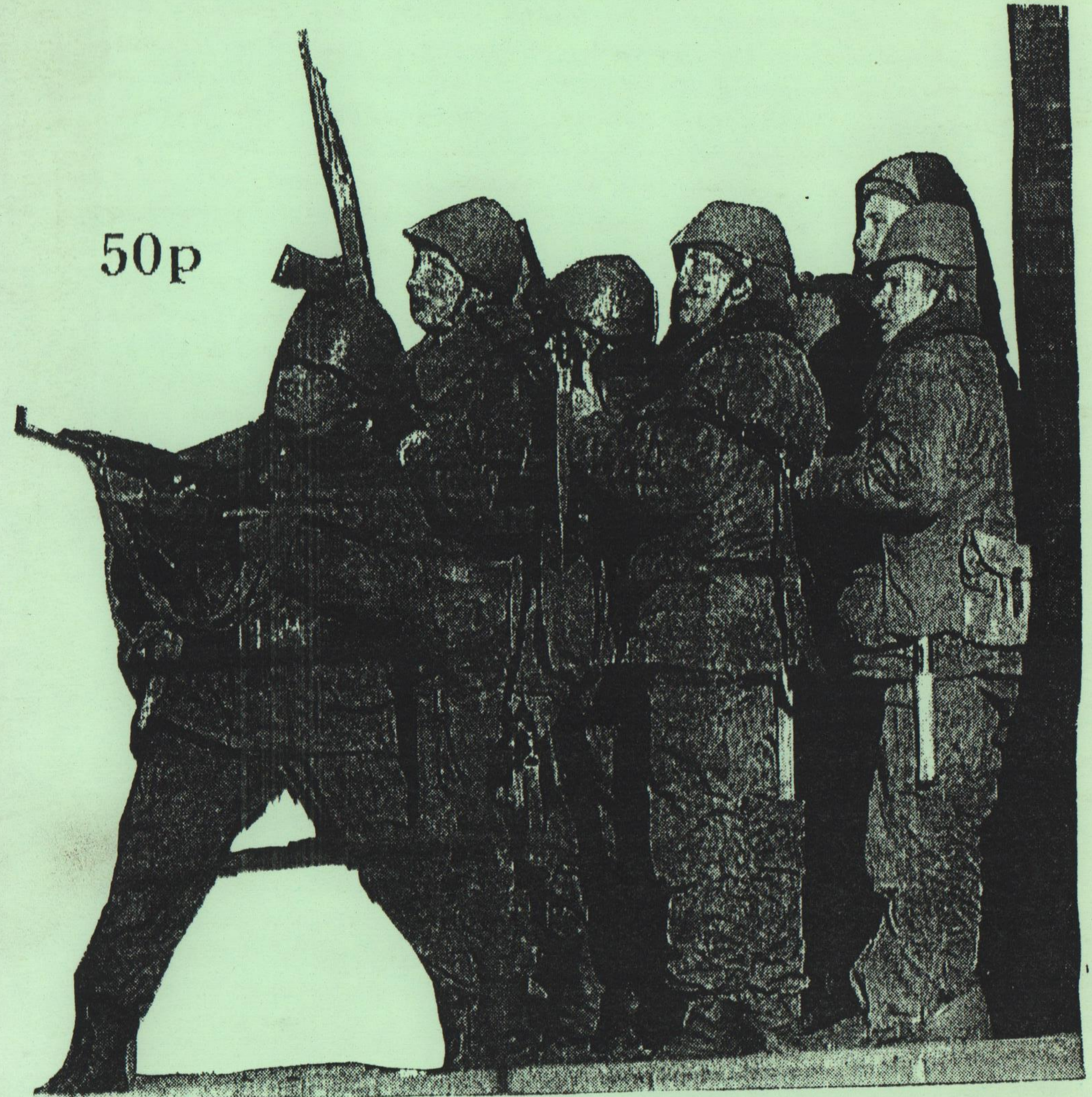


THE TWO O`CLOCK KNOCK  
NOW COMES AT THREE

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How democratic was  
Russia`s "democratic" coup?

