

FFD81

B-WIRE

14-JUN-86 23:18

USSR -- CHERNOBYL CHILDREN DESCRIBE LIFE AFTER NUCLEAR ACCIDENT
BY ALISON SMALE

ARTEK PIONEER CAMP, U.S.S.R., JUNE 14 (AP) -- CHERNOBYL'S CHILDREN
REMEMBER.

NATASHA ZHERYUBKINA, 9, REMEMBERS 'A KIND OF SMOKE' IN THE AIR
AND THAT THE TOWN 'SMELLED OF BURNING.'

MISHA TELYATNIKOV, 10, REMEMBERS HIS MOTHER ROUSING HIM AND HIS
BROTHER, OLEG, 12, AT 3:30 A.M. AND TELLING THEM THEY WERE GOING TO
KIEV.

'SHE DIDN'T TELL US WHY.'

IT WAS SATURDAY, APRIL 26, THE NIGHT OF THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR
ACCIDENT.

THE CHILDREN WERE IN THEIR HOMES AND APARTMENTS IN PRIPYAT, THE
CITY FOR THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR PLANT WORKERS TWO MILES (3 KM) FROM
THE NO. 4 REACTOR THAT BLEW UP AND BURST INTO FLAMES AT 1:23 A.M.,
NEARLY TWO HOURS BEFORE MISHA AND OLEG TELYATNIKOV WERE AWAKENED.

THEIR FATHER, LEONID, WAS A FIREMAN AT THE NO. 4 REACTOR. HE IS
NOW IN A MOSCOW HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT OF RADIATION EXPOSURE.

THE TWO BOYS ARE NOW AT THIS SUMMER CAMP ON THE BLACK SEA, AMONG
THE 110 CHILDREN WHO CAME HERE FROM PRIPYAT FOR REST AND MEDICAL
SUPERVISION.

NOT ALL THE CHILDREN LEFT AS SOON AS MISHA AND OLEG. THE OFFICIAL
ORDER TO EVACUATE PRIPYAT WAS GIVEN 36 HOURS LATER, AND CONVOYS OF
BUSES TOOK OUT THE THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS.

OTHER CHILDREN IN THE CAMP SAID THEY WENT OFF TO SCHOOL AS USUAL
IN THE MORNING. CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL ON SATURDAYS IN THE SOVIET
UNION. THEY REMEMBER TRUCKS WATERING DOWN THE STREETS.

AT SCHOOL, THEY SAID, THEY LISTENED TO TEACHERS INSTRUCT THEM ON
STEPS TO TAKE AGAINST RADIATION: STAY INDOORS WHEN YOU GET HOME, TAPE
UP THE WINDOWS, CLOSE THE BALCONY DOORS, WASH SHOES, CHANGE CLOTHES
AND WARN YOUR PARENTS.

OLYA DEMIDOVA, 14, SAID THAT AT SCHOOL, CHILDREN WERE GIVEN
TABLETS AND TOLD TO TAKE THEM. DIMA SOKOLOV, ALSO 14, SAID LESSONS
PREVIOUSLY GIVEN ABOUT CIVIL DEFENSE WERE TAUGHT AGAIN.

'THE TEACHER TOLD US EVERYTHING TO DO AFTER SCHOOL,' SHE SAID.
'THE MAIN THING WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PANIC.'

MISHA TELYATNIKOV REMEMBERS: 'I ASKED MAMA WHY THEY DIDN'T
EVACUATE PEOPLE. SHE SAID, 'SO THERE WON'T BE PANIC.'

THAT MESSAGE -- THAT THERE WAS NO PANIC -- WAS STRESSED OVER AND
OVER TO A REPORTER DURING TALKS WITH THE CHILDREN AND ARTEK CAMP
OFFICIALS.

THEY REINFORCED THE PICTURE GIVEN IN SOVIET MEDIA OF CALM, COURAGE
AND BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF THE DISASTER, WHICH HAS SO FAR CLAIMED 26
LIVES.

'OF COURSE IT WAS A SHAME TO LEAVE OUR HOMES,' SAID OKSANA
ARZHANTSOVA, 16. 'BUT WE KNEW THAT WE HAD TO.'

SHE AND OTHERS SAID MOST THE PRIPYAT RESIDENTS WERE TAKEN ABOUT
125 MILES (200 KM) FROM THE PLANT TO THE POLESSK REGION AND WELCOMED
'LIKE RELATIVES' BY THOSE AT WHOSE HOUSES THEY WERE BILLETED.

SELECTED FOR A STAY AT THIS COVETED SUMMER CAMP PRIMARILY BECAUSE
THEIR FATHERS WORK AT THE CHERNOBYL PLANT, THE PRIPYAT CHILDREN
ARRIVED AT ARTEK ON MAY 18 AND WILL BE STAYING AT LEAST UNTIL AUGUST,
SAID NIKOLAI PERVUKHIN, DEPUTY HEAD OF ARTEK'S EDUCATIONAL
DEPARTMENT.

