

Mikhail Gorbachev stresses unity and the Party's role in the Second World War

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev in a speech on May 8 stressed popular unity and the Communist Party's organising role as the mainstays of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45.

Speaking at a gala meeting in Moscow, which marked the 45th anniversary of the triumph, he said it was forged by the arduous joint effort of troops on the battlefield and workers on the home front. The war took a toll of more than 26 million Soviet lives, he noted.

Expressing gratitude to the allied armies and resistance fighters in various countries, Gorbachev said: "We mourn the enormous losses suffered by humanity in the flames of the Second World War."

When analysing developments that led to the war, he said they "would have taken quite a different turn had it not been for Chamberlain's and Daladier's 'appeasement' of the aggressors and for the perfidious calculations that Germany and the Soviet Union would bleed each other white, making it possible then to dictate to the whole of Europe."

While noting that "the possibility of averting war was very unlikely," Gorbachev also pointed out "gross strategic blunders" by the then Soviet leaders.

Although emphasising Josef Stalin's incontestable responsibility for those mistakes, he said it would be wrong "to dismiss all of his activities as supreme commander-in-chief and chairman of the state defence committee. Having unlimited powers, he wilfully directed the special super-centralised system of management, which in those extreme conditions played its role."

Gorbachev flatly rejected claims that the Soviet Union won because it was ready to pay any price for victory. He said those allegations "are out of touch with reality and basically an insult to our Army and people as well as to the antifascist struggles of other nations."

The main factor behind the victory, he said, was the fact that Soviet people rallied behind the war effort and that the nation did not collapse, as Hitler and his allies had planned.

Among the other decisive ingredients of the victory, Gorbachev mentioned the organising activities of the Communist Party. "Now that we

face the need to restore the Party's role as a political vanguard in Lenin's interpretation, it is more than relevant to stress that the Party never played that role as adequately as during the first years after the revolution and in the Great Patriotic War," he said.

The President described the anti-Hitler coalition as a unique political achievement during the Second World War.

He said that the co-operation sometimes came extremely hard and was patchy and uneven and the Soviet Union had to bear the brunt of the fight with Germany. Yet, victory in the Second World War "is the common service and accomplishment of all states and peoples that found one another in battle against the forces of aggression and obscurantism."

"The most important lesson presented to us by the history of the war is that in order to survive, mankind must unite and disarm," the President declared.

He pointed to favourable conditions emerging in the world and especially in Europe to establish a new security system and take consistent reciprocal steps towards disarmament.

Gorbachev said that "the post-war realities retain all their significance, and any encroachments upon them must be ruled out."

The President argued for the Soviet concept of building a 'common European home' along with a similar idea expressed by President Francois Mitterrand to set up a European confederation, on the condition that no one will attempt to replace the lasting peace in Europe with new versions of the 'cold war'.

"This determines our approach to German reunification. We sympathise with the understandable desire of Germans in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany to live as a single family. The time has come to turn this post-war page in German history," Gorbachev said.

Soviet people, he said, favour co-operation with this new Germany, but dependable guarantees are needed to ensure that German reunification will not violate the security interests of the Soviet Union or other nations, or

disrupt strategic stability in Europe and the world.

A German peace treaty would draw the line under both the Second World War and the 'cold war', Gorbachev said. It should give confidence that only peace will emanate from German soil in future.

"The treaty should determine the military status of Germany and its place in the pan-European security structure, and formalise its commitments concerning the immutability of post-war borders," he stressed.

"We don't want a document discriminating against Germany or affecting the Germans' national dignity," Gorbachev added. "This should be a peace act in the true, full sense of the word."

"The world is entering an era of disarmament, and the Soviet Union is prepared once again to reaffirm its readiness to assist this wholesome process in every way," Gorbachev said.

Commenting on the forthcoming Soviet-American summit, he said he hoped it will achieve substantial progress along the road followed by the two countries for quite some time now and, above all, make a constructive move towards disarmament.

Speaking of perestroika in the Soviet Armed Forces, Gorbachev said the country needs a strong, up-to-date army and navy that are capable of reliably protecting it and constitute part and parcel of a new system of international and European security.

He said the planned military reform stresses defence efficiency at minimum costs, an optimum structure of the armed forces, and weapon quality.

"The years of the war brought us together," Gorbachev said. "Popular cohesion led us to the victory. The memory of that unity gives people confidence that at the present watershed in our history, we shall hold out as well, remaining faithful to the ideals for which our fathers and grandfathers laid down their lives, and translating them into reality to make life better today and tomorrow." □

Yazov on Victory Day

MORE than a million Soviet troops laid down their lives fighting to free European nations from Nazi slavery, Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Dmitri Yazov said on May 8.

He was speaking at a meeting with military delegations from the Warsaw Treaty nations, who were in Moscow for the celebrations to mark the 45th anniversary of the allied victory in the Second World War.

Yazov said that over seven million Soviet officers and men took part in fighting to liberate eleven European countries occupied by the Nazis. The price paid by the Soviet people for rescuing humanity from the Nazi plague was incredibly dear, he said.

The feat of valour by the over one million Soviet troops who fell fighting in Europe in the

name of freedom, social progress and peace, Yazov said, was a cornerstone of co-operation among the fraternal countries that grouped together into a defensive alliance - the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

The entire history of this organisation, which will have been in existence for 35 years in a week's time, has been one of allegiance to the goal of maintaining stability and peace in Europe, which was proclaimed when the organisation was founded in May 1955, the minister continued.

He described the ensuring of the allied countries' security, the prevention of war and the preservation of peace in Europe as the principal service done by the Warsaw Treaty over the years.

"A big role in fulfilling this task has belonged
(continued on next page)

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev addresses education officials.....	p158
Nikolai Ryzhkov interviewed on Soviet television	p159
Soviet-EC Commission discuss bilateral co-operation.....	p160
TASS comments: Reunited Germany's NATO membership	p161
Geneva talks on banning chemical weapons has ended	p162

Mikhail Gorbachev addresses education officials

WE need a new higher school capable of influencing society and raising its intellectual potential, without which we are doomed to mark time or advance slower than required by the present situation, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told the country's rectors of higher educational establishments in Moscow on May 11.

He stressed that the Soviet Union's educational system, its higher school urgently needed a government policy consistent with present turning point in the development of society. Gorbachev invited the learned audience to start more vigorous work to form a state programme with the aim of transforming the higher school.

