himself. From the time of the first USSR Congress of People's Deputies (CPD) in May 1989, it was clear that Yeltsin would be a political manic-depressive, with bouts of intense political activism followed by periods of languor when he lost the political initiative. At that Congress, his performance was strangely subdued. By February 1995, on a visit to Kazakhstan, the signs of physical degeneration were already marked, and the rest of his years in power were effectively devoted to preparing for his own succession. In evaluating Yeltsin's career, Alexander Shokhin, one of Yeltsin's early ministers, argues that “if we limit ourselves to Yeltsin's activity up to 1995, then there would be much more on the plus side (especially if we take out of the balance October 1993).” He goes on to argue that Yeltsin could not be held responsible for all the minuses that accumulated after 1996, since he was reelected in that year based on a choice between two evils, since no one had really developed a more positive program. As Shokhin argues, “Every politician has their niche in history, and by 1996 Yeltsin had already fulfilled his role.”¹⁸ He was elected president of Russia in June 1991 on a wave of democratic anticipation, but his reelection in 1996 reflected little more than a popular fear of a greater evil and represented an elite strategy for self-preservation. Yeltsin's role in so impoverishing political life by reducing the choice to such a primitive level must be placed on the scales of our judgment of his leadership, but the responsibility of deeper factors also needs to be placed in the balance.

Yeltsin became more concerned with his personal power than with the powers of the presidency as an institution. Huskey describes this as the “politics of redundancy,” with more organizations created with overlapping and often competing competencies.¹⁹ A classic case was the establishment of the Defense Council in August 1996 to offset the Security Council, then headed by Aleksandr Lebed. Whereas authoritarian leaders traditionally play off one subordinate against another, under Yeltsin, whole organizations were embroiled in these court intrigues. It is precisely the deinstitutionalization of politics, with its focus on intrigues, elite conflicts, and personalized leadership, that prevented any democratic consolidation under Yeltsin's leadership. Elections were held on time and, although undoubtedly influenced by central and local authorities, were relatively free. But these elections did not make the regime politically accountable.

There is a question about the substance of his leadership. Some would argue that Yeltsin never had any serious democratic instincts and that his career was based on populist opportunism, while others continue to regard him as the least bad option in the circumstances of a Soviet collapse. For both camps, as the veteran human rights activist Kronid Lyubarsky states, “Yeltsin, undoubtedly, is one of the leading historical personalities of the twentieth century.” For Lyubarsky,

Yeltsin's influence was primarily positive, but he identified a motivating feature in Yeltsin's leadership: "In all the geological reverses in Yeltsin's fate the main if not the only motor was the instinct for power. The talent for power."²⁰ As Andrei Piontkovsky states, "Not since Joseph Stalin has any person in Russian politics had so acute an instinct for power as President Boris Yeltsin."²¹ It is this aspect, including the alleged tendency to place his personal interests above those of the country and society, that has revolted so many. Yet, the love of power is only part of the story. One of his biographers, Leon Aron, recounts how Yeltsin naturally aspired always to be number one, but he provides a mass of evidence to show that Yeltsin's striving for leadership, particularly in the early years, was mostly at the service of some greater goal.²²

It would be easy to develop a pathological analysis of Yeltsin's leadership. Much of his personnel policy was directed against individuals and had little to do with the development of policy or the consolidation of the institutional framework, and therefore was politically aimless. The primary political objective of Yeltsinism was to preserve the autonomy of personalized leadership, but the limited nature of this project brought out a number of unintended consequences. Perhaps the most significant of these was the reinforcement of the autonomy of certain sections of the economy against the state. However, although suspicious of the political popularity and status of rivals, Yeltsin was relatively tolerant of criticism. He neither craved praise nor was hypersensitive to condemnation, allowing the media to criticize him mercilessly. This is all the more remarkable given the dominance of politics, unconstrained by an autonomous middle class or effective countervailing political institutions.

Yeltsin's rule was indeed, as Vitaly Vitaliev called it, "politics by personality," with the concomitant rise of neo-Kremlinology.²³ In an unconsolidated democracy, charismatic leadership is inimical to democracy. This was, however, an idle personalized leadership cycle in which periods of somnolence were interspersed with sudden bursts of activity. Typically, this would consist of a vacation followed by the firing of a number of advisors and ministers, if not the prime minister himself. The purpose of cadre renewal was not to improve the efficacy of government, or even to consolidate Yeltsin's personal power, but to weaken any possible rival source of authority. This was also a feature of Gorbachev's leadership, with Yeltsin brought in to head the Moscow Party Organization to root out the supporters of one of the contenders for general secretary, Viktor Grishin, and with periodic purges of the Politburo and Central Committee designed to weaken Gorbachev's rivals, such as Yegor Ligachev and Nikolai Ryzhkov.²⁴ As Sherman Garnett notes of the Yeltsin years, "the cycle of decrees, new structures, and reforms is less a sign of sinister centralization than of quite the opposite—government disintegration."²⁵ The idleness of the cycle consisted not only in the failure to achieve policy innovation at the level of the presidency but also in that it weakened both rivals and also Yeltsin himself, eroding confidence in his judgment and undermining effective policy implementation.

