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### THE BIRTH OF RUKH

*The writers launch a new effort to create a popular movement*

Despite the Shcherbytsky regime's efforts to stem the tide, under the influence of developments in the Baltic states and Moscow, the amorphous movement in Ukraine for democratization and national renewal continued to gather strength. The turning point came when, in the late autumn, a group of literati in Kyiv decided to revive the idea of forming a popular movement in support of restructuring which would unite all the various disparate groups and organizations that wanted to see meaningful political and economic change.

It appears that after the attempts in Lviv and Kyiv to form democratic fronts had been blocked, it was increasingly realized by democratic activists, including literati, that the writers and their allies in the other cultural unions were the only force with the moral weight and organizational structures which stood a chance of breaking a way out of the impasse. Yemets, for example, recalls that around this time he and his colleagues in the leadership of the Public Union in Support of Restructuring initiated an appeal to the W U U to form a popular front from members of the Union of Cinematographers.<sup>1</sup> Also, apart from the continuing impressive successes of the Baltic Popular Fronts, there was also one other source of encouragement - ironically, the Kremlin's new ideological secretary, Medvedev. Interviewed in October in *Kommunist*, he seemed to welcome the appearance of the popular fronts, adding that to see them 'almost as a threat to the social order' did not correspond with the Party line on 'democratization, *glasnost* and pluralism.'<sup>2</sup>

Drach recalls that the idea of forming a popular front 'hung in

Author's interview with Yemets.

" *Kommunist*, no. 17, October 1988, pp. 3-18.

the air'. He himself had travelled in the summer to Italy with two leading Baltic poets, the Latvian Janis Peters and the Lithuanian Algimantas Baltakis, and had had the opportunity to learn directly from them about the role which the writers and cultural unions had played in creating the Baltic popular fronts. Seeking a way to channel a similar initiative through some official structure, during the late summer and autumn further attempts were apparently made behind the scenes by representatives of the Ukrainian cultural elite to hold a joint meeting of the Cultural Unions. The authorities, especially the ideological secretary, Yelchenko, and the Kyiv city Party boss, Masyk, however, knew full well 'what this smelt of and blocked things.'<sup>3</sup>

The two writers who appear to have played a leading role in preparing the ground were Viktor Teren, a member of the Communist Party, and Pavlo Movchan, a non-Communist. On 30 October an informal preliminary meeting was held at the W U U building to discuss forming an Initiative Group. It was attended by about 150 people and chaired by Teren and Movchan. Potential problems emerged when Pavlychko and several others urged a cautious approach by proposing that the entire Party Committee of the Kyiv section of the W U U be included in the Initiative Group, while Movchan maintained that the initiative should be seen as a 'popular' one, and not Party-inspired.

The following day, Pavlychko, Drach and Oliinyk were called in by Yelchenko. According to the latter, he and Kravchuk 'knew immediately what the writer's initiative represented — an attempt to form an organization which would compete with the CPU for political power'. Multi-candidate elections to the new USSR Congress of People's Deputies were scheduled for 26 March and they offered dissenters the first legal opportunity to challenge the CPU's monopoly on power through the ballot-box. Moreover, the components for the nucleus of a broad coalition of democratic forces in which the writers were providing the leadership were fast crystallizing. Numerous branches of the Native Language Society and of the 'Green World' ecological association had been formed and their leaders were planning to hold inaugural republican conferences; the activity of the 'Memorial' group in Moscow, which was dedicated to exposing the crimes of the Stalin era and honouring the victims

of Stalinism, had found a resonance in Ukraine and efforts were being made to create a Ukrainian organization by that name; and, of course, the UHU and numerous other unofficial groups were stepping up their challenge to the Shcherbytsky regime. The consolidation of all these elements would make for a powerful political force and pose a formidable challenge to the rule of the CPU. The ideological secretary called on the writers to put their cards on the table and admit what they were really after. Pavlychko, however, apparently sought to reassure him that he and Kravchuk were wrong and simply too conservative. The writers, he explained, simply wanted to help the Party promote restructuring.<sup>4</sup>

On emerging from the meeting, Pavlychko and Drach announced that the Party Committee would form its own Initiative Group.<sup>5</sup> Had Party discipline prevailed? Interestingly, just as the writers were starting their attempt to form a popular movement, the Ukrainian authorities began indicating their readiness to offer more substantial concessions including a compromise on the issue of making Ukrainian the state language of the republic. In fact, in early November, two commissions of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet held a special hearing on this question at which several writers, including Mushketyk, Drach and Pavlychko were asked to speak. One of the commissions, on education and culture, was headed by Oliinyk, the other, on internationalist education and inter-ethnic relations, by Kravchuk, who also chaired the hearing. The outcome, as *Pravda Ukrainy* reported on 11 November, was that the commissions decided to recommend that the republic's constitution be changed in order to raise the status of Ukrainian to that of the state language, though there was no knowing how long this might take. It is possible, therefore, that this might have influenced Pavlychko's and Drach's initial behaviour.

On 1 November, the initiative was taken a step further at an official meeting of the Communist members of the Kyiv section of the WUU to which non-Communists were also invited. Kravchuk was also present. Teren formally proposed that the writers take the lead in creating a popular front-type organization. He argued that, as far as restructuring was concerned, the republic was lagging

Author's interview with Yelchenko.

See Solchanyk's interview with Movchan on the origins of the Popular Movement in *Ukraine: From Chernobyl' to Sovereignty*, pp. 7-8.

behind others and that 'all attempts at democratization are severely punished'. Even the modest measures that had been adopted by the CPU leadership to bolster the position of the Ukrainian language were being sabotaged. In order to change things, it was imperative to consolidate all the various centres of opposition and democracy and he offered as an example the role which the Latvian Writers' Union had played as an initiator and coordinator in the formation of the Latvian Popular Front. The time had come, Teren declared, for Ukraine's writers to follow suit and to form an Initiative Group to create a 'Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring'. The Group's first task would be to draft a programme which could then be published, discussed and fine-tuned at a joint plenum of Ukraine's Cultural Unions. Movchan seconded Teren's proposal. Their initiative seems to have been deliberately played down, however, for, according to *Literaturna Ukraina's* account of the meeting, the 'Communists unanimously' agreed simply 'on the need to form an initiative group from among the writers to promote restructuring'.<sup>6</sup>

What helped the writers was the fact that after the Nineteenth Party Conference democratization had begun to make itself felt even within the CPU and this, in turn, also affected the make-up of the Party structures within the WUU. At the meeting, Pavlychko and Teren were among those elected to the Party committee of the Kyiv section of the WUU.<sup>7</sup>

Although the writers' initiative generated considerable excitement and discussion among the creative intelligentsia, it was not until 17 November that the public was able to read about it in the pages of *Literaturna Ukraina*. In the meantime, a splendid opportunity presented itself to sound out the citizens of Kyiv about this idea. Concern about the dangers of nuclear energy and industrial pollution had grown even more during the last few weeks as a result of a mysterious disease in the south-western city of Chernivtsi that had caused loss of hair and nervous disorders in scores of children. The Kyiv authorities had permitted the local 'Greens' and other informal groups to hold an outdoor public meeting on 13 November to

<sup>6</sup> *Literaturna Ukraina*, 17 November 1988. The newspaper, it turns out, also published a sanitized summary of Teren's speech. A fuller version appeared in *Rozbudova derzhavy*, no. 5, 1993, pp. 23-4.

