
Interview: Vitali Urazhtsev

'Russia is sitting on a powderkeg!'

Vitali Urazhtsev is an elected People's Deputy of the Russian Federation, a member of the Supreme Soviet, or Parliament, abolished by Boris Yeltsin's Decree No. 1,400 of Sept. 21, 1993. He served on the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Economic Ties, and was leader of the "Reform of the Army" deputies group. He headed the first independent trade union of Russian military servicemen, Shield, which he founded in 1988. A convinced anti-communist, he was expelled from the Soviet Army in 1989, where he held the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He was an active defender of democratic institutions, both in August 1991, when a group of Communist Party, KGB, and military officials declared themselves to be the State Committee for the Emergency, and after Yeltsin's imposition of rule-by-decree in September-October 1993.

At the present time, he is in hiding. He has been accused of "organizing mass disorders" in Moscow, because of his actions in defense of the Constitution suspended by Yeltsin. Urazhtsev is one of the few people alive and not in prison, who was an eyewitness and participant in the central events of the October crisis. He was in the White House, the Russian parliament building, in the hours before it came under tank and artillery fire, and during its shelling on Oct. 4, with the leaders of the Parliament and with Aleksandr Rutskoy, Russia's elected vice president who became "Acting President," according to the Constitution, after Yeltsin's illegal decree.

Urazhtsev's account of the September-October events and his thoughts on the situation in Russia should be of interest for anyone still wondering whether what happened in Russia in early October was a victory for democracy, or a return to the worst times of totalitarianism.

Vitali Urazhtsev was interviewed for publication in EIR on Nov. 26, 1993, in Russia. The following is Part 1 of the interview, which is translated from Russian.

EIR: Tell us how the events began for you, which ended in the bloody finale of Oct. 3 and 4.

Urazhtsev: I think the mass media have reported and commented on the events of Sept. 21-Oct. 4 in a very one-sided manner. TV and press coverage treated the actions of the deputies as thoughtless and criminal, while the actions of

those who attacked and shelled us were portrayed as heroic and correct. We are put on trial, and not they. The casualties were 17 killed among the government's forces, and as many as 4,000 civilian dead. On one side were 1,500 defenders of the White House. On the other side, there were over 100,000 fully armed troops. The precise number of dead is still being covered up and will probably never be known. That is how the Yeltsin regime intends to conceal its crimes.

I was at the epicenter of what happened. But I caution, that my opinion is that of an interested party. It is subjective. But I will try to be honest and to tell what I saw and experienced. Since Yeltsin's Okhrana is not sleeping, I will use initials for the names of some of the people involved.

I spent Tuesday, Sept. 21, 1993, with Moscow City Council Deputy Viktor Kuzin, chairman of the Council's Subcommittee on the Defense of Civil Rights, at Moscow's international airport, Sheremetyevo-2, trying to fly to Washington to work on saving Lyndon LaRouche, the American dissident, and his associates. LaRouche was effectively given a life sentence, since 15 years imprisonment, for a 70-year-old man, is a life term.

It's a lie that everything's fine in America. They torture people there, as well. The Bushes and Clintons are fine fellows, perhaps even more proper than our Yeltsin. But their consciences are not clean. Their arms, like Yeltsin's, are bloody up to the elbows. "Where there is power, there is no justice," as they say. All the dirty dealers support and protect each other. Our Sergei Kovalyov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet's Committee on Human Rights, who has become bureaucratized as a Yeltsinite official, will hardly come to their defense. It is not profitable to spoil your relations with the American big shots, or else they won't invite you there any more.

At the airport, there was some kind of foul-up with the tickets. Our departure was rescheduled until 7 a.m. the next day. I now think that this foul-up may not have been accidental. The coup began that evening.

I maintain that the coup was really in preparation since December 1992, since the 7th Congress of People's Deputies. I was one of the deputies who voted for the impeachment of Yeltsin. Yeltsin promised us then, that he would never forget that we did that. That was his threat.

Yeltsin was nurturing his desire to finish off the Parliament for a long time. A narrow-minded person, he is always looking for an enemy. His entourage often exploits this peculiarity of his character. On Dec. 10, 1992, at the 7th Congress, and again on March 20, 1993, he attempted to impose a state of emergency. On the second occasion, I spoke at the Congress. The Congress, the Supreme Soviet, and the Constitutional Court resisted imposition of the so-called "special administration of the country." Yeltsin made his third attempt during the 9th Congress, when he again tried to pressure the Parliament, demanding extraordinary powers.