"I will issue respective instructions within the framework of the Presidential Council. Perhaps, a decree on this score should be adopted," he said.

Gorbachev then discussed the situation in the country, economic and political reforms, paying special attention to the reorganisation of the Party and the preparations for the 28th Communist Party Congress.

"You can judge from the discussion under way in the country how many problems have accumulated and what questions the Congress is due to answer. I am not expecting any extraordinary incidents, although people have been talking about a split and about the Party

giving up its positions. Some say it will no longer be a party capable of carrying on the cause of Lenin. I believe that having passed through the pre-election phase and debates, the Congress will approach fundamental decisions and the Party will make an important step forward in mastering its new role of society's political vanguard and will be equal to the transformations taking place in society. I am deeply confident that there will be a strengthening, not a weakening of the Party," Gorbachev stressed.

Noting that the Congress will have to thoroughly discuss how the Party should act under actual political pluralism, Gorbachev said that in his view, the Party should be open to dialogue and co-operation and be prepared to form an alliance with all political movements, which are interested in implementing the perestroika policy.

In this sense, he said, it is necessary to use the entire intellectual, democratic potential of our society. "We must realise once and for all that we have parted with the political monopoly of the Soviet Communist Party for good and have to be prepared to act in conditions of democracy and political pluralism.

"Indeed, we have approached a very important phase of transformation. If we cope with it and find correct decisions required by the life and perestroika processes, we shall take the lead for a long time, and, moreover, we shall boost perestroika most powerfully." □

Soviet President receives Mongolian leaders

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev on May 14 met visiting President Punsalmagiyn Ochirbat of Mongolia and Mongolian communist leader Gombojavyn Ochirbat.

They discussed Soviet-Mongolian relations and ways to improve them in the spirit of the changes in the two countries.

The sides agreed to accelerate their efforts to change the structure and mechanism of economic relations in order to make them more efficient and more socially-oriented.

The transition to payments in freely convertible currency according to current world prices will help the sides balance their trade and economic ties.

The basic issues, related to mutual payments, will be considered by the two governments on a

mutually acceptable and just basis.

During the discussion of international issues, the sides reiterated their adherence to the policy of strengthening peace and developing international co-operation in Asia, and their readiness to apply more efforts in this field together with all interested countries.

The Soviet Union's major peace proposals, set forth in Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk, serve these goals.

Gorbachev welcomed Mongolia's proposal to create a permanent mechanism of political dialogue in North-East Asia and its efforts to broaden contacts with other Asian countries, regional international organisations and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Soviet and Mongolian leaders expressed satisfaction with the development of the two countries' relations with China.



SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on May 14 met his Mongolian counterpart Tserenpiliyn Gombosuren, who is accompanying President Punsalmagiyn Ochirbat of Mongolia and Mongolian communist leader Gombojavyn Ochirbat on a working visit to the Soviet Union.

The two ministers discussed Soviet-Mongolian relations in the light of the reforms in the two countries.

They paid special attention to the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and pointed to the need for active actions to reduce the military threat there.

The sides agreed to increase their interaction in the environmental protection.

Shevardnadze and Gombosuren expressed satisfaction with the full normalisation of the Soviet Union's and Mongolia's relations with China, which they said met the interests of all other countries, as well. □

Presidential decrees in Estonia and Latvia

ON May 14 President Mikhail Gorbachev signed two decrees proclaiming invalid the decisions of the Supreme Soviets of Estonia and Latvia concerning the restoration of independence of these Soviet republics.

The Presidential Decree on the resolution by the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic says that the Estonian Parliament unilaterally, without holding counsel with the population of the republic, and ignoring the existing economic, political, cultural and legal connections within the Soviet Union, adopted resolutions proclaiming illegal the state authority of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Estonia. In this way, a number of articles of the Soviet Constitution and the USSR law on the procedure for deciding matters relating to a union republic's secession from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were violated.

The President decreed to declare the resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic null and void from the moment of its adoption and consider unlawful any actions of the state bodies and officials, as well as individual citizens, carried out on the basis of the indicated resolution.

In the decree of the declaration of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic "On the Restoration of Independence of the Latvian Republic" President Gorbachev stated that the declaration violated a number of articles of the Soviet Constitution, as well the law of the Soviet Union of April 3, 1990 "On the Procedure for Deciding Matters Relating to the Secession of a Union Republic from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

The President declared the declaration illegal from the moment of its adoption. □

Gorbachev meets Moscow communists

SOVIET Communist Party leader Mikhail Gorbachev toured several factories in Moscow's Frunze district on May 11 to meet communists who nominated him their delegate for the forthcoming 28th Party Congress.

Gorbachev said debates in the Party should lead to a consolidation of its ranks, assuring that it was still possible to prevent a split at the Congress.

"The Party is a powerful, consolidating force of our people," he said.

He began his tour with a visit to the Yava tobacco factory. After that he went on to the Bolshevik confectionery factory.

He discussed a wide range of issues, including housing shortages, working conditions and rumoured price hikes.

"It is necessary to bring our prices in line with the world level," Gorbachev said.

"A market entails a full responsibility of the work collective for its products. Such a market is yet to be created, and we will be moving towards it step by step, keeping the price of basic food products under control," he said.

In the afternoon, Gorbachev met Frunze communists gathered in the *Izvestia* conference hall to discuss problems facing his perestroika reform drive.

In order to speed up reforms, "it is necessary to expand socialist democracy and do everything possible to promote social justice. A socialist idea is a fruitful idea. Not in vain did it survive such serious deformations and millions of people are still loyal to it," he said. □

(continued from previous page)

also to the Warsaw Treaty's Joint Armed Forces. They are part of the strategic military balance with NATO which is a highly important factor for international stability and security," Yazov said.

He noted the growing importance of political means in the Warsaw Treaty's activities, which, he said, presupposes reciprocity. "Only on a mutual basis is it possible to gradually transform the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO into politico-military organisations, into tools for political co-operation," Yazov said.

The issue of German reunification, he believes, can be naturally solved only within this framework. "A united Germany's membership of NATO would disrupt the existing balance of forces and thereby destabilise the situation on the continent. This is why this variant is unacceptable," Yazov said.

After the meeting the visiting delegations placed wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin wall. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov interviewed on Soviet television

SOVIET Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov said that transition to a regulated market economy is a lengthy process and will take many years.

