

CHERNOBYL

party functionaries had conceived a "palace coup". Certain party workers - supporters of the "Democratic Platform" and the "independent" Ukrainian Communist Party - were alarmed. On the day of the oblast party committee plenum they fired a salvo of appeals, a statement and a resolution in the pages of the oblast Komsomol newspaper 'Moloda Galichina' (the former 'Leninska Molod'), which recently defected to the DBU. If you discard the political blather, their essence is the same: Hands off the oblast party committee first secretary.

So, DBU activists, people's deputies who were party members (some of them have already said they have left the CPSU) and party workers found themselves all together. The extremists came together. They were united by the presentiment that their monopoly on the region's political life was coming to an end.

The situation required the oblast party committee plenum to clarify at once its position on very urgent problems. Above all, how to build its relations with the DBU and with the soviets formed from its representatives. This was the conclusion: without waiving principles, to do everything to seek co-operation with regard to the region's well-being and the people's better life. An extremely important conclusion, if you take into account the fact that the oblast party organisation found itself in opposition. Comprehension of the fact that, having assumed power, they must not look down patronisingly on Communist specialists is even becoming apparent in individual statements by DBU leaders on local soviets. The very near future will probably show which of these declarations will be followed by deeds and which will remain just words...

[4]

BELORUSSIAN OFFICIAL ON CHERNOBYL CLEAN-UP PROGRAMME

Moscow home service 0800 gmt 23 Apr 90

Editorial report

A detailed map of Belorussia regions, polluted with caesium 137 after the Chernobyl accident, has been recently published in the republic. It was based on the results of observation of over 5,000 localities during 1986-90. Over 2,200,000 people live in the area of radioactive contamination. Viktor Nikolayevich (?Buryavik), head of the Belorussian Council of Ministers department for ecological problems and emergency situations, told correspondent Petr Makritskiy in an interview, that over of 40,000 sq. km. of Belorussia were polluted with caesium 137 over one curie. The population will be resettled from these areas, as envisaged in the state programme for eliminating the consequences of the accident. These areas are mainly in Gomel and Mogilev oblasts, where about 20 rayons are contaminated by radionuclides, though Brest oblast also has extensive areas of contamination.

A long-term programme on Chernobyl has been adopted by the Belorussian Council of Ministers, although it has not yet been confirmed by the USSR Council of Ministers. However, the USSR State Planning Committee and USSR Council of Ministers have allocated R 700,000,000 in capital investments

to implement measures under the programme in 1990, and these funds are being utilised. Efforts are being made to speed up considerably the resettlement of people from the most highly contaminated settlements, of which there are about 90. It is planned this year to finish resettling the people involved, namely about 7,500 families, and in 1990 and 1991 to finish resettlement from less highly contaminated zones, firstly of families with children and the sick. The most highly contaminated villages in Mogilev Oblast - (?Chudanyy), Malinovka and Aleksandrovka - have been almost entirely resettled, and hundreds of families have gone to allocated apartments. About 3,000 apartments were allocated in the first quarter of 1990, and construction of entire agricultural settlements has started. There will be about 5,000 holdings for these people. In order to speed up the elimination of the consequences of Chernobyl, the republican Supreme Soviet and republican Council of Ministers have established contacts with compatriots abroad, and with the world scientific community.

[5]

OPEN LETTER SENT TO LUKYANOV ON ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN MASSACRE

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Excerpts from report

Residents of Soviet Armenia are today [24th April] honouring the memory of the victims of the genocide of 1915 committed 75 years ago by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. More than one and a half million Armenians died in this vicious act. The day of commemoration instituted by the republican parliament has been declared a non-working day...

In the town of Echmiadzin, home of the Cathedral Church and residence of the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a service of mourning has been held, which was conducted by Vazgen I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. The Armenian chief priest also addressed a message to the people in which he called for the memory of the victims to be preserved as sacred and for prayers for the souls of those who died. The message notes, among other things, that the political security and strengthening of the mother country's economic might within the family of multi-national and sovereign Soviet peoples is the supreme pledge and guarantee of the further existence of the Armenian people.

An international scientific conference, "Genocide of the Armenians: history, theory and political responsibility" held in Yerevan yesterday [23rd April] was timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the tragic events...

Those taking part in the conference sent an open letter to Anatoly Lukyanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, asking that the matter of an official condemnation of the genocide against the Armenians be examined by the country's supreme body of state power...

interest in the party from which power in the region has "ebbed away"? There is no denying that the method of misleading people and distracting them from one's promises has been tested not just today.) Why did they proclaim the plenum participants "plotters" who had raised their hand against democratic processes? Why, finally, did Communist people's deputies and certain party workers find themselves alongside the rally participants?

