

[Andryushchenko] That is the whole problem—so far it has not. Nevertheless, its construction has continued from year to year. During its use there have been frequent unplanned interruptions in the operation of the power units. In 1989 there were 30, and in 1990 rather fewer.

[Vorotnikov] Why does this happen?

[Andryushchenko] Primarily because sub-standard technological equipment breaks down, particularly the steam generators. For example, in the first power unit they worked for only five years instead of the 30 years they were guaranteed for.

[Vorotnikov] The cooling reservoir has also been causing a great deal of criticism....

[Andryushchenko] Exactly. It is part of the Volga reservoir, sealed off with a sand embankment which is very permeable. In the event of a serious accident this will create potential danger to the great river.

[Vorotnikov] And what is the personnel training situation?

[Andryushchenko] Unfortunately, because of a lack of modern training equipment, practices do not conform with world standards.

[Vorotnikov] Is there a system of economic and social protection for the population living in the area of this AES?

[Andryushchenko] No. Different options for predicting local, regional, and global damage to the environment and the population in the event of a serious accident have not been drawn up either. Nor are the inhabitants of Natalino village being granted privileged conditions for living there.

[Vorotnikov] What conclusion did the participants in your seminar reach?

[Andryushchenko] We decided to appeal to the USSR and Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviets to speed up the adoption of a law on nuclear energy, governing the economic and legal aspects of regulating mutual relations between this sector and the population. The scientists recommended that the USSR Ministry of Atomic Power Engineering and Industry put the resources allocated for the construction of the second stage of the station into making sure that the power units in the first stage of the AES work more efficiently and reliably. Also that it ensure a stage by stage transition to a closed cooling system—through cooling towers—thus eliminating the danger of polluting the Volga from the cooling reservoir. Also, in the short term that a modern training system be used. All equipment provided for these stations must also be reliable. It is scandalous that steam generators break down five or six times more quickly than they should. And finally we determined the subject matter for joint scientific

research to improve the reliability and safety of AES's. We are involving scientists from the Volga region and the whole country in this.

Pyatigorsk Introduces 'Ecological' Toll Charges for Transit

PM0801135991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 7 Jan 91
Second Edition p 3

[Correspondent V. Pankratov report under the rubric: "Ticker Tape": "Ten Rubles for a Whim"]

[Text] Drivers of all types of motor vehicles passing in transit through Pyatigorsk must pay a 10-ruble toll. This decision has been adopted by a session of the city soviet. For those not wishing to burden themselves with an unnecessary expense, provision has been made for an alternative option associated with the use of the bypass: Travel along it is free. The purpose of the innovation is to ensure effective protection of the atmosphere. Routes from such directions as the Transcaucasus, the Volga region, and the Black Sea intersect in Pyatigorsk. It is planned to use the sums obtained from the tolls to implement measures to protect the environment. This is why they are called ecological dues. Ten rubles is the payment for a whim for those who do not wish to use the circular route.

Urals Town Contaminated by Radioactive Waste, To Be Evacuated

PM1401155391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
11 Jan 91 Union Edition p 5

[A Tarasov "Reportage With a Bias": "Evacuation 40 Years On"]

[Text] Sverdlovsk Oblast—A Sverdlovsk Oblast Soviet Executive Committee [Oblispolkom] resolution has been approved. It provides for the evacuation of the inhabitants of the settlement of Ozerney, Rezhevskiy Rayon, which is 70 km from the oblast center—it is yet another radiation disaster zone.

On my way to Ozerney I took a look at the radiation monitoring report on homes in the settlement, drawn up by a team sent out by the oblast sanitary and epidemiological station. Here are a few entries: "25 West Street—ceiling around 1,000 microroentgens per hour; 8 West Street—800 microroentgens per hour in the stove"....

I entered this little house, all neat and tidy:

"Lady, do you know that your stove gives off 120 microroentgens per hour and the part of the fence near your neighbors' gate is giving off around 400?"

"They came from the city and gave my mother a dosimeter. They told her to hang it on a nail. A month later they collected it. But there has been no sign of them since..."

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In my conversations with the villagers I established that most of them were not only ignorant of the changes that lay in store for them, but had no inkling of the nature and scale of the problem in their own homes. And that was despite the fact that it had been Ozernyy's lot to have radiation as a "neighbor" for as many as four decades—ever since construction began on the uranium-thorium ore enrichment combine alongside the settlement.

