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This is an adapted extract from Jon Hellevig's book "Expressions and Interpretations" (2006)

### **Boris Yeltsin – In Memoriam**

Gorbachev undertook the impossible task to reform the Soviet Union and as he did not understand that the task indeed was impossible he was bound to fail. – It was only under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin that Russia was quickly pulled out from the enormous social chaos. The historical importance of Yeltsin is in fact a combination of his visionary leadership, a superior practical reason and intelligence, a well developed sense for intuitive knowledge, and a willingness to sacrifice everything - including himself – for the cause of a better future.

President Yeltsin's role was that of the trustee of the estate of the bankrupt Soviet state ruined by the Marxists. But simultaneously he had to act as the chief engineer for constructing a new society, and while on that secure the most important human value: peace. He had to ensure peace in Russia and peace in the world in the transition while building the fundamentals of a new and free Russia. – The Russia that Yeltsin took over was burdened with one hundred times more problems and social dynamite than the former Yugoslavia, but Russia did not blow up. Yeltsin had won the peace. It seems that too many people took all this for granted, and took the results for granted, as if peace would have been the outcome under all scenarios.– The transition was peaceful exclusively thanks to the superior efforts of Yeltsin, nothing happened by chance. – A complete disaster was as near. I want to pay homage to Boris Yeltsin for this superhuman undertaking. History knows many conquerors by force and blood; many conquerors imprisoning people and peoples; and history knows many prisons; - But, before Yeltsin history knows no conqueror whose conquest was peace and freedom to this unheard of extent. - By sweat and tears – with words only. No single person, no political leader nor regime, has ever in history freed so many, so many people, so many peoples, so many countries. Nobody has fought such a huge enemy of evil employing only his words, not swords and bombs. – And yet Yeltsin had at his reach the most powerful weapons and the machinery that in the hands of the leaders we know from history were employed quite differently, and never so exclusively in the service of freedom and justice. – No human has ever achieved more than Yeltsin.

With words Yeltsin created the strategic weapon called the oligarchs. – This is because Yeltsin understood that in social life all is about competition and arguments – too often the usual arguments have been killing and destruction, but Yeltsin chose a new path, a path of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which he ushered in with peace. Yeltsin's arguments were those of reason. Yeltsin created a contra-force to the communist power, the oligarchs – it was the blitzkrieg of peace: as soon as possible there had to be a counterweight to the communist interests and wealth. – The creation of the oligarchs is not something Yeltsin should be blamed for, but praised for: Never has so much peace and future been brought with so little sacrifice. What a small price for liberation! – We shall compare that with the memory of millions of lost lives on which the Marxists built their Soviet state.

Having won the peace, with great personal sacrifices, Yeltsin was able to secure the transfer of power to Vladimir Putin. - Putin had a chance to bring the society to the next stage from the platform Yeltsin had secured. – And Putin used this chance with remarkable precision and success. He managed an unprecedented transformation of Russia further to equality, and prosperity, setting the foundations for law and justice.

One cannot understand Russia and Russian social life today without understanding the destruction brought about by the Marxist ideology and its application in Russia. – With Yeltsin's revolution Russia did not start social life in 1990 from scratch– but with a heavy burden from the past; the more remarkable the achievement.

Today a salute this, for me, most remarkable man of world history. Not our typical hero, but that is perhaps because he was so much like us, a human being, a person that carried in himself so much of human joy and suffering, distress and hope. He was human, all too human – in the very best sense of word.