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THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION

Baltic echoes

As the crucial Nineteenth Party Conference approached, the political struggle in Moscow intensified. It also raised hopes and further stimulated independent political activity. Throughout the Soviet Union, conservative forces batted to keep the reformists at bay and to prevent the selection of democratically minded delegates to the conference. Indeed, the conservative resistance was so strong that the elections, scheduled for April, were delayed for six weeks. Even then, charges of ballot-rigging abounded, making a mockery of the supposed shift towards more democratic elections. The dissatisfaction with this state of affairs precipitated the first attempts to form mass grass-roots movements for genuine democratization and reform—the so-called popular democratic fronts.

The need for new independent organizations which would mobilize the public behind Gorbachev's restructuring drive was increasingly recognized during the first half of 1988 by leading Russian reformist intellectuals, such as Boris Kurashvili and Tatyana Zaslavskaya. They realized that the reformers in the Party would not be able to defeat the conservatives with the help of the liberal intelligentsia alone, and therefore began calling on the public to lend its support by organizing popular unions, or fronts, to promote restructuring.¹

Zaslavskaya, interviewed in *Izvestiya* on 4 June, pointed to the example already being set by the Estonians, who were the first to demonstrate how powerful a force for change popular fronts could be. In mid-April, Estonian reformists and nationally minded Com-

¹ See Bill Keller, 'Gorbachev Adviser Urges "Popular Front" as Alternative Party', *Washington Post*, 24 May 1988.

munist intellectuals announced the formation of an Estonian Popular Front in Support of Restructuring. Carefully avoiding calling itself a political party, it acted as a loyal opposition to the Estonian Communist Party and literally within weeks grew into a mass grass-roots movement for democratization and republican sovereignty. The Lithuanians set up their own popular movement — Sajudis — on 3 June, and later that month the Latvians also began to organize an analogous Latvian Popular Front.

The response in Ukraine to the initial Estonian initiatives in early April was surprisingly prompt. Within weeks of the Council of Estonian Cultural Unions adopting two radical resolutions which, in connection with the forthcoming Nineteenth Party Conference, demanded the decentralization of the USSR and broad political, economic and cultural autonomy for the republics, the Ukrainian cultural workers' weekly *Kultura i zhyttya* suggested on its front page that a similar independent cultural council should be established in Ukraine. The proposal seems to have been quashed behind the scenes, for there was no follow-up to this implicit call to emulate the Estonians. The newspaper also broke new ground by asking readers to comment on the election of delegates to the Party conference and by suggesting that those who were chosen to go to Moscow familiarize themselves with what had appeared in the press on Ukrainian national issues.²

By this time, the political ferment throughout the Soviet Union was manifesting itself in a wave of protest meetings and the appearance of the first openly political opposition groups. In the first half of May, representatives from various 'informal groups' met in Moscow to form a united front — the Democratic Union — which they saw as an 'alternative political party' committed to ending the Communist Party's monopoly on power. Though it consisted mainly of Russians, this new coalition also included several representatives from Ukraine. Among other things, the Democratic Union recognized the rights of all nations to self-determination and proposed that the USSR be turned into a democratic confederation. During the second half of the month there were demonstrations about the undemocratic way in which delegates to the Party

²'Bilshe demokratii i hlasnosti' [More democracy and openness], *Kultura i zhyttya*, 8 May 1988.

Conference were being selected in cities as far apart as Odesa in Ukraine and Sverdlovsk and Omsk in Russia.

While all this was going on, Ukrainian activists were given an unexpected boost from another quarter. During President Reagan's visit to the Soviet Union, five of them were invited to a reception in Moscow on 28 May given by the American president for Soviet dissidents, and Chornovil ended up sitting next to him. Two days later, in a speech at the Danilovsky Monastery before Russian Orthodox hierarchs, Reagan spoke out in defence of the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Churches.³ To add to the Moscow Patriarchate's and the Kremlin's discomfort, on 3 June Sakharov publicly condemned the 'archaic' ban on the Ukrainian Catholic Church, pointing out that it damaged the international prestige of the USSR.⁴ This, and the absence of Pope John Paul II from the official celebrations of the millennium of the Christianization of Kyivan Rus, drew more international attention to the situation in Ukraine and Ukrainian national aspirations. The first sign that the pressure from both inside and outside Ukraine was having some effect appeared the very next day when the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan of Kyiv and Halychyna, Filaret, an implacable foe of both the Ukrainian Catholic and Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, acknowledged at a press conference in Kyiv that the issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was indeed an obstacle to better relations with the Vatican and announced that Russian Orthodox officials would shortly be holding talks on the status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church with representatives of the Vatican.⁵

On 5 June, activists from the Ukrainian Culturological Club held an unofficial commemoration of the religious jubilee in Kyiv by the statue of Saint Volodymyr, who had introduced Christianity to Kyivan Rus. Some 200 people attended and heard renewed calls for religious freedom and for more truthful accounts of Ukraine's history. The meeting was not dispersed.

That same day, however, one of the first demonstrations sanctioned by the authorities was held in the Ukrainian capital by members of the growing 'Green' movement to protest about the

³ USIS transcript of President Reagan's speech, 30 May 1988.

⁴ Reuter, 3 June 1988.

⁵ Reuter and AP, 4 June 1988.

elling of trees in the city's Holiivskiy Wood. The defenders of the environment were joined on their march through the city centre to the First of May Park, where a public meeting took place, by democratically minded individuals and representatives of various informal clubs and societies. The gathering provided an opportunity for the city's diverse unofficial activists to meet and begin forging a coalition. Indeed, it was at this ecological protest that the call for the creation of a 'Popular Union to Support Restructuring', only just delivered by Zaslavkaya in Moscow, was first publicly advocated in the Ukrainian capital.⁶

Four days later, a meeting of representatives of some of the capital's unofficial groups was held at which the 'Popular Union' was launched. Some 500 people are reported to have attended the inaugural meeting.⁷ The leaders of the new democratic umbrella organization included Oleksandr Yemets and Oleksandr Zoryanov, both of whom were research workers at an institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the ranks of captain, and Aleksandr Sheikin, who was elected head of the organizing committee. As Yemets put it: 'We were naively romantic in our desire to help Gorbachev in what we saw as a struggle against the conservative bureaucracy.'⁸

On 22 June, the new democratic pressure group held a meeting with several of the officially nominated delegates to the Party conference from Kyiv, including Oliinyk. During the session, which was chaired by Yemets, a lawyer and psychologist by training, delegates were quizzed by the public about their position on a broad range of issues ranging from the status of the Ukrainian language to ecological questions. Speakers called for some delegates to be stripped of their mandates because of their non-democratic attitudes. Thus, for instance, the mayor of Kyiv, Valentyn Zhursky, was criticized for allowing the demonstration on the second anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster to be broken up, and Masyk, the city's Party boss, was castigated for his hostility towards unofficial groups and his advocacy of stricter ideological controls. Interestingly, in the

⁶ O.V. Haran, *Ubyty Drakona: Zistorii Rukhu ta novykh partii na Ukraini* [To Kill the Dragon: From the History of Rukh and New Parties in Ukraine], hereafter referred to as *To Kill the Dragon*, Kyiv, 1993, p. 16; and the author's interview with Oleksandr Yemets, Ebenhausen, Germany, 5 October 1993.

