CHAPTER THREE

From Discussion Clubs To Informal Political Movements
The beginning of 1988 saw political reforms taking shape. Demands for the party to change its practices were reinforced with expressly political concepts aimed at forcing party cadres to abandon their old methods of work. Three concepts: the socialist pluralism of opinions (sotsialisticheskii plyuralizm mnenii); the socialist law-based state (sotsialisticheskoe pravovoe gosudarstvo); and, the limitations of the functions of the party (ogranicheniya funktsii partii), were introduced, which it was hoped would force the party to reform its behaviour. It was the inscription of these three principles of reform in law and the constitution which led to the creation of the new Soviet legislature in 1989. However, the place of CPSU, both within principles and the laws, did not change. The CPSU continued being at the centre of reform and reform was still defined as neither the dismantling of socialism nor an attempt to miss out a stage of socialist construction.\(^1\) Despite the continued tempo of reforms, the CPSU continued being portrayed as the key agent in any process of socialist construction:

> It is the party, armed with scientific knowledge of the past and of the present, of tendencies which have a real perspective on development, which is obliged to head the process of forming a socialist consciousness in society.\(^2\)

The three concepts mentioned above were to operate as follows.

Socialist pluralism of opinions was necessary to overcome dogmatism and voluntarism:

> Problems of theory cannot be solved by any kind of decrees. A free competition of minds is needed. Only out of this can our social thought win, develop its prognostic force, and this capacity is the reliable basis for the working out of party policy.\(^3\)

The dogmatism of the past could only be overcome if the party paid attention to public opinion and sought to forge a socialist pluralism of opinions. This could then be used to

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3. *GIRS*, vol.6, p.64, ibid.
win elections and thereby safeguard the vanguard role of the party. The party was expected to work in a purely political fashion to ensure that it successfully forged such a socialist pluralism of opinions.

This style of work was defined in one of the three concepts, i.e., the limitation of the functions of party organs to the solving of strategic political problems and ideological work. This was to be based on the party's legitimate right to rule as a force unifying the socialist pluralism of opinions. It was assumed that this legitimacy would be recognised by the population in the electoral process so that cadres would be able to operate through their control of representative institutions. 4

Finally, the limitation of the party’s functions was to be enforced through the creation of a law-based state as "the process of democratisation in our society sharply poses the problem of the observation of law". 5 Observation of the law required an overcoming of 'legal nihilism' and 'rule by injunction':

The main problem of the development of our political system is the creation of a mechanism of power and administration which would be clearly based upon democratic control, worked out in accordance with legal procedures which would be seriously thought out, so that there should not be the element of arbitrariness in the solving of important state and political decisions so that the possibility of subjectivism is excluded from all 'levels' of our political system. 6

Under the changed circumstances, party cadres were to operate under the law to secure the process of change which it was hoped would also enhance their popularity. The failure of Gorbachev to force the party to limit its role, by administrative means as well as by appeals to the goodwill of the party members, put the need for electoral competition in the forefront. Party cadres had to be taught the need for obedience to law. This was to be done by forcing them to engage in politics and dialogue with the people through the electoral process.

4 GIRS, vol.6, p.69, ibid.
5 GIRS, vol.6, p.69, ibid.
6 GIRS, vol.6, p.82, ibid.
However, in calling for an electorally defined relationship between party, state and policy, Gorbachev had to guard against the danger of elections creating alternative centres of power. Some way had to be found to head off interest articulation, to assimilate it, before it threatened the CPSU. Gorbachev began at the February 1988 Central Committee Plenum to propose that assimilation and control could be better achieved through existing public organizations such as the Trade Unions and the Komsomol.7 His speech portrayed these organizations as the representatives of ‘defined social strata with their specific features and interests’ and were called upon to promote and lead social activity. But the interests represented by these groups were still perceived to be subordinate to the overall interests of the socialist commonwealth as represented by the party. Thus the very concepts that were supposed to make these organizations a source of support for the CPSU, limited their ability to support the party. They were to be limited to representing the interests of their constituents as recognised by the party.

The processes of democratisation and assimilation was also not to be free from the control of law itself. This was highlighted by a participant in a Pravda round table discussion on ‘Democratisation and the Law’, when he said, "democratisation is not liberalisation, it is not the outcome of irresponsibility".8 Limits to autonomy were to be established under the rubic of the socialist pluralism of opinions. This concept permitted differing opinions but only within the specific framework of socialist choice:

Socialist pluralism, and this is why it is called socialist, is the discussion, the scientific search, that is carried out within the boundaries of our socialist choice made by our people once and forever in October 1917.9


9. ibid.
Socialist pluralism of opinions was, then, as much about constricting thought as about enabling it. Its central purpose was not to create democracy but to enable the party to change by revealing what were the correct boundaries for criticism and the healthy interests that had to be exploited. It was there as Gorbachev put it in a speech in Uzbekistan, to force party cadres to 'master methods of work in the conditions of unfolding democracy'.

All in all the project for political reform initiated at the start of 1988 and developed in the documents and resolutions of the 19th Conference was very limited as far as the redistribution of political power was concerned. Although the Conference passed proposals for the creation of new legislatures through which, it was hoped, a reformist consensus and a law-based state could be created, the CPSU remained the ultimate arbiter of policy at a general level. None of the Conference declarations or speeches made any attempt to pass power in the proposed law-based state from the CPSU to either local Soviets or the new Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet. With the party still claiming the right to determine the conditions for political participation, the attempts to limit its functions which in any case was always aimed at local party bodies rather than the centre, was undermined as all party organizations could appeal to the larger leading role that the party had in the process of socialist construction.

There was therefore a contradiction at the very heart of the democratisation process. This contradiction was evident in the laws that were passed in December 1988 on the changes to the constitution and the establishment of the new legislatures. These laws codified the paradigm of politics that could be found in Gorbachev's use of the concepts of socialist pluralism and the socialist law-based state. They were therefore, in

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essence an example of the contradictory effort of the leadership to force changes at some levels of the system while guaranteeing the primacy of the party at the top. \(^\text{12}\)

In the new laws the continued power of the party was ensured in four ways. First, the party was amongst those public organizations that were guaranteed a certain number of seats in the Soviet of Representatives of the Congress of People's Deputies. \(^\text{13}\) These public organizations were not only allocated seats in the new representative institutions but they also had the right, through their all union bodies, to present legislation to them. The party, and the other representatives of interests, were therefore allowed to dominate the legislative process through their main organs. Control over organizations which actually secured representation in this way was centrally defined so that only legitimate interests were allowed into the Congress. \(^\text{14}\) In reality, the process of incorporating public organizations as ‘Socialist pluralism of opinions in action’, was not intended to give free rein to opinions or to ensure adequate representations but to find and adopt appropriate forms of opinion.

Second, deputies were to be ‘guided in their activity by the interests of the state as a whole’, with the ‘needs of their constituents and the interests of the public organizations that elected them’ only being ‘taken into account’. \(^\text{15}\) It was the prerogative of the party to define what the interests of the state were. The party was the only force capable of playing a ‘unifying role to integrate into one policy different,
sometimes contradictory social interests.\textsuperscript{16} Deputies were therefore being co-opted into a system of party-defined policy priorities even before they were chosen.

Third, it was not surprising that as the party sought to control the context in which deputies were to work, it also sought to control their selection. The process for selecting the final slate of candidates supposedly passed power to local electoral commissions for election to seats in the Soviets of the Union and the Nationalities, and to centrally appointed election commissions for the public organizations.\textsuperscript{17} As the party was the best established organization at all levels, its control was guaranteed in theory even if it was at times challenged in practice.

Fourth, and finally, in the sections of the laws on the powers of the Congress of People’s Deputies and the Supreme Soviet, as well as the accountability of administrative organizations to them, there was no mention of the party. Rather, following the model of accountability presented at the 19th Conference, the control functions of the Congress, the Supreme Soviet and the committee of ‘Constitutional Observance’ were legally defined as being over ministerial and state organs.\textsuperscript{18} The CPSU remained free of legal control.

THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS

The constitutional amendments and the new Law on Elections which followed, opened an opportunity for the population to organize and to influence via public elections, the composition of the government. On the other hand, this very legislation also enabled the apparatus to intervene at the various stages of the electoral process and

\textsuperscript{16} Gorbachev, n.12, pp.165-66.

\textsuperscript{17} "O vyborakh ..." n.15, pp.1, 2.

\textsuperscript{18} ibid, p.1, and Gorbachev, n.12.
thus limit the same opportunity. Struggle in a number of forms - manipulation, public demonstration, intimidation, violence and, ultimately, voting - became the means by which contests between democratic and conservative forces were settled during the electoral phase of the democratisation process. The immediate encounters that took place between the apparatus and the forces oriented towards democracy were mediated by electoral commissions in each electoral district and within each public organization entitled to name deputies to the Congress.

The first stage of the electoral process began with the naming of a 35-member Central Electoral Commission (CEC) by the Supreme Soviet. According to its Chairperson, V.P. Orlov, representatives of all the Union republics and of many labour collectives and public organizations were included in its membership. The selection process by which these ‘representatives’ were chosen was thoroughly controlled by top party officials and by the apparatus within the trade unions that formally made nominations to the Supreme Soviet. The CEC work was supervised by the Vice-President Lukyanov who attended all but save one of its meetings and acted as a ‘political guide for the commission’. The first session of the CEC which took place on 6 December, approved the boundaries of the 1500 districts in which public elections were to be held. It also submitted estimates to the government for the campaign and administrative costs.