The development of the presidency as an institution in the whole postcommunist period has been extraordinarily interconnected with the personalities of the

incumbents as individuals.²⁶ Although there has been an interesting debate on the perils of “super-presidentialism,”²⁷ and in all systems there is a dynamic flux in the relationship between incumbent and office, in the Soviet Union and then in Russia, exaggerated leadership has been an aspect that can be considered a metapolitical feature distinct from the evolution of the presidency as an institution. Indeed, we could go so far as to argue that charismatic leadership is the independent variable, and that the office is instrumentalized by the social power represented by the leader. Charismatic leadership in a time of accelerated change and systemic crisis draws out the problems of adaptation by evoking images of a tangible order implicit in appeals to national greatness or a glorious future personified in the figure of the leader. Charismatic leadership for Weber was the alternative to “legal-rational” forms of routinized, indeed bureaucratic, leadership—exemplified by both Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

Although charismatic leadership is curiously archaic, it is nevertheless an inalienable part of modern statecraft in Russia and elsewhere. For this reason, many commentators anticipated an authoritarian turn in Russian politics, where a genuinely charismatic praetorian intervention would promise to draw Russia’s fragmented statehood and social order together again by combining fundamental principles of statecraft. Although leadership is primarily about the day-to-day devising of policy and the politics of staying in power, statecraft designates two key relationships. The first is the relationship to the state—the attempt to further the national interest, however defined, of the state while maintaining the fabric of governance itself. For both personal and contextual (structural) reasons, both Gorbachev and Yeltsin were not positive exemplars of this feature, although Putin’s leadership is a clear attempt to overcome the failures of his predecessors in this respect. The second aspect of statecraft is the relationship of a leader to politics, where politics is defined as the formulation of recognizable goals achievable in their own terms and perceived to have internal coherence and some legitimacy, even for those who do not share the objectives. Here, Gorbachev’s record is fundamentally divisive, since the policies pursued during perestroika were not devised politically, that is, through the institutional contestation and reconciliation of various legitimate views.²⁸ Yeltsin’s record is more ambivalent, although the gulf between politics and government remained. Putin’s great strength at first was his ability to score highly on both the first and the second elements of statecraft, but his great weakness, as with Gorbachev earlier, has been the inability to find an adequately democratic way of legitimating his politics.

How can we understand this stubborn gulf between politics and government?²⁹ In part, the whole dynamic with various forces since 1985 has been the politics of insurgency, the attempt to mobilize resources to overcome perceived enemies by transcending immediate political limitations. Under Yeltsin, the politics of insurgency was taken to extreme lengths and was reflected in the inability to formulate detailed and considered long-term positive goals, and instead, anticommunism was equated with democracy itself. Yeltsin’s axiological politics meant that democracy became an “anti,” a politics of negativity in which every blow against the past was considered a step to the future. This destructive revolution-

ary rather than restorationist logic was in part derived from the context of Yeltsin's democratization project. Whereas in some East Asian countries (notably South Korea and Taiwan) democratization was sustained by the pressures generated by prosperity and economic success, in Russia (and other postcommunist countries) it was provoked by economic failure and state collapse. There is clearly a very different dynamic to a democratization of growth compared to a democratization of decay.³⁰

In his *Politics as a Vocation*, Weber identified three key qualities that characterize a genuine politician: passionate devotion to a cause, a sense of responsibility, and far-sightedness. Gorbachev scores high on the first two but is weak on the third. Yeltsin falls short on all counts, and in particular on the second. Although the Machiavellian dimension to politics was at the heart of Yeltsin's political style, it appeared disengaged from the needs of the state. Democratization in East Asia may have eroded the state's managerial capacity, but the collapse of communism undermined the very *raison d'être* of the state. The larger context of Yeltsin's failure of statecraft was that the whole idea of governmentality, an extended role for the state, was challenged. Too many of Russia's ills in the past had come from excessive state-centrism, but now the pendulum veered wildly in the opposite direction. The international context of state activism had also changed, with neoliberal policies favoring market forces and a minimal state. Classical notions of *raison d'état* (*arcana imperii*) were lost. The scramble was on for the richest pickings from the old state economy, while the state itself—its coffers and its authority—was pillaged. It was against this that Putin set his face, but the struggle against the over-mighty subjects created in the 1990s, above all regional barons and oligarchs, was in danger of reestablishing the over-mighty state. *Raison d'état* was raised to the highest level, and thus politics was rendered epiphenomenal, and potentially disruptive to the higher cause.

Ambiguities in the Appropriation of Civil Society

In the final period of East European communism, the concept of civil society was used in at least three specific senses. First, it was used as an act of historical reconstitution, returning to Europe in the philosophical sense of reconnecting with traditional liberal discourses of the West, from Hobbes through Locke, Mill, and beyond. Second, it was used as a form of resistance, whereby the opposition sought to create spaces in civil society where the logic of action did not so much directly challenge the party-state as ignore it, a policy of circumvention that proved extremely effective in delegitimizing the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and eroding its base in society.³¹ Third, as a form of emancipation, the concept assumed the outlines of a positive program to transcend both communism and capitalism by recovering politics for the social body itself. In the last days of the Soviet Union, these three elements of the discourse of civil society coincided, collided, and were contradicted in the tumultuous proliferation of informal associations (*neformaly*), but each facet was represented in a distinctively different way than in Eastern Europe.

