Boris Yeltsin's Ascent to Power: Personae and the Rhetoric of Revolution.

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BORIS YELTSIN'S ASCENT TO POWER:
PERSONAE AND THE
RHETORIC OF REVOLUTION

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication

by
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August 1997
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this study hinged on the participation of a dedicated committee. To this group, I owe my gratitude. Dr. Ken Zagacki served as an exemplary advisor. When I labored productively, he was a laissez-faire (but always vigilant) mentor. When I labored ineffectually, he was an insistent (but never ruthless) taskmaster. Dr. Zagacki blended these roles well to nurture my efforts. The rest of the committee performed their duties with equal mastery. Dr. Andrew King, Dr. Harold Mixon, Dr. William A. Clark, and Dr. William Demastes made invaluable contributions to this study. Moreover, they always provided assistance freely and enthusiastically.

Appreciation must also go to those who aided my personal well-being during the composition of this document. For their persistent encouragement, I thank my parents, Rod Gabel, Heidi Brough, Dr. Dan Heaton, Dr. Sharon Croft, lstrange@indiana.edu, David and Karen Weber, and my fellow graduate students. For their editorial and job-hunting assistance, I thank Mark Williams and Ted Reilly. And for their spiritual guidance, I thank Bruce Broberg and the body of believers at Quail Ridge Bible Church.
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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the rhetorical strategies utilized by Boris Yeltsin during his rise to prominence and his role in the second Russian revolution. By borrowing concepts from the study of revolutions in science, the author contends that Yeltsin used three distinct rhetorical personae, or modes of public presentation, to forward his discourse between 1985 and 1991. These personae include the revolutionary, the conciliatory, and the conservative. With this critical vocabulary, the author argues that Yeltsin’s successes and failures hinged on his fitting use of rhetorical personae in relation to four exigencies during the late-Soviet era: the evolution of perestroika, the decline of progressive perestroika, the emergence of the Russian presidency, and the unfolding of the August coup of 1991. This study serves to supplement revolutionary theory which needs further investigations concerning the ways radical leadership negotiates the course of a revolutionary movement.
CHAPTER ONE

A RHETORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE SECOND RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

The second Russian revolution was a remarkable event. For over seventy years, the fathers and descendants of the Bolshevik uprising fought to establish the Soviet Union as the spearhead of communism’s march to global dominance. This aspiration to build a distinct society apart from capitalism’s international influence created a myriad of geo-political alliances which shaped the course of twentieth-century history. The advance of Marxism, however, halted as the USSR failed to sustain itself. Out of the remains of this dead empire emerged an assortment of newborn countries struggling to establish stable, sovereign governments. And for the world’s eminent nations, the Soviet challenge to liberal democracy and capitalism quickly perished. Thus, diplomats negotiated new alliances, and corporate investors swarmed to stake their claims.

Merrymaking over the Soviet Union’s demise, however, is still carefully measured. As the fallout settles on the international front, the rebuilding of a sovereign, domestic Russia is in its early stages. Threats to stability remain. For this nation, the transition to a more representational form of government continues to present an abundance of difficulties. Within its borders,
political organizations, social structure, economic control, and the once pervasive myths of state-supervised social order are still being torn down and reconstructed. Russia's transition represents an unparalleled and unique case. No other emerging, democratic state possesses such an unpromising legacy. Historically, Russia boasts limited experience with capitalism and democracy. Moreover, the heritage of Soviet domination is still smoldering as evidenced by the rekindled embers of communist political activity in the 1996 presidential elections.

Despite obstacles, the tenuous conversion advanced under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin. More than any one single person, he symbolized the revolution of 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union's communist regime. Prior to the revolution, as an aspiring leader working his way up through the party ranks, he demonstrated a flair for action when the party and state system were ineffective. While others moved cautiously or were limited in vision by ideological blinders, Yeltsin took bold risks which paid dividends after the fall of communism. As Mikhail Gorbachev became disgraced and discredited, Yeltsin emerged as the democratic movement's foremost captain.

Yeltsin's influence during the transition, however, was a mixed blessing. Following the coup of 1991, political disorientation erupted as Gorbachev became ineffectual and the plotters floundered in the coup's
aftermath without a decisive plan of action. Yeltsin, however, gathered up the fallen reins and, without inciting violence, took control of the situation. Regarding Yeltsin's acquisition of power, Sakwa (1993) notes, "Seldom before had the world seen the destruction of an old political order and the attempt to create a new one being achieved with so little physical violence" (14). In this light, Yeltsin might be seen as a savior. Ironically, he was also a potential threat to the democratic movement which he led. Giorgi Satarov, a member of the presidential council, once noted Yeltsin's penchant for authoritarian tactics. After Russia rose from the ashes of the USSR, Satarov once remarked:

Like Gorbachev's perestroika, everything now in the development of democracy is being guided from above....It is very easy to slip into dictatorship. There are no checks. Monopolistic rule is responsible for checking itself, and this self-restriction has to hold somehow before there are real checks and balances (in Remnick 1994, 536).

Questions remain regarding Yeltsin's methods as an established institutional leader as do questions regarding his rise to revolutionary power and his ascent to institutional authority.

Given that the revolution was relatively bloodless and Yeltsin's post-Soviet, presidential authority works independently of many clearly-defined regulations, one might conclude that Yeltsin's rise to power was a triumph of his use of rhetorical strategies. That is, Yeltsin's
success depended on his ability to negotiate and persuade, to acquire allies and appease rivals. In light of Yeltsin's accomplishments during the late-Soviet era, a provocative question emerges: what is the relationship between rhetoric and revolution? It is to this question that I now turn.

Rhetoric and Revolution

The theoretical focus of this study, the relationship between rhetoric and revolution, is infrequently explored. Paramount issues in the study of revolution tend to focus not on persuasion and leadership during times of political change, but on antecedent conditions which precede conflict and revolutionary outcomes. For instance, in anticipating the underlying causes of conflict, Karl Marx emphasizes incessant class struggle and competition for modes of production (in Tucker 1978, 164-165). Vilfredo Pareto underscores Darwinistic conflict between elites for positions of power, status, and wealth (in Hagopian 1974, 52). And Hannah Arendt (1963) sees revolution in terms of a crusade for freedom by masses seeking liberation from oppressive circumstances (1).

Other theorists look for general similarities which characterize revolutionary outcomes. Leon Trotsky defines revolution as a political movement striving to supplant one dominant group for another thus shifting the balance of power. For Louis Gattschalk, revolution is a popular
movement which attempts to initiate radical change in the governing structure of a given nation. And Sigmund Neumann defines revolution as an essential transformation in "political organization, social structure, economic property control and the dominant myth of a social order, thus indicating a major break in the continuity of a development" (in Blackey and Paynton 1976, 6-7). These definitions demonstrate significant utility, but, like all conceptualizations, bear weaknesses.

One such weakness is the tendency to use the above mentioned theories to create scientific, causal models of revolution. About this issue, Mark Hagopian (1974) claims that social scientists and historians may not invoke "laws" with the same certainty as scholars investigating natural sciences. He writes, "Historical situations present a multitude of interrelated factors whose relevance or irrelevance to the events we wish to explain is difficult to determine" (124). The implication of this claim is obvious. Universal, many covering-laws, and even multi-causal approaches to the study of revolution can be reductionistic. Further, they do not always account well for the chaotic transition period at the time of and shortly following a revolutionary crisis. This is a void that a rhetorical perspective on revolution aspires to fill.
Rhetoric is, in its traditional sense, the art of persuasion. Rhetoric deals not only with pure reason, but with subjective modes of influence as well. In the classical, Aristotelian conception of rhetoric, the persuasion of a given audience also deals with three interrelated factors: *logos*, appeals to logic; *pathos*, appeals to emotions; and *ethos*, appeals based on a rhetor's character. Given that this formulation includes logic, a rhetorical approach to revolution does not preclude or ignore the "facts" of history and the variables that constitute the building blocks of conflict. A rhetorical approach does, however, encourage and include the study and understanding of the extra-rational factors that contribute to revolutionary movements.

Expanding on Aristotle's conception of rhetoric, Farrell explains that rhetoric helps manage emerging situations in history. He writes, "urgent circumstances require that we act, even though we lack complete, reliable grounds for determining what the best action might be" (Farrell 1993, 278). A rhetorical culture, therefore, is one in which people recognize the responsibility of civic leaders to issue discourse aimed at conflict resolution. Here, Farrell seemingly echoes Vico's humanist position which asserts that humans are indeed born out of nature, but shape it. That is, humans are not entirely bound to strict behavioral laws. They can make active, and not
necessarily instinctual, choices concerning action and can ascribe meaning symbolically to sense data; thus, they can interpret their world in an assortment of ways (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 1985, 133). Consequently, a rhetorical perspective assumes that humans are active agents who make meaningful, strategic choices about how to manage problems.

The rhetorical choices which manage crisis situations may take a variety of forms. For instance, following the American revolution’s Boston Massacre, Kirt Ritter and James Andrews (1978) note the importance of illustrated handbills, sermons, newspaper essays, and broadsides (6). David Bezayiff (1976) even includes the courtroom oratory of John Adams as instrumental discourse aimed at challenging British authority. These forms of discourse are rather conventional artifacts for examination, but rhetoric has recently expanded its range of investigation. After the American civil rights movement in the 1960s, popular music, protest marches, and confrontation itself have all been studied as rhetorical forms.

Whatever shape rhetoric takes, it should be underscored that rhetors have the ability to influence people’s attitudes toward seemingly "objective" events in history, including a variety of social, economic, and political conditions. For instance, in relation to the American revolution’s Boston Massacre, Ritter and Andrews write, "The Massacre was, of course, a symbolic event in
patriotic rhetoric. It was tactically necessary to enlarge upon it to make clear the real, and sinister, significance of the event" (7). In short, spokesmen of the revolution actively interpreted the event that their audiences might be reminded of the "oppressive" British government's "evil" designs.

While newspaper essays, speeches, and like modes of discourse can be used rhetorically, they do not necessarily stand on their own. Often, the author's identity is a contributing factor in the success or failure of a message. Two rhetorical terms describe this thought, ethos and persona. As noted previously, ethos concerns a rhetor's perceived character. According to Aristotle, the concept involves a rhetorical appeal which functions at the time of a rhetorical act. While ethos deals with the representation of one's personality, persona concerns itself with a constructed role that a person plays. Often, these roles develop in certain rhetorical conditions which demand that a rhetor assume a certain set of characteristics for audience acceptance. For instance, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1990) contend that presidential discourse in the United States is role governed (5). That is, genres of presidential address are associated with specific expectations, both public and institutional, which guide what can and cannot be said. Of course, a president's distinctive, personal style of
presentation is always present. Nevertheless, for a chief executive to deviate too far from a genre's standards may dash audience expectations and, consequently, damage his or her credibility.

The construction of perceived credibility for a leader's image is important in that it conveys an impression to an audience of a rhetor's potential for action. In The Rhetoric of Religion, Kenneth Burke writes that action "involves character, which involves choice--and the form of choice attains perfection in the distinction between Yes and No....action implies the ethical, the human personality" (in Lee and Andrews 1991, 25). Given this association between action and perceived character, an audience's belief in a message hinges, in part, upon the integrity of the source. Consequently, the success of a movement's ability to mobilize the masses depends on its leadership. This thought is not new in history. Robert Tucker (1973) once observed that the Bolshevik revolution might not have occurred without Vladimir Lenin's leadership (45). To support this hypothetical notion, Tucker cites Trotsky who, in his diary, writes that only he and Lenin possessed the leadership skills to drive the overthrow of the post-tsarist, provisional government (45-6). Without Lenin or Trotsky, therefore, the Bolsheviks may not have assumed control in 1917. If revolutionary leadership is important to the initiation and resolution of conflict,
rhetorical studies may prove useful in explaining the phenomenon of revolutions by pointing out what particular rhetorical strategies or tactics make revolutionaries like Lenin or Trotsky successful.

A definition of revolution that recognizes humans as active agents is forwarded by historian of science I. Bernard Cohen. In the scientific context, he contends that revolution "implies a break in continuity, the establishment of a new order that has severed its links with the past, a sharply defined plane of cleavage between what is old and familiar and what is new and different" (Cohen 1985, 6). This break in continuity is characterized by two essential elements, newness and conversion. To explain the newness that revolutions provoke, Cohen employs Arendt's words to describe newness as, "an entirely new story, a story never known or told before" (8). Further, Cohen's notion of conversion recognizes that it is not enough that change is simply advocated or fought for, but it must be routinized and practiced--only then will the revolutionary process be complete. For change to become routinized and practiced, however, it must be argued for by leaders and accepted by a given audience. This entails the use of rhetoric.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With Cohen's rhetorically-oriented definition of revolution as a critical perspective, this dissertation
seeks to further unite the concepts of rhetoric and revolution. More specifically, it examines Boris Yeltsin's rise to revolutionary leadership and his appropriation of power as post-Soviet Russia's first president. In doing so, I will explore how he constructed various rhetorical personae which empowered him to become the chief commandant of Russia's second revolution. To explore this area of inquiry, I will address the following research questions: 1) What were the personae utilized by Yeltsin for the establishment of himself as an influential leader?; and 2) How was Yeltsin's strategic use of personae essential to the revolutionary process? In the process of answering these questions, I contend that: 1) Rhetoric is an essential and influential element in the revolutionary process; and 2) There are certain rhetorical personae revolutionaries tend to adopt to fuel revolutionary movements.

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

As a topic for the exploration of the relationship between rhetoric and revolution, Yeltsin provides an excellent case study for several reasons. First, his rise to power symbolizes a remarkable moment in Russian history which presented a number of curious exigencies. Boris Yeltsin's emergence as a leader came during an unprecedented juncture in Russian history. For the first time, government was to be accountable to a voting public.
Previously, Russia’s citizenship followed the lead of autocratic authority. In his work titled *Political Culture and Soviet Politics*, political scientist Steven White (1979) argued that autocracy is the defining principle in Russia’s political history. In light of this tsarist-based heritage, White asserted that Russians developed a view of citizenship not as a legal expression of public interests, but as submission to a kind of patrimonial rule (White 1979, 22). Thus, despite being autocratic, tsarism was seen by many Russians as a legitimate form of government.

Even after the reign of tsars ended, Bolshevism perpetuated Russia’s tradition of oppressive rule. Throughout its more than seventy-year life span during the Soviet era, the communist party operated as a self-centered entity despite claims that it represented the well-being of the proletariat and peasantry. Many of the party’s elite indulged in heavy-handed measures to ensure the party’s fortitude. Lenin himself believed in terrorist tactics, if necessary, to convince the masses of communism’s “inevitability.” In addition to terrorizing the Soviet Union, Stalin corrupted the nation’s bureaucracy. This corruption, under Brezhnev’s administration, blossomed into blatant forms of misconduct which served the interests of party members including, to name just a few, housing and traveling privileges. As this progression of unofficial,
yet state-recognized debauchery unfolded, much of the public grew distant, indifferent, and cynical. In this difficult environment for constructive change, Yeltsin braved several demanding tasks.

First, under Yeltsin's leadership, post-Soviet government faced the task of building credibility in a political culture long guided by patriarchal dominance. This dilemma presented a weighty theoretical problem. The aggregate effect of centuries of autocracy was a disjunction between state allegiance and agreement with the practices of a reigning government or acceptance of that government as desirable (Tucker 1987, 202-203). This situation placed Russia in a condition that impedes the development of an aspiring democracy. In On Liberty, John Stuart Mill advocated individual rights but denounced that which keeps citizens from recognizing themselves as an active part of a greater whole; citizens must function as willing participants of a governed body.

Second, in addition to the theoretical, a practical problem also arose in the creation of Russia's civil society. The nation had no historical or cultural basis for democratic, participatory functioning in government. Therefore, encouraging the public to take part earnestly in civic affairs proved difficult. After the fall of the communist party, a vast number of avaricious political parties emerged. This development of partisan communities
found itself poorly united with Russia's broad social interests and new political institutions (Sakwa 1993, 392). Further complicating the integration of public interest and government is the problem of economic reform. On this issue, Sztompka (1991) observed that a sturdy and equitable system of free trade demonstrates a link between individual interests and the public good (309). Thus, the unfinished construction of stable economic institutions weakens the opportunity for a coherent political party system's success (Weigle 1994, 267). With these ideas in mind, it is not difficult to hypothesize that a comprehensive democratic conversion is not yet complete or assured.

A second justification for this study is the opportunity for a close, contemporary examination of the role of leadership in revolution as it unfolds. In studying the relationship between rhetoric and revolution, the Yeltsin phenomenon demonstrates how one can use rhetorical actions to underscore social and political conditions, interpret them for a public, and construct a public sense of exigency. Put differently, the revolutionary leadership concerns the ability to create the precipitants of revolution. Hagopian (1974) defines the idea of precipitants by making an analogy to the field of chemistry. He explains that, "[A] precipitant is a substance which introduced in minute quantities causes another substance (the precipitate) which is in solution to
leave that state" (Hagopian 1974, 166). That is, a precipitant provokes a drastic reaction among relatively stable ingredients. Thus, a revolutionary precipitant is, in Lyford Edwards' (1970) words, "some act, insignificant in itself, which precipitates a separation of the repressors and their followers from the repressed and their followers" (27). Leadership is the fundamental feature in the creation of precipitants, but one cannot create precipitants out of thin air. Precipitants must work in conjunction with precipitates, "long-term" causes of revolution. These constitute the power keg which precipitants, like burning fuses, ignite. About precipitates, Marx writes that increasing misery drives the working class to uprising (in Tucker 1978, 165). Put differently, as the standard of living falls, chances for revolution increase.

During the late 1980s, with standards of living diminishing, conditions were such that the Soviet Union was ripe for revolutionary change. Perestroika had faltered. Gorbachev's "revolution within a revolution" sought to save the principal features of the Soviet system and retain the party's leading role in national affairs. However, even with democratization, glasnost, and the introduction of a limited market economy, perestroika failed to alleviate many of the Soviet Union's problems. In fact, the ambitious reform of communism only exacerbated a system
already in a dire situation. Sakwa (1993) labels most of the development—political, social, economic—following the 1917 revolution "misdevelopment" (16). Although great gains were made in the realm of industry, the empire's citizens' quality of life suffered. Empty shops, idle workers, and squalid housing—these circumstances characterized the lives of every-day people. All glasnost accomplished was to provide a means of expressing frustration, not solving problems. For many people, the only apparent solution seemed to be radical change.

To encourage such radical change during the 1980s, Yeltsin played the role of agitator with enthusiasm. As the Soviet system continued to crumble, Yeltsin's celebrated tirades became increasingly revolutionary. In his campaign for the Russian presidency, he became the first Soviet official to decry the national impulse to idealize and idolize Lenin and to commend Solzhenitsyn for his role in de-Stalinization. At this point, Yeltsin's intention became clearly obvious. He was not as much concerned with promoting the Soviet Union as he was concerned with the return of Russia as it was before the Bolshevik revolt. According to Petro (1995), "Like the nineteenth century Slavophile reformers Y. Samarin and D. Shipove, Yeltsin embraced change not for his own sake, but for the sake of restoring Russian greatness" (158-9). While Yeltsin saw no future for the communist party, he
believed in the reconstruction of a sovereign Russia's statehood.

Because Yeltsin is an influential revolutionary leader whose presence in office influenced Russia's future, it profits scholars to understand him. In Russia, according to Sestanovich (1990), Yeltsin helped make the difference between a relatively smooth transition and wide spread violence (3). During the Soviet Union's final days, Yeltsin was seen as a threat to stability. But as a spearhead of the revolution, he set the tone for the establishment of a new Russia. His legacy will be an integral component of continued advancement toward some form of democratic management. To understand Yeltsin, his rise to power, and Russia's prelude to political transformation, an examination of his discourse should prove beneficial.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand the guiding objectives and assumptions underpinning this rhetorical study of Yeltsin, it is necessary to review literature concerning the relationship between leadership and revolution. In this area of study, a number of different academic disciplines have done work including rhetoric, political science, psychology, and sociology. The forthcoming review will examine major concepts used in these fields and strengths and weaknesses of each respective approach.
Social Movements

In the field of rhetoric, few contemporary studies have associated ideas concerning leadership and political revolution. The study of social movements, however, may provide useful insights. Social movements are mass crusades of advocates seeking improvement in institutions or social practices that change slowly. In defining social movements, Stewart, Smith, and Denton (1994) write,

A social movement...is an organized, uninstitutionalized, and large collective activity that emerges to bring about or to resist a program of change in societal norms or values, operates primarily through persuasive strategies, and encounters opposition in a moral struggle (17).

These movements function outside of settled, legitimate institutions. Rather than overturn institutions, movements seek to reform the practices of those in power like legislators, governors, ministers, and industrialists. Thus, social movements and political revolutions differ in that the latter seeks the upheaval of institutions while the former seeks only reform. Nevertheless, there are ideas concerning rhetoric and leadership in social movements one can appropriate that might serve scholars well in the arena of revolutions.

Just as revolutions have a moral tone, so do social movements. For a movement to justify its standing as a significant and substantial enterprise, it must warrant itself with what Oberschall calls an "elaboration of systems of beliefs and moral ideas" (in Stewart, Smith, and
Denton 1994, 11). Put differently, a social movement must demonstrate that it is seeking to better a public's welfare. Given that moral struggle is involved, Griffin argues that all movements are political and concern a conflictual drama which aims for a society's salvation (in Rueckert 1969, 456). Here, the idea of conflict is important in that one group alone does not produce a movement; movements involve a rhetorical struggle between an old and new over what practices and principles are beneficial.

In light of such moral conflict, leaders of social movements have meaningful responsibilities. The tasks of leaders are many, including organizer, administrator, and decision maker. Nevertheless, there is one function of leadership of particular importance to rhetoric, the leader's role as a symbol of a movement which represents its values. Certainly, leaders in social movements do not possess the same kind of mandate claimed by institutional leaders. Leaders in social movements command because they become identified with the group's cause. That is, the identities of the leaders and the movements merge (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 1994, 95). For instance, Martin Luther King became synonymous with the civil rights movement, Caesar Chavez came to represent the fight for migrant workers' rights, and Andrei Sakharov represented an archetype for Soviet nonconformists. For a leader to
develop the kind of influence possessed by individuals like these, Herbert Simons (1970) suggests that leadership potential resides in his or her "capacity to fulfill the requirements of his [her] movement by resolving or reducing rhetorical problems" (2-3).

To solve the dilemmas faced by a movement and to be a symbolic leader, one must be a kind of prophet. Or, in Lessl's (1989) words, a leader must project either a "bardic" or "priestly" voice. In comparing the two, Lessl claims that "bardic and priestly communication share many features but are differentiated by virtue of the role-relations speakers and listeners manifest in each rhetorical type" (188). More specifically, bardic communication is nostalgic and may well suit the rhetorical needs of conservative or reactionary movements. It reminds people of their traditional values, aspirations, and convictions. Priestly communication, however, is transcendent in nature. It suggests to people that they might become something different and better. Lessl claims that using this vocabulary can aid a critic in drawing out some of the "posturing" involved in some kinds of rhetoric (188). And more importantly, this vocabulary helps explain the moral appeal of rhetors associated with progressive social movements.

Lessl suggests that with the use of the "priestly" voice comes authority which is largely divorced from the
mainstream marketplace of ideas. That is, the priestly voice forwards ideas that are idealistic and untested. This poses a risk in terms of seeking rhetorical success in that one might become estranged from their constituency. Gregg helps illustrate this possibility in his discussion of the "ego function" of protest rhetoric. He claims that protest rhetoric has a limited audience; those in power may refuse to listen. From this assumption, he argues that the provocateur may choose to address him or her self "and that regardless of his reasons for such behavior, this primary transaction of self may be properly designated rhetorical" (Gregg 1969, 71). In a typical rhetorical transaction, one assumes that the rhetor has a particular aim, like inducing action in or shifting attitudes of an audience. In Gregg's words, "The speaker is successful insofar as he can maneuver his listeners to assent the point of view, claims, or actions proposed by the speaker" (72). For the protestor, however, protest rhetoric may function simply to psycho-logically construct and affirm an individual's or a group's own position (74).

If protest rhetoric is, to some degree, ego driven, the line between the success and failure of a movement may be thin. In other words, a subtle distinction exists between satisfying one's own needs and pragmatically satisfying the needs of a constituency. For instance, Eugene Debs was successful because his rhetoric made a
difference for the constituency he represented. Debs was, in a sense, a marginal leader in that his supporters were few and his unattained goals were many—he did not, in four attempts, become president of the United States, and "he did not even see the creation of a vertically integrated industrial union in his lifetime" (Darsey 1988, 434). Debs' efforts did, however, provide a moral foundation for reforms resulting in better treatment of workers who were once seen as mere cogs in the American manufacturing machine. Emma Goldman, however, was not as successful as Debs. Solomon (1988) argued that the anarchist firebrand of early 20th century America used rhetorical techniques that were self defeating (185). "Red Emma" Goldman was a better agitator than practical reformer. Therefore, while she pointed out social ills, she forwarded no feasible plans for reform and could not rally a coherent core of supporters. Thus, her consequence as a pragmatic activist was nominal.

How leaders like Debs come to the forefront of movements is uncertain. John Wilson writes that "the typical pattern of domination in the typical social movement is subsumed under neither the concept of power nor that of authority" (in Stewart, Smith, and Denton 1994, 92). The pathways to control are not well defined and the movement's support of a commander may be fickle at best. In describing this precarious situation, Simons (1970)
writes that a leader may manage an organized nucleus, but
wields little control over those at the periphery of the
movement (4). Without assured support from the movement’s
fringes, Stewart, Denton, and Smith (1994) speculate that
leaders gain legitimacy through performing specific skills
like organizing or decision making "through costly trial
and error as the social movement unfolds" (92).

While conjectures exist about how leaders acquire
power in social movements, the importance of leadership is
clear. Leadership is essential because the leader’s
characteristics often shape the movement’s activities. As
Sidney Hook (1967) once noted,

We can tell that it [revolution] is coming, we can
predict its approach though not what particular event
will set it off. We can predict...the advent of a
revolution or a war but not always what its upshot
will be. That upshot may sometimes depend upon the
characters of the leading personalities (154).

To understand the kind of and importance of occurrence to
which Hook is referring, one must question the adequacy of
claiming that leaders arise through "trial and error."
More research must be done to more fully understand the
strategies and tactics used by leaders to justify efforts
aimed at reform and revolt.

