Armenians block Russian pullout

Karabakh survivors flee to mountains

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN AGDAM

ing Nagorno-Karabakh have been wantonly killed by Armenian forces, refugees arriving in the Azerbaijani regional centre of Agdam said yesterday. The claim came as the Soviet garrison in the disputed enclave was preparing to pull out yesterday on orders from Moscow.

But facing an infuriated and hysterical Azerbaijani population, convinced that the Russians had a hand in the mass killings, the Russians appear to have delayed their withdrawal last night. There are fears that crossing through Agdam to the safety of their local headquarters in with Azerbaijani forces.

Last night a Russian column of troops made its way to Stepanakert, the main city in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, to help assist the former Soviet military's 366 Motorised Infan-

try Regiment to leave the disputed territory. But reports reaching Agdam said that the local Armenian population there was preventing the garrison from leaving.

The reports also said that there had been exchanges of gunfire in the city. One possibility is that the Armenians are hoping to extract equipment from the garrison in return for safe passage.

Before the Armenian attack and seizure of Khodjaly last week, the town had a population of about 5,000. But fewer than a thousand have so far reached Agdam, local officials said. Survivors claimed that many may have been Ganja could lead to a clash taken prisoner. Of those still alive, they said, most will eventually succumb to the lack of food in the snowcovered mountains where they had fled. Their relatives begged the West for help.

Geyush Gassanov, the deputy mayor of Khodjaly, said

Country

nouse

conference

venues

in the

middle of

London.

Not in the

middle of

nowhere.

- EXCLUSIVE HOTELS -

THE HAMPSHIRE LEICESTER SQUARE.

THE BERKSHIRE OXFORD STREET.

THE EDWARDIAN INTERNATIONAL

HEATHROW.

- DELUXEHOTELS -

THE MOUNTBATTEN COVENT GARDEN.

THE MARLBOROUGH BLOOMSBURY.

- TRADITIONAL HOTELS -

THE GRAFTON TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.

THE VANDERBILT CROMWELL ROAD.

THE KENILWORTH BLOOMSBURY.

EDWARDIAN

HOTELS

London's country houses

THE EDWARDIAN RADISSON GROUP

FOR RESERVATIONS AND FURTHER

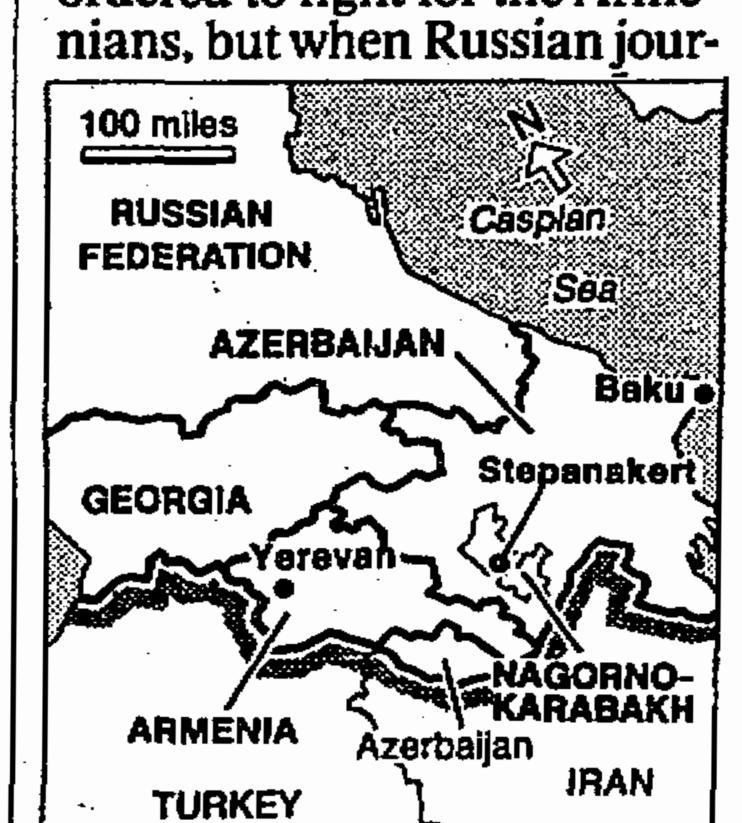
that Armenian troops surrounded the town after 7pm on Tuesday. They were accompanied by light tanks. "We thought that they would just bombard the village, as they had in the past, and then retreat. But they attacked, and our defence force couldn't do anything against their tanks."

