



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON RUSSIA AND CENTRAL EURASIA

Benevolent Despotism: Russia's Role in the Former Soviet Union

The recent political developments in Russia and the deterioration of respect for human rights there form the basis of this issue of *Refugee*. Also examined are the interethnic conflicts in Moldova, Latvia, and the Ukraine. In these three regions, the treatment of ethnic minorities has ranged from local discrimination to government-sanctioned persecution. In all three cases there are internal reasons for the ethnic conflict, however Russia continues to apply additional, external pressures by interfering in the economic and political activities of these newly formed countries.

The consolidation of power in the hands of Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, demonstrated by his recent crackdown on the Russian Parliament on October 3–4, could potentially destabilize Russia and the entire territory of the former Soviet Union, forcing even more refugees to escape the current disintegration of civil society. The dissolution of Parliament on September 21, 1993 and the subsequent confrontation have unleashed the processes of political repression and censorship, and have increased xeno-

phobia among the general population. Yeltsin's victory over the opposition, cheered by Western governments and unopposed by most people inside the country, has bolstered his popular support and has allowed him to formally assume virtually total control over the former Soviet Union.

The articles in this issue repeatedly demonstrate that the increasingly autocratic rule of Yeltsin is allowing numerous violations of human rights to occur and is creating a political environment conducive to state persecution of minorities. It seems obvious that Yeltsin aspires to extend his sphere of dominance not only to rebellious regions of the Russian Federation, but to all other former Republics of the USSR. One of his objectives is to

re-establish the economic ties that existed in the former Soviet Union but under even tighter central control than in the past. Another role in which Yeltsin's government sees itself is that of gendarme of the CIS. Russia's attitude towards the rest of CIS members is clearly expressed by Yevgeny Ambartsumov, former chairman of the Supreme Soviet's Joint Committee on International Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations:

As the internationally recognized legal successor to the USSR, the Russian Federation should base its foreign policy on a doctrine declaring the entire geopolitical space of the former Soviet Union to be the sphere of its vital interests... and should strive to achieve understand-

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YORK LANES PRESS
Centre for Refugee Studies
Suite 351, York Lanes
York University
4700 Keele Street, North York
Ontario, Canada M3J 1K7
Phone: (416) 736-8843 • Fax: (416) 736-8837
Electronic Mail via Internet Address:
REFUG@YML.YORKU.CA

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Editor

C. MICHAEL LANFIER

Issue Guest Editors

TANYA BASOK

ALEXANDER BENIFAND

Assistant Editors

JACQUELINE CASTEL

STEPHANIE E. JOHNSON

IAN SMITH

Circulation Assistant

DOMINIK ZAKRZEWSKI

Managing Editor

ARUL S. ANULIAN

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ing and recognition from the world community of its special interests in this space (Eggert 1992).

Russia insists on playing the role of peacekeeper throughout the former Soviet Union. In an interview with *Izvestia*, Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev stated that Russia was particularly interested in using peacekeeping forces in the "near abroad," emphasizing the danger of "losing geopolitical positions that took centuries to conquer" (Crow 1993, October 8). Experts from the human rights group, Helsinki Watch, have raised concerns about Russia's role as a peacekeeper in the former USSR. They have cited abuses by the peacekeepers in Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan, claiming that Russian authorities have been providing military and financial support to breakaway groups in parts of the former Soviet Union. Helsinki Watch added that "Russia considerably overstepped the limits of its goodwill mission in Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, North Ossetia and Tajikistan" (Crow 1993, November 2). The Russian military has also been accused of using chemical weapons against Georgians in Abkhazia (UNHCR 1993).

Russia has assumed a partisan position in many regions. It has provided weapons, soldiers and "volunteers" to the self-proclaimed Transdniestrian Republic (see the article on Moldova in this issue), to Abkhaz separatists in Georgia and to Armenia in support of its struggle against Azerbaijan over the control of Nagorni Kharabakh. Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Anatolii Zlenko, has adamantly opposed grant-

ing special status for Russian peacekeeping operations as proposed by Andrey Kozyrev at the 48th UN General Assembly Session (Markus 1993). Similar opposition has been raised by other government officials from the neighbouring countries of the "near abroad."

Increased control over the former Soviet Union is not sufficient for Russia. Yeltsin wrote to NATO leaders urging them not to extend membership to Eastern European countries (Whitney 1993). Instead, he suggested that Russia and NATO together should guarantee the security of Eastern Europe. This suggestion could have been prompted by the military, who, in exchange for its support in helping Yeltsin crush the resistance by Parliament members, wishes to see its former status and prestige restored both at home and abroad (Gray 1993).

The imperialist policy being pursued by Russia has the potential to intensify existing interethnic and territorial conflicts in the former Soviet Union and neighbouring countries. These countries have already experienced the trauma of displacement of people caught in the crossfire. The further concentration of power in Moscow will, in all likelihood, complicate interethnic relations in these and other regions of the former USSR, forcibly uprooting even more people in the coming months and years. ■

Tanya Basok and Alexander Benifand

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Editor's Note

Guest editors of this special issue of *Refuge*—devoted to the changing social and political situation in Russia and its various former Soviet Republics—bring very timely information to periodical literature. Tanya Basok and Alexander Benifand have included numerous citations in the references which may appear unfamiliar. These citations derive from electronic mail "bulletin boards" or "conferences," to which researchers at the Centre for Refugee Studies subscribe through networks which link research centres throughout most of the Northern (and regrettably too little of the Southern) Hemisphere.

In addition to prompt communication from a variety of contributors, electronic bulletin-board information is widely available—to any subscribing person or organization. While information is not subject to editorial scrutiny before being posted, it is clearly identified by source. Moreover, the information can be corroborated or challenged by other contributors, so that the "bulletin board" does indeed become a "conference," which contains its own "peer review." While our researchers draw heavily on these sources for the material in this issue, they have included multiple references as a type of corroboration of any single event report.

We have been pleasantly surprised that documentation of major political events, in this case Russia and Central Eurasia, has been comprehensive and unusually precise during the several months we have drawn upon this source. This issue represents the first publication in which their role is evident. We welcome your comments on use of these "bulletin board" sources and the kinds of reportage which are derived.

On behalf of the staff at *Refuge* and CRS, we offer our best wishes of the Holiday Season.

Michael Lanphier

Recent Political Developments in Russia and Four Types of Potential Refugees

Tanya Basok and Alexander Benifand

Once again, an attempt to establish democracy in Russia has been short-lived. Throughout Russia's entire history, democratic forms of government have been sporadic. Most of the time, the country has been ruled either individually or collectively by autocrats; monarchy survived in Russia long after it was abolished in European countries. The rule of the czar was truly dictatorial. Even when the ruling czar allowed for the formation of the State Duma (parliament), its activities were kept under his thumb. When the State Duma attempted to become independent of the czar, it was dissolved and new elections were called for. All three Dumas which existed in Russia before the 1917 Revolution had this fate. In the Soviet era, democracy was also illusory. The Soviets of Peoples' Deputies at all levels took orders primarily from their national party bosses, and next from the regional party bosses. Even the electoral candidates to the Soviets had to be approved by the Party, and only the most loyal Party members were selected.

The 1990 parliamentary election was the first democratic election in Russia. During the September-October 1993 confrontation between Yeltsin and Parliament, the media, both in Russia and in the West, were quick to point out that Parliament was controlled by former Communists. This fact was meant to explain the clash between Parliament and the President. What was rarely mentioned was that both Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov and Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi stood by Yeltsin during the failed August 1991 coup—both of them were Yeltsin appointees. The Constitutional Court, headed by Valery Zorkin, was also founded by Yeltsin as an organ to approve political and economic reforms. Most members

of the so-called "hard-liner" Parliament were actually staunch supporters of the market and political reforms being pursued by Yeltsin. Among the deputies still in Parliament on October 4, 1993 was 33-year-old Oleg Rummyantsev, whose efforts to write a truly democratic constitution for Russia led *The Washington Post* in 1990 to call him "the James Madison of Russia." The U.S. National Endowment for Democracy awarded his committee with a grant and honoured him as a feature speaker at its 1991 biannual conference (Cohen 1993).

It was this same Parliament which adopted a constitutional amendment enabling Yeltsin to become Russia's president in 1991, ratified his abolition of the Soviet Union in December of that year, and empowered him, for 12 months, to reform the economy by decree. The media also ignored the composition of Yeltsin's cabinet and his body of advisors. Among Yeltsin's key advisors, there are a number of prominent Communist administrators and intellectuals. Yegor Gaidar, the architect of "shock therapy" in Russia, was the economics editor of the Communist Party publication, *Pravda*, until 1990. Yeltsin's main political adviser, Gennady Burbulis, was a lecturer of scientific communism in Yeltsin's hometown of Sverdlovsk.

Former Communist *nomenklatura* members have recently come to power, not only in Moscow, but throughout the region. Unlike other former Communist block countries (such as Poland and Czechoslovakia), in which dissidents came to occupy government offices, in Russia, those who used to be in power in the past have taken off their "Communist" hats and have become "Democrats." In most cases they try hard to deny their Communist past. They have embraced

the policy of privatization (especially when it gives them an opportunity to transfer state property into their own pockets) and they have defended freedom of religion and the press. However, their motto remains "La loi, c'est moi." According to an article which was to appear in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* the day after the resistance by Parliament supporters was crushed (but was censored by the authorities), power in Russia remains in the hands of the *nomenklatura* which is trying to restrict popular political participation (Mironov 1993).

Parliament supported the transition to a market economy, however it wanted this transition to proceed more slowly than advocated by Yeltsin's advisors. In the last two years, numerous disagreements developed between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet. These disagreements were not over the major political and economic course that the country had adopted, but over specific measures. With all its shortcomings, Parliament was a legitimate institution, able to keep Yeltsin and his associates in check. Parliament prevented Yeltsin from arbitrary rule; it challenged his decrees and political resolutions; it prevented him from unilateral decisions on appointments and dismissals; it regulated the distribution of power and privilege; and it oversaw changes in social policies and other important matters. This is not to say that Parliament was a true defender of the people's interests. Good intentions of some deputies notwithstanding, Parliament was also interested in securing its own power and privilege. Whereas in 1991, Yeltsin enjoyed an absolute majority in Parliament, by the spring of 1993, as little as 20 percent of Parliament supported his measures (Kagarlitsky 1993, October 15).

It was this growing opposition to Yeltsin's absolute rule that he wanted to eliminate once and for all. Yeltsin tried to dissolve Parliament in December 1992 and again in March 1993—however, both attempts failed. In September Yeltsin became bolder; first he evicted Vice-President Rutskoi

from the Kremlin; and then he disbanded Parliament on September 21; finally, Yeltsin quelled the resistance of Parliament members and their supporters who had occupied the White House, with a forceful attack using artillery on October 4, 1993.

As Boris Kagarlitsky, a former Moscow City Council deputy and leader of the Labour Party suggests, Parliament was the author of its own demise; it had given Yeltsin emergency powers; it had aided in the creation of the heads of local administrations with a system of presidential appointments; it had undermined the rights of the local Soviets; it had created the post of Executive President of Russia; it had brought into the government Yegor Gaidar and approved his extremist economic policies; and it had concentrated unlimited power in the President's hands (Kagarlitsky 1993, October 15).

