

## President Gorbachev presents Bill to Parliament on amendments to Constitution

*President Mikhail Gorbachev presented a Bill, On Amendments and Addenda to the USSR Constitution in View of Streamlining the System of State Administration, to Parliament on December 4. Here follows his remarks:*

"YOU have the Bill in your hands, and this frees me from the need to describe the proposed changes in detail. I shall only single out some points and shall point out first of all that we discussed the suggested changes in the structure and the functions of the executive branch of government long and thoroughly yesterday with the participation of the leaders of constituent republics, albeit not all of them.

"The most significant changes concern a new role for the Federation Council. From an advisory body under the President, it will turn into a linchpin in the system of higher state power and administration and be vested with extensive authority.

"The council shall deal with all major issues of national importance, coordinate the activities of federal and republican bodies of power, and help settle disputes and conflicts.

"You have noticed, of course, that the Bill provides for giving Federation Council members important powers to enable them not only to uphold and protect the interests of their republics but also to share in exercising federal powers on an equal footing.

"This is also reflected in article 127.9, which stresses that the President can delegate some of his duties both to the Vice-President or the speaker of the USSR Supreme Soviet and to Federation Council members.

"One fundamental novelty is that federal executive authority will henceforth be concentrated in the President's hands. This is necessitated by the transformation of the Council of Ministers into a cabinet of ministers, which will be accountable to the President.

"Day-to-day guidance of the cabinet will be exercised by the Prime Minister, to be nominated by the President and endorsed by the Supreme Soviet. The ministers will be appointed by the President in agreement with the USSR

Supreme Soviet, but the opinion of the Federation Council will also be taken into account.

"The cabinet of ministers shall be responsible to the President and the USSR Supreme Soviet, which will guarantee the Supreme Soviet, the possibility to fulfil one of its important functions, namely exercising control over the activities of executive authorities.

"In keeping with the eight-point plan I submitted to you on November 17, the Bill suggests adding to the power and administration structure new agencies to monitor compliance with laws and presidential edicts. The main goal behind the launch of a state inspection service will be to guarantee the viability of the mechanism for executing adopted decisions.

"The bill briefly defines the functions of the Vice-President. This person should effectively be the President's right hand, fulfilling his most diverse instructions. In addition, the Vice-President will supervise the state inspection service.

"A place of its own in the new system of higher power should be taken also by a security council. It will fulfil functions of exceptional importance to the entire society and state, which will be within the competence of the centre. When corresponding constitutional amendments were being formulated, account was taken of Supreme Soviet members' considerations on this score that had been made available to me.

"As to how the security council should be formed, we decided it possible, after we had discussed the issue, to leave for the Federation Council President to decide.

"I want to draw your attention to yet another aspect to the Bill submitted for your consideration. The list of powers vested in the cabinet reproduces in the main the set of powers envisaged by the draft union treaty. It does not include only those federal powers which are part of direct authority vested in the President, the Federation Council and some other bodies.

"In this way, we are introducing in advance into our structure principles and institutes with which the radical transformation of the USSR into a union of sovereign republics is connected. Yesterday, this question was thoroughly and comprehensively discussed during a meeting with republican leaders. We formulated the task as follows: it is time to make a choice. I asked comrades to speak about their standpoints.

"The draft union treaty is now under discussion and it will naturally undergo certain changes. How should we act during the transition period before the entire new system of government and management is formed in accordance with the redistribution of powers on the basis of the union treaty? Shall we vest special powers in the cabinet for sometime or shall we grant it only those powers which are envisaged in the draft treaty which is now being discussed. To put it plainly, to secure objectives towards which we are to advance and thus give a clear

signal as to what position the Supreme Soviet occupies and as to our commitment to deep changes in our union, first of all through the redistribution of powers.

"After we exchanged views, the latter view point was fully supported: we cannot delegate any special 'transitional authority' to the cabinet. It would still further complicate the already complex situation in the country. Conversely, we should put on record what the draft union treaty proposes and start moving towards the new structure, although we all understand that we shall not be able to reach this structure overnight.

"Another question arises here. Obviously, the transfer to a new system of government will require a certain period of time and some intermediate stages. In this connection, we must see to it that each new step in this direction is commensurate with the actual situation in the country and act in a way that would not let the transition to the new structure increase destabilisation but to decrease it.

"We shall have, I think, to work out and adopt a law on the transitional period, which would provide the basis for restructuring government with a view to achieving the system set out in the draft union treaty."

President Gorbachev stressed that it was necessary to solve many practical problems in

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### Ryzhkov meets Bank of England governor

SOVIET Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov met Bank of England Governor Robin Leigh-Pemberton in Moscow on December 5 to discuss Soviet economic reforms, including monetary, crediting and hard currency policies.

Current Soviet economic difficulties have been prompted by excessive centralism and mismanagement in finances, credits and price formation, Ryzhkov said.

The economic reforms require the solution of many complex problems, when on the one hand, the state has to boost spending on social programmes and, on the other, there are few financial resources for this, he said.

The natural process of affirmation of republican sovereignty is not free from negative tendencies, when there are attempts to abandon uniform economic rules in a federative state, he said.

Leigh-Pemberton said he was convinced that a common monetary and currency system in the Soviet Union and a common policy in this sphere are major conditions for economic stabilisation and the transition to a market.

The understanding of the Soviet economic situation is crucial for the British Government's position on Soviet-British economic relations, he said. □

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# Mikhail Gorbachev addresses Party plenary meeting

A REGULAR plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) opened in Moscow on December 10. Notwithstanding the Party's renunciation of its monopoly of power, the importance of the two-day plenum is great. Its main task is to work out the country's communists' attitude to the drafting of a new Union Treaty. Those present were addressed by Soviet President and Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

"The Party is in favour of keeping and radically renewing the Union," he said. "This is not a tactical move or concession to anyone under pressure of circumstances but it is the Party's principled stand."

