

Belorussian Resolution on Chernobyl Cleanup

90UN0858B Minsk SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA
in Russian 6 Jan 90 p 1

[Resolution issued by the Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers in Minsk; date not given]

[Text] The Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers notes that in 1990, it was necessary to resettle 7,454 families in the republic from populated points subjected to radioactive contamination as the result of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station [AES] in which the radiation dose might reach 35 rems, and from populated points where the content of radionuclides in the soil on agricultural land adjacent to them is 40 curies per square km or more, including 3,521 families from Gomel Oblast, 3,831 families from Mogilev Oblast, and 102 families from Brestsk Oblast.

In order to accelerate resolution of questions pertaining to the resettlement of this number of families, the Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers resolves the following:

1. To adopt the proposal of the oblast executive committees [oblispolkoms] to provide 2,691 apartments during the first quarter of 1990 for citizens who resettle out of populated points subjected to radioactive contamination, broken down as follows:

1.1. One thousand five hundred seventy-eight [apartments] for the inhabitants of Gomel Oblast, including 628 in that oblast, 200 in Brestsk Oblast, 300 in Vitebsk Oblast, 250 in Grodno Oblast, and 200 in Minsk Oblast;

1.2. One thousand eleven [apartments] for the inhabitants of Gomel Oblast, including 270 in that oblast, 140 in Brestsk Oblast, 301 in Vitebsk Oblast, 150 in Grodno Oblast, and 150 in Minsk Oblast;

1.3. One hundred two apartments in Brestsk Oblast for the inhabitants of that oblast.

To take under advisement the fact that the Minsk Gorispolkom [city soviet executive committee] will be allocated 236 apartments for citizens who are not able-bodied for resettlement in housing near close relatives (if need be in improved housing conditions), including 100 for the inhabitants of Gomel Oblast and 136 for inhabitants of Mogilev Oblast.

2. To oblige the Gomel and Mogilev Oblispolkoms [Oblast Soviet Executive Committees] jointly with the Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno, and Minsk Gorispolkoms to provide during the first quarter of 1990 for the resettlement to permanent places of residence of 2,927 families from populated points as provided for in List 1 (a, b) of the Stet Program for the Cleanup in the Belorussian SSR Following the Accident at the Chernobyl AES for the Period 1990-1995, giving priority to families that have children aged under 14 years, pregnant women, and persons for whom for medical reasons it is not recommended that they live in those populated points.

3. The Gomel and Mogilev Oblispolkoms, jointly with the Belorussia trade union council will, if necessary, provide for accommodation of families resettled to the new housing settlements, at their request, in sanatoria and health-maintenance facilities, rest homes and pioneer camps in use year round, for temporary residence in 1990 until construction of these settlements has been completed.

4. The Belorussian SSR Ministry of Trade, Belorussian Cooperative Union, Belorussian SSR Ministry of Health, and Belorussian SSR Ministry of Public Education, and the oblispolkoms and rayispolkoms [rayon soviet executive committees] shall, if necessary, organize at sanatoria, health-maintenance facilities, rest homes, and pioneer camps to which inhabitants from regions contaminated with radionuclides are sent trade in everyday commodities and provide medical care for citizens, and also teaching and training processes for schoolchildren and children of preschool age who have been resettled with their parents.

M. Kovalev, chairman,
Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers.
A. Sokolovskiy, deputy chief,
Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers—
Administration of Affairs.

Proceedings of First Ukrainian Ecology Congress Reported

90UN0561A Kiev RADYANSKA UKRAYINA
in Ukrainian 15 Nov 89 p 4

[Article by special correspondent V. Smaha: "The Greens Are Still Green. Polemical Notes From the First Congress of the Green World Ecological Association"]

[Excerpts] Life changes, and we along with it. Two years ago a young bearded informal, rather exotic to look at, brought to the editors an announcement about the formation of the Green World Association, attached to the Ukrainian Peace Committee. The desire to outstrip everybody is probably one of newspaperdom's professional diseases. Therefore, I moved quickly to sign to press the first announcement in the Soviet press about the formation of the Ukrainian Greens. And the next day I was compelled to argue a long time, apparently, about the reliability of the fact. For some reason the news caused consternation in the Ukrainian SSR State Committee for Environmental Protection. And I asked that young bearded informal prior to the Greens Congress—such things do happen—for an invitation for one of the officials of the State Committee for Environmental Protection!