The answer is both simple and difficult at the same time. It is simple if you consider that almost from the DBU's birth the forces that have gathered within it have enjoyed virtually a most-favoured status and operated under conditions of the oblast party committee's "ideological neutrality". This was the course laid down for party committees by the then oblast party committee first secretary. This is why party members found themselves without a rudder and sails, as it were, in a raging sea of public passions. Their non-resistance to evil both strengthened separatist, nationalist sentiments in local organisations of the DBU and occasioned defeat in the elections and served as a pretext for ousting party members from work collectives. This pretext is "substantiated" as follows: in a democratic state, they say, work collectives must be outside politics. This is an explanation designed for simpletons. For there is no end of examples where the DBU hurriedly fills a vacuum before it has had time to form, or here a leader of Shevchenkivskiy Rayon Soviet declares: Let us ban the Komsomol and the young pioneer organisation. In order to deliver children and young people from politics? On the contrary. They are clearing the way for a Bandera-type youth organisation.

Confident that their election victory gives them complete freedom of action, from the very first days the DBU deputies began "cooking" decisions and making speeches which in no way conform to the republic's constitution. In the economy: We do not need anything of "yours", i.e. from the country and the republic, but we will not give up "ours" either. In politics: We will unite with Ternopol and Ivano-Frankovsk Oblasts and create joint detachments for self-defence... In interethnic relations: We will send volunteers to Lithuania and turn it into Spain. (A familiar style - to decide for both the Ukrainian and the Lithuanian peoples at a stroke, without asking their opinion.) In this way they hastily give a "legal basis" to their election statements: it is necessary to carry out not restructuring but construction in the republic. These concepts would seem to share a single, creative root, but that is just the root. What of the crown? It is only possible to restructure something that already exists. But it is possible to construct only on an empty space, starting from zero. So this is heard increasingly frequently in the oblast soviet: "before us" there was nothing. Hence, if you discard the wordy format, this conclusion suggests itself: a new chronology begins "with us". Since Lvov Oblast, they say, is a small island of freedom and genuine people's power in the Ukraine, we can expect just about anything from the dictators in Moscow and Kiev. But we must not lose heart, they say. Fellow countrymen abroad and foreign firms... will help to assert "their" order first in the region and then also in the republic. The ultimate aim of these intentions is to take the Ukraine out of the USSR, and they do not conceal the fact that republic people's deputies from Lvov

Oblast are prepared to try to achieve this aim even in the new Ukrainian parliament. Foreseeing that they would not encounter unanimous support there, they prepared in advance a charge against the republican Supreme Soviet: It is "wrong" in terms of its composition and does not express the Ukrainian people's aspirations.

Simultaneously with the offensive by DBU forces a polarity of opinions is also being manifested increasingly clearly among party members. Various clubs, platforms and programmes paint different pictures of the future of the CP of the Ukraine. Some see it as a separatist organisation of a parliamentary type. Others see it with a thoroughly eroded organisational structure. Yet others see it as part of the CPSU, but absolutely independent of the centre. Here really sensible suggestions are no longer of substantial significance for, in the final analysis, they do not alter the essence. Their realisation will produce not a combat vanguard but an amorphous formation ready to fit in with sentiments but not to tackle the difficult work of shaping them. Having such a "sheaf" of directions, certain party members, as Prof V. Orlov graphically put it at the CP of the Ukraine Central Committee plenum, are already looking for someone to surrender to...

Outwardly, the authors of the proposed reforms appear to be acting for the good of the party. But in actual fact their efforts are aimed at blowing up the party from within in its name. No one on the oblast party committee has yet tried to explain this difference between the aims and their "format". Sometimes party members find it hard to understand the intricacies of attractive formulae, and they take a great deal on trust and so become the social base of various kinds of "reformers".

Individual rayon committees and party committees of large city enterprises noticed this danger (the DBU's growing influence and increasing disagreements among party members) as early as last autumn and sounded the alarm then. They demanded the convening of report-and-election party conferences and the resignation of the town and oblast party committee. For a while the "disturbers of the peace" on the oblast party committee were pacified. As time went on, however, the more support there was for the idea of strengthening the oblast and town party committee leadership. A day was even appointed for an oblast party committee plenum. It was thwarted, however: the oblast party committee bureau and the action group created by party committee secretaries failed to reach agreement on the procedure for holding it. In all probability the DBU, which was engaged in forming bodies of power, was confident that the initiators of the holding of a plenum would not keep their word. When the DBU saw for itself that the plenum would still take place, it feverishly cranked up its propaganda machine to maximum revolutions.

The then oblast party committee first secretary also helped it crank the flywheel. He declared at one conference, not without his sights on the distant future: I would be glad to work some more, but the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee is pensioning me off. It is not hard to imagine how pleased the DBU was at such a "gift" and what capital it endeavoured to make out of it. The purport of the ballyhoo raised by the DBU boiled down to the claim that reactionary