50p



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The 2 o'clock knock now comes at 3.

how democratic was Russia's "democratic" coup?

"... some time around 6 or 7 P.M., before the tanks all started to converge on the White House, two friends & I were standing on the Mayor's building across the street from the White House. We were completely surrounded on all sides by Yeltsin's troops. (Only after some while, as the tanks began to roll, did they try to disperse us.)

Every once in a while fire broke out, sometimes in the direction of the White House, sometimes in our direction. We witnessed a woman near us take out a pistol from her pocket & begin shooting in the air. It seemed entirely strange to us, & we weren't certain who she was, or what she was shooting at. [There was so much going on that assuredly few people noticed this.] Then she slowly walked to the blown-out first floor windows of the mayor's building. We watched very intently because we thought she might be a communist or a nationalist of sorts, (although she was too well dressed,) & we thought she might try to shoot one of the soldiers. She instead started to talk to one, & entered the building from the side."

[extract from a faxed message from Moscow, dated the sixth of October 93.]

Two years & two months ago, there was a failed coup in Moscow; Syndicalist Bulletin while very much opposed to the stalinists who launched that coup, nevertheless at the time expressed doubt that we were being told the whole truth. It appeared that the tanks that were supposed to overthrow the democratically elected parliament stopped at traffic lights on their way to it, & by a remarkable

oversight had forgotten to take any ammunition with them, & were therefore incapable of doing anything to prevent Yeltsin climbing onto the tanks to denounce the coup. We thought then, & we still believe that there must have been collusion between Yeltsin & at least the Moscow representatives of the coup plotters.

We now see a second "failed coup" which again helped increase Yeltsin's power; it again was either quite incredibly mismanaged, or perhaps spurious. According to almost all the Western Media another set of hard-line stalinists captured the Parliament, first obstructed Yeltsin's democratic reforms, then refused to agree with a majority plebiscite vote to have new elections, & finally encouraged thugs to try to make a violent take-over.

One or two writers, notably Jonathan Steele in The Guardian, did point out that when the present Parliament was elected the Russian Communist Party was banned, & so far from being over-represented; that in fact less than 45% of the plebiscite votes favoured new parliamentary elections, & since the Parliament was only elected two years ago it can hardly be said to have outlived its mandate. But though it published this, & though the Radio has occasionally reported similar facts, this has not prevented both paper & radio referring continuously to "Yeltsin's hard-line stalinist opponents" whenever they mention parliament. [Even though they have to admit that Parliament's leaders opposed the last coup.] They have on the other hand reported that most Russian papers, including those that normally support Yeltsin, have frequently appeared since the coup with large blank spaces, where the censor has banned particular articles.



Curiously this attitude by the Western Media, *applauding as democratic completely undemocratic moves for power by a potential dictator*, is reminiscent of Stalin's rise to power in the mid & late Twenties. Then too the Western pundits applauded the manoeuvres of a bureaucrat & careerist, who they rightly saw was insincere in his communism, who was engaged in rolling back the gains of the revolution, & who they assumed, (this time wrongly,) would make Russia safe for Western capitalist investment. (They did not realize that Stalin's aim was to foster the rise of a native (state) capitalism within Russia, & that this would necessitate a bogeyman & lead to the rise of Hitler. Stalin was their ally, Yeltsin is, can they rely more on him?) Or does the fact that the 2.00 A.M. KGB knock has been postponed to 3.00 really mean things are better? (History, as Marx said, repeats itself once as tragedy, once as farce.)

Last time, - to remind people - though Gorbachov was imprisoned by the plotters, & there was no attempt to arrest Yeltsin, the latter was able to convince the world that the former had colluded with the plotters, & so Gorbachov lost the remains of his power. We did not, of course, have any brief for Gorbachov, & so though we were sceptical, & though we warned that we thought Yeltsin would prove about as much a democrat as the butcher, Pinochet; it mattered little to us as to which set of gangsters had won.

