

President Boris Yeltsin

Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin was born on Feb. 1, 1931, in Sverdlovsk (now called Yekaterinburg). After receiving a degree in construction engineering from the Ural Polytechnic Institute in Sverdlovsk, he was employed as a construction engineer from 1955 to 1968.

Mr. Yeltsin joined the Communist Party at the age of 30. In 1976, he was appointed first secretary of the Sverdlovsk District Party Committee, where he gained a reputation as an energetic reformer.

In 1985, he was brought to Moscow as secretary of the Central Committee for Construction. There he joined the new reform leadership headed by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. A year later, Mr. Yeltsin became first secretary of the Moscow Party Committee and a candidate member of the Politburo.

In October 1987, after criticizing the Communist Party's Secretariat and complaining about the slow pace of perestroika, Mr. Yeltsin resigned from local Moscow and Politburo posts.

Two years later, Mr. Yeltsin was elected to the U.S.S.R. Congress of Peoples' Deputies to represent all of Moscow, and joined the Supreme Soviet.

In 1990, he was elected chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet. He resigned from the Communist Party in July 1990.

In June 1991, in the first democratic election of a head of state in Russia's history, Boris Yeltsin became president on the first ballot. Two months later, an attempted coup in the U.S.S.R. failed largely because President Yeltsin steadfastly opposed it publicly.

In January 1992, he launched a program of far-reaching economic reforms. The Russian people confirmed their support for President Yeltsin and his policies in a referendum held in April 1993.

Boris Yeltsin is married to Anastasiya Iosipovna Yeltsina and has two daughters, Tanya and Lena.