Gorbachev recalled that the country has taken shape as an integral whole "for decades and even centuries." If "patches" of land, divided by customs barriers, independently-issued currencies or even border pickets form instead of an all-union market, "vast opportunities would be lost."

Along with economic and demographic factors, Gorbachev said, "the union is necessary for our peoples also as a reliable guarantee of their security and the basis of international prestige."

The weight of republics that are emerging in

the world arena, he recalled, is now determined by the fact that "they are backed by a powerful state which is one of the supports of the present-day world order. I do not think that any republic, I mean its people, not the ambitious public straining after portfolios, would win by giving up this indisputable advantage."

Reaffirming the right of nations to self-determination, Gorbachev specified that it is a question of "precisely the right of nations, not of a group of people vested with power. The question as to what kind of a state people would like to live in can be decided only through a referendum."

Gorbachev called for an end to the "war of laws", into which the discussion of the correlation of powers between republics and the union, and first of all their rights to management material valuables, develops sometimes.

Proposals made by Gorbachev on November 17 and endorsed by the Soviet Parliament are designed to put an end to such an intolerable state of affairs.

The union should retain a sufficiently wide range of powers, Gorbachev believes. It is fundamentally important that these powers will be exercised by the selfsame representatives of republics delegated to all-union bodies.

Gorbachev described the draft Union Treaty as a "good basis for the elaboration of a full-value document. Plenipotentiary representatives of republics will gather in Moscow for collective work on the document," he announced.

Among the main peculiarities of the draft Union Treaty, the General Secretary mentioned "a thorough resolution of the question of the separation of powers" with guarantees of "the existence and development of republics as sovereign states."

Gorbachev voiced doubts about the advisability of first adopting republican constitutions and then concluding a Union Treaty.

As far as the idea of inter-republican agreements is concerned, it can be supported only provided "there is no intention to counterpose them to a Union Treaty and an all-union market or, still less, to use them as a substitute for these."

Gorbachev reaffirmed his determination to "energetically introduce new principles, connected with the remaking of the union, to the state structure" before a new union treaty is signed. □

## Rouble convertible in two years

THE Russian Government intends to make the rouble convertible in two years' time, Russia's Economics Minister Gennadi Filshin told an international seminar in Moscow reports TASS correspondent Georg Mikhailin on December 7.

The republican government will do it without haste to prevent the dollar from reigning throughout Russia, the republic's Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov specified.

But this announcement did not dispel doubts of representatives from 40 leading American and West European companies and banks attending the seminar that the long-cherished convertibility of the rouble could be achieved within the confines of one republic, even Russia, which possesses the Soviet Union's most powerful economic potential.

In addition, as many participants admitted, the political instability in the country and the "war of laws" between the republic and the centre still scare Western investors away from the Russian market.

However, Filshin reassured the business people, differences between the Russian and federal governments are greatly exaggerated, he said. They concern not the essence of the radical economic reform but only the pace of implementing it.

The federal and Russian leaderships visualise privatisation as a process to bring into being independent commodity producers - competitors in any forms acceptable to the market, Filshin said.

The emerging private sector in Russia at times evades paying taxes, Fyodorov said. Therefore a ramified taxation system that will be served by 30,000 revenue inspectors is being created in the republic.

The establishment of a securities market, without which privatisation would flounder, is the main problem for the Russian Finance Ministry, Fyodorov said.

His ministry is already establishing a Moscow-based international stock exchange after the pattern of the Luxembourg one.

The bonds of republican and other governments will be quoted there along with the shares of companies. It is in this civilised way that the ministry intends to offset the state budget deficit. The Russian leadership intends to keep the state budget deficit at a level of not more than five per cent of expenditures. □

## Tension in Lithuania mounting believes Deputy Premier

"TENSION in Lithuania is mounting," Lithuanian Deputy Prime Minister Romualdas Ozolas said on republican television, reports Kazys Uscila from Vilnius.

Speaking about sources of tension inside the republic, Ozolas first of all touched upon the problems of eastern Lithuania, where Poles constitute an ethnic majority.

He recalled that the establishment of a Vilnius Polish national-territorial region was proclaimed there early in October this year at the second congress of deputies from all levels in the Vilnius area.

However, up to now the republic Parliament has not officially expressed its opinion on the issue. A special working group is considering matters concerning a possible status of Polish autonomy and will submit its recommendations to Parliament for consideration.

The Deputy premier also mentioned as a

source of the mounting tension "the Soviet Communist Party's disruptive activity in Lithuania. The CPSU has long been the main coordinator of political sabotage and military blackmail in Lithuania," Ozolas said.

He described as a particularly significant event in the republic's political life the discussion, which began at the Lithuanian parliamentary session last week, of the item concerning "the political and economic situation in the Lithuanian Republic."

The Parliament itself and its leadership were for the first time openly and strongly criticised during the discussion.

As Ozolas put it, the discussion was "very interesting and valuable."

He pointed out that "the orientation towards parliamentary immunity that has been in existence so far is a reflection of the CPSU's immunity." At the same time he emphasised that no one can be allowed to deny the Parliament itself or speak about re-electing it.

Ozolas did not show any optimism when speaking about a meeting, scheduled for December 13, between delegations of the Lithuanian Republic and the Soviet Union, to discuss matters of preparation for talks. He believes that "the quest for accords at the meeting will apparently turn into putting forward demands."

Ozolas also took a pessimistic view of prospects for Monday's meeting between Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis and US President George Bush.

Having in mind, undoubtedly, the problems of recognising Lithuania's independence, Ozolas said: "One can have no doubt that what was not done during several days following March 11 would not be done now that there is the threat of a Gulf war." □

### From a Woman's Viewpoint

Novosti correspondent Yelena BOGATYKH interviews ZOYA KRYLOVA, member of the Committee of the USSR Supreme Soviet on Women and the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Childhood, and Editor-in-Chief of the magazine *Rabotnitsa*.