This time we are more worried. Yeltsin has taken the opportunity to imprison & torture socialists who have a far longer record of opposing stalinism than he has, who were indeed imprisoned by the Communist regime, when he was part of that regime, & who now still profess the same views in opposition to both stalinism & Yeltsin, that they

always held. Chief amongst these are our own comrades of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation (KAS,) & comrades with whom they cooperate in Russian Labour Review, the socialist humanist group round Boris Kagarlitsky.

*"Boris Kagarlitsky - known to many people abroad - was arrested & beaten, as were Alexander Segal & Vladimir Kondratov. (The police claim that they beat their heads against the paddy wagon & against the bars of the prison cells.)"*

We have received three faxed reports (reproduced below) from (anti-stalinist) socialists in Russia, & we believe it to be essential that we give these the widest possible publicity. (Though our correspondent has never been to the West & taught himself English, he is remarkably fluent in our language, but inevitably his command of idiomatic English, & our grammar, is sometimes imperfect. (Not made better by the telegraphic process.) Consequently what follows contains some stylistic & explanatory changes, but no change of substance.)

.....

Many people, including the mainstream English press, here, wonder why the OMON didn't take more precautions at the Ostankino television centre, & why they did such a bad job at simple crowd control. It was known for four days that the opposition were planning to take Ostankino, & when they finally arrived they rallied for over an hour before the storm began. Troops arrived at the scene much later. Others - including many pro-Yeltsinites - asked how Yegor Gaidar could go on TV & urge people to fight back.



The answers are not clear. Of course people were somewhat afraid of the well-armed White House defendants. But there is more & more speculation going on here that that part of the events were provoked by pro-Yeltsin troops, to rally public resentment against the opposition...[see beginning of this pamphlet]"

At this time the tanks started rolling, so we went up Novy Arbat St., to the Garden Ring Road to try & find a telephone; before we got to the Garden Ring Rd., soldiers were trying to get us to run [ & create some hysteria amongst the few people who were there.] On the ring road there were a few hundred spectators, while one of us went to find a 'phone, a friend & I still watched. Suddenly guns started firing down the ring road. We ran through an archway, into a courtyard, where the corner house ended, & where there was an alley between that corner house & the next building [on Novy Arbat St.] The fire from the alleyway could only have come from the troops that we had passed, & who'd been trying to create a panic less than 5 mins. before. They were the only people there.

Dozens of people tried to run into the courtyard, only to find that there was a lot of gunfire there & so they were trapped in a small space, where the corner building curved round from the ring road onto the street. The fire was apparently growing closer. We noticed that there were people shooting from the windows into the courtyard, I wondered what, in hell, they were shooting at. We finally made a run for it, through the courtyard, dodging bullets. I looked behind & saw something fall from the sky into the courtyard behind me. We ran further & turned back onto the ring road. There we witnessed general panic.

There were a lot of guns being fired at the top floors of buildings & also into the crowd, & also into the crowd; [both the troops in the roads & people from the upper floors were firing into the crowd in the courtyard.] I was fairly upset & wondering why Yeltsin's troops were firing into the crowd; someone said that they were trying to disperse people; then I thought: "this is a stupid way to do it," but accepted the explanation for a while. Then it occurred to me that the only people who could be firing into the courtyard from ground level were Yeltsin's troops.

