

A first-hand look at Yeltsin's 'cold coup'

by Rachel Douglas

Viktor Kuzin is a veteran human rights activist and vice chair of the Moscow City Council's committee on Law, Justice, and the Defense of Civil Rights. His analysis of Russian politics, where he warned against western leaders' miscalculation that Boris Yeltsin personified democracy and stability, appeared in *EIR* on Aug. 20. In a Sept. 29 faxed reply to *EIR*'s request for his comments on events in Moscow, Mr. Kuzin called Yeltsin's latest actions "anti-constitutional." He detailed the Yeltsin group's attempt to secure top-down control.

"A massive purge of unreliable staff members is being prepared in the government apparatus and the administration of [Yeltsin]. . . . A recertification of staff is planned for October, and those who don't agree with Yeltsin are openly being told to quit.

"The real initiators of the anti-constitutional measures are: former professor of scientific communism, now head of the Strategy Foundation, G. Burbulis, and the group of so-called 'radical democrats' (S. Filatov, V. Volkov, L. Ponomaryov, G. Yakunin, V. Mironov, V. Shumeiko, Yu. Baturin). They are acting in strict secrecy. . . . The theoretical basis of the measures and the elaboration of concrete actions, as well as preparations for elections, are provided by a directorate headed by former Communist Party secretary N. Medvedev. The putschists have assigned a special role to the secret Fifth Directorate (communications, counterintelligence) . . . of B. Yeltsin's administration. The Control Directorate (A. Ilyushenko) and Directorate for Combatting Corruption (A. Markarov) collect compromising material on opponents.

"Monitoring of telephone calls, disinformation, and infiltration of the opposition are handled by the Main Directorate of Yeltsin's Guard, headed by M. Barsukov, and Yeltsin's personal security service under S. Korzhakov. The organization of mass actions in Moscow in support of Yeltsin is being carried out by a group of staffers of the Moscow 'mayoralty.' The ideological side (management and control of the mass media, including censorship) is in the hands of S. Yushenkov and M. Poltoranin.

"Former [Communist Party] staffers V. Ilyushin, A. Korobelschikov, and former party secretary S. Filatov are constantly with Yeltsin."

Kuzin, who was at the Russian White House after the siege began, said that visible support for its slow strangulation was carefully staged. "The so-called 'popular support'

for Yeltsin is mostly a matter of coordinated and well-compensated demagoguery and brainwashing. How really 'independent' the media can be, is conditioned by the fact that their printing plants, paper supply, radio stations, television studios, and broadcast facilities are in Yeltsin's hands." Meanwhile, he said, the daily "rallies of 5-20,000 people at the White House . . . are being reported in a distorted fashion by the TV companies, including CNN" in the West.

Opposition of democrats and nationalists

In opposition to Yeltsin, he explained, "are not only the 'reds,' of whom there are really not so many and who do not play the main role, but above all real democrats and nationalist supporters of the state, simply decent people, who can no longer stand this running roughshod over the population in the name of reforms. . . . The opposition unites very diverse forces, whose kinship is their hatred of the anti-people Yeltsin regime, and not at all some love for communists."

About President Bill Clinton's open support for Yeltsin, Kuzin commented that "the convenience [of counting on Yeltsin] is profoundly illusionary and ephemeral. Former Communist Party Politburo members in the role of democratic Presidents for Russia and other [former Soviet] states, is an expensive and useless toy, promising neither social, economic, nor political stability for a long time ahead. And that means that Russia will remain for a long time, a source of tension in the world. . . .

"The West must give up the consumer attitude toward Russia and stop naively presuming that it is still not understood in Russia that the 'reform' carried out here by [Vice Prime Minister Yegor] Gaidar's hand has had as its main goal seizing access to the energy, raw materials, labor and other resources and the market of Russia, crushing its economic potential and turning it into a semi-colony.

"Yeltsin and his clique have gone so crazy, that they could launch civil war. U.S. congressmen should . . . try to convince President Clinton, that such a development is not in U.S. interests. That the current parliament is not as terrible as Yeltsin makes out. That it is rather less 'red-brown' [Communist-Fascist] and, for all its shortcomings, more represents the population than Yeltsin himself and his entourage."

Kuzin expressed concern about "provocations, which would allow Yeltsin to justify the force option." On Sept. 26, he reported, Col. Vitali Urazhtsev (ret.), a member of parliament and founder, in the 1980s, of the anti-Communist Russian Army reform group "Shield," was arrested on the street by special forces. He was located on Sept. 29 in a Moscow hospital, badly beaten.

The siege of the White House, Kuzin underscored, was tightened by the cutoff of electricity and heat, bolstered by censorship. "*Rossiskaya Gazeta*, newspaper of the Supreme Soviet, was closed. Attempts were made to break up the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, which threatened a general warning strike."