

**A POLITICAL HISTORY
OF FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN RUSSIA, 1991**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

VIKAS JHA

Centre for Soviet and East European Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067
1997



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067

CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

JULY 21, 1997

CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the Dissertation entitled "**A Political History of First Presidential Election in Russia, 1991**", submitted by **Mr. Vikas Jha** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university, or any other University and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



PROFESSOR NIRMALA JOSHI
(Chairperson)



PROFESSOR ZAFAR IMAM
(Supervisor)

**DEDICATED
TO THOSE WHO LOVE
DEMOCRACY**

CONTENTS

CHAPTERS	PAGE
PREFACE	i-ii
I INTRODUCTION	1-23
II THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT	24-44
III ELECTIONEERING: STRATEGY AND TACTICS	45-81
IV THE RESULTS: AN ANALYSIS	82-97
V CONCLUSION	98-107
APPENDIX	108-114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115-121

PREFACE

In the midst of growing chaos and widespread depression in the Soviet Union, there came a fresh air for a possible survival of its people. In June 1991, Russia directly elected a President of the newly emerged Russian State. This was a historic event which finally changed the destiny of the Russians. The process of Russian presidential election in 1991 was a novel experience for all concerned; so much so its political history may be considered to have begun with this very action. Hence, a political history of first presidential election in Russia, 1991 is relevant for all interested in New Russia.

In the following pages, we have studied this very historic event. Our study comprises five chapters. Chapter-I discusses the radical changes made by Michael Gorbachev in the Soviet political system which ultimately paved way for the establishment of office of President, it also considers briefly the historical importance of first Presidential election in Russia. Chapter-II deals with the politics between the Communists and the liberal forces, viz., Boris Yeltsin over the establishment of office of President. In the subsequent chapter, the campaign strategy and tactics of various candidates is discussed. Chapter-IV analyses the election results, while the last chapter throws

light on transition from one mode of governance to another and it also discusses the prospects of democracy in Russia.

Finally, we conclude that all in all, this was a historic landmark in the political history of the new Russian state.

This study is based on published, primary and secondary sources, particularly Summary of World Broadcast (BBC) and Current Digest of Soviet Press proved invaluable with its detailed recording of electioneering, etc. These are further supplemented with relevant books, academic articles and press coverages.

I am immensely indebted to my Supervisor, Professor Zafar Imam, for all help and encouragement he gave me without which this work would never have been completed. I would like to thank Dr. Anis Ahmed for carefully editing the manuscript.

Finally, let me hope that I have succeeded in my modest efforts in understanding new Russia.

Vikas Jha
21/7/97
VIKAS JHA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Presidential election of June 1991 was an extraordinary historical event in the Soviet Union; it was the first time in their history that the people of Russia had a real choice of directly electing their president. Held at the time when Russia was faced with growing economic problems, political tensions and ensuing instability, the new election was to have long-term impact on the leadership and political institutions of the country. The new President was expected to shoulder the responsibility of steering the new state of Russia towards multiparty democracy and free market economy.

By all counts, this election was a big advance on the previous experiments in democracy. At the election for Soviet Congress of People's Deputies only two years earlier (in 1989), one-third of seats were reserved for public (Communist Party affiliated) organizations, while electoral commission ensured that most of other candidates were also communists. But the 1991 Presidential election was held in a free and fair atmosphere. The President, for the first time, was elected directly by the people and thus it had made this election an event of tremendous historical importance.

The first Presidential election in Russian Federation cannot be passed of as one of conventional elections; rather

it was symptomatic of systemic transformation signalling the beginning of the process to end the 'serious deformations' of the social order of USSR. Michael Gorbachev was trying to correct these deformations afflicting the Soviet polity and economy through his reform measures of *Perestroika*, *Glasnost* and democratization. Our endeavour in this chapter would be to focus on the 'serious deformations' of Soviet political system and how Gorbachev was trying to reform these. Hence, it should be in order to present in brief the Soviet political system established by Lenin and the attempts made by Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev to reform it over a period of time. How Gorbachev's democratization was different from reforms of earlier period would also be part of our enquiry.

The term 'democracy' has had different connotations at different periods in Soviet history. Lenin in "What is to be done?" believed in need for a firm leadership and the desirability of democratic participation to be reconciled in the doctrine of "democratic centralism".¹ The reasons for firm leadership and strict discipline was that, under the conditions of early twentieth century, the Russian working class would not spontaneously develop into a revolutionary body. Many workers, not seeing their long term interests would concentrate on short term trade union economic activity confined to marginal improvements in wages and -----

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 5, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p.452.

conditions. In such a situation, one group of workers would turn against another and the capitalists, having a divided enemy, would remain supreme. Hence a resolute action against the Proletariat's class enemies called for a party based on 'absolute centralism' and the 'strictest discipline'. In order to provide a decisive political leadership, a party had to be monolithic: that is, unified and centralized in its organizational structure, its members bound by strict discipline, its pronouncements being definitive representing in theory, if not in practice, the unanimous voice of the party.²

Lenin's form of party organization, therefore, was specifically devised to promote the interests of the working class under autocratic conditions. As Lenin put it, "only an incorrigible utopian would have a broad organization of workers with elections, reports and universal suffrage under the autocracy."³ The dominant political institution in the USSR was the Communist Party of Soviet Union which was not only assertive in formulation of ideology and interests, but was also responsible for the supervision of selection of personnel to leading positions - in factories, unions, collective farms and administration. There was considerable overlapping between the Party and above-mentioned administrative positions. In the election to the Soviets,

2. *ibid*, pp. 258-259.

3. David Lane, *State and Politics in USSR*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 209.

no candidate could receive mandate of the electoral committees without Party approval. The central party organizations decided the social and political... composition of the Soviet. The party also controlled the agencies which nominated the candidates.⁴

In the elections, the franchise was universal. All the citizens over 18 years of age had the right to vote with the exception of mentally handicapped and insane. The elections were direct and totally secret, and votes were cast on printed ballot papers.⁵ But the voter did not have any choice of candidates since the ballot papers generally contained only a single name; he, however, had the opportunity to strike off the name on the official ballot paper. But, in reality, he was not even free to do this.⁶

A system, in which a party dominates every political process, can hardly be called a "participatory democracy". In comparison with normative theory of democratic participation,⁷ the Soviet Union was deficient, because the relationship between ruler and the ruled was asymmetric. The citizens and social interest groups did not have any say

4. *ibid*, p.183.

5. *ibid*.

6. *ibid*, p.225.

7. Normative theory of democracy assumes the following ingredients - (1) Multiple Party Competition, (2) Freedom of Association, (3) Freedom of Speech and Expression.

in the affairs and functioning of the government.⁸ It can be said that there was weak "political input" by the citizens. Even such inputs were arranged by the rulers: There were no competitive elections either between parties or candidates. The political culture did not support the articulation of individual or group interests. There was no free press; trade union activity was controlled by the government; voluntary associations were under tutelage of the political party; and dissent was repressed by force.⁹

"The Soviet system had been conceived of in terms of asymmetric participation, having its own democratic 'essence' derived from its political processes. Marxist-Leninist ideology gave greater power to the centre : democratic centralism had, in practice, been highly centralized. Taking part in "party-state, parliamentary, trade union and controlling works, occurs within the context of 'centralization' of administration". The Soviet notion of participation had emphasized upon taking part in the "outputs" of the government.¹⁰ This is in direct contrast to the position prevalent in western liberal democratic regimes where voting for the political leadership is the essence of democratic participation. Western democratic

8. David Lane, *Op. cit.*, pp.250-252.
David Lane, *Polity and Society in the USSR*, p.198.

9. David Lane, *State and Politics in USSR* (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.252.

10. *ibid.*, p. 254.

regimes had, in fact, a strong "political input" by the citizen.

The endeavour to reform the political system began at the Seventh Congress of Soviets of the USSR (6 Feb., 1935) which called for democratizing the electoral system by replacing, not entirely, unequal suffrage by equal suffrage, indirect elections by direct elections, and open ballot by secret ballot.¹¹ Stalin claimed on 25 November 1936, that "the democratization of the new Constitution is not the ordinary and universally recognized democratism in the abstract but `socialist democratism'".¹² Stalin coined the phrase "socialist democratism" to underline the point that it was different from other kinds of democratism; this term emphasized economic meaning of democracy. Article (1) of the 1936 Constitution declared the USSR to be a socialist state of workers and peasants.¹³ This implied that all the other classes and capitalist elements had withered away and the society was moving in the direction of becoming a classless society. The 1936 Constitution was indeed entitled to claim to have established socialism in USSR.

The 1936 Constitution introduced uniform territorial franchise. It merged the All Union Congress of Soviets and -----

11. J. Stalin, *On the draft constitution of the USSR and constitution (Fundamental Law) of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1951), p.33.

12. *ibid.*

13. *ibid.*

All Union Central Executive Committee into the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, as the highest organ of state power discharging legislative and policy-making functions. The Supreme Soviet now had the responsibility of appointing the ministers, judges of Supreme Court of the USSR and other officials, holding them individually responsible for their functions.¹⁴ These amendments brought the USSR political system to some approximation of the parliamentary form of liberal democratic governments.

Despite these political reforms, the predominance of Party in the elections and appointment to various offices continued. The voices of dissent in inner party affairs were suppressed. This fact came to light in the Twentieth Congress of Communist Party of Soviet Union. At this Congress, presided over by Nikita Khrushchev, horrendous evidences of suppression of dissent, cruelty to opponents and accumulation of power collectively designated as 'personality cult' were brought to light.

Khrushchev continued the reform measures initiated by Stalin; he started the mass education programme and change of personnel in the leadership. At the institutional level, he abolished the Comiform and got the programme of CPSU revised. The 1961 programme of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (Road to communism) envisaged "All round extension and perfection of the socialist democracy, active

14. *ibid.*

participation of citizens in the administration of state, in the management of economic and cultural development, improvement of government apparatus and increased control over its activity".¹⁵

It was L.I. Brezhnev who took effective measures to reform the political system of USSR; Brezhnev's report to twenty-sixth CPSU Congress mentioned "Glasnost" as an effective means of strengthening ties between the party and the masses.

The 1977 Constitution declared that "The principle direction in the development of the political system of soviet society" is the extension of socialist democracy, namely, broader participation of citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvement of machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organizations, strengthening of system of people's control, consolidation of legal foundation of the functioning of the state and public life, greater openness and publicity and constant responsiveness to public opinion.¹⁶

The Brezhnev Constitution of 1977 proclaimed USSR as Socialist State of the whole people, superseding the concept of "proletarian dictatorship", and expressing the will and

15. *The 1961 Programme of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (Road to Communism)*, (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1962), p.53.

16. Article 9, *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of USSR, 1977*, in Jitendra Sharma, *New Soviet Constitution : An Indian Assessment*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p.84.

interests of workers, peasants and intelligentsia.¹⁷ The government, it is assumed, had been made more responsive by Brezhnev. The Council of Ministers was made responsible and accountable to the Supreme Soviet - the legislature of USSR. During latter's recess, the Council was responsible to the Presidium, the standing committee of the Supreme Soviet. But in actual practice, parliamentary form of government was absent in USSR. Sound and effective opposition, deemed as the soul of parliamentary democracy, was ruthlessly suppressed during Brezhnev era. The voice of the local bodies was also restricted by introducing the concept of "democratic centralism" in 1977 Constitution.¹⁸ The dominant position of the Party in Soviet political system had reduced parliamentary form of government to a farce.

The landmark feature of the Brezhnev Constitution was widening of the scope for fundamental rights also known as "bill of rights", although it was the 1936 Constitution which had first incorporated the basic rights of the citizens. Fundamental rights (Articles 39-58) included right to employment, insurance, equality (both gender and racial), freedom of speech, press and assembly, liberty to form trade union, co-operative associations, youth organizations and other societies, etc. How far people enjoyed these rights in actual practice is subject to -----

17. Article 1, *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of USSR, 1977*, *ibid*, p.84.

18. Article 3, *ibid*, p.84.

question. The transition towards democratization of Soviet political system continued under Andropov who, at June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, stressed the need to bring the activities of the Party and state bodies closer to the people through greater publicity (Glasnost) in work. Chernenko too used the term "Glasnost" in his work "Questions on the work of the party and state apparatus". He justified the use of term "Glasnost" in the political parlance by making the Party and state machinery respond to public queries.

However, it was Gorbachev whose *Perestroika* (restructuring) with democratization made drastic changes in Soviet political system, not only in theory but also in practice. Gorbachev envisaged a political system which could function under restricted democratic control and guidance of Soviet people as a whole. His policy of "Glasnost" (openness) formulated in 1986 freed press and media from censorship. It encouraged the participation of the people in the affairs of the country. The direct result of this policy was that people started asking questions of the party and government functionaries; whole society was faced by open debates, question-answer sessions, public meetings, etc. The policy indirectly made the government more accountable to the people.

Gorbachev's policy of "Glasnost" became a subject of wide ranging debate which mainly centred around the ideas and concepts for restructuring democracy in USSR. Gorbachev

had endeavoured to provide a framework for theory and practice of democracy in USSR through his numerous speeches and pronouncements.

At a theoretical level there appeared to be a consensus on the following:

- (1) Democracy, both in theory and practice, was not against socialism: indeed it emanates from it;
- (2) Democracy was essentially the creation and development of a political culture where an individual was not simply a part of collective but also has his/her perception or role to play;
- (3) Every centre of decision-making from top to bottom must acquire a social basis as a result of real participation, where the freedom of choice and dissent must be ensured;
- (4) Citizens must have every opportunity to be informed on the affairs of management of society;
- (5) A congenial political culture need not be confused with anarchy, a control mechanism that controls less was best under developed socialism;
- (6) Democracy must have potential and resilience to tolerate and balance contradictions and conflicts, not only between individuals but also among social classes, strata and interest groups; and
- (7) Democracy must seek to have a mass support and involvement by catering, to the best of its ability, to

the various needs and aspirations of its citizens both at micro and macro level.¹⁹

There appeared to be consensus in the Soviet society, vis-a-vis the idea and concept of democracy in the USSR. People were now fully aware of the democratic set-up which they sought to establish. Some concrete proposals about the operationalisation of democratic practices were to come in the following years.

The 19th Party conference proposed concrete measures for political reforms which were adopted through constitutional and electoral law amendment at 12th Special Session of Supreme Soviet of USSR on 29 November, 1988. Gorbachev's initiative towards political reforms was a definite advance in the direction of democratization. The measures adopted for reforms were as follows:

Multi-candidate election to the Soviets; full authority of the Soviets of people's Deputies as the basis of the Socialist state system; two-term restriction on holding of elective office; a regular and effectively functioning of Supreme Soviet; establishment of the committee for constitutional review as a watch-dog of the Constitution; 20 per cent mandate for annual renewal of members of the Supreme Soviets; independence of the judiciary; and demarcation of function between party and the state bodies.²⁰

-
19. Zafar Imam, "Politics of *Perestroika*, *Mainstream*, vol. XXVI, No.11, 25 December 1987, pp. 7-9.
 20. Seweryn Bialer, "The changing Soviet Political System : The nineteenth Party Conference and After", in Seweryn Bialer (ed), *Politics, Society and Nationality inside Gorbachev's Russia*, (Boulder & London; West View Press, 1989), pp.220-237.

However, it would be wrong to project these reform measures as a thorough-going and fully-consistent process of democratization. The indirect election of the President and the Supreme Soviet; provision for allocation of one-third seats in the country's highest body, the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR, and public organizations including the Party were indicative of the movement in reverse direction.

Despite some limitations in process of democratization, the constitutional reforms were translated into practice in 1989 when the elections for Congress of People's Deputies were held in March 1989. The process of election campaign conclusively showed how enthusiastically and actively the Soviet citizens had started participating actively in the affairs of the nation. In all 750 open constituencies earmarked, under the constitution, for direct election; more than one candidate contested and in a number of cases, important party functionaries lost the election. A characteristic example was the defeat of official party candidates in the Moscow constituencies as well as those of the secretaries of party organization of Leningrad and elsewhere.²¹

21. Zafar Imam, "An intelligent person's guide to *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*" in the *Second Revolution : Democratisation in USSR* (on behalf of Indian Centre for Regional Affairs, (Delhi, 1989), p.18.

In May-June, 1989, debate and deliberations in both Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet were open and frank, and its business was conducted in a democratic manner. A further manifestation of the democratization process could be gauged from the fact that in this session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, M.S. Gorbachev was elected unanimously as the President of USSR. Also the Council of ministers was appointed after an intensive debate and questioning with majority votes of the Supreme Soviet members. Moreover, the new President and Council of ministers adopted the practice of regularly reporting their work to Congress and of seeking its approval. Debates and discussions on major issues continued in the Congress and questionnaire were put to the ministers to make them accountable.²²

Thus, we see that a few democratic institutions and their role appeared to have come up in the USSR underlining the fact that "the era of controlled democracy from above was over in the Soviet Union".²³ "A novel theory and practice was being adopted for making Socialist democracy more responsive and humane to public opinion".²⁴

The trend was well marked. Even the leaders of different ideological leanings expressed opinion in favour

22. *ibid.*

23. *ibid*, p.21.

