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**TITLE: BETWEEN CLASS AND NATION: WORKER POLITICS
IN THE POST-COMMUNIST UKRAINE**

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Executive Summary¹

Stephen Crowley

Two major dilemmas confront labor politics in Ukraine. First, the majority of workers are dependent on decaying state enterprises for the provision of the most basic goods and services. This dependence on the enterprise has helped keep workers quiescent, despite the dramatic decline in real wages and living standards and the threat of widespread unemployment. At the same time, this situation has strengthened the political position of enterprise managers, who are able to keep workers quiescent by obtaining credits and subsidies to keep their enterprises afloat.

Second, those workers who are organized have shown a willingness to strike to obtain their objectives. This includes above all the Donbass coal miners, who are further strengthened by an alliance across class lines with managers and others in Eastern Ukraine to push for greater ties to Russia and continued industrial subsidies to keep workers employed. Continued economic decline could push miners, and other workers, to seek more radical solutions for their dilemmas.

The economic situation in Ukraine has deteriorated greatly since independence, with little promise for recovery in sight. A wide variety of measures show declining living standards for many social groups in Ukraine, and the current poverty level could be as high as 85 percent. While inflation runs between 70-100 percent a month, however, official unemployment rates are extremely low. It is argued that continued employment at state enterprises, no matter how artificial, is essential to avoid major social unrest.

Those workers who have struck and organized independent unions, while a minority, have had a dramatic impact on Ukrainian politics. Coal miners in the East, nationalistic workers in the West, and industrial workers in Kiev united with other Ukrainians to help bring about independence. Since independence, railroad engineers, public transportation workers, dock workers and pilots and air traffic controllers have been active as well, and have formed independent trade unions in alliance with the miners.

Most workers have remained quiet however. An in-depth look at a steel factory in the center for the miner's region, the Donetsk Metallurgical Plant, finds workers dependent on their workplace not only for a paycheck, but for the most basic consumer goods and services, including housing, day care, durable goods and food. Most of these items are distributed through lists controlled by management, and this dependence helps keep workers from acting

¹Revised and edited by NCSEER staff.

collectively. The distribution of goods and services through the workplace places a major roadblock before the privatization of state enterprises, a path upon which Ukraine has hardly even begun to embark. Since city governments cannot afford to take over the operation of day care centers or the construction and distribution of housing, and private owners would have to charge prices out of the reach of potential customers, enterprises remain, for the present, the only alternative.

Enterprise distribution has also benefitted the directors of these plants, a group commonly referred to throughout Ukraine as the "Red Directorate." Far from being interested simply in profit-maximization, these directors view their positions politically. They continue to expend scarce resources on the well-being of their workforce, which both prevents workers' collective action and allows the directors, or others with whom they ally, to achieve positions of political power and influence. Thus, the director of the Donetsk Metallurgical Plant used his plant's resources as a base for election to Ukraine's parliament. The director of the Zasyadko mine, Efim Zviagilsky, was elected mayor of Donetsk, member of parliament, and as of this writing, is acting Prime Minister of Ukraine. These political positions, in turn, allow for further strengthening of their economic base: Zasyadko's success appears largely a result of an export license, one of the scarcest resources in Ukrainian industry, the distribution of which has little correlation with economic rationality. Others are able to use their position to get favorable credits for their enterprises. Collectively, these industrialists cum parliamentarians are blamed, through their granting of subsidies and credits to industry, for much of the monetary emissions currently plaguing Ukraine's economy.

Such a state of affairs helps explain why the only "labor" parties in Ukraine have been organizations of industrialists and directors. They, together with the once-official trade unions, have taken over the Communist Party's legacy of "acting in the interests of the working class", while having a weak link with those they claim to represent. This would appear to be bad news for the creation of a democratic society, since most workers, a very significant social group, and one that will be asked to make still more sacrifices for the sake of economic reform, lack a genuine channel for articulating their interests and defending their rights.

More importantly still, the miners of Eastern Ukraine are joined in their demands across class lines by others in the region. The reasons are both material and cultural: both workers and managers in these state enterprises have an interest in strong economic ties with Russian firms, and the predominantly Russian-speaking population has cultural and kinship ties with Russia, an interest in promoting the Russian language as a second state language, and little interest in state building at the expense of economic well-being. As the strike of June 1993 showed, much of this region is capable of acting collectively to defend its interests.

While the miners' demand for a referendum on the confidence of the population in the parliament and the president was eventually rejected, pressure applied across Ukrainian society succeeded in forcing parliament to call pre-term elections for both president and parliament. With elections now called for, workers in Galicia may well support Rukh and other parties of democratic-nationalist orientation, but workers in the East will almost certainly not do so. Yet a party that might capture the concerns of workers as a distinct group has failed to appear. In fact, the only "Labor Party" was rather clearly set up by enterprise managers, largely from the Donbass. In the absence of a party perceived as genuinely committed to the interests of labor, the parties of industrialist and former communists may do quite well in the coming elections among workers, especially in Eastern Ukraine. Indeed, early survey data indicates that the Socialist Party (the successor to the Communist Party) has gained support from unskilled workers, among other groups. Moreover, while the largest group of those surveyed are still undecided, their profile closely resembles the supporters of the Socialist Party, suggesting that the latter could continue to gain considerable support. Unless such moderate political groups such as New Ukraine can craft effective appeals to workers in the East, the former communists may do quite well.

These cleavages illuminate the vicious circle to be faced by any government in Kiev: in order to halt inflation and stabilize the economy, that government would have to cut subsidies, much of which are aimed at industries in the East. Any reduction in subsidies will lead to bankruptcies and open and widespread unemployment. Yet if relatively modest price increases were sufficient to bring much of Eastern Ukraine to strike and call for the virtual ouster of the government and the president, then a sudden reduction in subsidies and subsequent unemployment will almost certainly do so. The result has been a political crisis, as the Ukrainian economy continues to slide deeper into the morass.

**Between Class and Nation:
Worker Politics in the Post-Communist Ukraine**

Stephen Crowley

Workers in contemporary Ukraine face two major dilemmas. First, Ukrainian industry, as a result of its long, extensive exploitation, is nearly obsolete. Thus upon achieving political independence, much of Ukrainian industry is more dependent than ever. In turn, many industrial workers are dependent on decaying state enterprises, and despite tremendous economic hardship, find themselves unable to act collectively to defend their interests. Thus, perhaps a majority of Ukraine's workers remain, well after the downfall of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, without a direct means to articulate their interests and defend their rights in economic or political realms.

Second, and the first dilemma notwithstanding, those workers who are mobilized are strategically positioned to block reform efforts that would reduce their substantial subsidies. This group includes, though is not limited to, the coal miners of the Donbass, who find themselves on one side of a great cultural divide in Ukraine. While miners and other Ukrainians from different classes and regions united in the fight for a sovereign Ukraine, they did so for different reasons, and now find themselves aligned on opposite sides of a cleavage between East and West, between Russian and Ukrainian speakers, and between industrial and agricultural and interests. Indeed, while the Ukrainian state, embodied in President Kravchuk, first allied itself with nationalists in the goal of creating a strong independent state, it now finds itself hostage to the industrial East. This region requires state subsidies to survive, while the possibility of deindustrialization and mass unemployment create the very real threat of social explosion by its industrial work force.

This paper is an attempt to understand better these dilemmas facing workers and contemporary Ukraine. It will first look at the particularly acute economic difficulties confronting Ukraine, before turning to strikes and other actions by workers which helped pave the way for Ukrainian independence. It will then attempt to answer several questions: why most other groups of workers have not joined the miners thus far in striking and forming independent unions; how those groups of workers that are independently organized, as well as the once-official unions, have framed their demands and waged their struggle; how the united support for Ukrainian independence between workers and nationalists changed to significant conflict once independence was achieved; how the Donbass and the new Ukrainian state became inter-dependent -- the Donbass on state support for industry, and Kiev on the acquiescence of the independent workers' movement for political stability.

Upon gaining independence, Ukraine was seen by many observers as being the best endowed and most viable of former Soviet republics, including Russia. Ukraine's advantages included raw materials, its large size, location near Europe with access to the sea, a skilled workforce and high level of industrialization.¹

Yet independence has been anything but kind to Ukraine's economy. Several disadvantages were overlooked in the more optimistic forecasts on Ukraine's viability. First, unlike Poland or Russia, Ukraine has little recent history of independent statehood, and thus in the first years of independence policy has been driven by the nationalist concerns of nation and state building, and only belatedly and out of necessity has Ukraine turned to economics. Likewise, the "Ukrainian economy" is an entity still in formation, given the tremendous interdependence with the economy of Russia and other former republics. Disruptions in trade and shocks in oil prices have hit Ukraine hard.