As an act of historical reconstitution, although Europe was important as a referent, Russia's own past was more central. Russian national thinking then and

today is rooted in a retrospective logic in which key concepts and ideas are applied in a way far removed from the context in which these notions were originally generated. Thus, the writings of Nikolai Danilevsky, Konstantin Leont'ev, and the Eurasianists are applied in a decontextualized manner, and thus rather than rooting Russian thinking in a native context while speaking to universal themes, they are in fact rendered rootless and irrelevant to the contemporary challenges of society. This desperate attempt to come to terms with the past by drawing on the past suggests that the original experience was never worked through society in the first place; that civil society never absorbed these ideas, and instead the ideas remained the playthings of a narrow stratum of intellectuals and politicians. As for resistance,

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organizations such as Democratic Russia and the dense network of civic associations played an essential role in bringing mass demonstrations to the streets of Moscow and other cities. At crucial points, such as in February 1990, when the mass movement forced the Central Committee plenum to renounce the Party's "leading role," and in March 1991, at the

time of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies (CPD), the mass movement was able to change the course of history. Concerning emancipation, it was enough for most to be rid of the communist regime, and little thought was given as to what would replace it, let alone actions to sustain an autonomous critique of both capitalism and socialism.

The democratic movement in the period of insurgency (1988–91) challenged the old regime under the banner of general human and European values, but these proved inadequate and too amorphous to provide the basis for a sustained political program after the fall of the old system. The Democratic Russia movement was held together by the negative program of overcoming the power of the CPSU and extracting Russia from the USSR, but it never seriously planned to turn itself into a political party.³² Yeltsin himself became only the symbolic head of the democratic insurgency and undertook no obligations whatsoever toward the democratic movement.³³ The alliance between Yeltsin and the insurgency was an entirely opportunistic one on both sides, and the consequences were not long in coming. Yeltsin's political genius was to be one of the first to realize that the popular mobilization represented the emergence of a new political force, one he exploited to propel himself into power. For Lyubarsky, "the symbiosis of Yeltsin and the democrats was mutually fruitful,"³⁴ but most analysts are more cautious and stress the ambiguities in the relationship.³⁵ Under Gorbachev, perestroika failed to become a mass project, defined largely in negative terms, and failed in finding an enthusiastic social base for its reassertion of communist reformism, and the dominance of the regime bureaucracy in the process of systemic trans-

formation continued into the Yeltsin era and beyond.³⁶ Not only was Yeltsin's relationship with the movement parasitical, but later the organized democratic movement was eviscerated by its relationship with Yeltsin's regime.³⁷ As far as Dmitry Furman is concerned, "the path to the Putin regime began in 1991, when their party [the Right] seized power without the nation's consent. . . . The present right opposition is a party of nostalgia for 1991 which has failed to understand anything, just like the Trotskyites were a party of nostalgia for 1917 who did not understand anything."³⁸

Despite having rallied to Yeltsin in the October 1993 confrontation, putting thousands on the streets of Moscow on October 3, in a demonstration that helped swing the military toward saving the Yeltsin regime, by 1994, the so-called democratic movement (represented mainly by Democratic Russia) was exhausted as an organized political force, having been weakened by disappointing results in the December 1993 elections. Yeltsin's policies thereafter adopted a more assertive stance, culminating in the decision in November and December 1994 to intervene militarily in Chechnya. However, with the 1996 presidential election, with the formation of another "government of reforms" in March 1997 that included Boris Nemtsov and Anatoly Chubais, and with Sergei Kirienko's appointment in April 1998, Yeltsin attempted to keep the "project of '91" on the road. The president, and not even the presidency as an institution, substituted for the direct mass organization of a liberal political movement.

Under Putin, the democratic parties staggered on for a short while before succumbing to a crushing defeat in the December 2003 parliamentary elections.³⁹ Contrary to much comment from the West, it was not the regime that defeated organized liberalism in 2003 (although there is no doubt that there was a far from level playing field in the election campaign) but liberalism's own contradictions, including fragmentation. The roots of this fragmentation stood in the way that popular forces were mobilized during perestroika and their relationship to the regime in the great transformations of the 1990s. Only by asserting the impartial prerogatives of the constitutional state and arguing for the subordination of the regime to this framework (the rule of law and so on), rather than placing themselves in opposition to the state per se, can a *rassemblement* of the democratic movement take place and thus contribute to resolving the main political problem of the day: ensuring the accountability of the regime to society and the constitution.

State versus Regime

The extent of continuity between the bureaucratic-patrimonial regime of the Soviet type and the attempts to reconstitute elements of such a regime under Putin is a fundamental issue. Elements of a counterrestoration are apparent in Putin's regime, where the agenda of 1985 as modified by 1991 is gradually being undermined in favor of a new particularism, this time based not on revolutionary socialist principles but on Russian exceptionalism. The tension between adaptation to a model of governance devised elsewhere and autonomy in the choice of social order has once again come to the fore. The background to this is clear.