<sup>7</sup> Author's interview with Drach. On the new composition of the Party committee, see *Literaturna Ukraina*, 3 November 1988.

discuss ecological issues. The meeting drew over 10,000 people and turned into a huge political demonstration. Among the writers who addressed the gathering were Pavlychko, Shcherbak, Yavorivsky and Bratun. They linked the worrying environmental situation in Ukraine with the republic's lack of sovereignty and its conservative leadership. Pavlychko, however, was more direct: he openly called for the formation of a Ukrainian popular front and his proposal drew enthusiastic support. After hearing other speeches from representatives from Latvia, Lithuania and Armenia, as well as from the recently freed Makar, the crowd started chanting: 'Popular Front!, Popular Front!'

During the following fortnight, the general atmosphere in the Soviet Union was strained by a constitutional crisis precipitated by Gorbachev's attempts to reassert control over the republics through amendments to the Soviet constitution. On 16 November, the Estonian Supreme Soviet defiantly adopted a 'Declaration of Sovereignty' and asserted its right to veto laws passed in Moscow. Despite the strong condemnation of this action by Moscow as 'unconstitutional', the Supreme Soviets in Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia also voiced their objections to what was seen as an unexpected departure by the Gorbachev leadership from the positions adopted at the Nineteenth Party Conference. The Lithuanian parliament also proclaimed Lithuanian the state language of the republic and designated the flag and hymn of independent Lithuania as the official flag and anthem of the Lithuanian SSR.

While the Ukrainian authorities joined in the orchestrated condemnation of Estonia's stand, there were both implicit and explicit unofficial manifestations of Ukrainian support. For instance, the UHU, which by now had even formed a group in Moscow, deplored the position of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet and on 20 November addressed a statement to the Estonians assuring them that 'the national democratic forces of Ukraine are fully on your side'. Furthermore, on 24 November, *Literaturna Ukraina* published a discussion in which three legal experts condemned the proposed changes to the Soviet constitution and emphasized the need to begin respecting the proclaimed sovereignty of the Union republics. One of them, Volodymyr Vasylenko, a professor of juridical sciences of Kyiv University, reminded Ukrainian readers that, according to the Nineteenth Party Conference and the democratic principles which it had upheld, the rights of the Union republics were supposed to

be broadened and not narrowed.

In the meantime, encouraged by the display of public support for the idea of a popular movement, on 23 November a group of writers and literary scholars met in Kyiv to elect a representative Initiative Group. Evidently, by this time, despite pressure from the CPU's ideological officials to make it appear that the initiative to form a popular front had come from the Party organization of the Kyiv section of the WUU, Drach and Pavlychko, at any rate, had accepted the view that the Initiative Group could not be limited to Party members. Representatives of some of Kyiv's unofficial associations were also present. The meeting was chaired by Movchan who told the assembled that there should be no further delay: other republics were watching Ukraine and 'waiting for it to awaken'. According to the record of the meeting, Teren, Zhulynsky, Donchyk, Pavlychko, Drach and several others took part in the discussion. One, a worker, said that hundreds of signatures in support of the idea of forming a Popular Movement for Restructuring had already been collected and he proposed Drach to head the Initiative Group. The meeting elected an Initiative Group led by Drach (his candidature had apparently already been agreed on by the writers), which also included Pavlychko, Telnyuk, Teren, Movchan, Bryukhovetsky, Donchyk, Dzyuba, Syvokin and several others.<sup>8</sup>

After the meeting, Drach, Pavlychko and Mushketyk were once again called in 'for talks' by Yelchenko at which Masyk and Kravchuk were also present. The writers stood their ground and continued to argue that they simply wanted to help the Party by mobilizing popular support for restructuring. In public, Drach also challenged the impression which some newspapers now sought to convey that the idea to create an Initiative Group had come from the writers' Party committee and not the public. In fact, the pressure on Drach and his colleagues only seems to have made them more determined to press on.

At the end of November, the question of creating a popular movement was discussed at a plenum of the Board of the WUU. Shcherbak was among the speakers who brought out the full dramatic significance of the situation. After decades during which it had seemed that 'time had been suspended' indefinitely, he ex-

<sup>8</sup> The protocol of the meeting, which was not mentioned in the press, was later also published in *Rozbudova dcrzhavy*, no. 5, 1993, pp. 24-6.

plained, the 'energy of restructuring and *hlasnist*' had finally 'reawoken us'. Now history, with its perennial hard choices, was knocking at the door and asking: 'Whose side are you on, Ukrainian writers?' Having made the choice to defend democracy and their own people, the writers had to be in the front ranks of the movement for change. The conservative forces were not about to give in and the writers knew what they were up against. As Shcherbak put it:

Even now, in the fourth year of restructuring, we feel the deaf unwillingness of officials to face up to the new realities of life. We feel their suspicious and hostile glances; we know that the civic and publicistic activity of the writers irritates certain people and makes them recall the old days nostalgically."

Therefore, Shcherbak and his colleagues argued, the struggle had to be stepped up. Mushketyk, the head of the W U U, also delivered a powerful speech in this vein and spoke of the need for 'gigantic and broad-ranging work' by the writers, including 'political and democratic actions', to raise the national and political consciousness of their compatriots. He also renewed the call for a joint meeting of the republic's cultural unions.

The plenum not only endorsed the idea of creating a popular movement, but also devoted a special resolution to it which made it clear that the new organization would be an all-republican one and that its leadership would not be restricted to Communists. The plenum resolved:

To entrust the initiative group of the W U U in support of restructuring, which includes members of the Party Committee and also writers elected to this group by other organizations, to prepare a draft programme of a Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring. In doing so, to take into account proposals from the regional writers' organizations. To authorize regional writers' organizations to take an active part in the work of the appropriate initiative groups.

