

## USSR faces "most important time in its history"; Gorbachev says

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev, addressing students at a meeting in the Kremlin on Thursday, November 1, favoured the idea of creating a special body dealing with the problems of students.

Gorbachev said that Soviet youth are called upon to play an important role in the development of Soviet society. He said that this society has vast opportunities. Because of its expanses and manpower it can be one of the most dynamic societies and the state can be among the most flourishing.

At the same time, "all this does not prevent one from realising the acuteness of the present situation, the socio-economic and political instability, almost chaos, and painful processes of the transformation of a multi-ethnic state," Gorbachev said.

"This is a decisive moment, perhaps the most important moment in national history," Gorbachev said. "The months ahead will see the transition to a market, a period which will last a year and a half. Much should happen before next autumn."

Gorbachev noted that there exists the danger of destabilisation.

"There is no room for retreat. If retreat continues, the economy, state, political structures will disintegrate," Gorbachev said. In this connection, the President believes that "some measures of a strict political or administrative character based, naturally, on legality" should be taken.

"Very serious measures to curb the growth of monetary incomes and restore the balance between the circulation of money and the mass of commodities are to be taken. If the planned

actions prove ineffective and the situation is not stabilised, even stricter measures should be taken," the President said. "But," he went on, "the situation should be taken under control within several months so that positive tasks could be resolved in a normal way and new forms of economic and political life be developed in a balanced framework."

Regarding the forthcoming anniversary of the October Revolution, Gorbachev said: "We are for preserving traditions. The celebration of the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution is one of these traditions." He said that Soviet society "intends to implement all transformations within the framework of socialist choice." Our aim is socialism understood creatively, taking into consideration the country's experience, the experience of civilisation and today's opportunities," Gorbachev said. □

## Soviet President's decree on foreign currency fund

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev has signed a decree to establish a federal-republican foreign currency fund to guarantee, among other things, that the country will pay back its external liabilities.

The decree *On Special Procedures for Using Foreign Currency Resources in 1991*, which was published in Moscow on November 2, provides for the fund to be formed with deductions from the export revenue of enterprises, amalgamations and organisations, excluding joint ventures.

It will serve to meet priority economic and consumer needs, put foreign currency resources to efficient use, and create conditions for the guaranteed Soviet repayment of foreign debts, the decree says.

It establishes a federal-republican foreign currency committee consisting of heads of government from constituent republics and the chairman of the federal cabinet's state Foreign-Economic Commission.

The committee will work out and co-ordinate foreign currency and import policies, distribute the fund's resources among priority projects, monitor efforts ensuring that Soviet foreign liabilities are paid off, map out measures to deve-

lop the country's export potential, and deal with other nationwide issues of foreign currency regulation.

The decree binds enterprises, amalgamations and organisations regardless of by whom they are owned and departmental and territorial affiliation, but excluding joint ventures, in 1991 to sell to the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs 40 per cent of their foreign currency export revenue for roubles at the commercial exchange rate of the USSR State Bank in order to ensure the repayment of the Soviet foreign debt.

The decree instructs enterprises, amalgamations and organisations - after the mandatory sale of foreign currency for paying off the foreign debt and the formation of their own foreign currency funds - to sell 90 per cent of the remaining foreign currency revenue to the

federal-republican foreign currency fund and the other ten per cent to the foreign currency funds of constituent republics and local councils for roubles at the commercial exchange rate of the USSR State Bank.

Under the decree, the setting of export and import quotas and the licensing of exports and imports from 1991 will be transferred to the federal-republic regime of regulation.

Quotas on products of national significance (oil, gas, gold, diamonds, other gems, special-purpose machinery and some other goods enumerated in a list agreed with constituent republics) will be set by federal agencies.

In keeping with the decree, all payments under foreign economic transactions in 1991 will be made through the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs or other authorised banks. □

## New commercial rate for rouble

THE introduction of a commercial exchange rate for the rouble is a logical event in the reform of the Soviet Union's foreign economic activity, Oleg Mozhaiskov, member of the board of the USSR State Bank, told a press conference in Moscow on November 5.

He said the aim of the move was to "completely exclude requests by Soviet partners in foreign economic ties for budget allocations."

Mozhaiskov said the problems of the rouble's "real exchange rate to the dollar has never been as acute under the centralised economy as it is now.

"Several years ago, the absolute exchange rate of the rouble did not matter much to the partners in foreign economic ties, as the state knew in advance what it would sell and buy.

"All profits from foreign trade operations were included in the budget, and unprofitable operations were subsidised from it.

"The decentralisation of foreign economic activities has complicated relations between Soviet enterprises participating in foreign economic operations and the state. The introduction of the new exchange rate will make the problem much less acute."

Mozhaiskov explained that the new commercial exchange rate of the rouble - 1.8 roubles per US dollar - "reflects the average parity between the purchasing power of the rouble and the dollar. This parity has been established on the basis of the correction between Soviet and world prices on a wider range of goods than previously used."

He noted that the former exchange rate - 60 kopecks per dollar - was "unreal as it reflected prices on a very narrow group of goods."

Mozhaiskov said the new rate "corresponds to the Soviet economy's export possibilities. However, the introduction of the commercial exchange rate does not annul the existing rate used in foreign trade payments.

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# Soviet leaders meet Moldavian representatives

IT IS necessary to take urgent measures to restore law and order in the Republic of Moldavia, to stop resolutely any actions aimed at aggravating the situation and instigating conflicts among the population.

A way out from the current situation can be ensured only if the Soviet and Moldavian constitutions are strictly observed. This was the unanimous opinion of the Soviet leaders – Mikhail Gorbachev, Anatoli Lukyanov and Nikolai Ryzhkov, and representatives of the Republic of Moldavia – Moldavian President Mircha Snegur, First Deputy President of the Moldavian Parliament Ion Khadyrke, representatives of the Gagauz population and residents of the Dniestr region, who met in Moscow on November 3 in connection with the sharp aggravation of the situation in Moldavia. Serious concern was expressed over the tragic developments in Dubosary and the worsening of the situation in the cities of Komrat, Tiraspol and some other populated localities of the republic.

