



WLADIMIR TCHERTKOFF

THE CRIME OF CHERNOBYL

THE NUCLEAR GULAG

The Crime of Chernobyl

The nuclear gulag

by
Wladimir Tchertkoff

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*In Memory of Alla Tipiakova,
Anatoli Saragovets
and Vassili Nesterenko.*

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the real authors, friends and victims of Chernobyl, whose testimony forms the basis of this book. They are numberless. The whole world needs to know the tragic truth about their destiny, so that the crime, which threatens humanity, is not perpetuated into infinity. The book was published in French, Russian and Japanese, but seemed not to interest publishers in the English-speaking world. I would like to thank Susie Greaves for having made the decision on her own, and without any prospect of finding a publisher, to translate the book into her native language, with rigour and passion. I am also indebted to Glagoslav who offered to publish the translation some years later. The door is open to our adversaries, the deaf and the blind, to join us on the side of truth. We are all in the same boat.

Note from Translator

I read Wladimir Tchertkoff's book in 2008 when it was published by Actes Sud and I was certain that it should be translated in order to reach a wider audience. I am very grateful to Glagoslav for their publication of the book, both in English and in Russian. This book is the most comprehensive account of the tragedy of Chernobyl, encompassing the historical, political and medical aspects of the events. I would like to acknowledge the help and support of my sister Alison Katz, and of my husband David Greaves, who shared my dedication to its translation and publication.

Preface

Hundreds of books, long and short, have been written about the Chernobyl tragedy. Few people are left indifferent once they understand a little about the biggest technological catastrophe in history. Wladimir Tchertkoff's book "The crime of Chernobyl—the nuclear gulag" occupies a central place in this library about Chernobyl.

Many journalists, like Wladimir Tchertkoff, a documentary film maker for Swiss television", were shocked by what they saw in the areas affected by the radioactive emissions following the explosion at Reactor 4 of the "Lenin" nuclear power plant in Chernobyl (Ukraine). Many witnesses, like Tchertkoff, were revolted by the events that followed in the scientific and political world after the Catastrophe. But very few were able to gather together all the facts to back up these feelings of indignation in a formidable work of documentation.

Tchertkoff's book does not limit itself to remembering the events, it demands of each of us that we grasp the consequences of the fact that following the Chernobyl catastrophe, the damage to human health and to the natural environment will be felt for hundreds of years over immense areas of the northern hemisphere contaminated by strontium-90 and caesium-137, and for tens of thousands of years by plutonium in a number of areas of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

Tchertkoff's book is reminiscent of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's famous book "The Gulag Archipelago", not simply in its title but in the method used to select and reveal the facts: it is a documentary (supplying names, titles and dates), it is encyclopaedic (the destinies and actions of individuals are accompanied by medical, historical, physical, biological, legal and political documentation) and it is passionate (the author is not a foreign observer but an active participant in events).

The bringing together of all this information, combined with the author's obvious talent as a writer, makes the publication of Wladimir Tchertkoff's book an important event for thousands and thousands of people in different countries. For those living in the contaminated territories, or those who have been exposed in any way to dangerous levels of artificial radionuclides, this book will help them towards a better understanding of how to deal with the dangers posed by radiation to themselves and to those closest to them. For those who are trying, in spite of the reaction to the consequences of Chernobyl from governments and international organisations, which was muted, to say the least, to understand more fully and to reduce to a minimum the uncontrolled effects of "atoms for peace"—the chronic exposure to low level ionising radiation, the effects of artificial radiation on health—this book will provide great moral support.

This is an important book for the history of contemporary society: it documents the way in which, during the last quarter of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, political statements diverged, sometimes diametrically, from the real action taken. The corporate interests of the nuclear industry and short-term “political expediency” took precedence over safety considerations and over the lives of millions of people. Finally, the book contains many striking descriptions of human behaviour: cowardice and heroism, baseness and self sacrifice, selflessness and villainy, a sense of duty and irresponsibility.

This book is a revised and fuller version of the 2006 French edition. It is based on documents from the hundreds of hours of film footage used in the seven documentary films made about the Chernobyl catastrophe by the inseparable team, Wladimir Tchertkoff—Emanuela Andreoli.

I am certain that no-one who reads Tchertkoff’s book will remain indifferent. The first French edition resulted in the setting up of the international organisation “For the independence of the World Health Organisation” (IndependentWHO—Health and Nuclear Power), and the *daily* (!) picket, still taking place today, in front of the World Health Organisation headquarters in Geneva: for more than eight years the Hippocratic Vigil has demanded that the WHO tell the truth about the consequences of Chernobyl and now of Fukushima. The WHO, linked by an agreement signed in 1959 to the International Atomic Energy Agency does not have the courage to do so. I am convinced that the publication of this book will mobilise more people to take part in the struggle for the truth against the nuclear deceit for the sake of this generation’s health and the health of future generations.