When Yeltsin dissolved Parliament and all regional Soviets, it was a declaration that rule by law no longer existed in Russia. By crushing the resistance of Parliament members and their supporters, Yeltsin confirmed that his ruling principle is "might is right." He resorted to "gun diplomacy" with the blessing of the West, and became the absolute ruler of Russia. As John Gray stated, "He [Yeltsin] has assumed the powers of a czar and begun to act like a czar" (Gray 1993, October 20). If the present draft constitution is approved, Yeltsin will have vast powers over security policy and personnel. The President would become the "supreme commander in chief" of the armed forces and would be able to appoint and remove the "high command" of the military, without consulting the Federal Assembly. He will be in a position to form and head the Security Council, and would have the authority to approve Russia's military doctrine (Lepingwell 1993).

A spokesman for the nationalist Russian People's Union has observed that the draft was "a constitution of an almost unrestricted monarchy." Sergei Rogov, of the centrist Civic Union criticized the draft for making the procedure of presidential impeachment too

complicated (Tolz 1993, November 12).

Political Repression

Political repression began immediately after Yeltsin's victory when thousands of people were detained. The Moscow City Council and the regional councils were disbanded and some deputies were arrested.¹ The detainees were systematically beaten. Press censorship was introduced, and a state of emergency was imposed on Moscow. All the opposition daily newspapers were seized or their premises occupied. Television programs which did not reflect the views of the government were cancelled. Most of the opposition parties were banned, and the rights of the trade unions were restricted. The Constitutional Court was suspended by order of the President. In place of the legally elected General Prosecutor of Russia, Stepankov, Yeltsin appointed his supporter Aleksei Kazannik, in violation of all the established procedures.

After a few days, the repression was softened to a degree. Some of the people who had been arrested were released, and prior censorship was replaced by the threat of reprisals against dissident publications (Kagarlitsky 1993, October 15). Yeltsin dissolved most of the existing local councils and removed government ministers whose loyalty was in doubt.

Amnesty International has expressed concern about reports that a number of known or suspected opponents of President Boris Yeltsin have been ill-treated while in detention, including two Moscow City Council deputies, Boris Kagarlitsky and Vladimir Kondratov, and one of the leaders of the Russian Party of Labour, Alexander Segal.² Over one thousand people were initially detained after fighting broke out in Moscow on October 4-5, 1993, but the majority are now believed to have been released. However, dozens have reported that they were beaten while in detention. Amnesty International is also concerned about allegations that a number of those still detained have not yet been

charged, and that at least one has been denied access to his lawyer (Naylor 1993). It has been reported that Sergei Baburin, a nationalist member of Parliament, was detained and tortured in the Moscow police headquarters, and subjected to a mock execution (Larsen 1993). Vladimir Klebanov, a Brezhnev-era dissident and a member of the Constitutional Committee of the dissolved Parliament, was detained by the police on October 16, 1993, because he did not have a domicile registration stamp in his passport (*Glasnet Info* 1993).

Censorship of the Press

Media censorship and other forms of state repression began immediately after the dissolution of Parliament. On October 20, 1993, a group of Russian journalists accused the security forces of arbitrarily beating and arresting correspondents during the state of emergency in Moscow. Reporters stated that during the tragic events of October 3 and 4, 1993 in Moscow, seven reporters were killed and 76 were wounded by the militia (Tolz 1993, October 22, a).

Parliament's paper, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, was shut down soon after Yeltsin's September 21 suspension of Parliament; only to reopen a few days later with a new editor and a pro-government line. Along with a dozen other publications, *Pravda*, which is loosely associated with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, a pro-Soviet nationalist paper, were suppressed after the armed clashes of October 3 and 4. *Pravda* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* were required by the Press and Information Ministry to be re-registered. It was made clear that re-registration would be granted only if the newspapers changed their names, replaced their editors and softened their editorial lines. This was in direct violation of the recently adopted Press Law, which makes it clear that news publications can be shut down or required to re-register only for reasons strictly defined under a court order (Clarke 1993, October 29). *Pravda* reappeared on November 2, 1993. Although its

journalists refused to change the name of the paper, they did replace the chief editor, Gennadii Seleznev, with Viktor Linnik, a former Washington correspondent for *Pravda* (Teague and Slater 1993).

Additional measures have also been taken to stifle criticism of the regime. Staff of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, a sharp and persistent critic of the regime since the September 21 dissolution of Parliament, have received numerous threats. The editor of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Vitaly Tretyakov, said he was told by Press Ministry officials that he may be removed as editor and the newspaper re-registered as a government organ because of its excessively independent stance (Clarke 1993, October 29). On October 29, an Ostankino TV show, "Press-Express," alleged that the authorities secretly ordered the Russian Ministry of Communications not to sell subscriptions to this newspaper (Wishnevsky 1993, November 2). Similarly, Independent Television (NTV), the first private television company in Russia, which started broadcasting October 10, 1993, has been under attack by the Federal Information Centre (*ibid.*).

Parliamentary Elections

Having dissolved Parliament, Yeltsin called for elections on December 12, 1993 for the Government *Duma*, and Presidential elections in June 1994. In the opinion of some analysts, the promise of submitting his own political future to the judgment of Russian voters has legitimized his actions in recent weeks (Bohlen 1993). Later he backed away from an early presidential election and decided to stay in power until 1996, thus undermining the legitimacy of his earlier measure.

An important question is, 'how free are the parliamentary elections going to be?' Yeltsin promised that all parties running for Parliament would be granted equal rights and access to the media, but many opposition parties have complained that the pro-Yeltsin bloc, which includes many key ministers and specifically the Information Minister, has a strong advantage in

media coverage (*Reuters* 1993). Indeed, on October 27, leaders of major political blocs (including Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation), were each given several minutes of television time to express their views. This brief exposure contrasted sharply with the extensive coverage given to the President, his officials and the regime's policies (Clarke 1993, October 29). Even deputy chairman of Ostankino Television, Valentin Lazutkin, recently acknowledged the biases in electoral coverage (Tolz 1993, November 8, a).

Grigori Yavlinsky, the reformist leader of a democratically oriented election bloc and Presidential candidate, criticized the forthcoming elections as, "a far cry not only from democracy but even from simple logic." Yavlinsky also pointed out that the pro-Yeltsin Russia's Choice bloc had virtually unassailable advantages over other parties since its list of candidates included key ministers (Slater 1993, October 29). He told *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on November 9, 1993, that the "present parliamentary elections are being held by an authoritarian regime in order to strengthen its position and are far from democratic" (Rahr 1993, November 10).

According to B. Kagarlitsky, a former Moscow city deputy, Russian elections are prepared by the authorities, under the control of the authorities, and according to rules devised by the authorities. Furthermore, the new parliament, convoked by a simple presidential decree in the absence of a law on elections or a law on government, will be subject to dissolution at any time by the same method. In fact, the powers which the new Parliament is to possess have not been clarified. In the election campaign, the Presidential administration is intervening directly and openly on the side of the "Russia's Choice" coalition. The Central Electoral Commission, appointed by Yeltsin and composed mainly of "turn-coat" former deputies, is denying the right to participate in its work—not only to representatives of the opposition, but also to anyone with a degree

of competence (Kagarlitsky 1993, November 10).

Moscow News has argued that "the number of reports in the state-run electronic and print media on the activities of the pro-Yeltsin "Russia's Choice" bloc is so high that not only the President's opponents, but even his supporters from other blocs cannot dream of such publicity. On October 20, 1993, the newspaper *Kommersant* criticized the Deputy Chief of the presidential apparatus, Vyacheslav Volkov, for stating, "with full confidence" at an October 19, 1993 press conference, that the party Russia's Choice, would get up to 38 percent of seats in the new parliament. The newspaper said such statements cast doubt on the fairness of the election campaign (Tolz 1993, October 22, b).

In an interview with *Delovoi Mir* on October 20, 1993, the leader of the reformist Republican Party, Vyacheslav Shostakovsky, expressed his concern about the bloc's electoral list, which includes a number of members of the current government. This situation was also criticized by the leaders of the Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms, Gavril Popov and Anatoli Sobchak. Shostakovsky said that the privileged position enjoyed by Russia's Choice, compared to other blocs, would likely win it an overwhelming majority of seats in the new parliament. He said that he feared there would be no "constructive opposition" in Parliament (Tolz 1993, October 22, c).

Various opposition parties have complained to observers from the European Community of bias and irregularities in the election campaign. Sergei Baburin, the leader of the right-wing Russian All-People's Union, said that his telephone line had been cut off, while Communist Party leader, Gennadii Zyuganov, complained that his protests to the Russian government about media bias had gone unanswered. More serious allegations were made by Nikolai Travkin, of the Democratic Party, who accused local leaders appointed by the President of using their office to collect signatures for

themselves. On November 4, 1993, Ostankino TV reported instances of paying 20,000 rubles for 100 signatures and quoted Arkadii Volsky of the Civic Union as saying that other parties were buying signatures for packets of cigarettes (Slater 1993, November 5).

Yeltsin has ordered a special court to be set up to ensure the independence and accessibility of the media for all candidates in Russia's Parliamentary elections (*Reuters* 1993). Given that Yeltsin himself appointed the judges to this court, it is unlikely that they will be able to make impartial decisions. Without sufficient time allowed for candidates to run their campaigns, and without the means to do so, voters will still just have to vote for deputies they know nothing about, as they did in pre-Gorbachev times.

Even though international observers have been invited, the Central Electoral Commission has ruled that all international observers must be officially registered and that if the commission considers the actions of observers to be "incompatible with their status," it will be entitled to have them deported (Kagarlitsky 1993, November 10).

Lack of Internal and External Opposition

Voices of internal opposition to Yeltsin's absolute rule are few and far between. A notable exception was an open letter signed by eight renowned Russian academics, in which they stated that Yeltsin's authorities took advantage of "the amoral union of Rutskoï's supporters with extremist and fascist forces" in order to provoke violence and establish dictatorial rule. Listing a long series of violations of human and political rights by Yeltsin's regime, the statement calls on "all those to whom the free and democratic future of Russia is genuinely dear [to join in] a broad, non-violent opposition bloc" in defense of civil freedoms and the rule of law (Clarke 1993, October 8). Some human rights activists of the Brezhnev era have reacted quickly to the abuse of civil rights occurring throughout the country, but one prob-

lem is that many of them still remain in the background of Russian political life. The dissidents of the Brezhnev era—those sent to the psychiatric prisons—have not been rehabilitated, and are considered pariahs (Malakhin 1993). Furthermore, it seems that the majority of Russian citizens prefer the "iron fist," to democracy, which, according to them, has brought nothing but high inflation, impoverishment and rising crime.

Most Western governments have applauded Yeltsin's success in crushing the "hard-liners," which were supposedly obstructing the transition to a market economy. They have been willing to close their eyes to the abuse of human rights and the absence of free expression. The U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, even promised "technical support" for Yeltsin and \$10 million to stage the election.

There are several reasons why the United States has offered unconditional support to Yeltsin. First, the persistence of the "Cold War" mentality has coloured the perception of Russia's internal politics, which is still viewed in simplistic dichotomous terms as a struggle between market forces, on the one hand, and "Communists," on the other.

Any form of opposition to the market transition, however mild, is categorized as "Communist," and actions taken by the "market supporters" against them are cheered. Second, there is a fear that the possible return to power of the perceived "hard-liners," will put an end to present East-West détente and will lead to an escalation of the arms race. Third, Yeltsin has demonstrated his commitment to sweeping market reforms proposed by the International Monetary Fund, whereas Parliament advocated a more cautious approach. Western countries have always preferred investing in those countries which accept IMF recommendations. Given that the United States and other Western countries are interested in expanding their markets in Russia, it is hardly surprising that they are willing to support those members of the political elite who can guar-

antee favourable conditions for investment.³

Economic Collapse

Advocates of a market economy argued that what the Russian economy needed was "shock therapy." The transition to a market economy began with the sudden removal of price controls on January 2, 1992. This provoked a rapid increase in prices, which far outpaced wage increases, and pushed an estimated 85-90 percent of the population below the official poverty line.

