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AUGUST 1991 VERSUS OCTOBER 1993

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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Happened in August 1991</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting New Symbols in Place</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August as Liberation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August as Failure</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Happened in October</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing a Counter Myth</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August Versus October</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endnotes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMPETING MYTHS OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY:
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ABSTRACT

This essay considers August 1991 and October 1993 as fuel for political myths, primarily by examining how these dates have been commemorated to the present. It examines how political leaders attempted (or neglected) to manipulate memory of events for their own purposes. In essence, I argue that August 1991 has failed to serve Yeltsin as a founding myth for the new Russian state. Not only his actions in October and their subsequent framing by the opposition, but his initial inattention to the value of commemorative politics left Yeltsin without positive patriotic images at his command. Opposition leaders, by contrast, have devoted themselves to consolidating their versions of August and October. They have taken superficial parallels in location, rhetoric, and public participation to replace August with October as the defining moment in Russian politics. Although Yeltsin has made the case that October was really a mirror opposite of August, his timidity in molding patriotic ritual has allowed the opposition to largely control the commemorative calendar.

Russia today, like many new nations, is characterized by numerous intense conflicts over constructing and reconstructing the past. Memory is always fragmentary. Some things are recalled, others forgotten. With the passage of time, dramatized, public versions of the past further obscure imperfect, private memories. Moreover, various opinion makers—from historians and politicians to artists and journalists—mold past events. Politicians have a particular interest in preserving and shaping moments from the past because shared memories of nationally significant events provide grist for the formation of collective identities, and therefore for the consolidation of groups’ political legitimacy.

During the August 1991 coup attempt, journalists captured and reproduced the spectacle of Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin standing atop a tank in front of the Russian parliament building. Photos showed a mixed group of young and old, men and women with tense faces crowded around the tank, looking up at Yeltsin as he appealed to them to resist the unconstitutional actions of the so-called State Committee for the State of Emergency. Over the course of three days, hundreds of thousands of volunteers rallied around maverick democratic politicians in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and staved off the efforts by solemn, but not entirely sober, defenders of the old communist system. The image of Yeltsin heroically presiding over a popular revolution would seem to have provided Russian democrats with excellent fodder to distinguish the new regime from the old. After all, the peaceful, civic movement in defense of democratic leaders and elected institutions stood in sharp contrast to the conspiratorial, armed clique that had attempted to reverse political and economic liberalization. In the months immediately following the coup attempt, one can find evidence of some efforts to convert the August experience into a new set of state symbols.

But two years later the image of Yeltsin defending the nation from his base in the Russian parliament building was challenged, and perhaps replaced, in the public mind by new reportage of Russian tanks firing on the parliament on Yeltsin’s orders. Today the area
that in August 1991 Yeltsin officially named "Freedom Square" is partially occupied by a "Memorial Territory" for the victims of October 1993. On a weedy lot bordering the White House, members of the opposition have crafted small chapels out of scraps of wood, decorated trees with crosses and photos of victims. Reform and hardline communists and Russian nationalists of all stripes have united around the interpretation of October as the ultimate betrayal of Russian democracy by Yeltsin.

Introduction

During the August 1991 coup attempt, journalists captured and reproduced the spectacle of Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin standing atop a tank in front of the Russian parliament building. Photos showed a mixed group of young and old, men and women with tense faces crowded around the tank, looking up at Yeltsin as he appealed to them to resist the unconstitutional actions of the so-called State Committee for the State of Emergency. Over the course of three days, hundreds of thousands of volunteers rallied around maverick democratic politicians in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and staved off the efforts by solemn, but not entirely sober, defenders of the old communist system. The image of Yeltsin heroically presiding over a peaceful, civic movement would seem to have provided Russian democrats with excellent fodder to distinguish the new regime from the old. In the months immediately following the coup attempt, one can find evidence of some efforts to convert the August experience into a new set of state symbols.

But two years later the image of Yeltsin defending the nation from his base in the Russian parliament building was challenged, and perhaps replaced, in the public mind by new reportage of Russian tanks firing on the parliament on Yeltsin's orders. Today the area that in August 1991 Yeltsin officially named "Freedom Square" is partially occupied by a "Memorial Territory" for the victims of October 1993. On a weedy lot bordering the White House, members of the opposition have crafted small chapels out of scraps of wood, decorated trees with crosses, photos of victims, ribbons and flowers, and erected bulletin boards covered with lists of victims, clippings from the press and political commentary. Currently various political forces are fighting over not only the territory around the White House, but the very memories of the past.

Russia today is characterized by a remarkable number of intense conflicts over constructing and reconstructing the past for political ends. Beyond the occasional wild rumors that flow about plots and conspiracies behind the coup or the storming of the parliament, serious and concerted efforts have been made from above and below to frame August and October for ideological purposes. I will argue that August 1991 has failed to serve Yeltsin as a founding myth for the new Russian state. Not only his actions in October and their subsequent framing by the opposition, but his initial inattention to the value of commemorative politics left Yeltsin without positive patriotic images at his command. Opposition leaders, by contrast, have devoted themselves to consolidating their versions of August and October. Before addressing the cases at hand, however, one must
consider the complex dynamics of collective memories and the place of mythmaking in new states or new regimes.

Memory is always fragmentary. Some things are recalled, others forgotten. With the passage of time, dramatized, public versions of the past further obscure imperfect, private memories. Moreover, often consciously seeking to provide insight into the present or inspiration for the future, various opinion makers—from historians and politicians to artists and journalists—mold past events. Politicians have a particular interest in preserving and shaping moments from the past because shared memories of nationally significant events provide grist for the formation of collective identities, and therefore for the consolidation of groups' political legitimacy. National identity, after all, shouldn't be thought of solely as some sort of mystical cultural bond formed in the distant past. As the historian John Gillis points out, "National identities are, like everything historical, constructed and reconstructed," and need to be studied to "learn more about those who deploy them and whose interests they serve."¹

New, weak nations are particularly prone to struggles over the past. Political upheaval can create an ideological vacuum in which old symbols, heroes, myths seem to become irrelevant or invalid. Thus, drawing on the experience of the French revolution, the Bolsheviks looked to public dramas and festivities as a means of replacing the old Russian culture with a new Soviet one. In his study of Bolshevik mass celebrations, James von Geldern demonstrates how the Bolshevik leaders exploited historical episodes and holidays for political education.² Myths can mobilize adherents behind a range of potential policies and facilitate some kind of civic accord. "If the conflicts of the present seemed intractable, the past offered a screen on which desires for unity and continuity, that is, identity, could be projected." Gillis observed in describing post-revolutionary America and France.³ Therefore, new or would-be leaders may seek myths that not only justify their political pretensions, but also foster a sense of common destiny.

