4 Gorbachev, Dissent and the New Opposition (1987-8)

THE VIEW FROM THE CENTRE

On coming to power in 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev had little idea of the extent of the potential nationality problem in the USSR. It was not until the end of the decade that he began to turn his attention to this question after riots in Kazakhstan in 1986, the public outcry over the Chornobyl nuclear disaster, the return of dissidents from the Gulag the following year, and the growing campaign by the cultural intelligentsia to raise questions of Russification and national revival forced the issue on to the agenda.

Almost immediately after Gorbachev came to power, non-Russians began demanding a return to 'Leninist nationality policy' - as they had during previous periods of 'liberalisation' (such as during the 1920s and 1960s). This included demands for the titular nationality's language in each republic to become the state language, as well as for the Ministry of Education to determine the language of instruction in schools in accordance with the national composition of pupils (rather than by parental choice). In Ukraine and Belarus, where enrolment in native language schools had noticeably declined since 1958-9, the situation was far more urgent, leading to the prioritisation of demands for radical changes in educational and cultural policies. Almost immediately, therefore, leading Ukrainian literati, such as Oles Honchar, used the opportunities provided by glasnost' to revive the debate of the 1960s.

However, the new CPSU programme adopted in 1986 seemed to assume that the nationality question was resolved - the view, we must remember at the time, of most Western Sovietologists.1 Its section on the nationality question was half as long as that in the 1961 programme and optimistically proclaimed: 'the nationality question, as inherited from the past, has been successfully resolved in the Soviet
Dissent and the New Opposition

Union.' The programme emphasised the Soviet Union's unitary nature, playing down the importance of the republics. Again optimistically, it concluded: 'A new social and international community of people - the Soviet people (has been) formed ... This development entails, in the remote historical future, the complete unity of nations.'

By the following year it was becoming clear to experts on Soviet nationality policies in Moscow that the situation was not as rosy as the CPSU programme had claimed. It was time for an overhaul of the Brezhnev era nationality policies, Eduard Bagromov, a leading Soviet authority on nationality problems, admitted, because events had clearly moved on. In his speech to the 27th CPSU Congress, Gorbachev admitted that Soviet nationality policies until then had been merely 'upbeat treatises reminiscent of times of complimentary toasts rather than serious scientific studies'.

The most contentious issue immediately became language. One of the most 'successful' results of the Brezhnev era nationality policies was the growth of bilingualism, with Russian becoming de facto the second language of the majority of Soviet citizens. The demand that the right of parents to choose the language of instruction of schools be revoked was clearly seen as an attempt to reduce the number of Russian-language schools.

Gorbachev therefore criticised the 'blunders and miscalculations' of his predecessor's nationality policies. But, at the same time, lauded the 'process of the flourishing of nations, their unification, their willing unification', which was guided by the CPSU. In his speech to the 27th CPSU Congress, Gorbachev gave no detailed analysis of the Kazakh riots and no hint of new policies to redress the problems that were already evident, except to call for 'a principled struggle against all manifestations of narrow-mindedness and arrogance, nationalism and chauvinism.' Gorbachev's lack of understanding of the nationality question was evident when he visited the Baltic states in spring 1987 and attempted to convince his hosts that the 'Russian warrior' had come to their rescue, that the Baltic states had welcomed Soviet power with open arms.

Although a reformer on other issues, on nationality questions Gorbachev remained a conservative, relying on the dogmas of the Brezhnev era. Gorbachev was, after all, the first CPSU General Secretary who had never previously served in a non-Russian republic and hence initially devoted little attention to the nationality question.
THE VIEW FROM UKRAINE

Zbigniew Rau proposed an ideal-type timetable for 'Four Stages of Our Path out of Socialism' which can serve as a benchmark for assessing the development of informal opposition structures in Ukraine:

Firstly, the emergence of dissident groups; secondly, the establishment of massive revivification movements; thirdly, the launching of independent political parties; and fourthly, the taking of power in competitive elections by these parties.

From 1987 until late 1988, the first tentative steps towards the reconstitution of a Ukrainian dissident movement were made in the limited political space opened up by Gorbachev's reforms, with Ukrainian dissidents initially returning to the battlelines of the Brezhnev era, from which they had been forcibly removed during the arrest waves of 1972-3 and the late 1970s.

The period was characterised by:

- a redefinition of glasnost' and perestroika by amnestied political prisoners, although within a general framework of support for Gorbachev's programme;
- the launch of small, unofficial 'fronts, leagues or unions' as embryonic political oppositions, but with little mass support beyond the intelligentsia;
- concentration upon the exposure of 'Stalinist crimes' and the rehabilitation of their victims, and on issues of language and culture, as the state was still prepared to use coercive measures against more overtly political groups;
- the ChornobyP nuclear accident as a catalyst for an environmental movement; and
- an uneven national 'awakening' gradually spreading from western to central Ukraine.\(^8\)