For most of the 1990s, Russia was in crisis. With the exception of 1997 and 1999, the economy declined; in politics, the country veered between crisis and stagnation. The roots of Russia's crisis reach far back into history, encompassing the larger struggle between various foreign-inspired models of modernization and attempts to maintain Russia's alleged uniqueness, yet the specific features of the situation under Yeltsin are found in the manner of the dissolution of the USSR, the institutional choices made in the exit from communism, the decisions taken on economic reform, and leadership styles pursued. The choices were determined by the struggle against the declining Soviet authorities and then by the constitutional failure to regulate the conflict between parliament and presidency. Out of this emerged a strongly presidential system, where the president enjoyed great formal powers but was unable to exercise them to the fullest. Was the continual crisis a result of policy mistakes by Yeltsin as a leader, or was there a deeper, structural explanation rooted in the policies of perestroika?

Perhaps the decisive factor is the conditions in which the Russian state achieved independence. The Russian state that emerged as a subject of international law in late 1991 was the creation of the regime, rather than the regime being subordinate to the state. Of course, the idea of Russian statehood long predates 1991, but before 1917, Russia had been buried in an imperial identity, and after the creation of the USSR in 1922 it was just one of the union republics. The tension between Russia's autonomous statehood and the confines of supranational politics is the subject of numerous studies.⁴⁰ The permanent feature is what we can call "subaltern statehood": the Russian state has historically been constrained by something outside it. In the imperial system, the autocracy claimed certain prerogatives that inhibited the development of a modern constitutional system. In the Soviet period, the Communist Party acted as the guardian of a revolutionary cause that was specifically designed to limit the autonomy of the state and to constrain popular initiative; hence, it is hardly surprising that when the changes began, they took the form, as Gordon Hahn argues, of a revolution from above.⁴¹

One of the main thrusts of Gorbachev's reforms in the latter part of perestroika was to allow the state and its institutions to emerge, but this was done in a peculiar way. A number of features of subaltern statehood continued right up to 1991. At the nineteenth party conference in June–July 1988, Gorbachev called on party leaders to relegitimize their rule by becoming the leaders of their local soviets. Instead of separating party and state, Gorbachev sought to intensify the link. Similarly, the development of postcommunist parliamentarianism was distorted by the creation of the sporadically convoked three-chamber Congress of People's Deputies in a two-tier system crowned by the permanently working Supreme Soviet. The transfer of a modified version to Russia was one of the main contributing factors provoking the September–October 1993 conflict.

Between 1985 and 1991, the Bolshevik system dissolved, but the Soviet state disintegrated. The dynamics underlying the two processes are very different, although there is a distinctive pattern of interaction between the two processes. The notion of system here is intended to indicate that the Soviet government, for all of its failings, was part of a broader political order that was deeply embedded

in society and largely represented the aspirations of a majority of society. In addition, the Soviet governmental system had the potential for significant evolution, even if by doing so it began a profound process of self-transcendence.⁴² However, as noted above, Gorbachev's definition of perestroika hesitantly embraced the notion of the actualization of the radical potential for popular self-management and self-governance in the Soviet system.⁴³ Although a popular movement did emerge, it was fragmented and ultimately oppositional and could not provide the social base for democratic politics within the framework of perestroika.

In Russia by 1990, the democratic movement took on a national form (not nationalistic, although at the margins there was no shortage of that either) supporting not the democratization of the Soviet Union as such (in whatever composition) but the creation of a Russian national state. The fateful question of whether Gorbachev should have split the Communist Party and placed himself at the head of a social democratic bloc by this late stage, and certainly by 1991, had become irrelevant. Even though the popular movement increasingly stood in opposition to Gorbachev, it was not an integral part of Yeltsin's insurgency and, like state development itself, took a subaltern role. The democratic leadership in Russia used the democratic movement instrumentally. The dissolution of the system and the disintegration of the state left a vacuum that was gradually filled by personalized leadership that took on the contours of a peculiar post-Soviet regime.⁴⁴ This regime remains insulated from social control and effective parliamentary accountability and strives to escape the bounds of the constitutional order of the state that formally it represents.

Axiology and Ideology

The shift from *partiinnost'* (party-spiritedness) to *gosudarstvennost'* (state-mindedness) during perestroika represented a shift from an explicitly ideological approach to political management to formal government by the impartial principles of the rule of law, Weberian bureaucracy, and rational policymaking. The tension between the revolutionism instituted in the ruling ideology and statism had been characteristic of the Soviet period,⁴⁵ but now the statism that prevailed from around 1990 entailed a whole new set of problems. However, the attempt to establish genuinely constitutional forms of statism in the 1990s came into contradiction with the autonomy of the regime, lacked a powerful social basis, and developed in an effective vacuum of autonomous political forces based in civil society and representing substantive constituencies. With the onset of the Putin era, the autonomy of the regime was accentuated in the guise of an unabashed statism, bringing Russia full circle. The statist ideology espoused by Putin appears more reminiscent of the old communist spirit, although the subject is no longer the allegedly universal ideals of building the communist system under the guidance of the party, but the narrowly particularistic purposes of the Russian state. The involution of subjectivity here is notable. For commentators such as Urban, Russian political culture is characterized by the logic of binary opposition.⁴⁶ Although certain principles of ideological thinking hold true, such as the us-them divide, the castigation of enemies and fifth columnists, and the attempt to arouse the defensive spirit by

invoking the threats to the state,⁴⁷ the shift in the subject from party to state grounds the binaries in a different logic.