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20 V.M. Chebrikoo, "Pre-election Party Platform: Real Challenges to Perestroika" (Speech at Kishinev), Pravda, 11 February 1989, p.3.


22 Pravda, 6 May 1989.
(ultimately fixed at 156,470,000 roubles)\textsuperscript{23} of the elections.\textsuperscript{24} It met frequently and discharged four general functions.

First, the CEC registered and monitored the activities of the electoral commissions formed in the localities and in those public organizations with the right to name deputies. In this respect, the role of the CEC was ambiguous. Its Chairperson, defined its role as that of uniformly enforcing the letter of the law.\textsuperscript{25} But its Secretary, doubting the ability of the citizens to make informed choices as to who should represent them, saw the CEC's role as one of assisting local electoral commissions in deciding not only the number but also which particular candidates to register in their districts.\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, since the CEC set a very early date (15 December)\textsuperscript{27} for completion of the process of selecting members to the local electoral commissions, it all but ensured that the composition of each was determined by the apparatus. In this respect, the new elections very much resembled the old. Without notifying the labour collectives of their right to nominate representatives to the electoral commissions,\textsuperscript{28} local party officials simply drafted individuals of their choice into service on the commission. They also conveniently ignored legitimate nominations when such were put forth.\textsuperscript{29} Thereafter, the local apparatus often withheld vital information from these commissions while making

\begin{itemize}
\item Orlov, n.21, p.31.
\item M. Kushnapin, "Central Election Commission Begins to Work," Izvestiya, 8 December 1988, p.4.
\item Orlov, n.21, p.29.
\item Yu. I. Ryzhov, interviewed by V. Saklatov, "Deputies for Perestroika", Izvestiya, 29 December 1988, p.2.
\item Izvestiya, 11 December 1988, p.2.
\item For detailed account, see, Amo Al"mann, "Actual Political Questions", Kommunist Estonii, no.2, 1989, pp.97-102.
\end{itemize}
the real decisions themselves behind a facade of public involvement.\(^{30}\) As one local party official explained to a newspaper reporter: "Nobody has taken from us the responsibility of conducting the elections".\(^{31}\)

Second, the CEC interpolated the legal provisions governing their work and, in the process, took some important decisions bearing on the outcome of the elections. One of these decisions assisted the opponents of the apparatus by enabling all registered candidates to select a campaign staff of ten persons who were paid out of the election funds disbursed by the CEC. Another decision, proved to be of enormous advantage to the apparatus. It stipulated that should a given electoral commission choose to call a pre-electoral district meeting, then (a) at least half of the delegates must be drawn from organizations in the district that had not nominated a candidate, (b) the local electoral commission would decide which of these organizations could send delegates to this meeting, and (c) all delegations attending this meeting would be equal in number. These provisions made it easy for the electoral commissions to choose those labour collectives in which delegate selection could be controlled by the apparatus and thus pack pre-electoral district meeting with reliable people.

Third, in accordance with statute and in consultation with top officials of public organizations, the CEC made a number of determinations with respect to which of the public organizations would be eligible to select deputies to the Congress and the number of seats allotted to each. A few disputes broke out on these points as certain organizations that appeared to meet the legal requirements of selecting deputies were denied the right to do so. Towards the end, the CEC rejected the claims of the Association of Cooperatives and the Inter-Regional Federation of Cooperatives on this score,\(^{32}\) but reached a compromise with the Movement of Volunteers for the

\(^{30}\) G. Ohrezkov, "Izbrannil'ya podpisi?" Izvestiya, 16 January 1989, p.4.


Conservation of Nature by arranging for it to name two deputies on the list of 75 that had been apportioned to the Komsomol.33

Finally, on numerous occasions, the CEC intervened into the electoral process, both in response to complaints and by way of spot-checking procedures. In a number of instances, these interventions rescued democratic candidates whose legal rights had been violated by opponents in the apparatus. In this respect, the CEC often played an important role in upholding the law and in guaranteeing a modicum of fairness in the electoral process.

Elections in the Public Organizations

A total of 39 public organizations named deputies to the Congress. The number of seats awarded to each organization ranged from just one (eg., the All-Union Volunteer Society for the Struggle for Sobriety, the All-Union Society of Philatelists) to 100 (the Communist Party and the All-Union Council of Trade Unions). By the close of the nomination phase, a total of 880 candidates had been registered by public organizations for the 750 seats earmarked for them in the Congress.34 There were instances, when the nominations within public organizations were genuinely competitive thus generating no small amount of excitement. But in most cases, it was thoroughly orchestrated by the executive apparatus of the respective organizations, leading one reporter to comment that - 'the strictures corresponding to the spirit and even the letter of the Law on Elections has not been everywhere observed.'35

The process of the selection of the 100 Deputies of the Communist Party began with a summon from its Electoral Commission. The EC called on the party members to submit the names of the prospective candidates to their respective primary party

33 Interview with G.V. Barabashev. Izvestiya. 7 May 1989, p.3.
organizations. From here, the names of the prospective candidates, would be sent up the organizational ladder, with the possibility of deletions and additions occurring on each rung.\textsuperscript{36} Accordingly, the 31,500 candidates proposed by the primary party organizations were reduced to 3,500 by party committees at the next level. This number was further whittled to 207 by republic and regional party bodies, inflated to 312 by the Central Committee and finally fixed at 100 by the Politburo.\textsuperscript{37} Although millions of party members had participated at one stage or another in this process, it was in the Politburo that the actual election occurred.

The selection process, highlighted certain novel aspects. First, the deputies chosen by the Communist Party included only some 23 individuals employed in the apparatus. The majority were composed of lower-level administrators in industry and agriculture (factory directors, brigade leaders, collective farm chairpersons and so forth) and leaders in the field of science and culture.

Second, at the enlarged Plenum that approved the Politburo's list, the Chairperson of the party's Electoral Commission, V.A. Koptyurg, mentioned the fact that a number of letters from rank-and-file party members had reached his office that contained decidedly negative evaluations of many of the party's better-known newly named deputies.\textsuperscript{38} He then proceeded to name the individuals in question: nine members of the Politburo, including the General Secretary, himself, and another two dozen or so luminaries, among them the Editor of Pravda and the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Third, the party's Electoral Commission published the results of the final voting. Although no candidate suffered defeat, yet the tallies made some interesting reading. It clearly showed that the larger share of the negative votes were reserved for the more

\textsuperscript{36} Pravda, 10 December 1988.


\textsuperscript{38} "Deputies' Mandate to the Party", Izvestiya, 6 March 1989.
prominent nominees of the party, especially the members of the Politburo. Ligachev the reputed leader of the conservative faction, outdistanced others by capturing 78 'no' votes.\textsuperscript{39}

Among the other public organizations entitled to send sizable blocs of their members to the Congress, the process of nominating and electing deputies was more or less the same as in the case of the Communist Party. Out of the 1,000 nominations sent from the ranks to the \textit{All-Union Council of Trade Unions}, only three of these names figured on the final list of nominees adopted by an enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Trade Unions.\textsuperscript{40} The 10 Deputies elected at the subsequent plenary session were drawn from a list of 114 nominees.\textsuperscript{41} In the \textit{Komsomol} only 207 nominations were introduced from below. This number was reduced to 102 by the \textit{Komsomol}'s Central Committee, which later at an enlarged Plenum, elected its 75 Deputies. The Committee of \textit{Soviet Women} together with the National Association of Women's Council convened to nominate their candidates in a joint session, where they reduced some 200 nominations proposed from the ranks to a list of 81. Out of this 81, 79 were selected by the joint presidium and two were put forward from the floor. The latter two were chosen for purposes of 'geographic' representation. This same notion of geography later influenced the final selection of 75 deputies from among the 81 candidates.\textsuperscript{42} The organizational rank of the contenders in as much as those successful candidates who drew the largest number of negative votes tended to be those who occupied prominent positions in the government and in public organizations.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Izvestiya}, 19 March 1989.

\textsuperscript{40} Orlov, n.21, p.33, in n.19, p.95.

\textsuperscript{41} Stephen White, "Soviet Elections: From Acclamation to Limited Choice" (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1989), pp.7-8.

\textsuperscript{42} A Stepovoi "Committee of Soviets of Women" \textit{Izvestiya}, 22 March 1989, p.5.