...The Rezhvskiy uranium deposits turned out to be poor, so in 1964 the nuclear people left, leaving thousands of cubic meters of raw material in "burial grounds." It was only a token burial—sprinkled with earth. Sprinkled indeed—the protective layer was barely one meter deep. There were towering piles of sand-clay refuse on the bank of the Ozernaya River—production waste, its high level of radioactivity due to the residual uranium and thorium.

The nuclear people upped and left, without even giving the inhabitants of Ozernyy a hint of the implications of their legacy. The villagers set about removing the abandoned sand-clay refuse—anyone building a brick house, plastering walls, building a sandpit for grandchildren. Construction organizations took the pesky sand away in trucks and put it on all the highways in the neighborhood. The radiation spread in patches.

In the late sixties the Sverdlovsk radio equipment plant, which was setting up a branch in the settlement, took over the empty premises of the former secret facility and the oblast sanitary and epidemiological station was allowed to monitor production.

"We appealed to the oblast leadership on several occasions," S. Treyger, a doctor at the oblast sanitary and epidemiological station radiation hygiene department, said. "But they merely made a note of our decontamination proposals."

Two years ago some unsuspecting construction workers uncovered one of the "burial grounds" while laying heating pipes. Ozernyy had begun the final act of a tragedy without ever suspecting it: Everyone was suddenly renting cottages for the summer, students from the Urals University "Vagant" detachment were building spacious brick houses in the settlement, and subsidiary farming was on the increase at the radio equipment plant.

V. Vyukova, head of the midwifery center:

"Recently I collected analyses of all the settlement's inhabitants. I was hoping that doctors would require them. But no doctors have come. Except for a stomatologist, who agreed only to do a stint here."

Conversations with the villagers revealed that R. Khuzin, chief physician at the Rezhvskaya sanitary and epidemiological station, did visit Ozernyy on several occasions, but an amazing silence accompanied the visits... One inevitably wonders whether the settlement's

plight is due not so much to the nuclear people's irresponsibility and not so much to the oblast authorities' diktat and local authorities' incompetence as to a basic lack of respect for the villagers, which condemned them to neglect and ignorance. After all, if Ozernyy had been just once told the truth about the burial places and the villagers had been taught how to take elementary precautions against the invisible calamity, would they have allowed their kids to create a beach on top of one of the "burial grounds," near the river, where the gamma radiation was calculated at 3,000 microroentgens per hour? Had the doctors seen the analyses of the settlement's inhabitants, would they be dismissing some of them now, at the mere mention of evacuation?

Talk about moving and people reply: We would not be able to find work; we have cushy jobs here, salaries. But they also complain about not being able to lay on a decent meal and about sick children. The ultimate in the statization of human beings. To keep quiet about the fact that the settlement has been enveloped in something that is probably rather worse than a ring of radon clouds above the "burial grounds" is to make a mockery of things human: doctors maiming the sick through their inaction, the sick sacrificing their own salvation and their children for the sake of "salaries."

So they finally remembered Ozernyy. As if the 40 silent years had never happened and the tragedy had occurred overnight, the settlement suddenly—the only word to describe it—started getting visits from commissions, the Rezh Soviet adopted a resolution, immediately followed by the Sverdlovsk Oblispolkom. We might stop there. But one thing is worrying: Rezh and Sverdlovsk intend to help Ozernyy in different ways. For example, Rezh deputies, attracted by the possibility of rectifying matters at a chemical plant where, owing to conversion, there is a dire shortage of manpower, the Rezh deputies plan to construct 450 apartments and 25 cottages for the villagers. A Sverdlovsk Oblispolkom resolution talks only of 336 apartments in the rayon center—to all appearance, it will be implemented, nonetheless. A Rezh City Soviet decision envisages the construction of a kindergarten for children who have been moved out of Ozernyy, but this is not mentioned in the oblispolkom resolution.

There is no need to wonder why the Sverdlovsk people "forgot" about the kindergarten and 150 or so families of villagers. The reason is symptomatic. Judge for yourselves: The oblispolkom first calculated the cost of decontamination, involving the removal of radioactive waste from the settlement—and pretty expensive was the result. Evacuation, then. So they calculated what it would cost. Even more, apparently... A senior delegation went to Ozernyy, called a meeting of villagers, and tried to persuade them that there was no need to move.