24. *ibid*, p.22.

of democratization of Russian polity : M. Gorbachev, who had given a new thrust to the democratic movement through his measures as *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, emphasized the role of people in building a new State. He said "the role of people of Russian Federation in renewing the Union Federation is indispensable".²⁵ Gorbachev pointed out: "The challenge before the President and new power structures in Russia was primarily to make people understand their responsibilities in the formation of Russian Federation".²⁶ He stressed that all reform measures should aim for a movement towards the market, to a new pluralistic society, and to a new relations within the framework of the union between the republics and the people.²⁷

Even Zhirinovsky, who had fascist overtones in his programmes, explained the meaning of his party name "Liberal democratic party" as "free democratic party" (LDP when translated into Russian means free democratic party) which implies freedom in every thing -- freedom in ideology, in politics and in the economy.²⁸ He said, "in the framework of law we are all free, we are all citizens without ethnic,

25. "Gorbachev interviewed at polling station", *Summary of World Broadcast* (hereafter referred to as *SWB*), (BBC Monitoring, Caversham Park, Reading), 14 June 1991, PP C/1-2.

26. *ibid.*

27. *ibid.*

28. "Interview with Zhirinovsky", *SWB*, (BBC Monitoring, Caversham Park, Reading), 4 June 1991, PP B/1.

political, religious and social distinctions."²⁹ Though Zhirinovskiy did not suggest any concrete measures for the democratisation of polity and society but he paid a lip-service to the democratic movement in the perception that this `slogan' enjoyed tremendous support among the people.

In Russian politics, the principal proponent of reform, whether it was in the field of polity or economy, was Boris Yeltsin. He was representative of the force which suggested more radical measures than that of Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. Yeltsin accused communists of derailing the democratization process through their `go slow' approach. He pointed out, "a movement for democracy had already begun in Russia, a wave of meetings, unprecedented in its scale, has swept all over Russia. Many thousands of actions were carried out in support of the Russian Parliament and its course towards radical democratic changes...this is not anarchy or riot...people who took part are our citizens fighting for the freedom of the individual and for his rights and improvement for his life."³⁰

B. Yeltsin as Chairman of Supreme Soviet took some measures for democratization: a legal foundation in all areas of life was created; constructive efforts were being made for best possible model for Federation treaty; and the process of reviving the social groups was being initiated

29. *ibid.*

30. "Speech by Yeltsin on Main Tenets of Political Course", *SWB*, 3 June 1991, P. C1/1.

without whom a civilized society would be unthinkable.³¹ Thus we see that massive upsurge was taking place for making the political system more responsive and open.

Further manifestation of democratic practices was seen in the Presidential campaigning of RSFSR (1991), which saw the participation of people in large numbers.

Media, viz. Press, Television, Radio enjoying freedom from State regulations extensively covered the campaign with vigour and renewed fervour; they analysed prospects of various candidates and their programmes; they conducted opinion polls and interviewed the candidates and leading political figures. People sent letters to the newspapers in thousands and they questioned presidential candidates on Television and Radio.³² Although it cannot be said that all the media reported fairly (since they indulged in reporting a lot about rumours -- e.g. the reporting of Copola affair involving Yeltsin, carried by *Sovetskaya Rossiya* conveyed a biased opinion about the affair), but newspapers certainly used the 'new found' freedom to raise the political consciousness of people. Such large scale political participation of the Russian people was unprecedented in history of Soviet polity.

Further progress towards democratisation of Russian polity was made, when the Russian Republican Constitution

31. *ibid.*

32. *ibid.*

introduced the post of directly elected president by secret ballot.³³ According to Article 3 of law on RSFSR presidency, the RSFSR President will be elected by RSFSR citizens by secret ballot on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. No other election or appointment to the post of RSFSR President nor the conferment of the powers of RSFSR President is lawful or valid.³⁴ This was the first time in the history of Russia that the President was directly elected by the people. In the past, the President of the Soviet Union was nominated by the Party. The people of USSR did not have any say in the election of President. In 1991, the President of RSFSR was not only elected directly but was also made accountable to the Congress of People's Deputies. The RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies had the power to dismiss the President from Office on the violation of RSFSR Constitution and laws. As such, a system of checks and balance, in which the legislative wing of government keeps control over the executive, was introduced in Russian political system. This system is also in practice in the U.S.A. The principle of checks and balances is a part of democratic structure. Hence the introduction of the provision of direct election of President in RSFSR was certainly a step forward towards democratization of Russian political system.

33. "Law on RSFSR Presidency", *SWB*, 2 May 1991, p. C3/1.

34. *ibid.*

Article 10 reads as:

The RSFSR president can be dismissed from office on violation of the RSFSR Constitution and laws, or his sworn oath. Such a decision is made by the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies on the basis of the ruling of the RSFSR Constitutional Court by a majority of two-thirds of the total number of RSFSR people's deputies on the initiative of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, or one of its chambers.³⁵

Yeltsin was elected to the newly created post of President in June 1991. He wanted to bring about democratic reforms by introducing a new constitution that would guarantee human rights and rule of law which is universally recognised in the present times. But Yeltsin's reform measures, both in the field of polity as well as economy, were subverted by majority of the members of the Congress of People's Deputies (members of banned Communist Party had majority in Congress of People's Deputies); the continued opposition of the communists to the Yeltsin reforms created confusion in the country and effectively paralysed the functioning of the government. President Yeltsin, after winning the vote of confidence in the national referendum in 1993, decided to introduce a new constitution for Russia and to hold fresh elections for Parliament. He unilaterally released the text of a Draft Constitution (Basic Law) of Russian Federation and convened the session of constitutional convention to consider the Draft Constitution released by him.

35. "Law on RSFSR Presidency", *SWB*, 2 May 1991, P. C3/1.

The Draft Constitution of Russian Federation had the following features : Basic principles - Human rights and freedom (Articles 1 to 37), citizens of Russian Federation (Articles 38 to 54), justice (Articles 113 to 126), local self-government (Articles 127 to 130). It also had the following provisions: Treaty on demarcation of subjects and powers between federal organs of sovereign Republics within Russian federation; presidential power to dissolve the Parliaments; Two-house federal assembly -- State Duma and Council of Federation (having more powers); government chairman is under President; and three high courts.³⁶ Thus, we see that the establishment of the office of the president and new provisions of the constitution had laid the foundation for the formation of New Russian State.

Finally, it can be said that attempt to reform the political system and economy were the features which were present throughout the history of Soviet Union and not just limited to Gorbachev's period, as it is normally perceived. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Andropov had also endeavoured to reform the political system but their efforts were rather limited in nature. Gorbachev, however, went far ahead of others by suggesting sweeping changes in Soviet political system and economy; and to him goes the credit for making radical changes in political system, and these

36. *Izvestia*, 30 April 1993, in *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, (hereafter it will be referred to as *CDSP*), vol. XLIII, No.17, 16 June 1993, pp. 10-19.

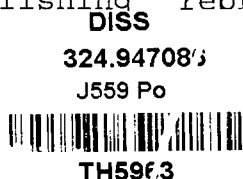
enabled Russians to participate in the political processes.

The manifestation of democratic practices could be seen in the first Presidential election, 1991, when people came out in large numbers to meet the candidates, attended rallies and asked for explanations from candidates in newspapers and the media. The heavy turnout of the voters on the election day was suggestive of heightened political consciousness of the people.

Media also exhibited the signs of freedom. Events were covered and reported freely without any fear from the State. The freedom enjoyed by media was manifest in the first Presidential election in 1991, when media aired its views on the prevailing political atmosphere on the eve of elections and about candidates and campaigning, without fear of reprisal from anybody. One of the clearest signs of end of political orthodoxy in mass media was visible on the streets of Moscow where anything relating to monarchism, dietary foods, business weeklies, horoscopes and even orthodox communism could be found.

In Russia, the age-old tradition of political passivity had been replaced by active participation of the people firmly committed to new institutions of representative government that had being established since late 1980's. Russia was indeed witnessing a "Second Revolution" in its political system.

However, the history of liberal democracy suggests that establishing representative institutions is the least



difficult part of transition to democracy, generating popular values and beliefs that will protect and sustain those institutions in a longer term is fraught with uncertainty. "The behavioural consequences of these political values -- support for various forms of political participation -- are a major indicator of the likely success of democratisation in post-Communist Russia."³⁷ The massive participation of the people in campaigning and voting in Presidential election, 1991 were indicators of inculcation of political values by the Russians which were going to sustain democracy in a long run.

Besides, autonomous business organisations and trade unions, which articulated the interests of the populace, were being formed in Russia. These are the primary organisations which support Party in any democratic country. However, in 1990-91, formation of political parties in Russia was in nascent stage. Though some parties such as "Liberal Democratic Party" and "Democratic Russia" had been formed but they lacked well defined public constituency, Russians had not reflected stable pattern of attachments to the political parties that have so far been established. This was in spite of the fact that electorate were divided

37. Ian McAllister and Stephen White, "Political Participation in Post-Communist Russia", *Political Studies* (1994), XLII, p. 614.

socially as well as attitude-wise.³⁸ Yet despite these limitations, the formation of political parties in the post-Communist Russia was itself a positive sign because it provided a channel to popular grievances and brought the various preferences of citizens to bear upon the formation of public policy. Russia is witnessing a transition from one form of governance to another, and in such a situation, representative institution and political values require time to take roots. It can be said that the prospects of Russia changing over to democratic form of governance were indeed bright.

38. Stephen White, Mathew Wyman, Olga Kryshtanovskaya, "Parties and Politics in Post-Communist Russia", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol.28, no.2, p. 133. The authors had the survey carried out in twelve urban areas in December 1992, which suggested that communist supporters were likely to be older, poorer, less educated and more working class while Yeltsin supporters, by contrast, were richer, better educated and younger, with supporters from other parties being less clearly differentiated. The supporters of various parties were often in agreement on central issues of public policy.

CHAPTER-II

THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

The establishment of the Office of a directly elected President was a part and parcel of the radical political reforms, launched by Gorbachev since his accession to power in 1985. He had moved on all fronts to bring about drastic change in nature of Soviet socialism. His goal was not simply to speed up the pace of economic performance as his initial slogan of 'acceleration' seemed to imply, rather his objective was to bring about far reaching changes in Soviet political and economic system through *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*.

Gorbachev intended to induce the evolution of a type of Socialist society that was to be markedly different from the Stalinist model created in 1930's. He tried to build on the reforms which were initiated during Khrushchev era and continued during Brezhnev rule. Brezhnev's report to 26th CPSU Congress mentioned *Glasnost* as an effective means of strengthening the Party's ties with the masses. A way was paved for expanding the powers and functions of the Soviets, particularly at the local level, following the adoption of the 1977 constitution. The trend received a powerful impetus with the succession of Andropov to power in 1982, when a new law on work collectives was adopted and a united economic reform experiment was launched in five industrial ministries. At the June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central

Committee, Andropov stressed the need to bring the activities of the Party and state bodies closer to the people through greater publicity (*Glasnost*) in work, Chernenko too used the term *Glasnost* in his work "Questions on the Work of Party and State Apparatus" and made a contribution to making Party and state machinery more responsive to complaints from public.

However, it was under Gorbachev's leadership that an integrated and comprehensive concept of restructuring (*Perestroika*) with democratisation as its important component, evolved during 1985-88 period. A new strategy of socio-economic acceleration was first mapped out at the April 1985 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, while the 27th CPSU Congress in February-March 1986, and the January and June 1987 Plenum of the Party Central Committee, held subsequently, added a new content to this strategy, developing it into a comprehensive concept of restructuring. Explaining his policy measures in his address on the 70th anniversary of the Revolution, Gorbachev said:

Democratisation was at the core of restructuring and upon it depended the fate of *Perestroika* and indeed Socialism as a whole. The changes already agreed represented the biggest step in developing socialist democracy since October Revolution, further change would concentrate particularly upon the Soviets which must completely live upto their name as sovereign and decision-making bodies.¹

1. M. Gorbachev, *Izbrannyye rechi i stat'i*, Vol.5, pp. 410-12 as quoted in S. White, "Democratisation in USSR", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.42, No.1, January 1990, pp. 254-7.

An effort was being made by Gorbachev for the creation of a new type of political institution under an effective control of elected bodies and democratic functioning of these institutions in place of "old one based on centralism" was being evolved. These political reforms on paper appeared to have taken root, when for the first time multi-candidate elections to thousands of local Soviets were held in January 1987. The detailed explanation of the General Secretary's conception of democracy became apparent in his address to 19th Party Conference, which met from 28 June to 1 July 1988. In his speech, Gorbachev called for radical reform of the political system, not just democratisation, and he went on to argue that it was crucial for the solution of all the other problems that was facing Soviet society. The political system established by the October Revolution, he told the Conference, had undergone "serious deformations" leading to the development of "command administrative" rather than democratic structures of management.² The role of bureaucratic apparatus had increased out of proportion - there were more than 100 central ministries, and 800 more in republics and this bloated administrative apparatus had begun to dictate its will in political and economic matters. Public life had

2. M. Gorbachev address to 19th Party Conference as quoted in S. White, "Democratisation in the USSR", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.42, No.1, January 1990, pp. 4-5.

become unduly governmentalised and ordinary working people had become alienated from the public ownership and management. It was this "Ossified system of government" that was now the main obstacle to *Perestroika*. Gorbachev was trying to reform this ossified state structure.

The 19th Party Conference adopted a series of resolutions calling for further democratisation of Soviet society and reform of political system. These proposals were also carried to Central Committee meetings in July and September 1988, and this directly led to a series of constitutional reforms. At the 19th Party Conference, the process of the amendment in the existing Brezhnev Constitution (1977) of USSR was initiated. In fact, the amendments which were proposed at 19th Party Conference and Central Committee Plenum covered most of the provisions of 1977 Constitution; thus the amended Brezhnev Constitution can be regarded as a new Constitution. It can be said that the 19th Party Conference and the Central Committee Plenum that followed it, provided a blue print of a new Soviet political system that Gorbachev sought to create.

The key elements of the radical political reform that emerged from the 19th Party Conference and July 1988 Plenum of Central Committee were as follows:

ELECTORAL REFORMS

The Soviet Union under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev held elections on all levels of the Party but these elections had no democratic substance. Gorbachev promised

to give meaning to these elections as well as to the legislative process. The electoral changes which were proposed by him are as given under:

The Party and the State electorate should have right to propose a multi candidate for each office, the right to propose additional candidates would in practice rest on the lowest level with primary Party organization, the tenure of high officials on all levels should be unconditionally limited to two five-year terms. The balloting on all elections in Party and State institution should be secret and controlled by a specially selected electoral commission or committee. The Party or general electorate should have the right to recall officials, if they don't perform satisfactorily.³

The process of political reforms was also extended to the Soviet State. The central objective here was "All powers to the States" and more generally a shift of executive authority from Party to State institutions. It was proposed that Soviets should become genuine centres of the elaboration and adoption of all major State decisions in the field of legislation and administration. Gorbachev's proposal concerning USSR Supreme Soviet was to make it a smaller working body of 440-450 Deputies, elected from a much larger Congress of People's Deputies, which would meet annually.⁴

3. T.H. Rigby, *The Changing Soviet System*, (Edward Elgor Publishing House, 1990), pp.219-220.
4. *ibid*, pp.220-221.

Some changes were also proposed in the functions and activities of the Party apparatus. The Party apparatus was to be significantly cut in size. The economic sectors and departments of the apparatus were to be abolished. The work of the Party apparatus would be concentrated in two departments or sectors viz. ideological propaganda department and the organizational personnel department.⁵

The other important amendments proposed in 1977 Constitution were that the President of USSR was to be elected by the Congress of People's Deputies for a term of five years by secret ballot; he was to be accountable to the Congress of People's Deputies, Supreme Soviet and its presidium; a Constitutional Inspection Committee of the USSR for a period of 10 years was to be set up to act as a watchdog against any divergence between theory and practice; the old Supreme Soviet with two chambers as the highest body of USSR was to be replaced by a new Super Parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR with 2,250 members. Below the Congress of People's Deputies were two chambers of Supreme Soviet, the Council of Union and the Council of Nationalities, with equal powers and functions. These were elected by Congress of People's Deputies.⁶

5. *ibid*, p.222.

6. Zafar Imam, "An Intelligent Person's Guide to Glasnost and Perestroika", in *Second Revolution : Democratisation in USSR*, (Delhi, Patriotic Publishers, 1989), pp.18-19.

A "large scale legal reform" was also effected at this Conference. Existing legislations were reviewed and codified and independence of judges was ensured by electing them for a longer period.⁷

By taking all these reform measures, Gorbachev sought to create a distinctive socialist system of checks and balances protecting Soviet society from those who held the highest executive offices of State.

The creation of the office of the directly elected President of RSFSR can be seen a part of the process of political reforms initiated by Gorbachev. At the first Congress of People's Deputies in May and June, 1990, all Deputies of all factions had effectively endorsed the idea of creation of post of President. It was Communists of Russia group and their supporters in Parliament who had arrived with such a proposal and they wanted to incorporate it in RSFSR Constitution through amendments.⁸ But the Deputies were divided over the powers the President of RSFSR would hold and the procedure over the elections of the President.

Meanwhile, Yeltsin had come up as a principal opponent to the Communists in the Russian politics, he had been severely criticising the Gorbachev reforms measures like

7. *ibid*, p.20.

8. *Demokraticeskaya Rossiya*, 8, 17 May, 1991, as quoted in M.E. Urban, "Boris Yeltsin's Democratic Russia and the campaign for Russian Presidency", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.44, No.2, 1992, p.188.

Perestroika and *Glasnost*; moreover, Yeltsin was elected by the Congress to the post of chairperson of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. Boris Yeltsin's gradual increase in popularity over the years made him a good potential candidate for the office of the President. But Yeltsin's rising popularity made Communists sceptical for creation of the office of President. Yeltsin's resignation from CPSU and his increasing rivalry with Gorbachev made the Communists wary of creating presidency.