In a television appearance on May 12, Ryzhkov recalled that in late December 1989 the government submitted for the consideration of the Second Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR a programme for the economic recovery and defined stages in the further development of economic reform, which was supported by deputies.

Ryzhkov said speculation that the government was elaborating some new programme was at odds with reality. "We are fulfilling the programme, which was supported by the Second Congress of People's Deputies," he emphasised.

Ryzhkov said the government was late with price reform, without which further economic reform and work to raise production efficiency were impossible.

In Ryzhkov's view, a good many absurd and even paradoxical things have been created in price-setting in the country. He cited the example of grain purchasing: low purchasing prices did not stimulate grain production in the country, which generated the need to increase its purchases abroad.

Ryzhkov said that the amount of grain purchase abroad increased from two million in the eighth five-year plan period to 40 million in the 12th five-year plan period. "The country can no longer buy this quantity of grain," Ryzhkov said.

Ryzhkov emphasised the need to create such a system of prices that, on the one hand, would

enable the state to control some prices in the production sphere and on the consumer market – to be safe from spiralling inflation. And, on the other, to give an opportunity to develop the free prices, which would move the economy ahead.

On retail prices, Ryzhkov said that prices for consumer goods and food products should be increased starting in 1991. But the price of some essentials, especially food prices (meat, milk, bread, butter, sugar and oil) should be controlled by the state. In future, some of the consumer goods may, possibly, be allowed to go to the market.

Ryzhkov emphasised that all problems related to retail prices would be discussed with the people.

Asked about social guarantees and the mechanism to protect the interests of Soviet citizens, Ryzhkov spurned the "shock therapy" method to implement economic reform.

"The mechanism of social protection is being developed. If retail prices begin rising from 1991, this mechanism, which provides for compensation to some or other extent for the losses incurred by people as a result of a one-time price hike, will be put into operation.

"Students, pensioners, invalids, families with many children and low-income families will receive full compensation. In addition, an indexing system is being developed to compensate for the increase in the price of necessities," Ryzhkov said.

On unemployment, Ryzhkov noted that the government deemed it impermissible to create unemployment to achieve a rise in production

efficiency. "There are 10,000,000 job vacancies in the USSR now, especially in the service sector, which can absorb people losing their jobs."

Ryzhkov said the government would introduce a system for job retraining. He is of the opinion that in the next few years unemployment will not threaten Soviet society.

Ryzhkov emphasised that these measures can be implemented only with people's consent, only when people realise that this is necessary. □

Warsaw Treaty a factor for world peace and security

"THE Warsaw Treaty Organisation is as ever a significant factor for security and peace as applied to Europe and, considering the objective place and role of this continent in international affairs, to the whole world," Soviet Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov said in an interview published in the newspaper *Izvestia* on May 13.

"The Warsaw Treaty Organisation continues its activity and this is reaffirmed by all of its participants," Yazov points out. "Such is the political reality. It does not conform to speculative conclusions and predictions by some politicians and publicists speaking about the 'disintegration' of the Warsaw Treaty.

"Given all the drama and sometimes pain of the current democratic changes in Eastern Europe, they open new prospects for creating a collective security system, for which we have worked since even before NATO and then the Warsaw Treaty emerged. At issue is a system based on equality, mutual respect and trust and on the principles of reasonable sufficiency for defence.

"The thesis about transforming the Warsaw Treaty and NATO from the military-political to politico-military alliances is being shifted onto the practical plane today," Yazov said. "But this transformation is a mutual rather than unilateral process, which equally concerns the Warsaw Treaty and NATO.

"It is this nature of transformation, which stipulates the conversion of both alliances into instruments of political co-operation. The issue of reducing the ratio of military aspects in the activity of the Warsaw Treaty can be viewed only in this context," Yazov emphasised.

On German unification, Yazov noted that a future united Germany's membership in NATO would tip the strategic balance and, hence, destabilise the situation. "Soviet people do not accept this idea. Evidently, new solutions need to be searched for, which would take into account existing concerns and ensure reliable security for all European countries.

"A principle of mutual interests should be found and a document, fusing the provisions on the borders of a united Germany, its armed forces, the military/political status, the continuity of obligations and the stationing of the victor powers' military contingents on the territory of the new state, should be elaborated," Yazov emphasised.

Yazov said that the role of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO in building a new European home can and should be constructive. Favourable conditions for this are being created as the ideas of new political thinking are consistently asserting themselves. □

President Gorbachev meets papal envoy

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev met the papal envoy for special missions in the Soviet Union, Monsignor Francesco Colasuonno, in the Kremlin on May 14.

Colasuonno conveyed to Gorbachev a message from Pope John Paul II, which contained a reply to the letter by the Soviet President to the head of the Holy See, sent earlier.

During the conversation, Mikhail Gorbachev expressed profound satisfaction with the development of deeper contacts between the Vatican and the Soviet Union. The President noted that a dependable foundation for mutual understanding was provided by the values which form the basis of perestroika and of the Holy See's approaches – the recognition of the priority of the rights of man and nations.

"We are now passing through a stage of development in Europe and the world as a whole," Gorbachev said, "when a heightened sense of responsibility is required of everyone. If all, including the Soviet Union and the Vatican, use their potential and their influence, a truly novel, peaceful phase may open up in the life of

the world community. The achievement of this new phase is a lofty, noble goal."

Speaking about perestroika in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev noted that it is now passing through a phase of decisive revolutionary changes, when there is a greater need than ever for calm, objectivity and dialogue. In the USSR, which has experienced so many dramatic and even tragic moments, it is most important to carry out long-overdue changes in the spirit of democracy, humanism, conscience and law – on the basis of the priority of universal human values, Gorbachev said.

Colasuonno conveyed to Gorbachev the pontiff's cordial greetings and wishes for success in the renewal of society in the Soviet Union. The Pope, the envoy said, closely follows day-to-day developments in the Soviet Union and prays that their outcome may be favourable. The head of the catholic church proceeds in this from the awareness of the role played by the Soviet Union in Europe and the world, the role that Gorbachev's personal activity has to play, and the contribution of perestroika to the cause of stability and security in the whole world. The Holy See views the development of relations with the Soviet Union in this context.