Well, now Yeltsin has gotten what he wanted. All the

power is in his hands. What has changed for the better? Not a single problem has been solved, and Yeltsin cannot solve anything. He thinks he can do something by issuing decrees. But nobody will implement those decrees.

The redivision and mass theft of property is under way. Yeltsin is now becoming a brake for his own entourage, because of purely physical peculiarities, his inclination to drink, and irresponsibility in making certain statements. He often shows his cards. I think that this is not some super-intellectual ability of Yeltsin, as our press likes to depict it, to launch trial balloons. In August, for example, Yeltsin blabbed that there would be artillery training, that he would never forgive the deputies, and he promised to dissolve the Parliament. All this was stated openly. One minute he says he doesn't want to hold presidential elections, the next he asserts Decree No. 1,400. These are all minuses, not pluses. But our servile press and TV prefer to pass this off as the signs of a super-genius.

EIR: Who do you think is behind Yeltsin? What forces, what are they socially?

Urazhtsev: These are the dregs. It's a motley and ill-assorted team. It's only held together by a mutual assistance pact. Its basis is mercenary interest and a striving to exploit the troubled time in which we live, in order to seize property, especially economic facilities, and to use the power of position to do this. In order to get rich. There is a new distribution going on today, a return to capitalism, so they tell us. So why not, each of these people thinks, become a big capitalist? Here you have greed, and nothing more.

As for their politics, there are people among them who are sincerely convinced that they are right, but most of the people around Yeltsin today are lumpens, who landed in fairly prestigious positions, to their own surprise.

The poverty of thinking on the part of [Mikhail] Poltoranin, or [Vladimir] Shumeiko, or [Sergei] Yushenkov (strange as it might seem, since he's got a *kandidat* degree in philosophy) shows that what unites this motley chorus around Yeltsin is above all the idea of holding on to power. Any political clothing will do, for them. The main thing is to be in power. Each day they live allows them to widen their influence, and to grab another chunk of the national wealth, in the course of privatization.

The main clamp, of course, the magnet that brought them together, is Yeltsin, who at a certain stage of things was a unifying figure. Today, Yeltsin is degenerating more and more and is becoming less and less predictable for his own entourage, and he is not just up to his elbows, but covered with blood from head to toe, and he reeks of the smell of corpses—well, the court makes the king.

Yeltsin lives in a certain atmosphere, where he himself doesn't know what's really going on. He doesn't know what a crash awaits our economy. Since January 1993, Russia

owes the interest on credits received in the past. But there is no money. No convertible currency. It's all been stolen. The country has been bled dry, and is in its agony. Because first Gorbachov and then Yeltsin and his team were in power, the situation is very grave. It is so grave, that I don't even know what serious politician could tackle fixing it today, and improve the state of affairs. It can't be done just with slogans. It will take decades of intense work, to bring Russia back to life as a nation. And for this, the country needs to be led by a political figure who has the support of at least two-thirds of our people.

EIR: Do you think the people in power today could revive the country?

Urazhtsev: No. These people have relied on terror. They carried out a coup d'état. Historically speaking, they are doomed, beyond a doubt. They launched an adventure, and stained themselves with blood. Now they are trying to declare that pre-planned bloodshed a noble deed. Look at their logic: A certain number of people are in the White House. They mock us constantly, for two weeks, ringing us with barbed wire, and not letting people in. No food, no light, no heat, no communications. Then they bring over 100,000 troops into Moscow, from all the branches: the Air Force, Ground Troops, Special Forces.

The world community should understand, that Yeltsin has created himself an Okhrana [czarist secret police]. These are his *oprichniki* [the guards of Czar Ivan the Terrible, sixteenth century], his Chekists [Soviet secret policemen], headed by Mikhail Barsukov; his Directorate of the Presidential Guard. It has 18,000 men. It has specialists in wire-taps, storming various sorts of buildings, cryptography, document forgery, and perustration of correspondence. They have every foreign currency. Its structure parallels that of the Ministry of Security (the KGB), but it has more capabilities.

In June, I visited an area on the boundary between the Balashikhin and Nogin Districts of Moscow Oblast, looking for a model of the White House that had been set up on one of the training bases of Yeltsin's Okhrana. This was a life-size model, which storm units could practice on. They were in training for this, already then. At the time, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and the TV news laughed at us, deeming our suspicions groundless. Of course, we People's Deputies were not let anywhere near the place.

It is clear, that Yeltsin cannot rely on the Army. For him, the Army is [Defense Minister Pavel] Grachov, the Taman and Kantemir Divisions, and the Tula Airborne Division. These are elite, well-fed units, whom Yeltsin gave 3 billion rubles each, and promised 150 apartments each, in Moscow and its suburbs.