Other resolutions adopted by the plenum called on the Presidium of Ukraine's Supreme Soviet to expedite the recognition of Ukrainian as the republic's state language; for the W U U to sponsor the formation of a republican 'Memorial' Society dedicated to investigating the crimes of the totalitarian era and to help with the

<sup>9</sup> *Literatuma Ukraina*, 15 December 1988.

organization of a republican inaugural conference of the Native Language Society; and, for the resolutions adopted at the ecological meeting on 13 November to be published.<sup>10</sup> One other noteworthy feature was the forthright way in which Drach, Zhulynsky and others now raised the cases of Stus and other writers who had been imprisoned during the Shcherbytsky era.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with this demonstration of collective determination, Kravchuk chose to echo Medvedev and reassured the plenum that the official position on popular fronts was 'absolutely clear: to support popular initiative, everything that helps restructuring'.<sup>12</sup> That very same evening, however, he was shown on Ukrainian television questioning the need for a popular movement. Did Ukraine want the same sort of problems as Estonia, he asked, alluding to the appearance there of the so-called Intermovement (Interdvizhenie, or Internationalist Movement), consisting mainly of Russians and Russian speakers who felt threatened by Estonia's assertion of its sovereignty and national identity.<sup>13</sup>

The writers immediately began to receive support from outside the WUU. The staff of the Institute of Literature promptly voted to back the writers and formed its own Initiative Group to help with the drafting of the programme for the Popular Movement. Various unofficial groups, ranging from the Greens to the branches of the Native Language Society, also extended their support.

A vivid reminder of the difficulties that lay ahead, though, was provided on 10 December when democratic activists in various cities attempted to hold demonstrations to mark Human Rights Day. In Kyiv fifteen activists were detained and the authorities succeeded in preventing any large public protest. In Vinnytsya, the authorities banned the meeting that had been called by the local popular front. But in Lviv, several thousand people nonetheless defied the authorities and turned up for a meeting organized by the UHU.

On 18 December, the UHU's Coordinating Council, consisting of delegates from six cities, met in Kyiv and issued a statement expressing Support for efforts to create popular fronts or movements.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 December, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 December 1988.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, p. 22.

It stressed that attempts at creating such organizations had already been made in Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Vinnytsya, Ivano-Frankivsk and other cities and described the writers' initiative as 'the latest and most serious attempt'.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear from the statement that the leaders of the U H U were somewhat uneasy that the writers were attempting to form a popular movement when in fact they considered that their own organization, with its Baltic-front like programme, was best suited for this task and in any case was already trying to do precisely this. Evidently, the veteran dissidents and former political prisoners at the head of the U H U remained sceptical about writer-radicals who were also members of the Communist Party. What was important, though, was that the U H U was seen to be endorsing the writers' efforts to create a popular movement.

#### *The emergence ojKmvch.uk*

While the Initiative Group continued its work, the CPU leadership held another Central Committee plenum on 12 December at which important personnel changes were made. Shcherbytsky's number two man, Oleksii Tytarenko, was retired and in his place Ivashko was elected the CPU's new second secretary. Clearly, Ivashko was now the figure to watch as Shcherbytsky's most likely successor. What was not known on the outside at this time, however, was whether the fifty-six-year-old Ukrainian Politburo member, who had trained as an economist at a mining institute in Kharkiv, was Shcherbytsky's choice or Gorbachev's candidate. According to Yelchenko, it was the latter. Gorbachev wanted Ivashko to take over in Ukraine after Shcherbytsky, 'but he had to work to get him elected'.<sup>15</sup>

It was another senior Party official, though, who was to gain more and more prominence in the coming months and to establish a reputation for himself as perhaps the CPU's most capable representative. This was Leonid Kravchuk, the fifty-four-year-old ideological apparatchik from Volhynia, who too had trained as an economist. Highly intelligent, crafty and eloquent, he was increasingly used by the CPU leadership to deal with the rebellious

<sup>14</sup> UPA Presss Release, no. 12, 1989.

Author's interview with Yelchenko.

intelligentsia. In the process he developed a style of his own and underwent a certain evolution. Able to reason, argue or deliver warnings with a certain amount of flair, something which few of his Party colleagues possessed, he was gradually to win the respect of many of his political adversaries.

After being appointed head of the CPU Central Committee's Ideological Department, Kravchuk became in effect the Ukrainian Party's spokesman on nationalities policy and the line as regards the democratic opposition, while Yelchenko, the ideological secretary, remained more and more in the background. Kravchuk sought to convey the impression that, just as the Kremlin was now facing up to the need to make adjustments in its nationalities policy, Shcherbytsky's team also recognized that there had been considerable neglect of problems in the national-cultural sphere and that mistakes had been made, especially concerning the narrowing of the use of Ukrainian in the republic, but that the authorities were working to put things right. His general message seemed to be that the CPU was trying to be more responsive to public opinion, whether on the language issue, the rights of national minorities or ecological issues—in other words, that it was heading the process of restructuring and democratization in the republic and there was no need for any other organization to claim this role.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, Kravchuk carefully distinguished between what he depicted as positive forces for change in the republic, that is those organizations and groups, such as the WUU, which were still prepared to accept the leading role of the Party, and the 'political extremists', such as the UHU, which were not. His tactic was to drive a wedge between the 'constructive' moderates whom the CPU hoped to control in some way, and the 'destructive' radicals with whom there could be no compromise.<sup>17</sup>

The new lengths to which the CPU leadership was now prepared to go in order to harness the national revival was revealed on 5 January when the Central Committee published a wide-ranging decree on inter-ethnic relations that was devoted largely to 'expanding the sphere of the use of the Ukrainian language' and 'developing Ukrainian national culture', even if it was on the basis of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, 'socialism' and 'internationalism'. Had the

<sup>16</sup> See the interview with Kravchuk in *Radyanska Ukraina*, 19 November 1988.

See the interview with Kravchuk in *Pravda Ukrainy*, 20 January 1988.

measures to encourage 'the active use of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of socio-political, public and cultural life' and promote the restoration of some sense of national dignity<sup>18</sup> been proposed a year and a half earlier, they might have placated some of the patriotic activists. But now they were seen as belated concessions being grudgingly made by a regime that had been hostile all along to any Ukrainian national revival and which was finally being forced to give way.