Nations have multiple reference points from which people can extract lessons. As one Russian commentator argued, "Undoubtedly any societal cataclysm (from the Great October Revolution to the crash of "MMM") willingly or unwillingly gives rise to myths, summoned to somehow ennoble what happened, to give it some sort of deep meaning and romantic halo." Myth-making is further complicated by the fact that any number of actors may take on the role of interpreting of the past. And yet, our commentator further suggests, "It's quite obvious that myths are formed most actively around those events canonized by the government."⁴ Although governments have substantial resources with which to direct public attention to specific historic moments, they can not guarantee that the public will share their interpretation of the past.

History, as students of Soviet politics well know, is not completely vulnerable to elite manipulation. In the Soviet period, communist officials used their monopolies on the media and association to promote memories of the recent and distant past that promoted the authority of the
Communist Party. But glasnost revealed that competing interpretations and memories had existed beneath the facade of unanimity. Just as vernacular memories of collectivization, repression, and war remained part of individual consciousness under Soviet rule, today popular memories may assert themselves against officially sponsored interpretations. Moreover, in open societies, the desire of leaders for a legitimating and unifying past may be confronted directly by local or group interpretations of the same eras or events. Therefore, the present Russian government may have to deal with organized political opposition groups that marshal and publicize alternate versions of the past.

Expectations of consensus on how to evaluate the past are unrealistic; yet, though they offer rival interpretations of the significance of the juncture, even at times of great discord opposing forces can often agree on the identity of distinct historical turning points as such. In Russia, August 1991 marks such a moment. In the aftermath of the failed coup, the Communist Party was banned and the USSR dissolved along the lines of its constituent republics. It seemed as if the democrats had won a great victory in the six-year struggle over the course of political reform. Today the standing of August 1991 as the most significant political event in recent Soviet/Russian history has been challenged by the equally dramatic shelling of the Russian parliament building in October 1993. Nevertheless, all political contenders in Russia continue to offer interpretations of both of these events.

This essay considers these two key moments in Russian history as fuel for political myths, primarily by examining how these dates have been commemorated thus far. It examines how political leaders attempted (or neglected) to manipulate memory of events for their own purposes. As a form of mythmaking, public commemoration of past events or historical personages is particularly accessible to study and it has the benefit of being, "by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the products of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation."5 I also look at the reactions to the anniversaries by the press and politically active segments of the population. Admittedly, it is far easier to judge the intentions of planners behind celebrations than the reactions of spectators, but attendance at rallies and limited poll data provide the means for taking a first cut at understanding the dynamics of collective memory as a basis for political authority in Russia today.


On the morning of August 19, 1991 broadcasts by a new organization calling itself the State Committee for the State of Emergency (GKChP) flooded Soviet airwaves. Composed of seven top officials--including the USSR Vice President Gennadii Ianaev, KGB head Vladimir Kriuchkov, Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov and Defense Minister Dmitrii Iazov--and the head of the Peasants' Union,
the GKChP informed the public that it had taken power due to incapacitating health problems on the part of USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev. The early decrees broadcast that day, however, demonstrated that the GKChP aimed to reverse Gorbachev’s increasingly liberal policies of political and economic reform. For instance, the GKChP suspended political parties, arguing that “Taking advantage of the liberties that have been granted, and trampling on the first shoots of democracy, extremist forces have emerged, embarking on a course toward liquidating the Soviet Union, ruining the state, and seizing power at any cost.” The Committee members promised to preserve the Soviet Union by preventing the signing of the new decentralizing union treaty scheduled for August 20th, to lower prices on food and vital consumer services, and to improve the housing, medical and educational systems. Thus, the Committee members presented themselves as saviors of a nation in which the security of Brezhnev-era socialism had given way to political and economic chaos.

Although the GKChP had isolated Gorbachev and his family at their vacation home in the Crimea, it had not taken the precaution of making sweeping arrests of other potential opponents. The government of the Russian Republic headed by Yeltsin took the lead in opposing the GKChP’s seizure of power. Perhaps to the surprise of the coup-plotters, Yeltsin sprang to the defense of his long-time rival Gorbachev. Within hours of the GKChP’s first announcement, Yeltsin and his close associates had drafted a public statement charging the GKChP with illegally removing the elected President of the USSR. Yeltsin, Ivan Silaev, the chair of the Russian Council of Ministers, and Ruslan Khasbulatov, the acting chair of the Russian Supreme Soviet, signed the appeal labelling the seizure of power a "putsch" and declaring all of the GKChP’s actions to be unconstitutional.

During the course of the next two days a standoff developed between the army units that had moved into Moscow on the directions of the GKChP and crowds of civilians mobilized by Yeltsin with the assistance of journalists and democratic activists, who spread the news of the Russian government’s defiance by fax, phone, and broadsheet. Individually and collectively, civilians appealed to soldiers not to obey any orders to fire on the crowds. On second day of the coup over 100,000 citizens attended rallies in Leningrad and Moscow. Fearing that an attack might come under cover of darkness, hundreds of protesters spent the night at makeshift barricades around the Russian parliament building, known as the White House, where Yeltsin and his team had set up a command center. On the night of August 20-21 three young men were killed when they tried to prevent some tanks from moving closer to the White House. But the coup plotters never mustered a military attack on the Russian government.

Finally, on the afternoon of the 21st, a delegation of demoralized putschists rushed to the Crimea to try to curry favor with Gorbachev. The USSR President, however, sided with the Russian government and the chief plotters, with the exception of Kriuchkov who committed suicide, were arrested. When Gorbachev appeared before the Russian legislature on his return, Yeltsin acted not as his gracious subordinate, but humiliated Gorbachev by forcing him to admit that he was
betrayed by his hand-picked subordinates. Yeltsin suspended the activity of the Russian Communist Party, an action that Gorbachev matched at the national level only on the 23rd, when he also stepped down from his post as Party General Secretary. In the months that followed, the USSR was dissolved spontaneously by its constituent members and Gorbachev found himself without a job.