From not wanting even to believe in the creation of Green World to wanting to take part in the work of its congress is, you must agree, quite a change. Reasonably enough, the Association immediately registered officially with the State Committee. It seems to me this is one of the most positive changes in our life. Without fruitful cooperation of both the state environmental protection

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organ and the independent ecology organization, in my opinion, nothing substantial at all can be achieved. Why?

Regular readers of this newspaper already know the answer to that question. Since the start of the year we have, in the course of a special newspaper campaign, been monitoring the implementation of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers Decree "On the Radical Restructuring of Environmental Protection in the Country." And we have found that in implementing the decree, the departments (and they have plenty of experience in this) have skillfully translated the thing into a kind of long-term project [dovgobud]. At present the environmental protection organs, as one of our writers put it, are rather like "the premature child of an apparatus game." Not even a statute [polozhennya] on the USSR State Committee for Environmental Protection yet exists in nature.... And, undoubtedly, it will be able to overcome the resistance of the departments only with the help of the public. Unquestionably, the Ukrainian Green World has stated its position most fully and consistently in our republic.

It is not surprising that RADYANSKA UKRAYINA printed Green World's draft charter, gave a forum to its leaders, and held public discussions of the Greens' steering document. [passage omitted]

And now—the Green World Congress. Over 600 delegates from all areas of the republic gathered in the Kiev Artists House, and there were guests from Great Britain, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Canada, and the United States.... The Congress was participated in by USSR people's deputies and representatives of party, soviet, and environmental protection organs. Green World welcomed outstanding writers Oles Honchar and Borys Oliynyk. The Association's program was discussed and adopted, and its charter and a packet of resolutions were approved.

In short, the event turned out beautifully and, on the whole, positively. One must certainly endorse the Ukrainian Greens' noble slogan, "Survival, Democracy, Humanism." One must certainly recognize the progressive nature of the principles of the Association's existence as proclaimed in Green World's documents: Non-violent action, a diversity of public initiatives, a struggle for complete ecological glasnost. And one has to give credit to the skillful propaganda efforts of the Greens.

The first issue of the newspaper ZELENY SVIT was distributed at the Congress. Its editor (an interesting precedent), M. Prylul'sky, was elected by direct secret ballot. And Kiev artists and the creative group of the outstanding film "Nabat" did a good job of designing the facilities of the Congress.

Anyone who wanted to could inspect a map of the Ukraine's ecological troubles, which was dotted with the black blotches of all kinds of pollution. It showed convincingly that the Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, and Zaporozhye regions are on the brink of ecological disaster. And wherever the environment and people can no longer

stand the industrial burden, centers of the Greens are to be found. What kind of people work in them? I must confess it was a pleasure to meet the authors of numerous articles on ecology problems at the Congress, articles I was preparing to print sometime: people like V. Bilolid, an engineer in the South Ukrainian AES [nuclear power plant]; A. Shevchuk, a teacher from Odessa; V. Boreyk, a representative of student environmental squads of the Ukraine; Kiev writer D. Kulynyak; and Yu. Vysochyn, a designer from Cherkassk....

Green World today, in my view, is a rather variegated phenomenon. Noble ideas of protecting the environment have made it possible for a variety of people to take part in its work—people like A. Koval, head of the Nikolayev Obkom's [oblast party committee's] Ideology Department, and Bishop Jonathan; V. Kukhar, vice-president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and M. Bidzilya, head of Rukh's Ecology Commission.... And that ability of the Ukrainian Greens to consolidate the efforts of representatives of literally all strata of society is probably the Association's strongest feature today.

Yuriy Shcherbak, the outstanding writer and USSR people's deputy who is the leader of Green World, proposed that the possible paths of organizing the Association's development be discussed at the Congress. As is well known, there are three basic forms of Greens organization in the world. The first is the kind of Association that now exists in the Ukraine, a voluntary association of a variety of groups on a platform of fighting to avert an ecological crisis. In the second, the apolitical nature of the Greens is emphasized, of the kind, in particular, that is argued for by Peter Wilkinson, the representative of the well-known Greenpeace organization. And, finally, the formation of a Greens Party. Such a party, in fact, is active in the political arena of the FRG.

In conversation with journalists, Yuriy Shcherbak emphasized that a "Western model" is by no means envisioned. He went on to say, "We don't see ourselves as an opposition party. A confrontation with the Communist Party is out of the question. In fact, it is perfectly possible to be a member of both the Communist and the Greens parties. Examples of this kind of collaboration already exist. Kiev's Moscow Raykom [rayon committee] has become a collective member of Green World. Our republic's Greens do not need political power. A Greens Party is necessary to fight for the passage of political decisions having to do with ecological problems. It is also needed so that the new ecological thinking can, with the help of Greens deputies, exert influence from the Supreme Soviet down to the village soviets and become the norm in our society."

