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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **102<sup>nd</sup>** CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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## *House of Representatives*

THE HONORABLE NANCY PELOSI  
IN HONOR OF ROMAN KALININ  
*November 22, 1991*

The attempted Soviet coup in August, 1991 was the backdrop for a remarkable demonstration of courage and dedication to the cause of freedom. Roman Kalinin, publisher of Russia's first gay and lesbian newspaper, together with a group of gay men and lesbians worked to fight the coup by printing and distributing President Boris Yeltsin's decrees.

Roman Kalinin first learned of the coup through friends in San Francisco. From late in the evening of August 18, until the coup was defeated on August 21, Kalinin established a telephone link through Finland to San Francisco. A plan was developed to communicate with people in the Soviet Union who would have immediately become targets for intimidation and possibly death because of their sexual preference and work in the democratic movement. Fear and panic was rampant as reports surfaced of the possibility of waves of arrests. On August 20 an official demand was made for lists of people with AIDS and HIV from the Moscow AIDS clinic.

Kalinin is the Publisher of TEMA, the first lesbian/gay newspaper in the Soviet Union. His publishing system and copy machine became virtually the only method available to print and distribute information against the coup leaders. For almost 60 hours, gay men and lesbians in Moscow marshalled their forces in an incredible display of courage.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued a list of decrees which became the document of resistance against the forces of oppression. Gay men and lesbians at the TEMA offices processed the information on the computer. Around the clock the copy machine printed the Yeltsin decrees with the logo of the well known gay newspaper on the bottom. Kalinin wanted the public to know that the gay community was working to fight the coup, even though he risked his own arrest by publicly claiming the work.

These heroes then took the printed decrees into the streets of Moscow, working with other leaders of the pro-democracy movement. The decrees were distributed throughout the city and appeared at every metro stop for confused Muscovites to read. The decrees were even handed to soldiers in the tanks aimed at the Russian Parliament building. This heroism represents an ongoing commitment to fight oppression and discrimination in the Soviet Union. They have for several years, led the fight to reduce the discrimination which is faced by gay men and lesbians throughout the Soviet Union.

They have also joined with others from around the world to provide information and educational material for the Russian people to fight the ever increasing threat of AIDS and infection from the HIV virus. Their efforts have been supported through the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission, an organization has become in just one year, an international gay consulate to the world. Victory in the Soviet Union provided the opportunity to open doors for lesbian/gay freedom never before dreamed of that in the country.

The courage and commitment to freedom and democracy of Roman Kalinin is being honored in December, 1991 when he will be named the "Man of the Year" by The Advocate, the largest national publication in America serving lesbians and gay men.