Charisma

Charisma has been a useful tool in the examination of
revolutionary leadership in a wide variety of disciplines.
The influential and foundational conception of the term was
developed by Max Weber. He claims:
The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super human, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader (in Toth 1981, 19).

With this definition as a cornerstone in research literature, charisma refers to a personality with magnetic appeal, sense of timing, and the rhetorical skills necessary to articulate what "others can as yet only feel, strive towards, and imagine but cannot put into words or translate explicitly into action" (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 1994, 96-7). What makes some charismatic and others not is sometimes difficult to discern as charisma is a "gift of grace." Nevertheless, there appear to be two elementary kinds of charisma, pure and manufactured.

Pure charisma deals directly with, to use the term loosely, one's "actual" personality. It refers to an innate charm, or magnetism, which moves people around the charismatic individual to action. Thus, pure charisma's claim to obedience is personal. Its impact occurs in conjunction with the leader's ability to evoke the sense of conviction, devotion, and allegiance (Bensman and Givant 1986, 32). In its earliest conceptions, charismatic ability is associated with divine gifts. In fact, the plural of the term, "charismata," blossomed out of the Judeo-Christian tradition where it was associated with
talents bestowed by the Holy Spirit (Boss 1976, 302). As charisma stemmed from divine influence, the charismatic individual operated outside of the bounds of formal legitimacy.

Because charisma operates without institutional mores, it is often viewed as revolutionary and is associated with the role of agitator. Eric Hoffer scoffingly comments that "chaos is his [the agitator's] element. When the old order begins to crack, he wades in with all his might and recklessness to blow the whole hated present to high heaven" (in Hagopian 1974, 331). According to Weber, pure charisma tends to arise during times of crisis when traditional power and institutional structures have broken down (Bensman and Givant 1986, 29). In this situation, Lasswell claims that audiences are vulnerable to agitation at the hand of one who places emphasis on emotional responses from the masses (Lasswell 1960, 78). While it is difficult to speculate about the exact personality attributes of charismatic leaders who can manipulate the passions of a public, one thing seems certain. During times of crisis, some provisional form of authority is needed as an alternative to sheer chaos. That provisional form might be characterized by pure charismatic leadership.

While pure charisma concerns "innate" abilities, manufactured charisma relies less on personality, and more on institutional legitimacy; it is part of what Weber
calls rational-legal authority. According to Weber, once a charismatic leader comes to hold an official and secure office, a period of routinization follows in which a more lasting authority arrangement solidifies (Glassman 1986, 181). In short, manufactured charisma is a component of the legitimization process in which a constituency consents to be led (118). Thus, the leader appropriates the trappings of office to add to his or her influence.

Manufactured charisma is a fixture in the modern, mass-mediated world. Especially in America, leadership elites often utilize advertising techniques to package and sell an image. Leaders are promoted strategically. At pre-arranged, special events including news conferences, rallies, and parades, the "charismatic" are surrounded by impassioned symbols—flags, swastikas, red stars, or whatever is contextually appropriate. Within this carnival atmosphere, the leader finds him- or herself well prepared to play a scripted part. Speech instructors, speech writers, and special consultants all contribute to the creating of a formulated persona, a carefully crafted image which appears larger than life (Glassman 1986, 122). Lighting, camera angle, makeup, distance, stagecraft—all of these factors contribute to the production of modern, manufactured charisma (Bensman and Givant 1986, 50).

The study of charisma, both pure and manufactured, has been a fruitful endeavor. Given that charisma is driven,
in part, by creative, or extra-rational modes of proof, it is a concept ripe for rhetorical examination. Many scholars, like sociologist Talcott Parsons, believe that charisma, when astutely used, can identify key characteristics of influential leaders. He notes, "Charisma is not a metaphysical construct, but an observable quality of men and things in relation to human acts and activities" (in Boss 1976, 313). As Weber originally envisioned the term, charisma has several key determinants. First, the charismatic leader must be recognized by a constituency. Second, the leader's followers must have an emotional stake in a communal relationship. Third, for the leader to lose charismatic power, his or her "god" or "heroic" power must also fail. Fourth, economic considerations have no bearing on charisma. And, fifth, charisma is a revolutionary force (in Boss 1976, 301). In a summary of research literature, Boss claims that from Weber's conception, three dimensions of charisma have emerged: 1) qualities or traits characterizing the person him- or herself; 2) the observable influence on the "listener-followers"; and 3) the exigencies indicated in the specific socio-political situation (301).

While the critical use of charisma as a critical term has been productive, its study has its limits. Charisma, as studied currently, has become increasingly difficult to
use as a productive concept. Charisma is a popular term and is, thus, diluted in meaning. Of course, the term carries its foundational meaning. Nevertheless, McCrosky and Young (1981) warn that the core meaning has been obscured with continued study (24). Also, Boss claims that the concept’s overuse has promoted a thinning of the idea. He writes, "So vague indeed is the referent for 'charisma' that scholars in the field of rhetoric have had only minimal interest in the concept, content to allow the term to be subsumed under the general rubric of 'ethos,' or ethical proof" (Boss 1976, 300). Perhaps the time is ripe for scholarly vocabulary concerning rhetoric and revolution to venture beyond charisma and to include additional, complementary concepts.

The Psycho-Analytic Approach

Freud's influence is pervasive in academia, and the study of revolution is no exception. Appropriating Freud's insights, a number of scholars have suggested that revolutionary leadership is fueled by personality. That is, certain psychological dispositions motivate potential leaders to action during times of political activity and conflict. In addition to Freud's own works, the efforts of Harold D. Lasswell and Erik Erikson, to name a few, have been influential in applying and explaining Freud's theories in relation to revolutionaries.
To appreciate the psycho-analytic approach to leadership, one must start with a look at Freud and his landmark psycho-biography of Woodrow Wilson. In it, one finds the main tenets of the Freudian approach to political activity as expressed by three axioms. Freud’s first axiom holds that, from birth, all men possess libido, an energy derived from Eros. The second axiom maintains that all human beings are bisexual, and this results in mental conflict. Accordingly, the degree of masculinity obtained by adult men corresponds to their childhood experience and conditioning. And axiom three claims that an inherent "Death Instinct" clashes with one’s Eros. The result is a smoldering, internal aggression which either waits for provocation, or is the drive behind personal motivations (in Hagopian 1974, 321).

This Freudian troika of postulates may also be described in terms of Ego, Superego, and Id. Representing one’s "common sense," the Ego may come into conflict with one’s Id, a reservoir of primal, libidinal urges. Between the Ego and Id is the Superego which is the realm of consciousness and conflict, the root of which is the Oedipus complex. As a male child matures, Freud claims that he develops love impulses toward his mother. The child’s father, however, presents an obstacle to love impulses and, therefore, becomes the aim of aggression. Ironically, the father is also an object of affection. How
the child settles this paradox heavily influences his subsequent psychic development (Freud and Bullitt 1967, 42). Assuming that people suffer inner turmoil over their repressed urges and find no resolution, Freud suggests that political behavior is frequently an externalization of sexually-oriented difficulties troubling a leader during his youth.

Surveying literature grounded in the Freudian perspective, Lasswell suggests that all psychoanalytic approaches to politics have three basic steps. First, researchers attempt to understand a leader's private motives for his or her political endeavors. Second, researchers examine how one's private motives are manifest in public life. That is, they see how private motives influence public decision making. And third, researchers attempt to discern how leaders rationalize their decisions in terms of the public interest. In light of this procedure, Lasswell concludes that many scholars view the "political personality" as enthralled with the accumulation and use of authority. This urge stems from the Oedipal complex and functions to overcome feelings of inadequacy and loss (in Hagopian 1974, 320).

The psycho-analytic perspective has been applied to a number of political leaders and revolutionaries. Examining Julius Caesar, Cromwell, Robespierre, Hitler, and Stalin, Bychowski's (1969) *Dictators and Disciples* represents an
orthodox, Freudian analysis. In this work, Bychowski concludes that "the leader's fanaticism, will-to-power, and paranoid suspiciousness stem from his failure to cope with the traumas of childhood and adolescence" (245).

Wolfenstein's (1971) *The Revolutionary Personality* is more innovative in that it is not limited to an analysis of childhood experiences. Rather, as he studies Lenin, Trotsky and Ghandi, Wolfenstein also explores personality in relation to historical circumstances. For instance, he claims that the manifestation of a revolutionary personality is contingent upon historical factors including "an established revolutionary tradition" (Wolfenstein 1971, 21). In alternative settings, the would-be leader of a revolution might assume the role of criminal, outcast, or social deviant as a surrogate for political activity (23).

In examining the findings of Wolfenstein and Bychowski, Hagopian (1974) summarizes several characteristics of the "revolutionary personality." First, the leader tends to suffer from the trauma associated with the Oedipal complex, but more strongly than average for his social group or culture. Second, the leader endures the mental conflict by sublimating instinctive yearnings and aggressive drives though laboring for a cause or revolutionary movement. Through this substitution a rationalization occurs which justifies behavior in terms of a revolutionary ideology. Third, as the revolutionary

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process blossoms, the emerging leader unleashes animosity against leading members of the old regime. This action gains ideological sanction which appeases his superego. And, fourth, the leader, following the appropriation of power, often displays fanaticism and acute suspicions that suggest neurotic tendencies with deep-seated origins in his character (Hagopian 1974, 327).

The psycho-analytic approach to revolutionary leadership is productive, but limiting. Bychowski, Wolfenstein, and Freud take an individually-oriented perspective to the study of revolution. Indeed, the private dispositions of any influential human being inevitably affect behavior and, consequently, decisions which impel others. In this light, as Wolfenstein notes, it is difficult to distinguish between the psychological and sociological. Nevertheless, the rhetorical perspective is concerned not with one’s thought process. Rather, its emphasis is on public performance. Thus, while psycho-analytic study of a leader’s thoughts invite speculation about that which is ethereal and psychological, the rhetorical study of a leader’s discourse invites consideration of the creation of a publicly-viewed image.

CONCLUSION

Little research concerning leadership exists that explores the relationship between rhetoric and revolution. Certainly, there are some genres of investigation that
provide a framework for the study of leadership in the revolutionary setting. Nevertheless, these studies have shortcomings concerning the persuasive strategies of revolutionaries: social movement investigations could be more exacting; charisma studies may be losing potency; and, with regard to a rhetorical perspective, the psychoanalytic approach overemphasizes tacit, personal aspects of leaders. In this labyrinth of knowledge, a need exists to develop theories which more clearly examine rhetorical strategies utilized by leaders in the revolutionary context. Toward this end, the present study seeks to provide a bridge over the research gap through the utilization and modification of theory concerning rhetorical personae.
CHAPTER TWO
METHOD
RHETORICAL PERSONAE

To broaden our understanding of rhetoric in a revolutionary setting, this study investigates Yeltsin’s personae. Put simply, a persona is a "role" one plays, a publicly-constructed impression of one’s self. It is not a self in the psychological sense. Rather, an advocate’s use of a persona reveals only a strategic facet of his or her character for the sake of advancing a persuasive message in a community. From the study of revolutions in science, Keith and Zagacki (1992) suggest three different, ethical opportunities for the rhetor-scientist seeking to promote innovation—the revolutionary, the conciliatory, and the conservative personae—which may prove serviceable in the political realm.

First, Keith and Zagacki describe the revolutionary persona which, of the three, is the most dauntless. In announcing revolutionary findings, some scientists unabashedly declare the significance of their work. Keith and Zagacki claim that this posture may assume one of two forms. In the first approach, the researcher is inadvertently compelled to seek revolution (Keith and Zagacki 1992, 64). Here, the scientist claims to be merely doing his or her job—conducting research, recording findings, and, when necessary, determining that data can
not be explained with conventional modes of interpretation.¹

The alternative approach, the "scientist seeking revolution," is more blatantly radical. This kind of revolutionary stance emphasizes the need to actively seek out alternative means of inquiry. Even though a current paradigm may be sufficient to answer many research questions adequately, the scientist seeking revolution sees danger in contentment. Not to question underpinning assumptions regarding scientific methods is to dogmatically accept theories which might not be able to explain anomalies in research findings (65-6). The scientist seeking revolution plays the role of agitator and savors provocative confrontation.²

Second, Keith and Zagacki discuss the conciliatory persona. Occasionally, a lengthy delay occurs between the time revolutionary ideas are presented and the time these ideas are seen in practice. During this postponement,

¹To explain this kind of "reluctant revolutionary," Keith and Zagacki use the example of chaos theorist Ralph Abraham who, like many chaos scientists, confronted stern opposition to his ideas. Yet, in the name of innovation and creativity in science, he brooked disagreement and continued to advance his theories (64-5). In short, he did not necessarily want to be revolutionary, but did so in the name of scientific idealism.

²For instance, paleontologists Niles Eldridge and Steven Gould aggressively attacked Darwinism's reliance on induction and in a 1972 paper advancing the theory of punctuated equilibria (66). When challenged with new interpretations, Darwinists dogmatically invoked conventional explanations (66).
obstacles hinder revolutionary progress including skepticism in the scientific community and testing procedures for the new theories. Delays like these present weighty rhetorical repercussions for the scientists involved. The point here is that uncharitable responses to revolutionary ideas prompt the innovator to switch from a radical stance to one more conciliatory which appeases a scientific community's requirements of acceptability.

Third, the conservative persona serves to guard the status quo of science. Revolutionary progress can be deterred by disbelief and animosity. When these conditions are present, eminent members of the established order are afforded significant influence. These scientists often adopt a conservative persona which upholds the scientific community's prevailing methods and theories (67). According to Cohen, new ideas in science tend to face resistance because every successful researcher and teacher has a discernable interest—intellectual, social, or economic—in maintaining theoretical stability. Further, Cohen writes, "If every revolutionary idea were welcomed...utter chaos would result" (in Keith and Zagacki 1992, 67).

For instance, initially, Newton faced stern resistance to his Opticks. Consequently, he had to reframe his assertions in terms more agreeable to his colleagues. As Gross explains, Newton "employed a Euclidean arrangement to create an impression of historical continuity and logical inevitability" (in Keith and Zagacki 1992, 67). In the spirit of conventionality, Newton conducted an extensive number of experiments, piling detail on detail, to create a sense of need for innovation.
When theories fail to demonstrate the validity necessary for acceptance, the conservative persona is employed to promote rigor and defend the reigning paradigm.

Keith and Zagacki's concepts explain rhetorical personae well conceptually, but require further operational description. While no one has outlined in detail the forms these personae might take, a sound approximation may be produced by drawing further thoughts from political theory. On the use of a revolutionary persona, one might speculate that a radical uses idealistic reasoning and harsh commentary to debunk the status quo. Robespierre recognizes that revolutionaries seek to dethrone a prevailing, constitutional government and install a new administration. In this process, radicals appeal to public liberty rather than to traditional dogma (in Palmer 1970, 267). That is, they base their arguments for transformation in utopian principles and optimistic visions of the future. To encourage such visions and to instigate rapid advancement, Hagopian (1974) claims that revolutionaries demean an established order's current

'A helpful illustration of the conservative persona, as pointed out by Keith and Zagacki, involves the case of Velikovsky's radical cosmological physics and the stern critiques it faced. At an American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in 1973, Velikovsky's system was mercilessly assailed. Six years after the meeting, astrophysicist Robert Jastrow commented that only three of Velikovsky's ten predictions were corroborated, the others were contradicted (68).
condition. Hagopian states that revolutionary ideology and conduct is "hostile" to aspects of an antiquated regime and "willing to invoke the maxim that the end justifies the means" (201).

While the revolutionary seeks brisk transformation, those using a moderate, conciliatory persona, promote measured reform and demonstrate some degree of deference for the status quo. Thus, we might speculate that a conciliator uses appeals to an existing rule of law and invites predominant leaders of a reigning paradigm to join in a reform movement. According to the Edwards-Brinton model of revolution, moderates want to change fewer things than radicals and are satisfied with modifications grounded in an established political system (in Hagopian 1974, 195). Apparently, moderates wish to avoid the turmoil associated with revolution. However, they do act recklessly in some cases to coax change, as evidenced by the stifling of the Paris Commune in 1871. All perspectives considered, a moderate revolution might be best described as, in Pettee’s (1938) words, "anarchy thinly covered by legal continuity" (106). Thus, the use of a conciliatory persona may entail extra-legal appeals to an existing system of legality; to a need to embrace change; and to a need for certain, unified progress.

Finally, the conservative avoids revolution and reform by appealing to the need for constancy. Thus, the style of
reasoning associated with a conservative persona is likely marked by a lack of inferential leaps. Conservatives serve as guardians of a status quo's ruling class. As defined by Dorso, a ruling class is composed of the "organized power that has the political, intellectual, and material leadership of society" which seeks to maintain order (in Hagopian 1974, 93). Upholding this order is an eminent concern, as inventive, hasty change is almost unthinkable without some kind of coercive or authoritarian reaction from the state.

The intermingling of theories from science and politics seems, at first, dubious, but it is reasonable. In Revolutions in Science, Cohen (1985) relates the two. He notes that political and scientific revolutions differ conspicuously in that the goals of political revolution are more well defined than those of scientific revolutions. In science, the aim of revolution is to perpetuate further revolutions in a quest for empirical truths. Political revolutions, however, seek a goal which is more limited—the establishment of an innovative institutional order (Cohen 1985, 14-16). Despite this important distinction, the two possess similar characteristics. Cohen writes:

Political theories and events that involve rapid change in the social structure have had a pervasive influence on concepts of scientific revolution since the seventeenth century. Therefore we might profitably ask which specific features of political revolutions (and theories about them) have been incorporated into the concept of scientific revolution....A comparison of the two types of
revolution reveals a closer degree of concordance than might at first be imagined (Cohen 1985, 7).

This parallel between kinds of revolution is evident in Cohen's definition of revolution. As noted previously, revolution is characterized by newness and conversion. Newness refers to the elements of change inherent in a paradigm shift and conversion refers to the change involved in practice. Conversion is an intricate process. Cohen notes that in the scientific community, the publication standards, the educational order, and the positions of power must all be affected for conversion to prevail (11). Put succinctly, the successful revolution must eventually become institutionalized.

To explain the end goal of revolution, a consideration of rhetoric is required as both newness and conversion require persuasion. People must be convinced not only to abandon the familiar, but to embrace a future as conceived by revolutionary leadership. In terms of how innovative research is presented to an established, scientific community, a strong link connects the ideas of personae and of research breakthroughs. New discoveries often leave scientists facing technical uncertainties and questions concerning how unprecedented findings might be reconciled in light of previous, guiding studies. When this apprehension occurs, the innovator must decide what his or her stance will be in relation to unprecedented facts. In other words, scientists must summon and ethically promote
particular topoi which confirm or deny the significance of their discovery. If Cohen's analogy is fruitful, Keith and Zagacki's personae may be productive in exploring the realm of political revolution. To more fully develop this contention, a more complete understanding of persona is necessary.

**PERSONA**

In the rhetorical context, persona deals with one's creation of a credible public image and draws a distinction between the speaker as a person and the speaker as a perceived source of persuasion. Harrell, Ware, and Linkugel (1974) describe persona as "not the person, but rather [it] is the auditor's symbolic construction (and implied assessment) of the person" (251). This symbolic construction of the rhetor's image is a convergence of personal, ideological, and structural legitimacy variables which lend persuasive impact to the perceived credibility of a speaker.

The idea of the persona is typically familiar to students of literature and theater. In these contexts, dramatis personae refer to an implied voice or a fictive being suggested in a text (Campbell 1975, 391). Finding this textually embedded expression characteristically requires a careful reading of the given work in conjunction with knowledge regarding the author's intent or circumstances. In drama, actors who represent characters...
replace the playwright’s direct representation of persona with performative interpretation. As it is mediated to an audience, persona becomes self interpreting. Regardless of whether an author masks him- or herself with persona in lines on stage or words on the page, the auditor sees the narrativity. That is, the listener is aware that the words of the story belong to an identifiable author telling a story (Lyons 1985, 1).

Until several decades ago, Campbell (1975) claimed, the concept of persona was used sparingly by rhetorical scholars. In developing this claim, Campbell wrote, "...perhaps it is so easy to assume that an essay or article or speech reflects an actual human being" (Campbell 1975, 391). Such a position holds precedent in rhetoric’s classical tradition. In ancient Greece, many pre-Aristotelian scholars and teachers of rhetoric assumed that the character of a speaker directly reflected his private character. Isocrates, for instance, claimed that "the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul" (in Baumlim 1994, xv). Also, ancient Roman theorists promoted the importance of a "good and faithful soul." Quintilian believed that the noteworthy orator is the "good man skilled in speaking well." According to Quintilian, a speaker’s image was a product of rhetorical competence and
the cultivation of an observable "essence" or "inner self" which was formed prior to a speech. Aristotle, however, challenged the notion of representational ethos.

Aristotle avoids placing ethos in the realm of representing actuality, as he emphasizes the importance of influencing audience perception. He argues that the speech itself is the only source of ethos because very few speakers would be well known enough prior to a speech to provide any basis for antecedent ethos. Thus, credibility must be negotiated at the time of a speech. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle claims that "trust [in a speaker's credibility] should be created by the speech itself and not left to depend upon an antecedent impression that the speaker is this or that kind of man" (1356a). Put differently, Aristotle believes that ethos should not be left to chance, assuming that the audience will be able to discern one "essential" self of a speaker. Instead, it should be negotiated at the time of the speech to optimize persuasive impact of a message. Thus, in Aristotle's words, "it helps a speaker to convince us, if we believe that he has certain qualities himself, namely, goodness, or good will towards us, or both together" (1366b). For rhetorical purposes, Aristotle might say it is not necessarily important for a speaker to be a good person. Instead, he might say the appearance as a good person is persuasive.
This Aristotelian distinction between the public and private image of a speaker provides the foundation of persona, but with important differences. These differences rest with assumptions about audience. On this subject, Aristotle's suppositions were based on ideas concerning Athenian citizenship. As noted by Sproule (1988), the Athenian audience was an elite group with typically homogenous interests—its own well being. He writes in that Athens, the most democratic city state in ancient Greece, "the relevant political audience comprised only native, freeborn males, approximately fifteen percent of the adult population" (Sproule 1988, 470-1). In such a limited venue, it is difficult to hypothesize that Aristotle's notions of rhetoric might be aimed at influencing a heterogeneous social mass.

The idea of persona makes the transition from focus on the classical, elite audience to the heterogeneity of the contemporary crowd. While classical rhetoric was idea centered, contemporary rhetoric in the mass-mediated age concerns itself more with conveying pre-packaged ideology—an "image" orientation. Again, Sproule notes that along with this image orientation, the importance of interpersonal attraction and social influence increases. Consequently, the contemporary audience expects "pseudo-intimacy" from spokespeople wielding institutional sanction. Concerns regarding competence, character, and
motive have been replaced by standards which appraise entertainment value (473). In light of this condition, Black (1970) remarks that the idealism of Aristotelian discourse is supplanted. Therefore, "We are more skeptical about the veracity of representation; we are more conscious that there may be disparity between the man and his image" (Black 1970, 111).

Persona accounts for this disparity and is concerned with the idea of a rhetor playing a rhetorical role. This idea of rhetorical role playing is appealing to the likes of Hart (1990) who sees the limitations of attempting to discern a speaker's "true" character. He writes that too often "critics become amateur psychoanalysts, searching for a speaker's psyche within the metaphors he or she uses. This is a hazardous and unproductive game" (Hart 1990, 274). That is, Hart would question the benefit of understanding the soul of the speaker. The soul of the speaker does not have an impact on an audience. Rather, the representation of that soul persuades. Thus, Hart advocates understanding the verbal strategies that aid the construction of a "distinctive personal image" (272). Discerning this image might best be seen in Hillbrunner's (1974) definition of persona as the intersection of "signature"--the empirical characteristics of a speaker, and "archetype"--the deeply embedded worldview of a speaker.
Signature concerns the choices made by and observable characteristics of a rhetor. Fielder describes signature as "the sum total of individuating factors in a work, the sign of Persona or Personality through which an archetype is rendered" (in Hillbrunner 1974, 171). This summation includes both personality as well as strategy. According to Hart (1990), everyone has a "personal rhetorical history" which includes, for example, a learned speech style and life experiences (273-4). Further, Burchardt (1985) claims discourse bears one's personal "rhetorical imprint," conscious choices made about the formation of rhetoric. Such choices include the invention of "arguments, ideas, themes, techniques, metaphors, images, stylistic devices, adaptation, ethos-building tactics, and so forth" (Burchardt 1985, 442). Certainly, a speaker is not free from restraints on what can be said, including social conventions and audience expectations, but in so far as free choice is possible, signature persists.

Archetype, however, seems to deal not with the observable, but rather with the tacit characteristics of a speaker which guide rhetorical decisions. According to Fielder, archetypes go "down through the personality of the poet, past his foibles and eccentricities to his unconscious core, where he becomes one with us all....In fantasy and terror we can return to our common source" (in Hillbrunner 1974, 172). With Fielder's thoughts in mind,
it might be said that archetype deals with a speaker’s values or worldview. This position seems to make the assumption that there is some kind of "a priori place" which is an issue more philosophical than rhetorical. But, in dealing with this issue, Edwin Black implicitly disregards the philosophical in favor of the rhetorical.

In his noteworthy article, "The Second Persona," he argues:

The critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become. What the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a man, and though that man may never find actual embodiment, it is still a man that the image is of (Black 1970, 113).

Thus, a critic can only speculate about an "inner" man in relation to what is said as based in public discourse.

In short, performing persona is like playing a dramatic role. A script is given which includes a social "director’s" expectations—ideology, culture, role constraints and the like. At the same time, the rhetor’s character and personal choice inevitably shine through. In part, persona concerns the relationship between human character and discourse as it meets with audience expectation. It is "the complex of verbal features that makes one person sound different from another" (Hart 1990, 272-3). Hart claims that persona rests between one’s personality and social expectations, maintaining social obligations influence discourse, and one’s individualized image also helps to create rhetorical limitations and possibilities (273).
APPLICATION

Given the preceding commentary about the relationship between science and personae, one can see the importance of rhetoric in the "doing" of science. Paradigms guide behavior. They influence the way scientists conduct research, they influence what is seen as conventional research findings, and they influence how findings are presented. If science is rule governed, one must be able to perform and behave in socially allowable ways to be accepted as a member of the given scientific community. Bronowski claims that science depends on ethics and on "mutual trust on the work of other scientists..." (in Campbell 1975, 393). This is the case because research extends previous research. Thus, science is rhetorical in that it explicitly encourages practitioners to exercise specific behaviors and attitudes so that everyone might work in conjunction to preserve a given scientific community. Violations of these norms, including revolutionary activity, is seen as unethical.

