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The World Health Organization in Thrall to the Nuclearists

Thursday, 29 May 2014, 00:00

By Robert James Parsons, Truthout | Report

For 55 years, as of May 29, 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been under the heel of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in matters regarding ionizing radiation and health. The IAEA, whose mandate is the promotion of everything nuclear, has thus prevented the WHO from carrying out its public health mandate in a world more and more exposed to the lethal effects of ionizing radiation.

At 8 AM on Friday, April 25, one day before the 28th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, two anti-nuclear activists met at the entry of the drive leading to the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva for a day's vigil. They were there to protest the 1959 agreement that binds the WHO to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), giving the latter veto power over anything that the WHO may propose to do regarding human health and ionizing radiation. They stayed there until 6 PM.

As the work day at the WHO runs from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM, the vigil-keepers were seen by virtually all WHO employees and visitors, as well as by those traveling the public thoroughfare going by the entry (including students from the Geneva International School, just up the street). But this was nothing new, for on that day, the vigil was finishing its 365th consecutive week.

Begun on April 26, 2007, the 21st anniversary of Chernobyl, by a group of dedicated and extraordinarily well informed anti-nuclear activists, the Hippocratic Vigil, as it calls itself, goes to the heart of the matter: if the general public is uninformed about the intolerable dangers of ionizing radiation from nuclear power and nuclear weapons (as well as about the indissociable link between the two), that is because over the past 55 years there has been far too little work on the dangers to human health from ionizing radiation. None of that work has been done by – much less supported by – the WHO.

On May 29, 1959, the World Health Assembly, the WHO's general assembly of all its member states and the world's highest instance for setting public health policy, approved in a binding resolution an Agreement between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization. Its Article 3 states: "Whenever either organization proposes to initiate a program or activity on a subject in which the other organization has or may have a substantial interest, the first party shall consult the other with a view to adjusting the matter by mutual consent."

The WHO steadfastly maintains this has never had even the slightest influence on the independence of its work. According to Independent WHO, the group keeping the daily vigil, the effect of the agreement has been disastrous, effectively muting the world's foremost voice in public health on a matter that is of crucial importance. Everything on the record bears out this latter contention.

In effect, this right of prior approval has been granted to an institution that, while generally perceived as neutral, has as its mandate the promotion of the entire nuclear sector. The IAEA's founding charter states: "The agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity through the world." Yet nuclear reactors were initially conceived as production plants to supply plutonium for nuclear weapons.

The nuclear-free zones on earth, brokered by the United Nations through the IAEA, are really nuclear-weapons-free zones, with the treaties establishing these zones routinely agreeing the "peaceful use of nuclear energy in the zone" shall be promoted, i.e. the reactors that will provide the plutonium necessary for the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Dr. Helen Caldicott has recalled:

> In the early days of nuclear power, WHO issued forthright statements on radiation risks such as its 1956 warning: "Genetic heritage is the most precious property for human beings. It determines the lives of our progeny, health 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."

Independent WHO cites the last study done by the WHO on ionizing radiation and human health. The study's report, "Effect of Radiation on Human Heredity: Report of a Study Group convened by WHO together with Papers presented by Various Members of the Group," is dated 1957. The director of the study group was Hermann Joseph Muller, who had won the Nobel Prize in physiology/medicine "for the discovery of the production of mutations by means of X-ray irradiation."

Among the members of the study group were Rolf Maximilian Sievert, after whom one of the most common measures of ionizing radiation was named, and T.C. Carter, later to be named to the Order of the British Empire for his work on the subject.

Already in 1958, Carter was exploring the devastating effects of low-dose, long-term radiation to sperm mutation. In an article published in *Nature* on August 9, 1958 by himself and two other researchers, one reads: "Most genetically effective radiation exposure of man is due to low doses accumulated over an appreciable fraction of the life-span."

The authors went on to declare that this meant that the second of the four fundamental assumptions regarding the danger to human genetic material from ionizing radiation – that the relationship of mutagenic effect to dose rate is linear – was untenable. This was highly significant because this assumption still undergirds official radiation safety norms, even though it has been denounced repeatedly by all independent researchers.

According to the linear principle, maintained by phalanxes of pseudo-scientists from the nuclear lobby, the effects of low-level radiation are too small to be measured. Extrapolating from the observed effects of high dose, single-event irradiation (Hiroshima and Nagasaki), it was concluded on this basis that, for example, if 1,000 survivors became ill after exposure to a dose of 100 (an arbitrary figure for demonstration), 500 would be ill when exposed to 50 and only one from a dose of 0.5. Thus, below this exposure level – called the "permissible dose" – nobody is affected.

