

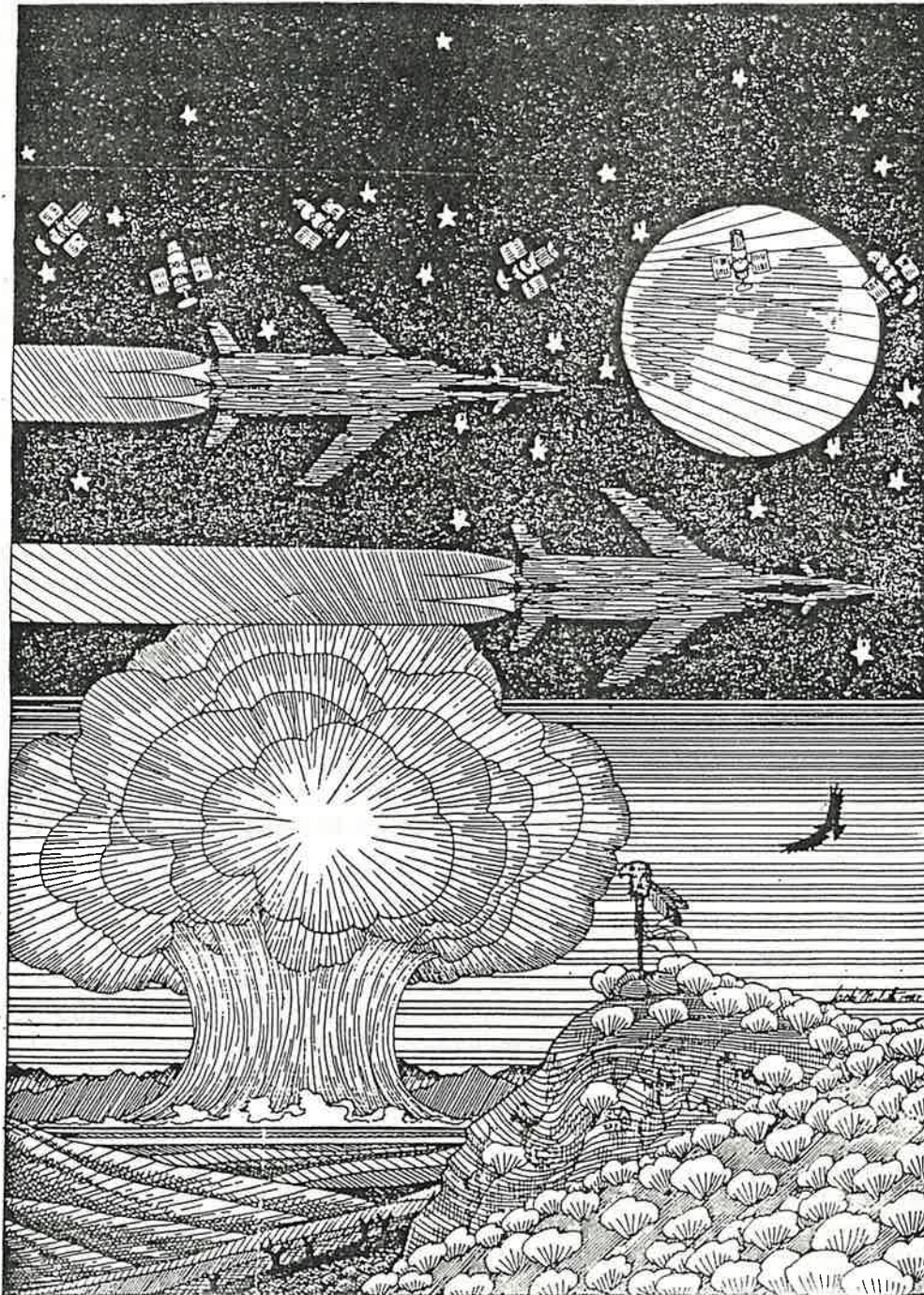
The Western Shoshone National Council & the Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance call for

# Healing Global Wounds

*Indigenous Forum and Ceremony*

Nevada Test Site/Las Vegas \* October 2-12, 1992

Stop Nuclear Testing \* End 500 Years of Injustice



- Oct 2-4: Indigenous Peoples Forum/ Las Vegas.
- Oct 5: Demonstration at the Test Site Operations Office/Las Vegas.
- Oct 5-9: Join European Peace Pilgrimage & Walk  
Across America for Mother Earth for the 65 mile  
completion of their 3000+ mile, 8-month walks.
- Oct 6-12: Nevada Test Site Encampment.
- Oct 10: Native-led Healing Ceremony.
- Oct 11: Multi-cultural Rally & Mass Nonviolent Action.
- Oct 12: 500 Years Commemoration.

