

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH

OCCASIONAL PAPER

TITLE: Boris El'tsin, Democratic Russia
and the Campaign for the Russian
Presidency

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DATE: August 1991

In accordance with Amendment #6 to Grant #1006-555009, this Occasional Paper by a present or former Council Trustee or contract Awardee has been volunteered to the Council by the author for distribution to the Government.

NCSEER NOTE

This paper, which describes and analyzes the campaign for the presidency of the RSFSR and its bearing on the formation of political parties, was written shortly before the August 19 attempted coup.

BORIS EL'TSIN, DEMOCRATIC RUSSIA
AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENCY

The focus of this study - Boris El'tsin's successful campaign for the Russian presidency - might appear at first glance as an event more or less circumscribed in time and comprehensible through the categories commonly employed to understand analogous phenomena. Taken as a discrete event, the campaign transpired within a specific time period in which (ostensibly) six candidates vied for the office of President of the Russian Federation (RSFSR). As in other contests of this type, the contenders stumped the hustings, explaining their respective platforms and attacking those of their opponents. Moreover, along the lines of conventional presidential races, this one featured such things as televised debates, press endorsements and a liberal measure of 'dirty tricks'. Like their counterparts anywhere, Russia's voters exhibited varying degrees of interest, involvement and sophistication. On June 12, 1991 they elected Boris El'tsin as their first president.

Although these (and other), aspects of Russia's first presidential contest were at least superficially reminiscent of a conventional election, this was not the case at the core. For involved here was not simply the issue of a change in leadership or even (perhaps deep) changes in socio-economic or political institutions, but a thoroughgoing systems transformation signaling the end of state socialism in Russia and the beginning of a new social order. For this reason, the establishment of the presidency itself - primarily a political act inseparable from the issue of who would fill the office - represented an integral phase of El'tsin's campaign. Once the race for this office was under way, his opponents, instead of combining to stop the front runner, fanned out. That is, those associated with the old order fielded a spate of candidates, all of

whom ran against El'tsin. None had either hope or thought of becoming president as a result of the balloting of June 12. The whole point of their efforts was to deprive El'tsin of a first-round majority and thus force a run-off between him and the next best vote-getter. Should that have occurred, it perhaps would be proper to situate that election closer to the norm. Even though the stakes would have remained exceedingly high, there would have been another candidate actually seeking the office rather than merely attempting to retard El'tsin's progress. Since that did not happen, however, it would seem rather unwarranted to regard our subject as primarily a presidential election, and more accurate to view it as El'tsin's successful effort to create, and then capture, the Russian Presidency in the face of opposition from the old order. Accordingly, our discussion highlights his campaign and includes those of his opponents only insofar as they impinge on this central concern.

Establishing the Office

In principle, the idea of creating the office of President of the Russian Federation engendered little debate. At Russia's First Congress of People's Deputies in May and June of 1990, effectively all deputies from all factions endorsed the notion. Indeed, the 'Communists of Russia' group - perhaps the most obdurate opponent of El'tsin and his supporters in parliament - had even arrived at the Congress with such a proposal among the amendments that they offered to the RSFSR's Constitution.¹ In the context of Russia's bitterly divided politics, however, this consensus in principle could not survive the concrete issues of what powers this office would possess, how it would be filled and, perhaps most importantly, who would fill it. When El'tsin was named by the Congress (after a number of ballots) to the post of Chairperson of the

Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Communist support for creating the Presidency began to evaporate. El'tsin's exit from the party in July, his growing popularity and his increasingly bitter feud with Mikhail Gorbachev dried it up entirely.

At the Second Congress in December 1990, no action was taken on the matter other than a rather bland resolution instructing the Supreme Soviet and its Constitutional Commission to consider appropriate amendments to the RSFSR's Constitution.² Since a Constitutional amendment would require a two-thirds majority in the Congress, Communists of Russia and their allies in the legislature seemed well positioned to repel any attempt at establishing a powerful and popularly-elected presidency, one that would most probably result in El'tsin assuming the office. Subsequently, however, the Gorbachev-sponsored national referendum on retaining a 'renewed' union ironically provided the El'tsin forces with the opening that they needed.

On January 25 1991, the Presidium of the RSFSR's Supreme Soviet proposed tacking another question on to the referendum in Russia: 'Do you consider necessary the introduction of the position of President of the RSFSR, elected by universal suffrage?' Some days later on February 7, the Supreme Soviet accepted this proposal and resolved to put this question on the same ballot as that regarding the 'renewed' union. On March 17, Russia's voters endorsed the idea of a presidency by a margin of some 70 per cent and, on the following day, the Presidium rendered a (legally questionable) ruling that establishing the presidency by referendum was not a Constitutional matter and therefore required only a simple majority of those casting ballots.³ By thus circumventing the necessity of a two-thirds majority in the Congress, the El'tsin forces had outflanked their opponents.

The effect of this flanking manoeuvre became clear when the extraordinary Third Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR convened in late March. On the opening day of the Congress, as many as a million Muscovites took to the streets of the capital, defying Gorbachev's ban on street demonstrations and registering their support for the democratic forces in government and their resistance to the counterrevolution then being waged by key elements in the central government and their allies in Russia, especially the Russian Communist Party. Inside Russia's parliament, the Congress called by Communists of Russia for the purpose of discrediting El'tsin, if not removing him from office entirely,⁴ backfired badly. Although Communists of Russia and their associates in the legislative faction 'Russia' - with their combined control of about 50 per cent of the seats in parliament⁵ - managed to keep the question of the presidency off the agenda, the referendum, as a legislative form of direct popular sovereignty, had already inserted the wedge needed to establish the office.⁶ Moreover, the immediate presence of a defiant, pro-democratic public on the streets and the political consideration of being associated with Russia's right-wing politicians whose standing in the opinion polls had hit bottom,⁷ forced a breach in the anti-El'tsin camp. Aleksandr Rutskoi, Afghan war hero and prominent 'patriot' on the political scene, took the rostrum to denounce his erstwhile colleagues in Communists of Russia, to announce the formation of a new faction, 'Communists for Democracy' (which initially brought in some 20 deputies previously affiliated with Communists of Russia, plus another 150 from various other factions and groups), and to extend the full support of his following to El'tsin.⁸

As the Congress wore on, it became clear not only that the right-wing had failed in its attempt to remove El'tsin from office or at least damage his standing, but that the right-wing

itself was beating a disorderly retreat. On April 5, the final day, the Congress resolved that a presidential election would be held on June 12, that the Supreme Soviet would draft a Law on the Presidency as well as appropriate amendments to the RSFSR's Constitution pursuant thereto, and that a Fourth Congress would convene on May 21 to ratify the Constitutional changes. What is more, the Third Congress also acceded to El'tsin's surprise request that he be immediately invested with the power to issue binding decrees within the scope of extant legislation in order to stabilize Russia's economy and advance the cause of economic and political reform.⁹

Political momentum now solidly behind El'tsin and his supporters, the Supreme Soviet authored draft amendments to the Constitution establishing the office of President along with a bill, 'On the Election of the President of the RSFSR', that it reported to the Fourth Congress. With the exception of two provisions - one regarding the inadmissibility of the President holding membership in a political party, the other granting him the power to sack local government officials - the Congress concluded on May 25 by providing the El'tsin forces with their preferred version of the presidency. To be sure, the right-wing had emplaced a number of roadblocks along the way, offering its own amendments to the electoral law and attempting to delay passage of the proposed Constitutional amendments.¹⁰ Although it was arithmetically conceivable that they commanded enough votes to prevent ratification of the amendments by the required two-third majority, the reminder issued by Sergei Shakhrai, Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet's Legislative Commission, that the referendum of March 17 had already established the presidency and that only another referendum could undo that fact,¹¹ ensured that right-wing resistance was, in the end, futile.