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# Nobel Prize received by Gorbachev envoy

A GRAND ceremony was held in Oslo on December 10 to present the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Gorbachev was unable to attend the ceremony personally to collect the prize in the traditional "Nobel period", as he is inundated with work. He instructed his personal representative Anatoli Kovalev, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister, to represent him at the ceremony.

In her introductory remarks, Norwegian Nobel Committee Chairperson Gidske Anderson said the decision to award the prize to the Soviet President is the recognition by the committee of the leading role Gorbachev had played in the great changes in East-West relations.

## Gorbachev addresses plant managers

PRESERVING existing economic links between enterprises is now a key task, President Mikhail Gorbachev told a meeting of Soviet plant managers in Moscow on December 7. If this is not done, destructive processes will set in and halt reform, he continued.

The meeting, which opened on December 6 and ended on December 7, was attended by some 3,000 plant managers.

Gorbachev took issue with allegations that the entire economic policy of the current leadership was flawed. He stressed that demilitarising the economy and overcoming its extensive character was and remains the only true course, but in the course of economic reform serious blunders were made that led to commodity and monetary imbalances and a growing budget deficit.

The President noted that next year's draft budget will make further inroads into spending on defence and management and capital investment. The recent decisions to raise interest on savings bank accounts and to introduce free

Anderson presented the diploma and gold medal to Gorbachev's representative.

On Gorbachev's instructions, Kovalev read out a message from the Soviet President. Gorbachev expressed his gratitude to the Nobel Committee, saying "the prestige and the authority of the Nobel Peace Prize are known everywhere."

"I consider the winning of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize not as something personal, but as recognition of the key importance of what we call perestroika and new political thinking, for the fate of the whole world," the message reads.

"The fact that the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to me proves that perestroika and new political thinking belong not only to Soviet people, but to all mankind and are indivisible from its fate and from a secure and peaceful

prices on selected consumer goods will help stabilise the commodity market.

Short-term plans, Gorbachev continued, call for increasing the number of plots hired on long-term leases and selling building materials to the population. The President stressed the need to take a decision to tie down "overhang" money held by enterprises and relocate it.

Gorbachev stressed that an effective executive branch is crucial for stabilising the economy. He announced his decision to propose Russian Federation Procurator Nikolai Turbin, for the post of USSR Procurator General and Veniamin Yakovlev, the current Soviet Justice Minister, for the post of USSR State Arbiter. Under the Constitution, their appointments are to be endorsed by the Congress of USSR People's Deputies which opens on December 17.

Gorbachev also disclosed his plan to propose Sergei Lushchikov, Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Legislation, as Soviet Justice Minister. Lushchikov was elected USSR People's Deputy from the Komi Autonomous Republic in the northern part Russian Federation. □

future."

Gorbachev's message continued: "We are extremely thankful to Norway and other members of the international community, who had such an understanding, and by their activities in international affairs and in relations with the Soviet Union, expressed solidarity with our perestroika and feel keenly our current problems. If we act on such a basis, we will not have to regret missing a unique chance for the victory of the logic of reason and peace over the logic of war and alienation." □

## Soviet President cracks down on porn

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev on December 5 signed an executive order to map out urgent measures to protect public morality, citing popular concern about the spread of pornography, pseudo-medical literature and erotic videos.

The work will be supervised by a commission led by Culture Minister Nikolai Gubenko, which will also include officials from central government agencies and mass organisations. Cultural authorities in constituent republics will also be invited to help.

When working out measures to protect public morality, the commission is to take account of international law and the experience of other countries in fighting the porn business. □

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## GORBACHEV PRESENTS BILL TO PARLIAMENT

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the next few days. Drafting a bill on constitutional alterations and amendments is a responsible work requiring comparisons and specifications. In this connection he asked parliament to give a go-ahead to the system in principle.

Gorbachev then told the parliamentarians about the setting up of a group to prepare a programme of urgent measures in order to improve the country's food situation.

"Republics took part in this work. This is a priority issue, which requires special attention from and coordinated actions by the centre and all republics and regions," Gorbachev said.

"I held three hearings on the issue, to say nothing about the fact that this group works round-the-clock. Within the next two or three days the programme will be discussed with participation of republican prime ministers.

"The programme envisages measures to maintain the supply of food in December and until March inclusive.

"This is the first part of the programme.

"The second concerns measures to reform property relations in the countryside and land relations in general. Everything should be done in order to, within the next month or two, tap the initiative of collective and state farms, agro-

firms, personal plots, family farms and create conditions for the development of gardening in various forms.

"Rural and urban residents should be free to pursue agriculture.

"I make public a provision that will require agreement by republics, I believe we should find at least three to five million hectares to enable all those willing to have a plot for gardening.

"The issue about a mechanism to stimulate the production of agricultural products should be viewed differently. This is what many republics think. We want to formulate a general principle, on the basis of which every republic will solve the question in accordance with local conditions. The question is about a food tax. Russia wants to make it part of the state order for negotiated prices. Farms will have control over all production above this.

"This part of the programme will include urgent measures to develop and reconstruct the food industry on the basis of our own abilities and co-operation with foreign firms.

"The third section will cover issues related to the modernisation of the agrarian sector, its ties with industry and the social development of the village," Gorbachev continued.

"This programme will be successfully implemented only if all republics participate in it in a coordinated manner. □

"Many foreign countries are now offering humanitarian food aid and credits to buy foodstuffs. A special commission has been set up to tackle this issue."

At the deputies' request, Gorbachev spoke in detail about plans to import food and agricultural raw materials in December, January and March.

He said the current situation required new forms of work to distribute products among the population and control this distribution.

"We are now working thoroughly on this. A survey of 50 stores in Moscow by security bodies has shown that when stores close, a 'third shift' starts working. The same takes place at warehouses," the President said.

"A new system is now being created, which will take the situation under strict control. We will take resolute actions.

"As you know, I have issued a decree to revive workers' control groups on new principles. They have been given the right to control plants and warehouses and transfer their materials to prosecutor's offices and courts.

