

Chernobyl: The Horrific Legacy

23 years and counting

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On April 26, 1986, Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station reactor number 4 exploded at 1:24 a.m. "Tons of radioactive dust was" unleashed "into the air...transported by winds, [and] it contaminated both hemispheres of our planet, settling wherever it rained. The emissions of radioactivity lasted [short-term] for 10 days."(1)

On 29 April, "fatal levels of radioactivity were recorded...in Poland, Austria, Romania, Finland, and Sweden."(2) The day after (30 April), it hit Switzerland and Italy. By 2 May, it reached France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Great Britain, and Greece. The next day, Israel, Kuwait, and Turkey were contaminated. Then, over the next few days, "radioactive substances" were recorded in Japan (3 May), China (4 May), India (5 May), and the US and Canada (6 May).

The radioactive spew from this explosion was "200 times greater than the atomic bomb at Hiroshima."(3) Not one person was safe from this catastrophic nuclear explosion; and "65-million people were contaminated...more than 400,000 people were forced to evacuate the area [around Chernobyl], losing their homes, possessions and jobs, as well as their economic, social, and family ties."(4)

The long-term and hidden costs of radioactive contamination have never been adequately reported by mainstream news. According to the authors (including the distinguished Dr. Rosalie Bertell) of a new book, "Chernobyl: The Hidden Legacy" "[i]t will take millennia to recover...[before an area] as large as Italy, will return to normal radioactive levels in about 100,000 years time."(5)

This week, 26 April 2009, marks the 23rd anniversary since this catastrophe; so we have another 99,977 years to go, until things return to "normal" again.

With a myriad of on-going social costs ignored by most of the world's media, the staggering medical consequences of now systemic radiation poisoning, and the enormous tragedy of genetic malformations, while the nuclear industry touts how "safe" nuclear power is, it is time to look again at the very real costs -most especially with the US financially bankrupt and the global economy in a deliberately created train wreck of proportions never seen in our history. Given this global economic collapse, there are neither enough financial or technological safeguards available today or long term to protect humanity from the already present and ubiquitous radioactive toxicity to which we are all exposed.

Social Costs

The surrounding area of Belarus was the worst hit, with "30 percent of its territory rendered

useless.”(6) While hundreds of thousands of people were initially evacuated, over these 23 years, many have returned “home.” Today, their lives and homes remain permanently devastated. Poisoned. However, the Soviet government did not either report to its own people how catastrophic this explosion was, or what were to be the real, long-term radiation consequences. Further, people who were working to supposedly “contain” the crisis, died shortly thereafter from massive radiation poisoning. Cover-ups and suppression, by the government and various international agencies, of what happened made the extent of this nightmare inaccessible to the Russian population affected as well as the rest of the world.

The Chernobyl reactors were built under a post-Stalin, 5-year plan by Moscow bureaucrats who had absolutely no understanding of the complex problems of building four reactors: (1) with such an unrealistic deadline; (2) the dangerous instability of running reactors for long periods on less than half power [that] made them unstable;”(7) and (3) a lack of realistic safety measures in the event of a nuclear meltdown.

The director of the power plant was a 35-year-old nuclear engineer named Victor Brukhanov. Inconceivably, he was placed in charge of both the building of the reactor-complex as well as creating a whole new town of Pripyat (that eventually had 50,000 people). The race to complete it, within the unrealistic deadline, resulted in parts that were “hastily built on the grounds of the plant” and that “were not specifically approved by the original designers.”(8) Yet, it was Brukhanov’s mission to make Pripyat as attractive to Soviet workers as possible, regardless of the very real nuclear dangers, as the city and the reactor were being rushed to completion.

Citizens were lured to Pripyat with inexpensive housing, regular salaries, and all the perks that were generally not available to the majority of Soviet citizens. Pripyat “was soon considered one of the prime locations for young workers [the average age was 26] in Ukraine and the surrounding area” that had “shopping centers, sports facilities, schools...and an amusement park.”(9) The city boasted an abundance of well-stocked food supplies and “goods that were difficult to get in other areas of the country.”(10)

Lulled into a completely false sense of financial security, “few realized that the massive...reactors in use across the country had already malfunctioned.”(11) An accidental release of a cloud of radioactive iodine at a power plant...in Leningrad” had occurred in 1975, and a “near meltdown” of another reactor had happened near Beloyarsk.”(12) Again, neither of these accidents were reported to Soviet citizens or to the rest of the world. Secrecy was already in place regarding nuclear power plants and the dangers of nuclear radiation.