*The local English-language paper reported the incident. The TV reported sniper fire in several areas of the city & claimed that this was done by opposition rebels on the loose. They are using this fear to justify things like martial law. But after hearing more & more people with similar accounts of incidents that just don't add up to the official thesis, I'm beginning to wonder.*

Of course there are armed rebels on the loose; but many White House supporters went home on the night of the 3rd., & were not able to return. When the White House was besieged by Yeltsin's troops, there were apparently several attempts by groups of people to get onto White House precincts. *In the morning this was virtually impossible unless you were a journalist.*

I had originally assumed assumed that the people firing from the windows into the courtyards were the parliamentarian opposition, [ & was made hostile to them by this,] I wondered how they got into the buildings, if any of them actually lived there, - they were in a posh area - or if they broke into apartments. Now however I do not think it was the opposition that was firing into that courtyard.



In other observed incidents the opposition were not running around the streets firing at innocent people, & as far as I have heard there were many cases where they were trying to get people out of the line of fire. When they did shoot, they generally selected their targets & went directly for them.

Why, then, would they fire into the courtyard & not in the other direction - into Yeltsin's troops? And what happened to these people up there in the building? - they weren't killed or arrested, had they been, the Media would have had reports of them, taking the opportunity to label them murderers. But that particular house was not even fired upon, nor stormed! Yeltsin's troops, who were stationed right outside this house, (on Novy Arbat St.,) decided not to fire up at the windows from which gunfire was coming, but rather into the courtyard, into which bystanders were fleeing.

Another weird incident: two different journalists reported seeing 10 militiamen shooting into the air in the Otradnoye area, just North of Moscow. Why were they there & why were they firing into the air? The reporters suggested that perhaps they were trying to create panic.

There are dozens of reports of such irregularities. Of course little is made in the mainstream Media (except in the English language press, which isn't sold on the streets, hasn't been subjected to censorship, & which almost no Russians read. In the Moscow Tribune, (Oct. 5,) there was a very vivid description of the beginnings of the action on Sunday the third. *Neither of the English-language papers appear on Mondays.* Apparently the violence was started by about 10 people who ran into the street from out of a crowd of 40 demonstrators. 120

Omonovsty (special police) stood without reacting. They weren't even wearing helmets. When a reporter from the Tribune asked why they were doing nothing, he was told: "We've got other goals, we have other orders." Only after 45 minutes - when the crowd had grown substantially in size - did they act, & then, only half-heartedly.

It is obvious to anybody who has seen these troops in action that they deliberately let the crowd gather & storm the Mayor's building, & the White House. Just a few days earlier, when they arrived at the White House, they'd had an almost air-tight seal on the place. On that occasion they were busy "kicking arse" & they prevented a much bigger & better armed crowd from going anywhere near the White House. On this occasion, as a matter of a fact, they ran away from the demonstrators. [As was shewn in a photograph on the front page of *The Guardian*, L.O.] At Ostankino, tanks that were moving to the area, turned back just before the storm.

Why? it has even conservatives & moderates like the Moscow Tribune asking: "Could this have been a trap to encourage the violent elements on the Parliament's side, so that they provided the justification, the government needed, to respond with the force it had sworn not to initiate? [c.f. John M. Helmer, "Moscow Crisis: The First Spark," Moscow Tribune, Oct. 5, 1993.]

You bet it could have been, (& was,) a trap. What better way to justify the violence, the censorship, political repression & so on that followed? Also by allowing these people to storm buildings, they had concrete targets to bombard. Of course lots of innocent bystanders also got hurt in the events. This, too, was part of the provocation. How did my friends & I get right



to the scene of the action, during crossfire? The soldiers pointed out the route for us! How come pedestrians were allowed so near the fighting. Was it that the soldiers couldn't control the crowd? - they usually do a pretty good job, completely blocking traffic, when they want to. How come, that on Oct. 5, troops were shooting at "snipers" on Novy Arbat St., but put up absolutely no obstacle to pedestrian traffic?

As far as the last question is concerned the answer is simple. For all the bullets that Yeltsin's troops were firing up at the rooftops, no bullets were being fired back down. One man, witnessing this yesterday, asked: "How can it be that they've been firing two days already & haven't caught the snipers? It doesn't seem like there's anyone there; & how could they let people walk the streets like that?"