Moreover, although Ukraine is certainly industrialized, it has suffered from years of intensive exploitation from Moscow, geared towards the needs of the Union. While Ukraine was an engine in Stalinist industrialization, it gave up much in raw materials, and investment lagged. In 1990, Ukraine's share of investment in industry was less than 12 percent of that for the Soviet Union as a whole, though its share in output was nearly 17 percent.² While such statistics helped fuel the desire for independence, they did nothing to change the fact that upon gaining sovereignty, Ukraine is saddled with obsolescent and environmentally harmful industries, and lacks sufficient resources to survive on its own.³

Nonetheless, Ukraine's structural position is not worse and perhaps better than most other former republics. Its twin problems -- hyperinflation and enormous deficit spending -- have been attributed by most economists to failed macroeconomic policy. Inflation has accelerated from about 5% in 1990 to 87% in 1991 to more than 1,000% in 1992. By the end of 1993 inflation was running between 70 and 100% a month, and the karbovanets, which had started at par with the Russian ruble two years earlier, was now trading at 27 to one ruble.⁴

In a measure of the impact of inflation on different social groups, one study used consumer baskets (based on the monthly Ukrainian Army ration) to assess changes in purchasing power.⁵ In October 1991, the cost of the basket represented 50% of monthly wages; in the beginning of 1992, the cost of the same basket rose to 123% of the average wage. By November 1992 the average wage in the state sector was 2-3 times that needed to purchase the basket, while in the mining industry it was 10 times and in the retail sector only 1. By March 1993 those factors had fallen to 1 for state employees, 2 for miners and 0.5 for

retail workers. In late June 1993, following their recent strike, the miners' had pushed their factor to 5, while the average wage had fallen to 0.6 and in retail to 0.3.⁶

In another measure, Ukrainians suffered about a one-fifth drop in their total personal income in 1992, in constant prices; as a rather clear result, retail sales were down 22.3% and paid services dropped 22% for the year, and have continued to fall. In human terms, this has produced perhaps the most graphic statistic of all: perhaps as much as 85 percent of the population is currently below the poverty line.⁷

Such a level of inflation was in a part a result of the introduction of the karbovanets in early 1992. Intended initially to be an interim currency before the hryvnia was introduced, it was to be used as a coupon alongside rubles. The hope was that it would ease the transition to hryvnia by giving Ukraine greater control over its monetary policy. In fact the opposite occurred, as the Ukrainian central bank was able to print as many karbovantsi as it wanted; the expenditures, which greatly outpaced revenues, were used as subsidies to industry and as social payments to the population suffering from inflation. The inevitable result was further inflation.⁸

While Ukraine's GDP declined at about 20%, official statistics reported a somewhat smaller 9% decline in gross output for industry, thanks to subsidies. Such payments are clearly reaching their limits, preventing the government from further protecting the population against drops in the standard of living. By the end of 1992 the budget deficit was between 36-44% of GDP. Social and cultural payments were 43% of total spending for 1992, and payments to industry, including subsidies, were 36% of the total. These two categories alone accounted for an overwhelming four-fifths of total expenditures for 1992. In the words of one observer, "Any effort to reduce the budget deficit . . . will have to center on cutting spending on social welfare programs and subsidies to industry."⁹

Ukraine's industrial workers compromise one of the biggest road blocks lying in the path of such a policy. While hyperinflation will surely have to be brought under control, the too often unacknowledged tradeoff with inflation is unemployment. Putting a brake on such a high level of inflation and deficit spending implies a correspondingly high level of unemployment. As of December 1993, official statistics provided the incredulously low figure of 0.3% unemployed among the able-bodied population, though this figure failed to reflect the large portion of the labor force that is compelled to work part-time.¹⁰

With hyperinflation, significant drops in real wages, impending unemployment, and the unhappy distinction of making the Russian economy look strong by comparison, the dismal state of the Ukrainian economy has created much of dissatisfaction. If deprivation, relative or

otherwise, was all that was needed for workers and others to mobilize, then Ukraine would be a hotbed of social unrest. That it is not is one of the puzzles this paper attempts to answer. However, while (as we shall see) by no means are all Ukrainian workers independently organized, significant numbers, in strategic sectors, are already prepared to fight against the solution of inflation at the expense of widespread unemployment.

Workers and the Push for Independence

Beyond a handful of activists and dissidents, workers in Ukraine (as elsewhere in the Soviet Union) found their voice with the miners' strike of July 1989. While there had been a few strikes before, both within the mining industry and outside of it, this was the first to create solidarity among workers of different enterprises and different regions.

The strike has been discussed in detail elsewhere,¹¹ and here attention will be placed only on its effect on Ukraine. Begun in a single mine in the Siberian Kuzbass, the strike spread quickly to the Donbass, where it involved nearly all the region's mines.

The strike was to have "long-term political repercussions in Ukraine," for an area that was not known for its political militancy, the industrialized eastern oblasts -- long assumed to be conservative and steeped in Stakhanovite traditions -- had risen up and organized itself.¹² As one observer has noted, it was perhaps not surprising the intellectuals and nationalists from the West, the Draches and Chornovils, stood up, but no one expected the miners to do so.¹³ Moreover, nationalism played a role, in that while the major coal basins were located in the East, the strike took an especially militant form in the small Lviv-Volyn coal field in the West, including huge demonstrations of striking miners in Chervonohrad.¹⁴

Thus miners were organized as a social and political force in Ukraine even before Rukh, Ukraine's most powerful and well-known social movement. When Rukh was founded at a congress in Kiev in September 1989, the Regional Council of Donbass Strike Committees (RSSKD) sent representatives. While they agreed with many of the principles discussed there, the miners also found what they considered to be nationalist and extremist elements applauded by the congress. Further, they left with the inescapable impression that this was a group led by writers and intellectuals.¹⁵ Such views portended conflicts yet to come.

Beyond their first strike, Ukrainian miners played a central role in the Soviet miners' movement, and Donetsk was the site for two Union-wide miners' congresses, where the Independent Miners' Union (NPG), the first independent union in the Soviet Union, was formed.

Yet workers outside of mining also had a significant impact. Driven by nationalism, the strike committees that emerged in 1989 in the Western cities of Lviv, Chervonohrad, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil played a crucial role in March 1990 in electing pro-reform and nationalist candidates to office. They also conducted mass demonstrations and sympathy strikes with miners in the East.¹⁶ In the autumn of 1990, when a conservative backlash had taken hold of the Ukrainian republican government, workers were again instrumental. While students led the way with a hunger strike and a permanent outdoor encampment in Kiev, several of the city's enterprises shut down and workers from the West traveled to demonstrations in the capital.¹⁷ The student hunger strikers, pushing the parliament for passage of the Ukrainian constitution establishing Ukraine's sovereignty prior to the signing of the Union treaty, were unable to achieve their demands on their own. "On October 18, unexpectedly, a large column of workers from Kiev's largest factory marched on Parliament in support of students. They chanted only one word, the factory's name -- 'Arsenal'. Workers tipped the balance."¹⁸

The full force of Ukrainian workers was not felt again until the start of the second, all-Union miners' strike in 1991, which was significant because it strengthened the centrifugal forces leading to the end of the Soviet Union and the establishment of an independent Ukraine.

This second strike began in the Donbass, over economic issues such as a pay increase and additional pension benefits. Though the initial strike was small and poorly organized, it soon spread to other regions, such as the Kuzbass, where miners declared they had no economic demands, only political, aimed at the Soviet state.

Meanwhile, all twelve mines of Chervonohrad of Western Ukraine joined the strike, arguing that the miners' demands from 1989 would not be fulfilled without a change in the political structure. The demands included abolishing the post of President of the USSR, and dismissing the Soviet congress; granting the Ukrainian declaration of state sovereignty the status of a constitutional act; a rebuff to the Union treaty; and the release of Stepan Khmara (a Ukrainian nationalist and people's deputy) and other political prisoners.¹⁹ Within days, 21 mines of the Lviv-Volhynia coal field were on strike; in addition to the political demands, miners there added, for good measure, the demand that wages be increased two to two and a half times.²⁰ To resolve their demands, representatives from the twenty-one striking mines of Chervonohrad traveled to Kiev; when the republican government agreed to discuss only economic demands, the miners refused to talk unless their political demands were added to the agenda.²¹

According to one source, Donbass miners were first exposed to ideas of independence by their colleagues from the strike committees of the Lviv-Volyn' basin.²² In any case, by the fourteenth of March, political demands were added in the Donbass, where the strike had started over wage and pension issues two weeks earlier. Miners there now called for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to be abolished, Ukraine to be given political and economic sovereignty, and an end to "deductions for the center."²³

Indeed, while far from all mines struck, the miners of the Donbass had been remarkably radicalized within a few weeks. It was soon declared that in the Donbass "political demands are most important."²⁴ With the demand of sovereignty for Ukraine, the Russian-speaking miners of the East found common ground with nationalist groups based in the West, or as put elsewhere, "the sector of Ukraine's population most likely to resist state-building measures had been won to a sovereigntist perspective."²⁵

The strike eventually spread north from the Donbass and the Lviv coal fields to Kiev. By mid-April a "Ukrainian strike committee" was set up in Kiev, with a miner from Krasnoarmeisk (Donetsk oblast) as its chair. Hundreds of miners were said to attend a rally on the 14th held at the initiative of the Ukrainian People's Democratic Party under the slogan "Freedom for Political Prisoners--Freedom for Ukraine." Demonstrators blocked traffic and picketed the headquarters of Ukrainian television and radio, demanding that representatives of the miners be given air time. Meanwhile, the Kiev strike committee called for a city-wide general strike on the 16th.²⁶

Despite a ban on strikes by the Ukrainian parliament, the strike call was heeded by somewhere between twelve to fifteen enterprises, including some of the city's bus and trolley drivers. The largest enterprise was the Leninskill metal works, where 80 percent of the plant's 8,000 employees walked off. Most attended a demonstration in the center of the city, despite a Ukrainian Supreme Soviet ban on rallies during working hours.²⁷ Miners marched with several hundred students on the day of the announced general strike: when the students said they were showing support for the miners, the miners responded by supporting the demands of the students' hunger strike of the past October. Together they marched to the Arsenal plant to seek the support of other workers, where they were eventually dispersed by troops using riot gas.²⁸

In all, the strike lasted for a full two months, and with the actions in other coal basins, it significantly weakened the Soviet Union and helped set the stage for an independent Ukraine.

The 'Silent Majority?': a Case Study

This worker militancy notwithstanding, one must ask why more workers did not join the miners during this major strike, or why they have not since been active in forming independent workers' organizations. For example, despite the presence of striking miners and the considerable pull of nationalism, the Kiev strike was a faint echo of the strike in Minsk earlier that month.²⁹

What of other workers during this tumultuous period? In particular, what of workers right next door to the miners, such as steelworkers, whose plants' smokestacks can be seen throughout Eastern Ukraine? Ukraine produced some 40% of the Soviet Union's total output in ferrous metals, and metallurgy remains one of Ukraine's major industries. Virtually all of these plants are quite old, and in need of major reconstruction if they are to compete successfully in world markets. Often employing tens of thousands of workers each, these plants have been hit hard by the economic downturn, the disruption of ties to the CIS countries, and the rising cost of inputs, including coal. In order to understand the political situation within these giant factories, it is worth examining one such plant in Donetsk, the center of the miners' insurgency.³⁰

The Donetsk Metallurgical Factory (hereafter referred to as Donetskii) was established by John Hughes, a Scottish entrepreneur, in the late 1860's; the mining and mill town that rose along with the plant was named Iuzovka after its founder.³¹ The Donetsk plant, like other old plants in Ukraine, was rebuilt and enlarged during the Soviet era. Its current work force numbers more than 17,000, quite large by world standards though not so in the Soviet Union. As in many plants in Ukraine, open-hearth furnace production, virtually abandoned in the West, remains dominant at Donetskii.³²

Although neither Donetskii nor any other major industrial plant, for that matter, struck along with the miners, a close examination of the plant over this period finds it hardly without conflict of its own.³³ Clearly, in contrast to the coal mines, the administration retained the upper hand in steel and other plants, but the question remains how. The explanation given most often by the participants themselves -- whether members of the plant's administration, trade union officials, or worker-activists who were in favor of a strike -- has to do with the role of these enterprises not only in producing steel, but also in reproducing the labor force.