I believe Yuriy Shcherbak's sincerity. But inasmuch as his idea was endorsed by the majority of the votes at the Congress, and Point 12 of the Green World Program speaks of the intention to start preparations for the creation of a Greens Party, I should like to express my own thoughts on the matter. A party, as we know, means

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economic, cultural, and moral—and the introduction of regional cost accounting. Because, after all, it is specifically the urban environment which will become the primary field of action for the mechanism of self-government and self-financing.

The Leninist definition of the role to be played by cities as the engines of progress is timely even nowadays. However, breakdowns in the operation of these engines are becoming more and more evident. At present more than 73 percent of Russia's entire population lives in its cities; this, by the way, is more than in all the remaining union republics. The concentration of the population in Russia's cities considerably exceeds the union indicator, which is equal to 66 percent. These cited figures are not just random. They reflect an undesirable tendency. The large cities continue to drain population away from the surrounding territories, thus depriving the land of its proper agricultural upkeep.

An impartial analysis likewise elucidates the unfavorable situation in the development of Russia's urban population itself, a skewing in the direction of concentrating the urban population in the large and largest cities. Thus, during the last 20 years the number of people living in cities with a population of a million or more increased from 15.4 million to 23.7 million. An even more significant population increase is to be observed in Russia's largest cities. But now at the other pole of urban potential—in the small cities—the picture, unfortunately, is different. Since 1970 the population of Russia's small cities has decreased and quite substantially so.

I can foresee the following objection: It will be said that this phenomenon is a common one throughout the entire world. Yes, that is the case. But there are different kinds of urbanization. In fact, in many developed countries the proportion of city-dwellers is higher than it is in Russia. In the United States, for example, they comprise 76 percent of the total population. However, in that country only 16 percent live in cities with populations of more than half a million. The remaining city-dwellers, i.e., the overwhelming majority of them, are "registered" specifically in the small cities.

Russia's small cities these days are dragging out a truly wretched existence. Their common scourge is a lack of roads. Out of 720 small cities, 106 are situated at a distance of more than 50 (!) kilometers from a railroad.

Most of these cities, which are losing population are old Russian cities, the "roots on the nation." Take Vologda Oblast, for example: Velikiy Ustyug, Totma, Ustyuzhna.... Here too is the oldest small city—Belozersk; it is part of Russian history itself. Moreover, the number of people living in this "patriarch" among cities is only 12,000—right on the borderline of the Census definition for a city.

We do not need to prove that settling people through a territory is an extremely important compositional, social aspect of the economy. But the crisis of the cities has many features. And, therefore, counteracting it must be

comprehensive, multifaceted, and coordinated. In this connection it would be feasible to pose the question of developing a targeted, comprehensive program for developing urban potential in tandem with the guidelines of the upcoming five-year plan. Its most important "connecting-rod" is activating the development of the small and medium-sized cities, as well as employing all measures to restrain the growth of the large and largest ones. Moreover, the economic guidance from above must be organically connected with urban self-government from below—as a genuine foundation for the qualitative transformation of the urban environment. The shortage of resources must be bridged and covered by a city's free and creative initiative. Moreover, urban self-government should be based on expanding communal property ownership, the legal possibilities of administering the activity of all the economic facilities located on the given city's territory, a firm tax-and-budgetary system, direct monitoring controls on the city's apparatus for administering the population, and, finally, the opportunity for each city to have its own urban-planning and building code.

The foundation of any self-government is self-financing and the independence of the entire budgetary and tax process. Therefore, we must, first of all, change the correlation between the central budget and the budget of the local Soviet. It is not a matter of eliminating the practice of subsidies. The center is, after all, still the center. The truth obviously consists of an intelligent combination of local independence and initiative with republic-level strategy. The new financial-and-budgetary mechanism of self-government should, first of all, provide a ratio between the revenues of the municipal budgets and the efficiency of the regional economy. Commerce, authority, and intelligent management will put the local leadership on a solid track and will fill its activity with human content. But the budgets of cities must also be formulated on the basis of long-term norms for deductions from the general state revenues, taxes, and payments from the profits of all enterprises situated in the city, regardless of their administrative subordination.

In my opinion, the time has come for us to create an All-Russian organization of cities (association or union), within the framework of which we can work out and implement a strategy of urban development, balanced on the scales of collective common sense.