II. Setting New Symbols in Place

In the wake of the arrest of the coup plotters, Yeltsin and the Russian government acted decisively to set a tone of victory. They immediately marked their achievement by declaring August 22 a national celebration of "Freedom Day." They christened the territory in front of the White House "Free Russia Square" and adopted the old Petrine tricolor carried by many defenders of the White House as Russia's flag. Moreover, the government moved to honor the civic participants in the resistance to the coup by creating a new medal to honor the defenders of the White House. And they lavished attention on the families of the three youths killed at the barricades. The USSR government similarly honored the dead by making them "Heroes of the USSR" posthumously and later by creating a block of postage stamps that featured their portraits set around a picture of the White House. In a marked contrast to Gorbachev's actions upon his return to Moscow, Yeltsin immediately sought out the crowds once the crisis had passed, and thanked them profusely for their heroism and sacrifice. He even declined Gorbachev's subsequent offer of a "Hero of the USSR" award, giving credit for the defeat of the putsch to the masses.

The government also organized funerals for the three martyrs. The Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church led the service for the two Russian victims, while a rabbi presided over the burial of the third. At a massive rally on Manezh square preceding the funeral, Gorbachev expressed his sense of obligation to the young people. But Yeltsin stole the show with his use of the highest patriotic rhetoric—"We do not bid farewell to their names because henceforth their names have become sacred for Russia"—and his remarkable plea to the victims' families to "Forgive me, your president, for not being able to defend, to protect your sons." In continued display of humility, Russian politicians marched with the crowd to cemetery for the last rites. The funerals were broadcast live on national television. Coverage was, in the eyes of two Western observers, scripted to depict Russia as a nation newly "committed to common citizenship in civil society." To this end, reportage of the funerals switched back and forth between the Orthodox and Jewish burial rites and stressed the diverse class backgrounds of the three martyrs. Also significant for the ongoing struggle between Yeltsin and Gorbachev was the decision to bury the three with Russian flags on their caskets and to the accompaniment of the Russian national hymn.

The popular response to the end of the coup consisted of far more than attendance at state sponsored rallies. The first popular celebration began spontaneously, even before officials felt secure enough to announce victory, when rock musicians put on impromptu concert at the barricades
on the afternoon of the 21st. Later in the evening, a euphoric crowd roamed through Moscow, threatening to break into Party offices on Staraia square and attempting to topple the statue of the founder of the Soviet secret police, Feliks Dzerzhinskii from its perch in front of the KGB building. The public mood was militant and revolutionary. Indeed, the crowd’s determined assault on Dzerzhinskii forced the city authorities to remove the monument with a crane so as to prevent injuries among the bystanders. They also removed a statue of Kalinin that had similarly attracted the crowd’s ire. The two monuments were deposited behind the sculpture garden at the Central House of Artists. But Moscow officials did not undertake further systematic steps to rid the city streets of the multitude of communist era statues.

The Russian government was not the only group to claim the mantle of August. Already during the defense of the White House, civic activists proposed the formation of a permanent volunteer defense force. In the words of an appeal to defenders of the parliament composed on the night of the 21st: “But God save us from giving in to euphoria. The monster is still alive and will destroy many of us one by one if we presume to disperse with a feeling of having done our duty. Only our dead brothers have fulfilled their duty completely.” The author of the manifesto, therefore, called on people to unite in a “living ring” [zhivoe kol’eso] that could instantly gather wherever the “monster” appeared. A month later, the “Living Ring” union held its founding conference in Moscow and laid out as its main goal “to be an active participant in the democratic transformations, the formation of rule of law in Russia, and to be a popular guarantee against totalitarian regimes.” Indeed, the organization’s very name drew on nascent democratic traditions in the USSR--harking back to the precedents of human chains around government buildings in Vilnius and Riga in 1991 and around the KGB during commemoration of Soviet Political Prisoners day.

The union also saw itself as an organization for pursuing the interests of defenders of the White House. The members chose not be a political party with a distinct ideology, but instead to adopt the tasks of preserving memory of August and disseminating facts about what happened. “Living Ring” took on the duty of identifying those eligible for the Russian government’s “Defender of Free Russia” medals, honors that did not carry any particular privileges.

III. August as Liberation

The Russian government’s preferred mythical version of the events of August 1991 can be easily identified in Boris Yeltsin’s public addresses on the occasion of the first anniversary of the coup attempt. On August 21, 1992, Yeltsin gave a live press conference in the Kremlin. He welcomed the press “on the day of victory... of the forces of democracy and the supporters of change, of the whole Russian people, over reaction.” In flowery language, he thanked the journalists in particular for their role in defending democracy and in showing the world “the new Russia, previously unknown, the Russia that could overcome its old instinct of resigned
In an earlier television address to the nation, the President had praised the unselfish, patriotic impulse that had sent citizens to the barricades. The defenders of the White House also knew, he claimed, that most Russians in different cities and towns were with them. And he compared the rejoicing in the wake of the defeat of the plotters to the celebrations that marked Victory Day in 1945. Once again, civic unity had been the formula for defeating a monstrous enemy. Moreover, Yeltsin used the anniversary to try to reinforce a desired connection between support for Russian sovereignty and support for his radical economic reform program by announcing the start of voucher privatization. He told citizens that their active participation in economic change in 1992 was just as vital to the fate of the nation as their actions to fight the coup attempt in 1991.

At the press conference, however, a journalist delicately raised the idea that the GKChP's actions could not be seen as a serious attempt at revanche by asking the President's opinion of conservatives' references to the putsch as an "operetta." Yeltsin answered testily that the death threats made against his person and the presence of thousands of tanks and armored personnel carriers in the streets of Moscow were not the stuff of farce. Yet, this charge that the putsch was not serious highlighted a key problem with the preferred version of August: the centerpiece of the drama of August was a non-event—the awaited, but never attempted storm of the Russian White House. Thus, a commentator in 1992 could refer to the living ring around the White House as a big festive "happening" and compare its canonization to the Bolsheviks' false dramatization of the storming of the Winter palace—an event which was also disappointing from a mythical point of view until rewritten by dramatists and screenwriters. If the coup plotters were bumbling idiots with no chance of success, their defeat could hardly serve as proof of the strength of the democratic movement.

The democratic myth of August was further weakened by its reliance on the claim that the Russian people had overwhelmingly demonstrated in 1991 that they had been transformed into irrepressible supporters of democracy. In reality, mass resistance to the coup in the Russian Republic was largely limited to Moscow and Leningrad. In the provinces, journalists and activists publicized Yeltsin's appeals, but local officials and citizens tended to wait till the outcome was fairly clear before publicly adopting a pro-democratic stance. Journalists, also, had not uniformly supported the Russian government during the coup. However, Vitalii Tret'jakov, the outspoken and often controversial editor of Nezavisimaiia gazeta was the sole liberal observer to recall in 1992 that only a minority of Muscovites had turned out and that outside of the city the general response was inertia. But Tret'jakov nevertheless defended the interpretation of August as an occasion of civic resistance by noting that those who did turn out on the barricades represented a cross section of the population.

