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THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY

Rukh's inaugural congress

As was to be expected, Rukh's inaugural congress turned into a celebration of the national and political awakening of Ukraine and was a landmark in modern Ukrainian history. Held in the hall of Kyiv's Polytechnical Institute, which was lavishly decorated with Ukrainian national symbols and regional emblems, and with the Ukrainian Zaporozhyan Cossack march sounding as the theme tune, the atmosphere was euphoric. Not since the days of the shortlived independent Ukrainian state seventy years before had Kyiv witnessed such a gathering. The broader international significance of what the congress represented was emphasized by one of the main foreign guests, the Polish historian and veteran Solidarity activist, Adam Michnik. With the 'totalitarian system' in Eastern and Central Europe collapsing and a new European community of free nations appearing in its place, this 'historic day' of 'Ukraine's national rebirth' was important for 'all of Europe', he maintained. Michnik brought the delegates to their feet by calling for closer Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in a 'new common European family' and by finishing his speech with the words: 'Long live a democratic, just, free Ukraine!'

Rukh's growth had been spectacular. According to the data presented at the congress, the Popular Movement's membership had soared to almost 280,000. The congress was attended by 1,109 of the 1,158 elected delegates (some were prevented from participating by local authorities), representing 1,247 groups throughout Ukraine and several in the Baltic republics. The delegates represented a broad cross-section of Ukraine's population and included 994 Ukrainians, 77 Russians, 9 Jews, 6 Poles, 6 Belarusians, 2 Armenians, and representatives of seven other national groups. There was a

preponderance of intellectuals and white collar workers, though 109 of the delegates were workers. Although all the regions of Ukraine were represented, almost half of the delegates came from Western Ukraine, some 35% from the central regions, 9% from the southern ones, and less than 6% from Eastern Ukraine. The largest delegations were from the Kyiv region (accounting for 17.71% of the total), Lviv region (14.21%), and Rivne region (10.23%); Party members made up just over 20% of the delegates, and Komsomol members another 2%.

Understandably, the congress saw three days of catharsis, emotions ran high, and many of the speakers treated the congress as a rally rather than as an occasion for offering constructive proposals and identifying and debating concrete tasks. Nevertheless, the overriding theme was the need for unity — political, ethnic and social — and its prerequisites: tolerance and democracy. With Communists and non-Communists, Ukrainian nationalists and representatives of Ukraine's national minorities, Western Ukrainians and Eastern Ukrainians, workers and intellectuals, former political prisoners and representatives of the militia and army all meeting together under one roof and, by and large, finding a common language, the congress demonstrated how much progress Rukh's organizers had made in building a broad coalition. The presence of representatives of the Regional Union of Strike Committees of the Donbas was also an encouraging sign. Faced with such an impressive assembly, the CPU's plan to disrupt proceedings failed.

Although there were calls at the congress for independence, most notably from UHU leaders Lukyanenko and Chornovil, the majority of speakers called for the broadest political and economic sovereignty for Ukraine and for the USSR to be transformed into a confederation. As Pavlychko put it, Rukh rejected the existing 'paper' statehood of Ukraine but was not calling for secession from the USSR. 'We want an independent Ukraine', he declared, 'within a constellation of free states'. This position was reflected in the new, more radical and detailed version of the Popular Movement's programme, which was approved by the congress. It stated that Rukh sought 'the creation of a sovereign Ukrainian state', which would 'build its relations with the other republics of the USSR on the basis of a new Union treaty'. As before, it also committed Rukh to striving for a democratic law-based state, a mixed economy, social

justice and ethnic harmony. Recognition of the Party's leading role, however, was dropped.

The congress also adopted a statute and numerous programmatic resolutions and appeals, including ones addressed to all the non-Ukrainians living in the republic, and separate ones appealing for understanding and support from Ukraine's 11-million strong Russian minority, condemning all forms of anti-Semitism, and supporting the national rights of the Crimean Tatars. Pavlychko warned in his speech about the rise of the Interfronts in the Baltic republics and Moldova and the fact that 'the centre', including the ail-Union media, seemed to be encouraging these 'chauvinistic' and 'reactionary' movements, and clearly Rukh's leaders, were anxious to forestall similar developments in Ukraine. Even Chornovil, one of the most radical figures at the congress, went out of his way to reassure Russians. He explained that he was telling Western Ukrainians not to use the slogan 'Occupiers out!', without qualifying what was meant. If by 'occupiers' was meant those responsible for imposing the control of the central ministries and 'Moscow's imperialism' in Ukraine, then he supported the slogan. But if it meant 'the Russian worker, who not being conscious of his role, ended up here as a result of the Stalin-Suslov policy of intermixing peoples, and whose children have grown up here and have no fatherland other than Ukraine', then he was against it.

Several new themes were raised at the congress which reflected the continuing radicalization of society and the progress of the national revival. One was that of the degree of economic control and 'exploitation' by Moscow. For instance, in addressing the question of economic sovereignty, the economist Mykhailo Shvaika from Lviv claimed that the central ministries controlled enterprises responsible for 95% of the republic's output and the distribution of 90% of the wealth produced in Ukraine. He told delegates that sovereignty was impossible without the creation of Ukrainian financial, monetary and banking systems and the introduction of a national currency. Another was that of the role of the army. The Armenian Colonel Martyrosyan assured delegates that officers such as he would never lead the army against the people. Aleksandr Volkov, a Russian worker from Ivano-Frankivsk and U H U member, who introduced himself as the son of a Red Army officer and the grandson of a tsarist officer, told the congress that only 'an independent, strong Ukraine' would be able to safeguard the rights

of all of its citizens. But without the creation of a 'strong Ukrainian national army' the achievement of political independence would be impossible. As a first step, Volkov proposed that Rukh demand that Ukrainian citizens do their military service only 'in Ukraine and in the Black Sea Fleet' and that Ukrainian be the official language used by military units stationed in Ukraine.

Kravchuk represented the CPU leadership at the congress and was given quite a warm welcome. Adopting a moderate tone, he appealed to the delegates not to rush matters, to recognize existing political realities, and to distance themselves from 'extremists'. His arguments failed to make much of an impression and, hardly surprisingly, the congress heard repeated calls for Shcherbytsky to go, including from Salii. In fact, a group of nineteen deputies from the Republican Deputies Club attending the congress issued an open letter to Gorbachev, which was read out to the delegates, in which they accused the Ukrainian Party leader and his team of sabotaging *perestroika* and deliberately destabilizing the situation in the republic through disinformation and by fomenting confrontation between Rukh and its opponents as well as between Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians.¹ Among those who criticized Shcherbytsky at the congress, as well as the attempts to discredit Rukh in the official media, was the deputy head of a Donbas strike committee and Party member Petro Poberezhny.

As at the inaugural conference of the Kyiv regional organization of Rukh, Yavorivsky and Konev delivered two of the best speeches and emerged as the congress' stars. The latter emphasized the critical importance of the forthcoming elections to the republican Supreme Soviet and the local councils and declared that Rukh and its allies had 'no right' to lose them. He told delegates that, apart from keeping up the pressure for a revision of the officially proposed draft law on elections, it was essential that Rukh and its allies made good preparations, such as building up a network of voters' associations that would guard against efforts by the Party apparatus to dominate the local electoral commissions, and establishing a republican committee to coordinate the activity of these associations. Konev also

¹ For the text, see *Hobs*, no. 4, 17 September 1989. Two other signatories, Yaroshynska and Chelyshev, withdrew their signatures because, as the same issue of *Holos* put it, their constituents did not necessarily support Rukh and its position on the national problem.

warned the delegates to be on their guard against efforts by the Party apparatus to split the opposition into 'patriotic' and 'democratic' camps, or along regional lines, by, for instance, frightening Eastern Ukrainian workers with the blue and yellow colours or the prospect of forcible Ukrainization, or by setting strike committees against Rukh groups; he also called on Rukh to refrain from actions in the east that might antagonize the local population.

These problems were also raised by a representative from the Donbas, S. Furmanyuk, who caused controversy by declaring that the region was not yet ready to accept Ukrainian national symbols and that the workers there 'will not understand us'. Poberezhny, however, offered a somewhat different assessment. He told the delegates that it was not true that the miners had made only economic demands: they wanted better contacts with the intelligentsia, more information about Rukh and to learn about Ukrainian national symbols." Other representatives from the strike committees, however, were less receptive to what they encountered at the congress. According to one from Voroshylovhrad, not enough was said in support of the workers and insufficient attention was paid to economic questions.³ Indeed, among the resolutions, which included an appeal addressed to personnel in the military, militia and KGB, there was also one addressed to the republics' workers and peasants. Apart, however, from recognizing in very general terms the 'unjust' and 'unbearable' conditions in which the workers found themselves, and calling for unity between the workers and intelligentsia, the resolution failed even to mention the recent miners' strikes.

The congress elected Drach leader of the Popular Movement, Konev, as his first deputy, and Yavorivsky, Mykhailo Horyn and Chernyak as other deputies. Horyn was chosen to head the secretariat and Yavorivsky to lead Rukh's Grand Council. Apart from establishing a new organizational infrastructure, the congress also set up numerous *collegia* and committees to work on a broad range of issues ranging from economic reform to stimulating cultural revival. Overall, whatever its shortcomings, the congress was a major success and, having confirmed the consolidation of the Ukrainian

" See Viktor Hrabovsky's report on Rukh's congress in *Literatuma Ukraina*, 14 December 1989.

³ *Postup*, no. 11, October 1989, p. 2.

national democratic movement in the form of Rukh, marked the opening of a new chapter in the political transformation of modern Ukraine.

