

September 23, 1989

USSR: Challenges from Nationalist Reformers in the Ukraine

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Summary:

An analysis of nationalist movements and potential reformist legislation in Ukraine.

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If adopted, a new republic election law promoting direct elections under the one-man, one-vote principle, drafted by an opposition coalition of reformers and nationalists, would spell defeat for many in the party apparatus in the coming republic election.

Shcherbitskiy's fall will make Ukrainian Catholics even more hopeful their suppressed Church can be legalized. Activism like last week's open mass in Lvov attended by 150,000 Ukrainians will accelerate as Gorbachev's proposed autumn meeting with the Pope in Rome approaches.

A draft law making Ukrainian the only state language could, if passed, spark a backlash—like the organized Russian opposition in Moldavia and Estonia—from the 20 percent of the republic population who are ethnic Russians.

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