Also problematic for the myth of August as a great democratic victory was the tenuous nature of any link between people's anger with the unconstitutional seizure of power and support for radical
economic reform. Opposition to a return to Brezhnevite socialism with its stultifying, puritanical censorship or to the reimposition of a single party dictatorship did not necessarily translate into enthusiasm for Yeltsin’s plans for economic change. One could disagree with radical economic reform and still not be aligned with GKChP, as the speaker of parliament Khasbulatov argued when he voiced his disagreement with many of Yeltsin’s proposals but distinguished his views from Pavlov’s conservative economic policies and still cited August as a great victory.\textsuperscript{25} Pravda, still a mouthpiece of the Communist Party, moreover, suggested that material disappointments had led people to reevaluate what August meant; it put the anniversary headline “A year ago tomorrow everything looked totally different...” not over a picture of tanks in the streets, but over a chart showing changes in consumer prices since 1991. Pravda also featured interviews with citizens complaining about the unexpected emergence of a super rich elite in conjunction with higher prices on consumer goods.\textsuperscript{26} The same newspaper featured on the 22nd a poll in which 32% of respondents claimed that their view of August had changed for the worse (as opposed to 2% for the better) and in which 41% favored releasing the imprisoned members of the GKChP.\textsuperscript{27}

Democratic papers, on the other hand, stressed people’s fearful reactions in 1991 and the moral significance of the decision whether or not to resist the putsch.\textsuperscript{28} Vladimir Lukin chided people for their overly romantic expectations of an instantaneous transition to normal life. He reminded the public that freedom was its own reward.\textsuperscript{29} In general, liberal criticism of Yeltsin in 1992 was quite mild, consisting mostly of complaints about the scarcity of democratic activists in high state offices.\textsuperscript{30} And, no doubt speaking partly out of self-justification, one leading activist of "Living Ring" insisted on the possibility of a repetition of a coup, arguing that democratization was not yet thorough enough to allow for a relaxation of vigilance.\textsuperscript{31}

Over all, the Russian government did not try to use the anniversary for educational or entertainment purposes. For instance, they did not sponsor a reenactment of the defense of the White House. In fact, Yeltsin expressed disagreement with the idea of a lighthearted celebration, given the tragedy of the three deaths. He suggested instead that people celebrate on June 12th—the official day of Russian Sovereignty; but that date marked the passage of legislation and had no popular roots, provided no obvious forum for public participation.\textsuperscript{32}

The anniversary of August was not an official national holiday. Nevertheless, civic activists, entrepreneurs and city governments in Moscow and Leningrad did organize both festivities and solemn ceremonies. The Moscow organizing committee, despite losing a big sponsor at the last minute, promoted the "Vivat, Rossiia!" festival, which included a restaging of the "Rock on the Barricades Concert." Despite poor weather, "Living Ring" members met on the 19th, without official speakers, at the site of their barricades.\textsuperscript{33} And at a general democratic meeting, which attracted some 8-12,000 people, Khasbulatov spoke, followed by Gaidar, Burbulis and deputies Adamovich, Iakunin, and Gdlian.\textsuperscript{34} State representatives—INCLUDING Rutskoi, Gaidar, Burbulis,
Khasbulatov--also participated in the unveiling of a special memorial to the three victims at Vagankov cemetery. Museum displays also added to canonization of August. The political opposition marked the anniversary very quietly. The Russian Edinstvo organization held a conference at which conspiracy theories of putsch were discussed. And several nationalist groups gathered at the grave of Marshal Akhromeev to mourn his suicide in the wake of the coup's collapse.

IV. August as Failure

By 1993 neither Yeltsin's administration and its democratic allies nor the growing communist and nationalist movements treated August 1991 as an untainted, glorious event. Increasingly polarized political camps did not agree on the meaning of the defeat of the GKChP. Was August 1991 the end of a revolution, or its beginning? Was the coup itself an act of treachery or of heroism?

In August 1993 Yeltsin once again gave a live news conference to mark the anniversary, but this time his address was longer, more political, and rather defensive. He still insisted August was a turning point, the moment when the fate of reform and Russian sovereignty was decided. And he defended the memory of August against attempts to "cast doubts on the noble impulse of many thousands of Russian people, who had come to the defense of democracy and freedom." Yeltsin did not, however, shy away from the unpleasant fact that his own key lieutenants during August 1991--namely Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi and the speaker of the Supreme Soviet Khasbulatov--were now in opposition to him. Instead, he specially thanked those "who subsequently have continued to maintain their loyalty to the ideals that they were prepared to defend, even at the price of their lives."

In 1993, facing fresh political opposition. Yeltsin readily conceded the possibility of a reactionary reversal. He did not hesitate to lay out the lines of dispute between him and the Supreme Soviet. He castigated legislators for their rhetoric, destabilizing laws, and blocking of constitutional process, and lamented that the White House had "turned into a bulwark of revanchist forces today." Moreover, Yeltsin used the occasion to admit that he made a big mistake in August 1991 when he did not seize the opportunity to hold new parliamentary elections, and to urge that the mistake be corrected now. In response to a question about the immediate future of relations between the executive and the legislature, he noted that, "The remaining part of August will be artillery preparation [artpodgotovka], as I call it. Then there will be September, the most crucial month." He subsequently clarified this statement by saying that he meant political, not military struggle. Nevertheless, he clearly sent the opposition a strong warning.

Opposition forces in 1993 labeled the August anniversary an occasion for mourning--mourning for the death of the Soviet Union. Nostalgia for empire and super power status united communists
and patriots. They framed their criticism of Yeltsin, however, in new democratic vocabulary on this occasion. Thus, a Pravda editorialist called Yeltsin "totalitarian" and accused him of using tactics reminiscent of 1937 to whip up hysteria in support of harsh measures against his enemies. He argued that Yeltsin's supporters were propagating a false dichotomy--that it was either "us" or "monster-reactionaries ready again to send people to the gulag." He further accused the democrats of having exploited tanks as a backdrop to make themselves look sincere. Another commentator turned the analogy made by democrats between August 22, 1991 celebrations and the euphoria of V-Day 1945 on its head by arguing that Russians at present were suffering far more than they had during World War II. Finally, Pravda once again tried to strike a populist pose by focusing on ordinary citizens, whom it claimed were "rethinking" the meaning of August 1991. Its editors again turned to man-in-the-street interviews to demonstrate that people were often confused about what happened in August 1991. One person reasoned that Yeltsin had looked heroic, but had really been acting for himself. Another person argued, "It is hard to say who was right, who was guilty. Maybe that GKChP would have restored order. Everyone laughed at the funny name. But is SNG [CIS] much better?"