Participants in the meeting agreed that it is necessary to create urgently a conciliatory commission and begin working out mutually acceptable solutions, proceeding from the assumption that peace can be achieved in that region through the preservation of Moldavia's integrity within the Soviet Union, through the unconditional observance of human rights irrespective of the nationality of people. The attempts to split the union, the same as the republic, lead to an impasse.

Expressing heartfelt condolences to families of the dead and injured, the Soviet leaders stressed that they would take most resolute measures to stop any illegal actions, leading to the kindling of inter-ethnic intolerance and strife.

The meeting was held at the request of Moldavian representatives.



## Ryzhkov on developments in Moldavia

THE Soviet leadership will follow closely the developments in Moldavia and, if the decisions

taken there prove to be ineffective, will take more resolute steps. Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov said in a television interview. He pointed out that this had been said at a meeting held in Moscow that day, November 3, between Soviet leaders and Moldavian representatives.

Supporters of certain political ambitions and political aspirations finally managed to set the nations, inhabiting Moldavia, against each other. This is impermissible for our multinational state. Such development of events in Moldavia, the Baltic republics and other regions is the most horrible thing our people can experience. This is why these trends must be nipped in the bud and not allowed to develop further.

The developments in Moldavia are the result of ill-considered steps taken by both sides. Their further escalation is impermissible. Those who are to blame for the tragic developments in Moldavia that led to the loss of life must be called to account, the Soviet Prime Minister said. He reported that the case is being investigated not only by the republican authorities, but also by investigating officers from the USSR Public Prosecutor's Office. □

## Soviet Parliament approves investment Bill

THE Soviet Parliament on October 31 approved the first reading of the bill on investment activities in the USSR. The goal of the bill is to introduce market-type investment relations and to intensify entrepreneurship.

The bill lays down general guidelines for in-

### Nikolai Gubenko appointed member Presidential Council

NIKOLAI GUBENKO has been appointed a member of the Presidential Council by a decree issued by President Gorbachev on November 3. Gubenko is the Soviet Minister of Culture and a well-known actor. □

(Continued from previous page)

"The existence of parallel exchange rates is in line with international practices, for instance, in countries with nonconvertible currency, where each exchange rate fulfills its own functions.

"The rouble's commercial exchange rate should prevent Soviet enterprises and organisations from asking the Finance Ministry for subsidies. Subsidies should not exist, except for those important of social significance, such as medicines."

Speaking about payments for goods and services by Soviet holders of hard currency, Mozhaikov said that prices of these goods and services "are being brought into line with the new rate" and that their hard currency prices "remain unchanged." □

vestment policies to be used by republics to draft detailed legal acts taking account of local specifics.

During the discussion it was stressed that the bill must help normalise the situation in the investment field – one of the "weak points" of the Soviet economy. At present the annual volume of investment into the development of the national economy exceeds one third of the national income, while in developed countries this index is no more than seven to ten per cent.

The rate of investment turnaround in the USSR is four to five times slower than is required in a modern economy. As a result, large volumes of unfinished construction prove a heavy burden for the state budget, contributing to the growing deficit and inflation.

The bill is based on the need to decentralise investment activity, which is no longer the right of state structures alone. It gives equal rights to all investors, irrespective of the forms of ownership, as well as to individuals. Much importance is attached to the guarantees and protection of investments. In particular, provisions have been made to reimburse participants in investment activity for losses, including lost profits, if government agencies take decisions violating their rights.

Having supported the main principles of the bill, deputies made many proposals on perfecting it. For example, Vladimir Kirillov a deputy from Voronezh proposed enhancing the anti-monopoly thrust of the bill, by adding an article on the special examination of all major projects.

The bill is expected to have a second reading in November. □



## Russian Parliament adopts economic sovereignty Bill

THE Russian Parliament on October 31 adopted a bill to lay the foundations for the republic's economic sovereignty.

In its first article, this document, which was described by deputies as "effecting the transition to a market," proclaims Russia's resources and

assets as the national wealth of the Russian peoples.

The law identifies state projects, institutions and organisations of union subordination as the property of Russia. Russian property can be managed by the federation to fulfil functions voluntarily delegated to it by the Russian Government.

The USSR's gold reserve, diamond and currency funds are the property of the union republics. Russia recognises the union republics' right to shares of the diamond and currency funds and the gold reserve belonging to them.

The law also envisages several measures regulating foreign economic activity. Deals in this sphere on major types of raw material and resources, which are listed in the first article, are recognised as invalid.

The republican government receives the right to define the procedure for the licensing of and fixing quotas for goods and services imported and exported from the Russian Federation. It will also accredit foreign firms, banks and other organisations, which have their offices on Russian territory.

The Parliament also adopted a bill to plan Russia's budget for 1991. Deputies endorsed the appointment of Viktor Khlystun, a doctor of economic sciences, as Chairman of the Russian State Committee for land reform. □

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# Mikhail Gorbachev meets parents of dead soldiers

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev met in the Kremlin on November 1 a group of parents whose sons had died while serving in the Soviet Armed Forces.

Many mothers arrived carrying photos of their dead sons. Opening the meeting, Gorbachev suggested a minute's silence in memory of the soldiers.

"This is a hard time for all of us. Boys who were just beginning their lives have died. I share your grief and it is difficult for me to talk. Nothing can compensate for your losses. There is no justification - neither in human, nor in juridical laws," Gorbachev said.

Several mothers and fathers then spoke about their sons and their tragedies.

The meeting was attended by leaders of the Soviet Army Political Department, Chairman of the Council of the Union Ivan Laptev, Presidential Council members Yevgeni Primakov and Veniamin Yarin, Soviet Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Oleg Baklanov, and representatives of the Soviet Prosecutor's Office and military prosecutors.

The participants agreed that military reforms were needed to upgrade discipline in the Army.

Every accident, especially every death of a soldier, should be carefully investigated and all culprits punished, they said.

Gorbachev set up a special presidential commission to investigate servicemen's deaths in peacetime.

He said he would soon pass a decree, taking urgent measures on issues discussed at the meeting.

He said he would issue directives to the government, Defence Ministry, Justice Ministry and the Soviet Prosecutor's Office. □

## ★ Soviet Defence Minister meets servicemen

PROBLEMS faced by the Soviet Armed Forces should be solved "in public, without concealing anything from the people," Soviet Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov said after his meeting on November 3 with servicemen of all ranks, who are members of Parliament.