The Soviet industrial enterprise, in a shortage economy that created a dearth of consumer goods and services, as well as shortages of manpower, developed an array of services that it provided to its work force, from housing to food. At the Donetsk plant, as with many others, the factory provided vacations at its centers on the Azov and Black Seas,

had a close relationship with a state farm to which it provided "seasonal workers" and material inputs in exchange for foodstuffs. The plant also had a shop for subsidiary agriculture, which, among other things, asked steelworkers to take in pigs for fattening. The enterprise also distributed such scarce durable goods as automobiles. By providing nurseries and day care for workers' children, and payments for workers' funerals, the plant's services were quite literally from cradle to grave.³⁴

The plant provides much of the services to the borough, including housing and transportation to and from work, so much so that the plant's general director was elected to the Ukrainian Congress of People's Deputies (and from there to the sitting parliament, the Supreme Rada) from the borough. In nominating Director Slednev, his deputy argued that it was time to recognize the significance of the factory, since "without the factory the borough's dwellers would not be able to live normally. See for yourself: every second day care center in the borough belongs to the factory, half of the dwellers depend on the plant's stores."³⁵ Slednev, easily making the transition from industrial manager to politician, promised that if candidates from the "steelworkers' bloc" were elected to the borough council, the plant would build a children's amusement park around the "Steelworker" stadium.³⁶

About five months after the first miners' strike, the director at Donetskii reflected on why steelworkers had remained at work. The economic and financial position of the plant allowed for the solution of a series of problems, including a one hundred ruble payment to single mothers, free food to certain categories of workers, aid to labor veterans on pension, a free vacation or monetary aid to large families once every three years, additional bonuses to workers in the plant cafeterias for quality food preparation and the plant's subsidiary agriculture shop, which over-fulfilled the plan for pork by 120 tons. The sphere of social services was continuing to grow, he added, as there were plans for a shop for smoking meats, another shop for meat products, construction of greenhouses for vegetables, contracts with Hungarian and other foreign firms for the provision (through barter) of shoes, clothes, radio goods, cars. "In a short interview I can't talk about everything... ." claimed the director.³⁷ In the years since, despite the plant's opening to the market, the provision of such goods and services has continued unabated, as barter deals have provided items priced beyond the reach of the plant's employees.³⁸

In listing all of the characteristics of the social infrastructure of such an enterprise, one creates the impression that all the workers under its wings were quite well provided for. But given the enormous size of the work force -- 17,000 -- these benefits seem rather less imposing

on a per capita basis. More importantly, these benefits were not distributed equally, and therein lies a major source of conflict, one that workers challenged when they found increased political opportunity to do so.

Enterprise paternalism in the Soviet Union has been closely related to the labor shortage -- privileges are distributed very unevenly, above all to keep those most in demand, skilled workers, at the plant. Thus, certain categories of workers that were scarce were given privileged distribution of housing, so that a pipe fitter might be given apartments in five years, while a steel founder had to wait ten to fifteen. Other items that fell the plant's way, like automobiles, might be distributed to "exemplary workers," as defined by management. The divisions were not only between skilled and unskilled, or those favored by management and others, but were part of an entire hierarchy that existed throughout the plants. If skilled workers in high demand and most central to production were most favored, service workers, predominantly women working in the plant's giant social infrastructure, were virtually ignored.³⁹

One might assume that workers' organizations, such as trade unions, would help workers attempt a more equitable distribution of plant resources. In fact, the trade union at Donetskii, as with other plants, was seen by workers as part of the problem rather than the solution. At Donetskii, less than three weeks after the region's coal miners had first filled city squares and seized control of mines, the trade union committee met to discuss fulfilling the plan. The trade union chair announced, "in July there were 20 absences from work, 28 violations of public order, and 22 cases of drunkenness." The results of the latest round of socialist competition were announced: the winning brigades received red banners, a diploma and a small monetary prize.⁴⁰

Soon thereafter, a delegate to a plant trade union conference discussed serious problems in his shop: due to the lack of steel, for the second month it had not fulfilled the plan, leading to drastic cuts in workers' wages. However, this apparently was not a problem which concerned the trade union. "As for the trade union committee," he added,

it has solved the problem of the family vacation center on the Azov Sea. I consider this a social victory for the trade union committee. And our children vacation at the pioneer camp "Metallurgist" [on the Black Sea]. . . . Now many are saying that the trade union should not be occupied with the problems of providing workers with potatoes, meat, soap. But who will take care of these problems? I consider this the trade union committee's job.⁴¹

Others were not so sure. Another delegate put the question more sharply:

Frankly speaking, it pains me that you have organized this conference as if it were ten to fifteen years ago. We don't talk about the sore points here. We won't revolt, if we find out that apartments are being given to Afghan war invalids ahead of the line, that a vacation trip in short supply [defitsitnaya] is being given to a steel founder, a furnace worker or a rolling mill operator. But we demand the just distribution of social goods. We need glasnost here, so that all will know, who obtained what I think we've ruined this conference.⁴²

Such opinions notwithstanding, as in most industrial enterprises in Ukraine, the once-official trade union remains dominant at Donetskii.

Why have steelworkers not gone on strike and organized themselves as the miners have since 1989? It is certainly the case that miners, owing to their difficult and dangerous work, have a tradition of labor militancy throughout the world. Steelmaking is not much easier, nor have steelworkers been spared the tremendous economic hardship or political turmoil that has been plaguing Ukraine. There are other differences. One significant difference between the miners and steelworkers has been that while miners have been the highest paid group of industrial workers, they have in recent years received much less of the "in-kind" benefits distributed at Donetskii and other enterprises in heavy industry. Conversely, wages in steelmaking have traditionally been lower than in coal-mining, but these large plants have had a much greater social infrastructure. Payment in wages has tended to homogenize the work force, while distribution of benefits through lists and privileges creates divisions. Further, the threat of losing one's position in line for an apartment or a car, after years of waiting, is a powerful disincentive to collective action.

In some mines, new directors elected after the first strikes re-established a paternalism more favorable to the workers.⁴³ Mines that have re-established some form of paternalism have generally been able to avoid the labor unrest of other mines. For example, workers at the Donetsk's famed Zasyadko mine, which has amassed a retinue of goods and services that rivals any top industrial enterprise in Ukraine, appears to have struck only with the blessing of its director.⁴⁴

Trade Unions: 'Free' and 'Independent'

The Donetskii Steel Factory may represent the position of many, perhaps most, industrial workers in Ukraine. Other groups of workers, however, have begun to organize independently, indicating limits to enterprise paternalism.

One such group is VOST, the Ukrainian acronym for "The All-Ukrainian Association of Solidarity of Workers," which has organized around radical political and economic change and Ukrainian nationalism. VOST was first formed as a socio-political organization in June 1991, just months after miners and others had struck for Ukrainian sovereignty. The congress declarations were extremely critical of the regional and republican parliaments, the Communist Party, and the official trade union federation, and strongly opposed the signing of the Union treaty. At its second congress, in March 1992, the group called itself an "inter-branch, inter-regional trade union association." In both versions, VOST has consciously modeled itself after Poland's Solidarity. The group welcomes into its membership all "hired labor," whether physical or mental. According to Oleksandr Ivanshchenko, the organization's chair, by June 1992 VOST had 4 million members, with organizational structures in 8 oblasts and six cities. The mere founding of the organization has been credited by some with creating fear in the former authorities and pushing them to adopt reform measures.⁴⁵

Yet an organization of Ukrainian workers built on a foundation of nationalism suffers from an inherent difficulty stemming from Ukraine's social structure: most workers, while ethnically Ukrainian, live in the russified East, not the more nationalist West. Thus a nationalistic workers' organization will almost certainly lack the numbers that would make it a formidable social and political force. VOST's nationalism was clear at its first congress, where dissident and Ukrainian Republican Party representative Stepan Khmara was elected to its consultative council. The inclusion of others beyond blue collar workers is evident in such constituent organizations as the Union of Ukrainian Students and the Committee for the Defense of Teachers. While the group has remained active politically in Kiev, it has thus far failed to mobilize its purported constituency: according to one source, by September 1992 VOST had issued at least 5 calls for all-Ukrainian strikes, each of which failed to materialize.⁴⁶ Indeed, rather than reflect the demands of Ukrainian workers, it is probably more accurate to say (as does one of its supporters in the West) that VOST "seeks to promote democratic and nationalistic ideas among workers."⁴⁷

Other worker organizations have formed along sectoral lines. These include, along with miners, workers in public transportation, longshoremen, pilots and air traffic control workers, and railroad workers. The pilots and air traffic controllers were independently organized before the downfall of the Soviet Union, and joined with the miners in the Federation of Free Trade Unions in January of 1991, and they continued to cooperate with the miners' independent union following Ukrainian independence.