The El'tsin Campaign

Russia's Central Electoral Commission, charged with the overall organization of elections in the RSFSR and with monitoring the conduct of district electoral commissions, set May 18 as the official opening of presidential campaign.¹² Thus, the formal campaign period included only 23 days, a term that for 'normal' presidential elections might appear excessively brief. Yet, in context, it would not be inaccurate to suggest that the referendum of March 17 and the Third Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR were already phases of this campaign, albeit ones that assumed other-than-normal venues. As Mikhail Shneider, one of the directors of the El'tsin campaign in Moscow, remarked on the issue of dispatch:

Our task has been made difficult by the short term for conducting this campaign; indeed, by the hurried way in which the legislation was put through and all the imprecision in the law and regulations and the confusion that has resulted from that. Of course it would be better to have more time to organize. We've never done this on a national scale before. But we're facing an economic crisis and we need presidential action immediately. One week can make a huge difference, not to mention a month. And from that point of view, I would say that [El'tsin] doesn't need a lot of time to acquaint the voters with himself and his programme. These things are well known to everyone. In this respect, you could say that his campaign began in 1987 [when he broke ranks with the Politburo, from which he was expelled and then deposed from the leadership of the Moscow party organization].¹³

The El'tsin campaign, along with most others, began operations as a petition drive commencing in late April, considerably before the date prescribed by the Central Electoral Commission. This simply reflected the fact that the law drafted by the Supreme Soviet on April 24 established two methods for entering a candidate's name on the ballot: either by a petition with a minimum of 100,000 signatures; or by the nomination of a registered political party or

public organization that received the endorsement of at least 20 per cent of the deputies at the Congress. So, prior to the legal establishment of the presidency, prior to the adoption of the law under which the campaign and election would be conducted and prior to their own registration as an 'initiative group' authorized to gather signatures, El'tsin forces launched their campaign with a mass rally in Moscow that began the petition drive.

El'tsin's Grand Manoeuvre. Spearheading the El'tsin campaign was 'Democratic Russia' an amalgam of political parties, public organizations and simple members that had first taken shape during the Russian parliamentary elections of 1990. El'tsin, who was among the initial leaders, had suspended his membership in the group prior to standing for election to the office of Chairperson of Russia's Supreme Soviet. By the time of its First Congress in October 1990, at which Democratic Russia constituted itself as a political body standing somewhere between a party and a movement,¹⁴ El'tsin no longer maintained any formal ties with the organization. Democratic Russia's programme demanded the immediate resignation of the President, government and parliament of the USSR and the holding of new elections envisaged as terminating what remained of the Communist state. With his own call for Gorbachev's resignation on national television on February 19, 1991, El'tsin, still regarded as Democratic Russia's symbolic leader (albeit with a lapsed membership), appeared to be again casting his lot with the revolutionary democrats.

Although Democratic Russia's programme also supported the complete 'departization' of society (namely, removing party organizations from all state and public institutions), its own decision of January 1990 - in obvious contravention to this principle - to build a mass base by establishing 'cells' in factories and public institutions¹⁵ vastly accelerated its growth. By April,

it boasted a membership of 1.3 million organized in a thousand cities and towns across Russia.¹⁶ With a significant presence in the parliament of the RSFSR (about 35 percent of the seats), majorities in the city soviets of Moscow and Leningrad and its demonstrated ability to put hundreds of thousands of supporters on the streets of the capital and other large cities despite the inclemencies of the Russian winter and the menacing presence of the army and internal security forces, Democratic Russia by spring had emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Moreover, its informal alliance with the burgeoning strike movement, which shared its political demands regarding the resignation of the government of the USSR, appeared to indicate that the goal of non-violent democratic revolution was within reach.¹⁷

The strategy collapsed on April 23 when, to the surprise and dismay of Democratic Russia's leadership, El'tsin joined with 8 other chairpersons of supreme soviets in the republics of the USSR to sign with Gorbachev the so-called 'nine-plus-one' agreement outlining the ground rules for establishing a new 'union of sovereign states'.¹⁸ El'tsin's volte face triggered immediate activity in the hitherto dormant fault lines running both under his partnership with Democratic Russia and the strike movement, and inside Democratic Russia and the strike movement themselves. Many of those attending the rather stormy meeting of Democratic Russia's Coordinating Council on April 25 declined to conceal their shock and anger as El'tsin explained his reasons for seeking accommodation with Gorbachev. Had El'tsin not gone behind the backs of both the democratic and workers' movements in order to cut a deal with their sworn enemy?¹⁹ Although Democratic Russia's larger and more authoritative body, the Council of Representatives, soon endorsed the 'nine-plus-one' accords as a mutual and mutually-beneficial compromise between the centre and the republics,²⁰ the movement's top leadership, in the

persons of Democratic Russia's five co-presidents, continued to regard El'tsin's actions 'not completely, but to a significant degree, as mistaken.'²¹

The 'nine-plus-one' agreement was integrally connected to El'tsin's overall strategy for campaigning for the presidency. On the one hand, he had already become the generally acknowledged personification of opposition to the Communist order and the central authorities. Power flowed in his direction as a wave of political strikes and mass civil actions revealed a central government bereft of substantial popular support and increasingly unable to govern. He was consequently in position to shore up Gorbachev's authority by striking a bargain with him. At the same time, a severely weakened Gorbachev proved the ideal bargaining partner for El'tsin. Not only could he exact from Gorbachev an agreement very much to his liking,²² but their new partnership ensured against any serious opposition from the Communist Party at the upcoming Fourth Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR which, after all, had yet to pass the legislation creating the presidency.

On the other hand, the 'nine-plus-one' accords enabled El'tsin to act like a presidential leader throughout the remainder of the campaign. His first success in this respect was achieved by pacifying the striking miners, who had first reacted angrily to El'tsin's accommodations with their opponents. By April 29, El'tsin was visiting Russia's mining regions, winning over the initially hostile strikers with provisions from the very agreement that they had seen as a sell out. For the 'nine-plus-one' agreement, since it recognized the economic sovereignty of Russia, implied the transfer of all-union property to Russian jurisdiction. As far as the mines were concerned, Russia would pass this property directly to the miners themselves.

As a matter of fact, arrangements for transferring the mines to Russia's jurisdiction had already been going forward for some time.²³ No one, however, seemed to have noticed. Consequently, El'tsin was able to portray the transfer of ownership to the miners as a direct result of his agreement with the centre.²⁴ Although a number of strike committees remained opposed to the bargain²⁵ - at least for the moment - industrial peace rapidly broke out across Russia. This, in turn, took the edge off of the criticisms levelled at El'tsin by the more radical leaders of Democratic Russia whose initial objections to the 'nine-plus-one' agreement were largely couched in terms of an alleged betrayal of their newfound allies in the workers' movement.²⁶

Finally, El'tsin's successful meetings with the striking miners established a posture that he would employ throughout the remainder of the campaign. Relying on the emerging powers granted him at Russia's Third Congress of People's Deputies, El'tsin wrapped his presidential campaign in a series of business trips during which he would meet with local citizens and officials, military personnel and scholars, workers and farmers, listening to their complaints and suggestions and then, in most cases, he would conclude his visit by signing special documents authorizing improvements in the local situation.²⁷ Carrying himself now with the bearing of head-of-state and discarding his well-worn image of insurgent populist, El'tsin would frequently explain: first, that he had no campaign programme other than that of the policies that he had been bringing to fruition as Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet; and, second, no campaign other than the official business that he was transacting during his swings through Murmansk, Voronezh, Tula, Izhevsk, Sverlovsk, Bryansk, Perm and elsewhere.²⁸

