

War-Making

6 August 1945



The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not a forgone conclusion. Immediately after the first test explosion in Alamogordo, New Mexico, in July, 1945, U.S. political leaders, Pentagon strategists, and atomic scientists entered into a debate: should the United States pressure Japan to surrender by verbally threatening them with the bomb but not actually dropping it? Might such a threat be made more effective with a demonstration explosion in, say, an unpopulated region? Or should an actual attack be executed?

After the actual attacks took place — Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9 — an explanation came from Washington: they had been motivated by military necessity — to end the war and save American lives. As President Truman later wrote, "The Japanese in their conduct of the war had been vicious and cruel savages and I came to the conclusion that if two hundred and fifty thousand young Americans could be saved from slaughter, the bomb should be dropped."

The first suspicion that the attacks had little to do with either ending the war or saving American lives came as early as 1946. The Army Air Force released a study, the Strategic Bombing Survey, asserting: "Prior to 1 November 1945 (the proposed date of the U.S. invasion of Japan), the Japanese would have surrendered, even if the atomic bomb had not been used, and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."² In 1948, a distinguished British physicist who had been involved in the wartime debate claimed the bombings constituted a gross power play to ensure that the U.S. would have the upper hand in negotiations with Russia after the war.³ This suspicion is now accepted as historical fact.

The latest suspicion centers on the matter of race. Would U.S. strategists have so easily considered dropping the devastating weapon on their European counterparts? Or was it easier to contemplate the bombings given that the targets were to be "savage" Asian people?

—Editor

At eight seconds past 8:16, the Little Boy* had exploded. Fifty-one seconds previously it had been dropped from the bomb bay of the *Enola Gay* at a height of almost six miles. The three B-29s — the bomb carrier itself and the two observation planes — had turned sharply, as their pilots had been trained to do, and had fled the scene of imminent disaster. The explosion occurred at a height of 1,850 feet and less than two hundred yards from the target point, the T-shaped Aioi Bridge that spanned the widest of the seven streams. The huge fireball that formed afterwards possessed, for a fraction of a second, a temperature of a million degrees. To many of the people who saw it, the fireball looked like a tremendous bluish white flash that blazed for about three seconds. The Little Boy had released the equivalent of 13,500 tons of TNT over the center of the city

The next thing she was aware of was a sudden blinding flash that seemed to sear her eyeballs; at the same time, her whole body felt as though a silvery current was flowing through it, and she heard a slight rushing sound, as of falling sand. Within a split second the current that she had felt passing

through her body became a sensation of intense heat. Then she heard the crackle of burning hair. As she put her hands to her head, it seemed to her that every part of her was on fire. Without conscious thought, she ran inside and began to roll on the tatami, the straw mats that covered the floor, in an attempt to put out the flames that she felt were devouring her.

Then the whole house began to quiver. Rising from the floor, she now saw that countless bits of jagged glass had pierced her body; her arms and legs were bleeding; she could even feel the sharp fragments of glass in her face. Hardly knowing what she was doing, she crept downstairs, where the family kept an emergency first aid kit. The stairs too were strewn with broken glass. Then she saw the walls of her house had caved in; the doors had been blown off; the house no longer had a roof. Outside, it was as dark as though the city had been enveloped in a heavy dust storm.

—Pacific War Society,
The Day Man Lost Hiroshima: 6 August 1945

* Little Boy is the name of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Editor's Notes

Ever since western world views emphasizing the domination of nature and "progress" replaced the older ecological philosophies of people-in-relation-to-the-cosmos, the theme of human experience has centered on arms build-up, expansionism, and colonization. The startling quote on the cover of this issue alerts us to the inevitable union, in the imagination of the dominating mind, of the ultimate weapon with the ultimately feared, the ultimately despised.

The unraveling of this union has begun. At the World Uranium Hearing in Austria in 1992, people of color from all over the world — from Namibia, Tahiti, Mongolia, Tibet, the American West, Canada, Peru, the Arctic Circle — testified to a board of scientists, journalists, and scholars about the effects of nuclear development on native peoples. Remarkable facts were revealed: over 70 percent of the world's uranium deposits lie on lands inhabited and considered sacred by indigenous peoples. For every ton of uranium oxide used by the nuclear industry, up to 40,000 tons (still emanating 85 percent of the ore's original radioactivity) remain behind — often left in mounds, seeping into the water table, scattering in the wind across indigenous lands. Nuclear testing disproportionately rains down upon people of color.

And today industrialized nations are luring impoverished tribal governments with promises of money in exchange for storing nuclear waste on their ancestral lands.

Remarkably too, the totem creature of the World Uranium Hearing was the Njamal Rainbow Serpent, a monster etched into the cliff walls of the Upper Yle River in Australia long before European people ever set foot in the region — and discovered uranium there. According to Njamal legend, the Serpent sleeps within the Earth. Its job is to guard over the elemental forces that lie outside the realm of human control, but if the Serpent is disturbed, it will rise in vengeance in a deluge of destruction and death.

At the Hearing snakes were everywhere: snakes in Namibia, snakes in the land of the Cree, the Dené, the Tewa. An ancient petroglyph of a serpent adorns the entrance to the largest open-pit uranium mine in the world, the Jackpile Mine at Kawaika (Laguna Pueblo) in New Mexico, and the corporation that dug this mine managed to name itself after the mean, slow-moving constrictor of the Amazon, the anaconda.

One of the most startling moments at the World Uranium Hearing occurred when a North American television network approached a Maralinga Tjarutja aborigine for an interview. In a painstaking process that took some forty-five minutes, the man was outfitted with hidden microphone and arranged in just-so lighting by a swarm of television producers and camera people. Finally, when his bright red headband was adjusted to just the right angle, the cameras began to roll and the question was put to him: "What is your story? Why did you travel halfway around the world to this conference?"

With great dignity and a stiff Australian accent, he enunci-

ated each word of his answer. "*The . . . future . . . is . . . broken.*" He unclipped the microphone from his shirt and walked away.

There was nothing more to say.

Beginning with physicist Enrico Fermi's revealing declaration at the moment the scientists realized they could catalyze a controlled chain reaction, this issue of *Race, Poverty and the Environment* — BURNING FIRES: NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR — marks the 50th anniversary of the Nuclear Age by tracing the intertwining of the nuclear fuel cycle with the contamination — and activism — of communities of color.

War-making is the starting point — from Hiroshima to the Persian Gulf. Next we move to nuclear research at Los Alamos National Laboratory and then pay a visit to the uranium mines of the Grants Mineral Belt in the Southwest. Next we cover the uprising of African American communities in Louisiana against uranium enrichment facilities, radioactive contamination at the Savanna River Site, transport of spent fuel rods through low-income urban neighborhoods and Indian nations, and waste disposal on the lands of indigenous peoples. This environmental justice view of the nuclear fuel cycle is enhanced by essays on related subjects: recent medical perspectives on radio-contamination; growing up African American in the Nuclear Age; and spiritual and political visions of the future.

These days some people are saying that such concerns are a thing of the past, that the Cold War is over, that the dismantling of nuclear weapons is imminent. Yet those of

us who live in the cold shadow of the nuclear industry know that, while restructuring of priorities is indeed taking place, commitment to future nuclear development is as vital as ever to government and the nuclear industry. The drive behind this commitment springs from forces greater than concerns about unemployment within the nuclear industry: it is the product of the New World Order. With the recent achievement of interlinking high technologies that virtually crisscross the globe and "free" trade agreements giving corporations a "bill of rights" to supersede local and national autonomy, transnational corporations have finally achieved a goal that previously was mere science-fiction fantasy: they have arranged the world's institutions, people, and resources into a global system of mechanistic, autocratic, non-sustainable control. Given the affront to humanity imposed by this dominion, the corporate world and the governments backing them need protection. *Big* protection.

You and I, we live in historic times. It is crucial that we remember this — and live accordingly.

When Jeannette Armstrong of the Okanagan Band in British Columbia recently visited nations of indigenous people in the former Soviet Union, she returned with insight for us all.

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When I got there, there was no light, no street, no nothing. Only dead bodies, horrible smell, and rubble still burning. I can still hear the voices crying for help. I went to the hypocenter to find my father. I dug through the bodies. They looked like dark rotten peaches. Most people died in the fetal position, with char on their backsides and the frontsides still somewhat identifiable. Then I went where the survivors were congregating, but I couldn't identify anyone. Some didn't have faces anymore. Others had mouths burned away. I never found my father.

—Kanji Kuramoto,
*"How Did You Learn to Stop Worrying
and Love the Bomb?"*

**The huge fireball that
formed afterwards
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I set off along the embankment with the idea of crossing Aioi Bridge. Countless dead bodies were lying in the undergrowth at the foot of the embankment on our right. Other bodies came floating in steady succession along the river. Every so often, one of them would catch on the roots of a riverside willow, swing around with the current, and suddenly rear its face out of the water. Or one would come along rocking in the water, so that first its upper half then its lower half bobbed to the surface. Or another would swing round beneath a willow tree and raise its arms as though to grasp a branch, so that it almost seemed, for a moment, to be alive.

We had sighted from some way off the body of a woman who lay stretched out dead on top of the embankment. Suddenly Yasuko, who was walking ahead of us, came running back with a cry of "Uncle! Uncle!" and burst into tears. As I drew closer, I saw a baby girl of about three who had opened the

corpse's dress at the top and was playing with the breasts. When we came up to her, she clutched tight at both breasts and gazed up at us with apprehensive eyes.

—Masuji Ibuse, *Black Rain*

All the houses around them were shattered and fallen, fire curling and crackling in the ruins. Mii-chan stumbled over broken tiles and rubble, past burned bodies and blazing houses. From beneath piles of rubble that had once been houses, people screamed for help. There was nothing that Mii-chan and mother could do to help them. On and on they stumbled, fleeing the terrible destruction. The streets were reduced to a burning desert. Hiroshima had disappeared. . . .

"We must try and get to the river," gasped mother. "Water! Water!" echoed Mii-chan.

They were not alone. Many others were around them, a pathetic tide ebbing away from the burning city. There were children with their clothes burned off, their eyelids and lips swollen, some of them unable even to open their eyes. Most people were naked, their clothes ripped off by the force of the blast. They moved like ghosts, their skins burnt by the flash, peeling and hanging off them in shreds. . . .

In places, people fell to the ground in exhaustion. Others fell on top of them, forming small heaps of human bodies. Surely hell could not be more terrifying than this.

—Toshi Maruki,
The Hiroshima Story

NOTES

1. Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon*, New York: Vintage, 1981, p. 20n.
2. U.S. Air Force, *U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey*, Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, 1946.
3. P.M.S. Blackett, *Fear, War, and the Bomb: Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, New York: Whittlesey House/McGraw Hill, 1948. See also Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, New York: Penguin, 1965, and Barton Bernstein, "The Atomic Bomb and American Foreign Policy, 1941-1945: An Historical Controversy," *Peace and Change*, Sp.1974.

Pacific War Society, *The Day Man Lost Hiroshima: 6 August, 1945*, Tokyo, Kodansha International, 1981, p. 235. *The Pacific War Society consists of fourteen Japanese researchers. In 1965, they produced Japan's Longest Day about the final twenty-four hours before Japan's surrender in World War II.*

Kanji Kuramoto, interviewed in Chellis Glendinning, "How Did You Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb?" San Francisco Bay Guardian, August 7, 1980. *Kuramoto was visiting Japan from the United States when World War II broke out. He went to Hiroshima two days after the bombing to find his father. Since then, Kuramoto has become an outspoken Japanese-American activist for medical compensation of U.S. atomic bomb survivors.*

**Surely hell could not be
more terrifying than this.**

Masuji Ibuse, *Black Rain*, Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1969, p. 107. *Ibuse was born in Hiroshima in 1898. He won Japan's highest literary award, the Noma Prize, for Black Rain.*

Toshi Maruki, *The Hiroshima Story*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1983, pp. 12-14. *Maruki went to Hiroshima soon after the A-bomb fell. As an illustrator and author, she has since focused much of her artwork on the experience. In 1952 she won the International Peace Prize for the series "Genbaku no Zo" (Pictures of the A-bomb).*

The American Hibakusha

An estimated 1,500 American hibakusha (A-bomb survivors) of Japanese and Korean ancestry live in the United States. Over half of these were American citizens, born in the United States, who were receiving education or visiting relatives in Japan and were stranded there when the war broke out. Other hibakusha of Japanese and Korean ancestry married Americans after the war and later immigrated to the U.S.

Three out of four U.S. hibakusha are women, now in their mid-50s, 60s, and early 70s. Most were between the ages of five and twenty-four when exposed to the bomb. Many hibakusha still suffer from physical, emotional, and financial hardship as a result of their exposure nearly fifty years ago. They still fear the long-term effects of radiation including leukemia, cancer, genetic damage, diabetes, heart disease, and emotional trauma. Their medical costs can cause heavy burdens.

The U.S. government has spent well over \$80 million since 1947 to study the effects of ionizing radiation on the hibakusha population, yet nothing has ever been allocated to medically assist the American survivors. Free health care is offered in Japan; but for most American hibakusha, a trip to Japan is prohibitively expensive and logistically difficult.

For over two decades U.S. hibakusha have sought medical assistance through government channels, and many have spoken out to inform the public about the effects of nuclear

weapons. Realizing the implications for the future, many have transcended personal pain to tell others of their experience.

Since 1977, the U.S. hibakusha have relied on Hiroshima doctors who come every two years to help monitor their health status. However, the duration of future medical missions is uncertain. It is long overdue for the U.S. to take responsibility for all of its radiation-exposed citizens, including the American hibakusha

The primary goal of the Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States is to secure government-sponsored medical care for American hibakusha. Since CABS began its lobbying efforts in 1971, legislation has been introduced in nearly every congressional session, but every effort has been squelched in committee from lack of sponsors. CABS continues its struggle.

Friends of Hibakusha has been assisting the American survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki since 1981 through cultural, educational, and informational support.

Together, CABS and FOH sponsor visits from Japanese medical teams offering the hibakusha and their children the comprehensive medical screenings they cannot obtain in the United States.

For more information, contact: CABS, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco CA 94115; 415-921-5225 and FOH, 1759 Sutter St., San Francisco CA 94115; 415-567-7599.

"The sun was dazzling bright that morning when a single atomic bomb instantly destroyed this town of Hiroshima and took its deadly toll. And it pains me to be unable to stand before this monument to those dead and to report that we finally have a world free of nuclear weapons."

—*Takashi Hiraoka, Mayor of Hiroshima*
6 August 1994

DEPLETED URANIUM: Legacy of the Persian Gulf War

By Dolly Lymburner

Department of Defense Manpower Data (September 30, 1992) tell us that people of color are only 20% of the total U.S. population, yet they accounted for nearly 50% of those sewing on the front lines during the Gulf War. In the service, as a whole, people of color are 32% of enlisted categories but only 13% of the officer corps.

— Editor

The United States has a poor record of how it has treated the men and women who have served to defend their country and have been exposed without knowledge or consent to toxic contamination. Some veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War (PGW) are now suffering from the "Gulf War Syndrome," which can exhibit a variety of symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, recurrent diarrhea, bone or joint problems, muscle weakness, loss of hair, rashes, and kidney problems. There also appears to be a high incidence of both reproductive problems and birth defects in babies born to PGW vets.

In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, U.S. forces used uranium anti-tank munitions for the first time. Made from "depleted" uranium (DU), these bullets and artillery shells are both radioactive and toxic. DU was also used to armor plate tanks. Uranium weapons are effective because, when alloyed with titanium, they are extremely hard. DU is also pyrophoric, which means that it burns upon impact.

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Depleted uranium is a waste product from the enrichment process that extracts U-235 from natural uranium for nuclear weapons and power plants. Disposal and storage of DU waste, about one billion pounds according to the Department of Energy, is a growing problem.

The production, testing, and use of DU pose health risks to anyone who inhales or ingests the substance. Uranium oxide is created when DU weapons burn, corrode, or are machined. When inhaled, small particles can lodge in the lungs exposing the delicate tissue to alpha radiation and often causing lung cancer. DU, like other heavy metals, is also a chemical poison. Food or drinking water contaminated with DU particles can, when ingested, cause irreparable damage to the kidneys.

The Depleted Uranium Citizens' Network of the Military Toxics Project recommends that independent health studies of PGW veterans be conducted to determine the toxic and radiological effects of exposure to DU. An epidemiological study should be done of all service persons who were exposed to DU, and of their families. Additionally, the children conceived and born after the Gulf War should be examined for evidence of radiation-induced genetic damage. Health studies should also include military and civilian personnel at DU manufacturing sites and DU test sites across the United States.

"An Assessment of External Interest in Depleted Uranium Use by the U.S. Military" is a report contracted by the Army Environmental Policy Institute to identify the issues and concerns that individuals and groups have expressed about the Army's use of depleted uranium. It concludes that the Depleted Uranium Citizens' Network has been effective in raising public awareness in regards to health and safety issues.

In response to the latest form of military radioactive pollution, the mission of the Depleted Uranium Citizens' Network is to provide outreach and unite people affected by the production, testing, and use of DU for military purposes and to demand cleanup, health care, compensation, and the end of DU munitions use worldwide.

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Remembering the Cuban Missile Crisis

Freedom from Annihilation Is a Human Right

By Carl Anthony

As far as we know, the Cuban Missile Crisis marks the closest the world has ever come to nuclear destruction. In the thirteen days between October 14, 1962, when CIA officials obtained photographic intelligence that Soviet missiles were being assembled in Cuba until October 27, 1962, when Nikita Khrushchev agreed to pull back, the people of the United States lived on the brink of nuclear disaster.

I was almost twenty-four years old, living with two roommates in a basement flat on the lower East Side of

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Manhattan, a student at Columbia University. As a result of my social activism in the civil rights movement, the segregated worlds which had formed my social practice and consciousness as a youth were unraveling. The summer and fall of 1962 had been a season of hope and bitterness. The hope came from mobilizations within and between communities. People I knew were talking for the first time about their dreams and passions for the future, love affairs, and a glimpse, previously unimaginable, of the end of racism. Martin Luther King had been arrested protesting segregation of public facilities in Albany, Georgia. The newly formed Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee had galvanized the nation with courage. But a bitterness grew from the intransigence of Southern racists, the fickleness of the Kennedy Administration in protecting the lives of civil rights workers, and the powerlessness of African Americans to secure even the rudiments of dignity.

Then came the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The crisis can be understood as a conflict between three figures — Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Fidel Castro. Kennedy represented the "great white hope," the debonair Bostonian, the apex of American mastery and intelligence, the model of what every American of my generation had been conditioned to worship. Khrushchev was his nemesis. He was fat, old, and bald. He couldn't speak English, and he had a habit of taking his shoe off and banging it on the table to make his point. But

beneath the crudity of his image, the points he sought to make were closer than Kennedy's Camelot to my own hopes and dreams.