Gorbachev wished the papal envoy success in his mission. "As President of a country," he said, "I have to think about the well-being and the solution of vital problems of all citizens – non-believers and believers of the orthodox and catholic churches, as well as of other confessions. On this basis, we can find common ground for co-operation," he said.

In closing, Gorbachev conveyed his regards and best wishes to Pope John Paul and stressed the importance of meaningful personal contacts between the head of the Vatican and the Soviet leadership. □

Nuclear Deterrence: Past and Future

By Konstantine Nikolayev

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW

Soviet-EC commission discuss bilateral co-operation

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Frans Andriessen, Foreign Affairs Commissioner of the European Communities (EC), opened the first session of a Soviet-EC Joint Commission for Trade, Commercial and Economic Co-operation in Moscow on May 10.

In his opening remarks, Shevardnadze described the Moscow session as a "significant and major event", emphasising that the Soviet Union attaches much importance to co-operation with the communities.

He voiced hope that the session will give a substantial impetus to establishing co-operation between the two sides under specific programmes.

The Soviet Foreign Minister pointed out that Soviet-EC economic co-operation is lagging behind "the already established and progressing political dialogue between them."

Having pointed to the urgent need for progress towards building a common European home and overcoming the division of Europe, Shevardnadze emphasised that there should be no discrimination from political motives in approaches to co-operation with various countries.

Describing German unification as being central to current European affairs, Shevardnadze urged the leading bodies of the EC to take due account of the economic relations between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic in view of the forthcoming inclusion of East Germany in the EC's sphere.

Frans Andriessen referred to the Joint Commission's first session as an historic event. He pointed to the existence of an immense potential for the expansion of trade between the USSR and the EC.

The liberalisation of their mutual trade, Andriessen believes, will create new opportunities for Soviet exports and improve conditions for EC businessmen in the Soviet Union.

Andriessen praised the progress which had been made in the two sides' accords on co-operation in the fields of the nuclear power industry, environmental protection and the training of managerial personnel.

Following the opening remarks by Shevardnadze and Andriessen, the Soviet and EC delegations began to discuss bilateral co-operation.



COMMUNIQUE

AN acceleration of the economic reform in the Soviet Union will promote a more active integration of the Soviet economy into the world economic system and will create favourable conditions for trade and economic co-operation between the Soviet Union and the European Communities (EC), emphasises a joint communique of the Soviet-EC joint commission's first session which ended in Moscow on May 11.

The volume and pattern of goods turnover

between the Soviet Union and the EC do not correspond to their economic potentials, the communique states.

In order to create a good basis for structural changes in bilateral trade, the Soviet Union and the European Communities decided to make efforts to promote direct capital investments and encourage co-operation between enterprises and companies of the Soviet Union and the EC.

The two sides declared in favour of removing non-tariff restrictions to promote the export of Soviet goods to the EC and boosting Soviet imports from the EC, particularly that of consumer goods.

The EC delegation, the communique goes on, welcomed progress in ensuring favourable conditions for EC business representatives in the USSR.

At the same time the EC expressed hope for further improvements in the provision of all necessary information to them, specifically about overdue payments and the availability of office and housing premises.

Having discussed the state of co-operation in the fields of ecology, the power industry, science, technology, management, and the training of personnel, the two sides put forward specific proposals to develop it, the communique reports.

The Soviet and EC delegations expressed readiness to consider them in the most favourable spirit, agreeing to set up sub-commissions on trade policy and on environmental protection problems.

The session was held in a cordial atmosphere of mutual understanding, the communique emphasises. □

Amendments to Soviet customs regulations

AMENDMENTS to USSR customs regulations, severely restricting the export of miscellaneous consumer goods and food from the Soviet Union, entered into force on May 10.

Valeri Dragonov, deputy head of the USSR Council of Ministers' Main State Customs Control Board, told TASS that, under the new regulations, citizens, permanently residing in the USSR and crossing the border for private business, cannot export from the USSR a range of commodities.

These include, in part, car accessories and spare parts, electric cable and wire, erection and bench tools, building materials, furs and fur garments, fabrics of all kinds, carpets, tablecloths and linen, household freezers and refrigerators, bicycles, cameras, household electric appliances, vacuum cleaners, washing, sewing and knitting machines and consumer electronics.

Soviet and foreign tourists and persons going abroad on private business are prohibited to export food products from the USSR.

At the same time, the regulations allow USSR citizens leaving for Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia on private business, on tourist trips, for rest and treatment, to take abroad foodstuffs, with the exception of those banned for export, worth five roubles per person. This provision is applied also to citizens permanently residing abroad.

Persons, travelling abroad for permanent settlement, are allowed to export up to 5,000 roubles worth of jewellery and other household goods made of precious metals and stones per person, irrespective of age. This category of citizens is prohibited from exporting foreign made furniture.

Manufactured goods, food, combustible and lubricant materials purchased in the USSR with foreign currency may be exported without restrictions.

Speaking about the reasons behind such tight customs regulations, Draganov noted that the measures are meant to protect the Soviet consumer market. The export from the USSR of manufactured goods and food products, which are in short supply in the country, including for the purposes of profiteering, has drastically increased recently, further destabilising the weak domestic market.

Some 9,000 TV sets, 16,000 sewing machines,

12,000 washing machines, 170,000 alcoholic beverages, 25 tonnes of butter and 30 tonnes of sugar were seized at the Nastmska customs post on the Soviet-Polish border alone during the first quarter of 1990.

Goods are not confiscated but are returned to their owners upon the latter's return to the USSR. Therefore, a decision was adopted about the length of time goods seized from foreign citizens can be kept on the border. It is limited to 48 hours. After this term expires, goods are transferred to a trade outlet for sale.

"However, the measures are temporary and will be revised as the state of the Soviet consumer market improves," Draganov stressed. □

IN THE SERIES

Perestroika

PERESTROIKA as seen by
a Writer

PERESTROIKA Through the
Eyes of a Co-operator

PERESTROIKA as Seen by
an Economist

PERESTROIKA as Seen by
a Mathematician

PERESTROIKA as Seen by
an Economist

The above booklets are priced 30p each and are obtainable from:

Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

HUMANISM:

Traditions

and

Paradoxes

by Pavel Gurevich

price 80p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

TASS comment:

Reunited Germany's NATO membership

By Alexander Antisferov, TASS political news analyst:

"THERE are no longer any obstacles to German unity. This has been achieved due to the joint efforts of participants in the 'two-plus-four' meeting. The Soviet side merits particular gratitude," stated the West German newspaper *Neue Presse* with regard to the Soviet Union's position at the 'two-plus-four' talks that were held in Bonn earlier this month.