The same is true in the political realm. As dramatized in Machiavelli's The Prince, certain behaviors become acceptable according to customs, and violations of these customs is seen as unethical. In this work, Machiavelli separates the difficulties associated with acquiring a state from difficulties associated with preserving one (Garver 1990, 191). This distinction
connects the preservation of a state, the established paradigm, with standardized politics and ethics. The rise of a new prince seeking to claim the state for his own would most likely be seen as unethical, self interested, and fraudulent as he operates outside of accepted modes of behavior (190). Thus, the prince, much like the revolutionary scientist, must be strategic in forwarding his ideas to the "old" order.

In both revolutionary contexts, the political and the scientific, a rhetor may cloak his or her genuine orientations with a persona for the sake of influencing an audience. For instance, a legislator desires revolutionary change, but her peers in parliament and her constituency are nervous about radical reforms. Therefore, the legislator assumes the guise of a moderate. By utilizing a conciliatory persona, she seeks to avoid estranging her peers and to gradually build the public support necessary to effectively legislate change. That is, the legislator in this hypothetical example is politically radical but rhetorically conciliatory. The point here is that one's ultimate political goals and rhetorical strategies may appear, at times, disparate.

Similarly, Boris Yeltsin pursued radical change in the face of conservative opposition from communists. However, despite his revolutionary aspirations, Yeltsin occasionally utilized conservative and conciliatory personae.
To address this seemingly paradoxical condition, one must consider the rhetorical predicaments in which he functioned because personae respond to circumstance. Put differently, rhetoric is situational. According to Bitzer (1968), discourse depends upon recognizing the "context of meaning in which the speech is located" (3). From this perspective, Bitzer develops his notion of the "rhetorical situation." In defining this concept, Bitzer writes:

> Let us regard the rhetorical situation as a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance; this invited utterance participates naturally in the situation, is in many instances necessary to the completion of situational activity, and by means of its participation with situation obtains its meaning and rhetorical character (5).

In light of Bitzer's view, to claim that rhetoric is situational means that discourse emerges in response to an exigence which demands resolution. Therefore, to understand the personae utilized by Yeltsin in his revolutionary endeavor, an examination of the major exigencies he faced is required. During his rise to and routinization of power, Yeltsin managed four major situations.

The first exigence examined by the present study is perestroika. In a sense, perestroika marked the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union and the communist party. As originally conceived by the Kremlin's inner circle, perestroika was meant to be a return to a kind of Leninism which promoted empowerment of the people. "Democratic"
reforms emerged that limited the authority of state and communist officials (Moses 1989, 236). Replacing control by state-sanctioned officials included an increase in the power of local soviets. Rather than promote solidarity in the Soviet Union, however, the seeds of fragmentation were planted. Glasnost-induced criticisms became more manifest. Thus, the regime was being discredited, giving Yeltsin an opportunity to assert his influence. As a member of the party machine, how did he accomplish this without getting thrown into jail or worse? What kind of persona(e) allowed him to succeed during the revolution’s incubation?

The second exigency examined concerns the end of progressive perestroika. In 1989, Gorbachev’s reform effort became increasingly difficult to maintain. Because of economic disorientation, labor strikes, and ethnic unrest in the republics, the General Secretary could not permit the continuance of decentralization without risking loss of the party’s prominence in the Soviet system. However, the newly-formed Congress of Peoples’ Deputies gave voice to dissent. In this popularly-elected parliament, Yeltsin expressed his disapproval of Gorbachev’s lethargic policy making and called for reform. How could he do this without reproach?

In the summer of 1991, a third exigence developed, as the Russian presidential elections were held. After the massacre in Vilnius, Lithuania earlier in 1991, Yeltsin
determined that he could no longer work with Gorbachev. Thus, in the election race and during his first months in the presidential post, Yeltsin pushed for change. He openly advocated taking political power away from the Soviet government and transferring it to the republics' governments. Championing such an innovation took courage and savvy. Can the application of rhetorical theory help explain Yeltsin's strategy?

The fourth exigence examined concerns the demise of the communist party following the coup of 1991. During August of that year, reactionary elements of the party launched an inept conspiracy against Gorbachev. Kryuchkov, Pugo, Yazov, Pavlov, Shenin, Baklanov, Boldin—all of these men believed that Gorbachev was incapable of leading the Soviet Union from the brink of collapse, so they forcibly relieved him of duty (Remnick 1994, 450). Importantly, the end of Gorbachev was intertwined with the end of communism. In the wake of Gorbachev's absence, no one in the communist party picked up the reins of leadership. Chaos might have surely erupted, but Yeltsin, reigning president of the Russian Federation, took charge. On August 23, at a boisterous session of the Russian parliament, Yeltsin issued a fateful decree: the communist party's activities in Russia were suspended.

To examine these exigencies and forward this study's contentions, I scrutinize a number a rhetorical artifacts.
Yeltsin’s own books including *The Struggle for Russia* and *Against the Grain*, while personal and reflective, will contribute insight into the dilemmas he faced in his rise to power. And, more importantly, internet resources and international news monitoring agencies provide a wealth of public speech texts from which evidence can be drawn. With these resources, I examine each exigence mentioned above in chapters three, four, five, and six. In chapter seven, the conclusion, I hope to fuse together results from preceding chapters and successfully support my argument that the creation and use of *personae* is an influential factor during revolutionary crises.
CHAPTER 3
YELTSIN AND EARLY PERESTROIKA
INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines Yeltsin's early career in Moscow in relation to the exigence presented by perestroika between 1985 and 1989. These were foundational years for Yeltsin upon which the stability of his future political career in post-Soviet Russia would be built. During this time, Yeltsin employed a revolutionary persona, but was forced to adjust and adopt a more conservative one. When Yeltsin first arrived in Moscow, he was a proverbial bull in a china shop. Reckless, blunt, confrontational—he dared to assault the conventions of political conduct of Moscow's political culture. In 1986, as the novice leader of Moscow city's party apparatus, he gave several key speeches which unabashedly violated the conventional sensibilities of public address in the Soviet Union.¹ His brashness reached its apex in 1987 when he accused the party of indulging in self-appeasing, cult-like reverence of its leadership. Simultaneously, he threatened to resign from his position as a candidate member of the Politburo. Because of this effrontery, Yeltsin was banished from the party's top council and lost his position as party leader.

¹Rhetoric in Soviet government was remarkably ceremonial. For example, in a special to the New York Times, Schmemann (1986) noted that deliberation at the Twenty-seventh Party Congress in 1986 was marked by characteristic "ritualized unanimity" and caution.

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in Moscow. Yeltsin might have fallen to the depths of political obscurity if he was banned from the party and, importantly, if he had not adopted a new rhetorically conservative stance toward General Secretary Gorbachev. This stance was necessary until Yeltsin could attain a new power base outside of the party, a feat accomplished at the first Congress of People’s Deputies of 1989. At the Congress of People’s Deputies, he won the popular mandate of the voting public.

In the first section of this chapter, I examine Yeltsin’s speeches during his first two years in Moscow as he assumed a revolutionary persona. Also, the first section frames Yeltsin’s rhetoric in the context of Soviet political culture. In the second section, I examine the party’s backlash against Yeltsin’s revolutionary stance after his unprecedented speech to the 1987 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. Finally, in the third section, I explore how Yeltsin maintained his reformist intentions, but with a different mode of presentation, a more conservative persona.

**A POLITICIAN WITHOUT TACT**

Soon after Gorbachev became general secretary of the party in 1985, he initiated his bold and controversial reform program, *perestroika*. Calling it a "revolution within a revolution," *perestroika* was designed to add greater responsiveness to a failing Soviet economy and
political system through *glasnost*, democratization, and limited marketization (Sakwa 1993, 1). At the same time, however, Gorbachev resolved to preserve the party's central role in the Soviet political machine. Initially, the plan appeared promising, but it was faced with influential resistance. Behind the Soviet Union's curtain of Marxist idealism, the levers of power were pulled by members of a social class referred to as the *nomenklatura*. Understanding this influential group in the USSR is essential for appreciating the defiance Yeltsin would confront in Moscow.

The term *nomenklatura* refers to a privileged class in Soviet society which tacitly ruled the nation without direct accountability to the public or to state sanction. The *nomenklatura* was a strata of society which sought its own perpetuation, and, before *glasnost*, its *de facto* power was never fully, officially recognized by the Soviet state. In a book on the subject, *Nomenklatura*, Voslensky (1984) points out that the term is noted in official Soviet literature, but only in benign ways. Prior to 1984, the term is not referred to by *The Soviet Historical Encyclopedia* or the *Soviet Political Dictionary*. One of the last editions of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* does define the word as a list, an index of names: "1. System (totality) of technical terms and phrases used in a particular field of science, technology, etc.; 2. System of conventional signs that constitute power the most..."
convenient way of designating certain things" (in Voslenky 1984, 1). Indeed, the denotative usage of nomenklatura relates to the idea of classification. However, the manner in which nomenklatura is officially defined fails to reveal its political nature and the stratification of the party's echelons. Though the general population knew the term well, the official lack of recognition appears strategic; it camouflaged the system of favoritism which controlled political appointments and other crucial civic functions in Soviet life.

In the USSR, the roots of the nomenklatura ran deep. Sakharov wrote that as early as the 1920s or 1930s, a distinguishable, party-bureaucratic stratum developed (in Voslensky 1984, 2). This class sought to maintain its status and the way of living which developed through an intricate system of patronage. Even before the 1920s, the nomenklatura's way of life was discernable during the age of tsars. Kennan (1986), in his article "Muscovite Political Folkways," suggests that the nomenklatura's sense of status quo, its protectionistic orientation, stems from old political traditions associated with the Muscovite principality. In this tradition, decision making was centralized in an oligarchical structure and was based on minimizing risks. For instance, if improvements in the group's way of life increased the risk of disaster, they were refused. In Kennan's (1986) words, "when faced with
danger, the village [Moscow] would hunker down—or pick up
and move on—rather than change time-tested ways" (125).
In Gorbachev’s day, perestroika represented potential
improvements. But, for the nomenklatura, perestroika stood
as a threat to "time-tested ways" and their monopoly on
power.

Gorbachev, however, wanted Russia’s legacy of
conservative self-interest expunged, and Yeltsin had a
fitting resume for the job. Yeltsin’s reputation for
fighting corruption in his previous position was
impressive. When he became party boss in the city of
Sverdlovsk in the Urals, fighting perks and privileges was
at the core of his reformist policy. According to Solovyov
and Klepikova, Yeltsin perceived inequity in a socialist
society in acute, personal terms. That is, Yeltsin
believed that for a party leader to accept or insist on
special privileges was an unpardonable disgrace. With this
orientation toward exclusive benefits, Yeltsin once closed
all specialty stores for party members in Sverdlovsk,
though he did leave a special hospital alone for a time.
Nonetheless, he insisted that the medical facility admit
retirees and elderly citizens requiring special care
(Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 152). In short, many people
in his region were impressed by the fact that a party boss
could function so independently of ideological concerns;
Yeltsin placed the interests of people above dogma.
Given his attitude toward party privileges, the results of Yeltsin's move to Moscow were not entirely surprising. The party leadership sought security and insulation from social conditions. Yeltsin, however, sought reform in spite of "official" interests. Therefore, Gorbachev's recruitment of Yeltsin to Moscow was a dangerous proposition. Yeltsin was bound to face resistance. His self-proclaimed reputation as a fighter for "social justice" boasted a lust for "doing the right thing" rather than protecting the well-being of the politically and economically powerful. Thus, those opposed to Yeltsin saw him as irreverent and politically immature, labels not surprising as he imported his provincial leadership style from the Urals to the capital city of Moscow. A major part of his provocation of the party machine can be found in his reform policies and, importantly for my purposes here, the speeches he delivered.

Soon after his arrival in Moscow, Yeltsin began a campaign against waste and corruption that enraged orthodox party members and many leading citizens. For instance, Yeltsin initiated "Sanitary Fridays" which took idle white-collar workers from behind their desks and placed them, broom in hand, on the streets one day a week. Despite howling criticism, he insisted on meeting civic needs, citing a serious shortage of street sweepers and an
abundance of managers and paper pushers (Solov'ev and Klepikova 1992, 56). By initiating this program and others like it, Yeltsin rejected Moscow's traditional rules of social hierarchy. In place of these rules, he borrowed principles learned in the Urals. There, as opposed to Moscow, ideals were more pragmatic than dogmatic and the gulf between rulers and the people was less wide.

His policy of "Sanitary Fridays" is representative of Yeltsin's administrative style and hints at the nature of his revolutionary persona. During his first year of tenure as Moscow city boss, Yeltsin made two major speeches that would demarcate his rhetorical stance. Given only three months after taking office in Moscow, the first was an address to Moscow propaganda employees in the spring of 1986. The second was given later in the year to the Seventeenth Party Congress, a bold speech that nearly led to the end of his political career.

In his first major speech of 1986, Yeltsin spoke about two themes, the practice of Moscow party officials down playing widespread problems and the interests of common people in the USSR. On the matter of whitewashing, Yeltsin frankly accused the city's leadership of valuing Moscow's image above solving problems. Rather than engaging in "window dressing," Yeltsin argued that they should more openly admit the city's difficulties and actively seek solutions. To support his contentions, Yeltsin
categorically addressed Moscow's woes. For instance, Yeltsin marveled at the fact that in a city of 8.7 million people, 2.5 million lacked adequate housing. On the issue of historical sites, Yeltsin quoted figures showing that since 1935, 2,200 architectural monuments were destroyed and many others required restoration. And speaking about city transit, Yeltsin noted that, "Sixty kilometers of subway lines need to be built [and]....[I]n 1985 for the first time the subway operated in the red" (in Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 37-8).

Capsulating his points, Yeltsin spotlighted the heart of his contention. He claimed that city officials intentionally overlooked Moscow's evident problems:

We're getting too conservative here. City authorities were pulling the wool over people's eyes: 'everything's fine, we're the best in the world, let's not advertise our dirty laundry to the world.' Whoever still feels this way should clear out his desk and leave. The City Council is nothing but red tape (in Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 38).

Yeltsin's persona here, while stern, was measured. That is, he declined to advocate the overthrow of whole institutions as a pure, radical revolutionary might. However, he fully advocated comprehensive change in the way institutions carried out their business.

After taking his jabs at the party elite, Yeltsin engaged in something characteristic of many of his public presentations—he participated in a question and answer session. Following his speech, Yeltsin replied to most of
the 300 unedited, written questions presented by the audience. These notes were of two sorts. One kind concerned practical matters. For instance, one message addressed the issue of Moscow party officials' privileges and asked if Yeltsin understood the needs of common citizens. Yeltsin's reply included an account of a recent conversation he had with a young, female shop clerk. This woman, Yeltsin explained, told him of the system of kickbacks for the benefit of Moscow's privileged class operating in the trade network. Summarizing his view of corruption in Moscow, Yeltsin declared, "We dig and dig, and the bottom of the filthy well is still not visible..." (in Tucker 1987, 162-3).

The other kind of note concerned Yeltsin's personal ambitions and desire for change. One note read, "You have Napoleonic plans; what do you think you're up to? Gorbachev simply needed his own man [to implement controversial reforms]. Go back to Sverdlovsk before it's too late!" Another stated, "Khrushchev already tried to make ordinary laborers out of us. He won't succeed and you won't either. We've stolen in the past and we'll steal in the future." To such statements, Yeltsin replied calmly and with words to inspire betterment through cooperation: "Comrades, we can only break this circle by our common efforts" (in Tucker 1987, 162). Evidently, the voice of the nomenklatura, set and comfortable in its ways, spoke
through these memos to discourage Yeltsin’s efforts. Yeltsin, however, would not be easily dissuaded.

The tone of Yeltsin’s speech and accompanying question and answer session represents the use of a revolutionary persona. More concerned with reform and breaking with the past than protocol, Yeltsin dared to address issues traditionally hushed by party and state officials. For instance, the question and answer format, a favorite of Yeltsin’s, made him seem more accessible and genuine to the "ordinary" citizen. While this approach increased identification with the general populace, it chagrined party officials who were eager to maintain their status quo. Further, Yeltsin’s demand that party and city officials disclose and openly discuss the state of affairs in the USSR was truly revolutionary. Publicly, Yeltsin’s forthrightness earned him the reputation as a populist. In influential communist circles, however, he became known as a maverick.

In his address at the Seventeenth Party Congress, Yeltsin also assumed a revolutionary stance to combat the practices of the CPSU and Soviet government. This speech occurred against the backdrop of a stunning Pravda article. Its title boldly revealed the copy’s nature: "The Cleansing. The Candor Talk." In this article, the party bureaucracy was attacked, a feat unimaginable during the Brezhnev era. The author accused the party of many
cardinal sins including engaging in illegal activities, negotiating unofficial pardons from judicial officers, and enjoying undue social privileges (Shlapentokh 1988, 10-11). This article was, a few days later at the seventeenth congress, a central topic of debate (Tucker 1987, 160). Prompted by this article, Yeltsin addressed similar issues.

In the speech, Yeltsin was blunt in his accusations against apathy in the party. He implored the audience to consider the repercussions of indifference in the realm of social concerns:

Why has the obviously alien word 'stagnation' appeared in our party lexicon? Why for so many years have we failed to extirpate bureaucratism, social injustice and abuses from our life. Why even now does the demand for radical changes sink into an inert stratum of time-servers with party cards? In my view, a main reason is that some party leaders lack the courage to assess the situation and their own role objectively and in good time, to speak the truth, even if bitter, but the truth, to view each issue or action, their own, a work colleague’s or higher leaders, not in terms of one's interest at the moment but politically (in Tucker 1987, 160)?

From members of his audience, murmurs arose which expressed surprise and, from hard-line party members, outward hostility. "Extirpate," "demand," "radical change," "lack the courage"—these were words of revolutionary transformation. In this speech, Yeltsin's persona was obviously indifferent to the conventions of silence concerning the inner workings of the party. To criticize the party of "stagnation" was tantamount to indicting its members of negligence and incompetence.
Clearly, Yeltsin spoke as if he desired dramatic change for the party and the Soviet system of government.

Paralleling the Pravda article, Yeltsin echoed the newspaper’s concerns, he but went further. Both the paper and the speech accused the party of stagnation, but Yeltsin did something never done before by a major player in the party. He denounced the party for its indulgence in the "cult of leadership," the party’s excessive deference for its commanders. To add further insult to the party, he continued by attacking the social favoritism propagated by the privileges offered to party elites. Yeltsin demanded the elimination of all unjustified advantages of communist party leaders at all levels of government (Shlapentokh 1988, 14).

To understand the reaction to Yeltsin’s persona at this time, one must know about the political culture of the USSR. In the context of Soviet political culture, a myriad of tacit rules guided discourse and conduct. This conformity is well capsulated by an anecdote about two beggars gathering on street corner. As they sit, a third beggar arrives and begins playing a harmonica for alms. Aggravated, one of the beggars walks over to the third and begins hitting him on the head saying, "You can’t do that, you have to beg the same way the rest of us do!" The would-be musician puts his harmonica away, apologizing excessively (in Rancour-Laferriere 1995, 207).
This story embodies a typical pattern in Soviet politics, conformity over progress and efficiency, which has deep roots in Russo-Soviet political culture. Tucker (1987) defines political culture as everything in a society's way of life germane to government and politics (viii). This way of life, he argues, has deep roots in a nation's traditions, and Russia is no exception. Tucker writes that communism, in some ways, perpetuated Russia's pre-existing cultural ethos. This ethos, according to Kennan (1986), included a silent yet influential ruling oligarchy. The implication of Tucker's and Kennan's contentions is that the Soviet Union borrowed, in some form, the unique, oligarchical form of politics that influenced imperial Russia's governance.

The result of such leadership was a special kind of informal conformity which placed restrictions on political behavior and discourse. Gill (1985) claimed that four types of rules were observed in Soviet political culture: formal rules that served to produce a perception of legitimacy rather than to organize political proceedings; formal rules that were inflexible principles, always followed regardless of the situation; formal rules that were followed in some situations; and conventions, or informal principles, which were "only weakly reflected in formal rules, but which gain their real force through constant application" (214). The aggregate of explicit and
implicit rules in the Soviet Union produced a unique system of political rationality.

Knowledge of the conventions of the Soviet system was essential for promoting outcomes acceptable to the party elites. Put differently, only those who played by the "rules of the game" survived in Soviet politics. The routinized practice of political conventions in the Soviet Union created an environment in which party sanction was essential for one's political career. Even in remote ends of republics, Moscow sent special appointees to represent the party's interests in the affairs of local governments. Thus, many political figures were under the watchful eye of the CPSU (Gill 1985, 217). In fact, all nomenklatura positions were controlled by the appropriate party committee. Because the central apparatus had so much authority, conformity stood above the need to be forthright, innovative, and outspoken. Thus, traditionally, those who spoke out were frequently disciplined.

For example, Khrushchev once tried to initiate change by bypassing the conventions of the Soviet decision making process. Once in command of the state, Khrushchev's style of leadership frequently pre-empted the "rules of the game." Occasionally, he announced policy decisions directly to the public or the Central Committee without first consulting the party's senior leaders. By inviting

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popular participation, Khrushchev effectively undermined the significance and competence of assorted institutional parts, both formal and informal, of the system. Further, without consideration of institutional sensitivities, he sought advice outside of the normal channels of consultation with favored advisors. For a time, Khrushchev engaged in this method unopposed because he had adequate support in the party machine to emancipate himself from the requirements of cooperative leadership (Gill 1985, 221).

Nevertheless, Khrushchev's independence from Soviet conventions and rules eventually worked against him. When his reforms and policies fell apart, no institutional protection, formal or informal, stood to shield him from his detractors. This, too, would be the case for Yeltsin. For a time, the party endured Gorbachev's apprentice. However, in 1987, the party, as well as Gorbachev himself, decided to stand firm against Yeltsin, the political maverick.

YELTSIN'S FALL

October 21, 1987 emerged as a pivotal moment in Yeltsin's career and the course of Soviet history. On this day, Yeltsin presented an ill-prepared, four-minute speech that would elicit the party's wrath. In Stalin's era, Yeltsin's discourse on this day would have resulted in his death. Instead, he faced a kind of civic execution in which he was humiliated by the party, stripped of
privileges, and suffered a significant loss of official authority. From the perspective of conservatives, perhaps the party should have arranged his execution. Out of the compost of his decline, Yeltsin's influence among Russia's citizens grew stronger than ever.

Yeltsin's 1987 speech marks the same kind of unabashed revolutionary persona witnessed throughout 1986. In his address, he attacks the practices of the party. Specifically, he criticizes the slow pace of perestroika and its impact on public sentiment. Further, Yeltsin makes the dangerous decision to attack the tacit system by which the inner workings of the party operate. Put differently, he bemoans the party's concentration of power in its upper echelons and its inability to discuss new and innovative ideas.

But what makes this speech different than any of his previous discourse during 1986? In this speech, he asks the party to accept his criticism or accept his resignation as Moscow party chief and Politburo candidate. This bold demand represents an unprecedented and dangerous move in that right-wing forces in the party were looking for any excuse to be rid of this bothersome reformer. This speech provides conservatives with such an opportunity. Further, it would eventually mark Yeltsin's retreat from a revolutionary to a conservative persona. To develop this
contention, let us examine the speech itself and the
details of its aftermath.

To describe the context in which Yeltsin's speech was
made, it should be noted that he was not officially
scheduled to speak. The keynote concern of the Plenum of
the Central Committee on October 21 was a review of
Gorbachev's commemoration speech of the seventieth
anniversary of the revolution. In it, Gorbachev planned a
delicate foray into the reappraisal of Soviet history and
perestroika's standing in that history. Before his
presentation, Gorbachev distributed a 15-page outline of
his speech for the audience's consideration. After
speaking for nearly two hours, Gorbachev faced no comments
or questions, apparently by advanced agreement. Then, with
the session drawing to a close, Yeltsin demanded to make a
statement. Gorbachev hesitated at this unexpected request,
but yielded the floor (Bialer 1988, 30).

As Yeltsin took the podium, he was tense. By some
accounts of the event, Yeltsin was not certain if he was
going to speak until the moment he stepped up to face the
crowd. Further, as Yeltsin would admit later, he felt ill
at the time of the presentation. Nevertheless, he forged
ahead, presenting a personal speech which was, at times,
disheveled and bitter. In his oration, he addressed two
general themes: the pace of perestroika and the party's
failure to debate crucial issues in an open, constructive
manner. In conclusion, the topics addressed were underscored by Yeltsin’s stunning and unexpected resignation announcement.

On the first theme, Yeltsin openly criticized the pace of perestroika in terms of its effect on the public. He claimed that at its current rate, reform would lead to change too late. Yeltsin clearly blamed Gorbachev’s conservative rival, Yegor Ligachev, for this shortcoming. Despite gains in perestroika during the past two or three years, Yeltsin laments that, "now we’re talking about another two to three years—all of this befuddles the people and the party" (in Solovoyov and Klepikova 1992, 72-3). That is, his concern was for the people with high hopes who repeatedly faced disappointment. Yeltsin warned that a lack of morale would "run the risk of finding ourselves [the party], shall we say, with the party’s reputation lowered considerably" (73). Thus, Yeltsin recommended that "we [the party] should be more careful when we announce the time frame and the actual results of perestroika in the next two years" (73).

After wondering aloud about the merit of the party’s ineffectual resolutions about perestroika, Yeltsin addressed the issue of power in the party. Speaking in cautious tones, he stated:

Another question. It’s a hard one, but this is a plenum. I must say that in the last seventy years we have learned some hard lessons. We have had victories...but we also had to draw lessons from bad,
heavy defeats. These defeats formed gradually; they happened because we had no collegiality, because we had different groups, because the party’s power was concentrated in one hand, and because he—this man—was isolated from all criticism (Solovoyov and Klepikova 1992, 73).

In short, Yeltsin was worried about placing too much power in the hands of one man—the general secretary. Without checks and balances on power, Yeltsin claimed that decision-making bodies lack rigor in deliberation.

