

27/3

 *
 *
 * THE 'SHIELD' OFFICERS UNION *
 *

*P. file
 CR*

From: Chris Donnelly
 Sovietologist-in-Residence

13 March 1990

Comment:

I am circulating the attached translation for your interest. The formation of the 'Shield' (Russ: Shchit) organization reflects very serious concern within the Armed Forces about the progress of events in the USSR and in the military system. It is evidence of strong Russian nationalist and a-political feelings within the officer corps.

2198/SIR398
 DONNELLY/13.03.90

The following is a translation of the platform programme of the informal organisation "Shield" - the union for social protection of servicemen, those liable for military service and members of their families

The Army, like society as a whole, is going through a serious crisis. Present principles of military development (stroitel'stvo) are not producing optimum results in the SAF.

Existing public institutions in the army are almost bereft of rights. Social protection of servicemen is deficient, their legal awareness is low.

One-man command on a party-basis cannot be justified. It creates conditions ripe for the development of bureaucratism, leads to the growth of protectionism, corruption, arbitrariness, and the spread of mutual guarantees. It imitates perestroyka, slowing down the process of building an army in a socialist state based on the rule of law.

Social tension in the army is rising steadily. It has become absolutely vital to redistribute functions among commanders, political workers and army public organisations in order to broaden the latter's rights and functions connected with restructuring of the political and economic system.

Unions of servicemen which enjoy the support of society and state have shown in a number of countries that that they are in practice a proven form of social protection for servicemen and members of their families.

Based on the above, the independent, public organisation "Shield" sets itself the following aims.

- the broad distribution of its ideas, views and opinions.
- to galvanise and democratise public consciousness in the SAF. The development of glasnost', the fight against suppression of the real state of affairs in the army and navy.
- the creation of primary organisations of "Shield" along trade union lines at unit, regional and republican level, with a communications net and information concentrated at the centre.
- the social defence of servicemen, those liable for military service and members of their families.
- the passing of a USSR law preventing the use of military force

against people of the USSR and peoples of other countries. The use of military force is a crime against humanity.

- to create conditions for developing a new type of army - one in a state based on the rule of law.

"Shield" supports and in principle shares the platform of the interregional group of the USSR's people's deputies, including its proposals for reforming the SAF.

Developing the country's defence should in today's conditions be founded on three main principles.

1. The principle of reasonable sufficiency.
2. Preparations for the gradual transition to a new type of army - one of a socialist state based on the rule of law, with a significant reduction of its numbers.
3. "One man command" cannot be justified on a party basis. It should therefore be substituted by "one man command" on a legal basis.

We believe that it is essential to take a series of urgent measures to change the conditions of military service.

1. Cut radically the numbers of generals, and MOD's apparatus.
2. Limit significantly the functions of the political organs at divisional and army level, and abolish completely the institution of company political workers.
3. Reduce the size of the officer corps and other categories of servicemen, under effective public control. In the case of cuts to the officer corps, provide officers with re-training prior to their discharge to the reserve.
4. Significantly and radically increase servicemen's salaries using funds freed by reductions to the size of the SAF.
5. Free the army from unsuitable functions (helping to bring in the harvest, and work on organising public services ...) except in the case of clearing-up operations after serious accidents and natural disasters.
6. Transfer the centre of gravity of training away from senseless drill and fatigues duties to the raising of combat, physical and specialist training.
7. Reduce conscripts' term of service, and increase their pay.
8. Introduce alternative service for conscripts.

9. Achieve real concern, not in words but in practice, for servicemen, those liable for military service and members of their families. Take concrete measures to satisfy their needs and requirements.
10. Show concern for the families of conscripts.
11. The creation of a "quick reaction" fund to provide material help to the needy or those who have suffered, on the basis of profit from enterprises belonging to "Shield". The creation of such enterprises will partly solve the problem of unemployment for families of servicemen in garrisons.
12. Participation in call-up commissions.

"Shield" sees the achievement of its aims in actions performed in strict accordance with the USSR's constitution and laws. We decisively reject any form of violence in the struggle for the rights of servicemen, those liable for military service, and their families, as well as strikes, go-slows and other forms of illegal action as unacceptable for the SAF.

To realise our proclaimed goals, we are ready to co-operate with any public organisations, parties and movements which do not advocate violence, Nazism, or chauvinism, as well as with all state government organs, departments, institutions and enterprises.

"Shield" sees the following ways for developing a new type of army:

1. The study, analysis and maximum use of progressive concepts and alternative projects for reforms of military development (stroitel'stvo).
2. The change of principles of military development (stroitel'stvo), the optimisation of organisational structures in the SAF, the reduction of personnel numbers in order to raise the professional qualities of servicemen.
3. The strengthening and development of the principles of "one man command" on a legal basis in combat, in training, and in the performance of combat missions.
4. The democratisation and humanising of the SAF. The further development of glasnost', freedom of thought, improvement of the electoral system for people's deputies in units and sub-units. The granting to councils of people's deputies of every

opportunity for controlling the social and living spheres of forces' activity - for this they must be granted the right of unhindered entry into all units located on the territory of a given council. The drawing up and universal discussion of alternative draft laws on defence and all-arms regulations on the SAF.

5. We see a new type of army free of bureaucratic arbitrariness, in which shameful phenomena such as protectionism, nationalism, and barrack-room hooliganism are eradicated, as well as outrages against the honour and dignity of servicemen, those liable for military service and members of their families.

We believe that it is only through the realisation of these aims that the SAF's former prestige and universal respect can be returned.

Passed at the constituent congress of "Shield"
Moscow October 22 1989

SSRC/JBKL

1/90