

Soviet people cast vote for reform

For the first time in more than 70 years, voters in the Soviet Union enjoyed the freedom of having more than the Communist Party's candidates to choose from in last week's elections. And the choices were blatant repudiations — a shaking of the structure — of the party's "apparatus."

This unprecedented multicandidate election swept liberalism through the far-reaching territories of the Soviet Union, as victories went to reformers both inside and outside the party.

And the election undoubtedly produced shock waves in the Politburo, dealing a severe blow to the party elite while sending a crystal-clear message that the Soviet people prefer *perestroika* with their Pepsi.

The election was not, however, a democratic free-for-all — though Communist party leaders would have us believe so simply because the voters were given a choice of candidates. Rather, there is no legal requirement that officials rejected by the voters step down from either government or party posts.

This particular paradox may create unneeded stress for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev has suggested that resignation is the only ethical response to electoral defeat, which would result in an exodus of conservatives from the power structure. This would be a true victory for Gorbachev's reform plans. He can be excited that the people have accepted his proposals and that they refuse to lapse back into ultra-conservatism.

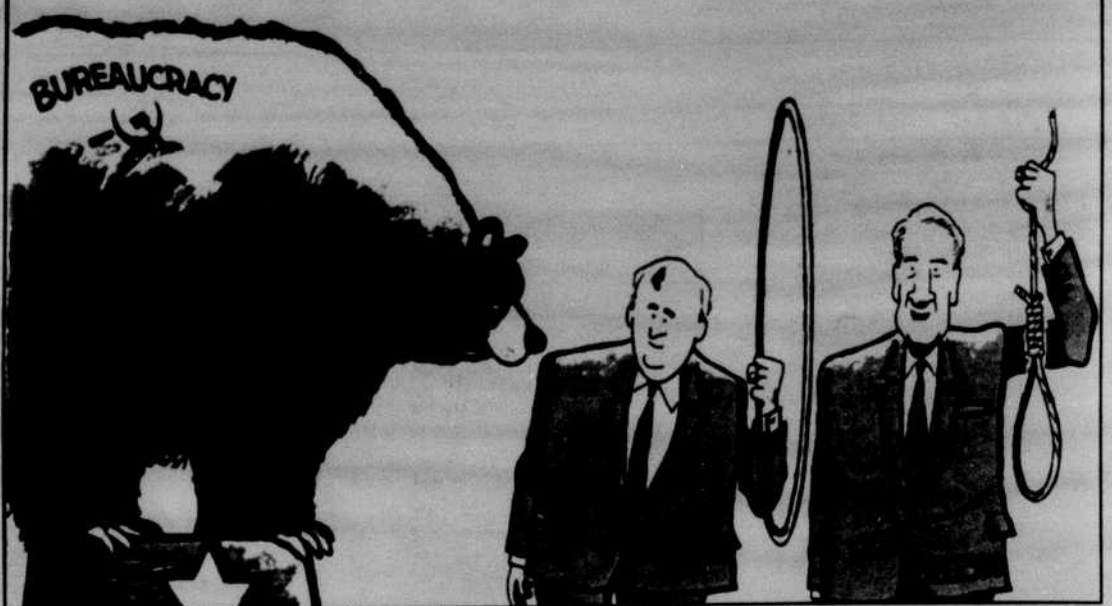
Gorbachev must temper his excitement, however. He must remain a moderately conservative leader and approach reform cautiously. Gorbachev's challenge will be to remain the leader of the reform movement while occasionally bowing to pressure from Soviet leaders who are dubious about his efforts to open the social system. He merely wants to redirect the entrenched Moscow bureaucracy, not destroy it the way former high-ranking Communist Party member Boris Yeltsin does.

Yeltsin, in fact, provided the most exciting and closely watched victory in the elections when he won a seat in the Congress of People's Deputies with nearly 90 percent of the vote. Yeltsin got the boot from the Politburo in 1987 for his talk of far-reaching reforms and deviation from party lines.

And while they swept Yeltsin to victory, the voters also swept Politburo candidate Yuri R. Solovyov to defeat by crossing his name off the ballot even though he had arranged to run unopposed.

It is apparent that party conservatives cannot ignore the signs of the Soviet citizens' discontent.

SKINNY HORSES



'Vision thing' needed for Central America

President Bush's "vision thing" popped up again recently.

The new administration has yet to develop a consistent, cohesive foreign policy dealing with Central America. Evidence of this was shown by the passage of an expensive new Contra aid package at the same time the Bush administration tries to distance itself from the right-wing government of El Salvador that Ronald Reagan so dearly loved.

True, Bush's agreement with Congress ends the home-grown war between the White House and Capitol Hill that has claimed national security advisers as its victims. We hope that the Reagan years will no longer be remembered as glamorous as the Oliver North trial proceeds — particularly because Reagan's overzealousness has brought nothing but suffering to the people of Central America.