⁷ *Russkaya Mysl*, 24 June and 15 July, 1988.

Author's interview with Yemets.

account of this meeting which appeared in *News from Ukraine*, the official newspaper for Ukrainians abroad, it was also revealed that an ecological group had garnered 27,000 signatures for a petition demanding the recall of another delegate, Yurii Kolomyets, the chairman of the State Agro-Industrial Committee of the Ukrainian SSR.⁹ Less than a week later, on the very eve of the opening of the Party Conference, the Popular Union in Support of Restructuring held a small demonstration in central Kyiv during which placards were displayed with slogans such as 'We Trust in the 19th [Party conference] - But for the Last Time!'¹⁰ A similar attempt, but on a more modest scale, to found a 'Democratic Union in Support of Restructuring' was also made at this time in Odesa.

Ten days that shook Lviv

In Lviv, the developments were rather more dramatic and the issue of democratization was intertwined with that of national rights. First, on 11-12 June, leading national rights campaigners from Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia met in the city and established a Coordinating Committee of the Patriotic Movements of the Peoples of the Soviet Union. Although those who took part in the meeting were primarily advocates of political independence for their respective nations (Chornovil, Mykhailo Horyn and Khmara were the main Ukrainian representatives), the goal of the new body was tactfully toned down to resemble that of the new Baltic popular fronts, namely 'the complete political and economic decentralization of the Soviet Union', and the transformation of the USSR into a 'confederation of separate sovereign states'.

When, on 13 June, the authorities in Lviv attempted to prevent the inaugural meeting of the local Ukrainian Language Society by locking up the hall in which the gathering was to take place, the action backfired on them. Hundreds of indignant people moved to the square in front of the university, in the centre of which stands

Andriy Savitsky, 'Informal Meeting Formulates Requests to Delegates', *News from Ukraine*, no. 27, 1988.

Author's interview with Yemets.

¹¹ See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Representatives of Non-Russian National Movements Establish Coordinating Committee', RL 283/88, 22 June 1988.

the statue of Western Ukraine's greatest poet and writer, Ivan Franko, and held the first of Ukraine's mass protest meetings. The participants, who were addressed by the former political prisoners Mykhailo Horyn and Iryna Kalynets, as well as representatives of a new generation of activists, such as the engineers Ivan Makar, Yaroslav Putko and Ihor Melnyk, not only elected the leadership of the new local Ukrainian Language Society, but also raised numerous political and cultural issues. Makar, in particular, incensed the authorities by daring to question the official view of the Ukrainian nationalist resistance movement in Western Ukraine of the 1940s and early 1950s as having been made up of despicable bandits and killers. It was time to acknowledge, he argued, that the OUN and UPA had fought against two equal evils, Stalinism and Fascism, and to begin erecting monuments also 'to those who had died in the struggle against Stalinism'. The participants of the meeting decided to send a telegram to Gorbachev protesting about the undemocratic behaviour of the local authorities and to reconvene in the same place on 16 June and to invite delegates to the Nineteenth Party Conference to attend.

Three days later, some seven thousand people turned up at Lviv's second mass political demonstration. The authorities sought to prevent the meeting between the delegates to the Party Conference and the public by organizing a smaller official assembly elsewhere, but the mass meeting summoned the delegates to appear before the people. Several of them, including the first secretary of the Lviv city Party organization, Viktor Volkov, and the renowned physicist, Academician Ihor Yukhnovsky, turned up and faced the crowd: Volkov had quite a difficult time trying to defend the Party's unchanging nationalities policy, while Yukhnovsky's speech, with its emphasis on supporting democratization and Ukrainization, went down very well. In general, though, strong criticism was voiced about both the undemocratic way in which delegates to the Party conference were being chosen and who was being picked to represent Ukraine. Disgust was expressed, for instance, about the choice of Shcherbysky, -Yelchenko, Pohrebnyak and the local KGB chief, Stanislav Malyk, all of whom were accused of having contributed to Russification and repression in Ukraine; the meeting called for the local well-known writers Ivanychuk and Lubkivsky, as well as the head of the Lion Society, Orest Sheika, to take their place. Chornovil, who also spoke, called for genuine

elections and demanded that the UHU and other independent public organizations be allowed to put forward their own candidates.

This mass meeting became a political turning point for other reasons too. Makar opened it with a call for the creation of a united front which would take on 'the forces of bureaucratic stagnation'. The proposal met with an enthusiastic response, and later during the meeting the idea of forming a local 'Democratic Front to Support Restructuring' was overwhelmingly endorsed and the draft statutes for such an organization read out. Furthermore, the more radical speakers at the meeting, who apart from Makar and Chornovil included Mykhailo Horyn, his brother Bohdan (who was also a former political prisoner) and Ihor Derkach, a young engineer, in effect proposed an alternative agenda for the delegates going to Moscow. They urged them to raise, among other things, the issues of restoring the sovereign statehood of the USSR's constituent republics, economic decentralization and republican economic self-management, the dissolution of the KGB, the release of the remaining political prisoners and the elevation of Ukrainian to the status of the state language of Ukraine. Before concluding, the assembled decided to call a follow-up meeting on 21 June at the city's main sports stadium for which the embarrassed Volkov reluctantly gave his permission.

The local Party authorities were clearly alarmed by these developments. In Kyiv, too, the events in Lviv and the Ukrainian capital, as well as the news that on 16 June public pressure had finally toppled Estonia's Shcherbytsky — Karl Vaino — must also have set off alarm bells. At any rate, on 17 June Yelchenko arrived in Lviv to take stock of the situation. The following day, the local newspapers carried the first of the predictable denunciations of the meetings and their organizers, depicting Chornovil, Mykhailo Horyn, Makar and several others in the standard fashion as dangerous demagogues and extremists who were attempting to lead the public astray.