Other survivors described how they had been fired on repeatedly on their way through the mountains to safety. "For two days, we crawled most of the way to avoid the gunfire," Shukru Aslanov said. His daughter was killed in the battle for Khodjaly, and his brother and son died on the road.

Ramiz Mahmedov, a farmer, said that his wife was shot in both legs and had bled to death near the hilltop where I saw a litter of corpses. Others said that whenever they tried to leave the forest refuge, the Armenians would fire and drive them back again.

Reports of other atrocities abound, though they are hard to verify. The eyes of one dead man appeared to have been gouged out, although this could have been the result of a bullet through the head. The bitter cold has been the other main killer. In an improvised hospital train at Agdam station, a boy of 13 from Khodjaly, Boris Hamidov, decribed how he had watched from the edge of the forest as his mother was taken prisoner. He spent three days in the mountains with nothing to eat.

Every Azerbaijani refugee from Khodjaly I interviewed believed that Soviet troops had been involved in the mass killings. A group of Soviet deserters from the 366 Motorised Infantry Regiment said on Azerbaijan television that they had been ordered to fight for the Arme-



nalists had interviewed them a week earlier, they had expressed their fears of "being The prosecution maintains drawn into a conflict".

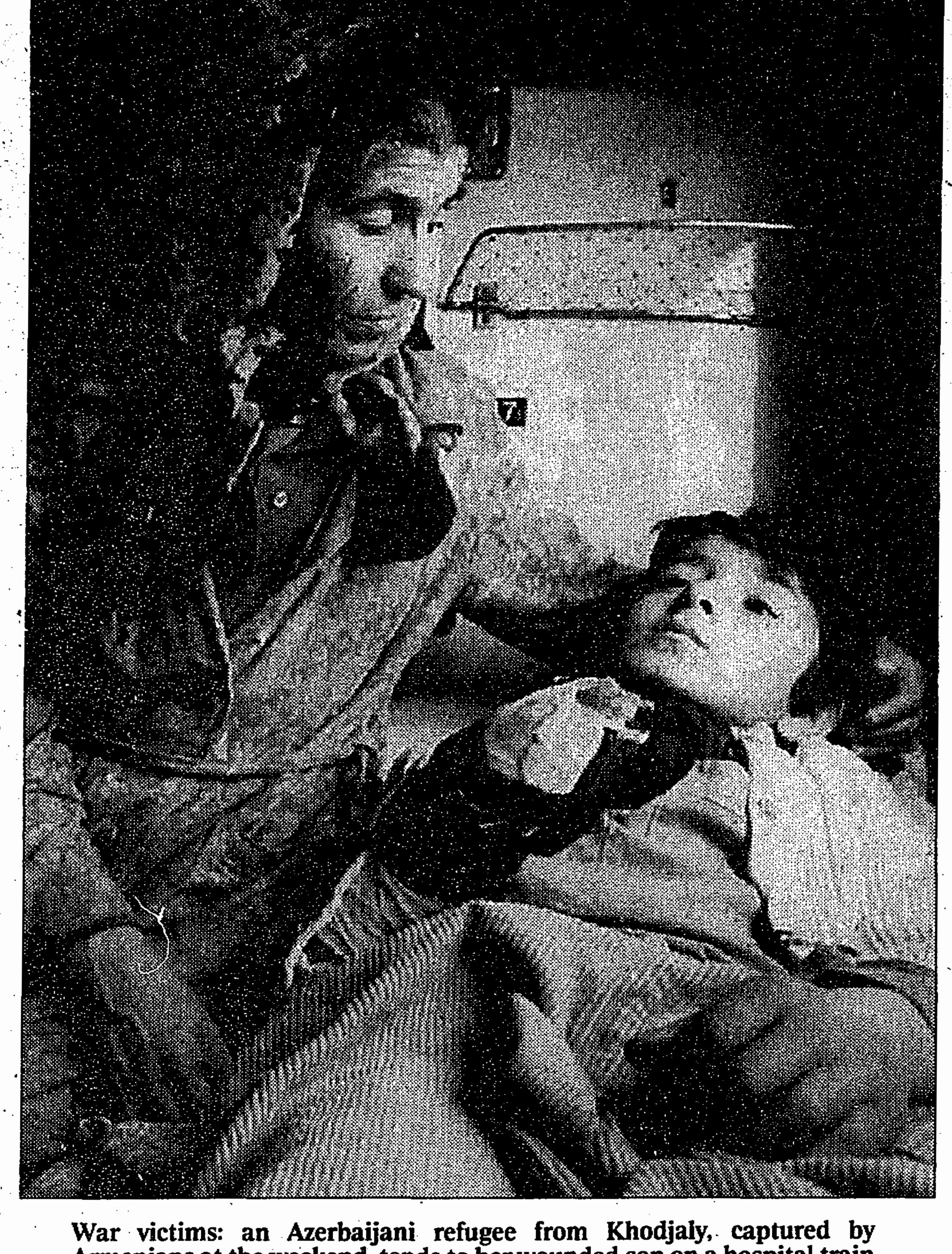
The Azerbaijani government has repeatedly accused Soviet troops of involvement, possibly in an attempt to find excuses for the serious military defeat, one which could threaten the survival of President Mutalibov.

