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Political Parties in Western Siberia, August 1991–October 1993: A Comparative Analysis

by Grigorii Golosov

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INTRODUCTION

For the past three years, specialists on new Russian politics have been looking at the emergence of new political parties in the country with considerable–although not always explicit–controversy.[1] Some analysts assume that "nongovernmental forces, including political parties and movements," even if not yet developed, nevertheless "play an important role in channeling political developments" in Russia.[2] The predominant view, however, is that new Russian political parties, or, as Michael McFaul has put it, "proto-parties" have not "aggregated social interests, represented specific constituencies, structured the vote during elections, or consequently served as intermediaries between state and society."[3] Some analysts go even further, arguing that these formations are not even proto-parties, but rather pseudo-parties whose attempts to survive into the next phase of Russian political development, whatever that may be, are doomed to failure.[4] Indeed, Russia appears to have an extremely anarchic and ineffective party system which hardly deserves to be so labelled. If the skeptics are basically right, then does it make any sense to do research on this subject? One can answer in the affirmative for two different, interconnected reasons.

One hypothesis holds that one of the most important factors explaining the physiognomy and functioning of a well-established party system is the organizational history of the parties which constitute it. According to Angelo Panebianco, "the characteristics of a party's origin are in fact capable of exerting a weight on its organizational structure even decades later. Every organization bears the mark of its formation, of the crucial political–administrative decisions made by its founders, the decisions which molded the organization."[5] Secondly, another argument, which holds that once established, party systems tend to be stable,[6] is also compelling, and provides grounds for believing

1. For a brief bibliography on a Russian multiparty system, see Alexander Dallin, ed., *Political Parties in Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 95–7.
2. See Nina Belyaeva, "Russian Democracy: Crisis as Progress," in *Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1993): 5.
3. Michael McFaul, "Party Formation after Revolutionary Transitions: The Russian Case," in *Political Parties in Russia*, 7.
4. See Richard Sakwa, "Parties and the Multiparty System in Russia," in *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 31 (July 1993): 14–15.
5. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 50.
6. See Seymour Martin Lipset and Sidney Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party

that the study of new political parties, even if weak and fragile, may contribute to a better understanding of future Russian politics. Of course, it may be argued, as does Richard Sakwa, that Russia is likely to fail to develop an effective party system because the country has missed the golden age of party politics.[7] In democracies, however, even ineffective party systems matter. Whether Russia will be condemned to endless conflicts between small parties or, beyond all expectations, develops stable party rule, depends on the present state of party politics in the country.

The objective of this article is not to predict the future. It is difficult to forget how poorly social scientists, especially those involved in Russian studies, have fared at prediction. Students of new Russian politics, however, may hope that their contributions will be useful to those who will study the party system of democratic Russia in retrospect. True, it cannot be taken for granted that anyone will study Russian political parties, as prospects for Russian democracy are far from certain. This brings us to another and probably more important reason for studying new Russian political parties.

Since the early 1940s it has been almost universally assumed that the study of political parties is virtually a prerequisite to a realistic understanding of the problems of democracy, both in theory and in action.[8] As Richard Katz has put it, "modern democracy is party democracy; the political institutions and practices that are the essence of democratic government in the Western view were the creations of political parties and would be unthinkable without them."[9] It is widely hypothesized that contemporary Russia is experiencing the process of a transition to democracy, therefore the study of Russian political parties may result in a better understanding of the nature of this process.

That, briefly, is the major objective of this article. This argument is not, however, based on the assumption that consolidated democracy is the only possible outcome of the breakdown of an authoritarian regime. The collapse of dictatorship in Russia may well be reversed or lead to a new authoritarianism.[10] The uncertain present is thus not presumed to be

Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Sidney Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1–64.

7. See Sakwa, "Parties and the Multiparty System," 14.

8. See Avery Leiserson, "The Place of Parties in the Study of Politics," in *Political Parties: Contemporary Trends and Ideas*, ed. Roy C. Macridis (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). For an early but still important and convincing argument strongly focused on the contribution made by political parties to the advancement of democracy, see Elmer E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Rinehart & Winston, 1942).

9. Richard S. Katz, *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 1.

10. See Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms*

a mere prologue to the democratic future.[11]

Even if it is more or less clear why it is important to study new Russian political parties, there is another, thornier question: How does one study political formations that have little in common with the well-established parties of the west? There is a strong argument that claims a party can be understood solely within the context of the particular society in which it operates. This position is held, for instance, by MacIntyre. In relation to the mass parties of Africa, such as that which developed in Ghana under Nkrumah, the author asks:

> Why do we think of these as parties, rather than as, say, churches? The answer that they have some of the marks of American political parties, and that they call themselves parties does nothing to show that in fact the meaning of 'party' is not radically changed when the cultural context is radically changed, or that even if it is not changed the description has not become inapplicable.[12]

Indeed, it makes complete sense to address a similar question to students of new Russian parties: why do we think of these organizations as parties rather than as, say, clubs? It would not be too difficult to prove that some of them, at least under certain conditions, do perform as "real parties," even if others obviously do not. Yet this argument does not resolve the problem as such, for the problem has to do with theory, not empirical data alone.

In fact, there appears to be a deep-seated tradition to treat the Soviet system as *sui generis*. According to Thomas Remington, "some scholars, impressed by how greatly the Soviet system differed from traditional dictatorship... pursued their studies in relative isolation from other branches of social science."[13] The collapse of the Soviet Union has contributed to the advancement of alternative—basically, more comparative—approaches to Russian politics. It takes time, however, to break with old traditions. Furthermore, the failure of Sovietology (that is, its inability to anticipate the fall of communism) is often explained by accusing it of misinterpreting the realities of Russia in rationalistic, optimistic terms invented by western social scientists.[14]

in Eastern Europe and Latin America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51.

11. The disadvantages entailed by such an approach are discussed in Valerie Bunce and Maria Csanadi, "Uncertainty in Transition: Post-Communism in Hungary," in *East European Politics and Societies* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 240–41. The hypothesis that contemporary Russia is a proto-democracy is, however, too important to be ignored and provides a theoretical perspective for further discussion.

12. A. MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, 4th ser., ed. Peter Laslett, Walter G. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 14.

13. Thomas F. Remington, "Sovietology and System Stability," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* 8, no. 3 (1992): 242.

14. See Richard Pipes, "Russia's Chance," in *Commentary* 93, no. 3 (1992): 28–33.

For those who share this view, it is the cultural and historical specificity of Russia that really matters. For instance, John Lloyd states:

> Russia comes to democratic ways very late, that being so, its political and intellectual elites can both observe and participate in the democratic forms and conferences of the Western, especially European, worlds; can readily grasp the modalities of free political practice—but cannot transfer the experience to the harsher soil of their own country, where the population has not undergone the civic development which could sustain democratic institutions.[15]

This argument—based on the inference that Russians believe in strong leaders or czars—can be elaborated theoretically using the concept of political culture and reformulated thus: there are no political parties in Russia because the level (or nature) of mass political culture in the country does not correspond to this form of political organization. This is not to say that the concept of political culture is not useful at all, but as Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy have said, "it is undoubtedly necessary to renounce making 'political culture' a reservoir of easy explanations, which would make up for any lack of understanding and even discourage further efforts to discover other political causes."[16]

There are strong reasons to expect that political studies in the post-Soviet era will be more comparative and, correspondingly, less focused on the specificity of Russia than studies of decades past. This article is intended to be a comparatively oriented case study. Although the data of comparative social science is clearly cross-societal,[17] it is widely assumed that comparative research does not explicitly use data from different societies. According to Arend Lijphart, "the distinction between the comparative and case study methods in terms of the number of cases analyzed is not entirely satisfactory because the single cases investigated in case studies are usually implicitly viewed in the theoretical context of a larger number of cases."[18]

Hence, comparatively oriented case studies are quite possible. If Raymond Aron is right in his assumption that certain concepts are comparative by their very nature,[19] then the political party is definitely one such concept. In this paper, well-established political parties of the west will serve as

15. John Lloyd, "Democracy in Russia," in *Political Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (1993): 154–55.
16. Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, *How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics* (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House, 1990), 73.
17. See Donald P. Warwick and Samuel Osherson, "Comparative Analysis in the Social Sciences," in *Comparative Research Methods*, eds. Donald P. Warwick and Samual Osherson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 8.
18. See Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," in *Comparative Political Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975).
19. See Raymond Aron, "La théorie du dévéloppement et l'interprétation historique de l'époque contemporaine," in *Le dévéloppement social*, ed. Raymond Aron and Bert Hoselitz (Paris: Mouton, 1965), 89.

comparative referents for analyzing new political parties in Russia. Such a research strategy, however, entails a serious methodological problem.

First, Alan Ware correctly assumes that

> with states in the same geographical region, or when there is a shared cultural heritage, it is likely that there may be important features which the parties share—and, in fact, two well-established traditions of studying parties have been analyses of parties in particular geographical areas (such as Western Europe), and analyses of parties which must operate in similar ways in order to control the state (such as parties in liberal democracies).[20]

Russian parties actually share few features with their western counterparts. Even the problem of defining political parties in a way that could embrace both kinds of political organizations is unlikely, although the marketplace of political science offers many such definitions. A number of definitions proposed by various authors are lengthy and complex, yet the more lengthy and complex the definition, the more it applies only to the political parties of western Europe and the United States.

An alternative approach is offered by Giovanni Sartori in his *Parties and Party Systems*, where he briefly states that "a party is any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or unfree), candidates for public office."[21] One could argue that this definition could even be applied to the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). As of yet, however, it is inapplicable to new Russian political parties. All of them are indeed so labelled, and without a doubt they will present at elections, beginning in December 1993. But their capability of placing candidates in public service is debatable, to say the least, for the simple reason that no elections have been held in the country since 1991. Most of the specific features that characterize Russian political parties stem preciseley from this fact. It is important to keep in mind, however, Philippe Schmitter's reflection that all peculiarities of the Russian political process "have been the product of strategic choices, not the inexorable result of a 'revolutionary' process."[22]

Definitions thus do not provide an appropriate starting point for analysis. Yet why is it so important to be definition-conscious in comparative studies in the first place? If we view the question from the methodological perspective, the answer should be: be-

20. Alan Ware, *Citizens, Parties, and the State: A Reappraisal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 19–20.

21. Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 63. For another very broad definition of political parties, see Kenneth Janda, *Political Parties: A Cross-National Survey* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 5.

22. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Reflections on Revolutionary and Evolutionary Transitions: The Russian Case in Comparative Perspective," in *Political Parties in Russia*, 32.

cause definitions are one of the most important means of providing conceptual homogenization across research fields. As Roy Macridis has said, "comparison involves abstraction; concrete situations or processes can never be compared as such. Every phenomenon is unique... To compare, then, means to select certain types or concepts, and in doing so we have to distort the unique and the concrete."[23] The more heterogeneous the field of research, the clearer the effort to make it conceptually homogeneous and the more rigorous the formalization of concepts.

As Pierre Bourdieu reminds us, however, "concepts have no definition other than systematic ones, and are designed to be *put to work empirically in systematic fashion.*"[24] In other words, definitions are not ends in themselves, they are supported by theoretical systems and methods. Concepts also can be defined only within more general methodological frameworks, not in isolation. The most crucial problem for any comparative social scientist is thus to identify his or her method in a manner that corresponds to a given field of analysis.

There is a great diversity of comparative methods.[25] In his listing of would-be paradigms offered by political science since the 1950s, Harry Eckstein points out that the most conspicious is a political version of functionalism.[26] It might be added that this paradigm is also the most severely criticized. Ware, for instance, rejects "the sociological approach, which was inspired by the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons, that assumed there were certain functions which had to be performed in any society and that we could compare parties with respect to how they so performed them."[27]

Putting aside the usual accusations of a static approach to the social—important but irrelevant to this discussion[28]—let us concentrate on another line of reasoning that questions the validity of structural functionalism. This critique is thoroughly elaborated by Giovanni Sartori in his influential article on conceptual misformation in comparative politics.[29] The fundamental assumptions of

23. Roy Macridis, *The Study of Comparative Government* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), 18.

24. Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 96. [italics mine]

25. For an overview of recent developments in comparative political science, see Howard J. Wiarda, ed., *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, rev. ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

26. Harry Eckstein, *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political Theory, Stability, and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 7.

27. Ware, *Citizens, Parties, and the State*, 19.

28. For an example of such criticism, see Karl W. Deutch, *The Nerves of Government* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 89–90.

29. See Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," in *American Political Science Review* 54 (1970): 1033–53.

structural functionalism may be formulated thus: 1) no one structure is unifunctional, i.e., no one structure performs only one function, 2) the same structures can be multifunctional, i.e., can perform very different functions in different countries and 3) the same function has structural alternatives, i.e., it can be performed by very different structures. Sartori identifies two major problems which inevitably arise when this approach is applied to the study of political parties. First, this paradigm risks an enumeration of the functions of parties without any clues as to their level and type. Political scientists and sociologists provide us with an impressive list of the functions of "western democratic" political parties, [30] most of which are obviously inapplicable to transitional polities like Russia. Second, all parties can be said to fulfill the function of competition. The most inclusive answer to the question "what are parties?" might be that parties perform a communication function.

Although certain political scientists have adopted an overall cybernetic approach that perceives parties as "communication network[s] that specializ[e] in the aggregation of political communications... for a polity,"[31] everything in social life really boils down to communication. Sartori's conclusion, that such no-difference notion of communication nullifies the problem of function, appears correct.

In general, researchers must find the level of generalization that permits them to avoid sterile theory on the one hand, and useless accumulation of data, on the other.[32] If we take communication as the most general function of all political parties, we may pose the following question: Communication from whom to whom? The answer to this question will identify those political actors who play the leading roles in political performance. There are, of course, different—and even contrasting—ways to identify political actors, each of which corresponds not only to a particular analytical approach to politics, but to some level of generalization as well. In selecting comparative referents for analyzing new Russian political parties, it is reasonable to apply the model of communication between the elite and the masses that encompasses all interactions between those who rule and those who are ruled.

Two major aspects of "mass–elite" communications may be easily distinguished. First, parties primarily enable the masses to communicate to the elite by expressing and aggregating interests, as well as providing the means of political communication for those who do not belong to this elite. Second, parties enable

30. See, for example, Roy C. Macridis, "Introduction: The History, Functions, and Typology of Parties," in *Political Parties: Contemporary Trends and Ideas*, 17–20.

31. Samuel H. Barnes, *Party Democracy: Politics in an Italian Socialist Federation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 241.

32. See Alfred Grosser, *L'explication politique: une introduction à l'analyse comparative* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), 55.

the elite to communicate to the masses by providing it a means of mobilizing support. These two functions may be defined as expression and integration, respectively. It is widely assumed that there is no equilibrium between them. According to Sartori, "political communication is not a dialogue among equal partners for the sake of entertainment."[33] Parties are expected to perform primarily as agencies of expression for the elite.