Izvetzia reports that it is the city police & the regular army who are the only ones being used to shoot at the snipers. These are not specially trained for this. There are however, many, many, special troops that are. Where are they? Izvetzia got past the censors with an article entitled "Troops near the White House shot at everything that Moved." *[Which is in fact what they did, but shouldn't have done.]* Now people are trying to justify this, saying that undoubtedly there were armed insurgents in the crowd, & that the people there were looking for trouble. But this was not the case.

Now they keep making-up stories about "snipers on the loose" & how communists were firing into crowds of innocent people. They cannot hide the fact that government troops shot into the crowd, so they have to make up all sorts of justifications for their actions, & they

blame the whole situation on the 'inhuman' insurgents who put the civilian population in jeopardy. In fact it was Yeltsin & Grachev who put the crowd in danger, who shot onlookers.

More & more witnesses are coming forward to say that many of these "snipers" were in fact KGB, [Yeltsinite ex-KGB or similar.] For example the snipers at the Mezhdunarodnaya Hotel were let in past security. Would the security guards at this posh hotel, which houses many shops, is adjacent to the Trade Centre, (which in turn houses offices of many multi-nationals,) have let opposition "snipers" through? If the hotel was stormed, how come there isn't a single report of this in the Media? How come the Media then describes the "snipers" at the hotels as part of the insurgency? It is more than likely that the snipers who were on the heavily guarded Hotel Mir, opposite the White House, were also from the Government.

Also residents of the buildings from which the snipers were shooting have come forward to say that these were government snipers, but none of this has been reported in the Media. Yeltsin has a lot of blood on his hands, especially the blood of the people killed in each & every one of the sniper incidents, that were manufactured to create public fear & outrage; so as to provide him with justification for political repression.

.....  
*Earlier [Oct. 5th & 6th] we had the following two reports:*

There is much news to be reported after the events of Oct. 4th., after CNN broadcasting resumed in Moscow I was



able to see much of what was told the world, & I'd like to comment on that reportage; but first, Yeltsin's dictatorship.

As is known martial law has been declared, curfew at 11.00 P.M., those breaching it to be arrested; political repression has begun but is not yet in full swing. At this point it is extremely hard to gather information, because of conditions - e.g. extreme censorship. We expect that soon offices will be searched, property & funds (of banned groups) seized.

Yeltsin, yesterday, outlawed many political organizations; he labelled them all as pro-Communist or Nationalist, though this was not the case. We have heard that KAS (Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists) has been outlawed, despite the fact that it had issued a statement saying it supported neither side in the conflict. Most left political parties seem to be banned, whether or not they had anything to do with the events; so what kind of elections does Yeltsin propose to hold, having first banned all opposition. How will it differ from when the stalinists had no opposition?

On the night of the 3rd, at about 3.00 A.M. members of the Moscow Soviet, who were serving on a commission were arrested. They were not taking part in the defence of the White House, but were gathering information & discussing democracy & human rights. Also we have heard that many deputies & local officials who were neutral, [neither taking part in the defence nor supporting Yeltsin,] were also arrested in the night. Boris Kagarlitsky ...

As far as censorship goes, many papers did not come out

today. Of those that did there are clear examples of censorship in them, - whole articles & columns appear whited out. Even in the pro-Yeltsin papers there is information whited out. Yeltsin & his henchmen do not want the people to know anything but what they would have them believe.

CNN reports that everyone in Russia supports Yeltsin. That is simply not the case; I would concede that the majority do, but a very large minority supported the White House, & many people support neither side. It's not clear, but those who do not support Yeltsin may be 40%. What is certain is that while rich Russians, foreign journalists & businessmen watched on like ghouls from the roof-tops of luxury apartment buildings, cheering while people were being shot, many people below were experiencing deep tragedy. A small proportion of these wanted blood & revenge, but most felt powerless & confused.

