

**Analysis**

# The future of Russian private farming

by **Andrei Balebanov**

Is there a future for private farms in Russia? It's a question which figures prominently at the moment following passage by Russian Federation legislators of a law which provides equal rights for all forms of property holding, an unprecedented step in post-Revolution Russia.

First, some history. Why should individual subsidiary plots be treated as the basis for the development of private farms? Precisely because under the conditions which prevailed in the country for many years these individual plots existed as the sole form of small production in the agricul-

tural sector. Peasant holdings, cut down to the size of rural farmsteads, nevertheless preserved many characteristics of the traditional family agricultural production unit.

Holders of personal plots have historically been placed in severe conditions of struggle for survival. Here we have in mind, among other things, the problem of adequately supplying the rural population with industrial products. The total experience accumulated through the functioning of subsidiary plots, covering administrative-bureaucratic as well as economically rational methods of management, gives hope

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## Is the establishment going "green"

What might be termed the establishment press — including "Novosti", the state propaganda agency — has begun clamoring for new legislation with which to attack industrial polluters.

The highly conservative conservative daily *Soviet Russia* last week joined the offensive with a surprisingly tough article which, quite even-handedly, blamed present and former authorities for the Soviet Union's environmental mess.

This may represent foreshadowing for a new legislative offensive. At the moment, prosecutors say bringing polluters to trial is next to impossible. And the current system of penalties represents little more than a system of fees.

There is little room for skepticism about the nightmarish state of the Soviet physical environment.

In fact, the list of Soviet horror stories already headlined in the press is a long one, and each week brings new scandals.

In *Soviet Russia* (Dec. 7), for instance, the following harrowing details are offered:

— Birth defects recorded in Moscow maternity hospitals number 1.5 times the national average;

— Infant mortality is 2-3 times levels recorded in the capitals of all other capitals in the world;

— One third of all Muscovites reside in environmentally "uncomfortable" districts, contributing to a life expectancy which places the city 70th on a ranking of 90 international cities;

— Radioactive waste contamination has been found in half the schools inspected in a survey;

— Of every 100 enterprises and factories in Moscow, 75 have no pollution control equipment, a fact the article blames for the high levels of dangerous trace metals in city soil; and

— Incineration Plant No. 3, closed at one point for its dioxin emission levels, was subsequently reopened because officials feared even more the danger of garbage piling up.

And that's just Moscow. The article depicts an even more acute situation in one district of the city of Volgograd. In the Krasnoarmeysk area, the article says two industrial associations are pumping out so much hydrogen chloride that inhabitants have a life expectancy a full 7.5 years lower than others in the cleaner city center. Cause of death is usually cardiovascular, and has been linked medically with the air pollution.

Meanwhile, the "Novosti" Press Agency, recently transformed into a state information outlet, has carried excerpts from a highly-critical report in the *Trud* trade union daily. Headline: "Bribing environmental experts."

The account is based on developments surrounding construction of a new nuclear power plant in Rostov-on-Don. The correspondent outlines conflicts of interest among regulators and planners, including links between a research group engaged to conduct an environmental assessment and the Ministry of Nuclear Power. The article concludes that the "state apparatchiki are consolidating with business interests."

As it happens, the Rostov project was halted, though largely as a result of the power struggle between central government and republican authorities. But what, the *Novosti* report asks, "will happen if [republican authorities] decide to derive profits from all sorts of environmentally-hazardous projects and nuclear power projects?"

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# The future of Russian private farming

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to the development of private farming upon the basis of personal subsidiary plots.

The creation of the first peasant farms in the Baltic Republics and the non-Black Earth zone provides evidence that, in addition to "farmers' colonization" of unoccupied or unused terrain and the gradual transformation of contractual and rental family collectives into self-sufficient farms, one variant for the formation of agricultural structures is tied to straightening the position of the individual subsidiary plot.