In 1992, prices increased 2,500 percent. Soon after the liberalization of price controls, industrial production collapsed due to the lack of credit to pay workers and suppliers. The easing of monetary policy in the summer of 1992 failed to bring a recovery, and by the end of the year, Russia's GDP had fallen by 22 percent, twice the rate of decline in 1991. Consumer spending fell by 38 percent. Kiosks offered imported goods at prices beyond the reach of 90 percent of the population (*The Toronto Star* 1993; Kotz 1993).

The economy continued to falter in 1993. During the first nine months of the year, GDP and industrial output were 11 percent and 16.5 percent, respectively—lower than in the same period of 1992 (Bush 1993, November 4). For most workers, compensation has been inadequate and erratic. Real per capita incomes have plunged to Third World levels, and recent World Bank figures rank Russian living standards as comparable to those in Mexico (Clarke 1993, October 1). According to the newspaper, *Trud*, increases in average wages between January 1992 and October 1993 totalled only 44 percent of the increase in consumer prices (Clarke 1993, November 12). At the same time, the budget deficit has continued to escalate.

According to Finance Minister Boris Fedorov, the budget deficit for 1993 could rise to 22.2 trillion rubles, or 14 percent of GDP, considerably higher than the latest target of 17 trillion rubles or 10 percent of GDP (Bush 1993, November 12).

The head of the Federal Employment Service, Fedor Prokopov, stated that there were 706,000 people listed as officially jobless; 968,000 listed as out of work; and 3.7 million on unpaid or part-time leave during the first half of 1993. Prokopov warned that the number of unemployed could rise to 10 to 12 million in 1994. During the first eight months of 1993, a total of 18.1 billion rubles (roughly \$15 million) was paid out in unemployment benefits (Bush 1993, October 22).

Residents of Russia's urban centres are experiencing what might be called "financial embarrassment." In a recent survey, only one respondent in a hundred said that his or her family was "quite well provided for." A total of 2.6 percent said their living standards were above average, and 26 percent believed their families to be of "moderate means." The rest thought they were poor (23.6 percent), and some considered themselves "not poor but below average" (Kryshtanovskaya and Skorobogatko 1993). According to *Kommersant*, a leading Russian business newspaper, only about 2 percent of Russians, or three million people, have the income to live at a middle-class, Western European, level (*Covert Action Quarterly* 1993). A hike in value-added taxes and excise taxes on energy sources, predicted to be set in place after the December 12, 1993 elections (Clark 1993, November 12), will create even more hardships among the Russian population.

The decline in Russia's economy has incurred a heavy social cost. In 1992, some 250,000 people died in Russia as a result of accidents, poisoning, injuries, and so-called "unnatural causes" of death, including murder, suicide and alcohol poisoning. Overall mortality rose by almost 7 percent over the year, while the number of "unnatural" deaths increased by 20 percent.

Mortality among teenagers under the age of 18 is growing at the fastest rate and is directly attributable to growing alcoholism and drug abuse. Infants also suffer from poor health; in 1985, one out of every 11 newborns was sick, while today one child out of

every five, is unhealthy (Ivchenko 1993).

Rising Crime

One of the consequences of the transition to a market economy has been the emergence of organized crime as a central feature of Russian life. As Stephen Cohen puts it, economic reforms have given rise to a "Klondike 'capitalist' profiteering in state goods and natural resources - 'corruptalism.'" (Cohen 1993). An estimated one-third of raw material exports are illegal. In the fall of 1992, a military transport plane loaded with titanium was seized at Koltsovo Airport. The scale of illegal exporting is demonstrated in Latvia which exported 238,000 tons of nonferrous metals in 1992, although it did not produce any. The chairman of Russia's central bank has admitted that at least \$20 billion of the \$24 billion of Western aid has been illegally taken out of the country and deposited in Western banks (Kotz 1993).

According to some reports, the most corrupt government institutions are the law enforcement agencies, the state property administration, the tax office, the customs services, and foreign trade organizations. According to Alexander Mikhailov, head of the Public Relations Office at the Moscow Administration of the Ministry of Security, almost all the directors of state enterprises in the Moscow area had set up joint ventures and small businesses linked to their state enterprises. There are also cases of government bodies directly involved in business activities (Yasmann 1993).

Yeltsin made a statement recently that Russia is becoming "a Mafia great power" (Kotz 1993). This opinion is generally shared by the public. In a survey of over 1,500 residents of 12 cities in four Russian regions, over half of the respondents could not describe the present socio-political system in Russia, and 9.2 percent of the respondents said that the system is characterized by "chaos, anarchy and rampant lawlessness." When asked about who rules Russia today, almost one-quarter of the respondents (23.3 percent) said

"Mafia," while only 16.3 percent thought it was Yeltsin who ruled Russia (Kryshtanovskaya and Skorobogatko 1993).

According to the Department of Criminal Statistics, crime has increased dramatically since the end of the Soviet Era. In 1992, 3.8 million crimes were committed in the CIS, an increase of 24 percent from 1991. The number of robberies and assaults rose by 50 percent, thefts rose by 58 percent, violent crimes rose by 25 percent, and murders rose by 40 percent. In the same year, 1.6 million people were convicted of crimes in the CIS (*Argumenti i Fakti* 1993).

Yearning for "Iron Fist"

The growing chaos in the country has made the former system of totalitarian control look attractive. Moscow City Hall Press Centre disseminated a report that there have been numerous appeals to President Yeltsin and Mayor Luzhkov from labour collectives, asking for the state of emergency to be extended. According to the All-Russia Centre for the Study of Public Opinion on Social and Economic Questions, 75 percent of respondents surveyed favoured the extension of the state of emergency in Moscow, while only 16 percent opposed it. What is also remarkable about this survey is that there were no significant differences by age. Moreover, the proportion of people who agreed to the extension of the state of emergency was higher among those with higher education than among the less educated (74 and 69 percent respectively) (*Izvestia Daily* 1993, 1,4).

However, nostalgia for a firm government does not necessarily reflect a preference for Yeltsin and his policies. According to Yuri Levada, the best known Russian pollster, a bare fifth of Russians believe they are better off since the start of market reform. Most want gradual rather than radical economic reform; and they favour candidates who will defend the poor over those who advocate individualism (Gray 1993). According to another poll, sponsored by *U.S. News and World Re-*

port Magazine, and conducted by Moscow's Institute for Comparative Social Research, less than one-third of Russian people said Yeltsin deserved to be president again, although about half of the 1,000 people sampled replied that they approved of the way he was handling his job (*Reuters* 1993).

It seems that to many Russians it does not matter who is in power, as long as the government is autocratic. Nor is there strong opposition to having the Communists in power. According to yet another opinion poll conducted by the Russian TV program "Obschestvennoe mnenie" (public opinion) on October 28, 1993, 38 percent of those surveyed supported the leader of the Communist Party, Gennadii Zyuganov (Rahr 1993, October 29).

Scapegoating Ethnic Minorities

The elimination of political competition did not help Yeltsin solve the economic crisis in Russia. Once the so-called "hard-liners" were out of the picture, other social groups had to be blamed for the continued economic woes of the Russian population. Such scapegoats were easily found.

Most Russians blame Caucasians (those from the Caucasus) for the dramatic rise in crime in Moscow. Government officials, police and even the TV news claim that Caucasians commit 80 percent of the crimes in Moscow. In order to fight rising crime, the Moscow Police used the state of emergency as an opportunity to clear the city of thousands of Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis and other unpopular ethnic groups from the southern Russian republics, who had no domicile registration permits (*propiska*). Moscow Traffic Police ordered its officers to stop all cars, driven by Caucasians and demand identity papers. Police also confiscated cars and detained and deported their owners. Many of the deported people were already refugees from Azerbaijan, Abkhazia, Georgia, Chechnya and regions of conflict in the former Soviet Union (Gray 1993; Kaplan 1993). The harassment of people from these re-

gions ranged from document checks, beatings and extortion, to sweeps of the local markets and deportations from the capital. Mayor Yury Luzhkov seriously aggravated the situation with a call on Muscovites to help police enforce the state of emergency. *ITAR-TASS* reports that 40,000 residents of Moscow signed up as "volunteer guards [to] patrol the city" (*Moscow Times* 1993). At one Moscow food market, Russian merchants reportedly helped police turn over fruit stands, beat and arrest traders from Azerbaijan (Akai 1993).

The operation to clear the city of illegal residents was targeted almost exclusively at people with dark complexions. Over 5,000 people were deported within the first two weeks alone, while thousands of illegal residents who were ethnic Russians or otherwise white-skinned, continued to enjoy their stay in Moscow.

This harassment of people of colour has been going on for some time in Moscow, and indeed such racism has always existed in the Soviet Union. People of colour are stopped and harassed daily, regularly paying bribes to the police to avoid arrest. Now the government, using the pretext of the *propiska* system, has institutionalized this racism (Akai 1993).

Once again, the state is blaming ethnic minorities for the economic collapse and rising crime in the country. The people are led to believe that Caucasians, some of whom are involved in petty commerce, are responsible for soaring prices. At the present time, they serve as convenient scapegoats. As D. Ostalskiy, *Segodnya's* editor in chief, commented, "it is much easier to deport all persons of Caucasian nationality from Moscow along with southern vegetables from Moscow markets than to engage in the painstaking work of eliminating criminal gangs" (Ostalskiy 1993, 1).

Once Moscow is "cleansed" of these people, other visible minorities will become victimized by the racist mobs inspired by the Police. Already the OMON (special purpose militia detachment) has detained 95 Kurds who

were meeting in Moscow's Pushkin Square on October 14, 1993. Sources at the Moscow main Interior Department told ITAR-TASS that the detainment was part of the state of emergency arrangements to expel foreigners without residence permits from the capital (ITAR-TASS 1993).

Separatist Challenges

The secessionist movements of the resource-rich regions has been one of the biggest challenges to Yeltsin's rule. Tatarstan, a large Muslim republic on the Volga with some of the largest oil reserves in Russia, has declared economic independence. Bashkortostan, also Muslim and closely aligned to Tatarstan, with 60 percent of Russia's oil refining capacity, is also moving toward greater independence. A recent joint session of the Bashkir Supreme Soviet Presidium and Council of Ministers reaffirmed that Bashkortostan will work toward further sovereignty. Parliament has also criticized the decision by Yeltsin's administration to try to deprive the republics of their sovereignty and to preserve the Russian Federation as a union (Sheehy 1993, November 9, a). Most leaders of other republics have protested the fact that Russia's Draft Constitution fails to define republics as "sovereign states" (Tolz 1993, November 12).

In the north Caucasus, there is one oil-rich Muslim republic, Chechnya, which has already seceded from Russia. Chechnya refused to hold elections to the Russian Federal Assembly on its territory (Sheehy 1993, November 9, b).

Karelia, a Finnish-speaking republic bordering Finland with an abundance of mineral and forest resources, has declared economic independence. Sakha-Yakutia, in eastern Siberia, is about one-third the size of Canada. It has only one million people, but contains almost all of the former Soviet Union's diamonds (12 percent of global production), the second biggest gold reserves in Russia, as well as newly discovered oil, gas and coal basins. Kalmykia is a small, oil-rich Bud-

dhist republic on the Caspian Sea (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 1993; *Covert Action Quarterly* 1993).