Professor Alexey Yablokov

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Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

11 July 2013

Petruchovo village (Ryazan region, Russia)

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PROLOGUE

*Who in this world is able to answer the terrible obstinacy
of the crime if not the obstinacy of the witness?*

ALBERT CAMUS, *Actuelles II*

“The future belongs to those with the longest memory”.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The authors of this book are the victims of the Chernobyl disaster that took place on 26 April 1986, the peasant communities whose voices I recorded in the north of the Ukraine and in the forests in the south of Belarus. They are the millions of people who eat caesium-137 every day in their food. They are the young mothers, contaminated themselves, who unknowingly are a source of poison for the new confident life forming inside them. They are the children who, even if they appear healthy when they are born, are condemned to become ill as they grow up, because they eat radionuclides morning, noon and night... They are the “liquidators”, the unsung heroes of Europe, who suffer all the unknown illnesses of the atom. Hundreds of thousands of people are ill, tens of thousands have died young and continue to die in unimaginable suffering... And they are the doctors and scientists, the few who have not submitted to the nuclear lobby, who, fortified by their knowledge, are engaged in a battle for the truth. As an Italian journalist, a Russian speaker, educated in France, it was by chance that I began to pass on these forbidden truths, as part of a fragile human chain made up, in the East, of activists in a country trapped in radioactive contamination and in the West, by activists who support them against scientific lies. It is with the help and the contribution of these men, women and children that I, wishing only to bring clarity and truth, am able to present the documents and testimonies that are in my possession thanks to them. Because lies and secrecy surround the worst technological catastrophe in History and threaten the future of humanity.

This book also recounts the struggle of two Belarusian scientists who risked their careers, their health, their own personal safety and that of their families to come to the aid of the population that had been contaminated. The physicist,

Vassili Nesterenko, and the doctor and anatomopathologist, Yury Bandazhevsky, forced into the role of dissidents because the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna prohibits the recognition of the harmful effects of low dose ionising radiation on health, were persecuted for their opposition to the official dogma. The first was a member of the Academy of Sciences in Belarus, but with his career in ruins, he continued to fight independently to protect children from radiation in the contaminated villages¹. The second was condemned to eight years in prison by a military tribunal, after he revealed the pathogenic effects on vital organs of low doses of radioactive caesium incorporated through food. Amnesty International recognised him as a prisoner of conscience.

The international organisations still refuse to verify the validity of the research findings of these two scientists and will not even consider the radioprotection measures that they recommend that might, at least, save the lives of the 500,000 children living in the contaminated villages in Belarus.

¹ Fate did not decree that the scientist V.B. Nesterenko should live to see the book appear in English. He died on 25th August 2008. *“One can only marvel at the unbelievable determination, energy, talent for organisation, and indomitability of this great man who created Belrad under conditions of unprecedented tyranny and repression from those in power who fear the truth about the terrible consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Today, we can say that Vassili Nesterenko has entered the ranks of the great humanists of our time: Schweitzer, Ghandi, Sakharov...”* Words spoken at the funeral oration by A.V. Yablokov

PART ONE

IGNORANCE

Chapter One

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

On the morning of Thursday 29th November 1990, four and a half years after the accident, we had a meeting with Alla Tipiakova at the school in Poliske, 68 kilometres west of the nuclear power station at Chernobyl. We had come to film a conversation with the pupils in her class. When we arrived, she was waiting for us outside in the drizzling rain. She got into our bus and made it quite clear that the step she was taking would probably end her career as a teacher. Then she asked us to film what she had to say.

A. Tipiakova.—I've been a primary school teacher for thirty five years. I know everything about the lives of the children in my class. There are 22 pupils in the class. Half the class is always absent. One little girl is in hospital permanently. Over the last two years her diabetes has got so bad that she needs two injections of insulin every day. She has been given every available treatment, but there is no real hope. I have a boy who, over the last year, has had such violent asthma attacks that he almost suffocates and spits blood. All of the children, one hundred per cent, have got abnormal blood chemistry. We have seen their clinical records. Nearly all the children, about 80% of them, have diseases of the thyroid. Hyperplasia of the first or second degree. All of them have dizzy spells. All of them experience nausea. Fainting is very common. Nosebleeds have become an everyday occurrence. Yesterday, when I spoke to them to prepare them for the meeting with you, they had tears in their eyes and told me that they faint in the street. They all know where their heart is. Children who know where their heart is! Because they experience stabbing pains in the heart. One little girl told me: "I feel as if my head is blowing up like a balloon. Then it tightens up, everything creaks and I feel as if I'm going to die". Another girl told me that her blood pressure is either too high or it's too low and she has to lie down. There is a little boy, Seriozha, who has started to stammer. He is already so sickly, so weak. He is one of twins and one of them already thinks of himself as being older. The children wanted to tell you all about it. Because they know...