In Yeltsin’s comments were thinly-veiled attacks against Gorbachev and his followers in the party. Yeltsin, however, proceeded to make his indictments more explicit, stating:

Something else concerns me. It’s too bad here in the Politburo, one thing has grown—what I’d call paens that some Politburo members—permanent members—sing to the General Secretary. I don’t think this is permissible now (Solovoyov and Klepikova 1992, 73).

Justifying this contention about the Politburo, Yeltsin argued that in the age of Soviet democratization, undue genuflecting could not continue. Unlike the "old days," Yeltsin announced that confrontation must be accepted, not shunned, as a part of the deliberation required for beneficial reforms (73).

After a brief pause, Yeltsin concluded with an unexpected twist, a bombshell that stunned his listeners:

I don’t think I’m doing well in my Politburo job. For various reasons. Could be my inexperience, could be other things. Could be a lack of support from certain parties, especially, I would like to stress, from Comrade Ligachev—all this had led me to decide to ask you to relieve me from the duties of Candidate Member

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of the Politburo. I have already submitted an official request in writing; as for my duties of the First Secretary of the Moscow City Committee—well, it is for the Plenum of the City Committee to decide (Solovoyov and Klepikova 1992, 74).

In short, this announcement accomplished more than simply to request his removal from the Politburo. It was, in fact, an ultimatum: accept my criticism or relieve me of my duties in the party.

The immediate reaction to Yeltsin's speech was stunned silence. Gathering his wits, Gorbachev invited remarks and questions. Silence ensued. Gorbachev repeated his invitation. After a conspicuous pause, Ligachev rose and took the podium. He refused to accept Yeltsin's indictments against the party. Ligachev argued caustically that if shortcomings did exist in the Moscow administration, they were attributable to Yeltsin. As for Yeltsin's harangue against excessive praise for Gorbachev, Ligachev, often critical of the general secretary, labeled these allegations as "disgusting" and "politically harmful" (Bailer 1988, 30-1). Rather than blame, Ligachev claimed, praise was due to Gorbachev for his efforts to unify the party during trying times. After Ligachev's deluge of comments, Yeltsin was relentlessly barraged with denouncements from others at the podium for nearly three hours (Bailer 1989, 95).

While comments directly after Yeltsin's presentation were piercing, the worst was yet to come. The subsequent
public humiliation of Yeltsin was delayed but brutal. The party announced the outcome of the Yeltsin debacle only after careful, strategic contemplation. News reports published the following day, October 22, revealed no signs of tension within the party’s upper ranks. Pravda and Izvestia reported only the names of speakers, the theme of the plenum, and that Politburo and CPSU Central Committee member Aliyev announced his retirement. Concluding, the article stated, "The plenary session approved the basic propositions and conclusions set forth in M. S. Gorbachev’s report and adopted an appropriate resolution on this question" (Pravda and Izvestia 22 October 1987, 1).

After biding time to consider Yeltsin’s fate, the Moscow city party committee announced his punishment. On November 11, by decree of the Politburo, this assembly officially met to deliberate the details of Yeltsin’s punishment. About 250 full and candidate members of the committee attended. The meeting commenced with a one-hour report by Gorbachev which addressed three themes. First, the general secretary critiqued Yeltsin’s expressed views and his performance as First Party Secretary of Moscow. Second, Gorbachev rejected Yeltsin’s "baseless" claims that party factions, led by Ligachev, fought to derail efforts to improve economic conditions in Moscow. Third, Gorbachev attacked Yeltsin more personally, claiming that he lacked the organizational skills and the interpersonal ability to
deal with his colleagues in a "comradely" manner (Bialer 1989, 105).

Following Gorbachev's address, other condemnations ensued, some of which were published in major Soviet newspapers. For instance, Nikolai Ryzhkov, the Soviet prime minister, criticized Yeltsin for "developing an oversized ambition." Vitalii Vorotnikov, Russia's prime minister stated, "it's like you [Yeltsin] had on some kind of mask....Not happy about anything...everybody or anything." Viktor Chebrikov, KGB chairman, accused Yeltsin of demagoguery and dividing the party when unity was required to "march on bravely toward our objective that we set at the last party congress" (in Solovyov and Klepikova, 1992, 64-5). Only Georgi Arbatov, head of an important government think tank, bothered to defend Yeltsin. However, Arbatov's commentary was cursed immediately by the next speaker (67).

Yeltsin did get the opportunity to justify himself during the same meeting. In his personal defense, Yeltsin engaged in the time-honored, Stalinist ritual of self-criticism. Simultaneously, he attempted to reassert his commitment to the party's mission of restructuring (Tismaneanu 1988, 283). Belittling himself and addressing his alleged Napoleonic tendencies, he stated, "I give you my sincere party word that of course I had no ulterior motives and there was no political orientation in my
Further, he claimed, "I agree with the criticism which has been voiced" (283). In short, he admitted that his personal ambitions may have clouded his judgment.

On the issue of continued support of perestroika, he gave his encouragement to the party for its further efforts:

The main thing for me now as a Communist of the Moscow organization is, of course, what decision to take to minimize the damage [resulting from my actions]. . . . [I]t will be very difficult for the new gorkom first secretary, for the bureau, and for the party gorkom to ensure...that work is done to heal it [the "wound"] as rapidly as possible (Tismaneanu 1988, 284).

He concluded his presentation with support for the party’s efforts at restructuring. Yeltsin declared, "As a communist I am sure that the Moscow organization is united with the party Central Committee and that it has marched and will march very confidently behind the party Central Committee" (285). Whatever his true intentions or thoughts might have been, Yeltsin unequivocally endorsed unity with hope that perestroika would continue, even without him.

In this speech, Yeltsin shifts his persona. Obviously, he could not continue to use his revolutionary persona without risking further reprimands. To save what was left of his political career, he shifted to a conservative persona. By supporting the efforts of the party, Yeltsin salvaged some semblance of a continuing political career.
Yeltsin's apologies, however, meant little as complete protection against the consequences of his actions. He stood accused of grandstanding, panic mongering, and annulling the accomplishments of perestroika. Agreeing with these assessments, Gorbachev summarized the proceedings for Yeltsin by stating, "...Comrade Yeltsin, you got what you deserved" (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 67). Yeltsin's discipline included removal from the Moscow Party Committee; he was replaced by Lev Zaykov. Further, according to the decision of a February 1988 Central Committee plenum, Yeltsin was removed from the Politburo.

The fall of Yeltsin marked a crucial moment in the progress of Gorbachev's perestroika. For conservatives in the Party, members of the orthodox nomenklatura, a major victory was won. Yeltsin's ouster sent an unmistakable signal to all of those thinking reforms were irreversible. Further, the situation may have frightened other reformers who sympathized with Gorbachev. Even liberal members of the Party, including Eduard Shevardnadze and Aleksandr Yakovlev, distanced themselves from Yeltsin. As he was linked with cutting-edge reforms, Yeltsin's demise might have been an irreparable setback for perestroika, but all was not lost. Because Yeltsin's replacement, Zaykov, was an ally of Gorbachev, the outcome of the Yeltsin situation did not necessarily mean a complete victory for conservative forces in the party. With Yeltsin gone,
however, Gorbachev was faced with the prospect of confronting resistance in the party directly.

YELTSIN’S REBIRTH

After his fall from the party’s top ranks in 1987, Yeltsin would return to prominence within two years. This section traces Yeltsin’s remarkable rebound from the brink of obscurity back into the foray of perestroika politics. In the process of returning, Yeltsin employed a special kind of rhetorically conservative persona. That is, rather than outwardly attacking politically orthodox forces in the party, he was more strategic in his approach. He carefully limited his political activities by allying himself with Gorbachev. That is not to say that Yeltsin became the General Secretary’s servile lackey. In fact, the two still disagreed vehemently on a number of specific issues. On principles of democratization, however, Yeltsin supported Gorbachev and maintained an obvious degree of tact when talking about Gorbachev publicly. By employing this strategy, Yeltsin shielded himself from the ire of right-wing party members, letting hopes of reform continue. The Lazarus of Soviet politics found rebirth in, primarily, two important events: the Nineteenth Party Conference in June of 1988 and the first session of the first Congress of Peoples’ Deputies in 1989.

The Nineteenth Party Conference, held in June of 1988, provided Yeltsin with a valuable opportunity to reassert
his political clout. Prior to this event, Yeltsin failed to gain significant public exposure as he was bound by a domestic gag order. Thus, the Soviet press avoided publishing the interviews occasionally given to members of foreign press agencies. To return to the political fray, however, Yeltsin realized he needed some kind of press coverage. The conference in 1988 provided him with such a rhetorical opportunity.

At the conference, Yeltsin's very appearance caused a stir. Originally, he was not supposed to be at the event or to speak. His surprise showing at the proceedings was the result of an eleventh-hour nomination from the Karelian Autonomous Republic on the Finnish border. His admission, however, did not assure him a speaking opportunity. During the first few days of the conference, Yeltsin pleaded for the podium with no avail. Without success via conventional requests, Yeltsin, on the final day of the conference, decided to storm the podium (Solovyov and Kleipkova 1992, 93). Yeltsin's unannounced and daring advance at the assembly created a commotion. Astonished by Yeltsin's bold walk to the front of the assembly, Gorbachev hesitated, but he eventually allowed Yeltsin's imposition.

With control of the podium, Yeltsin bandaged his tattered political image. He began his speech by explaining the circumstances surrounding his address at the 1987 plenum. Claiming that he was bedridden prior to the
plenum, Yeltsin announced that he was forced to attend despite being heavily medicated. In fact, he claimed that party doctors, under order, administered liberal doses of medication. Therefore, Yeltsin was "incoherent" and not thinking wisely when giving his unprecedented speech. In giving this explication, Yeltsin did not condemn Gorbachev, though he would later blame the general secretary for forcing the doctors to drug him. Rather than accosting Gorbachev in his speech, Yeltsin turned Yegor Ligachev into a scapegoat with a number of criticisms (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 95).

After his introductory remarks and a brief assault against Ligachev, Yeltsin went on to his main points which concerned the progress of perestroika. Yeltsin credited the party for its initiation of perestroika, but he also criticized CPSU for failure to maintain the movement it started. In conjunction with this theme of inadequate effort, he spoke out against party privileges, the lack of elections for legislative positions, and term limits on party politicians. For instance, he placed particular emphasis on the fact that representatives for party conferences were still nominated by the party elites rather than through a democratic nomination process. Without mentioning Gorbachev by name, he placed the blame for this situation of political appointment on the party's general leadership (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 95).
In addition to addressing the party’s political monopoly, Yeltsin spoke on the issue of terms limits. Thus, Yeltsin stabbed at party incumbents and argued,

In a number of countries, when the leader steps down, he takes the rest of the leadership with him. In our country today, we’re used to accusing only the dead, who cannot respond. Today we are told that Brezhnev alone was guilty of stagnation. Where does that leave those who spent ten, fifteen, or twenty years in the Politburo—and are still there (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 95)?

Yeltsin’s claim was that career politicians—self-serving and conservative—hampered progress, dragging their feet to preserve their status. By doing so, Soviet citizens suffered. Yeltsin remarked,

In the last three years, we have failed to solve a number of tangible problems pertaining to the well-being of our people, to say nothing of initiating and revolutionary transformations....We should set ourselves goals for every two or three years—a goal or two—and reach them for the people’s benefit. We should not disperse our efforts in all directions, but focus on one, and commit everything—resources, research, manpower (96-7).

Finished with his main points, Yeltsin might have concluded. As a master of high drama and surprise, however, he abruptly introduced a stunning interjection: “Comrade delegates! I have a delicate question...regarding my personal political rehabilitation following the Central Committee’s October Plenum” (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 96). Again, commotion swept through the audience. Alertly, Gorbachev interrupted him to announce that his time expired; all delegates at the conference were limited...
to 15-minute presentations. Nevertheless, the audience began heckling, demanding that Yeltsin receive more time. In response, Gorbachev, well renown for his ability to make a bad situation appear the better, allowed Yeltsin to proceed. Yeltsin continued, "We're now used to rehabilitation after fifty years; it has had a positive effect on our society. But I would like to ask for political rehabilitation in my lifetime" (97). After the speech, Yeltsin's request was denied. Further, he was verbally assaulted by the same pack of accusers who censured him for the 1987 oration. However, Yeltsin got what he wanted, a chance to appeal not just to the party, but to the public listening to the broadcast proceedings.

How did Yeltsin manage to invade the conference without reproach? His conservative management of the rhetorical situation was vital for his success. Yeltsin demonstrated deference for Gorbachev by furthering his goals of the conference. Nowhere in his major speech did Yeltsin blame the General Secretary for any of perestroika's shortcomings; direct criticism was reserved for Ligachev, Gorbachev's conservative adversary. Certainly, indirect stabs were taken at Gorbachev, as he was a member of the "party elite." Nevertheless, Yeltsin's commentary was cloaked in the grammar of Gorbachev's own reform agenda.
The agenda of the conference was controlled by Gorbachev, who saw the event as a watershed moment in Soviet history. To ensure the success of the meeting, Gorbachev would take no risks with his agenda. He slated himself as the opening and closing speaker of the conference and he limited all speakers to no more the fifteen minutes at the podium (Bialer 1989, 215). To further protect his vision of the conference from conservative opposition, the event centered around the deliberation of ten "theses." Approved by the Central Committee and publicly published prior to the conference, these assertions called for significant changes. For example, recommendations included term limits on office holders like the general secretary himself. These resolutions also called for: the public elections of legislative officials from a pool of candidates; the strict separation of state and party interests; "the granting of greater responsibilities and rights to trade unions; a speedy change in the legal system and in Soviet law" (Bialer, 1989 213).2

Such changes were important in that they safeguarded the progress of perestroika. In discussing the proposals at the conference, Roy Medvedev said that the changes proposed were not revolutionary, but they constituted one

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2For a complete list of Gorbachev's proposals, see Barry 1991, pp. 75-77 or Izvestia, November 30, 1988, p. 2.
of the most important moments during Gorbachev’s tenure as general secretary. As Medvedev puts it, "There was ‘socialist pluralism’; and a new law was introduced to establish the rotation of leaders. In other words, for the first time a mechanism was provided for the succession to positions of command" (Medvedev and Giuietto 1989, 238). What is more, the proceedings were broadcast live to the public, meaning the Politburo’s hands were tied. With live broadcasts, the interest of the public was piqued, participation in government encouraged, and the Politburo faced public accountability. In short, Gorbachev took precautions to make sure that his reforms would not backslide.

In light of Gorbachev’s strategy, Yeltsin’s rhetoric fit the situation. While somewhat contentious, Yeltsin supported the theses of the conference and, therefore, General Secretary Gorbachev. Even Yeltsin’s indirect stab at Gorbachev, by including him in the "unchanging" party elite, was appropriate. After all, Gorbachev’s proposals recommended term limits even for his own office. In short, Yeltsin’s return was facilitated by his risk taking, but also by his "playing by the rules" of Gorbachev’s "game" as well.

Yeltsin’s conservative persona also aided him at the first session of the 1989 Congress of People’s Deputies. At this inaugural meeting of the congress, Yeltsin strongly
advocated pluralism in the Soviet political system, while Gorbachev was more conservative. Not surprisingly, they clashed on a number of issues. Nevertheless, Yeltsin continued his conservative stance. He advocated the principle, if not the practice, of Gorbachev’s ideas and even supported the General Secretary’s bid for the presidency of the Supreme Soviet. Evidenced by his major speech at the congress and his statements to the press, Yeltsin’s conservative persona aided his quest for political rehabilitation. To more fully appreciate Yeltsin’s discourse, one must know more about the congress itself.

The establishment of the Congress of People’s Deputies was a major step in Gorbachev’s endeavor to restructure Soviet government. As a result of proposals at the Nineteenth Party conference and constitutional amendments in 1988, the CPD represented a significant attempt at democratization. Exclusive functions of the congress, to name a few, included: adopting the USSR Constitution and related amendments; selecting the USSR Supreme Soviet and its chair and first deputy; and electing the USSR Constitutional Oversight Committee (Theen 1991, xiv-xv). For the first time in Soviet history, government— at least a small part of it— would be accountable to the public.

While Gorbachev wanted his reforms to root out lethargic elements of the nomenklatura, he also wanted the
party to retain its eminence. To ensure this outcome, he stacked the elections. Of the 2,250 representatives at the CPD, two-thirds were elected popularly on the basis of territorial and national criteria. However, the remaining 750 seats were reserved for party-sanctioned organizations. For example, 100 seats automatically went to the Communist Party, 100 to the trade unions, and 100 to cooperative organizations (Barry 1991, 90). To worsen this ratio, some observers suspected corruption among party-influenced officials counting the ballots. Yeltsin, a popularly-elected candidate, saw Gorbachev's scheme as nearsighted and spoke out.

On May 31, Yeltsin presented his major speech to the Congress which forwarded a guiding theme of pluralism in the CPD and other facets of Soviet political life. To underscore his thesis, he began by stressing the importance of the congress. He stated, "This congress is solving the main problems which will determine the future of our society. It is the question of power which must justifiably belong to the people represented by its legislative authority, i.e., the Congress of People's Deputies" (in Theen 1991, 230).

Given his assumption about the role of the congress in Soviet government, Yeltsin continued by criticizing the contradictory nature of the proceedings. Scolding
Gorbachev indirectly, Yeltsin called for a "real transfer" of power:

Paradoxical though it might be, this congress, which must assume the power and responsibility for restructuring and the reorganization of society, has turned out to be hostage of the laws and resolutions passed by the preceding Supreme Soviet....The most important problems of state power and management which, by the logic of the laws should be considered by the congress itself, were predetermined before the congress yet we are asked to vote for them (in Theen 1991, 231).

Plainly, his main concern stemmed from the fear of conservative forces in the party conspiring to keep control of power.

As the party clings to power, Yeltsin argued, conditions for the USSR’s people worsened and must be solved. He claimed:

Meanwhile, the situation in the country remains extremely alarming. Anti-restructuring forces have become stronger and more consolidated; the second economy and corruption are developing; crime is rising; the moral foundations of society are being eroded; the problems of young people, who need the political confidence of our entire society for the future belongs to them, are becoming aggravated (in Theen 1991, 231).

Here, he avers that for change to happen, people must be encouraged to participate in civic affairs. If decisions continue to be made from above, the gulf between government and people will continue to worsen.

Yeltsin’s recommendations for change were many. His suggestions included: dismantling the Soviet command-administrative system; allowing peasants in the countryside to make decisions concerning farm management; providing
increased freedoms for print and broadcast media; permitting alternative candidates to run for new, elected offices; and yielding more political rights to the republics of the Soviet Union (Theen 1991, 232). Then, Yeltsin concluded with his most radical call:

I believed that within the framework of building a rule of law state the present congress must create corresponding collectively operating mechanisms. I suggest...that we pass a law on an annual referendum on the subject of a vote of confidence for the chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet (233).

Here, Yeltsin demonstrates his distrust of Gorbachev to ensure comprehensive reform.

At Yeltsin’s criticisms, Gorbachev might have taken offense. However, Yeltsin’s conservative persona gives him some leeway. On this issue, two distinct points come to mind. First, in interviews with the press, Yeltsin openly supported Gorbachev and the principles of his reform efforts. Before attending the congress, Yeltsin said that he would help Gorbachev’s mission to battle conservative elements in the party, and promote restructuring. And of his relationship with Gorbachev, Yeltsin told reporters,

We have always had good, normal relations, maybe with the exception of a year ago when some members of the leadership helped relations grow colder....I think there is a warming between us, without a doubt. I always supported the strategic line of Gorbachev, and moreover I fought for it (Cornwell 1989).

And, during the congress, Yeltsin passed up the opportunity to run against Gorbachev for the position of Supreme Soviet president. Further, Yeltsin endorsed Gorbachev’s race for
the post, but not without stipulation. Yeltsin added that, for the sake of principle, alternative candidates should be permitted to run against him (Theen 1991, 724). In all, while Yeltsin didn’t like everything Gorbachev was doing, he was willing to let the general secretary proceed. To attack Gorbachev would aid the conservative reaction to perestroika.

The results of the first session of the Congress of People’s Deputies were a mixed blessing. On the negative side, despite Yeltsin’s objections, Party prominence endured. Gorbachev intended to unsettle the complacency of the nomenklatura, but he wanted to ensure the party’s continued dominance. Thus, the general secretary’s attempt at democratization merely combined the party’s institutional power and authority with a new variable—electoral accountability (McAuley 1992, 96). This situation presented a troubling question that would soon torment Gorbachev: What happens when the voting public does not want to support party candidates and proposals? Without alternatives at the ballot boxes, Gorbachev preserved the party’s status but fueled future protests.

Despite the negative, some good emerged from the congress. For instance, the Soviet Union’s news media became invigorated and, occasionally, was willing to report infractions of the letter and spirit of the law’s innovative arrangements. New political organizations
including popular fronts and nationality movements discovered a voice in the Congress of People’s Deputies. Indeed, Gorbachev’s USSR in 1989 was still dominated by the party. However, it no longer possessed the unequivocal ability to cloak its labors behind the veil of secrecy (Barry 1991, 91). Many spectators regarded the 1989 elections to the CPD a referendum on the CPSU. In these elections, party members failed in four out of five elections where they encountered non-party-member opponents (Kiernan and Aistrup 1991, 1054). In short, because of Gorbachev’s reforms and the Congress of People’s Deputies, the party became accountable to a voting public. Yeltsin’s conservative persona allowed him to place himself in a position where he eventually found power in public opinion.

CONCLUSION

Yeltsin’s first five years in Moscow were a time of adjustment. Initially, with a revolutionary persona, he advocated sweeping change. Yeltsin spoke out against party members’ misuse of power and privilege, and he championed government’s accountability to Soviet citizens. Despite his principled efforts, conditions were inappropriate for his brazen, reformist stance. The party stood firmly behind the levers of control, refusing to relinquish dominance. In 1987, the CPSU demonstrated its brawn and desire for a continued monopoly on authority by casting him out of the Politburo. Yeltsin then labored in political
obscurity as head of the construction ministry with a dubious political future.

When Yeltsin made his daring return to the forefront of politics in 1988, he used a new rhetorical approach. He utilized a rhetorically conservative persona to ally himself with Gorbachev and to shield himself from the disapproval of politically conservative communists. Thus, Yeltsin was strategically "conservative" in his public presentation but not in his political orientation. By adhering to the dictates of Gorbachev's perestroika, Yeltsin maintained his standing in the ranks of government. Consequently, Yeltsin stood ready to run for office in the Congress of People's Deputies. Yeltsin's popular support became the substructure upon which he faced the next major challenge of his career.

During the closing months of 1989, Yeltsin would again shift to different persona. The next chapter examines Yeltsin's rhetorical strategy in relation to Gorbachev's growing conservativism. Commenting on Gorbachev's backsliding following the first Congress of People's Deputies, Yeltsin claimed, "Right now it's not Ligachev on the right wing--it's the general secretary himself. I get the impression that he led our society into a political maze--but I don't know if he himself knows the way out" (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 103). To maintain the progress of reforms and to preserve his political career,
Yeltsin utilized a conciliatory *persona* which was an important strategy in his race for the Russian presidency in 1991.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE END OF PROGRESSIVE PERESTROIKA
INTRODUCTION

After the first session of the first Congress of People's Deputies in the early summer of 1989, a new chapter in Soviet politics began. It was marked by the death of progressive perestroika and the birth of the party's struggle to retake lost political ground. McAuley (1990) writes that "Perestroika is best understood as a combination of policies put forward by the Gorbachev leadership during the period from the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1986 until the end of 1989" (90). But why does not McAuley include the period immediately after 1989? The answer is that the reform effort became unmanageable for Gorbachev. By 1989, the general secretary failed to match the pace of democratization and reforms of superministries with the pace of marketization and increased outputs of consumer goods. Further, Gorbachev became disheartened by perestroika, as he realized continued reform jeopardized the livelihood of the party. Thus, Gorbachev began backsliding.

As political conditions changed, so did Yeltsin's rhetorical persona. By 1990, Yeltsin pressed for unprecedented, liberal policies in his role as chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet. Yeltsin sought greater autonomy for Russia apart from the Soviet Union so that the
republic could stimulate reform. However, Yeltsin still demonstrated some deference for Gorbachev and a willingness to work with some party members if they supported the peaceful transformation of the Soviet Union into a more decentralized and economically progressive nation. To promote his vision of revitalized Soviet politics, Yeltsin employed a conciliatory persona.

This chapter traces the development of Yeltsin's shift in rhetorical strategies in relation to the exigence of perestroika's degeneration which occurred, approximately, between late 1989 and early 1991. The first section of this chapter examines the changing nature of the rhetorical situation in 1989. The second section examines the party's conspiracy to neutralize Yeltsin's growing political influence. Finally, the third section explores Yeltsin's reaction to the government conspiracy and the development of his conciliatory persona.

A YEAR OF STRAIN: 1989

After the first session of the Congress of People's Deputies, the rhetorical situation became urgent. While perestroika was characterized by a certain degree of optimism and progress during the mid-to-late 1980s, 1989 marked the beginning of renewed pessimism. The economy, labor strikes, and the issue of the republics' autonomy were all exigencies that prompted Yeltsin's modified rhetorical strategy. To appreciate Yeltsin's conciliatory
persona, one must first recognize three features of the situation in which his rhetoric functioned.

The Economy

When Gorbachev assumed the role of general secretary in 1985, his foremost concern was economic reform. The fundamental impetus behind perestroika was to maintain the Soviet Union's status as a super power and to make it a well-developed, socially attractive state. In the early 1980s, economic backwardness plagued the USSR. While most of the world's economic giants were well into the age of micro-technology, ninety-eight percent of the Soviet Union's engineering output produced iron and steel. Also, ten percent of the population's calorie consumption came from agricultural goods imported from non-socialist nations (Hanson 1991, 50). These figures alarmed leaders of the USSR, a nation struggling to compete with the world's superpowers for global supremacy. Thus, top Soviet officials insisted on constructing the appearance of financial well-being. Officially, the nation's foremost economists claimed that the Soviet union accounted for about twenty percent of the world's industrial production (49). This preposterous statistic, and other half-truths like it, would soon fail to mask the actual state of the Soviet Union's economic condition.