Studies conducted by the All-Union Research Institute on Agricultural Economics in early 1990 showed that at the present time three types of private farms have come into being: "consumption goods" farms, for the most part oriented toward satisfying the family's needs in the area of unavailable food products; "consumption-consumer production" farms, providing for the family's financial needs as well as making up for food shortages; and "consumer production" farms, oriented toward producing for the market.

Considering that individual subsidiary plots are one of the most lasting traditions of the rural way of life, which with the urbanization of the village will even more deeply implant itself into the consciousness of the rural population, it is doubtful whether one can predict the full disappearance of farms of the "consumption goods" type. It is more likely that this type of production unit will in the first place transform itself into a personal garden in form and content.

The greater portion of personal plots, around 65%, are of the "consumption-consumer production" type. Such farms significantly strengthen the material base of rural life, creating the preconditions for the satisfaction of various consumption needs. These considerations allow us to conclude that such farms will develop into one of the fundamental forms of agricultural production.

Returning to the creation of private farms in Russia, it must be conceded that this process will be long and difficult. According to the most optimistic prognoses, it will take 15 to 20 years for private farms in Russia to begin showing results in terms of satiating the market with products.

In my opinion the main danger lies in the fact that the realization of the land reform program stipulated by the RSFSR People's Deputies' Resolution depends in large part on the cooperation of local authorities — rural soviets, regional soviets, etc. It is no secret that representatives of these organs of power often include incompetent people, poorly oriented in agricultural problems. In support of this thesis one can refer to the recent "Law on Property" and "Law on the Land" promulgated by the USSR Supreme Soviet, as well as the "Law on the Land" elaborated by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. Many local organs understood these laws in different ways.

Another barrier to the introduction and creation of private farms in Russia will be the absence of specialized machines and the imperfection of farming techniques, in the form of low levels of insuring the rural population with goods and services. This conclusion is in particular corroborated by the results of an early 1990 opinion poll. Seventy to 90 percent of those questioned indicated that their desired monthly in-

come, covering costs for one family, would be no more than 750-1,000 rubles. They agreed that it would be senseless to make more money.

One more obstacle to the creation of private farms may lie in the system of economic measures affecting farmers. Such measures include prices, conditions for credit and taxes, as well as shortages and inaccessibility of many kinds of resources.

Further difficulties are associated with the lengthy process of increasing the qualifications of modern farmers. According to some economists, any intensive restructuring of agricultural production will span two generations. This is tied to the insufficiency of farmers' knowledge.

The People's Deputies' Resolution indicates that not less than 15% of the RSFSR national budget will be appropriated for restructuring Russia's agricultural sector. This means that the Russian government is prepared to subsidize private farmers. However, it is not clear how in practice relations between farmers and kolkhoz (state farm) chairmen will arrange themselves. It is not clear who will have more control over resources, technology and people.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of problems associated with the realization of the People's Deputies' Resolution and the creation of private farms in Russia. Is there a future for these farms? People's Deputy of the USSR and well-known agricultural economist A. Yemelyanov believes there is. Yemelyanov asserts that recognition of the equality of various types of ownership, in particular private property, represents a long awaited rehabilitation of those values which were categorized as alien to the nature of socialism or figured as mere remnants.

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## Trends

### More hard-currency travel plans

The state tourism agency, Intourist, has following the Railway Ministry's lead in announcing a new hard-currency-only policy for Soviet excursions to the rest of the world. In the rail system's case, the move was a fairly transparent pressure play to force the release hard-currency funds to let it pay debts in the west. Intourist says it too can't get convertible funds out of the treasury.

### But non-travellers can now save dollars

The giant savings bank system has announced that Soviet citizens may now open hard-currency accounts at five of its Moscow branches. It's even offering better terms than Vnesheconombank, the traditional keeper of Soviet and foreigner-held bucks, including interest, which the "Vnesh" claims it can't pay because of computer problems.

### Meanwhile, in the courts...

Moscow city court is reported to have ruled in favor of a souvenir vendor jailed for accepting hard currency for his wares, if upheld — and, equally critically, if followed by lower district courts — the decision may imply legalization of hard-currency payment to individuals, and an end to the infamous Article 88 penal code provision which makes currency "speculation" a serious criminal offence.