The Communists then adopted a "go slow" approach and tried to put various hurdles in the way of constitutional amendment. At the second Congress in December 1990, no action was taken on the matter other than adopting a resolution instructing the Supreme Soviet and its Constitutional Commission to consider appropriate amendments to the RSFSR Constitution. Since constitutional amendment required two-thirds majority in the Congress, the Communists of Russia and its allies were well positioned to repel any attempt of establishing a powerful and popularly elected President particularly at a time when the chances of Yeltsin becoming President were most obvious.

However, the matter was sought to be resolved by the direct choice of the people. On 25 January 1991, the presidium of RSFSR Supreme Soviet proposed inclusion of another question on the referendum within Russian Federation of directly elected President of RSFSR alongwith union treaty. The Central Commission of the Russian Federation

for Referendums in USSR and Russian Federation approved two questions to be decided on 17 March 1991 by referendum:

- (i) "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Russian Federation as a single federative multinational State with the renovated Soviet Union?"
- (ii) Do you consider it necessary to create the post of the Russian President to be elected by popular vote?⁹

Yeltsin, in order to garner support for creation of the post of President in the referendum, launched a tirade against Gorbachev and the local leadership; he called the elected Deputies as the "traitors of democracy" since they had derailed the reform programmes.¹⁰ Yeltsin accused them of betraying the people since they went back from the programmes they had promised in the elections; he charged them of not only rejecting the programme but becoming the enemies of the programme.¹¹ Yeltsin alleged that the 500-day programme had been thwarted by the central authorities. He also drew the attention of the people to the disappearance of RSFSR gold reserve.¹²

Replying to the charges made by Yeltsin, Premier Pavlov in an interview to Soviet television said that the 500-day

- 9. *Summary of World Broadcast*, (Hereafter it will be referred to as *SWB*), 19 February 1991, PB/10.
- 10. "Yeltsin's Address to Democratic Russia Rally", Moscow Home Service, *SWB*, 9 March 1991, PB/3.
- 11. *ibid.*
- 12. *SWB*, 22 February 1991, pi.

programme had been merged with that of the USSR Supreme Soviet and that nothing prevented the RSFSR Supreme Soviet from implementing it. Turning his attention to the matter of gold reserves, he provided the break up of the ways in which it had been spent.¹³ Embittered by the 'false' allegations of Yeltsin, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium members denounced Yeltsin's presidency and called for an extraordinary RSFSR Congress to debate Yeltsin's leadership.¹⁴ The statement signed by several leading members of RSFSR Supreme Soviet said: "Yeltsin's activity, progressive at first, became ever more clearly marked by authoritarianism, confrontation and the determination to take individual decisions on the matters of domestic and foreign policy and he took decisions discarding law and opinion of constitutional bodies."¹⁵

The statement of Deputies on the matter said "During the mounting crisis, he tries to avoid unpopular decisions and shifts his burden to the Centre and other Republics thus aggravating chaos and disorganization in the economy. He ignores the agreements that have been reached, the proposals of his own government and opinion of the Russian Federation Council members,"¹⁶

13. "Premier Pavlov in an Interview to Soviet TV", *SWB*, 22 February 1991, p.i.

14. *SWB*, 22 February 1991, p.i.

15. *ibid.*

16. *ibid.*

However, Yeltsin received strong support from many other Deputies, who, said that it was difficult for the Parliament to work in condition where "Communists of Russia" vetoed every progressive decision.¹⁷

Disregarding the explanation provided by Premier Pavlov as also criticism from RSFSR Supreme Soviet presidium members, Yeltsin continued his attack on Gorbachev and central authorities. Addressing the Democratic Russia rally, he said: "Democracy is in danger...either democracy will be extinguished or we will, nevertheless not only stick it out with democracy but we will also conquer without fail in this sense."¹⁸

Appealing to the people to vote for the creation of the Office of the President in the referendum, he said:

I am in favour of President being elected by the whole nation. I am in favour even now of a structure of power that is re-inforced by the people in some way. That is then all the chairmen of the Soviets are elected by the whole people. That will mean a strong executive and legislative power at a local level.¹⁹

He stressed that 16th March was a decisive day for them.

Boris Yeltsin's hard-hitting rhetoric at public meetings made the Communists restive. Alarmed by Yeltsin's

17. *SWB*, 22 February 1991, p.i.

18. "Yeltsin addressed Democratic Russia Rally", *SWB*, 11 March 1991, PB/4.

19. *Ibid*.

'irresponsible' speech, Anatoly Ivanovich Lukyanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet said:

a leader of the highest body of authority of such a republic as Russia does not have the right, the moral right to make such declarations. That is a direct appeal for confrontation with legally elected authority. This is a direct appeal to declare what is precisely a war on the country's leadership, those bodies which were elected by the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet.²⁰

Lukyanov was also critical of Yeltsin's proposal of replacing Soviets in the localities with empowered representative of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, who would be nominated directly by himself and would carry out, as Yeltsin claimed, "Our policy".²¹ He called, Yeltsin's speeches "irresponsible and impermissible which would lead the country to confrontation."²²

It was in this atmosphere of allegations and accusations, charges, counter-charges and uncertainty about the future of USSR and RSFSR, that the referendum was held. The results of the referendum was declared by RSFSR Central Commission on 25 March 1991, and these were as under:

20. "Lukyanov Interview to Soviet TV", *SWB*, 11 March 1991, PB/4.

21. *ibid.*

22. *ibid.*

Total number of citizens on the voting lists	101,776,550
Number of citizens who received ballots	76,652,747
Number of citizens who took part in the voting	76,425,110
Number of citizens who responded "Yes"	53,385,275
Number of citizens who responded "No"	21,406,152
Number of ballots deemed invalid	1,633,683

In summing up the results of the RSFSR referendum, the Central Commission did not take into account the figures for the North Ossetian Autonomous SSR (North Ossetian SSR), the Tatar Autonomous SSR (Tatar SSR), the Tuva Autonomous SSR or the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous SSR (Chechen-Ingush Republic), on whose territories referendum commissions and bodies of state power did not provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in the RSFSR referendum.

The question posed in the Union referendum was answered in the affirmative by 71.34 per cent of the citizens who took part in the voting, and the Russian referendum question by 69.85 per cent of those voting.²³

On 17 March 1991, Russia's voters endorsed the idea of Presidency by a margin of 70 per cent and, on the following

23. *Izvestia*, 26 March 1991, carried a full report from Russian SFSSR Central Commission, *Current Digest of Soviet Press* (hereafter it will be referred to as *CDSF*), Vol. XLIII, No.13, 1 May 1991, p. 24.

day, the Presidium delivered a ruling that establishing the Presidency by referendum was not a constitutional matter and, therefore, required only a simple majority of those casting votes.²⁴

Thus by circumventing the necessity of a two-thirds majority in the Congress, the Yeltsin forces had outflanked their opponents.

Another attempt of discrediting Boris Yeltsin and removing him from the office (though not stated clearly) was made at the Third Congress of People's Deputies convened in late March 1991. The motion of making necessary amendments to the Constitution and instructing the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to adopt a law on the procedure for Presidential elections was also to be considered at this Congress. Realising the importance of the extraordinary Congress Session and massive support of Russians to Yeltsin, President Gorbachev, with the consent of USSR Cabinet of Ministers, imposed a ban on rallies, street processions and demonstration in Moscow from 26 March to 15 April.²⁵ Gorbachev wanted to shield Congress from the popular pressure, so that it may take decision out of its own volition. USSR President's decree also removed the Moscow City and Moscow Province chief internal affairs administrations from the jurisdiction of the Moscow City

24. Referendum in Soviet Union: A Compendium of report on March 17, 1991 as quoted in Michael E. Urban *Op. cit.*, p. 190.

25. *Izvestia*, 28 March 1991, as quoted in *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.13, 1 May 1991, p. 14.

Soviet Executive Committee as well as of the RSFSR Ministry of Internal Affairs; these presidential decrees were criticised by the Presidium of Russian SFSR Supreme Soviet which held these measures 'illegal' and issued a statement saying "adoption of unconstitutional acts, especially in an unstable political situation, may have unpredictable consequences and full responsibility for such consequences lied with the President and the Council of Ministers."²⁶

These 'illegal' measures of the government were also resented by Muscovites (about 700,000 ralliers) who gathered on Maya Kovsky and Arbat Squares as well as on Pushkin Square and Manege Square.²⁷ They were registering their support for democratic forces in the government and offering resistance to the key elements in the central government and their allies in Russia particularly Russian Communist Party, who were putting hurdles in the way of adoption of decisions through referendum. Ralliers were asking for USSR President's resignation. Banners with slogans like "A presidential post for Yeltsin", "Down with CPSU" and "CPSU, thou shall not kill thy neighbor", carried by the ralliers showed their resentment of CPSU.²⁸ The massive public support behind Yeltsin proved to be a setback to anti-Yeltsin forces who had convened the Congress probably

26. *ibid.*

27. *Izvestia*, 29 March 1991, as quoted in *CDSP*, Vol.XLIII, No.13, 1 May 1991, p. 15.

28. *ibid.*

with the purpose of obtaining Boris Yeltsin's resignation from the Chairmanship of Russian Supreme Soviet.

The Congress began its session with the adoption of resolution:

- (1) To suspend the USSR Cabinet of Ministers' resolution of 25 March 1991, on temporarily suspending the holding of rallies, street processions and demonstrations in Moscow.
- (2) To suspend USSR President's decree of 26 March 1991.
- (3) To instruct RSFSR Council of Ministers to safeguard public order in the City of Moscow and Moscow Province.²⁹

Strictures against Boris Yeltsin were quite severe at the Third Congress. In one of the co-reports presented by V. Isokov, Chairman of the Council of Republic, he assailed Boris Yeltsin saying, "Yeltsin is behaving insincerely. To the war of demagoguery, a new dictatorship is coming."³⁰ Isokov indicted Yeltsin for launching a war on laws, banks and budgets. He said, "Yeltsin is committing ill-considered off-hand actions and indiscretions and he has imperial ways."³¹ The atmosphere at the Congress was highly charged, Deputies were not willing to hear rivals' argument; speeches were greeted by shouts, noisy foot-stamping, applause - in

29. *Izvestia*, 28 March 1991, as quoted in *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.13, 1 May 1991, p. 9.

30. *Izvestia*, 1 April 1991, as quoted in *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.13, 1 May 1991, p. 10.

31. *ibid.*

fact, this Congress had fever pitch of enmity, intransigence and refusal to compromise. The speech of M. Zakharov, Member of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet, presenting one of the co-reports gave a positive appraisal of Boris Yeltsin's activities in the post. Meanwhile the acerbity at the Congress continued. Communists of Russia severely attacked Yeltsin's economic programmes and wanted to restore old economic mechanism.³² They also appealed to all working people and to the Republic's trade unions with the aim of declaring a moratorium on strikes.³³ Yeltsin was criticised by both right and left factions for his relations with the Centre.³⁴ Communists of Russia were bent upon discrediting Boris Yeltsin and they wanted to delay the adoption of a decision of instituting the post of President that could be the reason for commotion at the Congress.

The Communists of Russia and their associates with their combined control of about fifty per cent of the seats in Parliament managed to keep the question of presidency off the agenda of Congress. They insisted on discussion on the points of agenda before its adoption. Despite the proposal of reconciliation commission that agenda containing RSFSR referendum be adopted, Deputies of Congress were adamant on its discussion. It was a "delay tactics" adopted by the

32. *ibid.*

33. *ibid.*

34. *ibid.*

Communists to keep the question of presidency in abeyance primarily because once created, the post was expected to be captured by Yeltsin.³⁵

However, huge pro-democratic rallies on the streets in favour of Yeltsin created breaches in the anti-Yeltsin's camp. Alexander Rutskoi, an Afghan war hero, changed his stand and denounced his erstwhile colleagues, that is to say the Communists of Russia. He announced the formation of a new faction, "Communists for democracy" and extended full support to Boris Yeltsin.³⁶

As the opposition against Yeltsin lost ground, the Congress resolved on 5 April that the presidential election would be held on 12 June; the Supreme Soviet would draft a law on the presidency as well as appropriate amendments to the RSFSR Constitution and a 4th Congress would be convened on 21 May to ratify the constitutional changes.³⁷ The Third Congress went to the extent of acceding to Yeltsin's request that he be invested with the power to issue binding decree within the scope of legislation in order to stabilise Russia's economy and advance the cause of economic and political reform.³⁸

The Fourth RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies approved

35. *ibid.*

36. I. Demechenko and G. Shipt'ko reporting in *Izvestiya*, 3 April 1991.

37. *ibid.*

38. *ibid.*

on 22 May, by a majority vote, the law on RSFSR president drafted by the Supreme Soviet and adopted by the Russian Parliament. A total of 615 Deputies voted in favour of the law; 235 Deputies voted against, while 65 abstained. The main provisions of the law on Presidency were as given under:

The Russian President was to be elected directly by the secret ballot on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. He was to be supreme official of RSFSR and the Head of executive power. Russian President was answerable to RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies on the fulfillment of socio-economic programmes. All the ministers and head of the committees and departments were to be appointed by him. The Russian President had right to call extraordinary sittings of RSFSR Congress but he did not have the right to dissolve the Congress. All the international and inter-republic treaties were to be negotiated and signed by Russian President on behalf of RSFSR.

Thus, we see that RSFSR President had been given enough powers by the new law on RSFSR Presidency to govern Russia in an independent way. However, certain restrictions were also imposed on his powers: (a) Congress of People's Deputies or Supreme Soviet was entitled, on the basis of ruling of constitutional court, to repeal Presidential decrees if they are at variance with RFSR Constitution; and (b) Russian President could be dismissed from office by

Congress of People's Deputies supported by two-third majority.³⁹

On 24 May, the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies adopted, by 894 votes to 6 with 16 abstentions, amendments to the Republican constitution in conjunction with the introduction of the post of President. The Congress, at the same time, rejected a proposal from the Supreme Soviet on the "departyization" of the Presidency, deciding instead that the President was not obliged temporarily to withdraw from his Party. The Deputies also rejected a proposal that the President may recall those officials who violated Republican laws; it was resolved at the Congress that the head of the Republic may only suspend decisions by executive bodies at odds with the Constitution and laws of the RSFSR. Moreover, the budgetary allocations would be made only by the Supreme Soviet.⁴⁰ Thus, the stage was set for the direct elections for the President.

We can see that establishment of the office of the President was a product of political reforms launched by Gorbachev in 1985. The 27th Party Congress (1986) and 19th Party Conference (1988) had been the forum which did the groundwork for amending the 1977 Brezhnev Constitution. Radical reforms were proposed for key elements of Soviet

39. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 30 April, 1991. As quoted in *SWB*, 2 May, 1991, p.C3/1. Full text of the Law on Presidency has been provided in the Appendix.

40. *SWB*, 25 May, 1991, pp.1.

political system such as State apparatus, Communist Party, Communist Party apparatus, the system of Soviets, the function of the first secretaries, and indeed the structure of Party and State. The creation of the office of President was a constituent of a new political system based on secret ballot and multiplicity of candidates. In the beginning, the proposal for this office had come from Communists who seemed to be backing out of this proposal once it became apparent that Yeltsin would be contesting for the post in near future. But Yeltsin backed by the public support had the Presidency question placed in referendum and its outcome went in his favour by a massive mandate. The wrangling between the Russian Communists and Yeltsin's supporters continued at the extraordinary 3rd Congress of People's Deputies. However, the Communists found themselves outmaneuvered by political tactics of Yeltsin who succeeded in creating the post of President in RSFSR.

This in fact paved the way for the emergence of fully sovereign and independent State of Russian Federation. In many ways the countdown for the disintegration of USSR had begun.

CHAPTER III

ELECTIONEERING : STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The stage was now set for holding of first Presidential election in Russia on 12 June 1991. The date for official opening of the Presidential campaign was fixed as 18 May 1991. All eyes of the world were now set on Russia to watch the proceedings of electioneering. People around the world were watching anxiously Russia's experiment with democracy. Could democracy be established in Russia was the question which people were asking across the globe. One could only answer this question after watching the electioneering in the first Presidential election and also after observing functioning of President in the coming time.

The elections were being managed by Russia's Central Electoral Commission along with the district electoral commissions; Central Electoral Commission had the responsibility of monitoring the election campaign, fixing the date of campaigning and elections, examining the eligibility of the candidates contesting the election and scrutinizing the signatures on the petitions, etc. The Central Electoral Commission had tremendous responsibility of conducting free and fair elections.

The procedure for filing the nomination for the Presidential post was framed by Supreme Soviet. This procedure was adopted by Central Electoral Commission. According to this procedure (or law), any person could

contest for the Presidential post either by a petition with a minimum of 100,000 signatures or by nomination of a registered political party or public Organisation that received the endorsement of at least 20 per cent of the Deputies of the Congress. Six candidates had filed the nomination for the office of President. We shall now look at their profile quickly.

Profile of candidates

Boris Yeltsin: Yeltsin was born in 1931. He experienced hunger, cold, poverty and war along with rest of the country. He began work in Sverdlovsk as driver and painter and then moved rapidly through ranks. In 1976, he became first secretary of Sverdlovsk oblast party committee. In December 1985, he was elected candidate member of politburo and first secretary of Moscow city party committee, a position which Yeltsin occupied until 1987, when he was ousted by Gorbachev. In 1990, he was elected to the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and later became chairman of Russian Federation of Supreme Soviet.¹

Nicolai Ryzhkov: The former USSR Prime Minister, Ryzhkov was regarded as Yeltsin's only serious opponent. Ryzhkov had the explicit backing of Russian Communist party apparatus.

