

The
Carl Beck
Papers
in Russian &
East European Studies

Number 1005

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Adrift in Turbulent Seas

The Political and Ideological Struggles
of Ivan Kuz'mich Polozkov

REES
THE CENTER FOR RUSSIAN
& EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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No. 1005, June 1993

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ISSN 08899-275X

The Carl Beck Papers

Editors: William Chase, Bob Donnorummo, Ronald H. Linden

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Cover design: Mike Savitski

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Introduction

In the winter of 1989-90 the unintended consequences of Mikhail S. Gorbachev's program of political and economic reform had become obvious to all but his most optimistic spokesmen. The General Secretary's attempt to create a new ideology of *perestroika* by grafting "bourgeois" and "social democratic" concepts onto the conventional ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had divided the party, created immense ideological confusion, and led to the formation of non-Communist and anti-Communist political organizations. The attempt to shift authority from party officials to elected soviets on the union and republican levels had led to the emergence of separatist and nationalist movements in many of the USSR's republics, including the RSFSR. The decentralization of the state's administration of the economy and the encouragement of both private and cooperative economic activity had failed to reverse the deterioration of economic conditions. As anxiety swept through the CPSU, orthodox party leaders called for the establishment of an autonomous Communist Party for the RSFSR to counter Gorbachev's policies and to "save Soviet Russia" from destruction.

Gorbachev had initially resisted these efforts as a threat to his own policies and to the unity of the CPSU. But with his decision to end the CPSU's formal monopoly of political power in early 1990, he was either unwilling or unable to prevent a Founding Conference of the Communist Party of the RSFSR in June 1990. The Conference provided an arena for repeated orthodox attacks on the Gorbachev leadership and elected Ivan Kuz'mich Polozkov, who had served as the first secretary of the Krasnodar Krai party committee (*kraikom*) since 1985, as the new party's first secretary. From June 1990 until August 1991 (Polozkov resigned his position just weeks before the abortive coup against President Gorbachev), Polozkov sought to lead the party through a complicated political landscape dominated by new parliamentary institutions and by the ever changing relationship between President

Gorbachev and Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin, the newly elected (May 1990) chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

Why Look at Polozkov?

Although Polozkov has been consistently denounced as a born reactionary by both reform Communists and pro-Yeltsin democrats, his actual political orientation was far more complex. Polozkov began his tenure as first secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom* as a supporter of *perestroika*; he endorsed Boris Yeltsin's sharp critique of party officials at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in early 1986, and he supported the General Secretary as least until the end of that year. But as Gorbachev began to challenge the authority of local party leaders, Polozkov began to distance himself from the General Secretary, to develop a coherent critique of Gorbachev's political and economic reforms, and to defend party officials' traditional prerogatives. Polozkov's political orientation was hardly unique. It is highly probable that his views were shared by the many local party leaders who realized that *perestroika* threatened their own vast authority over the rank and file members of the CPSU who staffed the Soviet state, and who therefore indirectly supported the abortive coup against President Gorbachev in August 1991.

Analysis of the last years of Polozkov's political career provides significant insight into the collapse of Communist power in the USSR, as it was probably experienced by a generation of party officials. The following account of his actions and public commentary is divided into two sections. The first deals with his years as first secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom*, when he developed his critique of *perestroika*. The second section deals with his brief tenure as first secretary of the RSFSR Communist Party during the last year of Gorbachev's reign and his unsuccessful efforts to counter and even overcome what he saw as the leadership's fatal drift away from socialism.

While serving as the first secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom*, Polozkov spoke out on four major elements of *perestroika*: (1) the leadership's attempt to redefine the relationship between the party's full time officials and the rank and file members under their supervision who manned the state and soviet structures; (2) the parallel effort to transform the moribund soviets into legislative/representative bodies on the basis of multi-candidate elections; (3) the attempt to dismantle the branch-ministerial system of economic administration and to create a "mixed" economy in its stead; and (4) the effort to reshape the USSR's federal system in the face of unprecedented demands for national autonomy and independence in the various republics.

During the first four years of *perestroika*, while Gorbachev and his supporters claimed great progress in all of these areas, Polozkov increasingly concluded that the actual implementation of these policies threatened the authority of the CPSU. Polozkov initially endorsed Gorbachev's efforts to persuade regional party officials to give more attention to "political leadership," i.e., to adopt a less authoritarian style of leadership, to make direct and personal appeals to various elements of society, and to develop a new sensitivity to their demands and aspirations. At the same time, he was quick to point out that Gorbachev's efforts to limit party officials' intervention in the administration of the economy, which had been the focus of their activity for years, threatened the basis of "party leadership" of the Soviet state. In similar fashion, Polozkov praised the democratization of personal management in the mid-1980s, but was increasingly distressed about the impact of electoral politics in the newly empowered soviets. In particular, he argued that the new electoral politics permitted anti-Communist forces to extend their authority in various soviets, and complained that the central party leadership failed to provide local party officials with sufficient guidance on the proper approach to these forces. Polozkov also endorsed initial efforts to limit the authority of branch ministries over the economy, but complained repeatedly that the government's fumbled efforts to move towards some sort of mixed economy had only led to sharp drops in production, undermined the working people's standard of living, destroyed

its faith in the leadership, and thereby threatened to destroy the existing socialist system. Finally, Polozkov consistently endorsed the use of presidential power to counter nationalist demands for autonomy and independence.

Polozkov's public commentary as first secretary of the RSFSR Communist party reveals that it was far easier for him to provide an orthodox critique of *perestroika* than to construct a coherent strategy on that basis. While his analysis of the political and economic situation became more and more alarmist in 1990-91, his recommendations for the RSFSR Communist Party embraced both orthodox and reformist positions. For example, he simultaneously sought to restore party officials' traditional economic responsibilities and to help them adjust effectively to the challenges of parliamentary politics. In the same spirit, he combined generalized support for a "regulated market economy" with repeated warnings about the growing dangers of unemployment and class stratification and pleas for the development of a "socialist *perestroika*." He simultaneously insisted on the need for a powerful central government, criticized Yeltsin's vision of a looser grouping of autonomous states, and sought to persuade the RSFSR to act as the defender of Russian citizens throughout the USSR.

Polozkov's efforts to develop a coherent strategy for the RSFSR communist party were hampered by the shifting relationship between President of the USSR Gorbachev and Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Yeltsin. Polozkov found it difficult to frame his own views in relation to these two critical, and often antagonistic, leaders. In the immediate aftermath of the 28th Congress of the CPSU, when they seemed willing to create a broad alliance uniting Gorbachev's "healthy center" with Yeltsin's "democratic left" against the growing orthodox attacks on *perestroika*, Polozkov pledged his support to their efforts to deal with the country's ever widening crisis. But when they seemed willing to cooperate in the rapid dismantling of the socialist economy, Polozkov moved back to more orthodox opposition.

The collapse of cooperation between Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the fall of 1990 seemed to restore Polozkov's political maneuverability. As these two leaders

traded increasingly bitter and angry charges, Polozkov supported the President of the USSR as the champion of "law and order" and a powerful central government against Yeltsin's conception of relations between Soviet republics and calls for a more rapid dismantling of the socialist economy. In fact, in the winter of 1990-91, when President Gorbachev sided increasingly with the forces of "law and order," Polozkov and his party briefly thrived. But in April 1991 when Yeltsin and Gorbachev resumed cooperation on the basis of a new union treaty, Polozkov warmly endorsed Yeltsin's position. From this point until his resignation as first secretary in early August 1991, Polozkov seemed to become almost totally disoriented. He adopted contradictory positions towards the establishment of an elected president for the RSFSR, and towards Gorbachev's revisionist version of the new program for the CPSU, and resigned shortly after Yeltsin's ban on the activities of party's primary party organizations.

