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**The Role of Ukraine's Communists in the  
Ukrainian Independence Movement**

by

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June 1993

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Ukrainian Independence Movement**

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B.S., University of Arizona, 1985**

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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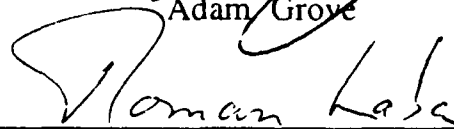
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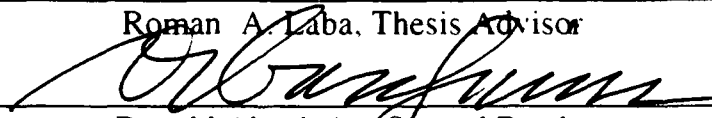
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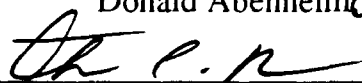
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## ABSTRACT

Contrary to nearly all predictions, Ukraine's Communists supported the Ukrainian declaration of independence in 1991. Closer scrutiny reveals this should have been no surprise because Communist support for independence was the result of Marxist-Leninist ideology's failure to resolve the conflict between nationalism and Communism. Because of this contradiction, Ukrainian Communists were promised national self-determination but were forbidden to exercise it. Similarly, Ukraine's pre-Communist national consciousness survived and was even nurtured by the Soviet system. These two factors, acting simultaneously, meant the idea of an independent Ukrainian nation was never far from the thoughts of Ukraine's Communists. Thus, when the opportunity came to realize self-determination for the third time this century, Ukraine's Communists, still retaining national consciousness and marching under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, joined and even led the move toward independence.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contrary to nearly all predictions, Ukraine's Communists supported the Ukrainian declaration of independence in 1991. This "revolutionary turn" was the result of Marxist-Leninist ideology's failure to resolve the conflict between nationalism and Communism. Because of this contradiction, Ukrainian Communists were promised national self-determination but were forbidden to exercise it. Similarly, Ukraine's pre-Communist national consciousness survived and was even nurtured by the Soviet system. These two factors, acting simultaneously, meant the idea of an independent Ukrainian nation was never far from the thoughts of Ukraine's Communists. Thus, when the opportunity came to realize self-determination for the third time this century, Ukraine's Communist still retaining national consciousness and marching under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, joined and even led the move toward independence. The Ukrainian Communist Party alienated this movement from within by vacillating between coopting the reformist agenda and crushing the movement. As a result, the Communist Party in Ukraine collapsed and was replaced by a regime rooted in Ukrainian nationalism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

On the first of December 1991, Ukrainians achieved in one day, without firing a single shot, what their forefathers had struggled and died for from 1917 to 1920, and again in the wake of WWII - independence. How did Ukraine in 1991 achieve what had twice in this century been struggled for and lost? How was it that independence came without the violence of earlier attempts?

The answer lies in the fact that Ukraine's move toward independence was in part initiated and supported by the very same political actors Ukraine sought independence from - the Communist Party of Ukraine. This is not a popular nor widely held view. However, the image of the Ukrainian opposition forces seizing control of the government and routing the Communists does not fit with reality. Had Ukraine's Communists not supported the initial vote to declare independence in August 1991 hours after the collapse of the attempted coup d'etat in Moscow, and had Communists not voted for independence in the 1 December referendum, Ukrainian independence would have been tossed back on the trash heap of modern history. This being the case, why did Ukraine's Communist elites support a nationalist program of independence which was totally opposed to the dominance of the Soviet state?

What follows is an attempt to answer this last question and to provide insight into the process by which Ukraine's Communist elites supported and eventually merged forces with the pro-independence opposition. The thesis of this investigation is that support from Ukrainian Communist leadership



for independence was more a consequence of the contradictions of the Soviet state and the national tendencies of Ukrainians than a defeat by the forces of opposition. In 1990 and 1991 the forces of opposition and the Communist Party of Ukraine merged unexpectedly. This was the result of an historical shortcoming of Marxist-Leninist ideology -namely, that it fails to resolve the inherent conflict between Communism and nationalism. The inconsistencies in Soviet ideology led to a contradictory federal system and policy toward the non-Russians under which Ukrainians were given the instruments of national-self determination but denied their use. This contradiction, in an environment of strong national sentiment, provided fertile ground for the growth of anti-Russian and strongly pro-autonomy feelings among both Ukrainian nationalists and Communists. In the past these sentiments had been contained only by strong central force and brutal repression. Whenever the center loosened its grip, Ukraine, led by its ruling elites, tried to wriggle away. In 1991, Ukraine, with the help and complicity of its ruling elites, finally did get away. This was to be a devastating blow to the continued existence of the Soviet Union because Ukraine was the territorial and economic key to the Union's viability. The events of 1991 highlighted not only the importance of Ukraine to the Union but also Ukraine's political volatility.

**A. UKRAINE'S IMPORTANCE - QUESTIONS OF ECONOMIC WEALTH AND POLITICAL STABILITY**

Ukraine, known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) from 1919 to 1991, has been described as "Europe's secret nation." Its importance to the Soviet Union was captured in the words of the British historian, Norman Davies, who stated "There is Moscow and the Ukraine -

all the rest is window dressing."<sup>1</sup> Ukraine was important not only because of its enormous inherent natural resources but because of the volatility of its strong national character which lay not far below the tranquil, Soviet imposed, identity.

Ukraine's inherent wealth has always been its population, and its natural resources. In 1991, Ukraine had a population of 52 million and a territory the size of France. Yet, with only 3 percent of the territory and 19 percent of the population of the Soviet Union, Ukraine provided more than its share of the Soviet Union's national income (17 percent in 1989)<sup>2</sup> as well as a number of valuable resources which fueled the Soviet State for many years.

The most important of these resources is coal located primarily in the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine. These coal deposits are second in the world only to the Appalachian deposits in the United States. Oil and natural gas are also found in Ukraine in great quantities and Ukraine produced 30 percent of all the Soviet Union's natural gas prior to 1972 when Siberian deposits began to be developed. Ukrainian iron ore accounts for more than half the Soviet output, and manganese mined in Ukraine accounted for 27 percent of the world's total in 1973. In addition, Ukraine produces large quantities of titanium and uranium.<sup>3</sup>

Ukrainian industry, built around these natural resources, is quite well developed and Ukraine produces more pig iron than any other European country and more coal and steel than either France or Britain. These

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990), 73.

<sup>2</sup>David Marples, Ukraine Under Perestroika (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>3</sup>Swoboda, "The Ukraine," 262.

industries account for a disproportionate share of the Soviet Union's production capability. Ukraine produces 50 percent of the Union's pig iron and coke, over 40 percent of the steel and almost half the metallurgical equipment.<sup>4</sup>

In the area of agriculture, Ukraine has been known as the bread basket of Europe for centuries because of its very rich *chernozem* or "black earth" and moderate climate. In 1970, Ukrainian agricultural enterprises produced 19 percent of Soviet grain, 59 percent of the Union's sugar beets, and 28 percent of all vegetables.<sup>5</sup>

While this economic dowry was instrumental to the success of the Soviet Union, it was not unlimited and its exploitation has an unseen price. The economy has been experiencing a severe decline since the 1970s due in part to falling agricultural and labor productivity and exhaustion of Ukraine's mineral resources. Although Ukraine has become a leader in cybernetics, the vast majority of Ukraine's economic might is based on outdated equipment and obsolete technology. As a result of the declining economy, Ukraine's standard of living has also dropped significantly.

Ukraine's leaders found that under the existing Soviet federal system their ability to solve the republic's growing economic problems was very restricted. Ukraine's lack of political viability was an intentional aspect of the Soviet political structure and one of the key destabilizing factors in the Ukrainian political character.

The UkSSR, according to the Soviet Constitution, was a sovereign national state which voluntarily joined the Union and was thus accorded a

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Roman Sporluk, "The Ukraine and the Ukrainians," in Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities, ed. Zev Katz Rosemarie Rogers and Frederic Harned (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 22.

number of rights, including secession. Ukraine also became a member of the United Nations which theoretically allowed the republic to pursue independent international relations. Domestically, UkSSR's sovereign power was vested in its Supreme Soviet. However, in reality as a part of the Union, Ukraine had very limited sovereignty because the republic had no control over activities within its borders. Central control was exercised by Union ministries to such an extent that the UkSSR only had real control over the ministries of roads, road transport, housing, communal services, and social insurance. This centralization of control began to increase in the 1980s with a number of joint Ukrainian-Union ministries coming under control of the center. Centralization progressed to the point that in 1990 Ukraine controlled only 5 percent of its own resources and industry. The Ukrainian Republic's sovereignty was further limited by the "leading" role of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) which was under the direct control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). In effect, the CPSU, via the CPU, controlled every aspect of the Ukrainian government.<sup>6</sup>

A second key factor in the instability of the Ukrainian political character were the historical contradictions of the Ukrainian national consciousness brought about by periods of political discontinuity. Ukraine as we know it today has spent a great portion of its modern history divided into parts. During the 19th century pieces of what we now call Ukraine were under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire while others were part of the Russian Empire. After WWI, the political environment changed drastically and most of Ukraine came to be divided

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<sup>6</sup>Victor Swoboda, "The Ukraine," in The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ed. George Schopflin (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986), 261.

between Russia and Poland. The Western part of Ukraine, known as Galicia, only became united with the eastern, Russian part, after WWII when the Soviet Union gained Galicia as a spoil of war. However this union was flawed by the differing historical experiences of the Eastern and Western Ukrainians with the Western regions harboring strong nationalist feelings which, to the Russified East, appeared fanatical.

The legacy of differing political orientations and systems, as well as the physical separation of the Ukrainian people was manifested in a number of different ways. Demographically Ukraine was split between East and West because Russians, for the most part, tended to settle in the Eastern or central regions leaving Western Ukraine as a stronghold for native Ukrainians.<sup>7</sup>

Ukraine's two halves were also driven apart by religion since Western Ukrainians were predominately Catholic or Greek Orthodox while Eastern Ukrainians were Russian Orthodox. The religious rift was accentuated by the Soviet's ban on the Catholic Church and their decision to force the Eastern rites upon Western Ukraine.

These underlying fractures in the UkSSR combined with the frustrations of economic and political powerlessness, led many of Ukraine's Communist and informal non-political leaders to agitate for increased autonomy. When this political force combined with Gorbachev's perestroika Ukraine's move to independence began to accelerate dramatically.

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<sup>7</sup>Throughout its Soviet history, Ukraine was the focus of intense Russification and as a result, by 1989 Russians comprised 22.2 percent of the population and Ukrainians only 72.2 percent, the remaining 5.1 percent being minorities (primarily Jews, Byelorussians, Poles, Bulgarians, and Moldavians). Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, 6.

## B. WHY STUDY COMMUNIST ELITES?

The focus on ruling elites is crucial to understanding the transitions away from Communism which have occurred both in Eastern Europe and Russia. Gale Stokes in his study of the 1989 revolution in Eastern Europe stressed that one of the lessons from the Eastern Europe experience is the important role of leadership. As he writes,

For a historian...there is little question that we all operate within a historically determined and relatively limited range of creative possibilities. But 1989 has shown once again...how important and unpredictable is the ability of the individual leader to stretch that range.<sup>8</sup>

Why study Ukraine's "former" communist elites? Would it not be better to study the new political forces in Ukraine? The short answer to the latter question is that by studying Ukraine's former communist elites, we are also studying the new political forces in independent Ukraine. Ukraine's former communist elites have, to a very great extent, retained their power and to this date they hold the majority of governmental posts from the Presidency down.

To address the first question; the study of Communist elites in Ukraine is fundamental to understanding the political future of the largest new independent state in Europe<sup>9</sup> for three main reasons; 1) Without the study of Ukraine's Communist elites one cannot understand the process of nation-building in Ukraine much less the process of achieving

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<sup>8</sup>Gale Stokes, "Lessons of the East European Revolutions of 1989," Problems of Communism XL, no. 5 (September-October 1991), 21.

<sup>9</sup>Or perhaps Ukraine is the second largest new independent state if one holds that Russia is a new European state. In any case, it is obvious that Ukraine considers itself a European state. Take for example the Ukrainian representative's statement at the Paris Summit of the CSCE in late 1990: "Europe cannot end at the borders of the USSR. The process of creation of independent states from the former republics of the last empire in the world is the most important event in Europe. To welcome the emerging state formations on the territory of the USSR is a moral and political obligation of democratic Europe." ("Ukraine, Baltic states and Armenia send representatives to Paris Summit," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 47, 25 November 1990, p. 1.)

independence because these elites were deeply involved from the outset; 2) The Communist government in Ukraine was caught between the center (Moscow and the CPSU) and the opposition and was acted on by both. As a result, a study of Ukraine's Communists can provide insight into a broader spectrum of the political process in Ukraine prior to independence; 3) Since independence, Ukraine has not faded into the background like the Baltic states.<sup>10</sup> Quite to the contrary, the recent dispute over nuclear weapons and ownership of the Black Sea Fleet make it clear that Ukraine is, and will continue to be an important factor in European and American strategic and security calculations; 4) The study of Ukraine's communist elites is applicable to the study of other republics because the role played by republican communist elites in the process of nation-building and independence in the various former republics is similar. In addition, many former republics of the USSR have been headed by former Communists just as post-independence Ukraine.

### C. THE QUESTION OF ELITE RELIABILITY

Among the popular and academic literature there is an innate tendency to ascribe the majority of protest in the Soviet Union to nationalist sentiment. This oversimplification, if not patently wrong for most republics, is certainly misleading as this study will demonstrate. Richard Pipes in his article "The Soviet Union Adrift" stresses this point. He cites economic and political factors as important in Soviet

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<sup>10</sup>The continued visibility of Ukraine in the West has been hampered by profound Russo-centrism and a lack of understanding captured by Robert Conquest's in his Harvest of Sorrow. Conquest describes the Sovietization of Ukraine, the struggle for independence in the 20th Century, and the human costs associated with both processes. These were events which "never truly gripped the Western mind" he writes, because of "a lack of understanding or knowledge of the power of Ukrainian national feeling, of Ukrainian nationhood." He could be just as well be speaking about the contemporary Ukraine. Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror - Famine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 25.

republic unrest. He cites the failure of the center's economic distribution system as a "major reason" for national disunity in the RSFSR as well as other republics. Additionally, nationalist sentiment is not the only factor driving decentralization. The inability of the center to provide adequate regional leadership is also major factor.<sup>11</sup>

The behavior of regional leaders in Ukraine and many other republics was unforeseen by the vast majority of western (and Soviet) experts. As a result, the analysis of Ukraine's independence movement was often off the mark. The major unchallenged assumption, that Ukraine's communist elites would remain loyal to Moscow turned out to be wrong. For example, one of the leading students of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, Seweryn Bialer concluded that:

While the failure of will and effectiveness of political elites seems unlikely in the coming decade, what seems even less likely in the foreseeable future is a transformation of the Soviet political system in a democratic direction through a peaceful, "painless" evolution. The nature of the Soviet political elite, the way in which the Soviet system was established, and the way it is now run argue forcefully against the effectiveness of incremental changes in breaking the vicious circle of elite self-replication, bureaucratization, and autocratic societal control.<sup>12</sup>

Addressing the issue of loyalty of national Communist Party elites, Bialer points out that since the 1960s there have been growing tendencies toward increased competence among republican national leadership as well as a decreased Russian presence "inside" the local government to monitor the national elites. This tendency, he argues, creates a more stable situation.

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<sup>11</sup>Richard Pipes, "The Soviet Union Adrift," Foreign Affairs 70, no. 1 (1991): 77.

<sup>12</sup>Seweryn Bialer, Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability, and Change in the Soviet Union (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 285-286.



It is the process of the formation of such native elites, of the political and social mobility that it represents, of the opportunity and satisfaction of indigenous cadres that it reflects, which forms the basis of the probably still strong commitment of these cadres to the existing system and a key element of the explanation for the stability of nationality relations in the past decade.<sup>13</sup>

However, in the same paragraph, Bialer points out the counter thesis that this process will encourage the national elites to seek their own path.

At the same time, of course, this situation exacerbates the Soviet dilemma for the future: Once such a plateau of mobility and competence has been achieved, the prospects that indigenous elites will press increasingly for greater autonomy from the central authority may rise sharply.<sup>14</sup>

He counters this by noting that although republican elites tended to demand increased autonomy in the area of economics, they compete not with the center but with other republics for limited resources. This implicitly means, argues Bialer, "there will seldom be a unity of interests and views on economic issues among the republican elites...." which "points...to another strength of the Soviet Federal system."<sup>15</sup> But even more important and key to Bialer's argument is the supposition that this disunity of republican elite action against the center also occurs within the republic and "for this reason bureaucratic elites within the republics do not represent a *political* danger to the central authorities and are as manageable as local politics in the Russian region."<sup>16</sup>

As an example of republican elite loyalty, Bialer turns his analysis to the situation of Ukraine. He highlights the special role of Ukraine in the Soviet system and describes how the Ukrainian Party elites have long

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 216.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 217.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 218.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 219.

been more equal than the other nationalities in the eyes of Moscow. The common racial identity, cultural affinity and high level of russification have, he writes, formed a Russo-Ukrainian compact, which,

by expanding the opportunities open to Ukrainian elites, enhanced the prospects for Ukrainian commitment to the federal system as it exists, the prospect that they will not pursue autonomous aspirations. By so doing, it provides one of the bases for containment of the nationality problem in the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

Today this conclusion seems difficult to believe not only in light of what has happened since Bialer's book was published in 1980 but even before that with the purge of Shelest in 1972.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, the events of 1989 disproved Bialer's assertion of increased national Party elite loyalty.

Bialer's assessment that national elites will remain loyal to the center was shared by others. Alexander Motyl in his book Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality, argues that National Communism is an inevitable result of the "imperfectly totalitarian Soviet state." The historical tendency toward National Communism, says Motyl differs from nationalism by explicitly rejecting political independence although it can be "contextually nationalist" in "appropriate circumstances." National Communism emerges from the conflict between the centralized Communist Party and the idea of the Austro-Marxist state which grants to republican leaders a measure of authority.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>18</sup>Bialer's misreading of the situation seems to be enduring. His book, The Soviet Paradox, published in 1986, stubbornly asserts the same thesis that the stability of the ruling elites will continue: "The Soviet Union is presently in the throes of a crisis of effectiveness. There is little reason to believe that the situation will change in the foreseeable future. But it is unlikely that the state is now, or will be in the late 1980s in danger of social or political disintegration." Seweryn Bialer, The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 19.

<sup>19</sup>Alexander J. Motyl, Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality: Coming to Grips with Nationalism in the USSR (New York: Colombia University Press, 1990), 87-88.

Unfortunately, Motyl's conclusion after all of this is that the process of disintegration will be stopped by the center and ultimately the non-Russians, although they want to rebel, will not.<sup>20</sup> Motyl bases his conclusion on the fact that the conflict between the periphery and the center will result in full-scale national conflict which may result in a reforming of the system but not the successful freeing of the republics.<sup>21</sup> Motyl's key error is that he fails to consider the possibility that National Communists may go so far in pursuit of their regional ambitions that they may join forces with the nationalists and totally reject the center and its Communist ideology.

Not all Soviet analysts were ignorant of the potential for republican leadership to turn against the center. Recently Biddulph and Breslauer independently asserted that, given the opportunity, republican Communist elites would tend to advocate local interests.<sup>22</sup> Brzezinski, writing as early as 1969 and Rakowska-Harmstone writing in the late 1970s noted that the non-Russians were led by "Soviet" elites who could press for increased political autonomy and an increased economic share without appearing as

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<sup>20</sup>This, incidentally, is the same conclusion he reaches in his book titled Will the Non-Russians Rebel, which primarily focused on Ukraine. He concluded his study of the potential for the non-Russian nationalities to revolt as follows:

As long as the public sphere is occupied, and more important, as long as the KGB remains intact, the deprivatization of antistate attitudes will be problematic, antistate collectivities and elites will be unlikely to mobilize, alliances between workers and intellectuals will not materialize, and rebellion, revolt, and insurrection will be well-nigh impossible. Because they cannot rebel, non-Russians will not rebel. (Alexander J. Motyl, Will the Non-Russians Rebel? State, Ethnicity, and Stability in the USSR (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 170.)

<sup>21</sup>Motyl, Sovietology, 185-186.

<sup>22</sup>George Breslauer, W., "Is There a Generation gap in the Soviet Political Establishment?: Demand Articulation by RSFSR Provincial Party First Secretaries," Soviet Studies XXXVI, no. 1 (January 1984): 1-25 and Howard Biddulph, L., "Local Interest Articulation at CPSU Congresses," World Politics XXXVI, no. 1 (October 1983): 28-52.

secessionists.<sup>23</sup> As a result, their demands would continue to grow and "could impose a major strain on the Soviet constitutional structure."<sup>24</sup>

Conquest writing in 1965 about stability in the USSR noted that:

with weakness or schism at the center, it is not improbable that moves might be made by the leadership of some of the peripheral Union republics to increase their power, and perhaps even to effect virtual or even overt secession from the U.S.S.R.<sup>25</sup>

Conquest, drawing on the Hungarian example, postulated that a similar break with Moscow could occur within the USSR if the same levels of intellectual ferment were reached among the populace. In such a case, he writes, there are two relevant points;

First, that a second-rate 'conservative' leadership can make enormous and provocative miscalculations; and second, that a wing of the *apparatus* driven into opposition can make common cause with the genuine progressives among the non-*apparatchik* youth and intelligentsia.<sup>26</sup>

Simon's book on nationalism and Soviet nationality policy also stresses the potential for the Soviet Union's national elites to destabilize the system. Simon argues that the Soviet national elites, whenever presented with the opportunity, will pursue their nationalist interests against the interests of the center. As a result, he argues, "the continued existence of the state and its social system depends largely on the loyalty of the new non-Russian elites" and the center must continually strive to satisfy these demands while still maintaining the

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<sup>23</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Concluding Reflections," in Dilemmas of Change in Soviet Politics, ed. Zbigniew Brzezinski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 160 and Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Ethnicity and Change in the Soviet Union," in Perspectives for Change in Communist Societies, ed. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1979), 167-188.

<sup>24</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Political System: Transformation or Degeneration?," in Dilemmas of Change in Soviet Politics, ed. Zbigniew Brzezinski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 29.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Conquest, Russia After Khrushchev (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 204.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 253.

empire.<sup>27</sup> Simon asserts that the Soviet Union has held together in spite of these tendencies toward separatism "because the system of repression prevented the growth of separatist aspirations and because the new elites were socialized in a Soviet environment, that provided for a certain loyalty to the Soviet system."<sup>28</sup> But he also recognizes that the Soviet Empire is coming to an end primarily because of the contradiction in which national elites increasingly found themselves; "These elites are looking for a way to reconcile fundamental loyalty to the Soviet order with the advancement of national ambitions."<sup>29</sup> When national elites began to resolve this dilemma in the late 1980s by rejecting loyalty to the center, the empire promptly crumbled.

In speaking of Ukraine specifically, Simon, like Bialer points to the composition of the CPU as a critical factor in determining the stability of Ukraine's Communists. Simon argues that the increase in Party participation in the 1960s and 1970s was unavoidable and Moscow reluctantly had to allow it or face large scale unrest among the Ukrainian elite. By the 1970s the large number of Ukrainians inducted into the Party apparatus was great enough to raise, for the first time, the level of Party membership to be in proportion with Ukrainian's percent share of the population.<sup>30</sup> Even Khrushchev's purges in 1959-61, and Brezhnev's re-russification of the Party leadership could not stop the trend toward nationals participating in their leadership groups in proportion at least

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<sup>27</sup>Gerhard Simon, Nationalism and Policy Towards the Nationalities in the Soviet Union, trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1991), 8-9.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 274.

equal to, and often more, than their percentage in the total population.<sup>31</sup> However, as republican participation in the Party grew, there was a marked decrease in the number of non-Russians among the central leadership positions under Brezhnev. In fact, by the early 1980s the level of participation by non-Russians in the central organs had dropped to the level of the late Stalin era. Although Ukrainians and Byelorussians were able to maintain their presence in these central bodies, it was due only to the unspoken desire to form a strong slavic block in the USSR.<sup>32</sup> Simon concludes from these trends that the Soviets viewed the increasing role of nationals in republican leadership positions as a danger:

Apparently, because the Brezhnev leadership was unable to keep nationals from participating in the governments of the Union Republics, they were determined to keep them from becoming involved with governing the whole state. This backwards step of co-opting non-Russians into the leadership clearly contrasts with Brezhnev's general style of leadership, which was characterized by increasing involvement of bureaucratic apparatuses in political decisions. The Soviets apparently saw increasing the involvement of local nationals as a considerable risk. This discrimination against non-Russians also shows that top politicians were very aware of their Russian heritage and were interested in surrounding themselves primarily with fellow Russians. This situation heightened the participation crisis.<sup>33</sup>

In assessing the stability or reliability of the republican Communist elites it is also necessary to consider their personal motivation for engaging in "irregular" behavior. Conquest enters into this murky area by identifying the literary elite as the key segment of communist society in which the seeds of revisionist behavior lie. These figures played predominate roles in Eastern Europe in the late 1950s and the 1960s as

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 277.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 278.

well as in the revolutions of 1989 and their motivation seems to have been the desire for autonomy or the chance to have a say in a society in which the ruler rules without the consent of the ruled.<sup>34</sup>

Within the Party itself, the motivation was not much different. Drawing experience from Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia, Conquest points out that progressive inputs to the Party came from the intellectual, student, academic, and journalistic sectors of the Party. The *apparatchik's* role was usually very small and although they did abandon unpopular, centrally-mandated policies, such as collectivization in response to revisionist pressures, they "have never given up the dynastic claims of the *apparat*."<sup>35</sup> This points to the fact that while the individual may reject his ideologically driven role, he may not be willing to reject the power which his role has given him.

In fact, a leading scholar of Ukraine, Bohdan Krawchenko, notes that those members of the Ukrainian elite who came out in opposition to the centralized regime were motivated by a desire to control their own lives and to exercise their own power.

A new Ukrainian political elite comprised of individuals with modern skills had come into being and found itself frustrated politically and economically by a hyper-centralized system which refused to recognize it as a force or share power with it.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Conquest in his Russia After Khrushchev (p. 255) describes this process as it occurred in Hungary along very similar lines to what happened in Ukraine in 1989-1990.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 257.

<sup>36</sup>Bohdan Krawchenko, Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1985), 249.

To this end they vigorously pursued a policy of Ukranianizing the Party and developed their own justifying ideology and legitimization in the ever present idea of nationality.<sup>37</sup>

#### D. NATIONALISM AND THE STATE-BASED APPROACH

Manifestations and expressions of non-Russian nationality, national identity or consciousness were suppressed in the Soviet Union and it is clear that Gorbachev would have preferred to have continued this tradition. However, it was not possible to bring reform to the economic and political sphere without effecting processes in the social arena. The processes unleashed by Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the area of nationalities centered on the ideas of nationalism and the concept of state versus nation.

##### 1. Nationalism

To provide a definition of nationalism we can turn to Alter, who defines nationalism using Theodor Schnieder's contention that nationalism is a "*specific* integrative ideology which 'always makes reference to a 'nation' in one sense or another, and not *merely* to a social or religious group."<sup>38</sup> From this Alter concludes:

nationalism, such as it has appeared since the American and French Revolutions, will be understood as both an ideology and a political movement which holds the nation and the sovereign nation-state to be crucial indwelling values, and which manages to mobilize the political will of a people or a large section of a population. Nationalism is hence taken to be a largely dynamic principle capable of engendering hopes, emotions and action; it is a vehicle for

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<sup>37</sup>Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," Problems of Communism XXIII, no. 3 (May-June 1974): 10.

<sup>38</sup>As quoted in Peter Alter, Nationalism, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 8.



activating human beings and creating political solidarity amongst them for the purposes of achieving a common good.<sup>39</sup>

Anthony Smith in his study Nationalism in the Twentieth Century pursues a similar line but describes in more detail what the "common good" is. Smith defines nationalism as an "ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, cohesion, and individuality of a social group, some of whose members conceive it to be an actual or potential nation."<sup>40</sup> Furthermore:

The supreme goal for a nationalist is 'national identity' or 'nationhood', a visionary state of authentic self-expression and fraternity in which an historic community realizes its unique qualities. The search for nationhood is a long and arduous struggle for self-regeneration."<sup>41</sup>

Both these definitions are necessary to get at the key aspects of nationalism. First, nationalism is stronger than religion or social affiliations. Second, nationalism seeks autonomy and distinction for a self-defined unit defined as the nation. Third, it is capable of mobilizing large masses of people across social boundaries. Fourth, nationalism is often a struggle to renew a real or invented historic glory. Nationalism is not synonymous with secession or separatist sentiment because such sentiment is only a subset of nationalism.

Nationalism is an ideological chameleon capable of both good and evil; it is, as Alter describes it, "a repository of dangers and opportunities." (Emphasis added)<sup>42</sup> The nature of nationalism seems most

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>40</sup>Anthony D. S. Smith, Nationalism in the Twentieth Century (New York: The New York University Press, 1979), 87.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>42</sup>Alter, Nationalism, 4.

precisely to be determined by its goal. The historical example of Ukraine has certainly proven this to be the case.

## 2. State-Based Approach

In the case of Ukraine, nationalism has assumed many different faces. During the revolution of 1917 and during WWII the idea of nation which fueled the struggle for Ukrainian independence was closely tied with ethnicity in what is called ethno-nationalism, according to which the nation is seen as an ethnically pure political grouping. In the 1980s and 1990s the basis of independence was not focused on ethnicity but territory (i.e., the Ukrainian state). Ukraine now advocates citizenship for persons of any ethnic background living within the state boundaries. This gives the Ukrainian national movement unprecedented strength through a broader base of support.

In spite of this, Western and Soviet analysts alike color all nationalisms with the ethnic brush. For example, Aleksandr Tsipko, a specialist in the history of Marxism and the deputy Director for the Institute of Economic and Political Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences, in a July 1990 interview with Solchanyk revealed that

I see no real historical possibility whatsoever for the creation of a Ukrainian state in Europe at this juncture...[because] ethnically the population is tied together very strongly, its all mixed together - Crimea, the southern oblasts, and so on.<sup>43</sup>

Under Ukraine's concept of national self-determination this does not matter - all these ethnic groups comprise the Ukrainian state.

Because the focus of Ukrainian nationalism is territorial, this study proceeds on a state-based as opposed to a political system approach. This approach is appropriate in studying the non-Russians because the

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<sup>43</sup>Roman Solchanyk, Ukraine: From Chernobyl' to Sovereignty: A Collection of Interviews (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 135.

conflict between Russians and non-Russians is essentially over conflicting concepts of a State which, in its inherent desire to pursue stability or survival will seek to maximize its autonomy.<sup>44</sup> This state-based analysis is useful for two reasons. First, it aids in understanding why Moscow acts the way it does toward Ukrainian nationalists who threaten the stability and survival of the Soviet state. Second, it also explains why Ukrainian national opposition groups exist and why they act the way they do as they engage in state building and seek to gain increased autonomy for their "states-to-be."

Soviet scholar Frederick Starr, in his update to John Armstrong's 1968 article, "The Ethnic Scene in the Soviet Union: The View of the Dictatorship," highlights the importance of the state in the nationalities question in the Soviet Union. He makes two points in this vein. The first is that the notion of state has changed based on the viability of small states showing that "what counts in modern life is not size but intensity." His second point is that the events of 1989 and the emergence of independent states in Central Europe sent a strong message to the "Soviet inner empire" highlighting "their lack of full sovereignty and their international isolation from the international mainstream."<sup>45</sup> Starr's analysis supports Motyl's point that a state-based approach to the renegade republics will get at the important issues.

#### E. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The study of Ukraine was for many years on the margins of Soviet studies and only very recently has the field of Ukrainian studies taken on

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<sup>44</sup>Alexander Motyl develops this approach in Will the Non-Russians Rebel?, pp. x-xi.

<sup>45</sup>Frederick, S. Starr, "Soviet Nationalities in Crisis." Journal of Soviet Nationalities, 1, (Spring 1990), 78, 80.

any wide-spread appreciation.<sup>46</sup> With the notable exception of Armstrong, Conquest and Brzezinski, the Ukrainian question did not even feature in Western discussions of the Soviet nationalities question before the 1980s.<sup>47</sup> In the 1980s, with the advent of *glasnost*, interest in Ukraine began to increase primarily once academics realized, as Motyl did, that:

The major challenge to the Soviet state's ethnic stability...comes from the regional hegemonies of the non-Russians in general and the Ukrainians in particular.... Their indisputable economic, political, social, and demographic importance, as well as their frequent involvement in nationalist movements have combined to make...the USSR's second republic the key to the nationality question.<sup>48</sup>

From today's vantage point, Motyl was right and the West is now scrambling to make up for years of neglect.<sup>49</sup> However, quite understandably, there is little literature on independent Ukraine so soon after 1991. However, in order to understand contemporary Ukraine it is

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<sup>46</sup>See Marples' introduction in Ukraine Under Perestroika. Along with a general disinterest in Ukrainian studies, there have been some glaring omissions of Ukraine from scholarly works. For example Gleason's book published in 1990, Federalism and Nationalism: The Struggle for Republican Rights in the USSR failed to mention Ukraine at all.

<sup>47</sup>See Brzezinski, "Concluding Reflections," 160-1; Conquest, Russia After Khrushchev. See also Kenneth C. Farmer, Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980) which although a bit more recent, was also a significant work in this field.

<sup>48</sup>Motyl, Will the Non-Russians Rebel?, xi.

<sup>49</sup>Ironically the situation between the West and the Soviet Union is the opposite that which existed in 1917 between the West and Russia. Kennan describes the 1917 situation as one in which the successors to the Tsarist Empire were wholly consumed by their ideological struggle to bring socialism to Russia while the West was aflame with a nationalist frenzy over Germany's threat to democracy and the Western way of life. As a result "People just talked past each other" and individually the West and the USSR moved "earnestly forward in the pursuit of its particular goal . . . having no understanding or respect or tolerance for the issue that preoccupied the other." Today the tables are turned; the former inhabitants of the "prison of nations" are consumed with the nationalist flame while the West is concerned with the ideological outcome of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Today as then, people are talking past each other with little understanding of what the other's preoccupations are and little tolerance or respect for the dilemmas faced by each. George F. Kennan, Russia and the West: Under Lenin and Stalin (New York: New American Library, 1961), 12, 16.

necessary to first understand the history of Soviet Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>50</sup>

Along this path there are many notable contemporary studies. Recent studies of Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalism have been undertaken in a number of different ways. For example Krawchenko's book, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* examines Ukraine in the Soviet environment by arguing that national discontent in Ukraine is socio-economic. While his study may suffer from a certain rigidity that does not consider non-economic factors in the development of national consciousness, his approach is useful to understanding Ukrainian national consciousness. Krawchenko also edited another recent book *Ukraine After Shelest*, which is a valuable study of why Ukraine was considered the lynch-pin of the Union. In this book, Bohdan Nahaylo's chapter "Ukrainian Dissident and Opposition" goes a long way toward explaining the basis of Ukrainian susceptibility to secessionist desires. He develops the theme of "away from Moscow" and indicates that secession is a constant and inevitable characteristic of Ukrainian nationalism. David Marple's recent book, *Ukraine Under Perestroika* is an excellent counterpart to the above sources because he develops the role of ecological awareness and its ability to mobilize Ukrainians and how it emerge as a political force in the late 1980s. A good portion of the book is also devoted to the 1989 coal miner's strike in Ukraine which is invaluable in examining the roles of the CPU, Moscow, and the Ukrainian worker in building civil society.

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<sup>50</sup>Ernest Barker in his book on national character, cautions that in studying nations and national character, one must keep in mind that both nation and national character can change with time and that it is insufficient and even incorrect to judge the present nation by its past. However, there are, he adds, "profound and abiding permanencies in a nation's character; and the heaving of the surface must not blind us to the stillness of the depths." Further more, he also adds the reflection that "the weight of the past is heavier in the balance than that of the future." Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors of its Formation (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1927), 8, 9.

However, Marples fails to explain why Ukrainian elites sought and in fact supported economic independence from early 1991 forward.

While these books provide valuable insight into Ukrainian nationalism and national consciousness, they do not address, *per se*, the role of communist elites, their loyalty, and their motivations. For this Gerhard Simon's book, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union* is valuable. While not specifically focused on Ukraine, a large portion of the work uses Ukraine as a study in nationalism. Simon's treatment of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet federalism and nationality policy and their effect on the ruling elite in Ukraine is well done and applicable. Also applicable in this vein, is James Mace's book *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*. While his book is historical, it is a good foundation for understanding the Soviet Stalinist federal system which was only dismantled by Gorbachev in the late 1980s. More contemporary and theoretical approaches are undertaken in *Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities* edited by Alexander Motyl. The essay "The Emergence of Nationalist Policies in the USSR: A Comparison of Estonia and Ukraine" by Charles F. Furtado, Jr. and Michael Hecter provides a large part of the theoretical approach used in examining the evolution of the Communist elite in Ukraine in the last section of this paper. Also included in this collection is an essay, "Center-Periphery Relations in the Soviet Empire: Some interpretive Observations," by S. N. Eisenstadt which provides additional theory on the relationship between Ukraine and the Soviet Empire and the reasons why Ukraine's position in the empire was inevitably at risk. A final work useful in the theory of elite functions in the Soviet Empire is the somewhat dated *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability, and Change in the Soviet Union* by Seweryn Bialer.

While this current study invalidates some of Bialer's conclusions in this book, his structured approach and theoretical basis is none the less helpful.

#### F. THE PLAN

This study is based on both structural and political action arguments both of which are essential to understanding why Ukraine's Communists turned against the center in favor of national independence. This paper is divided into two major parts. The first provides the foundation and background for the second part which examines, in detail, the behavior of Ukraine's Communist elites under Gorbachev and their ultimate transformation into Ukrainian nationalists.

Part one consists of two chapters. Chapter I of this study focuses on the structural argument which is that Marxist-Leninist ideology forming the theoretical basis of the Soviet State was unclear and fundamentally contradictory in its approach to nationalism. As a result, the ensuing federal structure, and approach to the nationalities question adopted by Lenin and later modified by Stalin created a contradiction which was subsequently exploited by Ukrainian nationalists to legitimize nation-building, national autonomy and ultimately secession from the Union.

Chapter II begins the presentation of the political action argument by showing that Ukraine's Communist elites were fundamentally influenced by the structural contradiction mentioned above as well as by Ukrainian nationalism. As a result their behavior tended toward nationalism or more precisely, national communism. The first argument is that Ukrainian nationalism, based on a series of national myths, was fundamentally opposed to Communism and Soviet domination. The second is that the

loyalty of Ukraine's ruling elites to the center was undermined by these forces of nationalism which grew rapidly under Khrushchev as Ukrainian Communists to begin reviving the Ukrainian nation under the mantle of national communism. The third political action argument is that the center's response to "irregular behavior" among Ukraine's ruling elites was to suppress it without removing the influences which motivated its development making its re-emergence simply a matter of time.

The final three chapters comprising part two of this paper continue the political action argument by focusing on Ukrainian elites in the Gorbachev era and their swing away from the center and toward support for an independent Ukraine. The focus is on Ukraine's elites and the interplay between their desire to maintain power, Ukrainian national opposition to the Communist state, and reforms from the center. The argument is that Ukraine's Communists, unable to preserve the status quo first, attempted to retain power and control by any means possible. However, their position was continually undercut by the opposition's successes, the center's weakening of the Communist Party, and the elite's own deep-rooted motivation toward a policy of "away from Moscow" and a desire to preserve their own power. Ultimately, the shifting balance of power and conflicts within the party, weakened the Party structure to the extent that individuals chose the national, rather than Soviet, path to the future.



## 11. CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFLICT

The collision of Communism and Ukrainian nationalism divided the loyalty of Ukraine's Party elite. Communism, based on the ideas of Marx and Engels and modified by Lenin to fit the Russian situation, provided contradictory answers on how to deal with nationalism and as a result, the Soviet system also failed to adequately address the enduring "nationalities problem." This meant that, ideologically, national elites had "wiggle room" with which to pursue national goals and Marxist-Leninist theory to legitimize them.

The structure of the Soviet state also facilitated such behavior because Soviet federalism tactfully promised to respect national rights to self-government but actually prohibited the realization of this promise. In this sense, Lenin's federal solution to the problem of nationalism ended up exacerbating it.

This chapter examines the conflict between Communism and nationalism and the ideological and structural contradictions which contributed to the swaying of Ukraine's ruling elites to the cause of independence. The first argument is that the inability of Marxist-Leninist ideology to adequately address nationalism created room for the non-Russians to deviate from the internationalist path. The second is that Lenin's federal structure was fundamentally contradictory which not only raised expectations for self-government but also provided opportunities and structures for Communist elites to adopt a national Communist tint.

## A. THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MARXISM

The basis of the "nationalities problem" lies in Marxist theory which had an enormous influence on Lenin and the Soviet federal structure. Because of this, Marxism must be examined prior to undertaking a study of Soviet federalism.

### 1. A Rejection of Nationalism

All in all, Marx and Engels took a negative approach to nationalism. They argued that nationalism was counter productive because national loyalties excluded those based on class consciousness and led to exploitative relationships with the bourgeoisie. Nationalism was also equivalent to national oppression which was inconsistent with proletarianism. Marx and Engels also shunned nationalism because of its potential to break large political units into smaller ones which would inhibit the growth of socialism. Finally, they held that the progressive assimilation of peoples would eventually eliminate the concept of nationality.<sup>51</sup> Robert Conquest and Walker Connor<sup>52</sup> among others argue that in rejecting nationalism, Marxism created fundamental contradictions which ultimately led to conflict and change in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Marxism, which forms the ideological basis for Communism, is itself vague on issues of nationalism and the nationalities problem. Connor argues that this stemmed from the fact that Marxist ideology was so

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<sup>51</sup>MACE83, pp. 9-10.

<sup>52</sup>See CONN84, CONQ65, as well as SIMO91, and BREZ69.

opposed to nationalism that nationalism as an ideology was marginalized.<sup>53</sup> Marx and Engels regularly confused the terms nation and state as well as nationality in their writings indicating that the idea of nationalism received little thought in their predominantly economic treatises. In the course of their writings, when Marx and Engels did turn to the nationality question they approached it in three distinct ways which Connor identifies as "strains" of nationalism.

## 2. The Strains of Marxism

The first strain is what we recognize as "classical" marxism, that is, class consciousness and struggle are predominant and nationalism is irreconcilable with these ideas. In this strand of thought, there is little room for any serious considerations of nationalisms impact:

Nationalism, like religion, is a temporary phenomenon which, generated by the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, is one of the self-sustaining spiritual weapons against the proletariat. If too often, it penetrates the masses, it does so as a form of 'false consciousness' which disguises their true condition from them and breeds illusion that provides them with deceptive comfort in their benighted state. After the end of the conditions that have given rise to it--the class war-- nationalism, like religion, will evaporate together with other politically potent and historically conditioned illusions. It may acquire a certain independent influence of its own, but it cannot survive the destruction of its primary source, the capitalist system.<sup>54</sup>

The second strain of nationalism which Connor calls "strategic" Marxism, hinged on the very ambiguous concept of national self-determination<sup>55</sup> which entered into the writings of Marx and Engels following the 1848 revolutions in Europe. Marx and Engels applied the

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<sup>53</sup>CONN84, p. 6. The basic problem being that Marxism was focused on socio-economic class which divides society horizontally while nationalism's divisions are vertical.

<sup>54</sup>BERL91, p. 249.

<sup>55</sup>Connor points out the irony of Marx and Engels embrace of this term since it contradicted their ideas of internationalism with a strong national connotation. (CONN84, p. 11)

concept of self-determination unevenly to different situations favoring self-determinations for large groups and denying its applicability to small groups. This inconsistency leads Connor to conclude,

Quite evidently, the strategy of Marx and Engels called for ostensible commitment to the principle of self-determination in the abstract, while concomitantly reserving themselves in each and every case the decision as to whether a particular movement was to be supported or opposed.<sup>56</sup>

This strain still could be reconciled with the "classical" Marxists by arguing that eventually the need for national self-determination would wither away with the state.

The final strain is national Marxism which recognizes "the role of nations as the principle instrumentality of historical forces."<sup>57</sup> This strain was based on the tendency of both Marx and Engels to validate the idea of nations by using the ideas of national character and historic national roles in their writings. Engels' later writings clearly identified national traits which transcended and contradicted his conception of society divided only by class distinctions. Engels also went a step beyond strategic nationalism by identifying these national traits as enduring characteristics, not temporal aberrations to be swept away by economic advancement. Marx's writing was less prone to such conclusions but he undoubtedly shared Engels' view on nations and nationalism and even Marx's last writings reflected a perceptible weakening of the concept of internationalism in the face of national consciousness. It did not seem to bother either philosopher that national Marxism, as a strain, was wholly irreconcilable with the other strains.

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<sup>56</sup>CONN84, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup>CONN84, pp. 19-20.

Over all, however, Marx and Engels remained steadfast in one sense - the national question was of secondary importance to classes and the world revolution. As a result, despite growing awareness of nationalism late in their lives, they tended to underestimate the emotional and cultural attractions of nationalism and overestimated the potential of economics to unite disparate national groups. At the basic level, they overestimated the willingness of an individual to abandon his national identity to join a larger, more viable political unit.

Not surprisingly, these oversights and the different strains of nationalism within Marxism created ambiguities and inconsistencies for Lenin and those after him who attempted to put Marxism into practice. Russia's early Communists reflected this conflict between interpretations of the same ideology.<sup>58</sup> While the Bolsheviks adopted the strategic Marxist point of view (which increasingly tended to national bolshevism for the Russian nationality), the non-Russians leaned toward the third, nationalist strand.

## B. SOVIET FEDERALISM

When the tsarist trinity of orthodoxy, autocracy, and *narodnost* was supplanted by the Soviet version; ideology, dictatorship, and nationalism with the rise of Communism in 1917, the Soviets began to fashion a new empire based upon these pillars. In short, the Soviet trinity created a

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<sup>58</sup>For example, Luxemburg's theories on national self-determination were equal to national nihilism while, using the same ideological basis, Lenin protected (initially) the right to national self-determination. Or for example, the contrast between Stalin's authoritative approach to the nationalities question and Khrushchev's softer, humanistic approach using the same ideology was significant. (See MACEB3, pp.11-13 for a closer examination of Luxemburg's theories in contrast to Lenin's)

idiocratic partocracy,<sup>59</sup> which, among many other things, created a social base for nations which had not existed prior to 1917 and exacerbated non-Russian nationalism while at the same time suppressing it. In such a system, it was inevitable that, without drastic changes, the republics would spar with the center and attempt to gain autonomy which could not be granted without threatening the collapse of the state.

Soviet federalism was devised as a means for managing the relations between the peripheral, non-Russian "colonies" and the Empire's center in Moscow. While the basis of these center-periphery relations was established under the Tsarist Russian empire, the Russian revolution in 1917 fundamentally altered this relationship and Gorbachev's perestroika of the 1980's once again, redefined the roles of the periphery and the center.

This federalist system, which eventually became a federation of 15 republics, was, as declared by the 1918 constitution, "established on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics."<sup>60</sup> There were other political subdivisions within the republic such as the twenty Autonomous Regions and ten Autonomous Areas. The important point about these federal divisions is that they were ethnically defined units.<sup>61</sup> Each of these units was provided with a system of "government" which consisted of a parliamentary body known as

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<sup>59</sup>HALI92, p. 93.

<sup>60</sup>Quoted in CONN84, p. 218.

<sup>61</sup>It is interesting to note that 14 of the republics also bear the name of the predominate nationality which would make the federalist structure more appealing psychologically. (The 15th republic the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic when rendered in Russian does not indicate ethnicity to avoid the natural conclusion that this largest republic was harkening back to the Great Russians). Also of note, are the ethnic groups which did not receive any federal body of their own. For example, the jews.

the Supreme Soviet consisting of "elected" delegates. Although these national governing bodies were theoretically designed to provide each federal unit with the means of self-government, they were in reality merely symbolic and devoid of any power for the nationalities. This federalist system was national in form only.

### 1. System Stability

From the beginning, Lenin stressed that he was opposed to federations in principle but claimed that his Soviet federation was a tactical move and it was "a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations."<sup>62</sup> This tactical move was an enduring one primarily because, as Connor argues, it meshed very well with Lenin's idea of allowing Communism to appear national in form but remaining socialist in content.<sup>63</sup> To this end, the Soviet Union portrayed itself as a voluntary union of sovereign states even though it was one of the most centralized states in the world.<sup>64</sup>

Despite its appearance of being based on national rights and the strength of voluntary association, the Soviet federal system was inherently unstable. Eisenstadt, in his examination of center-periphery relationships in the Russian and Soviet empires, notes that the center-periphery relationships which existed under the tsarist empire continued into the Soviet empire but with a few important changes. Under the

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<sup>62</sup>CONN84, pp. 217-218.

<sup>63</sup>CONN84, p. 218. Stalin was initially opposed to what he called Lenin's "national liberalism" but when he came to power he maintained the existing federal system in large part. This indicates that the structure was reasonably effective.