Vadim Bakatin: Bakatin hailed from Siberia where he had lived for 47 years. For 13 years he worked in various

1. *Summary of World Broadcast* (hereafter it will be referred to as *SWB*, 11 June, 1991, p.B/9.

capacities on construction sites. Later he spent 12 years in party work. Bakatin was secretary in Kemerovo oblast for two years, and was Minister of internal affairs for two years. At the time of election, he was a member of Security Council.²

Albert Makashov: He was commander of Volga-Ural Military district and chairperson of the Kemerovo oblast Soviet.³

Aman Geldy Tuleev: He was chairman of Kemerovo regional council.⁴

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy: Zhirinovskiy was founder and leader of the insignificant Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union from which he was expelled in October, 1990 for alleged KGB collaboration. All the candidates, except Zhirinovskiy, had acquired 100,000 signatures (100,000 signatures were required for entry into ballot paper). Zhirinovskiy managed nomination through support of 477 votes of deputies of the Congress.

These six candidates had an uphill task and tremendous challenges of framing the political strategies in order to influence the voters. The political strategies and election manifesto had to be devised by taking into account the political, social and economic environment of Russia. Thus,

2. *ibid*, p.1.

3. *SWB*, 6 June, 1991, p.B/3.

4. *SWB*, 8 June, 1991, p.B/4.

it is the milieu (in which election is conducted) which determines the party manifesto, campaign themes, voters' turnout and voting behaviour in an election. Let us now study the milieu of Russia during the First Presidential election. This was the period when Russia was confronted with acute political and economic crises. M. Gorbachev's *Perestroika* of Soviet economy had gone haywire; his economic performance during last five years had been dismal. As compared to 1985, the industrial production had declined by 2 per cent in 1988. As a consequence, industrial prices increased. The shortage of goods had reached "epidemic proportions" leading to spread of rationing. The consumer market had collapsed during second half of 1988.⁵ In 1989, there were shortages of salt, sugar, soap, butter, sausages and tea. There were reports of shortages in producer goods like machinery and equipment, electricity and oil. Inflation was showing an upward trend in the range of 6-8 per cent.⁶ Budgetary deficit, unknown in Soviet Union till recently, was growing; in 1986-88 total budget deficit was 183 billion roubles or roughly 7 per cent of GNP; in 1989 it exceeded by another 120 billion roubles raising the total deficit to 303 billion roubles, or about 12 per cent of GNP.⁷ The number of incomplete investment projects instead

5. Jayashekhar, "Disturbing Economic Trend", *World Focus*, vol.11, no.4, April, 1990, pp.7-11.

6. *ibid.*

7. *ibid.*

of reducing, as planned, had actually increased. For instance, out of 135 projects in the priority sector of machine building due to be ready by 1989, only 37 were, in fact, completed.⁸

The negative effects of stagnation or decline in growth rates in real terms and growing shortages and inflation had a direct effect on the living standard, which began to fall dramatically. The shortages and inflation had harshly affected 40 million Soviet people who were below subsistence level, apart from adversely affecting even the fixed income earners.⁹

"The *Perestroika* years had, however, sent the economy nosediving. Due to frequent changes in policy and personnel and ill-conceived hasty amendments to the basic laws, production had suffered, distribution was disrupted. People were called up to put up with hyperinflation accompanied by severe shortages. The last two years of Gorbachev era were particularly shattering. According to official statistics, the national income fell by 13% in 1st quarter of 1991".¹⁰

This economic insecurity of the common people and devising a viable solution for it seemed to be the prime concern of all the Presidential candidates. One of the

8. *ibid.*

9. *ibid.*

10. Zafar Imam, "How and why Soviet Union disintegrated", *International Studies*, vol.29, no.3, October-December, 1992, p.381.

important agenda of their campaign themes was to take care of economic ills of Russia. People, distressed by the deteriorating living standards, had now lost hope in Gorbachev's economic reforms; they were now looking for some quick solutions to their economic problems. The candidates, particularly Yeltsin, sensed the mood of the people; he promised a quick shock therapy of Soviet economy.

Gorbachev's policies had failed to cope with market mechanism and the growing consumer demands that created disillusionment and anger all around. Corruption also contributed to difficulties. A major negative development during the Gorbachev era was, in fact, the menace of corruption which was unchecked and which had infected the Russian bureaucracy from top to bottom, both in government and in party. All this provided the necessary ammunition to Yeltsin camp for discrediting Gorbachev and *Perestroika*.

The nationalities crisis also assumed acute proportions in the year 1990. There was half-hearted attempt to use force in Baku in January 1990. The territorial disintegration of Soviet Union began on 11 March 1990, when the newly elected parliament of Lithuania declared total independence and it repudiated the jurisdiction of the Union. The two other Baltic republics, Estonian and Latvia, too, declared their independence soon.

Meanwhile, CPSU lost power in Russian federation, the new parliament of the republic elected in March 1990 had the majority for Yeltsin. Soon after his election, Yeltsin made

the new parliament of Russian republic adopt a declaration of sovereignty - Article 1 of the declaration proclaimed RSFSR as a "sovereign state created by people united in history",¹¹ Yeltsin moved ahead to arm himself with emergency powers. He created new ministries and departments, including a separate secret service. He established personal contacts with Bush administration and conducted a tour to Eastern Europe.¹² He treated the Baltic republics as independent and sovereign for all practical purposes. He continued his attack on Gorbachev holding him and his party responsible for all the difficulties of past and present. He openly and consistently campaigned against *Perestroika* saying that the "Soviet system was incapable of being reformed and that it had to be uprooted".¹³ Due to relentless attack from Yeltsin, Gorbachev and his party lost credibility in the eyes of the public. Yeltsin had nick for understanding the political climate and mood of the country; he picked up the relevant issues to build momentum for his election campaign.

Another person, who used political crisis to his best advantage during the election period, was Zhirinovsky. He raised the issue of formation of "greater Russia" at the cost of independence of other republics. The issue of

11. *ibid.*

12. *ibid.*

13. *ibid.*

mistreatment of Russians in other republics was raised by him at a time when inter-ethnic conflict was threatening to rave the Soviet Union. Zhirinovsky's emotional appeals to Russians to come forward in support of fellow Russians in other republics was enough to draw people to his party.

It is the political, social and economic milieu which decides the tone of election campaign, voters participation and their turnout in elections and the final verdict. The political and economic condition in Soviet Union was critical in 1991, and the candidates contesting in Presidential election realized it and used the situation to their own advantage; this was particularly true of Boris Yeltsin and V. Zhirinovsky, as we have already seen.

In comparison to other candidates, Yeltsin had been in news ever since he was removed from the position of Moscow party secretary in October 1987. Over a period of time, the disillusionment with the Gorbachev's policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* started growing as these were not yielding results even after three years of reform. Yeltsin encashed on the dissatisfaction of common people by attacking *Perestroika*, Gorbachev, CPSU and old and archaic socialist system. By 1989, Yeltsin had built up public support for himself and he had come up as a political opponent of Gorbachev. In March 1989, Yeltsin managed to win the crucial Moscow parliamentary seat by openly challenging the party. In this election, more than two-thirds of the regional party secretaries, including the secretary of the important

Leningrad party committee, were defeated. CPSU suffered another severe jolt in election to the new parliament of Russian federation, when it lost majority of the total 1068 seats. Yeltsin had the majority of 51 per cent in the Supreme Soviet of Russia and hence, he was easily elected the Chairperson of Russia's Supreme Soviet. Yeltsin had thus built up considerable clout in public as well as in the media. This gave him an edge over all the other candidates in the Presidential elections. He did not have to build a rapport with the people; they were already aware of his policies and his stand on various issues. In this sense, he had an advantage over other candidates who had to struggle for support for themselves from the scratch. Moreover, they had less than twenty days for it. Thus, the presidential election of Russia was Yeltsin's affair in every way. Our focus of study, therefore, would be to analyze Yeltsin's campaign, his tactics to engage his opponents as also his opponents' tactics to counter him, in order to build base for themselves.

Boris Yeltsin's campaign can be said to have begun ever since the idea of creation of the office of President emerged; in fact, it was Communists who had proposed such an amendment along with several political reforms made in RSFSR Constitution. The proposal for the establishment of office of President was endorsed from the Deputies of all factions. However, when Yeltsin's name was proposed for the chairmanship of Supreme Soviet of RSFSR, Communists became

wary of supporting the office of President. They believed that Yeltsin would be contesting for the post of President and he would give a tough fight to the Communist party for this post. Moreover, Communists were well positioned to block the amendment for the creation of office of President since this amendment required two-thirds majority of Supreme Soviet. Yeltsin realising the intentions of Communists, decided to take the issue to the people. Addressing a mammoth rally in Moscow on 9th March, he charged Gorbachev of launching persecution, slander and dirt in various forums. He asked people to go on offensive since "Democracy is in danger".¹⁴ He insisted that the President should be elected by the whole nation; "structure of power should be reinforced by the people in some way. All the Chairmen of Soviet Union should be elected by people in some way".¹⁵ Yeltsin had outmanoeuvred Communists by trying to settle the deadlock of establishing the office of President before the people. Yeltsin realized the fact that he enjoyed massive support of people, and if the issue of establishing of the office of President would go to people for decision, then it would certainly go in his favour. Meanwhile, huge rallies and demonstrations were being held in support of Yeltsin in various towns of Russian federation. "Yes" to Yeltsin and "no" to Gorbachev was the slogan of meeting attended by -----

14. "Yeltsin addresses Democratic Russia Rally", text of Russia Radio Report, *SWB*, 11 March, 1991, p.B/1.

15. *ibid.*

several thousand people in Sverdlovsk, very important industrial centre in southern Urals region; meetings were held in Kazan, Syklyvkar, Ulan ude, Petropavluvs, Kamehaskiy, Omsk and a number of other towns in support of democratic Russia movement.¹⁶

Yeltsin, with massive public support, had clearly outmanoeuvred the Communists in the politics of establishing the office of President. On 5 April, the Supreme Soviet drafted a law on the Presidency as well as appropriate amendments to RSFSR Constitution. It was also agreed that a fourth Congress would be convened on 21 May to ratify the constitutional changes.

Till now, we have discussed the initial phase of the campaigning which is said to have begun with the agitation for the creation of the post of the President; let us turn our attention now to official phase of campaigning which was just of 23 days duration. The campaign, launched on the eve of elections, was based on three ideological streams. The first, represented by Yeltsin advocated free market economy, privatization, independence of public sector enterprises, political reforms, viz. complete departyisation of state services and institutions, removing party organization from all stage and public institutions.¹⁷ The main proponent of

16. *SWB*, 14 March, 1991, p.B/3.

17. "Speech by Yeltsin on the main tenets of political course", text of Russia's radio broadcast, *SWB*, 3 June 1991, p.C1/7.

the second ideological stream was Nicolai Ryzhkov, a representative of Russian communist party. Some ex-Communists like Vadim Bakatin, Albert Makashov and Amangeldy Tuleev also belong to this category. Ryzkhov, representing left stream of Russian politics advocated a gradual switch to market economy but he insisted on slow pace of reforms.¹⁸ He assured the people that his return to power would not mean return of old Communist politics; he, rather, ensured accord and consolidation of the society and prevention of growing civic crisis.¹⁹ He said that his team would not consist of single Monolithic party; rather, he proposed it to be a coalition team, not only of communists but also of people from other parties and other movements.²⁰ He declared "I will set up a team of professionals and I shall, therefore, conduct policies that will promote well being of Russia".²¹

Finally, there was Vladimir Zhirinovskiy who represented the third ideological stream a new fascist trend, which aimed at creating "Greater Russia" at the cost of other union republics. Speaking at Congress of People's Deputies on 28 May, 1991, he set out his election programme in which

18. *SWB*, 18 May, 1991, p. B/3.

19. "Ryzkhov presents his election programme", *SWB*, 7 June, 1991. p.B/2.

20. "Ryzkhov answers questions on RSFSR Presidency", *SWB*, 11 June, 1991, pp.B/12-13.

21. *ibid.*

he emphasized the need to do away with confrontation between Russia and centre. He sought to resolve the nationalities problem by renouncing the division of country into regions on an ethnic basis. In economic field, he advocated the lifting of restrictions on all types of economic activity. In the sphere of foreign policy, he favoured cooperation mainly with "wealthy and cultured countries".²²

Yeltsin's election campaign was spearheaded by 'Democratic Russia' which was an amalgam of political parties, public organizations and public members. It had come into existence during Russian parliamentary elections of 1990.²³ Over the period of time, Democratic Russia had come to enjoy vast support of the people, having the membership of 1.3 million (by April, 1991). Democratic Russia was organized in cities and towns across Russia. Its significant presence in the Parliament of the RSFSR (about 35 per cent) made it a force to reckon with Russian politics. Thus, Democratic Russia had emerged as a challenge to Communists in Russia.²⁴

Democratic Russia provided a springboard for Boris Yeltsin who used it to his own advantage, depending upon the circumstances. Yeltsin was not the representative of Democratic Russia; rather it can be said that Democratic

22. Interview with LDP leader V. Zhirinovskiy on Soviet TV, *SWB*, 4 June, 1991, p. B/1.

23. Michael E Urban, *op.cit.*, p.191.

24. *ibid.*

Russia supported him from outside. Yeltsin did not maintain formal ties with Democratic Russian organizations, still some of their election programmes like resignation of the President, Government and Parliament of the USSR, departyisation of society were quite similar. Democratic Russia with its good organizational setup, provided backbone to Yeltsin's campaign.

However, the liaison between Democratic Russia and Boris Yeltsin collapsed on 23 April 1991 when Yeltsin made a complete about turn; he joined hands along with eight other chairpersons of Supreme Soviets in the republics of the USSR, to sign with Gorbachev the "nine plus one" agreement outlining the ground rules for establishing a new "Union of Sovereign States".²⁵ Yeltsin's complete turnaround created an embarrassing situation for Democratic Russia's leadership, since their ally, Yeltsin, had gone against them and signed 'cooperation contract' with their adversary, Gorbachev. On 25 April 1991, the Democratic Russia's leadership at their coordinating council meeting, expressed their deep shock and anger.²⁶

The "Nine plus one" agreement signed by Yeltsin was a part of his campaign strategy for Presidency. Yeltsin knew that in the public view, he had become a principal opposition to the communist order and the central

25. *ibid.*

26. *ibid.*

authorities, and that he would now have to move on and create an image of himself as being "cooperative" among the electorate. "Nine plus one" agreement of 23 April 1991, convinced the electorate of the fact that Yeltsin was not just confrontational with Gorbachev, but, with a view to resolving the problems the country was facing, he was willing to lend cooperation.²⁷ This spirit of cooperation among various political parties and personalities was the need of the hour, particularly, at a time, when Soviet Union was facing crisis in all sectors. Yeltsin had again shown his sense of perception and he had again used the opportunities for his own benefit; he, in fact, was a clever strategist who not only sensed the mood of the electorate but also used other parties and candidates for his own ends. The other candidates were always on their toes, defending themselves, as Yeltsin outmanoeuvred them on every occasion.

When "Nine plus one" agreement was signed, miners went on strike in Kuzbass, Kiselevsk, Prokopyevsk Kranoarmeysk, Donitsk and Seledovo Makeyaska to protest against Yeltsin's alignment with Gorbachev. ²⁸ Yeltsin visited them and successfully convinced them that the agreement had been signed in their favour. The agreement recognised economic sovereignty of Russia which implied the transfer of all union property to Russian jurisdiction, and that, ultimately

27. *SWB*, 25 May 1991, p.C2/7.

28. *SWB*, 1 May 1991, p.B/4.

it would lead to passing of this property to the miners. Yeltsin, thus, brought the miners back to his fold.²⁹ As a matter of fact, the process of transferring the mines to Russia's jurisdiction, had been going on for some time. But Yeltsin was able to portray the transfer of ownership as a direct result of his agreement with the Centre. Industrial peace, which was disturbed throughout Russia, was now pacified and workers' movement had turned in favour of Yeltsin. On the other hand, Gorbachev's popularity received a further setback when, during the May Day demonstration in Koylma Chukotka, workers demanded Gorbachev's resignation.³⁰ Yeltsin's popularity touched a new height when, at a founding meeting of Kuzbass workers committee, Yeltsin was nominated a candidate for Russia's Presidency.³¹ It shows the extent of popularity Yeltsin enjoyed among the miners.

Yeltsin used the office of the Chairman of Supreme Soviet of Russia to his own advantage in the campaign; he carefully listened to the demands of local citizens and officials, military personnel and scholars, workers and farmers, then for the relief of the complainants, he signed special documents with the purpose of providing succour.³²

29. "Speech by Yeltsin on the main tenets of political course", text of Russia's Radio Broadcast, *SWB*, 3 June 1991, p.C1/7.

30. *SWB*, 1 May 1991, p.B/4.

31. *SWB*, 2 May 1991, p.B/4.

