

interests of Russia or the majority of its citizens.

The ruinous impact of these policies on the nation and the people provokes a self-defense reaction in the form of growing popularity for patriotic leaders, which Yeltsin has noticed. He is trying to adopt and exploit their slogans. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev has done this. Even that ideologue of corruption, "shock therapy," and "globalism," former Moscow Mayor Gavriil Popov, has lately come out as an opponent of all these things. This is the latest ploy of a certain segment of the pro-Yeltsin "democrats." They are waiting in the shadows, feigning criticism of the regime, making themselves out to be friends of the people, so that tomorrow, at the next elections (less than two years away) they might come to power disguised as oppositionists and in reality continue the line of the International Monetary Fund in Russia.

The menace of collapse

The complete collapse of Russia as a nation, however, may breed a fascist dictatorship sooner than that, since people who experience nothing but hatred and despair, history shows us, will succumb to that. There are indications of the preconditions for establishing a fascist dictatorship, both from the President's camp and in the extreme opposition. Both are exhibiting a growing tendency to criminal thinking and behavior, and a potential to move in the direction of the armed seizure of power.

Thus Gen.-Col. Vladislav Achalov, recently freed from Lefortovo Prison in the amnesty, spoke openly about the option of seizing power by force. "Today we have a situation," he said, "where [presidential guard chief] Korzhakov, [Defense Minister] Grachov, and [Internal Affairs Minister] Yerin might remove Yeltsin from power" (*Moskovskiye Novosti*, March 6-13). Former Prosecutor General Kazannik, meanwhile, told the Spanish paper *El País* that Yeltsin's close associates "might ignore the law, issue illegal decrees, adopt blatantly criminal decisions, and impose them on Yeltsin" (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, March 15). It is noteworthy that here we had approximately the same evaluation published on the pages of newspapers representing quite opposed political orientations.

Aleksandr Barkashov is leader of Russian National Unity, whose swastika-clad cadre acted as provocateurs during the September-October crushing of parliament. *Sovetskaya Rossiya* of March 5 reported his remarks after his release from jail in amnesty: "The fighters have become tougher. There is an influx of new people into our organization. A lot of young people. Workers from a lot of the Moscow factories sympathize with our views, and we're setting up our first RNU factory cells. . . . We have comrades in arms among the ex-generals, too." Barkashov is not putting it on this time. Even a casual observer can see steady growth of interest in the publications and activity of his and other such organizations in Moscow.

A colonial system

by Stanislav Govorukhin

The author is a prominent Russian filmmaker, known for his documentaries on the impoverishment of Russia under the Communist regime in the 1980s and now under Boris Yeltsin. His latest film is The Great Criminal Revolution, under which title he also published a book (Andreyevsky Flag, 1993). It deals with the looting of Russia's economy during the past two years, the rapid rise of a new criminal class, and the violent destruction of the Russian Parliament by Yeltsin's forces. Having completed The Great Criminal Revolution just after the Oct. 4 burning of the Parliament but before the Dec. 12, 1993 elections (when Yeltsin was stunned by high votes for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party, the communists, and independent opposition figures), the author wrote the present article in February as an epilogue for the second edition and for foreign-language editions. On Dec. 12, Mr. Govorukhin was elected to the Duma, the lower house of Russia's new Parliament, on the Democratic Party of Russia slate. We are printing this chapter of The Great Criminal Revolution as a guest commentary, with the author's kind permission. It is slightly abridged and subheads have been added. Rachel Douglas translated it from the Russian.

Thank God, I was wrong. The new Parliament is not two-thirds made up of the henchmen of organized crime. The party whose base is the new class of "men of property" lost at the polls. Despite having all the money, all the mass media, all the power in their hands, they lost big!

They were all set to win. My evaluation was not off the mark. But as I've said, my book was written before Oct. 4. I made my evaluation without taking into account the events of that day.

Oct. 4, the Parliament in flames. . . . That upset all calculations. It was a boon for some and for others a misfortune.

A month before the elections, the result could be foreseen. People who toured the country and met with voters could see it. They saw how the population had changed, consolidated in its united loathing for the murderers. But the murderers themselves did not see it. They understood their country and their people not at all. Two weeks before the elections, their sociologists were still publishing prognoses that in Moscow [the pro-Yeltsin slate] Russia's Choice would get 37%, in St. Petersburg 38%, in Mukhosransk over 50%. A lavish television show, a real Political Ball, was organized

takes hold

in the Kremlin for the night of Dec. 12. Champagne goblets in hand, they were gazing at the big board where the figures recording their victory would appear.