Castro was different from the other two. At thirty-five he was the only one who had actually made a revolution. The people of Harlem loved Fidel, and this made a big impact on me. Harlem residents remembered 1960 when Fidel came to speak at the United Nations. Planning to stay at a hotel near the UN in downtown Manhattan, he and his entourage were harassed by the management and unceremoniously evicted. In a move which greatly embarrassed the U.S. State Department, Malcolm X invited Fidel to stay in a modest hotel in Harlem.

Like many young African Americans of my generation in New York, I had met Malcolm X and talked with him. We had lunch several times at Mosque Number 7 on 116th Street. Yet Malcolm X frightened me. I would go up to Harlem to listen to him speak. There were usually 500 to 1000 Black people. Malcolm taught that African Americans should think of themselves as global citizens. He said the African American struggle was not for civil rights, but for human rights. Civil rights derive from the authority of the state. Human rights are natural rights that precede and transcend the restrictions of a particular sovereign nation. As a people unrepresented by the national government, we must demand our human rights. Malcolm counseled Black people to be peaceful unless they

It infuriated me that somebody's program of blowing up the planet would interrupt the business of my growing up and healing the corrosive scars of segregation.

were provoked, in which case he instructed us to use "any means necessary." I would gaze out over the crowd, beyond the barricades that had been placed to contain the Black people, and look into the eyes of the white policemen. I could see fear in their eyes.

Fidel accepted Malcolm's invitation to stay at the Hotel Theresa on 125th Street and 7th Avenue. On his arrival, Fidel was lavishly welcomed by thousands of Harlem residents who

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lined the streets to greet him. They saw the abusive treatment he received by those in power as similar to the discrimination they experienced daily.

On October 16, 1962, President Kennedy's advisors told him that the Soviet Union was building nuclear weapons launching sites in Cuba. After a week of deliberation, Kennedy announced the crisis to the nation, charging that the Soviet Union had lied to him. Armaments and military equipment were being sent to Cuba, and now there was "unmistakable evidence that offensive missile sites were in preparation." Kennedy ordered a strict quarantine of "ships of any kind bound for Cuba," promising they would be turned back if they contained offensive weapons. He ended his speech with patronizing remarks to what he called "the captive people of Cuba."

"I speak to you as a friend, as one who knows your deep attachment to your fatherland . . . Now your leaders are no longer Cuban leaders inspired by Cuban ideals . . . We know that your lands and lives are being used as pawns by those who would deny your freedom."

From a white perspective, the Cubans were only a marginal factor in the struggle between super powers. The perspectives of Black people in the United States were irrelevant. But today, in a world fraught with ethnic tension, it may be important to understand the crisis from these undervalued points of view.

Cuba is a Spanish-speaking, multi-racial Caribbean Island. One third of the population is visibly African, and a much larger percentage of the population views the struggle against

slavery as a defining crucible of national identity. Much of the culture reflects a New World amalgam, blending ancient Yoruba, Carib, and Iberian traditions. It is a culture inaccessible to a U.S. nation which, despite its large multicultural population, regards itself as "white." The majority of the Cuban population had been dispossessed by exploitative global military, economic, and political forces. In 1961, the U.S. had launched an unsuccessful invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. Castro feared that the United States would try again. It was this fear of U.S. aggression that led the Cuban government to ask for Soviet missiles. But Kennedy read the crisis as an act of Soviet aggression rather than Cuban self-defense.

By October 24, the quarantine was in full effect, and Russian ships, including a submarine, were nearing the 500 mile barrier. Kennedy now faced a major choice. The US had to intercept or announce withdrawal.

That afternoon, I learned that the confrontation was about to take place as I came up out of the bowels of the subway and fixed on a newspaper headline: NUCLEAR WAR IMMINENT.

It infuriated me that somebody's program of blowing up the planet would interrupt the business of my growing up and healing the searing, corrosive scars of segregation that were tearing me in half. How could they do this to me when

everything was finally coming together? I remembered when I was a kid; air raid sirens would go off every few days in our neighborhood. My father instructed us to get under a table when we heard the wailing sound. He told us not to look out of the windows when the whistles blew as bombs might be dropping from the sky. I stared across the intersection at a sullen sky, expecting at any minute to be confronted with evidence that a war had begun. Would there be a warning siren? Would there be a flash of light? Would the ground tremble beneath my feet?

Later that day the news came. Inexplicably, Russian ships had not challenged the quarantine. "We have a preliminary report which seems to indicate that some of the Russian ships have stopped dead in the water." The report was confirmed. Still the crisis was not over. Russian technicians were in Cuba, uncrating and assembling bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons to the U.S. mainland.

The President had said that the missiles could hit targets 1000 miles away. How far was it from Cuba to New York? More than 1000 miles I thought. The missiles might hit Atlanta, Charleston, Albany, Georgia, cities torn apart by racial strife. I was struck by the absurdity of Black people risking their lives so they could sit at picnic tables in

public parks or go into public bathrooms marked "white only." Southern racists feared black bodies in public swimming pools. They didn't want Black people to vote or go to white colleges. They sent police officers to beat up pregnant women, and backwoods vigilantes shot up homes of civil



Carl Anthony and his mother, Mildred Anthony, on a New York street, circa 1965.

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rights workers. Meanwhile hour by hour, minute by minute, missiles to be aimed at these same cities were being erected in Cuba.

During those days in October, I experienced a crisis of consciousness. I couldn't find a point of balance, a center. As I read the news, a space opened up within me to two types of terror: one concrete, routine, familiar; the other abstract, technological. Which was worse? I couldn't say. It was eerie waiting for the bomb to drop, trying to sort out my emotions of rage and impotence. My anger came from the reluctant admission that maybe the peace activists were right all along. Maybe preventing a nuclear holocaust was more important than gaining civil rights for Black people.

Webster's dictionary defines the verb to annihilate as "to destroy all traces of, to obliterate, to nullify or render void, to abolish." It is possible to argue that segregation is a lesser evil than annihilation because in the former, a human being may be degraded but is at least allowed a physical existence. In a nuclear blast, all people would be eliminated. This instant stands in contrast to the social death routinely enforced, which allows one set of people, through conscious and unconscious acts of commission and omission, to abuse another people. I couldn't accept the possible truth that total annihilation was worse.

On the evening of October 25 Kennedy received a "very long and emotional" letter from Krushchev. Some people who reviewed the message ominously suggested it showed that Krushchev was unstable and incoherent. In his book, *Thirteen Days*, Robert Kennedy thought otherwise. "It was not incoherent, and the emotion was directed at the death, destruction and anarchy that nuclear war would bring to his people and all mankind. That, he said again and again and in many different ways must be avoided. We must not succumb to 'petty passions' or to 'transient things' he wrote, but should realize that if war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war." Krushchev ended the letter proposing to withdraw weapons from

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Cuba. In exchange, he asked Kennedy to cancel the blockade and agree not to invade Cuba. The next day, Krushchev sent a more threatening proposal demanding that the U.S. dismantle missiles aimed at Russia, sited in Turkey. Kennedy ignored the second letter and agreed to the terms of the first. The Cuban Missile Crisis was over.

Great sighs of relief were felt throughout the land. But some saw in Kennedy's actions another example of white arrogance, the willingness on the part of Kennedy to risk the threat of global nuclear disaster rather than lose face. Kennedy chose to force Krushchev to back down unilaterally, with a potential loss of face. But the question remained: what would have happened if Krushchev had refused to back down?

Today, the Soviet Union no longer exists. While many are gloating over the success of the "free" market, we might pause to remember that it was Krushchev, not Kennedy, who saved the world from a nuclear holocaust. We are still faced with the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Many Westerners fear a future in which Third World nations have access to these weapons. The leaders of these countries are more like Fidel Castro than they are like Kennedy or Krushchev. The ethnocentric bias and the terror of the Cuban Missile Crisis remain with us.

Nuclear weapons are tools of a conquering, violent culture. Racism at domestic and international levels heightens the potential vulnerability and miscalculation surrounding nuclear proliferation. Few people of color have had any role in debate, development, or decision-making about the goals of this brutal technology. In a nuclear holocaust whole populations will be vaporized in the flash of an eye. People deciding the appropriateness of such a choice

inevitably would bring their prejudices and fears to the devastating decision to annihilate whole peoples. The concentration of nuclear power in the hands of a Eurocentric technological elite, paranoid about the aims and aspirations of the majority of the world's population—people of color—magnifies the potential for global disaster. The great and growing gulf of human communication between the rich and poor, European and non-European, multiplies the potential antagonism that could result in planetary holocaust. In this context organizing against nuclear proliferation is, by definition, a multicultural effort, bringing the intelligence and wisdom of every community to the global task of defeating the excesses of racism, human aggression, and technology-gone-berserk.

Nuclear weapons are a violation of the sovereignty of the world's people. Freedom from annihilation is a human right.

Trained as an architect, Carl Anthony is the executive director of the Urban Habitat Program and the chair of the East Bay Conversion Reinvestment Commission.

Weapons Research

Los Alamos, D.C.* Growing Up Under A Cloud of Secrecy

By Hilario Romero

That one day in early 1954 remains vivid in my memory today. My parents, my brother, and I were at the gates of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory (LASL) on a routine visit to my padrino's house in Los Alamos. My father and my padrino grew up together in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and by 1940 joined the Army Air Corps. After their discharge in 1945, my padrino went to work for the lab as a technician, but it was not until 1949 that housing was made available to him and his family in Los Alamos. We visited many times.

The imposing tower first caught my attention as we approached the last hill coming into Los Alamos. Three guards carrying rifles were standing at the gate entrance, a fourth came out of a booth, and a fifth was stationed in the tower. The soldier from the booth approached the car and asked my dad to provide several pieces of identification, while two guards inspected the car from the outside. The main guard asked my dad to open the trunk of the car and allow them to search the interior of the trunk and the car. Once we were through the gate on our way into Los Alamos, my dad explained to us that the search was routine and was important to national security, which showed his patriotic duty as a U.S. veteran.

My padrino was extremely loyal and patriotic to the mission of the lab and remains loyal today. I remember that there were two questions we were not allowed to ask him. The first was, "What do you do at the lab?" and the second was, "What goes on at the lab?"

During the war years of 1941-45, northern New Mexico was a self-sustaining agricultural and ranching area only marginally dependent on modern society. With most of the land and water rights taken from many of the pueblos and Hispano communities for national forests, mining, and other uses, these communities had to become more creative in maintaining their traditional lifestyles through sacrifice and sustainable development appropriate to their traditions. Politically, many of these rural communities were responsive only to their local leadership, who could speak their language and lived among them. There was distrust of those outside the communities who talked about addressing their problems but rarely visited the villages. Even though these communities were somewhat out of touch with the so-called "modern world," they were aware of major global events through radio, and many of their young men went to war as a means of helping the family with a steady income.

The war brought forward over 60,000 New Mexican men, mostly young, mainly Hispano and Native American. When you consider that the total population of New Mexico in 1940

was 80 percent Hispano and Native American, it is no wonder that New Mexico was one of the highest per-capita states for volunteers and draftees. The men served bravely, many losing their lives at Bataan and Corregidor, as many New Mexican recruits had been assigned to the 200th Coast Artillery in the Philippines. In all, over 1,500 New Mexico men lost their lives during World War II. Many of these soldiers believed they were making a difference, and their families supported them. They believed they would keep the Japanese from invading the continental shores on the Pacific.

When plans were initiated between 1939-42 by a group of civilian scientists to study the feasibility of developing an atomic bomb, very few citizens knew of such an effort; in New Mexico fewer still knew of such a plan. What little information did trickle down to the average New Mexico citizen was that whatever the U.S. War Department was doing, it was for national security and could not be questioned. Northern New Mexicans knew nothing of the plans in 1942 to convert the sacred lands of San Ildefonso Pueblo, formerly taken by squatters to become the Los Alamos Boys Ranch, into a major scientific laboratory. Its sole mission was to develop and produce a usable weapon with great destruction capability. Environmental and waste management concerns were way down the list in terms of priorities for this mission. Health and safety concerns for workers and the surrounding communities could not be measured due to inexperience with and ignorance about nuclear technology. The scientists involved only understood this new technology theoretically, not in practice.

They chose a semi-isolated area upwind from the northern pueblos and Hispano communities and created "security controlled buffer zones" which, they informed the public, were for health and safety reasons. However, these "zones" were used more for security *from* the public; with only eight miles separating the lab from the nearest community, they were far from being a safety net.

By 1944, the first formal arrangements were made to test the bomb the scientists had developed. A place was needed where they could explode the bomb. Once again, the choice of the location was secret; not one New Mexico citizen knew anything about it. The Alamogordo Bombing Range in South central New Mexico was chosen. The code name for the area was Trinity Site, and the bomb was affectionately called "the gadget." On July 16, 1945, the gadget was set in place on top

* "Los Alamos D.C." is the term Chicano and Indian children used in the 1960s to describe LASL.

Weapons Research

of an eighty-foot tower and detonated. The pristine New Mexico sky lit up and the ground shook for miles along the Rio Grande fault. Once again, environmental, health, and safety issues regarding this explosion were not of concern to the project. The fallout from this blast was measured by crude instruments that were unable to define the short- or long-term effects on human, plant and animal life, land, air, and water. To this day, the area is still hot, left that way since the detonation, and those who visit the exact site must wear protective suits. This was the first detonation of an atomic bomb in the world, with New Mexicans as its first guinea pigs.

As the years passed and the gates came down, my trips to Los Alamos became more frequent, and I still noticed my *padrino's* reluctance to talk about his job. Even today he seldom talks about his tenure at the lab. Its secrets are safe with him.

Now here we are, fifty-two years after the initial opening of LASL. As a New Mexico historian, I have spent a great deal of time researching the lab and its history. However, everything I have found was written from the lab perspective by authors and historians who were part of the labs or the federal government. Everything was written in a void, almost as if there was this lab that hovered over the New Mexico skies, bringing security, power, and jobs to the United States, and a few of the latter to New Mexico. Hidden in secrecy for fifty years, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL — as it is called today) has had

great difficulty opening up communications with the public, and especially with the northern New Mexico community.

As news articles began to expose the "environmental mess" that must be cleaned up (before and during the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1992), LANL continued on with its propaganda in an attempt to counter the realities of fifty years of nuclear dumping. During the past few years, we have learned of releases of 3.2 million curies over the once-pristine New Mexico skies; 2,500 dumps, which are mostly unlined and contain a toxic-radioactive soup which cannot be categorized because of sloppy LANL record keeping; and the leaking OMEGA West reactor which has been leaking three gallons per hour over an unknown number of years, draining radioactive liquid discharges into arroyos and the Rio Grande (a major water supply for New Mexico and Texas). There have been no apologies, regrets, or even concerns from LANL. There has only been rhetoric, excuses, and a much-publicized plan to deal with the situation with millions of taxpayer dollars for "cleanup experiments" which have yet to be proven safe.

During the 50th anniversary ceremonies in 1992 (at which I presented and performed), many of the former Manhattan Project scientists were invited, at government expense, to return to LANL and celebrate their accomplishments. Edward Teller, one of these noted scientists, paid a visit to my nephew's sixth grade class at a Los Alamos

elementary school and bragged about how he developed the H-bomb. He also bragged a little about his part in the production of the A-bomb.

My nephew was not impressed. He felt that Edward Teller had no interest in humanitarian issues. Yet, at the government's expense the scientists were wined and dined and given heroes' welcomes.

There are a large number of historians, researchers, and writers who have revisited the WWII years of 1941-45, and many have written about the turning point of the war. Their conclusions reveal that the dropping the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not what caused the Japanese to surrender. As early as 1946, it was documented that they were about to surrender even before the plan was conceived to drop the A-bomb.

It is my hope that our efforts to make LANL accountable now and into the future will be met with openness and honesty, as the future of New Mexico and the world depends on shifting away from the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology and working toward true peace on this planet. I will leave you with a quote from Albert Einstein: "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our mode of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

Hilario Romero is the director of the New Mexico Educational Opportunity Center and co-chair of the LANL 2000 Task Force. He is also the former New Mexico State Historian.



Trinity Site, White Sands, New Mexico — Courtesy Museum of New Mexico

Weapons Research

Radiation and AIDS

By Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman

A presentation of the hypothesis that radiation led to mutations which give rise to AIDS was made by Ernest Sternglass and Jens Scheer at the annual Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on May 29, 1986.* The response of the scientific community to the paper was complete and utter silence, despite the fact that it provided a potential explanation for why and where AIDS first emerged.

A summary of the paper begins as follows:

Two of the principal unexplained aspects of the AIDS epidemic are the timing of the sharp rises beginning in 1980-82 and the initial geographic concentration in Central Africa, the Caribbean, and the East and West Coasts of the U.S. These findings can be explained by the hypothesis that beta irradiation of bone marrow cells by strontium-90 and other bone-seeking radioisotopes in the diet during the period of nuclear testing may have led to mutation of an AIDS-related indigenous human or animal retrovirus, and also produced a cohort of susceptible individuals whose immune defenses were impaired during intra-uterine development.

Although atomic bomb tests began in 1945, the worldwide increase of strontium-90 in the diet did not take place until after the large hydrogen bomb tests of the mid-1950's, rising most sharply between 1962 and 1963. The greatest increase in AIDS occurred some eighteen to nineteen years later, or between 1980 and 1982, when the large cohort of potentially immunodeficient infants would have reached maturity and been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases. Thus, the AIDS virus would spread among people of this cohort wherever conditions favored high rates of sexual contact or other efficient means of transmission directly to the bloodstream.

Since 90 percent of fallout comes down with precipitation, this hypothesis could explain why the AIDS epidemic began in areas of high rainfall such as Central Africa and the Caribbean Islands close to the latitude of the Pacific test sites and rose most rapidly in the high rainfall areas of the East and West Coasts of North America.

Because strontium-90 is transmitted mainly through diet, it also explains why Southeast Asia, although high in rainfall, shows fewer AIDS cases, since rice and fish have a much lower strontium-90 to calcium ratio than milk, bread, meat, fruit, potatoes, beans, and vegetables dominant in U.S., Caribbean, and African diets.

Sternglass and Scheer further support their hypothesis by referring to a 1957 study published by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation, which found that the highest concentrations of strontium-90 in human bone were in the high rainfall areas of Africa, with measures four times greater than those in much-drier South Africa. They continue:

The crucial role of diet could also explain the puzzling fact that on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies, with equal populations of African and Asian Indian origin and comparable percentages of homosexuals, there were forty-five cases of AIDS diagnosed among those of African origin and none among those of East Indian descent. A detailed study of the dietary differences and strontium-90 concentrations in bone for the two ethnic groups would serve as a valuable test of the present hypothesis.