"We should continue to inform the Soviet people about all measures taken by Soviet Defence Ministry senior executives to solve pressing

and, sometimes, painful issues related to current transformations in the Army and the Fleet," Yazov said.

Yazov said he informed deputies about problems which senior executives of the Defence Ministry have to tackle during the present reform in the armed forces, the difficulties that emerged during the transition to a market economy and the servicemen's interests affected by the reform.

According to Yazov, deputies concentrated on issues related to reductions in the armed forces and armaments, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East European countries and Mongolia and social safeguards for servicemen and their families.

"The meeting passed in an exceptionally frank and friendly atmosphere," Yazov noted. He thinks that deputies expressed their full commitment to the idea of strengthening the socialist statehood, the multi-ethnic homeland. All speakers at the meeting emphasised the need to preserve the union Army. They said its division into republican armies would weaken the state.

Deputies put the question of the necessity of a meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. "I think he will agree to this meeting," Yazov said. □

## USSR State Security Committee releases communique

*The Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) public relations centre has released the following communique:*

A great deal of work is being carried out in our country to rehabilitate the victims of Stalin's terror, and state security agencies' staff take an active part in this work.

Like all Soviet people, they roundly denounce the arbitrary rules and lawlessness that was perpetrated and stigmatise the masterminds and executors of the crimes against their own people.

In decisively dissociating themselves from the legacy of the past, the present generation of

### Presidium of Soviet Council of Ministers hold session

FUNDAMENTAL problems dealing with the distribution of authority in the sphere of law-making and management should be resolved by the concluding of a new union treaty. However, before it is concluded, all organisations, officials and citizens should observe the present Soviet Constitution, the laws adopted on its basis, presidential decrees and other legislative acts, issued by the supreme authorities of the Soviet Union.

This was pointed out at a session of the Presidium of the Soviet Council of Ministers, held in Moscow on November 3. The Presidium resumed the discussion of those problems, because the discrepancy between the union and republican legislations seriously hampers the working out of plans and budgets on all levels and can lead to a complete disorganisation of economic ties, the relations of enterprises with banking and financial institutions. It can also result in a further decline in production and the living standards of the population.

The Soviet Government expresses confidence that its resolution will help prevent the development of destructive processes in society and will promote the stabilisation of economy and the early overcoming of the crisis. □

KGB officers regard as their moral and civic duty to intensify their work to restore historical truth and justice.

Together with government and law enforcement agencies and public organisations, the KGB is engaged in the search for mass graves and takes measures to perpetuate the memory of innocent victims. Security officers' painstaking work helped uncover quite a few tragic pages of our recent history. Millions of victims have already been rehabilitated with their assistance. Thirty-six mass graves, including those in the cities of Vladivostok, Voronezh, Donetsk, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk and Chernigov, have been uncovered and recognised as official cemeteries.

Information about graves in Alma Ata, Arkhangelsk, Ashkhabad, Nizhny Novogord, Saransk, Tula, Ufa, Chita and other cities is being investigated.

Documental evidence associated with the names of many victims buried at the Vagankovskoye and Donskoye cemeteries in Moscow has been found.

Similar work is being carried out in the area of Butovo and the Kommunarka state farm in the Moscow region. The surnames of those perished are being handed over to the press for publication.

However, the memory of millions of people, who were tortured in Stalin's prisons, calls for a still greater attention to this work and for its purposeful conduct. The KGB has at its task to expedite the revision of criminal cases, using archive materials, speed up the search for graves, continuously coordinate its activity with soviets of people's deputies, the associations of the repressed and other public organisations, and give aid in bringing in proper order official and memorial cemeteries, in building and erecting monuments to the victims of the terror. The public should be systematically informed about the results of the work on rehabilitation.

Progress in accomplishing these tasks is constantly monitored by the KGB in the centre and in localities. These issues were the subject of discussion at a conference in the USSR KGB in October. □

## Soviet officials on Novaya Zemlya nuclear test

THE October 24 nuclear test on Novaya Zemlya was a reluctant measure, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Karpov told a news conference in Moscow on October 31.

Taking part in the conference were representatives of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the Soviet Defence Ministry, the Ministry of Nuclear Power Engineering and the respective industry and the Soviet State Committee for hydrometeorology.

Speaking about the nuclear test, Karpov said that the test had been postponed for almost a year due to the Soviet unilateral moratorium. As a result, the period the nuclear charge could be stored had expired. This is why the decision was made to detonate the charge this year.

Karpov recalled that the United States had carried out seven, France four and China two nuclear explosions in 1990. □

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# Vladimir Petrovsky addresses Soviet-US meeting

"THE developing Soviet-US partnership will become in future a foundation for the new world order's stability," Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky said in Moscow on November 2 at the opening of the fourth Soviet-US meeting focusing on information and cultural exchanges.

Petrovsky noted that the talks between the Soviet and US leaders in Malta, Washington and Helsinki "enabled the Soviet-US relations to acquire a new quality - healthy partnership on a stable and long-term foundation."

"We are firmly committed to making the 90s a decade of close rapprochement between our states, peoples and individual citizens," Petrovsky said.

He expressed the view that the current meeting between Soviet and American experts in information and culture "will help make a self-

critical and unbiased review of what has been accomplished and to define what hinders our progress."

Petrovsky said it was particularly important "to identify, mindful of current changes in our countries and the world, new areas for collaborative efforts." He attributed regular contacts between the USSR Supreme Soviet and the US Congress, the training of personnel for work in conditions of a market economy and the more active involvement of the two countries' news organisations in efforts to raise people's educational standards to such new areas.

Speaking about unresolved problems in boosting information contacts, Petrovsky voiced concern about restrictions on Soviet journalists' work in the United States - the deliberately complicated procedures to accredit, register and organise journalists' tours, the quest for lodgings and admission to official events. He said these restrictions were tighter than those applied to American journalists in the USSR. □



## Shevardnadze receives USIA director

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on November 3 received Bruce Gelb, Director of the US Information Agency (USIA), who was in to Moscow to attend the fourth Soviet-American meeting on information and cultural exchanges. During the conversation they expressed satisfaction with the development of Soviet-American relations and said that they intended to deepen and develop information and cultural contacts between the two countries and to master new promising forms of co-operation in those spheres.