Kravchuk's ambiguous role at this time should be mentioned. Pavlychko recalls that Kravchuk's attitude in private, if not in public, had begun to change and that, for instance, behind the scenes, he helped the organizers of the congress deal with some of the technical problems which they had faced, such as arranging hotel accommodation for the delegates.⁴ At the congress itself, Pavlychko acknowledged Kravchuk's help and also paid tribute to his position on the draft law on languages, stressing that had it not been for Kravchuk, the draft would be proposing two state languages for the republic —Ukrainian and Russian.⁵ For his part, Kravchuk called for an end to confrontation, saying that the CPU wanted to see in Rukh 'its natural and active ally in the cause of renewing society', and was ready to cooperate with 'all progressive forces' that were prepared to work within, as opposed to against, the 'socialist Soviet' system. He concluded his speech at the congress with the declaration: 'I wish the Ukrainian people well, [and wish for] real sovereignty for Ukraine in a friendly family of all peoples and nationalities.'⁶

Kravchuk provided a clue to understanding his behaviour in a candid interview which he gave during the congress to *Postup*. Asked about his 'evolution', he replied that if a politician does not alter his views to take into account changes in the political situation and the balance of political forces, 'he is not a politician'. Citing the example of how Lenin had changed his policies when circumstances demanded it, he argued that politics demand political flexibility and that those who attempt to 'stand still' lose 'touch with real life'. As for Rukh, he predicted that if the movement applied itself to concrete tasks, then 'the people will of course support it'. Among these tasks, he mentioned work in the cultural and environmental spheres and, especially, generating ideas and support for economic reforms and their implementation. Reviewing the years of restructuring, he acknowledged that there had been plenty of proposals,

Author's interview with Pavlychko.

Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, p. 55.

⁶ On Rukh's Congress, see the issues of *Uteraturna Ukmina* from 14 September to 14 December 1989; *Suchanist*, no. 12, 1989; Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 48-60; Kaminsky, *In a Transitional Stage*, pp. 235-70.

but that no economic progress had been made and that in some respects the situation had deteriorated. Public meetings and talk alone without work, including 'work towards building democracy', would not solve anything. Without a solid economic basis, he asserted, democracy would remain 'a mirage'.⁷

Behind the scenes, though, Kravchuk stuck to his previous 'official' position: on the basis of his report about the congress the Central Committee of the CPU adopted a resolution on 11 September calling on regional Party organizations to step up their activities against Rukh. Local Party bosses were instructed to use 'actively all forms and methods of political struggle'. Rukh was described in the document as aiming to take power by a 'peaceful parliamentary' route and to 'achieve the complete independence of Ukraine'.⁸

Thus, despite Kravchuk's apparent flirtation with Rukh, the general reaction of the Shcherbytsky regime to the congress was prompt and predictable. There were new attacks on Rukh in the republican press, amplified by *Pravda* and TASS,⁹ which focused on the influence of 'extremist' elements in the organization. On 14 September *Radyanska Ukraina* published an open letter from a group of representatives of the strike committees in Voroshylovhrad who had attended Rukh's congress in which they praised the movement's programme for its 'democratic, progressive and constructive' features, but condemned the 'nationalism' and 'extremism' which they claimed had been supported by the delegates. They announced that because of this, they had decided to withdraw from the Voroshylovhrad Rukh organization. The following day, thousands of residents of Kyiv found leaflets attacking Rukh in their mailboxes and in newspapers bought in kiosks.

The most direct official response to the congress came a week after its close. On 16 September the Kyiv authorities organized a mass meeting in the Ukrainian capital to denounce the Popular Movement, filling the city's Republican Stadium with thousands of Party and Komsomol members, pensioners, workers and school-children. Speaker after speaker, who included the commander of the Kyiv military district, Lieutenant-General Boris Gromov, ac-

⁷ *Postup*, no. 11, 1989, pp. 2-3.

⁸ Lytvyn, *Political Arena*, pp. 158-9.

⁹ *Pravda* and TASS, 15 September 1989.

cused Rukh of having become a forum for forces which wanted to sow inter-ethnic discord. One speaker, a certain G. Mykhailyuk, representing Red Army veterans, even compared Ukrainian national democrats to the Nazis, claiming that they were resorting to the methods used by Goebbels: 'hysteria, lies, demagoguery, exploitation of the herd instinct, influencing the immature minds of children'. Yelchenko, whose strident denunciation of Rukh's congress contrasted with Kravchuk's far milder earlier criticisms, warned of the danger of 'counter-revolution' in the republic. The meeting's implicit message, or warning, seemed to be that there was a need for an 'Interfront'-type of organization to combat Rukh. Yavorivsky and Hryshchuk, and to some extent Oliinyk, all of whom also spoke, managed, however, to add a more objective tone to the proceedings.¹²

But even as the Party authorities were attempting to strike back at Rukh, there were new dramatic developments in Western Ukraine. On 17 September — the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet takeover of Western Ukraine — at least 150,000 Ukrainian Catholics from all over the region joined a procession through Lviv organized by Hel and other activists to demand the legalization of their Church; they then defiantly participated in an open-air Mass.¹³ Later that evening, throughout Western Ukraine tens of thousands of people held silent vigils with lighted candles as a sign of mourning on the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and what they depicted as the replacement of 'the Polish occupation' of the region by a harsher Soviet one.¹⁴

A few days later, in Chernivsti, the first republican festival of contemporary Ukrainian song (named 'Chervona Ruta' after a song by the patriotic young Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Ivasyuk, who had been found dead in Lviv in 1979 in mysterious circumstances), further embarrassed the authorities. Bringing together young musicians and singers not only from all over the republic, but also from Eastern Europe and the Western diaspora, it revealed that the

Radyanska Ukraina, 17 September 1989.

See, for example, Michael Dobbs, 'Catholic Ukrainians Demand Legalization of Disbanded Church', *Washington Post*, 18 September 1989, and Masha Hamilton, 'Thousands of Ukrainian Catholics Pray in Show of Strength', *Los Angeles Times*, 18 September 1989.

¹² Reuter, 18 September 1989.

national revival had affected the younger generation and that a vibrant new 'Ukrainian' pop culture was developing. Although blue and yellow flags were banned, the youth smuggled them into the concerts and support for Rukh was manifested by both performers and spectators. Efforts by the police and the organizers to control the proceedings only produced protests and strengthened the sense of solidarity. One of the main organizers of the festival was the republican Komsomol, which was by now plagued with internal ferment and declining influence, and the defiant and increasingly patriotic mood of the youth gave the Komsomol's leaders plenty to think about.¹³

Ivashko replaces Shcherbytsky

On 19 September, the long-overdue plenum of the CPSU's Central Committee devoted to the nationalities question was finally held but, as had been expected, no new deal for the Russians was offered. In his report, Gorbachev largely adhered to the Party's previously published 'Platform' on nationalities policy, and the only new element it contained was hardly good news for the non-Russians: the Soviet leader announced that it had become 'expedient to give the Russian language the status of a common state language across the USSR'.¹⁴ During the discussion, Yelchenko stuck to his hard-line position, warning that 'the future of our common home had been put under threat by anti-Soviet forces, nationalists and extremists'.¹⁵

The plenum did, however, bring one important surprise: on the second day of the meeting, Shcherbytsky and two other members of the Politburo, Viktor Chebrikov and Viktor Nikonov, were unexpectedly retired. With a plenum of the CPU Central Committee scheduled in a few days, Shcherbytsky's seemingly imminent departure from the helm of the Ukrainian Party was cause for jubilation among the democratic opposition in his republic even

Video recordings of the concerts in the author's archive. See also the 'indignant' reports about the festival in the main CPU organs, *Pravda Ukrainy*, 7 October 1989, and *Radyanska Ukraina*, 13 October 1989, as well as a more balanced one in *Molod Ukraina*, 4 October 1989.

¹⁴ *Pravda*, 20 September 1989.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 September 1989.

though it was by no means certain who would succeed him, and whether a new first secretary would make much of a difference. The two leading contenders appeared to be Ivashko and Kopto.

A week later, Gorbachev flew to Kyiv to oversee the replacement of the seventy-one-year-old apparently ailing Ukrainian Party leader. Nevertheless, at the plenum of the CPU Central Committee, the emphasis seemed to be placed not on making a new start but on continuity. Shcherbytsky was given almost a hero's send off by his colleagues and Gorbachev himself joined in the praise by speaking of the retiree's 'great life', his many years of 'fruitful labour for the good of the Party and the country', and his 'great contribution to the development of the republic', all of which, the Soviet leader declared, 'undoubtedly deserve a positive evaluation'. Only one of the speakers, the director of the Botanical Institute, Academician Kostyantyn Sytnyk, implicitly challenged this view, saying that 'during the last three or four years' things had not gone 'as well as we would have wanted'. This drew an angry rejoinder from Yelchenko who, on behalf of his colleagues in the CPU Central Committee, denied that anything had begun to go amiss in the republic.

Significantly, Gorbachev also revealed in his speech that Shcherbytsky had asked to be allowed to retire during his previous visit to Ukraine because of old age and poor health, but that the Politburo of the CPSU had asked him to stay on until after the election campaign was over. In other words, the Soviet leader acknowledged in so many words that at a very critical moment, when many in the West and in Ukraine too had assumed that Gorbachev the reformer had wanted to get rid of Shcherbytsky - the personification of Brezhnevist stagnation—he had in fact kept the unpopular Ukrainian Party boss on.

The rationale behind this seems to have been that, whatever his faults, for the Kremlin Shcherbytsky remained the best figure for maintaining order in the vitally important Ukraine. In fact, indicating why he had come to Kyiv again for the second time that year, Gorbachev reiterated the crucial importance of Ukraine and the 'great' responsibility which its Party organization bore. 'Without things going well in Ukraine', he reminded the plenum, 'we can hardly expect *perestroika* to succeed in the country.'¹⁶ He also

¹⁶ See the report on the plenum in *Radyanska Ukraina*, 30 September 1989.

repeated this in an interview for *Pravda* published on 30 September, saying: 'If *perestroika* falters in Ukraine, it will falter throughout the entire country.'