* * * * *

This paper is divided into six sections. The first presents some general information about western Siberia and examines the origins of political parties active in the region in 1991–1993. Section 1 also looks at these parties' organizational histories within the context of overall political developments in Russia, particularly in Siberia, during the years 1990–1991. Three subsequent sections present an analysis, framed in terms of expression and integration, of Russian parties as agencies of communication between the elite and the masses ("vertical" communication), within the elite, and within the masses (the latter representing two different kinds of "horizontal" communication). Although the discussion focuses on political parties, the problem of functional equivalents (i.e., those institutions that are, in effect, usurping the typical functions of well-established parties or serving as surrogates for them in a particular role) cannot be avoided.

It cannot be assumed *a priori* that those formations which call themselves parties in Russia perform only the roles performed by their western counterparts. Quite the reverse, it may be hypothesized that their real functions are very different from those of western parties, but equivalent to those of other groups or institutions. The notion of functional equivalence, designed to make possible comparisons between embryonic and highly structurally differentiated systems, is thus of crucial importance for the analytical approach employed in this article.[34]

The fifth and sixth sections of the paper will relate the major characteristics of new Russian political parties to prospects for the country's transition to democracy. The paper's central thesis on the nature of the new Russian polity is presented in the fifth section, where it is suggested that this polity is not a democracy, but a competitive oligarchy transitional to democracy. The sixth section examines the view, expressed by many observers, that the current regime must be replaced by an alternative form of government. In this context, the section briefly reviews western literature on transitional regimes and identifies the kind of regime change most likely to take place in Russia after the October events of 1993 to be a shift towards delegative de-

33. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, 57.

34. See Howard J. Wiarda, "The Ethnocentrism of the Social Sciences," in *Review of Politics* (April 1981).

mocracy (or, more precisely, proto-democracy).

The advantages and disadvantages of such a regime change are discussed in the conclusion, which suggests that competitive oligarchy is more consistent with the purpose of a transition to democracy than alternative paths of political development.

The analysis presented here is based on empirical data collected by the sociopolitical research group of the Siberian Personnel Training Center and partially published in its bulletin, *Political Chronicles of Siberia.* Those parts of the article that deal with developments in Moscow are based on analyses of post-communism in Russia by western social scientists, among which Yithak Brudny's work on the history of the Democratic Russia movement proved especially helpful.[35]

1

Before we begin to examine political parties in western Siberia, two questions must be answered: Why the time period August 1991–October 1993? Why western Siberia? The first answer is easy: the two sieges of the Russian White House, in 1991 and 1993, are probably the greatest watersheds in contemporary Russian history, and the impact they have and will have on the evolution of a party system cannot be ignored. Despite the fact that the outbreak of violence in October 1993 upset the balance of power in the country and the vast majority of its regions (including western Siberia), the discussion in this article nevertheless focuses on previous developments. Even the most recent events, whether or not they completely overshadow the past, can be understood only in historical context. More important for this particular study, the description of the past is intended to provide generalizations that are expected to be useful for explaining the present. Thus the conclusion will give some consideration to the meaning of contemporary events in Russia as they relate to its prospects for a transition to democracy.

The second question is somewhat more difficult. To begin with, the question should be reformulated as 'Why not Moscow?' Most researchers writing about new Russian politics, both in the country itself and abroad, rarely leave the capital for the vast periphery of the former inner empire, with the exception of St. Petersburg. There are important reasons for devoting special attention to Moscow. For more than six hundred years, the city shaped the history of the country. Today, the headquarters of the most important Russian parties are situated there, whereas those parties that seek to represent regional interests within the Russian Federation are of virtually no political significance. It is logical, then, to study larger formations like the Democratic Russia movement in Moscow, where prominent leaders may be interviewed and internal documents may be examined than, say, Novosibirsk.

35. See Yitzhak M. Brudny, "The Dynamics of 'Democratic Russia,' 1990–1993," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1993).

An impressive example of thorough analysis based primarily on Moscow sources is provided in the above-mentioned article of Yitzhak Brudny. While demonstrating the advantages of this approach, however, the article also suffers from its shortcomings. For instance, it is stated that "DR's contribution to Yeltsin's victory in the referendum [in April 1993] was even more crucial than its contribution to his 1991 presidential victory... This tactic, combined with excellent organization, succeeded remarkably in mobilizing what was presumed to be an indifferent electorate."[36] An observer of the 1993 referendum campaign in Novosibirsk, however, could easily conclude that Democratic Russia contributed virtually nothing to Yeltsin's victory. In fact, in the weeks prior to the referendum there were almost no signs of the activity by the movement in the region.

On the other hand, the April 1993 referendum results showed that Yeltsin and his policies still mastered a reasonably high level of support among the region's population. Like everywhere else in the world, the leaders and activists of Russian parties tend to overestimate their own significance, attributing the success of their political allies to their own efforts even if their contributions to this success were very modest. This is not to say that it is absolutely necessary to leave Moscow or St. Petersburg in order to attain a better perspective on Russian politics, but it is sometimes useful.

There is also another reason for focusing attention on the Russian periphery. Quite understandably, political life in the capital is excessively turbulent. Parties constantly emerge, hold congresses, change their names, propose programs and bylaws, form coalitions, split, reunite. How does one judge the relative significance of these events, taking into account that participants in such parties are not usually modest in their estimation of the significance of these organizations? How can one distinguish between those organizations seeking to control the state, despite insufficient resources, and those noisy formations whose only goal is to attract some publicity, preferably in the west, for their founder-members?

As far as the opposition is concerned, how can we identify those parties which are relatively influential in contrast to those whose strength is systematically overestimated by the mass media simply in order to make negative examples of them (consider the typical case of Nina Andreeva's "All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks")? One possible resolution to these problems would be to look at the periphery. If something that occurs in Moscow exerts a significant impact on political life in, say, Novosibirsk, one has good reason to believe the phenomenon is worth studying. Of course, it goes without saying that one can study Moscow without reference to the periphery, although such studies are somewhat one-dimensional,

36. Ibid., 167–8.

but it is impossible to study western Siberia without reference to Moscow. Thus the core of the discussion in this paper is the periphery, not Moscow, and, while no claim is made that western Siberia is necessarily representative of other Russian regions, there is no apparent reason to conclude that it is so far from the mainstream of provincial politics as to constitute a unique case.

* * * * * *

Novosibirsk, a city in the southern part of western Siberia with a population of about 1.5 million, is not only the administrative center of a province (*oblast'*), the population of which is slightly less than twice the size, it also dominates the surrounding regions of western Siberia, including the Tomsk, Omsk, Tiumen', and Kemerovo provinces, the Altai territory (*krai*) and the Altai republic. Novosibirsk claims to be the unofficial capital of Siberia. Although this claim may be contested by Tomsk or Omsk, it is by no means groundless.

Being relatively young (it was founded one hundred years ago), Novosibirsk has experienced rapid industrial development since the early 1920s and especially after the 1940s, when many enterprises together with their staffs were evacuated from European Russia. Since that time, Novosibirsk has continued to take advantage of its location at the intersection of the Trans-Siberian railway and the Ob river, as well as its proximity to the heavily industrialized Kuznetsk Basin (in Kemerovo province) and the metallurgical plants of the Urals. The city's primary industries are diversified machine construction and metalworking; a substantial part of its working population is, in one capacity or another, employed in the defense sector. Undoubtedly the center of scientific research in the region, the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences is situated in a specialized suburb of Novosibirsk—Akademgorodok (Academic town)—along with more than fifteen institutions of higher education.

Omsk, the second largest city in western Siberia, also owes its origin to its strategic location on major transport lines, occupying the rail crossing on the Irtysh river. At present, industry in Omsk is concentrated in machine building, metal working (one-half of all enterprises), chemicals (one-quarter), and food industries (one-quarter). Kemerovo and a dozen other cities (Novokuznetsk, Prokopievsk, Kiselevsk, Mezhdurechensk, Belovo, etc.) sit in the important coal mining area in the Kuznetsk Basin, or Kuzbass. Western Siberia also includes the oil-producing Tiumen' province and the Altai territory, the latter being the only part of the region that has a more or less developed agricultural sector.

It must be stressed that the population of the city and region of Novosibirsk is virtually homogenously Russian. The aborigines of the Altai republic and northern Tiumen' province, as well as Shors of southeast Kuzbass, are politically passive minorities, while the Crimean Tatars, Poles, and western Ukrainians who were exiled to Siberia have been mostly assimilated. The political activities of Volga Germans in the

region focus on the problem of their return to the lost *Vaterland* and are thus of no relevance to current developments in the region. There are practically no grounds for ethnic conflict, which tends to be widespread in post-communist societies in the region. Those few politicians who insist on more independence for Siberia appeal to pragmatic rationality rather than to the national identity of the population. Even in September 1992, when tensions between Moscow and the periphery were approaching their apogee, only 35 percent of respondents polled in Novosibirsk were in favor of creating an autonomous (not independent) Siberian republic, while 47 percent rejected even autonomy.

Groups of Siberian secessionists are small, poorly organized, and fractious. The most well-known, the Party for Independence of Siberia (PIS), was dissolved in January 1993 by its leader and founder, Tomsk journalist B. Perov. This party, whose activities were limited to Tomsk, strongly disapproved of national economic reform strategy and demanded a halt to privatization and other forms of "plundering the natural riches of Siberia," including foreign investments in the Siberian economy. Although similar demands made at congresses of Siberian deputies in Krasnoiarsk in March 1992 and Novosibirsk in September 1993 attracted the attention of the mass media, in both cases it seems these demands were mainly aimed at exerting political pressure on Yeltsin, not securing mass support for the idea of secession. No organized group has replaced the PIS in separatist zeal; those political parties that do exist in the region are generally local chapters of Moscow (or, so to speak, all-Russian) organizations, thus the regional "party system" appears to be a simplified version of the central system.

The earliest more or less independent political organizations in western Siberia were formed by radical nationalists, whose movement first emerged during the 1970s in Moscow. In 1983, it obtained a kind of legal status under the *Pamiat'* (Memory) Society of History and Literature Amateurs. In broad terms, *Pamiat'* hoped to foster a resurrection of Russian national self-identity and pride so that "each person could say 'I am a Russian' without embarrassment and fear."[37] In 1986 and 1987, groups bearing the same name began to emerge in other Russian cities. The *Pamiat'* Historical and Patriotic Association–Novosibirsk was founded on 19 February 1986, the first non-communist political group in the region since 1921. As such, it attracted some public interest evidently kindled both by certain restrictive (but limited) measures and the hidden support of certain CPSU officials.

While most early activists of *Pamiat'* sought a just nationalities policy that addressed the impoverished state of the Russian peo-

37. For an overview of the ideological foundations of *Pamiat'* and its activities in Leningrad in 1988–1991, see Robert W. Orttung, "The Russian Right and the Dilemmas of Party Organization," in *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 3 (1992).

ple, some of its xenophobic leaders (in Novosibirsk, A. Kazantsev was the most notorious) depicted Jewish domination as the principle cause of all Russian troubles, including the revolution of 1917, and regarded national proportional representation as the remedy. In 1987–1988, similar groups emerged all over the region, among them *Otechestvo* (Fatherland) in Tiumen' and *Vremia* (Time) in Novokuznetsk. In June 1988, some of these groups, including *Pamiat'*– Novosibirsk joined the Union of Patriotic Organizations of the Urals and Siberia (UPOUS).

Originally, *Pamiat'* had benefited from its position of being the only non-system political grouping in the region, but this position was substantially undermined in 1988–91. As a result of a new conflict that shifted the politically relevant emotions of the population from *Pamiat'* to Yeltsin, the influence of the former declined. UPOUS participated in the 1990 election campaign in the Bloc of Social and Patriotic Movements of Russia, which suffered a total defeat. Between 1987 and 1990, *Pamiat'* split into several factions. Currently, some seven organizations of this origin exist in the region, no one of which has more than ten members and each of which claims to be the true successor to *Pamiat'* (the Novosibirsk People's Assembly, Russian National Unity, the Russian Party of National Renewal, and others). Certain of these organizations were banned after the October 1993 events in Moscow.

The "democratization" of Soviet political life in 1987–90, of which *glasnost'* was the most important part, was originally intended to release human energies that, according to Mikhail Gorbachev, had been strangled by the bureaucratic centralism of the recent past. Democratization was never intended to create anything close to multiparty democracy in the country. Yet as a result of the opportunities created by *glasnost'*, there arose a number of societal pressure groups—*neformaly* (the "informals")—and, later, various democratic associations, fronts, and clubs, who demanded political change.[38] In Novosibirsk, the largest such group was the Memorial Society. Originally formed to commemorate the victims of Stalin's terror, the Memorial Society started making modest political

38. On the early stage of the formation of the multiparty system in Russia, see M.A. Babkina, ed., *New Political Parties and Movements in the Soviet Union* (New York: Nova Science, 1991); Steven Fish, "The Emergence of Independent Associations and the Transformation of Russian Political Society," in *Journal of Communist Studies* 7, no. 3, (1991); Geoffrey A. Hosking et al., *The Road to Post-Communism* (London: Pinter, 1992); Arkadii Meerovich, "The Emergence of Russian Multi-Party Politics," in *Report on the USSR* 2, no. 34 (1990); Vera Tolz, *The USSR's Emerging Multiparty System* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1990); Michael E. Urban, "Party Formation and Deformation on Russia's Democratic Left," in *Perestroika-Era Politics*, ed. Robert T. Huber and Donald R. Kelley (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1991). For factual information on some 120 groups that have emerged across the Russian political spectrum since 1987, see Vladimir Pribylovskii, *Dictionary of Political Parties and Organizations in Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1992).

demands in 1989–90. At the same time, the most radical variety of *neformaly* in Novosibirsk was the Democratic Union, which had formed as early as May 1988, when it declared unbending opposition to the communist regime. The Democratic Union stood for non-violent change of the country's political system with the goal of constructing a representative parliamentary democracy at all levels.

Similar goals were advanced by the Democratic Movement of Akademgorodok, a small but active group of scientists and educators. In some cities and provinces of western Siberia, local democrats succeeded in creating "popular fronts" patterned after coalitions like *Sajudis* in Lithuania: the Society of Active Supporters of *Perestroika* (Barnaul), the Tiumen' People's Front, and the Union for the Promotion of Revolutionary *Perestroika* (Tomsk). In Kemerovo province a number of political groups originated in the workers' committees set up during the miners' strike of July 1989. Members of these committees took part in the establishment of the Union of Kuzbass Workers, which by mid-1990 was the largest independent political organization in the region, with five to six thousand members. In late 1990 and early 1991, certain political formations that emerged from worker committees joined the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR).

The idea of creating a large democratic organization that would challenge the authority of the CPSU first emerged in late 1989. The most important initiative to create such a structure came from Nikolai Travkin, a prominent member of the CPSU Democratic Platform. The organizing committee of the DPR, chaired by Travkin, was established in Moscow in May 1990 and the party soon had strong support in the regions of Russia, where several branches were created in the summer and fall of 1990. Many local democratic organizations joined Travkin's party. Consciously trying to expand beyond the party's original base in the liberal intelligentsia, activists successfully recruited into the DPR many low- and middle-level managers and former CPSU functionaries.[39]

Travkin's attempt to create a nationwide democratic party did not go unchallenged. At least two other major democratic groups competed with the DPR for political influence and membership in this effort—the Republican Party of the Russian Federation (RPRF) and the Social-Democratic Party of Russian Federation (SDPRF). Yet by the fall of 1990, the DPR was well in the lead. The local branch of the party in Novosibirsk, for example, had five hundred members and was definitely the largest and best organized political force in the city after the CPSU.