Shevardnadze suggested the correction and amendment of the texts of the general agreement on contacts, exchanges and co-operation in science, technology, education, culture and other spheres with due account for the present level of Soviet-American relations. He proposed to do the same with the programme of co-operation and exchanges for 1989-1991 with the aim of developing co-operation of all levels, to encourage contacts between public organisations, universities, professional unions and associations, cultural personalities, scientists, athletes and educational workers.

Bruce Gelb pointed to the fruitful development of Soviet-American relations and stressed that the US Administration was serious about its intention to render practical assistance to Soviet perestroika, including the sphere of information and cultural exchanges. □

## Primakov sums up results of Gulf mission

SOVIET presidential envoy Yevgeni Primakov called for all possible measures to avoid a military settlement of the Gulf crisis and ensure a political settlement.

Primakov, a member of the Soviet Presidential Council and President Gorbachev's special envoy, returned to Moscow on October 31 after visiting the United States, Middle East and European countries to discuss the Gulf crisis.

In an interview with Soviet television on October 31, he said that during talks in Iraq "the question was raised in no uncertain terms about the necessity to provide an opportunity for all Soviet people to leave Iraq, and a schedule was agreed on."

Primakov said that a total of 2,500 Soviet people would leave Iraq before the end of November.

Talks with Saddam Hussein, Primakov said, were "forceful" and largely focused on the withdrawal of military specialists from Iraq. He said the first group of 34 Soviet military specialists whose contract terms had expired but who were held in Iraq, would leave for home on November 1, and all the rest would unconditionally be sent home too.

"We want Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. We do not give up this question and do not make it subject to compromise," Primakov stressed.

He said that the peaceful settlement depended on the activity of the Arab factor, including efforts along the Arab League line. □

## TASS COMMENT:

### CSCE Paris summit

THE two-day meeting of Europe's neutral and non-aligned states at the level of foreign minister ended in Helsinki on Friday, November 2. The conference was devoted to preparations for the Paris summit of the 35-nation Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which is scheduled for November 19-21.

Judging by the final communique adopted by the ministers, the neutral and non-aligned states in Europe are fully determined to make their constructive contribution to building a new Europe.

The meeting in Helsinki is a component of the vast preparatory work which has reached a culminating point at the special meeting in New York in early October. At that meeting, the foreign ministers of all CSCE member-countries and also Albania, which decided to join the Helsinki Process, discussed the holding of the Paris summit.

They chose the venue and the date for the holding of the "Helsinki-2" forum, formulated the agenda and mapped out the tasks and goals of the forum.

Most people are eager for the summit. They hope for its success as it will concentrate on how we will live together and co-operate in a totally new era.

The Paris summit is intended officially to bury the cold war, forge accord through creating CSCE structures, including a permanent secretariat, lay the foundation for new disarmament talks and adopt a declaration of intent.

Now that slightly more than two weeks are left before the Paris summit, the consensus on security, the key issue, has already been shaped. The outlines of the modern European security system structure formed within the CSCE framework came into focus.

The idea for creating a CSCE centre for the prevention of conflict won general approval. The centre will engage both in military and political aspects of security.

An assembly of Europe, a CSCE parliament, is planned to be formed. A mechanism of regular political meetings and consultations at various political levels, including at the top level, is being elaborated.

Decisions on this score will lay the groundwork for the future common European home and will make the disarmament process irreversible. But the building of this house, to which French President Francois Mitterrand gave the name of an European confederation, will not go ahead without another major foundation - asserting democracies, based on a market economy and the mechanism of social justice, throughout the continent.

A proposal was made to adopt at the Paris summit a charter of the united nations of Europe - a legal document defining the rights and obligations of states, containing elements of judicial influence and, if need be, compulsion with the help of multi-national forces.

The view is also expressed to turn the planned declaration on relations between the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO countries into a pact of friendship based on principles of security as well as close political, economic and cultural co-operation.

In short, there are every grounds to hope that the Paris summit will become a truly historic meeting, switching Europe from the East-West confrontation to accord and interaction, which are so sorely needed for the future Europe to become united, peaceful and democratic. □

### For the Peaceful and Safe Use of the Atom

Novosti Press Agency correspondents interview:

Nikolai LUKONIN, Minister of the USSR Nuclear Power Industry

Vadim MALYSHEV, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Safety Supervision in the Nuclear Power Industry.

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# Russia crosses the Rubicon

By Gennadi Filshin, Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation.

RUSSIA starts implementing its programme of moving to a market economy, and does so alone (the other 14 republics remain undecided on this issue). Its first steps along this road: de-statisation of the economy, and privatisation which envisages the transfer or sale into collective, private, leasehold, or joint-stock ownership of everything that today belongs to the state. All the above forms of property, including state, are deemed equal and, as such, equally protected by the law.

Privatisation, by our estimates, will spread above all in retail trade and public catering (shops, department stores, canteens, restaurants and cafes), in the service sector (barber's shops and hairdresser's saloons, dry cleaners, laundries, dressmaking and tailoring establishments, and so on), then in construction (including the building materials industry) and motor transport. From 70 to 90 per cent of the capacities in all these branches will be privatised.

Land is also to become an object of ownership – both in private plots and collective farms. Today's collective farmers will each get an allotment with which, if they wish, they can withdraw from the co-operative. As for urban dwellers, they are to be given small private plots for gardening 30-50 kilometres outside city limits.

Under the programme, the functions of direct production management will completely pass to enterprises and organisations. No one "from above" can now order them about. Government influence on their activity will be exercised only through economic levers and stimuli.

The rouble is to be stabilised. A complex of related measures will help to avoid a steep and universal rise in prices at the first stage. The prices of essential goods (roughly 150-200 items) altogether won't be raised until full stabilisation in the economy.