## Agriculture

### From a bad seed

Losses from cattle brucellosis for the last five years make R800 million. (A report of the current state of affairs.)

Defence of Consumer's Rights, page 3. Length: Medium. 12 06 90.

### Not like making pancakes...

Opinion poll report on peasants' attitudes towards land reform in Russia: 88% of kolkhoz farmers for private ownership of land, but only 13-19% stand for private farms system.

Pravda, page 2. Length: Long. 12 04 90.

## NEWS INDEX

## Business

### Hansatic League

Lensoviet Chairman A. Sobchak is disappointed with the state of affairs at the forming Baltic market. As an alternative he's proposed to create a Hansatic League of Russian, German and Scandinavian cities.

Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Brief. 12 07 90.

### KGB will publish a newspaper

The bimonthly will be titled "Analytic Press" and is going to start at the end of December this year. Two of ten pages will be filled with advertisements, seven - with analytic materials on economics, policy, law, history and literature, and one - with KGB materials including archives.

Worker's Tribune, page 4. Length: Brief. 12 05 90.

### Italian-Soviet Trade Chamber: from words to acts

Italian-Soviet Trade Chamber President Ferrero comments on the development of trade relations between the USSR and Italy.

Economy and Life, No 49, page 21. Length: Brief. 12 01 90.

## Economy

### Economy at the threshold of market

Report of the first working day of the All-Union Meeting of Managers of State Enterprises.

Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12 07 90.

### Association: to be or not to be?

A new financially independent Association "Lesbumizdat" producing paper can easily lose its independence because of a heavy burden of the State order, says the board's director V.A. Federmesser.

Pravda, page 3. Length: Medium. 12 07 90.

### Only sky is the limit

A report of the sky-high vegetable prices at Moscow markets.

Rural Life, page 3. Length: Brief. 12 07 90.

### N.I. Ryzhkov's speech

The Prime-Minister's speech on the current economic situation in the country and perspectives of its development in 1991 under new conditions.

Soviet Russia, page 2. Length: Long. 12 07 90.

### Mossoviet is for privatization of accommodation

On Dec 4 Mossoviet adopted a project of general directions of privatization as the basis for a future decree.

Worker's Tribune, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 07 90.

### To a market - with coupons?

Although the transition to a market economy has many times been proclaimed, the chaotic state of the country's economy gives no signs of improvement due to no decisive steps taken. Instead, we're buying things for coupons if the process can be called "buying" at all.

Defence of Consumer's Rights, page 4. Length: Long. 12 06 90.

### Less meat and more vacuum cleaners.

Statistics for Russian industry for January-October 1990. Industrial production has dropped by 0.4%.

Defence of Consumer's Rights, page 5. Length: Brief. 12 06 90.

### I've a ruble in my pocket

Populist ideas of all kinds are barring possible ways to a normal economy. Politicians must forget their slogans concerning "popular well-being" and become realists. (An interview with I.V. Blinov, economist).

Evening Moscow, page 2. Length: Medium. 12 06 90.

### We won't be able to do without an economic agreement

"Without inter-republican economic agreements the Union Agreement won't be effective" says V. Kucherenko, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Planning and Budget & Finance Commission.

Izvestia, page 2. Length: Brief. 12 06 90.

### And we're going on trading to our hearts' content...

State shops have nothing to sell and black market prices are anything from three to 10 times higher than the state prices.

Moscow Komsomolets, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 06 90.

### A "bomb" for the market

Excerpts from readers' letters one of which calls the existing system of payments "a bomb for the market" due to the system's absurdity.

Pravda, page 3. Length: Long. 12 06 90.

### Agroprom on its way to market: bank and sovkhos

At the editorial "round table" bankers and state farm leaders discuss possible ways of cooperation.

Rural Life, page 2. Length: Long. 12 06 90.

