

Sewers of the Past



Edmond D. Pope

On 3 April 2000, Edmond D. Pope, an American businessman, was arrested in Moscow, Russia by the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), a component of the former KGB and charged with espionage. At the end of the closed trial in December 2000, he was found guilty and sentenced to 20-years hard labour, then almost immediately pardoned by President Vladimir V. Putin. During his 253-day ordeal inside the notorious Lefortovo Prison, he kept detailed diaries and otherwise wrote extensively to help preoccupy his mind. Thinking the FSB would certainly screen and probably confiscate these writings, Ed viewed his writing efforts first as a means of helping preserve his sanity, and secondly for repetition as a means to help reconstruct events upon his release. Frequently, he would use cryptic notes so as to avoid giving the interrogators any additional material for their fertile minds to misconstrue as "spying" activity. On 14 December 2000, he was surprisingly released. The doors opened and prison staff helped carry out all of his personal belongings, including 600-pages of notes he had written. These notes were used extensively to help accelerate drafting Ed's book TORPEDOED, however, the concise presentation of the experience depicted in the book provides only a cursory look at the many detailed events and thoughts that transpired during his time inside Lefortovo.

The black Volga sedan sped past the turn I knew we should have made to go to Lubyanka, KGB (more recently FSB) headquarters, but the FSB officers both in the front seat and those who had me sandwiched between them in the back seat remained passive and seemingly unfazed. My blood pressure spiked yet again as I realized that we were probably headed to Lefortovo instead of Lubyanka. Would I disappear with my family never to learn what had happened to me? At approximately 4.00pm on Monday, 3 April 2000, we had arrived and I was escorted through the main visitor entry door of Lefortovo Prison, located in the northeast quadrant of Moscow. Over the next ten days, my frustration would turn to a nightmare as the FSB, reinvigorated by the presidential election of Vladimir V. Putin on 26 March 2000, played out what now appears was the beginning of a well-planned act that resulted in a formal charge of espionage being filled against me, an eventual conviction by a Moscow "kangaroo court" eight months later, and an immediate pardon.

Said to have been built during the 1762-1796 reign of Catherine the Great, Lefortovo Prison has long been used to house political prisoners, serious criminals, and other 'enemies of the state'. Rumored horrors from the past include assassins hiding in dark basement passageways who would emerge behind prisoners to put a bullet in the back of their head, an oversized meat grinder in which victims' bodies were ground and sluiced into the city's sewers, electric shock tables, drug torture chambers, and other forms of torture and experimentation. I saw no direct evidence of such draconian measures during my eight and one-half months there, however, I was told and shown marks and other tales of beatings of several inmates.

That such activities are continuing today there is no doubt in my mind.

Only occasionally during my time inside Lefortovo would the outburst of shouting or loud voices penetrate the thick walls and solid steel doors of our cells. The cell blocks of Lefortovo consist of four floors of cells with approximately fifty cells on each floor. While I could discern that only the first and second floors were being used during my term there, I was unable to estimate beyond vague generalities the number of prisoners being held. I was held exclusively on the second floor until the very last night. On that occasion, I was moved to a cell on the ground floor in preparation for release the next morning. During movement to the showers, interrogation rooms, medical clinic, and other special activities, I was able to discern that a number of the other cells were occupied and that certain wings of the cell block at times appeared to be empty of prisoners. I would speculate that Lefortovo held somewhere between 50 and 150 detainees.



Edmond Pope aboard the USS Oriskany in the Gulf of Tonkin, 1970

In recent history, Lefortovo was briefly turned over to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) in 1994. Two years later, this decision was reversed and Lefortovo was taken back by the Federal Security Service (FSB), one of three principal successor groups to the KGB. The SVR, a CIA-like external intelligence agency, comprises the other major active element of the former KGB. The third group, and perhaps the largest in terms of numbers of people, were simply dismissed by Boris Yeltsin's government when it was openly recognized that this huge apparatus was totally unnecessary and could no longer be funded. It should be noted at this point that Lefortovo is the only prison in Russia today that is not administered by the Ministry of Justice. In fact, Russia promised to transfer all penitentiaries to a unified penal system independent of the prosecution system upon entering the European Council, however, Lefortovo has escaped this promise and remains under the control of the FSB.