Public transport workers were also among the few groups of active workers under perestroika.⁴⁸ Their militancy appears to be due to the fact that their pay is closely tied to performance, and any changes in work rules immediately affect pay. In November 1991, 10,000 drivers in the Donbass walked off work and gathered at demonstrations. They were prompted by new rules that stated (perhaps not unreasonably) that only roadworthy vehicles should operate. However, since at least half of the vehicles in the fleets should have been written off as completely worn out, and since fuel was becoming increasingly scarce, the vehicles often went idle and workers went unpaid. Consistent with the argument that the distribution of in-kind benefits through the workplace has prevented workers' collective action, it was noted during the strike that the drivers "are in last place [among workers] regarding the extent to which they have been provided with apartments."⁴⁹

In March 1992, Donbass drivers again went on strike, this time shutting down transport throughout the entire region, with 80,000 workers out. Workers from the Krivvy Rih section of the Dnestr railroad line joined in as well. Strikers were careful to state that their action was "not a political strike," and that they were advancing "purely economic demands."⁵⁰

The actions of coal miners, did not lead to organized activity by neighboring steelworkers, but they did have a direct effect on other groups. For instance, iron ore and uranium miners followed the example of coal industry workers and walked out several times. In March 1992, the ore miners of Krivvy Rih forced the resignation of the Dnepropetrovsk oblast soviet chair through a strike lasting over two weeks.⁵¹

The miners' success in getting sharp increases in their pay affected other workers both directly and indirectly. In a relative sense, other workers' wages began to lag behind that of the miners. More directly, miners' wage increases added a regional inflation spiral on top of already greatly accelerating prices. The wage structure was further distorted by the fact that while underground workers tended to be the most militant, wage increases were granted to peripheral and service workers in the coal industry. Thus, when doctors in the Donbass threatened to strike, they could argue (as did Lilya Omelyanchuk, chair of Donetsk regional medical workers' union) that the pay of a professor of surgery was one-quarter that of a janitor in a coal mine. Moreover, drivers could argue that the average pay of a Donetsk regional transportation association driver was 1,800R, which bought 15 kg of meat in April 1992, while drivers for the Ukrainian state coal committee would get 3-4 times more for same work.⁵² Yet when doctors, teachers and drivers did strike, they did not direct their anger at coal miners, but rather appealed to them for advice in organizing their fledgling unions and in directing protests at the state.

To be sure, the increasingly high rate of inflation was not due solely to the miners' strikes. Rather, as then Prime Minister Fokin argued in 1992, wage increases in industry were not being backed by increases in productivity; inflation was pushing up wages, which were being funded through monopoly pricing and bank credits, pushing inflation further. At least in a relative sense, those in heavy industry (especially miners, workers in power-engineering, and metallurgists) were better able to keep up with inflation, while those outside the sphere of production, such as farm workers, service employees and pensioners, were the hardest hit.⁵³

Yet such a state of affairs has not kept the miners quiescent. In May 1992, at the initiative of the independent miners' union, a Consultative Council of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine was formed, comprising the miners' NPG, the pilots' union, the air traffic controllers, and a free trade union of railroad engineers.⁵⁴ The council was soon given legitimacy by Kiev when it sat at a round-table meeting in June 1992 with Kravchuk and representatives of the once-official trade union federation (FNPU). Among the agreements signed at the meeting was a promise by the government to examine the collective contracts proposed by the independent trade unions. The independent unions took this agreement to heart, and argued that the government was obligated to sit down and negotiate over "general tariff agreements," which would regulate compensation, benefits and some work rules in the industries and professions represented by the unions. When the government dragged its feet, the independent unions called for a strike, threatening to shut down the railroads, airports, and the coal industry.⁵⁵

The strike, when it began on September 2, paralyzed Ukraine's rail and air transport systems. Virtually every airport was closed, and traffic stopped at 15 major rail junctions. Support in the coal fields was spotty, with at most 39 mines closed down.⁵⁶ This was not altogether surprising, since this was the first strike called by central unions over collective bargaining issues, rather than by strike committees or through spontaneous conflicts at the enterprise. The NPG, while influential beyond its numbers and continuing to grow, was not the dominant union in most coal mines.⁵⁷

Yet the stoppage illuminated the fact that the strike weapon cannot be wielded with equal success by workers in every sector. Unlike miners' strikes and other disruptions in industry, this strike had an enormous impact on daily life, since it affected average citizens above all. The unions were unprepared for the negative reaction that their strike received from the public, and Kiev was able to use this to its advantage, first by turning the major state controlled media against the strike, and second by invoking the Soviet-era law on labor

conflicts in declaring the transportation strike illegal. By the second day of the strike, union officials were issued subpoenas to appear in the Supreme Court.

Despite the fact that the unions had begun the strike only after the failure of a fairly lengthening bargaining process, the strike was condemned by most political groups in Ukraine. The FPU, which had earlier reached a separate agreement with the government, called for an end to the strike, rejecting "the efforts of one category of workers to get privileges at the expense of other groups."⁵⁸ The nationalist Ukrainian Republican Party and Democratic Party of Ukraine called on workers to go back to work, "for the sake of political stability, civil accord, and the benefit of Ukraine."⁵⁹ Rukh also came out against the strike, saying the actions of the union leaders "gives rise to astonishment," although union leaders said that the deputy chair of Rukh Lavrinovych made it clear that Rukh would support the independent unions if they advanced political demands formulated by VOST, which the unions declined to do.⁶⁰ As it was, the trade union council was demanding, beyond a signing of the tariff agreements, the resignation of Fokin's cabinet and the reelection of the Ukrainian parliament. The strike was ended on the third day when the government dropped plans to prosecute strike leaders, signed the tariff agreements, and gave union leaders time on state television to present their side of the conflict.

Yet the success of other actions in the transportation sector were mixed. In a little over a month Kravchuk was able to prevent a strike by an independent longshoreman's trade union at the port of Ilichevsk.⁶¹ But a strike in February 1993 by Kiev public transportation workers -- bus, trolley and tram drivers -- was more problematic. While the city's transport workers had struck three times before, this was the largest action. Once again, the disruption the strike caused in people's everyday lives did not win the strikers much sympathy. Rukh condemned the action, and urged ominously that the authorities "punish the real organizers of the strike."⁶² The strikers, many of them women, remained out for over a week. Yet the state responded harshly, declaring the strike illegal, and mobilized civil defense forces, military drivers, and buses from army depots and industrial enterprises in an effort to break the strike. In the end the drivers returned to work without gaining their main demand -- that they be paid 10 times the minimum wage. Taken together, the two transportation strikes showed that the state had changed its attitude towards strikes, at least by certain groups, and was willing to take them to court rather than give in to strikers' demands quickly and quietly as in the past.

The actions of these independent workers' groups, while limited to certain sectors, contrasts sharply with the behavior of the once-official trade union federation, which, at least

formally, can claim to speak for the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian workers. Indeed, at the end of 1992, the federation claimed to represent some 80% of workers in Ukraine.

Despite such numbers, and with the economy in a desperate tailspin, the actions of the FPU have been surprisingly tame. It has increasingly made populist noises with little apparent effect. When Kiev failed to keep its promise of consulting with the union before any price increases, the FPU threatened "actions putting pressure on the government," though the independent unions had already declared a strike. The FPU has declared warning strikes several times, none of which have materialized.⁶³ As expressed at a meeting of regional union officials in Kirovohrad, where the regional council received angry responses from local union representatives, the FPU "acts in such a way as to merely scare but not to hurt anybody."⁶⁴

The reason that the FPU has managed to retain such a large membership despite its apparent inability to defend its workers' interests is fairly clear.⁶⁵ As noted above, unions during the Soviet era were part of the state and enterprise distribution network, where they handed out everything at the workplace from the state's social security funds to vacation trips and consumer goods. As in Russia, workers in Ukraine are afraid to sign a form stating their desire to leave the once-official union, for fear of being denied access to these goods and services. Because there is no alternative at present for many of these services that the union provides, and because their distribution is such an effective way of retaining union members, even the independent unions (while denouncing the practice) have become involved in allocation of social services ("raspredelenie i sotskul'tbyt)."⁶⁶

The reasons for the federation's lack of militancy appear fairly straightforward as well. The existence of independent unions in a workplace or industry correlates fairly highly with strike activity; indeed, it appears that a group of workers must reach the point of collective action required by striking in order to overcome the hegemony of the once-official trade union. Conversely, were the FPU or its constituent members to lead a real strike rather than make vague strike threats or calls for protests, there is a fairly good chance that workers would throw off the old union leadership in favor of strike committees or new union structures, much as the independents had done. A further reason for the federation's lack of militancy, and a significant one, is that it would surely have a difficult time mobilizing its constituency, since most workers at best tolerate it merely for the social benefits received.

There are more directly political and personal reasons for the FPU's docility during this period of economic crisis. Oleksandr Stoyan, the federation chair elected in November 1992, came to the top union post from the position of "senior consultant in the president's political

service," and Stoyan has done little since to embarrass his former boss.⁶⁷ The revolving door has worked in both directions: O. Yefimenko, the former chair of the union federation, was subsequently named to head the State Social Security Fund. While new laws have been directed at giving the state control of social security funds and sanatoria, this personnel move has effectively given such powers back to the trade union structure.⁶⁸ Thus it appears unlikely that there will be a major rift anytime soon between the trade union federation and the president, as has recently happened in Russia, with the resulting loss by the union of control over social security funds.