The amnesty of Soviet prisoners of conscience, a disproportionate number of whom had been Ukrainian (see Chapter 3), during the first half of 1987, breathed new life into the political and cultural debate in Ukraine. Shcherbytskyi's 15-year rule had led to widespread repression of all forms of dissent, an all-embracing campaign of Russification and the placing of cadres loyal to the conservative 'Little Russian' wing of the CPU in every layer of state and government from the village upwards.\(^9\)
Although the Western media constantly speculated about Shcherbytskyi's demise after Gorbachev's rise to power in April 1985, he nevertheless remained in office until September 1989. Neither Shcherbytskyi nor his two successors - Volodymyr Ivashko and Stanislav Hurenko - undertook any purge of the CPU to bring it more in line with the policies of perestroika and glasnost'. Gorbachev refrained from pushing perestroika in Ukraine in the interests of maintaining centralised control and not allowing this most crucial of Soviet republics to take the Baltic road to independence and marginalisation of the CPSU in public life.

Therefore, in terms of Alexander Motyl's typology discussed in Chapter 1, the amount of 'public space' available for oppositional activity was still minimal in Ukraine (and often less than in Moscow), although the growing number of small unofficial groups did their best to organise within it. There seemed little sign of any 'national communism' within the state, or of a possible alliance between the CPU and opposition forces. The Shcherbytskyi regime's founding principle had, after all, been the eradication of such tendencies, as they had developed under Petro Shelest from 1963 to 1972.

This was especially the case after the shock received by the CPU in the March 1989 elections to the all-Union Congress of People's Deputies. Iurii Badzo, in a report prepared for the Ukrainian Helsinki Union (UHU) on the March 1990 elections, stated that Gorbachev 'wanted to maintain political stability in Ukraine at the expense of democracy, at the expense of the Ukrainian national revival.' Until 1990-1, it was informal groups, not the CPU, who were the major engine of change in Ukraine. Leonid Kravchuk, then head of the Supreme Council of Ukraine and former ideology chief of the CPU later admitted: T agree that, if it had not been for Rukh and other democratic currents we would not have come so far so fast.n2

UKRAINIAN HELSINKI UNION

The most important informal group, whose influence extended into numerous other independent groups which were formed later, was the Ukrainian Helsinki Union (UHU). The UHU viewed itself as the continuation of Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords, which had been established in November 1976, as the latter had never formally disbanded. Indeed, initially perestroika and glasnost' encouraged dissidents to renew the
demands of the shestydesiatnyky and Ukrainian Helsinki Group during the 1970s and 1980s. These included democratisation, defence of human rights and resistance to Russification.  

Consequently, during this first stage the aims of informal groups were little different from those advanced in the Brezhnev era. The first major Ukrainian samizdat document of the Gorbachev era was former prisoner of conscience Viacheslav Chornovil's 'Open Letter' to Gorbachev in August 1987. Open letters such as Chornovil's were significant in that, as 'In the 1960s (especially after Khrushchev's fall), Ukraine believed that direct appeals to the authorities or to Shelest himself would redress injustices and solve problems.' Such appeals and open letters to Moscow became less popular after 1989-90, as the USSR began to disintegrate, and the Ukrainian SSR began to breathe real life into its quasi-state structures.

The open letter to Gorbachev began:

I am informing you that several Ukrainian journalists and writers, who are presently experiencing a ban on their works and within their profession, including myself in this field, are legally reviving the publication of the socio-political and literary journal the Ukrainian Herald (Ukrains'kyi visnyk) which appeared from 1970 to 1972 under difficult circumstances. This journal conforms to the present stipulation of glasnost';

The Ukrainian Herald was relaunched as issue number 7, thereby stressing its continuity with the same publication forcibly closed down 15 years earlier, after Shcherbytskyi had come to power in Ukraine. The UHU officially came into being in March 1988 and the Ukrainian Herald became its official organ.

Chornovil went on to define his understanding of perestroika and glasnost';

We, the tip of the iceberg, are the individual representatives ... of those healthy forces which resisted the stagnation and bureaucratisation of Soviet society, and in the non-Russian republics, the great-state chauvinistic policies of de-nationalisation ... So you see, it would have been worth listening to the voices of 'anti-soviets' and 'nationalists' fifteen to twenty years ago.

The beginnings of the UHU were later described in a rather romantic way:
In the darkness of Brezhnevite lawlessness, when many had lost faith, a group of patriots formed themselves, which through the strength of their greatness of spirit and at the cost of their own lives proclaimed to the world and to the rulers of the Kremlin that Ukraine continued to live and fight.

The Gorbachev 'thaw' ignited a conflagration of civic-political acts. People gathered around the movement which rejected the Communist path in the life of nations. In July 1988 a political association called the UHU was formed and it quickly became an all-Ukrainian structural organisation. In less than two years of activity, the UHU acquired widespread political legitimacy not only in Ukraine, but beyond Ukraine's borders as well. The Communist rulers of Ukraine were forced to deal with the UHU leadership, despite the fact that the 'Red press' had continually tried to discredit these leaders.¹⁷

Levko Lukianenko, a prisoner of conscience for over 26 years, was elected as the new leader of the UHU. From exile in the winter of 1988, Lukianenko wrote in his programmatical essay 'What Next?'¹⁸ that Ukraine was 'crucified, pillaged, Russified and torn', and that 'Restructuring means infinitely more for Ukraine - ultimately the life or death of our nation. The continuation of *pre-perestroika* policies would have meant total assimilation and the destruction of our nationality.'

