

Radical Leader arrested in Kiev

From Susan Viets
in Kiev

IN AN abrupt break with *glasnost*, the Ukrainian authorities arrested the prominent opposition leader, Stepan Khmara, at the weekend.

Mr Khmara, leader of the radical Republican Party, was stripped of his parliamentary immunity last week following a 7 November scuffle with a plainclothes police colonel. His arrest follows police violence against students in Lithuania.

A video on Ukrainian TV showed how Mr Khmara and his colleagues surrounded and disarmed Colonel Grigoriev, tearing his clothes, after he harassed a young woman camped in an underground passage during the October Revolution celebration.

A leader of the pro-independence Rukh movement, Sergei Odarych, said the arrest was an attempt to provoke a clash between opposition forces and the communists but added: "If we remain calm, they will regret the arrest very much." A Rukh spokesman said Mr Khmara was being held in Lukyanovskaya prison.

Eighteen opposition deputies staged a one-day hunger strike before Mr Khmara's arrest, alleging parliament had rigged the vote against him and that such provocations were a prelude to martial law. Parliament will soon debate a law granting sweeping powers to the Ukrainian police force.

Last week the Communist Party daily *Pravda Ukrainy* carried a front-page statement by the party accusing Rukh of "dirty political provocations", part of a communist backlash aimed at discrediting the opposition.

The outspoken and popular Mr Khmara was the first MP to don a white headband and join students in their recent hunger strikes. He was a political prisoner under Brezhnev for his participation in the Ukraine's human-rights Helsinki union.

■ A Russian Orthodox priest was shot and killed by unknown assailants in the Ukraine, according to Tass, AP reports. It was the second killing of an Orthodox priest in three months.

Tass, the official Soviet news agency, quoted police as saying Ivan Kuz, a priest in the village of Bynliv, was hit by three bullets fired at close range. His body was discovered in a forest by residents of the nearby town of Vizhnitsa.

The report said the priest was seen driving his car to a religious service in a neighbouring district. The car, which had been burnt, was discovered near the village of Valyava.

The motive for the killing was not known, although Tass said police had ruled out robbery.

In September, Alexander Menn, a Russian Orthodox priest and writer who was persecuted for his evangelical activities, was bludgeoned to death with an axe while on his way to church. His body was found near his house in Zagorsk, the site of an ancient monastery. The case has not been solved.

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