Being an isolation facility, we had no way of sensing anything outside our typical eight foot by fifteen foot cell, however, a day after one of these outbursts was heard, one of my cellmates returned from a meeting and informed us that there had been a "suicide" in which a detainee had been able to jump through the netting of the upper floor and onto the concrete floor of the main level. What I did observe from the early hours of my incarceration was that the FSB was careful to avoid any mishap or physical injury to my body that would leave a mark. This was only one of many indications that their purpose with me was politically motivated. Several of the staff made direct comments and suggestions that my ordeal "would be over soon" and that I would be home before "very much longer." Of course, they would then try various methods to mentally torment me and threaten me with future prisons and ordeals that would make Lefortovo seem like a walk in the park. Their deceit worked well in keeping me confused, off balance and frightened.

Lefortovo Prison is administratively divided into two separate chains of authority; the interrogation/investigation section and the prison/detention facility administration. My interrogation team consisted of approximately 12 officers and was headed by Major of Justice Dmitry Vladislovovich Shalkov, whom, I am told, has been promoted in honor of his brilliant skullduggery in the handling of my case. Colonel Kiriushin was the chief of the prison, responsible for all other aspects of the compound. I had numerous meetings with him, most notably during the eight day interlude between the "conviction" and my pardon and release. He was a most pleasant appearing man and seemed sincere when telling me that he truly was happy with my pardon and exit from his facility, both for my own good and to lessen the high level of attention afforded his command that had been brought on by my presence. In finalizing my pardon and release from Lefortovo on the morning of December 14, Colonel Kiriushin invited my return to Russia in the future and stated he would like to have me as a guest at his dacha for a social visit. I restrained myself from suggesting that he not hold his breath waiting for such an event to ever occur.



On a previous business trip to Russia in 1992

From that afternoon until the day I walked out of Lefortovo on December 14, one common distinction marked my every moment inside the walls of the prison; that being the stench of heavy and cheap cigarette smoke mixed with the smell of rotting wooden parquet flooring, cabbage soup, dirty laundry and bodies, and other unidentifiable odors that produced a unique smell I will never forget the remainder of my life. I may and may not be the first and only American to have ever been held in Lefortovo (Francis Gary Powers was held at Lubyanka and later Vladimir Prison), but there is a higher likelihood that I was the only non-smoker in the prison during my detention. I would frequently wake with head aches from the overwhelming stench and heavy air created by the incessant chain smokers and poor circulation system of the prison. A circulation pump that served the entire prison complex through a duct system was turned off between 10.00pm and 6.00am each night, otherwise the low dull pitch of the pump seemed to reverberate completely through the prison, body and soul. On rare occasions, most probably due to the dire economic situation still persisting throughout Russia, the thunderous roar of jet engines being tested in the wind tunnels of the Central Aero-Hydrodynamics Institute immediately behind Lefortovo would be so loud and disruptive as to be unable to carry on a conversation in our cells.

During my first four days at Lefortovo and while not being interrogated, I was kept in Cell 67 in complete isolation in keeping with some of the typical methods employed to instill a certain frame of mind. The cell was at the very end of the cell block and the radiator did not seem to function at all. It was still rather cold in Moscow and certainly frigid in my cell. I had the clothes on my back and nothing more. Only when an official from the US Embassy came for a short visit on the third day did the interrogators/guards give me a tooth brush and razor and instruct me to "clean up" for the visit.