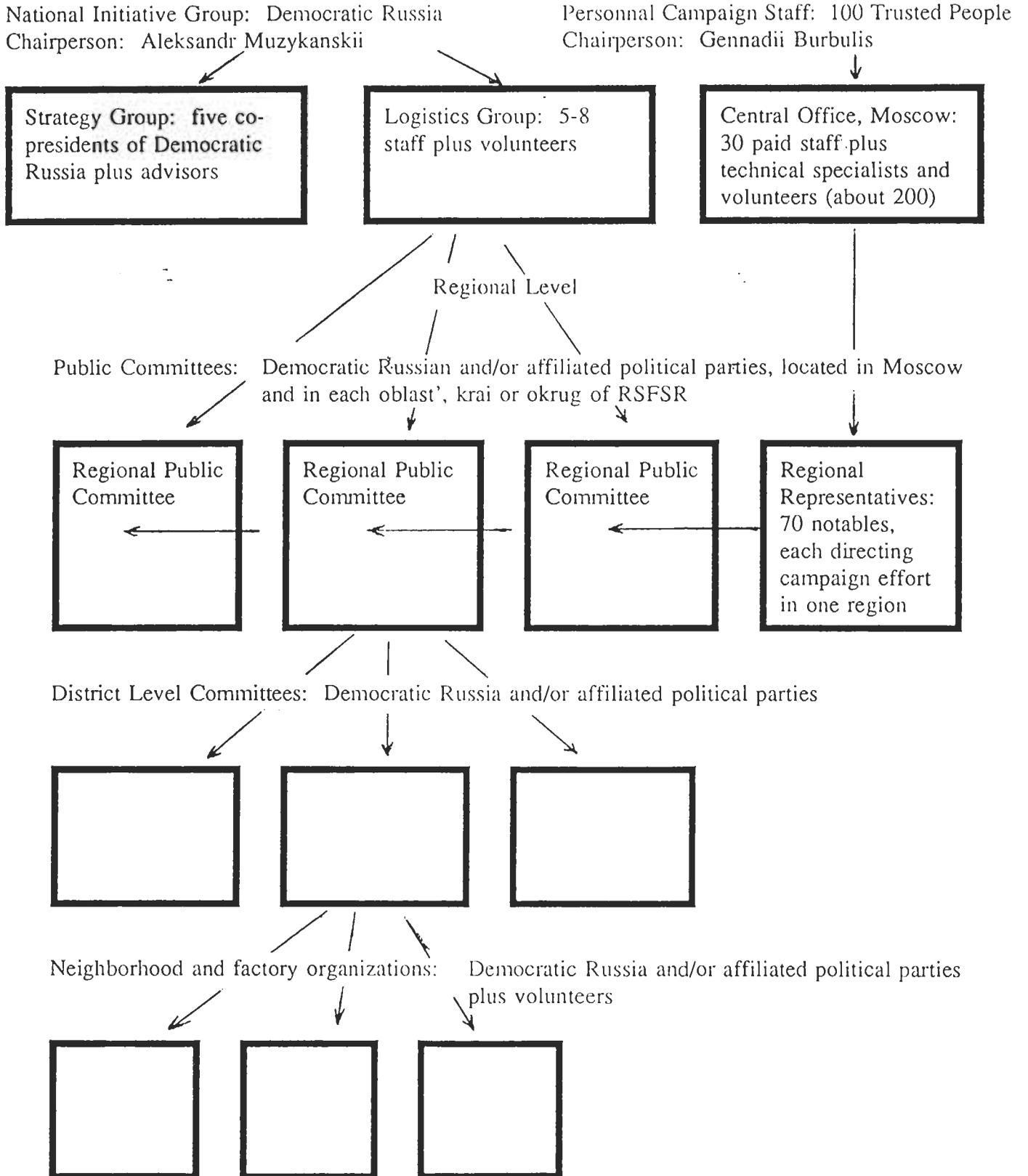
With opinion polls running heavily in his favor,²⁹ El'tsin's own participation in the campaign was designed to emphasize the image of a statesman standing above the political fray. To that end, he deliberately refrained from any comment on his opponents or the charges that they were levelling at him,³⁰ and took no part in the candidates' televised debates although he had initially agreed to do so.³¹ The candidate, as it were, was too busy acting presidential to appear as if he were actually running for office.³² The business of conducting a campaign was, therefore, left to others.

Campaign Organization. As indicated in the chart, Democratic Russia comprised effectively all of El'tsin's campaign organization.³³ In addition to mobilizing over 150,000 of its members and supporters who worked in the localities - setting up 'pickets' at metro stations or in town squares, passing out literature in neighborhoods and factories, canvassing door-to-door and arranging campaign rallies - Democratic Russia also supplied nearly all of the 100 'trusted persons' (established by law as the publicly financed staff afforded to each candidate) whose task it was to coordinate the overall campaign effort.

(See Chart on page 11A)

Although this organizational configuration was dictated in part by the legal provisions governing the campaign,³⁴ it also reflected the peculiar relations obtaining between El'tsin and Democratic Russia. El'tsin's recent political history - his work as first secretary of the Communist Party organization in Sverdlovsk and Moscow, his successful campaign for the USSR's parliament in 1989 and his subsequent leadership of the Inter-Regional Deputies Group (I-RDG) had provided him a myriad of associations with those in the many strands of the popular movement that had come to comprise Democratic Russia. The chairpersons of both of

Chart. Presidential Campaign Organization for Boris El'tsin



El'tsin campaign organizations owed their positions to these associations. While this is unremarkable in the case of Gennadii Burbulis (an organizer from Sverdlovsk who worked with El'tsin in the I-RDG) who headed the team of 100 'trusted persons', it also has been reported by leaders in Democratic Russia that their campaign chairman, Aleksandr Muzykanskii (a Vice Chairperson in the Moscow City Soviet and a leading organizer of El'tsin's 1989 parliamentary campaign), was also named at El'tsin's request. Yet El'tsin's association with Democratic Russia has stopped short of establishing any formal connections. As Lev Ponomarev, one of Democratic Russia's co-presidents, has remarked:

El'tsin is always trying to put some distance between himself and Democratic Russia. And we oppose that . . . I think it a mistake on his part. He is a national leader, but in fact he depends on us for his organized support. We now work on the basis of mutual-understanding, but sometimes this mutual-understanding doesn't exist. He has taken some steps that we regard as mistakes, but at the same time we are unable to withhold our support for him.³⁵

In the same way, then, that El'tsin campaigned for the presidency by assiduously avoiding the appearance of campaigning, he eschewed establishing any direct relationship with that organization which secured his nomination and conducted his election campaign. This approach meant, in effect, that El'tsin appeared as the head of a headless organization. Moreover, since he failed to consult with Democratic Russia on the 'nine-plus- one' agreement, on his choice of Aleksandr Rutskoi for his running mate, on the composition of his post-election government,³⁶ he also failed to provide to Democratic Russia that visible leadership and a structure of incentives for ambitious subalterns necessary to contain the many centrifugal forces in the democratic movement. Room for his own political manoeuvres, therefore, has been purchased at the price of disorganizing his own organizational base. Symptoms of this disorganization were readily apparent during the campaign itself - from the severe

disappointment darkening the faces of Democratic Russia's top organizers as they learned via a television broadcast that El'tsin had chosen Rutskoi as his vice-presidential candidate, to the electoral defections of some of Democratic Russia's constituent political parties who put up their own candidates against those of Democratic Russia in the race for Mayor of Moscow and in a by-election for a seat in the Russian parliament.³⁷ The long-term implications of El'tsin's strategy of enhancing his personal authority to the neglect of institution-building remain to be seen. The experience of this campaign, however, has suggested unhappy consequences for Democratic Russia's capacity to act as an organization.³⁸

Although Democratic Russia benefitted from the experience of conducting a nationwide campaign - an evaluation testified to by its ability to develop active new constituencies in the strike committees and the military,³⁹ as well as by the declining levels of confusion and controlled panic on display at both El'tsin campaign headquarters in Moscow as the campaign progressed - disorganization and inefficiency, resulting in huge losses of potential resources, were symptomatic of the entire enterprise. Efforts at Democratic Russia's own campaign headquarters were often paralyzed because no one had bothered to create a reference file of pertinent legislation or telephone numbers - including that of the RSFSR's Central Electoral Commission! Democratic Russia's campaign office established a press centre, but it never actually functioned, with the result that already overburdened organizers were often required to double as press officers. Top organizing roles were left to those with backgrounds in the natural sciences, engineering and medicine (those from the social sciences and humanities preferred to act as theoreticians and strategists), and consequently the human aspects of organizing often

received short shrift. As one top campaign official commented:

We have a formal division of labor here, one person is responsible for, say, coordinating the campaign in each of the regions, another, for links with mass organizations, and so on. But there isn't very much of this in practice because we have no organization. That is, most of us are not used to working with people. We don't know how to design roles and put our cadres or volunteers into action. It's really terrible, because a great many people have come to volunteer their help. We might write down their telephone numbers, then nothing comes of it.

Democratic Russia's regional organizations comprised the basis for the entire campaign effort. Speaking to the directors of these regional organizations on June 1, Aleksandr Muzykanskii outlined this regional structure by detailing the links between the central office and each of its provincial counterparts, explaining how those at the centre were responsible for analyzing the information sent in from each region on their respective problems and the activities of El'tsin's opponents in their locale. In turn, the central office would supply each region with campaign materials - from tactical advice, to speakers, flyers and placards. His remarks, however, were followed by spirited remonstrations from some of the regional organizers themselves - usually to the accompaniment of enthusiastic applause from their peers - who complained that the central offices has sent nothing, that no notice has been given when speakers' itineraries have been changed and, in more than one instance, that the only assistance coming into the province in the form of speakers or other materials has belonged to the campaigns of El'tsin's opponents.