From the Kremlin's standpoint, however, things were no longer going so well in Ukraine. It was not only that Rukh had emerged as a major force, which was disquieting enough, but also that the Donbas, a traditional stronghold of the Communist Party in Ukraine, had unexpectedly staged a social revolt and its disaffected miners were threatening to begin new strikes. The traditional methods of maintaining order were no longer appropriate. As if implicitly responding to Shcherbytsky's communication from the previous month, Gorbachev told the plenum: 'If someone thinks that it is possible to control the situation by using old methods of force ... it is a dangerous mistake.' Either the Party recognized the principles of freedom of thought and action, accepted the idea of political dialogue and cooperation with other social forces, and worked to win public sympathies and support, or it risked becoming 'a secluded force claiming a leading role'. In these circumstances, Shcherbytsky had finally become politically inexpedient, if not obsolete, and expendable.

Gorbachev provided few clues as to which of the two threats — Ukrainian 'nationalism', or the workers' movement — Moscow feared most at this stage. In his address to the plenum, and during his one-day stay in Ukraine, he again stayed off the national question and avoided the issue of Rukh. When asked, though, during one of his walkabouts in the Ukrainian capital, about the Popular Movement, he replied evasively that he welcomed 'healthy' public movements that supported *perestroika* as long as they were not the bearers of 'separatism or nationalism'.¹⁷ On this occasion he did not meet with representatives of the cultural intelligentsia but did find time to talk with a group of miners. While appearing receptive to their concerns, he emphasized just how damaging to the economy strikes were.¹⁸

In a display of 'democratization', six candidates were initially proposed for Shcherbytsky's post: Ivashko, Hurenko, Kapto, Yelchenko, Masol and Anatolii Korniyenko, who in July had replaced Masyk as the Kyiv city Party boss. The latter three nominees

¹⁷ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 1 October 1989.

¹⁸ TASS, 28 September 1989.

declined to stand and Gorbachev, who personally proposed Ivashko, told the members of the CPU Central Committee that Kopto was not available because he had a 'responsible assignment' from the Soviet Party leadership heading the CPSU's ideological department. In the secret ballot, Ivashko was elected by 136 votes to Hurenko's 43.

The new first secretary of the CPU was born in Poltava and before coming to Kyiv had spent most of his political career in the Kharkiv region. A mining engineer trained in economics, he had served in, among other positions, as a political instructor in Afghanistan in 1980, and as the CPU's ideological secretary in 1986-7. Shcherbytsky described him at the plenum as 'our new right flank' while Ivashko thanked his predecessor for having devoted all his 'exceptional talent, energy and creativity' for the good of the 'Party and the people'.

But in his first speech as republican Party leader, Ivashko indicated that he was more in the mould of his Moscow patron than the former Kyiv boss. Sounding quite outspoken but not confrontational, he acknowledged that 'the pace of renewal in different spheres of the republic's life' was 'clearly unsatisfactory', and that the population was 'dissatisfied with a great number of things'. More would have to be done, he said, to tackle the problems of housing, food shortages, protecting the environment and improving health care. It was imperative for the CPU not to lose the political initiative, and it would have both to improve and democratize its cadres policy and to present a platform to voters at the forthcoming elections which addressed all of the republic's vital needs. Political reform needed to be carried out consistently and the 'socio-political activity of the masses' supported.

Revealing how fast political changes were progressing in the USSR, Ivashko also came out with the kind of statements about republican economic sovereignty that only a few months ago the Baltic representatives at the Congress of People's Deputies had been attacked for but which had gradually become politically acceptable. He told the plenum that a 'key direction' which the CPU ought to follow was 'to secure and put into practice the principles of Ukraine's economic sovereignty' within the ail-Union 'integral national-economic complex' and go over to cost-accounting. Moreover, acknowledging that restructuring in Ukraine was developing 'most dynamically' in the 'spiritual sphere', he sounded a note reminiscent

of Shelest: the Party had to do 'everything it could', he said, 'to ensure the all-round flourishing of Ukrainian culture' and the satisfaction of the national-cultural needs of the republic's minorities.¹⁹

Just as the public were reading the speeches delivered at the plenum to find out if Ivashko represented a genuine break with the past, events in Western Ukraine suggested that, despite the change of leadership, the old regime was determined not to give up. On 1 October in Lviv riot police were used to disperse a peaceful demonstration and dozens of people were hurt. The renewed use of force shocked the city's residents: a local strike committee was quickly formed and tens of thousands took part in protests. Moreover, deputies from the city raised the issue in the USSR Supreme Soviet and succeeded in having a special commission appointed to investigate the incident.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Catholics were also continuing to organize large rallies to press for the legalization of their Church. The latest was held in Ivano-Frankivsk on 1 October. Support for their campaign was also expressed by the mass circulation Moscow publications, *Ogonek* and *Argumenty i fakty*. As a Western observer noted, these articles 'shattered the pretense of canonicity of the Russian Orthodox Church in Galicia and Transcarpathia and were widely perceived as a sure portent of a policy shift in Moscow'.²⁰ News that Gorbachev might meet with the Pope during a visit to Rome later in the year also strengthened the belief that legalization could not be put off for much longer.

Although the CPU leadership without Shcherbytsky was trying to put a brave face on things, it was facing enormous difficulties and challenges and being forced not only by developments in Moscow and society at large, but even by forces which had hitherto been considered its allies or extensions, to be more responsive to changes in the political climate.

Right after the CPU Central Committee plenum, on 29-30 September the Central Committee of the Komsomol held its own plenum. Under the leadership of its liberal new first secretary Anatolii Matviyenko, the Komsomol's leadership acknowledged

¹⁹ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 30 September 1989.

²⁰ See Bociurkiw, 'The Ukrainian Catholic Church', p. 11; *Ogonek*, no. 38, 1989; and *Argumenty i Fakty*, 7-13 October, 1989.

that the organization was in a 'crisis', that its membership and prestige were declining and that the organization was threatened with fragmentation and marginalization. It decided to embark on a new heterodox course which amounted to a declaration of autonomy, if not independence, from the CPU. The plenum renounced the Komsomol's traditional claim to a monopoly over the youth movement and, echoing much of what was in Rukh's programme, called, among other things, for the creation of a democratic law-based state, genuine sovereignty for Ukraine within a revamped Soviet federation based on a new Union treaty, republican economic sovereignty, different forms of ownership, fuller information about the workings of government, live radio and television coverage of the sessions of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, cooperation with Rukh, and complete freedom of conscience. Furthermore, the plenum also relinquished the Komsomol's claim to the quota of seats allocated to it as a 'public organization' in the Supreme Soviet by the officially proposed draft law on elections. Last but not least, the plenum also adopted a resolution giving a generally positive appraisal of the Chervona Ruta festival and directly criticizing some of the official and semi-official institutions and organizations which had been co-sponsors, such as the Ministry of Culture, for their meagre involvement."¹

Implicitly distancing himself from what had just happened in Lviv, Ivashko proceeded to try and promote a positive image of himself as a more tolerant, conciliatory and progressive leader and to convey the impression, as he put it, that 'we are entering a new epoch'. During his first days in office, he met with representatives of the cultural intelligentsia, media and Rukh's leader Drach. He told foreign journalists that he had found Drach 'a reasonable person' and that he did not consider Rukh to be dominated by 'nationalists', though the presence of 'extremists' was a problem. As long as the movement did not assume a 'destructive or destabilizing nature', he would be prepared to cooperate with it and would not oppose its registration. He also indicated that he accepted some of the criticisms of the draft law on elections and would go along with some of the proposed changes. The new Party leader was unforthcoming on the issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, hinting only that 'a process' was under way. As for the restless miners, he said that he was

²¹ See the materials on the plenum in *Molod Ukrainy*, 4, 5, and 10 October 1989.

sympathetic to their complaints, but that his 'biggest fear' was of 'a chain reaction'.

Foreign journalists, however, came away not entirely persuaded. David Remnick of the *Washington Post* concluded: 'From his comments, Ivashko made it clear that he would be Moscow's instrument, and not do anything to encourage any permissiveness on his own.' Indeed, Ivashko even told Remnick that 'it was more to the point to speak of similarities' than any differences between himself and Shcherbytsky. 'There should be no illusions', the new Ukrainian Party leader had warned: 'Both Shcherbytsky and I are convinced Communists.'"²³

Still, a difference in style was apparent. Ivashko let journalists know that they would be 'somewhat freer to criticize the Party and its leaders than they were under Shcherbytsky',²³ and it was not long before the first signs of greater *hlasnist* were appearing. For instance, on 5 October, the CPU's mouthpiece *Radyanska Ukraina* published an article by the young pro-Rukh economist Oleksandr Savchenko criticizing the proposed draft law on the principles of the economic independence of the Ukrainian SSR as being too tame and urging that it be scrapped and replaced by a more radical one. And on 17 October, the eve of the first CPU Central Committee plenum under Ivashko, the same newspaper carried a candid interview with Komsomol leader Matviyenko in which, among other things, he stated outright that communism was no longer a rallying idea either for youth or for society generally.

The more open approach was also displayed in the coverage of the plenum itself, which was supposed to ensure that the Party line on nationalities policy enunciated by the September CPSU Central Committee plenum was adhered to. It revealed that the CPU leadership was not as united as the public had been led to believe under Shcherbytsky and that there were serious problems that had been covered up. Ivashko sought to set the new tone in his report, stressing that the 'style' of the CPU's work would have to change and compromises made as regards the provisions of the draft

²³ David Remnick, 'New Party Boss in Ukraine is Clearly no Liberal', *Washington Post*, 5 October 1989. His American colleague, Bill Keller, concurred with this assessment of Ivashko. See his 'Party Chief in Ukraine Offers Lighter Touch', *New York Times*, 8 October 1989.