The first election returns, from the Far East and Siberia, sent them into a state of shock. Television captured the moment very well—their frightened, confused eyes fixed on the electronic board. One ideologue, drunk as a skunk (he had started to celebrate too early!), staggered onto the stage and, clutching at a microphone so as not to fall, cried to the entire country, “Russia, how stupid can you get?!”

Aha, you say *Russia* has gotten stupid, not you—the one who gave the order to your cannons, “Fire!?” For it was you and other “artists” like you, who gave the order: “Fire on the Parliament!” You’re the ones who called for the President to take decisive actions against the Parliament. You advised him: “Hit your ideological opponents about the ears with candelabra!” At the very moment when the tanks and APCs were rolling to their combat positions, one well-known writer, foaming at the mouth, shouted on television, “Crush the reptiles!” Radio Russia broadcast at a shriek, “Riff-raff, rabble, murderers, wild mongrels . . .”—meaning those who were being killed like cattle at the slaughter, at Ostankino and in the White House [Parliament building]. One lady uttered a real gem, in a widely circulated newspaper: “They [the defenders of Parliament] are guilty of forcing us to kill them.” There’s Satan in a skirt for you!

No, Russia has not become stupid; she is just coming to after a bad dream. People had barely unstuck their eyelids and were shaking off the trance, when the shouting began: “Everybody to the elections!” “What for? Why such a hurry? Let us at least read the Constitution!” “No! To the elections, on the double!” And so in haste, they voiced their preference for the one who seemed to be the antipode of the authorities, the one who promised to restore justice the very next day, to punish the guilty, feed the hungry, and cure the sick. Well, it will be all the more difficult for that person to deceive the people a second time, when it becomes apparent that he was unable to do any of that, did none of it, and had no desire to do it.

Russia has not become stupid, she has cried out in pain. She is one big bleeding wound. And the wound will not heal until the rot is cleaned out.

“We averted civil war!” That’s how the murderers justify themselves now. But no, blood never stopped a war. On the

contrary, blood demands revenge.

The blood has estranged people. Before even greeting a person these days, everybody looks twice: What kind of person is this? From which camp?

And they call that averting civil war?

The State Duma

Russia has had a new Parliament for two months now. In the eyes of the world she is a democratic country once again.

The Deputies of the Federation Council [upper house] and the State Duma [lower house] have yet to set eyes on each other. There is no place in Moscow for them to meet in joint session. How can that be? It has been quite a while since the district, municipal, provincial, and central committees of the Communist Party existed, or the central committee of the Communist Youth League, or the Soviet government ministries, but bureaucrats are sitting in all those offices. What is the cost of that to the taxpayers?

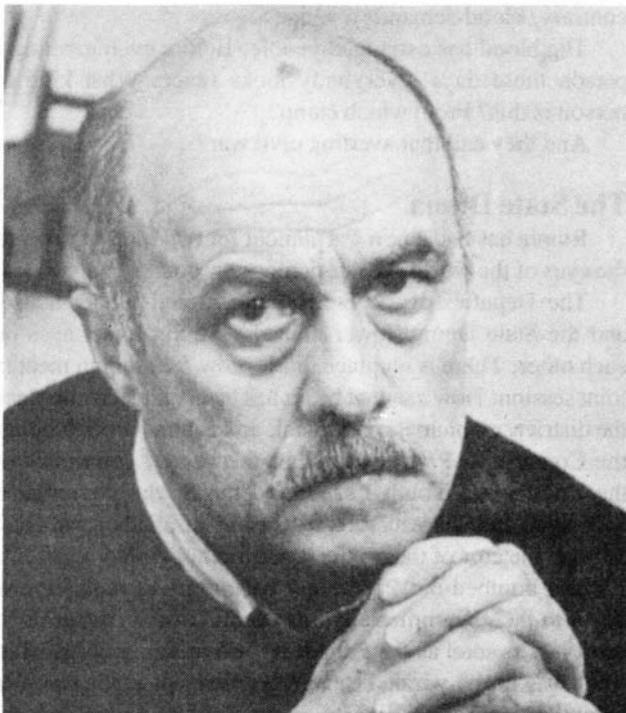
The bombed-out Parliament building was repaired and given to the government. It was handed over to the government just as soon as the President’s entourage got a whiff of what was in the wind: The new Parliament might not be a compliant pocket parliament as anticipated. So the government is there now. No, they are not haunted by ghosts of the dead. They are materialists.

