

**Belorussian Chernobyl Clean-up Criticized***90UN0658A Minsk KOMMUNIST BELORUSSII in Russian No 12, Dec 89 p 64*

[Article by special correspondent V. Samoylov: "The Radiation of Indifference, or the Story of Why Academician Ilin Has Nightmares about Two Belorussian Villages"]

[Text] *"Our institute has calculated the doses every locality has received in Belorussia, the Ukraine, and the RSFSR. But I must confess, there are two villages in the Mogilevskaya oblast—Chudyany and Malinovka—which we have nightmares about almost every night. Those areas have around 140 curies per square kilometer. I do not know why they have taken so long to relocate them. All of our calculations and recommendations for these localities have long since been in the hands of the republic's leadership."*

*Academician L.A. Ilin*

It is exactly ten years since I have been in the Cherikovskiy rayon. The last time was when we prepared a big television program here in 1979 with the optimistic title "Outlook." I remember how the rayon authorities insisted that we include more shots in the program of new settlements and sites of so-called cultural and communal facilities. They spoke a lot about the rayon of tomorrow. And one kolkhoz chairman invited us right on camera to come back in ten years. "You won't recognize our area," he said...

But all the same, I recognized Cherikov at once. Still the same dusty square in front of the Palace of Soviets, the same endless noise from the traffic along the main road. Although a few brick buildings had been added and a restaurant had appeared.

The prospects for this rayon appeared bleak, as is the case in many other corners of Belorussia, the Ukraine, and Russia over which a radioactive cloud had stretched its black wing. Perhaps it was auto-suggestion, but from my first step on Cherikov soil it seemed to me that even the air here had a peculiar smell. However, it is not my intention to ignite fears which are already on the verge of combustion. Radiation has no smell, so it could be that it only seemed that way to me. Unfortunately, to this day the population has no instruments, even the most rudimentary ones, for testing its suspicions and fears and for verifying official information, which has long ago exhausted its credibility. The population is not grumbling; it understands that it has only recently dealt with a shortage of every-day mercurial thermometers and is still unable to overcome a shortage of mustard plasters.

But we will be objective: no small amount of steps are being taken. In the middle of 1989 "170 well-built settlements were created for the evacuation of the population. In them 9,770 apartments were built in farmstead-like buildings with outbuildings. More than 600 sites designated for social, cultural, and production

activities have been built. For these aims more than 660 million rubles in capital allotments have been used.

"For the construction of medical establishments an additional sum of nearly 60 million rubles has been earmarked from the current five-year plan. More than 140 thousand children and pregnant women rest every year in sanatoria, holiday homes, and pioneer camps, for which around 30 thousand rubles per year are spent.

"For populations of areas in zones that have been subject to radioactive contamination, additional foodstuffs at a cost of over 115 million rubles are provided from the republic's fund. Working people will receive hardship pay increases. The aggregate sum for benefits and pay increases comes to 104 million rubles per year. Three hundred twenty kilometers of hard-top roads were built; 542 kilometers of electro-transmission wires, 933 kilometers of waterlines and 113 kilometers of sewer lines were extended; 388 artesian wells were dug; and 3,000 public water fountains were drilled..."

A lot was built in the Cherikovskiy rayon as well. But there is still no hotel here. And clearly there won't be one anytime soon. Indeed, the construction of a hotel is not, it seems, among the top-priority measures for eliminating the after-effects of the accident. Earlier a certain rayon chairman explained to me (I don't know to what degree he was serious) that they are in no hurry to build one, because they want to discourage oblast officials and people from the capital from coming through and checking up on them. This is how they have attempted in their somewhat idiosyncratic way to assert the rayon's independence. Whether for this or another reason, a hotel has still not been built in the rayon center. However, this has not at all kept the rayon center free of guests, whether invited or uninvited, welcome or unwelcome. But it seems that recently no guests' arrival has been awaited with more anticipation than that of experts from the World Health Organization. To be sure, they did not ask for a hotel: they stomped about a bit on the main square, spoke to a packed audience in the local Palace of Culture, and took off, leaving the rayon's population in a state of complete incredulity. This they did not with their somewhat vague speeches, nor with statistics and terminology, but rather with an analogy as simple as a boot: in the suburbs of Paris, it seems, life is even worse in terms of exposure to radiation than in Cherikov and its outlying areas. This piece of news made the rounds throughout the rayon within only a few hours. Cherikov, less ancient, but no less proud of its history, had never before been compared with the renowned Paris. And perhaps that is why, despite the enormous authority of the specialists from abroad, their other ideas evoked a certain scepticism as well.