Q.—Why can't we meet them?

—That's what I wanted to explain... I had told the children, very calmly, that some people from another country were coming: "A television company. You can

talk to them about your family, your situation, your thoughts, your troubles, and about your health. You can confide in them”. The children agreed. They were very pleased about it, especially as it was something new, something they had never done before. This morning I went to talk to the head teacher about it. I told her that someone was coming to see us, and I asked permission to meet you. She categorically refused: “How could you invite foreigners in to hear about the children’s health without my authorisation?” I replied, “They aren’t foreigners. They’re people who have come to help us!”

—But that’s exactly what you were doing, weren’t you, asking for permission?

—Yes. I told her about it straight away. Before I’d even taken my coat off, I went into the staffroom and gaily announced: “Today, we’re going to have a little show...”. “What! We’re working and you’re having fun?” After a telephone call to someone, I don’t know who it was, she called me into the staffroom a second time. And then she told me categorically no. So there had been a “no” from the regional office of the education authority. They told me there was to be no direct contact between you and the children. That upset me beyond all measure. I know my children, they weren’t going to complain about anything... And even if they had, why shouldn’t they? We can’t keep on with this slave-like mentality, it’s time to break free. We told the children it was cancelled and they went home very disappointed.

But I want to talk to you about something else. For a long time, we’ve been living here hoping that we were going to be evacuated, hoping to escape this circle of death. And at the beginning we were promised the earth. Pretty soon we noticed that nearly all the local managers had got themselves housed elsewhere while we were being lulled to sleep with fairy tales. We were told everything was normal, everything was fine and that there was no reason in theory not to live here. The adults will manage somehow. We have our roots here, this is our land... we will die here and be buried here... But we have to save the children. And now the children know, because they hear their families talking about it, that it is very unlikely that Poliske will be evacuated. They don’t trust us any more because they’ve been told lies. Today one of my children said to me: “If I had to write an essay today about a happy childhood based on the last four years, I couldn’t do it”. There is no happy childhood round here. They have forgotten how to smile, they have forgotten joy. They aren’t the same, they have become aggressive, disobedient. They don’t do their homework like they should. All of this is so hard for them that even we don’t understand our own children any more.

We really need help to save our children, get them out of here. We need to appeal to international opinion. We are deeply grateful for the gifts that they send us. Our children have been to France, Italy, Germany, Cuba, Bulgaria. The United States also has sent us food, vitamins for the children. But these are crumbs to keep us quiet. The reality is that if we stay here, we are condemned to death, we are hostages and we will all die here, our children with us.

Thank you. Send our good wishes to everyone who is helping us. We know that most people on earth are generous and understanding. In spite of borders, political ambitions and obstacles, they've opened up their hearts to us. But these are emotional gestures, heart felt.... But it's as if the policies, that might actually resolve our problems, are being blocked somewhere and at the political level no-one's interested in us.

I want to tell you a little bit about my grandson. He is one year and nine months old. He knows all about health centres. He has chronic amygdalitis, chronic rhinitis, chronic pharyngitis, all sorts of bacterial infections. He's so young and he already has all these illnesses. When you ask him "Where does it hurt?" he opens his mouth: "My throat hurts". He's less than two years old. Sometimes he doesn't speak for a couple of days and then on the third day, he speaks in a baritone voice, and the next day he makes little cries like a mouse. His parents are so worried about him. We are doing everything we can to save his life. And what about families with lots of children? In my class, I have families of five, six children. Three or four, is the norm. What about families where the father and the mother are terrified for each one of them? Their lives are condemned...I want to tell the whole world. I want to tell anyone who has a heart. We no longer believe our children can be saved if they stay here. You have to help us. Maybe there are centres in Europe that could look after them properly. They could invite the mothers and their little children. Here, no-one will have them. This is the most vulnerable group in society, young children and babies. They need medicines and special care.

The truth, only the truth, everything I've just explained to you, that any of these children could tell you. Tell other people what you see and what you hear, and shoot. Film it. Let this truth resound round the whole world! I don't want to say bad things. I belong here in this village. I grew up here. I teach the children here. I don't want to paint everything black. I know people are doing a lot. But the way it's being done is crazy, it's impulsive and chaotic. It's not solving the real problem.

This is definitely the end of my teaching career. It doesn't matter.

In 1998, I was sent to the Chernobyl territories again by Swiss television and I went to find Alla Tipiakova. I found only her daughter and family who were living in Kiev. I left them a cassette recording of her voice, her face. Alla Tipiakova did not lose her job, but her life. Some time after she delivered this desperate message, she died of cancer. But she left us with this lamentation, this painful whisper, which is still ringing in our ears.