The organizational structure of the DPR was designed to fight a trench war against the CPSU. Although the party aimed to secure

39. The formation of the DPR is thoroughly discussed in Brudny, "The Dynamics of 'Democratic Russia,'" 146–8.

multiparty elections at the earliest possible moment, the DPR based itself on democratic centralism and exercised strict discipline over the activities of its members. The majority of democratic leaders in Moscow and Leningrad, however, feared the emergence of a populist dictatorship within the party and strongly criticized Travkin's drive to create a new "political vanguard." As Brudny has noted, "Indeed, creation of the social movement was a direct response by those democrats who had participated in the formation of DPR and been alienated by the result."[40] The founding congress of the Democratic Russia movement (DRM), held in Moscow on 20–21 October 1990, struck a heavy blow at Travkin's party.

Democratic Russia is a term that applies to several entities. The earliest was a body known as the Voters' Bloc, created in January 1990 at a conference of over 170 democratic candidates for election to representative bodies of the Russian Federation. Although Democratic Russia's electoral campaign—dominated by the antipolitics of opposing the communist regime—proved to be successful, it did not lead the alliance to transform itself into a stronger organization. In fact, it effectively ceased to exist after the elections, only to be resurrected in the fall of that year as a loosely-structured coalition of democratic parties, groups, and individuals.

The founders of the DRM considered this structure to be both more democratic and more suitable to existing political conditions in Russia. The most important advantage of such an organizational scheme was that it mobilized those members of the CPSU sympathetic to Yeltsin, but still reluctant to leave the Party. The major target of the founders of the DRM, who felt themselves increasingly isolated from democratic activists in the periphery, turned out to be not the CPSU, but members of the DPR. Not surprisingly, the debate between Travkin and his opponents in the organizing committee was the main event of the movement's first congress. The committee's refusal to accept Travkin's proposals resulted in the DPR's temporary withdrawal from the movement. Bowing to strong pressure from many provincial branches, who feared being cut off from the mainstream of the democratic movement, however, Travkin rejoined the DRM in January 1991.

The founding conference of the Novosibirsk provincial branch of the DRM took place on 10 February 1991. The conference elected a coordinating council chaired by RSFSR People's Deputy A. Manannikov, who combined his previous experience in the dissident movement with close connections to leading democrats in Moscow. The top leadership of the provincial branch also included V. Shirokov and Y. Savchenko of the DPR as well as the representatives of RPRF and SDPRF. On March 10, the DRM brought 8,000 people to Lenin Square in the center of Novosibirsk, marking the begin-

40. Ibid., 148.

ning of mass demonstrations in support of Yeltsin; the DRM continued to be the most important organization at Yeltsin's disposal during his electoral campaign in the summer of 1991.

Yeltsin's overwhelming victory in the presidential election of June 1991 did not, however, lead to the consolidation of the DRM. Quite the reverse. Efforts to create a strong party in place of the movement were renewed by Travkin and his lieutenants in the periphery. A joint conference of the local branches of three parties—the DPR, the RPRF, and the SDPRF—took place in Novosibirsk in July 1991 with the official purpose of creating a united party. Once formed, such a party could literally embrace the entire membership of the DRM in the province.

The alliance never materialized. Moreover, soon after the conference, the DPR itself split into two factions led by Shirokov and Savchenko, respectively. At the same time, Yeltsin's victory helped him to garner the loyal support of the old political, managerial, and administrative elites of the region. Strongly reluctant to join the DRM, which appeared to be too radical and irresponsible, they sought alternative political organizations. One such alternative was the Movement for Democratic Reforms (MDR), created in Moscow by a group of prominent politicians consisting of Gavriil Popov, Eduard Shevardnadze, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and others. An organizing group of the MDR was established in Novosibirsk in June 1991. From its inception, the group was patronized by the chairman of the Novosibirsk city soviet, I. Indinok, who eventually became a member of the MDR.

Another option was the Democratic Party of Russian Communists (DPRC), led by vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoi. Yeltsin's trusted representative in the province during the electoral campaign, I. Vinogradova, joined the DPRC along with a relatively large group of low- and middle-ranking functionaries of the CPSU. In Vinogradova's own words, she supported Yeltsin "because he enjoyed confidence and support of such remarkable people as Ruslan Khasbulatov, Sergei Shakhrai, and Aleksandr Rutskoi."

Despite this potentially fractious situation, the summer of 1991 was the golden age of Russian political parties. They were expected to play an important role in undermining the strength of the CPSU; people forecast that a strong and probably victorious coalition of well-established democratic parties would challenge the CPSU during the next parliamentary elections, probably sometime in 1994. These hopes of party activists were dispelled by the coup attempt 19–22 August. This is not to say that Russian parties proved to be weak and useless in the cause of democracy during the crisis. Already in the first hours of the coup, democratic activists began organizing demonstrations in support of Yeltsin. One such demonstration, staged in front of the Russian White House, proved to be of crucial importance for the ultimate defeat of the coup. In western Siberia, prodemocratic rallies took place in Novosibirsk,

Barnaul, Tomsk, Omsk, and other cities. Yet even if Yeltsin scored a success during the coup, his allies did not. Democratic parties were among the first to come out in support of Yeltsin's decree banning the CPSU and confiscating its property, yet the collapse of the CPSU meant that the task of its counterparts—in the form of democratic parties—had been accomplished. These parties now had to redefine their political goals, which turned out to be an extremely difficult problem.

2

The DRM was the only democratic organization to maintain a relatively large membership during the period August 1991–October 1993, appearing to be something of a mass party. It is logical, therefore, to begin an examination of the role of new parties in "mass–elite" communication with the DRM. It must be stressed, however, that the membership of the DRM fell rapidly during this period, first and foremost due to the unpopularity of the economic policy pursued by Yeltsin's administration after the autumn of 1991. Deep dissatisfaction with the consequences of the reform program was the predominant attitude in Russian society and DRM activists faced pressure from their supporters. Some, it appeared, simply could not stand the pressure; others were appointed to positions in local govenment, such as presidential representatives (or, as they were referred to locally, *namestniki*) who were appointed to all provinces of the country. Functionally, *namestniki* could be viewed as new supervisory authorities, operating in much the same way as had the former provincial first Party secretaries.

DRM activists were chosen as Yeltsin's representatives in Novosibirsk (A. Manokhin), Tomsk (S. Sulakshin), and Omsk (A. Minzhurenko). In Kemerovo, M. Kisliuk, a prominent leader of the independent workers' movement, was appointed to the position of head *(glava)* of the provincial administration. Other democrats entered the lower ranks of the new, postcommunist bureaucracy, especially in Kemerovo province. The drain of the most active and most able DRM members into the new administration hampered the organizational stability of the movement and contributed to its decline. Finally, a large number of previously active members exchanged politics for business, while still others radically revised their ideological convictions and joined parties in opposition to the Yeltsin government.

The DRM nevertheless remained the largest of the democratic parties. In the spring of 1993, its membership in each of the provincial centers of the western Siberian region still numbered in the hundreds. This relatively large membership was not necessarily irrelevant to the actual political role of the DRM, as the movement was doing its best both to express the interests of its members and to mobilize support. But was the DRM capable of performing these important functions effectively?

Before answering this question, one must note that the movement had long enjoyed an

ambivalent relationship with Yeltsin. On the one hand, the movement completely supported Yeltsin's drive to promote economic and political change. On the other hand, the policies implemented by Yeltsin in 1991–93 did not always meet the requirement of undermining the power of the old *nomenklatura*. Realistic or not, this requirement was very important to the overwhelming majority of democratic activists, especially in the periphery, which explains why the leaders of the Democratic Russia Movement alternated between supporting and criticizing Yeltsin. In retrospect it appears that those observers who concluded that the movement's capacity to pursue both policies would in the end prove inadequate and the DRM would suffer a gradual decline, were essentially right.[41]

One of the most impressive efforts to transform the DRM into an organization that could secure stable support for the policy of radical reform was made in December 1991–January 1992, when the Public Committees of Russian Reforms (PCRR) came into existence. According to a decree signed by Gennadii Burbulis, the heads of local administrations were obliged to support the provincial PCRRs in their attempts to advance the pace of reform, most especially, that of privatization. For this purpose, the committees were to be provided with offices and communications equipment. At first local DRM activists were enthusiastic about the new opportunities created by the PCRRs, and it seemed that they had found it particularly attractive to demand the removal of those officials who opposed or sabotaged the reform effort. The chairman of the Altai territorial PCRR, P. Akelkin, claimed: "If somebody will be in our way, if somebody will obstruct reforms, our committee will send the list of such people directly to Moscow. We are sure that these people will never be able to hinder us, because they will be removed and never again appointed chief executives." Attempts by some of the PCRRs to influence the appointment of executive staffs were, however, remarkably fruitless. Literally no senior- or middle-level government executive was removed at the demands of these newly established bodies. S. Sulakshin (Tomsk) commented that the most difficult problem was to find people who could replace these bureaucrats: "I was trying my best to find people. But those democrats to whom I offered the job were hesitant and reluctant to take it. True, it is easy just to make noisy declarations, but the drudgery of management is very difficult."

One could not deny that PCRR activists themselves were, as a rule, highly incompetent in administrative matters, so that their demands had to be treated with a grain of salt. Yet, for good or ill, the authorities in Moscow preferred to maintain close ties with regional administrative elites

41. See Michael McFaul, "Democrats in Disarray," in *Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 2 (1993); Julia Wishnevsky, "The Rise and Fall of 'Democratic Russia,'" in *RFE/RL Research Report* 1, no. 22 (1992).

rather than an ideological cleansing campaign. As early as Spring 1992 it became clear that the PCRRs had failed to accomplish their mission; almost nothing has been heard about their activities since that time.

Let us now examine whether the DRM was capable of doing what it did best in the earlier period of its evolution—secure mass political mobilization in the face of antidemocratic forces. Indeed, confrontation generally energized the DRM, yet no political crisis experienced by Russia between September 1991 and October 1993 provoked the storm of activity associated with early 1991. One of the most serious confrontations between Yeltsin and the Russian parliament took place on 10 December 1992. Speaking before the deputies, he denounced the Congress as a bastion of reactionary forces attempting to carry out a constitutional coup. Soon afterwards he called for a referendum to consider dissolution of the parliament. In this critical situation, it was logical for him to call upon the DRM to mobilize on his behalf. Yet, the movement failed to organize an efficient campaign in support of "the sole guarantor of successful democratic reforms in Russia." At most, roughly 2,000 people waving national banners gathered in front of the Kremlin walls. As for the periphery, it simply ignored these events. Two days later, Yeltsin and his antagonists announced a compromise.

It may be argued, as does Brudny, that Yeltsin's surprise attack against the parliament was nothing more than a tactical maneuver in pursuit of an intra-elite deal. Even so, one could not deny that the DRM delivered an extremely poor performance. One can speculate that the failure of the DRM to mobilize a campaign in support of Yeltsin contributed to the compromise which resulted, in particular, the replacement of Egor Gaidar with Viktor Chernomyrdin. (The latter's loyalty to Yeltsin was quite questionable at that moment). As mentioned earlier, the DRM also contributed little to Yeltsin's victory in the April 1993 referendum. Brudny rightly observes of the referendum campaign that "contrary to 1991, Yeltsin did very little campaigning himself and, when he did so, his appearances tended to be lethargic and ineffectual."[42] Does this mean, however, that it was largely the task of DRM activists to spread Yeltsin's message and that of his economic program? Although the referendum campaign was marked by a reasonably high level of political activity at both ends of the political spectrum,[43] the role of political organizations seemed outweighed by that of the mass media. Consideration of this aspect of new Russian politics will follow below.

The DRM's inability to express criticism in a way that could influence public policy stemmed from the ineffectiveness of its efforts to

42. Brudny, "Dynamics of 'Democratic Russia,'" 167.

43. See Wendy Slater, "No Victors in the Russian Referendum," in *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 21 (1993): 13–14.

mobilize support. The relationship between Yeltsin and the DRM began to cool as early as September 1991, but the movement as a whole could never afford to remain in opposition to Yeltsin for very long. Certain prominent DRM leaders, however, accused the president of betraying the cause of democratization by preserving the political and economic power of the old *nomenklatura.* Rather than supporting the government, these leaders wanted the DRM to spearhead democratic opposition to it.[44]

Although these radicals were ignored by the leaders of provincial branches of the DRM, the movement's rank-and-file were also not consistently loyal to Yeltsin. The regional conference of the DRM held in Tomsk on 18 and 19 February 1993, for example, turned into a conflict between the movement's local and Moscow leaders (L. Ponomarëv, Gleb Yakunin), on the one hand, and local activists on the other, with the latter accusing the national leadership of following the "inconsistent and suicidal policy of Yeltsin." These feeble attempts at dissent within the DRM were unable to affect Russian politics in general. Yeltsin's position was stronger than that of the DRM, let alone its dissident factions. And, while the movement could not survive being abandoned to fate, Yeltsin's rather limited need of it demonstrated his readiness to sacrifice the movement whenever he thought an intra-elite compromise possible.[45]

The decline of other democratic parties in western Siberia during the period August 1991–October 1993 was even sharper than that of the DRM. Obviously these parties had failed to build effective grassroots ties. In late 1991, even the largest was relatively small, counting its membership in the tens rather than in the hundreds—the Novosibirsk branch of the DPR numbered 40; the RPRF, some 100; the SDPRF, 30. While these figures should be treated with skepticism, there is little doubt that party membership has fallen or, at best, remained the same since that time.

Provincial branches of democratic parties were generally represented by local leaders who followed instructions from Moscow in directing the activities of a small number of supporters. Were such parties too small to play any significant role in communication between the masses and the elite? It is within this framework that Maurice Duverger developed the concept of the mass party as an alternative to the "*parti de cadres.*"[46] By definition, a *parti de cadres* has neither a strong apparatus nor a strong membership structure, but nevertheless acts as an important channel for expressing the interests and preferences of its sup-

44. For a thorough analysis of infighting within the DRM leadership in 1992, see Brudny, "Dynamics of 'Democratic Russia,'" 158–59.

45. See Brudny, "Dynamics of 'Democratic Russia,'" 168–69.

46. See Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen, 1954).

porters. In comparative perspective, the political parties of the United States are another such example of non-mass parties which play a significant role in "mass–elite" communications.[47] It may be also argued that major postwar changes in the economy, social structure, and communications network in western Europe have severely damaged the traditional role of political party membership in these countries.[48] Some analysts, such as Denis Dragunskii and Martin Malia, go even further, claiming that the time of mass parties is passed.[49]

Political parties may, of course, adopt various organizational structures that do not always correspond to the given social and political conditions. Non-mass parties, for example, are efficient within the established framework of democratic institutions that provide the necessary prerequisites for interparty competition, particularly under conditions of relative political stability. The latter helps politicians and citizens alike to concentrate on the electoral process. Yet none of these conditions can be found in contemporary Russia. As Philippe C. Schmitter observes, "what definitely is most peculiar about Russia's transition is the role that elections have (not) played in it."[50]

The CPSU was virtually the only party represented in the legislative elections of March 1990, but it was so divided by that time (some of the most effective leaders of the opposition were still officially members), that it would be fair to characterize those elections as nonparty elections. As a result, those voting blocs which eventually emerged in the Russian parliament were neither organized nor effectively controlled by political parties. The largest party-based faction in the parliament, that of the SDPRF/RPRF, was composed of over fifty members, but fewer than ten were actually members of either of these parties.

