

- [Local Food](#)
- [Animals](#)
- [Animal Photos Of The Week](#)
- [Climate Change](#)

[More](#)
[Log in](#) [Create Account](#)

Your(New)Name@aol.com  Claim your name @ AOL Mail.

April 29, 2012



THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY

Edition: **U.S.**

- [CA Canada](#)
 - [Québec](#)
- [FR France](#)
- [US United States](#)
- [UK United Kingdom](#)

97k

[This is the print preview: Back to normal view »](#)



Ben Barber

Journalist, photographer,
consultant

GET UPDATES FROM Ben Barber

[Like](#)

Soviet Chemical Plant Threat to Ukrainian City

Posted: 04/26/2012 12:17 pm

Follow

[Ukraine](#), [Blacksmith](#), [Chemical Plant](#), [Gorlovka](#), [Gorlovka Chemical Plant](#), [Soviet Union](#), [Tnt](#), [Toxic Chemicals](#), [Green News](#)

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, it left behind in the Ukrainian city of Gorlovka [an abandoned chemical factory](#) awash with leaking drums and pipes containing TNT and other dangerous chemicals.

Local officials in the city of 300,000 people were not even sure what was being produced in the plant -- possibly munitions or even nerve gas -- because the factory was "secret" under the Soviet regime. And the Soviet Union took some of its secrets with it.

The 400-acre site is in the middle of the city, creating concern that if an explosion were to take place, the toll of injuries could be catastrophic; or if toxic chemicals leak into the water, health could be threatened.

An expert from Blacksmith Institute, an NGO working with the Ukrainian government to clean up the facility, said there is a 5 percent chance per year that there will be an explosion at the site.

Yet plans to clean up the plant have been slow in getting official approval. The government has balked at paying off an engineering institute that did a detailed survey of the site and drew up plans to neutralize the threat to people.

Gorlovka, in the eastern Ukraine near the border of Russia, is not the only city facing threats from abandoned Cold War plants. Since the Soviet Union vanished, Russian, Ukrainian, and other former Soviet authorities have simply walked away from chemical, weapons and even nuclear sites, leaving ill-equipped local authorities to cope with a witch's brew of deadly pollution threats.

The Ukraine government is especially aware of the risks from the site because in June and July, many thousands of sports fans are expected to descend on the nearby city of Donetsk, a 40-minute drive away, to view European soccer championship games. The last thing the government wants is an environmental disaster to drive away the fans.

Already a major cleanup has taken place. Tons of TNT have been removed from leaking barrels and rusting sheds into strong new metal drums, ready for shipment to burning sites in Poland.

The site also contains mononitrochlorobenzene (MNCB), rarely used in the West. Ukrainian authorities say the chemical was used for dyes, paints and pharmaceuticals. It is a carcinogen and one teaspoon can kill a human being. But one U.S. chemical industry expert said the chemical can be easily changed into nerve gas.

In the past few weeks some progress has been made in getting the Ukrainian government to move toward paying the \$300,000 owed to the engineering institute that did a comprehensive survey of the abandoned plant and wrote up a detailed, step-by-step plan to clean up the site. Tons of chemicals have already been trucked to Poland for incineration and tons more have been transferred from leaking containers into more secure drums. But 30 tons of TNT, plus other chemicals remain on site, clogging up pipes, leaking from barrels and flowing into groundwater. Blacksmith has already obtained \$650,000 from the European Community, the Swedish aid agency, and the Swiss Green Cross agency to do the actual clean up.

But the engineering institute says it can't release its detailed survey and design to clean the site until it gets paid.

"This is the worst case of leaving dangerous materials in the center of a city after the Soviet Union collapsed," said Andrew McCartor, a Blacksmith official. "It is a terrible toxic legacy."

On a recent visit to the site -- which is so toxic and dangerous local officials were reluctant to enter -- McCartor found buildings collapsing over tanks and pipes laden with explosives and chemicals.

Ukraine authorities must find a way to pay the engineering fees and work with the international donor community to clean up this site before a grave accident occurs on the magnitude of another [Bhopal](#), the worst industrial accident in modern history, in which more than 2,000 Indians died from a cyanide gas leak in 1984.

Ben Barber is a freelance journalist and a communications adviser to Blacksmith Institute.

FOLLOW GREEN

[Like](#)

97k

Enter email for Green . [Get Alerts](#)

FOLLOW US





Connect with your friends
Check out stories you might like,
and see what your friends are sharing!



