



KOZLOVA: AGGRESSIVELY MARKETING UKRAINE IN CANADA

Kozlova Enterprises Inc. is a Canadian based company with offices in Winnipeg, Canada, and Dniprodzerzhinsk, Ukraine. The founders of Kozlova Enterprises Inc., Igor Zaks and Liudmila Kozlova formed the company in 1994. With years of business experience and a sound understanding of business, economic and political conditions in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, they have taken a global view and professional approach to the establishment of the infrastructure necessary for companies based in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries to access western markets and capital. Kozlova recognizes that for Ukraine and other Eastern European countries to exploit Western European and North American markets, infrastructure must be put in place to facilitate these activities. With this objective it has assembled a team of international business advisors with expertise in various disciplines.

Kozlova Enterprises is currently involved in organizing two events designed to assist Ukraine in moving toward a free market economy. More than 50 companies from Ukraine will be attending the "UKRAINE and PARTNERS XX-XXI" Trade Show, one of the first in North America, being held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from April 30 until May 3, 1996. The goals of the Trade Show are to introduce exhibitors to the North American market, to promote unique opportunities through the cooperation and integration of industrial enterprises of Eastern Europe and North America, and to provide investment opportunities as well as the import and export of goods and services.

Running alongside the Trade Show will be the "Doing Business in Ukraine" Conference, being held at the Metro Toronto Convention Center on May 1 to 2, 1996. This is an Executive Conference for Senior Decision Makers in business and government focusing on Ukrainian investment opportunities. Featured speakers include senior business representatives and government officials from Ukraine. The aim of the Conference is to give those attending a clear picture of the economic and political climate in Ukraine, allowing delegates to make informed judgments about the timing and nature of investment and to provide direct contact to highly qualified, senior Ukrainian business and government decision makers. (See pages 16-17)

THE IMPACT OF CHORNOBYL

by David R. Marples
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Information released by the Ukrainian government has been equally problematic, though from a different perspective. The Ukrainian Health Ministry was initially under the leadership of Anatoliy Romanenko, who assured the public that no serious health consequences would accrue from Chernobyl. His successor Yuriy Spizhenko was more open, whereas today's Ukrainian Health Ministry has produced alarming figures - 125,000 Chernobyl-related deaths - without corroboration. In today's climate, which has seen furious arguments about casualty totals, such a decision was unwise in the extreme. That the death toll is in the thousands is clear - as that for liquidators demonstrates - but it has to be verified with adequate evidence.

Since Chernobyl, Ukraine has suffered from major health problems in a number of areas. In the heavily contaminated regions, the incidence of morbidity has generally risen in alarming fashion. In Zhytomyr Oblast, for example, the deaths of children suffering from oncological diseases have doubled over the past year alone. Cases of anemia, lung diseases and children's diabetes have seen similar increases. Compared with the year 1993, the number of evacuees living in Zhytomyr who became ill in 1995 had risen by 31%, a dramatic and unprecedented increase.

This portrait of a nation in health crisis is an accurate one, though it must be regarded within the general perspective of health care as a whole: shortage of funds; a general lack of nutritious food in some communities; unhealthy lifestyles, including the smoking of cigarettes and high consumption of alcohol; and the lack of adequate pharmaceutical provisions, especially outside major cities. Ukraine also has not yet seen a rise in the number of leukemia cases as a result of Chernobyl. Conversely thyroid gland cancer, especially among children, has seen an unexpected rise both in Ukraine and neighboring Belarus. This disease, which was rare among children prior to the disaster (1-2 cases per year in Ukraine), has risen markedly since 1990 and has developed almost exclusively in the heavily irradiated areas. In the north-central areas of Ukraine, for example, the rise in incidence among children is 8-10 times.

This particular form of cancer is a highly aggressive form which can metastasize rapidly if not operated upon promptly. Virtually all the new cases have arisen in children born or conceived prior to the accident - hence it is affecting an older age group with the passing years. In about 40% of cases, repeat surgery is necessary. Initially the cause of the disease was believed to be radioactive cesium, but the consensus of the World Health Organization and other bodies at a major conference in Geneva last November, was that it arose through the fallout of radioactive iodine, the major radioisotope released by the explosion, but one that has a half-life of only 8 days.

The situation has been made worse by the fact that northern Ukraine and southern Belarus have iodine-deficient soils, meaning that the thyroid glands of children in particular, would take in and be saturated by iodine in the air. Thyroid-related illnesses, but not including cancers, were common prior to the accident. Medical specialists maintain that thyroid gland cancer has a 90% cure rate. Hence with totals today approaching 800 children (Ukraine and Belarus) and continuing to rise in 1995, one can anticipate that at least 100 deaths will ultimately result. Among both adults and children in Ukraine, the numbers have also continued to rise: 1,389 in 1991; 1,408 in 1992; and 1,616 in 1993. To date, thyroid gland cancer is the single most serious and pervasive disease to result directly from Chernobyl, and unfortunately it has not yet peaked.

Dealing with the sort of problems engendered by Chernobyl would pose problems for any government in the world. For Ukraine they are simply impossible to overcome given its current financial situation. In the budget as a whole, funds allocated for Chernobyl have been squeezed in recent years. According to the chair of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Committee on the questions of the Chernobyl Catastrophe, Volodymyr Yatsenko, writing in March 1995: in 1992, Chernobyl funds constituted 15.7% of the state budget; in 1993, 7.4%; in 1994, 5%; and the plan for 1995 (it was not fulfilled) was a mere 3.4%, or 80 trillion Karbovantsi. Adequate funding, he admitted ruefully, would require the deployment of 20% of state funds, a totally unrealistic proposition. Under such circumstances, and with Chernobyl-related costs growing, rather than declining, the young Ukrainian state has been forced to request international aid for Chernobyl problems. These entail not only expenses for evacuation, new housing, and health care; but also for the twin dilemmas of the closure of the Chernobyl plant itself, and the construction of a new covering, or "Sarkofag", over the destroyed fourth reactor unit. →