<sup>64</sup>See articles 3, 15, and 18 of the Soviet Constitution for the promise of sovereignty and 4, 17, 22 for the right to secession. The last draft of this constitution in 1977 down graded these provisions slightly and removed the earlier right to form republican armies. (See MAT189 for presentation and discussion of the Soviet Constitution)

tsarist system, the center was strong and the periphery weak with no political engagement save a special segment of society which oversaw the implementation of central policies on the periphery. This was designed to maintain stability in governing a vast empire. After the 1917 revolution, the idea of a strong center was maintained but "the Soviet regime aimed at a very high extent of political activization of the periphery, but at the same time, a total control by the center of the channels and expressions of such activization."<sup>65</sup> As a result, under the Bolsheviks, the relations between the periphery and the center became increasingly unstable.

Instability was induced by the push for industrialization and political mobilization of the empire necessary to support and nurture the new state. This process was very powerful and it gave rise to differentiation and specialization among a formerly relatively undifferentiated body. It also gave rise to large bureaucratic organizations supervised by the political elite. This mobilization was directed along two paths which Eisenstadt describe as first, "the occupational and ecological frameworks generated by the processes of industrialization and urbanization and by the unprecedented expansion of the educational systems" and second, the Party and bureaucracy which exercised control over the system.<sup>66</sup> Tensions and competition for power and resources developed between these two arenas but due to the totalitarian nature of the system a pluralistic system did not result and autonomous centers of power, which could resolve this conflict, did not and could not develop. This does not mean that

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<sup>65</sup>EISE92, p. 216.

<sup>66</sup>EISE92, p. 216.



attempts to achieve autonomy on the periphery did not exist and indeed they did, but strong central control kept the system together.

In order to maintain stability in the Communist system, the center had to be strong and had to extend elements of this control to the periphery. In this endeavor the Party remained the source of all innovation and political support while the Soviet bureaucracy tended to the administration of the center's policies in the periphery. In order for the system to work, the interests of groups and movements on the periphery had to be interwoven with the bureaucracy and the Party. The more integrated these interests, the greater the stability.

## **2. The Price of Stability**

To integrate interests of the periphery, in the goal of creating a united federation, the ruling elite in the Soviet system had to encourage and direct political, social, and economic change in the periphery while at the same time minimizing the autonomous political expressions of various social groups and their political reaction to the actions of the center. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union served as the cornerstone for this process and in an effort to develop loyalty on the periphery, the Communist Party recruited members of the periphery to participate in the central organs of bureaucracy and Party. Certain enticements, namely power, were offered to the non-Russian nationalities to encourage their participation in the Soviet system.

The fact that Soviet society was very ethnically diverse, and that one of the ascriptive entitlements offered to the periphery was the right to national self-determination meant that tensions along national lines were sure to develop. However, these tensions were contained by

strong central pressure exerted through the Party and bureaucracy structures on the periphery. This strict control of the periphery was made less offensive by the selection of ethnic (national) elites to serve along side those sent from the center. But these national elites were different than the Russians - they owed allegiance both to their nationality and the Party. Thus the system was build on a shaky alliance between the non-Russian Party elites and the CPSU. This alliance, argues Gerhard Simon, is the crucial link between the non-Russians and the Russians and "the integration of the multinational empire increasingly depends upon the loyalty of non-Russian elites."<sup>67</sup>

### C. NATIONALITIES POLICY

At this point, it is necessary to examine in detail the relationship between the Russian center and the non-Russian periphery. This relationship was manifested in what is called the "nationalities policy."

In the broad perspective, the Soviet nationalities policy is a means of controlling the interaction of dissenters and loyalists. As the political-sociologist, Tarrow describes it,

States set the boundaries of this interaction by defining the boundaries of the permissible and responding to the early salvos by moving the line in one direction or another; by facilitating one group of insurgents and repressing another; and sometimes by co-opting protesters, sometimes preempting their demands, and - more rarely - giving up the ghost.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>SIMON91, p. 265. This loyalty became critical after Stalin's death when the process which he's development of the non-Russian peoples had begun, continued even past his decision to halt it. Stalin feared that the USSR might begin to experience what he saw in other parts of the world -- decolonization. Simon argues that the USSR is indeed experiencing an "inconspicuous but probably irreversible decolonization." He argues quite perceptively that, although this process differs from other parts of the world it is still a turning point in the nationalities question.

<sup>68</sup>TARR91, p. 17.

In the USSR the set of rules which define the boundary of permissiveness for the national groups was very dynamic. One cannot speak of a single, monolithic nationalities policy because in fact there have been several; some repressive, some liberal, and most ineffective or worst.

A great deal of the Communist rhetoric about the nationalities problem has shown itself, as Professor Dmytryshyn argues in his study of Soviet nationalities policy toward Ukraine, to be "meaningless doubletalk, concealed in carefully chosen phraseology and intended to confuse, not clarify, and to arrest, but never solve the problem."<sup>69</sup> Even more bluntly, although the aims of Moscow's nationality policy have varied from time to time, they have consistently aimed not to simply submerge the interests of the minorities for the betterment of the union as a whole but, in accordance to the first and second strands of Marxist ideology, to eventually suppress them all together.

#### 1. The Basic Problem

Soviet policy toward the nationalities was influenced by two major factors outlined by Professor Dmytryshyn. The first is the historic Russian (as opposed to Soviet) predilection to view the "empire" as monolithic. Historically Russians have viewed the struggling nationalities as an annoyance but hardly something significant enough to merit their concern which was best applied toward more noble endeavors. As Dmytryshyn sums up the Russian attitude toward the nationalities; "their attitude toward the national problem was if not outright hostile at least negative."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>DMYT56, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup>DMYT56, p. 12.

The second factor is that of socialist principles which sought the amalgamation of small nations and peoples into a global community in the interest of human progress. Nationalism was evil and threatening to the socialists who, although not above using nationalism to their own ends, viewed it negatively and tried to ignore it. As a result, Dmytryshyn argues, legitimate national demands voiced in the latter part of the 19th century such as the right to use native languages and national self rule were neglected by the Russians.<sup>71</sup> This inevitably led to increasing demands which played a role in the collapse of the Tsarist government, installment of the Communists and even the demise of the Communists.

As a result of this dangerous mix of Marxist short-sightedness, strong central control, and Russian nationalism, the Soviet Union built a federal system on the basis of a contradictory nationalities policy. On one hand, the center and its policy granted very little autonomy to the peripheral nationalities while, on the other hand, the center provided these same groups with all the symbolic manifestations (institutions and administrative structures) of self-government.

## 2. The Development of Nationalities Policy

The basis for Soviet nationalities policy was Lenin's attempt to win the loyalty of the nationalities by concessions to strategic Marxism. His goal was to win the civil war and secure his power over the new socialist republic and in the process, Soviet nationality policy developed with two major goals as outlined by Simon. First, the object of supporting the non-Russian nationalities was to establish and stabilize

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<sup>71</sup>DMYT56, p. 12.

the Party's rule. Second, the long term goal of nation-building was to construct a completely unified state with no differentiation between peoples.

The problem was how to do construct such a state? First, one had to remove the nationality-based antagonisms which separated people. Since Lenin's perception of the national question was colored by the Marxist interpretation of nationalism as "the out growth of past discrimination and oppression"<sup>72</sup>, he was led to conclude that the way to rid society of these evils was to introduce a period of "national equality." This policy, called the "flourishing of the nations" advocated state-sponsored nurturing of the more obvious manifestations of a nation's unique identity such as language, dress, and the like. This period of lessened hostilities would allow previous nations, even former enemies, to gradually complete a process of *sliianie*, "coming together" or rapprochement. The end goal of this process was the creation of a single political, social, and economic entity. According to Marxism, this process stressed absolute equality, was strictly voluntary, and was not design to force assimilation with the dominant nationality however, under Leninism these three ground rules were abandoned.

On this basis, the 10th Party Congress in March 1921 adopted a resolution on the nationalities question which affirmed Stalin's wish that the regional working masses become active in every aspect of the administration of their region. Two years later, in April 1923 the 12th Party Congress added to this policy the assertion that the nationalities problem

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<sup>72</sup>CONN84, p. 210.

would be solved only when they achieved political, economic, and social equality with the more advanced center.

a. *From Lenin to Stalin*

Enigmatically, Lenin was seeking homogeneity of the non-Russians by encouraging (and even creating, if needed) cultural diversity and uniqueness in a process of *rastsvet*, or the development and "flourishing" of nations. This process of "flourishing" was to consist of both form and content. Form, overt manifestations of nation uniqueness such as language, would be employed to make the idea of sovietization more palatable to the outlying regions. Content, on the other hand, was the core of the process and it was the message put out by the Party. In 1925 Stalin abbreviated two track concept in the phrase "national in form, socialist in content."

The Soviet state thus embarked on a program of nation-building for the nationalities. The possibility that this process of national flourishing might lead away from merging toward increased national consciousness and eventually the breaking apart of nations was ignored. This dialectical possibility was to be prevented by the Party's control of the state which would command all forms of political socialization. Through agitation and propaganda the intellectual content of communication would be controlled and a new anti-nationalist education would take place to ensure the content would remain thoroughly socialist. However, by the late 1920's it was clear that this process was beginning to create ideological as well as practical contradictions.

The Party was engaged in a "battle on two fronts," as they struggled to allow room for nation-building while at the same time tried

to limit the resultant demands for increased national autonomy. As a result, *rastvet*, was abandoned by the mid-1930s in favor of assimilation.<sup>73</sup> One of the first manifestations of this the 1929 All-Union factory-combine project by which republican control over industries on their territory was transferred to the center. Next, Party institutions, such as the Council of nationalities which fought for the interest of the non-russians, were dissolved in 1930 and control of industrial management was centralized.<sup>74</sup> The 1933-34 purge was a more visible manifestation of this centralizing trend as its result was to reduce the participation level of nationals in their regional Party organizations.<sup>75</sup> This "nationalization of the Party and state apparatus" was aimed at decreasing the role of the non-Russians and destroying the institutions which had been constructed in the decades prior with the intent of increasing their political participation and national autonomy.<sup>76</sup>

Although Stalin's version of nationality policy took a different turn in the 1930's and sought to limit national aspirations in favor of assimilation into the grand, centralized, uniform state, the contradiction between empowerment and control - inspired by ideology, empowered in the federal structure, and implemented in the nationalities

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<sup>73</sup>It is arguable that the policy of *korenizatsiia* was never given a true test before it was abandoned. Perhaps, this was because Stalin had disagreed with Lenin on the path to World Communism and favored reduced national autonomy and increased assimilation. In any event, by the end of the 1930s it was clear that the future was to be invested in a centralized state with no national differentiation.

<sup>74</sup>SIM091, pp. 143-145.

<sup>75</sup>Simon argues that this was accomplished indirectly (although not unintentionally) by concentrating the purge on rural Party organizations where the percentage of non-russians was greater, and by requiring new members to be from the technical intelligentsia among which the non-russians were poorly represented. (SIM091, p. 31)

<sup>76</sup>SIM091, p. 30, 36.

policy continued. For example, because efforts to assimilate the non-Russians were increased during the 1930s via this process of nationalization, there appeared an unintended side effect. Namely, that "the integration of non-Russian peoples into Soviet society's upper echelons, professions, and organizations helped the nations develop independent national identities."<sup>77</sup>

**b. Post-WWII Nationalities Policy**

Stalin's supposed resolution of the nationalities problem began to unravel in the Post-WWII era when his death in 1953 signaled the transition from a very repressive policy to more lenient but inconsistent ones under Khrushchev. Krawchenko identifies four major themes in the Post-WWII policies which were applied as seen fit at various times. Each theme seeks a modus operandi between non-Russian nations and the Russian dominated Union; *rastsvet*, the development and blooming of nations; *sblizhenie*, the unification of nations under one Soviet economic, cultural, and political umbrella; *sliianie*, the fusion of all nationalities into one; and finally the triumphant concept of the *Sovetskii narod*, or a new, undifferentiated Soviet People. Khrushchev stressed *sliianie* sometimes simultaneously with *rastsvet* while Brezhnev stressed the concept of *sovetskii narod* and a tighter union of nations.<sup>78</sup>

Under Brezhnev, assimilation was not a political priority.<sup>79</sup> The effort was focused on establishing Russians in positions of control in the periphery and in this way maintaining loyalty to the

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<sup>77</sup>SIM091, p. 41.

<sup>78</sup>KRAW85, pp. 186-187.

<sup>79</sup>SIM091, p. 322.



center. The focus of this policy became language. As Simon argues, Brezhnev seems to have figured that he could not prevent the participation of non-Russians but that he could exact a price from them by making them fluent in Russian as a prerequisite for political participation.<sup>80</sup> The Russian language was now more than a *lingua franca*, it "was to be the chief forger of a common supra-national identity, one of the essential hallmarks of the Soviet People."<sup>81</sup> Ukraine and Byelorussia were singled out during this period for more intensive linguistic assimilation than the other republics. Language policy was also responsible for a great deal of protest from the republican literary elites which was to become not only louder but more successful in the 1980s as Gorbachev began to reform the Soviet state.

In summary, the Marxist base of the Soviet State complicated the federal structure which Lenin built (and Stalin modified) because of its inherent inability to deal with the problem of nationalism. Lenin's successors inherited an ideology which failed to provide solutions to the Soviet's greatest dilemma - the nationalities and nationalism. In spite of this, the centralized state was established and the non-Russians have been, more or less, kept within the bounds established by Stalin's nationality policy. However, behind the facade of Soviet federalism, the construction of national institutions and administrative systems in an effort to appease the non-Russians merely whetted their appetite. Raised expectations were continually challenging the limits of autonomy.

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<sup>80</sup>SIM091, p. 323.

<sup>81</sup>Cited in SIM091, p. 323, ftn 193.

The solution to the nationalities question - assimilation, has not proceeded well in most cases. In fact, the whole process actually stimulated an increase of national consciousness among the non-Russians and increased the centrifugal forces on the periphery. The brief sketch of the application of the federal system to Ukraine will illustrate this point.

#### **D. THE EXAMPLE OF UKRAINE**

In practice, Slavic Ukraine, along with Byelorussia was considered as one of the core nationalities in the Soviet Union and Ukraine was held particularly closely to Russia and targeted for immediate assimilation because of Ukraine's common history, culture and great economic value. However, when the Bolsheviks attempted to extend their power into Ukraine in 1917, they met with great resistance not only because Ukraine was reluctant to fall under another Russian dictator, but because Bolshevik socialism collided directly with Ukrainian socialism. This conflict formed the basis of Ukrainian-Russian tensions and shaped the later application of nationalities policy to Ukraine.

##### **1. Ukrainian Socialism**

Directly confronting Marxist ideology, whether under Lenin or Stalin, was Ukrainian socialism. This ideology was based on the theories of Mykhailo Drahomanov who in the 1870s developed a political theory based on Ukraine's particular circumstances. Ukraine was unique in terms of applying Marxist ideology to Ukrainian society because it had no bourgeois to speak of. The historic preserve of national revival, the petty

bourgeoisie<sup>82</sup> was not Ukrainian, and the native leadership abdicated their responsibility under the pressure of russification to the intelligentsia which was not prepared for the responsibility.<sup>83</sup> Thus the weight of Ukrainian nation-building rested on the peasants.<sup>84</sup>

Ukraine was in the awkward position prior to the revolution of 1917 because it has lost its representation in the upper classes which were overwhelmingly non-Ukrainian. So in order for Ukraine's largely, non-Ukrainian elites to rally the lower social stratum, they appealed to the Ukrainian peasantry with a mixture of socialism and nationalism. Although this mixture lacked the power to attain and maintain political sovereignty, it was sufficient, as Mace says, "to effectively block the establishment of any regime that did not take into account their aspirations for national liberation."<sup>85</sup>

In fact, during the struggle between Ukrainians and the Bolsheviks in 1917, a notable Ukrainian socialist warned Lenin that an empty promise of self-determination was of no interest to Ukraine and that Ukrainians were seeking national self-determination as well as socialism and were ready to fight for self-government.<sup>86</sup> And fight they did, but as time progressed the Ukrainian government forestalled meeting the

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<sup>82</sup>Miroslav Hroch, *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas*, as cited in John-Paul Himka, "Voluntary Artisan Association and the Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, No. 2, 1978, pp. 235-6.

<sup>83</sup>Krawchenko, p. 43.

<sup>84</sup>Drahomanov, seeking to exploit this fact, was the first to try to combine agriculturally based socialism with Ukrainian nationalism. Drahomanov's idea was that society would be based on a number of self-governing, independent peasant communities which would cooperate when needed. His ideas of free communities within a federation of socialist nations, argues Mace, was basically anarchic and based more on Proudhon and Bakunin than Marx. (MACE83, p. 15 (see ref. to Drahomanov's article)

<sup>85</sup>MACE83, p. 9.

<sup>86</sup>MACE83, p. 16. FTW32.

as time progressed the Ukrainian government forestalled meeting the demands of their rural constituency for land reform and lost support to the Bolsheviks who were willing to promise land in return for loyalty to Bolshevik socialism.

## 2. A Shaping of Ukrainian Nationality Policy

Lenin's early tactical realization was that in Ukraine, the Bolshevik's fate was to be determined by the Ukrainian peasants and thus concessions to their national aspirations had to be made. But on the other hand, such aspirations had to be controlled. Lenin's "national liberalism" offered such concessions and promised a hands-off policy (*korenizatsiia*) which would allow the non-Russians to develop their own culture and establish their national roots. This philosophy was manifested in the policy of ukrainianization which came into full bloom after the 12th Party Congress in an attempt to create stability by placing Ukrainians in Party positions in the Ukrainian SSR. The intent was to gain control over Ukraine which meant providing concessions to the Ukrainian countryside and the countryside was demanding a government which "would act Ukrainian and foster Ukrainian culture."<sup>87</sup>

Ukraine, in particular, benefitted from *korenizatsiia* because the Ukrainian Party elite took a special interest in nation-building and under their interpretation of the 10th Party Congress resolution as a signal to begin de-russification, Ukraine began to reclaim their language, culture, and industry.<sup>88</sup> However, Ukrainian eagerness was criticized by Stalin

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<sup>87</sup>MACE83, p.303.

<sup>88</sup>SIMO91, p. 30.

who accused the Ukrainians of ignoring the idea of a "uniform federal state" in favor of a confederation.<sup>89</sup>

Clearly under *korenizatsiia* the Bolsheviks got more than they expected or wanted. Within three years after the policy was put into effect the influential Ukrainian Communist Shumskyi was demanding the removal of Stalin's designee sent to Ukraine to oversee indiginization. Another influential Ukrainian Communist Party member, Khvylovyi, demanded a rejection of Russian culture and demanded that Ukraine look westward for its influences. Others in Ukraine protested that Russia was treating Ukraine as a colony and exploiting her.

Skrypnyk was dispatched to Kiev to suppress these voices and he did so but over time came to establish himself as a ruler of an independent country and with the ideological support of Ukrainianization, created an explosion of Ukrainian nation-building. This burst of nation-building was abruptly checked after 1929 when Ukrainian factories were transferred to central control and the All-Ukrainian bank was absorbed by the All-Union bank. Skrypnyk was defeated in 1933 after a prolonged struggle and history began to be rewritten to justify Russian centralism, chauvinism and imperialism.<sup>90</sup> As the idea of a Ukrainian nationality was forced into the background from whence it had been, Soviet nationalities policy hardened into a Russo-centric program of assimilation. However, the basic contradictions of ideology and federalism always lay not too far beneath the placid surface of center-periphery relations.

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<sup>89</sup>SIMO91, p. 141.

<sup>90</sup>WACE83, pp. 305-6.

### 3. The Turn to Assimilation

Of special importance in the history of the nationalities question in Ukraine is the use of collectivization as a means to speed assimilation of the Ukrainians by deliberately reducing the population by starvation. Of the means used to homogenize society and strengthen the power of the centralized state, collectivization was one of the more brutal and grandiose schemes. As Simon describes the goals of collectivization;

The objective was to continue centralizing the economy and state administration as a counter measure to regionalization and personal initiative in the peripheries. In this respect the objectives of collectivization contradicted the policy of nation-building from the very beginning.<sup>91</sup>

Of all the republics, Ukraine suffered particularly in this attack on nation-building primarily because the segment of society most effected by collectivization, the peasants, were predominantly Ukrainian.<sup>92</sup> There is also significant evidence that Ukraine was singled out because Stalin went to his grave doubting Ukraine's loyalty to the center.<sup>93</sup> As Nahaylo and Swoboda describe it, "Stalin saw potential disloyalty in all Ukrainian Communists as well as the Ukrainian masses."<sup>94</sup> His distrust stemmed from the rural resistance to collectivization of the early 1930s and the vigor with which the Ukrainian Party embraced de-russification. Stalin's "Ukrainian problem" was

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<sup>91</sup>SIMO91, p. 109.

<sup>92</sup>For the argument over the fine point that the forced starvation of Ukrainians during collectivization in the 1930s was connected with the nationalities issue and that Ukraine was thus singled out see CONQ86.

<sup>93</sup>SIMO91, p. 85.

<sup>94</sup>NAHA89, p. 68.

exacerbated by the 1932 famine, decreased industrial production, and the increasing nationalism of the Ukrainian Party elite. He vented his rage against Ukrainians in his final, 1933 purge to cleanse the Ukrainian party and to reinstate central control. Stalin was successful in this endeavor and he temporarily cowed Ukraine and altered the federal structure to reduce national autonomy.

A comparison of the constitutions of 1923-24 and 1936 confirm the extent to which Stalin's "vision" was fulfilled. Centralism increased and autonomy of the periphery decreased and the "constitutional myth" was complete.<sup>95</sup>

#### 4. The Foundation is Laid

The unraveling of Stalin's solution to the nationalities problem began immediately following his death in the thaw introduced by Khrushchev. Some scholars, such as Soviet dissident analyst, Alexeyeva, argue that Khrushchev's liberalizing thaw was spawned by his humanist interpretation of Marx;

along with others, he experienced a natural human urge to tear himself away from the ghostly, ahistorical world created by the official myth-makers and to enter the real world.<sup>96</sup>

Others such as Armstrong and Krawchenko argue that his policies stemmed from a strategic goal of immediately assimilating the Ukrainians and Byelorussians as "younger brothers" in a Eastern Slavic alliance which would form the core of the Soviet Union.<sup>97</sup> If so, this was not a new goal, since Russification had been a key aspect of nationality policy even

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<sup>95</sup>SIMO91, p. 147.

<sup>96</sup>ALEX85, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup>ARMS90B, pp. 34-36, KRAW85, p. 187.

in the Tsarist Empire.<sup>98</sup> Regardless of his motivation, Khrushchev's leadership, based on the unsteady foundation built by Lenin and Stalin, widened the contradictions in the Soviet system increasing the opportunities for deviation from the strict Communist path.

Although, the impact of the systems's contradictions are discussed more fully in the following chapters, it is necessary to mention here that the tensions between Communism and nationalism and the contradictions of the system continued into the 1980s. National opposition groups began to appear in Ukraine in the 1960s and 1970s and the new liberalism which pervaded the Union gave rise to Petro Shelest and his overtly national Party apparatus. However, he and his regime met their ends in 1972-73 when the CPU was heavily purged by Shcherbytsky who managed to keep the lid on Ukrainian nationalistic tendencies until September of 1989. The very severe repression of nationalism under Shcherbytsky seems to indicate that after Shelest, Moscow began to fear either the resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism or the consequences of such a resurgence. More than ever, it seemed Ukraine was a key piece of the Union. Ukraine was important to the Union because of its economic input into a declining Soviet economy and its contribution to offsetting the decreasing percentage of Slavs in the Soviet Union.

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<sup>98</sup>In fact, even before the end of WWII, in the hey-day of national rebirth, the impact of assimilation was already apparent. Milovan Djilas, a former founder of Communist Yugoslavia, in writing of his experiences in the USSR during the Winter of 1944-45 made this point clear. He wrote of Ukraine,

Though Khrushchev [then Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party and Premier of the government] left the impression of strength, self-confidence, and realism, and Kiev one of conscious and cultivated beauty, the Ukraine has remained associated in my memory with a loss of personality, with weariness and hopelessness. (DJIL62, p. 124)



As the example of Ukraine shows, Soviet federalism created a monster and the harder Moscow tried to control it the more dangerous it became. The basic premise of the Soviet federal system, namely that the non-Russians would be absorbed into a unified, homogeneous mass, had failed.<sup>99</sup>

## E. CONCLUSION

In Ukraine, as else where in the Union, national elites were able to successfully legitimize their nationalist agendas using Marxist ideology and the Soviet federal structure. It was relatively easy to legitimize nationalist goals on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The theory is sufficiently vague to allow a wide interpretation on the issue of nationalism and in the crucible of the Soviet state, the ideologies of nationalism and socialism merged and in the Ukrainian case, as in others, the differences between nationalism and socialism were narrowed to such an extent that National Communists such as Shelest could come to power.

The constitutional-legal structure of the Soviet state was also conducive to the growth of national goals. Under the Soviet governmental system, the republics were "given" the right to secession in theory only however, the organs of government created to fill out the myth of self-government did exist and were used, albeit not to their fullest extent, by the national elites.<sup>100</sup> These administrative-governmental structures

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<sup>99</sup>For example, as Richard Pipes pointed out in 1977 the Balts and Ukrainians could not be assimilated by the Russians; "The chances of that are nil because the demarcation is so sharp now, not only culturally but also territorially." (Richard Pipes, "Reflections of a Nationality Expert," p. 10, in LIND77)

<sup>100</sup>As Rakowska-Harmstone notes, the tendency to legitimize national claims via ideology is more common simply because there is more freedom to act in the sphere of ideology than there is in the strictly limited federal structure. (RAK079, p. 180)

raised elite expectations only to later frustrate them when they realized what appeared to be means self-government was really little more than manipulation by the center.

Both Soviet ideology and federal structure by creating room for deviations from the internationalist path and providing opportunities to fall into the national communist camp, greatly jeopardized national elite loyalty to Moscow. But behind this structural argument lies the force which motivated Ukraine's national elites to exploit the contradictions of Marxist ideology and weaknesses of the Soviet state. This force was Ukrainian nationalism and its influence on elite loyalty is examined in the following chapter.

### III. SOCIETY AND THE COMMUNIST ELITES IN UKRAINE

Opportunities presented by the contradictions of Marxism, the Soviet federal structure and Soviet nationalities policy exacerbated but did not create the feeling among Ukrainians that he or she is first a Ukrainian and then a Soviet. This feeling of national identity was the motor force behind Russian-Ukrainian and later Soviet-Ukrainian conflict. It provided the motivation to exploit the contradictions of the system and it was the force which time and again turned Ukrainian elite loyalty away from Moscow.

The issues of political environment and their impact on Ukrainian elite reliability are examined in the following two chapters. This chapter sets the stage by exploring the issue of Ukrainian nationalism and how it had a tendency to turn Ukraine's national elites away from the center and how it developed into political opposition. The following chapter will examine the issue of loyalty to Moscow in depth and show how it led to the rapid disengagement of Ukraine from the Union in 1991.

The first step toward understanding Ukrainian nationalism is to define what national consciousness is and then to trace its development in Ukraine, concluding with an assessment of the impact national consciousness had on Ukrainian's communist leaders. The focus of this chapter is national consciousness rather than nationalism and although these two concepts are very closely related, national consciousness is taken to be a mental conception of nationalist actions.

On this premise the chapter is broken into two sections with the first concentrating on the theory of national consciousness while in the second section Ukraine is used as an illustration of the development of national consciousness.

#### A. PRECURSOR TO NATIONALISM - NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Although there are many theories of nationalism, the approach used here is that used by Connor, Hayes, Emerson and others<sup>101</sup> who view nationalism as national consciousness - a people's widely held conception of themselves as a nation. Without national consciousness there can be no nationalism but national consciousness can exist without having fully manifested itself as nationalism. That is, national consciousness lies in the realm of ideas while nationalism is a physical manifestation of consciousness-an action. It is this mental attitude, not necessarily manifested in physical action, which permeated Ukraine's political elites and proved to be the unknown factor in their surprising turn toward support of the Ukrainian opposition forces. For this reason, we must examine this tertiary concept before proceeding further.

What is national consciousness and how does it develop? Ernest Barker defines national consciousness along the following lines:

The self-consciousness of nations is a product of the nineteenth century. This is a matter of the first importance. Nations were already there; they had indeed been there for centuries. But it is not the things which are simply "there" that matter in human life. What really and finally matters is the thing which is apprehended as an idea, and, as an idea, is vested with emotion until it becomes a cause and a spring of action. In the world of action apprehended

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<sup>101</sup>See CONN72, Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York, 1926), and Emerson's From Empire to Nation.

ideas are alone electrical; and a nation must be an idea as well as a fact before it can become a dynamic force.<sup>102</sup>

In short, the idea or national consciousness is what Connor calls a "sense of vital uniqueness."<sup>103</sup> People develop feelings of uniqueness by comparing themselves with others and detecting differences in language, history, ideals, aspirations, memories and the like. The development of these feelings of uniqueness is a complex process on which Karl Deutsch's theories can shed some light.

### 1. Beyond National Consciousness

Deutsch's essay, "The Growth of Nations," postulated that there were eight "uniformities" which have been found in the growth of nations. The first five center on his theory of mobilization and modernization as the key to nationalism which may have limited utility.<sup>104</sup> However, the last three deal with the issue of awareness and how nationalism develops into a mass movement. Deutsch uses a system which begins with the growth of individual self-awareness which he describes as "awareness of one's predispositions to join a particular group united by language and communications habits." The second step is "the awakening of *ethnic awareness* and acceptance of *national symbols*, intentional or unintentional." The final step is what Deutsch calls the "merging of ethnic awareness with attempts at political compulsion."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors in its Formation, (London, 1927), p. 173, as cited in Connor "The Politics of Ethnonationalism," p. 3.

<sup>103</sup>CONN72, p. 338.

<sup>104</sup>See David L. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 99-105 and Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" pp. 321-329 for evaluations of the Deutsch-style modernization theories.

<sup>105</sup>Karl W. Deutsch, Tides Among Nations, (New York: The Free Press, 1979), p. 17.

Once this movement toward group or national awareness has begun, Deutsch says, "there appear also the deliberate pioneers and leaders of national awakening." This group is composed of grammarians and purifiers of the language, historians, and poets and writers. Simultaneously there arise the "first organizers." The first of these groups are usually literary and language societies which are followed by other benevolent societies and fraternal organizations for mutual support. The appearance of national symbols also occurs in these final stages of national awareness.<sup>106</sup>

Bohdan Krawchenko building on the logic of Karl Deutsch goes beyond the mere linking of an idea with a political vehicle to get at the mechanics of managing national consciousness.

The transition from a people to a nationality (or, in other words, the acquisition of a national consciousness or national identity) is a further step in the growth of a people's solidarity. This occurs when the cultural distinctiveness becomes an important factor in a people's social, economic and political demands. At this stage of development a nationality must acquire a measure of effective control over the behavior of its members' in order to strength and elaborate the alignments that 'make up the social fabric of nationality'.<sup>107</sup>

Krawchenko goes on to describe this control as being set up through informal or formal social, or most effectively, political, organizations. This control becomes manifested in the ability to compel members of the nation which completes the process;

once a nationality has added this power to compel to its earlier cohesiveness and attachment to group symbols, it often considers itself a nation and is recognized as such by others, even though it may not yet control a state of its own."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>DEUT79, p. 29.

<sup>107</sup>As cited in Bohdan Krawchenko, Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1985), p. xvii.

<sup>108</sup>KRAW85, pp. xvii-xviii.

## 2. The Key Players

Deutsch identifies institutions as the key to transforming the idea of nation into a political force. He attributes individual awareness primarily as a result of "personal psychology" but group awareness as "a matter of social institutions." Institutions are responsible for invoking and disseminating national symbols which begin a "stream of memories" which serve to create national awareness. Once begun, this process may well be irreversible even if the institutions have long since disappeared.<sup>109</sup>

Krawchenko goes one step further by specifically identifying the key actors in this transformation process. The key roles are played by national elites and "leading social groups who elaborate and politicize objective cultural markers."<sup>110</sup> If they are to be successful, however, they must demand and receive "the corporate recognition of the group as a whole."<sup>111</sup> To sum up Krawchenko's theory;

The active intervention of indigenous elites, the existence of a mobilized population and of infrastructures of national life tolerated by the central state are, in our view, among the most important elements facilitating the emergence of a national consciousness.<sup>112</sup>

The following section examines these ideas about national consciousness in the Ukrainian context in two ways. First we explore those aspects of Ukrainian history which establish the feeling of uniqueness or which help form national consciousness. Second, in summarizing the development of the Ukrainian nation, we can illustrate the

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<sup>109</sup>DEUT79, p. 27.

<sup>110</sup>KRAW85, p. 29.

<sup>111</sup>KRAW85, p. xviii.

<sup>112</sup>KRAW85, p. xix.

development of national consciousness in Ukraine and its impact on the national elites.

## **B. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN UKRAINE**

Ukrainian national consciousness is a complex phenomenon which has been a fundamental influence on the history of Ukraine especially under Communism. In order to provide the basic framework of this consciousness we will focus on its basic constructs, that is, on the themes of the national myth and a sketch of the physical development of national consciousness and nationalism in Ukraine in the 20th century.

### **1. A National Myth**

It is often the self-perception of a people which determines the paths they choose to follow and it is just as often that this self-perception is ignored by outside observers attempting to determine why a people act as they do at important historical crossroads. This self-perception is embodied in the "national myth" which is an historically based history of the people which is carried by each individual and forms a common understanding and direction among all members of the nation. This myth sets the fundamental beliefs, values, and standards of behavior which are expected of all members of the nation and allows the nation to be self-defined which, as Connor emphasizes is an essential step in nation-building.<sup>113</sup> By the use of the word "myth" we do not necessarily imply fiction but rather seek to illustrate the passion and pervasiveness of these ideas.

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<sup>113</sup>Connor73, p. 3.



The Ukrainian national myth has remained a continuous thread in Ukrainian national consciousness since a definable nationalism began in the 19th century. The accuracy of the myth may be debatable but this is not important. Real or not, this is what Ukrainians believe has been and still is the basis of their claim to nationhood and ultimately statehood. As a result, the contemporary struggle for Ukrainian independence cannot be understood without at least a brief look at Ukraine's national myth. This myth contains dominant themes of which we shall examine four.

*a. Historic Nation*

The first theme in the Ukrainian national myth attempts to establish a legitimate historical basis for the Ukrainian nation. It does so by claiming that modern Ukraine descended from the medieval Rus' who were established in the Kiev area in the 9th century. To Ukrainians, this distinct historical origin sets them apart from Russians and validates their claim to nationhood. However, Russian and the majority of western historians adhere to the view that the modern Russian nation and state was also derived from Rus' which undermines Ukrainian claims to distinctive national origins and legitimate Russian claims to Ukrainian territory.

Ivan Rudnytsky, a prominent scholar of Ukrainian history, argues that while Ukraine's exclusive claims on Rus' ancestry are without a doubt exaggerated and that Russians and Byelorussians legitimately share this ancestry there is no reason why this should deny Ukrainians a historical basis for their nation. Medieval Rus' was, he points out, geographically centered in what we now know as Ukraine and

by its political institutions, social structure, and cultural make-up the Kievian state is closer to the mainstream of the Ukrainian rather than the Russian historical tradition.<sup>114</sup>

Rudnytsky's balanced view does not deny Ukrainian national distinctiveness and in fact supports long-held nationalist views such as that espoused by the Ukrainian publicist, Mykola Kostomarov (1817-85) that Russia and Ukraine are fundamentally different because Ukraine upholds the basic concepts of individualism and federalism while Russia stresses collectivism and centralism.<sup>115</sup>

#### *b. Struggle Against Oppression*

The second theme in the national myth provides a proud tradition of struggle counterpoised with victimization. This theme centers on the great warrior Cossacks of the Zaporozhian Sich who struggled with both the Poles and the Russians to establish an independent Ukrainian state and the Tsar's violation of the rights of the free Cossacks. Particular emphasis is place on the how Ukraine came under Russian domination in 1654 when Cossack hetman Khmel'nyts'kyi traded independence for Moscow's protection from the Polish. From this flows the "Ukrainian national constitutive myth" in which Ukraine was forced to form a union with the Russians.<sup>116</sup>

This second theme, writes Armstrong, was one which received the most attention from Ukraine's nationalists in the 20th century because they were aware that memories of the Cossacks, still existent among the

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<sup>114</sup>RUDN81, pp. 241-242.

<sup>115</sup>DUNC90, p. 96.

<sup>116</sup>ARMS90, pp. 4-5.

common people, were a valuable means of political mobilization.<sup>117</sup> The division of Ukraine in 1663 between Russia and Poland and the subsequent partitions of Poland in the 18th century which left only Galicia outside the Russian empire helped perpetuate the Ukrainian's sense of Russian oppression.

The violence, pain, loss, and frustration of attempting to carve out a nation and state with the Hetman's sword would not be repeated until the first four decades of the 20th Century during which Ukraine was to experience these powerful forces twice. These experiences, both because of their intensity and ultimate failure, became powerful additions to the national myth. The first addition to the myth came after WWI and centered on the idea of a glorious and bloody, yet almost divinely justified struggle for the Ukrainian nation. This element of the collective national myth was drawn upon by both Eastern and Western Ukrainian nationalists when the opportunity for national independence arose during WWII. Armstrong argues that at this time an additional element was added to the national myth. This addition is that of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) which fought both German Fascism and Soviet Communism.

This myth, says Armstrong, largely superseded (without displacing) the earlier myths.<sup>118</sup> Although this may be somewhat exaggerated, it was true that the UPA was a very powerful and attractive element which glorified nationalism and had the unique honor of being a effective anti-Communist force longer than any other as it operated

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<sup>117</sup>ARMS90, pp. 4-5.

<sup>118</sup>ARMS90, p. 219.

effectively from 1944-1950. In fact, Armstrong claims that the UPA was "very probably the most important example of forceful resistance to an established Communist regime prior to the decade of fierce Afghan resistance beginning in 1979."<sup>119</sup>

It is important to note that because post-WWII UPA operations in Eastern Ukraine were very limited, Eastern Ukraine does not share in this most recent and powerful addition to the national myth. Although this merely aggravates the East-West differences in Ukraine, the myth of the UPA was most worrisome to the Communists after the unification of East and West Ukraine because of its incredible attraction and popularity in the West which threatened to spread to the East. As a result, a great deal of Soviet effort was devoted to debunking this latest addition to the Ukrainian national myth.

*c. Intellectual leadership*

The previous two themes combined to create a feeling of uniqueness which directly conflicted with Russian contentions that Ukrainians, like the Byelorussians, were nothing more than Russians with a dialect. But if there was to be political action to accompany this independence-minded ideology then there would have to be leaders who would assume this important role of linking thought with action. The legendary cossacks who embody the idea of physical struggle against oppressors, serve as premier leadership figures, however, the more recent (18th, 19th and early 20th century) leaders have been intellectual, literary

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<sup>119</sup>ARM, p. 223.

elites.<sup>120</sup> This is not surprising because as Alter notes, nation building is most often a process "engineered by the intellectual elites but directed at the social group as a whole."<sup>121</sup>

The role of writers, poets, and translators is very important in the history of Ukraine and much more so than in Russia or Poland because as Harvard's George Grabowicz explains;

in the absence of 'normal' political development, and particularly in the absence of political institutions, cultural expression, of which literature is but the most manifest, and by virtue of being the most multi-levelled and multi-functional also the most privileged form and vehicle, becomes a natural and inevitable replacement.<sup>122</sup>

In such cases the writer himself becomes an institution, a "shadow government."

Grabowicz explains literature as a paradigm of national revival on three levels. First, writers and poets became political figures because there was a "functional equivalence between literary and political life." Political figures either turned to literature to further their programs (i.e., Franko) or as was usually the case, it simply turned out that "literature and the political ideology and activity were fused in a programme of national and explicitly national analyses and prescriptions."<sup>123</sup> In fact, under both the Tsarist and Communist

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<sup>120</sup>This may be in part due to the quite severe repression of the Cossack theme in Soviet Ukraine.

<sup>121</sup>ALTE89, p. 21.

<sup>122</sup>GRAB89, pp. 118-119.

<sup>123</sup>GRAB89, p. 118.

regimes, it was not possible to be a Ukrainian literary figure without being labeled a nationalist.<sup>124</sup>

Grabowicz's second level of literature as a paradigm for national revival is that literary periods correspond to stages of national development. That is

literary consciousness-both as the values, stances, and modalities that generate literature and those that are involved in its reception ...apparently channelled the way *national* consciousness developed and crystallized.<sup>125</sup>

For Ukrainians, the first phase of this literary consciousness was Romanticism which authenticated Ukrainian national consciousness by discovering the past and glorifying the folk traditions, history, and most importantly, revitalizing the foremost symbol of nation identity, the language.<sup>126</sup> The second phase was *narodnyctvo* or popularism which defined the individuality of things Ukrainian and differentiated them from things Russian. While this was in itself an important step, even more important was that in so defining the borders of the Ukrainian self, the movement revived the older idea that the Ukrainian-Russian relationship was one of opposition. The negative side of Ukrainian Popularism was that it tended to precipitate isolationism and provincialism, as well as a mistrust of institutions.<sup>127</sup> Popularism gave way to the era of Positivism which covered the last third of the 19th century. During this

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<sup>124</sup>The role of literature was such that even the act of moving the editorial offices of the *Literaturno-naukovyj visnyk* in 1907 from Lviv in Galicia to Kiev in Ukraine was not a simple editorial decision but "a symbolic act signalling the goal of *sobornist'*, or the in-gathering of Ukrainian lands, and anticipating the political and revolutionary moves of a decade later." (GRAB89, p. 120)

<sup>125</sup>GRAB89, p. 120.

<sup>126</sup>GRAB89, p. 121.

<sup>127</sup>GRAB89, pp. 122-125.

era Ukrainian literature was identified with "civic duty, with the national cause, with lifting up hearts and educating minds...."<sup>128</sup> As Grabowicz notes, while this sense of duty undoubtedly undermined the quality of literature during this period, its contribution to the Ukrainian national movement was great. The slaving of literature to national duty was only reversed in the early 20th century.<sup>129</sup>

The third level of literature as a paradigm of national revival is that of "deep structures" or unconscious collective action.

Since literature is taken as an expression of national will, or, at the very least, unconscious collective feelings - while synergistically also shaping and transforming that will - the word, inevitably is identified with social or even political action.<sup>130</sup>

The Ukrainian national identity came to be defined by language, historical memory, and ethnicity and the literature, especially during the Romantic era, highlighted a "sense of victimization." This identification then led to a nativist pattern of thought which was a particularly fragile foundation for national revival because of its susceptibility to distortion and upsets in its course of renewal. As well, literature tended to define Ukrainian nationalism in a closed, isolated way concerned most with the preservation of the old rather than the discovery of the new.<sup>131</sup>

In this combined preservation and search for history it was only natural that historians would rise to the pinnacle of the nationalist movements. In fact, claims Armstrong, the most prominent among Ukrainian

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<sup>128</sup>GRAB89, p.126.

<sup>129</sup>GRAB89, p. 128.

<sup>130</sup>GRAB89, p. 128.

<sup>131</sup>GRAB89, p. 129.

historians of the 19th century, Michael Hrushevs'kyi deserves to be called the father of Ukrainian nationalism. Historians and writers complemented each other in the parthenon of nationalism because historians could provide the material which writers then wove into a national myth with which to inspire loyalty to the nation word by word and page by page.<sup>132</sup>

The fact that Ukrainian nationalism was led by intellectuals (namely men of letters) since its inception is one of the themes which is carried forward to the Ukrainian national movement today and obviously a connection which was not unnoticed by the Communists who ruthlessly persecuted these members of Ukrainian society until very recently. For example, in the late 1920s during the attack on the Ukrainian "nationalists" 80 percent of the Ukraine's writers and poets became victim's of the terror.<sup>133</sup>

#### *d. The Wealth of Ukraine*

The final, enduring national myth is that of Ukraine as an inherently wealthy country both culturally and economically. Culturally speaking, Ukrainians were proud of their cultural heritage. Ukrainian culture hit a peak in the 18th century when Ukrainian authors, summoned by Peter I to serve in top posts in ecclesiastical and education institutions, began to glorify Ukraine, going so far as to call Kiev the "second Jerusalem" and creating works of Ukrainian history known as the "Cossack Chronicles." Music and architecture also bloomed at this time. The foundation of Russian and Ukrainian choral traditions were begun.

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<sup>132</sup>ARMS90, p. 4. The poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-61) created a literary Ukrainian language, the preservation of which has been a consistent rallying cry for Ukrainian nationalists since the 19th century.

<sup>133</sup>Wadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1990), p. 74.



Architectural marvels such as the Kievian Cave Monastery, or the cathedrals of St. George and St. Andrew were erected and stand to this day as a symbol of cultural greatness.<sup>134</sup> In the 1840's, Taras Shevchenko emerged and transformed Ukrainian literature from a one-dimensional, limited literary role, into a literature of international excellence. The fact that Shevchenko's pictures appear, even today, along side holy icons in Ukrainian homes, indicates how much his contribution to Ukraine is valued.

From the perspective of economic wealth, the Ukrainians throughout modern history have felt that Ukraine could be an important European power if only it was not dominated by malevolent powers. At the time of the Russian revolution Ukraine was considered the bread basket of Europe. Under the Communists it was considered the Bread basket of the USSR and yet through all of this was the idea that there was much more which could be if only Ukrainians could be free to rule themselves.

Ukraine's economic wealth lay in the resources as well as the people. In addition to agriculture, Ukraine's mineral wealth was vast. The coal and iron ore under Ukrainian soil fueled Stalin's industrialization of the 1930s and beyond. The difference between the independent-mindedness and hard working attitude of the Ukrainian peasant and the communally oriented, ill-motivated Russian was often drawn. It was also stressed under the Communists that Ukrainian workers were more productive than Russian. In fact, this productivity was highlighted by Aleksei Stakhanov who in 1935 hewed 102 tons of coal in a single shift. He quickly became a symbol of what Marples calls "the ruthless and quasi-

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<sup>134</sup>SUBT90, pp. 196-7.

colonial exploitation of nonrenewable resources for the all-Union economy."<sup>135</sup>

This exploitation under the centralized Soviet economy inevitably led to feelings that economic autonomy was needed to prevent Ukraine's wealth being plundered by the center. These sentiments have existed throughout Ukraine's history under the Communists and in the 1920s, 1940s, and 1960s led to outspoken protest against central reallocation of Ukraine's resources. This issue, not surprisingly, also began to be raised vocally during the late 1980s.

In summarizing the national myth it can be said that the development of Ukrainian nationalism and nation from the very early years to the present was characterized by a number of themes. The predominant ideas of Ukraine as a historic (yet incomplete) nation in a continual struggle against oppressors serves as the foundation of Ukrainian nationalism. The theme of literary elite acting in the capacity of preservers of the Ukrainian culture and the vanguard of nation-builders influences strongly influences even the contemporary form of the national movement and pulls at the Communist elites loyalties. The final theme; the conceptualization of Ukraine as a potentially wealthy nation provides the motivation to self-determination by holding a promise of something better in the future.

These themes were constructs of varying intensity at different points in the history of Ukraine and they spun various threads among other aspects of Ukraine's culture to create a rich cultural-political background based on self-determination and nation-building. The

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<sup>135</sup> HARP91, p. 1.

19th century in Ukraine was dominated by the themes of historical nationhood, struggle and literary leadership. Interwoven amongst these themes were a number of others: a confusion as to whether Ukraine is rightly a Western nation or a Eastern one; an incomplete and unrealized struggle to achieve nationhood; and the creation of a national myth to glorify the ideas of distinctiveness and independence through struggle. The sense of victimization runs heavily through all these themes.

The period of 1914 to 1950 saw a reinforcement of previous themes supplemented by the growing awareness that Ukraine's wealth was being plundered. To these were added the ideas of the internal divisions within the Ukrainian nation and the lack of international, and thus national, viability both of which added to the previous identity crisis and the idea of the incomplete nation.

During WWII and to a limited extent during WWI, some dominant aspects of Ukrainian nationalism such as leadership by literary figures were lessened as the pen and word were replaced by the rifle and bullet. There also emerged a new sub-theme, namely the use of violence to achieve national goals. These themes merged and intertwined creating new aspects of the national myth and shaping the development of Ukrainian nationalism.

## **2. Physical Manifestations of National Consciousness**

This section which traces the actual development of national consciousness in Ukraine is divided into two parts. The first concerns the development of national consciousness up to WWII when the basic ideas were established. The second, follows the development of national consciousness from WWII forward in more detail because these developments

impinged more heavily on contemporary Ukrainian than those prior to WWII.

a. *Pre-WWII Developments*

The discussion of Ukrainian national consciousness can, for our purposes begin at the turn of the 20th century when the level of national consciousness in Ukraine was quite low. In spite of the illegal General Ukrainian Democratic Organization founded in 1897 to coordinate cultural and social groups which were keeping alive the memories of the Hetmanate and the Sich, there was no mass movement to speak of in turn of the century Ukraine. In fact, Conquest argues that a true mass movement in Ukraine appeared only in 1912.<sup>136</sup> At this juncture, what national concepts there were among Ukrainians resided with the peasants and the workers, dominated by Russians, were not interested in Ukrainian nationalism. The historic preserve of national revival, the petty bourgeoisie<sup>137</sup> was not Ukrainian, and the native leadership abdicated their responsibility, under the pressure of russification, to the intelligentsia which was not prepared for the responsibility.<sup>138</sup> In essence, Ukraine was a peasant nation with Russian, Polish and Jewish urban centers. In spite of this, there were indications that national consciousness was on the rise; there were peasant uprisings in 1902 which were repeated six years later, the first Ukrainian political party formed

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<sup>136</sup> CONQ86, p. 30. Although by no means a mass movement, the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, organized in 1847 by cultural elites such as Kostomarov and (more distantly) Shevchenko, was one of the very first attempts by Ukraine's elites to move from cultural to political phases of national development. (See SUBT90, pp. 235-237) The Brotherhood eventual discovery and persecution alerted Moscow to the dangers of Ukrainian nationalism on the rise and was responsible for a new wave of suppression which inhibited mass mobilization of Ukrainians through the remainder of the century.