Certainly the conditions prevailing in Russia were small aid to relative novices in the art of staging a national campaign. Each of the six campaign organizations, of course, liberally supplemented its public funding by laying its hands on whatever resources it could - staff on salary with party or state institutions, office space, paper, printing facilities and so forth. In

Moscow, and perhaps Leningrad (St. Petersburg), this meant that Democratic Russia functioned at a relative disadvantage when compared with the Communist Party. In the provinces, however, the balance of campaign resources was altogether lopsided in favor of the latter. Differences in this respect were also apparent in the case of television, as local Communist authorities were in many places able to interfere with the reception of pro-El'tsin broadcasts over Russian Television, while Central Television's anti-El'tsin signal was received across the RSFSR without difficulty. Yet even Moscow was no refuge from the hardships of Russia's political climate as the bombing of Democratic Russia's organizational headquarters on the night of May 16 indicated so dramatically.⁴⁰

Tactics. Democratic Russia benefitted from a visit by five campaign experts, led by Paul Weyerich and Robert Kriebel from the US-based Committee for a Free Congress, who met with organizers of the El'tsin campaign at national, regional and district levels in Moscow on May 18 and 19. Although not thoroughly versed in Russian conditions and therefore often making recommendations that were in context quite impractical - an aspect of this Russian-American interchange that led one Democratic Russia organizer to remark that 'these people are from another civilization!' - much of what the Americans had to say was carefully noted and duly applied in devising campaign tactics. In particular, the US specialists contributed: the design of El'tsin brochures; the idea of setting up of campaign calendars in order to budget time strictly within each unit of the organization; the dispatching of 'flying squads' of activists from urban centres to small towns and rural settlements to stage brief rallies and distribute campaign literature; the imperative of drawing as many people as possible into the campaign in order to track voters and turn out supporters on election day; and the utility of forming a special section

composed of military officers in order to overcome the barriers to campaigning in the armed services that had been present during past elections.

To one degree or another, all of the above tactics were featured in the El'tsin campaign. During interviews, campaign officials would mention them with a certain degree of pride, underlining the idea that they had begun the campaign as amateurs, but were fast becoming professionals. Nonetheless, a considerable number of modifications were introduced by Russian circumstances into the American blueprint.

First, the urgency voiced by the Americans with respect to using every minute of the brief campaign period was not altogether appreciated by the Russians. As one of El'tsin's 'trusted people' expressed it:

Unlike the Communists, we have delayed [launching] our campaign until today [June 1], knowing that the people have grown tired of politics, slogans and elections. Our strategy calls for a minimum campaign; we don't want to bore or put off a public already saturated with politics.

Second, the Americans' emphasis on door-to-door campaigning seemed largely out of place to the El'tsin team. In most areas, volunteers were simply in short supply. However, when sufficient numbers were available, they often tended to be radical democrats whom the organizers did not want to associate with El'tsin in the voters' minds. Consequently, leaflets anonymously deposited into mail slots became the primary means for distributing campaign literature.

Third, the idea of campaign calendars and economizing on time was highly regarded in principle. But Russia's communications and transportation system, as well as sheer disorganization at headquarters, meant that invariably much time and energy were wasted. A district official, for instance, might be told to collect placards at regional headquarters tomorrow.

That evening, he would ring volunteers and arrange for their distribution. After travelling a considerable distance on the appointed day, however, he would learn at headquarters that the placards were not yet ready and that he would have to repeat the whole process again.⁴¹As a result, not only were the large numbers of volunteers who devoted a day or two to the campaign not always used to maximum advantage, but questions would remain here about how for many this initially disappointing or frustrating experience will affect their decision to volunteer their services to Democratic Russia in future.

Engaging Opponents

Since El'tsin's behavior throughout the campaign reflected his strategy of appearing as a president rather than a candidate, he steered clear of any political battles. These were fought for him by Democratic Russia which found itself in an unfamiliar defensive posture, warding off the attacks of the five challengers, all of whom were seen as candidates representing one or another element of the old power bloc. In the eyes of El'tsin's supporters the opposition had arrayed itself as follows:

Nikolai Ryzhkov. The USSR's former prime minister was regarded as El'tsin's only serious opponent.⁴² With the explicit backing of the Communist Party apparatus, and quite favorable media coverage (especially on Central Television and in Sovetskaya Rossiya and, to some degree, Pravda), the Ryzhkov organization represented a palpable concern to El'tsin organizers. 'Our agitation', lamented one, 'is constantly directed to answering the false charges - "El'tsin is preparing to destroy the collective farms" or "El'tsin is preparing to eliminate the army" and so forth - that have been coming from the Ryzhkov campaign and are circulated by

the apparatus, especially in the provinces where these charges become rumors that many simple people believe.⁴³ The tactics of the Ryzhkov campaign may have achieved some results in the hinterlands and among certain groups in the general population such as military personnel, veterans and pensioners,⁴⁴ attracted to his slogan by which a vote for Ryzhkov meant 'to live peacefully' [zhit' spokojno]. Yet El'tsin staffers reported that since the Ryzhkov organization was structured in the excessively centralized manner of the 'command-administrative system', its actions were quite predictable - a tactic detected in one locale could be then anticipated to appear everywhere - and failed miserably to adapt with any dispatch to changing circumstances. Moreover, as its errant missive impugning the character of El'tsin's running mate, Rutskoi, would suggest, its ham-handedness could represent a definite liability.⁴⁵

Vadim Bakatin. Whereas Ryzhkov represented that wing of the Communist Party personified by politicians such as Egor' Ligachev and Ivan Polozkov,⁴⁶ Vadim Bakatin drew his support from elements associated with Gorbachev. Democratic Russia strategists tended to view the Bakatin campaign, with its moderately progressive programme, as lacking any real base in the voting population other than that which they hoped to deliver to El'tsin's column.⁴⁷ Consequently, they regarded Bakatin's candidacy as an attempt to raid their constituency and, perhaps, deprive El'tsin of a first-round majority. This would force a run-off with Ryzhkov that, given the lure of the dacha in summer, might not draw the necessary 50 per cent of the electorate to the polls till autumn - by which time, they calculated, the political situation might be quite different. Although the Communist Party apparatus contributed to the Bakatin campaign effort in some places, his forces were far too thin to mount an effective nationwide campaign. El'tsin strategy was, therefore, to accept the fact that some would-be El'tsin voters would cast

their ballots for Bakatin on June 12, but that their number might be minimized by calling as little attention as possible to Bakatin's candidacy.

Vladimir Zhirinovskii. The fact that the leader of the insignificantly small Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union - actually the rump of the Liberal Democratic Party which Vladimir Zhirinovskii himself had founded but from which he was expelled in October 1990 for alleged KGB collaboration⁴⁸ - could receive the endorsement of 20 per cent of the deputies to Russia's Fourth Congress and thus find a place on the presidential ballot, was taken by Democratic Russia as evidence of yet another Communist effort to drain voters from El'tsin column.⁴⁹ As local Communist Party organizations began to make direct contributions in terms of personnel and materials to the Zhirinovskii campaign, whatever doubt had remained on this score vanished entirely. Tactically, this candidacy recommended itself to the Communists simply by reason of party label - 'liberal democratic'. Here was a way to tap into some of El'tsin's non-communist and anti-communist support. As the campaign progressed, however, Zhirinovskii was able to supplement whatever number of votes might come his way for this reason with appeals based on race, empire and restored national greatness.⁵⁰

Zhirinovskii's presence at the televised debates of presidential candidates was apparently one of the primary reasons behind El'tsin's reconsideration of his own participation therein.⁵¹ During the campaign, Democratic Russia organizers came to regard Zhirinovskii as 'a clown who must be taken seriously'.⁵² Given his extremist right-wing rhetoric, it may be that the immediate effect of the Zhirinovskii campaign was to re-divide the vote among El'tsin's competitors rather than to draw votes away from El'tsin himself. Nonetheless, the rather intense emotions exhibited by Democratic Russia officials and organizers when discussing the

Zhirinovskii phenomenon, both publicly and in private, testified to the concern that they attached to this figure and to what role he may play in future.⁵³