Belorussia Seeks Chernobyl Relief Abroad

90UN0882A Minsk SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA in Russian 7 Jan 90 p 3

[Interview with A.Ye Gurinovich, Belorussian SSR minister of foreign affairs, by unidentified BELTA correspondent: "The Whole World Against the Misfortune"; place and date not given]

[Text] The Belorussian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing a great deal of work

Investigation Attempt: What Measures Were Taken by the Organs of Law and Order in Connection with the Events of 18 January at the Central House of Letters [TsDL]?

Responding to a call from the Central House of Letters administration, two police officers proved incapable of bringing about order. The police had to be called again. The supplementary detail that came attempted to enter into negotiations with the so-called patriots. They were called out of the hall. Somehow, though, the police never got the most active participants in the provocation. One K. V. Astashvili (he calls himself Smirnov), who shouted pogromist anti-Semitic slogans over the megaphone in front of everyone, was handed over by the police at the TsDL entrance to two unknown persons, whereupon they beat an utterly calm retreat. This is the account given by participants in the writers' meeting who went to the 83rd police station in order to give the necessary explanations. Here they were treated crudely, jeeringly, familiarly. They got the impression that the detained brawlers and not the victimized writers enjoyed particular sympathy. This is confirmed by the conversation I had there the next day with police chief I. D. Chevka and his deputy A. M. Suchkov.

[I. D. Chevka] I haven't studied the report yet, therefore I'm not going to answer any questions... We did not arrest anyone or record anyone's name... We did not force anyone to come to the police station, both sides suggested coming to the station to sort things out and they did. There were no victims. One writer's glasses broke in his hands.

[A. M. Suchkov] It's the writers' own fault... One of the writers called the scandal's initiators "fascists." That's when the fight broke out...

In order to get more exhaustive information on the measures taken, we called N. A. Gerasimov, executive head of RUVD (Russian Internal Affairs Administration). "What, don't you have anything to write about?" he asked. "Blood is flowing in Azerbaijan, and what are you doing? I have no desire to talk with you." And he hung up. Does that mean we're going to wait until the pogromists take off their gloves everywhere?

True, the next day our conversation with Gerasimov was quite proper, but unfortunately just as lacking in results. "Until the investigation is over," he said, "your editors are going to get no more information. That's the law." Yes, according to the law, news media cannot make public materials in their possession. But we are not asking to be told all the details about the course of the investigation. However, there are many alarming questions to which society has a right to answers today. Why wasn't the obvious leader of the brawlers Smirnov-Astashvili brought in to the police? Who were those people to whom the police gave him over? Why were the writers spoken to at the 83rd police station in that unwarranted tone? And finally, what happened on 18 January at the TsDL must be categorized according to the law not only as malicious vandalism but also as

group actions directed toward inciting national strife (art. 74 of the RSFSR Criminal Code; punishment—up to ten years imprisonment). According to this fact the investigation ought to be conducted by the prosecutor's office, not the police. However, the prosecutor's office, as we know, is not doing so. Why?

And more. As became clear, K. V. Astashvili, who was let go in peace and who is a worker at the "Sapfir" enterprise, has been nominated as a candidate for deputy to the Pervomayskiy Rayon Soviet by the "Fatherland" society. And citizen E. M. Lugovoy, who took part in the brawl and is a photo journalist for LYUBERETSKAYA PRAVDA, is a candidate for deputy to the Moscow Soviet. Can people of such ways really represent the interests of the people in the organs of power?

We have been informed by the USSR Union of Writers that the administration's secretariat has addressed a request to the prosecutor's office to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter and punish the guilty parties.

But the Meeting Was Held

Despite the outrageous incidents, after a while the "Aprel" meeting was continued and its task finally completed. An organizational committee of the all-union association of writers "Aprel" was created and practical steps for calling its constituent assembly in April 1990 were discussed.

The meeting was led by I. Duel, Ye. Yevtushenko, and Ya. Kostyukovskiy. Among the speakers were S. Bukchin (Minsk), T. Gaydar, A. Zlobin, V. Kavtorin (Leningrad), P. Katayev, V. Leonovich, V. Oskotskiy, A. Rekemchuk, Vad. Sokolov, B. Sernov, T. Tolstaya, Yu. Edlis, people's deputies V. Samerin and G. Starovoytova. It was resolved to invite writers from all regions of the country to participate in the organizational committee and to prepare for a draft charter for the association for conference approval.

In connection with this incident, at the suggestion of Ye. Yevtushenko, those gathered approved the declaration unanimously.

