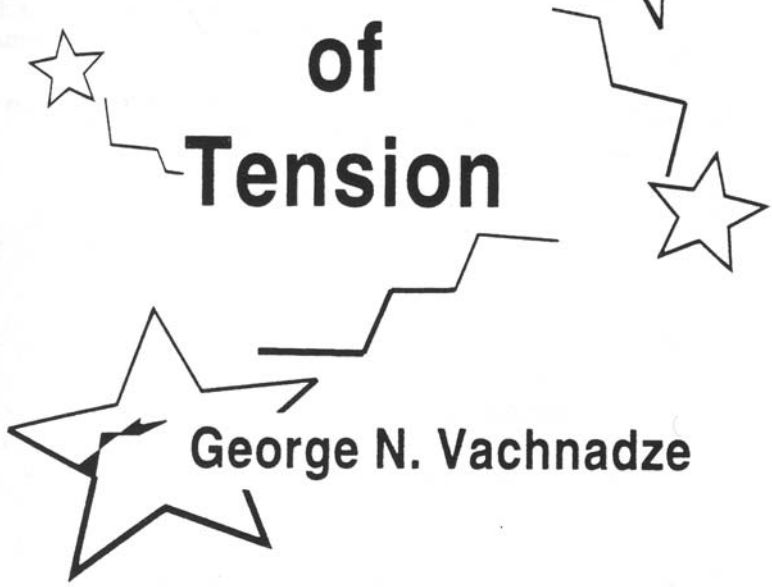


**Russia's Hotbeds
of
Tension**



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Having rejected the USSR, communism and the Cold war, Russia has embarked upon the path of cutting down her military forces, disarmament conversion and privatization..

This book views Russia's future from the vantage point of the interests of dozens of her economic and national regions, republics, influential political forces.

Former small-time petty bosses in these outlying provinces have now become presidents, MPs, mayors and have thus gained independence from Moscow. But they are now under the influence of their constituencies.

The fates of politics and business are no longer decided in Moscow's corridors of power, but directly in the geographic localities of Russian Eurasia where, until yesterday, a foreigner has never set foot.

A close insight into what used to be Russia's backwoods provinces is therefore a promising adventure full of surprises.

INTRODUCTION

RUSSIA TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF THE USSR

National republics and autonomous areas of the Russian Federation are determined not to pay taxes to the central government in Moscow and establish full control over all natural resources, land and production capacities in their sovereign territories. The age-old Russian territories in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East also united to press for full independence. The regions which have not yet demanded independence account if only for one eighth of the Russian territory.

The run-down environment, hopelessly neglected social sphere and grinding poverty make for a dangerous political setting. If the central authorities commit a few more mistakes, the entire Russian empire will collapse like a cardcastle, breaking into a number of small states as was the case in the 1920s.

During the past 70 years, this conglomerate of lands and peoples was held together by bayonets and a veil of absolute secrecy. But there is no money left to maintain this Gulag anymore. The army is falling apart while the secret documents are being declassified.

Browsing through Russian newspapers of 1992 may make one's flesh creep. What have we done to our own people? Solzhenitsyn described the horrors of Leninist and Stalinist concentration camps. It takes another Solzhenitsyn to describe what the Soviet people did to their own country during the 1950s-1990s. The military-industrial complex crushed

down people, nature and resources. But as soon as we started winding up military production, the economy fell apart.

In the 1980s, Russia buried Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko. In 1991, it banished Gorbachev and elected Yeltsin president. Each change of the supreme leader was followed by a lengthy reshuffling of officials—from a minister to a superintendent. Following the disintegration of the USSR, power in Russia was wielded by dabblers who committed as many errors and crimes as the old party nomenklatura did.

Russia is still plundered by those who administer its natural resources and factories. In the past, raw materials and weapons were exported in order to meet the needs of the world revolution and to keep the ailing national economy afloat. Now, crude oil, timber piling, Kalashnikovs and Sukhoi fighters, uranium and Russian brides are exported mostly to replenish the foreign bank accounts of several thousand Russian nouveaux riches. Incidentally, the emergent «barons» in Russian provinces do not abase themselves to the democratic rulers in Moscow.

A Gift for the Defence Industry. On September 15, 1992 the ITAR-TASS agency reported that the government of the Russian Federation had endorsed state defence orders for 1993 in amounts greater than this year. Traditionally, the military-industrial complex has absorbed the lion's share of labour, foreign exchange and production assets. It is precisely this sector that accounted for a large percentage of civilian output, including cars, machine tools, irons and casseroles. What's more, a defence order has always been top priority and a must for any civilian enterprise. And the military has always been a generous customer.

Today, defence factories and other enterprises still prefer to get contracts for nuclear submarines or satellites rather than take pains over a civilian product which can be neither exported due to its poor quality or sold on the domestic market because of the high production cost and sweeping poverty dogging this country.

The army also cheered up by the end of 1992. After having dawdled in the Baltic states like a bull in a china shop, the Moscow generals have focused their attention on the Caucasus and Central Asia. Many military commanders have carved out careers for themselves and made a fortune in Afghanistan. They have developed a taste for this sort of things and now are doing the same in the southern regions of the former USSR. They are selling major batches of tanks and aircraft to the warring parties in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Transdnierster.

The line-up of the defence ministry remained virtually intact, and so did the two powerful and autonomous agencies, the GRU and the KGB. Their psychology has not changed either. Thousands of generals and millions of officers who are just wasting taxpayers' money are still ready to serve the Russian imperial idea.

Did the life of Poles, Finns, Estonians, Letts or Lithuanians worsened after they broke with Russia in 1917? Or will the Russian nation become poorer if it loses Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Transcaucasia and the

Chechen republic? Why should the Russians have interfered in all European conflicts during the past two centuries? Why should so much Russian blood have been shed to conquer the Northern Caucasus in all innumerable wars fought in the 19th and 20th centuries? Why should we have responded to the West's provocations and let them drag us into the ruinous arms race? Why do we lack guts to stop the military machinery of death and why should we continue building ever new warships, manufacturing thousands of tanks and developing super-expensive weapons systems, our starving and inflation-robbled people notwithstanding?

The Russian empire was built over centuries. Tens of non-Russian peoples contributed their efforts to that endeavour, which did not benefit the Russians however. Russian czars and general secretaries of the Communist party preferred to design all kinds of geopolitical plans with regard to foreign territories rather than to raise the living standards at home. The only difference is that the Bolsheviks developed the imperial plans of the Russian monarchy to the point of absurdity. The ideas of communism cost one hundred million lives, as Dostoyevsky predicted.

The central authorities in Moscow demonstrate ever more graphically their inability to act in the interests of those people who live in the provinces. The Moscow power had to withdraw from Poland and the Baltic states. It will have to withdraw from everywhere unless it manages to shake off and shift onto the local administrations the crushing burden of economic problems.

What we need is private ownership and powerful and efficient local governments enjoying the support of the electorate. Otherwise, another ten or twenty years, and Russia will turn into a disabled nation. Even today, Russia is a dying out country.

Ecological catastrophe. The break-down of the USSR removed a lid of secrecy from much of statistics and we suddenly discovered that we rank first among other European countries in terms of infant mortality. The average death rate among babies under one year in the USSR is 27 per 1,000, in some regions this indicator is as high as 110.

Every tenth child in the USSR is born with genetic defects. Psychic disorders have been detected in 45 per cent of the conscripts. In 1989, there were 10.2 million mentally disturbed people registered in the USSR.

53 per cent of the Soviet schoolchildren have poor health. Up to eight percent of all children have psychic or physical defects. Of the 287-million population of the USSR, as many as 152 million people have Poor health, including 50 million chronically ill or disabled persons. Every fourth woman is genetically unable to give birth to a healthy baby, while every fourth man is impotent.

The life span of an average Soviet is 69.5 years, or 8 to 10 years less than the average life expectancy in 44 capitalist countries.

These are all 1991 data. In 1992, as the living standards plummeted due to hyperinflation, production slump, unemployment, wars, forced

migration, crime, deteriorating quality of food, etc., all the above indicators have gone from bad to worse.

In terms of the average life span of its residents, Moscow ranks seventieth among the world's 91 largest cities. Up to one third of all dairy products available in Moscow are contaminated with colibacillus. There is twice as much sulphur dioxide in Moscow's air than in New York and eight times more than in Paris. Not only do we breathe with benzopyrene, we also eat it with bread since the food grain we consume is dried with exhaust gases of diesel fuel combustion. Thirty per cent of all food products in Moscow feature a dangerous content of toxic chemicals. According to the USSR Ministry of Health, 21 per cent of sausages were poisoned with toxic chemicals.

Our leaders were aware of all that. Therefore, several tens of thousands of «top» Moscow bureaucrats and their families used health food coming from special farms and factories. They ate special bread, special sausages, special vegetables, drank special beer and special lemonade. They spent much of the year out of town, at special dachas (country homes) located in environmentally safe areas. They underwent treatment at special hospitals and special out-patient clinics boasting a whole array of western medicines and medical equipment. Also, they usually spent their vacations at foreign-based resorts. This shower of special privileges came free, of course. But eventually they deceived themselves and their own children. Even if you do not drink poisoned tap water, there is little sense in using special spring water for cooking and washing, for we all breathe with the same air. Therefore, you can hardly count on healthy grand-children. The permitted levels of exposure established by the USSR Ministry of Health exceed the respective western norms ten times over. Therefore, the children of the nomenklatura are very smart to go to western countries to study. They get married there and stay away from this country until better times.

The following was a common practice in the provinces. A local party boss hailing from Moscow would build chemical and other hazardous factories without any purification facilities in the territory under his administration. Such industrial projects were inevitably accompanied with slums which served for housing for workers who received miserable wages. For the money he so barbarously saved for the state, the local official would be rewarded with a dozen of decorations, an apartment in Moscow and a dacha in its environs. Naturally enough, with what he did to his region (republic, territory), such a party boss could not stay there after retirement. He would be either killed, or live a miserable life in the midst of ruin and outrage.

The timber industry alone annually pollutes the environment with more toxins than the USA used during the Vietnam War. In the Russian Federation alone, industrial enterprises discharge more than 37 million tonnes of toxic substances into the air. Add another 20 million tonnes of discharges generated by outdated Russian motor transport and 23 billion cubic metres of untreated effluents dumped into bodies of water. The

annual per capita «consumption» of toxic substances averages 400 kg in Russia.

You can hardly find another site on the planet with as catastrophic an ecological situation as in this country. Where else will you find a place where every tenth barrel of the produced oil is spilled? What other country awards state prizes for the construction of a canal losing up to 40 per cent of water? One has to be insane to conduct more than 120 «peaceful» nuclear explosions, and it takes a peculiar kind of love for Russia to turn it into a nuclear waste dump. We have succeeded in destroying the forests of Siberia and the Far East which are as important «lungs» of our planet as the Brazilian rainforests. There is no other country where half of food products is contaminated with chemicals. We have far too many cities where most people do not live long enough to earn pensions.

Price of Human Life. In the event of death on a crushed domestic flight, the insurance indemnity paid in the USSR before October 1990 was Rbs 1,000. After this date, the indemnity paid by the state in the event of an air, rail, marine, riverine or motor transport accident was fixed at Rbs15,000. The limit for a voluntary life insurance policy in the USSR was Rbs25,000. In January 1991, compulsory life insurance was introduced for the military, irrespective of the death circumstances. The policy is worth Rbs25,000, or about US\$500 at the January 1991 exchange rate.

Insurance indemnities paid in developed countries are 100 or even 1,000 larger, which naturally makes western companies see to it that the systems used on transport and in production are highly secure and dependable.

Our Soviet (Russian) evaluations of human life are so ridiculous (even with our prices) that they fail to provide any incentives for our authorities to at least minimally improve working conditions and safety. During the second world war, our military commanders effectively killed millions of their own soldiers. In peace time, our party bosses were responsible for a still greater number of deaths among the deported and the builders working on the great construction projects of communism, including the White Sea Canal, Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Angarsk, Magnitogorsk, Sterlitamak, Salavat, etc.

As recently as in 1989, we were absolute world leaders in terms of suicidal statistics (approximately 30 suicides per every 100,000 citizens). The respective figure for the USA was 12 at the time. The gap has widened since then.

There are no doss houses in Russia or other Commonwealth states, although there are at least six (maybe even seven) million homeless people in the European part of Russia alone, says the newspaper Business World (Aug. 22, 1992). The czar cared about such people, but the Bolsheviks thought nothing about them. They built posh palaces for their party committees, acting not unlike the church, which is spending millions on the restoration of church buildings now.

Deputy Albert Likhanov made public secret information at the 1st Congress of Peoples' Deputies, according to which the militia annually detains 900,000 homeless children. Add to this the millions of refugees fleeing from the Chernobyl area, earthquake zones, ethnic conflicts, etc, and the millions of homeless officers and their families, and you will get a truly gloomy picture. More than a million people, often with mental and other chronic diseases, are annually released from prisons, special medical institutions, orphanages and boarding houses - with nowhere to go.

The process of the impoverishment of the people, hyper-inflation and unemployment is gathering momentum, producing more millions of homeless, who constitute the potential core for the Russian «ruthless revolt.» The government doesn't seem to understand that it is in its interests to care for the people. When Yeltsin was elected chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, he promised at a press conference to allocate 100 million roubles in 1990 prices for the establishment of doss houses. He has not done it yet, while the Ministry of Social Protection is levying huge taxes on charity foundations.

Foreigners visiting the Commonwealth states seldom see wheel chairs in the streets, which are not suited to the life of disabled persons. A year or two ago our press lifted the veil of silence that covered this problem and we learned that up to ten million people cannot live a normal life owing to the fact that home-made prosthetic devices lag far behind Western medical achievements.

Why did the USSR disintegrate? All Soviet citizens knew that the Communist Party' management of agriculture and industry and treatment of Nature and the people was extremely short-sighted. There was a joke in the party lobbies. Radio Armenia asks: Can we spread socialism throughout the world, meaning not only Africa, Asia and Cuba, but also the USA and France? The answer is, «Yes, but where would we get grain and where would our wives go shopping then?»

Rural dwellers did not know for sure but guessed that half of the 20 million hectares of arable land in the Commonwealth were salinated and needed emergency help. Any normal person knows that as long as land has no market price (value) and Communists and other parasites enjoy the privilege of distributing benefits, we will continue to eat foods poisoned with nitrates, drink dirty water and breathe polluted air.

Landsbergis, chairman of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet, argues that the nature of Lithuania and other Baltic states was destroyed by Soviet (Russian) troops, so it is the prime task of the Green movement to oust the occupiers. Indeed, do the people of the Baltics have reasons to love Russians? Can they love us for deporting hundreds of thousands of indigenous Baltic people to Siberia and Polar regions in the 1940s, for forced mass emigration, for sweeping expropriation of property, and for enforcing the Soviet way of life?

Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Plyusch said that the policy of the USSR ministers and the Communist Party Central Committee has

lead Ukraine to a severe economic crisis. The overpopulated southern industrial regions of Ukraine are in actual fact dying because of the lack of purification facilities. The environment of Donbass, Zaporozhye and Mariupol has been polluted beyond repair. Plyusch said that Ukraine had been «a colonial appendage of the empire.»

The Communist Party had a finger everywhere, controlled everything, but bore no responsibility for anything at all. President Kravchuk of Ukraine initiated the dissolution of the USSR and was the first to proclaim the final divorce from the Kremlin elite. He justified that decision by saying that Ukraine had not received effective assistance from the USSR leadership in clearing up the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy.

Four years after the 1986 nuclear disaster, Gorbachev visited Belarus and had to admit that the local people do not understand him. The Kremlin turned a deaf ear to the demands of Belorussian victims of Chernobyl.

Instead of establishing dialogue with and giving concessions to the national liberation movements in the Caucasus in the late 1980s, the Politburo drowned in blood peaceful demonstrations in Tbilisi and Baku. The KGB, GRU and the Communist Party Central Committee pulled all strings they held in order to launch—and then fan—the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenian writers initiated the quarrel.

President Levon Ter-Petrosyan of Armenia later admitted that his country should have not risen to the bait over Karabakh, but the conflict began way back during the Communist rule. Mass Armenian pogroms in Baku were instigated by Moscow. Gorbachev was embarrassed when he was forced to admit that Russian troops deployed in Azerbaijan kept aloof to the tragedy. He complained that unfortunately they could interfere only four days after the bloodshed.

In 1991 the USSR military elite shed the last covers of decency and used tanks against peaceful civilians, occupied TV stations in Vilnius and Riga, exploded the TV towers in Tbilisi and Baku, and sold or presented large batches of rifles and heavy-duty hardware (tanks, aircraft, etc.) to anyone willing in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Moldova.

By the end of 1991 those simple machinations, compounded by regular disruptions in the delivery of energy carriers, foods, spares and other industrial goods, produced the desired result: the economy of the Baltics, the Caucasian republics, Moldova and, partially, Central Asian states was in shambles.

For forty years we waged a chemical warfare on the cotton fields of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics. We fertilised land with genetic poisons and used defoliant, that is, acted exactly as the USA did in Vietnam. But at least the USA fought a war against an enemy in Vietnam, whereas we fought for larger harvests, thinking nothing of poisoning our own people in the process. For two months in

autumn, urban dwellers, including 12-year-old children, picked the poisoned cotton.

The horrible and unpredictable consequences of the influence of mutagenes can be compared only to a nuclear explosion I mean that it is not a one-act tragedy but a never-ending horror story of more and more babies with inborn defects pathological pregnancies and births.

The puppets of the Communist Party in Central Asia and Kazakhstan could not muster enough courage to renounce the use of poisonous fertilisers or force Moscow to stop nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk and the testing of biological weapons in the dry Aral Sea Gorbachev-led new Moscow rulers began their operation in the Muslim part of the USSR by sending a group of several hundred investigators to Uzbekistan They worked for several months, turning the republic upside down and inside out, arresting thousands of local party leaders and economic managers, including topmost ones-all under the pretext of combating corruption In actual fact, their goal was to ensure their unconditional subordination to the will of the Politburo.

All Soviet republics received their share of coffins from Afghanistan All ethnic republics suffered under the heavy burden of Russification, when the indigenous population was turned into a national minority because enormous groups of Russian workers were imported to man giant industrial projects, often built in ethnic republics for the sole purpose of ensuring Russification.

The tragedy of Russia. The Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and the Chernobyl tragedy triggered off the disintegration of the USSR The unbelievably silly policy of the Kremlin before 1985 and the immoral regime of the period of perestroika finished the era of communism in Russia Russian people, all citizens of Russia did not weep over the elimination of the Communist Party and the collapse of the USSR Even the comparatively young Gorbachev-led Politburo failed to resolve the main problems of the USSR.

It was only in 1992 that we learned that nuclear engineering in this country was designed to serve the Defence Ministry, and the RBMK-100 nuclear block, created by Academician Aleksandrov, had terrible inbuilt drawbacks reeking of simple technical illiteracy Suffice it to say that it has no back-up safety systems The block had to be cheap, no matter what.

Moscow built Ukraine's first nuclear station over a fissure in the granite slab, between three rivers-the Dnieper, the Pripyat and the Desna, on weak forest soils, with wind from the station usually blowing towards Kiev, which is only a hundred kilometres away But it turns out that the 1986 catastrophe could have been avoided if the lessons of the 1982 accident at the same Chernobyl station had been taken into account.

The press was allowed to say the truth about the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy for Russia only in August 1989 But now, in 1993, Russia still doesn't have a map of radiation contamination as a result of Chernobyl, although Ukraine and Belarus had had such maps long ago

Anyway- ecological maps have never been issued in Russia, which is why some five million people are still living in 12 areas of Russia contaminated as a result of the Chernobyl accident.

Who will help the residents of Bryansk, Tula, Kaluga, Orel, Belgorod, Voronezh, Kursk, Leningrad, Lipetsk, Ryazan, Smolensk and Tambov regions? And who will help the rest of the population of Russia who eat foods grown in the above regions and sold throughout the country? The corrupt and venal state bureaucrats, from state farms up to ministries, stole even those few billions rouble which had been allocated to Russian victims of Chernobyl in the late 1980s, as the government newspaper *Rossiiskiye Vest* wrote (No 6, Feb 1992).

When that newspaper was called *Government Herald* (No 4, Jan 1992), it published an article by S Voloshchuk, a newly appointed minister and chairman of the Russian State Committee for Social Protection and Rehabilitation of Territories Affected by the Chernobyl and Other Radiation Catastrophes. Such committee could not have appeared during the rule of the Communist Party, although there were quite a few such catastrophes.

«Most of these catastrophes are still hushed up,» Voloshchuk wrote «I mean that the nuclear shield of socialism is equal to fifty or more Chernobyls in terms of radiation load on the territories housing nuclear engineering enterprises, as a result of weapons-related nuclear explosions, and partly owing to accidents at corresponding facilities (...) The accident in Kyshtym released 1.2 billion curies. The Chernobyl accident released «barely» 50 million, which means that the tragedy in the Urals was twenty times more powerful than Chernobyl. There are people with radiation burns there. Other consequences and malignant tumours will take effect later.

The bulk of Soviet people never knew that the Kyshtym tragedy ever happened at all. No information, no trouble. The victims did not get compensations, and their case histories and pension documents never mentioned radiation burns. The people did not tell the truth for fear of severe and immediate punishment, such as a prison term or exile for revealing state secrets.

The population of affected towns and villages was not resettled or as much as informed of their plight. They fell ill and died without knowing why. Meanwhile, specialists from the Third Department of the USSR Ministry of Health regularly measured background radiation and studied case histories there. It was created under Stalin to monitor the health of those who work in nuclear engineering, produce and process radioactive materials. Later the department started training cosmonauts and was put in charge of all secret medical projects. Its archives could tell the world endless horror stories and supply materials for a dozen Nuremberg trials.

Russia's vast territory is its salvation. If all effluents from its military and industrial enterprises concentrated say, on its European territory, Russia would have long perished.

The West has always known everything but kept silent. On the one hand, our opponent in the cold war acted proceeding from its own interests. On the other hand, the West was never sure that the Kremlin octogenarians if bothered too much by the «bourgeois press, would not press the nuclear button.

The situation changed in 1992. President Bush said that democrats in the Kremlin could ensure American security better than nuclear missiles.

West Germany and Russia have signed an agreement on ecology. The Germans will help us to draft a new ecological legislation and to train our specialists. The first on the agenda is the project for improving water in the Volga, that sewer of Russia comparable to Europe's Danube.

Experts say that the environment will continue to deteriorate in Russia. Scandinavian states are extremely worried by this prospect. Of all foreign states only Norway, Finland and Sweden are prepared to retool nature-polluting enterprises in Northwestern Russia practically free. They would have done this already, but they are still not sure that the money they will allocate will be used as expected.

V. Danilov-Danilyants, Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of Russia, invited Western countries to invest money not into the retooling of their ecologically-friendly enterprises but into planting forests in Siberia. The authorities of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany (when it existed) and the USSR-Commonwealth-Russia admitted their inability to save their environment. Now that the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe have collapsed, it has been calculated that the improvement of their environments will cost over one trillion dollars.

The aim of this book. The cold war is over and ex-socialist countries no longer threaten the West with a nuclear stick. But industrialised countries cannot hope for a brighter future unless the West decides to help Russia to remove the weight of its ecological, economic and political problems.

In one half of Europe the people are struggling to overcome the legacy of 50 Chernobyls and the continuing chemical warfare, while hundreds of millions of semi-hungry people of different confessions and nationalities living there are settling accounts in a very loud and completely uncivilised manner. And they all have justified complaints to Moscow and each other.

Instead of one general secretary sitting in the Moscow Kremlin, the Eastern Europe now has dozens (or hundreds?) of fully independent principalities with their own presidents and military leaders. The trouble is that these states have a fantastic amount of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and mountains of conventional armaments, hundreds of obsolete, accident-prone nuclear power stations, oil and gas pipelines and major chemical enterprises. Russia has neither the strength nor the

means to radically cure the patient. The «mind, honour and conscience of our epoch [read the Communist Party of the USSR] fell to pieces and there are no other political forces yet to assume the leadership of Russia. There is also no good legislation, free press, free money-you name it.

What we have is more or less available information about our troubles. Nearly each page in this book reveals a state secret. The main achievement of democratic government in Russia is that it has lifted the veil of secrecy from well-nigh all spheres of life in this country.

We were shocked by what the communist authorities had done. The consequences of the activity of the Communist Party are more frightening than the achievements of Hitler and Pol Pot. Western intelligence services knew about them and regularly relayed this information to their governments.

Following the rules of the cold war, the West closed its eyes to the more hair-raising violations of human rights in the USSR.

Today the West must help Russia. The end of the cold war and the collapse of the USSR ensured the leading industrialised countries of the West a fund-saving respite in the arms race. Besides, the West greatly benefited from the emigration of the cream of our scientists, experts in all kinds of human endeavour, and cultural dignitaries. Today the West can hire the entire personnel of our major research centres, who still rank among the best in the world.

The subjects of this book are the military-industrial complex a monster who lived off Russia like a parasite, the ex-Soviet republics insulted by Moscow's policy, and the Russian people dying of intolerable living conditions. It is based on the materials of the Russian and foreign press and declassified documents from Soviet archives. It describes current developments which offer a view of tomorrow.

The Russian Federation is moving in the footsteps of the USSR. Like the USSR, it will collapse unless the West renders it immediate and effective support in carrying out the reforms and resolving ecological problems, if the policy of central authorities with regard to the provinces and Muslim republics continues to be a heap of mistakes and shortcomings, and if it doesn't legalise private property and demilitarise the economy.

This book provides background information for political scientists and businessmen. It enumerates Russian problems and troubles which can be used to forecast the future. It is the warning of the author who has experienced many of the problems of the Soviet way of living.

PART ONE

REGIONS THREATEN MOSCOW WITH DIVORCE

URALS. Nuclear Discharges in Kyshtym Equal 24 Chernobyl Accidents

The largest in the Russian Federation Urals economic area may well be transformed into a separate Ural Republic to incorporate Sverdlovsk (Yekaterinburg), Perm, Orenburg, Chelyabinsk and Kurgan regions. This proposal was advanced to the Russian Parliament by a number of democratic organizations of Urals in spring 1992. This Ural republic would allegedly have its own legislative body -a rigorous Supreme Soviet and its own president... Sverdlovsk, now Yekaterinburg, has already given Russia President Yeltsin and President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Yu. Osipov.

Russia's abdicated Emperor Nicholas II, his spouse and children as well as their servants were shot in Yekaterinburg in July 1918 on the order of Lenin.

This barbaric act, senseless as it was, set the scale of the subsequent red terror and atrocities committed in relation by both sides during the civil war in Russia and later: execution of the 19 members of the Imperial family was the starting point of the martyrdom of over 60 million people who died a violent death under Lenin and Stalin, all our losses during the world War II put aside.

In 1977, with Boris Yeltsin as the First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk Regional Communist Party Committee, M. Suslov, a member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and the chief ideologist of Soviet Union, had the Ipatyev house, where the Imperial family had murdered, blown up and razed to the ground.

Urals became an industrial gangling of Russia back in the 19th century. At the beginning of the World War II, many plants and factories were relocated here from European areas of the USSR. This apparently accounts for the faults of our mining technologies which allow only to «skim» mined ores, and up to 90% of most valuable metals and other raw materials are dumped into spoil heaps. Similar attitude is transparent everywhere to logging and woodworking. Only 5-10% of the lumber cut in the taiga ever reach the user and about 90% is left to rot in the cutting areas and in the rivers where logs sink or are reduced to waste at woodworking plants and sawmills.

This attitude is due to the fact that both under the tsars and under the communists land in Russia was mainly owned by the state. And labour in this country was mostly forced; it was slavery. Under Stalin, i.e. from 1924 to 1953, all concentration camps in the USSR were built at mines and large logging-lumbering enterprises, bringing together dozens of millions of labourers. Remnants of the GULAG system have survived up to this day, and our state much prefers to keep prisoners not in their cells, but use them to do hard labour and thus to save up on their upkeep. Under Khrushchev and Gorbachev prisoners and troops were the BASIC productive force in construction and in the most polluting and ecologically hazardous industries.

With Yeltsin and disintegration of the USSR, Russia seems to have discarded the practice of using the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior as bodies controlling two multimillion-strong armies of labourers working without pay. Who, throughout the 70 years of the USSR existence has been doing tremendous work at the gigantic construction sites of Communism from Magnitogorsk and the Hydropower station on the Dnieper to the Baikal-Amur Railway? Who has been gathering in the harvest, building the mammoth hydropower stations on the Volga, the Lena and the Yenisei? Soviet press would say that these were young enthusiasts, Komsomol members, but everyone was aware that hundreds of soldiers or prisoners worked together with rare enthusiasts.

When Yeltsin came at power mass imprisonments ceased and planned numbers (sic!) of people to be imprisoned no more assigned. There is practically no universal military service, which is being supervised by professional army units. Could such an innovation have been introduced without affecting our economy? By 1992 in Yekaterinburg and all over the middle Urals consumption of petrol was limited to 40 litres (about 10 gallons) per motor vehicle a month.

The Urals area is fabulously rich in minerals. Extremely valuable are also spoil heaps, geologically promising deposits, areas where the forest has been felled and which are now piled with waste wood and studded with stumps. And all that to say nothing of the labour force potentials. There is a plethora of Western entrepreneurs who are prepared to pioneer joint ventures with local industrialists, but they are

stunted by lack of local owners, by the lack of guarantees for private investors.

Not so long ago, back in the 1980s, big plants and industrial towns were built in the Sverdlovsk region to implement large-scale state programs. But even before the power resources price rise in summer 1992, the output in metallurgy contracted by 25%, in machining and power engineering-by 10% as compared with 1985. And it should be borne in mind that in 1991 over 500 Urals enterprises exported their produce-mainly timber, non-ferrous and rare metals, semi-precious stones, metal specialities.

The wicked tongues assert, and not without grounds, that all this talk about the Urals republic is initiated by those who would like to preserve communist oases in the area, i.e. to retain their power to act in favour of military-industrial complex, the communist party nomenclature and the comprador bourgeoisie, who have been cashing in on mediation and speculation in raw materials.

In March 1992, government structures of the Russian Federation tendered a memorandum to President Yeltsin to advise and caution him of an increased pressure exercised by some local administrations within the Russian Federation aimed at obtaining privileges. Redistribution of power and favouritism with respect to export duties will doom Russia to a precipitous disintegration that will entail catastrophic consequences. On March 16, Russian MP Sergei Shakhrai firmly stated that according to the Federative Treaty, «territories and regions will not get a statehood» and that «the Federative Treaty does not envisage the right for subjects of the Federation to secede from it.»

And why not? People of the Urals would survive on their own. According to experts from the Geophysics Institute of the Urals Affiliation of the Russian Academy of Sciences (July, 1992), Ural is almost entirely an oil-bearing area with deposits estimated at being in excess of 400 million tonnes, but located in extremely technically disadvantageous places.

The potential of the Urals Affiliation of the Russian Academy of Sciences exceeds those of research centres in many former Soviet republics put together. But currently we witness an exodus of scientists and researchers from Urals: thousands of them have gone abroad or into commercial structures. Financing of research work at the Urals Affiliation of the Russian Academy of Sciences has halved (1992) as compared with 1990, whereas the degree of wear and tear of the equipment has attained 50%.

Science here has been at the service of our military- industrial complex which is currently fading away. 34 extremely powerful heavy engineering plants have now been abandoned by Moscow and left to their own devices. Today Moscow has no need in tanks from Tagil, nuclear bombs from Sverdlovsk-44 and Sverdlovsk-45. The famous «Uralmash» plant is likely to turn to civil production. But at present the status quo

remains and they have not arranged for sales abroad of even those unwanted weapons that have already been produced.

As the people are lumpenized increasing number of individuals face a dilemma "THOSE WHO WOULD NOT STEAL, NEITHER SHOULD THEY EAT" The Sverdlovsk region has for the first time taken the absolute leadership in the rate of crime growth Only one third of burglaries is ever detected But audacious crime achieves its peak in the theft of valuable metals from the state Interpol and the Russian Ministry of the Interior are piled up with cases of hundreds of tonnes of titanium ingots smuggled from Urals to the West defying all prohibitions and customs barriers. A town of Verkhnyaya Spada smelts 80% of all Russian titanium European market demand for this metal is up to 6,000 tonnes a year, and the plant at Verkhnyaya Spada turns out 20 times that amount per annum. One shipload of titanium smuggled out of Russia is enough to shake the world market. The same picture is observable with regard to other non-ferrous metals and rare earths. They are used to make large metal-consuming articles, such as fire doors for blast furnaces, also cupronickel pipes, and this produce is then shipped to the West, thus sidestepping the laws prohibiting export of strategically important raw materials which are then sold for a song (otherwise who will ever buy it from us over there?).

Stealing and negligence in Russia, probably, have no analogues in the world, because our wealth is uncountable. And it is nobody's wealth, too as it has never had owners. Half a tonne of emeralds annually mined in the Urals from deposits unique in the whole of Russia (Malyshevskoye mine management, Sverdlovsk Region) are bought from our state at a price about \$1,000 per kilogram (Sic!) and shipped abroad as raw material for further processing, after which the average retail price of 1 carat (0.2 gram) of cut and polished first-grade emerald is \$15,000 at least By virtue of relevant agreements signed in Moscow at the topmost level, Russia will have no right to use her emeralds as she pleases: all of them, to the last chip go abroad for a song. Such is our legacy from the Ministry of Atomic Industry of the former USSR which controlled all emerald mines. Now officials of this disbanded ministry and their intermediaries have quite a lot of money on their accounts in foreign banks This information came to the Government from Russian President's representative in Yekaterinburg Mr. Mashkov.

«Ural is our country's defence shield,» Yekaterinburg is Russia's third capital city.» These statements are perfectly true for this unique area where the Ural mountains, hollowed out all over by miners, divide Europe from Asia. 80% of the industry here works for the military needs and yet millions of washing machines, refrigerators, electric cookers, tape recorders and radios are manufactured here. The military plants also made furniture, automatic conveyor lines for processing agricultural production, medical equipment, computers

The voting equipment for Russian MPs in the chambers of the Russian parliament in the White House in Moscow was installed by the

«Prominform Co.» of Perm. The «Philips system fitted in the Kremlin palace where the former parliament of the former USSR held its sessions P recently is a far cry from it: the Dutch sold us a system outdated by two decades, at least.

Prior to summer 1992 the Lenin machine building plant in Perm was busy manufacturing the 2C23 self propelled gun, the 2A60 semiautomatic gun and «URAGAN» («hurricane») and SMERCH («tornado») systems of jet-propelled volley fire. Now this plant in Perm has to go over to manufacturing equipment for oil extraction, for coal mining industry and metallurgy. The government is impotent neither to pay the plant for the weapons that have already been manufactured, nor to fund its conversion. As a result, the Plant's management are lobbying the government with a demand for clearance to sell these weapons to some private intermediary company in Bulgaria which will immediately sell the said weapons to third countries, since this plant's production used to be the leader in the world market dealing with analogous weaponry.

The Urals Electrochemical Works together with the American «Engelhardt» Corporation began to build near Yekaterinburg a plant for manufacturing devices to neutralize automobile fumes—the first of its kind in Russia. And, instead of using their own technology based on isotope division and acclaimed to be the best in the world, instead of manufacturing the electro-chemical current generators for spaceships, instead of producing automobile fumes neutralizing devices of its own design (Sic!), this super top secret «mail box» in Ural purchased not only a US licence for catalytic making catalytic converters, but, together with it, acquired patronage of a world-known company 2 million of the American-Russian automobile fume converters a year will be sold abroad, where only Europe will need 20 million of them annually by 1995 The USA have already been using them for two decades and have thus been able to cut down the noxious emission by 96% These converters can only be used with unleaded fuel Russia plans to switch over to this fuel in 1995.

The last special-purpose military vehicles were assembled and rolled off the conveyor line of the «Pnevmostroymashina» Amalgamation in Yekaterinburg back in March, 1992 Now the same amalgamation has started to manufacture, by licence of the American «Bockett» Company, 1,200 smaller fork-lifts a month that can be equipped with 15 different attachable devices and fixtures. The same amalgamation now manufactures special beds of indigenous design for patients suffering from bums with each bed costing 1 million roubles.

During World War II Urals' factories manufactured the majority of the weaponry with which this country crushed the fascism Available today in Yekaterinburg are prospectuses of super modern tank T-72, in four colours The «Uralvagonzavod» Amalgamation in Nizhny Tagil is confident that it is too early to stop the conveyor line making these tanks, though the output was cut down 100 times only during the year.

And what is to be done with the T-72s already manufactured? «Sell them abroad, and we'll let you keep 80% of the foreign exchange,»-promised . Yeltsin during his visit to «Uralvagonzavod» in June 1992. But there is an annoying factor, too: viz. that the manufacture of freight rail cars the country needs so badly has dropped owing to lack of funds at the Ministry of Transport. Not to fall into dependence of 1 or 2 monopolist clients, the «Uralvagonzavod» began to manufacture hydraulic excavators with a bucket holding 1 cubic metre, production assemblies for breweries and whole unit assemblies for the «Moskvich» passenger car and fork-lifts. The «Formanta» Radio Electronic Works in the town of Kachkanar discontinued all its military production and in 1992 switched over to making TV-sets by licence of the Swiss «Rodstar» Company; jointly with Japanese and German companies «Formanta» began manufacturing vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

The Electromechanical Works in Yekaterinburg has gained renown for VCRs and video players it makes jointly with the «Philips» Company The next to be implemented here is a joint venture to manufacture colour television picture tubes (1,5 million pieces a year) and laser compact discs.

And yet, practice has shown that Western companies cannot sponsor all enterprises of the military-industrial complex, for there are always fewer benefactors than those who need them. Moscow now is flat broke The military orders placed earlier and fulfilled by now remain unpaid there are drastic cuts of staff everywhere, while unemployment and social tension are growing. In the Sverdlovsk region alone there are 30,000 young men who have returned alive from Afghanistan It was to the Urals Military District where troops were relocated from the former Socialist countries and former Union republics There is no housing for either the «Afghans», or for other officers and men. So, they joined efforts to wrench from the Government what they had been promised housing, pensions, land, exemption from taxes, etc Frightened by the onslaught of the «Afghans», the Russian Government granted Yekaterinburg a two million roubles credit for housing construction.

Given a little bit more of glasnost and freedom, the population of Urals might revive and raise their heads after decades of Bolshevist terror and flood Moscow with court cases demanding compensation of damages inflicted to their health by polluters of the environment The three little known nuclear catastrophes (Soviet mass media never mentioned them until censorship was lifted with us in August, 1990) in Southern Ural have turned this vast area into the Earth's worst radiation-contaminated place.

Crimes Against Humanity. Our atomic industry administration has in the course of 40 years been manufacturing plutonium for nuclear weapons in a military industrial centre with a code name «Cheliabinsk-65» which was built not far from Kyshtym soul 150 km from Cheliabinsk. The «Mayak» Chemical Works functioning under the USSR Ministry of Heavy Engineering had no problems with radio- active waste for the sim-

ple reason that over 20 years these wastes were drained into the river Techa and lake Karachai.

The Techa-Issyet-Tobol river system was contaminated with radio nucleides for 1,000 km and, according to the official data now made public, 134,000 inhabitants were affected by radiation. These people were never treated and never relocated... They simply knew nothing and never tried to guess. What's more, they continue to live in the areas where habitation is not permissible. In the village of Muslyumovo the radiation level reading in spring 1992 was 800-2500 microroentgen, the official admissible limit being 20 microroentgen. Children living here represent the third generation affected by nuclear radiation and none of them is healthy. And what about the availability of qualified medical personnel and drugs? There is none of either. On June 5, 1992, Yeltsin promised «to look into it». But nothing has changed ever since.

Lake Karachai puzzles everyone. In 1967-72, this lake turned into a settling pond for highly active fluid wastes of the «Mayak nuclear cycle» - became very shallow owing to little snow, lack of precipitation, hot summer, etc., and almost dried up. Gusts of wind and small but numerous tornadoes brought into the atmosphere tonnes of radioactive dust from the denuded former bottom of the lake and thus caused radioactive fall-out on an area of 200,000 hectares. And nobody seemed to bother that this area was home populated by 30,000 people, that grasslands and pastures contaminated with caesium 137 yielded hay and crops which, processed into food stuffs, poisoned dozens of thousands of other people. And all that was to be done was to cover the denuded areas of the lake bottom with a polyethylene plastic sheeting or with a layer of uncontaminated soil. However, nobody in authority at the «Mayak» nuclear centre chose to bother about the local population.

Today lake Karachai is brimful again. Yet, seeing that its limestone bottom is riddled with carstic cavities, it is not excluded that the water may break through them and, draining into underlying aquifers, may ultimately contaminate the Ob Gulf and the Kara Sea. This lake and other such ponds had by now accumulated nuclear waste containing over 1 billion cune, the fall-out at Chernobyl being estimated at about 50 million cune. This is the place where radioactive «mud» is still brought from all Russian atomic power stations and from some such stations functioning abroad, as well as from all our atomic powered ice-breakers and submarines. And this world's nuclear cesspool invites all those who can pay millions of dollars to use the services of Chelyabinsk-65.

This town was built in great hurry by prisoners and under the veil of total and complete secrecy. If the first two nuclear catastrophes - Techa and Karachai - were planned, the third one was like a bolt from the blue. The 29th of September, 1957, is the date of the most serious accident in the history of nuclear power engineering known (understandably, not to the Soviet people) as the Kyshtym accident, when the containers with radioactive waste exploded and lifted into the atmosphere 20 million

curies The radioactive cloud carrying mainly strontium-90 covered then 217 villages with 272 thousand population.

But we reiterate that the people never knew that they have been exposed to radiation. The next day after the Kyshtym holocaust, when the sky became scarlet, the newspaper *Pravda* wrote that in the Chelyabinsk region polar lights were observed-an extremely rare phenomenon for these latitudes... And even up to 1992 there wasn't a single organization in Russia that would dare to officially diagnose «a radiation sickness» and its etymology, stating the cause and the circumstances under which the patients were exposed to radiation Besides, people here die earlier-not of radiation, but due to other diseases that their weakened organism cannot resist. Quite recently, it was officially admitted that Soviet doctors can't cure leukemia, leukosis and other blood diseases We left the rest of the world behind in our zealous efforts to proliferate nuclear death, and toddle somewhere near Ethiopia in terms of treating radiation disease. The matter is that we obviously overlooked a revolution in medicine, which took place in the West as far back as in the 1970s. This is why half of our children are dying in blood and cancer wards today. The number of cancer patients has been steadily growing. The last healthy generation is disappearing in Russia Even if we're blessed with a miracle, and our environment recovers overnight, the effects of a genetic impact inflicted on our people in the 20th century will still be felt for at least 50 years. Don't expect a miracle, however. The environment is only rapidly deteriorating.

We have learned the Stalinist principles of building socialism at any cost by rote. The first Soviet industrial reactor to produce weapons-grade plutonium was put into operation in Chelyabinsk-40 (known as Chelyabmsk-65 today) in 1948. The first Soviet nuclear bomb was successfully tested in the same year at the Semipalatinsk testing range in Kazakhstan. The only radiochemical factory in the ex-USSR to regenerate the nuclear waste of power plants operating on WER-440 reactors, fuel of nuclear warships and research reactors has been operating in Chelyabinsk-65 since 1977.

It was announced recently that the military-related activities of Chelyabmsk-65, or the Mayak military-industrial amalgamation, will be channelled into the civilian nuclear power engineering. By the end of 1992, as many as 189 factories in the former USSR extracted fissionable materials, upgraded them or produced nuclear weapons or their component parts. A total of 151 of them are located in Russia.

Incessant public demands in Chelyabinsk, Kurgan and Sverdlovsk Regions, which suffered the worst from nuclear operations, prodded the government to iron out a state plan for the rehabilitation of contaminated areas in the Urals and providing aid to the local population for 1992-1995. GoskomChernobyl has allocated over 1.1 billion roubles for this plan (in 1990 prices, which is roughly equivalent to 50 million dollars) and instructed none else than the Mayak amalgamation itself to do the job The military amalgamation promptly classified its environmental arrange-

ments and refuses to submit any reports even to the Russian environmental ministry Mayak is quite happy with this new, though small state order It has several lakes like Karachai laced with nuclear waste and a sudden gust of wind may bring tonnes of radioactive water and ooze into the air any time from any one of them. Large-scale accidents already happened in 1949-1956, 1957 and 1967 and air, water and soil contamination has continued for almost half a century. This has never affected Mayak's financial standing, however. As time goes by, military doctors placidly write their theses and get more academic degrees by surveying the declining health of the affected population in the Southern Urals for decades The first White Paper in the post-Soviet history was published in October 1992 and revealed that 935 residents of the Urals region are suffering from chronic radiation disease The paper admits that the mortality rate among the affected population is twice as high as among others.

A real A-bomb was set off during the war games in the city of Totsk near Orenburg (known as Chkalov at that time) in the Yuzhno-Uralsky military district on September 13 1954 The nuclear explosion affected all 44,000 troops involved in the games and the unaware local population The war games were ordered by Marshal Zhukov Combat materiel weapons and uniforms were never decontaminated after the manoeuvres. The participants in the Totsk war games were forbidden to tell anyone about what happened for at least 25 years This meant that the enlisted men were deprived of any certificates, or special treatment, or compensations Only after the censorship machinery collapsed in 1990 that the nuclear soldiers could raise their voice and say what had really been done to them.

When a newly established committee of special nuclear veterans appealed to the victims in 1992, only 1,000 Totsk soldiers responded Almost all of the remaining 43,000 servicemen had died of diseases, neglected and forgotten by their country.

Legions of doctors roamed in the Chernobyl and Urals regions, screening the affected population In most cases, they did not intend to relieve their tribulations, but preferred to use local populace as guinea pigs This country has never been short on funds for such projects All results were taken together and instantaneously classified Foreign experts were also invited to join in. A prestigious international agency, the IAEA received 21 million dollars from the USSR annually-a third largest regular contribution after the US and Japan Dozens of Soviet experts worked at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna This collaboration led to a situation, when the IAEA in its own name spread the news in the way the Soviet Communist Party wanted it. In the meantime our academicians in engaged in nuclear research, including Kurchatov Alexandrov, Ilyin and dozens of others, never felt a pang of conscience faithfully serving the nuclear engineering ministry.

A top-security factory established in 1949 sits cozily near the village of ozerny (Rezhevsky District, 50 kilometres away from Sverdlovsk). That

factory quietly extracts uranium and thorium from mineral ore. The waste of this factory has been off-handedly buried nearby and contaminated the entire region around it. Moreover, radioactive stone waste was used for the foundations of blocks of flats in the area. Most residents of Ozerny are seriously ill, since the radiation background in some blocks of flats amounts to 400-1,000 microrentgen per hour. All local and Sverdlovsk bosses knew about it for 20 years from secret reports—and kept their mouths shut.

The situation at the Beloyarsk nuclear power plant nearby, in Sverdlovsk Region, is in no way different. Radioactive waste of this plant has been poured into Olkhovskoye marsh for years, and the marsh is located five kilometres away from a huge water reservoir!

The inquiry into a sudden epidemic of anthrax which took away dozens of human lives in 1979 in Sverdlovsk still goes on. The epidemic broke loose in Chkalovsky District, where the so-called 19th military cantonment is located. The cantonment is in reality a large microbiology centre of the defence ministry. It still remains unknown whether people died due to a leak of bacteriological agents from that centre or got infected from shoddily guarded cattle burial grounds. Authorities don't hurry with the inquiry, since any conclusion will force them to pay compensations, however paltry, to the families of the victims. There are three centres doing research on or producing bacteriological weapons in Russia—in Yekaterinburg (a.k.a. Sverdlovsk), Kirov and Sergiev Possad (former Zagorsk, a city near Moscow).

The fourth, island-based, centre in the Aral Sea actively tested bacteriological weapons prior to 1992. Sometimes, these tests resulted in accidents. In May 1988, half a million saigas suddenly died all at once in the Turgai steppe, though the spring was blooming and the area was an abundance of water and herbage. Then, uniformed people came to the place, collected and buried the carcasses with bulldozers and told witnesses to keep their mouths shut or else.

A heavy smog lowered over the Aral Sea region in July 1989. Isolated cases and outbursts of plague were registered in the area. This unknown scourge even affected the sheep. Whole flocks of sheep began balding rapidly and eventually died in great numbers. Of course, no one talked or wrote about this incident publicly in the USSR. Loose lips may have led their owner to prison camps, even in 1992. Russia is still producing biological weapons, and the USSR spent billions and billions of roubles for their development in the past, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* wrote on September 19, 1992.

Moving Towards Private Ownership. We have sacrificed the health of the nation and our environment, but still failed to build a modern industry even at this exorbitant cost. Moreover, worn out and depreciated fixed assets (depreciation rates grew from 36 to 46 percent over the past decade across the USSR) are fraught with across-the-board industrial accidents and a landslide decline in production. Our decrepit equip-

ment and archaic technologies are gobbling up lots of energy and raw materials, turning the environment into a desert and crippling people.

The largest steelmaking amalgamation in the world has been chugging on in Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region, for over half of a century. This pre-historic industrial monster deserving exhibition in a museum emits noxious fumes, causing high infant mortality rates and cancer. For the past three years, the hazardous pollution of the amalgamation has been reduced from 850,000 to 650,000 tonnes. In July 1992 the management of the amalgamation found 100 million dollars available and signed a contract with the German Krupp's to install a complex to process the gas that results from the coking process. By 1996, the level of hazardous pollution is expected to go down to 150,000 tonnes year.

The factory may survive if it spends at least 10 billion dollars for modernisation. It will then be possible to produce internationally competitive steel and keep the environment relatively clean. So far, the Magnitogorsk amalgamation cranks out steel suitable for tanks, not for cars or computers.

The Magnitogorsk steel works have been successfully selling its product abroad for four years. Today, parts of it switch over to a joint-stock basis, and parts made private.

Rich European countries tend to fold up their environmentally hazardous steel-making production and transfer them to the East. If this trend persists, the Magnitogorsk amalgamation may check the downturn in production from 16 million tonnes in 1988 to 13.5 million tonnes in 1992. A whole ten percent of its output are already exported to Western Europe, Japan, China, North Africa, Persian Gulf states and South-East Asia, not to Eastern European satellites as before. Another way to survive is to sell off to the West what we can't use anyway. For instance, we could sell our heaps mounting near mines, power plants and steel-making factories. They have been piling up for decades, spoiling the air, water and soil. We could issue long-term concessions for the development of these heaps, thus saving human lives and other resources. The management of the Magnitogorsk amalgamation, the Tyazhpromexport agency in Moscow and the German Comex recently signed an agreement on the joint processing of slag. The Western partner will supply the equipment.

Industrial factories in Nizhny Tagil have signed a similar agreement on the processing of heaps left from the copper concentrate. Four foreign entrepreneurs even offered to the Russian government to pay off all Soviet foreign debt, i.e. about 70 billion dollars, in exchange for a permission to process the refuse left after the extraction of non-ferrous metals. Of course, they will supply all requisite latest equipment for this project themselves.

The Russian Federation has already adopted environmental legislation, but it has yet failed to hammer out a mechanism to enforce it. There are no procedural documents or judiciary precedents in tackling cases of

violating the newly adopted legislation. The total penury is also a difficult obstacle. How can authorities possibly order a closure of a factory, which pollutes the environment, if its workforce will be laid off without any means of subsistence? They state is reluctant to pay the dole while personal savings have been gobbled up by inflation in 1991-1992.

People are also nettled with the rapidly augmenting export of oil, gas, coal, coke, lignite, iron ore, pig-iron, non-ferrous metals, scrap metals, rolled stock, timber, lumber, tractors, trucks, tanks, etc. Everybody knows that the increasing exports won't prop up living standards or improve living or labour conditions.

Toilers and bosses in the Urals will support any form of separatism. The Big Urals corporation was established by the chiefs of seven Urals regions in the mid-1990. The *Pravda* newspaper lamented on April 24, 1991 that most residents of Sverdlovsk region were the only community in the Russian federation that refused to vote for «a new Union» at a nationwide referendum.

When Boris Yeltsin was running for people's deputy in his Sverdlovsk constituency, he laid an emphatic stress on the movement for the «Ural Republic». In June 1991, the chairman of the Russian legislature signed a decree establishing an economic association of several regions in the Urals. By that time, «the Ural parliament»- a regional association of local legislatures- and a regional foreign trade bank were already operating. All governing structures of the Urals economic community are located in Yekaterinburg. Obviously, the basic objective of this region is to get rid of control from Moscow as much as possible and to pay as little in taxes as possible. Colonial practices must be finally done away with. This recalcitrance led to a situation, when timber enterprises at the Kama River, in the Western Urals, paid less than one percent of their profits tax to the regional budget in 1991.

In a bid to improve the ailing economy in Orenburg Region, the Russian government allowed it to market abroad one out of the eight billion tonnes of oil it produces annually and 700,000 cubic metres of natural gas. This amount of resources must have yielded about six billion roubles to the local budget (roughly equivalent to 20 million dollars at last summer's exchange rate). However, the Russian customs authorities reduced this sum by half, having imposed heavy duties. Well, everything but everything goes awry.

Logically enough, Orenburg Region — a traditional Russian wheat basket- refused to sell its grain to the federal authorities this year, afraid that everything would be taken away from the region. Instead, local authorities decided to establish the Urals trading house to market its grain.

The city of Berezniki in Perm Region is the chemical centre of the entire Urals. The region can also boast two universities (in Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk), one of the largest autoworks in the country (in Miassy), which turns out military trucks, and another bus factory in Kurgan.

The city of Kurgan is most popular for its world-famous orthopaedic center established by Academician Gavriil Ilizarov, however. There are also famous ironworks in Kuvshino, Kamensk, Kussino Kaslino. The Kaslino ironworks earned its renown last century for intricate ornamental castings-grids and figurines.

The region features vast hunting grounds for wealthy people, who will be cordially received by the Diena-Tour firm in Chelyabinsk. Southern stretches of the Urals with their mountain ranges, forests and steppes still have roe deer and elk. Wolves, bears and wild pigs can also be met occasionally. Snipe and duck hunting may be a pleasure too. Half of all businesses and establishments in the Urals went private for the past year.

SIBERIA. Petrodollars Prolonged the Agony of Communism for 30 Years

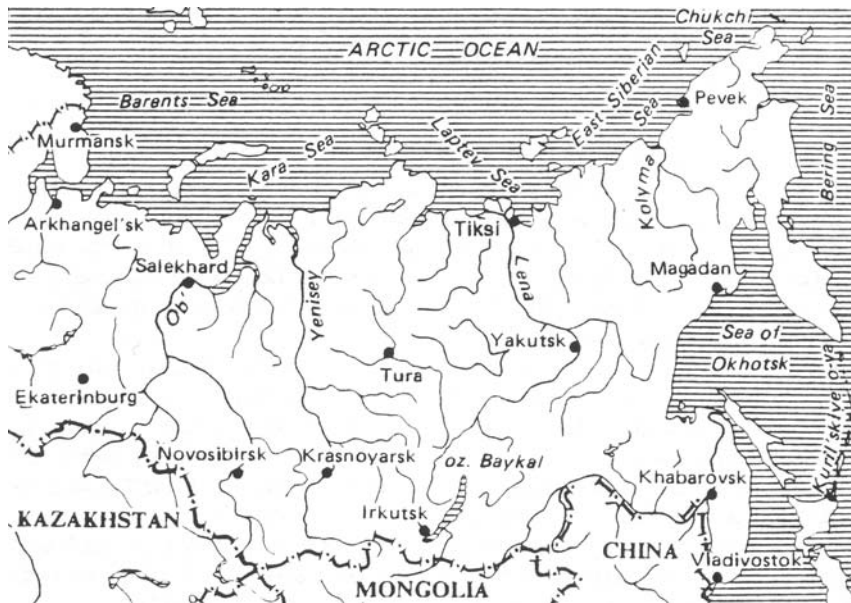
Oil and gas exports yielded from 500 to 600 billion dollars to the USSR for the past thirty years. Without these proceeds, the country would have had to ration bread as far back as in the early 1970s. In 1946 Stalin dreamed of extracting 60 million tonnes of oil a year. He believed that at this production rate, the country will wallow in money and move very close to Communism. In the late 1970s, the USSR produced 600 million tonnes of oil a year.

When the Soviet union ceased to exist, its outstanding foreign debt hovered at 140 billion dollars. Russian economist Vassily Selyunin believes that an amazing 28,000 tonnes of gold are needed to pay off the debts of the Communist party's debts in roubles and foreign exchange. After the Communist rule collapsed, it turned out that our gold reserve was a measly 200 tonnes. Under Stalin, by the end of World War II, the gold reserve was at least 15 times greater. Even in 1985 the vaults of the USSR State Bank contained 2,500 tonnes of gold. Mr. Selyunin believes that even if Russia makes no more debts, which is barely possible, we shall be able to pay of the current liabilities with oil only by the middle of the 21st century. If we have to pay with gold, Russia won't wash 28,000 tonnes until after one a century or so.

The official statistics say that for 1986- 1990, the USSR sold an ocean 01 crude oil and a sea of petrochemicals, including fuel oil, petrol, diesel fuel and lubricants, abroad. All in all, over one billion tonnes of oil products were exported. The average world price for one tonne of this commodity stands at about 100 dollars. So, the export proceeds amount to 100 billion dollars for five years, plus slightly less than 50 billion dollars for the export of natural gas (420 billion cubic metres).

Perhaps, we did not receive all 150 billion dollars due for the exported oil and gas. At any rate, we never hesitated to pump oil to Afghanistan, Cuba, Vietnam, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia almost free of charge. Oh yes, remember friendly firms in other countries working for communist and other parties abroad. In its last years the USSR also exported 36 million tonnes of coal per year. In 1991, the country exported one million tonnes of aluminium, 1.3 million tonnes of nickel, 354,000 tonnes of copper, etc. The list is very long and includes electricity, iron ore, metals, timber and cotton. To take these strategic materials abroad, 5,000 railway cars crossed the border every day, not counting oil and gas.

A lion's share of these export proceeds were spent by Communist panjandrums on armaments, or international ploys, or downright pocketed.



Ample Natural Resources Are A Tragedy. The first fountain of the Tyumen oil went to the sky in summer 1960. This momentous event was marked by erecting a small monument in the city of Ural, on the bank of the Konda River. This was the first oil field discovered in the region followed by the famous Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk and Nefteyugansk oil fields, where whole cities for oil workers were built later. For two decades, Siberian oil fields accounted for half of oil extraction in the USSR, and a greater percentage in the Russian Federation.

However oil production in Russia has been declining at a steady 20 percent each year. Moscow has virtually lost all levers of exerting pressure on local governments and can't finance expanded oil production. So far, Moscow has only cheated on oil workers buying up 90 percent of their entire output for roubles and reselling it abroad for dollars. To improve the situation somewhat, President Yeltsin allowed local oil production managers to export ten percent of their output abroad. Central authorities, however, impose taxes and duties on oil exports so heavy, that oil managers receive only 25 percent of their export proceeds. So oil workers demand the right to export 50 percent of oil instead of ten. It is only after that the staff of oil factories will be able to buy out their factories and turn them into joint-stock companies.

The USSR extracted its oil in the worst conditions possible, but it had enough experts and workforce and most advanced technologies later borrowed by other countries. The Soviet Union produced at least 80 percent of all requisite oil extraction equipment at factories in Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Today, half of Soviet sea ports used for oil exports are located outside Russia. Russian oil pipelines stretch across Belarus, Ukraine and Baltic countries.

The Soviet oil was cheap because extraction costs were low, as oil producers never thought about environmental protection. Besides, most oil fields were developed to only half of their capacity and oil workers moved on to other areas. Our oil pipelines were really a scruffy work, leaking here and there almost 700 times a year.

Western oil pipelines have taps at a distance of five kilometres from one another, while on Soviet ones there is only one tap for 50 kilometres of piping. Accordingly, much oil is lost through leakage and accidents. All in all, from seven to 20 percent of the extracted oil are lost through leakage.

Striving to normalise its economy, the democratic Russia visualises a steep growth in oil production costs. If the production is earned out in a civilised way, Russian oil will be more expensive than the Middle Eastern one. Oil production in Russia is shifting to climatically rigorous zones. Only 15 percent of all oil can be produced through the cheap fountain method these days, while the rest of it has to be extracted through a more complicated and expensive procedure. Millions of tonnes of high-grade steel pipes are left in the ground for good.

It may well happen, that authorities will refuse to further expand oil production. However, at a time of economic crisis, oil production is declining, while oil export is growing. People in Siberia are raging with indignation as social and environmental projects there are put on ice due to aggravating shortages of funds.

The Russian government is dreaming that oil prices will grow due to severe instability in the Middle East and the crumbling popular confidence in nuclear power. However, Russia will have to reduce the domestic consumption of oil in any case. This is only possible through more

rational energy consumption and folding up the military-industrial complex. Also we can't be sure that the current attempts to increase oil and gas production will succeed. The development of deposits of natural gas in the Yamal Peninsula may require as much as 50-70 billion dollars in investments, the Russian Foreign Policy Fund has announced in a report signed by a group of notable experts and members of the Cabinet (*Moscow News*, September 30, 1992) Is it another project of the century ventured in a free-market Russia this time? There is no confidence, in fact, that local government won't demand the right to administer their natural resources independently or break away from Russia in a day or two.

Digging A Tunnel From Moscow To Alaska. Yes, we can well dig it, if we can further receive dollars from the selling of our depleting natural resources against all sceptical forecasts. At least, we managed to build nuclear waste depositories near Krasnoyarsk by digging a whole system of tunnels which is ten times as long as the Moscow subway. That's as long as a tunnel from Moscow to Tashkent! (Below, we shall describe other impressive achievements of socialism in the closed city, Krasnoyarsk-26).

We have other plans today, as magnanimous as the previous ones. We're now thinking about building a highway from Minsk to India via Yekaterinburg (1), from Yekaterinburg to Yakutsk, Chukotka and Alaska (2) and from Yekaterinburg to South East Asia via Vladivostok (3). The Rosavtodor concern has already obtained the consent from several well-known businessmen in Hamburg to join in this project with up to 300 billion dollars. This tremendous project may be completed in ten years. If it is worked out properly and ordinary people don't have to shell out, why not launch it?

So far, we have been trading off national assets cheap. We often sell raw materials at reduced prices, and lump sums in dollars are stashed away at personal foreign accounts of Russian officials who secured those deals. Thus Russian papers reported that Houston, Texas, is rapidly turning into a foreign-based coordination centre for our oil pipelines.

Bribe-takers in Moscow licensing offices or oil smugglers keep their lips shut, naturally, while Siberian oil managers openly boast to reporters: «Yes, we sell oil illegally, but we don't steal it—we wage war against the government». They assert that since Moscow authorities provide only 4 percent of the drilling pipes needed, oil managers have to find other ways themselves. The patriotic thieves admit that they do receive a percentage of the deals—as a remuneration for their risk and effort.

Siberia and Moscow have been launching endless accusations at each other. Siberians even suspect central authorities in Moscow of harbouring plans to stop the illegal activities of local oil traders by giving oil and gas fields stretching from Tyumen to the Yama Peninsula away to Western firms on concession, and on terms lucrative to Moscow alone. Siberian oil managers bombastically claim that they deserve applause

for keeping the Russian natural resources under the Russian jurisdiction.

The so-called Demyanskaya Zone in Tyumen Region will be auctioned in 1993. He who offers the best price will obtain the right for the extraction of all natural resources here for 25 years. The competitive bidding on this and dozens of similar projects involves largest companies from the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. It's only a matter of who will receive the money for this lucrative chunk of property and future profits.

Soon, four equal (?) partners will be sharing an oil pie between them: Moscow, Tyumen Region, Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets national regions. There have been no differences between Siberians and northern community so far—in October 1992 they unanimously demanded that Moscow allocate at least 30 percent of all stocks in the oil and gas complex to the territorial bodies of administration.

This tug-of-war between the government and Asian provinces still continues with little significant changes. In June 1992 the Russian president issued a decree limiting the export of 13 types of goods—from oil and metals to grain, timber and furs. This decree also revoked all previously issued export licenses for these products. Another Yeltsin's decree was related to privatization in the energy complex. The former ministry for energy, which turned into a state-run joint stock company immediately tried to rake in 49 percent of all stocks issued by most efficient hydropower stations operating in Ust-Ilimsk, Bratsk and Irkutsk and main power lines. The loss-making power plants operating on fuel were to be left to the local residents. Clearly, these two decrees never added to the popularity of the President in Siberia. And who's going to pay to Siberians for the damage incurred by these three hydropower plants allegedly producing cheap electricity? The price of energy never included the costs of flooding fertile land and the taiga. Even the climate there has changed, crops have dwindled and mortality rates increased.

Poisoned Siberia. Siberia is poisoned and so is the rest of Russia. Thirty per cent of Russians die at an economically active age, that is they do not live till the pension age. The now defunct USSR did not have the money to finance health care schemes and nature conservation programmes. Obviously, Russia does not have the money either.

At the same time, the USSR was a country whose population did not know hot water meters, or gas metres, or running water metres heating metres, etc. At the very best, the authorities installed electricity metres in houses. There are millions of leaking water taps in the Commonwealth. Doors and windows in the northern part of Russia do not seal in warmth. Paradoxically, in 1992 when production slump became obvious, domestic energy consumption did not drop. The aforementioned report by the Russian Foreign Policy Fund suggests that with a certain level of prices and taxes, small investments would be enough to cut Russia's energy consumption by 40 per cent, which will not affect the current level of

production and services.

Socialism has corrupted, robbed and destroyed us. Every six hours oil deposits of Russia register an accident equal in scope to the Exxon Valdez spill. Several years ago, the Exxon Valdez tanker ran aground outside Alaska. As a result of the accident, more than 11 million gallons of crude oil escaped. In Russia, 920,000 barrels of oil are dumped in the environment every day. According to US News and World Report, a «nobody's oil sea» 1.8 metres deep and measuring four by seven miles has been registered in a Siberian region.

During oil transportation and refining, together with water used to wash reservoirs and in other technological processes, millions of tonnes, or up to 7 per cent, of oil products are dumped into the soil. This mixture of exhaust oil products is not used in Russia, and no export license is required to take it out of the country. It is free for everyone who cares to export it. All settling tanks are filled with it and we have no use for this kind of oil residuals. As oil prices are skyrocketing, it will be profitable for Russians to embrace environment-friendly oil and gas producing and processing technologies.

It is a common practice at the Tyumen oil fields to burn all oil gas. Therefore, up to 10 billion cubic metres a year are wasted to heat the skies. The Japanese have been bargaining with the USSR and then with Russia and calculating what would be more profitable for them to build a petrochemical plant on-site or take oil gas in tank wagons to the Pacific coast and then reload it onto a Japanese tanker. We will soon realise that it will be more profitable for us to pay the Japanese if they agree to put out our gas torches in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia. Viewed from outer space, Tyumen at night is the most brightly lit place on the planet. And the depletion of the ozone layer occurs all over Russia, particularly over Siberia.

There are plans to pump out all gas there is in the Yamal peninsula. In expert opinion, this might lead to the extinction of the indigenous Khanty and Mansi people whose average life span even now is 20 years shorter than the average for Russia. What's more, the very peninsula will disappear, since there is much underground ice and voids in its subsoils which will not bear the impact of exterior forces. Ruhrgas of Germany indicated its willingness to be actively involved in austerity programmes and offered Russian gas industry captains to jointly build a factory producing gas metres and polythene pipes. The upgrading of our gas-consuming industrial equipment installed at thermal stations and various factories alone could save up to 30 billion cubic metres of gas a year, or five per cent of Russia's gas output. The Germans wanted to take part of the gas thus saved in payment, while leaving all environmental benefits to us.

The *Megapolis Express* newspaper (Iss.no.26/1992) wrote about the chief engineer in charge of purification facilities of the Bratsk aluminium plant. Enterprises of the Bratsk region situated on Lake Baikal dis-

charge up to 95 per cent of all toxic gasses, aerosols, fog and fluorine air which destroys the ozone layer, since their filters and purification systems are good for nothing. The same situation prevails throughout the country. What is wasted in industrial effluents and dumps disregarded, up to 1.5 billion tonnes of raw materials are sent down the drain (the State Committee for Statistics puts the figure at 60 million tonnes). Chief engineer A Kazakov was sacked because no one wanted to put his invention-recyclable waste catchers-to industrial use.

What will help the residents of Bratsk—a city on the list of Russia's most polluted localities? The carbon disulfide content in the Bratsk air is 190 times more than the permitted level. The incidence of oncogenic diseases among Bratsk children has increased five times during the past five years. The past sixteen years have seen coniferous forests die on 111,000 hectares. Following the pattern set by its predecessors, the Russian government decides to ban the construction of new enterprises, and at the same time sanctions the expansion of polluting shops in Bratsk and along the entire shoreline of Lake Baikal. And what about hundreds of non-aboriginal people who have to permanently live in the village of Yamburg on the coast of the Ob Bay, 68th parallel? According to sailors, one cannot possibly live there for more than three months at a time.

Or what best store for the residents of Salekhard, Surgut, and some other cities of the Tyumen region where there is more than 14 million square metres of housing poisoned with phenol and formaldehyde. The maximum allowable concentration of hazardous substances in these wooden houses with the lethal heat insulators (incidentally, this concentration has been okayed by the USSR Health Ministry) exceeds the norm 350 times over. Those who live in those houses are more susceptible to illnesses, but no medical authority has dared to diagnose such cases as phenol poisoning, because in this case the government would have to shell out money to finance new housing, cure the poisoned and compensate them for the injuries sustained.

«Siberian Scientists Can Guild Russia.» This is the headline of an interview with Ivan Nesterov, director of the Tyumen-based Western-Siberian Oil Prospecting Centre, carried by Izvestia on June 2, 1992. His research team made its name after it invented and launched serial production of pundoil—a preparation used to purify soil and water from oil. The world does not know a preparation more effective than pundoil. Small wonder, foreign buyers from Spain, the USA, Kuwait and Argentina are lining up to buy the purifier. The world price for clean-up averages US\$50,000 per hectare. Our oilers from Surgut, Noyabrsk and Nizhnevartovsk offer the research centre a rouble equivalent of US\$200 per hectare.

Nesterov is a prolific inventor who could not implement his ideas in a wasteful and primitive economy of a colonial type. He is trying to prove there is oil in clay shale, too. This kind of oil can be transformed into an entirely new solid fuel whose calorific value would be several orders of

magnitude higher than that of regular oil Nesterov proposes a unprecedented type of energy generation which is comparable to nuclear power but absolutely environment-friendly.

Also, Nesterov assumed the risk of building a factory in Novy Urengoy where he intends to assemble miraculously light diatomic houses. About one thousand open diatomite pits with a total capacity of 500 trillion cubic metres were discovered in the Tyumen region back in the 1970s. Diatomite means liquid glass fibreglass, crystal, absorbents, fertilizers and construction materials. In the 1980s, experts at forty research centres examined and agreed with Nesterov's projects and calculations. The Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation was about to sanction the construction of 50 factories, but the CPSU Central Committee objected.

Nesterov, a geologist and corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, also told Izvestia that in 1992 his institute started a programme providing for an artificial oil deposit. He promised it will take him several weeks rather than one million years to form an oil field. It is like sparkling wine. You can let it ferment during three years or three days.

There is nothing we cannot accomplish if we have an interest in something or if we are forced to work by effective laws if not at gunpoint. It was to Siberian oilers, more precisely to the international research & production concern Konversiya (general director . Korobochkin) that Kuwait offered a contract for well revival and manufacture of oil traps. Military cargo planes helped our oilers airlift 200 tonnes of large-size equipment to Kuwait where they performed the contract. In a year or two, the Russian military-industrial complex may well start serial production of the entire range of state-of-the-art oil-producing equipment which will help completely eliminate imports in 1995. Meanwhile, there are 25,000 wells in Russia which stand idle for lack of sucker-rod pumps and other equipment.

If only our land and natural resources, labour and human life had been realistically priced, and the state had ensured strict compliance with the law, we would have certainly listened to our experts (following are the estimates of the research institute of energy economics) who have vainly tried to convince the government that one rouble invested in purification facilities saves two roubles, and the returns on each rouble invested in water conservation programmes will amount to Rbs4.5. Alas, we have disregarded common sense since 1917, and the only difference between our system and the colonialist or Hitlerite regimes is that those infamous systems plundered the resources of other nations while we are looting our own wealth.

Under western laws, it is expedient to clean coal in order to reduce its ash content and increase its calorific value to 5,000-6,000 calories per kilogramme. Our consumer is happy with coal whose quality is ten times lower. Consequently, transportation costs are rising, furnaces break down, and the air is ever more heavily polluted. As early as in

1987, the US Congress earmarked US\$12bn to finance a ten-year programme called «Clean Coal for Thermal Plants and Boilers».

Our coal-washing plants stand idle and we sell our low-quality coal to Turkey where it is processed and then resold on the Turkish market at an exorbitant price. Such transactions have been possible only due to behind-the-counter dealings of the powers-that-be. Organisations like the Union of Kuzbass Coal Exporters have been established precisely to curb this day-light robbery. In 1992, the members of the Union set up their own information centre, and sophisticated quality test laboratories to prevent dumping sales.

In 1989, Siberian coal-miners were the first in this country to make their voices heard and shake off the burdensome wardship of the ministerial bureaucrats. The authorities in Kemerovo- Siberia's largest coal-mining centre- began selling their coal directly to foreign consumers, eliminating Moscow-based intermediaries. In the summer of 1992, the central authorities launched a counter-offensive and tried to restore their control over the national energy-producing complex. The Siberians lashed back by establishing the Kuzbass Coal-Mining Company which expressly spoke against Moscow bossing around in the Kemerovo region, and declared themselves their own masters.

Siberian coal-miners have been playing political games for quite some time, and very successfully, too. They have ceased to be easily gullible hillbillies. They have established close ties with the Brussels-based European Union of Entrepreneurs. Also in Brussels, they bought a legal firm with Russian-speaking lawyers who are prepared to go to any location on this planet to deal with claims. In the past, the region was losing dollars on every tonne of coal, since it could not verify whether the price offered by foreign buyers was justified. Once Kuzbass miners have become the owners of their coal, they began to take care of the quality of their product intended for export. Going with this tide, Aman Tuleyev, chairman of the Kemerovo Regional Council, was nominated candidate to Russian presidency in 1991.

Siberian miners were also the first in the USSR to have it out with the government when they demanded that the ecological situation in Kuzbass be examined by independent experts. They invited prominent scientists, most of them foreigners, who spent more than one week visiting all purification facilities in the region and consulting local engineers. The international environment monitoring station of the World Laboratory's Russian branch opened its permanent centre in Kemerovo. The local authorities provided the ecological service with premises and support staff and earmarked hard currency funds to buy analytical equipment. The visiting environmentalists suggested that the local authorities could easily cope with 30 to 40 per cent of all ecological problems even if they took minimum efforts.

Provided there is a will, Siberians could also put an end to the squandering of their forestry and curb deforestation. There is hardly any other country in the world which can afford to waste about two thirds of

its commercial lumber. The water reservoirs of the Angara-Yenisei basin alone flooded more than five million cubic metres of timber. As Valentin Rasputin justly put it, our morality sank together with timber.

During the past two years, the rouble prices of timber increased 500 times over. Before the USSR broke up, Russian timber exports averaged 20 million cubic metres a year, or 7-8 per cent of the output which earned about US\$1bn (for comparison's sake, the USA exports 25 million cubic metres of timber a year). During the former half of 1992, the physical volume of exports shrank by 50 per cent, although the output of timber in Russia dropped by 10 per cent only. In expert opinion, Commonwealth states are taking advantage of the gap between timber prices in Russia and abroad and are more actively buying timber in order to subsequently re-export it for hard currency. All this prodded the local authorities in Siberia and other timber-producing regions to declare forests their property.

Moscow has always hated local economic initiatives. In Moscow's view, the local authorities are supposed to adequately implement the policies generated by the centre. But like the ex-Soviet republics, Siberia has long developed its own views. For the first time in Russia, the Irkutsk municipal militia formed a nature conservation squad in 1992. For instance, the Krasnoyarsk public has for many years wanted to sue the Moscow-based State Committee for Energy Resources which built the Krasnoyarsk hydropower plant on the Yenisei river. One consequence of the project is that water does not freeze up for hundreds of kilometres during winter time. This phenomenon accounts for permanent fog which absorbs technogenic discharges in the territorial centre, and almost one million of the city's residents inhale crystalline particles containing a variety of carcinogenic substances. The incidence of respiratory diseases in Krasnoyarsk is 2.5 times higher than the average for Russia. Meanwhile, the proceeds from the operation of the Krasnoyarsk hydropower plant are received by Moscow. But Moscow refuses to pay for the freezing-up of the Yenisei river. Therefore, Krasnoyarsk residents say the power plant will have to be made municipal property.