²³ Keller, *New York Times*, 8 October 1989.

election law. Nevertheless, he also made it quite clear that the forthcoming elections would be a struggle to determine 'in whose hands power would end up' and warned that the CPU was being challenged by 'demagogues' who were calling for a 'return to capitalism, [and] secession from the Soviet Union'. Invoking the CPSU's 'Platform' on nationalities policy, Ivashko called for the strengthening of the sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR within a revamped Soviet federation, affirmed the inviolability of the territorial integrity of the republic and the republic's right to challenge all-Union laws conflicting with republican ones, and acknowledged the need for 'a new approach' to the idea of 'a citizenship of the Ukrainian SSR'. On the other hand, he condemned the 'revelry of blatantly nationalist elements in Lviv', the 'activation of religious extremists', attempts to rehabilitate the Central Rada and the OUN and UP A, and to foist 'bourgeois nationalist' national symbols on the population of Ukraine.

Other speakers at the plenum, representing the diverse regions, brought out the full complexity of the problems facing the Ukrainian SSR. For instance, Pohrebnyak from the Lviv region called for an understanding of the distinct conditions in Western Ukraine, including the higher level of national consciousness, and the outstanding need to resolve the issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and for Ukrainian to be made the state language of the republic. Representatives from the Russified Donbas, Kryvyi Rih and Odesa regions, however, expressed misgivings about the proposed draft law on languages which designated Ukrainian as the republic's state language, the first secretary of the Donetsk region Party organization, Vinnyk, calling for two state languages - Ukrainian and Russian. The representatives from the Donbas also complained that Rukh's activists were becoming a nuisance in the region. The hard-line Odesa region Party boss, Heorhii Kryuchkov — who had attacked Rukh in Gorbachev's presence at the previous CPU Central Committee plenum — called for a tougher line towards the Popular Movement and warned that there were signs of dissatisfaction with the proposed new law on languages among the region's non-Ukrainians. Furthermore, the Crimean regional Party leader, Mykola Bagrov, emphasized the peculiarities of Crimea — the only region of Ukraine with a Russian majority (which was now also faced with the problem of integrating tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars returning to their historic homeland), and in effect served

notice of the growing movement among the peninsula's population for broad regional autonomy. The discussion about Crimea's future status and orientation had been stimulated, he said, by the moves to make Ukrainian the state language.

The plenum elected Hurenko as the CPU's second secretary and Kravchuk as a candidate member of the Ukrainian Politburo and a Central Committee secretary. He was given responsibility for ideology, becoming the head of the CPU's Ideological Commission. Mushketyk, the head of the WUU, was also appointed to this commission, while Yelchenko and Vrublevsky were moved to a new Central Committee Commission on Inter-Ethnic Relations, which Yelchenko was put in charge of.²⁴

Ukraine's Supreme Soviet makes adjustments

When the eagerly awaited session of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR that was to debate changes to the republic's constitution, the proposed law on languages and the elections opened on 25 October, it was clear that the CPU leadership was going for compromise. Moreover, in an important break with the past and following the example set in Moscow by the coverage of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the proceedings were broadcast live by the republican radio, thus giving Ukraine's residents their first chance to hear the debates for themselves.

In the opening address, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet's Presidium, Shevchenko, acknowledged that the public discussion of the draft electoral law had revealed 'a change in the psychology of the people, [and] their increased activity and national self-awareness'. No less than nine alternative drafts had been submitted to the Supreme Soviet. She announced that, because of the 'negative' public reaction, and foreseeing pre-election district meetings (at which undesirable candidates could be blocked), the provisions allocating a quota of seats to public organizations had been dropped. Shevchenko also confirmed that the general trend towards revamping the system of Soviets and enhancing republican sovereignty had also been taken into account: she unveiled a series of major revisions to the republican constitution designed both to broaden the powers

of the republican Supreme Soviet and to bolster its position *vis-a-vis* Moscow.²⁵

Ivashko himself played a refreshingly constructive and conciliatory role. He intervened when the more conservative deputies attempted to prevent reformist deputies to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, who were present as observers, from participating in the debates. Urging the deputies to avoid confrontation, he appealed to them with the words: 'there is only one way [forward] for us: the consolidation of the entire Ukrainian people for the good and well-being of the Ukrainian people.'

The charged atmosphere at the session was demonstrated by an incident involving the radical deputy to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, Kutsenko. During one of the breaks, Kryuchkov ripped a blue and yellow national emblem from Kutsenko's tie and caused a scandal. Later, a deputy from Kharkiv protested that Kutsenko had been wearing a 'nationalist' emblem and succeeded in persuading a majority of the deputies to vote for Kutsenko's expulsion from the chamber. When Bratun attempted to protest this action on behalf of the Republican Deputies' Club, he was shouted down.

After heated debate, the proposed laws on the elections and revisions to the constitution were adopted, and the date for the elections to the Supreme Soviet set for 4 March 1990. The new election law was considerably more democratic than the original draft and, depending on the spirit in which it would be observed, foresaw that only candidates advocating the violent overthrow of the Soviet system or inter-ethnic enmity could be barred by the local electoral commissions.²⁶ One of the members of the Republican Deputies' Club, Shcherbak, welcomed this 'wise compromise' and described the new law as 'one of the most democratic election laws' to have been adopted in the various Soviet republics. For all the residual political intolerance displayed by some of the deputies, he told *Radyanska Ukraina* during the session, there was definitely 'movement forward'.²⁷

Although overshadowed at the time by the election and language laws, the changes which were made to the constitution were also

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 October 1989.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 November 1989.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 October 1989.

highly significant and marked a major step in the direction of transforming the republican Supreme Soviet (Verkhovna Rada [Supreme Council] in Ukrainian) into the legislature of a sovereign republic and making it function like a proper parliament. The idea of a republican Congress of People's Deputies was rejected and it was decided that the legislature would consist of a streamlined Supreme Council with 450 (that is 200 less than before) directly elected deputies. Although the concept of a popularly elected chairman of the Supreme Council, or 'president', which some democrats had advocated, was also discarded, the role of the chairman, elected by secret ballot by the Supreme Council, was enhanced. The office-holder was now to be the republic's highest official and representative both within the USSR and abroad. The system of permanent parliamentary commissions was also to be overhauled and these bodies given greater responsibility in preparing legislation and approving candidates for government posts.

As Shevchenko herself noted in her address, this was to be 'a qualitatively new Supreme Council, endowed with broad powers'; the changes were designed to create a legal framework which would stimulate the economic development of the republic and strengthen its sovereignty. The Verkhovna Rada now assumed the rights to challenge any all-Union laws if they infringed on the republic's sovereignty and likewise to suspend on the territory of the republic the implementation of any decrees or decisions of the Soviet government which did not conform with Ukrainian laws, and to 'decide questions' connected with the use of the republic's territory and resources. The Supreme Council also asserted its 'exclusive' right to, among other things, 'the formulation of the main directions of the internal and foreign political activity of the Ukrainian SSR' and deciding questions concerning the opening of diplomatic, consular and trade offices abroad representing the republic."

The high point of the session, however, was the adoption of the historic law designating Ukrainian as the state language of the republic. Oliinyk introduced the proposed law and pointed out that it had taken almost seven months of intensive work and extensive debate to prepare an acceptable draft on such a sensitive but cardinal issue. The working group charged with preparing the draft, which had been headed by the director of the republican Institute of

Philosophy, Academician Volodymyr Shynkaruk, and included, among others, Oliinyk, Mushketyk, Pavlychko, Dzyuba, Vasylenko and Ivan Tymchenko, a specialist in constitutional law from the Institute for State and Law, had received over 50,000 letters with comments and proposals, and four alternative drafts had been submitted. The draft which had finally been published for public discussion had been the seventeenth version. The key problem had been to devise a compromise whereby the status of the Ukrainian language would be enhanced and legally bolstered without antagonizing the republic's large Russian and Russian-speaking population, thereby avoiding the kind of conflicts that had been generated in the Baltic republics and Moldova by the introduction of new language laws. The working group had rejected the idea of two state languages for the republic—Ukrainian and Russian—which, as Oliinyk acknowledged, 'a considerable number of citizens' had called for, arguing that this would only perpetuate the status quo and put no onus on Russian-speakers to learn Ukrainian. Instead, the proposed law envisaged making Ukrainian a compulsory subject in all schools, but at the same time safeguarding the right of citizens to learn Russian and, where applicable, the languages of a given national minority (that is, in areas where a national minority was 'compactly' settled).

Behind the scenes, Tymchenko played a major role in finalizing the draft and travelled to Russian-speaking areas in the Donbas and the Odesa *oblasts* to gauge what would be acceptable.²⁹ The compromise formula enshrined in the law was as follows: Ukrainian was recognized as the state language of the Ukrainian SSR; Ukrainian, Russian and 'other languages' were recognized as languages of 'inter-ethnic communication' within the republic; and the Ukrainian SSR safeguarded 'the free use of the Russian language as the language of communication between the nationalities of the USSR'. The very fact that the law was entitled 'On Languages in the Ukrainian SSR' was intended to denote that it was not concerned with Ukrainian alone or aimed against any other ethnic group, and that it recognized the language rights of all Ukraine's nationalities. While inaugurating gradual Ukrainization, it also contained provisions to foster the developments of the languages of the national minorities. The law allowed for a protracted period off from three

to ten years for implementation, depending on the sphere and region in which the transition to Ukrainian was to be made, and no specific sanctions were prescribed for violations of the law.

Despite this extremely cautious approach, the passage of the law was far from smooth. Deputies from the Odesa, Kharkiv, Voroshylovhrad, Crimean and Chernihiv regions voiced their concern and called for Russian to have the same status as Ukrainian. They warned of possible inter-ethnic friction, of 'unpleasant consequences' for the 'international' Soviet armed forces stationed in Ukraine, and argued, among other things, that the economic cost of making the transition to Ukrainian as the state language could not be justified at a time of mounting economic difficulty, and that switching over to Ukrainian would impede technical and scientific progress.

