
Interview: Viktor Kuzin

New bureau seeks to revitalize Russia's human rights movement

Viktor Kuzin is a Russian human rights activist and former member of the Moscow City Council (Mossoviet), who visited the United States in July and October of 1993 (see EIR, Nov. 5, 1993, p. 60). The Moscow Bureau for Human Rights Defense Without Borders was founded on Kuzin's initiative on Nov. 25, 1993, Mossoviet having been disbanded in October, as a result of Boris Yeltsin's violent overthrow of parliamentary institutions in Russia. At Mossoviet, Kuzin headed the Subcommittee on the Defense of Civil Rights. The new bureau is intended to continue work in the area of human rights defense, both in Russia and abroad. The name of the organization highlights his view, that only international efforts for human rights can succeed under present circumstances, as the campaign for freeing Lyndon LaRouche exemplifies. Kuzin spoke to EIR from Moscow on Dec. 22, 1993.

EIR: There exist many international and national organizations with similar names, which say that they are acting for human rights. What is the sense and the justification for setting up another human rights organization?

Kuzin: Unfortunately, respect for human rights has not improved in proportion to the growth of the number of human rights organizations. Strange as it might seem, the situation rather has deteriorated. This is a universal pattern. Another consistent pattern, is that the violation of such elementary human rights as the right to life and decent living conditions has become massive.

EIR: What are the reasons for this, in your view?

Kuzin: As the collapse of the communist system showed, none of the states existing today has treated human rights as an absolute value, or the protection and observance of those rights as the highest criterion of an effective domestic or foreign policy.

Unfortunately, there are still no players in world politics, who would defend the sanctity of the individual, as against egoistical, parochial interests. We encounter an attitude to the philosophy and practice of human rights defense, on the part of the state, which consists exclusively in playing with and manipulating human rights for narrow purposes, in the struggle for power. This means that the attitude toward human rights is determined by what is politically opportune. It is subordinate.

Therefore we can say for sure, that all the best known and flourishing human rights defense organizations today, those whose activity is approved at the state level, are really neither independent, nor truly concerned with human rights. Their approach to the evaluation of various human rights violations, sometimes very crude ones, is not based on law; it is a purely political approach. The examples which you and I might know best would be the reaction of these organizations to the preplanned mass murder of innocent people, committed by partisans of Boris Yeltsin on Oct. 3-4 in Moscow, in the course of their overthrowing the parliamentary republic in Russia, and also the reaction to the conviction and sentencing to long prison terms, on fabricated accusations, of activists of the political movement headed by Lyndon LaRouche in the United States.

EIR: What concept of human rights activity would you counterpose to the existing state of affairs?

Kuzin: There is essentially nothing new in how I see human rights activity: The freedom of the individual, guaranteed by the norms of international law, should be fully defended, regardless of his political or other beliefs. Such individual freedom, corresponding to the natural variety of forms of life, is a value in and of itself, insofar as it represents the only inexhaustible source of intellectual and material wealth for society, society's ability to overcome any obstacle in the path of progress.

It is also important to stress that any freedom in society can only exist in the framework of law, which acts as the necessary measures of freedom, and without which freedom itself turns into caprice. Law and the state, which guarantees obedience to the law, should act as guarantors of the harmony of interests of the individual and society. The task of human rights activity is to constantly prod the state to do this, in accord with its true purpose.

EIR: What are the necessary conditions for this?

Kuzin: First of all, the most serious and hard to eliminate obstacle on the path to success today is the existence of a persistent tendency everywhere, toward the moral bestialization of mankind, as a result of the global deterioration of the quality of the social environment, the absolute reduction of the quantity, as well as the reduced accessibility, of the mate-