The Cynicism of the "Permissible Dose"

Dr. Rosalie Bertell, an epidemiologist who specialized in the effects of ionizing radiation (who, until her death in 2012, spent almost two decades studying Gulf War Syndrome/Illness and attributed it to low-level radiation poisoning from depleted uranium weapons) kept insisting on the pure cynicism of the principle of the "permissible dose" – commonly and erroneously called a "safe dose".

According to Dr. Bertell, the idea was developed by the United States Atomic Energy Commission in the early 1950s in response to major objections emanating from the scientific community regarding the safety of those engaged in research for more and greater nuclear weapons. The "permissible dose", Dr. Bertell pointed out, was established on the basis of the capacity of the United States hospital system – then in full expansion with bright days ahead of it – to take care of cancer cases caused by ionizing radiation. The "permissible dose" was thus determined to be that to which all members of the United States population could be exposed without producing more cancers than could be cared for by the medical establishment.

Dr. John W. Gofman, who led the team that isolated the first milligram of plutonium in 1942, in his

monograph "Radiation Induced Cancer from Low-Dose Exposure", stated – and then throughout the rest of his life continued to insist – succinctly, that "by any reasonable standard of biomedical proof, there is no safe dose."(1)

In 1958, the WHO published a 53-page technical report, which turned out to be the last installment of the work of Muller's study group after the 1959 agreement put an end to it. "Mental Health Aspects of the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy" explored the anxiety among the ever greater number of people exposed to ionizing radiation subsequent to the1953 Eisenhower administration's launching of the Atoms for Peace program, intended to sell the public on the idea of hundreds of nuclear reactors generating "electricity too cheap to meter".

The final paragraph is both ominous and prescient: "But in the long run, the greatest hope of mental health in the future of the peaceful uses of atomic energy is the raising of a new generation which has learnt to live on terms with ignorance and uncertainty and which, in the words of Joseph Addison, the 18th century English poet, 'Rides in the Whirl-wind, and directs the Storm.'" (p.45)

Bogus Science

Paul Zimmerman, in his brilliant 758-page tome *A Primer in the Art of Deception: The Cult of the Nuclearists, Uranium Weapons and Fraudulent Science*,(2) easily the best and most comprehensive work on the subject in any language, explores the fraudulent science, in detail, in discussing the depleted uranium particles produced by the burning of depleted uranium anti-tank rounds used in the 1991 Gulf War.

Uranium burns at up to 6,000 degrees Celsius. The resultant particles are ceramic-like, microscopic and virtually indestructible. Further, they are mostly disk-shaped and extremely thin. This huge amount of surface relative to the mass of the disks makes them easily air-borne, like dead leaves, in spite of the density of the metal. The reactor fire at Chernobyl and explosions at Fukushima transformed tons of uranium fuel in the reactors into the same sort of air-borne particles as those resulting from the use of uranium weapons.

Drawing on the work of the late Dr. Leonard Dietz, one of the foremost independent researchers in the field of ionizing radiation, Zimmerman explains that a single, invisible uranium particle whose diameter is 2.5 microns, or one ten-thousandth of an inch, is respirable. A depleted uranium particle of this dimension is estimated to consist of 210 billion atoms of the uranium isotope U238.

While lodged in the lung, the uranium particle undergoes radioactive decay, emitting alpha particles, the most powerful force in the universe. If one imagines the uranium particle as being at the center of a sphere of cells whose radius equals the maximum distance that the alpha particles are capable of traveling, the potential sphere of cells constantly irradiated will be 0.0000001519 centimeters. Dr. Bertell put the number of cells in this sphere at between 200 and 300. Zimmerman explains: "Taking into account the relative biological effectiveness of alpha particles, the dose to the vulnerable population of cells is 170 rem per year."

He then quotes Dr. Dietz regarding the currently accepted "safety" model, which "cannot deal with small volumes and inhomogeneities of dose, and for this reason is unsafe to apply to internal radiation."

