

Information on verification of the facts set forth in the collective letter of the Chernobyl NPP personnel to the Central Committee of the CPSU

June 1, 1987

Secret

Regarding the situation at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and its surroundings

From May 17 to June 1, 1987, the operational situation at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and its surroundings remained unchanged.

The primary efforts of organisations involved in the disaster response were focused on decontamination and preparation for the start-up of Unit 3, the safe operation of the existing units and the Shelter, environmental protection from the spread of radioactive substances, and the construction of the new power industry town of Slavutych.

From May 11 to 19 of this year, a special commission, headed by Comrade V.M. Babanin, instructor of the Heavy Industry and Energy Department of the CPSU Central Committee, worked at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant to verify the facts set out in a collective letter from plant workers to the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers (incoming letter No. 211726, dated April 26, 1987).

The NPP's management and party committee was instructed to consider the advisability of continuing to employ Comrades B.V. Knurenko (Assistant Director) and V.M. Yanklovich (Deputy Head of Reactor Shop No. 1) in management positions. Comments were made to the management and party committee regarding the lack of attention paid to shift personnel, and the diminished role of shop trade unions and party organisations in resolving labour and welfare issues for workers at the Chernobyl NPP.

The commission instructed the management and party committee to conduct a detailed review of a number of specific issues raised by workers, take the necessary measures, and inform the workforce accordingly.

Following the review of these issues, a general meeting of shifts No. 5 and 6, where most of the letter's signatories work, was held on May 19 of this year in the Zeleny Mys shift camp in the community centre. At this meeting, commission members were provided with responses regarding the investigation into the facts outlined in the letter, as well as answers to additional questions from workers.

We have established through operational means that the initiator of the aforementioned collective letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers and the functionary in charge of collecting signatures for it was steam turbine operator (STMO) Ivan Ivanovich Osnovskiy, born in 1942, a native of the village of Pervomayskoye, Berezovsky District, Brest Region, non-party member, with a secondary education, who has been working at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant since 1978.

Osnovskiy is characterized as a quarrelsome, petty, difficult person, an eccentric by nature, constantly seeking out contradictions and striving for bravado by noticing them and not being afraid to raise them.

According to intelligence sources, this may be why I. I. Osnovsky's personal life has been so unhappy. He was officially married three times, has an adult daughter and a teenage son from each of his marriages, whose upbringing he has had virtually no involvement with.

In the fall of 1986, he filed a lawsuit against the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant trade union, unreasonably demanding a three-room apartment in Kiev. It was in connection with this that he repeatedly expressed to the chairman of the trade union, Comrade V. A. Berezin, that he intended to write a letter to the CPSU Central Committee.

During the work of the aforementioned commission, he inquired about the progress of the investigation into the facts set forth in the letter and expressed dissatisfaction with its progress.

He also identified himself as the "leader of perestroika at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant" and confirmed that he personally delivered the letter to Moscow. Moreover, I.I. Osnovskiy simultaneously sent a personal letter to the same address, which contained essentially the same facts.

According to unverified reports, I. I. Osnovskiy was allegedly convicted in Belozersk, Brest Region, in 1972 for attempted rape. He served his sentence from February 1973 to March 1974, working as a machine operator in the chassis shop at the Gorky Automobile Plant in Gorky. After his release, he worked at the Stavropol State District Power Plant, where he allegedly intentionally "lost" his passport to clear his criminal record and obtain a new one. He allegedly performed a similar operation with his work record book.

At the same time, it should be noted that Osnovskiy, in his own way, chose the right moment to write the letter, as the morale and psychological climate among the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant staff is currently abnormal. The upcoming transition to an eight-hour work schedule, preparation for which has been insufficiently thought out, is causing serious concern among the operating personnel.

Contrary to the current regulations, operational personnel at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant working at control panels and control rooms are working 12-hour shifts. The Trade Union Central Committee and the State Sanitary Supervision Authority categorically object to this schedule, as accumulated fatigue increases the likelihood of operational personnel making errors, which in turn could lead to serious consequences.

Despite this, the operational staff is overwhelmingly against switching to an 8-hour work schedule, citing the fact that they would practically lose contact with their families, and a lot of time would be spent traveling from Kiev, etc.

Shift supervisors take a completely indifferent stance on this issue, and with their tacit consent, the operating personnel propose a number of work options, all while maintaining the 12-hour work schedule.

Specifically, instead of the six full-time shifts and one reserve shift currently operating at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, it is proposed to switch to five and one reserve shift, respectively, freeing up an entire full-time shift of 210 people by finding internal reserves, but maintaining the 12-hour work schedule.

On May 18 of this year, during a tour of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant by Deputy Minister of Atomic Energy Comrade A.V. Piruev, steam turbine operator Yuri Svyatoslavovich Semenyuk,

born in 1955, a native of the village of Kuzino, Bilimbayevsky District, Sverdlovsk Region, Russian, not a party member, and employed at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant since 1981, made negative statements. Specifically, he stated in the presence of several people that the evacuation of the population from the city of Pripyat was not organized in a timely manner, resulting in many receiving unjustified doses of radiation.