Bush's new policy of distancing himself from the troubles in El Salvador might also speed healing in the region; the threat of invasion might be lifted from Nicaragua, allowing Daniel Ortega and other regional leaders to become less dependent on the So-

viet Union for protection.

However, Bush's distance also is somewhat confusing. Bush has signed this new Contra aid deal and we can't be quite sure where it will take us. It's difficult to think of Bush's "vision" for the nation when we can't even see where we're going.

What Bush should do is develop a consistent policy for Central America rather than take things on a case-by-case basis. Communist control in the area is communist control no matter how one looks at it, so the development of a doctrine for the entire region is Bush's best bet.

Furthermore, we are disgusted by the \$4.5-million-a-month aid package for the Contra rebels. The money supposedly will be spent on food, clothing, shelter and medical supplies until February 1990, when Nicaragua is tentatively scheduled to hold elections.

Moreover, the gross amount of funds given to the Contras comes as a slap in the face to Americans who lack food, clothing, shelter and medical care. We need to take care of our own problems before we take on those of other nations.

Letters

Shut up

Imam Mohammed Al-Asi came to town on Monday, March 8 to give the Shiite Moslem perspective on *The Satanic Verses* controversy, and I'm glad he did.

He argued that various passages in the book are very offensive to believing Moslems, and I believe they are. Various things Imam Al-Asi said were also very offensive to me, however, for I happen to believe firmly in at least three principles.

First, I think we should be tolerant of other people's convictions, especially when they differ from ours. Second, I believe we should never harm other human beings. Third, in case of conflict, the sanctity of the second principle overrules that of the first.

When Imam Al-Asi then has the audacity to claim that he is entitled to demand the murder of a man for writing a book the illustrious imam has not even read, I can only shudder in frustration and disgust.

I understand that I have no

right to expect everyone else in the world to accept my principles as moral universals. Nevertheless, for people who in the name of religion advocate brutalities, I want to offer three words of personal advice: Shut up, now!

Pertti Ahonen
History

Adopt plan

If styrofoam producers and distributors are so supportive of recycling efforts, which is a smoke screen to protect their industry, then they should be the ones responsible to pay for the ongoing collection, processing and shipping to guaranteed markets in demand of their product.

If they don't (No, Virginia, there isn't a Santa Claus), then it can be expected that the taxpayers of Lane County, and any other governments that fall prey to such deceptive ploys, will be asked to pick up the tab.

The Board of Directors and staff of BRING Recycling urge the Lane County Board of Com-

missioners, Eugene and Springfield city councilors, and others to support a styrofoam reduction ordinance based on Portland's sensible and newly adopted plan.

Leslie Weinstein
President, BRING Recycling

Sub-standard

In reference to the article in the Oregon Daily Emerald ("Custodian says candid talk on job led to firing," ODE, Feb. 28), I would like to make a few comments.

I was appalled that an employee was fired for doing an exemplary job and for making suggestions that would improve the quality of work being done by the custodians. It seems the complaining and telephone calls to the Physical Plant went unheeded knowingly — that's a crime in itself.

Why the lower standard, I ask myself? What do they gain by the sub-standard? I do not have all the answers. Where is all the money going?

This young man has shown the plant that the job can be

done, but the plant refused to comply to health standards that are paid for by our tax payers.

We are always concerned with safety and health standards, and yet the basic needs are being ignored. What a contradiction!

We who work for the University want to oppose the decision of firing Ramon Contreras. We want him back on the job and many more like him. Keep our work place clean!

Jo. C. Brasells
Eugene

Skinny horses

This letter is in reply to the letter written by Kathy Yonker (ODE, March 9). I have been associated with the stables since fall term. I find letters like Yonker's disturbing because they are not true.

The studs are not "malnourished and underweight," but healthy and feeling excellent. If Yonker saw skinny horses in the barn, they were there because they were losing weight in the field. When you feed a

large group of horses together, there are going to be some that dominate the feed and others that don't get enough to eat. Because of this, the horses in the field are watched, and when one begins losing weight, it's brought in and fed.

While working at the stables, I have cleaned numerous stalls. The stalls are bedded after every cleaning and extra bedding is added as needed.

One question to ask Yonker and others who have written letters like hers is this: Did you try to discuss your questions and worries with the people at the stable? No. This is rude and unfair. If you have a problem with the way someone is handling something, go to them first and talk it over before writing letters. Talk to the people at the stable; they're very willing to listen.

The stables are a place for people who like animals and the outdoors to go. Students and horses have a wonderful time. I would hate to see that lost.

Scott Carter
CIS

Friday, March 31, 1989