There is therefore persuasive evidence that fallout from atmospheric bomb testing may have damaged developing immune systems in the early 1960s, and may have also accelerated the mutation of an AIDS-like virus found in indigenous African monkeys that made it more virulent to humans.

There is persuasive evidence that fallout from atmospheric bomb testing may have damaged developing immune systems in the early 1960s and may have also accelerated the mutation of an AIDS-like virus

Dr. Jay Gould formerly served on the EPA's Science Advisory Board. He has written five books. Benjamin Goldman is the author of Hazardous Waste Management and The Toxic and Mortality Atlas of America. Reprinted from Deadly Deceit: Low Level Radiation, High Level Cover-Up, by Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman. Copyright 1990. With permission of the publisher, Four Walls Eight Windows.

*E.J. Sternglass and J. Scheer, "Radiation exposure to bone marrow cells to strontium-90 during early development as a possible cofactor in the etiology of AIDS," Philadelphia: American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting, May 29, 1986.

Weapons Research

IQ Is Affected by Fallout

By Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman

Consider the implications of Ernest Sternglass's discovery, later supported by two U.S. Navy psychologists, of the adverse impact of bomb-test fallout on Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) scores. In *Secret Fallout*, Sternglass described his reaction in 1975 when reading a *New York Times* article on the puzzling but steady decline in SAT scores since the mid-1960s, generally by no more than two or three points per year until 1975, when they dropped by ten points in a single year:

Suddenly, the question flashed through my mind: When were these young people born or in their mother's womb? Most of them were eighteen years old when they graduated from high school. What was eighteen taken from 1975? It was 1957, the year when the largest amount of radioactive fallout ever measured descended on the U.S.. from the highest kilo tonnage of nuclear weapons ever detonated in Nevada.'

By 1979, with the help of the educational psychologist Dr. Steven Bell, Sternglass was able to secure state breakdowns of the SAT scores, which indicated that the greatest declines had indeed occurred in states closest to the Nevada Test Site. The greatest decline was registered in the neighboring state of Utah, where the large Mormon population had the lowest rates of cigarette, drug, and alcohol consumption in the nation, and traditionally had very high SAT scores.

These findings were presented at the annual meeting of the American

Psychological Association in September 1979. There it was predicted that SAT scores would begin to improve again in 1981, eighteen years after atmospheric bomb tests stopped in 1963.

Two Navy psychologists investigated whether these findings could throw light on the difficulties new recruits were having in mastering complex weapons technologies. They found that:

. . . . the state having the largest drop in [SAT] scores from children born during the two year period 1956-1958 was Utah, a fact which is consistent with Utah's proximity to the Nevada Test Site and the general northeastern motion of the fallout clouds produced by the Nevada tests, providing very convincing and disquieting evidence closely linking the SAT score decline to the cumulative effects of nuclear fallout.²

These "disquieting" findings were largely ignored by the media, as was the fact that SAT scores have risen since 1981.

NOTES

1 Ernest Sternglass, *Secret Fallout: Low-Level Radiation from Hiroshima to Three-Mile Island*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972, 1981, p. 81.

2. Bernard Rimland and Gerald Larsen, "Manpower quality decline: an ecological perspective," *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1981.

Originally published in Jay Gould and Benjamin Goldman, Deadly Deceit: Low Level Radiation, High Level Cover-Up, New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990.



Uranium Mining

Fight Back:**Uranium Mining in the Grants Mineral Belt****By Simon Ortiz**

The Grants Mineral Belt cuts across central New Mexico and includes the native lands of Kawikameh (Laguna Pueblo), Aacqu (Acoma Pueblo) and Dineh (Navaho Nation).

— Editor

In the early 1950s, Anaconda opened the ground north of Kahwaika. All the time since it was formed, the land on the east slopes of Tsebinah was mesa, canyon, and grassland. Paguete village people had gardens and fields at the mouths of canyons and arroyos and alongside the small stream from the mountain. It had been like that for ages, but now the machines and Mericanos in hard-hats came.

Mining agreements were made between the Kawikameh leadership and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which was within the hold of the Department of Interior. And the international mining company worked efficiently and quickly after that. The Anaconda engineers surveyed and plotted, and soon they drilled the stone, filled the drill holes with dynamite, and blasted. And pushed the rubble away. They did it over and over again, until the land was just so much rubble pushed aside to find the strata of uranium bearing ore.

**There are songs
about the rain,
so beautiful.
White soft mist,
gentle on the land,
flowing in rivulets,
stone, shining,
so beautiful.
There are songs.**

Kerr-McGee even earlier than Anaconda's development on Laguna land had already begun mining and milling in the Cove and Shiprock area in northwest New Mexico. It had the same pattern. Navajo people had a small farming economy but most of their livelihood was in raising sheep. It was bare subsistence, and most Navajo people were faced with unemployment and dependency on welfare which was begrudgingly meted out and used to control the people.

The Navajo men who went into the underground mines did not have much choice except to work there, just like the Laguna miners who found themselves as surface labor and semi-skilled workers. The Kerr-McGee underground mines were dusty, and in twenty years the Navajo miners who had stayed for any length of time underground breathing the dust laden with radon gas would find themselves cancerous. The Laguna miners would find themselves questioning how much real value the mining operation had when their land was overturned into a gray pit miles and miles in breadth. They would ask if the wages they earned, causing wage income dependency, and the royalties received by the Kawaikah people were worth it when Mericano values beset their children and would

threaten the heritage they had struggled to keep for so long.

Right out of high school I worked in the mining and milling region of Ambrosia Lake. I was nineteen years old. My father, like others, had worked for the railroad for years, as a laborer on section crews and a welder on extra gangs. Most of the railroad workers I ever saw were Indians, Indo-Hispanos, and Blacks with occasional Okies, and the foremen were always white. My father firmly said that he did not wish for me and my brothers to ever work for the Santa Fe railroad. We were to go to school, get an education, and find something that was not grueling labor.

We had always been poor, though sometimes it didn't feel like it except we knew we didn't have much and were always envious of others who had more. One of the things we said was "Gaimuu Mericano," speaking of the good fortune of being a white American. We were resentful too, of course, though at nineteen I didn't know intellectually why or how that was the case, except that at times angrily we would seek out Indo-Hispanos and whites to fight. We knew we were close to the bottom of the social scale, and we knew that was a scary and painful place to be. So I went to work at Ambrosia Lake.

Mostly, I worked at the Kerr-McGee millsite although several times I went underground into the mines. At the mill, I worked in crushing, leaching, and yellowcake, usually at various labor positions but later as an operator which was not much different or more skilled than laborer. I had a job, and for poor people with low education and no skills and high unemployment, that is the important thing: a job. In 1960, some subsistence farming on small garden plots was still done at Aacqu, but faced with the U.S. economy and its impact, a wage income was becoming necessary.

Mining is dangerous work, whether underground or surface, but people continued to work there because there was no other employment available. It was total and intensive work, and the New Mexican and national economy required it. It was not the safety or health or lives of the miners there was concern for. In the national interest, mine operators, oil corporations, utility companies, international energy cartels, and investors sacrificed these men and women. In the Grants Uranium Belt area, which is the area between Albuquerque and Gallup, there was a miner killed every month. At home in Aacqu there are former miners who walk around crippled, as maimed as if they had been wounded in wartime.

At moments I got paranoid about my own health. In 1960, there was no information about the dangers of radiation from yellowcake, with which I worked. I didn't know if workers got any more information or warnings than we did twenty years before. The company managers and superintendents knew something or at least scientists did, but they didn't allow for its

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dissemination. If they did pass it on, it was low key, and it must have been low key in 1960 because there didn't seem to be much worker organizing for safer handling of yellowcake. But twenty years later, I worried about it, and I got angry because there weren't any special precautions we were required or urged to take then.

In the milling operation at the end of the leaching and settling process, the yellow liquid was drawn into dryers which took the water out. The dryers were screen constructions which revolved slowly in hot air; yellow pellets were extruded and crushed into a fine powder. The workers were to keep the machinery operating, which was never smooth and most of the work involved was to keep it in free operation; i.e., frequently having to unclog it by hand. There was always a haze of yellow dust flying around, and even though filtered masks were used, the workers breathed in the fine dust. It got in their hair and cuts and scratches and in their eyes. I was nineteen then, and twenty years later I worried about it.

On the way to Srahkaiya the day before, I had met old man beloved Bowtuwah above his sheep camp. He told me about some hawks nesting in the cliffs nearby. When I was a boy, Bowtuwah would bring his sheep to water at the chuna, the Rio de San Jose, and we would run to greet him every time he did so. Uncle, we would call, how are you? Fine, he would say, and he would laugh. He was a kind, gentle, and funny man, younger then. And he would always tell us stories and jokes.

Once he told us, it was true he said, that in the olden times, the people ate dragonflies. Dragonflies, we cried. Yes, he said, fine food, tasty, fixed a certain way.

No, we said, **Arreh-eh.** Yes, he said, in the olden times. We wanted to hear about the olden times, and he would tell us. It's true, Bowtuwah would say, it's all true.

Later, he would have us chasing dragonflies up and down the river, trying to catch at least one, but they were always too fast. If you can catch the fastest one, that will be the tastiest he would say, laughing. Well, I better go see if my sheep haven't all drowned.

He is gone now, and sometimes I wish he were still with us and I was a boy listening to stories by the river, all of us laughing.

The *Serpent* of the Upper Yule River was originally painted by the Njamal people of northeast Australia to guard over the elemental forces buried in the Earth. With permission, the World Uranium Hearing reprinted the *Serpent* during its meetings in 1992. With the blessing of the Hearing, *Race, Poverty and the Environment* pictures the *Serpent* throughout this 50th anniversary issue.



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The struggle goes on and it will continue. It is in the stories of the oral tradition and the advice and counsel that it will go on.

The Southwestern U.S. is caught in the throes of economic ventures and political manipulation which are ultimately destructive if the U.S. government and the multinational corporations do not have people and the land and their continuance as their foremost concern. It is not a matter of higher income for Indians because there will be higher incomes as inflation goes higher. It is not a matter of a higher standard of living which we are led to seek as the only possible alternative. It is the survival of not only the Aacquemeh hanoh or the Dineh or other Southwestern native peoples, but it is all people of this nation. It is not only a matter of preserving and protecting Indian lands as some kind of natural wilderness or cultural parks; rather it is a matter of how those lands can be productive in terms which are Indian people's to make, instead of Indian people being forced to serve a U.S. national interest which has never adequately served them. Those lands can be productive to serve humanity, just like the oral tradition of the Aacqumeh hanoh says, and the people can be productive and serve the land so that it is not wasted and destroyed.

But it will take real decisions and actions and concrete understanding by the poor and workers of this nation. They will have to see that the present exploitation of coal at Black Mesa Mine in Arizona does not serve the Hopi and Navajo whose homeland it is. They will have to understand that the political and economic forces which have caused Hopi and Navajo people to be in conflict with each other and within their own nations are the same forces which steal the human fabric of their own American communities and lives.

They will have to be willing to do so or they will never understand why the Four Corners power plants in northwestern New Mexico continue to spew poisons into the air, destroying plant, animal, and human life in the area. They will have to be willing to face and challenge the corporations at their armed bank buildings, their stock brokers, and

their drilling, mining, milling, refining and processing operations. If they don't do that, they will not understand what Aacqu and her sister Pueblos in the Southwest are fighting for when they seek time and time again to bring attention to their struggle for land, water, and human rights.

**That feeling
of "otherness"
came on as I lay
in the shade
of a juniper.
It passed,
and I got up
and walked
into a canyon
which would
enter into a valley.
As I walked
into the valley
I saw some horses.
One was a pinto
and the other one was red.
The sun had long set.
The horses were alert
to me as I passed by.
Suddenly, they bolted,
and galloped
into the canyon
toward Srahkaiya.
I watched them
until they vanished
into the folds
of the evening earth
that was the canyon
entering into
the dark near mountain
Srahkaiya.**

In 1980, there were forty-three uranium mines operating in the Grants Uranium Belt and five mills. According to a BIA study, 107 mines and twenty-one mills would be in operation by the year 2000 in the Belt and the San Juan Basin. Uranium yellowcake production in New Mexico was 9.7 million pounds in 1977; it was to have increased to 24.1 million in 1980. There were thirty-one companies exploring for and developing uranium in New Mexico. Kerr-McGee, Conoco, Gulf, Mobil, Philips, TVA, Pioneer Nuclear, and United Nuclear are all energy corporations; they were all there. Mobil and TVA were planning *in situ* mining in which chemicals are pumped into drilled holes, interacting with uranium ore bodies deep in the earth, and the solution is

pumped out and processed.

The forty-three mines in the late 1970s were dewatering, because most of the underground ore bodies were wet, between 190,000 to 250,000 gallons per minute. Nevertheless, even with all this activity, it was uncertain that peak production would continue as even then mines were closing and workers being laid off, causing even more economic distress for the people in the area. In fact, by the early 1980s, uranium ore extracting and processing was drastically reduced, and there was almost none going on by the 1990s. The market for uranium had dropped, some of it due to concerns and protests about radiation hazards and pollution.

This much is certain now however: the people of Deetseyamah and Deechuna and Kahwaikah downstream from the Grants Uranium Belt do not have enough water any more for their few remaining cultivated fields and gardens, and the water they drink is contaminated by Grants and the past processing mills. The hanoh anxiously watch the springs at Ghoomi and Gaanipah. Their struggle will go on; there is no question about that.

We must have passionate concern for what is at stake. We must understand the experience of the oppressed of this nation, by this nation and its economic interests. Only when we truly understand and accept the responsibilities of that understanding will we be able to make the necessary decisions for change. Only then will we truly understand what it is to love the land and people and to have compassion. Only when the people of this nation, not just Indian people, fight for what is just and good for all life, will we know life and its continuance. And when we fight, and fight back those who are bent on destruction of land and people, we will win. We will win.

One of the country's most important Native American writers, Simon Ortiz (Keres) has written Woven Stone, From Sand Creek, After and Before the Lightning, and other books. This edited excerpt from Woven Stone printed by permission of the author. Copyright 1992 by Simon J. Ortiz. Published by University of Arizona Press.

Uranium Mining

The Jackpile Mine: Testimony of a Miner

By Dorothy Ann Purley

Good morning, my name is Dorothy Ann Purley. I am a Native American from the Pueblo of Laguna which is one of the nineteen pueblos located in New Mexico. I have lived on the Laguna Reservation all my life. The village where I come from is called Paguat. It is one of the seven villages in Laguna Pueblo. It is where you can find the ghost of what once was the Anaconda Jackpile Mine.

In 1952 when the uranium mine first opened, it seemed like a dream come true. It gave many of my people of the reservation a chance to find employment. At that time we did not foresee the potential danger of radiation and health hazards to come. The only thing that we did see was that there was plenty of money to be made. The Pueblo of Laguna was held in high esteem for being self-sufficient. If we had only known the dangers in the beginning.

As years went by things started to change. The mine was in full operation. More and more machinery was being used and more and more Native Americans were being employed. They started using explosives to loosen and dislodge the hills and valleys that were once there. They tore up land that was once used to plant our crops. They tore up orchards filled with fruits and fields that once held livestock. This made my heart heavy because my childhood friends and I would play on the grassy fields. On Sundays we would take walks and have picnics. We would run up and down those hills and play tag. I can still picture it in my mind. Now all that is there is an ugly cancerous scar.

With the mine in full operation, life seemed great. People were living comfortably with their fat paychecks. Almost everyone had a new automobile. We tried not to notice the land being destroyed. We were concerned about raising our families. I cannot ever recall anyone talking about radiation or its dangers. Once in a while, you would see a white man walking around holding a gadget that looked like a small radio in his hand.

The Anaconda Jackpile Mine seemed to get closer and closer to our village. They started to build underground tunnels. We still do not know how far those underground tunnels extend. In the afternoons, they would set off a signal siren to warn us of an explosion or blast as they called it. There was a blast at noon and again at four p.m. When we heard the sirens start, we would run out of our homes to play it safe. We were usually eating our lunch or dinners at this time. The blast

would shake the homes so severely that dishes rattled and glassware would fall off the cabinets. You could feel the land under your feet move. If the blast was close enough, we could hear the rocks that had been blasted fall back to the earth.

What was even worse was the smell of sulfur. We were told that it was only blasting powder, nothing to be afraid of. The smell would linger in our homes for hours. A fine mist of dust would settle on our tables as we walked back into our homes to finish our lunch or dinner.

It seemed Anaconda became obsessed with their pursuit of uranium. It was in great demand at that time. It did not seem to matter to the company that homes and lives were being destroyed. They made many promises, such as the renovation of our homes. They promised that everything that had been altered would be corrected. Most of the homes along the edge of the cliffs where I lived started showing signs of blast damage. Walls began to develop large cracks and fractures. Some roofs started to sag and walls started to buckle. In our home, the floor gave way. The Anaconda Company came in to repair it twice. We eventually had to repair it again at our own expense. Just recently, the house that I was born and raised in totally collapsed. All that remains is the emptiness in my heart.

***All that remains is the emptiness
in my heart.***

In the 1970s we started to see and hear about health issues. People started dying from cancer. It seemed like an epidemic. We started hearing about people being affected by upper respiratory ailments like emphysema. Our younger generations were afflicted by leukemia and tumors. Babies were born with birth defects. We wondered what was going on and did not realize that our people were being affected from the exposure to radiation.

In 1975, I started my employment with the Anaconda Copper Company: In the beginning, there were only four other female employees. Here are a few of my jobs:

- Dump Operator Controller
- Hobo Ore Car Controller at the crusher
- Receptionist with the safety office
- Security Guard at an entry gate

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- Greaser for R25, R35, and R50 trucks
- Truck Operator for R25, R35, and R50 trucks

As you can see, my exposure to radiation was great. My term of employment was approximately eight years. As a result, I have developed lymphoma, which is cancer of the lymphatic system. As for now, I am in remission. I pray daily that it stays that way.

Due to economic reasons, the value of uranium changed and so did the employment status. Anaconda began to decrease employment at a steady rate. The uranium mining operation came to a halt in the early 1980s.