The State Duma has been housed in the Mayoralty building. This a building that has not been repaired for 20 years. Not even all the windows were replaced after the fire. I went into one room to photograph it for the record. The temperature was 18°F below zero. It wasn’t warm by Celsius, either. The staff works with their fur coats on. There are commercial firms on every floor of the building, which have no intention of freeing up those offices.

Well, the President did what he had to. The cobbler should stick to his last. He showed the Duma its place. So that the people would know that he doesn’t give a whit for the Duma and no parliament is going to decree what he should do.

The Duma has no facilities, no budget, no fleet of cars, not even a tiny room with a telephone where a Member of Parliament might work. The mass media, meanwhile, are fanning real hysteria about the outrageous privileges of the Deputies. Their insanely high salaries, their five aides (while in fact, nobody has a single aide), their apartments (not a single newcomer has gotten one), the personal vehicle each one has. . . . The methods for discrediting the Parliament are the same old incredibly primitive (but effective!) ones that were used before, and the purpose is the same—to provoke ill will among the population and push it to its logical conclusion: “What does Russia need a Parliament for?”

I would like to ask the reader to exercise caution with regard to today’s newspapers and television. Don’t be fooled! However bad this Parliament might be (and it is not at all worse than the previous one), and no matter how expensive



Stanislav Govorukhin: "This new regime is becoming amazingly like the old. It may be recalled that Beria, the bloody butcher of the Soviet people, also began with an amnesty of criminals."

it were to maintain (so far it has cost nothing), the price will still not be too great, because a Parliament is the only guarantor of democracy in our country, a stone in the road, a rock. Blow it up, open cannonfire against it . . . and the road to a one-man dictatorship, to an authoritarian regime, to a shameful colonial future will be wide open.

The amnesty decision

It is difficult to characterize this State Duma with certainty. It is a diverse body. It is split into two camps. Like all Russia, it was divided by blood.

It is difficult to adopt any serious decision, since one side or the other will always find enough votes to block it. Essentially everything then depends on Zhirinovskiy and his faction. The side that faction joins in a debate will prevail.

Zhirinovskiy is the master of the Duma. He has proved it more than once already. Say the question of a commission to investigate the October events is under discussion. Russia's Choice, naturally, opposes the investigation of the causes and circumstances of the tragedy. Their position is quite understandable. But Zhirinovskiy? He secured the votes of [deposed Vice President] Rutskoy's supporters, promising to get to the bottom of the matter and answer all questions for the people. . . . But his faction sabotaged the first two attempts. Only on the third try, after long discussions in the corridors to persuade Vladimir Volfovich [Zhirinovskiy], was the matter forced onto the floor. Yet it is more important

than ever. The investigation by the prosecutor's office cannot answer a single one of the main questions tormenting the population of Russia: What was the political underpinning of those events? What was the scale of the tragedy? How did the country react to the events? Was there any discernible role of the West and western secret services (a far from idle question)? What was the role of the paramilitary units of organized crime? And so on, and so forth. . . . Big questions and little questions, but there are no answers to any of them.

Nor will there be, now. The would-be investigatory commission had to be sacrificed to obtain amnesty for the political prisoners. Fear of an investigation of the causes and circumstances of the October events made even some of the President's partisans vote for the amnesty.

Now that the amnesty law has gone into effect, the mass propaganda has raised a ruckus: "They set free the guilty parties in the October tragedy! Now there will be civil war again. . . ."

The guilty parties in the slaughter were not in jail. The guilty parties won in October, and victors are generally not jailed.

As for the Anpilovites [supporters of communist Viktor Anpilov's "Working Moscow" group], they of course are back on the streets and are once again working for the President by tarnishing those in opposition to him. Looking at these people who want to go back to the communist past, sane citizens will turn away, crossing themselves: "To heck with those guys! We're better off with Gaidar and Yeltsin."

It was the President who submitted the law on amnesty to the Duma. It was meant to be the first law the State Duma would adopt. The President's draft affected only criminal [not political] convicts.

This new regime is becoming amazingly like the old. It may be recalled that Beria, the bloody butcher of the Soviet people, also began with an amnesty of criminals.

