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The Soviet Miners' Strike, July 1989

Perestroika from Below

Theodore H. Friedgut
and Lewis H. Siegelbaum

With an Introduction by Ronald G. Suny

**University of Pittsburgh Center for
Russian and East European Studies**

Theodore H. Friedgut is a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. He is the author of numerous books and articles on Russian and Soviet affairs including *Political Participation in the U.S.S.R.*, and *Iuzovka and Revolution: Life and Work in Russia's Donbass, 1869-1924*, which is the first of his three-volume history of Iuzovka/Donetsk.

Lewis Siegelbaum is a Professor of History at Michigan State University. He is the author of *The Politics of Industrial Mobilization in Russia, 1913-1917*, and *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1934-1941* as well as numerous articles on Russian and Soviet labor. Along with William McCagg, he is the co-editor of *The Disabled in the Soviet Union: Past and Present, Theory and Practice*.

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Preface

The editors are very pleased to publish Theodore H. Friedgut's and Lewis H. Siegelbaum's fascinating study of the July 1989 miners strike. Not only is their account the most complete analysis in print, but the circumstances that led to their being in Donetsk in August 1989 began here in Pittsburgh.

Friedgut and Siegelbaum were members of a documentary film crew which had planned to visit Donetsk in order to film Donetsk miners and steelworkers as part of the Pittsburgh-Donetsk Oral History Video Project. That project was conceived and the trip to Donetsk planned and organized by Larry Evans, a former steelworker and labor and peace activist in Pittsburgh. Evans had already filmed retired steelworkers and miners from the Monongahela Valley near Pittsburgh. After learning that Donetsk and Pittsburgh are sister cities, Evans came up with the idea of travelling to Donetsk to interview workers. His long-term goal was and is to produce a documentary film comparing the experiences of workers under capitalism and socialism. Evans worked tirelessly to assemble a film crew and to raise money to finance this venture.

Who could have guessed that this film crew would arrive in Donetsk just days after the conclusion of the most significant strike in the USSR in 70 years? How grateful we all should be that they did.

The Editors

Introduction: The Forward March of Labor, Soviet Style

After four years of *perestroika* and *glasnost* many Western observers were surprised by the depth, hostility, and frequency of inter-ethnic conflict in the Soviet Union and by the relative quiescence of workers. The picture provided by the theorists of totalitarianism — of an atomized working class successfully manipulated by a state ostensibly ruling in their name and by “transmission belts,” like the unrepresentative trade unions — seemed confirmed in the first years of Gorbachev’s rule. But this illusion of class serenity collapsed quickly in mid-1989. What Armenians had precipitated among nationalities — as the first people, so it was said, who believed in *perestroika* — so the Siberian miners stimulated among their fellow workers. Miners became the vanguard, to use a well-worn term, of a newly militant working class, determined to realize the potential of the Gorbachev reforms for themselves.

The context in which ethnic and class conflict has erupted under *perestroika* is basically the same, even as differences in causes and contours of the struggles keep them distinct. First of all, *glasnost* opened up a broad-based discourse in which deeply-rooted and long-standing social and political ills were aired. Such acute problems required strong medicine, the state argued. But as effective solutions proved illusive, the authority of the state and the party declined. A chronic crisis of legitimacy became a major problem for the reformers.

Secondly, *perestroika* from above was both resisted by powerful social and political forces, particularly in the ruling elites, and also required mobilization of the *nizy* (lower classes) against the entrenched middle strata. The first ally of Gorbachev, the “liberal” intelligentsia recruited through *glasnost*, was simply inadequate to effect reform, although it was indispensable in creating the necessary sense of crisis. As the situation worsened, many intellectuals continued to play their role as critics and thereby contributed to the pressure on Gorbachev.

Thirdly, new opportunities offered by the state, combined with frustration at the real lack of change, pushed people to take matters in their own hands — in Nagorno-Karabakh and Tbilisi, in Riga, Tallin, and Vilnius, and in the Urals, Siberia, the Far North, and Donetsk.

As the excellent paper by Theodore H. Friedgut and Lewis H. Siegelbaum demonstrates, the Donetsk strikes in the summer of 1989 occurred at a moment when authority at the top of society appeared weak. A political opening was seen and seized. The sense that the authorities were unresponsive to workers' demands and a feeling of class solidarity with fellow workers both stimulated strikes over a wide geographic area and sustained the struggle through the coming weeks. Miners' grievances had long existed; they had been present even in times of relative prosperity and rising expectations. But what was new in 1989 was the capacity to strike provided by *glasnost*' and the weakening of state and party authority. The first strikes may have been more spontaneous than planned, but they were organized and disciplined as they took shape. Workers moved onto the square in front of the *obkom* building, thus taking over that key public space. They quickly formed initiative groups, strike committees, and *druzhiny* to guard against excesses. New leaders, like Boldyrev, emerged outside the official unions, and they came from the ranks of the working class, not from the intelligentsia.

The workers made it clear that their actions were aimed against the *apparat*, not against socialism — whatever that has come to mean. They called for representative leadership and articulated a clear idea of “we” and “they,” those who were with the workers and those who were against. “We” included some people outside the working class, like Shepelenko, the mine director elected to a strike committee, and some lower party officials. The strikers saw themselves as adherents of *perestroika*, defenders of those like Boldyrev who had suffered for his reform activities. They quickly gained a sense of empowerment, something that contrasted with their belief that they were losing status as miners.

Although in the first round both workers and Gorbachev could provisionally proclaim victory, labor's continued discontent, as Gorbachev has repeatedly acknowledged, presents a serious problem for *perestroika*. Siegelbaum and Friedgut are not only historians and analysts of the Donetsk movement but witnesses to one of the grandest and most important social struggles of recent times. For three intense weeks they lived with and spoke to the workers of the Donbass, and their paper gives us a textured understanding of a complex and dynamic process of social change from below. They provide here the clearest picture we have to date of labor's attempt to participate in the world-historical events that are currently reshaping Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Ronald Grigor Suny
The University of Michigan

The Soviet Miners' Strike, July 1989

In the welter of social activism that has washed over the Soviet Union in recent years, the strike by some 500,000 coal miners in the summer of 1989 may be the most poorly understood of events. Inter-ethnic conflict in the Caucasus, the movement toward independence in the Baltic, competing currents among the Russian intelligentsia and within the Communist Party are all complex phenomena. But in each case, even as these developments continue to unfold and the parameters of the struggles expand, we have some idea of what the objectives are and what is at stake. This has been much less the case with respect to the miners. Why they went on strike, or perhaps more intriguingly, against whom or what they struck was not clarified in the accounts of Soviet or western reporters. Why the strike committees did not dissolve after the strike but in effect remain in existence to this day is a fact not only little understood, but also little known.

And yet, without minimizing the immense importance of the other movements to which we have made reference, the miners' strike may prove to be among the most significant influences on the course of *perestroika*, redefining both its direction and its limits. If before the strike *perestroika* was largely a state initiative that meant "openness for intellectuals and discipline for workers," since the strike both the state and intellectuals have had to tread more warily for fear of exciting other workers to follow the example of the miners.¹ Indeed, how workers fit into the scheme of *perestroika* and how it is perceived by workers are questions that, as of this writing, remain largely unclear. But that such questions are being raised in many different circles in Soviet society, and that Soviet workers can no longer be expected to be merely passive objects of reformist models concocted in research institutes are among the consequences of the miners' strike.

The authors' awareness of these problems was piqued and sharpened by a three week visit to Donetsk in the immediate aftermath of the strike.

During this time we observed the strike committees in session, interviewed numerous strike activists in depth, and met repeatedly and at length with rank-and-file miners and steel workers and with other people of Donetsk, workers, engineers and intelligentsia of both sexes and all ages, party members and non-communists. In addition, we gathered the local press and a number of documents dealing with the strike and its aftermath. The following account, then, draws on these experiences as well as on our reading of the national and non-Soviet press, and on our backgrounds as students of Soviet politics and history. The depth and immediacy of our experience in Donetsk has brought us to focus our analysis there, drawing reinforcement, comparison, and analogy from press accounts of the Kuzbass and other striking coalfields.

An Industry in Trouble

Over one million people are employed in coal mining in the Soviet Union, considerably more than in any other country. Despite the growing importance of nuclear power, natural gas, and other sources of energy in recent decades, coal remains a major component in the Soviet fuel balance.² The Chernobyl disaster and the resulting backlash against nuclear power have only increased the importance of coal.

The main coalfields in the USSR are the Donbass in the eastern Ukraine and the Kuzbass in western Siberia. These are supplemented by various smaller coalfields scattered throughout the Soviet Union. Of the 720 million tons of coal produced in the USSR in 1986, the Donbass accounted for 259 million or 36 percent. The Kuzbass produced slightly over 160 million tons or 22 percent. Of the two, the Donbass is considerably older. Its deposits, first discovered early in the 18th century, have been worked intensively for over a hundred years; development of the Kuzbass mines began in the industrialization of the 1920s, but extensive

operations date from World War II and the reconstruction period of the 1950s. Whereas deep underground mining is practiced in the Donbass, open-cast production predominates in the Kuzbass. This difference is of some importance in the economics of mining of the two regions, with Kuzbass coal being produced much more cheaply than that of the Donetsk Basin.

The Soviet coal industry is administered by a vast bureaucratic network at the apex of which is the USSR Ministry of the Coal Industry situated in Moscow. Below this ministry are large regional production associations (*ob"edineniia*) such as *Donetskugol'*, *Kemerovougol'*, and so forth.³ The ministry had been, until the strike, the juridical owner of the mines, setting annual and quarterly production quotas, allocating investment funds and wage funds, and controlling the disposal of the mines' production in conjunction with Gosplan and other central agencies on the basis of their estimates of the demand for coal and the capacity of the various mines. Plans and resource allocations are disaggregated as they move down from Moscow through the territorial production associations to the mines in a complex ongoing negotiation process. Working conditions are also centrally determined by governmental committees in conjunction with the Moscow-based Central Committee of the Union of Coal Miners.