Among the measures designed to stabilise the rouble, it is planned in the first place to carry out an action to stabilise the money supply on hand, or more precisely, to tie it up. To this end we are planning to halt the printing of new money, in the recent period, as a rule, not backed, and to bring orderliness to the loans field. With today's low interest rates plant managers readily borrow astronomical sums from the state while actually being bankrupt. When the charge for loans is raised, and the demand of scheduled repayments (which now everybody ignores) toughened, then before thrusting one's hand into the state's pocket one will have to think seriously, to weigh up one's possibilities in terms of creditworthiness. A principal source of unearned money will thus be neutralised.

Eliminating the budget deficit will also help to restore the rouble's prestige and purchasing power. Mainly through the selling off of state property (to collective and private owners), and reduced spending on defence and administra-

tion. And also by saturating the consumer market with various industrial goods and products. An incentive, ie low profits tax for enterprises working directly for the consumer, and a preference in investments will serve to influence this process.

We are placing high hopes on the emergence of competition. To this end we want to create a surplus of capacities in the light and food industries. The sale of small enterprises, mostly geared to the consumer market, I think will also work in this direction. A gradual shift to market price formation will likewise promote competition. It is free prices, by our estimates, that will help to establish commercial relations across the entire spectrum of horizontal ties.

In undertaking the "single-handed" transition to a market, Russia, of course, relies on its vast scientific and technological potential, its great labour resources and its developed heavy industry, machine-building and electrical power industry. It has plenty of oil, coal, gas and various other raw materials, including gold and diamonds.

Today Russia accounts for 79 per cent of the country's exports, and it could be more. All it needs is to free its economy from administrative-command fetters, liberate the business initiative of its workers and give them an opportunity to prove themselves in the field of entrepreneurship. If we manage to achieve this, success in world economic ties, just as the transition to a market as a whole, will be ensured. □

(Novosti)

## Government commission on eliminating the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster holds session

THE commission reviewed the way the tasks set by the Soviet government, which stem from the USSR Supreme Soviet resolution "On a Unified Program For Eliminating the Consequences of the Chernobyl NPP Disaster And the Situation Connected With This Disaster", are being fulfilled.

It was noted that the necessary organisational measures have been adopted; apart from that, a Union and a republican committee, responsible for the Chernobyl clean-up, have been set up. These committees have been vested with the task of coordinating all the work in this field and are responsible for monitoring compliance with the Union-republican programme.

An effort to ensure more adequate drug supplies to the population has been completed. For example, 87 types of drugs worth a total of 775,000 roubles have been additionally dispatched to the contaminated districts of Bryansk region. As far as the contaminated areas of the Ukraine are concerned, they now received 30 per cent more drugs and medical equipment. 2,700 doctors, nurses and medical attendants, and so on have been sent to Gomel and Mogilev regions; measures are being taken to provide them with comfortable housing. Use is being made of additional resources to provide the population with food products, proceeding from the consumption norms recommended by experts. Health care for the population of the affected areas, especially children, has improved considerably over the past few years. Children are treated best of all.

House-to-house checks of 1,168 populated lo-

calities has been conducted; a total of 104,300 buildings (i.e. 50 per cent of the total number) in the areas having a contamination level of 5 to 40 curies per sq. km. were checked.

Additional medical check-ups of all those, who took part in the Chernobyl clean-up effort, is currently being conducted. 17 regional inter-departmental expert councils to find out whether disability cases are connected with relief operations at the Chernobyl NPP.

Aerial gamma-spectrometry filming of territories in the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Byelorussia has been carried out. After the film is processed, a revised map showing areas that are contaminated with Caesium-137 will be compiled. The map will be used to keep the population informed, and will, doubtless, find other practical applications, as well.

At the same time, the government commission has noted that the councils of ministers of the union republics, as well as quite a few Soviet ministries and departments do not ensure timely housing construction. For example, the USSR Ministry of Transport Construction and the Defence Ministry have failed to construct 7,400 sq. m. of housing in Bryansk region. Over the past nine months, only 35 per cent of the year's housing to accommodate settlers from the areas affected by the Chernobyl blast has been constructed in the Russian Federation alone. The respective figures for the Ukraine and Byelorussia are 57 and 27 per cent. The Chernobyl clean-up programme envisages compulsory resettlement of the population from areas where radioactive contamination exceeds 40 curies per sq. km. The relevant tasks set by the programme for 1990 have been fulfilled in the Ukraine by 13 per cent, in Byelorussia, by 68 per cent and in the

Russian Federation, by 72 per cent, respectively. The commission has suggested to all the agencies concerned to thoroughly study the situation in this field and to report to the commission on the measures taken within a ten-day period.

The commission has set the following priorities for 1991 – completing the resettlement of the population from those specific localities on which a relevant resolution has already been passed; further development of preventive medical check-up for children, young families and other categories of the population; providing health care to children in summer; setting up additional production facilities to turn out more baby food; completing the house-to-house radiation checks of populated localities.

The commission heard a report by Academician Belyayev, who heads the USSR Academy of Sciences' Presidium's coordinating council on the scientific issues connected with the Chernobyl clean-up effort. Belyayev spoke about preparing jointly with foreign scientists and experts of a concept and criteria of population safety in those specific territories that had been subjected to radioactive contamination. In November 1990, these shall be reviewed at the USSR Council of Ministers' regular session.

The commission also studied the "Chernobyl Children" project, drawing attention to the fact that a more specific approach was required while drafting specific measures. With due account of the discussion, the commission has instructed the USSR Public Health Ministry and other ministries and departments concerned to modify this document accordingly and to submit it to the Soviet Government for consideration. □

(Pravda, October 27. In full.)

# Did Mikhail Gorbachev need to travel to the West?

*A view from Moscow on the Soviet President's visits to Spain and France  
By Alexander Ignatov, Novosti political analyst*

THE FOUR-DAY trip by the Soviet President to Spain and to France has been an episode in Gorbachev's tight schedule. The visits were successful, above all from the political point of view. Practically all concur in this. But the visits also had an economic aspect, which raised doubts in Moscow.

An inquiry was made in Parliament: what purpose will be served by the credits obtained in both countries? There is no answer as yet. I learned the following from diplomatic sources.

The Soviet-Spanish memorandum provides for a credit to the Soviet Union amounting to 1.5 billion dollars, with half of it to be used to purchase consumer goods, both foodstuffs and manufactured goods, as well as raw materials and materials for their production. The document signed does not specify which commodities will be bought – that is a matter for those who will be instructed to hold concrete talks on the use of the credit.