"The Soviet Union should be repaid in its own coin for its response to the idea," the newspaper concluded.

The four NATO countries that participated in the meeting – West Germany, the United States, Britain, and France – which advocate NATO membership for a reunited Germany had such an opportunity in the Canadian city of Calgary this week during the session of NATO's planning group at defence ministers' level.

Expectations of response rose as Western political figures of the highest rank recently talked about a new role for NATO and about the need to reorganise it in light of changes taking place in Eastern Europe and to create new security structures on the continent.

However, the outcome of the session in Calgary makes one question the sincerity of such statements. The ministers did not introduce any substantial adjustments to NATO's military doc-

trine, which envisages – in particular – a first use of nuclear weapons.

In the new conditions, sub-strategic nuclear systems were said to be of "relatively greater importance," meaning the US plans to deploy new tactical air to surface missiles (TASM) in Western Europe, including on West German territory.

What kind of alliance should a reunited Germany join – 'reorganised' and 'transformed', which NATO leaders only speak of so far, or a military group that seeks to build up its combat might?

It is naive to base one's policy of counting on altruism or gratitude, which the *Neue Presse* urges the West to do. The steps being taken by NATO indicate that the Soviet Union's apprehensions about a reunited Germany's NATO membership are more than justified.

"Reliable guarantees must ensure that the interests of our security, just as those of other nations, and the strategic stability in Europe and the world will not be upset," President Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised in his remarks in Moscow on May 8.

It is clear that a reunited Germany's NATO membership by itself cannot provide such guarantees, despite all the verbal assurances by NATO leaders.

The Soviet proposals to conclude a German peace treaty taking into account present-day realities and interdependent interests seems to be the most acceptable solution to the problem. □

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman

'Open skies' agreement

"ELABORATING an agreement on the 'open skies' regime will be a major step in boosting openness in military activity and in confidence building," Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov told a briefing in Moscow on May 10.

Commenting on the second stage of an international conference on the 'open skies', currently drawing to an end in Budapest, Gerasimov noted that progress was achieved at the forum on some issues.

"However, the parties' positions on several key issues have yet to be harmonised," Gerasimov went on. "For instance, Western negotiators talk at including in the number of facilities subject for verification military bases outside their national territories, which considerably limits the zone of the 'open skies' regime's application," Gerasimov said.

"The parties' positions also differ on which aircraft should be used for verification flights and what monitoring and measuring devices should be installed in these aircraft. Agreement has also not been reached on the utilisation of information gathered during the flights," Gerasimov said.

"Despite remaining differences, we think that an agreement on the 'open skies' can be reached within a short time," Gerasimov said. "This agreement will be a tangible addition to national

means to verify arms reduction agreements," Gerasimov emphasised.



Denies rumours of pogroms

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov, at a briefing on May 10, denied recent Western press reports about anti-Jewish pogroms in Moscow, allegedly planned for May 5 of this year.

"The Western press, primarily the American press, reported that anti-Jewish pogroms, closely resembling the Nazi 'Kristallnacht', would be staged in the Soviet Union on May 5," Gerasimov said.

"Because fear of pogroms intensified, at the beginning of May, 98 rabbis from the Western coast of the United States complained to the Soviet ambassador in Washington, reported the *Washington Post* newspaper. They expressed deep concern over the growth of anti-semitism in our country and the pogroms expected on May 5," Gerasimov said.

"On May 4 the Israeli Government delivered an official statement on the same subject to us through the leader of the Israeli consular group in Moscow," said Gerasimov.

"As we were told at the Press Centre of the USSR Interior Ministry, rumours about allegedly planned anti-Jewish pogroms in Moscow were totally unfounded. No incidents of this kind were recorded on May 5, meaning the rumour was fabricated from the very beginning."

Let us ask who benefits from this?" the Soviet diplomat said addressing the journalists. "Those who wish an increase in emigration to Israel, who frighten people with pogroms, urging them to leave the country. You know who wishes this." □

USSR-CUBA:

30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

"THE 30th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Republic of Cuba, being marked by our peoples, is not just a jubilee date but a boundary that enables one to appraise the path traversed on its merits. Our relations are based on the principles of equality and are marked with mutual respect, the understanding of each other's real possibilities, a sense of responsibility and internationalist mutual assistance.

Fraternal co-operation between the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist Party of Cuba is a major element of the dynamic relations between our states," Soviet People's Deputy and Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee Oleg Baklanov said at a meeting held on May 9 in Havana to mark the event.

Baklanov was leading a visiting USSR Supreme Soviet delegation.

"Our co-operation rests upon a huge potential which should be treasured and multiplied. It is now essential to make our relations more efficient."

Speaking of Cuban-American relations, Baklanov said that the United States should demonstrate a really democratic approach to other countries, specifically to Cuba. Putting American-Cuban relations back on a good-neighbourly footing would promote the process of recovery in the region and the world as a whole. The Soviet Union is ready to promote such a dialogue in all aspects, that would not affect the sovereign rights of either of the sides.

"The Cuban revolution has been able to withstand this time of trial because of the Soviet Union's firm and timely support," Cuban Communist Party Central Committee politburo member Jose Ramon Machado Bentura said. He expressed gratitude to thousands of Soviet specialists who had made an inestimable contribution to the development of the Cuban economy, science and technology.

Fidel Castro, First Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, Chairman of the State Council and the Council of Ministers attended the celebration meeting. □

FROM THE USSR

The following are available at the prices shown:

- To Find Oneself..... 60p □
- Our Way to Victory..... 50p □
- Europe on the Eve of the
Second World War 50p □
- Man and Politics..... 50p □
- May Day:
a Hundred-year History 70p □
- USSR Yearbook '90 £1.50 □
- USSR: Perestroika £1.00 □

Please tick the appropriate box(es) and send cheque/PO to:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

MAN

Is the Measure of all Things

price 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Geneva talks on banning chemical weapons has ended

SERGEI BATSANOV, a Soviet delegate at the Geneva disarmament conference, is here interviewed by Novosti's Valeri Borisenko:

BORISENKO: Another round of the Geneva talks on a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons has ended, but the mass media has not reported on the decisions it has taken. Why? Are the talks deadlocked?