As time went on, my health was not at its best. I started to lose weight and noticed two lumps in my right breast. I was in a lot of pain and I was afraid to tell anyone. All kinds of thoughts raced through my head. I continued to notice that the lumps were enlarging as days went by. I finally informed my doctor. He immediately performed a biopsy. One week later, I was diagnosed as having cancer. I chose to receive high-dose chemotherapy. This treatment was for a duration of eight months. I have experienced many adverse symptoms as a result of the chemotherapy. I have pain in my breasts and throughout my body. I endure sleepless nights. I have swelling in my hands, legs, and toes. I feel numbness all over my body. I have severe migraine headaches. I fall frequently

All these physical hardships cannot compare with the emotional turmoil that I have gone through.

without any warning and walk with the aid of my cane. Soon, I will have all my teeth pulled. My vision is blurry and the muscles in my eyes are being affected. I lost my hair during the first month of chemotherapy.

All these physical hardships cannot compare with the emotional turmoil that I have gone through. I have two grandsons who are eleven and three years old. Before I was diagnosed with cancer, I was able to do a lot more with them. I would accompany my older grandson on school fieldtrips and did a lot of volunteer work at his elementary school. I was able to run and play with my little three-year-old grandson. I was able to ride a bike and to do all the things that grandmas are made to do. I have lost a lot of this. Right now I am seeking professional help to help me deal with my disease. I am finally able to talk about my cancer. People tell me that I look good on the outside, they just can't understand how it really feels.

Yesterday I sat at the edge of the mine to gather my thoughts for today. I could not stop the tears that flowed. There in front of me is a vast waste of land. The violation was too much for my eyes. I asked my Great Spirit for

forgiveness.

Today I am here in hopes that we may get things accomplished. I feel that the Anaconda ARCO Corporation has the responsibility to aid our people with health issues which have resulted by their greed. They need to compensate families of cancer victims. This is the least that they could do. Perhaps if my people were better educated in health or had prior knowledge on the effects that radiation could cause, we may have never allowed uranium mining on our land. The 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act does not include open-pit uranium miners or uranium millworkers. Perhaps we could enforce a compensation act that would cover open-pit uranium miners and millworkers.

Dorothy Ann Purley (Keres) is active with the Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment, Box 100, Pagate NM 87040; 505-552-9352. This testimony was first delivered to the New Mexico Conference on the Environment in 1994. Since then Ms. Purley has spoken at hearings all over the country, including the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments in Washington DC and Santa Fe NM.

The 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act does not include open-pit uranium miners or uranium millworkers. Perhaps we could enforce a compensation act that would cover open-pit uranium miners and millworkers.

SECRECY AND DISREGARD AT SAVANNAH RIVER

By Mildred McClain

The Savannah River Site (SRS), located in Aiken, South Carolina, is a complex of nuclear reactors and weapons factories and is the Department of Energy's facility that most directly affects African Americans. According to the South Carolina Energy Research Foundation, since operations at the Savannah River Site began in the 1950s, the plant has released millions of curies of radiation to the air, soil, and water.* High quantities of non-radioactive, hazardous chemicals have been released as well. Tens of thousands of workers at the site, and people in communities around the downstream of Savannah River Site, may have been affected by these releases. Many of these people who live in Georgia and South Carolina are African Americans.

Throughout the Southeast, both private military contractors and government military installations introduced health hazards. Operating behind a screen of secrecy, military contractors violated health and safety laws inside their plants and environmental regulations outside them. The claim of military necessity frequently provided the justification for ignoring or dismantling major public safety and environmental regulations.

Military installations presented emerging environmental and public health problems. Seventeen percent of the federal facilities placed on the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list were in the southeastern states, as were 22 percent of the Pentagon's in-house Installation Restoration programs.

The health hazards introduced by the Atomic Energy Commission's Savannah River Site in South Carolina illustrate the dangers associated with nuclear energy. Locally known as the "Bomb Plant," the Savannah River Project spreads over 312 square miles of land. Its construction required the relocation of 1,500 families who received an average of little more than \$12,000 apiece in compensation. Farmers took a particularly heavy loss, since they did not receive sufficient compensation to buy new farms.

SRS has been the source of endless community controversy. In 1987, two of its reactors were closed because of cracks and other flaws. Other reactors operated at less than 50

percent of capacity after a study revealed they had been run for years at what might have been unsafe temperatures.

In 1987 the Environmental Policy Institute issued a second report on the Savannah plant entitled "Evading the Deadly Issues: Corporate Mismanagement of America's Nuclear Weapons Production." The report claimed that more than three-quarters of the radioactivity from the nation's military waste was held in fifty-one tanks on the site, each holding 750,000 to 1.3 million gallons of waste. Taking into account the number and individual vulnerability of the tanks, the chance of any one of them suffering an explosion, the report held, was one in fifty each year. Officials of E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, which managed the facility, disputed the report, but said the evidence supporting their position was classified or in draft form.

In Jasper County, southeast of the SRS, infant deaths climbed from 22.9 per 1,000 live birth in 1950 to 29.2 in 1980, although the state average dropped from 38.9 to 15.6. Heart disease in Screven County, Georgia, also southeast of the plant, rose at a rate nearly five times the statewide increase. In neighboring Georgia's Burke County, the cancer rate multiplied five-fold between 1950 and 1980. These counties are predominantly African American.

Repeated community demonstrations have protested the health hazards caused by the plant. In 1983, fifty demonstrators who blockaded the entrances of the plant were arrested for blocking traffic. Their two-day trial exposed many facts.

Finally, increased militarization, alongside the Southeast's deepening poverty, contributed to intensified racism. Historically, the military adopted the norms of the region's white power structure. During WWII, for example, the Manhattan Project at Oak Ridge recruited black workers from Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee only as common laborers. The military authorities rigidly segregated their housing, education, and services. Blacks even had to pay 25 cents to obtain identity passes. After the war, when Union Carbide took over the management of the project, segregation persisted in employment, as well as in theaters, barber shops, and self-service laundries. School desegregation lasted until after the

* One million curies is the estimated measure of radiation released at Hiroshima.

Manufacture

Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision.

The Southeast is the home of the Blackbelt where the majority of African Americans live, work, and suffer. Many of the counties that surround the Savannah River Site and are downstream have significant African American populations.

African Americans have been on this land for 400 years, and our status as impoverished and exploited citizens has not changed. American democracy has not afforded us the human rights of the dominant culture. It is within this frame of reference that African Americans find themselves not only living as a semi-colonized people but also bearing the brunt of environmental racism.

Historically, people of color have been excluded from the nuclear weapons debate by both the DOE and anti-nuclear

groups. While many of the nuclear weapons facilities are sited within communities of color, secrecy and the jobs blackmail factor have effectively excluded participation. The notion that people of color don't care about health or the environment is a clear misconception. The health of oneself and family is a primary consideration regardless whether employed by DOE or living by those dangerous facilities. Rural African

Historically, people of color have been excluded from the nuclear weapons debate by both the DOE and anti-nuclear groups.

Americans living and working at the SRS, Chicano farmworkers, and Native Americans living and working at Hanford or Los Alamos National Laboratory all care about the health of their children and the threat to future generations. The health studies being undertaken by the Department of Health and Human Services can only be effective and accurate if inclusion and participation are primary goals in the process.

Mildred McClain is the founder and director of Citizens for Environmental Justice, P.O. Box 1841, Savannah GA 31401; 912-233-0907. She holds a doctorate in education from Harvard University. A longer version of this essay is used in stakeholders's training sessions to teach about the Savannah River Site and the struggle for environmental justice.

T O P T E N NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONTRACTORS

Top 10 Parent Companies, in rank order, of U.S. Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Weapons System Manufacturers, Fiscal Year 1993

1. Lockheed Corporation	\$3,927,265,000
2. McDonnell Douglas Corporation	3,716,040,000
3. Westinghouse Electric Company	2,838,685,000
4. Martin Marietta Corporation	2,813,169,000
5. Northrop Corporation	2,758,917,000
6. University of California System	2,250,603,000
7. AT&T	1,403,182,000
8. Bath Holding Corporation	995,714,000
9. United Technologies Corporation	697,778,000
10. Rockwell International Corporation	488,603,000

Researched and published by Nuclear Free America, The New Abolitionist, Fall 1994.

You **CANT** Do It in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana

By Citizens Against Nuclear Trash

If you were a nuclear-power advocate, staring two decades of failure in the face, how might you try to restart your flagging industry? You might try to lull some investors into financing a new fuel fabrication plant. Then you might look around for a spot to build your plant — why not rural Louisiana, where the only possible objectors would be a few poor African American folks?

Indelicate as the language may be, that's what Louisiana Energy Services (LES) has in mind. The proposed plant would be located in the middle of two low-income, African American communities: Forest Grove and Center Springs. We, the citizens from these communities and the surrounding area, organized in 1989 into a group called CANT — Citizens Against Nuclear Trash. We are a small, hardworking grassroots group, and we intend to defeat this proposal and demonstrate that David can beat Goliath.

Before this proposed facility can be constructed, a license must be obtained from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). CANT, represented by the Louisiana office of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, has intervened in the licensing proceedings before the NRC to oppose the licensing of the facility.

CANT is well aware that every uranium processing plant in this country has caused toxic and radioactive injury to the environment and to the people who live near them. The members of CANT are not willing to be the next victims of such a facility and are particularly disturbed that two poor communities — which are not close to either the source of the raw material for the proposed plant or the markets for the end product — have been targeted for such a dangerous plant.

Recently, the draft environmental impact statement (Draft EIS) for this project was issued, but it contains absolutely *no* discussion of any impacts of the proposed facility on the two African-American communities of Forest Grove and Center Springs. In fact, neither of these historic communities appears on any of the numerous maps included in the Draft EIS, although more distant, predominantly white communities of similar size are noted. A more blatant instance of environmental racism is difficult to imagine.

In issuing this grossly deficient Draft EIS, it seems that the NRC is trying to forget CANT's prior victory in successfully arguing to the NRC's administrative law judges that the issue of environmental racism is entirely relevant to the licensing proceedings and must be ruled upon after a full airing at trial. This will be the first time that the NRC has been called upon to deal with this issue.

The nuclear power industry itself has acknowledged that it considers this a crucial test case, making CANT's stance all the more formidable. As Ed Davis, president of the American Nuclear Energy Council, said in the *Washington Post*, if CANT is successful in stopping the LES project, the nuclear power industry would have to question its entire future:

If we can't get a site for a facility like this, an enrichment facility, how are we ever going to get a site for another reactor? It's just a factory. If we can't make a convincing case on this [the LES plant], then we'll have our work cut out for us on future power plants. We'd have to question our whole future.

CANT is ready and willing to cause the entire nuclear power industry to question its continued viability.

We are a small, hardworking grassroots group, and we intend to defeat this proposal and demonstrate that David can beat Goliath.

The proponents of this plant were probably counting on a subdued populace, more concerned about the alleged economic benefits than with environmental protection. Instead, they have found a group of people determined to prove that poor communities will no longer be acquiescent targets for polluting industry, and that the nuclear industry is dead, not only in the rest of America, but especially in northern Louisiana. We have successfully lobbied both the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the NAACP to pass formal resolutions

Manufacture

opposing the proposed facility.

It was in June of 1989 that LES announced plans to construct a uranium enrichment plant in the midst of Forest Grove and Center Springs, which are four miles outside of Homer, Louisiana. Homer is located in Claiborne Parish, a poor rural county about fifty miles east of Shreveport. LES is a consortium composed of a European firm, Urenco; three U.S. nuclear utilities (Duke Power, Northern States Power, and Louisiana Power & Light); and a contractor, Fluor Daniel.

Uranium enrichment is one of the steps involved in the conversion of natural uranium into fuel for nuclear reactors. The proposed LES plant would produce approximately 4,000 tons of radioactive uranium-238 (U-238) waste per year, in the form of uranium hexafluoride. U-238 has a half life of more than 4 billion years. LES plans to store the waste *on site* in fourteen-ton cylinders.

Relying on Louisiana's history of lax enforcement of its environmental laws and regulations, its poor economy, and U.S. Senator J. Bennet Johnston, who has been one of the most outspoken supporters of nuclear energy, the nuclear industry has selected the LES facility as a test case for what some analysts believe is an initial step in an attempted revitalization of the nuclear power industry.

In recent reports though, several well-respected industry analysts have expressed serious doubts about any resurgence of the nuclear power industry, given the industry's terrible record of investor losses. If there is no such resurgence, the number of potential customers for LES's enriched uranium

will soon be dwindling. This has made LES desperate to lock in long-term contracts before the market crashes.

Notwithstanding its economic question marks and environmental hazards, the LES plant has received heavy backing from local officials, who have accepted significant financial gifts from LES. At the federal level, Senator Johnston sponsored legislation to ease the licensing of this plant by amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. Johnston has received substantial campaign contributions from members of the LES consortium. In contrast, two local African American churches turned down what they called LES's offer of a "bribe."

The state of Louisiana already bears more than its share of this nation's ill-treatment of our natural resources. Louisiana ranks first in the nation in the amount of toxic chemicals discharged to its air, land, and water. The Bayou State is the top emitter of toxic air pollutants per person, dumps into its water eight times more toxic pollutants than any other state, and has more commercial dump sites than any other state. In the words of *The New York Times*, Louisiana is "the worst

Relying on Louisiana's history of lax enforcement of environmental laws and U.S. Senator J. Bennet Johnston, the nuclear industry has selected the LES facility as a test case for an attempted revitalization of the nuclear power industry.

environmental mess in the country."

With reason, the citizens of Forest Grove, Center Springs, Claiborne Parish, and Louisiana in general have environmental concerns about the LES facility. The polluting waste water from the plant will be discharged into a stream which is part of the Lake Claiborne watershed. The threat of groundwater contamination near the plant looms very large for the forty homes within five miles of the plant site which rely on wells for their drinking water. Further, many elderly residents who would live near the plant and have no transportation, are also concerned about how they will get out of the area in the event of an accidental release of uranium hexafluoride.

We believe that our battle goes far beyond our own backyards; it encompasses many of the issues that are most important to the environmental justice movement: pollution, disparate impacts on communities of color, the right of communities to have a say in their future, and agency sensitivity to cultural impacts. Our fight demonstrates that citizens united can effectively stand up to industrial interests: they *can* change the way business is done. We are not rich and do not hold positions of power, so we have organized and empowered ourselves. Our efforts could have repercussions far beyond Claiborne Parish.

Citizens Against Nuclear Trash is a group of activists living in the communities surrounding the designated location of the LES plant. They can be reached at: P.O. Box 195, Homer LA 71040; 318-927-6942. Thanks to Norton Tompkins for permission to print this article.

Death on the Road: Transportation of Spent Fuel Rods

By Nancy J. Nadel

After years of proliferation of nuclear power plants in the U.S. and abroad, the federal government is faced with an unsolved problem: what to do with spent nuclear fuel rods. While companies like General Electric, Westinghouse, EG&G, WINCO, and Bechtel Engineering have made huge profits from building nuclear plants, it is the communities that are left with the responsibility of handling the dangerous waste. The problem has been caused by shortsighted, contradictory U.S. policies:

- promoting nuclear energy, for which there is no waste handling solution;
- proliferation of nuclear energy power plants worldwide; and
- non-proliferation of bomb-grade plutonium, which is a component of spent fuel rods from nuclear plants.

The U.S. government helped finance a worldwide nuclear industry before finding a technical solution for long-term disposal of waste. Since 1989 \$23 billion has been spent to create the nuclear waste problem. Estimates of the total cost of clean-up range from \$200 to \$600 billion. Upcoming studies may

reveal that the cost will reach \$1 trillion.

Meanwhile, around the world the existing storage pools for spent fuel rods are rapidly filling up, leaking, or at risk of boiling. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is faced with devising a plan to address this urgent problem.

WHAT ARE SPENT FUEL RODS?

Spent fuel is made up of intact fuel assemblies that are discarded after serving their useful life inside a nuclear reactor. In its Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), the DOE defines spent nuclear fuel rods as also including uranium/neptunium target material, blanket subassemblies, pieces of fuel and debris. The average useful life of a fuel assembly is about three years. After that, the assembly is so heavily contaminated with fission products that it will not efficiently support a chain reaction. It must then be transferred to storage pools to cool down for several years before shipment to either a fuel reprocessing plant or a final high-level waste repository.

HEALTH RISK

Marc Pilisuk, a professor in the Department of Applied Behavioral

Sciences at UC Davis, speaking on behalf of Psychologists for Social Responsibility at a 1993 DOE hearing, noted that both High and Low Enriched Uranium (HEU and LEU) pose dangers of leukemia, cancers, genetic mutation, diabetes, sterilization, and circulatory disorders. Radiation can kill or damage cells. Therefore, depending on the amount of radiation exposure, death is the ultimate risk.

The risks occur when there are exposure opportunities. Exposure can occur from a problem with the existing storage pools, newly constructed pools or other depositories, or a transportation accident during the movement of spent fuel rods from their current storage location to a more permanent location.

WHY ARE SPENT FUEL RODS FROM FOREIGN RESEARCH REACTORS A U.S. PROBLEM?

Since the 1950s, the U.S. has provided HEU to foreign countries for use in research for peaceful applications — on the condition that these countries not make bombs with the spent nuclear fuel. In 1968, the U.S. also began taking the spent fuel back. The U.S. began develop-

Countries With Research Reactors Expected to Generate Spent Nuclear Fuel

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain (stored in Scotland), Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zaire

Transport

ment of LEU for research reactors to reduce the amount of HEU available in international commerce to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1986, the return policy was expanded to include LEU of U.S. origin. The return policy for HEU expired in 1988 and in 1992 for LEU. Until September 1994, no shipment of either fuel had been received since 1988.

U.S. STRATEGY

The DOE is faced with the problem of storing spent nuclear fuel rods from both existing U.S. reactors and foreign research reactors. They are again considering a policy of bringing back all spent fuel originally supplied by the U.S. Since a technology has not yet been developed to handle spent nuclear fuel rods in the long-term, the DOE is looking for short-term solutions for the spent fuel rods which are currently stored world-wide in pools. The problem is urgent because many of the pools are full.

Instead of looking at the issue of handling the spent fuel rods as a whole, DOE is issuing a separate EIS to address the domestic and the foreign problem. In June 1994, the DOE released a draft Environmental Impact Report on Nuclear Spent Fuel Management. This report only addresses the management of spent fuel rods at U.S. sites. The DOE is preparing a separate document on transportation of spent fuel rods from international locations, the EIS for Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel.