In this regard, according to him, he would personally execute high-ranking officials in Moscow and Kiev who failed to give the order for the timely evacuation of the population. An attempt by Comrade A.V. Piruev to explain the erroneousness of his position was futile; Yu.S. Semenyuk continued to stand his ground.

We have placed Yu.S. Semenyuk under operational investigation.

A spontaneous discussion among staff at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (ChNPP) about an excerpt from the novel "Maria with a Polynomial at the End of the Century" by Ukrainian writer V. Yavorovsky, published in issue 16 of the magazine "Ukraine," sparked serious outrage. According to the majority, the excerpt depicts the activities of nuclear power specialists in a biased, disdainful, and grotesque manner, which is clearly untrue (see the attached 3-page photocopy).

According to agent "Dobrovolsky," his wife personally witnessed on May 25, 1987, that Ivan Dmitrievich Terebov, born in 1936, a native of the village of Stogovka, Toksinsky District, Vologda Oblast, a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), with a higher technical education, working as a turbine shop foreman, was collecting signatures in Kiev at 22 Balzac Street (Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant District) for a letter addressed to one of the leaders of the CPSU Central Committee. The letter outlined demands for the allocation of space for a garage cooperative in Kiev instead of the proposed site for a temporary open-air parking lot. The Prip'yat City Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was promptly informed of this fact.

It should be noted that Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant personnel are also sensitive to the issue of declaring housing being built in Slavutych as official housing, interpreting it as follows. On the one hand, they have temporary registration in Kiev and an open parking lot for temporary vehicles, while on the other, they have official housing in Slavutych. This situation is causing anxiety, instilling uncertainty about the prospects of obtaining permanent housing, and is not conducive to normalising the morale and psychological climate among the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant staff.

The need for radical improvement in educational work among the staff of continuous shifts, as well as with the management of the plant's shifts and workshops, is more than obvious. The recent weakening of this work, especially under the conditions of 12-hour shifts, has led to a certain disconnect between operational personnel and the rest of the team, deteriorating their awareness on many issues, which has contributed to the intensification of unhealthy tendencies and attitudes among some Chernobyl NPP workers.

On May 30, 1987, at 11:45 PM., turbogenerator No. 4 (TG-4) was energized during the shutdown of Unit II during a major overhaul (MOO).

According to operational sources and competent specialists, the exit of Unit II from the MOO was very difficult. Despite the fact that start-up operations began a week ahead of schedule,

a number of defects were discovered in both the primary and auxiliary equipment, caused by both maintenance and operational personnel.

The most typical of these defects are as follows:

– On May 27, 1987, at 11:21 AM, while testing the main steam valve (MSV) on TT-4 to check its tightness, A.V. Oslyak, due to inattention, allowed the pressure in the drum separators to increase over a three-minute period. At a pressure of 74 kg, the AZ-5 circuit breaker of power unit No. 2, which was operating at a capacity of 400 MWh, was triggered. It should be noted that A.V. Oslyak, SIUT, knew that the high-speed pressure-reducing device (HRPD) of the process condenser (FRCD) was remotely controlled due to the circuit breaker being released, but he failed to take appropriate measures to prevent the AZ-5 circuit breaker from triggering.

On May 23, 1987, shift No. 6 (unit shift supervisor Yu. V. Malinin) performed a pressure test of the live steam pipeline (responsible shift supervisor Yu. N. Ozhusin, TC). A walk-through of the pressurized pipeline was carried out by auxiliary process equipment operator A. P. Demchenko, who inspected the pipeline; no issues were identified. However, on May 28, 1987, during start-up operations, a leak was detected at the fitting where the valve is welded to the pulse tube, specifically in the live steam section. Similar leaks were also detected at the connectors of two feeder valves, which were inspected during the pressure test by reactor shop personnel (responsible shift supervisor N. V. Serkov).

On May 28, 1987, during start-up operations on the TT-4, defects were discovered in bearings 12 and 14: a hydrogen leak in bearing 12 and low insulation resistance in bearing 14. In the first case, this was due to poor-quality packing of the oil seal (responsible for the work was G.P. Ofimkin, Lvovenergoremont (LER) foreman); in the second case, A.P. Yankelevich, LER foreman, reported bearing 14 with an insulation resistance of 3 megohms (start-up is possible at 1 megohm). However, by May 28, 1987, the resistance had dropped to 0.23 megohms. It is known that during a TG shutdown, the insulation resistance of the bearings is maintained by periodic blowing to remove moisture; however, neither the repairmen nor the maintenance staff did this.

The listed defects constitute a small fraction of the total number identified during start-up operations at Unit II. According to operational sources among competent specialists, this situation is the result of extremely poor organization and execution of the major repairs of the power unit, which was led and carried out by Deputy Chief Engineer for Repairs (ZGIS) B.N. Spektor.

The material support for the KPR II EB was poorly organised, limited to the turbine shop. Due to a lack of components, nine planned repairs were removed from the scope of work. This included the failure to implement the Government Commission's October 1986 decision to install vibration dampers on the condensate collector pipelines. A pipeline rupture in this location would, at best, lead to an emergency shutdown of the power unit.