There is one additional fact that must be mentioned regarding the coal mining industry. This is that output has stagnated since the mid-1970s. In the course of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (1981-1985), the shortfall of coal production amounted to 145 million tons. Table 1 shows the decline the rate of growth of coal mining.

The causes of this situation are many, but two stand out above all. The first is geological. The century of intensive coal production in the Donbass has meant that miners have had to go ever deeper into the earth. The average depth of underground mines in the USSR is 410 meters, but in the Donbass, 79 of the 156 mines are more than 700 meters below the surface, and 15 are more than a kilometer deep.⁴ The deeper the mine, the higher

Table 1: USSR Total Coal Output for Selected Years

[In millions of tons]

Year	Output	Average Annual Increase
1950	261.1	--
1955	400.0	27.8
1960	509.6	21.9
1970	624.1	11.5
1975	701.3	15.4
1985	718.0	1.7

Sources: *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 3rd ed., vol. 26, (1977), p. 464; P.M. Maliavin, F.S. Bocharov, and A.V. Likhobabin, *Shakhtery-gvardiia truda* (Moscow, 1986), p. 181.

the temperature and the greater the complexity and expense of pumping out water, ventilating—particularly to prevent accumulations of explosive methane gas — putting miners down to the coal face, and raising the coal that is produced. The second problem is linked to this. Investment in modern equipment and in mine development has lagged badly in recent years as oil, gas, and nuclear power have been given greater preference. As one miner told the 27th CPSU Congress in February 1986: “My fellow cutters and I are using the same jack hammers as fifty years ago. This state of affairs has to be corrected immediately....”⁵

How the Coal Strike Developed

The July strike could not have been a surprise to the Soviet authorities, central or local. It had been preceded in March by two brief strikes at the

Lidievka and Kirov mines in Donetsk. At the June 24 plenum of the Donetsk city party committee (*gorkom*), the miners' extreme discontent had been expressed in a demand that the Minister of the Coal Industry, Shchadov, be asked to resign. Telegrams to this effect were sent to the Supreme Soviet to try to prevent his confirmation as minister in the new Soviet government formed after the spring 1989 elections. Gorbachev himself, while visiting Donetsk in June, had been informed of the ferment and its background.⁶ The problem was not a lack of warning, but a lack of attention by the authorities. There had been a warning strike in the Vorkuta coalfield. In the Kuzbass, workers at the Sheviakovo mine had formulated demands without any interruption of production and had sent them to the Central Committee of the Soviet trade union organization on December 28, 1988. That body forwarded them to the regional trade union executive, which passed them down to the industrial association to which the mine belongs, from whence they were returned, without comment or recommendation to the mine director.⁷ From the recriminations and breast-beating of all the party and trade union authorities after the strike, this would appear to have been the general pattern throughout the country. Each level of administration passed complaints, demands, or recommendations on to a higher or lower level, without any action ever being taken, and thus allowing each to blame the others for inaction.

The explosive situation of the miners' discontent and their lack of faith in the authorities should have been clear immediately after the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in March 1989. Among those who were voted down by the electorate were the first secretaries of the Kemerovo *oblast'* party committee (*obkom*) and city party committee (*gorkom*), the chairman of the *oblast'* soviet executive committee, and the directors of *Kemerovougol'* and the Kemerovo Railroad Administration.⁸ Deputies who were elected from the region attempted to warn the Congress of the explosive situation in the Kuzbass, but their warnings were lost among the multitude of issues facing the Congress.

The coal miners' strike began on July 10 in a single mine in the Kuzbass city of Mezhdurechensk. Within a week 158 Kuzbass mines had been closed and 177,862 miners on strike⁹ From the Kuzbass it spread to Karaganda, Pechora, the Lvov region, Rostov, and the Donbass.¹⁰

On July 12, the Minister of the Coal Industry, Mikhail Shchadov, arrived in Mezhdurechensk to begin negotiations with the strikers. By the time a tentative agreement had been worked out the next day, the strike had spread throughout the region, and when it had reached its peak on July 17, a joint commission of government, party, and trade union officials headed by Politburo member Nikolai Sliunkov came to deal with the crisis.

There was a direct and palpable link between the Siberian strike and the Donbass. Questioned as to the relation between the strikes, the Donbass people reluctantly admitted that a delegation of Siberian miners had visited, reported, and urged them to join the strike.¹¹ Beginning in Makeevka on the morning of July 17, the strike spread to Pavlograd and from there to Donetsk. The Donetsk miners' response appears to have been based as much on a sense of professional solidarity as on any particular grievance.¹² At the Kalinin mine in Donetsk, and presumably at all the other mines as well, party organizers were busy explaining to the workers that the government and the Supreme Soviet were fully informed of the miners' grievances, that these grievances were seen as justified, and that there was no need to strike.¹³ The party bosses and mine executives of Donetsk later admitted to having relied on the wishful thinking that such tactics would prove effective.¹⁴ The manner in which the authorities in Moscow handled the Kuzbass strike also may have inadvertently led to its spread to other regions. For among the complaints voiced by the Donetsk First Secretary against the central party organs and the media was a charge that *Pravda* had published an erroneous statement claiming that whatever settlement was worked out with the Siberian miners would be restricted in application to that region.¹⁵ In this vein, the dispatch of Sliunkov's high-level commission of party, trade union and government

representatives to the Kuzbass boomeranged, conveying the impression that the authorities were treating the strike as a strictly regional affair.

The beginning of the strike in Donetsk was nevertheless tentative. On July 18, the Lidievka and Abakumov mines struck briefly while general meetings of the miners drew up a list of demands, returning to work once these had been presented to the mine administration. At the Zasiadko mine, the miners informed their director, a much respected man who even today retains the miners' confidence, of their intention to strike. He agreed with their decision, letting them know that he considered their demands entirely justified, but suggested that they wait until some other mine had walked out, and then follow them, joining the strike, rather than initiating it.

The miners of the "Socialist Donbass" mine were those who tipped the balance. On the morning of July 19, they refused to work, and in the evening, following the Siberian miners' example, marched in orderly ranks, four abreast, along an eight kilometer route from their mine, in work clothes, and with lanterns glowing, to sit in the square facing the *obkom* and *oblast'* soviet headquarters. The next morning, all twenty-one coal mines in the city of Donetsk were on strike and had representatives in the square.¹⁶ There, for the next five days, shifts of miners sat day and night, discussing their grievances, formulating demands, and receiving reports on the progress of negotiations. They sat according to work shifts, each shift foreman marking his miners' attendance, with each mine assigned a quota of men to be at the square.

Although the strike was spontaneous and had no organizing body at the beginning, the miners soon displayed a fine talent for organization and for discipline. They were alone and had only themselves to rely on, for at the strike's outset, with the exception of two mine directors and a small handful of engineering and supervisory personnel, neither party, nor trade union, nor administrative officials were willing to be tainted by association with what was, even after the fact, denounced by one official as having

been “an illegal act, that remains an illegal act to this day, as we have no law as yet permitting such actions.”¹⁷

At the various mines, initiative groups convened meetings that elected strike committees representing the rank-and-file miners. Interested and active miners sought advice and came to the square for consultation. When Iurii Boldyrev of the Gorkii mine heard that the “Socialist Donbass” miners were on the square, he ran to them, conferred the whole night with their leaders and helped begin to frame the strike demands. At dawn, he returned to his mine to lead the formation of a strike committee. At each mine the strike committee found itself headquarters, commandeered a telephone, and began to make contact with the other mines to compare experiences. At the Kuibyshev mine, the committee set itself up in the political education room of the mine’s party committee.¹⁸ The general pattern was that each section of a mine elected delegates to the strike committee.

The committees’ members were generally young, averaging about 35 years of age. This was explained as reflecting the fear that older workers had of retribution after the strike. They only wanted to reach pension age quietly and get out. The younger men were bolder – and it must be noted, are better educated on the whole than their predecessors, not a few having a higher education. The membership was also overwhelmingly male – in the Kuibyshev strike committee there were two women out of 32, and in the Panfilov mine one woman (a deputy chairperson of the committee) out of twenty five. While the mines have a heavily male work force and women have not worked at the coal face since the end of the 1950s, there are as yet large numbers of women employed in the mines in technical, maintenance and service capacities, and their representation on the strike committees was not commensurate with this presence. When asked what the role of women was in the strike, the miners replied that their wives brought them hot food when they were sitting in the square.

Finally, one quarter of the membership of the Donetsk strike committees were party members, a fact proudly put forward by both the first

secretary of the Donetsk *obkom*, and the first secretary of the Donetsk *gorkom* in an attempt to indicate that the party played an active and influential role in the strike. Indeed, these strike committee communists were almost exclusively rank-and-file members, though some had been in the *aktiv* at some stage of their careers. Valery Samofalov and Gennadi Kush of the Kuibyshev mine strike committee had both been Komsomol organizers, while Iurii Boldyrev and his friend Sergei Vasil'ev, initiators of the Gorkii mine committee, had been respectively party group organizer (*partgruporg*) and trade union representative of their mine section—about which we will hear more later.¹⁹ In no way can the strike be considered a revolt against communism. Rather it was an attempt to attack the *apparat* at the grass roots level and replace it with a truly representative and democratically elected local leadership. As *Pravda* put it, “not just party leaders, but also many economic and trade union leaders ‘drowned’ in the mighty wave of the strike.”²⁰ For many of the leaders of the strike committees, the strike was a conscious effort to advance the policies of *perestroika*, as much as an attempt to better their own professional conditions.

