

What we want from the BBC

- They must stop pretending that the Chernobyl Forum represents a “scientific consensus”. Hundreds of scientists have shown increased disease after the disaster and they think radioactivity is the cause.

- The BBC’s own rules on balance demand new programmes to redress the bias of *Nuclear Nightmares*, *Today*, and *You and Yours*. They must have the same prominence and publicity as the nuclear propaganda. They must examine the full range of evidence and represent it fairly. They must interview the scientists they’ve ignored so far.

- The BBC complaints process is clearly partisan and should be made independent.

How you can help

- Write to Sir Michael Lyons, Chairman of the BBC Trust, supporting our demands. His address is Room 211, 35 Marylebone High Street, London W1 U4A.

- Write to your MP, MSP, and Welsh AM pointing out that the BBC must be impartial, especially on controversial subjects, that they admit radiation and health is controversial, and that licence-payers bear the cost of their pro-nuclear propaganda. We would like copies of the replies you receive.

- Letters to national and local papers will add to the pressure for change.

Ask us for copies of this leaflet to distribute. They are free on request but we need donations to carry on this work.

More information - www.bbcnuclear.co.uk

Use this box to tell us how many more copies of this leaflet you need

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Tick this box if you do NOT want to be added to our database for future mailings. (We don’t pass contact details to anyone.)

The Low Level Radiation Campaign is an independent body set up in 1993 to draw attention to the true dangers of radioactive pollution. We depend on the support of the public.

Donation

Send me the next four issues of *Radioactive Times* (£10 individuals £15 groups)

Total enclosed

Please make cheques payable to *Low Level Radiation Campaign*. Other ways to send money are on www.bbcnuclear.co.uk

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The Low Level Radiation Campaign is a company limited by guarantee. Company number 3821690

Nuclear propaganda and the BBC

How the BBC

plays down the health effects of
Chernobyl;
breaks its own rules;
condones lying;
and skews the nuclear debate.



www.bbcnuclear.co.uk

Should we worry?

In April 1986 Chernobyl's reactor number 4 exploded. It burned for ten days, spreading radioactivity all over the world. This was the worst nuclear accident ever. If it had no effect on health, then why would we worry about a new generation of nuclear power stations?

The BBC's *Nuclear Nightmares*

On 13th July 2006, just as Blair's Government announced its determination to promote new nuclear power stations, BBC TV broadcast *Nuclear Nightmares*. This 50 minute *Horizon* documentary sneered at public concerns about the health effects of nuclear power. It used Chernobyl as a particular example.

- Preceded by global publicity, the programme presented fear of radiation as hysterical;
- headlined claims from the Chernobyl Forum that radioactive pollution had no observable effect on health;
- dismissed without explanation all the hundreds of published scientific studies that link the accident to increased rates of cancer, leukaemia, birth defects, miscarriages, genetic mutations, lowered intelligence, and other diseases;
- suggested that the very real breakdown of public health in regions around Chernobyl is caused by fear of radiation;
- speculated on unpublished findings that low level radiation may even be beneficial.

The BBC calls *Horizon* its "flagship science series ... outstanding acclaim ... a world leader in its field".

"Impartiality" - a BBC standard

Editorial Guidelines absolutely require balance, especially on controversial issues. Defending themselves against complaints of bias, *Horizon* staff

- denied that the topic was controversial;
- lied about evidence they'd examined;
- put forward irrelevant, scientifically illiterate arguments, and
- totally ignored the studies that contradict the Chernobyl Forum.

In adjudicating the complaints, the BBC's Editorial Complainants Unit

- denied that the topic was controversial;
- ignored *Horizon*'s lie about the evidence;
- accepted *Horizon*'s illiterate arguments;
- misrepresented the complaints; and
- totally ignored the studies that contradict the Chernobyl Forum.

After 19 acrimonious months the BBC Trust adjudicated an appeal. Guided by an anonymous "Editorial Advisor" who was even more biased than *Nightmares* itself, they

- ignored *Horizon*'s lie about the evidence;
- parroted some of the illiterate science;
- misrepresented the complaints; and
- totally ignored the studies that contradict the Chernobyl Forum.

But the Trust did rule that

- radiation and health **is** controversial;
- *Nuclear Nightmares* was biased, and
- it was "important to remind all programme areas to ensure impartiality, especially on controversial topics".

But that didn't mean they'd make a new programme to tell the truth ...

... and it didn't stop them telling the same biased story again ...

On New Year's Eve 2007 the *Today* programme (BBC Radio 4) repeated the Chernobyl Forum view — "apart from the deaths of a few highly irradiated firemen and some additional cases of thyroid cancer (mostly curable), there was no measurable impact." "Fear of radiation has had more of a health impact than the radiation itself". Evidence to the contrary was dismissed as "mythology and misconception".

Emails from *Today*'s editors show they didn't think about any of the numerous scientific studies that contradict the Forum.

... and yet again

On 7th April 2009 the Forum view was repeated by the presenter on *You and Yours* during an hour of mainly nuclear-friendly discussion of future energy supplies.

Of all the news and factual programming on the BBC's radio channels, these are the most prominent.

Should they trust the Forum?

No. The Chernobyl Forum is led by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The IAEA exists to promote nuclear power and for half a century has been able to veto WHO research on radiation and health. An international campaign opposes this conflict of interest, calling for WHO to be independent of the nuclear lobby. More information on:-
www.bbcnuclear.co.uk/chernobylforum.htm