On the morning of 21 June, Lviv's residents received leaflets in their mailboxes informing them that new 'temporary regulations' had been introduced concerning the holding of demonstrations and public meetings in the city and urging them not to attend the mass meeting. Nevertheless, an estimated forty to fifty thousand people arrived at the stadium only to find it 'closed for repairs'. Despite demands by officials that the crowd disperse, a huge meeting was held outside the stadium and it was decided to call another public

meeting for 7 July. A large group of protesters, some carrying portraits of Gorbachev, subsequently marched through the city and gathered by the statue of Lenin.

Undaunted by this setback and the continuing propaganda campaign in the press against 'nationalist provocateurs', on 23 June some 5,000 people gathered at the city's Lychakivsky cemetery for a memorial service conducted by Ukrainian Catholic priests for the victims of Soviet repression.¹²

Undoubtedly, the public mood in Lviv had undergone a profound change. Fear had receded and a new sense of solidarity and purpose had been demonstrated. Former political prisoners, representatives of the cultural and technical intelligentsia, disaffected but patriotically minded Party members, leaders of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and, significantly, representatives from the national minorities (including democratically oriented Russians and Jews), were forging a coalition - exemplified in the attempt to create a local democratic popular front. Moreover, the demands being made were no longer limited to cultural matters, but were clearly political in nature. The situation in Lviv had come to resemble what was taking place in the Baltic republics, and the question now was whether the new spirit would spread to other parts of Ukraine.

One other development also added piquancy to the situation on the eve of the Party conference - the surprise re-emergence of Shelest after fifteen years of political obscurity. On 23 June, Moscow's *Stroitdnaya gazeta* published an interview with the former Ukrainian Party leader in which the latter criticized Brezhnev, and especially Suslov, but did not explain why he had been ousted and isolated. The reappearance of the octogenarian 'private pensioner' in a positive light became a sword of Damocles hanging over Shcherbytsky, for it appeared that as soon as it were felt in Moscow that the latter had outlived his usefulness, Shelest could be used to discredit him.

¹² For details about the 'ten days that shook Lviv', as the editors of *The Ukrainian Herald* put it, see their bulletin *Ukrainskyj V[isnyk]-Ekspres*, no. 8 (Kyiv-Lviv), August 1988, reprinted by the External Representation of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, New York, 1989.

The Nineteenth Party Conference

The Party Conference, which lasted from 28 June to 1 July and was broadcast live on television, lived up to expectations. Although a majority of the 5,000 or so delegates were probably conservatives, there was a refreshingly candid and unpredictable atmosphere. Hardly surprisingly, the nationalities question figured prominently in the debates. The radical proposals for economic, cultural and political autonomy put forward by the Baltic delegates emboldened representatives from some of the other non-Russian republics to come out with their own demands. Reflecting the pressure that was welling up from below in their republics, quite a few of the republican Party leaders, including the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Uzbek ones, championed republican and national rights. The result was the most open debate on the nationalities question at any major Party meeting since the 1920s. During it, despite Gorbachev's disappointingly conservative comments on this topic in his opening address, the issue of genuine, as opposed to proclaimed, sovereignty for the republics was pushed to the forefront.

While delegates from the Baltic and Transcaucasian republics pressed for a fundamental review of the relationship between Moscow and the Union republics, Ukraine's main speaker, the CPU Central Committee secretary Borys Kachura, came across as an old-style defender of the 'integral' Union and of the Party's monopoly on power. In fact, his address may well have been intended to sound like a manifesto of the Shcherbytsky team, whose leader was not only present but even chaired one of the sessions at the conference. Pointing to the changing political atmosphere in the Soviet Union and the reduction of fear and apathy, Kachura warned that it was time to take legal measures to ensure that 'speculation around democratization' did not get out of hand. The Party, he declared, would never relinquish its leading role, and this remained an 'axiom'. Going on to attack nationalism, he told the delegates that for 'the Ukrainian people' the 'internationalist brotherhood of the peoples' of the USSR remained 'sacred and unshakable'.

Oliinyk, however, who represented the Boards of the Ukrainian and Soviet Writers' Unions, saved the honour of his countrymen. With the outspokenness that had come to be expected of him when he was delivering a speech in Moscow, the poet raised three of the

major issues which were of such great concern to Ukraine's patriots and burgeoning democratic opposition: Stalin's man-made famine, the language question and nuclear power plants. After affirming his pride in his 'motherland' — 'Soviet Ukraine' — and his 'country' — 'the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' — Oliinyk announced that he had been 'instructed to recommend, to request, that, finally, a "white book" be published' about the crimes of the Stalin era, which would identify those responsible for the terror and the victims. Stressing that since in Ukraine 'persecutions began long before 1937', he added: 'The reasons for the famine of 1933, which extinguished the lives of millions of Ukrainians, need to be made public, and those responsible for this tragedy [should] be identified by name.'

Whatever Shcherbytsky and his colleagues may have thought, according to *Pravda*, the delegates greeted this bold request with applause.¹³ It was the first time that the Ukrainian famine had been mentioned in such a way before the assembled Party leadership and in full view of the entire Union.

The poet went on to reiterate that one of the 'burdensome legacies' of the Stalin era was the 'universal' distortion of Lenin's nationalities policy. In Ukraine, he explained, this had meant that the national language was progressively being squeezed out of all aspects of social and political life, schools and higher education. What was needed was an official policy of affirmative action — 'a state-sanctioned programme to create the most favourable conditions for the functioning of the native language in all spheres and at all levels of society, reinforcing theory with laws, right up to prosecuting people who impede the development of national culture.'

Oliinyk then turned to the issue of nuclear energy and announced that he had brought an appeal signed by over 6,000 people asking for a review of Moscow's plans for the expansion of Ukraine's nuclear energy facilities. 'The arrogance and disdain' which some central agencies, and especially the USSR Ministry of Power and Electrification, were showing towards Ukraine, he protested, 'borders not only on some sort of merciless cruelty, but also on an insult to national dignity'. The need for energy was understood well

¹³ *Pravda*, 2 July 1988.

enough, he explained, but there were 'limits, saturation limits, which it would be simply criminal to exceed'.