In fact, reminders about the record of the Shcherbytsky team continued to appear in Moscow, as well as Kyiv. In the second half of December, the CPSU's main journal, *Kommunist*, unexpectedly reprinted Dzyuba's article of almost a year before about conceptualizing Ukrainian culture in which he had also described the repressive policies which had been pursued during the Shcherbytsky years.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the following month the mass circulation all-Union publication *Argumenty ifakty* published another interview with Shelest, who this time confirmed that he had been purged for 'nationalism'.<sup>20</sup>

The CPU leadership had missed the boat in another sense, too: language and cultural issues, though still highly important, had been overtaken by political and economic ones concerning democratization and republican sovereignty. Nonetheless, by giving the go-ahead for the republican inaugural conference of the Ukrainian (or Native, as the authorities still insisted that it be called) Language Society, and bending on the question of making Ukrainian the state language, the Shcherbytsky team still hoped that it would be able to appease the cultural intelligentsia and steer it away from further engagement in the political sphere.

Furthermore, in Western Ukraine, and especially Lviv, the national revival was now beginning to assume openly political forms. In November, the Ukrainian Christian Democratic Front had been formed in the Ivano-Frankivsk region by the former political prisoners and radical U H U members Vasyl and Petro Sichko. It held its inaugural meeting in Lviv on 13 January. Though small, its significance lay in the fact that it was one of the first groups to come out openly for Ukrainian independence.<sup>21</sup> Just over a week later,

For the text of the decree, see *Pravda Ukrainy*, 5 January 1989.

<sup>19</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 18, 1988, pp. 51-60.

<sup>20</sup> *Argumenty ifakty*, no. 2, 1989.

the citizens of Lviv defied the authorities to observe an important anniversary. On 22 January 1989, several thousand of them gathered outside the former Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of St George (Yurii) (which the Russian Orthodox Church had taken over) for a commemorative mass to mark the seventieth anniversary of the proclamation of the unification of Ukraine by the UNR and the ZUNR (and the seventy-first anniversary of the declaration of independence by the UNR).

But in Kyiv, too, more modest attempts were made to mark the anniversary. On that day, the authorities prevented a new opposition political party — the Ukrainian Democratic Union (UDU) — from holding its inaugural congress, which had been scheduled to coincide with the anniversary, and also denied UHU activists permission to hold a commemorative public meeting.<sup>22</sup> The following month, the UDU, which included Milyavsky and many other activists from the Ukrainian Culturological Club (UCC), changed its name to the Ukrainian People's Democratic League (UPDL) and on 12 February its Kyiv regional branch adopted a programme aimed at achieving an independent, democratic Ukraine.<sup>23</sup>

In both Lviv and in Kyiv, then, political organizations more nationalistic than the UHU were appearing whose leaders were either members of the UHU or were supporters of it. With the leadership of the UHU preferring to stick to its tactic of not openly calling for full independence, this trend was soon to lead to trouble and factionalism.

### *The battle over the Popular Movement's programme*

All this time, while playing up the CPU's new responsiveness to cultural problems, the republican press, with the exception of *Literaturna Ukraina*, kept silent about the writers' attempt to form a popular movement. On 15 January, however, Dzyuba was able to promote the idea in the pages of the liberal *Moskovskie novosti*. He argued that such a movement would be 'a logical development' in view of the revival of Ukrainian cultural and public life and the search for solutions to 'general political and socio-economic

<sup>21</sup> See UPA Press Release, no. 25, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> See UPA Press Releases, nos 34/1989, and 9/(25 January) 1989.

<sup>23</sup> See UPA Press Release, no. 56 (8 May) 1989.

problems', as well as national-cultural and inter-ethnic ones. The writers and their allies were also fortunate in that their initiative coincided with the end of the Soviet jamming of Radio Liberty's broadcasts to the republics of the Soviet Union. From December 1988 onwards, anyone who tuned in could listen unimpeded to news and political, cultural and religious programmes in their native language. Moreover, a number of courageous activists linked primarily with the UHU and UCC promptly began to provide information by telephone about events in Ukraine which was then beamed back in from Munich throughout the republic. Thus, news about what the writers were attempting and the barriers that were being placed in their way spread rapidly.

The work on preparing a draft programme for the Popular Movement proceeded reasonably quickly. 'Above all, we had as models those programmes with which we were already familiar, the programmes of the Estonian Popular Front, Sajudis, and the Latvian Popular Front', Movchan recalls.<sup>24</sup> The writers in the Initiative Group and their colleagues from the Institute of Literature were helped by a variety of specialists. These included the economists Volodymyr Chernyak and Venyamin Sikora and the young legal specialist Serhii Holovaty. The latter had got involved with the writers and their allies by responding to a report in the press that the Native Language Society was planning to hold an inaugural republican conference and offering his services.<sup>25</sup> Many other supporters of democratization and national renewal did likewise.

Matters came to a head on 31 January when the Initiative Group presented its draft programme to a general meeting of the Kyiv section of the W U U at which Kravchuk was present. Faced with continuing pressure from the Party's ideological officials, on the eve of the gathering the authors of the programme had decided to moderate some of its more radical provisions, namely the right of the republic to veto legislation passed in Moscow which affected it and the principle that all resources and property on the territory of Ukraine were owned by the republic. They had also added a statement conceding recognition of the leading role of the Party. Kravchuk, however, disregarded the changes and proceeded to denounce the original version. He argued that it violated the

<sup>24</sup> See Solchanyk's interview with Movchan, *op. at.*, p. 11.

" Author's interview with Serhii Holovaty, Ebenhausen, 23 November 1993.

constitutions of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR and the Programme of the CPSU. In particular, he attacked the authors of the draft for challenging the Party's right to its leading role, calling for the replacement of the existing political system, and proposing that the Popular Movement become the 'genuine' embodiment of the will of the Ukrainian people. The draft, he maintained, represented a manifesto of political demands and the Popular Movement was proposing itself as a political alternative to the Communist Party. Members of the Party could therefore not take part in such an organization. Who, in any case, Kravchuk asked, gave the writers the right to speak on behalf of the Ukrainian people and to propose such a programme when the CPSU had already initiated a course of political and economic restructuring.