According to current norms, a member of the public is permitted in any one year to receive a dose of no more than 0.5 rem – to the whole body. In other words, as Zimmerman explains, "It is thought that the organism can absorb the energy of 0.5 rem and undergo the amount of ionization produced by this energy throughout its molecular structure without causing any significant health detriment. And yet, the single particle of depleted uranium transfers in one year 170 rem to the tiny cluster of cells in its immediate vicinity . . . . **It is at the level of the cell where radiation effects become significant, not over large masses of tissue.** Any honest approach to radiation safety would be grounded on this fundamental fact."(3)

Further, besides the alpha particles released by uranium atoms, there are the beta and gamma

radiation from the resulting daughter isotopes. One of these daughter isotopes is the gas radon. Thus, wherever there is uranium (as in the core of nuclear reactors and in nuclear weapons), radon will inevitably be constantly emitted in a specified quantity through the transition from one isotope to another down through the decay chain.

The bunker busters used by the United States in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere typically contain a ton of uranium, which burns just like the uranium in the anti-tank rounds, producing billions of trillions of microscopic particles each. Also, images of hits with Hellfire and Tomahawk missiles show explosions that resemble exactly the explosions from bunker busters, with similar subsequent destruction, although these missiles are not necessarily carrying one-ton warheads. These particles then travel in the air throughout the planet and are incorporated into the food chain and inhaled and lodged in people's lungs. The time required for the decay chain to exhaust itself so that the material becomes a stable element in the form of lead is 20 billion years, making the contamination permanent. (The solar system is reckoned to be 4.5 billion years old.)

Samples taken from craters in South Lebanon after Israel's assault in August 2006 and analyzed by the United Nations Environment Program in the Swiss military laboratory in Spiez revealed low enriched uranium from those bunker busters. Particles that do not become airborne can enter the local water tables and the food chain – just like those from Chernobyl and Fukushima – and ultimately the human body.

None of this is taken into account in the international "safety" standards that the WHO champions. In the absence of constant, thorough, in-depth research on ionizing radiation and health, independent advances in understanding these phenomena, while impressive, have remained relegated to the periphery as the absence of proof of danger from the WHO is regularly cited as proof of absence of danger.

The WHO Chernobyl Conference That Fell Down the Memory Hole

In November 1995, in anticipation of the April 1996 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, the director-general of the WHO, organized a major conference on the subject, drawing in some 700 of the world's pre-eminent scientists in the area. The letter of invitation to the conference stressed that the proceedings of the conference would be published the following March, a good month before the anniversary date.

Yet the proceedings never appeared. Questioning of a WHO official by this journalist regarding what had happened to them resulted in the presentation of a copy of the WHO's "Health Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident: Results of the IPHECA Pilot Projects and Related Programs" and a copy of the *World Health Statistics Quarterly*, volume 49. No. 1, 1996. Repeated questioning of various other WHO officials resulted in the presentation of the same hard-bound pilot project study and paper-bound quarterly report.

After identical inquiries addressed to six different WHO officials had produced six copies of each, this journalist questioned the crew on the loading docks in the basement of the WHO building. One of them stated categorically that he remembered the report being delivered, hundreds of copies, in packages of 10 or a dozen wrapped together in plastic, the packages all piled on wooden pallets. The crew had instructions to leave them in the unloading zone until further instructions. Several days later, the copies were taken out of the building. Asked where they had been sent, the employee carefully looked around the work area, stated, "To the incinerator," then pointed a finger at the journalist, declaring vehemently, "I never told you anything, you understand?"

An inquiry directed to the WHO librarian in charge of cataloguing, in the hope that one copy had been retained for the WHO archives, resulted in a dead-end. Informed of the conversation with the dock worker, the librarian replied, disabused, "That doesn't surprise me at all."

According to Dr. Nakajima, speaking directly to the cameras, the proceedings were "censored" as a result of the legal obligations of the WHO to the IAEA.(4)

Later, it was discovered that the participants' original scientific papers, on paper, some type-written, others printed by computer, were in cartons in the office of Dr G.N. Souchkevitch, the only doctor on the WHO staff specialized in ionizing radiation. He would not speak about the conference, but he made a point of stating that the papers were at the disposal of any outside researcher who might want to consult them.

Dr. Rosalie Bertell, on one of her many trips to Geneva, asked to consult the papers. Dr Souchkevitch put his entire office at her disposal and spent the better part of two days working elsewhere so that Dr. Bertell could work undisturbed. She later drew extensively on this work for her writings.