(PTO)

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USSR -- (1) CHERNOBYL CHILDREN DESCRIBE LIFE...

THE CHILDREN SEEMED HAPPY WITH THE RARE CHANCE TO SPEND THE SUMMER AT ARTEK, CONSIDERED THE NATION'S BEST CAMP FOR THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S YOUNG PIONEERS, THE SOVIET EQUIVALENT OF BOY SCOUTS AND GIRL SCOUTS.

"WE GAVE THEM EVERYTHING THEY DIDN'T HAVE -- SPORT SHOES, BATHING SUITS -- THE THINGS THEY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GRAB," PERVUKHIN SAID.

THE CHILDREN ALSO RECEIVED MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS, WHICH REVEALED THAT 25 HAD ABOVE-NORMAL RADIATION READINGS, ACCORDING TO DR. SERGEI LAVAREV, THE CAMP PHYSICIAN. HE DESCRIBED ALL THE INCREASED READINGS AS INSIGNIFICANT.

BUT KOSTYA AVRAMENKO, A 15-YEAR-OLD WHO LIVED JUST A HALF MILE (1 KM) FROM THE PLANT AND WAS FOUND TO HAVE THE HIGHEST RADIATION READING OF 1.1 MILLIROENTGENS, IS UNDER ORDERS NOT TO STAY IN THE CRIMEAN SUN FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES A DAY, PERVUKHIN SAID.

BLOOD TESTS TAKEN WHEN THE CHILDREN ARRIVED SHOWED FIVE HAD SLIGHTLY ABNORMAL BLOOD-CELL COUNTS, LAVAREV SAID. WEEKLY EXAMINATIONS AND BLOOD TESTS TAKEN FROM ALL THE CHILDREN SHOWED, HOWEVER, THAT CELL COUNTS WERE BACK TO NORMAL AFTER TWO WEEKS, HE ADDED.

LAVAREV AND CAMP COUNSELORS SAID THE ACCIDENT HAS LEFT NO APPARENT PSYCHOLOGICAL SCARS ON THE CHILDREN.

"THE FIRST DAY, THE KIDS WERE A LITTLE BIT MORE DOWN THAN OTHER CHILDREN," SAID CAMP COUNSELOR OLGA SAKRUTO. NOW, SHE ADDED, "THEY HAVE NO WORRIES; THEIR PARENTS WRITE LETTERS REGULARLY, AND MANY OF THEIR RELATIVES AND PARENTS COME" TO VISIT.

TWO CHILDREN, OLEG AND LARISA KHODEMCHUK, HAVE THEIR MOTHER WITH THEM AT ARTEK, PERVUKHIN SAID. VIKTOR KHODEMCHUK, THEIR FATHER, WAS ONE OF TWO PLANT WORKERS KILLED INSTANTLY IN THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT.

PERVUKHIN SAID MRS. KHODEMCHUK IS WORKING AT ARTEK AND WATCHING HER DAUGHTER, WHO UNDERWENT AN APPENDECTOMY WHILE IN CAMP CARE. HE SAID ALL THREE WERE FINE BUT ARE STILL CARRYING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN OF THE DEATH IN THEIR FAMILY.

OLYA DEMIDOVA AND DIMA SOKOLOV BOTH SAID THERE HAD BEEN WORRY IN THEIR FAMILIES BECAUSE THEIR FATHERS HAD WORKED AT THE CHERNOBYL PLANT DURING AND AFTER THE ACCIDENT. DIMA SAID HIS FATHER WAS "A LITTLE BIT SICK" AND HOSPITALIZED FOR A WEEK, BUT IS FINE NOW.

THE TELYATNIKOV BOYS SEEMED BUOYANT ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE ONCE THEIR FATHER GETS OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.

OLEG TALKED, HOWEVER, OF TWO OTHER FIREMEN, VLADIMIR PRAVIK AND VIKTOR KIBENOK, WHO DIED AFTER RECEIVING MASSIVE RADIATION DOSES BATTLING THE CHERNOBYL FIRE.

"THEY WERE ALMOST LIKE MY BEST FRIENDS," HE SAID. "I PLAYED CHESS WITH THEM."

OLEG ADDED THAT HIS FATHER "WRITES ME LETTERS IN HIS OWN HAND" AND THAT HE AND HIS BROTHER MISHA WOULD SOON JOIN THEIR PARENTS, GRANDFATHER AND AUNT IN MOSCOW.

NO ONE KNOWS WHEN, IF EVER, THESE CHILDREN WILL RETURN HOME.

"OUR TOWN IS REALLY VERY BEAUTIFUL," SAID OKSANA ARZHANTSOVA. "THERE ARE MANY, MANY ROSES IN OUR TOWN, AND THAT'S WHAT I REMEMBER."

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