Barely five days after the explosion of reactor number 4 at Chernobyl, the physicist Bella Belbéoch wrote an article that appeared on 1st May 1986 in the journal 'Ecology'. "Over the next few days we can expect an international conspiracy on the part of experts minimising the number of victims that will be caused by this catastrophe. The pursuit of civil and military programmes

will impose on all countries a tacit complicity that will override ideological or economic conflicts”.¹

In the autumn of 1990, when I made my first visit to the contaminated areas of Ukraine and Belarus to make a documentary about the accident at Chernobyl, I knew very little about nuclear physics, radioactivity or the interests of the nuclear industry. I did not have the expertise of a physicist like Bella Belbéoch. But one of the privileges of our profession is that we learn a lot in the course of our inquiries. In fact the very ingenuousness of a fresh approach can sometimes shed light on questions that have become too familiar to the experts.

Our duty is to inform. Before I present the testimonies and documents recorded for the five documentaries I made between 1990 and 2002, and the material uncovered over a period of five years when I was passing on information on a daily basis between independent scientists and doctors from the East and West, I will present the crucial pieces of evidence that might have helped Alla Tipiakova understand why the children in her class had been abandoned by the rich countries of the West. Neither destiny nor providence can be blamed for the fate suffered by these children. The responsibility is entirely and exclusively human.

¹ Quoted in *Tchernobyl, une catastrophe*, Bella and Roger Belbéoch, Editions Allia, Paris 1993; Tokyo 1994.

Chapter II

MEDICINE AND THE NUCLEAR ESTABLISHMENT

Everything to do with the disaster at Chernobyl, its causes and its consequences, must be made public. We must have the absolute truth.

ANDREI SAKHAROV, May 1989

I'm going to speak frankly, because life is short.

ANDREI SINIAVSKY, *A Voice from the Choir*

Humankind made the leap into the nuclear age some decades ago, but still does not understand the multiple consequences on human health of chronic exposure to low level radiation, or about the toxic effects of artificial radioactive substances that have been disseminated in large quantities into the environment by both civil and military nuclear activities.

The chronic incorporation into the organism of radionuclides, by millions of people (caesium-137 only disappears after three centuries) condemned to feed themselves with radioactive food, is a completely new phenomenon resulting from the Chernobyl disaster, of which humanity has no experience. The same can be said of Gulf War Syndrome in Iraq and of the health problems experienced by the Serbian and Albanian populations in Yugoslavia where tonnes of uranium-238 (described as “depleted” but having a half-life of four and a half billion years) were dropped. If research on these matters has been undertaken in secret by the scientific establishment, it has so far been reluctant to share the benefits of its findings with the planet’s populations.

Why has the World Health Organisation (WHO) done nothing in the territories around Chernobyl? Why has it handed over its radioprotection work to the promoters of nuclear power plants? Public opinion is largely unaware of the conflict of interest between the two specialist United Nations agencies directly responsible for managing the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe on the health of the contaminated populations.

An agreement signed between WHO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1959 prevents WHO from acting independently in the nuclear domain without the IAEA's consent. The IAEA, made up of physicists, not doctors, whose main objective is the promotion of the nuclear industry around the world, is the only specialist United Nations agency that reports directly to the Security Council. It imposes its *diktat* on WHO, whose objective is “*the attainment of all peoples to the highest possible level of health*”.

Today, the two agencies still only recognise as a consequence of the accident at Chernobyl the deaths of 44 firemen in the first hours following the disaster, (two from trauma and one from heart failure), 203 cases of acute radiation exposure and 200 easily avoidable thyroid tumours. The UN predicts a total of 4000 deaths that *could be verified as resulting from exposure to radioactivity from the accident*.² In contrast, the Office of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs shares Kofi Annan's view that estimates 9 million as the total number of people affected in the long term by radioactivity and confirms that the tragedy of Chernobyl has only just begun. Kofi Annan, not being a scientist, was sharply reprimanded by the director of the Scientific Committee of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), whose task it is to evaluate radiation doses world wide, their effect and the risk they carry.

These facts and contradictions erupted at the international conference in Geneva in 1995, and then at the conference in Kiev in June 2001, that we filmed.³ Here we witnessed the fury of the nuclear agencies and of their accomplices from the former Soviet Union on hearing the revelations of researchers and doctors in the field about the radiological causes of the health catastrophe in the contaminated

² Joint WHO/ IAEA/ UNDP communiqué, 5th September 2005. The previous day, the official death toll from the accident was still being put at 32 by the three agencies.

