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Reformers win across Slavic region; Yeltsin wins Russian legislative seat

MOSCOW - Candidates who want faster reform won elections across the nation's Slavic heartland and Boris Yeltsin easily gained a legislative seat in the Russian republic, unofficial returns indicated Monday.

Yeltsin has said he will seek the presidency of the republic, which traditionally means a place on the Communist Party's ruling Politburo. That could return the Communist maverick to the membership he lost in February 1988 for advocating speedier change.

Leaders of popular movements in the Ukraine and Byelorussia, an outspoken television commentator in Leningrad and a defiant editor in Moscow also appeared to have won in Sunday's local and republic elections.

"We're so happy! Such success!" said Irina Rozhenko of the Ukrainian pro-democracy movement Narodny Rukh.

Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the vast Russian republic account for 80 percent of the Soviet Union and more than two-thirds of its 290 million people.

Most of the 1,800 contests for seats in the legislatures of the three republics remained undecided, with no candidate getting the required majority. State TV said fewer than 15 percent were resolved in the Russian republic.

Activists said strong showings in this round nearly guaranteed victories in runoff elections for candidates who want to step up the pace of reforms begun by President Mikhail Gorbachev. The runoffs are expected in two weeks.

Defeat of old guard local Communist leaders probably would help

Gorbachev's liberalization. He has railed against functionaries who hamper reform, and people hoping to exercise new economic freedoms have told of crippling obstacles erected by local party officials.

Ukraine party chief Vladimir Ivashko, considered a moderate protégé of Gorbachev, qualified for a runoff against an opponent backed by the Narodny Rukh pro-democracy group. Vitaly Vorotnikov, president of the Russian republic, defeated a lone opponent in the city of Krasnodar, winning 71.3 percent of the votes cast.

Both are members of the Politburo.

Preliminary figures showed Yeltsin, who has said he will challenge Vorotnikov for the republic presidency, got 72 percent of the vote in his district of Sverdlovsk in the Ural Mountains. He defeated 11 other candidates, said Anatoly Moiseyev of the Russian Federation Election Commission.

Narodny Rukh members said the movement's leader, poet Ivan Drach, was elected in the first round along with several other prominent activists.

Zyanon Paznyak, leader of the Byelorussian People's Front, got 59 percent of the vote in his Minsk district, said spokesman Victor Ivashkevich. He said activist candidates appeared to have carried cities but party "apparatchiks," including Byelorussian party chief Yefrem Sokolov, won rural districts.

In Leningrad, Bella Kurkova, controversial commentator of the television program "Fifth Wheel," appeared to be the only first-round winner, said IMA Press, an official youth news

agency. "Fifth Wheel" is a public affairs program that includes long segments about politics and such social problems as crime and poor living conditions.

Despite Leningrad's reputation as a conservative bastion, pro-democracy candidates dominated the elections, said Yelena Velinskaya, editor of IMA Press. She said only two of about 150 candidates supported by the ultra-right nationalist group Pamyat survived the first round.

Vladislav Starkov, editor of the country's most popular newspaper, Arguments and Facts, was reported the winner of a seat to the Russian republic's parliament.

Starkov ignored a strong suggestion from Gorbachev that he quit last year after the paper, which has a circulation of 33 million, printed results of a poll implying human rights activist Andrei Sakharov was more popular than Gorbachev.

Unofficial reports said well-known dissident Sergei Kovalyov also won a seat in the Russian parliament.

Nearly 150 million voters were registered to vote Sunday and more than 11,000 candidates vied for 1,800 seats in the three republic legislatures and thousands more places on local governing councils. Official results are expected today.

Official reports said 86 percent of the candidates in the Russian elections and 80 percent in the Ukraine were members of the Communist Party.

Gorbachev, who was not a candidate, described the elections as a battle between reformers and entrenched bureaucrats, and added: "I am convinced that perestroika will win."



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R e g i s t e r N o w

Kohl defends position on border

BONN, West Germany - Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Monday defended his demand that a guarantee of Poland's border be linked to Warsaw's renunciation of war reparations, saying Poland has been demanding compensation for forced laborers used in the Third Reich.

In East Berlin, meanwhile, Communists and opposition parties agreed to submit a broad social charter to lawmakers in both Germanys designed to protect East Germans against social hardships once the countries merge under a capitalist system.

The charter, adopted at weekly negotiations between the Communists and 15 opposition groups, demands that the right to work and the right to accommodation be enshrined in the constitution of a united Germany.

It also calls for guarantees of democratic and humane working conditions, education and health services for all, protection of pensions, equality of the sexes, and social integration for the disabled.

Kohl's refusal to give Poland guarantees about its border has led to a widening split with Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and the two met privately Monday to discuss the issue. Results of the meeting were not made public.

Genscher has been saying that West Germany must make clear to its neighbors that a unified Germany would not be a threat.

"This not only concerns Poland's trust, but that of all Europeans," he told the ZDF television network.

Kohl has said he has no designs on land ceded to Poland after the Third Reich's defeat -- about a third of modern-day Poland.

But he has insisted that only the government of a united Germany could have final say on the matter. Kohl faces West German elections in December and is apparently concerned about losing the conservative vote.

Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki has called on both Germanys to begin negotiations on a treaty that would recognize the Oder and Neisse rivers, which currently form the border, as the permanent boundary between Poland and Germany.

On Friday, Kohl said such a treaty would have to be tied to Poland's 1953 renunciation of war reparations and of its pledge last year to protect the ethnic rights of its German minority.

Kohl's demands produced astonishment in

Warsaw and harsh criticism from politicians at home.

The chancellor, trying to justify his demands, said Monday that since 1987, Poland has been raising the topic of compensation for Poles sent to Nazi labor camps during World War II.

Kohl also said he would oppose signing a peace treaty as a means of settling the border

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This not only concerns Poland's trust, but that of all Europeans.

*Genscher
W. German Foreign Minister*

issue. No World War II peace treaty was ever signed.

In East Berlin, opposition minister Gerhard Poppe said the new social charter, once adopted by the East German parliament, should serve as the basis for East Germany's negotiations with its capitalist neighbor on economic, monetary and social union.

He said the charter also would be presented to the West German Bundestag for discussion.

According to the charter, unification should be based on "reforming of both German social security systems, to perfect the positive points of both."

Single parents, large families, pensioners and the disabled should receive special advantages, the document said.

Delegates also urged guarantees to protect East Germans' personal property and savings.

The proposed social charter comes less than two weeks before East Germany's March 18 elections for a new parliament.

East Germans traditionally have viewed their social security network as the paramount achievement of more than 40 years of Communist rule, and they are nervous about what might happen to them under a capitalist system.

East Germans in general know little about West Germany's social security network, viewed as one of Western Europe's most generous.

The conservative Alliance for Germany, backed by Kohl's Christian Democratic Union, appealed to voters not to fear the switch to capitalism.