Significantly, Oliinyk, Honchar, Pavlychko, Mushketyk and others were joined by Ivashko, Kravchuk, Masol and Valentyna Shevchenko in seeking to allay the fears of the republic's Russian-speakers that they faced forcible Ukrainization and in presenting the case for recognizing Ukrainian as the state language of the 'sovereign' Ukrainian SSR. For instance, Kravchuk stressed the political significance of the law, arguing that it was prompted by the 'complex political situation' and the growing national consciousness and political activity of Ukraine's multinational population. Appealing to the republic's Russian-speaking workers to support the law, he explained that it had been necessitated because of the disregard for 'humanism and justice' in the past which had left the Ukrainian language, and those of the republic's national minorities, 'unwell' and requiring 'treatment' to restore them to health. For his part, Ivashko urged the deputies to cast aside their prejudices and fears, and to show goodwill and understanding. 'Let's live in a civilized way', he proposed, 'so that our Soviet Ukraine flourishes, and its language and culture; and so that no harm is done to anyone, whatever their nationality'.³⁰

This was an important turning point, for it marked the first time since the Shelest period that the Party and state leaders of the Ukrainian SSR had come out in defence of Ukrainian national rights. Whether this was out of political expediency rather than

For the debate on the law on languages, see *Radyanska Ukraina*, 28, 29 and 31 October 1989.

patriotism was open to question: the main thing, though, was that the same arguments as had been advanced during the 1920s by Skrypnyk, Shumsky and other national Communists were being taken over from Rukh, the Ukrainian Language Society, and other national democratic organizations by the post-Shcherbytsky Kyiv leadership and becoming the new orthodoxy.

After some last minute revisions to the draft, the law on languages was adopted on 28 October.³¹ Although it contained numerous loopholes, and failed to provide legal sanctions for violators of the law and to allocate funds for its implementation, it was nevertheless a historic achievement. As various speakers pointed out during the debate in the Verkhovna Rada, the adoption of the law marked the recognition of a fundamental principle (that Ukrainian should be the state language in Ukraine) and right (of the Ukrainian people to their national language, with all that this entailed), something which the Ukrainian national movement had striven for since at least the first decades of the century. Not only was this a matter of national dignity and self-respect: in a broader sense, the struggle for the recognition of Ukrainian as the state language of Ukraine had also been implicitly a struggle for the affirmation of Ukrainian statehood and sovereignty.³²

The passage of the language and election laws, their shortcomings notwithstanding, signified a notable victory for Ukraine's national democratic forces. The more constructive and conciliatory attitude shown by the post-Shcherbytsky official Ukrainian leadership, and the new emphasis being placed on augmenting republican sovereignty, albeit within a revamped Soviet federation, also seemed to offer the prospect of change for the better. On the other hand, though, the debates in the Supreme Council had highlighted the regional differences in the republic and the latent split between the Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking groups. Moreover, the enduring hostility of conservatives to Rukh and Ukrainian national and cultural symbols, as well as their aversion to the idea of sharing political power, did not bode well for the new election campaign.

For the text, see *Radyanska Ukraina*, 1 November 1989. The details of the voting do not appear to have been published.

Author's interview with Pavlychko.

The battle is resumed

Important developments were also taking place in the religious sphere. The revival of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) was by now gathering momentum. Somewhat surprisingly, this process was having its greatest impact in traditionally Catholic Western Ukraine where a number of Russian Orthodox parishes had gone over to this Church and Lviv was emerging as the centre of the revival. The first had been the parish of Sts Peter and Paul in Lviv, which had switched its allegiance to the UAOC on 19 August. On 22 October, Bishop Ioann Bodnarchuk of Zhytomyr broke with the Russian Orthodox Church and became the leader of the UAOC. He was promptly excommunicated by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The emergence of the UAOC was a source of concern not only to the Russian Orthodox Church but also the Ukrainian Catholics. Some of the latter began to suspect that the rise of the UAOC in Western Ukraine was being encouraged by the KGB as a means of weakening and blocking the Ukrainian Catholic Church. A three-sided contest for influence and parishes began in the region. On 29 October, the Ukrainian Catholics peacefully took over the Transfiguration church in Lviv which, while St George's Cathedral remained in the hands of the Russian Orthodox Church, was to serve as their main centre. This action, and the emergence of the UAOC, drew a statement of protest from Metropolitan Filaret and the other Russian Orthodox hierarchs in Ukraine. In it they accused the Catholics of using force to seize 'Russian Orthodox' property and condemned Bishop Bodnarchuk's 'violation of Church unity'. Significantly though, the Russian Orthodox leadership in Ukraine also sounded a new concessionary note: it pledged its support for the development of Ukrainian national culture and traditions.³³

With Gorbachev scheduled to meet with the Pope in the Vatican at the beginning of December, the Ukrainian Catholics intensified their campaign for the legalization of their Church. On 26 November, over 150,000 of them took part in a religious procession through Lviv. At the end of the month, in a move clearly timed to coincide

with the historic meeting in Rome, Ukraine's Council of Religious Affairs announced that Ukrainian Catholics 'may enjoy all rights which are provided by the law for religious associations in the Ukrainian SSR'. This fell short of full legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and its leaders pointed out that the announcement made no mention of condemning the forcible liquidation of their Church in 1946 or of returning its confiscated property.

The concession, nevertheless, had opened the way for the eventual full legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. It also encouraged Ukrainian Catholics to take over more of their former churches from the Russian Orthodox Church. During December and January, about 370 parishes in Western Ukraine were reclaimed and scores of local Russian Orthodox priests switched their allegiance. By the end of 1989, only four out of nineteen of Lviv's functioning churches remained in the hands of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time, the UAOC also continued to win over parishes from the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁴

As more and more local Russian Orthodox priests abandoned their Church, and the UAOC began to loom as a new threat, Ukrainian Catholics were taking matters into their own hands by reclaiming churches that had been taken away from them in 1946. Russian Orthodox representatives protested that the 'Uniates' were using 'illegal' methods and 'force' to seize property, and talks between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican were suspended. The 'competition' between the Ukrainian Catholics and the UAOC also soon began to develop into bitter rivalry.³⁵

Meanwhile, Rukh and its allies continued to push forward. During October Yavorivsky travelled to the United States as a representative of Ukraine's democratic forces and met with leading American political figures and leaders of the Ukrainian community. He was successful in obtaining support for Rukh's efforts on behalf

" See Bociurkiw, 'The Ukrainian Catholic Church'; Roman Solchanyk, 'Ukrainian Catholics in the USSR: Toward Legalization', *Report on the USSR*, no. 50 (15 December 1989), and Frank E. Sysyn, 'The Third Rebirth of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Religious Situation in Ukraine, 1989-1991', in Stephen K. Batalden (ed.), *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine and Georgia*, DeKalb, IL, 1993, pp. 198-9.

" See the article by S. Pakholiv in *Postup*, no. 2, January 1990, and the interview with the leaders of the UAOC in *Postup*, no. 4, March 1990.

of children who had suffered as a result of the Chornobyl disaster. At home, patriotic activists finally succeeded in obtaining permission for the bodies of Stus, Lytvyn and Tykhy to be reburied in their homeland. On 19 November, thousands, many carrying national flags, turned out in Kyiv for the funeral procession and to pay their last respects to Ukraine's most recent national martyrs.

Preparations now began in earnest for the parliamentary and local elections. The continually changing political climate and the confidence which it was giving the democratic opposition was evident at the inaugural conference in Kyiv on 28 and 29 October of the 'Green World' Association at which it was decided to move towards the formation of a Ukrainian 'Green party'. But it soon became apparent that for all of Ivashko's calls for dialogue and cooperation with the democratic opposition, the CPU leadership was up to its old tricks. Drach pointed this out in November in an open letter to Ivashko in which he protested against the CPU's harassment of Rukh activists, its attempts to prevent the formation of new branches of Rukh, and the distorted picture of the Popular Movement still being presented in the official press.³⁶

As the nomination stage of the elections opened on 3 November, the authorities continued to drag their feet with the registration of Rukh; Memorial had also still not been registered. In this way these organizations were blocked from nominating candidates. Furthermore, the formation of the local electoral commissions was left to the regional authorities, the 'majority of which were in the hands of arch-conservative elements' determined to keep the democrats out. For instance, the Ukrainian Language Society, which had been registered in May, was forced to complain publicly to the Central Election Commission that some of the electoral commissions were refusing to register its nominees.³⁸ As Drach had emphasized in his letter to Ivashko, all this was forcing Rukh and its allies 'to adopt an appropriate position and to choose appropriate tactics'.

³⁶ *Vichc*, no. 11, 1989, p. 3.

See Peter J. Potichnyj, *Elections in Ukraine*, Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Cologne, no. 36 (April), 1990, pp. 3-5.

See the open letter from the deputy head of the Ukrainian Language Society, I. Yushchuk, to the head of the Central Election Commission, Vitalii Boyko, in *Literatuma Ukraina*, 14 December 1989.

The election campaigns were launched against the background of revolutionary developments in Eastern and Central Europe where communist regimes were crumbling and the Iron Curtain was being dismantled. In October, in Hungary, the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party had relinquished its claim to a leading role, transformed itself into a social democratic party (the Hungarian Socialist Party), and was preparing for free multi-party elections. That same month, mass protests erupted in East Germany which led to the removal of Erich Honecker and the opening on 19 November of the GDR's borders, including the Berlin Wall. The following day, Bulgaria's Communist leader of thirty-five years, Todor Zhivkov was finally ousted. And in Czechoslovakia, the brutal suppression of a student demonstration on 17 November triggered off the largest protests for twenty years which within three weeks were to topple the Communist government. In Moscow itself, there was a huge alternative demonstration on 7 November on the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution.