The writer finished his speech with a more general proposal. In contrast to Kachura's emphasis on the Party retaining its leading role in society, he suggested that 'the equality of Party and non-Party people in their movement up the hierarchical ladder' be established by law. This would have a 'refreshing effect' and hopefully force out careerists.¹⁴

The voice of Ukrainian forces supporting democratization was also heard when a Russian delegate read out a telegram that he had received at the conference from Kharkiv University. Grigorii Baklanov, the editor of the all-Union journal *Znamya*, informed the delegates that the message asked whether any of the liberal writers were going to reply to the reactionary views propagated by Andreeva in her infamous letter, or by Yurii Bondarev, the deputy chairman of the Board of the Union of Writers of the RSFSR, in his speech at the conference. Responding to this call from Eastern Ukraine, Baklanov then proceeded to deliver one of the most outspoken speeches at the conference in support of *glasnost* and restructuring.¹⁵

Undoubtedly, the Nineteenth Party Conference succeeded in conveying the message of change and endorsing reformism, and it can be considered a watershed. Although the various resolutions which were adopted at the conference represented compromises in which high-sounding phrases more often than not were substituted for specifics, the gathering nevertheless paved the way for the inauguration of the 'cardinal reform of the political system' which Gorbachev had called for in his opening address. The conference endorsed the creation of a new Congress of People's Deputies, to be elected the following spring in multi-candidate elections, which in turn would elect a smaller, full-time, two-chamber Supreme Soviet and, by secret ballot, a chairman of this body. Gorbachev made it quite clear that he wanted the chairman of the Supreme Soviet to be a president in all but name and to transfer political power from the Communist Party to revamped elected Soviets.

As far as the nationalities question was concerned, the resolution adopted by the conference on this issue, though nowhere near as

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

radical as some of the non-Russians delegates would have liked, represented an important step forward. However grudgingly, the Party had finally been forced to acknowledge the need to rectify its nationalities policy and broaden the rights of the non-Russian nations and republics. The resolution recognized that 'within the framework of the restructuring of the political system urgent measures' had to be undertaken to ensure the 'further development and strengthening of the Soviet federation on the basis of democratic principles'. It noted:

Above all it is a question of the expansion of the rights of the Union republics and autonomous formations . . . decentralization, the transfer to the local level of a number of managerial functions, and the strengthening of their independence [*samos-toyatelnost*] and responsibilities in the spheres of the economy, social and cultural development, and environmental protection . . . the idea of the transition of the republics and regions to the principles of cost-accounting . . . merits attention . . . More concern must be shown for the active functioning of national languages in various spheres of state, public, and cultural life. Encouragement must be given to the study of the language of the people whose name a republic bears by citizens of other nationalities residing on its territory, above all by children and young people.¹⁶

Thus, despite Gorbachev's efforts to keep the nationalities question on hold, powerful, newly released forces were beginning to push things along. *Perestroika* and *glasnost* were beginning to acquire a dynamic of their own.

Hopes raised

With democratization now linked more and more in the minds of non-Russians with the need for a fundamental change in the imperial relationship between Moscow and the republics, the preliminary concessions that had seemingly been won in this respect at the Party Conference raised expectations and spurred on the various national movements.

On 7 July, over 10,000 people gathered in Lviv to launch the city's 'Democratic Front to Promote Restructuring' formally. The

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5 July 1988.

constituent members of the new coalition included the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, the Native Language Society, the Public Committee of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Lion Society, the local Trust Group, the Lviv Political Discussion Group and a newly formed Jewish Cultural Society. The Democratic Front defined its goals as: support for restructuring, raising democratic consciousness among the public, monitoring the observance of democratic procedures and participating in elections.

Once again, however, the officially controlled press not only in Lviv and Kyiv, but also in Moscow, sought to discredit the organizers of the meeting as extremists. On 10 July, for example, the all-Union Komsomol daily, *Komsomolskaya pravda*, did not even mention the creation of the Democratic Front but instead depicted 'Makar and the group of Western-supported, previously convicted "[human] rights defenders"', as crypto-fascists who were really out to achieve the rehabilitation of the 'terrorists' of the OUN-UPA Banderist movement'.

In fact, by this time, the leaders of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union (UHU) had elaborated their political platform and on 7 July they issued it in the form of a 'Declaration of Principles'. As before, though, it remained exceedingly difficult for this, and other dissident groups, to make their position known and to refute effectively the accusations being levelled against them in the officially controlled media. Apart from reading between the lines of the official accounts, the public could still only learn about these things either from *samvydav* publications, with their very limited print runs, or from Radio Liberty's Ukrainian and Russian broadcasts, which, despite *glasnost*, the Soviet authorities were still continuing to jam.

The Declaration of Principles drawn up by the leaders of the UHU represented the first attempt to provide a comprehensive programme for the emerging Ukrainian national democratic movement. Indeed, in the preamble, the authors declared that they hoped that the UHU's Declaration of Principles would become 'the basis for uniting democratic forces in the struggle for restructuring society and for human and national rights'. Although, for the purposes of self-protection, they denied that the UHU was a political party, or even a political organization — that is also why they called their document a declaration of principles and not a programme — there was no disguising the fact that that is precisely what the leaders of the UHU were aiming at. The Principles stated quite clearly that

the UHU would strive to bring about 'the all-round activation of the popular masses, [and] the development of a mechanism for the participation of the people in the government of the state and for reliable control over the state apparatus', and that it intended to field candidates in forthcoming elections.

Defining the principal task of the UHU as the 'defence of national rights', the document dismissed the sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR as a legal fiction. It stressed that Ukraine's ruling Party was a mere 'regional subdivision' of the CPSU which, together with the so-called Ukrainian government had 'not been able or wanted' to protect the republic's population over the decades from denationalization, starvation, economic exploitation and 'the artificial transformation' of its 'ethnic composition'. Thus the first of the Basic Principles proposed in the document stated:

The Ukrainian Helsinki Union considers that the re-establishment of Ukrainian statehood, which today exists only on paper, would be the fundamental basis for guaranteeing the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of both the Ukrainian people, and of the national minorities which live on the territory of Ukraine.

Having identified the restoration of genuine sovereign statehood for Ukraine as the UHU's principal goal, the document nevertheless followed the successful example being set by the Baltic Popular Fronts and stopped short of calling for political secession from the USSR. Invoking the calls that had been made at the Nineteenth Party Conference for transforming the Union into a genuine federation, the leaders of the UHU tactfully came out for the replacement of the 'state, centralized to the maximum, which was built by Stalin', by a 'confederation of independent states', adding that a 'federation of sovereign democratic states', with the 'fullest political, economic and cultural decentralization', could serve as a transitional stage to it. In this way, they also marked out the various stages in what they evidently envisioned as being a complex and protracted process of achieving independence.

The Declaration of Principles contained numerous other radical and far-reaching aims. The leaders of the UHU proposed, among other things, that the all-Union and republican constitutions be revised to reflect the ending of the imperial set-up and to take into account international human rights norms; that the new Ukrainian constitution establish Ukrainian citizenship and recognize Ukrainian

as the state language of the republic; that the rights of national minorities in Ukraine be fully guaranteed; that the autonomous statehood of Crimea within Ukraine be re-established and the return of Crimean Tatars and others who had been deported from the peninsula be organized (on 9 June 1988 *Pravda* had reported that a special state commission chaired by Soviet head of state Andrei Gromyko had rejected the demands of the Crimean Tatars for the recreation of their autonomous republic in Crimea); and that Ukraine start caring for its large Eastern diaspora and the Ukrainian minorities in Eastern Europe, and begin cooperation with the Western diaspora. As far as the external sphere was concerned, the document also asserted Ukraine's right as a sovereign state to proper representation in the international arena and to establish its own diplomatic contacts.