The writers stood their ground and Drach made it clear that they would not be intimidated. In particular, he urged the CPU leadership to be more careful with issuing warnings to Communist Party members not to participate in the Popular Movement — the creation of which, he stressed, had been endorsed by the writers' own Party committee — as this could boomerang on it and lead to the embarrassing exodus of writers from the Party. The only somewhat dissonant note from among the writers was sounded by Shcherbak, who was preparing to stand for election to the new USSR Congress of People's Deputies and, according to some of his colleagues, did not want to spoil his chances by appearing too radical. He felt that the programme was too long and detailed and that parts of it needed to be improved, especially by legal specialists, to make it appear less categorical and confrontational. The writers decided to adopt the draft in principle and asked the editorial team to polish it up and then publish the programme in *Literaturna Ukraina* and, hopefully, other newspapers. In the event of the authorities banning the publication of the programme, Drach called on all of the writers to help disseminate the document independently.<sup>26</sup>

Within the next few days, a major press campaign was launched attacking the writers for their draft programme and repeating the accusations which Kravchuk had made. Although the public had still to see the text of the draft, the offensive against the writers caused

<sup>26</sup> For details, see Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 23-4, and the articles by V. Desyatnykov in *Radyanska Ukraina*, 1 February, and E. Lohvyn, *Robotnycha hazeta*, 8 February 1989.

a stir and inadvertently revealed that a serious challenge was being made to the CPU by democratic and patriotic forces whose representatives included Communists and leading cultural figures. The timing also added to the drama: whether the writers intended it or not, the fact that they were proposing an alternative programme only weeks before the multi-candidate elections to the Congress of People's Deputies were due gave the document the aura of an election manifesto.

The attacks against the writers only precipitated the consolidation of the democratic opposition. Drach, Pavlychko and their colleagues realized that a critical phase had been reached in the long, drawn out, trial of strength between Shcherbytsky's conservative regime and the resurgent Ukrainian cultural intelligentsia and that they had to go for broke. Drach, for instance, decided to try to run for election in the Ukrainian capital. During these tense days, he and Pavlychko pressed Kravchuk to allow the draft programme to be published. 'We told him', Pavlychko recalls, 'that if Rukh's [Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring] programme is not published, all of the members of the Writers' Union who are members of the Communist Party will leave the Party'.<sup>27</sup> Reluctantly, the CPU leadership gave way.

But before the draft programme was published, a major event took place which became a triumph for Ukraine's national democratic forces: on 11-12 February the inaugural republican conference of the Native Language Society was held in Kyiv. It brought together hundreds of delegates from all parts of Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian communities in the Baltic republics, Eastern Europe and the West. Ukraine's national minorities were also represented. What is more, for the first time, leading writers and cultural figures (Honchar opened the proceedings) shared the stage with former political prisoners (UHU activist Bohdan Horyn was elected to the Board of the Society). The Ukrainian Party leadership came under strong attack — Yelchenko, who was present, was booed — as did Soviet nationalities policy generally. In particular, the delegates assailed the notion of bilingualism in Ukrainian and Russian as a norm and demanded that Ukrainian be made the state language of the republic without further delay. The delegates formally named their organization - which at this time had about

10,000 members—the Ukrainian Language Society and elected Pavlychko to lead it.

The delegates also expressed their wholehearted support for the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring. Dzyuba compared the campaign being waged against it with the Stalinist tactic of setting the workers against the intelligentsia. For his part Drach, who suspected that the Shcherbytsky leadership hoped that by allowing the creation of a republican Ukrainian Language Society it would blunt the push for the creation of the Popular Movement, was determined not to allow this to happen. He told delegates that the creation of the Ukrainian Language Society was only the first stage in the creation of a broad popular movement and not an end in itself. The conference duly registered its backing for the Popular Movement in its resolutions.

Unexpectedly, outspoken criticism was also voiced at the conference of the Russian Orthodox Church's attitude towards the Ukrainian language and its hostility towards the Ukrainian Autocephalous and Ukrainian Catholic Churches. It was delivered by a young Ukrainian priest ordained in the Russian Orthodox Church, Father Bohdan Mykhailechko. Criticizing Metropolitan Filaret, the Russian Orthodox Exarch for Ukraine, for not having accepted an invitation to attend, he commented: 'This again underlines the attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church towards our language and culture. . . . It is not only the policy of Stalin and of the period of stagnation; it is the policy of Peter I and of other Russian tsars.' His bold stand was strongly supported and, on 15 February, he and four others announced the formation of an 'Initiative Committee for the Restoration of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church'.<sup>28</sup>

The following day, *Literaturna Ukraina* published the draft programme of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring, or Rukh (which, like Sajudis, meant 'Movement'), as it was now called for short. Although it did not go quite as far as the programmes of the Baltic popular fronts, or the 'Declaration of Principles' of the UHU, bearing in mind the political conditions existing in Ukraine, it was still a radical document. The preamble

" See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Inaugural Conference of Ukrainian Language Society Turns into Major Political Demonstration', *Report on the USSR*, no. 9 (3 March 1989), pp. 20-2, and Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 25-7.

reflected the compromises which the authors had made as a result of pressure from the CPU leadership. It described the new movement as 'a mass, voluntary organization, based on the patriotic initiative of citizens of Ukraine', to support the 'revolutionary restructuring initiated by the Party' and the 'fundamental socialist renewal in all spheres of state, public and economic life' which this policy entailed. It also acknowledged 'the leading role of the Communist Party in socialist society'. But the rest of the document made it quite clear that the new organization, in taking at face value and supporting the progressive course launched by Gorbachev, was in fact seeking an end to the traditional authoritarian Soviet political and economic system which the CPU was still perpetuating in Ukraine. Indeed, the programme declared that Rukh 'will do its utmost to dismantle the administrative-bureaucratic system which was formed during the periods of Stalinism and stagnation'.

Broad in scope, the programme called for fundamental changes in the political, economic, social, cultural and ecological spheres, the aim of which was to transform Ukraine into a genuinely sovereign republic and a law-governed state. Unlike the UHU's 'Declaration of Principles', which had come out for a Soviet confederation, it envisaged Ukraine within a revamped Soviet federation based on Leninist principles. Although the document did not assert outright the republic's right to veto legislation affecting it which was passed in Moscow, it stressed that the powers of the Ukrainian and Soviet Supreme Soviets had to be clearly delineated, that all of the republic's resources, enterprises, and communications and transport networks were the property of its people and only the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet had the right to decide how they were to be used, and that the republic should become economically sovereign on the basis of republican cost-accounting. The people of Ukraine, it stated, had the right to determine their own destiny and Rukh would seek the realization of the republic's proclaimed rights as a sovereign state.

As for the political reforms which were to transform Ukraine into a state based on the democratic rule of law, the programme emphasized the following principles: 'the state exists for the people, not the other way around'; equality before the law; and respect for civil rights and international democratic norms. It demanded the banning of persecution on political, racial or religious grounds and of political censorship and sought the inauguration of freedom of thought,

religion, expression and of information. Stalinist crimes, it added, had to be recognized as crimes against humanity and there could be no statutes of limitation in this regard. The cases of the more recent victims of political persecution had to be reviewed and those responsible for them brought to account.