Can we trust anyone, though, when for years we have remained suspended between complete ignorance and conscious efforts to disguise the truth which have been justified as attempts to preserve calm among the people?

listed in a separate column—1,956,217. Thus, the overall population of the Soviet Union comprised 168.5 million people.

Thus, the final census figure coincided with that which Stalin presented at the 17th Party Congress as reflecting the population numbers for the end of 1933. Three full years had elapsed between the Congress and the census. We may rightly ask: Where did three of Stalin's "Finlands" go?

As for the repeat census taken in January of 1939, it was already conducted by different people whose qualifications were evidently an order lower. The final data were published on 2 July 1939 in the form of official information which stated that the Sovnarkom had heard the report of the USSR Gosplan on the results of the census, notes that the census was conducted correctly and in accordance with government directives, and expresses its thanks to the census workers. Later tens of its organizers were awarded orders and medals.

Yet despite the dubious nature of the obtained results, even they showed that in the Ukraine, in Kazakhstan and in the Northern Caucasus the population numbers were lower than they were prior to 1933. No one explained either this deficit or the absence of the 6-year natural growth. No one focused attention on forbidden topics. After the terror of 1937-1938, it was evidently no longer necessary to specially disguise the demographic consequences of the famine.

An unexpected turn in the subject of the 1937 census occurred after the publication of the April 1989 issue of the journal *VOPROSY ISTORII*. In it, the director of the USSR Central State National Economic Archive, V. Tsaplin, published new data in the form of a letter to the editors. Having access through his work position to materials which are still secret, as he himself stressed, he found an extremely important document—a letter written by TsUNKhU Chief I. Kraval to Stalin and Molotov, "On the preliminary results of the all-union census of the population", dated 14 March 1937. The document was typewritten in four copies, of which two were found, including also the original—for some reason unstamped and without a signature. Soon afterward, as we know, I. Kraval was arrested and, in 1938, executed.

The letter states that the total USSR population on 6 January 1937 comprised 162,003,255 persons. These data are 6,526,000 persons lower than the those cited by Kraval's successor as TsUNKhU chief, Veremenichev. Thus, the documents found in different archives allow us to easily reconstruct the course of events.

After the removal of I. Kraval and the persons directly responsible for conducting the census, the frightened TsUNKhU workers hurriedly corrected the summary data with a 4 percent mark-up, and presented them in this new form to the Central Electoral Commission.

If we proceed from Stalin's figure of 168 million persons by the end of 1933—which would be quite accurate had it not been for the famine, and even if we believe Stalin's careless remark about the "reproduction" of the population at a rate of "one Finland a year", and this remark is absolutely true, since the dictator himself took pains to "spur on" the natural growth by prohibiting abortions—then by the start of 1937 the population would be expected to number 177 million persons. The census showed a terrible inconsistency with the expected results, caused by the starvation from famine and the repressions: 15 million people!

Why did the TsUNKhU workers not mark up the summary data to the "necessary" figures, rather than adding on only 6.5 million persons? Evidently, they too knew at that time that in 1939 they would have to repeat the all-union census of the population and during this repetition—to "bring up" the results. To do this by a figure of 15 million would hardly be possible even in such a huge country. Therefore, the true census data were destroyed, and the falsified ones were made accessible to the highest organs of state control as top secret data.

Based on the real data of the 1937 census, we may compute the shortage of the population in the Ukraine caused by the losses from the 1933 famine. They comprise, without considering the repressions which became massive after the murder of S. Kirov—6,074,000 persons. This is an approximate demographic evaluation which bears a minimal character. It turns out that one in every four rural residents perished in the Ukraine. By relative losses from famine (computed per total number of residents), the Ukraine is in third place after Kazakhstan and the North Caucuses, and by absolute losses it is in first place. These losses are staggering in their scope.