³ At this conference the chief medical officer for the Russian Federation stated that nearly 30% of the liquidators listed in their medical-dosimetric register were ill and about 10% had already died. This official register brings together information on the 184,175 liquidators. Estimates of the total number of liquidators, who were summoned from all parts of the Soviet Union to construct the sarcophagus and decontaminate the area, vary between 600,000 and 800,000 young men in good health (the associations defending the rights of the liquidators put forward the figure of a million). Their average age was 33 in 1986. Information about the disaster at Chernobyl was a state secret during the first four years (the last years of the USSR) and the doses of radiation that they received were systematically minimised, so official figures today can only be wrong, by default. The survivors of this army were dispersed over the 11 time zones of the former Soviet Union, many are untraceable statistically and, thanks to the disinformation from both the Kremlin and the UN nuclear agencies, they do not know why they are ill or what is causing them to die so young. The official numbers registered by the Russian Federation allow us to estimate that the total number of liquidators who are ill is between 200,000 and 300,000 and that some 60,000 to 80,000 have already died.

territories. The data and recommendations for radioprotection presented by independent scientists to protect hundreds of thousands of contaminated children were cast aside with disdain and arrogance. They refused to discuss it.

A deliberate scientific crime has been going on for twenty-eight years at the heart of Europe, sanctioned at the highest level, against the background of disinformation and general indifference of the technologically advanced Western civilisation. In order to preserve consensus about the nuclear industry, the nuclear lobby and the medical establishment are knowingly condemning millions of human guinea pigs to experience new pathologies in their bodies in the vast laboratory of the contaminated territories of Chernobyl. The dictator Lukashenko, safeguarding his own position, is simply the local administrator of policies that emanate from the Permanent Members of the Security Council of the United Nations. (United States, France, Great Britain, China and Russia) and are “legitimised” by the experts at the agency in Vienna. Europe is an accomplice, investing millions of euros in the programme CORE (Cooperation for the Rehabilitation of Conditions of Life in the areas of Belarus contaminated by Chernobyl), set up in 2003. This “humanitarian” programme, whose covert aim, according to one of its administrators, is “to occupy the territory”, has formulated no scientific projects concerning the health of the contaminated inhabitants. It shares the same objective, as we shall see later, as that expressed by the United Nations agencies responsible for the atom, in agreement with the Soviet Union, from the first days following the accident. “The ‘consensus’ report of the United Nations on Chernobyl published in February 2002 broadly reflects the proposals put forward by the nuclear lobby: the economy of the contaminated territories needs to be revived, the local people given help to ‘develop’ them and even to recolonise them. These optimistic proposals are not based on any measures of the levels of radioactivity in people or in locally-grown food produce. ‘Chernobyl is over.’ ‘It is the economic crisis and stress that are responsible for the problems encountered by the inhabitants.’ They need to be reassured and to resume normal life again”. (Solange Fernex in *The Ecologist*, February 2003.)

The influence of the military-industrial nuclear mafia over the health of the population started, as we will see, in the 1950s. If we compare two documents published by WHO, one in 1956 and the other in 1958, we can see quite clearly the change in direction taken by this specialised United Nations institution before its final submission to the nuclear lobby in 1959. The first document is a seriously worded warning against the choice of developing nuclear power, presented by a group of distinguished genetic scientists, one of whom was H.J. Muller, who received the Nobel Prize in 1946. The second document is a report of a study group analysing “questions of mental health (for the population) posed by the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes”. Representing France in this study group was Dr M. Tubiana, a cancer specialist at Villejuif.

First document 1956: "...genetic heritage is the most precious property for human beings. It determines the lives of our progeny, healthy and harmonious development of future generations. As experts, we affirm that the health of future generations is threatened by increasing development of the atomic industry and sources of radiation...We also believe that new mutations that occur in humans are harmful to them and their offspring". (WHO, *Genetic effects of radiation in humans. WHO Study Group Report*, Geneva 1957).

Second document from 1958: "However, from the mental health point of view, the most satisfactory solution for the future peaceful use of atomic energy would be to see a new generation of people who would have learnt to accommodate ignorance and uncertainty and who, to quote Joseph Addison, an English poet of the 18th century would 'sit astride the hurricane and direct the storm'". (*Technical Report No 151*, page 59, WHO, Geneva 1958.)

How apt a programme for Chernobyl, on which Professor Michel Fernex, a keen observer of WHO's abandonment of the nuclear issue, comments in measured terms. "This justification for keeping people in ignorance illustrates the contempt in which the world's people are held, that goes against the letter and the spirit of the Constitution of the World Health Organisation".⁴

⁴ "La catastrophe de Tchernobyl et la santé" (The Chernobyl disaster and health) in *Chroniques sur la Biélorussie contemporaine*, L'Harmattan, 2001.