The democrats also expressed their unhappiness with the state of affairs. Even fewer romantic illusions remained from 1991. August was no longer seen as the end of a fight--but rather as just the start of another round of battles for power between elite politicians. By the second anniversary, democrats had become concerned with the delays in proceedings against the coup plotters, and a Kuranty poll claimed that 60% of Muscovites agreed that the plotters should be brought to trial rapidly. The inability of the prosecutor's office to bring the case to court seemed to show the weakness of the democratic system. The new governors of Russia were seen as perpetuating the lack of accountability that had dominated under communist rule. "The precedent of lawlessness gives birth only to lawlessness," wrote Vitalii Tret'jakov, who urged people not to treat the putschists as hooligans whose petty crimes should be forgiven and forgotten.

Although they blamed Yeltsin for not having consolidated what might have been a decisive victory in August, democratic leaders had not defected to the side of the White House. In fact, Lev Ponomarev, a leader of the Democratic Russia Movement, when asked by an interviewer about the danger of a "GKChP-2," replied: "Yes, in a drawn out, crawling form a new putsch is already underway. Khasbulatov, as leader of the Supreme Soviet has totally gone over to the side of the GKChPists, of the extremist forces... demonstratively ignoring the results of the April referendum [on early elections and faith in the executive], in practice they're carrying out a coup." And one citizen wrote to the leading perestroika era liberal paper Moskovskie novosti to beseech democratic activists, journalists, and leaders to wake up and recapture the fighting spirit of August, to remember the "times of Sakharov and Afasans'ev." Yet, the same paper published a survey that showed that, although the number of those condemning the GKChP's aims had not changed from 1991, in
1993 only 15% thought the August coup would go down as a glorious page in history. By contrast 30% believed that it would be remembered as a misfortune, and 43 predicted it would be viewed as insignificant. In general, Russian citizens had returned to a state of political passivity and, in particular, had largely ceased participating in demonstrations—and the anniversary of August was no exception in this regard.

In August 1993, Yeltsin supporters and opponents in Moscow organized competing rallies. Memories of a violent clash between extremists of the opposition and the militia on May Day raised fears about a new confrontation. City authorities worked hard to ensure that the two sides did not encounter each other. Both camps, needless to say, wanted to demonstrate in front of the White House. The democrats wished to mark Yeltsin's shining moment, the opposition to show that, "The genuine supporters of democracy—including those who were here two years ago—like before are on the side of the White House [i.e. supporting Khasbulatov and Rutskoi against Yeltsin]." The democratic protesters did not receive Yeltsin's support. At his August 19th press conference Yeltsin responded to a question about the potential for anniversary rallies to end in violence, by noting "I also do not believe that this form is essential." Nevertheless, at the democratic rally on August 20, Yeltsin's chief of staff Sergei Filatov spoke. as did key economic reformers Chubais and Gaidar. The administration's representatives tried to orient the crowd toward the political future, to get them looking forward to new elections. August 1991 again became just a battle in a war that was yet to be won. Neither camp drew large crowds. Kuranty claimed "Living Ring" supporters numbered 6,000, while the opposition mustered only 2-3,000. The festival side of "Vivat, Rossiia" also took place, with the highlight again being the now traditional rock concert for young people.

V. What Happened in October

On the evening of September 21, 1993, President Yeltsin made his plans for a "fighting September" clear when he announced in a live television broadcast that he had issued a decree "On the Gradual Constitutional Reform of the Russian Federation." This decree mandated the dissolution of the present legislature—the Russian Supreme Soviet—and the rapid election of a new Federal Assembly. The leaders of the Supreme Soviet responded with a midnight session where, guided by the judgement of the Constitutional Court—which had already met in its own special session—they declared Yeltsin's decree unconstitutional. They swore in Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi, whom Yeltsin had fired by a decree of questionable legality earlier in the month, as the new Russian President. In the week that followed, approximately 140 deputies refused to leave the White House even after the presidential administration cut off telephone and ultimately electric service to the building. On September 28th, the White House was totally surrounded by barbed wire and guards. The standoff was characterized by escalating name-calling between members of the
executive and legislature, that peace talks organized by the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church failed to temper. Meanwhile, civic supporters of the parliament increased their activity in Moscow. Protests on October 2 and 3 ended in bloody clashes between demonstrators and police. The militia and OMON troops did not hesitate to use extreme force.

On October 3 a crowd of several thousand demonstrators broke through an OMON cordon with surprising, and some would argue suspect, ease and approached the White House. The besieged parliamentarians, encouraged by this visible display of popular support, came outside to speak to the crowd. From the White House balcony, Rutskoi and Khasbulatov urged their followers to storm the nearby building of the Mayor's office and to move on the Kremlin and the television center at Ostankino. The crowd turned on the Mayor's building, smashing windows and taking up posts inside. Then, commandeering some vehicles and taking weapons from the White House armory, a delegation headed off to attack the Ostankino tower. At the television center, they encountered fierce armed resistance. After a short violent battle in which passersby also lost their lives, the defenders of the White House were repelled. Yeltsin responded to the outbreak of violence by calling a state of emergency in Moscow and informing citizens that the "armed fascist-communist mutiny" would be put down as quickly as possible. Early on the morning of October 4, the Russian government brought in tanks to shell the White House. In the aftermath of the storm, officials set the number of victims at 145, though opposition accounts cited much higher figures. Many details of the October events remain murky, especially since the newly elected parliament amnestied the leaders of both the October events and the August 1991 coup attempt in spring 1994 before trials could be held. Moreover, in exchange for Yeltsin's consent to the amnesty, the parliament promised to abandon its plans to investigate the October events.