Polozkov as a Regional Party Leader

Born in 1935 in Kursk Oblast, Polozkov was trained as an agricultural economist and spend all of his early career (from 1957 until 1975) in a series of party and state posts in his native region. He worked in the central apparatus of the CPSU Central Committee from 1975 until 1983 (the details of his actual responsibilities remain unknown), when he was named secretary for ideology in the Krasnodar *kraikom*¹ under the leadership of First Secretary Georgii Petrovich Razumovsky.

Razumovsky had been named first secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom* by the government of Yurii Vladimirovich Andropov in 1983 in order to restore the *kraikom*'s direction of social and economic policy and to wipe out the notorious corruption that had flourished under Sergei Fyodorovich Medunov, the first secretary since 1973 and one of CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev's cronies. Razumovsky evidently enjoyed considerable success in achieving these objectives.

Pravda praised the *kraikom* leadership for its successful struggles with corruption, its "more demanding" approach to personnel management, its fostering of local party officials' efforts to accelerate technological development, its broadening of worker participation in management, and its restoration of primary party organizations' activities.²

In early 1984, when Konstantin Chernenko replaced Andropov as General Secretary, he sought to reinvigorate party leadership of the USSR by reviving the CPSU's propaganda and injecting new life into the moribund Komsomol. Razumovsky quickly followed Chernenko's lead, citing the General Secretary's "brilliant formulations" on the subject as the inspiration for an ambitious program to revive local Komsomol and agitprop activities.³

This program provided the context for Polozkov's first publications as secretary for ideology in the central party and Komsomol press. His discussion of oral propaganda focused on the development of more efficient means to utilize human resources and to provide lectures that actually responded to the needs of particular audiences.⁴ His comments on reviving the Komsomol emphasized the creation of attractive "socialist rituals" as alternatives to religious practices and called for improving military-patriotic education among Soviet youth to cultivate loyalty to the homeland and its armed forces. His suggestions on various ways to enliven patriotic holidays were often genuinely imaginative.⁵

Polozkov's work in Krasnodar evidently caught the attention of some high officials in the CPSU Central Committee apparat. Sometime in 1984 he returned to Moscow to work in the CPSU Central Committee's organizational party work department, which was responsible for personnel management and at this juncture headed by Yegor Kuz'mich Ligachev.⁶ Polozkov was evidently regarded as an effective official, whatever his exact relationship to Razumovsky and Ligachev. Soon after Gorbachev's selection as General Secretary in March 1985, Polozkov was given a major promotion. In June 1985, when Razumovsky was named to replace Ligachev as the director of the organizational party work department, Polozkov was named first secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom*.⁷

In his first year in this position Polozkov clearly built upon the accomplishments of his predecessor, particularly in the area of personnel management, and also seemed to follow the lead of the vigorous General Secretary. It must be remembered that in his first year as General Secretary, Gorbachev did not make any public effort to change the orthodox conception of local party officials as the chief supervisors of all state agencies responsible for the fulfillment of the five year plan. In fact, the Central Committee plenum of April 1985, which launched the first phase of reform, explicitly endorsed the concept of "party direction" of the economy (a formulation that had traditionally provided the ideological rationale for local party officials' intervention in economic administration) and urged local officials to assure the fulfillment of previous decrees.⁸

Polozkov clearly took his cues from the April meeting of the Central Committee. In his first major report on his *kraikom's* activities, in October 1985, he claimed that its definition of immediate economic objectives and its close supervision of production plans were the basis for Krasnodar's considerable economic success.⁹ In fact, Polozkov made a concerted effort to improve the organization of such supervision. While he praised and continued his predecessors' efforts to democratize personnel management,¹⁰ he insisted that the *kraikom* departments provide more detailed supervision of the soviet executive committee (*ispolkom*) departments responsible for agriculture, construction, and the production of consumer goods.¹¹ Polozkov reiterated this theme in a report to the *kraikom* in January 1986 on the eve of the 27th Congress of the CPSU.¹²

Polozkov clearly regarded himself as Krasnodar's chief economic official. In his report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February/March 1986, Polozkov outlined Krasnodar's economic successes and called for the construction of an atomic energy plant (which was cancelled after sharp controversy in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster a few months later) and new factories for processing agricultural products.¹³

But despite his traditional conception of local party officials' role, Polozkov publicly seconded Gorbachev's initial call to limit their preoccupation with questions

of production. In his detailed report on behalf of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress, Gorbachev had urged party officials to curtail their intervention in state agencies' economic administration, to become more responsive to the immediate social and economic needs of the population, and to transform the local party committees (and by implication the officials who acted in their name) into "organs of political leadership" dealing with the major policy problems in their respective regions.¹⁴ Polozkov not only paraphrased these formulations in his own report to the Congress, but moved beyond the General Secretary to endorse explicitly Boris Yeltsin's more radical critique of the departments of the Central Committee for their duplication of the ministries' economic activities.¹⁵

But Polozkov was far too sensitive to the shifting balance of forces at the apex of the CPSU to maintain this position for long. Shortly after the 27th Congress of the CPSU, Gorbachev was evidently obliged to retreat from his revisionist definition of party officials' responsibilities. In his report to the Central Committee in June 1986 Gorbachev did not reiterate his earlier critique of their interventionism but focused instead on the problems of plan fulfillment,¹⁶ and Polozkov quickly followed suit.¹⁷ Moreover, by the fall of 1986 Gorbachev and Polozkov seemed in agreement on a more modest definition of party officials' responsibilities focused on the reform of cadre management.¹⁸

Henceforth, Polozkov proved unwilling to give full support to Gorbachev's various initiatives. In the last months of 1986, particularly after Gorbachev's failure to achieve a breakthrough on arms control at the summit conference in October, the leading orthodox critics of *perestroika* became increasingly vocal. For example, Yegor Ligachev, who had been making indirect attacks on Gorbachev's program since mid-1985, was not only selected to present the report in November marking the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution but used the occasion to criticize Gorbachev's formulations.¹⁹ In early 1987, Gorbachev sought to blunt this orthodox assault and restore the momentum of reform with a series of dramatic initiatives in both domestic and foreign policy. In a wide-ranging report to the CPSU Central Committee in January 1987, Gorbachev launched a frontal assault on virtually all of

the political and economic institutions created under Stalin, sharply assailed party officials for their interventionism, and called for the democratization of the CPSU based on the election (rather than selection) of the party's regional leaders.²⁰

Polozkov did not support Gorbachev's initiatives with much enthusiasm. His immediate comment on the Central Committee meeting of January 1987 did not refer to Gorbachev's critique of the existing system,²¹ and his detailed discussion of the development of *perestroika* in the Krasnodar region, published in the spring of 1987, balanced reformist and orthodox definitions of officials' responsibilities in particularly skillful fashion.²² Moreover, in an elaborate essay published in *Partiinaiia zhizn'* (May 1987). Polozkov ignored Gorbachev's strictures against officials' interventionism to focus on his own *kraikom's* efforts to assure fulfillment of production targets by state agencies. His description of local party officials' role in the establishment of agricultural production targets and his detailed critique of local state agencies' ostensible errors in planning and construction indicated that he still supported the orthodox conception of party officials' responsibilities. In fact, he explicitly declared that *gorkom* and *raikom* officials were responsible for all policies within their respective regions, and he called for the establishment of special groups in both party committees and primary party organizations to assure the fulfillment of production targets set by the *kraikom*.²³