On 12 November, the Republican Deputies' Club announced that it would support candidates in the elections who upheld the following four principles: the need for a new Union treaty, the repeal of Article 6 of the Soviet Ukrainian constitution (corresponding to Article 6 of the Soviet constitution and recognizing the leading role of the Party), acceptance of different forms of ownership, and that the republic's laws should be brought into line with international human rights norms.³⁹ The following day, a member of the Republican Deputies' Club, Serhii Ryabchenko from Kyiv, proposed in the USSR Supreme Soviet that an open debate be held on Article 6 of the Soviet constitution. 'Article 6 inspires no confidence among the people but rather the suspicion that the Party seeks to hang on to power no matter what', he argued. Gorbachev countered that this was an attempt 'under the cover of criticism to debase the role of the Party', and the proposal was narrowly defeated by just three votes.⁴⁰

On 18 November, the consolidation of the republic's democratic forces reached a new peak when representatives of forty-three independent organizations met in Kyiv and formed a coalition for the elections. The 'Democratic Bloc', as it called itself, included

Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 73-4.

⁴⁰ Reuter, 13 November 1989.

among other organizations, Rukh, the Ukrainian Language Society, Memorial, the Green World Association, the UHU, and the Strike Committees of Donetsk, Mykolaiv and the Lviv region. The new coalition issued an election manifesto, which Pavlychko described as a condensed version of Rukh's programme.⁴¹ It had six main planks: genuine economic and political sovereignty for Ukraine; political pluralism and a multi-party system; a mixed economy; a new republican constitution guaranteeing internationally recognized human and civil rights; Ukrainian national renewal and free cultural development for the republic's national minorities; and full religious freedom, including the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and UAOC. All was summarized in the slogan: 'Freedom, Prosperity and Justice'. The coalition declared that it was 'entering the election campaign under the slogan of uniting all citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their nationality, party affiliation, religious convictions and social standing, on the basis of democracy and humanism'.

The CPU's response was not long in coming and was delivered at a plenum of its Central Committee held on 29 November to discuss the CPU's election platform. With the Czechoslovak Communist government having just resigned, the mood seemed fairly sombre. Unlike the Communist Party of Lithuania, which had sought to establish a *modus vivendi* with Lithuanian national democratic forces and was at this time being pressured by the Gorbachev leadership not to set a precedent by declaring its independence from the CPSU, the CPU made no attempt to meet the Democratic Bloc halfway and treated the Democratic Bloc's manifesto as a declaration of war.

Ivashko dispensed with his more liberal tone and reverted to Shcherbytsky's style. He warned that the CPU's political opponents were uniting and resorting to 'blatant lies' and 'provocations'; they had even revived the 'counter-revolutionary slogan of "Soviets without Communists"'. Rukh was increasingly becoming 'a cover for anti-Socialist formation' and calls for Ukraine's 'secession from the mighty Soviet Union' and the restoration of private ownership were growing. The Party, he acknowledged, had never had to 'conduct elections in such a complex social and political situation . . . of real

⁴¹ Radio Kyiv, 14 December 1989.

⁴² See *Viche*, no. 11, November 1989, and *Vilnc Slovo*, no. 7, January 1990.

political competition'; the very 'existence of the Socialist order' was at stake. Reiterating that there could be no substitute for the Communist Party, and that it alone was capable of heading the process of restructuring, the Ukrainian Party leader affirmed that 'our flag was and remains the red one'. The plenum also heard calls from hard-liners, such as Kyiv city's Party boss Korniyenko, for a tightening of controls over the media.

There were, however, some indications of differences within the CPU. Reporting on the discussion of the CPU's election platform, Hurenko revealed that representatives from 'the city of Kyiv and the Transcarpathian, Lviv and some other *oblasts*' had wanted to address the following issues: Article 6 of the Constitution, the creation of a multi-party system, the use of national symbols and the CPU's position on the Ukrainian Catholic Church.⁴³ *Radyanska Ukraina* of 30 November also noted that this and the previous Central Committee plenums had been conducted in Ukrainian.

On 2 December *Radyanska Ukraina* published on its front page a joint appeal from several labour collectives calling for the formation of a 'Union of Toilers of Ukraine for Restructuring'. Although the CPU was not mentioned directly, it was clear from the document and the prominence given to it that this purported initiative from below was in fact an officially sponsored attempt to create an Interfront-type organization as a counter-weight to Rukh and the Democratic Bloc.

The following day, the CPU's Election Platform was unveiled. A year or so earlier, it would have seemed very progressive and in some respects it even seemed to borrow from Rukh's original draft programme. But in the current conditions, it came across as a belated attempt to adapt to an agenda that in fact was being set partly in Moscow and partly by Rukh and the democratic opposition at home. An accompanying appeal to the republic's voters sought to justify the Communist Party's leading role and continued rule, claiming that it was 'the guarantor of restructuring', and that 'realistically' only it was capable of 'representing the interests of all classes and social groups, consolidating society, and safeguarding civic peace'.⁴⁴

As the elections approached, the growing discontent in the

Radyanska Ukraina, 1 December 1989.

Ibid., 3 December 1989.

republic with deteriorating social and economic conditions and the Party's preservation of its power and privileges erupted in a series of localized mass protests which forced the replacement in quick succession of no less than eight regional Party bosses. Fortunately, unlike in Romania, where the Ceausescu regime had just been toppled in a bloody revolution, the unrest did not assume violent forms. On 5 January, Radio Moscow announced that the Party leaders of the Chernivsti and Kharkiv regions had been dismissed. The very next day, protests began in Chernihiv after a Party vehicle which was involved in a crash was discovered to be carrying luxury food and drink for local officials. Although Rukh had been relatively weak in this area, it managed within a few days to take control of the demonstrations and, after Kravchuk arrived to defuse the situation, to force a major shake-up of the region's Party leadership.⁴⁵ During the following month, the first secretaries of the Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian, Voroshylovhrad and Khmelnytsky regions were also replaced, as well as the entire Bureau of the Party committee of Kremenchuk.

Paradoxically, the high level of social discontent did not necessarily work in favour of the Democratic Bloc. Many people seemed to have little confidence in the electoral process. General disenchantment with the way *perestroika* was proceeding, the powerful hold which local officials and directors of factories and collective farms still had over the local populations in many regions, and the fact that the authorities were up to their old tricks in the electoral commissions, only reinforced the view that voting would not make a difference.

At the beginning of the new year, however, Rukh managed to raise spirits in many quarters by the success of its action to mark the anniversary of the proclamation of the unification of Ukraine in one united, independent, state on 22 January 1919. The date had additional significance for Ukrainian patriots, for precisely one year earlier, the Central Rada had declared Ukraine's independence. In its boldest and most ambitious undertaking so far, Rukh's leadership called on the inhabitants of Ukraine to express their support for the idea of a united, sovereign and democratic Ukraine by forming, on

See Vitalii Hak's account of what occurred in Chernihiv in *Literatuma Ukraina*, 18 January 1990.

Sunday, 21 January, a 500-kilometre-long human chain, a 'Ukrainian Wave', from Kyiv to Lviv. The idea was borrowed from the example which the Baits had set the previous August on the fiftieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Rukh's action implicitly rejected the official Soviet line on Ukraine's modern history and the underlying aims seem to have been to legitimate both the brief period of independence and Ukraine's national symbols.

Faced with this test of strength and the prospect of widespread confrontation, the CPU leadership gave way. On 19 January, Kravchuk admitted in *Radyanska Ukraina* that the period 1918-19 had indeed been treated in a 'one-sided' and distorted manner and stated that the fact that the attempt to unite Ukraine in 1919 had been made by a 'bourgeois' government should not detract from its significance. He also indicated that the authorities would not attempt to prevent the 'Ukrainian Wave' and would be publishing more objective historical material about Ukraine's modern history. In fact, the appearance of a two-part article by Dzyuba in the same Party newspaper on 17 and 18 January seemed to confirm that the CPU was ready to remove the remaining blank spots. Its theme was the retrieval of Ukraine's suppressed historical and cultural heritage and overcoming the national inferiority complex which Dzyuba argued had been deliberately fostered. And on the same day as the interview with Kravchuk appeared, *Radyanska Ukraina* carried the beginning of a lengthy two-part article which, though still rather tendentious, included the texts of the various declarations of autonomy and independence made by the Ukrainian Central Rada in 1917-18.

This test of both the influence of Rukh and the strength of national feeling turned into a triumph that went beyond the expectations of the organizers. Rukh's leaders claimed that up to 3 million people took part in the action, while the authorities conceded that at least 450,000 had been involved. Not only was the human chain from Kyiv, via Zhytomyr, Rivne and Ternopil, to Lviv, largely completed; in the west, it was extended in a loop from Lviv to Ivano-Frankivsk. As had been requested by the organizers, most of the participants carried blue and yellow flags or other national symbols. Many of the republic's non-Ukrainian inhabitants were also reported to have lent their support. Huge meetings were held later in the day in central and Western Ukraine. In Kyiv itself, an estimated 100,000 people gathered in St Sofia's Square, where

Ukrainian independence had been proclaimed seventy-two years earlier, and approved a resolution that 22 January be made a national holiday in Ukraine. There were also smaller meetings in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Odesa, and recently formed Ukrainian organizations in Moscow, Riga and Vilnius, as well as Ukrainian communities in the West, also manifested their solidarity.⁴⁶

Ironically, this massive peaceful display of the revived national spirit of the USSR's largest non-Russian nation passed largely unreported outside Ukraine. In the Western press, the 'Ukrainian Wave' was overshadowed by events in the Transcaucasus (a state of emergency had just been imposed by Soviet troops in parts of Azerbaijan after an escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict). In the Soviet Union itself, the central media provided minimal coverage: only on 30 January did Soviet central television show a glimpse of the human chain in Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk. The day before, however, Soviet central television devoted almost an hour and a half to a film attacking Rukh's deputy leader Konev for allegedly letting down the electorate of Dniprodzerzhynsk by siding with 'Ukrainian nationalists'. Once again, then, *glasnost* was forgotten and the Ukrainian public had to rely for information on Radio Liberty's extensive on-the-spot reports from its stringers and interviews with the organizers of the 'Ukrainian Wave'.⁴⁷

Elated by its success, Ukraine's national democratic movement stepped up its pre-election campaign and adopted a more radical anti-Communist and anti-imperial tone. On 25 January some 10,000 people attended a rally in Lviv to protest Moscow's military intervention in Azerbaijan and to express support for democratic candidates in the forthcoming elections. Pre-election rallies were held throughout the republic on 10 and 11 February, the one in Kyiv being attended by over 50,000 supporters of the Democratic Bloc.

