

have ensconced themselves in the leadership of the state structures and of major businesses. The bureaucrats have simply stolen their way ahead now in Russia.

The retirement of Gavriil Popov as mayor of Moscow illustrates this. That doctor of Marxist-Leninist political economy from the former Institute of Social Sciences of the CC [Central Committee] CPSU, one of the leaders of the new post-communist *nomenklatura* that has united into the so-called Democratic Movement of Russia, a Yeltsin man, during his short term as mayor became one of the six wealthiest people in Moscow, selling state property for bribes. It is worth noting that the scandal in the Moscow City Council that led to the resignation of Mayor Popov was his article, published in Moscow newspapers, in which the mayor proposed to legalize the transfer to bureaucrats working in the mayor's office, a certain percentage of the value of the state property they privatized, and outlined his approximate calculations on the magnitude of these percentages.

Under these conditions, the position of the United States toward Russia is especially immoral. American aid to the government of Russia is a disservice to the peoples of the Russian Federation. By feeding the anti-popular regime of Yeltsin with dollars, the United States supports former CPSU functionaries

who neither desire nor are capable of carrying out actual reforms and real privatization in the interests of all citizens, so as to provide everybody with equal startup opportunities.

The U.S. and the IMF willingly give credits to those thieving Russian bureaucrats, knowing perfectly well that money from the state budget will be passed through commercial structures into the personal overseas bank accounts of the people around Yeltsin, while the citizens of Russia will be denying themselves the bare essentials, while paying off these immoral credits and working for American monopolies.

"America has no permanent friends and allies. America only has vital interests," one American President said in his day. It would be interesting to know whether—besides those interests—America has an elementary concept of right and wrong. Judging by the current "Russia" policy of the United States, this concept is lacking. That is why Democratic Union went to protest at the U.S. embassy on June 12, on the "Russian independence" day proclaimed by Yeltsin, wanting to find out, when America's slumbering conscience will wake up.

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Misery and criticism grow in Russia

The increase in price and scarcity of food in Russia primarily affects those who are already badly off, such as pensioners. A Moscow research institute investigated how the living standard of old people has changed since the lifting of price controls; the results are devastating. The elderly must pay more than 80% of their pensions just to buy food. Simultaneously, pensioners have had to sharply limit their consumption of milk and meat. Last November, the per capita consumption by this population group was still around 19 kilograms (kg) of milk and milk products and 3.9 kg of meat. By the beginning of this year, it contracted to a meager 4 kg and 1.6 kg, respectively. Humanitarian help from abroad only rarely reaches the needy. In November, only 7% of those who had asked for help had received such aid, and in January it was a mere 3%.

The deliveries of aid from the western countries have evidently been taken over by the old Communist Party organizations. Thus, the German labor group Free Animal Husbandry and Meat Industry in Brussels protested that on the Russian side, the firm Prodintorg is still exclusively authorized to receive food imports. Additionally, the group said, the Russian firm refused to accept the most

favorable price offer, and would work only with those firms that it knew during the time of the Soviet planned economy. Prodintorg is even willing to pay higher prices. The European Community has thus far delivered \$630 billion worth of food aid to Russia.

Reform not thought through

Meanwhile, the agricultural trade unions and the Russian Agricultural Union have sharply criticized the Yeltsin government's agricultural policy. The reform policy of the government, they say, is "not thought through"; it will lead to an "irreversible process of decline of agricultural production, to rural ruin, and the dying out of Russian villages." That will in turn lead to mass poverty and hunger among the Russian population.

As a result of the lifting of price controls, the gap between costs and prices to the producers has increased. Thus a farmer now must sell 473 tons of grain or 208 tons of milk in order to buy a tractor of the "Don 1500" type, three times as much as one year before. Mineral fertilizer and insecticides cost 40-100 times more than last year. However, because of the low purchasing power of the population, the critics say, prices to the farmer cannot be correspondingly increased. This discrepancy will lead to the ruin of agricultural businesses. Wages in agriculture in the first quarter of 1992 are only one-third the comparable wage level in industry, the union critically points out.

—Rosa Tennenbaum