\textsuperscript{43} For details of the results, see \textit{Izvestiya}, 25 March 1989.
In a number of cases, it so happened, that the central organs of public organizations appropriated to themselves the sole right to name deputies. In less than half an hour, the Council of Collective Farms approved a list of 58 candidates (a figure equal to its allotted number of seats) that had been prepared for it by officials in the State Agro-Industrial Committee.\textsuperscript{44} Again, out of the over 100 candidates proposed from below to the Central Council of the All-Union Society of Inventors, its Electoral Commission chose to register the exact number of deputies awarded to it,\textsuperscript{45} i.e., only five of them. Similarly, a joint meeting of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries and the association, Rodina, likewise produced five candidates for the five posts to which they were entitled.\textsuperscript{46} Subsequently all five were elected deputies.\textsuperscript{47} Within the Union of Journalists, progressive candidates, such as E.V. Yakovlev and V.A. Korotich fell victims to the arbitrary rulings handed down by the organization's executive body.\textsuperscript{48} While those supervising the elections in the Soviet Committee in Defence of Peace, turned a blind eye to violations of the Law on Elections, it fatally injured the candidacy of Georgii Arbatov.\textsuperscript{49}

In other cases, however, more democratic practices prevailed. Although the nominations meeting at a Plenum of the Union of Cinematographers started with a dreary bureaucratic start, when a prepared list of nominees were read out from the Presidium, but the proceedings saw the tone of discussion sharpen with the meeting continuing for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} White, n.41, p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{45} For details of the results, see V. Dolganov, "First Elections of the USSR People's Deputies," Izvestiya, 12 March 1989, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{46} M. Kushtapin, "Five Posts, Five Candidates", Izvestiya, 12 January 1989, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{47} M. Kirsanov, "Union of the Soviets Friendship Society", Izvestiya, 22 March 1989, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{48} G. Ivanov, "Who is Lagging Behind in the Line" Literaturnaya Gazeta, no.4, 25 January 1989, pp.10-14, in Urban, n.19, p.96.
\item \textsuperscript{49} "Letter to the Editor from R. Sagdeev et al.", Moskovskie Novosti, no. 15, 9 April 1989, pp.13-15, cited in ibid.
\end{itemize}
two days. Towards the end, 20 candidates, almost all of whom had been nominated from the floor, were registered to compete for the Union's ten seats in the Congress. Similar contests occurred in the Writers Union and in the Lecturers Association, Znanie. The largest and longest display of political fireworks was witnessed in one of the country's more staid and decorous institutions, the Academy of Sciences.

At its very first meeting on 26 December, the Presidium of the Academy decided to broaden the representation of the scientific community in the new legislature by giving five of its 30 seats in the Congress of People's Deputies to the newly-formed Union of Scientific Societies and Associations.

In these enlarged plenary session, convened on 18 January by the Academy, it tried to register its own candidates for the remaining 25 seats. Those attending this meeting, however, rejected 98 of the 121 proposed nominees, leaving the Academy two candidates short of its quota in the Congress. A decision to open nominations from the floor was taken and then reversed when V.N. Kudryavtsev, the Academy's Vice-President, mounted the rostrum and persuaded the hall to close nominations and solve the problem of a deficit of candidates by ceding five more of its seats to the Union of Scientific Societies and Associations.

A number of contextual factors contributed to the storm of protest that this meeting subsequently provoked. Although, formally not undemocratic, to many, the voting pattern at the Academy's enlarged Plenum displayed small concern for the wishes of the general membership. It so happened that those who had been nominated by the

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50 Refer to the "Interview with Anatoly Ilyashov", Izvestiya, 13 February, 1989, pp.1,3.
largest number of the Academy’s constituent institutes were knocked out of contention at this meeting. The list of these popular but unsuccessful candidates read like an abbreviated roster of the nation’s leading progressive figures: Andrei Sakharov, Roald Sagdeev, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Gavrill Popov, Dmitrii Likhachev and others. Since it was an open secret that these same individuals had long been conducting a struggle within the Academy against its senior and thoroughly conservative officials, it seemed blatantly obvious that the conservatives were avenging themselves for the past by attempting to deny the progressives a political future. Finally, the giving away of yet another five seats to the Union of Scientific Societies and Associations ensured that individuals such as Sakharov, who was not a member of any of the 28 groups housed under the Union’s umbrella, would have no chance to stand as candidates before their peers in the academic community.

The strong protest expressed by the members of the Academy and others, forced the CEC to review the case. But it upheld the actions of the Academy’s Presidium and the Electoral Commission, arguing, unconvincingly as things turned out, that those reform leaders who had been denied registration by the Academy still had time to find a place on the ballot in some electoral district. The decision precipitated a boisterous protest, by over 1000 supporters of the excluded democrats.

Jolted by the realization that a revolt was brewing in the ranks of the Academy, the authorities starting looking for a compromise solution. A series of meetings followed that involved, at various times, the CEC, officers of the Academy and its Electoral Commission, the directors and party secretaries of academic institutes as well as leaders of a newly organized inter-institutional initiative group, For Democratic Elections in the

In the end, a compromise was arrived at by supplementing the 903 voters in the Academy with another 554 delegates chosen by academic institutions around the country who were expected to reflect a more progressive orientation in the scientific community. The three-day meeting convened in mid-March passed a vote of no-confidence in the Academy's Electoral Commission and then proceeded to reject all but eight of the 23 nominees before it. This meeting provided a forum for impassioned speeches and denunciations of the Academy's old guard, said to be oblivious to the democratic transformation sweeping the country. The new elections prompted by these actions took place the following month and witnessed victories for many of the reform leaders who had earlier been excluded, among them Andrei Sakharov, Roald Sagdeev, Dmitrii Likhachev and Nikolai Shmelev.

Nominations in the Electoral Districts

Although the new 'Law on Elections' provided for the nomination of an 'unlimited number of candidates' to compete in elections to the Congress, the mechanisms that it established for proposing and registering candidates, became the grounds on which innumerable battles were fought on the issue of who the candidates would be. Prospective candidates had to cross one and, often, two thresholds. The first involved obtaining a majority of votes from one of the nominating bodies - labour collectives or meetings of voters in their places of residence with at least 500 in attendance. The second concerned the pre-electoral district meetings that were called by local electoral commissions in 868 of the country's 1,500 constituencies in order to winnow the number of nominees who had crossed the first threshold.

59 Interview with G.V. Barabashev, Izvestiya, 6 May 1989, p.5.
60 I. Karpenko, "Dear, how do we choose right?" Izvestiya, 21 March 1989, p.3.
62 Barabashev, n.59.
During the pre-registration phase of the nomination process (26 December - 24 January), some 7,558 potential candidates were put forward. This yielded a nationwide average of just over five candidates per seat, varying from 190 constituencies in which only one individual had been nominated to one constituency in which 30 potential candidates had been named. 63

For some, the path to nomination was relatively easy. For instance in Kazakhstan, each of the Republic’s 17 Obkom first secretaries was nominated to stand for office in a constituency in which his name alone would appear on the ballot. 64 In Moscow’s self-administering community, Brateevo, a lively meeting with over 1,000 residents in attendance debated the merits of two individuals who had been proposed by the community’s coordinating committee. It was well past midnight when a vote confirmed the nomination of one of them. 65

The local authorities, through various methods, tried to shut out challenges to their preferred candidates during the initial stage of the nomination process. One such method involved the manipulation of the nominating meetings that were held in labour collectives. One ally in this endeavour was the force of inertia, owing to the fact that local elites had always nominated the candidates of their choice behind the facade of unanimous affirmations from (depoliticized) workers. The passivity induced by this longstanding practice meant that many simply acquiesced in continuing the old ways under the new circumstances. 66

Nominations in large enterprises witnessed the local apparatus controlling communications in such a way that only their candidates became known to many of the

63 Karpenko, n.34.

64 White, n.41.


66 For example of this phenomenon, see V. Nikdaeva, "Best Wishes from One Voice", Izvestiya, 14 January 1989, p.1.
shop level delegates who attended the selection conferences. Although, this tactic was not democratic, it was perfectly legal. Other stratagems employed by local elites, often crossed the boundaries of the legal framework. According to some reports, local party committees in certain areas issued directives to functionaries at the factory level to carry out a 'struggle' against informal democratically-oriented groups seeking to nominate their own candidates.

The local apparatus did not take a very positive view of those who sought to exercise the right of nominating candidates at voters meetings in places of residence. Officials in Arkhangelsk refused a meeting place to one initiative group bearing a petition with the requisite 30 signatures. Its request for a venue was again turned down even after it approached the authorities with a petition containing 300 signatures. Elsewhere, defunct laws were resurrected by the local authorities to refuse a place of assembly to initiative groups backing candidates not approved by the apparatus. In the capital, where a better observance of the new procedures were expected both due to the proximity of expert advice and the regulatory mechanism of the CEC, the situation was no better. Local elites in the Tushinskii district flatly refused 'in direct violation of the laws' to acknowledge the candidacies of a number of individuals nominated at residential meetings. While in other parts of the city, rightwing 'thugs' were encouraged to break up nomination meetings. In Leningrad, an electoral commission announced that

71 Davyдов, n.54.
72 Nuikin, n.68.
it had unilaterally decided to place on the ballot one candidate from among the four nominees who had been put forward. 73

Although the CEC overruled the actions of the local authorities in a number of instances, the brevity of this phase of the nomination process (in practical terms, about three weeks) resulted in a situation in which the CEC could do little. The absence of procedures for enforcing the Electoral Law on the very people who were administering it meant that the local apparatus effectively enjoyed the right to violate the law with impunity. 74

Pre-electoral District Meetings

Legally, these meetings were to be held in those districts in which more than two nominees had been put forward by the voters during the first round of nominations. Surprisingly, in some areas, most notably Estonia, the political leadership regarded pre-electoral district meetings as both undemocratic and unnecessary. 75 Instead, the names of all those candidates who had been nominated in the first round, regardless of their number, were simply placed on the election ballots. In the districts, where the pre-electoral meetings were held, the result produced was the same as the names of all the nominees were registered, thus leaving the matter of candidate election solely to the voters. 76 However, in the overwhelming majority of districts in which pre-electoral


74 For an authoritative statement on this issue, see the interview given by G.V. Barabashev to V. Shchepotkin in Izvestiya, 9 February 1989, p.4.


meetings were held, the attrition rate among nominees was high. About two-thirds of the candidates named in the first round failed to survive the second.\textsuperscript{77}

In some districts, as an exception rather than the rule, pre-electoral meetings resulted in lively, policy-oriented debates among nominees and delegates alike. At least in three instances, attempts, by the local apparatus in derailing the democratic process with intimidation and slander had the opposite effect.\textsuperscript{78} It offended the delegates and redoubled their resolve to resist these pressures and make their choices according to the relative merits of the nominees before them.\textsuperscript{79}

The overall pattern of the pre-electoral district meetings revealed, that it provided ample opportunity for local political elites to employ a variety of tactics to eliminate those candidates whom they disapproved of, thereby retaining control over the electoral process.

