

Ukrainian nationalists reject anti-Semitism

In mid-April, the Ukrainian Helsinki Union reported that organs of the Soviet KGB and party functionaries in major cities began spreading provocative rumors that on April 20, Hitler's birthday, some "extreme nationalist" organizations were preparing Jewish pogroms, kidnappings of Jewish children, and so forth. This was even echoed in the official Soviet press.

The attempts by Pamyat and its KGB backers to extend the wave of anti-Semitism into non-Russian Slavic republics has failed so far, especially in the populous Ukraine, where about 15 million Russians reside. The failure has not been accidental. It is the fruit of a conscientious campaign by Ukrainian nationalists to defend Jewish rights and to expose anti-Semitism as a Moscow "divide and conquer" scheme.

A powerful resolution against anti-Semitism was unanimously passed and circulated throughout the republic at the September founding congress of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, Rukh. Key passages from this extraordinary document, titled "Against Anti-Semitism"

and never before published in the West, read:

"The Congress of Rukh is acting against any form of national discrimination, and is extending its brotherly hand to the Jewish people. . . . A people that for many years has lived in Ukrainian territories, a people which has excelled in its talent and hard work, still does not feel as an equal. . . . Years of Stalinism, as well as Brezhnevism, and fascist genocide during World War II has left them with many losses. . . .

"The people of Ukraine are not to blame for that. We reject any formulations and allegations that try to portray Ukrainians as anti-Semites. Anti-Semitism in Ukraine, and in other regions of the country [U.S.S.R.] exists not in the hearts of nationally conscious and civicly active people, but in the denationalized masses who thrive on the lies of politicians who are acting on the old imperial principle of 'divide and conquer'—sowing enmity amongst nations. In fact, it's characteristic that today, in a time of great social and national revival in Ukraine, anti-Semitic meetings are not taking place.

"The Congress calls on all the conscious citizens of Ukraine and representatives of all nations and nationalities who are living in Ukraine to raise their voice against any form of anti-Semitism and to come to the defense of their own national integrity and the integrity of the Jewish people, their culture, education, religion, rights of representation in electoral organs, as well as their right to speak, develop, and teach their children Yiddish or Hebrew."

cheaper.' . . . The Soviet Jewish Cultural *Chronicle* [*Vestnik*] recently sent a reporter to infiltrate Pamyat in Leningrad, and he ominously recounts that the first qualification for new members is to supply the addresses of three Jewish families. According to the *Chronicle's* editor, Tankred Golenpolski, Jewish self-defense groups are being widely organized. . . . Three hundred members of the Writers' Union have sent an anguished telegram to Gorbachov complaining that there is a group of journals 'encouraging anti-Semitic pogroms.' Most Jews I know are worried sick."

Russia's 'fashiki'

In addition to these alarming developments, "fashiki" (fascist youths) and neo-Nazis who are known to enjoy support in higher places—the *nomenklatura* included—have been running around with Nazi regalia for the last several years committing criminal acts of vandalism, according to an article, "Fashiki," by Vitali Yerebin, in *Nedelya*, (No. 15, 1989). These acts have included beatings of Jews and other nationalities, murder, and rape. Borrowing their ideas from the works of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (such

as *Diary of a Writer*) and Nazi ideologists such as Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, and Josef Goebbels, these Russian thugs call themselves the "Russian National-Socialist Workers' Party," the "National [Russian] Front," and the "Organization of National-Socialists." Established firmly in Leningrad and Moscow, these groups are found in almost every major city of the Soviet Union where Russians live: Murmansk, Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Minsk, Alma-Ata, Riga, etc., says Valeri Konovalov, in *Report on the U.S.S.R.*, (June 16, 1989, p. 10). Recently, the journal *Semya* (*Family*), No. 31, 1989 published an article about how these "fashiki" were on the loose, terrorizing the entire city of Voronezh, going around and raping young girls on the open street.

On July 8, 1988, a documentary film "Tak i zhivem" (This Is How We Live) appeared on the popular Central Television program "Vzglyad," featuring two young Russian neo-Nazis from Leningrad who attacked non-Russians as "inferior races." "We will finish what the Führer began," one of them said. "He didn't bring in the right kind of Nazism in Germany. Only Russian soil is suitable for the real thing."