All in all, this is simply a gang. The country today is ruled by a gang. The chief mafioso, of course, is Yeltsin. Sure, he tries to keep face before the world. He tries to say

nice things. Clinton, Mitterrand, and the others support him, because the existence of Yeltsin is useful for western leaders, since this great country, Russia, once so grand and powerful, has been turned into a third-rate power, and has become virtually a raw materials appendage of the West.

EIR: In your view, is such support wise? Is it in the strategic interest, the national security interest, of the western countries?

Urazhtsev: By no means! Russia might repeat the fate of Egypt under Sadat, when a group of young officers shot the President during a parade. If such forces exist, they will not forgive Yeltsin for the bloodletting. Neither the peoples of the Caucasus, nor the Russians will forgive him.

Even the 40-day mourning for those who died showed that everybody has understood what is going on, no matter what the press lies. The day will come when those who are lying today, will cry that they were forced to do it. That day will come very quickly, since the country is not the same as it was after Stalinism.

Is it a good long-term plan to support the Yeltsin regime? I would say that this tendency always existed in American policy and continues to exist. Remember how they supported Gorbachov, and looked askance at Yeltsin. Now they've placed their stake on Yeltsin, and they don't understand what's going on.

The huge staff of the American Embassy in Moscow is an unprofessional group of routinized individuals, carrying out political orders. They don't report back the truth. As a member of the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Economic Ties, I met a large number of American correspondents and diplomats, located here. The majority of the diplomatic staffers are the same old Bolsheviks, only now under Clinton's banner. These fellows don't give any accurate information to America. When they're passing on information they've been given, they're de facto carrying out orders to deceive.

EIR: What could happen in Russia now?

Urazhtsev: Russia is sitting on a powderkeg—the hurriedly, poorly built oil and gas pipelines; the terribly underdeveloped rail network; if communications break in just one place, some significant part of the country will begin to suffocate. Picture Moscow, cut off from any energy supply.

The regions of Russia have quite a high level of consciousness. They are not afraid. Yeltsin's Taman, Kantemir, and Dzerzhinsky Divisions, and the Directorate of the Presidential Guard, will not suffice to strangle and hang 150 million people of Russia. Therefore, the capabilities of this central structure, which is living like a parasite and wants to make everybody dance to its tune, are quite limited. It tries to show its might to everybody, but this is only an appearance. And only the mass media

keeps up this appearance.

This immediately became clear on Oct. 3, when we freed the White House. And today, the regime is unable to counter the bold and honest statements of citizens of Russia, such as [filmmaker] Stanislav Govorukhin. Despite all barriers, truth breaks onto the television screens. Total censorship cannot exist.

Since I went underground, I tried to publish 15 articles. *Moskovsky Komsomolets* rejected three of them, *Kuranty* rejected one, as did *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Sevodnya*, and other so-called democratic publications. *Pravda* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* aren't coming out. But, nevertheless, my articles were able to appear in two newspapers.

EIR: In sum, what would you warn the West about?

Urazhtsev: Why is this regime doomed, and how is it dangerous for the West? This must be understood well. There is a real threat of partisan war. The relatives of the victims, and political forces, will never forgive the blood that was spilled. That bloodshed cannot be justified in the name of democracy.

This was a blatant seizure of power. But one can come to power on bayonet points; it is not so comfortable to hold power on them. Thus this regime has condemned itself.

Can Russia revive? It is very difficult. Yeltsin says: There are no worthy leaders in Russia, besides me. There is no alternative to me. But people said the same thing about Gorbachov!

There are always such forces. But absolutely not [Vladimir] Zhirinovskiy! And not those pro-fascist structures, obtuse and limited, who understand everything, have it all worked out, and have no doubts whatsoever. Watch out for people who say they know everything. These are the most dangerous people. What's the difference between a fool and a normal person? The fool has all the answers. Take Zhirinovskiy.

Life is so complex, contradictory, and hard to predict. The main thing is not what is in our head, but what is behind the walls of that house. The task of any government, and any official is to take into account life's game of patience, which is dealt out new every day. Put it into a system.

How is Russia dangerous, being today in the hands of irresponsible people? Explosions, sabotage, more than one more wave from a Chernobyl to pass over the world. The pollution of the environment, which has acutely worsened under the Yeltsin regime: poisoning of the air, the seas, the soil, genetic damage to Russia's people, and aggravation of the food problem (we will be going around with hand outstretched all the time, and there are already cases of human meat for sale).