When the nuclear accident happened at 3-Mile Island in March 1979, Soviets had a field day criticizing capitalism, noting that money and profits were more important than safety issues. This criticism of the Western nuclear reactors was short lived. East or West, however, any country with nuclear power continues to deceive its citizens about the true costs and dangers of radiation.

When Chernobyl exploded, the two operators in charge followed their procedures, “to contain the damage as much as possible and managed to impede the spread of the explosion to reactor number 3.”(13) These two men died soon after the explosion. However, in the rush for the Soviet government to cover up what really happened, these men were tried “as the single cause of the explosion.”(14) In fact, after years of lies and deceit, there were “various historical revisions of the accident, during which it was made clear, that the

principle cause lay with planning defects of the reactor, they were exculpated of the crime, but not officially.”(15) Citizens of Pripjat were not evacuated until two days after the explosion. There were only allowed to take personal documents and some money. They were never allowed to return. Pripjat is now a ghost town.

An area for 30km around the nuclear plant site is called the “Exclusion Zone.” It is “fenced off and the entrance is forbidden.”(16) Radioactive Cesium 137 rates are staggering. Nonetheless, about 4,000 people moved back to evacuated areas, even though they remain radioactive. People are forced to live in a contaminated environment.

The clean-up continues to this day. “Clean-up” (a real oxymoron) staff are called “liquidators.” They are not trained properly, not do they understand the enormous life risks about the work they do. For example, between 1986-1987, more than 800,000 liquidators worked inside the Exclusion Zone –all without any medical monitoring of radioactivity levels that “reached as high as 20,000 Roentgens per hour. The normal level would be 0.010-0.020 milliRoentgens per hour. ...The normal dose of radiation received from natural background radiation over a lifetime of 70 years is 7 REM.(17) (See below, under Medical Costs.)

All liquidators (who wore no protection as they tore down contaminated houses and sifted through rubble) worked in a cloud of nuclear dust that enveloped them. One liquidator, Zalavie Chechersk noted:

“We have always worked without protection, we don’t even notice it any longer. We got used to radioactivity and radioactivity got used to us, and anyway, we have to work to live, and this is how you work here.”(18)

It is a death sentence to be a liquidator.

Longer term, anyone who helped in the clean-up also eventually died. In Alla Yaroshinskaya’s “Chernobyl: The Forbidden Truth”(19) the author reports, that requests to

open judicial proceedings against the persons who obstructed openness –glasnost- with regard to the consequences of the accident, and had hidden the information from residents of the dangerous zones”(20) only received a ‘bureaucratic’ reply, always the same camouflage, the same concealing of the global lie at the State level. Not a word of the government decrees setting up the regime of secrecy, nor of the administration circulars in the same spirit, not a word of the millions of people put in danger by constant exposure to radiation. Not a word of the unchecked spread of radionuclides [another term for radioactive isotopes that are produced artificially during the nuclear fission process] throughout the country. It was as if all this did not exist.(21)

Chaos, on-going chaos, is what these people (living in a radioactive environment) continue to deal with on a daily and yearly basis. Today, more than 9-million people live in this area (Belarus, the Ukraine, and western Russia), “with high levels of radioactivity, consuming contaminated food and water...and 80 percent of this” entire “population suffers from various pathologies.”(22) So far, the Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion “has caused more than a million deaths.”(23) The real death toll may never be known. The radioactive core, entombed in a now cracking sarcophagus (where radioactive gas and dust escape) still contains 180 tons of radioactive material.