A useful way of identifying the features of this new logic would be to associate the party spirit with ideological forms of motivation, while the logic of political conflict based on the state is axiological. Axiology can be defined as the Schmittian friend or foe distinction and the role of the exception, as practiced in societies where constitutional norms are weak and regime accountability to society is vestigial. In the Soviet period ideology and axiology coexisted, although not always comfortably. For example, during the Great Patriotic War (World War II), axiological features of mobilization came to the fore, and it took a major coercive effort by Stalin in the postwar years to reassert the ideological orientations of the party. The development of the cold war formalized ideological confrontation between two systems, although the axiological competition between states was lurking just below the surface. Indeed, for some commentators, it is precisely international factors that explain the Soviet collapse. How could a major world power, with a full armory of conventional and strategic weapons and with pretensions to act as an alternative civilization to that of the West, collapse so swiftly and conclusively? The USSR's confrontation with the West, elaborated in the conventions of the cold war, gave meaning and purpose to the Soviet state, and when the country retreated from confrontation with the West, the rationale for its continued existence disappeared. The various stages and manifestations of the cold war had become internalized into the institutional-structural fabric of the Soviet system. During perestroika, Gorbachev removed the cold war fighting aspects of the Soviet system to leave what he believed would be a truer form of socialism and a more effective and dynamic societal and economic system. Instead, he removed what turned out to be the essential core of the system, leaving it vulnerable to collapse.⁴⁸ In essence, during perestroika, the Soviet Union could no longer perpetuate itself as a system of values or institutional structures. However attenuated the class war aspect of Soviet power may have been by the end, the structure of values that it represented, including the prohibition on private ownership for the means of production, was essential for the normal functioning of the communist system. Once that legitimacy was taken away, all that was left was a naked and greedy power system.

Within the ideological carapace of the Soviet system, clearly there was a fundamental gulf between what can be called the core ideology, appealing in theory to the classics of Marxism and Leninism and based on a vision of proletarian emancipation, and the operating ideology, changing on the whims of the various leaders and acting as a filter to the core. The operating ideology became the substantive buttress for the rule of particular elites, even though much of what they were doing was contrary to the core ideology. The fundamental ethical quality of perestroika was the attempt to overcome the gulf between the core and operating ideology, with the intelligentsia in the vanguard and with groups like Memorial seeking to achieve moral recuperation by coming to terms with the past by establishing the truth about the system's crimes.⁴⁹ Leaders like Aleksandr Yakovlev sought to achieve a reconciliation within the ideology,⁵⁰ whereas Yeltsin very soon

began to operate at a very different level, that of axiological politics. The incommensurability between what Gorbachev and Yakovlev were trying to achieve, namely, the reinvention of the Soviet order (although, as I have suggested above, not the achievement of its putative emancipatory potential), and Yeltsin's ruthless political logic that had left all this far behind in the name of a postcommunist future helped provoke the dissolution of the system and ultimately the disintegration of the state.

The question of axiology focuses on the quality of political relationships, together with their ideological context. The tension, if not contradiction, between the logic of democracy, which accepts and provides a forum for the contestation of a range of alternative views

through politics, and the exclusive logic of axiological politics, which seeks to impose solutions on politics, characterizes Russian leadership in the postcommunist era. It is hardly surprising that politics as practiced by Gorbachev was acutely ideological, confronting the entrenched views of the Communist order with an alterna-

“Yeltsinian-era politics thrived best when in competition with some force that was defined as a threat to the very existence of the state, identified with the interests of the presidency.”

tive worldview based on universal humanitarian principles. These views were ultimately formalized in the draft party program, *Towards a Humane, Democratic Socialism*.⁵¹ Competitive politics as practiced by Yeltsin was constantly shifted not so much to the ideological as to the axiological plane, and thus inhibited the development of practical constitutional politics. This was the politics of struggle rather than that of settled “normal” politics. The configuration of beliefs that sustained Yeltsin appealed to democracy and the proclaimed universal principles of the West but, like the Bolshevik ideological politics of the earlier period, was susceptible to flexible interpretation while remaining loyal to the principle of axiology itself.

Yeltsinian-era politics thrived best when in competition with some force that was defined as a threat to the very existence of the state, identified with the interests of the presidency. This was particularly evident in the 1996 presidential campaign, when the Yeltsin camp portrayed the choice not as one between governments but as one between fundamentally opposed systems. Political and moral concerns were combined. I leave the question of what degree there was a real threat to the postcommunist order from an assorted set of Red-Brown revanchists, with not only the political achievements of the post-1991 order in danger but also the physical survival of its proponents at risk.⁵² This was an axiological milieu to which Yeltsin was accustomed and to which he contributed. As Goble noted, “Yeltsin has frequently sought to govern by crisis.”⁵³ Yeltsin himself noted, “In emergency situations, I’m strong. In ordinary situations, I’m sometimes too passive.”⁵⁴ Not only was he at his most effective at times of crisis, but at crucial points he would either engineer a crisis or take advantage of one to transform the

political system. This was the case with his dismissal of Yevgeny Primakov as prime minister in May 1999 on the eve of the Duma's vote on impeachment. The installation of a new prime minister, Sergei Stepashin, allowed Yeltsin once again to stamp his authority on the system, but he lacked the energy to establish a coherent policy line. His final period in office was characterized by his tenacious grasp on an office whose functions he could only partially fulfill.

