

Welcoming speech for the international conference  
**'Effects of Nuclear Disasters on Natural Environment and Human Beings'**

Martin Niemöller Haus, Arnoldshain, 4th to 7th March 2014

by

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Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, colleagues and guests,

We, the members of the Frankfurt IPPNW are particularly pleased that you have come to us from near and far, in order to pass on your knowledge and discuss, as physicians and scientists, the dangers and consequences of radioactive emissions from nuclear energy plants or nuclear weapons. We are also particularly pleased that we IPPNW physicians are working together with the Protestant church for this event, as there is no religion, which does not aim to care for God's creation, which encompasses the earth, human beings, animals and plants.

There are three days in my life which I shall never forget:

The first was the sixth of August 1945. I had been a prisoner of war in England for 11 months by that time. The loudspeaker in the camp announced that a huge bomb had hit Hiroshima and two days later, it was announced that Nagasaki had also been bombed. Now the war was also at an end in Japan. It was only many months later that we were informed that the two bombs were nuclear and much later than that, that an estimated 200,000 people had been killed within seconds, and a further hundred thousand had been severely wounded, both physically and psychologically. But what people all over the world discovered even later, was that the detonation of the nuclear bombs was aimed at impressing the Soviet leadership, and was also needed for estimating the destructive power of the bombs, at the end of the 'experiment'.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the beginning of the nuclear arms race and, in 1981, became the spur for the formation of IPPNW international and in Germany as well. Our Japanese colleagues will find it interesting and will be pleased that the city of Frankfurt has joined the international movement "MAYORS FOR PEACE" and that only a few weeks ago, we Frankfurt physicians read out the message sent by the World President and Mayor of Hiroshima, Mister MATSUI KAZUMI and officially handed over the flag of Mayors for Peace in the city hall. From now on the flag will be hoisted each year on the 6th of August.

The second day, which I shall never forget was the 26th of April 1986, when we first heard about the reactor catastrophe in Chernobyl. Four weeks later the IPPNW World Congress took place in Cologne, under the motto "Maintain Life on Earth", and we were already aware that precisely the opposite had taken place in Chernobyl. The politicians and the technicians tried and often still try to tell people that the dangers of radioactive emissions are really very minimal and controllable. That is, however, untrue and we will be discussing this in detail at this congress.

The third day, which I shall never forget is the 18th of March 2011 " Fukushima Day ". We were in the midst of our German IPPNW annual congress, when the catastrophe was announced. The Japanese physicists and technicians had always assured us that the nuclear power plants could not be damaged by earthquakes or storm waters. Now this estimation was shown to be false. Naturally we too were shocked. We broke off our congress and went to a central square in the city. There we called out loudly, in unison and with a megaphone "Yesterday Chernobyl, today Fukushima, tomorrow Biblis! Shut down immediately!"

Finally the politicians woke up and recognised that one can not take the risk of causing potentially uncontrollable catastrophes. Most of the nuclear power plants in Germany have now been shut

down. Now it is our job to work against the building of any further nuclear power plants anywhere in the world. Constant research and work must be put into the development of alternative and non-damaging forms of energy production! The continuing radioactive pollution of the earth and the ocean around Fukushima should be lesson enough!

JEFF PATTERSON has died.

Distinguished and dear friends, I now have the sad duty of telling you of the unexpected death of our American colleague and friend JEFF PATTERSON, who was torn out of his life and work by an acute heart attack on the 24th of January at the age of only 67. Jeff was an untiring educator on the risks of nuclear radiation from power plants and nuclear weapons. Immediately after the IPPNW World Congress in Hiroshima 2012 he and Dr. Siedentopf travelled to five Japanese cities where they lectured in order to support the Anti Nuclear Movement. Two days before his death he corresponded with Alex Rosen on the issue of " low level emissions".

Jeff's death leaves an irreplaceable void in the IPPNW and the physicians peace movement. I have known Jeff for 30 years. We first met in 1982, at the IPPNW-World Congress in Cambridge/England, and then met each year at our IPPNW conferences and congresses. But what remained unforgettable for Jeff and for me was our 1992 trip with Prof. Bernard Lown / USA, Prof. Sergej Kolesnikoff/USSR, Prof. Shizuteru Usui/Hiroshima and Dr. Ole Schenstroem/Sweden to Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and Alma Ata. In discussions with ministers and other important politicians, we campaigned for the removal of all nuclear weapons from the Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan for final destruction in Russia. In these difficult discussions I experienced Jeff's intellect and his diplomatic talent, with which he managed to convince those with whom we were talking.

"Get rid of nuclear weapons, the risks associated with nuclear power plants, damage to health by radioactive emissions, as well as dialogue rather than violence " remained his most important areas of work as president of the US-PSR and International Councillor of the international IPPNW. In addition to this Jeff was an empathetic physician and professor emeritus for general medicine, who also organised transport of medication to Russian hospitals in the eighties, and to the hospital of Kerbela in Iraq during the sanctions.

Jeff and I were to a great extent of the same opinion. He wrote to me on the 28th.of April 2002: " I have followed your message ( to the IPPNW-board and Council) with interest..I believe that we must continue to move PSR toward the opposition to war in general. I am enclosing an editorial that I wrote recently". In that editorial entitled " Violent Force" Jeff emphasised the question : "Where is the continued use of violent force in international relations likely to lead us in the 21st century?" . and " violent begets violence.and for the prevention of nuclear war, prevention of war is necessary".

With Jeff's death, we have lost a loyal and valuable fellow fighter for peace, for human empathy, for the abolition of all nuclear weapons and the closing down of nuclear power plants.

We now wish to keep silent for one minute to honour this man. Thank you.