As noted earlier, the detention section of the prison is comprised of four floors of cell blocks with approximately fifty cells per floor. A typical holding cell in Lefortovo measures approximately eight feet wide by fifteen feet long and has a curved ceiling that caps at a height of about ten or eleven feet. This standard size cell normally is configured to hold three inmates but I was placed temporarily in some cells that were configured with only two bunks. The walls are all solid brick/concrete with a semi-opaque window in one end that admits some light and a solid steel door at the opposite end that opens into the inner prison sanctuary. Inside the cell, three steel frame beds are permanently embedded into the concrete floor. The beds are only slightly over six feet long and about 28 inches wide. When being processed in, each detainee is issued a very well worn mattress, one blanket, two sheets, a pillow case, one small towel, a metal eight inch bowl, a metal cup, and one spoon. These are then your possessions until such time as you depart the facility.



Map of central Moscow showing prison and Lubyanks

A typical day, as recorded in my diaries of June 8, 2000, finds me waking and looking toward the window; only the first twinkling of light is apparent so I can only guess that it must be around 4:00am. when dawn comes to Moscow this time of year. I have been sleeping somewhat better recently so it doesn't take too long to readjust my position on the narrow bed and go back to sleep. During the first few weeks of detention, I could only average one to two hours of sleep per day between spasms of frustration and anger. This morning, the next thing I am aware of is the small access window in our cell door clanging loudly open and we hear the inevitable shout "Dobray uttra, padom!" (Good morning, get up!). We then have about five minutes to climb out of our bed and straighten sheets/blanket. This morning, four of the six of us in this double cell get up immediately and start our early morning routine of taking turns using the single toilette ("parasha"), brushing teeth, washing, shaving, putting on our "daytime" casual clothes, etc. One of the current cellmates is a nightowl whom I have given the nickname "Big Kahuna." He typically will stay up very late every night reading, writing, talking with anyone else awake, playing backgammon/"nardy" and then will sleep late. The other late sleeper today is the one who normally is our energetic early riser. Victor was obviously up late last night with Big Kahuna. The prison guards/"musar" don't seem to want to disturb Big Kahuna when they come around a second time, however, if they catch Victor, as they do this day, they do not hesitate to open the small access door and shout at and threaten him. From their tone of voice and the actions Victor takes, it appears that the "musar" consider it Victor's task to also get Big Kahuna up. Once awake, both straighten their blankets, put on their day clothes, stretch out on top of the bed with a coat over themselves and go back to sleep. A few minutes passes and the daily trash collection appears. This is one of the few times that the full door of the cell is opened to allow us to place our carefully wrapped previous day's collection of cigarette butts and other garbage in the larger receptacle the guards push around on

a wheeled cart. Our first meal of the day comes around at about 7:00am We hand our bowl out the access window when opened and it is ladled with a helping of porridge and returned.

Those who choose to exercise are then taken out as a group, one cell at a time so as not to have any contact with other inmates/detainees, and escorted to the first floor elevator entrance from whence we go up to the top of the building. There are two elevators but their movements are carefully coordinated so as not to allow any two groups in elevators to have any contact. Upon entering the elevator, we were required to move into a compartment in the back portion of the elevator while the guard would then close a sliding door and secure it. The prisoner portion of the lift compartment occupied approximately one-third of the floor space of the elevator, thus leaving two-thirds for the single guard. The exercise complex is located on the top of part of the building and consists of between fifteen and twenty exercise compartments, each measuring approximately eight by fifteen by about ten feet high (i.e. typical cell size) and open to the sky but protected by various pipes, wire mesh and reinforcing bars. The thick concrete walls of the exercise rooms are bare with the exception of one small wooden bench and a large circular tin can used as an ashtray. There are no windows, but the upward open view of the sky is a welcome one except when the guards pacing on their catwalk above us peer down. Loud talk is frowned upon and speaking English is strictly prohibited. On one occasion, one of my dull whited cellmates continually ignored the guards demand to keep his voice low. He was taken out of the exercise room before the rest of us and returned to our cell a few hours later with bruises and lacerations clearly noticeable. His demeanour changed after that day. Typical exercises included pacing/walking the lengthwise ends of the chamber plus other stretching, jumping and push-up type training. At the end of one hour, we would be returned to our cell and then would take turns taking a towel-bath in our sink. Almost as beneficial as the physical exercise, the daily training time would consume a total of about two hours and help reduce the monotony and routine of the day.