There have been hundreds (if not thousands) of scientific studies that document the

unmitigated nightmare that continues at Chernobyl. "The last report of 7 September 2005, is that no matter how hard they [the government and others] try to conceal the deadly reality of Chernobyl, no one will succeed in eradicating it for several thousand years."(24)

Medical Costs/Tragedies

According to Dr. Pierpaolo Mittica, the on-going medical nightmare of radiation poisoning includes(25):

1. An increase of 100 times the incidence in aggressive tumors of the thyroid(26) and 50 times the incidence in other radiation-related tumors (leukemia, bone and brain tumors) in the contaminated areas. Much of this carcinogenic increase is in children.
2. There is a 30-percent increase "in malformations due to genetic mutations, of pathologies of the senses, cardio-vascular, skeletal, and muscular systems and the connective tissues, as well as diseases of the nervous system and psychic disorders.
3. There is a 20-percent increase of premature births.
4. These figures do not include unknown numbers of spontaneous abortions, miscarriages, and still-births due to radiation.
5. Physicians and scientists who spoke out were discredited, fired, or jailed.
6. Low-level radiation exposure remains a hazard.

Cancer has been around since ancient times. The difference now is that it is epidemic. Much of this epidemic can be linked to human-induced causes; and millions of cases can be connected to radiation poisoning. Of course, there is the natural background radiation. However, for the past 64 years, we continue to have radiation contamination from: thousands of nuclear explosions (in the atmosphere, underground, above ground, and in the oceans); other nuclear weapons such as Depleted Uranium (used most recently on innocent Gaza citizens), X-rays and other kinds of nuclear medicine.

This is not a simple one-cause crisis. Rather, humans have become sponges and unsuspecting guinea pigs for an assortment of highly toxic substances, including very long-lived nuclear radiation; more than 100,000 chemicals in use (and 1,000 new ones added each year) with most never tested for human safety; more than 60 illegal Clandestine Weather Modification Programs (that have never had any public discussion or debate). This list is just for starters.

From the very beginning of the nuclear age (with the secretive Manhattan Project established to build the atomic bomb), the great majority of the world's citizens have never been warned about the extreme dangers posed by nuclear explosions and the massive radiation that ensues. We also have global contamination from many nuclear-related accidents that continue to cause havoc for billions of citizens. Dr. Bertell estimates that there may have been "thousands" of nuclear accidents, as many have not been reported, but are known from "anecdotal" evidence.(27) The enormous catastrophe at Chernobyl is one of many on-going radioactive nightmares that wreck permanent havoc. Radioactive contamination does not go away.

The genetic mutations to all living beings (humans and all animals) that are happening also

have received little coverage from corporate-controlled media. When the 1959 thalidomide tragedy struck infants, the media did show many photos of deformed babies. The corporate-controlled media is now silent, so the world at large does not know or see the devastation that nuclear radiation causes. However, the medical and alternative journals have covered this horror.

Nuclear radiation comes from several sources. The most damaging are Strontium-90 and Cesium-137.(28) Radioisotopes (also called radionuclides or radioactive isotopes) are the “radioactive elements produced artificially during the process of nuclear fission.” The nuclei of these artificial isotopes are unstable due to “an excess of protons and/or neutrons.” This “instability provokes spontaneous transformations into other isotopes, and this transformation is accompanied by the emission of ionized radiation. This process is called disintegration or decay.”(29) This radioactive decaying process varies, depending upon the isotopes. This is known as its radioactive half-life. Cesium-137 has a half-life value of 30 years, and for the emission of its radioactivity to disappear takes 300 years. Cesium has a similar chemical structure to potassium. Due to this, it can enter the body’s circulation and substitute its own radioactivity for potassium and cause “genetic mutations, tumors, and a large number of pathologies in various organs.”(30)

Strontium-90 has a 28-year half-life, and disappears after 290 years. Strontium shares chemical similarities with calcium, and thus is absorbed in our bones, bone marrow, and teeth. As it emits radiation constantly in the body this “causes cancers such as osteosarcomas and leukemias.”(31) Other radioactive substances include Iodine-131, Uranium-235 (700-million year half-life, disappearing in 7-billion years), and Plutonium-239 (with a half-life of 24,000 years, disappearing in 240,000 years). Thus, any contamination from these radioactive substances is lethal forever; and it does not just mean immediate death, but in its longer duration causes severe mutations and sterility in subsequent generations.

The dramatic and heart-wrenching photos of infants and children that accompany Mittica’s book and Leuren Moret’s articles need far wider circulation. (See NOTES.) As extremely painful as they are to look at, the intense impact of seeing these innocent children suffering so acutely would cause a universal outrage, if millions of people knew the extent of what radiation damage is doing. This is the true and tragic cost of nuclear technology. There is no “fix” for these radiation consequences that are now global. They are reported in obscure journals, instead of on the front page of every newspaper and all Internet news sites.