"These groups should be given premises and transport facilities and work together with law enforcement bodies. Workers' control groups should be formed within the next two to three weeks."

The President went on to answer questions from the floor. □

# Union treaty discussions

THE nationwide discussion of the draft union treaty shows that its conclusion is seen by many as the way capable of taking the country out of the crisis and helping all peoples in this multi-national country to achieve real social, economic and intellectual progress.

This is undoubtedly possible only if the principle of true sovereignty of all national communities is ensured. That the leaders of some republics declare their unwillingness to become a party to the treaty has caused protests from other republics.

Estonia's reluctance to join the union treaty, voiced by the republican leaders, "is fraught with serious economic problems," according to Estonian People's Deputy Anatoli Novokhatsky. "The republic will have to transfer to market relations after severing its economic relations with other regions of the country."

According to Novokhatsky, "it is necessary to focus on the preservation of the integrity of the renewed federative state, on the improvement of its nationality policy in order to ensure complete implementation of the universal declaration of human rights on entire Soviet territory."

Vardo Rumessen, member of the board of the Estonia Committee, which favours the restoration of the Estonian Republic on the basis of the 1938 constitution, says that the withdrawal of Soviet Army units from Estonian territory is a necessary preliminary condition for the discussion of the draft union treaty in the republic.

"If the union of Soviet republics disintegrates, this will cause imminent damage to each national culture," the rector of the Leningrad Conservatory, Professor Vladislav Chernushenko told TASS.

It is enough to take a look at the history of the St Petersburg and Leningrad conservatory to see that many national composer schools, including Baltic, Transcaucasian and Central Asian, have been formed for many decades on its basis."

## Ukraine and Lithuania sign agreement on co-operation

LITHUANIAN Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene and Ukrainian Prime Minister Vitold Fokin signed an agreement on economic and cultural co-operation for 1991-1995 in Kiev on December 7.

At the talks between the Ukrainian and Lithuanian delegations, both sides emphasised that the fulfilment of mutual obligations should not hinge on any third party.

The Lithuanian delegation's brief visit to the Ukrainian capital proved hectic. The sides conducted intensive business negotiations, during which they discussed, among other things, reciprocal deliveries of goods, expressed their desire to boost trade and openly discussed disputable issues. They exchanged views regarding the payment of the union's foreign debt, the price-setting policy and the formation of the state budget.

The Lithuanian delegation said it was interested in supplies of Ukrainian coal, rolled ferrous metal, table salt and vegetable oil. Ukraine, in turn, needs fish, refrigerators, television sets, clothes and knit-wear, fabrics, timber and accessories for the electronic industry.

In an interview after the signing of the agreement, Prunskiene expressed satisfaction with the document, noting that several of its points need

The process of inter-penetration and mutual enrichment of cultures, each of which is unique is now taking place. "It would be an unpardonable mistake to destroy the root system that has taken shape over many decades," Chernushenko, one of the initiators of the plan to establish a Baltic academy — an alliance of the Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Leningrad conservatories, said.

"There are many republics in the union with which Azerbaijan has formed friendly and business ties and has signed co-operation treaties," analyst Fikret Sadykhov says in the December 6 issue of the newspaper *Bakinsky Rabochy* (Baku worker).

He discussed the importance of conditions under which a union is possible and points out that "the true, guaranteed responsibility of the centre for the security of sovereign republics and a reliable defence of their national interests" is one of these conditions. He insists on parity relations and partnership principles in co-operation between republics and the centre, and says that the interests of neither party should be infringed upon. □

## ★ Russian deputies discuss draft treaty

THE Union of Soviet Republics must continue to exist but in a renewed form, Russian people's deputies told their extraordinary Congress in Moscow on December 8.

The discussion centred around principles of the new union treaty, with speakers favouring its signing but only after considerable redrafting.

The need to sign a union treaty is overdue, Deputy Viktor Zhigulin said, but only after Russia's federation treaty has been signed.

Deputy Sergei Baburin urged the adoption of a resolution on the participation in the prepara-

tion and signing of the union treaty.

Grigori Bondarev said the treaty should aim to ensure "by democratic means the preponderance of centripetal tendencies over centrifugal."

Speakers sought to focus on impartial analysis of the situation, but the political passions sweeping the audience were also voiced.

That was why the Congress heard with special interest the intervention by historian Dmitri Volkogonov, who is known for his balanced approach to the most pressing issues and his unbiased judgement.

"We need a union treaty, but it must be completely new and voluntary," Volkogonov said and added that "we are destined to live side by side for ever. Only a madman can seek to sever age-old ethnic, cultural and economic ties," he stressed.

He was critical of the present draft treaty. "I approve and support in principle the need for a union treaty, but we must resolutely and seriously alter its substance," Volkogonov said.

Vice-President of the Russian Republic Federation Khasbulatov informed the Congress of the consultations about the preparation of the treaty draft.

According to Khasbulatov, ideas behind the draft have undergone considerable evolution, taking into consideration numerous proposals made by Russia and other republics. Nevertheless, Khasbulatov pointed to a number of anomalies in the present draft.

Khasbulatov stressed the Russian Parliament's commitment to the idea of a renewed union and the union treaty.

The Parliament is expected to approve a resolution on the matter on Monday, December 10. □

## ★ Russian Federation agrees to participate in Union Treaty

RUSSIA has reaffirmed its determination to become "a fully-fledged member of the renewed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the basis of a new union treaty," the Russian Congress of People's Deputies said on December 11 in a resolution on the issue.

The Congress decided that the Russian Federation will participate in work on a draft treaty.

The document will be devised in line with suggestions by republics and autonomous areas and the draft treaty submitted by the Soviet Parliament, it said.

Legislators decided to set up a deputies' commission to prepare the new treaty.