<sup>137</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas*, as cited in John-Paul Himka, "Voluntary Artisan Association and the Ukrainian National Movement in Galicia," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, No. 2, 1978, pp. 235-6.

<sup>138</sup> Krawchenko, p. 43.

in 1900, and in 1905 the first Ukrainian newspaper, *Khilorob* was being printed, in the same year Ukrainian representatives to the Second Duma<sup>139</sup> demanded independence for Ukraine.

However, these beginnings were not to last. In 1910, Stolypin, the economically progressive but imperialist Russian Prime Minister, closed down Ukrainian cultural organizations, printing houses, and banned use of Ukrainian in public. The birth of Ukrainian national spirit was further crushed by the arrival of WWI. Hosking describes Ukraine of this period as "a potential nation which had failed to achieve full nationhood...."<sup>140</sup> Not surprisingly, when the revolution came to Ukraine in 1917, in the "springtime of her development", also called the "fusilladed renaissance,"<sup>141</sup> she was unprepared to achieve self-determination.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the establishment of WWI-era institutions such as the Ukrainian Rada and other institutions of independent Ukraine in accordance with the Deutsch model and the establishment of incipient statehood, attempts to reach the final stage of nation failed. The explanations for this are many but most boil down to a combination of four factors; a consistent repression of the Ukrainian nation under the Tsar,

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<sup>139</sup>The legislative body introduced after the revolts of 1905 which were supposed to allow for public participation in state policy making.

<sup>140</sup>Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, (London: Heinemann, 1990), p. 95.

<sup>141</sup>Ivan Dzyuba, "A Time to Gather Stones," *Moscow News Weekly*, No. 3, 1989.

<sup>142</sup>Krawchenko, p. 85.

lack of national consciousness, poor national organization, and lack of external assistance.<sup>143</sup>

During the remaining years of the 1920's Ukraine thrived on the short experience of independence and entered the golden era of Ukrainianization. This was a crucial period of nation building because "What was at stake was whether the new social weight of the Ukrainian fact would be able to place on the agenda further measures for the self-emancipation of the Ukrainian nation."<sup>144</sup> The purge trials of 1928 were the first sign that this was not to be possible and the 1930's saw the "entry of the Ukrainian nation into modernity...[accompanied] by the unleashing of terror on a mass scale during which millions died and the nation's cultural and political elite was eliminated."<sup>145</sup> As the Soviet diplomat Butenko noted about this period "every sign of Ukrainian national consciousness, 'even when it did not venture beyond the established norm of Soviet life, was rooted out and destroyed.'<sup>146</sup> This was apparent in the attack on the Ukrainian national heart, the writers and poets, 80 percent of which became victim's of the terror.<sup>147</sup> The great famine of

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<sup>143</sup>Yaroslav Bilinsky, The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine after World War II, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1964), pp. 2-3; Jaroslaw Bilocerkowycz, Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation, (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 16 citing Reshetar, The Ukrainian Revolution, pp. 319-331, and Zev Katz, Rosmarie Rodgers, and Frederic Marned, Handbook of Major Soviet Nationalities, (New York: The Free Press, 1975), p. 24. See Lubomyr Y. Luciuk and Bohdan S. Kordan, Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection, (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1987), p. 1. and Motyl, Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality: Coming to Grips with Nationalism in the USSR, pp. 116-117 for the lack of intervention argument. Motyl goes so far as to even discount the role of national consciousness and popular support (p. 117).

<sup>144</sup>Krawchenko, p. 112.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>146</sup>Giornale d'Italia, 16 February 1938 cited by Tryzub, 27 February 1938, p. 4 as cited in Krawchenko, p.152.

<sup>147</sup>Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1990), p. 74.

1932-33 and the continual suppression of Ukrainian culture further submerged the sense of nation.

These massive attacks on the young nation left only the question of "what of the Ukrainian nation survived that decade?"<sup>148</sup> Krawchenko stresses that social institutions survived and a new intelligentsia was put in place.<sup>149</sup> Both these elements, essential to the development of national consciousness as discussed above, held hope for a future revival.

Any hope for revival in the confusion of WWII when Nazi forces swept through Ukraine were dashed by the cruelty of the Germans and their suppression of Ukrainian national aspirations.<sup>150</sup> Stalin manipulated the rise of Ukrainian patriotism during the war in order to assure the loyalty of the 4.5 million Ukrainian members of the Soviet military. To this end, Stalin permitted the establishment of things Ukrainian, entry into the United Nations, and a revival of the Ukrainian culture. He hoped to rally support behind the call to defend the Ukrainian State, the Ukrainian language, and Ukrainian lands. While Stalin's concessions were largely symbolic, propaganda ploys, they did to an extent legitimize Ukrainian expressions of national self-consciousness.<sup>151</sup> However, when

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<sup>148</sup>KRAW85, p. 113.

<sup>149</sup>KRAW85, p. 152.

<sup>150</sup>KRAW85, pp. 168-9.

<sup>151</sup>KRAW85, p. 169.

Zhdanov's crack down on liberalization began in 1946 in Ukraine, what few gains had been made were lost.<sup>152</sup>

#### **b. Post WWII Developments**

In terms of the revolution of 1989, the post WWII period is most important because not only did the status of the "Ukrainian nation" reach new lows but in the 1950s and 1960s national consciousness was converted into a different, but closely related phenomenon of political opposition which has continued up to this day. This evolution from national consciousness to physical manifestations of organized opposition which rejected ethno-nationalistic ideas was to be critical in the events of 1989-1991 because the struggle was no longer cast in terms of ethnicity but in terms of the Ukrainian state (inclusive of all ethnic groups). This development was also critical because it drew a line between the

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<sup>152</sup>An interesting sidelight to the idea of the Ukrainian nation is the external perception of her national status at this point in history. In a Top Secret, 18 August 1948 note S. W. Souers, Executive secretary to the National Security Council spelled out US post-war objectives with respect to Russia. His treatment of Ukraine is of special interest because it shows the perceived lack of "nation" in Ukraine at this low time in history:

It is true that the Ukrainians have been unhappy under Russian rule and that something should be done to protect their position in the future. But there are certain basic facts which must not be lost sight of. While the Ukrainians have been an important and specific element in the Russian Empire they have shown no signs of being a "nation" capable of bearing successfully the responsibilities of independence in the face of great Russian opposition. The Ukraine is not a clearly defined ethnical or geographic concept. In general, the Ukrainian population made up originally in large measure out of refugees from Russian or Polish despotism shades off imperceptibly into the Russian and Polish nationalities. There is no clear dividing line between Russian and the Ukraine and it would be impossible to establish one.... The real basis of "Ukrainianism" is the feeling of "difference" produced by a specific peasant dialect and by minor differences of custom and folklores throughout the country districts. The political agitation on the surface is largely the work of a few romantic intellectuals, who have little concept of the responsibilities of government.

...The Ukrainian territory is as much a part of their [Russian] national heritage as the Middle West is of ours, and they [Russians] are aware of that fact.... [Ukrainians] are too close to the Russians to be able to set themselves up successfully as something wholly different. For better of [sic] worse, they will have to work out their destiny in some sort of special relationship to the Great Russian people.

Souers goes on to propose a solution which would not encourage Ukrainian separatism and would toe the line of neutrality toward both Ukrainians and Russians. He was, however, adamant about ensuring that the Baltic States "not be compelled to remain under any communist authority in the aftermath of another war." Thus the fate of Ukraine was sealed until the question arose again in 1989. (LUC187, pp. 210 - 211)



establishment and the opposition and polarized the political environment in which Ukrainian Communist elites circulated. The pressures of this polarization combined with national cultural influences proved critical in defining the role of these elites as power began to flow from the center to the periphery in the late 1980s.

At the root of these important changes lay the decline of the Ukrainian nation which pressured Ukrainian nationalists to act and Ukrainian ruling elites to press for national concessions from the center. The post-war period was a study in dialectical materialism; Soviet policies were repressive and stressed assimilation of Ukrainians, however, in so doing, they encouraged a reactive nationalism which, in turn, encouraged the Ukrainian elite to become even more Ukrainian.<sup>153</sup>

(1) The Changing Social Structure of Ukraine. The gradual rise of national consciousness in Ukraine since WWII has been due, in part, to continued russification but, more importantly, to a important changes in the social structure of Ukraine. For the first time, we saw the growth of a Ukrainian dominated proletariat which began to raise national demands<sup>154</sup> and an intelligentsia, although subjected to intense russification, which did not grow indifferent to the issue of Ukrainian national existence.<sup>155</sup> Increasing urbanization, education, and mobilization fulfilled Connor's promise<sup>156</sup> that national consciousness would grow as a result of the self awareness induced by the increased

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<sup>153</sup>KRAW85, p. 253.

<sup>154</sup>KRAW85, p. 212.

<sup>155</sup>KRAW85, pp. 214-216.

<sup>156</sup>CONN73, p. 4.

interaction of differing groups of people such as happens in cities, schools, and travel.

(a) Demographic changes. Social changes in Ukraine following the war were significant and while nature and the drought of 1946-7, which decimated the steppe regions, played a role in changing the demographics of post-war Ukraine, man-made factors were also at play. Not only were boxcars of Ukrainian deportees leaving Western Ukraine bound for Siberia but over half of the male and one quarter of the female population of newly reunited Ukraine had perished during the war years. These factors alone were to have a telling effect on the socio-economic structure of post-war Ukraine.

While Ukraine shrank in human terms it expanded in geographical terms with the addition of Western Ukraine (Transcarpathia in 1944) and the Crimea (1954).<sup>157</sup> Expansion also occurred among the Russian population in Ukraine with an unprecedented 1 million Russians migrating to the republic between 1959 and 1970.<sup>158</sup> One consequence of this was that during the 1960s, Ukrainian plurality decreased by 2 percent and by 1970 Russians comprised 20 percent of the population as opposed to 13 percent in 1939.<sup>159</sup> By 1989 Russians comprised 22.2 percent of the population and Ukrainians only 72.2 percent with the remaining 5.1 percent being minorities (primarily Jews, Byelorussians, Poles, Bulgarians, and Moldavians).<sup>160</sup> Between 1979 and 1989 alone, the real percent increase

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<sup>157</sup>KRAW85, pp. 171-172.

<sup>158</sup>KRAW85, p. 174.

<sup>159</sup>KRAW85, pp. 171-172.

<sup>160</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p.6.

of Russians was 4.1% as opposed to 2.6% for Ukrainians.<sup>161</sup> The percentage rise of Russians was not due solely to the immigration of Russians but also due in part to a declining Ukrainian birth rate and increasing death rate, assimilation of Ukrainians into the Russian culture, and the out-migration of Ukrainians from the Republic. This massive shift in nationality posed a particularly difficult problem for Ukrainians since it threatened the preservation of their national identity, their ability to achieve social dominance within their own country and led to a crisis of social mobilization.<sup>162</sup>

(b) Cultural Changes. Culturally, Ukraine's national status declined under the onslaught of russification which sought to submerge (and eventually eliminate) manifestations of a separate Ukrainian identity. The key aspect of identity, in the case of Ukraine, was language. Language was a sensitive topic because traditionally, at least since the 1950s, the Ukrainian national opposition had been formed from literary elites and they were very attuned to the importance of language. Ivan Dzyuba, a prominent member of the literary national opposition, decries the loss of language which he feels is a most important part of a people's national consciousness; "There is little understanding of the language as the greatest spiritual treasure-trove, the carrier of historical memory, and a condition of the people's full fledged existence."<sup>163</sup> Ukraine's intelligentsia rallied around the idea that the loss of language was the primary threat to Ukrainian nationhood. Language

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<sup>161</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p.6.

<sup>162</sup>KRAW85, p. 253.

<sup>163</sup>DZYU89.

had a secondary purpose in the struggle for national concessions. As Krawchenko notes, "The language question is of course important for a nation in its struggle for continued viability. But the language issue also plays the role of a *symbol* in the important conflict between competing social groups, in particular, elites."<sup>164</sup>

The issue of the Ukrainian language became a surrogate for national revival and the rallying call for those in Ukraine who wished to protest russification. The issue of language was fought on two fronts. One was the lack of Ukrainian-language publications and the other was the lack of education opportunities for Ukrainian students.

In 1979, Simon indicates that although the percentage of Ukrainians in the USSR was 16.2 percent, the number of Ukrainian language publications was only 2.7 percent. In fact, Ukrainians and Byelorussians have the dubious honor of being the two nationalities whose percentage of native language publications has decreased the most since 1958.<sup>165</sup>

In addition to the problem of inadequate publications in Ukrainian there was the issue of education in Ukrainian. The education issue centered on the issues of the right of parents to decide in which language their children will be educated and the number of Ukrainian-language schools available. The right of parents to decide in which language their children will be taught has been anything but

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<sup>164</sup>KRAW85, p. 198.

<sup>165</sup>SIM091, p. 330.

voluntary in the UkSSR for the last 27 years.<sup>166</sup> The domination of Russian which extends from kindergarten to graduate school, was such that parents who elected the option of sending their children to Ukrainian schools were accused of subjecting them to hardship because Russian predominates in everyday life. The problem of inadequate numbers of Ukrainian-language schools was also raised. According to Ukrainian sources, despite the fact that Ukrainians are the majority nationality in all but the Crimean Oblast, only 28% of oblast center schools are Ukrainian.<sup>167</sup> Simon cites statistics showing that the percentage of children in Ukraine taught in Ukrainian decreased from 73 percent in 1955 to 51 percent in 1987.<sup>168</sup>

(c) Economic Changes. In addition to the changing demographics and loss of cultural markers, the surge of industrial growth in Ukraine following WWII significantly altered the class structure of society. This, in combination with the restructuring which occurred as a result of Soviet economic policy structure on the internal colonialism model, provided much of the impetus to the national revival of the 1960s.

Economic development in Ukraine was extensive and unequal with Ukrainian agriculture especially prone to unequal policies. In 1970, Ukraine's collective farmers ranked lowest among all republics

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<sup>166</sup>The reference is to statute 26 of the Law of the Ukrainian SSR on National Education which states "Parents or guardians have the right to choose according to their wishes the language of instruction for their children." The law, although adopted as a union-wide requirement (known as thesis 19), was not put into practice in all republics. Ukraine, the Baltics, and transcaucas republics, because of subordinate laws, made both Russian and the native language mandatory for all students. Gradually the native language requirement was eroded by the fact that Russian was the "official" language. See SIMO91.

<sup>167</sup>See Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 15.

<sup>168</sup>SIMO91, p. 327.

for earned income and yet by 1975, they supplied over 25 percent of the all-union agricultural income.<sup>169</sup>

Industrialization in Ukraine was also large scale and unequal in comparison with the RSFSR. By 1970, in Ukraine the working class had eclipsed the collective farmer as the predominate class but in comparison with the RSFSR, Ukraine had 25 percent more collective farmers, 13 percent less workers, and 9 percent less white-collar workers. Furthermore, Ukrainians, although proportionally represented in the working class, were consistently under represented in the white collar class. Clearly Russians in Ukraine had moved out of the working class and Ukrainians had replaced them.<sup>170</sup>

This large scale industrialization would be expected to produce a positive economic effect in Ukraine but by 1970 one half the total capital formed in Ukraine was being reinvested outside republican boundaries and knowledge of this fact did much to aggravate both workers and farmers.<sup>171</sup> Food shortages and poor working conditions prevailed and maddened the working classes who saw their situation as the result of Moscow's exploitation. This perception was increased by raised expectations among the workers brought on by the influx of youth into the labor force and the increasing education levels of workers.<sup>172</sup>

(d) Mobilization of the Population. It was rapidly becoming apparent that the traditional achilles heel of russification, the

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<sup>169</sup>KRAW85, p. 207.

<sup>170</sup>KRAW85, pp. 205-6.

<sup>171</sup>KRAW85, p. 209.

<sup>172</sup>KRAW85, p. 209.

peasant, was being replaced by the worker. Armstrong's argument that the peasantry posed the principle obstacle in the path Russian assimilation because, unlike the heavily russified urban Ukrainians, they retained a stronger national identity<sup>173</sup> is challenged by Krawchenko.

He argues that the increasing national homogeneity of the working force was a major factor in making the worker the fulcrum of nationalism. As Russians moved up into the white-collar class, the working class, by 1970, was 74 percent Ukrainian.<sup>174</sup> This preserved national identity among workers and made social and linguistic divisions coincide which ultimately led to casting worker unrest in a nationalist light. It was also important that the major part of post-WWII industrialization was occurring in the central-western and western parts of Ukraine where national identification was historically strong. The increasing national identity of workers in Ukraine became evident as early as 1956 when on numerous occasions in which workers actively protested against russification under nationalist banners. In 1960, Ukraine became the center for labor unrest as Ukrainian workers went on strike to protest low wages and poor working conditions. By 1970 the first structures of trade unions could be seen.<sup>175</sup>

Although it was not apparent to many, the increasing Russian population and the unfavorable economic situation was leading toward an explosion of national sentiment. Moscow's policies toward the nationalities which formed the center's reaction to an

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<sup>173</sup>ARMSTRONG, p. 28 - 32.

<sup>174</sup>KRAW85, p. 211.

<sup>175</sup>KRAW85, p. 208.

increasingly troublesome periphery did little to calm the situation and in fact, exacerbated it in many cases.

The 1970s and early 1980s saw a worsening of the All-Union and Ukrainian economy which came to exacerbate resentment against the center. As Krawchenko notes, in the 1970's the "avenues of social mobility...narrowed still further."<sup>176</sup> This was linked in great part to the stagnating economy in which Ukraine found itself in 1971. The extensive mode of economic development which had carried Ukraine through the 1960's was no longer viable. The national reserves were drained, the labor force was no longer expanding at the previous rates and the influx of capital had slowed to a trickle.<sup>177</sup> The rising expectations of Ukrainian consumers were greatly out of sync with the ability of Ukrainian planners to influence central economic planning to meet their particular needs. The efficiency of the ukrainian economy was, despite the reforms of 1965, was still very poor and the quantity of consumer goods in the 1970s failed to keep up with demand which then lowered labor productivity because there was no reason to work harder if there was nothing to buy with increased wages. The structure of national consciousness was rapidly becoming less cultural and more economic.<sup>178</sup>

(2) The Ukrainian Reaction to Post WWII Developments. In the environment described above, the struggle for national sovereignty was very much cast as a conflict between two competing nationalisms; Russian and Ukrainian. This struggle is best described using Anthony Smith's

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<sup>176</sup>KRAW83A, p.115.

<sup>177</sup>OZOR83, p. 73.

<sup>178</sup>See KRAW85.



delineation of nationalism into two forms which describe the causal relationship between the Soviet center and its colonial periphery. Smith describes what he calls "preservation nationalism" which aptly describes the policies of the Soviets (Russians) through the Brezhnev years. Preservation nationalism exists when

a culturally demarcated ruling group aims by a mixture of discriminating and homogenizing measures to perpetuate its caste-like rule, while posing as the champion of the whole unit in opposition to the outside world.<sup>179</sup>

In reaction to this variant of nationalism which came to be embodied in the idea of the "Soviet People [Narod]" and executed via the series of nationalities policies, there can appear what Smith calls "renewal nationalism." This form of nationalism, like Ukrainian nationalism, is in opposition to "preservation nationalism" and it usually starts "outside the main centers of power, and if allied to social discontents, [is] directed against the incumbent ruler or regime...."<sup>180</sup> Clearly this form of nationalism is somewhat limited in environment and as Smith is careful to note, renewal nationalisms "operate in settings of, at least, nominal, independence from ancient times, and in (almost) homogenous groups."<sup>181</sup> One should also note that an historic legacy of former nationhood and independence need not be historically valid but simply believed to be a fact by the majority of the population. Smith's typology of preservation and renewal nationalism approximates the interplay of Soviet and Ukrainian goals during the post-war period and

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<sup>179</sup>SM1171, p. 224.

<sup>180</sup>SM1171, p. 224.

<sup>181</sup>SM1171, p. 224.

Smith's supposition that renewal nationalism can only occur in homogenous groups has significant implications for the Ukrainian case. This lack of homogeneity became a major stumbling block for the widening of the opposition movement in the 1960s as in the 1980s which then forced renewal nationalism to be rejected by the opposition in favor of a widely-based movement of non-ethnically defined nation-building.

This new structure of Ukrainian nationalism was being built at the time when the death of Stalin and the thaw brought on by Khrushchev ushered in a period of tremendous growth for the Ukrainian opposition. Thanks to Khrushchev's tendency to try to leap over an abyss by making two leaps one after the other<sup>182</sup>, he increased suppressive measures which heightened concern among Ukrainian intellectuals while at the same time creating an environment favorable for growth of nationalism to offset the suppression. There was an explosion of civic activity in what can only be called a rebirth of pre-Stalin national movements.

Ukraine was the first in the union to demonstrate the up swell of nationalism which this period was to bring.<sup>183</sup> The Ukrainian Communist Party was swept up in this wave of rising nationalism and even became a part of it. By the early 1960's under the leadership of Petro Shelest, the nationally minded Ukrainian First Secretary, protest movements appeared under the banners of anti-russification, equal rights, and democratization of the republic.<sup>184</sup> The growth and maturation of

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<sup>182</sup>HELL86, p. 602.

<sup>183</sup>In 1956, the Crimean Tatars and Meskhetians were the first nationalities to protest but unlike Ukraine, they did not appear as potent since they were not a people with a recognized status such as a republic. (See ALEX85, p. 7)

<sup>184</sup>ALEX85, p. 7.

Ukrainian opposition and complicity of the CPU elites was cut short by the ouster of Khrushchev and the entrance of Brezhnev and his idea of true socialism in which there was no room for a Ukraine for Ukrainians even Communist ones.

The first overt expression of post-war nationalist feelings came in the 1950's revival of Ukrainian culture which was in part precipitated by the more open and liberal cultural environments in Eastern Europe during this period. Western ideas were brought back to Soviet Ukraine by Ukrainians who traveled abroad at this time as well as by the increasingly large amount of literature by emigre Ukrainians making its way into the republic.<sup>185</sup> The revived interest in Ukrainian folk art and music and the rehabilitation of 1920-30 era nationalist writers appeared especially threatening in the wake of the Hungarian uprising.<sup>186</sup> The role of the CPU in these affairs was minimal and when Moscow directed a crackdown in Ukraine in 1965 there was not much resistance.

(3) A New Nationalism. The crackdown of 1965 which was all-Union in its scope, proved to be crucial in defining the future national movement in Ukraine and the role intellectual elites would play in it. The 1965 arrests led many to the conclusion that Moscow was singling out Ukrainians for the most severe punishment. Chornovil pointed out at the time that not only did Ukrainians receive stiffer sentences but that the trials of Russian dissidents (namely Daniel and Sinyavsky) were public while those of Ukrainians were secret.<sup>187</sup> This added yet another

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<sup>185</sup>FARM80, p. 82.

<sup>186</sup>FARM80, pp. 81-83.

<sup>187</sup>CHOR68, p. 2.

layer of disenchantment to the Ukrainian opposition which made it impossible for them to sit on the fence any longer.

Prior to 1965, Farmer argues that the dividing line between the "establishment" and the "opposition" in Ukraine was unclear. The mass arrests of the Brezhnev era changed this by forcing intellectuals in Ukraine to take a clear stand on one side or the other. After 1965 the opposition was defined either by the regime (those arrested, jailed, or black listed) or by the individuals themselves (writing in *samvydav* and expressing anti-state views).<sup>188</sup>

The first clear indications of this "establishment" - "opposition" cleavage appeared at this time among younger intellectuals who were very important because as Farmer writes, "they represent the first kernel of a deliberate, committed, and self-identified nucleus of opposition among the mobilized and Soviet-educated generation."<sup>189</sup> They demonstrated that opposition to Communism could exist in a form of what their chief representative, the poet Vasyl Symonenko, called "moral courage."<sup>190</sup> Moral courage was first and foremost an individual sentiment and secondly primarily a sentiment of the intellectual and cultural elites.

Ukrainian nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s, were societal elites who, although sharing the same essential motivation as their WWII era counterparts, namely "the instinct of national survival, or

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<sup>188</sup>FARM80, p. 95.

<sup>189</sup>FARM80, p. 100.

<sup>190</sup>FARM80, p. 101 (Symonenko was replaced as symbolic head of the 1960s movement by Moroz in the late 1960s).

national preservation,"<sup>191</sup> found the battle field to be somewhat different. The struggle was foremost survival within the existing system; "National survival, defined in the light of the harsh realities of the present [1970s], means the preservation of Ukrainian language, culture, customs, arts, literature, historical ties, religious traditions."<sup>192</sup> These nationalists also imbued the movement with a new set of goals.

Krawchenko's study of dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s indicates that the majority of claims made were for democratization (freedoms of thought, expression and the like), followed by protests against those arrested, and protests against russification.<sup>193</sup> Submerged in these demands was the idea of independence from the binding embrace of the Soviet State which was in many ways a continuation of the old struggle against the imperialism of Russia but with a different cast of players and different strategies. As a result of this "soft" nationalism, the CPU found itself also attracted to the ideas of increased autonomy and the opportunity to rule in their own region.

From the 1950s through the early 1970s this struggle between Russians trying to preserve the empire via assimilation of the nationalities and Ukrainians renewing their nation was characterized by two important and consistent themes; a turn away from integral nationalism and a lack of separatism. These themes were picked up by the Communist as well as the literary elites in Ukraine. These themes not only defined the

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<sup>191</sup>JONE77, p. 10.

<sup>192</sup>JONE77, p. 11.

<sup>193</sup>KRAW85, pp. 250-253.

strategies of the movement but also differentiated it from previous nationalism and set the stage for the revolution of 1990.

In January 1972 the fundamental nature of Ukrainian opposition began to change as the KGB began arresting Ukrainian political dissidents. This in itself was not unusual, however, by the time the last arrest was made this purge had become the largest since Stalin and the CPU was the target. In May 1972, the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Shelest, was removed from office and in May 1973 was made to resign his position in the CPSU Politburo. Accused of fostering nationalism and a nationalist movement in Ukraine, he was replaced by V. V. Shcherbitsky and a large purge of local party officials labeled "nationalists" began. Surveillance and eavesdropping reached new highs and the ranks of the KGB, especially in Western Ukraine, swelled as they executed what became known as the "general pogrom." Vyacheslav Chornovil, one of those arrested in Lvov, related the words of a KGB investigator about the attitudes of the higher KGB officials toward the purge;

Formerly, we were not getting the right people; we should have been arresting not those who circulate things, but cut off the head, that is, those who write things and organize. Now we have done the right thing--and we shall have peace for a decade or so.<sup>194</sup>

The immediate effect of this decapitation of Ukrainian opposition was to create a familiar feeling among Ukrainians;

the atmosphere resembled in many respects that of the Stalinist terror: physical extermination was no longer used and there were far fewer arrests. Nonetheless, everyone fell under suspicion and the

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<sup>194</sup>Cited in ARRE77n, quoting Vyacheslav Chornovil, "My Trial," Index on Censorship, Vol 5, No. 1, Spring 1976, p. 76.

threat of reprisals for a careless word or expression of sympathy toward the wrong people hung over everybody.<sup>195</sup>

Thus the anticipated revival of Ukraine culture was overnight transformed into what Dzyuba calls a "strangled renaissance"<sup>196</sup> which signaled the end to the symbiosis of a nationalist, anti-Stalinist intelligentsia and a nationally-oriented Communist Party in Ukraine. Not only did the "general Pogrom" transform an entire generation of young Ukrainian intelligentsia into "a generation of political prisoners" and inflict "irreparable damage to the Ukrainian nation and its culture"<sup>197</sup> but most importantly, as Nahaylo argues, it "ended the patriotic protest phase in Ukrainian dissent." The year 1973 was a turning point at which, as Krawchenko describes it, Ukrainian "patriotic protest" was transformed in to a much more powerful "Ukrainian national opposition."<sup>198</sup> From this point forward dissenters imprisoned as a result of the "general pogrom" defined themselves as part of a Ukrainian national movement in opposition to Moscow.<sup>199</sup> The comments of V. Stus who was imprisoned and exiled for dissent in 1972 reflect this transformation;

Until January 1972 I was a Ukrainophile (I think most of my friends were of the same hue). Mordovia [KGB prison camp] made me a Ukrainian. Now I am unperturbed how they label me: a nationalist, a spy or traitor. I know that my spiritual life and that of my nation are too catastrophic for me to sit quietly with my arms folded.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup>ALEX85, p. 46.

<sup>196</sup>DZYU89, p. Unknown.

<sup>197</sup>V. Stus quoted in NAHA83.

<sup>198</sup>KRAW83, p. 38.

<sup>199</sup>NAHA83, p. 38.

<sup>200</sup>V. Stus, "Lyst do pryiateliv", 29 October 1977, Pohrom b Ukraini, 50 as cited in NAHA83, p. 38.

(4) The Church. Simultaneous with the appearance of national opposition was the strengthening of church activities which were, especially in Ukraine, closely linked with ardent Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>201</sup> Armstrong argues that religion was "the most persistent manifestation of Ukrainian national traditions" during even the difficult years between 1972 and 1985.<sup>202</sup> In part, this was due to the continuing pressure of urbanization which was driving increasing numbers of rural families to the suburbs and they brought with them their non-Russian Orthodox beliefs.<sup>203</sup> The significance of this rising adherence to religion which is so closely linked with the idea of the Ukrainian nation leads Armstrong to conclude that for the first time eastern Ukraine may actually be committed to a national movement through the church.<sup>204</sup> Going even further, Armstrong hints that this may be the key to a future successful mass movement in Ukraine:

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<sup>201</sup>Religion in the Soviet Union became linked with nationalism for a variety of reasons but primarily, because religion was considered hostile to the Soviet regime. As Pedro Ramet portrays it; "religion is not merely a set of beliefs about a 'world beyond' but also, and perhaps more importantly, a set of beliefs about how the present world - its law, its authority, its hierarchical relations - should be organized." (RAME89B, p.1) Religion's threatening role is manifested in two ways. First, theocracy as one of the very first forms of government has remained a highly institutionalized threat to other forms of government. Although this political role has been greatly curbed over time it is undeniable that churches have retained political power by "adopting a new countenance as the guardians of discrete interests...." Because the church claims absolute interests it either compels or discourages the loyalty of the flock toward the government. (RAME89B, p. 4) Second, because of religion's historical development which has tied the fate of the church to the nation and sometimes the other way round, there is a link between the church and the nation. Churches have tended to become national institutions and ethnicity and religion have merged to such a point that one cannot be eliminated without threatening the other. (RAME89B, pp. 4-5) This merger confronts authorities with the unpleasant situation of having to deal with the church as a spokesman for the ethnic group. (RAME89, p. 8) As a result, the Communists have had to approach religion very carefully as they have attempted the "substitution of a secular religion for a revealed one." (MARK89, p. 138) The sheer number of religious believers in this atheist state make the task of eliminating religion difficult enough but when this is combined with nationalism the whole issue threatens to blow up into passionate, broad-based opposition to the Communist regime.

<sup>202</sup>This trend is not restricted to Ukraine alone. Overall, the non-Russians adhere to religious beliefs more strongly than do Russians which creates the potential for churches to play a national role. Various sources have placed the percentage of religious believers in the USSR at between 35 for the Russian regions and 60 percent for the non-Russian regions. See DUNL86, p. 281.

<sup>203</sup>ARMS90, p. 238.

<sup>204</sup>ARMS90, pp. 238-239.



As an elite manifestation of adherence to Ukrainian traditions, however, the dissidence of the 1960s and 1970s resembles the nationalism movement of the Second World War, apart from the West Ukraine. The small bits of evidence of religious revival, on the other hand, suggest the persistence of a mass phenomenon which may perpetuate the tradition of the peasant mass as the unconquerable custodian of national identity.<sup>205</sup>

His prediction was validated out when in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the Ukrainian churches emerged from the cellars, the Russian church in Ukraine quickly came under attack.

In response to the rising sentiments associated with the Millennium of Christianity a number of articles appeared in the Ukrainian and Soviet Press decrying what they called the "'alarming phenomena' of God-seeking and 'God-building'" among youth. First Secretary Shcherbytsky on 25 March 1987 spoke out against the rise of religion and called for increased efforts in atheist work and warned of the linkage between religion and nationalism.<sup>206</sup>

Specialists in atheism pointed out that the profile of the religious believer had changed in an unexpected direction. Urbanization, instead of creating a totally atheist of society had "simply replaced the semi-illiterate rural believer with the relatively well-educated urban believer." This unexpected development was further supported by the confessions of Ukraine's atheist propaganda group *Znannya* [Knowledge] Society which held a meeting in March 1987 during which they admitted that they were loosing the battle against the rising tide of religion in Ukraine. Despite the groups 400,000 lectures, 20,500 primary organizations, and 700 city, regional, or district organizations the

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<sup>205</sup> ARMS90, p. 239.

<sup>206</sup> SORO87, p. 4.

"restructuring of the peoples' consciousness" was not occurring as desired. The group's presidium and methodological departments were reprimanded as were the Society's regional organizations in Kiev, Ivano-Frankivsk and Sumy. Several members of the leadership were also replaced at this time.<sup>207</sup>

To the Communist Party elite in Ukraine at this time, the revival of the church was simply another indication of the growing threat to their already shaky post-purge existence. The CPU suffered from this purge as well as the opposition. The CPU was strongly punished for looking too Ukrainian and not being sufficiently loyal to the center. Perhaps more importantly, suddenly Moscow saw that Ukrainian nationalism was on the rise not only among the population but, certainly more seriously, among the Party elite themselves.

### C. CONCLUSION

Ukrainian nationalism, in addition to the ideological and structural factors of the Soviet State, served as a very important influence on Ukrainian elite loyalty to the center. At the root of Ukrainian nationalism is the myth that Ukraine is a wealth, historic nation which has been plundered and oppressed by outside invaders - first Russians then Soviets. Since contemporary Ukrainian nationalism is opposition to what Moroz calls the "mincing-machine of Russification"<sup>208</sup> and the destruction of the nation, Ukrainians have a strong call to protest which unavoidably impacts the reliability of Ukrainians holding leadership positions in

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<sup>207</sup> SOR087, p. 4.

<sup>208</sup> JONE77, p. 6.

Ukraine. The worsening of the cultural and economic situation in Ukraine in the post-WWII era exacerbated the tensions which divided the consciousness of Ukrainian elites between Communist internationalism and Ukrainian nationalism.

The following chapter examines the issue of elite reliability in this nationally charged environment and traces the influence of the powerful force of the "Ukrainian fact."

#### IV. THE LOYALTY PROBLEM

As the extension of Moscow's power in the periphery, the Communist Party of Ukraine has had a checkered past. Loyalty to Moscow has not been a great virtue of Ukraine's Communists, and yet since 1918 (with the exception of the WWII years), Ukraine remained under the shadow of Moscow without serious deviations or attempts to escape. Although there were calls for increased autonomy and freedom to pursue national goals, the demands never went so far as to demand secession from the Soviet state.

In the late 1980's this position came into question as Ukraine's opposition leaders attempted to ascertain the way which Ukraine's Communists would lean in the upcoming battle for national independence. Ivan Drach, speaking at the 1987 Writers Plenum addressed this issue and placed significant blame for Ukraine's last 15-20 years of stagnation on the "spineless snob" or the Ukrainian bureaucrat. He argued that, this unique Ukrainian creation created the repressive atmosphere under which Ukraine struggled for so many decades. Drach quoted the Turkish poet and Communist, Nazym Khikmet, who he said accurately described the Ukrainian bureaucrat's capabilities and success in his remark that "When fingernails are being trimmed in Moscow, they chop off fingers in Kiev" and Drach adds, "and we, whose fingers are still aching today might add - 'due to zealously' to that statement. So glory to the Ukrainian bureaucrat, our best production of the last twenty years!...."<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>UKRA87, pp. 20-21.

This chapter examines the issue of CPU loyalty in the light of the previous chapter which detailed the influence of Ukrainian national consciousness on Ukraine's elites. The argument being that Ukraine's Communists were fundamentally influenced by the "national fact" as well as the ideological and structural aspects of the Soviet state and as a result their loyalty was divided between Kiev and Moscow. This division of allegiance facilitated the events of 1991 in which Ukraine's ruling elites came out in support of Ukrainian independence.

To understand how this "tainting" of the CPU happened it is necessary to go back to the post-WWII era when the CPU was being rebuilt after the war and Ukrainian Communists were coming to power within the Party.

#### **A. A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM - THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNIST PARTY**

While the macroscopic view of the Communist elite in the midst of Ukrainian society provides clear indications of instability within the Communist Party at the level of theory as well as practice, it seems to be more difficult to transfer these ideas to the microscopic, or individual level. However, if we take as a fundamental assumption that the basic indication of what Berg calls "irregular elite behavior" is the failure of the Communist elite to act in accordance with the currently accepted guidelines (usually determined by the current definition of the Marxist ideology), then we can begin to look for its manifestations.

Berg gives us a starting point by citing the two fundamental sources of such irregular behavior.<sup>210</sup> The first source is the structural argument which was outlined in chapter two; namely that elites are moved

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<sup>210</sup>BERG90, p.25.

to act "irregularly" because of the conflicting political demands placed upon them by the system. This conflict provides not only the opportunity for alternative behavior but also the motivation. The second source is the declining performance of the decision making bodies within the system. In the Communist state, as the organs of power were increasingly disabled by increasingly centralized control, national elites found their avenues of action further reduced forcing them to act outside the system.

To study this phenomenon of elite behavior it is first necessary to examine how these elites came to occupy positions of power and how they acted in those positions in terms of reliability to the central mandates. Only then can we progress to examining the manifestations of elite behavior among the Communist Party elite in Ukraine.

#### 1. Ukrainian Communists Come To Power

The primary precondition for Ukrainian ruling elites to take advantage of a conflicting nationalities policy and federalist structure came soon after WWII. At this time, Ukrainians achieved domination of the CPU and Russian control over the day to day operation of the Party began to slacken.

Khrushchev, seemingly unaware of its potential to backfire, offered Ukrainians an increased role for national elites in the high echelons of republican leadership. Simon documents that beginning in the 1950s this resulted in a large number of non-Russians being represented in local republic executive Party positions.<sup>211</sup> It appears that Khrushchev

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<sup>211</sup>In spite of the changes under Khrushchev the non-Russian nations generally had low party participation and in the 1960s and 1970s the Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Balts experienced pronounced decreases in membership. Only by the early 1980s had non-Russian participation increased and Ukrainians holding party membership were for the first time in proportion with their population. (SIMO91, pp. 273-4)

was forced toward this direction by the necessity to replenish Party membership which had plummeted during and right after the war. His ukrainianization of the local Party rolls was successful; by 1949 almost half of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) was composed of those who had joined after 1945.<sup>212</sup>

This shift in the Party rolls gave Ukrainians unheard of opportunities to rise to higher positions in the Party and after the June 1953 CC CPU plenum, the doors were opened to even the highest posts. Very quickly the first and second secretary posts were filled by Ukrainians (Kirichenko and Pidhornyi) and by 1954, Ukrainian presence in the CPU CC leapt from 62 to 72 percent.<sup>213</sup> In a stunning, reversal of past policy, from 1955 to 1972, 93 percent of the Ukrainian Politburo was Ukrainian. Overall, during this period, republican Party members in Ukraine managed to maintain 75-89 percent of the Party jobs.<sup>214</sup> Even more significantly, the majority of these new Ukrainian party elites were from the less russified oblasts of Ukraine and thus were "far more influenced by the Ukrainian fact."<sup>215</sup> A surprising 13 percent of the CPU total membership was composed of Western Ukrainians.<sup>216</sup>

## 2. The CPU Is Reigned In

The sporadic concessions and permissiveness of the Khrushchev administration came to an abrupt end when Brezhnev came to power and

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<sup>212</sup>KRAW85, p. 243 see also DMYT56, pp. 239-242 for more details on party composition during this time.

<sup>213</sup>KRAW85, p. 244.

<sup>214</sup>Hodnett's study cited in SIM091, pp. 276-7.

<sup>215</sup>KRAW85, p. 244.

<sup>216</sup>KRAW85, pp. 247-8.

refused to concede any more authority to the republican leadership and purged Ukrainian First Secretary Shelest in May 1972. During subsequent purges, Shelest and his administration were decried for their "unprincipled tolerant attitude on the part of individual leading cadres toward manifestations of national limitedness and localism."<sup>217</sup>

The purge of Shelest and the CPU slowed, but did not stop, the turn toward increased autonomy for the CPU. As Krawchenko writes,

with the fall of Shelest, autonomism as a movement within the CPU suffered a major setback. But since conditions that gave rise to it have not changed, its re-emergence within the CPU remains part of the historical agenda.<sup>218</sup>

In this atmosphere, Shcherbytsky, who replaced Shelest as First Secretary, proved a reliable representative of the CPSU in Ukraine. However, the transition from Shelest to Shcherbytsky was a drawn out process which has led some scholars such as Yaroslav Bilinsky to speculate that Shcherbytsky experienced difficulties in consolidating his power over Ukraine.<sup>219</sup> Another conclusion drawn from this lengthy transition is that of Grey Hodnett who suggests that the problem which the CPSU was attempting to root out was bigger than Shelest and his network. This process of purging may in fact have included other campaigns, or may have reflected difficulties implementing new policies or even factionalism in the CPU.<sup>220</sup> These theories are supported not only by the prolonged

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<sup>217</sup>New Ukrainian first secretary Shcherbytsky's speech during the April 1975 CPU CC Plenum as quoted in KRAW85, p. 249.

<sup>218</sup>KRAW85, p. 250.

<sup>219</sup>See Y. Bilinsky, "The Communist Party of Ukraine after 1966," in Ukraine in the Seventies, pp. 239-266.

<sup>220</sup>Hodnett quoted in SOLC83, pp. 8-9.



series of purges after Sheles. but by the subsequent purging of some officials who conducted the original purge.<sup>221</sup>

## **B. A POLITICAL ACTION PROBLEM -IRREGULAR BEHAVIOR**

Ukrainian elites, under the pressures of the structural problem addressed above began, with increasing strength, to display irregular behavior. This behavior was centered on issues of culture, economics, and ecology and in each, there were manifested demands for increased autonomy.

### **1. Culture**

Frustrations with the structural conflicts of the Soviet system and Ukrainian desires for autonomy first appeared as a growing gap between the intellectual elite and the Party, as well as between Ukrainian Party elites and their Moscow counterparts on the issue of culture and language. In fact, overall, the role of the CPU in cultural matters in Ukraine did much to alienate the Ukrainian intelligentsia in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Krawchenko shows in great detail that the desires of the Ukrainian public were deliberately ignored as Moscow deliberately attempted to eliminate Ukrainian language publications. He cites the publication of newspapers as a good example that Moscow deliberately disregarded the desires of Ukrainians. In 1971, 70 percent of all newspaper titles and 68 percent of the circulation was claimed by Ukrainian language papers. In Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovs'k the evening papers were published only in Ukrainian up until 1972 which demonstrates that even in the Russified regions the demand for Ukrainian publications was quite well established. The all-union agency *soiusspechat'* was accused

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<sup>221</sup>See SOLC83, pp. 8-9.

of systematically suppressing the publication and distribution of Ukrainian language newspapers and readers continually complained of short supply.<sup>222</sup>

Ukrainians and an increasingly Ukrainianized republican elite fought to reverse the centralized policies toward literature and language and until the purge of Shelest in 1972, they were remarkably successful. Their efforts to preserve Ukrainian literature and language were part of a more global strategy of preserving the Ukrainian nation. To the intellectuals, it was rapidly become apparent that Soviet policy toward Ukraine during this era was threatening the very existence of their nation. As Jones and Yasen summarize this policy;

The harsh treatment of Ukrainian writers and artists must be interpreted as nothing less than an expedient Stalinist approach to liquidating the leading Ukrainian creative intelligentsia and thereby accelerating the destruction of Ukrainian culture.<sup>223</sup>

In this way, language functioned as a symbol of a larger struggle and not the key struggle itself and as Krawchenko argues, the Ukrainian political, as well as intellectual elites selected language as a symbol to gain access and control over society.<sup>224</sup> This is easily obscured because this elite competition and struggle for control is often less tangible than is the status of language. Connor supports this view by observing that economics, language, religion are often not primary factors in a nationalist struggle although they are often presented as the causes since they are more tangible than national consciousness.<sup>225</sup> Language was in

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<sup>222</sup>KRAW85, pp. 240-241.

<sup>223</sup>JONE77, p. 9.

<sup>224</sup>KRAW85, p. 199.

<sup>225</sup>CONN72, pp. 340-342.

many ways a cover for other underlying sentiments which were more dangerous to the state.

## 2. Economics

More so than the visible issue of language, however, the issue of economics seemed to elicit "irregular" behavior among regional elites in Ukraine.<sup>226</sup> For those in power in Ukraine, economics were a source of much frustration and growing alienation from the center. The problem was simply that in the field of economics, the powerlessness of the CPU and the Kiev government was impossible to hide. Political leaders, as well as followers came to the same conclusion that Gordijew and Koropecikj reach, namely that Ukraine's economic deficiencies

could have been eliminated or at least ameliorated if the Kiev government had a freer hand in pursuing economic policies of its own choosing. As it is, that government has continuously had to subordinate the interests of the Ukrainian economy to those of the USSR.<sup>227</sup>

This subordination created a lever by which the Ukrainian Party elite could begin to access popular support and through which they began to exhibit increasingly "irregular" behavior.

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<sup>226</sup>While the connection between economics and nationalism is hotly contested, the example of Ukraine seems to indicate that there is a relationship between the two. Namely, along the lines of Greene, who in his study of comparative revolution, is careful to point out that nationalism's role in revolution or social movements is not necessarily that of a precipitator but more that of a sustaining force. He notes that even where the potential for nationalist appeal is strong, the revolution or the movement itself is usually triggered by less noble concerns such as unemployment, lack of social mobility, education and the like. Thus he concludes that the role of ideology in revolutionary movements is to reinforce rather than to create the conditions which facilitate cross-class alliances and mobilization. (GREE84, pp. 102-103) This seems to apply to Ukraine where issues of russification (and economic results of it) seemed to be the key concerns about which nationalism coalesced. It is also interesting to note that cross-class alliances in Ukraine (to include cross-nationality alliances between Russians in Ukraine and Ukrainians) were formed, certainly not by nationalism, but by common economic and environmental concerns. Nationalism was important in that it initially established the boundaries of the problem as an anti-center issue which had a well rooted traditional appeal to Ukrainians of many classes. It transcended this appeal however, and came to attract even those Russians who lived in Eastern Ukraine's Donbas.

<sup>227</sup>GORD81, p. 294.

**a. *Exploitation as a Focal Point***

To Ukrainians, both in the government and outside it, the idea of economic exploitation was powerful because it struck a resonance with a long standing aspect of the national myth, namely, that Ukraine is inherently a rich country and if only it could throw off their oppressor Ukrainians could prosper. As a result, the issue of economic exploitation has played a long and important role in the history of Ukrainian attitudes toward the center under the Tsar and under Communists.

Ukrainian claims that they have paid considerable opportunity costs for their present institutional arrangement, have been denied by Soviet sources who point to the unparalleled economic benefits of being a member of the USSR. Some Western sources have also tended to discredit the notion that Ukraine has suffered economic ill as a result of its membership in the USSR. For example, Richard Pipes, writes;

Statistical computations purporting to show that Russia withdraws more wealth from the national republics than it puts into them are not convincing, because they usually do not take into account the cost of administration and defense which these republics would have to bear if they were independent. They are indeed no more realistic than Marxist statistics adduced to show imperialistic exploitation of colonies by capitalist countries.<sup>228</sup>

However, Gordijew and Koropecykj, both economists specializing in the USSR and Eastern Europe, conclude that Ukraine's claims of exploitation are in fact justified.<sup>229</sup> Schroeder's economic statistics also prove this

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<sup>228</sup>Richard Pipes, quoted in GORD81, p. 295, footnote 71. Pipes ignores the fact that most countries do not expend such a large percentage of GNP on defense and that in the case of Ukraine, this heavy burden was compounded by a central planing system not found in most other countries.

