

До Чорнобильських роковин - 30

# Chernobyl – 30 years on

By Judith Gough  
British Ambassador to Ukraine

“Good evening, there has been no nuclear accident anywhere in Russia today particularly not in Chernobyl. No one is feared dead in the incident, which did not happen. The rescue services have not been called out because obviously, that would be stupid considering there isn't a vast nuclear cloud drifting across Northern Europe. So, no need for a newflash, which didn't happen anyway...”

This is how the UK's biting satirical show, “Spitting Image” reacted to the news of Chernobyl 30 years ago (albeit with a shaky grasp of Soviet geography).

The words above were spoken by a Comrade Brezhnev puppet reading the news, with smoke drifting across the screen – you can find the clip on YouTube.

I remember it well, I sat in the living room at home watching the show with my parents. I was 13 at the time, and like a lot of people in the UK, I was very scared – for we had very little detail of what was happening and the Cold War still brewed deep suspicion on both sides.

All we knew was what Scandinavian scientific data were telling us and that preparations for May festivities being shown on television in the Soviet Union was not a good omen.

Of course, the situation was much more terrifying and dangerous in Belarus and Ukraine than it was in the UK. Ukrainian friends and colleagues tell me how you all knew something was very wrong, but were still encouraged to go about your business and out onto the streets as normal. The Chernobyl disaster highlighted not only the failings of the Soviet system, but also its callousness.

The consequences were enormous and long-lasting. It is unlikely we will ever know the true death toll from the Chernobyl disaster – 31 heroic workers died in the immediate aftermath, but there were very many more casualties. Over 350,000 people were evacuated and resettled and long-term health effects are still felt.

The environmental disaster was acute in Belarus and Ukraine, but the effects were felt as far afield as Scandinavia, Wales and Scotland.

The UK has contributed to international remediation efforts at Chernobyl since the early 1990s as part of the G7 (or G8, before Russia's suspension). International remediation efforts are managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

There are two strands of remediation activity: the provision of treatment facilities for radioactive waste and interim storage for spent fuel, and the Shelter Implementation Plan designed to make Reactor 4 stable and environmentally safe.

To date the UK has contributed over €120 million to these funds and activities. And we will further contribute to the G7 pledge announced by Japan on 25 April 2016. We have also supported Chernobyl children's charities for over 16 years.

Thirty years on, much has changed. The Cold War is over and the Soviet Union has gone, although conflict, tragically, still lingers in the region. Nothing can erase what happened in Chernobyl and the effects will continue to be felt for many decades to come.

But the isolation and disconnect that was satirised by “Spitting Image” in the 1980s is no more... in this country. Ukraine is deepening her ties with Europe, holds a seat on the UN Security Council and is playing an increasing role internationally. The clean-up of Chernobyl and assistance provided has been a truly international effort – and the UK has been very proud to play its part. We will continue to work with our Ukrainian partners to improve nuclear security, through our Global Threat Reduction Programme.

My timid 13 year old self would never have dreamt that I would be visiting Chernobyl on the 30th anniversary of the disaster. I join all Ukrainians today in remembering the terrible tragedy that took place in Chernobyl and honour those who lost their lives in such appalling circumstances.

But we should also not forget that the progress and international cooperation involved in the remediation effort highlight the fact that we have come a long way since 1986 – that should give us all hope for the future.

# Lesson of hope from a nuclear tragedy

By Natalia Galibarenko  
Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK

attention, reminding us of the dangers of the peaceful atom and how vigilant the world needs to be in its interaction with technology and the environment.

These consequences cannot be ignored as they still affect the health of all those who live on the contaminated territories and need medical assistance, those who were resettled and need moral and humanitarian help, as well as children who in the third generation suffer from cancer and immune system diseases.

We are very grateful to

all friends of Ukraine in the United Kingdom who continue to help us in alleviating the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

Today, the construction of a new safe confinement at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant is underway. The confinement, due for completion next year, will isolate the destroyed power generating unit from the surrounding environment.

The imperatives of strengthening nuclear safety and overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe will encourage

more active involvement among the world community in solving the remaining problems in this sphere.

I believe that this year's commemorative events will open up a new phase of international cooperation aimed at turning the “Shelter” into an ecologically safe system. In the very near future Chernobyl will be known not only as the site of a nuclear disaster, but as a world-renowned scientific and research centre which will help keep the world safe: an unexpected lesson of hope from a nuclear tragedy.



