Cultures of Power in Post-Communist Russia

In Russian politics reliable information is scarce, formal relations are of relatively little significance, and things are seldom what they seem. Applying an original theory of political language to narratives taken from interviews with thirty-four of Russia's leading political figures, Michael Urban explores the ways in which political actors construct themselves with words. By tracing individual narratives back to the discourses available to speakers, he identifies what can and cannot be intelligibly said within the bounds of the country's political culture, and then documents how elites rely on the personal elements of political discourse at the expense of those addressed to political community. Urban shows that this discursive orientation is congruent with social relations prevailing in Russia and helps to account for the fact that, despite two revolutions proclaiming democracy in the last century, Russia remains an authoritarian state.

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Cultures of Power in Post-Communist Russia
An Analysis of Elite Political Discourse

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For Veronica, one more time.
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The first group of people whom I would like to thank are those who sat for the interviews on which this study is based. Their names are listed in the Appendix. For me, talking with them represented the most enjoyable part of the project. Their candor and generosity of spirit amazed me not a few times, perhaps even more than their many insights into the world of Russian politics. I learned a lot from them. I also benefited from the counsel of two Russian scholars – Alexei Kuzmin and Viktor Sergeyev – whose advice during the early stages of my work proved invaluable, as did the support and encouragement of Mary McAuley and Ronald Suny.

I am particularly grateful to Vyacheslav Igrunov, a veteran of innumerable political struggles in his country and a scholar in his own right, who pulled every imaginable string to arrange the great majority of the interviews that were done. That gratitude extends, too, to Elena Alekseenkova and Vadim Sharomov who conducted some of the interviews for me while I was away from Moscow. Likewise, my thanks go to Vladimir Pribylovskii for furnishing the biographical information used in the Appendix.

The final draft of the text was informed by the encouraging and critical comments rendered by a number of scholars who had read earlier versions in whole or in part. My thanks in this regard go to: Richard Anderson, George Breslauer, Archie Brown, Craig Calhoun, G. William Domhoff, Paul Frymer, Stephen Hanson, James Hughes, Eugene Huskey, Grigori Ioffe, Cynthia Kaplan, Peter Kenez, Jonathan Larson, Ronnie Lipschutz, Aleksandr Smirnov, Vadim Volkov and Stephen White. I am likewise thankful for the opportunities to present my work in progress at Miami University of Ohio and the University of California, Berkeley. Venelin Ganev and Karen Dawisha made
possible the first of these and Yuri Slezkine, the second. At later stages of the project, Paul Held, Benjamin Read and Kent Eaton fed my thinking with some very helpful suggestions on things to read. George Urban sat for many days before the computer screen painstakingly constructing a complex electronic index.

I wish to thank the Academic Senate of the University of California, Santa Cruz, for the travel grant that enabled me to make the site visit that started my research, and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research for a generous grant that financially sustained it thereafter. Chapters 2, 4 and 5 of this volume appeared in earlier version in, respectively, *International Political Anthropology*, *Europe-Asia Studies* and *Post-Soviet Affairs*. My thanks go to the editors of those journals for permission to reprint those articles here.

Reserving pride of place for last, I make another inadequate attempt to thank my wife, Veronica, for technical and moral support, for inexhaustible patience with a person preoccupied (to his own chagrin) with thinking about the stuff of this book, and for long conversations, as well as the offhanded quip, that made that stuff better.
Note on transliteration

I have followed the standard British form for transliterating the Cyrillic alphabet into the Russian one. Hence, names such as “Yeltsin” that are regularly used in the popular press are rendered here as “El’tsin.” The rare exceptions to this rule concern those Russians who have adopted a particular transliteration of their own names: thus, for instance, “Alexei” instead of “Aleksei.”