Polozkov's definition of officials' responsibilities was in striking contrast to the views expressed at this time by such leading supporters of Gorbachev as Aleksandr N. Yakovlev and Georgii P. Razumovsky.²⁴ With the reformers at least temporarily in the ascendancy, Polozkov's views were not published in the central party press for nearly a year.²⁵ It is impossible to determine whether or not this reflected hostility on the part of the central leadership to Polozkov's orthodox orientation or his own preoccupation with a series of pressing problems in Krasnodar. Whatever the reason, he received less than positive press coverage in the fall of 1987 and subsequent months. In September 1987, the Krasnodar *kraikom* (and other regional party organizations) was criticized by the CPSU Central Committee for ostensibly slackening efforts to limit alcohol consumption.²⁶ And in the first months

of 1988, when the *kraikom* became involved in a serious dispute over the desirability of constructing the new nuclear power plant that Polozkov had sought at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, *Pravda* seemed to question his judgement by publishing a letter detailing his warm support for the project at the time.²⁷

Whatever the reason for this rather unflattering reminder, Polozkov was sufficiently influential to be named to the Presidium of the 19th Conference of the CPSU, which was convened in June 1988 to discuss Gorbachev's proposals for a fundamental change in the political system.²⁸ In his detailed report, Gorbachev sharply assailed party officials for their chronic interventionism in both state and soviet institutions and called for a sharp limitation of their responsibilities and a major shift of authority to elected soviets at all levels. Polozkov's comments on Gorbachev's suggestions were extremely ambiguous. On the one hand, he clearly endorsed the extension of local soviet authority against a ministerial structure that Polozkov portrayed as insensitive to local interests. On the other hand, he qualified his general support for Gorbachev's attack on party officials' authority by defending their actions as a natural response to the inadequate development of local soviet authority. Furthermore, he did not endorse the practice of electing party officials and warned that the movement towards democratization had to be balanced by greater party discipline to prevent a disastrous split within the CPSU.²⁹

Polozkov elaborated on his anxieties about the unintended consequences of democratization in a lengthy discussion of personnel management published in *Partiinaiia zhizn'* in November 1988. While he pointed with considerable pride to his own *kraikom*'s support for multiple candidates for a wide range of positions, he lashed out against the election of "dangerous unprincipled leaders and babblers" by those work collectives and party organizations who had rejected the nominees of local party bodies and elected their own candidates. Polozkov now clearly implied that party officials' control of the electoral process was the essential element of effective political leadership.³⁰

Shortly afterwards Polozkov was named to the Central Committee's new commission on agricultural policy, chaired by Ligachev. This was one of the six

new commissions created in the fall of 1988 as part of Gorbachev's effort to reform the apparatus. While they were ostensibly designed to give members of the Central Committee a larger role in policy making between Central Committee plenums, their establishment was accompanied by a severe cutback in the party apparatus at both the central and local levels.

Polozkov's discussion of the reform's impact on his own *kraikom* clearly indicated that he opposed the General Secretary's efforts to limit party officials' responsibilities. While he agreed on the overwhelming importance of "political methods" of leadership, he insisted that the extension of local soviet authority had not lessened party officials' responsibility for all activities within their respective regions.³¹ Furthermore, in an interview published in *Kommunist* in early 1989, Polozkov charged that the new emphasis on "political leadership" had totally confused and disoriented local party officials educated within the branch organization of the apparatus, but that the party's leadership had failed to provide any coherent guidance for them under new conditions.³²

Moreover, Polozkov had no intention of giving up his role as the chief economic officer for his region. In a detailed report on the economic situation in Krasnodar published in *Ekonomicheskaja gazeta* in March 1989, Polozkov portrayed himself as an expert on agriculture with a detailed knowledge of soil conditions and the merits of alternative methods of cultivation. In the process, he assailed Gosplan's agricultural planning and administration and praised his own *kraikom*'s development of a new intensive program of grain cultivation based on the widespread use of contracts and leases with a variety of production units.³³

Polozkov's doubts about the direction of policy were evidently intensified by the unexpected consequences of the elections for the Congress of People's Deputies. Although local party officials had managed to maintain control over the nomination process in many regions and organizations, the elections were sufficiently democratic to defeat a number of important party officials and to elect a small but determined group of prominent democratic critics led by Andrei Sakharov, Boris Yeltsin and others. In April 1989, when the Central Committee met to assess the situation,

Polozkov charged that the leadership's ideological revisionism and its reform of the apparat threatened to destroy the CPSU's dominant position in society. In particular, he now asserted that the leadership's systematic blurring of the fundamental differences between "bourgeois" and "working-class" ideologies and its failure to provide a coherent definition of the renovated socialism it ostensibly sought to construct had seriously confused party members throughout the USSR and thereby undermined the CPSU's popular support. He also charged that the Gorbachev leadership had failed to provide guidance to local party leaders disoriented by the reform of the apparatus in 1988 and thus had undermined their capacity to provide coherent "party leadership."³⁴

Polozkov elaborated on local officials' difficulties in a lengthy interview published in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* in early July 1989. In the process, he acknowledged that party officials' training as economic specialists had left them particularly ill-equipped for the "political leadership" now demanded by the Gorbachev leadership. Polozkov charged that many party officials had continued to use an outdated "economic-administrative style of leadership," which hampered their relationships with local soviet officials and the population at large, made it impossible for them to develop effective electoral strategies, and had led to their defeat in the most recent elections. Polozkov claimed that his own efforts to reach out to a variety of groups, such as potentially hostile university students, had made his electoral campaign successful.³⁵

While Polozkov's support for "political leadership" brought him much closer to Gorbachev's definition of officials' priorities, the General Secretary himself closed the gap by moving in a more orthodox direction. In mid-July of 1989 Gorbachev called a special meeting of party officials to cope with the unprecedented miners strikes in various regions of the USSR. In an apparent effort to gain the support of regional officials, Gorbachev spoke in more orthodox political terms than he had for some time. He gave renewed attention to local party officials' economic responsibilities (which he had sought to limit in the reform of the apparat in the fall of 1988), recognized that cooperatives sometimes violated the country's "standard of

social justice" and therefore needed local regulation, implied that the working class had not been given sufficient representation in the Congress of People's Deputies, and expressed considerable reservations about the capacity of a market economy to solve the country's pressing economic problems.³⁶

While Gorbachev's shift to a more orthodox stance seemed to close the gap between Gorbachev and Polozkov on many issues,³⁷ new differences developed in the fall of 1989 over the establishment of a separate Communist Party for the Russian republic. In October 1989 Polozkov clearly sided with those orthodox party members who sought to establish such a party to counteract the formation of autonomous Communist parties in the non-Russian republics and to offset the drift of Gorbachev's policies. While Gorbachev and the Politburo were evidently resisting these pressures,³⁸ Polozkov not only called for the restoration of a Buro for the RSFSR within the Central Committee of the CPSU, with its own Secretariat and subordinate departments, but also endorsed the convocation of an All-Russian Party Conference.³⁹ Polozkov and Gorbachev clashed over this issue at a meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in December 1989; while Polozkov repeated his call for an all-Russian Party Conference, Gorbachev was evidently unwilling to do more than name a Buro for the RSFSR in the Central Committee.⁴⁰

During the first months of 1990, Polozkov became involved in two local crises that brought him considerable media attention and probably helped him emerge as a national political figure in the following months. The first crisis was sparked by the USSR Ministry of Defense's abrupt call-up of Russian military reservists in Krasnodar (and other adjacent regions) in January 1990 for possible service in the violence-plagued Caucasus. The sudden mobilization prompted angry street demonstrations outside the party's headquarters in Krasnodar and demands of immediate demobilization. According to his own account, Polozkov intervened successfully with the Minister of Defense to reverse the mobilization order within a few days.⁴¹

At approximately the same time, Polozkov evidently played an important role in the public exposure of the export activities of the state-sponsored ANT