And now, the nuclear danger. Nuclear weapons are extremely dangerous in the hands of a fool. People say that our nuclear missiles are not aimed at America. That is all nonsense. Everything is as it was. Nothing has changed,

except for political declarations. This is an insane capability. In November, the newspaper *Sevodyna* published an article on one of our 30-ton thermonuclear bombs—2,400 Hiroshimas! And such bombs today are in the hands of people with a criminal mentality.

EIR: You're not exaggerating?

Urazhtsev: They are quite capable of using these weapons. During the last days of the seizure of the White House, I spoke with very high-ranking people, in particular with the cosmonaut Vitali Sevostyanov, who has known Yeltsin for 30 years. He said that Yeltsin would do anything to stay in power. He would even organize a nuclear world war.

It should be understood that Yeltsin's statements about the Parliament being crazy have some foundation. Yeltsin himself began as a deputy of Russia. Before becoming chairman of the Supreme Soviet, and then President, he was one of them, and was nominated for high office by the people he today defames as mentally deficient. Absurd!

In the case of Yeltsin and his close entourage, we should speak not about mental deficiency (that would be too easy an explanation), but about vice of another sort. What an unscrupulous lot there is around Yeltsin today! Shumeiko, Poltoranin. Listen to the ravings of Poltoranin or Shumeiko, look at what [Yegor] Gaidar does—an obvious sadist. Look at what kind of *duci* we have around Yeltsin today. Look at what they look like. Yuri Luzhkov, I believe, visited you in the United States not long ago, in mid-September. He's Fantomas [criminal in a popular detective story—ed.]. It's obvious. There is a method of determining by external evidence, whether or not a given person is criminally inclined. And this person is third after Yeltsin, in the hierarchy of state officials! Poltoranin! They're all thieves. Gaidar—a vampire. He sucks blood, at night. And these people, are "Russia's Choice"?! [The name of the main pro-Yeltsin electoral slate—ed.] This gang? Pure raving!

Of course, this regime is doomed. It's another question, what ruins it will leave us. If it's smoking ruins, we'll all be choking.

Yes, we are Upper Volta with missiles. But this Upper Volta will burn not only its huts.

Therefore, one has to see sober, rational people in Russia. There are such people. But it doesn't suit the leader of Upper Volta for such people to be visible, or to exist at all.

Why did the regime shed blood? When does a regime shed the blood of its own citizens? At the moment it is mortally threatened. Almost nobody came out to support Yeltsin. Fifteen hundred people, maybe. But on Oct. 3, I brought 200,000 people from October Square, and we lifted the blockade of the White House. That's why Yeltsin hates me to death, thinking that I thought the whole thing up, and brought those people.

Next week: The events of Oct. 3 and 4.

Could the elections be free and fair?

by Konstantin Chermnykh

Editors' note: *Konstantin Chermnykh is a journalist from St. Petersburg, Russia. In this article, first published in the German newspaper Neue Solidarität, he analyzes the political brawl taking place before the elections slated in Russia for Dec. 12. This vote will select a new State Duma, decreed into existence by Boris Yeltsin.*

On Sept. 21, Yeltsin abolished the elected Parliament, or Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, by decree. Although the Parliament attempted to resist its termination and the Constitutional Court ruled that Yeltsin had violated the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Yeltsin summoned support from key Army units to crush the Supreme Soviet by force. On Oct. 4, the Parliament building was shelled, with heavy casualties. Some leaders of the Parliament are in prison or in hiding. The new Duma has been dubbed a "pocket Parliament" or even a new Politburo, since Yeltsin is also seeking ratification of a new Constitution, under which he will be able, as President, to exercise the ultimate veto over the new body by dissolving it.

If Chermnykh's report recalls a Byzantine Empire court chronicle, it is also testimony—as he maps the network of banks behind the political parties and blocs—to the impact of western-brand "free market" reforms in Russian politics: Everything, from influence to television time to the franchise to proclaim new "sovereign republics" in the middle of Russia, is for a price. As the Russian economy slumps further into an abyss and justifiable rage builds against the wholesale destruction of the country that has been billed as "reform," it becomes more and more dangerous for western governments to applaud the corrupt horse-trading described in the West as the flowering of democracy.

The so-called victory of democracy achieved on Oct. 4 in Russia has been the occasion for the discreditation and dissolution of legislative bodies at all levels. The *soviets* (elected councils) are now being blackballed as communist and reactionary, by the official propaganda. Only a few years ago, during the first free elections (which were much freer than the ones being prepared now) the same political leaders now responsible for this smear, called the same *soviets* democratic.

In several city councils, such as those of Moscow and St.