The new Russian regime is continuing to bolster itself, seeking (and finding!) support exclusively in the criminal layers of the population. Or among those who are rapidly becoming criminalized. As in the old days, criminals are a social element in close kinship with the regime. There was not a word about dissidents or political enemies in the presidential draft of the law on amnesty. There was not even mention of the accused in the August 1991 coup, whose two-year trial has become a comic spectacle.

Naturally the Russian Parliament immediately proposed to amend the President's draft with the addition of a point on amnesty for political prisoners. Passions flared. The President's partisans could not dream of Khasbulatov and Rutskoy (who evidently have a lot on them) going free. The majority (223 votes) needed to pass the law with this amendment would never have been secured, if somebody hadn't gotten the idea of sacrificing the commission: "You pass the law, and we will stop the parliamentary investigation of the October events. Thus we offer you peace and accord, let's work

together and pass laws that can alleviate the people's suffering."

I repeat: It was fear of the investigation and what it might reveal that made even some of the President's supporters vote for the amnesty. Zhirinovskiy's faction also voted for it and worked for it. But no more actively, and of course no more effectively, than other factions and independent deputies.

When the prisoners were released from Lefortovo, Vladimir Volfovich rushed to be the first one there, to collect his dividends. "See, I promised to free them, and I did it."

To a certain extent he is right. If the Liberal Democrats on orders from the boss had voted "against" or even just abstained, the law on amnesty would not have passed.

And thus we have the Master of the Duma. You won't get anywhere without Zhirinovskiy.

Zhirinovskiy's scheme

Vladimir Volfovich is not a simple person. When I meet with voters, I am constantly asked: What do you have to say about Zhirinovskiy?

What can you say about him? Especially in two or three phrases. To define means to delimit. But Vladimir Volfovich is boundless—from the Arctic Ocean to the Indian.

Judging by his words, he would seem to be an ardent foe of the authorities.

Judging by his deeds, he's the President's man.

Judge for yourself. He did not protest [Yeltsin's] Decree of Sept. 21. He did not condemn the October slaughter. He accepted the new Constitution. (Without him and his supporters, would they have forced through a Constitution that nobody had read, but which gave the President of Russia more powers than Czar Nicholas II had?) He freed Yeltsin from the threat of a new presidential election this year. (You will recall that this question was under discussion, and the President himself had set the presidential election for June 12, 1994; who dares bring this up again now? "Are you out of your mind?" people will demand, "Do you want Zhirinovskiy?")

For the President and his party Zhirinovskiy is a panacea, the salvation from all their troubles. They say so practically in so many words, "Sure we're bad, we're so-and-so's. . . . But if not us, then Zhirinovskiy!" And people believe them. They are really scared.

The politicians from Russia's Choice should be carrying Zhirinovskiy on their shoulders, so much has he done for them! But you see, they're squeamish so they welcome him on the sly. Behind him, don't you see, are the rabble.

And where would they be now, if that rabble had not voted up the new Constitution? They would have had to live according to the old one. Does that mean punishing those who trampled it under their feet?

Yes, Zhirinovskiy is a complex person. But not so complex that it's impossible to figure him out. And when you do figure him out, it turns out he isn't so complex after all.

His position is the following: Do not hinder this regime from proceeding on its chosen course, because the regime is mediocre and its course is a road to ruin. The sooner it reaches the edge of the abyss and plunges in, the better, and the sooner the people will reach up to me, pleading, "Pull us out of here!"

Thus Zhirinovskiy's position is, the worse the better. The Bolsheviks took that line in 1917. And they came to power.

I haven't even mentioned the fact that it is immoral to help prolong the people's suffering. Moral considerations do not enter into it.

Zhirinovskiy's calculations are wrong. The regime he so despises is a Bolshevik regime, and it cannot be tricked. As for Zyuganov's party, they themselves acknowledge that the teachings of those gentlemen, Marx and Lenin, are not decisive for them. That party should have been renamed the Social Justice Party. The real Bolsheviks stayed [with Yeltsin] in the Kremlin. One hundred percent Bolsheviks, Leninists. But they are even more frightening, because they are werewolves! Their morals, or rather their lack of morals (on Oct. 4 they violated the fundamental moral laws on which human society is based), and their methods are purely Bolshevik. "Let 90% of the Russian people perish, if just 10% live to the happy future (capitalist now, rather than communist)." There's a Leninist thought for you. What necrophiliacs! What do they care for the suffering of the people, as long as they have their lofty goal: "We will build capitalism in a single five-year plan!"