Local elections held in some provinces of Russia in late 1992 and early 1993 also did not contribute to the rise of political parties. In fact, almost all democratic candidates lost to former *apparatchiki*. No elections for the positions of head of local administration (*glava administratsii*) have been held in western Siberia since August 1991, but additional elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in Tomsk province (January 1992) provide some relevant data. There P. Kohsel, the director of a state agricultural enterprise (*sovkhoz*),

47. Leon D. Epstein, *Political Parties in the American Mold* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

48. See Stefano Bartolini, "The Membership of Mass Parties: The Social–Democratic Experience, 1889–1978," in *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, eds. Hans Daalder and Peter Mair (London: SAGE Publications, 1983).

49. See Denis Dragunskii and Martin Malia, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," in *Vek dvadtsatyi i mir* 9 (1990): 20.

50. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Reflections on Revolutionary and Evolutionary Transitions," 31.

was elected over RPRF candidate Associate Professor O. Popov by a wide margin—Koshel received 47 percent of the vote to Popov's 6 percent. Other democratic candidates fared even worse. One can thus conclude from the evidence that parties like the RPRF were incapable of performing in a manner reminiscent of Duverger's *parti de cadres.*

It would be unfair not to mention that several parties fared far better in creating relatively large memberships than did democratic parties—namely, the successor parties to the CPSU. In early 1993, the largest of these successor parties in western Siberia was the Russian Communist Workers' Party (RCWP), with more than 4,000 members in Kemerovo province and 1,500–2,500 members in the Altai *krai* and the Novosibirsk, Omsk, and Tomsk provinces. Founded in November 1991, the origins of the RCWP can be traced to the Communist Initiative movement, once the most radical anti-Gorbachev faction inside the CPSU.[51]

The party's program aimed at establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers' self-management, Marxist–Leninist ideology, and a planned economy. RCWP leaders (A. Makashov, V. Anpilov, V. Tiulkin) and activists both in Moscow and in the periphery refused to attribute legitimacy to the existing political regime; for them, the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 was a state crime. As a matter of fact, the RCWP had nothing to do with the Russian Federation as a political reality. The party correspondingly followed a confrontational line dominated by the antipolitics of opposition to Yeltsin and, long before "the second October revolution," was described as the most "battle-ready" of Russia's procommunist groups.

Together with the Working People's Russia Movement, the party organized "food line marches" in Moscow on 22 December 1991 and 15 January 1992 that involved 100,000 people, as well as an All-Union Popular Assembly in February 1992, which attracted more than 300,000 people. (All of these figures are no doubt exaggerated, but it cannot be denied that some rallies staged by this party in Moscow attracted relatively large mobs of protesters). The activities of the RCWP in western Siberia, although not so well-organized as in Moscow, took on the same organizational forms as those in the capitol—mostly rallies, demonstrations, and pickets.

Yet is it possible to describe these activities as meaningful political participation? The most influential effort to provide a conceptual framework for analyzing different forms of political participation and to examine them empirically is the seven-nation comparative study conducted by Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim, *Participation and Political Equality.* There the authors adopted the following working definition of political participa-

51. For a description of the Communist Initiative Movement, see Orttung, "The Russian Right," 461–73.

tion: "those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take."[52] The authors explicitly exclude demonstrations, peaceful or violent, from consideration. Although the model has been criticized for this reason,[53] it is quite applicable to the case under discussion.

Normally, those who participate in politics do not seek momentous and/or drastic change, even if they find it necessary. Quite the reverse, participating in politics means to virtually become a part of the established political order. That is why participation may be linked with the function of political integration. If, however, political integration is defined as "the capacity of a political system to make groups and their members previously outside the official fold full-fledged participants in the political process,"[54] it would seem that the Russian Communist Workers' Party did not act in this capacity. As for the function of expression, the political protest campaigns run by the party in 1992 and early 1993 had absolutely no impact on the decision making process. The RCWP did not, in Key's words, even seek "to translate mass preferences into public policy."[55] Despite its relatively large membership then, the RCWP did not play any significant role in "mass–elite" communications. Its real functions will be discussed later in this article.

It may be hypothesized that the channel of "vertical" political communication between the elite and the masses in Russia is provided not by parties but, first and foremost, by the electronic mass media. The April 1993 referendum may be considered evidence of this hypothesis. Despite deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the results of economic reform, dissatisfaction clearly indicated in sociological surveys, the majority of those who voted in the referendum expressed their confidence in Yeltsin.

In western Siberia, the Altai territory was the only exception to this pattern. Of course, people voted for different reasons, yet it must be kept in mind that the same surveys which showed dissatisfaction with economic reform also showed widespread negative attitudes toward the prospect of a restoration of communism. And a communist restoration was precisely the focus of the propaganda campaign conducted by the mass media in the weeks prior to the referendum: "If not Yeltsin, then the communists." The options fac-

52. Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 48.

53. See William R. Schonfeld, "The Meaning of Democratic Participation," in *World Politics* 28 (October 1975).

54. *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*, 7th ed. (Pacific Grove, C.A.: Brooks/Cole, 1990), 238.

55. Valdimer O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 433.

ing Russian voters were portrayed as a stark choice between Yeltsin—meaning reform, progress, and the new Russia—and his opponents, whom the media depicted as communists attempting to engineer a return to the past. The Congress of People's Deputies was depicted as a predominantly communist body (in fact, the main political opposition at the congress was a loose coalition of factions whose political positions ranged from support for the restoration of the Soviet Union to monarchist aspirations, with total membership representing one-third of all People's Deputies).[56] It was stressed that R. Khasbulatov was a Chechen', a North Caucasian nationality that many Russians associate with organized crime. The strategy worked.

Although a detailed discussion of the role of the media in post-communist transitions would distract us from the major topic of this article, one cannot reduce such a discussion to the question of who controls the broadcasting media in countries where private radio and television stations are emerging very slowly. This question, though topical in current politics, is of marginal significance for the study of the transition to democracy. From a theoretical perspective, the real question is: What properties of the totalitarian mass media and its impact on mass political behavior have survived the collapse of communism? The answer to this question, it would seem, would give us a better understanding of the role played by the media both in the fall of communism and in the rise of new political order.

One should not conclude from the above analysis that no communication between the masses and the elite is taking place in Russia. It appears that Russian political parties were simply not involved in this process during the period August 1991–October 1993. According to the large volume of transnational literature on the significance of specific social cleavages in European party systems and voting patterns,[57] parties are expected to express clearly definable social interests. In contemporary Russia, they do not do so for two major reasons. First, the communist regime had an equalizing impact on the structure of social and political attachments; everything outside the party and state tended to be turned into an amorphous mass, with the entire country becoming, in the words of Moshe Lewin, *"déclassé."*[58] Although officially proclaimed an objective of the Communist Party, it proved impossible to eliminate the difference between skilled and unskilled workers or between workers and intellectuals. Yet it was possible to prevent the translation of these cleavages into social interests, so that group political conscience

56. See Nina Belyaeva and Vladimir Lepëkhin, "Factions, Groups, and Blocs in the Russian Parliament," in *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 20 (1993): 18–19.

57. The foundations of the developmental theory of cleavage structures and party systems are stated in Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, amd Voter Alignments," 1–64.

58. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 265.*

conscience was a rare phenomenon in the former Soviet Union.

Second, under contemporary Russian conditions, social cleavages observable today are not clearly defined, neither are they likely to become increasingly stable. As Richard Sakwa has said, "in postcommunist Russia the patchwork pattern of social interests, groups, professions, strata, and classes remained desegregated," thus resembling, rather ironically, an advanced "postmodern" social structure.[59] As a result, it is practically impossible to establish close ties between a party and a social group in Russia today.

True, communist organizations claim to express the interests of the working class. The statute of the RCWP emphasizes that the membership must be mostly drawn from the workers and that party cells must be at the workplace, not residential. According to Viktor Anpilov,

> We have won the trust of the working people because we have totally rejected the idea of being "a party of the whole people" and openly declared our intention to express and promote the interests of the working class... The Russian Communist Workers' Party openly declares its class nature. We have taken important steps in this direction. The party is leading a campaign to set up workers' councils at factories and to ensure absolute government of the people at all levels.[60]

In reality, the party did not have any serious industrial influence. Most of its active members were aged pensioners who longed for the ideological scenery of their youth, while others could be defined as *lumpenproletariat* in Marxist terms.

Originally, the RCWP was critical of nationalism. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), established at a "revival–unification" congress of communists in February 1993, became Russia's largest political party overnight, claiming 600,000 members. The election of a prominent leader of nationalist forces, Gennadii Ziuganov, former ideology secretary of the Russian Communist Party, as chairman of the CPRF's Central Executive Committee signaled the new party's nationalist orientation. While a number of communist groups (including the Socialist Party of Working People (SPWP), the Russian Party of Communists, and the Leninist Socialist Party of the Working Class (the latter was active in Novosibirsk from 1991 through early 1993) joined the CPRF, the RCWP refused to join the latter because it objected to the idea of close cooperation between communists and so-called "patriotic forces." As a result of this decision, the membership of the RCWP declined. In Omsk province, where the RCWP membership fell by more than one-half (from approximately 2,000 to 700 members), the CPRF had about 4,000 members. One could barely distinguish the communists from the nationalists in the party. V. Kostiuk, for example, one of the

59. Sakwa, "Parties and the Multiparty System in Russia," 13.

60. Quoted in *Political Parties and Movements: A Quarterly of the INTERLEGAL Center for Political and Legal Studies* 1 (1992): 13.

leaders of the CPRF in Novosibirsk, was a *Pamiat'* activist as early as the mid-1980s. In general, the ideology of the expanding CPRF was much more nationalist than that of the declining RCWP.

Other parties were even less definite in their social attachments than the communists. Their programs accordingly did not appeal to specific constituencies and were essentially backward-looking—still fighting the one-party state and offering little in the way of concrete programs for replacing this state's political institutions and de-socializing the economy. R. Franklin applies the term "mainstream democratic" to the ideas shared by these parties. Their declared common goal was to dismantle the Soviet totalitarian system and replace it with a democratic, representative, and accountable government; they also supported a law-based state and a civil society with guarantees of individual freedoms and rights, and, of course, market reforms.[61]

In fact, it was difficult to distinguish between these parties. One could, perhaps, interpret the similarity in their programs as evidence of a profound political consensus on the basic values of the post-communist order in Russia. As Richard Rose reminds us,

> [I]n the 1960s it was fashionable to speak of parties competing for popular support without any reference to differences in principle or ideology. Instead, the parties were believed to compete simply in terms of the personality of their leaders or a more generalized image of competence. Values were assumed to be consensual.[62]

The concept of "catch-all" parties was designed to refer to parties whose ideologies excluded virtually no one[63] and is used by certain authors to describe the political parties of eastern Central Europe.[64] But it would seem that this concept is no more applicable to post-communist societies than is the concept of *parti de cadres*. Catch-all peoples' parties in the West did not emerge overnight, but as a result of a historical evolution that gradually changed the appearance of former class/mass parties. The latter were by definition not indifferent to specific ideologies. Why? Because during the initial phase of party formation, the leadership must select the key values of the party and then build an organization that makes these values coherent. This process explains the crucial role that ideologies normally play in shaping newly formed organizations.[65] As

61. See R. Franklin, "The Emerging Democratic Political Parties in the Russian Federation," in *Vox Populi: Newsletter of Political Organizations and Parties* 12, no. 1 (1993): 8.

62. Richard Rose, *Do Parties Make a Difference?*, 2nd ed. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1984), xiii.

63. See Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems," in *Political Parties and Political Development*, eds. Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966).

64. See, for example, Barnabas Racz, "Political Pluralization in Hungary: The 1990 Elections," in *Soviet Studies* 43, no. 1 (1991): 130.

for the "mainstream democratic" parties of Russia, they were close to being "catch-none" rather than "catch-all" parties. Their inability to establish links with clearly identifiable social groups whose interests they would try to articulate meant that they were not involved in the process of political communication between the elite and the masses. As the crisis of liberal reform intensified, such crosscutting issues as economic reform, the powers of the presidency, and relations with the "near abroad" undermined the apparent consensus among these parties, creating political cleavages that will be discussed below.

3

The question remains: What were the real functions of those formations which called themselves parties during the period August 1991–October 1993? Or, to put it in other words, were these formations dys- or, at least non-functional agencies? Before we answer this question, however, we need to examine the patterns of political communication within the elite, an examination that will clear up the issue of which groups are most likely to rule in western Siberia. Since the region is not a political unity, but a geographical area, our discussion will focus on Novosibirsk province, both because it is more or less typical and for purposes of coherence. (Kemerovo province, with its strong independent trade unions and "democratic" administration, would be a deviant case within this framework.)

Elites are usually defined as persons who by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elites are the principal decision makers in the largest, or most resource-rich, political, governmental, economic, military, professional, communications, and cultural organizations and movements of a society.[66] Our examination of western Siberia will therefore center on those decision makers who exercised authority through membership in the executive and legislative branches of power in Novosibirsk province. During the period August 1991–October 1993, both of these branches were strongly dominated by the former communist *nomenklatura*. The head of the provincial administration, V. Mukha, was the former first secretary of the Novosibirsk city Communist Party committee (*gorkom*). It should come as no surprise, then, that neither the staff of the provincial nor city administration of Novosibirsk has changed greatly since 1991. I. Indinok, head of the city administration, was also a member of the Novosibirsk *gorkom* until August 1991. Most provincial, city, and district peo-

65. See Panebianco, "Political Parties: Organization and Power," 53.

66. See Thomas R. Dye, *Who's Running America?: The Reagan Years*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1983); John Higley, Desley Deacon, and Don Smart, *Elites in Australia* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); and George Moyser and Margaret Wagstaffe, eds., *Research Methods for Elite Studies* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

ple's deputies in the region were former communists, although a few had joined the RCWP or the CPRF.

It is necessary to draw some distinctions here; it would be highly misleading to depict most former Party officials as true believers. To be sure, they existed, but in the early eighties it was far more typical to consider a Party card of the CPSU a key to power which was exercised in two major domains: state administration and industrial management. Correspondingly, a striking majority of decision makers in Novosibirsk were either professional civil servants or the directors of industrial and agricultural enterprises.

