

**THE TOMB OF THE SOVIET UNION,
OR THE WOMB OF PUTINISM?
THE 1993 RUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS,
30 YEARS AFTER**

**WORKSHOP
THUR, 21ST SEP 2023**

PROGRAMME



INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the USSR, newly independent Russia struggled to create functioning state institutions amid social and economic turmoil. Two centres of power emerged, whose antagonism culminated in the violent clash between president Boris Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet in late September to early October 1993. The crisis, and the potent imagery of a parliament building being shelled by its own army, is often identified as a key moment in the development of the modern Russian state. According to many observers, Yeltsin transgressed his presidential powers and, with his violent repression of parliamentary opposition and a new presidentialist constitution, nipped Russian democracy in the bud - thus laying the foundation for the authoritarian state capitalism of his hand-chosen successor Vladimir Putin. Russian liberals have tended to defend Yeltsin's course of action, claiming it saved Russia from civil war and a full power grab by old Soviet elites with unpredictable economic and geopolitical consequences.

Our workshop, held in Berlin on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the constitutional crisis, brings together historians, political scientists, constitutional lawyers, and eyewitnesses. We will stake out the state of research on a pivotal moment in modern Russian history that is key for our understanding of contemporary Kremlin politics.

The workshop is organised by the head of the Junior Research Group 'Peripheral Liberalism' Dr Tobias Rupprecht. If you wish to attend in-person or online, please register with George Payne - g.payne@fu-berlin.de

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 21st September 2023

09:30 am – Keynote speech

Escape from Political Freedom. The 1993 Conflict and Russia's Political Trajectory

11:00 am - Session 1: Constitutions

The Dangers of Rights Constitutionalism for Democratic Politics

Constitutional Change under Autocracy from a Comparative Perspective

2:30 pm – Session 2: Contemporaries

Constitutionalism versus Special Orders of Government. The Road to Constitutional Normality

Liberals Against Parliament. The Russian Intelligentsia and the Struggle for a New Constitution

4:00 pm - Session 3: Crisis

An Authoritative Accessory. The IMF's Role in the Crisis

Implementing the New Central Bank Law in Russia. Legal and Economic Challenges Following the Adoption of the Constitution in 1993

5:00 pm - Session 4: Consequences

Post-Soviet Conservatism and Democracy. Belarusian Views of the Russian Constitutional Crisis

From 'Living' Constitutionalism to 'Zombie Apocalypse'.

Valery Zorkin and his Role for Russian Authoritarian Constitutionalism