BATSANOV: I think that it is not diplomats but journalists that are responsible for the absence of such reports, even though this round has not produced positive results. The talks are not deadlocked, but the situation is alarming.

Last year's political developments promised that the convention on a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons would be concluded soon. But major initiatives have not been transformed into progress at the talks. We think this can be explained by the fact that a number of delegations, above all the US, do not have flexible instructions which would enable them to agree to compromises on the few remaining problems.

These problems concern inspections on challenge, regimes for the admissible production of dangerous chemicals, non-use of chemical weapons, sanctions against violators of the conventions, economic co-operation in the peaceful uses of chemistry, and so on.

I think these problems could be solved in a package.

The success at the talks largely depends on the positions of the Soviet Union and the US, which hold bilateral consultations to coordinate them. Have they made progress? How does the US tackle the issue of the production and modernisation of chemical weapons?

Both the Soviet Union and the US have repeatedly stated that they regard the prohibition of chemical weapons as a priority task. Regular bilateral consultations started in 1985 to promote multilateral talks and draft interim bilateral actions towards the convention. These are useful consultations that proceed as expected.

In the past few years the Soviet Union and the US advanced at the multilateral talks joint documents on the procedure of inspections on challenge and on the destruction of chemical stocks and facilities producing them.

During these consultations the sides produced a memorandum on a bilateral experiment on verification and exchange of data pertaining to the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Under this memorandum, the sides have exchanged data on their respective chemical capabilities and have started exchange visits to corresponding facilities. In line with the proposed bilateral agreement the Soviet Union suggested that the sides not only reduce chemical weapons to a coordinated low level but pledge to stop the production of such weapons.

We have never been happy with the continued production and modernisation of chemical weapons in the US. The Soviet Union is a principled opponent of the production of chemical weapons, especially now that an international convention to prohibit such weapons is being drafted.

It is for the US to decide whether to produce or not to produce chemical weapons now that there are no international conventions on the prohibition and destruction of toxic agents. The situation will change when corresponding agreements on banishing chemical weapons from the face of Earth are signed.

The US suggested that the destruction of chemical weapons proceed gradually, so that their stocks do not surpass 500 tonnes in the first eight years. Next should follow the complete elimination of chemical weapons, but on the condition that all states having the potential for their production join the convention. Does this mean that even if signed the convention will never be carried out in full?

The Soviet delegation has called for complying with the agreement, reached largely thanks to the Soviet Union and the US, on complete elimination of chemical weapons ten years after the convention comes into force.

The right to preserve chemical weapons, even if in small numbers, would mean the perpetuation of the chemical threat, the more so that the US intends to realise this right unilaterally, or jointly with the Soviet Union at the most.

This can create a situation where the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons will not be carried out to the full.

However, the US proposal is not bad overall. It has an aspect that concerns the need to guarantee the universal applications of the convention and wide representation of states. Though the Soviet Union does not think that the preservation of 500 tonnes of toxic agents would encourage participation of other states in the convention, as the US expects, this problem cannot be removed from the agenda.

It should be settled politically, and efforts to this end are being made at the talks.

The US has made public its plans for the withdrawal of its chemical stocks from West Germany. Who will guarantee that they are not replaced with binary weapons?

Though the US and West German governments concluded a secret agreement on the issue, their statements testify to the will to pull out US chemical weapons from West Germany by the end of this year. Judging by reports, the agreement provides for non-deployment of US chemical weapons in West Germany in the future.

The withdrawal of chemical arsenals from the heart of Europe will clearly help lessen the threat of a chemical war. Personally, I think it is hardly possible that the US will deploy binary weapons in West Germany.

The issue of confidentiality of information obtained during inspections of private chemical enterprises has been a stumbling block at the talks. Meanwhile, chemical corporations supported the idea of a chemical weapons ban at their conference in Canberra. More than that, some US companies have refused to fulfil Pentagon contracts for the production of toxic agents. What is hindering the talks now?

The multilateral talks on the convention are, of course, talks between governments. But, since the future convention will inevitably spread to some sectors of the chemical industry, it should respect its legitimate interests without detriment to the reliability and effectiveness of international verification.

The position of the Canberra conference is probably the first case of industrial quarters supporting an agreement on the reduction of weapons that directly concerns them. I think that the refusal of some US companies to produce toxic agents is an example of a responsible attitude.

Could the agreement promoting the prohibition of chemical weapons be reached by the next Soviet-US summit?

It is expected that the Soviet and American presidents will sign an agreement on mutual commitments of their countries before the convention comes into force, called upon to promote chemical disarmament in general and the signing of the convention in particular.

The agreement will provide for radical cuts of Soviet and US chemical stocks, the world's largest, to 5,000 tonnes of toxic agents on either side. While carrying out this agreement, the sides will actively co-operate, spotlighting issues of environmental protection and safety of the people in connection with the destruction of chemical weapons. The sides are searching for compromise solutions to the remaining problems.

If this agreement is signed, the Soviet Union will face certain difficulties because the corresponding draft national programme is still being discussed by the USSR Supreme Soviet, which prevents us from talking about a specific schedule of the elimination of chemical weapons under the bilateral agreement. □

(Novosti)

USSR Yearbook '90

The USSR 1990 Yearbook provides information about the progress achieved in restructuring all aspects of life in Soviet society. It contains information on:

- the Soviet Union's geography;
- the country's nature;
- its state structure, ethnic composition, and inter-ethnic relations;
- the economy, politics, culture, science and engineering;
- civil rights and opportunities for the development of personality.

The book includes a record of the key events that took place in the Soviet Union from July 1988 till June 1989.

obtainable at £1.50 from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

The Wonders and Problems of Lake BAIKAL

Lake Baikal is often called "the gem of Siberia" or "the Siberian Sea". It has a surface area of 31,500 square kilometres. Baikal is the world's deepest lake (1,620 metres), containing one-fifth of the fresh water on the surface of the planet.

Lake Baikal's water is almost as pure as distilled water. There are some 1,800 species of wildlife and vegetation living in the lake, and three-quarters of them are not to be found anywhere else in the world.

obtainable at 60p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.