Most regional councils disapproved of Yeltsin's decision to suspend Parliament. When the latter was defeated on October 4, Yeltsin moved directly to dissolve regional councils as well, thus eliminating political dissent and maintaining strong control over resource-rich areas. He has also adopted this strategy toward the regional councils which have demanded more autonomy. In October, 1993, for instance, Sverdlovsk Oblast declared itself a republic within the Russian Federation, but on November 9, Yeltsin dissolved it—dismissing Governor Eduard Rossell from his post and halting all activities of the regional soviet (Teague 1993; Tolz 1993, November 8, a).

Security Forces

It is possible that the return to ruling with an "iron fist" will revive the security bodies, regardless of who is in power. Even before the October crisis, the former KGB was regaining some of its past power.

The KGB has broken into domestic and foreign operations since the end of the Cold War. Most of the domestic functions are now with the new Ministry of Security. It is worth pointing out that, contrary to popular expectation, after the reorganization of the KGB, the Ministry of State Security increased its personnel by tens of thousands of people (Vizhutovich 1993). Fred Weir, a Moscow correspondent for seven years, said:

"As far as I know, it's still all there and doing everything it used to; perhaps more." For example, contrary to everything you hear, any Russian who wants to obtain a passport for travel abroad now needs to obtain a *razresheniye*, or clearance, from the Ministry of Security. All that was abolished years ago by Gorbachev, but it seems that a lot of those old functions are being reestablished. (*Covert Action Quarterly* 1993).

The KGB has infiltrated about 3,000 members into Soviets at various levels (*Literaturnaya Gazeta* 1993).

In an attempt to deal with state-level corruption, in September 1992, Yeltsin issued a decree which authorized the posting of several thousand state and internal security officers from the former KGB Active Reserve to various government institutions. According to this decree, these officers were to act as advisors and consultants under dual subordination to the central government and the Ministry of Security (Yasman 1993). However, it appears that these officers have been investigating more than just corruption. In June 1993, Brezhnev-era dissident writer, Anatoly Pristavkin, observed that people were being urged to report to the Regimented Secret Organ (RSO—a branch of the State Security) information concerning their colleague's relatives living abroad, and their ties with foreigners coming to Russia (Pristavkin 1993).

To strengthen its power, in March 1993, The Russian Federation Ministry of Security submitted to the Supreme Soviet for consideration a "Draft Law on Making Changes in and Additions to the Russian Federation Law 'On Operational Investigative Activity in the Russian Federation'," the Russian SFSR Criminal Code and the RSFSR Criminal Procedure Code," and a "Draft Law On Federal State Security Agencies." Political analysts view this as an attempt by the Security to reestablish its former absolute power (Bespalov 1993). Contrary to the provisions of the Russian Constitution, the law would entitle the Ministry of Security to search apartments, bug telephones and scan private correspondence without a warrant from either court or public prosecutors. If adopted, it would also make it obligatory for employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to take part in MS operations against foreign spies, and would commit all citizens to serve as the Ministry's secret agents should the latter deem this necessary. Moreover, the report revealed that the Draft Law includes a provision exempting MS agents from prosecution for crimes they commit in order to preserve their anonymity (Wishnevsky 1993, May

11). The re-installation of the authoritarian rule may make these proposed changes possible and Russia may once again return to the era of dissidents and political prisoners.

Potential Refugees

In addition to the present flight of refugees from Russia due to the rise of nationalism and the persecution of ethnic minorities, three other types of refugees may be expected to emerge from Russia. First, it is very likely that political repression will prompt some dissenters to leave the country. Second, under fear of deportation from Moscow, many refugees from the southern countries of the former Soviet Union and from the southern regions of Russia, will attempt to move westward, rather than return south. Finally, the independence struggle in some republics of the Russian Federation is likely to provoke a repressive response by Yeltsin, creating yet another group of asylum seekers. ■

Notes

1. The detained deputies include Yuri P. Sedykh-Bondarenko, the City Council's Deputy Chairman; Viktor A. Kuzin, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, Justice, and the Defense of Civil Rights, co-founder of "Memorial," and co-founder of the first opposition party in the Soviet Union, Democratic Union, in 1988; Viktor Bulgakov, a human rights activist and a prominent member of the "Memorial" Society; and Aleksandr Tsopov (Covici 1993, October 7).
2. Segal, Kagarlitsky and Kondratov were seized by police on October 3, 1993, after the failed assault on the Ostankino television centre. They had tried to prevent a pointless and potentially bloody attack on the TV centre by the Ruskoi and Khasbulatov supporters. Over the next 24 hours they were systematically beaten by police. The detainees were told they stood accused of complicity in killing two policemen in order to steal their vehicle (Clarke 1993, October 26).
3. The reaction of some members of the American public has contrasted with the official response to Yeltsin's repressions. An American organization, "The Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia," was organized to demand respect for human rights and freedom of the press, assembly and political organization for all in Russia, and to stop repression of trade unionists and democratic activists. See "Russian Human Rights Appeal," distributed by web.apc.org on November 8, 1993.

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Nationalism and the Violation of Minority Rights in Latvia

Alexander Benifand and Tanya Basok

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Nationalism, which inspired the struggle for Latvian independence, remains a strong force in this country. In practice, nationalism has translated into laws and policies that often violate the rights of the non-Latvian population. Against a background of economic crisis and rising crime, nationalist ideas are gaining popular support as the disgruntled population attempts to find a scapegoat for emerging domestic problems.

Economic Instability

Privatization has progressed slowly in Latvia. Only 7 percent of state property was privatized in 1992. Industries are experiencing tremendous losses and are in need of restructuring and investment. Many factories do not even have enough money to pay wages (Petersons 1993, February 18). In 1992, industrial production in Latvia dropped by 31.5 percent over the previous year, while consumer prices rose by 1,051 percent (Bungs 1993, January 15).

In 1993, industrial production continued to decline. The chairman of the Latvian statistics office, Gunars Baltins, reported that industrial production in January 1993 was 8 percent lower than in December 1992 and 45.6 percent lower than in January 1992 (Girnius 1993, February 10). In 1992, 33,200 persons, or about 2.3 percent of the economically active population, were officially unemployed. The unemployment problem was further aggravated by the existence of another 44,300 persons who were laid off or had their working hours shortened (Bungs 1993, January 15). According to the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Latvia, 83 percent of Latvian residents were living below subsistence levels in 1992 (*Riga Leta* 1993, September 23).

Rising Crime

As growing numbers of people begin to experience economic hardships, many are resorting to illegal livelihoods. In 1992, crime increased throughout the Baltic states. However, of all the Baltic states, Latvia had the highest crime rate (Girnius 1993, March 1). Crime rose by 48 percent in 1992 over the previous year. Of the 61,900 registered crimes in 1992, the vast majority were cases of either theft or robbery; some 234 cases were murders or attempted murders (Bungs 1993, January 15).

Political Situation

The Latvian government has moved to the centre of the political spectrum. In the June 1993 elections, victory was won by the moderate liberal forces. The Latvian Path bloc headed by Anatolis Gorbunovs, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, won the most votes (32.4 percent), followed by the radical Movement for National Independence (13.35 percent), the Peasant Union Party (10.64 percent), and the Equality Movement (5.77 percent), led by Alfreds Rubiks, the former First Secretary of the CP Latvia Central Committee.

Conservative Communist organizations still maintain a high profile. During the recent siege of the Russian Parliament in Moscow there were reports that these forces were planning a similar coup attempt. If the anti-Yeltsin opposition in Moscow had been victorious, members of the OMON (special purpose militia detachment) from the Latvian capital Riga, and the "Dniester Republic" had apparently planned to kidnap Latvian leaders in the hope of trading them for Alfreds Rubiks, currently on trial for anti-Latvian activities. To neutralize

the political opposition, on October 6th the Latvian government banned three pro-Communist organizations (Latvian Union of Communists, Union to Secure Veterans' Rights and Latvian Association of Russian Citizens) for "22 acts of conspiracy" (Girnius 1993, October 7). This measure could potentially heat up what has so far been a rather peaceful struggle for power in Latvia.

Nationalism and Violations of Minorities' Rights

The popularity of Latvian nationalism and anti-Russian sentiments are both responses to the past subordination of the republic by Moscow, and to Russia's present interference with Latvian domestic life. The Russian-speaking population, most of whom migrated to Latvia after 1940 (the year of the Soviet invasion), is identified with Russian imperialism. The national radicals, such as members of the Citizen's Congress and the Lettish National Tevzeme Alliance, have adopted the toughest stance. They are demanding Latvia's complete "decolonization" and "de-occupation," implying, as was bluntly declared at the Tevzeme's December 1992 Congress, the repatriation of the "occupants" either to their ethnic homes, or to some third country. In their appeal to the audience, they declared: "Register colonialists only at railway stations!" (Myalo 1993). An article arguing against granting civil rights to Russians appeared in *Pavalsinieks Daily*; "Nothing can save the Latvian nation from destruction if Russian colonialists are granted citizenship," the author argued (Kolmanson 1993, April 11). These nationalist sentiments find fertile soil at the highest levels of the state. The head of the Latvian state declared in a short interview before departing for New York that, "those who occupied and had incorporated Latvia and find Latvia's independence unacceptable, will have to leave" (Myalo 1993).

In their desire to purge themselves of the remnants of their colonial past, Latvian political leaders have introduced laws and policies which violate

the rights of the Russian-speaking population, including ethnic Russians, Jews, Tatars and members of other ethnic groups. According to the Chair of the Latvian Parliament, Anatolis Gorbunovs, Parliament endorsed Latvia's new system of ethnic separation. Under this system (enacted by Parliamentary resolution, but yet to be passed as law), Latvian citizenship will be granted only to those people who can pass a Latvian language test and show that their parents or grandparents held citizenship as of June 17, 1940—the day of the Soviet invasion. The new proposed restrictions may ultimately make it illegal to own property or open a bank account, and will make it difficult for non-citizens to hold job or obtain university degrees. The Movement for Latvia's National Independence (with 15 seats in the Parliament), announced its own draft of the law on citizenship. Their proposed law would immediately grant citizenship to ethnic Latvians, members of the Latvian citizens' families and foreigners who legally arrived in Latvia before it joined the Soviet Union. The draft law also proposes that most former Soviet citizens be granted Latvian citizenship on the basis of annual naturalization quotas not exceeding 10 percent of annual population growth (FBIS 1993, September 15).

According to Edward Barnes, these proposed measures are intended to force Russians to return to Russia. This would also disenfranchise an estimated 95 percent of the nation's Jews, most of whom came to Latvia after 1940 (Barnes 1992). The CSCE commissioner for national minority issues, Max Van der Stoel, noted that the status of a resident whose future in Latvia is not yet decided is also a matter of some concern (Bungs 1993, January 22). He argued that "Russian-speaking people living in Latvia who have been sent to Latvia in accordance with the central planning policy of the former USSR are merely victims of the Soviet system in the same way that Latvians are" (*Radio Riga Network* 1993, September 15). Van der Stoel called on the Latvian Government to quickly adopt

a more liberal law on citizenship in order to stabilize Latvian politics (*Radio Riga Network* 1993, September 14).

The 90,000 strong Russian-speaking population was deprived of the right to vote in the June 1993 parliamentary election, although the Latvian Sejm has been compelled to permit them to vote in local elections. However, Eduard Smekhov, leader of the Russian community in Latvia, believes that Russians will be ousted from Latvia by the time of the elections, given that many of them will have lost their temporary resident status by then (Yemelyanenko 1993, June 11).

A report on the three Baltic states, published by the State Department, describes the unresolved status of the Russian residents as a cause of "exacerbated tensions" among ethnic groups there. The report cites the new language law as a potential lever for discrimination in jobs and elsewhere (Trumbull 1993, January 21).