Upon his retirement, Dr. Souchkevitch mailed the papers to Dr. Michel Fernex, a retired WHO employee and professor emeritus of the University of Basel, who had attended the November conference. Since Dr. Souchkevitch's departure, there has been only one WHO staff member at the WHO's headquarters in Geneva with a qualification in radiation science, a person who cannot in any sense be called an international-calibre expert: she is very young and junior. Further, the entire department in which Dr. Souchkevitch worked (RAD) was shut down in 2009.

It is worth noting that the IAEA organized its own conference on Chernobyl, April 8 to 12, 1996, which replaced the November conference in all references by the WHO and furnished the basis of its official report for that time.

Bogus Science, Bogus Science and More Bogus Science

According to the WHO, 51 people died as a result of Chernobyl.

In November 2005, a major symposium was held at the University of Berne Medical School, devoted to the more than 800,000 Chernobyl liquidators (young men recruited to put out the fire and build the sarcophagus around the reactor). In 2001, at a conference in Kiev (whose proceedings also disappeared without ever being published), it was declared that already over one third of them had been reported as incapacitated or dead. In the first weeks, symptoms and suffering were mostly attributed to external radiation sources. Subsequently, the overwhelming majority of cases involved inhaled "hot particles" as internal sources of radiation.

The symposium was organized by the Swiss chapters of Physicians for Social Responsibility and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In the introduction to the symposium's *Abstracts*, the editors note that in April of that year (the 19th anniversary of the catastrophe) a press release from the Ukrainian embassy in Paris had announced that 2,646,106 Ukrainians must be recognized as victims of the catastrophe, among whom one third are children.

Given the unstinting efforts of the Ukrainian, Belarus and Russian governments to minimize the numbers of those affected, through statistical manipulation, denial and outright lying, such an official figure is breath-taking. Of the registered Ukrainian liquidators, 94 percent were ill in 2005. And this covers only Ukraine. The bulk of the radiation was unleashed on Belarus.

The WHO figure, juxtaposed with the others, presents such a vast discrepancy that it cannot be explained in any way by accepted margin-of-error calculations. Rather, as Alison Katz of Independent WHO told *Truthout*, "It points to a cover-up, especially as the discrepancies exactly parallel the source of the 'science' – whether it emanates from the nuclear establishment (including the academic and research institution it controls) or from independent researchers."

However, according to repeated official statements by the WHO, the peer-reviewed literature supports its claims that there have been no major health effects from Chernobyl. Such a claim cannot be called even disingenuous, for there is a vast peer-reviewed literature, mostly in Russian, but also in other Slavic languages, whose existence the WHO does not acknowledge. This is even more shocking because Russian is one of the official languages of the WHO (along with the other five official United Nations languages).

In 2011, the New York Academy of Sciences published a 327-page English translation of a 2007

Russian publication presenting an analysis of the scientific literature (some 1,000 titles and more than 5,000 printed and internet publications mainly in Slavic languages) on the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe.(5) The figure of deaths calculated therein for the period from 1986 to 2004 is 985,000.

The WHO has never officially acknowledged the existence of this publication, even though members of Independent WHO presented a copy to the current director-general of the WHO, Dr. Margaret Chan, during their single meeting with her.

May 4, 2011: Independent WHO Finally Meets Dr. Chan

This meeting took several years to come about. When it finally was scheduled (after repeated requests by Independent WHO, all ignored) Dr. Chan had only 45 minutes to spare. In the end, the director-general being inclined to discursive oral expression, the meeting went on for over three hours. Lost in discussion with five members of Independent WHO (including a former mayor of Geneva, mandated by the city government, which fully supports all the demands of Independent WHO), she acknowledged that there is no such thing as a safe dose of ionizing radiation. Although this is not an official WHO policy pronouncement, it was a major admission from the head of an organization whose docility in following the IAEA's lead has been exemplary.

Further, in the course of her rambling conversation, Dr. Chan disavowed an infamous September 2005 joint WHO-IAEA press release which stated:

> A total of up to four thousand people could eventually die of radiation exposure from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (NPP) accident nearly 20 years ago, an international team of more than 100 scientists has concluded. As of mid-2005, however, fewer than 50 deaths had been directly attributed to radiation from the disaster, almost all being highly exposed rescue workers, many who died within months of the accident but others who died as late as 2004.

Her blunt statement – "For me, no radiation inside the body is good." – contradicted the iron-clad rule underpinning the norms supported by the WHO, the IAEA and the International Commission on Radio-Protection (ICRP), to wit that there is no distinction to be made between external and internal sources of radiation. Yet, as Independent WHO continues to point out, the latter is generally judged responsible for some 95 percent of the contamination from Chernobyl, for example, through the ingestion of contaminated food.