As for the other half of the loan, it will be spent on buying machines, equipment and tech-

nologies to modernise consumer goods enterprises. Above all, in the food and light industries with the agro-industrial complex. But also in the textile, woollen and leather industries, in the production of building materials, medicines, medical instruments and equipment.

A discussion arose between the partners over allocation of sums without any strings attached. In other words, Moscow wanted to get some currency to meet its debt obligations to other clients. But the sides failed to reach agreement. There are pluses and minuses here. A "free" credit is good for "plugging holes", but threatens rapid spending of large sums, especially considering the number and scope of our needs.

France, during the Soviet President's visit, opened a credit line of five billion French francs – almost a billion dollars. Here, too, the main sums will be used to purchase the foodstuffs we need, including grain and meat. But one should remember that accords reached during summit-level talks are, as a rule, political and fundamental in character, and are seldom concrete. A list of goods to buy is a matter for businessmen of the two sides who draft and conclude appropriate currency agreements on credit use. In

other words, it is a thing of the future.

If, however, one is to draw a philosophical conclusion from this situation, I would recall the recent past. Some five to ten years ago, the major Western powers whom we called our main potential adversaries, would undoubtedly have been glad to see the collapse of the Soviet State and would have been ready to pay practically any price for that. And did pay – through expenses on armaments, propaganda, secret operations, destabilisation, and so on.

Today, paradoxically enough, the same capitals are ready to give and do give us credits. With hesitation, but still give them. Big credits. Being well aware that should something happen to the country (like disintegration into a series of independent states), or should reforms fail, and with them the political career of the current president, they will not get their money back.

That is to say, they run high risks by investing billions of dollars in keeping that same state afloat. What do they proceed from? From the fact that a downfall of the USSR is also a threat to themselves. And so they have to help in spite of the risks. For the same of perestroika and Gorbachev. □

## The oil fever and its possible consequences for the Soviets

*By E. Zhurabayev*

THERE is growing evidence that the world will be hit by a new oil fever again. As ever, the causes of the disease are in the volatile and oil-rich Middle East.

One of the consequences for the world of Saddam Hussein's adventure in Kuwait has been a more than twofold increase in the price of oil, which has now exceeded 40 dollars a barrel. Here is but one fact showing how serious the situation is. Kuwait and Iraq supplied eight per cent of the world's needs in oil. Consequently, the current losses for the consumers are almost the same as they were during the severe oil crisis in the seventies. Aware of this, UN experts are pessimistic about the prospects for the world's economic development. Even if the Gulf crisis does not lead to a full-scale war and the oil prices stay as they are, economic growth rates will decline by one per cent, the worst fall since 1982.

The industrialised nations with their advanced technologies and vast oil reserves are better prepared for the hard times, whereas for the countries of Eastern Europe, which are going through the difficult period of transition and reduction in Soviet oil supplies, the present situation may lead to a financial mess and loss of credibility in the eyes of the world's banks.

However, it is the developing countries that have been the hardest hit and the North-South economic relations are in jeopardy.

Against this gloomy background the prospects for the Soviet Union may seem bright. According to Western estimates, this year alone the Soviet Union will earn 10,000 million dollars from the increase in the price of oil and 27,000 million dollars next year. We need this money to finance our reform efforts, but there are some problems.

The unexpected benefits we may get from the

increase in the price of oil, which is a major Soviet currency earner, may be upset by at least four factors. First, it is a decline in oil production in the USSR and severe oil shortages inside the country. We have no reserves to counter these shortages quickly.

Second, one should take into account major losses resulting from the severance of mutually beneficial co-operation with Iraq and Kuwait and a general decline in business activity in the region which played a major role for the Soviet Union.

Third, the rise in oil prices will inevitably bring out a rise in the cost of finished products we need so badly.

Lastly, one should bear in mind that some countries, especially Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, can quickly increase oil production.

In short, the situation is very contradictory. So, I have asked the head of the press and information department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, I. Mordvinov, to comment on it.

"As a result of the landslide fall in the price of oil in 1985 we have lost 50,000 million dollars. So, we have nothing to gain from price fluctuations.

"As for the losses connected with such rich clients as Iraq and Kuwait, they are estimated at 6-7 billion dollars. It is not only strictly economic loss: our reputation as a reliable trading partner has been damaged. Before the Gulf crisis the Soviet Union re-sold four million tons of Iraqi oil to Eastern Europe and the closure of this source coincided with a decline in domestic production due to strikes, slackening labour discipline, technical problems and other factors. As a result of these factors and the restructuring of the entire system of our ties with our traditional partners in Eastern Europe, the Soyuznefteexport foreign trade association has been unable to fulfil its contract obligations to these countries.

"The situation in the Middle East may explode any time and a conflict there may result in the destruction of many oil fields, pipelines and tan-

kers. Is there reason to believe that the oil fever may turn into something worse?

"A conflict may have unpredictable consequences. Everything should be done to avoid it. If we want to solve our domestic problems as soon as possible and make progress, this country must be able to rely on stable international co-operation. The crippling crisis in the Persian Gulf and an urgent search for a means of remedying oil shortages may impair economic co-operation between the East and West.

"In the present situation the interest of American and other companies in investing capital and technologies in the Soviet oil industry has increased dramatically. Western investment and know-how may help us increase production from existing wells and improve the processing of crude oil. We have received first proposals from the US Continental Oil Company. More and more leading businessmen are coming to realise that the Middle East is an unstable source and looking for other sources of energy in other regions to maintain a normal climate for business in the world. The realisation of this fact by most businessmen may facilitate the Soviet Union's becoming a part of the world market." (Trud, October 23. Abridged).

### From a Woman's Viewpoint

Novosti correspondent Yelena BOGATYKH interviews ZOYA KRYLOVA, member of the Committee of the USSR Supreme Soviet on Women and the Protection of the Family, Maternity and Childhood, and Editor-in-Chief of the magazine *Rabotnitsa*.