Siberians have a correct attitude towards property ownership issues. Thus, the city of Omsk ranks third after Moscow and St. Petersburg in terms of privatization, rates. As of October 1, 1992, more than 161 businesses worth Rbsl.4bn were privatised in that Siberian city. Probably, one of the reasons for this success is that Germans are the second largest community in the Omsk region. There are still five plus million Germans living in Russia.

In that very same Omsk, major trials will be inevitably held soon. The military repaired their helicopters outside Omsk and buried the discarded instruments containing fluorescent substances within the city limits. The local penitentiary and other hazardous industrial facilities resorted to almost identical practices. As a result, when specially invited Moscow experts came to Omsk many years after-late in 1992-they discovered 155 contaminated sites in the city. The city council could ear-

mark poultry Rbs2.5m to finance the clear-up effort, half of which sum was spent on the decontamination of one school alone. Incidentally, the Russian government allocated Rbs102m for such works to be carried out nationally... during a five-year period.

The residents of the Tomsk region are also restless. They do not want to live next door to the off-limits town of Tomsk-7 where radioactive waste is buried. The burial sites are improperly located and any time may discharge highly active isotopes which would exceed the power of the Chernobyl accident 20 to 100 times over.

According to the *Moscow News* newspaper (October 11, 1992), the Russian ministry of atomic energy is negotiating with the US government the construction of a storage facility for used nuclear fuel outside Tomsk. The deal is reportedly worth US\$300m. The local public indignantly discussed that grim project as recently as last summer.

The local press has reported that the radiation background has increased on a tributary of the Tom river. Other reports allege that poachers are selling dangerously contaminated elk meat on the city market. The water used by the city of Tomsk is supplied from a water reservoir located next to a subterranean storage of liquid radioactive waste discarded by the Siberian Chemical Company. True, the water reservoir and the storage are located in different subterranean galleries, but there must have been some reason for the increased salts content in the drinking water.

The residents of the Tomsk region are concerned over a proposed joint project which provides for the use of the facilities of the Siberian Chemical Company for enriching uranium from French nuclear power plants.

The CPSU followers are still turning a deaf ear to the warnings voiced as early as 10 years ago by honest scientists and Siberian old-believers who are hermits seeking refuge from mundane vanity and temptations in hard labour and forest life. The library of the Academic City outside Novosibirsk preserves a hand-written book by old-believer Afanasy who wrote the following about the dying nature in 1984:»Chemistry kills everything. Forests are withering, grass is shriveling, and insects and animals are dying out. The air erodes and breaks stones. People are hit by ever new, strange and incurable diseases. Or some diseases like cancer which were formerly rare have become frequent and widespread. Where are the numerous flocks of hundreds of geese and cranes that were heading north every spring and south in the autumn, flying high over our heads? When we were kids we looked up when we heard their call and admired the harmony and orderliness of their flight pattern. What made them change their inborn nature and stop migration flights? Every March they are heading north, and once they cross the Himalayas and the Caucasus they land to have some a rest in the insecticide-sprayed fruit gardens of Central Asia. The instant a bird takes a bite at a bug or fly vere, it falls dead never to see our places

again. Tens of species are on the verge of extinction. And those who were saved by Noah during the Flood did not escape death from chemistry in our nuclear age. Even if there are still five or ten birds twittering in the bush they will cease their chirp in ten or 15 years from now.»

A white-and-green flag is now flying over Siberia, and it is more popular there than the official tricolor of the Russian Federation. It is not accidental, therefore, that the most influential politicians and industrialists of Siberia are currently testing out their government skills in the Moscow corridors of power. Thus, B. Chernomordin, chairman of the omnipotent Gazprom concern, became Russian vice president in 1992. By 1993, all public movements in Siberia debated ways of gaming sovereignty and prospective models for building economic and legal relations with Russia.

Under the best-case scenario, Siberian politicians would like Siberia to have the same status as that enjoyed by, say, Kazakhstan. They want Siberia to have its own armed forces and constitution, an independent budget and fiscal bodies, a customs service, police and courts. These attributes do not rule out membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States and close economic ties with Russia, including a preserved currency union.

There is nothing new about these plans. The archives of the Tsarist security service and the Soviet ChK-KGB abound in files on those who advocated Siberian autonomy or even its full secession from Russia. The fall of monarchy in February 1917 and the disintegration of the USSR in December 1991 gave a new impetus to the old hopes. The idea of economic autonomy for Siberia was supported by President Yeltsin of Russia. Three months after he was elected president Yeltsin visited Novosibirsk and took part in the session of the Interregional Association «Siberian Accord». He even gave his seal of approval to a number of the association's programmes. If the programmes were fully implemented by 1939, there would have been no point in talking about a Siberian republic. But none of the proposed measures aimed at Siberia's economic autonomy have been implemented by Moscow, and consequently, the opponents of the centre took heart.

There are even geographical maps describing Siberia as the United States of Northern Asia. Indicatively, the plans for Siberia's secession are supported by the ex-Soviet republics. Deprived of Siberian wealth, Russia will immediately become a truly equal partner for Ukraine or Kazakhstan.

«Why is it in Siberia that I want to begin building a worthy statehood? That's because I want to live a normal life in my Siberia. I want to get out of the eternal shame called Russia,» wrote Novosibirsk region-ahst Andrei Sobolevsky in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (September 1, 1992)

The Siberian Accord association unites as many as 19 republics territories and regions of Siberia and the Far East. At their regular session held in Ulan Ude in July 1992 the leaders of the association tried to

reassure the journalists alleging that they were only contemplating a common market of goods and services, a regional concern in farm produce processing, and an integrated satellite communications network.

Sibena will receive some degree of autonomy. It is hard to tell at the moment what worries Moscow most. It may be either the fact that the leadership of the Krasnoyarsk territory printed their own money in the summer of 1992, or the scale of all-pervasive pilferage. By the latter indicator of freedom the provinces may well surpass Moscow. Sibena is in the same situation. Anything that can possibly be stolen, gets stolen. In April 1992, there was an attempt to fly 12 tonnes of zirconium from Novosibirsk to Kaunas. If this attempt had succeeded and this bulk of zirconium ever reached Western Europe, it would fetch \$2 million. The police and the KGB are supposed to be at a high level of efficiency in Siberia since it has been their domain for many decades. In Novosibirsk, tucked away from curious eyes, there is a unique higher school-The Higher Courses of Military Countenintelligence under the Ministry of Security of Russia, which have been functioning for half a century and only one year ago slightly modified the official name.

The economic decline stimulates separatist sentiments. In addition to the Urals republic, word goes round about a Transbaikal and the Yenisei republics. The idea of Siberian separatism was current in the 19th century when, at the end of the 60, there was a famous trial of Siberian separatists condemning 40 partisans of this movement. But seeing that at the turn of the 20th century the European part of the Russian Empire had everything it could possibly use, there was no need to bring anything all the way over from Sibena.

Siberia is a land of severe climate and it has tempered the population to be especially enduring hardy and tolerant of other people. The pioneers who dared into the taiga lived under the conditions of natural selection where the fittest survived and the weaker either escaped back home or died. Siberians are renowned for their affability, warmheartedness and trustfulness:- in old Siberian villages a lock is something nobody uses.

In the historic-ethnographic museum «V.I. Lenin's Exile to Siberia» at the village of Shushenskoye there are sturdy century-old log houses, some of them two-storeyed, with equally big subsidiary structures. A middle income Sibenan peasant had some 3 or 5 horses, a cart, a sledge and about 10 dessiatinas (27 acres) of tilled land. And such peasants (we may call them farmers) formed the majority here and only idlers, gadabouts and drunkards remained poor.

The Sibena largely surprised a young marxist Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin who had expected to see backward and impoverished outskirts of the great empire, but found, instead, proud, independent and literate people. It was the time when Sibenan grain- cheap, but of excellent quality-virtually flooded Russia's market to such an extent that the Emperor was compelled to enforce a special duty to be paid by Siberians when

they brought their ware to the banks of the Volga, by the year 1900, trade in the famous Sibenan butter yielded more revenue than was obtained from the mean annual production of gold mines all over the Russian Empire Sibenan butter was acclaimed the best in the world, and 70% of it was exported in large refrigerator carnages that rolled once a week on the Trans-Siberian Railway to ports whence, packed in oak caskets, it was shipped in refrigerated holds to Copenhagen, London Hamburg By the beginning of World War I, the Siberians had managed to penetrate into the world market with their butter unassisted by their traditional Danish mediators In 1915, Siberia exported 4 6 million poods (1 pood = 36 11 pounds avoir-dupois) of butter, in 1918- 1 7 million poods and in 1922- only 395 thousand poods prosperous farmsteads were ruined by the bolsheviks for ever.

Sibenan farmers did not get any instructions «from above, and no administrative body could meddle into their business Moreover, the peasant community played a much smaller role in Sibena than it did in Central Russia where it interfered into the very process of land tenure Land in Sibena always belonged to the state, yet the farmers always followed the principle that they could use as much land as they could till.

Today, many areas in Sibena have to import grain, meat and dairy products from the USA and Europe And again, today Sibena is regarded by Russia as its big and rich colony from where it can take everything of value and where it can dump all kinds of unwanted stuff, like nuclear waste and convicted criminals From Omsk to Irkutsk or Chita the population continues to live under some sort of GULAG conditions, while they could very well be extremely prosperous So it is not improbable that some time in the 21st century Sibena will become an independent state, all the more that there is a precedent -in 1919 Sibena broke away from Russia for a few months, of which a proclamation was made in Tomsk .

The Governor of Omsk, or to be more exact, the Head of Administration L Polezhayev said to the press in April 1992 that from each rouble earned by the Omsk region 86 kopecks are taken by the Central Government 75% of the regional industry catered for the needs of the military- industrial complex, the entire area was closed to foreigners until 1991 Now we have freedom, disarmament and economic crisis, Omsk will soon cease to produce Soviet tanks which are competitive at the world market As it is, the USSR has manufactured more tanks than the rest of the world.

The living standard in Sibena is half as low as in the European Russia and its rate of decline is much faster than in the Centre With all that, out of the 9 billion roubles collected quarterly as taxes in the Krasnoyarsk Region, the federal government leaves for local uses less than 2 billion.

The First Congress of the People's Deputies-elected from the Irkutsk Kemerovo, Tomsk, Omsk and Novosibirsk regions and the Altai and Krasnoyarsk territories and later joined by observers from Khakassia Tuva, Buryatia, Mountainous Altai, Chita, Chelyabinsk and Perm-was

held in Krasnoyarsk on March 27-28, 1992. Its participants, both separatists and their opponents found a common stand in rejecting Moscow's claims to remain the hub of the wheel and continue to distribute everything from tissue paper to crude oil.

Tyumen is the oil-producing capital of Siberia and, essentially, of Russia. The immense Tyumen region, which geographically, could hold almost all the former Soviet republics, has 75% of oil and natural gas deposits of the former USSR. But the life here is hard and lacks any comfort, which is all too evident even at the background of the misery of the Russian everyday life. To halt the catastrophic fall of oil and gas production, President Yeltsin signed a decree «On the Development of the Tyumen Region» (September 19, 1991). Beginning from 1992, 10% of the general output of oil and gas in the oblast was allowed to be utilised by the local authorities and enterprises at their own discretion, i.e. to be sold at free market prices.

In the course of what has passed of the year 1992, oil production in Tyumen has dropped by 100 million tonnes. The reason: suspension of agreements with many Western companies operating in the area. Our oil barons are so accustomed to regard the state-owned oil fields as their property that they would not tolerate even 10% of foreign capital. They argue that it is sale of the Motherland -a thread-bare bolshevik slogan. But let us take Norway as an example: it produces more oil per capita than Russia, and 20 years ago it had 80% of foreign capital investments. Then a programme was worked out permitting to reduce this figure to 40%. In 1992, the Norwegians are going to bring it up to 50%.

In December 1991, the consortium of the world famous «British Petroleum» and the Norwegian «Stat Oil» which was set up for implementation of large-scale projects in the USSR, after a year of working within this joint venture refused to provide funds for the development of oil and gas deposits in the Irkutsk region. The British partners made it clear to the Russian side that there was no local oil market with world prices, that the transportation of crude oil from the North down to oil refineries in Angarsk was too costly and the taxes were too high. And then they made up for the Island of Sakhalin where oil is extracted right at the Pacific ocean-front. In March 1992, a representative delegation headed by the British minister of power engineering Mr. John Wakeham arrived in Tyumen to explore the possibilities of making investments into Russian oil. And the minister heard from Yuri Shafranik, head of the local administration, that «from now on decisions will be taken locally, not in the Centre».

Mr. Shafranik is a smart person and he believes that Russia can only survive as a whole state if she delegates to economically strong areas maximum economic rights. As head of the Tyumen region administration, he maintains that the regional authorities should urgently obtain the formal right (which, according to the already adopted Russian Federal law «On the Subsoils of the Earth», is already their's) to grant licences for running oil, gas, ore and other deposits.

Understandably, negligent slopworkers will not get any licences, and deposits running at a loss will come under the hammer and be bought by private individuals. Another idea of Mr. Shafranik's is to set up non-governmental transnational corporations involving enterprises from the former USSR republics. How is it possible to do without Ukraine whose oil refining capacities exceed her own level of oil production ten times? And again, how can one make do without Azerbaijan that used to manufacture up to one half of all the oil-extracting machinery and equipment the USSR needed? So, Mr. Shafranik trusts that oil producing cooperatives based on oil deposits in the Tyumen region should become the backbone of Russia's future economy.

Mr. Valery Neverov, another entrepreneur from Tyumen who revived the multibranch «Hermes» oil concern in 2 years holds that the state should renounce its monopoly on oil production. He thinks that while foreign companies somehow do obtain concessions for running oil fields, the indigenous private business has more bureaucratic hurdles to overcome and regards such discrimination absurd and historically unprecedented anywhere in the world!

The citizens of the «State of Tyumen», including the indigenous Khanty and Mansi, are determined to struggle for their rights, i.e. for their share of the GNP per capita, which in the Tyumen Region is not lower than in the flourishing oil emirates in the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile, Moscow has been pocketing almost all their proceeds. And the few crumbs that are left for the local population go for the scanty food the people living in the squalor of barracks have to queue up for. Tyumen's oil producing enterprises curse the Moscow authorities for blocking many millions in hard currency in the Vneshekonombank for already three years. The State Bank has officially declared itself bankrupt, thus enabling the state to steal billions of dollars from Soviet industries and enterprises. The Tyumen oil generals threatened to go on strike and the Central Bank of Russia gave in and compensated the losses suffered by the Tyumen group of oil producing enterprises by handing over to this group Donau Bank in Austria.

The continuing disintegration of Russia's economy will tell hard not only on us, but also on the West. The demand for oil exceeds its supply, and due to a dramatic contraction of production in Russia, the price of a barrel of crude by 1995 will be twice that of 1992. And this means that the world is in for a new «oil shock».

Siberian Gas. The north area of the Tyumen region have presented us with a treasure trove—the natural gas deposit at Urengoi containing 40% of the amount prospected and estimated in the world so far. In 1992, Urengoi became the basic, if not the only hard currency supplier for the Russian Federation. Over the period of 13 years the Urengoi deposit has yielded almost half of its gas, i.e. 280 billion cubic metres annually. And the efficiency of this most valuable raw material is dozens (sic!) of times lower than, say, in the USA.

When Urengoi is exhausted, it will be replaced by the abundant deposits on the YamaJ peninsula. And the steel gas pipes will reach still further north.. But it turns out that it is not wise to sell Siberian gas at the Russian market yet, because in 1991 it cost 13 roubles (some 10-20 UScents) per 1,000 cubic metres, while in the United States the same amount cost then over \$60. In 1992 alone, the rouble pnces for fuel in this country went up 150-fold.

And even if the prices of fuel are raised again and again many times, the officials in Moscow are unlikely to realize that they have already committed an Arctic Chernobyl: no money can restore the ecologic damages in the Yamal-Nenets National Region. Only in the Purovsk district oil and gas workers have destroyed 3.5 million hectares of reindeer moss, and in the Nadym district this area is about 2 million hectares. It will take several decades to restore these losses.

The next victim now is the Yamal peninsula where a railroad and gas pipes are being laid. But is it so vital to develop Arctic areas at the moment? We shall only rum this immense territory with big reserves of minerals, and our children will curse us for that. Back in 1982, experts from the Ural Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences estimated the costs of development of the Bovanenkov deposits on Yamal at 8.8 billion roubles, while damages to the environment came to exceed 5 billion roubles. Under these all too evident circumstances, the government of the former USSR cancelled its plans to develop this area. But in February 1992, the government of the Russian Federation decided to recommence the project of the century» on Jamal, thus giving green light to colonialist plundering of natural resources with utter impunity. And with all that, did anyone in Moscow ever think about the interests of the local Arctic population?

According to prognoses for the year 1995, Russia will soon be importing oil from the Middle East. In 1992, villages m the Tyumen region had no natural gas supply. In the Arctic parts of this region, oil and natural gas were extracted by teams of «vakhtoviki»- drillers and other workmen who would go to the tundra and work there 2-3 weeks; you could see such men in any airport of the USSR who would regularly % thousands of kilometres from home to do this work And again, the south of the Tyumen oblast is a resort area with thick relict pine woods teeming with wild game, radon springs, muds, and lakes. Yet, there are no health resorts, not even housing construction: the area remains undeveloped Now, Moscow is worried: the local population in Siberia is scanty, temporary visitors run away back to the more civilized European Russia, and the newly-formed sovereign republics no longer wish to send their working teams to the Tyumen oil fields. Pnces of oil and gas have soared so that before long the republics of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, the Ukraine and the Baltic states will find it cheaper to buy oil products not from Russia, but from the countries of the Middle East.

Transition of only smaller oil and gas wells under the jurisdiction of either the Tyumen or the neighbouring Tomsk region administration (where Yegor Ligachev used to be Party overlord for many years before Moscow stepped in directly) would entail multimillion financial injections and save Siberia from running to complete ruin. In April 1992, the average monthly pay of road builders on the Yamal peninsula amounted to 1,400 roubles (inclusive for indexation for working under extreme conditions of the Far North and in remote areas). And that was when an ordinary passenger car cost from 300,000 to 500,000 roubles.

It is to be admitted that by giving the local administration the right to use at their own discretion 10% of the oil and gas produced in the area, President B. Yeltsin has let the genie out of the bottle. Now a hundred times more officials than before have taken up trade. Vice-premier Y. Gaidar had to concede in February 1992 that oil industry «is one of the most criminogenic spheres of administration.» The Russian government has decreed that privatization, of the fuel and power complex be postponed.

Unlike Russia's colliers and oilmen who have threatened the president «to turn off the tap,» gas workers have, so far, been keeping mum. The former Soviet and now Russian monopolist «Gasprom» has spent millions of dollars to buy thoroughbred cattle from Holland and, in place of neglected Tyumen hamlets, set up animal husbandry complexes «Gazovik» and «Fakel,» hothouses all over the country and vegetable store-houses beyond the Arctic Circle. Early in the spring of 1992, with prices ballooning out of control, in the faraway construction workers' stations Nadym, Yamburg, Novy Urengoi and elsewhere shops offered fresh grapes, milk, fish, fruit juice, vegetables, meat at prices 10 times lower than those at Moscow markets. And no queues. Gas production management deliver all this by the Arctic Ocean which is open to navigation in summer and then store it very efficiently. Understandably, services and catering under Arctic conditions don't pay, but otherwise nobody would stay and work there.

The share of Russian gas in the total consumption of France (31%), Germany (33%), Finland (100%), Italy (28%), Yugoslavia (65%), Austria (65%), Poland (60%), Czechoslovakia (90%), Bulgaria (100%), Hungary (50%) has been constantly growing. Our natural gas is much safer when piped to the user than to be liquefied and transported in tank-cars, the latter method, incidentally, being more expensive. Therefore, Great Britain and Greece will soon use Russian natural gas. by the year 2000, Russia will be exporting 180 billion cubic metres of gas, i.e. almost twice as many as the USSR in 1991. In 1992, 37% of the world export of gas was controlled by the Russian «Gazprom.»

But it does not give us cause to celebrate, because only in Western Siberia up to 15 billion cubic metres (sic!) of natural gas are burned annually in flares at the end of gas outlet pipes, and we have no technology to process 5.5 million tonnes of wide fraction of volatile hydrocarbons.

Unprofitable Exports.

Improvement of oil processing technologies in this country would save, for instance, some 250 million tonnes of oil in 1992.

The annual output in Tyumen alone almost equals that of the USA (365 million tonnes), or exceeds that of Saudi Arabia by 45 million tonnes. And yet, the volume of our oil export continued to decline from 126 million tonnes in 1988 to 61 million tonnes in 1991.

Up to one half of the investments into the Soviet industry went to meet the needs of power generation and to little avail too, because the equipment and technologies had been worked out back in the 1950s and never updated since then. Technologically speaking, we are decades behind the time. As a result, we used only those oil pools that were closest to the surface and pumped up only one-third of the oil from there, leaving the underlying ones untapped.

In spring 1992, only in Western Siberia 15- 20 thousand oil wells were idle for lack of equipment. This decrease of oil production in Russia corroborates today the famous prognosis made by the US CIA back in the 1970s, i.e. at the period when the USSR was flooded with petrodollars from the West.

Oil production in Russia has dropped to an extent when the economic safety of the country is in jeopardy. But we could well save every third tonne of our oil, if our outdated industries did not devour so much power.

And again, when shall we stop exporting our crude oil, after all? In the 1880s, i.e. under the Tsar, Russia exported about 0.5% of crude she produced, processing all the rest of it at home. Pressurized by the public opinion, Russian oil producers had to stop squandering national wealth. Kerosine-a finished product-cost in Baku 10 times more than crude oil. And Russian lubrication oils (then obtained by the most sophisticated and, understandably, most expensive technology) were, by the turn of the century, acclaimed as best in the world, and being of much better quality than those manufactured in America, they cost 20-30% more. Russian lubricants were distinguished for high viscosity and lack of hydrocarbons.

The Russian press understood all this perfectly well and harangued crude oil exporters accusing them of neglecting the interests of their Motherland. The result: in 1886, Russia exported 1,101 thousand poods (1 pood = 36.11 pounds avoirdupois) of crude and in 1887- only 74 thousand poods (up to November 1st). Despite pressure from the West, Russia did not build an oil pipeline from Baku to Batumi. Instead, she built a pipeline for transporting kerosene (sic!) which was the longest and the best in the world at that time. Only the Baku oil fields gave half the world's output of oil, while in 1901, Russia extracted 12 million tonnes of oil. We then had the most powerful and the largest oil producing and oil Processing industry in the world.

Now, almost a century later, we are wrecking our brains about the terms of purchasing oil processing miniplants from America and oil extracting equipment from Germany. According to unofficial expert

data, foreign capital holders were prepared to invest \$60-70 billion into Russian oil industry in 1992. True, unlike in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, foreign investors are at risk never to get their dividends owing to instability in Russia. And what is Russia going to get, seeing that only in 1991 one-third of all the oil extracted in Western Siberia was sold at the «black market» using fraudulent export sale permissions, and seeing that in 1992, too, the young ministers of foreign economic relations Pyotr Aven said that we would be much better off if we did not distribute quotas for exporting oil and other raw materials through arbitrary officials choice, but, much rather, publicly auction these quotas?

But not a single government minister either under Brezhnev, or Gorbachev, or Yeltsin ever demands that export of crude oil be stopped. Our richest oil fields are at Samotlor. Until 1990, they yielded 1919 million tonnes of oil, to say the least. With today's prices, it would fetch about \$250 billion, while if this oil were processed, the returns would be many times more. But the Kremlin trades only in crude oil, much to the delight of Western partners who adored Brezhnev exactly for this. However, these happy days have come to an end, since Samotlor is now getting exhausted, and the local population-robbed by Moscow, the West and their own bosses-are losing their temper.

The living standard in the Tyumen oblast is a far cry from that in Kuwait. Therefore, it is quite probable that the Yamal-Nenets and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Regions will, before long, secede from the Tyumen oblast and become... full-fledged republics within the Russian Federation. 30,000 oil and gas workers in Yamal live a life of misery in Polar bidonvilles, crumbly jerry-built shacks that shake all over under piercing Arctic winds. And they are robbed by just the same system which has been robbing the indigenous population dooming them to death. Not only small Siberian hamlets fell into disrepair and decayed. The same process is also under way in large towns and cities there, such as Novosibirsk with its famous Akademgorodok (Academy of Sciences residential area).

This research centre is widely acclaimed in the world for its scientific schools of nuclear physics, archaeology and ethnography. Academicians Tatyana Zaslavskaya and Abel Aganbegyan, the two experts who advised President M Gorbachev on economy, had been living and working in Siberia's Akademgorodok for many years. Many researchers had to emigrate from there to the West, which now is the haven of the flower of Russia's science and culture.

In larger cities of Siberia the pay was smaller than in the Arctic areas. But in the 1990s, after the end of the «cold war», the working conditions at military-defence plants (and these plants make the majority in this country) began to deteriorate. The aircraft factory in Irkutsk, on the shores of Lake Baikal-the world's deepest-is manufacturing the famous SU-27s and MIG-29s. But in April 1992, the Irkutsk region was officially declared a financial bankrupt.

A Cavity As Large As Three Pyramids of Cheops. The Krasnoyarsk area, neighbouring on the Irkutsk region accommodates many defence industry «monsters», such as the biggest in Russia copper and nickel combine in Norilsk, above the Arctic Circle, built virtually on the bones of hundreds of thousands of prisoners, and another group of mines and chemical plants near Krasnoyarsk producing plutonium for nuclear weapons. Krasnoyarsk-26 is also the largest in the former USSR sarcophagus for storing spent nuclear fuel of atomic reactors. In 1991, each tonne of such waste from atomic power stations in the Ukraine, brought Krasnoyarsk 94,000 roubles. South Korea offered \$1 million for the same and Krasnoyarsk jumped to it pretending that Ukraine had neglected the talks on supplying Krasnoyarsk with food and industrial commodities in 1992.

As far back as the early 1950s, by Stalin's command, prisoners dug a unique cavity cutting through rocks on the banks of the Yenisei to a depth of a quarter of a kilometre (825 feet). The volume of this cavity is about 7 million cubic metres, i.e. 3-5 times that of the pyramid of Cheops. This top secret project took about 100,000 prisoners (not the best builders) three (sic!) years to construct. World history scarcely knows anything equal to it in grandeur based on indifference to human beings.

However, though Stalin sacrificed the life and health of miserable prisoners for implementing his projects, our children's curse will fall on the heads of his successors at the top from Khrushchev to Gorbachev this hell-hole, dug under the bed of the Yenisei river, two nuclear reactors were installed to obtain plutonium for nuclear weapons. For 35 years on end, the active zone of these reactors is being cooled by the same technology water from the Yenisei is pumped into the reactors «jackets» and then a steaming hot stream, teeming with radionuclides, is, without any treatment, drained back into the river. As simple as that, and cheap too, for that matter. Nobody knows up to this day what price we shall ultimately have to pay for this blood-curdling cynicism. Radiometric data obtained from aircraft show that the Yenisei is increasingly radioactive all the way from the source to where it falls into the Kara Sea. Comprehensive ground investigations have not been done so far. In some areas of the Krasnoyarsk area and down the course of the Yenisei, the contamination level attains 160 cune per square kilometre. It is even higher than in some places within the 30-km radius around Chernobyl, now closed to residence.

In summer and autumn 1992, two huge military reactors were shut down, but they, nevertheless, will keep «glowing» for decades to come. And will keep being cooled by the above described unsophisticated «direct flow» method. Besides, there is another such reactor in close vicinity, which is in operation, supplying heat and electric power to the so-called Krasnoyarsk Combine of mining and chemical works and Krasnoyarsk-26—a secret town with a 100,000 population closed to all visitors.

The state now has discontinued lavishing nuclear experts with funds, which makes them face an alternative: either to seek employment abroad, or agree to accept into their huge underground capacities nuclear waste from all over the world for storing or for further processing. It pays a lot more to regenerate nuclear waste than to mine fresh uranium. Incidentally, we have accumulated so much of this waste that it would be enough to power all atomic stations of the former USSR for some 200-300 years. The first plant for this purpose has already been built in «Krasnoyarsk-26,» but has not been put into operation for lack of funds.

The four longest Siberian rivers-the Ob, the Yenisei, the Lena and the Irtysh-once crystal clear and clean, are now destined to carry into the Arctic Ocean radioactive contaminants for a long time to come. At present, the greater part of the radioactive waste-from nuclear reactors powering submarines and the fall-out resulting from nuclear weapons tests at the proving grounds at Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan) and on the island of Novaya Zemlya, from explosions made to facilitate the mining of Siberian gold and diamonds, and from atomic plants in Chelyabinsk and Krasnoyarsk-has settled down along the river banks, being, every year, captured by the ice. But the climate tends to become warmer everywhere, the ice melts, and it is to be expected that in some 5-10 years we shall have first signs of radioactive contamination of the Arctic Ocean. This means that before long radioactive compounds will be transported from southern Urals and Siberia to fishing areas of the North Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, which will jeopardize not only Russia, but also the Scandinavian countries, Canada and Alaska.

Our contemporaries seem to have done their best to kill the future generations. In spring 1992, the now free Russian press came up with another hair-raiser: Krasnoyarsk with its one million population and the mysterious towns around it where nuclear weapons are manufactured, together with all the territories in Eastern Siberia up to the Arctic Circle and above it are living now unaware of the mortal danger they are all exposed to. If one of the Yenisei's spring floods happens to be more powerful than usual, it will destroy the dam of the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydro-electric station and a wave 200 metres high will sweep away every living thing downstream. To avert this danger, it is necessary to invest half a million dollars. This picture became clear after the not-so-strong spring floods in 1985 and 1988. Yet, nothing has been done so far.

Legacy of the Past. We have inherited quite a lot of problems from the past. The Altai area occupies the first place in the rate of mortality from oncologic diseases (286 for every 100,000 population, though, surprisingly, in rural areas this index is even higher than in town, which presumably is more hazardous, ecologically speaking). Our press, free from censorship, got to the bottom of this phenomenon: it is the result of our first nuclear explosion in August 1949 over the testing ground in Semipalatinsk. The now published top secret documents of the Ministry of Defence bearing endorsements of the supreme communist party

authorities, specified in most precise terms that such weather conditions were to be chosen that no trace of radioactive fall-out should be tracked outside the USSR. So favourable wind was waited for, and when it came the bomb was blasted off and the wind carried the radioactive particles towards and over the densely populated areas in Altai and along the West- Siberian Railway. The scheme was well thought of: the population of this area have been slowly dying out for the last half century. There are more funerals than christenings here. Women would not have babies: too many are born with signs of oligophrenia and other horrible diseases. What we have is cancerogenesis, i.e. poisoning the third generation by the environment. Russia's President Yeltsin who visited Altai in 1992 was shocked when he had heard the whole truth about this tragedy in the region and he promised express assistance from the government.

On March 26, 1992, the Government of Russia decreed further construction of atomic power stations. This causes little optimism, if any. Sociologists polled 200 leading specialists from leading atomic industries of Russia about the situation in the country and got the following averaged answers (in a 5-point scale of evaluation): reliability of the existing and operating atomic power stations -3; technology of shutting down such stations -2; burial of nuclear waste-2.3; mining, processing and transportation of nuclear fuel- 3.5; safety of such stations equipped with the RBMK type reactors -2; with the BBP type -3; with the BBS-1000 type -4; with the ACT type -5; the quality of reactors of the new generation -4; the degree to which Chernobyl problems have been solved in social aspects-2; in physico-technical aspects -3; the degree of reliability of the «sarcophagus» covering the destroyed 4th block of the Chernobyl atomic power station -0-2 (many didn't know what to answer); the degree to which our atomic power engineering is prepared to come out of the crisis -3; the degree of probability of large-scale subversive acts in atomic power stations.

Numerous are the wonders our military-industrial complex performs in Krasnoyarsk. The electromechanics Research Institute is engaged in manufacturing artificial satellites. However, when funding of military space exploration was shopped it came to light that the manufacture of satellites to watch over the weather and prospect for natural resources was also substantially decreased. This production consumes metal and Krasnoyarsk can only get it either in exchange for lumber or for astronomic sums of money much beyond the present-day estimates.

Rockets for men-of-war and submarines are made at the heavy engineering plant in Krasnoyarsk. But since 1992 Moscow stopped purchasing them, and the plant has switched over to making the famous «Biryusa» household refrigerators (up to 1 million pieces a year, one-third of them being exported to the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany) and deep-freezers. The Krasnomash plant now manufactures a great deal of medical equipment, but Russian medics have no money to buy the production they need so badly. «Geyzer» — a device for express

preparation of washing solutions — reduces 3-4 times the mortality rate during surgery. Each rural or town district polyclinic from Vladivostok to Kaliningrad should normally be equipped with two such devices and Krasnomash is fully prepared to manufacture as many of them as medics need. But here in Russia human life is not of great value and therefore medics are beggars.

Krasnomash has, together with the Japanese, started building workshops to manufacture 1.5 million compressor assemblies for refrigerators a year. Within months Krasnomash experts mastered the manufacture of special kilns for growing silicon monocrystals without which no upsurge in electronics is conceivable. Also mastered here is the manufacture of meat processing equipment complexes, which are at par with those made in Italy or France.

Six kilometers away from Kansk — one of the largest towns in the Krasnoyarsk Krai — there is a place where the USSR naval arsenal has been located since World War II. Should somebody explode this superstore of weapons and ammunition — as it happened in Vladivostok in 1992 — the torpedoes and sea mines stockpiled there will blow half of Krasnoyarsk to kingdom come. Not far from it there is another similar object — the main arsenal of the air force, and close by in the Achinsk district — the arsenal of the main rocket and artillery administration of the Ministry of Defence.

Aluminium production at special plants in Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk is also ecologically hazardous. The demand for this metal in the West is on the increase. That is why US companies have started retooling these plants and setting up joint ventures. Complete updating of both these plants will require \$20 billion and some 10-20 years. The first such installation is scheduled by the American «Kaiser Aluminium and Chemical» to be put into operation in 1994. Both these Siberian plants produce about 1 million tonnes of aluminium a year. In 1992 they decided to give their former customers only 50,000 tonnes and barter the rest of the metal either at home or abroad. Understandably, our aircraft-making factories raised hue and cry.

Nobody knows who will have the upper hand in this economic battle with Moscow. All the more that there are supermodern aircraft-making factories in Novosibirsk and in Omsk. Siberia today is engaged in a serious political game, just as it was at the beginning of the century.

An old mansion in the centre of Omsk which used to be the residence of «the Supreme ruler of Russia» Admiral Kolchak and now houses the local museum of fine arts, recently received guests who came to celebrate the official registration of the executive committee of a white guards organization. Young fellows in pre-revolutionary military uniform were raising glasses of fizzy «Soviet champagne» to their victory over the Soviets. Detachments of white guards have also been formed in Novosibirsk, Barnaul, Rostov-on-Don, St. Petersburg, Irkutsk, Tallinn, Ufa, Kineshma and in other cities of the former Soviet Union. But they have been officially recognized only in Omsk.

Omsk is the city concentrating 25% of all oil-processing plants in Russia. It is also home of the «Polyot» aircraft and spacecraft manufacturing amalgamation, making rockets, artificial satellites, engines for spaceships, household washing machines, etc. Siberia has an ocean port Igarka, independent TV companies of her own, the largest technopolis (Krasnoyarsk), a famous scientific and research centre in Novosibirsk plus 14 international research centres; it has a sea of oil in Tyumen and gold mines in the lower reaches of the Yenisei and the Lena rivers; it has transport connections with South-East Asia; it possesses world important reserves of natural gas and coal and, last but not least, it has labour force.

The reader will understand that the «Siberia-Russia» tug-of-war will become even more acute in all spheres with frustration of Siberians' hopes connected with the Yeltsin- Gaidar reforms. By the beginning of 1993, those in favour of sovereignty of Siberia are likely to gain more strength and the point at issue will be not whether sovereignty is good or bad, but rather which variant of sovereignty should be given preference. The people have suffered too much, they have come to learn such a lot about their recent past and gloomy present and they know better than hoping that the Kremlin will help them solve their ecological problems, to say the least. They are fully determined to tackle their problems themselves. Mother nature has already raised the sword of Nemesis. In addition to the problem of burying nuclear waste, wild silk-worm that has been slowly advancing up North from the South for 35 years is already here and ruining vast wooded areas, which, on top of it all, are already infested with the encephalitis-bearing tick and are periodically burned down by big fires that rage in the taiga for months on end and there is nobody to put them out. Now add to it random wood cuttings and polluting rivers with untreated waste! If you look at the taiga from a helicopter, flying, say, over the Turukhansk area, you will see millions of abandoned dressed logs, strewn along the banks of the Yenisei from the estuary of the Angara for thousands upon thousands kilometres from Lake Baikal to the Arctic Ocean. If these logs were sold, one could wade waist-deep in hundred-rouble notes all the way from Krasnoyarsk to the Kara Sea. Alas, only today they have started, to ship lumber from the taiga by barges and even by helicopters, instead of floating logs in rafts down the rivers as it had been practised in decades. The USSR forests were last inventoried back in 1935; according to the data then obtained, we had 125 billion cubic metres of timber. But now, in 1992, we have less than one third of that amount.

Krasnoyarsk to Chita area falls out of the territory of Eastern Siberia where, in the middle reaches of the River Podkamennaya Tunguska, it is possible to start tapping a unique deposit of natural gas and oil. Here under a dome of gas there is a virtual sea of crude oil some 40 metres deep. According to geologists, the amount of oil in Eastern Siberia is not less than that already discovered in Western Siberia. In

practice it unfortunately means many square kilometres of spilled oil, increase of ecological hazards in Siberia as a whole and, regrettably, marked deterioration of the living standards of the indigenous population and visiting residents from elsewhere

The latter are now fleeing from Siberia Those who have recently arrived from the Ukraine are going back there for fear of losing their right to pension and lodging In Siberia the share of state expenditures for the social infrastructure-housing construction and improvement, schools, hospitals, trade centres, etc -does not exceed 30% of all the basic funds, which is a lot less than in Russia as a whole That s why people frustrated in their attempts to secure a decent living for themselves and their children and their elders, flee from these places. From 1986 through to 1990, Western Siberia received 4.6 million population and lost 4.1 million In the 1990s with the onset of economic reforms and the ensuing economic collapse, we observe mass exodus of population from Siberia.

And what is Siberia as a whole? It is 20-25 million people residing mainly along the very few railways in the South. And yet it is this territory with its minerals and various raw materials that gives Russia advantage over a score of most industrially developed countries of the world Russia is in no way confined in her growth and development for the nearest two or three centuries. She is destined to be a great country, since her expanses can potentially support 1 or 2 billion people instead of the 150 million residing here today.

RUSSIAN NORTH. Genocide: From Stalinist Camps to Nuclear Dumps and Testing Ranges

If you take the map of the northwest regions of this country, put one leg of the compasses somewhere between the villages of Debin and Yagorny and draw a circle in a thousand or more kilometres, the newspaper *Business World* (Sept 22, 1992) wrote, it will embrace all the Far Eastern gold, diamond and other mines, construction sites, auto pools, and «timber» enterprises, which are in fact nothing other than some 500-600 hard labour camps, prisons, secret penitentiaries, closed military zones and barracks for NKVD wardens, which seem to be everywhere, like roaches in a filthy household.

There are no cemeteries there. Bodies were let to freeze in quarries or are picked clean by wolves and foxes in marshes and small forests Inmates died by the hundred of hunger, backbreaking work and diseases There are hundreds and even thousands of such GULAG islets all around the vast territory of the USSR

But it was within that imaginary circle from Kolyma to Chukotka that more Americans visited during the Second World War than have visited Moscow. The main lend-lease delivery route passed from Vladivostok via Alaska and Magadan. In 1942-45 it was the world's largest, spanning 14,000 kilometres. Fitted out with the latest aircraft navigation instruments and powerful ground services, it was the KS's best air route. Prisoners built all the airports there, including at Oymyakon, one of the world's coldest spots. Eight thousand American planes were transported by that secret Alaska-Siberia ALSib route (in all, the USA provided 14,000 aircraft for the Red Army). The polite American military and diplomats pretended that they did not know exactly what places they visited in the Russian North.

All other Western politicians, who rubbed noses with Stalin, pursued the same policy. They kept silence even after the war ended and it became clear that at least three million prisoners of war died or disappeared in the Soviet Union in 1945-51, including more than a million Germans, 234,000 Japanese, 70,000 Italians, 45,000 French, and more than a million Hungarians, Romanians, Austrians and Spaniards. Nothing was said about that horrible destruction machine either in this country or in Western capitals.

A strange national house—a northern 'chum' not unlike the wigwam—has appeared in the Rumsiskes museum of folk architecture and household traditions, outside Kaunas. Lithuanians deported to the polar islands in the Laptev Sea fifty years ago lived in such houses. The survivors built that northern 'chum' house at their own expense, and deportees from all over Lithuania gathered to its inauguration.

We have many such open-air museums of Communism. For example, every other smoker in Russia smokes the cheap Belomorkanal filter-less cigarettes. Few of them know that the canal linking Moscow with the White Sea, built by prisoners in the 1930s, is no longer working. But during its construction quite a few prominent Western figures of culture came to Russia to express their admiration for the project.

A railway linking the towns of Salekhard and Igarka, now rusting for 40 years, was GULAG's 501st project. More than a million prisoners built that secret railway in the permafrost zone in a matter of several months, complete with terminals and stations, auxiliary rails and depots. But the railway was never used because Stalin suddenly decided to site a new major naval base further to the east, on the Arctic Ocean.

Not a single train ever covered the 1,300 kilometres of the railway through marshy tundra and islets of taiga. The railway was still 'alive' when Khrushchev came to power, for a mail trolley used its western part. That time gas was discovered in the area and towns Novy Port, Nadym and Urengoi rose along the disintegrating railway. The question of the railway was settled negatively during Brezhnev's rule. Was it moral to let a major and very costly railway go to rust, despite the fact that it was ordered by Stalin, who once was exiled to Turukhansk, situated in that area?

Russian Federation



Republics: 1 — MORDOVIA, 2 — CHUVASHIA, 3 — MARIY EL,
 4 — TATARSTAN, 5 — UDMURTIA, 6 — BASHKORTOSTAN,
 7 — ADYGHEIA, 8 — KARACHAEVO-CHEKKESSIA,
 9 — KABARDINO-BALKARIA, 10 — SEVERNAYA OSSETIA,
 11 — CHECHENO-INGUSHETIA, 12 — DAGHESTAN,
 13 — KALMYKIA-KHALMG TANGCH

Autonomous districts: 14 — Ust'-Ordynskiy Burlatskiy, 15 — Aghinskiy Burlatskiy, 16 — Komi-Permiatskiy, 17 — Jewish Autonomous Region.

From Alaska to Norway. Today the authorities of Kolyma and Chukotka hope to finish the construction of a highway along the coast of the Arctic Ocean, from Chersky to Bilibino to Pevek, and then to Smidt Cape, Ipultin and Uellen. From Uellen it is only a short way across the Bering Strait to Alaska. There are plans to build an underwater 10-billion-dollar tunnel from Chukotka to Alaska. Maybe the Americans will teach the Russians in Chukotka to care for Chukchis and Eskimos?

In 1992 prices jumped a hundred times, which put the indigenous population of Kolyma and Chukotka on the verge of extinction. Their delegates in the Russian Parliament asked the President to allow the Kolyma and Chukotka Soviets of People's Deputies to keep up to 20% of gold, tin, tungsten, coal and semi-precious stones mined in the region, with the aim of creating territorial funds and commodity and raw materials arsenals, as well as sign contracts for their export.

So far the indigenous population of the northernmost regions of Russia sit on gold but are poor as church mice. Dozens of novels have been written about local Klondikes. Passengers in local airports are searched more thoroughly than in Moscow's Sheremetyevo-2. The state pays the miners ten cents per each gram of gold, getting a dollar for itself. More than that, it tries not to give the people even the few cents they earn. By the end of 1992 the state had not delivered to the 250 mining partnerships the three million dollars for the gold they mined in 1990.

In reply to this GULAG-like care, 100,000 gold diggers, who produced half of Russia's 200 tonnes of gold in 1991 (the total for the USSR was 300 tonnes), stopped working. A part of them signed contracts and left for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Bolivia and Sierra Leone. It should be remembered that state-run mines could never produce enough gold without diggers, not even under Stalin.

Many people think that Russia can be saved only through the strengthening of local governments, which should be given the power to control everything on their territory, with their only duty being to pay the centre taxes by agreement of both sides.

Only in this case will the destruction of wild life stop on the vast Soviet (Russian) expanses. Millions of star-fish died in the White Sea in the summer of 1990. That catastrophe was followed by the mass death of seals in the White and Barents seas. The poor animals have leukaemia. In general, the nature of changes in the sea animals proves that they were exposed to the influence of toxic and radioactive agents over long Periods.

Yuri Timoshenko, head of the laboratory of sea mammals of the Northern Branch of the Polar Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (see *Business World* of Apr. 24, 1992), says that the seals are dying as a result of nuclear tests held on Novaya Zemlya and the pollution of its off-shore areas by solid and liquid radioactive wastes. Besides, the bed of the White and Barents seas is studded with chemical munitions filled with sarin yperite and lewisite.

The situation in the inner water bodies of the Russian North is no better. For example, water from Lake Ladoga goes via the Neva into the Bay of Finland. The Finns are prepared to make a comprehensive study of Ladoga and provided their research ship Mijukku for a joint Russo-Finnish expedition, which was to take place in the summer of 1992. The Russian Foreign Minister promised the Finnish Ambassador at the beginning of 1992 that the ships would be let through to the lake. But the military said «No,» although all possible secrets of Ladoga-and the rest of the Russian territory for that matter-are long since known to everybody who wanted to know them.

With the Finn's assistance we could have collected precise data on the situation in the lake after the Defence Ministry held imitation nuclear explosions and dispersed radioactive isotopes outside the town of Priozersk and the island of Valaam several years ago. The leaders of the St. Petersburg Green complained that when their representatives start bothering the highest bodies of power, the latter either keep silent or produce obviously false information.

Ladoga is not the only victim. After the war the USSR and the USA sunk in the Baltic Sea 100,000- 400,000 tonnes (by different account) of combat toxic agents produced by all participants in the Second World War. The safety period of 50- 100 years, set for the metal barrels and shells, is running out. A group of people's deputies of the USSR asked the USSR Defence Minister Yazov to give them a map of the burial ground kept in secret archives and even said in which archives to look. Yazov did not even bother to answer. President Gorbachev tried to interfere, but even his assistance did not stop the KGB from giving a completely incompetent answer which reeked of disinformation. In the same spirit the KGB answered the Green regarding the radiation contamination of Lake Ladoga.

In October 1992 the Greenpeace ship Solo from Amsterdam headed for the burial ground off the Novaya Zemlya archipelago in the Arctic. The Greenpeace mission in Russia wrote to the Russian Defence Ministry asking permission for the ship to enter the archipelago's secret zone. The letter remained unanswered, and Solo was stormed by the Russian frontier guards in neutral waters off Novaya Zemlya and conveyed to Murmansk.

Greenpeace committed that act of hooliganism in order to attract the attention of the world public to the radiation situation in the Barents and Kara seas, where in the 1960s- 1980s the USSR is believed to have sunk 17,000 containers with radioactive wastes and a dozen of naval nuclear reactors.

The Solo expedition intended to take water samples in the Stepovago Strait, where the reactors of the experimental nuclear-powered submarine K-27 were sunk in 1982. During an accident on that submarine in May 1962, the first contour of the portside reactor became depressurized. The accident was cleared up but nine seamen died in hospital and many more became invalids. The submarine was left in

storage for many years, after which it was cut up and its reactors were sunk at the depth of 50 metres off Novaya Zemlya. Will our security suffer if we know for sure whether the reactors pollute the sea or not?

In September 1990 Greenpeace ecologists bypassed frontier guards and took measurements in the zone of the Novaya Zemlya nuclear testing range. It turned out that you can get a year's doze of radiation in one week there. It was another blow for our Defence Minister, who claimed that background radiation in his Moscow office was higher than at the Novaya Zemlya testing range.

Trying to protect their statements from unpleasant revelations, the Russian military refused to provide a group of deputies from the Russian parliament's committee on ecology with precise information on the number of dumped nuclear reactors and containers with radioactive nuclear wastes and the sites of their burial. Moreover, those deputies who were allowed to visit Novaya Zemlya had to admit that the situation at the burial grounds there is not monitored. The Greenpeace envoys were not allowed to take the necessary measurements either. A year of demarches by the Supreme Soviet and Greenpeace did not produce a single map, a single bearing from the chief of the Russian Navy.

We should be grateful to President Gorbachev for stopping nuclear tests at the Russia' largest testing range on Novaya Zemlya on September 28, 1990, and to President Yeltsin for not resuming them. But is the behaviour of our military, who did their best to undermine the moratorium, moral?

Ex-minister of the ecology of the ex-USSR, N. Vorontsov, told the Americans, in the presence of journalists, at a conference in the Russian Ministry of Ecology (*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, June 5, 1992): «Immediately after the question of ending tests was raised, the former Ministry of Nuclear Engineering of the USSR considered it moral to demand money to repair tunnels on Novaya Zemlya that was ten times more than the cost of Moscow University buildings, complete with everything else situated in them. The question is, is it moral for this country, which is receiving humanitarian assistance, to spend so much money on nuclear tests?»

The greatest trouble is that the highest officials in this country keep lying. They just consider it their duty to lie, especially when the question concerns the interests of the nuclear military-industrial complex. B. Mikhailov, Minister of Nuclear Engineering of Russia, still claims that underground explosions are safe and should be continued on Novaya Zemlya, arguing that otherwise our specialists will forget their skills.

First, why should we need better methods of nuclear annihilation? We have already manufactured tens of thousands of nuclear warheads-enough to contain anyone.

Second, no nuclear explosion can be completely safe, the more so in Russia, where the probability of human error is many times higher than elsewhere. The greatest Soviet authorities on the matter claimed that they were aware of all consequences of nuclear explosions when nuclear

charges were blown up over troops outside Orenburg in the 1950s, and later at the Novaya Zemlya and Semipalatinsk ranges.

And third, nuclear explosions cannot be safe in the permafrost zone. Otherwise how can we explain the fact that so many children fall ill with leukaemia in the Vilyui basin? According to A Yablokov, State Councillor of Russia, maps of geophysical profiles of nuclear explosions held in Russia in the 1970s show that the influence of each explosion spread to an area of several thousand kilometres (*Rossuskaya Gazeta* May 18, 1992).

Everything is ready for nuclear tests at Chernaya Cuba and Cuba Mityushina (Novaya Zemlya). Deputies of the Russian Parliament who visited them suggested, as a way of compromise, that the territory of the range be reduced by one-third, with the released area turned into preserves and tourist complexes. I wonder who would be crazy enough to spend their holidays in the ex-nuclear testing range? Who will be convinced of safety by the fact that people who live in Novaya Zemlya, eat local foods and are exposed to radiation, are still alive?

Yeltsin's resolution, «On Specially Protected Natural Territories of the Russian Federation,» provides for tripling their area to 3% of the national territory. How can this be done? By reducing military testing ranges, which still occupy a much larger territory than preserves and national parks in Russia. Holiday centres on the shores of the Barents Sea, Yablokov believes, could attract thousands of tourists, who would go there to watch grey whales, walruses and other sea inhabitants.

When Aleksei Yablokov became adviser to the Russian President, he voiced an idea — reasonable, as all his ideas are — that it would be more profitable for the state to promote the natural growth of the population of the North, rather than import millions of workers from the southern and central areas of Russia. Unlike the local residents, Pomors, southerners fall ill more often and take much time to get used to life in northern areas. The shift method is good, but temporary workers think nothing of turning the coast of the Arctic Ocean into a giant garbage pile.

The CIA will not forget us. Researcher Graham Dingle from New Zealand found not the romantic 'white silence' but polluted land and filthy water in the Russian Polar regions. In the spring of 1992 he headed an international ecological group Arcticos there, which made a unique trip along the 66th degree N, from Uelen to Murmansk.

They visited fifty towns and villages, registering everywhere «terrible pictures of the destruction of Nature,» rivers poisoned by metals, and ailing people, animals and fish. For example, Dingle said that the nickel capital of the Russian Polar region, Norilsk, is «a place that is unprecedentedly hostile to the environment» because the concentration of toxic agents in the atmosphere there is higher than in any other Polar region of the world.

The travellers were shocked by mountains of garbage, discarded machinery and rusty fuel barrels, which surround all towns and settlements in the Russian North. In some places these garbage piles occupy

thee to five kilometres and stink terribly when snow melts in the spring, because sewage cannot seep into permafrost.

Luckily for this country and itself, the West not only criticises our shortages but wants to help us eliminate them. Trying to save themselves, the Finns fitted our nuclear power stations in Lithuania, the Kola Peninsular and St. Petersburg with alarm systems directly linked with equipment in Finland in the autumn of 1992.

The Scandinavian governments, no longer relying on the assistance of IAEA, decided to allocate money for the inspection of all nuclear power stations in Eastern Europe. It is obvious that Norway, for example, will get the permission to hold, together with Russia, an expedition to Novaya Zemlya with the aim of clarifying the situation in the nuclear bunal sites there.

Finland and the USA have elaborated a large-scale project for the introduction of modern resource-saving technologies and equipment to the Russian industry. The Finnish company Imatran Bojma analysed energy consumption in St. Petersburg, a neighbour of Helsinki situated in the same climatic zone and having more or less the same period of operation of the central heating systems. It turned out that St Petersburg spends about five times more energy than Helsinki. Effluents from the St. Petersburg heating system reach Finland I am sure than eventually the Finnish government will convince the Finnish taxpayers to allocate money on the improvement of the ecological situation in St. Petersburg.

Meanwhile, we are wreaking havoc in our homes. In July 1992 military reconnaissance pilots of Norway sent to their government and the press photographs of the Russian tanker Serebryanka, taken when it was discharging radioactive water into the Barents Sea.

A new business is taking shape in Russia. I mean extortion of very large sums of money from Western countries, allegedly for the restructuring of ecological facilities. The border forests in Finland and Norway, just like the thousands of kilometres of Russian tundra, have been destroyed by the polluting effluents from Nikel, a town on the Kola Peninsula. Nikel's enterprises annually discharge 170 tonnes of nickel, 110 tonnes of copper, 10 tonnes of cobalt, and some 300,000 tonnes of sulphur into the atmosphere, or at least five times more than the corresponding discharge in Norway. Since 1988 a joint Russo-Norwegian commission has been trying to find a way out of the situation. In October 1993 V. Danilov-Danilyants, Russian Minister of Ecology asked Norway for 560 million dollars for restructuring Nikel's enterprises. Norway and Finland were prepared to give only 100 million dollars.

Norway's Green say that they would fight till the end, using «ecological terror» and subversion if need be, in order to close down nickel enterprises in Nikel and Zapolyarny, Murmansk Region. The living standards of the personnel of nickel enterprises is much higher than the average for this country. But the gap is closing fast. Besides, Russian servicemen who fought in the Afghan war might support the threats of the Green, as they stated in October 1992. Control is easily lost in such

situations, and the organisers of such potential illegal acts of protest should remember this.

The residents of our northern regions have many more grounds for complaint. Russian men live an average of seven to ten years less than their counterparts in developed countries. Our northerners live 22 years less.

The ecological situation in the Russian North is so dramatic that the US Senate Intelligence Committee held several hearings in Fairbanks Alaska, in August 1992, with Robert Gates, director of the CIA, as the principal speaker. «Imported» personnel are leaving Russian northern regions, for different reasons. Meanwhile, several dozen nuclear submarines are waiting to be cut there. Safe maintenance of each of them annually cost 50 million roubles (in 1991 prices), and the military claimed that no money was specially assigned for the purpose. The Senate committee also sent a delegation to the Alaska international conference on preventing the pollution of the Arctic.

But the CIA cannot be the only one to worry about the fact that an absolute minimum of ozone was registered in St. Petersburg, Arkhangelsk and the entire Russian North in 1992. Harvests are becoming smaller, and viral infections spread faster. Tens of thousands of people fall ill with skin cancer and AIDS. In 1987-90 the USSR approved a programme for the elaboration of ozone-saving technologies, but we haven't found money to finance it yet.

Our leaders cannot master enough courage to admit that mistakes were made deliberately over the more than 70 years of socialism in this country, when the party and the government ordered the creation of the simplest possible industries, in order to save months and even days in the fierce arms race. They did not bother to think about protecting the people's health and the Nature. It was dangerous even to mention the problem, and we should admit this truth now. But the leaders of the military-industrial complex don't want to admit their mistakes, although it was one of the reasons why they lost the USSR.

Labour productivity of the Swedish forest fellers, who use computers, is ten times higher than in this country, the newspaper *Lesnaya Gazeta* wrote on April 16, 1992. In this situation we can only hope to sign contracts on the allocation of land to Western partners in return for assistance in cleaning our land. Swedish forest fellers in Arkhangelsk Region live in comfortable kit houses they brought along. Interestingly, neither the Swedes nor the Finns are eager to sell high technologies to us, for example for the production of paper from broad-leaved timber. They are content to take our timber and produce everything then need from it at home.

Our government should have encouraged foreigners to build processing enterprises here, because foreign technologies are much better than ours. But no, our bureaucrats have only recently left their party posts for the current economic ones, and they spend all their time stuffing their pockets by exporting raw materials at dumping prices, and car-

rying out privatization in the way that suits them best. They will hardly let foreigners to the trough.

Meanwhile, hundreds of forest fellers from the Commonwealth states are looking for jobs in Sweden and Canada, where they can earn up to 30,000 dollars for six to eight months of hard work. Besides, during this period they will live not like prison inmates, but in warm kit houses with colour TV sets, VCRs and other household electronics. One of them told the newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets* after returning from Sweden: «For the first time in my life I lived as a human being.»

The Red Data Book of Nations. The Russian North is losing more and more of its people as the country is accepting market rules. State subsidies to them are diminishing. Many northern autonomous national areas are seceding from corresponding territories and regions of Siberia and the Far East. Direct subordination to Moscow makes northern autonomous areas full-fledged subjects of the Russian Federation, complete with them the right to have their own budgets and not to pay taxes to the territorial capital.

But will Moscow forget its interests? No. The industrial area of a sprawling northern city of Norilsk, on the Taimyr Peninsula, collected about 23 billion roubles in taxes in the second half of 1992. Eleven of them were sent to Moscow, and 8.5 to the local Soviet in Krasnoyarsk. The latter also regularly gets multi-million fines from Norilsk for breaches of ecological safety rules, but has not yet invested a single rouble into saving the nature around Norilsk. The people of the Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) Autonomous Area dream of creating a free economic zone. But who knows for how long the Norilsk nickel will remain competitive on the world market? The cost of mining raw materials has been growing. Only 17% of the 50,000 residents of Taimyr are indigenous people. Will the new delineation of powers make the Norilsk mining and dressing combine a better patron of the indigenous deer-breeding population—Dolgans, Nganasans, Nentsi and Entsi?

The Evenk Autonomous Area is still administratively a part of Krasnoyarsk Territory. Only 22,000 people live on an area of 770,000 square kilometres. Several enterprises have been closed down or are on the verge of bankruptcy. The local authorities don't yet think of seceding from Krasnoyarsk Territory or of giving foreigners a concession to mine the rich raw materials there, for example, Sobchinsk gas condensate or Yurobchensk oil. There are no roads there, but it is a short way to the West via the Arctic ocean.

Reasonable people in Moscow and territorial capitals try to draw the attention of these areas' authorities to the fact that there are very few indigenous residents there. Khanty and Mansi make up no more than 1,7% of the 1.2 million residents of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area, and Koryaks, 15% of the Koryak Autonomous Area population. But the local deputies argue that we are not to worry, that they will build reservations for the aborigines that would be no worse than those which the USA built for Indians.

If the local authorities establish their own militia and customs services they might protect the reindeer-breeders of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area from being turned into alcoholics and robbed by visitors from the hinterland, who exchange vodka and food for reindeer antlers. Many medicines can be made from antlers, including rantorin, which is as good as ginseng. The local head of reindeer is the world's second largest, but the slaughter houses of collective farms there used to discard antlers. Maybe political and economic independence will sober up local residents and they will start exporting wild geese, as merchants in tsarist Russia did, keeping oil and gas for their children?

If you draw a line on the map from St. Petersburg to the point where the borderlines of Russia, Kazakhstan and China converge, you will see to the North from this point those Russian territories which are conventionally known as the northern areas. They do not include a strip of land, 100 to 1000 km wide stretching along Russia's borderline from Kazakhstan to the Pacific Ocean.

The 11 million population of the 16 areas, regions, autonomous regions and territories where the natural and climatic conditions are regarded equal in severity to those of Arctic lands enjoy all kinds of privileges from the State Enterprises functioning there are partially exempt from paying taxes to Russia's budget.

With the disintegration of the USSR when southern Soviet republics gained sovereignty, Russia has become a northern state, with about 70% of her territory being regarded as northern lands. It is not fortuitous that in 1991 a State Committee for socio-economic development of Northern territories was set up in the Government of Russia. The new minister chairing this Committee made a proposal to build new ports on the shores of Russia's northern seas. Even «the great sledge ways» that existed at the time of Amundsen and described by him as following the coastline of the Arctic Ocean were brought back to memory. The press used the occasion to remind everyone that irrespective of the fact that Russia's northern territories have a very scanty population, the area is at present, facing ecological hazards threatening not only the few resident humans, but also reindeer and polar bears roaming in these lands.

In the course of the last thirty years, the Soviet Government adopted 29 resolutions concerning the northern territories. Not a single one of them has ever been translated into life. Twenty-six smaller ethnic groups—the Nentsy, the Khanty, the Mansi, the Chukchi, the Evenk—are on the verge of extinction. The mean life expectancy of a Nivkha woman is 42 years, of a man—35 years. These still surviving 182 (April, 1992 data) thousand members of smaller aboriginal northern ethnic minorities make a very modest share of the country's total population. It should, however, be borne in mind that the year 1993 has been declared by the UNO an International Year of indigenous and aboriginal peoples.

Another few years—and unlike their American, Canadian and Australian brethren, our indigenous aborigines will simply disappear from

earth Their reindeer pastures have been shrinking, fish and wild game is becoming rare their income has decreased and they have lost many privileges they used to enjoy. For instance their children are no longer enrolled into higher educational establishments by special quotas, as was the practice three years ago. Now they have to take entrance exams like anyone else. However, the main cause of such a short life expectancy among these ethnic groups is that they have been denied their traditional diet-fish and meat. Half the adult males stay single, since they are unable to keep a wife and children. There are many unmarried mothers, many men drink heavily and there even are tramps. It is by virtue of the historic religious, physiologic and other peculiarities that these indigenous minor peoples have been able to survive under such extremely severe climatic conditions and that because they were part of the local nature The Evenk, the Chukchi, the Nanaisi and the Nivkhi have always believed that the spints,-masters of the forest, the waters and the air-know every man's thought, they punish a bad man who has no respect for them and bless a good one.

During the last decade of its existence, the Soviet State spent a huge sum-31 billion roubles' for the needs of the Far North Dividing this sum by the number of the population over there (182 thousand) we shall get an impressive figure 167 thousand roubles per capita annually! («LADA» car cost not more than 10,000 roubles). Yet the aboriginal population never saw the colour of this money all was grabbed by the local authorities who built houses and offices -for themselves, we need hardly say -in district centres. Only recently the humiliating system of privileges has been rescinded, according to which anyone coming to the far north from elsewhere was entitled to triple wages for the work a native of the area did for the simple salary.

The newcomers tried to enforce a new life-style with the aborigines (this term now officially implies not only the native population but also those who have been living here since these areas were annexed by the Russian State). Children were practically snatched away from their families and reared in boarding schools. So by the time these young northerners attained maturity they were so pampered by the benefits of the civilization that they would not return to their families to become trappers or reindeer herders as their parents were. And another thing: Moscow must discontinue crash-developing northern territories with the existing barbaric technology.

The situation may change if tribe communities are given the full ownership (with the right to inherit and free of charge) of pasture grounds and parcels of land, or if they are allowed to rent these lands This is what President Yeltsin promises in his recent decree Though everybody would be better off if people became owners of their land and could decide for themselves under what conditions to allow geologists, oil workers, prospectors or coalminers to work on these, now privately owned territories.

Northern Wealth is the Last Gift of Nature to Russians. Had it not been for the mineral wealth of the North, the communist economic sys-

tem would have collapsed thirty years ago. And it makes abundantly clear that this wealth is the last nature's gift for the Russians, because the rest of the world regards Russian Northern territories also as a vast ecologic reserve whose preservation is of *vu^i* importance for maintaining the natural equilibrium on the entire north hemisphere.

Recent research has shown that it is not the tropical rainforests that are the lungs of our planet, but, rather, the taiga and the tundra. In the face of the dramatically growing ecological degradation of our planet and potential hazards ensuing from human recklessness and negligence, it is vitally important to have, as a resort, vast unoccupied territories, and we have them only in the North. Besides, in some 3-4 decades in many northern areas the temperature is likely to rise by 3 or 4 degrees. This will significantly improve the natural conditions here, make living and working easier and favour agriculture.

Boris Yeltsin's visit to the Arkhangelsk region in spring 1992 attracted attention of the press to this apparently God-forsaken area. But it is studded with military objects all over. The city of Severodvinsk is the only place in Russia where they do build atomic-powered submarines. The gigantic ship-building and repairing plants are gradually absorbed by the main base of Russia's Southern Navy.

«Mirnyi» - a small closed town in the Arkhangelsk region, is working entirely for providing scheduled operations at Plesetsk - the only cosmodrome and space exploration centre in Russia since Baikonur has already been appropriated by Kazakhstan. The same Mirnyi is now the home of the International Commercial Space Exploration Centre and of the Universal Space Exchange. It is not totally excluded that Plesetsk will become the main space harbour of Russia and piloted spaceships will be launched from here. The cosmodrome in Plesetsk has been operating since 1963 as a proving ground for rocket and space weapons.

Today Arkhangelsk is becoming a main sea-port of Russia and Russia's ship-building centre. The now free democratic Russia will revive her northern citizen towns, such as, for instance, Apatiti, Bilibino, Vorkuta, Vuktyl, Dudinka, Igarka, Inta, Kovdor, Murmansk, Nickel, Nadym, Norilsk, Salekhard, Severomorsk, Urengoy, Usinsk, Yakutsk - the 17 ancient centres of civilization and settled life. The mayors of the above cities and towns, getting together in March, 1992, at the White House of Russia, set up their «Union of Towns of the Arctic and the Far North Areas.»

Under Yeltsin, the business circles of the North have been displaying an increased interest in mid-Russian areas. The Northern collieries, iron mines, metal smelters, having rejected prison labour, have now to guarantee their paid personnel, after a decade of working under the extreme conditions of the North, new positions in normal climatic areas. The dream of anyone who comes to work up North for some time is to have a house of his own with grounds to it not where there is permafrost and the

night lasts 6 months, but somewhere in the middle latitudes of Russia It runs contrary to reason that retired pensioners above the Arctic Circle.

In the nearest future the immigrant population of the North is unlikely to grow. The world market of fossil fuel is all streamlined up to the year 2005 and nobody would welcome unwanted tonnes and barrels One is sometimes tempted to think that. Western companies want to obtain from us the rights to run mineral or fuel deposits only to freeze them for many years to come.

As for our own plans to run such deposits in the North, there still are some doubts. A number of our largest defence plants-the Kurchatov Atomic Institute in Moscow together with «Rubin,» «Lazunt,» «Malakhit» used to design and build atomic-powered submarines, and the plants at Severodvinsk, Izhorsk and the Kirov plant having lost large Soviet subsidies, decided to join their efforts and switch over to . extracting oil.

The new «Ros-Shelf» Company headed by Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Yevgeni Vehkhov and supported by the Russian government decided to start offshore oil production at the Shtokman and Prirazlomnoye oil fields on the Barents Sea shelf. The objective of this experiment is, essentially, to rechannel the maximum of atomic-powered submarine building potential to be used for peaceful purposes.

The project is worth \$10 billion and envisages designing and building underwater oil- extracting stations sitting on the bottom of the sea However, all this may well be another scheme of those who want to preserve our military-industrial complex and keep it going Gigantomania-this communist disease-still persists in Russia. We exterminated our class enemies-bourgeois intelligentsia and well-to-do farmers and herded all other peasants into collective farms, workers into factories and behind barbed wire fences, we ploughed the virgin lands, built the Baikal-Amur Railway, dug longest in the world canals, put up the largest hydropower and atomic power stations, filled man-made seas, built arsenals and already planned to turn the course of all the main Siberian rivers to the south.

And only now clever people have explained to us -that we need not have implemented any of these giant projects. We needn't have plunged the country into atomic arms race and into exploration of the space at the expense of keeping the population in misery. Life has shown that we are utterly impotent to implement any really large project, not Detrimental, but beneficial to society. One Chernobyl is more than enough for us. And potential 4 trillion cubic metres of natural gas in the Shtokman reserve on the shelf should much rather be saved for our children or leased to foreigners on terms of concession.

As it is, we already have what can be described as Nuclear North. Only on the Kola Peninsula there are 239 nuclear reactors This comprises the 4 reactors the Kola atomic power station, the 6 atomic-powered ice-breakers, the three atomic-powered submarines that are under con-

truction and almost half the total number of atomic submanes of the former USSR. The chief atomic naval base is located in the city of Severomorsk. Authorized delegations from Finland and Norway periodically visit the Kremlin and demand (or beseech) the officials there to find money (not so much, after all) to increase the safety of nuclear reactors of the Kola atomic power station, to discontinue contaminating the sea with the radioactive waste and the atmosphere with toxic compounds generated in the course of mining and processing minerals (apatites, ore, nickel and aluminium ores). Winds carry clouds of nephelite sand, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides many kilometres away from the industrial areas where they are obtained and processed. The Finnish side are prepared to pay for all the purifying devices and their installation, and in 1990 offered \$ 400 million for this purpose. But in the end they didn't give us the money, because they doubted our honesty and feared that we could use this money for anything else.

Severomorsk is the naval base where the aircraft carrying cruiser Kiev has been berthed, our chief man-of-war. There itself one can see another aircraft carrier- 'Baku' (now Admiral Gorshkov) and the biggest submarine in the world Typhoon, displacing 25,000 tonnes.

The Arctic zone makes one fourth of Russia's territory, its white blanket concealing over 60% of our oil and natural gas resources, mineral and biological resources. Already today it is our largest centre of supplying natural gas, rare metals, gold and diamonds. The Soviet man has to pay for his activities in this area by scarcely reparable deterioration of the environment on the entire littoral of the Arctic Ocean. In particular, doctors do not recommend venison, because reindeer feed on their moss and other plants equally slow in growing and before reindeer nibble on it, it absorbs a host of radioactive substances settling down from the atmosphere.

Arctic areas are fabulously rich. Only hydrocarbon reserves on their shelf are estimated at being in excess of 50 billion tonnes. But extraction of fossil fuels in the Far North is 10-20 times more expensive than in middle latitudes. Operation costs of an offshore platform in the Arctic Ocean are in excess of \$ 1 million. And if such operation is organized on the rouble basis, i.e. with Soviet approach and attitude, all polar bears will be greased in oil.

Russia's North has already once been the main gateway into the country during the World War II: more than half of the 17 million tonnes of cargo was shipped into the USSR, then at war against fascism, via Chukotka, Murmansk and the Far East from the allied powers. And main air routes connecting the USSR with the USA went via Chukotka. Even now our most prestigious itineraries for foreign tourists are in and around North-Eastern areas of our country.

FAR EAST. In One Boat With the Japanese, Koreans, Chinese and Americans

This part of Russia begins where Siberia ends, i.e. beyond Lake Baikal, from where it stretches along the border with Mongolia and China up to the Pacific Ocean. For few decades the USSR has been on the brink of war with China and that is why in the vast area along the borderline one can see only pill-boxes and tanks. Neither houses, nor industries—only shepherd camps many miles away from one another in this wasteland. These steppes simmer with heat and are scorched with hot winds in summer and freeze without snow swept by icy winds in winter.

But all the area beyond Lake Baikal is pierced by the Transsiberian Railway built as far back as in the 19th century, which makes the town of Zabaikalsk the only Russian and Europe's gateway to East Asian countries. However today a visitor can scarcely imagine that tomorrow this place will become a centre of international trade of the free economic zone «Dauna» in the Chita region, i.e. our main access to the east. The Russian government has already made relevant decisions. And the Chinese have built on their side everything a small-scale trade area Zabaykalsk-Manchuria may need, investing into it some 75 million yuans (\$15 million). Lee Peng has visited the place, 200 largest Chinese companies have already opened their representation offices in Manchuria plus those of 14 various ministries of the Chinese Peoples Republic. But in Russian Zabaikalsk everything was quiet until autumn 1992. Only 2 or 3 freight trains pass across the border line to China every day, while up to seven thousand freight cars are waiting their turn to cross the border. And the Chinese side have repeatedly offered to build for us everything a crossing point needs, viz. several railway tracks together with all the necessary facilities and customs offices instead of one track functioning at present.

We seem to be expecting businessmen from Japan, the USA, South Africa, Thailand, Germany, South Korea. They have already visited Chita to attend the ceremony of official presentation of the free economic zone and may be expected to invest their money into future Prosperity of their business in «Dauna» which occupies a territory of 432,000 sq km with 1.4 million population. Taxes in this free economic zone will be lower, payment for leasing land for 70 years with the right to sublease it will be substantially reduced. Besides, foreigners will be free to privatise many industries in the zone, buy either the control or even the full packet of shares, the procedure of registration of enterprises with foreign participation will be simplified, 50% duty will be imposed for exporting and importing commodities and crossing the border will be radically simplified.

Located in the Chita free economic zone is the world's largest deposit of copper at Udokan where only the prospected reserves amount to 1.3 billion tonnes of copper ore. The deposits at Noyon Tolovoi can yield 350 000 tonnes of lead and zinc, 420 tonnes of silver 9 tonnes of gold 2,000 tonnes of lithium and considerable amounts of tantalum. All these will be open-cast. Besides, it is possible to obtain from the taiga 1 7 million cubic metres of lumber. The rights to develop all these deposits will be auctioned to foreign companies.

In 1992, a huge tank-repairing plant was converted to make general-purpose tractors 'Berezina,' and it has signed a contract of cooperation with China in manufacturing light passenger car «Sungan».

North Korea has been with us for a long time. It has bought quite a lot of weapons from us, including the newest MIG-29, etc. During the last 5 years they have bought a \$4.5 billion worth of weaponry and still owe us about \$3 billion. But North Korea has had her labour camps in our Far East since 1967. At the end of February 1992, Russia's representative at the United Nations Human Rights Committee confirmed at its session in Geneva that 22000 North Korean lumber-jacks working to the North of Khabarovsk are in actual fact prisoners whose horrible condition is nothing short of medieval slavery «Besides, «in these camps innocent people are lynched, tortured executed, without trial» The last Soviet-Korean intergovernmental agreement on Korean workers colonies in the Khabarovsk area and Amur region was signed on August 8, 1991 to be in force until December 31, 1993.

Among Koreans living in the Far East there are Russian citizens as part of the indigenous population. There are also some businessmen coming from South Korea. In August 1992, the Hyundai Company deputed 100 specialists to begin joint prospecting and mining tin with the «Dalgeologia» amalgamation. The South Korean company will invest \$1 billion, expecting this venture to pay back in some 9-10 years. Experts expect that by 1993 the world price of tin will rise from today's (August 1992) \$6.6 thousand to \$8.3 thousand per tonne.

A great deal has changed in the Far East in 1992 with the lift of restrictions for entry of foreigners. Vladivostok has now become one of three Russian cities (the other two being Yekaterinburg and Novosibirsk) where France has opened her Trade Representation. In Vladivostok there is a US Consulate, an Australian trade mission, a South Korean Trade Promotion Corporation. Vladivostok may be the first city in Russia where traffic of the left side of the road should be introduced: -streets are filled with so many used cars imported from Japan, that our «LADA» look totally out of place. And the people are clad from head to foot in clothes made in China.