According to media reports, discrimination against non-Latvians is widely practised in all spheres of Latvian life. "The discrimination begins in kindergarten where Russians have to pay more for their children," observes one Russian emigrant from Latvia who was forced to leave his position as a technician and work as a mechanic (Pushkar 1992, August 11). The *New Times* magazine has published several letters documenting such discrimination. One of them reads:

My father was born in Latvia before the 1940s and I have all the papers needed to confirm that. However at the registration centre in Jaunolaine I was asked to describe properties 'privately owned by my father.' When I could not give a detailed account, I was told citizenship would be denied me (Myalo 1993).

Another letter says: "I am Lettish by birth, but I will not be granted citizenship because my husband is a Soviet Army colonel" (ibid.).

Given this situation, it is no wonder that when polled by the All-Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research, 75 percent of Russian-speaking respond-

ents said they believe that over the last two to three years, the attitude toward them has worsened in Latvia; 32 percent of the respondents believe that a mass exodus of Russian-speaking people from Latvia will begin in the near future (Bungs 1992, December 6).

Russian political leaders have expressed serious concern about the violation of minority rights in the Baltic states. Speaking at a closed meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Council of Baltic Sea States on March 16, 1993, A. Kozyrev, Russian Foreign Minister, said he would not sign a communique with the other Baltic states unless they appointed a commissioner to protect the rights of ethnic minorities. Kozyrev likened the plight of Russian minorities in the Baltic to the current situation in the former Yugoslavia (Crow 1993, March 17). The Russian Parliament's Committee on Human Rights has accused Latvia of violating the rights of minorities, and called upon the country's Parliament to make changes in their legislation. In the opinion of the Committee, Latvia has established "a regime unfavourable even for those members of the Russian-speaking population who intended to assimilate into the new state's legal environment." The Committee drew attention to the repercussions of the undefined status of, and discrimination against, the Russian-speaking populations of Latvia, mentioning more specifically the intensification of chauvinistic and nationalistic forces in Russia and Latvia, which could threaten regional security.

The committee appealed to Latvian legislators to take the following actions:

abolish state language examinations for those over 50 years old; eliminate any requirements for command of the state language; reduce settlement requirements in Latvia to five years and generally redefine "permanent residency" in Latvia; reconsider and reduce the numbers of people who cannot receive citizenship; and confer citizenship upon children born to parents without citizenship (*Moscow Baltfax* 1993, February 25).

Moscow has turned the issue of protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population into a precondition for the withdrawal of its troops. In an interview with the German agency, DPA, The Russian Ambassador to Latvia, Alexandr Rannikh criticized Latvia for committing innumerable injustices against the Russian-speaking minority and its electoral law for violating human rights and announced that if Latvia continues to create complications in bilateral relations, Russia will not be able to withdraw its troops by the end of 1994 as planned.

In its turn, the presence of 27,000 Russian troops, and Russian intelligence (Bungs 1993, January 13) is a perpetual irritant to the Latvian population who regard it as interference in Latvia's domestic affairs. This fuels nationalist sentiments both in the government and among the population at large. Latvia took its running dispute with Russia to the United Nations on September 29, 1993, where it demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and defended its controversial citizenship laws. Latvian President, Guntis Ulmanis, told the General Assembly that the presence of foreign forces threatened regional stability, degraded the environment, and discouraged badly-needed foreign investment. The President dismissed charges that efforts to protect the slim majority of ethnic Latvians (which he estimated at 52 percent) amounted to discrimination against Russians, Ukrainians and others (*Reuters* 1993, September 29).

The Latvian Parliament voted to remove the remains of hundreds of Red Army soldiers from a military cemetery in Riga, saying that "their presence offends nationalist sentiments in the former Soviet republic" (*Toronto Star* 1993, February 3). In turn, Leonid Mayorov, the commander-in-chief of the Northwestern Military Group Forces of the Russian Army, accused the Latvian Home Guard of repeated provocations against Russian military personnel, and he sent Latvian Supreme Council Chairman, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, a letter containing a warn-

ing that Russian military personnel stationed in Latvia may be ordered to arm themselves when moving around Latvian territory (FBIS, June 2). While Russia refuses to withdraw its troops until the rights of the Russian-speaking population are protected, the Latvian authorities are reluctant to extend full citizenship to these people as long as the Russian military is stationed in Latvia. Representatives of the Fatherland and Freedom faction, who have six of Parliament's one hundred seats, have stated that the naturalization of former Soviet citizens was impossible before the Russian troops' complete removal from Latvia. This faction believes that former Soviet citizens should be treated as "illegal migrants," and therefore, the world community should help Latvia to have them repatriated to Russia (FBIS 1993, September 15).

Russian ultra-nationalists continually threaten the independence of Latvia by claiming that the predominately Russian districts should become part of Russia (Bungs 1992, December 7). This intensifies the backlash against the Russian-speaking population, including Jews.

Having analyzed the situation of Russian-speaking people in the Baltic republics, a well-known American political scientist, Francis Fukuyama, warned the United States in his article published in the *New York Times*, that unless the United States is willing to defend the rights of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic countries, there will be another hot spot appearing on the map of Europe (Volsky 1993).

Following a recent visit to Latvia, the U.S.-based Helsinki Watch organization, on October 29, 1993, gave Premier Valdis Birkavs a list of violations and irregularities in the implementation of human rights. Baltic media reported that most of the criticism had to do with the registration of non-Latvians, especially members of the Russian military, former members of the Soviet army and their families, by the Citizenship and Immigration Department from March 1992 to March 1993. Helsinki Watch also objected to

recent legislation stipulating that non-citizens in Latvia receive only 90 percent of the state pension (Bungs 1993, November 2).

Anti-Semitism and Ultra-Nationalism

According to senior *Life* correspondent, Edward Barnes, "a resurgent anti-Semitism is forcing the Jews of Latvia to run for their lives" (Barnes 1992).¹ He claims that neo-Nazis are becoming increasingly visible in Latvia. Among the 15,000 member armed Latvian police, for instance, there are two units composed of "Old Warriors," former members of the Waffen SS. Some of them have been training in the farm country outside Riga. For six weeks they lived together in a dormitory and filled their days with marching, target practice, war stories and new politics. Even more disconcerting for Jews, he insists, is the sight of the Aizsargi, the paramilitary group that helped the Nazis in their attack on Riga and killed many Jews. This group, which can be seen patrolling the streets and marching in rallies, claims to have 14,000 members (Barnes 1992).

Anti-Semitism is becoming more overt. Many Latvian Jews experience personal confrontations with members of Old Warriors and their supporters who tell them to "get out" (Barnes 1992). During a world congress of Jews in Riga, commemorative slabs installed at a site in Bikernieks forest where 46,500 Jews had been shot to death 50 years ago, were desecrated. Swastikas and inscriptions "Juden frei" (free from Jews) were drawn on the slabs.² Schools present Jews in a derogatory light. A new Latvian history textbook for 12-year-olds gives a false picture of the role of the Jews in the history of Latvia. It mentions, for example, that the organizer of Stalin's violence in Latvia was Simons Schustins, of Jewish background (*American Association of Russian Jewry* 1992, November).

A number of recent beatings of Jews, two of which resulted in death, have alarmed the Jewish community in Riga. In the case of the beating death of 53-year old Semen Riftin, police

explained to the family that they could find no witnesses, no evidence, and no motive, and, therefore, had no practical reason to open an investigation of the case. In a police report handed to the victim's wife, it was stated that he had fallen from a height of five feet and died of his injuries, contrary to what the doctors and a few of the investigating officers had told her (*Monitor* 1993).

Anti-Semitic statements are even made by People's Deputies. One of them, Juris Debelis, has been cited accusing "Russian Yidloving journalists" of causing the country's hardships. Another People's Deputy, Juris Bojars, said that Latvians should never apologize to Jews for the injustice done to them because Jews in the Soviet Government assisted in deportations and massacres of Latvians in the past (Koval 1993). ■

Notes

1. On December 2, 1992, Ojars Kalnins, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of Latvia, wrote a letter to Pamela Cohen, National President of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, in which he catalogues, "the errors, distortions and unsupported claims" made by Barnes in his article. Latvian Ambassador to the UN Aivars Baumanis also stated in an interview that the *Life* correspondent had been used as "a pawn in Russian propaganda." Latvian media made considerable efforts to refute or at least downplay the article. However, an editor's note in the March issue of *Life* affirms that the magazine, "stands by its story" (Litvinova 1993, April 2).
2. Latvian Parliament Chief, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, described this as an act of vandalism. On June 11, 1993 he apologized to the Jews for the crime (*ITAR-TASS* 1993, June 12).

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Moldova: A Country in Turmoil

Tanya Basok and Alexander Benifand

Recently there have been numerous violations of political freedom and ethnic minority rights in the former Soviet republic of Moldova. These human rights abuses have resulted from two significant political processes: the rise of Romanian nationalism; and separatist movements in the Transdnister and the Gagauz regions. Political opponents and members of ethnic minorities are ruthlessly persecuted in all regions; Moldova proper, Gagauzia, and Transdnistria. As Anatol Tsaranu, Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on State Security and Military Affairs, observed:

In a country with no established democratic traditions, a country which has experienced chronic political instability in recent years, a country going through a severe economic crisis, extraordinary phenomena can be expected. The impetus could be provided by the most ordinary event (Prikhodko 1993, 3).

The two political developments—Romanian nationalism and anti-Moldovan separatism—have to be placed within the context of the two opposing political pressures being exerted on Moldova: one from Russia, which wants to see Moldova reintegrated into a renewed Russian Empire; and the other from Romania, which would prefer reunification with Moldova. Transdnistria and Gagauzia are leaning strongly towards Russia, Moldovan nationalists are campaigning for reunification with Romania, and the Moldovan government is trying to remain independent of both. However, the deplorable state of the Moldovan economy is making Moldovan autonomy less viable and is forcing Moldova toward joining the CIS.

Russian Interference

Russia's interference in the Transdnister conflict in Moldova has

occurred through the participation of the 14th Russian Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Alexander Lebed (a protégé of Russian Defense Minister General Pavel Grachev). There is considerable evidence that the 14th Army's actions against Moldova were authorized by the military hierarchy in Moscow and condoned by senior government officials there. The Russian government never tried to prevent several thousand volunteers from Russia from fighting on the side of the Transdnister Republic (TDR) against Moldova. Furthermore, the Russian government increased its economic aid to the TDR. At the same time, negotiations to withdraw the Russian troops from eastern Moldova remain at an impasse (Socor 1993, January 1). The stalemate in the present negotiations have forced Moldova to extend the CSCE's Moldova's Mission by another six months (Socor 1993, November 10).

In March 1991, Yeltsin officially transferred 15,000 troops of the 14th Army to Russian control. His former vice-president, Rutskoi, visited Tiraspol and said that the republic should continue to exist (Europa World Yearbook, 2802-6). According to eyewitnesses, personnel and equipment from the Russian 14th Army participated in the fighting against the Moldovans (Department of State 1993, 850).

On September 13, 1993, Lt. Gen. Aleksandr Lebed, participated in a four-way race for a seat in the Transdnister Republic Supreme Soviet, and won 88 percent of the votes. During his campaign, he pointed out that Russian Federation citizens enjoy full political rights in Transdnister. No Russian civilian or military authority tried to prevent him from joining the Transdnister government (Socor 1993, September 14).

At a news conference in Chisinau on November 1, 1993, the Moldovan side of the joint commission supervising the cease-fire in Transdnister accused the Russian side of multiple violations of the cease-fire agreement. Reported violations include: allowing the penetration of additional Transdnister forces into the "security zone" between the conflicting sides; blocking inspection of suspected Transdnister arms stockpiles in Bendery, where such stockpiles are banned; and tolerating aggressive picketing by Russian Communist groups around the last remaining Moldovan police station and courthouse in Bendery, thus exerting pressure on the Moldovans to leave (Socor 1993, November 4).