During the late 1980s, the Soviet veil of economic secrecy became translucent. By mid-1989, a number of
Western companies and nations noticed that the USSR was failing to pay debts in a timely manner. For instance, the Soviets owed New Zealand $53 million, West Germany $600 million, and Japanese companies $200 million (Goldman 1992, 159). In addition to financial shortcomings on the international front, the Soviet Union struggled internally as its official shroud of confidentiality was no longer corroborated domestically. On March 30, 1989, Izvestia reported that the nation’s acknowledged, real deficit was 100 billion rubles (Barry 1991, 185). While this figure was low, it was much more realistic than anything previously disclosed. Prior to 1989, Soviet leadership maintained that deficit financing was never practiced. Allegedly, the budget was always balanced. As the 1990s approached, however, the Soviet economy finally stumbled to the brink of collapse and the myth of self-sufficient prosperity became palpably tattered.

To improve the USSR’s economic conditions, Gorbachev attempted a number of reforms, but they only exacerbated difficulties. During perestroika, the centerpiece of his strategy for economic correction was the 1987 law on state enterprises. To make the Soviet economic system more responsive to consumer demands and to encourage productivity, the law allowed individualistic initiative at the micro-level of the economy. In other words, Gorbachev’s reform program reduced the role of central
supervision in production planning. Soviet businesses still had to fill state orders according to this legislation. However, a certain amount of production resources could be set aside for shipments to profitable foreign markets. The advantage of this increased independence was that successful businesses would grow and reward their workers (Barry 1991, 182).

Unfortunately, Gorbachev's law on state enterprises worked poorly. Economic decentralization entailed a ripple effect that the general secretary did not anticipate or want. More independence for business meant self financing, marketing, and finding new sources for supplies. Under old arrangements, many enterprises were heavily subsidized by the state. Thus, the law on state enterprises created an abundance of dilemmas including decreased job security and increased strain on the economy in terms of supplies meeting demands (Barry 1991, 182). Pummeled by such unexpected effects of reform, Gorbachev became increasingly reactionary.

Gorbachev's retreat from progressive reform was clearly noticeable in 1989. In October, leading economic advisor Leonid Abalkin suggested a comprehensive, long-term schedule for moving the Soviet economy toward market principles. Despite this recommendation, General Secretary Gorbachev opted for recentralization. He followed Ryzhkov's lead which insisted that financial and
legislative retrenchment were necessary before additional reforms could be advanced. Thus, the early 1990s were characterized by attempts at recentralization of economic control. The fallout of Gorbachev's vacillating economic reform included an escalated budget deficit, runaway inflation, and confused pricing methods (Sakwa 1993, 203-4). In short, during the disarray of economic restructuring, Gorbachev panicked and backslid to familiar principles. Thus, he did not take his reforms far enough to ensure comprehensive change. The result was public dissatisfaction which contributed to a number of paralyzing labor strikes.

Labor Unrest

Labor protests ravaged the Soviet Union during 1988 and 1989. Because of the fallout created by Gorbachev's economic decentralization, many strikers protested the noticeable change in the quality of life. Shortages of consumer goods, food, and supplies for industry were conspicuous. According to Goldman (1992), "...as it became clear in 1989 that the stagnation or zastoi of the Brezhnev era had become eclipsed by the zastoi II of Gorbachev, the workers began to stir in an effort to prevent deterioration in their living conditions" (149). Certainly, ethnic conflict was an important impetus for many strikes. However, economic well-being figured heavily into workers' decisions to instigate organized protests.
In conjunction with deteriorating economic conditions, the first Congress of People’s Deputies stimulated labor protests. In this legislature, representatives from industrial centers, including prominent coal-mining regions, spoke with unprecedented candor. Seeing frank dissent uttered by representatives at the congress, many miners concluded they could speak out themselves. The result of the miners’ inference was a drastic increase in strikes. During the first half of 1989, an average of 15,000 Soviet workers struck per day. After the Congress of People’s Deputies, this figure rose to 50,000 workers per day in the second half of 1989 and 130,000 per day during the first five months of 1990 (Goldman 1992, 151).

Despite the magnitude of the labor strikes, the most salient economic goals of the workers were rather banal. Often, heavy industrial workers and coal miners went on strike not to demand higher wages, but to secure basic necessities. They had money but little to buy. In July of 1989, over 500,000 Siberians and Ukrainians walked away from their jobs to protest a distressing lack of food products and soap. The fuel miners extracted from the land provided the Soviet economy with essential hard currency from foreign markets. Given this premise, protesters argued convincingly that their basic needs should be met in exchange for their efforts. The miners grieved that each worker only received one bar of soap every third month.
(Goldman 1992, 150). Because of this predicament and many others like it, the strikers demanded that Gorbachev find the means by which consumer goods might be more quickly produced and appropriately distributed.

One of the most noteworthy results of the coal-miners' strikes was Moscow's decision to relinquish unconditional control of mine revenues. Many miners realized that Moscow did not always fulfill their promises for more consumer goods. Therefore, some strikers demanded more than assurances. In May of 1991, miners won control over approximately eighty percent of their earnings. This move entailed great risk for the laborers. Without state subsidies, workers were not well protected from price variation and the threat of mine depletion. As miners faced new risks, so did Moscow (Goldman 1992, 152). With economic ties loosened between the center and the republics' local interests, political ties between the center and the republics loosened as well.

Nationalities

In addition to difficulties related to economics and labor dissension, the problem of nationalities and ethnic uprisings became increasingly pronounced in 1989. Traditionally, Marxist-Leninist teachings dictated that the historical march toward communism eradicates national hostilities. That is, the desire for economic well-being superseded affiliations of country or ethnicity. Until the
late 1980s, Soviet leaders held their theorists' doctrine as fact. At the Nineteenth Party Congress in 1988, however, some leaders began to speak of a "negative phenomenon" regarding relations among the USSR's republics and ethnic groups—a phenomenon that had been ignored for decades (Barry 1991, 239). In January of 1989, Gorbachev himself publicly admitted that relationships between national groups constituted a major threat to the progress of perestroika. The friction between Armenia and Azerbaidzhan concerning Nagorno-Karabakh; violent riots in Kazakhstan and Moldavia; the energetic outspokenness demonstrated by Crimean Tartars; and the Baltic republics' quest for sovereignty—such problems threatened stability in the Soviet empire. Without resolution of these difficulties and others like them, the general secretary hypothesized that perestroika would collapse as the Party would be compelled to buttress its position (Nahaylo 1990, 135).

Resolving ethnic tensions would not be simple as the roots of the problem ran deep in Soviet history. Since its inception, the USSR drew its borders for political purposes and without regard for cultural and linguistic considerations. Stability endured through the threat of force. For example, after the ratification of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, Soviet authorities brazenly asserted influence over the Baltic region. The display of national
flags, public rallies, and other demonstrations of dissociation from Moscow were banned. Outspoken nationalists and critics of Soviet rule faced imprisonment or exile. In the stead of removed dissidents, Russian nationals were imported by communist officials to dilute the ethnic potency of the Baltic regions (Goldman 1992, 121).

The devastation of native cultures developed through political repression, but also through the exclusion of cultural practices. For years, the Russo-centric Soviet officials forced homogeneity by disallowing territorial languages in education, science, and most forms of public life. Moreover, the glorification of the Bolshevik revolution threatened to erase the cultural memory of some ethnic groups through a "distortion of history" (Nahaylo 1990, 139). Because of Russification, many republics and ethnicities sought opportunities to pursue sovereignty. Such opportunities were found in the late 1980s.

The candor invited by glasnost, the withering of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the sense of self-reliance gained through Gorbachev's efforts at economic decentralization all encouraged the cauldron of nationalistic dissent to boil over. As late as 1987, outcries for resistance to Soviet domination resulted in imprisonment, and demonstrations induced police crackdowns (Goldman 1992, 121). But, by mid-1988, fear of retaliation

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faded and jingoistic protests called for increased autonomy. Such calls resulted in a number of important occurrences. For instance, in popular elections, candidates who held tolerant views about issues of autonomy were elected to legislative bodies. Also, proclamations of sovereignty were voiced including Lithuania's bold announcement of independence in December of 1989. In light of Lithuania's proclamation, the republics' quests for independence became a pressing issue for Gorbachev as he planned perestroika's fate in the 1990s.

Summary

In light of the economic, labor, and nationality problems faced by the Soviet Union, late 1989 marked a year in which the party's prominence fell into question. Of course, the party was still in control, but it could not evade open, public criticism. Citizens wondered aloud about the worth of the 1917 October revolution. In November of 1989, Izvestia published a representative article of appraisal which straightforwardly considered the party's progress. It read,

The Bolsheviks promised us the moon—and many believed them. What was bound to happen happened; The social ideal of Marxism, which was utopian but attractive to the lumpenized masses, and what seemed to be amazingly simple methods for realizing that ideal means of the forcible redistributions of power and wealth according to the well-known formula "he who has nothing will become everything" fell upon exceptionally fertile Russian soil. The expectation of a miracle is a feature of our national character." In short, the dream of Bolshevism was never meant to be as promising as many thought (in Kiva 1989, 5).
Here, the author suggested that the Bolshevik era was at an end and that new visions were needed for the future. Of course, scrapping centralism was a dangerous proposition. For some Soviet citizens, taking power away from Moscow represented liberal attempts to agitate public hysteria (Prokhanov 1990, 4-5). Either way, the controversy moved into an open, public venue, hurting the party’s appearance of legitimacy.

Despite the media disputation concerning party supremacy, Gorbachev still advocated pluralism in the CPSU and the continuance of perestroika, but in a half-hearted fashion. In a report the plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee, Gorbachev made it clear,

Our [the party’s] ideal is a humane, democratic socialism. Expressing the interests of the working class and all working people...the CPSU is creatively developing socialist ideas as applied to present-day realities...In a society that is renewing itself, the Party can exist and perform its vanguard role only as a democratically recognized force (Pravda 6 Feb. 1990, 1-2).

Despite Gorbachev’s faith in renewal, conditions in the Soviet Union were worsening and he failed to respond with decisive measures. Yeltsin, however, sternly opposed a standstill in the progress of perestroika. Thus, the stage was set for conflict between Yeltsin and the vacillating Gorbachev and party conservatives.

THE PARTY VS. YELTSIN

Against the backdrop of perestroika’s decline, conservative elements in the party sought to reconsolidate
power at the center. With control of the republics flagging, regulation of labor faltering, and regulation of the economy failing, the USSR faced dismal prospects. Reverting to time-tested ways, Soviet officials sought to regulate the nation's situation from above which required regaining their ability to direct the course of civic affairs. Thus, Gorbachev slowed the pace of progressive reform programs which delegated authority to local agents. Further, conservatives sought to neutralize the influence of the political left's principle protagonist, Yeltsin. To discredit Yeltsin and, therefore, commandeer public support, the party waged a smear campaign which centered around two events in 1989: Yeltsin's visit to the United States and a rumor concerning Yeltsin's alleged "abduction." These two events greatly influenced Yeltsin's future rhetorical strategies.

On the first event, Yeltsin wanted to visit the United States to aid his reform efforts for Russia and the Soviet Union. Yeltsin realized that he could not forge a democratic-style government with instincts alone. For reasons he labeled "common sense" and "expediency," Yeltsin adopted the United States as a model for reform (Solovyov and Klepakova 1992, 168). In particular, he was interested in the legal status of minority opposition in the American Congress. Thus, with the eagerness of a novice politician, he concluded to journey to the United States for a first-
hand investigation of what made that Western nation prosperous.

Yeltsin organized his trip for the summer of 1989, but his plan faced resistance from party officials. In the U.S., Gorbachev's popularity with the citizens was high. Thus, party conservatives did not want Yeltsin's approval rating to grow in the U.S. because they feared that American approval could translate into increased domestic popularity. Consequently, despite Yeltsin's request for a two-week venture, the Central Committee only approved a one-week stay (Morrison 1991, 102). To further inconvenience Yeltsin, the Central Committee refused to give him status as an official representative of the USSR. Yeltsin was forced to travel as a lecturer sponsored by the Esalen Institute, a California group committed to fostering cultural exchange. With support from the Esalen Institute and with the media watching, the party could not hold Yeltsin back from the visit. They did, however, conspire to reinterpret the trip’s events with advantage. This task was attempted on two fronts.

First, during the trip, Yeltsin became exhausted, as he was an inexperienced traveller. At the time of the trip, Yeltsin was in his late 50s, but the number of his trips abroad could be counted on one hand. While many other party members were well travelled, Yeltsin worked in a city, Sverdlovsk, that was closed to foreign visitors.
because of its involvement in Soviet military production (Morrison 1991, 101). Thus, his administrative duties did not require extensive interaction with or travel to far-away destinations. Consequently, when Yeltsin’s opportunity to travel to the United States arose, he failed to anticipate the rigors of a trans-Atlantic jaunt and an eleven-cites-in-seven-days tour. The result of his inexperience was a public-relations debacle.

In America, Yeltsin was fatigued. Perhaps the most celebrated instance of his tiredness occurred in Baltimore, Maryland. During an early breakfast meeting at Johns Hopkins University, he appeared groggy and, at times, incoherent. Of Yeltsin’s behavior, one journalist wrote, "Yeltsin came in. He clasped his hands like a boxing champion. He tilted, he rocked. He swerved. He careened." In another report, the Baltimore Sun claimed Yeltsin was "not at his freshest" for the meeting: "Mr. Yeltsin’s gaze was sometimes vague, his grasp listless as the guest shook his hand." (in Morrison 1991, 104). Some reporters surmised that Yeltsin was hungover. Later reports claimed that after several sleepless nights, Yeltsin’s aids persuaded him to take sleeping pills around four in the morning, several hours before the breakfast meeting. Consequently, they had difficulty waking him (104). Whatever the case might have been, the press interpreted Yeltsin’s public appearance pejoratively.
Second, the American press mistook Yeltsin's easy-going, spontaneous style for buffoonery. In the United States, Yeltsin relished the experience of his visit and made no attempt to hide his sense of delight. Like a seasoned politician, he worked the receptive American crowds with an easy-going, "call-me-Boris" style. Yeltsin also used his casual demeanor in meetings with American officials. Some members of the press, however, interpreted his behavior as a lack of political manners. According to his staff, Yeltsin's impulsiveness was a conscious ploy to contrast him with the stiff, protocol-bound Gorbachev (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 175). However, his spontaneity, combined with rumors of his heavy drinking, took its toll in the media's accounts of his trip.

In the Soviet Union, the Kremlin used distasteful information about Yeltsin against him. As the visit came to a close, Pravda and Izvestia republished a damaging account of Yeltsin's travels from an Italian journal, La Repubblica. In this article, journalist Vittorio Zuccona (1989) details the escapades of Yeltsin by writing, "he is leaving behind a trail in the form of predictions of disaster, insane spending, interviews and, especially, the smell of the famous Jack Daniels Black Label Kentucky Whiskey....Yeltsin has a phenomenal ability to drink and spend money" (5). Put differently, Zuccona accused Yeltsin of using the profits from his lectures for merrymaking and
extravagant spending. This allegation carried an enormous amount of weight, as it was leveled against a CPSU member, one dedicated to serving the needs of a theoretically selfless, socialist society.

While such allegations were largely fabricated and eventually discounted, the scandal frightened Yeltsin aides. They worried that poor press coverage could, at worst, severely damage Yeltsin's reputation and, at least, confuse his supporters. However, retractions appeared quickly. In America, papers recanted their accounts of Yeltsin's extreme drunkenness (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 174-76). In the Soviet Union, Pravda printed an unprecedented apology to Yeltsin, admitting that Zuccona never checked his sources (21 September 1989, 7). Thus, after proper investigation, a different account of the trip emerged: Yeltsin was tired, not drunk; and Yeltsin spent more than $100,000 of his earnings in the U.S. on disposable syringes to battle the spread of AIDS in the USSR, not to purchase American consumer goods (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 175).

Following Yeltsin's public-relations struggle concerning his trip to America, the Kremlin smear campaign did not end; conservatives continued their assault. In October, Yeltsin fell ill with pneumonia and failed to attend sessions of the Supreme Soviet. His absence fueled gossip of an attack or an assassination attempt. Rumors of
the alleged attack began with a report from two militiamen guarding government dachas just west of Moscow. On September 29, the guards stated that a soaking-wet Yeltsin approached them and declared that an attempt was made on his life. Allegedly, Yeltsin told the guards that two men forcibly placed a bag over his head, pushed him into a car, drove him to a bridge, and plunged him into the river (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 178). Yeltsin wanted the matter kept confidential, but the story made its way through the chain of command to the Moscow rumor mill.

Hearsay spread quickly and prompted Gorbachev to order an investigation. When Yeltsin was well enough to return to the Supreme Soviet on October 16, he was met by an unexpected surprise. Gorbachev announced that the abduction rumor should be addressed immediately--during the Supreme Soviet session. The general secretary then asked interior minister Vadim Bakatin to read a prepared statement. From the rostrum, Bakatin told the audience that Yeltsin reported a kidnapping, but the story could not be verified. Further, he said that Yeltsin now denies any attack or complaint, stating, "maybe I was joking." According to Bakatin, Yeltsin claimed after the initial report that, "there was no attack on me, I didn’t make any written statements, I didn’t go to anyone for help, and I have no complaints against the internal affairs agencies. That’s all I have to say" (Izvestia 17 October 1989, 2).
Given the events which occurred in the previous months, Yeltsin's reticence was not surprising. Yeltsin refused to give his right-wing competitors and Gorbachev further information for them to manipulate in the state-controlled media. Clearly, Gorbachev wanted Yeltsin discredited as elections to the Russia Parliament and local soviets approached. In Soviet political culture, personal scandals were kept from the public's eye. Nevertheless, Gorbachev intentionally interrupted a session of the Soviet Union's most prominent decision-making body to discuss Yeltsin's private life. Further, Gorbachev ordered Izvestia to print the complete transcripts of the Supreme Soviet's session the following day (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 178). By doing this, General Secretary Gorbachev hoped that Yeltsin would be so consumed with repairing his image that Gorbachev could enhance his own political position.

In the short term, the smear campaign against Yeltsin worked. He felt frustrated and blamed Gorbachev for his political inactivity, accusing the General Secretary of using "unprincipled moral and psychological methods to remove opponents instead of political means" (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 181). However, travel and "assassination" scandals later aided Yeltsin. In the public's eye, Yeltsin was seen favorably as a man who stood up to the party and endured. Further, the smear campaign served as a
springboard upon which Yeltsin would become increasingly conciliatory.

THE RISE AND FALL OF CONCILIATION

Following his misadventures with the Party in late 1989, Yeltsin felt and acted upon a sense of exigence concerning conservative resistance. Yeltsin believed that the party's backsliding, including Gorbachev's, on reform issues could be irreparable. Moreover, Yeltsin also believed that the Party's opportunities to serve the needs of the Soviet people were rapidly diminishing. At a plenum in early February, 1990, he warned that the party had one last chance to redeem itself, at the forthcoming Twenty-Eighth Party Congress in June (Morrison 1991, 118).

Clearly, this prognostication served as an aggressive, but conciliatory invitation to unite all fronts to avoid future conflict. Evidence of his persona was illustrated by Yeltsin's resignation from the CPSU at the Twenty-Eighth Congress and by his call for Gorbachev's resignation, after the Vilnius incident, in early 1991.

The Twenty-Eighth Party Congress was the stage upon which conservative members of the Party formally sought to thwart reforms and reconsolidate power. In June 1990, stalwart conservatives in Russia formed the Communist Party of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (CP RSFSR) as a fortification against Gorbachev's more liberal policy decisions. Once organized, the CP RSFSR battled Gorbachev
at the congress on the issue of the democratic party platform. Because of this struggle, the party appeared constitutionally unable to amend itself. Thus, reform was hindered in the Communist ranks and lagged behind public expectations (Sakwa 1993, 7). In short, the party became increasingly fractured and unable to productively champion reform.

Seeing the influence of the CP RSFSR, Yeltsin spoke out at the congress against the lack of progressive policy making. In a June 6 speech summarizing the work of the Twenty-Eighth Congress of the CPSU, Yeltsin lashed out against the party's conservatives:

After taking the defensive in the initial restructuring, the conservative forces have shifted to the offensive....As the past few years have shown, it is not possible to neutralize the effect of the conservative forces in the party. They have begun a struggle against the economic reform, a struggle that, although timid and halfhearted, created a real threat to the party’s full power....This position has discredited those communists who are sincere and consistent supporters of changes (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLII (35) 1990, 11).

As he expressed his frustration concerning the right-wing movement in the party, he was concerned with the effect of that backsliding on the future efforts of party-led reform in the Soviet Union.

Obviously, Yeltsin doubted the party’s ability to continue its leading role in national affairs. He asserted that power was shifting away from the Party to alternative agents of government. Commenting on congressional debates,
Yeltsin stated that restructuring is no longer the central issue. Restructuring was being negotiated by the people, "beyond the walls of this building; it is being decided in the Congress of People's Deputies" (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLII (35) 1990, 12). The Russian congress, therefore, faced a different issue. Yeltsin declared,

This congress is faced first of all with the fate of the CPSU itself....Will it [the CPSU] apparatus find the strength to decide on changes? Will it take advantage of this last chance that is being offered to it by the Congress? Either it will or it won't. Either the Party apparatus, under the pressure of political reality, will decide on a fundamental restructuring of the Party, or it will cling to doomed forms and end up in opposition to the people, in opposition to restructuring (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLII (35) 1990, 12).

In essence, Yeltsin issued a conciliatory warning to the party: soon, conservative party members would have to decide to either play a role in reform or step aside. He claimed that the country could no longer be faced with orders, intimidation, and insipid promises. The nation demanded results: "It [the nation] will support only a political organization that does not summon them to a distant prospect of communism beyond the clouds but that, through its daily deeds, defends the interests of everyone and helps make them and our country advanced, rich and happy" (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLII (35) 1990, 12). Part of this change meant making room for change, particularly change in the political order. As
Yeltsin noted, "In a democratic state, a changeover to a multiparty system is inevitable" (12). Here, Yeltsin was rhetorically conciliatory, as conciliators do not force change but present an audience with the sense that history is simply following its natural course. In short, he provided party members with a final opportunity to work for reform. From Yeltsin’s perspective, the time for change approached quickly.

Almost a week after his July 6 address, Yeltsin made an astonishing announcement. He shocked the congressional delegates by rejecting his membership in the communist party. Before the congress, the possibility of resignation passed through his mind, but Yeltsin had not intended to quit at the congress. He was prompted to act, however, because some representatives nominated him for a seat on the Central Committee. In light of this offer, Yeltsin determined that accepting the seat would create a conflict of interests between his Party affiliation and his role as Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet.

In March of 1990, Yeltsin was elected to the chairmanship in a highly-contested election. The race proved difficult for Yeltsin, as the public did not vote. Rather, the election was decided by the Russian Parliament in which about half of its members were Kremlin appointees. Pressing this advantage, conservative party forces introduced an exuberant anti-Yeltsin campaign during the
election. In the media, at state-sanctioned rallies, and inside the Russian parliament proper, efforts were made by Kremlin conservatives to promote pro-party candidates (Solovyov and Klepikova 1992, 198). Despite the party's scheme, Yeltsin was elected in a close race on the third ballot. Many of the delegates in the Parliament eventually supported Yeltsin, as they were sensitive to the voices of their constituents (204). Nonetheless, from the tone of the election campaign, it was clear that the party apparatus had successfully kept control of the selection of delegates. Further, Yeltsin's struggles to promote reform in the party were not getting easier. In other words, party membership impeded Yeltsin's efforts for reform.

At the congress, on July 12, the nomination of candidates for membership in to the Central Committee served as an impetus for his decision to resign. In his speech, Yeltsin expressed his stance simply and without bluster. His election to the chairmanship of the Russian SFSR; his tremendous obligation to the people of Russia; and the Soviet Union's struggle to initiate a multi-party system--Yeltsin used all of these considerations to justify his departure from the party. In closing, he stated,

As head of the republic's supreme legislative authority, I must submit to the will of the people and their authorized representatives. Therefore, in accordance with the comments I made in the pre-election period, I announce my withdrawal from the CPSU, so as to have a greater opportunity to exert an effective influence on the Soviets' activity. I am prepared to cooperate with all parties and public-political
organizations in the republic" (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLII (35) 1990, 20).

After these remarks, he quietly gathered his notes and descended from the rostrum.

Yeltsin’s resignation address was conciliatory, as there were sound reasons for him to temper his anti-party rhetoric. Yeltsin did not want to antagonize the influential communist bloc in the Russian parliament, whose participation was indispensable to elect a functioning government. According to Morrison (1991), "[L]ike many other radicals, he [Yeltsin] chose to keep his lines of communication open to those who were still in the ranks" (123). Indeed, Yeltsin needed to handle carefully moderate members of the party, some of whom were still sheepish about reform. For instance, at the February 5, 1990 plenum, Yeltsin proposed a number of drastic reforms. These reforms included the abolition of Article Six of the Soviet constitution, a text that ensured the CPSU’s monopoly on political power. In the end, Yeltsin cast a lone vote in opposition the leadership’s draft platform for the congress. Some participants at the plenum sympathized with Yeltsin, but they lacked the fortitude to follow his lead. About this situation at the plenum, Yeltsin told a Danish interviewer:

The fact that there were no others who followed my lead does not mean that I was alone in being opposed to the platform. But it is not easy to raise your hand and vote again, when the whole Politburo is
sitting there staring at you. Fear still sits deep in your stomach (in Morrison 1991, 118).

In light of this statement, Yeltsin still believed he could work with some factions inside the party. Thus, he wanted to break with the CPSU as cleanly as possible.

After his speech, Yeltsin exited immediately from the Kremlin Palace of Congresses without confronting audience members. Isolated claps and whistles of disapproval escorted the stoic Yeltsin to the door. An Izvestia correspondent described Yeltsin's departure as gentlemanly, leaving "without slamming the door or giving vent to his emotions. Therefore, you start to think something in this spirit: He has a better view of things, he probably knows something we don't" (Gonzalez 1990, 20). While the specific thoughts in Yeltsin's mind at the time were unclear, the quiet manner in which he departed was clearly strategic.

While the rhetorically conciliatory Yeltsin wanted to keep doors open for possible alliances with some party members, working with Gorbachev became increasingly difficult and, eventually, impossible. Yeltsin's growing ire with Gorbachev's reactionary disposition erupted into revolutionary rage after the Vilnius incident in early 1991.