If the FPU is to weaken its hold on Ukrainian workers, it will do so from within, and there are some small signs that this may yet happen. The western regions, where Ukrainian nationalism is strongest, have led the way in this regard. Building on the strength of strike committees from 1989 and 1991, the regions of Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk elected local democratically oriented trade unions that are pushing to break free of the FPU. These regional organizations comprise some three million members, though because of the Soviet-era practice of including everyone in a trade union, from managers to artists, the number of blue collar workers is probably less. In October 1991, the 1.1 million members of the Lviv regional union elected as its head Yaroslav Kendzior, the former editor of the samizdat journal Ukrainian Herald. By June of 1992, the regional union council voted to disband itself, most likely as a way of helping break up the FPU.⁶⁹

Yet elsewhere the federation shows little sign of imminent collapse. One would expect to see important changes in places like Donetsk, the center of the coal miners' movement. Yet the regional union, or the Union of Independent Associations of Trade Unions (known by its Russian acronym as SNOP), remains dominant in membership and property holdings, if not in political power. In an effort to distance itself from its Communist-dominated predecessor, SNOP has advertised its brightly colored logo on local buses and sponsored rallies for economic reform, yet the changes have been largely superficial. It is some indication of how muddled the organization is that SNOP's newspaper is called "The Position," though from its pages it is impossible to determine what that position might be. In place of the masthead slogan "Workers of the world, unite!," there now appears the more innocuous "Trade unions defend the rights of workers."⁷⁰ To be sure, the association is broadly based, containing representatives from the official steelworkers' and miners' unions ranged alongside their counterparts from the textile workers union, the union of jurists which includes the police, and something called "Solidarnost'" which turns out to be an association of small businessmen.⁷¹ Yet other than a rather vague feeling of not getting a fair deal from Kiev, it is hard to see what

unites them or how SNOP can serve as an effective agent for mass mobilization.⁷² In private, several of the more dissident elements of the organization ridiculed the organization's pretensions to "independence," with several saying that "they have changed in name only." The leader of the textile workers' union, based in a single plant and modeled on the miners' NPG, spoke of the difficulty in organizing an independent union. But she added, "When the miners went on strike, I started to listen to everything attentively. It was as if I opened my eyes for the first time. I started to communicate with other people, to delve deeply into all our problems. My life changed." Yet it is illustrative that in this region of heavy industry and miner militancy, instead of industrial workers, the dissident elements within SNOP were the small textile union, the air traffic controllers, and the unions of jurists and entrepreneurs. Owing to SNOP's resources, even these groups have remained official members; only the miners' NPG in Donetsk operates completely independently.⁷³

Coal Miners, the Donbass, and Ukrainian Independence

The miners themselves have continued to have a direct impact on the course of Ukrainian politics. Moreover, the focus of their struggle has shifted to the level of regional politics within Ukraine, in a way that has blurred the conflicts between independent and once-official trade unions, and even between workers and managers.

While miners from East and West, together with Ukrainian nationalists, united in 1991 for the goal of an independent Ukraine, they did so for different reasons. The Donbass miners had neither the positive economic incentive of the Kuzbass miners, nor the nationalistic drive of those in Western Ukraine. It is worth reflecting on the reasons the Russian-speaking Donbass miners pushed for Ukrainian independence and the dismantling of the Soviet state, since they shed light on the present conflict.

One central factor was a strong sense of exploitation -- a sense that the miners were not getting justly paid for the product of their labor. Despite much rhetoric in favor of the market, a just payment for their labor power was viewed by miners as being based not on its market value, but on a materialist labor theory of value. Indeed, many miners had calculated (based on what it was difficult to determine) that they were earning only a very small percentage of the true value of their product.

This labor theory of value deepened class antagonisms within the workplace. Bosses, after all, produced nothing. At Donetsk's October mine one worker insisted, in a typical complaint,

A lot of people live at the expense of others. Take our mine for example. During the last strike we counted the number of people who work directly in the

mine producing coal -- 3800. Of these 700 were managers. We have some sections in the mine where 4 workers are supervised by 3 people.⁷⁴

Another October miner put it more strongly still: "Look at how many mouths we feed! This system must be smashed."⁷⁵

Given this materialist sense of what different people deserved to be paid, wage differentials within a single firm, which would seem overly modest in a capitalist economy, were simply not tolerated where miners had the ability to challenge such an arrangement. Valery Samofalov, a strike leader at the Kuibyshev mine who disagreed with this prevailing view, recalled with exasperation, "When we drafted the [labor collective] contract . . . and read it to the workers, no one was listening until we got to a paragraph [about] the director's salary." According to the contract, if the mine fulfilled the plan, workers would be paid R2,000 a month -- a hefty wage at the time -- and the director would get three times that amount. "So, we got to this point, and people have this consciousness -- it's not their fault, it's our misfortune, it's how we were raised. 'Look,' they said, 'the director sits in his office and makes R10,000 whereas I work with a shovel'."⁷⁶

Yet there was more at work in these sentiments than populist envy. Rather, miners expressed a strong sense of injustice, a sense of having been robbed. Miners, even with their high wages, could not obtain the same privileges they saw distributed to their bosses and others with connections. The problem, according to many miners, was that people were not getting paid according to their labor: Those that worked hard, and produced something of material value, were being cheated out of its worth, while those that distributed and redistributed this wealth, were enriching themselves without real work.⁷⁷

The miners soon drew a connection between their sense of exploitation and the state's ability, through the self-appointed Communist Party, to distribute and redistribute wealth as it saw fit. Indeed, the class-based anger directed at managers within the enterprise was soon aimed towards a system the miners believed to be exploiting them.

With the sense that Moscow was cheating them, that they were putting more into the central coffers than they were getting out, the call for a sovereign Ukraine, when it came, struck a deep chord. The support of the Russian-speaking Donbass miners for Ukrainian sovereignty was based not on nationalism, but on the hope that a Ukrainian government with more independence would provide a better deal than the Soviet government in terms of what it took away and what it gave back, while events would be easier to control in Kiev than in Moscow.

As Yurii Makarov, co-chair of the Donetsk strike committee, explained after the 1991 strike:

It's my opinion that in such a big state as ours, it's impossible to administer all regions from one place, from Moscow, and to issue laws that would be acceptable to everyone. I think that if Ukraine were independent, it would be better able to fix the economy and everything else on its territory.⁷⁸

But the hope of the Donbass miners that Ukrainian independence would improve their material situation and the accountability of the state proved short-lived. When asked a year later what had changed since the 1991 strike (in which the miners' political demands had been achieved) Makarov replied, "everything has gotten worse."

Ukrainian independence did not improve the situation -- the "center" just moved from Moscow to Kiev. In the past we fought for the existence of Ukraine as an autonomous state. But we didn't want Kiev to become the center instead of Moscow, we wanted power to be given to the localities, to enterprises, to cities, we wanted the living standard of the population to grow. But not so Kiev could grab the reins of government in its fist.⁷⁹

This dissatisfaction was furthered by the Ukrainian government's coal policy. The initial strategy of Kiev, upon gaining independence, was to let the coal miners follow the logic of their rhetoric, and to exist totally on the free market. When Russia began lifting price controls in January 1992, forcing Ukraine to take similar action, the government in Kiev freed prices for coal and cut all subsidies and tax obligations for the industry. This allowed for windfall profits in the coal industry, and miners wages rose dramatically.⁸⁰

The euphoria from the sudden increase in wages was short-lived. Miners began to perceive the free market policy for the coal industry as a trap. As Donetsk's deputy mayor Bychkov put it, the miners "started to realize that there are less and less buyers of coal, and more and more coal in warehouses. . . . Now miners understand that in a year or so there will be lots of coal, but few buyers, and no need to keep mining. What will happen to the miners then?"⁸¹ Recognizing their predicament, miners and coal managers themselves volunteered to pay taxes to the state, Bychkov explained, "on the condition that the state should be responsible for the mines, like in the Ruhr Basin in Germany, in Britain, and even in America. When a mine is closed, the state decides to develop new work in electronics or some other industry, creating new work places. That's state policy."⁸²

However, even as they recognized the importance of subsidies and their dependence on the state, the Donbass miners continued to argue that they were being exploited. Samofalov of

the Kuibyshev mine, addressing a meeting of miners before their shift, used the following illustration to explain how the exploitation had taken place before, and how little had changed since.

Once the Soviet Union existed. Once clever men worked in our Motherland's capital city, and each of us received a little something from our Motherland's 'granaries.' All of us worked, poured everything into the 'granaries', and the clever men divided it into parts. They decided themselves how much everyone would get, because no one should get rich, no one should 'fatten.' When the collapse of the Union started the 'granaries' moved from Moscow to Kiev.

He went on to argue that in the Donbass "steelworkers, chemical workers, and so on, all of us create material value," placing it ahead of other regions, but "if you contribute the lion's share to the budget of Ukraine, you get only a certain small percentage back to satisfy your needs, such as day care, pensions, health care. But the Ternopil [agricultural and western] region which produces much less than you do, is given a big share." These regions "live at our expense." The answer, he and many others argued, was to make the Donbass a free economic zone, as the first step toward a federal Ukraine.⁸³

Part of the conflict between the Donbass miners and Kiev has to do with a greater cleavage in Ukrainian society: between Russian and Ukrainian speakers, and between the industrialized East and the more agricultural West. When viewed in terms of ethnic background alone, Russians are a clear minority in Ukraine -- 22% of the population as compared with 73% Ukrainians. But the greater cleavage, many would argue, is between those for whom Russian is the first language -- Russians, Russified Ukrainians, and others -- and Ukrainian speakers.⁸⁴ Ukrainians speaking Russian as a first language tend, for historical and sociological reasons, to be much less nationalistic than their Ukrainian-speaking counterparts. Moreover, these Russian speakers, both ethnic Ukrainians and Russians, are concentrated overwhelmingly in the industrial East, while Ukrainian speakers predominate in rural areas especially in the West.⁸⁵

In the East, the ties to Russia are not only cultural: in the heavily-industrialized South-East region of Ukraine, at least 80% of enterprises were oriented to Russia either as suppliers of inputs or as purchasers of their products.⁸⁶ This is not surprising, given the fact that almost all of the Donbass's industry was run by Union ministries in Moscow rather than Ukrainian ministries.

Thus in Ukraine ethnic and national issues, such the question of Ukrainian as the state language, overlap with class and economic concerns, such as state support for agriculture

versus that for industry. These conflicts coincide on the crucial issues of state building, economic reform, and policy towards Russia: Ukrainian nationalists and western Ukrainians favor building a strong independent state above all, while those working in industry and eastern Ukrainians generally favor strong trade and other contacts with Russia, and are not willing to suffer economic hardship, even temporarily, for the sake of a strong Ukraine. Together these conflicts have pushed miners and others in the Donbass to call for a federal system for Ukraine, giving their region greater autonomy.