Clearly, a permanent condition of axiological politics inhibits democratic consensus and consolidation, and threatens the integrity of the state and the tranquility of society. As Colton states, "His [Yeltsin's] all-thumbs approach has been distinguished by a propensity for polarization, frontal blows at entrenched adversaries, reliance on undifferentiated, antiestablishment mass opinion, and inattention to administrative detail and organizational structure."⁵⁵ As putative leader of "all Russians," Yeltsin by 1995 had thoroughly alienated the great majority of his fellow citizens. It was from this period that the axiological politics of the "lesser evil" was played for all it was worth, winning him reelection in 1996. But the degeneration of the regime had come earlier and is a phenomenon that needs explaining. It was not only Yeltsin's personal failure. To a remarkable extent, Yeltsin's faults were reiterated by the opposition, certainly by Ruslan Khasbulatov as speaker of the Russian CPD between 1991–93, but also in different ways by the leftist and nationalist opposition. The leaders of most non-Baltic post-Soviet states, moreover, have elevated axiological politics to become the cardinal principle of governance, something that takes extreme forms in Belarus under Alyaksandr Lukashenka. Compared with many of his peers in other post-Soviet states, Yeltsin was the lesser evil. Whether the same can be said about Putin has been increasingly questioned.

Displacement of Sovereignty

Although Russia had the full panoply of democratic institutions by the end of the 1990s, something was clearly missing. Shevtsova identified it as the absence "of a mechanism for elaborating and implementing socially effective decisions. [The power system] cannot develop independently and depends entirely on manual control."⁵⁶ Was this attributable to the personal characteristics of the leaders, or was it a response to the structural conditions of postcommunist Russia? A similar logic was at work in some of the other post-Soviet states, notably Ukraine (although with many differences in detail), which suggests that axiological politics as a political phenomenon is as much a systemic problem of post-Soviet systems as something arising out of the personality of the individual leader. Every state has a personalized face to its power structure, but the degree to which the power is institutionalized and depersonalized marks the extent to which a modern state has emerged. In Russia under Yeltsin and Putin, there remains a structural personalization in the form of the presidency in tension with the development of countervailing institutions—above all parliament, the judiciary, and federalism (the regions). Everywhere there is a tension between institutionalization and personalization, leading some to suggest that the recrudescing neopatrimonial regimes are a structural characteristic of postcommunist Russian politics.

If this were the case, however, then these features would be perpetuated despite leadership changes. Putin's presidency represents the repudiation of Yeltsin's particular elite configuration, but not of his axiological style.

Putin, groomed for the presidency by the Yeltsin elite, soon stamped his character on the presidency. Putin argued that democracy in post-Soviet Russia, "imposed from above," had almost led to chaos.⁵⁷ His innate skepticism about democracy was reinforced by his experience of the 1990s, when the democrats did not act very democratically. The attempt to overcome this chaos lay at the heart of Putin's program, and this challenged Yeltsin's political style but not Yeltsin's political program, broadly defined as international integration and the shift to capitalist democracy. It is this transformative impulse that runs as a common thread through the three leaders since the onset of perestroika. If during the communist era the "leading and guiding" role of the party was legitimated by its claims to be leading the country in building communism, now the presidency's leading role was legitimated by the need for strong leadership in the "reforms" required to build capitalism.⁵⁸ It is this common purpose of the nature of power, which by definition displaces sovereignty away from the people as they actually exist at any given time toward the sovereignty of an overriding ideal, that prompted Reddaway and Glinski to dub Yeltsin's regime "market Bolshevism."⁵⁹

The insurgency from the late 1980s against the communist system, headed by Yeltsin, was based on competing sovereignty claims. It was never clear who or what was to be sovereign in the new society, a question that is not yet resolved to this day. To what extent does the presidency, as the embodiment of the purported higher interests of the state, have the right to subvert popular sovereignty? Politics under Yeltsin remained embroiled in what might be called a permanent state of insurgency (the axiological politics discussed earlier), sometimes known as the politics of transition. No settled legal order emerged where the executive itself became subordinate to law. The issue was explored in revolutionary England by John Selden, where he distinguished, as Richard Tuck describes it, "between the arena of law and that of necessity."⁶⁰ Selden insisted that the plea of necessity "could never be used *within* the legal order,"⁶¹ and its use is an implicit admission that the civil order has broken down, or, in Russia's case, has not yet been constituted. As with the Bolsheviks earlier, a displacement of sovereignty took place; the regime eschews responsibility to the actual people existing at that time, and instead a mythical people of the future is invoked that would emerge as a result of the "transition" policies of the regime. Just as communism was built on the bones of the contemporary generation, so too the postcommunist Russian regime took on neo-Bolshevik features insofar as the irresponsible and profligate way that it implemented what may have been necessary measures, sacrificing the well-being of a large part of this generation for the good of the next.