LIST OF ACRONYMS & ORGANISATIONS

ACAT Association chrétienne contre la torture. French. (*Association of Christians Against Torture*), affiliated to the International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture. (FIACAT), 533

ACRO Association pour le contrôle radioactivité dans l'ouest, French. (*Association for Radiation Monitoring in the West*), 240

AEC US Atomic Energy Commission, 60

ALC Admissible Levels of Contamination, 219, 226, 300

AREVA A French industrial conglomerate specialising in energy but in particular nuclear energy. It used to be made up of COGEMA which dealt with the entire fuel cycle from mining, through to reprocessing and Framatome ANP, which built nuclear power stations. In 2001, Cogema was merged with Framatome and CEA Industrie to form the larger group Areva. Areva NP was created by absorbing the nuclear business line of German company Siemens, 58, 266

ARTE Franco-German television network specialising in cultural and arts programmes, 267–269, 273, 275, 418

ASN Autorité de sûreté nucléaire. (*Authority for Nuclear Safety*), 179, 180, 181

ASPEA Association Suisse Pour l'Énergie Atomique. (*Swiss Association for Atomic Energy*), 131

Associations in Europe for the children of Chernobyl

- “Jugends Aktions Netzwerk Umwelt– und Naturchutz e. V. (JANUN) ø Gr. Barlinge 58a–30171 Hannover–Allemagne 244
- “NIKOBELA” Grosse Drakenburger Strasse, 3–31582 Nienburg.–Allemagne 244
- “Association Belgo-Biélorusse pour les Enfants de Tchernobyl–A.S.B.L.” 16 rue Marache–5031 Grand-Leez–Belgique (*Belgium-Belarus Association for the Children of Chernobyl*) 244
- “Chernobyl Children’s Project” 8 Sidneyville, Bellevue Park, St Luke’s, Cork–Ireland 244
- “Enfants de Tchernobyl Bélarus” (*Children of Chernobyl Belarus*), 20 rue Principale–68480 Biederthal–France 207, 239, 241, 244, 533, 537, 551, 553
- “Les Enfants de Tchernobyl”, (*Children of Chernobyl*) 378 rue de Modenheim 68110 Illzach–France 207, 244, 533
- “Solidarité de Biélorussie et de Tchernobyl” (*Solidarity with Belarus and Chernobyl*), 74 rue de Falaise–14 000 Caen–France 244

BEIR Biological Effects of Ionising Radiation, 62

- BelAm** Joint 30 year scientific project set up by the Ministry of Energy in USA and the Ministry of Health in Belarus to establish the number of cases of thyroid illness among the inhabitants of contaminated areas in Belarus, 245, 246, 269
- BELRAD** Independent Institute of Radiological Protection (Belarus), 3, 74, 112, 161, 164, 170, 218, 220–223, 228–235, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 248, 256, 258–260, 261, 265, 269, 270, 272, 273, 274, 278, 283, 285, 286, 291, 292, 294, 304, 305, 330, 342, 365, 389, 397, 491, 514, 535–537, 541, 548, 551, 552, 555, 576, 577, 583, 586
- CEA** Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique. French. (*Commissariat for Atomic Energy*), 58, 165, 179, 180, 190, 264, 266, 267, 270, 348, 422, 423, 451, 560
- CEPN** Centre d’étude pour l’Évaluation de la Protection dans le domaine Nucléaire (*Centre for the Study of the Evaluation of Nuclear Protection*), 58, 240, 263, 264, 266, 270, 271, 275, 285, 365
- CFDT** Confédération française démocratique du travail One of the two main French Trade Unions. (*French Democratic Confederation of Work*), 180
- CIS** Community of Independent States. Formed in 1991 by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine as a successor to the USSR, 246
- CODHOS** Comité de Défense des Hommes de Science de l’Académie des Sciences de Paris (*Committee for the Defence of Human Rights for Scientists at the Academy of Sciences of Paris*), 539
- COGEMA** Compagnie générale des matières nucléaires. The French company that worked at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle from the mining, conversion and enrichment of uranium to the treatment and reprocessing of used nuclear fuel. COGEMA is now called AREVA NC, 58, 180, 266, 270
- Comchernobyl** Belarus government committee on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, 259, 348, 200, 206, 207, 229, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 282, 286, 290, 345, 357, 365
- CONTRATOM** Anti-nuclear organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, 412, 556
- CORE** Cooperation for the Rehabilitation of conditions of life in the areas of Belarus contaminated by the Chernobyl accident, 12, 26, 187, 207, 239, 240, 241, 261, 264, 265, 275–298, 364, 548, 551
- CRIRAD** Commission de Recherche et d’Information Indépendantes sur la radioactivité (*Commission for Research and Independent Information about Radiation*), 169, 207, 412, 454, 514, 535, 537, 539, 546, 547
- DVTH** Deutscher Verbände für Tschernobyl-Hilfe (Fédération allemande d’aide à Tchernobyl), 232, 233
- EAD** Effective Annual Dose, 224
- ECG** Electrocardiogram, 173, 174, 248, 298, 387, 388, 389, 391, 392, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 401, 402, 403, 473
- ECRR** European Committee on Radiation Risk. International centre for study and research, 60, 62, 184, 185, 446, 461, 600
- EDF** Électricité de France, 180, 264, 266, 270
- ENS** European Nuclear Society, 131
- ETHOS** Multi-disciplinary French-Belarusian consortium set up by the CEPN and financed by the European Commission for the rehabilitation of