32. *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p.B/10/

During his 15-day tour of the regions of Russian Federation, he examined the documents already prepared and signed them there and then. These provided for foundation of association for economic cooperation between the oblasts of the urals region of the RSFSR; the foundation of the greater volgo association for economic cooperation between the republics and oblasts of volgo valley region of the RSFSR; measures to regulate socio-economic condition for development of northern region of the RSFSR during the transition to the market; measures to ensure effective socio-economic development in Murmansk oblast; and creation of conditions for accelerated development of the Karolean SSR and expansion of economic independence.³³ Yeltsin combined his official tour as Chairperson with his campaigning, thereby, creating his image in people's mind and hearts as a 'saviour'. His official tour to Murmansk, Voronezh, Tula, Izevsk, Sverdlovsk, Bryansk, Perm and elsewhere greatly helped him to further consolidate his position.³⁴

Yeltsin tried to convince people of the benefits of his political and economic programmes while criticizing the communists for the present pathetic state of affairs. He also toured major industrial centres in N.W. Russia. During this tour, the Coordinating Council of servicemen for -----

33. "Yeltsin on RSFSR tour and party mud slinging" - text of Russia Radio Report in *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p.B/10.

34. *SWB*, 30 May 1991, p.1.

Democracy backed his candidature.³⁵ Thousands of peoples (Muslims) in Dagestan joined pro-Yeltsin rally and appealed to Dagestan committee of Communist Party, RSFSR, to end its slanderous campaign against Yeltsin.³⁶ In the campaign speeches, Yeltsin explained to the electorates the achievements of the work of the Supreme Soviet and the Government of Russia in the past one year.. He said, "the most valuable result of our work was the creation of a fundamentally new legal foundations for all main areas of life in Russia".³⁷ Yeltsin also took credit for removing the fear from the minds of Union leadership regarding market reforms, since the Russian Government had initiated a programme under the supervision of Silayev, Chairman of Council of Ministers, for the stabilization of the economy, transition to market relations and start of real improvement in people's lives in two years (1991-92). Yeltsin stressed that it was their principled position for market reforms that "predetermined the union leadership incipient recovery from its deep seated allergy to the market".³⁸

Yeltsin launched a virulent attack on the Communists, who were his main opposition in the election, by denying them any credit for the achievements during 70 years of -----

35. *SWB*, 11 June 1991, p.1.

36. *ibid*.

37. *SWB*, 30 May 1991, p.1.

38. "Speech by Yeltsin - Main tenets of political course", *SWB*, 3 June 1991, p.C1/2.

their rule. Yeltsin wanted the people to look at him as an alternative to Communists.

Yeltsin claimed, "Marxist experiment was forced on us, or it simply pushed us off the path which most civilized countries have taken. This has been reflected in today's situation when 40 per cent of the people are living below the poverty line".³⁹

Trying to make his programme clear to the audience, he said "I am not in favour of socialism or capitalism but in favour of Russians living better materially, spiritually and culturally." He emphasized, "the idea of our policies is not only to strengthen Russia state sovereignty and implement radical reforms as in practice. This is not the end in itself. We have begun most important work for renewal of Russia for the sake of her citizens so as to improve their lives. Moreover, not in some distant future".⁴⁰

Yeltsin tried to draw support from wide cross section of the people including workers, peasants, military-men, small traders, entrepreneurs, pensioners, invalids and students. In fact, in his election manifesto there were programmes for everyone of them.

Important features of this programme may be thus summarized:

39. *ibid.*

40. "Speech by Yeltsin on Main tenets of Political Course", *SWB*, 3 June 1991, p.C1/3.

- Decision to increase minimum earnings 50 per cent higher than union wide level for worker;
- Social protection of military and their families in the territory of Russian federation;
- Creation of independent farms which will continue to exist along with collective and state farms;
- Start of small scale privatization - of housing, retail and wholesale trade enterprises, and service sphere enterprises serving agriculture.
- Guarantee for the social security to citizens in transition to the market;
- Programme for creation of jobs especially for socially unprotected categories of population, pensioners, invalids and students;
- Implementation of a common Russian Programme without delay to strengthen public order, to protect citizens safety and to combat crime; and
- Special measures to combat corruption.⁴¹

Indirectly criticizing the regime which had been existing in USSR, Yeltsin promised to create an atmosphere of freedom of conscience and a man's right to his individuality. He said, "Culture and morality should be at the centre of President's attention. Our principle is a

 41. ibid, p.C1/6.

complete rejection of a dictate over creative process, in whatever sphere of activity it may occur".⁴²

In this election, Ryzhkov and Zhirinovsky criticized their main opponent Yeltsin severely in order to discredit him in the eyes of the public. They highlighted their own political and economic programmes. The 'image destruction' tactics of the opponents went on simultaneously with projection of positive self-image. The other Presidential candidates, too, finding Yeltsin in an enviable position, launched slanderous accusations and falsifications against him and started using methods which vilified the election atmosphere.⁴³ *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (7 June 1991) published a report captioned "What links Russian leaders with International Mafia"?⁴⁴ It was alleged in the report that Boris Yeltsin, Chairman of RSFSR Supreme Soviet, had confirmed the licence of 79 year old resident Roberto Copola for sending charitable aid to RSFSR despite knowing the fact that Copola had earlier been caught involved in elementary swindling.⁴⁵ Tuleev and V. Zhirinovsky demanded that the

42. *ibid.*

43. "Every election campaign is a two-way process of image-building and image destruction with political parties in fray trying to project a positive self-image and simultaneously also attempting to destroy the positive image of political parties in opposition", Varma S.P. and Iqbal Narain (eds.), *Fourth General Elections in India*, vol.10 (Bombay : Orient Longman, 1972), p.24.

44. *SWB*, 11 June 1991, p.B/15.

45. *ibid.*

elections be postponed until the charges made against Yeltsin in *Sovetskaya Russiya* were investigated.

In fact, there was no substance behind the accusations levelled against Yeltsin, as elucidated by the mass media and Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev. Kozyrev said, "It was simply an attempt to whip up a scandal out of six months after the incident and sling mud at one's own country".⁴⁶ The "Copola Affair" had been investigated by both Italian and Moscow Embassy in October, 1990 as soon as its dubious past became known. The permission to Copola in giving humanitarian and social aid was put off immediately. It was a clear attempt by *Sovetskaya Russiya* and right wing conservative forces to discredit Yeltsin and prevent the first round of elections. After all, it was quite obvious that Yeltsin would win as he had tangible advantage in many regions of Russia. Ruslan Khasbulatov, Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, reacting to the false accusations in the articles carried by *Sovetskaya Russiya* and *Moskovskaya Pravda* said, "All opponents of Yeltsin aimed at toughening up this campaign, at toughening it up in the most upstightly way, using slanderous accusations and using methods that are truly inappropriate for political practice".⁴⁷ Accusing other candidates for their lack of -----

46. "Russian TV interview with Kozyrev, RSFSR Minister of Foreign Affairs", *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p.B/12.

47. "Interview from Russian TV with Khasbulatov, Deputy Chairman of RFSFR Supreme Soviet", *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p.B/13.

appropriate thoughts, ideas, opinions and programmes, Khasbulatov elaborated "virtually none of the contenders has set out any viable programme. In one way or another they all pick up certain key items from our manifesto and try to talk a language similar to ours. They even include the 500-days programme and the current Yeltsin-Silayev programme in their manifestoes.⁴⁸ He came down heavily on all the candidates, except Yeltsin, saying that contenders do not have a real programme for overcoming the crisis, for developing the economy, ...and the social sphere....⁴⁹

Yeltsin's camp was also charged of mud-slinging electoral tactics; Ryzhkov was charged with attempt to buy votes in different regions of the country but this charge was denied by Ryzhkov at various public speeches.⁵⁰

The former USSR Prime Minister was regarded as Yeltsin's only serious opponent. Though he was backed by media (especially on *Central Television*, in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and to some extent in *Pravda*) and Communist party apparatus, yet he had tremendous challenges at hand: firstly, he had to tackle the fear psychosis created by Yeltsin that Ryzhkov coming to power would mean return of old Communist policies; secondly, he had to counter the

48. *ibid*, p.B/14.

49. *ibid*, p.B/13.

50. "Ryzhkhov denies that candidates buy votes" *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 6 June 1991, *SWB*, 11 June 1991, p.B/15.

growing popularity of Yeltsin; and lastly, he had tremendous responsibility of convincing people of his changed policies and their effectiveness in dealing with problems facing the country.

Ryzhkov tried to dispel the electorates' fear of Communists coming to power if he assumed office by pointing out to them that though he was a member of Russian Communist Party, he was not officially supported by it.⁵¹ He said, "my government would consist of a "coalition team of not only Communists but also of non-party people from other parties and other movements and it would conduct policies to promote well-being of Russia."⁵² He tried to dissociate himself from the old Communists by holding the party functionaries responsible for political and economic crisis facing the country. To this circle belonged M. Gorbachev, Edward Shevardnadze and B. Yeltsin.⁵³ Ryzhkov questioned their credibility by pointing out to the electorates that they changed views far too frequently.

Ryzhkov's programme exhibited a complete turnabout from Communist party programme; he had moved away from "state directed" CPSU to "state guided economy". Ryzhkov was in favour of market economy but an economy which was not

51. "Ryzhkov answers questions on RSFSR Presidency", *SWB*, 11 June 1991, p. B/12.

52. *ibid.*

53. "Ryzhkov press conference on the eve of election", *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p. B/7.

created on the sufferings of working people. He stressed upon "strict regulations during the transition period, an unconditional implementation of obligations on agreements, and a staged introduction of market mechanism in order to make the transfer to the market most painless.⁵⁴ He considered turning the economy towards individual as most important directions of state activity.⁵⁵ He claimed that his "first step will be the creation of effective legal and functional infrastructure for transition to market economy."⁵⁶

To counter his principal opponent Boris Yeltsin, Ryzhkov launched a blistering attack on him; he accused Yeltsin of preparing to destroy the collective farms and trying to eliminate the army. He also criticised Yeltsin's economic reforms by calling it a shock-therapy method of reforming the economy.⁵⁷ Ryzhkov felt that the main function of the leadership, at present, should be social protection for the broadest strata of working people, so that 95 per cent of the population does not suffer in course of reform being carried out.⁵⁸ He stressed, "I am putting

54. "Ryzhkov presents his election programme", *SWB*, 7 June 1991, p B/3.

55. *ibid.*

56. *ibid.*

57. M.E. Urban, *Op. cit.*, p.196.

58. "Ryzhkov claims 95% support for RSFSR Presidency", *SWB*, 18 May 1991, p. B/3.

forward a gradual switch to market economy but in a considered way so that this does not again become a strong social scourge on population".⁵⁹ To what extent he was able to dispel fear of communist regime is difficult to say but it certainly was an enviable task for him because he was backed unofficially by Russian communist party. Moreover, Ryzhkov spent most of his energy and resources during the campaign period in countering Yeltsin rather than presenting his programmes before the electorates.

Albert Makashov, commander of the Volga-Urals military district and Aman Tuleev, chairperson of the Kemerovo oblast Soviet, banked on the support of military personnel and the workers, respectively. But an election could not be won by depending on one section of the population. Both the candidates seemed to be trailers in the Presidential race. By repeatedly emphasising on the gradual economic reform, they were encroaching upon Ryzhkov's votes who was the main representative of anti-Yeltsin columns. Makashov, being a military man, tried to convince the people that his commander like qualities would greatly help him in political and economic governance, since army officers were patriots and uncorrupted.⁶⁰ Free housing, social security for unemployed, checking unemployment and inflation, GDR level of prosperity, were some of the major components of his -----

59. *ibid.*

60. "Makashov outlines his election programme", *SWB*, 7 June 1991, p. B/3.

election programme.⁶¹ He favoured "Sovietization of the economy not privatisation"; he called upon Russians to be "patriotic", so that Russia could be extricated from the position which they have found themselves in. Makashov believed that appeals on the patriotism could translate votes for him in the elections.

Tuleev's approach was to cut into potential Yeltsin voters in the east, particularly the miners, who might still be disgusted with Yeltsin's joining hands with Gorbachev.⁶² Democratic Russia, in order to prevent him from winning the support of miners and workers, portrayed him as a candidate of Communist Party apparatus, masquerading as miners' favourite son.⁶³

After seeing the election programme of six presidential candidates, it can be said that there was consensus among them regarding the economic reform. However, they disagreed on the pace with which these reforms should be carried out. While Yeltsin wanted a shock-therapy method, Ryzhkov was addressing on slow pace - a gradual change to market economy.

Another important candidate, Vadim Bakatin, tipped to number three position in the presidential race, drew support from the associates of Gorbachev. Bakatin called for

61. *ibid.*

62. M.E. Urban, *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

63. *ibid.*

subjective assessment of the situation, particularly the crisis of Soviet society and the economy. He appealed to the electorates to exercise their choice on the basis of rationality and common sense.⁶⁴ Bakatin's views on economic reforms, defence and nationality question were quite different from those of other candidates. He stressed the need to give up "sacred dogmas" - the socialized economy -- and emphasized the need for opting two-tier economy wherever there is space for private ownership and entrepreneurship, and the public sectors.⁶⁵ As a member of CPSU Central Committee, his views on the economic reforms were most striking. He said, "One must not put ideology into economy, nor must ideology be held to be more important than the economy. Since we are talking about common sense, it pre-supposes that we shall do everything that is sensible and useful for the people and not what is in keeping with this ism or that."⁶⁶ Bakatin accused other candidates of making false promises of reforming the economy in two-three years. He appealed to voters not to believe in "illusions" created by other candidates. His views on military, however, were unlikely to win him any support from military men. Speaking on the subject, he said "military-industrial

64. "Bakatin condemns populism of opponents programme", *SWB*, 12 June 1991, p. B/7.

65. *ibid.*

66. "Interview with Presidential candidate Bakatin", *SWB*, 1 June 1991, p. B/1.

complex is hypertropied and exaggerated...therefore, we need to cut the defence expenditure".⁶⁷

On the nationality question also, Bakatin sounded different from other candidates. He said, "every state, every republic, in accordance with constitution, has a right to secede from the union and we simply do not have any right to hold on to anybody by force; that is unconstitutional".⁶⁸ Bakatin, in his scheme of issues to be tackled on priority basis, placed the inter-ethnic problem right after the economy.

However, Bakatin's strategy of building his election programme on common sense, and appealing to the people to vote on rationality, was unlikely to succeed in the face of the campaigns marked by rhetorics demagoguery and false promises. No doubt, Bakatin had set the moral standard of the campaigning.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of small Liberal Democratic Party of Soviet Union was rather an unknown figure in the Russian politics till his name was proposed for the post of President. That his popularity, at the start of the election campaign was on a low ebb, was clearly evident from the fact that he could not even collect the requisite number of signatures needed for the post. He was forced to seek the endorsement of 20 per cent of deputies of

67. *ibid.*

68. *ibid.*

Russia's Fourth Congress, to find a place on the presidential ballot. However, in the poll of the Congress, he won the support of 477 voters, (although he needed a mere 213 for confirmation); 417 deputies voted against and 36 abstained. Zhirinovskiy got this tremendous response in the polls of the Congress due to the support of the Communists. The Communists were, all the more, trying to tap into Yeltsin's non-Communist and anti-Communist support by backing this candidate of Liberal Democratic Party in the Congress. The local Communist Party organisations even began to make direct contribution in terms of personnel and materials to Zhirinovskiy's campaign.⁶⁹

Once provided an opening into the politics, Zhirinovskiy went on to carve out a sphere of influence for himself among the electorates. He launched a blistering attack on the Communists as well as on Boris Yeltsin in the campaign speeches, rallies, Television interviews, etc. Criticising the Communists for the spate of problems ravaging Russia, he said, "thanks to the *Perestroika* which neither I nor million of people wanted, there is a deterioration of life. Today, when our President is in Kazakhstan, where there is some success, it would be better if Gorbachev travelled to the depths of Russia where there is a decline in the living standard...."⁷⁰ Appealing to the people, he said, "for

69. M.E. Urban, *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

70. "Interview with Zhirinovskiy, SWB, 31 May 1991, p. B/1.

decades you have been deceived, made fools of and stuffed full of various dogmas, and the political show still continues. All leaders blamed their predecessors for the errors committed. Russian State is dying before your very eyes, culture is on the decline. There is no economy. There is destitution and hunger". Criticising the leadership for changing their colours, Zhirinovsky appealed to electorates to beware of such politicians who were now presenting the crisis as "confrontation between Russia and Centre".⁷¹

Zhirinovsky then focussed his attention on Yeltsin whom he accused of failure on several fronts: Yeltsin policies lead to migration of countless Russians from their places of residence; Yeltsin also ignored Russian population wherever he happened to be. Zhirinovsky accused Yeltsin for being more interested in contacting the leaders of various popular fronts. Blaming him further for pursuing faulty policies Zhirinovsky said "wherever Yeltsin is, there is war, there is fascism there, there is counter evolution there".⁷² Continuing his criticism of Yeltsin, Zhirinovsky said that Yeltsin's victory would generate civil war, and a military coup in Russia and in USSR very soon. He claimed that Yeltsin did not understand the ethnic question.

71. "Press Conference by Zhirinovsky", *SWB*, 10 June 1991, p. B/6.

72. *ibid.*

Yeltsin who was tipped to be the President of Russia, continued to be Zhirinovskiy's main point of criticism.⁷³ Zhirinovskiy simultaneously tried to present his own programmes before the electorate. Giving prime importance to the nationalities question"; Zhirinovskiy raised the issue of 25 million Russians in other Soviet Republics where they had been reduced to the status of second class citizens. He vowed to take up the cause of Russian minorities living in other republics. He said "New President of Russia be not only President of Russia but also President of all Russians living on the territory of USSR and all Russian speakers and take under protection all the small peoples."⁷⁴ He added "I would come down on the side of defending Abkhov and Osetian peoples, small people which today the democratic movement of Georgia is practically turning into second class people and destroying them before our eyes."⁷⁵ This statement of Zhirinovskiy raised furore in Congress of People's Deputies and in the media. Media compared his 'genocide' remarks to those of Hitler; Communists criticised him for inflaming inter-ethnic conflict.

