TITLE: WORKERS' RESPONSE TO THE POST-COMMUNIST
TRANSITION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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## CONTENTS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** ............................................. 1

**I. INTRODUCTION** ............................................... 1

**II. IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC REFORM ON RUSSIA’S WORKERS** ............ 2
   Prices and Wages ............................................ 2
   Employment .................................................. 3
   Privatization .............................................. 5

**III. LABOR STRIKES** ............................................. 6
   Introduction ................................................ 6
   1989-1990: The First Strike Wave .......................... 7
   Politicization of the Strike Movement ..................... 10
   The Spring 1991 Strike Wave ................................ 10
   Workers’ Responses to the Yeltsin-Gaidar
   "Shock Therapy" Reform .................................... 11
   Assessment: Strikes and the Defense of
   Workers’ Interests .......................................... 14
   Trade Unions: Agendas and Constituencies .................. 15
   The Reformed Official Unions: Seeking a
   Constructive Dialogue ...................................... 16
   The Militant Independents ................................... 19
   Labor Unions in the Russian Federation .................... 20
   State-Labor Relations ...................................... 20
   Unions and their Constituencies ............................ 22
   Challenges to the FNPR’s Dominance ....................... 23
   Unions and Parties .......................................... 25

**IV. WORKERS, POLITICS AND THE 1993 ELECTIONS** .................... 26
   Introduction ................................................ 26
   The 1993 Elections ......................................... 27
   Parties and Labor issues .................................... 27
   Unions and Workers in the Elections ....................... 29

**V. CONCLUSION: UNIONS, WORKERS AND POLITICS** ................. 29

**APPENDIX 1, TABLES** ............................................. 31

**APPENDIX 2: PERSONS INTERVIEWED** ................................. 35

**FOOTNOTES** ..................................................... 36
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present study examines workers’ responses to the post-Communist transition in the Russian Federation from 1989 through 1993. It asks how workers have defined, articulated, and organized around their interests under conditions of simultaneous democratization and economic reform, concentrating on three central sets of questions:

1) What have been the patterns and levels of workers’ labor activism, especially participation in demonstrations and strikes concerning economic austerity, unemployment, pricing policies, and support or opposition for particular political leaders or policies? How effectively have Russia’s workers used strikes to defend their interests in the reform period?

2) What have been the types and levels of workers’ participation in trade unions? How have trade unions defined their constituencies, policy agendas, and relations with the democratizing state? What kinds of divisions have developed within the labor movement? How well have unions sustained themselves in the reform period?

3) Where has labor - both organized and as a social stratum - gone politically and electorally? Have strong linkages developed between labor unions and political parties? Have workers organized to speak with a coherent voice on labor politics and to promote their interests effectively in the evolving party system, or has labor divided or simply fragmented, exercising little influence on the political process and outcomes?

The paper first discusses briefly the major impacts of reform on Russia’s workers. These include a sustained decline in real wages, the beginnings of structural unemployment on a small scale, and the use of short work days and weeks at reduced pay and involuntary work leaves on a larger scale. Real wages remained severely depressed throughout 1992 and 1993, ranging between 50% and 75% of their January, 1990, level. Official unemployment affected only 1% of the labor force for the period under study, but compulsory leaves and part-time work reportedly affected some 9% of the industrial labor force, confronting large numbers of workers with the financial and technical vulnerability of their employing enterprises. Russian workers were for the most part willing participants in “insider privatization of enterprises.

The reform has been accompanied by significant strike activity which began on a large scale in 1989, moderated in 1990, burgeoned in 1991, lessened in 1992 and declined further in 1993. Strike movements have been concentrated in three sectors: energy (especially coal, gas,
and oil); transport (including rail, air, and municipal); and budget-financed social services (i.e., medicine, teaching.) Demands for wage increases have been central in all strikes but a range of grievances concerning working conditions, work regimes, provision of social services, control over output and prices, as well as explicitly political demands, have characterized various strikes. There have been few large-scale strikes in industry, probably because managers have provided regular, substantial increases in nominal wages. Broader strike movements did emerge in the spring of 1992 and the fall of 1993 over the government’s failure to meet wage and other payments. Most strikes were settled with wage and other concessions.

How much have strikes contributed to the defense of Russia’s workers against reform policies? Strikes produced wage increases which partially and temporarily blocked the government’s efforts to pass on the costs of reform to workers. At the same time, these wage increases fed a wage-price spiral that continually forced up living costs, undermining previous gains as well as the government’s efforts to control inflation. Workers struck again and again simply to maintain their wages against inflation. Strikes also contributed to large disparities among wages in different sectors. Overall strike movements remained fragmented, with simultaneous strikes in many sectors during 1991 and 1992 but no general, coordinated challenge to, for example, the April 1991 or January 1992 price liberalizations. By 1993 workers seemed demoralized, with strike movements rarely moving past threats or brief work stoppages. Finally, strikes revealed some significant conflicts of interest within the Russian labor force, particularly between energy producers who want high prices and international markets for their products and domestic producers who depend on cheap, subsidized energy to operate.

Russia’s trade unions are divided into the dominant FNPR (Federation of Independent Trade Unions), successor of the old Communist-era unions, and a number of independent unions which have sprung up from grass-roots initiative in the reform period. The FNPR has exercised some influence in helping to block Gaidar’s reform program, shaping privatization policy to maintain some ownership rights for workers, and pressing for income maintenance especially for poorer strata - minimum wage workers, pensioners. It found powerful allies in the Civic Union and the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. At the same time its authority among its claimed 50 million members (from a labor force of 73 million) has been extremely low, with most workers remaining in the union because they depended on it for social security and other benefits. The FNPR’s efforts to institutionalize its role as a peak labor organization and bargaining partner with government through the Tripartite Commission has had little success. By the middle of 1992 the Federation was confronting multiple challenges to its
dominance, including defections by constituent unions and efforts by independent unions and Yeltsin's government to divest it of property and functions. Measures taken by the government in the fall of 1993 - removing control of social security funds from the unions and eliminating automatic union dues check-offs - are likely to further seriously undermine the FNPR.

Independent unions are active in a number of sectors, but they have seen relatively little expansion in size or breadth of activity since 1991. The independents represent relatively privileged and militant sectors of the labor force, including miners, pilots, air traffic controllers, transport workers, and others, and have been fairly successful in gaining wage increases and other concessions for their members. At the same time, they confront various resource, leadership, and collective action problems, and have spent considerable resources fighting with the FNPR over the 'institutional space' for labor organizing. Their loyalty to Yeltsin's government has gained them few rewards, and it remains uncertain whether they will expand into more sectors as the FNPR declines.

Politically, the unions first divided into pro- and anti-reform groups and, in the December 1993 election, fragmented. They have exercised no coherent influence on labor issues in electoral politics; there is evidence that neither the FNPR nor the independents could influence most members' voting behavior in any case. Given the divisions among the unions - largely reflecting genuine differences of interest among their members - and the weakness of political parties, we certainly should not expect development of a strong social-democratic or left/centrist laborite party-union coalition of the West European variety in Russia. Rather, according to evidence from the December, 1993 election, unions and workers are spreading themselves across the political spectrum. Some unions see the future of their sector in a competitive and internationalized economy, while others seek to defend their interests through statist and protectionist policies. Among workers, the election results indicate weakening of support for reform and an increase in support for anti-reform and extremist alternatives.
WORKERS’ RESPONSES TO THE POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION
IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The present study examines workers’ responses to the post-Communist transition in the Russian Federation from 1989 through 1993. It asks how workers have defined, articulated, and organized around their interests under conditions of simultaneous democratization and economic reform, concentrating on three sets of questions:

1) What have been the patterns and levels of workers’ labor activism, especially participation in demonstrations and strikes concerning economic austerity, unemployment, pricing policies, and support or opposition for particular political leaders or policies? How effectively have Russia’s workers used strikes to defend their interests in the reform period?

2) What have been the types and levels of workers’ participation in trade unions? How have trade unions defined their constituencies, policy agendas, and relations with the democratizing state? What kinds of divisions have developed within the labor movement. How well have unions sustained themselves in the reform period?

3) Where has labor - both organized and as a social stratum - gone politically and electorally? Have strong linkages developed between labor unions and political parties? Have workers organized to speak with a coherent voice on labor policies and to promote their interests effectively in the evolving party system, or has labor divided or simply fragmented, exercising little political influence on the political process and outcomes?

The paper first assesses the major impacts of economic reform on Russia’s workers, including a sustained decline in real wages, threats to job security, and the development of both open structural and "hidden" unemployment. This assessment provides the context for discussion of workers’ strike activity, the policies and activities of labor unions, and labor’s political responses to reform from 1989 through the December, 1993 elections.

II. IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC REFORM ON RUSSIA’S WORKERS

Prices and Wages

By 1989, Gorbachev’s reforms had begun to undermine the price stability to which Russian workers were accustomed. Some easing of state price controls, pressures on state enterprises for profitability, and expansion of the cooperative sector combined to produce price
increases and severe shortages of cheap mass consumption goods. In 1990 open inflation, until recently unknown in the Soviet economy, reached approximately 10%. As a result real wages declined slightly in the second and third quarters, but wage increases had more than compensated for inflation by the end of the year.

The first dramatic price increases came in April, 1991, when the Gorbachev government finally initiated its long-promised retail price reform, intended to stabilize the consumer market, reduce subsidies, and move the economy toward market determination of prices. The reform produced a doubling or tripling of the cost of many common food items, and an overall increase in retail prices of 55% for the month. Real wages fell a precipitous 25%, and the number living near or below the poverty line increased markedly. Inflation accelerated again in the fall, with the overall increase in retail prices from December 1990 to December 1991 reaching 140%. A combination of pay increases and compensation measures sponsored by the collapsing Soviet government produced some recovery of real wages by the fall.