Here are the words of I.I. Titenkov, first secretary of the neighboring Krasnopolskiy party raykom [rayon committee]: "In 1986 scholars were arguing that there was no radiation of any kind in this rayon. We believed them and told people the same. Then it became clear that there was radiation after all, moreover a considerable amount. But the scholars were telling us once again that everything would be alright. Professor K.I. Gordeyev said in 1986 that by the following spring there would already be uncontaminated milk and that he himself, Gordeyev, would come to the rayon and go into the forest to pick mushrooms and berries... And then a year later it turned out that the milk should not be drunk, the meat should not be eaten, and by no means should one go into the forest. At the end of 1986, physicians from Moscow paid us another visit. Why, they asked, have these children not been taken to an uncontaminated zone? They promised to make a report in the capital. Whether they made the report or not is unknown, but the children are still running around to this day in radioactive dust."

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How can we live? In whom and what should we trust? What can we hope for? These are not idle questions. How can we continue without knowing that human life cannot be used as a pawn in a scientific debate?

Frankly speaking, I do not want to become involved in controversies over maximum safety levels of exposure to contamination or other specialized issues. But I cannot help admiring those who can boldly state their viewpoints without in the least doubting their own competence. The time is clearly such that in the atmosphere of general confusion and confrontation, one can earn the reputation of an uncompromising defender of the truth on any question, not only on this one. But where is that truth when two scholars, endowed with the highest credentials and armed not only with modern instruments, but more importantly, with scientific (in other words, objective) knowledge, argue themselves hoarse, without listening to one another, in an attempt to prove clearly contradictory truths? And if only there were no more than two of them! There are as many opinions being presented these days as there are people presenting them. There's pluralism for you! The scholarly soldiers fight their cruel battle of Chernobyl polemics without regard for the shields and armour of scientific schools and movements. Doctors and deputies, party and soviet representatives, journalists, those who stagnated during the period of stagnation and now want to display their "principled" position—all of them are fighting each other. But it just seems that in battle we are at times forgetting about the most important thing: for those living on contaminated land and tormented by frightening conjectures about their future, it is not a particular position or design which is important, nor an official decision, nor even the amount of rubles allocated, but rather the result. Unfortunately, the results so far have been, to say the least, of little comfort.

This information is from the Cherikovskiy rayon "sane-pidstantsiya" [medical epidemiological station]. "During 1987 the total dose of radiation for a group of seven people in the 'strict regime' zone exceeded the established norm by three rems. During 1988 a group of 17 persons was exposed to a dosage 2.5 rems above the established norm.

"It was concluded on the basis of data from a thorough medical examination of children conducted in April, 1989 that the health of children living in areas with a concentration of cesium-137 at 15-40 curies per square kilometer or higher has a tendency to deteriorate. The health rate of one group of children was below the republic's index and showed a tendency to decline. The incidence of vegetovascular dystonia, chronic tonsillitis, and adenoid conditions increases, and a tendency towards developing anemic syndrome and endemic goiter is being observed in children who are becoming sick frequently and for long periods of time. The health of children born of mothers who were pregnant at the time of the accident is worse than that of children who were born in subsequent years.

"Anemia has appeared in 30 percent of these children, and the incidence of neurological problems is higher than the index for other rayons in the republic.

"Among adults an increase has been observed in neuro-circulatory dystonia, hypertension, ischemic insult, stenocardia, diseases of the liver and biliary tracts, ulcers of the stomach and duodenum."

This is the sad document handed to me by the chief sanitary inspector of the Cherikovskiy rayon, A.P. Busel. In the opinion of many residents, he is one of the most competent specialists (and more important, he is one of the most principled and honest, which is very important these days).

—Aleksandr Petrovich, how would you evaluate the conclusions drawn by VOZ [WHO—World Health Organization] representatives who visited the rayon not long ago?

—The concept of safe living in Western nations is based more upon economic considerations than on medical ones. As an example let's just take Chudyany. There are 140 curies here. That is around 104 rems of exposure for the next 70 years of its residents' lives. Let's calculate what it will cost to lower that level to 35 rems. If we use their methodology, it would require 200 dollars per year to lower the level by one rem. Lowering it to 70 rems, then, would require an expenditure of approximately 14,000 dollars per resident. That is what their safe life will cost.