DOMESTIC FUEL

Most domestic spent fuel is currently stored at three primary locations: the Hanford Site in Washington; the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL) in Idaho; and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. Smaller quantities remain at other locations. Since 1957, spent nuclear fuel from nuclear-powered naval vessels and naval reactor prototypes has been transported to INEL. A court order dated June 28, 1993, however, now limits the number of shipments of spent nuclear fuel to Idaho. Therefore, most naval spent nuclear fuel is retained in shipyards. In addition to the three main sites, four naval shipyards

(Norfolk VA; Portsmouth ME; Pearl Harbor HI; Puget Sound WA) and one prototype reactor site (Kesselring NY) were considered for naval spent nuclear fuel. In response to public comment in the scoping process, two more potential sites were added: Oak Ridge Reservation in Tennessee and the Nevada Test Site in Nevada. The DOE did not choose a preferred site in the EIS but the Navy, as a cooperating agency, identified the INEL as their preferred site.

Currently, approximately 2,700 metric

The import and transport of spent nuclear fuel rods has strong environmental justice implications.

tons of heavy metal from U.S. spent nuclear fuel have not been processed. This number is likely to increase to 2,800 tons by the year 2035.

The EIS discusses management of spent nuclear fuel during the next forty years. Evidently DOE scientists and policy makers believe that in forty years a technology will be developed for permanent disposition.

FOREIGN FUEL

The U.S. State Department, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency are urging the DOE to renew acceptance of spent fuel rods from foreign reactors with U.S.-origin fuel. The State Department indicates that failure to renew acceptance of spent fuel rods could jeopardize negotiations to renew the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. To address this issue, DOE's EIS will analyze the environmental issues related to acceptance of up to 15,000 foreign research reactor spent fuel elements. The EIS will study acceptance of both HEU and LEU which would be shipped by commercial container ships to ports in the U.S., where it would be transferred by truck or rail to a U.S. storage site. The policy would remain in effect for ten years, with an option for a five-year extension for reactors that

convert to use of LEU during the ten-year period. The storage site or sites will also be explored—including Savannah River, INEL, Hanford, and others.

While preparing the foreign spent fuel EIS, the DOE was informed that a group of six foreign research reactors had urgent spent fuel rod problems that couldn't wait until the EIS was finished. According to the DOE, several of these reactors had no option other than to rely on the U.S. to accept their spent fuel or shut down. Failure of the U.S. to assist them could lead to charges that the U.S. did not live up to its obligations under the 1970 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. To address this problem, DOE developed an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed return of spent fuel elements from foreign research reactors.

According to the EA, DOE wanted to bring the elements into the U.S. through four potential ports: Charleston, Hampton Roads, Portland, and Wilmington. Qasimah Boston, associate director of Citizens for Environmental Justice in Savannah GA, says that her organization—in coordination with the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Energy Research Foundation—prepared a response to the EA: they needed more time to understand the EA; the community needed more education about the shipments; and workers needed more training on how to handle the assemblies. Even Governor Carroll Campbell (R-SC) agreed that there was no need to take in the shipment. "Let's face it," said Campbell, "these allies are stable allies, with the capacity to store this material safely. Having it babysat in South Carolina, with no long-term plan, solves no problems." Judge Mathew Perry ruled in favor of the state and issued a restraining order blocking the DOE from shipping fuel rods from foreign nuclear reactors to the Savannah River Site. The DOE appealed the ruling, and on September 23, 1994, the federal appeals court granted DOE permission to bring ashore two freighters of spent nuclear

Transport

fuel rods for storage at the Savannah River Site.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Despite President Clinton's February 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice (EJ), the 1994 Programmatic Spent Nuclear Fuel Management (Domestic) EIS did *not* include an analysis of environmental justice impacts. According to DOE spokesperson Brenda Fleming, the absence of this analysis was noted in the public comments and the final document. The DOE now knows, Fleming reported, it must include EJ in its analysis.

The import and transport of spent nuclear fuel rods has strong environmental justice implications. Many of the proposed ports of entry are surrounded by low-income communities of color. Highway routes pass through low-income communities of color. Native American nations lie along transportation routes. Many of these communities are already impacted by other industrial hazards and freeway emissions. No cumulative analysis was included in the Programmatic EIS to address the risk from more than one hazard in these communities. Since the site specific analysis was so weak in the Programmatic EIS, a similarly weak analysis is expected in the Foreign Research Reactor EIS.

In the 1980s, West Oakland residents, led by recently deceased activist Chappell Hayes, demanded that the Port of Oakland refuse to import nuclear spent fuel rods. Aided by other environmentalists and activists like Saul Bloom, Len Conley, and Janan Apaydin, the effort was successful. The Port of Oakland passed Resolution 29577 on June 3, 1986, banning the movement of spent fuel rods from ocean-going vessels to the Port of Oakland. Oakland residents have since voted to make the city a nuclear free zone.

Similarly, the highway and rail route for materials sent to Hanford passes through the Umatilla Nation. The entire Hanford Nuclear Reservation is located on lands ceded by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to the U.S. under the Treaty of 1855. CTUIR retains rights to

fish, hunt, gather plants, and pasture livestock. The railroad line that goes through the reservation has the highest derailment rate on any portion of the Union Pacific track. The river water is the tribes' drinking water. Comments from Elwood Patawa, chairman of the Board of Trustees of CTUIR, appear in the DOE Programmatic Scoping Report. Mr. Patawa speaks of four key concerns: 1) protection of tribal rights, 2) protection and restoration of the environment, 3) protection of cultural, religious and archaeological resources, and 4) protection of the reservation, members, and residents from hazards caused by the transport of radioactive and hazardous materials to and from Hanford.

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have a similar situation with respect to INEL, comments Chairperson Keith Tinno. Their lands, the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, sit forty miles southeast of

On March 22, 1979, a truck carrying fifty-four drums of uranium crashed, breaking over twenty drums and spilling thousands of pounds of the powder. The DOT's summary report says that only six drums broke.

the INEL and along a major corridor for transportation of spent nuclear fuel rods. The tribes feel that INEL should not receive, process, and store spent fuel waste.

Likewise, Congresswoman Patsy Mink of Hawai'i, commenting on the U.S. proposal to store spent fuel rods at Pearl Harbor, recalls the Navy's track record on handling radioactive materials at Pearl Harbor. She cites a 1992 EPA report showing the Department of Defense has 88 radiologically-contaminated sites of the 125 listed in Hawai'i.

RISK OF TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS

According to DOE in its Programmatic EIS, the risk of transportation accidents for all the alternatives estimates latent cancer

fatalities at less than one over the forty-year period of normal operations. The "one" fatality is "latent" because the cancer may take many years to cause death. This estimate is for incident-free transportation. The evaluated transportation accident scenario with the largest consequences (a transportation accident in an urban area) would lead to fifty-five latent cancer fatalities. DOE claims that the probability of this occurrence is one in 10 million.

All transportation accidents are supposed to be reported to the Department of Transportation (DOT) or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). But considering the fact that accidents are often unreported, it is difficult to trust the DOE's low risk numbers. For example, on March 22, 1979, a truck carrying fifty-four drums of uranium crashed, breaking over twenty drums and spilling thousands of pounds of the powder. The DOT's summary report says that only six drums broke. DOT accident report #7070949, describing a Brisbane CA accident, shows a scratched out number with a handwritten "0" next to it. In fact, four persons were hospitalized.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The DOE's low risk numbers and lack of detailed, site-specific environmental impact analysis leads to strong public distrust of both the Programmatic EIS and the Foreign Research Reactor EIS. One Oakland resident at the Foreign Research Reactor EIS Scoping Session, Lillian Nurmela, made the following thoughtful suggestions:

- 1) stop all shipments of uranium to foreign research reactors;
- 2) leave the spent fuel on site at foreign reactors. To protect the stockpile from being used for manufacture of bombs, place it under secure international control;
- 3) recognize that radioactive waste is irreversible. Shipping it around the world will not make it disappear, and we have no place in this country to store it either. It cannot be safely burned, stored, transported, or buried.

Transport

Environmental engineer Nancy J. Nadel is an elected director of the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Married to activist Chappell Hayes for fifteen years prior to his death from pancreatic cancer in 1994, Nancy is also the mother of Sele Nadel-Hayes, age 13. Nadel is founder of the Oakland Quality of Life Coalition and a commissioner on the East Bay Conversion and Reinvestment Commission.

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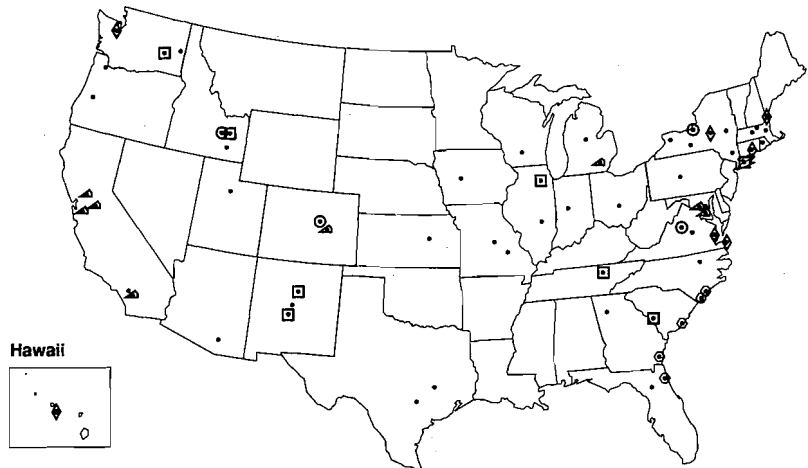
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Existing Spent Nuclear Fuel Locations



1995 Inventory (Metric Tons Heavy Metal) ^a		Legend	
Hanford	2,133	□	US Department of Energy Facilities 8
Idaho National Engineering Laboratory	289	◆	Naval Sites 7
Savannah River Site	202	⊙	Special-Case Commercial 4
Oak Ridge Reservation	3	▲	Domestic Non-DOE 8
Other DOE Facilities	28	⊕	Urgent Relief Foreign Returns (potential port of entry) 5
Universities	4	•	Universities 33
Other	16		
Total	2,675		

Naval sites ^b	State	DOE Facilities	State
Kesseling	New York	Argonne National Laboratory-East	Illinois
Newport News	Virginia	Brookhaven National Laboratory	New York
Norfolk	Virginia	Hanford	Washington
Pearl Harbor	Hawaii	Idaho National Engineering Laboratory	Idaho
Portsmouth	Maine	Los Alamos National Laboratory	New Mexico
Puget Sound	Washington	Oak Ridge Reservation	Tennessee
Windsor	Connecticut	Sandia National Laboratories	New Mexico
		Savannah River Site	South Carolina

a. A metric ton of heavy metal is the unit used throughout this document to indicate the amount of spent nuclear fuel. It corresponds to 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) of heavy metal (uranium, plutonium, thorium).
 b. Name of shipyard or site.

Figure 1. Locations of current spent nuclear fuel generators and storage sites

From DOE Programmatic Spent Nuclear Fuel Management Summary, June 1994

Human Experimentation

Another Broken Promise

Another Broken Promise

Another Broken Promise

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Another Broken Promise

By Manuel Pino

In January of 1995, the Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment (LACSE) was asked to present testimony before the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. The one-day hearing was conducted in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on January 30, 1995.

Testimony presented at the hearing took me back one hundred years to the late 1800s when Indian people, without their knowledge, were given small pox-infested blankets by the U.S. government. The lies, theft, and the genocidal extermination of Indian people by the U.S. government to get what they wanted was being revisited at the Santa Fe hearing. The ideology of the U.S. government using people on an experimental basis without their prior knowledge or informed consent is nothing new to Indian people. Almost all the people who testified said they had no idea they were being used in experiments involving radiation. People of all colors at this hearing could relate to the small pox blanket scenario of one hundred years ago. The U.S. government has made it a

common practice to lie to its own citizens. As Indian people, we have experienced this practice more than any other race in this hemisphere. The 400-plus broken treaties signed between the U.S. government and Indians are one of the best examples of this practice. They lied to kill our people, they lied to steal our land, they lied when they told us our way of life was

heathen and savage. As I sat in the hearing I thought to myself, we have circled this rock before.

Listening to people from all walks of life presenting testimony that they had been cheated and lied to made me think, "Now they know what it is like to be an Indian." Veterans who faithfully served their country as patriots were appalled that their country would use them as experiments.

The U.S. government used a program called "Operation Sunshine" in the 1950s to gather soil, water, crops, and even bones from dead infants to try to learn the extent of worldwide radioactive fallout from U.S. weapon tests. The samples were collected under the cloak of secrecy and through the use of

Testimony presented at the hearing took me back one hundred years to the late 1800s when Indian people, without their knowledge, were given small pox-infested blankets by the U.S. government.

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elaborate cover stories, according to testimony presented and documents released by the Presidential committee.

Civilian testimony included relatives of prisoners who were incarcerated in the 1960s who were given \$10 and time off if they participated in experiments that required injections of radioactive substances. When the children of prisoners were born dead or with birth defects, the response from prisons was similar: they said the prisoners had signed releases. What about their wives and children? They didn't sign releases. Another person presented testimony that his grandfather was injected with radioactive plutonium in a San Francisco hospital in 1945 without his knowledge.

Scientists from Los Alamos National Laboratory told committee members that enthusiasm for discovering the effects of radiation on humans overshadowed any soul-searching over ethical considerations. One scientist even allowed his six- and eight-year old children to volunteer to be injected with plutonium and radioactive iodine. Los Alamos scientists stressed that it was necessary to do some testing to determine how the body processes plutonium. The necessity led to injection experiments in 1945-46 at the Rochester School of Medicine in New York, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.

As I sat in the audience listening to horror story after horror story, it made me wonder what the federal government is doing to humans today that we are going to find out forty years from now. Indian people throughout history have had minimal participation in the legal process that has decided our fate. Acts of Congress, Supreme Court decisions, treaties, and the U.S. Constitution have used legal strategies to take our land, water, and natural resources. All this legal maneuvering was accomplished because Indian nations' assumed the use of integrity and honesty on the part of the U.S. government.

When Laguna Pueblo was approached by Anaconda Minerals, Company in 1952 to develop uranium on their lands, the people were not informed of the dangers of radiation. Unaware and

uninformed of the dangers of uranium mining, they put their full faith in the hands of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to negotiate in their best interest. Forty-three years later, we are left with contaminated land, unsafe drinking water, and a growing segment of our population that is sick and dying of cancer.

Our testimony included a 1953 letter from Duncan A. Holaday, an official with the federal Division of Occupational Health, to Allen D. Look, with the U.S. Bureau of Mines. Holaday states that there was a high concentration of radioactive dust in the Jackpile Mine on the Laguna Reservation – so much that

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two minutes of exposure could give a person the maximum amount they should receive in a day. However, Holaday stated, "We have not worn respirators in the mines primarily because we actually do not spend many days a year in high concentrations. Also, the psychological effect on the miners probably would not be very good."

This letter is just an example of the lies we have had to live with in the thirty years uranium was developed on Laguna land. In this day and age of militias and the Contract "on" America, with all its anti-environmental legislation pending in Congress, makes me wonder if the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments is

actually going to have positive results for the victims. As the true owners of this land that we have seen destroyed before our very eyes, we hope and pray to the Creator that this is not just another federal governmental committee that is full of broken promises. As people of the sacred colors, we can only hope that the U.S. government, in its commitment to nuclear weapons and nuclear power, will not ignore this damning evidence, deny the truth, mislead our people, and jeopardize our health and even life itself.

Manuel Pino (Keres) is an environmental activist from Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico who has worked on uranium mining issues for the past seventeen years.

Human Experimentation

High Hopes: Testimony on Human Radiation Experimentation

By Caroline Cannon

We Inupiat people, with all respect, welcome visitors to the community, and to this matter we were taken advantage of our warm welcome. Military researchers exposed the Inupiat people from the Arctic region to radioactive isotopes in experiments designed to measure the ability of U.S. soldiers from the lower forty-eight states to survive in the arctic climate. You must keep in mind that there was a language barrier, limited information, and little done to overcome known language barriers. A communication gap was the big problem when the United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) distributed radioisotopes in our soil and water using contaminated radioactive soil from Nevada. The experiment occurred at Cape Thompson, Alaska, at the Project Chariot site which is thirty-four miles from our village of Point Hope.

Today we total approximately 700 people, and the majority of our Inupiat people still rely on our subsistence hunting in that same Cape Thompson area which was untouched before the AEC disrespectfully invaded that land. That area did and still does provide much for our needs: the water that we drink and give our children — our future — caribou meat, berries, greens, murre eggs, seals, bearded seals, and walrus which have been used by the Inupiat people of Point Hope, Tikigaaq, a people who were able to survive the harsh climate primarily through that subsistence hunting.

We have had fifty-four recorded cases of cancer. We find this high compared to U.S. statistics. The federal government has tried to convince the community that this is all due to our "life style." In 1988 we had eight individuals who died of cancer: our respected leaders, friends, and family members, a loss so severe as to cause chaos and burden to this community where pain and grief are suffered by an entire network of people, felt for years mentally and physically, and still here today.

I myself lost both of my grandparents to cancer. My grandparents had eleven children and four of those died of cancer. My mother last year was diagnosed with cancer, and I had to take her to Seattle, Washington, for medical attention. My grandparents used Cape Thomson as a subsistence area, along with their children, as did so many others, hunters from our community of Point Hope.

There have been many testimonies regarding miscarriages and sterilization for both men and women. It has also been stated that children were born deformed, and without explanation in earlier years these children were shipped away, taken from their parents. Several years ago I had a first cousin who traced his family tree to Point Hope and came back to visit his

family. He had been born with a disability on his leg. He was one of these children that was shipped out and adopted by another family. He was one of many.

There also has been testimony about hunters noticing differences or deformation on the animals, some being sickly and unedible. In 1988 an entire whale landed by a whaling crew was so terribly ill that it couldn't be eaten. Through tests, there was a diagnosis of disease that could have made people sick if they ate the whale. As far as history goes back, whalers and Elders cannot recall or find any recorded information about a whale being as sick as this.

In the spring and summer of 1956 and continuing into 1957, the United States Army Aeromedical Laboratory conducted a series of medical experiments on 102 Eskimos and Indians from the North Slope area and outlying areas. The iodine experiments were designed to study whether Alaska

Natives had physiological differences that enable them to withstand cold temperatures better than other people. One experiment involved administering the radioactive isotope Iodine-131 in pill form to test thyroid uptake. Point Hope area had six male individuals that were in this experiment, and to this day the names of these people have never been revealed. This makes us think that we haven't been provided with all the

information related to these tests.

In conclusion, I would like you to ask yourself some serious questions and see if you can put yourself in my shoes. I am in the position of understanding that an invasion of personal freedom and choices was inflicted on my ancestors who did not realize the truth of what the United States government was capable of doing. I have lived in Point Hope all my life and eaten the food from the sea and land and drank the water of Cape Thompson along with all the others. I have to wonder about my health, what impacts the poisons in our earth will have through my lifetime — emotionally, physically, and most of all for my children, my grandchildren. My people want to be assured that there is some kind of justice for the betrayal they suffer, some responsibility taken by someone. The Inupiat people are still waiting for answers that make some attempt at human decency.