- areas contaminated by the Chernobyl accident, 256, 257, 264–277, 279–288, 290, 295, 297, 298, 305, 333, 348, 415
- EU** European Union, 520
- EURATOM** European Atomic Energy Community, 233, 283
- EUROSCIENCE** European association for the promotion of Science and technology, 504
- FDA** Food and Drug Administration, 246
- FRANCE LIBERTÉS** Foundation set up by Danielle Mitterrand, 22 rue de Milan–75009 Paris, 169, 533, 535, 537, 538, 553
- FRG** Federal Republic of Germany, 161, 162
- GNC** Gosoudarstvennyi naouchnyi centr (Russian Government Scientific Centre), 237
- GNP** Gross National Product, 290
- GSIN** Groupement de Scientifiques pour l'Information sur l'Énergie Nucléaire. French. (*Scientist Group for Information on Nuclear Energy*), 169, 289, 533, 535, 539
- HRS** Human Radiation Spectrometer sometimes called a Whole Body Counter, 160, 161, 162, 173, 174, 194, 199, 219–232, 243, 250, 257, 303, 304, 367, 472, 473, 474
- IAEA** International Atomic Energy Agency, 11, 38, 47–49, 51, 58–60, 62–64, 66, 67, 72, 74, 81, 96, 101, 137, 153, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 165, 168, 188, 199, 200, 202–204, 206, 218, 224, 230, 233, 234, 238, 246, 265, 283, 287, 297, 298, 300, 358, 386, 412–415, 417–423, 425–428, 430, 439, 440, 451, 453, 455, 460, 461, 463, 485, 536, 540, 541, 543–545, 547, 554, 556–560, 561, 563–568, 570–575, 578, 582–585, 588–590, 594, 596, 597, 600
- ICRP** International Commission on Radiological Protection, 59–63, 66, 67, 69, 71, 96, 165, 184, 302, 335, 417, 427, 443, 453, 454, 456, 458, 600
- IFHD** International Federation for Human Rights, 533
- IMCC** International Medical Commission-Chernobyl [p. 188
- IPHECA** International Project on Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident—WHO, 297, 298, 557, 567, 568, 585, 596
- IPSN** Institut de Protection et de Sûreté Nucléaire French (*Institute of Protection and Nuclear Safety*) [p. 178–181, 183, 184, 539
- IRSN** Institut de radioprotection et de sûreté nucléaire. French. (*Institute of Radioprotection and Nuclear Safety*), 179–181, 184–187, 241, 265, 277, 294, 298, 432, 451
- JCE** Joint Committee of Experts, 234
- JCR** Joint Research Centre European Commission, 256–259
- JÜLICH** Research Centre for Radioprotection (Germany), 161, 207, 239, 240, 243, 244, 248, 269, 287, 365, 389, 394, 395, 399, 401
- LCRM** Local Centre for Radiological Monitoring of food products (Belarus), 114, 206, 207, 233, 264, 266, 267, 270, 272, 273, 275, 279, 283–286, 305, 306, 325, 342, 348
- LOS ALAMOS** The Los Alamos National Laboratory—LANL is a laboratory of the United States Department of Energy, managed by the University of California, situated at Los Alamos, in New Mexico. It is the biggest institute and the largest employer in New