In January, 1992, as part of its "shock therapy" reform program, the Yeltsin-Gaidar government freed 90% of retail prices from administrative controls. The retail price index increased to 345% of its December, 1991, level in January and to 477% in February. Real wages fell by a stunning 50%, producing intense pressures for pay raises. The ensuing increases in money (nominal) wages, which had more than tripled by June, produced some limited recovery but at the same time contributed to a wage-price spiral. Overall during 1992, consumer prices rose by a factor of 26 while money wages rose by a factor of approximately 13, producing a dramatic decline in living standards. According to the Labor Ministry's statistics on living standards and the structure of consumption, during 1992 consumption of meat, fish, milk, sugar and fruit fell 11-19%, consumption of non-food goods by 50%, and sales of services by 36%. The monthly inflation rate remained above 20% for most of 1993, while nominal wages continued to grow rapidly and retail trade turnover increased 4-5% over its 1992 level.

Because the central wage determination mechanism had largely broken down by this point, the effect of the 1992 price increases was highly differentiated for various sectors of the labor force. Industrial wages, well above average to begin with, saw the largest increases as managers raised both workers' pay and prices for their products. Workers in the strike-prone energy sector earned 12 times the national average. Employees in state-budget-financed organizations in education, health, and culture suffered most, with wages lagging well behind the consumer price index. In many sectors of the economy workers received short wages or
none at all for extended periods because of a cash shortage in the late spring and summer of 1992 and again in the summer and fall of 1993.

In sum, since the beginning of 1990 Russian workers have experienced dramatic increases in inflation, (estimated at a monthly average of 0.7% per month in 1990, 8.3% in 1991, 31.3% in 1992 and 23% for the year ending in September, 1993.) and an accelerating decline in real wages, with periods of recovery in late 1990 and late 1991. Real wages remained well below their January, 1990 level for much of 1991 and suffered a continuing severe depression throughout 1992 and 1993, when they ranged between 50% and 75% of their January, 1990 level. (See Table 1, Appendix). Real industrial wages declined less than wages overall, but showed similar trends. Provision of social services also worsened dramatically over these years. We will examine how, and how effectively, Russian workers have responded to this downward pressure on their living standards.

Employment

Before Gorbachev, the Soviet labor force (outside of Central Asia and the Caucasus) was virtually fully employed. The initial reform program included ambitious plans for re-structuring the labor force, reducing reliance on manual labor, and increasing efficiency and cost accountability in production, but most of these plans were not implemented and in 1989-90 the actual impacts of reform on employment remained quite limited. Perhaps a score of marginal enterprises were closed down under the Law on State Enterprises and an indeterminate number of workers, mostly of pre-pension age but also women with children and youth, were dismissed from their jobs. However, economists and reformers invariably predicted that millions would be left unemployed by genuine market reforms, which would force drastic staff cuts and bankruptcies throughout Russia’s inefficient, overstaffed, technologically obsolescent industrial sector.

In January 1991, faced with these predictions, the Soviet government passed the Basic Law on Employment which provided for registration and (in some cases) compensation for unemployed workers. Under the provisions of this Law the Russian Republic created a State Employment Service and in July, 1991, began formally registering unemployed workers. Even allowing for the well-recognized inadequacies of the Employment Service and its data (which are generally considered to seriously underestimate joblessness), the number of registered unemployed workers provides us with a crude indicator of the scale and growth of lay-offs and joblessness. Overall, they indicate a modest level of unemployment—from just under 69,000 in January, 1992 to just over 730,000, or approximately 1% of Russia’s 73
million-strong labor force, in March, 1993—along with a rather high rate of growth—almost 10 times for the year. Numbers qualifying for benefits also increased steadily through 1992 and the first quarter of 1993. Registered unemployment leveled off and declined somewhat in the summer of 1993 (see Table 2, appendix).

The Service's data show that unemployment is heavily concentrated among women and young people; some 70% of those registered were women, disproportionately well educated and white-collar, while 38% were below the age of 30. A more inclusive official category, those 'not employed in labor activity,' follows a similar trajectory but shows a level seven hundred thousand higher than 'registered unemployed,' equalling 1.1 million in March, 1993. Estimates of actual unemployment given by Russian officials range as high as 4-5% of the labor force, but the bases for these estimates remain unclear.

Given the limited scale and location of unemployment indicated by these numbers, we might conclude that the threat to blue-collar industrial workers, the focus of this study, remains quite limited. But a closer examination of the employment picture indicates that the threat has grown substantially since 1992. In that year 1.3 million people were dismissed, about half from jobs in industry, while the blue-collar percentage of all applicants to the Federal Employment Service doubled (from about 30% to 60%) for the year. A study of several thousand workers released from enterprises in mass dismissals during the first half of 1992 found that, while some 40% found permanent new jobs in the state or private sector, more than half remained unemployed for extended periods. Secondly, the traditionally high demand for labor is declining rapidly in most industries, and the number of job-seekers in the economy exceeded the number of vacancies for the first time in late 1992, indicating the emergence of structural unemployment.

Most significantly, a new type of "hidden" unemployment has developed in the Russian economy: enterprise managers who lack either the materials to employ or the money to pay their workers are placing significant numbers on part-time work or involuntary, extended leaves with no or reduced pay. These practices began in 1991 and affected 3-4% of the labor force in 1992. In the fall of that year Goskomstat found that one in four (of 22,000 surveyed) industrial enterprises had shifted to short time work or unpaid vacations for some part of their labor force. These practices reportedly affected some two million employees (9% of the industrial work force), including up to 30% of industrial workers in some regions. In 1993, according to Goskomstat figures, 1,070,000 people worked 'part time at the initiative of the administration' and 3,681,000 received 'leaves at the initiative of the administration without
wages or with partial wages,' and in April of that year the Yeltsin government passed a decree introducing compensation for workers transferred to an incomplete day or week.19

Many of these compulsory leaves are short-term, consequences of temporary problems or conversion, but in other cases they are due to serious financial and structural problems; for example, 20 large enterprises in Khabarovsk Krai shut down because of lack of both raw materials and customers able to pay, sending most of their workers on unpaid leaves. Similarly, the textile industry in Ivanovo, no longer able to rely on its traditional supplies of cotton from Uzbekistan, has closed down more than 50% of its factories and sent many thousands of workers on partially-paid leaves.20 A clear picture of the causes and length of enforced part-time work and unpaid leaves cannot be formed from available data.

The loss of substantial work time and pay experienced by some 9% of the industrial work force (and visible to many more) may have a greater effect on the consciousness and apprehensions of workers than the modest levels of actual unemployment. It arguably confronts them with the financial and technical vulnerability of their employing enterprises, which are in many cases dependent on threatened state subsidies, disrupted supply lines, and outmoded equipment. Part-time work and unpaid leaves are often used by managers as an alternative to lay-offs and, in combination with the actual beginnings of mass dismissals in industry, brings the prospect of unemployment close to many workers. Indeed, survey research indicates that a majority of workers in state enterprises believe they face a real possibility of dismissal.21 Their enterprises' demonstrated incapacity to maintain work and wages may make the unemployment issue much more salient, and the reformist program (with its subsidy cuts and austerity measures) much more threatening, to Soviet workers in 1993.

Privatization

In contrast to the East European and Baltic cases, Russian industry underwent relatively little privatization during most of the period under study here. A legal framework for privatization was established in 1991, but by September of that year only about 45 large enterprises had undergone the process throughout the USSR and the August coup attempt caused further disruption.22 In the fall of 1991 Yeltsin set out ambitious goals for privatization of Russia's industrial and service sectors during 1992, and further legislation in mid-year elaborated options for privatizing firms and required that most large-scale enterprises be transformed into joint-stock companies.23

Much progress was made with privatization of small-scale retail trade outlets in 1992, while privatization of industrial enterprises took off in 1993: by the fall of that year,
approximately one-third of state and municipal medium and large-scale enterprises were being privatized. A large majority chose Option 2, which allowed enterprise employees (both workers and managers) to acquire up to 51% of their enterprise's stock, the rest being sold at voucher auctions (often also to enterprise employees) or held by the State Property Fund. Thus, the process has so far resulted mostly in a kind of "insider privatization" that allows managers, with their workers, to gain a majority share and maintain control of their enterprises. There is little evidence so far that such privatization has produced more entrepreneurial or market-oriented behavior on the part of managers. Indeed, some analysts argue that managers gained their workers' cooperation in implementing Option 2 by promising job security and other benefits, and, in at least one survey, most workers in privatized enterprises reported either no change or an improvement in their work conditions. It remains an open question whether privatized enterprises will in future re-structure and cut their labor forces. For the period covered by this study, Russian workers were apparently willing participants in privatization (though a few strikes in 1993 raised privatization-related grievances), while trade unions and other reform-resistant elites pressed for "insider" advantages in the distribution of state property.

III. LABOR STRIKES

Introduction

Confronted with both costly reforms and new democratic rights, some Russian workers turned to strikes in order to press their grievances and demands. While reliable data on the overall scale of economic and labor strikes in Russia is not available, we do know that large-scale strike activity began in 1989, moderated somewhat in 1990, burgeoned in 1991 (contributing to the collapse of Gorbachev's government), then lessened in 1992 and declined further in 1993. There was a shift in the dominant location of strikes, from concentration in production sectors in 1990-91 to the service sector in 1992 (see Table 3, Appendix). Throughout the reform period strike movements have been concentrated in three sectors: energy (especially coal mining, gas and oil production); transportation (including rail, air, and municipal transport); and budget-financed social services (i.e., medicine, teaching). The following sections of this paper will examine major strike activity in the Russian economy during 1989-93, including grievances, demands, and terms of resolution, and try to explain the concentration of labor unrest in these particular branches.
1989-1990: The First Strike Wave

The first open labor unrest in Russia's economy took the form of spontaneous collective workplace protests, work stoppages, and localized strikes during 1988-89. They were held mostly to protest pay cuts caused by reformist wage and quality control policies, generally produced quick and easy concessions from managers, and contributed to undermining the early stages of Gorbachev's reform program. Such small, localized strikes were, however, soon dwarfed by the massive coal miners' strike of summer, 1989. As a great deal of information concerning this strike has already been published, I will confine the discussion to a few critical points.27

First, the summer strike demonstrated an enormous and unexpected capacity for self-organization among Soviet miners. Initiated by a newly-emergent grass roots leadership, the strike involved an estimated half million miners in Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan and broke out in rapid sequence during July in cities and basins separated by hundreds and thousands of miles, interrupting most of the country's coal supply creating a national crisis. Secondly, though the miners won concessions to most of their demands in 1989 they remained the most militant and strike-prone sector of the labor force, mounting further mass strikes in 1990 and 1991 and more limited strikes in 1992 and 1993. A close examination of those demands helps to explain the comparative intensity of the miners' dissatisfaction with both their living standards and the government's reform program.