Ways To Increase Growth of Small Cities Noted

90UN0723A Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA
19 Jan 90 First Edition p 1

[Article by A. Zholkov, chief, Sector of Settlement and Comprehensive Development of Populated Points, Council for the Study of Production Forces Under USSR Gosplan: "Exhausted Springs: Why Are Russia's Small Cities Dragging Out A Wretched Existence?"]

[Text] The deepening of the social trend in the economy requires a multifaceted analysis of Russia's urban potential. There is an objectively heightened attention being paid to cities, their sense of self-awareness—financial,

to attract international organizations within the UN body and the foreign public to help in dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident on the republic territory. A BELTA correspondent talks with A.Ye. Gurinovich, Belorussian SSR minister of foreign affairs, about this.

[Gurinovich] Last year, the minister reported, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped to bring to our republic a group of foreign radiation safety experts recommended by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] and other international organizations. They conducted a series of monitoring measurements and discussed questions of radiation safety with Belorussian scientists. In October the IAEA Secretariat allocated \$50,000 to the republic to acquire certain kinds of complex equipment before the end of 1989. Requests have been made to the IAEA to implement a more significant program this year and in subsequent years, including the delivery of equipment, joint work, and grants for Belorussian specialists to spend time abroad. Now, with the participation of workers from the Ministry, work is being done on the question of setting up on the territory of the Belorussian SSR a branch of the Chernobyl International Scientific Research Center. Proposals dealing with a possible joint project with the United Nations Environmental Program [UNEP], WHO, and the Belorussian SSR with the goal of dealing with the consequences of the accident on Belorussian SSR territory have been drawn up and submitted for review by UNEP. Steps have been taken to recruit other international organizations for this work, including UNESCO, UNICEF, and others.

[Correspondent] Anatoliy Yemelyanovich, what has been done with respect to the appeal from public organizations in the republic to fellow countrymen and other people of goodwill abroad?

[Gurinovich] We have been making efforts to circulate this appeal, translated into foreign languages, at sessions and conferences of international organizations and among the public in countries where the Belorussian SSR has representation in international organizations—New York, Vienna, Geneva, and Paris. References have been made to it in statements by the republic's representatives at international forums. For example, during the course of the work of the 44th UN General Assembly Session in New York, this appeal was circulated among all UN member states. It has been published in three newspapers that circulate in New York, giving the number of the open account of the permanent representation of the Belorussian SSR in the United Nations for the transfer of funds.

[Correspondent] Please say a few words about funds that have already been received.

[Gurinovich] The most active responses to the appeal have come from workers in Belorussian SSR institutions abroad, workers in the secretariats of international organizations from the republic, and also other Soviet citizens working abroad. They have contributed about \$5,000 of their own savings. This has already been used

to buy 14 highly accurate dosimeters, which are already in use in the republic, and also 28,000 disposal syringes and needles. Collection of funds continues. I would like to note in particular the students at the Soviet school in New York, who organized a bake sale using sweets that they made themselves, and with the money received acquired about 1,000 disposal syringes.

[Correspondent] And what has been the response of foreign citizens to the appeal?

[Gurinovich] They have already transferred \$1,100 into a special account opened in New York. The American pharmaceuticals company Andzhon [name as published] has expressed its readiness to send medicines and medical equipment to the Belorussian SSR to treat children. Contacts have been established with a number of businessmen and religious and other figures.

[Correspondent] What, in your opinion, should be done to activate funds from abroad?

[Gurinovich] In my opinion, this would be helped by adding to the republic program for the cleanup following the accident at the Chernobyl AES [Nuclear Power Station] an international section and by disseminating abroad information about the consequences of the accident and the republic's needs. This could be done, including at the government level, by making use of the possibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[Correspondent] Is there anything else that you would like to say?

[Gurinovich] Permit me through the republic mass media to express my gratitude and thanks to all diplomats and experts from the Belorussian SSR working abroad, and to other Soviet citizens abroad, for their charity and voluntary contributions to the fund for help in the cleanup following the accident at the Chernobyl AES on the territory of our republic. We are also indebted to those foreign citizens who have responded to our misfortune.

Latvian Council for Religious Affairs Reorganized

*18004007A Moscow SOYUZ in Russian No 4, 22-28
Jan 90 p 4*

[Unattributed article: "Department for Religious Affairs"]

[Text] The reorganized Latvian SSR Council for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers is now called the Department for Religious Affairs. Henceforth it is accountable to the republic Council of Ministers. The Church is taking an active part in the processes occurring in the republic. In Latvia at present, where there are nine active confessions [churches], more than 640 parishes are registered and there are about 400 clergymen. Relations with the Church will be simplified with the introduction of

the republic department; this pertains in particular to publishing activities, travel abroad by clergymen, and other matters.