- Mexico, with nearly 10,000 employees from the University of California and about 3000 more on contracts. Los Alamos is one of the two American laboratories, along with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where secret research into nuclear weapons is undertaken, 422, 423, 444, 451
- MES** Ministry for Emergency Situations, 220
- MINZDRAV** acronym for Russian Ministry of Health, 200, 218, 224–228
- MUTADIS** A scientific research group specialising in the social management of risk and in the management of high risk activities. It intervenes in both public and private organisations but particularly in the nuclear domain, 282, 284
- NASB** National Academy of Sciences in Belarus, 235
- NAS SSRB** National Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Belarus 235
- NATO** North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 307, 504
- NCRP** USA. National Council on Radiation Protection, 60–62
- NCRP** (Belarus), 160
- NEP** New Economic Policy, 126
- Network Sortir du Nucleaire, 533, 535
- NRPB** National Radiological Protection Board [p. 62
- OCHA** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 413, 417, 421, 422, 425, 444, 463, 558
- OPRI** Office de Protection contre les Rayonnements Ionisants France. (*Office for Protection against Ionising Radiation*), 180, 181, 183
- OSCE** Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 169, 219, 222, 232, 265, 476, 477, 526, 527
- PACE** Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe, 502, 503, 504, 512
- PSR/IPPNW** Physicians for Social Responsibility / International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Nobel Peace Prize 1985, 140, 265, 556, 557
- RERF** Radiation Effects Research Foundation—Foundation for research into radiation effects at Hiroshima, 53, 74
- SCPRI** Service Central de Protection contre les Rayonnements Ionisants France (*Central Service of Protection against Ionising Radiation*), 71, 180
- SCSNT** State Committee for Science and new Technology, 198 199
- SMW** Swiss Medical Weekly, 186, 240, 248, 386, 389, 434, 526
- TACIS** Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States. European Commission—Euratom Regulation n° 99/2000. The aims of Tacis were “to support the process of transition to market economies and democratic societies in the countries of Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia”. TACIS worked in a number of domains but particularly for the support and promotion of a culture of nuclear safety, 166, 206, 239, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 283, 285, 548
- TDR** Tropical Diseases Research, 563
- TSI** Télévision Suisse Italienne (*Swiss Italian Television*), 66, 71, 138, 167, 418, 538
- UkrAm** Ukrainian project—the counterpart to BELAM in Belarus, 246

UN United Nations, 10–12, 22, 23, 35, 49, 58, 59, 62, 63, 70, 74, 81, 118, 131, 132, 153, 158, 165, 169, 173, 182, 206, 230, 233, 262, 265, 283, 297, 315, 357, 372, 412, 414, 416–422, 424–426, 443, 444, 449, 455, 461–463, 467, 470, 472, 490, 498, 500, 505, 508, 509, 511, 516, 521, 531, 533, 536, 541, 543, 554, 563, 567, 568, 583, 588, 593, 594, 597, 600

UNDP United Nations Development Programme, 11, 51, 265, 277, 278, 282, 291, 358, 463

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 265, 277, 278, 291, 489

UNSCEAR United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, 11, 51, 58, 62, 63, 68, 72, 74, 101, 153, 165, 182, 183, 199, 206, 230, 287, 289, 415, 417, 420, 423–425, 427–429, 431, 443–445, 449–451, 461, 463, 557, 568, 596

WHO World Health Organisation, vii, 10, 11, 12, 13, 22, 51, 58, 59, 62–64, 67, 71, 72, 74, 96, 101, 117, 126, 155, 158, 165, 168, 234, 287, 297, 298, 300, 301, 335, 358, 386, 412–422, 430, 436, 437, 454, 455, 460, 461, 463, 485, 490, 536, 537, 540, 541, 543–547, 554–570, 572, 573, 580–585, 588–597

WILPF Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, 536, 556, 557

WOMEN against nuclear power (Finland), 536

Women for Peace Amandamaji (Finland), 535

The real authors of this book are the victims of the disaster at Chernobyl that occurred on the 26th April 1986. Wladimir Tchertkoff recorded their voices in the villages of the north of Ukraine and in the forests in the south of Belarus. They are the millions of peasant farmers who consume food containing caesium 137 on a daily basis: the young pregnant mothers, themselves contaminated, who are unknowingly poisoning the life developing within them: the children whose lives are condemned, even if they are born apparently healthy, because they will become ill as a consequence of consuming radionuclides, morning, noon and night. Then there are the “liquidators”, the unsung heroes of Europe who were sacrificed in order to extinguish the fire at the power station. They suffer any number of unknown “atomic” illnesses. Hundreds of thousands of them are ill, tens of thousands have already died prematurely, and continue to die in unimaginable suffering....And finally there are the doctors and physicists, at least the few of them who have not submitted to the will of the nuclear lobby.

This book also tells the story of the struggle undertaken by two Belarusian scientists who risked their careers, their health and their personal safety to come to the aid of the contaminated populations. Forced into the role of dissidents by the refusal of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to recognise the harmful effects of low dose radiation on health, the physicist Vassili Nesterenko, and the doctor and pathologist Yury Bandazhevsky, were persecuted in their own country for their opposition to the official dogma. Vassili Nesterenko died in 2008, having suffered innumerable health problems following his exposure to high levels of radiation in April 1986, when he flew over the exploded reactor in a helicopter.

This book was first published in 2006 in France. Despite the biblical proportions of the disaster that could have rendered the whole of Europe uninhabitable, the world has still not learnt its lesson. The real health effects from the accident at Chernobyl continue to be covered up by governments, by the nuclear industry and by the international institutions that support them. This cover-up has made certain that sooner or later, another catastrophe would arise. In 2011, following an earthquake and tsunami, three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant experienced a nuclear meltdown. The health effects there are just beginning.

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