The commission will be guided by several principles, including equality of Soviet citizens on the territory of all member-republics, the right of each nation for self-determination and self-government, common defences and a uniform state security structure and a central foreign policy in line with republics' interests and with their participation. □

## Azerbaijan and Georgia sign agreement on co-operation

AZERBAIJAN and Georgia have signed an intergovernmental agreement on economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation in Baku on December 7.

The document takes into account the transition to market relations and the development of ties between republican enterprises.

The sides pledged to co-ordinate their economic policies to protect domestic markets and consumers.

They agreed not to provide fuel, energy and other resources to a third party without mutual approval. □

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# Soviet Parliament adopts law on trade unions

THE Soviet Parliament on December 10 approved a landmark law on trade unions, giving them broad independent rights and guarantees.

The law states that trade unions will henceforth be independent of state, economic and political authorities. They will also enjoy complete property and financial freedom. The law proceeds from the basic guidelines for the transition to a market economy, which the Soviet Parliament approved last month.

The law vests trade unions with the right to control the labour code's observance by enterprises. Management will have the right to close down enterprises or suspend their operation only after informing trade unions about their decision at least three months in advance. They must also hold preliminary talks with them to guarantee workers' interests.

All-union and republican trade unions have the right to take part in the determination of compensation in the case of price increases. They also have the right to control the obser-

vance of legally established minimum living standards.

Work collectives will determine the terms on which trade unions will be provided with premises and equipment for their efficient work. This will be done with the participation of the management and trade unions.

The law meets the requirements of International Labour Organisation conventions ratified by the USSR. It takes into account the international practice of legally controlling the work of trade unions.

The new law will come into force on January 1, 1991. □

## Pravda:

### On situation at Moscow freight yards

NIKOLAI GAVRYUSHIN, the chief of administration of container and commercial traffic of the Soviet Railways Ministry, described as "catastrophic" the situation regarding the unloading of foodstuffs and consumer goods at Moscow railway terminals.

In an interview published by *Pravda* on December 9, he said that, according to information on December 8, "20,000 containers and 300 railway wagons with consumer goods and industrial equipment stand unloaded at Moscow's freight railway terminals.

"Goods with a total weight of 23,500 tonnes 'have been buried' at some warehouses for a long time. Cargo-moving motor agencies are

operating below any recognised standards: they haul away only a fifth of all cargoes. There is also a shortage of trucks and drivers."

The newspaper says that 101 wagons with meat brought mostly from abroad have been standing at the Moskva-Tovarnaya Station of the Oktyabrskaya railway since November 25.

They are destined for the Ostankinsky meat-packing factory in Moscow, which is unable to process all the meat.

"One of the reasons given for freight congestion is a shortage of storage facilities: all warehouses of trading establishments are packed to capacity," *Pravda* says in conclusion.

"On the other hand, shop shelves are empty. Why? This question should be put to the leaders of the Moscow City Council who have been carried away with rallies and meetings." □

### Neftekhimexport joint-stock company founded

YET another foreign economic joint-stock company has been founded in the Soviet Union - Neftekhimexport - the legal successor of the foreign economic association of the same name.

Major amalgamations in the oil processing and petrochemical industries have formed a stock capital of 20 million roubles and expect that the company's turnover will soon reach one billion roubles, speakers at the launch of the new joint-stock company at the Moscow World Trade Centre said, reports TASS correspondent Yuri Sepanov on December 10.

"One of the main goals of Neftekhimexport is

to broaden the export of Soviet petrochemical and oil processing products, on the one hand, and due to that increase the import of goods that are now essential for the Soviet Union," Valeri Kuzmin, chairman of the board of the joint stock company said.

"The company exports a wide range of petrochemical and oil processing products, synthetic rubber, commercial-grade carbon, tyres of all types and sizes for wheeled machinery, mechanical rubber products, rubber and sports shoes.

"The import list of the company includes petrochemical finished products, synthetic and natural rubber and latex, individual types of machinery, equipment, materials and other goods for the needs of technical re-equipment, reconstruction and expansion of production at oil processing and petrochemical plants.

"Matters concerning the construction of oil transshipment complexes and the founding of a consortium for the comprehensive processing of oil are now in the works. It has been agreed to organise a number of joint ventures abroad.

"Talks are under way, in particular, to establish mixed and subsidiary enterprises of Neftekhimexport with British, Dutch, Austrian, Hungarian and Bulgarian firms.

"The Neftekhimexport is now a major shareholder in the Sovfinamtrans joint venture, the main line of activity of which is to lease special railway tank cars to carry various petrochemical products of high viscosity.

"The Neftech joint stock company, established in Finland, is functioning successfully. There are projects to inaugurate similar joint-stock companies in other countries," Kuzmin said. □

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# Briefing at Foreign Ministry Press Centre

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze received on December 5 Jayantha Dhanapala, Director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and a group of participants in the international conference *Role of the United Nations in Disarmament and Security Process*, which was held in Moscow between December 4 and 6. This was reported at a briefing on December 6 by Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitali Churkin.

He said that Shevardnadze had stressed during the meeting that the UN would have to work out a scale of specific priorities of multilateral disarmament for the 90s, which would include, initially, problems dealing with the termination of nuclear tests, the non-proliferation of wea-

pons in all their dimensions, regulating international deliveries of conventional armaments and the release of resources for peaceful purposes as a result of the reduction of arms spendings and conversion.

Churkin devoted much attention to the return home of Soviet citizens from Iraq. He said that 242 Soviet specialists flew from Baghdad to Moscow by an Aeroflot flight that day, some 3,000 Soviet people remain in Iraq. He also said that it is planned to send to Iraq 6-7 tonnes of food for Soviet people on December 9.

Churkin spoke at length at the briefing about the expanding food and humanitarian assistance, rendered to the USSR by other countries. He said that governments, public organisations, businessmen and individuals from 21 countries offered their assistance gratis.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman welcomed "positive changes, that create a favourable political atmosphere for the continuation of the internal Lebanese settlement."