The CPU fought back with a combination of deviousness and ostensibly conciliatory actions. Democratic candidates were besmirched as extremists and in numerous cases the electoral commissions

See the coverage of the 'Ukrainian Wave' in *Radyanska Ukraina*, 23 January 1990; in the monthly newspaper of the Ukrainian Language Society, *Slovo*, February, 1990, and, in the first issue of Rukh's newspaper *Narodna hazeta*, February, 1990.

See Bohdan Nahaylo, 'Human-Chain Demonstration in Ukraine: A Triumph for 'Rukh'', *Report on the USSR*, no. 2 (2 February 1990).

manipulated the rules to block their registration. The leaders of the Ukrainian Language Society and the Green World Association, Pavlychko and Shcherbak, protested to the Presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet about these irregularities.⁴⁸ Furthermore, following the success of the 'Ukrainian Wave', rumours were generated that Rukh and the 'nationalists' were about to launch pogroms against Jews and other non-Ukrainians. During February, leaders of Rukh and the Democratic Bloc were compelled to condemn these 'provocations' publicly and to re-emphasize the need for ethnic unity and harmony.⁴⁹

Towards the end of January and in the early part of February, the authorities finally registered Memorial and Rukh, but only when it was too late for them to nominate candidates. All in all, despite continuing protests about the obstructive behaviour of many of the electoral commissions, candidates from the Democratic Bloc were registered in only 45% of the 450 electoral constituencies.⁵⁰ According to the Central Electoral Commission, of the more than 3,000 candidates who were registered, only 12.7% were non-Party members.⁵¹

The CPU Central Committee made another belated concession designed to win support for the CPU: it adopted a resolution, which was published on 7 February, acknowledging that the famine of 1932-3 in Ukraine was the result 'of the criminal course pursued by Stalin and his closest entourage (Molotov, Kaganovich) toward the peasantry'. Also, during January and February, *Radyanska Ukraina* began publishing material promoting the far from Marxist idea of creating a mystic 'Ukrainian spiritual republic' which the controversial writer and former political prisoner Oles Berdnyk was advocating as a means of filling the 'spiritual void' and stimulating Ukrainian cultural revival. In the first of these items, Berdnyk stressed he had recently been received by Ivashko and that the latter fully supported

⁴⁸ *Literaturna Ukraina*, 8 February 1990.

⁴⁹ Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 81-4. See also the statement addressed to the citizens of Ukraine on this subject by Rukh's leaders Drach, Yavorivsky and Mykhailo Horyn, in *Vilne slovo*, no. 9, 1990.

⁵⁰ This figure was provided by Serhii Odarych, the deputy head of Rukh's election committee. AFP, 21 March 1990.

⁵¹ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 23 February 1990.

'the idea of all-Ukrainian unity and the mobilization of cultural and spiritual forces'.⁵²

In the religious sphere, too, certain adjustments were made. At the end of January, the local authorities handed back the Cathedral of the Resurrection in Ivano-Frankivsk to the Ukrainian Catholics. On 31 January, Metropolitan Filaret appeared on Soviet central television to protest this action on behalf of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Faced with the growing challenge in Ukraine from the Ukrainian Catholics and the UAOC, and no longer having the backing that it used to have on this issue from the Kremlin, the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church was, however, finally forced to make a major concession to resurgent national feeling. On 3 February, it was announced in the press that the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church had decided to rename the Ukrainian and Belarusian Exarchates of the Russian Orthodox Church as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Belarusian Orthodox Church respectively and grant them a certain measure of autonomy in order that 'church life' in the two republics would correspond more to 'the national religious traditions' of the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples.

Dissension in the Party ranks

In the final weeks before the elections, however, political developments in Moscow, the Baltic republics and Eastern Europe, resonated in Kyiv and this appears to have stimulated further ferment within the Ukrainian Communist establishment. By now, the Lithuanian Communist Party had asserted its independence, and in Czechoslovakia, Alexander Dubcek, the Party leader during the Prague Spring, had become chairman of the Czechoslovak parliament and the dissident playwright and former political prisoner Vaclav Havel the country's president. Furthermore, signs of a split in the CPSU were also appearing. In Moscow, on 21 January, more than 450 reformist members of the CPSU from various parts of the USSR met to form an intra-party faction seeking the transformation of the Communist Party into 'a genuinely democratic parliamentary party operating under a multi-party system' and market reforms. Known as 'the Democratic Platform', this group also had supporters in Ukraine who proceeded to organize.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 12 January and 11 February 1989.

Soon afterwards, on the eve of a crucial plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, tens of thousands staged the largest pro-democracy rally yet seen in Moscow. At the plenum on 5 February, Gorbachev finally conceded that the Communist Party should give up its constitutionally guaranteed monopoly on power and instead compete for power in democratic elections. On the other hand, he proposed that a presidential form of government be created. The Soviet leader also signalled that the Kremlin was now prepared to acknowledge the need for a new Union treaty. The first to criticize Gorbachev's speech and the new Party Platform which he had proposed for the forthcoming Twenty-eighth Party Congress was a representative of the conservative wing of the CPU, Korniyenko. He urged the Soviet leader to use the 'most radical' means to restore order and save the Socialist state 'before it was too late'. The Communist Party, he argued, had to preserve if not a 'leading', then a 'special' role for itself in society.⁵³ Despite the criticism from the hard-liners, the Platform advocated by Gorbachev was adopted.⁵⁴

Against this tumultuous background, the issue of Ukrainian sovereignty was rapidly moving to the top of the political agenda. The emphasis on the need to achieve sovereignty was evident at a session -of the Verkhovna Rada devoted to environmental issues, which opened on 17 February and at which, incidentally, Shcherbytsky's death was announced. For instance, Ivan Plyushch, the head of the Kyiv region's administration, argued that it was time to 'fill the notions of sovereignty and independence with real substance, that is, build our relations on the basis of mutual expediency and choice in a free Union of states'. The session also heard outspoken criticism of the diktat of the central ministries and calls for the closure of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant. In a display of its new assertiveness, the Ukrainian legislature voted to send an appeal to the Soviet Defence Minister Dmitrii Yazov calling for the suspension of the building of a military radar station in the Transcarpathian region until experts had examined the consequences for the environment.⁵⁵ A few days later, Yazov agreed to comply with this request.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1990.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1990.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18, 20, 21, 22 and 23 February, 1990.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25 February 1990.

On the same day as the Verkhovna Rada was convening, supporters of the 'Democratic Platform' in Kyiv formed a coordinating council of local 'progressive' Party clubs and organizations from Kyiv University and various institutes and factories. Among the members were Sahi and Karpenko. Similar groups were being formed in other cities.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the leadership of the Ukrainian Komsomol, which was struggling to hold the organization together and redefine its role, moved closer still towards the positions held by the democratic opposition. At a plenum of the Komsomol's Central Committee on 19 February, its leadership explicitly criticized the Central Committee of the CPU for responding too slowly to 'sharply acute current problems', including 'the question of Ukraine's remaining within the USSR, and of its state, political and economic system in the future'. The plenum came out in support of political pluralism, cooperation in the elections 'with all democratic forces', and the broadest possible political and economic sovereignty for Ukraine on the basis of a new Union treaty. Two important resolutions were adopted. The first 'on the Sovereignty of the Ukrainian SSR', urged the new parliament to make the declaration of the state sovereignty of Ukraine a priority and, echoing much of what was in Rukh's programme, set out in considerable detail some of the principles that needed to be included in it. The other expressed toleration for the use of national symbols. Kravchuk participated in the plenum and in his speech declared: 'I support the position of the Komsomol concerning the sovereignty of our republic.'⁵⁸

The emerging divisions within the CPU leadership between, on the one hand, moderates, reformists and proponents of broad sovereignty, and on the other, conservatives, hard-liners and defenders of the empire, surfaced at the CPU Central Committee plenum convened on 22 February to discuss the situation on the eve of the elections. Ivashko set the tone by warning the participants that the Party's opponents were effectively presenting it with an ultimatum: 'If we do not make a choice between the GDR and Czechoslovak variants, the "Romanian variant" cannot be ruled out.' The CPU would not give in to fear, he asserted, and, with the help of the security forces, would ensure that order was maintained.

Haran, *To Kill the Dragon*, pp. 91-2.

Molod Ukrainy, 22 and 24 February 1990.

Yelchenko and quite a few other hard-liners, however, called for the restoration of order and discipline not only in the republic but within the CPU as well. The Party had become plagued with divisions between 'rightist and leftist positions, capitulationism, membership in unofficial organizations with a negative political profile, [and] apathy', he complained, and it was time to purge the ranks. Another speaker, a Party official from the Voroshylovhrad region, declared that Drach, Pavlychko, Yeltsin and Afanasev had no right to call themselves Communists and also attacked Kravchuk for his political evolution and liberal stance.

One of the reformists, the pro-Rector of the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute, M. Rodionov, criticized the calls made 'in-many of the speeches for the use of force, because we have ended up under some sort of siege'. Together with Leonid Kuchma, the general director of the 'Pivdenmash' rocket building complex in Dnipropetrovsk, he argued that the CPU and CPSU had lagged behind developments and instead of leading had in fact been pushed along from below. Kravchuk, too, rejected what he described as 'the nostalgia for the stern hand'. The people had grown tired, he said, and what was needed was to win back their confidence.

Several of the speakers, including Kravchuk, stated that the CPU should seek greater autonomy and Rodionov even went as far as to suggest that the CPSU should be transformed into 'a union of independent national parties'. Ivashko himself in his concluding remarks said that the CPU needed to emphasize that 'in its policies it upholds the interests of Ukraine'. Rodionov, Kuchma and Kravchuk went the furthest in calling for the practical realization of Ukraine's sovereignty on the basis of a new Union treaty. As Kravchuk put it, although Ukraine was part of the Soviet federation, 'we have to be masters in our own land'.