\textbf{The Election Campaign}

Of the 7,558 candidates put forward during the first phase of nominations, the names of 2,895 candidates entered the ballot by the close of the second. Almost identical number of candidates were registered in territorial (1,449) and national-territorial (1,446) districts. The figures presented in Table 3.1 indicate that two-candidate races were the norm. They also indicate that the idea of electoral competition had not yet caught on in a considerable number (384) of constituencies, especially those located in Central Asia and the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} I. Karpenko, "Beginning of the Elections of the People's Deputies of the USSR", \textit{Izvestiya}, 11 March 1989, p.2.
\item \textsuperscript{78} A. Zimova, "Lessons of Democracy", \textit{Mayak} (Moscow), 18 February 1989, p.8 in Urban, n.19, p.102.
\item \textsuperscript{79} A. Karpov, "Candidates Show Skills", \textit{Izvestiya}, 23 February 1989, p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Andryshchenko, "Elections: Lessons and Tendencies", \textit{Argumenty i Fakty} (Moscow), no.19, 13-19 May 1989.
\end{itemize}
Table No: 3.1

DISTRIBUTION OF CANDIDATES ACROSS ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Candidates Registered</th>
<th>Number of Districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>384</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>953</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>109</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8, 9, 11 or 12</td>
<td>1 in each case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The period of electoral campaign, stretching from 23 February to 25 March, (a day prior to the national elections), represented a critical phase in the transformation of the Soviet political system. The issues that had been resolved at the Nineteenth Party Conference was now to be acted out on a mass scale by the entire Soviet population. An open struggle was witnessed, by the Soviet people, between the old guard and an emergent popular leadership that spoke in the name of the people, against the ruling apparatus, its privileges, its incompetence and its abuse of power.

The contest for office unfolded differently in different places. In the less politically developed areas, the new elections were not much different from the old ones. For instance, in Kazakhstan, all 17 Obkom first secretaries stood for office unopposed
and were elected. However, the more advanced regions of the republic such as the Baltic, witnessed intense competition between the apparatus and the well organized popular movements.

The electoral campaign provided an unprecedented opportunity for opposition groups to focus their organizing efforts, concentrate their energies on a clear and specific goal and bring their ideas to the larger public. In Leningrad, a number of small groups concerned mainly with the problems of ecology and the preservation of historic places had long been targets of heavy repression by the local authorities. These elections provided them with an opportunity to strike back against those representing the local power structure.

Sociological research has pointed to the fact that in the more developed areas of the USSR, it were the independent political groups which played an important, even decisive, role in the election campaigns. Most voters identified informal political groups as the ones who conducted 'energetic, intelligent and honourable campaigns'. About one-half of those elected in the more advanced regions claimed that victory was achieved in the face of opposition from the local apparatus. The events at Minsk clearly portrayed the intensity of the electoral contest between the apparatus and the emergent democratic forces. Here the police administered beatings to peacefully assembled pickets and carried out numerous illegal raids on the offices of independent political groups, confiscating

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81 ibid.
82 The Declaration of the Lithuanian Movement for Perestroika (Sajudis) Vzrozhdenie, no.9, 3 March 1983, p.5.
84 Interview by S.A. Ivanova to A. Manila, "Going Towards Fair Competition", Leningradskaya pravda, 7 April 1989, p.3.
their materials and destroying their property. But it was in Moscow that the elections unfolded in the real sense of the term.

*Moskovskaya Tribuna*, having come into existence in October, surfaced in the electoral process as the leading voice among the democratically-oriented intellectuals in the Soviet capital. The weekly, *Moscow News*, invited some of its more prominent members to take part in the ‘social council’ organized by it to work out an election platform reflecting the views of the readership. This ‘social council’ adopted the ‘radical-democratic’ programme which was promulgated by the newspaper as a common platform for a number of *Moskovskaya Tribuna* members campaigning for office. By the time it was officially chartered in early February, *Moskovskaya Tribuna* had assumed the character of an opposition party in embryo, complete with an illustrious leadership, a distinct political programme, its own press outlet and organizational links to opposition movements in the Baltic and Armenia. A new and decisive stage in the development of an opposition was reached when this group unofficially joined forces with a political leader capable of igniting the larger public, Boris Yeltsin.

The very apparatus that had sought to undo Yeltsin, contributed to the enhancement of his status as a public figure. His demotion from the post of First Secretary of the Moscow City Committee of the Communist Party to that of the First Deputy President of the State Committee on Construction, concomitant with the loss of his seat in the Politburo, was widely seen as a result of a political struggle over the pace and fate of *perestroika*, within the party.

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88 "Pre-Election Platforms", ibid., no.4, 22 January 1989, p.12.
The elections provided Yeltsin with a new forum to continue his assault on the conservatives entrenched in the party apparatus. His name having been excluded from the list of candidates selected by the Communist Party to fill its 100 seats on the Congress of People's Deputies, Yeltsin was reportedly advised by senior party officials to stay out of the elections altogether. Instead he chose, to stand for election in the country's most prominent district, Moscow's national-territorial District No.1, encompassing the entire capital including nearly six million voters. During the campaign, every effort was made by Yeltsin's opponents in the apparatus to put him down. The production of his campaign literature was disrupted, anonymous pamphlets viciously attacking his character were distributed and his property was damaged. They even organized an inquisition in the form of a special sub-committee of the party's Central Committee charged with determining whether Yeltsin should be expelled from the party because of the views he was expressing. These efforts of the conservatives, did not yield the desired result. The more the conservatives attacked him, the larger and more enthusiastic became the crowd he drew.

The ineptitude of the conservatives was clearly demonstrated when on 19 March some 5,000 Yeltsin supporters gathered in Gorky Park to stage a campaign rally that had received official sanction from the city authorities. No sooner had the crowd assembled, they were informed by the police that the rally was illegal as the Moscow City Soviet had changed its mind about the rally. This apparent setback was brilliantly turned by the rally's organizers to their own advantage. They led the crowd to the office of the Moscow City Soviet demanding an explanation for the rally's cancellation. The

91 White, n.41, p.11.
92 Ibid.
93 Vitalii Tretyakov, "Reverse Effect". Moskovskie Novosti, no.12, 19 March 1989.
94 White, n.41, p.11.
number of the crowd soon swelled to some 10,000. Emboldened by the spontaneous display of public support and the timidity of the authorities, the crowd decided to continue its rally on Gorky Street.

In this entire campaign, the only aspect that appeared to be clear and unmistakable was the depth of public opposition to the ruling apparatus. The success of the 'left democratic candidates' and even Yeltsin was primarily attributable to the voters unqualified opposition to the apparatus and all that it symbolized. This feeling became evident when in a nation wide survey conducted during the election, the majority of the respondents, identified wealth and association with the apparatus as the primary negative trait of some of the candidates. 96

In keeping with their long-standing tradition of treating state property as their own private preserve, the apparatus was able to throw considerable resources - personnel, printing equipment and supplies, transportation and so forth - behind their own candidates. 97 Inspite of it, the simple message of 'social justice' voiced by Yeltsin and others on the 'democratic left' was sufficient to overcome these advantages and hand the apparatus a string of humiliating defeats on election day. 98

The election campaign generated a surfeit of ostensible programmes. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, during the initial stage of candidate nominations, issued a platform intended to serve as a basis for the campaigns of all party members seeking election. 99 It was not only vague in the sense that it contained no reference to policy choices, it also did not include any mention of how its splendid and often mutually exclusive goals (more production plus a cleaner environment, more economic efficiency


97 "From the Real Struggles to the Realization of People's Representatives", Moskovskie Novosti, no.100, 12 March 1989.


plus more funding for pensions and public health and so forth) were to be realized. Consequently, it become difficult to regard this document as an election platform in the proper sense of the term.