The lists of demands that miners presented to the government were long and complicated; a typical list included improved pay, pensions, and holidays; better provision of food and industrial goods; more housing construction; improved consumer, municipal, and medical services; more investment in modernization of the mines; cuts in the administrative apparatus; and other political, ecological, and job-specific demands.28 The strikers' central demand, however, was that their mines be granted economic independence and self-management rights in accordance with Gorbachev's announced (but unimplemented) reform program. They also wanted increases in coal prices, lower plan targets, the right to control disposition of above-plan output, including the right to market output abroad, retain foreign currency, and use it for local development; the right to manage profits, and autonomy from the central ministry.29

The Gorbachev government's debates on reform, including discussions of cost-accounting, self-financing, and the potential insolvency of loss-making enterprises, had focused miners' attention on their sector's sorry financial state and its sources. They believed (not entirely correctly as it turned out) that their coal was valuable both at home and in hard
currency markets abroad, and that mines often made little or no profit because the state depressed domestic wholesale and retail prices below the cost of production and kept hard currency earnings from foreign sales in the state budget. As a consequence, mining regions had few resources for either production or social development and had to rely on ministerial subsidies. As one striking miner stated the case: "Miserly sums are left /for us/ by comparison with the solid profits earned /by us/." Reform policies had imposed additional costs on miners: the consumer shortages that developed in 1988-89 were particularly acute in mining regions, while mines could not increase their profits by changing their product mix and introducing cosmetically-improved goods at higher prices, (by this time a standard practice in most production sectors.)

The miners believed they saw an opportunity to resolve their problems through genuine enterprise autonomy and self-financing. Autonomy from ministerial diktat and state pricing restrictions would allow them more control over pricing and marketing. They could raise artificially depressed domestic coal prices to cover both costs of production and profits, and sell part of their product on international markets, earn hard currency, and use it to modernize production and improve social infrastructure and supplies of consumer goods in the basins. The potential to sell their output for hard currency was one the miners shared mainly with other energy and raw materials producers. The vast majority of Russian enterprises produced goods which were not saleable on international markets, and their workers saw little benefit in economic independence and self-management.

The miners’ accumulated grievances about their social and living conditions were also deeper than those of other Russian industrial workers. While their wages were among the highest paid to blue-collar workers, miners’ access to decent housing, municipal services, schools, medical care, etc., were much inferior to those of even low-income residents of developed urban areas. Many miners lived in dilapidated housing (including pre-WWII barracks), schools in mining areas often operated indefinitely in multiple sessions, water and electricity were often supplied during limited hours and sewage was inadequate. Pollution in the basins was severe, and health services and problems considerable worse than those in the general Russian population. Glasnost helped draw attention to these conditions and defined them as legitimate political issues. Besides such long-standing grievances, the difficulty and danger of miners’ work (particularly the substantial incidence of fatal accidents) contributed to their militancy.

The miners’ 1989 strike was settled within the month by the July Protocol, in which the government made deep and expensive concessions to most demands. Regional strike
committees in each basin retained the right to call for renewed work stoppages if the agreement was not honored, and over the following months repeatedly raised grievances about the government’s delivery on its promises and threatened or held brief warning strikes. The government’s efforts to impose legal procedures and restrictions on striking miners succeeded only in escalating and politicizing the conflicts. In sum, the democratizing Soviet state proved rather weak and vulnerable in the face of a major grass-roots challenge from labor.

The miners’ strike had a demonstration effect on other producers of energy resources, who saw similar opportunities in sectoral independence. In the spring of 1990 oil and gas workers in the Tyumen region, which provided 60% of Soviet output of these resources, threatened a strike over demands for improved living standards and the right to sell a portion of their product abroad and keep the hard currency earnings. After emergency talks the government acceded to most of their demands in the Tyumen Protocol. This settlement, too, led to protracted disputes over the workers’ claims of nonfulfillment and repeated strike threats.

Strikes and strike threats in the transport sector also became numerous in 1990. Drivers and others in municipal transport systems demanded higher wages and improved working conditions. Air traffic controllers demanded pay increases as well as more pension benefits, an earlier retirement age, more holidays, and a shorter work week. The most serious incident came in the fall of 1990, when railroad and transport construction workers threatened an All-Union warning strike, to be followed by a genuine strike two weeks later if their demands were not met, over their right to strike (which was prohibited by law for national security reasons), guarantees of trade union activity, and the social and technical needs of their sector. In all cases concessions were made, but strikes and strike threats continued in the sector.

Politicization of the Strike Movement

In 1990, the miners’ committees continued to raise grievances about the government’s fulfillment of the 1989 strike accord. The government insisted it had implemented most of the promised measures, citing large supplemental payments for miners’ wages, allocations for development of mining districts, and new pension legislation. But it was delivering very little of what the miners wanted most — coal price increases, independent rights to market abroad, and autonomy. The government was hamstrung on these issues: domestic coal price increases, in the absence of a general price liberalization, would raise costs throughout already-troubled production sectors. Expanded marketing rights for energy producers could deprive the state of critical energy resources and hard currency, while autonomy for a single sector held multiple
complications. The miners' demands for control over production, pricing and marketing thus brought them (along with other energy sector workers) directly into conflict with the state and led to politicization of their movement.

In the spring of 1990 the miners' movement began pressing for elimination or replacement of state structures and governmental authorities which they saw as obstacles to their goals. In July, 1990, the Regional Council of Strike Committees called a 24-hour political strike to demand resignation of Ryzhkov's government and the end of Communist Party control over enterprises and central institutions. Strike documents charged that the government was "obstructing liquidation of the command-administrative system." Ryzhkov promised greater efforts to implement the original strike agreement, but the miners no longer trusted his government to deliver on its promises. Instead they turned to the newly-autonomous republic-level governments and began seeking independence through transfer of the mines to republic jurisdiction. From this point on, the miners' movement added to the pressures for dissolution of the central Soviet government and state structures.

The Spring 1991 Strike Wave

In the early spring of 1991, simultaneous strikes broke out in several sectors of the economy. In the first week of March, Soviet miners began a national strike that, though much less organized and unified than its 1989 counterpart, would continue in some regions into early May. The miners made two central demands: wage increases of 100-150% with improved pension benefits, and the resignation of Gorbachev's government (though the political demands were not universal and the miners' varied deadlines and stated conditions for return to work indicate a lack of unified leadership). The government's efforts to deal with the miners' strike at once highlighted and exacerbated its crisis of authority. After trying unsuccessfully to halt the strike by legislative action and court orders, Prime Minister Pavlov in early April conceded a staged wage increase which would double miners' pay and expanded rights to sell coal at contract prices. Many miners rejected this agreement, and in the end republic leader Yeltsin settled the strike in Russia by taking jurisdiction of the mines from Gorbachev's government and promising the strikers full economic independence.

Workers in the oil and gas sector, gold mining, metallurgy and social services also held or threatened strikes in the spring months. Escalating their earlier demands, oil and gas workers insisted that prices for their output be raised to world levels and that they be given expanded marketing rights and large pay increases. Unrest in the sector continued through April and May. Siberian gold miners struck, demanding 100-200% increase in wages and
development funds. Strikes expanded into industry where metallurgical workers, severely affected by the protracted unrest in the coal fields, demanded higher salaries and other concessions. Doctors and teachers began what would become an ongoing strike movement, demanding higher pay and more state allocations for medical facilities and schools.  

The April, 1991 price reform exacerbated the strike movement. Militant workers saw recently-won wage increases wiped out by the sudden rise in food prices and escalated their demands; as one spokesperson for the miners stated it, "High prices have nullified everything the miners have achieved during the three years of strike struggle." Strikers began demanding not only doubling and tripling of wages but indexation of future wages to the rising cost of living. Many factories had brief warning strikes at which workers demanded compensatory pay increases. Outside of Russia, a huge strike wave broke out in the Belorussian capitol of Minsk. Strikers demanded rescinding of the price reform and resignation of Gorbachev's government, and anti-reform strikes also broke out in Ukraine.  

In the aftermath of the price increases strikes escalated in budget-financed sectors (medicine, education, public transport) which were hardest-hit by both rising prices and cuts in government spending. Doctors and teachers struck throughout the fall in various regions, demanding increases of 100-400% in their salaries and protesting dire shortages of medicines and equipment. Their situation was particularly desperate in coal mining regions, where large increases in miners' wages had pushed up the regional cost of living, and strikes were held in both the Kuzbass and Vorkuta. Most were settled with some concessions, and in November Yeltsin signed a decree raising the pay of all employees of social service organizations.  

Strikes and strike threats in transport also continued through the spring and fall of 1991. Air traffic controllers, inexplicably deeply aggrieved, repeatedly threatened to strike over demands for a tripling of their wages, partial pay in foreign currency (because they served on international flights or realized that the airlines earned hard currency revenues for foreign airlines’ landing rights), and other concessions. The government granted a 50% salary increase, but grievances and threats continued. Local transport workers, particularly in mining regions, also struck for wage increases. Finally the miners, though they held strikes in Yeltsin’s support during the August, 1991, coup attempt, were already striking against his government by fall to protest rapid price increases and falling living standards.  