Defending himself of the accusations of making genocidal remarks, Zhirinovskiy said "I am a fierce opponent

73. "Speech on Russian TV broadcast by Zhirinovskiy", *SWB*, 11 June 1991, p. B/5.

74. *ibid.*

75. *ibid.*

of fascism.⁷⁶ He further added, "I don't want to raise Russian above other people. I am an opponent of nationalism. All nations and people are equal under law. But today, 155 million Russians are suffering and I, as future President of Russia, would definitely protect all Russians."⁷⁷ He claimed "I would very much like to remove from agenda once and for all the nationalities question."⁷⁸ For providing solution to this complex nationalities question, Zhirinovskiy framed "new nationalities policy", the emphasis of this policy was Russianisation of other republics, i.e., Russia according to him would include whole territory from the Baltic to the Pacific, from Kuskokwim to Murmansk and from Kishinev to Kamchatka and the three Baltic republics.⁷⁹ Zhirinovskiy's "new nationalities policy" took up the cause of Russians only at the cost of subserving the right of autonomy of other republics. He was indeed harping on the theme of "old greater Russia" and patriotic feeling of Russians. His repeated reference to oppression of the Russians were aimed to raise the ethnic feeling of the people leading to accentuation of inter-ethnic conflict. Zhirinovskiy was trying to bring to fore the darker instincts

76. "Press Conference by Zhirinovskiy", *SWB*, 10 June 1991, p. B/6.

77. "Zhirinovskiy election address", *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p. B/20.

78. *ibid.*

79. "Interview with Zhirinovskiy", *SWB*, 4 June 1991, p. B/2.

of the people by raising the emotional and ethnic issues which, he thought, would certainly bring him votes in the election. Zhirinovskiy was representative of darker side and fascist trend in Russian politics, which were evident from his "New Nationalities Policy".

Zhirinovskiy realised the fact that his support was limited to middle-strata young people, private farmers. Therefore, he repeatedly referred to their welfare in his speeches. Zhirinovskiy was the only presidential candidate who talked about problems faced by women and promised to solve them if elected. He said in election address: "I would take most active part in solving women's issues so as to eliminate it once and for all."⁸⁰

In the economic field, Zhirinovskiy advocated the lifting of restriction on all types of economic activity and putting state sector, the cooperative, private farmers and enterprises, collective farmers and peasant farmers on an equal footing.⁸¹ He promised to take steps to reform the cooperatives.⁸²

On the foreign policy front, Zhirinovskiy said, he would take recourse to a "cheap foreign policy" by ending Russia's confrontation with America and Europe. He said, "We ought to reach an agreement with USA and Europe on -----"

80. "Zhirinovskiy election address", *SWB*, 13 June 1991, p. B/20.

81. *ibid.*

82. *ibid.*

disputed points and reshape the East-West Axis into North-South one."⁸³

Zhirinovskiy claimed that he was the third political force, a neutral one between the ruling Communists and Democratic Russia; thus, he had a conciliatory position to everybody's liking, particularly to million-strong masses of middle strata of society which looked forward to a president who would protect their interests. Zhirinovskiy presented himself before the electorate in a very sophisticated way, he talked about freedom in economy, ideology, politics and human rights, within the framework of law. The electorates living in an atmosphere of economic insecurity, fear, and political uncertainty, were swayed by the rhetorics and illusive promises of Zhirinovskiy.

However, during the campaigning for the Presidential election, no real surprises came to the fore. Yeltsin continued to maintain his lead over other candidates in the opinion polls. Zhirinovskiy took advantage of the publicity provided to him by media and tried to carve out his own niche among the electorates by populism, demagoguery and rhetoric. He rushed from rally to rally, blasting his opponents and forewarning of "a civil war and dictatorship within six months if he is not elected President".⁸⁴ It is

83. "Interview with Zhirinovskiy", *SWB*, 4 June 1991, p. B/4.

84. *ibid.*

surprising that without any organisational support, he was able to reach the masses.

It is difficult to correlate the intensity of campaigning with the electoral verdict, but election campaigns certainly help candidates and their parties to reach out to the people and to put forward their programmes. The election campaign provides opportunities to the people for political participation -- people attend rallies, ask questions of the candidates. The conscious and active electorate makes the elections as well as political process healthy.

In Russian presidential elections 1991, active participation of the people surprised many political analysts since free and fair elections, with active campaigning, were being held for the first time in Russia, where people were not used to such political freedom and electioneering.

The electioneering was marked by political bickering, rhetoric, mud-slinging, false charges (usually witnessed in the elections of any democratic country), though the candidate like Bakatin tried to set a precedent through his own 'clean' campaign. But his example was hardly followed by the other candidates. Boris Yeltsin took an early lead in the campaigning, and he was tipped to be winner in the opinion polls right from the beginning. The organisational set-up of Democratic Russia, Yeltsin's own official-cum-campaigning tour, spread over several parts of

Russia and involvement of foreign experts in the campaigning, had put him in an enviable position in the presidential race. All the other candidates merely danced to tune of the tactics adopted by Yeltsin. They spent most of their time in formulating strategies to counter Yeltsin. Zhirinovskiy's right wing slogan, Ryzhkov's attempt to create fear about malaise of free market economy and Bakatin's appeal to vote on rationality and common sense, could hardly make a dent in the support-base of Yeltsin. The election campaign, indeed, was Yeltsin's show from start to finish.

CHAPTER IV

ELECTION RESULTS

The atmosphere on 12 June, 1991, the day of election in Russia, was feverish. People thronged the polling booths in large numbers - 74.66 per cent of total electorates voted. Such a high percentage of voting was no mean achievement for a political system where direct election with multiple candidates were being held for the first time. Although high percentage of voting has been a recurring feature even earlier, during post-Soviet elections, its novel significance was, thus, obvious.

106,484,518 citizens were recorded on the lists of 88 electoral districts set up on the territory of the republic. Out of this, 79,498,240 electors or 74.66 per cent took part in voting.¹ Six RSFSR Presidential candidates were included on the voting paper for a secret ballot. As per the results of the elections declared, the votes were divided as under:

1.92 per cent of the issued voting papers were crossed out and 2.16 per cent were deemed invalid.²

Some irregularities during the elections and counting also came to light. The Central Election Commission

1. *SWB*, 21 June 1991, p. B/4.

2. *ibid.*

Table 4.1

Name of candidate	% for candidate	% against candidate
Yeltsin, Boris Nokolayevich	57.30	40.54
Ryzhkov, Nikolay Ivanovich	16.85	80.99
Zhirinnovsky, Vlamimir Volforich	7.81	90.03
Tuleev, Aman	6.81	91.03
Makashov, Albert Mikhayalovich	3.74	94.10
Bakatin, Vadim	3.42	94.42

Source:³

declared invalid the voting results at polling station No. 389 of the Leningrad oblast electoral district, and polling station No.1,904 of the Novosibirik electoral district. However, these did not affect the election results.⁴

Boris Yeltsin was declared President of RSFSR as he had received 57.30 per cent of total votes polled and this was more than half of votes of electors who took part in voting.

74.66 per cent of polling in an election can be considered good; more so, in view of the fact that direct elections were being held for the first time in Russia.⁵ The high turn-out shows that people had hopes that the

3. *SWB*, 21 June, 1991, p. B/4.

4. *ibid.*

5. *SWB*, 15 June 1991, p. C1/3.

emergence of institution of Presidential power in Russia would change life for better.

Post-election scenario was marked by allegations of procedural irregularities of elections and violations of democratic norms. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy went to the extent of asking the electoral commission to cancel votes for Yeltsin. He charged Yeltsin for using the office for campaigning and of ordering the police to vote for him. Zhirinovskiy alleged that leadership of Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered everyone in the Republic police to vote for Chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Zhirinovskiy also charged Yeltsin of using his official position for personal ends, e.g., the printing of 3 million copies of Boris Yeltsin campaign posters, telecast several video films on Russian TV during the campaign, and use of state-owned aeroplane during the election campaign. Zhirinovskiy alleged that all the above expenditure would not have been met out of 200,000 roubles allotted to each candidate by Supreme Soviet.⁶

Russian TV carried a bulletin on procedural irregularities on 12 June 1991: sometimes there is no official seal or signature of a member of the electoral commission on the reverse side of voting slips. Evidently, such slips were regarded as void. In one Moscow oblast printing house, 25,000 voting slips were printed with

6. CDSP, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p. 1.

presidential and vice-presidential candidates mixed up. Fortunately, the candidacy of the vice-presidents had no significance in voting.⁷

The election violations were widely reported on Russian TV, Radio and in newspapers like *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. *Sovetskaya Rossiya* carried the report on 13 June 1991. A day before the election, a stand with materials about N. Ryzhkov in the building of Orenburg's socio-political information centre, was literally destroyed by an unknown person and his portraits were roughly torn down. On the election day, people in Turkestan street (polling station No.221) found leaflets urging them to vote for Boris Yeltsin in their letter boxes.⁸

Some serious allegations were made against Yeltsin and his supporters: on the election day, when campaigning was prohibited by law, the entire town had been pasted with leaflets and posters urging people to vote for Yeltsin. Posters were pasted in trolley buses, bus stops, shops and at the entrances to block of flats. Leaflets and posters of other candidates were torn down by Yeltsin's supporters.⁹

Complaints were received from several quarters regarding not being provided enough time for election campaign: voters questioned the idea of holding elections in

7. *SWB*, 14 June 1991, p. C1/5.

8. *ibid.*

9. *ibid.*

just three weeks when, even for local Soviet elections, three months' time was provided. Three weeks was too short a period, and people simply did not have time to think or to give meaning to the information which bombarded them. They did not have enough time to analyse the manifestoes and programmes of various candidates. So their voting seemed to be based on promises made by candidates in their speeches on TV and radio.¹⁰

Thousands of citizens complained that they were unable to participate in the elections perhaps due to rigid electoral procedures; at least 10,000 sailors at foreign ports were deprived of the opportunity to vote, as the RSFSR Central Electoral Commission had prohibited the holding of early elections and the opening of the ballot boxes at ship in seas.¹¹

It was common belief among the voters and election analysts that had the electoral commission been given enough time to prepare for elections, these irregularities would have been minimised (or reduced). But considering the limitations of time and lack of experience of conducting direct elections (open to the gaze of media, foreign as well as national) polling for the First presidential election can be said to be fair and free. Boris Yeltsin had a landslide victory in First presidential election.

10. *SWB*, 17 June 1991, p. C1/7.

11. *ibid.*

But what did the election results reflect? Yeltsin said, "the fact that between 40-50 million people in Russia have voted for a democratic leader shows that a majority of the Russian Federation's population is in favour of democratization of society and reforms. Those who called for halts or for going backwards did not receive support from the Russian people."¹² Yeltsin stressed, "the people have spoken unambiguously against the rule of CPSU, they have held it responsible for the ongoing crisis afflicting Russian society and economy and Russians believe quite strongly that it is Boris Yeltsin who is going to take them out of crisis."¹³ Despite everything that was written and said about Yeltsin during the campaigning (he was described as a "destructive force and slanderer"), the election results showed that people had backed him and linked their hopes of future with him.

The results of Mayorial elections in Moscow and Leningrad, held simultaneously with the Presidential elections, also indicated a clear victory for Democratic Russia. Gavriil Popov, the present Chairman of Moscow City Soviet was elected Mayor by Muscovites. Popov, doctor of economics, representing the radical forces, stressed upon "the need to transform bureaucratic services and -----"

12. "Reaction of Yeltsin on election results", *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p. 1.

13. "Reaction of Yeltsin on election results", *Izvestia*, 14 June 1991 in *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p. 1.

organization of city with entrepreneurial ones".¹⁴ Anatoly Sobchak's election as Mayor of Leningrad also looked as convincing. After being elected, Sobchak said, "it is no secret that I am Yeltsin's representative, so I link with Yeltsin and his team, Russia's destiny on the root of radical changes".¹⁵ After observing the results of Russian Presidential and Mayorial elections in Moscow and Leningrad, it can be said that voters had given a clear mandate to Yeltsin and his team.

Regional break up of votes across Russia is shown in Table 4.2.

Obviously, Yeltsin enjoyed support across the country. In forty out of 88 constituencies Yeltsin obtained a majority of votes from the electorate; among the major industrial cities the maximum support for Yeltsin came from Moscow and Sverdlovsk where 71.56 per cent and 84.8 per cent of voters, respectively, supported him.¹⁶ In Vladivostok (far East), figures for voting on ships in Pacific and Indian Oceans and off Antarctic coast showed that 81 per cent of seamen had supported Boris Yeltsin. Nikolay Ryzhkov and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy received about 6 per cent of votes. The majority of the inhabitants of Ulan Ude voted for

14. *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p. 3.

15. *SWB*, 15 June 1991, p. C1/2.

16. *ibid.*

Table 4.2. Regional Break Up of Votes Across Russia

Region	Yeltsin	Ryzhkov	Zhivinovsky	Tuler	Makashov	Bakatin
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Chita Oblast	36.8	31.5	10.2	6.6	4.9	N.A.
Aginsko Buryat District	17.5	47.69	6.1	10.1	2.9	N.A.
Buryatia	34.4	25.00	11.7	20.1	2.3	2.5
TVER Oblast	43.7	24.80	10.9	9.1	4.1	3.7
Kamchatkg Oblast	60.00	16.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Koryak Auto-nomous Okrug	42.0	20.50	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Irkutsk Oblast	53.00	14.00	12.0	10.0	2.0	4.0
Khabarovsk Kroy	57.80	18.09	7.04	4.6	3.0	3.0
Maritimekray	61.60	15.61	5.5	3.98	5.54	3.89
Kaliningrad Oblast	45.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Volvograd Oblast	55.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Sverdlovsk Oblast	90.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Tuva Oblast	38.00	42.50	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Ulyanovsk Oblast	80.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Kemerovo\ Oblast	80.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Moscow	72.00	11.58	4.01	2.6	2.67	4.05
Leningrad	85.00					
Mari Republic	51.4	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Murmarsko Blast	56.00	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Novksisk	75.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Krasnoyarsk	80.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Khabarosk	63.9					
Novosibirsk	65.0					
Yakutsk	56.0					
Blagovesh-chensk	57.0					

Yeltsin. They explained their preference for Yeltsin as lack of any worthwhile alternative to him.¹⁷ In Chelya-binsk oblast (South Urals), majority voted for Yeltsin; sociologists explained their choice for Yeltsin to their (people's) belief in his doggedness and consistency that could pull Russia out of crisis. This reflects the fact that Yeltsin, through his long term campaigning (which started from the agitation for creation of the office of President), had turned public support in his favour. People's dissatisfaction with the old system was such that they were willing to believe whatever Yeltsin was saying; they were just hypnotized by Yeltsin's personality and speeches. Krasnaya Zvezda carried a report on 14 June 1991: "Yeltsin rally was seen as made up of hypnotized 'true believers' showing drug like desire for unthinking faith in speakers. There were hardly any face in rallies on Manege Square which had skeptical look. People who had been fed with the opium of one set of illusions is now reaching out for the opium of another set. It is distressing to see this kind of unthinking and unconscious faith for Boris Yeltsin".¹⁸ Kuranty of 15 June 1991 carried a report saying that Yeltsin's victory shows people hate CPSU. Nevertheless, power, communications, money and all the structures of economy are still in the hands of the CPSU

17. *SWB*, 14 June 1991, p. C1/4.

18. *CDSP*, 17 July 1991, p.4.

nomenclature. It further said that the CPSU may not give up those things simply as a result of voting but, psychologically, its back has been broken....Russia will be reborn and will not become a step mother but a real mother to its children...today is a big holiday on the streets, a holiday of liberation".¹⁹ People had come to understand the causes of crisis and also who was responsible for it; they were willing to give Yeltsin a responsibility of dealing with the crisis.²⁰

Our analysis of the election results raises a few questions:

- (a) What were the reasons for the humiliating defeat of Ryzkhov, indirectly backed by CPSU?
- (b) Why did not CPSU officially nominate a candidate?

Inspite of having explicit backing of the Communist party apparatus and quite favourable media coverage (especially central television, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Pravda*), Ryzkhov, the ex-Prime Minister of USSR had a poor result to show at the polls. His poor show can be

19. *ibid.*

20. What influence did the electoral programmes of candidates have on voting is very difficult to tell, since the opinion polls of the elections are not available. Similarly, data about rural-urban voting percentage, age group, distribution of voting are not available. The non-availability of central election commission reports and opinion polls makes it difficult for us to say anything conclusively about the election results. The reasons for landslide victory of Yeltsin can only be assumed by drawing inferences from newspaper reports.

attributed to the fact that he was seen as representative of CPSU which was detested by the people. CPSU was seen as the party with old ideas which enjoyed currency only in the milieu of the apparatus. Moreover, CPSU had nothing new to offer as a panacea for present political and economic crisis. The disenchantment of the people with CPSU was such that even Ryzkhov, when asked directly by voters whether he represented Communist party, answered in negative.²¹ Ryzkhov judged the mood of the people quite correctly and he refused to identify himself with Communist Party. Besides, Ryzkhov had not done anything worthwhile to make a place in psyche of the people, whereas Yeltsin had emerged as oppositional focal point to CPSU in electoral politics. Yeltsin said, "I am not for Socialism or Capitalism, but in favour of Russians living better materially, spiritually and culturally."²² Yeltsin offered a programme for stabilization of economy, transition to market relations and start of real improvement in people's lives in two years' time 1991-92. It is difficult to imagine as to how he would have solved the acute economic crises in just two years' time. Yeltsin was mainly banking on rhetorics to win the elections; he exploited the psyche of the common masses who were willing to believe anyone who offered a quick way out of social and economic malaise. Yeltsin, in fact, played on -----

21. *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p. 4.