Caroline Cannon's Inupiat name is Nusuqrak. She is the Coordinator of Project Chariot, working to bring factual information and justice to the Cape Thompson/Point Hope contaminations, Box 169, Point Hope AK 99766; 907-368-2223. This testimony was presented to the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments in Santa Fe NM, January 30, 1995.

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Other Than Honorable: An Atomic Bomb Veteran

By William Hodsden

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nevada Test Organization
OFFICE OF TEST INFORMATION
1235 South Main Street
Las Vegas, Nevada
August 24, 1957

CAMP DESERT ROCK, NEV.— Can a highly trained soldier think clearly and perform the duties of his fighting mission efficiently in the shadow of a nuclear bomb's mushroom cloud? Two minutes after a blast with an explosive force of over 20,000 tons TNT, will his hands tremble as he kneels to field-strip and reassemble his rifle?

For the first time since man learned to split the atom, the United States Army is prepared to find the answers to these and other unknowns concerning human behavior in nuclear warfare, in connection with the shot "Smoky" which will be detonated above Yucca Flat at the Nevada Test Site Wednesday, August 28. ¹

The U.S. government began blasting atomic bombs in the South Pacific right after World War II in what it officially called "atmospheric weapons testing." Between 1946 and 1958, over seventy-five bombs were exploded into the air — purposefully contaminating American servicemen ordered to witness the blasts, as well as South Pacific native islanders and their homelands. In 1951, most aboveground testing was moved to the Nevada Test Site sixty-five miles northeast of Las Vegas, where ninety-three nuclear devices were detonated directly into the air.² Then in 1962, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty drove testing underground and caused the government to disband its experimentation on military personnel. According to the National Association of Atomic Veterans, during the time of atmospheric testing between 1946 and 1962, more than 400,000 people — U.S. servicemen and contractors to the program — were directly and purposefully exposed to radiation.³

The spoken purpose of these human experiments was to see if troops would be harmed during nuclear warfare. "Stress tests" were set up to find out how troops would respond after witnessing a nuclear blast. Would they be able to dismantle a rifle? Could they throw a hand grenade? Would they follow orders? Atomic Energy Commission scientists painstakingly

planned these exercises so they could gather data, claiming they needed the data to help soldiers during nuclear warfare and "for national defense."

Public relations was an unspoken but blatant factor in the program. After test Smoky, ultimately conducted at the Nevada Test Site on August 31, 1957, the Army told the media that the intent of the test was "to portray to the public the Army at its best."⁴

Needless to say, thousands of servicemen and civilian workers have developed radiation-related health problems, from cancers and leukemias to nervous system disorders and genetic damage. In 1990, after years of political struggling by atomic veterans and their legal and medical supporters, the landmark Veterans Radiation Exposure Bill was passed to compensate veterans displaying certain designated illnesses. Yet both the Veterans Administration and the Department of Justice have long and devious histories of denying medical treatment and financial compensation to servicemen with bomb-related illnesses, and despite the new law and subsequent additions to it, many obstacles still plague veterans seeking treatment or compensation.

One third of the military records on GIs — records containing documentation critical to veterans seeking federal benefits for radiation exposure — were destroyed in a St. Louis fire in 1973. Only 4.5 million folders were salvaged of the 20 million stored in the federal building. U.S. attorneys issued a report documenting that the fire had indeed been set, yet charges were never pressed.⁵

William Hodsden insists that he was present at test Smoky in 1957, a forty-eight kiloton atomic bomb four times the size of the bomb that decimated Hiroshima,⁶ and insists he deserves medical care from the Veterans Administration. The Army insists that Hodsden was never exposed to radiation — rather that on August 31, 1957, he was locked up in the stockade at Fort Lee, Virginia. Hodsden's records are gone.

—Editor

It's an awesome sound. About three or four seconds later, the backs of my eyes began to light up. See, I had my hands covering my eyes and in the back the nerves started to light up. Then I could feel something — it passed through me. It stopped my heartbeat.

My knee started to hurt. To bum. I felt a warm sensation in my knee — a stinging and burning sensation going up inside my kneecap. It hurt for me to move. My right hip hurt like hell.

Around the rectum it began to feel warm, very warm and a pinprick sensation and around the testes the same sensation.

Atomic Testing

Then the strangest thing — this is the strangest — when you looked at the fireball, you'd hear the noise. If you looked up at it—it's weird—a gold yellowish color, and from the center — it's the weirdest thing I've ever seen — the center is like a swirl that's all them bright yellows and gold colors in swirls. And when I looked up at it, I became very aware of the noise. It sounded like about fifteen freight trains going by. So we grabbed our ears. When we became aware of the noise and we felt the pressure on our ears, we grabbed our heads.

We stayed there, in that position. I looked up at the fireball and looked down there and see a guy lying unconscious on the ground. I kept checking him, looking at him. I looked back at the fireball and kept looking down at him. Up at the fireball and down at him.

Then I felt something on my thigh. A burning sensation, and I looked down and saw a piece of dust—it was gray and it was on my right thigh. Stuck to it. The wind was blowing. And that dust particle stuck there. Then I felt some sort of cut. It went into my leg and stopped at the back of my thigh and then burned again. I felt it on the inside. I looked back at my leg and the dust particle was gone!

The strangest damn thing. The uniform wasn't burning. There was no hole down there. If it was a cinder, it would've burned a hole and burned the skin. But it wasn't that. It was just a piece of dust — a piece of ash that had cooled off already.

Then I heard someone yelling through a loudspeaker: "Goddamn! If you guys don't get your asses out of them damn trenches, you gonna go to Leavenworth."

Then this guy in front kept going back in the trenches and grabbing guys. "Get the hell out of there!"

Now when they came out of their trenches, they were about two thousand feet from ground zero. Then they started marching. They marched to the right of the tower, turned up toward ground zero, and went about one hundred yards through the ash. Then the guy in the front, who's leading them out, saluted.

He saluted ground zero.

It's light now. We're still standing,

looking. Then the loudspeaker comes on, and it says: "You have just witnessed one of the most powerful weapons in the world. And it belongs to one of the best damn armies in the world — the United States Army!"

The test was over. . . .

We went back to Camp Murray — and like GIs do, we just hung around the barracks, doing nothing. Go to eat, chow time, come back, stick around, smoke. My neck was still hurting.

My buddy said, "What's wrong?"

"I can't hardly turn my damn neck. And my leg is sore as hell too."

That was Saturday the 31st. Sunday I began to stiffen up more. I began getting a little nervous. We walked outside the barracks and sat up on one of the trucks.



William Hodsdon as a young man

When I got up there, something burned me and I went *slap!* like that.

"What's wrong with you?"

"I don't know, man." Then I saw a little fluid — a little spot. I pull up my pants and look at it. Where I'd hit it, I'd bust a blister — like the size of a half-dollar. He said, "You'd better tell somebody about that," he says. "Come on!"

We run into the barracks.

"Hey, sarge, look at this here. He had a blister there!"

"Don't get excited, don't get excited!" said the sergeant.

I can't move. My neck's hurting, my heart's palpitating. I guess my eyes were big, too, because I was getting scared.

So he takes me up to the infirmary. Two or three guys come to the door and look. "Hey what's wrong with you?"

When they peered out, their damn heads were huge, and their eyes had stretched and they were red. This white dude — he was swollen in the face, and his nostrils were big and you see blood running. He said, "Look at this, man! What's wrong with you?"

Another black guy came, and he said, "What's wrong?"

And their faces — I do not think they realized — but their faces looked so swollen that the cracks had turned red — the eyelids had separated in the comers and their noses

They put me in another barrack. They had it partitioned off and all the windows blackened out, and they took all my clothes off, set me in the bed with my legs crossed at the ankles. I was all naked. A medic used four or five pillows to prop me up. "Your leg is very swollen," he says. "Your hip and your leg is very swollen. We're doing this to keep it from hyperextending."

So I'm sitting there naked, and all of a sudden my right leg begins to swell. Then I start to get nauseous, and then I was throwing up. I looked down. I was secreting — *pissing*. So he gives me a glass of water.

"See if you can keep this down."

Whew! It comes right back up again.

And this right leg is swelling. Then it starts hurting in the groin and all up in the back of my spine, then my neck, and I become very weak.

If you ever get sick like that, I swear to God you get so weak your mind goes. You just go out. Eventually you come around and you get a little bit of your senses back, and you're still *pissing*, throwing up. You got nausea.

One guy would come and hand things in from the door. He had something — a box maybe — and he'd point it at me and then go back.

I remember that every once in a while a machine was turned on. It sounded like a camera whining. Whenever this happened, the lights would get a little brighter. During the next four or

Atomic Testing

five days this went on — the light came on, and I would hear that whining. This went on one, two, three, four, five days.. Sitting naked. Feet crossed. Swollen. And blacking out. Getting very weak.

On the eighth or ninth day the pain began to subside — the pain in my groin—and my leg started to go down. I still had the weakness and tiredness, but I was gaining more control of myself. They let me put my clothes back on.

"All right. You can get up and walk around a little bit, but you can't go outside." I remember that. "We can't let you out in the sunlight." . . .

They let me go back to the barracks of my company, my buddies. This guy came into the barracks and said he wanted to talk to me.

"The post commander has said that you are not to say anything once you leave here — you understand? You are supposed to keep your mouth shut about the bum. You could be in a lot of trouble . . . You are to keep your mouth shut." And he mentioned a colonel, and said this colonel was the post commander.

That Monday they put us on trains back to Fort Lee. We got to Fort Lee around the middle of September. I remember coming into the company area and some of my black buddies coming up to me.

"Hey, man, where you been?"

Well, I wanted to tell them, "Hey, man, you know what happened to me..." But the threat was there. Keep your mouth shut. So I got nervous, kind of excited. "Man, let me tell you something," I said. "I just witnessed two atomic bombs."

"Man, why don't you just cut that crap out. They don't let black people see no damn atomic bombs!"

I said, "That's where I been at."

"No, they don't do that. They don't let nobody see no damn atomic — specially black people. Man, you crazy?"

One of the guys — he was a big old dude — I'll never forget. He said, "I'm gonna punch you in your damn mouth!"

And this sergeant — Sergeant Cooper — walked by and heard. "Come here," he said.

Sergeant Cooper was white. He was a good dude. We were between ages twenty and twenty-three. He was a little

bit up in age, and he was a staff sergeant. When we was out there in the desert a lot of times he'd helped out.

So he said, "Come here. I want to tell you something. You don't have to argue with them. You know where you been. You just cool it. I thought you had more sense than that."

That's what he said. Real calm. "I thought you had more sense than that."

I said, "You're right." So I didn't say anything more about it. . . .

One day I was called into the Orderly Room, and this colonel says, "We've got a follow-up on you. You've been recommended for a medal, but you can't accept this medal because it would involve investigation. This is a top-secret project, and if you know what's good for you, you'll keep your mouth shut about that blister."

So I didn't get a medal

I began to get very weak in the legs and my muscles would start twitching. It would start in my knees. And the muscles in my legs got so tired I couldn't stand up. I'd have these stupors. Here I was back at Fort Lee doing these various duties, but I began having these damn stupors. I had to sit down. Then I broke out with some infections on my right leg.

Then they got on me. "You can't do nothing. There's something wrong." They didn't say there was something wrong with me. They said there was something wrong with my personality. "You don't want to work. You don't want to do your job. You got a personality disorder."

The last week of February they call me before a board and they're saying, "You can't do the job."

I said, "Something's wrong with me. I can't get settled."

They gave me a less than honorable discharge a week later, March 8, 1958 — after my full tour of duty!

I felt really hurt to be released out of the army like that. Before I went in I was, you know, I was the Black John Wayne in patriotism. I can't explain what it means when they hand you something that says you are released from the army other than honorable

William Hodsden was hospitalized at New York's Harlem Valley State Hospital from 1960 to 1965. According to the Army, he is a "schizophrenia-paranoid type. . . Through the years he has suffered from tumors of the cervical spine and thigh, blackouts, body pains, and hearing distortions. His children suffer from brain dysfunction, chronic skin sores, red blood disorders, and anemia. Hodsden has applied to the Veterans Administration eight times for service-connected injuries that, if awarded, would grant him and his children free treatment through the V.A. medical care system. Without access to his military records, though, he has been turned down every time.

The National Association of Atomic Veterans provides support to atomic veterans and their families. They can be contacted at: P.O. Box 4424, Salem MA 01970, 508-744-9396.

This edited version is reprinted from Nuclear Witnesses: Insiders Speak Out, 1981 Leslie J. Freeman, with permission of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

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Waste Disposal

Indian Nations Go NUCLEAR FREE

By Chuck Johnson

Since the 1950s, with the generation of the first electricity from atomic power, U.S. government officials have been trying to find some way, *any* way to dispose of the highly irradiated "spent" nuclear fuel from nuclear power plants. In 1991 they thought they'd found the answer: *give it to the Indians*.

This would not be the first time the U.S. government has done its dirty radioactive deeds on indigenous peoples' lands. The Dineh and Pueblo uranium miners, Marshall Islander and Western Shoshone nuclear test down-winders, and the downstream members of Yakima and Lakota communities among others, suffer death, disease, and destruction of their land as a direct result of U.S. policy.

This time around, offering sweet talk and sweeter money deals, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Nuclear Waste Negotiator David Leroy was able to convince seventeen tribal councils and four non-Indian county governments to take \$100,000 grants to study the possibility of becoming a volunteer host for a Monitored Retrievable Storage (MRS) facility.

The Waste Negotiator was fond of quoting the famous Duwamish leader Sealth (Seattle) and praising Native Americans as "natural earth stewards." Approaching tribal organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT), the DOE sponsored "educational" workshops and gave out millions of dollars in grants. Both NCAI and CERT still depend on DOE funding.

Applicants for funding were told the MRS was to be a temporary facility, used for no more than fifty years, until a permanent waste repository could be built. These grants were to be followed with Phase II study grants of \$250,000 and \$1.3 million respectively, culminating in an unspecified (but rumored to be very large) amount to be offered to the governmental body brave or foolish enough to take the waste.

The non-Indian Phase I grantees were quickly eliminated, due to threats and recall elections from angry constituents, or governors' vetoes. This left only the Native American tribal councils.

The U.S. government was particularly interested in Native American tribal lands for three reasons: they are some of the most isolated in North America; the people living there are some of the most impoverished and politically vulnerable; and tribal governments have a claim to national sovereignty, partially recognized by the U.S. courts.

It was sovereignty that made the tribal councils most attractive. State governments have, in recent years, fought ferociously against any plan for sticking their citizens with the nation's high-level radioactive waste. Tribal councils, if recognized as representing sovereign nations, could provide an



"Freedom Burning," acrylic on canvas, 1992 by Andrew Kong Knight. The artist writes: "The base of the mushroom cloud represents the destruction of the Native Americans' dream to live peacefully on their own land. . . . The Iwo Jimn soldiers [are] ironic, since post-World War II wars have been more often about protecting the U.S.'s position as a superpower. . . . at the expense of both U.S. and non-U.S. lives."

end run around state and local laws.

Given the financial state of much of Indian Country, it is significant that only seventeen tribal governments, out of nearly 560 federally-recognized tribes, decided to apply for the money. Also significant was the fact that the tribes accepting

Waste Disposal

these grants had virtually no experience dealing with radiation.

In January 1992, Grace Thorpe was enjoying a comfortable retirement volunteering for her tribe, the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma, as a health commissioner and part-time tribal judge, and learning basketry and pottery. She was retired, that is, until she discovered that her tribe was one of the seventeen applying for funding through the U.S. government's MRS program. She researched the issue, discovered that her initial reaction to oppose the program was warranted, and set about successfully challenging the grant at a special meeting of the Sac and Fox Tribe. Tribal members voted 70-5 to return the \$100,000 grant.

Suddenly she found herself swept up into a new unpaid "career," speaking throughout the country against the U.S. government's MRS scheme. Thorpe, a daughter of legendary athlete Jim Thorpe, was not unfamiliar with political action. She participated in the occupation of Alcatraz during the '70s. As an aide to former Senator James Abourezk (D-SD), she helped shepherd legislation through Congress that allows Indian Nations first chance at surplus federal lands.

In her travels, she discovered that Native American activists throughout the country had, like her, awakened to this plan for nuclear waste storage. People like Wilbur Slockish, who served time in jail for salmon fishing in order to re-establish Columbia River fishing rights, understood what a bad deal the MRS would be for their tribes. Soon Slockish and others saw to it that the Yakima tribe returned their MRS money as well.

Farmer and activist Joseph Campbell of the Prairie Island Dakota Community approached the MRS program differently. He and his tribe took the initial \$100,000 and used it to oppose the creation of a "dry-cask storage facility" for irradiated fuel at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. The plant borders

Nuclear Free Native American Nations

NFZ	DATE	TYPE
Chickaloon Village (Alaska)		Village Council Law
Devil's Lake Dakota (South Dakota)		Tribal Council Law
Flathead (Montana)	7-13-84	Tribal Council Resolution
Kaw (Oklahoma)	3-13-94	Executive Council Resolution
Kenaitze (Alaska)	12-13-93	Tribal Council Resolution
Kickapoo (Kansas)	11-24-93	Tribal Council Resolution
Pawnee (Oklahoma)	3-94	Tribal Council Resolution
Ponca (Oklahoma)	3-11-94	Business Committee Resolution
Prairie Island Dakota (Minnesota)	8-18-94	Tribal Council Resolution
Red Cliff Band Lake Superior	1-3-94	Tribal Council Law
Chippewa (Wisconsin)		
Sac and Fox (Oklahoma)	8-28-93	Tribal Council Law
Shoalwater (Washington)	5-6-94	Tribal Meeting Law
White Mountain Apache (Arizona)	9-9-93	Tribal Council Law

**U.S. state names for identification purposes only.*

their reservation on the Mississippi River near Red Wing MN, less than a mile from the tribe's child care center. The DOE refused to fund the Prairie Island Dakota in the next round of grants.

As the list of tribes receiving MRS money shrank, opponents got more organized. In March of 1993, Thorpe, Slockish, and Campbell formed a new organization: the National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans (NECONA). Joining them on the board were Vivienne Caron-Jake (Paiute), Lance Hughes (Creek), Lila Bird (Keres), Phil Harrison (Diné), Virginia Sanchez (Western Shoshone), and Rufina Laws (Mescalero Apache).