The strike committees very rapidly became the centre of all activity in the striking areas. Some of them sat in almost continuous session, and all maintained around-the-clock telephone watches. Almost immediately they received all types of requests and complaints from the public. Miners, other workers, and citizens from all walks of life began turning to the strike committees with requests for help in getting medical care, housing repairs, and financial assistance. The public evidently saw in these bodies authoritative institutions that were to replace the discredited local officials in caring for the many daily problems that plague the Soviet citizen. This was also the case in the Kuzbass city of Kemerovo, where the strike committee found itself besieged by citizens who assumed that at last they had an institution to help them. Petitioners lined up all day for a stamp and signature to enable them to get a bank loan, advice as to what to do when the person renting them a room wanted to terminate the lease,

and a host of other daily cares that were far beyond what the strike committees ever intended to undertake.

Anxious to maintain the integrity of their strike, the miners set up a *druzhina* that cordoned off the square from the public, chasing away the numerous drunks who at first attempted to join the strikers. At the same time, they sent a delegation to the city's militia commander, demanding that all sources of alcohol be shut down immediately. They also set up patrols to keep order in the streets.²¹ When the union authorities awoke belatedly to the fact that they were entirely isolated from the flow of events, they attempted to enter the picture by bringing field kitchens with food to the square. They were greeted with contemptuous jibes of "Who are you and what do you want? We don't know you." A trade union official attempted to address the strikers on the square but was chased from the platform by a storm of jeers and whistles that drowned out his efforts.

The organization of the strike differed from mine to mine. Vladislav Shepelenko, director of the Skochinskii mine told his workers that he was against their striking for fear that the mine would be ruined by neglect. After a stormy discussion among the workers, it was agreed that maintenance and safety work would continue. Shepelenko then announced that he would join the strike, was elected on the spot to the mine's strike committee, and led his men to the square. In the Kapital'naia mine, the workers walked out spontaneously, making no provision for the safety and maintenance of the mine. A young engineer in charge of one of the shafts told the men that if they did not set up a maintenance detail, he would resign, leaving a letter that any loss of life or material damage was the responsibility of the miners themselves. Sobered by this possibility, the miners set up a maintenance duty roster under supervision of the engineer.²² In some other mines, collapses and flooding caused damage amounting to hundreds of thousands of rubles.²³ The miners were, however, on the whole conscious of the fact that maintaining the mines was in their own interest, and in most cases provided for pumping, ventilation,

and maintenance during the strike.²⁴ After the strike the workers at the Stakhanov mine suggested that the draft law regulating strikes that was under the consideration of the Supreme Soviet should include an article defining the responsibility for the mine or enterprise during any trike.²⁵

Causes of the Strike and Strike Demands

Why did the strike break out at this time, and why did it spread so widely? A multitude of discontents contributed. Yet the causes of the strike, and the strike demands must be separated. Essentially, the outbreak of the strike was the result of frustrated expectations.²⁶ In a survey conducted for the Soviet Sociological Association by Dr. G. Shalygin of Donetsk, three-quarters of the 216 mine workers polled named that as the primary cause. Summarizing the workers' statements, the survey reported that people were tired of waiting for promises to be fulfilled, that they had felt themselves freed from serfdom by *glasnost*' (the term used in the newspaper was *raskrepostilis*'), that fear had vanished, thinking awakened, and that the media had encouraged a popular rejection of the bureaucracy. Fifty per cent added that professional solidarity played a part in their motivation.²⁷

Contrary to what some observers assumed beforehand, it was not fear of the disruptive effects of economic reform that drove the miners to strike, but rather anxiety that *perestroika* was passing them by.²⁸ "We haven't yet seen *perestroika*," was the comment often heard. If the intelligentsia had hitherto been the most vociferous champions of reform, it was now the workers' turn. As the chairman of the Kuibyshev mine strike committee told us with evident pride, "we are now ahead of the intelligentsia." Certainly the miners knew what was going on elsewhere in the country. They could not help but compare the prodigious growth of the cooperative movement, particularly in the consumer service sector, and

the new opportunities for kolkhoz members to lease-hold plots of land, as well as a myriad of other new or projected reforms, to the conditions in which their own industry was mired.

Among the specific grievances cited by the poll, lack of consumer goods headed the list (mentioned by 86 per cent), followed by low pay (mentioned by 79 per cent). These were followed by: inadequate vacations (62%), pension provisions (50%), high prices (41%), poor housing (41%) and frictions with management (38%).²⁹ The economic grievances hardly reflect the miners' actual situation in Soviet society, for an average coal miner earns about 450 rubles per month, nearly twice what the average Soviet industrial worker earns.³⁰ Financially, the miners' incomes are above the average for the Soviet population, and the overwhelming majority live above the poverty line.³¹ Their pensions, granted to underground workers at age fifty, rather than at sixty as is the case for other Soviet males, are also greater than the general industrial pension.

At the same time, their housing accommodations are below the minimum norms, international or Soviet. The international sanitary minimum used in the Soviet Union is set at nine square meters of living space per person. Half the strikers polled lived in 5-9 sq. m. per capita, while an additional 23 per cent had less than 4 sq. m. per person. The *obkom* first secretary, in his report, noted that twenty per cent less housing was being built than fifteen years previously, while the waiting list for housing was half again as long as it had been in 1980. Among the workers of three mines, a construction trust and a transport center in the Kuibyshev district of Donetsk, 10,148 families now await housing, an increase of 3,045 since 1985. During the entire year 1988, only 494 families received housing in the district.³²

To the foreign visitor, the mine settlements adjoining the mines of Donetsk appear picturesque: Single-story whitewashed cottages trimmed in bright blue abut onto dirt roads, and with their fruit trees and vegetable gardens, present a picture from another epoch. That is just the problem. As one coal cutter put it, with only mild hyperbole, "Many miners live in

such conditions that if a film were shot here you would think it was 1905.”³³ In Kemerovo *oblast*’, a reported 20 percent of the population lives in decrepit housing or has no fixed accommodation whatsoever.³⁴ The miners’ strike demand regarding housing was that it be provided at such a rate that no family should have to wait more than *six years* for accommodation after applying.

In almost every sphere of life and work, miners’ conditions were deteriorating steadily. Ecological conditions in the Donbass are better than those in Siberia but are almost unbelievably disastrous, even though a concerted if not entirely successful effort has been made to sweep back the sea of pollutants.³⁵ The twenty-one mines within the Donetsk city limits, the Lenin Steel Works employing 17,000 people and the additional mines and chemical plants that crowd the city on every side literally choke it with fumes and coal dust. Were it not for a determined effort by the local authorities to provide every street with a double row of trees, and to lace the city with parks and playgrounds as “green lungs”, featuring rose gardens that are the pride of the entire population, it would be almost uninhabitable. In June 1989, the steel factory discharged 7.2 times the permissible norm of sulphuric anhydrides, 6.7 times the norm of hydrogen sulphide, and 2.1 times the permissible norm of dust.³⁶ The territorial coal association, *Donetskugol*’, was also cited for its failure to comply with sewerage and waste disposal provisions.

Investment in the mines has been insufficient for maintenance of production and improvement of working conditions. In the Stakhanov mine only three of eleven sections work properly due to poor maintenance. The result is that the pressure to fulfill the plan inevitably involves winking at safety regulations. This was said to have been the cause of the gas explosion a few years ago that killed a large number of miners.³⁷ Beyond life and death situations, twenty-two thousand Donetsk miners work in conditions defined as “high temperature”, and much work is done by hand laboriously and unproductively for lack of appropriate technology.³⁸ All of this also lowers the miners’ wages.

In addition to productive investment, many of the funds for housing and other social services are allotted through the Ministry of the Coal Industry. The lower priority given to the industry in recent decades, combined with bureaucratic mismanagement have increased the squeeze on these social investments, arousing the miners' resentments. Medical facilities in Pavlograd *oblast'*, for instance, are far below the statutory demands of the 19th century, with only 300 hospital beds for 42,000 workers.³⁹ Nor have the recent beginnings of economic reform helped as yet. Coal industries, like other extractive enterprises cannot change their production profile to take advantage of new opportunities to turn out higher priced goods and obtain additional income.

But other factors were at the root of the strike. Along with the frustrated expectations that were felt so strongly, there was a long-festering resentment of the corruption and hypocrisy that had permeated the entire ruling stratum. Two incidents will illustrate this. At the Kuibyshev mine at the start of the 1980s, a *subbotnik* (voluntary workday, usually on Saturday) had been scheduled. However, when the miners found that the materials necessary for carrying out the mining had not been provided and that they would spend their hours underground in idleness, they refused to report for the shift, saying that they were not children to be provided with "busy work". The mine director accused them of being like the Poles: wanting to work less and eat more. Their reply was that they wanted to work well and eat well, and it was the fault of the administration that they did not have the necessary working materials. At this point, the party secretary interjected that if the miners' entire agenda was similar to this, then their next meeting would not be with the party committee, but with a different committee in a different building.⁴⁰

The second incident was more protracted. It involved Iurii Boldyrev and his two friends, Sergei Vasil'ev and Viacheslav Mukhopad. Iurii, a graduate in Physics from Donetsk University, had been an early enthusiast of *perestroika*, and had joined the Communist Party immediately after the 27th Party Congress in the spring of 1986. Together with his friends, he

had sought ways of implementing the ideas of *perestroika* at the Gorkii mine where all three worked. They finally found their lead in an article in *Kommunist*, the party theoretical and ideological journal. The idea was simple. *Perestroika* was a vast undertaking and Soviet society too huge and complex for reforms to be instituted from above. In each small group, a start had to be made in introducing democratic change and civic activism. *Perestroika* had to reach up from below to meet the efforts initiated from above.⁴¹

Iurii was the party group organizer for the brigade that tended the lifts, raising the coal to the surface and bringing the miners up and down. Vasil'ev was the representative to the trade union committee. Together they succeeded in having the brigade pass a resolution that henceforth the money allotted to their brigade from the premia for socialist competition should be allocated by the brigade itself, and not by the administration. The amount was small, some two hundred rubles a month for a brigade of a hundred workers, but it was the principle that was important. Control of these funds and of a dozen similar small funds, as well as control of the allocation of manpower, was the source of a whole system of corruption – the phenomenon of *pod snezhniki*, the infamous “snowdrops” who have entered the public lexicon since the strike. Large numbers of workers – one source estimated it at up to thirty per cent of the work force⁴² – were nominally on the mine payroll, but used as “house serfs” to work for the bosses, repairing their houses or even tending their gardens, opening and closing their dachas in accordance with the season, and even doing work for visiting inspectors, as a way of ensuring favorable reports on the mine.⁴³ The *pod snezhniki* were rewarded for their compliance by being given minor posts and privileges in the elected bodies representing the workers, or as shift bosses or other minor executives. There they served as *gorlopani* (“bawlers” – in the tradition of the hired claque who swayed the public meetings of medieval Novgorod by shouting down the opposition and cheering for the man who had hired them), supporting their patrons in any discussion.