(Automation–Science–Technology Interbranch State Cooperative). ANT had evidently been granted broad authority to purchase and resell excess goods and raw materials abroad in order to raise hard currency, and was evidently supported by a number of defense and civilian ministers. The exposure of its bungled effort to export tanks and scarce raw materials through the port of Novorossiisk (in Krasnodar) in late January 1990 led the Presidium of the Council of Ministers to abruptly close ANT and either dismiss or reprimand a number of important ministers.⁴²

In early February 1990 Polozkov revealed that he had played a key role in unmasking ANT's efforts in the port of Novorossiisk. He noted that it had been very difficult to convince the central government to investigate ANT and assailed both the complicity of ministerial authorities and the reluctance of the "liberal" press to respond to this issue. Polozkov charged that the Council of Ministers was essentially engaged in a cover up, demanded a more thorough investigation of ANT's various activities, and reserved the right to raise the issue in the Congress of People's Deputies.⁴³

Polozkov did raise the issue in March 1990, when the Congress of People's Deputies convened to approve the establishment of a new powerful executive President of the USSR. Like many speakers (except for the undaunted Sakharov and a few others), Polozkov insisted that the new presidency was essential to compensate for the party leadership's decision to give up the CPSU's "leading role" in February 1990, and he portrayed the new position as a virtual cure-all for the USSR's problems. But he also argued that the new presidency of the USSR was needed to prevent any future scandals like that surrounding ANT, which, as Polozkov told the Congress, was evidence of an alliance between many of the country's "democrats" and a "quasi-criminal new bourgeoisie."⁴⁴ Polozkov represented himself not only as a fearless crusader against this nefarious coalition, but as a defender of the "long-suffering and ignored Russian people." He charged that Russian interests were not being adequately represented in the USSR's Congress of People's Deputies, and insisted that the Russian people did not share the views of the government's leading critics but supported the existing socialist structures.⁴⁵

Polozkov's comments on the alleged neglect of the Russian people's interests reflected his decision to seek election to the new Congress of People's Deputies for the Russian republic in the spring of 1990. With his election as a deputy from Krasnodar, Polozkov began to speak out increasingly on questions of national economic policy. On the eve of the Congress he expressed the hope that the new Russian parliament would defend the people's wealth more effectively than the USSR Supreme Soviet, and he outlined his reservations about the country's shift to a "market economy" in some detail. He warned that a rapid transition to a market economy would undermine the standard of living of those on fixed incomes, he criticized the speculative activities and corruption ostensibly spawned by the new cooperatives (the Krasnodar soviet had begun to limit cooperative activity in the spring of 1988),⁴⁶ and he questioned the proposals to solve agricultural problems by creating a new class of private farmers ("*fermery*").⁴⁷

In May of 1990 the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR (which had been elected on a more democratic basis than the USSR Congress of People's Deputies) convened for the first time. The first item on the agenda was a question of immense political significance—the election of a chairman to preside over both the Congress and the Supreme Soviet, to be selected from its membership. The deputies in the Congress were divided into two major factions: Democratic Russia, a loose coalition of Communist and non-Communist reformers who sought to limit the CPSU's power and to elect Boris Yeltsin as Chairman, on the one hand, and the Communists of Russia, a more orthodox coalition that opposed Yeltsin and initially supported Polozkov as its candidate, on the other.

Yeltsin launched his campaign with an attack on both the central USSR government and the CPSU. He focused on the protection and broadening of the RSFSR's sovereignty against the domination of the central government and closed with the following prescription:

Without destroying the system immediately, we should construct a new parallel structure, put an end to the party's monopoly of power and hand

over power to the people and the soviets. The subsequent transition to the market will make the entire command-administrative system unnecessary, and it will die a natural death.⁴⁸

Polozkov's election speech seemed designed to convince the deputies that he was not a narrow-minded opponent of reform. His discussion of the USSR lumped nationalist and centrist formations together, and he endorsed positions favored by both orthodox and reformist wings of the CPSU. For example, he declared that the revitalization of the RSFSR would be based on both the regime's "socialist choice" and the historical ideals of "the Russian people," and he balanced support for the RSFSR's "full sovereignty" with opposition to any action which might threaten the USSR's status as a great power.⁴⁹ While Yeltsin had totally ignored President Gorbachev in his address, Polozkov endorsed Gorbachev's efforts to preserve the USSR and warmly defended the USSR's military. While Yeltsin had made no reference to the RSFSR Communist Party, Polozkov described its formation as vital to foster the CPSU's "consolidating role." But Polozkov made no claim for the party's leading role, endorsing instead "full democracy," the development of a multi-party system, and the transfer of "all power to the soviets."

Polozkov dealt with economic issues in the same way. He agreed with Yeltsin that the RSFSR should control the natural resources and means of production on its own territory and limit the USSR government's control over the republic's economic life. But he warned against a too rapid shift to a market economy, argued that increased reliance on private ownership would lead to the restoration of social stratification and unemployment, and expressed his previous reservations about cooperatives.⁵⁰

In the first two rounds of the election for Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Polozkov won sufficient support to prevent Yeltsin from gaining the absolute majority needed to capture the post,⁵¹ and thus forced the reopening of nominations. Polozkov's withdrawal from the third round (along with a number of other

candidates) allowed Yeltsin to win a bare majority against the former chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Vlasov.⁵²

Polozkov as Russian First Secretary

The first Conference of the RSFSR Communist Party convened in June 1990 and immediately turned itself into a Founding Congress. General Secretary Gorbachev's opening report was followed by a barrage of attacks on his policies by Polozkov and other orthodox party officials. Polozkov now discarded the relative moderation of his campaign against Yeltsin to charge that the USSR's growing difficulties had been produced not merely by the "deformation of socialism" in the past but by the current leadership's growing ideological incoherence and its continued failure to provide local party officials with clear guidance. Polozkov assailed the Gorbachev leadership for its ostensible refusal to criticize those who "opposed the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of socialist construction," its portrayal of Soviet history as a series of mistakes, and its inability to develop a clear program for the regeneration of socialism. He also charged that the economy had been ruined by the Politburo's repeated insistence that local party officials end their intervention in economic administration even though no alternative system of management had been devised, and declared that Communists could not support *perestroika* when it was implemented "at the people's expense."⁵³

But Polozkov at this juncture was either unwilling or unable to outline a clear strategy for the new Communist party. He merely declared that it should "expose" the activities of the increasingly vocal anti-Communist political forces, oppose all efforts to depoliticize the army or police, unite all those interested in the preservation of socialism, defend the interests of workers and peasants at all costs, and establish Communist factions in all soviets.⁵⁴

After Polozkov was nominated for the position of first secretary, he made a brief speech to supplement the remarks outlined above. Polozkov lumped reformist and orthodox formulations together in an apparent effort to broaden his support. On the one hand, he defined the new party as the defender of "the socialist choice on a Marxist–Leninist basis," called for additional state support to collective and state farms, and warmly welcomed an endorsement from Communists in the military. On the other hand, he vigorously denied that he shared the orthodox views of the Leningrad teacher Nina Andreeva (whose article attacking *perestroika* in March 1988 had won wide attention), expressed willingness to cooperate with all democrats, and denied that he was an extreme conservative.⁵⁵

As First Secretary of the new party, Polozkov initially adopted a strikingly conciliatory stance towards the governments of the RSFSR and the USSR. In his first brief press conference, he declared that he wanted to show that he was "not as horrible as imagined," that he sought cooperation with both Gorbachev and Yeltsin on the basis of *perestroika* and an improved life for the Russian people, and that he favored a "regulated market economy."⁵⁶ In a more elaborate interview with *Pravda*, Polozkov seemed to be extremely tolerant of ideological diversity. He asserted that there were "positive" elements in both the Democratic and Marxist platforms being circulated on the eve of the 28th Congress of the CPSU, pledged to eliminate the "conservative structure" of the party, and once again distanced himself from the orthodox views held by Andreeva, insisting that while he was cautious in regard to "radical" reform, he was not a conservative with outdated notions but receptive to innovation. He also emphasized his desire to work within the framework of the RSFSR's new parliamentary structure and to cooperate with Communist parties in other republics.⁵⁷

In a third, more detailed interview in *Sovietskaia Rossiia* Polozkov sought to present himself as both a man of the people and prepared for political life at the apex of the political system. He asserted that the sudden call up of military reservists in Krasnodar in January 1990 had convinced him of the overriding need to defend the population against the commands of the "center," and he pledged to build the RSFSR

Communist party on that principle.⁵⁸ At the same time, he implied that he had a long-standing personal relationship with President Gorbachev, fully understood the complex relationships between the General Secretary and other members of the leadership (which he rather coyly refused to discuss), and expressed considerable admiration for Yeltsin and his objectives.