Part of the reason for Armenian successes in the ongoing civil war lie in their better organisation, discipline and training. They have almost certainly bought most of their equipment from Soviet soldiers in return for dollars provided by the Armenian diaspora.

On the Azerbaijani side, the disorganisation of their forces is very apparent in Agdam, their headquarters for the eastern side of Karabakh. Different armed groups seem

If and when the Soviet 366 Motorised Infantry withdraws through Agdam on its way to Ganja, they will have to face Azerbaijani forces who have already taken up positions to supervise the pullout. In view of the tension, the possibility of a clash with the Russians now seems high.

Under fire, page 1



Armenians at the weekend, tends to her wounded son on a hospital train

Secret police chief's Berlin trial turns into a free show

Anne McElvoy in

Berlin reports on

the 60-year-old

charges against

calculation of time after

BERLIN's greatest free show is being played out in the unlikely surroundings of Moabit court, where Erich Mielke, formerly head of East Germany's secret police, is on trial. Tired of constant requests from spectators for directions, court officials have given him special billing on the board downstairs: "Erich Mielke, Room 700. No ques-

tions answered here." Herr Mielke is being tried not for his crimes in the East difficult and inconclusive to investigate — but for the murder of two policemen in 1931 outside the headquarters of the Communist party. The defence claims the case is out of date and that the testimony of witnesses gathered in 1934 was obtained using torture. that the case is still current because the 41 years of East

Germany's existence as

state are excluded from the

AFTER a weekend of in-

fighting and insults, the lead-

ers of Ukraine's nationalist

movement, Rukh, yesterday

patched up their quarrels

over the movement's role in a

niqué signed yesterday and

agreed by Rukh's three lead-

ers, the group, the most pow-

erful political force in the

republic, declared that it will

campaign for Ukraine's with-

drawal from the Russian-

dominated and newly found-

ed Commonwealth of Inde-

from Moscow", rather than

economic collapse, were de-

fined as the leading threats to

Ukraine's nascent statehood.

Russian nationalism and

In a compromise commu-

post-Soviet world.

pendent States.

Ukraine nationalists

aim for breakaway

FROM ROBERT SEELY IN KIEV

Erich Mielke, who later ran the Stasi

which a case lapses. While counsel bandy legal arcana, the public and media are more interested in Herr Mielke's court performance. Slouched behind bullet-proof glass in the dock, he has engaged in a panoply of antics apparently aimed at hold-

ing up the proceedings. Having initially appeared in court wearing a synthetic leather hat — a relic of East Germany's fashion industry — he was ordered to remove it by the judge, Theodor Seidel. He continued to moan softly for the rest of the day: "They

"If we cannot develop power

in Ukraine, our country will

remain a vessel for everybody

to pursue their own interests

in," Ivan Drach, Rukh's co-

Other speakers at the three-

day conference, the first since

Ukraine's independence in

December, spoke of plots

being hatched by senior

members of the KGB and

former Communists who, ac-

cording to one MP, are trying

to undermine the republic

militarily and block the intro-

duction of a Ukrainian cur-

rency. President Kravchuk,

who addressed the conference

on Friday, spoke of the dan-

nationalists.

chairman, said.

back my property."

was once again behatted. Herr Seidel merely sighed. "I did order you to take it off, but I am not going to order the use of violence against an 84year-old man," he said and tried instead to elicit basic details from Herr Mielke.