Al'bert Makashov and Aman-Gel'dy Tuleev. The fourth and fifth units in the Communist Party's nominations strategy - Commander of the Volga-Urals Military District, General-Colonel Al'bert Makashov, and Chairperson of the Kemerovo Oblast' Soviet, Aman-Gel'dy Tuleev - represented attempts to hold, on the one hand, and build on the other, discrete electoral constituencies for the anti-El'tsin column.⁵⁴ Makashov, along with his running mate, Aleksei Sergeev of the pseudo-workers' organization, the United Front of Working People, sought to enlist the vote of military personnel, the so-called 'patriotic' element of the population and workers frightened by El'tsin's economic programme. In addition to assuaging the fears of this last group by repeated references to 'social defense' in the transition to a market economy, Democratic Russia's strategy was to open up the closed military garrisons by means of a team of 10 military officers who were also people's deputies of the RSFSR. Their activities concentrated on low-key presentations to military personnel, explaining that, as citizens, they were not bound to vote for the candidate recommended to them by their superior officers.⁵⁵

Tuleev's approach was to draw off potential El'tsin voters in the East, especially among miners who might continue to harbour resentment toward El'tsin because of his recent accommodation with Gorbachev. To that end, his campaign emphasized local autonomy, gradual economic reform and 'social defence'.⁵⁶ Democratic Russia's counter-strategy was to portray Tuleev as a candidate of the apparatus, masquerading as the miners' favourite son.⁵⁷

The Campaign at Street Level

Months of mass rallies and strikes had prepared a highly-charged atmosphere for Russia's presidential election. Popular consciousness had become thoroughly politicized. No longer were the demands put forth by striking workers confined to economic issues. No longer were street demonstrations demanding that Gorbachev either return to his promised course of reform or step down. Both the democratic and the workers' movements had ratcheted upward their rhetoric, demanding an end to the Communist order itself. The dichotomy evident in the previous political discourse between the authorities and a supplicant - albeit, perhaps disappointed and even angry - population had been succeeded by a new understanding that more and more framed public discussion: The business of government is our business, not just theirs.

Citizens discussing politics - indeed, citizens engaged in furious and heated debate about politics - was the (literally) inescapably concrete manifestation of the presidential contest on the mass level⁵⁸. Hundreds (and before long, thousands) were gathering daily at Moscow's 'Hyde Park' off Pushkin Square, arguing, declaiming, shouting and laughing their way through the entire rainbow of human emotions. At the pickets that the various campaign organizations established near metro stations or in public squares, commuters returning from work would throng around a given candidates' representatives, demanding answers for something he had said or done in the past, often bellowing abuse at his spokespersons, only to receive the same in turn from others in the crowd who would join in to take their part. At the entrances to apartment buildings, at bus stops or in queues, scenes such as these were replicated in diminutive dimensions as citizens would spontaneously engage one another in spirited conversation. Politics

and, in particular, this election had become ubiquitous and intensely serious topics of discussion.

El'tsin organizers regarded this atmosphere as sufficient reason to conduct a low-key campaign. They would explain that there was simply no reason to whip up emotions further. In fact, many believed, it might already be time to begin to calm things down. The demonstrations in support of El'tsin's candidacy held at Manezh' Square on May 20 and June 10, clearly reflected this approach. Before a crowd of 200,000-300,000 supporters who were present on each occasion, speakers relied on wit, poetry, humour and expressions of confidence in El'tsin's victory to foreground the occasional invectives hurled at the Communist order and the candidates that it had fielded in the race.

Yet, there may well have been another reason, one perhaps not consciously formulated by the leadership of Democratic Russia, as to why campaign rallies for their presidential candidates tripped so lightly over the issues and contrasted so markedly in tone with the informal street debates occurring all around. For on its way to election day, Democratic Russia was already visibly staggering under the weight of its top-heavy alliance of political parties and groups. All seemed to have a common interest in holding things together at least until the election - Democratic Russia's leadership, for the obvious reason of retaining as large a cadre and complement of activists as it could for the purpose of conducting the campaign; affiliated parties, because El'tsin's victory was almost certain and breaking ranks during the campaign would scarcely ingratiate one's party with the future president.⁵⁹ 'Holding things together' seemed to imply avoiding whatever specific issues might exacerbate the fissures and, indeed, tensions already present in the movement. Judging by the steady adherence to the vague and remote themes sounded at the public rallies,⁶⁰ there was, indeed, much to avoid.

The final phase of the campaign involved selecting and deploying poll watchers at as many voting places as possible across the RSFSR. Since their surveys leading up to the election were continuing to report a substantial majority in El'tsin's favour, campaign officials began more and more to turn their attention to the one remaining factor that might deprive their candidate of victory - ballot fraud. Regardless of the safeguards against this danger that were contained in legislation, campaign organizers had an acute appreciation both of the potential for election theft and of the strong motives among representatives of the old order to attempt it.

On election day itself, top organizers at Democratic Russia's campaign headquarters were in constant telephone contact with their counterparts in the provinces, receiving reports and barking instructions. Ballot fraud was the main topic. As one of their number, Vladimir Bokser, remarked:

Yes, violations are occurring. And they are difficult to detect. What the apparatus is doing is taking ballots on which all the names have been crossed off except El'tsin's [thus signifying a vote for El'tsin-M.U.] and then crossing off his name too, thereby invalidating those ballots entirely.

His co-worker, Mikhail Shneider, continued:

The most troublesome part of the campaign has been control of the voting at the polling places. In Moscow, things are okay; but, on the periphery, our people [official poll observers - M.U.] don't know their rights, what they can and cannot do. We've been in constant contact with them but it doesn't seem to matter. They are 'our people', but they have come to us more or less by happenstance. They don't know how to fulfill the role of observer at the polls.

Manipulation and, often enough, coarse violations of electoral procedures by the Communist Party's apparatus had figured significantly in the all-union elections of 1989 and those in the RSFSR in 1990.⁶¹ Since, however, only two individuals had been apprehended and punished for law breaking of this type,⁶² the threshold of discouragement has remained

rather low. As in the 1990 elections, a special public commission was formed to study the voting results in order to detect statistical patterns in the returns which might indicate ballot tampering. Although this commission reported to the authorities supervising the presidential election evidence of ballot fraud in four regions and in a number of military districts,⁶³ these violations along with others,⁶⁴ were overlooked by Russia's Central Electoral Commission when it issued its final tally of the election results on June 19.⁶⁵

Conclusion

This study has examined Boris El'tsin's successful campaign for the Russian Presidency as a complex political event that repeatedly blurred or even erased the legal, institutional, temporal and organizational distinctions commonly associated with presidential elections. It has indicated how the establishment of the office was in many respects indistinguishable from the campaign to capture it, how an organized mass campaign was launched considerably prior to the office's very existence, and how the winning candidate appeared simultaneously as leader/not leader of the organization that secured his election. These anomalies themselves suggest that the El'tsin campaign perhaps might best be understood as one phase of a larger process, something that historians in the not-so-distant future may call a revolution.

From this vantage, the election of Russia's first president revealed in concentrated form many of the contradictions that have been driving this revolution. For instance, in the realization that a El'tsin victory represented a bell tolling for them, a previously 'monolithic' Communist Party staged a remarkable display of pluralism by fielding five candidates in an effort to stave off that result. Equally, El'tsin's standing as the most popular political figure in

Russia enabled him to strike his bargain with Gorbachev and the leaders of the eight other republics participating in the 'nine-plus-one' negotiations. Once struck, this bargain permitted him to open a new political gambit as Russian head-of-state, turning the trajectories of his organized support in the democratic and workers' movements away from simply disassembling the institutional machinery of the old order and toward the construction of a new one.

Yet building a post-communist Russia remains a project for which those forces represented by El'tsin have been ill-prepared by past struggles. In the face of pressing problems - impending economic collapse, social disintegration and the attendant acceleration of the crime rate and so forth - these forces are at present united around a reform agenda that features fundamental change, a real perestroika, in the structures of the economy and society. At such a juncture, tactical advantages hitherto enjoyed by El'tsin and those at his back are converted into their opposites. Striking miners, for instance, have framed their demands in terms of what the old order had denied them - both a decent standard of living and control over the product of their own labour. Although this configuration of interests has proven itself effective in uniting the miners to press their grievances, the strike committee movement would appear to be immediately entangled in the consequences of its own success. How will the new collective proprietors, with state subsidies discontinued, control the product of their labour in such a way as to improve worker living standards and at the same time avoid massive redundancies? Indeed, as market relations are installed in Russia, we can expect manifestations of this same conundrum to surface in the non-manual as well as the manual sectors of the working population, generating a large lumpen population and raising the spectre of an authoritarian or even totalitarian resurgence.