One of the factors which seemed to have convinced some of the Ukrainian Communists of the need to take fuller responsibility for affairs in their republic and broaden its sovereignty was disillusionment with Moscow generally, and the Gorbachev leadership in particular, for getting the Soviet Union into such a mess. This theme figured quite prominently at the plenum. Kachura, for example, blamed the Gorbachev leadership for the grave 'political, economic, and ideological crisis' in which the USSR found itself, arguing that the Kremlin's policies had been poorly thought out, inconsistent and belated. The old economic structure had been ruined and was

no longer functioning and the very survival of the Soviet state was in question. For those who felt themselves 'responsible for the fate of the republic, for the life and welfare of the people of Ukraine', there was only one way out: the consolidation of all the 'healthy forces' in the republic from both the CPU and the opposition. The Dnipropetrovsk region Party boss, M. Zadoya, used a different argument. The central authorities in Moscow were not in a position to restore order in Ukraine; therefore, the republic had to become sovereign so that its leaders could do the job themselves.⁵⁹ Ukraine's Communist leaders also could not help but notice that the demand for the sovereignty of the Russian Federation was growing, with radicals such as Yeltsin, conservative Russian Communists and Russian nationalists all beginning to press for it.

But there were other new developments, too, which alarmed particularly the leaders of the Soviet Union's democratic and national movements. The creation of a strong Soviet presidency, in the absence of a new constitution defining the division of powers, was potentially dangerous for the cause of democracy and the devolution of power from the centre. At the same time, a new law was being prepared on secession which left no doubt that it was intended to make it as difficult as possible for those republics which wanted to leave the USSR to do so. Moreover, on 24 February the Council of the USSR Supreme Soviet approved a bill regulating the declaration of a state of emergency, the provisions of which allowed the USSR Supreme Soviet to impose this measure without the consent of the legislature of the republic concerned.

In some republics, the elections to the republican legislatures were held a week before those in Ukraine and provided encouraging results for the Democratic Bloc. They resulted in a resounding victory for Sajudis in Lithuania, and the defeat of the Communist Party of Moldova by the Moldovan Popular Front. What was also encouraging for Rukh and its allies was that Russia's fast-growing democratic movement was campaigning hard and seemed poised to do well in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.

Radyanska Ukraina, 24, 25, 27 and 28 February 1990. The maverick Kuchma urged that 'the first decree of our Renewed Verkhovna Rada should be a decree on the full economic and political sovereignty of Ukraine as a state.' See Yurii Lukakonov, *Tretii prezident: Politychnyi Portret Leonida Kuchmy* [The Third President: A Political Portrait of Leonid Kuchma], Kyiv, 1996, 17-19.

In the final days before the elections the political polarization in Ukraine grew. On 25 February, the last Sunday before the elections, according to official figures 126 demonstrations involving 300,000 people took place throughout the republic at which the authorities were accused of rigging the electoral process, and genuine democracy was demanded.⁶⁰ Pro-democracy rallies were also held that day in Moscow and many other cities in the USSR. Three days later, however, *Radyanska Ukraina* reported that the Union of Toilers of Ukraine for Socialist Restructuring had just held its inaugural congress in Kyiv.

The parliamentary elections become a watershed

On 4 March, almost 85% of the voters turned out to cast their ballots for the 2,888 candidates who were competing for 450 seats. Deputies were elected in roughly a quarter of the constituencies and the run-offs were scheduled for a fortnight later. The initial results indicated that the Democratic Bloc had done very well where it had been able to nominate candidates, winning 43 of the 112 decided seats, and that the national democrats were headed for a landslide victory in Western Ukraine and making a strong showing in Kyiv. Among the representatives of the democratic opposition who were elected were: Drach, Yavorivsky, Chornovil, Mykhailo and Bohdan Horyn, Lukyanenko, Yukhnovsky and Khmara. As for the CPU leaders, Ivashko and Yelchenko were forced into the second round; Kravchuk, Hurenko, Matvienko, Kachura and Masol were elected; and Pohrebnyak and Kryuchkov were among those who lost.⁶¹

The results spurred some of Rukh's euphoric leaders into issuing a call, without even waiting for the second round of voting, for the transformation of the Popular Movement into a political party committed to achieving Ukrainian independence. On 6 March, the day the appeal was launched, Drach told a Western correspondent that during the election campaign

....people asked us why we did not form a party . . . We finally told ourselves that we should make up our minds and form a

Washington Times, 27 February 1990.

⁶¹ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 13 March 1990. For further details, see Potichnyj, *Elections in Ukraine*.

party for the national, social and spiritual renaissance of Ukraine. . . Our party will stand for the independence of Ukraine, for its political and social sovereignty. And at this stage the only way to achieve it is to leave the Soviet Union.⁶²

Two days later, *Literatuma Ukraina* published the appeal signed by twenty-two activists. They included leaders of Rukh and the UHU, and Communists and non-Communists alike. Among them were: Drach, Yavorivsky, Pavlychko, Mykhailo Horyn, Lukyanenko, Konev, Badzo, Donchyk and Holovaty. The statement called for a multi-party system, blamed the CPSU for the ills that had befallen the Ukrainian nation under its rule, and rejected the 'imperial Moloch', which the authors said was being disguised as a renewed federation. They proposed that Rukh be transformed into a political party uniting all those who wanted to achieve in a democratic and peaceful manner 'the real and lasting independence of Ukraine'. They also called on the CPU to follow the example which Brazauskas and the Lithuanian Communist Party had set and transform itself into an independent, democratic, leftist party.

The appeal was another milestone, both as regards the development of a multiparty system in Ukraine, and the shift towards the open embracement of the cause of Ukrainian independence by the democratic opposition. In fact, the Green World Association, the UHU and the Ukrainian Christian Democratic Front had all recently announced their intention to become political parties, and *Literatuma Ukraina* of 8 March also published material about preparations by an initiative group in Lviv to form a Ukrainian Peasant Democratic party.

Nevertheless, the proposal about Rukh's future caused a certain amount of confusion and concern within the Democratic Bloc and there was strong opposition from those who wanted the Popular Movement to remain an umbrella organization. It also enabled the Party apparatus to play up warnings about 'separatists' and 'extremists', especially as on 11 March the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet, now controlled by national democrats, voted to declare Lithuania's independence.

Despite the new questions concerning Rukh's direction, the Democratic Bloc did well again in the run-off elections, the voter

⁶² - Reuter, 6 March 1990.

turnout in which was a little lower —78.8%. Among the democrats and reformists elected were Holovaty, Oles Shevchenko, Yemets, Tanyuk, Saliy and Kotyk. Ivashko and Yelchenko also got in.⁶³ Altogether the Democratic Bloc won about 110 seats, ten of the successful candidates being former political prisoners. A further thirty or so of the deputies elected turned out to be potential allies of the democrats, so that the democratic opposition in the new parliament made up between a quarter and a third of the lawmakers. The Democratic Bloc achieved similar successes in the elections to the local councils, the national democrats winning control in the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil regions, and capturing half of the seats in the Kyiv city council.

The election results provided a fairly good picture of the balance of political forces in the republic. The Democratic Bloc won resounding victories in Western Ukraine and Kyiv, winning all 24 parliamentary seats in the Lviv region and 18 out of 22 in the Ukrainian capital. In Kharkiv the Democratic Bloc won 9 of the 28 seats, and in the Donetsk region 9 out of 45. Generally, the Democratic Bloc did better in the bigger cities than in the rural areas. In fact, its poorest performance was in the rural areas of southern and eastern Ukraine. The Democratic Bloc won seats in twenty of Ukraine's twenty-five regions, failing to secure representation in the Voroshylovhrad, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and, rather surprisingly, Chernivsti regions, as well as the city of Sevastopol — the main base of the Black Sea Fleet.

As for the ethnic composition of the 442 deputies who had been elected by 18 March, 331 were Ukrainians, 99 Russians, 5 Belarusians, 4 Jews, 1 Armenian, 1 Bulgarian and 1 German. Party functionaries captured at least 97 seats, directors of state and collective farms 33, while directors of industrial enterprises also won a significant number.⁶⁴

The results confirmed that Western Ukraine and Kyiv remained the centres of the national revival but that the pressure for change was also considerable in the cities of Eastern Ukraine, where social and economic considerations dominated. Rukh and the national democrats had made little headway in the more industrialized and Russified regions on the left bank of the Dniro, and outside of

⁶³ *Radyanska Ukraina*, 24 March 1990.

See Potichnyj, *Elections in Ukraine*, pp. 24-7 and 31.

Western Ukraine their influence in the villages was still weak. Nevertheless, considering the difficulties and obstacles it had faced, Rukh and its allies in the Democratic Bloc, had done remarkably well. The CPU's monopoly, though not its hold on power, had been broken and the political struggle for democracy and sovereignty elevated to a new plane.

Meanwhile, in the Russian Federation, democratic forces had also done well in the elections. Candidates representing the new 'Democratic Russia' Bloc swept to victory in Moscow and Leningrad and captured about a quarter of all the seats to the new RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies. The radical reformers Gavriil Popov and Anatolii Sobchak were subsequently elected to head the city councils in Moscow and Leningrad, respectively. Yeltsin, who after the death of Sakharov in December became the uncrowned leader of the Russian reformist opposition, also won comfortably in Sverdlovsk. When then, on 13 March, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies finally took the historic decision to abolish the Communist Party's constitutional monopoly on power, it was simply acknowledging the new political realities which the elections to the republican legislatures had confirmed. On the same day the Congress elected Gorbachev as president of the USSR, though not without problems: the radical deputies were split over whether to support the creation of an executive president and almost 200 deputies did not vote for the Soviet leader. In short, the elections had drastically altered the political set-up in the USSR and the forces for democracy and republican sovereignty were continuing to set the political agenda.