Pravda analyses events in Eastern Europe

"CHANGES in the allied countries of Eastern Europe reflect global democratic tendencies," Valeri Musatov, deputy chief of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee's International Department, believes. "They signify a switch from totalitarianism to parliamentary pluralism, to a humane society and a law-governed state," he says in an article 'Changes in Eastern Europe and our Perestroika', published in the May 14 edition of *Pravda*.

Musatov believes "the nature of changes in Eastern Europe testify to the replacement there of a social structure based on the 'one party state' administrative-command system and the discrediting of the ideological concept of 'real socialism'. In the international arena they show a departure from the post-war division of Europe and reshaping of our allied system.

"The revolutions in Eastern Europe," Musatov says, "were brought about by long developing national crises. It was chiefly characterised by a crisis of the concept of state socialism with

its authoritarian-bureaucratic system and dogmatic ideology. This model, in spite of attempts to modernise it, proved its political and socio-economic inefficiency in the 1970s. Alienation of the masses from politics and from participation in the state administration, violations of human rights and discrepancies between the leadership's promises and the actual achievements produced setbacks and sharp crisis phenomena.

"The command-administrative model of society's administration and the one-party system put a brake on progressive reforms. The Soviet Communist Party did not arrive at this conclusion overnight. We cherished illusions for a long time about the creative potential of a one-party system. In Eastern Europe it was crucially important for the ruling communist parties, which constituted the core of their political systems, to realise the need for in-depth changes and to elaborate practical steps in that direction.

"At the decisive moment it became clear that, after decades of uncontrolled rule, the ruling parties had lost their ability to self-renovate. They bureaucratically degenerated and upheld dogmatic views. They lost contact with the people, and their policy was no longer trusted by

the popular masses.

"In most East European states the communists were much too late with their reforms, and even where they eventually launched reforms (Poland, Hungary), the initiative quickly passed over to other political forces in pluralistic conditions.

"The ruling parties, which seemed monolithic and powerful, began to gradually disintegrate when divorced from the state machinery. The efforts of these parties were paralysed by disputes about the past (the opposition accentuated the communist parties' responsibility for the crisis), by the inevitable aggravation of the internal struggle between advocates of traditional views and of reformist approaches.

"Was it possible to avoid such a dramatic course of events in neighbouring countries? Hardly. The events were warranted. The reasons were mostly internal. But, of course, there were also important external factors. Perestroika in the Soviet Union and the new political thinking gave an impetus to socialist renovation. However, most former leaders were unable to pick-up the signals of our epoch. And the grassroots, of the Party, used to obeying orders, were thrown into confusion," Musatov notes. □

Soviet scholar on German unification

"THE original euphoria over the idea that German unification may occur instantly is gradually fading.

"The unification programme beginning from a currency and economic union between the two Germanies and to international determination of the status of a reunited Germany take time and require attention not only on the part of the GDR and the FRG but other European powers as well," Professor Abdulkhan Akhtamzian, a prominent Soviet expert on Germany, told TASS. "Therefore it is necessary to be prepared for patient and constructive work."

This work has already been started, he said. The first ministerial meeting in Bonn under the two-plus-four formula dealt with the setting out of initial positions. The key question has been identified: the military and political status of a

future reunited Germany.

"I believe that serious substantive talks on the issue are forthcoming," Akhtamzian said.

Another aspect of the problem is the need to renew the notion of 'the four powers' responsibility for Berlin and Germany as a whole. Right up to a final peaceful settlement and recognition of the status quo in Europe this responsibility, should, of course, remain in effect.

"As far as the four in which the status quo will be consolidated is concerned, this should not necessarily be a peace treaty in the classic sense of the word," the Soviet scholar went on to say.

"One must also take it into consideration that it is not indifferent to Germany's European neighbours as to which status a reunited Germany will have. I mean in particular Poland and the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. Therefore, it is inevitable that other European countries will be involved in addressing unification problems particularly if talks to this effect as is

planned be put on the plane of supporting the all-European process."

Economic relations with the two German states are of great importance for the Soviet Union. For at least 15 years the Federal Republic has been our major economic partner among industrialised Western countries and the GDR has been the largest business partner in general.

It seems to be that the task will be to secure that our business relations with the two German states take on a new quality. Akhtamzian said. This is prompted by the forthcoming renewal of machine-building and other branches of GDR's industry.

"Engineering products are the main thing to us because one-fifth of the machines we import come from the GDR and one-fifth from the Federal Republic. In the field of engineering technology whether we want it or not we shall objectively have to renew our industry on the basis of German equipment." □

THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD 1942-1943

by Yuri Plotnikov

The Battle of Stalingrad lasted for 200 days and nights, from July 17, 1942 to February 2, 1943. The USSR Armed Forces, having encircled and destroyed a 330,000-strong enemy force, launched a general strategic offensive and began to drive the aggressor from the Soviet land on a mass scale. The victory at the Volga marked a turning point in World War II.

price 50p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN)
3 Rosary Gardens
London SW7 4NW

West German exposition opens in Moscow

A SPECIALISED exhibition West German Metal-Working Equipment - Stanki-90, for short - is due to open for the first time at the Moscow National Economic Achievements Exhibition Centre. A total of 204 West German firms and organisations will exhibit a wide range of metal working equipment, instruments, processing centres, automated lines, manipulators, components and micro-electronic devices.

The exhibition's general commissar Hans-Jurgen Marczinski told a news conference in Moscow on May 14 that West Germany occupied a special place among the Soviet Union's trade partners from Western industrially developed countries. It is the leading supplier of machine-tool-building equipment to the Soviet Union. Soviet exports to the West German market are also on the increase. In 1989, they nearly

doubled as compared with 1980. Bilateral relations were boosted by the recently granted free access of many Soviet enterprises to the international market, Marczinski noted.

Valentin Kalchenkov, Deputy Minister for the machine-tool and instrument-building industry, stressed in his opening address the special significance of the development of new forms of co-operation between the two countries - production co-operation and joint ventures. World markets' high standards for machine-tool building, Kalchenko noted, make it imperative to raise the universality of products. These tasks are easier to accomplish on the basis of close partnership between major machine-tool building countries, he noted.

The exhibition will last until May 24 and will make a new contribution to the expansion of contacts between the two countries. □

Soviet Government needs popular support

By Alexander Voznesensky

THE coming switchover to a regulated market economy has been confirmed in the USSR. In his television interview on May 12 Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov said that in the next few days the government will submit its proposals to the federation and presidential councils and in late May the government report will be heard in parliament.