<sup>229</sup>See GORD81.

thesis of disproportional extraction of national wealth and investment in Ukraine.<sup>230</sup>

Ukraine's contributions to industrialization under both the Tsar and the Communists has been significant and Ukraine has for a long time supported a great portion of the USSR defense capability.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, Gordijew and Koropecykj argue that "there is no doubt that the Ukraine experienced continuous and significant loss of its national income to other parts of the USSR."<sup>232</sup> Gordijew and Koropecykj conclude that "there is no doubt that the Ukraine experienced continuous and significant loss of its national income to other parts of the USSR." The post-war economic policies placed Ukraine in what Solovei called the "scissors of colonialism" in which "in every significant sector of industry, Ukraine's share of all-Union production declined, whereas Russia's share increased."<sup>233</sup>

This loss of national income reduced both consumption and investment in Ukraine. These unfavorable trends, combined with Moscow's refusal to compensate Ukraine for its higher than average labor productivity, meant a continual downward slide for the Ukrainian economy.<sup>234</sup> Economic growth was fueled primarily by growth of the labor

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<sup>230</sup>SCHR90, pp. 43-71.

<sup>231</sup>GORD81, p. 295.

<sup>232</sup>GORD81, p. 296. According to various sources cited in Gordijew and Koropecykj, the difference between the national income which Ukraine produced annually and that which was utilized in Ukraine annually vary between 10 and 20 percent of Ukraine's NMP. A 1977 study conducted by University of Cincinnati professor of finance Zenon L. Melnyk showed that 20 percent of Ukraine's national income was transferred to other regions of the USSR. (Study cited in DIUK90, p. 50) For comparison; the transfer of industrial profits from Lithuania to a combination of the All-Union budget and the All-Union ministries in 1988 were put at 55%. (BELK90, p. 638)

<sup>233</sup>As quoted in KRAW85, p. 248 (Ftn 364).

<sup>234</sup>GORD81, p. 297.

force rather than by the influx of capital which has made the Ukrainian economy labor intensive and thus, less able to introduce and adapt to new technology. Gordijew and Koropecykj conclude their study of Ukraine's economic role in the USSR by saying that Ukraine has indeed suffered as a result of the last 70 years of centralized, socialist economic direction:

There is little doubt that the present political status of the Ukraine makes it the object of planning objectives that subordinate, and therefore sacrifice, the interest of its residents for the achievement of aims of a much larger agglomeration. This much has been recognized-however grudgingly, even by Soviet economists.<sup>235</sup>

Even if feelings of economic exploitation by the center were not justified, the mere fact that they exist among such a wide spectrum of society in Ukraine make these feelings significant in defining relations between Ukraine and the center.

The importance of having local control of Ukraine's economy became evident in the post-1965 era when the centralization of economic control was strengthened. In the 1950s and early 1960s the power of Ukrainian authorities to make their own economic policy was great and the economy was very efficiently managed. From 1965 on, especially after the new Soviet Constitution was introduced in 1978, efficiency plummeted as a direct result of the "virtual elimination of any lingering elements of separateness of the national economies of individual Union republics."<sup>236</sup> This problem was highlighted by a growing fuel shortage in Ukraine in the 1970s and 1980s despite the fact that Ukraine exports coal and natural gas to other republics. The shortages could have been eliminated by decreasing Ukraine's energy exports but Moscow, instead, ordered Ukraine

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<sup>235</sup>GORD81, p. 298.

<sup>236</sup>GORD81, p. 291.

to import oil from the RSFSR to make up the deficits. Not only was this inadequate to eliminate the shortages but when the Ukrainian leadership demanded increased energy development in Ukraine their requests were denied.<sup>237</sup>

As it was, the republican leadership presided over an increasingly ailing economy suffering from severe structural and regional economic imbalances. Under such circumstances it is not difficult to see how the ruling political elite came to resent central control and strive for national autonomy.

*b. The Economic Status of Ukraine in the Gorbachev Era*

With Gorbachev in the Kremlin it appeared that economically there was hope for Ukraine. Gorbachev was advocating increased productivity and local economic authority but progress was slow, especially in Ukraine. There is, as Seweryn Bialer notes, a particular social rule in the Soviet system that requires that economic reform not begin with the economic system but with the political system<sup>238</sup> in which ironically, the root of the problem lay.

Despite symbolic economic reform at the "Frunze" machine-tool factory which began in 1985<sup>239</sup>, reform came slowly to Ukraine. The economic reforms under Gorbachev were tentative and half-measures which encouraged various regions and republics to seek out new economic methods and strategies. In this economic free for all, as Donna Bahry points out,

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<sup>237</sup>GORD81, p. 292.

<sup>238</sup>As Quoted in KRAW89, p. 7.

<sup>239</sup>See MARP91, p. 2.

"the geography of reform has been uneven."<sup>240</sup> The unevenness was a function, Bahry argues, of "differences in regional leaders' commitment and political capacity" to execute such reforms. In Ukraine, the delay of reform was a function of Soviet desire to keep a tight reign on Ukraine. Under Shcherbytsky, economic reform occurred slowly and only in accord with the center's desires. After Shcherbytsky's ouster in 1989, economic reforms began to take on a more republican nature in Ukraine.

However, as regional leaders began to demand their share of all-Union funds and resources from the various ministries in order to fuel their local economic enterprises they began to realize that they had little capability to act. The loss of alcohol tax revenue and the transfer of control over coal mines, geological services, and metallurgy industries to the center in 1987 had greatly reduced the amount of local funds for local industry.<sup>241</sup> Marples claims that prior to the republican declaration of sovereignty, Ukraine, in spite of supposed reforms, controlled only 5 percent of its own industry and resources.<sup>242</sup> Economic progress was dismal under perestroika; by 1988 less than 50 percent of Ukrainian industry had even started to move toward self-financing and accounting which was to have been completed by 1989, agricultural production was plummeting, coal output was suffering from lack of capital inflow and thus self-financing was producing no effect; the construction industry was in shambles with shortages and unbelievably long completion

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<sup>240</sup>BAHR89, p. 3.

<sup>241</sup>BAHR89, p. 4.

<sup>242</sup>MARP91, p. 2.



times as a result.<sup>243</sup> In 1991 the Ukrainian journal *Demokratychna Ukraina* (30 October) announced that the GNP of Ukraine had fallen by 8 percent<sup>244</sup>, industrial productivity had decreased by 4.7 percent, only 80% of last years gain yield had been collected and prices were continuing to rise.<sup>245</sup>

The central system of allocation of goods soon came under criticism as the economic situation worsened and Moscow's control over the direction of economic transactions was quickly challenged and subverted. The cries for territorial economic autonomy increased rapidly and Gorbachev's foot-dragging in this area in 1989 encouraged local republican Party leaders further and further toward localism or republicanism with their goals set on the welfare of their republic rather than on the Union itself. Moscow's demands and directives were now routinely being ignored with no reprisals.

As a result of the general failure of the economy, the average citizen's economic well-being was increasingly jeopardized which rapidly politicized him in a way no amount of lecturing by intellectuals on the need to revitalize the Ukrainian language and culture had been able to do. Due to declining agricultural production, food consumption levels fell, and continued to fall, below recommended norms.<sup>246</sup> Wages in Ukraine were "considerably" lower than in the RSFSR, Byelorussia, or the

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<sup>243</sup>HARP91, p. 7.

<sup>244</sup>Radio Kiev on 4 November reported a decrease of 7 percent. (See Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 20, November 1991, p. 4.

<sup>245</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 20, november 1991, p. 6.

<sup>246</sup>HARP91, p. 5.

Baltics.<sup>247</sup> Approximately 14 percent of the population was in "extreme" need of housing and general housing shortages increased in spite of programs to ameliorate the demand as the number of newly constructed apartments in Ukraine actually decreased by 5 percent in 1990.<sup>248</sup> In 1991 the number of Ukrainians waiting for State-owned apartments reached 2.6 million and today one out of every four urban families in Ukraine is waiting for an apartment.<sup>249</sup> Power production stagnated in 1990 and rationing and outages began in 1990.<sup>250</sup> As Ukrainian sources indicated for the period 1986-1987, 45 percent of the Ukrainian population was living below the poverty line (125 R/month) primarily due to inflation outstripping wage increases.<sup>251</sup>

Under these circumstances, Marples classifies Ukrainian society into three economic groups: the fairly well-off who have nothing on which to spend their salaries; the middle group (31 percent of the population); and a much larger poor stratum whose standard of living was continually decreasing.<sup>252</sup>

### *c. Economic Issues and CPU Aspirations*

In the area of economics, the CPU was especially vulnerable to "irregular behavior." Rukh candidate Pohribnyi, campaigning in March 1990 as a member of the opposition while still a Party member stressed the

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<sup>247</sup>MARP91, p. 9.

<sup>248</sup>MARP91, p.9, and Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 6.

<sup>249</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 6.

<sup>250</sup>MARP91, p. 10.

<sup>251</sup>O. Moskvina, Analiz tendentsii zminy rivnya zhyttia naselennya USSR, Ekonomika Radians'koi Ukrainy, No. 2, 1990, pp. 13-21 cited in MARP91, p. 11.

<sup>252</sup>MARP91, pp. 10-11.

fact that not only does a large sector of the CPU want sovereignty for Ukraine but that the key issue in the struggle for Ukraine's future is first and foremost an issue of economic control.

The Ukrainian SSR should have jurisdiction over its natural, economic, cultural, and other resources. This is a question of sovereignty.... We are totally dependent in all areas. We live in a monopolized state. I don't know of any analogies that one could draw where everything is so centralized. We would like this to be a Ukrainian Republic,... a Ukrainian state that would have jurisdiction over all its resources.<sup>253</sup>

He goes on to provide an example of the ridiculous proportions centralized planing has reached in Ukraine;

You know that in our country sugar is rationed. When there is not enough sugar we get it from abroad.... Last year the per capita production of sugar in Ukraine was 160 kilograms. This is a great deal of sugar; one could get buried under all that sugar.<sup>254</sup>

He calls for the right to be able to cover domestic need and sell the rest to whom and at what price the producers see fit. He concludes,

What do we need sovereignty for? Not to be up to our necks in sugar but to have normal relations, contractual relations. At present there is only draining, draining, and draining, and as a result some terribly unjust things happen.<sup>255</sup>

Pohribnyi reflects the idea that Ukraine could be rich if it were not for the exploitation and plundering by the Soviet system - a historic legend which some argue is just that - a legend. But none the less, Ukraine's political elites were greatly influenced by this idea of power and wealth independent from the center.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>253</sup>SOLC90C, p. 24.

<sup>254</sup>SOLC90C, p. 24.

<sup>255</sup>SOLC90C, p. 25.

<sup>256</sup>It was not only the elites which began to be influenced by the ideas of economic exploitation and deprivation. A survey of public opinion printed in the 31 October 1991, issue of Vechirnyi Kiev noted that the main reason for the mass support of the declaration of sovereignty was economic and ecological. Nearly 79 percent of respondents indicated that their reason for supporting independence was "quicker to climb out of the economic crisis." At 62 and 60 percent

Dissatisfaction with the declining economic status of Ukraine made the CPU a target for opposition forces while the disadvantageous central economic policies inevitably drew additional lines of battle between the center and the periphery. As the CPU came under attack it was unavoidable that Moscow would become the target of Kiev's dissatisfaction as was evident during a 15 September 1991 mass meeting in Kiev at which a banner appeared next to St. Sophia's cathedral reading "Kiev versus Moscow!"<sup>257</sup> This pitting of Ukrainians against the CPU and against the center was no longer an elite phenomenon. Tragedies such as the accident at the Chernobyl Atomic Energy Station (AES) in April 1986 served as a powerful symbol of CPU and central incompetence and callousness and was an early catalyst for the process of political mobilization among all Ukrainians.

### 3. Ecology

When the impossible happened at Chornobyl and an explosion spread radioactive material over a large portion of Ukraine and Byelorussia in 1986, the Party was faced with more than an ecological crises. The most critical problem was how to handle the accident in an increasingly open society. The Kremlin decided absolute secrecy was the best approach but unlike in earlier years, Chornobyl's impact was international and soon Gorbachev was faced with having to tell the truth. Not only did this

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respectively the issues of increased standard of living and improved ecological status of the cities were the next most common reasons. Among Ukraine's youth dissatisfaction with the economy is even greater. A poll of youth prior to the coup published in Zelenyi Svit (September 1991) revealed that after the April 1991 price rises, 80% of youth were living below the 260-290 Ruble/mo minimum allowance. When asked how long they would be willing to wait for change, only 3% said over 10 years, 20% are willing to wait 2-3 years, and 70% said they cannot wait any longer. (Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 17, September 1991, p. 6).

<sup>257</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 8.

expand the limits of *glasnost*<sup>258</sup> but it fueled an ecological movement which quickly became a focus for political activism.

a. *The Chornobyl Fallout*

Although the real story about Chornobyl may yet to be revealed, when the basic facts about Chornobyl began to come to light in Ukraine in 1987, it suddenly became, as the Byelorussian Chornobyl relief worker Olga Korbutska described it, "a 20th Century Calvary" for those effected by the accident.<sup>259</sup> The Chornobyl incident had a tremendous and multiform impact on Ukrainian society.

The incident provided a focus for opposition groups and turned their sights directly toward Moscow at whose feet they lay the responsibility for the accident and its subsequent mishandling. The accident broadened the range of opposition from cultural to ecological, economic, and social issues and greatly expanded the base of support from a small group of intellectual elites to the whole of Ukrainian society (including Russians and other minorities). The incident also highlighted the ineffectiveness and complete subordination of the CPU to the center and undermined the credibility of the Party among Ukrainians.

To the opposition forces, Chornobyl was a major turning point and previously "middle of the road" elites were radicalized and pushed toward the opposition platform. As an example of this process, less than one and a half months after Chernobyl, the Writers' Union of Ukraine at their 9th Congress tied ecology to more general problems in the republic. The opening speech by the leading Ukrainian literary figure,

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<sup>258</sup>NAHA89, pp. 223-4.

<sup>259</sup>HAD291A, p. 5.

Oles' Honchar, set the tone by identifying the Chernobyl incident as a mandate for Ukraine's writers to show increased civic action and live up to the needs of the country. He talked not only about the need to protect the environment but leapt into the controversial topic of preserving the Ukrainian Language and culture.<sup>260</sup>

These themes were echoed a month later at the Soviet Writers' Congress in Moscow during which participants expressed an anti-russification sentiment and demanded more say in the running of their own republican governments. The explosion of sentiment was, in the words of Nahaylo and Swoboda, "the most forthright and comprehensive expression of grievances and demands voiced at any official forum since the 1920s."<sup>261</sup>

In 1990 an informal ecological association called Green World (*Zelenyi Svit*) was formed and in 1991 the Ukrainian Green Party (*Partiya Zelnykh*) arose from this group under the leadership of the writer and physician Yuriy Shcherbak who later became Ukraine's Minister of the Environment. Their mission as described by Dr. Preobrazhenska, is "to defend the innate right of the individual, the right to life [because] in my country, the Soviet government does not adhere to this principle."<sup>262</sup> This group in conjunction with the parliamentary Chornobyl Committee, has effectively led protests against the Chornobyl coverup and more generally, the Soviet Energy Program in Ukraine. In June 1991 they claimed a membership of 500,000 in Ukraine. A number of smaller, less well organized groups also sprang up around the issue of nuclear energy. For

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<sup>260</sup> NAH89, p. 244.

<sup>261</sup> NAH89, p. 245.

<sup>262</sup> LEW91A, p. 9.

example, at Kiev University in the Winter of 1987 a group calling themselves "The Perestroika Club" called for Ukraine to be declared a nuclear free zone.<sup>263</sup>

*b. The Widening of Protest*

Although the immediate reaction of Chornobyl was ecologically oriented, its impact rapidly began to be felt in other parts of Ukrainian society. By early 1987 it was becoming popular in the Ukrainian press to write of an "ecology of the spirit" and the similarities between the linguistic and the environmental situation.<sup>264</sup> Ecological damage was equated to moral rot internal to Ukraine and was an issue which Iurii Mushketyk, the head of the Union, used to illustrate how Ukraine's writers contributed to Ukraine's downfall by writing nothing but praise for the construction of new dams, factories, and power plants. "It was we," he said, "who glorified the construction of the Chornobyl' nuclear power plant."<sup>265</sup> Such complicity led to media coverage which ignored the problems of Chernobyl and the explosion there in 1986 and actually encouraged people to engage in activities which exposed them to great harm. Mushketyk continues,

We, naturally, knew nothing about this, because the period to the breakdown of radioactive iodine was also the period of the downfall of the morality of some of our top leaders. The press, television, and radio are all within our domain. We did not know, have not learned and still do not know how to live in a way that is consistent with a policy of *hlasnist'* [glasnost].<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>263</sup>UPA, No. 4, 22 January 1988.

<sup>264</sup>This is a revival of Honchar's analogy made in his 1968 *Sobor* and one which he, himself revived during the 9th Congress of the Writer's Union of Ukraine in June 1986. (PAVL87, p. 7)

<sup>265</sup>One critical article was written on the subject by Liubov Kivalevs'ka, editor of the local Prypitat' paper, and which was published in *Literaturna Ukraine* on 27 March 1986.

<sup>266</sup>UKRA87, p. 13.

Chernobyl also widened the scope of opposition demands by turning Ukrainian opposition forces on the center. Chernobyl became a powerful emotional and political issue not so much because of the 7-10,000 casualties and unknown others suffering the effects of the accident, but because it was cast in the light of Ukraine suffering due to the incompetence of Moscow. For example Dr. Marples in his analysis of the Green Party mentions and supports the allegation that then Ukrainian First Secretary, Shcherbytsky, wanted on 10 May 1986 to evacuate the city of Kiev which is less than 70 miles from Chornobyl and was stopped from doing so by Gorbachev who called him "panicker."<sup>267</sup> Under Moscow's directive, the three Chornobyl reactors continued to operate until 1991 when the Ukrainian parliament ordered them stopped.<sup>268</sup>

All in all, the Chernobyl incident highlighted the fact that Ukrainians were pawns of Moscow and a growing number of Ukrainians began to draw the conclusion that, as one opposition leader put it; "The people of Ukraine have been the victims of a totalitarian system where all of us are ecological prisoners."<sup>269</sup>

The scope of opposition demands was widened still further by the Green Party's successful linkage of Moscow's economic program to the powerful political and moral issue of Chornobyl. Dr. Shcherbak has tied the impact of Chornobyl to the industrial pollution in Ukraine by

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<sup>267</sup>MARP91D, p. 2.

<sup>268</sup>Ukraine managed to secure an agreement with Moscow to take over nuclear plants on its territory in July 1991 and voted in August to shut down the AES by 1995. However, the Green Movement achieved a great victory on 29 October 1991 when the Ukrainian parliament voted to shut down the AES no later than 1993. In doing so the Parliament issued an appeal to the UN citing its "responsibility to the world community" for help in shutting down the plant and dealing with the failed reactor problem and dealing with the linger problems of 1986.

<sup>269</sup>PRE091, p. 8.



declaring Ukraine a "zone of ecological catastrophe," a claim which the Ukrainian government itself adopted in 1991 as it began to separate itself from Moscow.<sup>270</sup> Chernobyl and the lingering problems of 1986 were seen as a symbol of what the opposition referred to as "the greatest techogenetic global catastrophe in human history, which revealed to the whole world to what fatal limits we have approached as a result of an unprecedented growth in the capacity of industry, generated by the military-industrial complex."<sup>271</sup>

The Chornobyl accident not only focused and magnified opposition efforts and exposed the powerlessness of the CPU, it undermined the credibility of the entire Soviet system which allowed this accident to happen and then bungled the cleanup and impeded aid to the suffering.<sup>272</sup> The complicity of the government and Communist Party leadership was supported by the belated realization that while Soviet officials were encouraging residents of Kiev to come out into the streets to celebrate the annual May Day holiday despite the radioactive cloud from Chornobyl which hung over the city, their own children and wives were being hurriedly evacuated from the fall-out zone.<sup>273</sup>

In summary, the roots of Ukrainian Party elite disaffection with the center were founded on a structural contradiction between the

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<sup>270</sup> HARP91D, p. 2.

<sup>271</sup> LAPPY91B, p. 12. There are many areas of vast ecological destruction in Ukraine. The majority of them are in Eastern Ukraine in the most heavily industrialized and russified parts of Ukraine. In the Dniprodzerzhynske region, for example, not only are there large chemical plants but also a uranium processing plant for the military around which radiation levels are claimed to be higher than at Chornobyl.

<sup>272</sup> HARP91D, p. 2.

<sup>273</sup> PREO91, p. 8.

promise of power and the subsequent denial of that power. The Ukrainian elite were in a position to voice their frustrations because of the important role they play in the CPSU as well as their large ethnic share in the CPU. The question of reliability, often incorrectly analyzed, clearly indicates that the tendency for these elites is to pursue their local interests with the desire to rule themselves over their republic. These factors result in "irregular" behavior most clearly manifested in continuing cultural conflict but more strongly in protest of economic policies of the center which robbed the republican elites of any real control in Ukraine. Feelings of exploitation grew stronger as the economy in the USSR slowed further and the myth that Ukraine could be a great and wealthy land continued to operate in the background promising to the CPU elite an even more powerful position if they could just get control of the Ukrainian economy. In such a polarized environment the struggle was clearly between Ukraine's Party and governmental elites and those in Moscow. Chernobyl and its political fallout added to these other pressures and magnified and intensified opposition demands and simultaneously undermined the CPU and drove a wedge between Ukraine and Moscow.

### C. CONCLUSION

The elite loyalty problem was one of the main aspects of the Soviet nationality problem throughout the history of the state. Loyalty in the Soviet periphery has been most fundamentally swayed by the rise of national consciousness which divided the loyalty of peripheral elites between their national group and the Soviet State.

As Ukrainian history shows, the level and intensity of national consciousness and thus degradation of loyalty to the center, varies with time. For example, although Ukraine entered the 20th century with low levels of consciousness it rose sharply, although insufficiently, in 1917. National consciousness began to rise again in the 1930s but there simply wasn't time to mobilize and develop national consciousness sufficiently to overcome the integral and external hurdles to nation-building. After WWII, however, the development of national consciousness developed in a fundamentally different way and civic consciousness replaced ethnic consciousness. This change of direction quickly became manifested in political opposition and in individual dissent.

National consciousness impinged upon every Ukrainian in some way or another and it was clear by the 1960s that not even the Communist elites were exempt from such influences. In reaction to Shelest's overt leaning toward the path which national consciousness indicated, Moscow reinstated severe repression in an attempt to stem the growth of Ukrainian national consciousness. Like before, this worked for a while but irregular behavior was not totally eliminated.

The tendency for Ukrainian Party elites to pursue republican over all-Union interests was as much a result of their cultural-political heritage as it was the contradictions of the Communism system. This "irregular" behavior was manifested primarily in the area of economics. There was a concerted and continuous effort on behalf of Ukraine's Communist elites to achieve economic autonomy under Shelest and even after his replacement this tendency was difficult to stop. It seemed, more than anything to be motivated by feelings of exploitation by the center and these feelings

continued to grow in the 1970s and 1980s as the Soviet economy stagnated and began to decline. Increased demands for resources and the shift from distribution to redistribution led to sharpened conflicts between Moscow and Kiev. Gorbachev's arrival to the Kremlin in 1985 did little to resolve these underlying causes of increasingly "irregular" behavior among Ukraine's Party leadership.

The future of relations between the center and the periphery were increasingly being shaped by what Moscow saw as non-acceptable behavior both by opposition forces within and outside the Party. The Ukrainian Party was severely reigned in under the leadership of Shcherbytsky and ironically was thus less prepared to survive in a world of opposition. Clearly, being aligned closely to the center, as Shcherbytsky's mandate demanded, was neither good for Ukraine nor the Ukrainian Communist Party which was increasingly driven apart from its supposed constituency which began to oppose the center with increasing voracity.

Underlying the CPU's "irregular" behavior was a motivation for autonomy and to be rulers in their own kingdom without central interference. This motivation resurfaced in 1989 and came to be a fundamental influence on the course of the CPU leadership from 1989 forward. This course of events is the focus of the following chapters.

## V. PRELUDE TO TRANSITION - AN INTRODUCTION TO PART II

This chapter introduces the second half of this paper which focuses on what happened when the ideological and structural contradictions of the Soviet state mixed with increasing Ukrainian national consciousness in an atmosphere of social, political, and economic tension in the late 1980s. When these tensions began to reach a critical climax, Gorbachev's reform-minded administration adopted radical policies to meet these crises and in so doing, began a process of deconstruction which eventually destroyed the Soviet Union. The rapid pace of events and the weakening of the Party in the rarified atmosphere of impending collapse in the late 1980s make this an excellent era for studying the ideological and structural contradictions of the Communist systems and the influences of non-Russian nationalism on elite loyalty.

The roots of the crisis which the USSR faced in the 1980s lay in the social, political, and economic collapse of the state. There is a Polish joke which aptly summarizes the crisis in which the Soviet Union found itself in 1989; namely without ideological or forceful means to prevent its own collapse from within.

An older man ventures to buy meat. A long line has already formed, people waiting for the meat to arrive. The delivery is not coming; the people are getting impatient. The man begins to swear: at the leader, at the party, at the system. Another man approaches him and remarks pointing to his head: 'You know comrade, if you said things like this in the old days, we would just go "paf" and it would be all over.' The old man returns home empty handed. His wife asks: 'They have no more meat?' 'It is worse than that,' the man replies, 'they have no more bullets.'<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> PRZE91, p. 22.

This was a crisis of vast proportions - economic, social, moral, and ideological. The key question became how could these problems be fixed, or more precisely, how can Communism be reformed?

As it turned out, Communism could not be reformed, it could only be destroyed. Communism, and the Party were destroyed from the outside but not before the Party was weakened on the inside. While Gorbachev played a fundamental, leading role in this weakening process, republican elites accelerated and maintained the process by reverting to "irregular" or nationally-based behavior.

The purpose of this second half of this study is to apply the theoretical and practical background from the preceeding chapters to the nationalization of the CPU from 1988-1991. The argument flows from the preceding chapters, namely that Ukraine's communist elites chose the national path rather than the Soviet one because of the pull of their national consciousness and their desire to maintain power. The changes in the CPU, were in part initiated in the CPU by members more influenced by their national consciousness. Pressures from above and below contributed to the decline of Party power and legitimacy forcing even those not nationally inclined to find the Ukraine path more promising than the one laid out by Moscow.

To begin this final part of this paper it is necessary to set out the situation facing the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, Gorbachev's response to it, and the resulting environment in Ukraine prior to 1988.

#### **A. THE SOVIET DILEMMA**

In many senses, the situation facing the Kremlin in 1985 was one driven by external pressures. For example, Mikhail Heller cites the

revolutionary transformation of the 20th century world from industrial to information societies as responsible for this collapse of the Soviet Empire. The USSR was unable to make this transition without destroying itself because the free access to information would "break the magic circle which imprisons the Soviet people."<sup>275</sup> And yet if the transformation could not be made, the USSR's superpower status would begin to rapidly erode and without the legitimacy of this status as a protector of the people, the masses would see that their years of deprivation in the name of national pride were no longer required.<sup>276</sup>

On the other hand, the situation in which Gorbachev found himself in as he took power in 1985 was nothing new. Gorbachev, argues Vera Tolz, in announcing in 1986 that Soviet society must be changed was merely acknowledging a *fait accompli*. As she argues, Gorbachev was merely acknowledging a process of change begun from below in the 1960s.<sup>277</sup>

This process of change was to eventually lead to destruction of the Communist system because of both internal and external factors. Leon Aron summarizes the collapse of the Soviet Union by identifying three contributing influences, which he calls "*bunt* factors" after the Russian word for rebellion. These three factors have been active in every major revolution in the Soviet (Russian) empire since 1861 are at work today.<sup>278</sup> The first *bunt* factor is "delegitimization" of the regime

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<sup>275</sup>HELL88, p. 263.

<sup>276</sup>HELL88, p. 263.

<sup>277</sup>TOLZ90, pp. 6-7. In Ukraine this process from below began in the 1960s under Khrushchev and continued into Brezhnev's era. Thus the saying that the country underwent a revolution while Brezhnev slept.

<sup>278</sup>ARON89, pp. 25-26.

which is today manifested in the banishment of the Communist Party and mass rejection of communist symbols as well as institutions. The second is "impoverishment of the population" which is manifested both in terms of food shortages and in a larger way the utter collapse of the central economy. The final factor is "military defeat" which at the time Aron was writing, appeared to be the defeat in Afghanistan but now seems to have been the loss of the cold war.

However, this approach is inadequate by itself; as Gale Stokes points out, the unpredictable events were the result of "moral rot as least as much as of economic or political failure."<sup>279</sup> What happened in Eastern Europe and the USSR was a moral revolution; an outright rejection of the humiliation and moral disgust which characterized the ruling regimes. This unanticipated and unpredictable moral aspect of the revolutions of 1989 and 1990 provided the emerging national movements with a much needed vitality.

While the debate over what it was which actually failed in 1991 will no doubt continue for many years, it is sufficient to say that what happened in 1992 was an implosion of what Malia calls the "idiocratic partocracy."<sup>280</sup> By this he implies that 1991 was the end of both an ideology and a system of political power.

This implosion was swift and bloodless because as Przeworski noted about Eastern Europe,

Party bureaucrats had nothing to say to defend their power. They were simply mute: they did not speak about socialism, progress, future, prosperity, rationality, equality, the working class. They

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<sup>279</sup>STOK91, p. 20.

<sup>280</sup>MAL192, p. 93.



only calculated how many thousands of people they could beat up if they persevered, how many ministerial posts they would have to yield if they compromised, how many jobs they could retain if they surrendered.<sup>281</sup>

In addition to this, the bureaucrats did not use the Army to rescue themselves. Even the actions in Lithuania were half-measures and poorly executed perhaps because "when those who hold the trigger have absolutely nothing to say, they have no force to pull it."<sup>282</sup> The common Soviet soldier found himself in agreement with the rebels more than he did with his Communist bosses.

The roots of the collapse lay in a failed ideology - Communism, or perhaps even more broadly, socialism.<sup>283</sup> Przeworski in describing the internal collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe captured also the nexus of the crisis in the Soviet Union;

Socialism--the project for a new future--was no longer the end; it became an instrument of traditional values. And by the seventies, repression had subsided: as the communist leadership became bourgeoisified, it could no longer muster the self-discipline required to crush all dissent. Party Bureaucrats were no longer able to spend their nights at meetings, to wear working class uniforms, to march and shout slogans, to abstain from ostentatious consumption. What had developed was 'goulash communism,' 'Kadarism,' 'Brezhnevism': an implicit social pact in which elites offered the prospect of material welfare in exchange for silence. And the tacit premise of this pact was that socialism was no longer a model of a new future but an undeveloped something else.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup>PRZE91, p. 22.

<sup>282</sup>PRZE91, p. 22.

<sup>283</sup>Przeworski defines socialism as "the idea of rationally administering things to satisfy human needs--the very feasibility of implementing public ownership of productive resources through centralized command, the project of basing a society on disinterested cooperation -- the very possibility of disassociating social contribution from individual rewards." (PRZE91, p. 22)

<sup>284</sup>PRZE91, p. 20.

Under Communism, speech was empty; the speaker did not believe what he spoke and the audience did not believe what they heard. This quiet emptiness is captured in a Soviet joke:

A man is distributing leaflets at the Red Square. He is stopped by a policeman who confiscates them, only to discover they are blank. 'What are you spreading? Nothing is written!' the surprised guardian of order exclaims. 'Why write?' is the answer. 'Everybody knows....'<sup>285</sup>

No matter what the cause, the Soviet system found itself rapidly losing legitimacy among the Soviet people and this forced Gorbachev to act. But how? As Seymour Martin Lipset described the Soviet situation in 1990,

Systems low on legitimacy can only improve their position through prolonged efficacy. Gorbachev clearly has no reservoir of regime legitimacy to draw on. Where legitimacy is weak and there is little pay-off, governments have repeatedly been forced to resort to force, to dictatorship, or break down.<sup>286</sup>

As it turned out, by the time Gorbachev was to step down in December 1991, he had already resorted to all three.

As the USSR embarked on a path to reform it found itself confronting conflict in two dimensions; vertically, that is between the center and the republics and horizontally between conservative and liberal forces in the Party. This two dimensional conflict occurred at both the Union-wide and republican levels and was the background against which this last part of this paper is laid out.

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<sup>285</sup>PRZE91, p. 21.

<sup>286</sup>LIPS90, p. 27.

## B. GORBACHEV AND PERESTROIKA

Gorbachev's uneven approach to reform alternated between hard-line Communist ideas and reformist initiatives and this vacillation had a great effect on the periphery because it put contradictory pressures on the Republican governments and exacerbated tensions between hard-liners and reformers at the republican level. This varying nature of reform was a result of the transition Gorbachev was forcing on the system which fragmented the political system. Along these lines, O'Donnell and Schmitter assert that

there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence - direct or indirect - of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners.<sup>287</sup>

Hard-liners are those

who, contrary to the consensus of this period of world history, believe that the perpetration of authoritarian rule is possible and desirable, if not by rejecting outright all democratic forms, then by erecting some facade behind which they can maintain inviolate the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of their power.<sup>288</sup>

The soft-liners are, for the most part, former hard-liners or hard-line sympathizers who realize that the regime which they help support must liberalize in order to gain legitimacy.

Peter Frank, writing on the deconstruction of Communist systems points to this conflict between hard and soft-liners over the issue of liberalization as the crux of the crisis in the USSR. He writes that Gorbachev's liberalizing program of perestroika was a dynamic concept which would inevitably

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<sup>287</sup>O'DON86, p. 19.

<sup>288</sup>O'DON86, p. 16.

run up against the rigid, immovable supports of the system (the Party apparatus and its associate institutions).... Then, either the forward rush would be stemmed and turned back, or the obstacles would be overwhelmed and swept away, allowing the process of reform to undergo a qualitative transformation.<sup>289</sup>

Frank observed, in 1991, that this point of *stolknovenie*, or collision, has been reached and the Party is unwilling to give, Gorbachev has gone as far as he wants to go, and yet the radical forces are demanding a qualitative change in Soviet society.

When liberalization begins to occur it is usually minimal and tightly controlled by the regime initially. The soft-liners begin to diverge and form different factions while the hard-liners exploit their initial power advantage in the chaos of reform when the instruments of repression remain under their control. Eventually, the soft-liners create a political opening by which excluded actors can enter the political system as resources for the soft-liners. Thus, even while repression continues and the regime still appears monolithic, there are subtle changes occurring which create cracks in the structure and opportunities for political participation.<sup>290</sup> Przeworski amplifies this point when he describes the breakdown of authoritarian regimes as occurring when members of the dominant group break rank and seek support from those sectors of society previously shunned.<sup>291</sup> In this way, the regime itself takes the first step down the path of its own destruction and unconsciously provides

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<sup>289</sup>FRAN91, p. 82.

<sup>290</sup>ODON86, p. 17. Take for example, the federal structure of the Soviet State which created the institutions and even the laws guaranteeing public participation which were not actuated until 1989-90. These institutions were utilized by the opposition to legitimate and structure their assault on first the republican government then the center.

<sup>291</sup>As cited in BUCH88, p. 1021.

subtle signals to potential protesters that opportunities for increased action are available.

Gorbachev encouraged this process as a way to gain charge, however, he was unable to limit the extent of this process and it ended up accelerating out of his control. In addition to this self-initiated process of growing proportions, Gorbachev found himself constrained by an obsolete ideology.

Przeworski in describing the collapse of Communism from within captures the ideological nexus of the crisis in the Soviet Union;

Socialism--the project for a new future--was no longer the end; it became an instrument of traditional values. And by the seventies, repression had subsided: as the communist leadership became bourgeoisified, it could no longer muster the self-discipline required to crush all dissent. Party bureaucrats were no longer able to spend their nights at meetings, to wear working class uniforms, to march and shout slogans, to abstain from ostentatious consumption. What had developed was 'goulash communism,' 'Kadarism', 'Brezhnevism': an implicit social pact in which elites offered the prospect of material welfare in exchange for silence. And the tacit premise of this pact was that socialism was no longer a model of a new future but an undeveloped something else."<sup>292</sup>

Gorbachev's task was to reform a system which had declined to the point of crisis. In attempting to reform Communism, Gorbachev introduced a program of perestroika, or reform, which initially focused on regaining economic vitality but which eventually spread to other aspects of society to include politics and culture. There were two major aspects of perestroika; *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia*. *Glasnost* worked from the bottom up while *demokratizatsiia* worked from the top down to reform, but not destroy, Communism.

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<sup>292</sup>PRZE91, p. 20.

## 1. Glasnost

*Glasnost*, or "openness" was one of the major underpinnings of Gorbachev's initial reform platform. It was a powerful idea that initially led to a limited amount of free expression in the press. *Glasnost* was necessary because a key aspect of Gorbachev's reforms was the establishment of an objective history, a "fuller exposure of the harsh realities, brutalities, and mistakes of Stalin and the corruption and stagnation of Brezhnev."<sup>293</sup> The hope was that *glasnost* would help expose corruption and put pressure on the system to become more accountable to the people and encourage revival of self-initiative.

By late 1985 *glasnost* was beginning to have an effect as the presses became more open. Gorbachev increasingly catered to the Soviet Union's intelligentsia (especially those who had access to the press) in the hopes that they would support him and his policies and thus also elicit popular support for him.<sup>294</sup> But as time went on, *glasnost* began to have an unintended side effect - criticism was beginning to be directed at Gorbachev and his policies. *Glasnost* became very much a part of center-periphery relations as it allowed the republics to voice their discontent with the system and, as such, it became a conduit for increasing national consciousness.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup>MILL89A, p. xxiv.

<sup>294</sup>NAHAB9, p. 237.

<sup>295</sup>Unfortunately, *glasnost* was still scarce in issues of nationality. Only in the middle of 1987 a number of candid articles began to appear in the press about the nationalities issue. On 7 May *Pravda* printed a critique of Soviet nationalities policy by a non-Russian. The article by the Armenian nationalist, Silva Kaputikyan demanded a return to Leninist nationality policy and increased autonomy for the non-Russians. Her article was only one of many significant articles that summer which demanded a new approach to the nationalities issue. (See NAHAB9, pp. 266-7 for additional citations)

Perhaps even more threatening to Party bureaucrats than the introduction of *glasnost* was Gorbachev's widening of it's scope at the 27th Party congress (February 1986) to include political affairs. This meant, Gorbachev explained, that institutional and attitudinal changes would have to take place, namely; broader citizen rights and their legal protection, increased popular participation in the political process, and checks on political-administrative workers.

These suggestions were ignored by Gorbachev's fellow politburo members Ligachev (ideology), Chebrikov (KGB), Solomentsev, and Shcherbitskii (first Secretary of Ukraine). This one of the first indications that political reform was meeting with resistance at the very top levels. This resistance prevented Gorbachev from convening a CC plenum in the second half of 1986 in order to discuss political reforms further.<sup>296</sup>

## 2. Demokratizatsiia

In January 1987 Gorbachev began stressing *demokratizatsiia* (part of *perestroika*) as essential to solving the crisis of public alienation from the system. *Demokratizatsiia* stressed increased public participation by establishing some routine form of exercising popular control over the political-administrative workers, by establishing public forums for expressing diverse views and alternate opinions, and the development of a process to allow regular (but indirect) public participation in leadership selection and decision-making processes. These ideas were tested in a limited way at the local level in the spring and summer of 1987.

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<sup>296</sup>EAST89, pp. 64-66.

Another CC plenum was convened in June 1987 and Gorbachev took the offensive again and held Party organizations responsible for the second phase of *perestroika*; namely, achieving results. This plenum revealed a possible split in the politburo on the timetable for reform and soon after the plenum articles comparing unsuccessful Chinese political reforms with Gorbachev's political *perestroika* appeared.<sup>297</sup> Gorbachev's ideology secretary, Ligachev, warned the non-Russians about the dangers of pushing too hard and too fast in a 3 June speech in Tblisi which appeared on Soviet TV and in *Pravda*:

nationalist and religious ideas are being kindled and attempts are being made to exploit the deepening of democracy and openness for spreading irresponsible demagoguery hostile to the interests of the working people.<sup>298</sup>

It was clear that the conservatives preferred to keep *perestroika* within the realms of its initial program, *uskorenie*, or acceleration of scientific and technical progress rather than see its spread to democratization of Soviet society.

In mid 1987 Party elites feared a coming purge and increased social disorder and in October 1987 the conservative forces in the top leadership made their move against Gorbachev's program.<sup>299</sup> The conservatives wanted 2-3 years to enact the second phase of *perestroika* as opposed to Gorbachev's immediate time table. The conservatives also wished to make political reform a secondary aspect of the program after economic restructuring. In late 1987, the conservatives managed to

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<sup>297</sup>EAST89, pp. 63-66.

<sup>298</sup>As quoted in NANA89, p. 271.

<sup>299</sup>The incident which sparked the confrontation was B. Yeltsin's revelation about his ongoing argument with Ligachev over the reform movement. As a result of discussion following this incident Gorbachev was forced to back down on the agenda of reform.



consolidate their demands and managed to officially place limits on Gorbachev's reforms.

This momentary defeat was insufficient however to halt the process which had already begun. Gorbachev's opening of society provided the opportunity for opposition forces to emerge from below once again. As opposition strength and boldness grew, the regime was increasingly delegitimized and the process began to snowball. As the regime anxiously watched, reform broadened and began to take on a life of its own.

For Ukraine's elites, an important consequence of Gorbachev's reforms was the reconstruction of civil society which had, in its limited form, been destroyed in 1917. Civil society is one in which the government is responsible to the people and society controls the state and not the other way around. Although the construction of a civil society was not first on his agenda, Gorbachev quickly realized that it was necessary if he was to achieve *perestroika* in economics. The connection between the individual, society and the economic problems was apparent to Gorbachev and his reformers. Aleksandr Yakovlev, a pro-reform Politburo member, for example pointed out the connection in saying that "the administrative command system created under Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s allowed the State to swallow up civil society. The result led to economic stagnation."<sup>300</sup>

Early in 1987 a group of scientists meeting in Ukraine to discuss plans to continue to build units 5 and 6 at Chernobyl, voted almost unanimously not to do so and by the end of May 1987 it was announced that

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<sup>300</sup>Quoted in TOLZ90, p. 2.

the project was being abandoned.<sup>301</sup> This placing of societal good over state mandates was a first step toward a civil society in Ukraine. Civil society was certainly beginning to form in Ukraine as a result of perestroika but this was only one of many perestroika spin-offs.

### C. PERESTROIKA AND UKRAINE

Perestroika came late to Ukraine with significant political, economic, and social changes occurring only in 1989. The reason for retardation of reforms in Ukraine has been explained by many analysts as stemming from the important role Ukraine plays in the Union. The argument is that Ukraine's share of the all-Union budget is the single largest for any republic other than Russia and because of this there is no way Moscow would permit the secession of Ukraine. Marples argues that the reason for the delay of perestroika in Ukraine was not because the Union needed Ukraine but because of the ruling hierarchy - the CPU, the Ukrainian KGB, and the Moscow-based ministries which even by the summer of 1990 still controlled 95 percent of Ukraine's industrial output.<sup>302</sup> "One might say that Ukraine has one of the strongest anti-democratic movements in the Soviet Union and that it was directed from above, against the popular will."<sup>303</sup>

#### 1. Reform From Within The CPU

Change came in Ukraine only because the ruling apparat changed under the influence of pressures, first from above, and then from below.

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<sup>301</sup>NAHA89, p. 268.

<sup>302</sup>MARP91, p. xvii.

<sup>303</sup>MARP91, p. xviii.

When Shcherbytsky took control of the CPU in 1972, he made clear his intent to follow Moscow's guidance closely even to the detriment of Ukraine. When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, despite expectations, Shcherbytsky remained in his post due to his connections to the anti-reformers in the Kremlin. However, by the late 1980s, he and his determinedly anti-democratic apparat were now being subjected to increased pressure from above. Most threatening were Gorbachev's reforms in the Party which began to nibble away at the communist monopoly on power. The most significant change came when Gorbachev forced an opening into the Party by restructuring the central organs of government in 1988 to include the popularly elected Congress of People's Deputies which allowed the forces from below to enter the government. The pressure from above for reform within the Party grew too great for even Ukraine's First Secretary to hold it back - in September 1989, Shcherbytsky stepped down at Moscow's insistence.

## **2. Reform From Below**

Reform from below in Ukraine was closely linked to the progress of reform within the CPU. Without change in the Party, there was likely to be little change outside it. Union-wide it was true that some Party acquiescence was necessary for the development of the opposition and one is forced to agree that without at least implicit support from the local party apparatus the forces of opposition would have failed to reach the levels they did in 1989-90. This was no where more visible than in Ukraine where the opposition forces failed to form a national movement until 1989 nearly a half year behind the Baltic states. The resistance of Shcherbytsky to acquiesce even the slightest to opposition forces (i.e.,

Baltic-style cooperation between the opposition and the Party) seems to be the primary factor in causing this delay. As long as the Party and the CPU had control over political, economic, and social aspects of life, real reform was doomed to failure.<sup>304</sup>

While the CPU preached stability and the status quo, the opposition promised change. The CPU began to realize that they were no longer able to provide the economic or social goods which the people demanded and the opposition promised to change the system so that these goods would be provided. The growth of this opposition was directly linked to the political mobilization of the Ukrainian population and this came from an unexpected source - ecology.

*a. The Beginning of Mass Mobilization*

The image of Stakanov, a Ukrainian coal miner who achieved fame in 1935 for exceeding a miner's daily production by 14 times, was invoked by Gorbachev in 1985 to support his push for increased productivity and this reference epitomized the situation in which Ukraine found itself in the 1980s. As Marples documents in his book Ukraine Under Perestroika, the idea of massive production simply for the sake of production had taken a great environmental toll on Ukraine. Even before Chernobyl, Ukrainians at all levels of society were cognizant that Soviet industrialization was causing irreparable harm to Ukraine's environment. Communist Party leaders increasingly found themselves having to fend off

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<sup>304</sup> Motyl argues that Shcherbytsky's resistance to cooperation with the opposition was illogical since national communism was in his best interest and he concludes that it was Shcherbytsky's lack of "republican roots" which made him resist collaboration with the opposition forces to the end. (MOTY90, p. 183.) More likely, Shcherbytsky, being ideologically a loyal Communist, either rejected the idea of national communism on his own or took the cue from Gorbachev who continued to support him and his anti-nationalist campaign in Ukraine because it preserved the status quo. His down fall probably stemmed from his misreading of the situation in Moscow and failure to keep pace with Gorbachev's altering hardline and reform mindsets.

demands for expensive clean-up operations and protests against the locating of new "environmentally hazardous" industries in their local regions. The 1986 Chernobyl incident did much to raise the level of ecological activism in Ukraine and local CPU leaders came under increasing pressure to divert some resources to this new area of Republic expenditure.

Ecological leaders such as Shcherbak and Grodzinsky harnessed the widespread public anger and organized ecological groups such as *Zelenyi svit* (Green World). These ecological groups, argues Marples, arose because the CPU refused to even acknowledge Ukraine's environmental problems. The belated release of information about the Chernobyl incident epitomized the government's attitude and added momentum to the ecological movement. The Chernobyl cover-up also did much to discredit the CPU elites not only in the eyes of the opposition leaders but in the eyes of the masses who by 1989 were very sensitive to the issues of ecology. By the late 1980s ecology had become a very powerful and broad based instrument of popular politics because it was something that everyone could relate to no matter what their socio-economic class, their party affiliation, their nationality, or their political activity level.

The ecological movement was the first movement for reform in Ukraine to attract both mass public support and elite participation. The radicalization of the masses in Ukraine had begun and the target of their discontent went beyond the CPU to Moscow.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>305</sup>MARP91, pp. 172-174.

**b. The CPU Response**

The ecological movement in Ukraine caught the CPU off guard because they did not comprehend (nor perhaps did the ecological leaders) the potential emotions these issues were capable of engendering among the population. This was well illustrated by a ecological rally held in Kiev on 13 November 198. Prior to the event, the organizers had received approval from the local authorities for an ecological demonstration because the authorities failed to see any danger in this non-political issue. However, as Marples notes, this demonstration of 10,000 or more was a critical mistake for the CPU because, it was "one of the first occasions when the transition from ecological to political questions presented itself."<sup>306</sup>

During the course of the demonstration, the CPU and primarily Shcherbytsky, came under attack for keeping Chernobyl secret, for exploiting the environment for marginal economic gain, and for approving industrial and power-generating projects without consulting the people or considering the environmental impact of these outlandish plans. To make matters worst, a representative of the State Committee for the Protection of Nature, representing the government's position, assured the disbelieving crowd that the ecological situation was stabilizing.<sup>307</sup> The rally ended with a speech by Ivan Makar from the Ukrainian Helsinki Union who explicitly linked environmental and socio-political issues. He called for the creation of a national front, unity with the Baltic fronts and the

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<sup>306</sup> MARP91, p. 138.

<sup>307</sup> MARP91, pp. 138-141.

right to Ukrainian sovereignty.<sup>308</sup> The resolutions which followed the rally were political and ecological and in Marples words, pointed out that "the party apparatus in the Ukrainian SSR did not represent the interests of the Ukrainian people...."<sup>309</sup>

The large scale of this rally and the mass popular support demonstrated indicated that Ukrainian society was rapidly becoming mobilized and politicized. The success of this rally served as a powerful impetus for the formation of Rukh, Ukraine's popular movement for perestroika, later in 1989<sup>310</sup> and gave a hint of the public interest which would accompany the upcoming elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in March 1990 and even sooner, the 19th Party Congress in Moscow.