Given their common Party background, it is important to ascertain whether these groups were virtually similar or constituted two different kinds of political actors. Indeed, industrial managers had always been among the most powerful forces in the former Soviet Union, especially in the country's provinces. As early as the 1970s, some students of Soviet politics suggested that a kind of interest group politics was emerging in which technical elites would play a growing role. There was no lack of evidence that industrial managers had recurrently tried to influence Party policy, occasionally with success.[67] Some analysts went so far in their attempt to utilize fashionable "pluralist" interpretations of Soviet politics as to forecast a pragmatic, Western- oriented regime as a result of the rise to power of industrial managers.[68]

The real (not hypothetical) power of industrial managers, however, stemmed from two sources: their right to administer economic resources granted to them by the ministries and the inability of their labor forces to question their authority. Thus their connections with the regional Party apparatus had always been extremely cozy, with some industrial administrators crossing back and forth between management and Party and local government (soviet) work. For instance, V. Mukha ran the important "*Sibsel'mash*" machine building plant until he was promoted to Party work. As a result, both the behavioral norms and political attitudes of industrial managers and Party *apparatchiki* were so similar that one could hardly distinguish them from one another.

If most Novosibirsk decision makers had a *nomenklatura* background, a minority of this elite were intellectuals who had joined the democratic movement in 1988–90 or even earlier. These people were only slightly represented in the executive structures of Novosibirsk; one, A. Manokhin, held the position of presidential

67. See Jeremy R. Azrael, "The Managers," in *Political Leadership in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. R. Barry Farrell (Chicago: Aldine, 1970); and H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

68. See, for example, Alexander Yanov, *Detente after Brezhnev: The Domestic Roots of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1977).

representative to the province. Democratic groups in both provincial and city soviets were strongly critical of Mukha and Indinok, but they were not sufficiently numerous to force the executives to resign. The ex-communist majority, on the other hand, could not afford to ignore the democrats. Although weak on the regional level, the democratic opposition had the advantage of direct links with the democrats in power in Moscow. This connection became institutionalized, as the presidential representative's job was to act as a liaison between local administrations and President Yeltsin and to ensure that presidential decrees were implemented at the local level. Certain democratic activists, such as A. Manannikov, were also well enough known to be able to rely on Moscow authorities for support and protection.

Not surprisingly, executives in the province were not interested in engaging in direct confrontation with their apparently weak opponents, and the state of relations between the two factions of the elite was not antagonistic. There was a good deal of cooperation: the presidential representative had to cooperate with the head of administration and the democrats (who were generally more active in political performance than the ex-communists) often headed permanent committees and subcommittees of the soviets—cooperating with "communist" majorities that occasionally played a significant role in the decision making process at the local level.

A third group, underrepresented in the structures of power but nevertheless influential, was the province's new elite: businessmen. Their involvement in politics was stimulated by the process of privatization and their major access to power was money, although personal contacts were also very important. A number of businessmen in Novosibirsk province had political backgrounds, being either former communists who chose wealth over power, or former participants of the democratic movement who enjoyed the fruits of victory.

This elite—composed of the three groups outlined above—needed some means of inner communication. Let us begin with the function of expression. The function of expression, attributed to "horizontal" communication within an elite, may be linked to the formulation of ideologies. It is widely assumed that elite beliefs are structured by partisan ideological commitments.[69] As Alan Arian has argued,

> members of an elite not only produce ideology, they are also its largest distributors and consumers. They distribute it to their constituents in their programs and statements; they consume ideological output because, trained in the language of ideological discourse, they tend to communicate with their peers in that idiom and they are the most alert and sen-

69. The structures of leaders' belief systems across nations are thoroughly discussed in Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976), 87–105.

sitive to messages which have an ideological cast."[70]

In the former Soviet Union, Marxist–Leninist ideology was of crucial importance in maintaining a stable and consensual political order. This order was destroyed by reformers under Gorbachev and replaced by pluralistic elites lacking ideological consensus.[71] Former communists, either bureaucrats or industrial and/or agricultural managers, were especially aware of the lack of ideological means of expression vis-à-vis their democratic opponents. Some of the new political parties were quick to attempt to satisfy this pressing need, not without success. It would be misleading to underestimate the importance of this process, which resulted in the elaboration of a new language, or new intellectual style, of political communication.

As mentioned above, the Movement for Democratic Reforms was a party deliberately created to unite prominent supporters of radical reforms from the old political, managerial, and administrative elites with prominent members of the new democratic elite on the basis of a "mainstream democratic" ideology. Indonok, head of the Novosibirsk city administration, was particularly enthusiastic about the prospects of the MDR, which explains why the movement was among the most influential political groups in western Siberia. In the fall of 1991, many former Communist Party leaders and local executives joined the MDR. Its founding congress in December 1991 appeared to be a great political success. The RPRF, the People's Party of Free Russia (PPFR, actually the Democratic Party of Russian Communists, was renamed soon after the abortive coup of August 1991, when Aleksandr Rutskoi declared that "we've had enough communism"), and several smaller groups were confirmed collective members of the movement.

As early as January 1992, however, it became clear that "mainstream democratic" ideology did not provide solid ground for elite realignment. The MDR "Russian branch" held its congress in Nizhnii Novgorod on 15 and 16 February 1992, where Gavrill Popov was elected president and presented the movement's new program. The program advocated limiting the functions of the legislative branch and its interference in the executive branch, as well as early elections to all legislative bodies "from top to bottom." Quite clearly, this program had nothing in common with the objectives of local elites, who feared Yeltsin's monopolistic domination of the country and for whom the idea of new elections was absolutely unacceptable. As a result of these miscalculations, the MDR started to disintegrate. Its Novosibirsk branch, for example, split into two factions in late April 1992. One

70. Alan Arian, *Ideological Change in Israel* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968), 15.

71. See David Lane, "Soviet Elites, Monolithic or Polyarchic?" in *Russia in Flux: The Political and Social Consequences of Reform*, ed. David Lane (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1992).

faction, led by A. Plotnikov, backed Popov in his attempt to maintain the MDR as a "mainstream democratic" party, implementing a propaganda campaign about the advantages of "strong executive power." As Plotnikov put it, "indeed, it is time to get rid of the system of soviets, to throw out all this rubbish." Another faction, that supported by Indinok, redefined its goals and joined the Civic Union of Siberia.

The Civic Union was created in May–June 1992 to promote the interests of industrial managers during the privatization process. The main force behind the Civic Union was the All-Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, a pressure group created by former high-level CPSU official Arkadii Volskii.[72] At the end of May 1992 Volskii and his associates launched a political party, *Obnovlenie* (Renewal), which strictly limited its membership to an exclusive circle of enterprise directors. *Obnovlenie* had no intention of becoming a mass electoral party, but was soon joined by two parties that not only sought mass membership, but possessed relatively strong regional networks: the PPRF, led by Aleksandr Rutskoi, and the DPR led by Nikolai Travkin. The Civic Union had one goal in common with "mainstream democrats:" its leaders wanted to continue to implement market-oriented economic reforms and strengthen the country's democratic institutions. On the other hand, they were against the policy of tight budgetary controls pursued by the Yeltsin–Gaidar government and argued that mass public privatization through a voucher system would not redistribute ownership but, to the contrary, concentrate it in the hands of black marketeers, the mafia, and foreigners. In October 1992, Civic Union of Siberia was created by the same parties that had created the Union in Moscow, with the addition of Indinok's faction of the MDR. Union branches were created not only in Novosibirsk, but in Barnaul, Tomsk, and other cities of western Siberia.

For Volskii and his associates, lobbying was more important than party building. Indeed, there were ample opportunities for lobbying throughout 1992 and early 1993, as Yeltsin sought an accommodation with both the directors of state enterprises and the heads of local administrations. In late October 1992, he publicly stated that he was ready to reach a compromise with the Civic Union on the government's economic program; in November a joint program that had been drafted and accepted by the government and Civic Union was announced. Although the agreement collapsed on November 26th, it was in part due to the lobbying of Volskii that three industrialists—Viktor Chernomyrdin, Georgii Khizha, and Vladimir Shumeiko—were included in the government.

In order to become a truly influential force, most especially, in order to influence the form of

72. See Eric Lohr, "Arcadii Volsky's Political Base," in *Europe-Asia Studies* 45, no. 5 (1993).

Russia's government, however, the Civic Union had to become active in the political arena. Thus, public party building was genuinely important for Volskii and his clientele in the long run, as was the articulation of the interests of industrialists in a more or less coherent ideology. Civic Union was not a pro-communist party, but it deliberately detached its ideology from the radical reformism that threatened the well-being of former communists. Not surprisingly, the latter found such a party useful, as it helped them to express their interests in post-communist language.

It bears mentioning that the Civic Union maintained that it sought to protect the labor force from radical market reform, thereby trying to forge an alliance with the leaders of trade unions, who shared the interest of industrial managers in assuring continued operation of their enterprises by means of government subsidies and contracts. Some analysts even hypothesized that, provided Russia followed a western model of democracy building, the Civic Union could become a viable social-democratic party.[73]

While this hypothesis was not confirmed by later developments, Civic Union did indeed have a certain capacity to deliver messages that had an easily identifiable ideological cast, and thus served the function of expression within intra-elite communication.

The function of integration in this communication process was of no less importance. Three major aspects of integration can be identified here. First, segmentation among party politicians was evidently less than that within the elite as a whole. For instance, the Civic Union was normally in opposition to Yeltsin, but many of its constituent parties had previously belonged to the democratic movement. As early as September 1991, even the PPFR completely distanced itself from Marxist ideology. As for the DPR, it was once the most influential and largest group within the Democratic Russia movement. For these parties, the Civic Union functioned as a non-communist representative of those decision makers who felt themselves burdened by their communist backgrounds, thus helping them to cooperate with colleagues of more democratic origin.

Second, parties were useful for businessmen who needed additional channels to reach those in power. The case of the Party of Economic Freedom (PEF) is a case in point. The PEF, founded in May 1992 by Konstantin Borovoi, was at that moment the only Russian party which openly advocated the interests of new businessmen. The main demand of the party was that the government stop impeding the development of private business. Although the PEF was described by its leaders as "the first truly Western-type party in Russia," it would seem that the relatively rapid expansion of the party's in-

73. See Vera Tolz, Wendy Slater, and Alexander Rahr, "Profiles of the Main Political Blocs," in *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 20 (1993): 24–5.

fluence owed more to the financial resources of Borovoi (who was subsequently joined by other self-made men and women) than to political activities *per se*. In Novosibirsk, the party was reported to have provided "financial aid" to journalists, social scientists, and other opinion makers. Moreover, the provincial branch of the PEF established the Businessmen Defense Committee. Although the official objective of the committee was to fight corruption, its own activities were rather ambiguous in this respect because its well-paid employees were also provincial and city soviet deputies. Many PEF activities reminded an observer of an interest group. In its capacity as a political party, however, it joined the DRM; the local PEF leader, Yankovskii, was even a member of the provincial council of the DRM.

For the sake of analysis, let us isolate peripheral elites from the central elite. Provincial elites also need some means of communication. Previously, the CPSU performed as a channel that enabled local party officials to be in touch with the Kremlin. The necessity for such a channel could not be abolished together with the communist regime, and, not surprisingly, new parties tried to bridge the communication gap between Moscow and the periphery. As mentioned above, almost all of these parties were headquartered in Moscow. There were several reasons for this situation, but it would seem that dependence on the material support of the center was most important. True, the state did remarkably little to assist the development of parties or a party system and not much came of Yeltsin's promise to provide such assistance at a 12 December 1991 meeting with the leaders of fifteen of the largest parties.

Some of Yeltsin's rivals were not so indifferent to party politics. The activities of Rutskoi's PPFR, for example, were subsidized by public funds provided by *Vozrozhdenie Rossii* (Russia's Revival) bank, although the official goal of this bank—controlled by Rutskoi's apparatus—was to promote agrarian reform in the country. The Civic Union was strongly supported by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. Other financial support of political parties came from Moscow-based foundations (e.g., the Gorbachev Foundation, "Civic Accord," "Reform") and influential business groups, such as Borovoi's stockbrokers. In the periphery, there were neither powerful politicians in opposition to Yeltsin nor foundations, and local businessmen apparently lacked Borovoi's passion for party politics. As the chairman of the Novosibirsk branch of the RPRF G. Chulinin, put it, "those entrepreneurs whose interests coincide with our program think that it is... cheaper to bribe civil servants; they are not mature enough to understand that it is necessary to cooperate with democratic parties."

Of course, dependence on financial support from Moscow contributed to the weakness of local parties. On the other hand, national political parties were more likely to survive under these conditions, despite the increasingly regional character of Russian politics. The existence of

such parties helped local decision makers relate their political preferences to those of competing factions of the Moscow elite, thus structuring regional politics more or less along national lines. For example, in early 1993 the provincial and city administrations of Novosibirsk identified themselves primarily with the Civic Union, while Yeltsin's representative in the province, along with a minority of people's deputies, tended to support "mainstream democratic" parties.

New political parties did, therefore, play a significant role in "elite–elite" political communication. Of course this role, even if we speak of the well-established parties of the west, is of marginal importance for democratic party politics. In the west, a communication function is performed by think tanks (which formulate ideologies for communication within the elite), interest groups (who lobby), and other institutions that either simply do not exist in Russia or are still in embryo. On the other hand, it is necessary to stress that parties are by no means the only sort of institutions that perform the function of intra-elite communication in Russia. The new stage of Russian politics, in sharp contrast to the period that preceded it, was literally crowded with different forms of political and social aggregation: parliamentary factions, the mass media, and non-elected consultative bodies that abounded both in Moscow and in the periphery (the most well-known, the National Security Council, was somewhat reminiscent of the old Politburo).[74] Other types of informal political relationships should also be considered for the completeness of our analysis.[75] One could be forgiven for strongly doubting whether new parties would be able to find a niche for themselves in this overcrowded segment of Russian politics, but it would seem that they had no choice.

4

Let us take another "horizontal" level of communication. This case is actually much more difficult to analyze than the "vertical" case. Communication is politically relevant within the elite by definition. Within the masses it is not. People discuss political questions in everyday life even if they are not politicians, yet political parties have virtually nothing to do with such intercourse—it does not need an organizational framework. Moreover, such discourse does not influence politics as such, for the clear reason that the decision making process involves not every kind of communication, only authoritative communication. Despite theoretical arguments, parties like the RCWP did act as agencies of "mass–mass" communication, and their performance of this function can be interpreted in the same terms as that of "mainstream democratic" and "centrist" parties within the

74. See Alexander Dallin, "Alternative Forms of Political Representation and Advocacy," in *Political Parties in Russia.*

75. See John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

elite, that is, expression and integration. It goes without saying that these parties produced ideologies which their supporters apparently needed, as well as programs which shaped their attitudes towards the events they found significant—not only political events. As we have seen, these parties also enabled their supporters to participate in political—or, once this participation was no longer meaningful—quasipolitical activities. But the question remains: did the existence of these parties influence the actual political process? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider the question of their membership.

Sociological surveys, especially those in which the respondent is asked to choose between socialist and non-socialist values, are helpful here. In such polls, "socialist values" were identified with such goals as "to restore the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union," "to prevent class inequality," "to stop exploitation," and "workers' and peasants' power." A number of such surveys have been conducted in western Siberia since early 1992, and the percentage of those who chose "socialist values" turned out to be both low (4–7.5 percent) and rather stable. It is symptomatic that these respondents usually expressed their will to take part in demonstrations (i.e. in activities that are virtually monopolized by communist parties), but did not want to vote or contact state officials. As we have already seen, the supporters of communist parties did not belong to any recognizable socioeconomic group; these parties drew their membership from varied social strata. The only cleavage likely to characterize the communist movement in Russia as a whole has more to do with demography than with politics—it is the movement of the older generation. The phenomenon also seems of a basically cultural nature.