Claiming the moral higher ground for those leaders of the UHG who had never waivered, Lukianenko argued that the Ukrainian intelligentsia should also be in the forefront of reform:

Not very long ago, during the times of the Brezhnevite-Shcherbytskyi oppression, these people - writers, poets, literary critics, film and theatre artists - squeezed fame and ruin out of themselves. Now they have straightened their crooked spines and are slowly beginning to return to the people with the word of truth.

The former political prisoners who dominated the UHU were later to make common cause with the cultural intelligentsia, through the launch of the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society, and the Ukrainian Popular Movement for Restructuring (*Rukh*), thereby broadening the public space available for dissent, as the state could not but take a more tolerant view of the activities of the writers and artists who were often themselves part of the state apparatus.
Lukianenko's arguments, however, still reflected the climate of the times. In his view, Soviet society was divided into three groups. The first represented Gorbachev and the CPSU leadership, the second the Soviet New Class or *nomenklatura* and the third the masses. Supposedly, only the first and third groups were in favour of *perestroika* and it was up to the UHU to act as a link between the two, and support restructuring from below as a 'social group of supporters of *perestroika*.'

Fear among the Ukrainian masses was still a problem, Lukianenko claimed, although it was decreasing: 'The number of people who dare to speak the truth, sign declarations, petitions, protests, participate in rallies and unofficial gatherings, form unofficial groups, and so forth, is growing.'

Although Lukianenko did not disguise his view that independence, 'was the most favourable condition' for Ukraine, nevertheless the priority was 'first of all to defend the rights of citizens and to raise language and cultural issues.' The UHU Declaration of Principles, therefore, which was written by Chornovil and the brothers Mykhailo and Bohdan Horyn and released in the summer of 1988 represented a tactical compromise designed to win broad support from an atomised Ukrainian public still reluctant to support very radical demands.\(^{19}\)

The Declaration of Principles noted that, unlike the Moscow Helsinki Group, the UHG had never formally disbanded, although arrests had rendered it largely inoperative by 1980. It claimed to have been 'subjected to a more devastating pogrom during the Brezhnev years of stagnation than any other Helsinki group in the USSR'. Four members of the group died in the Gulag under Gorbachev - Oleksa Tykhyi, Iurii Lytvyn, Valerii Marchenko and Vasyl Stus. Others had been forced to emigrate, such as Mykola Rudenko, who became the head of the external branch of the UHU.

The Declaration of Principles claimed that the UHU was not a political opposition party but formally, 'an organisation which activates the masses in order to encourage participation in the government of the country' and a 'federative union of self-governing human rights groups and organisations'. In practice, however, the UHU regarded itself as an unofficial popular front with the intention of uniting a broad range of people in opposition to the CPU. As more unofficial groups began to appear, the UHU conceived of its role as leading such groups into progressively more radical positions by always being one, but only one, step ahead of them in its demands. The UHU was, however, split from the start between supporters of Chornovil, who
wished to preserve a loose federal structure for the organisation, and those who were increasingly openly prepared to copy Leninist vanguard tactics.

The Declaration of Principles' 20 sections dealt with political, constitutional, language, education and economic reform. The UHU stood for the transformation of the USSR 'into a confederation of independent states' (a position forced upon a reluctant Gorbachev only after the failed coup in August 1991). While going much further than the demands raised by the UHG of the 1970s, many of the Principles were later included both within the Democratic Bloc election programme to the Supreme Council of Ukraine in March 1990, and enshrined in the July 1990 Declaration of Sovereignty. These included points such as a transfer of power from the CPSU to democratically elected councils, Ukrainianisation, the right to independent Ukrainian diplomatic activity, a market economy, an end to nuclear power, legalisation of banned religious denominations and public control over the law enforcement agencies. These represented a 'minimum' programme which was advanced by most informal groups during the early stages of the evolution of Ukrainian dissent.

Members of the UHU, however, were still subject to severe official harassment, and its activity throughout 1988 was still very much circumscribed. Hence dissidents and the radical intelligentsia increasingly submitted their energies into more overtly cultural groups, which they calculated would be less likely to be repressed.

UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CREATIVE INTELLIGENTSIA

In Chornovil's 'Open Letter to Gorbachev', he also announced the intention of the UHU 'to form our own creative circles independent from the official ones, which enforce a ban upon us, and forming our own associations of persecuted Ukrainian writers, journalists, artists, even though the circulation of our publications may well be limited'. This was a reference to the Ukrainian Association of Independent Creative Intelligentsia (UANTI), launched in October 1987, whose founding document was signed by fourteen well-known former prisoners of conscience. UANTI would act as an unofficial Writers' and Literary Union because, according to the UANTI Declaration, the official unions, 'do not fully represent the spiritual, literary, cultural and public processes'
that are taking place in Ukraine. Stepan Sapeliak, a leading UANTI activist from Kharkiv, stated that the official unions had 'created only a pseudo-culture, modelled upon socialist realism.'