As for Boldyrev, after attempts to intimidate him had failed, he was excluded from the party, charged with political immaturity and overly hasty application of the slogans of democratization, destroying the morale and discipline of his brigade, and undermining the authority of the administration. He was also transferred to a different section of the mine, far from his brigade and friends. A stubborn campaign reaching to Moscow and the Central Committee resulted in his reinstatement in the party.⁴⁴

The result of such incidents was, in the Donetsk and elsewhere, a complete distrust of the local administrative and political stratum that found its expression through all stages of the strike. It was at the root of the strike, and influenced the way negotiations for a settlement were carried on, as well as the specific form of settlement. As Vasil'ev and Krans put it in summing up their account of the wrongful persecution of Boldyrev in the Gorkii mine, "the leadership of the mine destroyed the people's faith in *perestroika* and democratization."⁴⁵ A Kuzbass miner quoted in *Pravda* generalized this theme: "The tragedy is that our own Soviet regime has forgotten about its people. Of itself it is mindful, but not of us."⁴⁶

The leadership (*nachalstvo*) was resented, and the workers had no confidence in their promises. The First Secretary of the Pavlograd *gorkom* was vacationing abroad when the strike broke out, and returned only on the 24th, a week after the strike had started. For the miners his vacation abroad was a symbol of aristocratic privilege and his tardy return a gesture of indifference.⁴⁷ Even when the Pavlograd leadership negotiated with the strikers, their offers were perceived as "insincere, unconvincing, and unclear", and the strike continued until the government commission from Moscow came with the central government's authority to sign an agreement.⁴⁸ There was apparently good reason for them to be suspicious of their bosses, for when a draft agreement was reached after a marathon bargaining session, it was given to the *gorkom* authorities for typing in preparation for signing. In the morning, the miners' representatives who

came to sign, found themselves with quite a different document with several important clauses omitted or changed. After angry questioning, it was admitted that the document “had been edited to eliminate unnecessary repetitions,” but who had authorized the editing, and who had actually done the editing was never discovered. Each official, when questioned, pointed to someone else.⁴⁹

When the Donetsk representatives of the Donbass strike committee went to Moscow to set up a detailed schedule for implementing the agreement that had ended the strike, officials in the Central Council of the Trade Unions told them: “Boys, we’ve shipped soap and sausage to your district, you can go home!”⁵⁰ The speaker who presented this vignette went on to say: “You see how they put things? And if there should be a different shortage tomorrow, should we rise up again? In fact we were deciding more specific questions of a higher order.”

The miners’ solution to this crisis of confidence was blunt and to the point. When the government commission, led by Politburo member Nikolai Sliunkov, negotiated a protocol of agreement on the demands of the strikers, the strike was suspended. Only when the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai Ryzhkov, signed a detailed schedule, assigning specific institutions responsibility for fulfilling the agreement, and dates for the beginning and end of the fulfillment, and it was announced that this agreement had the personal approval of Gorbachev was the strike officially ended. And along with the delegation that went to negotiate with Ryzhkov, the miners sent a group of young *Afgantsy* (veterans of the Afghan war) as observers to see that there would be no sellout of the strikers’ cause. Even this was not enough. On August 3, the Kuzbass strike committee threatened to renew the strike when they found out that construction was continuing at an increased pace on an ecologically harmful hydro-electric complex that, in accordance with the agreement, was supposed to have been phased out.⁵¹

The miners’ success in the strike filled them with a sense of civic competence that found expression in all their meetings and interviews.

The Kuibyshev mine strike committee radiated joy, confidence, and a sense of a new-found empowerment waiting to be tested. A Kuzbass miner exclaimed: "We feel good, this is the first time we've ever done anything like this." The strike committee chairman in Prokop'evsk termed it the real beginning of self-management in industry.⁵² An all-day meeting of the Kuibyshev and Panfilov mines' delegates to hear their trade union committee's report and to hold new elections was notable not only for the ferocity of the attack on the old committee, but for the gravity and attention with which the audience followed the debate and the seriousness with which they discussed matters. There were light moments and there were moments of cruelty when the miners voted to recommend that the former secretary be stripped of his "Order of Miners' Glory, third class", but the order and decorum and the overall atmosphere of scrupulous fairness were notable. Time and again during this period observers commented on the feeling of self-worth and a desire to live in honesty and dignity that was at the bottom of the miners' aspirations. As one *apparatchik* somewhat ruefully put it: "They are seeking to put an end to abuses by having public workers' control over distribution of benefits – something at which we have had very limited success."⁵³

This feeling of competence was not restricted to their own immediate affairs, but extends to national affairs as well. E. L. Zviagil'skii, director of the Zasiadko mine told the Donetsk *gorkom* plenum: "I and my miners sent a letter of protest to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet against nomination of 150 [*sic*] deputies by public organizations. Elections should be direct."⁵⁴ In every sphere, the feeling spread that the worker should have a direct and clear input into the political system, and that the old system that had proved so corrupt and hypocritical had to be radically changed. Alexander Solzhenitsyn once wrote that the Soviet regime was based on mass lies and hypocrisy and that, if for one day every Soviet citizen would refuse to lie or to accede to lies, the entire system would collapse. It did not happen in a day, but that is approximately what took place in the mine strike.

The strike demands themselves were many and varied. The protocol published by *Vechernyi Donetsk* on July 23 contained 47 demands. These demands may be divided into four types. First were demands affecting the structure and administration of the coal industry itself. In putting these demands first, the Donbass coal miners felt that they were more radical and militant than the Siberian miners. The second group of demands may be called “bread and butter” demands. They ranged from pay, vacation, and social welfare benefits to improved supply and housing, cost of living linkage for wages and benefits, etc. Miners, emerging from the pits black from head to toe, were limited to a ration of 200 grams of washing soap per month. Their demand was that this be increased to 800 grams. The third group of demands touched on professional conditions: medical care, occupational disease, responsibility for safety and accidents, and similar questions. Finally there were demands for protection for worker-activists and for strike leaders.

In the historical tradition of Donbass miners’ strikes, each delegation added new items and the list swelled almost endlessly. Many of the demands were items that had been in the workers’ complaints and suggestions to the administration and trade unions for years without result.⁵⁵ Some came as a result of the miners’ perception that their profession had lost standing, and that they were marking time or regressing while other professions were bettering themselves. One young miner said: “I’m not a Stalinist of course, but under Stalin, miners were the best paid, and the best fed. Today many are leaving the profession.”⁵⁶

Two demands dealing with the basic organization of the mine and the industry are perhaps the most interesting. The first demand of the Donbass miners was for full legal and economic autonomy of the mines beginning from January 1, 1990. The meaning of this is that the Ministry of the Coal Industry in Moscow should have nothing to do with administration of the mines. The 1988 Law on State Enterprises was to have given the mines more autonomy, but even a year before the strike, at the 19th Party Conference, a delegate from Karaganda had complained that this law was

ineffective, that all funds were going for production needs, with social needs given residual status, and that less than thirty per cent of a firm's earnings was left for its own use.⁵⁷

Nor should the ministry have any say in the mines' budgets. The state would receive thirty per cent of the mines' income as taxes and the remaining seventy per cent would remain at the disposal of the mines for amortization, development, wages, social benefits and profits. According to the miners, the proportion today is the reverse. In Donetsk, the city's twenty-one mines would form a single corporation that would run the entire complex. First steps in this direction have already been taken.

The miners have no illusions that they have the necessary education or the experience to handle such complex technical and economic matters. They do, however, expect that among their directors and chief economists competent people can be found. In the first instance, the Soviet state will remain the overwhelming customer for Donetsk coal. Up to now, state orders have accounted for ninety-five per cent of production. Gosplan has been instructed to reduce this to ninety per cent in the coming year.⁵⁸ Some of the miners exhibit a certain naivete regarding economic independence of the mines. A member of the Mezhdurechensk strike committee noted that the Siberian miners were lacking refrigerators. "They've promised to send meat to the region. Where will we store it? The Japanese want to buy 200,000 tons of coal from our mines. We'll exchange it for refrigerators."⁵⁹ Others are presumably more sophisticated, but even so, when the director of the Gorkii mine went to Japan to negotiate the sale of 300,000 tons of coal, making use of the new freedom of Soviet firms to develop independent import-export relations, he found that the Japanese demands for low ash and low sulphur were far beyond what the Donbass could supply and he returned without a contract.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Donetsk miners are unreservedly determined to learn the craft of commerce, both domestic and international, and run their mines without Moscow.