By the early eighties, most specialists in Soviet studies had accepted the fact that the totalitarian model was no longer adequate for describing communist regimes. Indeed, it could be sensibly argued that this model overlooked conflict within the system and overemphasized the role of ideology both as a source of consensus among leaders and a resource for mobilizing the support of non-elites. It is this second role of ideology that is especially significant in the context of this discussion. Even the most severe critics of the totalitarian model normally assumed that, in their early phases, when communist regimes most closely conformed to this model, they made massive efforts to indoctrinate their populations. One of the most important peculiarities of these regimes was their totalitarian ideology, characterized by the attempt to entirely penetrate and politicize life. Over time, however, communist regimes tended to change, often becoming less totalitarian and more authoritarian. Correspondingly, the importance of ideology and mobilization declined.

As Adam Przeworski has remarked, "from the late 1950s, ideology was no longer the cement, to use Gramsci's expression, that held these societies together."[77] These developments were ex-

plained by the concept of the "social contract," i.e., an implicit social pact in which elites offered the prospect of material welfare to the population in exchange for the latter's silence.[77]

Not only did Western analysts interpret the apparent stability of the Brezhnev era according to its ability to manage and contain popular expectations, defining the regime as "welfare state authoritarianism,"[78] the Communist party leadership itself appealed less to ideological images of the radiant future and more to prosaic, practical, and contemporary images of the "Soviet way of life."

Thus there were grounds for Stanislaw Ossowski's observation that the dominant values of the USSR and the United States were strangely similar: "the same meritocratic context in the political culture, the same advocacy of mobility, the same 'religious' faith in an indefinite progress toward a better future."[79] The emergence of "welfare state authoritarianism" profoundly affected all the aspects of social life in the former Soviet Union. In this article, however, the question of special importance is: How did the emergence of "welfare state authoritarianism" influence mass political culture in the USSR?

It is generally assumed that one, political culture is not an easy subject of scientific research, and two, Russian political culture has yet to be satisfactorily explained, despite a number of studies that have called attention to the process of change in the value system of the Soviet population during the postwar era.[80] I will take a somewhat roundabout approach to this complicated problem. The concept of political culture as formulated by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba[81] is closely linked to that of political participation. Therefore, one may arrive at certain conclusions concerning political culture by studying participatory routines. Until the mid-1970s, the prevailing view of mass political participation in communist countries was that with few exceptions, such participation was little more than window dressing used by Soviet leaders to obtain a veneer of legitimacy and enhance their capability to mobilize support.

The application of interest group theory to Soviet politics opened up the conceptual possi-

76. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*, 2.

77. See, for example, Peter A. Hauslohner, "Gorbachev's Social Contract," in *Soviet Economy* 3, no. 1 (1987).

78. See George W. Breslauer, "On the Adaptability of Soviet Welfare-State Authoritarianism," in *Soviet Society and the Communist Party*, ed. Karl W. Ryavec (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978).

79. See Stanislaw Ossowski, *Class Structure in Social Consciousness*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

80. See, for example, Brian D. Silver, "Political Beliefs of the Soviet Citizens: Sources of Support for Regime Norms," in *Politics, Work, and Daily Life in the USSR*, ed. James R. Millar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

81. See Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988).

bility that policy-making in the Soviet Union could be influenced by input from below, thus provoking, in Jeffrey Hahn's words, "a kind of cottage industry of published works dealing with political participation in communist countries."[82] Some scholars vigorously believed in the utility of studying political participation in the Soviet Union;[83] the absence of competitive elections, however—the most frequently articulated criticism of this analytic approach—united those who maintained that political participation in the country was not really meaningful.[84] In particular, participation in organizations that organized mass activities, such as trade unions, local soviets, the Komsomol, and the like, was dismissed as "sham participation" at best.

The diversity of analytic approaches seeemed to reflect the genuine complexity of political participation in the Soviet Union, especially in the seventies. Basically, three major modes of participation could be distinguished. First, "sham participation" in public organizations which, while by no means obligatory, was nevertheless very useful for a loyal Soviet citizen. In fact, this kind of participation may be interpreted in terms of the above-mentioned "social contract," participants aimed at demonstrating support in exchange for receiving the benefits of loyalty to the regime. No one expected them to be committed communists and they certianly were not. This "sham participation" was motivated by very real material interests that had nothing to do with ideology. The second mode of participation in the former Soviet Union was once described as "covert participation," given that "meaningful" participation was almost exclusively limited to obtaining outputs of the system—through personal connections if the citizen was educated, through bribery if he was not. Zvi Gitelman termed this covert political behavior a "second polity" that paralled the "second economy" of the Soviet Union.[85]

In fact, these two forms of political participation were closely interconnected and supplemented one another. The benefits derived from "sham participation" were merely potential benefits until validated by "covert participation." Every loyal citizen, apparently, had a chance of receiving a better apartment from the state, but it was necessary to use personal connections in order not to miss this chance. The more connections used in exercising this "right," the better. Of course, it may be argued

82. Jeffrey W. Hahn, *Soviet Grassroots: Citizen Participation in Local Soviet Government* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 32.

83. See, for example, Jon S. Adams, *Citizen Inspectors in the Soviet Union: The People's Control Committee* (New York: Praeger, 1977).

84. See Richard V. Burks, "Political Participation under Socialism," in *Studies in Comparative Communism* 15 (1982).

85. Zvi Gitleman, "Working the Soviet System: Citizens and Urban Bureaucracies," in *The Contemporary Soviet City*, eds. Henry W. Morton and Robert C. Stuart (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1984), 241.

that there were individuals who managed to avoid "sham participation" by having especially influential patrons, or that, in some cases, it was enough simply to be loyal in order to benefit from the system, but these exceptions only proved the rule.

There was thus no difference between the value systems that underlay the two modes of political participation—both were highly individualistic and materialistic. As Przeworski has noted, "It was a society in which people uttered formulas they did not believe and that they did not expect anyone else to believe."[86] While the ideas that founded the system (equality, social justice, mutual cooperation) became meaningless for the bulk of the population, the value of their consumption rose. By the 1970s, western Europe and the USA had become the standard of comparison and these comparisons were increasingly humiliating. Not surprisingly, a number of surveys conducted in the former Soviet Union in the *perestroika* years implicitly challenged the view that support for capitalist market institutions was specific to west European cultural communities.[87]

Changes in the value system of the country did not, however, affect all strata of the population equally. Even if "sham" and "covert" forms of participation were of primary importance for the vast majority of the population, there was reason to anticipate that they were not the primary forms of participation for certain significant minorities. It would simply be unrealistic to assume that the regime's massive effort to indoctrinate the population in the 1930s had no impact on mass consciousness and that the "support" participation (which some analysts identified as the predominant form of political participation) which prevailed in the early phase of communist regimes did not survive into their next phase of political development.[88] One can hypothesize that this form of political participation still existed in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, even if it had been marginalized by the process of value change.

The problem that often seemed insurmountable for a student of Soviet politics was to draw a clear-cut distinction between "sham" and "support" participation. To distinguish between these two forms of participation meant to identify two different sets of politically relevant values, yet values cannot be

86. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*, 2.

87. See, for example, James L. Gibson and Raymond M. Duch, "Emerging Democratic Values in Soviet Political Culture," in *Public Opinion and Regime Change*, ed. Arthur H. Miller, William M. Reisinger, and Vicki L. Hesli (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1992).

88. See J.P. Nettl, *Political Mobilization: A Sociological Analysis of Methods and Concepts* (London: Faber, 1967); James R. Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); and Myron Weiner, "Political Participation: Crisis of the Political Process," in *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*, ed. Leonard Binder et al. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971).

observed and described as such. In order to study these values, an analyst has to focus his or her attention on political behavior. In the west, survey-based research has proven useful for detecting politically relevant values. These two methods—observation of political behavior and surveys—were not, however, applicable in the USSR. Surveys were not viable for the obvious reasons: it was very difficult (if possible at all) to gather this kind of sociological data in the Soviet Union, while interviewing emigrants excluded those people involved in "support" participation. Observation of political behavior was complicated by the fact that there was no observable difference between the behavior of people who were genuinely eager to return to the uncorrupted values of the past and people who simply pretended to cherish communist values. It seems the difference between them became recognizable only *post factum*, i.e., after the fall of the communist regime, when "sham" participation vanished and "support" participation survived by transforming itself into "protest" participation.

In the world of totalitarian ideology, private life naturally becomes overpoliticized and politically interpreted. Private histories become public, i.e. individuals and their pasts become part of the collective entity, perceivable only in an ideological reconstruction of the path that led to their present. No events were isolated from ideology—it would not be an exaggeration to say that ideology shaped private life itself. This shaping of private life was exactly what parties like the RCWP offered their followers, a process that enabled them to communicate with one another in a way customary to them.

Those communist successor parties in Russia whose activities deviated from this model failed to mobilize significant membership. The Socialist Party of Working People, founded in October 1991 and led by a former dissident, Roy Medvedev, is illustrative in this respect. A party convention in December 1991 dropped the phrase "dictatorship of proletariat" from its program and adopted a declaration of respect for human rights, a mixed economy, and a multiparty system. Medvedev called for a thorough investigation into the past errors of the CPSU and was apparently wary of the extremist leanings of other communist successor parties. Although the SPWP was overrepresented at the Congress of People's Deputies and had limited access to the media and certain financial support, it could not compete with the RCWP at the grassroots level. A branch of the SPWP existed in Novosibirsk, but most of its members were passive and the rest wanted nothing to do with the intentionally "eurocommunist" ideology of the leadership. It would seem that the era of moderate socialist politics has not yet arrived in Russia.

The RCWP and the majority of smaller communist parties in Russia thus performed an important function in the field of mass culture. Yet the question remains: What were the political consequences of this situation? One is tempted to define these parties as

"antisystem." True, the concept of "antisystem parties" formulated by Giovanni Sartori is rather vague and too often used polemically in order to stigmatize a democratic party that has no real intention of overthrowing a regime, such as the way the Italian Christian Democrats used the term in relation to the Italian Communist Party. The RCWP, however, never caused observers to doubt its unequivocal opposition to the existing regime; the party not only regularly condemned those in power and articulated a vision of the alternative regime it sought to establish, it also tried to subvert existing political institutions. To be regarded as an antisystem party, however, a political formation must combine opposition to the regime with meaningful political activity, and the activities of the RCWP were of no relevance to the decision making process in Russia—its members did not participate in politics. Rather, they isolated groups which under certain conditions would be antisystem in the proper sense of the term. I would define the RCWP, then, as a "non-system" party. As such, it was not dangerous to the system and, furthermore, appeared to function within it.

5

The nature of the political system itself must be clarified here. To begin with, let us list some properties of the new Russian polity that can be identified as a result of our analysis:

1) There was no "mass–elite" communication intermediated by political parties. This function was instead performed in part by the electronic media. Parties enabled the masses to speak to the elite, while the media made the masses listen. Parties, then, were channels of participation, while the media was not. In fact, no form of meaningful mass participation in politics has evolved in Russia since August 1991, when the practice of "sham" participation vanished.

2) Political parties along with certain other institutions acted as agencies of expression and integration within the elite. The dynamics of the new Russian polity were rather unusual: the less interest the masses had in politics, the more intensive was the political life of the elite. While the public simply refused to be provoked into participating actively in disputes between their elected leaders, the activities of the leaders themselves—aimed either at reaching compromises with opponents or defeating them—tended to give the impression that partisan politics was flourishing in the country.

3) Those parties that did mobilize relatively large memberships still differed sharply from their western counterparts because they functioned to discourage, not encourage, political participation, thus diverting the activity of potentially dangerous groups from the real decision-making process.

Can such a polity be defined as a democratic polity? The an-

swer depends on what is meant by democracy. For all the meanings "democracy" has acquired, there is broad scholarly agreement that it is best defined and applied in terms of the procedural criteria of Robert Dahl: a political regime characterized by free and open elections, relatively low barriers to participation, genuine political competition, and wide protection of civil liberties.[89] None of these criteria could be attributed to the Russian polity during the period August 1991–October 1993, least of all protection of civil liberies. It can be argued that it makes no sense to describe and explain the Russian polity in rigid procedural terms, as post-communism is, in the words of Laslo Bruszt "both genuinely transitional and truly transformational."[90]

In the context of democratic transitions, it is possible that Russia has just entered what Dankwart Rustow calls the "preparatory phase" in which "a prolonged and inconclusive struggle involving 'well-entrenched forces' is waged over issues of meaning for them."[91] Most mature democratic countries experienced such a phase over several generations. Britain's protodemocratic evolution can be traced at least to the eighteenth century, when the cabinet system and the tolerance of a loyal opposition became firmly established; in some respects, this evolution goes back to the early Middle Ages. In the case of the United States, its entire colonial period of a century and a half was such a prepatory phase.[92] Naturally, one cannot expect evolving democracies to be exactly the same as well-established ones. Britain of the nineteenth century, for example, is sometimes defined as a "stable limited democracy." As Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley have put it, "the absence of substantial mass participation means that democracy is limited to such an extent that the requirements of our ideal-type definition of democracy are not met."[93] In the first years of Russia's proto-democracy, the absence of meaningful mass participation was accompanied by lack of electoral accountability. It is thus impossible to apply the notion of limited democracy to the Russian case.[94]

89. See Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

90. See Laslo Bruszt, "Transformative Politics in East Central Europe" (paper presented at the Conference on Obstacles to the Transformation of Soviet-Type Societies in Eastern Europe, Institut fur Wissenschaft von Menschen, Vienna, July 1991.)

91. See Dankwart Rustow, "Transition to Democracy: Towards a Dynamic Model," in *Comparative Politics* 2, no. 3 (1970): 352–61.

92. See Robert Dahl, "Transition to Democracy," in Gyorgy Szoboszlai, ed., *Democracy and Political Transformation: Theories and East-Central European Realities* (Budapest: Hungarian Political Science Association, 1991), 14.

93. Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley, "Introduction: Elite Transformations and Democratic Regimes," in *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*, ed. John Higley and Richard Gunther (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6.

The term that next comes to mind is oligarchy. According to William R. Schonfeld, oligarchy "is a form of domination where a small coalition tends to exercise a disproportional influence over a group's political decisions."[95] While it is by no means conventional to define the new Russian polity in this manner,[96] Thomas H. Rigby described the former Soviet Union as a "weakly institutionalized oligarchy, with a potential, tragically actualized by Stalin, to collapse into a system of personal dictatorship."[97] This is not to argue that no difference exists between the contemporary Russian polity and its communist predecessor. Yet this difference requires conceptualization. I assume here that instead of the stable oligarchical order of the Soviet Union, a different political system has emerged in Russia, one I will refer to as "competitive oligarchy." The notion of competitive oligarchy seems to have the advantage of indicating the transitional nature of post-communist polities in a way that precludes "conceptual stretching."[98]

From this theoretical perspective, the question of Russia's prospects for democratization is particularly loaded. Scholarship that preceded the wave of democratization in the USSR in the 1980s argued that a number of preconditions were necessary for a stable democratic polity to emerge. Yet the search for the causes of such a polity —rooted in economic, social, cultural, or institutional factors—has not yet yielded a general law of democratization, nor it is likely to do so in the near future.[99] The notion of contingency, i.e., that outcomes depend less on objective conditions than subjective rules surrounding strategic choices, stresses collective decisions and political interactions that have been underemphasized in the search for the preconditions for democracy.[100] If not explicitly placed within a framework of structural constraints, however, this understanding of the

94. Electoral accountability is usually considered to be the most important feature of liberal democracy. See Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 28; and Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1947), 269.