Workers' Responses to the Yeltsin-Gaidar "Shock Therapy" Reform  
In January 1992 the Yeltsin-Gaidar government initiated its 'shock therapy' economic program, including a radical price liberalization which produced a 50% drop in real wages and
commitments to cut state spending and subsidies. Price liberalization was followed by months of double-digit inflation and, in the spring, a severe cash shortage leading to non-payment of wages in many sectors. The reform produced renewed strike movements (though not on the scale of 1991) and renewed concessions, but real wages remained severely depressed.

The price liberalization prompted a large-scale strike movement in the budget-financed service sector, which accounted for 90% of all strikes in the first quarter of 1992. In late January health care workers in seventy-three of Russia’s seventy-seven administrative regions threatened a strike to protest their ‘poverty’ wages and inadequate allocations for medical services; the strike was preempted by a 45% across-the-board salary increase and other concessions. In late April and early May medical workers and teachers struck in various regions, demanding that their wages be increased several times to equal the average wage of industrial workers. Although an 80% wage increase for all budget-financed employees was scheduled to go into effect shortly, teachers got productivity-linked increases up to 160 percent. 44

Workers in the energy sector continued to present a serious challenge to Yeltsin. In the aftermath of the January price liberalization the miners (whose hopes for foreign hard currency sales had been largely disappointed because of low demand, technical and coal quality problems) again threatened a strike unless their wages were raised to cover the price increases and their future wages and pensions indexed to inflation. Yeltsin agreed to a tripling of miners’ wages in an effort to buy off this most militant sector of the labor force. In May oil and gas workers struck, demanding large wage increases and decontrol of oil and gas prices. Their wages were also tripled, and the government agreed to higher energy prices but not to complete deregulation (though its reform program in fact committed the government to such deregulation and the IMF pressed for it). The strikes led to sharp reductions in extraction of oil and gas as well as an ongoing dispute over price levels. 45

As in the past, transport workers were also restive and strike-prone. Both pilots and air traffic controllers threatened strikes in February, demanding indexing of their wages and pensions to inflation and guarantees of property rights during privatization. The government pre-empted strikes by meeting most of the demands, but strike threats continued in the sector. Trolley, bus, and tram drivers also struck in various cities and in April threatened an all-Federation transport strike, demanding higher wages and modernization of their vehicles. Agro-industrial workers, meteorologists, and others also struck, with wage increases always paramount among their demands. As under Gorbachev, the government usually made easy
concessions but delivered on its promises poorly, leading to further tensions and renewed strike threats.

In the late spring and summer of 1992 a new wave of labor unrest, over non-payment of wages, spread across Russia. Raging inflation (averaging 20-25% per month) and large wage increases, combined with the Gaidar government’s efforts to combat inflation by limiting new currency emissions, had produced a serious cash shortage, leading to disruptions of wage payments in many regions. Protests and warning strikes broke out among Kuzbass miners, nuclear workers in Krasnoyarsk, and workers in Novosibirsk, Kamchatka, and the Far East, who typically claimed two to three months’ wage arrears. Many strikers added demands for cancellation of enterprise debts, extension of additional credits, and indexing of working capital as well as wages to inflation. The strikes were settled, but disruptions in wage payments continued throughout the summer.

The late summer and fall of 1993 saw another wave of collective protests, strike threats, and brief work stoppages (‘warning strikes’) across many regions and sectors of Russia’s economy, including timber and agroindustrial workers, doctors, teachers, transport and communications workers, coal, oil and gas workers, and some in the defense sector. Workers protested stridently, even desperately, but actual strikes lasting beyond a one-or-two day period were few. The central trigger and common grievance of workers’ protests was wage and other arrears—the state’s failure to keep up payments, probably a consequence of the tightening of the money supply after Yeltsin’s victory in the April referendum. The FNPR claimed that the state owed agricultural workers R600 billion for grain already supplied. Energy sector workers, as usual the most militant, struck briefly over unpaid wages and subsidies as well as billions of rubles in consumer debt accumulated after the liberalization of energy prices in July, 1993, though the strikes were brief and regions split over participation. Again, the government responded with mediation and money.46

Several significant elements distinguish some of the 1993 strikes from those of previous years: First, the issue of unemployment was raised explicitly, with, for example, construction workers in the far north demanding either further investment in their region’s development or resettlement, while coal miners demanded state guarantees of job placement after closure of loss-making mines. Secondly, there were occasional strikes and strike threats over workers’ rights in the privatization process. Thirdly, protesting workers frequently threatened to bring lawsuits over violations of laws or regulations as well as to strike; defense industry workers, for example, threatened to both sue and stop work over violations of legislation on defense
conversion. Finally, some 1993 strikers included political demands, specifically, for replacement of the fuel and energy and labor ministers.47

Assessment: Strikes and the Defense of Workers’ Interests

How effectively did Russian workers use economic strikes to defend their interests in the reform period? Why were large-scale strike movements confined mostly to the energy, transport, and social service sectors? What about other industrial workers who were also affected by price increases, inflation, and budget cuts? In an overall assessment, how well did strikes protect workers against the impacts of reform policies?

Large-scale strike movements emerged and succeeded only in sectors which were of strategic significance to the functioning of the overall economy. Energy sector workers could shut down much of industry and deprive the state of critical revenues. Transport workers could paralyze cities and regions almost wholly dependent on rail and public conveyances. Doctors and teachers could deny vital services and keep many parents out of work. Threats to withhold labor thus placed workers in these sectors in stronger bargaining positions than most others. Secondly, as we will see below, in several of these sectors (i.e., mining, air transport) militant independent trade unions had emerged out of early strikes, providing an organizational infrastructure (and creating an organizational imperative) for renewed strikes when conditions worsened. Finally workers in these sectors had central collective claims against governmental authorities: energy sector workers were in direct conflict with the state for control over the pricing and sale of their output, while workers in budget-financed organizations depended on state and municipal authorities for wage increases.

Most of Russia’s production workers confronted different conditions. Their enterprises did not occupy strategic positions in the economy, and by 1990 both the prices of their products and their wages depended mainly on their managers. According to available evidence, managers in most Russian enterprises regularly raised wages to compensate for inflation in response to pressures from workers, strike threats, or brief localized strikes that did not spread or gain national attention. Indeed, wages began increasing more rapidly than productivity in Russian enterprises from 1988, when the central government lost firm control over wage levels. It is important to recognize that Russian managers were not bound by hard budget constraints or competitive pressures, as are their counterparts in market economies. Faced with pressures from below to compensate for rising prices, they often raised wages and covered the costs by increasing the prices of their own products in the semi-monopolistic Russian market and pressing for more state subsidies and soft credits. In the face of drastic declines in overall
production these practices produced both wage and price inflation, and frustrated the government’s efforts to limit wages, but they also contributed to limiting industrial unrest. Most Russian industrial workers also depended on their enterprises for many resources, and shared certain interests with their managers vis a vis both the state and reform. Enterprises typically supplied workers not only with social services but often with housing and, increasingly, bartered goods, producing a situation of multiple dependency which inhibited militancy.48

How much did strikes contribute to defense of Russian workers against reform policies? In energy, transport, and to a much lesser extent education and medicine, concessions won through strikes certainly did shore up workers’ wages against the downward pressures of price liberalization and inflation in the short term. The role of localized strikes in producing wage increases in other production sectors remains unclear; strikes combined with paternalism and the low cost to management to push up wages. These factors (along with some others) produced a phenomenal increase in Russian workers’ average monthly money wages, from R1,438 in January, 1992 to R78,500 in September, 1993.49 At the same time, wage increases (in the context of production and productivity declines) fed a wage-price spiral that continually forced up living costs, undermining previous gains as well as the government’s efforts to control inflation and stabilize the economy. Workers struck again and again simply to maintain their wages against inflation. From early 1992, in spite of ongoing strikes and large nominal wage increases, real wages remained severely depressed.

In sum, strikes succeeded partially and temporarily in blocking the government’s efforts to pass on costs of reform to workers. At the same time they contributed to large disparities among wages in different sectors (See Table 4, Appendix). Strike movements also remained fragmented, with simultaneous strikes in many sectors during 1991 and 1992 but no general, coordinated challenge to, for example, the April 1991 or January 1992 price liberalizations. By 1993 workers seemed demoralized, with strikes movements rarely moving past the state of threats or brief work stoppages. Finally, strikes revealed a significant conflict of interest within the Russian labor force, between energy producers who want high prices and international markets for their products and domestic producers who depend on cheap, subsidized energy to operate.

Trade Unions: Agendas and Constituencies

During the Soviet period virtually all workers and employees (including managers) belonged to the official All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), which
controlled considerable property as well as the distribution of social security and other critical benefits to its members. Under the pressures of democracy and economic liberalization, the old official unions transformed their structure and politics and survived as the dominant (in most sectors monopolistic) organization representing workers. During the reform years new, independent unions also emerged among coal miners, pilots, air traffic controllers, and some other groups. The agendas and constituencies of both types of unions are discussed below.

The Reformed Official Unions: Seeking a Constructive Dialogue

Initially the AUCCTU responded to Gorbachev's reform program with long-conditioned, reflexive acceptance of changes in the Party line, promising vaguely to 'shield workers from negative consequences.' Tensions over lay-offs and productivity pressures early in the reform period posed some challenges to union officials, who were well-entrenched in most enterprises and generally had a close, subordinate working relationship with management and a highly bureaucratic work style with the rank-and-file. Factory unions' responses to the first localized strikes were mixed and confused. Meanwhile, glasnost' was exposing the lack of mass confidence in and loyalty to the old unions: in a March, 1989, VTsIOM survey, for example, more than 75% of urban respondents gave a negative evaluation of the trade unions' role in "protecting the rights of workers in our country" with 52% assessing the unions' performance "fairly low" or "very low." By that point the union's leadership had become moderately critical of the reform's costs for workers, while some maverick local union activists had become stridently critical.