War games in Newport, Rhode Island. Pope is seated third from left.

Upon our return this day, a couple of the other cell mates wake and decide to eat. I had not taken porridge this day and was invited to eat with Big Kahuna and Victor. Today, we had sliced bread, cheese, smoked fish and butter. We were well stocked at the time as Big Kahuna had only recently received a delivery of produce from his family. His wife prepares several special food items and sends an abundant and varied supply each week of fruits, nuts, vegetables, meat, cheese, candy, snacks,

coffee, tea and other items. I was to learn that this was an extreme exception to the "normal" detainees fare in Lefortovo. Big Kahuna, as is the norm in the prison system, freely shared his provisions with all other cell mates. Another did house cleaning chores; a task we relished and shared as it also helped break the monotony and routine.

Big Kahuna also has a TV set in the cell so we can catch some news. As 10:00am nears, the normal time to begin work in Moscow, we know that some of us may be called for interrogations or other meetings. Those of us who expect we may be taken out, take turns heating water with our cup heaters, shaving and preparing. We are rarely told ahead of time whether we will be called but even if we are not we have succeeded in killing some more time. Victor is called away shortly afterward and the rest of us wait, and wait, and wait. It takes a while, however, for the guards to take Victor away as today is bath/"banya" day and the guards are busy shuttling groups of prisoners back and forth between their cells and the shower chambers. About 3:00pm this day, we are notified that it is our turn to go to the showers. The showers are located in the basement of the prison and we are walked single file, hands behind our backs, clutching our belongings. Every bath day, we are also allowed to exchange our bed linens for clean sheets, pillow case and towel. This exchange is made in the shower complex at the end of our bath. Getting to the basement compartment where the showers, more accurately the steam baths, are situated conjures up visions of the former intrigue and torture that probably took place here. Passing through narrow passage ways, low doors, locked doors and making several sharp turns, we arrive and are placed into our change room. Again, waiting until the guard has a shower stall ready for us and no other prisoners are present, our change room is unlocked and we are moved within the maze to one of the five or six shower rooms.

There are only three overhead shower nozzles in each room so no more than three of us are ever placed into a shower room. These rooms measure roughly seven foot-square and once inside, the solid steel door is locked and the guard can keep an eye on us through his peep hole. If the water/steam becomes too hot, we bang on the door to get his attention and he can then regulate the mix of water. We are allowed perhaps fifteen minutes and use the time to thoroughly wash, attempting to remove not only grime but thoughts of our surroundings as well in the soothing hot water. We are taken through the reverse procedures, exchange our bed linens and then are walked up two flights to our second-floor cell again. The showers are most relaxing and even lulls the mind into a temporary sense of ease and contentment. For me, this normally would end within minutes of returning to the cell and having two to five cell mates light up their cigarettes.



Pope beside his vehicle - note registration plate.

Our next "event", after making our beds and perhaps taking a short nap, is the 5:00pm round in which the guards/musar collect tea pots through the small access doors. These pots are collected once in the morning and once in the afternoon for those who want tea and will be returned a short time before the meal. Most detainees do not take this offering. The reason/suspicion for declining the pot of tea is the belief that they are being drugged with something.

Before I was informed of this, i.e. during my first four days, I did take the offered tea and found it to be very weak and unappealing. Fresh bread is also delivered; black bread every day and white bread three days a week. If not eaten, the black bread will begin to mold within one day. I actually found the fresh white bread loaves to be quite tasty. They would last a bit longer than the black bread before molding but it was normally gone by that time anyway. When we have received a supply of fresh provisions from family deliveries, or in my case the US Embassy hire that Cheri arranged, preparing an evening meal/salad is a welcomed event, both for the opportunity to engage in an activity that would consume time and for the valued fresh vegetables and the nutritional value we lacked from the prison fare. Other than the bread, we received no fresh provisions whatsoever from the prison fare. The prison, however, does have a commissary from which we were allowed on a bi-weekly basis to purchase what might be available.