have done nothing. I want out of here. It's evil treachery. everything." He slid so far down in his seat that only his headgear remained visible and his lawyer had to check whether his client was still

sisting that Herr Mielke is senile and that the case should not be heard at all. Heinz Dahlheimer, a prosecution lawyer, dismissed the claim. The state of Herr Mielke's mental health is a matter on which not even the two psychologists called to appraise it could agree. The first declared him unfit for a court case; the second said that, while he appeared "mentally confused" when

lawyers. chologist, Herr Mielke took to trying to hide under the bed. Defence and prosecution are at odds as to whether that indicates senility or the tacti-

The proceedings are fregers of condemning Russian | Mielke's mumbled "I have democrats only to see them | done nothing" with: "I suffered under you. You ruined replaced by xenophobic

have stolen my hat, give me

The next day, however, he

The defendant growled: "I raise objection against

To the clear irritation of the judge, the defence is still in-

being questioned by psychologists, he showed no signs of disorientation while in conversation with his family and

On the approach of a psycal skill expected of a cornered secret-police chief.

quently interrupted by disturbances from the public gallery. One young woman was bundled out yesterday when she shouted that the use of evidence gathered under the National Socialist regime made this "a Nazi trial". Another was silenced after responding loudly to Herr

Moscow embarks on big selling

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

spree

ong queues reap-Lepeared in Moscow at the weekend for bread, milk and petrol just days after the Russian government's announcement of the abolition of most remaining price controls.

No date has been set for the removal of subsidies, which will remain only on baby food, medicine and local government rents and repairs.

The reappearance of long queues and renewed panic-buying provided a sharp reminder of the situation before most subsidies were lifted on January 2. They came at the end of a month in which the consumer situation in Moscow has taken a turn for the better, if in unexpected ways.

In that time the city has become a giant, and uncontrolled, bazaar. The price liberalisation has slowly helped to bring an unheard-of variety and quantity of goods, especially food, into the shops. Generally, queues have been remarkably shorter.

The plentitude results L also from the lifting of regulations about who may trade and where. The black market is coming into the open. These days most of Moscow's workforce seems to be crowded onto every spare piece of pavement. Everyone is buying and selling. The space in front of the French perfume store at the foot of Tverskaya teems with traders in perfume and cosmetics.

Police once raided these "spontaneous markets" regularly. Now there are even bustling street markets outside that paragon of state trading, the GUM department store. The infamous nocturnal car and spare parts market on the Moscow outer ring road also now functions in daylight.

• Sex shop: Russia's first sex shop has opened its doors in Moscow, offering German, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong sex aids ranging from condoms to inflatable dolls. Couselling is also offered to help Muscovites improve their sex lives. (Reuter)

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Israel mudslide kills 23

Jerusalem: A cafe in east Jerusalem collapsed in a mud-slide at the weekend, killing 23 people and injuring many others. Israeli policemen and Arabs, working together, called off their search for survivors after pulling the 23 bodies from under tons of rock and mud (Richard Beeston writes).

The disaster happened near the Herod's Gate entrance of the Old City when the wall of an ancient cemetery collapsed under accumulated rain and melting snow, sending earth, rocks, tombstones and skeletons crashing down on the roof of the cafe below. Many of the dead and 22 injured were local Palestinians. Some bodies were found with playing cards still in their hands. One elderly Arab was discovered with a waterpipe clenched between his teeth.

Fraser joins Keating fans

Sydney: Malcolm Fraser, the former Liberal prime minister, is among prominent Australians flocking to join the fledgeling republican movement after Paul Keating's onslaught last week on constitutional ties with Britain (Robert Cockburn writes).

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, said on television yesterday he hoped Mr Keating's outburst was an isolated incident and that rudeness would not become a habit in Australia.

Reporters held

London: A number of journalists, including William Cash, a Los Angeles correspondent of The Times, were arrested at Disneyland in Anaheim, California, last week as they tried to cover Elizabeth Taylor's 60th birthday party. He will plead not guilty to a trespass charge.

Niger shooting

Niamey: Shooting broke out as rival groups of soldiers tried to take control of Niger's radio station. A sergeant who last week led mutinies retook control of the radio from a captain who appeared to be staging a coup. (Reuter)

Funds to US

Washington: Moscow funded America's Communist party with millions of dollars until 1990, The Washington Post said. It said Soviet documents showed that communist parties in other countries also received support. (AFP)

Third World troops live it up in Crimea

By ROBERT SEELY

WHILE commonwealth officers and troops enjoy a Russian winter in squalid conditions, their Third World ' comrades are receiving military training in the former Soviet Union's republics.