What you have here is "market scales"—on one side the cost of the plans, on the other the value of the villagers' health.

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The argument for those who stand behind the scales is that six-year-old Katya Kargina died in December in Ozerney. Of leukemia.

...Just before I left I dropped in at the settlement soviet. I was closely followed by little Katyusha's mother, who had come to arrange for a death certificate for her daughter. I dared not approach her, so I went out onto the street. I was presented with a spectacle typical of the times: children from a boarding school for the mentally retarded—constructed on the grand scale in Ozerney, with 150 places; incidentally there is no mention of its future in the oblispolkom resolution—were running in the direction of a "burial ground," all red faces, shouting something. They were running along a snow-covered road, through patches of radiation.

Tyumen Oblast Residents Fear Falling Rocket Debris

PM0801090991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
7 Jan 91 Union Edition p 1

[SIBINFORM report: "Rockets Will Go on Falling"]

[Text] Colonel General of Aviation German Titov, the second man in space, has held talks with representatives of Soviet power in Tyumen. The subject of the talks was "Rocket Launcher Stages Falling on the Oblast's Territory," SIBINFORM reports.

"The Tyumen people are rightly concerned about rocket stages falling on their territory," German Titov said. "First of all, let me set people's minds at rest—our rockets are environmentally clean. Their fuel components are ordinary kerosene and oxygen."

That will not help local residents, who will still have to mind their heads...

Kazakh President Cited on Future Semipalatinsk Nuclear Tests

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[Text] Moscow (ADN)—The Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev fears "political and social repercussions" in his republic if Moscow continues with its nuclear tests on the Semipalatinsk test site. Nazarbayev told the Soviet news agency NOVOSTI [no date given] that all talks between the Kazakh leadership and the leaders of the Defense Ministry have so far remained unsuccessful. Everybody is sticking to his positions. In spite of the fact that Kazakhstan has strictly banned any further nuclear tests on its territory, it has recently emerged from the army leadership that a total of 18 underground nuclear explosions in Semipalatinsk have been planned for 1991 and 1992. The Kazakhstan president sees in the attitude of Defense Minister Yazov a sign of the "imperial policy of the center" which refuses to abandon the totalitarian system which exists in the USSR. "Obviously, the center has no idea of the real

situation which exists here," Nazarbayev said. "They should finally understand that there will be no turning back from sovereignty in the republics. Policies should be developed which are based on that premise."

Semipalatinsk Test Site Environment Study Planned

PM0801112191 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA
in Russian 4 Jan 91 First Edition p 1

[Report by Ye. Doroshenko: "Diagnosis for Test Range"]

[Text] A coordination conference of the country's scientific organizations which in 1991-1995 have to carry out a comprehensive study of the Semipalatinsk test range and adjacent regions was held recently at the V.G. Khlopin Radium Institute.

The program provides for a study of the full spectrum of possible radiation and ecological, medical and biological, and seismic consequences of nuclear explosions compared with the influence exerted on the environment and on man by natural factors and ecologically harmful technogenetic factors in modern production facilities.

The main avenues in the study will be headed by Doctors of Chemical Sciences A. Krivokhanskiy and Yu. Dubasov, Doctor of Medical Sciences V. Gorlov (USSR Health Ministry), and Doctor of Technical Sciences A. Matushchenko. It is planned that a number of Kazakhstan's scientific organizations will take part in the work.

The results of the research will be brought to the notice of the broad public.

Fifth Irkutsk Oblast City Declared 'Environmental Disaster Zone'

PM0701142791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
4 Jan 91 Union Edition p 2

[Item from roundup of IZVESTIYA, TASS, SIBINFORM reports: "Fifth Environmental Disaster Zone"]

[Text] A session of the Shelekhov City Soviet has adopted a decision to recognize the territory of the city of Shelekhov as an environmental disaster zone. According to the data of a commission, 52,000 tonnes of harmful substances are discharged annually into the atmosphere of this city of 50,000 people. Moreover, a check carried out on agricultural produce delivered to a store revealed twice the maximum allowed quantity of nitrates.

Shelekhov is the fifth city in Irkutsk Oblast to declare itself an environmental disaster zone.