After the division of the property of the former USSR the most up-to-date ships remained in the Baltic and the Black Seas. The principal shipbuilding yards and specialized ports are there too. Now, 200 years after the Emperor Peter the Great, we shall have to cut a northern window -not to Europe, but, in the first place, to countries of Asia and the Pacific area.

It is quite possible that we shall have to set up another free economic zone Primorski region littoral with civilian ports Vanino and Sovetskaya Gavan and with Postovaya and Zapadnaya bays which are now being handed over by naval units stationed there to the civilian authorities. There is enough load to be rolled to Europe by the Amur-Baikal Railway, and our clients from Europe and Asia wish to ship their stuff in containers from Primorye, and the infrastructure of ports is not bad, and foreign investors are swarming up with ready money. But everything is at a standstill.

Russian authorities cannot as yet provide legal guarantees for protecting foreign investments, whereas they eagerly take from our own entrepreneurs and state organizations the greater part of the foreign exchange they earn.

The balance of forces between the Kremlin centre and the Russian province is being tipped in favour of the latter. And the Far East can scarcely be described as a province. The great majority of economic ties and promising interests of the Far Eastern region and Siberia are within the Pacific area. With opening our borders to foreign contracts, many previous connections (when, e.g. fresh tomatoes and preserved vegetables were shipped to Vladivostok from Bulgaria) with Europe became unprofitable, because they had been maintained by Moscow artificially.

In 1992 Far Eastern economic cooperation association was formed to cover a lot of other territories, such as Buryatia, Yakutia, the Kamchatka and Sakhalin regions, the Jewish Autonomous Region and the Chukotka autonomous district. It may well be that Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics will join in. Under such pressure the Centre will have to give in and concede to anything. The notion of a separate Russian Far Eastern state is no chimera.

In the 1920s there was a republic with such a name. In 1992 four areas Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, the Kamchatka peninsula and the Island of Sakhalin claim the name. The latter is on the very outskirts of Russia, and yet the press devotes more attention to it than to any other province of the federation.

Following St Petersburg, Sakhalin in spring 1992 and with the help of Americans obtained an autonomous space telephone station which now connects the island with the rest of the world, and it is at the time when practically every trunk call from Russia with any foreign country (except those making up the Commonwealth of Independent States) has to be channelled through Moscow.

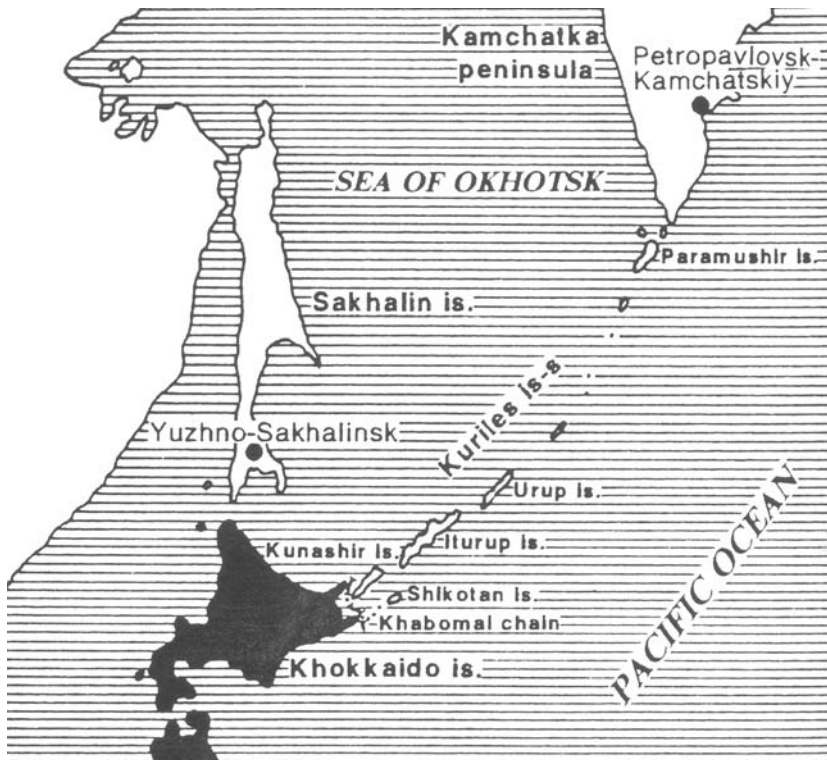
The 15 of March 1993 is the deadline for opening in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (the island's centre) the first in Siberia and the Far East an international 4 star hotel to accommodate 200 guests. The deal with the Japanese company (that is building the hotel) has already brought Sakhalin's mayor's office \$20 million for the land sold to build the hotel on.

Surprisingly, the biggest and most modern building in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk houses, since 1992, not the local authorities but represen-

tative offices of indigenous and foreign entrepreneurial structures. All the companies have the computer communication with their counterparts in Moscow (the Centre of International Trade) and in the rest of the world.

Sakhalin has embarked upon the path to free market. And at the same time its authorities threaten to secede from Moscow, should the Kremlin decide to give over to Japan the Southern Kuril Islands, stretching from the Japanese island of Hokkaido to the huge Kamchatka peninsula.

Artyom Tarasov, Russian MP stated in early 1991 that the USSR President M Gorbachev had agreed to hand over to Japan four disputed islands for \$200 billion. Gorbachev was appalled and the procurator-general (Attorney-general) of the USSR demanded that the MP be sued for insulting the honour and dignity of the President.



However, 1992 already witnessed serious discussions in Moscow of compromises in the dispute with Japan about the islands vis-a-vis \$2.5 billion credit that Tokyo would grant Russia.

A ridiculous drop from 200 billion to 2.5 billion dollars!? Returning the islands annexed by force to their original and legitimate owner is to make a compromise with the demands of morality and justice: it is not fortuitous that the Japanese were so insistent in their claims for their «Northern Territories».

Kurils, Shakhalin and Kamchatka Are Invaluable. For Russia the loss of four southern Kuril Islands would, economically, mean a reduction of fish catch by one third all over the Far East. Together with Iturup and the Habomais Japan may acquire a 200 mile zone in the sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean.

The South Kuril fishing area annually yields 1.5 million tonnes of walleye (Alaska) pollack, iwashi sardines, all varieties of salmon, crab, mackerel, scomber, Pacific skipper, shrimp and laminaria (cf all the Baltic states catch 350 tonnes). All this wealth is worth not less than \$2 million annually. The Kuril Islands give Russia half the amount of laminaria it uses as a raw material for obtaining drugs for the radiation disease. The biological and mineral reserves of the islands proper are estimated to cost \$44 billion. Properly developed, the South Kuril Islands can bring trillions of dollars income. The islands are on the migration route of salmon and other kinds of fish and the loss of the islands will mean uncountable and irreparable losses to affect the entire Far Eastern area.

The South Kuril shelf situated on the faults of earth crust whence streams of gases and various salts surface up to mix with coastal waters, thus activating the productivity of microorganisms. This accounts for the fact that though millions of tonnes of fish are caught here, yet the amount of it is not depleted. Before long tidal power plants will be built in the straits between the Kuril Islands. Besides in the southernmost part of the Southern Kurils navigation is feasible all the year round, since one of the straits never freezes. This is extremely important for Russia because if she loses the islands she will have to pay hard currency for the passage of the ships through these straits.

The handing over to Japan her so called «Northern Territories» may become a bargain of the century in the field of real estate. But these beautiful, though remote, islands in the Northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean cannot fetch a good enough price, and, therefore cannot be sold because nobody can pay us the actual price. These islands have gold, silver and other noble metals and plenty of volcanoes (19 on the island of Iturup alone), hot geysers and sandy beaches «We just can't give away this wealth», said Russia's president Yeltsin after visiting the islands. On the whole Yeltsin is believed to be inclined to pass on this cumbersome problem to be decided by the next generation of Russia's leaders.

Another leader that we had Mr. Nikita Khrushchev, back in 1956 was apparently prepared to return to the Japanese the coveted territories by saying: «These islands were forsaken and were used only by fishermen and by our armed forces».

The Southern Kuril Islands used to be Russian until 1855, when they went over to Japan, and after World War II, according to the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, Japanese lost them to Russia again. There are grounds for endless arguments in this case, but there is the principle of inviolability of borders which is equally important for the whole world. We may deeply mourn the facts that the Emperor Nicholas I has sold Alaska to the USA and Khrushchev has made a present of the Crimea to the Ukraine, but that is all we can possibly permit ourselves to do. If Japanese are so fervently insistent and cannot help it, we may lease these islands and even other territories to them for a long period of time without officially altering the state borders of Russia.

If this were done, the life of the population (47000) who now have to live in dilapidated wooden barracks and stone houses would magically change. The islands have no aborigines: the local Ainu and 17000 Japanese were deported to Japan by Soviet military command in 1948. Under Gorbachev, Japan was several times offered a compromise: turning four South Kuril islands into an international wildlife preserve with a national park and recreation area attached to it. Larger and, all the more so, smaller islands and islets, uninhabited today are the mating places for seals and the most valuable fur-bearing sea otters. They also house large and clamorous colonies of birds.

The Japanese used to possess Southern Kurils close to 100 years and Southern Sakhalin-40 years. They wired electricity all over the town of Yuzhno Kurilsk and all the other townships and settlements on the island of Kunashir, and maintained in an excellent shape its ramified network of dirt roads, airstrips, the railroad, the wharves and piers, the collieries with coal washeries, the logging areas and fish canneries.

During perestroika, i.e. at the end of the 1980s even frozen fish could be obtained in Sakhalin shops only for special food coupons. Even now the huge island has not a single fish market. During the entire period of Soviet power only fish canneries have been built on the island, while the private entrepreneurs using their savings and credits have built 30 such only in 1991. Now Sakhalin has 200 private shops. Non-professional fishing and sale of the fish to the population by professional fishermen were prohibited until 1992. Practically all the food is imported here from the mainland.

The Governor of the Sakhalin oblast, Valentin Fyodorov, a former professor of economics in Moscow, having lost all hopes to build capitalism in a separate area, suggests setting up a joint Russian-Japanese «special economic zone» involving the Southern Kuril Islands, the Island of Sakhalin and a portion of a Japanese island of Hokkaido without, however, altering the state borders. And as the first step he suggests establishing free entry into either country in that area without a visa. However, both in Russia and Japan these appeals fall on deaf ears.

Prof. V.Fyodorov compares the potentials of Sakhalin with those of Taiwan with regards to the prospects of developing the beautiful shelf of

the Pacific shores of Sakhalin. The reserves of oil and gas only at Piltun-Astokh and Lunsk are about 100 million tonnes and 400 billion cubic metres, respectively, and these two fields account only for one tenth of the shelf territory. The federal government of the new Russia is critically powerless to radically help the 700000 population of Sakhalin in their struggle to survive.

In early 1992 in Moscow winners emerged in an international competition among companies who desired to develop the Sakhalin Shelf with an area of 17000 sq.km. The indisputable winners were the «Mitshui» Company with their money and the «Marathon» and «McDermott» companies of the USA with their oil-extracting technology. International bargaining concerning the running of the Sakhalin shelf has been under way for two decades at least and is still in the works. The most salient point of controversy is that some influential parties in Sakhalin would like to keep all the income from developing the shelf and channel it to meet the needs of the island, while Russia insists on retaining her own control over all the mineral reserves all over the Federation. Especially so in view of the fact that the Khabarovsk area and the whole of the Primorye area are virtually suffocating in the grip of the fuel and the power supply crisis: in winter houses are not heated.

The spring of 1992 was the time when demilitarization began on Sakhalin and the Southern Kuril Islands. Only from the latter a machine-gun-artillery division is to be relocated together with a fighter aircraft regiment numbering 28 MIG-23.

The top-secret Kamchatka peninsula has ceased being a closed frontier area. Here the military have three aerodromes, a flotilla of atomic powered submarines, a huge testing ground where blank metal warheads fell during training launches of ICBMs. The peninsula's population is under half a million. It has promising gold deposits, a lot of game and precious salmon, active volcanoes and warm springs, unique geysers, relict ferns and other exotic plants. In Magadan, beyond the Sea of Okhotsk gold reserves have already been depleted and in the years to come they will be completely exhausted. And that's when the Kamchatka gold will be tapped. If they use the open cast method, and rip the ground with excavators it will be a death sentence to all varieties of salmon-keta or chum salmon, soho silver salmon, sock-eyed salmon and king or chinook salmon-who come upstream to spawn in brooks near gold deposits.

Mother nature is extremely vulnerable in the Far North. An abandoned path or car tracks get overgrown with grass only in 15-20 years. The air in Kamchatka is so clean that from the top of the volcano one can see the landscape 200 km away. The primeval nature of Kamchatka is of a much greater value than the momentary profits from gold drenched out from the earth so barbarically. Quite a stream of American and Japanese tourists who first appeared here in 1991 provides ample proof that reasonable civilized tourism and disciplined tourism can bring more income than gold mines.

The USA, Japan and Russia share one ocean, same varieties of fish their indigenous populations are alike -Aleutians, Itelmen, Indians. And severe living conditions in the far north are similar, too. It is only in such megapolises as Seattle, Tokyo, Moscow spring time means thawing snow and clean asphalt covering the streets. In Petropavlovsk. Kamchatskiy spring snow storms destroy houses. And in summer there are the tsunami

Japan occupies the first place as an exporter to Kamchatka, while the USA exports ten times less Quite current now is the idea of reviving the old Russian-American company, which in tsarist time was a decisive force in the vast region from Anchorage to the Hawaii.

Currently containers for shipping personal belongings and furniture are an item of the shortest supply in Kamchatka and Sakhalin People are fleeing these places making for the European part of Russia, though they do have a vivid example of how things can be set straight there is a joint venture which has been supplying Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy with lavish amounts of food and other stuff The above city has a Soviet-Dutch «Holkam» supermarket where goods are sold for roubles and twice as cheap as one can buy them in private shops in Moscow. And it should be remembered that in Kamchatka people get almost double pay as they will in the north.

Grand Robbery. The chancy actions of the Holkam store are easily explained this joint venture gets the bulk of profits from the sale of fish and sea foods to Japan at dumping prices Likewise, hundreds of fishing vessels of Russia, instead of delivering the catch to the home shores, go directly to Japanese ports or sell fish to foreign vessels in the sea.

The Russian government has lost interest in the Maritime Territory and the army It has become profitable for the frontier guards to say that they have no fuel for their ships, which have allegedly low-power engines. Poachers, both Russian and Japanese, have become the masters of the sea. They violate Russian state borders, the terms and fishing technologies, and intrude into preserve areas.

The revenues of Russia from fishing exports plummeted after prices of our fish sold abroad fell. According to official data, the catch itself diminished too But as the newspaper *Rossia* (Aug.26, 1992) wrote, the sales of fish abroad run into one billion dollars.

This is depriving the state of even the theoretical possibility to retool the fishing fleet and fish-processing enterprises. In 1989 hundreds of thousands of tons of luxury fish were banded in Sakhalin because they could not be processed In the next one or two years we will scrap more than a half of fishing and nearly all processing vessels in the Far East which is great pity because the processing vessels of Dalmoreprodukt company produce the world's best crab preserves. There is a way out to build oyster and fish-growing farms in ecologically-safe regions Money has already been allocated for the creation of mussel farms in Krasnodar Territory and on the shores of the White Sea.

Russia is dropping out of the club of sea powers. Under an agreement with the USA, which has not yet been ratified by Russia the USA will get an area of over 16,000 square kilometres in the centre of the Bering Sea where our fishermen used to catch up to 150,000 tons of fish annually.

The situation in the Okhotsk Sea 97% of which is a part of Russia's 200-mile economic zone, has long been dramatic for us. Only 3% of the sea are open for foreign fishermen, which officially catch up to 200,000 tons of fish there, but the fish inspection bodies of the Russian Far East believe that the actual figure is several times larger.

Formally, Russia and Japan have not signed a peace treaty, although the Second World War ended 47 years ago. Japan will hardly return to Russia the 22 crates with gold coins from the treasury of the last Russian czar, Nicholas II, which the White Army gave to Japan for safe-keeping at the Manchuria station in November 1920. Together with interest, the crates now cost about 700-800 million dollars in current prices. Trying to save the Russian State Treasury from the Bolsheviks, the White Guards transported thousands of standard crates with gold from Petrograd (St. Petersburg) to Kazan, then further on to Samara, Chelyabinsk and the Far East. The gold was used to buy weapons and to maintain the army of Admiral Kolchak during the Civil War. Regrettably, the bulk of Russia's gold fund (up to 10,000 tons of gold) were stolen from the Russian people in the first decade of this century and in the late 1980s.

We can provide quite a few arguments from Russia's recent past to prove that Russians have a right to the Japanese island of Hokkaido and the US Hawaii. But in practice it's the other way round. Japan and China openly state that the Russian presence in Siberia and Maritime Territory is colonialist and imperialist. Many Tokyo experts on Russia forecast that a new state, Eastern Russia, will appear before the end of this century. It will follow the lead of Japan and, like China and Korea, become a part of the economic zone of the Sea of Japan.

So far it is obvious that the Sakhalin authorities are more resolute than the Moscow ones in trying to keep the Kuril islands. The same concerns the operation of South Korean loggers in Maritime Territory. The few local residents, Udegei hunters and Cossacks, are accusing the South Korean Hyundai of felling trees, including the valuable firs and cedars, indiscriminately. The Koreans leave behind them a lifeless desert, from which animals flee and where rivers die. But the contract was signed with Hyundai for 30 years, under which the Koreans will produce one million cubic metres a year.

The international ecological organisation Greenpeace more than once accused Hyundai of indiscriminate tree felling in other countries. Now Hyundai is vivisectioning the 300,000 hectares of unique Ussuri taiga, with tigers, ginseng, very expensive kinds of fish, etc. The Russian Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the Maritime Territory Soviet recommended creating a preserve in the region under control of the Udegei. In October 1992 it was announced that the Supreme Court

of Russia would hear the complaint of the territorial Soviet of People's Deputies and the Maritime administration on the illegal nature of felling by the joint venture Svetlaya and the South Korean Hyundai in the upper reaches of river Bikin. Greenpeace supported the demand for reviewing the terms of the contract with the South Korean concern.

In general, the nch South Korea feels at home in the Russian Far East and intends to compete with Japan and the USA for the right to produce oil and gas on the Sakhalin shelf. There are over 40,000 Korean citizens of Russia living in Sakhalin, which is a point to remember.

Russia ceded 4,000 islets on the Amur to China. The Sino-Soviet agreement to this effect was ratified by the Russian Parliament in 1992. It is possible that in the near future China will move the state border tens of kilometres inside the Russian territory by reviewing in its favour the peculiarities of the flow of the border rivers Amur and Ussun.

The helplessness of the Russian authorities became flagrant in the case of Vietnamese hired workers, which we had the imprudence to invite to this country. The Vietnamese government appropriated their salaries leaving them only a few crumbs for survival. The hungry and dissatisfied Vietnamese turned into a criminal mob, bribing Russian customs officers and economic managers into letting them export large batches of precious metals and goods to Vietnam. The Russian authorities lose hundreds of millions of dollars annually, while the smart Vietnamese are playing on the great difference between the Russian and world prices.

The problem is complicated by the fact that the Vietnamese remember only too well who helped their country to build socialism and later incited the war with the USA. I can imagine how Koreans thank us for exporting socialism to their country and dividing it into two states as well as for downing the ill-fated passenger liner in 1983. The Japanese used to fight with Russia bitterly, and were the masters of the Russian Far East until 1945.

This inheritance is the high wall of misunderstanding that divides business partners in the Far East. Besides, Moscow is to blame for many blunders. Here are some of them.

The residents of Maritime Territory are dissatisfied that the military authorities don't want to raise 80 tons of pyrite, banded in ordinary steel barrels 200 kilometres off Vladivostok in July 1941.

In May 1992 all munitions depots of the Navy situated on the outskirts of Vladivostok burned for several days, as a result of which nearly a half of the city residents had to be evacuated.

Or take the idea of wizards from the Moscow Kurchatov Institute of Nuclear Energy, who advised President Yeltsin to build a nuclear power station on the Kunles. They think nothing about our incomparably low technical standards in this sphere and the threat of local quakes and typhoons.

The Moscow authorities had the danng to proclaim invalid the results of the international competition for the right to operate on the Sakhalin shelf, won by the Japanese and Americans, and to announce a

new winner, the MMM consortium in October 1992. The consortium has commissioned the construction of the necessary technology at Russian defence plants, which means that all mountain rivers and the shores of the Okhotsk sea will be polluted with oil and gas condensate. Inhere are 300 kinds of fish there, a third of them endemic, which means that they can live only there and nowhere else.

The life span in the Far East is four- five years shorter than the average for Russia. For decades the USSR ministries did what they wanted there. As a result, Amur, which used to have the world's richest fish reserves and which provided food and water to a vast region, was polluted by industrial wastes and cannot be used for drinking even after purification. The mining and dressing combine, the pulp and paper mill and the bio-chemical factory, the steel mill and dozens of other ecologically-hostile enterprises are discharging their poisonous wastes into the river.

It is strange, but Jews, isolated there by Stalin, continue to live in that outlying region ill-suited for normal life. Only after the USSR collapsed were Hebrew and Yiddish allowed to be taught in the schools of the Jewish Autonomous Region, bordering on China.

Only those who have something to sell can live in the Russian Far East. The personnel of the aircraft-making factory in Komsomolsk on the Amur survive by producing for China the Su-27 fighters, which were put on active duty in the Soviet Army only in 1986.

PART TWO

REPUBLICS WITH LITTLE IN COMMON WITH ORTHODOX CHURCH

LEGACY OF COMMUNISTS AND GOLDEN HORDE

BASHKORTOSTAN. Overwhelming Catastrophes

The Bashkirs were the first to wrench from the bolsheviks the status of an autonomous republic and this blazed the way for all the other minorities and ultimately for the union republics.

In the post-communist Russia of 1992 all her autonomous republics, areas, national regions and districts are determined to alter their present status and become full-fledged members of the Russian Federation. In other words, all the provinces now are striving for real sovereignty and none of them wishes to stay hostage of the imperial ambitions of the Kremlin.

The population of Bashkortostan (before 1991 this autonomous and later a constituent republic of the Soviet Union was named Bashkiria) is slightly over 4 million with 1 million living in Ufa, the capital city of the republic. Ethnic Bashkirs make only 22% of the population and their share in the population of Ufa is not more than 12%. The percentage of other nations in the population of the republic is: Russians- 40%, Tartars — 28%, Chuvashes — 3%. Only 16% of the republic's residents regard Bashkirian their native language.

But, strictly speaking, only those are fluent in the Bashkirian language who use it professionally- philologists, journalists, theatre and film actors, teachers. Some of the linguists are inclined to regard the language used by the Tartars residing in the Republic, and western Bashkirs as a separate dialect of the Bashkirian language. Four is the

number of the languages used in the republic as a medium of instruction at school, in the mass media, in the theatre and by folk art groups. Bashkortostan has a parliament (Supreme Council) of its own.



In March 1992 Moscow granted export quota to Bashkortostan 9% of the oil products manufactured in the republic, and 16% of the extracted oil. Bashkortostan produces 32 million tonnes of oil annually, which is about what is produced in Kuwait. Also, the difference between the prices of oil within the USSR (averagely 25 roubles per tonne in 1991) and in the rest of the world (\$140-180 per tonne) have always been incompatible all the more so that in 1991 the unofficial exchange rate was about 100 roubles in cash for one dollar.

Bashkiria, one of the largest republics within the Russian Federation, attracts the attention of business circles by its relative stability. It was the only republic in the Federation that could keep its output in 1991 at the level of the previous year regardless of the general disintegration and rupture of economic ties.

80% of all Russia's petrol is manufactured at the oil refineries in Ufa and Bashkir petroleum chemistry still retains the first place in Russia. Reforms in Bashkortostan are quite likely to go the Hungarian way because the Bashkir government's official adviser is Demyan Sandor 'the father of Hungary's market economy. Also, Ufa has a stock exchange with a most up-to-date communications centre a stock exchange bank, a network of trade houses, a transport and freight and insurance companies.

The automobile and aircraft engines made in Ufa are exported to 35 countries and in 1992 the local industries received credits from

Austrian, US, Italian and Spanish banks and companies. The aircraft factory in Kumertau is famous for its modifications of military and civil KA-32 helicopters and other equipment and gear for paratroopers. These helicopters are exported to 12 countries.

The republic is striving to get direct access to the world market. It is a matter of life and death To begin with, Bashkortostan opened its trade representation in Austria (summer 1992) through which it expects to implement three large-scale projects, totally worth over \$100 million. The first project envisages granting the republic a credit with 3% annual interest, the second-for purchasing goods, the third-for reconstruction of a number of industries on the territory of the republic, including the «Khimvolokno» chemical plant and the Ufa's airport. The International Financial Corporation DCI has undertaken the functions of a financial guarantor (replacing the bankrupt VNESHEKONOMBANK) providing some 10% of the entire cost of the credit As a political guarantee they recommend that the Supreme Council of Bashkortostan adopt a special resolution. And this resolution was adopted, and on a sufficiently sound legal basis, too it is Russian Presidents decree No. 197 dated February 27, 1992, granting Bashkortostan the right to independently realize part of the oil and oil products manufactured in the republic, this decree is further supported by a relevant resolution of Russia's Cabinet of ministers on top of all that there is Bashkortostan's annex to the Federal Treaty, signed by Yeltsin and Khasbulatov, according to which Bashkortostan shall be an independent participant in the international and external economic relations except those which have been voluntarily ceded to the Russian Federation by the signatories of the treaty Further, on August 10, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic adopted a law «ON FOREIGN INVESTMENTS» which had been scrutinized by reliable law companies in the West and found to be excellent.

Asked by a Nezovismaya Gazeta (Apr 21, 1992) correspondent about the number of the staff and the office premises of Bashkortostan's. Trade Representation, the Chairman of the Republic's State Committee for External Economic Relations Rafil Garifullin said that the Republic needed one or two employees. «We may come to make arrangements with the Russian Embassy,» he added, «but if they are short of office space, we shall easily find it at companies we cooperate with».

In the course of negotiations, the Austrian side accepted the proposal to conclude a bilateral agreement with the autonomous republic following the model of that between Hungary and Bashkortostan incidentally, Hungary has already opened its trade representation in Ufa. Also willing to sign such an agreement are Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, some of the United States and Canadian provinces and some lands of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Bashkortostan's activities at the world market dismay the Centre, whose recommendations according to Ganfullin can practically be expressed in one phrase: «Why don't you folks, just stay put?» In January he asked for some experts to be sent down from Moscow to test

the qualification level of Bashkir specialists with regard to issuing licences for the oil products featuring in Yeltsin's decree. No reply ever came, as a result, the first tank-truck of oil products rolled off to the customer only at the end of March, and a quarter of the year was thus lost. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, trying to solve all the problems in Moscow, cannot settle the problem of export in good time trying to monopolize the solution of all the problems and since all the plethora of economic problems from all over Russia has to go through the eye of the needle of the Council's staff, Bashkortostan loses time, hard currency, confidence of the partners and contracts. Moreover, the Ministry's staff doesn't have a single officer specifically incumbent to deal with Bashkir problems.

«They have never called us here to ask how things are» — says Ganfulhn, «since Russian Ministries don't seem to care for cooperation with us, we, being left to our own devices, have to reinvest the potter's wheel and learn by our mistakes, which we could have otherwise never made. Russia's representatives will not be weaned from their old proclivity to render economical problems a political tinge. There is no mutual understanding between us and the Centre and this entails all kinds of suspicions and triggers talk about secession from Russia, about isolation. Therefore, currently, whenever any technical problems arise, we are compelled to make strong-worded statements and that at the highest levels, too. So, under the circumstances we have to stick to the principle -if you want to move forward, you have to face confrontation...».

Nuclear Bursts to Benefit the Economy? When the former Soviet people hear the names «Ufa» and «Bashkiria» they immediately recollect by association three disastrous accidents that took place there in recent years.

From 1960 through 1980 Bashkiria was the site of underground nuclear explosions allegedly earned out for the sake of increasing the extraction of oil. All the explosions were made in a densely populated area near the cities of Meleuz, Kumertau, Salavat, Ishimbai. Within the distance of 1 to 10 km from the epicentre of the blasts there were dozens of villages, and the authorities have never bothered to relocate the population. These experiments were made under the guise of «civil defence drills». After atomic blasts near Sterhtamak contaminated radioactive water penetrated into drinking wells and even surfaced. There were instances of escape of radioactive oil and gas. Ever since then both oilmen and local farmers have been dying from the radiation sickness and its side effects. The state as represented by Moscow authorities and the military-industrial complex will not plead guilty of these inhuman experiments, the victims have never got either pensions or special compensations for the damages to their health.

On the 4th of July on the Ufa-Chelyabinsk railway, near Asha, there was a crash that now rates the biggest in the world. In a depression brimming full of natural gas that had been leaking from a defective pipe two passenger trains were fated to meet on parallel tracks, running at

full speed, one from Adler to Novosibirsk and the other from Novosibirsk to Adler. One spark from under the wheels was enough to prime an explosion that swept both trains off the tracks with 575 passengers burning to death while still alive, and 623 passengers crippled and essentially burnt (of whom 90 died later).

Two years later the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation sat in Ufa and condemned seven third rate railway officers, while the actual culprits: all the Soviet oil and gas generals who, in Moscow offices had designed «the longest bomb in the world» got away with it.

The whole structure was jerry-built, the cheaper and the quicker-the better, to make things worse the pipelines were laid along railway tracks and in the vicinity of towns and villages. All this was done in violation of prohibition on building such structures imposed by Glavgosekspertiza (State Panel of Experts) of the USSR State Committee for Construction. The world practice is to process the lethal WLHD (wide light hydrocarbon distillate) right where it is obtained and never to pipe it thousand of kilometers away. After the Supreme Court ruling, the Ministry of Oil and Gas Structures Building of the USSR that had emerged unscathed, planned, in summer 1991, to build another (sic!) similar (sic!) pipeline from Tyumen to Tatarstan (3,841 km).

The authorities of the sovereign Bashkortostan, responsible to their own nation, would have never given their consent for building the majority of ecologically hazardous industries on the territory of their republic. But before 1991, local authorities had no say in such matters everything was decided up in Moscow.

Ufa is surrounded by a ring of largest petrochemical plants, and the situation around Salavat, Sterlitamak and Ishimbai is no better the population of these cities live in extreme ecologic conditions.

Millions of tonnes of toxic waste products have been accumulated on the territory of Bashkiria, and a considerable part of them are lethally hazardous. The policy pursued by Union ministries of the former USSR can only be described as ecologic banditism.

In spring 1990, the population of Ufa drank a good deal of tap water contaminated with phenol and dioxine, the latter being the deadliest synthetic poison on our planet. A year later, this case was tried in court, which heard the evidence of 1,139 residents of the city whose chronic condition had been deteriorating due to the substandard drinking water.

In August 1990, preliminary censorship in the USSR was lifted, and several months later two more horrible facts were exposed by the media The «Khimprom» Corporation which has once contaminated the water supply system with toxines, has, in actual fact, been doing it all the time and is not going to put an end to it, defying the expostulations of the local authorities. The thing is that the majority of large and medium industrial enterprises in the Republic were operating under direct Moscow administration and Moscow officials were reluctant to spend money on reconstruction.

One of the factories in Ufa manufactured herbicides using far outdated technology and poisoned the atmosphere and rivers with dioxine. The municipal authorities pressurized the Third Chief Administration of the Ministry of Health of the USSR to make an official statement on the fact. It was then revealed that about 130 km. of dioxine flows in the water in the river Ufa every day. Compare it with the Americans having used only 200 kg of this poison during the whole war in Viet Nam. The permitted content of dioxine in the environment in the USA is 15 times lower than that allowed in the USSR. And that is the theory, while in practice the Ufa authorities made the city's residents drink water where the concentration of dioxine exceeded the permitted limit from 50 to 147 thousand times! When these figures were revealed, everyone in Ufa was profoundly shocked.

Dioxine is a genetic poison, a scourge of many future generations to come. In 1991, the incidence of cancer in Ufa was twice that of 1960. Children here suffer from bronchial asthma 5-6 times more often than they did 15 years ago, while anaemia occurs among them two or three times more frequently than earlier. Deputies of the City Council demanded that Ufa be officially proclaimed a zone of ecologic disaster. The local authorities succeeded in persuading Moscow to discontinue the construction of the Bashkir atomic power station.

Independence and economic sovereignty came to Bashkortostan in good time, for its territory is virtually prone to ecologic disasters. And small wonder: -qualistechnologia-talisecologia!

Every year Russia suffers from up to 700 accidents when large oil and gas pipe-lines ruptures, one of the reasons being insufficient strength of pipes (cf. of ships pipes are twice as strong and accidents are less frequent).

Another major explosion which claimed many human lives took place at the Ufa refinery in September 1992, halting the production of aviation fuel, which is in such short supply in Russia and other Commonwealth states. Vice-Premier Valery Makharadze, who came to the accident site, agreed with specialists that one must not use equipment with 90% of depreciation. But the bulk of petrochemical enterprises and refineries of Bashkortostan use exactly such equipment.

To be the master of one's own country. Bashkortostan is Russia's leader in the number of accidents. Samara Region on the Volga has 15,000 kilometres of mainlines and local oil and gas pipelines, or five metres of time bombs per each resident of the region, the State Committee for Emergencies says. So, pipelines blow up and burn not only in Bashkortostan. Data on accidents in heat conduits further complicates the picture.

What should we do? Victims of dioxin poisoning should be paid compensations for the rest of their life. There should be legal responsibility for supplying poisoned water to the people, meanwhile, each Ufa resident (or better still, every other resident of Russia) should be issued a plastic container with coal filters to purify drinking water.

Politically, each day shows to the Bashkortostan leaders elected by the people that they should tackle all their problems independently. At least Russians, Bashkirs and Tartars living in that small republic on the Volga think so.

I have already mentioned the resolution of President Yeltsin which allowed Bashkortostan to dispose of 75% of its hard currency revenues from the sale of 9-16% of oil and oil products abroad. Gaidar's government made the resolution invalid by taking an opposite decision half a year later. The leaders of Bashkiria, Tatarstan and Yakutia issued a joint statement denouncing the practice of the Moscow centre violating commitments which it itself had approved. Owing to difference of opinion, the Russian President, Parliament and government cannot coordinate their actions and, worse still, regularly invalidate the decisions of each other. As a result, the provinces and the bulk of Russia's regions and republics suffer.

Murtaza Rakhimov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Bashkortostan, noted that only the Constitutional Court can invalidate Presidential decisions and that Moscow should observe the terms of the Federative Treaty and supplements to it, which say that Bashkortostan is independent as regards the formation of its budget.

Rakhimov told *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Aug. 18, 1992) that Russia has in actual fact blockaded the republic financially. «In reply we can throw the switch on pipelines and Russia will remain without oil and gas. But we don't do this. [Russia] should respect republics; we should sit down and determine who owes what and to whom. For 75 years continued the blood-letting of the republics, which have acute ecological problems, and now they again want us to live as before. No, this will not do. I have been criticised for signing the Federative Treaty and warned that I should not believe the Russian government. Regrettably, I tend to think that my critics were right. But we will not turn back.»

In October 1992 the heads of Russian ex-autonomous formations had a highly satisfactory meeting with Yeltsin. The Council of the Heads of Republics was established at the President, and Yeltsin himself saw that it is impossible to control such a vast federation from the centre-meaning in conditions of a democratic country, of course.

Russian enfants terribles-Bashkortostan and Tatarstan-have devised a counterbalance against Moscow's pressure. In August 1992 Bashkortostan's Murtaza Rakhimov and Minitmer Shaimiyev, President of Tatarstan, went to the neighbouring Uralsk for a meeting with the Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev. Reading between the lines of the official communique of the meeting, I could get the impression that those who have oil and grain have nothing to fear.

So far religious authority in the Moslem republic of Bashkortostan rest in the hands of Talgat Tadjuddin, head of the Moslem Board of the European Part of the Commonwealth and Siberia, headquartered in Ufa. Mufti Tadjuddin attended the inauguration of a mosque in Vilnius, supervises the construction of 250 mosques on his territory, sends hun-

dreds of young people for training in religious institutes in Turkey and Egypt and tours the world collecting donations to the construction of religious schools in Russia. He holds the ring of Belief keeping ravaged Russia together. That is why he has so many opponents who have created independent Moslem boards in Bashkortostan and neighbouring Tatarstan.

By the beginning of 1993 the Supreme Soviet of Bashkortostan forced Moscow to grant the national bank of the republic maximum powers taking into account the fact that the republic is still within the ruble zone.

The construction of an international airport is in full swing in Ufa. But there are brighter sides in Bashkinan life. The Republic has coaches training horse-riders and their mounts at a special school-the only one of its kind in Russia. Riders from stud-farm Tulpar (the Mazhit Gafun collective farm) have won first prizes at many national and international contests.

BURYATIA. Buddhism Revived

In 1991 this republic beyond Lake Baikal was raised to the status and dignity of a Union republic from a formerly autonomous republic and a year later it reinstated its original name of Buryat-Mongolia.

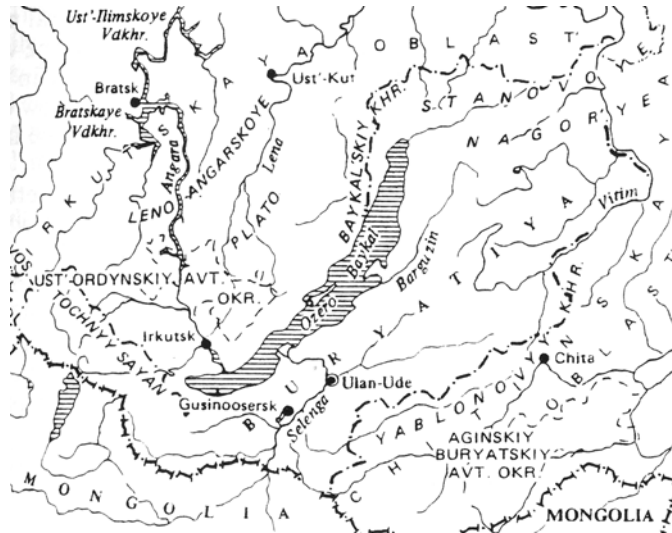
Having become a full-fledged sovereign republic within the Russian Federation this former autonomy instituted the post of president adopted a law on the republic's citizenship and a new constitution of its own. The newly-elected parliament contested as illegal the partition of the Buryat- Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1937 into several smaller formations due to which for half a century the country was divided into the Republic of Buryatia and two national regions, given over under the jurisdiction of the Chita and the Irkutsk regions. This was done with a view to crushing and oppressing Buddhism-the basis of the language, culture and lifestyle of the Buryats.

That is how, in the course of half a century the Buryats have lost their mother tongue and became another Russian- speaking nation. It was only in 1991 that teaching of the Buryat language was reinstated in secondary and higher schools and a Department of Buryat philology was opened at the local Teachers' Training Institute. The young people of the Republic don't know the Buryat language, do not read their national literature, do not listen to their national music. And Buryat culture with its old Mongolian language is closely connected with Buddhism-a philosophy soaring at the highest intellectual and aesthetic level!

On Lake Baikal. Some 340 thousand Buryats live in the vicinity of Lake Baikal. They make only 24% of the population (over 1.5 million) and are actually a national minority in their own republic. Buryat intelligentsia was almost entirely wiped out in the 1930s by the Stalin regime.

Now, when ban on religion has been lifted the national culture of the Buryats tends to be reviving.

At the end of the 19th century the Transbaikal area was home for 15 000 lamas-Buddhist pnest (Lamaism-one of the principal forms of Buddhism had come here many centuries ago through Tibet and Mongolia).



Today Buryatia scarcely has 50 of them. They obtain a higher religious education at the Ulan-Bator Buddhist Institute in Mongolia and upgrade their knowledge in India. A new generation of lamas for 19 Buddhist communities in Buryatia, Tuva, Kalmykia, Moscow and St. Petersburg is also being trained at a recently opened school in the Ivolgin datsan (monastery) not far from Buryatia s capital Ulan Ude Other Buddhist monasteries are also being restored in the Republic. The oldest of them-the Anninsk datsan, destroyed by the Soviets-is now being rebuilt. In the Central State Archives of Buryatia there is a document according to which the cultic objects and other property of the Anninsk oatsan are worth 1 million golden roubles in the Emperor Nicholas II gold com

Buryat lamas attract numerous pilgrims from all over Russia. Devout believers, sick people come here with a hope to restore their health with the help of the mystenous medicine. The lamas welcome all guests-from the British Princess Anne and Russia's President Yeltsin to foreign tounsts and hundreds of local visitors.

Since 1992 Buryatia has been a self-governing independent state and ownsits land and the subsoils. This encourages hopes to save the ecology in the area of Lake Baikal and the Sayan Mountain range. Currently, however, the 200 nvers falling into the Lake Baikal-a huge and

the most beautiful natural reservoir of the cleanest fresh water in the world-pour into it a great deal of industrial waste.

70% of Lake Baikal's littoral and two-thirds of its water table are in Buryatia. Baikal is a unique phenomenon. Hydrochemically, its water has no analogues anywhere on the globe; it is a natural reservoir holding one-fifth of all fresh water of our planet. And in terms of drinking water this miraculous lake contains half of the world's reserves, and a better half of that. The organic life of the lake provides for natural purification of the water and so far is functioning faultlessly, keeping the water clean and clear. However, these endemic organisms can live only in such clean habitat (media): they die in the Angara river, the only outflow of the lake through the water in this river can scarcely be distinguished from that of the lake.

This lake, very often referred to as the Siberian sea, generates crystal clear water fully saturated with oxygen even at the bottom which is at a depth exceeding 1.5 km (approximately 5,000 ft). Baikal contains more water than the Baltic Sea. Every year the lake produced additional 60 billion cubic metres of this priceless liquid mineral. If we set ourselves the task of obtaining as much desalinated water (I insist on desalinated and not that amazing cocktail of useful microelements that the Baikal water is), we would have to spend \$2.5 trillion. In other words: all the gold so far extracted from the depth of our planet is worth 25 times less.

Out of 10 human beings inhabiting the earth only one drinks natural water. All the others drink desalinated water treated with various chemicals and chlorinated. Natural spring water (and Lake Baikal is brimming exactly with this kind of it) costs a pretty penny. The Baikal Limnologic Institute, along with multiple research, tried, though in vain to convince Moscow not to foul the lake. And although the USSR government issued decrees and orders, nobody fulfilled them. What we have up to this day is promises to close down the noxious pulp-and-paper mill that drains into the lake 250 thousand cubic metres of waste every day.

Now, if clean water is pumped up from the depth of the lake, filtered through sand, cooled down to +3C, saturated with carbon dioxide as preservative, bottled and sold abroad at \$2 a 1.5 litre bottle, making \$1 profit from each bottle sold.

Our drinking water has been attracting the attention of the Persian Gulf countries for quite a long time. Buryatia is going to build a few small workshops for pumping and bottling Baikal water to be then sent to disaster-stricken areas, -Chernobyl, in the first place.

But bottling began only in 1992 by order of the Russian government. And before that nobody was allowed to take even a drop-neither Russians, nor foreigners. If Buryatia had her way, could it have had the idea of building bottling shops years ago? Or sell the famous «omul» - a unique variety of salmon, endemic to Lake Baikal, described here as tsar-fish and still found in the waters of this lake? The presidents of the

USA and Russia announced in 1992 their intention to preserve the unique ecosystem of Lake Baikal.

And to keep Baikal healthy is a sophisticated task. In his decree on measures to maintain the development of Buryatia's economy, signed in March 1992, B. Yeltsin made it incumbent on the government of Buryatia and administration of the Chita and Irkutsk regions to work out a state programme for protection of this area and utilization of its natural resources. The Government of Buryatia set up an international scientific centre jointly with the USA Centre for the problems of the American Great Lakes. The entire system of utilization of land hundreds of miles around Baikal is to be reviewed from the ecologic standpoint.

After the abortive putsch in August 1991, Buryatia got a gift from the Transbaikal military district and the High Command of the troops in the Far East: -they returned to the Republic 23,000 hectares of fertile land (only a small fraction of the huge territories occupied by tankodromes, shooting grounds and other military objects. The Chief Commander's Headquarters is located near Ulan Ude, and its Chief Commanding officer Colonel-General A. Kovtunov represents Buryatia in the Russian Parliament. Already in 1992 the balance of forces in the Republic changed. Her parliament, her President and her Supreme court are much weightier than the commanding officers of any armed forces stationed here. The power of Moscow viceroys in Buryatia came to an end with the collapse of the USSR.

Buryatia started, on her own, active trade simultaneously with the Chinese People's Republic and Taiwan and strengthened economic cooperation with neighbouring Mongolia-her chief foreign partner. Now there are direct flights between Ulan Ude and Ulan Bator.

In March 1992 The Supreme Council of Buryatia endorsed a decree issued by the Government and exempting investors on the projects in the Republic's territory from taxes for several years. New commercial banks and stock exchange have been opened. External economic relations of the Republic are managed by a special cabinet minister-the charming Signora Claudia Godigna, born in Italy and holding an Italian passport. She believes that international tourism is a very promising prospect and not only because the Buddhist centre of Russia and the whole former USSR is situated here.

Very prospective also are organized tours of hunters, who will be issued licences for gunning Manchurian deer, elk, brown bear. Buryatia exports pelts and furs, cedar nuts, berries, mushrooms, medicinal raw materials, game animal flesh. In the Chita, Irkutsk regions and in Buryatia proper, four-fifths of the bulk of export for foreign currency are made up by timber, woodpulp and non-ferrous metals. So raw materials account for 70% of the Republic's export. But raw materials are a lot cheaper than finished product.

Up to recently the local authorities were not very interested in boosting up their business activities because Moscow grabbed 80% of the hard cash the Republic earned. The manufacturing plants were allowed to

keep 20%, of which only 5% (i.e. 1% of the original sum) went to the budget of the local authorities. All this concerns timber and lumber. But as for pulp and paper, Moscow took all the 100% of the currency it fetched. Almost the same picture was observable in other groups of exported commodities. With the end of the Soviet Union, Moscow's share in the foreign exchange earned by Buryatia was dramatically cut.

Now Buryat leaders are prepared to step up their activities Buryati's territory is 352,000 sq km Total lumber reserves are estimated at 1.890 billion cubic metres. The annual cuttings-at 4.5 million cubic metres (cf the territory of Finland is 338,000 sq km with lumber reserves being 1.6 billion tonnes and the annual cuttings being 45 million cubic metres). It is abundantly clear that if logging and pulp and paper making are controlled not by the former USSR Ministry of the Interior with its prisoners and hard labour camps, but by local and visiting entrepreneurs, Buryatia's optimism will be justified.

Return to common sense. Buryatia wanted to become one of the first in Russia to get privatization vouchers in the autumn of 1992 and to start privatization as soon as possible. It planned to begin with twenty major timber enterprises, which were to be turned into joint stock companies.

It was expected that the new owners of the enterprises would abandon the barbarous Soviet method of felling trees, when a bunch of twenty-metre-tall trees is pulled by a dragging tractor, which destroys grass and underbush in the process. The trail of these tractors are well seen fifteen years afterwards. The new owners were expected to find the money and deem it profitable for them to buy foreign equipment on wheels, using which four fellers working in two shifts can procure 40,000-50,000 cubic metres a year without destroying nature in the process.

We need hard currency? Why not demand it from those who built the Baikal-Amur Mainline? The railway went along Lake Baikal disfiguring a vast area at the unique lake with hundreds of station buildings, warehouses and dwellings, barracks and industrial enterprises. Who will answer for spending fantastic sums of money on the construction of the 15-kilometre-long Severomuisk railway tunnel which has not been finished yet? There were about thirty projects for building the road across the ridge, but the criminally negligent prospectors chose the worst a zone of small and big fissures. As a result the BAM is ready, but the tunnel is not.

Ulan Ude has hard currency. Fifty thousand workers of the local aircraft-making plant are turning out three models of combat helicopters and their numerous civilian modifications. Out aircraft-making factories used to produce only one model Kazan produced the Mi-8, Komsomolsk on Amur produced Simonov's aircraft, and Kumertau in Bashkiria, Kamov's helicopter. The Ulan Ude aircraft-making plant has its own bank and does not get money or resources regularly from the centre. They acquire whatever they need themselves, producing 100 helicopters a year, selling some 20 to the military departments of Russia and selling the rest to China. The plant pledged to repair its helicopters

In special shops in Magadan, Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk and guarantees technical servicing in places where their helicopters work.

Yuri Kravtsov, 50 director of the plant, is on the Buryatian government. He has proved that he understands development problems of Buryatia much better than those who try governing the republic from Moscow.

Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev thought nothing of sacrificing Baikal when they ordered the construction of a pulp and paper mill on its shores without purification equipment, designed to produce super heat-resistant viscose cord «super-super» for tyres for military aircraft.

Only the unique clean water of Baikal (with its unchanging chemical composition) could be used for the production of cord which must withstand the temperature of up to 3,000 degrees C during take off and landing, to minus 60 at high altitudes. No matter how large the revenues from the sale of cellulose, they could no bring the mill more than 200 million roubles a year in the pre-reform 1990 prices.

Meanwhile, the sale of one-twentieth of Baikal's water used by the mill in bottles could earn six billion dollars a year. But can you imagine our general secretaries as much as thinking about allowing local authorities to earn an extra rouble or catering to the health of the people by providing them with fresh water? Our leaders knew well that the average Soviet citizen will live till the age of 55 even despite drinking polluted water.

Now that Buryatia has broken out of the bonds of control of Moscow rulers, it will try to relieve Baikal from extra ecological pressure, such as the East Siberian Shipping Lines, which transport up to 15 million tonnes of cargo, including oil products, a year, or the barges with timber shuttling to the timber-processing mill and back, leaving in their wake hundreds of trees rotting in the pure waters of Baikal.

Yeltsin can be regarded as a saint by the people if he had started to purify drinking water with activated carbon instead of chlorine. Russia is the only country in the world not to mass produce ecologically-safe drinking water. We need laws binding economic managers to create systems for recycling water and in general to save water, under the threat of large fines for violating them. Meanwhile Russia is dying largely because of polluted water. We still purify drinking water with chlorine although a high-frequency industrial water ozonator was patented by Yu. Yemelyanov, of Moscow State University, in this country and eleven other countries in 1964. His method of purifying water is regarded as very effective but expensive-for us, of course. Other countries have long been using it.

One example of the return of common sense in Buryatia lone is the restoration of 20 Buddhist temples. The monks, some of them as old as 95, have climbed down from the mountains where they spent a great part of their lives hiding from the authorities.

Several years ago it was impossible to imagine that in September 1992 Buryatia, Tuva and Kalmykia would be visited by His Excellency

Tengzhingyao, Dalai Lama XIV. We were afraid to invite that Nobel Prize winner who travelled around the world and was regarded as a dissident by Chinese officials, not even to the Central Buddhist Board of the USSR, established 32 kilometres away from Ulan Ude in 1946 with the gracious permission of the great Stalin. Since then the few lamas who had survived Stalin's hard labour camps served in the headquarters of this country's Buddhists.

In the near future the republic will start building a new headquarters for the Central Buddhist Board on the 20 hectares of land allocated in the picturesque district of Verkhnyaya Berezovka in the capital, complete with the residence for the Khambo-lama and a centre of Tibetan medicine.

A Buddhist school will be built not far away from the Ivolgmo datsan, in the place called Tapkhar. The school has Buryats, Russians Ukrainians, citizens of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tuva, Kalmykia and even Mongolia and America among its students, which is natural, because Buddhism does not distinguish people by race.

Every morning a dungar (sea shell), sounding from the pointed roof of the datsan calls lamas to the khural (main prayer). Like hundreds of years ago, saffron-robed Buddhist monks and their disciples (khuvaraks) hurry to the main temple.

In 1923 Buryatia had 211 Christian Orthodox churches, 81 churches of Old Believers, 44 Buddhist temples and 13 synagogues.

CHUVASHIA. Famous Dark Beer

Famous Dark Beer Chuvashia was the first of the Russian autonomies to sign a federation treaty with Russia. As Chuvash authorities are clearly oriented to Russia, Chuvashia was chosen as a venue for a meeting of the heads of Russian autonomies in September 1992. The meeting was attended by all leaders of Russia and its provinces.

That meeting was a success for Russian authorities and the Chuvash government as well. Immediately after it ended, President Yeltsin signed a decree to support social and economic progress of the Chuvash Republic. This decree meant hefty subsidies to the ailing collective and state farms amounting to one billion roubles, allocation of 70,000 tonnes of fodder concentrate, as well as access to foreign credits granted to the Russian Federation and the right to sell agricultural produce to Russia at negotiated prices.

In fact, Chuvashi don't have much to offer. After federal property of the wrecked USSR was split between Chuvashia and Russia, the latter got all defence factories, power plants and communication lines.

Chuvashia traditionally grows hops, known in the republic as «the green wealth,» but it can't effectively store it or process into oil.

Chuvashes believe that their ancestors were the first beer brewers in Europe. When autumn comes, Chuvash rural dwellers home-brew their celebrated dark beer, which retains its flavour and bite for six months with no pasteurization or canning. Other exotic Chuvash dairy and meat products, like turakh, uiran and shartan, do not require special processing or storage techniques either.

In Chuvashia, the secrets of craftsmanship have been passed from generation to generation, and that otherwise unremarkable Chuvashes were always known throughout Russia as unsurpassed potters and embroiders.

In December 1990 Chuvashia declared the restitution of its state identity, having elevated its status in the former USSR from autonomous to union republic. In 1991, 1.3 million people were living in the Chuvash SSR, 68 percent of them Chuvashes, 26 percent Russians and three percent Tartars. Almost a third of all newspapers and books in Chuvashia are published in the Chuvash language.

The capital city of the republic, Cheboksary, is a major industrial city in the Volga area. Like many other cities in this region, its environment has been vastly damaged by hazardous operations of numerous defence factories here.

KARELIA. Ruined Part of Finland

Anatoly Grigoryev, the leader of the Karelian Movement, is advocating the secession of Karelia from Russia and the return to the bosom of Finland of certain territories illegally annexed by Russia some 50 years ago.

Karels have lived in Finland since the Second World War. There are 200,000 of them in Finland, or double the figure living in Karelia. In the 1940s the Finns who had decided not to leave their home parts were transported in cattle wagons to the hard labour camps in the tundra regions of the Kola Peninsula and to Kazakhstan. The so-called Ingermanland Finns had lived along the Neva and the eastern part of the Bay of Finland, where there were 500 Finnish collective farms, dozens of Finnish Soviets of Workers Deputies and 322 Finnish schools in the early 1930s. There were 200,000 Finns in Leningrad. And none of the deported Finns have ever been allowed to return to their native parts or recognised as a persecuted nation in this country.

Deprived of the ports on the Baltic and in Ukraine, Russia is pondering the possibility of securing the agreement of Finland on the use of its ports. Finland and Russia have had the same width of the railway and the distance from the many regions in Russia to Finnish ports Kem, Oulu, Turku and Helsinki is shorter than to Baltic or Ukrainian ports.

Karelia and Finland have 700 kilometres of land borders. The place of numerous divisions of Soviet frontier guards, missile men and air

defence troops is being taken by railway builders. They are building a private 126-kilometre long railway between two obscure stations j^ Finland and Karelia: Kochkoma and Ledmozero.

It is claimed that the use of Finnish transshipment points would cost Russia half of what it will have to pay for the use of ports in Lithuania Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine. The shortest way from Russia to the West lies through Finland, which is why new checkpoints are being quickly built on the border between Finland and Leningrad Region, Karelia and Murmansk Region.



If privatization, is carried through in Russia, it will yield wonderful results in Karelia-thanks to Finland. The socialist disorder in the timber and pulp and paper industries of Karelia will be stopped as soon as they are privatised. The Karelian authorities will allow Finnish businessmen into Kondopoga, the town of paper-makers, and all timber farms. About a hundred of small Soviet-Finnish ventures in Karelia have proved competitive and honest. The Finnish «interference» in Karelia will stop the ecological barbarity of Russian technologies. Russian Finns and Karels, Russians and Ukrainians will live much better than today in Karelia. Lake Ladoga, the island of Valaam and timber felling will no longer mean hard labour camp for the Russian people.

Parade of sovereignties. The Karelian Soviet Autonomous Republic was one of the first in the former USSR to declare its sovereignty. But

even after that the Karels, Finns and Vepses, altogether not making even 20% of the population of the Republic, stay far from the helm of the State.

As is known, the USSR practised segregation of its nations by applying different standards in defining their status: nations of Union Republics were first-rate, autonomous republics were second-rate, and autonomous regions and districts were third-rate. Many nations were deprived not only of a political status, but they were even forcibly relocated thousands of kilometres away from their motherland where they eventually were assimilated by the local population.

A 600-km borderline separates Karelia from Finland. Until 1918 the whole of Finland was part of Russia and was lucky to take care of its fate after secession from the Empire, fought for its independence during the armed aggression on the part of the USSR in 1939. Many Russians were killed in this inglorious for the USSR military campaign. But then we managed to throw the Finns out of the Karelian Isthmus, and make Vyborg (Viipuri) a Russian town. As is known, the Russian Emperor Alexander I presented this territory to Suomi after a victory over the Swedes in 1809.

In the 1940s the state borderline with Finland was moved up to the north for 50 km from Leningrad. The Karels were just lucky in their puppet Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. Moscow just changed the name of the motherland of Karels and reduced its status-it became the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Karelia. But under Stalin the whole native population could have well been deported in cattle trains to Siberia into exile.

Today a keen discussion about the vast eastern territories, which made the territorial bulk of Soviet Karelia, wouldn't stop. A lot of people demand from the politicians in Helsinki to repossess Karelia by way of negotiations with Russia, and if that doesn't work, to purchase these territories, by raising the necessary sum of money from the whole population of Finland. More cautious ones fear that Suomi might not be ready for «the three languages problem» - taking into consideration the Russian population that might wish to stay on its territory.

At the end of the 1980s the Finnish Karels were at last granted a permission to visit their family nests on the Soviet territory, and they were appalled at the scale of wreck and ruin of their former motherland. And perhaps that was the reason why our champions of «secrets» and «interests of the state» would not let tourists from Finland enter our territory.

Will Finland have enough money to bring the ruined Karelia up to the «Finnish condition»? In 1990 Karels numbered only 80,000 out of almost 1 million population of the Republic, and from them fewer than a half knew their mother tongue. The Soviet power deprived the Karels from their alphabet and literature. There are no Karelian schools, newspapers, magazines, theatres and so on. The Karelian language is one of the oldest in the family of Baltic-Finnish languages and considerably

differs from related ones. A six-volume dictionary of the Karel language has long been in use in Finland, while in Soviet Petrozavodsk, after 20 years of torment and ordeal a similar explanatory dictionary was published only in 1991.

Only in 1990 the Government of the Autonomous Republic endorsed the Karelian and Vepsian alphabet and spelling rules. Three national communities-Karelian, Vepsian and Ingermandian were registered and free Karelian language courses were organized in Petrozavodsk. Karels live in rather large and compact groups in some rural areas in the south and northwest of the Republic. Finland willingly subsidizes the revival of Karelian literature, culture, folklore, traditional trades in the conditions of post- communist Russia.

Finland gives Russian Karels generous humanitarian help, supplies them with corn, potatoes, butter, meat. The new authorities of the sovereign Republic of Karelia are making first steps to revive the national economy by organizing full production process at stone and woodworking plants and obtain finished products locally, promoting foreign and domestic tourism, by distributing land and credits among farmers.

Karelia is a treasure drove of variegated marble, granite and unique deposit of noble deep red quartzite. 1,500 monuments of history and culture are registered here, among which there are more than three hundred masterpieces of world- famous northern carpenters. But, to tell the truth, nowadays they no longer make even furniture from whole boards and beams of wood, hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of timber are sent abroad or to pulp-and-paper mills.

After Mr. Yeltsin visited Karelia in spring 1991, the republican authorities were given the right to issue licences for trade with western countries and retain 75% of the proceeds in hard currency.

KOMI. Gulag Homeland

In 1990 the Komi Autonomous Republic became a full- fledged union republic of the USSR. A year later the republican authorities refused to send to the Centre as mandatory supplies all the lumber, oil, natural gas and coal they produced either as raw material or as finished product. During the last year of the USSR existence the central ministries were no longer able to guarantee supply of food and other consumer goods to northern areas of the country. And this compelled Komi (like all other areas) to resort to barter deals-one railcarful of meat against 30 railcarfuls of lumber.

Of course it would be a lot more profitable to manufacture furniture and saw logs into timber right there. But there was neither money nor wish to do it. Oil should be refined right there too, but, the only oil' refinery in the Republic of Komi is in the centre of the city of Ukhta and it can

only produce the low octane A-76 petrol, diesel fuel, and black oil, polluting the atmosphere with a horrible lot of waste. The Republic has Deposits of bauxites (of much better quality than those in Guinea regarded as world standard), titanium (our indigenous technology is unable to process this ore) and gold, but their industrial mining is practically impossible without substantial investments and technical Assistance.



In 1992 the Republic's parliament ruled that all coal mining in Vorkuta which requires huge subsidies be left in Russia's jurisdiction, while oil fields and lumbering placed under the jurisdiction of Komi. Would Moscow agree? But what was to be done since Moscow had earlier allowed the Republic's authorities to dispose of 30% of all her production at their discretion.

The territory of the Republic is immense- 416 thousand square km, the equal to that of France. The indigenous ethnic groups Komi live mainly in the South of the Republic, making 23% of the entire Population. And as recently as in 1920s the Komi people accounted for 90% of the Republic's population. They made their living mostly by hunting and fishing. With the disappearing of villages and under the impact of immigrants the mother tongue of the Komi is gradually ousted by Russians and the national culture perishes.

Vast and scarcely populated expanses without roads, with communications only by air or by surface sledge tracks in winter, earned the Komi Republic a reputation of a prison under the open sky. Komi is the cradle of the GULAG system, where up to this day the majority of

forced labour camps are situated, with inmates felling trees, mining coal and ore, grinding wood into pulp and doing all kinds of hard and hazardous labour. After they have seen their time out prisoners are released and some of them settle down thus aggravating the criminogenic situation, increasing the incidence of recidivism (repeated crime) which is here the highest in Russia.

GULAG is still alive. Only somewhat shrunk Russia, e.g still has 14 j colonies-settlements, holding as of summer 1992 about 40,000 those prisoners who have already seen two-thirds of their term out and the state thus «eases» their conditions But in reality it is the same kind of slavery, hard labour practically without pay (most of the earning being spent on food).

In spring 1992, 140,000 various articles were manufactured in Russia's penitentiaries. On the eve of disintegration of the USSR the penitentiary system occupied the third place among industrial ministries in the total production output. It is not fortuitous that there are few prisoners now in Siberia and the Far East many have been transferred to the west of the Urals and are working, behind barbed wire fences, at 600 enterprises.

Every day each of us uses things manufactured by prisoners directly or indirectly. The majority of large automobile and aircraft plants has workshops manned by prisoners. Up to this day about 170 thousand prisoners, condemned for the so-called economic offences are seeing their time out behind barbed wire fences, though their offences have ceased to be qualified as such in today's Russia. Among prisoners today there also are lots of people who have been condemned as criminals for reselling small batches of goods, foreign currency and services. Any civilized society has much fewer articles in the penal code which permit the court to send a citizen down and lock him up than in this country. Another horrible reality with us is that people are kept in confinement for years on end waiting for trial.

Only in 1992 the Russian Ministry of the Interior has been keeping in custody over 1,500 entrepreneurs. A very curtailed amnesty promulgated by Russian Parliament in summer 1992 extends to only 5% of the detained, none among them being an «economic» culprit, while majority of them was sentenced to different terms of confinement exactly what our reformers are touting for today. But in Komi, the majority of people unfortunately, live according to the Moral Code of the builder of communism.

Was this the lot local educationalists and philosophers wished their country should have? Citizens of the Republic's beautiful capital Syktyvkar preserve a loving memory of Bishop Stephanos of Perm who converted the Komi into Christianity, and of the author Ivan Kuratov, founder of Komi Literature, and of the world-renowned sociologist Pitirim Sorokin.

In 1992 the Komi Republic remained an ideal place for prisons there is nowhere to go in that unpopulated area, with marshes in the north,

while in the south the militia straddles the only airport, railway and highway.

At the end of 1992, a year after the collapse of the USSR and its economy, the situation of inmates in Komi and the rest of Russia was worse than before. President Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament introduced only insignificant changes in the Criminal Code, keeping the GULAG structure the same as it was under Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev.

The maintenance of prisoners should not be profitable to anyone but the prisoners and their families. Otherwise, the concerned party will try to put as many people behind bars as possible.

Twenty percent of prison inmates in this country die of inhuman conditions (see *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Aug 30, 1992), 50% lose from 70% to 80% of their ability to work, and more than 30% become invalids and old people, despite being 30 or 40 years old. According to the draconian Soviet laws, they cannot get back their flats, because six months after the court hearing they are stricken off the register, and only few manage to restore their rights. Without a line in the register concerning the place where you live, you cannot get a job, a passport, anything Not even an air plane ticket. As a result, 80-90% of criminals soon commit more crimes and are imprisoned.

But this is not all. According to Natalia Bezhnina, chief doctor at the Russia's largest prison TB hospital for 1,500 beds, 70% of prisoners have TB, and in general prisoners fall ill with TB 35 times more often than other people, and only 20-30% of them get well (3% in the case of complicated forms of TB) (see *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, Aug. 16, 1992). Bezhnina says that this epidemics of TB will soon spread to other people, because only 7-10% of the released prisoners who have TB register in their neighbourhoods and get treatment.

Russian hard labour camps are a human mincer, undermining the health of the entire nation, but you will never guess that it is so if you stroll in the streets of the Komi capital, Syktyvkar. Meanwhile, it did not have a cardiological centre and the construction of one began only in 1992, jointly with a Cypriot company.

Having removed the words «Soviet» and «socialist» from the official title of the Komi republic in July 1992, the local Parliament approved a law «On Social Protection of Invalids,' but it did not concern itself with the fate of local prisoners.

There are quite a few disabled people in Komi. Many ex-prisoners remained in the republic to build «communist» projects. Besides, there can hardly be healthy people among the local population either.

Half an hour's drive from the centre of Syktyvkar stands one of the largest pulp-and-paper mills (as large as the one in Kondopoga, Each paper-making machine is situated in a shop which is big to house a dozen of Boeings. The smell inside these shops and them is incredibly foul. I wouldn't wish my bitterest enemy to there, to breathe that foul

chemically polluted air. But the houses of the mill's personnel stand right next to the foul-smelling shops, although there is free land for dozens of kilometres around. Why not build houses for the personnel in the forest and let them breathe fresh air? But no, the Moscow ministries ordered the cheapest possible construction of the mill. Many of the mill's workers are prisoners, while the few free people who work there try to leave the place as soon as they can-if they don't die.

The Komi republic even had a Bulgarian consulate. Bulgarians came here for decades under an intergovernmental agreement, to fell trees married Russian and Komi women and soon left for their native Bulgaria.

There is an amazing place in Komi-the Nyuvchim cast-iron foundry put into operation in the middle of the 18th century. IN 1795 the foundry produced 832 tonnes of cast-iron, two centuries later-800 tonnes, and with the same technology and with the same equipment. The only innovation in the foundry was that electricity was wired to provide lighting on the premises-and that is all the improvement effected here over 200 years.

In May 1991, Mr. Hwang, an American national of Korean extraction, rating the 28th on the list of the richest people in the USA was appointed Adviser to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Komi ASSR. Ten years of previous experience of dealing with the Soviet market enabled Mr. Hwang to propose a number of projects to develop the Republic's electronic industry, agriculture and river transport.

In the north even bogs and marshes can and do yield rather abundant harvest of wild-growing ecologically clean berries, cloudberries bilberries, blueberries, red buck-leberries, cranberries, currants. The problem is that there is nobody wishing to pick these berries, though Vologda region neighbouring on Komi, has organized their picking and shipping them to Finland (sic!) which gives any goods in exchange and on profitable conditions too! And on the huge territory of the Republic of Komi practically nobody picks berries and mushrooms to sell either at the internal market or abroad.

And here is another paradox that used to be a pattern of Soviet life. At the end of 1990 the Syktyvkar paper-and-pulp plant daily shipped 40 railcarfuls of paper, one tonne of which the state bought averagely at 500 roubles. The administrative building of the plant was besieged by private entrepreneurs who were prepared to pay 20 times more. But they got only some scraps and the workers together with the rest of the population continued their miserable existence with bare shelves in shops sub-standard housing, and exposed to hazardous ecologic conditions.

How can the Komi be expected to treat the Russians and other immigrants who had brought to their land misfortune and ruin that the indigenous population have been suffering from for decades on end? Under the Tsars, feudal oppression made dozens of the thousands of the Komi seek a better life in Siberia. Today only 350,000 Komi live in the Republic of Komi and beyond its geographic borders: the neighbouring Perm oblast, and the territory of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous district

are the home of the Permyaks, also known as the Komi-Permyaks, numbering, according to the 1989 census, 152,000. The Komi-Permyak language is a special dialect of the Komi language, and together with the Udmurt language, pertains to the Perm group of the Finno-Ugrian languages in the Ural family of languages.

MARIY EL. Munitions Industry

This is the name (since 1991) of the former Mari SSR which, over the decades under the Soviet power (until 1990), was known as the Mari ASSR. In 1992 Mari El elected her president, her parliament (the Supreme Soviet) and government, having gained substantial independence from the Kremlin, ceased to be puppet bodies.

80% of Mari El's industry is working for the «needs of defence». In Yoshkar-Ola, the Republic's capital, the powers that be would stress and reiterate that their Republic has always been the most militarized one in the USSR and the Russian Federation.

In November 1990 the then USSR premier Nikolai Ryzhkov attended the ceremony of opening in Yoshkar-Ola of a refrigerator-making plant—the biggest of the kind in the USSR. Italian banks had given a credit of \$200 million, while the Italian company «Fata» had started and streamlined the manufacture of 220 thousand refrigerator bodies and freezers for storing food, i.e. twice as many as had been manufactured in the USSR until 1990. The joint venture «SOVITALPRODMASH» radically settled the problem of saving the one-third of the agricultural production that was usually lost on the way from the fields to the shop shelves. Newspapers mentioned then that one tenth of the new plant's area would be occupied by purification installations—i.e. production would be ecologically clean.

The Republic has 300,000 indigenous Man, and about as many live in small communities in Bashkiria, Tatarstan and Udmurtia, also in the Kiev, Nizhniy Novgorod, Sverdlovsk, Perm and Orenburg regions. The Meadow, the Eastern and the Mountain are the three basic dialects of the Man language. The Mari literature is bilingual, appearing in the Eastern- Meadow and in the Mountain-Mari languages.

The mountain Mari were practically deported from the mountains 10 years ago when 45,000 hectares of their land became the bottom of the Cheboksary water reservoir to run the turbines of a hydropower station of the same name straddling the river Volga. The government of Mari El demands that the policy pursued by the former Ministry of Power Engineering of the USSR be condemned as economically inconsistent and immoral and is determined to make Moscow lower the level of water in the reservoir. At the moment, 38 hectare of forest are ruined owing to the roots of the trees rotting in the water that seeps from the reservoir.

Dozens of villages have sunk in the «Cheboksary Sea» and 40 more are facing the danger of being flooded. Today annual losses of agricultural produce were worth (in terms of pre-reform prices) twice the cost of the electricity generated during the same year. And on top of all that another disaster: the Cheboksary reservoir has turned into a colossal cess pool, since one third of the inflowing water represents entreated waste from industrial enterprises of Nizhny Novgorod. The reservoir is within the geographic boundaries of Chuvashia, Mary El and the Nizhny Novgorod region, and the Republic of Mary El is suffering the worst and therefore, intends to sue Russia for damages in the newly-formed Constitutional Court.

Yeltsin's decree, «On Measures of State Assistance to the Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Mary El» of August 24, 1992 hinted at the possibility of settling the problems of the Cheboksary Hydro in the near future, allowed the Mary government to conclude direct agreements on cooperation with foreign companies, allocated 85,000 tonnes of fodder to local industrialised poultry farms, and 250 million roubles on the construction of housing for servicemen. In conclusion, the decree allowed the mission of the Mary government to occupy offices and housing with the total floor space of 103.6 square metres at two addresses.

That «fatherly» benevolence forced even the armaments enterprises of Mary El, which did not have state orders any more, to accept republican jurisdiction. The Mary authorities concluded an agreement on pursuing a joint economic policy with Tatarstan in September 1992, and negotiated cooperation with the Ugro-Finnish states Finland, Estonia and Hungary. The Mary El's first president, Vladislav Zotin, lost all illusions of getting assistance from the democratic Moscow authorities. Even though the republic is officially a part of Russia, it will have to fight its economic crisis single-handed. We'll do it if Moscow doesn't interfere, Zotin implied in an interview to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Sept 18, 1992).

MORDOVIA. Arzamas-16-Nuclear Research Centre

In the autumn of 1992 Mordovia established the world's only museum of nuclear weapons. It also houses a hard labour camp where all foreigners sentenced in Russia serve their term.

Local armaments enterprises produce electronic items which are quite competitive on the Western markets. They assembled the BGR, the world's most powerful pulse-graphite reactor, and overtook the Americans in the production of nuclear-pumped lasers by at least 15 years.

The authorities of one research and production association in the republic's capital, Saransk, persecuted a 40-year-old researcher for his

desire to become a deputy of the local Soviet. His flat was put on fire and killers were hired to assassinate him. It was a miracle that he survived after being hit on the head with a crow-bar. Several months after he was dispatched from the hospital he became the republic's first president. .

Alexander Garmashov, first deputy chairman of the Mordovian government, made the whole of Russia laugh. Replying a question on the results of his trip to Moscow, asked by a correspondent of the local newspaper *Molodoi Leninet*s, he said: «I don't know if I should tell you the whole truth. [Here he laughed.] Alright, the results are good. The Mordovian budget has been doubled. As to how... The way was paved by the people who had gone to Moscow before me; in a word, the system of bribes is working better than ever. They distribute, hence they have the power. Like it or not, you will not achieve anything if you go to the capital empty-handed. In short, we did our homework well. And all these departments will fight to keep this system intact.».

It was a scandal. The Main Department for Economic Crimes at the Russian Interior Ministry was ordered to investigate it. Its inspectors questioned dozens of people in Saransk and Moscow-and did not find anything. Garmashov told the investigators that the journalist had misunderstood him. *Izvestia* (Aug. 31, 1992) complained that bribery had acquired unprecedented proportions. I think that the next annual budget of Mordovia will not be approved in Moscow; the republic itself will do it.

In 1992, a new political elite began taking shape in the post-communist independent Russia. In various areas and regions of the Russian Federation, President B. Yeltsin succeeded, without much opposition, in replacing top officials in local administrations. But in Russia's autonomies, after they had declared their sovereignty and elected their own presidents and parliaments, power actually remained in the hands of the former communist party bosses.

Chechnya and Mordovia are an exception to the rule, where nationalist radicals came to power, while only in Mordovia an uncontested victory was won by a representative of democratic forces ; -Chairman of the Mordovian organization of the «Democratic Russia» party.

The first president of Mordovia Vassily Gusyatnikov is Russian. Mordovians make 20% of his government. The share is slightly lower than that of ethnic Mordovians in the Republic's population. It is noteworthy, that Gusyatnikov-a Russian-won 80% of votes in many Mordovian villages, against his rival-a Mordovian. Even in Mordovian families children know their ethnic language poorly because schools have not been teaching Mordovian for quite a long time. It was only in 1991, that the former first secretary of the Communist Party regional.

Committee, a Kremlin viceroy who had been ruling over Mordovia with an iron fist for 20 years, left the place. Under him pompous pageantry was organized to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Mordovia joining Russia. And under him, too, complete russification of Mordovia became a fact, -and not only in Saransk, its capital city.

Now Saransk demands that Moscow put Mordovia on the list of zones of ecological disaster. Moscow had sent its experts who arrived in Saransk in 1990 and took samples of the soil from the flower beds in front of the Republic's government building. These samples contained seventy times (sic!) the permitted concentration level of mercury and thirteen times that of strontium. Besides, they contained excessive amounts of chromium, nickel, arsenic, antimony, lead, and even silver. Chemical analysis of curls of hair snipped off from children's heads showed the same results.