This utter disregard for the effects of low-dose, internal radiation is one of the major omissions of the nuclear establishment's pseudo-science, thus allowing virtually all health consequences of Chernobyl to be denied and the entire nuclear sector to be regularly given a clean bill of health.

Dr. Chan's promise to Independent WHO that there would be an investigation into the non-publication of the proceedings of the two conferences is yet to be kept.

The Attempt at a Fact Sheet and the Disappearance of a Deputy High Commissioner

After the US-directed bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 with depleted uranium bunker busters, the story of radioactive contamination slowly filtered out through the rest of the year and on into 2000. Finally, in early summer 2000, Frederick Barton, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, whose agency had a major presence on the ground in Kosovo, requested an expert opinion from the WHO on the danger of contamination from the use of depleted uranium weapons.

The only person competent in the area, Dr. Souchkevitch, set to work on it immediately. In keeping with the 1959 agreement, the IAEA was duly informed. Shortly thereafter, the word came back from Vienna that the agency refused to allow the work to go forward. The aborted essay, entitled "Elements of a Fact Sheet on Depleted Uranium", was nonetheless transmitted to Barton.

It was nothing groundbreaking to anyone knowledgeable of the dangers of weapons using uranium

and depleted uranium, and it contained no recommendations. Nonetheless, it bore a sort of imprimatur from a recognized, specialized WHO expert. Thus, stymied but informed, Frederick Barton drew up instructions for his staff(6): no pregnant woman to be sent to Kosovo; anyone approached about going there must have the option of being posted elsewhere; and the file of any employee sent to Kosovo must be marked "service in the field" to facilitate any claim for compensation in the event of illness resulting from contamination. According to Barton, efforts to draw the civilian population's attention to the risks of contamination met with overwhelming resistance both from Albanian politicians and from NATO and UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) administrators.(7)

Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, had announced her retirement for the end of 2000 and had entrusted most of the running of the organization to Barton, who had assumed his responsibilities in August 1999. It was assumed that he would thus assure a smooth transition when the new High Commissioner arrived in January. After the publication of the story about the aborted fact sheet and the personnel directive in 2000, Barton suddenly left. His successor took over in February 2001, shortly after the arrival of Ogata's successor, Ruud Lubbers, on January 1.

Barton's abrupt departure, at a time when the High Commissioner had withdrawn from daily active supervision of the organization and was obviously moving toward the door, did not go unnoticed. Such changes of heads of United Nations agencies are routinely announced at the semi-weekly press briefings at the United Nations Geneva office. On this occasion, there was none. Repeated requests of various United Nations spokespersons for an explanation went unanswered.

Months later, at a reception, this journalist was approached by a high official from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who opened the conversation by stating, bluntly and most emphatically, that Frederick Barton's departure had nothing to do with the personnel directive and the publicity thus attached to the matter of radioactive contamination in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia. The official then explained that the journalist's inquiries had been noticed – however ignored – and that to imply a removal of the Deputy High Commissioner from his post for an indiscretion was to threaten damage to the reputation of the UNHCR and its invaluable work. Having made this statement, the official refused to discuss the matter further.

And Fukushima?

The Fukushima disaster, which has already surpassed Chernobyl in severity, has produced more of the same. In the weeks following the earthquake and tsunami, repeated requests to WHO spokesperson Gregory Hartl for sources of the information, and the raw data behind it, that the WHO was announcing at the Geneva United Nations semi-weekly press briefings, were met with the response that the WHO had competent people following the situation, and that the information was reliable. It turned out that the sources were IAEA personnel on the ground, engineers and physicists. As the IAEA employs neither public health officials nor radiation biologists, this was hardly surprising.

The internationally accepted permissible dose of radiation is currently one millisievert per year. The Japanese government, totally unchallenged by the WHO, the IAEA or any other nuclear regulatory agency, has arbitrarily increased it to 20. This will allow significant numbers of people to return to, or remain in, contaminated zones, which, under the new norm, are now designated "safe". Thus, even as the catastrophe continues to unfold, the cover-up and its concomitant pseudo-science continue apace.

And the claim heard over and over that the catastrophe at Fukushima can be attributed to "man-made" deficiencies reinforces the idea that with better design, construction, maintenance and surveillance, such accidents can be avoided, thus making nuclear reactors "safe".