Cheri took great pains to work some funds through first the US Embassy bureaucracy then the Russian quagmire. After close to three months, a credit slip was delivered to me and I was allowed to order some items from this commissary list within the prison. My mouth watered as I awaited the kielbasa sausage, dried fruits and chocolate. I was also greatly relieved to be able to finally purchase my own bottled drinking water, fruit juice and toilet paper. A mixed blessing arrived a few days later. The packaged products, such as drinking water and chocolate, were wonderful and disappeared almost instantaneously. On the other hand, the dried fruits were full of gravel, dirt and unwashed and unidentified objects and could be eaten only after extensive washing. The fruit must then be boiled due to the presence of hepatitis and other contaminants in the water system. Only after suffering food poisoning several times and having to visit the prison medical staff did we discover the commissary kielbasa sausage could not be eaten. The chief doctor informed me not to eat the sausage unless we first boiled it to kill the bacteria. On return to the prison

cell, my escorting guard proudly informed my cellmates, who interpreted for me, that "Russian kielbasa had defeated the American Army!"

At 10.00pm every evening, the electricity outlet we used for the TV and the water heater was turned off and we were told to keep all talking to a whisper. It was time to end a long day of boredom and confusion and begin a long night of boredom and confusion. In this regard, nothing has changed from Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. At least one light is kept burning all night long. If the bulb burns out during the night, no more than five minutes passes before a crew with a ladder appears, opens the door and changes the bulb.

During my time in Lefortovo, both the physical and mental relief thus garnered were very important in trying to maintain sanity. A significant and perhaps the most important aspect of stability/survival in Lefortovo is dealing with the isolation, anxiety, stress and boredom. Finding ways to pass time and occupy the mind is a daily challenge inside Lefortovo. These factors were so extreme during my first four days that I can say without reservation that I existed for those ninety-six hours in pure freight and terror. The first evenings strip search removed belts, metal objects, shoelaces and anything they considered harmful or objectionable that we might use against ourselves or others, however, I was confused and suspicious when, upon being ushered into my cell, I discovered a hard, red plastic knife. This seemed to be the only instrument other than the lid of the toilet/parasha in every cell I was in that was not permanently affixed. Were they giving us the suicide instrument? I often wondered and at one point did contemplate using it for this purpose.

Everyone in Lefortovo is under this common thread of pressure. I found it extremely difficult to concentrate on many occasions because of this stress. I felt it strange that I should be thinking so frequently about utter trivial matters; my family, the situation, a mosquito perched on the ceiling waiting to drop on one of us, however, this is what a great deal of our time consists of; boredom and trivial matters. Then it becomes that much easier to slip into worrying, fretting, focusing on the unknowns and possibilities facing us, depression, etc., just what the KGB/FSB wants us to do. All detainees, however, share this understanding and therefore quickly attempt to adjust to each other's peculiarities.

Lefortovo has its own dental and medical clinic, as well, I would expect but can't prove, its own torture chambers and chemistry laboratory. I would suggest the latter are probably better equipped than the former. I visited the dental clinic only once. During the first weeks of my detention, I was spooning down my morning porridge/gruel, when I crunched a piece of gravel that shattered a tooth. I asked and was taken to the dental clinic and examined. The dental clinic itself would command a fortune in an antique auction; I've only seen such chairs and equipment in black and white films. My dentist, after examining the damaged tooth, pronounced "Nhyt problem!" and then took a pair of pliers from a nearby drawer. I made a quick decision and informed her that there was no pain in that tooth as it had previously had a root-canal. She looked somewhat sympathetic, perhaps wondering what a root-canal was, and told me to come back if there was any pain and she would immediately solve the problem. When I later relayed this story to my cell mates, one of them grinned and opened his mouth as wide as possible. He told me that he had spent eight years so far in various Russian prisons and knew only too well what the accepted solution was to a tooth problem. Victor had no more than one-third of his

teeth remaining. It suddenly dawned on me why he so much relished mashed potatoes.