### 3. The 19th Party Congress

The first major showdown between CPSU reformers and conservatives was scheduled to occur at the 19th Party Congress which Gorbachev called in order to circumvent the Central Committee where he had little support. The congress opened on 28 June 1988 and turned out to be an unparalleled media event featuring open discussions and debates about reform. The congress carried with it an air of expectation because although the majority of the delegates were known to be conservatives, the non-Russians, buoyed by the Baltic republics' recent successes in achieving major concessions from the system, raised their demands for increased restructuring.

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<sup>308</sup> HARP91, pp. 141-142.

<sup>309</sup> HARP91, p. 143.

<sup>310</sup> HARP91, p. 138.

During the Party Congress a long-awaited resolution on *glasnost* was published and *glasnost* was linked with the "right to know." However, it was limited: the resolution was adamant that *glasnost* could not be used to promote selfish or ethnonational interests. Free expression was to be tolerated only as long as it did not impede on the interest of the State. As such, *glasnost* was a strong centrally mandated policy which pressured Ukrainian political elites. As never before, the press could make these officials accountable to the public. It also gave rise to a political culture which was anti-establishment.

In a reversal of past practice at such gatherings, among the conservatives one also saw a number of Party leaders demanding national rights. Among these were the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic states. The CPU representative Kachura stressed the vanguard role of the Party and attacked the well-worn "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" while the writer's Union representative, Oliinyk raised the issues of language, ecology, and the desire for truth about the 1933 famine. He also told Gorbachev that Ukraine's creative intelligentsia supported his reforms and stressed the national aspects of perestroika which must be addressed.<sup>311</sup> This overt split between Ukraine's Party and its intellectual elites (also for the most part, Party members) was a hint of what was yet to come.

The net effect of the Congress was to support reform but postpone its immediate implementation. For Ukraine, it appeared that

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<sup>311</sup>PLYU88, p. 4. Plyushch, writing about the CPU and Opposition positions at the conference also points out, quite accurately, that Gorbachev's only support is among the republican intelligentsia who he is increasingly alienating by his stubborn refusal to relinquish the rigid controls of the CPSU. (PLYU88, p. 5)



reform was still a distant hope. However, in spite of this, the Congress marked a watershed in Ukrainian politics between external challenge and the break down of the Party because of the after effects.

Following the congress, the primary issues of electoral reform, internal Party restructuring, and the reform of the Supreme Soviet (SS) and its presidential structure were undertaken by a special group, the Supreme Council, organized by Gorbachev to circumvent the normal channels through the Central Committee (CC) and the politburo. In September, Gorbachev, preempting CC and SS meetings to discuss the implementation of these ideas, implemented them himself with success. The central Party organs were cut by one-third and the republican governments found that they were also reduced in size but more importantly, they had lost control over economic ministries and other large public organizations in the interest of achieving the strategic goals of developing the Soviet economy and society.

Thus attacks on the central Party apparatus were felt even in the Republican Party structures and this weakened them at a time when they needed to muster all their strength to fend off the increasingly strong forces from below.

#### **D. THE PLAN OF ATTACK FOR PART TWO**

The process of state decline and opposition growth as described briefly above is necessary to understand the more detailed study of Ukraine's Communist elites in the year 1987-1991 presented in the following section of this paper. The first chapter of Section II examines the crucial events between 1988 and the Fall of 1989 which weakened the CPU and allowed the opposition forces to make their first gains. The

transition of Ukraine's ruling elites from a position of strength to a position of growing vulnerability is analyzed. The second chapter focuses on the events of 1990 which placed the CPU under increasing pressure from the center. This pressure alienated and fragmented the CPU making concessions to and joining with the opposition even more attractive. The third chapter which brings the study to the end of 1991, focuses on the final merging of party and opposition forces against the center and for an independent Ukraine.

## VI. THE TIDE TURNS

Forced to respond to Gorbachev's convening of the 19th Party Congress, the Ukrainian Party First Secretary, Shcherbytsky, convened a Plenum of the CPU on 10-11 October in Kiev in order to begin implementing the results of the 19th All-Union Party Conference and the CC Plenums of the CPSU in July and September. Little implementation was carried out and instead Shcherbytsky and his subordinates accused the rising forces of national opposition including the Writers' Union, the Uniate church, and the numerous new youth organizations of being "demagogues", "extremists", "nationalists", and referred to them as "politically immature." Shcherbytsky complained that concessions made in the area of language<sup>312</sup> were not being accepted and that the debate was continuing unabated.<sup>313</sup>

It was clear that as Plyushch wrote after the 19th Party conference that "The Communist Party 'in the provinces' is, opposed, by and large, to the programme of reform as this would then mean relinquishing power."<sup>314</sup> What wasn't clear was how long this approach and Shcherbytsky's

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<sup>312</sup>The reference here is to the August 1987 announcement of CPU measures "to more fully satisfy the population's requests for social and cultural services in proportion to their composition in the population...."(UTSK87, p. 25) The announcement of CPU intent to increase publications in the Ukrainian language, raise the level of Ukrainian language education in the schools, and use of Ukrainian language in public settings. The Ukrainian language publications mentioned included a small number of Ukrainian language dictionaries, reviews of Ukrainian literature and history, and the 50 Volumes of Marx and Engels, the 12 volume Soviet Ukrainian Encyclopedia, and the 55 volume set of Lenin's works all in Ukrainian. The CPU announcement also included a strong denunciation of nationalism and called for strict adherence to Leninist nationalities policies, Soviet patriotism and internationalism. The Politburo included in their announcement that "Counter-propaganda work, aimed at uncovering the sabotage activities of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists beyond our borders [i.e., the emigre community], zionists, and clerical centers [i.e., the Vatican] that speculate on the problems of nationality relations and attempts to sow hostility between the peoples of our country, was recognized as being essential...." (UTSK87, p. 27)

<sup>313</sup>NAHA88, pp. 2-3.

<sup>314</sup>PLYU88, p. 4.

Brezhnevian apparat could continue. In 1988 and 1989 the political tides began to turn not so much from pressure from below but from pressure from above. Gorbachev's declarations at the 19th Party conference opened the political arena to popular elections legitimizing the forces of opposition and weakening the Party.

This chapter explores this first crucial step which would clear the way for the forces from below to begin to work in Ukraine. The approach is to examine three key events which occurred between the Fall of 1988 and the Fall of 1989 and analyze their impact on CPU elites and how these events helped sway these cadres to the cause of nationalism. The three key events are the elections to the Congress of Peoples Deputies, the 1989 miners' strikes, and the founding of the Ukrainian popular movement Rukh.

To the extent possible while maintaining a topical approach, these events are presented in chronological order so as to preserve the cumulative effect these events had on Ukraine's ruling elites. In the case of Rukh, the process of building the popular movement was one which continued from late 1988 into late 1989 but the discussion of these events is placed chronologically late in 1989 when Rukh gained prominence in Ukraine.

The ultimate outcome of every one of these events depended greatly on the social mobilization of Ukrainians which by late 1988 was well underway but not yet charged with political ambitions. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin our discussion with the transition to political mobilization of Ukrainians and their testing of the changing political system.

## **A. THE PEOPLE ENTER THE SYSTEM**

On 26 March 1989, the Union-wide elections to the Congress of People's Deputies occurred. These popular elections, the first since November 1917,<sup>315</sup> had been proposed by Gorbachev at the 19th Party Congress as part of his plan to restructure the government and to instill popular confidence in the state. Although it is difficult to know what Gorbachev expected from the elections, he could hardly have anticipated the impact they were to have on both the Party and the forces of opposition. One suspects Shcherbytsky realized the impact these elections would have on his Party but there was little even he could do to stop this particular top-down reform.

### **1. The Structure Of The Congress Of People's Deputies**

As described at the 19th Party Conference, the Congress of People's deputies was created to perform as an all-Union active assembly from which a new, smaller Supreme Soviet would be formed. The Congress would meet once a year and would be responsible for selecting the newly created office of President of the Supreme Soviet. Its 2250 deputies would be salaried and would serve a 5 year term. A similar structure was to be implemented at the republican level after September elections.<sup>316</sup>

During the March 1989 elections, for the first time in 70 years, Soviet voters actually had a choice between multiple candidates for most of the deputy positions. Of the 2250 deputies all but 750 which the CPSU maintained control over, were to be elected by popular vote. In order to win the turnout had to be 50 percent and the candidate had to receive at

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<sup>315</sup>In late 1917 the elections to the Constituent assembly took place.

<sup>316</sup>These elections were postponed later until March 1990.

least 50 percent of the ballots cast. This led to a number of unresolved contests which were subsequently settled in run-off elections in May.

## 2. Election Results

As the election and run-off results poured in, it was clear that although the majority of the 2,250 candidates were conservative, the election indicated a "psychological turning point."<sup>317</sup> Large numbers of protest votes were registered throughout the Union and in the Baltics, Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldavia the forces of opposition achieved some success against the old order.<sup>318</sup> Although, Shcherbytsky won easily in Dnieperopetrovsk, some 63 of 240 thousand voters crossed his name off the ballot and two of his aides were not reelected. In addition, five Obkom first secretaries failed to be voted in, including one from the Kiev Obkom.<sup>319</sup>

## 3. The Congress Meets

In May and June of 1989 when the Congress of People's Deputies convened in Moscow the impact of the March elections was severely muted by the still predominant CPU. In such an atmosphere, Ukraine's representatives, Shcherbytsky, Masol, and Shevchenko managed to ignore the issues of language, economic deprivation, Chernobyl', and the rising discontent of the Donetsk Basin (Donbas) miners. The non-Party deputies, untrained in parliamentary procedures, were either denied permission to speak by the

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<sup>317</sup> NAHA89, p. 322.

<sup>318</sup> See BERE89 for an interesting and comprehensive geography-oriented discussion of the 1989 election results. Overall voter turn-out in March was reported to be 89.9 percent, some 10 points below the Soviet average. In Ukraine, the turnout was 93.4 percent. In Azerbaijan it was 98.5 percent while in Lithuania it was 82.5 percent. (HARA89B, p. 2)

<sup>319</sup> HARA89B, the four Obkoms were in L'viv, Chernihiv, Transcarpathia, and Voroshylograd.

Presidium or were not sufficiently aggressive enough to gain the floor. As a result, the opposition deputy Borys Oliynyk described Ukraine as "the most peaceful and most loyal republic" at the Congress.<sup>320</sup> At first glance the Congress appeared as victory for Shcherbytsky and a disappointment for all those struggling against him. However, this was not really the case.

The elections to the Congress of People's Deputies had significance for the opposition as well as the Party. For the opposition it was a positive step for a number of reasons. First, the elections effectively increased the potential influence of the opposition groups by granting them access to the political process. Second, by being able to run their own candidates, the opposition's ability to distribute their message increased and the level of their discourse was raised to that of the Party candidates in terms of legitimacy. Third, as a result of their elections and participation at the Congress, the opposition was now able to carry on their struggle from *inside* the system.<sup>321</sup>

With opposition members now operating from within the system, the Communist Party found that its monopoly over what Furtado and Hecter call "an important private good- access to political power" was gone.<sup>322</sup> That is, suddenly they no longer had the monopoly on providing access to power. This was a severe blow to the *nomenklatura* process which allowed the Party, by controlling who could fill certain posts, to maintain control

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<sup>320</sup>Literaturna Ukraina, 6 June 1989.

<sup>321</sup>FUR 92, p. 175.

<sup>322</sup>FURt92, p. 175.

over most aspects of political, social, economic, and military activities in the country.

As Furtado and Hecter point out, it was rapidly becoming the case that the Party wasn't the only game in town for those who aspired to political ambitions. For the first time, as evidenced by the defeat of several Obkom first secretaries in Ukraine, the Party couldn't guarantee that if you kept your nose clean you had a life-time career. Clearly for these two reasons, loyalty to the Party would become less compelling. With the Party's control over the political environment slipping, a defector from the Party could not only find a new job, but he could very likely avoid punishment for his "disloyalty."

Although these changes didn't all take place instantly after the elections to the Congress of People's deputies, the process of change was begun and it didn't take a lot of foresight to see where they would lead. It is easy to see that defections from the Party as well as non-Party-sanctioned behavior would begin to increase. It could also be expected that dissension in the Party ranks would increase as Party members struggled to maintain their power in competition with the opposition.

## **B. THE MINER'S STRIKE**

On 10 July 1989, fast on the heels of the Congress of People's Deputies, the Soviet Union witnessed the first large scale strike in its history. Although the coal miners' strike originated in the typically non-activist Western Siberian Kuznetsk Basin (Kuzbas), the unrest began to spread to other regions which were also not known for their active questioning of state policies. By late July the unrest spread to the



Donbas in Ukraine, the arctic city of Vorkuta, and other mining regions and involved a half million miners.<sup>323</sup>

### 1. The Roots Of Miner Discontent

The strikes in Donbas were encouraged by central policies such as *glasnost*, *demokratizatsiia* and economic reforms which, although resisted by the CPU, were not under Ukrainian control. The actual motivation for the strikes was economic hardship which had been increasing since 1988 when reforms had resulted in reduced supplies, increased prices, and a faltering distribution system.<sup>324</sup> In Ukraine, several months prior to the strikes, prices had increased, the production of necessities and essential goods had fallen and their supply was intermittent. An example of this was soap something of importance to coal miners. Soap was already in shortage and rumors began to spread in the summer of 1989 that soap prices were going to increase. This led to increased demand, panic buying, and shortages.<sup>325</sup>

The strikes were also prompted by problems in the sphere of production. New cost accounting measures, in conjunction with transportation difficulties, sometimes meant miners would loose wages or bonuses. This situation was exacerbated by the transfer of the USSR's mining basins to self financing in January 1988. The Donbas was most severely impacted by this transfer because the Union's oldest and least

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<sup>323</sup>See especially COOK91 and MARP91 (Chapter 6) for insightful analysis of the strikes.

<sup>324</sup>See TEAG90 for the argument that the strikes were not economically but politically motivated. There is little evidence to probe Teague's and Hanson's thesis that this is the case. Economics seemed to be the motivating factor but necessarily, the strikes became political because in the Soviet Union economics are political. It is certainly arguable that in 1990 the strikes became much more politically motivated since the economic demands put forth in 1989 were unfulfilled and the struggle to hold Moscow to the 1989 agreements became politically charged.

<sup>325</sup>COOK91, p. 1.

productive mines are located here and years of exploitation have left little margin for improvement in output or efficiency. Many mines were threatened with closure. Local officials expressed frustration over their inability to control the export of coal from Ukraine and the under-pricing of these exports which in 1989 were undervalued by 300 thousand rubles. In addition, the centrally mandated 1989 price of 45 rubles per ton of coal was reportedly less than the cost to bring it to the surface.<sup>326</sup> Efforts to raise coal prices to equalize the situation were stymied by old price restraints which had not yet been removed by the State.

## 2. The Miners Begin To Mobilize

The miners had begun to mobilize under the canopy of *glasnost* and as early as the Fall of 1988, articles began to appear in the press describing the poor living and working conditions of the miners. In Spring 1989, an official report on the status of the miners was printed using statistics from the Special Collegium of the USSR Prosecutor's Office which showed high levels of occupational hazards and violations of safety rules.<sup>327</sup> Soon after, ecological issues came to light as well. A significant process had begun as described by Cook,

All this discussion and attention no doubt contributed to the common consciousness of grievances in the mining communities, and more importantly, defined these grievances for the first time as legitimate political issues.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup>Robitnyche hazeta, 18 April 1989 and 16 August 1989.

<sup>327</sup>See COOK91, p. 2 and V. S. Shatalov in Ekonomikheskaia Gazeta, No. 7, 1989, pp. 17-18. Marples cites the following statistics to place the miners' work and living situations in perspective: Ukrainian coal miners can retire at age 50 but their average life span is 47 years and for every million tons of coal mined 3-4 miners are killed due to unsafe conditions in the mines. (MAR90T, p. 14)

<sup>328</sup>COOK91, p. 2.

Also significant to the growth of politics in the mines were the recently concluded March 1989 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies. In many of the mining regions Obkom secretaries were defeated<sup>329</sup> and the miners elected their own deputies. These limited electoral successes indicated that Gorbachev was willing to tolerate political change and that the miners now had a voice in the political system.

To make matters worse, the CPU's hands were tied in dealing with the miners.<sup>330</sup> Moscow was to blame for the factors which stimulated discontent in the Donbas and when the first localized strikes broke out in March and April 1989, Moscow intervened directly by sending Coal Industry Minister Durasov, Nonferrous Metallurgy Minister Durasov, and Chair of the State Committee on Labor and Social Questions Gladkiy, to handle the negotiations.<sup>331</sup> This merely exacerbated the miners' growing contempt for local officials at the Party, Soviet, and industrial levels. In May, the Central government even went so far as to draft a Law on the Rights of Trade Unions which included a tentative right to strike.<sup>332</sup> The miners began to negotiate directly with Moscow and in June, the Kuzbas miners sent a petition of grievances to Moscow which went unanswered. The strike deadline was set and when Moscow did not respond the strike was called.

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<sup>329</sup>See Jerry Hough, "The Politics of Successful Economic Reform," Soviet Economy, Vol. 5, No. 1, Jan-Mar 1989, pp. 14-15.

<sup>330</sup>The Ukrainian Ministry responsible for the coal industry was abolished in 1987 and replaced with the Donetsk and Voroshilovgrad Production which were circumvented by the strikes.

<sup>331</sup>FBIS: Soviet Union, 10 April, 1989, pp. 53-54.

<sup>332</sup>Trud, 29 April, 1989, pp. 2-3 published the draft.

### 3. Demands and Concessions

The breadth of the work stoppages during the strikes caused a national crisis alleviated only by concessions from Gorbachev. The central government was unprepared to deal with the strikers and so they did so through an ad hoc system for arbitrating labor disputes. The USSR's first law on labor disputes was submitted to the Supreme Soviet during the crisis. The negotiations were carried out between the miners and the central ministries and local government, Party and trade unions were not involved at all. In fact, the central authorities criticized the local officials for ignoring the miners grievances and letting them build to the breaking point. The miners demanded that local authorities be replaced at all levels and in the end, the miner's own grassroots organizations were legitimized because they were the only ones capable of controlling (i.e., bringing to an end) the strikes.<sup>333</sup>

The center's concessions to the miners broadly included more autonomy for the miners, decreased production demands, higher prices, and more subsidies. The total estimated cost of this package exceeded two billion rubles which would not only lead to inflation but would extend the already large deficit.<sup>334</sup> For Moscow, this was a high price to pay for a tenuous amount of control over a crisis which was still very explosive.

After the strikes were ended in August, the miners retained the right to strike again to enforce the agreement between miners and the central government. This power was formalized in the Council of Ministers

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<sup>333</sup>COOK91, p. 4., See also M. Odinetz, "At Life's Front Line," Pravda, 2nd ed., 27 November 1990, pp. 1-2, transl. in "Gurenko Revives Political Situation," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 27-28 for the Party perspective on what went wrong during the strike.

<sup>334</sup>COOK91, p. 5.

Resolution Number 608 which was signed on 3 August 1989. Periodic strikes continued throughout the rest of 1989 but for the most part the situation seemed to have been diffused for the time being at the further expense of local Ukrainian apparat.<sup>335</sup>

#### 4. The CPU And The Miners' Strikes

From the CPU perspective, the strikes were significant for two reasons:

a. The strikes were particularly disturbing because the Ukrainian Party counted on russified eastern Ukrainians to help offset very nationally conscious western Ukraine.<sup>336</sup> The CPU expected, and were prepared for, attacks against their anti-democratic crusade from Western Ukraine, but who expected that such sentiments would arise in the East? The CPU, like most Western analysts,<sup>337</sup> were counting on the Donbas miners to act as a conservative bulwark against the increasing barrage of reforms from Moscow. The fact that few of the miners appeared to be members or advocates of Rukh<sup>338</sup> was of little consolation to the CPU because this meant that a new, totally independent, distinctly hostile,

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<sup>335</sup> Anniversary strikes occurred in the Summer of 1990 as well.

<sup>336</sup> The Donbass is 45 percent ethnically Russian and over 90 percent of the Ukrainians living there claim Russian as their first language.

<sup>337</sup> Linda J. Cook points out this fallacy in COOK91, and cites a number of sources which adhere to the view of the Soviet Worker as a conservative, anti-reform political mass; Timothy J. Colton, "Approaches to the Politics of Systemic Economic Reform in the Soviet Union," Soviet Economy, Vol. 3, No. 2, April-June, 1987, pp. 166-169; Gail Lapidus, "Social Trends," in Robert F. Byrnes, ed., After Brezhnev: Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980's, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 188-190.

<sup>338</sup> See SOLC92, p. 32 for the Rukh view of the miners and see KRAW90, (Blue and Yellow), pp. 14-15 for a discussion of the speech of the miner's representative at the Rukh Founding Conference in Fall 1989 which indicates that in 1989 the miners resisted joining Rukh because they feared this would threaten the independence of the strike committees. The fact that Adam Michnik, a leading figure in the Polish opposition and advisor to Solidarity, was present at Rukh's founding conference must also have sat well with the miners.

political organization had sprung up in the coal fields. The Ukrainian pro-reform movement appeared to be gaining support in leaps and bounds.

b. The outbreak of the strikes demonstrated the CPU's increasing loss of control over the political and economic sectors in the Republic. The ease and efficiency with which the miners circumvented the local Party, Soviets, and other organs of the CPU's political and economic influence in the Donbas indicated that the CPU's monopoly on political power, already under fire since the March 1989 elections of People's Deputies was now even more tenuous.<sup>339</sup> Even more significant was that the Donbas strike committees which, in accordance with the strike settlement were to have been disbanded on 23 August, remained through the Fall.<sup>340</sup> This indicated that the miners' initial hesitancy to get involved in politics<sup>341</sup> had vanished. As one miner explained, their intent was to "maintain these committees that have been elected by the miners until the elections to the local bodies of power are held.... We hope to have a real impact on [the elections] in this way...."<sup>342</sup>

The miners were not the only ones with hopes of being able to influence the upcoming elections.

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<sup>339</sup>In an obvious understatement of the situation the first secretary of the Ukrainian communist Party central Committee S K Gurenko, in November 1990 admitted that as a result of the actions taken by both miners and the center to resolve the strikes, "Communists' positions in the workers' movements are now weakened." (ODIN90, p. 29). First Secretary of the CPU, Murenko, in a series of articles printed in Radianska Ukraina (14, 15, 18 June 1991) lamented that the CPU did not get involved in the miner's strike while their demands were only economic. He claimed that the CPU had lost "authority among the workers" when the workers movements allied themselves with Rukh or the URP. (See "the Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 2.

<sup>340</sup>The decision to not dissolve the strike committees was actively encouraged by opposition forces such as the Ukrainian People's Democratic League. (See "To the Donbass Miners, To the Miners of the Donetsk Region!", Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1989, p. 28)

<sup>341</sup>See KRAW90, (Blue and Yellow), p. 15.

<sup>342</sup>Molod' Ukrainy, 27 August 1989 as translated in Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1989, p. 40.

### C. BIRTH OF THE POPULAR FRONT

The idea of organizing pro-reform forces under the banner of a popular front was not intended to create a second party to the CPSU but to harness the forces of opposition under the CPSU. The idea was that the front would fulfill some of the roles of the opposition, namely to critique and monitor the government and ensure efficient operation, but not threaten the supremacy of the CPSU.<sup>343</sup> In essence, the idea of a popular front had emerged as a means of bringing anti-Party sentiment back under the wing of the CPSU. The concept was first made public in 1988 by the Moscow Jurist Boris Kurashvili of the institute of State and Law. His proposal printed in *Sovetskaya Molodezh* in April 1988, was to create a "popular front in support of Perestroika" to combine all socially active groups (both Party and non-Party) under one umbrella to act, not as a counter to the CPSU but as an opposition party within the CPSU. This popular front should, he insisted, combine all groups even if they are opposed to one another.<sup>344</sup> Based on this description, Tolz argues that this proposal was clearly intended to reign in the growing number of opposition movements and place them under control of the CPSU, a move which a majority of them were not opposed to. By the Popular Front design, those groups who refused to come under this umbrella would be a minority and would be subject to attack by the much stronger, united majority.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup>TOLZ90, p. 17.

<sup>344</sup>TOLZ90, p. 17.

<sup>345</sup>TOLZ90, p. 18.

## 1. The Baltic Example

No republic embraced the popular front idea more strongly than the Baltic republics where the fronts rapidly became very successful and received support from the republican Communist leadership. The Baltic states took the lead in pressing for reform and mass movements formed in the Spring of 1988 to back demands for national emancipation. On 13 April, the first front, the Estonia Popular Front in Support of Restructuring, was established. Lithuania and Latvia soon followed.

Beginning in September 1988, members of the Baltic Popular Fronts began to enter the ruling bodies of the republican Communist governments. This was primarily because the fronts appeared non-threatening. Demands for sovereignty and national rights both culturally and economically were initially couched in Marxist-Leninist terms and although they called for resurrection of religious and native cultures, these demands remained within the boundaries of Perestroika and with a stated policy of remaining true to the original popular front idea. The demands for secession, although voiced by some delegates, were not included in the initial official programs of the fronts. Within months, however, the fronts became more radical as pressure from below overtook these cautions, conciliatory initial steps. By the end of 1989, the fronts began to split from the Communist Party and in 1989 and 1990 they proved their viability by winning elections for popular support. The republican Communist Parties at first resisted but eventually, beginning in Lithuanian, adopted the popular front program as its own.

In the beginning, the legal status of these front organizations was untenable in most republics because the 1989 all-Union law on



voluntary associations had not yet been adopted.<sup>346</sup> Lithuania became the first republic to legalize parties other than the Communist Party of Lithuania by a 7 December 1989 constitutional amendment legalizing a multi-party system.<sup>347</sup> Acts such as this ushered in a new political era for the Soviet Union; the number of informal groups doubled from 1988 to 60,000<sup>348</sup> and most of these groups challenged the CPSU in some way.<sup>349</sup>

## 2. No Popular Front For Ukraine

The Baltic Popular Fronts, on the basis of their success, became models for the other republics, including Ukraine. Politically Ukraine was very different than the Baltics and the popular front concept, although strongly influencing the opposition in Ukraine, was strongly suppressed by the CPU. When the 8 May issue of the Ukrainian cultural magazine *Kul'tura is zhyttia* suggested that the Estonian Popular Front idea be implemented in Ukraine the idea was quietly suppressed and the idea was not mentioned again in the press for some time.<sup>350</sup> In June, a group in Kiev attempted to start a Popular Union to Promote Restructuring but were prevented from doing so by the authorities. However, in L'viv where national consciousness is higher, unofficial groups managed to mobilize a number of citizens around interest in the upcoming 19th Party Congress and on 16 June, several thousand protestors gathered to criticize the undemocratic selection of local delegates to the Party Congress. On

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<sup>346</sup>Tolz, "The USSR's Emerging Multiparty System", p. 11.

<sup>347</sup>"Amends Articles, Six, Seven," Daily Report: Soviet Union, 8 December 1989, p. 50.

<sup>348</sup>"Demokratiya ne terpit demagogii," Pravda, 10 February 1989. Cited in Tolz, "The USSR's Emerging Multiparty System", p. 11.

<sup>349</sup>Tolz, "The USSR's Emerging Multiparty System", p. 11.

<sup>350</sup>See NAHA89, p. 297.

21 June, a similar rally in L'viv drew an estimated 50,000 people. Clearly, the events in the Baltics were having an influence, albeit muted, in Ukraine.

While members of the Baltic fronts were being elected by popular vote to positions of power, in Ukraine and Byelorussia, informal groups were being severely repressed. The republican press was still strongly controlled by the Ukrainian Communist Party and the attacks against the opposition reminded one of the Brezhnev, rather than the Gorbachev, era. In large part because of this, a formal opposition movement in Ukraine, The Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova (Perestroika) or more simply Rukh, would not formally emerge until Fall 1989 nearly one and a half years behind the Baltic states.<sup>351</sup>

### 3. A Ukrainian Popular Movement

In spite of repression, Ukraine was moving toward the popular front idea. By the spring of 1989, in addition to the "officially sanctioned" Writer's Union, a number of other political, cultural, or religious groups had appeared on the scene. Some older organizations, namely the Ukrainian Helsinki Organization (UHU), remained and served as a magnet to attract smaller socio-political groups. Others, such as the Ukrainian People's Democratic League (UPDL) which issued their program on 12 February 1989, sought to pull together smaller groups under one umbrella. The UPDL itself, in April became part of the UHU. Their

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<sup>351</sup>The later development of a formal opposition in Ukraine can be attributed to a number of factors. For one, Ukraine was a much larger republic both physically and in terms of population. Ukraine also suffered from what appeared to be a serious rift between the more nationalistic Western and the heavily Russified Eastern regions. Ukraine also did not share the strong sense of independence shared by the Baltic republics because Ukraine had no recent tradition of independence. In addition Ukraine (with the exception of Western Ukraine) had suffered 27 years longer under the communist yoke. Third, Ukraine did not share the western recognition that kept the Baltics in a higher profile political status. The most significant factor remains, however, the simple fact that Ukraine was seen by Gorbachev as too important to let go.

program included among the usual calls for free speech, freedom of religion, economic autonomy, a call for Ukrainian sovereignty and independence and for making Ukraine a nuclear-free zone.<sup>352</sup> These goals were shared by yet another spin-off of the UHU, the Ukrainian Christian-Democratic Front, which advocated restructuring Ukraine politically, economically, culturally, and environmentally along christian lines.<sup>353</sup> Among these myriad organizations there were normal, friendly relations, but great potential for loss of coordinated action. These organizations also had very few links to the Communist Party because of their radically anti-Party stances.

*a. The Birth of Rukh*

The roots of Rukh, the ideas and early leadership, can be traced to the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, which despite its name (later changed to the Ukrainian Republican Party), was overtly politically and encompassed a great deal more than a strict focus on human rights. The UHU had tried unsuccessfully to begin a popular front in Ukraine in 1988. When , early in that year the UHU emerged to offer an alternative to the CPU and on 4 August 1988, thousands of people gathered in L'viv to ratify the program of the Democratic Front for Perebudova. The meeting was forcibly broken up and the effort was pushed once again underground.<sup>354</sup>

A year later, initiative groups from the Kiev Branch of the Writer's Union of Ukraine and the Schevchenko Institute of Literature of

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<sup>352</sup>UPA, Vol. 2, No. 4-5, April-May 1989, Press release no. 56, "Ukrainian Opposition Party Issues Programme."

<sup>353</sup>UPA, Vol.2 , No. 1, January 1989, "Interview with founding member of 'Ukrainian Christian-Democratic Front'", News release No. 25.

<sup>354</sup>CHOR89, p. 41.

the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR<sup>355</sup> met on 31 January 1989 and drafted a program for an organization which they envisioned as forming the focus for national reform efforts. They were moved to such an action by the increasingly powerful anti-reform Party bureaucracy in Ukraine and a realization that something had to be done to not only unify opposition forces, but to also forge links with the CPU. In essence, learning from the success of the popular fronts in the Baltics, they were forming the beginning of a popular front in Ukraine. They named this organization the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova (perestroika) or Rukh (which literally means movement in Ukrainian). The movement was met with immediate hostility and the initiative group's program was attacked in the press even before it was printed.<sup>356</sup>

***b. The Development of Rukh***

On 30 October 1988, a third attempt was launched at a meeting of writers in Kiev where an initiative group for a popular movement was formed and after which, over several months, a program was drafted. On 16 February 1989, one of Ukraine's most pro-reform journals, *Literaturna Ukraina* published Rukh's program. This document proclaimed the main goal of the movement "to assist the Communist Party in the creation and functioning of the democratic mechanism and the promotion of societal development." It was self described as "a new coalition of Communists and non-Party members", "a unifying link between the programme

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<sup>355</sup>The Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society was formally founded in February 1989, led by the respected poet Dmytro Pavlychko. Its goal was to lead a campaign to define the status of the Ukrainian language in the UkSSR.

<sup>356</sup>For a detailed analysis of the early origins of Rukh see UPA0189.

of restructuring proposed by the Party and the initiative by the broad masses of people." Rukh's broad role was clearly stated,

to become the real spokesman for all the vital and social interests of the Ukrainian people (narod) and people of different nationalities living in Ukraine. It is to maintain ties with Ukrainians living in other fraternal republics as well as with Ukrainians abroad.<sup>357</sup>

Although the Rukh program appeared in many ways similar to those of the Baltic states, Rukh activists attempted to make a differentiation if for no other reason that at this time, the Baltic fronts were quite radical and threatening to their local Communist Parties. The very name of the popular movement in Ukraine indicates a difference between Baltic style activism and that found in Ukraine. Rukh is not labeled a popular front but a movement. This conscious and careful choice of the word movement rather than front was made to reflect the conglomerate structure of Rukh. Rukh, being a movement, is composed of many different "member-groups," and many individual platforms ranging from preservation of the ecology to preservation of the Ukrainian language.<sup>358</sup>

As a result, New York Times reporter Bill Keller labeled Rukh as "The great swap-meet of opposition politics...."<sup>359</sup>

### c. *The Rukh Program*

The key concerns of the Rukh program were clearly outlined in the following order: 1) The "grave" economic and environmental situation in Ukraine and the USSR; 2) The retardation of *glasnost* in Ukraine; 3) The need for a law-based state which recognized human and

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<sup>357</sup>PROG89, p. 20.

<sup>358</sup>UPA0189, p. 4. and see also "Programme of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova," Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 2, No. 4, Winter 1988, pp. 20-23.

<sup>359</sup>Bill Keller, "Hazard Sign for Soviets As the Ukraine Wavers," New York Times, 26 March 1990, p. A8.

individual rights; 4) Sovereignty (as opposed to independence) for Ukraine.<sup>360</sup> Special care was taken towards the issue of both nationalism and nationalities. Rukh assured the CPU it had no intent to become a "nationalist" organization in the Soviet use of the word and at the same time assured non-Ukrainians in Ukraine that they were welcome and would be included within the scope of the movement.

Although the ideas of economics, social rights, and civil society were mentioned, actual proposals were quite vague.<sup>361</sup> For example, in the area of economics the program only said that they felt the heart of the problem lay in the repression of the peasant and that there should be more information available on the republican contribution to the all-Union fund.<sup>362</sup> However, the national question, language, and culture were addressed at length and in depth with several concrete proposals put forth.

The fact that the first program of Rukh was primarily focused on the ideas of culture, language and the restoration of a civil society is not surprising considering the roots of Rukh in the literary elites of Ukraine. The focus on what Rukh's founders called the "humanization of Society"<sup>363</sup> pervaded all aspects of their initial program. However, quite significantly, considering the literary elite's

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<sup>360</sup>PROG89, p. 20.

<sup>361</sup>Although details were scarce in some areas, others seemed to suffer from too many of them, for example consider this following from the Ecological section of the program; The Movement believes there can be no democratization and *glasnost* without the full disclosure of detailed information of the nitrates concentrated in [food] products...." (PROG89, p. 22)

<sup>362</sup>PROG89, p. 21.

<sup>363</sup>PROG89, p. 21.

previously limited vocalization of language issues, Rukh was demonstrating a distinct politization of the opposition in Ukraine.

*d. Rukh Gains Momentum*

Over the Summer and Autumn of 1989 Rukh began to gain momentum through founding conferences for regional and city Rukh organizations. The first such founding conference was held in Kiev on 1 July and over 442 delegates, representing over 200 different organizations, were in attendance. On the next day, 20,000 Rukh supporters gathered in Kiev to consummate the conference. Similar events occurred throughout Ukraine despite the efforts of local authorities who tried to interfere and, in some cases, even made arrests of Rukh activists. It was obvious that the scale of mobilization had exceeded the CPU's ability to suppress it.

From 8-10 September 1989 Rukh held its founding conference with 1109 deputies and some 280,000 members in attendance. Also in attendance was Leonid Kravchuk, the CPU CC Chairman of Ideology, and representatives from other Republics. Half the delegates came from Western Ukraine and 20 percent of the total delegation were members of the Communist Party.<sup>364</sup> While the program presented during this congress did not differ greatly from that published earlier in the year, there was more opportunity for debate and the Ivan Drach was named chairman of Rukh.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup>See PANI91 for a sociological breakdown of the founding congress of Rukh.

<sup>365</sup>See Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 3, No. 3-4 for complete coverage of the speeches given and the final resolutions.

Once again the program stayed well within the limits of Leninist principles on the nationalities question which Gorbachev had established earlier as the limits of *glasnost* and political perestroika;

The activities of the Movement are in the interest of humanity, peace, and progress. The Movement recognizes the leading role of the Party in a socialist society.... The Movement cooperates with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union through the communists in its ranks who are implementing the resolutions of the 27th Party Congress and the 19th All-Union Party Conference.

The main goal of the Movement is to assist the Communist Party in the creation and functioning of the democratic mechanism and the promotion of societal development.<sup>366</sup>

However, quite significantly, and indicative of the rapid pace of political development within Ukraine during the summer of 1989, the 9 September 1989 Program presented as its main goal;

the construction of a democratic and humane society in Ukraine, one which will truly be a government by the people, for the good of the people, one that will ensure conditions necessary for a dignified life of the individual, as well as the rebirth and development of the Ukrainian nation in all its aspects, safeguarding the national and cultural needs of all ethnic groups in the republic, the creation of a sovereign Ukrainian state, which will build its relation with the other republics of the USSR on the basis of a new Union Treaty.<sup>367</sup>

The original program of Rukh published in late 1988 said nothing at all about such a redefining of Ukraine's relationship with the center.<sup>368</sup>

#### 4. The CPU Reacts To Rukh

After their founding congress, Rukh was severely criticized in what Harasymiw implies was a Party-organized media campaign. The basic

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<sup>366</sup>"programme of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova," Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol. 2., No. 4, Winter 1988, p. 20.

<sup>367</sup>PROG89B, p. 44.

<sup>368</sup>See "Programme of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova," Soviet Ukrainian Affairs, Vol 2., No. 4, Winter 1988, pp. 20-23.



idea of the assault was to show that Rukh was not necessary and that it represented nationalist extremist goals.<sup>369</sup>

Rukh was potentially very important even at this early stage because it was the only "unofficial" organization in Ukraine at this time which linked the Party to the opposition. However, the CPU bungled the birth of Rukh and all but severed these links before Rukh had taken its first steps.

Anatolii Pohribnyi, one of the founders of Rukh, describes the idea of creating a popular movement for Ukraine as "an honest Party initiative" in response to Gorbachev's appeals for initiatives from below to make Perestroika possible. The initiative group for Rukh was formed by members of the Writers Union and suddenly, as Pohribnyi describes it, "something barbaric" happened. The Party, Shcherbytsky and his regime, turned on the group and denounced them as nationalists and extremists.<sup>370</sup>

An interview with Pavlo Movchan on 24 June 1989 sheds more light on these early relations between Rukh and the CPU.<sup>371</sup> Movchan describes how he and Victor Teren, attending a meeting of writers in Kiev on 30 October 1988, chaired a meeting of 150 writers at which the initiative group for Rukh was formed. The meeting was specially convened and the Party organization within the Writer's Union had granted permission for the meeting to take place and the initiative group to be formed. Party representatives, Oliinyk, Drach (republican secretary), and Pavlychko (Kiev secretary) attended the meeting. Pavlychko suggested adding the

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<sup>369</sup>HARA89b, pp. 3-4.

<sup>370</sup>SOLC90C, p. 22.

<sup>371</sup>This interview, Conducted by Roman Solchanyk is included in SOLC92, pp. 7-18.

entire Party committee to the already formed initiative group. When Movchan protested saying the movement should be a popular, rather than Party, movement he was outnumbered by those who felt the initiative group should not distance itself from the Party. On 31 October the Secretaries of the Writer's Union as well as the secretaries of the Party committee were called to the CC where the Ideological Secretary Yu. Yel'chenko met with them. Movchan and other non-Party members were not invited. When the secretaries returned from the CC meeting they announced that they were forming their own (Party) initiative group within the Party committee.

When this information got out protests were registered and a meeting of the Kiev organization of the Writer's Union was called and there the Party Committee added an amendment to the program declaring the leading role of the Party in the movement. A previous decision to form a network of activists across the Republic by including the heads of the local writers' Unions in the Initiative committee was also revived and adopted. Kravchuk, then head of the Ideological Department of the CC, was present at each of these meetings and gave the proposals his full support.<sup>372</sup>

Even before the program was printed on 16 February it came under attack because, Movchan argues, Kravchuk got cold feet with the sudden turn of events in the Baltic states which placed the opposition forces in control.<sup>373</sup> Kravchuk led the assault on Rukh using the argument that Rukh was intended as an alternative political Party. Despite that he was told by Rukh founders that the movement was not intended to challenge the

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<sup>372</sup>SOLC92, pp. 8-9.

<sup>373</sup>SOLC92, p. 9.

Party and that it was only a popular movement to support perestroika, Kravchuk was not convinced. Also to no avail, advocates of Rukh quoted CPSU CC secretary and Politburo member Vadim Medvedev who proclaimed the Popular fronts to be a positive idea.<sup>374</sup>

In March 1989, having lost control of Rukh, the Party again tried to derail the movement by convening a round table of Ukraine's creative intelligentsia to draw up a program for the development of Ukrainian culture. The group headed by Kravchuk attempted to meet all the opposition demands with a cultural program designed to diffuse the potential for the popular movement to expand as it had in the Baltics.

At the same time a media campaign aimed at discrediting Rukh began in the Ukrainian press attempting to distort aspects of the program that concerned linguistic and national problems because the Party knew that these subjects were the most likely to cause fear among the public.<sup>375</sup> The distortions in the press began to have their desired effect--a poll taken in Kiev during the summer of 1989 indicated that while 90 percent of the respondents supported the idea of a Popular Movement, 50 percent had doubts and reservations about the "national" points raised in Rukh's platform.

However, before long, the media blitz against Rukh in the early months of 1989 ran into the paradox of *glasnost* namely, that information put out by the Party condemning a particular idea or program ends up stimulating people's interest and their search for the truth. By 1987

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<sup>374</sup>See V. Medvedev, "K posnaniyu sotsializma. Otveti na voprosy zhurnala Kommunist," Kommunist, No. 17, October, 1988, pp. 3-18.

<sup>375</sup>See the comments of the Ukrainian literary critic, poet, and translator, Mykola Riabchuk in RIA889, p. 22.

*glasnost* had proceeded to such an extent in Ukraine that the non-distorted draft of Rukh was being made available to the public. Ideological functionaries sent to various enterprises in Kiev to organize meetings to slander Rukh<sup>376</sup> had the opposite effect of angering people into supporting Rukh and denying the Party's charges that Rukh was a group of national extremists.

In summary, the CPU, initially endorsing the concept of a popular front, supported Rukh but then seeing the impact of the popular fronts in the Baltics changed their minds and attempted to snuff it out from the very beginning. However, because of the progress of *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia* this was no longer possible. Attempts to discredit Rukh had the opposite effect and in the process they gave legitimacy to the Popular movement further complicating the CPU's increasingly complicated political existence. While it is difficult and not very useful to engage in speculation about what would have happened if Rukh and the Party had emerged from 1989 hand in hand, it is certain that the process of breaking down the CPU would have proceeded at a much slower rate. The polarization of Rukh and the Party increased the legitimacy of Rukh and accelerated the demise of the Party.

#### D. THE COMMUNIST RESPONSE

The long promised Central Committee plenum on the nationalities question was finally convened on 19 September 1989<sup>377</sup> amidst rising nationalist mobilization in the Baltics, Azerbaijan, Moldavia, and

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<sup>376</sup>See SOLC92, p. 17.

<sup>377</sup>See NAHA89, pp. 332-9 and FBAR89 for coverage of the plenum and Gorbachev's speech.

Armenia. The plenum was a disappointment to reformists from the very outset as Gorbachev preempted discussion of the nationalities question by announcing that the 28th Party Congress would be held five months earlier than planned in October 1990 and that Shcherbytsky, and two others from the politburo would be retiring. When Gorbachev did finally turn to the nationalities question he stunned the audience by beginning with a historical overview of the current predicament which failed to even mention the struggles of the non-Russians in 1917 to achieve independence. Gorbachev denounced the Balts' claims that they were illegally incorporated into the Union and thus should be allowed to secede. He referred to secessionists as "adventurers" and lashed out at "nationalist" and "extremist" groups. In response to the very sensitive language issue, he declared that "it is expedient to give the Russian language the status of a common state language across the USSR."<sup>378</sup>

Gorbachev also turned his anger toward the idea of national self-determination saying that "in present-day conditions the principle [of national self-determination] is best reflected in self-management." Gorbachev's concept of self-management was far from even the Leninist guarantee to secession because it

"presupposes the voluntary association of republics and national entities in the name of grappling with needs common to all and their organic involvement in the advance of the whole country."<sup>379</sup>

Gorbachev clearly defined the limits of this form of "self-determination" by saying there would be no secession, no splits in the Party, but there would be protection of minority rights. This was to be backed up by his

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<sup>378</sup> NAHAB9, p. 335.

<sup>379</sup> NAHAB9, p. 335.

proposal that "nationalist, chauvinistic, and other extremist organizations" be subject to legal prohibition.<sup>380</sup>

As described by Nahaylo and Swoboda, Gorbachev's speech was "rather defensive, and contained a mixture of warnings and appeals to reason" and that as a whole, the plenum "was historic only in the sense that it was the first of its kind."<sup>381</sup>

To the non-Russians, the plenum represented a reversal of the gains from the 19th Party Conference. In fact, "if the non-Russians can be said to have finally broken through at the 19th Party Conference, then the plenum was a belated attempt to repair the breach in the imperial edifice."<sup>382</sup> Gorbachev did not side with the hard-liners like Ligachev or Chebrikov nor did he bow to the demands of the opposition forces. He did not abandon the idea of *demokratizatsiia*. In fact, Gorbachev had stressed the need for democracy; "Radical revolutionary changes cannot be achieved unless we act consistently, by democratic methods, push ahead step-by-step, without deviating to any side, without slowing the pace, without halting."<sup>383</sup>

#### 1. Shcherbytsky Leaves A Weakening CPU

At the CC Plenum on nationalities, the CPU's representative, Secretary Yelchenko, made reference to the fact that he was in favor of applying Gorbachev's idea of banning nationalist movements such as Rukh because, he argued, Rukh's program is a thinly disguised plan for

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<sup>380</sup> NAHA89, p. 335.

<sup>381</sup> NAHA89, pp. 335, 338.

<sup>382</sup> NAHA89, p. 338.

<sup>383</sup> NAHA89, p. 335.

separatism.<sup>384</sup> As Yelchenko's comments indicated, Ukraine's Communist elites were leaning toward the hard-liners who were now on the rise in the center.

On 28 September 1989, Gorbachev took a significant step toward diluting the influence of the CPU hard-liners when he flew to Kiev to remove Shcherbytsky from his post as the first Secretary of the CC of the CPU. This obvious intervention from the center was the culmination of Moscow's rising discontent with Shcherbytsky's machine in Ukraine. It was obvious to Gorbachev that Ukraine's first secretary was not moving at the same pace as the other republics. For example, in February, Gorbachev visited Kiev and stopped people on the street admonishing them for not speaking up for change. They told him they were afraid and he responded by telling them they must work from below for change while he works from above.<sup>385</sup> This is hardly a conversation he would have had in one of the Baltic states. At the same time he also met with the leaders of the Rukh initiative who assured him they had no intent to build an alternative political structure and that they adhered firmly to the ideas of a Leninist federation.<sup>386</sup>

Meanwhile, Shcherbytsky's silence during the Congress of People's Deputies made it clear he was still willing to ignore the changes that were happening all around, and in spite, of him. The miner's strikes revealed that this strategy was not going to work and the center

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<sup>384</sup>See FBAR89, p. 8.

<sup>385</sup>Olin Robinson, "Redefining the Marxist Faith," in MILL89, p. 313.

<sup>386</sup>SOLC92, p. xvii.

intervened and eliminated him from the process of resolving a serious problem in his own republic.

Haraymiw, writing in the fall of 1989, reflected the predominate view that

Shcherbytsky's anti-nationalism...[serves] as a cover for the *status quo*, and...[runs] contrary to the spirit of *perestroika*, but it ties in well with Gorbachev's underdeveloped policy on nationalism and serves to hold the finger in the dike.<sup>387</sup>

But by Fall 1989, even Gorbachev realized, that if some water does not flow through the dike, the whole thing could collapse and thus he had little to lose by removing Shcherbytsky who was hampering *perestroika* in Ukraine.

Shcherbytsky's removal brought a sigh of relief from below because Shcherbytsky's refusal to bring Ukraine into line with centrally mandated reforms had long been seen as intolerable. Shcherbytsky's ability to give lip service to reforms while keeping a tight lid on pressure building from below was described by one Ukrainian critic as trying to be half-pregnant which of course one cannot do.<sup>388</sup>

While the Shcherbytsky regime had indeed created a number of its own problems such as a radicalized Rukh because the CPU did not represent the desires of Ukrainians (i.e., elites)<sup>389</sup> and the CPU's continued resistance to *perestroika* and suppression of democracy from below

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<sup>387</sup>HARA89, p. 37. The First Secretary of the CPU, Hurenko, also admitted after the ouster that there was some initial linkage between Gorbachev and Shcherbytsky; "Had he [Shcherbytsky] disappeared from the political arena immediately upon the coming to power of Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, that would have been totally incomprehensible. Precisely during the period before his departure, the beginning of *perestroika*, he was, in my view, to a certain extent Mikhail Sergeevich's helper." (SOLC92, p. 155)

<sup>388</sup>RIAB89, p. 22.

