

Chernobyl and the Imperialist Media

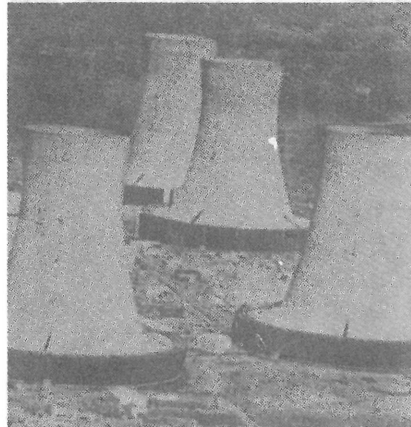
Even before the seriousness of the Chernobyl accident was grasped, there was massive imperialist mobilization to deepen anti-Soviet sentiment internationally.

Since the regrettable mishap, the western media, and especially that of the United States, has waged a broad campaign against the Soviet Union, using the accident to score points. The US papers caused an international uproar against the Soviet Union for its alleged "lax safety measures", "employing old techniques", "concealment of facts", etc. This burning campaign, waged by the American government, aimed at diverting attention from the real issue. The real issue is international peace that is being sabotaged by the US. The US is not only escalating the nuclear arms race, but also further extending it into space with the Star Wars Program.

Nuclear power will continue to make a contribution to society's energy needs, and the Chernobyl disaster is likely to happen again anywhere. Yet international peace could only be achieved through successful negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Soviet Union has, on many occasions, proposed different initiatives to reduce nuclear experiments and the production of nuclear arms. The last initiative was proposed by the Soviet leader himself in his speech during the 12th International Youth Festival in Moscow. Gorbachev announced a freeze on all nuclear experiments, and called upon the US and all western European countries to take the same step. The US, aspiring to achieve military superiority, has rejected all initiatives, in spite of domestic protest and many setbacks for its own programs, most recently the explosion of the Challenger. The human mind cannot imagine the catastrophe that would have been if the Challenger had exploded over a populated area.

The American media launched a wave of hysteria as if Chernobyl was the first accident of its kind in the world. Yet the May 12th issue of the American Time magazine listed seven of the most serious, reported nuclear accidents in the world. Four of these occurred in the US at plants used for both energy and military purposes. This year, other than the Challenger explosion, there was the malfunction at the Kerr-McGee corp. uranium-processing plant in Oklahoma state, which killed one worker and sent one hundred people to hospitals. The biggest US mishap, which occurred in 1979 in Pennsylvania at Three Mile Island, was also caused by equipment malfunctions and human error. Due to a

malfunction in the safety system in Alabama's Brown Ferry reactor, there was another nuclear disaster in 1979. In 1961, there was a fatal explosion of the SL-1 reactor for military experiments near Idaho Falls. There have been many others. In 1952, the meltdown of Canada's Chalk River reactor was the first known major malfunction of a nuclear power plant. In 1957, at least 33 cancer deaths were traced to the effects of England's Liverpool plant malfunction. In Japan, leaks from a major nuclear power plant contaminated water for several hours, which exposed many people to radiation.



The Three Mile Island Plant is still being decontaminated.

Unlike what the American media has tried to establish, the quality and safety of the Soviet-built nuclear reactors are no less than the American-built ones, or any others. None of this is to diminish the seriousness of the Chernobyl incident, but to expose the hypocrisy of the imperialist media that attempts to influence international public opinion against the Soviet Union and poison the political and diplomatic atmosphere.

What are the real reasons behind this hysteria?

Nuclear disarmament is a battle the Soviet Union is winning on the ideological level as a result of its peace initiatives to which some western European countries have been more receptive than has the US. The US government wants to retaliate by attempting to divert attention away from these initiatives and portraying the real threat as coming from the Soviet Union. This would justify the US government's refusal to respond to the Soviet initiatives, and

allow it to enact its own policies. The US used the Chernobyl accident as part of its economic warfare against the socialist countries. It encouraged its allies in Western Europe and the 'third world' to check all food exports coming from the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the Soviets certified that these were not contaminated. (In fact, there has never been any proof that any were contaminated).

In its continued efforts to solve imperialism's crisis to its own advantage, the US seized upon the Chernobyl accident as one more weapon for enforcing its own economic and «anti-terrorist» policies at the Tokyo Summit. In addition, the US government tries to present itself, to the world and its own masses, as technologically superior to the Soviet Union. This is especially true after the Challenger setback. Last, but not least, the US government tries to divert international attention from its aggressive policies, and calm down the outrage as a result of its latest military aggression against Libya. It is clear that the attitude of imperialism to Chernobyl was to employ the incident to serve its ideological, military and economic aims.

After the Chernobyl accident, the Soviet leadership renewed its willingness to unite efforts on the issue of nuclear arms control. They suggested serious cooperation with the US within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to pass an international law that regulates nuclear arms production and nuclear experiments. Comrade Gorbachev himself extended the unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing until August 6th of this year. He suggested to meet with President Reagan in Hiroshima to sign an agreement to cease nuclear experimenting for military purposes.

Whatever else there is to be learned from the incident, there is an urgent need to respond to the Soviets' nuclear disarmament initiatives. Because if the meltdown of a power plant caused so much unrest, we can only imagine the outcome of a nuclear bomb explosion! International cooperation is necessary to reduce this risk.

The Soviet Union has taken yet another step in this direction by agreeing to host US scientists to monitor three Soviet nuclear stations to see if tests occur, if the US approves monitoring of US tests by Soviet scientists. The US government's initial reaction has been skeptical, for it had already determined its main response to the Chernobyl incident, i.e., its announcement that it will no longer abide by the terms of the Salt II treaty for limiting nuclear arms. ●