In June of 1993, NECONA made an alliance with Nuclear Free America to promote the declaration of Nuclear Free Zones (NFZs) on Native American lands. At the Indigenous Environmental Network Conference that same month, Native American activists from throughout the continent unanimously endorsed the Nuclear Free Zone proposal.

The Nuclear Free Indian Lands Project has succeeded in encouraging the formation of twelve new NFZs since that time. The newly-declared Nuclear Free Nations joined the Flathead Nation of Salish and Kootenai, which has been NFZ since 1984.

Even more significantly, Thorpe and Margret Carde of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety of Santa Fe NM convinced Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) to introduce a successful amendment cutting all funding for MRS study grants.

By the beginning of 1994, the MRS program was on the ropes. All but four tribal governments had withdrawn or been removed from the MRS list — and federal funding was far from certain. But, as often seems to happen, before environmental activists could finish off the MRS program, it changed form.

Northern States Power (NSP) was desperate. The Minnesota-based utility was facing a court-ordered requirement to move their irradiated fuel or shut down the Prairie Island Nuclear Power

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Plant. In March, they announced a private deal they, and a new consortium of over 30 nuclear utilities, were working out with the Mescalero Apache Nation. Under the plan, the Mescaleros would take their high-level radioactive waste at a new, *privately-run* MRS. (See next article: "A Premonition Fuels Mescalero Apache Struggle.")

Some analysts believe the nuclear industry looked to the private Mescalero option as a diversion. The real effort will be revealed when the nuclear industry lobbies the Republican-controlled Congress to reopen the U.S. Nuclear Waste Policy Act. The apparent goal is to deal with the nuclear waste storage crisis at Midwest reactors by making the legal changes necessary to begin storing irradiated fuel immediately at the Nevada Test Site.

The Test Site is located next to DOE's proposed permanent disposal site at Yucca Mountain and both facilities are, once again, on Indian land.

The Treaty of Ruby Valley, signed by President Ulysses S. Grant, recognizes the Western Shoshone Nation's title to the core of their traditional lands, Newe Segobia, a long strip of land extending from southern Idaho through Nevada and into southern California. In 1979 the U.S. government offered the Western Shoshone Tribal Council, and the councils of the several separate reservations where Western Shoshone now live, \$21 million as payment for violating their treaty and taking their land. The money was refused.

Native American and other environmental activists from throughout the country are meeting now to strategize how to best support the Western Shoshone and the non-Indian population of Nevada. The Western Shoshone, along with the State of Nevada, have been fighting hard for years to avoid being designated the nation's nuclear dumping ground.

Chuck Johnson is executive director of Nuclear Free America, 2852 High St., Salem OR 97302; 503-364-2661. A longer version of this article was originally published in NFA's quarterly newsletter, The New Abolitionist (Fall 1994).

A Premonition Fuels Mescalero Apache Struggle

By Rufina Marie Laws



I had a vision. It was a vision in technicolor of one of the most beautiful spots on the reservation. Tall, old pine and oak trees with high meadow grass. It has a spring that comes out of the mountain. In my vision the spring water disappeared, and in its place iridescent, contaminated water slowly flowed with the iridescent colors mixing and remixing. The liquid material was heavy and hot, instantly killing everything in its path.

I was panic-stricken. I was trying to figure it out and started praying; that's when I woke myself up because I was praying aloud, I was almost shouting. I woke up, but the vision continued. I saw the rest of it — and the rest of it is what I am waiting for.

That occurred in July of 1990 while I was living in another state. I woke myself up at 3:30 in the morning. I was shaking and crying hysterically, and I thought, "That's so strange. What in the world does it mean?"

I came home for a visit in July, 1991. I was in the kitchen talking with Mom, just happy to be home in the kitchen while she was cooking and telling me things. That's when she asked me, "Rufina, what does 'nuclear waste' mean?" I said, "Mom! Where did you

learn that word?" She answered, "The tribal council said they're going to build a nuclear waste dump."

I couldn't believe it! I said, "Mom, no one in the world wants nuclear waste. What on Earth is happening?" She said, "That's all we know."

I returned to work and would think about what I had heard. Then several days later I made the connection with the vision and thought, "That's what it meant!" It was at that point I began making plans to come back home to the reservation. I came back because of the vision. In July 1992, the morning I stepped out to start the petition drive, I thought, "My vision is the only thing that's going to keep me going. I don't know what the future holds, but I do know nothing will ever be the same again."

I drew up a resolution in opposition to the nuclear waste dump, which was supported by a petition. Two days before I started the petition drive, I showed the resolution to my Mom. She read it and said, "Don't do this. You don't know what kind of trouble you're going to get into. The tribal council wants this, and not too many people can stop them if they want something. You're going to put the entire family in jeopardy. *Don't do this.*"

I was real disappointed because my Mom is the most important person in my life as far as training me in my moral values and to know that as spiritual and as moral as she is, she still couldn't let me do this with her blessing. I was supposed to start the petition drive on Thursday; instead I spent that day in thought. I wondered, "Is my Mom really right? Am I going to do something I'll regret?" I'd heard of things happening to other people on the reservation who stood up against the administration, and they are no longer on the reservation. I thought, this is more important to the tribal council than anything they've ever

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wanted — and yet it's the most dangerous thing to our tribal history and genetic pool. How can I face that generation in the future who will be paying the price for our inaction to halt the waste, when that generation asks, "Why?" How will I answer? Later that day I decided to go ahead and make my stand, to follow my vision.

I came back to my Mom five days later, and I said, "I reserved three spots on the first page for you, my Dad, and my brother." She looked at it and said, "If this means that much to you, we'll sign it."

For two weeks, the resolution and petition were circulated around the reservation for people to sign. People read it, and if they agreed they were given the opportunity to sign. Many signed. Quite a few people said, "I'm glad for what you are doing, and we wish you all the luck in the world, but we're not going to sign it." Others explained why: "There's no way I'm going to sign the petition," they said. "If my name appears on that petition, I'm going to lose my job, my wife is going to lose her job, and we're going to lose everything we have."

The problem here on the reservation is that we have an autocratic form of government. All the power is placed in the president. In the final analysis, his word is law. The strata on the reservation is skewed. The first class is given to the tribal president himself. The second class is granted to the tribal council. The people here on the reservation are third class citizens. This is 1995, and 99% of the Native Americans in America are still left without working "representative democracy!"

This set-up was established in 1934 by the Indian Reorganization Act in what I call the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) "cookie-cutter" approach to tribal government. That form of government is not traditional; it is farcical. When that first tribal constitution was presented to the tribal body and its traditional leaders, all of the people's power was placed in the proposed tribal Business Committee. Many tribes naively accepted that ill-conceived constitution which allows petty, greedy, self-serving politicians a way to gain complete control of Native

American governments and their resources — and legally exclude the will and voice of Native American people.

Today Native Americans are left with entrenched power machines. Revisions must be approved by the BIA and the Department of Interior, and it appears that the revisions made so far have been

Many tribes naively accepted that ill-conceived constitution which allows petty, greedy, self-serving politicians a way to gain complete control of Native American governments and their resources — and legally exclude the will and voice of Native American people.

approved without question and with complete disregard for their debilitating impact upon representative tribal government. This is an example of how Native Americans are viewed as a part of U.S. foreign policy, and historically that policy has supported dictatorial power.

The foundation of this government is found in the election code. It allows an election board made up of eligible voting members. The board is appointed by the tribal president. Elections and referendums are held using ballot sheets, not voting machines. Pencils are used to mark one's choices on the ballot. At the end of the day, the ballot sheets are tallied in complete seclusion by the board members. Small wonder why we have retained the same tribal president for over three decades.

This is an unjust legal system that was conceived by the U.S. government and introduced and implemented by the BIA. This unjust legal government which was forced upon the Apache people is the main force behind the destruction of the traditional social fabric of our Apache culture. In destroying most of the traditional culture, problems like addictions, chronic welfare and unemployment, alcoholism, fetal alcohol

syndrome, to name a few, have become an everyday part of life on our reservation.

I've spoken to people in Washington DC who are pursuing their dreams and careers on the state or federal level and are following their version of the "pursuit of happiness." They've said, "We can't touch this. There's nothing we can do about it. When you get elected come back and see us. We're sorry about it."

YOU'RE SORRY ABOUT IT! We have people here who are dying as a result of this situation, people who are treading water until they give up and are shattered. I'm saying that this unjust legal/political set-up has shattered untold numbers of people's lives on Native American reservations — and now it is threatening to bring nuclear waste into New Mexico. We were elated for the Bingaman amendment, but now the tribal government is trying to bring in "privatized" nuclear waste.

This is my home. My ancestors go back centuries before 1492. The Mescalero Apache Reservation is a living symbol of the entire Southwestern lands which my ancestors loved. They prayed for it. They fought for it. They died for it. We are commanded by our heritage as Mescalero Apache people to maintain the purity of our sacred legacy. It is our duty to protect this precious gift which has been handed down through the ages.

Nuclear waste, uranium mining, enriched uranium, the Cold War, plutonium, nuclear industry, the fuel cycle: these things translate into custodial care for an eternity.

I feel a great spiritual battle is taking place. I truly believe that if there is anything that's going to solve the nuclear problem, it will be the inclusion of the part of humanity that has been ignored since the splitting of the atom. The key is to clearly and publicly include the spiritual side of ourselves, not just the science-and-technology side of ourselves.

Long before this mineral called uranium was discovered, the Native Americans and Aboriginal people knew the awesome powers held within those uranium-filled lands. They treated the

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lands and everything surrounding the lands with great respect. Within the life of the community, traditional ceremonies were the way of life; the lives of the people, daily prayers were humbly offered to the Great Spirit.

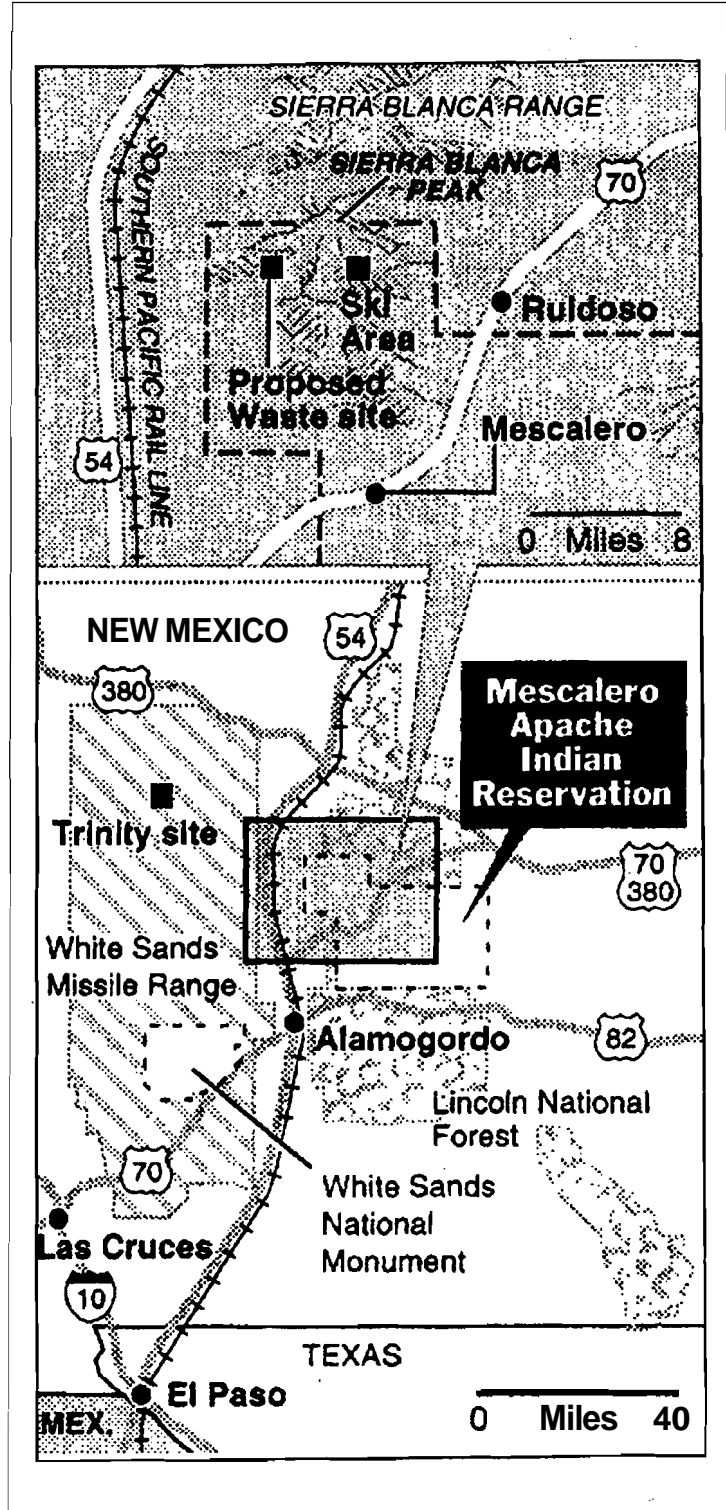
The Great Spirit was placed first and last in everything. The Great Spirit was sought and acknowledged each day for untold generations. Modern civilization never thought twice of sacredness. Have we learned anything from this lesson? Ours is the first generation which will be handing a future to the next generation that bears the gigantic slash of our dependence upon uranium.

The solution to the problem will partially be found in using the skills and knowledge available in the fields of science and technology. I believe that an integral portion in the solution also lies within each one of us. Let's not lose this precious opportunity. We must humbly seek, include, and acknowledge the power of the Great Spirit. If we as a species cannot bring ourselves to honor this relationship which has been ignored for so long, then the chance we have left will be null and void. Then what I heard, felt, and saw in that terrifying nightmare of a vision in 1990 will become reality.

On January 31, 1995, in a historic tribal referendum, the Mescalero Apache people voted 490-362 to refuse the "privatized" nuclear waste of Northern States Power. Proponents of the dump forced a second vote in which the project passed, 593-372. The scheduled opening date is 2002. Opponents are now looking to legal and regulatory strategies to stop it.

Rufina Marie Laws (Mescalero Apache) holds a Masters degree in education from Arizona State University. She is a long-time activist and ran for President of the Mescalero Apache Tribe in 1993. To learn more about the Mescalero struggle, contact: Humans Against Nuclear Waste Dumps, P.O. Box 2170. Ruidoso NM 88345.

This article is based on interviews with Laws by Race, Poverty and the Environment and by Beth Enson, published in The Workbook,, Southwest Research and Information Center, P.O. Box 4524, Albuquerque NM 87106, \$12/yr.; Winter, 1993.



The Future

Who Here Will Begin This Story?

By Herman Agoyo

I watched my five-year old grandson, Jordan, playing with his friends at the Picuris Pueblo Feast days last week as I began to think about what to say to you here this evening. I felt that my grandson and your youngest children and grandchildren hold the key to what we are here for this weekend. I believe that for us to understand why we are here and what we must do is for us to have a heartfelt vision that we can share with our children — to instill in them a memory and a meaning of this situation that we have lived through, that will live in them forever, and guide their journey into the future.

As I watched my grandchild, the memory of my grandfather came to me. When I was a young boy my grandfather told me, "That place in the mountains is a blessing." I was very familiar with "The Hill" as it was known in those early years, because my aunt and uncle lived and worked there. They frequently arranged "passes" for family members to visit "The Hill." I interpreted grandpa's statement to mean "The Hill" meant jobs, education, and new opportunities.

It has been nearly fifty years, and as my grandfather and the years have passed, as Los Alamos National Laboratory has carved its place into the people and the land of New Mexico, a different understanding grips us. What shall I tell my grandson?

The promise of jobs and development has not truly benefited us. Yes, people weren't as hungry as before, some were able to buy cars and trucks, but for the most part, the poor people, Indians, and Spanish were and still are at the bottom of the work ladder where advanced science and the highest technology positions are rewarded for the very few. The vision of "education" has also been an elusive entitlement. Approximately 30 percent of our young people do not finish high school and the majority who do graduate end up with an 8th grade level education, and consequently they are derailed in so many preventable and cruel ways from the best technical and leadership opportunities. Worse, our children are never systematically taught the most important and complex truths about the world they live in, truths that are needed to instill a sense of clear purpose and decision-making confidence in our human society.

The "opportunities" have also turned to ashes. We have slowly realized that this work which started out to harness an unimaginable power has in fact harmed human beings and the planet beyond any calculation. It has harmed us all by the sickness, death, and destruction that has been the ultimate product of this work. It has harmed us by the nightmare fear instilled in the hearts and minds of all the world's peoples about nuclear war and radiation "accidents." It has violated and

harmed us by the awful problems of pollution and defilement caused in handling and disposing of the radioactive materials dumped onto and into Mother Earth.

The most important truth about Los Alamos National Laboratory is that it has always been and still is a secret; a center whose work has always been kept utterly shrouded from the view of the world; a place with no public memory. What do our children know of the Laboratory and what do they care? And if they do not know and do not care because it's just another "adult problem," that is the more reason for them to be indifferent and reject our ways. Then who is left to understand and care?

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As grown-ups, our memory of Los Alamos National Laboratory is embedded in those specific events where we had to act to protect or save our people and our sacred lands from the eternal effects of nuclear detonation experiments, deadly wastes, the proposed construction of the 345KV Ojo Line Extension, and other ways in which the expansion of the Laboratory "science" spilled over into our lives, our communities, our shared destinies.

I speak of this old legacy because it is the way that so many of us have grown up, the way we have thought about fixing the problem. For these fifty years have been a period where many of our worst human traits — ignorance, racism, unbridled power, defilement of the land — have dominated our relationships. What is so disturbing is that, in looking backwards, it is easy to understand why the government, the scientists, and the community-at-large have battled, each seeking its influences or protection from the other, each not really knowing the whole picture, the full measure or the consequences of what was being developed or handled, and what was in our common interest. Meeting by meeting, study by study, problem by problem, conflict by conflict — usually involving only a tiny fraction of the community, often hidden from public view — we invested years of struggle in our efforts to establish a human understanding of how to live side by side with our different ways.

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What is so striking to me is how few people really appreciate the importance of what we have learned over these past decades. We have begun to talk about a cleansing here on these grounds, a cleansing that will last more than seventy-five years. Who will begin this work? Who will be alive to give continuity as it nears its conclusion? I hope my grandson will be a guardian and contributor to this huge human challenge. So the question that I ask is: how shall we tell our children the story of Los Alamos National Laboratory, both the heroic adventures, the genius search into the unknown, and all the nightmares that we now begin to know about, the truth as it unfolded, the knowledge of what we people, neighbors, and community did about LANL 2000 and beyond? Early this week, we learned that the Japanese leadership who were children at the start of World War II apologized to the world for their country's inhumanity. They learned the truth, faced up to it, and had the courage to apologize.