The second structural innovation is the demand to begin leasing and brigade contracting as forms of work organization in the mines, allowing the miners to have closer control over the amount they will work and the payment for that work. This had been one of the suggestions put forward by Boldyrev to his lift brigade, evoking considerable disagreement among technical personnel and economists as to its feasibility. Originally conceived in the field of agriculture, such arrangements have been recommended in the recent amendments to the Law on State Enterprises. They would constitute a powerful tool of de-centralization, giving the workers a direct interest in working well. An inquiring journalist found one-third of the miners in favor of having the leasing system introduced into their brigades, twice as many as were in favor of having the entire mine run on the basis of economic accountability.⁶¹ It is being tried now in a number of sections of the Gorkii mine, and the Kuibyshev mine newspaper reprinted a discussion of the question from *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*.⁶²

Although one of the most articulate of the Donetsk strike activists defined his ideological position as “cooperative socialism”, the admiration for cooperatives is far from universal. There was no dispute that the advent of clothing cooperatives had transformed the wardrobe of Donetsk women, adding a measure of style and quality that is obvious to even the most unrefined eye, and in every sphere cooperatives were raising quality standards. At the same time, their high prices, translated in the consumers’ eyes to a high profit margin, evoked ubiquitous protest. There is more than a hint in this of the old Russian cultural trait of wanting to pull down those who have advanced, rather than wanting to make the effort to emulate the successful. The scapegoat in the system proved to be the commercial, non-producing cooperatives, most of which deal in farm produce which they purchase in the countryside and sell in the city. One of the strike demands was the closing of all such cooperatives. This was the first strike demand to be implemented by the local authorities. On July 26, amidst rhetoric about the “justified censure and complaints of the population”, and in satisfaction of the miners’ strike demands, the

Donetsk *oblast'* soviet passed a decree that no more such trading cooperatives should be registered, and that as of September 1, all such cooperatives should cease activities until the Supreme Soviet amended the law on cooperatives. Until then, no bank credits were to be extended to the existing cooperatives.⁶³ Even after this decree was published, the newspapers continued to publish articles and letters in which existing food shortages were blamed on "the legalized speculators."⁶⁴

Reactions to the Strike: The Public, the Party, and Officialdom

No sector of Soviet life was left unmoved by the coal strike. Although local strikes have become a fairly frequent occurrence in recent years, such a mass chain reaction of publicly discussed labor unrest has not been seen since the start of the 1920s.

The first reaction in Donetsk, as the miners filed into the *obkom* square, was fear. A university professor whose apartment overlooked the square told one of us frankly: "I was simply afraid. When I saw them coming into the square I felt I understood the meaning of the word revolution."⁶⁵ As the miners proved their discipline and the strike assumed an orderly form, the square became a lodestone for the curious, who, though prevented from entering the square and mixing with the miners, could meet with each other, observe, exchange views, and argue as to the meaning of the phenomenon they were witnessing. Perhaps one of the strike's most unique aspects was the absence of any influence by the intelligentsia. Not all the observers were in favor of the strike. There were not a few among the Donetsk intelligentsia, and among retired miners, who still regarded the miners as privileged and resented their demands for additional wages and benefits. Others saw the strike as a threat to the whole economy and to *perestroika*, accusing the miners of particularist selfishness. There were, however, others who supported the miners unreserved-

ly, asking "How much can they be expected to suffer?" But whatever their views, these people were merely observers.

In contrast to the public at large, the party and union *apparatus* was intimately involved. As local representatives of Moscow, they knew that the ultimate consequences would fall on them, whatever the outcome of the strike. The authorities' first reaction to the outbreak of the strike in Siberia was harshly negative. The idea of bringing in strikebreakers was considered, but abandoned for fear of "undesireable incidents."⁶⁶ At the same time, word was put out to the local party committees that participation in the strike was considered incompatible with party membership, and it was given to understand that the order had originated somewhere higher than the local level.⁶⁷ In the Donbass, the party line was also against the strike, with the activists trying to convince the miners that the authorities supported their demands as just, but that to strike was wrong. In some regions this evidently had an effect, for the Krasnoiarsk coal workers' committee sent a telegram of support to Shchadov, the Minister of the Coal Industry, stating that in such troubled economic times even the severest problems should not be settled by striking.⁶⁸ However, numerous rank and file members were bombarding their party committees with the demand that the party not oppose the strike.⁶⁹ The result was confusion and paralysis in many of the local party organs, preventing them from creating any constructive communication with the strike committees.⁷⁰

There were, however, exceptions. From the morning of July 18, A. Mironenko, secretary of the Dnepropetrovsk *obkom* was talking with miners, feeling out their mood. Throughout the strike he went from mine to mine, not worrying about "dirtying himself," to find out what was really going on.⁷¹ After the strike was over, the first secretary of the *gorkom* in Mezhdurechensk, where the Siberian strike began, was handed a severe reprimand by the *obkom*. The miners were offended at this, claiming: "He's one of ours. He got his Hero of Socialist Labor down below, cutting coal."⁷² Other local secretaries, however, fared worse. In several Don-

bass cities, dismissal of the local party secretary was among the strikers' demands and, as we shall see later, this was done.⁷³

We have already noted the trade unions' failure when they attempted to attach themselves to the strike, and this was evidently the fate of many of the local soviet deputies and other dignitaries who were rejected by the strikers as belonging to the local establishment. Still others simply dangled in the air. The Deputy Prosecutor of Donetsk's Kuibyshev District complained at the session of the raion committee (*raikom*) that he had been unable to act during the strike because there were "no orders forthcoming from above."⁷⁴ More serious from the party's viewpoint was the low profile and lack of influence of all those "award winners and Heroes of Socialist Labor who usually crowd the platforms," and who were counted on to be the solid base on which the party committees could rely.⁷⁵ Nor were the elected leaders of the Councils of Labor Collectives active in the strike. Suddenly it was discovered that all these cadres were an illusion and that they not only had no standing in the mining community, but were actively disliked.

After the strike, there was a clear difference between the mood of the unions, deep in gloom and confusion and frightened for their future, and the party bodies that were gingerly examining their bruises, but preparing for the next round. The coal miners' union convened an enlarged plenum of the territorial committee in Donetsk a few days after the strike's end, ostensibly to decide how to implement the agreements that had been reached between the government and the miners. The tenor of the meeting was one of bewildered self-criticism. "In the strike, as in their everyday work, the union committees displayed indecision, incompetence, political inadequacy, and a cozy reliance on management."⁷⁶

There were those who justified themselves by pointing out that the strike situation was highly unusual, and that they had been left facing it without any instructions or guidelines from higher bodies. The most frankly realistic was V. I. Efimov, secretary of the Kuibyshev mine union committee, who following a gruelling interrogation that accused him of

bureaucratic behavior, corruption, indolence, and favoritism admitted: “Yes, the strike is over. The train has pulled out of the station and we are left standing on the platform. Our trade union people turned out to be totally unprepared for any such extreme situation. The people launched their attack and charged right by us, and we were left dragging soup kitchens after them. The strike committees are right when they declare that they have no faith in us.” To this, one of his colleagues from the Kalmius mine added, “If we have any honor whatsoever, we’ll all resign of our own, as having failed at our task.”⁷⁷

A short time later an *oblast*’ trade union conference took a broader view of the situation and began looking for new forms of organization and work.⁷⁸ This was no simple matter, for while the official report to the conference stated that the miners’ strike provided a shock that finally made the unions take a new look at their functions, one of the delegates warned that the Central Council of the Trade Unions was already trying to reimpose the old functions and style. “If we don’t revive the function of protecting the workers, then other structures will arise to do this, taking our place.” As though to emphasize these words, the meeting was introduced to V.F. Luchkov, who presented himself as a delegate of “The United All-Union Central Committee of Free Trade Unions.” Claiming that his organization had been in existence for ten years, he asked the plenum for official recognition.⁷⁹ In fact, the Donbass miners appeared to have no intention of founding an alternative system of trade unions, but fully intend to purge and re-activate the existing system.

The party authorities’ response showed an increasing sensitivity to reality the closer they were to the grass roots. The *obkom* plenum on July 31 was held in the presence of an *instruktor* from the Central Committee in Moscow and another from Kiev. The first secretary, who must have seen his tenure endangered by the strike, ventured little further than the comments that had appeared in the central and republican press. The bulk of his remarks and exhortations were directed at the lower levels, with criticism far outweighing self-criticism. His speech was also phrased

in the by-now standard language of new thinking, overcoming remnants of the command-administrative system, and accelerating the tempo of restructuring. His principal points of reference were the resolutions that had been made at the center, such as that of advancing the party's report and election meetings and preparing for early elections to the soviets.

Ignatov's report to the *gorkom* plenum in Donetsk focused far more on the strike itself and the party's performance during the strike.⁸⁰ "Our greatest tactical error was in trying to prevent the strike when we should have been leading it. We all supported the miners' demands. I suppose we were afraid of what the higher echelons would say. That's the old style of thinking dominating us." Ignatov apparently has liberated himself from fearing what *verkhushka* (superiors) will say. He complained: "Both communists and non-party people note a rift between the center and the local organs. We simply do not understand a situation in which the central press and authorities try to lay all blame for failure on the local party committees." With regard to the approaching elections to party committees, he repeated this theme: "We must look upward less in choosing our cadres, and pick those whom the collectives have elected." He also made a point of emphasizing that elected party officials must enjoy the confidence of both communists and non-party people. In this he put himself in step with Gorbachev's innovation that the party secretary should serve as chairman of the local soviet, thus compelling him to win a public election campaign, as well as a secret ballot vote of confidence in the soviet. As will be remembered, a number of high party officials failed this test in the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, and consequently lost their party positions. With regard to the nature of the upcoming (i.e. Spring 1990) elections, Ignatov explicitly called for an increase in "pluralism of opinion and alternative candidacies," points ignored by his superior, Vinnik. Apparently not all the party activists feel able to implement these new values, for in addition to noting the confusion and paralysis that affected certain local party committees during the strike,

Ignatov condemned the tendency of “individual party leaders.” to passivity and keeping a low profile.