Individual platforms were put forward by all candidates, during the period of nomination and electoral campaign. While these platforms were quite specific on the issues, which they widely promulgated through the mass media\textsuperscript{100} and at the voters meetings, they too could not be regarded as relevant to the question of voter choice among the competing electoral programmes. The absence of opposing parties rendered moot the question of programmatic competition. As each of these platform represented the proposal of a single candidate rather than a programme that a party had collectively pledged to work for in the legislature, the question of the responsibility of candidates as would be legislators simply did not arise. No candidate was required to defend the platform of his group or attack that of his opponents. The absence of genuine programmatic competition was not lost on the electorate themselves. In a mass survey conducted by the \textit{Scientific Research Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences}, 60 per cent of the voters disclosed that they regarded the platforms of the candidates as collections of unrealistic promises that would not be fulfilled with these candidates elected.\textsuperscript{101} Among the voters themselves, 34 per cent of them reported during the campaign that they were prepared to vote for whomever the authorities instructed them to support. Among the electorate who were not voting blindly, the most important criterion was the personal qualities of the candidates. When it came to the issues, local problems, rather than questions of national policy, headed the list.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{100} Brendan Kiernan, "Elections to the Congress of the Peoples' Deputies, Moscow 1989", (Paper presented at the Social Science Research Council's Summer Workshop, Toronto, Canada; 1989), p.5.

\textsuperscript{101} For details see \textit{Izvestiya}, 12 March 1989.

\textsuperscript{102} N. Popov, "Social Opinion and the Representatives", \textit{Izvestiya} 22 April 1989.
The election campaign tended to subvert the political monopoly of the Communist Party. Its campaign platform was for all intents and purposes irrelevant to the actual competition among the candidates. In an overwhelming majority of instances, members of the same party stood in opposition to one another for seats in the legislature. Nearly half (44 per cent) of the members of the Communist Party negatively evaluated the activities of their own party committees in the elections. Only in the Baltic republics, things worked out differently. Here the 'popular fronts' organized themselves in opposition to the entrenched apparatus. Consequently, the election campaigns in these republics were distinguished from all others in the country. They involved the relatively clear issues of national identity, self rule and economic autonomy. They yielded electoral mandates that were carried into the legislature by organized contingents of deputies resulting in the production of new legislation in those areas for the republics concerned. Due to the lack of such political organization, the Communist Party continued to function as it had for some 70 years as a form of un-party or even anti-party, i.e. that which prevented the political organization of society, that which disorganized the electorate.\textsuperscript{103}

This anti-party character of the Communist Party was obscured by its method of rule, prior to the political transformation launched at the Nineteenth Party Conference. The Communist Party simply dictated a political agenda and suppressed any and all alternatives. However, in the period of \textit{perestroika}, beneath the expansive umbrella of permitted speech, a pluralism of opinion was allowed to be expressed. This change of method was not without consequences. The question arose as to how long would the Communist Party retain its monopoly of political power when some of its own members stood for public office and were elected on programmes that advocated the creation of a multi-party system.

\textsuperscript{103} Urban, n.19, p.110.
Election Results

The first significant result of the national elections was the high voter turnout. Unlike, in the past when the authorities had relied upon a combination of persuasion - coercion to post incredibly high rates of participation, the elections of 26 March was different. These methods were effectively abandoned in this election, and citizens were at liberty to refrain from voting if they so chose.\(^{104}\) Inspite of it, 89.8 per cent of the electorate turned out to cast their ballots.\(^{105}\) The highest levels of voter turnout (in the upper 90 per cent range) were recorded in Central Asia and the Caucasus (although an organized electoral boycott in Armenia restricted participation there to 71.9 per cent). In these areas, single - candidates were still the norm. Even from those areas of the country, where multi-candidate races were most commonly held, the participation was more than respectable, ranging from 82.5 per cent in Lithuania to 93.4 per cent in the Ukraine.\(^{106}\)

These elections provided the public with a direct vote. Voters were required by law to mark their ballots in secret and were protected by the privacy of the voting booths. Even in those constituencies in which only one candidate had been nominated, voters could strike off that name with impunity if they so desired. In those areas where a more developed political culture prevailed, the voters used their new electoral rights to deliver a series of surprising\(^{107}\) and often crushing defeats to the apparatus and their preferred candidates.

The most spectacular victory was that of Boris Yeltsin over Evgenii Brakov, director of Moscow's ZIL Automotive Plant. Yeltsin, who was the premier anti-apparatus

\(^{104}\) CEC member G.V. Barabashev reported that fraudulent ballots did turn up in a few places, but their numbers were insufficient to alter the results of the elections. For details, see, ibid., p.111.

\(^{105}\) "Information of the Central Election Commission on the All Representatives of the People's Deputies in the Year 1989", Izvestiya, 5 April 1989.

\(^{106}\) ibid.

\(^{107}\) N.G. Starovoitov's interview in Moskovskii Komsomolets, 5 March 1989, in Urban, n.19, p.113.
candidate, captured an astounding 89 per cent of the 5.7 million votes cast in this contest, while his well-financed opponent failed to reach even the seven per cent mark.\(^{108}\) The Yeltsin phenomenon greatly contributed to the success of a number of other 'left-democratic candidates' who made every possible effort to associate their candidacies with his.\(^{109}\) It was this factor which led to the defeat of Moscow's Mayor, Valerii Saikin, who was running in one of the territorial districts.\(^{110}\)

In Leningrad, the apparatus was decimated at the polls. Although Yu. F. Solo'nev the First Secretary of the Leningrad Obkom ran unopposed and was also favoured by some voting booth irregularities\(^{111}\), yet over 60 per cent of the voters struck off his name.\(^{112}\) In another instance, A.N. Gerasimov, the First Secretary of the Leningrad Gorkom managed to capture only 15 per cent of the vote, losing to Yurii Boldyrev, a shipbuilding engineer and member of the political group, Leningrad Perestroika.\(^{113}\) The remaining four top officials in the region -- the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Leningrad, the President of the Regional Soviet and the Second Secretary of the Leningrad Obkom - were all defeated at the polls. It seems that the voters in Leningrad had readily responded to the city wide leafleting campaign conducted by a number of political groups under the name 'Elections 89', urging the people to strike from their ballots the names of those in the local elite.\(^{114}\)

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111 White, n.41, p.16.


Elsewhere in the country too, a number of prominent members of the apparatus experienced humiliating defeats. Out of the party's 166 regional First Secretaries who stood for election unopposed, 33 of them were rejected by the voters. The rejected candidates included all the party leaders in the mining regions of the Urals and Western Siberia. In Kiev, both the Mayor and the First Secretary of the Gorkom ran in uncontested races and lost. The same was true of the First Secretary in the city of Lvov. In Zhitomir, Alla Yaroshynska, whose candidacy was made possible only after the CEC over-ruled the massive illegalities in the nomination process perpetuated by the local apparatus, captured 90.4 per cent of the vote. In Belorussia, two regional party First Secretaries, the First Secretary of the Minsk Gorkom, the President of the Mogilev Regional Soviet and the First Deputy Chairperson of the Belorussian Council of Ministers all suffered defeats. Two of the republic's leading industrial directors, M. Lavrinovich of the Belorussian Automotive Works and A. Zinkevich of the Minsk Ballbearing Plant, faced off in a two-man race and were both rejected by the voters.

In the Baltic republics, the popular fronts followed a strategy of putting their own candidates in all districts except in those districts where party officials sympathetically disposed towards the fronts were standing for election. The result witnessed in each republic was landslide victory for the popular front candidates as well as those candidates whom they had endorsed. The elections resulted in a string of defeats for candidates from the apparatus; these included the Chairperson of the Latvian Council of Ministers, the First Secretary of the Riga Gorkom, the second Secretary of the Estonian Communist

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117 Parks, n.110.
119 "Affirmation....", n.116.
Party, the President of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet and the Chairperson of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers.\textsuperscript{120} The only exception was the First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, Janis Vargis, who managed to win by a slender margin (51.3 per cent).

The opening of the Congress of People’s Deputies was postponed by a month to allow the electoral process to run its course. Some 150 candidates competed for 76 seats in the run-off elections held in early April, involving the top two vote getters in each district (in a field of three or more) in which no candidate had received a majority in the balloting of 26 March. Due to an anomaly in the Electoral Law, it was possible for the candidates in this round to win a seat without getting a majority of the vote.\textsuperscript{121} Although the voter participation in this round was somewhat lighter (74.5 per cent) than in the first one, nonetheless some of the contests were no less interesting. Once again, the popular fronts in the Baltic continued to score victories. In Moscow, the election of such candidates as Roy Medvedev, the outspoken Marxist historian who was the subject of repression in the pre-Gorbachev period, and Sergei Stankevich of Moscow’s Popular Front, added to the new legislatures left democratic column.

The repeated elections, required in those 198 districts in which one or two candidate races on 26 March had produced no winners, got under way with a new round of nominations during the first half of April. In proportion to the number of seats under contention, the number of candidates eventually registered (1,216) for the new balloting of 14 May was twice as many as previously. In 15 districts only one candidate appeared on the May ballot, while in 127 districts, four or more candidates were included. The numbers at the upper end of the scale (25 for one seat in Kishinev, 33 in Kiev, 34 in Leningrad), reached unwieldy dimensions.\textsuperscript{122} Consequently, run-off elections were

\textsuperscript{120} Parks, n.110, Rettle, no.109.

\textsuperscript{121} “Repeatation of All the Results of the Voting”, Izvestiya, 15 April 1989.

subsequently required in 125 of these districts. Voter turnout in this round reached only 78.4 per cent mark.