Conclusion

Most restorations in history do not achieve a full return to the past but selectively incorporate elements of the revolutionary period into a new consolidated regime. In 1660, the monarchy was restored in England, but most of the social and polit-

ical changes of the civil war and Cromwellian period were incorporated. In 1991, the monarchy was not restored, and the degree to which the Soviet legacy remains viable for the new system has still not been resolved. In this sense, the respective revolutions did not “end” either with the rise or fall of Napoleon, or with the dissolution of communist power; the revolutions only assumed new forms. The adoption of the syncretic state symbols under Putin is vivid testimony of the historical eclecticism of restoration regimes. It was Gorbachev who symbolized the transcendence of the progressivist revolutions and thus allowed Russia’s return to “normal” politics, a type of politics that lacked an emancipatory edge. The subject of emancipation turned out not to be the people in the sense of the sovereign subjects of democracy, but a transformative elite guided by the principles of leadership and top-down modernisation.

NOTES

1. For an analysis of Gorbachev’s views, see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

2. M. S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London: Collins, 1987); M. S. Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

3. Cf. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” *National Interest* (Summer 1989): 3–17; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

4. Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev on Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

5. K. Kosík, *The Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Observations from the 1968 Era* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

6. This is not the place to explore the link between the Prague Spring and perestroika. Undoubtedly, there were close personal ties between many of the architects of Gorbachev’s reforms and leading figures in the Czechoslovak events, and Mlynář himself was probably closer to Gorbachev’s views of social change than he would admit. However, whereas the Prague Spring had the potential to become a genuinely popular non-capitalist form of social self-organization, *perestroika* firmly remained an elite-led renewal process that failed to integrate the nascent civic associations; hence, their rapid defection to alternative social and national projects.

7. Oleg Rumyantsev, *Osnovy konstitutsionnogo stroya Rossii* (Moscow: Yurist, 1994), 159–60.

8. Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism: The Classic Statement of Democratic Socialism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961).

9. Forrest D. Colburn, *The Vogue of Revolution in Poor Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

10. For a critique of this “universalizing” trend, see Tony Evans, ed., *Human Rights Fifty Years On* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

11. Other symbols were also restored. The “new” national anthem adopted on December 25, 2000, was the old anthem composed in 1943 by Alexander Alexandrov, with new words written by the author of the original lyrics, Sergei Mikhalkov (the father of film director Nikita Mikhalkov). On the same day, the two-headed Tsarist eagle, stripped of the shields denoting Muscovy’s victory over the former Russian principalities but with the addition of two small crowns flanking a large one, intended to symbolize the sovereignty of the Russian Federation and its republics, became the state emblem.

12. M. Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968).

13. For a good study of the demolition of the instruments of Party rule, see Jonathan Harris, *Subverting the System: Gorbachev's Reform of the Party Apparatus, 1986–1991* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

14. A. S. Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym: po dnevnikovym zapisiyam* (Moscow: Progress–Kultura, 1993), 519.

15. Archie Brown, "Introduction" to *Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin: Political Leadership in Russia's Transition*, ed. Archie Brown and Lilia Shevtsova, 6–8 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001).

16. The bugging and general harassment of Sergei Filatov when he was head of the presidential administration and beyond is revealed in a fascinating interview by Valery Streletsky, the head of the anticorruption unit of the Presidential Security Service, *Moskovskii komsomolets*, October 8, 1997.

17. Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

18. Alexander Shokhin, "Putin dolzhen vernut' foru ne konkurentam, a obshchestvu," *Nezavisimaya gazeta, Figury i litsa*, no. 1 (January 13, 2000): 11.

19. Eugene Huskey, *Presidential Power in Russia* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

20. Kronid Lyubarsky, "My vse glyadim v napoleony," *Novoe vremya*, no. 7 (1995): 16.

21. Andrei Piontkovsky, "Season of Discontent: Yeltsin Braces for Last Battle to Keep Power," *Moscow Times*, February 27, 1998, 6.

22. Leon Aron, *Boris Yeltsin: A Revolutionary Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 133 and *passim*.

23. Vitaly Vitaliev, "Yeltsin's Gamble," *Transitions* (May 1998): 3.

24. The use of perestroika as a way of weakening Gorbachev's opponents is analyzed by Susanne Sternthal, "Gorbachev's Change in Worldview," *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 453–79; and Lynn Nelson and Irina Kuzes, "Russian Economic Reform and the Restructuring of Interests," *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 480–503.

25. Sherman Garnett, "Russia's Illusory Ambitions," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (March/April 1997): 64.

26. For studies of the institutional development of the presidency, see Eugene Huskey, ed., *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992); Thomas M. Nichols, *The Russian Presidency: Society and Politics in the Second Russian Republic* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2000).

27. Notably M. Steven Fish, "When More Is Less: Superexecutive Power and Political Underdevelopment in Russia," in *Russia in the New Century: Stability or Disorder?* ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and George W. Breslauer, 15–34 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); M. Steven Fish, "The Executive Deception: Superpresidentialism and the Degradation of Russian Politics," in *Building the Russian State: Institutional Crisis and the Quest for Democratic Governance*, ed. Valerie Sperling, 177–92 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

28. Although politics were indeed reborn in this period, as analyzed by Michael Urban, with Vyacheslav Igrunov and Sergei Mitrokhin, *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), the gulf between politics and government was not transcended and has not been to this day.

29. Although not formulated in this way, M. Steven Fish's *Democracy from Scratch: Opposition and Regime in the New Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) is all about this problem.