UANTI promised to publish literary periodicals and almanacs, hold art exhibitions and 'support all those who desire to put their talent and civic courage at the service of the good and the spiritual development of the Ukrainian people, and the national life of Ukraine.' The signatories included seven honorary members of International Pen: Ihor Kalynets, Mykhailo Osadchyi, Mykola Rudenko, Ievhen Sverstiuk, Ivan Svitlychnyi, Iryna Senyk and Viacheslav Chornovil.

One of the first acts of UANTI was to demand the reburial in Ukraine, 'of the bodies of the talented poets and public-cultural figures - Vasyl Stus, Oleksa Tykhyi and Iurii Lytvyn - murdered during the period of stagnation' in a letter signed jointly with the Ukrainian Culturological Club to International Pen in October 1987, which pointed out that, to this very day, the grave of Vasyl Stus 'at the camp cemetery is marked simply as no. 9'. He died during 'the era of stagnation, when spiritual values plummeted catastrophically. A consumerist mentality corrupted the souls of an entire generation. Fear made people petty and mean.'

UANTI appealed to both International PEN and the Soviet Ministry of Culture to honour Stus's fiftieth anniversary on 6 January 1988, for Soviet publishing houses to print a selection of his works, and for the KGB to release the works which were confiscated from him in the camps. Since then the official literary press has published the works of Vasyl Stus, and a book of his poetry has appeared.

UANTI held its first congress in L'viv in January 1989, 15 months after it was founded, with 26 participants from throughout Ukraine. By then UANTI had contributed to opening up public debate through its official periodical, Kafedra (L'viv), edited by Mykhailo Osadchyi, and other independent literary journals whose editors belonged to UANTI - levshan zillia (L'viv), edited by Iryna Kalynets, Karby hir (Kolomyia), edited by Dmytro Hryn'kiv, Snip (Kharkiv), edited by Valerii Bondar, and Porohy (Dnipropetrovs'k), edited by Ivan Sokulskyi. Members of UANTI were also active within the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society and Tovarystvo Leva.

UKRAINIAN CULTUROLOGICAL CLUB

The Ukrainian Culturological (literally, the Culture and Ecology) Club was another of the political clubs that was to have an ephemeral
existence as a home of convenience for the hedging opposition. It was formed in August 1987 in Kyiv, and according to the weekly samizdat bulletin Express-Chronicle, held its first meeting on 27 September, where copies of its charter were distributed.\textsuperscript{27} The Club was organised mainly by former prisoners of conscience to spread the ideas of democratisation and national revival in the republic's capital. It immediately began to campaign for the release of all remaining prisoners of conscience and for a widening of the discussion surrounding the blank spots in Ukrainian history (in particular, the artificial Ukrainian famine of 1933, a subject which was recognised by the CPU in 1990). Leading individuals in the Club included Serhii Naboka, Leonid Miliavskyi, Oles Shevchenko and Olha Matusevych.\textsuperscript{28}

One of the first actions of the Culturological Club was to appeal to UNESCO with the proposal that 1988 be made the 'Year of Vasyl Stus'. In addition, evenings were devoted to Stus and a petition was organised to demand the return of his body for reburial in Ukraine. Other evenings organised by the Club dealt with the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine, the 175th anniversary of the birth of Ukraine's national bard Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian national figures who had fallen out of favour with the authorities and nuclear power and the environment.

In addition, in May 1988 the Culturological Club held meetings with members of the editorial board of the journal \textit{Iunost'} after which they jointly called for the legalisation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Appeals by the Culturological Club were addressed to a West German television station criticising a Soviet official's comparison of the Russian nationalist organisation \textit{Pamiat} with the Culturological Club, and in defence of the venerated Mohyla Academy in Kyiv, which was then being used by the Soviet military.\textsuperscript{29}

The authorities responded almost immediately to the activities of the Culturological Club with a harsh press campaign in both \textit{Vechirnii Kyiv} and \textit{Radians'ka Ukraina}. Although the Culturological Club and its members were described in the traditional pre-Gorbachev manner as 'nationalists' who were exploiting \textit{glasnost'} for their own ends, and entire pages of \textit{Vechirnii Kyiv} were devoted to letters (some of which were favourably disposed, however, towards the Club), the campaign, by all accounts, had the opposite effect to that intended. Instead of arousing the hostility of the republic's population towards the Culturological Club, the articles publicised the Club's activities. \textit{Radians'ka Ukraina}, in a series of articles between 19 and 21 May 1988, claimed the Culturological Club 'approaches the history of Ukraine, especially its Soviet period, only with black paint in hand'.

The Culturological Club also refused to incorporate into its statute that it upholds 'Marxist Leninist ideology' and 'struggles against Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism'. The Culturological Club was even reputed to have argued that 'Russian great-power chauvinism' is a far worse threat than 'Ukrainian nationalism'.