As I have written, invisible does not mean safe.

Nuclear Waste

According to Dr. Bertell, who has written extensively about the spectacular flaws and the true costs of nuclear energy: “The problem of secure storage of nuclear waste...remains dangerous for millennia.”(32) Already many areas of supposedly “safe storage” are leaking radioactive substances. Supposedly “safe” containers –actually, “time-bombs”– have developed leaks and cracks.

The US, has 1,623 Superfund sites.(33) About 11-million Americans live near a Superfund site –and this includes 3-4 million children(34)– loaded with an assortment of highly toxic materials, including an enormous amount of nuclear waste. There are insufficient funds to

clean up or safely store this nuclear waste. Dr. Bertell notes(35) There is “no scientific evidence that geologic strata can guarantee absolute stability of the [nuclear waste] containers. Quite the reverse,” as the earth’s crust is in constant motion.

1. Real costs are already seen in radioactive “caused cancers in children, their children for generations to come.”(36) Over the last 30 years, there continue to be dramatic drops in fertility: male sperm count is down more than 40 percent; and millions of women have difficulty in conceiving.

2. Isolating nuclear waste for “eternity” is a PR sham. “It is not possible to find materials that will assume leak-proof retention, or even the US’s poor understanding of radioactive life, or eternity.” Radioactive waste already contaminates many parts of the less-developed world. Furthermore, the state of Utah is considering bringing in low-level nuclear waste from Italy.(37)

For example, toxic waste is stored in the 500,000-acre site of Hanford Nuclear Reservation, near Richland, Washington, and the Columbia River. Originally, Hanford was “chosen as the site for one of three “atomic cities” to be built by the US Army to support the Manhattan Project.(38) There are “excessive rates of pancreas cancer and multiple myeloma, a rare type of bone marrow cancer, among former Hanford employees” were reported between 1951-1971.(39) Both the Columbia and Willamette rivers that go through Portland, Oregon, are some of the most polluted rivers on the planet.

Hanford was built in 1942, initially to produce plutonium for US weapons.(40) Of the nine original General Electric reactors there, eight have been leveled and one remains. Hanford’s radioactive nuclear waste includes hundreds of liquids waste containers, and millions of gallons of “high level radioactive liquid reactor waste.”(41) The nuclear toxicity is so enormous that now it is a “Superfund” site. The story of Hanford as a “high-risk accident” waiting to happen, due to its contaminated longevity, is well documented.(42) Public watch group, Heart of America Northwest, notes that:

The Native Americans living on and near the Hanford Site have been dispossessed of their land and culture because of government policies and economic expediency.” Since Hanford was built, “as much as 450 billion gallons of contaminated [nuclear] wastes have been dumped into unlined soil trenches at Hanford. More than a third of the 177 underground storage tanks have leaked, resulting in more than a million gallons of liquid High-Level Nuclear Waste contaminating groundwater near the Columbia River.(43)

Eisenbud and Gesell in their book, “Environmental Radioactivity from Natural, Industrial, and Military Sources” note that eight of the original reactors used “natural uranium...and were cooled by single pass-through of Columbia River water. This cooling water accumulated activation and fission products before being returned to the river [and the Pacific Ocean]. ...In addition to activation products, fission products also escaped because of failures of the aluminum cladding that encased the natural uranium fuel.”(44)

Dr. Bertell notes that “Hanford is undoubtedly among the most contaminated spots on the globe.”(45) People living in the Pacific Northwest near this hazardous nuclear facility are at risk.

Hanford is just one example of: the on-going radiation toxicity to which citizens are exposed; the current hazardous conditions that have a 67-year history; and many governments’

continued refusal to make health and safety a priority. A hazardous Superfund site and safety are diametrically opposed to one another.

Sellafield in Cumbria, England, is another long-term nuclear nightmare. According to George Beveridge, Sellafield's deputy director: "It is the most hazardous industrial building in western Europe."(46) In an article published this past week, Robin McKie, Science editor of London's Guardian, notes that it

is it hard to understand why the building possesses such a fearsome reputation. Piles of old nuclear reactor parts and decaying fuel rods, much of them of unknown provenance and age, line the murky, radioactive waters of the cooling pond in the center of B30. [B30, is the concrete edifice, at the center of this complex]. Down there, pieces of contaminated metal have dissolved into sludge that emits heavy and potentially lethal doses of radiation.(47)

Like Hanford, Sellafield was built to become England's first atomic reactor site to produce plutonium. The highly radioactive nuclear waste produced there over decades has created another nightmare. It is estimated that the cost of clean-up over the next 100 years could cost the country up to £50 billion. From where is this money supposed to come, given the UK's financial debacle?