Since the May elections were the direct result of the voters rejection of the candidates placed before them in March, many in the apparatus having been caught off guard by the previous outcome, now redoubled their efforts to ensure the desired results. Not only did high-ranking officials face humiliation of rejection at the hands of the voters, but their positions in the apparatus was also endangered. In his address to representatives of the mass media, delivered shortly after the balloting in March, Gorbachev spoke of the defeats suffered by party officials as the outcome of 'a normal process, a democratic one, that we must not regard as some kind of tragedy'. He further added that these defeats were 'signals to the Central Committee and to the respective party committees concerning cadre policy'. In short, it meant that failure to win a public election would provide sufficient ground to remove one's name from the nomenklatura.

In the plenary session of the Communist Party convened on 25 April by its Central Committee, a number of conservatives blamed the process of democratisation under way as the root cause of all the difficulties faced by the Soviet people. V.I. Mel'nikov, the First Secretary of the Komi Obkom and himself a successful candidate in the March election, warned of an impending boycott by the apparatus of the republic and local elections scheduled for the autumn.

Despite the cascade of protest issuing from Central Committee conservatives, the Plenum represented a moment of triumph for the reform leadership. Against the backdrop of the election debacles experienced by many leading figures in the apparatus, 74 members and 36 candidate members of the Central Committee tendered their resignation.


from this body. This, radically shifted the balance of power in the Central Committee in favour of the 'progressives'. In his concluding remarks, Gorbachev repeatedly referred to the election results as a mandate for perestroika and, by implication, as something of a vote of 'no confidence' in the ruling apparatus. With the elections, he argued, perestroika, begun on initiative 'from above', reached 'a decisive stage characterized by a powerful movement from below - a movement of the broadest mass of working people'.

The aftermath of the first session of the new legislature, put the leadership in a dilemma. The leadership did not really know what to do to centre reform. The elections created institutions that had the opposite effect to what had been intended. These institutions had a divisive rather than homogenising effect. Gorbachev was quite firm on the need to keep the party constitutionally in a place of power and on the need for party discipline in the new legislatures. The leadership also continued to believe that the new legislature was potentially useful. It just had to be infused with the right kind of party spirit. One way, it attempted to do this was by allowing republican leaders to match electoral practice with local needs in ways that could maximise the party's empathy with the populace. However, legal changes to the status of the CPSU and the creation of an executive presidential post was rejected. Gorbachev was quite vehement about the folly of creating an executive presidency, claiming that such a move would be 'very stupid'. The rejection of presidency at this time was not a rejection of executive powers but a rejection of the erosion of the role of representative organs controlled by the CPSU as the founder of a new social cohesiveness.

125 Izvestiya, 26 April 1989.
126 Izvestiya, 27 April 1989.
127 Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "Perestroika and the Worker's Party - Paramount Key Problems of the Day", Pravda, 19 July 1989, pp.1-3
128 Gorbachev, cited in Izvestiya, 24 October 1989, p.4.
Having rejected the executive presidency for the time being, Gorbachev reverted to his original method of trying to achieve legitimacy; namely appeals to the party to pursue perestroika. These appeals were centred around revisions of the concept of socialism and preparations for the XXVIII Congress, which was brought forward from its scheduled date. In short, Gorbachev went back to the idea of promoting reform through the party, with the party now motivated by having to organize for a Congress.

ORGANIZED PLATFORMS WITHIN THE PARTY

By late 1989, analysts in the Soviet Union were already identifying a variety of different strands of opinion inside the CPSU. For M.G. Aliev, the Dagestan Party Secretary, there were at least two different parties within the CPSU differing in their attitude to democratic centralism, the party’s role in industry and its social base.\textsuperscript{129}

A reader of Izvestiya saw at least three different parties within the CPSU: communist, social democratic and ‘radical’.\textsuperscript{130} In the December of 1989 the Rector of the Moscow Higher Party School, Vyacheslav Shostakovsky cited a study by a colleague, M.V. Malyutin, whose classification included eight tendencies as follows:

1. \textit{Liberals}, essentially \textit{social-democrats}, whose aspiration was not so much democratic socialism as social democracy on the Swedish or Austrian model, based on a mixed economy and a parliamentary political system: this group’s principal strength lay in the intelligentsia, some of whom wished to see an elitist party in a bloc with the progressive wing of the workers’ movement.

2. \textit{Socialist}, aspiring to create a mass working class, intellectual and left populist movement, headed by a party of the non-bolshevik type, in alliance with the progressive part of the CPSU; its specific proposals were the dismantling of the nomenklatura system of ‘party-controlled appointments to positions of responsibility and authority, and of the social guarantees established in past

\textsuperscript{129} Pravda, 7 July 1990, p.3.

\textsuperscript{130} Izvestiya, 2 April 1990, p.2.
decades, and creating a mixed economy with self-government and cooperatives, and stressing 'the problems of municipal and ecological socialism'.

3. *The renewed wing of Marxist-Leninist*, whose views were based on the New Economic Policy and 'the idea of a socialist system of civilised cooperators'; they relied on a democratised CPSU, in which the apparatus was controlled by the primary and elective organs, but conceded the right of other political forces to exist.

4. A group that wished to revive the fortunes of the CPSU as a vanguard workers' party, mistrusting the intelligentsia (whose role they saw simply as that of advisers), suspicious of cooperatives and lease-holding, and demanding the transfer of property to the enterprises.

5. The *Workers' United Front*, which opposed any restoration of capitalism, was against the market or leasing, and supported the production principle in the formation of Soviets; it had links with Moscow Trade Unions.

6. and (7) 'Restorationists' such as 'Patriotic Front of Russia', 'Fatherland' and 'Unity', they wished to revert to pre-Khrushchev type of party and political organization, as indicated by the desire of one group to hold the XX Congress of the *All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*.

8. Finally, *the silent majority*, whose rising concern was expressed in the mood that said, 'come on now, lads, lets' all live in harmony'. In a commentary on this analysis, Shostakovsky suggested that it could be possible to devise more objective criteria for identifying groups within the party. Nevertheless,

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the key point was that he observed the existence of 'a totality of views circulating in the party', which ought to be aggregated into platforms.\(^{133}\)

In the run-up to the 28th CPSU Congress, four tendencies emerged with particular clarity: a radical or liberal current organized in the Democratic Platform; an orthodox grouping organized around the 'Marxist Platform'; a pro-reform position associated directly with the party leadership; and a conservative current highly critical of the main direction of perestroika.

*The Democratic Platform*, founded in Moscow on January 20-21, 1990 can be regarded as the first organized faction in the Communist Party since the 1920s. The founding Conference was attended by delegates from 162 party clubs and organizations representing 102 Soviet cities and thirteen of the fifteen republics. Prominent party members like Boris Yeltsin, economist Gavrill Popov and historian Yurii Afanas'ev also attended the founding Conference. Established on the bases of *Moscow Party Club* (formed in April 1989), it set about organizing Party Clubs across the country, with regional coordinators and a central coordination council of 57 members.\(^{134}\) It produced a newspaper *Democratic Platform*, with a circulation of 50,000 in the spring of 1990, and its programme was published in the 'official' party press.\(^{135}\)

The charter of the platform adopted at the founding conference, described the CPSU as an obstacle in the path of the full democratisation of the Soviet society. It called for the abandonment of democratic centralism and the nomenklatura system, full freedom of action for groups and factions, equal rights for all parties and a parliamentary system directly reflecting the political preferences of the electorate.\(^{136}\)

\(^{133}\) ibid.

\(^{134}\) n.131, p.8.

\(^{135}\) *Pravda*, 3 March 1990, p.3.

The activities of the Democratic Platform prompted a conservative counterreaction. In an open letter published on 11 April, 'For consolidation on a principled basis', the Central Committee of the CPSU criticised the Democratic Platform by name and called for the expulsion of its leaders, saying that there was no room in the CPSU for those who were trying to provoke a 'split in the party from within'. A week later Yurii Afanas'ev left the CPSU and the others were expelled or they themselves resigned. A research by the party's own Academy of Social Sciences found that 35 per cent of members supported the Democratic Platform, with one in four supporting the abandonment of democratic centralism and the same number supporting the principle of a federal party.

In the Second All-Union Conference of the Democratic Platform held on 16 and 17 June, it was agreed by a majority that the Platform would attend the XXVIII CPSU Congress and put forward a package of proposals designed to transform the CPSU. Only if these were rejected it would consider the formation of an independent party.

By contrast, the Marxist Platform oriented itself towards more traditional values. Dissatisfied with the social democratic orientation of the Democratic Platform, the supporters of the Marxist Platform were also critical of the position of the CPSU itself. Its aim was to 'restore confidence in the party... in that section of the working class for whom the possibility of working freely and collectively and being masters rather than hired labour is a major consideration'. The alternative programme of this platform published in Pravda on April 16, 1990 envisaged two solutions for the crisis ridden Soviet society: the adoption of capitalism or of democracy and socialism. Advocating the

139 Pravda, 18 June 1990, p.3.
140 Pravda, 9 May 1990, p.3.
141 Pravda, 16 April 1990, p.4.
latter, the *Marxist Platform* drew a distinction between social democracy and what it proposed itself: a return to classical Marxism, based upon a 'critical attitude' towards Marx and his followers and the constant 'revolutionising' of Marxist theory. Favouring self-management in all spheres, in their view, it was better if the party concentrated upon working with mass democratic organizations *'with a view towards implementing the socialist choice'*.