VI. Constructing a Counter Myth

Khasbulatov, Rutskoi and their allies sought to give their actions in the besieged parliament all the trappings of legality. As in August when Yeltsin asked the public to rally not around him personally, but around the democratically institutions of state, Rutskoi appealed to the public "to defend the Constitution and the law." Using the language of August, the opposition leaders labeled Yeltsin's decree a "governmental coup." Their language was readily adopted by their civic supporters who referred to Yeltsin's "dictatorship" and dubbed themselves "defenders of the constitution." Opposition activists mixed in communist era terms as well. For instance, the radical "Working Russia" organization called Yeltsin an "enemy of the people." Others revived the cry of "All Power to the Soviets." They also applied derogatory terms made newly popular in the capitalist era, such as "criminal" and "mafia," to democrats.

Not only did the language of constitutionality provide a connection to August 1991, but during the October crisis the opposition forces occupied the same territory and, at least initially, benefitted
from the impression that they faced imminent attack by more powerfully armed force. The
defenders of the White House clearly sought to create the public image of themselves as the true
heirs of August in the sense of real elected representatives and as the recipients of genuine civic
support. The "false democrats," one homemade leaflet declared, by surrounding the White House
with barbed wire had set up a "concentration camp for dissidents." This text thus combined
powerful language connected to the two great populist victories in modern Russian history—the
victory over the Germans in World War II and over the totalitarian system in the 1980s—to stir up
civic, patriotic conscience. The mere use of the term "blockade" by the opposition also evoked
memories of the desperate struggle of men, women, and children in Leningrad during the 500 day
Nazi siege.

The biggest difference from August 1991 was that in October 1993 both sides turned to
violence to try to further their aims. The OMON roughed up demonstrators; the defenders of the
White House stormed several buildings; the army at Yeltsin’s command shelled the parliament; and
the police beat many oppositionists when they fled the burning parliament building. And, unlike in
August 1991, civilians did not attempt to win over the military through fraternization. Indeed, the
public seemed somewhat hardened to the use of force. The shelling of the parliament did not bring
new crowds to the defense of Khasbulatov and his allies, but instead attracted thrill seekers. As one
witness observed, "There was the impression that some kind of performance had been organized, and
that people had come and taken their seats in the boxes... in order to get a good view." Moreover, as a result of the October events, over 100 people died. They were not given state
burials or even negative official acknowledgement; instead, relatives had to search out for themselves
the fate of their loved ones in the city’s hospitals and morgues. Also, it was unclear whether the
dead could be counted as conscious supporters of the White House or whether they were simply
accidental victims of the street fighting.

VII. August vs. October

Since the October events, both official and popular commemorations of August have changed.
Most importantly, the Russian government's already meager attention to the anniversary declined
even further. Today, only the executive branch pays any heed to August, and its efforts have
become increasingly less populist and less inclusive. In August 1994, President Yeltsin did not even
interrupt his black sea holiday (presumably not at Foros) to address the nation in person. Instead,
the presidential administration funded a conference—which met in its buildings on Staraia square—on
the lessons of August. Yeltsin sent the participants a brief written address in which lamented that
the whole truth about August had not been uncovered and marvelled that some people continued to
question whether the coup really happened. Still, he defended August as the first revolution in
defense of the law in Russia. His only allusion to October was an expression of dismay that three
years later some participants in the defense of the White House had renounced their actions. He did issue a decree declaring 22 August "Day of the State Flag," but without explaining why the flag was the one piece of August to be enshrined. Nor did he elaborate on how this day was meant to be marked.

In 1995 and 1996, Yeltsin gave short "interviews" to newspapers of his choice. However, in 1995 Pravda exposed that Yeltsin had adopted CPSU general secretaries' old practice of returning written responses to questions submitted ahead of time by journalists. In other words, the "interviews" allowed for no give-and-take and might have been ghost-written by Yeltsin's staff. The president clearly felt a need to be insulated from potentially embarrassing or difficult questions. Perhaps to distract attention from the many democratic activists who had broken with Yeltsin over Chechnia and other issues, Yeltsin used the anniversary to argue for a new concept of "democrats"--the prototypical democrat, he argued, was no longer the dedicated demonstrator, the radical opponent of the old regime, but the professional policy maker. Though he thus downplayed the significance of public demonstrations of support, he praised Russian citizens, averring, "Russia is the home to ordinary people who dream the same dreams as all normal people in the West. That is why democracy is not a forbidden fruit for us." The anniversary of August is no longer linked with new policy initiatives but with the principle of stability.

After the October events, it became difficult for liberal or conservative commentators to recall August 1991 without reference to October. Playing up the territorial parallel, Kuranty featured a photograph of anti-Yeltsin graffiti on a wall near the White House next to a picture of the 1994 reunion of those who had been on the barricades in August. Two years later, Nezavisimaja gazeta presented August as simply the prologue to a series of coups. Its editor argued that the myth of August as a revolution ending totalitarianism could no longer be believed, and hence celebrations of the anniversary were absurd. In fact, Tret'iakov argued that the restructuring of politics in October showed that August was not a decisive victory. And on the 1994 anniversary, he printed a sarcastic review of what had happened to major democrats from August 1991--including Rutskoi, Khasbulatov, Burbulis, Popov, Barannikov--noting each one's "fall from grace," "removal from office," or "voluntary resignation." The shocking dissolution of the coalition of politicians that resisted the GKChP led another editorialist to look back on the whole episode as a strange dream. He accepted the blame for a continuing lack of accountability in Russian politics in the name of the people, who were too naive in their faith in "good tsars." Another democratic leader similarly argued that mistakes were not made during resistance to the coup, but afterwards. Overall, the democrats now looked back on August 1991 as a time of hopes that were soon to be disappointed.

Conservatives consistently depicted August 1991 as a tragedy, most importantly because it initiated the dissolution of the empire. After their amnesty, the former coup plotters became increasingly outspoken in their criticism of both Yeltsin's economic policies and his handling of
foreign policy. Their mistake, according to Lazov, was in not using force.\textsuperscript{71} A pro-communist commentator characterized the battle in August 1991 as between a minority of "new Russians" and a majority of "old Russians"—one that the wealthy minority had won. He further claimed, using the October events as evidence, that politics had been more democratic in 1990 than after August 1991.\textsuperscript{72}

In a major change of pace, in August 1994 opposition forces kicked off the anniversary "celebrations." On August 19, the Union of Officers laid flowers on Akhromeev's grave. They followed up with a press conference where conservative officers, including Gorbachev's former deputy defense minister Varennikov spoke. Newly-acquitted in the case against the August coup plotters, Varennikov, in fact, defended the GKChP as having sought "to restore the government, and not the power of the CPSU."\textsuperscript{73} A "Working Russia" demonstration that afternoon gathered some 2,000 in protest against Yeltsin's military policy.\textsuperscript{74} Democratic groups began their activity only that evening, when different organizations and representatives of the August defenders of the White House gathered on Free Russia Square.