In a recent journal article about Sellafield, scientist Leuren Moret who visited England in 2003 when there was "a nationwide recall of radioactive salmon and venison throughout England." She notes also that "sea animals in the Irish Sea are contaminated with radiation from Sellafield, with levels of Technetium-99 reported in some lobsters to be 40 times higher than the EU Food Intervention levels." The accompanying photos to this article show other damaged-mutant sea animals.

The widespread and long-term contamination about which Moret writes is yet another reminder of the devastation caused by radiation:

The daily 'permitted' radioactive emissions and discharges into the Irish Sea since the 1950s, have turned contaminated sediments, seawater, and biosphere into a radioactive sink or permanent point source of radiation, with serious local and global effects. Daily 'permitted' radioactive emissions and discharges from global sources have accumulated to higher radiation levels than many Chernobyls would release, and are the main cause of the large increase in ocean dead zones since the 1970s. People are missing or overlooking the serious impact of chronic releases. Politics and activism has been misdirected to focus on nuclear fuel in pools, nuclear waste storage, and accidents like Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, a strategy guaranteed to fail.(48)

With accompanying photographs of infants so enormously damaged by radiation that affected their mothers during pregnancy, this article needs to be widely disseminated. Calling this daily dumping of nuclear materials into the biosphere an "undeclared and invisible nuclear war" on all of us, Moret urges us to re-direct our collective energies, because "chronic exposure of biological systems to low-level radiation is the most serious impact now damaging the biosphere, especially on a daily basis."(49) She further notes that after 1963 and the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, by US, UK, and the Soviets, "the Atlantic fish catch had over-recovered to more than twice the pre-1957 levels before the dramatic decline," indicating that recovery from contamination was possible.(50)

Recent Radiation News

1. Jan. 21, 2009. "Just before Bush left office this past January," his administration "Approved new Protective Action Guides [PAGs] for radiation releases that dramatically weaken public protection." These new PAGs "would permit radioactivity in drinking water hundreds to millions of times higher than longstanding EPA standards.(51)

2. Feb. 21, 2009. The Oregonian reports that the US Navy plans to "increase warfare training off the Oregon Coast."(52) This will be part of the decades-long, thousands of warfare training exercises that have been going on off the Pacific coast of Washington state, Oregon, California -to the detriment of everyone living there.

Through a Freedom of information request for the Navy's Environmental Impact Study [EIS] for these military exercises, Rosalind Peterson notes that the Navy "decided to use public lands, the Pacific Ocean, private property, wildlife, and humans as test subjects for warfare testing in four states. The Navy also has decided to contaminate our air, water, and soils with the chemicals used in these programs. They fail to list many of the chemicals that are to be used in these programs. ...There is a short listing of hazardous materials, air pollutants, and pollutants from munitions, expended materials, and radioactive materials [Depleted Uranium?] that will be used in this project."(53)

How much geologic instability has the Navy created in this area that has the San Andreas earthquake fault? To how much radiation will the public and all ocean sea life be exposed? Why should citizens be the military's radiation guinea pigs? In this EIS request, Peterson also wants to know if weather modification programs will be used, including the use of toxic aluminum-coated fiberglass [used also in Chemtrail aerosols]. Finally, Peterson notes:

It also appears that nothing would be spared in testing weapons of war on the public...it appears that these Western States will be sacrificed for building and testing more weapons of mass destruction. Remember that sacrificing California, Washington, and Oregon is just the beginning.(53)

3. News headline on 9 March 2009: "At Least 31 Nuclear Reactor Applications With the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission." Staff at allheadlinesnews reports that, despite the controversy surrounding the nuclear repository at Nevada's Yucca Mountain, the US nuclear power industry may be on a comeback trail based on at least 31 applications for nuclear reactors..." NRC expects "more applications in the coming days."(54)