The military-industrial complex has spoiled the soil and the air; the Alatyr, the Sura and the Vad-the main rivers of Mordovia-are poisoned and fishermen catch scaleless breams, eyeless perches, and other ichthyomutants. Not a single factory in the Republic has a decent purification plant, and the technologies used at her enterprises date back, unaltered, to the times of pre-Petrine manufactories of the eighteenth century.

On the territory of Mordovia, bordering on the Nizhny Novgorod region nuclear warheads are manufactured in «Arzamas-16,» former town of Sarov, a supersecret settlement closed to any visitor prior to 1991. It was built in 1945 by prisoners; a few kilometers away there were famous «Mordovian camps,» where highly renowned nuclear scientists Sakharov, Zeldovich, Kurchatov used to work and where Khariton, Negin, Trutnev, Kocheryants, Pavlovsky are working presently. These stars of nuclear physics were known personally to all Secretaries general of the Communist party Central Committee from Stalin to Gorbachev. The scientists were quartered on the premises of the pillaged monastery Sarovskaya Pustyn, where they began to build the nuclear rocket shield for the Motherland on the technical base of the former plant that used to produce rockets for our famous «Katyushas.»

The scientists were treated without much courtesy there. Comrade Beria put it in such a winning straightforward and heartfelt manner-»If you fail-we'll shoot you!«-that Kocheryants remembered it well and recounted to the first journalist he ever talked to in his life-and that was in 1992. There is a symbol in the fact that one of the fathers of the Soviet atomic bomb had become the Great Sakharov and ipso facto damned his employers to hell, while in the closed top secret «Arzamas-16» the 80-year-old Academician Khariton has been the «overlord» for about half a century supervising the manufacture of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for the USSR and consequently (1992) for Russia.

Stalin ordered the atomic «project» to be built at least 400 km from Moscow. The ancient town of Sarov was four kilometres farther. At the beginning of the century the road to Sarov was well trodden: among other pilgrims, the Russian Imperial family came to worship the relic of St. Seraphim Sarovsky. Later on, the surrounding forests became part of the Smidovich forest reserve of Mordovia. After World War II the old Sarov became «Moscow-2,» then «Kremlyovsk» and later entered history

under its present nickname «Arzamas-16.» The main area of Sarov land, over 22,000 hectares still belongs to Mordovia. «Arzamas-16» is still governed by three masters-trie land belongs to Mordovia, the city council operates under Gorki region administration, and all industrial sectors depend on the military-industrial complex. Frankly, Saransk, Sarov and Nizhny Novgorod are on good terms, but Mordovian parliament has no intention to let the atomic complex use the Republic's land for ever and free of charge.

Today in «Arzamas-16,» the unofficial capital of our nuclear archipelago, dozens of thousands of people are working at the main research institute of experimental physics and at the «Avangard» electromechanical plant. The Federal nuclear Center of Russia is going through a crisis now: the Cold war is over and foreign journalists and public activities are actually flooding former Sarov. Western diplomats are imploring Moscow to do their utmost and keep the elite of our atomic industry from slipping into the abyss of unemployment and oblivion. Should a score of experts from «Arzamas-16» move to one of the «hot» countries, the US military-industrial complex will have sufficient grounds to ask for some \$100-200 billion for gearing up another stage of star wars.

Know-how is of fair demand now whereas researchers from «Arzamas-16» have mastered the most sophisticated technologies but need help from Western entrepreneurs. Visitors here are shown wonderful products, sometimes handmade pilot pieces-from the smallest in the world X-ray unit to a mobile outpatients' clinic filled in powerful «Ural» military wagons and from lazer and palms installations to the technology of intensifying oil production by way of blasting up the soil and rock to a depth of 200 metres with cumulative charges (which makes the whole process 100 times cheaper than while using analogous American technologies).

TATARSTAN. Capital of Moslem Russia

The only republic among former Russia's autonomies, it has many attributes of sovereign independent state. Kazan, its capital, has its own Kremlin. Tatars have a president, a parliament, a government, a shadow cabinet, strong opposition parties and social movements of their own. Tatars make half of the republic's three million population, and the number of Russians amounts up to 43%.

The majority of the total 7 million of the former USSR Tatars live in Russia and make the second biggest ethnic group in the Russian Federation after the Russians proper. Traditional historic alliance, ethnic and linguistic closeness of Tatars and Bashkirs make these two ethnic communities a critical factor in Russia's political life. There are large

Tatar communities in the USA, Australia, Germany, Turkey and Finland. In summer 1992 they convened a World Congress of Tatars in Kazan.

Russia's Tatars, together with the Crimean Tatars and the indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus, represent the Muslim world of the Russian Federation. The pro-communist-minded leaders of Tatarstan supported by local nationalist movements were, in 1992, on the verge of a coup within the Federation. Having denied outright the signing of a treaty and joining the Federation, local authorities have thus supported those who stand for total defying the authorities of the democratic Russia.

Tatarstan's parliament has ruled (February 1992) that the Republic will not mark the day of memory of victims of Stalin's genocide. Communist MPs insisted-and succeeded-that November 7th be celebrated as a holiday in commemoration of the October revolution. So the day of grief and pain in Moscow will be the day of joy and jubilation in Kazan. In the course of less than 2 years, the parliament adopted a declaration on the Republic's sovereignty and a resolution on a referendum on national independence, declared supremacy of Tatar authorities over Russia's, changed the status of the Republic to a full-fledged Union republic and then resolved that the country be henceforth known as the Republic of Tatarstan.

Will Tatarstan secede from the Russian Federation? There are hundreds of articles on this topic in the Russian press. The Moscow media attached prime importance to the rebellious Tatarstan and Chechnya in 1990, unanimously and unconditionally condemning them. The Constitutional Court of Russia ruled that changes in the Constitution of Tatarstan and the resolution on referendum were inconsistent with the Principal Law of Russia. True, the Tatar parliament had adopted and promulgated on March 6, 1992 (before the referendum on national independence) a statement which clearly said that the fact of acquiring by Tatarstan the status of an independent state did not change the common ecologic and geopolitical space it shared with the Russian Federation. Once voted for independence at this referendum, Tatarstan henceforth intends to establish horizontal ties with Moscow and other republics, delegating, at the same time, some of its authority to the relevant bodies of the Russian Federation.

It should be expected that the most refractory republics will get some special status (within the Russian Federation) of a federal unit with limited rights and without the right to secede from the Federation. Tatars are trying to gain independence *d e j u r e* not to secede from Russia, but to improve the position of the nation it was in Kazan that Yeltsin said his famous «Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow» in August 1991 after the victory over the putsch. And on the anniversary of the declaration of independence-a national holiday and a non-working day celebrated on August 30-the President of Russia sent leaders of Tatarstan his congratulations. So Moscow and the constituent members

of the Russian Federation have practically achieved division of authority, the stumbling block being taxes and the legal forms of property ownership. The Leninist and Stalinist approach to peoples and nations as first-rate and second-rate could not have lasted for ever.

The Tatars have adopted two state languages-Tatar and Russian. But so far all the administration is conducted in Russian. Radio and television are starting to broadcast in Tatar. Only 7% of children attend schools where the instruction language is Tatar. As far as its production potential is concerned Tatarstan was not inferior to the three former Baltic republics put together. But in 1991, 80% of all enterprises in Tatarstan belonged to the Union ministries, 18%-to the Russia's ministries and the remaining few-to the Kazan authorities during the last year of the USSR existence, the central authorities, in an attempt to ease the social tension, graciously permitted the Republic to sell abroad 1 million of Tatar oil out of the 32 million tonnes the Republic had produced that year.

Tatarstan has produced 2.5 billion tonnes of oil, but to refuel a car was always a problem, all the oil went gratuitously, to oil refineries outside the Republic-to Ryazan and Nizhny Novgorod. The Republic's south-east oil producing area has become a zone of ecologic disaster Moscow wouldn't be bothered to take care of the land and the people there. Even in the oil-producing areas of Tatarstan, gas has only been piped to some 12-15% of users. So in villages built right over oil and gas deposits, people burn firewood in their stoves to keep houses warm.

In what goes for defence industry, the products of any plant is virtually unique. Among the reasons why Kazan rose in revolt in the 1990s, is that all defence plants, even aircraft-making works lost planned orders from Moscow and faced the threat of unemployment. Moscow was attacking the problems of conversion, new oil production and shoe-making industry technologies. The thing is that the largest shoe factory, turning out some 12 million pair of shoes, had no right to make new lasts of their own design and start new models of footwear. The themes of scientific research, topics of books, the number of researchers or post graduate students were determined in Moscow too. Master's and doctoral theses could be presented and defended only in Russian.

In 1991, the Soviet quasimonopoly of heavy-duty truck building-the «KamAZ» works (80% of all loads is transported by «KamAZ» trucks-honoured Tatarstan, the Republic on whose soil it stands, only 13% of its shares and only 2.3% of the number of trucks that roll off its conveyor lines these trucks rate as the hardest and most reliable currency in Russia and in the CIS, which enables the factory management to create the best working conditions for the blue- and white-collar workers employed there, speculating with its trucks on various stock exchanges and auctions, the factory makes fantastic profits and will not pay anything to Tatarstan, to which it belongs territorially. .

The same situation is available at the Kazan aircraft-making amalgamation building sophisticated and powerful «Backfires».The prime

minister of Tatarstan Muhammad Sabirov told the press in 1992 that he had repeatedly asked Moscow to reorient the factory building the up-to-date passenger airliner TU-204.

When Russian economists heard the rustle of the cns \$24 billion of Western credits, Sabirov suggested that the Tatar share in this credit be used to build the first oil refinery in Tatarstan to utilize 96% of the crude it processes (the existing facilities in Ufa, Ulyanovsk and elsewhere in the Russian Federation are about to breathe their last and their utterly worn out equipment allows half the oil escape as waste during processing).

Sabirov also has another headache- he has inherited from the former USSR a slow moving project of an automobile works near the ancient town of Yelabuga, very close to «KamAZ.1 Neither Moscow, nor Kazan has the money to finish up the construction which has already cost hundreds of millions of roubles (then one US dollar cost 3-5 roubles at the black market, not 400 as it cost in 1992).

Assistance on the part of the International Monetary Fund would allow to start a conveyor line by 1996 and manufacture about 150 thousand motor vehicles annually, and a little later to get into operation another conveyor. It would meet the demand for passenger cars in Tatarstan and in Russia, and also in all the countries members of the CIS wishing to invest money into the project.

This new automobile plant would then place its orders with local defence industry enterprises and thus preserve a lot of jobs there, because conversion has driven them to a standstill. The giant at Yelabuga would help to ease social tension in Tatarstan and take the republic s economy out of the cnsis. One does not have to be a prophet to answer the question whether Moscow is going to help Kazan to solve the problem Affirmative, if the Tatars, assisted by the West, find credits and do everything themselves.

Nationalisation and privatization, of all industries in the republic are imminent. But then, who will buy factories and plants? Mafia from the shadow economy of former parry bosses who have been stealing and stashing away huge sums of the people s money? But when we speak about smaller objects of privatization., there appear several possibilities. Tatars are pretty good at commerce. Even in Moscow, which hosts 200,000 Tatars, we can safely state that they control an extremely large sphere of trade.

The name of Sergei Shashunn, 39, is well known in Kazan. His association «Tan' («dawn» in Tatar) comprises over 200 small and medium civil construction enterprises, factories, cooperatives and services. They had started by building vegetable store-houses all over Tatarstan which brought prices for vegetables down twice as compared to the average level in Russia Now they are building hotels, garages for servicing cars, health resorts.

Shashunn personally flies by his private plane together with his lawyer and his bookkeeper all over Russia and strikes deals personally

without the mediation of government ministries and stock exchanges he pays government taxes. Besides he collects logs of wood abandoned on the river banks in middle Russia, loads them on his private barges and ships them down to Astrakhan where he barter them for tomatoes and water melons to be shipped back to Kazan. In addition, he has built big freezing plants and a factory for grinding fish meal as cattle fodder in Kamchatka (sic!) and has thus solved this problem in Tatarstan. Shashurin pays taxes, his workmen do a good and honest job, but what do separate state-owned enterprises which are not «hinged» on the private sector have to do?

The confectionary «Zarya» in Kazan was to be bought out for 13 million roubles (in terms of 1991 prices). Over the past 15 years the value of the factory's property rose by 7 million roubles, out of which the budget allocations made only one seventh and the rest of the sum was earned by the employees. Besides in the course of these 15 years the factory paid 53 million roubles of its income back to the state budget, which also got from the factory another 85 million roubles as sales tax. The production collective of the factory have recouped with their work all the expenditures of the state. But even when the factory becomes a fully private enterprise it will scarcely get good footing for the burden of taxation is too heavy. During a randomly taken day in December 1991 a working team of confectioners turned out 447 kg of their sweet produce worth 6,745 roubles. Out of this sum the workshop got 218 roubles as wages and the sales organizations-337 roubles as a trade discount. And the budget grabbed 2,260 roubles as tax.

The post-communist Russia has made concessions to its former autonomies and particularly to Tatarstan. Moscow charged to support the defence industry, manufacture of photographic film, drugs, medical facilities and equipment, compressors, automobiles, etc. in hard currency.

The oil reserves available will last for some 30-35 years if annual production does not exceed 25 million tonnes. It is planned to involve into the Republic's economy the natural bitumens with reserves estimated at 12 billion tonnes. The Republic is practically self-sufficient in staple foods.

The sober-minded politicians in Tatarstan realize that isolation from Russia can only rum the local population. But chaos and production slump in Russia will have exactly the same effect on Tatarstan. The circumvent Tatars can very well see that neither extreme nationalists, nor communists are in a position to guarantee their well-being. The actual truth is not with those who are screaming their heads off about the necessity to reinstate Tatar statehood. Yes, indeed, from 1448 to 1558 there was the Khanate of Kazan. Over that period, it went to war against Russia 13 times which was not the case after 1558.

Moscow will prove its flexibility and prudence if it treats other republics of the Russian Federation as equal partners and acts by their

consent. Otherwise multinational superpower which is Russia will cease to exist In March 1992 Bashkortostan and Tatarstan officially informed Russia via their MPs about the draft agreement on setting up a Volga-Ural confederatuon-a presidential republic with a legislature of its own and with Ufa as its capital city also comprising Komi, Udmurtia and Chuvashia.

Historically, the Volga has always been the axis of the most active economic area in Russia, and will, quite probably, remain the greatest Russian river. There are a lot of universities in the cities located along this river, one of the oldest and the best being in Kazan The high scientific potential and skilled labour force available in the Tatar capital, enabled the ICL to open from the USA there (in 1992) assembly conveyor lines to build personal computers. The conversion movement has resulted in the opening of eleven Russian-American international station for radio and telephone communications via satellites, each of these stations operating 120 international channels.

In September 1992 an automatic system of transmitting computer information through television channels was put into operation in Tatarstan. The Kazan Amalgamation of Computing Technology and Informatics has built up this system for 1,400 users-the city and district authorities, newspaper offices, special services, state and private enterprises, each user has a personal code which permits exchange of confidential information between two or more users. Full implementation of the project calls for additional \$6 million. The President of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaymiev succeeded in attracting Kazakhstan's attention to the innovation and leaders of the latter have offered a communication satellite of their own which will permit transmission of information (from Warsaw to Irkutsk).

Russia and Tatarstan have been and will stay together as equal partners within the Russian Federation. However, Tatarstan will cease to be something like a Russian province. The policy-makers in Moscow and Kazan will have to divide their authorities, and the Russian leaders will have to concede to it, bearing in mind that prosperity of Tatarstan will profit the Russian Federation, too. Otherwise, Tatarstan will gam freedom by its own means but this freedom will not only be economic but also political and will not be won at the negotiations table but in an armed fight.

TATARSTAN: A New Switzerland? It may not be one yet, but, at any rate, the Tartars will no longer be an appendage to the Russian military-industrial complex or a bottomless source of raw materials Therefore, they are bound to live better Imagine Tatarstan a neutral and happy country, like Switzerland. Why not?

In 1992, the Tartar Public Centre was the most influential political organization in that republic. The centre formed a political bloc with the party of national revival, Ittifak, the Republican and Islamic democratic parties, the Sovereignty political centre and the league of the Tartar youth, Azatlyk. By concerted action, these political forces are aiming to create a politically and economically independent Tartarstan. This

alliance is also supported by the largest Tatar parliamentary faction named Tatarstan.

Another significant parliamentary faction, Soglasie (Concordance) represents ethnic Russians living in that republic. Generally speaking the two factions are strong enough to neutralize each other in the parliament, but the Tatar legislature nonetheless passed a declaration on sovereignty unanimously, (only one person abstained).

Semi-official legislative and executive structures in Tartarstan have been assuming higher profile recently. In February 1992, the All-Tatar kurultai established a parallel national parliament-milli majlis composed of 75 members and headed by Talgat Abdullin, who is the leader of the parliamentary Tatarstan faction-and the national Tartar government, milli nazanyat.

The first shadow prime-minister of Tatarstan, Ilghiz Bareyev, who is also the manager of a tobacco factory in Kazan, once refused to allow procurator Khassan Gilmetdinov to inspect his factory, saying, «The law enforcement agencies of my republic have not yet been placed under Tatarstan's jurisdiction, and I don't want procurators of a neighbouring country to boss around here». Bareyev suggested that Gilmetdinov obtain a permission to inspect the factory in the majlis first. The procurator retaliated by sending the case to court. On October 21, 1992 the entire personnel of the factory lined up before the court's building with posters «Trial of Bash Nazir-Shame for Tatarstan» and «Russian Courts to Russia!». Authorities had to keep three trucks with spetsnaz troops nearby. At the trial itself, the vice-chairman of milli majlis, Zaki Zainullin, warned procurator Gilmetdinov, «You'll come to a bad end, pal». Later, he hissed to judge Nikolai Apollonov in the lobby, «When we come to power, judges will be sweeping streets». The ruling of the court-a fine of 500 roubles (slightly more than one dollar)-was accompanied by hilarious calls, the *Commersant* weekly reported.

Other alternative authorities popped up in Tartarstan's provinces as well. A document drafted by milli majlis reads that alternative structures will come to power if the legislature declines to follow the line of state sovereignty.

Tartar leaders managed to withstand this opposition for the past year, and is still doing well. Consumer prices were set free, but the government still subsidises the production of staple commodities. Tartarstan has obtained a permission from Moscow to sell five million tonnes of oil on the world market, which helped this autonomy to form its own budget and pay four billion roubles to central authorities in Moscow. These efforts bolstered the social footing of the populace-the cost of living in Tartarstan is one of the lowest in the country, and in Kazan it is the lowest among Russia's major urban centres. Thus the President of Tartarstan, Mentimer Shamiyev, a former party boss, has become quite popular in his republic.

In fact, he is seriously nettled by the oppositional milli majlis. In October 1992, this shadow parliament called for early presidential and

parliamentary elections. Representatives of the milli majlis came to Moscow as part of the official Tartar delegation. Muscovites were really upset by this incident and said it was the same as if Zhirinovskiy was sitting in the Kremlin as part of the official Russian delegation. However these two people can't be bracketed. According to Mr. Shaimiyev, milli majlis has passed several resolutions concerning the appointment of the chief judge and procurator of the Tatar nation, on its own armed units and on the hat of conscription. Curiously enough, milli majlis was not officially registered as a mass organization in Tatarstan in 1992.

The Tatar emblem with a winged snow leopard has replaced the old hammer-and-sickle. Soviet emblem on the facade of the Tatar presidential residence in the Kazan Kremlin on October 7, 1992. On the same day, the Tatar parliament declared the republic a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

In 1992, Tatarstan exchanged trade missions with Lithuania. Lithuanians obviously like Tatar oil, while Tatars would like to get access to Lithuania's sea-going fleet. In 1992, Russia failed to supply 2.4 million tonnes of oil to Lithuania. In its turn, Kazan wants to use the Majekias oil refinery standing idle in Lithuania and try to sell its oil for hard currency. Lithuania has become a gate to Europe for Tatarstan. When the speaker of the Lithuanian parliament, Vyatautas Landsbergis, received Tatar Vice-President Vassily Likhachev in September 1992, he was seemingly pleased to recall the battle of Grunwald, where Tatars and Lithuanians pooled their troops against a common enemy, in the context of the Tatar diaspora in Lithuania.

Mr. Likhachev also paid an official visit to Bishkek, to President Askar A.k.a.yev. Indicatively, Kyrgyzstan was among the first ex-Soviet republics to have recognized Tatarstan's sovereignty as early as in December 1991. The Tatar diaspora played its positive role in Bishkek, like in Vilnius, by consolidating its links to Kazan during a recent World Taar Congress there. Mapping out a route to Asia was bolstered by a series of economic agreements and a declaration on the principles of cooperation. Tatarstan is now aiming at expanding contacts with Estonia.

An expert in international law and the former chief of the Constitution Committee, Vice-President Vassily Likhachev, said in an interview with the *Rossia* newspaper (August 19, 1992) that «the example of Tartarstan shows that each should be the master of his own home.» Mr. Likhachev further explained, «National consciousness is steadily growing in former autonomies. This process is only logical, but economic sovereignty will obviously play a key role in relations between states. The problem of economic sovereignty is pulling autonomies away from the centre and also compels them to seek rapprochement between each other. It's a principle of regionalism. Perhaps, a powerful group of sovereign states composed of Tartarstan, Bashkortostan, Udmurtia, Chuvashia, Mordovia and Mari El, will emerge in the near. These countries will in no

way oppose the Russian leadership. It is only a matter of structure which may come into existence in the near future. If the principle of regionalism materializes, Russia will become a genuine federation.».

Kazan's main street has been named after the legendary chief of the Kazan khanate, Suubike. The street was known as Lenin Street for the past decades, and Voskresenskaya Street before that. Authorities have to think about new textbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries and computer software. They even have to think carefully about written language. Not long ago, Tatars used Arabic alphabet, then the Latin one, and switched over to Cyrillic writing in the 1940s.

One thousand schools teaching in Tatar (the total number of school amounts to 2,370), and 20 Tatar grammar schools opened in 1992. Since both Tatar and Russian were declared state languages, the knowledge of Tatar has become mandatory in 1992. Schoolchildren in Russian schools have at least one lesson of the Tatar language a day. Everyone can study Tatar now. Every week, local television broadcasts Tatar lessons, explaining grammar and the Arabic alphabet.

Thirty-two territories of the former Soviet Union receive over 200,000 copies of Tatar textbooks a year. This campaign is only gathering momentum, mind you. In the meanwhile, 110,000 Tatars in the neighbouring Udmurtia has no opportunity to learn their mother tongue.

Children in 86 schools in Tatarstan are studying in the Chuvash language, 32 schools teach in Udmurt, 15 in Man and two schools in the Mordovian language. These languages are taught in several Russian schools as well.

Tatars Know Their Problems Better. The recalcitrant Kazan may well become a powerful centre in the area stretching from the Volga and the Urals. This centre may unite both Moslem areas and traditionally Russian communities living in the Volga region and the Urals. These communities will aspire to equal partnership and independence irrespective of their living standards. The past decades under the rule of Moscow from Lenin to Gorbachev are commonly referred to in this region as the genocide of the provinces.

The Russian government desperately tried to thwart the referendum on independence in Tatarstan in March 1992. The Russian Constitutional Court denounced the referendum as a totally illegitimate affair. Any official meeting between Russian and Tatar authorities promptly triggers off a critical salvo at Tatarstan in the Russian media. Russian journalists from the official press did their best to smear and deride any draft treaty between Russia and Tatarstan proposed by the Tatars or the Tatar Constitution, while both parties were painstakingly hammering out versions of such treaty throughout 1992.

The year 1992 has become one long survival course for Kazan fledgling politicians. Initially, they were soliciting 1.5 billion roubles in credits from Moscow to complete the Yelabuga autoworks (Yelaz). Having Passed a decision to transform Yelaz into a joint-stock company,

Tatarstan offered 49 percent of its stocks to Russia and other CIS states. The Gaidar government brushed off these offers with vague promises. In October 1992, the Tatar cabinet of ministers established an international consortium on Yelaz and invited commercial and banking institutions from the CIS and foreign countries to join in. The first foreign firms to respond were the US Pane Webber and German Arthur D Little, followed by companies from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Belarus. The giant Russian VAZ autoworks also joined the project by signing an agreement to build a line in Yelabuga in 1995 to assemble Lada-1121 there.

In 1992 the Russian government nearly strangled Tatar defence factories by blocking the sales of their already manufactured products. Central authorities do not allow defence products to be marketed abroad and refuses to shell out the 12 billion roubles promised for conversion projects at these factories.

Late in 1992 it turned out that the said five million tonnes of Tatar oil marked for export by Moscow's decision will hardly relieve the financial crunch of Tatarstan. Russian customs authorities levied heavy duties both on that oil and commodities to be purchased in exchange amounting to 50 percent of the total expected returns.

It was agreed that Russia and Tatarstan would share the oil left in that republic equally Tatar authorities insisted, however, that they should take control of all oil extracted there in 1993. This move is stern but logical. In 1992 Tatarstan sent all oil stipulated in the agreement to Russia, but received only half of the oil extracting equipment due in exchange. No penalties or fines for non-delivery were envisaged, naturally.

So, Tatarstan proposes that Russia purchases oil and energy in future on contracts, stipulating payment procedures, terms, penalties, etc. The Tatar prime-minister, M. Sabirov, made a sensational public statement in August 1992. It turned out that a vast deposit of quality coal had been discovered in Tatarstan. More recently, it also turned out that Tatarstan has copper deposits near the Volga, Kama and Vyatka rivers. New oil fields were discovered near Buinsk.

Even without these new mineral deposits, Tatarstan outstrips Armenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenia and Estonia in terms of its GNP. Tatarstan rejected Western humanitarian aid, though the republic still can't administer 75 percent of the taxes it collects. The same goes for its natural resources and the mammoth KAMAZ autoworks, which employs 150,000 people. Though the sales of KAMAZ heavy-duty trucks all over the world yield billions in profits, the works are a pathetic view of misery and devastation.

Tatarstan has 90 research institutes, but only as late as in 1992 a local enthusiast researcher, R. Saifutdinov, compiled a map of over 2,000 radiologically hazardous areas in the city of Mendeleyev-the oldest centre of the Tatar chemical industry In the 1920s, the fledgling Soviet government tried to launch the secret production of radium here. The proj-

ect aborted, and the contaminated production premises were readjusted for brick production. Radioactive materials thus spread all over the territory.

The present-day Tatar leaders are less inclined to experiment on the nation, than their opposite numbers in the Russian government. Authorities in Kazan proved to be far more generous and humane. Denationalisation in Tatarstan followed the Russian pattern. Privatisation vouchers with a face value of 10,000 roubles were issued in Tatarstan like in Russia. However, Tatar nationals domiciled in that republic are also entitled to inscribed privatization deposits. Funds at these deposits will be paid out in two instalments of 40,000-60,000 and 40 000-50,000 roubles each.

No tangible reforms will be possible without private land and production facilities. Tatarstan will probably manage to accomplish this task faster than Russia itself. It is impossible to introduce the market economy and rule an enormous country from Moscow only. It is not Tatarstan that wages war against the imperial Russia, but the principles of democracy. Russians or Tatars will eventually take control of things in their territories. Human rights are clearly not enough, they must be supplemented by a system of rights of nations and multiethnic territories. The pivotal principle to observe here is that the a strong and wealthy state with poor and miserable people is immoral. Well, in fact, tartar nationalists verbalise this idea in a different manner.

Tatar children study the Koran in Moslem schools and mosques. Workers in the street communicate in Tatar. They will readily name you many great Russians of the Tatar extraction, including czar Boris Godunov and the poet of the Russian soul, Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

The political leader of the Ittifak independent Moslem party, poet Fauzia Bairamova, wrote in 1992 «. A real Tartar is a Moslem who faithfully believes in the resurrection of the Kazan khanate and fights for it as is becoming to a descendant of Chenghiz Khan ». Here is a sample of frequent statements of Flora Zamulhna, Ittifak's second in command: «I would very much like to say that Russia gave more to the Tartar civilization than prostitution and alcohol abuse, but I can't say this».

In the late 1992, a congress of Moslem Tartars was held in Kazan. The congress admitted that the Moslem board of the European part of the CIS and Siberia has virtually fallen apart. The recent scandal with mufti Tatjutdinov was also discussed. The congress established an independent league of Moslem researchers, also known as the ulem council. From now on, regional Moslem boards delegate some of their terms of reference to the Supreme Coordination Centre. This centre incorporates Moslem boards of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabmsk, Kurgan, Tyumen, Saratov, Volgograd, Penza, Perm and Kirov Regions, Udmurtia, Baltics and Belarus, the Crimea, the Moscow religious association Bait Allah and the

Kalyametdm religious society of Buguruslan city in Orenburg Region. The mufti of Tatarstan, Gabdul Khan Galiullin, was elected chairman of the Supreme Coordination centre.

TUVA. Without Russians

In terms of territory, this republic amounts to Denmark, Holland Belgium and Switzerland taken together. Mountain ranges and alpine meadows, boundless steppes and taiga, mountain streams and lakes—this is the Uryankhai territory, which came under the Russian protectorate in 1914.

The indigenous people of the Tuva Republic, which borders on Mongolia, still remember their short-lived independence in 1921-1944. Remaining under the Soviet protectorate, Tuva lost its feudal rulers in the sweeping storm of reprisals in the 1930s and many of its strongest men in World War II. Another scourge of God came in the 1950s. In an attempt to destroy traditional agricultural techniques in Tuva—nomadic livestock breeding and farming—Soviet government imposed collective farms on this bucolic republic. Soviets also established 60 boarding schools for 500 children each there, cranking out youngsters totally unfit both for rural and urban life.

Nomadic Arats lost their young generation that forgot its mother tongue in Russian schools. They lost their land, contaminated by the waste of the Ulug-Hem coal mines and factories emitting fumes in the cities of Khovu Aksy and Ak-Dovurakha. The Kremlin was persistently developing the fuel and energy sector, nothing wavering destroying rich pastures with the construction of the Sayany water reservoir essential for a new hydropower plant.

The capital city of Tuva, Kyzyl, is also the geographic centre of Asia. Two hundred thousand Tuvinians believe that this fact is an important political sign, pointing out the real significance of their republic for the other 100,000 residents of Tuva. Prodded from feudalism to socialism, Tuvinians never forgave insult and injury incurred by Russians, and ethnic violence sparked off in the republic in 1991. Thousands of Russian specialists fled Tuva with their families and settled in the bordering areas of Krasnoyarsk Territory. As a result, almost all large industrial factories immediately ground to a halt in Tuva, unemployment soared, crime rates rose sharply, and, economically, the republic found itself floating in a sea of red ink.

The President of the Republic of Tuva, was elected in March 1992. The new name of the republic came after the USSR collapsed in December 1991. Shortly before, in October 1990, Tuva earned the name of the Tuvinian Soviet Socialist Republic, having long struggled for the elevation of its status of an autonomous republic within Russia.



The word Tuvians itself emerged in the 20th century only, as this ethnic group is descendants of Turkik, Mongolian, Samoyed and Ket tribes. Turkik roots of the Tuvians proved to be most powerful ethnically and linguistically, however. Tuvians also have much in common with Kha.k.a.s and Altaic tribes. Some Tuvian deer breeders resettled in Irkutsk region and became known as Tofalars. From 1755 till 1911 Tuva was subjugated by the Chinese Qing-Manchu dynasty. Its liberation, together with that of Mongolia, came after the Chinese Revolution. Mongolia chose independence, while Tuva opted for the Russian protectorate.

The ancient Tuva stood at crossroads of various civilizations, each leaving its imprint on that land, remaining either as cave writings or Brahmin-Indian syllabary of the 8th-7th centuries B.C. Modern Tuvians are still well-versed in Buddhism, Tibet medicine, healing herbs and potions (from pine nuts to mummia) and yak breeding. However, all Buddhist monasteries and temples were destroyed in Tuva even before World War II.

When 10,000 Russian engineers, teachers and doctors, including vets, left Tuva for good in 1991 after sharp ethnic clashes, the epidemics of brucellosis and plague broke loose. Brucellosis morbidity rates have exceeded those of Russia by 90 times. One thousand and twenty-five yaks out of the total 10,400 died of plague, as there is no one left to immunize the animals. There have been no plague epidemics in Russia since the 1920s in winter 1991-1992 military units came from Moscow on helicopters to bury the dead bodies of yaks on special burial sites

Upon demands of Ulan Bator authorities, burial teams went to Mongolian pastures bordering on Tuva to take away dead yaks.

Youth crime rates in 1992 hit a dramatic mark in Tuva. Soaring crime is explained as a reaction to plummeting living standards and quickly fading prospects for any improvement. Local youths set on Russians residents, eighty thousand Russians living in Tuva are commonly assaulted, and can't feel safe. Mugging, robberies and arsons are often pictured as a «retribution for Stalinism», and persecutions of Russians thus become «historically justified». So, Russians are leaving while Tuvinians are sliding back from socialism to the Stone Age.

The Kyzyl homeless society and former prisoners society are among the most influential political associations in Tuva. Thousands of families in Tuva's capital city have to dwell in cabins and yurtas. Over thirty percent of Tuva's residents have a criminal record.

Birth rates in this republic are quite high. Aggravated by economic crisis and high unemployment rates, this factor has caused the emergence of a large antisocial stratum-alcohol and drug abusers.

Subsidies from Moscow are dwindling, and Tuva's leaders are trying to establish closer links with Krasnoyarsk or Novosibirsk, having lost faith in Moscow. Moscow does no longer have its former latitude to administer economic and natural resources of Russian autonomies and provinces, which have de facto gained full independence. Perhaps independence will make it easier for Tuva to overcome its current crunch. Siberia may help, and Tuva has already signed a treaty with this territory, joining a regional economic alliance. Mongolia, together with business communities in mainland China Japan and Korea, may help their kith and kin in Tuva as well. In September 1992 the Tuvinian parliament approved a new national flag and emblem of Tuva. The chief Buddhist of the world, Dalai Lama XIV, came to Tuva from Tibet on a brief visit for the occasion to sanctify the flag and the emblem in Kyzyl's main square filled by a jubilant crowd.

The new emblem reproduces the code of arms of the independent Tuva, which existed for a brief period before World War II.

UDMURTIA. Chemical Weapons Arsenal

The small arms factory founded in Izhevsk in 1807, turned out the first batches of flint guns and cutlasses. By the time of the war against Napoleon the factory's gunsmiths and armourers were highly respected by the Russian army.

Since the middle of the 20th century the factory has been making the world famous Kalashnikov submachine gun, various types of rockets communication facilities and equipment and accessories for atomic weapons. 85% of the total industrial output of Udmurtia was produced by such giants of the USSR military-industrial complex as the Ministry

of Defence Industry, Ministry of General Machine Building, Ministry of Atomic Power Engineering, Ministry of Radio Engineering. Yet even such omnipotent patrons did not much contribute to the social upgrading of the Republic. In 1990, actually before reforms and cataclysms started the earnings of one-third of the Republic's population did not reach the subsistence minimum.

The above-mentioned Union ministries have turned the territory of the Republic into a huge keg of gunpowder. Eighteen oil and gas pipelines 1.400 mm in diameter under the pressure of 70 atm criss-cross the territory of Udmurtia. In the vicinity of Izhevsk alone there are over a score of localities brimming with chemically hazardous compounds. And a small town of Kambarka on the banks of the Kama is known worldwide as a chief arsenal of chemical weapons. It holds practically the world's stock of lewisite-7 thousand tonnes-which is sufficient for poisoning 50 thousand (sic!) times the entire population of our planet. Presidents Gorbachev and Bush have signed an agreement on destruction of stock-piles of lethal chemical agents. Judging by the progress in this direction Russia will be in position to afford this extremely expensive operation only after she has built the necessary facilities in 1998. And that, too, provided a relevant place is found for burying these agents, since such projects bring about negative reaction of the local people. Processing of 1 tonne of lewisite produces 6-7 tonnes of arsenic containing waste. Experts evaluate potential proceeds from selling arsenic at the world market at \$7-8 billion.

Slow Death. Until 1991 Udmurtia was closed to foreign visitors. In 1992 this republic became the second place on the territory of the former USSR after Moscow accommodating a compact population of the US nationals. It is already the fourth year that American experts have been vigilantly checking up progress in the implementation of the agreement on medium and close range missiles: they do their work day and night at the Votkinsk plant.

Kambarka and Pibanshur are two new addresses given by the USA in 1992 for organization of inspection on the territory of Udmurtia. Lewisite that has been stored at Kambarka for over 40 years will now be taken out of there. And Pibanshur in the Balezinski district is a place where a great deal of strategic weapons has been stockpiled; according to the latest international agreements these weapons are now to be eliminated.

An article in Moscow News emphasised that although the USSR swore not to use chemical weapons ever, they were used to disperse a Peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi on April 9, 1989. At the time, our military refused point blank to reveal the type of the chemical agent used or to disclose the antidote. The military contemplated a chemical attack on the Russian White House in August 1991, too. The article quoted General A.Kuntsevich, an academician, as saying at a regular round of the Geneva talks that «we completely stopped production of chemical agents in 1987» (see *Izvestia*, August 27, 1992). But that very same Kuntsevich, deputy commander of the chemical troops of the USSR, and

V. Petrunin, director of the All-Union State Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Technology were awarded the Lenin Prize and honorary diplomas by President Gorbachev himself for the production of the first industrial batch of Soviet binary weapons in the spring of 1991. The new combat agent surpassed the notorious VX by its performances, that is the effects of the new weapon are practically incurable. By that time Gorbachev had signed the known chemical weapons agreement with George Bush and received a Nobel Peace Prize.

On January 29, 1992, President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation declared that «Russia will adhere to the agreement on the non-production and destruction of chemical weapons signed with the USA in 1990. Behind the President's back, the new combat agent was tested on a chemical proving ground on the Ustyurt plateau, outside the city of Nukus located in a different state. It does not stand to reason that the President of Uzbekistan knew nothing about the testing earned out in the spring of 1992 under personal supervision of General S. Petrov, commander of the chemical troops.

Chemical weapons problems were negotiated in Geneva, for twenty years and ended only after the collapse of the USSR in the autumn of 1992, when the draft convention banning the development, production stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and providing for their destruction was submitted to the 47th UN General Assembly for signing. Russia will now have to destroy 40,000 tonnes of its lethal munitions in stock. The USA earmarked US\$400m at the first stage of the programme to help our country liquidate all types of mass destruction weapons. There is a depot in the village of Gorny, Saratov Region, where tone agents have been stored since the first world war. One of the factories which formerly produced chemical weapons will provide premises for the destruction of 3.5 million projectiles . Wow!

But who can guarantee that the US money will not be used by our scientists to produce a new generation of more sophisticated chemical weapons? Two major authorities on the subject, Vil Mirzayanov and Lev Fedorov, both with a PhD in chemistry (and both went down in history already), accused the military brass of premeditated and systematic concealment of the truth about chemical weapons in Russia (Moscow News, September 20, 1992).

The USSR and its successor, the Russian Federation, did not stop the development and production of state-of-the-art chemical weapons for a single day, Mirzayanov and Fedorov maintained. Their arguments were so convincing that the cornered top brass used the services for the state security agency to put the two authors of the Moscow News article behind the bars and institute legal proceedings against them.

Mirzayanov and Fedorov, one of whom was on the payroll of the Research Institute of Organic Chemistry as of the date when the article appeared, wrote that the institute located almost in the centre of Moscow on Shosse Entusiastov (Enthusiasts Road), lacked filters on air

shafts, therefore, all evaporating war gasses poison Moscow's air. The subterranean waters and all soil on the vast property of the institute are poisoned, too and diggers conducting excavation works on the premises of the institute are required to wear gas masks. The institute personnel still cannot fully neutralise modern phosphorous war gasses, sarin, soman, VX or the new binary agent.

If even in Moscow, at the top government level (Kuntsevich is now one of Yeltsin's advisers), generals and academics of the chemical branch of the military-industrial complex are so unscrupulous, one can hardly expect that the situation will be anything better in the peripheral city of Kambark, Udmurtia. There are 13,000 residents, 5,000 houses, and three factories there, there are no sewers, gas or running water. But there are now Americans here, and the growing public awareness, too. Yet Mirzayanov and Fedorov have every reason to believe that the generals of the military-industrial complex will outsmart the Americans again, and will spend the US\$25m provided by the USA to produce a new batch of even more deadly combat agents. Today, like ten years ago our superiority in the chemical weapons domain is indisputable.

Our entire chemical industry was busy fulfilling the orders of combat agents designers. There were classified departments working on chemical weapons programmes at the Moscow Institute of Phytopathology and the Institute of Chemical Plant Protectives, at the Ufa-based Institute of Herbicides, and the Moscow Institute of Applied Molecular Biology, and at the Institute of Toxicology of the Third Chief Directorate of the USSR Ministry of Health. Some time ago we sent our medics to help the victims of Agent Orange defoliant sprayed by the Americans over Vietnam jungles. But our compatriots in Central Asian republics still suffer from the effects of defoliants sprayed over the cotton fields prior to harvesting (there was not a single leaf left on cotton shrubs after they were treated with herbicides). Our Soviet people have been always kept in the dark as to this «mild form» of genocide. If we ever build a law-based state, the incumbent leaders and the retired generals from the chemical branch of our military-industrial complex will spend the rest of their lives in the dock, while the state will pay compensation to millions of victims and their children.

You cannot fool everyone for a long time. The powers-that-be fool themselves eventually. The Izhevsky Motor Works has for decades manufactured poor quality motorcycles. Compared to them World War Two motorcycles captured from the Nazis are an ideal of perfection. It has turned out recently that the main speciality of the motorcycle factory was production of electronic hardware for space programmes. With the end of the Cold War, the factory had to convert its operations to civilian production and significantly upgrade the quality of its motorcycles. It also had to build facilities producing components for the bikes in order to gain some degree of independence from its former suppliers. The factory is currently looking for buyers for its 350,000 motorcycles produced in 1992.

The output of Izhevsk-based defence factories was bought up by the army for a song. The producers did not receive a cent from export revenues. However, the Izhevsky Motor Works alone earned a staggering US600m for the state during the past ten years. Air defence systems manufactured in Udmurtia are the world's best. In 1992, Moscow abruptly stopped supplying materials and finance to defence factories in Udmurtia under the pretext of conversion schemes contemplated for the local producers. One air defence system goes for US 12m on the world market, while the defence ministry paid the producer a poultry Rbs4m in 1992.

In order to sell a Kalashnikov rifle or its replacement, a Nikonov sub-machine gun, the world's leader among similar weapons, one has to collect at least fifty signatures in Moscow, and even if you do get the requisite authorisations, the deal may never take place. Of course, arms trade is immoral, but still Udmurtia was the first republic to be deprived of arms exports revenues by the Russian government. With the consent of the Russian president, this republic was chosen as a testing ground for conversion schemes.

Had Moscow authorised the export of all weapons kept in stock at the Udmurtian factories in 1992, even one half of the resulting dollar earnings would have radically changed the quality of life in the small republic. On March 31, 1992, the President of the Russian Federation signed a decree in support of conversion programmes in the Republic of Udmurtia, which authorised Udmurtia to retain up to 70 per cent of hard currency proceeds from arms exports to pay for the import of modern technologies used in consumer goods manufacturing. But the presidential decree hangs fire. No one in Moscow is willing to give dollars to Udmurtians. At the very best, they may be authorised to directly sell abroad sports rifles and hunting shotguns, timber and 7 per cent of oil produced in Udmurtia. But Udmurtians used to produce SS-20 missiles, too.

They would like to renew the production of linen-their traditional export item. But they will hardly succeed as they lost the necessary skills over the years. During the past forty years, the yield of linen in Udmurtia has been only four times more than 300 kg per hectare, while the respective indicator in other countries is three to ten times higher.

Desperately trying to ward off the mounting unemployment which hit the virtually paralysed defence factories, the Udmurtian authorities appealed to the Russian government in August 1992 asking for a two-year tax exemption for private and foreign investment in the conversion programme. They have not received an answer yet.

All this happens at a time when Udmurtia has already certain achievements in and prospects for the development of the manufacturing of oil-producing and medical equipment. But whatever Udmurtia cannot get from the Moscow authorities, it will receive from the members of the Urals Regional Cooperation Association which has been active for more than a year now.

On June 16, 1992 V. Tubyllov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Udmurtia, and President M. Shaymiyev of Tatarstan signed an economic agreement providing for the opening of permanent missions in Izhevsk and Kazan. After all, there are 110,000 Tatars living in Udmurtia.

In Votkinsk, where the great Russian composer Tchaikovski was born in 1840, as well as in the rest of Udmurtia, the indigenous population knew its mother tongue. But only in 1991 (sic!) the Udmurt language was introduced as subject at schools. This language, spoken by people who used to live in thick forests, has over 20 different nominations for different types of forest 750 thousand Udmurts live mostly on the territory of their republic and in close neighbourhood. Half of them do not speak their mother tongue.

While the Mans are renowned for their folk dances, the Tatars-for their skills in dressing leather, the Bashkirs-for their wood carving, the Udmurts are famous for singing and weaving. By the turn of the century they were regarded as Christians, but actually they never stopped to worship their traditional pagan deities.

Udmurtia has a population over 1.6 million scattered on a territory of 42,000 sq.km. Half that land located between the rivers Kama and Vyatka is used for agricultural purposes and the remaining 45% is overgrown with forests. Six cities and sixteen towns manufacture, in addition to weapons and other military equipment, motor cars, diesel locomotives, machine-tools, paper-making equipment, they also smelt steel and roll it.

YAKUTIA-SAKHA. The Land of Gold and Diamonds

Sakha means Yakutia in the Yakut language. There are some 400,000 Yakuts in the world, some of them living in Kazakhstan and China. A total of 370,000 are living in Yakutia itself, amounting, however, only to 34 percent of that republic's population.

Yakuts are very close to Turkic people, ethnically. Formally, they are Orthodox Christians, but remain pagans deep at heart. The first and last names of Yakuts are perfectly Russian. There are no industrial workers or engineers among Yakuts.

The few industries in Yakutia are firmly pegged to the primary sector, staffed and controlled by Russians. Yakutia is the prime source of gold, diamonds, tin, mica, coal and fissionable materials. The attitude to Russians in Yakutia used to be warmer than now. Before, Russian teachers and doctors taught the vegetating Yakuts to read and write and them for horrendous trachoma and TB. Under the czar and, all these doctors and teachers were, for some reason, obscurely sent to their ancestral land in exile. Under Brezhnev and, these good wizards were replaced by cold-eyed researchers, nuclear charges to test. In 1975-1987, more than

a dozen nuclear charges were set off in Yakutia seriously contaminating this virginal land. Who knows about it in Russia or the rest of the world? Hardly anybody. Even the Yakut parliament doesn't have exhaustive data on the issue. Some time ago Yakuts ranked third among other Soviet peoples in terms of longevity, outstripped only by two Caucasian nations. One could easily stumble over an 80- or 90-year-old in any Yakut settlement. Today, the life span here has shrunk to 60-65 years in Central Yakutia while people in the north, closer to polluting industrial factories and contaminated areas, live to 45 at best.

Rural dwellers are living in downright penury. The cattle stock today is smaller than in the 1920s. There once existed the shaggy Yakut horse that grazed on moss, which it dug up from the snow. It is now extinct like the shaggy and chubby Yakut cow. Despite permafrost, Yakuts can even grow tomatoes in greenhouses during the short and warm summer, but the republic and its people have never come close to prosperity. The Kremlin used to mulct Yakuts of their wealth and rampant mismanagement finished the job.

Pauper With A Sack of Diamonds. Being a Russian autonomy until 1990, Yakutia was entitled to only four percent of its fixed assets (mainly in the services) and one percent of its financial resources. In 1991 Yakutia solicited some money for its natural resources, so far confined only to gold and diamonds, for the first time. In December 1991 Yeltsin allowed Yakutia to sell 10 percent of all extracted diamonds on its own and the Yakut president promptly signed a blanket contract with De Boers (South Africa), which buys up all Soviet (Russian) diamonds, for 1990-1995. It's worth knowing that four Yakut diamond mines yield 99.8 percent of all Russian diamonds, while De Boers controls 80 percent of the world diamond market. Thus Yakutia will be selling over 100 million dollars worth of raw diamonds to South Africans.

World diamond and gold prices dropped sharply in 1991, when the agonizing USSR dramatically increased its sales in a last-ditch attempt to undermine the Russian government. The free-for-all between Yeltsin and Gorbachev had one remarkable bout. As soon as the Russian parliament passed its Declaration of Russia's sovereignty, federal premier Nikolai Ryzhkov quickly cooked a deal with a De Boers branch to sell one billion dollars worth of Yakut diamonds a year for five years and 234 tonnes of gold. This hasty sell-off was apparently aimed at reducing Russia's share in the federal gold and diamond reserves.

Is gold and diamond extraction so profitable for Yakutia in the long run? All gold extracted in that republic was hardly enough to pay for foodstuffs shipped in during the short summer period by boat. There are no railways, linking Yakutia to the rest of Russia so far. As for the diamonds... Let's assume that Yakutia will be free to market all of them, not the ten percent as today. An intermediary will scoop ten percent of the returns. Cutters will demand at least a third of profits. Not much will be left.



Yakutia doesn't plan to secede from Russia for the time being, but over a half of Russian experts plan to leave Yakutia for good. It's not that Yakuts have grown hostile to ethnic Russians living here rather, the Kremlin have grown indifferent to their people and can't afford to pay hefty salaries to Russian workers slaving in the Far North mines and factories. With temperature differences reaching 100 degrees on the Celsius scale, people remained in this unfriendly land only for stable and rich supplies and a salary exceeding the Russian average by 200-300 percent. After five years of moiling in the North (think about northern nights that last for six months), a person could move to Central Russia and bask in the sun, buying a cosy flat, a summer cottage and a car.

In 1992 salaries in southern and northern regions were not much different, while formerly solid economic links sagged. Perhaps, Yakutia will sell the 56-carat diamond, proudly shown to Russian parliamentary speaker Khasbulatov in February 1992 at a diamond mine in Udachny, itself the other day. In exchange, it may get foodstuffs for a year, Yakutia's entire population spooning up caviar and happily munching on bananas.

Russia's northern areas are rapidly dispersing. Magadan and Kamchatka have failed to meet even basic gold extraction targets in 1991. To boot, Yakutia has the richest coal deposit in the world, Neryungri, which can be mined in an opencast manner. The Neryungri coal is unique in that it contains many rare elements.

Yakutia can also boast rich timber, fur and deer resources. The timber resources are estimated at over nine billion cubic metres, with 257

million hectares of forests registered in 1992. Forty-four cubic metres of mature timber may be produced annually, while the current production volume stands at five million only. On the other hand, fires destroyed 172 thousand hectares of forests in 1991—a figure 150 percent larger than fellings in that year. Apparently, these losses are explained by short funds on the fire fighting service.

It is heartening that no horrible concentration camps are left in Yakutia, Kolyma or Chukotka. The Stalinist Gulag has pulled out far to the West, to the Komi Republic beyond the Urals. The population of Yakutia is dwindling, but Yakuts won't move from their ancestral land. After the Communists left Yakutia, their former influence was once again picked up by the best and the brightest—shamans, priest-doctors who use the magic to cure the sick, actors, hypnotists and philosophers communicating with God and nature.

Business people are swarming in Yakutia these days mainly vegetable-growers from China and foreign experts, who promise to teach Yakuts waste-free technology in deer farming. Yakuts themselves don't know how to manufacture expensive chrome deer leather or turn deer waste into medicines.

Hundreds of thousands tonnes of scrap metal are piling up in Yakutia. After it is collected, Yakutia can afford to establish vast conservation areas. For instance, in Alaska, a third of all lands are in reserve and enjoy a special land use regime, while conservation areas in the Russian North constitute a measly 2-3 percent of its entire territory. Odd as it may seem, the deserted North has turned out demographically overloaded and ecologically vulnerable. Russia under Soviet government failed to produce a meaningful scheme of developing its northern areas.

Yakuts always grumbled that their autonomous republic was represented in the Soviet parliament, in the council of nationalities by only eleven seats, while a union republic enjoyed 33 seats. Even Yakut leaders said that Alaska with its modest population of 500,000 and the State of California with its 28 million people had an equal status in the United States and two seats each in the Senate.

The boundless Yakutia has a truly enormous economic potential. This republic also has a university and eleven research institutes but it has no meaningful rights whatsoever, and all money Yakutia earns still goes to federal coffers.

Russians are leaving, but the inflow of foreign businessmen and tourists obviously grows. Some people come for an exotic safari, others are yearning for a mammoth tusk or even a whole frame of this extinct mammal, still others heard a lot about versatile healing potions cooked here. A couple of decades ago, Yakutia was abundant in ecologically clean herbs, roots, berries, meat, poultry and fish, and used these natural riches skilfully. Northern people never heard of cancer or scurvy. With their traditional and constant diet, Yakuts had glistening white teeth till really old age. Their dental practices prescribed regular use of two kinds

of drinks—an infusion of herbs, roots and pine cambium, and the other a dairy drink with fish and poultry bones diluted in it. Jaundice was treated by applying a skinned pike to the liver area of a patient. Even today, a cook book of Yakut Tarbakhov, who lives in Namsky District, contains over 300 traditional recipes, some of them virtually unique. Mr. Tarbakhov recently published his book (10,000 copies). The most precious reserve of Yakutia is its nature. It is also important to keep in mind that small ethnic communities are much more attached to their land than large urban nations. Depriving Yakuts of their traditional lifestyles and sources of sustenance will be the greatest scourge for them. We already mentioned a series of nuclear tests conducted in Yakutia. The Yakut government is already paying out compensations to the victims of this nuclear genocide and resettlers, but a blanket medical and environmental screening is a way to go.

Only in 1992 Yakutia effectively insisted that empty rocket boosters be no longer dropped over its territory, while space rockets launched from Baikonur in Kazakhstan habitually discarded its empty tanks over Yakutia. However, the Vilyi River, the pride and glory of many Yakuts, will no longer be restored in its virginal state. Its pure water and amazing schools of fish have been ruined by the frenetic diamond fever. The fish has disappeared and water is no longer drinkable.

The shine of diamonds have long blinded bureaucrats in Moscow. Heavy inputs in the diamond extraction and the scope of the project required much cheap energy. Diamond miners operating in the upper stretches of the Vilyi recklessly pumped up to 60 million cubic metres of salty water in the river. They also built a large hydropower station on the river and never thought of cleaning the bed of the water reservoir of timber.

In 1992, a similar project may be laid out on the Kolyma River, which partly flows across Yakutia. One hydropower plant is already operating on this river and a string of others may follow. Fish catches have dwindled by half already, and fur animals are fleeing these lands. Naturally, indigenous people, including Evens, Evenks, Chukchis and Yukagirs, suffer the worst. The Yakut parliament has declared the republic a nuclear-free zone and banned the testing, use and storage of nuclear charges and waste on its territory, as well as the construction of nuclear power plants. So far, the fate of Yakutia proves that little is worse than being rich and vulnerable.

Rapprochement between Russia and the US gives the green light to a mind-boggling project of turning Yakutsk into a railway hub linking US, Russian and European cities. This project will require thousands of kilometres of railways from the Baikal-Amur Mainline to Chukotka and a tunnel under the Bering Strait (40 miles) for trains to run from Canada and Alaska to the Far East. An automobile route would also be useful. World's largest companies may soon fight for a stake in this project of the 21st century. At any rate, the idea was seriously discussed by Russia and American business communities as far back as 1904, when a Pan-American route was conceived.

Yakutia is a fabulously rich country. Prospecting efforts have delivered over one thousand natural deposits evaluated at circa ten trillion US dollars. Of course, Yakutia will spend something for current consumption, but a large-scale Vostok project, which envisages the supplies of the Yakut natural gas to South Korea and Japan, is already in the pipeline. An oil-extracting joint venture will soon be established with Austria. Canada is interested in gas processing cooperation.

Yakutia-Sakha received more economic freedom in March 1992, when Moscow allowed it to market 20 percent of diamonds on its own. Yakutia will also be entitled to 45 percent of all hard currency return from the sales of Yakut jewelry by Russians. The national bank of Yakutia has been established to handle the expected inflow of money. In a parallel move, Moscow established a development fund for the northern areas which gained access to ten percent of Russian diamond reserves. The draconian 28-percent VAT has been lifted for northern areas too. It was also decided that Russian federal authorities, buying up almost all Yakut gold, diamonds and non-ferrous metals at fixed prices, should guarantee stable supplies of foodstuffs, consumer items maternal and technical resources at fixed prices too. When that agreement was inked, journalists congratulated the President of Yakutia, Mikhail Nikolayev, with an achievement Chechenia or Tartarstan can only dream of.

Yakutia: One Year Without the CPSU. Yakuts and Chukchi have long been ridiculed in the Russian folklore for their simplicity and stolidness. By the end of 1992, it became ridiculous to laugh at Yakuts.

We always knew that this country ranked second in the world in terms of its gold and diamond production. With this powerful backing the rouble could become a strongest currency in the world. Alas, Communist thieves have gobbled up or squandered all national riches for the past 75 years.

The USSR launched spacecrafts to the Moon and Venus, but it failed to launch the production of quality cut diamonds. Politburo, the ruling party body, signed mammoth contracts to sell crude diamonds abroad. They surely took huge bribes for it. Only 15 percent of all exported diamonds were cut in Smolensk, Moscow and Barnaul, as well as in Ukraine (Kiev, Vinnitsa and Gomel).

However, Russian authorities panicked when they learned about a Yakut-Israeli joint venture established to cut diamonds extracted in Yakutia. After many months of negotiations, the Arda firm from Japan announced the establishment of large diamond-cutting facilities in September 1992. The factories, located in Yakutia, will cut 50,000-100,000 carats of diamonds a year and sell them all in Japan. Obviously, the cutting equipment will be supplied by the Japanese partners, and the local personnel will be trained in Japan. The first Yakut diamond was cut at this joint venture in the Yakut settlement of Suntar on October 24, 1992. For an amazingly short term, the Yakut partners delivered all equipment, including via-satellite communications system,

to the factory, which occupy the premises of a former service centre on the bank of the Vilui River. Yakutia always extracted diamonds but never cut them. This contract may thus be highly indicative against the background of a general slump in Russia's foreign trade. It is not by chance, besides, that the acting head of the Russian government, Yegor Gaidar, spent a day and a half in Yakutia in October, when the project was evolving, and even visited Yakutia's remote areas (Tiksi).

The almighty De Boers also had its finger in the Yakut pie and promptly signed a contract on building a diamond-cutting factory in Yakutia, the Polar Star. In summer 1992, the President of the Sakha Republic, M. Nikolayev, paid a visit to his partners at De Boers in South Africa where he arranged for a large group of Yakut specialists to receive hands-on experience in diamond cutting in Great Britain.

The world press broadly covered the visit of the entire De Boers clan, and the 84-year-old patriarch of the world diamond business, Harry Oppenheimer, to Yakutia in August 1992. Experts from the ad hoc Russian parliamentary commission had little to do after the visit but report to their bosses that the Yakuts had sold off their diamonds for peanuts. The experts only noted sardonically, that, surprisingly, the Yakuts sold their wealth for 60 million dollars and not for «glass beads and casks of rum». So they asked President Yeltsin to annul all items of the agreement signed with Yakutia last March, which envisaged the concession of 20 percent of all extracted diamonds to local authorities, asserting that local bosses were not competent enough to deal with precious stones.

Yakuts effectively insisted on their demands, though. Today, they virtually control the Yakutalmaz diamond amalgamation—a vast industrial empire stretching across the entire Western Yakutia. The amalgamation itself has 3,000 kilometres of roads on its territory. To boost diamond production, Yakut leaders exempted all diamond factories from all taxes for two years and reducing them by 50 percent for one more year starting from September 1992.

In August 1992 President Yeltsin signed an executive order to establish a joint-stock company, Russian-Sakha Diamonds. By this decision, Russia and Sakha (Yakutia) are entitled to 32 percent of the company's stocks. Eight diamond-producing regions received one percent of stocks each, their workforce 23 percent. The fund for the social protection of the military received five percent of stocks. This company succeeded to all diamond businesses previously operating in Russia. The Russian diamond extraction technologies are quite efficient, but diamond extraction, like that of oil, has been steadily declining for the past years. Russia is nourishing hopes to start the production of diamonds in Arkhangelsk Region, as 50 percent of all diamonds here are gem diamonds. In other deposits, gem diamonds constitute from eight to 30 percent of the total quantity.

In Yakutia, diamonds are known as the «tears of the tundra». This name may be indicative, as diamond extraction did little good to the local

populace. Thousands of strangers used to come to their virgin land with machines emitting noxious fumes, spoiled secretaries and boorish workers, raped the environment and went away, leaving smouldering ruins and devastation behind.

Presidential adviser on environmental issues Alexei Yablokov described his visit to five localities in Yakutia, where nuclear tests were made, in an interview with *Moskovsky Komsomolets* (February 5, 1992). «In two cases,» Mr. Yablokov said, «the tests resulted in severe radiological contamination similar to that produced by the Chernobyl disaster. The scope may have been smaller, but the consequences were equally grave. Forests in these Yakut localities are withered, like in Chernobyl, trees standing dead and bare. I have photos with me. And mind you, these are the areas where no high radiation background can theoretically be registered. All radiological substances must have been buried deep in the permafrost.».

«Yakutia was groaning under the imperial rule, but this won't happen again,» said Yakut President M. Nikolayev in an interview with *Delovye Lyudi* magazine (August/September 1992). Hopefully so. Yakutia's territory is five times larger than that of Ukraine, while its population amounts to one million at best.

Yakutia received greater economic freedom under Yeltsin. At long last, this republic established its own Yakut National bank, which issues credits to businesses operating in gold and diamond extraction and socially oriented spheres. Food prices in Yakutia are the lowest in Russia and public transportation is free. Dehabilitated people and lower-income individuals are allowed one free trip to any part of Russia a year.

Together with Austrian specialists, Yakuts have built a centre of diagnostics and surgery and launched the construction of a maternity home. The Yakutugol amalgamation funded the construction of the first medical centre in the CIS to treat infantile cerebral paralysis following the methods developed by a Hungarian physician A.Pete, in Neryungri. Two other similar rehabilitation centres simultaneously opened in Togliatti and Donetsk.

The first Yakut encyclopedia will soon be published. All these projects require large funds, while the Yakut business community is lamenting about stifling taxes. They are the highest in Russia, in fact, with the income tax rates going up as high as 45 percent.

Yakutia introduced the monopoly of alcohol production and sales on September 1, 1992. Local authorities also limited access to gold- and diamond-producing Oimyakon, Aldan and Mirny areas of Yakutia. People from other regions of the country may only come there by special invitation from the local administration. The export of mammoth tusks and bones has been prohibited, all export contracts and licenses revoked. Only a special national mammoth fund and the World Mammoth Museum being established in Yakutsk have been authorized to collect, procure and store mammoth remains.

The unique deposit of charoite, «the lilac stone,» has also been given the status of a specially protected national asset. This beautiful and highly popular mineral can be found only on the Chara River, on the border of Yakutia and Irkutsk Region. Naturally, large batches of charoite were smuggled out as soon as the deposit was discovered. The Yakut government requested the authorities of the neighbouring region to work out a common policy of setting quotas for charoite extraction and export.

In summer 1992 the press reported that the leaders of three Russian autonomous republics—Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sakha—announced that they would have to take measures to neutralise the economic blockade they endure and further bolster their national sovereignty. Central authorities were bluntly accused of ignoring the legitimate rights and interests of constituent republics and threatened with aggravated relations.

The speaker of the Yakut parliament, Kliment Ivanov, explained this posture in *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (August 18, 1992): «The Yakut law on the budgetary system, which doesn't contravene the corresponding Russian law by the way, was passed by our Supreme Soviet as early as in February 1992. Thus the statement of our three republics contains nothing unexpected or infringing on the Russian interests in it. Yakutia simply proposes to streamline financial and budgetary settlements within the Russian Federation. Look, what happens in Russia now—all funds are collected to the federal coffers first and then handed out as budgetary appropriations. This procedure is economically unprofitable both for the Federation and its members. We used this procedure before, and there is no sense in using this obsolete pattern again.

«We propose that all taxes to be remitted by my republic to the Russian budget should stay where they are. In our turn, we will finance all numerous federal establishments located here. There are quite many of them, in fact. Besides, we allocate some three billion roubles a year to geologists, river and air transport businesses here. In other words, we propose to spend part of the taxes due to the federal budget here. After these mutual settlements, we will immediately remit all remaining funds due, if any, to the federal budget. So, we're not talking about tax evasion or boycotting. This system will help us avoid remitting huge funds here and there, wasting precious time. Time is money, you know. This practice is internationally recognized. For instance, it is widely used in Austria. We suggest signing a bilateral tax agreement with the Russian government formalising this procedure. Unfortunately, they didn't listen to us initially. The situation is apparently changing today.».

SECOND CAUCASIAN WAR BEGINS

DAGESTAN. Twelve Official Languages

This 50,000 sq.km. republic accommodates 14 nations described as indigenous by the 1977 Soviet Constitution. There are 12 state languages in Dagestan. In reality, there are many more smaller ethnic groups living here that, in the past 30 years, were considered as assimilated and now commonly regarded as part of Avar, Dargin, Lezgin Kumyk, Nogai, Lak, Tsakhur, Agur, Tabaskran or other groups.

This Babylon normally uses Russian as a medium of communication, and all signs in Dagestan are also in Russian. However the capital of Dagestan, Makhachkala, has long developed a rigid system of appointments in accordance with a nominee's ethnic identity. All meaningful positions are occupied by people of different nationalities in turn, professionalism and skills obviously disregarded. Geographically, Dagestan is a narrow strip of land stretching along the Caspian Sea. It has managed to avoid sharp conflicts so far, but a multitude of civil servants clinging to power and perks are evidently harbouring a threat to peace and tranquillity in this region. To achieve their aims, bureaucrats have come up with one simple idea-let's secede and have a good time. They might, indeed, as this area is pivotal to the economy of the whole Caucasus.

The north of Dagestan, slightly away from the coast, is populated by the Nogais. In 1957, the Nogai lands were divided between Dagestan, Chechenia and Stavropol Territory. Thus demands to create the Nogai Republic is the demand of national reunification, not unlike demands of the Lezgins.

Lezgins live in the far south of Dagestan and have long been concerned with the Azeri jurisdiction over some of their lands since 1921, granted by fiat from Moscow. If the state border between Russia and Azerbaijan takes distinct shape, forget about Lezgistan! However, Lezgins have lived on their lands for centuries. For the past years, Azeri rulers painstakingly settled Azeris displaced from Armenia and Meskhetian Turks fleeing Central Asia on Lezgin lands to change the ethnic balance in that area.



Kumyks, who have lived on the coastal plains in the central part of Dagestan for ages, face a different sort of problems. In the 1950s-1970s, tens of thousand of Avars and Dargins were moved to their land from mountainous areas and granted serious economic privileges they enjoy even today. The indigenous people living side by side with the once highlanders have none of these. Three hundred thousand Kumyks insist that a national Kumyk republic be set up, but what about the Avars and Dargins?

The way out of this nationalist cul de sac may be found, if all parties agree that their discord stems from certain economic inequality. These differences may then be settled easily as a market economy gains ground and private ownership of land is allowed.

It was purely economic considerations that enabled the Laks to make an unprecedented breakthrough. After three years of debates, sessions and referendums, this ethnic group took a decision in 1992 to abandon their homes and lands and to settle on the coastal plains 15 kilometres away from Makhachkala. Forty-seven years ago this group was forcefully resettled from highlands. Today, the Laks took a decision to move from the Novolak (Aukhov) District themselves to make room for the Chechens deported in 1944. That incident was highly acclaimed as momentous in the Russian press.

Squeezed between the recalcitrant Chechenia and Azerbaijan Dagestan begins simmering too. After a long period, 300 mosques opened again, but this move never relieved the daily chores and tribulations of the populace. Rising crime rates and a series of political assassinations forced the Dagestan legislature to pass a law allowing almost anyone to carry firearms in 1992.

In the past 20 years Dagestan was represented at the highest levels of the pyramid of Russian power, first by poet Rasul Gamzatov, member of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, Hero of Socialist Labour and laureate of many state prizes, and now by Ramazan Abdulatipov chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of Russia. Abdulatipov said about himself: I was delegated to the Parliament by 333,000 of Dagestan residents, but I wonder who nominated members of the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples?

He told *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (Oct. 9, 1992): «Dagestan cannot imagine itself without Russia, and this has been stressed at different levels more than once. Respecting the 9% of Russians living in Dagestan, we did not approve the Declaration of Sovereignty. Of course, there are forces which want to set nations against each other. There are forces in all regions which want to acquire flats and buy property at the expense of refugees, without as much as providing them with wagons for carrying their property with them».

As many as 100,000 refugees from the Armenia-Azerbaijan border regions have moved to Lesghistan, Azerbaijan. The Lesghians see no reason in moving to their relatives in Dagestan, because 80% of the unemployed there are Lesghians. But many young Lesghians prefer to be unemployed, rather than fight against Armenians in the Azerbaijani army.

Dagestan suffers from tensions in relations between the neighbouring Chechen republic and Russia. Task forces of the Russian Interior Ministry attempted to settle in Hasavyurt, Dagestan, in August 1992. The worried Chechens and other local residents (Avars and Kumyks) kidnapped two officers from the division. They were promised immunity in return for the immediate withdrawal of the task force to Novocherkassk. The national guards of the Chechen Republic was put to combat alert, but it did not have to interfere, because the task force of the Russian Interior Ministry withdrew and the hostage officers were released.

KABARDINO-BALKARIA. 100-Year War with Russia

This dwarf republic may soon split into two. The national council of Balkaria, following by the Congress of the Kabarda Nation have unfolded their operations in 1992.



In a recent referendum, 95 percent of the residents of Balkaria, living in 26 settlements in four picturesque mountainous areas, spoke in favour of a sovereign republic within Russia with borders as of 1944, when the Balkars were deported to Central Asia. After the Stalinist genocide, only 85,000 Balkars, a Turkic-speaking ethnic group of Sunnite Moslems with Christian roots, are left in the CIS.

The Kabarda Movement also wants an independent national republic within Russia, even though the elders high in the mountains still vividly remember the one-hundred-year Caucasian war in 1760-1860 and willingly make a point of it to Russians. The highlanders believe that Russia under czars and under Stalin subjugated them in the Caucasus with much greater ferocity than during the exploration of America. Hundreds of villages were ruined, their inhabitants exterminated. No women or children were spared during the invasion in the 19th century. In the 20th century, Caucasus dwellers were drafted to two world wars and one civil war. Besides, they were ruthlessly deported to the deserted areas of Siberia and Kazakhstan.

The Congress of the Kabarda Nation, which took place in the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, Nalchik, in 1992 passed a decision on the restitution of Kabarda's state identity within its historical territory. The congress declared the 100-year Russo-Caucasian war a genocide of the Adyg (Cherkes) nation and demanded that the Russian leaders recognize the Adyg as a refugee people and that the descendants of the refugees return to their ancestral land from the Middle East and various parts of the CIS. The Congress ratified the Treaty of the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus and sanctioned the creation of the national guard.

In spring 1992, the parliament of this republic appealed to the Russian leaders with a request to return 26,000 hectares of land with

six inhabited localities ceded to North Ossetia in 1944, as the Balkars were deported.

There have been no conflicts between Balkars and Kabarda for their entire age-old history. Both future republics will stick to Russia as long as it is interested and heeds their interests. Otherwise, we may face the prospects of a Mountain republic or a state of the Adygs, which will claim its independence of Russia.

The capital city of Kabardino-Balkaria, Nalchik, is located in the centre of the Northern Caucasus. No shots rang out in the streets in 1990 here, people were happy and smiling, farm work done and factories chugging, flats brightly lit and hot tap water available.

The republic extracts tungsten and molybdenum, and produces unique water-distillers and powerful water purification equipment. It features several beauty resorts with mineral water springs, orchards and alpine pastures. However, checkpoints are bristling on all nine mountain passings linking the republic with Georgia and the border with North Ossetia checking the inflow of weapons.

In July 1992, representatives of Russian regional chambers of trade and commerce convened in Nalchik to seek and opportunity to buy goods two or three times as cheap as commodities exchanges offer them.

Breachers of the Peace. In late 1992 each Russian citizen knew about Yuri (now called Musa) Shanibov, teacher of scientific communism (today this subject is called politology), head of the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples. On September 23 he was detained for several hours at the order of the Russian Federations' Procurator General, and he immediately became famous.

The authorities of Kabardin-Balkaria, which allowed this act to be perpetrated by the Russian procurator's office on their territory, barely survived forced removal from their chairs by a mob, which cluttered the square at the House of Soviets in Nalchik for eight days.

The people wanted to make friends with Abkhazian guerillas and to collect weapons, foods and volunteers for them, as well as to punish Georgians, oust the Russian OMON from the republic, remove from office the government, the Parliament, the procurator and the Interior Minister of Kabardin-Balkaria.

Moscow allowed Shanibov to «flee» from Rostov, and he was immediately brought back to his place in Nalchik. The state of emergency, announced by the Russian Federation in the republic, was lifted and local partocrats agreed to all kinds of concessions. The imminent typhoon was detracted.

Later it turned out that the Kabardins and the Balkars will not be able to come to an agreement on the borders in case of territorial division. Persecuted under Stalin, the Balkars did not join the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples. They were also reminded that 70% of Balkars live on Kabardin lands.

The second name which is most often mentioned in the world press is Dr. Yuri Kalmykov (Law), chairman (since January 1992) of the

Congress of Kabarda People. A Circassian born in Karachayev-Circassia, he studied in Leningrad and for 30 years worked in the Saratov Institute of Law, which nominated him people's deputy of the USSR. In 1990 he was elected chairman of the Commission of Legislation of the USSR Supreme Soviet. President of the International Circassian Association.

At the beginning of the Abkhazian developments in August 1992, Kalmykov spoke his minds quite clearly: «The Circassian peoples will not keep quiet as long as Georgian troops remain on the territory of fraternal Abkhazia. The main thing now is to buy weapons, in particular anti-tank grenades, guns and air defence systems.» (*Megapolis Express*, Sept. 2, 1992). He said about Shevardnadze in «*Izvestia*» (Aug. 28, 1992): «A true democrat cannot issue an order to invade a republic whose only «guilt» is that it has decided to improve its status. However, I can be mistaken and possibly Shevardnadze was led by reactionary forces; but this cannot justify anyone.»

The life of citizens of Kabardin-Balkaria was complicated in 1992 by a seemingly endless flow of refugees from Abkhazia (Armenians, Abkhazes and Russians), South Ossetia and Armenia.

KALMYKIA. AIDS and Uranium Mines

Since February 1992, the official name of this country is the Republic of Kalmykia-Halmg Tangch. Kalmyks are a multilingual nation with its own state identity of yore. Four centuries ago, after the Golden Horde fell apart in the 15th century, the Kalmyk khan signed a treaty making his land part of the Russian empire. Pushkin and Dumas mentioned Kalmyks in their works. The 1st Kalmyk Regiment mounted on Bactrian camels entered Paris in 1814. Honore de Balzac witnessed this and wrote a short story, *Kalmyks in Paris*, based on his impressions. Lenin's grandmother was a Kalmyk...

In December 1943 all Kalmyks were prodded in trains and hauled thousands kilometres away from their homes, to the Siberia and Far East. The Kalmyk Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was abolished. After Stalin's death, some of these people managed to return home, and the Kalmyk ASSR was restituted in 1958, but became much smaller than before. In 1992, authorities of the neighbouring Astrakhan Region officially agreed to concede territories belonging to the Kalmyks before their deportation on December 27, 1943.

A whole 150,000 Kalmyks live on 76,000 square kilometres of this republic located in the very South-East of the European Russia, while Kalmykia's total population is nearing 400,000. Russians clearly dominate in the republic's ethnic composition, but their number has been growing smaller. Russians were leaving Kalmykia both under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, though there were no pronounced anti-Russian sentiments



there until 1992. In 1991, Kalmyk authorities began paying out ludicrous compensations to the few remaining deported people there—some 3,000 roubles per family (circa 30 dollars).