22. Yeltsin speech at Moscow Oktyabrskly theatre, Broadcast on Russian Radio, *SWB*, 3 June 1991, p. B/1.

the fear psychosis of common people passing through a difficult time; people's anxiety about their future was skillfully translated into votes by Boris Yeltsin. The question which intrigues political analysts even today is: Why did Gorbachev let Boris Yeltsin emerge with ease, in June 1991, as directly elected President of largest and most powerful republic of the Union, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR)?²³ He could have campaigned for Ryzkhov and made victory for Yeltsin a bit difficult. Perhaps Gorbachev took the Presidential election in Russia very lightly. He thought that victory in Russian presidential election would hardly make any difference at the level of Soviet Union politics. But after winning the election by massive mandate, Yeltsin easily moved on to centre-stage, bypassing Gorbachev, particularly after the abortive coup of August 1991.²⁴

Michael Gorbachev could also have checked the growing popularity of Yeltsin by getting himself elected as the President of Soviet Union in a nationwide election earlier than June 1991. In spite of Gorbachev's diminishing popularity, there was every chance of his scrapping through in the Summer of 1991.²⁵ But Gorbachev did not think it

23. Zafar Imam, "How and Why the Soviet Union Disintegrated?" *International Studies*, vol.29, no.3, October-December 1992, p. 384.

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*

necessary to get himself elected as President of USSR. Perhaps he never realised importance of directly elected President. On the contrary, Yeltsin did realise its significance, and he used it to uproot Gorbachev from the field of politics.

One of the major surprises of the election was the performance of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. How could this unknown man from small Liberal Democratic Party of Soviet Union attain third position? His performance (7.81 per cent votes) surprised political scientists as well as election forecasters and mediemen, since the third position in the Presidential race had been predicted for Vadim Bakatin. Tipped as the "political clown" in electoral politics of Russia, this "clown" had upstaged political veterans and attained the third position. It was, in fact, a lesson for all political force that right-wing tendencies should never be taken lightly.

In his electoral manifesto, Zhirinovsky raked up the emotional issues; he promised great and indivisible Russia. He vowed to prevent mistreatment of Russian minorities in other republics to shut down objectionable newspapers. He assured to everyone his share of cheap Vodka; he promised to change the domestic and foreign policy in practically no time. These were some other important issues which he hoped to deal with after coming to power.²⁶ Zhirinovsky's support

26. *CDSP*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, 17 July 1991, p.5.

constituency was limited to young people, free private farmers and young entrepreneurs who were tired of bureaucracy and who seemed to have been impressed by his exuberance and demagoguery. Zhirinovsky has found support among the cossacks as well: in Rostov Province, he received 11.5 per cent of their votes; in Stavropol territory 11.9 per cent and in Krasnodar territory 13.1 per cent.²⁷ Trampled under totalitarianism over the years, *perestroika* had given Cossacks great many hopes that Zhirinovsky promised to fulfill. Zhirinovsky played on the darker instincts of the people and their patriotic feelings. Good support to Zhirinovsky by people only reflected their complicated, tense and confused state of mind; they were willing to believe whatever the politicians were saying. Soviet Union was passing through the dark times indeed.

Another important candidate Vadim Bakatin (ex-Minister of Internal Affairs), had received favourable forecasts from the political scientists. However, he was toppled to the last position among the six candidates with mere 3.42 per cent of votes. The reasons for Bakatin's failure was his "moderate radicalism", devotion to common sense and his careful and balanced assessments and reasoned opinion in an atmosphere where other candidates had resorted to populist slogans and emotional blackmail. In his election speeches, Bakatin called for reduction in defence expenditure. He

27. *ibid.*

showed difference with other candidates on the nationality question. He said, "every state, every republic in accordance with the constitution has right to secede from the Union and we simply do not have a right to hold anybody by force, that is unconstitutionally."²⁸ Bakatin's appeals to the public, which were mostly based on reason, could hardly be appreciated by the common masses who were swayed by the emotional appeals of Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy.

The results were not much at variance with what the opinion polls had predicted. Yeltsin, who had an edge over the other candidates right through the campaigning, won by a good margin. As expected, Ryzhkov had attained the second position. But the performance of Zhirinovskiy, who had got 8 per cent of the total votes polled, was certainly spectacular. Yeltsin had the largest support at all the electoral districts (as per data released by the Central Electoral Commission. Yeltsin had bagged more than fifty per cent of votes in almost all the electoral districts. Clearly, people had given mandate to Yeltsin to carry out his economic and political policies.

The Central Electoral Commission had done a commendable job by holding the elections in Russia in such a short notice. Despite irregularities, inability of thousands of people to vote in the elections due to rigid electoral procedure, misuse of official media by Communist Party and

28. *SWB*, 1 June 1991, pp. 1.

violations of democratic norms, the first Presidential election in Russia can be said to be free and fair.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The election of a directly elected President in RSFSR had generated tremendous enthusiasm as well as hopes among the people of Russia. It was believed that the new President, with wide ranging executive powers, would be better placed to take care of socio-economic crisis afflicting Russia. Besides, this election was significant in the sense that it gave Russians for the first time in their long history, the chance of electing a candidate of their own choice from multiple candidates. This was in contrast with the practice in the past when only candidates nominated by the Party got elected. A directly elected President by the people was, in fact, the culmination of radical reforms initiated by Michael Gorbachev in key elements of Soviet political system since 1986. As we have noted, Gorbachev had brought about drastic changes in the 1977 Brezhnev Constitution, thereby paving the way for democratisation of Soviet polity. Directly elected executive post, based on secret ballot from multiplicity of candidates, was one of the constituents of new political system as envisaged by Gorbachev.

However, Gorbachev himself shied away from direct election; indeed he chose for himself the post of President of the USSR by an indirect election through the newly elected Congress of Soviets. It was Yeltsin who enhanced the

pace once he gained control of RSFSR as its executive President, following Gorbachev's choice of indirect election. Soon he managed to put the issue for referendum in Russia. In the referendum, the Russians enforced the idea of directly elected President by a huge margin of 70 per cent.

The die was thus cast, one would say, in spite of Gorbachev.

The elections for the office of President was announced to be held on 12 June 1991 at the 4th Congress of People's Deputies. The campaign period was of short duration, nearly 20 days but it was marked by tremendous fervour, enthusiasm and controversies. Boris Yeltsin led the campaigning from start to finish. Other candidates merely danced to the tune of his political tactics. His campaigning is said to have begun in 1989 when he won the Moscow Parliamentary seat by openly challenging the Party; it also marked the beginning of his interaction and contact with the people. But the real campaigning for the Presidential post is said to have begun from the referendum of 17 March 1991; the momentum of the campaigning picked up during 20 days of the campaigning period. Yeltsin, being an early beginner in campaigning, had an edge over other candidates since he had already established a rapport with the people; they were aware of his stand on various issues, his programmes, etc. Boris Yeltsin and his campaign managers made this election another referendum on Communism. Voters were made to understand (or rather be made to believe) that they were choosing between

the two systems, not two candidates. In order to polarize the electorates into two camps, Yeltsin emphasized his commitment to reforms and criticised 70 years of Communist rule.

Despite Yeltsin's attempt to divide the electorates into two camps, of Communists and reformers, he was not able to do so. The electorate, instead, got divided into three ideological streams. Boris Yeltsin representing the stream of reformers; Ryzhkov, Bakatin, Makashov and Tuleev representing the left stream; and V. Zhirinovsky representing a new trend in Russian politics, the right wing. Zhirinovsky was supported clandestinely by the Communists who were trying to cut into non-Communist and anti-Communist support of Yeltsin by backing his candidature.

But the Communists were not able to make much dent into Yeltsin's support base since Yeltsin's political tactics and strategy of campaigning were far more effective than those of the Communists. His campaigning was spearheaded by "Democratic Russia" which had developed a strong organizational set up with a membership of 150,000. "Democratic Russia" also benefitted from a visit of five American campaign experts led by Paul Weyerich and Robert Kriebel from US-based Committee for a Free Congress. Though the American experts were not well-versed with Russian conditions, they certainly helped in campaigning by setting up campaign calendars in order to budget time strictly

within each unit of organisation, and dispatching of flying squads of activists from urban centres to small towns and rural settlements to stage rallies and distribute campaign literature. "Democratic Russia" provided backbone to Yeltsin's campaign.

Boris Yeltsin utilised "Democratic Russia" for his own ends. Displaying his political acumen, he signed the "Nine plus One" agreement with Gorbachev on preservation of the Union, much to the anguish of "Democratic Russia" leadership who were crying for Gorbachev's resignation. Moreover, by signing "Nine plus One" agreement with Gorbachev, he created an image of being "cooperative" among the electorates. Yeltsin was a master strategist who used parties and personalities for his own ends, while his only aim seemed to be to create positive image of himself among the electorates.

In general, Yeltsin played on the anxiety of people by offering them a rosy future if elected to office. He was also banking on rhetorics and demagogy to win the support of the people. Yeltsin programmes, particularly on economy, lacked credence - he promised transition to free market economy in two years, while in the then prevalent economic crisis one could not expect him to fulfill such a promise. Yeltsin's main task in the campaigning was to discredit the Communists of all achievements of the past seventy years by lying or by making false accusations or by any other means possible. His objective was to censure the opposition

mercilessly in the eyes of the people, so that people see no way out of the crisis other than solutions he had offered.

N. Ryzhkov was Yeltsin's main opponent backed implicitly by the Communist Party apparatus. Ryzhkov had tremendous responsibility upon his shoulders of defending himself from the accusations of Yeltsin. He, not only, had to counter the growing popularity of Yeltsin but also had to tackle the anxiety among the electorates that Ryzhkov's coming to power would mean return of the Communists to power. Reading the minds of the people quite correctly, he advocated slow transition to free market economy in contrast to the Communist policies. Moreover, he was handicapped by the refusal of top leaders of CPSU, including Gorbachev, in campaigning for his candidature.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, representative of Liberal Democratic Party was another strong contender in the Presidential race. He represented right wing and the extreme nationalist tendencies in Russian politics. Zhirinovsky played on basic instincts of the people under stress in order to garner support. He tried to bring in voters into his fold by raking up emotional issues. For instance, he wanted "greater and indivisible Russia" and also promised to prevent mistreatment of Russian minorities in other Republics. Zhirinovsky's rhetorics, demagoguery, false promises, impractical solutions to difficult problems (like formation of greater Russia) won him supporters among young people and private farmers. Zhirinovsky was

underestimated by the opponents and election forecasters. But this unknown candidate from the Liberal Democratic Party came up with a creditable performance by polling 7.42 per cent of the total votes.

Vadim Bakatin, tipped to be the number three by election forecasters, set the moral standards of the campaigning. His election programmes, devoid of any big promises and sharp rhetorics, promised to provide practical solution to socio-economic problems facing the country. He appealed to voters to exercise their choice on the basis of rationality and common sense. Bakatin's strategy, of building his programmes based on rationality, was unlikely to succeed in the campaigning marked by demagoguery and rhetorics. Other candidates like Tuleev had considerable support among miners' while Albert Makashov seemed to enjoy considerable following among military personnel. But they were considered to be 'dwarfs' by media in comparison to the high profile race of Boris Yeltsin and Ryzhkov.

It was Yeltsin who led the opinion polls right through the campaign period. His political acumen and nervous energy, combined with good organisational backing of 'Democratic Russia' helped him to win tremendous support among the people. Ryzhkov's campaigning, too, had the backing of the Communist Party apparatus with its good organisational set up. But this organisation was structured in excessively centralised manner of the "command administrative" system which made its action quite

predictable. For instance, a tactics detected in one constituency could be expected to appear everywhere. Thus the opponents of Ryzhkov easily came to know of his moves beforehand: hence they were easier to counter. The other four candidates lacking good organisational backing depended on television, radio, newspapers and public meetings to reach out to the people but in such a short span of campaign period, they could hardly reach every corner of the country. It may ultimately have affected their performance.

However, electioneering for the Presidential contest was marked by political bickerings, false promises, rhetorics, mudslinging and false charges (e.g., the "Copola affair"). Yet a few candidates like Vadim Bakatin set the example by leading a 'clean' campaign, although the moral standards of campaigning set by him were hardly followed by other candidates. The main objective of the presidential candidates seemed to be to impress the voters and to win the elections by whatever means possible.

The result of the election had become quite clear during the campaigning period. Yeltsin, who had an edge over the other candidates right through the campaigning period, received an overwhelming number of votes -- 58 per cent. Ryzhkov came second with 16.85 per cent of votes. The most surprising result was that of Zhirinovskiy who came third with 7.8 per cent of votes; Vadim Bakatin who was tipped to attain the third position came last with 3.42 per cent of votes.

The performance of Yeltsin was quite spectacular for he had won the election by a huge margin. In forty out of eighty eight constituencies, Yeltsin had obtained majority of votes from the electorates; in the major industrial cities -- particularly in Moscow and Sverdlovsk -- he had received a massive mandate. People seemed to have been fed up with the Communist policies, they had outrightly rejected the Communist backed candidate, Ryzhkov. People of Russia thus had given overwhelming support to Yeltsin to carry out his 'reform' policies in order to pull Russia out of crisis.

One of the significant aspects of the Presidential contest of 1991 was political participation of the people on a scale which was unprecedented in the Soviet Union. People thronged the polling stations on the election day (12 June 1991) with obvious enthusiasm; the total votes cast were nearly 74.7 per cent which was significantly ahead of voting percentage in any other established democracy. It was also notable that unlike in earlier Soviet elections, this high turnout was due to the fact that people had the choice to elect from more than one Party/group.

The political participation was just not limited to voting in the elections which was just one of its dimensions. People also got engaged in non-conventional dimensions of political participation, for instance, taking part in mass demonstrations, political strikes and Party

activities.¹ In March 1991, there were mass demonstrations in support of Boris Yeltsin despite official ban, while before 1988, demonstrations, rallies, protests and boycotts were simply not possible. Democratization of political system had indeed opened new vistas for political participation. Demonstrations and protests were witnessed on an unprecedented scale in the campaigning of 1991 Presidential election. The campaign atmosphere of the Presidential contest was highly charged - citizens discussed politics, they engaged in furious and heated political debates. Thousands of people thronged rallies at Manezh Square at Moscow, hundreds of people gathered daily at Moscow Hyde Park off Pushkin Square, arguing the prospects of various candidates. At the entrances to apartment buildings, at the bus stops or in queues, citizens indulged in discussing politics. Newspapers were flooded with the letters from the public who asked for clarifications from the candidates on various issues. Television, radio and newspapers reported freely on the elections which was

1. Ian McAllister and Stephen White, "Political Participation in Post-Communist Russia: Voting, Activism and Potential for Mass Protest", *Political Studies*, (1994), XLII, pp. 593-615. They gave two forms of political participation.
 - 1) Unconventional Participation
Takes part in mass demonstrations
Takes part in political strikes
Takes part in party activities.
 - 2) Conventional Participation
Voted in 1991 Presidential election
Discusses politics with friends
Attends meeting to discuss political problems.

difficult to imagine a few years ago in USSR. In short, the entire atmosphere was electrifying and novel for the Russians.

All in all, the first Presidential election in Russia was a decisive step away from hitherto existing Soviet democracy. Whether it was a step towards western type of democracy, remains to be seen. But surely this marked the fact that the Russian people had certainly freed themselves from fear and had begun to learn how to choose their leaders out of their own choice from more than one options. The ground on which they had stood in the summer of 1991 was still shaky but there was no turning back for them. A new independent Russian state led by a President directly elected by its people in a historic election had thus arisen to take place of the crumbling Soviet state.

Indeed, political history of Russia can hardly be divorced from political history of the first Presidential election in Russia in June 1991. We hope that we have justified our efforts in the preceding pages.

APPENDIX

LAW OF RSFSR PRESIDENCY

Discharging the will of the people of the RSFSR as expressed in the first RSFSR Referendum of 17th March 1991, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet resolves:

Article 1 - The RSFSR President is the supreme official of the RSFSR and the head of executive power in the RSFSR.

The RSFSR President cannot be a people's deputy.

During the period of the exercise of his powers, the RSFSR President suspends membership of political parties and public associations.

Article 2 - Only a citizen of the RSFSR, no younger than 35 years or older than 65 years who enjoys the right to vote, can be elected President of RSFSR. The RSFSR President is elected for a term of five years. The same person cannot be RSFSR President for more than two consecutive terms.

Article 3 - The RSFSR President is elected by RSFSR citizens by secret ballot on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. No other election or appointment to the post of RSFSR President nor conferment of the powers of the RSFSR President is lawful or valid. The procedure for the election and inauguration of the RSFSR President is laid down by RSFSR laws.

Article 4 - On taking office the RSFSR President swears the following oath: "In exercising the powers of RSFSR

President I swear to observe the RSFSR's constitution and laws, to defend its sovereignty, to respect and protect human and civil rights and liberties and the rights of the RSFSR's peoples and to conscientiously carry out the duties placed upon me".

