

Reproduced with permission from the *Independent* 7 November 1990

Kiev students threaten army Parade

- 7 NOV 1990

From Susan Viets
in Kiev

THOUSANDS of protesters gathered in Kiev's central October Revolution Square yesterday on the eve of parades marking the 73rd anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution to commemorate victims of communism in a candle-lit ceremony.

Kievites carried banners saying "The October Revolution Celebration is a blasphemy for those who perished under the Bolsheviks" and "Enough communism - 7,500,000 are dead", and blocked traffic along the central Khreshchatyk street.

Tension in the city has diminished since opposition parties and the pro-independence movement Rukh signed a pact yesterday saying they would not block today's military parade. This follows a city council decision to ban the parade of military vehicles along Khreshchatyk, the traditional route, and the parade will now be held in

Victory Square, further from the centre and opposite the Rukh headquarters. Pro-communists are still allowed a civilian march along Kreshchatyk.

Students, however, remain a wild card. Leaders of last month's student demonstrations which toppled the prime minister, Vitaly Masol, and the radical youth movement SNUM have both refused to sign the pact. They had planned to set up tents to stop the tanks on Khreshchatyk. A student leader, Oles Doniy, yesterday said: "This isn't necessary any more. . . but this doesn't mean we won't act to stop the parade."

While October Revolution Square is awash with the brightly-coloured red and blue official republican flag, one blue and yellow national flag with a black mourning strip has been planted in their midst. Portraits of Lenin are up over party

buildings. Yesterday's crowd, however, brought its own decoration including several posters of tanks rolling over skulls and one of a large hand blocking a tank and Soviet missile saying: "We can't allow the Romanian option to occur."

Today's parades will be the focus of demonstrations throughout the Soviet Union protesting against the military and asserting the right of individual republics to determine their future but, defending the celebrations, the Soviet parliament chairman, Anatoly Lukyanov, told a Kremlin rally yesterday that the revolution "was the embodiment of the workers' dreams . . . their answer to the age-old desire for social justice". "No-

one can belittle the huge importance of the October revolution and its influence on the course of world history and the progress of mankind," Mr Lukyanov declared as Mr Gorbachev and many of the 5,000 guests applauded.

As well as focusing regional tensions, the celebrations will highlight criticism of the Soviet military, which will parade its latest long-range missile on Red Square today. Foreign military attaches yesterday identified the weapon as an inter-continental ballistic missile with a range of 6,500 miles, termed the SS-25 in the West.

"We are not displaying this latest ballistic missile to demonstrate our military power, but to show the taxpayer what his money has been spent on," one unidentified general told a Soviet television interviewer.

■ MOSCOW - Lithuania's President, Vytautas