In 1992, ominous rumours of Kalmykia's radiologically contaminated areas were confirmed. No one cared to bury the waste of the uranium mines exploited about twenty years ago. Though the mines were mothballed two decades ago, radiation doses hover at 100-400 microroentgen/h even a dozen kilometres away from them. Geologists and mining workers never observed safety techniques, while extracting uranium after the war, desperate to dig up more at less cost. The tight veil of secrecy closed the project from a critical eye. Only by the end of the first quarter of 1992 did the Russian authorities make public some data on the radiologically hazardous areas of Kalmykia. Before, sanitary inspections at all levels kept their mouths shut. Children were happily splashing in contaminated ponds, and summer camps were set up next to the abandoned uranium mines. The number of cancer patients was steadily growing. It may not be by chance that Kalmykia's capital, Elista, was the first city in the former USSR, where many children were infected with HIV. Radiation doses don't build up immunity, apparently.

Of course, Kalmyks do not feel much gratitude to Russians, or the Kremlin, to be precise, for this. Before 1917, Kalmykia was one large livestock farm. Things have not changed much for the past decades—Cheap crude wool, as well as meat, skins and oil are still shipped to other Russian regions for processing. The centralized economy could perfectly control these processes and artificially keep whole regions in penury.

Present-day Kalmyk leaders describe the construction of the Volga-Chograi canal across the boundless Kalmyk steppes as a crime of the century. The project has been recently mothballed after a series of vocal protests of the local population. That project hampered the migration of 160,000 saigas, pasturing and salinization of the soil, as salty water seeped to the bed of the canal as it is dug. The returns from the possible irrigation of land in the future will never cover the damage incurred to pastures which have turned into sand deserts. Local shepherds would be happy to have turned dozen artesian wells around and more agricultural machinery at their farms instead of a mammoth canal. The matter is that the canal was designed in Moscow, and Kalmyks were never asked whether it was needed at all.

Kalmykia harvests up to 200,000 tonnes of wheat annually, mostly hard strains, breeds Akhaltekin horses and will soon issue a concession for environmentally friendly oil and gas extraction to Americans and South Koreans at the fields in the shelf zone and deeper in the Caspian Sea. To boot, sturgeon spawns caviar in the Volga delta in Kalmykia.

With reasonable farming, saiga alone could yield enormous profits. This steppe antelope can graze on fodder that sheep won't touch, but has delicious meat. The saiga skin may be turned into expensive and beautiful chrome leather. Its horns are used for medicinal purposes, as they contain a valuable substance similar to pantocrine. The saiga is a wild nomadic animal migrating in the Caspian and Kazakh areas for thousands of years. Occasionally, it appears at the Black Sea. To preserve the saiga in Kalmykia, the Black Soil reserve will soon be created here. This project may really become crucial as poachers are decimating the saiga population ruthlessly.

NORTH OSSETIA. Russian Army's Bridgehead in the Caucasus.

There is also a South Ossetia, but it is located on the Georgian territory. Georgia also incorporates Abkhazia. Some Ossetians and Abkhazians have joined the Caucasus Mountain People's Assembly, a body which said as far back as in 1991 that it would aim at creating a Caucasian state composed of Abkhazia, Dagestan, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Adygeya, Chechenia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia, Kalmykia and North and South Ossetia. This super-state, according to the Assembly, would be totally independent of the USSR and its successors-Russia and the CIS.

The gossip says that this prospect makes some officials in Moscow inwardly gloat at the incessant bickering between Northern Caucasian peoples. There are many differences between these peoples indeed. Arable lands are scarce, the region is obviously overpopulated and many ethnic groups that were illegally deported under Stalin are striving to come back to their native land. However, their homes have been occupied

by others, deported to those areas forcefully. The RSFSR Law on the rehabilitation of oppressed peoples was passed in 1991, but it only fanned passions, as Russian authorities never had the money to fund the huge resettling schemes. Inveterate territorial disputes went aflame again, while the Kremlin is reluctant to pay compensations to anyone. Of course, these ethnic squabbles could be settled, if hefty credits for housing constructions were shelled out, free land was granted in private ownership and private enterprise was given a nudge.

The short-sighted and harebrained policies of the Kremlin turned 25 million Russians living outside Russia into potential hostages or migrants. They have also threatened dozens of millions of Russians living in Russia's autonomies and people of ethnic identities other than indigenous, who have lived in those autonomies for centuries. The main problem today is that most of these festering ethnic conflicts and claims cannot be settled without Moscow's help and involvement.

In the late 1980s the Kremlin leaders did their best to set the party panjandrums in the simmering South Ossetia on the neo-Communist rulers of Georgia. After two years of war with Tbilisi, South Ossetian leaders threatened to set off a powerful «non-traditional» nuclear device in Georgia. Almost all civilian population of South Ossetia fled to the capital of its northern neighbour. In 1992 Vladikavkaz was crowded with 130,000 South Ossetian refugees.

The Ingush problem adds up to the entangled Ossetian conflict. In 1944 the territory of North Ossetia was expanded by 16,000 square kilometres at the expense of the neighbouring Checheno-Ingushetia. The Ingushes were deported to Siberia on Stalin's order. A few years after Stalin died, in 1957, Khrushchev restored Checheno-Ingushetia, but in a smaller framework. Half a century has passed, and a few surviving Ingushes returned to their native land, having it in for innocent people settled on the Ingush land and living in Ingush houses.

Generally speaking, Ingushes are prepared to live next to the alien Ossetians on their land, but will this forced alliance last long? For its part, Moscow doesn't want to leave the Northern Caucasus, but it doesn't want to pay for its sins and current presence altogether. This posture resulted in a full-scale war in South Ossetia in 1992, as well as in occasional shoot-outs between Ossetians and Ingushes despite the long-standing state of emergency. Ingushes insist that the Prtgorodny District of North Ossetia and the adjacent right-bank part of Vladikavkaz be returned.

Russians are fleeing North Ossetia. They may be afraid to be made scapegoats for bloody reprisals during the wave of peace demonstrations in Vladikavkaz (then known as Ordzhonikidze) in 1981. In early 1991, many types of firearms were sold officially to individuals, while trenches and barricades mushroomed around the city.

When will the picturesque Military-Georgian Road stretching across the main Caucasian Range and glorified by Russian poets of the past

centuries be opened again for tourists and businessmen? With meaningful administration, North Ossetia could be quite well off as a tourist area only, since it boasts internationally renowned beauty and health resorts, like Kislovodsk, Nalchik, Pyatigorsk and Mineralniye Vody. A recently established centre for medicine and biology headed by Rudolph Lokhov, a professor at North Ossetian University, treats cancer patients with a local drug, RL-175, similar to the traditional biophosphomide, but less toxic and having no distinct side effects.

In 1991 and 1992 North Ossetia was the main concentration area for Russian troops in the entire Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Ossetians are the only historically Christian nation in the entire Northern Caucasus. But even they may turn their back on Russia in pursuit of a more powerful ally and protector. So far, Moscow has failed to prevent genocide in South Ossetia, or calm down the boiling Ingushes, who are striving to make Vladikavkaz the capital of two states—Ossetian and Ingush, as the right-bank part of the city was once the capital of Ingushetia under Soviet government. Vladikavkaz (known as Ordzhonikidze in the USSR) may in this case make a record in the Guinness Book. Ossetians themselves could make it to the book of records as well, since they managed to have two Soviet Socialist Republics for several months before the USSR collapsed, instead of the former North Ossetian Autonomous Republic (ASSR) within Russia and the South Ossetian autonomous region within Georgia.

A total of 1,150 flats will be turned over to tenants in Vladikavkaz by the spring of 1993. The Turkish construction workers built a settlement for Russian servicemen withdrawing from Germany in Ossetia on German money. But will Russians live a peaceful life there?

It began in November 1992. Ingushetia became a new republic of the Russian Federation on June 4. Moscow News (June 21) enumerated all the shortcomings and loopholes of the order under which a large part of North Ossetia, Prigorodny Region, is to be incorporated into Ingushetia in the next 18 months. The newspaper cited the opinion of Viktor Medveditsky, ex-Interior Minister of North Ossetia: «The Law [on the Rehabilitation of Persecuted Nations-G.V.] will not remove contradictions existing between the sides with regard to Prigorodny Region. In fact, it is a Karabakh syndrome; there will be a war.».

All newspapers in Russia wrote quite openly about the weapons market in Nazran, the largest city of Ingushetia. You could buy a helicopter and an armoured personnel carrier, a machinegun and a gun, and negotiate the sale and purchase of all other weapon types at the makeshift market off the Rostov-Baku highway, situated in Russia, a ten minutes' walk from the mission of the Russian Supreme Soviet. Meanwhile, you could be arrested and tried for carrying a mace in 1992.

Sergei Khetagurov, Premier of North Ossetia, Ibrahim Kostoyev, deputy of the plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Supreme Soviet in Ingushetia, and Viktor Gafarov, deputy commander of the

Russian Interior Forces, told journalists coming to Vladikavkaz that «the Russian leadership's actions in the Caucasus are clumsy» (*Pravda*, Oct. 8, 1992). The same newspaper wrote on November 19 that lists of Ingush families living in Vladikavkaz were circulated in the city.

Nobody stood up to protect them in time, and the people, fearing a massacre, fled the capital. Refugees from South Ossetia immediately occupied their flats. In early November 1992, after the Ossetian militants launched hostilities in the countryside, forcing all Ingush to flee from Prigorodny Region and the rest of North Ossetia, convoys of heavy-duty KAMAZ lorries piled high with bag and bagging started moving over the Main Caucasian Ridge. South Ossetian refugees marauded the belongings of the Ingush refugees.

(The massacre and deportation of Armenians from Sumgait, Baku and the rest of Azerbaijan followed the same scenario. The first to become murderers and marauders were Azerbaijani refugees whom the Armenians made to flee their territory a gear or two before that. Black market dealers from Armenia and Azerbaijan earned mind-boggling sums of money on selling weapons, deserted houses and belongings of the refugees).

What if the Cossacks of Stavropolye decide to do with the Ingush the same which the Ossetians did? In 1957, when the Ingush were allowed to return to their homeland, Ingushetia was given a part of Russian land in Stavropol Territory, as a replacement for Prigorodny Region which had been given to Ossetians.

The situation could have been defused by social measures before the beginning of the Ingush-Ossetian hostilities. The problems of South Ossetian refugees complicated the already difficult life in North Ossetia. Sixty percent of able-bodied population in Ingushetia were unemployed. There was only one higher school (agricultural) and two small enterprises (a textile mill and a factory producing agricultural machinery) in the republic. Tens of thousands of Ingush are migrating around Russia in search of jobs, which is a breeding ground for all kinds of conflicts.

Several thousand Ingush put the white head bands of kamikaze and proclaimed a gazavat (holy war) to the highest officials of North Ossetia and Russia «guilty of a new genocide of the Ingush people» in early November 1992. The Ingush unanimously denounced Russia and accused Russian troops of supporting the Ossetian militants. Ingush elders wept when they said that the situation was worse than during the deportation in 1944. Hundreds of Ingush have been killed and thousands taken hostage, and tens of thousands were wounded or became refugees.

Today a considerable part of the Ingush community accuses their leaders who called for joining the Russian federation. The leadership of Nazran asked the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples to use its armed formations as peace-keeping forces and to replace Russian troops.

In November 1992 the leaders of the Russian federation announced that they had allocated 12 million roubles (30,000 dollars at that time's

exchange rate, or 5-10 dollars per refugee) to refugees from North Ossetia. A hundred tonnes of grain, a thousand tonnes of flour and fuel was allocated to North Ossetia and the Ingush republic each from the federal fund.

All highest officials of Russia (with the exception of Yeltsin) went to Vladikavkaz. Remembering the failure of peace-making initiatives in Kabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Moscow centre was truly filled by the new conflict. Following the old Soviet tradition, several hundred Russian investigators were dispatched to Vladikavkaz, this time complete with a forensic laboratory. Russia promised to give weapons to North Ossetia and even to arm two regiments.

The fact that the Russian troops openly took the side of North Ossetia was reaffirmed by the proclamation of the state of emergency in the region. The Ingush were ordered to disarm, while this order did not concern Ossetians.

Central TV broadcast only lop-sided information. But the Ingush were most offended by the gross mistake (which they regarded as a deliberate act) of Vesti, the news programme of the Russian TV, which edited a film with the interview of a high ranking North Ossetian official. At the end of the interview, when the film had ended, the TV audiences heard him say about the Ingush: «They are all jackals there.» Understandably, Sunnite Moslems did not like to hear this from a Christian.

The provisional military administration seems to have settled in the Ossetian-Ingush zone for long. The politicians of the North Caucasus were worried that the head of the provisional administration was given several coordinating powers not only in the emergency zone but also in Kabardin-Balkaria, Adyges, Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, and Rostov Region.

It was not by chance that the first war on the territory of Russia in the past fifty years began in Vladikavkaz, because the South Ossetian tragedy has been going on for three years. The newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets (June 18, 1992) provided a clue to understanding Russia's actions in the Caucasus. At that time Russia's problem number one was South Ossetia. Speaker of the Russian Parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov announced that Russia was not only prepared to incorporate South Ossetia but would take up arms to defend it against Georgian militants. It was said on the eve of Georgian-Ossetian talks, which Yeltsin wanted to attend and which were expected to settle the problem. If Khasbulatov meant what he had said, why then did Russia welcome the overthrow of Yamsakhurdia and the access to power of Shevardnadze, who was very friendly disposed towards Russia?

Russia's Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi rashly threatened Georgia a war for the massacre of the small people of South Ossetia. «And it turns out that we have a certain «war party,» which protects the interests of the notary-industrial complex, i.e., the military Mafia, for the more

the blood flows, the more power and money it had,» *Literaturnaya Gazeta* correspondents reported from Tskhinvali (July 1, 1992).

Torez Kulumbekov, head of the South Ossetian Parliament announced in August 1992 that the three-year Georgian-Ossetian conflict is over and refugees can return to their homes. He reaffirmed that specialists had elaborated a programme for the revival of South Ossetia and that Russia and Georgia would allocate 40 billion roubles on its implementation in the next five year. In October 1992 Yegor Gaidar Acting premier of Russia, issued a resolution on the funding of rehabilitation works in South Ossetia, under which Russia would allocate 500 million roubles for this year, «which would be written off as Georgia's future credits.» How very nice. But South Ossetia has not received a single rouble from that promised sum, as Kulumbekov told *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Nov. 21, 1992).

The Ossetians living both sides of the Main Caucasian Ridge are paying for the thoughtlessness of their politicians, although it seems that Ossetians do not lack advisers. Some 500,000 Ossetians live outside their two national territories. In October 1992 they even held a world congress of Ossetians in Vladikavkaz. They have a popular General Kim Tsogolov, who fought in Afghanistan, a billionaire Taras Kibizov, ex-Politburo member and ex-USSR Ambassador to Syria Alexander Dzasokhov, who is reputed to become the republic's next leader (he once was first secretary of the regional Communist Party committee).

Former colleagues Shevardnadze and Dzasokhov could come to an agreement. They should know better than anyone else that there can be no winner in the Caucasian wars. And if Cossacks join the brawl... Cossacks living outside Mozdok in North Ossetia have proclaimed that they regard secession not just as desirable but as inevitable.

Russians also could, at long last, say loudly that their rights in North Ossetia have been infringed upon. Only 5-7% of nomenklatura posts in the republics are occupied by Russians, although there are 335,000 Ossetians and 190,000 Russians in North Ossetia.

CHECHEN-INGUSHETIA. Under Siege

Do you know about the tragedy of the Chechen village of Khaibakh? On February 27, 1944 a punishment unit of NKVD, responsible for the deportation of the Chechens, herded all residents of that village into a bam and set fire to it. Why? Because it was too much trouble to remove the people from that alpine village. The Chechens, who still recall that tragedy, say: Russians did it. Many generations of the Chechen will remember Khaibakh for a long time to come. But Russians should know about it too.



Sort-sighted policies of Russia with respect to its provinces has become particularly evident in Chechnya. Moscow has long got use to rule its provinces by fiat, remaining indifferent to their sentiments and aspirations. Deprecating attitudes to national minorities in Russia have also taken form in numerous derogatory linguistic labels attached to them.

If the so-called union republics were helped to build spectacular capitals and cultivate their own intellectuals and traditional culture under communism, autonomous republics were abandoned in their vegetation. No one represented them in the Politburo or other high bodies of power. Only after the wreckage of the USSR, newspapers wrote about the first Chechen woman, a welder by profession and a communist advocate by conviction, Sazhi Umalatova, parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, General Johar Dudayev and a Munich ^ernlinologist, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov. Only two years ago, Soviets only heard the name Makhmud Esambayev, but no one thought «tet his name odd to the Russian ear indicated his Chechen origin.

Yeltsin was far-sighted enough, politically speaking, to grant maximum rights and sovereignty to the former nations of the Russian Empire living in the Russian Federation. Yeltsin did that in order to save *Ussia. However, the Russian parliament and Vice-President Rutskoï *Ssumed a distinctly bellicose posture in 1991 and 1992, calling fire and nmstone on the heads of Chechnya and Tartarstan for their

intransigence. In the meanwhile, all nations populating the Russia^ Federation would like to live in peace and close economic cooperation with Russia. Alas, Moscow has a different vision of these problems Hence the deplorable results.

Since the early 1990s, 90,000 Russians have left the Moslem Chechenia. At least 80 percent of the population of the Northern Caucasus profess Islam. Russia will have to pull out its troops from all national republics of the Northern Caucasus, as it is doing in Transcaucasia.

The Chechen Republic, which was established in 1991 contrary to Moscow's will, is the only one of the former Soviet nations of the mountain areas that insists on the total secession from Russia. As Russia's influence in the Caucasus weakens, Chechenia's position is getting stronger. It gradually becomes the political centre of the Caucasus.

The word «Chechen» will startle any Russian today, as it has become synonymous of ruthless and brutal force, which will not succumb to anything, even to bribery, thanks to numerous press and TV reports on the mob rule of this ethnic group. There is another viewpoint of this ethnic group in the perspective of Russo-Chechen relations. No other European nation suffered so much in its history. The tragedy of the Russians is that they never learn from history. The British troops left Afghanistan, when they realized that they would never win. The Soviet troops never achieved anything in Afghanistan too, even though they killed 1.5 million people there and making three million Afghans flee their homeland. The USSR ceased to exist a few months after it pulled out of that shameful war. The situation in the Caucasus is not much different from that in Afghanistan. Have Russians brought peace and order to Chechenia?

The capital city of Checheno-Ingushetia, Grozny, is like an exhausted toiler. This city with developed petrochemistry is clouded with toxic fumes and lit with flames of the burning gas waste. Deplorably, it ranks among the five most polluted agglomerations of Russia. Chechenia outstrips Ingushetia by ten times in terms of its territory, population and economic potential. However, Chechens and Ingushes are part of one Vainakh ethnic group and are very close linguistically.

In February 1944, 640 crammed trains left Grozny, taking Vainakhs in exile for «colluding with the enemy,» which has never set its feet on that territory. Fifty percent of the Chechens died during the deportation of that nation to Kazakhstan and Siberia. Others were lucky twice. First, Stalin died in 1953 and not later and, second, Chechens and Ingushes were never settled in the Far North, a deadly place, which would have certainly killed off those southern dwellers.

Beria failed to deport all Chechens and Ingushes in February 1944. He ordered to level with the earth all villages high in the mountains that were not readily accessible to the troops. There are evidence that the dwellers were drowned in the Kezenoi-Am Lake, burned in their homes,

fragmented by hand grenades in stone towers and bombed from aircraft. A handful of survivors rebelled. Thus the NKVD had to keep several military divisions until the mid-1950s in the mountains of Checheno-Ingushetia to suppress Intransigence.

The Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was tituted in 1957, but several of its former areas handed over to Georgia, Stavropol Territory, Dagestan and North Ossetia were never given back to it. Instead, the republic received the Naursky and Shelkhovsky districts populated by Cossacks and Nogais. Chechens and Ingushes from the highlands were resettled in these areas by fiat in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1982, when all national Soviet republics were ordered to celebrate the 60th anniversary of «voluntary joining» Russia, a group of Chechen and Ingush intellectuals balked. Mass protests in Checheno-Ingushetia sparked off in 1988, when the Popular Front was established and the population got increasingly aware of the environmental disaster in the republic and potential greater hazards after the completion of a biochemical plant in Gudermes. Chronic unemployment compels many Chechens to hunt jobs in Russia, where they often join criminal structures or launch questionable entrepreneurial projects—something always bracketed by the Russian judiciary. Police squads or teams of investigators were regularly sent to the republic from Moscow in order to maintain the state of subjugation. After these raids, hundreds of entrepreneurs were convicted and put behind bars in Russia. Central authorities went as far as officially refusing to accept Chechens and Ingushes in Moscow hotels. Russian rulers even declared a military operation against the Chechen Republic, which proclaimed its independence in autumn 1991. In retaliation the President of Chechenia, General Johar Dudayev, threatened Russia with «major trouble» and «a second Caucasian war.».

The first Caucasian war lasted for one hundred years. In the 1850s, Russian military operations against the doomed leader of Chechenia and Dagestan, Imam Shamil, cost Russia one sixth of the state budget. In 1859, Shamil, an Avar by nationality, gave himself and his family up and eventually moved to Kaluga, a Russian provincial city. Finally, the Northern Caucasus became part of the Russian empire. It is often said these days that if the imam was a Chechen, Russians would have never subjugated the Caucasus. The Russian colonial rule never brought peace to that region. Major rebellions against Russia sparked off in Checheno-Ingushetia in 1860-1861, 1864 and 1877-1878. During the unrest, Chechens and Ingushes were deported to new localities and more Cossack settlements were set up in that region. It was then that the Abrek movement evolved. Today, we may have called that movement terrorism. Ruthless fighting over land was triggered off in 1917 between Chechens and Ingushes on the one hand and Cossacks on the other. The Bolsheviks gave the Chechens back their land confiscated under the czar and thus drew that highland nation on their side in the civil war of 1918-1920. The Mountain ASSR was established in 1921 and existed

until 1924. After that, it was replaced by a cluster of Northern Caucasian autonomous republics.

Forced collectivization began in Chechnia in 1929. Land was taken away from the highlanders again, triggering off more rebellions against Russians that kept on rumbling up to the 1960s. With all continual reprisals (some 10,000 local officials at all levels were arrested in 1937 for instance), Moscow never felt sure about its southern provinces. In the early 1940, another rebellion sparked off, abolishing collective farms and proclaiming part of Chechno-Ingushetia an independent state with its own government. The recalcitrant area even resisted Russian troops sent in to crush the opposition. In spring 1942 the recalcitrant areas of Chechno-Ingushetia were bombed by the Soviet air force in 1942 killing most of the inhabitants of many villages. Nonetheless, the Nazi army failed to reach Chechno-Ingushetia in World War II. The final retribution came from the Kremlin in 1944, and the Vainakh question ceased to exist for Russia for some time.

Sooner or later, Russia will have to pull out from the Caucasus, draw new borders and calm down. Otherwise, it will suffer new hefty outlays for the expedition corps and more curses from the highlanders. The loss of Grozny or Baku with their nearly exhausted oil fields will not be a heavy loss for Russia, economically speaking. Millions of Russian farmers, factory workers and experts will move to Russia. Of course, their homeland will have to allocate some funds for their housing, but the Caucasian area itself has long become an costly and dangerous burden for Russia. Long ago, the Russian empire stood up to protect its Christian brothers in Transcaucasia. On the one hand, that move saved Georgians and Armenians, and on the other, it ensued the Caucasian war. Much has changed since that time of yore, but one principle has remained intact-political idealism is fraught with great bloodshed.

All republics of the Northern Caucasus are small entities. Leaving Makhachkala in the morning, a traveller driving on a highway linking Rostov and Baku may easily get to Grozny, Vladikavkaz and Nalchik by dinner. Russia is incomparably larger than all these republics taken together, but it was teetering on the brink of a full-scale war in autumn 1991. That war would have made the Afghan campaign a pleasure trip.

God saved Russia from a total collapse in autumn 1991, when President Yeltsin declared the state of emergency in Chechnia and started airlifting special forces, Spetsnaz, to Grozny. Military aircraft were coming to the Khankala airport in Grozny, sealed off by the national guard. That military operation began after President Dudayev proclaimed the Chechen republic an independent state. Three days later, on November 8, 1991, Yeltsin signed his decree. Some time after he admitted that he had been wrong if only because he had set an impossible task. In retaliation, Dudayev appealed to all Caucasian nations to declare a holy war on Russia.

The Yeltsin decree removed all contradictions tearing apart dozens of Northern Caucasian nations in one stroke and united those nations in one anti-Russian front. It is not a matter of barricades and trenches

mushrooming in Grozny. On November 2, 1991, delegates from thirteen Caucasian nations in Abkhazia's capital, Sukhumi, established the Confederation of the Mountain Caucasian Peoples, elected a president, parliament and executive authorities. From now on, military units are subordinate to a single command of the Confederation. Before Yeltsin issued his decree, Dudayev had many opponents, but Moscow helped the rebellious general of the air force to become a national hero of the Caucasus. Dudayev established a huge army in Chechnia, promised to stop all shipments of petrochemicals to Russia (Chechnia is a monopoly producer of lubricants for aircraft) and appealed to all Moslem nations to turn Moscow into a «disaster area» for the sake of «our common freedom of kufra (vermin).» The provident president and parliament of the Chechen Republic circulated their testament appealing to the Caucasian peoples «not to furl the flag of freedom» and «transfer the fear and suffering to the source of evil and subjugation-Moscow.» On November 9, 1991 Dudayev gave the pledge of allegiance to the Chechen Republic at a rally in Grozny, which gathered 300,000 people. Leaders of the neighbouring republics upheld Dudayev, and Dagestan even promised its military aid to Chechnia.

Since 1992, Chechnia has produced submachine guns at its factories, boasts tank brigades and air force squadrons. Shamil Beno, a Chechen from Jordan, has been appointed foreign minister of Chechnia, which helped the republic to establish close links with the numerous Chechen diaspora in the Middle East. While Gamsakhurdia was in ascendancy in the neighbouring Georgia, Chechnia imported everything it pleased from turkey, including large batches of armaments. However, Chechnia can buy everything, including large missile launching pads, from the Russian military for hefty bribes. For roubles, not for dollars.

General Dudayev, who is the first ethnic Chechen to obtain this rank, was born in 1944, married to a Russian, and spent his childhood in Kazakhstan, where some Chechens had been deported. He may finish his career like his crony Gamsakhurdia. Internal opposition of the old-time Communist bureaucrats and young nationalists has already toppled the Georgian president and threatens Chechnia with restoration. This will hardly improve Russia's position, however. Highlanders may be interested in a strong and easy-going economic partner. These are the qualities Russia has got to prove, if it wants the Caucasian entanglement to be sorted out. Chechnia placed high hopes on Yeltsin. During the attempted coup in August 1991, Chechens were the largest ethnic groups among the defendants of the Russian parliamentary buildings other than Russians themselves.

Less than twelve months later, Dudayev gathered brawn and started sending ultimatums to Yeltsin, demanding more than one billion roubles in cash, since Chechnia faced a drastic cash crisis, like other regions of Russia. In the meantime, the rouble union was shaken by a major money swindle of Chechen businessmen who managed to mulct the

Central Bank of Russia and a string of Kabardino-Balkarian banks of over 30 billion roubles in cash using fake credit notes. In fact, Ukraine resorted to a similar, though more civilized, scheme. Ukrainians allocated 260 billion roubles for their factories, blatantly violating an agreement with Russia on credit restrictions.

The attitude of Ukrainians is not exactly known, but Chechens firmly believe, having raked in over 15 their annual budgets from the federal coffers, that Moscow still owes them more, as compensations for the deportation and numerous reprisals under the Soviet rule alone. So far, Chechens are stealing money by rail cars. The problem is that Russian banks are not linked by computer networks, and banking clerks are easily spoilt. The Moscow police managed to find and return only 40 million roubles out of the 30 billion stolen.

When 86 subjects of the federation inked the treaty on the Russian Federation in May 1992, only Chechenia stayed away from the alliance. With all optimism, this alliance doesn't mean much in today's highly volatile environment, as the Soviet Union itself collapsed in a matter of hours like a house of cards, together with the CPSU and the KGB. No one shed tears sincerely over them. Few people will be ready to defend the Russian empire of today till the bitter end. For their part, national republics within Russia are determined to defend their independence of Russia, even if in odd ways. At any rate, the green flag of Islam gathers many vocal warriors. Dudayev took every effort to coordinate the CIS oil market and bring it under an OPEC-style control of Moslem countries-Chechenia, Tartarstan, Bashkortostan and Azerbaijan.

It would be ludicrous to apply a Moscow yardstick to Dudayev. He's neither a democrat, or partocrat, or whatever by Russian standards. His satellites do not praise much the feudal structure of forces in Chechenia with its sects, clans, sprouting criminal firms, mass unemployment and seasonal migration all across the former Soviet Union. Russia has not recognized the Chechen Republic, this «Islamic state with secular administration,» but the Russian parliament passed a law on the establishment of the Ingush Republic in June 1992. The legislature never specified the territory or capital city of that republic. A civilized and peaceful divorce of the two nations will last for two years.

All political maps of the Northern Caucasus got completely obsolete by 1992. There are no more entities with double names on it. Karachaevo-Cherkessia, which used to be part of Stavropol Region in the ex-USSR, has been split into three national and two Cossack republics. For many years, that area had local papers published in the Abazin, Karachai, Nogai, Russian and Cherkessian languages. Part of the former Karachaevo-Cherkessia wants to join Krasnodar Territory, and all five newly established republics have announced their willingness to become part of the Russian Federation.

Won't Chechens turn Moscow into a second Beirut? Ruslan Khasbulatov, speaker of the Russian parliament, said at a press confer-

ence that he personally went to the Chechen republic to «overthrow Doka Zavgayev, a representative of the communist party elite». Soon it turned out, however, that General Dudayev was even more inconvenient a partner for Moscow than Zavgayev.

By the end of 1992 up to 80 per cent of all key posts in Northern Ossetia, the Kabardino-Balkar and Karachayevo-Cherkess republic and Dagestan had been occupied by the people who were in power five to seven years ago. Those people were certainly easier to deal with for the chairman of the Russian parliament's House of Nationalities committee for the affairs of the oppressed and deported people, Anatoly Anikeyev, an interior Ministry lieutenant-general, and Gen. Valentin Yermakov, a representative of the Russian parliament in the Ingush republic since July 1992. When the war broke out in Abkhazia in September 1992 the leaders of all these republics implored Yeltsin to declare a state of emergency over the entire territory of the Northern Caucasus. Fortunately, the President categorically turned down their requests.

The intense in-fighting between all the power structures in Russia makes it absolutely impossible to work out a sensible line of policy in the relations between the centre and the provinces. In an article entitled «Russia Needs a New Parliament to Survive,» which was published in the newspaper Golos (No. 18-19, 1992) Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, a leading Western Sovietologist, wrote this about the speaker of the Russian parliament and his fellow-countryman: «It is said that whenever God wants to punish someone, He deprives that person of reason. It appears that such punishment was inflicted upon the speaker of the anti-Yeltsin team, Khasbulatov. He may be a capable professor of economics, but he is no politician. If politics is the art of the possible, then one should be able to recruit one's supporters and neutralise one's enemies. As for Khasbulatov, the only thing he can do is increase the number of his enemies. But his arch enemy is himself. It is his arrogance and self-confidence. He is the speaker of a parliament which calls itself democratic, but he and his parliament have a very vague idea about democracy. If they had known what that means, the speaker would not have lied twice to that parliament, while the parliament would not have disgraced itself in the eyes of the world by behaving as if it were the Political theatre of the absurd.»

In the autumn of 1992 the Moscow press was unanimous in its opinion that Dudayev's threat to turn Moscow into a second Beirut by terrorist acts, blow up nuclear power stations all over Russia and occupy Rostov-on-Don was not a bluff but a tragic reality. Speaking on this Abject in numerous interviews, the speaker of the Chechen parliament, Khusain Akhmadov, said that the entire Chechen population, that is a Billion people in Chechnya and almost as many in Russia, would Participate in a holy war against the unfaithful and win it.

Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi and Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar repeatedly stated during the autumn of 1992 that there would be no war with Chechnya and that Russian troops would not cross

the border of the rebellious mountain republic. As bilateral negotiations went on sluggishly in Moscow and Grozny, Russia stepped up preparations for an economic and military blockade of Chechnya. Instead of working, all the male population of Chechnya on November 1 was mobilised into a single defence system to defend the republic against the 12,000-strong Russian army equipped with modern tanks, heavy artillery and missile systems. It should be noted that Grozny lies in a hollow and numerous gas and oil pipelines run through it, so a single rocket or even grenade may turn the Chechen capital into a burning inferno. It appears that the Chechens and Russian troops are reassured by the oft-repeated statement by President Dudayev that «we shall not fight on our soil.».

«**I preclude the Georgian scenario in Chechnya.**» This phrase was also uttered by Dudayev. In any case, he survived a coup attempt in early 1992 when by some miracle his enemies failed to explode a Russian interior force's ammunition depot in the outskirts of Grozny. The former Chechen communist party functionaries, who settled in Moscow, and all the members of the Russian parliament from the Chechen republic, who had been recalled by Chechnya's new leaders but continued to participate in the work of the parliament although they no longer represented anyone, were actively used by Moscow in its efforts to oust Dudayev. It is a miracle that throughout 1992 the latter managed to strengthen his shaky position in the republic despite mounting pressure from Moscow military leaders. The modest Chechen president even indulged the stamp-collectors by issuing the republic's first ever three national postage stamps. One showed eighteenth-century sheikh Mansur, the second one nineteenth-century imam Shamil and the third President Dzhokhar Dudayev in Soviet army general's uniform.

All Chechen politicians in Grozny, whatever their attitude to Dudayev, are convinced that the Ingush riots in Northern Ossetia were provoked to justify the military blockade of Chechnya. Grozny also believes that the Russian Supreme Soviet has no right to establish the borders of the new Ingush republic. According to Chechen parliament speaker Khusain Akhmadov, the dispute about the Chechen-Ingush border should be settled by an independent arbiter invited by both sides. No one has invited the Russian army or the Russian President's representative, Sergei Shakhrai, the Chechen parliament's speaker said. (By the way, the latter has never made a secret of his disapproval of General Dudayev's undiplomatic words and actions.).

Anatoly Sobchak, Mayor of St. Petersburg, once received an oral proposal from the Chechen foreign minister to arrange a meeting between Yeltsin and Dudayev. Sobchak used to sharply criticise both for different reasons. He believes that the federal authorities should decide once and for all what they ought to do whenever an autonomy refuses to obey their orders, that is work out an economic and financial mechanism in the event of a break-off of relations with Moscow. This is what Sobchak writes in «Nezavisimaya Gazeta» (August 7, 1992): «In the case of Chechnya, it did

not join Russia of its own free will. It was annexed to Russia by force. My personal point of view is that Russia must negotiate a special arrangement in respect with her relations with Chechnya and some other former autonomies, whose incorporation with Russia is not quite legitimate.».

It would be easier and cheaper for Russia to discuss problems with Chechnya at the negotiating table rather than through the army loudspeakers installed in the streets of Chechen cities. On September 3, 1992, Yeltsin was to discuss in Moscow the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict and invited the North Caucasian leaders to that meeting. General Dudayev, for his part, declared that a «roundtable» discussion on Northern Caucasus would be held in Grozny on September 4 and 5 and even said that it might be attended by Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi. Moscow responded by blockading the airport in Grozny on September 5, banned all flights from Chechnya to Russia and cancelled all flights from Russia to Grozny.

Now we know that that meeting in Moscow failed to produce any results. Moreover, in addition to the war in Abkhazia a war against the Ingush broke out in Northern Ossetia. By contrast, the «roundtable» in Grozny produced spectacular results: the Chechen leaders and very influential leaders from all Caucasian republics, who met in September, were very accurate in their forecast of the further developments in the region and reiterated their intention to create a Caucasian confederation with a common economic space, a common financial system and a single armed force and leadership.

The political short-sightedness of the Abkhazian leader, Vladislav Ardzinba, who allowed the conflict with Georgia to escalate into a full-scale war, was a god-send for the leaders of the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples. This popularity rating of that pro-Chechen organisation sky-rocketed.

The participants in the September meeting at Grozny formed a supreme religious council, which was headed up by Caucasian Moslem leader sheikh Allahshukyur Pasha-zade. It was yet a major step towards creating a union between the peoples, whose leaders blamed the Russian centre for all their problems and hardships. That union formed an arch between Baku, Makhachkala, Grozny, Nalchik, Sukhumi, Yerevan and Tbilisi (after the reinstatement of the presidency in Georgia), which extended from the Caspian to the Black sea.

It is very difficult to convince that mass of people in the Caucasus that this is not so, because Russia is represented in that region by generals, tanks, armoured personnel-carrier vehicles and poor servicemen. Russian parliamentary deputies occasionally make trips there, but they cannot resolve any problem single-handedly. It is also quite clear that there is no co-ordination of actions between the Russian Interior Ministry, Security Ministry, Defence Ministry and Foreign Ministry, the Government, the Parliament, the Security Council and the President. Each does what it sees fit and what is required by the immediate objec-

tives of the political struggle in the top echelons of power, and the overall result is nil. No one trusts Moscow because the Russian leaders use the fate of dozens of small countries and peoples as bargaining chips in their dishonest political gamble.

On September 5 the territory of Chechnya was blockaded on all sides by Russian troops. The transport blockade was allegedly imposed to prevent the smuggling of arms, ammunition and drugs, but in reality the Russian troops blocked all traffic into and out of the republic. A lorry carrying meat to Chechnya would be held up at the border for two days and the meat would be off and have to be thrown away.

A column of KAMAZ trucks carrying 120 tons of calf skins from Chechnya to Turkey (we cannot dress skins in this country) was held up by Sotchi police officers and all their cargoes were confiscated. No wonder the Chechens have financed the armament of the volunteer units of the Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Peoples. What other reaction could one expect from people who are not sold air and railway tickets in the Stavropol and Krasnodar territories, whose cars are not filled with petrol at filling stations and who are not allowed to put up at hotels? What would you expect from a people who know that in July 1992 the Russian Central Bank suspended all accounting and financial transactions with Chechnya?

The newspaper *Delovoi Mir* (*Business World*) on November 6, 1992, quoted Chechen Press and Information Minister Movladi Udugov as saying that Russian enterprises owed Chechen enterprises 30 billion roubles and that Chechnya fulfilled 90 per cent of its delivery obligations to Russia, while Russia met only 25 per cent of its obligations.

Blockade of Chechnya is impossible in principle. The events in Abkhazia, where Chechen volunteers arrived without any problems, confirmed this. All sensible people, including the Stavropol Cossack leader, Petr Fedoseyev, believe that Russia must conduct negotiations with Chechnya. Moscow, however, prefers the use of brute force to persistent and taxing diplomatic effort.

For more than a year now Chechnya has been an independent state, although no country in the world has recognised it. Gen. Dudayev has travelled to the United States and, to Russia's outrage, managed to sign a series of contracts with American oil corporations. As soon as it took power, the Dudayev regime signed agreements on direct economic ties with the neighbouring Stavropol and Krasnodar territories and the Astrakhan, Rostov and Volgograd regions. He did so in spite of the opposition by the central Russian authorities.

Now the Americans are to arrive in Chechnya with their technologies and equipment to drill oil from old wells and in areas which require horizontal drilling at the depth of 3,000-4,000 metres. As a result, 17,000 skilled workers of the local oil refineries and petrochemical plants may be out of work soon. Oil from Tyumen, Kuban and the Stavropol territory accounts for 80 per cent of the 15-16 million tons of crude oil refined in the Chechen republic. Oil supplies from those regions have now dwindle.

dled to 12 million tons because the Russian leaders decided to punish Chechnya and urgently bought for hard currency equipment for the construction of three module oil refineries in Tyumen, Kuban and the Stavropol territory. When Chechnya is left with her own oil resources, its oil-refining industry will come to a halt.

No wonder that people driven by poverty have started stealing petrol from pipelines running from Grozny to Budennovsk, Armavir and Trudovaya, Ukraine. All the three cities are now virtually paralysed because they hardly get half the petrol they need.

Petrol thieves drill or shoot holes in the pipelines and a lot of petrol gushing out of the holes is lost, creating big lakes.

Some gangs of petrol thieves are well equipped and armed and owing to widespread corruption, the Stavropolpolimer Plant, the biggest polyethylene enterprise in Europe, which accounts for a third of the total industrial output of the Stavropol territory, has now been stopped because of the absence of fuel. You cannot place a policeman to guard every kilometre of the 189-kilometre pipeline from Grozny to Budennovsk. It's too expensive. And now thieves are beginning to rob railway cars. A rare car arrives at its place of destination intact. Similar incidents have been reported from many other regions of the former Soviet union.

But this is not the main thing that worries the federal authorities. They simply cannot reconcile themselves with the fact that a vast territory has appeared within the Russian Federation, on which Russian laws are not working and where criminals cannot be reached by Russian law enforcement authorities.

But the main danger is that Moscow has now become the capital of the Caucasus. This megapolis is now controlled by well-organised criminal groups from the south. Azerbaijanis control fruit and vegetable markets, where drugs from Central Asia are sold. Daghestanis and Georgians specialise in car thefts and Chechens in extortions. And all Southerners buy and sell arms.

Southerners do business practically in all major Russian cities. It was not hard to foresee that when the Russian leaders imposed an economic blockade on the Caucasus (in December 1992 petrol in all the Trans-Caucasian republics cost more than in the United States, while the average wage there was four dollars a month, to say nothing about delays in wage payments and non-payments), hundreds or thousands of young Caucasians would rush to Russia to rob the population and the state.

All these criminal elements bribe law enforcement officers and government officials and divide spheres of influence with Russian criminals and among themselves. Such practices were not unheard of in the communist Soviet Union, but now, in a democratic Russia, they have become commonplace. It cannot be otherwise. Russia conquered the south and persecuted, deported, humiliated and exploited its peoples. she makes them fight against one another, cutting off gas and electricity and leav-

ing people without food and work. No wonder many Southerners have to live for months outside their homeland, that is in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

Our democratic and free press openly fumes about the presence of too many Caucasians, especially Chechens, in the Russian cities and this propaganda has produced the predictable results. Caucasians living in Russia are bluntly told to go home: Chechen families are being evicted from a district centre near Volgodonsk in the Rostov Region and from, dozens of other places.

The Terek Cossack army with its leaders, most of whom are former communist party functionaries, has become the most privileged public organisation in Northern Ossetia. It is headquartered in a mansion in the centre of Vladikavkaz and receives substantial financial assistance from the local authorities. Its chieftain, Vasily Konyakhin, has sent a package of proposals to the Russian Government, urging it to restore a Cossack autonomy on the territory of the Chechen-Ingush republic.

NORTHERN CAUCASUS. It is Vietnam, Lebanon and Afghanistan put together

As many as 25 million Russians now live outside Russia, which has found herself surrounded by warring neighbours. Sooner or later Russia will have to accept and re-settle on her territory not only these 25 million people but also numerous refugees of different nationalities.

Even now the Northern Caucasus, that is the south of Russia, cannot accept all the people who come there in search of warmth and food. This region with an area of 605,000 square kilometres has a population of 20 million. People of 70 nationalities live there. Should anything go wrong there and the conflicts around Ossetia, Chechnya, Ingushetia and the local Cossack lands intensify, a flood of refugees and unpredictable behaviour of the Moslem population of the Volga region will cause economic paralysis of the entire European Russia.

If the Far East and Siberia secede from Russia, little will change in the life of the Russian people living on the territory stretching from Rostov-on-Don to St. Petersburg. There will be less petrol at the filling stations, but we have never had enough petrol for our combine-harvesters anyway. We shall have fewer tanks, satellites, missiles and submarines. Russia will easily survive the secession of some North Caucasian republics, but a war in that region will be the undoing of the Russian Federation. It will shrunk to the size of the Moscow Region.

The man who initiated the break-up of the Soviet Union was Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk. The collapse of the USSR and the Soviet Union was a punishment for their inaction during the five years that had passed since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. As for Russia, it is yet to cope with the



aftermaths of not only the Chernobyl accident, but also the atrocities committed by our troops in Afghanistan and the Trans-Caucasus.

It was wrong to oust Gamsakhurdia, just as it was wrong to make him President. We know that the United States took a long time to recover from the Vietnam syndrome. At least 1.5 million young Soviets were involved in the 10-year war in Afghanistan. According to official statistics, 15,000 of them were killed and 150,000 were wounded and crippled. Many Afghanistan war invalids have not received adequate medical and psychiatric treatment, housing or compensation from those who sent them to kill innocent Afghan civilians (1.5 million Afghans were killed and three million had to flee from the country). At the same time, Soviet generals made fortunes on the war and carried valuables and drugs from Afghanistan by aircraft, bypassing customs controls.

The Afghanistan war veterans were a major political force which supported the democrats during the elections throughout the former Soviet Union and the Afghanistan war was one of the factors which contributed to the collapse of the communist regime.

However, our army also has changed. There were too many Professional killers, marauders and thieves in the Soviet armed forces. The criminal regime used the cut-throats with Afghanistan war experience against the crowds of unarmed pro-democracy campaigners in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, the Baltic republics, Ukraine and the Caucasus.

The Kremlin did not dare to unleash a full-scale war against the numerous Soviet Moslems or the independent-minded Baltic states, which were supported by the West. It was in the Caucasus that the Moscow leaders decided to use the Afghanistan experience of the Soviet army and teach all potential rebels a lesson.

In was in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan that the dim-witted Soviet leaders lost everything they had in the late eighties. They lost the support of the local leaders, corrupted their own army, tarnished their international image and became incapable of controlling the situation.

If in 1991 the Soviet army had behaved in the streets of Moscow the way it behaved in Afghanistan or the Caucasus, Soviet generals would not have dared to appear in public in military uniform for fear of being spat in the face.

However, Soviet generals have nothing to fear because in the south they did not fight against the Russians. They have nothing to fear because they had the support of such influential structures as the GRU (Military Intelligence), the KGB, the Interior Ministry and the Soviet Communist Party.

When it became clear that the communist rulers would have to pass through the gruelling test of the first free parliamentary and presidential elections in Georgia, the local secret police officials instructed all the local government officials and their own activists to support anti-Sovietist Zviyad Gamsakhurdia. As soon as that dissident and senior research fellow of the Georgian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Georgian Literature became president, Moscow knew that he would not stay for long. His enemies in Moscow easily defeated him without realising that it was actually their own defeat. The GRU, the KGB and the Communist party wreaked havoc on Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, failing to realise the simple fact that a rich neighbour is easier to deal with than a poor one.

The Gamsakhurdia regime was put to its first test in Southern Ossetia, where the local communist leaders were not inclined to give up their power to the Georgian President. There were leaders and members of the Soviet parliament in Tskhinvali who were prepared to do anything for the promise of generous reward from Moscow. It was not difficult to unleash a war in the south where most people have arms, can fight and still abide by the vendetta laws. So, there was President Gamsakhurdia, on the one hand, and the Kremlin, the Trans-Caucasian Military District and the local communist rulers and criminals, on the other. Meanwhile, the Georgian Interior Ministry, Academy of Sciences, Prosecutor's Office and KGB continued to be financed out of the Soviet budget. All these structures continued to be controlled by both Tbilisi and Moscow.

With a little money the Kremlin created a motley armed opposition to President Gamsakhurdia and gave his ideological opponents the opportunity to use all mass media in Moscow and abroad.

It was no problem in Georgia in 1990-1992 to obtain a sub-machine-gun, machine-gun, tank, armoured carrier vehicle or rocket launcher. A short while ago a soldier who might lose his submachine-gun would have been tried and imprisoned, but during Gamsakhurdia's rule and afterwards the Russian army in Georgia suddenly became easy-going and began to sell, give away and hand out for bribes any number of arms to anyone who asked for them. The Soviet (now Russian) army did

not care about the outcome of the power struggle in Georgia. All the local military, from sergeant to general, wanted was to get rich and their superiors in Moscow received commission and remained faithful to their strategy: let the Caucasians kill one another and ruin their economy and then ask Moscow to help them.

The economy in the Caucasus was destroyed with the aid of a few simple tricks. At first railway cars were robbed, but later the only railway linking Georgia with Russia was blockaded. The strategic road through Ossetia had long been closed for Georgia, so the only way one could get to Russia from Tbilisi, by train or car, was through Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan (even that route was closed for Armenia).

All Georgian criminals who served their terms in prisons throughout the former Soviet Union were released by Moscow and sent to Tbilisi. There the only choice they had was either to continue to serve their terms in overcrowded prisons or fight «for the Motherland». The Russian army gave up the sophisticated heavy military hardware to the Georgian along with the Russian personnel. Criminals, mercenaries, political adventurers and marauders began to rain supreme on Georgian roads and in Georgian cities. That policy demoralised the Russian army. Soldiers began to desert their units in numbers, while the officers became hostages of the short-sighted, suicidal policy of their commanders. Russian servicemen's families in the Caucasus will hardly be welcome guests in Russia.

Wasting taxpayer money, Moscow intentionally left mountains of weapons in Georgia and turned the republic into a powder-keg. Russian troops could have taken these weapons away from Georgia, sold or exchanged them rather than put them into the hands of those who shelled with artillery rockets and missiles government buildings in Tbilisi in December 1991.

The GRU has achieved its aims in Georgia. «A process has begun» there, as our beloved General Secretary and President liked to say, but it is a suicidal process. The commander of the Trans-Caucasian Military District and his close associates have already built luxurious mansions near Stavropol where they will retire after leaving Tbilisi shortly. Meanwhile, vast amounts of weapons and ammunition of the Russian army, kept at military depots in Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Gudauta, Tskhinvali, Tsulukidze and Kutaisi (see the newspaper *Kommersant* of November 24, 1992) have been placed at the disposal of the warring factions in Georgia (*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, November 14, 1992).

In the same way a lot of advanced weapons was obtained by the illegal armed units in Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia. According to Valery Shuikov, secretary of the Russian parliament committee on defence and security, the Russian army has given Gen. Dudayev's army 150 armoured carrier vehicles and tanks, 160 aircraft, 40,000 light firearms and a million rounds of ammunition (the newspaper *Federatsiya* No. 42, 1992). And after that Russia unleashes a war of nerves against Dudayev, blockading the Chechen republic by troops, barbed wire, mine fields,

trenches and anti-tank hedgehogs and inciting a nationwide hatred campaign against the Chechens.

The forces of literally all warring parties in the Caucasus include a lot of Russian mercenaries. Russian army officers and men captured with their planes or tanks are now tried by military tribunals in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Osetia. Tanks or missile launchers of the CIS army, complete with crews, equipment and ammunition, are known to have been hired by various warring factions—by Armenians today and by Azeris tomorrow. Yesterday convoys of equipment and a squadron of SU-25 aircraft were provided to support Shevardnadze and, at the same time, ten T-80 tanks (the latest model) were handed over to Ardzinba in Abkhazia (the newspaper *Vek* No. 9 1992). No wonder the military in the Trans-Caucasian region hate reporters—bullying and blackmailing local ones and suffering the presence of foreign newsmen only for their dollars (*Sobesednik* No. 44, 1992). Indeed, who needs extra witnesses?

Now, in retrospect, some political leaders in Russia admit that the military had been actually allowed to decide all matters of policy in respect of the former Soviet republics on their own, particularly in the Trans-Caucasus (an interview with Russia's deputy foreign minister Fyodor Shelov-Kovediayev in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 30, 1992). This has prompted Azerbaijan to look for new backers—South Korea, the US, Israel, and, of course, Turkey—while Russia is losing ground to Ukraine. Just as in Yerevan, people in Baku have long suspected that Moscow would like the war to continue (*Rossiia*, November 18, 1992).

When Gorbachev still ruled the tottering empire, there were many opportunities to end the mutual extermination of Armenians and Azeris. It was possible to settle the whole thing in a matter of days—identify and put on trial the perpetrators of the Sumgait massacre and do everything to shut up the Armenians laying ambitious, and in now way justified, claims to Nagorno-Karabakh. Maybe, Moscow would have done well to cough up some money, pull off a diplomatic miracle, and climb down on some issues to appease both Baku and Yerevan. In his time, Gorbachev would not reconcile Armenia and Azerbaijan; today Yeltsin is unable to do that. But, surely, it is not right to leave all weapons, equipment and troops at the disposal of the two warring republics. Now both the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities have offered an alternative to the Russian servicemen—either to service as instructors (combatants) with local armies or «you will never make it alive from here.» Russian papers of all leanings have described many such cases, mentioning the persons involved by name (for example, «Russian prisoners in Azerbaijan» in the newspaper *Den*, October 4, 1992). Professor Alexander Vladislavlev and Professor Sergei Karabanov wrote in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on November 17, 1992, that «a semi-indifferent attitude to the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and Moscow's departure from an active role in efforts to end the conflict did much to precipitate the flare-up of hostilities throughout

the Trans-Caucasus. And now the fighting has spilled over into North Caucasus, which is part of Russia.».

I strongly disagree with this view. The Moscow manipulators, anxious to protect party apparatchiks in Yerevan, have gone out of their way to impress on the inexperienced local democrats the nationalist idea of making Nagorno-Karabakh part of Armenia. Since taking office, President Levon Ter-Petrosyan has on more than one occasion publicly lamented that Armenians should not have started this hopeless and dangerous undertaking. And the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee must have been felt satisfied till its final demise that it had properly punished the Armenians who appeared recalcitrant and hostile to Moscow. The Georgians, Armenians, and Azeris—all got a beating from the KGB and GRU (Chief Intelligence Department) for their determination to leave the Moscow political ambit. Indeed, the Trans-Caucasian economy is now in tatters.

One man now pushing forward on the Moscow political scene is Arkady Volsky, formerly a CPSU Central Committee insider for 20 years. The high point of his career was a two-year stint as special administrator in Nagorno-Karabakh. Having signally failed to bring peace to the embattled enclave, Volsky seems set to continue experimenting on a larger scale. In fact, no political leader in what used to be the Soviet has so far failed to speak on the Armenian-Azeri carnage or to make a trip to the theatre of hostilities, if only for a couple of hours. Yet nothing seems good enough to stop the fighting—the machinery which the Communists and KGB men within the army once set in motion. Russia would do well to leave the region—the sooner the better—for it should not have allowed the region to be ravaged the way it is. The Yeltsin government faces heavy odds. The worst thing of all is that political decision-making in the Caucasus is now in the hands of the same top brass who, when Gorbachev was still around, started the ball rolling, in the first place, by encouragement, instigation, promises and other means.

The Georgian-Abkhazian war in Russia. Theoretically, Yeltsin could have helped peace efforts in the Caucasus, yet within a year of his rule the situation there became irreversible. Russia's weak and ambiguous policy was among the factors which triggered off the war between Georgia and Abkhazia, which is likely to drag on for years. Even in 1992 official Moscow proved unable to see a simple thing—that it should have allowed the Trans-Caucasus, and, more recently, northern Caucasus, to be turned into a vast Afghanistan where each tribe takes up arms to fight the other with a proper measure of enthusiasm. The on-going fighting in Afghanistan has spilled over into neighbouring Tajikistan—and for a very simple reason: a whole generation in Afghanistan today regard war-fighting as their livelihood.

What does the future hold for the millions of not very well fed young men who have mastered the art of killing in the Caucasus? The answer is, they will continue to practise it elsewhere, Russia included. Already,

their crews descend on Moscow in rotation, going back home to relax after a monthly stint in the vast expanses of Russia, while local police unable to keep the situation in hand.

Worse still, the numerous armed groups in the Caucasian republic now take orders only from their «field commanders,» ignoring political authorities. The «commanders,» for their part, are at odds with one another and their national political liberals-just as in Afghanistan today. In all likelihood, Georgia will see a series of military coups in the near future.

It is Moscow that has brought about this appalling situation-both in Afghanistan and in the Caucasus. Indeed, political conflicts would not break out here three to four years ago without support and advice from a powerful party. Only 17 per cent of the Abkhazian population are ethnic Abkhazians, who live mostly in rural areas. In its capital Sukhumi, ethnic Abkhazians made up six per cent-all holding senior executive posts. Abkhazia had its own party elite and privileged economic managers, who regularly replaced one another in posh offices in Sukhumi, Moscow, and Tbilisi. In the latter two cities, Abkhazian functionaries were sized up taught the ABC's of politics. Some Abkhazians were thought capable of taking advantage of what seemed never-ending Russo-Georgian frictions, if only within the party bureaucracy.

It was the Ossetian, not Abkhazian, card that was played with Zviad Gamsakhurdiya, which is further proof that the President of Georgia had competent opponents (Zviad is of Mingrel descent, and the Mingrel ethnic group makes up the bulk of the Georgian population in Abkhazia, which is also home to a great many mixed Mingrel-Abkhazian families). During the past few decades, when Moscow felt like snubbing the top man in Tbilisi, the usual practice was to provoke some kind of «Abkhazian events.» An all-Abkhazian jirga in some far-flung village would declare its intention to accept Russian jurisdiction. That would stampede Tbilisi men into action. They would arrive their offering to open an Abkhazian university or organise Abkhazian television or do something else of this kind. Tbilisi would seethe with anger, with Moscow bosses smiling at the whole thing, and the men in Sukhumi puffed up with the feeling of their own importance.

In the summer of 1989, in a bid to provoke and discredit the growing nationalist anti-communist movement in Tbilisi, smart men at certain government agencies sanctioned the Abkhazians' letter to Gorbachev and went on to set up groups of armed terrorists. At that juncture, an alliance between the Abkhazian separatists and Moscow was to mutual benefit, etc. Afterwards, everything went according to plan-a group of specially trained Abkhazians brutally beat up Georgian passengers travelling by bus. In protest over the event, Georgian students from Abkhazian University went to Tbilisi to demonstrate for a few days. On April 9, 1989, the protest was broken up by special forces dispatched from Moscow. They used war gases and spades against the protesters,

killing 20, with thousands taken to hospital with wounds. In mid-July, gunfire and unrest were provoked in Sukhumi by Abkhazian militants, whose leaders were pressing the central government to impose a state of emergency, which would rob Georgia of its authority over the region, so that new nationalist power structures could be formed in Abkhazia. Yet the game was spoiled by local criminals and grey economy operators, who must have thought a curfew would frighten off holiday-makers and diminish incomes. In short, criminal world bosses moved quickly to pacify the right people, thus preventing a bloodbath.

In the autumn of 1992, the players on the Abkhazian political scene were different. Muscovite V. Ardzinba, a senior research officer at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, did not know the rules of party subordination. However, he was represented Abkhazia in the USSR Supreme Soviet and made a career by opposing a faction of democratically-minded deputies. In a move without precedent in Georgian history, he hired mercenaries from northern Caucasus—an option which even Gamsakhurdiya rejected, despite frequent suggestions. As a result of Ardzinba's blatant instigation and the equally appalling actions by the north Caucasian. Abkhazian and Georgian militants, Abkhazia today lies in ruins and its people are fleeing to escape the fighting. Some competent Moscow generals at the level of Russia's deputy defence minister and Russia's ministry of defence special envoy in Abkhazia, which were entrenched together with Ardzinba during the most critical days at the Russian military base in Gudaut, seemed pleased with the job done, as the only natural access to Russia was finally closed to the mutinous Georgia and Armenia for a long time to come.

The newspaper Rossiya wrote on November 25, 1992 that it was the mercenaries of the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, not the «freedom-loving» Abkhazians, that had proved the more fierce fighters in that war. According to some prisoners, every mercenary had been given 50,000 roubles and promised a car and an apartment in Sukhumi—once the Georgians had been driven out. Everyone looks after his own interest in a war. Sukhumi and, indeed, most of the other Abkhazian cities and villages have been thoroughly looted. Georgians have been known to drive up to an apartment block in a tank, load all the belongings of its tenants into a truck, and drive away in the tenants' cars. In fact, everyone with an automatic rifle is now behaving in this manner in Abkhazia. But north Caucasians are known to be particularly ruthless, according to many refugees. Thousands of people have died in Abkhazia since August 1992.

Georgia was the first to send its troops to Abkhazia—crowds of armed, to-the-teeth, disorderly and hungry young men with drug addicts' glimmer in the eyes—maybe even against the will of Shevardnadze. What we are witnessing in Georgia is an all-out war between Georgians from eastern Georgia and supporters of President Gamsakhurdiya, whose government was barbarously overthrown in January 1992. Gamsakhurdiya and

his cohorts are now in Grozny, from where he controls the actions of his supporters in western Georgia-his native Mingrelia would like to break away and become an independent state.

In Abkhazia, even before the fighting began in late August of 1992, it had become clear that total disruption of normal life in Georgia no longer suited either Abkhazians, Russians, Armenians or Mingrel Georgians. These ethnic communities were at war with each other, and trains and trucks seldom reaching eastern Georgia and Armenia intact. Psychologically, Abkhazia had come to a point where it was ready to ask for Russian protection, so that later press for full independence. In late July of 1992, Ostankino hastened to announce «the declaration of Abkhazia's independence.» Surely, those in charge of the country's television broadcasting had enough common sense to see that, given the situation at hand, another Nagorno-Karabakh was bound to emerge close to the Russian border. The Abkhazian parliament then met in session, with only half the MPs present, and terminated what it called «the Brezhnev-Shevardnadze 1978 Constitution» and decided to draft a new agreement between Abkhazia and Georgia.

From instigator-generals to nationalists. It was not for nothing that Tbilisi accused the Abkhazian authorities of supporting the Mingrel pro-Gamsakhurdiya armed opposition. Had Russia formulated a realistic policy regarding the Trans-Caucasus, where many CIS army units were stationed, the Russian Federation authorities would have found some way to provide economic aid to the Abkhazian minority, thus preventing the worst happening. If the military authorities of the Russian Federation had acted as prompted by their conscience and reason, they would have easily persuaded Georgia's defence minister Kitovani not to dispatch troops to Sukhumi and Gagra. Yet the Moscow generals decided otherwise.

The fact is that the Trans-Caucasian military authorities remain the only real force in the region-if only because the Russian army has always been fully in control here (the Commander of the Trans-Caucasian Military District had far higher status than the top Communist Party man in a Soviet republic, even higher than Politburo member Shevardnadze). Today the Trans-Caucasian Military District guarantees maintenance of the equipment employed by all armed groups in Georgia and Abkhazia, provides the necessary training, and supplies its own instructors and advisers-all under informal arrangements, of course. Georgia has run out of bread, but weapons are in plentiful supply, and there are enough spare parts and repair facilities.

The Main Intelligence Department and the KGB (the Russian Security Ministry) should have foreseen the reaction of the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus to the invasion of Abkhazia by the forces under the command of the Georgian State Council. Official authorities throughout the Russian Federation were shocked to see a powerful political group based in Russian territory

declaring war on a state neighbouring on Russia. This being so, what is the use of the President, parliament and government of a country whose citizens can act as they think fit, relying on their own military clout? But then, the Moscow generals committed to the traditional Communist doctrine might have wanted to see just that outcome.

Of course, demonstrating their solidarity, the Confederation sent strong forces across the mountains to support the Abkhazians. What's more, the August 22, 1992, Decree issued by Confederation President Musa Shanibov (assistant professor at Kabardino-Balkarian University honorary chairman of the Confederation) and Speaker of the Confederation parliament Yusup Soslambekov (the de facto head of the Confederation and one of the more influential men surrounding President Dudayev of Chechnya) was couched in such terms as would have done credit to Hussein, Arafat, and Quaddafi: «(1) All headquarters of the Confederation must ensure that volunteers arrive in sovereign Abkhazia... (2)... engage the enemy and fight their way through to Abkhazian territory by any means. (3) Declare the city of Tbilisi a disaster area, using every possible methods, terrorist acts included. (4) Regard all persons of Georgian descent on the Confederation territory as hostages. (5) Arrest all cargoes destined to Georgia...» (*Nezavisimaya gazeta*, August 25, 1992).

A few days later, the Abkhazians and their defenders armed had armoured personnel carriers and rocket launchers at the disposal, in addition to handguns and rifles. The newspaper *Izvestia* queried on October 9, 1992: «Can Russia, being a member of the UN Security Council, continue to act as a guarantor of international stability at a time when it cannot ensure security at home? Can we feel secure in a country where heavily armed groups—a veritable army—flout the law and go unpunished. Today they declare Tbilisi a disaster area; tomorrow it may be Moscow's turn.»

Writing in the same issue of *Izvestia*, political scientist Emil Pain said that Russian nationalists should not laugh at Shevardnadze's troubles, saying he had destroyed the Soviet Union and wishing Georgia went the same way.

Pain suggested that these nationalists imagine their reaction if, say, Bashkiriya were to send terrorists to Russia (the way Abkhazia acted, using Zviad supporters, even before the Georgian aggression), taking Russian government ministers hostage (Georgian ministers Kavsadze and Gventsadze were kept hostage by pro-Zviad militants) and changing.

Constitution against the interests of the ethnic majority (as the parliament did on July 13, 1992, in the absence of Georgian).

Finally, the Abkhazians greeted the resolution passed by the Russian parliament on September 25, 1992, as a sign of unqualified support; witness the statement made by Ardzinba on Russian television later that day. What also said a lot about Abkhazia's attitude was the start of fighting in the Gagra direction a few days after the adoption of the resolution.

Now did the Russian parliament achieve by its «peace-making exercise? It came as further evidence of diarchy (or even anarchy) in Russia. Indeed, the parliamentary resolution proved at odds with the tripartite peace accord on Abkhazia signed by the Russian President. Furthermore, it worsened Georgia's suspicion that Russia might be exercising double standards, undercutting the stand of the liberals on Georgia's State Council and strengthening the hand of the hawks. Resolution caused the conflict to escalate, setting the conditions for it to spill over into Russian territory. Days of protests in Nalchik over the arrest of Confederation leader Shanibov by the Russian Prosecutor's Office (he was immediately released) and the long-running passions over the dispatch of volunteers to Abkhazia stopped little short of breaking the fragile peace in the northern Caucasus. The Kabardins (the Adighe-Abkhazian ethnic group) and the Balkars (the Turkic ethnic group) have different views and different interests, so their split would have disastrous implications. Then again, there is the Republic of Adigheya nearby, the President of which was quick to take a pro-Abkhazian stance. But we cannot deny the ability of this minor President of the newly-declared republic to analyse facts. One high office in Gudaut was held by Russia's deputy defence minister Georgiy Kondratiev, whose mindset had been strongly anti-Georgian ever since South Ossetia, where he ordered helicopter gunships to attack Georgian positions. A few Georgian SU-25 ground-attack planes were shot down in Abkhazia-something which is technically impossible without AA missile launchers, which the Abkhazians could not have had at their disposal. Someone must impress on the wild Russian politicians that «compromise solutions to the conflicts raging in Georgia would be in Russia's interest, whereas continued warfare or any threat of force in the handling of the crisis would spell disaster» (from an article by Yevgeny Kutikov in the newspaper *Golos*, October 19, 1992).

Some political leaders in Russia may have forgotten that Turkey alone has more than a million-strong Adighe-Abkhazian community and is home to about two million Georgians of Muslim faith. *Izvestia* (November 13, 1992) quoted the Turkish press as saying that a group of 70 Turkish nationals had been fighting alongside the Abkhazians for several months now. All these volunteers are Turks of Abkhazian background whose ancestors moved to Turkey at the turn of the century.

Every month a new war breaks out in the Caucasus, and Russia has been unable to reconcile any of the warring parties. Member of the Russian parliament Viktor Sheinis, having made a tour of the Caucasus as an official parliamentary representative, takes the view that «while efforts to bring the situation back to normal in Ossetia have been marginally successful, the events in Abkhazia seem to be developing very much like in Nagorno-Karabakh» (*Literaturnaya gazeta*, November 4, 1992). We should agree with Sheinis, who thinks that the extremely unstable peace in South Ossetia was maintained in 1992

exclusively with the help of armed force and with a full-scale involvement of the Russian peace-keeping officers' corps and the firm stand of all political forces in North Ossetia, which believe that the political future of South Ossetia lies in the re-establishment of the prewar status quo, i.e. autonomy within Georgia. But the Georgians are opposed to any kind of autonomy while the people of South Ossetia are determined to reunite with North Ossetia to be part of Russia. The question is, how long will the peace-keeping force have to stay there?

Confrontation in South Ossetia was engineered by the Russian and other opponents of Gamsakhurdiya, who took advantage of his obvious lack of political vision.

Now why couldn't the Ingush and Ossetians live in peace in the northern Caucasus? Moscow, eager to pique the Chechens, willingly allowed the Ingush, by a parliamentary resolution, to establish their own republic-yet without clearly delimited borders, without a budget, without government structures, and without a capital. Decisions on these matters were put off. The happy Ingush, being normal people, began to arm to be able to protect their borders, drive Ossetians away from «the Ingush land,» sort it out with the Cossacks, and bargain with their Chechen brothers. Before being elected President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin promised the Ingush a republic of their own. They backed Yeltsin at the time; now they have a state of emergency on their hands, a war with the Ossetians to the last, hundreds of dead, and thousands of refugees.

Now what was it exactly that started the fray? As Pain writes in *Izvestia* (November 5, 1992), «the institution of military envoys have proved ineffective. Viktor Yermachev, whom the Russian government appointed its official representative in Ingushetia in June, may be a good general, but lacks political skill; witness his proposal to hold parliamentary elections in the Ingush republic's four districts, including the one in North Ossetian territory. » That led to armed clashes between Ingush and Ossetians.

Some high-placed bureaucrats in Moscow set off conflicts through political bungling and legal blunders, and others attempt to put them down with the same lack of skill. Local leaders locked onto nationalist ideas are looking to make political capital on the war. Pain goes on to say: «One member of the parliament Presidium publicly argues against absolutising' the borders between the former Soviet republics, and a Presidential adviser thinks it right and proper to provide military assistance to culturally and historically related nations.».

Through these concerted efforts, political leaders and senior military commanders in what used to be the Soviet Union contribute to making hostage-taking, and sabotage have become common practice throughout the Caucasus. Committed as they are to the idea of a nation-state-which ynever actually materialise-dozens of small nations are well aware that the all-important thing for Moscow is to keep its troops in the Caucasus. Whether this region prospers or degenerates into lifeless

desert is not the Russians' concern, nor are they worried about the fate of the indigenous population.

One hundred and eighty roubles per each month of imprisonment but altogether no more than 25,000 roubles, i.e. 50 dollars at the rate of exchange in late 1992. This is the size of compensation due to persons purged, deported or otherwise persecuted without good grounds during the Stalin era and exonerated under Khrushchev. Under the relevant law passed in October 1991, these miserly sums must be handed out to the victims of persecution or their heirs. On July 26, 1992, parliament voted to raise the ceiling on this compensation to 90,000 roubles (180 Us dollars at the rate current in late 1992). The absolute majority of those entitled to compensation, counting from 1917 to this day, have no papers whatsoever to confirm their tragic past. The necessary evidence can be found in official records or obtained through correspondence. But those who can, will not do the job, and others—mostly rural dwellers—are not in a position to get the ball rolling. So consider this situation: A man returned from prison or exile in 1956; thereupon he may have succeeded in obtaining a paper from the Supreme Court to certify his exoneration. That paper could have been lost or turned to dust since then. In addition, a person seeking compensation has to obtain a lot more papers from security police files. This is all very humiliating. Indeed, after ten years in prison or a life of suffering, people are promised two hundred dollars, which one cannot get, anyway.

Well, let us forget about this disgrace. The legislation in question will go down in law textbooks as an example of nonsense, pure and simple. It provides, inter alia, that «the rehabilitation of the repressed peoples» must involve the re-establishment of their nation-states. Now the once persecuted Cossacks, for instance, and the persecuted Karachai can point to the law and find sufficient legal grounds for laying claims to the same land. The ensuing territorial disputes escalate into ethnic conflicts, as has been graphically exemplified by the events of the past few years. Since the start of this century, every family in the northern Caucasus has been forced to move about three times. In the Trans-Caucasus, every second family has been displaced in this way. The law seeks a return to the situation which had taken shape by the autumn of 1943. But this is impractical. Why set innocent people at loggerheads? The authorities concerned could have handled the issue of compensation in a different manner, dealing with every family and every village on a case-by-case basis, for example.

If it is to command the respect of the people, a government must not be just and fair to some at the expense of others. «Nothing can justify the kind of actions which triggered off the bloody conflict in North Ossetia, Chairman of the House of Nationalities Ramazan Abdulatipov told its session. Being of Avarian origin, he was sorry for the Ingush whom the Ossetians had literally thrown out of a part of Vladikavkaz and from Prigorodny District. But it was the House of Nationalities of the Russian parliament that had the «territorial rehabilitation» clause written into

the text of the law in 1991. The only reasonable proposal came from Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Georgiy Khizha, the Leningrader sent to settle the conflict in the northern Caucasus. He suggested opening a free economic zone in the region as an alternative to redrawing the borders. But this arrangement would call for fair play. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Lenina.k.a.n and faced with the escalating conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian authorities made futile requests to Gorbachev to allow them to go ahead with the creation of a free economic zone. Passions would have been calmed down, for the well-fed do not rebel.

Khizha was ordered back to Moscow. The central figure was now Sergei Shakhrai, who had been put on the Security Council—a Politburo-style body in the power structure of today. Shakhrai flew to Vladikavkaz, where he appeared before TV cameras wearing paratroopers' blotched uniform, which must have sent a certain message to television viewers.

A Cossacks' hospital in southern Russia. The Kremlin has now the only chance to keep control of Krasnodar Territory, the last bread basket, the last holiday-makers' resort, and the last access to the warm seas. How come that the semi-mythical Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, which campaigns on an Islamic platform, has brought under its banners even the Christian North Ossetia and Abkhazia, which have lost faith in Russia? Looking farther ahead, what if Iran and Turkey should decide they need access to the Volga, where many Muslims live?

The current widespread looting in Georgia and the economic blockade of Armenia have set off a flood of Armenian refugees to southern Russia. In fact, they have been arriving in such great numbers that in many districts of Sochi, Tuapse, Armavir, and Rostov they account for 50 per cent of the population. The local criminal world, envious of the fortunes made by the looters of Armenian in Abkhazia (the Armenians, by definition, are all rich), may decide to adopt the same practices in southern Russia any time now. No doubt, this would be performed under lofty nationalist slogans on the part of the Cossacks, who now constitute the second most important force in the south of Russia after the Muslims. But the outcome would be lamentable—for Armenians and other ethnic groups alike. Already, some newly-formed, and large and very powerful, Cossacks' organisations have joined forces, Poised for battle. These are the Kuban Cossacks' Rada (jingoists and pro-communists opposed to Yeltsin) and the Kuban Cossacks Army (the Whites who fought in Trans-Dniestria). Refugees are welcome nowhere, and will always be looted. The problem is, though, that their numbers will further increase. They may well set up armed units, find a place to their liking, and will fight to the last. What agitated the Slavic part of the Kuban was the intention of the local indigenous ethnic group, the Shapsugs, to establish a district of their own.

When Russia was ruled by tsars, it was divided into provinces like America into states. The tsars trusted the Cossacks, who settled on the

country's borders and protected them. The Cossacks never forgiven the Soviets their massacres and other atrocities. In fact, the Bolsheviks did accomplish the task of wiping out the Cossacks as a class. It is not for nothing that during World War II the German invaders promised that the Cossacks would be able to regain their perks and privileges. The retreating Germans even gave some land to the Cossacks-in northern Italy.

In the summer of 1944, the Cossacks, like their ancestors from Zaporozhye, began migrating across the Danube, via Hungary and Austria, eventually setting up their communities near the Italian cities of Cortina d'Ampezzo, Villa Santina, and Udine. The Cossack troops central headquarters, with General Krasnov in charge, looked after their interests. Those communities kept to the traditional way of life, opening schools, military academies, and churches. In May 1945, the British occupation forces handed the Cossacks over to Soviet authorities, with all of them later deported and imprisoned.

Half a century on, Cossack self-government (sic) has been almost fully restored both in Stavropol Territory and on the Don River. There is even an organisation called the Allied Cossack Forces of Russia. Its Hetmans Council has been chaired by Albert Vetrov, hetman of the Yenisei Cossack Army, since October 1992. This alliance regards itself as immediate continuer of the White Movement and successor in title of what used to be a privileged social group in tsarist Russia. In an interview with *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (October 14, 1992), Vetrov was straightforward enough, saying that «Armenians should flee to Armenia,» rather than to southern Russia. «I repeat my message: Armenians must live in Armenia. If they happen to live in Russia, this will not justify their talk of nation-states. Personally, I see a need for a government programme here. Ethnic Russians living in Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus must be resettled to Russia, and the Caucasians just go to their own homeland,» he said.