The pattern of commemoration by the civic democrats has remained the same as before October: a meeting by defenders at the White House; a general democratic rally; and a rock concert. But enthusiasm for demonstrations has clearly waned. The main democratic meeting in 1994 attracted only 200 people, whereas counter-demonstrations by the united opposition the next day gathered two to three thousand people.\textsuperscript{75} The customary wreath laying at the graves of the three victims was attended only by Shokin and other less well known and low ranking officials; even the rock concert was poorly attended in 1994.\textsuperscript{76} By 1996, the festive side of the program had come to dominate. The rock concert was not only the best attended, but received the most coverage in the press.\textsuperscript{77}

Democrats' preferred version of October is somewhat difficult to ascertain, given that their real preference—a peaceful dissolution of the Supreme Soviet—did not occur. One can begin, however, with Yeltsin's statement on the first anniversary of October and his lengthy treatment of the events in his memoirs. Yeltsin tried to put October in perspective as the end of a process started in August. Hence, he assessed his sentiments on watching the broadcast of his speech announcing the dissolution of parliament: "Russia was entering a new epoch. We were shrugging off and cleansing the remains of the filth, lies, and falsity accumulated for seventy-odd years. Just a few more shakes and we would all start to breathe more easily and purely."\textsuperscript{78} Yeltsin justified his violent suppression of the crisis by arguing that the opposition had brought the country to "civil war." The defining image of October for him was "hysterical demonstrators throwing themselves at unarmed policemen, provoking a horrible massacre."\textsuperscript{79} October represented the mirror opposite of August: in August non-violent resistance brought about the withdrawal of troops, whereas in October an aggressive "defense" ended in military suppression. Moreover, Yeltsin argued that, since the
mutineers failed to win over people either in the capital or in the provinces, one could look at October as a period once again of popular support for democracy. Placing the parliamentary leaders in the same camp as the GKChP, Yeltsin interpreted the lack of popular support for the October offensive as society once again choosing "an uncertain, difficult freedom" over "a well-fed slavery."80

The anniversaries of October have been dominated by opposition interpretations, in part because the liberal press has paid minimal attention to trying to unravel what really happened in October. Instead, democratic journalists marked the anniversaries by printing the opinions of members of the establishment intelligentsia, who called the October events a tragedy, but accepted Yeltsin’s interpretation that the opposition was starting a civil war. Even those who condemned use of force in settling conflicts, argued that Yeltsin had little choice but to dismiss the parliament and to answer force with force.81 Journalists struggled to find acceptable images of victory in the rubble of the White House. One approach was to further tarnish the reputation of the opposition by focusing coverage on fascist elements within the opposition. Only the always iconoclastic Nezavisimalia gazeta reproached the mainstream liberals for tarring all of the defenders of the White House as fascists.82 A second strategy was to stress the "pre-history" of the crisis, rather than its ignoble denouement.83 Finally, liberals pointed to the crowd that gathered at Moscow’s city hall in response to Gaidar’s call for help on the night of the fourth. They drew a distinction between the "lumpen" elements that supported the opposition and the "thinking people" who supported Yeltsin.84

The opposition has held several rallies each year on the anniversary of the October events. These meetings have consistently drawn thousands of people in Moscow each year.85 Opposition groups have worked together to organize meetings under a single umbrella group with a non-partisan name--the "Committee for the Memory of the Tragic Events of September-October 1993 in Moscow." Their commemorations have featured a variety of Communist, nationalist, and even fascist symbols, but have been dominated by poster size reproductions of photographs of victims. After a parade in which each group marches in a coordinated group, all gather for an Orthodox funeral ceremony at the "memorial territory" near the White House. In this script, leaders appear together but only the priest speaks, thereby keeping any contradictions submerged. In the run-up to December 1995 elections, however, opposition leaders were criticized by liberals for treating a mournful occasion like a "festival for parties and movements."86 But in general, the opposition has displayed remarkable unity, when compared to liberals; they have not pointed out each other’s mistakes in October, nor indulged in recriminations over the past--though on the first anniversary, Rutskoi echoed Yeltsin’s famous apology to the families of the victims of August.87 Thus, in the wake of his strong but unsuccessful presidential campaign in 1996, Ziuganov who was notably silent during the 1993 crisis was still awarded the prominent position in the commemorative parade.
The battle over the memory of August 1991 and October 1993 shows a myriad of political actors searching for positive mythic elements with which to inspire an increasingly jaded and apathetic public. Despite their substantively different interpretations of these key events, politicians from across the spectrum have demonstrated some similar interests. First, all wish to lay claim to the mantle of genuine civic support. In what must surely be a positive development, they use the language of democracy to present themselves as truly popular representatives and as committed to a legal order. On the other hand, both denigrate their opponents’ civic supporters as naive and misguided at best, and “bourgeois” or “lumpen” at worst. Second, both canonize young victims to underscore the serious and heroic nature of their different attempts to defend the White House as a base of power. In this, one may hopefully find a real aversion to use of force. Third, both sides wish to draw attention away from the fluid, rapidly shifting nature of political alliances in post-Soviet politics so far. After all, it is hard to present a manichean scenario if one is perceived as fighting ones former partners.

Commentators have taken a slightly different tack toward the two events. On both sides, journalists have been more frank about their respective disappointments. Their willingness to accept canonization of top leaders—whether Yeltsin, Rutskoi or Khasbulatov—has declined with the passage of time. Each anniversary serves to remind that euphoric hopes for decisive political victories have not been realized. And yet journalists play a major role in keeping the memory of past crises live in the public imagination. They help create myths and also hold them up for examination. For instance, as regards politicians’ commitments to non-violence, the anniversaries have provided occasions for journalists to remonstrate with leaders. Thus, a liberal editorialist writes in 1996, “Five years ago the president asked for forgiveness for not being able to protect three youths from absurd deaths. If he should have to do this today, then the biggest difficulty would be that the whole presidential apparat would not be able to tell Yeltsin how many Russians had been killed.”

Conservatives have avoided discussing Rutskoi and Khasbulatov’s calls for the violent storm of buildings—but they united behind a presidential candidate who was notably not implicated in the aggression. And liberals and conservatives alike use the anniversaries to complain about rising public indifference toward politics, even when it involves violence.