The rather fragile alliance forged between Democratic Russia and the workers' movement would also appear to be jeopardized by these considerations. Moreover, in the wake of El'tsin's victory, Democratic Russia has forfeited the advantages accruing to it by reason of its ambiguous status as neither political party nor mass movement. To be sure, this ambiguity had been of great service when strategy called for uniting all the democratic forces in street demonstrations against the Communist order or on behalf of El'tsin's presidential campaign. Yet, once these projects have given way to the practical questions of governing, Democratic Russia has not been able to display a level of institutionalization sufficient to restrain the disparate tendencies and ambitions within it. A mere month after the election, for example, it self-destructed on the floor of the Russian parliament. Unable to unite behind a single candidate to replace El'tsin as Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet, the democrats succeeded only in producing a 6-ballot stalemate. Consequently, the Fifth Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR adjourned after five days of rancour, having accomplished nothing beyond listening to El'tsin recite his oath of office.⁶⁶ If El'tsin's ambiguous relation to Democratic Russia has enabled him as presidential candidate to have things both ways (organizational support sans organizational responsibility), then the first test of his presidency - namely, his failure to secure a majority at Russia's Fifth Congress of People's Deputies for his choice for Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet (Ruslan Khasbulatov) - has revealed the limits and liabilities of this strategy. In this respect, it would appear that the campaign for an effective Russian presidency will remain an ongoing enterprise, one that perforce will return to the unfinished business of transforming a fluid political base into a reliable force in the legislature. Should this be the course taken, we might expect Russian presidential politics to begin to resemble more its counterparts in other

democracies which have amply demonstrated the tacit rule that in order to use power one must be prepared to share it.

ADDENDUM: Party Formation

Democratic Russia, which conducted the El'tsin campaign, has taken an enormous stride in the direction of establishing itself as a fully-fledged political party. Two general aspects seem to attend this process. On the one hand, Democratic Russian has had for some time the trappings of a political party, viz.: it has maintained a regular organizational structure with officers and collective decision-making bodies; it has generated a membership of some 1.3 million dues-paying members; it has established its own organ (the weekly, Demokraticeskaya Rossiya); it has published its own program; and it has assumed an identifiable presence as a faction in effectively all of the large legislative bodies in the Russian Federation. The El'tsin campaign, however, was the first occasion in which the efforts of the entire organization were marshalled to achieve a single goal. And, what is more, it succeeded in accomplishing its task. This experience and its presence in the collective memory of Democratic Russian represent, then, something of a watershed in the history of that organization.

On the other hand, as Democratic Russia has become a political party de facto, a number of formally-constituted parties that had nestled under its umbrella have now begun to disassociate themselves from it and stake out for themselves (again) their own separate political identities. Above all, this process of (re) differentiation is represented by the largest of Democratic Russia's constituent organizations, the Democratic Party of Russia which fielded candidates against some of those put up by Democratic Russia in the elections of June 12 and which broke

with Democratic Russia at the Fifth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation (July 1991), producing a stalemate in the voting to elect a successor to El'tsin as Chairperson of Russia's Supreme Soviet and, by the same token; preventing the Congress from addressing the many (and important) issues on its agenda.

Two other aspects of El'tsin's election to the Russian presidency have altered fundamentally the context in which party formation has taken place and augur for a rapid acceleration of their development. The first would be his decree on "departization" issued on July 20, which has banned all party organizations from workplaces and state institutions. This measure had been featured in his campaign platform, and the government of Russia has since been pursuing its implementation as the fulfillment of El'tsin's popular mandate. As far as party development is concerned, its implications are clear: by removing Communist Party organizations (the only ones that matter here) from these sites, the decree subverts the Communist Party's ability to control from within state institutions. This measure represents, ceteris paribus, a transfer of power to those who up till now have held only nominal authority in government; namely, the elected legislatures. As a consequence, political conditions have been altered in the direction of those obtaining in a "normal" democratic order. This, in turn, would remove the need for individual parties to continue to combine their forces in a larger movement for the purpose of ousting the Communists from their control of the state machinery. Indeed, inasmuch as their movement strategy up till now has led to El'tsin's winning the presidency and issuing the decree on "departization", it has thus cleared the way for pursuing those purposes for which the individual parties had grouped together in the first instance, viz.,

to establish themselves individually as parliamentary parties within a "normal" parliamentary system.

The second aspect of El'tsin's assumption of the presidency involves the so-called "nine-plus-one" negotiations on a new union treaty that have been under way since late April. Since the agreements reached hitherto call for new national elections (probably in winter or spring of 1992), another stimulus has been added to party development. Already parties are pulling out of the Democratic Russia coalition and forming separate electoral blocs such as "Popular Consensus" (composed of the Democratic Party of Russia, the Russian Christian Democratic Movement, and the Constitutional Democratic Party) and the likely alliance of, if not merger between, the Social-Democratic Party of Russia and the Republican Party of Russia. This process, along with the affiliation of certain notables - Stanislav Shatalin, Tel'man Gdlyan, Oleg Bogomolov and others - with one or another of the parties now in existence, indicates a process of gearing up for the elections to come. In short, we are observing today a seminal stage of party development.

NOTES

1. See the roundtable moderated by G. Koval'skaya, 'Zachem Rossii prezident?', Demokraticeskaya Rossiya, No. 8 (17 May 1991), p.7.
2. Ann Sheehy, 'The All-Union and RSFSR Referendums', Radio Liberty Report on the USSR, Vol. 3, No. 13 (26 Mar.1991), p. 23.
3. Referendum in the Soviet Union: A Compendium of Reports on the March 17, 1991 Referendum on the Future of the U.S.S.R. (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, April, 1991) p. 18.
4. Olga Bychkova, 'A bomb for the Chairman', Moscow News, No. 9 (3-10 Mar. 1991), p. 1; Boris El'tsin's press conference of 5 April 1991, excerpted as 'B. N. El'tsin: Prizyvayu k grazhdanskomu miru', Doverie, No. 3 (April, 1991) pp. 2-3.
5. Olga Bychkova, 'Decisive March', Moscow News, No. 11 (17-24 Mar. 1991), p. 5.
6. I. Demchenko and G. Shipit'ko, 'Zasluslan doklad B. N. El'tsina', Izvestiya (30 Mar. 1991); idem, 'Pridetsya sobirat' eshche odin s"ezd?', ibid. (2 April 1991).
7. This point was made by Leontii Byzov, Director of the Sociological Service of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (interview, 15 May 1991).
8. I. Demchenko and G. Shipit'ko, 'Ot konfrontatsii k sblizheniyu', Izvestiya (3 April 1991); Nikolai Andreev, 'Posle s"ezda', ibid. (8 April 1991).
9. G. Shipit'ko, 'Vopros o chrezvychainykh polnomochiyakh', Izvestiya (5 April 1991); I. Demchenko and G. Shipit'ko, 'Rossiiskii s"ezd zavershit rabotu', ibid. (6 April 1991).
10. A good account of the right-wing strategy can be found in Aleksei Zuichenko, 'S"ezd proshel uspešno', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 62 (28 May 1991).