4. Karen Dorn Steele, an award-winning investigative reporter was interviewed a few days ago by Amy Goodman on her "Democracy Now" radio program. Steele was asked about her many years of research at the Hanford Nuclear site. She responded by saying:

Hanford is the nation's largest plutonium production complex. It made the plutonium for the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. In the course of weapons production, it sent a lot of radiation into the air, contaminating the region. There's now a major lawsuit with over 2,000 plaintiffs winding its way through the federal courts. It was filed in 1991, seeking compensation. So far, the lawyers defending the government contractors have racked up about \$60 million in defense costs, and not one sick person has received a dime. So it's a justice issue. Again, sovereign immunity is being claimed by the government, and the government agreed to

indemnify these contractors who came in during World War II.(55)

Governments' repeatedly claim "sovereign immunity." Rarely do they take responsibility for the havoc they create.

The Precautionary Principle

As I have written recently, the entire concept of precaution, as espoused in the Precautionary Principle, is not part of the US government's agenda where the over-riding focus is on war and destruction.(56) The US budget for this year is the largest in our history.(57) Most of it is going to war and military expenditures. This is all to the exclusion of desperately needed social services. There are insufficient funds for health and elder care, education, and massive crumbling of infrastructure of roads, bridges, and a poor-to-nonexistent rail service. All this loss, while the US has the largest prison population of any western country.

The concept of the Precautionary Principle requires doing no harm. When we have reasonable suspicion of harm; where there is scientific uncertainty, we have an ethical and moral responsibility to take action to do no harm.

The level of corruption and criminality that pervade governments and corporate business today are off the scale. Are these people to whom we want to entrust the so-called "safety" of nuclear technology that has failed and permanently endangered all our lives? The history of the nuclear-warfare industry is not one that engenders trust or belief that they know what they are doing -except making profits. The true cost-benefit where lives and safety are more important than profits are not part of any current government equation. Chernobyl, Hanford, and Sellafield are just the tip of the proverbial problem. Nuclear energy is still a hazard.

We must ask these questions, and demand to be heard:

1. How long do we wish to be duped about this failed technology that has caused so much havoc?
2. With so many countries on the brink of bankruptcy, how can there be sufficient money to store deadly radioactive spent fuel for hundreds (let alone thousands) of years, when this technology is in an already failed state now? Who pays for future accidents, when there are already crumbling, hazardous sites all over the planet, that can never be cleaned up? The US government continues to cut band-aid funding to do this.
3. When will there be real reporting of the enormous radiation poisoning of our biosphere and genetic damage to millions of people and other living creatures that gets massive front-page coverage? We continue to remain at very high genetic risk from all the nuclear-related technology to which we are already now exposed.
4. When will millions/billions of people be tested for levels of chronic radiation exposure (either through insurance policies or national health coverage)? The tragic survivors (and their offspring) of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings are still being monitored.(58) For those who have any medical insurance (most of the under-developed countries' citizens do not even have basic medical care), testing for radiation exposure, or the toxicity of Chemtrails and other Clandestine Weather Modification Programs' poisons, as well as thousands of other deadly chemicals ubiquitous in our environment is not part of any

standard medical procedures.

Again, with 31 new proposals in a Congress (no longer working for the people) to build new nuclear facilities –with a real history of devastating accidents– massive contamination that will never go away, documented genetic damage around the globe, greed continues to be the modus operandi, and the Precautionary Principle is excluded.

The overwhelming majority of the world's people want to live their lives in peace and health. This is difficult when so many of today's illnesses are radiation related or have been created in secret bio-warfare centers. [Did this new outbreak of swine flu come from some secret lab?] These facilities are paid for with citizens' hard-earned taxpayer dollars. The Orwellian rhetoric of peace belies the reality of constant warfare and genocide perpetrated by many governments, but the causes are generally unknown by the majority of its citizens.

We are being chronically poisoned. Many people of good will, who understand the factual consequences of radioactivity, continue to write and speak out. Their voices must be heard, as we all are in grave danger. Here are just two examples: In a recent article entitled "From Hiroshima to Iraq –Uranium Wars: A Suidial, Genocidal, and Omnicidal Course," Leuren Moret writes eloquently and urgently about this military insanity.(59) For decades, Dr. Helen Caldicott has written and spoken out internationally about the massive radioactive dangers to which we are all exposed.(60) No one is safe.