The 1989 miners' strike proved a watershed in the AUCCTU's reform. Strike organizers completely bypassed union officials, rank-and-file miners showed them deep contempt, and central officials used them as scapegoats for poor conditions in the coal basins. Local unions in the affected regions were completely discredited. Most significantly, the rise of independent miners' strike committees threatened the AUCCTU's monopoly, raising the specter of its repudiation and replacement by a democratic labor movement organized from below. The union's leadership responded to the strikes with trenchant self-criticism, openly acknowledging its loss of authority and trust among workers, failure to defend their interests, and transformation into "an appendage of the state structure." At its Sixth Plenum in September, 1989, the union declared its commitment to 'defense of workers' interests above other functions,' and threw its weight against economic reform, demanding a price freeze, return to stringent price controls, and severe restrictions on cooperatives and privatization. It also began to engage in more activist politics, organizing rallies, aggressively lobbying the Supreme
Soviet, and trying unsuccessfully to mobilize anti-reform workers for electoral competition through the United Front of Working People. This period of reactionary obstructionism was, however, short-lived.

In the course of 1990 the AUCCTU transformed its structure, moderated its policy line, and sought a 'constructive dialogue' with government as labor's representative in the reform process. The leadership replaced the old Union's centralized structure with the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) and affiliated republic-level Federations of Independent Trade Unions, the largest and most important in the Russian Republic (the FITU(R)). The reformed union retained, for the most part, the old union's leadership, apparatus, property, functions, and membership lists (thus claiming to represent 140 million workers - most of the Soviet labor force - at its founding), but its politics and tactics were now driven by the need to survive in a democratizing polity.

The GCTU now recognized the need for economic reform and declared its 'conditional support' for a market economy with a diversity of ownership forms, but demanded that the transition program include social guarantees. It set forth a policy agenda that focused on jobs programs and income maintenance, insisting that the state provide liberal unemployment compensation, state programs for re-training and re-settlement, and public works programs for the then-anticipated several million unemployed. The GCTU also insisted that the state maintain living standards through regular indexation of all wages, pensions, and transfer payments to inflation, guarantee of a subsistence minimum, and increases in the minimum wage.

Over and above its specific policy agenda, the GCTU sought to formalize and institutionalize its role as a direct, permanent participant in the policy-making process. It pressed Gorbachev's government to create a tripartite negotiating structure which would work out a comprehensive annual socio-economic agreement among the state, labor, and entrepreneurs, with the GCTU acting as the designated national representative of labor while the FITU's would engage in similar bargaining at the republic level. Though it claimed in principle the right to strike, the Confederation eschewed confrontation and insisted that all issues relating to reform could be peacefully negotiated through consultation and compromise. In essence, the GCTU was trying to preserve its dominant position through integration into the democratizing Soviet state as a 'peak' or 'chartered' representative of labor which would exchange labor peace for bargaining power.

By the fall of 1990 both central and Russian Republic governments had in fact begun holding regular consultations with the reformed official unions over employment, income, and
other labor and social policies. In October, Ryzhkov declared his government ready for a 'social partnership' with the GCTU, which he acknowledged as representing 140 million workers. Russian Republic leaders Yeltsin and Silayev also met with FNPR Chair Klochkov, confirmed the need for close collaboration between the unions and the new republic-level governments, and began negotiations.57

Negotiations between the GCTU and Gorbachev's government proved tense. By the spring of 1991 the Confederation was frustrated with government foot-dragging over an agreement on employment and income protections. The GCTU and its republic affiliates threatened more than once to call strikes, but never actually did so. Instead they stridently protested the April price increases, claiming that large numbers of workers had been pushed below the poverty line and demanding immediate and full compensation, a law on income indexation, and a wage increase of 70-100% in base industries by the end of the year.58

On April 20, Gorbachev's Council of Ministers and the GCTU signed an agreement on labor and socio-economic policies which committed the government to raise several categories of wages (including the minimum wage and those for workers in health and education as well as pensions), augment immediate compensation for the price increases, draft legislation on income indexation, and increase enterprise independence in setting wage levels above the guaranteed minimum. The GCTU promised, in turn, to refrain from organizing strikes for the duration of the agreement. It was stipulated that non-GCTU trade unions could join the agreement.39 The terms of this agreement made it clear that the Gorbachev government would or could not impose wage and income restraint (as had several of its East European counterparts under similar circumstances); rather, it jettisoned its own modest compensation program and agreed to an extremely costly and inflationary package of income maintenance measures.

It is difficult to assess the significance of the GCTU's bargaining power in pushing up wages. In April 1991 the government was responding not only to pressures from the Confederation but to amorphous popular dissatisfaction, the rise in strike activity, and its own ethic of state paternalism. Moreover important parts of the agreement (in particular a law on income indexation) were never put into effect, and enterprise managers continued to raise wages (especially for their more skilled and valued workers) independently of governmental decisions. Nevertheless, the GCTU did articulate, bargain over, and gain concessions to a comprehensive program of wage and income increases. Moreover the Confederation defined its constituency very broadly, including not only workers but virtually the entire population, and pressed for income maintenance especially for pensioners, minimum and low wage workers,
students, and others. Thus it gained compensation for groups that would otherwise have had no voice and little bargaining power with managers, those most vulnerable to bearing the costs of reform.

In exchange for its bargaining position and concessions the GCTU gave Gorbachev's government a no-strike pledge, yet there is little evidence that it could either call out or (in most cases) control strikes. The Confederation's occasional strike threats found little response, and it never led a significant strike. And while the GCTU occasionally intervened successfully to quell unrest, it had little effect on the protracted miners' strike movement. The transport strikes were mostly local wildcat actions, while oil and gas workers' strike threats were often supported by sectoral unions only nominally under GCTU control. In sum, the GCTU's authority among its rank-and-file was weak. Under the circumstances, the government's acceptance of the Confederation as the authorized bargaining agent for labor in state councils shored up union's position and added to anti-reform pressures.

The Militant Independents

Independent unions began organizing on the basis of rank-and-file activism in 1989. A complete list would include scores of organizations, mostly small locals or ephemeral confederations ranging from private-sector to anarcho-syndicalist. The three most visible and significant were the Independent Miners' Union (NPG) established in 1990 and the Air Traffic Controllers' and Civil Aviation Pilots' unions, both registered in the spring of 1991. All three emerged from the grass-roots as militant, confrontational, strike-prone unions with considerable authority and legitimacy among their rank-and-file. As we have seen in the discussion on strikes, they articulated their members' interests forcefully, organized credible strike threats and effective strike movements, and (though by no means always successful) managed to gain concessions for their members from the state. Unlike the GCTU, the independents usually represented and bargained only for workers in a single branch, and in spite of their confrontational attitude toward the government they tended to support reform.

A fourth independent union, the Association of Social Trade Unions (Sotsprof) was established in 1989 but split (and took its present name) in 1990. An interbranch association, Sotsprof combined many branch and regional affiliates, mostly white-collar and municipal unions (teachers, medical and transport) but also some in industrial enterprises. Its chief significance was as an umbrella organization under which enterprise-level initiative groups, or groups of workers who had split off from the GCTU, could begin official activities as trade unions. Sotsprof's national leadership was pro-reform and non-militant, but its many small,
dispersed affiliates held together poorly. Its effectiveness as a bargaining agent for its members is difficult to judge.

**Labor Unions in the Russian Federation**

As Yeltsin established his government in the summer of 1991, the GCTU/FNPR faced some threat that it would meet its demise along with the Communist Party. The GCTU leadership claimed that attempts were being made in Russia to remove trade unions from factories and institutions under Yeltsin’s de-partyization decree (which deprived the Party of its property and right to maintain cells in enterprises). In July GCTU Chair Shcherbakov sought and received assurances from Yeltsin that such measures would not be applied to the unions.63 During the August coup attempt the GCTU called for "calm and no work stoppages" and, while the FNPR claimed to have supported Yeltsin, only the coal miners answered his call for a general strike.64 Yeltsin might have taken steps at this point to repudiate these anti-reform unions as part of the old order and deprive them of some resources, as was done, for example, in Lithuania. Instead, he called for a 'social partnership' between state and labor prominently including the FNPR (the All-Union GCTU having all but collapsed along with the Soviet Union). Thus the FNPR remained intact, with its membership, property, apparatus, and virtually monopolistic role as distributor of social security funds and social services, and retained its dominant position as labor’s representative in the newly-independent Russian Federation.

**State-Labor Relations**

In January, 1992, Yeltsin's government established the Tripartite Commission on the Regulation of Social and Labor Relations. The Commission included equal numbers of representatives of labor, management, and government in a three-sided negotiating structure. Of labor's fourteen seats nine were allocated to the FNPR, one each to the Independent Miners' Union (NPG) and the Independent Union of Civil Aviation Pilots, and three to Sotsprof. Management was represented by several organizations from both state industry and new entrepreneurial groups, while officials of state ministries sat in the government’s seats. The commission was to review wage levels, monitor working conditions, mediate industrial disputes, and negotiate an annual socio-economic agreement. In exchange for their role in the Commission, unions took a no-strike pledge.65

The FNPR now adapted its agenda to the more radical Yeltsin-Gaidar reform program, and the increasingly desperate situation of many industrial enterprises. It retained full
indexation of wages and transfer payments as a central demand and, after prices were liberalized in January, also insisted that the state re-impose price controls for necessities, continue to regulate energy prices, and limit exports. The FNPR also demanded that the privatization process should transfer ownership and control of enterprises predominantly to the workers, condemning other variants as "nomenklatura" privatization. And it joined with management (in particular Arkady Volsky's Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs) to demand that Yeltsin's government maintain industrial subsidies, provide soft credits, and reduce taxes in order to halt the drastic decline in industrial production (estimated at 20% for 1992) and, in effect, keep obsolete, inefficient, and unprofitable enterprises afloat and their workers employed. Indeed, in the Tripartite Commission the union and industrialists often cooperated in efforts to maintain real wage levels, subsidies, and continued high employment levels against the government's program of austerity and fiscal restraint.