Polozkov sought to broaden his support in a variety of ways. While critical of "democrats" for their failure to act effectively (he was most critical of the reported refusal of the Chairman of the Moscow soviet to grant Polozkov permission to live in Moscow), he reiterated his interest in a "dialogue" with all except those who sought to liquidate the CPSU, pledged to cooperate with religious organizations to improve standards of morality and to counter national discord, represented himself as the natural ally of all segments of the intelligentsia (i.e., those in the capital, the provinces, the party and the military) and seemed to soften his previous criticism of the drift towards a market economy.⁵⁹

Polozkov also adopted a conciliatory attitude in his address to the 28th Congress of the CPSU, which convened only a few days after the first session of the RSFSR Communist Party's founding congress. He muted his criticism of Gorbachev and praised the Congress's programmatic documents, described *perestroika* in positive terms, and outlined a program for the RSFSR Communist Party which could hardly provide a challenge to the CPSU's leadership. Polozkov claimed that the party would attempt to defend citizens against the negative consequences of a transition to a market economy, raise labor productivity and both technical and administrative discipline in enterprises, provide more modern equipment for the peasantry, support the law enforcement agencies in their struggle with crime, and improve living conditions for veterans, young people, and children.⁶⁰ At the end of the 28th Congress Polozkov was named to a totally reconstructed CPSU Politburo,⁶¹ and in August he met with his immediate colleagues to prepare for the second session of the RSFSR Communist Party Congress in September. While they struggled to shape an action program for the new party,⁶² the relationship between President Gorbachev and Chairman Yeltsin shifted dramatically.

In the spring of 1990 Gorbachev had derided Yeltsin and his program for the RSFSR, but the orthodox attacks on his policies at both the Founding Congress of the RSFSR Communist Party and the 28th Congress of the CPSU in June/July 1990 evidently convinced him that cooperation with Yeltsin was essential. Sometime after the 28th Congress, the two leaders evidently agreed to work together on the development of a radical economic policy for the entire USSR. In early August a group of their advisers headed by Stanislav S. Shatalin, a member of Gorbachev's new Presidential Council, began work on a program for a rapid transition to a "market" economy.

Polozkov and his colleagues openly opposed the Shatalin program, which was clearly designed to dismantle key elements of state socialism. When the RSFSR Communist Party Congress reconvened in September, Polozkov warned that the proposed rapid transition to a market economy would bring higher prices, unemployment, and the growth of both a private property mentality and class stratification. He declared that the RSFSR Communist Party would defend the working people against the regime's efforts to establish a market economy and he called upon the Communists of Russia in the new RSFSR parliament, who held approximately 40 percent of the seats, to counter the Yeltsin government's effort to restore a "capitalist system."⁶³ Henceforth, the Communists of Russia, which remained far more disciplined than Democratic Russia, emerged as a powerful and vigorous opponent of the Yeltsin government's economic policies.

Polozkov also opposed Yeltsin's conception of the USSR as a confederation of autonomous republics. In an address to the CPSU Central Committee in October 1990, Polozkov denounced Yeltsin's position and explicitly endorsed President Gorbachev's vision of a "revitalized" federal system with a powerful central government.⁶⁴ At the same time, Polozkov sought to portray his party as the true defender of Russian "national interests." He insisted that a powerful RSFSR was the key to a strong Soviet Union, demanding that both the USSR and RSFSR governments act more vigorously to defend the rights and interests of Russians living in the non-Russian republics.⁶⁵

Shortly afterwards President Gorbachev dramatically shifted his position on economic policy by rejecting the major components of the Shatalin program and incorporating a variety of proposals into his own eclectic "Presidential plan."⁶⁶ Gorbachev's action enraged Shatalin and other leading proponents of radical economic reform, produced a major breach between Gorbachev and Yeltsin over both economic policy and the nature of the USSR, and deepened the Soviet leadership's anxiety about impending collapse and chaos in the USSR. In November 1990, when the Supreme Soviet of the USSR convened, it suspended its own agenda to demand that President Gorbachev take action to forestall what many deputies regarded as a drift towards economic collapse and civil war.

The breach between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, who explicitly committed his government to the implementation of the Shatalin program, evidently convinced Polozkov that he and his party should lead the opposition to Yeltsin. While Polozkov and his colleagues remained sharply critical of the Gorbachev leadership for allegedly undermining state socialism, they now directed their major attack towards Yeltsin and his "radical democratic" supporters.

In November 1990, Polozkov charged that the Gorbachev leadership had allowed anti-Communist "radicals" and national separatists to seize control of the policy process from the CPSU's officials, and to use their domination of the mass media to wage a savage assault on "socialist values," the legitimacy of the CPSU, the military and law enforcement agencies. Polozkov also claimed that the central leadership's misguided economic policies had destroyed people's faith in socialism, and led to a virtual "civil war" between the supporters of socialism and the "new bourgeois forces" who sought its destruction. Although Polozkov did not attack Yeltsin by name, he sharply criticized Democratic Russia, Yeltsin's major ally in the RSFSR parliament, for calling for an end to Communist party activities in state agencies and was sharply critical of those who favored rapid transition to a market economy. He derided their ostensible support for class differentiation as essential for the country's development and their conclusion that the newly rich in the RSFSR were potentially creative entrepreneurs, and denounced all proposals for the

privatization of state industry. Polozkov insisted that the regime create "a regulated market of the socialist type" to avoid the pitfalls of a capitalist market.⁶⁷

In early December 1990 President Gorbachev moved in the direction supported by Polozkov⁶⁸ and other orthodox critics of the regime. He dissolved his Presidential Council (which had included his most influential reformist allies), replaced the Council of Ministers responsible to the USSR's parliament with a presidentially appointed Cabinet of Ministers, and acquired emergency executive authority for the next eighteen months.⁶⁹ Gorbachev's effort to rule the USSR by broadening the central government's authority, which intensified his conflict with Chairman Yeltsin and other democrats, proved a boon for Polozkov. In the winter of 1990-91 he emerged as a major advocate of a powerful central government that would not only reestablish political and economic stability but would also restore key elements of state socialism. During this period, Polozkov publicly allied himself with the leaders of the USSR's armed forces, the KGB, and the law enforcement agencies,⁷⁰ and his views were given wide coverage in the party's publications. *Pravda* published his reports to the RSFSR Communist Party, which it had previously ignored,⁷¹ *Partiinaiia zhizn'* published his plea for a powerful central government led by a strong executive president,⁷² and *Kommunist* featured his theoretical justification for the creation of a "socialist *perestroika*."⁷³

