

CHERNOBYL

USSR (12) THE USSR THIS WEEK

FSSS

part of the CPSU towards social democratic ideas and towards a union with left-wing groups, who hate [the idea of] a great Russian state and want to undermine its integrity." According to reports received from Leningrad by RL's Russian Service, speakers at the inaugural meeting of the new party attacked Gorbachev's reforms and called on nationalist parties around the world to unite.

Meanwhile, on April 24, *Sovetskaya molodezh'* published information on another newly created Russian nationalist group. This one is called the Orthodox Constitutional-Monarchist Party of Russia. Its members believe that Russia is not ready yet for democracy and that therefore authoritarian monarchist rule would be the best political arrangement for it.

#### Officials Sign Chernobyl' Memorandum with WHO

Representatives from the USSR Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed a memorandum on international cooperation to ease the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Under the agreement, the WHO will supervise a comprehensive program to protect the health of those living in areas contaminated by radiation and of those who took part in the clean-up. In addition, an international center for the study of radiation problems will be set up in the city of Obninsk.

Wednesday, May 2

#### Moscow City Soviet Seeks Legislative Powers

Moscow's reformist city soviet is preparing to debate a law granting the city the power to set its own laws. Radio Moscow said the law would establish a special status for Moscow within the RSFSR but, the radio added, the law will have to be approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet. Radio Moscow said Moscow's new city soviet, which is led by the reformist economist Gavriil Popov, needs special legislative powers to tackle the city's economic and social problems.

#### Soviet Official on Chernobyl' Statistics

Ukraine's ambassador to the United Nations told RFE/RL that the official death toll of thirty-one from the Chernobyl' accident has never been revised because "nobody really knows the exact count." (The figure is based on the number of people killed during the explosion or immediately afterwards.) Gennadii

(PTO)

Udovenko said that, while officials acknowledged that more people had died since then as the result of radiation, they were reluctant to define what constitutes "a direct consequence" of the accident. A figure of 300 deaths has been cited in *Pravda* and elsewhere in the Soviet press recently. Udovenko said the government was not challenging these new estimates. Seen in this light, the Soviet government's reticence may be an attempt more to avoid a protracted battle over the compensation of victims and their families than to understate the consequences of the disaster.

### Soviet Government Approves Financial Assistance to Refugees

The Soviet government approved new legislation under which Armenia and Azerbaijan would have to pay compensation to people who were forced to flee from those republics. Radio Moscow said that over 500,000 people had been made homeless by the conflict between the two republics, and that many of them fled to other parts of the USSR.

**Thursday, May 3**

### Patriarch Pimen Dies

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pimen, died in Moscow at the age of seventy-nine (*TASS*, May 3). Pimen, who had long been in frail health, had been head of the Church since 1971. In the past few years, he had come under criticism from reform elements in the Church for failing to introduce necessary changes. The same day, the Holy Synod began meeting in Moscow to elect a caretaker patriarch (*TASS*, May 3). The interim hierarch will serve until a new patriarch is elected within six months by the highest organ of the Church, the *pomestnyi sobor*.

### Moscow Studies New Investment Rules

Soviet Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov said the Soviet authorities were preparing legislation to define the percentage of foreign ownership to be allowed in Soviet companies. He said there were plans to allow foreign investors to own up to 100 percent of companies in the USSR. Pavlov was speaking in Madrid at a conference of potential Spanish investors. He said, "We are creating legal, administrative, and economic foundations to attract foreign capital" (*AP*, May 3).

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