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CHERNOBYL

LENINGRAD PARTY, CITY COUNCIL DIVIDE CONTROL OF PAPERS. The conservative Leningrad Party organizations and the liberal Leningrad city council have divided responsibility for newspapers there. In the past *Leningradskaya pravda* was a joint organ of the Leningrad Party Committees and the Leningrad City and Oblast Councils, and *Vechernii Leningrad* was a joint paper of the Leningrad Obkom and the city Council. From now on, *Leningradskaya pravda* will be solely a Party newspaper, while *Vechernii Leningrad* will be issued by the Leningrad city council (*Radio Moscow-1*, (2200), April 17). This change should make *Vechernii Leningrad* a more interesting paper; up to now, it has generally followed the pre-*glasnost'* traditions of the Soviet press. (Vera Tolz)

FORMATION OF RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY DISCUSSED. A two-day congress of Communist Party members from the RSFSR was held in Leningrad over the weekend (TASS, April 22.) Participants announced they would meet again on June 9 and 10 to prepare for the constituent congress of a Russian Communist Party to be held on June 19. TASS stressed that the new body will be created within the framework of the CPSU. The RSFSR is the only Soviet republic without its own Communist Party. Gorbachev resisted pressure for the creation of such a body until last month, when he told the March Central Committee plenum that an all-Russia Party conference would meet in June to discuss the matter. Gorbachev was forced to give in since this is one of the few causes that are supported by both wings of the Party. It has strong support from the "right-wing," Russian nationalist end of the Party, but is also among the demands of the "leftwing" Democratic Platform, which sees the creation of a Russian Party as a necessary step in the federalization of the CPSU. (Elizabeth Teague)

MASS PROTEST IN UKRAINE. More than 50,000 people marched through Kiev yesterday to mark the fourth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Reuters reported. Speakers included peoples deputies Yurii Shcherbak, Boris Oliinyk, and Volodymyr Yavorivsky, as well as the former political prisoner Leonid Plyushch who now lives in Paris. They demanded that the power station be closed and that former Ukrainian officials be put on trial for failing to tell people how serious the accident had been. Among those named were Valentina Shevchenko, currently the republic's president, and former health minister Viktor Romanenko.

According to a press spokesman for the Ukrainian Helsinki Union in Kiev, demonstrations also took place in Kharkov, Kaniv, Odessa and other cities. These opened a series of actions called by Rukh, the Ukrainian ecological movement and their allies to mark the anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. But the meetings had a broader agenda as

well. Among the slogans at the Kiev meeting were "Down with Leninism" and "Down with Bolshevism," an indication of growing nationalism in Ukraine. Some marchers threw their copies of Lenin's works at the militia. (Paul Goble/Bohdan Nahaylo)

GOVERNMENT PROPOSES NEW PROGRAM FOR CHERNOBYL ASSISTANCE. A special session of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers has accepted a new, sixteen-billion-ruble plan of "urgent measures" to assist the victims of the 1986 accident over the next three years (*Reuter*, Central Television-B, April 22). The plan will provide for the resettlement of people living in contaminated areas, improve medical aid to those affected by radiation, supply "clean food" to the affected regions, and increase social services, especially for children and the elderly. The Presidium also called for foreign scientists and specialists to be consulted on the program's formulation. Finally, the Presidium created a special department under the State Commission for Emergency Situations to monitor the implementation of the program. The new program, which comes on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the accident, will be submitted to the Supreme Soviet for final approval.

The Council of Ministers program represents a significant concession in favor of the victims of Chernobyl; previously, the government had pegged the total cost of the clean-up program at 8 billion rubles. As recently as two weeks ago, the Supreme Soviet Commission on the Environment and Rational Use of Natural Resources rejected the government's earlier plans as inadequate (*TASS*, April 12). However, a study commissioned by a group of accident survivors counters that the real costs of an effective clean-up and resettlement program are between 35 and 45 billion rubles (See *Daily Report*, March 30). (NCA/DJ Peterson)

MESKHETIANS DEMONSTRATE, GERMANS RECEIVED. Dozens of Meskhetians demonstrated in front of the Supreme Soviet building in Moscow on Friday, "Vremya" reported. As in the past, they were demanding that the legislature's commission looking into their situation allow them to return to their homeland in Georgia. The same day, *TASS* reported, Supreme Soviet chairman Anatolii Luk'yanov received a group of Soviet Germans to discuss their situation. While he expressed sympathy for their plight, Luk'yanov underlined the many difficulties Moscow faced in doing anything about it. (Paul Goble)

AZERBAIJAN-ARMENIAN RAIL LINK OFF AND ON. Over the weekend, Moscow radio reported first that the situation along