Polozkov's essay in *Kommunist* charged that the CPSU's leadership had failed to protect the people against an emerging coalition of "mafia capitalists, national separatists, and corrupt bureaucrats," and urged the CPSU leadership to avoid a headlong rush towards privatization of industry and to retain state ownership of the means of production.⁷⁴ At the same time, Polozkov sought to restore the distinction between socialism and capitalism that Gorbachev and his leading spokesmen had blurred systematically since the 19th Conference of the CPSU in mid-1988. Polozkov derided the Gorbachev leadership's tendency to identify capitalism with "the advance of civilization," and attempted to restore faith in traditional conceptions of socialism by portraying the introduction of a planned economy and state responsibility for welfare as in themselves major contributions to civilization.⁷⁵

In January 1991 Polozkov's faith in Gorbachev's leadership was evidently restored when the President approved (or at least did not oppose) the use of military force against nationalist forces in Lithuania. Polozkov explicitly praised Gorbachev and his new cabinet of ministers for acting vigorously against the "reactionaries" who had ostensibly restored "the dictatorship of private capital" in Lithuania and now sought to extend it to the entire USSR.⁷⁶ In February 1991 Polozkov overtly defended the use of military force in Lithuania, condemned the separatist regimes in the Baltic states as "totalitarian," nationalist, and pro-Western, and turned against the "so-called democrats" with particular venom. He now warned that over-reliance on electoral politics could have dangerous consequences (reminding his audience that Hitler had come to power on the basis of electoral politics) and assailed the independent press for its anti-Communism, its accusations that the central government was drifting towards dictatorship, and its misrepresentation of the RSFSR Communist Party as "conservative and obstructionist."⁷⁷

Polozkov now portrayed his party as a loyal supporter of President Gorbachev and the central government and as ready to participate in a "multi-party system within a socialist framework."⁷⁸ He urged party members to support the President's efforts to restore economic and political stability, called on Communist deputies to "expose" their opponents in the Russian parliament, and told primary party organizations to focus on the production problems ostensibly now ignored by both the USSR and RSFSR governments.⁷⁹

Polozkov also gave particular attention to his party's support for the USSR's military. Polozkov condemned demands of the "so-called democrats" for the depoliticization of the armed forces (i.e., the elimination of Communist controls) and urged local party units to attend to the welfare of local military detachments.⁸⁰ In late February, Polozkov attended a massive rally in support of the armed forces along with Minister of Defense Yazov, Chairman of the KGB Kryuchkov, Minister of the Interior Pugo, and the first secretary of the Moscow party organization, Prokofyev (all of whom led the attempted coup against Gorbachev in August).⁸¹ He reiterated his harsh criticism of the "radical democrats" in an address to a conference of

nationalist organizations⁸² and in his detailed report to the Central Committee of the RSFSR Communist Party in March 1991.

Polozkov now charged that the "radical democrats" served the new bourgeoisie, foreign transnational corporations, and national separatists who sought to lead the USSR "to the edge of destruction under the nominal leadership of a Communist president" and then represent themselves as the country's only saviors.⁸³ Polozkov called on the Communist Party of the RSFSR to oppose this coalition at all levels of the political system. He demanded that all Russian Communists support the forthcoming national referendum on the fate of the USSR,⁸⁴ urged local party officials to work with local soviet authorities to improve regional economic conditions, and insisted that all Communist deputies unite against their "radical democratic" opponents to rebuild popular support for the party by developing specific programs for workers and peasants. Polozkov also urged all Russian Communists to counter the growing commercialization of Russian culture, to support local law enforcement agencies, and to defend Lenin and his ideological legacy from increasingly hostile attacks.⁸⁵

Although Polozkov did not criticize Yeltsin by name, he assailed the RSFSR regime for supporting "national separatists" in the non-Russian republics and for ostensibly remaining indifferent to the fate of Russians living outside of the RSFSR, and denounced as a direct threat to Gorbachev's authority the movement (clearly supported by Yeltsin and his followers) to elect a President of the RSFSR.

Polozkov's assaults on the "so-called democrats" and on Yeltsin's policies were widely interpreted as a concerted effort to oust Yeltsin from his position as Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. Whatever his intent, Polozkov's aggressive position led to a dramatic split within his own party. In late March 1991, when the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies convened in special session, Aleksandr V. Rutskoï, a popular leader of the RSFSR Communist party and a former military officer, denounced the Polozkov leadership for disregarding the CPSU's programmatic documents and announced the formation of a new parliamentary faction, the Communists for Democracy, which would support Yeltsin's program.⁸⁶

Rutskoi's desertion seemed to force Polozkov into a far more moderate position. He told the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies that his party did not seek Yeltsin's ouster but reserved the right to criticize the government's policies within the parliament and to advance its own alternative program.⁸⁷ While Polozkov denounced Rutskoi's actions, he sought to minimize the significance of his desertion and underlined his party's commitment to a purely parliamentary strategy.⁸⁸

Polozkov's efforts to make the Communist Party of the RSFSR into the "vanguard" in the conflict with Yeltsin's "democrats" was completely derailed by a dramatic shift in the relationship between Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the spring of 1991. In late April President Gorbachev unexpectedly announced that Yeltsin and the leaders of the majority of the USSR's republics had reached an agreement to end their "war of laws" and to cooperate in the restoration of political and economic stability on the basis of a new union treaty that would guarantee member republics rights as "sovereign states."⁸⁹ Polozkov had long supported the consolidation of the USSR, and this agreement on a new federal treaty evidently made him reverse his position towards Chairman Yeltsin. He praised Yeltsin's capacity "to transcend his personal interests, to act in a far-sighted fashion, and to support a constructive position expressing the interests of Russia and the Russians"⁹⁰; reversed his previous opposition to the popular election of a President for the RSFSR; and pledged to support the candidate who really sought to improve the Russian people's standard of living and restore cooperation with the USSR's other republics.⁹¹

With the restoration of cooperation between Gorbachev and Yeltsin and the beginning of the electoral campaign for president of the RSFSR, Polozkov's leadership of the RSFSR Communist Party seemed on the verge of collapse. When the Central Committee of the RSFSR Communist Party convened in May, Polozkov did not present the traditional report of the first secretary, allowing other leaders to deal with the substantive issues facing the party and limiting his public comments to a brief concluding address, in which he politely declined to run as the party's candidate for president and endorsed former Prime Minister of the USSR Nikolai Ryzhkov instead.⁹²

From this point onward, Polozkov seemed to withdraw from the leadership of his party. Late in May he denounced the idea of an elected president for the RSFSR as a threat to Gorbachev's authority.⁹³ He failed to participate publicly in Ryzhkov's election campaign,⁹⁴ and he made no public comment on Yeltsin's electoral victory in June. Polozkov's passivity prompted sharp criticism from every faction within the RSFSR Communist Party. Communist deputies in the RSFSR parliament assailed his failure to attack President Gorbachev, Communists in Kaliningrad demanded his resignation because of his opposition to Yeltsin,⁹⁵ and Rutskoi, who had been elected vice president of the RSFSR on Yeltsin's ticket, broke with the RSFSR Communist Party by creating a new political party—the Democratic Party of Russian Communists.⁹⁶

Almost immediately after Yeltsin's inauguration as president of the RSFSR in July 1991, he turned on the RSFSR Communist party with a vengeance, banning the activities of its primary party organizations in all state institutions.⁹⁷ While the party's Politburo denounced Yeltsin's action and urged President Gorbachev to countermand Yeltsin's decree,⁹⁸ Polozkov seemed to have become totally demoralized and disoriented. He made no public comment at the plenum of the CPSU Central Committee convened in July to approve Gorbachev's revisionist program for the CPSU, and his report to the meeting of the Central Committee of his own party in August was extraordinarily flaccid. While he repeated his usual tirades against the more radical reformers who he claimed sought to destroy the socialist system, his discussion of the revisionist program that Gorbachev had foisted on the CPSU Central Committee was ambiguous. On the one hand, he objected to the program's uncritical enthusiasm for a market economy, its total failure to differentiate the CPSU from social democratic or bourgeois liberal parties, and the stress placed on "universal values" of world civilization to the exclusion of class values. On the other hand, he praised the new document for ostensibly providing a coherent program for action (which it did not) and declared that it could serve as an effective rallying point for the party as a whole.⁹⁹ Polozkov then resigned from his position as first secretary without public explanation.¹⁰⁰ While the timing of his resignation suggests he might

have had some knowledge of the attempted coup against President Gorbachev three weeks later, his actual role in these developments remains unknown.

