

women's ability, as mothers, to save the country and to overcome the crisis. The third factor revealed the well-established regional and local network and good connections inherited by the Union of Russian Women from the Soviet state. Thanks to these contacts, the coalition managed to get support of two big trade unions. Finally, the women's block had its mass media outlets (the radio station "Nadejda," newspapers).

Parallel to Women of Russia, other women's groups ran in the 1993 election campaign. The Women's League, created on the eve of the elections, brought together 17 organizations, including the Gaia network. Inspired by a promise on the part of the Fatherland block to give one-third of the candidacies to women, the League was active in its election campaign. However, despite an impressive undertakings of the Women's League nominees, the Fatherland failed to obtain required 100,000 voter signatures and could not be represented in the Duma. In addition, several women activists were nominated on the lists of the other parties and movements or run independent election campaigns.

The 1993 elections have demonstrated that the women's movement in Russia, though taking its disparate and disunited first steps, has good potential and resources for action. It has been suggested that the women's faction in the Parliament may be a real gain for women in terms of their representation even in comparison with the Soviet period when the quota system provided a larger number of women deputies. It was believed that fewer but more independent women will be better at lobbying on behalf of women than the "puppet women" of the old quota system. However, after two year's performance of the Women of Russia in the Duma, many grassroots women's groups are sceptical about the ability of the faction to speak out for the women's interests. Also, the faction was strongly criticized for not taking an active stand in the opposition against the war in Chechnya. However, much will depend on the women's movement itself, which needs to generate a national agenda, strategy, and tactics to influence the Government and Parliament.

Yevgenia Issraelyan works as a senior researcher for the Department of Canada at the Institute of the USA and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences. She is also Research Director of the Centre for Women and Family Studies at the Moscow Youth Institute. She is interested in doing a comparative analysis of Russian and Canadian women.

References

- Chipman, Andrea, and Issraelyan, Yevgenia. "Female Rep Pushes for Equal Rights." *Moscow Tribune* 6 March 1994: 4.
- Fisher, Ruth. "Women and Dissent in the USSR." *Canadian Woman Studies* 10.4 (Winter 1989): 63-64.
- The Large Soviet Encyclopedia*. Vol. 19. Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1972.

Pukhova, Zoya. Interview. "For a Better Life and More Good Will." By Yelena Kotlyarevskaya. Moscow, Novosti Press Agency, 1988.

Posadskaya, Anastasia. "Women's Dimension of Social Transformation from Forum to Forum." Second Independent Women's Forum, "From Problems to Strategy." Dubna, Russia, 27-29 November 1992.

Report on Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Russian Federation. Moscow: Ministry of Social Welfare, 1994.

Soviet Women's Committee. Pamphlet. Introduction. Moscow: Soviet Women's Committee, 1987

Women and Children in USSR. Statistical Review. Moscow: "Finances and Statistics" Publishing House, 1985.

SUSAN McCASLIN

Self-Indulgence

I in the privacy
of my un-paid-for air conditioned Volvo
with its automatic locks snapped down
make you the occasion of poems
scribbled in the McDonald's drive-
through.

I give you back yourself
in the dignity of honest labour
as I write myself into or out of
acts you will never receive,
you who are your own first person.

Susan McCaslin is currently teaching creative writing at Douglas College in New Westminster, BC. She has a book of poetry due to be published by Ektasis Editions (Victoria) in June of 1995.