Zhirinovskiy's hopes that power will fall into his hands of its own accord are absolutely unfounded. The regime needs him now, for the sake of maintaining "the threat of Zhirinovskiy," but later on. . . . On the eve of elections, he will be banned as unneeded, having done his job. But most likely there won't even be elections. We know how that is done. When it is announced in, say, late 1995 that there will be no elections, nobody will dare say a word. By that time the regime will be as strong as the Bolsheviks were in the early 1930s, on the eve of the repressions.

How is it spending its energy, this regime? Only to consolidate its power. It has subjugated the judiciary, disregards the Parliament, is creating mobile military units directly under the President, and is disbanding unreliable agencies. . . .

On Dec. 21 of last year, the Ministry of Security was disbanded. Not because it harbored "heirs of the NKVD." No, the heirs of the NKVD are alive and well elsewhere. They have gone off to guard the new businessmen. Thus the KGB has purged itself during these years.

That agency has undergone strange metamorphoses. How much grief it inflicted on the people! But the years passed and suddenly it emerged that the KGB was the least corrupt of all the armed ministries. In the year I spent making *The Great Criminal Revolution*, I had a lot of contact with staffers from this agency, both with young ones and some older people. I found people who were honest and dedicated

to their country.

That is why it was disbanded. The October events showed that the security men would not act against the people and carry out criminal orders. (I have already mentioned that the Alpha and Vypmel units of the KGB conducted themselves honorably during the storming of the White House.)

That was reason enough to do away with those units.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Security was dissolved at the very point that it began to tackle the gravest form of

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crime, the one most damaging to the country—economic crime.

A colonial future?

Politicians who are basing their calculations on the expectation of a speedy catastrophe are very wrong. There will not be a catastrophe and no cataclysms are forecast.

Who said that at the end of the road we are traversing there is an abyss? I said it, for one—in the first part of this book. "Like the blind led by the blind, we are heading straight for the edge of the abyss." I wrote that four months ago. The world has changed since then. My eyes have been opened to many things. Both I and my vision of the world have changed. This happens. Tolstoy said that a man must change his convictions and strive for something better.

I doubt that my convictions have changed for the better, but I would not say the same thing now.

We are not being led by blind men, but by experienced, sighted guides who know the road very well. And it is not an abyss up ahead, but a comfortable valley, suitable for living in. It is quite tolerable to live there. There are sneakers in the store and enough Pepsi to drown in. There is the necessary minimum for human existence. There is even some art; who cares if it is Americanized, because who among those who will live there (society is growing younger) will remember that there existed a great spiritual nation called Russia?

The name of this valley is: Colony.

The reforms have succeeded. The country is working in a colonial system. We have rejected culture, science, and high technology in favor strictly of raw materials extraction. We have no reliable defense. The only people who live well in this country are those who steal or those who have gone to work for foreigners (the exception proves the rule). An insolent class of comprador bourgeoisie has sprung up, well defended by its own combat units.

Of course there will still be some popular unrest. But have no doubt, that will be put down swiftly.

That part of the intelligentsia that has not prostituted itself, but is truly the conscience of the nation, had better get ready for repressions.

That is how democracy in Russia died during its difficult birth.

A letter from Kolyma

My son sent me a letter. From Kolyma [location of prison camps in the Stalin period—ed.]. My wife and I joke that "Seryozhka has gone on a scouting mission. We'll be moving there pretty soon."

I wanted to offer the reader a few excerpts from this missive, but then I thought again and decided to give the letter in full.

"Dear Papa!

"I've been in Kolyma for a month. I don't know when I'll get out of here. The village of Yagodnoye, where I am, is totally frozen. The sewage system is also frozen, so the village has a most unpleasant appearance. I am renting a cot to the left of the stove in the two-room Khrushchov-era apartment of a mechanic from the local ore-refining plant. The mechanic lives on the right. Today they brought water and we were able to get a bucket each. So there is some chance of a light bath and some laundry. Sometimes I dream about hot soup, but less and less often.

"Here is how we sleep: We put bricks around the stove and at night we lay the bricks on top of our blankets. The bricks hold the heat a long time. Outside it is 54°C below zero.