### There is food stuff and bread

G. Popov's press conference.

Evening Moscow, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 05 90.

### Heavy burden of paper money

If no radical measures are taken, the avalanche of paper money will reach R50 billion next year in addition to R22-R25 billion anticipated by the end of this year. Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Bank A.V. Voylukov in his interview talks about the current situation.

Izvestia, page 2. Length: Medium. 12 05 90.

### Economic forecasters say a warm spell is going to set in

Russian MPs discuss Ivan Silayev's report on measures being taken by Russian Government for stabilization of economy and transition to market.

Izvestia, page 2. Length: Medium. 12 05 90.

### Great dealings

Ryazan Commodity Exchange started dealings with representatives of Germany, Japan, Finland, Poland and 14 Soviet Republics participating.

Pravda, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 03 90.

### Ambitions in hard currency

Siberian "Norilsk nickel" concern failed to take control of its own foreign trade operations: deliveries of nickel to the USA are accomplished via "Technoexport" State Agency while quality certificates are supplied by another State Agency "Raznoimport".

Izvestia, page 2. Length: Medium. 12 02 90.

### We'll bow to forest

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Express

Regular

Report on the first All-Union Congress of Forestry Officers: one cubic meter of saw-timber costs \$28 in the U.S., \$32 in Finland and less than \$2 in the USSR  
Rural Life, page 2. Length: Medium. 12.02.90

#### Rates of privatization

The USSR State Statistics Committee report on rates of privatization in 1991: 17,300 retail trade outlets and 6,700 public catering enterprises are planned for privatization - 9% of all state-owned outlets and 5% of state-owned enterprises.  
Economy and Life, No. 49, page 16. Length: Medium. 12.01.90.

#### About the black market prices

Average black market prices for foodstuffs and clothes are 2-3 times higher than state retail prices, for pharmaceuticals - 10 times, for perfumeries - 6-10 times, for cars - 6 times and for electrical household appliances - 2-5 times.  
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#### Why should Lithuania have its own mint?

Lithuanian Government commissions the Republican Ministry of Finance with establishing a mint for printing new Lithuanian money.  
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#### What do we have in our "purse"?

The USSR Minister of Finance Alexei Pavlov is interviewed on governmental financial policy in 1991: "Real tax rates for enterprises will be lowered to 37% in 1991 instead of 47% in 1990."  
Governmental Bulletin, No. 49, page 5. Length: Long. 12.01.90.

#### Health

##### Pay and be healthy

Investments in Russian Health Security System are far behind its real needs, and after introduction of paid medical services few people will be able to afford the luxury.  
Moscow Pravda, page 3. Length: Long. 12.05.90.

#### Birth "by mistake"

The nation's genetic pool is reportedly under serious threat from an annual increase in disabled children's births ranging from 100,000 to 120,000. Of 819 births, 37 are premature, 16 born dead, 121 die in infancy, 36 are deformed, 55 fall ill soon after birth due to immuno-deficiency and 145 are physically handicapped.  
Soviet Russia, page 4. Length: Long. 12.05.90.

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Izvestia, page 6. Length: Medium. 12.03.90.

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##### Rumors are grossly exaggerated

Delays at the main railway freight-yards in Byelorussia are being blamed on two factors: increased supplies of foodstuffs from Europe and the so-called "Abalkin problem" - progressive taxation for increasing wages, which prevents the railway administration from hiring additional workers.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.03.90.

#### Now market is coming...

Report on Scientific and Practical Conference "City management on the stage of transition to market-regulated economy" held in Moscow.  
Izvestia, page 2. Length: Brief. 12.02.90.

#### International

##### Relying on somebody else's...

Interview with I. Prostnyakov, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Commission for Distribution of Foreign Aid.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### Investment

##### Have travelled enough...

The USSR monopoly travel agency "Intourist" will sell tourist vouchers for hard currency only, since the state is not going to give it a cent next year.  
Evening Moscow, page 2. Length: Medium. 12.03.90.