There were many ways and techniques of provoking us detainees in Lefortovo. After four days in complete isolation, I was transferred to Cell 80 and remained alone with "Sasha" for over two weeks. Sasha was very likely an informant, a "hen" in prison slang, but was helpful to me in explaining the routine and rules of survival. He spoke a little English and learned new words with almost amazing rapidity. He tried to explain some of the seeming hundreds of rules/"pravila" posted in a large placard on the wall of each cell. On 21 April, a new man was put into our cell. Fat and gross, a chain smoker and incessant talker, Nick was also an incurable snorer. The noise that he made was so loud that it rivaled the jet exhaust tower from the institute adjacent to the prison and it was absolutely impossible to sleep when he was in dreamland. Sasha and I had to try to adjust our schedules, to sleep when Nick was awake, and Nick cooperated by dozing when we were awake or out of the cell. He chatted continually in Russian at Sasha, even when Sasha pointedly interposed his magazine between himself and Nick's face; sometimes Nick would move his position to try to force Sasha to pay attention to his monologues.



The toilet roll given to Pope by his cell mates. The message reads: Yankee Go Home!

At this early stage in my detention, I discovered the necessity of mind control and positive thinking. One of the first books I was allowed from a list of prison English language holdings was *The Streets of Laredo* by Larry McMurtry. Mr. McMurtry's style is very engaging and I even found humor in some passages and I became ensnared in a phrase McMurtry had a character employ: "a nickel's worth of dog-shit." To pass time in the cell I wrote a thirty-two-page screed on this subject. Within the various cells, we detainees worked hard at trying to buoy each others spirits and frequently took on the character of young schoolboys in pursuit of light-hearted thoughts and laughs. One day, upon returning to the cell, I discovered my fellow prisoners acting out antics made famous by the Three Stooges. I quickly recognised their enjoyment of pretending to use the "double fingered eye gouge" and counter measure "salute." This protective parallel hand held in front of the nose became our official salute for the next two weeks. Several of the guards also showed sympathy toward us in their

own way. One, whose task it was in the prison, would engage in practical jokes by telling us that his haircuts were used as practice on us so that he could then give his dogs at home a proper cut. At other times, when opening the door to take us out for interrogations or other meetings, he would feign jolts to the body, suggesting we were going for electric-shock treatment. I laughed uneasily the first couple of times.

The guard force was composed of a mostly male contingent and, for the most part, were of the younger generation. Lefortovo also housed a number of female detainees and included a number of female guards. Like the male guards/musar, the disposition of the females appeared hinge on their age and the parallel hang-over from the Soviet "days of glory." Many of these younger guards openly sympathised with me, particularly in later stages of the charade conducted by the FSB investigators. Other guards who had been around a few years longer were clearly from the "old school" of thought and, it was obvious from their glares, snarls, communist party pins and other signals, hated me with a passion. The fall from glory and prestige as a world super-power will clearly trouble them to the day they are laid to rest. Whether sympathiser or avid foe, they all used the famous Lefortovo requirement of announcing the presence of a prisoner during escort through the facility by clicking/snapping their fingers loudly or using a metal clicker to notify anybody in the vicinity that "I am escorting a prisoner."

Every morning we would be given kasha porridge and tea; at midday it was the big meal of cabbage soup, steamed fish, and mashed potatoes; and in the evening, more kasha porridge. Black bread came every day; it was almost inedible. The white bread delivered three days a week was better. One hour each day, we prisoners were taken up, a cell at a time, to a rooftop exercise area open to the sky and surrounded by high walls; it was not much bigger than a normal cell, but it was empty of fixtures, and we could walk unrestricted in it for an hour; I usually walked the equivalent of three miles. After sweating during our exercise, we took turns sponging off in the sink of the cell, until Thursdays, when we were taken out of the cell to the steam bath rooms and allowed a once-a-week cleansing.