Indicating the political role that Rukh wanted to assume, the programme insisted that free elections — a particularly sensitive issue at this time — were a precondition for the democratization of society and declared that the new organization intended to 'take an active part in election campaigns and propose its own candidates', and that it would demand the recall of 'idle' deputies, or ones whose activities were considered to be damaging to the people of Ukraine. Rukh would also 'systematically organize public opinion polls and publish their results and introduce proposals on holding referendums'.

In the economic sphere, the programme was rather more vague. It called for the transformation of the Ukrainian economy into a 'genuinely socialist one, free of deformations and distortions', which would be, 'humane ... ecologically healthy and resource-balanced'. This entailed reducing bureaucratization, centralization and everything impeding the gains of the scientific-technical revolution. Furthermore, a 'rational restructuring' of the Ukrainian economy had to be carried out and the priorities in the distribution of capital investments changed. The programme stated that it was 'necessary to switch over from an economy in which the mining and high energy-consuming branches play an excessively vast role', to scientifically based 'ecological clean' industries. Turning to agriculture, the programme denounced the 'brutal violence' and damage that forcible collectivization had brought and suggested that economic policy should move some way towards privatization through flexibility with respect to the size of agricultural enterprises and the leasing of land to the rural population 'with rights of inheritance'. In the social sphere, the programme called for the 'humanization of society', an end to the *nomenklatura's* privileges, greater equality, a struggle against corruption, 'a genuine emancipation of women', and an overhaul of the security and health care systems. The programme also expressed its support for the Green movement and urged the strict legal protection of the environment. It called for a radical review of the nuclear energy programme in Ukraine, the closure of the Chornobyl nuclear power station, as well as stopping the construction of new atomic reactors in the republic.

Last, but certainly not least, the programme addressed the issues connected with nationalities policy, language and culture. Invoking once again 'Leninist principles' in the sphere of nationalities policies, it called for the national rights of the Ukrainian people — including the right to 'state sovereignty' — to be respected, and at the same time extended this principle to all the other nationalities living in Ukraine. Indeed, the programme declared that 'genuine friendship between peoples can only be achieved on the basis of mutual respect for the language, culture, history and traditions of each people'. Thus, it presented the realization of the national rights of the Ukrainians as something that was to be done not at the expense of the other national groups living in the republic, but in tandem with their own national-cultural development. While, on the one hand, stressing that the Ukrainian language should be recognized as the state language in the republic and be made a compulsory subject in Ukraine's educational institutions, and that the revival of 'national dignity [and] historical memory' be officially promoted, it also upheld the right of all the other nationalities in Ukraine, from the Russians to the Crimean Tatars, to have their own schools, newspapers, theatres, and other cultural facilities necessary for their cultural development and well-being. The programme also sought the same for Ukrainians living in other republics of the Soviet Union and maintained that it was the duty of the Ukrainian state to care for their cultural needs.

By referring throughout the document to the 'people of Ukraine', rather than to the 'Ukrainian people', and by naming Rukh itself the 'Popular Movement of Ukraine', rather than the 'Ukrainian Popular Movement,' the authors of the programme emphasized that they were not seeking to mobilize purely ethnic 'Ukrainian' forces, but were seeking to build a broad coalition representing all of Ukraine's inhabitants. In fact, they were projecting an understanding of Ukrainian statehood and citizenship based not on an ethnic principle but a territorial one wherein Ukraine was regarded as a homeland for all of its residents.

Although what Rukh's programme was advocating boiled down to a cross between national Communism and Socialism with a human face, both of these were anathema to the Shcherbytsky regime, and the reaction was predictable enough. Apart from *Literatuma Ukraina*, no other publication published the document and a special appeal which the authors of the programme had

addressed to the nationalities of Ukraine explaining Rukh's objectives was not allowed to appear even in this newspaper. Within two days of the programme's publication, a 'collective letter' was published in *Radyanska Ukraina* attacking the programme; it was signed by, among others, three vice-presidents of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.<sup>29</sup> It signalled the beginning of a new barrage in the press against Rukh.

*The democratic opposition makes headway*

Attention now focused on the first multi-candidate elections and the political struggle throughout the Soviet Union between the forces of change and the defenders of the status quo. Although the elections represented a major step forward in the direction of democracy, they were still far from being truly democratic. Their intention, after all, was not to encourage the development of a multi-party system in the Soviet Union, but to enable Gorbachev and his team to establish better control over the reform and modernization process by means of a revamped and 'democratized' CPSU and a new two-tier quasi-parliament, in other\* words, through the creation of an as yet undetermined form of socialist democracy within a mono-Party system and a unitary USSR. Thus, of the 2,250 seats in the Congress of People's Deputies, only two-thirds were to be filled by popular vote, with 750 being reserved for representatives of 'public and professional organizations', that is, the CPSU and organizations operating under its aegis. Furthermore, the complicated procedures for the nomination and registration of candidates effectively gave local Party officials control over determining who would be allowed to stand for election.

In Ukraine, as elsewhere, the election campaign was heating up. The CPU apparatus was increasing tension by seeking to prevent its critics and opponents from being registered as candidates. In Kyiv, where the political awakening of the public was becoming increasingly apparent, some Rukh leaders and supporters, such as Drach and Yavorivsky, were allowed to stand and thereby afforded the opportunity to promote the Popular Movement at election meetings and in the capital's evening newspaper *Vechirni Kyiv*.<sup>M</sup> To add to

the CPU's problems, several leading local Communist Party figures began at this time either to express their support for Rukh, or to dissent from the Shcherbytsky regime's general line. They included Ivan Salii, the first secretary of the Podol district Party organization, Karpenko, the editor of *Vechirni Kyiv* and Petro Talanchuk, the Rector of the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute, who was running for election.