An analysis of the results of the II EB repair campaign confirms the findings of the GAEN inspection that the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant lacks a quality management system for repair work (see the three-page instructions).

Power unit maintenance checks at nuclear power plants are conducted once every four years; therefore, high-quality repair work is the foundation for the long-term reliable operation of technological equipment.

Despite this, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant administration and party committee still pay insufficient attention to the timely implementation of educational measures against negligent workers and their transparency.

In particular, no order has been issued to date for any of the above-mentioned individuals responsible for the defects that led to the shutdown of Unit 2 during start-up operations.

Leak testing of the fuel assemblies (fuel assemblies of Unit III) continues, using the method of soaking the spent fuel pool canisters in water. From May 20 to 26 of this year, a leak test of the fuel assemblies was conducted in the central hall of Unit 3.

The test involved six fuel assemblies with varying power outputs ranging from 494 to 2130 MW per day, unloaded from six fuel channels between May 21 and 24 of this year.

As a result of the study, the radionuclide content in the incubated water (Bq/kg) for cesium-134 and cesium-137 in the canisters where three fuel assemblies were stored, unloaded from cells TK 481,000,000,000-2,294,000,000,000 [0.481-2,294 TBq/kg], 481,000,000,000-1,184,000,000,000 [0.481-1.184 TBq/kg], and 1,110,000,000,000-1,332,000,000,000 [1.110-1.332 TBq/kg], exceeded the existing leak criteria by two orders of magnitude (one hundredfold).

Before the shutdown of Unit III on April 26, 1986, the percentage of leaky fuel assemblies did not exceed 1%. Of the six removed in May of this year, three, or 60%, were found to be leaky. There are serious concerns that the percentage of leaky fuel in the reactor core of Unit 3 could be high.

In light of the above, a special program for further, more thorough leak testing of Unit III fuel has been developed and approved by the head of the RBMK Main Directorate.

Decontamination work continues at Power Unit III. By the end of May, 662 of the 1,164 rooms required for decontamination had been decontaminated. According to operational sources among competent specialists, decontaminating the cable system at Power Unit III is highly problematic. On the one hand, the radiation level is quite high—approximately 10,000 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$; on the other, approximately 1,000 cubic meters of contaminated concrete must be removed by chipping. Due to the high expected radiation exposure, a contractor for this work has not yet been selected.

The radiation situation has not changed significantly.

In the rooms of Administrative and Amenity Building No. 1, it is 1.5–2.0 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$, and in the unit control rooms, it is 1.2–4.0 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

In the turbine hall of the operating units, it is up to 110 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$, and in the turbine halls of Unit 3, it is up to 1,300 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

On the roof of the Shelter, it is 100–150 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$, and at an altitude of 200 meters above it, it is an average of 40 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

On the roof of Unit 3, it is up to 1,000 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

Along the perimeter of the NPP, it is 25–3,250 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$, and on its territory, it is up to 15 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

At the construction site of Phase II, it is up to 80 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

On the road from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant to Chernobyl, it's 1–50 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

In Pripyat, it's 1.5–70 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$; in Chernobyl, it's up to 6 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

The controlled parameters of the damaged unit continue to decline steadily. The maximum temperature inside the facility is 96.3°C, and gamma radiation above the reactor's collapse is 15,120,000 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$.

USSR Ministry of Defence units are conducting work to bury the "red" forest and have begun preparatory work to bury the second-stage construction base of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The most valuable materials located in storage facilities will be decontaminated, while the rest are planned to be buried on the construction base's territory, where a repository will be constructed. At a meeting on May 27 of this year, the Chairman of the Government Commission, Comrade B.E. Shcherbina, instructed the USSR Ministry of Defence task force to focus its efforts on burying the construction base at the expense of the forces currently employed in decontamination work in the city of Pripyat, which, he asserted, will not be fit for habitation within the next decade.

The personnel of the military construction detachments (MCDs) are currently being replaced. The planned strength of the MCDs of the USSR Ministry of Energy will be 8,500 personnel. A MCD of the USSR Ministry of Atomic Energy, consisting of 533 reservists, has arrived in Pripyat for restoration, repair, and construction work. The military construction regiment of the USSR Ministry of Medium Machine Building, currently involved in roof cleaning work on Unit 3, with a total of 1,400 personnel, continues to be recruited (according to the plan, up to 1,300 personnel by June 10).

The GVF's authorised representative's findings regarding the lack of a fire safety system at the Shelter facility were confirmed during the inspection. At our initiative, paramilitary fire brigade No. 3 conducted an inspection of the unit. In May of this year, a fire safety work schedule for the damaged unit was developed.

To carry out counterintelligence tasks, the KGB department for the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant uses 69 agents, 3 residents, and 112 trusted individuals; "Genrikh" is being investigated by the KGB.

Head of the KGB Department of the Ukrainian SSR for the city of Kiev and Kiev Region for the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant
Lieutenant Colonel A.N. Mirgorodsky