Other principles included the reduction of military forces to reasonable limits necessary only for defence and that military service be carried out on the territory of the respective republics in republican military formations; that the KGB be dissolved or cease functioning as a political police; that political power be transferred from the Communist Party organs to democratically elected councils; that all political prisoners be freed and repressive legislation repealed; and that full religious freedom be inaugurated. In the economic and social spheres, the document called for a shift towards a market economy; for industry to be restructured to take into account environmental factors; for independent trade unions to be allowed to function; and for the establishment of a just system of social security'.¹⁷

This manifesto was an important landmark in the evolution of Ukrainian political thinking. The broad programme for the achievement of a sovereign Ukrainian state was notable for its practical, tolerant and forward-looking features. The UHU, which was being depicted in the official media as an extremist nationalist organization, was in fact judiciously eschewing any trace of political intolerance and ethnocentrism and instead proposing a concept of an inde-

The document is analysed in Anatol Kaminsky, *Mi perekhidnomu etapi: 'Hlasnist', 'perebudova' i 'demokratyzatsiya' na Ukraini* [In a Transitional Stage: 'Glasnost', 'Restructuring' and 'Democratization' in Ukraine], Munich, 1990, pp. 321-6; an English translation is provided in Kuzio, *Dissent in Ukraine*, pp. 24-31.

pendent democratic Ukrainian state in which all of its citizens, regardless of their nationality, would feel at home.

Indeed, this, the most radical 'nationalist' group to have emerged so far in Ukraine during the Gorbachev era, issued a special statement on 24 July addressed to the national minorities living in Ukraine. Identifying themselves as 'representatives of the Ukrainian *national democratic movement*', the U H U leaders urged non-Ukrainians not to believe the 'slanderous' attempts of the authorities to depict them as xenophobic ultra-nationalists and to join forces in a common struggle for the improvement of the situation of all of Ukraine's citizens. Reiterating the main planks in their political platform, the UHU's leaders concluded their appeal with the following words: 'We call on you. Ukraine is in peril. But she is not only our motherland, but also yours as well.'¹⁸

A growing awareness of the need to protect the rights of the Crimean Tatars and other national minorities living in Ukraine while simultaneously pressing for the redress of Ukrainian national grievances was also apparent at the first meeting to be held by Ukrainian writers after the Nineteenth Party Conference — a joint plenum on 12 July of the Board of the W U U and the Board of its Kyiv section. But this was not main feature of the meeting.

Generally encouraged by the results of the conference, the writers delivered their most outspoken criticism so far of the Shcherbytsky regime and the way it was 'hindering' the Ukrainian national renewal. Drach led the attack and implicitly called on Shcherbytsky to resign. In order to repair the colossal damage which had been done to the Ukrainian nation and its 'soul', he argued that enormous measures 'on a state scale' were required. Addressing the Ukrainian Party and state leadership, he declared:

If any of our leaders do not know how, do not want, or do not have the strength to revive this living soul, if any of them are not prepared to take on the resolution of these painful problems, then let them leave the stage with a firm and confident step. This will indeed be the honourable thing to do in the spirit of restructuring.

Another writer, Oles Lupii, suggested that it was perhaps time

For the text of the appeal, see *U[krainskij] Vlisnyki-Ekspres*, no. 9 (Kyiv-Lviv), July-August 1988, reprinted by the External Representation of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, New York, 1988, pp. 17-19.

for Ukrainians to stop 'requesting' and to begin taking more resolute action.

Responding to what had gone on at the Party Conference, the writers supported the idea of transforming the 'multinational Soviet state' into a union of genuinely 'free and equal peoples'. On the other hand, they openly denounced the very notion of a 'Soviet people', which some of the conservative speakers had referred to, and the fact that the term had appeared in the resolution on national relations. They also expressed dismay that the Party Conference had failed to support the view that the study of the native language in the republics, along with that of Russian, be made compulsory.

Inspired by Oliinyk's bold speech at the Party Conference, the writers demanded that a monument be erected for the victims of the Stalin famine in Ukraine and that the archives covering this period be opened. Several writers once again urged that the works of Hrushevsky be republished, with the novelist Pavlo Zahrebelny describing his *Istoriya Ukrainy-Rusy* (History of Ukraine-Rus) as the best there was. This time, however, the writers also stressed that it was time to remove the 'blank spots' from the most recent period of Ukrainian history—the 1970s, or in other words, the Shcherbytsky era. Zahrebelny, for instance, who from 1979 to 1986 had headed the W U U, proposed that the cases of the 'young people, who were accused on the basis of the very things that we are talking about openly today' be reviewed.^{1^}

Anatolii Makarov had already described in *Literaturna Ukraina* of 19 May 1988 the tragic fate which had befallen a large group of young promising modernist poets who had been prevented from making their contribution to Ukrainian literary life. Furthermore, the Ukrainian Culturological Club and the UANTI had been conducting a campaign for the rehabilitation of Vasy Stus, the poet who had died in a labour camp only three years earlier, and posthumous publication of his works. Several members of the W U U had extended their support to the campaign, including Drach, Pavlychko and Stanislav Telnyuk. The first breakthrough had been achieved when, on 22 June, *Literaturnaya gazeta* had published an article by Yaroslav Melnyk which mentioned Stus. It was to take

See *literaturna Ukraina*, 21 and 28 July, 1988, and Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Ukrainian Writers' Plenum Reveals Growing Frustration and Radicalization', RL 356/88, August 10 1988.

another two months before Danylo Kulynyak managed to do the same in a Ukrainian publication, in his article which appeared in *Molod Ukrainy* on 25 August.²⁰

There were other signs that the Shcherbytsky era was coming to an end. Between 14 and 19 July, Dzyuba, the leading Sixtier whom Shelest had defended and Shcherbytsky had imprisoned and forced to recant, was able to publish a series of five major articles dealing with the defence of the Ukrainian language in *Vechimii Kyiv*. His earlier articles on this theme had elicited scores of letters, and the editor of the newspaper, Vitalii Karpenko, had decided to provide Dzyuba with the opportunity for a thorough discussion of the issue. Dzyuba's reasoned and unemotive approach helped hundreds of thousands of readers in the Ukrainian capital (the mass circulation evening newspaper appeared in Ukrainian and Russian) to understand better the concerns and demands of Ukrainian patriots.