There in the West, the culpable firm must pay for the elimination of the after-effects of any accidents. Therefore they have a higher established ceiling. These things differ from one country to the next, but on an average the level is about 80 rems for the next 70 years. It is entirely wrong to compare their conditions with ours. I think that



in this day and age life in a contaminated area is not a medical problem, but a composite problem.

Of course there are changes in people's health. And these changes are related not only to the direct effects of radiation, but also to general living conditions. They are subject to a stressful situation, psychological pressure...

—So it's not directly related to the radiation?

—I think that it's much more complicated than simple causality (i.e., the higher the contamination, the more illness). The fact is that the usual tenor of life is entirely destroyed. One cannot go into the forest; there is no individual farming; the stereotype is destroyed. That alone can bring on illness.

—But the children didn't see any stereotypes destroyed?

—Tell me that 12 hours in a closed school or kindergarten doesn't cause changes in a child's organism! Of course it does. And since 1986 our children live in these conditions. Beginning this year they have rescinded the ban on playing outdoors.

—Why did they rescind it? Have conditions changed?

—Conditions have not changed, but the lesser of two evils was chosen. Hypodynamia, a lack of fresh air—that strongly affects their health.

—Excuse me, but the following strikes me as strange. If, as the foreign experts claim, the radiation conditions in Paris are even worse than in Cherikov, then why don't they keep the school children locked up all day there?

—I have never been to Paris, so I won't presume to comment on the situation there, but the experts have claimed in all seriousness that the level there is just barely under 200 curies and that the concentration of radioactive contamination is much higher than here. They were speaking, it is true, about Parisian suburbs. But let's not talk about France now. They have their problems, and we have ours.

—But a comparison will clarify things...

—How can you and I compare Belorussia and France today when we don't even know in principle the social conditions in which people are living? I can only guess and assume that the quality of life in the Cherikovskiy rayon differs from that of a suburb of Paris. Doctor Pellerin said that the most important requirement (and here one cannot fail to agree with him) is that the population be supplied with uncontaminated foodstuffs. And this is a problem we have great difficulty with.

—Let's get back to Cherikov. What is your opinion on the so-called 35 rem plan?

—First of all, biophysicists should not be the authorities in devising a plan for safe living. Sociologists, psychologists, soviet and party organs should be involved as well. This plan should not revolve exclusively around maximum dosage.

In my opinion, that would not be a plan for safe living, but for safe exposure levels. They are not at all the same thing. Today it is not so much the amount of exposure which plays a role in the changes in the population's health, but rather, as I have said, stressful situations. People lack the right to choose. And the plan has been discredited because, in putting it into practice, it was necessary to take real steps and real actions...

—What do you mean?

—First of all, dealing with social problems: securing uncontaminated food, instituting additional payment so that this food can be bought, etc. But that has all been done in a slipshod manner.

Therefore on June 1, International Day for the Defense of Children, a meeting took place here in Cherikov. A decision was made to send a delegation to the Congress of People's Deputies. And we went to Moscow. First we went to see our deputies, then we arranged a meeting with Belorussian CP Central Committee first secretary E.E. Sokolov. But when we met with the people's deputies, they gave us the impression that they are not allowed to speak about this subject. We demanded that someone among them be given the floor. After that Tkacheva spoke at the morning session. In Moscow we met with N.I. Ryzhkov. At this meeting V.S. Leonov, first secretary of the Mogilevskiy Belorussian CP obkom, spoke, to my mind, in a very principled manner, like a true representative of the Belorussian people. He criticised both sharply and, what's more, in a well-reasoned manner, the 35 rem plan. Then minister E.I. Chazov gave a speech defending the 35 rem plan and addressed issues of material and technical provisions for health establishments. Then B.E. Shcherbina took the floor and donned "rose-colored glasses." He talked until it seemed that all questions were decided, everything had been sacrificed for Belorussia, hermetically sealed tractor cabs were being adopted, etc.

—And how is it really?

—We have seven farms in the strict control zone. Each of them has only two or three cabs.