But in the regions the situation was more difficult. In Lviv, for example, the authorities blocked Bratun's registration, while in nearby Chervonohrad, the former political prisoner Khmara was placed under administrative arrest for fifteen days, ostensibly for organizing an illegal meeting, when in fact he had simply sought to present his platform at a gathering to select candidates.<sup>31</sup> These actions only led to protests, which in Zhytomyr, at least, were successful. Here, the courageous journalist Alia Yaroshynska, who had exposed corruption among the local Party authorities, was registered as a candidate, but only after thousands had come out in support of her. In the Ukrainian capital itself, on 19 February democratic activists began a chain of pre-election demonstrations."~

It was in this charged atmosphere that, on 20 February, Gorbachev made a previously unannounced visit to Ukraine. He did little to clear the air, however, for in his numerous comments and statements he once again gave mixed signals. Although he urged the public to remove those who were blocking restructuring, he did not openly criticize Shcherbytsky, who was shown by his side throughout most of the visit. This time, however, the Soviet leader was more tactful as regards Ukrainian national sensibilities. He visited Lviv and met there with representatives of the city's cultural and scientific intelligentsia. At the meeting, the writers Lubkivsky and Roman Fedoriv spoke of the concern for the fate of the Ukrainian language and culture, and a pensioner complained that the history of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, which had been purged and suppressed during the Stalin era, was still being distorted.<sup>33</sup> Generally though, Gorbachev stayed off the nationalities

<sup>30</sup> See the interviews with Drach and Yavorivsky in *Vechirni Kyiv* of 6 and 9 March 1989, respectively.

<sup>31</sup> See UPA Press Releases, nos 14/1989; 30/(19 February) 1989; and, 7/(25 January) 1989.

<sup>32</sup> AP, 22 February 1989.

question and restricted himself to statements about the economic importance of Ukraine for the Soviet Union, the need for unity among the peoples of the USSR, especially the Slavs, and to repeating the claim that Ukrainian national culture had flourished under Soviet rule. In Donetsk, though, Gorbachev was put on the spot in front of television cameras by a Donbas miner who castigated the writers for creating a Ukrainian popular front and for, as he implied, their excessive zeal for the Ukrainian language. The Soviet leader evaded committing himself on these issues and instead responded defensively with a rhetorical question: 'Can anyone . . . say that we are indifferent to the fate of the Ukrainian people, to its culture, history, language and literature, and to its intelligentsia?'<sup>34</sup>

At the same meeting in Donetsk, Gorbachev revealed what was probably behind his foray into Ukraine. He openly acknowledged Moscow's concern about the possibility of Ukraine making 'a contribution . . . to all these revolutionary changes of ours . . . in a way not contemplated by restructuring' and about the potential consequences of unrest in the republic. The effects of the conflict in Nagorny-Karabakh, he stressed, had been felt throughout the Soviet Union. 'You can only imagine what would happen if disruption were to begin in a republic such as Ukraine where . . . 51 million people live', he told miners. Restructuring would fail and the whole fabric of the USSR would come apart. That is why 'at this crucial time', as he acknowledged, 'a close watch' was being kept on the situation in the republic.<sup>35</sup>

Although the media depicted Gorbachev's meetings with residents of Kyiv, Lviv and Donetsk as 'spontaneous' ones, it transpired that they were in fact 'choreographed' by local officials who had carefully selected the people he encountered. Moreover, in both Kyiv and Lviv, the authorities detained a number of local activists during the visit.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, in both cities, demonstrations against Shcherbytsky and his methods took place, with hundreds of

<sup>33</sup> *Pravda*, 23 February 1989.

Soviet television, 22 February 1989. Interestingly, the comments made by the miner, identified as O. Lyashok, were subsequently toned down in the official TASS account which appeared in the Soviet press.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

One of Lviv's singing bards, Andrii Panchyshyn, wrote a song satirizing Gorbachev's visit to the city ('Novyna u misti Lvovi' [News in Lviv City]), and it subsequently became popular throughout the republic.

protesters gathering in the Ukrainian capital for several nights running.<sup>37</sup> For all of Gorbachev's continued emphasis on the need *foiglasnost*, the Soviet media made no mention of this.

While Gorbachev was actually in Ukraine, on 22 February Yelchenko and Kravchuk jointly submitted a report about Rukh to the CPU's Politburo which also outlined a plan for stifling it. They described Rukh as an attempt to create a political opposition movement which, behind the facade of support for restructuring, was, as they claimed its draft programme indicated, 'nationalistic' and under 'extremist' influence. Political exigencies, they explained, had required that in order to 'expose the real aims' of Rukh *Literaturna Ukraina* had been allowed to publish the draft programme and this had been followed up by a campaign organized with 'the use of all means of propaganda and agitation' to discredit the writers' initiative. The offensive against Rukh would be stepped up with more organized attacks in the media from 'mass public organizations', such as trade unions, the Komsomol, and veterans' and women's organizations, and meetings would be organized in factories to denounce the fledgling movement. If the organizers of Rukh persisted, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet would rule that the creation of Rukh violated the Soviet and Soviet Ukrainian constitutions. A proposal that Drach, Pavlychko and Bryukhovetsky be called to face workers' meetings in Eastern Ukrainian cities was personally rejected by Shcherbytsky because this could provide them with opportunities to get their message across.<sup>38</sup>

Unexpectedly for the democratic opposition, though, the Soviet leader's visit finished on an encouraging note. The leaders of the WUU, most of whom were also the founders of Rukh, managed, at virtually the last moment before Gorbachev's departure, to obtain a meeting with him. Oliinyk apparently pulled this off because of his good contacts with Raisa Gorbachev. The meeting was held on 24 February in Shcherbytsky's office in the presence of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders. Drach and Pavlychko did not mince their words and, in describing the situation in the republic, castigated Shcherbytsky and his policies. For his part, Gorbachev sought to soothe tempers and promote conciliation between the CPU leadership and

David Remnick, 'Activists Arrested in Ukraine before Gorbachev's Arrival', 77*e* *Washington Post*, and AP, 22 February 1989.

Lytvyn, *Political Arena*, pp. 118-21.

the writers. On the one hand, quoting Shevchenko and other Ukrainian poets, he assured the writers that he understood and sympathized with their concern for the Ukrainian language and culture, but appealed to them to be patient, to 'understand the complexities of the entire situation', and not to get carried away. It was imperative, he told them, for the Slavonic peoples of the USSR to maintain their unity. On the other hand, after being reassured by Pavlychko that Rukh did not view itself as a new political party, he did not condemn the creation of the Popular Movement. In fact, as Yelchenko recounts, he demonstratively told the CPU's ideological secretary: 'Yura, you have to pay heed to the issues which the writers have raised.' At any rate, the writers emerged from the meeting with the feeling that the Soviet leader had endorsed their efforts and that Shcherbytsky and his lieutenants had been put in their place.<sup>39</sup>

After Gorbachev's visit, however, the struggle between the Shcherbytsky regime and the democratic opposition only intensified. On 27 February, Rukh was denounced at a meeting of the Presidium of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences by Yelchenko and other speakers and the press kept up its attacks against the Popular Movement. But fear was receding and political protests, mainly connected with the forthcoming elections, were becoming almost daily occurrences, especially in Kyiv and Lviv.