On 26 April 1988, on the second anniversary of the Chornobyl nuclear accident, the Culturological Club organised a demonstration in central Kyiv. Members of the Culturological Club held placards which read 'No More Chornobyl's', 'Turn Ukraine into a Nuclear-Free Ukraine' and 'The Ukrainian Culturological Club is Against Nuclear Death.' The authorities used loudspeakers to drown out speeches and arrested 17 people, sentencing Oles Shevchenko to 15 days' imprisonment. Two days later Prapor komunizmu claimed that 'a group of extremists, mostly representing the Ukrainian Culturological Club, tried to whip up unrest, interfere with street repairs, and obstruct the flow of traffic.' Only two years later the authorities eventually officially recognised 26 April as Chornobyl Day, permitting officially sanctioned marches.

The Culturological Club also commemorated the annual Taras Shevchenko anniversary on 22 May 1988, although the authorities tried to upstage it with an official celebration. On 5 June 1988 the Club organised unofficial celebrations to mark the millennium of Christianity in Kievan Rus'. Similar unofficial Clubs devoted to culture and ecology were opened in other Ukrainian cities, including Kharkiv, and eventually became the initiators of more radical independent groups.

Both the radicalisation of the opposition and sections of the public at large led to a decline in the activity of the Culturological Club towards the end of 1988. The opposition movement in Ukraine was moving to a higher second stage in its evolution. Leading figures in the Culturological Club moved into other groups, such as the UHU, the Ukrainian People's Democratic League and the movement for the legalisation of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

**HROMADA**

The unofficial student organisation Hromada (Community) named after the cultural societies formed in late-nineteenth-century Ukraine, began at Kyiv University in the spring of 1988, where many of the original members were students in the physics faculty. Hromada pub-
lished a 30-page *samizdat* journal, *Dzvin* (Bell), five issues of which are known to have appeared, and an irregular bulletin - *Chronicle of Opposition*. The activation of students in *Hromada* helped to broaden opposition circles beyond the elder generation of former-political prisoners who controlled the commanding heights of the UHU and the Culturological Club.

One of the first activities of *Hromada* was the holding of a meeting to call for the refoundation of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, founded in the seventeenth century but closed in 1917. They, like the Culturological Club, demanded the removal of the military political school from its premises. Close co-operation with the more senior dissenters in the Culturological Club could be seen when Bohdan Horyn read out an appeal to the Nineteenth Communist Party Conference which argued that people should not be solely concerned with the preservation of monuments (like *Hromada*) - but also with the question of whether power should lie with the KGB and *nomenklatura* or with councils' of people's deputies.32

In September 1988 members of *Hromada* travelled to Erevan, capital of Armenia, to voice their support for Armenian demands over Nagorno-Karabakh, while the demonstration in Kyiv attended by 10,000 in November 1988 in support of the formation of a Ukrainian Popular Front and in opposition to nuclear power was also mainly the organisational work of *Hromada*.33 Members of *Hromada* organised a successful boycott of military instruction classes at Kyiv University during the latter part of 1988, demanding that military education become voluntary. The boycott was suspended after a number of concessions were made - military classes were shortened for most and abolished for second-year students. In late November the boycott was renewed with the demand that all military classes be voluntary and that a leading *Hromada* member - Volodymyr Chemerys - be reinstated.34

At first, the instructors refused to discuss the issue, but eventually compromised on a cutback in training and the right not to wear uniforms in class. The action by *Hromada* 'stirred debates at a subsequent university conference involving students, the military and university administration' and showed that 'the long-lost traditions of free thought are being revived in their independent publications and political clubs. And the signs are that their aspirations are beginning to count'.35

The third issue of *Dzvin* published an open letter, dated October 1988, from *Hromada* to the plenum of the CPU, arguing that the
present republican Party leadership which 'has remained unchanged virtually since 1972' is 'responsible for the stagnation in Ukraine'. Demanding the removal of Shcherbytskyi and others responsible for the catastrophic state of Ukrainian culture and language, Hromada argued for a system of republican cost accounting, Ukrainisation of all spheres of life in Ukraine, the formation of Ukrainian military units, the liquidation of party privileges and an end to the construction of new nuclear plants (demands which clearly converged with those of the UHU).36

The impact of Hromada could best be gauged by the hostile official reaction to it. The local Kyiv University newspaper Kyivs'kyi universytet published numerous attacks upon the student group throughout 1988, accusing them of being 'overcome by demagogic nationalistic slogans'. According to Kyivs'kyi universytet, the authorities were not hostile to Hromada when it was first launched, thinking it to be another harmless informal student group, but became increasingly concerned when it became more politicised during the course of the year. When finally in November 1988 Hromada organised a meeting to discuss the UHU's Declaration of Principles this was the last straw for the authorities, who began to expel some students.37