Of the many special objects and remembrances I left Lefortovo Prison with, the most precious to me is a roll of prison issue toilet paper. This roll was presented to me as a parting gift by my cellmates. It is signed by each of them with well wishes for my health and future. On one end is inscribed the numbers of the double cell (73/74) while on the opposite end, in the Russian, is written in small letters "Moscow - Lefortovo Prison - 8.12.2000" and in large block letters the words "Yankee Go Home." This gift brought mixed tears of joy, suffering and pain to all of our eyes. Even if they were all "hens" I felt sincerity in their wishes for me and in their own pain for their suffering.

A final word on Lefortovo/Russian prison custom as passed on from several cell mates is that of burning your clothes worn during prison upon release. Victor is the one who most emphatically stressed this custom and repeated that I must honour this custom. Victor also freely admitted that this was not his first stint in a Russian prison. Whether a legitimate prisoner or a "hen," this custom apparently had not worked in Victor's case. I have, indeed, burned most of my clothes from the Lefortovo experience and am confident the tradition will work in my case.

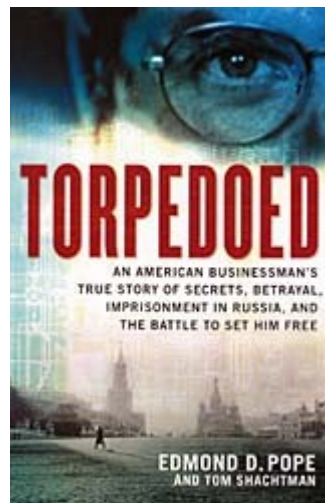
One final note on a more serious and frightening topic. My pardon was recommended by Russia's "Pardons Commission." This independent, intellectual group was established by President Boris N. Yeltsin in the early 1990s in recognition of the

wrongs that had been committed against political and other prisoners in the Soviet Gulag. Unlike what today's Putin administration would have us think, President Yeltsin did engage in some humanitarian, worthwhile and noteworthy efforts in his transitory years that helped move Russia toward a more modern and caring society. Each year of his administration, Yeltsin accepted the majority of recommendations from the Pardons Commission and authorised pardons for hundreds, and normally thousands, of wrongly/harshly imprisoned citizens. Vladimir Putin accepted and continued this activity. In his first full year as president of the Russian Federation, Putin authorised the pardon of over 12,500 people from Russian prisons.

Unfortunately for the citizens of Russia, Edmond Pope's pardon on 14 December 2000 represented the last ever to be granted under this system. The Russian government now claims that it has instituted its own administration of a pardons system. There is little question in my mind that the former independent Pardons Commission's unanimous recommendation for my release, followed by their pronouncements of "old Soviet ways and spy mania" having returned had a great deal to do with the demise of that body. There is no longer a fair voice in Russia loud enough to keep one of my former cell mates at Lefortovo from being moved to a "mental institution" some six months ago. Who is there left in Russia with the power to balance the abuse currently being committed against Valentin Mosiyev? Where does the wind now blow for the many wonderful people of Russia?

They are being sucked into the sewers of the past.

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Comment: Edmond Pope has begun working on a second book that contains a much more detailed examination of what transpired and what it is like inside one of the most infamous prisons in history. Eye Spy is extremely grateful to Mr Pope for allowing our readers a cursory glimpse of what promises to be another hugely interesting book.

- US readers can purchase *Torpedoed* via US stores. UK and European readers please contact Eye Spy for purchase details

Edmond Pope has a web site at www.edmondpope.com that includes many photos and stories, not presented here or in the book TORPEDOED, that further compliments his story.