Conclusions

Polozkov's commentary and political activities provide considerable insight into the collapse of Communist power in the USSR. First of all, his analysis of the impact of *perestroika* on local party officials helps explain why Gorbachev's reforms led to the destruction rather than the rejuvenation of the CPSU's "leadership of the Soviet state." Polozkov clearly understood that local party officials' domination and direction of the CPSU's rank and file who manned the state was the essence of party leadership. He therefore concluded that the extension of the soviets' executive and legislative authority at the expense of local party officials would destroy the party leadership's most important means to coordinate and direct the activities of the Soviet state.

Polozkov also realized that Gorbachev's ideological revisionism seriously undermined party officials' capacity to lead the party rank and file. He understood that the leadership's uncritical embrace of various elements of "bourgeois" and "social democratic" theory and practice virtually destroyed the rationale for party control over the media and the country's intellectual life, making it impossible for the CPSU to develop a consistent and coherent "socialist" orientation, and stimulating ever sharper attacks on the CPSU's historical record and its very right to rule. Polozkov also realized that the leadership's confused efforts to create a "mixed" economy had produced massive economic dislocation, which encouraged the development of anti-Communist organizations in the newly empowered soviets at all levels of the USSR. All of these factors threatened to transform the Communist parties into purely parliamentary factions with limited social support.

Second, Polozkov's efforts to frame a coherent strategy for the new Communist Party of the RSFSR in 1990-91 demonstrate the immense impact of the transformation of political authority he had criticized as First Secretary of the Krasnodar *kraikom*. Gorbachev's persistent assault on party officials' interventionism, his decision to end the CPSU's monopoly of power, the establishment of the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet as the republic's legislative and representative bodies, and the formation of Democratic Russia and its support for the election of Boris Yeltsin as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and then as President of the RSFSR made it very difficult for the Communist Party to be more than an aggressive parliamentary opposition.

These encroaching limits on the party's range of action probably shaped Polozkov's strategy of maneuver in regard to President Gorbachev and RSFSR Party Chairman Yeltsin. While Polozkov initially offered his support to both leaders in the summer of 1990, in October he sided with President Gorbachev, who sought to retain the USSR and slow the drive for a "market" economy, against chairman Yeltsin, who continued to endorse the Shatalin plan and favored a decentralized federation of autonomous republics. During the winter of 1990-91 Polozkov and his party seemed to benefit from President Gorbachev's alliance with those who sought to strengthen the power of the central government.

But when Gorbachev and Yeltsin resumed their cooperation on the basis of a new type of federal system for the USSR in the spring of 1991, Polozkov seemed to lose all maneuverability. His virtual silence henceforth in the media and his failure to participate in the party's campaign to elect Ryzhkov to the RSFSR presidency suggest severe demoralization and loss of orientation. Polozkov's evident relinquishment of active leadership of his party may have encouraged both Yeltsin and Rutskoi to launch a direct assault on the RSFSR Communist Party after their election in July 1991. His earlier, repeated warnings about the dangers of extending the soviets' authority at the expense of the party proved to be all too correct.

A few months after the abortive coup against USSR President Gorbachev in August 1991, a victorious Russian President Yeltsin banned the Communist Party of

the RSFSR. While Yeltsin's order eliminated the party's leading organs and the apparatus of party officials, it did not disrupt the activities of the party's parliamentary faction, the Communists of Russia, who had been elected to the Congress of People's Deputies in 1990. Although some members deserted to join one of the numerous other factions created in 1992, the Communists' faction remained largely intact, broadening its influence through alliances with newly emerging "patriotic" factions.

The approach of this coalition towards the Yeltsin government in 1991-92 was in many ways similar to Polozkov's relations with Yeltsin in the last year of the USSR's existence. In late 1991 the Communists of Russia faction initially endorsed the Yeltsin governments' economic program, but the unintended consequences of reform that became increasingly evident in 1992 gave it an extraordinary opportunity to attack the Yeltsin government. Its members charged that the unchecked inflation, the declines in industrial production, the growing hardship for those on fixed incomes, and the spread of class differentiation, corruption and crime proved the government's program was harmful to the Russian people. Their attacks on the Yeltsin government were no less strident than in previous years, but there was one significant difference in their orientation. In their ongoing assault against the President and his government, the Communists of Russia emerged as ardent champions of parliamentary supremacy to counter the "excessive" authority enjoyed by the President.

The dissolution of the USSR at the end of 1991 provided the Communists of Russia with additional opportunities to criticize Yeltsin. In 1990-91 Polozkov's party had assailed the RSFSR government for ostensibly supporting the "national separatists" and ignoring the interests of Russians living in other republics in the USSR. In 1992, the real and imagined threats to Russians who remained in the newly independent members of the Commonwealth of Independent States allowed the Communists of Russia to revive these accusations with a vengeance. In addition they portrayed the outside world from both a Leninist and a nationalist position, warning that western capital investment and economic advice threatened to make Russia a

colony of the "imperialist world," and attacking arms control agreements that ostensibly undermined Russia's great power status.

Aleksandr Rutskoi, Russia's independent-minded vice president, adopted a similar position throughout 1992. While Rutskoi periodically pledged his loyalty to Yeltsin and had created his own political party independent of the Communists of Russia, his analysis of the government's economic policy, its relationship with Russians abroad, and its foreign policy was strikingly similar to Polozkov's earlier broadsides. As a result, despite the destruction of the organizational structures of the Communist Party of the RSFSR, the ideological orientation of its only first secretary has continued to find expression in Russia's political system.

Notes

1. Alexander Rahr, *A Biographical Directory of One Hundred Leading Soviet Officials* (4th Edition, October 1988), pp. 138-9.
2. *Pravda*, October 26, 1983, p. 2; January 16, 1984, p. 2.
3. *Pravda*, July 14, 1984, p. 2.
4. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, August 21, 1984, p. 2.
5. *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, August 29, 1984, pp. 1-2.
6. Rahr, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
8. *KPSS o perestroike. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: 1988), p. 10.
9. *Pravda*, October 14, 1985, p. 3.
10. For a detailed discussion of this process in the Krasnodar *gorkom*, see *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, June 7, 1985, p. 1.
11. *Pravda*, October 14, 1985, p. 3.
12. *Pravda*, January 22, 1986.
13. *Pravda*, March 1, 1986, p. 5.
14. *Current Soviet Policies, Vol. IX. The Documentary Record of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Columbus, 1986), p. 40.