On 21 July, *Literaturna Ukraina* published an article by Bilokin which presented Hrushevsky in a positive light. Two days later, *Molod Ukrainy* ran another piece which broke new ground—an article by the Western Ukrainian poet Rostyslav Bratun in which he touched on several hitherto taboo subjects and thereby presented a different picture of the recent history of Western Ukraine. These included the arrest of Communists by the Soviet authorities after the incorporation of Western Ukraine into the Soviet Union in 1939, the mass execution of political prisoners in Western Ukrainian jails by the Soviet authorities at the outbreak of the Second World War, and the mass repression in the region after the war which accompanied the Soviet campaign against the Ukrainian nationalist resistance. Referring to the situation in Lviv, he assailed the local bureaucrats who remained indifferent to pressing national and ecological issues, and, as an example of the vibrant independent life in the city, he noted that an unofficial Russian group calling itself 'Friends of Ukrainian Art and Culture' had recently appeared, as well as Jewish, Polish and Armenian cultural societies.

Needless to say, the Ukrainian Catholics, too, were heartened by recent events and intensified their campaign for the legalization of their church. On 17 July some 15,000 of them gathered in Zarvarnytsya for the largest of the numerous unofficial celebrations by

²⁰ See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Rehabilitation Sought for Victims of Brezhnev's Political and Cultural Repressions in the Ukraine', RL 410/88, 7 September 1988.

Ukrainian Christians of the millennium of the Christianization of their homeland.²¹

Hopes dashed

But just as it seemed that the Nineteenth Party Conference had blown new wind into the sails of the democratic and national movements, matters unexpectedly took a turn for the worse. The first sign of this was on 18 July when, at a meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet dealing with the continuing crisis in the Transcaucasus, Gorbachev seemed to backtrack. He was shown on Soviet television expressing his annoyance about the tendency of the non-Russians, as he put it, to conclude that 'Moscow is to blame, the centre is to blame'. He also claimed that, 'under the banner of democratization', national movements were exerting 'shameless pressure' on the authorities.

Shcherbytsky, too, took an active part in this meeting and used the occasion to argue the case for toughening policy towards national movements and democratic activists. Although the theme under discussion was the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny-Karabakh, the Ukrainian Party leader might as well have been outlining his understanding of the situation in his own republic. Shcherbytsky claimed that it was 'becoming increasingly obvious' that the people behind the recent events in the Transcaucasus were subversives who sought 'to fan national egoism and aggravate emotions, making them increasingly militant and anti-social — even anti-Soviet'. 'Extremists', he said, were urging the people of Armenia 'to take it upon themselves to change the leadership of the Party' and government of their republic. Ukrainian citizens, especially local Party officials from the Donbas, were asking why such things were being tolerated. Shcherbytsky then issued the following warning:

We have no right to forget that some people abroad are trying to do everything possible to have what is happening in Transcaucasia now take place on as broad a scale as possible in other parts of our country . . . We cannot allow anyone, no matter who he is, to interpret our democracy as all-per-

²¹ UPA Press Release, no. 128, 1988.

missiveness and impunity. Otherwise situations like this will arise again and again."

Controls were duly tightened. On 28 July, the USSR Supreme Soviet surreptitiously issued a decree giving sweeping powers to the paramilitary forces of the Ministry of the Interior, empowering them to suppress unauthorized political meetings and demonstrations. Another decree published that same day required all demonstrations to be registered ten days in advance.

In Ukraine, as Shcherbytsky had indicated at the meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the reaction of the authorities to the surge of independent political and religious activity and the continuing peaceful revolution in the Baltic republics was even greater determination not to allow *glasnost* and democratization to take their course. In fact, they went on the offensive before the decrees were even issued in Moscow. On 23 and 24 July, the media in Lviv announced that criminal proceedings had been initiated against the activists responsible for organizing the Democratic Front. Chornovil, the Horyn brothers, Makar and Putko were singled out. Resorting to threats, administrative detention and the use of force, the authorities sought to prevent any more public unauthorized meetings or religious gatherings from being held. This was demonstrated on 24 July, when the police in Kyiv detained sixteen activists of the Ukrainian Culturological Club who were planning to collect signatures that Sunday for a petition calling for the release of political prisoners. Most of them were driven several dozen kilometres outside of Kyiv and abandoned in the countryside.²³

In Lviv, the authorities used even tougher methods. Here, on 28 July, a public meeting at which about 1,000 people had gathered was dispersed by force. When, a week later on 4 August, the Democratic Front attempted to hold its next scheduled meeting, the police were sent in with truncheons and dogs and brutally broke up the gathering. The shock and outrage which this caused was conveyed in a press release issued the following day by the UHU. It stated:

The barking of dogs, screaming of children, and pitiful cries of women provided the final brushstrokes to the portrait:

²² *Pravda*, 20 July 1988.

²³ *Russkaya mysl*, 29 July 1988.

'Democracy and Restructuring Ukrainian Style' . . . Thus, on 4 August 1988, for the first time in many years, blood was spilt on the pavements of Lviv, and together with it fell the last illusions of people who were treated by the authorities as if they were enemies.²⁴

It also transpired that on the morning of what the residents of Lviv dubbed as 'Bloody Thursday', Makar had been arrested. He was subsequently charged with 'violating public order'. Makar's colleagues, who immediately began a campaign for his release, described him 'as the first political prisoner of the era of restructuring'.

On 13 August, the Associated Press reported that the Ukrainian Catholic activist Hel had told its representatives that pressure was being stepped up not only on Ukrainian Catholics but 'on the whole of society'. He revealed that the police were disrupting services and imposing heavy fines on participants. Among those who were detained and fined were several Ukrainian Catholic priests.