The first response to Independent WHO's numerous letters to Dr. Chan came on February 26, 2011, well before Fukushima. It dismissed the New York Academy of Sciences publication, but invited

the vigil organizers to meet with WHO representatives, but not with Dr. Chan. The organizers declined the offer, insisting on speaking to Dr. Chan. However, following Fukushima, on two occasions, high-level WHO staff were sent to say that Dr. Chan wished to meet with Independent WHO.

Alison Katz of Independent WHO told *Truthout* that "this was almost certainly related to the imminent World Health Assembly in May, for there was a strong possibility in the wake of Fukushima that Dr. Chan would be asked whether she had ever met with the protesters outside the WHO headquarters. Yet, she started by asserting that there was no public health impact from Fukushima, reassuring us that all radio-contamination was, in any case, diluted in the ocean."

Rémy Pagani, the former Geneva mayor who attended the meeting with Dr. Chan, did not mince his words to her: "If the WHO continues this way, you will be completely discredited!"

A highly placed WHO official has confided that no major high-level meeting at the WHO can be held without the subject of the vigil being brought up, for it has become a colossal embarrassment to the WHO.

Indeed, the vigil draws in ever more participants from all over Europe, with occasional participants from other continents. Independent WHO has built a network of volunteers in the Geneva area to house them gratis for however long they stay.

At its own general assembly in March 2014, as they have done for the past seven years, the members of Independent WHO voted unanimously to extend the vigil for another year. Their position is simple: they will be there every working day until the "pact with the devil" is rescinded and the WHO is free to fulfill its mandate in the field of public health.

In the meantime, the general public has indeed "learnt to live on terms with ignorance and uncertainty," riding the whirlwind of ionizing radiation that now enshrouds the earth, but less than ever able to direct the storm of illness and suffering it is spawning.

Notes

1. Taken from his monograph "Radiation Induced Cancer from Low-Dose Exposure" and quoted in an open letter from him dated 11 May 1999, signed John W Gofman, MD, PhD.

2. Published privately. (No publishing house with the means to handle such a major work would touch it.) Available from the author at www.du-deceptions.com or at P.O. Box 145, Lyndonville, New York14098.

3. Ibid., pp. 148-152. Emphasis in original.

4.*Atomic Lies*, film by W. Tchertkoff, Production FALO - TSI [Telvisione della Svizzera italiana - Italian Swiss Television], shown in 2002 on SF [Schweizer Fehnsehen - German Swiss Television]; also *Nuclear Controversies*, film by W. Tchertkoff, Production Feldat Film 2004.

5. Yablokov, Alexey V., Nesterenko, Vassily B., Nesterenko, Alexey. V. and Sherman-Nevinger, Janette D., consulting editor, *Chernobyl: Consequences of the Catastrophe for People and the Environment*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 1181.

6. File of instructions to the HCR personnel department, on file with the author.

7. Later, the story was reported in *The Nation*.

[Robert James Parsons, a freelance journalist based in Geneva, writes regularly on international affairs (among other things) for the Geneva newspaper *Le Courrier*, 146 years old and the last independent daily in Switzlerland, supported, like *Truthout*, by its readers.]

Journalist's Note

In the COMMENTS, one reads:

> *The "permissible dose" was thus determined to be that to which all members of the United States population could be exposed without producing more cancers than could be cared for by the medical establishment.*

That's simply not true. The "maximum permissible dose" was established in 1946 and was defined as a dose which is not expected to cause appreciable bodily injury to a person at any time during his lifetime based on the "most critical" tissues: blood-forming organs, gonads, and lens. At that time, 1946, the "maximum permissible dose" was .3 rem. To put this in perspective, .3R is the worldwide average background radiation dose.

Predictably, the remainder of your article is just as error filled.

I respond:

Yes, a maximum permissible dose was set in 1946, and, according to Dr Bertell, it was later altered as described in the article.

Comparing the .3 rem of a maximum permissible dose to worldwide average background radiation dose simply recurs to the nuclearists' bogus science of setting standards based on total body exposure as opposed to specifically targeted internal exposure.

To make the point, Dr. Chris Busby has compared the heat in a burning coal held near a body, which has no consequence for the body, and placing the coal in the mouth, thus concentrating the heat on the delicate mouth tissue. The amount of heat is irrelevant. It is how it is concentrated and where applied that makes it dangerous.