## “Chernobyl 30” at London's Frontline Club

A large audience attended London's Frontline Club in Central London last Saturday for a special commemoration of the 30 anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster.

Organised by the Central and East European London Review, the Embassy of Ukraine in the UK, the Association of Ukrainians in GB, the Association of Ukrainian Women in GB and the Anglo-Belarusian Society in London, the event included introductory remarks by the Ambassador of Ukraine, Natalia Galibarenko, and film-screenings of “Chernobyl: Surviving Disaster” (Nick Murphy, BBC 2006) and “Babushkas of Chernobyl” (Bogart and Morris, 2015). There were also readings from Nobel Prize-Winner Svetlana Alexievich's Voices from Chernobyl by film actress Anamaria Marinca, supported by Ukrainian harpist Alina Bzhezinska, and an evening discussion-panel of experts on Chernobyl and Ukraine (photo above, from left to right: Robin Ashenden, Alla Kravchuk, Balthasar Lindauer, Anna Reid, Professor Geraldine Thomas).

# Charity concert

TWO YOUNG pianists were the stars of a charity gala concert to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Alexandr Brown gave an unblemished version of Mozart's Burlesque followed by an equally matched performance by Benedikt Bölhoff, playing Naugasimov's Lullaby, on piano.

Both eight-year-old pupils of the Alla Sirenko Piano School received rapturous applause from the audience, and no doubt will be ones to watch in the future.

The tone of the evening at the Ukrainian Cathedral Hall in Mayfair on 16 April had sombre overtones to reflect the occasion, but it also carried some lighter moments, giving hope for the future.

Ukrainian soprano Anastasia Golovina gave a polished performance of Bach's Ave Maria, followed by an aria from Kantata 21, by the same composer.

The very likeable and charming violin player Orpheus Papafilippou, was able to stamp his authority on the evening's events with both Achron's Melody and Reflections (World Premier).

Tony Leliw  
London

The dashing tenor Yuri Sabatini raised the bar to an even higher level with his interpretation of Donizetti's aria from L'Elisir d'amore and Tauber's Precious Child, enhanced by a group of dancers from the Young Ballet Academy.

Apart from the sensational music and song, an additional ingredient of drama was added. Actress Caroline Hames gave a highly-charged emotional performance of L. Sirota's two masterpieces Poem to Pripyat and Poem from Radiophobia.

Background images of Chernobyl's destruction were highlighted on screen and Sirenko's own Spring of Sadness, Monologue and Ballade – dedicated to the children of Chernobyl



– kept us captivated – mood changes effectively produced by her husband Paul Cascarino, with amazing lighting and sound work.

Following the end of the concert a raffle was held by Tatiana Birch, project managing trustee, Chernobyl Relief Foundation in the UK where the top prize was a return ticket from London to Kyiv, donated by Ukrainian International Airlines.

Sirenko, who deserves nothing but praise for organ-

ising this event, which raised £1,000 for the Chernobyl Relief Foundation in the UK, holds regular concerts at the Cathedral Hall, where she is composer in residence.

Among distinguished guests who attended were: Ihor Kyzym, Charge d'Affaires, Ukrainian Embassy; Margaret Cooper BSc Hons – Rotary Club Barkingside; Bishop Hlib Lonchyna, Apostolic Exarch for Ukrainians in Great Britain; Lord Dominick Mere-

worth; novelist John Pindar.

## Вшанування по громадах

Ковентрі

24 квітня, при церкві Святого Володимира Великого громада зібралася, щоб вшанувати 30-ті роковини Чорнобильської трагедії.

Місцевий парох УГКЦ о. митр. Олександр Лісовський відправив Службу Божу та панахиду у пам'ять тих, хто втратив своє життя, рятуючи світ від радіоактивної загрози.

Також була посвячена таблиця присвячена 30 річниці трагедії.

У своєму слові, голова місцевого Відділу СУБ д-р Маріян Космірак коротко розповів про аварію та її наслідки.

На завершення відспівано Молитву за Україну.

ІМарія Джулал

Болтон

A Service of Remembrance, conducted by priests from the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, was held at the Cenotaph in Bolton last Sunday to remember those who gave their lives in the immediate aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster.

Joint AUGB Bolton Branch Chairs, Yaroslav Tymchyszyn and Zoryana Jurczyszyn, addressed the gathering and read out the names of victims of the catastrophe whose heroism helped to protect the world from further devastation.