Given this history and social structure, the Donbass strike of June 1993 was hardly surprising. What was surprising was that the conflict united much of Eastern Ukraine, and both workers and managers, manual laborers and professionals, against the current government in Kiev. The strike began over the latest round of price increases on food and basic consumer items, an action that was exacerbated by the fact that many miners had not been paid for months due to the shortage of cash. While the work stoppage began on June 7 in a single Donetsk mine over these economic issues, the news quickly spread to other mines, and the Donetsk city strike committee put forth political demands: regional independence for the Donbass, and a national referendum on (no) confidence in the parliament and the president. Within a day all the mines of the Donetskgol coal association had stopped working, and the miners had gathered on the city square.⁸⁷

Workers from other industries showed their support for miners, either by shutting down production or sending their representatives to the demonstration on the city square. Teachers, medical and cultural workers also took part. By June 11, 150 enterprises in Donetsk province alone had stopped work, including 74 mines. On the city square speakers argued that government policy was hurting the industrialized region; the phrase "they've squeezed the last juice out of the Donbass" was heard repeatedly. More specifically, demonstrators maintained that the region was not getting its fair share of state revenues, and that Kiev's policy on trade meant that goods were not flowing to and from other former Soviet republics, creating losses for industry. If a strike was not sufficient to achieve their goal of regional independence, the miners threatened to call for civil disobedience throughout the region.⁸⁸

The miners and others claimed that their political demands were the most important, and as if to prove their point they refused to halt the strike after considerable economic concessions were made by the government.⁸⁹ Nor did they show much reaction when Efim Zviagilskii, then mayor of Donetsk and the former director of the Zasyadko mine where the strike began, was named first Vice Premier of Ukraine. What did end the strike was the

decision of the Ukrainian parliament, after three days of discussion, to hold a national referendum on the faith of the population in the parliament and the president.⁹⁰

The strike, which lasted ten days, was considerable in scope. According to the strikers' statistics, more than 300 enterprises stopped work. Beyond the Donbass, the strike was said to have touched Kherson, Kirovohrad, the Kryvyi Rih basin, Simferopol and Kharkiv. Workers at the well known "Arsenal" plant in Kiev called a meeting to discuss joining the strike, and even three mines from Novovolynsk in Western Ukraine stopped work.⁹¹

One reason that the strike was so successful was that, in contrast to previous strikes (and most labor conflicts), managers and local governments were not opposed but openly supported the demands. While the strike was started spontaneously by coal miners, directors wholeheartedly supported the demands -- aimed at Kiev and not management. Moreover, strikes occurred in many enterprises where management, rather than workers, still retains the upper hand. (At the Donetskii Metallurgical Factory, for example, work did not stop, but representatives from the plant participated in demonstrations in Donetsk and in Kiev.) Coal directors and other industrialists, in fact, refused to open talks with Kiev on economic questions until the strikers' political demands were met.⁹²

Cleavages in Contemporary Ukraine and Electoral Prospects

Thus, despite tremendous class and political differences, Donbass society proved able to unite on the goal of greater regional autonomy. Indeed, cleavages in contemporary Ukraine, far from being "cross-cutting," largely overlap and reinforce one another. Again, these include agricultural versus industrial interests; Ukrainian nationalism versus cultural and kinship ties with Russia; the issues of state building versus economic growth; an independent economy versus free trade with Russia; Ukrainian as the state language versus Russian as a second state language; and finally, a sense that the industrial East is a net drain on the Ukrainian economy versus a sense of exploitation -- that the Donbass is producing more than it is getting back from the state.

It is this sense of exploitation that has led miners and others to call for a free economic zone in the Donbass. If understandable politically, the calls for a free economic zone for the region make little sense economically, given the region's dependence on subsidies.⁹³ Most miners and others interviewed in the Donbass held two contradictory viewpoints without particular concern: that the "center" (first Moscow, now Kiev) was exploiting them, and that they were dependent on state subsidies for their survival.

The subsidies have been significant: 550 billion karbovanets subsidy to Ukrainian coal industry in May-June alone; an extrapolation of this rate would mean annual cost of 3,300 billion karbovanets, or nearly a third of the annual state budget, before counting the wage hikes granted after the recent strike.⁹⁴ The dilemma facing Kiev is either to invest large amounts of capital reconstructing worn-out industries and creating new jobs or to spend still greater sums to subsidize unprofitable industries.⁹⁵ A further option, to employ Thatcher's strategy of direct confrontation with workers, leading to closures and unemployment, would almost certainly be a disaster for all involved. Miners, for example, well understand the industry's enormous losses, not only financial but in human lives, and themselves argue that some mines should be closed. But they insist that they be retrained -- to build cars, houses, roads, or whatever society needs. Otherwise, they are prepared to fight.

As Donetsk strike committee member Boldyrev maintained, "The authorities in Kiev seem to be hostage to the situation: if there were mass closing of the mines, there would be a great outburst and social unrest, and they know that perfectly well."⁹⁶ As his colleague Krylov insisted, "Maybe those who say the Donbass should be closed as a zone of ecological catastrophe are right. It's necessary to close mines and factories. But if the Donbass mines are closed, 120,000 underground miners will be jobless. There'll be a social explosion -- a war."⁹⁷

While the miners' demand for a referendum on the confidence of the population in the parliament and the president was eventually rejected, pressure applied across Ukrainian society succeeded in forcing parliament to call pre-term elections for both president and parliament. In fact, in their loathing of parliament, Rukh (and other parties) and the miners' NPG united in calling for early elections.⁹⁸ Rail workers in Lviv oblast struck for at least six days, demanding the dissolution and reelection of the parliament as well as higher wages; they were joined by other workers in the oblast in one-hour strikes and demonstrations, where participants also spoke out against the agreements on the Black Sea fleet and nuclear weapons, as well as the possibility of Ukraine's participation in an economic union with the CIS states.⁹⁹

With elections now called for, workers in Galicia may well support Rukh and other parties of democratic-nationalist orientation, but workers in the East will almost certainly not do so. Yet a party that might capture the concerns of workers as a distinct group has failed to appear. In fact, the only "Labor Party" was rather clearly set up by enterprise managers, largely from the Donbass.¹⁰⁰ In the absence of a party perceived as genuinely committed to the interests of labor (such as the labor or social democratic parties of Western Europe), the

parties of industrialist and former communists may do quite well in the coming elections among workers, especially in Eastern Ukraine. Indeed, early survey data indicates that the Socialist Party (the successor to the Communist Party) has gained support from unskilled workers, among other groups. Moreover, while the largest group of those surveyed are still undecided, their profile closely resembles the supporters of the Socialist Party, suggesting that the latter could continue to gain considerable support.¹⁰¹ Unless moderate political groups such as New Ukraine can craft effective appeals to workers in the East, the former communists may do quite well.¹⁰²

Conclusions

Ukraine is now mired in an increasingly dire economic and political crisis, so much so that Ukraine has been transformed in a very short while from the former Soviet republic with perhaps the best prospects to a country of which the following is now being asked : "Can Ukraine survive as an independent state?"¹⁰³

The question is not an abstract one for the Ukrainian population, of which industrial workers comprise a predominant part. Prices have soared uncontrollably, real wages and living standards have dropped dramatically, and the threat of unemployment looms on the horizon for a good many of Ukraine's workers.

And yet the number of industries where workers have mobilized to defend themselves in such appalling economic conditions has been surprisingly few. The threat of unemployment, together with the enterprise paternalism described above, has placed workers in a difficult situation as they remain dependent on industrial enterprises precariously propped up by credits and subsidies. These enterprises themselves have thus far proved resistant to change.

For one, the distribution of goods and services through the workplace places a major roadblock before the privatization of state enterprises, a path upon which Ukraine has hardly even begun to embark. Since city governments cannot afford to take over the operation of day care centers or the construction and distribution of housing, and private owners would have to charge prices out of the reach of potential customers, enterprises remain, for the present, the only alternative.

The once-official trade unions have also continued to benefit from this system of distribution. At Donetskii as elsewhere, these unions retain members largely through their ability to control the distribution of items from the state's social security benefits to places in plant vacation centers and children's summer camps. As we have seen, these trade union

associations are having a much harder time mobilizing their constituency and convincing them that they have recast themselves into a legitimate defender of workers' interests.

Enterprise distribution has also benefitted the directors of these plants, a group commonly referred to throughout Ukraine as the "Red Directorate." Far from being interested simply in profit-maximization, these directors view their positions politically. They continue to expend scarce resources on the well-being of their workforce, which both prevents workers' collective action and allows the directors, or others with whom they ally, to achieve positions of political power and influence. Thus, Donetskii's director used his plant's resources as a base for election to Ukraine's parliament. The director of the above-mentioned Zasyadko mine, Efim Zviagilsky, was elected mayor of Donetsk, member of parliament, and as of this writing, is acting Prime Minister of Ukraine. These political positions, in turn, allow for further strengthening of their economic base: Zasyadko's success appears largely a result of an export license, one of the scarcest resources in Ukrainian industry, the distribution of which has little correlation with economic rationality. Others, such as Donetskii's Sledenev, are able to use their position to get favorable credits for their enterprises. Collectively, these industrialists cum parliamentarians are blamed, through their granting of subsidies and credits to industry, for much of the monetary emissions currently plaguing Ukraine's economy.

Such a state of affairs helps explain why the only "labor" parties in Ukraine have been organizations of industrialists and directors. They, together with the once-official trade unions, have taken over the Communist Party's legacy of "acting in the interests of the working class," while having a weak link with those they claim to represent. This would appear to be bad news for the creation of a democratic society, since most workers, a very significant social group, and one that will be asked to make still more sacrifices for the sake of economic reform, lack a genuine channel for articulating their interests and defending their rights. While workers and directors may have some common interests at present, such as in maintaining employment, their interests are hardly identical.¹⁰⁴

However, while most workers remain dependent on state enterprises and their managers for their well-being, significant sectors are independently organized and have shown their willingness to strike. While some of these groups, such as those in transportation, have found that the use of their strike weapon can create a social backlash, others, most notably the Donbass miners, have used strikes to dramatic effect. Moreover, in applying a conception of justice born in the Soviet era (such as the miners' argument about their exploitation despite heavy state subsidies), the miners' insurgency underscores the difficulties not only in creating

capitalism but making it legitimate -- in convincing miners and other workers that the market not only works efficiently, but distributes its rewards fairly.