#### Labor

##### Postponed strike

Workers of the major Moscow building contractor "GlavMosStroy" Agency, after negotiating with their employers, agreed to postpone by 10 days their strike of protest against poor housing conditions.  
Moscow Pravda, page 1. Length: Brief. 12.04.90.

#### Unemployment without... unemployed?

How to tackle problems faced under market conditions, like unemployment? Sociologist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada presents excerpts from the third part of his new book "Social Innovations: Prognosis of the Grounds".  
Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Long. 12.07.90.

#### Risk always has consequences

For the first six months of this year the number of industrial injuries followed by death has gone up by 1.6%. Still, the USSR has no appropriate law on labor protection and nobody seems to care...  
Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### Better less but well-done

Report on the USSR All-Union Trade Unions Confederation Soviet session.  
Labor, page 1. Length: Long. 12.04.90.

#### Law

##### Legal guarantee. How about people?

If the "decrepid" communist dogma is not overcome, land privatization will remain an empty declaration on paper, a correspondent contends.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.06.90.

#### New taxes in Lithuania

The Lithuanian Parliament has adopted a number of new tax laws affecting individuals, exempting certain groups (pensioners, for example). One provision exempts company dividends from taxation.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Brief. 12.06.90.

#### Presidential "eight points"

President's amendments to the Constitution may help to overcome the paralysis of power.  
Moscow Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.06.90.

#### Time for actions

MPs have discussed a draft law on the basic principles of social security of invalids.  
Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### On the program of revival of Russian village...

Text of the Russian Parliament's Decree "On the program of revival of Russian village and

development of the agro-industrial complex" signed by Boris Yeltsin.  
Rural Life, page 1. Length: Medium. 12 05 90.

#### How calves butted "starodubtsevs"

At long last the land belongs to its real owners and the author borrows the headline from Solzhenitsyn's "How a calf butted an oak-tree". This time the calf has won, however, despite resistance from many conservatives including Peasants' Union chairman V.A. Starodubtsev.  
Evening Moscow, page 1. Length: Long. 12 04 90.

#### A great day in the history of Russia

Effective Dec. 3, 1990, the land was to be given out to its owners complete with re-selling rights.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Long. 12 04 90.

#### Parliament supports concept of the Union Agreement

Despite the controversy over the draft Union Agreement, MPs are reported to have endorsed the Agreement's concept in principle.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Long. 12 04 90.

#### Russia-Center: Is a love-match possible?

Analyzing two draft laws, the Union Agreement and Russian Constitution analyst B. Pugachov concludes that judging by the proximity between "political philosophies" upon which the two documents are based a "marriage of convenience" should be anticipated rather than a "love-match".  
Izvestia, page 3. Length: Long. 12 04 90.

#### The Presidential Decree on Strengthening Workers' Control

Decree is aimed at establishing an inspection system over storage, transportation and sales of foodstuffs and industrial goods.  
Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12 01 90.

#### Politics

**The USSR President's proposals endorsed**  
Gorbachev's speech on amendments to the USSR Constitution.

Izvestia, page 1. Length: Long. 12 05 90.

#### Currency ruble and "wooden" ruble

The USSR Supreme Soviet standing Commission on Planning and Budget Financing sharply criticizes the drafts of the State Plan and Budget submitted by the Central Government.  
Izvestia, page 2. Length: Long. 12 03 90.

#### How reach "the pass"

Pravda commentator reviews drafts of the State Plan and Budget for 1991 being discussed by USSR MPs in conventional Pravda-style: "United economy is impossible without overall consent."

Pravda, page 1. Length: Long. 12 03 90.

#### About taxes

Report on the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet debate on introduction of amendments to the USSR Law on production taxes.

Pravda, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 02 90.

#### Alternative version of Union Treaty

According to the alternative draft of the Union Treaty proposed by the League of Independent Scientists, the USSR would be called the Russian Republic, would be governed by the State Duma or assembly, the President and the Council of Ministers, and would be divided into provinces with their own senates and provincial armies.

Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Brief. 12 02 90.