95. William R. Schonfeld, "La stabilité des dirigeants des partis politiques: la théorie de l'oligarchie de Robert Michels," in *Revue Francaise de Science Politique* 30 (1980): 858.

96. The concept of "competitive oligarchy" is applied to the new Russian polity in Grigorii V. Golosov, "New Russian Political Parties and the Transition to Democracy: The Case of Western Siberia," in *Government and Opposition*, forthcoming.

97. See, for example, Thomas H. Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar, 1990), 254.

98. See Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," 1034.

99. See Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," in *Comparative Politics* 23 (October 1990): 2–5.

100. See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

transition to democracy descends into excessive voluntarism. The notion of competitive oligarchy refers to those political institutions, norms, and routines that together constitute such a framework in Russia. By specifying the competitive character of a polity, we assume that the level of elite integration is so low that intra-elite interactions tend to be decisive in determining whether or not a polity becomes democratic. In this respect, competitive oligarchies are absolutely dissimilar to the limited democracies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;[101] their dissimilarity to communist regimes is even sharper.

In the former Soviet Union, value consensus was uniform in the sense that different segments of the elite did not publicly express ideological or policy disagreements, confining their public utterances instead to a single, explicit ideology. Members of the ruling bureaucracy enjoyed security and stability; non-elites shared in the results of the country's economic growth. Eventually the political compact of the Brezhnev era was destroyed by intra-elite conflict born of the poor economic performance of the early eighties. At first, this conflict took place within the parameters of the existing system, but in the late eighties competing factions of the elite undertook several attempts to mobilize mass support for their positions (the earliest being the policy of *glasnost'* in 1987–88).

This strategic choice made it impossible to maintain Marxism–Leninism as the regime's dominant ideology. In the first place, no one faction of the elite could afford to base its mobilization strategy on the claim that it represented the interests of economically underprivileged strata of the population partly because, in contrast to the liberal intelligentsia, the underprivileged were not a significant political resource, and partly because such a strategy could be dangerous to the elite itself. It made no sense, therefore, to revert to the uncorrupted values of the past. In the second place, it made no sense to rely on the attractiveness of the latest version of Soviet ideology because the images of the "Soviet way of life" had faded along with the relative efficiency of the regime. Marxism–Leninism could no longer provide Soviet society a shell of ideological stability and elite cognition. Gorbachev, who failed to understand this in time, was thus doomed to fail in his struggle against the radical opposition led by Yeltsin.

The characteristic feature of the system of competitive oligarchy that emerged in August 1991 was acute intra-elite conflict. This conflict, however, cannot be explained by increased heterogeneity of the elite. While a certain number of democratic activists did indeed flow into the structures of power, the impact of this influx on the political process was not as serious in Russia as in say, most

101. For an interesting description of such a political system, see Nils Stjernquist, "Sweden: Stability or Deadlock," in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, ed. Robert Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

central European countries or even in some of the former Soviet republics. The post-communist elite in Russia appeared to lack ideological consensus. In other words, factions of the elite disagreed on major ideological issues and it was this disagreement that led to the collapse of the system of competitive oligarchy in October 1993. Let us consider the strategic choices which contributed to this outcome.

As several dimensions of ideological consensus are possible, consensus may be strong on one such dimension and weak on another. By the end of 1991, all factions of the elite accepted the worth of the political order they called democracy. Neither Yeltsin nor his political opponents saw the existing regime solely as a vehicle through which rival factions promoted their own interests, hence, no one sought to destroy or cripple the regime. The dominant strategy of the major political actors in the regime was to search for intra-elite compromise. As we have seen, "mainstream democratic" parties as well as the Civic Union were among those formations which applied this strategy. Indeed, compromise seemed feasible even in late March 1993, when Yeltsin struck his last deal with Khasbulatov.

With priority given to intra-elite compromise, Yeltsin was not really interested in alliance with, or populist dependence on, the DRM, nor did his political rivals need allies like the RCWP. These parties were thus marginalized, if not forced into political non-existence. To be sure, the level of elite integration was low and the system's lack of networks for communication and influence contributed to its ineffectiveness. However, it would be an exaggeration to claim that chaos prevailed in the country. In retrospect, the Russian polity as it existed between August 1991 and October 1993 was far from completely ineffective, in fact, the situation in the country was to some extent reminiscent of the "stable instability" of the French Fourth Republic.[102]

This relatively stable political order was substantially undermined in March 1993. The agreement reached between Yeltsin and Khasbulatov that month would have cancelled the April referendum, abolished the Congress of People's Deputies, and organized elections for a new parliament for the fall of 1993. Yet the deal was rejected by the majority of deputies, who were so infuriated that they tried unsuccessfully to impeach both "conspirators." As a result, Yeltsin went on the political offensive and aimed to defeat the parliament.

The implications of these developments for Russia's political evolution were profound. It must be stressed that the relative homogeneity of the political elite in Russia had not been undermined in August 1991. The former legislature was composed of a mix of

102. See André Siegfried, "Stable Instability in France," in *Foreign Affairs* 34, no. 3 (1956).

apparatchiki, local Party members, and Soviet-style industrial managers. As for Yeltsin, foreigners sometimes forget that he emerged from the highest ranks of the *ancien régime* and that his influential "Sverdlovsk mafia" was a patron–client group whose origin could be traced to the communist period of Yeltsin's career. Not surprisingly, both major political actors had authoritarian tendencies. Under the system of competitive oligarchy, these tendencies were restricted by the competing factions' commitment to maintaining the status quo. Once this restriction was lifted, the situation changed radically.

The changed political situation produced two major alterations in party politics. First, the number of parties involved in providing channels of intra-elite communication declined. The Civic Union split into several factions and attempts to create a new political center in Russia—intended to play an appeasing role in the power struggle between the parliament and the president—were fruitless. Second and more significant, non-system parties became accepted as participants in the political process. After March, both the parliament and Yeltsin engaged in an unrestricted, potentially violent struggle for dominance which left them no choice but to revert to populism. If Yeltsin could appeal to the remnants of the DRM (which claimed to maintain some capacity for political mobilization) for support, the only force capable of providing mass support to the parliament was the RCWP. The unholy alliance between the parliament and the communist opposition was established when the so-called Committees in Defence of the Constitution were created all over the country in March 1993. After that time, the RCWP played an increasingly important role in shaping intra-elite conflict; it goes without saying that the goal of the communists was not to become a part of the system, but to destroy it.

This is not to say that either the DRM or the RCWP was particularly successful in mobilizing support for their allies. Quite the reverse, neither the "October revolution" of 1993 nor the "counter-revolution" which followed kindled any enthusiasm among the masses to support either side in the escalating conflict —the masses showed no desire to return to the streets and civil war did not occur. Happily for Russia, those parties which appeared to be mass parties, i.e., those parties whose strategy was directed towards mass mobilization, experienced miserable failure. The RCWP is currently banned and the DRM has become a minor partner in the governmental electoral coalition, Russia's Choice. Not only the composition of the party system but the entire political landscape of the country has changed radically. But does this mean that a different political regime has emerged?

By mid-October 1993, the Russian parliament was dissolved, its most prominent members and certain leaders of anti-Yeltsin forces were jailed, several political parties and newspapers were banned, censorship was introduced, and the country

was ruled by decree. The system of competitive oligarchy seemed to have been replaced by a sort of liberal autocracy, or *dictablanda,* to use the term of Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter.[103] This regime might have survived in Russia if the West had not made it clear that Yeltsin's supporters outside Russia strongly preferred new parliamentary elections to a liberal autocracy. This was not the first and probably not the last time that international influence on Russian decision-makers had a considerable impact on the country's development. At the time, one was tempted to ask: Provided that parliamentary elections take place according to schedule and Russia has a new parliament by December, will the lack of electoral accountability in the political system be eliminated, thus making Russia a democracy in a conventional sense?

Before answering this question, we must recall that a political regime refers, in the words of O'Donnell and Schmitter, to the entire "ensemble of patterns, explicit or not, that determines the forms and channels of access to principal governmental positions, the characteristics of the actors who are admitted and excluded from such access and the resources or strategies that they can use to gain access."[104] Elections as such, however important they may be, are therefore not the only factor worthy of consideration. As the experience of a number of authoritarian regimes has shown, electoral accountability stems not only from elections themselves, but from effective mass participation in politics. Let us then examine the October–December 1993 electoral campaign (the only observable manifestation of mass political participation in contemporary Russia) from this perspective.

Paradoxically, the electoral campaign of 1993 was strongly reminiscent of the campaign which preceded elections for the previous Russian legislature. Not only did most political activity originate with "democratic forces" (simply because their opponents were in understandable disarray) but, due to the recent confrontation that had threatened to put the communists in charge once again, the pre-electoral rhetoric of the reformers was backward looking, still fighting the communist regime and its "communist-fascist" legacies. Foremost among reformist parties was Russia's Choice, a loose coalition of prominent individuals like Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar and those activists who entered the democratic movement in the late 1980s. (In this respect Russia's Choice resembled the former DRM.) The

103. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule,* 13–14.

104. Ibid., 73. For different approaches to the problem of defining the political regime, see Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, eds., *Comparative Politics,* 2d ed. (Boston: Little & Brown, 1978); Samuel E. Finer, *Comparative Government* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970); and Juan Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in *Handbook of Political Science,* vol. 3, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

most broadly publicized alternative to Russia's Choice, the Party of Russian Unity and Concord, was founded by Sergei Shakhrai, who claimed that his party represented the "real interests" of Russia's regions. Given that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin initially agreed to stand for this party, and that Shakhrai himself was another Deputy Prime Minister, it would seem that these regional interests were expected to coincide with the program of the government.

Just as in 1990, no serious programmatic differences existed between the proreform parties participating in the elections. To use the words of Elmer Hankiss, their ideology was "nineteenth-century conservative liberalism."[105] At the same time, the tendency of political parties to fracture around dominant personalities appeared to have reasserted itself, a realignment that threatened to make parliamentary representation increasingly irrelevant in terms of public support and inducing the lack of electoral accountability so typical of the former Russian parliament. Indeed, during the period of competitive oligarchy in Russia, the masses were demobilized partly because deputies came to Parliament representing ultimately no one but themselves and were thus responsible to no one. The new electoral system (which combined direct constituency election with party list election) was a very useful, but insufficient prerequisite for changing this situation.

Conclusion

The role of mass participation in politics in the process of transition to democracy needs to be reexamined. While mass participation proved to be of crucial importance in crippling communist regimes, there is no significant evidence that mass democracy has emerged anywhere in the post-communist world. This fact contradicts the widespread assumption that democratic transitions primarily produce increasingly active citizenship. From this theoretical perspective, Attila Agh is correct in claiming that "to avoid the separation of politics and people, participation by the people is now much more important...than in the consolidated democracies."[106] Yet this approach implicitly underemphasizes the level of mass participation that existed in communist regimes. As was reasonably argued by students of Soviet politics, political participation in the country was substantial on the basis of numbers alone and had grown steadily in the post-Stalin period, often exceeding in quantitative terms standard measures of conventional participation used to describe Western democracies.[107]

105. Elmer Hankiss, *East European Alternatives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 247.

106. Attila Agh, "Transitions to Democracy in East-Central Europe: A Comparative View," in *Democracy and Political Transformation*, 119.

107. See, for example, Jerry Hough, "Political Participation in the Soviet Union," *Soviet Studies* 28 (January 1976); and D. Richard Little, "Mass Political

Neither "sham" (in conjuction with "covert") nor "support" participation was equivalent, even in functional terms, to mass participation in democratic politics. Nevertheless, these forms of political activity were meaningful within the context of a communist regime. Moreover, it may be argued that the routines of "support participation" shaped the activities of anti-communist protesters during the period 1989–1991. Assuming that both communist regimes and democracies are basically participatory forms of government, we can conclude that the transition from the former to the latter can neither be described nor explained as a process of extending participation in politics in quantitative terms. Quite the reverse, democratization makes old forms of political participation meaningless, and new forms do not emerge overnight.

First, a significant minority of the Russian population remain committed to old routines that function to channel their activities out of the real political process. Second, for the vast majority of the population political participation has been invalidated by "sham" practices of the recent past. Third, Russian citizens lack the civic political culture usually considered a necessary prerequisite for democratic participation. All in all, there are no grounds for expecting the early phases of post-communist development, whatever they may be, to involve mass political participation.

It would seem that the choice faced by the Russian polity today is not between competitive oligarchy and full-scale democracy, but between competitive oligarchy and another type of protodemocratic regime. It is a difficult task to define the latter. Drawing comparisons between the protodemocratic evolution of Russia and, say, Britain would make little sense. Aside from the fact that asynchronic comparisons of such scale lead to erroneous perspectives, it is quite clear that linear models of democratization based on the European experience of the nineteenth century are inapplicable to Russia.

One "law of democratization" derived from this model is, however, worth mentioning—namely, the assumption that an expansion of competition within the political elite must precede an expansion of mass participation in politics.[108] On the other hand, the sequential model elaborated by a number of authors implies that Russia must first define its national identity, then develop effective institutions of authority, and, finally, initiate a gradual progression from civil to political rights.[109] Russia simply cannot afford to follow such a se-

Participation in the US and USSR: A Conceptual Analysis," *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (January 1976).

108. See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 32–59, 78–92.

109. See Eric A. Nordlinger, "Political Development: Time Sequences and Rates of Change," in *World Politics* 20 (1968); and Binder et al., eds., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*.

quence. Transitional polities that have recently emerged in Latin America, Central Europe, and, historically, Southern Europe, thus appear to be more appropriate comparative referents for analyzing the new Russian polity.

One can object that incorporating the study of post-communist developments within the general corpus of "transitional regimes" occurs at the expense of the cultural, ideological, and national peculiarities of the post-communist case.[110] I would argue, however, that those authors who do not categorically reject research on other transitional regimes are in the right.[111] There is, after all, no other way to exit the "conceptual ghetto" in which, as some critics allege, Sovietology still prevails.[112] On the other hand, generalizations drawn from previous transitional experiences are not always useful.