Article 5 - The RSFSR President:

1. enjoys the right of legislative initiative;
2. signs and publishes RSFSR laws within 14 days of their adoption.

Laws adopted by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet can be returned by the RSFSR President for re-examination before the expiry of this period. If on re-examination the RSFSR law is adopted by a majority of votes of the total membership of each chamber of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, the RSFSR President must sign and publish it within three days;

3. President at least once a year, reports to the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies on the fulfillment of socio-economic and other programmes adopted by the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and on the situation in the RSFSR and sends messages to the people of the RSFSR, the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. The RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies is entitled by a majority of

- votes of the total number of RSFSR people's deputies to demand an ahead-of-schedule report from the RSFSR President;
4. appoints the chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers with the RSFSR Supreme Soviet's assent;
 5. appoints and releases from duty ministers and leaders of RSFSR committees and departments at the submission of the chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers;
 6. directs the activity of the RSFSR Council of Ministers;
 7. accepts the resignation of the RSFSR government with the RSFSR Supreme Soviet's assent;
 8. appoints and recalls RSFSR diplomatic representatives and accepts the credentials and letters of recall of diplomatic representatives accredited to it;
 9. heads the RSFSR Security Council, whose structure, powers and formation procedure are laid down by RSFSR law;
 10. conducts talks and signs on behalf of the RSFSR international and inter-republic treaties, which enter into effect after ratification by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet;
 11. adopts measures to ensure the state and public security of the RSFSR and participates in ensuring the state and public security of the USSR

behalf of the RSFSR. Extraordinary sittings of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and extraordinary sessions of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet are convened at the proposal of the RSFSR President. The RSFSR President does not have the right to dissolve or suspend the activity of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies or the RSFSR Supreme Soviet;

12. declares a state of emergency in accordance with RSFSR law. On the territory of a republic forming part of the RSFSR a state of emergency is declared by agreement with its supreme bodies of state power;
13. resolves questions of RSFSR citizenship and the granting of political asylum in accordance with the law;
14. presents state awards of the RSFSR and confers special titles, class ranks and titles of honour of the RSFSR;
15. exercises the right to pardon citizens convicted by RSFSR courts;
16. exercises other powers vested in him by the RSFSR Constitution and laws.

Article 6. The powers of the RSFSR President cannot be used to alter the RSFSR national state structure or to dissolve or suspend the activity of any lawfully elected body of state power.

Article 7. The RSFSR Vice - President is elected simultaneously with the RSFSR President. An RSFSR Presidential candidate may propose an RSFSR Vice-Presidential candidate. An RSFSR citizen no younger than 35 years or older than 65 years who enjoys the right to vote can be elected RSFSR Vice-President.

During the exercise of his powers the RSFSR Vice-President suspends his membership of political parties and public associations.

The RSFSR Vice-President cannot be a people's deputy. The RSFSR Vice-President exercises his individual powers on the RSFSR President's instruction.

The RSFSR Vice-President deputizes for the RSFSR President in the latter's absence.

Article 8. The RSFSR President issues decrees and instructions and verifies their execution on the basis and in fulfillment of the constitution and the laws of the RSFSR and the decisions of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. The RSFSR President's decrees may not run counter to the constitution and laws of the RSFSR. The RSFSR President's decrees must be carried out throughout the territory of the RSFSR.

The RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies or the RSFSR Supreme Soviet is entitled, on the basis of the ruling of the RSFSR Constitutional Court, to repeal RSFSR Presidential decrees if they are at variance with the RSFSR Constitution

and laws and the decisions of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

The RSFSR President is entitled to suspend the resolutions of bodies of executive power on the territory of the RSFSR if they are at variance with the RSFSR Constitution and laws and to remove officials of those bodies from the exercise of their duties if they are in breach of RSFSR legislation.

Article 9. The person of the RSFSR President is inviolable and protected by law.

Article 10. The RSFSR President can be dismissed from office on violation of the RSFSR Constitution and laws, of his sworn oath. Such a decision is made by the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies on the basis of the ruling of the RSFSR Constitutional Court by a majority of two-thirds of the total number of RSFSR People's Deputies on the initiative of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, or one of its chambers.

Article 11. In the event of the removal of the RSFSR President from office, the resignation of the RSFSR President, or the impossibility of the further exercise of his powers, or in the event of the death of the RSFSR President, the powers of the RSFSR President are exercised by the RSFSR Vice-President.

The question of setting RSFSR Presidential election is resolved in accordance with the RSFSR law "on the election of the RSFSR President".¹

1. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 30 April 1991 as quoted in *SWB*, 2 May 1991, p. C3/1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Select Bibliography

Primary Sources (Published)

a) Documentary Collections

Documents and materials - Reports by M. Gorbachev at 12th special session of Supreme Soviet of USSR of the 11 Convocation, (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1988).

Documents and materials - 28th Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (Novosti Press, 1990).

Documents - 19th All Union Conference of CPSU, (Novosti Press, 1988).

27 CPSU Congress - documents and resolutions, (Allied Publishers Private Ltd., 1986).

Lenin on Soviet Socialist Democracy, (Moscow, 1962).

V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works* (in three volumes) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963).

V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965).

M.S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika, New Thinking for our Country and the World*, (Collins, 1987).

-----, *A Time for Peace*, (Richardson & Steirman, 1985).

-----, *Peace has no alternative speeches*, *Writings and Interviews*, (Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1987).

-----, *Speeches & Writings*, Vol.I & II, (Pergamon Press, 1986).

b) Documents in Serials, etc.

"Russian Parliament adopts laws on elections, duties of Republic President", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol.XLIII, No.13, 1 May, 1991, p.1.

"Huge pro-Yeltsin rally held in Moscow - Results of RSFSR referendum on direct election of Republic President", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.13, 1 May, 1991, p.1.

"Communist for democracy leader Rutskoï called Astute for mobilizing Russia's Moderates", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.13, 22 May, 1991, p.27.

- "Ryzhkov enters race for Russian presidency", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.17, 29 May, 1991, p.13.
- "Six enter Russia's presidential race", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.20, 19 June, 1991, p.7.
- "Media sifts Russian Presidential Aspirants (pp.1), Russian Presidency law becomes official", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.21, 26 June, 1991, p.6.
- "Close Yeltsin Ryzhkov race predicted", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.22, 3 July 1991, p.22.
- "Election eve : Yeltsin analyses pros and cons", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.23, July 10, 1991.
- "Yeltsin wins Big : Scrutinizing the returns", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.24, July 17, 1991.
- "What do polls of Russia's voters show?", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.27, 7 August, 1991, p.8.
- "Yeltsin sworn in as Russia's President", *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIII, No.28, 14 August, 1991, p.1.
- "Interview with Presidential candidate Bakatin", *Summary of World Broadcast, Daily and Weekly Reports - POA*, (BBC Monitoring, Caversham Park, Reading), 1 June 1991, p. B/1.
- "RSFSR presidential election campaign", *SWB*, 1 June, 1991, p-B/5.
- "Yeltsin address voters in Moscow", "KGB denies phone tapping and blackmail claims", "Speech by Yeltsin on 'Main tenets of Political Course'", "Yeltsin answers question after speech", *SWB*, 3 June, 1991, p.i.
- "Interview with Zhirinovskiy"; "Summary of Presidential campaign"; "Yeltsin meets orthodox church head", *SWB*, 4 June, 1991, p.B/1-5.
- "Democratic campaigners barred from Arkhgelsk Garrison", "Yeltsin arrives in Perm", "Andreyeva backs Makashov in RSFSR elections", "Air Force party organisation backs Ryzhkov campaign", *SWB*, 5 June, 1991, pp.i,3.
- "RSFSR Presidential elections", "Presidential candidate Makashov aims for GDR level of prosperity", *SWB*, 6 June, 1991, pp-B/1-2.
- "Presidential election campaign continues", "Rutskoi condemns communist propaganda campaign", "Rutskoi presents his election programme", "Makashov outlines his election programme", "Presidential opinion poll", *SWB*, 7 June, 1991, pp-B/1-4.

- "Who's Who interview with Yeltsin", *SWB*, 8 June, 1991, pp.B/1.
- "Democratic Russia plans pro Yeltsin rally", "Candidate Tuleev interviewed", "Press conference by Zhirinovsky", "Newspaper alleges Yeltsin appointed 'Swindler' as Consul-General", *SWB*, 10 June, 1991, pp.B/6.
- "Yeltsin answers questions on TV", "Muslims join pro-Yeltsin rally in Dagestan", "Yeltsin Press Conference", "Profile of Yeltsin", "Report on document reputed to link oilstone to Mafia", "Rzykhov answers question on Presidency", "Rzykhov denies that candidates buy votes, Bakatin profile", *SWB*, 11 June, 1991, pp.B 1, 9, 11, 12, 14.
- "Lower than expected turn out for Yeltsin rally", "Bakatin warns against populist programmes, Democratic Russia rally in support of Yeltsin, Editor of 'Sovetskaya Rossita'on alleged Yeltsin link with mafia", *SWB*, 12 June, 1991, pp.B - i, 1, 8, 9.
- "Gorbachev interviewed at polling stations", "Presidential candidates interviewed", "Preliminary voting figures in Presidential elections", "Yeltsin, Zhirinovsky election address", *SWB*, 13 June, 1991, pp.B-1, 10, 16, 19, 20, 23.
- "Yeltsin elected President according to preliminary results", "Sovetskaya Rossiya" alleges RSFSR leaders mafia connection", "Yeltsin receives 56% votes according to unofficial information", "Regional breakdown of preliminary election results", "Official results to be announced on 22 June", *SWB*, 14 June, 1991, pp.i, B/1, C/3, B/4, B/6.
- "Russia TV on Yeltsin victory and Zhirinovksy unexpected success", "Pravda on aggressiveness of election campaign", *SWB*, 15 June, 1991, pp.C/1, B/2.
- "Yeltsin says majority favours democratisation", *SWB*, 17 June, 1991, p.C 1/1.
- "Yeltsin elected President according to official results", *SWB*, 18 June, 1991, p.i.
- "Final results of Presidential elections, Yeltsin interviewed by 'Rossiya' and 'Moskovskiye Novasl'," "Poll analyses Moscow audience of Russian TV", *SWB*, 22 June, 1991, pp.B/3, B/4.

Secondary Sources

A) Books

- Adyar, S.P. & Raju, S.V., *When the Wind Blows : India's Ballot Box Revolution*, (Bombay : Himalaya Publishing House, 1978).

- Bialer, Seweryn (ed.), *Politics, Society and Nationality inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder & London: West View Press, 1989), pp. 220-237.
- Chowdhary, N.K., *Assembly Elections, 1993*, (Delhi : Sipra Publications, 1994).
- , *Assembly Elections, 1994-95*, (Delhi : Sipra Publications, 1995).
- Democracy and Politics*, Soviet Political Science Association, (Published by Social Science today, USSR Academy of Sciences, 1982).
- Emmons, Terrence, *The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia*, (London : Harvard University Press, 1983).
- Gill Graeme, *The collapse of a single party system*, (Great Britain : Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Gorbachev, Raisa, *I hope*, (London : Harper Collins, 1991).
- Gurtov, Mel (ed), *The Transformation of Socialism : Perestroika and Reform in Soviet Union and China*, (San Francisco : West View Press, 1990).
- Hill, Ronald J., Dellabrant, Jan Ake, *Gorbachev and Perestroika*, (Edgar Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1989).
- Kagarlitsky, Boris, *Farewell Perestroika*, (London, Newyork : Verso, 1990).
- Kerimov, D.A., *Soviet democracy in the period of developed socialism*, Translated from Russian by Barry Jones (Moscow Progressive Publishers, 1979).
- Lane, David, *State and Politics in the USSR*, (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1985).
- , *Soviet Society under Perestroika*, (Boston : Union Hyman, 1991).
- Mitra, Subrata K. & Chiriyam Kandath, Hames (ed), *Electoral Politics in India : A Changing Landscape*, (Segments Books, 1992).
- Moore Jr., Barrington, *Soviet Politics - The Dilemma of Power*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 1950).
- Pushkarev, Sergei, *Self Government and Freedom in Russia*, (Boulder and London : Westview Press, 1988).

- Rigby, T.H., *The Changing Political System* (Edgar Elgar Publishing House, 1990).
- Sakwa, George, *Russian Politics and Society*, (Routledge, 1993).
- Sakwa, Richard, *Gorbachev and his reforms 1985-86*, (London : Philip Allan, 1990).
- Sondhi, Manohar L., *Beyond Perestroika : Choices and Challenges facing Gorbachev*, (Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1989).
- Smith, Godun B., *Soviet Politics : Struggling with change*, (Hampshire : MacMillan, 1992).
- Thompson, Terry L., *Ideology and Policy : The Political Uses of Doctrine of the Soviet Union*, (San Francisco and London: Westview Press, 1989).
- Urban, G.R., *Can Soviet System Survive Reform?*, (London : Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1989).
- Urban, Micheal E., *More Power to the Soviet, the Democratic Revolution in USSR*, (Edgar Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1992).
- Varma, S.P. and Iqbal Narain, (Eds.), *Fourth General Elections in India*, Vol.1-2, (Bombay : Orient Longmans, 1970).
- Vladimir Soloryov and Elena Klelikova, *Boris Yeltsin: A Political Biography*, (London : Wiederfeld & Nicolson, 1993).
- White, Stephen, (Ed.), *New Directions in Soviet History*, (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

b) Articles

- Brovkin, Vladimir, "Revolution From Below : Informal Political Associations in Russia 1988-89", *Soviet Studies*, Vol.42, No.2, April 1990, pp. 233-257.
- Colton, J. Timothy, "Economics and Voting in Russia", *Post-Soviet Affairs* (Florida), Vol.12, No.4, October-December 1996, pp. 289-317.
- Dejevsky, Mary, "Kremlin Smears Yeltsin Election Margin on the Eve of Elections", *Times* (London), 11 June 1991.
- Dobbas, Michael, "Amid Ruins of Marxism, What Next for Russia", *Washington Post Service*, 17 June 1991.
- Duncan, Peter J.S., "Democratic Transition in Russia : From Coup to Referendum", *Parliamentary Affairs*, October 1993.

- Gooding, John, "Gorbachev and Democracy", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No.2, April 1990, pp. 195-231.
- Gathani, Batuk, "Challenge for Gorbachev", *Hindu* (Madras), 15 June 1991.
- Imam, Zafar, "How and Why the Soviet Union Disintegrated", *International Studies*, Vol. 29, No.3, October-December 1992, pp. 377-402.
- Imam, Zafar, "Politics of Perestroika", *Mainstream*, Vol. XXVI, No.11, 26 December 1987, pp. 7-9.
- Imam, Zafar, "An Intelligent Person's Guide to Glosnost and Perestroika", in *The Second Revolution : Democratisation in USSR* (New Delhi : Patriotic Publishers, 1989).
- Jayashekhar, "Disturbing Economic Trend", *World Focus*, Vol. 11, No.4, April 1990, pp. 11-14.
- Light, Margot, "Democracy Russian Style", *World Today*, December 1993.
- Livingstone, Ken, "Can Democracy Survive in Russia", *New Left Review*, No.192, March/April 1992, pp. 98-104.
- McAllister, Ian and White, Stephen, "political Participation in Post-Communist Russia : Voting, Activism and Potential For Mass Protest", *Political Studies*, October 1994, XLII, pp. 593-615.
- Mcfaul, Michael, "Russia's 1996 Presidential Elections", *Post Soviet Affairs* (Florida), Vol. 12, No.4, October-December 1996, pp. 318-351.
- Mira Salganik, "Yeltsin Victory and After", *Indian Express*, 25 June 1991.
- Nadler, Gerald, "Another Nail in Communist Coffin", *Bangkok Post*, 15 June 1991.
- Orthtung, Robert, W., "Russian Rights Dilemma of Party Organisation", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 44, No.3, 1992, pp. 445-478.
- Rumganstsev, Oleg, "Yeltsin will aim for a new Russia in a New Union", *International Herald Tribune*, 20 June 1991.
- Shah, Rajiv, "Ominous Implications of Yeltsin's Elections", *Link*, 23 June 1991, p. 24.
- Urban, Michael, E., "Boris Yeltsin, Democratic Russia and Campaign for Russian Presidency", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 44, 1992, pp. 187-204.

- White, Stephen, "Russia's experiment with democracy", *Current History*, Vol. 92, No. 567, October 1992, pp. 310-313.
- White, Stephen, "Parties and Politics in Post-Communist Russia", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, June 1995.
- White, Stephen, Ian McAllister and Olga Kryshtanovskaya, "Eltsin and his voters : Popular support in 1991 Russian Presidential elections and after", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No.2, 1994, pp. 285-304.
- Editorial, "Russia for reform", *Deccan Herald*, 17 June 1991.
- "Risk for Democracy", *Times*, (London), 12 June 1991.
- "Organic democracy Prescribed for Russia", *Current Digest of Post Soviet Press*, 24 February 1993, pp. 21-24.
- "Parliamentary Democracy and Reform", *Russian Social Science Review*, September-October 1993, pp. 3-20.
- "Yeltsin Draft Constitution for Russia", *Current Digest of Post-Soviet Pres*, 16 June 1993, pp. 10-19.
- "Yeltsin sets plan for constitutional conference", *Current Digest of Post Soviet Press*, 23 June 1993, pp. 1-7.
- Zoellick, Robert and others, "Observations on economic reforms and the Presidential politics", *Post Soviet Affairs*, January-March 1996, pp. 91-97.

TH-5963