RELIGION

In 1982, three years prior to Gorbachev's ascent to power, members of the illegal Ukrainian Catholic Church formed the Initiative Committee to Defend the Rights and Believers of the Church in Ukraine. The Group began to publish the samizdat journal The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Ukraine, 33 issues of which were published during the course of five years. The leading figure behind both the Committee and the samizdat journal was Iosyf Terelia, who was deported to the West in 1988.38

In August 1987, during the same month that Chornovil wrote his 'Open Letter to Gorbachev', 206 underground bishops, priests, monks, nuns and faithful of the Ukrainian Catholic Church emerged from their catacomb existence and wrote to Pope John Paul.39 Thereafter, they campaigned through petitions, meetings with the Council for Religious Affairs and statements to government institutions, international bodies, and high-ranking religious figures to legalise their Church, forcibly disbanded by Stalin in 1946.40

In the early part of 1988 the Initiative Group was renamed the Committee in Defence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church under Ivan
Hel, and the Chronicle was merged with a new samvydav journal entitled Khrystyians'kyi holos. This publication ceased after four issues and was replaced by Vira bat'kiv (L'viv) and Dobryi pastyr (Ivano-Frankivs'k). The strength of Ukrainian religious feeling could be seen when upwards of half a million visitors came to the site of a reported apparition at Hrushiv in western Ukraine on the second anniversary of the Chornobyl nuclear accident in April 1988.

TOVARYSTVO LEVA

In the spring of 1987, yet another informal group was established in L'viv entitled Tovarystvo Leva (The Lion Society). In an undated two page leaflet, entitled 'Tovarystvo Leva. Who Are We? What Are We Now?' it described itself as an 'independent, community eco-cultural youth organisation which stands on a platform of democracy, the motto of which could be: The revival of a Ukrainian Sovereign State through Culture and Intellect.'

The leaflet described how during the era of stagnation there was moral, national and economic decline in Ukraine, and a rising ecological catastrophe. Together with other informal groups, Tovarystvo Leva believed they should support perestroika from below: 'Given from above, "but in effect begun from below, restructuring pushed forth a large section of conscious society into concrete deeds, in the first place young people.' In L'viv the decline of established youth organisations left a vacuum into which Tovarystvo Leva could step to promote 'patriotic, internationalist and aesthetic inculcation of people, especially the youth, arousing feelings of national consciousness' and advance the 'development of the Ukrainian language, struggle for its cleanliness, and inculcate respect for the language and culture of other peoples.'

Tovarystvo Leva was formally established on 19 October 1987 by enthusiasts, artists, students, workers and pupils, although individuals had been active since the spring. They began by renovating the Lychakivs'kyi cemetery in L'viv, and then moving on to renovate churches. It took a two-year 'struggle with the conservative authorities and reactionary political system' before it was formally registered, even though it functioned under the auspices of the Komsomal at L'viv University, and received limited financial help from the Ministry of Culture.

In the village of Havorechyna, only three old craftsmen remained who could produce traditional Black Ceramics. In a few years the craft would have died out. Tovarystvo Leva opened a school to teach the
craft in the nearby town of Bilyi Kamin'. During Christmas 1988 and Easter 1989, the society initiated the revival of national traditions such as the Vertep play and Hahilky dances, not seen in Ukraine for over 40 years. They promoted rock music, amateur theatre groups such as 'Meta' (which performed the play 'Marusia Churai'), exhibitions of the formerly banned novel 'Sobor', the cabaret show 'Ne Zhurys' and folk singers and composers such as Andrii Panchyshyn, Viktor Morozov and Vasyl Zhdankin. In May 1988 Tovarystvo Leva organised an ecological expedition entitled 'Dnistr 88' to raise awareness about the pollution of the river. Expeditions have since taken place into eastern Ukraine and as far away as the Sakhalin Islands to raise national consciousness among denationalised Ukrainians outside Ukraine.

Although, in contrast to the Kyiv-based Culturological Club, Tovarystvo Leva attempted to concentrate upon non-political issues, in the Soviet context this was very difficult. The authorities refused permission for the use of a hall in L'viv at the very last minute after delegates had arrived from throughout the USSR in October 1988 for the congress of Tovarystvo Leva. They were apparently afraid of discussion of the arrest of Ivan Makar and the need for the organisation of a Ukrainian Popular Front. Iryna Kalynets, editor of the independent literary journal levshan zillia, was a strong supporter of Tovarystvo Leva and the journal was rumoured to have been proposed as the organ of the society at one stage. But in April 1989 Tovarystvo Leva began publication of the bi-monthly Postup 'the first unofficial youth newspaper in Ukraine', with a circulation of 20 000.

