

Polynesians: Nuclear France's Guinea Pigs?



Press Release from the CDRPC in Lyon, September 8, 2005

Ten years ago on September 5, 1995 , the first underground test ordered by Jacques Chirac ignited a social explosion in Tahiti . "Despite the end of the testing, the matter is not settled. Indeed, the 46 atmospheric nuclear experiments carried out over Moruroa and Fangataufa between 1966 and 1974 today represent that many time bombs for the health of the French Polynesian population," states Bruno Barrillot, director of the CDRPC. This answer is confirmed by the "Cancer du tropique" an investigation broadcast September 9 by Thalassa over the France 3 television channel.

This past April, Damoclès, the periodical of the CDRPC (Center for Documentation on Peace and Conflicts) revealed documents classified "military secret," which mention considerable radioactive fallout, especially over the island of Mangareva , near Moruroa. Today, Damoclès continues its task of information on the consequences of the texts by the publication of Barrillot's report, " A Contribution to Research on the causes of Thyroid Cancer in Polynesia," carried out as part of his mission as an expert hired by the Polynesian government on July 1, 2005.

In 2005, the rate of thyroid cancer and other thyroid diseases is four times greater for Polynesian women than for European women. On the "Old Continent," Chernobyl is blamed. In Polynesia , nuclear tests are rightly blamed. Indeed, the Chernobyl accident and the nuclear tests emitted radioactive iodine, which tends to settle in the thyroid gland, as all scientists know.

The authorities in charge of the tests knew that, as the Damoclès report makes clear. Each year, from 1966 to 1974, the French government published and sent to the United Nations a document (Radioactive Fallout from Nuclear Explosions in Polynesia) in which the fallout of radioactive iodine over all of Polynesia was described and analyzed with regard to the risk to the thyroids of Polynesian infants, children, and adults. In short, the observation was made but the preventive measures, already known before 1960, were not taken.

At the time, of course, the claim was made that there was no danger. Today, the French Ministry of Defense holds to that claim. By contrast, in the United States , the National Cancer Institute admitted that more than 500 cancers above the norm are due to the fallout from American nuclear testing over the Marshall Islands between 1945 and 1963. Astonished, Bruno Barrillot asks, "Did France, contrary to the United States , the United Kingdom , and Russia , carry out 'clean tests'?"

Damoclès no. 116-117, 14 pages, 4 euros, is available on the Internet (www.obsarm.org) or from the CDRPC, 187, montée de Choulans , 69005 Lyon

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