#### Arguments are over but no decision yet

Report on Russian Prime Minister Ivan Silayev's concluding remarks at the Russian

Federation Special Congress final sitting.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12 01 90.

#### What will peasant get from an empty sack?

Report on the USSR Supreme Soviet standing Committee on Agriculture discussing the agro-industrial budget draft for 1991.

Rural Life, page 2. Length: Medium. 12 01 90.

#### Retail Trade

##### Who is the GUM store master?

At Dec. 5 founders' conference it was decided that the Moscow department store GUM will be transformed into a joint stock company with a statutory fund of R75 million and 150,000 shares.

Pravda, page 3. Length: Brief. 12 06 90.

#### In the mirror of statistics

At the first of three stages of privatization, nine per cent of all shops will be sold to workers collectives.

Trade Gazette, page 1. Length: Brief. 12 06 90.

#### Bazaar tends to market

Black market survey embraced 71 cities and towns of Russian Federation. Comparative table shows that average black market prices are usually 2-5 times higher than state retail prices.

Arguments and Facts, No. 48, page 3. Length: Medium. 12 01 90.

#### Soviet life

##### Land — to people!

"A&F" opinion poll on the people's attitudes toward private ownership of land involved more than 300,000 respondents. Poll report shows that the overwhelming majority, 96.2%, favor introducing private ownership of land.

Arguments and Facts, No. 48, page 1. Length: Long. 12 01 90.

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##### Rumors are grossly exaggerated

Delays at the main railway freight-yards in Byelorussia are being blamed on two factors: increased supplies of foodstuffs from Europe and the so-called "Abalkin problem" — progressive taxation for increasing wages, which prevents the railway administration from hiring additional workers.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.03.90.

#### New market is coming...

Report on Scientific and Practical Conference "City management on the stage of transition to market-regulated economy" held in Moscow.  
Izvestia, page 2. Length: Brief. 12.02.90.

#### International

##### Relying on somebody else's...

Interview with I. Prostakov, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Commission for Distribution of Foreign Aid.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### Investment

##### Have travelled enough...

The USSR monopoly travel agency "Intourist" will sell tourist vouchers for hard currency only, since the state is not going to give it a cent next year.  
Evening Moscow, page 2. Length: Medium. 12.03.90.

#### Labor

##### Postponed strike

Workers of the major Moscow building contractor "GlavMosStroy" Agency, after negotiating with their employers, agreed to postpone by 10 days their strike of protest against poor housing conditions.  
Moscow Pravda, page 1. Length: Brief. 12.04.90.

#### Unemployment without... unemployed?

How to tackle problems faced under market conditions, like unemployment? Sociologist Igor Bestuzhev-Lada presents excerpts from the third part of his new book "Social Innovations: Prognosis of the Grounds".  
Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Long. 12.07.90.

#### Risk always has consequences

For the first six months of this year the number of industrial injuries followed by death has gone up by 1.6%. Still, the USSR has no appropriate law on labor protection and nobody seems to care...  
Worker's Tribune, page 2. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### Better less but well-done

Report on the USSR All-Union Trade Unions Confederation Soviet session.  
Labor, page 1. Length: Long. 12.04.90.

#### Law

##### Legal guarantee. How about people?

If the "decrepid" communist dogma is not overcome, land privatization will remain an empty declaration on paper, a correspondent contends.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.06.90.

#### New taxes in Lithuania

The Lithuanian Parliament has adopted a number of new tax laws affecting individuals, exempting certain groups (pensioners, for example). One provision exempts company dividends from taxation.  
Izvestia, page 1. Length: Brief. 12.06.90.

#### Presidential "eight points"

President's amendments to the Constitution may help to overcome the paralysis of power.  
Moscow Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.06.90.

#### Time for actions

MPs have discussed a draft law on the basic principles of social security of invalids.  
Pravda, page 1. Length: Medium. 12.05.90.

#### On the program of revival of Russian village...

Text of the Russian Parliament's Decree "On the program of revival of Russian village and