THE GREEN WORLD ASSOCIATION (ZELENIISVIT)

The Chornobyl' nuclear accident in April 1986 proved to be the catalyst for many informal groups, because it highlighted the lack of Ukrainian sovereignty over the activities of all-Union ministries and enterprises in Ukraine, and on this occasion the callous indifference of Moscow to the republics. In late 1987 the Green World Association was launched as an informal group which immediately came into conflict with the established Ukrainian State Committee for the Protection of Society (USCPS), especially as, once again, it functioned de facto as an umbrella organisation for a broad spectrum of the informal opposition, from the poet Ivan Drach, eventual leader oIRukh, to Anatolii Lupynis, later leading member of the far right. At this stage, however, the Green World Association was something of a loyalist alternative to the more radical Culturological Club.
In January, the Green World Association chose the writer Serhii Plachynda as its first president, and on 29 March 1988 the Green World Association held a joint conference with the Writers' Union of Ukraine, to express the concern of the association at the Chornobyl accident, and call for a demonstration on 5 June as 'Environmental Protection Day'. Its demands were: greater *glasnost* on the state of the environment and food supplies, greater openness from medical staff about radiation sickness, the publication of ecological textbooks and a newspaper, holding of referendums on the building of nuclear power stations and formation of commissions of scientists on the question of the construction or completion of nuclear power stations.

A demonstration planned on 28 June by the radical wing of Green World Association, the *Zelena varta* (Green Guard), did not take place after the leader Anatolii Lupynis was arrested for three hours. In comparison with Green World Association, which concentrated on letters and petitions, *Zelena varta* was more action-orientated. In comparison with Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society though, the Green World Association was more radical. Founded in 1946, the Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society had millions of members, representing one of the largest organisations in Ukraine, but even its leaders admitted that during the era of stagnation it had fallen into 'formalism' and 'bureaucratism'. In a list of the presidium published in 1986, 14 of the 15 members were ministerial functionaries. 'There are no well-known educated ecologists, writers, journalists, youth representatives or informal ecological organisations', one newspaper reported. Many younger members of the Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society were now looking towards the Green World Association as a 'self-governing' group in which they were 'putting all their hopes for the future'.

A member of the Kaniv branch of the Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society wondered if the leaders of the organisation agreed with his views that both ecological associations should merge, even if it meant that the Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society was renamed 'Green World'. The executive secretary of Green World Association, Sviatoslav Dudko, believed that the work of the Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society was 'ineffective' and asked, 'Isn't this the reason why the committee was against our association’s foundation - because we meant the end of its quiet life?' Ukraine State Committee for the Protection of Society concentrated upon ecological information to raise awareness, whereas Green World Association, according to Dudko, 'tackled environmental protection problems in a different way: we lay emphasis upon
practical efforts to rectify previous mistakes and avert new ones.\textsuperscript{55} Its first major campaigns were to save the historical island of Khortytsia, the Cossack former capitol, and to prevent the construction of new chemical plants in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{56}

An important catalyst for increasing the influence of Green World Association was the first large demonstration in Kyiv on 13 November 1988. The demonstration attended by 10 000 people had two main subjects - ecology and the need to organise a Popular Front. Marchers stood in the rain for three hours while speakers denounced the ecological crisis in Ukraine. 'For Ukraine it was just not normal,' one participant later commented.\textsuperscript{57}

However, public reaction to the Chornobyl' disaster meant that an environmental movement could not be easily suppressed. Therefore Green World Association became a flag of convenience for many other radicals, while environmental discourse permeated throughout political life, and became a useful shorthand for criticism of Ukraine's lack of control over its own destiny.

FIRST POPULAR FRONTS

In the summer of 1988 simultaneous attempts were made to launch Popular Fronts in L'viv, Kyiv and smaller towns, although the authorities quickly utilised new legislation against unsanctioned meetings and the black-bereted OMON (Special Purpose Militia Detachments) to break up mass meetings.\textsuperscript{58} The Democratic Front in Support of Perestroika grew out of such mass meetings held in L'viv and attended by between 20 000 and 50 000 people during June and July 1988, which arose in parallel with similar demonstrations in the Baltic republics.

The main unofficial groups which joined together to launch the would-be Popular Front were the UHU, the Committee in Defence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Tovarystvo Leva and the Ridna Mova Society (the precursor to the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society). For the first time, however, middle-level CPU functionaries were also beginning to seek common cause with the opposition, such as elements in the L'viv Komsomol led by Bohdan Kotyk.\textsuperscript{59}

The demonstrators expressed a lack of faith in delegates to the Nineteenth CPU Conference and called for an end to party privileges, the closure of the KGB, greater republican autonomy and release of remaining prisoners of conscience.\textsuperscript{60} Some participants held aloft
pictures of Gorbachev, whose policies they believed they supported but which were being obstructed by the CPU in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{61} To further its end, the Popular Front pledged to stand in elections, ensure the continuation of the democratisation process and influence citizens' commissions and the media.\textsuperscript{62}

With increased use of the OMON (in Ukrainian, ZMOP) and with the authorities denying premises to the Popular Front, by August-September monthly meetings by the Ivan Franko monument had dwindled to 3000-4000.\textsuperscript{63} The first attempt then to form a Popular Front in Ukraine was thus a relative failure. According to the Russian newspaper, \textit{Sobesednik} (no. 35), the UHU was seeking to 'direct public opinion in L'viv', where it had managed through the creation of the Popular Front to effect, 'a rather strange symbiosis of nationalistic slogans and slogans connected with \textit{perestroika}'. However, the UHU alone could not hope to create a mass organisation when the authorities were still prepared to use coercion to prevent them, and when it was still relatively young.\textsuperscript{64}