During the first month of 1991, Soviet paratroopers and tanks attacked the city's television tower to quiet the broadcasts advocating Lithuanian independence. Unarmed
civilians protected the tower by placing their bodies in front of oncoming, Soviet tanks. The tanks did not stop. Thirteen civilians died, and 120 others were injured during the evening which came to be known as Lithuania's "Bloody Sunday" (Coleman 1996, 332). Gorbachev’s explanation of the incident was a public relations debacle. While he regretted the loss of life, Gorbachev failed to take any responsibility. Further, no disciplinary action was taken against any military officers in command of the Soviet Union’s troops. Seemingly, Gorbachev engineered a cover-up (333).

From Yeltsin’s perspective, Gorbachev’s explanation was a lie, and the attack in Vilnius represented an attack against the progress of democracy. Never before was Gorbachev’s contempt for perestroika’s repercussions so blatant. Prior to the Vilnius incident, Gorbachev frequently vacillated on key principles concerning democratization. For instance, in 1990, he abandoned Article Six of the Soviet constitution, a text which ensured the CPSU’s monopoly on power. In that same year, he also sent troops to Moscow to intimidate pro-Yeltsin demonstrators. However, for Yeltsin, the Vilnius incident was a defining moment for Gorbachev.

In a February 22 speech broadcast on Soviet television, Yeltsin spelled out his criticism of Gorbachev in two parts. First, he began by reviewing his past
relationship with the Soviet leader. Yeltsin claimed Gorbachev gave people hope for reform in the first two years after 1985, but "he didn’t have a very good idea about how to fulfill those promises..." (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol XLIII (7) 1991, 1). Thus, Yeltsin claimed that Gorbachev’s recent reform efforts bore the name of perestroika, but the associated policies were reactionary, not reformist, in nature. After citing supporting evidence for this claim, Yeltsin expressed frustration concerning his relationship with the Soviet leader, stating, "I will say frankly, with God as my witness, that I made many attempts to really cooperate" (1). However, in light of the Vilnius massacre, Yeltsin implied that cooperation was a thing of the past.

Second, Yeltsin then called for Gorbachev to step aside as the USSR’s top executive. After lamenting the fact that he put faith in Gorbachev, Yeltsin said,

...I consider the excessive trust I put in the President to be my personal mistake....I dissociate myself from the position and policy of president [of the USSR], and I call for his immediate resignation and the transfer of power to a collective body—the Council of the Federation. I have faith in Russia, and I urge you, esteemed fellow citizens and esteemed residents of the Russian Republic, to have faith in our Russia. I have made my choice. Everyone must make his choice and define his position. I want you to hear and understand me. This is the choice I have made, and I will not turn off this road (Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol XLIII (7) 1991, 1).

This moment marked the end of Yeltsin’s use of the conciliatory persona. For Yeltsin, the lines were drawn
and he would not reconsider his position. From this moment forward, Yeltsin developed a new rhetorical strategy—a revolutionary persona.

CONCLUSION

As perestroika ended, Yeltsin’s conciliatory persona began. Gorbachev failed to address decisively important issues facing the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Economic, labor, and nationality problems were met with half-measures and backsliding. Consequently, Yeltsin moved to encourage reform by predicting monumental changes in the Soviet Union’s near future. While his speeches and actions were aggressive, he sought to include moderates in the party. By taking this tempered approach to his rhetoric of reform, Yeltsin hoped to consolidate power with which decisions about the Soviet Union’s future could be made. Unfortunately, the Vilnius incident persuaded Yeltsin that Gorbachev and the party could not be swayed. Thus, the foundation was built on which Yeltsin would develop a revolutionary persona. The coming chapter examines Yeltsin’s new persona in relation to a landmark event in Russian history, the popular election of a president.
CHAPTER 5

THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENCY

INTRODUCTION

The months following the Vilnius incident were a pivotal time for Yeltsin's relationship with Gorbachev. Yeltsin alienated himself almost completely from Soviet President Gorbachev and the communist party. After his heated condemnation of Gorbachev's handling of the massacre in Lithuania, many questioned Yeltsin's risky decision to demand a resignation from Gorbachev. Fearing conservative backlash, the editors of Izvestia (20 February 1991) wrote that Yeltsin's speech may have "added yet another dangerous mistake...one that could have dangerous consequences not only for Russia, but the entire country" (1). However, Yeltsin believed that the time for cooperation had passed. In his autobiographical work, The Struggle for Russia (1994), he remarked, "By late winter and early spring of 1991, Gorbachev was sick of perestroika. He clearly saw the dead end into which the country had run" (16). Yeltsin sensed Gorbachev engaged in reactionary power grabbing rather than pursuing progressive political and economic reform. In light of Gorbachev's change of course away from perestroika, Yeltsin shifted his rhetorical stance to that of a revolutionary.

Yeltsin's revolutionary persona was observable in his quest for the new Russian presidency in 1991. During the
campaign, he insisted that a large portion of Soviet power should be meted out to the republics. In particular, Yeltsin argued for increased decentralization by advocating a new kind of Russian nationalism. This chapter traces the exigency created by the Russian presidential election and Yeltsin’s corresponding development and utilization of a revolutionary persona. Specifically, this chapter will examine the circumstances surrounding the development of the Russian presidential office, the presidential campaign, and the election’s immediate aftermath.

PRELUDE TO THE PRESIDENCY

Following the Vilnius incident, Gorbachev was in a precarious situation. He emerged from the episode with his political image badly damaged. Even though Gorbachev did not accept the blame for the incident, he defended those individuals directly responsible for the bloodshed. Consequently, during the month after the massacre, his approval rating in popular-opinion polls tumbled to 13 percent. Yeltsin, however, enjoyed a 59-percent approval rating (Coleman 1996, 334). To heighten his popularity and to bolster the image of the party, Gorbachev scheduled an unprecedented referendum.

For the first time in the USSR’s history, a Soviet leader placed a significant policy decision in the hands of his people. In March, 1991, the question on the referendum ballot involved the future of the Soviet Union: Should the
union remain together rather than separate into sovereign republics? If the empire's collective reply was yes, Gorbachev would show the world that the USSR endured because of consensus, not because of force. Gorbachev's referendum was a clever tactical maneuver. Despite the rebellious mood of many republics, the idea of "union" was still popular among many Soviet citizens (Coleman 1996, 335). Therefore, the Soviet president's plebiscite promised the possibility of capturing a public-relations boon.

After the votes were tallied, the answer was "yes" to Gorbachev's question. In all, 112 million people out of 147 million voters, or 76 percent of those who participated, cast their ballots in favor of preserving the union (Stepovoi and Chugayev 1991, 3). Moreover, in a number of prominent republics, citizens supported the referendum question: 70 percent responded affirmatively to Gorbachev's inquiry in the Ukraine; 70 percent in Belorussia; 94 percent in Kazakhstan; and 93 percent in Azerbaidzhan. In these regions, approximately 80 percent of register voters participated in referendum balloting (3).

Such a seemingly fruitful response, however, was arguably inconsequential for two reasons. First, the authors of the question worded it strategically. The referendum question read, "Do you consider it necessary to
preserve the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal, sovereign republics...?" (Parkhomenko 1991, 1). In examining this question, it seemed apparent that its authors assumed that the political center intended to mete out power to the fringes freely. With this assumption manifest in the question (i.e., "sovereign republics"), the question's authors steered the respondents toward the answer of "yes." Thus, the authors, who modestly hid behind an obscure notarization, "a group of lawyers," worked to downplay the possible political consequences of the plebiscite--further fragmentation.

Second, Gorbachev's "victory" seemed all the more shallow when considered in conjunction with a second question affixed to the Russian ballot by Yeltsin. His inquiry dealt with assessing people's attitudes toward the creation of a Russian presidency. By attaching this question, Yeltsin accomplished two tasks. First, by introducing a referendum question on the same ballot with Gorbachev, Yeltsin suggested that he was his rival's equal. Second, Yeltsin set the stage for direct competition with the Soviet power structure. If Yeltsin's referendum won favor with the public, he planned to run in the campaign. Moreover, if Yeltsin won the presidential election, he could boast that he held more legitimacy than Gorbachev, a politician who refrained from participating in popular elections. When the referendum results returned, Yeltsin's
question was approved by 70 percent of voters (Coleman 1996, 335).

In the fanfare surrounding the referendum's proceedings, the tension between Gorbachev's reverence for the Soviet dream and reform became increasingly evident. When garnering support for his referendum question, Gorbachev contradicted himself. On the one hand, he advocated pluralism and innovation. On the other, he criticized what he dubbed "so-called democrats" for their appropriation of Western ideas. According to Gorbachev, democrats used Western concepts like "marketization" as tools to break apart the Soviet Union. Rather than left-wing politicians, the "so-called democrats" were, in fact, betrayers who were allying themselves with separatists and fascists. Moreover, Gorbachev claimed that Western ideas served only as tools for a kind of psychological warfare against the political coherence of the nation (Morrison 1992, 236). In short, Gorbachev was trying to slow the process of democratization and to keep reforms under his control.

Of Gorbachev's inconsistencies, Yeltsin grew weary and donned a revolutionary persona in response. On March 9, Yeltsin addressed a meeting of the Democratic Russian bloc and delivered a blunt message: democrats were to organize an opposition party against the CPSU, as the time for cooperation with Gorbachev was over. During his invective,
Yeltsin cast aside his prepared notes and labeled conservative communist party members "traitors" and "enemies." Furthermore, he ordered his supporters to "take the offensive" (Morrison 1992, 237). For these remarks, Yeltsin's aides chastised him for his impromptu performance. Consequently, he later regretted using words including "enemies" and "war" in his address. Several days after the speech, Yeltsin remarked, "I wrote it [the prepared speech] at night, and when I mounted the rostrum, I realized that I couldn't just read out a speech in that auditorium. I said what I felt" (237). What Yeltsin "felt" was an undeniable feeling of frustration with the Soviet order. Like any revolutionary, Yeltsin knew that a break with the past must occur to make way for the future.

Russia's citizens, too, felt frustration with Gorbachev and the Kremlin. In support of Yeltsin's militant speech, crowds of people heeded his call for opposition and poured into the streets of the Soviet Union. On March 10, 200,000 paraded in Moscow, 70,000 in Leningrad, and 50,000 in Sverdlovsk. The demonstrators cheered for Yeltsin and chanted slogans including, "Gorbachev, get out!" (Morrison 1991, 238). After this demonstration, a month of rallies ensued which culminated after the referendum vote on March 28.

Most directly, the March 28 protests occurred in response to a March 25 resolution by the USSR's Cabinet of
Ministers. This resolution introduced a state of emergency in Moscow from March 26 through April 15 which banned all public demonstrations. The Russian congress responded quickly to the Soviet government’s proclamation by issuing a statement of protest signed by 220 RSFSR deputies. In this statement, the deputies affirmed their responsibility to their constituents. Further, they claimed that the Soviet’s law impinged on citizens’ constitutional right of free expression and served to pressure the Russian congress to take a more conservative stance (Demchenko and Shipitko 1991, 3). In conjunction with this statement, the Russian congress urged citizens to march in the streets to protest conservativism in the Kremlin and the Ministers’ resolution on temporarily suspending the holding of rallies, street processions, and demonstrations in Moscow.

Despite Gorbachev’s deployment of 50,000 troops in Moscow, defiant citizens took to the streets on March 28. As if to diminish the gravity of the protests, official news agencies downplayed the turnout by reporting spurious information. The Beacon radio station broadcasted that about 900 gathered in one square in Moscow; police measured protest participation in the tens of thousands. However, the rally’s organizers, the Democratic Russia Movement, reported that by 7 p.m., about 700,000 demonstrators had gathered in Mayakovsky, Arbat, and Pushkin squares (Ardayev, Andreyev, et. al. 1991, 1). Fortunately, no
noteworthy violence occurred and, in the end, Gorbachev recalled the troops.

The events surrounding the demonstrations and the plenum constituted a major blow against Gorbachev's credibility. By placing 50,000 troops in his own capital, the result was widely seen as a self-inflicted political defeat. As such, the Soviet president's intended show of strength turned into a display of weakness (Morrison 1991, 242). Thus, Gorbachev's inability to work with political opposition developed into an unexpected gift for Yeltsin. Upon Gorbachev's shortcomings, Yeltsin furthered his use of a revolutionary persona.

During the week following the March 28 demonstrations in Moscow, Yeltsin sternly denounced Gorbachev and advocated revolutionary change. For the congress, it was a time of heated arguments. In a one-and-a-half-hour speech, Yeltsin told the deputies that Russia faced a decision between distinct political lines--further fundamental reform or the perpetuation of an outmoded system disguised by the word perestroika. Arguing for revolutionary change, Yeltsin proclaimed:

The objective outcome of the past six years has shown that we were dealing not with perestroika, but with the last phase of stagnation. However, there are positive results. The country is now longer where it was. The main thing that has changed is the people; they have recognized the truth about the society in which they live, about its history, about life in other countries. Millions have awakened (in Morrison 1991, 242).
Yeltsin's revolutionary tone was evident in this address. By reinterpreting events of the past six years as "stagnation," he set the stage for his crusade to decentralize political power in the Soviet Union. To promote the notion of an increasingly sovereign Russia, Yeltsin employed a revolutionary persona during the campaign for the Russian presidency.

THE RACE

June 12, 1991, was a monumental moment in Russia. On this day, the people of the republic elected a president, Boris Yeltsin, for the first time in its thousand-year history. The presidential post was created in late May, 1991 by Russia's Supreme Soviet, and the legislation gained quick approval by the Russian Congress of Peoples' Deputies. This law was particularly noteworthy because of its emphasis on a separation of powers among a legislature, an executive, and a constitutional court (Morrison 1991, 259-60). In short, the Russian presidency marked an important point in the republic's progress toward a Western-style government and its struggle for greater autonomy.

The creation of the Russian presidency occurred within the context of the republic's pursuit of increased independence from the Soviet Union. Under Yeltsin's chairmanship, the Russian parliament formally declared the republic's sovereignty in June, 1990. While the meaning of
"sovereignty" was ambiguous to most delegates, the declaration’s implication was clear: Russia endeavored to distance itself from the Kremlin’s authority. During 1990, the Russian parliament straightforwardly passed laws at odds with Soviet law. Some of the parliament’s laws ensured that tax money collected in Russia went directly to the Russian government rather than to Soviet authorities. Of course, the Kremlin countered by claiming its laws took precedence (Coleman 1996, 335). The result of such clashes was a constitutional crisis in which the Russian republic’s leadership attempted to prod Gorbachev toward more enterprising and faster reform.

Russia’s separatist bearing was evident when the Yeltsin-led congress formulated its law on the Russian presidency. The executive position’s basic specifications were rather orthodox. For instance, to be president in Russia, one was required to be a citizen of the RSFSR and be no younger than 35, but no older than 65. Once in office, the law dictated than an individual’s term included five years, and an individual could not serve more than two consecutive terms. The law on the presidency, however, was unusually stringent regarding specific affiliations. Those holding office as a Peoples’ Deputy, those holding posts in any state organizations, and those who belong to any political party were restricted from holding office as Russia’s president (Sorokin 1991, 2). By eliminating the
direct influence of political parties, one may speculate that the congress actively attempted to curtail the activity of the communist party in Russian presidential politics.

Despite precautions against CPSU influence in the election, conservative opposition was encountered during the campaign for Russia's first president. Of course, Yeltsin ran as the chief radical in the pack of contenders. His most formidable resistance came from Nikolai Ryzhkov, the prime minister and a man rooted in the past of Soviet tradition. Ryzhkov was supported by the CPSU and the state-sanctioned media. Even further to the right stood General Albert Makashov, an old-fashioned military conservative who gained notoriety in 1990 for his austere criticism of Gorbachev's foreign policy. Vadim Bakatin, the liberal interior minister, was perceived as the candidate backed by Gorbachev. Other, lesser known candidates included: Aman Tuleyev, a local politician from the Kemerovo province in Siberia; and Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a maverick right-winger who based his blustery campaign on appeals to Russian imperialism (Morrison 1991, 260). To help in his quest against these competitors, Yeltsin made an astute choice for a running mate.

Yeltsin selected Alexander Rutskoi as his vice-presidential contender. Rutskoi was well liked by many Russians, as he had earned a military hero's reputation.
during the Soviet Union's Afghan conflict. Further, he stood in opposition to Gorbachev on social issues and denounced the Soviet President furiously for dodging accountability for the bloodshed at the Vilinus television tower (Morrison 1991, 261). As a running mate, Rutskoi suited Yeltsin's needs well because he appealed to a wide range of voters, including military personnel, and he clashed with Gorbachev on a number of important campaign issues.

With all the candidates in place, the presidential race transpired at a vigorous pace. By American standards, the political contest was brief, lasting only three weeks. Nevertheless, Yeltsin made the most of his time. While his competitors griped about the campaign's brevity, Yeltsin took the path of an incumbent. Yeltsin made a number of "working visits" to not only evaluate the circumstances in Russia's furthest reaches, but to promote his radical ideas. He journeyed inside the Arctic Circle to Murmansk and to Severomorsk, a base for the navy's Northern Fleet. Yeltsin's path then led to Petrozavodsk in Karelia, to the heartland cities of Tula and Voronezh, and then to industrial cities in the Urals, including Perm, Chelyabinsk, Orenburg, and Sverdlovsk (Morrison 1992, 263). By campaigning extensively in these regions, Yeltsin added to his allure as a "man of the people" and garnered grassroots support.
During his campaign travels, according to Morrison (1992), Yeltsin focused primarily on four issues: the fall of the Soviet dream; economic reform; the promise of a better life; and Russian nationalism. Concerning the first issue, Yeltsin portrayed the goals of Leninist-Marxism as an experiment gone awry. Abstracting his views on the Soviet aspirations, Yeltsin said:

The myths that oppressed millions over many decades have lost their illusionary attraction. The dynamic process of removing ideology from public awareness has been going on throughout this time. Sometimes, this is called a moral disaster. I disagree categorically. Renunciation of the false signposts that have led people into an impasse, ruined the lives of multitudes, and destroyed the centuries-old traditions of a great nation is not a disaster but the first step toward moral rebirth. It is founded not upon the ideology of a superclass to which all is permitted but on universal human values and norms of life (in Morrison 1991, 264).

By stating that the legacy of Lenin "led people into an impasse," Yeltsin insinuated that the road to communism was at an end. Consequently, Yeltsin provided his audience with a basis for a revolutionary break with the past, giving his audience a reason to embrace a new kind of Russian political future—one based on equality, not on party membership.

To further justify abandoning the ways of Communism, Yeltsin expounded his views on economics during the Presidential campaign. Yeltsin claimed that the Soviet economy teetered on the edge of disaster; thus, a move to a market-style economy was necessary. Anticipating
resistance from those leery of capitalism, Yeltsin attempted to circumvent controversy by promoting a utilitarian view of economics. He refused to debate the merits of capitalism over socialism:

I am asked during my trips, 'Are you for socialism or capitalism?' I say: I am in favor of Russians living better--materially, spiritually, and culturally....A healthier society is determined by how people live, how they work, and how they are provided for materially, culturally, and intellectually. As for a name [for the new economic policy], people will think one up (in Morrison 1991, 265).

Yeltsin presented his views of economics by tactfully eschewing clashing with voters on sensitive, Marxist principles. Nevertheless, Yeltsin clearly promoted the abandonment of socialism and central economic planning, central planks in the CPSU's platform. Often, Yeltsin appealed to crowds' sense of suffering. In one speech, he held up a ration card used to purchase consumer goods and declared, "This is a constant humiliation, a reminder that every hour you are a slave in this country" (265). In short, Yeltsin argued in favor of finding innovative and ideology-free economic policies that "worked."

On the promise of a better life, Yeltsin declared that his presidency would stimulate improved living conditions for Russian citizens. During his travels, he made sweeping promises to audiences concerning swift economic reforms like privatization and land reform. Yeltsin guaranteed a number improvements including better wages, a shorter work week, and lower fares for rail travel. Further, he gave
special attention to the welfare grievances of the armed forces, promising some form of "social protection" for handicapped and homeless veterans. To afford these social programs, Yeltsin argued that Russia could reduce its contributions to the central budget of the Soviet Union and spend more money internally. Yeltsin acknowledged the necessity of the Soviet Union's role in defense, railways, and power generation, as the republics were closely bound by infrastructure. Nevertheless, he contended that decentralized republics could better provide for its citizens with local use of tax revenues than the Soviet Union as an all-encompassing, administrative giant. Here again, as with his views on economics, Yeltsin justified decentralization by appealing to practicality, not party-endorsed theory.

Finally, Yeltsin's most revolutionary theme promoted the "rebuilding" of Russia. Appealing to patriotism rather than ideological principles, Yeltsin promised devolution of the Soviet state, radical reform, and protection for Russia diaspora scattered throughout the USSR (Morrison 1991, 263-4). In light of events during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yeltsin deduced that the Soviet Union's size encumbered efficient administration. Thus, downsizing was advisable. In the Soviet Union's place, Yeltsin believed a new Russia would rise—a Russia built on national pride and history:
It had become perfectly clear that patriotism lies not only in words about love of the Russian past, not only in empty admiration of the uniqueness of our national character, and not only in fencing ourselves off from the rest of humanity. Today the highest form of patriotism is to serve the cause of Russia’s progress, to participate actively in the deep transformations of its life, giving the Russians a real right to be proud of their motherland (in Morrison 1991, 264).

Clearly, Yeltsin’s stance was revolutionary. As noted previously, Cohen (1985) argued that the central feature of revolutions is "newness." Cohen further explained that revolutions might be "links of transformation between the old and the new" (8). Thus, it made sense that Yeltsin believed that building Russian future meant borrowing from the nation’s pre-Soviet past.

With these four issues at the forefront of his campaign, Yeltsin won by an impressive margin against his five rivals. He needed at least 50 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff. However, Yeltsin captured just under 57.4 percent on the first ballot. As expected by pollsters, Yeltsin performed well in industrial cities, winning 72 percent in Moscow and 90 percent in Sverdlovsk. In all, Ryzhkov placed second with 17.3 percent, excelling in the conservative countryside. Zhirinovsky finished in a surprising third place with 7.9 percent of the ballot, demonstrating that his ultra-nationalistic message appealed to a significant number of Russians. Finishing last in the race were: Tuleyev with 6.1 percent of the vote; Makashov
with 3.8 percent; and Bakatin, the candidate supported by Gorbachev, with 3.5 percent (Morrison 1991, 267).

Yeltsin's victory was decisive, but the public was still uncertain about Russia's move away from the security afforded by Soviet government. Between June 14-15, a post-election survey of 1,500 voters measured attitudes toward campaign issues including economic and social concerns. The survey revealed reluctant outlooks about revolutionary reform. About 36 percent of the respondents backed an "endeavor to reform the republic's economy by patterning it after developed countries of the west," but another 36 percent backed an "endeavor to reform the republic's economy, but without allowing it to become capitalist..." (Kuvaldin 1991, 3). On social concerns, 49.9 percent of respondents expressed a desire to preserve the state's responsibility for solving housing and other social problems. Concurrently, only 16.7 percent expressed a desire to move the responsibility of housing and other social problems to the private sector (3). From the results, it seemed that Russian citizens were apprehensive about moving away from the familiar Soviet system of government.

The survey's results also indicated public anxiety about political change. Twenty percent of respondents considered themselves supporters of the communist Party, seven to nine percent supported the Democratic Russia
Movement, and four to seven percent supported various diminutive parties. The majority of voters, 60 to 70 percent, did not support any one party (Kuvaldin 1991, 3). Even after Yeltsin won the election, slightly more that 51 percent of those surveyed indicated a "readiness to cooperate with all parties and movements," and only 11.8 percent refused to support cooperation with the CPSU (3).

In light of the perceived need for political change, people recognized no clear allegiance to a party. The collapse of the old regime progressed faster than the rise of a new one. Nevertheless, on June 12, Russia passed the point of no return. There was no going back, as socio-political conditions required radical change and Yeltsin escalated his revolutionary rhetoric.

**ELECTION AFTERMATH**

After the election, Yeltsin continued the use of his revolutionary persona during his second trip to America and during his inaugural address. Yeltsin again ventured to the United States immediately after his election. As if to erase the embarrassing memories of his first venture to America, Yeltsin returned for two reasons. First, he wanted to establish good relations with President Bush. Unlike his first trip, in which he was shunned by the American president, Yeltsin wanted to discuss the future of U.S.-Russian relations as equals. Second, Yeltsin wanted to use his post-election journey as a pulpit from which he
could state his position on the progress of Russian domestic policy.

In America, Yeltsin's stance against Gorbachev was revolutionary. During an address at Andrews Air Force Base, Yeltsin attacked Gorbachev for his lack of commitment to steady reform. Yeltsin asserted that he did not want "halfhearted measures, halfhearted reform, semidemocracy" (Morrison 1991, 269). Instead, he claimed that the Russian people had voted for a market economy and privatization so that they might keep up with and join "all civilized countries of the world" (269). In an interview with American journalist Ted Koppel, Yeltsin warned, "If he [Gorbachev] holds up reform, if he makes halfhearted decisions, if he pressures the republics, including military pressure, I am his opponent" (269). Certainly, Yeltsin welcomed Gorbachev's cooperation in an effort to bring democracy and marketization to Russia. At the same time, however, Yeltsin professed that the days of Soviet socialism and international isolation were at an end. Of Gorbachev, Yeltsin declared, "There is no way for one man to preserve the Soviet Union....Slow, halfhearted change would be fatal" (270).

Yeltsin further expounded his views with a revolutionary persona during his inaugural address. In this address, he asserted that Russia's near future included a new history, a reborn economy, and a new spirit.
The introduction of the speech included an exclamation of wonderment and an explanation of Russia's newest aspirations:

It is impossible to convey in words my mental state at this moment... The first President in the thousand-year history of Russia has taken a solemn oath to his fellow citizens. There is no higher honor that a people renders to an individual.... For centuries in our country, power and the people were at opposite poles. Not finding the truth in life, people tried to find it in the skies and in dreams of a radiant future. For centuries the state's interest, as a rule, was placed above the individual, his needs and aspirations (2).

Here, Yeltsin quickly established for his audience the idea that Soviet aspirations were, in fact, myths. A new political future was at hand which integrated the needs of the people with government. In Yeltsin's own words, he announced a "rebirth of human dignity" (3).