In three Donbass cities, the reports and election meetings took place soon after the end of the strike, and in all three the incumbent *gorkom* first secretary was replaced. In all three cities—Thorez, Dzherzhinsk, and Shakhtersk -- the secretary’s removal had been among the miners’ demands. In Thorez, the *gorkom* secretaries made up a list of possible candidates and consulted with committee members. The best candidates were then circulated to workers’ collectives and other authoritative bodies to check on the public response. Nevertheless, when the plenum convened there were additional nominations from the floor. A total of seven candidacies went before the meeting, and in the end five were voted on. It took three ballots before there emerged a candidate who commanded a majority. In Shakhtersk, three candidates stood for election; in Dzerzhinsk, two.⁸¹ In both cases, a winner was selected after only one round of voting.⁸¹ Most certainly this was a change from the well controlled routine that has hitherto been the accepted form for party elections.

After the Strike: The Beginnings of Perestroika from Below

One of the points in the protocol of agreement signed by the strikers and the government commission was the provision that the situation of “dual power” created by the emergence of the strike committees was to continue for only two weeks after the end of the strike. In the Donbass, there was no intention of replacing the existing institutions. Activists of both the Kuibyshev and Gorkii mines were eager to work within the law and within the existing framework, but to give these institutions the function and content that they were meant to have rather than having them exist as empty shells to front for the *apparat*.

In accordance with one of the settlement's points, the strike committees were to supervise the election of the new Council of the Workers' Collective (*Sovet trudovogo kollektiva*—STK), a body created by the Statute on the Work Collective some years ago. This statute had given the STK broad oversight powers, including the right to vote confidence or no-confidence in any administrative or technical official, up to and including enterprise directors. Before the strike, these bodies had been elected in the old way (*po staremu*) and had been a sort of senate for "snow drops" (*podснеzhniki*). When Boldyrev's appeal against his transfer out of his brigade was considered by the Gorkii mine's STK, one of the comments was said to be: Let's get rid of him now—otherwise we'll have ten like him next year. Since the STK was elected by the entire work collective, the strikers' hope was that a democratically elected body would serve the workers honestly, and set the tone for election of other bodies on the same democratic basis. In addition, if an honest STK were to exercise its full statutory rights, including the election and dismissal of all enterprise officials, there was a hope that the workers' life could be improved and the entire parasitic structure of corruption eliminated.

In the Gorkii mine only two of the former sixty-two STK members were re-elected; twenty-three of the new members were strike committee members. When the new STK held elections for a chairman, there were two candidates: I.V. Baranov of the old STK, and Sergei Vasil'ev from the strike committee. Vasil'ev was elected with 58 votes in favor, none against, and four abstentions, while Baranov had four in favor, 57 against, and one abstention.

The Gorkii mine's STK formed four commissions: production and technical affairs, economic reform, workers' control, and social questions. This last commission has sub-commissions dealing with veterans, women, youth, and children.⁸² After the formation of internal institutions, the first matter of business taken up by the STK was the consideration of candidates for the director's post, in keeping with a resolution of the mine worker's general meeting. The Gorkii mine was one of those mines in

which virtually the entire administration was replaced. Despite the fact that the director had doubled the mine's production in the seven years of his incumbency, his management style and preferences were out of step with the times.⁸³ At the Kapital'naia mine, too, the three top officials were dismissed by the new STK, and new officials chosen in multi-candidate elections. At other mines, the directors were given a vote of confidence, while some of their subordinates were dismissed. All in all, one third of the mine directors in Donetsk were dismissed.

At times, the purge of administrative officials was said to have gone beyond the bounds of propriety. The newspaper *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass* complained that foremen and other technical personnel who refused to stop work during the strike, devoting themselves to safety and technical maintenance of the mines, were now being dismissed by the workers.⁸⁴ Repeatedly in plenary party and trade union sessions, we find expressions of anxiety over the strained relations between workers and engineering-technical personnel. In the Mushketovo mine, only one mechanic and two foremen were among the 42 members of the new STK.⁸⁵ This class split found expression in Donetsk society even before the strike. In discussing a candidate for the Congress of People's Deputies, a worker remarked: "He's from a miners' family, and that's good. But he has become an *intelligent*. He's no longer one of ours."⁸⁶

In a whole series of cases, it was said, directors felt unable to function under workers' control and resigned their positions. While the delegation from the strike committees was in Moscow negotiating the final agreement to end the strike, a telegram was sent to the Minister of the Coal Industry asking him to issue a decree forbidding the STK from dismissing any official above the position of a mine section chief (*nachal'nik uchastka*).⁸⁷ At the Donetsk *gorkom* plenum, the city prosecutor, Litvin, complained that the miners lacked elementary knowledge of the law and were illegally dismissing administrators. One of the members of the initiative committee from the Lidievka mine denied the charge, pointing out that nobody had been discharged from the mine. They had indeed been

dismissed from their positions in the administration, but were still employed by the mine in other capacities. The director, described as young and energetic and only two years on the job, was retained at his post. Five others at that mine were dismissed from their positions, including the chief engineer. He was replaced by a 62 year-old pensioner who was interviewed and given a vote of confidence by the STK.⁸⁸

The union committees experienced the same transformation that elections brought to the STK. In the Cheliuskintsev mine, the meeting deemed the previous committee's work unsatisfactory and elected a totally new committee. At the joint meeting of the Kuibyshev and Panfilov mines, the three hundred delegates sat the entire day, first hearing secretary Efimov's report, then disputing it, and then attentively interrogating the candidates for the new committee, carefully eliciting their qualifications and programs. Only four of the thirty-five members of the old Gorkii mine committee were reelected. Throughout this process one could hear the echo of Ignatov's speech to the *gorkom*: "Certain party committees and bureaus, secretaries and trade union administrators, have lost authority with the people. Some of them compromised themselves by immodesty, and abuse of their position...."⁸⁹

The miners' strike resulted in the purging of a whole layer of the lower level party, union and administrative bureaucracy that was, in effect, the foundation of the silent opposition to *perestroika*. It was a layer that Gorbachev and the Moscow elite could not affect, since it was simply too far removed from them and shielded by too many intervening layers. Based on the *podснеzhniki* ("snowdrops") and *gorlopani* ("bawlers"), this stratum drained off energies and distorted policies, whether out of incompetence or from sheer corruption, perpetuating itself and its kind.

What is more, this entire renovation of the administration was done independent of party control. The delegates to the union election in the Kuibyshev mine were elected from among the "firmest, most devoted supporters of the strike." When asked whether the chairmanship of the union committee was not a post that fell under the *nomenklatura* of the local

party authorities, the chairman of the strike committee simply smiled and said that if the party authorities had an opinion as to who might be a good candidate for union chairman, they knew where to find the delegates and were free to express that opinion along with all the workers. From mine directors down to minor union officials, party criteria for selection of personnel were pushed aside. This is something that Gorbachev had suggested on several occasions, but on which no action had been taken. Elimination of party control of personnel is the first step toward eliminating the party's interference in the enterprises' operation. From now on, the Communist Party will have to begin earning its authority among the miners, convincing them of the correctness of policy rather than relying on the threat of sanctions and on its monopolistic control of all institutions. This realization is seeping up from below. In discussing the upcoming elections to the local soviets, Ignatov warned his *gorkom* that they would be waging "a struggle for power, and not simply a contest for a deputy's mandate."⁹⁰

While the new STKs and union committees have been elected and the administrations have been reviewed and purged, the strike committees, as noted at the outset, have not dissolved. At some mines they continue to function as "workers' committees," implying a more or less permanent status that overlaps in many spheres with the competence of the STK. At the level of city and district, they are continuing as strike committees. In mid-August representatives of the Voroshilovgrad, Dnepropetrovsk, Donetsk, and Rostov *oblasts* set up a regional union of strike committees of the Donbass, with a coordinating council located in Gorlovka.⁹¹ The job of the regional union and coordinating committee is to oversee the implementation of the 47-point agreement, and to inform the miners of any problems. It was this regional strike committee, that at the beginning of November, split 14 against 14 on the question of a warning strike protesting the non-fulfillment of the July agreement, leaving the Donetsk miners to hold a two-hour strike as did the Vorkuta and Mezhdurechensk miners.⁹² The declaration urges the mines to maintain their strike com-

mittees and calls for the formation of a national union of strike committees. This is likely to prove a controversial subject because the prevailing tendency in the Donbass was to avoid any possible accusation of forming “a second party” or an alternate trade union of the *Solidarnosc*’ type. Donbass activists admitted that such thoughts were not uncommon in the Baltics, but they wanted none of them. Such an aversion was not shared in the Kuzbass, where the chairman of the Kemerovo strike committee, Teimuraz Avaliani, spoke openly of the need for a “fundamentally new type of trade union, maybe alternate trade unions.”⁹³

The strike committees are also divided as to what should be the primary direction of their work. The chief division is between “economists”, who see the bread-and-butter issues of miners’ welfare as the central object of their activity, and “politicals”, who believe that only a rapid general advance in the process of *perestroika* will guarantee that the old guard will not wipe out all the miners’ gains. Iurii Boldyrev, one of the active “politicals,” campaigned for every mine section to pass a vote of support for Gdlian and Ivanov, the two militia detectives who had come up against fierce opposition from conservatives, because of their work uncovering corruption and their accusations against members of the *nomenklatura*. Boldyrev was also in favor of an active link with the Inter-regional Deputies’ Group of the Congress of Peoples’ Deputies, and with Boris Eltsin in particular. Meanwhile there are a host of different groups whose representatives would be happy to add their own particular political dimension to the miners’ activities. During the strike, the Democratic Union, the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, *Rukh* (the Ukrainian Popular Front), and representatives of groups from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and Lvov all were active in the Donbass, but “the miners dealt them a decisive rebuff.”⁹⁴