All of these plans are highly varied and contradictory—they are mostly developed in the quiet of offices. Take for example the 35 rem plan. It fails almost entirely to take into consideration the real conditions of people's lives. A lot has been said about that. But opposing viewpoints are also, unfortunately, not always grounded in a thorough knowledge of the subject. For example, in Moscow we met with Ales Adamovich. I respect his work, including his publicistic pieces. But tell me, how can one shed light on the problem without having been

to the site? Adamovich has not visited us once, but he writes a great deal about our affairs.

—Is what he writes correct?

—In essence it's correct, but he also includes many controversial positions, for example, his well-known announcement that the radioactive cloud had been "seeded." There is still no official data on that... I think that in order to write objectively, one should visit here and feel the radioactive soil with one's own hands. We could give that same Adamovich quite a bit of information if he were to come. Indeed, the problem is much deeper than he imagines. In my view many publicistic works are directed towards kindling fears...

—Yesterday I stopped in at the food store here at the rayon center. The food they had to sell was formula for nursing babies and sausage at nine rubles. The rest was a collection of things that can be found in all village stores. In other words, there was almost a complete absence of any foodstuffs.

—Truly, there's little variety. But something is being done. We have received additional funds for buckwheat, and we have gotten refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners...

—Have you gotten a large enough quantity?

—In conditions of general shortages there will never be enough. We have created very long lists. In order to provide everyone with these goods, we would probably need more than one five-year plan. But how are we to understand the fact that here, in a contaminated zone, the sale of cleaning agents is restricted? One bar of soap per month! And one of the safety requirements is strict observance of personal hygiene.

—Is agricultural work going on in the strict control zone?

—Yes of course. Immobilization of an area was only carried out at the sovkhoz Znamya, where the worst conditions prevail. In the villages Chudyany, Malinovka, Novaya Malinovka, and Kamenka part of the arable land has been withdrawn from rotation and trees have been planted.

In point of fact, I am certain that Shcherbina misled the USSR Council of Ministers. That is why they passed half-measures. This is the fourth year since the accident, and almost no real action has been taken. What have we done? We have put down asphalt here and there. Here and there we have built a few shower rooms. But let's look at a matter like providing fresh products. This does not come out of Union funds. The money was taken from Mogilev and Bobruysk and given to this zone.

—How is the problem of protecting the health of children being addressed?

—We have received additional sanatorium passes. But at the moment there are not enough passes for mothers

with children. Schoolchildren have been fully provided for. They are leaving for periods of one to one and ½ months. Of course, it would be better to take them out of here for a longer time period, but can you imagine the effect of a two to three-month absence on, say, a younger schoolchild? There are a great number of problems here. Again, stressful situations arise for both mother and child. Therefore, we need passes for the entire family.

If these problems are being solved to some degree in the zone, i.e., those localities with 15 curies and more, then in remaining areas the situation is fully unacceptable. I'm judging from my own collective. We were unable to obtain a single pass for mothers with children, despite the fact that our people almost constantly work in the zone. Only three sanatorium passes were distributed for adults. How were they distributed? Again, we only got three passes for the entire year.

—I have seen Civilian Defense troops working here in your rayon. What kind of impact is their work having?

—You mean the decontamination project? Here I can give an unambiguous response: the manner in which decontamination is being carried out here is simply a case of government money being thrown to the wind.

—Why?

—If at the beginning the decontamination had some effect, its effectiveness now is insignificant and, apparently, does not exceed five percent. Soldiers clean houses, cut weeds, etc. They assiduously cleaned, for example, a farmstead, and a fund is being created at the expense of adjacent areas. That's one matter. The other is: why is this decontamination being carried out in Chudnyany or Malinovka when their residents are to be resettled anyway? Once again, the plan contradicts common sense.

—So the decontamination project should be suspended?

—Decontamination should be carried out in areas where the contamination is above five curies and above all in pre-school establishments for children. But they are not listening to our views.

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...I planned to go to the Mayskiy settlement with a commission which told me it would evaluate the results of construction being done there. With this aim, the sanitary inspector S.V. Masyuk and I arrived at the doors of the rayon Palace of Soviets shortly before noon to wait for the better-equipped commission members to pick up those of us who were "without a horse." That was the agreement. But a wait of almost an hour proved to be in vain. After conducting extended inquiries and traipsing through offices it came out that the commission had neither met nor gone to the Mayskiy settlement. No one even bothered to inform us that the trip had been postponed. This incident was not a big deal, of course.

