

Zuzana Jungerova from Spišská Nová Ves in Slovakia presents the first report about Chernobyl from the "Pravda" of the 29th April 1986.

Pravda (29th April 1986):

Havária v elektrárni
Moskva (ČSTK) — Rada ministrov ZSSR včera oznámila, že v Čiernobyľskej jadrovej elektrárni došlo k havárii, pri ktorej bol poškodený jeden z reaktorov. Podnikajú sa kroky k odstráneniu následkov a postihnutým sa poskytuje pomoc. Bola utvorená vládna komisia.

"An accident in a power plant

Moscow – Yesterday, The Council of Ministers of the USSR announced that there was an accident in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant during which one of the reactor had been damaged. Steps are being taken to eliminate the consequences of the accident and those affected are being supplied with help. A governmental commission has been created."

COMMENT:

The article was published 3 days after the accident had taken place. The information about the accident was very short, as you can see – only three sentences. It was a little bit difficult to find this article, as it was published on the seventh page of the issue, hidden in the middle.

In 1986, Slovakia was still a part of the former Czechoslovakia which belonged to the "Soviet part of the world". Thanks to it, there was a strong censorship at that time which did not enable the fluctuation of the information. The newspapers were under the control of the government and the communist party. I was checking the newspapers in the time of the accident (from 26.4.1986 – 10.5.1986). They were all written in the same way – very pathetic, without any relevant details, suppressing all the possible negatives. I do believe it was a common tendency in media during the Soviet times as the ideology of socialism resp. communism and therefore of the USSR was built on the idea that it **never fails**. Thus, everything negative, unpleasant or unsuccessful had to be suppressed.