11. I. Elistratov et al, 'Rossiiskii s"ezd: prinyat zakon o prezidente Rossii', Izvestiya (22 May 1991).
12. 'Kalendar' kampanii', Sovetskaya Rossiya (8 May 1991).
13. Interview (13 May 1991).
14. On the origins and development of Democratic Russia, see Michael E. Urban, "Party Formation and Deformation on Russia's Democratic Left", Robert Huber and Donald Kelley, Soviet Politics in the Perestroika Era (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, forthcoming).
15. Interview with Lev Ponomarev, co-president of Democratic Russia (30 May 1991).
16. "'Demrossiya" legalizovalas' i prizyvaet k stachke', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 50 (25 April 1991), p. 1.
17. See V. Bibler, 'O Grazhdanskom parlamente', Demokraticeskaya Rossiya, No. 4 (12 Apr. 1991), p.4; 'Plenum Demrossii opredelyaet strategiyu', Kuranty, No. 71 (16 Apr. 1991), p. 2.
18. 'Sovmestnoe zayavlenie o bezotlagatel'nykh merakh po stabilizatsii obstanovki v strane i preodoleniyu krizisa', Izvestiya (24 Apr. 1991).
19. Sergei Mitrofanov, 'El'tsin predlozhil bastuyushchim krasivo vyiti. Oni ne khotyat', Kommersant, No. 17 (22-29 Apr. 1991), p. 12.
20. 'Zayavlenie "9+1": mnenie "Demrossii"', Demokraticeskaya Rossiya, No. 7 (10 May 1991), p. 3.
21. Interview with Lev Ponomarev (30 May 1991).
22. In his televised interview of May 4, El'tsin claimed that only 20 per cent of Gorbachev's original plan survived the 'nine-plus-one' negotiations, and made clear that the 80 per cent supplied by himself and the other republican leaders represented his programme for the future

of Russia and the Union. This interview has been excerpted as 'B. El'tsin: Davit na lyudei nel'z'ya', Kuranty, No. 85 (7 May 1991), p. 5.

El'tsin's account leaves aside the reputed existence of a 'secret memorandum' signed by Gorbachev and the nine republican leaders, in conjunction with their formal proclamation. Its content, if indeed such a memorandum does exist, represents huge concessions by Gorbachev to the position that El'tsin had outlined. On the 'secret memorandum', see Viktor L'vov and Maksim Sokolov, 'Vstrecha "devyatki' na dache', Kommersant, No. 17 (22-29 Apr. 1991), pp. 1,3; Evgenii Nikitin and Maksim Sokolov, 'Soglashenie "9+1": blazhenny mivotvortsy', ibid., No. 18 (29 April-6 May 1991), p. 2.

23. See Izvestiya (19 Apr. 1991).

24. "'Eto byla improvizatsiya'", Demokraticeskaya Rossiya, No. 8 (17 May 1991), p. 3.

25. May Day 1991 witnessed El'tsin signing accords with the miners in the Kuzbass on the transfer of mining property while their counterparts in Kemerovo were holding a rally under the slogan: 'El'tsin and Gorbachev - two boots from the same pair'. See Tat'yana Malkina, 'El'tsin navestil gornyyakov', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 53 (5 May 1991), p. 1; 'Mitingi 1 May', Ekspress-khronika, No. 19 (7 May 1991), p. 1.

26. Yurii Afanas'ev, 'Mirazhi vlasti', Demokraticeskaya Rossiya, No. 7 (10 May 1991), pp. 1-2; Yurii Burtin and Igor' Klyamkin, 'Peremirie ili primirenje?', ibid., No. 8 (17 May 1991), pp. 8-9; Yurii Afanas'ev's interview given to Aleksandr Nikolaev, 'Politicheskoe liderstvo pereshlo k rabochim', ibid., No. 10 (31 May 1991), pp. 2,10.

Statements from prominent democrats in support of El'tsin's participation in the 'nine-plus-one' negotiations can be found in Aleksandr Gorshkov, 'Na kompromiss s Gorbachevym

vsled za El'tsinym', ibid., No. 7 (10 May 1991), p. 3; Sergei Stankevich, 'Predatel'stvo ili proriv k nadezhde?', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 53 (5 May 1991), p. 2.

27. For one such instance, in which El'tsin authorized the creation of a network of horizontal economic ties among firms in the Urals' region, see Aleksei Tarasov, 'Sozdaetsya ural'skaya assotsiatsiya', Izvestiya (10 June 1991).

28. El'tsin highlighted both of these points in his address to Democratic Russia's Council of Representatives in Moscow (1 June 1991).

29. Strong support for El'tsin and the policies that he represented can be found in 'Kto i kak golosoval', Gospodin Narod, No. 4 (1991), p. 3; Aleksei Levinson, 'Kto nam meshaet krasivo zhit', Izvestiya (12 May 1991). At the May 29 meeting of Democratic Russia's Coordinating Council, Larissa Vladimirova, a leading staffer in El'tsin's Moscow campaign organization, announced that Democratic Russia's surveys of public opinion showed El'tsin's support running at about 55 per cent. See also the interview given by Gennadii Burbulis to Elena Chenova in Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 64 (1 June 1991).

30. Interview with Kirill Ignat'ev, head of the Agitation Section of El'tsin's Campaign (1 June 1991).

31. Interview with Kirill Ignat'ev (3 June 1991).

32. Interview with Nikolai Bogaenko of El'tsin Central Campaign Staff (9 June 1991). This was abundantly apparent in El'tsin's televised campaign promotions in which footage of his past activity as an opponent of the Communist order portrayed him as a campaigner, while the images of El'tsin in the present played off of the notion of his previous victories, suggesting an established governmental leader.

Equally, during the three hours of his address to, and question period with, Democratic Russia's Council of Representatives on June 1, El'tsin made no visible effort to generate any enthusiasm in the crowd of some 2,500 and, at times, overtly discouraged it (for instance, by cutting short an incipient standing ovation with the remark: "No, don't do that. That sort of person [the object of the ovation] will be a dictator tomorrow"). Rather, he projected a confident demeanor, highlighted by the conviction in his tone when speaking of his programme for attacking Russia's problems, and a counter-punctual humor that suggested, again, confidence - in this case, the ability to smile with others at one's self.

33. The account that follows is based primarily on conversations and interviews held over the period, May 8 - June 12, with the following organizers in the El'tsin campaign: Mikhail Shneider, Lev Ponomarev, Larissa Vladimirova, Stanislav Kulakov, Kirill Ignat'ev, Dmitrii Levchik and Nikolai Bogaenko.

34. Democratic Russia's National Initiative Group was formed for the purpose of placing El'tsin's name on the ballot via the petition option requiring 100,000 signatures. Officially registered with Moscow City Soviet on May 8, it continued to function after the nomination phase as headquarters for the campaign in Moscow and played a coordinating role for the campaign in various regions, although a few of its top members had by then been named to El'tsin's staff of 100 'trusted people' and had taken up duties in the central campaign office.

35. Interview (30 May 1991).

36. Interview with Ponomarev (30 May 1991).

37. The Social Democratic Party of Russia ran Pavel Kudyukin against Democratic Russia's candidate, Gavriil Popov, in Moscow's mayoral contest, while both the Democratic Party of

Russia and the United Trade Union Council of the USSR put up candidates against Yurii Afanas'ev who was seeking a seat in the by-election in order to assume the leadership of Democratic Russia's parliamentary faction.

38. For instance, at the grassroots - where Democratic Russia set up campaign organizations for El'tsin and Popov (and in the Pervomaiskii district of Moscow, El'tsin-Popov-Afanas'ev) - activists reported that local organizations were in many cases thrown into confusion as members had to decide whether to work for Democratic Russia's candidate or for the one put forward by their respective political parties. As a result of this cross-pressure, many would-be campaign workers remained passive. Others chose to work for their own party's candidates, thereby pitting their efforts against those of Democratic Russia's.

39. 'Deputaty-voennosluzhashchie agitiruyut za El'tsina'. Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 65 (4 June 1991), p. 2.

40. Due to the fact that a meeting of Democratic Russia's Coordinating Council in the building of the Moscow Soviet was running overtime on the night of May 16, the headquarters were empty except for one individual who by chance had just left the detonated area when the explosion occurred. In addition to the losses mentioned in press accounts - about 200,000 signatures supporting El'tsin's nomination, about half of the needed one million signatures supporting a referendum to nationalize the property of the Communist Party, and about 100,000 rubles worth of campaign materials - the central file on Democratic Russia organizers across the RSFSR was also destroyed. On the bombing, see Dmitrii Borko and Vitalii Kolbasyuk, 'Zhertva, k schast'yu, net', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 58 (18 May 1991), p. 1; Yuliya Petrova,

'Bomba pod demokratiyu', Kuranty, No. 93 (18 May 1991), p. 1; S. Mostovshchikov, 'Vzryv v tsentre Moskvyy', Izvestiya (17 May 1991).