As the summer continued there were more and more reports about the prevention of meetings and the harassment of dissenters in various parts of the republic, and the official press continued to vilify the leaders of the UHU and Ukrainian Culturological Club. The case of Kyiv's Popular Union in Support of Restructuring was indicative of the general policy. The authorities sought to stifle the new organization by delaying registration of it and other forms of red tape. When, in September, the organization finally obtained permission to hold a meeting, it had to be held behind closed doors in a small hall, and the authorities demanded to receive details of the agenda in advance. According to Yemets, the activists were told by the authorities that they could not hold a rally in the open because stormy winds were expected which could endanger lives. A sympathetic journalist who attended the meeting was led to ask in the pages of the workers' daily:

As regards public meetings —which have become possible thanks to the process of democratization in society and which reflect the reawakening of people from social slumber —is it necessary for us to fear such manifestations of *hlasnist* and strive in every

" See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Lviv Authorities Resort to Old Methods in Breaking Up Unauthorized Meetings and Religious Services', RL 355/88, 13 August 1988.

way to isolate them, hiding them behind closed doors, from the eyes and ears of uninvolved people?²⁵

After such embarrassing questions had been asked in the press,²⁶ the authorities relented somewhat and allowed the Popular Union to stage a demonstration in the centre of Kyiv on 7 October — Soviet Constitution Day. About two thousand people participated with banners calling for the rule of law. This, however, became the peak of the organization's activities for it was not allowed to hold any more public meetings or demonstrations.²⁷

By the use of these tactics, the authorities appeared to succeed for the time being in obstructing the development of the Ukrainian democratic movement and of the popular fronts. Once again, the image of Ukraine as a 'bastion of stagnation' was reinforced. Thus, for instance, when at the end of August, a Spanish newspaper asked Korotych to assess the situation in Ukraine, he summed it up as 'rather sad and anti-democratic'.²⁸

Two weeks later, in what appears to have been an 'old-style' attempt to play up the danger of resurgent Ukrainian nationalism in order to justify the hard-line stance of the Shcherbytsky regime, a purported KGB 'triumph' in its war against Ukrainian nationalist emigres was announced in *Pravda* and subsequently played up in the Soviet media. According to the claims, as a result of a twenty-year-old operation codenamed 'Boomerang', the Ukrainian KGB and its ally, the Polish security services, had infiltrated the largest Ukrainian emigre nationalist group — the Bandera faction of the OUN — and neutralized its 'subversive' activities. Significantly, *Pravda* and other newspaper, laid emphasis on 'the US leadership's support for anti-Socialist and anti-Soviet forces' and warned that young people who participated in unauthorized public meetings were 'playing into the hands of dark forces'. It was also probably not entirely coincidental that this joint Soviet-Polish 'success' was announced the day after the joint Polish-Ukrainian celebration in Czestochowa of the millennium of the Christianization of Kyivan Rus.²⁹

²⁵ O. Kuts in *Robitnycha hazcta*, 4 October 1988.

See also *Radyanska osvita*, 30 September 1988.

Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 16- 17.

²⁸ *La Vanguardia*, 28 August 1988.

Pravda, 12 September 1988. For further details, see Bohdan Nahaylo. 'KGB "Success" in War Against Ukrainian Nationalist Emigres', RL 420/88, 15 September 1988.

In the historical sphere, Shcherbytsky's defenders of orthodoxy continued to hinder the efforts of the Ukrainian literary intelligentsia to secure the rehabilitation of Hrushevsky and Drahomanov. On 4 August, *Literatuma Ukraina* unexpectedly ran a piece signed by three authors seeking to discredit Drahomanov, and on 27 August *Radyanska Ukraina* published an article by an official historian in which he labelled Bilokin's recent positive article about Hrushevsky as 'incompetent'. Vitalii Sarbei, a section head at the Institute of History, maintained that despite Hrushevsky's undeniable scholarly achievements 'Soviet historians had no grounds for reviewing their generally critical attitude' towards the historian and his works. This did not stop *Vitchyzna* from beginning to publish Hrushevsky's memoirs in its September issue.

Now that Oliinyk's speech at the Party Conference had made the Shcherbytsky regime's position on the Ukrainian famine untenable, the new line was apparently being drawn at Hrushevsky. On 10 October, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the CPU, the Ukrainian Party leader himself inveighed against *Literatuma Ukraina* for publishing Bilokin's article about Hrushevsky. Shcherbytsky claimed that the newspaper had made a 'deplorable' mistake because Bilokin's article had been 'one-sided' and had sought to 'exonerate' Hrushevsky's 'notorious nationalist positions'.^{3*1}

The CPU's plenum was held less than two weeks after Gorbachev had managed to carry out major changes in the Soviet leadership and have himself elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, that is, head of state, in place of Gromyko, who retired. At a Central Committee plenum on 30 September, three other holdovers from the Brezhnev era in the Politburo, Mikhail Solomentsev and non-voting candidate members Vladimir Dolgikh and Pyotr Demichev, were dismissed, while another, Gorbachev's conservative rival, Ligachev, was effectively demoted by being given responsibility for agriculture. Vladimir Kryuchkov now replaced Chebrikov as the head of the KGB and Vadim Medvedev was given responsibility for ideology. Shcherbytsky, however, retained his Politburo seat and thus became the last of the Brezhnevite veterans in the Soviet leadership.

Why was Shcherbytsky still there, was the question that reverberated among supporters of change. A month earlier, Korotych had

³⁰ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 11 October 1998.

offered an explanation. Gorbachev, he had told a Spanish paper, needed to 'consolidate his strength', and 'the last thing' which he needed was 'a civil war'. Ukraine was a 'very strategic republic' and, in Korotych's view, this was not 'strategically the right time' for Gorbachev 'to tackle the issue of Ukraine'.³¹

Whatever the case, the October plenum of the Central Committee of the CPU, which focused mainly on economic and social issues, confirmed how unyielding the conservative Ukrainian Party leadership remained. Once again there was a measure of self-criticism and plenty of lip-service was paid to the reformist slogans being advocated by Gorbachev's team; and, as before, those genuinely advocating change were depicted as 'demagogues', 'extremists', 'nationalists', or simply 'politically immature' persons. Among other things, Shcherbytsky went out of his way to castigate the writers for indulging, as he put it, in 'demagogic verbiage' at their meeting in July.

Nevertheless, Shcherbytsky sounded an unusually defensive note when he acknowledged that the CPU leadership was now facing up to 'the shortcomings and miscalculations made in the past [which had] reduced in an unjustified way the sphere in which the Ukrainian language was used'. He announced that new efforts were being made to remedy the situation, including the opening of new Ukrainian-language schools, an increase in the number of hours devoted each week in schools to Ukrainian language and literature, more opportunities for learning and using Ukrainian at higher educational institutions, and the creation of a unit at the Dovzhenko Film Studio to dub films in Ukrainian.

The CPU plenum also revealed that despite all the bluster and the use of traditional methods of suppressing dissent, the authorities in Ukraine were increasingly losing control of the situation. Shcherbytsky himself acknowledged that: 'Lately, speculating on the development of the Socialist pluralism of ideas, individuals have begun propagating views that are ideologically hostile to us, instigating, with this aim in mind, various meetings and demonstrations that violate the law.' Although, as he put it, 'as a rule' it was former political prisoners, nationalists and Ukrainian Catholics who were responsible 'for all this', politically naive students, 'especially in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv', were also involved.

³¹ *La Vanguardia*, 28 August 1988.