Admittedly, it's easy to offer answers to Caucasian problems from the banks of the Yenisei. The Hetman of the Stavropol Territory Cossack Alliance, Pyotr Fedosov, has long lived in Chechnya himself. In his long-running interview with *Moscow News* (October 19, 1992), he never even hinted at Slavic superiority. Fedosov did not urge Cossacks to go and fight at Dubossary, Moldova. In his view, any sabre-rattling or calls to send all «aliens» out amounted to «madness with dreadful consequences.» I liked these words of the hetman: «Through the Cossacks, the sound part of the community is resisting actions that threaten its very existence.»

Reasonable Cossacks without extremist feelings could put paid to all problems in southern Russia on their own-yet at a price. One aim set by the Don Cossacks' Alliance Charter is to have the government give them full possession of the land, lakes, rivers, forests, and mineral resources in the places inhabited by Cossacks. Looks like each distinct community today wants to live on its own reservation, like American

Indians, with the only difference that the Cossacks would do without government subsidies. Unlike other communities in rural Russia, the Cossacks are hard-working people and live in abundance, if meddling outsiders do not get in the way.

History itself has prepared the Cossacks to combine freedom and order in their own distinctive way, of course. Cossacks from the Don and Kuban died in 1992 in both Trans-Dniestria and Abkhazia. Historically, the Cossack clans today account for an infinitesimal percentage of the population in southern Russia. Yet they have the capacity to make their presence felt. In mid-November 1992, the Stavropol Territory Soviet, i.e. the supreme local authority) resolved to press for Stavropol Territory to be declared a republic.

Yegor Gaidar (the top man in the Cabinet), Vladimir Shumeiko (a deputy prime minister who had previously run a big industrial organisation in Krasnodar), and Sergei Filatov (the second most important man in parliament, member of the Russian Federation Security Council) promptly travelled to the Kuban, where Shumeiko made the key point before a Krasnodar audience: «Right are those who say Russia cannot fit into a single economic model. But then, it does not need an endless variety of such models. So the point at issue should be enlarged regional models.» The deputy prime minister pointed to the Siberian Agreement, promising that in 1993 the ratio of federal and local government powers (at region, territory, republic or group of regions level) would be 40-60.

Already, power is slipping from the hands of the Russian leaders, who are too preoccupied with squabbles over ministerial posts. In 1991 through 1992, about 30 armed conflicts broke out in former Soviet republics, plus some 70 disputes that came close to warfare. These figures were cited by Lieutenant-General Sergei Bogdanov, head of the Battle Management and Strategic Studies Centre of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, when he met with foreign military attaches in November 1992. He said the political and economic situation and ethnic strife in Russia and the CIS as a whole was the worst since the Civil War. Russia's new military doctrine involved readiness to participate in local wars and other armed conflicts in the context of the reduced risk of global nuclear war. Plunged into the quagmire of poverty and destitution, the country could not afford to make tanks, missiles and warships in large quantities only to let them rust, Bogdanov said. In his words, Russia would have to do with the minimum number of professional servicemen, who must be equipped well up to world standards.

Current political developments in the CIS make the military indispensable. By the same token, a high crime rate quite suits Russian law-enforcement agencies, as the fight against criminals means quicker promotion and a lot of other, even more pleasant, perks and privileges.

PART THREE

POWER

LAND POWER. Nuclear Bombs for Export.

Like before, a third of Russia's 1992 budget was spent on defence. Russia was the most militarised part of the USSR, housing the overwhelming majority of defence enterprises. But troops and their depots and arsenals were situated mostly on the outskirts of the empire—in the Baltics, in Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus, Kazakhstan, Central Asian republics and the Far East.

With the exception of the latter, all other territories proclaimed themselves sovereign states in 1991 and «privatised» nearly all of the ex-Soviet Army property situated on their territory.

By agreement of all Commonwealth presidents, the last USSR Defence Minister Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov (Air Force) was appointed chief command of the Joint Commonwealth Forces in 1991, for a term of two years. It is indicative that the Joint Commonwealth forces promptly left their territory on the Arbat in downtown Moscow, which included dozens of buildings whose equipment is worth tens of billions of dollars, to the Russian Defence Ministry and moved to the modest building of the former Warsaw Pact headquarters on Leningradsky Prospekt. There are under 300 officers on the High Command of the Joint Commonwealth Forces, including 29 generals, which is a hundred times less than the staff of the ex-USSR Defence Ministry.

It would be logical to assume that the military union of a part of ex-Soviet republics will live on, but the strategic Joint Commonwealth Forces are doomed to death. The partners have too little money and too many differences. It is indicative that three of the four nuclear ex-Soviet republics—Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan—agreed to withdraw them to Russia for eventual elimination.

Russian Servicemen: Homeless. In 1992 the Russian Parliament approved the Law on Defence, under which the strength of Russia's Armed Forces should not exceed one percent of its population in peacetime. Later parliamentary debates indicated that by the end of this century Russia will have an army of 1.2 million men and officers instead of the three or four million who served in the Soviet Army in 1991. Another 300,000 men and officers will serve in the Strategic Forces of the Commonwealth. Long-term plans provide for renouncing conscription in favour of a contract army (today only chronic patients are not drafted for obligatory two-year service, whereas students are drafted after they finish their education). This means that army service will remain unsafe for quite some time, with an average of 15,000 conscripts and other servicemen dying in peacetime every year. For decades the life of servicemen hardly differed from that of prison inmates. In both institutions young people often lose health owing to unbearable working and living conditions in a matter of two or three years. And neither institution bears legal or material responsibility for the life and health of their «manpower.».

In 1992 Russia had more than 10 million officially registered invalids. This army of disabled persons will soon be complemented by a million or more unemployed servicemen retired before time. The Committee for Special Provision of Servicemen at the Russian government claims that over 70% of the military budget is spent on wages, pensions, housing, services for the military and training.

Russia is speedily pulling out its troops from the territory of East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Baltics and all other ex-Soviet republics. It will also have to withdraw its troops from all Moslem republics in the North Caucasus and Volga Region, incorporated into the Russian Federation.

Local Russian authorities, who have reconciled themselves to the deployment of hundreds of thousands of servicemen on their territory prefer troops which are pulling out of Eastern Europe. Why? West Germany alone has allocated 13.4 billion DM on the withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory, half of which will be spent on the construction of housing for servicemen and their re-training. More than 36,000 flats were to be built in 37 towns close to the ex-USSR European borders in 1990. But after the collapse of the USSR Yeltsin demanded that Bonn build housing for ex-Soviet troops only in Russia, which was a heavy blow for Ukraine and Belarus.

In the summer of 1992 10,000 servicemen of the tank division returned from Germany to the town of Chaikovsky, Perm Region' Privates live in tents, while officers and their families were billeted in overcrowded hostels. Tanks were stored outdoors. For how long will these people remain silent?

There are quite a few servicemen who fought in Afghanistan and still have no flats. In the summer of 1992 veterans of the Afghan war squat-

ted in two newly-built blocks in Yekaterinburg and demanded that the mayor give them flats there.

On July 21, 1992 Yeltsin issued a decree on the allocation of 89 billion roubles for the construction of five million square metres of housing, including three million for active servicemen and two million for retired ones. Sixty percent of this housing should be built in 1992, and the rest in 1993. In February this year Yeltsin issued a similar decree, which charged local authorities to provide servicemen with flats in the established manner, but it was not implemented in full. In the six months since February local authorities provided only 4,529 flats, whereas there were 167,000 servicemen who did not have a flat, and 82,000 needed to have their living conditions improved. Another 240,000 flats were needed to house troops from withdrawing the Baltics and 400,000 for those who will pull out of Germany.

Housing for the military will cost at least a trillion roubles in the prices of the summer of 1992. The government does not have this kind of money, but the army does, in the form of thousands of buildings, testing ranges, airfields and hardware, which are idling and could be sold with a huge profit.

And the training grounds in Moscow Region, the property of the deceased DOSAAF voluntary society of assistance to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, the KGB and hundreds of departmental and military construction units? The sale of their property would provide enough money for the construction of housing both for servicemen, teachers, doctors and disabled persons. But neither the army nor the Parliament are in a hurry to privatise their property, which can be sold only to private individuals and commercial structures.

Why should the army become impoverished all of a sudden? We are leaving 777 military settlements (21,000 buildings) in Germany. The real estate owned by the Western Group of Forces deployed in Germany costs 10.5 billion DM. We are leaving 180 military settlements with 6,000 buildings in Poland, and 55 settlements in Mongolia. Every eighth citizen of Mongolia lives in a house built by Soviet servicemen, which is 2.3 million square metres of housing plus 2.5 economic facilities. And now our servicemen are leaving all this behind without compensation (only West Germany agreed to pay compensation to us) and returning home where nobody are waiting for them.

The governments of East European countries refused to pay for the buildings we are leaving behind. Ex-Soviet republics, on the contrary, are prepared to demand that Moscow repay them for the damage done by the army to ecology and economy. As for the servicemen, they are selling whatever they can steal to all those wishing, leaving army property behind or destroying it. Worse still, military leaders in Moscow more than once approved the delivery of weapons to the warring Armenia and Azerbaijan. Tanks were delivered (sold?) together with crews, who often became highly-paid mercenaries.

Soviet Weaponry Sales Like Hot Cakes. Before the West reminded us that the export of weapons and nuclear technology can be only legal, our enterprising businessmen brought down the price of natural and enriched uranium, of which we have a surplus, it appears. They offer uranium in any form and bypassing all barriers. Officially, Russia controls only 7-8% of the market of enriched uranium and other nuclear materials, while the ex-USSR has half of the world's tapped deposits of uranium and a third of the latter are situated in Russia. Our facilities for the enrichment of uranium and its further processing make up about a quarter of the world's and are situated in Russia.

In the summer of 1992 the USA proclaimed a genuine trade war on Russia, its new political ally, and introduced high customs duties on the imported Russian uranium. The US Ministry of Power Engineering paid 3.3 million US dollars to legal companies in Washington for stopping Russia's uranium intervention. The sale of cheap Russian uranium in the USA brought two million dollars of revenues in 1986 and 120 million in 1991. Uranium was the third largest export item of the USSR and earned it over 500 million dollars in 1991.

Russia plans to increase revenues from uranium exports by at least five times, but comes across fierce resistance on the part of the USA. Why is the USA against this? Influential Russian businessmen, to say nothing of the government, can well engage in the semi-legal business of uranium exports, much to the pleasure of over a dozen developing states which would like to get quality raw materials and technology for their military nuclear programmes.

It is very fashionable in the Russian press to write about the alleged theft of nuclear weapons. Have they been stolen and if yes, how many? The generals say wisely that they can be easily stolen, since then weigh 30 to 500 kilogrammes, but it would be much more difficult for the thieves to steel delivery vehicles, with computer targeting and launching systems. But the extremist leaders of South Ossetia have boasted that they have «a powerful nuclear device» for the «much beloved Georgia.»

The CIA believes that the greatest threat comes not from nuclear weapons but from the 2,000 nuclear physicists, who can create nuclear weapons for any client. And they will do this, unless Washington guarantees them normal living standards, because they have lost their jobs of manual assembly of nuclear bombs in the five closed cities of the USSR Ministry of Medium machine-Building (Sverdlovsk-44, Sverdlovsk-45, Arzamas-16, Chelyabinsk-70 and Zarechny, outside Penza). Today they have to be paid fantastic (by Russian standards) salaries to dismantle their «goods.»

In Russia alone a million people live and work in ten towns of the Ministry of Nuclear Engineering and several dozen towns and settlements of the Defence Ministry, surrounded by barbed wire and protected better than the national border. Three years ago they could leave their places of residence only once every five years. It was well-nigh impossi-

ble to phone from these «zones» or to invite relatives to them. High salaries, a perfect provision system and a high level of social protection were compensations for self-imposed imprisonment. It all ended in 1992. The veil of secrecy was raised but the Russian Parliament allocated tens of millions of roubles on social protection of the population of these towns, so as to prevent them from fleeing the zones and bringing their expertise somewhere to the Middle East.

In another year or two Western adventure seekers will probably be able to flight to these closed cities, for handsome money. Flights could be organised to Krasnoyarsk-26, with its underground mining and chemical combine, 90,300 residents producing weapons-grade plutonium, three underground reactors, the world's only underground nuclear power station, production of rear-earth metals, an underground shop for the assembly of satellites and an underground site for the burial of radioactive wastes from all over the ex-USSR. Or to Tomsk-7, whose 107,700 residents produce weapons-grade plutonium and enrich uranium. Or to Chelyabinsk-65, whose 83,000 residents process radioactive wastes. Or to Krasnoyarsk-45, whose 63,400 residents enrich uranium. Or to Zlatoust-36, whose 29,800 residents mass produce nuclear charges.

Back home the adventurous tourists will compare their impressions with reliable sources and explain: Indeed, Russia has always been a prison state, both under czars and under Bolsheviks, and it remains a prison still, with obligatory registration by places of residence. The authorities still decide where the people should live and whether they should live at all.

There are 16 graphite reactors in the ex-USSR, similar to the one that blew up in Chernobyl. Back in March 1992 the Germans suggested that we should organise an international consortium of West European companies which would invest 50-60 billion DM in order to replace dangerous reactors with new, safe ones. We are still thinking about this offer. Probably we want to turn this country into a giant testing range for the dismantling of obsolete reactors, whose safety has long become an illusion. According to Academician Yevgeny Velikhov, Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, socio-economic damage from the Chernobyl tragedy amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars. We should agree to allow foreign investment into our nuclear engineering if we do not want to increase the horrible count.

It seemed that our scientists have top-class know-how. But the trouble is that our leaders, beginning with Lenin and ending with Yeltsin, value human no more than the Bangladesh leaders once did. If this is not do, why then did Russia bartered a unique, the world's third most powerful device for controlled thermonuclear synthesis TOKAMAK-7 for clothes and computers worth 45,500 dollars, when the real price of one TOKAMAK device is 16 million dollars? Will we barter another TOKAMAK for slippers?

Our scientists have the talent and will to work. The USA decided to finance the implementation of the idea of Gennady Kiselev from the

Institute of Experimental and Theoretical Physics, who suggested transforming long-life radioactive wastes into short-life ones Americans believe that one such device will cost four billion dollars while it has already allocated 24 billion dollars on the construction of another underground burial site in Nevada. Yet another burial site will be needed in several years' time, if Kiselev fails.

In the summer of 1992 the USA finally agreed to buy a Russian Topaz nuclear reactor for 13 million dollars for the creation of a space-ship engine. Our scientists worked on that reactor for over twenty years and spent 650 million roubles on its creation. It will be leased to the USA for joint space projects, without revealing technical secrets. Hence the modest price.

Nearly all our nuclear towns were created by the NKVD-KGB during the lifetime of Lavrenty Beria, who was shot in 1956. All our nuclear and major military facilities were built by German, Japanese and other prisoners, including Soviet ones, and military builders. But slave labour was not enough; enthusiasm was a major element, especially among scientists, most of whom worked in prison during Stalin's rule. In the 1940-60s we had a half of the industrial capacities of the USA yet we managed to be the first to launch a spaceship. In 1950 the USSR spent 10% of the national income on education, while the USA spent only 4%. Since then the roles have been reversed. The USA increased allocations on education to 12% of the budget and schools also get subsidies from private foundations. Japan and other leading countries of the world did the same, whereas in the USSR spending on education went down since the 1960s and amounted to 4.2% in 1982. For many years now there is no entrance competition at technical higher schools, because engineers here earn barely more than caretakers and few of them agreed to life imprisonment at defence enterprises, although salaries were much higher there.

The Soviet Union, unable to bear the brunt of the arms race no longer, lost the cold war with the West. And what has it achieved? The world's first nuclear power station (1954), artificial earth satellite (1957), manned space flight (1961), S-300 (mobile air defence missile that is better than the US Patriot), Kalashnikov machine-gun, 77,000 Soviet tanks (as of 1991). Sixty percent of the USSR military-industrial complex belonged to Russia. In the spring of 1992 Russia's military-industrial complex employed 4.4 million personnel, 12 million if we take into account the personnel of related industries and 36 million if we take into account their families. This is nearly a quarter of Russia's population.

Conversion, the transition of Russia's defence enterprises to civilian production, will cost 150 billion dollars, because productivity during the transition period will drop by 30-120 times (estimated in roubles).

Our military-industrial complex must export its goods, at least those which have been already produced, but not like it was in 1990, when we got only four billion dollars for weapons and hardware worth 14 billion dollars which were sold to our ideological friends. Moscow will be

unable to legally sell weapons on the world markets either today or tomorrow, because its export quotas have been reduced to a minimum, or to nil. CoCom limitations prevented Russia from buying a large part of Western high-tech goods or exporting best samples of Russian missile, nuclear and aerospace equipment in 1992. .

It is impossible to imagine but the USSR established military parity with the USA and spent 300 billion dollars on defence every year. A Soviet tank worth two million roubles was sold to Africa for two million dollars (in 1992 one dollar was exchanged for some 200 roubles). The loss of military contracts as a result of the end of the cold war bankrupted the Russian industry.

SPACE POWER. Nuclear Reactors in Space

Seeking to provide jobs, Yeltsin suggested that Russia should take part in the US SDI programme, which should be converted into a global programme to control the outer space and to warn of a missile attack. The Americans said they were prepared to allocated 50 million dollars for the purchase of 50 best Soviet missile defence technologies and for maintaining over a thousand missile defence specialists in the Commonwealth states. Fifty million dollars is less than one percent of the money which the US administration asked for the implementation of the SDI programme in the 1993 fiscal year.

Isn't this an unacceptably low price for our expertise? In the 1980s Soviet scientists Ablekov, Babayev and Berezhnoi created a well-nigh finished SDI equivalent. It was a ready reply to the US SDI, but its implementation was hindered by the sudden and somewhat mysterious death of the three scientists, the nuclear moratorium and the active Soviet policy of disarmament. Meanwhile, the US continued working on SDI and are approaching the final stage of this programme designed to put weapons in space. The Americans are ready to continue the arms race in space, with the help of our know-how and specialists. This will not ensure greater security for us or make us richer.

The US granted Israel 549 million dollars and Britain, 129 million dollars for research within the framework of SDI, but would like to Purchase at laughably low prices the Soviet technologies for powerful boosters, including the Energiya booster, nuclear power devices and low-volume engines for satellites. By spending several million dollars on the Purchase of top secret Soviet technologies, the US will save billions of dollars, which will enable it to deploy its missile warning system in space five years ahead of schedule.

What do the Americans want to buy in this country? Our programme for the creation of hypersonic munitions (for 1.2 million dollars), including targeting systems (for 200,000 dollars), launching and

homing devices (for 350,000 dollars), and the technology for the creation of electro-thermal guns (for 200,000 dollars). They offer similarly little for our programmes for the creation of homing elements for anti-missiles particle beam weapons, theatre missile defence systems, and advance achievements in military technologies. But our reconnaissance systems are priced the lowest: they offered to pay us 50,000 dollars for the purchase, for the purpose of analysis, of information on the Commonwealth programmes in reconnaissance and counteraction to missile defence.

The Soviet military space programmes (in fact, there was little else than that, because all launchings and designs came under the jurisdiction of the Defence Ministry) was badly affected too. Eighty percent of the industrial and scientists basis of the Soviet space research was based in Russia and 15% in Ukraine, mostly at the design bureau Yuzhnoye and research and production association Southern Machine-Building Plant in Dnepropetrovsk.

The latter stopped the production of military items, including the world's most ecologically-friendly booster Zenith, in March 1992, and is now turning out trolleybuses, although Australia, for example, was prepared to buy Zenith, 70% of parts for which were exported from Russia to Dnepropetrovsk for assembly.

Ukraine appropriated two ocean-going space communication ships, Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (displacement 45,000 tonnes) and Korolev (21,000 tonnes), while the ships Beliayev, Volkov, Dobrovolsky and Patsayev (9,000 tonnes each) still belong to Russia. Neither the Ukrainian nor the Russian military have the means to maintain these liners crammed with electronics which costs much more than the ships proper. Meanwhile, when stationed in certain parts of the world, these ships guaranteed six hours of stable connection with cosmonauts daily from the territory of the USSR. Today these ships are rusting in ports, while cosmonauts have connection with the Space Control Centre only when they fly over the territory of the ex-USSR, that is, for 18 hours.

Ukraine and Kazakhstan have not officially forsaken space research, but Russia's share in financing space programmes in 1992 amounted to 93%, while Kazakhstan and Ukraine provided 4% and 3%, respectively. Alma Ata's money does not suffice even for the solution of social problems of the town servicing the Baikonur space port with its 12 launching systems. The maintenance of Baikonur by today's (or yesterday's) prices will cost a billion dollars annually. The loss of Baikonur by Russia will cost it 10 billion dollars, which it will have to pay for the lease of the Plesetsk space port.

The Washington meeting of president Bush and Yeltsin in June 1992 was a sensation in that they agreed to dramatically reduce strategic weapons and to end Russo-American rivalry in space. Bush suggested that Russian boosters be used for launching American satellites, something which seemed impossible only a week before that. They also

agreed to couple Shuttle and Mir in 1994 and decided to postpone the costly joint mission to Mars.

On June 18, 1992, after three weeks of consultations, Yuri Koptev, director of the Russian Space Agency, and NASA director Daniel Goldin ratified the first contract between NASA and the research and production association Energiya, our main space agency situated in Kaliningrad outside Moscow. The Americans will spend only a million dollars and one year to study the possibility of using our manned spaceship Soyuz-TM and the automatic cargo ship Progress in the US orbital station Progress, to be launched at the beginning of the 21st century.

We could have sold the space systems which we don't need to developing countries, but this would be a gross violation of international agreements on control over the transfer of space technologies, which the USSR signed. The new Russian leadership informed the USA of the intention of Russia, as legal successor to the USSR, to honour the main principles of agreements signed by the USSR. Seems fine. But immediately India was promised cryogenic engines. The Americans were outraged, because rockets with such engines can launch not only communication satellites but also military-related systems. As a result, in May 1992 Russia well-nigh lost all economic assistance packages from the West, worth 24 billion dollars.

Our military cursed: why did we signed those binding agreements with the USA in 1972 and 1990. If not for them, we could have traded with all and sundry now. The West made us eliminate a great number of SS-20 missiles, while military wizards have created a space system Start-1 on their basis and now offer all those willing to launch commercial satellites with the disposable load of up to 550 kilogrammes to the circular Polar orbit of 700 kilometres from towers.

The military no longer set the tune in space exploration here. In July 1992 a Cyclone booster launched four military satellites and two civilian electronic mail satellites Gonets-D from Plesetsk. Sending mail by these satellites will cost thousands of customers tens of times cheaper than sending them by telegraph.

Our military also ceded their monopoly on secret technologies. In 1992 fifteen major space design bureaus in Russia and Ukraine opened their doors to foreign colleagues. Without getting a dollar of returns we welcomed a delegation from the Prospas association of 50 major French space companies. We told everything-or nearly everything-to the delegation of 30 leading space experts from Japan. We offer the world to remove garbage from space, to launch radioactive wastes into deep space, and to share our unique experience of the medico-biological provision of ling and super-long manned flights.

But we are hardly listened to. The voice of our scientists is not very loud yet, which is understandable after decades of mass thefts of foreign secrets and total secrecy over our research. Our fax machines are not harmonised with foreign ones, our international telephone exchange is

hardly better than in the 1930s, there is no electronic communication with the West, and neither are there scientific publications and patents on our inventions abroad, because they cost very much.

The world's most powerful booster Energiya is idling, while it could launch super-heavy satellites and space platforms. Dozens of states would readily launch their satellites from our space ports and on our boosters. Previously not a single satellite that had one US-made part of was built with the use of US technologies could be launched from this country by a Soviet booster. These prohibitive CoCom rules remained in effect in 1992, despite the optimistic pronouncements of President Bush. Not that the matter concerns the protection of secret Western technologies; the trouble is that we have been blocked from the world market, where the share of our contribution is barely 0.1%.

It's a pity, because we began very well fifty years ago. The scientific capacities of fascist Germany (by the beginning of 1945 it produced 39 ballistic missiles V-2 daily; that miracle weapon was based on a jet engine with the thrust of 25 tonnes) was snatched by American and Soviet research centres, complete with German scientists and their documents. The whole of the Soviet Union—our best physicists and engineers, whom the NKVD-KGB provided with unlimited material and human resources, built nuclear bombs and missiles for their delivery. Our propaganda created legends about physicists, the bulk of high school students wanted to become nuclear scientists and cosmonauts.

Space exploration was the domain of the military, but also our pride and glory, a proof of the great advantages of socialism. Spy and military communication satellites are necessary, of course, although not in thousands. The other half of the space budget was spent on the launching of orbital stations and dozens of cosmonauts, timed to coincide with red-letter dates in Soviet history—May 1 and November 7, Communist Party congresses and birthdays of general secretaries. Foreign cosmonauts were sometimes taken along, although these costly rides brought hardly any revenues. For thirty years we failed to launch a single scientist; we only put into orbit fighter pilots and specialists in space technology.

One to three percent of the space budget was spent on open, civilian projects. Another several percent were spent on the creation of the domestic space communication network, weather satellites, and geological prospecting from space. We still don't have satellites for ecological monitoring. Up to 90% of our spaceships were launching under military programmes. There are seven or eight civilian communication satellites Horizon, but only a thousand of ground-based communication stations. We should have had tens of times more of such stations, and then our communications would have been more reliable and profitable.

But why wonder about space communications when far from all Soviet flats are fitted out with telephones? Nobody seems to need the unique orbital station Mir or dozens (sic) copies of Buran, an analogue of the US space shuttle.

When working on the Buran project. Soviet scientists created 581 versions of new materials. The list of materials, technical joints and devices of Buran, declassified and designed for use on land, will take three volumes. But civilian industries have not yet received a rouble in profits from the introduction of these technologies, because only defence enterprises have the staff and equipment necessary for the use of high technologies. Besides, the thick veil of secrecy which our military put over all scientific achievements did great damage to the national economy and the state budget.

To be frank, the military themselves and the KGB did not need those space observations very much. Our cosmonauts spent up to 80% of their working time in orbit maintaining their own life. The low standards of our electronics prevented them from doing a tenth part of the tasks relating to the monitoring of the situation in hot spots, set by the GRU (military intelligence service) and the Centre of Space Intelligence. Of course, it is rather interesting to have the latest information on the deployment of US aircraft carriers and submarines, maintain communication with our own submarines and engage in photo reconnaissance, but to do this we need robot satellites, like the Japanese and American ones, rather than our flying barns settled by the heroic selfless efforts of our cosmonauts.

The Russian space exploration agencies have few military contracts. The Progress factory in Samara (former Kuibyshev) is turning out tram cars, microwave ovens and kitchen furniture instead of the world's most powerful booster Energiya.

We are selling our spaceship that have been to space to anyone who wants to buy them. You can improve the interior of any building immensely or build a fantastic playground for children for ten thousand dollars or slightly more.

Russian commercial structures have orbited several small communication satellites. The Russian authorities are out to sell the Mir station, which will remain in space till 1996. We offer any space-related services and sell air equipment at dumping prices.

Many types of Soviet military aircraft have the world recognition. At all international air shows we offered MiG-31 interceptors (which have no rival in the world in intercepting cruise missiles), Su-27TK two-seater fighter-bombers, and MiG-29 light and highly manoeuvrable all-weather fighters (a better plane than the Jaeger-90, which the Western Europe was only thinking of building) at tenth of their price. We guarantee prompt delivery of this machinery in the export-oriented, which means better, version. It turned out that MiG-29 proved better than the US F-16s during military exercises in Germany, and President Bush asked us to sell the US our MiG-29s. MiG-31 can be used as a mini-AWACS plane; four MiG-31 planes can exchange information and monitor a strip of up to 900 kilometres. Unlike the US AWACS planes, MiG-31 can not only track but also hit targets.

The offering price of the best Soviet fighter Su-27 was 40 million dollars each in the 1980s, but refused to sell. Today we are prepared to service aviation shows in all parts of the world for a modest pay. A wing of Su-27 fighters can fly abroad from the airfield in Kubinka outside Moscow, and perform breath-takingly beautiful dances in the air. If client orders, the giant An-124 Ruslan plane and the Yak-141 supersonic VTOL plane will accompany them. The latter two planes have no analogues in the world. We also have good helicopter gunships Mi 28 and Mi-34.

Is this why we don't have good civilian planes? And those that are produced have modest characteristics and are always in short supply.

Our Air Force has its problems too. On February 27, 1992 President Yeltsin issued a decree which allowed the sale of 1,600 old combat planes with the revenues spent on the purchase of housing for and social protection of the Air Force servicemen and the funding of Russia's aircraft-making industry. It was expected that revenues would amount to nine billion dollars.

The West was shocked: the 1,600 planes that Yeltsin allowed to sell are many more than the entire air force of France. Somewhat later our arms dealers again shocked the world when they guaranteed complete rearmament of the Iranian army. Iran allocated ten billion dollars for this purpose for 1990-94 and bought a thousand Soviet T-72 tanks; it also promised to buy 110 combat aircraft (12 Tu-22Ms, 48 MiG-29s, 24 MiG-31s, 24 MiG-27s and two radar planes 11-76). Iran was our traditional customer, and now it badly needs spares for the 115 Soviet-made planes which it got from Iraq (they were deployed in Iran to save them from bombings on the eve of the Gulf war; Iran never returned them). According to information of Western secret services (the Russian authorities deny everything under the pretext of honouring commercial secrets), the deal with Iran might earn Russia 11 billion dollars.

We also offer the same planes as the one we have sold to Iran to all countries of the Middle East. Before perestroika the USSR annually sold weapons abroad for an average of 18 billion dollars. Since then our military exports have dwindled, whereas thousands of foreign companies survive by reselling our armaments. We are learning to trade too, respecting international law, traditions and the unwritten laws of the market.

The first in this country international Moscow air show was held on the airfield of the Aviation Research Institute in Zhukovskiy, outside Moscow, in August 1992. The German company Glache International helped us to equip the airfield and build 36 pavilions for 200 national and 60 foreign companies. WE showed the spectators our new models: the supersonic bomber Tu-160, the missileer Tu-22M3, flattop fighters Su-27K and MiG-29K, and other planes and helicopters, 50 models in all.

The spectators saw a mock-up of the BE-200 amphibious plane, on the creation of which the Russian authorities allocated two billion roubles. To be completed in 1996, it has no analogues in the world and can

be used by seamen, fishermen, coast guards and search and rescue teams. Greece has already commissioned 200 such planes for putting out fires in the Mediterranean forests. The batch production of BE-200 might save from bankruptcy such giants of our aircraft-making as the Taganrog aviation scientific and technical centre and the Irkutsk aircraft-making plant, which used to build the world-famous Su-27 fighters.

We also displayed the description of our new aircraft engine PS-90A, made in Perm and to be mounted on our giant planes Tu-204 and 11-96-300. It took ten years to create that engine but now it costs 7 million dollars, or six times less than a similar engine produced by the US Pratt and Whitney. Unthinkably, but the Americans managed to sign a contract with the Ilyushin association on the sale of their engines to us. What for, when we have a better engine?

The Samara research and production association Trud is creating an NK-92 engine for passenger planes and gas-pumping devices, and have been promised money for the project.

But no air show will overshadow the fact that our passenger aviation is degrading. All ex-socialist countries have refused to buy our passenger aircraft. Boeing has ousted Tupolev from the aircraft markets of Eastern Europe. Russia faces the same fate, since it has bought five A-310 West European jumbo planes in Toulouse.

Where will we use our own jumbo liners? Scrap them, the air passengers who have suffered our airline services, comparable only to the haulage of refugees in wartime, will say. No other air line in the world offers worse services. Besides, the safety of our passenger lines dropped miserably: a total of 154 people died in 22 air crashes in 1986-89, while in 1990 alone we had 28 crashes (with 203 casualties) and in 1991, 35 crashes which claimed 249 lives.

At least a hundred of our airports are to be restructured and equipped with modern communication and navigation technologies to meet international standards. Western companies will help us. Twelve million flights are annually made over Russia. I hope we will not end collecting dues from Western air lines for using our air space and fuelling their aircraft.

Well, the situation is not that tragic yet, as proved by the contract on the participation of the Hydromach plant in Nizhny Novgorod in the creation of carriage for a new European liner A-240, signed in Germany in the spring of 1992. Maybe the Germans will use our large aircraft engine PS-90A (made in Perm) or buy our MiG-29s. Britain, Spain and Italy might do the same, because the creation of the Jaeger-90 fighter will cost them 40 billion dollars and the efforts of 40,000 top-class engineers and workers in Germany alone. A squadron of MiG-29s, which once belonged to East Germany, is now owned by the West German army, and the Germans are pleased. They will buy spares and engines for them up till the year 2000.

NAVAL POWER. Neglected Aircraft Carriers

The successors to the USSR inherited from it 242 submarines including 88 nuclear ones, 151 surface ships, including 17 cruisers (five of them air-capable), 87 destroyers, 33 coastal ships and 298 boats 1,638 naval planes and 651 helicopters. Together with weapons, they cost hundreds of billions of roubles in pre-reform prices, or hundreds of millions of dollars.

The bulk of these weapons should not have been created in the first place, because in the first hours of a war our aircraft carriers and submarines will be destroyed by any serious opponent. I am not sure about the aircraft carriers, but our submarines are good only for kamikaze because they are too noisy and hence easy to detect and destroy, 20 to 100 times easier than the American ones.

In 1992 three Soviet nuclear aircraft carriers, Admiral Kuznetsov, Ulyanovsk and Varyag were still under construction. But why were they commissioned in Nikolayev, Ukraine, in the 1980s, when the end of the cold war was as obvious as our economic catastrophe. The Ukrainian authorities decided that they better cut up the Ulyanovsk without finishing it.

Not a single major or medium ship was commissioned in this country in 1992, for the first time in twenty years.

Over the past 20 years the Americans did not lose a single submarine, whereas we lost five. Our nuclear submarines sink, get stranded and crash with other vessels. In the US, submarine turbines are aligned in the desert state of Nevada, 140 kilometres away from the nearest highway which lorries are not allowed to use so as not to cause the slightest earth movement. Our turbines are aligned in the centre of St. Petersburg, at the Neva Gate, with transport all around and the city itself built on quicksand. Hence the corresponding «precision.».

Our navy is unsafe. And the Americans do not intend to fight us. On the contrary, we get humanitarian assistance from well-nigh everybody. Why produce so much scrap metal then? Maybe we should build five well-armed silent ships instead of fifty targets? «We cannot stop building, even if targets,» Marshal Dmitry Yazov, ex-USSR Defence Minister, once said. «Otherwise the working class will remain without wages.» Besides, in that case the number of generals and admirals would have to be reduced by ten times too, which they would have never allowed.

We need ram-wing craft and hover-ships, effective and rather cheap vehicles. We used to work on them, but then dropped the idea in favour of aircraft carriers, which is a good cover for spending money without account and asking for more, eventually getting orders, privileges and high posts.

For 35 years we delivered military hardware and spares to Vietnam and trained their personnel free of charge. When we added up their debts in 1992, they amounted to 350-400 million dollars. In reply, the

Vietnamese demanded that we pay as much for the lease of a giant Cam Ranh naval base on the shore of the South China Sea, which had over 4,000 servicing personnel alone.

It was clear that we will have to get rid of that white elephant already in 1991, and so all ships were recalled home, but guards and builders remained in Cam Ranh, ordered to continue the construction of an underground warehouse over an area of 96 hectares. What do we need it for now that Russia is in crisis and the Cam Ranh base has already been returned, nearly free, to Vietnam? What would it do with the empty storage?

The logic of our admirals is simple: we have the navy and it should ply the seas, and hence they suggested that we should buy off Cam Ranh for 10 billion dollars which Vietnam owes us under economic contracts (military deliveries to Vietnam were free of charge). Indeed, what do we need Vietnamese meat, rice, coffee, rubber and clothes for? Let's keep Cam Ranh and the possibility of plying the Indian Ocean instead.

Russia is displaying the same kind of patriotism-at the taxpayer's expense-in the question of the Black sea Fleet. Instead of Sevastopol, which falls under the jurisdiction of free Ukraine, we shall have to build a new naval base on the Kuban, the other side of the Black Sea. Ukraine justifies its right to the Black Sea Fleet (45 surface ships, 28 submarines, over 300 small and medium vessels, 151 aircraft and 25 flattop helicopters, all worth 80 billion dollars) by the fact that the ships for the entire Soviet Navy were built in Ukraine and that it donated money for the development of the Northern, Pacific, Baltic and Black Sea Fleet, just like other ex-Soviet republics.

Ukraine believes that it has the right to 30.2% of the ships and property of the USSR Navy, or the whole of the Black Sea Fleet, which makes up 17% of the USSR Navy, with that part of the Black Sea Fleet that is deployed in Ukraine amounts to 10%. But that part includes ships of the strategic forces armed with tactical nuclear weapons and major shore-based facilities in the Crimea. There are giant underground weapons depots and an oil warehouse in Sevastopol, hangars in the rocks of Balaklava, deep skerries have been equipped with piers and other facilities to service surface ships in Donuzlava and Novoozerny. And lastly, there are many airfields for naval aircraft.

The bulk of the military seamen of Sevastopol agreed to take the oath of allegiance to Ukraine in the hope of settling their living and material Problems and preferring to guard southern borders (whose? of the Commonwealth, Russia, Ukraine or the Crimea?) instead of re-deploying to Severomorsk in the Polar region.

A part of the Black Sea Fleet has been transferred to Georgia (the naval base in Poti), while the bulk is being hastily sold abroad or transferred to the North and the Far East. Nearly all of the 15 submarines written off in 1991 were sold before February 1992. Up to two dozen surface ships, coast guard boats, mine sweepers, a missile boat and the destroyer Sveduschy were prepared for sale in 1992.

Ukraine has long announced that it will sold the part of the fleet which it will get. So far, Russia is selling the ships deployed in Sevastopol. A company from Naples bought a destroyer and two submarine. A Turkish firm bought three aircraft and 18 submarines. These transactions are carried out by the Russian trading company Nikozund, whose administrative council includes many ranking officers, in particular the commander of the Black Sea Fleet..

Hardly had the USSR disintegrated in December 1991 when the largest cargo and passenger ships of the Black Sea Line were sold by Moscow hastily, sometimes cheaper than scrap metal.

Warships are being sold in the Baltics, where Russia has lost the greater part of its ports and naval facilities over an area of 30,000 hectares (naval real estate there is assessed at 40 billion dollars in the least). The Bolshoi naval training centre and the ship repair yard attached to it outside Riga was created to service the Middle Eastern states. On April 1992 there were dozens of Iranian and Libyan servicemen there; the former bought a submarine and the latter had their submarine, which they bought from us in 1988, repaired.

The town of Baltiysk in Kaliningrad Region of Russia is well known as a large naval base in the westernmost part of Russia, which once belonged to Prussia (Königsberg). In 1992 Russian military seamen in fact leased the port and its only ice-free harbour in the Baltic to Sweden.

Yet the greatest revenues can come from selling our ships as scrap metal. Back during the Second World War 242 ships with the total displacement of 240,000 tonnes were sunk in off-shore areas. Another 265 ships (cruisers, large anti-submarine ships, coast guard boats and submarines with the total displacement of 170,000 tonnes) are rusting at the piers of naval bases. The USSR Navy annually wrote off ships with the total displacement of 80,000-100,000 tonnes. They are rusting, polluting water and poisoning sea flora and fauna.

A tonne of scrap metal costs 130-180 dollars in the world, but our cutting equipment is obsolete. Our steel mills are idling owing to the shortage of raw materials, while we have to send our large ships to India and Pakistan for remelting. The European ship-cutting bases are crammed with the ships of our former allies, Poland and Germany. Besides, the sale of many ships of the Ministry of the Merchant Marine and the Ministry of the Fisheries brought down the price of scrap metal.

India agreed to buy three cruisers, Zhdanov, Admiral Senyavin and Vice-Admiral Drozd, for scrap metal, and they have been moved from the Black Sea and the Far East to the Indian port of Alang. We offer for sale our nuclear submarines for use as floating power stations. The Kremlin allowed our military seamen to engage in commercial activities only in late 1991, when it became clear that our homeless and semi-hungry naval forces are prepared to turn from the defenders of the homeland into gangs of anarchists. But the government established high taxes to the state budget and strict control.

For example, the magistrate of Vienna wanted to buy a diesel submarine «for excursions, parties and outings on the Danube», at a price twice higher than scrap metal. Moscow turned down the offer; let the submarine fall apart but Austrians will not drink their beer under the Soviet-made periscope. The same reply was given to the Japanese who wanted to buy the cruiser Admiral Senyavin, to be used as a floating hotel, and to Americans who wanted to turn a Soviet submarine into a museum of «life and work of Soviet seamen».

In 1991 our military seamen sold 15 ships with the total displacement of 54,000 tonnes for 7.5 million dollars. One 270-flat block in Moscow costs one million dollars, or nearly equal to the cost of an obsolete cruiser. There are over 23,000 homeless officers in the navy.

They can be helped. Back in 1991 the leadership of the navy launched talks with the USA on the joint construction in Sevastopol, Novorossiisk, Yevpatoriya, Baltiisk, Severomorsk, St. Petersburg, Nakhodka, Vladivostok and other naval ports of facilities for pumping into ships liquid cargoes from oil and gas deposits in Siberia. The US building corporation Conti Link Group Ltd. was prepared to build 30,000 flats for military seamen serving all fleets, by American design and technology and from American materials.

On July 26, 1992 the warships of Russia bid good-bye to the military naval flag of the USSR Navy. It was replaced with the white and blue St. Andrew's flag, under which the Russian fleet defended the homeland and added to its military glory two hundred years ago. Our navy is the only one in the world to have the signal «I die but I don't give up.».

POWER IN CENTRAL RUSSIA.

Defence-Oriented Industry and Science

So who said our navy is good for nothing? The authorities of Nizhny Novgorod (called Gorky under the Bolsheviks) pressurised Yeltsin to allow them to sell abroad a giant submarine worth five billion dollars, which is being built on the Volga. The situation in the region is as bad as elsewhere in this country, but the unprofitable collective and state farms are the greatest danger. They cannot work normally after the prices of machinery went up a hundred times, yet they don't want to give land to Private farmers. Nobody believes the state and hence nobody sells grain, vegetables and meat to the state, either for roubles or hard currency, because of the palpable threat of inflation, the freezing of accounts in savings banks, high taxes, etc.

The city of Gorky, with its population of two million where Sakharov was exiled, was once closed to foreigners because it was a city of the military-industrial complex. The Krasnoye Sormovo plant is famous not only for its submarines. Fifteen years ago it produced parts for the 100-metre-long beauty equipped with jets, which zoomed over the Volga at

the height of 10-12 metres with the speed of 800 kilometres an hour. If fitted out with 20 engines, this ram-wing craft will be able to carry 1,500 tonnes of cargo or 3,000 passengers, or 200 Marines with tanks, helicopters and other heavy hardware.

A Soviet-American team financed by the Pentagon is working on the idea. The first models of the craft worth 500 million dollars will be built no later than in 1996. They will hop from New York to Europe quicker than a Boeing-747, and a ticket to them will cost barely 200 dollars. The conclusion of the project will cost the USA 15 billion dollars.

By the summer of 1992 military orders to Nizhny Novgorod were slashed by 85%. A thousand people were sacked from Ordzhonikidze aircraft-making plant, because nobody needs so many MiGs now. The Commonwealth' largest factory producing explosives doesn't know what to do with its stockpiles. Some of the unfinished submarines at the Krasnoye Sormovo plant are being cut into scrap metal, and the plant itself has switched over to the production of civilian goods.

But the missile testing range of the Nizhny Novgorod machine-building plant is still working. Many nuclear physicists from the nearby secret town Arzamas-16, which is not marked on maps, are seeking employment abroad, because they want to get 60,000 dollars a year instead of 20 dollars a month. And they are very likely to find jobs, because they know their nuclear bombs inside out.

Privatization auctions of small enterprises of the services, held since the spring of 1992 in all regional centres of Novgorod Region, somewhat dispelled the gloom. All members of the Russian government have visited the city in the bid to avert a social explosion fed by unemployment.

Seven hundred thousand of Muscovites are working at defence enterprises. In the summer of 1992 a third of them were sent into unpaid leaves and apart of others worked a three-day working week. Twenty-five percent of them will be sacked in autumn and another 25% by the beginning of 1993.

The hopes for partner relations with Western companies proved illusory. The latter try to place the worst orders, metal and energy consuming and ecologically dangerous, in Russia. In the summer of 1992 the average monthly salary at the Moscow defence enterprises was 1,200-1,700 roubles (8 -12 dollars), a miserable payment to those who only yesterday were the most highly-paid elite of workers, scientists and managers. They were given the best this country had, and at token prices.

Only those who worked at defence enterprises live in the beautiful high-rise buildings of pink and red bricks beyond the Moscow Ring Auto Road. When you see such a house five or ten kilometres from Moscow, it is the clear sign that a defence enterprise is somewhere nearby. Every other employee of the production sphere in Moscow Region works for the military-industrial complex. There is military hardware worth some two billion dollars at the complex's warehouses here.

The famous Russian Kamov helicopter company and the US Group Vector have agreed to jointly produce and sell the KA-50 helicopter—a one-seater armoured assault helicopter equipped with a catapult seat—to the Russian army. Foreign clients will get it complete with anti-tank and navigation equipment of Western make. The Kamov factory and the French aircraft-making company Aerospatiale will build a new helicopter for five.

The Russian Institute of Aviation Materials, whose dozens of laboratories no longer has military orders, offered «everything you need from titanium,» from prosthetic appliances to bullet-proof vests and armour for cars. The Commonwealth produces more titanium than the rest of the world. The institute can also make bullet-proof vests from steel, at 20% of the cost of titanium ones.

Those who used to make wheels for the space shuttle Buran are now selling them to the US General Motors and other car-making companies. These wheels can be used without tyres, they are so strong.

The Central Research Institute of Machine-Building in Kaliningrad, Moscow Region, has become a Russian Houston. The institute, which employs 30,000 people and incorporates the Space Control Centre, lost all its military orders in 1992 and suggested to the government that it would create a unique non-satellite communication network for 70 million subscribers throughout the ex-USSR. It only has to link hundreds of thousands of existing departmental communication (military, power engineering and transport) lines. The institute has created a micro-model of the network, at the cost of 3.5 million roubles, by linking 16 exchanges and banks across the Commonwealth in a matter of six weeks. The Russian Exchange Bank paid three million dollars for a similar network SWIFT.

Defence enterprises and institutes are prepared to engage in financial informatics and to sell to anybody the services of secret communication networks Istok, Iskra and Effect, which can be used to transfer data, facsimile information and electronic mail. The installation of the radio telephone Altai cost over 500,000 roubles in the summer of 1992, whereas the installation of Moscow telephone numbers in other Commonwealth cities, with the right of access to the international telephone exchange, cost 1.5 million roubles (10,000 dollars at the summer 1992 exchange rate).

The military-industrial complex was prepared not only to sell its obsolete goods but also to transfer our civilian telephone lines from analogue to digital or optic fibre ones. The use of 3% of a trans-Siberian optic-fibre communication line across Russia, which the whole world needs, would yield the annual profit of at least two billion dollars. The profitability of the line in general and orientation at earning hard currency will make it the third most important (after the export of raw materials and arms trade) enterprise.

If not for the CoCom limitations on the sale of optic fibre technologies to Russia (140Mb/sec optical cable is allowed for import to the

Commonwealth as of July 1, 1992, while the trans-Siberian optic-fibre communication line needs at least a 565Mb/sec cable), the line would have been working already. Our defence enterprises are prepared to ensure 75% of the cost of the project by using the best Soviet-made equipment. The laying of the cable from Japan to Europe would give a new lease of life to the eastern regions of Russia.

A comparison of the basic electric communications assets of the USSR and the USA showed a 1:20 balance, hence the enthusiasm of the defence enterprises for participating in the unification of local cable networks of Siberia in an optic-fibre mainline. The state Programme for the Development of Satellite Communications and Broadcasting for Russia in 1992-2000 has been approved at all conceivable levels.

Another major (probably most important) form of conversion is the transfer of the military-industrial complex to the satisfaction of the needs of the fuel industry and equipment-making. The time is past when the oil and gas industry, which brought hard currency revenues and supplied the whole country with it, could rival the military-industrial complex.

The only possible spectacular results of the economic reform can take place only behind the barbed wire, in secret institutes and facilities. For example, in Fryazino, outside Moscow, nearly all of whose 40,000-strong population works for Istok, one of the most secret institutions of the former Ministry of the Electronic Industry of the USSR. It produces targeting system that can hit a target from any altitude no worse than similar American systems. Our scientists maintain world, and sometimes even higher, standards in super-high frequency technologies. The Fryazino institute created the eyes and ears for the Buran shuttle, all navigation and radar systems, super-high precision sights and space communication systems.

When our military refused to buy Istok goods, it opened its doors to foreign companies, but only China and North Korea wanted to buy them. It could produce microwave chambers for saving harvests, treating timber and firing bricks, hearing aids and laser microwave devices for medics. But there is no money even for these noble programmes. As a result, the personnel of the super-secret Fryazino institution is making handles for American yachts, and car lights for foreign clients on German-made equipment.

The National Institute of Light Alloys in Setun, outside Moscow, makes rings for the MiG-29 jet engine from titanium alloys, and aluminium drilling pipes, which produced record results at the Kola super-deep well. British and German companies want to buy its technologies for the production of super-light 27-metre-long metal panels for high-speed railway compartments and heavy-duty lorries. The institute also offers warehouses that are assembled easily and quickly, in particular grain elevators for 1,000 tonnes complete with driers, which can be delivered anywhere by helicopter, or greenhouses for a hectare of land.

When the Defence Ministry stopped financing the aircraft-making design bureau in the town of physics, Dubna (the machine-building design bureau Raduga), it produced wind mills with the capacity of 250 kWt wing-gliders, and dish antennas for space communication. The design bureau is prepared to orbit foreign satellites on a Russian booster (plane) to any altitude, rather than depending on the site of the launching pad.

In July 1922 President Yeltsin signed the decree on the construction of a high-speed railway line from St. Petersburg to Moscow. Defence enterprises are to design and produce new-generation trains capable of making up to 400 kilometres an hour by the end of this century.

Much is now for sale in Russia. Unable to give jobs to all «Soviet Germans,» Bonn agreed to allocate 100 million DM on the restoration of a German autonomous formation in Saratov, Samarkand and Volgograd regions. A German consulate, which is to open in Saratov, will work to induce ethnic Germans, exiled by Stalin to Kazakhstan and Central Asia, to return to the Volga Region, rather than emigrate to West Germany.

But who will pay the 25 million Russians who found themselves in foreign countries as a result of the disintegration of the USSR and whose situation is no better than the situation of Black citizens of South Africa? The military-industrial complex will not part with its money easily.

Soviet-made weapons have always been in demand. We gave them free of charge to Afghanistan and Ethiopia, sold to Iraq, Libya and Yugoslavia on credit, and to the fraternal socialist countries at reduced prices. East Germany used to secretly sell whole batches of our weapons to the CIA. In 1982-85 US experts annually came to East Berlin on cargo aircraft in order to pick the latest Soviet weapons, which were later analysed in CIA laboratories.

But who would buy tens of thousands of our tanks? Hardly anyone, because their transportation costs too much and tank systems are being constantly modernised. Only guerrillas and organisations collecting scrap metal seem to need the bulk of our tanks now. Of course, potential clients from developing countries negotiate the purchase of our tanks, but probably because they want to bring down the price of Western hardware they want to buy.

«It took 80% to 90% of the national resources (raw materials, technical, financial and intellectual) to create the military-industrial complex. In actual fact it incorporated the best we had in Russia, including basic economic capacities, technologies, materials and specialists. That is why the military-industrial complex has become a symbol of our economy and its conversion, a symbol of the economic reform,» said Presidential adviser A. Rakitov, but this truth has long been transparent to everybody in this country. For decades (up to 1989) USSR officials lied to each and all-and nearly believed that lie themselves-that USSR spending on defence amounted to 4.2% of the GNP.

The USA is bearing with difficulty the military expenditures that amount to 6.1% of the GNP, whereas the Soviet Union had to admit only three years ago that it spent over 30% of the GNP on defence. We paid through the nose for maintaining military parity with the USA but managed to surpass NATO in chemical weapons, armoured vehicles artillery systems, and certain types of missiles.

When medium-range missiles were destroyed in accordance with the INF Treaty, it turned out that the USA had 862 such missiles, whereas the USSR had 1,846. We spent 600 billion roubles on their creation and production (at that time the official exchange rate of the dollar was 0.60 roubles and 4 roubles at the black market, which means that the sum was more or less equivalent to the US 600 billion dollars).

The Soviet economy was kept afloat by petrodollars, earned through total destruction of the human environment and its barbaric exploitation. Our raw materials ran out without enriching our people; on the contrary, the average life span became ever shorter in this country.

The Kremlin octogenarians continued their global and very costly terrorist activities even when the flow of petrodollars ebbed. It was the ultimate in absurdity when it transpired that Russia continued to produce weapons in hair-raising amounts until March 1992, although under agreements with the West a part of the newly-produced weapons was destroyed. By the end of 1992 only 12 of the more than 5,000 defence enterprises were closed down.

The watershed was the summer of 1992, when society came to understand that the recent decree on the 70% reduction of military contracts would be fulfilled and that the state would not buy the bulk of goods produced by the armaments industries. The army and the military-industrial generals raised a hue and cry over their lost privileges, trying to scare the people with mass unemployment and loss of the military superpower. But today, at the end of the 20th century, the power of states is determined by the ability to use dual-purpose technologies, rather than military production alone, as in this country.

Money spent on the production of a couple of aircraft carriers and five nuclear submarines would suffice to build housing for all servicemen or to pay very high salaries to the personnel of defence enterprises which are switching over to the production of civilian goods for one to three years. (Salaries in the armaments industries amount to 5-10% of allocations on production.).

A considerable part of defence enterprises of Russia have stopped or are stopping production, which means that energy, raw materials and rare metals are not squandered any more. And the defence plants cannot be closed down forever; they will produce civilian planes, medical equipment and agricultural machinery, houses and cars, bathroom equipment and dishes. Our society will soon heave a sigh of relief; we will stop being a world disgrace, stop delivering weapons and money to shady personalities, and the world's attitude to us will change. We will no longer suffer from the CoCom limitations, etc.

Meanwhile, the frightened managers of defence enterprises and generals stubbornly refuse to understand that our attempts to sell major batches of weapons at dumping prices produce a far from positive reaction in the world. The need for weapons greatly diminished with the end of the cold war, that is, after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union removed itself from the political scene.

Russia is becoming an open society, which means that the disintegration of the regime of total secrecy is engendering the possibility of emerging on the world markets with the whole (or nearly whole) licence arsenal of our armaments industries. We used to register 80,000-85,000 inventions annually. The sale of licences abroad and participation in the production of spares and sets of equipment under Western contracts will ensure us steady hard currency revenues.

The cooperation of our leading space companies with the French ones, the exchange of technologies with South Korea, the involvement of Russia in the Western scientific and technological programme Eureka, and collaboration with twenty million our compatriots abroad give us a chance for survival. Our achievements in the aerospace technology, lasers, welding and composites are indubitable. In many spheres we have scored much more considerable achievements during staged preceding production.

Foreign businessmen never entered the bulk of the USSR-Commonwealth territory until 1992, when the regime of secrecy became more relaxed and the military-industrial complex started looking for foreign partners. We shall have to use their assistance to learn to save materials and energy per production unit. The Mafia duet (the military-industrial complex and generals) used to get any amount of money, material assistance, personnel, etc., from the state.

The transition to a market economy will halve the spending of coal, oil, metals, energy, fabrics, etc. There will be a practical possibility of closing down all nuclear power stations in Russia, all «these nuclear bombs which are temporarily producing electricity,» as an international commission wrote about our nuclear power stations. This conclusion was reaffirmed by A.Yablokov, state counsellor of the Russian Federation on ecological policy and health care. Our nuclear stations produce barely 12.5% of electricity, or several times less than the military-industrial complex consumed.

Conversion is quite possible in Russia. Over the past four years the volume of civilian industries in the total volume of production doubles from 42% to 81%. The defence enterprises produce nearly all Russian radio and TV sets, photo cameras, tape recorders, VCRs and refrigerators, as well as 72% of vacuum cleaners, 66% of washing machines and household electric stoves, nearly 50% of motorcycles and bicycles, over 75% of technological equipment for the light and food industries, trade and public catering, over 80% of medical equipment, 100% of tram cars, 95% of computer equipment, 88% of diesel engines, 33% of freight cars, as well as tractors, lathes, and cars.

The de-monopolization of the military-industrial complex and their partial (at least) privatization, will attract to this country small and medium Western businessmen who are prepared to cooperate only with non-governmental enterprises. Only large Western companies have the strength to withstand our bureaucrats.

The shrinking of the sphere of the economic and political power of the military-industrial complex will greatly remove a heavy burden from the state budget. The taxpayer will no longer have to pay (unknowingly) for the construction of a secret underground city sprawling over dozens of hectares south of the high-rise Moscow University building, between Vernadsky and Michurinsky avenues.

Its construction began during Brezhnev's rule, while the construction of secret subway stations began during Stalin's lifetime and continues to this day. The cost of these stations by far surpasses the cost of the subway which ordinary people use every day. Subway-2 is situated below the ordinary subway, under the radial and ring stations, and has exits to all the main central institutions of the capital, to airports and dachas of the country's leadership.

But this tourist exotica for tomorrow's foreign tourists is a trifle compared to the embezzlement of the taxpayer's money. Up to the summer of 1992 not a single commission of the Russian Supreme Soviet could get precise figures of military revenues from the Defence Ministry. The Supreme Soviet approves annual allocations to the military, but the latter also have profits which they don't declare.

The islands of military trade in all kinds of military items, army farms and companies selling weapons, means of transportation and real estate bring enormous revenues which the military prefer to hush up, claiming that this is a military secret which cannot be told even to the most trusty deputies, comparable to the list of American citizens working for our secret services.

The top secret Park branch of the State Bank was situated in the building of the notorious Aquarium (GRU, Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff) in 73b Khoroshevskoye Highway. Only several high-ranking officials from the Central Fiscal Department of the Defence Ministry, to which the Park Bank is officially subordinate, know what «the 2nd section of the department of special works,» as the Park Bank is called in the CIA, does. Park Bank was not once inspected over the 14 years of its existence.

The Military Exchange Section, created by the eleven leaders of the High Command of the Joint Commonwealth Forces, intended to operate under the veil of secrecy covering Park Bank in a bid to monopolise the sale of military property.

Soviet marshals and many generals enjoyed much higher living standards and special privileges, which were more favourable than Politburo members had. Politburo members and their families shied from the eyes of the man in the street and their own colleagues, whereas the children and grandchildren of marshals used personal aircraft to have a good time

abroad and continued to enjoy these privileges even after the death of their parents. The time will come when the veil of secrecy will be raised from Park Bank and then we will learn astounding details about how else our military spent the taxpayer's money. I know for sure that this money was spent not on the millions of semi-hungry servicemen and their families.

Having resigned from the post of President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev relaxed and admitted that all our difficulties root in the resistance of the military-industrial complex, which was used to unlimited money allocations. He cited figures which once shocked him: in the 12th five-year plan period the growth of the national income was to reach 22-24%, while spending on defence was to increase to 45%.

Hundreds of millions of dollars of the taxpayer's money were spent by the KGB and GRU to remove the CoCom limitations on the sale of the latest hardware and technologies to socialist countries. Even slightly more sophisticated weapon systems than ordinary, created in this country in the 1980s (the famous MiG-29 and Su-27 planes, the lesser known missiles, tanks, submarines) were created thanks to the computer systems which we secretly bought abroad without a licence.

In this way, using hundreds of companies created on our money across the world, we bought tens of thousands of computers of different classes, a great number of periphery systems, software and spares. In this way we created the giant aircraft Mr.iya and accumulated a wealth of experience in reliable simulation of any systems and situations.

But even this large-scale «borrowing» of Western technologies did not help to eliminate our computer illiteracy. Our aircraft-making centres have only 30% of research equipment, compared to Boeing. Only 30% of researchers had a design station even at the best research institutions of the military-industrial complex, something which each of their foreign colleagues has. The ratio is 1:10 for the defence industries in general, and 1:1,000 for the country.

Industrial espionage has not made us richer or happier. We don't have competitive Soviet-made computers or the money to buy batches of foreign-made ones. Now Russia is offered to join CoCom, which is an invitation to play fair in order to reduce the number of Husseins and Qaddafis, Arafats and Kim IISungs on this planet.

I cannot imagine the CIA stealing the blueprints of a new Russian supersonic liner. To what private citizen or organisation would the CIA sell this information? This situation is highly improbable since the CIA believes that such theft is inadmissible. But Yevgeny Primakov, head of the First Chief Directorate (external intelligence), openly said that his department's main task will be economic espionage. It is natural that the interests of the homeland should be protected, but should we steal? This is shameful and unprofitable. I hope our military-industrial complex will understand this and will use CoCom to protect our state interests.

Meanwhile, in April 1992 the Bush administration accused Russia of continuing to spy against the USA. FBI officials claimed that GRU was

stealing military and technological secrets from the USA even more actively than before.

It is better to buy than to steal or get hand-me-downs. At least this will save us from comically shameful situations. For example, in July 1992 Yeltsin went to a testing station in Kuban, where he inspected a grain harvester Don made in Rostov. «It's a good combine,» he was told «but our farms cannot buy it since it costs two million roubles and has a guarantee of 18 hours.» If these combines has a guarantee of at least 300 hours, we would not have to buy American grain.

In the 19th century French governesses taught ABC and manners to the children of Russia's rich, whereas Germans managed the affairs of their parents. Today, a century later, Professor Wolfgang Kartte is working for the Russian government in Moscow, while managers form the British consulting company Braxton Associates and the French bank Credit Commercial head a consortium of Western companies chosen by the Russian government to advise on the strategy and tactics of privatization. I hope they help.

During the first stage of the programme of the EC humanitarian assistance to Russia, in December 1991-July 1992, we received some 150,000 tonnes of foods. Technical assistance is a more complicated process; it calls for preparations at the government level and at each recipient enterprise. Before allocating money on the conversion of the Russian armaments industries, Western donors sent their specialists on lengthy business trips to our largest defence enterprises. International research and technological centres for re-training our scientists who used to create weapons are being established in Moscow and some other major cities of Russia.

POWER AND HUMAN RIGHTS. No Decent Life with Censorship and Unlawfulness

Soviet censors are responsible for tens of millions of deaths. The Soviet press has always hushed up the names of those who died at the hand of Communists during the civil war sparked off by Lenin.

It was strictly banned to mention in the press or just in any talk the mass terror unleashed by Lenin and Stalin against peasants during the procurement of grain, collectivisation, and subsequently, against the intellectuals, proprietors, the clergy, and dissenters.

In the 1930s-1940 the press gave coverage to individual show trials, as the families of hundreds of thousands of convicts who were executed by firing squad received false notices from the authorities which ran as follows: «Your brother (father, son) has been sentenced to ten years in prison without the right to correspond.».

Did anyone in this country know the true number of those who died in labour camps in the 1920s-1950s, or about our true losses during the Second World War?

Strict censorship helped conceal from the Soviet and world public any crimes committed by the regime, any flops in the economic policy. Under Lenin and Stalin, Khrushchev and Gorbachev, the entire statistics, even the data which bore the stamps «for official use only» or «classified,» was falsified. Reports of the KGB, the interior ministry, the ministry for foreign affairs, and defence ministry, and all papers prepared by humanitarian research centres, all optimistic reports by any Soviet institution—from a ministry or college to a sanitary authority or recycling facility—were a far cry from reality. Each boss of any rank knew what kind of official reporting his superiors wanted to receive.

Blanket silence and inaction of the obedient puppet press guaranteed the authorities against any potential public outcry. Criticism in the press has always been carefully dosed and sanctioned from on high. Our society was losing millions of its members on the fronts, in wood-felling areas, in penal servitude on construction sites of communism and in hospital wards for want of medicines. Our citizens have breathed the poisoned air in heavily polluted cities, eaten food poisoned with hazardous fertilisers, lived in shared apartments and reported on each other for decades on end. The cold war, Russia waged on the West and common sense, lasted for 70 years during which the leaders of the free world willingly exchanged kisses and hugs with our general secretaries, and thus legitimised, or gave tacit consent to their rule.

Under reform-minded Gorbachev, preliminary censorship of the mass media existed till August 1, 1990 when it was abolished pursuant to the new Law of the USSR on the Press.

Had censorship fallen five years earlier, millions of people could have been saved from the pernicious effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. But the total silence of the press protracted the evacuation of people from the contaminated areas, and the entire country consumed contaminated farm produce for years. The irradiated victims received Rbs15 (an equivalent of US\$3 at that time) as a monthly allowance, but virtually no cure was administered to them, and no safe products were delivered to the disaster areas. It was not before five (zic!) years after the disaster that the authorities published in the press the hitherto classified maps of the European USSR with large areas marked as contaminated by nuclear fallout resulting from the Chernobyl accident. Until that time even heads of local administrations had no access to this kind of information. Radiation ceased to be a taboo subject for the press, and we learned that in the resort city of Sochi alone 800 radioactive zones were discovered. Only five (zic!) years after, did we learn that the entire harvest of Georgian tea from the Black Sea coast was poisoned, while the USSR by that time had bought and fed to the Soviet population tens of thousands of Turkish tea contaminated with caesium and strontium even to a greater extent than the Georgian tea.

It was only after censorship was lifted in 1990 that we learned that the Afghan war became more fierce and scopeful after Gorbachev came to power. The USSR withdrew from the war in 1989 after it realised that the war could be won only if all Afghans were exterminated.

The lifting of censorship per se changed little if anything in this country where the CPSU virtually had monopoly on TV, printing facilities, paper production and mailing services. The USSR broke down because of the eternal and ardent desire of all the constituent republics to get out from the rigid grips of the Kremlin. To avenge itself, the latter used the KGB and the GRU in the late 1980s to engineer ethnic conflicts (between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Ossetians, Meskhetian Turks and Uzbeks), bring relentless pressure to bear on ethnic leaders in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the Baltic states and Georgia, Armenia and Moldova.

The press in all Union republics overtly and covertly supported the nationalists universally described as «democrats» for some unknown reason. Probably it was thus easier to distinguish between them and Stalinist communists. It is common knowledge that one can make people work hard either by threat or by paying them handsomely. The bloodthirsty tyrants Lenin and Stalin died, the petrodollars of the Brezhnev-Gorbachev era dissipated into thin air. Consequently, Moscow was abandoned first by satellite states in Eastern Europe, then by the Union republics. Now is the turn for the former national autonomies of Russia, or even entire economic regions to the east of the Urals, to break away from Russia one after another.

Privatisation in Russia is marking time. Or to be more precise, it never got off the ground, despite the fact that Marxism-Leninism, the USSR and the CPSU long ceased to exist, and glasnost and free elections came into being. But the spirit of the KGB is still there, that is the powers-that-be lack political culture and common sense to accept the obvious gains offered by the free press.

Nevertheless, the Russian mass media are enjoying a greater degree of freedom than the other public institutions and the population. Since August, 1990, any Russian can establish a newspaper (a radio or TV-broadcasting station, or a publishing house). Many people did exercise that right. Small wonder, glasnost was the first and probably the only achievement of Gorbachev's perestroika. It was against the bold and freedom-loving publications in Moscow periodicals like *Ogonyok*, *Novy Mir*, and *Moscow news* which were nevertheless closely watched by the CPSU Central Committee, that Gorbachev received western credits in 1985-1990. Now it is time to repay them. Sadly, we did not receive a single dollar in exchange for our withdrawal from Afghanistan, Poland, the GDR, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Gorbachev and Yeltsin enabled the West to end the arms race and thereby save enormous sums of money. But we never saw a Marshall plan, because we cannot prove that this present anti-communism of ours is irreversible.

Privatisation of the majority of means of production, normal laws for foreign investment, respect for human rights, the freedom of the press are indispensable prerequisites for our prosperity.

The Russian press is not yet free. It is still possible to make money in society with minimum allocations for the survey of public opinion advertising. This notwithstanding, we already have private sociological centres which provide us with trustworthy information. Independent advertising agencies appeared only a year ago to fill our mass media with paid advertisements. In 1992, advertising became a major revenue source for the mass media, almost in keeping with the Western practices.

The journalist organisations of Moscow and a number of periodicals established their own Innovation Commercial Bank for the Development of the Mass Media, or Zhurbank. Publishers established Izdatbank.

The newspapers *Izvestia*, *Moscow News* and *Argumenty i Fakty* turned into powerful independent concerns, which upsets some members of parliament, government and courts. This development is upsetting at least because each of the three above Institutions of power now has a lower rating than the «fourth power»- the mass media. This public confidence in the journalists has been confirmed by many sociological surveys. In 1991, there were 2,000 independent publications, and tens of regional TV companies registered in the Russian Federation.

The sober-minded parliamentarians failed to include an exceptionally important provision in the Law of the Russian Federation on the Mass Media enacted in February 1992. The law should have strictly banned the establishment of newspapers (magazines, TV and radio companies) by bodies of state authority, Soviets, parliaments, governments, administrations and city councils. Making taxpayers upkeep such publications is nonsense. Then again, whose mouthpiece is *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, the publication of the Supreme Soviet of Russia? How can dozens of parliamentary factions divide the newspaper space?

Of course, the Russian press is no longer a kind of a public prosecutor. In the past, every local official concerned was required to report to the editorial office on measures taken in response to press criticism. The practice of «reporting to the superiors» has run its course. There are courts to take care of such instances. But now we have gone to the opposite extreme. Press exposures of politicians or industrialists have no effect on their careers due to the embryonic state of our public opinion structures. Elementary dishonesty, incompetence, bribery or embezzlement are considered rather a norm of conduct of officials, rather than an exception to the rule. Lawyers and journalists have not yet become the main champions of human rights in Russia, but gradually they will get the knack of this role, if the two professions become more Prestigious in this country.

We have a fund for the protection of glasnost established in February 1991 after the notorious KGB- and GRU-engineered pogroms in Vilnius

Riga. There are also journalists killed, persecuted or sacked for critical publications. But the independent fund virtually has no finance to support the families of journalists and periodicals in need.

The spring of 1992 saw a new crack down on the freedom of the press in Russia launched by the parliament, the government and local administrations in various regions of this country. President Yeltsin and vice premier Poltoranin (also holding the office of the minister of the press) were among those few in the upper echelons of power who somehow tried to stave off the onslaught by a new cohort of powers-that-be on the press. At the moment our press is uncontrollable in the better sense of the word, but not free.

It does not have enough funds to be totally independent. It needs office space, apartments for its staffers (which means that the editors have to pay writers handsomely so that they could afford housing), printing facilities, paper, etc. Here comes the state offering to finance all newspapers and magazines. What's more, the state promised generous subsidies to the most necessary periodicals. Journalists welcomed that generous offer in February, 1992, which prodded Ruslan Khasbulatov, chairman of the Russian parliament, to say the following in his public address to the journalists: «The press should not nurture the false hope that it is the fourth power. You are nonentity! May be, someone wants me to file a law-suit? But I don't give a damn about this fourth power!».

The pauperization of the Russian population coupled with numerous mistakes committed by law-makers and the government tempt the latter to blame all these problems on... the journalists. Judging by the proposed amendments to the Penal Code and the draft Law on Mass Media Supervisory Councils, Journalists may again turn into lackeys of a party (some democratic party if not the CPSU) by the beginning of 1993. They will not see freedom again. They will not be able to expose instances of misappropriation of funds which has become ten times more widespread under the democrats than under the former embezzlers from the CPSU. Even if they do expose such instances they will run the risk of being imprisoned.

The press should not be punished for criticism. This right is being denied to the Russian press in a very peculiar manner. The price of paper was upped from 18 to 30 thousand roubles during July, 1992 alone. The state preserves its monopoly on paper production and fixes the prices. Paper mills have incredible stocks of finished products which the poor publishers cannot afford to buy. The state again ups the prices on the eve of the 1993 subscription, which may eventually thwart the campaign-The policy pursued by state mailing agencies also serves the same purpose. It turned out in the summer of 1992 that the next-year price of a newspaper, say, of *Izvestia*, will be for the first time ever less than the delivery rate in Moscow, notwithstanding the fact that the *Izvestia* publishers pays for all expenses involved in the delivery of newspapers to Moscow post offices. This means that the subscribers will pay 60 roubles a month for the newspaper and another 80 roubles to the postal service. What is the purpose of

all this? This is being done to make newsmatter even less accessible for the public. In 1991, the subscription price of any daily was about Rbs7, the 1993 price is 1.7 roubles, or 250 more. No consumer goods in this country have shown this rate of price growth, the maximum figure being 100. Of course, solutions may be found. Any city council may decide to foot the bill of the mailing service and thereby alleviate the plight of the Journalists and the readers. Thus favoured, the periodicals will then heed to the voice of the generous city council.

In the tsarist times, the censor of great poet Pushkin was Nicholas I himself. Soviet films were censored personally by Stalin before they were okeyed for public showing. In December, 1988, A. Kapto, head of the Ideological Department of the CPSU Central Committee, prepared a draft resolution of the CPSU Central Committee in response to submission from the USSR Glavlit on the provision of Soviet censorship agencies with technical means for clandestine interception of reports transmitted by foreign correspondents in Moscow by fax or via computer communications .

In his interview with *Izvestia* (June 30, 1992). Andrei Kozyrev, Russian foreign minister, described-with frankness unprecedented for a diplomat-a mechanism for provoking conflicts in the «hotbeds of tension» in Russia-the USSR in the 1980s- 1990s. «The situation prompting the use of forces is created with the help of information presented in a certain manner by the former KGB and the military agencies. It is not absolutely distorted but biased and carefully intoned information.» Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin have repeatedly complained in public that some of their decisions were based on false information they received from their staff. The purpose of the quality Western press (like the CNN, *Le Monde*, *The Times*, *Time*, etc.) is precisely to preclude such instances. Expert press and TV journalists will not lie. They may be turning a blind eye to some bullshit fed to the broad public, but such tricks are eventually exposed by the same press. If the press lied all the time, no one would read it and the editors would go bust.

Two staffers of the ITAR-TASS bureau in Bonn went on strike in June 1992. Before that, they informed thousands of TASS subscribers worldwide that they demanded that the head of their regional centre in Germany and Austria, seventy-year-old retired KGB general Vyacheslav Kevorkov, resign. The spiteful *Commersant* weekly published a report about the squabble under the dubious title «Privates Blow Whistle At General.» It was next to impossible to be an overseas correspondent of a press agency (magazine, newspaper, TV) not being in some way related to the KGB-GRU operations. The two agencies either co-opted their officers or recruited «volunteers.» Foreign-based personnel of the Soviet (Russian) mass media, like the personnel of the KGB-GRU, did not change in 1992. The only nuance is that most Russian correspondents abroad ceased to receive a fixed salary from their Moscow offices and refused to work for them staying in foreign countries for good as refugees, displaced persons (or the KGB's own correspondents?), etc.

The Westerners poke fun at them but sometimes agree to pay for all the expenses of, say, a Moscow TV correspondent in Bonn.

As for the former KGB, it still closely guards its department archives but agrees nevertheless to declassify them for handsome compensation. They sell information to Dutchmen and Americans. But some cases are still kept under the lid, like the Vallenberg case. We do not have a law on archives, or a law on the state secret, therefore, the military and the KGB are taking advantage of the situation. Some materials compromising the living politicians have been destroyed, hidden or not made available to anyone, even if President Yeltsin himself asked for them. It is only after the departmental archives are put under state jurisdiction, will the current monopolists on state secrets lose part of their power. It will be that only 0.5 per cent of what is kept in our classified archives has some value, while the rest should be preserved, studied, published and publicly displayed rather than sold abroad.

The 5th Directorate of the USSR KGB resolved on September 6, 1989 to burn 583 (sic!) volumes of the Andrei Sakharov and Yelena Bonner (his wife) case, including dozens of kilogrammes of invaluable manuscripts written in Sakharov's hand. A few days before the August coup attempt, several truckloads of documents were carried away from the buildings of the CPSU Central Committee archives. Mikhail Gorbachev, ex-Soviet president, also carried from the Kremlin many interesting documents dealing with the CPSU Central Committee activities in 1990-1991.