<sup>389</sup>See MARP91, p. xix.



aggravated even the center, a certain part of the CPU's fate was simply political evolution. The creation of civil society simply would not tolerate a Shcherbytsky-like regime, just as it would eventually reject even a Gorbachev-like regime.

## 2. The Shcherbytsky Phenomenon

In order to understand why Shcherbytsky remained in power so long and why Ukraine moved so slowly toward reform, we turn to Furtado and Hechter who themselves sought to explain why Ukraine adopted the strategy they did toward the nationalist movement-namely to resist and suppress it.<sup>390</sup>

The key to this behavior is, they argue, the level of Republican elite dependency on the CPSU to gain access to political power. The Ukrainian leaders were more dependent and thus pursued a path more closely tied to that of the CPSU than say the Estonians. Ukrainian dependence on the CPSU was based on "the calculation of relative career chances with the organization of the CPSU itself." Local leaders, argue Furtado and Hechter, will take the interests of the center into account if they know that in so doing, they will be rewarded later by political promotion in the Republic or even into the central organs.<sup>391</sup> Since the high level Party positions have long been dominated by Slavs, Estonians and other non-slavs realized their chances of political reward are limited. As the Party's control over the periphery began to decline and opposition forces gained power, local leaders took the rational choice and began to do what

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<sup>390</sup>FURT92, pp. 189-190.

<sup>391</sup>See also SUBT90, pp. 513-4 where this argument is also made but compared to a corporate structure with Moscow as corporate headquarters and the Republican parties as branch offices. The republican elites perform at the "branch" level with hopes of being promoted to the "headquarters" level.

was necessary to maintain their power such as forming coalitions with the opposition forces.

Ukraine's political elites had no incentive to take this step because their paths upward remained open and if the center had any doubts about continuing to support them, the CPU could dredge up the old draconian stories about the dangers of Ukrainian nationalism (i.e., WWII integral nationalism and Shelest).<sup>392</sup> As well, even in 1988 and 1989 Ukraine remained closer to the center than did the Baltics or Asian republics.

Shcherbytsky's ouster did not necessarily indicate that Ukraine's dependency was ended, quite to the contrary, it indicated that they only needed to realign their behavior with the center.<sup>393</sup> The point at which this dependency would end would come only when Ukraine's elites recognized that the rewards offered by the center were less enticing than those offered by seeking cooperation with the opposition and establishing their own power in an independent Ukraine.

## E. CONCLUSION

In the period of a year, Ukraine's ruling elite had seen an erosion of their monopoly on power and the birth of Rukh, an organization capable of exploiting the new possibilities to participate in the Soviet political system. Elections to the Congress of People's Deputies gave the forces of opposition a much needed opportunity and granted them legitimacy by

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<sup>392</sup>Subtelny points out that prior to 1980 Shcherbytsky was a "Little Russian (Maloros) par excellence" and adhered very closely to Moscow's dictat. However, when these efforts failed to bring him promotion into Brezhnev's apparat, or as Subtelny argues, failed to make possible his true ambition to replace Brezhnev, Shcherbytsky began to tend his own garden in Ukraine to a greater extent. (SUBT90, pp. 512-3)

<sup>393</sup>Ivashko's short tenure and transfer to Moscow as Gorbachev's right hand man is the last example of such behavior among Ukrainian elites.

permitting them to wage their battle for power openly, with blessings from Moscow, and within the formerly sacred grounds of the CPU. The miner's strike later that summer showed the CPU's lack of control and the ease with which alternative political powers could be erected to challenge the CPU. The mishandling of Rukh's birth and the immediate alienation and radicalization of its leadership placed the Party in a direct confrontation with the opposition. Although the Party tried to utilize its still considerable monopoly of the media and means of mass communication to sway the public opinion in their favor, they still found themselves losing legitimacy and power to the opposition.

Shcherbytsky's ouster was a sharp blow to the conservative CPU and it was an indication that the center's policy was approaching a more middle of the road position trying to hold off the hard-liners and the radical separatists. On one hand, this indicated that Ukraine, finally, could make up lost time and begin to develop along the lines of the Baltic states since all the necessary ingredients were now in place. On the other, Gorbachev, at the CC plenum on the nationalities issue, firmly indicated that there were strict limits on what he would tolerate from the opposition. For the time being it all seemed to depend on Shcherbytsky's successor, Volodymyr Ivashko, who was an unknown quantity.

Ivashko's mere presence at the helm was, however, a signal that things were finally going to begin to change in Ukraine. The "stagnation of *perestroika*," as one opposition leader in Ukraine called it, was coming to an end. This was a powerful signal to the opposition forces and a serious blow to the CPU and its hard line Communists who had hoped to hold back the rising tide of anti-Party democratization. Opposition leaders saw

Ivashko as "striving to proceed more reasonably" in his dealing with the opposition forces.<sup>394</sup> Where as Shcherbytsky repressed and harassed the opposition forces, Ivashko was willing to meet with them in addition to suppressing and harassing them.

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<sup>394</sup>SOLC90C, p. 22.

## VII. THE PARTY WEAKENS

At the precise time when Ukrainian opposition leaders were preparing to take advantage of Shcherbytsky's removal and the growing pro-reform sentiment in their country, Gorbachev was beginning to pull in the reins on reform which seemed to be accelerating out of control throughout most of the periphery. By December 1989, five republics had openly defied Moscow and expressed their intent to achieve sovereignty; four had rejected their incorporation in the Union as illegal; and three had begun referendums on secession. The Balts were not alone in the struggle to exploit the contradictions of Soviet ideology and federal struggle and demand national self-determination. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and Moldavia, like the Baltic States, were well on their way toward being overtaken by the anti-Communist, pro-autonomy forces. Islam was gaining new recognition in the Asian republics and Uzbekistan was experiencing a burgeoning nationalist movement. In the slavic core of the Union cracks were beginning to appear. In Ukraine Rukh was gaining force, and in Russia the autonomous republics in Russia were demanding an upgrades political equal to that of the republics and Russians themselves were beginning to mobilize against the state.

On 20 December the periphery began to separate from the center; the Lithuanian Communist Party passed a resolution calling for its independence from the CPSU. Gorbachev's reaction was swift and unambiguous - the Party was to maintain the leading role and the Union was insoluble. As Gorbachev explained to the Congress of People's Deputies, "today, to

exercise self-determination through secession is to blow apart the Union, to pit people against one another and to sow discord, bloodshed and death.<sup>395</sup>

This chapter details the path taken by Ukraine's Communist elites in this charged atmosphere and analyzes the erosion of the CPU's political power by the combined pressures from the center and the Ukrainian national opposition. Unlike the experiences of 1988-1989, in 1990 the CPU's monopoly on power was not eroded by a number of distinct events but rather by a continuous process of political change. This is not to say there were not important turning points in the process but that the process proceeded much more rapidly and more smoothly than it had previously. The key point, and major theme of this chapter, is that the vast majority of this political change in 1990 occurred within the system as opposed to outside the system as in the years before.

The events of 1989, namely the elections which gave the opposition access to political power, the miner's strikes which weakened the CPU, and the empowerment of opposition forces through the organization of Rukh greatly accelerated political change. As a result, and this chapter will show, during 1990 a gradual merger of the moderates on both opposition and Communist sides of Ukraine's parliament and the attenuation of the CPU's power made the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet a two-party parliament making way for the July Declaration of Sovereignty and a serious challenge to the Union Treaty.

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<sup>395</sup>NAHA89, p. 345. In this speech Gorbachev also revealed his Russian bias by speaking of the centuries of unification in which the Russians had played "an outstanding role." The Russians, he argued, had done this to help the other peoples and had suffered as a result and "were not to blame for what has happened" to the non-Russians.

## A. SIGNS OF CHANGE

Political change began to accelerate as the post-Shcherbytsky government in Ukraine adopted a more open attitude toward the opposition forces. The first example of this came in November 1989 when intentionally or not, the CPU politburo granted a victory to Rukh and the ecological groups such as *Zelenyi svit* (Green World)<sup>396</sup> by removing the controversial Health Minister A. Romanenko who had come under attack by the opposition for his mishandling of the Chornobyl incident and for spearheading the subsequent coverup.<sup>397</sup> His replacement, Yu. Spizhenko, who had formerly strictly adhered to the Party line on Chornobyl, quickly began to cooperate with Ukrainian and Western agencies investigating the long term impact of Chornobyl. As a result, the April-May 1990 anniversary of the Chornobyl accident was marked by an increased honesty and openness about the true impact of the accident. Although the true story was still not told, the signal to the ecological and opposition groups in Ukraine was clear - *glasnost* had finally arrived in Ukraine.

Another significant concession came from the CPU in February 1990 when the Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution "concerning the Ecological Situation in Ukraine and Measures for Its Radical Improvement". Although this was a vague and ineffective declaration, its existence indicated that the CPU had realized the importance of the issue. To be honest, the CPU's motives were not entirely honorable. They undoubtedly hoped raising

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<sup>396</sup>Formed in Oct 1989.

<sup>397</sup>See MARP90N and MARP92 for more information on Romanenko and his handling of the Chornobyl incident.

the issue would help gain popular support and undermine the opposition platform prior to the elections to the Supreme Soviet scheduled for March.

Not surprisingly the CPU's benevolent attitudes did not extend to the campaign to elect new delegates to the Supreme Soviet. In fact, the CPU's old strong-arm tactics were quite visible perhaps as a desperate counter to Moscow's actions on Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution which guarantees the monopoly of the Party. The CPSU Central Committee Plenum held in early March became a show-down between conservative hard-line Communists and their more moderate comrades. One important issue raised was Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution and a great deal of discussion ensued on the need for the Party to cooperate (i.e., acknowledge) other "sociopolitical organizations." To both Rukh and the CPU this was seen as a signal that the monopoly of the Party was coming to an end.<sup>398</sup>

## **B. ELECTIONS TO PARLIAMENT**

The elections to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in March 1990 were preceded by lengthy debate over electoral laws and procedure. The primary issue was whether "public organizations" such as the CPU, Komsomol, and the like should be given fixed numbers of deputies regardless of the election outcome as had been done in the March 1989 elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet. The final law adopted by the Supreme Soviet abolished this practice and thus eliminated the last major hurdle to potentially democratic elections.

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<sup>398</sup>SOLC90C, pp. 21-22.



## 1. CPU Resistance

During the March 1990 elections, the Communists opposed the coalition called the Democratic Block (DB) which was an alliance of 40 informal groups which had been formed in November 1989 in order to coordinate opposition efforts. The appearance of the Democratic Block made it clear that for the first time, there was a danger to the Party aparatchiks who had for so long held their offices and they were not willing to surrender their posts to an opposition candidate without a struggle. As part of this, Party authorities employed "creative" electoral practices and delayed the registration of candidates from the Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society and *Zelenyi svit* (Green World) and delayed the official registration of Rukh for nearly 6 months.

The CPU's anti-opposition strategy was two fold; first they would secure nominations for as many Communists as they could and second, they would prevent as many opposition candidates from being nominated as possible. Party workers became very active in organizing nominating meetings at large factories and enterprises where the majority of people could be compelled to vote for the Communist candidate. The CPU was able to secure nominations for 40 to 50 percent of all candidates in this manner.<sup>399</sup> The tactics used against the opposition were no less effective. For one, the CPU had power over the opposition nomination meetings because the law stated that permission from the local authorities is required to hold meeting of 200 or more which is the number of people necessary to obtain a nomination. Electoral data indicates that more times than not, the authorities denied such a permit to opposition groups

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<sup>399</sup>MIHA908, p. 22.

desiring to hold such a nomination meeting. The CPU was also able to disqualify every one of the *Zelenyi svit* and Rukh candidates because these organizations were not legally registered.<sup>400</sup>

However, the aggressive methods utilized by the Party to discourage opposition candidates backfired according to Rukh secretary Mykhailo Horyn, who said the constant harassment by the authorities forced his movement to take more aggressive and radical approaches toward opposition politics.<sup>401</sup> This became important because the opposition was still able to gain access to the nomination process by securing nominations from Ukraine's cultural unions<sup>402</sup> and at the organization and enterprise level. The intellectual elites which formed the Democratic Bloc's pool of candidates also had a powerful appeal among those who rejected the current government. For example, V. Yavorivs'kyi, a prominent Rukh leader, was nominated in the city of Kirovograd with which he had no connection simply because the residents put his name up for nomination in order to see his communist counterpart defeated.<sup>403</sup> The Democratic Bloc candidates also had great support in Western Ukraine as could be expected.

## 2. Election Results

In spite of election "abnormalities", the Bloc secured 108 of 450 seats in the Supreme Soviet giving the Democratic Block 30 percent of the seats in the Supreme Soviet despite the fact that nearly one half of the

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<sup>400</sup>MIHA908, p. 22.

<sup>401</sup>MARP90F, p. 18.

<sup>402</sup>Mihalisko notes that 40 percent of the March 1990 candidates were intellectual elites while workers formed only 10 percent of the total. (See MIHA908, p. 22)

<sup>403</sup>MIHA908, p. 22.

seats were not contested. This meant in practice that the Democratic Block, in alliance with independents, controlled 160-180 seats while the CPU controlled 260-290. No Democratic Block candidates were elected into the presidium. The Democratic Block delegates formed a parliamentary union called the *Narodna Rada* (from the name of the 1918 parliament) to coordinate their activities within the parliament.

After the 4 March electoral success Rukh formally declared itself a political party with a program of independence for Ukraine and several of its top members turned in their Party membership cards. By April, Rukh's top leadership no longer claimed Party membership indicating that either there were serious splits in the CPU leadership or that Rukh's leaders figured the CPU was so discredited that it was no longer a viable political vehicle for achieving their goals.<sup>404</sup> As it turned out, predictions of a Party split were premature, but the specter of a discredited Party loomed large.

The CPU, although maintaining a majority in the Supreme Soviet, suffered significant internal damage as a result of these elections. "For the Communists, the elections were a devastating revelation; in nearly every case, when people had a choice between traditional Communists and an outsider, the voted for the outsider."<sup>405</sup> In addition there was other hidden damage: 1) The opposition candidates did remarkably well considering the hurdles they had to overcome and the CPU was rapidly running out of hurdles to set in front of them. Every time the opposition, now operating inside the system, increased their strength the

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<sup>404</sup>MARP90E, p. 18.

<sup>405</sup>David Remnick, "Soviet Democrats on the Defensive," Washington Post, 24 December 1990, p. A6.

more difficult it was to keep them under control. 2) The "dirty" campaign run by the Communists made it possible for opposition forces to challenge the validity of the elections as was done later in 1990. 3) The forces of opposition emerged heroes having overcome Communist trickery which only enhanced their standing with the public. Many, after the March elections to the Supreme Soviet, concluded that "All Ukraine now comprehends that the majority of Ukrainians are now represented by the minority in parliament."<sup>406</sup> 4) The opposition, operating in the parliamentary minority, was placed on the defensive immediately. Rukh's decision, shortly after the elections to declare itself a political party is an indication of this move to the offensive.

In spite of the damage to the CPU, they remained in power and even maintained a significant majority in parliament. The closer the opposition encroached on the sources of Party power, the harder the Party fought back. As expressed by a member of the Lithuanian Parliament,

We democrats have discovered to our great pain that the powers that be were prepared to bend, but they would not break when it came to their own interests: the preservation of their own economic and political power.<sup>407</sup>

#### C. THE CPU COOPTS THE OPPOSITION PROGRAM

In late March 1990 when Rukh organized mass rallies in support of Lithuania in opposition to Central Committee warnings and signaled their intent to place their efforts behind the goal of independence rather than sovereignty, the CPU began a two point offensive. The first line of attack was on the opposition itself. The CPU moved to legally strip 60

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<sup>406</sup>MARP90P, p. 23.

<sup>407</sup>David Remnick, "Soviet Democrats on the Defensive," Washington Post, 24 December 1990, p. A10.

opposition deputies of their parliamentary immunity for their participation in the rallies and they exploited the shift in emphasis toward independence by slandering the opposition claiming they were adventurists wanting to follow Lithuania's dangerous path.<sup>408</sup>

The CPU's second line of attack was to coopt the Rukh program as outlined in their November 1989 program in hopes of undermining support for Rukh and increasing their own credibility. The first signs of this approach came in March during the CPU Central Committee plenum at which the Party repeated its call for economic and political sovereignty within the bounds of a new Union Treaty which had originally been made a part of the Party platform in November 1989<sup>409</sup> in preparation for the March 1990 elections. This time around, however, state sovereignty was broadened to include economic, cultural and scientific relations with foreign countries and even diplomatic relations with states outside the USSR. Ivashko spoke of a Ukraine in a new Union which would allow two tiered relationships. On one level there would be relations between the republic and the center and on the other between republics themselves.<sup>410</sup>

A plenum of the CPU on 3 April 1990 attempted to "hijack the popular causes championed by 'Rukh..." by passing a resolution calling for the sovereignty of Ukraine.<sup>411</sup> "In short, the Party...[began] to adopt a political mien while trying to cast its political opponents in the role of

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<sup>408</sup>This attack on Rukh went to such an extent that the Communist daily publications failed to even analyze events in Lithuania concentrating only on using them as a lever against Rukh and western Ukrainian secessionists. (MIHA90A, p. 18)

<sup>409</sup>This program was printed in Radyans'ke Ukrianina, 3 December 1989.

<sup>410</sup>See SOLC90, p. 18 for more on Ivashko's speech.

<sup>411</sup>MIHA90a, p. 18.

nationalist extremists."<sup>412</sup> This sovereignty program was formally ratified by the CPU at their 19-23 June 1990 Party Congress.<sup>413</sup> This sudden move to coopt the opposition platform was so complete that it led Roman Solchanyk to conclude that "at the risk of sounding overly facetious, it might be suggested that the next logical step is for the Communist Party of Ukraine to apply for membership in Rukh."<sup>414</sup> In essence this process began in the late Spring and early Summer of 1990 as the forces of the CPU and the opposition began to merge.

#### D. TOWARD A MERGING OF FORCES

Although the first session of the newly elected Supreme Soviet (May-August) was characterized by near continual confrontation between the opposition minority under the umbrella of the Democratic Block and the Party majority known as the group of 239, a process of merging was beginning. This merging of forces was occurring not only at the level of political platforms but was also manifested in the voting patterns in the Supreme Soviet. The reason for this merger were both external and internal. The primary external factor was the revocation of Article 6 of the USSR constitution which weakened the power of the CPU. The internal factors were 1) a move of deputies from the communist to the opposition side of the parliament; 2) the realization that the minority in parliament actually represented the majority of Ukrainians; 3) the growing independence of Ukraine from the center; 4) pressure from the opposition

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<sup>412</sup>NIHA90a, p. 18.

<sup>413</sup>SOLC90, p. 23.

<sup>414</sup>SOLC90, p. 19.

supported by increasing economic problems, rising discontent of the populace, and a renewal of the coal miners' strike in Eastern Ukraine, and 5) the growth of a "reform" element within the CPU.

There were growing indications that a common ground was being formed in the new Supreme Soviet on the basis of the sovereignty issue. In June 1990, Radio Kiev reported results of a poll taken among parliamentarians indicating that 50% of the Supreme Soviet membership favored Ukraine becoming a sovereign republic within a new Union and 38% favored Ukraine's independence within a confederation and 10 percent supported secession from the union.<sup>415</sup>

Further evidence of this drawing together could be seen in July 1990. The process by which Ukraine's Declaration of Sovereignty was approved in a vote of 355 to 4 in favor illustrates that opposition and Communist Party delegates were voting together. On the 23rd of July, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet voted to replace the outgoing Chairman, Ivashko, with Kravchuk and 140 deputies voted for the opposition candidate indicating that in addition to their own 88 votes, the *Narodna Rada* managed to attract 52 votes from the other side of the isle.<sup>416</sup> This is explained partially by the fact that in July 1990 the faction of the CPU known as the Democratic Platform of the CPU contained 30 permanent members who had come over to the side of the Democratic Bloc in Parliament.<sup>417</sup> This sudden merging of forces broke the powerful communist bloc in parliament and allowed significant legislation to take place in the Summer of 1990.

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<sup>415</sup>SOLC90, p. 18.

<sup>416</sup>SHUT90, p. 6.

<sup>417</sup>MARP90, p. 23.

The most significant of these legislative actions were the Declaration of Sovereignty and the Law on Economic Independence.

### 1. The Declaration of Sovereignty

The new Supreme Soviet session had as a working draft for the Declaration of Sovereignty, a revision of a draft originally drawn up earlier in 1990 by the outgoing Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Valentyna Shevchenko. When the parliamentary commission on state sovereignty, headed by M. Shul'ha, the secretary for inter-nationality relations in the Central Committee of the CPU, released its revised draft of the declaration it was attacked by the more conservative elements of the Supreme Soviet as being a recipe for secession from the USSR while opposition deputies charged that the Shul'ha draft didn't go far enough.<sup>418</sup>

This stalemate was broken when the RSFSR led the way by approving their declaration of sovereignty on 8 June.<sup>419</sup> This external impetus was supplemented by internal factors; namely Ivashko's decision to take 63 conservative Communist deputies from the Supreme Soviet with him to the two-week long CPSU Congress in Moscow. On 7 July, under pressure from *Narodna Rada*, opposition leader V. Chernovil recalled these deputies to Kiev to vote on the declaration. The majority of them refused to return and quickly news reached Kiev that Ivashko had resigned from the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet to become Gorbachev's deputy in the CPSU. The realization that Ivashko and the others that remained in Moscow with him cared more

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<sup>418</sup>MIHA90F, p. 19.

<sup>419</sup>The RSFSR Declaration n Sovereignty was voted into effect on 11 June 1990. See MIHA90F and SHUT90.



about their own career advancement than the fate of Ukraine angered many Conservative deputies and they vented their frustration by voting for the Sovereignty resolution on 16 July.<sup>420</sup>

The resolution called for independence, self-determination, authority over external relations, revival of culture and protection of the environment. The largest section of the declaration concerned economic sovereignty which claimed Ukraine's resources for Ukraine. The highly symbolic issue of the abbreviation "UkSSR" was hotly contested and the opposition forces compromised by leaving it in the title but referring to the republic as "Ukraine" in the text. The article on citizenship was also a compromise with the opposition deputies demanding exclusive citizenship to Ukraine only but having to settle for dual citizenship in Ukraine as well as the USSR. The resolution's final sentence was also the object of much debate because the opposition deputies wanted to omit any mention of the union treaty while the hardliners demanded that the Ukraine's sovereignty be based on this yet-to-be-signed treaty. The final compromise read "the principle of the Declaration of Sovereignty of Ukraine will be used to lay the basis of a Union treaty."<sup>421</sup>

Overall, this resolution was a victory over the more conservative forces in parliament even if it was very idealistic. As Mihalisko summarized the declaration; it can "be faulted for lack of realism, but that would be missing the point. It was meant to be taken as a statement of Ukraine's firm intention to govern its own destiny."<sup>422</sup> The inclusion

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<sup>420</sup>MIHA90F, p. 19.

<sup>421</sup>MIHA90F, p. 19.

<sup>422</sup>MIHA90F, p. 18.

of an article in the declaration which called for Ukraine to create its own armed forces supported this view.

## 2. The Law on Economic Independence

In addition to the 16 July Declaration of State Sovereignty, the parliamentary coalition of opposition and Communist forces produced the 3 August decree "Concerning the Economic Independence of the Ukrainian SSR" and the accompanying "Law Concerning the Economic Independence of the Ukrainian SSR." In spite of the retention of the outdated name "Ukrainian SSR" the later two of these legislative items represented more of a real victory for the opposition than does the declaration of sovereignty.

The economic declaration and the accompanying law were more "a statement of intent than a real blueprint" for major reform. The law establishes the principles of economic independence for Ukraine and outlines regulations for its economy and society. The issues of financial policy, budget, credit and the monetary system were addressed in addition to regulations on property rights, taxation, and price policy. The overall intent was to transfer Ukraine to a free market while simultaneously protecting workers and those losing jobs as a result of the reforms. Relations with "other states" were also stipulated. Unlike the Declaration of Sovereignty, this law clearly asserts that Ukraine maintains control over all her resources.<sup>423</sup>

The merging of Communist and opposition forces during the first session of the Supreme Soviet had given rise to a very productive summer's legislation. However, the outlook for the second session which was to begin in October was less certain. Opposition forces wished to keep their

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<sup>423</sup> HARP90J, p. 16.

momentum while the hard-line Communists were beginning to be spooked by the rapid erosion of their power.

#### **E. CRISIS: UKRAINE'S OCTOBER SUPREME SOVIET SESSION**

The October Supreme Soviet session was being convened against a background of an opposition assault on the Communist government and the current make-up of the parliament over the issues of Ukraine's economic performance and participation in the Union Treaty.

##### **1. Background to the Session**

Pressure was being applied from the center following Gorbachev's April agreement known as the nine plus one plan and there were high hopes that Ukraine would validate the Union Treaty during the Fall session of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet scheduled to open on 1 October. It seemed, at first glance, that this would not be difficult; the Supreme Soviet was still dominated by the Group of 239, the Communist block, led by Party First Secretary Hurenko, and they came out strongly in support of the Union Treaty and strongly rejected an opposition-sponsored declaration of sovereignty. However, the opposition forces both inside and outside the political system had declared that they would not agree to any union treaty before a new Ukrainian constitution had been approved. In this struggle, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Vitalii Masol became a symbol of the Party's indifference to the demands of Ukrainians and he rapidly became the focus of opposition wrath.

Masol's comments to the press in September on the "difficult" situation in Ukraine did little to endear him to the opposition.<sup>424</sup> His

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<sup>424</sup>Pravda Ukrainy, 25 September, 1990 as cited in MARP90K, p. 16.

comments reflected, as Marples commented, that "his thinking not only lags far behind that of the Ukrainian population as far as radical reforms are concerned but is also alien to the current economic views in Moscow."<sup>425</sup> Masol placed blame for Ukraine's falling economic production on the self-centeredness of youth who are violating the constitution (i.e., evading the draft) and stirring up religious and national hostilities. Strikes and lack of worker discipline, he claimed, have cost Ukraine to date this year 1 billion, 10 million rubles. He went on to claim that the failure of the harvest which left 2/3 of the potato, vegetable, and sugar beet crops unharvested was a deliberate political plot by the farmers who are under the influence of opposition agitators. In detailing the housing shortage and energy crisis, he said the problem was that workers were too occupied with political matters to carry out their work effectively. In reference to the increasing number of Ukrainians rallying behind the opposition flag, he warned, "Don't let yourselves be deceived by political gamblers."<sup>426</sup>

In the wake of Masol's comments, the battle lines began to be drawn even before the doors of the parliamentary hall were opened. On the eve of the Supreme Soviet's first session, the Ukrainian Republican Party (URP) held a press conference and declared their goals to include the dissolution and banning of the CPU and secession of the republic from the Union. URP spokesman Chernovil also warned that a republic-wide demonstration and political warning strike was to be held on 30 September

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<sup>425</sup>MARP90K, p. 16.

<sup>426</sup>Pravda Ukrainy, 25 September, 1990 as cited in MARP90K, p. 16.

and 1 October.<sup>427</sup> Rukh and its associate organizations joined the fray and warned that they would carry out mass demonstrations in Kiev on the eve of the session.

## 2. The CPU Responds

In response to the growing threats of unrest from the URP and Rukh, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, in a major concession, declared on 29 September, that until a new constitution is adopted it "considers the conclusion of a Union Treaty premature." But this concession went relatively unnoticed in the excitement of the pending showdown of hard-liners and reformers and the concession failed to defuse the situation. On 30 September, protestors holding blue and yellow flags and banners reading "No to the Union Treaty" and "Freedom for Ukraine" gathered on October Revolution Square<sup>428</sup> in front of the parliament building. The rally before the parliament, consisting of 100,000 to 120,000 people, was claimed by Izvestia to be the largest mass demonstration in Kiev since the end of WWII. Among the demands of the crowd were the resignations of certain leaders (namely Masol and even Kravchuk), new elections to the Supreme Soviet, the depolitization of state institutions, Army, Security organs, the MVD, and so on. The opposition forces of Narodna rada and others issued a strike call throughout the republic that day. Although the call went unheeded in most parts of the republic, on the morning of 1 October, thousands of supporters did appear in front of the parliament in support of the opposition forces.

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<sup>427</sup>Pravda, 20 September, p. 2.

<sup>428</sup>Later renamed "Independence Plaza."

At the same time, the Ukrainian Student's Union established a tent city on the square to highlight their demands for nationalization of CPU property and the Young Communists' League as well as new elections to the Supreme Soviet.<sup>429</sup>

The Communist reaction was one of surprise quickly supplanted by fear. Even Mihalisko, writing for Radio Liberty about the opening session of the parliament, wrote at this time that, "Indeed, there is reason to believe that Ukraine's Communists were genuinely haunted by the specter of being ousted from power as a consequence of the mass protests scheduled for October 1."<sup>430</sup> Even before the session's opening day, the Communists had reportedly held a secret meeting to draw up plans to oppose the declaration of sovereignty and from their statements, Mihalisko, notes "it was clear that they feared events in the republic had got so out of hand that an anti-Communist uprising was a realistic possibility."<sup>431</sup> Public indifference to the Supreme Soviet's attempts to defuse the situation by agreeing to postpone approval of the Union treaty until Ukraine's new constitution was in place no doubt added to the Party's concerns.<sup>432</sup>

On 30 September 1990, when Kiev was awash with protestors demanding new parliamentary elections, economic improvements, and autonomy from the center, a hostile interview with Masol was published in *Pravda Ukrainy* in which he called for continued centralization of Ukraine's major industries and price controls to avoid anarchy. These were hardly the

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<sup>429</sup>S. Tsikora, "A Difficult Monday," *Izvestia*, 1 October, 1990, pp. 1-2 transl. in CDSP, Vol XLII, No. 40, p. 9.

<sup>430</sup>MIHA900, p. 18.

<sup>431</sup>MIHA900, p. 18.

<sup>432</sup>MIHA900, pp. 18-19.

words Ukrainians wanted to hear. In addressing issues of sovereignty and autonomy from the center, he urged Ukraine to sign grain agreements with Russian, Byelorussia, and Uzbekistan, proposed a move toward light, rather than heavy industry, in the future. He also warned it was not likely that the transfer of all enterprises from All-Union to Ukrainian control would be completed by the target date in 1991. Even if it was, he asserted there probably would be little impact on the falling standard of living. In addition, he warned against the idea of trading Ukrainian goods on the world market because "our standards are simply not high enough." Farmers, he told the paper, have "no great desire" for privatization and private enterprises have little promise.<sup>433</sup>

### 3. The Session Opens

Obviously, Masol's interview did little to help the situation. On the opening day of Parliament and the next, outside the parliament hall, Ukrainian students began a hunger strike in the tent city they had set up in the square in front of the parliament. Their demands for the resignation of the Ukrainian Prime Minister Masol, the nationalization of all Party and Komsomol property, the dissolution of the present parliament and multi-party elections, and the right for Ukrainian conscripts to serve in Ukraine were added to the demands of the opposition forces in parliament. Over the next two weeks the student strike spread and tens of thousands of University students, teachers, and high-school students. Ukrainian students skipped classes and held demonstrations in what was one of the "largest acts of student rebellion in Soviet history."<sup>434</sup> The

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<sup>433</sup>Pravda Ukrainy, 29 September 199, as cited in MARP90K, p. 17.

<sup>434</sup>MIHA90D, p. 18.

students came from diverse regions of Ukraine; Kharkiv, Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil. They were protected by uniformed students of the Kiev Marine school.<sup>435</sup>

The situation inside the parliament hall was just as chaotic. The opening session quickly devolved into chaos with opposition deputy Konev demanding the resignation of Masol, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Kravchuk as head of the republic. The session was shortly adjourned until the next day.

The second day of the Supreme Soviet was less hectic but was interrupted by altercations between protestors and police and the announcement that 123 students had begun a hunger strike in front of the parliament. During the second secession, it was also revealed that the Union-wide strike had failed. It had been supported by only 31 enterprises with less than 10,000 employees total.<sup>436</sup> Despite this, the opposition receive support from across the isle on the issue of economics and sovereignty.

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<sup>435</sup>"An October Revolution," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 43, 28 October 1990, p. 6. See also "An October Revolution: Hunger strike Leaders Reflect on Growing Student Influence in Ukraine," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 47, 25 November 1990, pp. 9-11 which portrays the students unhappiness with not only the CPU but also the lack of support receive initially from the Narodna Rada, Rukh, and other opposition groups. The view that Rukh was heavily involved in the strike was also presented. According to Pravda Ukrainy, Rukh and the Ukrainian Republican Party distributed leaflets encouraging students to support their comrades starving themselves on the parliament steps by asking them to "break off your studies, declare strikes, hold rallies, and adopt resolutions in support of the hunger strikers' demands." According to the same report money was also collected to support such activities. It was also mentioned that some People's Deputies from the People's Council (a parliamentary group comprised of parties opposed to the CPU which includes Rukh) actually joined the student strike. Pravda Ukrainy reported that I. Drach and M. Goryn of Rukh admitted involvement in organizing the student strike. ("Let's Look Truth in the Eye," Pravda Ukrainy, 25 Oct 1990, p. 2, as excerpted in "Pravda lays Blame for Kiev Hunger Strike," The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. 42, No. 43, 21 Nov 1990, p. 8)

<sup>436</sup>S. Tsikora, "In Search of Stabilization Measures," Izvestia, 3 October 1990, p. 2 transl. in CDSP, Vol. XLII, No. 40, p. 10. The turn out in support of the strike was very small considering that 25 million Ukrainians report to work every day.



The CPU, represented by Masol was clearly advocating the "go slow" approach and his refusal to directly address the Union Treaty issue in the press cast doubts on his ability to represent Ukraine's "true" desires in negotiations with Moscow on the issue of sovereignty. His ideas on economic reforms were outmoded and by laying the blame for economic shortcomings on the lack of worker discipline sounded condescending. He clearly had no solutions to offer and no visible loyalty to Ukraine. Accordingly, when Masol presented his economic plan to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in early October, they were rejected by both opposition and Communist candidates alike.

#### 4. Opposition Victory

In a startling victory for the opposition, on 17 October the Supreme Soviet bowed to the opposition demands and approved a modified declaration of sovereignty, a decree on Ukraine's economic independence, a referendum in 1991 to decide the question of new elections to the Supreme Soviet and the resignation of the Republic's Prime Minister. On 23 October, the Supreme Soviet voted 254 to 83 to accept Masol's resignation. Masol denounced the vote as "moral terrorism." He was succeeded temporarily by V. Fokin, chairman of the Committee on the Economy, and an ally of Kravchuk.<sup>437</sup>

The ouster of Masol and the approval of opposition demands for new elections and economic independence provided the *Narodna Rada* and the non-parliamentary opposition groups such as the student groups with

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<sup>437</sup>"Parliament Accepts Masol Resignation," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 43, 28 October 1990, p. 1. Fokin was elected to the post of Prime Minister on 14 November 1990.

increased credibility and confidence. Rukh capitalized on this turn for the better and took the offensive.

#### F. RUKH DECLARES WAR ON THE CPU

The radicalization of Rukh, a non-political body, proceeded at a rapid pace in 1990 as its delegates gained legitimacy and power through parliamentary successes. The inevitability of Rukh becoming a political Party was evident to its leadership early in 1990. A statement appeared in the 8 March 1990 edition of Literaturna Ukraina signed by a number of Rukh's leadership who were at this time still CPU members (Drach, Pavlychko, V. Yavorovs'kyi, V. Donchyk, and others). They argued for transforming Rukh into a political body and called for true independence of Ukraine. However, during the fourth session of Rukh's leadership body, the Grand Council, this appeal was rejected. At the same time, the battle lines began to be drawn between Rukh and the Party by the announcement that the top leadership of Rukh, Drach and Pavlychko, were leaving the CPU. The other's were soon expelled.<sup>438</sup>

##### 1. Rukh's Second Congress

During Rukh's second congress, held in Kiev from 25-28 October 1990<sup>439</sup>, Rukh's transformation into a political party was completed and a new direction for Rukh was approved by the body. This congress was "not the euphoric event that the inaugural Rukh conclave was, It was, instead - as benefits a maturing political and public organization - a goal-

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<sup>438</sup>SOLC92, p. xvii.

<sup>439</sup>See Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1991, p. 5 for a break down of the delegates attending the conference. This data may be compared to similar data for the inaugural conference in 1989 (See PAN191).

oriented meeting."<sup>440</sup> The goals were made clear by a large banner hanging outside the Ukraina Palace<sup>441</sup> where the congress convened; "From perebudova to independence." The word "perestroika" was dropped from Rukh's official name and "the renewal of independent statehood for Ukraine" was declared as the primary goal.<sup>442</sup>

A measure of Rukh's development was that unlike Rukh's first congress, over 200 guests representing foreign countries attended, including a 50 person delegation from the US. As well, in comparison with last year's congress when 20% of the membership claimed CPSU membership, only 2% did so this year.<sup>443</sup> In response to assertions in 1989 that Rukh did not have broad based support among the populace<sup>444</sup>, great emphasis was placed on diversity among the delegates in hopes of forestalling fragmentation of the opposition. As Ivan Drach stressed in his opening address, the congress is a "conference of consolidation for all democratic forces."<sup>445</sup> In reality this meant that

among the delegates and guests present at the congress were representatives of all facets of the Ukrainian nation: from Donbas miners to soldiers' mothers, from strike committees to student associations, from Green World to the Ukrainian Language Society, from the Ukrainian Republican Party to anarcho-syndicalists. Forty-five

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<sup>440</sup>"Rukh Moves Forward," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 45, 11 November 1990, p. 6.

<sup>441</sup>Ironically the Ukrainian Palace is where CPU forums are held.

<sup>442</sup>SOLC92, p. xvii see also, "Ivan Drach Addresses Rukh Assembly," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1991, p. 4 and see also SOLC90, p. 23.

<sup>443</sup>See PANI91, and Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1991, p. 5.

<sup>444</sup>Paniotto's study of Rukh's 1989 inaugural congress showed that based on demographic characteristics (education, occupation, age, etc.) Rukh delegates represent only 7-8 percent of the Ukrainian population. As well, he discovered that; "there are significant differences between the main concerns of Rukh and those of the general population: for Rukh members they are politics and national culture, for the population, economy and ecology." Although these discrepancies appear to have lessened slightly since the study in late 1989, they do indicate a representation problem.

<sup>445</sup>HAD290, p. 3.

political and public organizations active in Ukraine today sent their representatives to the congress.<sup>446</sup>

In line with this theme, the Rukh program was changed to allow "all democratic forces, all political parties or public organizations that work toward completely independent statehood of Ukraine" to join its ranks.<sup>447</sup>

## 2. CPU Reaction

In an analysis of the congress from the Communist view point, there was a remarkable change from the condemnations of a year ago. Although the CPU central Committee attacked the congress,<sup>448</sup> from Communists outside the parliament there emerged more moderate statements. In addition, although Rukh had initially masked its true intent, i.e. taking political power, because of the repressive regime in 1989, at the 1990 congress finally was able to emerge in its true form. As a result, at the congress, the CPU and the Democratic forces were considered to be now equal in force.<sup>449</sup> An article printed in two consecutive issues of *Rabochaya Tribuna* conceded this fact and warned,

Let us not oversimplify matters: Rukh is a serious political force, and it has to be recognized within the republic. It is essential to find here currents of dialogue, to seek points of contact together, and to act and not attempt to "bend" them and make them just another

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<sup>446</sup>"Rukh Moves Forward," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 45, 11 November 1990, p. 6.

<sup>447</sup>"Rukh Moves Forward," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. LVIII, No. 45, 11 November 1990, p. 6.

<sup>448</sup>See for example, ODIN90A. The statement also referred to Rukh's restructuring as an anticommunist organization opposed to the 'current regime.'" The article went on to discuss the implications of this turn; "In practical terms, this could mark the beginning of an open confrontation between the well-organized Ukrainian Communist Party, more than 3 million strong, and Rukh, which has 5 million members but no smoothly working mechanism of operation." *Pravda* took an even more reactionary approach toward Rukh "They need undivided power, and right now. As has been stated in parliament, their aim is to smash the last communist regime in Europe. And for this purpose all means will serve, as the saying goes." And it concluded; "The current actions of a certain segment of the leaders of Rukh and the Peoples' Council very much smack of a noose that they are preparing to slip around the neck of democracy." The same report decried the flocking of young people to the image of Bandura and the OUN-UIA which the report credited with "having left in its wake thousands of graves, orphans, and innocent people."

<sup>449</sup>BELO90A, p. 56.

structure accountable to the apparatus, as was the case a year ago. We should give serious thought to the very small parties hatched out in the Rukh nest which can, apparently, bring to clamorous mass meetings thousands and thousands of people. Packed squares are listening to them. Not all the speakers are, after all, calling for ...[secession]. We are all--opposition and ruling party--faced with the transition to the market. The longer we fail to hear one another, the more quickly we will move toward a deepening of the confrontation, and the longer it goes on, the more palpable will be the costs. The opposition may not understand this. But we Communists are duty bound to.<sup>450</sup>

There was a suggestive hint in the article that Rukh's attack on the CPU was solely based on the fact that the CPU was controlled by forces outside the republic (i.e., the CPSU) and that if the CPU were to become "separatist" then Rukh's stance would, allegedly, be different.<sup>451</sup>

Rukh's new path was forcing the CPU to evolve more quickly than it would have on its own. In an interview with Radio Liberty in October, Kravchuk declared that Rukh's decision to declare war on the CPU was "a crucial mistake" because it could only lead to confrontation. But he was also forced to admit that if Rukh had not pursued its confrontational policies, "we would not have come so far so fast."<sup>452</sup>

Rukh's stepped up attacks on the Party came at the same time the CPU was beginning to weaken from within. The extent of internal decay in the Party was growing and it would be critical in bringing about change of the CPU.

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<sup>450</sup>BELO90A, p. 56.

<sup>451</sup>BELO90A, p. 56.

<sup>452</sup>NAHA90A, p. 15.

## 6. THE CPU WEAKENS

The year 1990 was not a good one for the CPU. In this year alone, the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee admitted to a loss of 180,000 people from the party,<sup>453</sup> with Solchanyk putting the figure at 220,000.<sup>454</sup> In addition he also admitted, "I do not think this process has ended yet. There are many cases where Communists do not pay their membership dues, and thereby, also in effect, terminate their Party membership."<sup>455</sup>

In addition, the CPU was increasingly losing power to the opposition forces in the parliament and losing credibility among the population. There were several attempts to analyze this weakening of the CPU and one in particular, in discussing the fallout from the disastrous (for the CPU) Fall of 1990 and the failure of the Communist Party to gain even a majority in the Western Oblasts, concluded that the reasons were twofold. First, the program of the opposition was based on the ideas of the 19th All-Union Party Conference and thus the potential CPU program had been coopted. Second, "the perestroika people from the apparatus looked very unconvincing because they had used up their credit of trust allocated to them even before the elections."<sup>456</sup> While correct, this list is incomplete. One must also include in addition to the obvious rise of the

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<sup>453</sup>ODIN90, p. 28.

<sup>454</sup>SOLC91A, p. 13. Solchanyk also cites an incoming level of members at only 38,000. For an idea of the All-Union situation: in the months of July and August 1990, the CPSU as a whole, lost 311,000 members and in the previous six months a total of 371,000 members resigned from the CPSU. (See The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 43, 28 October 1990, p. 2)

<sup>455</sup>ODIN90, p. 28.

<sup>456</sup>BELO90, p. 56.

opposition discussed above, the following; internal CPU decay, poor handling of the opposition, and a loss of credibility with the population.

### **1. The Handling of the Opposition**

If there was one consistent theme throughout 1990 in terms of Party-opposition relationships, it would have to be the negative approach the Party took toward the opposition. This approach, an anachronistic hold over from the bygone era of Shcherbytsky, simply radicalized the opposition and politicized their supporters.

#### **a. Attacks on the Opposition**

The attacks on the opposition became increasingly severe as the year wore on especially after the events surrounding the opening of the second session of the Supreme Soviet in which the Party suffered humiliating losses and after the student strike frightened the CPU. The Party's attempt to respond to the opposition reflected a lack of both clear direction and thinking. For example, at the critical moment when the opposition forces were massing outside the Parliament, a special Ukrainian Party Plenum was convened on 28 September to address the issue. Hurenko railed against the opposition groups which recently emerged from their democratic "camouflage" and were now "concentrating their efforts on the seizure of power by any means, not excluding violence." These attempts to discredit the opposition forces were presented to the republic in an address titled "Let Us be Vigilant: They are Leading Us to Grief."<sup>457</sup> A few days later on 1 October 1990 when the Supreme Soviet Session opened both Rukh and Narodna Rada assembled (at some cost) thousands of supporters from Kiev and other Oblasts. The Communists

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<sup>457</sup>Pravda, 28 September 1990 as cited in MIHA900, p. 17.

responded by bringing their supporters into the streets - dressed in the much despised uniforms of the militia and special security teams [Omonovtsy]<sup>458</sup>.

*b. Alienation of the Opposition*

For some, the October fiasco was the last straw. For example, the final break between the literary-cultural elites and the CPU occurred as a result of events in October 1990. After the student strike, the "Patriarch of the Ukrainian literary scene", Oles Honchar, resigned from the Party in response to how they treated the student hunger strikers.<sup>459</sup> His decision to exit the Party signaled the end of Ukraine's literary elites efforts to work within the Party.

The Party's reliance on strong-arm tactics did little to endear them to the population. For example, there was significant public outcry after 17 November, when prominent democratic opposition leader Stepan Khmara was stripped of his parliamentary immunity and arrested in the Supreme Soviet after an alleged attack on an MVD officer during Revolution day on 7 November.<sup>460</sup> Drawing parallels between this incident and the well publicized arrests and trials of Daniel and Sinyavsky in 1965, deputies of the *Narodna Rada* called the arrest a "planned provocation...with the goal of compromising one of the leaders of

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<sup>458</sup>BELO90, p. 57.

<sup>459</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 17, September 1991, p. 4.

<sup>460</sup>See "Stepan Khmara is Arrested," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 47, 25 November 1990, p. 1, 11.



the democratic movement in Ukraine and removing him from political activity."<sup>461</sup>

After the Khmara, incident the Supreme Soviet adopted a decree restricting demonstrations and public meetings<sup>462</sup> and began what became known as the November assault. This program of CPU leadership-directed repression consisted of five prongs: 1) use of law enforcement bodies to repress opposition; 2) government pressure on independent trade unions; 3) portrayal of Western Ukrainians as extreme nationalists in the media and via the Party apparat 4) dispersal of CPU finances to prevent their loss in the transfer to a market economy; and 5) acts to discredit the opposition leadership. The media was hampered by closing of printing presses, paper shortages, closing of television programs, and firing of reporters who took an anti-Party line. A number of radical deputies (Khmara, Ratushnyi and others) were brought in for questioning or arrested. Leaders of the Solidarity Free Trade Unions of Ukraine were harassed.<sup>463</sup>

On another front, the Party attempted to play up to what they assumed was a fundamental unity between the Ukrainians and the Russians (read: the Union). In early November, a well coordinated pro-union press campaign organized by the CPU and executed by their press organ, *Pravda Ukrainy* was underway. The campaign started, ostensibly to

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<sup>461</sup>"Khmara Declares Hunger Strike," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 48, 2 December 1990, p. 4.

<sup>462</sup>SOLC91, p. 24.

<sup>463</sup>Viacheslav Pikhobachek, "The 'Contras' go on the Offensive," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 4, February 1991, p. 1. In addition see a secret Komsomol document printed in the Ukrainian Republican Party paper Nezalezhnist which outlines a program for Komsomol members to follow to bring youth back into the party fold. ("Secret Komsomol Document Outlines Counter Offensive," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 4, February 1991, p. 4)

protest the destruction of a statue of Lenin in Western Ukraine and was widened to advocate a continued close union between Russia and Ukraine. In an article by a middle school director in Kiev published in the Ministry of Education's official organ, *Radianska Osvita*, Russophobia was blamed for creating the idea of Great Russian chauvinism. Additionally the historic, common roots of Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Russians were stressed as was the magnanimous role the Russians have played in the development of Ukraine.<sup>464</sup>

In reality, the CPU was floundering and lashing out blindly at the opposition in a desperate struggle to gain control over a process it neither liked nor understood. This struggle was also being carried out within the CPU which had ominous indications for the future of the Party.

## **2. Internal Decay**

The most obvious symbol of the internal problems of the CPU was the Masol fiasco in September 1990 when "essentially Masol became a symbol of the Communist-led government's inability to preside over the transition to sovereignty."<sup>465</sup> As the vote to accept his resignation shows, he was rejected by the CPU as well as *Narodna Rada*. It was clear that the CPU was far from united on ideas for the future.

### **a. Dissention in the Party**

A number of Party members became disillusioned over the Party's trajectory. For example, Pavylychko, a Party member and founder of Rukh cites the Lithuanian Crisis in early 1990 as his final cue to leave the Party because he, like others, came to the conclusion that "the

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<sup>464</sup>MARP90S, p. 6.