The head of the Ukrainian Komsomol, Valerii Tsybukh, hinted at the scale of the problem. He drew attention to the fact that a process of 'politicization' was taking place among young people, which was leading to 'a pluralism not only of ideas, but also of actions'. Without elaborating, he added:

It is symptomatic that the number of independent associations of a political orientation has grown sharply. From the Lviv, Zaporizhzhya, Kyiv and other examples we see that various extremist elements sometimes attempt to prod young people, as they say, in the wrong direction.

A good example of what Shcherbytsky and Tsybukh were alarmed about was the activity of the Hromada Society among the students of Kyiv University. By the time of the CPU's plenum, the unofficial group had published three issues of an independent patriotic journal called *Dzvin (The Belt)*, the third of which, for example, contained among other material a poem by Sosyura about Mazepa (in which the latter was depicted as a Ukrainian national hero), an interview with Chornovil and works by Stus. It also carried an open letter from Hromada to the CPU plenum in which the CPU leadership was held responsible for 'stagnation', Russification and repression in Ukraine and was urged to alter its policies radically and remove Shcherbytsky and his team from power. "

But what was probably even more worrying, although Tsybukh did not mention it, was the fact that ferment had also become apparent within the ranks of the Ukrainian Komsomol where the developments in the Baltic republics were also having an effect. For instance, Sheika and other leaders of Lviv's Lion Society who were Komsomol officials sought to develop contacts with the Baltic popular fronts and in October organized a conference in Lviv to which they invited representatives from the Baltic republics. Anxious to prevent ideological contagion, the authorities in Lviv intercepted the Baltic guests on their arrival and sent them back.

In September and October, moreover, the Ukrainian Komsomol daily, *Molod Ukrainy*, underscored its continuing shift towards a more autonomous and liberal position by providing favourable coverage about events in the Baltic republics, including a highly sympathetic report from the inaugural congress on 1 October of the

¹- UPA Press Releases, nos 172 and 173, 8 November 1988.

Estonian Popular Front. While the rest of the Ukrainian press remained conspicuously silent about events in the Baltic republics, *Molod Ukrainy*, with its mass circulation of about 600,000 (as compared to *Literatuma Ukraina's* 71,000 at this time) therefore played an important role in breaking the information blockade being imposed by the authorities in Kyiv.

At the CPU plenum, frustration was in fact expressed by some speakers about the avoidance by the press of the more delicate but pressing issues, 'such as questions connected with political reform, international relations, and the functioning of the Ukrainian language'. Describing the problems in his region, Pohrebnyak, the Lviv region Party boss, appeared to call for a more differentiated approach to ideological work which would take into account the peculiarities of the various regions. To the west of his own fiefdom, the Polish Communist authorities had decided in August to open negotiations with Solidarity. The imposition of martial law had proved unsuccessful and the new wave of industrial strikes in the spring and summer of 1988 had forced the Polish Communist leadership to begin seeking an accommodation with the opposition. Clearly, in addition to what was happening in the Baltic states and Moscow, events just across the border in Poland would also have an influence on Western Ukraine.

Pohrebnyak emphasized that in Western Ukraine, apart from 'extremist manifestations', the 'natural pull towards the Ukrainian culture and language' had to be taken into account. Admitting that there was a shortage of 'highly professional ideological' workers available who were up to the task, he also criticized the press, and especially certain unnamed central newspapers, for displaying 'insufficient judgement and knowledge of the concrete situation and the complex, controversial history of the region'.³⁴

As part of a general streamlining of the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPU and an effort to improve the quality of ideological work, the responsibilities for overseeing agitation and propaganda, science and education, and culture were merged in a revamped Ideological Department, and Kravchuk was appointed to head it. As he was later to reveal, that same month functionaries of

³³ See *Molod Ukrainy*, 20 September, and 6 and 20 October, 1988.

For materia] on the CPU plenum, see *Radyanska Ukraina*, 11,12,13 and 14 October, 1988.

the CPU Central Committee were sent out 'into the field' to get a better reading of the situation in the regions. Consultative meetings were then held with representatives of the cultural and scientific intelligentsia about ways of remedying matters in the sphere of national cultural policy and thereby hopefully taming the forces that had been released.³⁵

In October, the custodians of ideology also resorted to rather unusual measures to try and halt the growth of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Kravchuk and Yelchenko supported recommendations from M. Kolesnyk, the head of the council on religious affairs attached to the republican Council of Ministers, that concessions be made to the Russian Orthodox Church in order to strengthen its position *vis-a-vis* the Catholics. In a special note for the Ukrainian leadership, Kolesnyk warned that the Ukrainian Catholic Church was gaining widespread support in Western Ukraine and that 'recently an obvious alliance has been made between the advocates of Uniatism and the advocates of Ukrainian nationalism'. As counter-measures, he proposed: that the registration of Russian Orthodox religious communities in Western Ukraine should be facilitated; that conditions for Russian Orthodox priests to conduct their parish duties be improved; that permission be given for the opening of a Russian Orthodox monastery at a former Catholic monastery near the village of Hoshiv in the Ivano-Fankivsk region; that more places be created in the Russian Orthodox seminary in Odesa, and training be provided elsewhere, to prepare clergy and religious activists for work in Western Ukraine; and that assistance be provided for the publication of Russian Orthodox religious literature, including a prayer book with a print run of 100,000, in the Ukrainian language. The state's interference in religious life was of course a standard feature of Soviet life, but here, as documents subsequently uncovered in the archives show, the CPU leadership was cynically using the Ukrainian language as a means to block the recovery of a Ukrainian church in favour of one identified with Russia and hostility towards Ukrainian patriotism. ^A Moreover, the

" See the interview with Kravchuk in *Pravda Ukrainy*, 20 January 1989.

' Volodymyr Lytvyn, *Politychna Arena Ukrainy: Diiovi osoby ta vykonavtsi* [The Political Arena of Ukraine: Cast and Performers], Kyiv, 1994, pp. 106-8. Hereafter referred to as *Political Arena*.

CPU's backing for the Russian Orthodox Church in Western Ukraine could only inflame the situation in this indomitable region.

Even as they revised their strategems, though, the CPU's leaders were overtaken by events. On 1 November, the citizens of Lviv demonstrated just how strong their sense of history and national pride was when some 15,000 of them gathered at the city's Yanivsky cemetery to commemorate the anniversary of the proclamation of the ZUNR and the fallen in the struggle for Ukrainian independence between 1917 and 1920. This time the banned blue and yellow Ukrainian national flag was raised and patriotic songs were sung.³⁷ That same day in the Ukrainian capital, Ukrainian writers were discussing assuming responsibility for creating a popular movement for democratization and national renewal.