In its Second National Conference on the eve of the XXVIII CPSU Congress, the *Marxist Platform* called for a party programme that was not a 'mixture of the free market and bureaucratic regulation' but one that relied on the initiative and self-organization of working people and which did not prejudice their standard of living.

In addition to these 'left' and 'right', 'radical' and 'conservative' wings, the official 'centre', where Gorbachev attempted to hold the ground, also published its platform. Under the title, *'Towards a Humane, Democratic Socialism'* , the *Official Platform* emphasised the human dimension of socialism, promising to introduce new legislation guaranteeing various personal liberties and rights (including the right to own property), conceding the formation of alternative political parties, and offering 'a political dialogue and cooperation with everyone who favours the renewal of socialist society'.

Addressing the Central Committee in March, Gorbachev declared that the central aim of the new platform was to end the party's role as the direct manager of state affairs, returning it to its proper function of political vanguard. The party would in future have to compete for political influence via competitive elections but would continue to exercise its integrating and coordinating role in the wider society.

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143 n.132.

DELETION OF ‘ARTICLE 6’ AND THE CREATION OF THE EXECUTIVE PRESIDENCY

Throughout 1989 the twin logics of socialist pluralism and the law based state had sought to deny any need for the re-evaluation of the role of the party as the leader of the society, although it had reached the end of its usefulness. Given the rapid collapse of the state socialist regimes in Eastern Europe in the last months of 1989 there was probably no need for radicals to have hammered this message home. Yet the situation that many of them faced in the new legislatures left them with no choice. On top of this, the unrest among the nationalities in the USSR had gradually worsened throughout 1989, and the theses of the Central Committee on nationality policy issued in September was having little effect. By the end of 1989 Gorbachev had to face increasing social turmoil and all that he had at hand to deal with it were a pair of ineffective legislatures and a party that, still refused to conform to his reformist norms. Worse still, it began to look as though the party conservatives had found an organizational framework in the Bureau of the Russian Communist Party that was established at the December Central Committee meeting. Gorbachev therefore had to find a way of creating a strong centre that could unify the people and still force the party to comply with his image of it.

The amendment of ‘Article 6’ and the creation of an executive presidential system were the only routes out of this crisis situation if the leadership, and eventually the CPSU were to reassert themselves. The switch to the new system, if not smooth, was inordinately quick. The rapid turn around between the refusal to discuss these questions at the Second Congress of People’s Deputies at the end of 1989 and their acceptance by the Central Committee at the start of February 1990, was clear. The conventional explanation suggested that Gorbachev was trying at this time to divest himself of the party and its apparatus so as to promote reform unhindered by them and their concerns. This did not explain why the party was still promoted at every turn by Gorbachev as the

best vehicle for the representation of the Soviet people. Nor did it explain why he should have continued to concern himself with questions of party discipline. Obviously he could not abandon the party totally since it still had an enormous amount of wealth and organizational potential that could have been used against him.

A fuller answer to this question must therefore be that the party was still important to Gorbachev and that he was still trying both to preserve and to change it. After voting in the March 1990 republican and local elections he proclaimed that the party was sacred to him. By rewriting ‘Article 6’ and investing new powers in a presidential post he was attempting to complete the process of reform. This he did by creating a strong policy-generating executive institution on the one hand and by stepping up the pressure on party cadres to be political leaders rather than economic managers on the other. It was safe to do this for three reasons.

First, the rewriting of ‘Article 6’ did not deprive the party of any power over policy at any level because both it, other political parties and all public organizations were to “... take part in the elaboration of the policy of the Soviet state and the running of state and public affairs through their representatives elected to the Soviets of People’s Deputies and in other ways.”

Since the party already had a majority in the legislatures at the all-union level the new ‘Article 6’ simply defined its hold over decision making within the Congress of People’s Deputies and allocated to it the political leadership role that Gorbachev had been advocating for so long. The ‘other ways’ were not specified, which left the party with freedom of manoeuvre, especially since it was the only named political party in the Constitution.

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See, for details of Gorbachev’s views, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "In the Preliminary Stage of Perestroika", Pravda, 31 March 1989, and "Socialist Ideas and Revolutionary Perestroika", Pravda, 29 November 1989.

Second, as the party was to retain its power over the military and the instruments of coercion via a continued presence in the armed forces, it would always be able to protect its position in the last instance.\textsuperscript{148}

Finally, the CPSU was to have in Gorbachev, an executive president who still believed in it.\textsuperscript{149} The party could therefore be reformed from an institution that blocked economic reform owing to the multiplicity of its functions, into a party that would have to justify its leading role through electoral competition but without fear of losing its place.

The abandonment of the 1977 version of ‘Article 6’ was both a formal solution to the problem of the party’s popular identification with the bureaucracy, in time for the March 1990 republican and local elections, and a way of trying to end that identification in reality. This was matched by a shift in the location of what was, or rather who was, to act as the unifier of the diverse social interests of the Soviet people. The party was to embark on the long-term strategy of forging hegemonic alliances with progressive forces, i.e., those who accepted the constitution and the structure of power, while struggling to exclude those who were ‘abusing’ democracy.\textsuperscript{150}

On 7 December 1989 the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet amended the republican constitution to eliminate the article guaranteeing the party’s leading role.\textsuperscript{151} The following day, Pravda declared that ‘Article 6’ could be subject to re-evaluation,

\textsuperscript{148} Documents and Material of the 28th CPSU Congress (Moscow; Novosti, 1990), p.188.

\textsuperscript{149} Gorbachev subsequently was elected Executive President of the USSR by the Congress of Peoples Deputies. See for details, "Gorbachev Sworn in as the First President of the USSR", 15 March 1990, Summary of World Broadcasts; (London), Part I, SU-0714, 16 March 1990, pp.C1-C6; and Stephen White, After Gorbachev (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.66-68.

\textsuperscript{150} Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "Essential Quick and Drastic Actions", Pravda, 15 February 1990, p.1.

\textsuperscript{151} Sovetska Litva, 8 December, FBIS Soviet Union, 18 January 1990.
modernisation and even exclusion but only in the course of a careful consideration of the Constitution, not under political pressure.\footnote{Pravda, 8 December 1989.}

Gorbachev's long awaited admission of the need for a pluralist party system was signalled in a new draft proposal entitled 'Towards Humane Democratic Socialism', prepared for the Central Committee meeting of February 1990. In a radical departure from the Party's former position he said:

In a society undergoing renewal the Party can exist and play its role as vanguard only as a democratically recognized force. This means that its status should not be imposed through constitutional endorsement. The Soviet Communist Party, it goes without saying, intends to fight for the status of being the party which rules. But it will do so strictly within the framework of the democratic process by giving up legal and political advantages, offering its programme and defending it in discussions, co-operating with other social and political forces, always working amidst the masses, living by their interests and their needs.

The extensive democratisation currently under way in our society in being accompanied by mounting political pluralism. Various social and political organizations and movements are emerging. This process may lead at a certain stage to the establishment of parties. The Soviet Communist Party is prepared to act with due account for these new circumstances, co-operate and conduct a dialogue with all organizations that are committed to the Soviet Constitution and the social system endorsed in that Constitution.\footnote{Gorbachev quoted in Ponton Geoffrey, The Soviet Era: Soviet Politics from Lenin to Yeltsin (Oxford; Blackwell, 1994), pp.99-100.}

Gorbachev went on to propose the modification of the principle of 'democratic centralism' under which Politburo decisions were binding on lower bodies, and which prevented open internal debate and grass-root initiative. Eventually, the Central Committee agreed to the creation of the 'executive presidency'\footnote{n. 149.} and to opening the Party to electoral competition. 'Article 6' of the Constitution was modified, which read as:

\begin{quote}
The Communist Party of the Soviet Union participates in running the country and nominating candidates like other political and social movements. The Party does not claim
\end{quote}
full governmental authority. It aims to be a political leader but with no claim for any special position codified in the Constitution.155

The relationship between the Party and the Presidency that was established in the first months of 1990 created an impasse. As President, Gorbachev was freed from many of the constraints that the party had put upon him. Yet as General Secretary of a largely unreformed CPSU, Gorbachev still had to contend with the norms that were supposed to govern the party’s decision making processes. There was therefore a fairly basic contradiction between the two posts: a presidency freed from constraints and the general secretaryship still hampered by the collectivism of the CPSU. This led naturally to different expectations. On the one hand Gorbachev expected the CPSU to avail itself of the opportunity he had provided and reform itself so as to support him in his position of president. On the other hand the party expected to retain some of its control over the policy making process, and assumed that its collective voice would be listened to even discordant. This impasse led Gorbachev to isolate the party even further by depriving it of a strategy for dealing with change in the USSR and denying it a basis around which to organize.

The rewriting of ‘Article 6’ and the establishment of the ‘executive presidency’ were non-events as moves towards more democratic forms of government in the USSR. Where more democratic forms were emerging they were doing so inspite of, and generally in opposition to, this legislation, not because of it. The contradictions of one party’s dominance over the state and the existence of the inadequate and fractious central legislatures prohibited further progress in the consolidation of official reform. With the rejection of the party and the transfer of control over policy to popular movements and leaders in the majority of republics, the presidency became the only all-union institution left that could portray itself as progressive. In practice, this was never possible because of Gorbachev’s continued identification with, and support for the CPSU. The divisions

155 n.153, p.100.
between the centre and the periphery and the divisions within central party-state institutions were exacerbated as a consequence. This brought reform to a standstill. The situation could only be resolved by the complete removal of the CPSU from the political arena. The events of August 1991 finally achieved this.