But in my view it was a characteristic one which reflects the style of our work in eliminating the after-effects of the accident.

Chudyany turned out to be a nice little village, like thousands of others in Belorussia. Who would have thought that it would become a kind of title-holder? It has the highest level of radioactive contamination—more than 140 curies per square kilometer. And those are only the average figures.

The strange emptiness and silence in the village were striking. But soon I met my first native resident, who was sitting on a fence, heartily eating some red berries which I could not identify. I asked him to introduce himself, and, without sliding down from the fence, he said that his name was Vitaliy, surname Petrachenko, and that he was in second grade but was now on vacation. In saying all this he did not neglect to pluck several dusty berries with a dirty hand and unceremoniously pop them into his mouth.

—Vitaliy, what do you know about radiation?—It's dangerous.—And is it okay to eat unwashed berries?—No one told us not to, so I guess it is.—Did they tell you about radiation in school?—Yes, they showed us a bomb exploding and everyone wearing gas-masks.

From house to house one could see signs of village life which was apparently once thriving, but was now dying out: farmsteads, overgrown with burdocks, rickety fences, benches on which no one had sat for a long time.

I stopped at one of the water pumps. I worked the handle, but the pump didn't work. I found another—the effect was the same.

I went up to some women who were seated on the porch of one of the still inhabited homes.

—Thanks to the government for thinking of us. They have installed a water line here.

—But it doesn't seem to be working.

—It often doesn't work, sometimes for days at a time, sometimes for weeks. For some reason it stopped working for two months in the winter. When that happens we take water from the well. How can you farm without it? The water in our wells has algae. It's downright green. But what can you do? We drink it. And the cattle need water too... What are our names? Mine is Vera Alekseyevna Ganchurina, and this is my mother, Anastasiya Ivanovna...

Anastasiya Ivanovna began to lament.—We were given 30 rubles each. I didn't want their coins. I cry every day. Do you think I want that hut in Mayskiy? I wouldn't want it if you gave it to me. I've lived here all my life. Once I was filled with joy. And now...

—I'm their neighbor, Varvara Danilovna Maydanova. May I say something? They built a lovely settlement for us. But how can we live there? I have my hut all to

myself now. Of course it's difficult even like this. But there? There are no one-room houses there. The chairman says, "Old ladies, take a three-room house for three of you." How can we live the end of our lives this way? One kitchen for all of us, one bathroom, one cellar? How can we keep our dishes and utensils straight in one kitchen? And that's the thanks I get for working at the kolkhoz all my life?

It was hot, and as I prepared to go the women lifted a bucket onto the porch and scooped out water with a large mug.

—Have a drink. Never mind those curies, the water from our stream is tasty.

Together with me, a small girl who looked to be about three years old drank this indeed tasty water, smacking her lips the way children do.

I went along further through the village.

I had more encounters, and the recurrent theme was radiation.

—They make blood analyses in the clinic, but they don't tell you anything.

—How do you feel?

—I'm tired; my head aches; I have heartburn... Sometimes my bones ache. My hands are tied.

—What are you eating?

—Some things are from the store, and the rest is my own. You go to the store with two ten-ruble notes, but what is there to buy? Once a month they bring canned goods and allow two cans per person. In the summer they provided a kilogram of sugar per person, then two kilograms. Sausage sells for six to seven rubles. Meat is available once a month. There is no limit on milk or sour cream.

However, the store was closed that day.

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And once again I am at a familiar turn. As I attempt to hitch a ride with a passing motorist, I think about the strange characteristics of the "zone." Truly titanic efforts are required to help the people living here. But as if under the influence of some peculiar kind of radiating indifference and blatant bungling wherever you go, common sense seems to have turned into its opposite everywhere. The government is spending millions and billions of rubles to help the victims, but it is necessary to go to Chudyany in order to understand that the money is often spent on nothing—for example, on a road that leads nowhere. Or on a water line that doesn't work.

