

# March of thousands in Kiev

- 2 OCT 1990

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From Susan Viets in Kiev

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AS UKRAINIAN opposition leaders yesterday staged a pro-independence strike across the republic in protest at the union treaty, thousands of Ukrainians responded by marching to the parliament in Kiev and holding a day-long demonstration against the communist heads of state.

It was the first time Ukrainian nationalists had staged a protest of such proportions. As many as 50,000 people streamed up the hill to parliament early in the morning, shaking their fists and calling for the resignation of the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Vitaly Masol, and the President of the Republic, Leonid Kravchuk. They also called for the dissolution of the Communist Party. The crowd then marched to the city council controlled by the opposition umbrella movement, Rukh, chanting "No to the Union Treaty", "Ukraine without Moscow" and "USSR is the prison of the people".

Later in the day several thou-

sand drifted back to the parliament building — where MPs were sitting for the first day of the second session. Angry demonstrators, many from the radical pro-independence western Ukraine, stood in the rain, demanding the resignations of the President and the Prime Minister.

Bohdan Kutyk, the Mayor of

Lvov, in the western region, said the city was "paralysed by strikes; all the factories and enterprises stopped work for two hours. Even Aeroflot shut its doors."

However, reports from other regions in Ukraine indicate that support for the strike was modest. In Donetsk, the mining and industrial heartland, the head of the

strike committee, Aleksander Averyanov, said: "No strike in the mines occurred but 10,000 rallied in the city centre and that's enough for now." The Kiev committee said less than a quarter of the factories supported the strike.

The main strike demand is rejection of the union treaty, which involves negotiations on a new pact governing relations between the 15 republics and the Kremlin to replace the 1922 national compact that set up the Soviet Union. The treaty will be discussed during this session of parliament. Most of the other demands — including stopping the operations of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and ending conscription of Ukrainian soldiers by the Soviet army — have already been adopted by the Ukrainian parliament.

The Communist government has yet to implement these measures. In the end Mr Kravchuk broke parliamentary rules by letting a strike committee member in to read out the demands.

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