Part of such rebirth included the uneasiness of change. Concerning radical reform, Yeltsin claimed that it would not come easily. Nevertheless, change was something the Russian people chose when they elected him to the presidential post. Commenting on his role as chief executive, Yeltsin stated:

Radical reforms are the essence of the President's course. We have all made a choice in favor of peaceful, legal, and democratic methods of transformation. The purport of our policy is not mass self-sacrifice but the good of each individual and his interest. A worthy life is not granted from on high and does not come by itself. It is impossible to arrive at it drawn up in columns and blindly following orders from above. It will be based on the freedom of enterprises and geographic areas, on initiative and enterprise (in Current Digest of the Soviet Press vol. XLIII (28) 1991, 3).
Yeltsin’s explanation of his presidential role signified that he was a mandated agent of change. Accordingly, Yeltsin intended to be responsive to his constituents as he battled to ensure the rights of individuals rather than the communistic pursuit of mass utopianism.

Also in his inaugural address, Yeltsin explained the kind of character which would distinguish the new Russia. Yeltsin’s Russia would be one concerned with its own affairs, relying on its own traditions to define its path. According to Yeltsin, apart from the USSR, Russia would no longer pursue imperial ambitions. Yeltsin claimed that the idea of "empire" was "profoundly alien to the political course chosen by the people" (3). Yeltsin’s Russia intended to gain allies, not enemies, in the world community, thereby affirming "creative human principles—freedom, property, legality, openness..." (3). Part of this process meant a return to traditional Russian values, including religion. Commenting briefly on the subject of Christianity, Yeltsin stated, "Russian Republic citizens will no longer renounce their past, present and future to suit dogma....The rebirth of our state will be based on the spiritual emancipation of people, true freedom of conscience, and complete rejection of any ideological diktat" (3). This statement was a truly revolutionary change, as the Soviet Union’s official policies discouraged religious practices.
Concluding, he encouraged his listeners to overcome present trials to rekindle the Russian spirit. Yeltsin invoked the glory of Russia's past to inspire his listeners:

The creative potential of the republic's peoples and of the Russian people is great. They have borne, with pain and honor, all the trials sent to them by fate, and they have managed, under very inhuman conditions, to retain a moral sense of faith in their Russia. The very rich and distinctive Russian culture, that tireless advocate of good, humanism and justice, is alive (3).

With his faith in the nature of his audience, Yeltsin believed that, "Great Russia is rising from her knees!" (4). The rule of oppression was to be replaced by democracy and the rule of law. With these words, Yeltsin stood at the juncture between Soviet rule and the dawn of a new beginning.

CONCLUSION

After the Vilnius incident, Yeltsin promoted a reinterpretation of the Soviet experience to rhetorically create Russia's future. He concluded that working within the Soviet government's institutional framework was impossible. For over seventy years, the USSR's politics operated with the hope that a Marxist utopia was possible. Thus, people were to abandon self-centered desires and work toward the common goals of society. Concurrently, government Marxist-based theory predicted that forms of government would wither away as society would regulate itself. However, rather than utopia, an avaricious system
of bureaucracy developed. In this arrangement, the nomenklatura held the levers of power in a stratified society supported by the labors of the masses. Yeltsin spoke for the abandonment of such practices in his quest for the Russian presidency.

In the name of a "new Russia," Yeltsin sought sweeping changes. Yeltsin demonstrated the signs of revolution in his discourse during his handling of the CPSU's ban on street demonstrations, during his presidential campaign, and during the election's aftermath. By subordinating the USSR's authority to that of Russia, he provoked radical institutional change. Further, among Russia's citizens, he wanted to encourage grass-roots efficiency and individual initiative. Certainly, Yeltsin gave opportunities to Gorbachev for participation in innovations. Nevertheless, Yeltsin abandoned hope in the CPSU's ability to manage Russia's future. In reaction to the progress of Yeltsin's assault, the party reacted with a startling coup in August, 1991, that would precipitate the end of the Soviet Union.
CHAPTER 6
THE END OF AN EMPIRE

INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of Yeltsin's Russian presidential victory marked a dire moment for Soviet conservatives. In the months following the election, it became clear that the USSR was involved in a vigorous process of transformation. Citizens gained an awareness of the importance of their participation in elections and of their ability to guide civic affairs. Gorbachev became increasingly liberal, as he meted out political power to the republics. And Yeltsin, in his new position, outwardly advocated the diminished prominence of the central government in political decision making. If conservatives intended to maintain their status in the Soviet Union, drastic measures were necessary.

Conservatives took such measures by launching a reactionary coup. This situation was strikingly similar to another predicament that occurred about 20 years earlier in Prague. When Soviet tanks entered the Czechoslovakian capital, Brezhnev's military aimed to beat back the reforms that threatened communism. On August 19, 1991, Soviet tanks rolled once again to maintain the legacy of Lenin. This time, however, the tanks were not driven to another country. This time, the tanks moved through Moscow in a desperate mission to save some semblance of the status quo.
This chapter traces the coup and Yeltsin's rhetorical management of the reactionary coup. Specifically, coverage will include reasons underlying the coup, Yeltsin's response to the uprising itself, and his struggle to extinguish the dying, smoldering embers of Soviet authority in Russia after the coup plotters' failure. Further, Yeltsin's utilization of a revolutionary persona will be examined.

CONCEPTION OF A COUP

Events during the first half of 1991 gave conservative forces in the communist party good reasons to fear for their political lives. Democratization and decentralization threatened the status quo to which many had grown accustomed. Primarily, three reasons provoked the conservative backlash which incited the August, 1991 coup.

The Yeltsin Factor

First, Yeltsin's success in promoting Russia's sovereignty created an air of anxiety among hardline conservatives. During and immediately after his presidential campaign, Yeltsin beamed with confidence and was frank in presenting his desires for Russian self-sufficiency. On Russian soil, Yeltsin desired the ability to direct the republic's affairs according to the "will" of the voting public. Thus, he demanded the transfer of a number of Soviet powers into Russia's hands: management of
economic reform; command of nuclear arms; and authority to negotiate relations with foreign countries (Coleman 1996, 338). Yeltsin also wanted to cut defence spending, openly admitting that Russia no longer wanted to be a world superpower (Morrison 1991, 278). In essence, Yeltsin pursued the idea of Soviet decentralization with unprecedented verve.

To encourage such a process of increasing republic power, Yeltsin badgered communist party activity in Russia. On June 20, Yeltsin ordered a ban on party operations in the administration of the Russian state. In his decree, Yeltsin expressed his commitment to ensure the equal rights of all political parties and mass, public movements. To accomplish the goal, he believed that the hegemony of party influence needed to be broken. Thus, he suspended the participation of parties— including the communist party— in Russian government. Yeltsin proclaimed that the "indication... of membership in a political party or mass public movements in official documents presented to state agencies, institutions, and organizations is forbidden" (Sovetskaya Rossiia 23 July 1991, 1). Put succinctly, Yeltsin stopped short of completely prohibiting party activity in Russia, but it was banned within the workings of Russian government. This extraordinary decree represented a monumental hindrance for the communist party; however, the worst was yet to come.
Several days after the Russian president’s decree, Vice-President Rutskoi called for the total eradication of the Russian communist party. At a Communists for Democracy meeting, Rutskoi announced that communist politics had no role in the Russian Republic:

We are building a new republic party that is not an alternative Russian Communist Party, and we call for the abolishment of the Russian Communist Party....We must draw dividing lines on the basis of ideological convictions, and my ideology is simple—the ideology of an ordinary person (Izvestia 24 July, 1).

Rutskoi wanted to focus the Russian government’s efforts on reform, not on settling quibbles in the party.

Clearly, Yeltsin and his camp were committed to rooting out Communist authority. While Russia was not yet an independent country, it was well on its way to being out from under CPSU influence. From the Communists’ perspective, the potential loss stood as a great threat. Russia composed two-thirds of the USSR’s land mass, held half of its population, and most of its mineral resources (Coleman 1996, 337-8). Without Russia under its control, communism faced ruinous future prospects.

The G7 Plan

Second, Gorbachev’s negotiations with the "Group of Seven" (G7) provided conservatives with serious concerns. In July, Gorbachev was invited to London to participate in an economic summit between the world’s seven richest nations—the United States, Britain, France, Germany,
Italy, Japan, and Canada. Gorbachev’s participation was an honor, as he was the first Soviet leader to participate at this exclusive event. The event, however, provided Gorbachev with more than distinction; it provided him with opportunity. Gorbachev saw the meeting as a chance to encourage foreign investment in the Soviet Union to revitalize its staggering economy. Realizing that many nations would be reluctant to finance a cold-war antagonist, the Soviet president concocted an inventive plan.

In a confidential document distributed to G7 leaders, Gorbachev proposed the exchange of investment in the USSR for Soviet military secrets. He suggested that the G7 nations contribute business expertise and investment capital for a $30-40 billion program to convert the Soviet Union’s military machine into profitable enterprises. In return, Gorbachev intended to give participants in his strategy access to elite defense and manufacturing facilities. Further, Gorbachev was also prepared to offer generous tax incentives and licensing agreements (Coleman 1996, 339). This plan was extreme, and Gorbachev realized the likelihood of opposition. Nevertheless, he also realized his nation could not survive by continuing to subsidize unprofitable industries and failing to provide its citizens an adequate supply of essential consumer goods.
Not surprisingly, the few military and political leaders aware of Gorbachev's plan reacted to it with resentment. To them, the entire idea was inconceivable. The Soviet Union toiled for decades to create one of the world's most potent military forces. Soviet defense plants were guarded with such secrecy that workers were forbidden to reveal factory sites. Frequently, friends and family of factory workers knew only a loved one's post office box, never their exact location. After all of the secrecy and effort invested in creating the Soviet military machine, Gorbachev wanted to give everything away. He proposed allowing "spies" to enter military facilities and "steal" their secrets. To this, leading conservatives said "no," though they could not formally persuade Gorbachev otherwise.

A New Union Treaty

Third, the negotiation of a new Union Treaty stoked further the fire of Gorbachev's impending demise. As with the G7 negotiations, the Union Treaty threatened to take power away from the USSR's guiding institutions. The defining objective of the Union Treaty was to move important decision making power from the Kremlin and give it to the Soviet Union's 15 republics. The final draft of the treaty recognized each republic as a sovereign state with the ability to resolve "all questions of their development, guaranteeing equal political rights and
opportunities for social, economic, and cultural development to all peoples living on their territories" (Izvestia 15 August 1991, 1). With increased authority in the hands of those guiding the republics, the USSR would be reduced to an emasculated coordinating body (Coleman 1996, 335). In light of the proposed transfer of power, Kremlin politicians and constituents of the USSR’s nomenklatura understood they would become increasingly irrelevant.

Gorbachev realized that the terms of the treaty would infuriate the nomenklatura, but his hand was forced. The republics openly demonstrated in favor of increased sovereignty. In early March, a nation-wide miners’ walkout crippled the country. The protesters’ demands were economic and political in nature, including calls for the resignation of Gorbachev; the resignation of Pavlov, a former minister of finance who maimed the economy by printing excessive amounts of currency to keep pace with inflation; and the disbanding of the USSR’s Supreme Soviet (Sakwa 1993, 9). To appease the miners’ demands and the public’s sentiments, Gorbachev turned to the democratic forces for support, which was earned by drafting a new Union Treaty. Gorbachev made concessions reluctantly, but, regardless of the political sacrifice involved, he intended to ensure the preservation of the union. Initial outlines of the treaty were penned in April, but the definitive draft was scheduled for formal ratification on August 20, a
date coup plotters considered when planning for their insurgency.

Obviously, Kremlin conservatives felt threatened by the liberal activities during early-to-mid 1991. The impending signing of the Union Treaty, Gorbachev's G7 negotiations, and Yeltsin's forthright advocacy of decentralization all marked the USSR's advance toward a new era—an era in which the Kremlin and the nomenklatura would hold only a cursory role. Increasingly, conservatives realized that the old rivalry between Yeltsin and Gorbachev was a bogus confrontation, as the two shared similar, liberal visions. The actual battle raged between old institutions of power, including the KGB, the communist party, and the military, and the emerging, nascent forces of democracy and capitalism (Morrison 1991, 275). In light of this struggle, some reactionary members of the USSR's old guard decided to create an opportunity to check the nation's progressive course.

**The Coup**

Conservative putschists took control of the Soviet Union with an ill-prepared, short-lived coup on August 19. The principal conspirators in the scheme included Pavlov, the Prime Minister; Vladimir Kryuchkov, head of the KGB; Dmitrii Yazov, the Minister of Defence; and Yanaev, the Soviet Vice President. Their immediate goal was to obstruct the signing of the Union Treaty which was
scheduled for the following day, August 20. Moreover, they sought to take back lost political ground, as the coup embodied an effort to settle the crisis of power and the conflict of opposed ideologies (Sakwa 1993, 11). To accomplish their goals, the coup plotters needed to neutralize Gorbachev.

On the day prior to the takeover, August 18, the conspirators directed a delegation of representatives to detain Gorbachev in his holiday home in the Crimea. The delegation’s task was to present the vacationing Soviet President Gorbachev with an ultimatum: support a reactionary state of emergency or step aside as leader of the USSR. By agreeing to a state of emergency, Gorbachev would have participated in a revolt against progressive reform and a return to authoritarianism. By stepping aside, Gorbachev would have willingly allowed a return to authoritarianism. Gorbachev refused to accept either demand. Consequently, the plotters’ delegation and Gorbachev’s treasonous security staff confined the Soviet Union’s chief executive and his family to the vacation home’s grounds, cutting them off from communication with friends, the USSR, and the rest of the world.

With the Soviet president sequestered, the plotters moved to take formal control of the country. Toward this end, a series of decrees were issued. Vice-President Yanaev printed a brief proclamation in Soviet newspapers
which claimed that Gorbachev was "ill." Accordingly, Yanaev assumed the duties of acting president of the USSR, citing relevant passages of the Soviet constitution (Pravda and Izvestia 20 August 1991a, 1). Simultaneously, a newly-formed State Committee for the State of Emergency asserted its authority. The committee was comprised of the four original plotters, plus Pugo, Baklanov, Alexander Tizyakov, and Vasilii Starodubtsev. They claimed the USSR's stability was threatened by Gorbachev's absence. Therefore, a state of emergency was declared to "prevent society from sliding toward a nationwide catastrophe and to safeguard legality and order...for a period of six months" (Pravda and Izvestia 20 August 1991b, 1). However, it would soon become apparent that the committee planned to do more than simply appropriate control in Gorbachev's absence. They took this opportunity to promote their reactionary movement.

The emergency committee made its views about the Soviet President's leadership quite clear. They claimed that the reforms initiated by Gorbachev led the USSR to the brink of disaster and that corrections must occur. On August 20, the committee published an "Appeal to the Soviet People" in newspapers. The article reflected reactionary views, stating that "[f]or a number of reasons, the policy reforms begun at the initiative of M. S. Gorbachev...has reached an impasse. The initial enthusiasm and hopes have
given way to unbelief, apathy, and despair" (Pravda and Izvestia 20 August 1991c, 1). Thus, the committee assumed leadership to reestablish expedient political conditions and to restore the "pride and honor of Soviet people" (1).

Realizing that such a reactionary transition might be disputed, the committee ordered the military into the streets of Moscow and other key cities. Officially, the justification for this decision was the protection of the citizens. They claimed that, in the nation's current condition, "people's basic personal safety is increasingly under threat. Crime is growing at a rapid rate and is becoming organized and politicized" (Pravda and Izvestia 20 August 1991c, 1). Because of this "threat," the committee argued that a temporary deployment of troops was necessary for the citizens' protection. "Protection," however, also included curbing potential democratic opposition. As military forces entered Moscow, a detachment of 50 tanks surrounded the Russian "White House," the headquarters of the Russian SFSR Supreme Soviet. Also, key democratic leaders faced intimidation: Priest Gleb Yakunin and RSFSR People's Deputy Bella Denisenko were threatened with arrests (Malash 1991, 1); and a team of commandos stalked Yeltsin.

Given the circumstances surrounding the committee's takeover, it soon became evident that the situation was not temporary. Conservatives aimed to take back control of the
Soviet Union. Though the coup was poorly planned and poorly managed, it presented a serious threat to the progress of reform. Thus, Yeltsin moved quickly to ensure the advancement of progressive policy.

**YELTSIN'S REACTION**

Yeltsin's response to the coup favored the return of the Soviet president to office, as Gorbachev was, at this point, part of the Russian president's revolution. In light of past problems between the two leaders, one might have assumed that Yeltsin wanted to be rid of Gorbachev. Events during mid-1991, however, modified Yeltsin's view of the Soviet president. Yeltsin expressed a positive opinion of Gorbachev's work on the new Union Treaty in a late-July interview. He commented, "I personally feel certain that now Gorbachev is finally going to stop dashing from one side to the other, that he is now irrevocably set on reform" (Alimov 1991, 2). If Gorbachev stood as an ally of revolutionary change against conservatives, the Russian president was to gain a tactical advantage by having him restored to office. To hasten Gorbachev's return, Yeltsin utilized an interesting variation of the revolutionary persona.

Against the coup and for Gorbachev's return, Yeltsin grounded his arguments in an appeal to the rule of law. In a printed statement issued on August 19, he called the emergency committee's actions illegal. Yeltsin claimed,
"Whatever reasons are used to justify this removal, what we are dealing with is a right-wing, reactionary, unconstitutional coup" (*Megaapolis-Express* 19 August 1991, 1). On the surface, this statement failed to reflect the use of a revolutionary persona, as he appealed to order and law. Nevertheless, Yeltsin’s rhetorical approach satisfied the needs of a revolutionary’s purpose. If the goal of his revolution was, to use Cohen’s term, "conversion," and if development of Soviet law supported the process of conversion, it made sense for Yeltsin to invoke constitutionality.

Yeltsin’s legalistic condemnation of the coup indicated that he believed the USSR was in the process of conversion. In the previously mentioned newspaper statement, Yeltsin implied that the law favored the development of change, as he cited the liberal Union Treaty as a leading cause for the putschists’ rebellion. Yeltsin charged, "This development of events [the events leading up to the signing of the Union Treaty] aroused the animosity of reactionary forces and drove them to irresponsible, adventurist attempts to solve very complicated political and economic problems by methods of force" (*Megaapolis-Express* 19 August 1991, 1). Yeltsin believed the changes in the USSR were natural and mandated by the public when he stated "We call on the citizens of Russia to give the putschists the response they deserve and to demand that the
Yeltsin’s persona here, while grounded in the realm of "constitutionality," was, nevertheless, revolutionary. In condemning the coup, he summoned words like "unconstitutional," "illegal," and "return to normalcy." Still, these terms were utilized in a way to condemn defenders of the old status quo and to ensure the progress of conversion—the end goal of a revolution. However, the success of Yeltsin’s appeal to constitutionality was threatened by the fact that the putschists believed they maintained a firm handhold on legality. As they took control of the USSR, the plotters, too, invoked the Soviet constitution. Thus, Yeltsin discerned the necessity to separate further from the remnants of the previous political paradigm.

In another decree issued on August 19, Yeltsin broke allegiance with the Soviet government. He commandeered absolute control over all Soviet power and resources on Russian soil. Again, Yeltsin intoned the illegality of the emergency committee’s actions. The Russian president then went on to announce his sweeping appropriation of power:

Until an extraordinary Congress of USSR Peoples’ Deputies is convened, all USSR bodies of executive power, including the USSR State Security Committee, the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the USSR Ministry of Defense, that operated on RSFSR territory are to be shifted to direct subordination to the popularly elected President of RSFSR....
State Security Committee, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the State Committee on Defense Questions are to temporarily exercise the functions of the corresponding USSR bodies. All RSFSR agencies, officials, and citizens are to take immediate measures to rule out the implementation of all decisions and orders of the unconstitutional Committee for the State of Emergency. (Kuranty 19 August 1991, 2).

Yeltsin’s decision to issue this decree was a prudent risk. By asserting control of defense, of internal affairs, and of government in general, Yeltsin attempted to undermine the authority of the plotters, and, therefore, he defended against further threats from the emergency committee. Despite the centrality of the committee in the coup, perhaps the most immediate threat was posed by the armed soldiers choking the streets of Moscow.

Yeltsin appealed directly to military personnel in his famous "tank speech." As long as armed soldiers lined the streets and were oath-bound to the Soviet state, the potential for violence existed. Yeltsin took action to placate this volatile predicament. At noon on the 19th, Yeltsin mounted a T-52 tank to address a small crowd in front of the Russian White House. Despite the relatively meager size of the gathering, enough reporters were present to cover Yeltsin’s address and to help make it an enduring symbol of the revolution. Yeltsin’s objective was to persuade soldiers to ignore orders from their right-wing superiors. Further, he wanted the troops to abstain from any brutality against their fellow citizens. Toward these goals, Yeltsin subverted the Soviet military commanders’
authority and asserted his own republic's control over USSR's military forces.

To discredit the putschists, Yeltsin called their activities treasonist and deceptive. He claimed:

The Vice President of the USSR, the Prime Minister of the USSR, the Chairman...have become members of an unconstitutional body, thereby committing high treason—a very grave crime against the state. The country is threatened with terror. The 'order' that the latter-day saviors of the fatherland are promising us will end in tragedy—the suppression of dissent, concentration camps, nighttime arrests. 'A better life' will remain a propaganda fraud (Kurany 20 August 1991, 1).

Here, Yeltsin asserted again the illegality of the coup. Further, he stressed the counterproductiveness of the conservatives' goals. To accept the plotters' perspective was tantamount to accepting the false hopes promoted by party dogma in the Soviet past.

Upon such a foundation, Yeltsin built his appeal to the soldiers to curb violence. The Russian president feared that the putschists might resort to violence to advance their objectives. Thus, he directed the soldiers to keep the peace and to do what was "right":

Soldiers and officers of Russia! ...Do not let yourselves get caught in a web of false promises and demagogic talk about your military duty! Do not become a blind instrument of the criminal will of a group of adventurists....

Soldiers! I appeal to you. Think of your loved ones, your friends, your people. At the difficult moment of choice, do not forget that you have taken an oath of loyalty to the people. The people against whom they are trying to turn your weapons....There is no return to the past, nor will there be. The
conspirators’ days are numbered (Kuranty 20 August 1991, 1).

Here, Yeltsin argued that the putschists’ actions were driven by archaic, self-serving doctrine and not by concern for the nation’s citizens. Therefore, Yeltsin encouraged the soldiers to think for themselves during this pivotal crisis rather than to take orders without adequate contemplation.

To strengthen his appeal for temperance, Yeltsin asserted his government’s supreme control over Russia. He proclaimed that General Konstantin Korbets, a chairperson of the RSFSR Committee on Defense Questions, was now commander of all military forces in Russia. Rather than listen to "conspirators," Yeltsin claimed that soldiers should listen only to Korbets. To influence further the soldiers, Yeltsin concluded his address by stating that, "Dark clouds of terror and dictatorship have gathered over Russia and over the whole country." However, he predicted these clouds would not become "an eternal night"; The soldiers would decide against staining the "honor and glory of Russian arms" with the blood of the nation’s own people (Kuranty 20 August 1991, 1).

Yeltsin’s revolutionary persona during his speech in front of the White House was essential in framing the issue of legitimacy during the turbulent days of the coup. Of course, Yeltsin’s vocabulary was critical of the putschists, as he assigned vilifying labels, calling them...
"conspirators" and "traitors." The truly prominent force of his appeal, however, stemmed from his ability to argue for his own government's legitimacy, even as he called for revolutionary change. Yeltsin's supplication rested on the premise that reforms in the Soviet Union (i.e., the Union Treaty) was part of a natural course of voter-mandated transformation. To return to the ways of the outmoded Soviet system was an invitation for catastrophe, characterized by "dissent," "concentration camps," and "arrests." Therefore, Yeltsin concluded that the soldiers had little choice but to revoke their allegiance to the Kremlin's conservatives and to become vanguards of a new era.

THE END

In a few days, the reactionary coup sputtered to a halt. The successful counter coup inspired by Yeltsin not only disparaged the putschists, it also heralded the fall of the Soviet power system. At Yeltsin's urging, anti-communist demonstrations ravaged the USSR. After his speech atop the T-52 tank, over 100,000 demonstrators flocked to the White House to defend it against Soviet troops. Elsewhere in Moscow, thousands of people threatened to storm the CPSU's headquarters. One after another, republics throughout the Soviet Union declared their independence (Sakwa 1993, 13). By August 22, less than a week after the coup began, the reactionary crusade
collapsed. The Soviet era ended with a number of monumental events, including Gorbachev's resignation as party general secretary on August 24 and the disbanding of the communist party in early November. During these proceedings, Yeltsin's rhetoric seemed largely ceremonial, as the death of the communist party's Soviet Union appeared to be a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, his statements and orations served to ensure the passing of the old Soviet paradigm and marked the birth of a new Russia.

Soon after his return to Moscow, Gorbachev relinquished position as chief of the communist party. His resignation was precipitated by a special session of the Russian parliament on August 23. At this meeting, Yeltsin humiliated Gorbachev by forcing him to read aloud a transcript of the gathering at which the coup was planned. On this transcript, two of those expressing support for the plan were government ministers appointed by Gorbachev himself. By requiring Gorbachev to read the statement, Yeltsin suggested that the soviet president was responsible for allowing the coup to occur. As he was disgraced by Yeltsin and his party was in shambles, Gorbachev knew what had to be done.

Gorbachev presented his resignation address on August 24. In light of his underlings' roles in the coup, he recommended that "the CPSU Central Committee must make the difficult but honorable decision to dissolve itself"
Despite the effects of the coup on the Party’s credibility, he believed that Communism still had a future in the Soviet Union. He stated,

*I believe that the democratically-minded communists who remained true to constitutional legality and the course aimed at the renewal of society will call for the creation, on a new basis, of a party that will be capable of actively joining, together with all progressive forces, in the continuation of fundamental democratic transformations in the interests of the working people* (Izvestia 26 August 1991, 2).

Despite his imminent resignation as general secretary, Gorbachev believed that some semblance of the party would survive and continue making contributions to Soviet government. In other words, Gorbachev was aware of his party’s present failure, but he floundered to discern the pending collapse of the Leninist-Marxist paradigm. He did not realize his party’s fate.

On November 6, after months of deliberation, Yeltsin banned the communist party. In his decree, he argued that the CPSU should not continue to exist, as it was never actually a party. Yeltsin stated that the communist organization served to shape political power by "fusing with state structures or making them subordinate to the CPSU" (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 9 November 1991, 2). By commandeering government influence, the party functioned only as a self-serving body for hoarding power and wealth. On this premise, Yeltsin asserted that the CPSU was never a legitimate institution. He supported his claim by explaining:
The activity of these structures was clearly antipopular and unconstitutional in nature and was directly linked to the incitement of religious, social and nationally-based strife among the country's peoples and to the infringement of basic human and civil rights and liberties that are recognized by the entire international community (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 9 November 1991, 2).