41. Time-wasting seemed a ubiquitous feature of the campaign. At meetings of district-level organizers in Moscow, for instance, an official from the central staff, rather than distributing a prepared list, might spend half an hour reading the names and telephone numbers of activists to the hundreds in attendance who would laboriously take down all the information by hand. Equally, at the meeting of Democratic Russia's Coordinating Council with district organizers in Moscow on May 29, Fedor Alekseevich, a leading organizer of Afanas'ev's campaign for the legislature, was awarded five minutes in which to brief the audience on that race. Rude interruptions - 'Stop, we don't care about this' - caused him to exceed his time limit. His request for another minute in order to conclude his remarks provoked a full-scale verbal barrage. Consequently, his conclusion did not require one minute but another five. This incident was by no means untypical.

42. One of El'tsin's 'trusted people', Stanislav Kulakov, noted in conversation (9 June 1991) that this view predominated among the campaign staff.

43. Interview with Kirill Ignat'ev (1 June 1991).

44. 'Ryzhkov svoego vitse-prezident ne nazval', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 56 (14 May 1991), p. 1.

45. Iosif Gal'pern, a journalist working with the liberal weekly, Russkii kur'er, received from a TASS official an open letter intended for the right-wing Russkii vestnik. The letter, allegedly written by an army colonel, was obviously meant to tarnish Ruskoi's military reputation by accusing him of deserting his comrades and country, and taking up company with 'El'tsin',

'democrats who have blackened you, the army and the country in the past', 'Western radio', 'Sovietologists', 'Armenians' and 'golubie' [homosexuals]. Gal'perin published this letter, 'Mezhdu nami polkovnikami', along with his own reply, 'Mezhdu nami zhurnalistami' in Russkii kur'er, No. 15 (7 June 1991).

46. Aleksei Zuichenko, 'Bitva gigantov?', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 55 (12 May 1991), p. 2.

46.

47. A similar view can be found in Aleksandr Peresvet, 'Vadim Bakatin - prezident ot KPSS?', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 63 (30 May 1991), p. 2.

48. On Zhirinovskii's checkered and rather unsavory career in politics, see: Stepan Orlov and Vadim Prokhorov, 'Pervoaprel'skaya partiya', Panorama (Moscow), No. 7 (July, 1990), p. 5; 'Coup or Operetta?', Moscow News, No. 45 (18-25 Nov. 1990), p. 6; Vladimir Nazarov, 'Vladimir Vol'fovich Pervyi', Kuranty, No. 71 (16 April 1991), p. 2; Vasilii Kotov, 'Spravka "Soyuza": Zhirinovskii Vladimir Vol'fovich', Soyuz, No. 21 (22-29 May 1991), pp. 12-13.

49. This was explicitly stated by Democratic Russia's co-chairperson, Gleb Yakunin, at a meeting of its Coordinating Council on May 29, 1991.

50. See, for instance, the interview given by Zhirinovskii to Vladimir Todres, 'Zapis v "pretendenty" nachalas', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 58 (18 May 1991), p. 2.

51. A number of Democratic Russia's campaign organizers mentioned in private conversations that Zhirinovskii could be expected to launch a major provocation against El'tsin at the debate, the avoidance of which on the eve of the election would be sound strategy. At the meeting referred to in Note 49, Yakunin remarked in a similar vein: 'We mustn't allow El'tsin to sit at the same table with Zhirinovskii.'

52. Often, such comments were followed by drawing a parallel to Hitler's early career.

53. Yakunin, at the meeting referred to in Note 49, noted that Zhirinovskii had been a member of the Russian 'Committee of National Salvation', assembled in 1990. Fears for the future among some Democratic Russia officials involved a scenario in which economic collapse and attendant political unrest might encourage a coup attempt in which Zhirinovskii, who had become, as a result of the presidential campaign, a well-known figure nationally, might play a leading political role. See, in this respect, Dolores Polyakova, 'Russkaya ideya na tanke?', Soyuz, No. 28 (10-17 July 1991), p. 4.

54. Dmitrii Ostal'skii, 'El'tsin, veroyatno pobedit...', Nezavisimaya gazeta, No. 68 (11 June 1990), p. 2; Nikolai Kas'yanov, 'Gotov' mandat, deputat, gryadet narodnyi kandidat!', Soyuz, No. 22 (29 May - 5 June 1991), p. 2.

55. 'Deputaty-voennosluzhashchie agitiruyut za El'tsina'.

56. Radik Abdullin, 'Aman Tuleev: "Ya mog by zhit' kak u Khrista za pazukoi"', Soyuz, No. 23 (6-12 June 1991), p. 9.

57. See, for instance, the telegrams from workers in Kemerovo that were published in Kuranty, No. 94 (21 May 1991), p. 1.

58. Although these observations are based on experiences in Moscow, friends and acquaintances report that the situation was roughly similar in Russia's large cities. Small towns and villages, however, for the most part seem to have remained de-politicized.

59. In Moscow, as noted above, this did not hold for the mayoral or parliamentary by-elections. In the case of the latter, which involved a very close race (Democratic Russia's candidate, Yurii Afanas'ev managed to win this contest with only 51 per cent of the vote), attempts to retain

unity among its fissiparous members led to some rather odd results. On June 9, for example, Afanas'ev's organizers staged a rally on the steps of a film theatre on the outskirts of Moscow. Among the speakers at this rally was Sergei Khramov, a member of Democratic Russia and also one of Afanas'ev's opponents in the race. A large Khramov placard was also on display amid those supporting Afanas'ev, as were others for Nikolai Moskovenko, another of Afanas'ev's competitors, from the Democratic Party of Russia. After Khramov's remarks, and with Khramov near his side, Lev Ponomarev took the microphone to request that Khramov and Moskovenko withdraw their candidacies and to lead the crowd in a chant to that effect.

60. At the rally of May 20, for example, the entire thrust of the speeches delivered was to oppose Soviet military operations then underway in Azerbaijan, to oppose the 'military dictatorship of the Communist Party' that is conducting these operations, and to honour the memory of Andrei Sakharov.

61. On the 1989 elections, see Michael E. Urban, More Power to the Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR (Aldershot, UK and Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar, 1990), Chapter Five; A. V. Berezkin et al., Vesna 89: geografiya i anatomiya parlamentskikh vyborov (Moscow: Progress), pp. 64-72; Stephen White, 'Soviet Elections: From Acclamation to Limited Choice', (Glasgow University, 1989); Brendan Kiernan and Joseph Aistrup, 'Moscow's 1989 Elections to the Congress of People's Deputies', Soviet Studies (forthcoming). On the RSFSR elections of 1990, see Thomas Remington, 'The March 1990 RSFSR Elections', Darrell Slider (ed.), Elections and Political Change in the Soviet Republics (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

62. Yu. Moskvich, 'Narusheniya ne ostanutsya nezamechennymi', Izvestiya (10 June 1991).

63. A. Danydov, 'Podtverdilsya predvaritel'nyi itog', Izvestiya (17 June 1991).

64. Violations of legally established procedures were in many places characteristic of the entire process as was effective action by the authorities to curtail them. During the campaign, for example, certain industrial premises and military units would permit only Ryzhkov spokespersons on their premises. On election day, many military units refused entry to poll watchers. Moreover, the newspaper, Sovetskaya Rossiya, in direct violation of legal strictures forbidding agitation on election day, ran a June 12 issue that contained a number of pieces fiercely attacking El'tsin. See 'Kak izbirat' prezidenta', Izvestiya (7 June 1991); Davydov, 'Podtverdilsya predvaritel'nyi itog'; Aleksandr Protsenko, 'O vyborakh, bor'be i zakone', ibid. (14 June 1991).

65. 'Soobshchenie Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii po vyboram Prezidenta RSFSR', Izvestiya (20 June 1991). This report mentions that the reported returns in two precincts (neither of which is located in any of the regions where potential fraud was detected by the special commission) had been disallowed - in one instance, apparently because the local authorities had burned the ballots - and lists the following percentages of the vote awarded to the respective candidates: El'tsin - 57.30 per cent, Ryzhkov - 16.85 per cent, Zhirinovskii - 7.81 per cent, Tuleev - 6.81 per cent, Makashov - 3.74 per cent, Bakatin - 3.42 per cent.

66. See Vladimir Lenskii, 'Mikhail Bocharov: "My naprasno vnesli v povestku s"ezda vybory predsedatelya"', Soyuz, No. 29 (17-21 July 1991), p. 3; and the coverage of the Fifth Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR featured in Izvestiya, 11-15 July 1991.