Gorbachev lost all of his offices because he did not have the guts to dissolve the CPSU and the KGB. Yeltsin did not declare the two organisations criminal. He simply wound up the Communist party and renamed the KGB, leaving the pro-Communist parliament and local Soviets intact. It might seem that the press has received political freedom, but in fact only few editorial offices in the provinces or in Moscow have been granted such freedom. As a result, the information void is filled not by the press and sociologists but by the former KGB which survived under the name of the Ministry of Security of Russia (MBR).

In the summer of 1992, KGB officers gathered intelligence on the true economic and financial status of foreign businessmen coming to Russia, and probed the attitude of people in the provinces to the reorganisation of collective and state farms, estimated the prospective harvest, etc. May be, the FBI performs similar functions in the USA. But in the USA, there are alternative sources of information which we lack. Again, like in the past seventy years, the ChK-KGB-MBR is tutoring our government, while the citizens may only try to guess what is being concealed from them. Why do we need sociologists, economists, statisticians and journalists if KGB officers can sort things out. And the Americans will explain to us everything that the KGB prefers to conceal. Research services of the US Congress Library, analytical divisions of the

CIA and the IMF may be very useful sources of knowledge for particularly inquisitive and very rich Russians.

Russia still has a long way to go before it becomes a law-based state. Our society is kept on a strict information diet. In June 1992 the leaders of the Russian parliament decided to bar accredited journalists, with the exception of ITAR-TASS, RIA, Interfax and Rossiyskaya Gazeta correspondents, from sessions of the Russian Supreme Soviet presidium and press conferences held by parliamentary leaders. The restrictions on travels by all foreign diplomats and journalists inside Russia are still in force despite the fact that the Russian leaders repeatedly demanded that such shameful discrimination be ended.

Attempts are being made to force Russian journalists to work like bureaucrats, which requires that the information they provide be pleasing for the authorities. This, in its turn, would give them a chance to survive. Such ignorance of the powers-that-be frightens all normal people. Society cannot develop and flourish without a free press. Of course, there are exceptions. An authoritarian regime may strangle its press but only during the lifetime of one or two generations. Then complete degeneration of society follows. In 1992, the pro-Communist Russian parliament (about 70 per cent in parliament are held by former party bureaucrats) launched a systematic crack-down on the press. Handouts to journalists became a strategy of the authorities who now decide what subsidies it will grant and to what periodical. What is really needed are tax concessions for editorial offices, publishers, paper producers and postal agencies. That is an accepted practice in democratic states.

The freedom of the press is the only democratic feature of our rudimentary democracy. Journalists here can responsibly speak about what they believe in. But the stand-off between *Izvestia* and the Supreme Soviet of Russia which is trying to break down that independent newspaper making it a parliamentary publication is a very sad development. Even in the financially unfavourable year of 1992, the newspaper had three million subscribers across the entire Commonwealth of Independent States. Now that the 1993 subscription campaign has got underway, the very existence of the newspaper is questioned. That's from the standpoint of the Russian parliament, however. President Yeltsin, minister of the press Poltoranin, and the majority of Moscow TV and press leaders believe that they will manage to protect the independence of the *Izvestia* newspaper and all other major TV and information companies. Under the law of the Russian Federation on the mass media, only court may close down a newspaper. So, let the parliament file a law suit or amend the law on the press.

In August 1991, *Izvestia* helped defend the Russian White House. A year after, the newspaper was subject to slow strangulation in the same building. But that is not the end of this story. A new constitution of Russia will be soon discussed. The proposed constitution does not have a room for the Congress of People's Deputies, that is for the parliament

as it was in the summer of 1992. Those who would like to have at least couple of major newspapers and a couple of TV channels at their full disposal in the future battle for power would love to control the forthcoming parliamentary elections. They want to use these instruments to convince the people what they should do, whom they should vote for, etc. Thus, instead of the former Propaganda Department of the CPSU Central Committee, the press would be effectively supervised by a no less influential Supervisory Council enjoying broad powers.

The entire democratic press was alerted to the imminent catastrophe and fourteen editorial offices of Moscow and St. Petersburg released the second issue of *Common Newspaper* on July 16, 1992. It will be recalled that the first issue of the newspaper appeared on August 20, 1991 when the coup makers banned all progressive publications. On July 27 *Izvestia* and the *Financial Times* newspaper concern agreed to publish a business weekly in Russia, initially as a supplement to *Izvestia*, and subsequently, presumably in 1993, as an independent edition. The proposed publication will be similar to the joint Russian-language newspaper, *We/Mi*, published in Moscow by *Izvestia* and the Herst concern for several months already.

The western partners were not disturbed by the conflict between *Izvestia* and the Supreme Soviet. Even if worse comes to worst, and the *Izvestia* editors lose their offices and printing facilities, the newspaper may publish its editions elsewhere, even outside Moscow. According to *The Times of London* (July 15, 1992), *Izvestia* is the best of what Russian journalism has. The battle for the future of this newspaper proved to be the most poignant show-down between the left and the right for the control over the mass media, and virtually the country itself.

The rift between the parliamentarians over the press was sparked off by the pride of Ruslan Khasbulatov, speaker of the Russian parliament, hurt by the journalists. Here are two episodes to illustrate this point.

Izvestia carried a report about Chechens, Khasbulatov's countrymen, being evicted from Moscow hotels and beaten up on instructions from Khasbulatov himself. In response Khasbulatov made a public statement that *Izvestia* is a «corrupt and subversive» periodical. The newspaper sued Khasbulatov in court after which the speaker began to harass *Izvestia*.

The second episode is known to the whole of Russia. Khasbulatov swore before the microphones of the Ostankino TV company that he had not called members of the Russian government «worms» in an interview with *La Repubblica*. Evidence had to be produced, and the amazed deputies listened to the recording of the interview to learn that Khasbulatov had lied to them. Now Khasbulatov wants to take his revenge on Ostankino in disregard of censorship.

On July 23, the Independent Institute of Parliamentary Sociology headed by N. Betaneli conducted another weekly poll of one thousand Muscovites at the request of the Information TV agency's Itogi pro-

gramme. The randomly selected sampling by its social and demographic composition proportionately represented the general composition of the population of Moscow. The survey revealed that the voters are losing confidence not only in the institutions of power but also in political parties and movements of Russia. Thus, only 8 per cent of the respondents believe that there is at least one party or movement which reflects their opinion and their personal civil stand. Most of those polled (67%) believe that «there are no «such parties and movements,» while 25 per cent ticked off the DK box.

At the same time, the poll suggests that the «fourth power» enjoys more confidence than all other institutions. Forty-four per cent of the respondents named newspapers, magazines, radio and TV programmes that reflect their opinion or their personal civil stand. 29 per cent said that there were «no such periodicals,» while 27 per cent of the respondents said they did not know.

All in all, 43 newspapers and magazines, as well as 46 TV and radio programmes were named. According to the results of the poll, the recognised leaders of public opinion in Moscow are the following:.

Moskovsky Komsomolets, Argumenty i Fakty-12 and 8 per cent, respectively;.

Izvestia, Trud, Kuranty-5, 4 and 3 per cent, respectively;.

Vechernyaya Moskva, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Moskovskaya Pravda-2 per cent each.

Commersant, Pravda, Sovetskaya Rossiya-1 per cent each.

The political climate in Russia is so unstable that the future of Western radiostations which have been broadcasting in tens of languages of the peoples of the USSR since the late 1940s is quite definite as far as their Russian programmes are concerned.

We still need such radiostations as Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, the Voice of America, the BBC and a dozen of others. We are only learning the freedom of the press and responsibility. We are still lacking professionalism. We are still learning to «sell» information and ideas without censorship and at the same time make the money enough to pay the rent. Russian journalists will have to learn from their foreign colleagues to make productions which are needed by the people and at a price which the readers and advertisers can afford.

Television in Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

The Rise of Independent Television in Russia

A mere two years ago the entire population of the USSR watched the only evening news programme, «Vremya» (Time). The situation changed for people in the Soviet Union on May 13, 1991, when the Russian Television Company was formed and launched its own evening news programme on Channel-II.

In 1992 citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) watched various news programmes, as well as their national and local programmes, on state TV channels—»Ostankino» (Channel-I), «Rossiya» (Channel-II), «Moscow» (Channel III) and «St. Petersburg» (Channel-V). Channel-IV is devoted to educational programmes as before.

There are also dozens of state-owned republican, regional, and territorial TV studios broadcasting to audiences in the provinces in Russian and national languages. Half the planet can now watch the «Novosti» news programme (Ostankino), which has superseded 'Vremya'. The 'Vesti» news programme (Rossiya) is not broadcast much beyond the territory of the Russian Federation.

Until the summer of 1991, the television network was headed by a minister directly under Gorbachev. Both exchanged telephone calls several times a day. Meanwhile, most of the Soviet newspapers and book publishers had already freed themselves from the yoke of censorship and deadly grip of the CPSU-KGB ideological departments. The wind of freedom did not blow in the TV network until after the abortive August 1991 coup—but not for long. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev in a televised address announced his resignation as the first and last President of the USSR. He made his address in the evening so that viewers on the American continent might see him live. Since that time Boris Yeltsin started his fatal political path in the wake of Gorbachev's career.

Books galore have been written on how television under Gorbachev unscrupulously lied about the bloodshed in Sumgait, Tbilisi, Ferghana, Vilnius, Baku and Karabakh, thereby precipitating the collapse of the Soviet Union and the CPSU.

Once the democrats came to power in Russia in 1992, they placed the state television network (and we practically have no other) in the service of their factional interests. Literally the day after the official disintegration of the USSR, Channel-I (Ostankino) was made subordinate to Yeltsin. According to a Presidential decree (No. 331 pi December 27, 1991), «the Russian State Television and Radio network is to cover political, economic and cultural life in the member-countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States». Ostankino was transformed into the Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company

(RSRTBC). Channel-II, Rossiya, was incorporated into a similarly sounding corporation, the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (ASTRBC). The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Russia, Yeltsin, went to great lengths in 1990-91 to persuade the USSR President Gorbachev to open a special channel for Russia in place of the second national one.

The Rossiya TV channel began operating nearly from scratch in premises unfit for the purpose. But this was compensated for by the anchormen. The most honest and popular TV journalists, who had been banished from the USSR National Television at different times because they refused to tell a lie, were hired. It was the first time that journalists who could be trusted appeared on the TV screen in Moscow. And people did!

But no miracle occurred. By early 1993 the team of Rossiya TV journalists had been split up. The management has had resplendent facilities built where they can hold receptions and invite hundreds of people. There is no dearth of luxury limousines and good-looking secretaries. Government lines become white hot towards the evening— none other than the parliament beneficiaries are calling! For it is their channel. They use the taxpayers' money for its operation and make sure the TV men dose out just certain information.

In 1993 President Yeltsin issued a number of decrees making the TV channels Rossiya, Moscow and St. Petersburg his mouthpiece. The parliament, however, is of a different opinion and is going to establish its own state TV network.

The post service and book publishers have all but folded due to the burden of economic ills in the CIS. The bulk of the population in the former USSR cannot afford to buy newspapers and books. Only television is left to them. So the TV screen is the only connecting line between citizens of what was once a vast country, the Soviet Union.

In today's Russia, which is falling apart, television— and it alone! — can act as a stabilising factor against the backdrop of destructive political collisions in Moscow.

Politicians gave five leading posts in the all-Russia state channels to their stooges. The latter are wasting taxpayers' money and indulging in the now licensed amusement of soliciting commercials and getting rich off the TV network.

To be sure, TV journalists in other countries are not at all poor. Yet ours is a special television system which is independent of its viewers. That is precisely why CIS citizens have again found themselves on information short rations. The TV administration, trying to please their bosses in the Moscow corridors of power, tend to hush up important events, smooth over rough spots and provide slanted information. Under Brezhnev and Gorbachev that was done in a more straightforward manner. In those times an announcer would read out official (!) news released by TASS, the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government. Today

we see a host of anchormen with a knowledgeable air feeding us information making it impossible to get an adequate idea of real life.

Under Gorbachev hundreds of people died at the hands of our army-men. And many other Soviet citizens fell victim to ethnic conflicts staged by the local authorities. Rigged economic statistics misrepresented the real state of affairs. And we had no way of knowing «who owes whom, and how much» and «who depends on whom», meaning the republics and the central government.

Under Yeltsin massive impoverishment of the population artificially organised by his opponents, and corruption of the top echelons of power acquired disastrous proportions. The Russian army is contributing to the death of thousands of people in armed conflicts in Transcaucasia, Moldova and Tajikistan. Elderly people get a pension of 3-4 dollars a month. Only the lazy do not have weapons and a couple of grenades in a secret place, and the price of human life dropped to the lowest level. Television «under the democrats» keeps silent about the causes of this calamity and the journalists give no analysis of developments in the zones of armed conflicts, but are content with the summary of official despatches released by the warring sides. Ostankino head Yegor Yakovlev was removed from his post 24 hours after he dared to show a film about the Ossetia-Ingushetia conflict in November 1992.

The Russian state television today is innumerable lotteries and foreign serials constantly interrupted by profit-bringing commercials and variety shows. What we get as political news is the scanty information about political strife in the Kremlin and the struggle for power at all levels, in the absence of a legal basis for operating the television network in Russia.

Legal Arbitrariness

On January 19, 1993, after two months of spadework by a dozen government organisations, the President of Russia signed a decree giving Rossiya (ASTRBC, Channel — II) the status of a national company. Channel — IV (the educational channel) was also attached to Rossiya. Meanwhile, Ostankino had already been registered as a mass information source broadcasting on Channel — IV. Incidentally, in keeping with Article 15 of the Law on the Mass Media, this registration can only be ruled as invalid «in court by due legal procedure» that is by the force of law, not decree.

Rossiya is to represent our country in international organisations. However, it is companies and not countries, that are members of television associations.

A presidential decree instructs the Ministry of Communications to develop «a network of distribution of TV programmes.» Manipulation of the audiences and local TV centres in the CIS countries may have a

deplorable effect. For most viewers in Russia and other CIS countries are oriented on Ostankino and not on Rossiya. For all of its shortcomings the first channel is more professional than its rival, the second channel. Thus 48 and 60 per cent of the viewers watch Ostankino programmes in Moscow and St. Petersburg; the figures for Rossiya being 17 and 15 percent, respectively. Outside Russia, Ostankino is watched more often than Rossiya which is reluctantly sacrificed to the local programmes.

The presidential decree alludes to the possibility of effecting a simple technical procedure— changing the channels, so that Rossiya will operate on Channel — I and Ostankino on Channel — II. As a result, the local tv people will transpose their programmes on Ostankino instead of Rossiya, without, however, giving preference to Rossiya.

If a state company becomes a national one it does not become better. Realisation of the decree with a view to «broadcast possible covering of the country's population,» may boomerang and have the opposite effect— the audiences in some regions may decrease by half.

Ostankino will stand to lose as it will be stripped of its viewers and advertisers. So will Rossiya as it has neither personnel nor facilities to handle two channels (II and IV).

The day after the presidential decree was passed Ostankino management threatened to start legal proceedings in the Constitutional Court. Why such a high authority? Because an ordinary court cannot try a case involving the country's president brought to trial. Generally speaking, it is neither the president nor the parliament but the joint commission of Ministries of Communications and of the Press that may issue a license for telecasting.

One more signboard appeared on the building of the Russian Federation's Ministry of the Press and Information (5 Strastnoi Boulevard) — »The Federal Information Centre of Russia« (FIC). By presidential decree 1647 of December 25, 1992, the huge newly built House of the Russian Press at 26 Pushkin Street was handed over to FIC. (This building used to house the last government of the USSR).

Yeltsin created FIC specially for Mikhail Poltoranin, who of his own free will resigned as Minister of the Press. The parliament bargained, the President backtracked and Mikhail Fedotov was appointed Minister of the Press. Mr. Fedotov is an expert lawyer and a decent man, one of the drafters of the laws on the press of the USSR (August 1990) and Russia (December 1991). FIC headed by Poltoranin, who is also the first deputy to Russia's Prime Minister, is directly subordinated to Yeltsin (which means that the first deputy premier is not accountable to the premier, which is nonsense). FIC now controls the TV companies Ostankino (Channel — I) and St. Petersburg (Channel — V), two major news agencies ITAR-TASS and RIA-APN, and 89 (!) regional state TV and radio broadcasting companies. Still, much has been left in the Ministry of the Press charge: all printing facilities, hundreds of publishing houses, and legal regulation of the media- - their registration, licensing of publishing and broadcasting, and control

over the fulfillment of the Law on the Mass Media. There are rumours about the establishment of a third (!) «Ministry of the Press» in the near future. It will be called the Press Foundation and will incorporate the Russian Agency for Intellectual Property (Mikhail Fedotov was its director).

In Russia not only the president, the parliament and the government have their own mass media, 99 per cent of all of Russia's media, as well as the channels for their dissemination and print-shops are owned by the state. In the USSR just a few dozen officials from the Communist Party Central Committee ideological department supervised this sphere. In independent Russia the bureaucratic apparatus for controlling the media swelled ten-fold.

What kind of legal mechanism of controlling the mass media can one talk about in a situation where the President Yeltsin's position shaken all his propagandist ministries will be reduced to nought.

The Law on the Mass Media is not that bad in itself. Any citizen may get a broadcasting license by applying to 17 Myasnitskaya Street, Moscow (tel. 927-2286 or 923- 5321) or to the local communications department, depending on the transmitter's capacity. The procedure for obtaining the licence is set out in the Russian government's decree No. 500 of September 26, 1991, and in the recently adopted interim Regulations on Communications. If the organisers of a new TV, radio or video programme do not have the technical means to disseminate information, they will have to sign a contract with one of the existing broadcasting organisations, a corresponding department of the Russian Ministry of Communications or other such organisations legally broadcasting. In this case there is no need to seek another license- -for obtaining a frequency.

The authorities' desire to control electronic information facilities is so obvious that very few people are willing to risk their money and set up a large private TV broadcasting company. A cable TV network broadcasting for several thousand subscribers is the maximum the authorities agree to. A similar picture is observed in the sphere of book publishing and periodicals.

The recently formed tiny private publishing houses and editorial offices are compelled to bow to state-owned print shops. Theoretically, every private person can have one's own print shop or a TV tower or use a private antenna to receive TV programmes from foreign satellites. However, the signals from the satellites are so weak that antennas that can receive them are very expensive and only really wealthy persons (by our standards) can afford it.

The prospect of a fourth «ministry of propaganda»- — the Federal Commission for TV and Radio Broadcasting — is quite likely. The avowed objective of this commission is to assure parity between state and private broadcasting in Russia. At least that is what the drafters of the Law on Organising Activities in the Field of TV and Radio Broadcasting claim. The first draft was worked out in the autumn of 1990, and since then a

group of deputies has been trying to get it through the Russian parliament. But in vain, for the bill is designed to encourage the development of a private television network and limit the government's possibilities for obtaining broadcasting licenses—something neither the democrats in power in Russia, nor the communists in the opposition want to happen. The independence of journalists from arbitrary actions by the TV and radio administration and technical personnel may be legislatively formalised for the first time. The republics and regions within the Russian Federation demanding more independence in the sphere of local TV and radio broadcasting are likewise against the Federal Commission. The local leaders do not need any Federal Information Centre either. Still less do they wish to fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Commission with its prospective staff of at least half a thousand.

Channel-I: Ostankino

In the former USSR and the now disintegrating Russian Federation television has been something more than an instrument of the authorities. Here the TV is itself an authority. The last chief of the USSR television network, Leonid Kravchenko (after the August 1991 failed coup he was replaced by Yegor Yakovlev), told in a newspaper interview recently that Mikhail Gorbachev insisted that all ministers, by turn, regularly appear on the TV. Not all of them could coherently answer the anchor-man's tricky questions and made fool of themselves. In this way Gorbachev managed to shift part of the responsibility onto them and switch the hungry public's attention from himself to his subordinates.

Let me repeat that Mr. Kravchenko was chairman of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting. Yegor Yakovlev headed Ostankino and was in charge of four TV channels in Moscow. True only the first and second channels were faithfully received beyond the 100 km zone. The rest of the television network in Russia was supervised by the new Ministry of Information and Press and, naturally, the heads of the local administrations directly subordinate to Boris Yeltsin.

Taking control of the television network, Yeltsin became the undivided and unchallenged boss of the second channel at the USSR National TV in the spring of 1991 (this purely Russian-broadcasting channel, subordinate to the chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Yeltsin, was given the name of Rossiya). In September 1991 he took over the first channel. However, Ostankino continues to broadcast for the same audiences as it did five years ago, the difference being that now it is Russia's taxpayers who pay for while five years ago the Soviet Union's taxpayers did (subscription rates are considered to be included in the cost of TV sets of local make). The other CIS member-states, and also Georgia and the three Baltic republics, flatly refused to pay, but they have condescendingly permitted the Russian-

speaking population to watch Ostankino programmes, mostly under the pressure from them. And indeed who wouldn't like to enjoy intermittent Mexican soap-operas (when they are on, in Transcaucasia and other hotbeds in the CIS even the military hostilities stop!).

Russian mass culture is infected with messianic and imperial spirit more than the American mass media. For decades Moscow was confident that it alone had the right to speak the ultimate truth. Hence the accepted practice was that the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Georgians or Armenians could learn about the developments in other republics only from Moscow and according to its interpretation. This information vacuum was somewhat filled by Western radio stations broadcasting in the languages of the peoples in the USSR-CIS, and CNN on TV.

Disregard for common sense and legal norms has taken firm root in Moscow, so much so that when changing the names of the two main channels- -Ostankino and Rossiya- -every three months, the authorities do not even bother to draw up relevant normative legal documents. And each renaming is a legal pretext for dismissing the entire staff and employing those who deserve it because of good behaviour. Worse still, each renaming means dealing (sometimes perhaps justifiably) with unwanted persons, and a new division of property. By way of example: The Ostankino TV and radio network alone owns the premises as big as a whole town, with many thousands of personnel, as well as its own child-care centre, resorts, garages, pilot plants, scientific-research institutes, construction organisations, TV and radio studios, broadcasting stations and archives all over the country.

A presidential decree of December 27, 1991 transferred practically all the property belonging to the USSR Gosteleradio to Ostankino. Yegor Gaidar signed Government Decree No. 300 on the Ostankino RSTRBC, elaborating on the presidential decree, only on May 7, 1992. The decree of the RSFSR State Committee for State Property Management (No. 155-p) was signed on May 12, 1992, and the Statutes of the Ostankino State TV and Radio Broadcasting Company were not endorsed until June 10, 1992.

Yeltsin's subsequent decrees (on FIC, Rossiya, etc.) did not clear up legal aspects of managing television network in any way. In November 1992 the president unceremoniously fired Yegor Yakovlev. Two months later he signed a decree appointing Vyacheslav Bragin, 55, chairman at Ostankino. That was pleasant for himself on the one hand, while on the other, Yeltsin rid his sworn rival, the speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, of Vyacheslav Bragin as chairman of the Supreme Soviet committee for the Mass Media, who was a disgrace. Bragin, an ex-party functionary who withdrew from the party the day after the January 1991 events in Vilnius, became chairman of the parliamentary Committee for the Mass media in November of the same year and showed himself to be an indefatigable champion of the freedom of the press.

It is hard to say how long the dilettante Bragin will stay at the head of Ostankino. Professionals have never been in charge of the television net-

work here. Nonetheless Yegor Yakovlev's removal shocked the journalists. How quick the president was to sacrifice «his team-mate»! He did that with Gorbachev's ease. Yakovlev's first deputy, 37-year-old Igor Malashenko, was one of those who staged a public protest—in the media—against Yakovlev's resignation. Malashenko was endorsed as Bragin's first deputy. He graduated from Moscow University, defended his thesis on «The Political Philosophy of Dante Alighieri», then was employed by the Institute of US and Canadian Studies to do research on nuclear deterrence and public opinion. From 1989 he was already in the CC CPSU international department and some time later on President Gorbachev's staff.

In March 1993 Malashenko had to disgracefully leave Ostankino in protest against the activities of the new team Bragin brought along with him. Malashenko was well in for a law suit. According to the RTRBC Chairman Bragin, this company's debt ran into \$50 million and the government subsidies for buying television and radio equipment (70% of it is obsolescent) had been misused. Bragin further said that the company had got out of hand: it disintegrated into a hundred legal persons that could start privatisation any minute. Bragin cited the auditors' report which was very unpleasant for the Ostankino former administration (embezzlement, corruption, abuse of office, etc.). The new president spoke out against «commercialisation of the media». It looks that under him Ostankino will be more politically engaged than under Yakovlev. Bragin intends to set up a consultative panel from representatives of all socio-political affiliations.

In the Russian President's budget message appropriations for the radio and television are estimated at 114 billion roubles (in February 1993, one US dollar equalled 700 roubles), and revenues from advertising at a mere 10 billion roubles. (Indicatively, in January 1993 alone, the total spending on advertising on the national TV channels exceeded 2.7 billion roubles—and not only due to inflation, but also due to sharp increases in the ad rates.) More specifically, Ostankino is to get 52.5 billion roubles, Poptsov's company 35.5 billion, and the TV and radio broadcasting department at the Ministry of Information and the Press, 26.2 billion roubles. Incidentally, the wages fund in the media does not exceed 10 per cent of the above sums. Consequently, the budget subsidies are the main source of existence for Russia's state television network.

In the case of privatisation, five per cent of the authorised fund of any state-owned agency may be taken by administration. Thus, the TV barons can become millionaires with dollar accounts and viable businessmen in the media sphere. Poltoranin, Bragin, Poptsov, Kurkova, Sagalayev—these are the names of prospective new Maxwells, Murdocks and Turners in independent Russia. This is only a forecast, but the list of the TV nouveau riches could be continued. It is customary in Russia that those who are supposed to protect the people's property look upon it as their own.

Unlike all civilised countries, we have not yet signed the Berne copyright convention, and the rights of neither our nor foreign authors are

observed here. In early 1993 a scandal broke out in the Moscow press. The Ostankino administration sold a certain dealer in the USA—for next to nothing—the exclusive right (including the right to issue licences to third parties) to use its audio and video archives. For infinitesimal bribes and American corporation, USSR Art Group, got access to a priceless asset—the records of many generations of Soviet musicians. The latter's rights were of course disregarded. With a stroke of a pen Russia has been robbed of its cultural values for several billion dollars before our very eyes. When some of the cheated musicians tried to protest, they got nowhere, for there are no copyright laws, no practice of examining such claims in court and no lawyers specialising in copyright here. Furthermore, there is no law on television. Such a state of affairs suits many people so far. It is not Ostankino, but a group of small self-policing telecompanies in St. Petersburg that have undertaken to subsidise long-term Russian-German cooperation designed to draft viable methods of organising the work of television and radio in the Russian Federation. The Russian side is represented by Mikhail Fedotov, Minister of the Press and Information, and Vsevolod Vilchek, director of the Ostankino sociological centre, the German side by the Hamburg Media Research Institute (headed by Dr. Wolfgang Hoffman-Riem) and the Russian-German Exchange Society (Berlin). In February 1993 the German side brought the finalised pertinent legal acts to St. Petersburg. In the view of Mr. Fedotov, Germany's experience can be invaluable for Russia, since both countries went through a totalitarian stage. True, most Germans have anathemised Hitler, whereas Stalin's legacy is still alive in people's consciousness and in the spheres of ideology, politics and economics.

According to Mr. Malashenko, he was «to preserve what had been given a rather dull name of a single information space».

In other words, Ostankino will continue instructing and entertaining half a billion people in the northern hemisphere. As for Yegor Yakovlev, he will publish a couple of newspapers and magazines commenting on the weekly TV Moscow programme schedule. The first thing Yakovlev did as the head of the TV-press concern was to circulate a letter to the chief editors of Russian and Foreign papers demanding that they pay (millions of roubles a year!) for reprinting Moscow's TV and radio programme schedule. The chief editors retorted that the taxpayers had already paid for the State television and would not pay twice.

As mentioned above, the «global» dimensions of coverage by the first channel make it possible for its personnel to demand sizable sums from their advertising clients—up to eight thousand dollars per minute for televising a commercial during the evening programmes. Since January 1, 1993, the commercial rates in Ostankino were raised to the maximum. In November 1992, Igor Malashenko issued an order prohibiting the Ostankino commercial administration to sign contracts for advertising tobacco and alcohol, prescribed medicines, products and services of intimate nature, and also commercials with erotic elements and nudes.

Incidentally, there are no such restrictions on the other TV channels in Moscow.

Big money is also to be made by those selecting the entertainment shows for the Ostankino channel. The newspaper *Moskovsky komsomlets* reported in its 27 January 1993 issue that «the music baron Valery Kurzhiyamsky, 55, was killed with a brick at the entrance to his house in the morning—and he was not even robbed». This is how the music mafia dealt with the director of the Ostankino music and entertainment studio.

Both the personnel and management of Ostankino, the first and the main TV channel, feel they are sitting on a powder keg. In summer 1992, a frenzied several thousand-strong mob besieged the TV centre in Ostankino, clamouring the Yegor Yakovlev's resignation.

In February 1993, the new boss, Bragin, curbed the powers of the company's administration and put an end to the practice of opposition leaders appearing on the screen much too often. In February Poltoranin's FIC held a number of sessions to bring the Ostankino board of directors to their senses. For the latter seemed to have forgotten that they were to serve the President of Russia, as faithfully as they had the CC CPSU Politburo. That same month Yeltsin signed a decree to liberally finance FIC (earlier, its staff had already been given the same rights and privileges as the Russian President's staff). The Moscow press of all persuasions gleefully scoffed on this score: propaganda cannot improve life. If the Federal Information Centre has been formed after the pattern of the USIA, The American foreign policy propaganda agency, then it is both funny and bad, because the taxpayers' money is being wasted. And if FIC is a censorship agency at the TV network and in APN-TASS, there is nothing funny about it, as we have already had propaganda and censorship departments before. Censorship was abolished on August 1, 1990, in the USSR Law on the Press, after 73 years of political obscurantism.

Can We Trust the Ostankino Anchormen?

«They Are Pulling Our Leg» was the title of a feature in *Megapolis Express*, and influential Moscow weekly (Nov. 28, 1992). It was contributed by Vladimir Yadov, a leading figure in the Russian School of Public Opinion Studies and director of the Sociology Institute of the Russian Academy of Science. By «they» was meant the Ostankino administration who in their political programmes use exclusively the findings of their own sociological service and a viewer poll laboratory. «Need I explain,» Yadov concludes, «that due to their many-year cooperation and mutual dependence, the answers are slanted in such a manner as to suit their Ostankino employers?».

The latter like to fly around the world first class with their retinue, and put up at luxury hotels—ot at their own expense naturally.

Meanwhile Russian TV bosses complain at press-conferences about scanty budget allocations...

As a matter of fact, they are right. The national Soviet (sorry Russian) newspapers and magazines, radio and TV studios have no money to maintain their correspondents outside Moscow. When it comes to Paris, New York and other civilised climes, the sponsors are easily found—among foreigners, local underground bankers or structures like the former *KGB and CPSU.

Rossiya has a great many underpaid journalists willing to send reports to Moscow even for meagre remuneration. Personnel at the 89 provincial (regional) TV centres can also do a TV feature for Moscow.

The situation is even worse as regards the former Soviet republics now independent states. The correspondents of the Moscow media working there have overnight turned from highly privileged persons into suicide cases or informers on the pay-roll of the hostile foreign state. Hundreds of correspondents have found themselves abroad against their own will—that is, if they are Russians. If they are of the local nationality, they wholly depend on the local authorities. Moscow does not provide them with anything. Telecameras, photo-cameras, armoured jackets, vehicles, housing satellite communications, life insurance, high salaries and political support on the part of the Russian embassy—none of this exists nor is guaranteed by the Moscow side. The maintenance of one Western TV reporter in Russia, or any other country for that matter, costs his or her employer in the West some 10 thousand dollars or more every month. A Russian correspondent in a CIS country costs Moscow less than 10 dollars a month. Customarily, the local party bodies footed the bill of Moscow's correspondents, and they also approved the list of correspondents, chosen from the local nomenklatura and provided with housing, transport, office premises and communications.

Given such complete tutelage, there certainly could be no question of objective information transmitted to the Centre. And everybody was happy. Now when developments affecting the lives of millions of Russians (who are foreigners against their own will) take place every day in every CIS state, in Georgia and the Baltic countries, and when carnage has been going on for months and years due to ethnic conflicts, there is no single information space on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Moscow-based newspapers are seldom received beyond Moscow itself and never in the CIS countries. Practically all who wish can watch Ostankino. Which they continue to do—by force of habit, due to the accessibility of the language and the fact that Brazilian («The Slave Isaura») and Mexican («The Rich also Weep») soap-operas are shown on the Ostankino channel. Still another reason is that the professional level of local national TV channels leaves much to be desired as a rule and in most cases local people living in the vast expanses of the former USSR can only tune in to either of the two channels—the local channel on

which Rossiya is occasionally transmitted, and the first national channel — Ostankino.

There are few people in the independent states who are keen on Ostankino political programmes. Who would indeed be inspired by the democratic games played according to the Kremlin rules (corruption, inflation, impoverishment, instability, the imperial and *KGB spirit)? Those involved in the developments taking place in the hot spots are especially indignant. Whereas blood is being shed and there is no end to destruction and human suffering, an Ostankino anchorman (and Rossiya's too) «treats us to a 30-second-long library reports with the correspondents from the warring parties, expounding their version of the events. Needless to say, this does not suit either the contending parties, or millions of TV viewers denied trustworthy information.

This is the same as the American CNN airing old features with commentaries coming in turns from the Iraqi and Kuwait sides. Luckily, a person tuning in to the CNN—be it even the US President—can get an adequate idea of the real state of affairs as he or she listens to the TV journalist and looks at his screen. Ostankino and Rossiya have uttered a sea of words about the Armenia-Azerbaijan war, the civil war in Georgia, Tajikistan and Moldova—and have succeeded in saying nothing about the causes and the underlying reasons for this well-organised conflict.

Western TV companies maintain scores of offices in Moscow. Their correspondents use the services of top-class cameramen who risk their lives filming in all comers of the ex-USSR. These people are willing to share their information with the television studios of the host country. Obviously, authentic information, brought to the knowledge of the conflicting and interested parties over TV, as well as explaining what is going on and laying bare the causes of a conflict, makes for its settlement. Last but not least, there are selfless and honest people among the Russian TV reporters and cameramen risking their lives in dangerous locations for high Western royalties, who are still prepared to share their footage with Ostankino or Rossiya for free.

However, under Yeltsin, like under Gorbachev, the TV bosses do not dare evoke the wrath of the high up officials. In their time the army and the *KGB, the Procurator's Office and the Ministry of the Interior, to say nothing of the nomenklatura mafia, were distrustful of Gorbachev. Today they are distrustful of Yeltsin and do whatever they like. The Moscow TV would do well to explain and show its vast audiences how in faraway cities of Sukhumi, Tskhinvali, Vladikavkaz, Tbilisi, Dushanbe and Stepanakert Russia is dying a cruel and tortuous death, how it is crumbling under pressure from the economic disaster zones.

In December 1991, when for the whole two weeks the Soviet troops were shelling the central Rustaveli avenue in Tbilisi and erasing government buildings from the face of the earth, all Yegor Yakovlev had to do was to allow a couple of honest reports to be broadcast. Then the commanders of the Transcaucasian military district would have been court-

martialled and the act of toppling Georgia's President Gamsakhurdia would have taken more civilised forms.

True, in November 1992 Yakovlev overcame his bias and permitted airing a report of his film crew from Vladikavkaz. Immediately the Ossetian side raised hell and Yeltsin removed Yakovlev from his post 24 hours later.

The new chairman of the first TV channel did not wait long but made a slip right after he had assumed office. At the end of January 1993 he upset Uzbekistan's authorities when report was broadcast about the trial of Pulatov, an Uzbek human rights activist, who had been arrested by the Uzbek secret services in a neighbouring state. Tashkent clearly indicated that they would stop transmitting of the subversive TV channel from Moscow.

Our life under the Russian democrats again confirmed the importance to us of the round-the-clock broadcasting of the American Radio Liberty in the languages of peoples of the former Soviet Union. (The CNN news programme has now come to its aid. Audiences in some parts of Russia can even receive it translated into Russian. This purely American TV station is oriented on covering events taking place in regions that are of vital importance to the United States.).

Honest television—be it in the West or in the East, one-or ten-channelled—is more needed by people in the former Land of Soviets than the much-advertised foreign humanitarian aid of clothes and food. It is clear that the Ostankino TV and radio company, this remainder of «real socialism», cannot serve as a bridge linking the CIS countries, no matter who pays for it. Russia is funding it now. Truncated, sketchy and inarticulate evening news (the «Novosti» news programme) plus a regular dose of a foreign serial is the only thing now shared by the CIS nations. All the other links have been broken. There is neither an economic nor a defence nor a rouble single space—only customs barriers and Ostankino.

Ukraine's representative at the conference of CIS heads of state (June 1992) in Minsk, said: «Even though our country is interested in preserving a single information space in the belief that it serves to strengthen the Commonwealth of Independent States, the current activities of the Ostankino TV and radio company do not serve the purpose». At the end of July, 1992, heads of 10 TV and radio companies of the CIS member-countries meeting in Moscow, drafted documents to set up an inter-state TV and radio broadcasting company as a closed joint-stock company. The documents were never signed. Most of the founding companies expressed the desire to have their own share of air-time. tv audiences would have watched the Moldavian, Kazakh, Ukrainian. Belorussian and Tajik programme an hour every day each. Russia was reluctant to cede her monopoly on broadcasting, referring to inevitable losses in the number of viewers due to a low professional level of tv studios of the CIS states. The representatives of Georgia, Estonia and Lithuania said that they had no money to pay for three channels—Ostankino, Rossiya and the inter-state channel.

There is another point of view. For example, in Alma Ata in the summer of 1992, there were eight generally accessible channels—two Kazakh, Ostankino, Rossiya, one from Kirghizia, one from Uzbekistan and two commercial channels. Kazakhstan could well afford to have one more TV, the inter-state one. However, expert lawyers are warning that on behalf of Kazakhstan's taxpayers, say, leaders of the Alash fundamentalist Turkic party (which is in opposition to the Nazarbayev government in Kazakhstan) may demand air-time from the inter-state company.

Incidentally, strong TV film producer firms, including private ones, have mushroomed in Moscow and across the ex-USSR. Many good films and themes could be found and shown on more than one inter-state channel.

The Minsk conference of the heads of state of January 25, 1993, endorsed the Statutes and composition of the constituent committee for founding the Inter-State TV and Radio Broadcasting Company (ISTRBC) and appointed chairman—Gadilbek Shalahmetov who had earlier headed the Kazakhstan President's press service. The founding members are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Ostankino, with its own interests in mind, will give air-time to productions by the named countries' producer firms recommended by the ISTRBC management. Shalahmetov does not rule out the possibility of the Baltic republics and possibly countries that belonged to the former socialist camp also becoming its founding members.

Kazakhstan, which is the patron of the future ISTRBC, managed to take Intervision (the international TV broadcasting organisation of the member-states of the socialist bloc that ceased to exist on December 21, 1992) under its wing. For all the states of the former Soviet Union wish to become members of the prestigious and important Eurovision company, they must first pay what Intervision owes the international sports federations for transmitting the Olympic Games and world championships. Besides, they will have to scrape up a lot of money to pay Eurovision membership dues.

Channel-II: Rossiya

For many years, until the end of August, 1991, the evening news Programme «Vremya» at the USSR National Television embodied the «empire of lies». This daily half-hour misinformation fed out on orders from the CC CPSU Politburo, largely contributed to the decline of Gorbachev's prestige among his countrymen.

Against the backdrop of absurd and obvious lies uttered by the poker-faced 'Vremya' announcers, a second TV channel was opened on May 13, 1991. It was given to the Russian Federation and its Supreme Soviet

chaired by Boris Yeltsin. The young anchormen (not announcers) of the Russian television did not tell lies—and this alone was sensational.

Three evening information releases («Vesti» at 6, 8 and 11 p.m.) showed the Russian democrats in power. Work of the closely-knit team—beautiful Svetlana Sorokina, ironical Alexander Gurnov, Vladislav Flyarkovsky, Nikolai Svanidze and Yuri Rostov—was regarded as a symbol of the policy of renovating the Russian state in 1991-92. Audiences hung on the lips of these young people, who earned their trust in the extraordinary political situation prevailing in 1991.

As a matter of fact, none of the democrats, except for maybe Yeltsin had a rating as high as the above mentioned «Vesti» team. This circumstance went against the grain of their numerous bosses, ministers and deputies not popular with the public. In early 1993, the «Vesti» team was disbanded: nearly all of them were sent abroad as correspondents for Rossiya. The image of the democrats was dealt another blow, and even the combined efforts of the current media bosses will not be able to recover it.

Svetlana Sorokina receives bagfuls of letters with declarations of love. Her commentaries always have a touch of warmth and hope. She is an unofficial national asset of Russia. French film actresses Brigitte Bordeaux and Catherine Deneuve were models for the sculpture of Marianna, the official symbol of France. As for Sorokina (she was born in Leningrad and came to work in Moscow), she and her family lived in a hotel before she was given a one-room flat not long ago.

By 1993, the bureaucratic structure of the Russian television (Channel-II) had swelled beyond all measure. However, the programmes did not improve. Rossiya employs a staff of more than three thousand (Ostankino—26,000). It had to the technical facilities of Ostankino and paid the rent of nearly 700 million roubles for rent alone in 1992.

Which channel is better—the first or the second? Whenever surveys are conducted by the Ostankino sociological service, the one that paid for the poll naturally comes out on top. According to outside experts the TV viewers prefer the Rossiya channel for its objectivity and volume of information (*Nezavisimaya gazeta*, April 22, 1992).

Seventy-seven per cent of the Russians watch Rossiya programmes plus audiences in those CIS and East European countries that permit transmitting them. In addition to its basic 16-hour daily programmes, Rossiya relays four duplicates for various time belts in the country (a total of nearly 64 hours). Rossiya and Ostankino often release the same reports. The thing is both of them use the services of one national tv Information Agency. Foreign reports are «(18 March 1992)» that hot video information from zones of conflict is sold on the sly by Rossiya staffers, if they manage to get it from the author, to Western agencies for 200 dollars per minute. Whenever videomaterial is sold abroad officially, its authors do not get a cent either—the Rossiya administration get all the money.

Approximately one-third of the Rossiya's programmes are its own. The rest are repeat showings of the best programmes in the daytime, and also of films and programmes bought from other TV companies.

The Rossiya administration, which owns the first Soviet TV centre in Shabolovka Street (its antediluvian equipment delights foreign colleagues) bought an incomplete 14-story building from the Ministry of Defence. In a year or two a modern TV centre equipped to the latest word in technology is to be opened there.

Oleg Poptsov, Rossiya's chairman, has contrived to be on good terms with both President Yeltsin, as well as the speaker Khasbulatov, the Supreme Soviet, and the Cabinet. So he hopes that more money will be allotted to the Rossiya channel.

When Rossiya was being set up and the property of the USSR National TV network and Gosteleradio split, Poptsov only took Shabolovka—he decided to start from scratch. In January 1993, acting on the presidential decree concerning the Rossiya TV channel, Poptsov took Channel-IV (Russian Universities) away from Ostankino and half the facilities of the «Moscow-global» satellite network. Now programmes of both the first and second Moscow channels will be relayed to the planet alternately.

The Ministry of Communications scheduled the launching of a satellite for relaying Rossiya programmes to the Russian Far East for the spring of 1993. Rossiya will also expand its zone of broadcasting through the Space Communications Centre in Klin near Moscow that was handed over to it not long ago. In 1993 budget appropriations for the development of space communications in Russia stand at 17 billion roubles (the entire space-related budget being 54 billion roubles).

Rumours are being circulated in the Ostankino company that the huge technical television centre in the Moscow district of Ostankino will also be handed over to Rossiya. It has been suggested that a competition be held for the fourth channel, for if it is managed by independent companies this will definitely ease the burden on the state budget. Channel-IV has ceased to exist as a brilliant programme with its own cultural and educational concept, being gradually turned into a surrogate commercial outfit. And the poor Rossiya company will hardly be able to restore the appeal of the Russian Universities now that it was placed under its jurisdiction. During the eighteen months of Rossiya's existence the Russian government issued seven decrees on this company, setting unfeasible tasks, wasting a lot of money and destabilising the country's television structure.

TV Channel-V: Russian Federal TV and Radio Broadcasting Service

Fifth channel programmes have been watched by audiences in most of the European part of Russia and in the Baltic republics for years. On October 17, 1992, President Yeltsin issued a decree on the establishment of the Federal Television and Radio Broadcasting Service Rossiya (FTRBS) with Bella Kurkova as its head.

After January 15, 1992, the Leningrad TV studio which had until then used Channel-V, was transformed by Yeltsin's decree into the Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company St. Petersburg. Victor Yugin, chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet committee for the mass media, was appointed its chairman (Vyacheslav Bragin succeeded him as head of the committee).

In 1991 the famous—since Brezhnev's times—TV journalist who hosted «The Fifth Wheel» (the most politically committed programme in the country) and now a member of the Russian parliament Bella Kurkova and her small team, began to work at the just formed Rossiya channel (II). They attracted much larger audiences to it. In 1992 Kurkova was appointed Director of St. Petersburg (the company affiliated to Oleg Poptsov's Russian Television network). The highly-energetic Kurkova (born 1935) in her time created the St. Petersburg channel literally from nothing, having persuaded many top Moscow institutions to give her loans and equipment.

In 1992 Yugin decided to move his Petersburg company under the wing of Khasbulatov the speaker who was at the time implementing his idea—to spite Yeltsin—of an Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS countries with its centre in St. Petersburg. But the Petersburg TV company turned «red and brown» even without Khasbulatov. It was marked by unbridled patriotism in the spirit of Alexander Nevzorov with his ultra-chauvinistic programme «600 seconds» and a sweeping invasion of commercialism. To quote Bella Kurkova, Yugin sold air-time to foreigners for glass beads.

Partocrats, nationalists and fascists of all hues, who had been taken off the silver screen in Moscow, were welcomed in St. Petersburg by Mr. Yugin and aired their views before half-Russia. Among them were also those in disfavour now—Gorbachev, Bocharov, Travkin, Sterligov and Alksnis. Yeltsin did not put up with it for long—he disbanded Petersburg, dismissed Yugin, formed the FTRBS for his political cousin Bella Kurkova and put her in charge of both Petersburg and St. Petersburg. Moreover, he put at her disposal the well-equipped facilities of the Russian News Agency (former APN) in Moscow that had been set up to propagandise Gorbachev's activities to the public abroad. In keeping with President Yeltsin's decree of October 17, 1992, the Rossiya Federal TV and Radio Broadcasting Company was set up to enhance information supporting reform in the Russian Federation and to further demonopolise the media. In 1993 the FIRBS will become the third

national programme. Its transmission across the country—from the Baltic area to Kamchatka—will start as soon as channels are released on the satellites in the process of conversion.

St. Petersburg residents will of course be able to watch their local TV, for the second Russian capital has enormous potential in the way of journalists—the former Petersburg company has 18 production groups. Meanwhile President Yeltsin will have three state TV channels at his disposal. Taxpayers recall how Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev made do with just one half-an-hour news programme «Vremya».

Yugin, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, learned about his dismissal watching the evening news on TV. He protested in court, since he had been removed from office without the knowledge of the Supreme Soviet, which means in violation of the law. On October 27, the Supreme Soviet Committee for the Mass Media discussed the legal aspect of the president's decree on the FTRBS. Reports made by two expert groups were submitted to the deputies: the first group's conclusion was that the decree had been written «to order», the other group found many faults in it. The President, they said, may not deny a mass information medium a broadcasting license. This can only be done by the Federal Licence Commission in court. Further, only the court or the founder (also in court) may close down a mass information medium, in keeping with the Law on the Mass Media. Following a two-hour-long debate, the deputies agreed that generally all laws and decrees issued today were imperfect. So no further action was taken, except that the parties concerned were instructed to inquire into the case and penalise those (Yugin) who drafted the Petersburg programme schedule with only 4 hours of the air-time given daily to this programme (the remaining time was sold to foreign TV companies). One can understand Yugin. He complained to his colleagues in parliament that his independent TV company, Petersburg, broadcast only half an hour less than Ostankino, but it got 20 times less (!) money from the budget than the latter.

Channel-VI: Eduard Sagalayev & Ted Turner

From May 1992 Muscovites could daily watch (at 10 p.m.) a two-hour CNN news programme on Channel-IV, live and translated into Russian. That was an outcome of the many-year dedicated efforts made by journalist Eduard Sagalayev and his Moscow-based Independent Broadcasting Corporation (MIBC), who obtained the permission from the government to open their own channel and signed a relevant contract with Ted Turner on May 17. The next day CNN began to regularly beam on the sixth channel.

It is not at all accidental that Ted Turner found himself in the good graces of the Russian democrats. Throughout the eighties the government and foreigners residing in Moscow could watch the CNN programmes on

cable television. Ted Turner who heads the TBS company owning world news service CBN, said on more than one occasion that the USSR National Television network and, later Ostankino could use CNN material in their programmes. Turner did not bother about the piratical reception of CNN programmes by all cable and state networks in the USSR and the CIS. It was only at the end of 1999 that several local companies in the CIS bought the right for commercial distribution of CNN programmes from Turner for symbolic price and began to seek an official subscription for its programmes through parabolic community antennas.

In a bid to assert CNN in the world market Turner, who owns an excellent film and video libraries of American movies, is in a position to offer viewers the gems and classical works of US cinema art—both on his own TV networks and, for instance, through Ostankino. Turner earned Brezhnev's and Gorbachev's favour when he lent his hand in an effort to lead the Soviet-American relations out of an impasse. It was specially for the USSR that Turner proposed holding Good Will Games, a certain alternative to the Olympiad, that allowed to smooth over the situation caused by the United States' boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games of 1980. The Good Will Games held in Moscow and Seattle (the third Games are scheduled for 1994 and will be held in St. Petersburg) brought Turner losses to the tune of \$26 million and \$44 million, respectively. They are conceived as a gigantic television show and the right to transmit them is sold to world companies for a pretty penny. To assure high standards of broadcasting an filming in St. Petersburg, Ostankino needs to buy TV equipment to the sum of \$140 million. It is absurd to ask the Russian government to allocate this sum. But Turner said he would think about it...

CNN is eager to have its own channel in Russia beaming to the whole country. Sagalayev, the author of the most honest and brightest political programmes on the National Television («12th Floor», «Vzglyad», TSN, «7 days»), who became director general of the first channel under Yegor Yakovlev and who is the long-standing president of the Confederation of the Journalists' Unions, has always worked for a television dependent on the viewers, rather than on the government, the President or the parliament.

Turner and Sagalayev became partners of necessity. Neither of them would have got the sixth channel on his own. To sell this channel to Turner would be tantamount to the government signing its own death sentence—for the opposition never forgives such liberties. Neither would the government cede this right to Sagalayev, «a half-Uzbek and half-Jew from Samarkand» (in his own words).

On January 1, 1993, the first independent channel in Russia, TV 6 Moscow, launched its daily five-hour broadcasts. The MITC plans switching to round-the-clock operation and producing its own programmes. In the meantime Turner's involvement guarantees the company the viewers' steady interest owing to the CNN accompanied with the Russian translation, animated films and Hollywood hits. For its part, Sagalayev has made it possible for the viewers to see the best national

pictures and retrospective reviews of the best Russian film directors. TV 6 Moscow broadcasts are free of charge and financed from the advertisements and commercials.

Sagalayev and Turner managed to successfully overcome the bureaucratic barriers raised in their way, even though the government bureaucrats did all they could to bury the idea, or at least to force them to take on a couple of copartners. This is how it was.

The Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, by its decree of September 26, 1991, introduced licensing into the state-monopoly practice of national television. In keeping with it, «TV and radio broadcasting on the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as communications pertaining to them, shall be effected on the basis of licenses issued by the Ministry of the Press and the Ministry of Communications, respectively, upon their mutual consent».

Since neither Ostankino nor Rossiya have the respective licence, this means they are operating illegally. The Council of Ministers adopted the provisional Statutes on Licensing, defining the procedure for obtaining licences. A commission for broadcasting was to be formed by an order of the Ministry of the Press and the Ministry of Communications. It took them three months to form the commission, and another two to approve the list of its members. The final composition of the commission was endorsed on March 20, 1992. However, even a year later it did not have its own premises, a telephone or any other facilities. Clerical work is done in the apartment of Alexei Simonov, a film director who is a cochairman of the commission. These attitudes on the part of the two ministries suggest the conclusion that the commission was to become nothing more than a democratic «screen» covering the same old sweeping government control over the TV and radio broadcasts.

The MITC has twice applied for the Russian licence. Incidentally the corporation already had the licence, issued to Sagalayev and Turner for five years (dated September 1, 1991) and signed by Yuri Luzhkov, Premier of the Moscow government, and A. Ivanov, deputy USSR Minister of Communications. The Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation decreed that the licences issued by the USSR shall be reregistered. Suddenly, the MITC learned that a competition was announced for the sixth channel on which the CNN news programme had been televised for some time. The MITC applied for a licence again. After that the TV Review published the terms of the competition, explaining that Channel-6 is the last in the one metre range making it possible to broadcast to Moscow and the Moscow Region. Some time in the future it may cover other regions in Russia.

The authorities knew what they were doing when they announced a competition: a dozen promising bidders joined in the struggle for the fight to work on Channel-6. Consequently, Sagalayev and Turner were compelled to accept new partners—the *Argumenty i fakty* daily and the International Television Business University (headed by Academician

Nikolai Petrakov). The latter has been allotted full four hours of daily air-time. The MITC Board of Directors was also forced to sell a considerable part of the shares of the Russian-American TV company to specified persons. The path of the TV 6 Moscow has not been a bed of roses. However, MITC President Sagalayev will not be daunted by difficulties. He is sure to find the means to buy satellite channels and start transmitting his programmes first to many and then to all towns and cities in Russia, the CIS and other neighbouring countries.

The MITC starts work at 7 p.m. From 3 p.m. until seven the sixth channel is given to the TV company Sevemaya Korona (Northern Crown) which represents a new non-governmental organisation—the International Television Business University with its information educational, cultural and entertainment features.

TV 6 Moscow is the only major TV channel in the former Soviet Union that is completely independent of the government so far as its funding goes. Apart from the CNN the Moscow government, banks, the Mosfilm film-making concern and even a few national oil companies made their contribution to the Channel-VI funding. Sagalayev is spending huge sums as modernization of 1.5 million community antennas in Moscow costs a lot.

As the TV 6 Moscow community reception area expands, so will the ad rates (today's rate is 200 dollars per 30 seconds at prime time). The company sent scores of its publicity workers to get training as ad specialists in the USA. Back home they will start establishing contacts with advertising agents and producing commercials. The next stage is to launch their own TV feature and documentary programmes.

By the end of 1994, TV 6 Moscow will become «a channel for all» and cover 50 million viewers. Four or five national television networks is a lot for one country, therefore Sagalayev is in for a stiff competition. However, only the shareholders' meeting can strip him of his duties as the company's president. Consequently, MITC need not try to please the authorities and this gives it the chance to win the audience. Sagalayev does not worry about some official from the Federal Information Centre, the parliament, the President's staff, some Ministry or the KGB calling him to give instructions to show this and that, pass some fact in silence, and so on. For, should this happen, Sagalayev is free to answer the way, say, Turner would, namely, something unprintable.

Symbolically, the brain-child of Sagalayev and Turner officially started its life on January 1, 1993, the day when Euronews first appeared on the air in Lyons (France). The best TV services in Western Europe take part in this project. It can be broadcast to the entire continent up to the Urals in five sound tracks with one picture and anchorman behind the screen. Broadcasting in Russian and Arabic is planned.

Let us not overestimate the degree of Sagalayev's independence or his non-conformism, as well as the Russians' interest in American televised news and the Lyons Russian-speaking opposite number may prove

to be a formidable rival—a kind of a television analogue of the much loved here America Radio Liberty.

Demonopolisation of the Television Network in Russia

Since the beginning of 1993 people living in some districts of Moscow can daily watch «Moscow- Revue» (from 2 p.m. to midnight, 27 UHF band). The first step towards the development of commercial television was made by the Marathon-TV association which incorporates Videofilm, the Astra research and production association for cable networks and radio-relay stations, the Main Centre for Radio and Television Broadcasting, the St. Petersburg Research Institute of Television and the A. Mints Radio Engineering Institute.

Videofilm headed by film director Oleg Uralov assures programme support for the commercial Moscow- Revue TV channel which does not rely on state subsidies. Until 1993, Videofilm operated on a renting basis. It renounced state subsidies and maintained thousands of video libraries all over Russia, and wielded monopoly right of recording films on video cassettes. By 1993, however, having despaired of fighting the video pirates from the local mafia structures, the corporation switched over to television and its own film-making. Videofilm shot and released «Great Chaliapin», «Sweet Dream» about Tchaikovsky, video-serials «St. Sergius Chapel» and the one about the Great Patriotic War, film-ballets, and films about Russia's past and present.

Oleg Uralov, who is not at all a free-thinker and malcontent, easily obtained for his «Marathon-TV» a licence for his own frequency channel in the UHF band. The Marathon-TV cofounders promptly organised the manufacture of thousands of decoders and UHF converters for dated TV models. At the end of 1993 they will already be able to rent these devices. The «Moscow-Revue» programme will thus operate on a subscription basis with the yearly subscription rate not exceeding those of one or two newspapers. Marathon-TV has undertaken to modernise all of Moscow's community antennas. Uralov hopes to get high profits from advertising activities, from his own video library numbering some 2000 titles of national and foreign films, and from the long-term contract he signed with the fourth channel of the British TV. He is also counting on attracting Russian businessmen for whom are intended 15 minutes every hour of economic, technological and stock exchange news with an expertly commentary on government decrees, answers to the questions asked by businessmen from commercial and state-owned ventures. «Moscow-Revue» is designed for intellectuals.

There will be stiff competition over Channel-III, the state-financed Moscow channel (MTV). It is headed by Aigar Misan, who only recently headed the TV sector in the CC CPSU ideological department. In 1992 the Moscow TV channel acquired independence and even started playing

dirty tricks on its former bosses from Ostankino. In summer 1992 Muscovites ceased tuning in to the «Vremya» (now «Novosti») news programme at 9 p.m. because it coincided in time with the serial soap opera «No One But You» on the Moscow TV channel. Giving justice where justice is due, it should be said that, among other things, Muscovites are devoted to Channel-III because they like its anchormen—Gregory Kuznetsov, Boris Notkin and Anelya Merkulova. Besides, they appreciate being acquainted with Moscow news in the sphere of culture and show-biz.

The enraged Ostankino administration was tempted to sue the Moscow TV channel in court. However, who prevents Ostankino to product high-quality «Novosti»? The more so since we are witnessing the mounting competition to the state-owned TV stations who are strong as long as they have a deadly grip on their channels and can so far (!) freely dispose of their air-time. In Other words, they can sell it to advertisers or to free-lance TV Producers who have their own television equipment and do the filming, editing and recording in their kitchens. For telecameras, TV studios and TV transmitters can now be rented. Now that the USSR is no more, this is no problem.

Major Ministries (of Defence, Security and the Interior), all the republics, territories and areas have their own TV studios—equipped to a varying degree. The National Television and Radio Broadcasting Studio of the defence ministry, for example, was anonymously on the air on the first national channel for decades. Now its programmes can be watched on the sixth TV channel (!). Our military regarded themselves as the bosses of the country and they did all they pleased meeting no rebuff.

Management of both Russian channels cannot stomach Vladimir Maslachenko, our gifted sports commentator. They won't accept the fact that he has become a free-lancer and with a staff of ten is making money in his own studio, filming in Barcelona and other venues of prestigious sports competitions. Having lost Maslachenko, Ostankino is now barring his programmes from getting on the air.

It looks that the changes taking place in Russian television market are irreversible. Since autumn 1992, the number of private producer TV companies renting broadcasting time from state-owned TV channels has been growing. Rimma Altukhov's 20-minute «AR-TV» (business, culture, sport and no politics) on the fourth channel appears daily morning and evening. Even more popular is Svetlana Popova's group of young producers from the Ostankino firm Master-TV: film directors Leonid Perfyonov, Igor Ugolnikov and Konstantin Erns lead the rating charts among the *Nezavisimaya gazeta* TV critics.

Mention should be made of Nikita Mikhalkov, a renowned film director with his video-producing team; REN-TV company (registered in September 1991, founder and director Irena Lisnevskay, 62 employees), and Vladimir Mukusev, a popular TV anchorman (he was one of the authors of «Vzglyad» (Look), the most disobedient programme on the first channel of the National TV in the USSR. Early in 1991 he had to quit the National Television). They have found their feet and do not link their

work with any one of the state-owned TV channels. They are oriented on the market, working with the most promising people. Irena Lisnevskaya, for example, produces and sells TV programmes authored.

by such popular stars as Eldar Ryazanov, Vladimir Molchanov and Urmas Ott. Any advertiser will surely loosen his purse-strings on hearing such illustrious names. This private company has signed long-term contracts with Ostankino and Rossiya.

Russia's TV market is inexhaustible and is constantly developing. Vladimir Mukusev, now a member of the Russian Parliament, is making his own on-the-spot reporting in the CIS hotbeds (nine 4-hour programmes from Karabakh, South Ossetia, Moscow and other places in two years) that are shown in Novosibirsk and by cable television in 20 trans-Urals cities. Mukusev's cassetted programmes are shown through the TV centres in the Baltic states, the Volga area and other regions to many millions of viewers. The advertisers value this highly... A mere two years ago this would have been out of the question.

UKRAINE

The first channel of the Ukrainian Television Centre (UT-1) and also the first TV channel Ostankino in Moscow are on the air in Ukraine daily from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. The Russian programme Rossiya is watched alternately with the second programme of Ukrainian TV UT-2. With the emergence of Ukraine and Russia as independent states and the growing contradictions between them, the Ukrainian TV administration began what may be called as censoring some of the Ostankino programmes: instead of the announced Moscow programme the viewers may be offered some local substitute without any advance notice.

Kievans can also watch the morning educational programme on the same channel, with «Tete-a-tete» entertainment programme from noon till midnight and the 32nd international commercial channel with the full transmission of untranslated news of the CBS, the Super Channel and ITN from Great Britain. Channel-VIII and Utar Plus are commercial channels broadcasting for Kievans.

East regional centre has its own local TV programme on a separate channel. In 1992, local television in the provinces broadcast 17,000 hours, including 3,000 hours in Russian, 127 in Moldavian, 146 in Magyar, 36 in Bulgarian and 108 in Crimean Tatar.

The Russian language is the main or sole means of communication for one-third of the population in Ukraine. Therefore it is safe to say that TV broadcasting from Moscow will continue in that country. In return, however, Kiev insists that Russia broadcast Ukrainian programmes for the «Eastern Ukrainian Diaspora», i.e. Ukrainians working in Tyumen and Siberia under labour contracts and generally for millions of Ukrainians living in the CIS.

Kiev maintains further that two channels broadcasting from Moscow is too much, adding that one channel will suffice presenting a selection of the best Rossiya and Ostankino programmes—and it is ready to pay for it (until now Moscow has footed the bill). In this case Ukraine would be able to organise its own three-channel national television network.

Ukraine boasts seven cities with a population of one million and more. In January 1993 a relaying centre was put into operation in Donbass, making it possible to broadcast and transmit on ten channels simultaneously. The Donetsk television network is now inferior only to that of Kiev.

The Ukrainian capital is about to make an advance towards progress when construction of a spacious 25-story TV centre with dozens of well equipped TV studios has been completed (it was started many years ago). To date, 70 per cent of the Ukrainian TV's 4 billion budget go for renting channels from the Ministry of Communications.

Decentralisation of the television network and the appearance of dozens of new «independent» TV studios cannot change the existing state of affairs. The new outfits have to pay the Ministry of Communications exorbitant sums at rates 10 to 15 times as high as the fixed ones. As a result, the independent studios have no money for producing their own programmes. So they buy C-grade video cassettes with C-grade Western films on the black market, and offer them to viewers. Once Ukraine signs the copyright convention, this video piracy system will crumble.

The Ukrainian Television Centre needs foreign currency to buy equipment. To get it, the TV people have to invite deputies to their pavilions and interview them for a couple of hours.

The studios also need their own frequencies and transmitters, otherwise foreign firms will not get involved in modernising the Ukrainian TV. Meanwhile it is the Ukrtelevision company and its regional associations and also the Ukrainian Ministry of Communications that are issuing licences for the air-time. Imagine a situation where the Newsweek magazine would give the permission to The New York Times to be published! However, whereas the TV administration issued 200 licences to organisations and private persons, the Ministry of Communications issued only 20 such licences. Why should the latter be the monopoly distributor of all the TV channels and bands and licences?

The future Law on Television will give answers to these questions. In the meantime the structure and centralisation of management remain intact at the Ukrainian television. The President of the Ukrainian TV and radio company is bossing over not only the central national channels, but also over the entire state television network in the country. The private commercial studios do not affect the situation in any meaningful way. Their assets and the size of their audience are deplorably small so far. Nevertheless, the cable television network is making progress, as is the network of share-holding and regional local TV companies. V. Tsentrovsky, head of the Ukrainian Television Union, hopes that by 1995, broadcasting on 12 channels will be a reality in towns and 5 chan-

nels in the countryside. In order to achieve this, however, relevant legislation is needed that would give the privately-owned TV network equal rights with the state-owned one.

BELARUS

In January 1993 there was one national channel at the Belorussian TV. Ostankino and Rossiya were transmitted in full from Moscow. The so-called eighth channel broadcast only for the two-million population of the Belorussian capital and its environs until the end of 1992. In 1993 the government closed this channel and laid off hundreds of employees of several independent companies.

The entire radio and TV network in Belarus is owned by the state: there is not a single transmitter in the republic belonging to a public organisation, private business or private persons. Commercial channels in the provinces are being closed one after another. This is the result of the Ministry of Information formed in January 1993 wielding control over all the mass media in the republic.

There are no laws on the press, television or copyright in Belarus. The Minsk TV network and five regional TV associations are directly subordinated to the Minister of Information who allots money and equipment to them and assesses and guides their activities, reshuffling its senior executives from time to time. Six minutes an hour are allowed for commercials, occasionally CNN, BBC, and MTV news and other programmes are on the air.

In the absence of a Law on the Press, control over the journalists and the mass media is not effected by the Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party, as had been the case up until two years ago, but by the Procurator's Office, the Ministry of the Interior, the KGB, the ministries of information, justice, communications and culture, the parliament and the government. The judicial bodies, as before, refuse to have anything to do with the media. The opposition cannot appear on TV.

TV broadcasts on the national channel is done in the Belorussian and Russian languages. There are a few local programmes in Yiddish and Polish. Programmes are planned in Ukrainian and Tatar.

LITHUANIA

There are two national programmes in the republic—LTV-1 and LTV-2- Ostankino and Rossiya are transmitted in full on separate channels. Vilnius transmits Polish TV programmes (15 hours a day) within a radius of 100 kilometres. The tenth channel is given to cable television the 26th channel to independent TV companies.

LTV-1 broadcasts from Vilnius and LTV-2 from Kaunas. During the first eight months of 1991 the television compound in Vilnius occupied by Soviet troops and broadcast evening programmes on behalf of the ideological workers of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party. The entire population, however, watched the Kaunas programmes.

Throughout 1992 incessant debates went on to decide whether the Ostankino channel should be transmitted or not. Claimants willing to operate this TV channel turned up. Linnevik, a Swedish firm registered in Luxembourg, proposed to the Lithuanian Television administration to form a joint company Baltic Television broadcasting... in English: six hours of teleshows, commercials and feature films every day.

In February 1993 communist-economist Brasauskas won the presidential election from anticommunist—music critic Landsbergis. Brasauskas is a communist like Yeltsin, Kravchuk, Nazarbayev, and Shevardnadze. He is a very experienced and sophisticated politician and managed to immediately relieve tension in the midst of the republic's Russian-speaking population by promising them not to suspend the Ostankino programmes at least until mid-1993. Then, he said, we shall see if the Russian television will be able to successfully compete with Lithuanian TV programmes. After all, the Lithuanian TV can broadcast in the Russian language (half an hour daily) not only in Lithuanian. Although Russia pays for the Ostankino channel, LTV-1 beams to Roman Catholics and Lutherans and Russian Orthodox believers in Polish, Ukrainian and Belorussian. There are no programmes for Jews as only three thousand of them remain there to date, whereas before 1965, Jews made up 12 per cent of the Lithuanian population.

In 1992 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted the Law on the Press. But there is still no law on television. Thank God, Klaipeda and Panevežis, let alone Vilnius and Kaunas, have self-policing and fairly professional studios producing tele-information and films. To cap it all, mention should be made of a dozen regional TV studios appearing for an hour a day and broadcasting for local audiences.

The Lithuanian Television was the first among the former Soviet republics' TV networks to be admitted to the European Radio and Television Union (1992). The national film library numbers 33,000 films and 11,000 video cassettes with records of entertainment and educational programmes. The Lithuanian radio has cooperation agreements with the BBC, CDF and ARD.

LATVIA

There are two national television programmes—LTV-1 and LTV-2. They are produced at the studios of the spacious and resplendent House of Latvian Television and Radio. It is the most modern structure in the

European part of the former Soviet Union which is only inferior to Moscow's Ostankino TV Centre.

Latvian population watch Ostankino programmes in full on what is termed the Eastern channel. The Rossiya channel is received in the eastern regions of Latvia or, from a public television satellite, in the rest of the country. In January 1993 the Ostankino TV company reaffirmed its consent to transmit its programmes to Latvia free of charge. From April 1, 1993, however, it will have to share its air-time with Rossiya and Moscow's new Channel-VI. True, according to Rossiya's spokesmen, its administration is going to persuade Riga to allot them a separate channel on which they would work gratis.

Quite a few private TV studios in Latvia are closely watching these developments. They have a stake in this too as they need air-time. In the meantime the newcomers are struggling with financial problems, making commercials that are poor in form and content, showing piratical films and offering the services of intim-clubs... They are pirates in the proper meaning of the word, who do not bother about the problem of copyright, be it a national or foreign producer.

Nevertheless, three leading private TV companies in Latvia—NTV-5, KS VIDEO, and IGE TV—are looking into the future with optimism. The NTV-5 studio (it first appeared on the air in May 1991) ranks among the first that have gained a firm foothold on the Latvian market. It has a staff of 38 persons, semi-professional video equipment, Super VHS, and the sponsors footing two-thirds of the studio's bills. NTV-5 specialises in information programmes, producing some of them itself and using ITN (USA) ones. They have progressed from 40 minutes of the daily air-time to from six to seven hours. Half an hour is given to the block of news in Russian, an hour to the show from Belgium (under a contract), etc.

The Latvian Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting assigns air-time to all privately-owned studios. The latter subsist on commercials, advertisements, sponsors, etc. The law specifies the maximum ad-time only for the state structures— not more than 2% for LTV-1 and up to 8% for LTV-2. It can be said that advertising activities at the Latvian commercial television develop «in the American direction». Many believe their commercials to be primitive and of poor effect. In more general terms, they are purely informative and functional. By contrast, in France, for example, they try to create an image, an original emotional script.

A special place on the information market is held by the Gaisma Private TV studio formed more than a year ago. It broadcast from 45 to 50 hours a week on three channels, including the 7th and 31st commercial channels. The studio was founded by pastor Vassily Filimonov. To be able to pay for the air-time and for the rent of the transmitter, Rev. Filimonov gives lectures on Theosophy in the West. The features transmitted by the studio include the «New Life» Mission (Norway) and Jim Swaggart's sermons (USA). The remaining eighty per centt are their own produce-prayers, sermons and liturgies in the Riga House of Sports.

Filimonov applied for a licence to have his own transmitter. Incidentally, the Russian military, now leaving Latvia, are willing to sell one for a symbolic price (it is tuned in to Channel V and operates within a radius of 200 km). If the licence is granted, Gaisma will be the first studio to operate on a round-the-clock basis. Then it will include features about «secular» life in its programmes.

Speaking about Latvian television, we should recall the contribution made to it by the Riga school of documentary film. Who knows whether the Soviet Baltic republics would have stepped towards independence had they not had such freedom chroniclers as Juris Podnieks, Andris Slapins and Gvido Zvaigzne, who all died in the 1990's. Podnieks, the first Latvian film director to earn recognition in the West, succeeded in stirring up TV audiences in many countries, and awaken their conscience and sympathy, while they watched his many-hour documentaries about the collapse of the Soviet empire. As the film director and cameraman Podnieks won the most prestigious prizes in the West for his pictures «We», «Calvary», and «The End of the Empire». All the three laid down their lives for being the only Soviet journalists filming in the seats of tension in the USSR.

Estonia has one national channel, three Russian TV channels (Ostankino, Rossiya and St. Petersburg) and three Finnish channels. Cable TV networks are developed in the central and southern parts of the country to such an extent that viewers receive a multitude of programmes of Western cable television, including such popular programmes as «Super Channel», «Pro-7», «Screensport» and «RTL Plus». When the CPSU Central Committee was still in existence, it was always turned to Estonia (where Finnish programmes could be watched without hindrances), when it came to studying the «pernicious influence of Western bourgeois propaganda» on communist convictions. The findings were always negative and therefore never publicised.

In 1993 the Estonian television authorities are planning to add another national channel (in Estonian) to the existing state one, and distribute its air-time among various commercial TV studios. Tallinn would like to merge the three Russian channels into one, despite the fact that these companies are willing to bear the expenses involved in transmitting their programmes. One of the channels that would be thus released could be placed at the disposal of local authorities in Tallinn, Tartu, Parnu and Narva that have their own regional TV studios.

Some seventy per cent of the republic's population watch TV programmes broadcast from Russia. A mere four per cent of the total come out for the closure of all the three Russian channels. Preference is given to the Ostankino channel (74% of the Estonians and 92% of the non-Estonians). Second in popularity is Rossiya and third, St. Petersburg. It goes without saying that if the Estonian government had the means and specialists, Tallinn would produce programmes for its own three or four channels. The only Estonian TV journalist known in the vast expanses of

the former Soviet Union is Urmias Ott who is capable of making any political figure talk before camera.

GEORGIA

Frequent changes of the political regime in this country, the unabating civil war going on for over a year between the supporters of the toppled President Gamsakhurdia and his successor Shevardnadze, the continuous ethnic and territorial conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the exodus of the national intelligentsia, have all left the Georgian television network in a sorry plight.

Georgia is experiencing energy shortages, Russian books and newspapers can hardly be found there, railroads are practically at a standstill. Ostankino and Rossiya (for which Moscow keeps paying) are the only window on the outer world for the republic's multiethnic population, as well as Georgians themselves. The sole national TV channel in Tbilisi is mostly devoted to parliamentary debates, reports on the hostilities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and movies. Owing to energy shortages, sometimes only one out of the three channels can be watched in the evening. The local regional TV programmes have also stopped broadcasts. But only a short while ago Georgian film-makers confidently won first prizes at many international film festivals. Georgian cinema is practically non-existent today, what with the economic and organisational confusion.

The Word of an Opponent Instead of an Epilogue The Opinion of Yevgeny Ambartsumov.

The great amount of factual material in this book about the heavy consequences of «real socialism» for the peoples of our country makes a most oppressive impression. The impression is all the greater, since Georgy Vachnadze, a well-known historian, political scientist and expert on mass media, has in the recent past himself made a sizeable contribution to the ideological basis of our former system and to the so-called counter-propaganda. And though the exactness of some of the facts presented by the author, as well as their interpretation, could be disputed, the book confirms the definitely overwhelming, at least at moments, feeling in each of us that our whole country has turned into a multitude of hot points, into a whole hot zone and that we are heading for an abyss.

But I would like to dispute that last point. True, the results of 70 odd years of communism are depressing. True, the leadership that took over made many errors, often worsening the already bad situation. But certainly we should not have preserved the Stalin-Brezhnev system of mass repression, of lack of freedom and human dignity, of the irrational suicidal arms race and destruction of the environment? The degree of sin of the initiators of the revolution, of executions by firing squads and hard labour camps is incommensurate with perestroika and the destruction of the system. The first were evil doers or the incarnation of the devil as they now say sometimes, while the latter are just weak people, not up to the burden of responsibility they would have to bear.

I agree with the author that we should and could have changed over from the totalitarian system using our heads more, being more careful and rational and calculating the consequences of each step. No matter what, there would be a big price to pay when parting with a system which had not only poisoned the country as a whole, but each of us — the way we act, our habits and attitudes. However, the distribution of the costs should have been more fair and thought out.