He included into this category the recent completion of the withdrawal from greater Beirut of all "non-regular units" and the restoration of the lawful government authority in the Lebanese capital.

Answering questions from journalists, Churkin said that the data for holding the next regular meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states had not been set so far. He believes that no such meeting would be held before the end of the year.

According to Churkin, "the date of the US President's visit to the Soviet Union has not been set either. Agreement has been reached on holding the meeting, and the sides realise that a treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive armaments should be prepared for it. They are now working hard on the blueprint of the treaty," Churkin said.

He believes that this problem will be in the focus of attention at the talks between Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State James Baker, due to be held in Houston, USA, on December 10-11, as well as during the meeting of the Soviet Foreign Minister and President Bush in the White House on December 12. He said that the next Soviet-American summit would probably take place early in 1991. □

## START Treaty—diplomatic view

A SOVIET-AMERICAN treaty on reducing strategic offensive arms (START) is almost ready, Colonel Valeri Ochirov, a USSR People's Deputy and member of the Soviet Parliament,

### Shevardnadze in Houston

IMMEDIATELY following his first working meeting with US Secretary of State James Baker, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze visited the Lyndon Johnson Space Centre near Houston, reports TASS on December 11.

Shevardnadze and Baker, who accompanied him, were warmly greeted by the centre's Director Aaron Cohen and research workers. Cohen said it was a great honour for them to receive two of the world's outstanding statesmen in their centre.

He said they were particularly pleased to greet the foreign minister of the country with which the United States has been successfully developing bilateral ties and co-operation in a variety of areas in recent years.

Baker said it was symptomatic that 11 American and Soviet astronauts and cosmonauts were simultaneously in space last week. He said it forcefully demonstrated how successfully the United States' co-operation with the Soviet Union was developing. Baker emphasised that all this was done exclusively in the interests of the peaceful space exploration and this fact undoubtedly deserved the highest appraisal.

In his speech in reply, Shevardnadze expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to visit this famous space centre. "We favour as many peaceful space explorations as possible and as less military-oriented space research as possible," Shevardnadze said.

He said that during President Bush's forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union, a new large-scale programme to explore space by the joint efforts of the best scientists and specialists from the two countries would be signed. "A very interesting programme for co-operation not only on Earth but also in space, in the interests of peace, is coming into view," Shevardnadze said. □

told a news conference in Moscow on December 10, reports TASS diplomatic correspondent Leonid Timofeyev.

Among a delegation of Soviet Members of Parliament he visited Geneva last week and familiarised himself with the course of the strategic arms reduction talks between the Soviet Union and the United States.

It remains for the two sides to coordinate individual technicalities concerning telemetry and its coding, throwweight and verification, Ochirov said.

The signing of the START Treaty, he emphasised, will become yet another stage on the way to an accord on further cuts in strategic types of weapons.

"We must have a fully prepared treaty by the end of December," Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Karpov emphasised at the news conference.

The Soviet Union, taking realities into account, agreed for the future treaty to allow a certain degree of co-operation between the United States and Britain in the field of missiles and missile technology because such co-operation has been maintained since the Second World War, Karpov told journalists.

The exception made for Britain as a third country envisages at the same time control on the part of the Soviet Union over the transfer of American Polaris and then Trident missiles to London, including the number of missiles, time and place of transfer, he said.

It is, virtually, a question of a tri-partite solution which would safeguard against the transfer of this type of armaments to third countries, Karpov added.

Speaking on the subject of non-proliferation of missile technology, Karpov said the Soviet Union is holding consultations with the United States, Britain, France, Germany and some other countries with a view to working out an international regime on the strength of the agreement concluded by seven European countries in 1987.

The Soviet Union, Karpov said, officially stated its readiness to join the regime if it will signify the Soviet Union's equal participation, including that in the exchange of information and technology which these countries share as COCOM members. □

### Another group of Soviet citizens return from Iraq

MORE than 400 Soviet citizens have returned from Iraq since Baghdad decided on December 4 to allow all Soviet people to leave the country, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh told a briefing in Moscow on December 10.

As was reported last week, 243 people returned from Baghdad to Moscow by a regular Aeroflot flight on December 7. Another 165 people returned today, he said.

There are less than 3,000 Soviet citizens left in Iraq as of now, Gremitskikh continued adding that the evacuation "will proceed as relevant exit documents are issued." He expressed the hope that the Iraqi leadership's decision "will speed up the evacuation of Soviet citizens."

Then Gremitskikh raised the issue of food supplies to Soviets in Iraq in connection with their shortage at the local market. Having recalled that the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee gave its permission to Moscow to send food supplies to Soviet citizens in Iraq, Gremitskikh said that on December 9 an Aeroflot flight delivered six tons of foodstuffs to Baghdad, this included buckwheat, pasta, tinned meat, dry and condensed milk. □

### For the Peaceful and Safe Use of the Atom

Novosti Press Agency correspondents  
interview:

Nikolai LUKONIN, Minister of the  
USSR Nuclear Power Industry

Vadim MALYSHEV, Chairman of the  
USSR State Committee for Safety  
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# USSR: the right to leave the country

By Vladimir Ostrovsky, *Novosti* parliamentary correspondent

**Soviet Parliament has prepared a bill on entry to and exit from the Soviet Union for a second reading.**

"TWO weeks ago the International Affairs Committee and the Committee on Legislation of the Soviet Parliament approved in the second reading the amended text of the Bill on entry to and exit from the Soviet Union. The Bill then went to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. I hope that in December the Bill will be considered by both chambers of the Soviet Parliament in a joint session," Feodor Burlatsky, Chairman of the Human rights Subcommittee of the International Affairs Committee, told *Novosti's* parliamentary correspondent.

It will be accompanied by a resolution of the USSR Supreme Soviet (the draft already exists) giving instructions to the Council of Ministers concerning the implementation of the law and the observance of the guarantees of its implementation, Burlatsky added.