If we truly want a world where our children and grandchildren can be born and grow up safe and secure in health and peace, we must wake up from our state of indifference and denial, become informed citizens (instead of shoppers), and create and join together in a global grassroots movement of good will to: demand real justice and accountability for those in charge perpetrating fraud and criminality, parading as government policy, that endangers all of us; demand ethical conduct; and refuse to pay taxes without representation to fund a constant war agenda that has contaminated the fragile web-of-life on our besieged planet.

"Our Children are dying. Help!"

A letter from the high-radioactivity zone at Chernobyl

"I am not yet thirty-two, and I have to go into hospital several times a year. My four children, the eldest of whom is twelve, are constantly sick, too (weakness, pains in their joints, low hemoglobin counts, enlarged thyroid and lymphatic glands, headaches, stomach aches, nonstop throat infections). It's the same in all the families.

We want to live. We want our children to live and grow up healthy, and for them to have a future. Because of the indifference and hard-heartedness, and cruelty of these on whom our destiny and that of our children depends, we are condemned to the most terrible fate, which we well understand. The only ones who don't understand are the bureaucrats in their comfy armchairs.

They promise the people of Narodichi that they will evacuate at least a few villages, but in our district it is never mentioned. And for so many years we have been forced to eat and drink radioactivity, to breathe it in, and just wait for our last hour. And all this in the land of the soviets, where it is always said (on the radio, in the newspapers, at school) that humanity is always the central priority!"

Valentina Nikolayevna Okhremchuk, mother of four boys, and all the mothers of Olevsk

district. (translated from the Russian). Alla Yaroskinskya, "Chernobyl: The Forbidden Truth," 1995.

"Should the public discover the true health cost of nuclear pollution, a cry would rise from all parts of the world and people would refuse to cooperate passively with their own death." Rosalie Bertell. "No Immediate Danger" xiii.

Educator and environmental writer Dr. Ilya Sandra Perlingieri is the author of "The Uterine Crisis" which London's Ecologist calls "an inspiration."

NOTES:

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3. Mittica, 29.
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5. Mittica, 22.
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7. Ingram, W. Scott. "The Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster." NY: Facts on File, 2005: 21.
8. Ingram, 18.
9. Ingram, 18.
10. Ingram, 18.
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13. Mittica, 56.
14. Mittica, 56.
15. Mittica, 56.
16. Mittica, 56.
17. Mittica, 57.
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19. It was published in English translation in 1994 by the University of Nebraska Press.
20. Yaroskinskya, Alla. "Chernobyl: The Forbidden Truth." Transl. by Michèle Kahn and Julia Sallabank. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995: 89.

21. Yaroskinskya, 89.
22. Yaroskinskya, 22.
23. Mittica, 23.
24. Mittica, 18. This information is based on an article by Dr. Michel Fernex, Faculty of Medicine, University of Basel, Switzerland.
25. Mittica, 180-181.
26. Kazakov, Vasili S., et al. "Thyroid cancer after Chernobyl." *Nature*. Vol. 359, (3 Sept. 1992): 21.
27. Bertell, Rosalie. "No Immediate Danger. Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth." Toronto: The Women's Press, 1985. Dr. Bertell notes that the increase in various cancers (that used to be a sign of old age, now is a marker for premature ageing: "[C]ertain biological processes, which normally occur with chronological ageing, break down earlier when the person is exposed to ionizing radiation." See: Mittica, 196.
28. For a list of other radioactive materials see: Mittica, 42-43 and Bertell, 15-63.
29. Mittica, 42.
30. Mittica, 42.
31. Mittica, 32.
32. Bertell, "No Immediate Danger": 178.
33. According to the Center for Public Integrity. See: http://projects.publicintegrity.org/superfund/?gclid=Cl_ysJirhZoCFQHyDAodlCslGg
34. See: Live Leak: www.liveleak.com/view?i=8a3_1199734181
35. Bertell, 11.
36. Mittica, 180.
37. Mark Clayton. "Will US become world's nuclear waste dump?" Feb. 28, 2008: See: [/www.csmonitor.com/2008/0228/p03s03-uspo.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0228/p03s03-uspo.html)
38. Bertell, 88.
39. Bertell, 89.
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