

„N.“, Belarus

Darya Tchoumakova interviewed a lady who asked not to be named. “N.” was 27 years old and had a four months old daughter when the accident in Chernobyl happened. She shared some of her diary entries of the days after Chernobyl with Darya.

N. lives in Minsk. She is 52 years old, married and has two children. N. works as a librarian. She is orthodox.

Of course, before the Chernobyl accident N. knew about NPPs, she knew that there were a lot of them throughout the Soviet Union and that they were very powerful. And of course she knew about nuclear power, or rather about two kinds of nuclear energy: a dangerous one which was used in military purposes, with a large radius of destruction. This was taught at school in the lessons of civil security, that, when it happened, it was necessary to apply the evacuation plans.

And the second one is atomic energy, which was pioneered by scientists and government of the USSR. This energy was useful and serving the people. About this energy the documentary films were shown. In these films people walked in white robes, and everything was under control, working people were responsible, intelligent, and part of some kind of academic elite.

N. was 27 when disaster struck, and her little daughter was 4 months old.

Next is the story N. detailed from her personal diary.

Her diary entries and the rest of this interview are presented in direct speech, because I wanted to convey the emotional mood of the witness.

July 27, Sunday. All day me with my daughter stayed outdoors. The weather was unbelievably hot.

July 28, Monday - My sister went for a walk with my daughter. I watched them and waved from the balcony. Oddly, I just saw that it was raining heavily, but down the sidewalk was completely dry. And I noticed some yellow haze in the air.

July 29, Tuesday – Me and daughter went with to the pediatrician. Baby grew up. (You see, it was 3 days after catastrophe and nobody said anything, not even doctors!)

July 30, Wednesday – I met a friend. Her husband was a doctor. He said that something had happened in the Chernobyl, so it's best not to let children play in the sandpit.

May 1-4 - we had already knew that the Chernobyl accident occurred, but we did not feel that it was dangerous for me and my family, because we really believed that the

atom from NPP was in fact peaceful, and the government had taken the certain measures to protect the population.

Only in 1989 I became fully aware of what happened in Chernobyl. My family had a rest in a sanatorium. And the whole resort was crowded with people from the contaminated territories. People told me that they were immigrants, that their land and houses were completely lost, because of the radiation and how it killed people. Then I started thinking what food to prefer and why along with weather forecasts it was indicated the level of radiation. And still I had the feeling that I was deceived, the government hid the truth from me! I would not walk with your child on the street, I would have taken action. I understand – I'm also victim of Chernobyl.

You know, in general, my life has not changed much after the Chernobyl disaster. But anyway, I'm sharing it in two parts - before and after Chernobyl. I'm afraid of radiation; I have fear of such a kind of disaster. My friend was a liquidator. He told me how people heroically coped with unknown radiation. You know, it is like 3 years as he is not alive; he died from uncommon and very serious kind of cancer. I often hear about the increasing cases of cancer.

And in Belarus have gathered to build the first NPP. The majority of people even do not mind. They (the government) hired people. They again say that it is safe. Is it forgotten how Chernobyl was and is terrible and fearsome!?

I have only one question. Please, can someone explain to me, the layman who grew up in the Soviet Union, what the government should have to do to protect their people from radiation?