It should be noted that the legislators did not leave out such a detail as the provision of per-

sons who leave the country with foreign currency (200 US dollars). It is commonly known that our country is experiencing shortages of hard currency but it would be unthinkable to let citizens go without at least a minimum amount of money. Besides, Soviet citizens will be able to buy hard currency (in excess of 200 dollars) according to the commercial exchange rate.

I would like to stress that transportation will be a major problem, especially in conditions of increased flow of Soviet citizens to foreign countries. Today, too, one has to wait a long time before buying an air ticket for any country outside the Soviet Union. This is why, being aware of that problem the legislators suggested that the Bill take effect on July 1, 1991. Moreover, Soviet visa offices which issue exit documents (passports) are not ready to handle an increased number of people who want to travel abroad. Such offices are seriously understaffed and under-equipped.

Burlatsky recalled that some departments which opposed the law came to use as their chief argument the supposition that the number of people wishing to leave the Soviet Union for good would increase steeply. A specific number — seven million — was even provided. When the legislators tried to find out how this figure was obtained, they learned that a small sociological group was the source, the group in its turn

determined the number by means of simple extrapolation, proceeding from the current numbers of people leaving the country.

"It is not based on any serious sociological study. Needless to say, we ignored that number," Burlatsky stressed.

As for the brain drain and its impact on the USSR, Burlatsky went on to say, the subject is based on assumptions rather than reality. The outflow of gifted people has indeed started, but its scale is not as large as some people believe. There is one argument which leaves no doubt that the process will not escalate. When every citizen has the right to free exit and knows he can return to his country at any time, the problem of the brain drain will be viewed differently. For instance, after working abroad and using the opportunity to their personal advantage, researchers will be able to utilise Western achievements in Soviet research establishments. Incidentally, the European Parliament has a special commission which is to limit the influx of citizens from Eastern European countries to Western Europe. This shows that fears exist on the other side, too.

I know that several state agencies want to put a new exit law into force commencing on January 1, 1992, however, I hope that our views which you now know will prevail. □

## SECRET ACTS REVOKED

THE Constitutional Compliance Committee of the USSR has examined at its latest session the question of compliance of the existing order in the USSR which allows the application of unpublished legislation affecting human rights and liberties and civic duties to the country's constitution and international law.

It was disclosed at the session that according to KGB estimates, 70 per cent of all legal acts concerning human rights and liberties in the USSR are classified to a greater or lesser extent. The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the USSR Council of Ministers, the KGB, the Interior Ministry and the Main Customs Office alone have a total of 210 such classified effective acts. Very often resolutions of the USSR Council of

Ministers have directly instructed the KGB to issue a particular secret act.

This creates perfect conditions for arbitrary, unlawful and uncontrollable restrictions of human rights and liberties, for the imposition of additional and often quite burdensome duties on citizens and for the bestowal of undeserved privileges on certain people. As a result, people are denied the opportunity to exercise in full measure their constitutional and other rights and liberties. This also complicates the struggle against high-handed decisions and actions and creates obstacles to appeals against unlawful actions by government agencies and officials.

In a number of cases, the Committee's conclusion reads, citizens should not be held responsible for breaching rules which they have never seen or heard of. Moreover, the bringing of criminal charges against citizens for the divulging of state secrets or for the loss of documents containing such secrets often depends on the degree of secrecy of the said documents, which is decided by ministry and department executives and company managers.

Guided by the Constitution of the USSR which demands compliance with Soviet laws from all Soviet citizens and by the international legal standards, the Constitutional Compliance Committee has passed the following decision:

**First.** The publication of laws and other legislative acts concerning civic rights, liberties and duties, or bringing them to the knowledge of the general public by other means, is a mandatory condition for the enforcement of these acts. Law article and other legal provisions, in so far as they directly or otherwise allow the coming into effect of unpublished legislation concerning civic rights, liberties and duties shall lose their effect from the moment of the passing of this conclusion.

**Second.** On the basis of Article 22 of the Law of the USSR on Constitutional Compliance in the USSR, all earlier passed but unpublished legislation concerning civic rights, liberties and

duties shall be made public by the appropriate government agencies within three months from the moment of the passing of this conclusion. Acts which are not made public by the end of this term shall lose their effect.

The experts who spoke at the session agreed that analysis of the question of the publication of classified legislative acts is part of a bigger problem which is the legal foundations of the official secrets regime existing in the USSR. The Committee intends to continue this work.

(*Izvestia*, Nov 30, 1990)

## LESSONS OF ANDREI SAKHAROV

The true scope and significance of an individual can be seen only from a distance in time. However, Andrei Sakharov is an exception to the rule. People involved in many, even the most incompatible sphere of human activity, consider him one of their own — as a model of the highest magnitude. He was a great physicist and he devoted his efforts to containing the nuclear arms race and to disarmament, the problems of world politics and social relations, to practical public and political activities. But Andrei Sakharov's most important dimension was his generous human heart, his pure and rapturous soul which made him the conscience of his people

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# A new Union Treaty: a time for decision-making

By Vladimir Reznichenko, *Novosti* political commentator

NO sooner had a draft of the new union treaty been published in Moscow and its discussion begun when the leaders of the Baltic republics and Georgia announced their refusal to sign such a treaty. If this position remains unchanged, there may be far-reaching consequences for the future federative state and for those who see their future outside of it.

The republics which are now set on separation will probably have to give up part of their present territories, if they secede, because some of their non-ethnic citizens do not support the idea.

The country-wide centrifugal tendencies are accompanied by centripetal outbreaks in some autonomies. The latter's peoples have grounds to fear that their independence and ethnic originality can be even more infringed if they become part of new states, which will emerge as a result of a split in the USSR, than of a state which is to be created in accordance with a new union treaty. Another important factor is the unwillingness to break traditional cultural and economic ties with the Russian people, which will be jeopardised in the event of separation.

