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# Soviets admit unemployment

MOSCOW (AP) — At first the Soviets denied it. Then they admitted a small problem might exist. And on Monday, more than 60 years after Stalin decreed that joblessness had ceased to exist, unemployment offices opened across the Russian Federation.

The Kremlin has plans for similar centers nationwide to help workers find jobs and survive in a central economy bordering on collapse.

The Russian legislature has set up "Labor Exchanges" for the 140 million residents of their vast republic, the largest and richest in the Soviet Union.

Workers in Russia will be eligible to receive jobless compensation of 160 rubles a month com-

pared to the average monthly salary of about 350 rubles a month, the state news agency Tass reported.

Private jobless offices have been operating in the capital for months. But none run by the republics or the national government has existed until now in a nation where the unemployed can still be arrested as "parasites."

In the era of reform introduced by President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, unemployment figures finally have been revealed for some parts of the Soviet economy.

The Soviet State Statistics Committee disclosed in January that nearly 25 million people

were out of work in all of 1990 in the country of 289 million.

Figures released by the United Nations were much lower. A U.N. report said that at the end of last year almost 1.4 percent of the Soviet labor force, or 2 million people, were unemployed.

That unemployment is acknowledged at all is a change. Dictator Josef Stalin declared in October 1930 that unemployment was a symptom of capitalism and no longer existed in the Soviet Union.

He abolished the Labor Commissariat and shuttered labor exchanges set up under the Bolsheviks. They were replaced by job placement offices that assigned people jobs.

Unemployment was made a crime and jobless people arrested for "parasitism."

The government denied there was any unemployment and guaranteed a job for everybody, enshrining the promise in its 1977 constitution. The law led to bloated staffs, low pay and virtually no layoffs or firings.

Western experts had estimated a low Soviet unemployment rate during the 1970s and 80s but a larger problem of overemployment: factories and businesses had more workers than needed. Under Gorbachev, officials admitted the problems and let businesses lay off workers in order to become self-sustaining.

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## Shevardnadze urges unity, democracy in platform

MOSCOW (AP) — Former Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze and other prominent reformers on Tuesday urged pro-democracy forces to unite and wipe out the "threat of dictatorship."

"The main task that we are facing is to save democracy," Shevardnadze told a news conference where reformers released a platform for a nationwide political organization they hope to form in September.

Shevardnadze's group of nine Communists and ex-Communists hopes to force the Communist Party to expel hard-liners who want to return to one-party rule, said group member Arkady Volsky.

The showdown between reformers and hard-liners will come at a Communist Party Central Committee meeting this month, said Volsky, an ally and one-time aide to President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

He did not indicate whether the meeting would be before or after Gorbachev meets in London on July 17 with leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations.

"The opposition is very strong," Volsky said. If the meeting ends with a Communist Party committed to democracy, it could then affiliate with or merge into Shevardnadze's pro-democracy coalition, Volsky said.

Shevardnadze had said earlier that he saw a need to "create a democratic party that would act parallel with" the Communist Party.

"There can be no state of law without a solid, serious, constructive opposition," he said last month.

Another key member of the group, former Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev, on Tuesday urged the coalition to "absorb everyone who takes as his goal the real renewal of society ... on the rails of democracy."



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## Prisoner swap Arab-Israeli trade may spur releases of other hostages

JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli-sponsored Lebanese militia said Monday it was ready to swap hundreds of Arab prisoners for Israelis missing in Lebanon, a move that could spur the release of Western hostages.

The offer by Gen. Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanon Army militia, came after a weekend of renewed diplomatic efforts by the United States to end the hostage crisis.

Shiite Muslim leaders have demanded freedom for Lebanese Shiites and Palestinians held by the SLA in exchange for Western hostages. Israel says an exchange also must involve its seven troops missing in Lebanon since 1982.

Israel army radio quoted Lahd as saying he was "ready to trade the hundreds of Palestinians and Shiite prisoners." An estimated 300 to 400 inmates are held by his militia at the Al Khiam prison in southern Lebanon.

Reached by telephone, Lahd

told The Associated Press: "Yes, it's true what they reported on the radio." But he declined to elaborate.

The radio did not mention the Western hostages, but said Lahd insisted that a swap include all missing Israeli soldiers and his own militiamen held by various groups. The radio also quoted him as saying he had no official request to free prisoners.

There are 13 Westerners missing in Lebanon, most of them held by Shiite Muslim militants. They are six Americans, four Britons, two Germans and an Italian. The longest held is American Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press. He was kidnapped March 16, 1985.

The reported offer by Lahd came as 6,000 Lebanese army troops backed by tanks moved into south Lebanon and began encircling Palestinian guerrilla bases in a bid to restore government authority to the region.

## Bush to meet Gorbachev at western economic talks, hopes for Moscow summit

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine (AP) — President Bush said Monday he would meet Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev in London for lunch during the western economic summit and hoped to stir progress on strategic arms talks.

He said a Moscow summit this month with Gorbachev was still possible.

Bush said he also was looking forward to the two-hour lunch, to be held on July 17, the final day of the western economic summit, to hear Gorbachev's assessment of Soviet economic reforms.

The Bush-Gorbachev session will come just before the Soviet leader makes a direct appeal to the United States and its major economic partners for economic aid. Bush rejected the notion that meeting would be a failure for Gorbachev if he leaves without major commitments.

"I'll be resisting it if people say that," Bush said. "We've got an awful lot of consultation before concrete economic programs can be agreed to."

The president said the one-on-one meeting did not reduce the urgency of staging a summit with the Soviet leader and said it was still possible that he would travel to Moscow by the end of the month for longer talks.

"I think we can't do it in just a luncheon, but my respect for him is such that I find, when we can sit down and talk over a reasonable period of time, you can get into a lot of subjects," Bush said.

The administration has at times wavered over whether having a strategic arms treaty ready for the leaders to sign is a requirement for a summit.

A White House official, who asked to remain anonymous, said Monday that an arms agreement was a requirement. "It will first be necessary to resolve the outstanding differences ... so a treaty will be ready for signing in Moscow," the official said.

Bush told reporters another goal of any summit meeting with Gorbachev would be an effort to erase lingering mistrust of the United States by hardliners in the Soviet military.