

FF106

B-WIRE

26-APR-1990 19:40:28

USSR - AP EARLY EVENING FROM MOSCOW ON CHERNOBYL

MOSCOW, APRIL 26 (AP) - WIDESPREAD PROTESTS, A 24-HOUR TELETHON AND A STRIKE AT A MAJOR FACTORY TODAY ADDED UP TO THE SOVIET UNION'S BIGGEST NATIONAL COMMEMORATION YET OF THE 1986 CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR PLANT DISASTER.

RESIDENTS IN THE SOUTHWESTERN SOVIET REGIONS MOST CONTAMINATED BY THE BLAST ORGANIZED PROTESTS TODAY TO DEMAND BETTER MEDICAL TREATMENT, PROTECTION FROM RADIATION AND PUNISHMENT FOR THE OFFICIALS WHO COVERED UP THE ACCIDENT'S EFFECTS, ACTIVISTS SAID.

IN THE BELORUSSIAN CITY OF GOMEL, MOST OF THE 35,000 WORKERS OF THE GOMSELMASH INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WALKED OUT ON A DAY-LONG STRIKE, SAID ALEXANDER KORNIEV, A PLANT WORKER.

HE SAID STRIKERS WERE CALLING FOR BETTER MEDICAL CARE AND WANTED ALL OFFICIALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE COVER-UP BROUGHT TO TRIAL.

THE CHERNOBYL TELETHON, ONE OF THE SOVIET UNION'S FIRST EXPERIENCES WITH THE INTENSIVE METHOD OF BROADCAST FUND-RAISING, HAD COLLECTED SOME 23 MILLION RUBLES (38 MILLION DOLLARS) AND ALMOST ONE MILLION U.S. DOLLARS AFTER ITS FIRST 12 HOURS, ORGANIZERS SAID.

THE LIVE BROADCAST, ORIGINATING IN MOSCOW, INTERSPERSED SINGING GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS WITH TRAGIC FOOTAGE SHOWING CHERNOBYL RESCUERS AND CHILDREN IN THE CONTAMINATED ZONE SUFFERING FROM RADIATION-CAUSED CANCERS. ALONG WITH MONEY, PLEDGES TO THE TELETHON CENTER INCLUDED DONATIONS OF RADIATION-FREE FRUIT AND EVEN 500 KILOS OF HONEY FOR CHILDREN IN THE CONTAMINATED AREA.

THE UKRAINIAN LEGISLATURE HAS DECLARED TODAY "CHERNOBYL TRAGEDY DAY" AND ITS BELORUSSIAN COUNTERPART PASSED A SIMILAR MEASURE. OTHER GOVERNMENT BODIES IN THE AFFECTED AREAS SANCTIONED WIDESPREAD DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THE SOVIET LEGISLATURE TOOK ACTION TO ASSIST CHERNOBYL VICTIMS.

THE ACCIDENT WAS ONE OF THE WORST DISASTERS IN SOVIET HISTORY AND ITS POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FALLOUT CONTINUE BE FELT IN THE SOVIET UNION AND AROUND THE GLOBE.

SWEDEN, WHICH LIKE OTHER SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES WAS IN THE PATH OF THE RADIOACTIVE CLOUD FROM THE EXPLOSION, REPORTED TODAY THAT FISH FROM ABOUT 15 PERCENT OF ITS LAKES STILL ARE TOO CONTAMINATED TO BE EATEN. IT MAY TAKE 30 YEARS BEFORE THE LAKES WILL BE CLEARED BY HEALTH AUTHORITIES.

IN NORWAY, NEWSPAPERS REPORTED TODAY THAT THE LEVEL OF CANCER-CAUSING SUBSTANCES IN THE MOST EFFECTED REGIONS IS 10 TIMES NORMAL LEVELS IN PLANTS AND UP 20 TIMES ABOVE NORMAL IN TOPSOIL.