The event was attended by (among others): Councillor Carole Swarbrick - Mayoress of Bolton, David Crausby MP, Chris Green MP, Yasmin Qureshi MP and Councillor Martin Donaghy.

Mr Hryhoryj Baluszcz laid a wreath at the foot of the Cenotaph on behalf of the Ukrainian community.

ІYaroslw Tymchyszyn

# NEWS FROM UKRAINE

*A grim week, as Ukraine commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, free speech takes a battering and the war in the east intensifies.*

## Free speech under attack

Back in September 2015, in moves which were barely noticed, the Ukrainian government banned several journalists and public figures from entering Ukraine – ostensibly as a result of any part they played in the annexation of Crimea and Russia's war in eastern Ukraine.

Dmitry Kiselyov, a Russian television host known for his anti-western statements, who is also barred from entering the European Union, and the major Russian state news channels Rossiya-24, Channel One and NTV were all banned.

But curiously, so were BBC Moscow correspondent Steve Rosenberg and producer Emma Wells, for a period of a year.

A NEW ROUND of bans has been announced, but this time it's causing outrage, as the popular television journalist Savik Shuster, who has Canadian citizenship, has had his work permit annulled.

Shuster hosts what many say is 'the' political analysis show to watch, and he is known for not pulling his punches.

He fled Russia in 2004 when his show on the NTV channel was banned by President Putin, at the beginning of a clampdown on media critical to the regime.

The State Employment Service's Kyiv branch said in a statement that the permit had been annulled because Shuster had failed to inform the agency about a criminal case opened by the State Fiscal Service against him.

Shuster said he would keep working without a permit.

“This government doesn't tolerate any criticism,” he added. “They're fighting with a mirror. Even if they break our mirror, others will emerge.” He said he believed the authorities would “crack down on all journalists who are trying to tell the truth” and added that he had faced the same problem in Russia and feared that Ukraine was on the brink of plunging into authoritarianism.

COMMENTING on the report, Poroshenko wrote on Facebook that “free speech is one of Ukraine's biggest achievements after the Revolution of Dignity and is the cornerstone of democracy.”

“As the guarantor of the Constitution, I have protected and will protect free speech in any of its manifestations,” he said. “That's why I hope that the relevant agencies will resolve the incident with journalist Savik Shuster as soon as possible.”

## Clampdown in Crimea

The Supreme court in Crimea has banned the ruling body of the Crimean Tatar community, the Mejlis, branding it an extremist organisation.

Crimea's Russian-appointed



With flowers, candles, anger and tears, ceremonies took place throughout Ukraine on Tuesday to mark the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster - the world's worst nuclear accident. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko was at Chernobyl itself where work is underway to complete a 2 billion euro (\$2.25 billion) long-term shelter over the building containing the exploded reactor. Once the structure is in place, work will begin to remove the reactor and its lava-like radioactive waste.

Iryna Terlecky



ban in the interests of human rights protection and social cohesion on the peninsula.”

## More civilian lives lost

Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine say at least five people were killed in an attack on a checkpoint in the town of Olenivka, and that ten more civilians were injured by artillery fire from the Ukrainian side as they waited in a queue to pass into Ukrainian-controlled territory.

Kyiv has denied the separatists' accusations of opening fire on the checkpoint.

A local border-guard spokesman, Anatoly Kotsurba, was quoted as saying there was an explosion at the checkpoint but he saw no artillery fired from either side, suggesting the blast could have been caused by a bomb.

In the meantime, the violence along the front line shows no signs of abating, with the Ukrainian army reporting well over 20 attacks every day, saying that the Russian-backed separatists are firing heavy mortars which should have been withdrawn under the Minsk agreements.

The separatists have already said that they are planning a May Day parade which will include heavy weaponry which should be in safe storage, and fears are growing of a new spring offensive.

## Glimmers of hope for Savchenko

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin had agreed a framework for a deal to secure the release of Nadiya Savchenko from prison – though there have been no public signs of progress.

However, as we go to press, Savchenko's lawyer, Mark Feygin, has said that a procedure to extradite Savchenko from Russia has begun. He said that papers had been delivered to Savchenko and that he had received her agreement to be extradited to serve her term in Ukraine.

He warned, however, that this would not happen immediately and that the process could take several weeks.

“I strongly urge a reversal of this