In a word... It was already evening when I reached Mayskiy. The view was simply splendid. Varicolored houses literally bathed in the rays of the setting sun.



Strolling through the streets, I remembered the words of the residents of Chudyany.

—How can we go there when even the sovkhos director tells us that we cannot bring the children and there is not enough work there for everyone?

The opinion of the rayon's chief sanitation inspector confirmed their statements: "In the settlement Mayskiy they have just barely completed the hook-ups for the school and kindergarten. They haven't even begun construction. Therefore it will be necessary to transport children to school and kindergarten in Malinovka. In other words, they will be taken from an uncontaminated zone to a contaminated one.

The following is from a resolution by the Mogilev Belorussian CP obkom and oblispolkom [oblast executive committee]: "We have not received scientifically-based recommendations for long-range plans for construction, resettling and the development of localities and production in the zone and around it. For example, the republic's Gosagroprom [State Agro-industrial Committee] (Comrade Nikitchenko) and BelNII [Belorussian Scientific Research Institute] of City-building (Comrade Shpit) have not created the legally required scientific and industrial-economic foundation for the relocation of the settlement Mayskiy, which is being built in a zone with eight curies per square kilometer for the relocation of residents of the 'Znamya' sovkhos of the Cherikovskiy rayon."

They say that around 12 million rubles have already been invested in the construction of this long-term settlement without prospects. And how much more will be spent? What does it cost to live in a settlement surrounded by radioactive land? No, the zone truly has some kind of effect on our common sense. In some villages which will be relocated, sites are being built which cost several million rubles. Why? In the name of what plan? So that we can report about what was wasted on the elimination of after-effects of the Chernobyl accident, and not wisely spent, but really squandered—more and more millions?

When I was getting ready to leave Mayskiy, several vehicles with construction materials were entering the settlement. I noticed the trucks' wheels—pounds of dirt had stuck to them from the road. In this way unseen radiation has been silently making its way into the settlement. Why not lay the asphalt on this road leading to the new settlement instead of laying roads for unknown reasons in Chudyany and other "dead" villages? And why are they doing everything backwards here? First they build houses, then roads, schools, and stores.

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While this material was being prepared to go into print, a number of events took place. The main one was the discussion of the Government Program for Eliminating the After-effects of the Chernobyl AES [Atomic Energy Station] Accident at a session of the Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet. A number of sensible ideas were

expressed in presentations and in debates. It was apparent that among those speaking there were none who were indifferent. And then this theme did not escape the press' notice. But as I saw the reports on television or read the passionate statements in the newspaper, I thought about the residents of Chudyany who were probably losing their heads in the midst of this storm of debates, opinions and information. But as before, they cannot find an answer to the simplest question: how and in the name of what should we go on living? And rumors are proliferating about an experiment being conducted by an unknown person on them and on all those within the "zone."

I must confess, I don't understand either: what do we need to fight first and foremost? The after-effects of an atomic accident, or those of a more global catastrophe which took place longer ago and which has had such an effect on our reason? If such a catastrophe never took place, then what is the source of such an intensive field of all-pervasive indifference and destructive irresponsibility? How many curies or other units should be used to measure that field?

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The window of the party raykom building affords a good view of the main square of Cherikov. After it rains, huge puddles form there. And since the traffic is moving along at high speed—the Moscow main highway runs through the square—the asphalt must be replaced often. However, repair expenses could be significantly less if the drainage system worked. But the problem is that many, many years ago, they say a supervisor of the city economy worked alone on the construction of a drainage system. The money was acquired on time and in full, and the director and collective received bonuses. But then it came out that when they built the wells, the workers forgot to lay the drainage pipes. That supervisor is long gone, and the members of the commission who signed the act on introducing a drainage system cannot be found either. But the "memory" remains.

What is the relation to contemporary events, the reader will ask? Those were other times, events, and people. But why do our actions so resemble these, as if we were doing everything not for ourselves, but for someone we neither like nor consider one of our own?

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#### **Estonian SSR Draft Law on Environmental Protection in Estonia**

90US0351A Tallinn SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA in Russian 6 Dec 89 p 3

[Law of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic "On Protection of Nature in Estonia"]

[Text] The opinions of over 40 departments, city and rayon executive committees, scientific research and design