Russia has tried to justify its continued presence in the Transdnister region by blaming Romania for the political instability in Moldova. The pro-Yeltsin newspaper, *Izvestia*, has published an anonymous interview with a Russian Foreign Ministry official in which he stated that "foreign agents" control the Moldovan government. In this interview, the official also stated that the Russian military behaviour in the region is premised on a "possible Moldovan-Romanian joint attack on the [Trans]dnister Republic" (Socor 1993, November 8).

On September 10, 1993, the Moldovan government issued an official statement describing the recent escalation of Gagauz and Transdnister militancy, as the "direct result" of recent visits to those two would-be republics by Russian parliamentary deputies who support the rebirth of the USSR (Socor 1993, September 13). Yet, when Moldovan Foreign Minister, Nicolae Tiu, addressed the UN General Assembly, he described Russia's 14th Army as the catalyst of the Transdnister conflict and cautioned the international community against granting Russia the

mandate of "peacemaker" on the territory of the former USSR. He complained of Russia's refusal to admit UN or CSCE observers to the deadlocked talks on the withdrawal of the 14th Army from Moldova and accused the Russian Foreign Ministry of "completely misrepresenting" Russian policy (Socor 1993, October 20, a).

Disregarding the criticism of the Moldovan Government, Russia continues to send economic aid to the self-proclaimed republic, despite the alignment of Transdnier fighters with Yeltsin's opponents in the October confrontation between Parliament and the President. On October 19, 1993, Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Kiba told the Supreme Soviet in Tiraspol that Russia had delivered 35 billion rubles worth of fuel and raw materials to the TDR in the first nine months of 1993. According to Kiba, the deliveries are being handled by Russia's state firm, *Rosskontrakt*, and are covered by credits extended earlier. He stressed the importance of the deliveries continuing on schedule (Socor 1993, October 20, b).

The Russian President demonstrated his complete indifference to the Moldovan Government by refusing to meet with President Mircea Snegur during his official visit to Moscow on October 18-19, 1993. Snegur had hoped to capitalize on support that the Transdnier Communist fighters had provided during the Moscow rebellion, and on the vocal support which he and Moldova had expressed for Yeltsin throughout that and other crises. The meeting was intended to be used to discuss with Yeltsin the question of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova, the political resolution of the Transdnier issue, the fate of Moldovan detainees in Tiraspol, and other pressing matters. Instead, Snegur was told on the second day of his visit that Yeltsin was indisposed and could not see him (Socor 1993, October 20, c).

The deplorable state of the Moldovan economy is weakening Moldova's resistance to Russia. According to Moldova's State Depart-

ment of Statistics, the country's national income dropped 20.2 percent in the first half of 1993, compared with the same period the previous year. Agricultural output, the pillar of Moldova's economy, fell by 36 percent. *ITAR-TASS* said that experts consider the decline in production to be chronic, due to the unbalanced nature of the economy, the breakdown of traditional economic ties, and the lack of raw materials. Inflation in the first half of 1993 was officially put at 24.3 percent, but the newspaper *Nezavisimaya Moldova* reckoned it was really 300 percent (Sheehy 1993). Moreover, some of Moscow's policy initiatives are aggravating Moldova's economic situation and further undermining their independence (Socor 1993, November 5). For instance, the excise and value added taxes imposed in August 1993 by Russia on agricultural imports from Moldova, cost Moldova more than 40 billion rubles in lost exports. The magnitude of the economic impact was equal to the previous year's drought, which had necessitated international relief. The new Russian tariffs influenced Moldova's decision to join the CIS Economic Union and ratify Moldova's membership of the CIS.

The Rise of Romanian Nationalism

The rise of Romanian nationalism in Moldova is apparent in three political developments: (1) the struggle to secede from the USSR (and to gain independence from Russia); (2) the persecution of non-Romanian minorities; and (3) the suppression of separatist movements within Moldova.

The stronghold for nationalist ideas is the Moldovan Popular Front (MPF). The MPF was formed in May 1989, when a number of independent cultural and political groups joined together, united by their common aspirations for separation from the USSR and for reunification with Romania. The MPF was later renamed the Christian Democratic Popular Front (CDPF).

Ideas of Romanian reunification found fertile soil among the Moldovan politicians and the population in gen-

eral. During the February 1990 election to the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, none of the independent political groups were officially allowed to support candidates. In fact, most of the 380 deputies elected (some 80 percent) were members of the Communist Party. Yet many were also sympathetic to the aims of the Popular Front. Approximately 40 percent of the new deputies were supported by the Front, and a further 30 percent were estimated to favour its objectives. Mircea Snegur, a Communist Party member supported by the Popular Front, was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet—eventually becoming Moldova's *de facto* President (Europa World Year Book, 2802-6). In August 1991 Moldova declared independence from the USSR.

Since its formation more than four years ago, the Christian Democratic Popular Front has transformed itself from a movement with broad political and popular support to an opposition party with ideals and aspirations no longer held by the majority of Moldovans. Most members of the Moldovan Supreme Soviet and the general population oppose reunification with Romania (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 1993). Despite their lack of popular support, members of the Christian Democratic Popular Front continue to press the Moldovan Supreme Soviet for Romanian reunification.

The maverick party has also confronted Parliament on another contentious issue—membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States. On August 3, 1993, Snegur proposed CIS ratification. Pro-Romanian members of the Supreme Soviet walked out of Parliament, thus creating a political stalemate (for any decision, the Moldovan Parliament requires a two-thirds majority). With the continued absence of deputies from Transdnier, along with approximately 75 others who rarely fulfil their parliamentary functions, it has been difficult for Parliament to ratify any decision. The boycott by the CDPF candidates created a political crisis in Moldova and led to a decision by Par-

liament to hold pre-term legislative elections in February 1994 (UPI 1993, October 13). Until then, Parliament remains virtually paralysed.

Having moved into the role of political opposition, the CDPF has tried to destabilize Snegur's government. In February 1993, President Snegur declared several times that a coup d'état was being prepared by the CDPF. In February 1993, CDPF members picketed the presidential residence and tried to storm it before a violent confrontation with the police in which several policemen were wounded (*Holos Ukrayiny* 1993). Around the same time, a letter from "Chernovitskaya Bukovina," reprinted in Moldovan papers, suggested that the Romanian security service, in close contact with the CDPF extremist wing, had set up combat groups comprised of Moldovan volunteers. The Romanian Secret Service intended to use this force to overthrow the President, Prime Minister, and other leaders of the republic, thus facilitating its reunification with Romania. Members of CDPF interpreted Snegur's accusation as an attempt to discredit opposition so that he would be able to carry out reprisals (Prikhodko 1993, 3).

While the CDPF represents extreme Romanian nationalism, it does not hold a monopoly on nationalist sentiments. A temporary commission for inspecting the state media of the Moldovan parliament has proposed a "patriotism exam" for journalists. Before working in the Moldovan state press, journalists would have to recognize the integrity and independence of the Republic in writing. This proposal came from Tudor Topa, chairman of the temporary Parliamentary Commission for Inspecting the Activity of the State Press. During the "party leadership of the press," he headed the press section of the Moldovan Central Committee Communist Party (ITAR-TASS 1993).

In its effort to build a nation state, the Moldovan Government has taken measures to strengthen the dominance of Romanian culture in this multi-ethnic country. In August 1989, the

Supreme Soviet of Moldova made Romanian the official language of the Republic, and replaced the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin one. Officials and employees are now obligated to know both Romanian and Russian. State enterprises are expected to use Romanian as their working language and as of April 1, 1993, records could only be kept in the Romanian language.

Furthermore, personal contacts at work between officials in languages other than Romanian are forbidden. Russian speakers have complained that language requirements have already been used to dismiss ethnic Russians from desirable jobs (*Department of State* 1993, 853). In Russian and other national schools, Romanian language examinations have already begun (Chala 1993). At the Moldovan State University 17 instructors with Master's and Doctorate degrees were suddenly discharged for "failure to qualify." All of them were non-Moldovans. One of them, the head of the Department of Modern Russia, had signed an open letter protesting the decision of the Ministry of Sciences and Education to cancel Russian philology classes at the University. Her discharge letter said: "Does not qualify for her present position because of her sociopolitical activism aimed against the decisions taken by parliament and the government" (Grevtsev 1993, 9).

The Pirogov Congress of Medical Workers' Association in Moldova issued a document accusing the Public Health Ministry leaders of using language as a cover for persecuting people on ethnic grounds. Due to the new language requirements, almost all non-Romanian administrators have been relieved of their posts in the Republic's Public Health Departments (ITAR-TASS 1993). This policy of discrimination has been implemented at all levels of educational institutions. Thus, in Chisinau the number of Russian kindergartens has been reduced by half. Previously there were 150 mixed schools in the republic—today the only language of instruction is Romanian. Similarly, two Russian news-

papers have closed down (Soldatova 1993).

In addition to discriminating against non-Romanian minorities on the basis of language, the government has denied certain religious denominations the freedom of expression and congregation. The practice of religion is generally free in Moldova. Parliament passed a law in 1992 which codified religious freedoms, but the activities of some religious groups were restricted. The law requires that religious groups be registered with the government and that denominations obtain government approval to hire non-citizens (*Department of State* 1993, 851).

This law effectively prohibits some denominations. For instance, the government refused to recognize the Metropolitan Seat of Bessarabia (ancient rite), which revived its activities in accordance with the rites of the Romanian Orthodox Church Synod (*Rompres* 1993). The law also prohibits "proselytizing," although, in practice, street preaching is still possible since Parliament did not provide an adequate legal definition of "proselytizing." Although the Orthodox Church was not designated as the official religion of Moldova, it remains a strong political and religious force. In one village, for example, the mayor requested permission from the local Orthodox Church before a Baptist congregation could build its own church (*Department of State* 1993, 851-2).

The Moldovan state has been extremely reluctant to grant autonomy to its predominantly non-Moldovan regions: Gagauzia and Transdnier. Almost two-thirds of the Moldovan population of 4.3 million consists of ethnic Romanians. About 600,000 people (14 percent of the entire population) live in the region of Transdnier, of whom about 60 percent are Russian speaking. Within Moldova, Ukrainians (14 percent) and Russians (13 percent) are the two largest minority groups. A Christian Turkic minority, the Gagauz, live primarily in the southern region. The Gagauz are largely Russian-speaking and repre-

sent about 3.5 percent of the population (*Department of State* 1993, 851-2).

On January 28, 1990 a referendum on Transdnister autonomy took place in Tiraspol. The predominantly Russian-speaking population voted overwhelmingly to seek greater autonomy for the region on the left bank of the Dniester River. On August 19, 1990 and on September 2, 1990, Gagauz and the Transdnister, respectively, proclaimed themselves autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. Both declarations were immediately annulled by the Moldovan Supreme Soviet (*Europe World Year Book*). The Moldovan government has used force to repress separatism, especially in the Transdnister region. In November 1990 inter-ethnic violence followed the announcement of elections to the "Transdnister Supreme Soviet" (*ibid.*). Clashes continued in 1991 resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. In June of 1992, heavy fighting broke out in the city of Tighina (Bendery), when separatist forces attacked a Moldovan police station. Moldovan army and police reinforcements were sent to the city, and other Moldovan forces were mobilized to attack the separatist forces (*Department of State* 1993, 850). A few days later a cease-fire agreement was signed, and since then, the two sides have been trying to negotiate a settlement. However, until now, their disagreements on Transdnister autonomy have not been resolved.