The strike created a multitude of tensions in Donbass society. First of all, it did not go unnoticed among other groups of workers. In the metallurgical industry, workers’ initiative groups were formed and began to draw up demands. Their roots were in the workers’ discontent over the

functioning of their STKs, as well as in the example of the coal mines. On August 1, a brief technical stoppage in one shop of the Khartsisk cable and steel factory turned into a warning strike by the workers of the wire shop, mostly women who suffered from excessive noise, dust that caused respiratory illness, miscalculated work norms, and a host of other poor work conditions. Here the party showed that the lessons of the strike had not gone unlearned, and party committees immediately adopted and pushed the demands. The workers presented no less than 800 separate grievances.⁹⁵ Only in one metallurgical complex, in Enakievo, was a strike committee actually formed. The factory director, Iurii Borisov, met with the committee and recognized its demands as just, but asked them to recognize the limitations of the enterprise: "The people's demands are justified and legitimate—that is clear. But the truth is also that over the years, the savings at the people's expense have created a debt so huge, that to pay it in one lump sum is impossible. You cannot give to some without taking away from others, no matter which way the demands are put."⁹⁶

Initiative groups have sprung up in the chemical industry and the coke plants as well, and the strike looms as a weapon to be used by any dissatisfied group of workers. Another strike committee was set up by metro workers in Moscow, Kharkov and Minsk.⁹⁷ In other localities the strike weapon was being used in ethnic conflict as Russian workers in Estonia struck against a law restricting the franchise, and Azerbaijani railwaymen stopped the movement of trains into Armenia. It was in this context that the Supreme Soviet resolved to hasten its consideration of a new strike law and Mikhail Gorbachev prevailed upon the legislature to impose a fifteen month ban on strikes. While permitting strikes in many sectors of the economy, this legislation mandates a cooling off period and the submission of labor disputes to arbitration. At the same time, the new law, adopted by an overwhelming majority in early October, bans such actions in mining, railway transport and other sectors vital to the national interest.

Meanwhile, the coal miners' strike cost the Soviet economy four billion rubles at a time when the government is desperately seeking six bil-

lion rubles from a deficit budget to cover the needs of the most disadvantaged.⁹⁸ In the Donbass, the *oblast'* trade union conference was told that the region's economy is so fragile that another strike would mean not only that the strikers' demands could not be met, but that existing social programs would be cut.⁹⁹

The Donbass miners have won a signal victory for *perestroika*. That victory, however, is only a first step toward reforming the Soviet system and creates at least as many new problems as it has solved. If the miners are really to develop their new-found sense of civic competence into a civic culture, they will have to develop whole new sets of political values and skills within a short time and under pressing conditions. On every side the temptations of power and corruption will beckon. The old certainties, however evil they now seem, will take on a nostalgic sweetness in comparison with the confusions of creating a new political and social system.

In the meantime, as summer turned to autumn and the economic woes of the Soviet Union mounted, resentment of the miners began to spread. Other workers, with complaints no less bitter than those of the miners, were quoted in the press to the effect that, by resorting to the strike weapon, the miners had been selfish and irresponsible. When the Vorkuta miners staged a warning strike at the end of October, other Soviet workers ceased the delivery of construction materials to the Vorkuta mines in retribution.¹⁰⁰ With the assertion by a kolkhoz chairman from the Pavlograd region that "our labor is not easier, but more difficult than the miners'... but they have privileges and we have none," the attitude of the public as expressed in the Soviet press would seem to have come full circle.¹⁰¹

On top of this is the 24 million ton shortfall in coal production that threatens other sectors of the economy. A group of People's Deputies connected to the Kuzbass metallurgical industry wrote in an open letter to the miners: "The labor of metallurgical workers is also not easy, and we understand better than others your desire for social protection and for

justice. But we cannot agree with your chosen methods for obtaining these goals. What has the general strike you organized brought? Production and the economic bases of the coal industry are undermined. An increasingly threatening situation now exists in the metallurgical industry.”¹⁰² While one cannot but admire the spirit and initial accomplishments of the coal miners, the problems they face in the immediate future are far from enviable. Although many of the political consequences of the strike have already come to light, its full economic and social significance and its ultimate effect on the progress of *perestroika* may be much longer in taking shape.

Notes

1. For the characterization, see Michael Burawoy, "Reflections on the Class Consciousness of Hungarian Steel Workers," *Politics and Society*, vol 17, no. 1 (1989), p.#26. To Burawoy's credit, he referred to this as "a potentially explosive combination." See also Ben Eklof, *Soviet Briefing: Gorbachev and the Reform Period* (Westview: Boulder, Colo., 1989), p. 116, where skilled workers are said to support democratization but are skeptical of economic reform.
2. For some figures see Judith Thornton, "Estimating the Demand for Energy in the Centrally Planned Economies," in Robert G. Jensen, Theodore Shabad, and Arthur W. Wright, eds., *Soviet Natural Resources in the World Economy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 299.
3. Until the beginning of 1989, the administration of the industry was further complicated by the existence of ministries in the coal producing republics as well as in Moscow. These were abolished as part of Gorbachev's program to reduce the administrative apparatus of the Soviet Union.
4. *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 3rd ed., vol. 26, (1977), p. 464.
5. Quoted in P.M. Maliavin and A.V. Likhobabin, *Shakhtery-gvardiia truda* (Moscow: 1986), p. 183. Miners speaking to us in Donetsk in August 1989 had much the same complaint. For a graphic description of the technological backwardness of one Donetsk mine see Jonathan Steele, "Shock Waves from the Coal Face," *The Guardian* (Manchester and London), October 13, 1989, p. 10.
6. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989, report of V.G. Ignatov to plenum of the Donetsk *gorkom*. *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5, reports two similar brief strikes in the Pavlograd coal mines of the western Donbass in the spring of 1989. The Kuzbass coal strike of July was preceded by a brief and unorganized strike in the spring
7. *Moscow News*, no. 32, August 6, 1989, p. 8, interview with Teimuraz Avaliani, chairman of the Kemerovo strike committee.
8. *Pravda*, March 30, 1989, p. 1.
9. *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 30, (459) July 29 - August 4, 1989.

10. *New York Times*, July 21, 1989.
11. This information came up twice in conversations with strike activists. Their reluctance to speak about this link was based on a fear that they might be regarded as having taken part in an organized conspiracy, or the founding of a "second party." *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5, noted that the Pavlograd miners were in touch with both the Donbass and Siberia as to methods and demands. In addition, the common phenomenon of the "sitdown in the square" attests to a clear demonstration effect, if not to direct coordination.
12. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, citing report of sociological survey taken during the strike. It is interesting that the report names *professional* solidarity rather than *class* solidarity.
13. Report of V.V. Kurasov, party organizer of the Kalinin mine, *ibid.*, July 31, 1989.
14. Report of Ignatov to *gorkom*, *ibid.*, August 16, 1989.
15. *Ibid.*
16. The solidarity of the strike was not automatic, for according to the secretary of the Kuibyshev *raikom*, there were cases in which miners agreed to work but were dissuaded by visits from representatives of the strikers on the square.
17. Speech of the Chairman of the Donetsk *oblast'* Trade Union Committee to a territorial conference, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 1, 1989. The chairman had evidently not yet learned the new slogan "All that is not prohibited is permitted." Since then, of course, the new law defining and delimiting the right to strike has passed the Supreme Soviet.
18. *Shaktar'ska slava*, no. 29 (858), August 1, 1989. Two weeks after the strike they were still operating there on a twenty-four hour a day basis.
19. The profile of the Donetsk committees is from observation of three committees and from: *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 2, 1989; *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989; and *Shakhtar'ska slava*, no. 29 (858), August 1, 1989. In the Kuzbass, there were eleven strike committees averaging thirty members each. The average age was 37 years, and 82% of the members were workers. Communists were 38.3% of the members, and included 4 secretaries of primary party organizations, 3 chairmen of trade union committees, and eight chairmen of councils of the work collective. See *Pravda*, August 21, 1989.

20. *Pravda*, August 19, 1989. p. 1.
21. Valeryi Samofalov, chairman of the Kuibyshev mine strike committee. The result of the patrols and the closing of alcohol outlets was a reported thirty per cent drop in crime during the period of the strike. The city militia commander later said that any miner who wished would be gratefully received into the ranks of the militia. Similar arrangements were in force during the Kuzbass strike where 450 bottles of illicit spirits and two kilograms of *anasha*, a hashish-like drug, were seized on the second day of the strike. See *Argumenty i fakty*, 30 (459), July 27 - August 4, 1989.
22. After the strike, the engineer was elected to be fully in charge of the shaft, and his superior, who had been on vacation throughout the strike, was told to retire on pension.
23. Shepelenko's story is in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 8, 1989. The young engineer told his story to one of us. Mention of damage is in the *gorkom* secretary's report, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
24. See the discussion among foreign correspondents who covered the strike in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 30, 1989, p. 10; also *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 30, 1989, p. 14.
25. *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 1, 1989.
26. See, for instance, the explanation of the secretary of the Kuibyshev *raikom*, L.S. Butov, in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, July 31, 1989: "The dissatisfaction of the people was linked to the talk of *perestroika* and the fact that in terms of standard of living no improvement had taken place."
27. Some of the data from the survey were published in *Izvestia*, August 12, 1989. Additional details were included in the report of first secretary Ignatov to the Donetsk *gorkom*. See *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
28. For an alternative interpretation, see David Seppo, "Miners' Strike Opens New Act in Perestroika," *International Viewpoint*, no. 170, (October 2, 1989), 10-17.
29. The *Izvestiia* account includes reference without percentages to poor working conditions and inadequate medical care. These are not mentioned by Ignatov.