In Moldova (formerly Moldavia), for instance, the Gagauz ethnic group who live in the south of this republic and the multi-ethnic population of the Dniester area in its west responded to the escalation of separatist tendencies by proclaiming their own sovereign republics with the firm intention to remain within the USSR.

The statements by the new Georgian leaders on their striving for complete independence are not totally supported in the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic and the South Ossetian Autonomous Region, which are parts of Georgia. It can very well be assumed that these regions will be severed from the territory of Georgia if the Georgian authorities go ahead with their plans.

In Lithuania, the idea of separation is not supported not only by numerous Russians but also by a large community of Poles who live near Vilnius (which was called Vilno up to 1939) and who wish to have a status of a national area. In this case, too, the border issue will be one of the main problems for negotiations with the Soviet Government.

Similar processes may begin in the Ukraine. The outburst of nationalistic sentiments, which is particularly strong in the western regions of this republic, is condemned in its eastern regions. The idea of an autonomy is already being expressed in Novorossiia, an area to the north of the Black Sea, and the Donbass, a major coal-producing and industrial Soviet centre. In the Crimea with which Khrushchev "presented" the Ukraine on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of its re-unification with Russia a referendum is to be held shortly to determine its future.

Under the past totalitarian regimes the peoples of the USSR were divided according to rank: some of them were given the right to form a union republic, others an autonomous republic, and still others an autonomous area. It was a kind of Matryoshka Doll arrangement, when larger peoples engulfed smaller ones administratively. What is more, the Moscow authorities often arbitrarily changed the status of certain nationalities.

All this aggravates the problems which arise. While upholding their own national sovereignty,

some peoples deprive others, who live on the same territory, of this right. Small wonder that such discrimination results in confrontation which sometimes develops into acute conflicts.

People are often divided locally into ethnics and non-ethnics. Such a division is improper in the first place because few people can say that they lived in the same place from times immemorial. The history of humankind is a history of migration. Nevertheless, there are politicians who assert the priority of their own nation and arrogantly call all the others "migrants" or "occupiers".

Regardless of any talk on historic justice, the issue at hand is a glaring violation of human rights and an encroachment of a citizen's equality for ethnic reasons. What is more, the rights of whole peoples are infringed because they do not have national statehoods of their own — there is no place in the vast territory which they could call their national home. But such people as Crimean Tatars or Germans were robbed of their statehoods by Stalin.

The new union treaty should put an end to all this. "The republics forming a union of sove-

reign Soviet republics recognise the birthright of every people to self-determination, self-government and independent solution to all the questions of its development. They will resolutely come out against racism, chauvinism, nationalism and any attempts to restrict the rights of peoples," its draft reads. "The republics recognise the supremacy of human rights proclaimed by the universal declaration of the UN and international covenants as the most important principle of their unification."

It is very important that the draft of the treaty provides for alternative variants of admission to the union: republics "enter the union either directly or as part of other republics," and "relations between the republics one of which is part of the other are regulated by treaties and agreements concluded between them."

It goes without saying that heated and uneasy debates will take place before a variant acceptable to all is found on the basis of mutual concessions. It is important that these debates should not be protracted indefinitely. The process which disunites us has gone very far. We should hurry up before it becomes irreversible. □

## President Gorbachev revamps power structures

By Vyacheslav Kostikov, *political analyst*

RADICAL changes in top Soviet power structures announced two weeks ago are beginning to be implemented. On November 4, Mikhail Gorbachev presented the Supreme Soviet with an updated version of such structures. Actually, it is going to be a form of Presidential rule. The Soviet Parliament has in principle approved the relevant amendments to the Constitution.

As outlined by the President, the new structures will include the Council of the Federation, which is to be transformed from a purely advisory body into a centre for conducting a union-wide policy in co-ordination with the republics. A state inspection service, something new and unprecedented in Soviet history, is to be introduced, which Gorbachev conceived to be the main driving belt of his policy, a connecting link between the centre and the periphery. It has also been announced that one more new structure — a security council — will be set up soon. True, its functions are rather vague, judging from the President's speech. It is not at all clear where the dividing line will run between the security council and the state inspection. It is only a guess that the security council will deal with acute and unforeseen situations, which are erupting one after another in the USSR hit by a severe crisis, and the centre is not always quick enough to react to them adequately.

The introduction of a vice-presidency in the USSR also appears logical, considering that with all executive power concentrated in the President's hands, his huge work load has increased enormously. In brief, the vice-president will not be a figurehead to stand for the President during his absence. He will be the right-hand man of the President, as he says.

Gorbachev's decision to put the entire central power structure into the melting pot did not come as a surprise. The proposed measures fully

fit in with the logic of the political process launched on March 14, or some nine months ago, when the Soviet Union decided to institute a presidency.

Since then two parallel political processes have been under way in the country: on the one hand, the expanding of general and parliamentary democracy and, on the other, the strengthening of presidential powers.

At the same time, developments, especially in recent months, have made it clear that the power system built on the ruins of the totalitarian state does not ensure stability in the country. There have been increasing signs of what Gorbachev described as "paralysis of power", with old structures much weakened or swept out of existence (Party power, for example) and new bodies represented by elected councils still unable to take up the reins of power.

Erosion of the power structure is evident both at the parliamentary and the presidential levels. Both these political structures are hit by one and the same malaise. Although the Parliament has passed a host of new laws and the President has issued quite a number of decrees, none of them are implemented in full and are bogged down with local authorities.

Locally, there is a bitter rivalry between several power structures, each of which claims priority: elected councils, executive bodies, ministries, and the Party, which especially in the outlying districts still keeps much of the sway.

All these circumstances, combined with the total destabilisation of the consumer market and the escalation of social tensions, prompt the need for revamping the power levels.

I do not think the presidential rule structure proposed by Gorbachev will be unanimously approved in the country. On the day following his speech, the *Russian Gazette*, a newspaper reflecting the views of Boris Yeltsin's team, voiced "grave concern" about the concentration of power in the President's hands. □

(*Novosti*, abridged)