Although the repression of Gagauz separatism has not been as violent as the Transdnister movement, certain incidents have occurred. At the end of March, there were serious disturbances in Komrat, provoked by the suicide of a Gagauz man in a pre-trial detention cell at the Komrat police station. The Gagauz side maintained that the man died as a result of torture. A crowd of 200 to 500 people surrounded the police building, throwing grenades and Molotov cocktails. The police building was burnt to the ground (Selivanov 1993).

In both separatist movements, the Moldovan state refuses to recog-

nize claims for autonomy. The Draft Constitution protects the right of minorities to preserve their ethnic identity, however, it fails to guarantee their right to self-determination (*Basapress* 1993, April 14).

Violence Against Ethnic Minorities in Moldova

The attitude of the Moldovan state towards its ethnic minorities has been largely benign. Violence against non-Romanians stems mainly from the CDPF and those inspired by its ideas. However, the state is partially responsible for the mistreatment of minorities; first, its language laws have transformed Russian-speaking people into second class citizens, and second, the state has failed to protect its ethnic minorities.

One of the most important principles of the 18,000 strong CDPF is that "the rights of the nation are above the rights of the individual." This principle translates into discrimination against Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gagauz, Germans and others (Soldatova 1993). Members of the CDPF reportedly use the slogan, "Let's drown Russians in Jewish blood." They have been kidnapping, beating and raping their opponents (*Zarya Pridnestroviya* 1992). *The Memorial Human Rights Centre* (1992, 18) reported that volunteer members of the CDPF serving on the Moldovan side of the conflict in the Transdnister region were involved in the beatings of prisoners, general violence, burglary and murder on both the right and the left banks of the Dniester River. Neglect of minority rights and active discrimination culminated with a phase of "anti-Russian hysteria" following the brief war in the Transdnister region. Around that time, the mass media spread propaganda about wickedness of non-Romanian people.¹

Russian cultural monuments were desecrated in Chisinau, and other Moldovan cities and towns (BBC 1992, October 5). Beatings and threats made to the Russian-speaking population became common in the aftermath of the Bendery War and the authorities

did nothing to stop them. According to a spokesperson at the U.S. Helsinki Commission, the Moldovan police are ignoring ethnic violence and the harassment of minorities.²

Some Jews feel that there has been a rise in anti-Semitism among Romanian nationalists, provoked in part by the crisis in Transdnistria and Moldova's weakness against Russia (*Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe* 1993). The CDPF suggested naming a street in honour of General Antonescu—an anti-Semitic Romanian Iron Guard in the 1930s who was responsible for the elimination of 300,000 Jews in Romania, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Transdnistria.

Speaking of some 40,000 to 50,000 Jews still living in Moldova, Leonid Baltam, a representative of the Moldovan Jewish community at the August 1992 World Jewish Congress in Brussels said, "I hope my forecast is wrong but I cannot help feeling that the life of these people is in serious danger" (Baltam 1992). Jewish refugees from the left bank received a hostile reception. They were reportedly forced to vacate a shelter in central Chisinau as a result of "anti-Jewish agitation protesting the large number of Jews who had gathered there."³

While the Moldovan state can hardly be accused of anti-Semitism or other forms of racism, it has been unable to protect Jews and other ethnic minorities from violence.⁴ Authorities have been reluctant to recognize anti-Semitic incidents and, instead, continue to classify them as acts of hooliganism. For instance, in the city of Sorroki, Jewish graves were desecrated. Leaders of Jewish organizations demanded that this incident be recognized as anti-Semitic, yet the authorities insisted that it was common vandalism.⁵ This impotence and reluctance of the Moldovan authorities to intervene reflects the low priority that protecting minority rights has in comparison to resolving the conflicts in the Transdnister and the Gagauz regions, resisting the mounting pressures from Romania and Russia, and coping with

the deplorable state of the Moldovan economy.

Abuse of Rights in the Transdnierster Republic

The Transdnierster Republic's human rights record is considerably tarnished by its treatment of political prisoners, dissenters and Jews. Five CDPF members have been in a Tiraspol jail since May/June 1992. They have been kept in steel cages and are stoned and spit upon by excited crowds calling for their execution.⁶ They have been on trial since April 1993 on charges of terrorism. On October 11, 1993, the TDR's state prosecutor demanded the death penalty for three of the defendants and prison terms for the others. Numerous international human rights organizations, and European bodies including CSCE, the Council of Europe, and Western embassies in Moldova have noted numerous legal inconsistencies in the trial and have demanded that the defendants be turned over to a lawful court in Chisinau (Socor 1993, October 12).

There have been a number of accusations of politically motivated killings in the Transdnierster region in connection with the fighting that took place in 1992. The separatist controlled prosecutor's office in the region has been reluctant to investigate these accusations. Moldovan government police and prosecutors have been dismissed or forced to flee the area. Once removed from the area, central authorities cannot take steps to apprehend or punish those on either side responsible for human rights violations in the region (*Department of State* 1993, 848). There is one remaining Moldovan police station and courthouse in Bendery, but local Russian Communist groups have been picketing them, demanding that these last seats of Moldovan authority be handed over to the TDR (Socor 1993, September 23).

There has also been political censorship and politically motivated persecution in the TDR. Jamming of Moldovan Radio in the TDR began in 1991, and continued in 1992. Likewise, distribution of the printed media has

been restricted. Some individuals in the TDR who oppose the *de facto* existence of the TDR, have been harassed, dismissed from work, and physically attacked. Doctors and teachers trained outside the TDR have been systematically raided as punishment for their presumed opposition to the TDR (*Human Rights Watch* 1993, 239). The Transdnierster government has forbidden the use of the Latin alphabet, and its supporters routinely harass Moldovans living within its territory.

Anti-Semitism is an integral part of the official ideology in the TDR. Many of Russia's pro-fascist militarist organizations, such as the *Russian Legion* and the notorious *Pamyat*, have participated in attacks on Jews, and their members have infiltrated both non-profit and government organizations. A faction of the *National Salvation Front* from Russia was created in the TDR (*Basapress* 1993, March 19). Russian nationalists in the TDR claim to have "won their first victory over the Zionist-American conspiracy throughout the Soviet Union (Russia)." Among the "conspirators" are Moldova's present government and those in the TDR who support the Moldovan Government and consider themselves citizens of Moldova (*ibid.*).

The influence of Russia's fascist and Communist ideologists in TDR are extremely strong. The TDR government has awarded orders to the entire editorial board of the anti-Semitic newspaper "Den" (Day). Ideologists and leaders of other anti-Semitic organizations in Russia have been similarly decorated (*ibid.*).

The Constituent Assembly of the Transdnierster branch of the International Slavic Academy of Sciences met recently at the Dniester State University in Tiraspol. Most of the Academy's leading officials and scholars are well known for their anti-Semitic views and include such renowned nationalist activists as Igor Shafarevich who was asked to resign from the Russian Academy of Science for his anti-Semitic publications (Rozenberg 1993).

Deputies of Russia's Supreme Soviet, representing various ultra-na-

tionalist organizations, such as *Otchizna* and the *National Salvation Front*, frequently visit Gagauzia and Transdnierster (*Interfax* 1993). In June of 1993, a group of deputies from the Supreme Soviet of Russia, led by Sergei Baburin, arrived in the TDR (*Basapress* 1993, June 22) to commemorate the events of the previous year (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 1993).

Today, in the TDR, the activities of all Jewish organizations have stopped and synagogues have closed. The authorities refuse to register new Jewish organizations and the media is full of anti-Semitic articles.⁷

Although there have been few reported cases of human rights abuses in the Gagauz region, ethnically-motivated violence has occurred. It has been reported that armed Gagauz groups raided non-Gagauz (Moldovan and Bulgarian) villages, plundering livestock and vehicles (*Radio Free Europe* 1993).

Freedom of Movement Within Moldova

Persecution of ethnic minorities and violent confrontations have produced significant numbers of refugees within Moldova. Yet, it is difficult for them to escape from one part of Moldova (including its two self-proclaimed republics) to another. Anyone moving within Moldova must state his or her reasons for doing so. A residence permit can be obtained if displaced people stay with relatives, in dormitories or in government supplied accommodation in hotels. The applicant must obtain written permission from the owner of the apartment in which he or she will stay, as well as from all other adult relatives living in the apartment. In practice, there are significant problems associated with finding an apartment or other residence in a country where housing is in such short supply (*Information and Research Branch* 1993).

Emigration

According to a poll conducted by the Moldovan Academy of Sciences in September of 1992, 60 percent of Russian-speaking citizens were ready to

leave Moldova because of "nationalistic" tensions (BBC 1992, October 5). Russian statistics indicate that, between July 1, 1992 and January 31, 1993 (including the peak of the Transdniester conflict and its aftermath), 11,072 people fled from Moldova to Russia, making a total of 191,431 who had arrived from Moldova in the few years prior to January 1993 (Soldatova 1993). Others fled to the Ukraine during the Transdniester war, but many have since returned. For most of the uprooted, possibilities for emigration to the West are limited. Only Jews have an established channel of escape. The exodus of 60,000 Jews from Moldova during the period of 1989-1992⁸ reflects the seriousness of the present situation.

The armed conflict between Romanian and Slavic populations of the Transdniester region has affected many Jews. Alison Kaplan and Shimon Chertok estimate that there were 8,000 Jews in the Transdniester region (with 2,500 in Bendery and Tiraspol before the Transdniester War began). Many of them fled the armed confrontations. One-third of the Jews who fled emigrated to Israel. Those who stayed remained anxious to get out (Kaplan 1992; Chertok 1992). According to E. Danilyan, freelance journalist and special representative of the UN in Moldova, in September of 1992, there remained not more than 10 to 13 Jewish families in Bendery (Chertok 1992). Among those who still live in Moldova and the TDR, 70 percent have Israeli letters of invitation.⁹ Some Jews have been subjected to the practice of "displacement" prior to leaving. When local residents learn that a family is planning to emigrate, they break the lock on the apartment while the occupants are out and simply move in. When the family returns, they are told that since they are leaving anyway, they can move in with their relatives. The police do not interfere in such instances.¹⁰

Many Moldovan Jews are reluctant to emigrate to Israel because of the discouraging letters received from compatriots in Israel who experienced

difficulties finding decent housing and jobs. In fact, the situation of some recent Moldovan Jewish immigrants in Israel was so desperate that they returned to Moldova. However, upon their return, they said in a public statement that they regretted their actions. They encouraged their relatives not to idealize their former homeland and to remain in Israel (*American Association of Russian Jewry* 1992). ■

Notes

1. The following illustrates the current tensions. On June 23, 1992, following four days of heavy fighting in the right-bank city of Bendery, Vitalii Balin, a 61-year-old economist, was attacked at his place of work by three men, resulting in a two-week hospitalization, lengthy convalescence, and partial loss of hearing in his right ear. According to the victim's wife, one of the men, who was known to Balin, had lost his brother in the war and was under the (false) impression that Balin had been collecting money to help in the war effort. The men beat Balin and threatened to kill his family if he reported the incident. Local officials rejected the claim that was filed as a basis for initiating a criminal case against the attackers, and the Balins have decided not to pursue a civil case, according to the victim's wife, for fear of retribution (*Human Rights Watch* 1993, 235-6).
2. IRB document, *Helsinki Commission*, New York, March 9, 1993, telephone interview with a representative.
3. *Soviet Jewry News* (1992, 89) originally cited in *Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe* (1993).
4. This may explain the statement on November 23, 1992, by the President of Moldova's Federation of Jewish Communities, who observed that "there is no anti-Semitism in Moldova either as a state policy or as a social phenomenon," and that the Moldovan government goes to great lengths to meet the Jewish communities needs... (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* 1992, November 21). Also, Nahum Keren, a senior diplomat with Israel's embassy in Moscow and currently in charge of setting up Israel's mission in Chisinau, stated that Moldova is more hospitable for Jews than, for example, Russia, and that the Moldovan authorities' attitude toward Jews is far more considerate (Socor 1993, October 22).
5. Telephone interview by Alexander Benifand with Semyon Vaisman, President, Jewish Organizations and Communities of Moldova, co-President, Jewish Organizations and Communities of CIS, August 7, 1993.
6. Information supplied by the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, distributed through netnews@eclipse.Stanford.edu.