Yeltsin's Media is trying desperately to downplay the extent of the tragedy, & is saying that only 30 people died during the events; even the CNN doesn't make up such impossibly low casualty-figures, & doesn't lie so outrageously.

If there is to be any democracy in this country the rights of this minority must be respected. If they are going to carry out this farcical election, those who oppose Yeltsin must be able to vote for someone who at least professes to represent their interests. But this looks unlikely, when those who oppose Yeltsin were branded criminals.

You may, in the future, hear little of opposition in



Russia; this won't mean it doesn't exist, that there's no resistance, any more than that there was none before Glasnost. With strong censorship it looks as if there's none, & we're again beginning to see this.

.....  
Two days after the successful storming of the parliament gunshots are still to be heard around Moscow, & this "obvious fact" of the existence of "communist fighters" & "snipers" pushes people to accept martial law, (curfew, troops, police) as saving peace & order; which is of course exactly what Yeltsin wanted when on the 21st Sept. he launched the coup d'état, & there are clear signs that his supporters were agent provocateurs, who provided the excuse.

The Media reports that Communist fighters & snipers somehow leaked through the lines of police & troops surrounding the White House, on the day that the troops started the storming of the parliament, (causing many deaths among the government troops & civilians.) "Gunfire is heard in various districts of Moscow," but in Moscow's northern suburb, Otradnoye, [in the evening of Oct. 5,] policemen were just firing guns in the air, & that's probably true elsewhere. What could that police action have been other than an attempt to make people believe in the necessity of martial law?

Even the Moscow-based English-language periodical, Moscow Tribune, which on the whole appears to believe in the stories about communist snipers, nevertheless published several revealing articles as to how the the forces of law & order were too reluctant when dealing with the rioters on Sunday, Oct. 3.; reporting a police officer, when asked

why the police who were at least 120 strong, had acted so slowly & done so little to stop 40 rioters, as saying, during the clashes on Oktyabrskaya & Smolenskaya Square: [John Helmer: "Moscow Crisis - The first spark" Moscow Tribune, Oct. 5.] "We've got other goals, we have other orders." *The Guardian* reporter also heard this, but interpreted it as representing indecision on the part of the military high command as to which side it should back.

Sometime after the riot was gathering its strength Muscovites witnessed demonstrators forcing police to retreat, attacking them with their own equipment & fighting their way over the Moscow river, & across the ring road to parliament. [Reuters, Oct. 3. 14:54] the police troops that were blocking the bridge across the Moscow river were rather poorly equipped, (helmets, shields & rubber batons only,) & stood only one rank deep. It's worth mentioning that during less dramatic opposition demonstrations, in Moscow, police forces were much more numerous, & acted less timorously, managing to stop the demonstrators when & where they wanted/needed.

An hour & an half after the beginning of the demonstration, [which is normally more than adequate for police to summon reserves, predict the movement of demonstrators, & block streets,] the police were once again defeated on Smolenskaya Square, not far from the White House. These "victories" inspired the opposition to storm the TV centre, which somehow seemed to be unprotected, later in the evening. Soon after which Yeltsin proclaimed the state of emergency & the government declared that it had been forced to use force to end the actions of political adventurists & that it "is doing everything possible to avert mass bloodshed." [Reuters, Oct. 3 17:51 & 19:04.] At 19.56 Moscow Mayor, Yuri Luzkhov, blamed "Bandits" for



the deaths of two policemen & two interior ministry soldiers, & the Media reported that troops loyal to the President were brought to Moscow.

### Who were the snipers?

One of the keystones of the Media campaign on Oct. 4 were the "snipers," (i.e. armed putschists, spread all over the city, whose numbers "it was impossible to guess.") One of the doctors who was evacuating the injured from Parliament was interviewed by Russian TV & said that there was a considerable number of people shot near the White House, in the morning & during the day, (right in their hearts, necks & heads;) this was presented by the media as evidence of the crimes of the putschists. In fact there appears more evidence that these were killed by the KGB & special poolice loyal to the government.