30. *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 1, 1989, gave the average wage of all Soviet workers as 236 rubles. *Chest' Shakhtera*, the newspaper of Gorkii mine, gave the average wage at the mine as 434 rubles per month in July 1989, down from 458 in July the previous year. Miners, asked about their pay, responded with sums as high as 600 rubles per month. Miner's wages have been consistently higher than average industrial wages since World War II. In 1955, the index of miners' wages as compared to the average for workers and salaried employees was 162. This rose to 183 in 1966, but fell back to 169 in 1975. This index would currently stand at 190, indicating a gain in relative status for miners rather than the loss generally perceived by them.

31. The sociological survey showed forty per cent of the miners with over 130 rubles per month per family member, while 48 per cent have between 71 and 130 rubles, and 12 per cent live at the poverty level of 70 rubles per person or less. The Soviet poverty level was recently defined as eighty rubles per person per month. At the same time it was stated that 45 million Soviet citizens live below this level. This constitutes about 16% of the general Soviet population.

32. See the report of A. Ia. Vinnik to the plenum of the *obkom*, *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 2, 1989, and *Shakhtar'ska slava*, no. 16, July 18, 1989.

33. *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 30, 1989, p. 7.

34. *Moscow News*, no. 30, July 23, 1989, p. 6.

35. For an account of the horrifying health conditions in Kemerovo *oblast'* due to pollution, see *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 30 (459), July 28-August 4, 1989 — fifty per cent of infants are in need of resuscitation at birth; eye diseases are 72% above the national average; bronchial asthma is 7.5 times as high as a rural control region, etc. *Pravda*, August 21, 1989, writes of an incidence of cancer 10 to 15 times the national average, and 50% of workers suffering some chronic illness, 87% of newly-born children suffering either physical or mental abnormalities. See also *Pravda*, July 1, 1988, speech of K.Z. Romazanov of Karaganda to the 19th Party Conference — four tons of pollutants per capita annually, including mercury, phenol, hydrogen cyanide, etc., causing “dead zones” of tens of kilometers around industrial centers.

36. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, July 18, 1989, p. 1.

37. Personal communication to one of the authors from a Donetsk mine engineer. Welders were sent in to set up metal pit supports despite knowledge that there was gas in the mine. See also *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 1, 1989 and August 12, 1989.
38. See *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 12, 1989, and *Vechenyi Donetsk*, July 31, 1989. Indignant miners at the Kuibyshev mine wanted to take us to the coal face to show us the working conditions there, but were dissuaded by their mates, lest some accident befall a foreigner, causing a scandal.
39. *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5. The 19th century standard was two beds per hundred workers.
40. This story was recited to the authors at a meeting of the Kuibyshev mine strike committee. The “other committee” was of course the Committee for State Security—the K.G.B.
41. See O. Ianitskii, “Otkaz ot shablonov, lomka stereotipov,” *Kommunist*, no. 11, 1987, 74-84.
42. See the interview with mine director Shepelenko in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 8, 1989. The figure was suggested by the interviewer. The director’s response was that the mine strike committee was investigating the phenomenon.
43. In addition, the *pod snezhniki* include less corrupt forms such as the football teams or folk ensembles that entertain and represent the enterprise, drawing pay as workers, but concentrating full time on what is ostensibly amateur activity. We are indebted to Professor Schneidman of the University of Toronto’s Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures for this observation.
44. The details may be found in A. Vasil’ev and M. Krans, “Konflikt. Chto za nim” *Kommunist*, no. 9, 1989, 77-85.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
46. *Pravda*, August 21, 1989.
47. See comments in *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5.
48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*
50. S. Naidenov, representative of the Abakumov mine strike committee, speaking at the Donetsk *gorkom* plenary session, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
51. *Izvestiia*, August 4, 1989. In Donetsk, too, rumors flew of renewal of the strike because of non-fulfillment of the agreement.
52. *New York Times*, July 21, 1989.
53. V.A. Zaets, director of organization department of Kiev *raikom* in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, July 31, 1989. See also *Pravda*, August 21, 1989: "The workers have full faith in the justice of their cause and in their own strength. They know their worth and know how to stand up for their rights and their place in society."
54. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989. The number of deputies elected through the public organizations is 750 and not as the paper printed.
55. *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5.
56. Personal communication to one of the authors by G.G.
57. See the speech of K.Z. Romazanov of Karaganda in *Pravda*, July 1, 1988.
58. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 7, 1989.
59. *Pravda*, August 21, 1989. p. 3.
60. For the changes in the Law on the State Enterprises giving more economic autonomy see *Izvestiia*, August 12, 1989. For the unsuccessful export attempt see *Chest' Shakhtera*, August 15, 1989.
61. *Izvestiia*, August 12, 1989.
62. See Krans and Vasil'ev, *op. cit.*, p. 78, p. 83. The conditions of the leasing and the results are not discussed. See also, *Shakhtar'ska slava*, no. 29 (858), August 1, 1989 for the reprint of V. Rutgaizers' article, "Two Types of Rental Relations."

63. The decree appeared in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 1, 1989. Medical cooperatives are also included under this order.
64. See for instance the letter in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 15, 1989, p. 3, and the comments of the *gorkom* first secretary to the plenum, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
65. Personal communication from Iu. K.
66. *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 30 (459), July 27-August 4, 1989.
67. *Pravda*, August 21, 1989.
68. *Zakarpatskaia pravda*, July 28, 1989.
69. Donetsk *obkom* Secretary Vinnik to plenum, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 2, 1989.
70. Donetsk *gorkom* Secretary Ignatov to plenum, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989. Ignatov condemns the mass media for spreading the idea that the party committees were in confusion, but later in his speech makes precisely this charge.
71. *Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta*, no. 32, August 1989, p. 5.
72. *Pravda*, August 21, 1989.
73. See mention of this in the report of A. Ia. Vinnik to the Donetsk *obkom*, *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 2, 1989.
74. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, July 31, 1989.
75. See the comments of the Kuibyshev *raikom* secretary Butov, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, July 31, 1989, and of A. Ia. Vinnik, *ibid.*, August 16, 1989. The fact that this criticism is to be found at all levels testifies to the seriousness and epidemic nature of the phenomenon.
76. Protocols of the meeting appeared in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 1, 1989.
77. The miners at Efimov's mine repeatedly pointed to this confession as a basis for justifying his dismissal a week later.
78. Protocols of this plenum appeared in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 12, 1989.

79. There was no notation in the protocol of any response to this request. The "Free Trade Union" movement in the USSR originated in Donetsk in 1977 with a disgruntled miner named Vladimir Klebanov who was put into a psychiatric hospital for his activities.
80. References to this plenum use the protocol published in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
81. Reports of the elections are in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 9, 1989.
82. *Chest' Shakhtera*, August 15, 1989.
83. For a discussion of the style and record of the manager, Vladimir Prishchep, see Vasil'ev and Krans, *op. cit.* Prishchep was eventually re-elected as director by a margin of 3,319 to 913 after three other candidates withdrew. The strike committee's last minute attempt to organize a boycott apparently backfired. For details see T. Glotova, "Vremia rassudit," *Vechernyi Donetsk*, December 14-16, 1989.
84. *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 1, 1989. This was not the case in the Kapital'naia mine, where the young engineer who convinced the strikers to detail a maintenance and safety crew, and who directed this crew throughout the strike was later elected to a higher post by the mine's STK.
85. See the speeches of both Ignatov and Litvin at the Donetsk *gorkom* plenum, *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
86. K. Bobrova, "Kto vyrazit interesy rabochikh?" *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 4, 1989. The author argues against such stereotypes as *svoi* vs. *chuzhoi*, pointing out the great variety of types within the working class: e.g., unskilled, educated, nomenklaturnyi, declassé, etc.
87. See the comments in *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 1, 1989, and the comment in the *gorkom* plenum regarding the telegram and the fact that such a decree would have violated the law regulating the STK.
88. The exchange appears in *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 16, 1989.
89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

91. The authors have a hand-written copy of the announcement that was drafted by those attending the meeting. It was explained that although Donetsk is the main center of the coal industry, the people heading the Donetsk city strike committee are weak and unambitious, and therefore the center of activity is now Gorlovka. The explanation says something about the internal politics of the strike committees.

92. See the *Washington Post*, November 2, 1989, p. A39.

93. *Moscow News*, no. 32, August 6, 1989, p. 8.

94. *Vechernyi Donetsk*, August 2, 1989, August 16, 1989. Similar phenomena were observed in Siberia, where a young Moscow "journalist," Efim Ostrovskii, busied himself distributing the program of the "New Socialist Party of Russia." See *Pravda*, August 21, 1989.

95. *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 15, 1989.

96. *Izvestiia*, July 31, 1989. The Enakievo strike committee presented management with a list of 700 grievances.

97. *Moscow News*, no. 38, 1989, p. 14.

98. *Pravda*, August 22, 1989. *The New York Times*, September 17, 1989, p. 9, cited Premier Ryzhkov as setting the cost of the settlement at three billion rubles.

99. *Sotsialisticheskii Donbass*, August 12, 1989.

100. *The Guardian*, (London and Manchester), November 6, 1989, p. 10.

101. *Pravda*, October 8, 1989, p. 2. While insisting that they would not resort to a strike, the *kolkhozniki* of this area sent an "ultimatum" to the Supreme Soviet on September 1, threatening that they would not sell their produce to the state without a revision of prices.

102. *Pravda*, October 2, 1989.