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# We shall work for human rights

*Yuri Osipyán, member of the Presidential Council,  
interviewed by Yevgeni Sorokin*

**SOROKIN:** What induced you, a prominent physicist, to take up politics?

**OSIPYAN:** If we want politics to cease to be a voluntarist expression of one's feelings, emotions and ambitions, and become a science based on a careful analysis of factors determining our life, we must use a scientific approach, which is vital both for political and state activity. I think that the scientific substantiation of political activity should be applied on a greater scale.

Very indicative in this sense is the phenomenon of our great scientist and politician Andrei Sakharov. He predicted many developments which we are witnessing today. Nearly all elements of his analysis have proved to be effective. His proposals on general political problems or on the federal structure of our state are no less important today than his ideas on the prohibition of nuclear testing, new avenues for the development of power engineering, ecology, and the like.

The like of Sakharov gives a good example of effective application of scientific analysis in politics.

**Why did Gorbachev choose you for the Presidential Council? What are your relations with him?** Gorbachev would answer this question better. Yet I have to answer it. The thing is that we were acquainted before. We had purely business relations. I often met Gorbachev as Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He invited me for business talks alone or with my colleagues. Gorbachev in general tries to maintain close contacts with the technical and artistic intelligentsia and cultural figures.

We have also been together in foreign countries. I headed several Soviet delegations at international scientific forums which discussed disarmament, mutual security and other strategic problems. Gorbachev probably formed an opinion of me during these trips.

**What are you doing now in the Presidential Council? What have you achieved? And what are you planning to achieve?**

My profession determines my place on the Presidential Council. I am responsible for supplying the President with information about the state of science and technology, education in natural sciences, and some specific aspects of the inter-relationship between difference spheres of science.

I also fulfil individual orders of the President. For example, I prepared materials on major scientific projects and technical solutions. My plans in the council depend on the tasks facing the Soviet Union.

**What are the best ways to fulfil the programme of transition to market relations? Do you support the government measures?**

I want to state that I am a convinced advocate of

the market economy. I think that the key task now is to quickly and radically switch over to market relations. But two conditions are needed to fulfil this task. First, we must adopt corresponding laws, which is being done but slowly. Second, we must determine a mechanism for the application of these laws, which we are doing much worse.

In principle I support the government measures, though I think they should be more radical. There is so much idle speculation concerning the transition to the market economy. For example, we fervently discuss problems of private property and exploitation. I think that we sometimes follow stilted dogmas rather than common sense in these issues.

I am also against the term "regulated economy." The thing is that we can have either the market or the administratively regulated economy. The market economy is such an economy which is regulated by means of economic instruments. Can we preserve our socialist choice in conditions of the market economy? I think so. Many countries, for example Sweden, showed ways to accomplish this.

We should delineate the questions of production and the principles of distribution. We should adopt the most effective method of production which will turn out the greatest possible amount of values.

The state levies taxes on these values, which is natural. This is the state's income from its property. And socialist principles must be especially strong when the state starts distributing this property. We must protect socialist justice and the interests of low-income sections of the population, and stimulate the development of science, the arts, and culture in the interests of the whole people. The socialist choice has great prospects.

**The deteriorating ethnic relations are our agony. What do you think should be done?**

This is the most painful problem for me. The Soviet Union is not the only country to suffer from ethnic strife. Regrettably, there are many countries where ethnic differences have acquired the form of acute conflicts. Take our neighbours in the Middle East, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. Europe is not immune to that disease either. Belgium is troubled by ethnic discontent. Or take Canada with its problem of Quebec.

We are discussing the problem of national autonomies. We must now allow national dignity of nations to be damaged and their striving for sovereignty limited. To be more precise, I think we should not spotlight only the economic and political sovereignty of nations. The issue on the agenda should be the cultural and ethnic sovereignty. It is important to revive, preserve and develop national customs and traditions, that is, specific features of their way of life and mentality. We should create conditions conducive to the realisation of each nation's original nature.

We should carefully analyse processes under way in different ethnic communities. It is not the borders of a community but rather developments within this community that are important. If we overlook this problem, we are in for more ethnic conflicts. We must not allow people to rally on the basis of the purity of blood rather than on the basis of principles of justice and truth.

I should say that the point at issue is the rights of the individual, or rather, the autonomy of the individual. Each individual must have a free choice.

**A few words about yourself and your family, please. Where do you come from? Who are your friends? What are your hobbies?**

I was born and grew up in Moscow, in Krasnaya

Presnya. My ancestors come from Nagorny Karabakh, but they moved to Russia back in the 19th century. My father was born in Samara. We have always spoken Russian at home and so, regrettably, I don't speak Armenian. I regard myself to be Russian.

My father, an economist by training, graduated from Moscow University. During the five-year plans he headed an electricians' trust in Moscow and was director of a steel mill in Donbass. He is a Communist. Regrettably, like many of his generation, he suffered during the repressions, but survived. He fought in the Great Patriotic War against fascism from the very first day of the German aggression. He was gravely wounded and spent the rest of the life on crutches.

My mother is an actress, but children and home troubles connected with the tragic fate of my father made her forget about her profession.

I am married with three children. My wife and my children (a daughter and two sons) are physicists. I think that parental influence in this sphere was not intentional: we never forced our children to take up physics. My children are all married and I already have two grandchildren.

I have quite a few friends among Moscow scientists, actors, musicians and writers. I like music very much. Another of my old hobbies is sport.

**What worries you as an ordinary human being?**

I am dissatisfied with the slow development of civil thinking in our society. Many people completely misunderstand this notion. I mean that we all consider ourselves cogs in the state machine and think that this is our civil duty. In return we expect that the state will remunerate us for this. Can such persons be called conscientious citizens?

It is true that we have certain functions to fulfil, but we should be active and independent, we should contribute to the common cause and bear responsibility for our words and deeds. This will engender respect for oneself and recognition of our rights.

Our society is very slowly moving towards recognising the fact that each person, each citizen has individual, personal rights. Everyone should abide by laws and social norms. Yet each should remain a creative individual. We should not forget the moral aspect either. Crude egalitarianism will not get us anywhere. Cogs cannot be expected to score major achievements or to make breakthroughs.

I think that this slow development of civil thinking is hindering perestroika. □

(Soyuz No.41. Abridged)

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# Will the 500-day programme get off the ground?