Though there were quite a lot of arms in the White House, there were hardly any snipers, that is people specially trained in shooting, among its defenders. (In 1991, there had been worries during the August coup, as to whether the special KGB troops would take Yeltsin's side or that of his opponents; but in this case none of the KGB troops declared loyalty to the Parliament.) So, it can hardly be the case that Communist "snipers" killed people in dozens around parliament.

Eye-witnesses of the storming of the White House report that there were government snipers shooting "in all directions" particularly at civilians, (Moscow Tribune Oct. 5.) Izvestiya (Russia's biggest newspaper) [Oct. 6] features a story "Troops Near The White House Shot Everything That Moves" describing how the soldiers started shooting at the windows & roofs of buildings round the

parliament if they saw anybody moving there. This went on for about two days & none of the specially trained anti-terrorist detachments of the KGB were involved in the fight against the mythical snipers.

During the "sniper incident" on Novy Arbat (the only one described in the media as far as I know) soldiers from APCs shot in various directions, including the house on the embankment of the Moscow River near the parliament where dozens of people & TV crews gathered to see the fight. After the people on Novy Arbat tried to escape into one of the courtyards, they were met by gunshots from the neighbouring streets & the windows of the houses that composed the courtyard, the area was totally in the control of the police troops & there were no "Communist fighters" there.

It would also be interesting to know how considerable numbers of armed people were able to "leak-out" from the White House & spread round the city. The Parliament was blocked from all sides, &, since the defenders didn't have tanks, it was almost impossible for them to get out; - until they were let out by the government. The authorities talk of "unprofessional actions of the police & military," this, in Russia, is an old & much used tale, serving to justify more repression & the use of more troops. This happened, during the clash between the communists & the police on the 1st of May this year; & we can assume it happened on the 3rd of October when the authorities let the opposition "defeat" special police troops on the streets of Moscow. This is probably how they provoked more violence during the storming of the White House.

Currently the media reports dozens of cases when jour-



nalists were arrested by the forces of 'law & order', severely beaten up, (their films exposed) & held in Lefortovo KGB prison, (together with the leaders of parliament & dozens of civilians - including children.) [Izvestiya, Oct. 6.] I doubt that any of the policemen or military will be punished for these actions, - they feel that this is their time & that they can do whatever they want without being punished or anything like it. They've been doing this of course for years, but what's going on now is just outrageous.

It's not just the police & military, since every other high ranking "democrat" is trying to take revenge on his opponents. Yeltsin had fun destroying the parliament, Moscow's mayor, Luzhkov, gladly witnessed (& sanctioned I am sure) arrests & beatings of Moscow City Soviet deputies, who'd bothered him a lot, asking about the legal position of his multiple business & political activities. Heads of local administrations are disbanding troublesome Soviets in their regions. In a situation where there are virtually no political organizations that really represent the interests of different social groups, the Soviets were almost the only opposition to governmental policies; (the only one that can be called a real opposition,) but with them being disbanded, oppositional organizations & papers closed, and martial law & censorship introduced; the road to Yeltsin's triumphal elections is clear. Long live the real freedom of choice between Big Brother & yourself.

Post Script:

Vecherniya Moskva, Moscow evening paper on Oct. 6, reported that none of the President's decrees, implemented

editorship & that the censorship that existed was dictated by the needs of the moment, & that they won't work anymore. Nezavisimaya gazeta, one of the pro-"democratic" pro-Yeltsin papers appeared on that day with about half a page of blank space, plus some published information lacking the initial sentences. The editor-in-chief of the hysterically pro-government Moskovsky Komsomolets said on TV that blank spaces in some of the papers is the fault of the editors. He also went so far as to declare that there will be no blank spaces in his paper, because they publish the truth & nothing else but the truth, "& the truth can't be censored."

Do you love me Moskovsky Komsomolets?      Yes I love you  
Big Brother.