The Tripartite Commission did help to settle a number of strikes during 1992 (usually with large wage concessions), and it did conclude in March a General Agreement on Social and Economic Policy in which the government made some concessions on wages and price controls. In general, however, the Commission worked poorly. Its meetings were marked by dissension and the frequent absence of government officials. Efforts at policy-making were conflictual and generally ineffective. Almost from the beginning FNPR officials protested the government's failure to consult with them on critical issues or to abide by its commitments, and FNPR Chair Klochkov periodically threatened to withdraw his union from the tripartite process. In June the 'social partnership' began to break down. The FNPR threatened to call a nationwide strike unless the government paid overdue wages in all regions, and demanded that the solvency of enterprises be guaranteed. Frustrated with the uncompensated decline in workers' real incomes and the growing threats to employment, the FNPR made a formal agreement on cooperation with the Civic Union (which advocated a much more gradual transition to the market, maintenance of production as the first priority, and a continuing state role in the economy), and in the fall the Federation joined an alliance of mainly anti-reform elites in a successful campaign to dismiss the Gaidar government.

The Tripartite Commission was nevertheless renewed in 1993, with the FNPR again the dominant representative of labor and Deputy Prime Minister V. Shumieko as its coordinator. A second General Agreement (for 1993) was concluded in the spring, with some specific provisions and many vague intentions to "submit legislation to the Supreme Soviet" on major issues. Within weeks Klochkov was alleging violations of the Agreement, and the 1992 pattern of alienation and growing acrimony between the Federation and Yeltsin's government repeated.
By August the FNPR was threatening to organize an All-Russia general strike, giving central place to the issue of wage arrears (which Klochkov claimed had reached R13 trillion, mainly owed to the coal, grain, health, and defense sectors) and claiming support among defense, agricultural, industrial, and cultural workers. Though there was, as we have seen, substantial unrest among these groups in late 1993, no general strike materialized; in fact the most significant strike that did take place, among coal miners, was led by the NPG.  

**Unions and Their Constituencies**

The vast majority of Russian workers during this period remained in the FNPR; the Federation claimed more than 50 million members from a total employed labor force of approximately 73 million and dominated in every branch of the economy except civil aviation. As far as can be determined from the available evidence, workers stayed not because they perceived the FNPR as representing their interests but because they depended on it for access to critical social security benefits and services. The Federation remained largely hierarchical and bureaucratic in its work style, though there has been considerable conflict within the union over the need to adopt more democratic methods and initiatives in this direction by some local activists. The union's leadership is clearly more comfortable and capable at negotiating with government officials and forming alliances with managerial elites than at grass-roots organizing. As a consequence, its conception of workers' interests has remained largely unitary, conservative, and paternalistic, focused on the maintenance of jobs and incomes at any cost. It has defended these interests with some success under Yeltsin, but largely without the genuine participation or consent of its membership.

At the same time independent unions, authentic products of democratic mobilization, have become well-established in only a few sectors; besides those already noted, Russian railway workers, seamen, and dockers have established independents. In most sectors independent organizing has been confined to local initiatives which are, however, reportedly widespread. New unions have the right to organize but face a daunting range of obstacles: would-be members fear not only loss of benefits but discrimination in wages and job assignments by pro-FNPR administrators. Even officials of the NPG (which organizes some 5% of all Russian miners, though its influence extends much further) claim that fear of losing FNPR-administered benefits has kept miners from switching. Emergent union leaders also have little organizing experience and few resources, and levels of activism among workers remain low. In 1992 the five most well-established independents together organized fewer than half a
million members, with Sotsprof claiming 250,000, the Pilot's Union 30,000, the Air Traffic Controllers 5,000, the Independent Miners' Union 70,000, and railroad workers 2,000.\textsuperscript{74}

The independents have been generally pro-reform, with Sotsprof and the NPG especially supporting Yeltsin's government and economic policies. We have already seen that the NPG leadership allied with Yeltsin against Gorbachev in 1991; despite strikes over economic issues, the union continued to support reforms. Sotsprof was closely linked to the liberal, pro-reform Social Democratic Party and to top officials in Yeltsin's early labor ministry. The political stances and activities of both unions' leaderships sometimes led to a perception that they are too politicized, and to claims of a schism between the leaderships' interests and orientations and those of the rank-and-file. This has been a problem especially for Sotsprof, many of whose affiliates do not share the national leadership's pro-reform stance. The independents also suffer from internal conflicts, corruption scandals and free-rider problems (i.e., strike concessions are generally granted to whole categories of workers in the sector, not only to union members.) Yeltsin himself has done little to reward the independents' support. As a case in point, the Tripartite Commission was reconstituted in 1993 with most seats again going to the FNPR, though the pro-reform independents pressed for more representation; Sotsprof was excluded entirely, leading to its alienation from the government.

Independent unions nevertheless continued to support Yeltsin on critical issues in 1993. During preparations for the April, 1993 referendum representatives from the miners', pilots' and other independent unions appealed to their members for a vote of confidence in the President and one for early elections of the People's Deputies. In June a collection of independents, including all those mentioned above (except Sotsprof), the Mining and Metallurgical Union and other federations and confederations issued an official statement on their readiness to take part in a constitutional conference held at the President's initiative. Several independents supported Yeltsin's action in dissolving the parliament in September, 1993.\textsuperscript{75}

Challenges to the FNPR's Dominance

A number of challenges to the FNPR's dominance emerged during 1992 and 1993. First, serious splits developed within the Federation over economic reform policies and market transition. Oil and gas workers supported reform, and pressed for deregulation of energy prices in contradiction to the FNPR's platform, without formally leaving the Federation. In the coal industry as well, many FNPR members looked to the NPG or regional miners' committees for leadership. In October, 1992 the Trade Union of the Mining and Metallurgical Industry, with
more than two million members, became the first branch union to split from the FNPR. The metallists left in order to support Gaidar’s reform program against the Federation’s leadership, and to gain more control over the social security funds of their comparatively well-off branch and more autonomy. In short, workers in energy and advanced manufacturing with at least some export potential wanted independence and privatization, and progressive loss of these unions was weakening the FNPR. There were also political divisions, most significantly the alliance between the large Moscow Federation of the FNPR and the militantly anti-reform Party of Labor, which caused considerable dissension within the Federation’s leadership. Finally, indeterminate numbers of workers were simply leaving the FNPR; some to join independents which may or may not consolidate while others remained outside any union structure.

Both Yeltsin’s government and the independents also raised serious threats to the FNPR’s property ownership and control over social security funds. The government proposed nationalizing the Federation’s property and Sotsprof asserted rights to a portion of it, proposing that administrative offices and other facilities be divided among existing unions. Reform of the social security system was also a prominent issue, with the Supreme Soviet reviewing proposals to either turn the system over to the state or give independents the right to administer benefits for their members; the NPG did gain the right to control its own fund. The independents further sought to change the ‘rules of the game’ of wage and contract negotiations at the enterprise level, with Sotsprof lobbying for legislation that would guarantee the right of any trade union functioning at an enterprise to negotiate a separate collective agreement with management. While declaring their support for Yeltsin on the April referendum, the independents called for the creation of unions excluding employers (who were included in the FNPR) and a ban on enterprise administrations deducting union dues from wages. The FNPR’s substantial support in the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet helped it to fend off most of these challenges.

The political confrontation of fall, 1993, was far more damaging to the FNPR. The Federation’s leadership condemned Yeltsin’s dissolution of the Supreme Soviet as an illegal usurpation of power and called on its members to protest and strike, and declared their pre-strike readiness. Workers’ response was negligible, while some branch unions openly opposed the leadership, and Klochkov soon declared the workers ‘unprepared’ and called off the strike (with dissent from some internal militants.) Under de facto presidential rule Yeltsin’s government then within a week passed a series of measures designed to undercut the Federation: enterprise financial organs were prohibited from collecting trade union dues,
undercutting the FNPR's financial base; Russian Federation pension funds were placed under the control of the government and finance ministry; and management of the social security fund was transferred to the government, depriving the union of its most significant and sustaining function. The government's decrees, if fully implemented, could seriously and perhaps fatally weaken the Federation.

In the aftermath of the fall crisis, Klochkov resigned and was replaced as Chairman by Mikhail Shmakov, former head of the Moscow Trade Union Federation. On the defensive over its position during the October crisis, the Federation went into the December elections with a low profile, claiming an 'apolitical' stance. The year 1993 ended on an odd note, with the Federation lamenting the low level of workers' confidence in its leadership (a recent poll had shown 90% of its members dissatisfied with the FNPR) while Shumeiko chastised regional governments for seizure of Federation property and other abuses, and proposed that Russia's labor unions unify into a single structure.

Unions and Parties

We have noted in passing several linkages between Russian Federation labor unions and political parties: the FNPR's alliance with the Civic Union, Sotsprof's ties to the Social Democratic Party of Russia; and the Moscow Federation's links with the Party of Labor. The Social Democrats also had contacts with other independent unions, and at least one of its factions sought ties to reformers within FNPR, while the Party of Labor had support from some additional branch unions. Each of these parties claimed to represent workers' interests and had electoral aspirations. Many parties on both extremes of the political spectrum, from anarchists to Communists, also developed small labor organizations.