<sup>465</sup>MIHA90D, p. 18.

belief that we can create a foundation for Ukrainian national life through the Party--as the Lithuanians initially thought--is mistaken."<sup>466</sup>

There were increasing numbers of those in the Party who began to think along different lines. While these "reformers" did not reject the ideology or the power of the Party they were cognizant that changes were happening and that they too needed to change, first Secretary of the CPU Central Committee, Gurenko acknowledged this;

I am not calling for a return to the old methods. That would be not only senseless, but frankly impossible. Life is changing, and whether we like it or not, in, say, the economic sphere, market relations are increasingly becoming a reality even today. Here diktat of any kind is inconceivable, and that includes party diktat.<sup>467</sup>

However, there was a substantial core of the Party which clung to the old methods and refused to accept change. A good example of this appeared in an interview with a correspondent from *Rabochnaya hazeta* V. Y. Ostrozhinskiy, politburo member and secretary of the CPU Central Committee. In the interview he gave his views on the challenge to the CPU and revealed the level of inflexible thinking still existent in the CPU leadership after the tumultuous events of 1990.<sup>468</sup> In response to calls for the CPU to be outlawed, he had this to say; "To raise the question of carving out a *healthy, vital* organ, to use medical terminology, is, if not absurd, then at least unusually stupid...this is a dangerous provocation." (italics added) In general to ideas about the opposition's calls to depoliticize institutions and the like, he responded;

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<sup>466</sup> NARP90P, p. 22.

<sup>467</sup> M. Odinets, "At Life's Front Line," *Pravda*, 2nd ed., 27 November 1990, pp. 1-2, transl. in "Gurenko Revives Political Situation," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 27-28.

<sup>468</sup> "Depoliticization: Let us Clear the Air," *Rabochaya Gazeta*, transl. "Communist Party Official on Depoliticization," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 29-32.

In my view, it is wrong to speak of depolitization. It is either an illusion or a deliberate political deception. In such a politicized society as ours, depolitization is unthinkable in general. The labor collectives and the Army will always be the object of political life.<sup>409</sup>

He accused the "republicans" of engaging in "political blackmail", "outright treachery", "hooliganism", and "pogroms." These opposition forces are deliberately exploiting the workers by playing up to their self-interests, he argued, "It is sad, but many people, when they enter hastily created social associations, do not yet understand that they are being manipulated for certain political interests." In response to the future political structure in Ukraine he declared that he is in favor of political pluralism, but that "it is impossible to formally reduce it exclusively to a multiparty situation." He criticized the focus on parties and the fact that local soviets, trade unions, and All-Union Leninist Communist Youth Leagues are not considered in the political fabric of Ukraine because "it is here that the masses really engage in the government of the society." In an appeal for help from the press, increasingly radicalized by *glasnost*, he added "Much--I emphasize this especially--can be done by journalists to protect the civil rights of Communists. In these questions, too, we need *glasnost*, efficiency, honesty, and comradely support." In closing, he appealed to those who were considering joining the growing number of those Communists who had turned in their cards;

I appeal to all who are confused: Do not give in to outbursts of emotion, do not be in a hurry to make a decisions about leaving the CPSU! Remember that only solidarity and joint efforts of Party members and all healthy forces of the society can rectify that

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<sup>409</sup>"Depolitization: Let us Clear the Air," *Rabochaya Gazeta*, transl. "Communist Party Official on Depolitization," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 29-32.

difficult situation in which our state has found itself. The people and history will give you your due in full measure.<sup>470</sup>

**b. *The CPU Fractures***

Under these internal tensions and external pressures, the CPU fractured. The roots of the rift go back to July 1990 when the group of 22 deputies, calling themselves the Democratic Platform of the CPU, broke away from the Party and renamed itself the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Agreement. Their motivation reportedly was disillusionment. They no longer believed real reform could happen inside the CPSU. On 1-2 December 1990 this group re-formed, creating the largest opposition party to date. During the group's founding congress in December, it changed its name again to The Ukrainian Party of Democratic Renewal (UPDR) and announced that it had a membership of 2,340 members representing all but two oblasts (Trans-Carpathia and Zhytomyr). One quarter of their members were still Party members. The UPDR platform expressed support for other democratic parties, condemned the CPU's November offensive on the opposition, denounced the Union Treaty, and came out in favor of disassembling the USSR and relying on the Declaration of Sovereignty as a new basis for existence.<sup>471</sup>

The UPDR had the potential to become a very powerful player in the struggle against the CPU because it was tied into the Party system. According to various reports, every fifth member was a deputy at some level of government and since "these are people with a lot of intellectual baggage" their impact may be magnified. Its major impact will most likely

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<sup>470</sup>"Depolitization: Let us Clear the Air," Rabocheye Gazeta, transl. "Communist Party Official on Depolitization," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 29-32.

<sup>471</sup>"Reformist Communists Launch Separate Party," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 4, February 1991, p. 2.

be felt in the urban centers in Eastern Ukraine because of its primarily Russian nature.<sup>472</sup>

*c. The Failure of Party Leadership*

In 1990, the CPU won the March elections but lost the fight. Following the elections, the Communists held a majority of seats in Supreme Soviet and yet, the Communist Group of 239, failed to produce an effective or dynamic leader to spar with those of the opposition, who, as the communists lamented, "were far ahead on points, at least in the eyes of the unsophisticated voters."<sup>473</sup>

There were even more fundamental problems affecting the CPU's performance throughout the republic. Namely that the CPU was no longer a political party but had become, as Gorbachev had said, "a nucleus of the command administrative system." This meant in practical terms that "When the system started to come apart at the seams, the nucleus had virtually no political fighters capable of breaking out of the comfort of their offices and engaging, as Lenin would have said, in a real fight."<sup>474</sup> This in turn led to another problem, "the inability of the functionary in Party uniform to engage in rigorous political actions."<sup>475</sup> This in turn led to a loss of vision.

It was exactly the lack of ideas for the future which was crippling the CPU from within. At the crucial turning point when the

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<sup>472</sup>"Reformist Communists Launch Separate Party," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4 February 1991, p. 2. One report remarking on the Russian-ness of the congress noted that "one gets the feeling that the party does not understand the national question," and that the congress itself, "had no Ukrainian character."

<sup>473</sup>BELO908, p. 56.

<sup>474</sup>BELO90, p. 56.

<sup>475</sup>BELO908, p. 57.

Party stood on the brink of paralysis at the opening of the Second Session of the Supreme Soviet, the Party was incapable of understanding what needed to be done. As described by a group of Communist journalists present at the 28 September Central Committee Plenum to address the problem, the Supreme Soviet condemned the opposition, called for Party unity and the need to enhance the primary role of Party organizations. Yet this speech by Central Committee First Secretary, Gurenko

had everything except the main thing - there was no strong and specific idea around which it would be possible to rally the more than three million-strong Party organization, nor was there a program for extracting the republic from its deep economic and political crisis.<sup>476</sup>

The lack of such a program was exacerbating a condition of declining public support for the CPU. Ironically, as the political situation in Ukraine developed, the CPU found itself with fewer and fewer means of regaining its credibility.

### 3. Loss of Credibility

A great deal the CPU's loss of credibility stemmed from being out of touch, or more to the point, refusing to recognize the public sentiment increasingly in favor of independence. For example, a poll by the Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev reported on 3 December 1990 that 38 percent of Kievites supported complete independence from the USSR, 40 percent supported an independent Ukraine within a confederation of Sovereign republics, and 18.5 percent favored sovereignty within a Soviet federation.<sup>477</sup> The CPU, with its

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<sup>476</sup>BELO908, p. 58.

<sup>477</sup>"Opposition Leads in Opinion Polls," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1991, p. 3. The September poll was conducted by The Central Ukrainian Department of the All-Union Centre of Public Opinion Studies. These results were said to be higher than a September poll showing only 25 percent of Kievites favored complete independence.

conservative stance on Ukraine's future, was simply not able to gain the confidence of the population which felt this way.

The results of a public opinion poll taken by 421 residents of Kiev and 878 others (presumably from other regions of the country) published on 31 March 1990 in *Radyans'ka Ukraina* indicated that in the eyes of the public the Party was expiring. The data from this poll, summarized by David Marples for Radio Liberty, indicates that among the population surveyed (75% with higher education, 70% Party Members, 6.6% Workers, and 2.6% peasants), 56.8 percent thought the February 1990 Central Committee of the CPSU Plenum was ineffectual in terms of helping the social problems in Ukraine.

In answer to the future of the CPSU, 37.3 percent said it must stand as vanguard alongside other parties, 30.1 percent felt it should be a "political club", and only 12 percent supported its continued one-party status. Nearly 75 percent of those surveyed felt that democratic centralism was not in accord with the needs of society today. In response to questions about the future of the CPU in the CPSU, the results were mixed with 36.7 percent advocating a CPU independent of the CPSU, 28.7



advocating a confederative arrangement, and 24.5 saying the CPU should remain within the CPSU.<sup>478</sup>

Although this last poll was far from a perfect reflection of public opinion, Marples drew some tentative conclusions from the data. Most basically he found that "the position of the Communist Party in Ukraine, long an obstacle to democratic reform, is becoming more and more insecure."<sup>479</sup>

*a. The CPU and the Lack of Power in the Periphery*

The root of the CPU's insecurity lay in the fact that the CPU had few instruments of power or control with which to entice support from the populace. For example the Supreme Soviet convened a meeting in early spring 1990, to adopt a resolution on closing Chernobyl by 1995 in response to growing public pressure exerted though ecological organizations such as *Zelenyi svit*.<sup>480</sup> Having adopted the resolution, however, the Supreme Soviet found itself unable to act because they lacked jurisdiction over the atomic energy stations in Ukraine. The Supreme Soviet resorted instead, to making a formal proposal to the central

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<sup>478</sup>MARP908, p. 22. In contrast to this survey see that conducted by Miller, Reisinger, and Hesli in May and June 1990 (prior to the newly elected Supreme Soviet beginning work). Their survey consisted of 1,800 Soviet citizens (600 each in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine. The cities polled in Ukraine were Kiev, Kharkhov, and Uzhgorod each in central, eastern, and western Ukraine respectively. The survey's aim was to measure the popular support for the Communist institutions in these Republics. Next to Russians living in Lithuania, Ukrainians living in Ukraine showed the second highest level of support to the central leadership with only 18 percent of those surveyed agreeing that their republican leaders better represented their interests than the leaders in Moscow. Ukrainians also held the highest regard for the Communist Party of all the other nationalities polled. Significantly, Ukrainians gave higher marks to the USSR Supreme Soviet than to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet and generally gave poor marks toward local-level soviets. This last trend may well have been because the recently elected Ukrainian Supreme Soviet had not yet begun to act. The survey results on the respondents preference of "freedom" or order indicated that 61 percent of Ukrainians in Ukraine valued order over "freedom." In addition, forty percent of them said that reforms were progressing too quickly. (MILL90, p. 103.) Overall, Miller, Reisinger, and Hesli conclude that there is a "tendency for Ukrainian to be more supportive and conservative than Russians." (MILL90, p. 105)

<sup>479</sup>MARP908, p. 22.

<sup>480</sup>Also contributing to public outrage is the fact that 8-9 percent of the energy produced in Ukraine is sent beyond Ukraine's borders and thus appears as exploitation at Ukraine's expense.

Ministry of Atomic Energy and Industry in Moscow for aid for environmental clean-up and asked for centralized capital input for other projects.<sup>481</sup>

Economic reform plans drawn up in 1989 by Leonid Abalkin also reflected the pervasiveness of central control in Ukraine. The section of the plan concerning prices noted that certain prices would remain at state-determined levels while others would be "freed". This clearly indicated that Moscow-controlled industry in Ukraine is not subject to republican jurisdiction.<sup>482</sup>

***b. Economic Crisis and Reform Undermines Support for the CPU***

The diminishing ability of the CPU to provide the population with economic improvement also undermined their ability to win support. This attenuation of power was primarily due to the collapsing Ukrainian economy for which the CPU was blamed while the opposition remained untainted. Attempts by the CPU to reform the economy and gain control over shortages and rising prices were bungled and caused a large public outcry against the Party. The most obvious example of economic reforms gone awry occurred on 1 November, when the Ukrainian government introduced a coupon system for a 6-month trial period. Under this system, coupons would be issued monthly for the purchase of food and non-food items as well as "goods of technical importance." A "consumer book" would be issued to each citizen needed to redeem the coupons. The motive for this drastic measure was to solve the problems of empty store shelves and the growing black market. However, this decree which effected every person living in Ukraine was drafted on 22 October with little or no discussion

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<sup>481</sup>MARP90E, p. 18 and MARP91, pp. 170-71.

<sup>482</sup>In 1990, only 5 percent of the resources in Ukraine are controlled by the Republic.

in parliament. The three chief engineers of the plan held a press conference on 29 October to explain although the measures were unpopular, they were necessary to prevent growing demand and falling production from leading to widespread speculation. Fokin remarked that the long-term solution was to introduce a Ukrainian currency but in the meantime the coupon system would have to do.

There was an immediate outcry from the Supreme Soviet saying the measure had been enacted secretly and without them even being aware of its existence until the press conference.<sup>483</sup> *Robitnycha haseta*, describing the measure as coming "like a thundercloud in a clear sky" said it was being implemented in "the worst tradition of the period of stagnation." The paper's editors argued that had the government sought the approval of the people, they would likely have received it but as it was, this announcement was further undermining the already low public confidence in the Government.<sup>484</sup>

Ukraine Supreme Soviet Deputy Chairman V. B. Grin'ev, who heard about the measures indirectly and not through parliament, declared that because of its sweeping embrace, it should be discussed along with the other reforms currently under consideration. According to Grin'ev's statement, some oblasts even went so far as to vote against enacting the degree as ordered by Kiev.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>483</sup>MARP90M, p. 10.

<sup>484</sup>*Robitnycha haseta*, 1 November, 1990 as cited in MARP90M, p. 10.

<sup>485</sup>MARP90M, p. 10.

### **c. *The CPU'S Ecological Problem***

To make things worse, Ukraine's economic collapse was inextricably linked to the Chernobyl clean up which continued to drag down the Ukrainian economy and constantly reminded Ukrainians of the state energy policies which led to Chernobyl's construction and mishandling. The major reconstruction work to house and facilitate evacuees had taken a large portion of the republican budget and in addition, in 1989, 500,000 hectares of agricultural land were restricted or closed to use due to the fallout which meant decreasing income from agriculture. In 1990, over 3 billion rubles was allocated to cover the costs of decontamination, new evacuations, provision of decontaminated food, and medical services from 1991-1995.<sup>486</sup>

Entering 1990, Ukraine was also facing energy shortages due to increasing demand outstripping production. But once again, the CPU was caught in a vise. In order to alleviate the crisis, additional atomic energy stations had to be brought on line, but the public outcry against these projects was threatening to destabilize the political arena.

On 2 August the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet declared a 5 year moratorium on the construction of new atomic energy stations and expansion of existing ones in Ukraine. The declaration was a mixed blessing for the CPU. On one hand it provided credibility to the 16 July declaration of Sovereignty and demonstrated to Moscow that Ukraine was capable of conducting independent domestic policy in an area traditionally run only by the Center. On the other hand, the declaration represented a victory for the opposition. After all, the declaration was the culmination of

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<sup>486</sup>MARP90G, p. 25.

numerous protests and strikes organized and prompted by *Rukh* and *Zelenyi svit* against the ecological and human dangers posed by these plants. The moratorium also meant that Ukraine's domestic energy production capability would be halted at present levels or even decreased.

The moratorium was a another victory for the opposition which had been for the past few years protesting the construction of new sites and the expansion or continued use of others.<sup>487</sup> In 1989, the Crimea station was closed when local residents threatened a large-scale strike. In 1990 the Khmelnytsky station was targeted for protest and in addition to mass protests, the cement factory which supplied materials for the plant construction went on strike and 15 local residents went on a hunger strike to protest the project.<sup>488</sup>

In August, in an unexpected reversal, the director of Chernobyl bowed to public pressure and agreed that the plant should be closed but only after careful study of how and when. He bitterly complained that the decommission of Chornobyl would create a shortfall of energy production but that such reasoning had been ignored by the public.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Ukraine appealed for a moratorium on atomic energy stations as early as the 19th Party Conference in June 1988.

<sup>488</sup> MARP90R, p. 20.

<sup>489</sup> The director's letter appeared in the 7 August 1990 issue of *Radyans'ke Ukraine* and is discussed in MARP90R, p. 20. Marples points out that by Fall 1990 only four power stations were operating and of those one was under siege by protestors. Nuclear energy comprises 22 percent of the energy unused in Ukraine and was expected to rise to 60 percent by 2000. Hydroelectric stations are operating a peak capacity and the coal fired plants are at risk due to the collapse of Ukraine's coal industry.

## H. THE CPU ATTEMPTS TO REGAIN CONTROL

The CPU's weaknesses were not unrecognized by the leadership as reflected in a speech by Kravchuk at the CPU Central Committee Plenum held on the eve of the 2nd session of the Ukrainian legislature;<sup>490</sup>

The people will support us if we offer them concrete deeds. At present this means the economy and finding solutions to social issues.... If this occurs we will push into second place all those about whom the political speculation is now rife....

What do people want? They say this; Just make one tangible good move .... We spend all our time talking, but in reality we are doing nothing....

...Since 10 September, long before the session, opposition deputies have been working energetically in the Supreme Soviet and have drafts for all documents. Up to now we have been unable to meet. Moreover, on 1 October the opposition organized a demonstration while our deputies from the Communist Party again gathered here, taking refuge from the traffic conditions....<sup>491</sup>

While Kravchuk seemed to know what had to be done, the CPU was dragging its feet. Steps taken to secure economic and political autonomy were steps in the right direction but they were only taken in 1990 under pressure from the opposition.

Under assault from within as well as from the opposition forces outside parliament, the CPU was gradually beginning a process of distancing themselves from the center. This was a strategy which would appeal to the opposition as well as to most of those in the CPU who saw that a future bound to the CPSU would bring only trouble. Beginning in 1990 there were a series of steps taken by the CPU (some under pressure from the opposition and others on their own initiative) to separate itself from Moscow.

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<sup>490</sup>Interestingly, none of this speech was ever printed in the Republic newspapers.

<sup>491</sup>BELO90B, p. 57.

The first of the CPU demands for increased autonomy from Moscow came in late February 1990 as the Supreme Soviet stepped up its demands that the Third Department of the USSR Ministry of Health transfer its facilities located in Ukraine to the Ukraine Ministry of Health.<sup>492</sup> This step was quickly followed by bolder steps.

#### 1. Ukraine Seeks Legitimacy Abroad

By Fall, Ukraine was beginning to act autonomously and on October 13-14 Ukraine took the first steps toward operating as a politically independent entity. Kravchuk and Polish Foreign Minister, Skubiszewski signed an agreement on diplomatic, consular, and trading representation of Ukraine in Poland. Also in this same month, Ukraine and Byelorussia signed a mutual agreement on trade, economic, and technical cooperation and development.<sup>493</sup>

On 2 November 1990 Prime Minister Fokin reported to the Ukrainian parliament that the best course of action for Ukraine was "the Ukraine's complete economic and political independence and transition to a market economy with profound constitutional changes." In the same address, he emphasized that Ukraine should enter the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.<sup>494</sup> The next day the Supreme Soviet approved this plan for "complete economic and political independence."<sup>495</sup> The gist of the program which was adopted by the Supreme Soviet was "that

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<sup>492</sup>MARP91, p. 170. Marples, links this decision to the demands of Zelenyi svit and its leader Shcherbak.

<sup>493</sup>MARP90T, p. 14.

<sup>494</sup>"Ukraine Adopts Plan for Economic Independence," FBIS-SOV-90-214, 5 November 1990, p. 97.

<sup>495</sup>"Newsbriefs from Ukraine," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 48, 2 December 1990, p. 2.

the major economic-control levers are not ceded to the central government but remain in the hands of the republican government."<sup>496</sup>

On 19 November, Izvestia reported that Yeltsin had flown to Kiev to sign a "treaty on the Principles of Relations Between the Russian SFSR and the Ukrainian SSR" which established the basis for economic and political relations without a single mention of the Union Treaty or the Soviet Constitution.<sup>497</sup> This agreement was "intended to establish the republics' real sovereignty and eliminate totalitarian structures, which are outdated."<sup>498</sup> The agreement confirmed the inviolability of the current state borders of Russian and Ukraine.

Shortly after this agreement was signed, Ukraine turned to the West. In November, Ukraine sent delegates to the Paris summit of the CSCE to declare Ukraine's intent to join the organization and the rest of Europe under the mandate of the 16 July Declaration of Sovereignty.<sup>499</sup>

## 2. The CPU Distances Itself From the Center

By the end of 1990 Kiev's measures to distance itself from the center seemed to be paying off. There had been no negative repercussions as a result of the Declaration of Sovereignty nor from the Decree on Economic Sovereignty. In fact, by December, when Gorbachev stood alone after reformists Alexander Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze resigned from

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<sup>496</sup>S. Tsikora, "New Chairman of Ukraine SSR Council of Ministers Means to Form Governemtn of National Accord," Izvestia, 15 November 1990, p. 2, transl. CDSP, Vol. XLII, No. 46, p. 23.

<sup>497</sup>S. Tsikora, "Treaty on Relations Between Russia and the Ukraine," Izvestiya, 19 November 1990, p.1 transl. CDSP, Vol. XLII, No. 17, p. 21.

<sup>498</sup>"Ukraine, Russia Sign Pact as Equal, Sovereign States," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 48, 2 December 1990, p. 1, 14. Pravda Ukrainy, 21 November 1990, p. 1, Transl. "Treaty Between RSFSR, Ukrainian SSR," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 23-25.

<sup>499</sup>See the 25 November 1990 issue of The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 47 for several articles on Ukraine's participation in the CSCE summit.



his administration and KGB head Krychkov was warning of intervention by foreign agents and suggesting that bloodshed might be necessary to bring the situation the periphery under control, Kiev's moves seemed even more timely.

There were even undercurrents of autonomy in CPU and CPSU relations after Lithuania's Communist Party declared itself independent of the CPSU early in 1990 and Popov and Sobchak, the mayors of Moscow and Leningrad respectively, quit the Party and declared they would make their cities islands of free enterprise. In Ukraine, such revolutionary ideas were slower in developing but they were beginning to become visible.

S. I. Gurenko, First Secretary of the CPU Central Committee, in speaking about the offensive by nationalist in Western Ukraine against the Communist structure there stressed that despite the gravity of the situation there, "We are not looking for protection from Moscow - Ukraine's communists are capable of defending themselves."<sup>500</sup>

However, the extent of the CPU's separation from the CPSU was in doubt. As Hurenko stated,

the Communist Party of Ukraine is now organizationally, financially, and as regards cadres, completely independent of the leading organs of the CPSU...[after the second phase of the CPSU Congress] our Party will be formed as a completely independent Party."

However he then adds,

I want to state at the outset, however, that its ideological principles and organizational structure will coincide with those of the CPSU.... What I can say is that we will not have any fundamental differences with the Statute and Program of the CPSU.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> M. Odinetz, "At Life's Front Line," *Pravda*, 2nd ed., 27 November 1990, pp. 1-2, transl. in "Gurenko Revives Political Situation," FBIS-SOV-90-242-S, 17 December 1990, pp. 27-28.

<sup>501</sup> SOLC92, p. 153.

Whether this conservative view would dominate over those in the Party who seemed to realize that their future lay in an autonomous existence was uncertain. But it was clear that the weakened CPU needed some way to back up what political power they had left with improvements in economic reality.

## I. CONCLUSION

One would naturally expect that the forces of the opposition, persecuted and outlawed for 70 years, would lack in political expertise. But one would not readily assume that the Communist Party, the original revolutionaries of 1917 and the masters of power brokering, would lack such experience but this was exactly the problem. This was compounded by what one Communist writer called "a progressive attenuation of power and will."<sup>502</sup>

The opposition was aggressive and having gained legitimacy by the 1990 elections to the national parliament, soon showed themselves more politically adept than the CPU which was handicapped by a weakness induced by 70 years of unopposed rule. In short, the CPU was ill prepared to carry on in what emerged in 1990 as a two party system.

This inherent inability to adjust to the new political realities in Ukraine, which were in large part introduced by the CPU itself, was revealed in a interview by Roman Solchanyk in November 1990 with the first Secretary of the CPU, Hurenko. Hurenko described the political changes in Ukraine [loss of Party monopoly] with the preface that

these changes occurred not because of other forces but on the initiative of the Communist Party. The fact is that *perestroika* in

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<sup>502</sup>BELO90, p. 57.

the political sphere began with the renunciation by the CPSU and, consequently by the Ukrainian Communist Party, of their monopoly in the political and ideological spheres. That's the first thing. Therefore, these changes were not a surprise for us.<sup>503</sup>

In reality the CPU leadership was genuinely taken aback by the changes which occurred unexpectedly and they were desperately trying to regain control and resented their inability to do so. The CPU felt genuine resentment that they were being cast in the role of the villain. In speaking about the new political parties and their programs Hurenko strongly criticized them because they

base their programs above all on criticism of the Ukrainian Communist Party for both its past and present activities and their direct their practical efforts towards the quickest possible elimination of the Communist Party from the political arena. From our standpoint, this does not promote a constructive solution of the problem, and it irritates people.<sup>504</sup>

Although Hurenko cited this push to get rid of the CPU as hampering the genuine transformation of some former CPU leaders who still held Party posts, it was clear during 1990 that this process had already begun regardless of anti-Communist pressures. The primary motivation for the softening of the conservative Party forces was a struggle for public support which began to get fierce by late 1990. By this point, both the Party and the democratic forces had achieved a roughly equivalent level of political power thanks to the power of public support. As Rukh Deputy Koniev explained at Rukh's second congress, the real problem then became in gaining and keeping the peoples' faith. The latter is most problematic; "If we do not act quickly to ensure a better quality of life

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<sup>503</sup>SOLC92, p. 150.

<sup>504</sup>SOLC92, p. 151.

for the people, all our work will have been in vain; for once the trust of the people is lost, it is too difficult to regain it."<sup>505</sup>

The "softening" of the CPU was also related to an increasing distant relationship between the center and the peripheral governments. Ukraine's moves toward increased autonomy and declaration of sovereignty clearly indicated that the center's tight grip on Ukraine was slipping. Even the traditionally close relationship between the CPU and the CPSU was beginning to be strained. By the end of 1990, it was clear that Ukraine was intent on redefining its relationship with the center but how this would be done was not yet clear.

The opposition forces gained in strength in 1990 by building on their March electoral success which gave them seats in the Supreme Soviet. Despite their minority status, they managed find common ground with at least the moderate Communist deputies and by using mass demonstrations they applied pressure to the conservative camps.

The following statistics from public opinion polls conducted by the Institute of Philosophy of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences indicate the shift in political support for the various political parties in Ukraine during 1990. In comparing the percentage of respondents supporting each party between January and July 1990 the following is noted; Support for Rukh grew from 27 to 46 percent. The Greens maintained a constant 13 percent support, support for the nationalists (those advocating secession) grew from 3 to 7 percent while support for the CPU was cut in half over this time period from 20 to 10 percent. The study also noted that while

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<sup>505</sup>"Follow-up on Rukh Congress: Excerpts of Principle Addresses," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LVIII, No. 46, 18 November 1990, p. 9.

Rukh was supported by the working class, the CPU could only expect support from pensioners and the Greens from the intelligentsia.

Perhaps even more importantly, the study pointed out that between January and June 1990 an evident "radicalizing" trend appeared among the population as shown by the percent of those polled with no political preferences which had dropped from 20 to 9 percent.<sup>506</sup> The combination of an increasingly politicized population and the fact that Rukh seemed to be more in line with public preferences than the CPU, provided serious food for thought for the Party. In all likelihood, next year's elections to the Supreme Soviet would result in a much different parliamentary composition.

The CPU, faced with a loss of support and power, was now in a critical position. The Ukrainian political system was effectively a two-party system in rapid transition. Now it remained to be seen if the CPU could change in time to prevent its own collapse.

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<sup>506</sup>"Opposition Leads in Opinion Polls," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1991, p. 3.

### VIII. THE END OF THE CPU

During the second stage of the CPSU's 28th Party Congress, convened on 13 and 14 December 1990, the CPSU demonstrated that despite signs to the contrary during 1990, it was still very much alive and hostile to the democratic forces. This renewed strength and turn to the right became more pronounced in early 1991 with the Soviet Army's intervention in Lithuania providing a warning to all would-be secessionists that the Union was not going to dissolve so readily.

On the eve of the January 1991 CPSU Plenum, Leningrad's Party leader, Gidaspov, published a strongly anti-reform article in Pravda<sup>507</sup> sending a signal to conservative forces throughout the Union to launch an anti-perestroika campaign. Gidaspov decried the turn of perestroika away from the economy toward society and he attacked Gorbachev for continuing to weaken the Party. He advocated the resurgence of the Party into political and economic spheres and if such demands were not met, Gidaspov advocated mass demonstrations.<sup>508</sup>

This theme carried into the January CPSU CC plenum where Gorbachev let hardliners such as Ivashko, Szasokhov, and Shenin speak for the Communist leadership. The Party was granted control over the economy once again which, to a great extent, reversed the last two years of liberal reforms. The Central Committee of the CPSU was reinstated as overseer of Party organizations. The previously vacant office of Propaganda Secretary was

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<sup>507</sup>Pravda, 12 January 1991.

<sup>508</sup>RAHR91, p. 2.

filled and Gorbachev's foreign policy was denounced as having abandoned the Marxist class struggle approach in favor of universal human values.<sup>509</sup>

This apparent recovery of the CPSU and its strike back at the reformers was felt at all levels. In Ukraine, at the 15 Feb 1991 Central Committee plenum it was evident that Party First Secretary Hurenko intended to follow Moscow's example and begin an offensive against the democratic forces in Ukraine. He stressed the Party's strengthened role in economics and over the Party as a whole. He also lashed out at Rukh for joining forces with other democratic movements beyond Ukraine's borders and engaging in "conspiracies".<sup>510</sup>

This chapter focuses on the role of Ukraine's Communist elites as the CPU attempted to recover from their setbacks of 1990 and renewed attacks on the democratic forces. During this time, the center of political change in Ukraine shifted away from Rukh, which had served as the center of political developments in 1990, toward the CPU. As Rukh's second congress in October 1990 had shown, Rukh was unable to unite all sectors and regions of Ukraine and now, with an increasingly conservative mood in Moscow, the CPU began to take center stage.

The main argument put forth in this chapter is that during 1991 the process of deconstruction which had begun in 1990 continued as did the merging of moderate Communists with democratic forces. In following the events of 1991, it becomes clear that although the attempted August coup in Moscow was the final blow to the CPU, the CPU would have imploded

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<sup>509</sup>RAHR91, pp. 2-3.

<sup>510</sup>See SOLC91A for a fuller discussion of the CPU Plenum.

and collapsed in 1991 on its own. This is illustrated in the following pages which examine the CPU's renewed offensive against the opposition, the changing composition of parliament, the results of the March referendum, Ukraine's position on the Union Treaty and the August coup.

#### A. THE CPU OFFENSIVE AND THE INTERFRONT

During early 1991 all eyes were turned toward Lithuania where Soviet military units intervened in an attempt to prevent secession of the republic. Ukraine's Communists were watching especially closely. They were interested in the methods used by the Communist Party of Lithuanian (CPL) to fend off the opposition forces. One of the key methods which the CPL and other Baltic Parties used extensively and which the CPU found attractive was the international front or interfront. These movements were designed as counters to the popular fronts and their purpose was to exploit the ethnocentrism of the Baltic popular fronts.<sup>511</sup> The interfront platform was anti-secessionist and anti-nationalist, however hopes of undermining popular support for the opposition by playing up the ethnic issue was of limited value.

They [Interfronts] are supported mostly by Russian-speaking workers at all-Union enterprises in the area, not by representatives of Russian intelligentsia in the Baltics, who generally support the popular fronts. The obvious link between the "internationalist" movements and conservative party officials and even neo-Stalinists in the Russian Federation further discredits these organizations.<sup>512</sup>

Because of these shortcomings, Interfronts in Ukraine appeared much later than in the Baltics.

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<sup>511</sup>TOL290, pp. 20-21.

<sup>512</sup>TOL290, pp. 20-21.



Even as late as mid-December 1990, experts were saying the formation of interfronts in Ukraine would be impossible because of 1) opinion polls giving the CPU only 10 percent support and 2) Rukh's extraordinarily open and fair policy toward minorities within Ukraine.<sup>513</sup> However, at about this time, Roman Solchanyk reported the formation of an intermovement in the Donbas region. This region, typically dominated by Russians or heavily Russified Ukrainians, seemed the perfect spot for such a movement. The fledgling front held its founding meeting on 7 November 1990 and proclaimed its goals as 1) to defend the Union Treaty and 2) to preserve a single all-Union economic structure.<sup>514</sup> Ukrainian intermovement spokesman, USSR People's Deputy Oleksiy Mykolayovych Boyko, expressed his concern over the "growing nationalist itch" in Ukraine which was manifested in the economic policies being made in Kiev.<sup>515</sup>

The Intermovement envisioned two possible plans for Donbas autonomy; formation of an autonomous region within Ukraine or secession from Ukraine all together. However, from the start it did not appear that the Donbas group was effectively united.<sup>516</sup> The transfer of control over Ukraine's

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<sup>513</sup>KUZ190C, p. 6.

<sup>514</sup>Interestingly, the Ukrainian intermovement stressed economic concerns more so than their Baltic cousins who concentrated on the secession issue. This reflects the primary interests of the populace in areas such as the Donbas which were largely economic. The predominance of economic interests in this region is interesting because the Donetsk oblast at the center of the Donbas region was ranked fourth from the top among Ukrainian oblasts in 1980 on the basis of its economic indicators which on the surface defies those that argue economic well-being implies political contentment. However, the interfront, as mentioned above, is a largely Russian organization. That is, the interfront as an organization is not protesting the status quo but what they perceive to be a threat to it from Ukrainian nationalists in Kiev. Thus, the nature of the struggle is to preserve the stability of yesteryear. One cannot neglect the ethnic aspects of this phenomenon but this type of counteraction to a nationalist agenda which threatens those who live well under the old system the hand of economics looms large.

<sup>515</sup>SOLC908, p. 1.

<sup>516</sup>A meeting of local USSR people's deputies of the region on 10 November 1990 failed to cast significant support toward Boyko. SOLC908, p. 1.

coal mines from Moscow to Kiev in January 1991 also undermined the viability of the interfront by refocusing miner's hopes for the future on Ukraine rather than the center and further discrediting the idea that the Center, or the Union, was willing to help those in the Donbas. This organization eventually collapsed.

Solchanyk also reported an intermovement being formed in southern Ukraine known as Novorossiia. This organization sought "special state status" for what was once Novorossiia which encompasses the Odessa, Mykolayiv, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, and Crimean Oblasts as well as a portion of the Dnister Region of Moldavia.<sup>517</sup> These movements utilized the issue of establishing Ukrainian as the national language as their rallying point hoping it would play up on interethnic tensions. This issue caused intermovement type activities as early as 1989 although no formal intermovement was established until November 1990<sup>518</sup> and even then, unlike in the Baltics, the ethnic issue didn't create any significant support and all of these groups eventually went the way of the Donbas group and collapsed.

Interfronts, as an anti-opposition device employed by Ukraine's Communists, failed because of the success of Rukh and other opposition organizations in politicizing the Ukrainian populace and convincing them that a brighter future lay in a path away from Communism. As public opinion polls mentioned below indicate, during 1990, the rising anti-Communist sentiment was high among Ukraine's Russian population as well as

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<sup>517</sup>COLCH90, p. 10. Other analysts at this time identified the Kherson and Nikolaev Oblasts as regions with secessionist movements. (KUZ190C, p. 6)

<sup>518</sup>COLCH90, p. 10.

among Ukrainians and thus the level of popular support for an interfront in Ukraine was limited.

The failure of the interfront was one indication of the quickly decreasing influence and power of the CPU. The composition of the Ukrainian parliament was another.

## **B. THE COMPOSITION OF THE UKRAINIAN SUPREME SOVIET**

In *Pravda* on 4 February 1991, First Secretary of the CPU, Hurenko described the political situation in Ukraine as one consisting "of only two parties-the Communists and the anti-Communists." In such a situation, he complained, "Political disagreements develop into direct confrontation over anything."<sup>519</sup> This situation grew more common as opposition delegates began to gain growing influence in the parliament.

### **1. Influence in Parliament**

Opposition deputies in the Supreme Soviet were in the minority after the March elections with only 125 seats to the Communist's 308. However, they held a disproportionate numbers of seats in Supreme Soviet committees which gave them (6) seats in the 27-member presidium responsible for conducting the Supreme Soviet business when the Supreme Soviet as a whole is not convened. This gave opposition forces greater influence than their numbers would at first indicate. Opposition forces were also aided by the fact that the CPU deputies were often distracted. The CPU's delegates were primarily Party and state bureaucrats or collective farm chairmen or enterprise managers and as a result, these

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<sup>519</sup>Transl. in "Are the Communists Split in Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 4.

deputies were often too busy with other business to be attentive to the business of the Supreme Soviet or its presidium.<sup>520</sup>

## 2. The CPU Fractures

The opposition in the Supreme Soviet after March was gathered under the umbrella of the *Narodna Rada* or People's Council. This group was composed of three parties; the Party of Democratic Revival (37 Members); the Democratic Party of Ukraine (23 Members); and the Republican Party (20 Members). The first two groups were pragmatic groups intent on pushing the CPU toward reform or taking power themselves if need be.<sup>521</sup>

After the split of the Democratic platform in summer 1990, the remaining CPU was split between a center faction which wanted to rule Ukraine independently and a right faction which adhered to the Pro-Moscow, all-Union platform.<sup>522</sup> Kravchuk led the centrists along with Prime Minister Fokin. Their main base of support was among factory directors who stood to gain from privatization of all-Union enterprises and the transfer of authority over them to the republic.

The "right" was lead by the CPU leadership in the Central Committee. After the November 1990 assault on republic autonomy, the center switched its efforts from sparing with the parliamentary opposition to sparing with the right wing within its own party.

Ironically, it was Moscow's decision to send troops into Vilnius to put down the secessionist government which began this process of internal struggle in the Party.

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<sup>520</sup>WILS91, p. 6.

<sup>521</sup>WILS91, p. 6.

<sup>522</sup>"Are the Communists Split in Ukraine?," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 3.

### C. CRISIS IN LITHUANIA AND PARTY SPLIT IN UKRAINE

When Soviet troops intervened in Lithuania in January 1991, there were republic-wide demonstrations in Ukraine in support of the Lithuanians. The event also triggered a response from the CPU and the Supreme Soviet. The Central Committee of the CPU adopted a resolution condemning the "provocative campaign, conducted by national-separatists and extremist forces..." and sent a telegram to Lithuanian Communists stating "we solidarise with all those who today are countering the pressure from aggressive anti-communists, derisory, ruining tendencies and actions...."<sup>523</sup>

Meanwhile, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, although predominately Communist, issued a resolution condemning the Army's intervention in Lithuania. Their protest read like those sent by Rukh, and the Ukrainian Republican Party (URP);

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR...supports legally elected state executive organs of the republics and beholds that any violent actions against national statehood on the part of political parties, public and other groupings are unlawful...consider inadmissible the use of military force on the territory of any Republic for solving of the internal and inter-ethnic conflict without approval of the legitimate Republic's authorities.<sup>524</sup>

For the first time in the history of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, the Communist dominated Supreme Soviet had taken a position at variance with the Central Committee.

It is likely that the Supreme Soviet deputies were moved to condemn the actions taken by the center in Lithuania because they realized that if

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<sup>523</sup>"Ukraine and the Baltic Republics," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 3, 3 February 1991, p. 2.

<sup>524</sup>"Ukraine and the Baltic Republics," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 3, 3 February 1991, p. 2.

military intervention were to occur in Ukraine they would loose their posts and in any case, a pro-center position would have been extremely unpopular.

The *Ukrainian Reporter*, reported in early March 1991 that following the Lithuanian showdown, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Kravchuk joined the "patriotic Communists" in condemning the military intervention indicating that he, like a growing number of others, were placing national interests before all-Union ones.<sup>525</sup>

This interplay between national and union interests were to quickly come into the open over the debate surrounding the March 17 referendum on the fate of the union.

#### **D. KRAVCHUK RECEIVES A POPULAR MANDATE**

One of the most important events in 1991 was the March 17 referendum on preservation of the Union. The referendum was agreed to in 1990 with the aim of querying the Soviet people whether they consider it necessary to preserve a Soviet Union of equal sovereign states. Gorbachev's intent, in calling the referendum was to gain a popular mandate for himself in order to strengthen his position vice the conservatives.

##### **1. The Referendum Meets with Resistance in Ukraine**

The referendum immediately placed Ukraine's Communists in an awkward position. On one hand the referendum was soliciting support for a renewed union and thus conflicted directly with Ukraine's declaration of sovereignty which Ukraine's Communists had supported in July 1990. On the

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<sup>525</sup>"The Union Referendum and Ukraine," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, pp. 1-2.

other hand, the CPU was still the "reliable and militant unit of the CPSU" and thus must obey the commands of Gorbachev.<sup>526</sup>

The opposition found itself in no such quandary and in February, Rukh issued a statement declaring the 17 March referendum to be illegal because it is being undertaken prior to the adoption of the new Ukrainian constitution.<sup>527</sup> Rukh also demanded a republican question be added with the question "Do you favor a union of Soviet sovereign nation states in which every nationality can decide its own fate?" These opposing views placed the issues at a stalemate in the Supreme Soviet.

The centrists broke the stalemate between the *Narodna Rada* and the Communist right by proposing a compromise which allowed the referendum to be carried out while simultaneously addressing the pertinent issue of Ukraine's future status in the union more directly. The compromise was the addition of a second, republican question; "Do you agree that Ukraine should be part of a Union of Soviet sovereign states on the principles of the declaration on the state sovereignty of Ukraine?"

## 2. The Referendum Results

Having settled the wording of the referendum, the ballots were printed and the polls opened. The conduct of the referendum suffered from a number of violations including harassment of opposition members, distribution of anti-referendum materials, confiscation of those materials as well as discrepancies during the actual balloting such as printing both Union and Republic referendum ballots on the same color paper. In

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<sup>526</sup>Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 1.

<sup>527</sup>"Chronicle of Events," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4 February 1991, p. 8.

addition, ballot boxes were stuffed and ballots were issued without proof of identity.<sup>528</sup>

However, in spite, or because of, these discrepancies, the 17 March referendum turned in an 80.8 percent vote in favor of the republican question and a 70.5 percent vote in favor of the union question. On a more detailed level, the results were regionally diverse. Western Ukraine came out strongly against the Union question and only marginally in favor of the republican question (about 30% on the average). Eastern Ukraine favored both questions equally while central Ukraine was slightly more in favor of the republican question. Southern Ukraine followed suit and threw slightly more support behind the republican question.<sup>529</sup>

Kravchuk wasted no time proclaiming a victory for Ukraine;

It is an historical fact that the people of Ukraine...came out not only in support of the union, but in support of a special kind of union, a union with a certain content-a union of sovereign states based on the Declaration of Sovereignty of Ukraine.... We have the task of building a new union treaty which will take into account the interest of the people of Ukraine....<sup>530</sup>

Clearly, Kravchuk, ignoring the union question, took the referendum results as a popular mandate to continue his policy of moving toward independence but "in such a way so as not to result in the appearance of tanks in the Khreshchatyk (Kiev's central boulevard)."<sup>531</sup> *Narodna Rada* concurred, but favored a more direct approach to independence.<sup>532</sup>

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<sup>528</sup>See "Referendum Chronicle," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 2.

<sup>529</sup>See "Referendum Results Analyzed," Ukrainian Reporter, 1, April, 1991, 2.

<sup>530</sup>"Referendum Results Analyzed: Democratic Groups Report Widespread Violations," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 7, April 1991, p. 2.

<sup>531</sup>"Referendum Results Analyzed: Democratic Groups Report Widespread Violations," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 7, April 1991, p. 2.

<sup>532</sup>See the statements by opposition deputies in Marta Kolomayets, "Over 80 Percent Vote for Ukraine's Sovereignty," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LIX, No. 12, 24 March 1991, pp. 9, 11.



The CPU leadership also claimed victory in the referendum citing the 70 percent support for the Union vote as an indication that the effort by "certain political forces" to claim the referendum was illegal and to boycott it failed.<sup>533</sup> However, as Moroz indicated, the rightist Communist deputies interpreted the mandate in their own way; "These referendum results give us the opportunity to go to the next step - the Union Treaty."<sup>534</sup>

The Union Treaty was to provide the second major confrontation over which the Communists would be further split between right and center.

#### E. THE UNION TREATY

Although the Supreme Soviet had agreed not to sign a Union Treaty until a new Ukrainian constitution<sup>535</sup> was in place, in early 1991 Gorbachev began to apply pressure to the republics to sign.<sup>536</sup> If the republics do not voluntarily sign, warned Gorbachev, they will have to live under the conditions of the 1922 treaty signed with each government whose territory was occupied by the Red Army, or they will have to go through the "law on secession" procedure which is deliberately so involved and difficult that it is virtually impossible to secede. The Union Treaty

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<sup>533</sup>Robitnycha Hvizda, 5 April 1991, as transl. in "The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 1.

<sup>534</sup>Marta Kolomayets, "Over 80 Percent Vote for Ukraine's Sovereignty," The Ukrainian Weekly, Vol. LIX, No. 12, 24 March 1991, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>535</sup>Work began on the Ukrainian constitution in October 1990 but due to serious conflicts over matter such as the name of the republic, the form of legislative administration, the office of president, the role of the Prosecutor's office and the Soviets, prevented its quick adoption. On 21 May the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet began to consider parts of the constitution and voting on them. The task is to be completed by June 1991. See SOLC91F.

<sup>536</sup>It seems that Gorbachev may have deliberately planned Kiev as the site for his 5 July meeting with German Chancellor Kohl to discuss western aid for the USSR prior to attending the London G7 conference in an effort to put pressure on Ukraine to sign the treaty.

was immediately seen by the republics as a means of reviving the old Union.

If Ukraine were to sign the treaty, it would mean having to go back on a number of promises made in the 16 July 1990 Declaration of Sovereignty and as a result, the idea of signing the Union Treaty was very unpopular. The right-wing CPU leadership in the Central Committee, however, supported signing the treaty as per Gorbachev's request.

On 27 June, in a surprising vote, the Supreme Soviet agreed to table the Union treaty<sup>537</sup> until September despite pressure from both the center and the opposition. Although Gorbachev wanted the signed treaty to prove to the G7 in London that the USSR was now a stable country the opposition threatened further strikes by students and the URP reminiscent of 1990 if the treaty was signed.<sup>538</sup>

In order to have passed the 27 June proposal to table the treaty, a majority of the Supreme Soviet's Communist as well as democratic deputies had to have voted together. This was direct evidence that there was no small amount of isle-crossing among the Communist delegates. As Kravchuk had pointed out a day earlier, the group of 239 "no longer exists, in essence, it has liquidated itself."<sup>539</sup> This vote was to

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<sup>537</sup>This treat was already a modified versions of the one provided by Gorbachev earlier. This revised draft was published on 9 March 1991, See SHEE91A for details.

<sup>538</sup>See SOLC91B for details on the strike threat. As concerns renewed student strikes, there are those in Ukraine who argued that another student strike would have been unlikely because of the increasing passivism of Ukraine's youth. Myroslav Marynovych, a former political prisoner active in youth organizations in Ukraine describes the youth of Ukraine in 1991 "extremely passive". In addition, "They react to untruths, they mistrust everyone, and as a result they want to be left alone." He cited the Kiev student strike of fall 1990 as a rare exception. (LEW91B, p. 3)

<sup>539</sup>In an interview printed in Trud, 26 June, 1991.

become the definitive demarkation point between imperial (right-wing) and sovereign (centrist) Communists.

Once again, Kravchuk emerged on the side of the sovereign forces supporting the idea of Ukrainian independence. While his motives may have been murky, Solchanyk suggests that

the bottom line is that the direct presidential elections in Ukraine are scheduled for December 1. It is unlikely that Kravchuk, as the leading candidate, would want to face voters confronting him with a copy of the new Union Treaty bearing his signature.<sup>540</sup>

Ironically, by August, the imperial Communists were demanding that the Union Treaty be signed by 10 October which would have put Kravchuk in a horrible bind but the August coup solved the dilemma for him.

#### F. THE ATTEMPTED AUGUST COUP

The attempted August coup d'état in which Gorbachev was ousted and a Committee for State Salvation took power from 18 to 20 August was viewed by many as a last ditch attempt to maintain territorial integrity of USSR before the Union Treaty signed it into history.<sup>541</sup>

##### 1. Response to the Coup

Ukraine's political response to the August coup consisted of three distinct variations; 1) The opposition immediately condemned the coup and pledged support for Boris Yeltsin who was leading the campaign against the coup in Moscow; 2) The leadership of the CPU supported the coup d'état; 3) The centrists or sovereign Communists "dithered" until the coup failed and then they joined the opposition in condemning it.

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<sup>540</sup>SOLC91B, p. 24.