Moreover, I cannot totally accept one of the main tenets of the author: «Russians, all people living in Russia, did not especially grieve over the liquidation of the CPSU and the USSR.» (quoted from his «Forward to an unpublished book» — Russian News, January 13, 1993). That's true about the CPSU, but not in relation to the USSR.

The USSR may have been doomed as an ideologized empire, but not as a state. For centuries before the appearance of the USSR it formed

through the efforts of many generations of various peoples and was not only the embodiment of oppression. And it disintegrated not as a result of being defeated in war, but the breakdown of a system the Russian people, who suffered most of all from it, are not totally responsible for.

Here is a typical fact in the book. The author reminds us of the tragedy of the Chechen aul (a village in the Caucasus and central Asia) Khaibakh on the 27th of February, 1944 when a punitive detachment of the NKVD, who were in the process of deporting people, herded all the inhabitants into a shed and set it on fire burning them alive...

When the Chechentsy recall this heinous deed, they say: «The Russians did it». To be more exact, it was conceived and organized by Stalin's and Beria's confidant, General Gvishiani. No matter what the nationality of the fellow butchers, there is no justifying them. The point is that the system and its heads, not the people, are responsible for such crimes.

It should not be thought that the accession to Russia of the small nations, whose current tragedies the author angrily and justly describes, brought them only harm. To the contrary, it is the separation from Russia that brought about the dramatic consequences, say, for Georgia or for small Tuva. It is just as unfounded to see the «hand of Moscow (or the KGB)» in all the current inter-ethnic conflicts.

Is that not how they used to explain all the disorders, hunger and accidents as intrigues by spies of the imperialist intelligence services? And even the Communist parry leadership and Moscow bureaucracy are not totally responsible for, say, ecological disasters in Central Asia. Can we regard as innocent the local bosses who went to all lengths in order to report overfulfilling plans for gathering cotton, though they knew that what they were doing was ruining the health of their own people? Wer is no justifying them. The point is that the system and its heads, not the people, are responsible for such crimes.

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Is that not how they used to explain all the disorders, hunger and accidents as intrigues by spies of the imperialist intelligence services? And even the Communist party leadership and Moscow bureaucracy are not totally responsible for, say, ecological disasters in Central Asia. Can we regard as innocent the local bosses who went to all lengths in order to report overfulfilling plans for gathering cotton, though they knew that what they were doing was ruining the health of their own people? Were not the Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Turkmenian Communist Party who gave the terrible order to dam the Kara-Boghaz Gulf? Later — unfortunately, too late — the dam had to be torn down? And so on and so forth.

A preconception the caused Vachnadze to give an inadequate explanation of the Karabakh and Georgian-Abkhasian conflicts and the situations in Chechnia and Tatarstan. By the way, judging by the reaction of Moscow to the separatist movements of the nationalistic leaders, it would pay to remember that any normal Western democratic state strongly suppresses actions aimed at its disintegration. And that the USA conducted a bloody civil war in order to prevent the secession of the Southern states.

The apocalyptic tone of the book makes one pause and think, but does not convince. For I believe in the wisdom and common sense of the peoples of Russia who have not taken the path of dangerous fratricide in Yugoslavia, and I hope that they will preserve Russia and will not allow its collapse.

Certainly this book and the pessimistic thoughts of the author about the future of Russia could be interpreted as a prediction and warning. In this light Georgy Vachnadze's book takes on its real significance, its real function, being public attention not simply to the hot, but to the sore points, to the centrifugal tendencies and get us to seek a way out of the dangerous situation in order to preserve, renew and strengthen Russia as a worthy and influential participant in the world community.

Yevgeny AMBARTSUMOV.
member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of
The Russian Federation,
Chairman of the Committee for International Affairs
of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation

APPENDIX

RUSSIAN FEDERATION — RUSSIA

General Information. Administrative Division

- Capital: Moscow.
- Territory: 17,075.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 20 republics, 1 autonomous regions, 10 autonomous areas, 6 territories, 51 regions.
- Currency: rouble.
- National flag: Russian tricolour — three horizontal strips of equal width: white, blue and red.
- National anthem: «Patriotic Song» by Mikhail Glinka arranged by Andrei Petrov.
- National language: Russian.
- Independence Day: 12 June.
- Basic law: Constitution adopted in 1978.
- Head of state: President elected for 5 years.
- Highest body: Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation and two-chamber Supreme Soviet (the Chamber of the Republic and Chamber of Nationalities).*
- Confessions professed by the population: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism.
- There are more than 100 parties, movements, organisations, foundations and other associations registered in Russia, among them 25 political parties and 16 political movements.
- Major political parties:
- Democratic Party of Russia (DPR): established in 1990, advocates development of market relations in the economy, demonopolisation and denationalisation of the means of production, raising the population's living standards. Chairman — Nikolai Travkin.
- Social Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (SDPR): established in 1990, advocates revival of entrepreneurship. Chairman — Boris Orlov.
- Republican Party of the Russian Federation (RPRF): established in 1990, advocates denationalisation and privatisation of state property and its transfer, with or without compensation, to all citizens in equal shares. Co-chairmen — Vladimir Lysenko, Vyacheslav Shostakovsky, Pyotr Filippov, and Igor Yakovenko.

* Data provided by the reference section of the Russian News Agency Novosti in December 1992.

- Peasant Party of Russia (KPR): established in 1990, sees its main task in liquidating the monopoly position of collective and state farms. Chairman — Yuri Chernichenko.
- Russian Christian Democratic Movement (RHDD): established in 1990. advocates a strong and united democratic state, radical privatisation, minimal taxes and protection of the domestic market. Chairman — Viktor Aksiuchis.
- Russian Communist Workers' Party (RKRP): established in 1990, advocates the reinstatement of Soviet power at all levels; the party is the core of the Worker Russia movement. Leaders — Albert Makashov and Viktor Anpilov.
- Constitutional Democratic Party (Party of Popular Freedom): considers itself a successor to the Constitutional Democratic Party established in 1905 and re-established in 1991, advocates the priority role of private property, socially-oriented market, separation of political and economic powers, for a united and indivisible Russia organised on the principles of democratic federation. Chairman of the Central Committee — Mikhail Astafiev.
- Russian National Union (ROS): set up in 1991 by the «Russia» parliamentary faction; advocates limited market relations without privatisation of land and big enterprises, insists on the Government's resignation and impeachment of the President. Leader — Sergei Baburin.
- Russian Popular Assembly (RNS): established in 1992 at the Congress of Civil and Patriotic Forces as an anti-Communist movement and as an alternative to the Democratic Russia movement.
- Economic Freedom Party (PES): established in 1992 on the initiative of Russian businessmen, advocates social market economy. Cochairmen — Konstantin Borovoi and Svyatoslav Fedorov.
- POPULATION (as of 1 January 1992): 148.8 million.
- including: Russians — nearly 130 million, Tatars — over 5 million, Ukrainians — nearly 4 million, Germans — nearly 2 million, Chuvash — 1.7 million, Bashkirs — nearly 1.3 million, Belorussians — over 1 million, Mordovians — over 1 million (all in all in the territory of Russia there are more than 130 nations and nationalities).
- Urban population: 109.0 million (1990).
- Rural population: 38.8 million (1990).
- Male: 69.4 million (1990).
- Female: 78.6 million (1990).
- NATURAL RESOURCES:
- timber — 20% of world resources;.
- coal — 30% of world resources;.
- oil — 40% of world resources;.
- gas — 45% of world resources;.
- shales — 50% of world resources;.
- ores:
- iron — 44% of world resources;.

- chromium — 30% of world resources;
- manganese — 74% of world resources;
- rare-earth — 40% of world resources.
- Russia's share in the world production of diamonds is 28% and of precious stones, 30%.
- INDUSTRY: industrial output (1991)-1,029 billion roubles (97.8% of 1990).
- Russia produces 17.9% of the world machine-building output. Its share in the world production of:
 - metal-cutting machine-tools is 22%; combine harvesters, 46%; machinery for the food industry, 11.3%; power-generating plant, 63.2%; aircraft, 27%; military hardware, up to 50%; trucks, 21%; passenger cars, 4.8%; electricity, 16% (Russian-made machines are used by 35% of basic industries in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 35% in India, 45% in Iran, 65% in Pakistan, 20% in Turkey, 50% in Egypt, 50% in Libya).
- OUTPUT IN 1991 (percentage of 1990):
 - meat — 5.6 million tons (84%); sausages — 2.1 million tons (91%); bread and bakery products-19.0 million tons (104%); alcoholic beverages- 82.2 million decalitres (104%); cigarettes-145 billion (96%); TV-sets- 4.4 million (94%); refrigerators and freezers — 3.7 million (98%); vacuum-cleaners — 4.7 million (105%); passenger cars — 1,029 thousand (93%); soap-151 thousand tons (79%).
- WAGES AND SALARIES. Average monthly wage in the national economy as of February 1992 was Rbls.1994, including: in industry — Rbls.2567; health care, social maintenance and sport — Rbls. 1249; education-Rbls. 1286; culture and the arts-Rbls.1000.
- Monthly cost of the «consumer good basket» in Moscow — Rbls.3800 (May 1992).
- Monthly inflation rate: 1% (as of April 1992).
- EXPORTS (1991): 64,2 billion foreign-currency-equivalent roubles (29% down from 1990).
- IMPORTS (1991): 44.7 billion foreign-currency-equivalent roubles (40% down from 1990).
- REFUGEES: 235 thousand officially registered refugees (as of January 1992).
- UNEMPLOYMENT: more than 61 thousand registered unemployed, of them 12 thousand receive unemployment benefits (as of January 1992).
- HEALTH CARE: 697.7 thousand physicians, or 41 per 10 thousand of the population.
- EDUCATION: by the beginning of 1991/92 academic year there were 6.8 thousand specialised schools (3.9 million students); 306 high schools (219 thousand students); 198 lycees (115 thousand students); 85 private schools (as of 1 December 1991); 519 higher educational establishments (2,861 thousand students); 2.6 thousand secondary specialised schools (2.2 million students); 8 million children attended preschool institutions (64% of children of the preschool age).

REPUBLICS WITHIN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

REPUBLIC OF ADYGHEYA

- Centre: Maikop.
- Territory: 7.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 2.
- Population: 436 thousand (1990).
- President: Asian Aliyevich DZHARIMOV.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Adam Huseinovich TLEUZH.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Mugdin Salihovich TLEHAS.
- Geographical location: foothills and mountains of the Greater Caucasus. Rivers: of the Kuban River basin. Part of the Krasnodar Territory.

REPUBLIC OF ALTAI

- Centre: Gorno-Altai.
- Territory: 92.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 1.
- Population: 194 thousand people (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Valery Ivanovich CHAPTYNOV.
- Chairman of the Government: Vladimir Ivanovich PETROV.
- Geographical location: Altai Mountains. Rivers: of the Ob River basin. Lake: Teletskoye. 25% of the territory under forests.
- Administrative unit of the Altai Territory.
- Industry: timber, woodworking, light, food, building materials, electrical engineering; mineral building materials mining.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, Siberian stag breeding, apiculture, cereals, hunting.

REPUBLIC OF BASHKORTOSTAN

- Capital: Ufa. Head of the city administration-Mikhail Alekseyevich ZAITSEV. Tel: (3472) 22 83 60.
- Territory: 143.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 54 districts, 17 towns.
- Population: 3964 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Murtaza RAHIMOV.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Anatoly KAPSOV. Tel: (3472) 23 37 01.
- Geographical location: Sub-Aral Sea area and South Urals mountains. Main rivers: Belaya, Ufa.
- Part of the Urals Economic Region.

- Industry: oil-refining, petrochemical, machine-building (oil-refining and chemical equipment, machine-tools, engines), metalworking, metallurgical, building materials, woodworking, light, food; oil extraction, coal mining, extraction of iron and copper-zinc ores.
- Industrial centres: Ufa, Sterlitamak, Salavat, Ishimbai.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, sunflower, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, poultry-farming, apiculture.

REPUBLIC OF BURYATIYA

- Capital: Ulan-Udeh. Head of the city administration: Viktor Kazanovich KUKSHINOV. Tel: (30122) 2 32 52, 2 39 38.
- Territory: 351.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 20 districts, 6 towns.
- Population: 1,049 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Leonid Vassilyevich POTAPOV. Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Vladimir Biziaevich SAGANOV. Tel: (30122) 2 45 63; fax: 2 47 03.
- Geographical location: Trans-Baikal area and Eastern Sayany mountains. Main rivers: Selenga, Barguzin, Verkhnyaya Angara, Vitim. Lake: Baikal. 80% of the territory under the taiga.
- Industry: mining (tungsten, molybdenum, gold, coal), machine-building, metalworking, timber, woodworking; extraction of brown coal, graphite, apatites.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, fur-farming, fur trade.

REPUBLIC OF DAGHESTAN

- Capital: Makhachkala. Head of the city administration: Alimirza Apendievich BIYBOLOTOV. Tel: (8720) 7 22 87.
- Territory: 50.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 39 districts, 8 towns.
- Population: 1,823 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Magomedali MAGOMEDOV.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Abdurazak MIRZABEKOV. Tel: (8720) 7 22 34.
- Geographical location: eastern part of the Northern Caucasus, on the Caspian Sea shore.
- Main rivers: Terek, Sulak, Samur.
- Part of the North Caucasian Economic Region.
- Industry: oil and gas extraction; machine-building, metalworking, food, light; crafts (chasing, carpet-making).
- Industrial centres: Makhachkala, Derbent, Kaspiisk, Izberbash, Hasavyurt, Kizlyar, Kizilyurt, Buinaksk.
- Agriculture: grain production, vine-growing.

INGUSH REPUBLIC

- Until November 1990 part of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. In June 1992 the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation adopted the Law on the Formation of the Ingush Republic within the Russian Federation.
- Centre: Nazran.
- Head of the provisional administration under the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Mikhailovich SHAKHRAI.
- Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Isa KOSTOYEV. Representative of the provisional administration under the President of the Russian Federation: Ruslan AUSHEV.

KABARDIN-BALKAR REPUBLIC

- Capital: Nalchik. Head of the city administration: Valery Huseinovich SIZHIZHAEV. Tel: (86600) 2 20 04.
- Territory: 12.5 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 8 districts, 7 towns.
- Population: 768 thousand (1990).
- President: Valery Muhamedovich KOKOV. Tel: (86600) 2 20 64.
- Vice-President: Gennady Sergeyevich GUBIN. Tel: (86600) 2 21 18.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Hachim Muhamedovich KARMOKOV. Prime Minister: Georgi CHERKESOV. Tel: (86600) 2 21 26.
- Representative of the President of Russian Federation: Aziratali AHMETOV. Tel: (86600) 2 20 04.
- Geographical location: southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus and Kabardin Plain. Main rivers: Terek, Malka, Baskan.
- Part of the North Caucasian Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, non-ferrous metallurgy, food, light, building materials; extraction and processing of tungsten-molybdenum ores.
- Major industrial centres: Nalchik, Tymauz, Prokhladny.
- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, stock-breeding, horticulture, vine-growing, wine-making.

REPUBLIC OF KALMYKIA-HALMG TANGCH

- Capital: Elista. Head of the city administration: Nikolai Konstantinovich SEKENOV. Tel: (84722) 5 23 11.
- Territory: 76.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 13 districts, 3 towns.
- Population: 325 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet:
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers:
- Tel: (84722) 6 27 41; fax: 6 28 80.

- Geographical location: western part of the Caspian Lowland. The south-eastern part washed by the Caspian Sea.
- Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, building materials, food industry; natural gas and oil extraction.
- Major industrial centres: Elista, Kaspiisk.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

KARACHAEVO-CHERKESSIAN REPUBLIC

- Centre: Cherkessk.
- Territory: 14.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 4.
- Population: 422 thousand (1990)
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet:
- Head of the administration: Vladimir Islamovich HUBIYEV. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Viktor Nikolayevich SAVELYEV.
- Geographical location: northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus. Main. river: Kuban.
- Part of the Stavropol Territory.
- Industry: petrochemical, chemical, light, machine-building, metalworking, electrical engineering, woodworking; coal mining.
- Industrial centres: Cherkessk, Karachaevsk, Zelenchukskaya.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, sunflower, sugar beet, vegetable-growing.

REPUBLIC OF KARELIA

- Capital: Petrozavodsk. Head of the city administration: Sergei Leonidovich KATANANDOV. Tel: (81400) 7 49 89.
- Territory: 172.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 15 districts, 12 towns.
- Population: 796 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Viktor Nikolayevich STEPANOV. Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Sergei Petrovich BLINNIKOV. Tel: (81400) 7 24 44.
- Geographical location: north-western part of East-European Plain. Main rivers: Kem, Vyg. Lakes: Lagozhskoye, Onezhskoye. Half of the territory under forests. Part of the Northern Economic Region.
- Industry: timber, furniture making, pulp-and-paper, woodworking, machine-building, metallurgy, mining (iron ore, mica).
- Major industrial centres: Petrozavodsk, Sortaval, Kem, Kondopoga, Medvezhyegorsk, Belomorsk, Segezha.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, Poultry-farming, fur-farming, fishery.

REPUBLIC OF KOMI

- Capital: Syktyvkar. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Alekseyevich KARAKCHIEV. Tel: 2 41 20.
- Territory: 415.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 16 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 1,265 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Yuri Alekseyevich SPIRIDONOV.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Vyacheslav Ivanovich HUDI-AYEV. Tel: 2 31 01.
- Geographical location: north-western part of Russia, in eastern part of the republic mountains of the Northern and Arctie Urals. Main rivers: Pechora, Vychegda. Part of the Northern Economic Region.
- Industry: fuel and power, timber, pulp-and-paper, woodworking, building materials, metalworking, food, and light industries; coal mining, gas oil extraction and refining. Industrial centres: Syktyvkar, Uhta, Sosnogorsk.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding.

REPUBLIC OF MARH-EL

- Capital: Ioshkar-Ola. Head of the city administration: Yuri Aleksandrovich MINAKOV. Tel: 5 64 01.
- Territory: 23.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 14 districts, 4 towns.
- President Vladislav Maksimovich ZOTIN. Tel: 5 66 64, 5 67 46.
- Vice-President: Viktor Aleksandrovich GALAVTEYEV. Tel: 5 68 33, 5 66 28.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Yuri Aleksandrovich MINAKOV.
- Geographical location: eastern part of East-European Plain, the Middle Volga area. Nearly half of the territory under forests. Part of the Volga-Vyatka Economic Region.
- Industry: machine building, metalworking, pulp-and-paper, wood-working, and light industries.
- Agriculture: stock breeding, flax growing, cereals.

MORDOVIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

- Capital: Saransk: Head of the city administration: Adbulhak Abdulgafurovich SALIMOV. Tel: 4 64 16.
- Territory: 26.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 21 districts, 7 towns.
- Population: 964 thousand (1990).
- President: Vassily Dmitrievich GUSLIANNIKOV. Tel: 4 28 01.
- Vice-President: Vladimir Pavlovich NAREZHNY. Tel: 4 29 22.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Nikolai Mikhailovich BIRIUKOV.

- Geographical location: Oka-Don Plain, Volga Highland. Main river: Moksha. 25% of the territory under forests. Part of the Volga-Vyatka Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, chemical, light, food, and building materials industries.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, hemp, stock-breeding, poultry farming, apiculture.

REPUBLIC OF SAHA (YAKUTIA)

- Capital: Yakutsk. Head of the city administration: Pavel Pavlovich BORODIN. Tel: 2 36 27; fax: 4 35 14.
- Territory: 3,103.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 32 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 11,999 thousand (1990).
- President: Mikhail Efimovich NIKOLAYEV. Tel: 2 36 27; fax: 4 35 14.
- Vice-President: Vyacheslav Anatolievich SHTYROV. Tel: 2 50 05, 4 16 20.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Kliment Egorovich IVANOV.
- Geographical location: Eastern Siberia, Main rivers: Lena, Olenek, Yana, Indigirka, Kolyma. 80% of the territory under the taiga.
- Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (gold, diamonds, mica, antimony, coal), timber woodworking, and food industries.
- Major industrial centres: Yakutsk, Mirny, Neriungri, Aldan, Lensk, Sea port: Tiksi.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, hunting, fishery.

NORTH OSSETIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

- Capital: Vladikavkaz (until 1990, Ordjonikidze).
- Head of the city administration: Mikhail Mikhailovich SHATALOV. Tel: 5 34 35, 5 52 26.
- Territory: 8.0 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 8 districts, 6 towns.
- Population: 638 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Ahsarbek GALAZOV.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Sergei Valentinovich HET-AGUROV. Tel: 3 36 44, 3 34 22; fax: 3 39 86.
- Head of the provisional administration under the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Mikhailovich SHAKHRAI.
- Geographical location: northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus. Main river: Terek. Part of the North Caucasian Economic Region.
- Industry: non-ferrous metallurgy, machine-building, woodworking, light, chemical, glass.

- Major Industrial centres: Vladikavkaz, Mozdok, Beslan.
- Agriculture: vegetable-growing, cereals, horticulture, vine-growing, wine-making, stock-breeding.

REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN

- Capital: Kazan. Head of the city administration: Kamil Shamilyevich ISKHAKOV. Tel: 35 56 94.
- Territory: 68.0 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 39 districts, 18 towns.
- Population: 3, 658 thousand (1990).
- President: Mentimer SHAIMIEV. Tel: 32 70 01, 32 74 66.
- Vice-President: Vassily Nikolayevich LIKHACHEV.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Farid MUHAMETSHIN.
- Prime-Minister: Muhamat SABIROV.
- Geographical location: eastern part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Volga, Kama. 20% of the territory under forests. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: oil and gas extraction, chemical, petrochemical, machine-building, light and food industries.
- Major industrial centres: Kazan, Naberezhnye Chelny, Zelenodolsk, Nizhnekamsk, Almetievsk, Chistopol, Bugulma.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, horticulture, fur-farming, poultry-farming, apiculture.

REPUBLIC OF TUVA

- Capital: Kyzyl. Head of the city administration: Viktor KARA-OOL, Tel. 2 28 45, 3 50 53.
- Territory: 170.5 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 14 districts, 5 towns.
- Population: 314 thousand (1990).
- President: Sheri-ool OORZHAK. Tel: 3 73 00, 5 67 46. Vice-President: Aleksei Aleksandrovich MELNIKOV. Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Kaldyr-ool BICHELDEI.
- Geographical location: southern part of Eastern Siberia. Half of the mountainous areas under forests. Almost all rivers in the Yenisei River Basin.
- Part of the East-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (asbestos, cobalt, coal, mercury), timber, wood-working, light, building materials, metalworking, and food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Kyzyl, Ak-Dovurak.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, trapping.

UDMURT REPUBLIC

- Capital: Izhevsk. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Ivanovich SALTYKOV. Tel: 22 45 90, 22 84 87.
- Territory: 42.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 25 districts, 6 towns. . Population: 1.619 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Valentin Kuzmich TUBYLOV. Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Nikolai Efimovich MIRONOV, Tel: 25 45 67, 69 63 36.
- Geographical location: Upper Kama Highland. Main rivers: Kama, Vyatka. Almost half the territory under forests.
- Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, metallurgy, timber, wood-working, oil extracting, chemical, glass, light, and food industry: pit production. Major industrial centres: Izhevsk, Sarapul, Glazov.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, hemp-growing.

REPUBLIC OP HAKASSIA

- Capital: Abakan.
- Territory: 61,9 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 5.
- Population: 573 thousand (1990).
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Vladimir Nikolayevich SHTYGA-SHEV. Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Yevgeni Aleksandrovich SMIRNOV.
- Geographical location: western part of Minusinaskaya Hollow, left bank of the Yenisei, eastern slopes of Kuznetsk Alatau and northern slopes of Western Sayany. Main rivers: Yenisei, Abakan. Part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory.
- Industry: mining (coal, iron ore, non-ferrous metal ores, marble), light, machine-building, non-ferrous metallurgy, timber, woodworking, and food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Abakan, Sorsk, Sayanogorsk, Chernogorsk. Balyksa.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

CHECHEN REPUBLIC (CHECHNIA)

- Capital: Grozny, Head of the city administration: Mairbek Elsievlch BAIMURAZOV, Tel: 22 01 42.
- President: Djohar Musayevich DUDAYEV.
- Chairman of Parliament: Husain Saidalimovich AHMADOV.
- Vice-Premier (acting): Yaragi MAMODAYEV.

CHUVASH (CHAVASH) REPUBLIC

- Capital: Cheboksary. Head of the city administration: Stanislav Vladimirovich SHALIMOV. Tel: 22 35 76.
- Territory: 18.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 21 districts, 9 towns.
- Chairman of the Supreme Soviet: Eduard Alekseyevich KUBAREV.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Valerian Nikolayevich VIKTOROV. Tel: 22 01 71.
- Geographical location: East-European Plain, the Middle Volga area. Main rivers: Volga, Sura. One-third of the territory under forests.
- Part of the Volga-Vyatka Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, chemical, light, woodworking, and food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Cheboksary, Novocheboksarsk, Kanash, Alaty, Shumerlia.
- Agriculture: cereals, horticulture, hops, hemp, makhorka (low-grade tobacco), stock-breeding.

NATIONAL-TERRITORIAL ENTITIES JEWISH

AUTONOMOUS REGION

- Centre: Birobidjan.
- Head of the city administration: Viktor Vladimirovich BOLOTNOV.
- Territory: 36.0 Thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 2.
- Population: 218 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Region Administration: Nikolai Mikhailovich VOLKOV.
- Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Iosif Davidovich NEHIN.
- Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Afanasievich SKACHKOV.
- Geographical location: basin of the River Amur. More than one-third of the territory under forests. Part of the Khabarovsk Territory.
- Industry: machine-building, woodworking, building materials, light and food industry; tin mining.
- Major industrial centre: Birobidjan.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, apiculture, hunting, fishery.

AGHINSKY BURYAT AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Aghinskoye township.
- Territory: 19.0 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 4 townships.
- population: 77 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Gurodarma TSEDASHIEV.
- Geographical location: south-eastern part of Trans-Baikal area. Main river: Onon. Nearly one-third of the territory under forests. Part of the Chita Region.
- industry: mining, timber, and food industry.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals.

KOMI-PERMIATSKY AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Kudymkar.
- Territory: 32.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 1.
- Population: 160 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Nikolai Andreyevich POLUYANOV.
- Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vyacheslav Nikolayevich DELIDOV.
- Chairman of the Area Soviet: Ivan Vassilievich CHETIN.
- Geographical location: Sub-Urals, upper Kama. 80% of the territory under forests. Part of the Perm Region.
- Industry: timber, woodworking, wood-processing, food, and light industry.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, fur trade and fur-farming.

KORYAK AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Palana township.
- Territory: 301.5 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 5 townships.
- Population: 39 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Sergei Gennadievich LEUSHKIN.
- Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Grigory Mikhailovich OINVID. Chairman of the Area Soviet: Anatoly Ivanovich DELIANSKY.
- Geographical location: northern part of Kamchatka Peninsula and the adjacent part of the mainland. Washed by the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk. Part of the Kamchatka Region.
- Industry: food industry; brown coal mining. Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, hunting.

NENETS AUTONOMOUS AREA (NENETS REPUBLIC)

- Centre: Naryan-Mar.
- Territory: 176.7 thousand square kilometres. Cities: 1.
- Population: 55 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Yuri Vladimirovich KOMAROVKSY. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Aleksandr Ivanovich VYUCHEISKY.
- Chairman of the Area Soviet: Boris Fyodorovich SLEZKIN. Geographical location: in the north of Russia. Washed by the White, Barents, and Kara Seas. Main river: Pechora. Part of the Arkhangelsk Region.
- Industry: timber and food industries. Sea ports: Naryan-Mar, Amderma.
- Agriculture: reindeer-breeding, fishery, sea animal hunting, fur-farming.

TAIMYR (DOLGANO-NENETS) AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Dudinka.
- Territory: 862.1 thousand square kilometres. Cities: 1.
- Population: 55 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Gennady Pavlovich NEDELIN.
- Chairman of the Area Soviet: Gennady Nikolayevich MAIMAGO.
- Geographical location: Taimyr Peninsula. Main rivers: Yenisei, Pyasina, Hatanga. Part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory.
- Industry: mining (polymetallic ores, coal, gas), food industry. Ports: Dudinka, Dikson, Hatanga.
- Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, fur-trade, stock-breeding.

UST-ORDYNSKY BURYAT AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Ust-Ordynsky township.
- Territory: 22.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 4 townships.
- Population: 137 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Aleksei Nikolayevich BATAGAYEV.
- Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Pavel Mikhailovich IMEDOYEV.
- Chairman of the Area Soviet: Leonid Aleksandrovich HUTANOV.
- Geographical location: southern part of the Lena-Angara Plateau.

- Main river: Angara. Part of the Irkutsk Region.
- Industry: coal and gypsum mining; timber, woodworking, and food industry.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

HANTY-MANSY AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Hanty-Mansiisk.
- Territory: 523.1 thousand square kilometres. . Cities: 11.
- Population: 1301 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Aleksandr Vassilievich FILIPENKO. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Eremei Danilovich AIPIN. Chairman of the Area Soviet: Valery Andreyevich CHURILOV.
- Geographical location: West-Siberian Plain in the Ob and the Irtysh basin Part of the Tyumen Region.
- Industry: oil and gas extraction; gas processing, timber, woodworking, and food industry.
- Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade, vegetable-growing.

CHUKOTKA AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Anadyr.
- Territory: 737.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 2.
- Population: 156 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Aleksandr Viktorovich NAZAROV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Yuri Anatolyevich YEREGIN. Chairman of the Area Soviet: Vladimir Mikhailovich YETYGIN.
- Geographical location: Chukotka Peninsula and adjacent mainland. Washed by the East-Siberian, Chukotka and Bering Seas. Main river: Anadyr. Part of the Magadan Region.
- Industry: mining (non-ferrous metals, coal), food industry. Sea Ports: Pevek, Provideniya, Anadyr, Egvekinot, Beringovsky.
- Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, fur trade, sea animal hunting, stock-breeding.

EVENK AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Tura township.
- Territory: 767.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Cities: 1 township.
- Population: 25 thousand (1990).

- Head of the Area Administration: Anatoly Mikhailovich Yakimov. Chairman of the Area Soviet: Valery Ivanovich NOVOSELTSEV.
- Geographical location: Central Siberian Plateau. Main rivers: Nizhnyaya Tunguska and Podkamennaya Tunguska. Part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory.
- Industry: graphite and Icelandic spar mining; food industry.
- Agriculture: fishery, fur trade, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming.

YAMAL-NENETS AUTONOMOUS AREA

- Centre: Salehard.
- Territory: 750.3 thousand square kilometers.
- Cities: 5.
- Population: 495 thousand (1990).
- Head of the Area Administration: Lev Sergeyevich BAYANDIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Piyakovlch YAR. Chairman of the Area Soviet: Aleksandr Ivanovich KUZIN.
- Geographical location: West-Siberian Plain, lower Ob. Main rivers: Ob, Nadym, Taz, Pur. Part of the Tyumen Region.
- Industry: gas and oil extraction; timber, woodworking, and food industry.
- Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade.

TERRITORIAL ENTITIES ALTAI TERRITORY

- Centre: Barnaul.
- Head of the city administration: Vladimir Nikolayevich BAVIRIN. Tel: 25 55 55.
- Territory: 261.7 thousand square kilometres. Administrative division: 65 districts, 12 towns. Population: approx. 3 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Vladimir Fyodorovich RAIFIKESHT. Tel: 22 68 14.
- Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Aleksandr Aleksandrovich SURIKOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Nikolai Mikhailovich SHUBA.
- Geographical location: bigger part of the territory located on West-Siberian Plain. Main river: the Ob with its tributaries. Nearly one-third of the territory under forests. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, chemical, petrochemical, mining (poly-metallic ores, gold, mercury, sodium chloride and Glauber's salts), food and light industries.

- Major industrial centres: Barnaul, Biisk, Rubtsovsk, Novoaltaisk, Slavgorod.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax, sugar beet, horticulture, stock-breeding, poultry-farming, apiculture, fur trade.

KRASNODAR TERRITORY

- Centre: Krasnodar. Head of the city administration: Valery Aleksandrovich SAMOLEIKO. Tel: 55 43 48.
- Territory: 83.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 44 districts, 28 towns.
- Population: over 5 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Tel: 52 57 16, fax: 52 85 40. Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Aleksandr Mikhailovich ZHDANOVSKY. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vassily Nikolayevich TETERIN. Tel: 52 45 63,.
- Geographical location: western part of the Greater Caucasus and Kuban-Priazovskaya Lowland. Washed by the Black Sea in the south west, by the Azov and Kerch bays in the north-west. Main river: Kuban. Part of the North Caucasian Economic Region.
- Industry: food, light machine-building, metalworking, cement, wood-working. Oil and gas extraction and processing.
- Major industrial centres: Krasnodar, Armavir, Novorossiisk, Kropotkin, Tikhoretsk, Eisk.
- Sea ports: Novorossiisk, Tuapse.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, tobacco, volatile oil bearing plants, hemp, horticulture, vine-growing, wine-making, tea-growing, stock-breeding.

KRASNOYARSK TERRITORY

- Centre: Krasnoyarsk. Head of the city administration: Valery Aleksandrovich POZDNYAKOV. Tel: 22 22 23.
- Territory: 2401.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 55 districts, 27 towns.
- Population: approx. 4 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Arkady Filimonovich VEPREV. Tel: 22 22 63; fax: 22 11 75. Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich NOVIKOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Yuri Nikolayevich MOSKOVICH. Tel: 22 46 12, 22 42 44.
- Geographical location: from the shores of the Arctic Ocean in the north to the mountains in Southern Siberia in the south. Main river: Yenisei. Most of the territory under the taiga. Part of the East-Siberian Economic Region.

- Industry: non-ferrous metallurgy, machine-building, metalworking, mining (coal, iron ore, non-ferrous and rare metal ores, gold, graphite) chemical, timber, woodworking, light and food industries.
- Major Industrial centres: Krasnoyarsk, Abakan, Chernogorsk, Minusinsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax, hemp, stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade.

PRIMORYE TERRITORY

- Centre: Vladivostok. Head of the city administration: Vladimir Vassilievich YEFREMOV. Tel: 2 42 29.
- Territory: 165.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 24 districts, 9 towns.
- Population: over 2 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Vladimir Sergeyevich. Tel: 2 38 00. Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Dmitry Nikolayevich GRIGOROVICH. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Valery Pavlovich BUTOV. Tel: 2 39 13.
- Geographical location: in the southern part of the Russian Far East. Washed by the Sea of Japan. Main river: Ussuri. Lake: Nanka. Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: fishing, non-ferrous metallurgy, mining (coal, polymetals), timber, woodworking, machine-building, metalworking, and chemical industry. Major industrial centres: Vladivostok, Ussuriisk, Nakhodka, Dalnegorsk, Lesozavodsk. Dalnorechensk, Partizansk.
- Sea Ports: Vladivostok, Nakhodka, Vostochny.
- Agriculture: cereals, soybeans, stock-breeding, fur-farming, reindeer- breeding, apiculture.

STAVROPOL TERRITORY

- Centre: Stavropol. Head of the city administration: Mikhail Vladimirovich KUZMIN. Tel: 5 57 50.
- Territory: 80.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 34 districts, 22 towns.
- Population: approx. 3 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Yevgeny Samyonovich KUZNETSOV. Tel: 5 22 52, 5 11 72. Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Yuri Andreyevich GONCHARENKO. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Aleksei Viktorovich KULAKOVSKY. Tel: 5 07 55, 4 82, 85.
- Geographical location: central part of the Sub-Caucasus area and northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus. Main rivers: Kuban, Kuma, Egorlyk. Part of the North Caucasus Economic Region.
- Industry: food, light, machine-building, chemical; natural gas and oil extraction, non-ferrous metals and coal mining.

- Major industrial centres: Stavropol. Nevinnomyssk, Cherkessk. Georgiyevsk, Budennovsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, sugar beet, horticulture, vine-growing, vegetable-growing, and stock-breeding.

KHABAROVSK TERRITORY

- Centre: Khabarovsk. Head of the city administration: Viktor Mikhailovich TEVELEVICH. Tel: 33 53 46.
- Territory: 824.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 21 districts, 9 towns.
- Population: approx 2 million.
- Head of the territory administration: Viktor Ivanovich ISHAYEV. Tel: 33 55 40; fax: 33 87 56.
- Chairman of the Territory Soviet: Igor Nikolayevich TSVETKOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Mikhailovich DESYATOV. Tel: 33 70 88, 33 36 85.
- Geographical location: Far East. In the east washed by the Sea of Okhotsk and Tartar Strait. Main river: Amur. More than half the territory under forests. Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, ferrous, metallurgy, timber, woodworking, pulp-and-paper, mining (coal, ores, non-ferrous metals), fishing, oil-refining.
- Major industrial centres: Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur, Sovetskaya Gavan, Nikolayevsk-on-the-Amur, Amursk.
- Sea ports: Vanino, Okhotsk; river port: Nikolayevsk-on-the Amur.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, poultry-farming, apiculture, hunting.

REGIONS WITHIN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

AMUR REGION

- Centre: Blagoveschensk. Head of the city administration: Yuri Gavrilovich LYASHKO. Tel: 41622) 2 49 85.
- Territory: 363.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 20 districts, 9 towns.
- Population: 1,058 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Albert Arkadievich KRIVCHENKO. Tel: (41622) 4 03 20.
- Chair Chairman of the Council of Ministers: Vladimir Biziaevich SAGANOV. Tel: (30122) 2 45 63; fax: 2 47 03.
- Geographical location: Trans-Baikal area and Eastern Sayany mountains. Main rivers: Selenga, Barguzin, Verkhnyaya Angara, Vitim. Lake: Baikal. 80% of the territory under the taiga.

- Industry: mining (tungsten, molybdenum, gold, coal), machine-building, metalworking, timber, woodworking; extraction of brown coal, graphite, apatites.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, fur-farming, fur trade.

ARKHANGELSK REGION

- Centre: Arkhangelsk. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Averianovich BRONNIKOV. Tel: 3 71 06.
- Territory: 587.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 19 districts, 13 towns.
- Population: 1,570 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Pavel Nikolayevich BALAKSHIN. Tel: 3 79 12; fax: 3 40 29. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Yuri Aleksandrovich GUSKOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Valery Samuilovich KRIMNUS.
- Geographical location: northern part of the East-European Plain. Washed by the White, Barents and Kara Seas. Main rivers: Northern Dvina, Onega, Mezen, Pechora. Lakes: almsot 2.5 thousand. Part of the Northern economic Region.
- Industry: timber, woodworking, pulp-and-paper, machine-building, and food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Arkhangelsk, Kotlas, Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk.
- Sea and river ports: Arkhangelsk, Onega, Mezen, Naryan-Mar.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, hunting, sea animal hunting.

ASTRAKHAN REGION

- Centre: Astrakhan. Head of the city administration: Vladimir Romanovich SCHERBAKOV. Tel: 22 55 88.
- Territory: 44.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 11 districts, 5 towns.
- Population: 998 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Anatoly Petrovich GUZHVIN. Tel: 2 85 19; fax: 2 95 14. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Valery Ivanovich VINOKUROV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Valery Mikhailovich ADROV. Tel: 2 56 44, 2 24, 55.
- Geographical location: Prikaspiiskaya Lowland, in the south washed by the Caspian Sea. Lake: Baskunchak. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: light, food, machine-building, metalworking, woodworking, pulp-and-paper, oil and gas extracting, and chemical industry.
- Agriculture: cereals, vegetable-growing, melon-growing, stock-breeding.

BELGOROD REGION

- Centre: Belgorod. Head of the city administration: Yuri Ivanovich SELIVERSTOV. Tel: 7 72 06.
- Territory: 27.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 18 districts, 9 towns.
- Population: 1,381 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Viktor Ivanovich BERESTOVOI. Tel: 2 42 47. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Mikhail Ivanovich BESKHMELNITSYN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Nikolai Ivanovich MELENTIEV. Tel: 2 46 89, 2 33 02.
- Geographical location: south-western part of the Central Russian Highland. Main rivers: Seversky Donets, Oskol. Part of the Central Black-Soil Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (ferrous ores), machine-building, metalworking, chemical, building materials, food industry. Major industrial centres: Belgorod, Shebekino, Alekseyevka, Valuiki.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, sunflower, volatile oil bearing plants, horticulture, stock-breeding.

BRYANSK REGION

- Centre: Bryansk. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Egorovich VOKHRUSHENKOV. Tel: 4 30 13.
- Territory: 34.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 24 districts, 25 towns.
- Population: 1,455 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladimir Aleksandrovich BARABANOV. Tel: 4 21 40, 6 33 18; fax: 6 48 55. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladimir Porfirievich SIDORENKO. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Nikolai Viktorovich IGNATKOV.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Desna. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, building materials, light, food, timber, woodworking.
- Major industrial centres: Bryansk, Klinty.
- Agriculture: cereals, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding.

VLADIMIR REGION

- Centre: Vladimir. Head of the city administration: Igor Vassilievich SHAMOV. Tel: 3 28 17.
- Territory: 29 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 16 districts, 21 towns.
- Population: 1,654 thousand (1989).

- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Vassilievich VLASOV. Tel: 2 52 52. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladimir Aleksandrovich KALYAGIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Nikolai Sergeevich YEGOROV. Tel: 2 53 62.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Oka, Klyazma. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, light, chemical, glass, artistic crafts (embroidery, jewelry, lacquered miniatures).
- Major industrial centres: Vladimir, Kovrov, Murom, Aleksandrov, Kolchugino, Vyazniki, Gus-Khrustalny.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, vegetable-growing, horticulture.

VOLGOGRAD REGION

- Centre: Volgograd. Head of the city administration: Yuri Viktorovich CHEKHOV. Tel: 33 50 10.
- Territory: 113.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 33 districts, 18 towns.
- Population: 2,593 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Ivan Petrovich SHABUNIN. Tel: 33 66 88; fax: 36 47 57. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Gavrilovich MOROZOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Yevgeny Stepanovich KUZNETSOV. Tel: 33 58 20, 33 68 41.
- Geographical location: south-eastern of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Volga, Don. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: oil-refining, chemical, petrochemical, machine-building, metalworking, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, building materials, woodworking, light and food industries; oil and gas extraction.
- Major industrial centres: Volgograd, Volzhshy, Kamyshin.
- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, mustard, melon-growing, horticulture, stock-breeding.

VOLOGDA REGION

- Centre: Vologda. Head of the city administration: Boris Valievich UPADYSHEV. Tel: 2 00 42, 2 01 21.
- Territory: 145.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 26 districts, 15 towns.
- Population: 1,354 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Nikolai Mikhailovich PODGORNYY. Tel: 2 07 64, 2 23 80. Chairman of the Regional Soviet Genady Timofeyevich KHRIPEL. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Gury Vassilievich SUDAKOV. Tel: 2 93 95, 5 13 26.

- Geographical location: north-western part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Sukhona, Yug, Sheksna, Mologa. Part of the Northern Economic Region.
- Industry: ferrous metallurgy, timber, woodworking, machine- building, glass, light and food industries, artistic crafts (lace, silver articles, weaving).
- Major industrial centres: Vologda, Cherepovets, Veliky Ustiug, Sokol.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, flax-growing, vegetable-growing, poultry-farming.

VORONEZH REGION

- Centre: Voronezh. Head of the city administration: Yuri Serafimovich CHERNOV. Tel: 55 04 27.
- Territory: 52.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 32 districts, 14 towns.
- Population: 2,470 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration (governor): Aleksandr Yakovlevich KOVALEV. Tel: 55 27 37, 55 45 34. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Ivan Mikhailovich SHAVANOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Viktor Alekseyevich DAVYDKIN. Tel: 55 34 24.
- Geographical location: Central Russian Highland. Main rivers: Hoper, Bitug. Part of the Central Black-Soil Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, chemical, building materials, food industry. Major industrial centres: Voronezh, Borisoglebsk, Georgiu-Dej, Rossosh, Kalach.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, sunflower, vegetable-growing, stock- breeding.

IVANOVO REGION

- Centre: Ivanovo. Head of the city administration: Sergei Vyacheslavovich KRUGLOV. Tel: 32 70 20.
- Territory: 23.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 17 towns.
- Population: 1,317 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Adolf Fyodorovich LAPTEV. Tel: 32 81 25. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladislav Nikolayevich TIKHOMIROV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Ilyich TOLMACHEV. Tel: 32 51 36, 32 70 05.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Volga. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: light, machine-building, chemical, food, woodworking, artistic crafts (Palekh and Holui lacquered miniatures).
- Major industrial centres: Ivanovo, Kineshma, Shuya, Vichuga, Furmanov, Teikovo, Rodniki.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax-growing, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding.

IRKUTSK REGION

- Centre: Irkutsk. Head of the city administration: Boris Aleksandrovich GOVORIN. TEL: 24 44 10, 24, 36, 50.
- Territory: 767.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 27 districts, 22 towns.
- Population: 2,831 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Abramovich NOZHIKO. Tel: 27 64 15, 24 27 74; fax: 24 44 74. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Viktor Vassilievich IGNATENKO. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Igor Innokentievich SHIROBOKOV. Tel: 24 69 79, 24 77 75.
- Geographical location: Eastern Siberia, south-eastern part of Central Siberian Plateau. Main rivers: Angara, Nizhnyaya Tungunskaya, Vitim, Kirenga. Lake: Baikal. 80% of the territory under forests. Part of the East-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (coal, iron ore, gold, mica, gypsum, talc, salt), machine-building, chemical petrochemical, timber, woodworking, pulp-and-paper, wood processing.
- Major industrial centres: Irkutsk, Bratsk, Ust-Ilimsk, Angarsk, Usolye-Sibirskoye.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, trapping, fishery.

KALININGRAD REGION

- Centre: Kaliningrad. Head of the city administration: Vitaly Valentinovich SHIPOV. Tel: 41 48 98.
- Territory: 15.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 13 districts, 22 towns.
- Population: 871 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Semyonovich MATOCHKIN. Tel: 46 42 31; fax: 46 35 54. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Yuri Nikolayevich SEMYONOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Tamara Aleksandrovna POLUEKTOVA. Tel: 46 46 32, 46 66 29.
- Geographical location: westernmost part of Russia. Washed by the Baltic Sea and its bays. Main rivers: Nieman, Pregolia. Part of the Baltic Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, electric engineering, pulp-and-paper, food, gas light industry; mining and processing of amber.
- Major industrial centres: Kaliningrad, Gusev, Sovetsk, Cherniakhovsk, Nieman.
- Sea ports: Kaliningrad, Baltiisk.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, vegetable-growing, fur-farming, fishery.

KALUGA REGION

- Centre: Kaluga. Head of the city administration: Vitaly Alekseyevich Chemikov. Tel: 7 26 46.
- Territory: 29.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 23 districts, 17 towns.
- Population: 1,067 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Aleksandr Vassilievich DERYAGIN. Tel: 7 23 57; fax: 7 23 57. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Valery Vassilievich SUDARENKOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Oleg Vitalievich SAVCHENKO. Tel: 7 46 37.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Oka. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, woodworking, light, building materials.
- Major industrial centres: Kaluga, Liudinovo, Kirov, Maloyaroslavets, Sukhinichi, Borovsk.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, vegetable-growing, cereals, flax-growing.

KAMCHATKA REGION

- Centre: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Head of the city administration: Aleksandr Kuzmich DUDNIKOV. Tel: 2 10 00.
- Territory: 472.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 11 districts, 3 towns.
- Population: 466 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladimir Afanasievich BIRIUKOV. Tel: 2 20 92, 2 20 96. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Pyotr Grigorievich PREMIAK. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Igor Andreyevich SIDORCHUK. Tel: 2 29 88.
- Geographical location: Russian Far East. Main rivers: Kamchatka, Avacha. Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: timber, woodworking, food, coal mining. Sea ports: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Ust-Kamchatsk.
- Agriculture: fishery, crab-catching, stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, poultry-farming, fur-farming, fur trade.

KEMEROVO REGION

- Centre: Kemerovo. Head of the city administration: Vladimir Vassilievich MIKHAILOV. Tel: 26 46 10.
- Territory: 95.5 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 16 districts, 19 towns.
- Population: 3175 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Mikhail Borisovich KISLIUK. TEL: 26 43 33; Fax: 26 34 09. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aman

TULEYEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation-Anatoly Vladimirovich MALYKHIN. Tel: 23 55 56, 26 41 42.

- Geographical location: Kuznetsk Hollow. Main river: Tom. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: coal, iron ore, polymetallic ores mining; ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical, machine-building, metalworking, food, light woodworking.
- Major industrial centres: Kemerovo, Novokuznetsk, Prokopievsk, Kiselevsk, Leninsk-Kuznetsky, Anzhero-Sudzhensk, Belovo.
- Agriculture: vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, apiculture, fur trade.

KIROV REGION

- Centre: Kirov. Head of the city administration: Anzhely Mikhailovich MIKHEYEV. Tel: 62 89 40.
- Territory: 120.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 39 districts, 19 towns.
- Population: 1,694 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vassily Alekseyevich DESYATNIKOV. Tel: 62 95 64. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Yakovlevich KOSTIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Veniamin Mikhailovich SUMAROKOV. Tel: 62 2494.
- Geographical location: eastern part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Kama, Vyatka. Part of the Volga-Vyatka Economic Region.
- Industry: Machine-building, metalworking, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical, timber, woodworking, light and food industries. Phosphorites mining.
- Major industrial centres: Kirov, Slobodskoi, Kotelnich, Omutninsk, Kirovo-Chepetsk, Vyatskie Polyany.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, flax-growing, vegetable-growing.

KOSTROMA REGION

- Centre: Kostroma. Head of the city administration: Yuri Alekseyevich KOROBOV. Tel: 7 32 25.
- Territory: 60.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 24 districts, 11 towns.
- Population: 809 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Valery Petrovich ARBUZOV. Tel: 7 34 72; fax: 7 34 04. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Rudolf Aleksandrovich KARTASHOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Yuri Alekseyevich LITVINOV. Tel: 7 24 82, 9 83 14.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Volga, Kostroma, Vetluga. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: light, woodworking, machine-building, food, artistic crafts.

- Major Industrial centres: Kostroma, Sharya, Nerehta, Galich, Bui, Manturovo, Krasnoye-na-Volge.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax-growing, vegetable growing, stock breeding.

KURGAN REGION

- Centre: Kurgan. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Fyodorovich YELCHANINOV. Tel: 2 24 52.
- Territory: 71 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 23 districts, 9 towns. . Population: 1,105 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Valentin Pavlovich GERASIMOV. Tel: 2 25 34; Fax: 2 74 64. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Oleg Alekseyevich BOGOMOLOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Veniamin Grigorievlch GRANKIN. Tel: 2 22 33, 2 1851.
- Geographical location: southern part of the West-Siberian Plain. Main rivers: Tobol, Iset. Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, light, food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Kurgan, Shadrinsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

KURSK REGION

- Centre: Kursk. Head of the city administration: Yuri Borisovich IVANOV. Tel: 2 63 63.
- Territory: 29.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 28 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 1,329 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vassily Ivanovich SHUTEYEV. Tel: 2 62 62; fax: 2 65 62. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladimir Nikolayevich LIKHACHEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Aleksandr Aleksandrovich KURENINOV. Tel: 2 30 02.
- Geographical location: Central Russian Highland. Main river: Seim. Part of the Central Black-Soil Economic Region.
- Industry: mining and processing of iron ore, machine-building, electrical engineering, chemical, food, light, building materials.
- Major industrial centres: Kursk, Zheleznogorsk.
- Agriculture: sugar bet, cereals, horticulture, stock-breeding.

LENINGRAD REGION

- Centre: St. Petersburg. Mayor: Anatoly Aleksandrovich SOBCHAK. Tel: 319 98 65, 271 10 85.
- Chairman of the City Soviet: Aleksandr Nikolayevich BELYAYEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Alekseyevich TSYPLAYAYEV.
- Territory: 85.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 17 districts, 26 towns.
- Population: 6603 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Aleksandr Semyonovich BELYAKOV. Tel: 274 35 63, 315 86 63; fax: 2745985. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vadim Anatolievich GUSTOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Tel: 319 98 65, 274 65 31.
- Geographical location: north-western part of the East-European Plain Washed by the Gulf of Finland of the Baltic Sea. Main rivers: Neva, Volkhov, Svir. Vuoksa. Lakes, Ladozhskoye, Onezhskoye. Part of the North-Western Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical petrochemical, woodworking, pulp-and-paper, light, food, building materials; boxites, shales and pit production.
- Major industrial centres: St. Petersburg, Sestroretsk, Vyborg, Kingisepp. Sea Ports: St. Petersburg, Vyborg.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, vegetable-growing.

LIPETSK REGION

- Centre: Lipetsk. Head of the city administration: Anatoly Ivanovich SAVENKOV. Tel: 77 66 17.
- Territory: 24.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 18 districts, 8 towns.
- Population: 1,231 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Gennady Vassilievich KUPTSOV. Tel: 24 25 65. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Oleg Petrovich KOROLEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Ravil Akhmedovich KASYMOV. Tel: 24 03 65, 72 24 26.
- Geographical location: Central Russian Highland. Main river: Don. Part of the Central Black-Soil Economic Region.
- Industry: ferrous and metallurgy, machine-building, metalworking, electrical engineering, building materials, food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Lipetsk, Yelets, Dankov, Gryazi.
- Agriculture: grain-growing, stock-breeding, sugar beet, makhorka (low-grade tobacco), vegetable-growing, horticulture.

MAGADAN REGION

- Centre: Magadan. Head of the city administration: Gennady Yefimovich DOROFEYEV. Tel: 2 50 47.
- Territory: 1,199.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 16 districts, 4 towns.
- Population: 543 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Victor Grigoryevich MIKHAILOV. Tel: 2 31 34; fax: 2 04 25. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vyacheslav Ivanovich KOBETS. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Sergie Sergeyevich PETRISCHEV. Tel: 2 55 32, 2 5520.
- Geographical location: north-eastern Russia. Washed by the Arctic Ocean and the Pacific. Main rivers: Kolyma and Anadyr. Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (gold, silver, tin, tungsten, mercury, coal), food industry, machine-building, metalworking.
- Major industrial centres: Magadan, Susuman, Pevek, Anadyr. Sea Ports: Nagayevo, Pevek, Provideniya, Anadyr.
- Agriculture: fishery, reindeer-breeding, stock-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade.

MOSCOW REGION

- Centre: Moscow. Mayor: Yuri Mikhailovich LUZHKOVA. Tel: 200 54 45. Moscow government Premier: Yuri Mikhailovich LUZHKOVA. Chairman of the City Soiviet (Mossovet): Nikolai Nikolayevich GONCHAR. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Fyodorovich KOMCHATOV.
- Territory: 47 thousand square kilometres.
- Towns: 71.
- Population: 6,686 thousand (City of Moscow excluded).
- Head of the Region Administration: Anatoly Stepanovich TYAZHLOV. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Andrei Aleksandrovich POLYAKOV. Tel: 206 65 49. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Gennady Vladimirovich VERETENNIKOV.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain between the Volga and the Oka rivers. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, radioelectronics, chemical, light, ferrous metallurgy, metalworking, building materials, woodworking, artistic crafts (ceramics, painted wooden boxes, trays).
- Major industrial centres: Khimki, Podolsk, Volokolamsk. Noginsk. Serpukhov, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Yegorievsk.
- Agriculture: vegetable-growing, cereals, stock-breeding, poultry-farming.

MURMANSK REGION

- Centre: Murmansk. Head of the city administration: I Oleg Petrovich NAIDENOV. Tel: 5 51 60.
- Territory: 144.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 5 districts, 11 towns.
- Population: 1,146 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yevgeny Borisovich KOMAROV. Tel: 5 65 40; fax: 5 46 25. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Yuri Alekseyevich YEVDOKIMOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Ivan Ivanovich MENSNIKOV. Tel: 5 51 31, 5 83 65.
- Geographical location: Kola Peninsula; washed by the Barents and White Seas. Main rivers: Ponoï, Varguza, Umba, Niva, Tulona. Lakes: Imandra, Umbozero, Lovozero. Part of the Northern Economic Region.
- Industry: mining and enriching of non-ferrous metal ores; mining-and-chemical industry, non-ferrous metallurgy, food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Murmansk, Monchegorsk, Kirovsk, Zapolyarny, Apatity, Kandalaksha. Sea Port: Murmansk.
- Agriculture: fishery, stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding.

NIZHNI NOVGOROD REGION

- Centre: Nizhni Novgorod (until 1990 Gorky). Head of the city administration: Dmitry Ivanovich BEDNYAKOV. Tel: 39 15 06.
- Territory: 74.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 47 districts, 25 towns.
- Population: 3,713 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Boris Yefimovich NEMTSOV. Tel: 39 10 12; fax: 39 06 29. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Yevgeny Vladimirovich KRESTYANINOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Boris Yefimovich NEMTSOV.
- Geographical location: the Middle Volga area. Main rivers: Volga, Oka, Sura, Vetluga. Part of the Volga-Vyatka Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, ferrous metallurgy, chemical, timber, light and food industries.
- Major industrial centres: Nizhni Novgorod, Dzerzhinsk, Arzamas.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, flax, onions, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, poultry farming.

NOVGOROD REGION

- Centre: Novgorod. Head of the city administration: Viktor Nikolayevich IVANOV. Tel: 7 25 40.
- Territory: 55.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 21 districts, 10 towns.

- Population: 753 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Mikhail Mikhailovich PRUSAK. Tel: 7 47 79, 9 22 87; fax: 7 22 87. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Nikolai Ivanovich GRAZHDANKIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Anatoly Mikhailovich KUZNETSOV. Tel: 7 40 46.
- Geographical location: north-western part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Msta, Lovat. Lake: Ilmen. Half the territory under forests. Part of the North-Western Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, radioelectronics, chemical woodwork-ing, glass, and porcelain, light and food industries.
- Major industrial centres: Novgorod, Staraya Russa.
- Agriculture: flax-growing, stock-breeding.

NOVOSIBIRSK REGION

- Centre: Novosibirsk. Head of the city administration: Ivan Ivanovich INDINOK. Tel: 22 75 53, 22 07 43.
- Territory: 178.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 30 districts, 14 towns.
- Population: 2,782 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vitaly Petrovich MUKHA. Tel: 23 08 62, 23 29 95; fax: 23 57 00. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Anatoly Pavlovich SYCHEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Anatoly Nikolayevich MANOKHIN. Tel: 23 08 13, 23 02 64.
- Geographical location: south-eastern part of the West-Siberian Plain between the rivers Ob and Irtysh. Main rivers: Ob, Om. Lakes: Chany, Sartlan, Ubinskoye, Urium. Nearly one-third of the territory taken by swamps. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: coal mining, oil and natural gas extraction, pit, marble, lime-stone and clay production; machine-building, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical, light, and food industries, building materials.
- Major industrial centres: Novosibirsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, vegetable-growing, flax-growing, sunflower, stock-breeding, poultry farming.

OMSK REGION

- Centre: Omsk. Head of the city administration: Yuri Yakovlevich SHOIKHET. Tel: 24 30 33.
- Territory: 139.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 31 districts, 6 towns.
- Population: 2,140 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Leonid Konstantinovich POLEZHAYEV. Tel: 24 14 15. 24 40 11; fax: 24 23 72. Chairman of the

Regional Soviet: Anatoly Pavlovich LEONTIEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Aleksandr Vassilievich MINZHURENKO. Tel: 23 18 20, 23 06 70.

- Geographical location: southern part of the West-Siberian Plain, the Middle Irtysh area. Main rivers: Irtysh, Ishim, Ot, Tara. A quarter of the territory under forests. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: building materials, oil-refining, chemical, light and food industries.
- Major industrial centre: Omsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax-growing, sunflower, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade.

ORENBURG REGION

- Centre: Orenburg. Head of the city administration (acting): Georgi Petrovich SOLDATOV. Tel: 7 50 55.
- Territory: 124 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 35 districts, 12 towns.
- Population: 2,174 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladimir Vassilievich YELAGIN. Tel: 7 69 31, 7 68 20, 7 38 02. Chairman of the Regional Soviet Valery Nikolayevich GRIGORYEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladislav Aleksandrovich SHAPOVALENKO. Tel: 7 30 18, 7 34 46.
- Geographical location: Foothills of the Southern Urals. Main river: Ural. Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, machine-building, metalworking, gas, chemical, light and food industries; oil extraction, mining of iron, copper and nickel ores, asbestos, salt. Major industrial centres: Orenburg, Orsk, Novotroitsk, Mednogorsk, Buzuluk, Buguruslan, Gai.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

ORYOL REGION

- Centre: Oryol. Head of the city administration: Aleksandr Grigorievich KISLYAKOV. Tel: 6 33 12.
- Territory: 24.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 19 districts, 7 towns.
- Population: 891 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration (acting): Nikolai Pavlovich YUDIN. Tel: 4 63 13. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Nikolai Andreyevich VOLODIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Valery Iosifovich VOLODIN. Tel: 4 26 24, 6 74 51.

- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain on the Central Russian Highland. Main river: Oka. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metallurgy, chemical, light and good industries.
- Major industrial centres: Oryol, Livny, Mtsensk.
- Agriculture: cereals, hemp, sugar beet, stock-breeding, poultry farming.

PENZA REGION

- Centre: Penza. Head of the city administration: Feodosy Fyodorovich DUBINCHUK. Tel: 63 14 67.
- Territory: 43.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 28 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 1,502 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Aleksandr Andreyevich KONDRATYEV. Tel: 66 11 94.
- Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Rodionovich. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Georgy Ivanovich DIDICHENKO. Tel: 63 47 35, 69 54 10.
- Geographical location: Volga Highland. Main river: Sura. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, light, food, woodworking, paper, building materials.
- Major industrial centres: Penza, Kuznetsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar root, sunflower, hemp. stock-breeding.

PERM REGION

- Centre: Perm.
- Head of the city administration: Vladimir Yemelyanovich Fil. Tel: 32 40 84.
- Territory: 160.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 37 districts, 25 towns.
- Population: 3,100 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Administration of the Perm Region and Western Urals: Boris Yurievich KUZNETSOV. Tel: 34 07 90; fax: 32 77 29. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Mikhail Ivanovich BYSTRYANTSEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Borisovich KALYAGIN. Tel: 34 33 44, 45 25 45.
- Geographical location: western slopes of the Central and Northern Urals and adjacent eastern part of the East-European Lowland. Main rivers: Kama. Chusovaya, Kosva, Vishera. Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: coal mining, oil and gas extraction, potassium, and common salt production, machine-building, electrical engineering, chem-

ical, petrochemical, oil-refining, pulp-and-paper, woodworking, timber, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, printing and publishing.

- Major industrial centres: Perm, Berezniki, Solikamsk, Chusovoi, Krasnokamsk, Chaikovsky.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, vegetable-growing.

PSKOV REGION

- Centre: Pskov. Head of the city administration: Aleksandr Vassilievich PROKOFIEV. Tel: 2 26 67.
- Territory: 55.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 24 districts, 14 towns.
- Population: 847 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladislav Nikolayevich TUMANOV. Tel: 2 22 03, 2 48 18. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vitaly Nikolayevich PUSHKAREV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Dmitry Konstantinovich KHARITONENKOV. Tel: 2 26 46, 2 06 21.
- Geographical location: East-European Plain. Main river: Velikaya. Lakes: Pskovskoye, Chudskoye. Part of the North-Western Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, light and food industries, woodworking.
- Major industrial centres: Pskov, Velikiye Luki.
- Agriculture: cereals, flax-growing, vegetable-growing, stock-breeding.

ROSTOV REGION

- Centre: Rostov-on-Don. Head of the city administration: Yuri Borisovich POGREBSCHIKOV. TEL: 66 62 75.
- Territory: 100.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 41 districts, 22 towns.
- Population: 4,304 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladimir Fyodorovich CHUB. Tel: 66 78 10, 66 96 62; fax: 65 32 26. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Vassilievich POPOV. Representative of the Government: Viktor Nikolayevich ANPILOGOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Nikolayevich ZUBKOV. Tel: 24 34 38, 66 45 34.
- Geographical location: southern part of the East-European Plain and Sub-Caucasus. Washed by the Taganrog bay of the Sea of Azov. Main rivers: Don, Severy Donets. Part of the North Caucasian Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, food, light, chemical, ferrous, and non-ferrous metallurgy; coal mining.
- Major industrial centres: Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog, Novocherkassk, Shakhty. River ports: Rostov-on-Don, Ust-Donetsky.

- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, mustard, vegetable-, melon- and vine- growing, horticulture.

RYAZAN REGION

- Centre: Ryazan. Head of the city administration: Valery Vassilievich RIUMIN. Tel: 77 27 85.
- Territory: 39.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 25 districts, 12 towns.
- Population: 1,346 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Lev Polievktovich BASHMAKOV. Tel: 77 40 32, 77 54 50. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Viktor Vladimirovich PRIKHODKO. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Nikolai Vassilievich MOLOTKOV. Tel: 77 21 47, 77 51 19.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Oka with tributaries. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, oil refining, chemical, building materials, light, food industries; coal mining, pit production.
- Major Industrial centres: Ryazan, Skopin, Kasimov, Sasovo.
- Agriculture: cereals, vegetable-growing, horticulture, stock-breeding.

SAMARA REGION (until 1991, Kuibyshev Region)

- Centre: Samara (until 1991, Kuibyshev). Head of the city administration: Oleg Nikolayevich SYSUIEV. Tel: 32 20 68, 32 20 98.
- Territory: 53.6 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 25 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 3,266 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Konstantin Alekseyevich TITOV. Tel: 32 22 68. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Oleg Nikiforovich ANISCHIK. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Anton Yurievich FYODOROV. Tel: 32 22 06.
- Geographical location: south-eastern part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Volga. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, metalworking, oil, petrochemical, power engineering, building materials.
- Major industrial centres: Samara, Togliatti, Syzran, Novokuibyshevsk.
- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, stock-breeding.

SARATOV REGION

- Centre: Saratov. Head of the city administration: Tel: 24 24 57.
- Territory: 100.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 38 districts, 17 towns.

- Population: 2,690 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Vassilievich BELYKH. Tel: 24 50 86, 24 14 16; fax: 24 20 89. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Nikolai Sidorovich MAKAREVICH. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Georgievich GOLOVACHEV. Tel: 42 10 25, 24 49 91.
- Geographical location: south-eastern part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Volga. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, oil-refining, chemical building materials, woodworking, light and food industries; oil and gas extraction.
- Major industrial centres: Saratov, Engels, Balakovo.
- Agriculture: cereals, sunflower, sugar beet, stock-breeding.

SAKHALIN REGION

- Centre: Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Head of the city administration: Igor Pavlovich FARHUTDINOV. Tel: 2 25 11.
- Territory: 87.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Territorial division: 17 districts, 19 towns.
- Population: 709 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Valentin Petrovich FEDOROV (Governor). Tel: 3 14 02, 3 60 81. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Anatoly Petrovich AKSENOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vitaly Valentinovich GULII. Tel: 3 50 70.
- Geographical location: Sakhalin island and the Kuril islands. Part of the Far Eastern Economic Region.
- Industry: fishing and fish products; oil and gas extraction, coal mining; timber, woodworking, pulp-and-paper industries.
- Major industrial centres: Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Holmsk, Oha, Nevelsk, Dolinsk, Korsakov, Ulegorsk, Poronalsk.
- Sea ports: Holms, Korsakov, Aleksandrovsk-Sakhalinsky.
- Agriculture: vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming.

SVERDLOVSK REGION

- Centre: Yekaterinburg (until 1991, Sverdlovsk). Head of the city administration: Arkady Mikhailovich CHERNETSKY. Tel: 58 92 18, 51 34 26.
- Territory: 194.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 30 districts, 44 towns.
- Population: 4,721 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Eduard Ergartovich ROSSEL. Tel: 51 13 65, 58 95 87; fax: 58 91 03. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Anatoly Viktorovich GREBENKIN. Representative of the President of

the Russian Federation: Vitaly Vladimirovich MASHKOV. Tel: 51 21 61, 58 95 62.

- Geographical location: eastern and part of western slopes of the Central and Northern Urals. Main rivers: of the Ob and the Kama basins. Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, machine-building, chemical, timber, woodworking, paper, light, food: iron and copper ore, boxites, asbestos and coal mining.
- Major Industrial centres: Yekaterinburg, Nizhni Taghil, Pervouralsk, Krasnouralsk, Serov, Alapayevsk, Kamensk-Uralski.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding.

SMOLENSK REGION

- Centre: Smolensk. Head of the city administration: Mikhail Gavrilovich ZYSMANOV. Tel: 3 11 81.
- Territory: 49.8 thousand square kilometres.
- Territorial division: 25 districts, 14 towns.
- Population: 1,158 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Valery Petrovich FATEYEV. Tel: 3 66 11, 3 63 08. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Mikhail Igorevich SEMYONOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Tel: 3 65 23, 3 65, 18.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Dniepr. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, chemical, light and food industries; coal mining, pit production.
- Major industrial centres: Smolensk, Roslavl, Safonovo, Vyazma, Yartsevo, Gagarin, Verkhnedneprovsky.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, sunflower, stock-breeding.

TAMBOV REGION

- Centre: Tambov. Head of the city administration (acting): Valery Nikolayevich KOVAL. Tel: 2 84 40.
- Territory: 34.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 23 districts, 8 towns.
- Population: 1,320 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration (acting): Vladimir Dmitrievich BABENKO. Tel: 22 25 28, 22 10 61. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Ivanovich RYABOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Valentin Vladimirovich DAVITULIANI. Tel: 22 33 01.
- Geographical location: central part of the Oka-Son Plain. Part of the Central Black-Soil Economic Region.

- Industry: machine-building, chemical, light and food industries. Major industrial centres: Tambov, Michurinsk, Morshansk, Kotovsk, Rasskazovo.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, sunflower, stock-breeding, vegetable-growing, horticulture.

TVER REGION (until 1990, Kalinin Region)

- Centre: Tver (until 1990 Kalinin). Head of the city administration: Aleksandr Petrovich BELOUSOV. Tel: 3 01 31.
- Territory: 84.1 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 36 districts, 23 towns.
- Population: 1,670 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vladimir Antonovich SUSLOV. Tel: 3 10 50. chairman of the Regional Soviet: Mikhail Aleksandrovich SHETSOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Viktor Ivanovich BELOV. Tel: 3 50 25, 3 02 61.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main rivers: Volga, Mologa, Tvertsa. Lakes: Seliger; all in all more than 500 lakes. One-third of the territory under forests. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, light, chemical, woodworking, printing and publishing, glass, porcelain and faience industries.
- Major industrial centres: Tver, Vyshni Volochek, Rzhev, Torzhok, Kimry.
- Agriculture: flax-growing, stock-breeding, vegetable-growing.

TOMSK REGION

- Centre: Tomsk. Head of the city administration: Yuri PILYAVIN. Tel: 23 32 32.
- Territory: 316.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 16 districts, 5 towns.
- Population: 1,001 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Viktor Melhiorovich KRESS. Tel: 22 25 02; fax: 22 48 84. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Grigory Andreyevich SHAMIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Stephan Stepanovich SULAKSHIN. Tel: 22 20 30.
- Geographical location: south-eastern part of the West-Siberian Plain. Main rivers: Ob, Tom, Chulym, Vasiugan. More than half the territory under forests. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: oil extraction, machine-building, metalworking, electrical engineering, timber, woodworking, chemical, food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Tomsk, Kolpashevo, Asino, Strezhevoi.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, vegetable-growing, flax-growing, fishery, fur trade, fur-farming.

TULA REGION

- Centre: Tula. Head of the city administration: Nikolai Egorovich TYAGLIVY. Tel: 27 80 88.
- Territory: 25.7 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 23 districts, 21 towns.
- Population: 1,868 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Nikolai Vassilievich SEVRIUGIN. Tel: 27 84 36.
- Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Yuri Ivanovich LITVINTSEV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Viktor Georgievich KUZNETSOV. Tel: 31 41 62, 20 57 51.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain in the North of the Central Russian Highland. Main rivers: Oka, Upa, Osetr. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, chemical, ferrous metallurgy, building materials, light and food industries; brown coal mining.
- Major industrial centres: Tula, Novomoskovsk, Schekino, Aleksin, Uzlovaya, Yefremov.
- Agriculture: cereals, sugar beet, stock-breeding.

TYUMEN REGION

- Centre: Tyumen. Head of the city administration: Gennady Ivanovich RAIKOV. Tel: 24 67 34.
- Territory: 1,435.2 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 37 districts, 20 towns.
- Population: 2,083 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Konstantinovich SHAFRANIK. Tel: 26 51 80. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladimir Ilyich ULYANOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Stanislav Vitalievich SELEZNEV. Tel: 26 29 84, 29 33 82.
- Geographical location: West-Siberian Plain. Main rivers: Ob, Taz, Pur, Nadym. Part of the West-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: oil and gas extraction and refining; machine-building, metalworking, chemical, timber, woodworking, food industry.
- Major industrial centres: Tyumen, Tobolsk, Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Nadym.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, flax-growing, vegetable-growing, reindeer-breeding, fur-farming, fur trade.

ULYANOVSK REGION

- Centre: Ulyanovsk. Head of the city administration: 'Sergei Nikolayevich ERMAKOV. Tel: 31 30 80.
- Territory: 37.3 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 20 districts, 6 towns.
- Population: 1,400 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Yuri Frolovich GORYACHEV. Tel: 31 25 06, 31 32 52. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Vladimir Loginovich RAZUMOV.
- Geographical location: the Volga area. Part of the Volga Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, light, building materials, woodworking.
- Major industrial centres: Ulyanovsk, Melekess.
- Agriculture: cereals, stock-breeding, sunflower, sugar beet.

CHELYABINSK REGION

- Centre: Chelyabinsk. Head of the city administration: Vyacheslav Mikhailovich TARASOV. Tel: 33 38 05.
- Territory: 87.9 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 24 districts, 27 towns.
- Population: 3,626 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Vadim Pavlovich SOLOVIEV. Tel: 33 92 41; fax: 33 12 83. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Pyotr Ivanovich SUMIN. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Valentinovich SELEZNEV. Tel: 33 30 67, 33 43 03.
- Geographical location: Southern Urals and Trans-Urals. Main rivers: Ural, Miass. Lakes: Evildy, Trugoyak. Part of the Urals Economic Region.
- Industry: ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, mining (ferrous and non-ferrous metal ores, magnesite, coal, mineral building materials).
- Major industrial centres: Cheliabinsk, Magnitogorsk, Miass, Zlatoust, Kopeisk, Korkino, Troitsk.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, cereals, vegetable-growing, horticulture.

CHITA REGION

- Centre: Chita. Head of the city administration: Ravil Faritovich GENIATULIN. Tel: 3 21 01.
- Territory: 431.5 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 31 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 1,378 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Boris Petrovich IVANOV. Tel: 3 34 93, 3 21 84; fax: 3 02 22. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr

Fadeyevich EPOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Sergei Nikolayevich SAMOILOV. Tel: 33492,32901.

- Geographical location: Trans-Baikal area. Main rivers: of Baikal, the Lena and the Amur basins. More than half the territory under forests. Part of the East-Siberian Economic Region.
- Industry: mining (gold, molybdenum, tin, lead-and-zinc ores, coal), ferrous metallurgy, machine-building, timber, woodworking.
- Major industrial centres: Chita, Nerchinsk, Darasun, Olovyannaya, Tarbagatai.
- Agriculture: stock-breeding, reindeer-breeding, fur trade.

YAROSLAVL REGION

- Centre: Yaroslavl. Head of the city administration: Viktor Vladimirovich VOLONCHUNAS. Tel: 22 08 41.
- Territory: 36.4 thousand square kilometres.
- Administrative division: 17 districts, 10 towns.
- Population: 1,471 thousand (1989).
- Head of the Region Administration: Anatoly Ivanovich LISITSYN. Tel: 22 23 28; fax: 22 34 25. Chairman of the Regional Soviet: Aleksandr Nikolayevich VESELOV. Representative of the President of the Russian Federation: Vladimir Gennadievich VARUKHIN. Tel: 22 09 95, 22 97 24.
- Geographical location: central part of the East-European Plain. Main river: Volga. Lakes: Nero, Plescheyevo. Part of the Central Economic Region.
- Industry: machine-building, chemical, oil-refining, light, food, wood-working; pit production.
- Major industrial centres: Yaroslavl, Rybinsk, Tutayev, Uglich, Pereslavl-Zalessky, Rostov, Gavrilov-Yam.
- Agriculture: vegetable-growing, stock-breeding, flax-growing, cereals.

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