At Simferopol military training school in Crimea — Mikhail Gorbachev's prison for three days during the August coup — officers from former Soviet client states in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America are living in comparative luxury.

Former Soviet troops survive on meagre rations of basic foods, but trainee officers from Nicaragua, Yemen and Mozambique have their national dishes prepared for them and sleep in their own private rooms. Junior officers

from commonwealth states, by contrast, are often cooped up in dormitories 12 at a time. Major-General Nikolai Tsevulenko, the camp's commander, admitted that, among others, officers from Afghanistan, Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Madagascar were being trained. Sources in Crimea say that the client governments pay £55 a day for courses that last up to four years. Payment is made in cash, by barter or by other "mutually beneficial" arrangements.

Antiquated teaching rooms bristle with colour-coded models, war-games boards, and instructions on how to destroy bridges and tunnels. "Give me one man and three mines and the Channel tunnel goes phuff," General Tsevulenko, a jovial Ukrainian, remarked.

Money from the courses on offer at Simferopol probably went to the central committee (of the Communist party), General Tsevulenko said.

The Third World students are happy. "This is a very important course for me to get on," Abdul Falab, a Yemeni cadet aged 24, said. He will leave this summer for an elite job in his army.

The only change to distinguish the base from its Brezhnev days is a slight change in syllabus; marxism-leninism is out; "sociology" is in. Portraits and pencil sketches of Lenin adorn the teaching rooms. Propaganda posters telling cadets to be "faithful to the combat power of those who fought in the great patriotic war (the second world war)" line the drive into the camp, which resembles a small Soviet town. Along the corridor are anti-tank and anti-personnel mines from America and Europe with scaled down models which

explode when required.

Champagne baptism for the glasnost glitterati

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

OYSTERS and champagne, the staples of the Russian aristocratic legend, abounded; there was a sprinkling of ball gowns and dinner jackets alongside the most micro of skirts, carnations for the women — and a cloakroom overflowing with fur coats. The glitterati of all Moscow and beyond was there, including Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev, the newest of Russian celebrities, plus their bodyguards.

The occasion was the gala anniversary of Nezavisimaya Gazeta, the first serious independent newspaper to be founded in Moscow under glasnost and a fierce, but thoughtful, critic of the old regime before it fell. Nezavisimaya, which has thrived in the new world of press competition to be- cow's roads ("so expertly

come the voice of the postperestroika establishment, was celebrating the completion of its first year of publication, albeit about two months late.

As at any such gathering, there were records to be put straight, new alliances to be cemented, and a tone to be set. The former president, a position without precedent in this country — Mr Gorbachev, and everyone else, is still trying to define what it means — set out to correct one of the great misunderstandings of his last year in

In a witty speech that suggested his new career should be in after-dinner speaking, not newspaper columns, Mikhail Sergeyevich commented on the state of Mos-

cleared of snow by the city council" — loud laughter from the audience), defended his pluralistic credentials, and congratulated the newspaper's editor and his young staff on their achievement.

Before the champagne and oysters, awaited with more curiosity than relish as possibly the first to be seen in Moscow since 1917, the guests were treated to a string of performances that illustrated the whole cultural confusion of the new Russian establishment, suspended as it is between the pompous parochialism of the Soviet age and emulation of the Western avantgarde, 1970-80.

Children dressed as cosmonauts praised the paper in excruciating chorus to a

strobe-lit backdrop of a spaceship suspended over the Moscow streets. Part of the former Soviet Army band and choir sang an im-



provised song in praise of press freedom. Marshai Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, sensitively introduced as commander of the armed forces

(unspecified) and clad in a smart double-breasted suit instead of his marshal's uniform, said how splendid it would be if all the army, from conscript to general, were reading Nezavisimaya.

Even Aleksandr Rutskoi, the Russian vice-president, whose commitment to democracy and pluralism has not been without ambiguity in recent weeks, swallowed hard and pledged his support for the independent press and undertook to publish his articles only in Nezavisimaya.

As for the oysters, consumer reaction was guarded. "I never thought they would be like that," said one of Nezavisimaya's more cosmopolitan young writers, poking the grey jelly warily

INFORMATION CALL CHRIS MILLS ON 0800 33 55 88

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