Whereas Yeltsin praised social calm and the professionalization of politics, commentators have lamented citizens’ retreat from the public square. They use polls and interviews to demonstrate the public’s confusion about how to evaluate the past. For instance, in October 1996 the liberal Moskovskii Komsomolets published a survey showing that three years ago 78% of Muscovites said they were on Yeltsin’s side in the October events, but at present only 39% claimed to have supported him. Moreover, in 1996 only 24% were willing to say that the president’s actions were correct while 42% said it was hard to say which side was in the right. Thus, it seems that the President’s preferred version of October, as of August, has lost its sway.
What could Yeltsin have done differently to better deploy collective memory to consolidate democratic legitimacy? First, he could have seized the opportunity in 1991 to create new holidays and celebrations to replace old ones. Why not have made the anniversary of the coup an occasion to rival the anniversary of the October revolution? By 1994, one commentator already mourned the loss of August 1991 as a patriotic touchstone: "It won't be much of a surprise if on a future anniversary, the defenders of the White House decide that victory over the putschists was only their personal holiday. And then people will wonder: is this a holiday at all?"91 Fear of heavy-handed propaganda need not have prevented any state support for patriotic rites. One can imagine a large-scale dramatization of August that was both educational and participatory. By not making the August anniversary a non-working national holiday, Yeltsin lost an opportunity to craft a new democratic ceremonial practice. Instead, rather than putting himself out and recapturing the spirit of closeness with the people, Yeltsin has increasingly withdrawn from popular celebration of the civic triumph of August. It would be naive to think that brief televised speeches alone could strongly influence memory in an open society.

Second, Yeltsin and his allies could have worked harder to propagate memories of those parts of August with the most popular resonance.92 Instead of going back to old traditional Russian motifs, such as the two-headed eagle, for new state symbols, they might have crafted new graphic representations that stressed democratic principles—such as popular participation, or respect for other republics' sovereignty. They could also have found more lasting, public means to commemorate the deaths of the three youths killed during the defense of the White House. After all, the Soviet postage stamps with their portraits became unusable a few months after they were issued, and the only marker is not on a public thoroughfare but in Vagankov cemetery.

As regards the October events, Yeltsin was aware of the parallels to August and did try to defuse them as the stand off developed. For instance, the decree dissolving parliament was originally scheduled for the 19th of September but concern arose that this would remind people of the GKChP coup, which started on the 19th of the month.93 Nevertheless, Yeltsin could have presented the contrasts between August and October more forcefully—though perhaps not to the extent suggested by the radical democratic activist Valeria Novodvorskaia who suggested with all seriousness that he make October 5 a non-working holiday called "The Day of the Liquidation of Soviet Power."94 If Yeltsin and the democrats had already consolidated their view of August 1991 as a victory for the people, they might have been less timid in challenging the united opposition's interpretation of October that cast them in the role of enemies of democracy.
END NOTES


5. Gillis, "Memory and Identity," p. 5.

6. Early statements of the GKChP can be found in Victoria Bonnell, Ann Cooper and Gregory Freidin, eds., *Russia at the Barricades* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 33-41; quotation p. 34.

7. During the defense of the White House it had been reported that, "at the suggestion of the Muscovite-defenders of the Russian White House," the square bordering the building would be renamed "The Square of Popular Unity" [Ploshchad' narodnogo edinstva]. Photo caption, *Putsch: Khronika trevozhnykh dnei* (Moscow: Progress, 1991).


15. Ibid., p. 217.

16. Note other smaller organizations--namely "Otriad Avgusta" and "Avgust 1991"--splintered off "Living Ring" to represent more militant trends among the defenders of the White House.


21. Alla Latynina, “'No voriugi mne milei chem krovonitsy...’” Moskovskie novosti, August 23, 1992, p. 22. On how the dramatized version of the storming of the Winter Palace replaced the more truthful, duller one even in memoirs of participants, see von Geldern, Bolshevik Mass Festivals.

22. After his release from Foros, Gorbachev quickly took the line of downplaying the danger represented by the coup plotters. The liberal media, however, preferred a script that stressed the threat; thus one documentary omitted photos of crowds fraternizing peacefully with tank crews. Bonnell and Freidin, "Televorot," pp. 40, 42.


24. Vitalii Tret’iakov, "19 Avgusta k nam prishla svoboda," Nezavisimaiia gazeta, August 19, 1992, p. 1. Nezavisimaiia was also the only liberal paper to publish a harsh attack on Yeltsin’s leadership, and that was written by a Radio Liberty correspondent based in Munich. Iulia Vishnevskiaia, "Restavratsiia," August 18, 1992, p. 5.


32. Balancing celebrations and mourning is a problem common to such anniversaries. Victory day commemoration, for instance, has incorporated both solemn wreath laying ceremonies and festive "narodnoe gulianie."


37. Yeltsin further compared the political atmosphere in the White House to that of the Central Committee when it was engaged in dressing down offending members.


46. VTsION poll of 1,300 Muscovites in Moskovskie novosti, August 22, 1993, p. 8.


51. Kolesnikov, "Vkhod tol'ko dla belykh."


56. Istoriia Sovremennoi Rossii, p. 189.


58. Ibid., pp. 28-33.

59. Ibid., p. 113.

60. The opposition also invoked the names of war heroes and used the slogan from the most famous World War ii recruiting poster--"The Motherland is calling." Ibid., p. 167.


73. Varennikov alone among the coup plotters and October conspirators refused to accept parliament's offer of amnesty. In August 1994, almost on the anniversary of the putsch, the Russian procurator in essence dropped the charges and asked the court to acquit Varennikov.
75. Evgenii Krasnikov, "Rossiia skromno otmetila godovshchini krakha GKChP," Nezavisimaia gazeta, August 23, 1994, p. 1; Kuranty did not even publish estimates of the turn out, saying only that "several hundred" participated in a prayer service at the site where the three young men were killed in 1991. It accompanied its article with a photo of big crowd from a MMM shareholders demonstration, and a close up of three defenders of the White House. Maksim Shiriamov, "Pominal'naia molitva," Kuranty, August 23, 1994, p. 2.
80. Ibid., pp. 267, 280.


86. Iadviga Iuferova, "Dni pamiati ili festival' partii?" Izvestiia, October 3, 1995, p. 5.


88. Solomonov, "Sladkii son."


92. A rapid trial of the coup plotters might also have gone a long way toward restoring popular faith in accountability of all before the law. For reasons of space, however, I will not discuss the politics of amnesties here.
