

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 April 29, "fatal levels of radioactivity were recorded in Poland, Austria, Romania, Finland, and Sweden."(2) The day after (April 30), it hit Switzerland and Italy. By May 2, 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 (May 3), China (May 4), India (May 5), and the US and Canada (May 6).

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, April 29, 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.

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