Why did the government keep silence for so long? Why was the possible variants of the market programme discussed for three months by all except its authors? Ryzhkov noted that he had been waiting for a long time to address the nation but found it inexpedient to speak of the rough drafts.

The Soviet Premier's plea may seem quite well founded. But the long silence enabled some opponents to stir up anti-government sentiments, and not without success. People from various walks of life today believe that the government ruined its former programme adopted at the 2nd Congress of People's Deputies and hastily started elaborating a new one. The government report on a switchover to a market economy thus received penalty points in advance. Reluctance to popularize their ideas and actions may cost Ryzhkov and his backers very much.

Ryzhkov pointed out that the government report is not a new programme but a natural follow-up to the programme approved by the 2nd Congress of People's Deputies. Indeed, the Congress backed the programme and instructed the government to polish it up and make it more radical. Efforts in this field are, probably, now getting underway but the government continues upholding a stage-by-stage shift to market me-

chanisms. The preparatory period is to continue throughout 1990 and the first measures will be taken in 1991-1992. So far Ryzhkov has unveiled two major aspects.

Individual quotas set in the middle of the 12th five-year-plan period (1985-1990) enabled the ministries to subsidise the inefficient at the expense of frontrank enterprises. Such a system has led to mismanagement and seriously worsened the economic situation. But, in Ryzhkov's view, had this not happened many enterprises would have gone bankrupt. It is high time to make profits taxes common for all except collective farms to make enterprises boost production efficiency. The new regulations would prevent the industrial ministries from manipulating financial means and thus lessen their monopoly. The Soviet Premier did not elaborate whether this will be the last step toward the elimination of ministries or more efforts will be needed to do away with inefficient and monopoly-based economic development.

Ryzhkov confessed that the nation has been late with a pricing reform. The situation would have, possibly, been better had this reform been carried out earlier.

There exists three views on a pricing reform. The radicals say that completely free prices would sooner or later be balanced by the market. The conservatives insist on higher fixed prices. The government programme sticks to the golden rule — making some prices free to prod economic advancement and others state-controlled to guarantee the country against galloping inflation. Such measures are being suggested for wholesale, purchase, and retail prices.

People, certainly, voice alarm over retail prices. Ryzhkov stressed the need to raise them but so far keep prices fixed on bread, milk, meat, sugar, seed oil, and many other food-

stuffs. The government suggests complete compensation for price rises for pensioners, students, invalids, and large families and partial compensation for other groups. A system of indexation has been worked out to regulate wages in keeping with subsequent possible shifts in pricing.

But it is up to the people to express their, fourth, view on a pricing reform. Nikolai Ryzhkov said that such a reform cannot be held without nationwide discussion. The government is expected to advance forceful arguments in its programme to be published in the press to gain popular support.

Ryzhkov noted that the radical way of economic recovery suggested by the government can be adopted only with people's consent. He added that unity is the best guarantee for overcoming the current difficulties. □

(Novosti)

Congress of People's Deputies of Russia opens today

THE first Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation — the new supreme authority of the largest of the 15 Soviet republics — opens in the Kremlin today.

Previously the supreme power body in Russia was a supreme soviet that met as a rule twice a year for two or three-day sessions. The institution of the Congress is one of the components of political reform in the Soviet Union.

The Congress will set up a supreme soviet that will become a permanently functioning parliament. Unlike the previous one, it will have two chambers.

One of the chambers — the Council of the Federation — shall be formed in proportion to the number of voters. In the other chamber — the Council of Nationalities — administrative units, including autonomous entities, will be represented by an equal number of deputies, giving additional votes to small nationalities inhabiting Russia.

In accordance with recently adopted amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, 1,068 people's deputies are expected to participate in the Congress. In actual fact their number will be somewhat less because deputies have not yet been elected in some districts, despite repeated voting.

The campaign to elect people's deputies of the Russian Federation began at the end of last year. For the first time in the history of the republic, elections were conducted on an alternative basis. There were more than 20 candidates per seat in a number of districts.

The deputies corps is basically multi-party in nature. Although the Soviet Parliament has yet to adopt a law on parties, amendments to the constitution recognise a multi-party system.

In addition to Communist Party members, the deputies' corp includes leaders of emergent and not yet officially registered parties — the Social-Democratic Party of Russia and the Russian Christian Democratic movement. There are also people who stated their intention to institute a people's party of Russia soon, and advocates of the formation of a democratic party.

Under conditions of real pluralism, deputies visualise various ways out of the current situation. The comparison of viewpoints and a quest for compromise will hopefully be a fruitful one. □

Soviet law on pensions to be introduced stage by stage

ON May 15 the Soviet Parliament adopted a law on the provision of pensions to citizens of the USSR. It substantially improves the position of pensioners, of whom there are more than 60 million in the Soviet Union.

The enactment of the law will cost the federal government approximately 35 billion roubles per year.

The law seeks to make pensions correspond to a person's labour input and provides pensions to all categories of citizens.

The document guarantees social protection to pensioners through periodic increases in pensions in accordance with the change of the cost of living index in the country.

Under the law, an overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens will receive 'labour' pensions.

This pension can be drawn by men over 60 years old and women over 55 who have worked for at least 25 and 20 years respectively.

A new type of pension — 'social' pensions — is being introduced for the first time and applies to people who for various reasons have not worked for the designated amount of time.

Union republics, local councils and work collectives are granted the right to grant additional pensions and benefits.

The pensions law, which includes more than 130 articles, was discussed for a record-long period: it was first discussed in autumn last year. The law adoption procedure was also dragged out for several weeks.

Pension benefits demanded by representatives of various regions and sectors were the main point at issue.

The government opposed an endless extension of the list of benefits-enjoying occupations, stating that working conditions should be improved instead.

But, following a keen debate, the government responded to some demands from people's deputies.

Speakers pointed out during the discussion that the provisions of the law are feasible only provided the rouble stabilises and the current scarcity of goods on the consumer market was addressed.

As a result the law will be introduced stage-by-stage in order to avoid a sharp growth of ready money not backed up by goods. □

In the series Expert Opinion

**Restructuring the Economy
is the Paramount
Political Task**

Nikolai Slyunkov

price 40p from:
Soviet Booklets (SN)
3 Rosary Gardens
London SW7 4NW