Have these ties produced, or are they likely to produce, party-affiliated unions that have substantial worker constituencies and play significant roles in political outcomes? At present such a development seems unlikely for several reasons. First, the parties all suffer from weakness and internal divisions: the liberal Social Democrats have a small, mainly white-collar membership, are heavily factionalized, and have no coherent economic program. The Civic Union, a centrist bloc strongly influenced by state enterprise managers, also divided internally and split in 1993, losing Nikolai Travkin's Democratic Party of Russia (the CU's one substantial constituent with a substantial blue collar membership.) Moreover, both the Social Democrats and the DPR lost substantial membership during 1992. The Party of Labor comprises a small group of socialist intellectuals who seek to establish a mass base through affiliation with FNPR unions. The most politically-significant labor-party tie has been the elite-
level alliance between the FNPR and the Civic Union against Gaidar’s reforms, an alliance which however did not involve any direct participation or consent of rank-and-file workers. Parties are too much in flux to provide coherent structures for union affiliation and workers’ representation.

In one probably typical effort to forge such an alliance, talks were held in September, 1993 between the Russian Social Democratic Center’s Co-chair O. Rumyantsev, leaders of the Labor Party, and Moscow Federation Trade Union Chair (soon-to-be FNPR Chair) M. Shmakov. Rumyantsev proposed forming a left-centrist/laborite bloc, uniting social democratic and socialist parties and the unions and committed to the political representation and social protection of workers. (He at the same time suggested that otherwise Communists might take on this role.) Shmakov agreed but the Labor Party representatives hedged, and nothing came of the initiative.81 In the legislative elections held two months later this potential laborite coalition dispersed, (with the SD’s split, Rumyantsev running on the Civic Union list, and the FNPR taking no position), leaving no left-centrist alternative for voters and virtually no voice for this political orientation in the Duma.

IV. WORKERS, POLITICS, AND THE 1993 ELECTIONS

Introduction

It is extremely difficult to assess Russian workers’ attitudes toward reform. The mass of available attitudinal data is uneven in quality, frequently unrepresentative (with survey research concentrated in large cities), and presents contradictory results. Many surveys, for example, show that workers are hostile to private enterprise, while others indicate that substantial numbers would prefer private sector employment. Some surveys show that a large majority of Russian workers consider the state responsible for providing full employment, while others indicated increasing tolerance for unemployment during the reform period. Indeed, data show that there has been overall an increasing tolerance for many reform policies and their costs during the early 1990’s, but some contradictory values (i.e., egalitarianism) remain strong.82

The record of workers’ political and voting behavior provides a much clearer picture than the mixed and confusing attitudinal data, so we will focus on this behavior in trying to assess workers’ responses to reform. Overall the record indicates that, at least until the December 1993 parliamentary elections, the majority of workers supported reformist political candidates (primarily Yeltsin) and programs while showing little interest in anti-reform organizations that sought their support.
Though there are few breakdowns of voting by social class, we can reasonably conclude from available evidence that workers formed at least a proportionate share (per population) of the pro-reform voting majorities in 1991 and spring, 1993. First, most opposition to reform has been concentrated in rural/agricultural areas and in the southern portions of Russia. So, for example, in the June 1991 presidential elections, which Yeltsin won by a landslide, the only substantial mass defections were among rural voters who supported Ryzhkov. Exit polls conducted at the April 1993 referendum (at a point when workers had clearly experienced the costs of reform) indicate that a majority of workers continued to support Yeltsin and reform. Some 55% of workers reported voting 'yes' on question 2 (support for government's social and economic policies) compared with 53% of all voters, while more that 75% reported voting for early parliamentary elections (a pro-Yeltsin position) compared with some 2/3 of all voters. These exit polls also showed, however, that unemployed voters were more likely to oppose reformist positions. Other analyses of the referendum voting also show that support for reform was strong in urban areas and in Russia's northern industrial regions, and that, while the most strongly pro-reform strata were the urban, young, well-educated, white collar and higher income, industrial blue-collar workers provided a proportionate share of that support. At the same time, extremist and anti-reform groups that sought to recruit workers, from the United Workers' Front established in 1989 to Victor Anpilov’s Working Russia, have had very limited success.

The 1993 Elections
What of workers’ role in the December, 1993 parliamentary elections? Anti-reform and extremist parties gained a considerable amount of support in these elections, and there is some evidence that workers contributed disproportionately to that support. Below we will review briefly the positions of various parties on a range of labor-related issues, including industrial policy and subsidies, protectionism, and social and employment policies. We will then examine the positions and alliances adopted by various trade unions, and the limited available evidence on actual voting patterns of workers.

Parties and Labor Issues
The four liberal parties, Russia’s Choice (Gaidar), Yabloko (Yavlinsky), the Movement for Democratic Reform (Sobchak) and the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (Shakrai) favored continuation of the reform program, but their platforms differed significantly on issues of relevance to labor. Russia’s Choice favored tough monetary and financial policies —
austerity in government spending, an end to subsidies and preferential credits, and liberalization of foreign trade. Except for the promise to bring down inflation, it did not address costs of reform for workers and implied more unemployment and a minimal 'safety net' at least in the short term.85 Both Yabloko and the PRUA called for more gradual reforms and paid more attention to social issues. Yabloko supported an industrial policy including targeted long-term state credits for 4 or 5 "locomotive" sectors, an active employment policy, guarantees for those unable to work, and partial indexation of some wages and payments.86 PRUA called, somewhat vaguely, for more social welfare and opportunities for employment, while the Movement for Democratic Reform insisted that the reform program be more "socially-oriented."87

The three centrist parties, the Democratic Party of Russia (Travkin), the Civic Union (Volsky) and Women of Russia placed much more emphasis on the state's role in the economy and/or social policy. The DPR favored economic reforms but with an active state industrial and scientific-technical policy and much more attention to preserving Russia's industrial base and markets.88 The Civic Union placed major stress on the employment issue, claiming that the essence of their program was to avoid or minimize unemployment; they also favored continued subsidies to support production, some protectionism, and state management of the economy and regulation of markets, and opposed austerity policies.89 Women of Russia's program was mainly concerned with social policy; while claiming to be pro-reform and pro-market, they called for budget priority to the social sector (i.e., health, education, housing) and protection for some domestic producers, and stressed the problems of women in the labor force, including high unemployment and pay discrimination.90

The three remaining parties that gained significant support in the election, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Agrarian Party, and the Liberal Democratic Party (Zhirinovsky) all favored strongly protectionist policies and a continuing state role in the economy. The Communists billed themselves as the "party of the working people" and called for a major regulatory role for the state, credits, regulation of prices on basic goods, and strong social protections.91 The Agrarians wanted restrictions on private land ownership, a guaranteed right to work, and subsidies, protectionism, and employment guarantees for the agroindustrial sector.92 Zhirinovksy's LDP was more open to reform, favoring continued development of the private sector and a more aggressive export strategy (particularly for arms) along with protection for Russian products against foreign imports. His party combined a mixed economy strategy with its well-known extreme nationalist appeals.93
Unions and Workers in the Election

Russia's trade unions fragmented in the 1993 election campaign, with various unions making alliances and endorsements all over the political map. As noted above, the FNPR's national leadership kept a low profile and gave no endorsements. Various of the Federation's constituent unions did play an active role, however: the trade unions of the agro-industrial complex, the largest in the FNPR, supported the Agrarians, with former Chairman Klochkov running on that party's list; the trade unions of the forestry sector and construction and industrial building materials allied with Civic Union; and some local unions supported parties of their own selection.94 One election observer noted in late October: "The trade unions that have been cut loose from the once orderly ranks of the FNPR are currently breaking apart. . ."95 Several independent unions tried early in the election campaign to form a pro-reform bloc so that they could run their own candidate list. Failing this they split, with the Independent Miners' Union endorsing Russia's Choice, the Air Traffic Controllers supporting Democratic Russia (which was itself conflicted over support of Russia's Choice), and Sotsprof allying with Shakrai's PRUA.96 The Social Democrats, who had cultivated ties with unions, themselves split in the election, and the FNPR apparently ignored the Communist Party's proposal for an alliance.

How did workers vote in this election? The evidence available so far is limited and fragmentary, but indicates significant support for Zhirinovsky's LDP among some groups of workers as well as some support for the Communist Party. Exit poll reports show that two groups of workers voted in substantial numbers for Zhirinovsky: older, less well-educated males, employed but working in vulnerable sectors that had in some cases experienced layoffs, as well as younger, relatively skilled workers.97 There is some evidence of a correlation between levels of unemployment and support for the Communist Party (though this correlation does not hold for Zhirinovsky's LDP).98 There is also evidence that workers often ignored their union's endorsement - even in the influential Independent Miners' Union, many members ignored the leadership's endorsement of Russia's Choice to support Zhirinovsky - and more generally that unions had little influence over their members' voting.99 The partial and preliminary nature of this evidence must be stressed.

V. CONCLUSION: UNIONS, WORKERS, AND POLITICS

In sum Russia's labor unions, though by no means powerless, are seriously divided and weak. Over the course of the period studied here the FNPR exercised some influence in
helping to block Gaidar's reform program, shaping privatization policy, and pressing for income maintenance especially for poorer strata - minimum wage workers, pensioners. It found powerful allies in the Civic Union and the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. At the same time its authority among its membership remained extremely low, and efforts to institutionalize its role as a bargaining and policy-making agent through the Tripartite Commission had little success. By the middle of 1992 the FNPR was confronting multiple challenges to its dominance, including defections by constituent unions and efforts by independent unions and Yeltsin's government to divest it of property and functions. The measures taken by Yeltsin's government in the fall of 1993 - removing control of social security funds from the unions and eliminating automatic dues check-offs - are likely to further seriously undermine the Federation.

