

Welcoming speech for the international conference

'Effects of Nuclear Disasters on Natural Environment and Human Beings'

Martin Niemöller Haus, Arnoldshain, March 4th 2014

Dr. med. Dörte Siedentopf

A year ago I was informed of this congress, and an important part of my past caught up with me. In the early 80th I frequently came together in the Center of Ecumenical Work of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau to discuss peace, justice and the preservation of our created world. I participated in these gatherings as an interested laywoman. Now, nearly 30 years later, the roles have been reversed: Members of the church asked IPPNW to develop the program that is now lying before you.

To investigate the aftermath of Chernobyl and Fukushima is one thing – but just as important is it to bring together physicians, scientists and committed individuals from the countries afflicted by the catastrophes and inform the general public about their findings and the conclusions they have drawn from the evidence. In Belarus, the government has laid the foundations of the first Belarusian nuclear power station, in Japan they want to start up the nuclear power plants again. The governments of both countries claim that after the catastrophes everything has returned to normal, they leave their citizens alone in their suffering and they impede scientific research.

We are glad to have been able to realize the proposition of the Hessian church to organize a field trip to Minsk and Gomel before this conference. Japanese, Belarusian and German physicians and scientist met during two conferences. Among other things we reported on new findings concerning low radiation health risks, we talked to colleagues, who could not come here, we visited hospitals and the BELRAD institute. We will inform the conference about this exchange.

We, - Frank Uhe, Xanthe Hall, Angelika Wilmen, Angelika Claussen and I myself, bid a cordial welcome to the speakers and participants of the congress. We hope, that you all will enjoy the friendly atmosphere of this house, renew old friendships, meet new people and develop new connections.

I cannot address every speaker here, allow me to mention – pars pro toto – four. Hidehiko Yamamoto from Japan. He sees the increase of thyroid cancer in children and young people not because of the screening program, but as a result of radiation. Timothy Mousseu from the USA will talk about the change of nature around Chernobyl and Fukushima. His findings are completely different from those shown in the ARTE film from 2010 “Nature comes back”. Mikhail Malko from Belarus is known to many – he wrote with untiring commitment about the health consequences and health risks after Chernobyl. Wolfgang Hoffmann from Germany will elucidate us - patients and physicians –that any ionizing radiation will cause serious health problems: The so called background radiation, the radiation set free by uranium mining, the medical diagnostic and therapeutical radiation, all radiation from the nuclear chain.

In this context I would like to invite you to have more than a look at the exhibition HIBAKUSHA WORLDWIDE which can be seen in the corridors of the house. You will see victims of military and civilian use of nuclear energy which are to be deplored all over the world.

We are glad that a number of representatives of the media have already arrived, some have informed us that they will participate. Welcome!

We hope that you will acknowledge our practical experience and expert knowledge, and that you will inform the public accordingly. Please ask all the questions you have in mind.

We will now begin our program with the film by Ian Thomas Ash: A2- B – C.