<sup>541</sup>As Malia argues, this was really not a coup, it was a "act of the Soviet government." The executors of the coup were Soviet leaders, appointed by Gorbachev. The difference was that Gorbachev refused to go along - hardly a real coup. (MAL192, p. 90)

The opposition's response to the coup was immediate. On the morning of 19 August the *Narodna Rada* organized itself as the coordinating center for democratic opposition forces and they formed a new presidium in the Supreme Soviet which was to function as the "legal, executive arm of authority in Ukraine." Rukh took over the daily operation of the *Narodna Rada*.<sup>542</sup> The *Narodna Rada* refused to recognize the legality of the Committee's decrees and appealed to "all citizens of Ukraine, all those in positions of authority, all serving soldiers and law enforcement officials to ignore any of the actions of the putchists and to follow solely the Ukrainian constitution and its laws."<sup>543</sup>

Kravchuk refused to bow to opposition demands to both force the presidium to issue a clear statement of support for Yeltsin and to convene an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet. Kravchuk called for "balance" and for Ukrainians to "keep a normal rhythm to life."<sup>544</sup> While Kravchuk reportedly told Yeltsin on the morning of 19 August over the phone that he would never support the coup, he appeared on the Moscow news show *Vremya* and showed support for the coup. Kravchuk claims that his responses were heavily edited to come out in favor of the coup. There were also claims that Kravchuk made a deal with the military commander, General Varrenikov, who Moscow had sent to Kiev to impose, if necessary, martial law in Ukraine. The deal may have been that Kravchuk would call

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<sup>542</sup>"Failed Coup D'Etat Leads to Declaration of Ukrainian Independence," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 1.

<sup>543</sup>"Failed Coup D'Etat Leads to Declaration of Ukrainian Independence," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 1. See this issue of Ukrainian Reporter as well as the next (no. 16) for translations of primary documents on the opposition reaction to the coup.

<sup>544</sup>"Failed Coup D'Etat Leads to Declaration of Ukrainian Independence," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 1.

for calm and prevent mass protests allowing the military to focus its efforts on the Baltics and Russia.<sup>545</sup>

## 2. Legal Action is Taken

On 20 August, the Supreme Soviet met in an extraordinary session and the presidium finally issued a weak condemnation of the coup signed by 15 of 25 members including members of the *Narodna Rada* and sovereign Communists led by Kravchuk.

On 24 August the *Narodna Rada* placed a declaration of independence on the agenda of the extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet.<sup>546</sup> In a vote of 346 of 450 (only 400 deputies were present) the Supreme Soviet adopted the declaration which read;

In view of the deadly threat posed to our country on the night of August 18-19...and expression of a thousand-year old tradition of statehood, the Supreme Soviet solemnly proclaims the independence of Ukraine.<sup>547</sup>

On the same day the Supreme Soviet also adopted recommendations to take control of all-union institutions on Ukrainian territory (KGB, Army, MVD, enterprises etc.) and to form a Ukrainian army/national guard. At this time Kravchuk resigned from the Supreme Soviet of the CPU, the politburo of the CPU and from the CPSU.

The opposition demand that the CPU be outlawed was rejected on 24 August but after obtaining secret documents implicating the CPU in supporting the coup and cooperating in the establishment of martial law in

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<sup>545</sup>"Failed Coup D'Etat Leads to Declaration of Ukrainian Independence," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 1. In preparation for martial law in Kiev the Kiev Army Commander deployed 12 divisions, including 4 tank divisions near Kiev.

<sup>546</sup>This extraordinary congress was called thanks to the efforts of the Narodna Rada.

<sup>547</sup>"Failed Coup D'Etat Leads to Declaration of Ukrainian Independence," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 15, August 1991, p. 1.

Ukraine,<sup>548</sup> the presidium of the Supreme Soviet voted, on 30 August, in favor of banning the CPU.<sup>549</sup> Kravchuk resigned from this illegal organization the following day.

### 3. Kravchuk's Role

Solchanyk concludes from his detailed study of Kravchuk's behavior during the coup that

the Ukrainian leader hesitated to take a decisive stand against the plotters in Moscow. Further, there are indications that even when he did act more resolutely, he did so as a result of pressure from the democratic forces.<sup>550</sup>

Solchanyk gives the example of Kravchuk's 21 August phone call to Anatolii Luk'yanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet during which he denounced the coup and said Ukraine was not going to abide by the Committee's decrees. Apparently just prior to this call, a representative of *Narodna Rada* called and demanded Kravchuk call Moscow and unequivocally denounce the coup. Similarly it was *Narodna Rada* which did all the leg work to convene the extraordinary session on the 24th of August. As Yeltsin's deputy, Ruslan Khasbulatov said, it was the *Narodna Rada* which from the start took the uncompromising stand against the coup and saved Ukraine's honor.<sup>551</sup>

As for the CPU, the August coup was the final discrediting act of the Party. Wilson describes the August Coup as a major factor in

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<sup>548</sup>See for example "Secret 'Telegram no. 47' Shows Communist Support for Junta," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 2.

<sup>549</sup>The decree titled "On the Prevention of Activity of the Communist Party of Ukraine" is dated 7 September and appeared in the 11 September issue of Robitnyche Hvizet and issue number 37, 1991 of Visti z Ukrainy.

<sup>550</sup>SOLC91E, p. 50.

<sup>551</sup>SOLC91E, p. 50.

Ukraine's state-building because it induced a "post-coup implosion of the Communist Party of Ukraine" and "put a greater distance between the new system and the old Communist Party Soviet structures than could conceivably have been hoped for prior to August."<sup>552</sup> Clearly the state-building process would have continued on its own but the coup greatly accelerated the process and led directly to the 24 August 1991 declaration of independence. The August declaration was significantly different in tone and scope than the 16 July 1990 Proclamation of Sovereignty and led to the 11 October 1991 decision to hold a referendum on independence in December 1991.

#### G. THE POST-COUP CPU

On 6 September, Oleksander Moroz, leader of the former "group of 239" announced the group's self-dissolution in accordance with the Supreme Soviet decree on banning the CPU. This was really a formality because the group of 239 had ceased to exist as a comprehensive group in June. Moroz blamed the CPSU for the failure of the CPU because while "existing structures had not allowed for the practical possibilities of reforming the Party from below" and reform from above had not happened because the correct leadership to do so had not come forward.<sup>553</sup>

On 6 September it was announced that the CPU was no longer a viable political force in Ukraine after more than 70 years of near absolute power. However, Communist deputies remained in parliament and in government. Now they were simply without a Party unless they belong to

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<sup>552</sup>WILS91, p. 6.

<sup>553</sup>"Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.

one of the new parties being formed in the rubble of the CPU. These spin-off parties were of two types; those attempting to reestablish Communist control and those formed from former CPU members but with goals other than reasserting Communism.

#### 1. Parties of Former Communists with Communist Goals

An example of the first type of CPU spin-off party was revealed in an 11 September interview in *Radyanska Ukraina*, in which Moroz announced that members of the former group of 239 were planning on becoming more involved in the workings of the Supreme Soviet with the aim to "create within it a strong center." Moroz also announced that a new Party was being formed to fill the vacuum left by the now-illegal CPU. This party, he said, is for "those healthy forces who were in the Communist Party of Ukraine and who wanted to see her differently".<sup>554</sup> In a later interview on 5 October, Moroz elaborated, saying the party was a "progressive, democratic" organization to uphold the ideals of "social justice". He announced the inaugural congress for this "Party for Social Progress: would be held at the end of October with 10-15 delegates attending from each oblast."<sup>555</sup> The UDP protested Moroz's attempts to launch a "Party of Left Inclination" which, they claimed, was just a new name for the old CPU. The UDP also, accused former communists of involvement in the separatist movements in the Donbas, Sub-Carpathia and Odessa region.

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<sup>554</sup> "Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.

<sup>555</sup> Interview in *Radyanska Ukraina* cited in "Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.



There were other examples of this first type of spin-off party. For example, the paper *Vechirnyi Donetsk* on 16 September called for the establishment of an new Ukrainian Communist Party and the initiative committee, led by former first secretary of the Donetsk city Party spoke out against the dismantling of the USSR.<sup>556</sup> In the Rivne region, the inaugural congress of the Liberal-Democratic Party of the USSR, led by V. Zhyrinsky was announced in September. The party, composed solely of former CPU members, was very pro-CPSU and opposed the break up of the USSR and the rise of Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>557</sup>

## 2. Parties of Former Communists with Non-Communist Goals

The other side of the coin was shown by the creation of another spin-off party in Donetsk at about the same time. The 14 September issue of *Radinaska Ukraina* announced that the inaugural congress for the Liberal-Democratic Party of Ukraine was just held. This party was organized primarily by former CPU members from the "economic community" (i.e. enterprise managers, businessmen, economists, and the creative intelligentsia) and one of their primary goals was to encourage foreign investment in Ukraine.<sup>558</sup> It is hardly surprising that this type of party would form since the vast majority of Ukraine's "economic community" were members of the CPU. However, it was unlikely that this type of spin-

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<sup>556</sup>Cited in "Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.

<sup>557</sup>"Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.

<sup>558</sup>"Whither the Communist Party of Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 18, October 1991, p. 1.

off party would have attempted to reinstate Communist control because it was not in their best interests to do so.

It is far from clear what impact these spin-off parties will have in the long run but they were not significant players in the December presidential elections. It is very likely these parties (especially those of the first type) will continue to appeal to the hard-line, rightist communists which were removed from power only by force. The parties of the second type may lose their attraction as these members of the "economic community" become integrated in to other political or economic organizations. Both types of spin-off parties have the potential for wielding significant clout because they can count among their members hardened politicians and officials in important posts.

#### **H. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CPU?**

To answer the question of what happened to the CPU in 1991 we have to turn to a number of different ways of analyzing the events because there were a number of different things happening simultaneously in Ukraine - political struggle, economic collapse, and social unrest. Toward this two different analyses will be undertaken to answer this question.

##### **1. Occupational Motivation**

Although we have already analyzed the structure of the Supreme Soviet, it is worth while to examine it again in light of the events of Spring and Summer 1991 but looking at the make up of the Communist body in a different way.

Lets examine the make up of the Communist bloc in the Supreme Soviet by occupation. To this end, Andrew Wilson describes the Communist bloc in the Supreme Soviet as being composed of two groups; the state and

Party bureaucrats and the collective farm chairmen and enterprise managers.<sup>559</sup> These groups were initially bound together by the presence of the opposition in the Supreme Soviet after the March 1990 elections but they began to split in the Spring of 1991. The causes of this split, which played into the hands of the opposition, were economic reforms such as a Ukrainian bank, control of enterprises on Ukrainian territory, and the like which appealed to the latter bloc but not the former.<sup>560</sup>

The collective farm chairmen and the enterprise managers also sought an alliance with the Supreme Soviet centrists (sovereign Communists) in an effort to gain more voting power over the state and bureaucratic block. The referendum on Ukrainian sovereignty and the renewed miner's strikes, both in March 1991, helped cement this alliance. This joining of forces around the "economic bloc" effectively reduced the hardline communist bloc "the group of 239" to 150-200 deputies according to Wilson.<sup>561</sup>

During the August coup d'état, the bureaucratic group attempted to administer the coup while the "economic bloc" tried to distance themselves from the economic collapse of the union by voting with the opposition. Wilson, noted that this later alliance may have been only

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<sup>559</sup>A study done by Dominique Arel breaks the occupational background of both communist and Narodna Rada deputies down even further (Table I) indicating that the bloc can be broken into three broad groupings; Command-Administrative Class, Intelligentsia, and other (including workers, peasants, military). The Command-administrative class forms the core (85%) of the group of 239. Looking at this class then Arel's data indicates that 59% of them are what Wilson calls Bureaucrats and 41% are from "economic" backgrounds. (See AREL90)

<sup>560</sup>WILS91, p. 7.

<sup>561</sup>WILS91, p. 7.

tactical since the desires of the "economic bloc" and the *Narodna Rada* did not necessarily coincide.<sup>562</sup>

## 2. Balance of Power

In addition to the analysis offered by studying the "occupational motivations" of the deputies there is a balance of power approach to examining why the Ukraine's Communist elites acted the way they did. In this approach the three parliamentary groupings, Sovereign (centrist) communists, imperialist (Right-Wing) communists, and the *Narodna Rada*, are considered in competition for political power. The behavior of each group is motivated by the desire to either hold on to or gain the political power to implement their program. This balance is examined over the course of the Spring and Summer in a series of segments which explore a particular aspect of political power in the CPU. A beginning point is late 1990/early 1991 with the centrist Communist group attempting to gain power over the then dominate conservative CPU.

### a. *The Centrists Gain Strength*

Having put the opposition on the defensive at the end of 1990, Rukh argued that the centrists then sought support from outside the republic to strengthen their position vis-a-vis Moscow and the imperial Communists in the CPU. This was done for example, via the Ukrainian-RSFSR treaty in November, and discussions in February with Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan about a joint treaty.<sup>563</sup> In line with this, Kravchuk and Fokin, and the deputy chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Hryniov

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<sup>562</sup>WILS91, p. 7.

<sup>563</sup>"Are the Communists Split in Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 3.

continually attacked the Union Treaty which would have strengthened the rightists in the CPU.

In the post-coup environment, Kravchuk's pursuit of continued close relations with Russia cast him in the image of a shrewd advocate of Ukrainian interest and strengthened his position as a truly pro-Ukrainian leader.

**b. *The Opposition Reaches Out***

In early March, Rukh's Council of Experts in the Kiev branch was recommending that Rukh unite moderate democratic forces and work together with the centrist Communists in order to offset the rightist in the CPU and Supreme Soviet. They also recommended that Rukh undertake "propagandistic work to inform the public" that the current repression in Ukraine is the work of the right-wing of the CPU and encourage cooperation with the centrists. The report added that opposition leaders should not be afraid to support the "autonomy of certain regions, even as free economic zones, which would increase their popularity in those areas." This was an obvious reference to the Crimea where the imperialists in the CPU were attempting to establish a free economic zone to win over the largely Russian population of Crimea. The opposition was also advised to support Kravchuk's four-republic agreement as a "counter-weight to the center"<sup>564</sup>

**c. *Away From Moscow***

In order to keep the support of the opposition and the very verbal populace (i.e., students), the Centrists were continually trying to

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<sup>564</sup>Tranel. in "Are the Communists Split in Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 4.

distance Ukraine from the center. This, in turn, forced the imperial Communists to fight back and to openly oppose very popular independence-building measures.

This distancing from Moscow was both political and economic. Politically greater separation was signaled by the Supreme Soviet's refusal to consider the Union Treaty any early than 1 September and then only to sign it after the new Ukrainian constitution was in place.

Economic separation began in January 1991 with Prime Minister Fokin, himself a former coal miner, demanding that the Ukrainian coal industry be brought back under republican control and that prices for Ukrainian coal be doubled. Moscow conceded on both requests thinking, no doubt, that this was a much better deal for them than it was for Ukraine. Now the burden of resolving the miner's strikes and finding the money to invest in the mining fields would rest on Ukraine and not Moscow. However, the Ukrainian government, unlike Moscow, by this point had come out in support of sovereignty which gave them a measure of trust among the miners.<sup>565</sup>

The transfer of control over economic enterprises continued in June of 1991. On 6 June, the Supreme Soviet approved a resolution transferring jurisdiction over Union enterprises in Ukraine to the republic. Although this was interpreted as an attempt to grab these enterprises from the center, the intent in the Supreme Soviet was to prevent the center from continuing to privatize these properties without

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<sup>565</sup>"Coal Miners and Public Discontent in Ukraine," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 1991, p. 5.

Republican approval.<sup>566</sup> Then, after heated debate in the Supreme Soviet on 26 June, the Supreme Soviet adopted a law on taxation which abolished the right of the center to impose taxes in the republic. On 9 July, Gorbachev approved this plan by which Ukraine would be allowed to determine how much revenue to turn over to the central government.<sup>567</sup>

Any attempts by the imperial Communists to counter these economic moves would have been countered by the "economic bloc" within the group of 239 because their self-interests were being best served by the shifting of power to the centrists and the opposition. The group of 239 also began to find their ability to shift power in any direction was being slowly undermined from below.

*d. Attenuation of Power in the CPU*

The CPU weakness was not at the center but at the local levels where the CPU was continually being eroded. At the local level either the CPU leadership was more influenced by Ukrainian nationalism or they were simply more susceptible to attack by the opposition. If the latter is true then it is logical that if the local leadership wished to preserve its position of power then capitulation to the opposition would be the best choice. If the former is true, there is no capitulation but only a merging of forces.

The newspaper *Radianskyj Prapor*, the organ of the Konotopka city CPU in the Suny Oblast, revealed, on 21 May, a typical crisis at the local level of the Party. The first secretary of the city CPU admitted at

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<sup>566</sup>"Economic Reform of Political Manoeuvring?," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 13, July 1991, p. 5. IN spite of these reforms, in July in the Donbas 67 percent of the enterprises were still under central control. (See *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 13, July 1991, p. 6.

<sup>567</sup>"Economic Reform of Political Manoeuvring?," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 13, July 1991, p. 5.

the City's plenum, that the CPU was to blame for the falling standard of living and other adverse influences on the city residents. He cited a loss of public credibility and internal discipline as weakening the Party. In 1990, the city CPU expelled 769 people or 11.6% of its membership for lack of discipline and another 86 for violation of CPSU statutes. Party careerists were leaving the Party and Party factory cells were closing down. The speakers addressing the plenum argued that in order to improve party discipline the Party had to go on the offensive, but against who? they asked.<sup>568</sup>

Also appropriate, is the question with whom to go on an offensive with because the balance of power was shifting away from the imperial Communists because of desertions within the party.

**e. "Lack of party discipline"**

In mid June, an open letter signed by leading members of the Ternopil Oblast Party organizations was published in *Ternopil Vechirnyj* (15 June 1991).<sup>569</sup> This was the most open critique of the CPSU and CPU to date representing an increasingly fractured Party membership. The letter, signed the "Initiative Group 91" and by members of the Party apparat, secretaries of primary Party organizations, leaders of regional Soviets of People's Deputies, of industrial and agricultural enterprises, youth groups and the intelligentsia, called for the CPU to separate itself from the CPSU.

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<sup>568</sup> AS transl. in "The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 1.

<sup>569</sup> Transl. in "Appeal to Communists of Ternopil," *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, pp. 3-4.



The letter cited the deep economic crisis, the social chaos, the threat of famine, poverty, and unemployment, the authors write, loom over Ukraine and

in this extreme situation the CPSU, the former 'leading and guiding force', has proven itself unable to defend the people. Its central committee is a tool in the hands of the President attempting to safeguard the rotten structures of the empire under a carefully disguised slogan of a 'renewed union of sovereign states.'

Furthermore, the letter continues,

The central committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) has become the humble servant of the 'elder brother'. So far it has been unable to honestly admit to its criminal policies before the people. This had led our people into material and spiritual poverty whilst it has force Ukraine into the state of a humble servant.<sup>570</sup>

"The Party," argues the letter, "is an obstacle to the independence of Ukraine." The solution, the authors argue, is for

the thinkers of the Party to denounce the anti-national past of the Communist Party of Ukraine and its current intentions. In view of the fact that the Kremlin is fully in support of saving the unitary state of a 'renewed' kind, we call for the split of the Communist Party of Ukraine from the CPSU, for its complete independence and for its transformation into a Socio-Democratic parliamentary party.<sup>571</sup>

The authors revealed their intent to hold a referendum in August in Ternopil oblast to gather popular support for this demand. They appealed to their fellow Communists in other oblasts to follow suit and revealed the fundamental contradiction that has existed in the Ukrainian communist elites;

We turn to those who have not lost the last drop of national consciousness, to the hearts and minds of members of elected bodies of primary party organizations. We do not have the right to go against the people. Practice has shown that senior party function-aries are

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<sup>570</sup>Transl. in "Appeal to Communists of Ternopil," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, pp. 3-4.

<sup>571</sup>Transl. in "Appeal to Communists of Ternopil," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, pp. 3-4.

mainly concerned about their own well being. At any moment they may betray the Party masses, as they have done on many occasions.<sup>572</sup>

This letter may help explain why the CPU lost more than one million members in the past few years and why the exodus continued in 1991.<sup>573</sup> It was clear that the balance of power was shifting away from the imperialist Communist bloc but to where is it going? This letter would indicate that it was going to the side of the centrists, or in the worst case to the opposition. But somewhat perplexing is the fact that Party members who resign tend not to join other party affiliations. For example, after the split of the Democratic Platform (now the PDRU) in June 1990, its membership, at 2,117 members is inadequate to qualify it for official registration.<sup>574</sup> Thus, in this case, the power shifted away from the CPU but it did not appear to manifest itself in either the opposition or centrist camps.

In summarizing the balance of power analysis, it is clear that the political power of the CPU's right-wing was consistently transferred to the center or to the opposition both wittingly and unwittingly. Attempts to alter the balance of power in favor of the right-wing were put to an end when the CPU was banned after the coup and Ukraine's Communist Party assumed the role of the opposition.

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<sup>572</sup>Transl. in "Appeal to Communists of Ternopil," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, pp. 3-4.

<sup>573</sup>This figure appeared in Vechirnyi Kiev, 17 June 1991 and was cited in "The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 1.

<sup>574</sup>"The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 1.

## I. CONCLUSION

Although the year 1991 began with a Communist offensive against the democratic forces with abrasive rhetoric and abortive attempts to establish interfronts, it ended with the defeat of the Communists. This is not to say that this process of deconstructing the CPU occurred in a year, because in fact, it began in 1989. However, the year 1991 was important because during this year the cracks in the CPU were widened by events in Lithuania and by the issue of the Union Treaty. The Party's inability to muster support for an interfront and decreasing Party loyalty in parliament spelled the end of the CPU.

The "sovereign" bloc of the CPU had carefully built, in merging efforts with the democratic forces, a basis for independence and had aligned themselves more closely to the popular sentiment than had been the case the year before. As a result, when the August Coup occurred and the CPU was abolished, Kravchuk's apparat was easily and successfully able to fill the void.

The last nails were placed in the USSR's coffin in December 1991 when Kravchuk was elected as Ukraine's first freely elected president since 1918 and the referendum returned a 90.3% vote for independence.<sup>575</sup> Although the CPU was abolished and a freely elected president was at the helm, the deconstruction of the CPU between 1990 and 1991 had not been complete. During this period and even after the August coup, the Communist elite was divided into two groups; those that changed their political views and those that did not. To be sure, this process of

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<sup>575</sup>See Jaroslaw Martyniuk, "Ukrainian Independence and Territorial Integrity," Radio Liberty Reports, 1 April 1992 for detailed analysis of the referendum and election results.

converting those who still cling to Communism is still continuing and will for some time, but the point is that not every Ukrainian Communist was a fervent believer nor was every one willing to abandon his beliefs. Those that have broken with their pasts, such as Kravchuk, will find their talents in need. Those who have not changed may later make the transformation, or may never. Their numbers are probably small and in a true democracy would not be destabilizing. In independent Ukraine, however, their numbers are undetermined and their access to power is still great.

This cloud of doubt hanging over Ukraine's governing bodies extends to Kravchuk himself who represents those former Communists who did not break with the Party until the very end but who appear to be genuine "nationalists." In speaking of this type of person using Kravchuk as an example, Rukh deputy Skoryk said, "That, in a moment of some danger, which can come from one knows not where, to await heroic action from such a person is futile. One cannot count on this. And one should keep this in mind." But she then adds, "on the other hand, is the given moment really one which demands heroics or is it a moment where super diplomacy is needed?"<sup>576</sup> At the end of 1991, this was Ukraine's dilemma in a nut shell.

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<sup>576</sup>ZAKY91B, p. 11.

## IX. CONCLUSION

By September 1991 it was already clear that the transformation of Ukraine's Communist elites was complete. Led by a desire to maintain political power and pushed by their Ukrainian national consciousness, Ukraine's Communist Party elites distanced themselves from the center to rally behind Ukrainian independence. This desire to achieve autonomy from the center was nothing new and in fact, during the seven decades of Soviet rule, the Ukrainian republican leadership had proven itself to be quite prone to "nationalist tendencies." Despite this, the extent to which these tendencies were realized in 1991 took the Soviet government and Western experts by surprise.

While the tendency for Ukraine's Communist leaders to agitate for increased autonomy was a historical fact, the widening of national demands to include the independence of Ukraine from Russia was, from Moscow's point of view, inconceivable. By almost any measure, after 74 years of intense Russification, Ukraine was among the most assimilated of the Soviet nations. The Ukrainian language was a phenomenon of the deep countryside and Ukrainian culture was becoming indistinguishable from Russian. The number of Ukrainian language publications could be counted on two hands and the percentage of Russians and russified Ukrainians in Ukraine was continuing to climb. Ukraine was also sharing a doubly "privileged" position of being the largest non-Russian Slavic population and being the most important non-Russian republic. Ukraine was considered so deeply connected to Russia historically, culturally, linguistically and

economically that the December 1991 referendum, in which more than 90 percent of the Ukraine population (Russians included) voted for independence, came as a great shock to Russia.

In the West, Ukrainian independence was equally unanticipated primarily because of an analytical focus which excluded or marginalized the study of Ukrainian Communist elites and their allegiance to the center. The basis of this study has been to examine Communist elite reliability in the Soviet socio-political environment and tie it to a number of cultural factors such as Ukrainian nationalism, the desire to rule in one's own land, and the decline of ideology. While it is true that people, leaders as well as others, are not predictable, as this study shows, there are certainly indications of potential behavior which are useful tools for the analyst.

#### **A. THE STUDY OF ELITE BEHAVIOR**

Ukraine's elites operated with a divided loyalty which placed them between two opposing political and ideological poles; Ukraine and Soviet. The reason Ukraine's Communist Party elites supported and eventually led the move to independence was that, wanting to preserve their political power, they chose between these loyalties. The path they chose to preserve their power, separation from the USSR and more precisely from Russia, was determined in great extent by their environment. The major social and political factors in this environment were the contradictions of Soviet ideology and the contradictory Soviet federal system.

The Marxist ideology upon which the Soviet state was based left open the question of how to deal with nationalism and the various approaches which appeared in the works of Marx and Engels were at best contradictory.

As a result, when Lenin and Stalin constructed the Soviet Federal system using this ideology as a basis, the state both extended and denied recognition and accommodation to the forces of nationalism. The legacy of this contradiction became clear in 1991. Ironically, in its struggle for independence, Ukraine only put into action the Soviet Constitution which guaranteed the right of secession. Also significant is that the current government is governing with the structure established by Stalin.<sup>578</sup> The contradictions of ideology and structure created a physical and ideological space within the Soviet system in which the "Ukrainian fact" took seed.

By the "Ukrainian fact" we refer to the historically based idea of an independent Ukrainian nation which brought Ukraine into immediate confrontation with the Bolsheviks in 1917 and created tensions under the Soviet system. The idea of a Ukrainian state bolstered by a strong national myth was never completely submerged in the Soviet system.<sup>579</sup>

By December 1991 it was clear, that Ukraine was again on the rise. The people of Ukraine had spoken out against the regime which had imposed upon them 70 years of cultural, political, and economic deprivation. But most importantly, the general rejection of the Soviet state and its ideology and federal structure was supported and echoed by the ruling elites of Ukraine. Without the support of the CPU, the Ukrainian opposition would likely have been slower to rise to power, if they ever

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<sup>578</sup>Of course, there has been the notable addition of a Republican Military.

<sup>579</sup>It is interesting to note that those states in Eastern Europe which had a strong tradition of national communism and had established their independence from Moscow decades ago (Romania, Albania, Yugoslavia) were the last to become non-Communist. In the case of Yugoslavia the process is continuing. Their independence from Moscow helped insulate them from the general collapse of Communism. These examples may in some ways pertain to Ukraine where the communist apparat (albeit under a new name) is still in power.

achieved power at all. The transition of the CPU was a gradual process and a natural by-product of the deconstruction of the Communist state.

## B. THE PROCESS OF COMMUNIST DECONSTRUCTION

Although the basic motivations and direction of the Ukrainian national movement were historically derived, the years 1989-1991 were critical for its development and success because in these years actions of the center both encouraged and shaped the Ukrainian opposition. Alexander Motyl describes the process of reform initiated by Gorbachev as one which, by its very nature, forced the republican Communist organizations to either break with Moscow and embrace the republican (and usually nationalist) program or to die. This dilemma was imposed as a result of Gorbachev attacks on the Communist bureaucracy begun in 1987. Gorbachev's use of personnel cuts, governmental streamlining, empowerment of the soviets, and the use of *glasnost* placed additional pressure on the system. These pressures on the CPU were now acting from below, above and from within.

### 1. Pressures from Below

The creative intelligentsia in the USSR embraced Gorbachev's liberalizations as did other parts of society. As the negative incentives for public participation decreased, more and more frequently the Party came under attack locally. This began, says Motyl a weakening of the state which prompted increased opposition.<sup>580</sup>

The forces of opposition were further strengthened by Gorbachev's 1987 release of political prisoners in an attempt to appeal to the intelligentsia and forces abroad on a basis of human rights. In Ukraine,

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<sup>580</sup>See MOTYL90, pp. 176-178.



this meant the release of numerous prisoners of conscience who quickly became quite active in the opposition movement. These "experienced" members of the opposition were able to instantly fill the role of opposition leaders based on their proven loyalty to the anti-regime forces and their contacts within the now-emerging opposition. Thus, claims Motyl, Gorbachev created both an official and an unofficial opposition.

## 2. Pressures from Above

Gorbachev had placed the republican party leadership in an intensely contradictory relationship. On one hand he was pushing economic and political decentralization which played into the hands of the republican leadership and encouraged national communist tendencies. On the other hand, however, he supported and maintained republican leaders, such as Shcherbytsky who were expected to be, and were, loyal to the center and responsive to Gorbachev's policies of strengthened federalism. As a result of this contradiction, the ideological and physical space provided by the flawed ideological and federal system of the Soviet state was quickly exploited by Ukrainians once the repressions were lifted after the retirement of the Ukrainian First secretary Shcherbytsky.

Not surprisingly, based on the history of the Ukrainian Communist Party, the Party was one of the first to rush into this void, utilizing Gorbachev's perestroika as a conduit to realize increased autonomy from the center. At first, the CPU supported and even initiated via its pro-reform members, means such as Rukh to continue this process. However, realizing the potential for a mobilized populace to undermine the power of the Communists, the CPU belatedly tried to intimidate and repress the

burgeoning opposition forces. Although these policies continued into 1991, the CPU was fighting a losing battle after 1990.<sup>581</sup>

### 3. Pressures from Within

The mobilization of the population via popular and broad-based sympathy for environmental and anti-Communist issues began a process which the CPU could not stop. At this point, the CPU was decisively split into two factions. The first was the "sovereign Communists" (primarily those with vested economic interests) who conceded power to the opposition forces and sought to preserve their power by adhering to the pro-reform, pro-independence line. The second faction was composed of "imperial Communists" (primarily those who held positions in the government administration) who sought to restore the stability and absolute power of yesteryear. The period of 1990 to 1991 was really nothing more than a contest to see which of these two could gain the most public support.<sup>582</sup> The increasing politicization of the populace signaled by the miner's and student's strikes made this struggle even more frantic.

### 4. The Politics of Power

Superimposed on top of this internal struggle in Ukraine was the battle for the locus of control. For the most part, the CPU was unanimous

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<sup>581</sup>This process is not dissimilar to the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. For example, Adam Przeworski, in describing the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe described the process by which Communist leaders attempted to deal with their increasing loss of power. Using Poland as a model he describes how Party apparatchiks are forced to rely on pure repression once protest against the regime becomes widespread. But after the miners' strikes in summer 1988, General Jaruzelski understood that repression was not enough and he compromised with the forces of opposition and forced this decision on the Party. At that point, the Party bureaucrats attempted to convert their political power into economic power before they lost even that. (PRZE91, p. 21)

<sup>582</sup>The precarious position of the CPU is well illustrated by the following comment by Ukrainian Party leader Hurenko in late 1990, in response to the question "is it possible to cooperate with Rukh? Or do you feel it is a hostile force?" He said it could be neither black nor white; "If I were to say that 'Rukh' is not our enemy, I would probably be subject to brutal criticism from our Communists. If I were to say that 'Rukh' is an enemy, I would be subject to brutal criticism from another side. The situation here is rather complicated." (SOLC92, p. 154)

that Kiev should gain increased autonomy for Moscow on this account. This became even more obvious when the CPU realized that if it could not control the "political goods" demanded by the population, its power base was gone.

This two-fold process of attempting to hold onto power in Ukraine and also break from the center came to a climax in August with the forceful removal of Gorbachev by the conservative Soviet government. The disgust with the Soviet government and the Communist Party led Ukraine and the remaining republics to declare their independence. In the period of two days the desires of the opposition and the majority of the population converged with those of the sovereign Communists. A new Ukrainian state was born.

### C. THE "NEW" UKRAINE

For all its importance, the August "coup" did not mean the decommunization process in Ukraine was complete. In fact, at the time of this writing, it has yet to take place. The government in Ukraine today is the very same one which was in place a year ago with very few exceptions. This immediately leads to questions of the motives and reliability of this new leadership. To some, such as Malia, the motives of the current leadership are questionable and Kravchuk's "commitment to democracy and the market is tenuous and opportunistic."<sup>583</sup> The underlying issue, one which was central to the problem of the CPU from 1989 until 1991, is, as one opposition deputy, supposed; "In reality no truthfulness, no real concern for the fate of our people exists among

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<sup>583</sup>MAL192, p. 92.

those people - they simply do not want to lose power."<sup>584</sup> To others, the present government symbolized by Kravchuk, is perfect. In this view, Kravchuk is the right man for the job because he is a moderate candidate who is supported by the broad range of public opinion in Ukraine. He is not a western Ukrainian who would frighten the less Ukrainianized easterners and he is not a Russian who does not reflect the general Ukrainian national consciousness.

### 1. Elite Motives

As far as the process and motives go: Furtado and Hechter seek to explain why the CPU hardliners stuck to, and the centrists eventually abandoned, the strategy they did toward the nationalist movement - namely to resist and suppress it.<sup>585</sup> Although their rational choice theory tends neglect some factors and to marginalize the center's ability to make decisions on what is best for the system, Furtado and Hechter do provide a useful theory for analyzing elite motives to not challenge the system.

The key to this behavior is, they argue, the level of Republican elite dependency on the CPSU to gain access to political power. The Ukrainian leaders were more dependent and thus pursued a path more closely tied to that of the CPSU than say the Estonians. Ukrainian dependence on the CPSU was based on "the calculation of relative career chances with the organization of the CPSU itself." Local leaders, argue Furtado and Hechter, will take the interests of the center into account if they know that in so doing, they will be rewarded later by political promotion in

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<sup>584</sup>Deputy P. Talenchuk, as reported in Holos, No 13, 1991 and transl. in "The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis," Ukrainian Reporter, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991, p. 1.

<sup>585</sup>FURT92, pp. 189-190.

the Republic or even into the central organs. Since the high level Party positions have long been dominated by Slavs, Estonians and other non-slavs realize their chances of political reward were limited. As the Party's control over the periphery began to decline, local leaders took the rational choice and began to do what was necessary to maintain their power. It is just that Ukraine took longer to do this because their dependency was higher and they began to deviate from the center only when they realized the center was failing and had no rewards left to offer. Shcherbytsky's ouster was one indication that the behavior the center was now rewarding was not that which Shcherbytsky had displayed. In fact, Ivashko was the last Ukrainian leader to take advantage of the old nomenclature system when he went to Moscow to be Gorbachev's deputy.

Although, as a result of this process of deconstruction, not all Ukrainian Communists came over to the side of the opposition, significant numbers did and their story is in many ways symbolized by that of their leader, Leonid Kravchuk.

## 2. Analysis of the Leader

Kravchuk came to prominence in 1988-9 as the ideology secretary set on destroying Rukh. On 23 July 1990, he replaced Ivashko as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and despite expectations quickly asserted his centrist view of Ukraine's future. This was a view he did not hide;

I am convinced that Ukraine should be a sovereign, full-fledged, and full-blooded state. I do not hide this from the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, nor from the politburo, not from the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, nor at home, nor at the Supreme Soviet. I see that this approach does not suit everyone.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>586</sup>Komsomol'skaya pravda, 27 April 1991, as cited in SOLC91G, p. 23.

Kravchuk's first indications that he had changed his views on Rukh and on the future of Ukraine came in late 1990 when, in his dealing with Moscow, he asked for a Ukrainian-Russian translator to be present. Along these lines, Marples noted in early November 1990 that Kravchuk "has of late adopted the practice of responding to questions only in Ukrainian, even if the speaker addresses him in Russian."<sup>587</sup> Symbolically and in his actions he appeared to be what he says he is but still doubts lingered.

Rukh Council Member Skoryk, speaking about Kravchuk the presidential candidate, worried that Kravchuk may have other intentions;

To say that this is a man with high moral values, I cannot, because a person who went into that field [the Party], who chose to climb up the rungs of the communist ladder, had to be ready to act amorally.... [Further] I find it difficult to believe that he is moved by the same convictions that we are. But in this situation our positions coincide.<sup>588</sup>

It was exactly, Kravchuk's ability to make his agenda coincide with that of the opposition which gave him his support. For example, if Kravchuk had bowed to the Party's intense pressure to sign the Union treaty, he would have lost every chance of being elected president. He felt the risk from challenging the ailing CPU was much less than losing popular support. Such tactical considerations are difficult to discount.

The only way to address worries about Kravchuk's real motives is to see inside his head which we cannot, but there are clues to his transformation which may give some insight into his motivations. Kravchuk traces his disillusion with the party to 1987 when he was asked by a group of scientists to provide, for their research, documents on the famine of

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<sup>587</sup>MARP90S, p. 12.

<sup>588</sup>ZAKY91B, p. 11.

the 1930s in which over 7 million Ukrainians died. Against Party wishes, he did so and in 1990 he facilitated the publication of "The Famine of 1932-33" which detailed Stalin's plan to starve Ukraine into submission. At this point, Kravchuk says "For the first time in my life - and I was no longer a young man - I felt the horror. I couldn't believe this had happened."<sup>589</sup>

In an interview with Nahalyo in 1990, he appealed to the Ukrainian diaspora to read about Ukraine in order to regain their national consciousness and revealed a bit about his own consciousness;

They [members of the diaspora] would understand much more about Ukraine than they do now [if they would read about Ukraine]. I'm not just theorizing; I know from my own experience. I have read more about Ukraine in the past five years than in all the previous years of my life.<sup>590</sup>

Kravchuk's growth of national consciousness was no doubt eased by the fact that Ukrainians were building a nation founded not on the basis of an exclusive ethnic, religious, cultural, or linguistic principle, but one based on the idea of an economically, politically, and territorial defined Ukrainian state. It was this vision of a Ukrainian state, non-threatening and viable, which helped sway the Communist elites to the side of the independence seeking opposition.

Kravchuk's support for this new Ukrainian state appeared to be whole hearted and the reason for this is right under our nose. In April 1991 a correspondent from *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote that Ukraine's biggest mystery was its leader, Kravchuk. Was he the man who had diligently and successfully worked his way up the orthodox Party

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<sup>589</sup>HAYS92, p. A10.

<sup>590</sup>NAHA90A, p. 16.

hierarchy or is he a hidden Ukrainian nationalist just now beginning to emerge? Kravchuk himself suggested a third alternative, and one that would be unheard of in the USSR, he suggested that he is a politician trying to represent his constituents.<sup>591</sup>

Kravchuk is a shrew politician who was successful in shedding the errand boy subservience of his predecessors and who is now attempting to preserve his power in Ukraine. Clearly he has to serve his constituents since that is where the new base of support lies.

#### **D. THE OUTLOOK FOR UKRAINE**

The future of the Ukrainian state depends foremost upon its structure, that is, the nature of the Ukrainian state. It also depends on popular support for the state, the Russian-Ukrainian relationship, and support from the West.

##### **1. The New State Structure**

What happened in the Fall of 1991 was a revolution in every sense of the word. There was an abrupt and radical discontinuity in the history of the USSR - Communism failed. But it was not a revolution in the ordinary sense of the word. The revolution of 1991 was a strange one, because as Malia points out, the idea of revolution is usually taken as the break through of a pre-formed, vital force such as the Third Estate in 18th Century France but in the USSR a far from preformed, vital force burst through the "outworn shell of power". It was a force fueled by the desire to be rid of Communism and there was little if any political,

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<sup>591</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 2 April 1991.



economic or ethnic form to it.<sup>592</sup> This is a process which Malia equates to the German *Zusammenbruch* or the Russian *smuta* which is used to describe the "time of troubles" between 1604 and 1613 when the Moscow Tsardom practically vanished leaving the country without a social or political system and various internal and external forces intervened appropriating what they could of the country.

## 2. Ukrainian National Consciousness and the Path Forward

As socialism weakened in Ukraine, the political and social vacuum was filled by a rising national consciousness. The remarkable thing about this consciousness was that it was not centered on the idea of ethno-nationalism but on the concept of citizenship. The path adopted by the Ukrainian national movement to unite and mobilize Ukraine was one of two possible as one of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group's first members, Myroslav Marynovych explained in the summer of 1991. "There are two options [to unite the people of Ukraine] - the option of force, which is short-term, or the option of understanding and love."<sup>593</sup>

The reasons the path of understanding, love and tolerance, was chosen are many. For one, the extent to which Russification had proceeded in Ukraine doomed to failure any ethnically based movement. Take for example the Mayor of Odessa who revealed in a 1991 interview that "I am Ukrainian, but my brother is Russian. We registered my eldest son as a Ukrainian, but our youngest, in memory of his Kuban Cossack roots on his mother's side - as a Russian."<sup>594</sup> In such situations, the only path

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<sup>592</sup>MAL192, p. 93.

<sup>593</sup>LEW91B, p. 3.

<sup>594</sup>L. Kapelyushnyy, "What Kind of Ukraine Can be Seen From Odessa?" *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 25 Sept 1991, Transl. in FBIS, Soviet Union, Republic Affairs, 4 October 1991, p. 97.

forward is one for the people of Ukraine rather than the Ukrainian people.

As well, Ukraine's historic experience made Ukrainian dissidents fundamentally different than that of the more commonly known Russian dissident simply because to a Ukrainian, the Soviet ideology was not only synonymous with Russian domination but it was alien and threatening. Ukrainians were threatened with what they feared was national extinction; a strong call to protest which Russians did not have. Further, the desire to renew the nation was not so much a glorification of Ukrainianism as it was a rejection of Russianism. Farmer, makes this point in describing the nature of Ukrainian nationalism, Ukrainian nationalism is, writes Farmer, "less the affirmation of parochial ethnicity for its own sake, than rejection of the *official* rejection of ethnicity."<sup>595</sup> As a result Ukrainian dissent developed a slightly different trajectory more focused on preservation of national identity through individual human revival with the idea of a territorial defined nation preeminent.

The former political prisoners also carried with them a strong sense of democracy. Myroslav Marynovych who was among the first to join the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and received a seven year prison term as a result, explains the roots of the opposition's credibility. He cites the political make up of the camps as a critical element of education; the fact that the camps were composed of representatives from all parts of the political and ideological spectrum Tsarist monarchists to Bolshevik imperialists provided the prisoners with a unique education because as Marynovych describes it, "We were all divided in our ideological positions, but we set our differences aside to unite in protest.... Camp

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<sup>595</sup>FARM80, p. 105.

was a school of democracy, and in fighting against a regime which at the time could not lose, we learned to grasp something higher."<sup>596</sup> It is this democratic experience and this ability to "grasp something higher" in the political turmoil of the current time that make former political prisoners able leaders. Their experience is not only very applicable to the current situation when the political spectrum is wide open, but their time in the gulag or in exile provides a clearly evident indicator that they were not part of the former regime but in fact opposed it openly.

The political dissidents symbolize truth and truth was one thing the Soviet system could not provide. Truth was important because, as Przeworski explains; "People need some modicum of cognitive consistency: when their thoughts and their words diverge, life becomes intolerable."<sup>597</sup> Przeworski argues that it is this search for truth which placed writers and intellectuals in leadership positions. But there is more to it than that. The vast majority of popular pro-democracy leaders in Ukraine are former political prisoners. Imprisonment implies that they stood up to the corrupt system; that they did not succumb to its treachery; these people are the only ones in society who have shreds of credibility as opponents of the regime. The implication was that only these people can be trusted to lead the nation. However, as it turned out in the end, these leaders abdicated to Kravchuk, the antithesis of the political prisoner.

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<sup>596</sup> LEW91B, p. 3.

<sup>597</sup> PRZE91, p. 21.

### 3. A Question of Leadership

The reason that Kravchuk came to power instead of a long-time dissident such as Chornovil was that he was the only person in Ukraine who could draw support from both Western nationalists and Russified Easterners and all those in between. While the radical political prisoners such as Chornovil frightened those Ukrainians who were less struck by the "Ukrainian fact", Kravchuk represented a more moderate and yet sufficiently independent position.

In many ways, the future of Ukraine lies in the success of this new leadership. In this vein, Armstrong notes, that Ukraine's biggest challenge now is to recruit and train a cadre of competent, practical civil servants. To this end it is important to utilize those hold-overs from the Communist era who are flexible enough to accept the new status quo. A number of temporary Western "experts" will also help. "The biggest problem is development of a stable, orderly civil society to complement traditional Ukrainian love of liberty."<sup>598</sup>

However, even though Armstrong argues that Ukraine emerged from the rubble of the Soviet Union as one of the "clusters of national civil societies"<sup>599</sup> the situation is far from stable. As Malia notes, in Ukraine today, there is little foundation on which to build a civil society;

Nowhere are there mature political parties with genuine constituencies in society; rather, there are only numerous coteries of intellectuals or ex-apparatchik politicians, and a society whose

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<sup>598</sup> ARMS92, p. 131.

<sup>599</sup> ARMS92, p. 122.

population, amidst the deepening economic crisis, is increasingly indifferent to the political process.<sup>600</sup>

It is true Malia neglects to consider the process by which Rukh and the miner's movement in 1989-90 developed; both of which indicate a more solid basis for civil society than he indicated. The point remains however, that the need for public support is an urgent and continuing necessity for the Ukrainian state.

#### 4. Popular Support

Ukrainian independence was only possible because of the political mobilization of the populace. However, the mobilization of the masses is a double edged sword; it can support the current government as well as turn against it. Once the people have been politically empowered, it is difficult, without resorting to Soviet methods, to ensure their actions will be supportive of the current government. However, there are several reasons why Ukraine's mobilized populace should continue to support the current regime. 1) Kravchuk is a compromise figure who can appeal to all aspects of Ukrainian society. 2) The Ukrainian movement is based on the idea of "Ukraine for Ukrainians" which reduces the potential ethnic, religious, or cultural tensions. 3) This process of moderation which began after the miner's lukewarm reception of the Rukh platform in 1989-90 forced Rukh to become more moderate in its demands which were shaped by its primarily western Ukrainian outlook of fervent nationalism. 4) The gradual development of the opposition allowed more moderate, central Ukrainians to rise to power in Rukh and moderate the program to include a slower paced move toward independence and inclusion of economic planks

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<sup>600</sup>MAL192, p. 92.

which would appeal to a greater portion of the populace. 5) The more moderate tenor of the Ukrainian state also has a calming effect on the important Ukrainian-Russian relationship which will strengthen the Ukrainian state and help calm public fears of having to choose between Russia and Ukraine.

#### **E. UKRAINE AND RUSSIA**

The Ukrainian-Russian relationship, central to centuries of Ukrainian history is also central to contemporary events. In his study of the 1917-1920 Ukrainian Revolution, Reshetar writes that "the single largest obstacle to the establishment of an independent Ukraine lay in the apparent difficulty which Ukrainians have had in severing their ties with the Russians."<sup>601</sup> Although today Ukraine has achieved independence from Russia, the Russia question has not been resolved and in fact the future of relations between Russia and Ukraine depend on the continued moderation of Russian nationalism which could tear Ukraine, as well as other former republics, apart. The recent conflict over the Black sea fleet and more importantly, over Crimea, indicate the importance of establishing a modus vivendi with the Russians. This is clearly a process which must be approached from both sides; the Russians must denounce the idea of little Russianism which has historically subordinated and denied Ukraine its sovereign existence and recognize the separateness of the Ukrainian state. Ukrainians, for their part, must be willing to recognize that their future lies to a great extent in cooperation with Russia.<sup>602</sup> The leadership of

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<sup>601</sup>RESH52, p. 330.

<sup>602</sup>See MARP91 for the argument that Ukraine's economic future is quite strongly connected with Russia.

Ukraine, in the hands of Russified Ukrainians, or at least Ukrainians familiar with the Russian (Soviet) system, has the best chance of not only managing Ukrainian-Russian relationships successfully but preventing potential conflict.

#### F. AN INTERNATIONAL ROLE

Ukraine has proven cunning enough to realize that the issue of nuclear weapons was a powerful influence in gaining international recognition and in 1992 this issue, perhaps more than any other, persuaded the United States to make an exception to its russo-centric policy and recognize Ukraine. Once again, Ukraine's leadership and its former ties to the Soviet state bodes well for international relations. Former Communists have a certain measure of political credibility in the international community in comparison to former political prisoners and radical nationalists and this can only help Ukraine.

Despite the international recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations, it is uncertain that the world community truly realizes the importance of Ukraine. Ukraine was not only the key which determined the fate of the USSR, but the future political paths taken by Ukraine and the other key states of the region (Poland and Russia) "are apt to determine the future of eastern Europe."<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> ARMS92, p. 133.

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