[Most Popular on HuffPost](#)

qAxUB066ScpgrOnJl3SDF4QoVw5veU%2Bq8bif2cAWClq7rwJB1voowtZfSJyHxmgbakFZMPfA%2B3HSNL4QCT5eQOKp%2B8zGIel
4%2BW%2ByHybeaQikdiGGEUE2NmBtoqjTBUzgN6v4P51yXto5%2FlcwUrDhZ2jJMwTqqKSu7lX6MF%2Ft16GGTSZuhPbBnFCTd3PXovu
1 of 2



['The B**ch Had Emptied My Mouth!': Dumped Dentist Pulls All Ex's Teeth Out](#)

[Recommend](#)

29k



[Kimmel Addresses Pot Legalization At Major White House Event](#)

[Like](#)

10k



[WATCH: Seattle Attorney Says He Traveled Through Time The Night Lincoln Died](#)

[Like](#)

4k



[WATCH: Dog NEEDS To Hold Owner's Hand](#)

[Like](#)

6k



[Woman Kills Man By Squeezing His Testicles In Street Fight](#)

[Like](#)

44k



[WATCH: Obama Kills At White House Correspondent Dinner](#)

[Like](#)

2k



[Obama: Hillary 'Won't Stop Drunk-Texting Me From Cartagena'](#)

[Like](#)

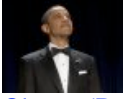
3k



[Surreal 360 Degree Photos Based In Reality](#)

[Like](#)

2k



[Obama: 'Dogs Are Fair Game'](#)

[Like](#)

3k

Don't Miss HuffPost Bloggers

1 of 5



Sec. Kathleen Sebelius

[The Affordable Care Act - Stronger Benefits to Seniors. Billions in Savings This Year](#)



Noam Chomsky

[May Day](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS

1 of 9

[Sneaky Lion Chases Zebras](#)



[Cute Zoo Animals Open Their Easter Eggs in Argentina](#)



[Rescued Russian Bears Start Road to Release](#)



MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW

2RgnQXLokElFimSGDV8i8a43pip0bdKP iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgKQA9zRBn5c9

1 of 2



['Agent Orange Corn' Sparks Public Outcry](#)



[WATCH: Climate Change, Close To Home](#)

HOT ON FACEBOOK

2RgnQXLokElFimSGDV8i8TKPvBq8xPkmgYINREC4w8w%3D iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgPTAYkCdRanfpr%2BnvSQA9QM%3D

jpeKJKgS0bJPIRX0pV4Fss35VaaM%2Fhsd5ArrOaf1yA%3D veAXRmomOKz1aBVE4Vheew%3D%3D

1 of 3



[Elephants, Tigers, Jellyfish And More Animal Photos Of The Week](#)



[Invasive Species Must Love This](#)



HOT ON TWITTER

2RgnQXLokElFimSGDV8i8f8ym0hHXTuf iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgDrc%2BaNUFZ3B

1 of 2



[aol](#)
10 recipes for perfect pancakes <http://t.co/QOErGmID> via [@kitchendaily](#)

[Retweet](#)



[kim](#)
Puts things into perspective. RT [@HuffingtonPost](#): These 10 companies control basically everything you consume <http://t.co/3t1TfMA0>

[Retweet](#)

[HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES](#)



[Drilling Record: Japan's 'Chikyu' Research Vessel Bores 25,000 Feet Below Surface](#)
[Video](#)



[David Cameron Denies 'Grand Deal' With Rupert Murdoch \(VIDEO\)](#)
[Rupert Murdoch](#)



['Skyfall': James Bond Movie To Explore Spy's Troubled Psyche, Says Director Sam Mendes](#)
[Movies](#)



[Ehud Olmert, Former Israel Prime Minister, Against Iran Strike](#)
[Iran](#)



['The Good Wife' Season 4: Matthew Perry Hopes To Come Back](#)
[Television](#)



[Haley Barbour Finds Marco Rubio's Alternative DREAM Act 'Clearly Attractive'](#)
[Marco Rubio](#)



[Jeff Kellogg, Home Plate Umpire, Tackles Fan At Orioles-Athletics Game \(VIDEO\)](#)
[Baseball](#)



[Miley Cyrus Flaunts Toned Midriff After Pilates Class](#)
[Miley Cyrus](#)



[Flooding Spreads Invasive Species In Vermont, Iowa, Louisiana](#)
[AP](#)
[more big news pages](#) »

Search The Huffington Post



- [FRONT PAGE](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [TECH](#)
- [MEDIA](#)
- [LIFE & STYLE](#)
- [CULTURE](#)
- [COMEDY](#)
- [HEALTHY LIVING](#)
- [WOMEN](#)
- [LOCAL](#)
- [MORE](#)

[GREEN](#)

- [Advertise](#) |
- [Log In](#) |
- [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) |
- [RSS](#) |
- [Careers](#) |
- [FAQ](#)

- [User Agreement](#) |
- [Privacy](#) |
- [Comment Policy](#) |
- [About Us](#) |
- [About Our Ads](#) |
- [Contact Us](#)

- Copyright © 2012 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. |
- "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.
- Part of **AOL Lifestyle**