The republic Supreme Soviet commission is continuing work on the Latvian SSR law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations". Representatives of all confessions are taking part in this work.

Political Discussion Clubs' Role in Youth Political Education

90UN0689A Moscow *POLITICHESKOYE OBRAZOVANIYE* in Russian No 18, Dec 89 pp 87-88

[Article by A. Strokanov, sector chief, and V. Lepekhin, instructor in the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Komsomol Central Committee: "What Kind of Political Education Do Young People Need?"]

[Text] Recently there has been an ever increasing need to answer the question of whether the system of Komsomol political education is necessary under present conditions. Speaking frankly, young people react negatively to any attempts to force yesterday's students to sit at school desks once again and to repeat what they have "passed" only recently. Of course, we cannot ignore the level of socio-political training, which the school or VUZ provides today. Alas, this level still is often low and does not meet the demands of life. But is the system of Komsomol political education capable of filling in the gaps and omissions in the teaching of social studies in the school and the teaching of party history, political economy or philosophy at the VUZ level? The answer can only be negative.

After all, for many years we counted on Komsomol political education to provide young people with a system of knowledge. From this came the unwieldy academic programs and the desire to do everything according to the methods used in party studies. The excessive organization, the formalism and the school-type methods for the conduct of political studies—that is what the Komsomol organizations successfully adopted from the party members. While party studies were able (and in some places are still able) to hold on through discipline and "compulsoriness," Komsomol studies are coming apart at every seam under these conditions. Not to mention the fact the youth political schools and seminars are given the lowest priority when propagandists are assigned. But even the best of them could not impart to the system of Komsomol political training a truly educational nature; they could not become instructors. The very orientation of political studies—the fact that it is aimed at obviously unrealistic goals—prevented and continues to prevent the propagandists from displaying in full measure their strongest points and qualities.

That is why the question "Is the political education of young people necessary?" should be replaced with another: "What kind of political education is necessary for young people?" There must be a shift away from academic programs and boring educational materials to open and honest conversation with young people on the basis of dialog. With the communists coming out ever more decisively against the old

approaches to political studies, such approaches are simply ruinous for the Komsomol. At the same time a free creative search for new forms of political education enriches the Komsomol organizations and helps them to extricate themselves from the crisis.

Political discussion clubs for young people are acquiring ever greater popularity in the country. At the start of this year there were about 8,000 of them. How do they attract young men and women? Above all by their democratic nature. No one is attempting to determine "from above" the work content and form, or to make accusations of political immaturity against those who bring up the most controversial and unexpected questions for discussion. Typically the discussion clubs operate within the framework of informal youth associations with a socio-political orientation or they are quite closely related to them.

What attitude should the Komsomol committees take toward the political clubs? This is by no means an idle question. The problem is that at first some Komsomol workers decided to take a position as detached observers with regard to the political club movement. There is, they say, a system of political education, but many discussion clubs do not "subscribe" to it... In fact, almost every political club has its own flavor, characteristic of it alone. The activities of the clubs are various and at times unpredictable; their composition is diverse and heterogeneous. The club may bring together youth and middle-aged people, for several months or for years. There may be five people or 100, who meet with each other once every two or three months or weekly. Is there any need to be frightened by such diversity? Certainly not.

Another problem is that by no means all Komsomol workers are capable of directing young people's political clubs. We are not talking about "paper" leadership and statistical summaries, in which everything is supposed to be "broken down to the number of pencils" and figures on the number of listeners, lessons and propagandists are supposed to be provided. This we have learned how to do. It is important that every Komsomol leader be able to become a genuine leader of young people, to carry on a dialog with them as equals. But some of our Komsomol committee secretaries come to the political discussion club as "inspectors" called on to judge whether the work here has the right slant. And sometimes these comrades do not resolve to hold their tongues; they express their viewpoint and get into an argument.

Probably the time has come to say with all determination to Komsomol workers that the youth political discussion club is that proving ground where their professional qualities, including competence, are tested. Here they take the political maturity examination. If a person does not pass it, if he walks away from a direct and open conversation with young people, that means he is not suited for Komsomol work.

The trend now is that the political clubs are gradually crowding out such traditional forms of Komsomol political education as schools and seminars. Not everyone