30. Cf. the terminology of "negative" and "positive" moments in democratization used by Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Securing Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1990), 15.

31. The landmark Western formulation of the strategy is Andrew Arato, "Civil Society Against the State: Poland 1980–81," *Telos*, no. 47 (1981): 23–47. See in particular the two volumes edited by John Keane, *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* and *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1988).

32. Lev Ponomarev, "The Democratic Russia Movement: Myths and Reality," *Demokratizatsiya* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 15–21.

33. Liliya Shevtsova, *Rezhim Borisa El'tsina* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999), 46. An abbreviated English version has been published as *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

34. Lyubarsky, "My vse glyadim v napoleony," 17.

35. For example, Michael E. Urban, "Boris Yeltsin, Democratic Russia and the Campaign for the Russian Presidency," *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 2 (1992): 187–207.

36. Gordon M. Hahn, *Russia's Revolution from Above, 1985–2000: Reform, Transition, and Revolution in the Fall of the Soviet Communist Regime* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

37. There is a large literature about this. A self-serving but perhaps representative account is Gavriil Popov, *Snova v oppozitsii* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnoe izdatel'stvo "Galaktika," 1994).

38. Dmitry Furman, "Leave and Make Room: The Opposition in Russia Has Fulfilled Its Mission," *Russia in Global Affairs* 2, no. 3 (July–September 2004): 67–71.

39. See Richard Sakwa, "The 2003–2004 Russian Elections and Prospects for Democracy," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 3 (May 2005) 369–98.

40. For the period before 1917, see Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552–1917* (London: Harper Collins, 1997). For the late Soviet period, see Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

41. Hahn, *Russia's Revolution from Above*.

42. Stephen F. Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 459–88. The debate was continued in the same issue by Archie Brown, "The Soviet Union: Reform of the System or Systemic Transformation?" 489–504; Mark Kramer, "The Reform of the Soviet System and the Demise of the Soviet State," 505–12; Karen Dawisha, "The Question of Questions: Was the Soviet Union Worth Saving?" 513–26; Stephen E. Hanson, "Reform and Revolution in the Late Soviet Context," 527–34; and Georgi M. Derlugian, "Alternative Pasts, Future Alternatives?" 535–52.

43. Cf. Michael E. Urban, *More Power to the Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR* (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1990).

44. I have discussed the shift from a party system to a regime system elsewhere. Richard Sakwa, "The Regime System in Russia," *Contemporary Politics* 3, no. 1 (1997): 7–25; and *Russian Politics and Society*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 454–58 and *passim*.

45. The tension between these two poles is used to structure Malysheva's discussion of the historiography of the Provisional Government. S. Yu. Malysheva, *Vremennoe pravitel'stvo Rossii: Sovremennaya otechestvennaya istorografiya* (Kazan': Izdatel'stvo 'Kheter,' 2000).

46. Michael Urban, "The Politics of Identity in Russia's Postcommunist Transition: The Nation against Itself," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 733–65.

47. For example, the deputy head of the presidential administration, Vladislav Surkov, "Putin ukreplyaet gosudarstvo, a ne sebya," *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, September 29, 2004.

48. The argument recounted here is made by Nick Bisley, *The End of the Cold War and the Causes of Soviet Collapse* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

49. See Philip Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

50. Alexander Yakovlev, *Muki prochteniya bytiya—Perestroika: nadezhdy i real'nosti* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991); *Predislovie, obval, posleslovie* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992); *Gor'kaya chasha: Bol'shevizm i reformatsiya Rossii* (Yaroslavl: Verkhne-Volzhskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1994); *Postizhenie* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998); *Krestosev* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000); *Omud pamyati* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001). His books in English include *The Fate of Marxism in Russia*, introduced by Thomas F. Remington, foreword by Alexander Tsipko (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); *Striving for Law in a Lawless Land: Memoirs of a Russian Reformer* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); and *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

51. *K gumannomy, demokraticeskomu sotsializmu: Programmnoe zayavlenie XXVIII s"ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990).

52. Jeffrey Sachs and Katharina Pistor, eds., *The Rule of Law and Economic Reform in Russia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

53. Paul Goble, "Yeltsin's Political Calculus," *RFE/RL NewsLine*, May 12, 1999.

54. Boris Yeltsin, *The Struggle for Russia*, trans. Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: Random House, 1994), 205.

55. Timothy J. Colton, "Boris Yeltsin, Russia's All-Thumbs Democrat," in *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership*, ed. Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker, 49–74 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

56. Liliya Shevtsova, 'Beg na meste,' *Izvestiya*, February 12, 1998, 4.

57. Vladimir Putin, "Rossiya ne dolzhna byt' i ne budet politseiskim gosudarstvom: prezident Rossiiskoi Federatsii dal intervyyu 'Izvestiyam,'" *Izvestiya*, July 14, 2000, 1–2.

58. See George W. Breslauer, *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 145–46 and *passim*.

59. Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms: Market Bolshevism against Democracy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001). The "market Bolshevism" approach has been challenged by numerous authors, notably Anders Åslund, *Building Capitalism: The Transformation of the Former Soviet Bloc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

60. Richard Tuck, "Grotius and Selden," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns, 529 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

61. *Ibid.*, 528.