More importantly still, the miners of Eastern Ukraine are joined in their demands across class lines by others in the region. The reasons are both material and cultural: both workers and managers in these state enterprises have an interest in strong economic ties with Russian firms, and the predominantly Russian-speaking population has cultural and kinship ties with Russia, an interest in promoting the Russian language as a second state language, and little interest in state building at the expense of economic well-being. As the strike of June 1993 showed, much of this region is capable of acting collectively to defend its interests.

This cleavage illuminates the vicious circle to be faced by any government in Kiev: in order to halt inflation and stabilize the economy, that government would have to cut subsidies, much of which are aimed at industries in the East. Any reduction in subsidies will lead to bankruptcies and open and widespread unemployment. Yet if relatively modest price increases were sufficient to bring much of Eastern Ukraine to strike and call for the virtual ouster of the government and the president, then a sudden reduction in subsidies and subsequent unemployment will almost certainly do so. The result has been a political crisis, as the Ukrainian economy continues to slide deeper into the morass.

ENDNOTES

1. Leslie Dienes, "Energy, Minerals, and Economic Policy." and other articles in I. S. Koropecy, ed., The Ukrainian Economy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) As for the level of industry, by the 1960's Ukraine's coal-metallurgical-heavy machinery complex exceeded that of any country in Western Europe.

2. Moreover, much of that investment was placed in industries without bright prospects on the market, such as defense and coal. Jay Mitchell, "Macroeconomic Perspective of the Ukrainian Economy," paper presented at the conference "Challenges of Transition for Ukraine's Economy," Washington, DC, Sept., 1993.

3. David Maples, Ukraine Under Perestroika: Ecology, Economics and the Workers' Revolt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

4. Mitchell, 6-7; The Ukrainian Weekly, 24 October, 1993; Financial Times, 22 December 1993.

5. The following paragraph is drawn from Simon Johnson and Oleg Ustenko, "The Road to Hyperinflation: Economic Independence in Ukraine, 1991-93," paper presented at the conference "First Steps Toward Economic Independence: New States of the Postcommunist World," Stockholm, August 1993. The authors note there is considerable room for error in the numbers.

6. The authors conclude, with some understatement, that "Overall, real living standards have fallen for most social groups since independence." Ibid. In addition to rising prices for basic food items, prices for such necessary services as housing and transportation have also increased. The living standards of pensioners and others on fixed income have been disastrous.

7. Mitchell, 5-6; Roman Solchanyk, "Ukraine's Year of Crises," RFE/RL Report, reprinted in The Ukrainian Weekly, 9 January, 1994.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid, 8.

10. [Interfax-Ukraine claims that unofficially the unemployment rate is 9 percent, though the difference in figures appears to be more a result of differing definitions than the inclusion of those not registered for unemployment. The Ukrainian Weekly, 19 December, 1993. Johnson and Ustenko report high re-employment in 1992 -- out of 349 job losers in the state sector in the second half of 1992, by December of the same year 42% had found jobs in the non-state sector, and another 31 % in the state sector. "Unemployment After Communism: Five Results from Ukraine," unpublished paper. It is far from clear however that such rates can be maintained.

11. Viktor Kostyukovskii, Kuzbass: Zarkoe leto 89-ogo (Moscow: Sovremennik 1990); Theodore Friedgut and Lewis Siegelbaum, "Perestroika From Below: The Soviet Miners' Strike and its Aftermath," New Left Review, (Summer 1990); Nina Maksimova, "Zabastovka: shtrikhi k portretu yavleniya," EKO, (no. 11 1989); Peter Rutland, "Labor Unrest and Movements in 1989 and 1990," Soviet Economy, (December 1990); Linda J. Cook "Lessons of Soviet Coal Miners' Strike of Summer 1989," The Harriman Institute Forum, Vol 4 No. 3, March 1991.

12. Marples.

13. *Ibid.*, xxi.

14. *Ibid.*, 203.

15. The strike committee representatives from Voroshilovhrad (later renamed Luhansk) called the new movement "the enemy and a menace to our struggle." *Ibid.*, 212.

16. Adrian Karatnycky, "The Battle of the Trade Unions," Journal of Democracy 3, no. 2 (1992).

17. The strike was limited to Kiev and Western Ukraine, and won the support of no more than 10% of Ukrainian workers. *Ibid.*, 51-2.

18. Bohdan Krawchenko, "Ukraine: the Politics of Independence," in I. Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds., Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 78.

19. Radio Kiev, 11 March 1991, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service [hereafter FBIS], March 12, 1991. Interestingly, while Yeltsin was actively courting the support of striking miners in Russia in his bid for independence, Kravchuk actively opposed both the economic demands of the Donbass and the nationalist and political demands in Western Ukraine. When presidential elections were held in late 1991, the Donbass miners supported neither Kravchuk nor Chornovyl, the Rukh candidate, but rather Grinyov, a Russian-speaking mathematician from Kharkiv, who served as deputy chair of the parliament.

20. Moscow Central Television, 13 March 1991, in FBIS March 14, 1991.

21. Radio Kiev, 21 March 1991, in FBIS 22 March, 1991.

22. Krawchenko, 79. Later, Soviet Prime Minister Pavlov complained that representatives of Rukh were active in the Donbass area and were encouraging people to strike. The nationalist Stepan Khmara was detained at the Donetsk airport, on his way to a meeting with miners. TASS, 11 April 1991, in FBIS 11 April 1991; Radio Kiev 12 April 1991, in FBIS 12 April 1991. The newspaper Pravda accused the miners picketing the Supreme Soviet in Kiev of being financed by the nationalist Ukrainian Republican Party. Pravda, 8 April, 1991.

23. Pravda, 15 March 1991. This last demand is a curious one given the miners' knowledge that they were being greatly subsidized by the state. This point will be returned to below.

24. Radio Mayak, 3 April, 1991, in FBIS 4 April, 1991. According to a correspondent for Moscow radio reporting from the Donbass, the economic strike which started on March 1st had been completely changed, "it has turned into a political strike; now only political demands are heard." FBIS, 12 April, 1991. A visit to the Donbass by the author in April 1991 also found miners almost consumed with political concerns.

25. Krawchenko, 79.

26. Izvestiya, 16 April, 1991; FBIS, 17 April, 1991.

27. Robitnycha Hazeta, 17 April, 1991. Between 12 and 15 enterprises were on strike, including 3 out of 4 trolley bus depots, one bus route, and several industrial plants. Radio Rossii, 17 April, 1991, Agent Press-France, 17 April 1991, in FBIS 18 April, 1991; Izvestiya, 18 April, 1991.

28. The following day attempts to mobilize Arsenal workers resumed. Komsomolskaya Pravda 25 April, 1991; Izvestiya 24 April, 1991.

29. Izvestia, 15 April, 1991; Pravda, 20 April, 1991.

30. The following is based on Crowley, "From Coal to Steel: The Formation of an Independent Workers' Movement in the Soviet Union, 1989-1991," (PhD dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1993), chapters 4-5; and idem, "Barriers to Collective Action: Steelworkers and Mutual Dependence in the Former Soviet Union," World Politics (July 1994).

31. Theodore Friedgut, Iuzovka and Revolution, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

32. Boris Rumer, Soviet Steel: The Challenge of Industrial Modernization in the USSR (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 64; Cheryl Harris, "Modernization of the Soviet Steel Industry," in "Gorbachev's Economic Plans," vol. 1, study papers submitted to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, Nov. 23, 1987 (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.). This production in old plants with obsolescent equipment is especially characteristic of steel-making in Ukraine, which compromised about 40 percent of Soviet steel-making. Rumer, 15.

33. See Crowley, "From Coal to Steel."

34. Metallurg [hereafter M], August 19, 1989.

35. Ibid., December 18, 1989. Whether such arguments were persuasive or not, the director was elected a Peoples' Deputy, and subsequently a member of the Supreme Rada.

36.The plant was capable of many such things, he argued. Dwellers of one street had long complained to local government officials about the raw sewage seeping into their courtyards and street, but the problem was not solved until the plant came and sunk sewage pipes and built fifty meters of road. The director claimed this was only one of many such possible projects. M, April 4, 1990.

37.M, December 30, 1989. Ibid., May 12, 1990.

38.Interview with A.R. and B.M., deputy chairs of the trade union committee at Donetskii, Donetsk, July 2, 1992.

39.Women compromised roughly one-half of the work force at Donetskii. As elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc, women in Ukraine have been the first to suffer from layoffs at industrial and other enterprises.

40.M, August 5, 1989.

41.Ibid., October 25, 1989.

42.Ibid.

43.Even within a single borough in Donetsk, one can find two mines, the first with renewed paternalism and a quiescent workforce, and the second with a militant workforce still pursuing workers' control. See Stephen Crowley and Lewis Siegelbaum, "Enterprise Paternalism Versus Self-Organization: A Tale of Two Donetsk Coal Mines" (unpublished paper).

44.Ibid.

45.Krawchenko, 82.

46. Viktor Tkachuk, "Strike of Free Trade Unions," Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research, September 3-5, 1992.

47.Karatnycky, 52.

48.Alla Nazimova, "Chelovek: konflikt na proizvodstve," *Politicheskoe Obrazovanie*, no. 10 (1989), 75-80; Walter Connor, The Accidental Proletariat (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 213-14

49.FBIS, 25 November 1991.

50.Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 21 March 1992; FBIS 23 March 1992.

51.FBIS, 6 march, 1992.

52.Izvestiya, 4 April, 1992.

53. Prime Minister Fokin's address to parliament, FBIS, 27 April 1992.

54. While one reason given for the association was that these were all occupations of "high risk" (though it was hard to see how air traffic controllers were themselves at risk) the absence of VOST in the Council could be viewed, in the words of one observer, as "a demonstration of the refusal of a significant majority of workers of Ukraine from nationalistic bases of association." Elena Kovalyeva, "Characteristics of the Trade Union Movement in Donetsk Oblast" (unpublished paper, 1992).

55. Kovalyeva; Profspilkova Hazeta, 13 July 1992; Rabochaya Gazeta 10 July 1992. When members of the independent trade union council believed that the government was failing to negotiate on the tariff agreement in good faith, they went on a hunger strike on August 17, refusing to leave the building of the Cabinet of Ministers until agreement was signed. Only when this failed did they call a strike. "Strike of the Free Trade Unions".