"Almost all the children have been evacuated to the mainland. During the first days of the freeze, before more stoves were set up, a lot of people died—mostly old people and children—in the sad tradition of our Time of Troubles.

"Gloomy prospectors wander around Kolyma like ghosts. A new season starts soon, and the state hasn't paid them for last year. They would like to go home, but to get a ticket! . . . A ticket from Yagodnoye to Magadan costs 42,000 rubles. This would be half of the monthly wage that they haven't been paid yet.

"Speaking of Aeroflot. It took us four days to fly from Moscow to Magadan. The reason was simple: They were trying to find an airplane. Ultimately the passengers from four flights went at once. There was a real crush on the plane and a lot of distress. The stairway crashed. Luckily nobody was hurt.

"They fed us plenty on the flight. They said it was chicken. I got a wing of this indeterminate bird, which had evidently died some time before I was born. I calculated the cost of the meal and was amazed: 672 rubles, while the ticket cost 352,000. Russia really does have two eternal woes: fools and the roads. That includes the air routes. . . .

"The airplane was more or less like a flying supermarket. The stewardess went up and down the aisle with a cart with the frequency of a trolley that's running on time. It was loaded with everything you could imagine, from pomade to Chinese-made Parisian toiletries. . . .

"But back to Yagodnoye, since that's where I am.

"The local inhabitants are not being paid either (their last salary was in October). People settle accounts as follows: Goods are issued against future wages through government agency channels, the population carries them to the store, where they are then sold at an even lower price for cash.

"This would all be funny, if it weren't so sad. It reminds me of something: the war maybe, or the blockade, or Kolyma when the camps were here. . . .

"We came to Kolyma with a concrete assignment from our office—to mine a gold deposit. Well, there is gold in Kolyma. Lots of gold. Silver and tungsten, too. Every meter of Kolyma land is a huge deposit of ores, especially precious metals. . . . But it turns out that mining gold is the least profitable enterprise today. I repeat: gold! The maximum profitability, given huge investment, is 10 to 15%. But that's in theory, without taking into account the headlong inflation and the government's lagging 3 to 4 months behind in settling with the gold-mining companies, which reduces the profit virtually to zero. Then Magadan strangles you with a 32% tax on profits, in violation of all laws of the Russian Federation, according to which a producing enterprise is not supposed to be taxed on its profits for the first two years.

"But the Americans feel absolutely free and unfettered here. English has become a familiar sound to people's ears in Kolyma, while the directorate of Severovostokzoloto [Northeast Gold] more and more resembles an office of the state of Alaska: That's lawful. The Americans have a green light in Kolyma: Russian entrepreneurs can buy licenses to exploit deposits with a maximum content of 3 grams of gold per cubic unit of gold, while the Americans get licenses for deposits with approximately 75 grams per cubic unit. The excuse for this is that it takes enormous hard currency investments to develop gold deposits.

"But that's not the real point. It's that we are temporary people in our own country, while they are here for good.

"They built a church here. Seventh Day Adventist. It's quite large. They opened a free stomatology office at the church for people who attend regularly. Fine fellows, those Americans.

"Where the Americans build a church, the local population begins to die out gradually, but with their teeth in good shape.

"Wages in Kolyma are comparable with Moscow, only the prices are 2 or 3 times higher. There's also talk in the air about termination of the already paltry tax credits and coefficients for living in the North. That's quite correct, since the Americans don't care about our tax breaks.

"Nobody can leave for the mainland. A three-room apartment in Magadan costs an average of 10 million rubles. In Moscow, you won't buy even a room for that. No new housing is being built. One-third of Kolyma is housed in barracks from those immemorial times. And those are gradually sinking into the earth, following after the people who built them.

"People are dispirited. Nobody believes in anything. Not in the government, not in the State Duma. Especially not in the latter. Zhirinovsky enjoys relative trust. Only here did I come to understand the phenomenon of his popularity—his schizophrenic optimism embodies the hope that dies last. There is nothing else to hope for.

"Father, we rarely write to each other. Each of us is swamped with work. I mainly have written to you as an official. And now? Something, at least. You, your party, and part of the Duma try to help Kolyma and the people, try to explain to the government that when the gold-mining industry becomes unprofitable, and the people mining gold can barely survive, there is nowhere to go. And Zhirinovsky certainly will not do anything for this region, using the well-known old methods.

"In hope, your son Sergei Govorukhin. Feb. 10, 1994."

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