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, GREENPEACE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS SCALED A COOLING TOWER AT A NUCLEAR POWER STATION UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN SOUTH BOHEMIA. TO CHEERS FROM ONLOOKERS AND PASSERSBY, THEY PINNED UP A BANNER SAYING "STOP CSFRNOBYL -- GREENPEACE." CSFR IS THE NEW NAME OF THE CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC.

A CZECHOSLOVAK HOSPITAL ALSO CALLED FOR PROSECUTION OF ITS COUNTRY'S COMMUNIST PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WHOM IT CHARGED WITH FAILING TO TAKE MEASURES TO PROTECT CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS AFTER THE DISASTER.

THE SOVIET UNION'S OFFICIAL WILLINGNESS TO PLAY UP THE CHERNOBYL ANNIVERSARY APPEARED TO REFLECT BOTH THE GROWING SOVIET AWARENESS OF THE CATASTROPHE'S AFTERMATH AND THE PRO-DEMOCRACY VIEWS OF MANY NEWLY ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNING COUNCILS.

OFFICIAL REPORTS SAY 31 PEOPLE WERE KILLED WHEN ONE OF FOUR REACTORS AT THE CHERNOBYL PLANT CAUGHT FIRE AND EXPLODED APRIL 26, 1986. UNOFFICIAL REPORTS SAY 250 DIED.

THE TV NEWS PROGRAM VREMYA FOCUSED ITS AFTERNOON SHOW ON CHERNOBYL REPORTS. "WE HAVE BEEN SILENT TOO LONG," A VREMYA REPORTER SAID. (PTO)

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B-WIRE

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USSR - (1) AP EARLY EVENING

ON THE EVE OF THE ANNIVERSARY, THE SOVIET LEGISLATURE ADOPTED A 16,000-MILLION-RUBLE PROGRAM THAT WOULD INVOLVE RESETTLING AN ADDITIONAL 200,000 PEOPLE FROM IRRADIATED AREAS. THE PROGRAM WAS ADOPTED YESTERDAY EVEN THOUGH MANY MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME SOVIET, CRITICIZED IT AS INADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH THE HEALTH, AGRICULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFTERMATH OF THE ACCIDENT.

IN THE MONTHS AFTER THE ACCIDENT, SOME 116,000 PEOPLE WERE EVACUATED, AND SOME SOVIET SCIENTISTS AND POLITICIANS HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING SINCE THEN FOR FURTHER RESETTLEMENTS. THEY SAY A TOTAL OF FOUR MILLION SOVIET PEOPLE ARE LIVING ON CONTAMINATED LAND. THE 16,000 MILLION RUBLES DOLLARS EARMARKED YESTERDAY IS TWICE THE LEVEL SPENT IN THE FOUR YEARS SINCE THE ACCIDENT BUT STILL SHORT OF THE 250,000 MILLION RUBLES THAT LEGISLATOR YURI SCHERBACK HAS ESTIMATED IS NEEDED OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

MANY CHERNOBYL-AREA RESIDENTS HAVE COMPLAINED OF INADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE AND CASES OF ANEMIA, LEUKEMIA AND CANCERS HAVE BEEN REPORTED RISING AMONG PEOPLE LIVING ON IRRADIATED LAND. MANY RESIDENTS STILL EAT IRRADIATED FOOD BECAUSE ALTERNATIVES ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

THE SUPREME SOVIET ALSO DIRECTED THE GOVERNMENT TO DRAFT A BILL ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY AND NUCLEAR SAFETY, AND TO PHASE OUT THE CHERNOBYL POWER PLANT. THE UKRAINIAN LEGISLATURE HAS CALLED FOR THE PLANT, WHOSE THREE REMAINING REACTORS ARE STILL OPERATING, TO BE CLOSED BY 1995.

SOVIET PREMIER NIKOLAI RYZHKOV SAID IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED TODAY THE COUNTRY WILL NOT PHASE OUT NUCLEAR ENERGY ALTOGETHER, BUT IT WILL IMPROVE SAFETY SYSTEMS.

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