By Felix Alexeyev, *Novosti's* parliamentary correspondent:

THE Russian Federation, with effect from 1st November 1990, has started to implement its social and economic recovery programme adopted at the last October session of the Russian legislature.

"November 1 is the starting point," said Ivan Silayev, Russia's Premier.

But the starting point for what programme? Far from all Russian MPs would be able to answer this question.

Ivan Silayev said in his statement that Russia was beginning to pursue the 500-day programme drafted by the team of Stanislav Shatalin, the well-known academic and economist, and approved earlier by the Russian Parliament. The blueprint stipulates the curbing of inflation and other crisis developments, to be followed by the first few steps towards a full-blooded market. True under pressure of circumstances, among them he delayed adoption by the national legislature of the federal reform plan and growing inflation, some serious changes will have to be introduced in the 500-day programme.

The Russian Government had to cross the

first "100 days" off its agenda. The original plan had stipulated a package of urgent recovery measures paving the way for successful reform precisely in that period. "But we are not going to scrap any of the major objectives stipulated in the Shatalin programme and opening the door for transition to a market economy, including privatisation, anti-monopoly measures and a deep-going land reform," Silayev said speaking in Parliament.

No matter how adamant the Russian Premier was, his view is not shared by all.

Grigori Yavlinsky, his deputy and one of the "young lions" in the Shatalin group, co-authored the 500-day programme.

"The programme is bunk," he told this reporter. "Everybody should realise this. Russia is virtually proceeding with the programme of transition to market economics approved by the national legislature. In our programme, we stipulated social provisions, which I regard as crucial. They may now become an illusion. So I am going to resign and I hope that my resignation request will be met by the Russian Parliament."

So is it the 500-day programme or some other? Even without a clear answer to this question, the government and the legislature of the Russian Federation are dead set on marching along. In November, we are likely to be offered a package of specific measures for implementing the programme of economic and social reforms.

I would say that the government and the parliament of Russia resemble an army command at the deadline, with no room into which to retreat. And they will have to act by Napoleon's principle, as Shatalin put it: "First get involved in the battle and then see what happens."

To my mind, the outcome of this battle will be determined in the very near future by several factors. The first will be a return to the political scene after treatment and rest of Boris Yeltsin. It is still open to question whether he will manage to breathe life into the programme and will attempt to overcome the deadlock between the central government and the authorities of the Russian Federation. It will also depend on the decisions of the Congress of People's Deputies, or super parliament, of the Russian Federation to be opened in late November. □

## Student factor: a new fuse in Soviet politics?

By Vyacheslav Kostikov, *Novosti* political analyst

IT LOOKS as though the student factor, until recently barely noticeable in Soviet domestic policy, may become one of the most explosive and unpredictable elements in crisis development of the USSR.

On November 1, the day when the Russian Federation, the biggest of the Soviet Union's constituent republics, formally embarked on a market economy, thus challenging the slower pace of the centre, Mikhail Gorbachev met in the Kremlin a group of students. The coincidence of the two events is, of course, accidental. But behind this coincidence stands the ominous logic of processes unfolding in the country and associated with a transition to a market economy, which somehow or other raises social tensions over the expected price growth and an upsurge of unemployment. Seen against this background, the entry of Soviet students, who until now were in political lethargy, into big politics may prove fateful.

It is common knowledge that it was students who provided that explosive material that blew up totalitarian regimes in East European countries. All remember the events in China in Tiananmen Square when brutal repression of a student demonstration signalled a sharp reverse in that country's leadership in domestic policy. Not far away in history one can recall student unrest in France in 1968, which then swept over the whole of Western Europe.

The meeting between the Soviet President and student representatives is an indicator that the authorities see the significance of that factory. At the same time, one must concede that, like in many other spheres of politics, the centre has been a bit slow in this matter, too. And the recent conversation of Gorbachev with students reminds one of hasty action to catch up with events which are already getting out of control.

The point is that a group of 50 students staged

a hunger strike outside the Kremlin on November 1. And although the official news agency TASS hastened to deny any connection between the President's meeting with students and that "unauthorised hunger strike", the hidden link between these two occurrences is apparent. It may be recalled that recent student demonstrations in Kiev, the first to show the scale of students' possible political weight, led to the resignation of the Ukrainian premier. The speed with which the Ukrainian Parliament met students' demands is evidence that authorities are aware of the possible consequences of long confrontation with them. The current hunger strike of a group of Moscow students has been a direct outcome of the events in Kiev.

In this connection one is surprised by the political "sterility" of Gorbachev's meeting with students. Mainly everyday and social matters were raised at it. It is beyond question that this sphere is one of the most neglected in the country, and students are one of the least protected groups of the population. Nevertheless, to confine the discussion to hostels, canteens, stipends, and job placement at a time when hunger-striking students near the Kremlin walls advance clearly political slogans and demand (in particular, that the government resign, Communist Party property be nationalised, and higher school and the Army depoliticised) appears to me to be dangerous "caution". A clear attempt to simplify student demands politically may only worsen the situation.

Student leaders believe that a constructive dialogue between students and the President is necessary and possible, but only if it covers the entire range of accumulated issues, including political ones. The last meeting, unfortunately, showed that there was no place for big politics in that dialogue as yet. That let slip a good chance of pre-emptive frankness.

The impression is gathered that the country's leadership has already felt the cracking of the

fuse and found it necessary to "react" to it, but does not seem to have assessed fully the menacing experience of student politicisation in East European countries.

There has been a growing awareness in the country of the need to refrain from extreme protests — large demonstrations and strikes. Some of the left-wing radical leaders who but six months ago willingly paraded their ability to get hundreds of thousands of people into the streets are also claiming to see the danger of uncontrolled anger. Today, everyone understands the perniciousness of big strikes or any other form of social explosion — hardliners, centrists and radicals. But against the backdrop of early signs of consolidation and calming of political passions, there still runs the danger of spontaneous political outbursts as a result of general destabilisation and an extremely sensitive situation.

In such a situation students may play the fateful role of a fuse. The students' hunger strike staged in Moscow, seen in this light, might, in spite of the pacifying meeting with the President, have hard-to-predict consequences. □

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