THE REPUBLICAN ELECTIONS

The March 1989 partly competitive national elections led to the reconsideration of the system under which it had been conducted. There was strong support for dispensing with some of the arrangements that had given rise to the greatest number of objections, particularly the selection conferences and the representation of social organizations. Barabashev and Vasil'ev, the two jurists closely involved in devising the new law, continued to defend these arrangements. They argued that the conferences or the pre-election meetings had given the voters a chance to compare the candidates at first hand and to reduce the number of names on the ballot paper to manageable proportions. Similarly, representation of social organizations had encouraged a greater degree of activism in the organizations concerned besides improving the representation of women and young people. In spite of these arguments, the fact remained that members of social organizations enjoyed additional representation in a way that was quite inconsistent with the principle of 'one person, one vote'. A national poll conducted by the All-Union Centre for the Study of Public Opinion, found strong support in most parts of the country for the view that the CPSU and other social organizations should be required to nominate candidates in the ordinary way. Far few (17.2 per cent in the RSFSR) thought that organizations concerned should have guaranteed number of places in the national legislature, and a substantial minority thought organizations of this kind should take no part at all in the elections. Overwhelming majorities thought a choice of candidate should be compulsory, and very substantial pluralities thought selection conferences were unnecessary (although in Russia and Armenia, as compared with the Baltic and Ukraine,
they had more supporters than opponents). These views were taken into account when the election law and constitution were once again revised towards the end of 1989.

In October 1989, Anatolii Lukyanov, speaking to the Supreme Soviet explained that this reconsideration involved both changes in general procedures and a greater tolerance of local variation in practices and institutions. For instance, Russia and Ukraine both intended to convene Congresses of People’s Deputies from which a working Supreme Soviet would be elected. The other republics chose to elect a Supreme Soviet by direct and popular vote. The formation of presidency would also vary from republic to republic. There were also differences on the question of social organizations, with some republics proposing to retain direct representation and others to abandon it. Similarly, different views were expressed on the idea of selection conferences too. Towards the end, a provision of this kind was retained only by the four Central Asian republics. Finally, on the question of electoral choice, the existing constitutional provisions were left unchanged, allowing but not requiring the nomination of more candidates than seats.

These and other changes were passed into law at the Second Congress of People’s Deputies in December 1989. ‘Article 91’ made it clear that the Congress of People’s Deputies would not be obligatory at the republican level. In the event the Russian Republic became the only republic to introduce the complicated two-level parliamentary institution that remained in existence at the national level. It was decided not to make any reference to the representation of social organizations in the USSR constitution. Thus, while the Congress of People’s Deputies continued to be composed in the same way, the republics were free to make their own arrangements. In the event, two of them - Kazakhstan (where a quarter of the seats were allocated on this basis) and

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156 Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, 1990, no.6, p.34. cited in Stephen White’s. After Gorbachev (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1993), pp.56-64.

Belorussia (where disabled and veterans’ organizations were given 50 of the 360 seats) - decided to retain such representation in their republican parliaments.\textsuperscript{158} The reference to selection conferences too was dropped from the Constitution, once again allowing the republics to make their own decisions.

It was on the basis of this amended law that the republican and local elections were held over a period of months and often on different dates (a further deviation from established practice) which left republican parliaments in some cases to vote themselves an extended period of office.\textsuperscript{159} The elections in the Baltic were among the first to take place: in Estonia, for instance, elections to local Soviets took place in December 1989 and to the republican Supreme Soviet in March 1990. More than twenty organized groups took part in the elections to the republican parliament. Out of a total of 105 seats, the Communist Party took 55 seats, followed by the Popular Front with 46 seats. It was the Popular Front, with its allies in other groups that headed the largest group of deputies and provided the new prime minister.\textsuperscript{160} In the other Baltic states too, the outcome was broadly similar, with sweeping successes for nationalist candidates. This was particularly true of Lithuania, where 90 of the 140 seats in elections of February 1990 went to the supporters of Sajudis. With the Communist Party’s leading role removed from the republican constitution the previous December, these were in effect, the first genuinely competitive elections in Soviet history.\textsuperscript{161} In Latvia too, where local elections were held in December 1989 and parliamentary elections the following March, the Popular Front was overwhelmingly successful. Candidates claiming membership of

\textsuperscript{158} ibid., 7 March 1990, p.2.


\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Pravda}, 30 March 1990, p.2.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Izvestiya}, 26 February 1990, p.1.
the Popular Front took 111 of the 210 seats, and allies brought the total to 131 - close to the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional change.162

The Slavic republics voted in early March 1990. Over 6,700 candidates competed for the 1,068 seats that were available in the Russian Republic, with up to 28 nominations for a single seat.163 The 77 per cent turnout was substantially lower than the corresponding figure a year earlier. It was still lower in Moscow and Leningrad.164 In the first round of voting only 121 seats could be filled and among them was Boris Yeltsin, chosen by over 80 per cent of the electorate in his home town of Sverdlovsk.165 Later in the month, in the second round, turnout was down to 70 per cent and a number of seats could not be filled because the turnout fell below 50 per cent.166 Considerable success was enjoyed by 'Democratic Russia' candidates, taking 20-23 per cent of the vote in the republic as a whole and a considerable larger share in the cities.167 On 29 May, the former Moscow Party Secretary Boris Yeltsin was elected to the chairmanship of the republican Supreme Soviet.168 The radical economist Gavrill Popov, became mayor of Moscow and a law professor Anatolli Sobchak became the head of the city administration in Leningrad.169

In the Ukraine, although the turnout was relatively high at 85 per cent, only 112 of the 450 constituencies were able to declare a result after the first round of

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162 *Pravda*, 20 March 1990, p.4
169 ibid., 21 April 1990, p.4.
voting.\textsuperscript{170} Large number of seats were won by candidates associated with the nationalist movement 'Rukh' and the 'Greens'; with Rukh taking control of Kiev and much of the west of the republic.\textsuperscript{171} The voters of the Lvov region in Western Ukraine elected the Goryn brothers (who had spent years in prison for their 'anti-Soviet activities') over the First Secretary of the regional party committee. The Ukrainian head of state, Valentina Shevchenko, withdrew from the electoral contest 'because of a number of circumstances' when its outcome began to seem doubtful.\textsuperscript{172} In the third Slavic republic, Belorussia, 1,473 candidates fought it out for 310 seats, only 20 of which were uncontested.\textsuperscript{173} Although, there was an 87 per cent turnout, only a minority of the seats were filled on the first ballot. In one particular case, which the \textit{Pravda} described as outstanding, a journalist defeated a member of the Belorussian Central Committee Secretariat.\textsuperscript{174}

Elections in other republics took place at various times: in Armenia, for instance in May 1990, and in Georgia, the date after postponement was set for November 1990.\textsuperscript{175} In Armenia, the turnout with just over 60 per cent was lower than the already lowest in 1989. Here too, the nationalist candidates enjoyed considerable success and a member of the Karabakh Committee, Levon Ter-Petrosyan was elected president in early August.\textsuperscript{176} In Georgia, the elections, which took place towards the end of October, led to the clear victory of a nationalist coalition, \textit{Round Table/Free Georgia}, which took, 54 per cent of the vote as compared with the communists' 29.6 per cent.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Pravda}, 14 March 1990, p.2.


\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Moscow News}, no.12, 1990, p.4.

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Pravda}, 4 March 1990, p.2.

\textsuperscript{174} ibid., 14 March 1990, p.2.

\textsuperscript{175} ibid., 22 March 1990, p.3.

\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Izvestiya}, 4 June 1990, p.2.
Shortly afterwards the veteran dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected republican president on a programme of transition to full independence. As before there was least competition in Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, a third of the seats in the February 1990 elections had only one candidate, with about half of them being managers and executives. Elections to the 250 places in the Kirgiz parliament also took place in February 1990 along with the elections to the Tajik parliament, where 1,035 candidates competed for the 230 seats available. The turnout here was close to the Central Asian norm, at 91.2 per cent.

The republican elections in the spring and autumn of 1990 had a number of common characteristics. In the first place, turnout levels were down on those that had been recorded a year earlier, particularly in the later rounds of voting and in the towns as compared with the countryside. Turnout levels, as in March 1989, were higher in Central Asia than in the other republics; Armenia, on both occasions, recorded the lowest figures. Secondly, there was a greater degree of electoral choice than in the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, although the level of competition remained much lower in Central Asia and in the elections to local rather than republican levels of government. As a result, larger number of seats remained unfilled after the first round of balloting than even before; the whole exercise being a lengthier and, inevitably, a more expensive one. Estonia, the only republic to employ the single transferable vote system, was able to avoid most of these difficulties. The candidates in the third place, remained overwhelmingly CPSU members, but a greater share of seats than ever before went to managers, executives, academics and clerics, and the representation of workers, collective farmers, women and young people declined even further. Moscow and

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177 Pravda, 14 November 1990, p.2.
Leningrad, each returned a single worker. Finally, there was a significantly higher level of party or organized group activity, with the beginnings of coordinated platforms across or within republics. This was particularly true of the Baltic and the major cities.

Pravda, 26 March 1990, p.2.