

Democratic Party Opposes End of Union

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[Article by Natalya Kozlova: "There Is No Union, There Is Commonwealth. The Final Verdict? Or Can It Be Contested?"]

[Text] *The participants in a rally called by the Democratic Party of Russia attempted to answer these questions.*

The accord among the three former Soviet and now sovereign Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia at the meeting held at Manezhnaya Square was called the "counter-revolution of the 'White House.'" On a damp winter evening several thousands of sympathetic and curious members of the Democratic Party of Russia gathered to hear the position of "N. Travkin's party" on problems which have been agitating both us and the entire sub-lunar world for several days.

Today the Democratic Party of Russia is considered one of the largest in the country. According to our established tradition, many general and beautiful words, which it was very difficult to believe, were said at the meeting. Political labels, which are also well known from past meetings during CPSU rule, were distributed right and left immediately afterward. Nevertheless, virtually all the speeches were intelligent and, basically, to the point. The danger of interethnic conflicts spreading to the scale of a civil war, with all the consequences—this alarm was sounded in most of the speeches not only by Moscow residents, but also by party members from the country's other regions.

Surprisingly, a group of people, who did not agree with the idea of the Democratic Party of Russia meeting, conducted themselves in an undemocratic way. These people also considered themselves democrats. The right to stand with posters, from which it is evident that the citizens who have brought them do not share the views of the Democratic Party of Russia on the consequences of the "Belovezh coup," is not objectionable. True, one would wish that slogans with unconcealed boorishness would not increasingly become the distinctive feature of our democratic meetings and democratic culture. The hysterical cries of women, like staff mourners at a funeral made to order, hissing, and hooting virtually without a stop during the entire meeting—this was not the most successful find by those who brought this noisy army to Manezhnaya. There were not many such people. As during old times the next speaker called them "so-called democrats."

The speakers' main points boiled down to the following: **No one authorized the leaders of the three Slavic republics to "abolish" the Soviet Union.**

A division of the Army and of presently unestablished borders, which is inevitable in such a situation, will lead to a civil war.

The Democratic Party of Russia is for an immediate signing of the Union treaty.

Undoubtedly, arguments on every point deserve the most serious attitude.

N. Travkin, leader of the party, called upon those gathered to picket the "White House" in order to explain their position to Russian deputies. In his opinion, this was the first stage of the struggle, which was reflected in the excessively verbose, in my opinion, resolution of the meeting.

The measure at Manezhnaya Square ended with a small fight during an attempt by a "dissenting" democrat to force his way to the microphone. I thought: If a fight begins for a place at the microphone... Reason and God, stop us at the dangerous line.