What moves me today is the deep belief that we are entering a new time, a new century, and a new understanding. The epoch of modern war and the national security state is moving into its late, late afternoon. The world's people will no longer tolerate, nor can we afford, the costs of war and rampant inhumanity. Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that the fall of mighty Russia was the result of star wars or our military and scientific superiority. Russia fell because the people were fed up with their form of government, and mind you, modern Russia collapsed without an all-out bloody revolution. We must open our eyes to a way to find a refreshing and energetic solution. This evening, I ask you to look at an opportunity that can bring us all together through our children. If we turn to our children as the source of memory, the repository of what we know as the truth, as the sources of how we are to gather together to cleanse Mother Earth and join to transcend the experience of the last fifty years, I believe we will have a way to transform ourselves. The old way will be hard to break, change will come slowly. A new generation will have to be taught a new way of harmony, mutual respect,

common interest, and love for each other and the planet.

Let us make a commitment here, this weekend, to mount a sharing of all stories, first to the youth in our communities, and then increase the circle of participation among all the children in our state and country. If the children understand what we have done here, if the children hear our passionate plea for their active participation in all aspects of how we are to move forward together with this land that belongs to their children's children's children, we will have begun the most important miracle of all. Memory and meaning go hand in hand.

Who here will begin this storytelling with the Indian tribes? Let us call together our best storytellers, our most passionate teachers, and our most creative media artists to this sustained work as the beginning of the true cleansing that we must perform.

My grandson and my grandfather count on me. Yours count on you. Let us form the circle together.

Herman Agoyo (Tewa) has served as chair of the All Indian Pueblo Council, executive director of Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council, and tribal administrator of Okay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo). This speech received a standing ovation in 1993 at the "LANL 2000: The Role of the National Laboratory in the 21st Century" conference in Las Vegas NM.

My grandson and my grandfather count on me. Yours count on you. Let us form the circle together.

The Declaration of Salzburg

THE WORLD URANIUM HEARING

Having met in Salzburg, Austria, from 13 September to 18 September 1992;

Having heard testimony concerning the environmental, cultural, spiritual, physiological, and economic impact of the use of radioactive substances from all regions of the world;

Convinced of the inherently destructive nature of all phases of the nuclear chain and that nuclear contamination is a threat to all peoples and environments irrespective of political boundaries;

Acutely aware that indigenous peoples have suffered particularly devastating consequences from the extraction and utilization of nuclear substances;

Reaffirming that the survival of indigenous peoples requires respect for their rights of self-determination and to territorial and environmental integrity;

Observing that the spiritual and cultural values of indigenous peoples in their relationship with the natural world offer a perspective capable of transforming prevailing destructive materialistic attitudes and practices;

Recalling that the disastrous impact of nuclear weapons testing on indigenous and other land-based peoples in such places as Nevada, Bikini and Eniwetok, Tahiti, Maralinga, and Central Asia;

Deeply moved by the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which marked the opening of the nuclear era;

Alarmed by the experience of Chernobyl and Three Mile Island;

Convinced that there is no completely safe technology for the containment of radioactive substances;

Dismayed by distorted economic values and priorities, including inappropriate consumption patterns, which threaten a sustainable future;

Apprehensive of the fate of future generations confronted with the intractable consequences of nuclear development;

Determined to end the danger posed by the entire nuclear chain and to ensure an enduring harmonious relationship with

the natural world;

Solemnly declares:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The natural world, in its richness and complexity, is the foundation of all life.
2. All peoples and individuals have the fundamental right of a safe and healthy environment and the corresponding duty to maintain the integrity of the natural world.
3. Each generation bears the obligation of effective stewardship for the benefit of future generations of all living beings.

II. THE PROCESS OF NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT

Exploitation, Mining and Processing

4. The mining and processing of uranium and other radioactive minerals result in the contamination and degradation of large ecosystems.
5. Radioactivity and chemical pollutants contained in tailings are spread by the flow of ground and surface waters and by wind currents.
6. Inhabitants of affected areas risk immediate and lasting health and genetic consequences from exposure to radioactive substances. Miners are exposed to particularly intensified levels of radiation.

Military Uses

7. Over time, nuclear weapons testing has produced atmospheric fallout, contamination of land and sea areas, forced removal of peoples, cultural disintegration, and a range of adverse health consequences, in particular, cancer and threats to genetic inheritance.
8. The development of thermonuclear weapons involves the production of large quantities of fission products and plutonium, the most toxic substance known; plutonium persists in the environment for up to hundreds of thousands of years.

Nuclear Power Generation

9. Nuclear power facilities, whether civilian or military, produce emissions of radiation and inevitably pose serious and



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unacceptable risks, including transportation spills, theft of radioactive materials, accidents that spread contamination over vast regions, and the catastrophic effects of a reactor core meltdown.

10. No nuclear power plant has ever been safely and completely decommissioned. The ultimate environmental and economic costs of decommissioning remain incalculable.

Nuclear Waste

11. No safe method for the disposal of medium- and high-level nuclear wastes has been devised. Solutions offered can only provide for storage or dumping, which carry an ever-present risk of lethal contamination. The problem is simply thrust onto future generations.

12. The territories of indigenous peoples, impoverished developing countries, and the global commons are frequently targeted for storage or dumping of waste, thus compounding international injustice.

III. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

13. Vast quantities of the world's uranium resources are located and extracted in the territories of indigenous peoples; these territories are often exploited for weapons testing and the storage or dumping of nuclear substances. In violation of their right to self-determination, indigenous peoples have been victimized by dispossession and forced removals, direct contamination, and the desecration of sacred sites.

14. The dispossession of peoples and the destruction of the natural ecology that result from the nuclear chain imperil the social cohesion and cultural, material, and spiritual relationship with the natural world upon which indigenous survival depends.

15. In order to defend themselves against the physical and cultural genocide that results from nuclear development, indigenous peoples must be able to freely exercise their right to determine and control, without external interference, all matters relating to their societies and territories.

IV. ECONOMIC POLICY

16. The monetary price of nuclear energy does not reflect the cost of damage to the biosphere and the profound risks to

present and future generations.

17. Governments, communities, organizations, and individuals have a duty to ensure that energy is produced and used in a clean, safe, and efficient manner; the global economy cannot support inappropriate energy consumption patterns.

18. The view that unlimited economic growth can be sustained on a habitable planet is fallacious and constitutes a significant threat to future generations.

19. Current international policies perpetuate unjust economic disparities which cause developing countries to adopt destructive environmental practices such as uranium mining, nuclear power generation, and the provision of dumping sites for radioactive waste. Sharing safe and efficient energy technologies is essential for equitable and environmentally sound economics in those countries.

20. The Precautionary Principle, as recognized by the international community, requires that the safety of potentially dangerous activities must be conclusively established prior to taking any measures towards their implementation. In the case of the nuclear chain, any reasonable application of the Precautionary Principle would require that uranium and other radioactive minerals remain undisturbed in their natural location.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Uranium Hearing calls upon governments and, within their respective spheres of responsibility and competence, transnational and other corporations, organizations, communities and individuals:

1. To recognize and respect the inherent right to self-determination of indigenous people, including their right to determine and control, without external interference, the nuclear process as it affects their societies and territories;
2. To provide reparations for peoples, communities, and individuals victimized by the mining of radioactive minerals, the use of nuclear weapons, or the storage or dumping of nuclear waste. To make every conceivable effort to alleviate risks and damage caused by

past and existing uses of radioactive materials;

3. To ensure that liability for social and environmental damage resulting from the nuclear chain is jointly born by those controlling all its phases;

4. The lands of indigenous and other land-based peoples, contaminated by nuclear development, must immediately be rehabilitated to as near as practicable to their precontaminated state;

5. To fundamentally alter existing economic policies to ensure ecological sustainability; energy development must shift to the use of safe and renewable resources;

6. To provide assistance, including financial resources where necessary, for the development of alternative energy programs in countries which utilize nuclear power;

7. To ensure that any economic analyses of the nuclear chain fully account for the entire ecological and social impact of radioactivity;

8. To provide peoples, communities, and individuals with complete information about the dangers of radioactive substances in all phases of the nuclear chain;

9. To support and promote community activities aimed at ending the use of radioactive substances;

10. To promote international and national standards, policies, and practices designed to ensure that:

a) radioactive minerals are no longer exploited; and

b) existing radioactive products of the nuclear chain are dealt with according to the safest technology irrespective of monetary cost;

11. To immediately cease production and testing of nuclear weapons; the process of global nuclear disarmament must continue to completion.

The World Uranium Hearing took place in Salzburg, Austria, on September 13-19, 1992. This document was presented to the United Nations in 1993. It is available in a book-transcript of the hearing, Poison Fire, Sacred Earth, from the World Uranium Society, 39 W. 14th St. #206, New York, NY 10011; 212-633-6646.



Only Justice Can Stop A Curse

By Alice Walker

Anti-Nuke Rally
Grace Cathedral, San Francisco CA
March 16, 1982

To the Man God: O Great One, I have been sorely tried by my enemies and have been blasphemed and lied against. My good thoughts and my honest actions have been turned to bad actions and dishonest ideas. My home has been ill-treated. My dear ones have been backbitten and their virtue questioned. O Man God, I beg that this that I ask for my enemies shall come to pass:

That the South wind shall scorch their bodies and make them wither and shall not be tempered to them. That the North wind shall freeze their blood and numb their muscles and that it shall not be tempered to them. That the West wind shall blow away their life's breath and will not leave their hair grow, and that their fingernails shall fall off and their bones shall crumble. That the East wind shall make their minds grow dark, their sight shall fall and their seed dry up so that they shall not multiply.

I ask that their fathers and mothers from their furthest generation will not intercede for them before the great throne, and that the wombs of their women shall not bear fruit except for strangers, and that they shall become extinct. I pray that the children who may come shall be weak of mind and paralyzed of limb and that they themselves shall curse them in their turn for ever turning the breath of life into their bodies. I pray that disease and death shall be forever with them and that their worldly goods shall not prosper, and that their crops shall not multiply and that their cows, their sheep, and their hogs and all the living beasts shall die of starvation and thirst. I pray that their house shall be unroofed and that the rain, the thunder and lightning shall find the innermost recesses of their home and that the foundation shall crumble and the floods tear it asunder. I pray that the sun shall not shed its rays on them in benevolence, but instead it shall beat down on them and bum them and destroy them. I pray that the moon shall not give them peace, but instead shall deride them and decry them and cause their minds to shrivel. I pray that their friends shall

betray them and cause them loss of power, of gold and of silver, and that their enemies shall smite them until they beg for mercy which shall not be given them. I pray that their tongues shall forget how to speak in sweet words, and that it shall be paralyzed and that all about them shall be desolation, pestilence and death. O Man God, I ask you for all these things because they have dragged me in the dust and destroyed my good name; broken my heart and caused me to curse the day that I was born. So be it.

This is a curse-prayer that Zora Neale Hurston, novelist and anthropologist, collected in the 1920s. And by then it was already old. I have often marvelled at it. At the precision of its anger, the absoluteness of its bitterness. Its utter hatred of the enemies it condemns. It is a curse-prayer by a person who would readily, almost happily, commit suicide, if it meant her enemies would also die. Horribly.

I am sure it was a woman who first prayed this curse. And I see her — Black, Yellow, Brown or Red, "aboriginal" as the Ancients are called in South Africa and Australia and other lands invaded, expropriated and occupied by whites. And I think, with astonishment, that the curse-prayer of this colored woman — starved, enslaved, humiliated and carelessly trampled to death — over centuries, is coming to pass. Indeed, like ancient peoples of color the world over, who have tried to tell the white man of the destruction that would inevitably follow from the uranium mining plunder of their sacred lands, this woman — along with millions and billions of obliterated sisters, brothers and children — seems to have put such enormous energy into her hope for revenge, that her curse seems close to bringing it about. And it is this hope for revenge, finally, I think, that is at the heart of People of Color's resistance to any anti-nuclear movement.

In any case, this has been my own problem.

When I have considered the enormity of the white man's crimes against humanity. Against women. Against every living person of color. Against the poor. Against my mother and my father. Against me When I consider that at this very moment he wishes to take away what little freedom I have died

The Future

I think, with astonishment, that the curse-prayer of this colored woman — starved, enslaved, humiliated and carelessly trampled to death — over centuries, is coming to pass.

to achieve., through denial of my right to vote . . . Has already taken away education, medicine, housing and food. . . That William Shockley is saying at this moment that he will run for the Senate of my country to push his theory that Blacks are genetically inferior and should be sterilized. . . . When I consider that he is, they are, a real and present threat to my life and the life of my daughter, my people, I think — in perfect harmony with my sisters of long ago: *Let the earth marinate in poisons. Let the bombs cover the ground like rain. For nothing short of total destruction will ever teach them anything.*

And it would be good, perhaps, to put an end to the species in any case, rather than let the white man continue to subjugate it, and continue to let their lust dominate, exploit and despoil not just our planet, but the rest of the universe, which is their clear and oft-stated intention; leaving their arrogance and

litter not just on the moon, but on everything they can reach.

If we have any true love for the stars, planets, the rest of Creation, we must do everything we can to keep white man away from them. They who have appointed themselves our representatives to the rest of the universe. They who have never met any new creature without exploiting, abusing and destroying it. They who say we poor and colored and female and elderly blight neighborhoods, while they blight worlds.

What they have done to the Old, they will do to the New.

Under the white man every star would become a South Africa, every planet a Vietnam.

Fatally irradiating ourselves may in fact be the only way to save others from what Earth has already become. And this is a consideration that I believe requires some serious thought from every one of US

However, just as the sun shines on the godly and the ungodly alike, so does nuclear radiation. And with this knowledge it becomes increasingly difficult to embrace the thought of extinction purely for the assumed satisfaction of — from the grave — achieving revenge. Or even of accepting our demise as a planet as a simple and just preventative medicine administered to the universe. Life is better than death, I believe, if only because it is less boring, and because it has fresh peaches in it. In any case, Earth is my

With this knowledge it becomes increasingly difficult to embrace the thought of extinction purely for the assumed satisfaction of — from the grave — achieving revenge.

home — though for centuries white people have tried to convince me I have no right to exist, except in the dirtiest, darkest corners of the globe.

So let me tell you: I intend to protect my home. Praying — not a curse — only the hope that my courage will not fail my love. But if by some miracle, and all our struggle, the earth is spared, only justice to every living thing (and everything alive) will save humankind.

And we are not saved yet.

Only justice can stop a curse.

Alice Walker won the American Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple*. She has written many books. "Only Justice Can Stop a Curse" is from *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, copyright © 1983 by Alice Walker. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace & Co.

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The people she met lived on lands decimated by fallout from nuclear testing. The forests were so lifeless and charred they resembled Hiroshima. Children were being born with genetic defects. The men of the village were dying at a disproportionate rate — of diseases like leukemia and cancer directly related to contamination, and of those like alcoholism and suicide secondarily related. Armstrong identified one woman in the tribe who she sensed could facilitate healing among her people. But this woman was so overcome with desperation and despair that

she was paralyzed. Using medicine ways of the Okanagan, Armstrong worked tirelessly with the woman to resuscitate her spirit. "As long as this woman was locked in despair," she told me, "there was no hope. Our job as humans is to care about and commune with Creation. *If we do not do our job, Creation doesn't have a chance of surviving.*"

People of color have borne more than the lion's share of the toxic effects of nuclear development. And yet, despite the injustice of the situation, if we do not do our job of caring for and communing with our beautiful world, as Armstrong says, all is lost. In this issue of *Race, Poverty and the Environment*, we hope to reveal to you the tragic connections between

nuclear development and the suffering of communities of color — and to inspire you to join the Struggle to stop this source of pain and dislocation before another fifty years pass.

Chellis Glendinning
Chimayó, New Mexico

Chellis Glendinning is the author of My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization, When Technology Wounds, and Waking Up in the Nuclear Age. Special thanks to Hannah Creighton and Hilario Romero for tireless dedication on this 50th anniversary issue.

Resources

Resources

ORGANIZATIONS

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P.O. Box 5339
Reno NV 98513
702-827-4200

Citizen Soldier
175 Fifth Ave.
New York NY 10010
212-777-3470

Citizens Against
Nuclear Trash
P.O. Box 195
Homer LA 71040
318-927-6942

Citizens for Environmental Justice
P.O. Box 1841
Savannah GA 31401
912-233-0907

Committee of Atomic Bomb
Survivors
1765 Sutter St.
San Francisco CA 94115
415-921-5225

Depleted Uranium Citizens' Network
P.O. Box 845
Sabattus ME 04280
207-375-8482

Friends of Hibakusha
1759 Sutter St.
San Francisco CA 94115
415-567-7599

Humans Against Nuclear Waste
Dumps
P.O. Box 2170
Ruidoso NM 88345

Indigenous Environmental Network
P.O. Box 485
Bemidji MN 56601
218-751-4967

Institute for Energy and Environmen-
tal Research
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Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe
Environment
P.O. Box 100
Paguete NM 87040
505-552-9352

National Association of Atomic
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Salem MA 01970
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National Association of Radiation
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Weaverville CA 96093
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Native Americans for a Clean
Environment
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Tahlequah OK 74465
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Native American Radiation Health
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Concord MA 01742
508-287-0023

National Environmental Coalition of
Native Americans
2213 West 8th St.
Prague OK 74864

Nuclear Free America
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Baltimore MD 21218
410-235-3575
and
2852 High St.
Salem OR 97302
503-364-2661

Paiute Earthkeepers
P.O. Box 68
Fredonia AZ 86022

President's Advisory Committee on
Human Radiation Experiments
1726 M St. NW #600
Washington DC 20036
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Project Chariot
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Point Hope AK 99766
907-368-2223

Rainbow Serpent
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510-540-5917

Rural Alliance for Military
Accountability
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Southwest Indigenous Uranium
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Gallup NM 87301
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Southwest Network for Economic &
Environmental Justice
P.O. Box 7399
Albuquerque NM 87194
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Southwest Organizing Project
211 10th St. SW
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Southwest Research and Information
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Albuquerque NM 87106
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510-443-7148

Uranium Radiation Victims
Committee
Navajo Nation
P.O. Box 1526
Shiprock NM 87420
505-368-5688; 505-368-4027

Water Information
Network
P.O. Box 4524
Albuquerque NM 87105
505-255-4072

Western Shoshone Defense
Crescent Valley NV 89821
702-468-0230

World Uranium Hearing
39 West 14th St. #206
New York NY 10011
212-633-6646

Resources

Books

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