7. Interview with Vaisman, op. cit.
8. *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*. 1992. Cited originally in *ITAR-TASS*, October 28.
9. E. Danilyan, personal communication, 29 May 1993.
10. *Soviet Jewry News* 1992, August 30. Originally cited in *Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe* 1993.

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Anti-Semitism and Its Effect on Emigration Potential of Ukrainian Jews

Alexander Benifand and Tanya Basok

Several Western analysts have argued that Jews are no longer interested in emigrating from Ukraine because the era of state policy of anti-Semitism is over and now Ukrainian Jews can engage freely in reviving their culture. However, it appears that this view is too optimistic. In reality, the significant reduction in state anti-Semitism has been more than compensated by grassroots anti-Semitic incidents which the state at the present time is unable and unwilling to curb. The Jewish community is experiencing serious difficulties in trying to revive its culture. As a result, most Jews continue considering emigration. For many residence in Western countries has become nothing more than a dream because of the difficulties in obtaining visas to go there. At the same time, hardship experienced by recent arrivals to Israel and the persisting political instability there have lowered the interest of selecting *aliyah* as a viable alternative. While some have chosen Israel as their new home, many are still waiting to see if the situation in this country will improve before they emigrate.

Anti-Semitism in the Ukraine has roots that are several centuries old. Ukrainian Jews are well acquainted with bloody pogroms and persecution. Ukraine President Leonid Kravchuk attributes anti-Semitism in the Ukraine to Russian and Soviet policies of divide-and-rule. Whether or not it was a deliberate policy of Moscow, in many respects, Ukrainian anti-Semitism is now stronger than in Russia.

Prior to Gorbachev's reforms, the Ukraine state's anti-Semitic policy was more thorough than Russia's (Chertok 1993). However, in Ukraine, as in many other Eastern European countries, ex-Communists have "reformed themselves," into nationalists

(Kovrigin 1993). Grassroots anti-Semitism has penetrated all spheres of life and is unlikely to disappear for some time. According to Sheldon Kirshner,

State anti-Semitism has vanished since the advent of Ukrainian independence, yet grassroots anti-Semitism is far from dead (Kirshner 1993).

In his recent testimony to the Human Rights Committee of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, Semyon Gluzman, Director of the Ukrainian Bureau on Human Rights, noted that according to a recent survey:

18 percent of Ukrainians blame Jews for the catastrophe caused by the 1917 Revolution; 38 percent believe that, for Jews, money and profit are much more important than human relations; and 10 percent consider Jews responsible for the present ills suffered by other people (*Informatsionniy Bulletin AARE* 1993).

Given these opinions, it is hardly surprising that anti-Semitic incidents are occurring. In December 1992, the Ukrainian National Party held a demonstration outside the Odessa Television Centre protesting the large number of Jews employed in the TV industry (Dobrivker 1993). On March 21, 1993, a group of young men burst into the Lviv City Centre for Jewish Culture, shouting anti-Semitic slogans and threatening to use violence (Arolovich 1993). After Dmitry Dvorkis, of Jewish origin, was elected mayor of Vinnitsa, a protest was organized by the Ukrainian National Assembly during which anti-Semitic slogans were sung (Khazan 1993).

Examples of anti-Semitic vandalism abound. On the night of November 10, 1992, a plaque of Jewish writer, Sholom-Aleikhem, was splashed with

paint (Yatsyuk 1992, November 12). On November 21, 1992, a sculpture to the memory of the victims of Babi-Yar received the same fate (*Kievskie Vedomosti* 1992).

In Kiev, unknown assailants placed explosives in the city's oldest functioning synagogue and posters of the *Lubavitcher rebbe* were defaced. In Kharkov, a severed pig's head was dumped in front of the city's only synagogue. In Dnepropetrovsk, a swastika was scrawled on a wall of the synagogue (Kirshner 1993).

Anti-Semitic newspapers are sold freely, and anti-Semitic posters are virtually unopposed in Kiev (*Evreiskie Vesti* 1992). The newspaper, *Nova Ukraina*, published an article accusing Constantinople Jews of conspiring with Spanish Jews to take over Spain (Antonov 1992). Another newspaper, *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, published by the Ukrainian Nationalist Assembly, printed an article by Pavel Chemeris, in which he put the blame for the "Socialist experiment" on Jews (Mirsky 1993).

The political atmosphere for Jews in the Ukraine became particularly tense during the trial of Ivan Demyanyuk in Israel, on the suspicion that he worked in a Nazi camp as a guard. Nationalists promised that if he was convicted, there would be reprisals against Jews in the Ukraine (Milner 1993). The examples of Western countries show that grassroots racism usually persists long after official declarations of anti-racist policies. In those countries where anti-racist hate literature is not illegal, human rights legislation does not exist, and commissions or boards in charge of hearing and adjudicating charges of racism are absent, one cannot expect racist acts to vanish; this, unfortunately, is the case in the Ukraine. The activities of ultra-right organizations are not prosecuted, and no one initiates investigations into the origin of anti-Semitic flyers (Schedrina 1992).

There are also numerous examples of vandalism which go unpunished. In Evpatoria, for instance, a group of people vandalized a plaque commemorating a massacre of Jews which took

place on November 24, 1941. One of those who drew a swastika and wrote anti-Semitic graffiti on the plaque was caught, yet the District Attorney ordered him released (Lyustin 1992; *Sholom* 1992). As a result of such amnesties, neo-Nazi organizations such as the "Legion of New Order" and "*Skhidnii Khrest*" are becoming more openly anti-Semitic. On October 24, 1992, 40 members of these organizations publicly burned Jewish newspapers and the Star of David. The participants promised that in the future, such acts would be more frequent (Yatsyuk 1992, November 5).

It seems that as long as no one is lynched, these and other openly illegal acts of ethnic hatred are perceived as "political pluralism" (Kapelyushnii 1992). Even when acts of violence against people are committed, the police remain unmoved. In one instance, an apartment of a Jewish writer was set on fire and anti-Semitic graffiti written on the wall. Only several days later did the police arrive to take evidence. The graffiti included as evidence only at the insistence of one of the victims (Sneider 1992; Arkadyev 1992). Police brought no action in another reported incident in which a Jewish man was beaten by two Russians (*Monitor* 1993).

Some critics trace the inability and unwillingness to protect the rights of Jews to the Ukraine government itself. According to Simon Wiesenthal, head of the Jewish Documentation Centre in Vienna, Ukrainian authorities are renaming streets after former pogromists, such as Simon Petlura. Wiesenthal sent a letter to President Kravchuk, reminding him that Petlura's fighters killed 80,000 Jews in 1918-20.¹ The President replied through the Austrian Embassy, explaining that renaming streets is a prerogative of local government bodies, not the central government (Kovrigin 1993, 16,17). That did not appease Wiesenthal however, and when the Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister invited him to a memorial for the victims of Babi-Yar, he declined, explaining:

[The] Germans who invaded an alien territory didn't know how to find

Jews and Communists. They would have been unable to kill so many people if not for the help rendered them by local hangmen. This must not be forgotten. This is precisely why I declined the invitation. I can't afford taking part in falsifying history. Today they don't want to remember about the collaboration of the Ukrainian police with fascists. Such people can't be rehabilitated (ibid.).

There have also been examples of anti-Semitic statements made by People's Deputies. Shkuratiuk, for instance, stated publicly at a session of the regional Soviet in Rovno on December 14, 1992, that he was proud that "Ukrainians took part in the execution of Jews in Babi-Yar." He accused Jews of being active in the security agencies which persecuted Ukrainians in the 1930s (Arolovich 1993). In February 1993, the paper *Golos Ukraini* (Voice of Ukraine) published an article by Kalinets, People's Deputy, in which he accused Jews of "constant complaining of bad treatment by Ukrainians during World War II," which, according to the author, "was not true" (Milner 1993).

According to Gregory Marianovsky, Chair of the Human Rights Commission of the Kharkov City Council, the state does not officially support anti-Semitism. However, there are anti-Semitic groups, even in Rukh.² An openly anti-Semitic and militant nationalist organization, *Ukrainskaya Samooborona* (Ukrainian Defence), enjoys the support of the Head of Regional Militia. There is provision in the Criminal Code against the incitement of ethnic hatred, but the Attorney General, citing freedom of the press did not invoke this provision even for such openly anti-Semitic newspapers as *Novaya Ukraina*, which clearly incite ethnic hatred. Marianovsky concluded that:

Today, [Ukrainian authorities] are inciting hatred even in the City Council, and our Commission cannot do anything about it. And they keep on writing atrocious articles about 'kikes' and 'masons'.³

Frustration over the state's failure to curb anti-Semitism was also expressed

by Semyon Gluzman in his testimony to the U.S. Congress:

In cases of barbaric anti-Semitic actions, as a rule, special services (Militia) of the Ukraine cannot (or do not want) to find those who are guilty (Arolovich 1993).

Some analysts have argued that the Jewish community is experiencing a revival in the Ukraine, but this seems overly optimistic. Jewish culture in the Ukraine is virtually dead. There is no Jewish community with its own language, traditions, religion and schools. There are only a few synagogues and no indigenous rabbis. In the last few years, Jewish organizations, synagogues and schools have received official titles to some buildings, but the high costs of their maintenance has made it extremely difficult to keep them (*ibid.*; Kirshner 1993). A Jewish doctor from Donetsk writes:

In spite of some revival of Jewish life, the situation in the city is complicated and even dangerous. The growing anti-Semitism among the population and the full negligence on the part of the authorities really scares us. We are constantly in fear. We have been directly threatened on many occasions because of our activism in the Jewish community (*Monitor* 1993).

The Department of Demography of the Jerusalem University estimates that there are 350,000 Jews in the Ukraine today, less than one-third of the Jewish population in 1926. Even in 1979, there were still 634,154 Jews, and in 1989, they numbered 487,307. Ninety percent of Jews residing in the Ukraine consider Russian their native tongue, and the remaining ten percent are elderly people (Arolovich 1993). Rather than a revival of Jewish culture, the collapse of Communist rule has led to a revival of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, the present economic and political uncertainty in the Ukraine is likely to contribute to this revival. Persistent anti-Semitism, alienation from the Ukrainian culture, and failure of the Jewish community to rebuild itself would likely to encourage many Ukrainian Jews to consider emigration as an alternative. ■

Notes

1. In 1926, Petlura was shot by a young Ukrainian Jew in Paris. Petlura's assassin was acquitted when it was discovered that 15 members of his family had fallen victim to Petlura's pogroms. When Germans occupied Lviv in 1941, they gave complete freedom to Ukrainian nationalists who then killed 8,000 Jews in a matter of a days.
2. There was a recent attempt to separate Rukh Kharkov from the All-Union Rukh under the motto "All Non-Ukrainians Must Leave." The situation in Kharkov Rukh has since stabilized and those holding anti-Semitic views have been expelled (Gluzman).
3. Gregory Marianovsky, telephone interview, March 10, 1993.

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