In Kyiv, a similar attempt had been made to create a 'Popular Union in Support of \textit{Perestroika}' at a meeting in June 1988, attended by 500 people. An initiative committee was established under Alexandr Sheikin, and a later meeting in July featured prominent speakers from the Culturological Club, such as Leonid Miliavskyi.\textsuperscript{65} Again, however, middle-level CPU members took part, such as Oleksandr Iemets (later as influential member of the PDRU) from the Higher Military School, and others from the Institute of History. Tentative contacts between the first secretary of the Podil' region, Ivan Salii and the 'informals' were also made. The Kyiv 'Popular Front's' occasional publication \textit{Narodnaia volia} was in Russian, however, indicating that it may have been formed outside the structures of the main Ukrainian dissident groups.\textsuperscript{66} (Russian Popular Front groups were also established in L'viv in the winter of 1988, resulting in the Russian-language bulletin \textit{Na polnyi golos}. Its leaders then became founders of the Ukrainian social democratic movement, established in 1989-90.)

However, once again the authorities were not prepared to tolerate an open challenge to their monopoly on power, and the would-be Popular Fronts in Kyiv and L'viv along with similar groups in Vinnytsia and Khmel'nysts'kyi, were stillborn.\textsuperscript{67}

Hence, in the winter of 1988-9 a second attempt was made under the alternative leadership of radical elements within the Writers' Union of Ukraine.
INTER-REPUBLICAN LINKS

The UHU was also the initiator of the Co-ordinating Committee of Patriotic Movements of Peoples of the USSR, formed in early June 1988 in L’viv by representatives of national democratic movements from the non-Russian and non-Muslim republics of the USSR. The Co-ordinating Committee represented the most ambitious attempt in the post-Stalin era to form a united bloc against Soviet domination. In September, at a meeting in Riga, they issued a draft statute appeal to the Helsinki review conference dealing with prisoners of conscience, nuclear power and freedom of conscience.

In January 1989, in Vilnius, two further documents were drawn up, a 'Charter of the Captive Peoples of the USSR' and 'An Appeal to the Russian Intelligentsia'. Whereas the 'Appeal', which argued that only a minority of Russians had still come out in favour of non-Russian aspirations, was signed by all four UHU representatives, the 'Charter' was signed by only Ivan Makar and Bohdan Hrytsai. Oles Shevchenko and Mykola Horbal refused to sign the 'Charter' because its demand for Ukrainian independence contradicted the Declaration of Principles of the UHU.

CONCLUSIONS

As yet, therefore, opposition groups were only able to operate on a small scale. Moreover, with the notable exception of the UHU, they were forced to confine themselves to a 'cultural' agenda. With little change evident in the conservative politics of the CPU, Ukraine still seemed one of the most quiescent of the Soviet republics.
4. Gorbachev, Dissent and the New Opposition (1987-8)


2. On this period, see Anatol' Kamins'kyi, Na perekhidnomu etapi: 'Hlasnist', 'Perebudova' i 'Demokratyzatsiia Ukraini (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1990).


'Postmortem of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group', Journal of Ukrainian Studies, vol. 2, no. 2 (Winter 1983) pp. 102-13, provides a summary of the activities of the UHG and reviews the various books published about them in the West.


10. While Chomovil was editor of the Ukrainian Herald between 1970 and 1972 six issues appeared. After the arrest of Chomovil in 1972 nos 7 and 8 (Spring 1974) appeared, edited by Maksym Sahaidak (the pseudonym of Stepan Khmara), reflecting a more nationalistic position after the clampdown on Ukrainian dissent in 1972. Relaunching the Ukrainian Herald in 1987 as editor, Chomovil therefore chose to begin from where he had left off, from no. 7.

Eight issues of the Ukrainian Herald appeared in Ukraine (7, 8, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14). Only numbers 7-12 have been republished in the West by Ukrainian Publishers, London, 1987, and Suchasnist', Munich and New York 1988, the external representation of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, New York, 1988 (nos 8 and 9-10), 1989 (nos 11-12). Four issues of the Express Herald, numbered 1, 8, 9 and 12, were also reprinted by the External Representation of the UHU between 1988 and 1989.


17. The return of the remains of the four dissident writers was reported by the Ukrainian Press Agency, 21 November 1989; Vechirnii Kyiv, 21 November 1989; and News from Ukraine, no. 49, 1989. The UANTI declaration is reported in Ukrainian Press Agency, press release no. 35, 1989.


38. *Sotsialistychna kultura*, 1988, no. 6, p. 11.


56. *Lenins'ka molod', 28 July 1988, advertised the first meeting of the DFSP which was scheduled for 3 August.


58. Iurii Kyrychuk, 'Narys istorii UHS-URP', *Respublikants'* [theoretical journal of the L'viv UHU, later Ukrainian Republican Party], no. 2

60. Radians’ka osvita, 30 September 1988; and Robitnycha hazeta, 4 October 1988.