56. Pravda Ukrainy, September 4, September 5, 1992. The government press service accused the media of exaggerating the numbers of strikers: it claimed that engineers in only 4 depots had struck, and that only 4 coal mines and 2 iron ore mines were out. Nevertheless two-thirds of all passenger trains were stopped in Kiev and 405 flights were delayed in the first 24 hours of the strike. FBIS 4 September, 1992.

57. FBIS, 2 Sept. 1992. One reason for the difference in numbers was that the NPG organized underground production workers, while the once-official coal union included virtually everyone affiliated with the industry.

58. FBIS 4 September 1992.

59. Ibid. Union officials also claimed to be harassed at their headquarters by a group of "toughs" from the Ukrainian National Association, an ultra-nationalist group that in a public statement called the strikers scum and offered to help law enforcement officials punish the strikers. "Strike of the Free Trade Unions."

60. Ibid. FBIS September 11, 1992.

61. FBIS October 26 1992. A strike did take place among port workers in July of 1993 however.

62. Golos Ukrainy, 17 February, 24 February and 25 February, 1992; FBIS 18 February 1993. Rukh leader Chornovil subsequently stated that given the current political situation in Ukraine political activity may have to be "somewhat curtailed," and spoke of strikes as being "out of the question." Ibid., April 2, 1993.

63. Vechernyi Donetsk, 8 July 1992; Profspilkova Hazeta, 13 June 1992; FBIS 29 December, 1992.

64. Holos Ukrainy, 22 January 1992.

65. This continues to be the case, despite a situation which was described in June 1992 by one observer as "a crisis situation for the FPU, [characterized by] the absence of a documented program, the unpopularity of its leaders, the weakness of its analytical foundation, union workers unprepared for contemporary conditions, an unwieldy structure, and attempts by lower organs to create independent trade unions." Kovalyeva.

66. Pozitsiia, 6-12 May 1992; Crowley and Siegelbaum.

67. Kravchuk in turn has been careful to address the regular trade union congresses, much as Communist Party bosses have done in the past. FBIS 23 December, 1992.

68. Holos Ukrainy 6 April 1993.

69. Vyacheslav Pikhovchek, "Democracy and 'Democrats': Some comments on the genesis of an electoral democratic bloc in Ukraine," Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research, Sept. 1992; Karatnycky; Kovalyeva.

70. At its rally on 12 June 1992, SNOP passed resolutions calling on the oblast' council of people's deputies and the president's representative to reorient the regional economy along the lines of producing consumer goods, halt the "artificial bankrupting of state enterprises," maintain social services, and curb crime and violence in the area. In a throwback to the Communist Saturdays, the meeting ended with an appeal to all workers to devote 2-3 days' labor to assist with bringing in the harvest. Pozitsiia, 17-23 June 1992, p. 2.

71. It is a fairly good indication of how little has changed in Ukraine that the entrepreneur that leads this latter organization speaks proudly of his participation in trade union movement, which for him is directed towards gaining greater political and economic space from the state, a conflict continuing to overwhelm that between private entrepreneurs and employees.

72. Interview with S. E. Ignatov, Yu. T. Pivovarov, O. P. Samofalova and S. I. Savchukov, Donetsk, 17 June 1992, Donetsk Oral History Interview Project [hereafter DOHIP].

73. Even the NPG cannot claim to have organized a majority of its potential constituency, having 60-70,000 members in September 1992. Kovalyeva. The former official miners' union still claims many members, and several Donetsk mines have established yet another union distinct from both the former official union and the NPG. Pikhovchek notes that some sectoral unions, such as power-engineering and ship building, are also pushing for independence.

74. Interview with October miners, Donetsk, 25 June, 1992, DOHIP.

75. Interview with October miners, Donetsk, 23 June, 1992. It is worth noting that this remark about the system was made well after the downfall of the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

76. Lewis Siegelbaum and Daniel Walkowitz, "'We'll remain in this Cesspool for a Long Time': The Miners of Donetsk Speak Out," Oral History Review, Vol. 20 Nos. 1 & 2

(Spring-Fall 1992). Likewise, in the neighboring October mine one year later, miners were outraged when they discovered that the director was getting as much as 50,000 rubles a month while miners were being paid 15-20,000. See Crowley and Siegelbaum, 27.

77. Payment according to labor was of course Lenin's definition of socialism.

78. Oral History Review.

79. Interview with Yurii Makarov, Donetsk, 24 June 1992, DOHIP.

80. FBIS, 2 January 1992; *Ibid.*, February 62-64.

81. He added that it was unthinkable to close the twenty-one mines in the city, since half of the population, around 500,000 were connected with the mining industry. Interview with Viktor Bychkov, 18 June 1992, DOHIP.

82. *Ibid.* The policy of free pricing for the coal industry was soon changed back to procurement prices set by the state.

83. 25 June 1992, DOHIP. Samofalov's address was prompted by his return from a picket of the parliament in Kiev, attended by miners and other workers from the Donbass, where these demands were advanced.

84. See, for example, Dominique Arel, "Voting Behavior in the Ukrainian Parliament: The Language Factor," in Thomas Remington, ed., Parliaments in Transition (Westview), forthcoming.

85. In the Donbass, the number of ethnic Ukrainians and Russians is approximately the same -- 51% ethnic Ukrainians and 44% Russians according to the 1989 census -- but only 32% claim Ukrainian as their mother tongue, as opposed to 66% claiming Russian. Andrew Wilson, "The Growing Challenge to Kiev from the Donbas," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 33, 20 August 1993, 8. Moreover, Russian is overwhelmingly the dominant language in public discourse. Most people interviewed in the Donbass from different social strata described themselves as being Ukrainians in terms of citizenship, while being oriented toward Russian culture and often having relatives living in Russia. Many described the belief that the Donbass was a melting pot of ethnic groups, and Ukrainians and Russians are heavily inter-married in the region.

86. Zhizn' (Donetsk), 15 June 1993. The article was referring specifically to the oblasts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhyya.

87. Vechernii Donetsk, 6 June, 1993; Zhizn', 6 June 1993.

88. Vechernii Donetsk, 11 June, 1993. The demands for regional independence and a referendum had reportedly been worked out at a meeting of Donbass miners at Novogradovka

in May; there Ukraine's policies on taxation, banking and customs came under heavy condemnation. Zhizn', 11 June 1993; KAS-KOR Digest (Moscow), Vol. 3 No. 6, June 1993.

89.The economic concessions made to end the strike were considerable, however, and included wage hikes that would push miners' pay to an average of 350 thousand karbovanets a month, and allow coal enterprises to sell 10% of their product at market prices. Zhizn', 30 June, 1993. These concessions undoubtedly weaken Kiev in its losing battle with inflation.

90.Vechernii Donetsk, 12, 15, 16, 18 June, 1993. On the very high level of distrust in Kravchuk and the parliament in the region as compared with that of other regions in Ukraine, see Kathleen Mihalisko, "Ukrainians and Their Leaders at a Time of Crisis," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 31, 30 July 1993.

91.Vechernii Donetsk, 12, 18 June, 1993; Zhizn', 12 June, 1993; Golos Ukraini, 18 June, 1993; Svoe Delo (Dneprpetrovsk) 29 June - 2 July, 1993.

92.Zhizn', 15 June, 1993; Vechernii Donetsk, 18 June, 1993. There is little evidence that this was a "director's strike" in the sense of being planned and controlled by enterprise directors, as some journalistic accounts characterized the events. New York Times, 17 July 1993.

93.The more convincing definitions describe the plan for a "free economic zone" in terms of greater autonomy for the region. Ilyushenko, the head of the Donetsk coal trust Donetskugol', defines the goal as allowing the region to form its own budget, to direct the policy of regional banks, and to negotiate economic agreements with neighboring regions in Russia. Zhizn', 30 June, 1993.

94.See note 90.

95.Moscow News, 18 June, 1993. Ukrainian coal would seem to be one answer for the country's energy needs, of which Ukraine at present can only meet 30 percent. Yet thermal stations now rely on oil and gas more than coal; Donbass coal is costly, and in the present economic and political conditions, production is unreliable. David Marples, "Ukraine, Belarus, and the Energy Dilemma," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 27, 2 July 1993. In fact, despite having the Soviet Union's largest coal basin, Ukraine produced only 70% of the coal it consumed before the collapse of the Union. Marples, "Turmoil in the Donbass: The Economic Realities," Report on the USSR, 12 October, 1990, 15. Coal presently accounts for 34% of Ukraine's fuel consumption.

96.Interview with Yurii Boldyrev, 1 July 1992, DOHIP.

97.Interview with Krylov, DOHIP.

98.As expressed by NPG chair Oleksandr Mryl, "This is a joint move by Rukh, the parties, and the trade unions with a single demand — to hold parliamentary elections. This demand will be supported in the east, west, and south of Ukraine." The groups threatened to use mass

demonstrations and strikes to achieve their goals. Narodna Hazeta, no.32, August 1993; FBIS, 24 August 1993.

99.FBIS, September 2, 1993; September 8, 1993; September 10, 1993.

100.The party is often derided as the "party of the red directors." On the formation of the Labor Party and its platform, see Pervaya Linaya, January 5 and January 11, 1993; Vechernii Donetsk, 23 December and 30 December, 1992. The party's first chair, Valentin Landyk, was since appointed to the government.

101.Jarolsaw Maryniuk, "Demographics of Party Support in Ukraine," RFE/RL Research Report, reprinted in The Ukrainian Weekly, December 26 1993 and January 2, 1994. Unfortunately, such reliable survey analysis remains rare in Ukraine, particularly concerning the attitudes of workers as opposed to other social groups.

102.New Ukraine is a coalition led by economic reformers from the East and based in Kharkiv. Its leader, Grinev, was supported by the Donbass miners in the first presidential elections, though its call for market reforms and privatization may not endear it to workers generally.

103.Roman Salchanyk, "Ukraine's Year of Crises," The Ukrainian Weekly, January 9, 1994.

104.The inherent conflicts between managers and workers would of course become more evident if enterprise property rights are transferred from the state sector into the hands of new owners