In their "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies," O'Donnell and Schmitter suggest two intermediary types of transitional regimes: *dictablanda* and *democradura*. Civic rights and partisan competition are permitted in both, but restrictions are placed on who may vote or hold office, the parties that may compete, how votes are counted and aggregated into districts, and so on.[113] Neither *dictablanda* nor *democradura*, however, can be fruitfully compared to a system of competitive oligarchy. As comparisons should be judged by their theoretical utility, the question of primary importance is: According to what parameters did O'Donnell and Schmitter classify regimes into these categories? If a political system meets certain procedural norms it is usually identified as a democracy.[114] As we have seen, the restrictions characteristic of a competitive oligarchy are not of a procedural nature. Rather, they stem from the social context of the new politics in Russia. *Democradura* is thus not a valid category because when compared to it, competitive oligarchy appears to be a democracy.

Another conceptualization proposed by O'Donnell is "delegative democracy," a concept grounded on one basic premise: he who wins a presidential election is enabled to govern the country as he sees fit (to the extent that existing power relations allow) for the

110. See, for example, Kenneth Jowitt, "The Leninist Extinction," in *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left*, ed. Daniel Chirot (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

111. See Genaro Arriagada, *Eastern Europe, Latin America and Comparative Politics*, Working Paper of the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, no. 193 (1991).

112. Francis Fukuyama, "The Modernizing Imperative: The USSR as an Ordinary Country," in *National Interest* (Spring 1993): 18.

113. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 9.

114. For a listing of these norms, see Robert Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). A couple of additional items are added in Phillipe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is... and is not," in *Journal of Democracy* (Summer 1991).

term to which he has been elected.[116] In contrast to *democradura*, the notion of delegative democracy does not imply that any formal or informal restrictions have been imposed on civil rights or partisan competition. O'Donnell himself envisions this type of regime as one form of democracy, yet the truth of his interpretation may be seriously questioned. First and foremost, it is representation that introduces the idea of accountability and distinguishes democracies from nondemocracies. While it cannot be denied that some elements of representation are present in "delegative democracies," it is clear that these elements are too weak to provide efficient control over decisions made by elected officials. As O'Donnell has written, "[A]fter the election, voters/delegators are expected to return to the condition of passive, but hopefully cheering, spectators of what the President does."[117] Although lack of electoral accountability makes "delegative democracies" strongly dissimilar to the well-established polyarchies of the West, they are similar to the kind of competitive oligarchy identified in this discussion.

Indeed, Russian President Yeltsin has persistently tried to replace parliamentarism with presidential rule, and not without success. His political behavior has often been more consistent with the norms of "delegative democracy" than those of competitive oligarchy. For instance, Yeltsin has consistently presented himself as above political parties or specific political groups, explicitly claiming to be the main custodian of the national interest. In his view, other institutions—such as the parliament and the judiciary—were nuisances that accompanied the domestic and international advantages of being a democratically elected president. The idea of being accountable to these institutions was absolutely alien to him. The new constitution of Russia, drafted by Yeltsin's team, embodies this image of democracy. It is quite possible, therefore, to interpret recent developments in Russia as a shift from competitive oligarchy to delegative proto-democracy. Yet for the purposes of this discussion, however heuristic it may, such an interpretation must be related to the prospects for a transition to democracy, which calls for additional conceptualization.

A simple dichotomy (for example, the dichotomy of competitive oligarchy versus delegative proto-democracy) has the advantage of providing an immediate and easy typology. Typologies, however, construct ideal types on the basis of one or more distinctive features, a process that results in presenting objects for further inquiry, rather than explaining the causes of the phenomena so identified. In contrast to typologies, models are specifically oriented toward analyzing causality.[118]

116. Guillermo O'Donnell, *Delegative Democracy?*, a Hellen Kellogg Institute Working Paper, no. 172 (March 1992), 6.

117. Ibid., 7.

This is not to say that an unbridgeable gap separates these two tools of social analysis, as typologies may serve as the basis for models. Yet in order to develop a model, one must overcome the methodological difficulties inherent in the static nature of typologies, which often requires use of rigorous methodology based on formal logic or mathematical analysis. One of the most beaten tracks in the history of political science (indeed, Aristotle invented this analytical tool) is to use the idea of a dynamic continuum and to develop a system of classification that corresponds to this continuum. If both competitive oligarchy and delegative proto-democracy are protodemocratic political regimes, then, their basic characteristics may be discovered by examining those political forms that are attributed to democracy as such.

The literature on "kinds" or "types" of democracy is abundant.[119] For the purposes of this discussion, the work of Arend Lijphart is of special interest.[120] Lijphart identifies a "consociational" type of democracy as something different from, and to a certain extent contrary to, the dominant "pluralist" type. According to him, consociational democracy has two peculiarities: vertical segmentation of the population into religious, linguistic, ethnic, or ideological communities, and institutionalization of a process of negotiation at the elite level of these communities. The experiences of nations such as the Netherlands are sometimes considered empirical referents for the consociational type of democracy.[121] Whereas the "pluralist" type of democracy is usually attributed to the United States, Britain, and a number of other polities, the hypothesis of primary importance for our discussion is that a correspondence exists between types of protodemocratic polities and types of democracy.

Let us for a moment assume that a high level of social segmentation is shared by all transitional polities. The criterion equally

118. See Raymond Boudon, *L'analyse mathématique des factes sociaux* (Paris: Plon, 1967).

119. See, for example, Peter Lange and Hudson Meadwell, "Typologies of Democratic Systems: From Political Inputs to Political Economy," in *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, 80–111.

120. See Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). In another book, the author draws a complex, multivariate distinction between "majoritarian" and "consensus" democracy. See Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). While the later distinction is better elaborated than that of the initial work listed here, it does not suit the purposes of this discussion.

121. See Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Kenneth D. McRae, ed., *Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); Jurg Steiner, *Amicable Agreement versus Majority Rule: Conflict Resolution in Switzerland* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1974).

applicable to democracies and proto-democracies is the role played by intra-elite negotiation in the political process. In both competitive oligarchy and consociational democracy, intra-elite negotiation plays an extremely important political role. This feature distinguishes regimes of both types from delegative protodemocracies as well as pluralist democracies. It can be argued that, whereas the role of negotiation is highly institutionalized in consociational democracy, in competitive oligarchy it is not. This argument would be somewhat tautological, however, as transitional polities are weakly institutionalized by definition. On the other hand, social scientists working from an institutionalist perspective assume that social life is shaped by institutions and do not exclude informal rules, conventions, and norms from their analyses.[122]

Even should this hypothesis be correct, what advantages does it entail for our discussion? It enables us to speculate that there are two major models of transition to democracy: from competitive oligarchy to consociational democracy and from delegative proto-democracy to pluralist democracy. This is not to say that indirect transitions (say, from competitive oligarchy to pluralist democracy) are impossible, but from the perspective of our conceptualization they are of less interest.

Even if we limit our inquiry to these major models, it is still far from clear what path Russia will follow to democracy. Some observers insist that the system of competitive oligarchy no longer exists because it was too inefficient to provide the strong political leadership required by reform. According to this line of argment, the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet is blamed for having slowed the pace of radical market reforms. True, their support of Yeltsin's strategy was equivocal, yet it must be kept in mind that the government ran almost solely on the basis of presidential decrees, not laws passed by the parliament. In fact, the Supreme Soviet itself granted Yeltsin the right to rule by decree on 1 November 1991. Despite several attempts, it never managed to revoke this right. Decrees appeared without warning or prior discussion, typically making unreasonable demands for immediate action and then often disappearing without a trace in the labyrinthine government bureaucracy.

Virtually omnipotent on paper, the Yeltsin–Gaidar government barely controlled the executive apparatus throughout the country. It was weak and simply could not be efficient; the parliament thus had little to do with the administration's poor performance. Although effectively deprived of its legislative responsibilities, the parliament nevertheless constituted an important arena of intra-elite negotiation. In

122. See, for instance, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life" in *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984).

politics, those who negotiate have to have power. If, in the Spring of 1993, it turned out that the only power available to the parliament was the power to impeach Yeltsin, it was logical to expect that this right would be exercised.

The collapse of competitive oligarchy in Russia was not, therefore, simply a result of its absolute inefficiency. Rather, it was the logical consequence of strategies pursued by the major political actors in the country in 1993. That being so, it is important to ascertain whether a system of delegative proto-democracy is likely to create conditions that will allow for the strengthening of democratic institutions. O'Donnell is rightfully very skeptical about this prospect. According to him, the purest Latin American cases of "delegative democracy"—Argentina, Brazil, and Peru—face deep social and economic crises which stem not only from the legacy of the past authoritarian regimes, but the incapability of contemporary regimes in these countries to provide efficient government. He concludes that the only optimistic possibility "would be that a predominant segment of the political leadership... agrees to change the terms by which they compete electorally and govern."[123]

On the other hand, those countries (particularly in Southern Europe) that are usually considered success stories in the transition to democracy have never experienced anything reminiscent of delegative proto-democracy. To the contrary, in the earliest stages of transitions in these countries, especially Portugal and to some extent Spain, resembled competitive oligarchies. Although these observations cannot be ignored by students of contemporary Russian politics, it would be senseless to see in Portugal the model for Russia's development in the near future. The fact that delegative proto-democracy does not work in Argentina, moreover, counts for little to those who find that model consistent with Russian political conditions. In other words, in order to make empirical evidence of transitional regimes valuable for this discussion, such evidence must be theoretically elaborated.

Transitions to democracy are primarily democratic consolidations. It is widely assumed that consolidated democracies encompass specific elite and mass features, in particular, all important elite groups and factions in such democracies are structurally unified and share a consensus concerning the rules of political conduct.[124] While democratic consolidation cannot be reduced to elite consolidation, the latter may be regarded as the necessary precondition for the former. The ability of a certain model of democratic transition to promote elite consolidation, then, gives us an idea of its probable success as a model.

123. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 16.

124. See John Higley and Gwen Moore, "Elite Integration in the United States and Australia," in *American Political Science Review* 75, no. 3 (1981).

Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley contend that the transformation from elite disunity to elite consensual unity takes two principal forms: settlement and convergence. Elite settlements, they claim, are "events in which warring elite factions suddenly and deliberately reorganize their relations by negotiating compromises on their most basic disagreements." Elite convergences take place when certain opposing factions within a disunified elite eventually acknowledge the legitimacy of an existing regime and become trustworthy competitors for electoral support after experiencing successive electoral defeats.[126] Elite settlement focuses on the process of negotiation, corresponding to a transition from competitive oligarchy to consociational democracy. Elite convergence, however, presupposes that certain factions of the elite strongly dominate the arena of intra-elite competition, thus forcing rival factions to abandon semi-loyal stances. This second form of elite consolidation corresponds to a transition from delegative proto-democracy to pluralist democracy.

Within this framework we can now ask: What kind of transition is Russia likely to choose? Before answering, we must recall that the progression from delegative proto-democracy to pluralist democracy is possible only if the dominant faction of the elite is not only stronger than any other faction, but strongly committed to democratic rules of the game. If the first condition is not fulfilled, the dominant faction will sooner or later lose its domination to an antidemocratic faction. If the second condition is not fulfilled, sooner or later it will reject the idea of transition to democracy because authoritarianism is the easiest political game for those in power.

Neither of these conditions can apparently be met in Russia. Yeltsin began his reform without any significant social backing—the reform process had yet to create entities such as a middle class with a clear and growing stake in a marketizing economy and political democracy. True, certain analysts argue that "what may account for individuals' political orientation within the post-communist setting is *not* their past location in the collapsing socialist economy but their ability to *convert* the resources and capabilities that they controlled under the old regime into new resources and capabilities in *what they expect to become the new socioeconomic regime*."[127] However, the stability of the bases of support created by such expectations is questionable. An electoral mobilization strategy based on expectations about the future socioeconomic system works only as long as the dominant faction of the elite claims to be the only political force effectively opposed to the restoration of the old regime, thus directly appealing to the expectations of

126. See Burton, Gunther, and Higley, "Introduction: Elite Transformations and Democratic Regimes," 13–30.

127. Herbert Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe," in *Politics and Society* 20, no. 1 (1992): 21.

the majority. Such a strategy cannot be pursued perpetually. In contemporary Russia, some factions that oppose Yeltsin claim to be more anticommunist than Yeltsin himself, and even the communists (at least the CPRF) recognize that there is no way to return to the past.

One of the greatest resources of political support for the dominant faction may very well be the personal charisma of its leader. Yeltsin's charisma from the very outset of his anti-Gorbachev crusade was, however, to use Robert C. Tucker's words, a "situational" rather than "pure" charisma.[128] After the first period of reform his leadership could hardly be perceived as a means of salvation, and it is unlikely that a new charismatic leader will emerge within the currently dominant faction. As for the dominant faction's commitment to the ideal of democracy, this seems somewhat ambiguous after the siege of the Russian White House.

The system of competitive oligarchy has many disadvantages, but from the point of view of those who regard democracy as the best option for Russia, it has the important feature of providing political space for elite settlement, encouraging the process of intra-elite negotiation and discouraging radical—even antidemocratic—decisions. More importantly, this regime makes a transition to democracy possible even when no faction of the elite takes this purpose seriously, because the process of negotiation as such necessarily involves some elements of democratic politics (for example, the effective separation of powers, virtually alien to delegative proto-democracy).

One cannot conclude from the analysis presented here whether a system of competitive oligarchy is likely to re-emerge in Russia, although there are some grounds for thinking so, or whether this system will be replaced by another kind of political regime. What is clear, however, is that an alternative regime would be a kind of authoritarian rule rather than a form of government that could lead to democracy. Delegative proto-democracy, for example, is unlikely to be used effectively in Russia. The transition to democracy is a complicated process that involves intermediate phases of political development which are not democratic themselves. The conditions under which such transitional political regimes are likely to survive and provide a basis for democratic development differ from the social and institutional requisites for stable democracy and will vary from country to country. It thus appears that the choice of the form of political transition is what really matters, as this form may or may not be consistent with a strategy of democratization.

128. See Robert C. Tucker, "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership," in *Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership*, ed. Dankwart Rustow (New York: Braziller, 1970).

ABBREVIATIONS

CPRF: Communist Party of the Russian Federation, *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii*

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza*

DPR: Democratic Party of Russia, *Demokraticheskaia Partiia Rossii*

DPRC: Democratic Party of Russian Communists, *Demokraticheskaia Partiia kommunistov Rossii*

DRM: Democratic Russia Movement, *Dvizhenie "Democraticheskaia Rossiia"*

MDR: Movement for Democratic Reforms, *Dvizhenie demokraticheskikh reform*

PCRR: Public Committees of Russian Reforms, *Obshchestvennye komitety rossiiskih reform*

PEF: Party of Economic Freedom, *Partiia ekonomicheskoi svobody*

PIS: Party for Independence of Siberia, *Partiia nezavisimosti Sibiri*

PPFR: People's Party "Free Russia," *Narodnaia partiia "Svobodnaia Rossiia"*

RCWP: Russian Communist Workers' Party, *Rossiiskaia kommunisticheskaia rabochaia partiia*

RPRF: Republican Party of the Russian Federation, *Respublikanskaia partiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii*

SDPRF: Social–Democratic Party of the Russian Federation, *Sotsial-demokraticheskaia partiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii*

SPWP: Socialist Party of Working People, *Sotsialisticheskaia partiia trudiashchikhsia*

UPOUS: Union of Patriotic Organizations of the Urals and Siberia, *Soiuz patrioticheskikh organizatsii Urala i Sibiri*