15. *Pravda*, March 1, 1986, p. 5.
16. *Pravda*, June 17, 1986 as translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 24, pp. 8-10.
17. *Pravda*, July 16, 1986, p. 2.
18. In September 1986 Gorbachev toured Krasnodar and indirectly praised Polozkov's efforts on behalf of *perestroika*. *Pravda*, September 20, 1986, p. 3. Shortly afterwards Polozkov outlined his own views on the reform of personnel management in *Kommunist*. See I. Polozkov, "Vospityvat' doveriem i otvetstvennostiu," *Kommunist*, No. 17 (1986), pp. 30-41.
19. For a detailed discussion of Ligachev's views, see Jonathan Harris, "Ligachev on Glasnost and Perestroika." *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, No. 706 (March 1989), pp. 25-6.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-8.
21. *Pravda*, February 11, 1987, p. 2.
22. While he followed Gorbachev's lead in stressing party officials' "political responsibilities," he continued to use orthodox formulations on their direction of economic, social, and political life. He balanced his pledge not to allow *kraikom* officials to "supplant" economic administrators with a broad definition of "verification of fulfillment," which legitimized constant intervention by local officials. See I. Polozkov, "Ne dliia parada," *Idet perestroika* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 97-8.
23. I. Polozkov, "Organizatsiia proverka ispol'neniia," *Partiinaia zhizn'*, No. 11 (1987), pp. 9-17.
24. See Yakovlev's essay in *Kommunist* No. 8 (1987), and Razumovsky's essay in *Kommunist* No. 9 (1987).

25. Polozkov's views on personnel management were briefly cited in *Pravda*, September 19, 1987, p. 2.
26. *Pravda*, September 13, 1987, p. 2.
27. *Pravda*, March 2, 1988 as translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XL, No. 12, p. 29.
28. *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia KPSS. Stenograficheskiĭ otchet* Vol. I, p. 9.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-4.
30. I. Polozkov, "Na konkurskoi sostiazatel'noi osnove," *Partiinaia zhizn'*, No. 22 (1988), pp. 30-2.
31. *Pravda*, December 22, 1988, p. 3.
32. I. Polozkov, "Politicheskoe rukovodstvo ot slov k delu," *Kommunist*, No 2 (1989), pp. 12-21.
33. *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, No. 11 (March 1989), pp. 4-5.
34. *Pravda*, April 27, 1989, p. 5.
35. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, July 9, 1989, p. 5.
36. M. S. Gorbachev, "Restructuring the Party's Work: A Top Priority Task," *Report at a Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee*, Moscow, July 18, 1989, pp. 14-32.
37. In a lengthy interview published in *Pravda* in October 1989, Polozkov joined orthodox and reformist formulations together in much the same way as did the General Secretary. He reiterated his strong support for party officials' economic responsibilities and portrayed himself

as the champion of the democratization of the *kraikom*, insisting that all members of the committee (rather than its officials) now developed policy on the basis of open discussion and debate. He also balanced his usual assault on the Central Committee Secretariat's failure to provide adequate guidance to local officials with support for cooperation between local party and soviet authorities against the central ministries' interference in regional development. He also lumped together the orthodox view that the CPSU was the only organization capable of reflecting the USSR's diverse social and economic forces with the reformist view that only a dialogue between party and people could restore its leadership position. *Pravda*, October 18, 1989, p. 2.

38. *Pravda*, October 20, 1989, p. 1.

39. *Pravda*, October 18, 1989, p. 2.

40. See the minutes of the meeting in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 4 (1990), pp. 100-1.

41. See the interview with Polozkov in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, January 28, 1990, p. 1.

42. *Izvestiia*, January 31, 1990, p. 2.

43. See the re-publication of Polozkov's interview in *Sovetskaia Kuban'* (February 6, 1990) in *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, No. 9 (March 2, 1990), p. 15.

44. He insisted that press's reluctance to expose the scandal and the general failure to expose those responsible for ANT's actions reflected the mutual action of "some cooperatives, journalists, deputies and corrupt state officials." *Izvestiia*, March 14, 1990, p. 7.

45. *Ibid.*

46. See the report in *Izvestiia*, November 19, 1988, p. 4.

47. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, April 29, 1990, p. 3.

48. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, May 27, 1990, p. 5.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Polozkov's broad electoral support has been largely forgotten in the subsequent enthusiasm for Boris Yeltsin's victory. In the first round Yeltsin won 497 votes and Polozkov 473. In the second round Yeltsin received 503 votes and Polozkov 458. See *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XLII, No. 21, pp. 5-6.
52. Polozkov subsequently complained that his campaign had been hampered by press efforts to portray him as a "reactionary," and that he might have been able to defeat Yeltsin but withdrew to defuse the confrontation between Democratic Russia and the Communists of Russia. *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, June 29, 1990, p. 2.
53. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, June 21, 1990, p. 6.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, June 23, 1990, p. 3.
56. He insisted that he had excellent personal and political relations with Yeltsin and expressed great interest in working with President Gorbachev. *Izvestiia*, June 24, 1990, p.1.
57. *Pravda*, June 24, 1990, p. 2.
58. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, July 1, 1990, pp. 1-2.
59. He sought to make the most out of alleged personal contacts with Gorbachev in Stavropol' and while working in the Central Committee. He also predicted that Yeltsin would remain

remain within the CPSU to "maintain his independence" and to foster his objective of defending the RSFSR's sovereignty.

60. *Pravda*, July 9, 1990, pp. 2-3.

61. All of the incumbents were replaced except Gorbachev. The Politburo was enlarged to include the first secretaries of all the republican Communist parties and a new set of secretaries of the CPSU Central Committee responsible for the six Central Committee commissions.

62. In an interview in August, Polozkov reported serious divisions within the leadership of the RSFSR Communist Party analogous to the differences expressed at the 28th Congress of the CPSU. *Pravda*, August 6, 1990, pp. 1-2.

63. *Pravda*, September 5, 1990, pp. 1-2.

64. *Pravda*, October 10, 1990, p. 4.

65. *Ibid.*

66. See Ed Hewett, "The New Soviet Plan," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1990/1991, p. 150.

67. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, November 16, 1990, p. 1.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

69. *Izvestiia*, December 5, 1990, pp. 1-2.

70. He participated in a meeting of RSFSR parliamentary deputies from the armed forces, KGB, and law enforcement agencies under the auspices of the Main Political Administration of the USSR Armed Forces. *Pravda*, November 25, 1990, p. 2.

71. *Pravda*, December 19, 1990, p. 2.

72. Ivan Polozkov, "Vzkatel'nost, "Partiinaiia zhizn', No. 23 (1990), pp. 33-4.
73. I. Polozkov, "Za sotsialisticheskii kharakter perestroiki," *Kommunist*, No. 2 (1991).
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Pravda*, February 4, 1991, p. 3.
77. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, February 5, 1991, pp. 1-3.
78. He claimed that a genuine multi-party system had not yet been established in the USSR because the CPSU was faced with a growing coalition of anti-Communist groups who had rejected a "socialist framework" and instead sought to destroy the CPSU and dismember the USSR. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, February 22, 1991, p. 2.
81. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, February 25, 1991, p. 1.
82. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, February 28, 1991, p. 2.
83. *Pravda*, March 7, 1991, pp 2-3.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Izvestiia*, April 3, 1991, p. 1.

87. *Ibid.*
88. *Pravda*, April 19, 1991, p. 2.
89. *Pravda*, April 23, 1991, p. 1.
90. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, April 27, 1991, p. 1.
91. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, May 6, 1991, p. 1.
92. *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, May 15, 1991, p. 4. Ryzhkov received the Central Committee's endorsement (*Pravda*, May 14, 1991, p. 1).
93. Moscow TASS in English, May 23, 1991 in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, SOV 91-100, May 23, 1991, p. 59.
94. On June 11, 1991 Radio Rossiia reported acidly that Polozkov seemed to have virtually disappeared. *Summary of World Broadcasts*, SU 1097, p. B/18, June 13, 1991.
95. TASS in English, July 12, 1991, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, SU 1124 (July 15, 1991), p. C2/7.
96. *Pravda*, July 16, 1991, p. 2.
97. *Izvestiia*, July 22, 1991, p. 1.
98. *Pravda*, July 24, 1991, p. 2.
99. Moscow TASS in Russian, August 6, 1991, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, SOV-91-152, August 7, 1991, pp. 54-60.
100. *Pravda*, August 7, 1991, p. 2.