More and more patriotic demonstrations were also taking place. On 26 February, for instance, thousands of people gathered outside St George's Cathedral in Lviv for a requiem service on the 125th anniversary of the death of Shevchenko, which was conducted jointly by a Ukrainian Catholic priest and an Orthodox one who had just broken with the Russian Orthodox Church. On the same day, a large public meeting was held outside Kyiv's Republican Stadium to discuss the defence of the Ukrainian historical and cultural heritage and among the speakers were Drach, Tanyuk, Yavorivsky and Saliy.<sup>40</sup> That the national revival was continuing to gather momentum could also be seen from the fact that more and more material was appearing in the Ukrainian press about previously proscribed historical and cultural subjects, including, for instance,

<sup>39</sup> Author's interviews with Yelchenko, Pavlychko and Drach, and AP, 24 February 1989.

<sup>40</sup> Bill Keller, 'In the Ukraine, Nationalism Gains Respect', *New York Times*, 9 March 1989, and UPA Press Release, no. 41, 1989.

the role of Mazepa, the works of Hrushevsky, Vynnychenko, and Khvylovy, and Stalin's terror-famine in Ukraine.

Ukraine's democratic opposition was given a new boost in early March by the inaugural conference in Kyiv of the Ukrainian Memorial Society. It again brought together representatives of the democratic intelligentsia and leaders of Rukh with former political prisoners and representatives of the still outlawed Ukrainian Catholic Church. The conference, in which about 500 people participated, was opened by Oliinyk, and among the activists which the conference elected to lead the new organization were Tanyuk, and the former political prisoners Mykhailo Horyn, Yehven Pronyuk and Ihor Dobroshtan (who had been a leader of an uprising in the Vorkuta labour camps after Stalin's death). During the forthright and broad-ranging discussion, calls were made for, among other things: the opening of the secret police archives; official acknowledgement that the trials of Ukrainian scholars and cultural figures at the end of the 1920s had been deliberately fabricated; the erection of a monument to the victims of Stalin's famine in Ukraine; for the truth to be told about the Bykivnya wood, on the outskirts of Kyiv, and other such sites throughout the republic, where, according to Memorial's supporters, thousands of victims of Stalin's executions were secretly buried in mass graves; for a reappraisal of the struggle which the UPA had waged; for the freeing of all remaining political prisoners; the return to Ukraine for reburial of the remains of Stus, Marchenko, Tykhy and other political prisoners; for an end to the political abuse of psychiatry; and for not only 'moral,' but also material, compensation for the victims of political persecution. Most of these demands, as well as a strong statement of support for Rukh, were incorporated into a programmatic resolution adopted by the conference.

On 5 March, the final day of the conference, Memorial held its first public rally and more than 5,000 people turned up.<sup>41</sup> Thus, within weeks of the creation of a republican Ukrainian Language Society, this patriotic pressure group had been joined by an important new vehicle for setting the historical record straight and exposing the political crimes of the Soviet period.

The CPU leadership fought back and did its best to neutralize

See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Ukrainian "Memorial" Society Confronts Stalinist Heritage in Ukraine', *Report on the USSR*, vol. 1, no. 11 (17 March 1989), pp. 15-18.

the challenges from the democratic opposition. It managed momentarily to stun the leadership of Rukh when, on 8 March, Oliinyk unexpectedly published a letter in *Radyanska Ukraina* in which he criticized Drach's version of how the writers' Initiative Group to create a Popular Movement had been established and Rukh's programme drafted (the Party Committee, he implied, had been tricked). In effect, he thereby publicly distanced himself from the Popular Movement. In Drach's view, the reason for Oliinyk's volte-face was pressure applied by the authorities on him as a potential candidate from the Communist Party in the elections.<sup>42</sup> Movchan, however, suspected that Oliinyk's action was motivated as 'an attempt to outshine Drach', whose popularity was quickly growing.<sup>43</sup>

Work on uniting Rukh's supporters and building a genuine grass-roots movement went on, with Bryukhovetsky playing a leading role in the organizational work. On 18 March a meeting of the representatives of some seventy-one diverse groups from Kyiv and the surrounding region which backed Rukh was held in the capital and a coordinating council was elected. The respected philosopher Myroslav Popovych was chosen to head it. His presence and active role in promoting Rukh — among other things, he ably defended Rukh in televised debates with Kravchuk — helped to thwart the CPU's attempts to depict the Popular Movement as an 'extremist' organization and to broaden its appeal.<sup>44</sup>

A week after Rukh established its coordinating council, the CPU's Ideological Department held a round-table with leading representatives of Ukraine's cultural intelligentsia. Kravchuk sought to persuade the cultural intelligentsia to concentrate on cultural matters and not meddle in politics. Rukh, he claimed, had failed to win mass support and, holding out the prospect of further cultural concessions, he invited the cultural elite to assist the CPU in formulating 'a comprehensive programme for the development of Ukrainian national culture for the period to the year 2,000'. Drach, however, countered by asserting that Rukh was in fact gathering strength and by arguing that cultural work did not preclude involvement in the Popular Movement and its activities. The opponents

<sup>42</sup> Author's interview with Drach.

<sup>43</sup> Solchanyk's interview with Movchan.

<sup>44</sup> See Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 37-8.

of Rukh, he declared, were simply 'defending the administrative-command system by whatever means'.<sup>45</sup>

On 28 March, the CPU's Politburo discussed another report on Rukh from Yelchenko and Kravchuk in which the latter two called for an intensification of the struggle against the defiant unofficial formation. They also proposed that the regional, district and city councils begin sending denunciations of Rukh to the Presidium of the republican Supreme Soviet in order to prepare the ground for a ruling that the activities of the organizers of the popular movement were illegal. Interestingly, the record reveals that Valentyna Shevchenko, the chairman of the Presidium, opposed this proposal and therefore in effect vetoed it. Perhaps alluding to this, Shcherbytsky commented that, unlike Kravchuk, not all of the Central Committee's leading officials were pulling their weight in the struggle against the Party's opponents.<sup>46</sup>

For details about the proceedings, see *Pravda Ukrainy*, 30 March 1989, and *Literaturna Ukraina*, 6 April 1989. From the official account of the meeting, it appears that most of the participants, the majority of whom were members of the cultural *nomenklatura*, preferred to play it safe for die time being and not to stick their necks out by coming out in support of Rukh.

<sup>46</sup> Lytvyn, *Political Arena*, pp. 126-31.