

ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER

In April 1986 the world was made aware that an accident had occurred in a nuclear power plant somewhere in the Soviet Union. Few details were given initially as the Soviet government attempted to cover up the incident.

Following a great deal of pressure in International circles the full horror of the incident was slowly released through western news agencies. A fire had broken out in the power station at Chernobyl in the Ukraine. This had spread and the reactor had gone into melt down. The resultant explosion released an enormous quantity of radioactive chemicals into the atmosphere. Within 21 days this cloud had contaminated the countryside's of half a dozen countries, including the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man.



The peoples of Belarus and the Ukraine were exposed to radiation 300 times greater than that released at the explosion of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima. The area around the plant itself was devastated by the explosion and the ensuing radioactive contamination. To this day there is nothing growing where once agriculture was the main occupation of the common man. The city of Pripyat remains a ghost town. Tests are carried out regularly to measure the danger still present in the soil. Radiation contamination exists in most animal and plant produce.

Ironically, because of the wind direction, the state of Ukraine suffered less than its immediate neighbours. The border with Belarus was only 15 kilometres from the plant. Rain in the immediate days after the explosion ensured that areas of Gomel and Mogilev were to suffer even greater problems. Some 70% of the fall-out from Chernobyl fell on Belarus. It will be another 24,000 years before the land is safe and children no longer suffer.

MEDICAL FACTS

There has been an increase of 800% in the incidence of cancers in children living near to the reactor. Thyroid cancer is up 3,000 per cent. There has been an even greater increase in leukemia, diabetes and kidney disease and damage to the immune systems in the 7-12 years age group.

There has been a dramatic increase in the rate of babies with substantial physical disabilities, babies born limbless or with severe brain damage.

The people of Belarus have a real fear that they are losing a whole generation, a situation which they see as meaning the death of their national identity.

Treatment of disease is difficult due to lack of proper medication and equipment. Even simple medicines like aspirin and antibiotics are not available. Drugs are virtually nonexistent due to their high cost. Insulin is in a dangerously short supply. Vitamins are needed to supplement their meagre diets. Many of the children suffer and die through the lack of proper treatment that can be afforded to them.

THE AIMS OF THE FRIENDS OF CHERNOBYL'S CHILDREN (ISLE OF MAN)

To relieve the suffering of children affected by the radiation explosion from the Nuclear plant at Chernobyl.

To provide family placements for children/orphans from the Mogilev region for at least one month each year and to meet the full costs of these visits, which will include optical, dental and health checks and lots of tender loving care.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The people of Belarus are in need of your help to take their children and give them a vision of a brighter future. Without our help the average life expectancy is 32 years.

The Friends of Chernobyl's Children is effective in working with the people of Belarus. Children benefit from our involvement in many ways, not the least being a measurable increase in their immune systems following a stay with us in the Isle of Man. As a small independent charity we can guarantee that all funds are used for the stated purposes. None of the workers are paid, all give freely of their time and talents.

The volunteer families who offer their homes for one month, do so without any recompense.

In order to continue with our work we desperately need to raise money.

The airfares for the children are rising each year. It costs hundreds of pounds to bring each child to the Isle of Man.

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