Yeltsin interpreted the past from a new, paradigmatic perspective. That is, the once "acceptable" events of the past were now obsolete and reprehensible.

In light of the party's avaricious and underhanded nature, Yeltsin feared the possibility of lingering problems. Yeltsin noted that since the coup's end, the CPSU continued resisting participation in the USSR's democratic transformation, as the nomenklatura persisted in grasping to preserve influence and wealth. Thus, Yeltsin outlawed the party by stating, "It has become obvious that as long as the CPSU structures continue to exist there can be no guarantees against another putsch or coup..." (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 9 November 1991, 2).

Yeltsin's revolutionary persona in this address was uncompromising, as he reinterpreted past history from a new perspective. Throughout over 70 years of existence, he claimed that the Communists accomplished no more than the "infringement of basic human rights." Yeltsin's rhetorical stance was indicative of the revolutionary persona, as revolutionaries frequently assert the existence of natural and self-evident principles. By taking such an unequivocal perspective, he emphasized the CPSU's shortcomings and
provided an argumentative foundation for the acceptance of a new political paradigm.

Shortly after Yeltsin’s address concerning the CPSU’s discontinuation, the Soviet state fell. The end of the USSR was more in the Ukraine’s hands than Yeltsin’s. On December 1, the Ukraine scheduled a referendum to substantiate its declaration of independence during the August coup. This referendum was a pivotal moment. If the Soviet Union’s most massive, most wealthy, non-Russian republic withdrew from the union, little would be left to hold the USSR together (Coleman 1996, 353). Hopes for support of the union in the Ukraine, however, were negligible and the vote led to the republic’s final decision to cede.

The Ukraine’s decision then encouraged Gorbachev to resign as the President of the USSR. On December 25, 1991, the Soviet President spoke to disagree with the dismemberment of the union but also to recognize the progress of events. He stated lamentfully, "A policy line aimed at dismembering the country and disuniting the state has prevailed, something that I cannot agree with" (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 26 December 1991, 1). Nevertheless, he admitted that he could not turn the tide of circumstance. Thus, as he was uncertain about the future, Gorbachev bid a nervous farewell to his role as Soviet president: "I am leaving my post with a feeling of anxiety. But also with
hope and with faith in you, in your wisdom and strength of
spirit....I wish all of you the very best" (2).

The era of the Soviet Union was over. With the fall
of the Party and the fall of the union, the old system's
institutions lacked a firm base of power. Of course,
conservative remnants of the Party, the KGB, and the
military were still able to exert influence on the events
subsequent to Gorbachev's resignation. Nevertheless, the
Soviet manner of thinking was bankrupt. In the public's
eyes, and as Yeltsin made it clear, there was no way that
the communists' oppressive ideology and discredited model
of economics could compare with the promise of a more
Western style of government (Coleman 1996, 355). Communism
faced the decision between reform and revolt. It chose
revolt and suffered with the results.

With the death of Soviet communism, Yeltsin began the
work of building Russia's future. In Cohen's (1985) terms,
Yeltsin reached the "post-revolutionary" stage, with its
own assortment of rhetorical problems. Thus, the events
following Gorbachev's resignation were many and lie beyond
the scope of this study. Nevertheless, Yeltsin's January,
1992, speech to the United Nations provided the world with
a representative glance of his vision of Russia's post-
Soviet future.

In his speech, Yeltsin proclaimed the beginning of a
new epoch in world history. With the fall of the Soviet
Union and communism, he asserted that a global "opportunity has appeared to finally put an end to despotism and to dismantle the totalitarian system, in whatever form it may exist" (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 3 February 1992, 1). Thus, Yeltsin acknowledged the supremacy of democracy in Russia and the world: "Democracy is a highly important gain of human civilization" (1). With the era of communism in the past, Yeltsin believed that Russia could viably enter into productive relations with the rest of the world. As he put it:

Russia sees the US, the West, and the countries of the East not merely as partners but as allies. This is a highly important prerequisite for, and, I would say, a revolution in, peaceful cooperation among the states of the civilized world. We rule out any subordination of foreign policy to ideological doctrines or a self-sufficient policy. Our principles are simple and understandable: the supremacy of democracy, human rights and liberties, legality and morality (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 3 February 1992, 1).

In this statement, Yeltsin echoed appeals found in other revolutionary declarations throughout his rise to prominence. The idea that human rights were more important than doctrine was a common theme in his revolutionary rhetoric.

His recommendations for Russia's foreign policy highlighted the comprehensiveness of Russia's transformation. For decades, the Soviet Union pursued a Stalinist policy of isolation aimed at developing communism within the nation's boarders. In spite of this history, Yeltsin advocated a bold and innovative direction. He
announced Russia’s participation in the world community as an ally of democracy and a confederate in the global economy.

CONCLUSION

The events surrounding the end of the Soviet era transpired at a dizzying pace. Prompted by Gorbachev’s liberal transformation and Yeltsin’s unflagging progress toward empowering the republics, reactionary forces responded quickly but ineptly. Leaders of the coup had no substantial plan for seizing control; they simply assumed that the masses would be swooned by patriotic invocations and a show of military might. However, Yeltsin’s actions provided a convincing counter to the putschists’ awkward plea for a return to the Kremlin’s conservative values.

Yeltsin’s use of a revolutionary persona was essential to his endeavor to fend off the coup. Frequently, revolutionaries utilize a vocabulary of blatant criticism and appeals to loosely-defined, natural human rights. Indeed, Yeltsin’s rhetorical approach fit roughly these criteria. His pleas for the return to the rule of law was a seemingly conservative approach. However, Yeltsin fashioned these arguments for order on the assumption that the Soviet constitution was not a static document. That is, he believed that Soviet law could reflect change and the will of the people. When it became clear that Soviet conservatives might also invoke the constitution for their
purposes, Yeltsin quickly circumvented their authority by snatching power away from them by decree. Yeltsin’s daring risk paid dividends, as the coup plotters were too unorganized to respond convincingly to the Russian president’s strategy.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION
REVIEW OF STUDY

Boris Yeltsin's rise to power during the Soviet Union's decline was an extraordinary happening. In 1991, after decades of repressive political conditions, one man finally emerged to facilitate the USSR's break from the communist path. Yeltsin's role was undeniably instrumental in expediting the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of a more Western-style government in Russia. One might call Yeltsin's achievement unlikely, as his demeanor was often termed brash, impertinent, and ungraceful. However, as a revolutionary leader, he honed a remarkable rhetorical sense of timing and savvy. It was this sense that aided the advancement of his reformist and revolutionary agendas.

This study promotes a rhetorical approach to the analysis of revolution to explain Yeltsin's influence as a revolutionary leader. Existing theories of revolution frequently feature the examination of antecedent conditions for confrontation or of predicted outcomes. Certainly, these perspectives are important, as they explore the social, economic, and political variables that constitute conditions for insurgence. However, complementary explanations need to be produced which illustrate how these variables are interpreted for persuasive affect by the leadership of a revolutionary movement. What rhetorical
strategies do revolutionaries use to advocate change? How do some leaders succeed in gaining the support necessary to guide a revolutionary movement? To produce answers to such questions, the rhetorical study of revolutionary discourse is beneficial.

To illustrate the development and effect of Yeltsin's public discourse between 1985 and 1991, this study utilizes concepts borrowed from the investigation of revolutions in science. Keith and Zagacki (1992) posit that scientists use one of three rhetorical personae to advocate claims in a scientific community. First, a scientist using a revolutionary persona openly seeks change. While the degree of zeal may vary, the use of this persona is exercised to champion an immediate modification in the way scientists conduct experiments and theorize about research findings. Second, a scientist using a conciliatory persona realizes that a paradigm shift may not occur immediately. Anticipating resistance from the status quo, the conciliator seeks to foster gradual reform, rather than to promote radical transformation. Third, a scientist using a conservative persona supports the preservation of the status quo. When a scientific community's interests—intellectual, social, and economic—are firmly rooted, change may not be welcomed. Thus, researchers may employ a conservative persona to encourage critical rigor and to defend against the influence of "second-rate" advances in
theory and practice. The present study argues that these three personae can be adapted for analysis in the political context.

Keith and Zagacki's conceptualizations explain the personae in a general sense but do not expound the forms these rhetorical strategies may take. However, complimentary ideas about form may be garnered from political theory. Based on the writings and theories of Robespierre, Brinton, and others, this study suggests that the use of various rhetorical personae in the revolutionary context may work in conjunction with certain appeals. Plausibly, the revolutionary persona relies on appeals which support the idea of "natural" public liberties. Further, revolutionaries tend to frame the accomplishments and conduct of the reigning paradigm in pejorative terms. Use of the conciliatory persona hinges on the use of appeals to order and continuity to foster reform. By encouraging inventive adaptation of an established paradigm's laws and institutions, the conciliator hopes to include members of the status quo in the process of paced, yet certain, transformation. The conservative persona is used to avoid change. Its use entails a lack of inferential leaps and support of a paradigm's reigning leaders and practices. With these adaptations to Keith and Zagacki's concepts, this study examines Yeltsin's revolutionary discourse.
RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study endeavored to address two research questions: What were the personae utilized by Yeltsin for the establishment of himself as a principal revolutionary leader? How was Yeltsin’s strategic use of personae essential to the revolutionary process?

To answer the first question, this study isolated and examined four exigencies to which Yeltsin responded. The first exigence was created by the commencement of perestroika. As conceived by Gorbachev, perestroika was an attempt to correct shortcomings of the Soviet economic and political system with glasnost, democratization, and tightly regulated marketization. With these innovations, Gorbachev hoped to decentralize Soviet bureaucracy, making it more efficient. However, the success of perestroika required that members of the USSR’s elite class, the nomenklatura, relinquish much of their authority and affluence. Because they refused to give up power, Yeltsin encountered stern resistance as a principal agent of Gorbachev’s reform effort.

This study found that Yeltsin attempted two rhetorical approaches during perestroika, between 1985 and 1987. First, Yeltsin used a revolutionary persona in his initial endeavor to root out corruption and misuse of party power. With his radical persona, Yeltsin failed, as the nomenklatura’s hold on power was exceptionally steadfast.
Thus, Yeltsin faced censure and demotion in the Soviet political ranks. Second, following his reproachment, he developed a conservative persona to safeguard his political well-being. Accordingly, Yeltsin fell in line with Gorbachev’s moderate approach to reform, a strategy more palatable to conservative forces in the CPSU than his confrontive style demonstrated in 1986. In short, during the initial years of perestroika, Yeltsin performed his duties in an environment that was not conducive to change. Therefore, he ventured to utilize and then abandoned a revolutionary persona in favor of a conservative persona.

The second exigence faced by Yeltsin concerned perestroika’s breakdown, which altered the rhetorical situation in which he functioned. In 1989, Gorbachev’s reform initiative encountered significant impediments. The nation’s financial health continued to degenerate at a rapid pace. Because of an unfavorable economy, labor strikes erupted to protest the decline of the standard of living and the severe shortage of consumer goods. Further, as a result of glasnost and the freedom of speech promoted by the newly-formed Congress of People’s Deputies, the number of protests in fringe republics escalated. Estranged nationalities openly demonstrated against their subordinate status and for greater autonomy. In light of these deteriorating circumstances, the public expected meaningful changes. However, Gorbachev protected the
eminence of the party. He avoided progressive policy decisions which entailed further decentralization and adopted more restrained measures. With this strategy, the Soviet president merely exacerbated tensions between political hardliners and an increasingly outspoken and reform-minded Soviet public.

In response to the demise of progressive perestroika, this study found that Yeltsin adopted a conciliatory persona. Because he was an elected representative in the Congress of People’s Deputies in 1989, he enjoyed increased freedom to express his opinions. Thus, Yeltsin was contentious in his rhetorical attacks against the status quo. He resigned from the communist party and pursued reform not within the party, but within the Russian parliament. Despite his aggressiveness, he was cautious in conducting his affairs, as the CPD had little real power, and he wanted to maintain a working relationship with progressive members of the party. Therefore, Yeltsin publicly claimed that reform could occur within the party and the Soviet system. However, he warned that reform must occur quickly, as the condition of the USSR was dire. Thus, he prodded dogmatic communists with predictions of impending danger and coaxed them to correct their course of action while they still had the opportunity.

The third exigence examined deals with Yeltsin’s quest for the Russian presidency in 1991, which provided him with
heightened, rhetorical license. After the bloodshed in Vilnius, Lithuania, the rhetorical situation changed; Gorbachev came under increasing scrutiny for his inability to take a decisive policy line. Evidence of his floundering included failure to accept responsibility for the Vilnius incident and continued vacillation about reform issues. Concurrently, the public became increasingly outspoken against the party's activities. For instance, protestors willfully ignored a March, 1991, ban on street demonstrations to march in support of Yeltsin. Several months later, the Russian presidential election gave its citizens a significant means with which to express their outrage.

Yeltsin responded to the troubled situation with a revolutionary persona, as the election provided him with an influential stage from which to voice his arguments. Frustrated with Gorbachev's continued reluctance to embrace change, Yeltsin lashed out. He campaigned on a radical platform which included promises of immediate economic reform, of improved living conditions for ordinary citizens, and of promoting Russian nationalism. Also, during his campaign, Yeltsin advocated taking decision-making power out of the Soviet government's hands and placing it in the hands of the Russian parliament. He proclaimed that the era of communism's false hopes and dreams was over. Through increased sovereignty, Yeltsin
argued that the republic of Russia could champion the needs and aspirations of individual citizens with representative government.

Finally, the fourth exigence examined was created by the August coup of 1991. Plotters of the takeover felt threatened by Yeltsin's success in the presidential election, by the possibility of Western incursion via Gorbachev's G7 negotiations, and by the impending loss of power outlined in the new Union Treaty. In response to these threats, the reactionaries apprehended Gorbachev, seized control of the Soviet government, and lined the streets of key cities with troops. However, the plotters bungled the coup's management, allowing Yeltsin to intercede. His rhetoric during this time of crisis was influential in ending the uprising and in administering the end of the Soviet era.

Yeltsin reacted to the coup with an unequivocally revolutionary persona. He denounced the coup by grounding his contentions in the "rule of law." This law, however, was not the same legality that guided the Soviet Union for decades. It was grounded in what Yeltsin called the rightful and citizen-supported development of the Soviet constitution. In Yeltsin's estimation, the constitution's development allowed for a revolution in political thought: the endorsement of decentralization and the abandonment of key Marxist-Leninist principles. Yeltsin eschewed
communist thinking by claiming that state interests would no longer outweigh the rights and interests of individual citizens. In addition to this radical change in thinking, Yeltsin banned the communist party after the coup’s collapse. He believed that eliminating this remnant of the past was necessary because he feared its continued influence. Further, Yeltsin argued that all authoritarian traditions must end to make way for the future of democracy in Russia.

The second research question posed at the beginning of this study was: How was Yeltsin’s use of rhetorical personae essential to the revolutionary process in Russia? Yeltsin’s use of personae was essential for two reasons. First, Yeltsin’s utilization of personae helped him preserve his political career by sensing and adapting to the limitations imposed by Russia’s evolving rhetorical situation. Rhetoric is situational. In Bitzer’s (1968) words, "...a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance" (4). Put differently, a rhetorical situation is a moment of crisis which requires a rhetor to sway an audience to accept one resolution over others. To be successful, the rhetor must tailor contentions to suit the disposition of the audience. In relation an audience’s needs, desires, and inclinations, the rhetor must know his or her limitations.
Yeltsin was able to sense his limitations; thus he was able to remain an influential factor in the republic's transformation. During the mid-1980s, Yeltsin's audience was not receptive to his radical messages, as those in power were in a comfortable position. Very few people openly challenged their power, and the process of democratization had not yet spawned avenues of formal dissent like the Congress of Peoples' Deputies. Put differently, for conservatives, no pressing reasons constituted a "crisis" in the same way Yeltsin was defining the situation. Consequently, Yeltsin's revolutionary arguments fell on unsympathetic and spiteful ears. To avoid reproach, he soon learned to anticipate audience response before fashioning a presentation style for his discourse. Thus, when faced with party hardliners as a reluctant, primary audience, his discourse was conservative. However, the scope of his audience grew after the 1989 parliamentary elections to include a more progressive voting population rather than the party. This population included common citizens who longed for reforms and for improvements in their standard of living. Thus, Yeltsin's discourse became increasingly conciliatory, as his constituency was receptive to moderate change. By adapting his rhetoric to the nature of the audience and the situational context, Yeltsin avoided detrimental confrontation to keep himself in a position of political
influence. If he had not accomplished this task, the second Russian revolution might not have occurred the way it did or at all.

Second, in addition to the perpetuation of his political career, the use of personae helps explain how Yeltsin successfully fashioned his claims. Theoretically, each persona features a different rhetorical approach to negotiating a rhetorical situation. When a paradigm’s power structure is firmly entrenched, the conservative persona is used to argue for the preservation of the status quo. However, when a need for reform is perceived, and when an audience is receptive to a mitigated criticism of the status quo, the conciliatory persona is appropriate. This persona is used to press for moderate change with premises grounded in reigning rules, laws, and practices. And when an audience discerns that a paradigm is on or near the brink of collapse, the rhetor stands in a position to use a revolutionary persona. This persona features inductive reasoning, as the rhetor seeks new principles by which a community conducts its affairs.

In practice, Yeltsin used each one of these argumentative approaches successfully. For instance, after his 1987 speech which invited party censure, he spoke within parameters set for him. Yeltsin repressed his views and used a conservative persona. In 1989, however, he had a new audience which was receptive to the idea of change at
the Congress of Peoples' Deputies. Yeltsin's arguments were deductive in nature. That is, against the backdrop of his perception of Soviet laws development, he scrutinized the progress of reform. Whatever the circumstances were, Yeltsin seemingly figured out an appropriate manner to frame his arguments in such a way as to appeal to the needs and dispositions of his given audience.

IMPLICATIONS

By using rhetorical theory to help explain the successes and failures of Yeltsin in late-Soviet Russia, revolutionary theory is supplemented. This study suggests that patterns of rhetorical strategies exist which help a leader manage the process of revolutionary uprising. If Yeltsin had not used rhetorical personae in his promotion of change, he might have been neutralized and the revolutionary movement suppressed. In light of this study's perspective on the importance of rhetorical personae in negotiating crisis situations, a number of significant ideas may be gleaned.

First, this study suggests that scholars may speculate more clearly than before about how revolutionary leaders acquire command and influence. Many students of revolution have hypothesized about the levers of power leaders must pull to guide revolutionary movement but little about how leaders put themselves in position to pull those levers. For instance, Hook (1967) contends that successful
revolutionaries come to power by securing control over military forces, by positioning various social and political factions against each other, by pursuing control of social functions, and by eliminating opposition (167-68). Hook's observations are insightful, but they do not tell us a great deal about how revolutionary leaders maneuver themselves into stations of authority and perform their functions.

The study of rhetoric allows us to examine how leaders construct their public images. From this study's theoretical perspective, Yeltsin's use of rhetorical strategies for his rise to power was somewhat predictable. Like revolutionaries in science, Yeltsin presented his contentions shrewdly to avoid damaging beneficial relations with his audience. When possible, Yeltsin invoked the status quo's own ideas, especially Gorbachev's, to frame controversial issues. At the same time, he gathered public support via press coverage to protect himself from party reprimands. Because he survived politically and built a popular base of support, Yeltsin was in a position to lead the revolution when the Soviet empire could no longer sustain itself. In short, Yeltsin's use of rhetorical personae was essential in stabilizing his position as an effectual leader.

With its rhetorical perspective, this study suggests a pattern of successful revolutionary behavior. Certainly,
there is no way to predict a leader's specific actions. However, the examination of personae may help scholars anticipate the tactics used by a successful revolutionary to manage his or her circumstances and to argue for change.

A second implication of this study is that the examination of Yeltsin's rhetoric leads to the conceptualization of a new revolutionary role, the role of "rhetorical chameleon." In previous studies, scholars have suggested a number of perspectives for examining the behavior of revolutionaries. From studies of psychoanalysis, scholars hypothesize that revolutionaries are driven by repressed desires and consequential appetites for power. From studies of social movements, scholars suggest that revolutionaries serve a number of functions, including ideologist, agitator, administrator. From studies of charisma, scholars contend that revolutionaries possess a kind of divine charm which derives power from outside of legitimate, established institutions.

Successful revolutionaries are also skillful managers of presentation. Yeltsin possessed a remarkable sense of adaptation. When faced with censure by the Politburo in 1987, Yeltsin bowed in defeat by publicly supporting the party. Despite his words of favor, his true feelings were probably different. Nevertheless, he played a partisan role with a rhetorically conservative persona. When the rhetorical situation changed, however, Yeltsin adjusted.
Gorbachev’s advent of the Congress of Peoples’ Deputies and of increased media coverage of state functions changed the rules by which Yeltsin played the Soviet political game. In popular opinion, Yeltsin was able to find a handhold of power. In short, Yeltsin was a survivor who endured a wide range of changing circumstances. If Yeltsin’s revolutionary behavior is telling, it is reasonable to believe that other revolutionary leaders might also play the role of rhetorical chameleon.

Third, this study offers scholars a fuller appreciation of the revolutionary process as "ordered chaos." Political theories recognize that revolution is more than mere revolt. For instance, in The Anatomy of A Revolution, Brinton (1952) argues that countergovernments can be "better organized, better staffed, better obeyed than that of moderates" (147). Nevertheless, a substantial element of uncertainty is associated with any form of transformation when old institutions have faltered, and new structures have not yet solidified. In this period of transition, Hagopian (1974) claims that radicals possess more freedom to fulfill their promises than conservatives and some moderates who wish to console as many interest groups as possible (199). Put differently, Hagopian believes that radicals are willing to play favorites to promote change. This idea of playing favorites may appear frenzied, but it might actually be represented as a
revolutionary leadership's utilization of a complex of rhetorical strategies.

In the Russian revolution, Yeltsin used a different set of persuasive approaches to solicit support from various groups. Yeltsin walked a fine line between placater and antagonist to promote his agenda. For instance, he frequently accosted conservative Politburo member Yegor Ligachev for his efforts to curtail reform. Confronting Ligachev and other high-ranking, orthodox party members was a risky undertaking, but after 1987, Yeltsin sought protection. He shielded himself against party censure with stratagems including publicly-staged "alliances" with Gorbachev and other public-relations exploits. Yeltsin's rhetorical feats kept issues in the media's eye and away from the closed doors of Politburo meetings. In short, Yeltsin knew how, when, and where to present information so as to heighten his message's effect and to diminish the possibility of detrimental consequences.

With a rhetorical perspective on revolution, perhaps one can discern a certain kind of order in chaotic, political change. In all of the instability associated with the rise and collapse of institutions, a distinguishable endeavor is present—a pursuit to settle controversies in civic affairs. Of course, not all factions in the multitudes may agree on individual
policies, resolutions, or future plans. However, whatever the questions and answers might be, rhetoric is at the center of negotiation. Its use seeks to adapt possible resolution to meet the dispositions of those involved in conflict. Thus, rhetoric may help provide some semblance of continuity in the process of transition and change.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The events surrounding perestroika and the ensuing revolution surprised many Western observers. Prior to the 1980s, Russian history was largely viewed as fully authoritarian. Notions including Rigby's concept of Russia as a "mono-organizational society" and the perceived tradition of "oriental despotism" led many to believe that the communist regime was somehow legitimate, and that Russians openly embraced oppression. These assumptions were not entirely true. Russia witnessed a number of instances of dissent in the twentieth century, including the fateful march led by Georgy Gapon in 1905 which became known as St. Petersburg's "Bloody Sunday"; the great literary protests of Andrei Sinyavsky, Yuli Daniel, and Boris Pasternak; and, after 1987, the striking wave of civic activism which involved over 60,000 independent associations and 15 million people (Petro 1994, 1). In light of these facts and others like them, perhaps the coercive power of Soviet communism was not as powerful as many once thought.
Like the Bolshevik uprising, revolutions are not complete upheavals which witness immediate change. Rather, they are contingent periods of transformation which require negotiation and appeals for support. On the prospects of change in scientific revolutions, Max Planck once noted that conversion requires time. He states that a new paradigm does not "triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it" (in Cohen 1985, 468). Radical change occurs slowly. The same is true in the political realm, as, for example, Robespierre and Saint-Just were removed from power for overexerting revolutionary tensions in France; and Lenin eased the pace of progress toward communism by introducing limited capitalism (i.e., NEP) during the early 1920s to avoid dissension in the Soviet Union's populace. If revolutionary change requires moderation and careful presentation to the public, we must assume that rhetoric plays a vital role in paradigm shifts.

To more fully understand the role of rhetoric in revolutions, further research must be accomplished to supplement this study. First, comparative investigations must be conducted to test the utility of rhetorical personae in different revolutionary movements. The method utilized in this study worked well to describe the events surrounding a relatively bloodless revolution. However,
one must ask if thoughts concerning the rhetorical personae are applicable in settings that include noteworthy violence. Perhaps future studies could investigate Robespierre in the French revolution, Castro in the January, 1959, Cuban uprising, or Lenin in the Bolshevik revolution.

Second, the results of this study may be used to temper existing and future models of revolution. As noted previously, scholars in the field of political science offer a number of serviceable explanations for the progress of revolutions. However, these interpretations may benefit from a consideration of the rhetorical perspective. By understanding the significance of rhetoric in revolutions more fully, researchers might be able to better comprehend and to anticipate what occurs during political transformation.
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VITA

Matthew Thomas Althouse was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and grew up in a small town in the same state, Salem. On his family's 200-acre dairy farm, Matt developed a Midwestern penchant for hard work and a dangerous ineptitude for handling heavy agricultural equipment. Thus, he entered academia. Matt graduated from Hiram College in 1991 with a bachelor of arts in communication studies. He then earned a master of arts degree in interpersonal and public communication from Bowling Green State University in 1993. Shortly thereafter, Matt enrolled in the graduate program in speech communication at Louisiana State University where he received his doctorate in August, 1997.

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Candidate: Matthew Thomas Althouse

Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: Boris Yeltsin's Ascent to Power: Personae and the Rhetoric of Revolution

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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Date of Examination: June 16, 1997