Independent unions are active in a number of sectors, but they have seen relatively little expansion in size or breadth of activity since 1991. The independents represent relatively privileged and militant sectors of the labor force, and have been fairly successful in gaining wage increases and other concessions for their members. At the same time, they confront various resource, leadership, and collective action problems, and have spent considerable time and resources fighting with the FNPR over the 'institutional space' for labor organizing. Their loyalty to Yeltsin's government has gained them few rewards, and it remains uncertain whether they will develop in more sectors as the FNPR declines. If not, large and increasing numbers of workers will be left with no organized representation.

Politically, the unions first divided into pro- and anti-reform groups and, in the December 1993 election, fragmented. They have exercised no coherent influence on labor issues in electoral politics; there is evidence that neither the FNPR nor the independents could influence most members' voting behavior in any case. Given the divisions among the unions - largely reflecting genuine differences of interest among their members - and the weakness of political parties, we certainly should not expect development of a strong social-democratic or left/centrist laborite party-union coalition of the West European variety in Russia. Rather, according to evidence from the December 1993 elections, unions and workers are spreading themselves across the political spectrum. Some unions see the future of their branch in a competitive and internationalized economy, while others seek to defend their interests through statist and protectionist policies. Among workers, the election results indicate the weakening of support for reform and an increase in support for anti-reform and extremist alternatives.
### APPENDIX 1

#### TABLE 1

Average Nominal, Minimum, and Real Wages of Workers in the Russian Federation, 1990 to September, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Average Wage (rubles/mo.)</th>
<th>Minimum Wage (rubles/mo.)</th>
<th>Index for Real Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/92</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/92</td>
<td>2,004</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/92</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/92</td>
<td>3,024</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/92</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/92</td>
<td>5,067</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/92</td>
<td>5,452</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/92</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/92</td>
<td>7,379</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/92</td>
<td>8,853</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/92</td>
<td>10,576</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/92</td>
<td>16,071</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/93</td>
<td>15,690</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/92</td>
<td>18,672</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/93</td>
<td>23,559</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/93</td>
<td>30,562</td>
<td>4,275</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/93</td>
<td>37,505</td>
<td>4,275</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/93</td>
<td>47,371</td>
<td>4,275</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/93</td>
<td>55,996</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/93</td>
<td>65,408</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/93</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Segodnia, Nov. 6, 1993, p. 3; similar figures for average monthly nominal wages and the real wage index, with some slight variations, can be found in PlanEcon Report, vol. 9, nos. 44-45, December 19, 1993, p. 30.
**TABLE 2**

Numbers of Registered Unemployed and Numbers Receiving Benefits, Russian Federation Employment Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Registered Employed (end mo.)</th>
<th>Growth in % (over preced. mo.)</th>
<th>No. Receiving Benefits</th>
<th>% of Unempld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>68,996</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>18,093</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>93,082</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>32,830</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>118,401</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>52,370</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>151,005</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>73,582</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>176,494</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>89,269</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun.</td>
<td>202,879</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>107,764</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>247,994</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>139,880</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>294,226</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>174,125</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>367,050</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>219,358</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>442,396</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>266,793</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>517,914</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>317,169</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>577,100</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>371,057</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>627,982</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>411,296</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>692,198</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>461,085</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>730,032</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>495,948</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>750,600</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>514,300</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>740,500</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>449,500</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun.</td>
<td>717,100</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>458,900</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul.</td>
<td>716,800</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>458,800</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>713,900</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>456,900</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of enterprises at which strikes occurred</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,755</td>
<td>6,273</td>
<td>2.314 mil.</td>
<td>1.893 mil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.989 mil.</td>
<td>325,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>4,929</td>
<td>187,000</td>
<td>1.115 mil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>295,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>109,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4
Average Wages in Selected Sectors, July, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Wages (Rubles/Mo.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In national economy as whole</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>62,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Industry</td>
<td>177,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyumen Oblast</td>
<td>245,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Extraction</td>
<td>156,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonferrous Metallurgy</td>
<td>111,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Industry</td>
<td>110,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Industry</td>
<td>78,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>40,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Art</td>
<td>30,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 2: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Andrey B. Bogdanov, Secretary of the Board, Democratic Party of Russia; Chairman of DPR Youth Union, May 2, 1993.
Tom Bradley, AFL-CIO representative, Free Trade Union Institute, May 26, 1993.
Arkady Didezit, journalist and activist of the Social Democratic Party of Russia; also members of the Legal Commission of the Russian Federation of Free Trade Unions, May 25, 1993.
Leonid A. Gordon, Professor, Institute of World Economy and International Relations; Vice-Director for Labor Studies of the Center for Socio-Political and Economic Studies, May 28, 1993.
Lev I. Jakobson, Professor, College of Economics, Moscow State University, June 2, 1993.
Pavel M. Kudiukin, Executive Director, Russian-American Foundation for Trade Union Research and Education, (former Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor and Employment of the Russian Federation), June 8, 1993.
Sergey Magaril, Member of the Directorate of the Social Democratic Party of Russia; Deputy Chair of the Party's International Commission, May 24, 1993.
Vladimir I. Makhanov, Member of Russian Federation Supreme Soviet and Supreme Soviet Commission on Social Policy, May 25, 1993.
Boris Grigorievich Misnik, President, Trade Union for Mining and Metallurgical Industry of the Russian Federation, June 1, 1993.
Alexander Segal, Press Secretary, Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, June 4, 1993.
Mikhail Tsovma and Boris Kravtchenko, Kas-Kor Labor Information Center, May 31, 1993.
FOOTNOTES


9See PlanEcon Report, Vol. 8, No. 37, Oct. 7, 1992, p. 14; though it is doubtful that real industrial wages had recovered fully by June, 1992, as the index indicates.

10For the employment law see Pravda, Jan. 25, 1991, p. 1.


14See, for example, Izvestiia, Dec. 21, 1993, p. 2.


19 For 1993 data see Izvestiia, Dec. 21, 1993, p. 2; for the decree on compensation, see Itar-Tass, Apr. 21, in FBIS, Apr. 22, 1993, p. 42.


26 Data on labor days lost for this period mixes economic strikes with those motivated by ethnic grievances. Leonid Gordon cites figures for the Russian Federation of 1.2 mil. labor-days lost in 1989, 0.2 mil. in 1990, and 2.3 mil. in 1991. These figures seem to me too low, but reflect
the changing scale of strike activity over these years. See L.A. Gordon, Ocherki rabochego
dvizheniia v poslesotsialisticheskoi rossii (Moscow, 1993), p. 46.

27See, for example, Peter Rutland, "Labor Unrest and Movements in 1989 and 1990," Soviet
Economy, 4, 1990, pp. 345-384; Walter Connor, The Accidental Proletariat: Workers,
Politics, and Crisis in Gorbachev’s Russia (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 271-
290; Theodore Friedgut and Louis Siegelbaum, “Perestroika From Below: The Soviet Miners’

28For lists of miners’ demands see, for example, Izvestiia, July 19, 1989; Trud, July 12, 1989,
p.1.

29See, for example, Izvestiia, July 17, 1989, p. 6.

30Quote is from FBIS:SU, July 17, 1989, p. 34, citing Moscow Domestic Service (MDS) July

Workers’ Politics from Brezhnev to Yeltsin (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 166-
168.

p. 1-2; D. J. Peterson, "The Supreme Soviet Passes Strike Legislation," Report on the USSR,


34See FBIS:SU, Apr. 12, 1990, p. 59, citing Moscow World Service; FBIS:SU, Oct. 23,


36Quote is from Izvestiia, July 11, 1990, p. 3.

37Simon Clarke et. al., What About the Workers? Workers and the Transition to Capitalism in
Russia (New York: Verso, 1993), pp. 168-172, argues that there was a division between the
economic demands of rank-and-file miners and the political agendas of the leadership.

38See Izvestiia, Mar. 15, 1991, p. 2; Pravda, Mar. 27, 1991, p. 2; May 1, 1991, p. 2; May 5,
1991, p. 3.


21, 24.
41 Quote is from FBIS-SU, Apr. 12, 1991, p. 44, citing Radio Network 1, Apr. 11, 1991.


48 Steven Crowley gives central place to this factor in explaining labor quiescence in steel industry versus unrest in mining; see his "Barriers to Collective Action: Steelworkers and Mutual Dependence in the Former Soviet Union," World Politics (forthcoming, 1994).


53 See, for example, Izvestiia, Oct. 4, 1989, p. 1, on a rally in Moscow; for a skeptical comment on the authenticity of these rallies, see Connor Accidental Proletariat (1991), pp. 291-292.


60 The GCTU tried to encourage compromise in the coal strikes, supporting miners' economic demands but condemning the political ones; see Trud, Apr. 2, 1991, p. 1.


62 Interview with Tom Bradley, AFL-CIO Representative, Free Trade Union Institute, Moscow, May 26, 1993.


64 See Trud, Aug. 27, 1991, p. 2; the FNPR claimed to have passed along decrees and appeals of President Yeltsin and to have distributed their newspaper in defiance of the coup leaders' ban.


72 For the FNPR's claimed membership, see Izvestiia, Apr. 4, 1992, p. 2.


40
74 See Valentin Rupets, "Trade union movement in 'post-totalitarian Russia," in New Labor Movement, no. 3-4, 1992, p. 44.
76 Interview with Boris Misnik, President, Trade Union for Mining and Metallurgical Industry of the Russian Federation, Moscow, June 1, 1993.
78 See Linda J. Cook, "Russia's Labor Relations: Consolidation or Disintegration?" in Douglas Blum, ed. Russia's Future: Consolidation or Disintegration? (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1994), pp. 112-114.
79 See Rabochaia Tribuna, Oct. 28, 1993, pp. 1-2; Nov. 2, 1993, pp. 1-2; Nov. 6, p. 1.
85 See Rossiiskie Vesti, Nov. 30, 1993, p. 3.
86 See Rossiiskie Vesti, Nov. 30, 1993, p. 3; Rossiskaia Gazeta, Dec. 9, 1993, p. 2.


98 Personal communication from Valdimir Gimpelson, March 22, 1994.