For more information contact:  
**Western Shoshone National Council**  
PO Box 140115, Duckwater, NV 89314  
**American Peace Test**  
PO Box 26725 Las Vegas NV 89126 (702) 386-9834  
**Citizen Alert**  
PO Box 1681, Las Vegas NV 89125 (702) 648-8982  
**Nevada Desert Experience**  
PO Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127 (702) 646-4814  
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# Nevada Desert Experience blasts ongoing nuclear threat

By DOROTHY VIDULICH  
NCR Staff

**LAS VEGAS** — They gathered shortly after dawn June 18 at the Nevada Test Site (NTS), 65 miles northwest of the glitter of the casino world here. Four hundred members of 71 religious communities from 31 states and seven foreign lands — Japan, Chile, Canada, Mexico, Guam, England and South Africa — were present to express publicly the prophetic character of their religious congregations as they reflected, prayed and acted to halt nuclear weapons testing.

For two decades now, since the Nevada Desert Experience was founded in 1981 by a group of Franciscan brothers and sisters to end nuclear weapons testing at the NTS, this desolate and arid spot has been the site of protest.

Annually, the Nevada Desert Experience, during Lent and other times, attracts religious-based and secular activist groups to pray, to protest and to risk arrest because they oppose the threat associated with possessing nuclear weapons, with the costs — the 1990 U.S. research, development and testing budget was nearly \$2 billion — and with the health hazards. The protest information packet included a letter from Gray Nun of Sacred Heart Sister Rosalie Bertell warning that "even underground explosions release noncondensable radioactive gases." Bertell is a researcher at Canada's Institute of Public Concern for Public Health.

*This year's religious communities' protest* — women outnumbered men 10 to one — was a four-day vigil and teach-in that ended with the June 21 mass arrest of 291 protesters who deliberately trespass on the test site property.

Each workday, 100 buses bring 8,000 employees to NTS, a 1,350 square-mile U.S. Department of Energy-operated facility, slightly larger than the state of Rhode Island. Workers disembark at Mercury, Nevada, a town with no permanent population — just a sheriff's office and a Quonset-hut theater — a town off-limits to all but energy department employees. (The U.S. government may run the site, but Native Americans claim it: See accompanying story.)

Protesters such as former Air Force officer Francisca Father Louis Vitale of

## Test site said to be Native American land

**LAS VEGAS** — Pauline Esteves, Western Shoshone Native American representative, set up a Nevada Test Site table and issued permits for protesters to "gather, go and come" on land used by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Esteves said the land belongs to the Shoshone nation; the U.S. government does not disagree. In 1979, it offered the Shoshone \$26 million in compensatory damages. But the Native Americans instead want their land back.

"The key to the protection of Western Shoshone rights is the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley," said Esteves, "but even Shoshone land belongs to the creator; we are just custodians," she said. —DV



—NCR photo/Dorothy Vidulich

Drumming up peace in the Nevada desert

Santa Barbara, who has been arrested at NTS 75 times in 20 years, see military nuclear weapons spending in terms of "putting a gun to the head of the world."

During one session, Josephite Sister Judith Vaughan, National Assembly of Religious Women director, pointed to the other costs of nuclear weapons. "Unless we resist military spending and laws which deprive families of adequate housing, health care, and education, we are complicit in contributing to the national evil of militarism," she said.

Throughout the Corpus Christi Desert Experience retreat, liturgy expressed in symbols, song and dance related the destructive forces of nuclear and high-technology warfare to the violation of creation.

The religious communities represented regarded their presence as renewal or renaming of their orders' original "charisms," or founding purposes. Said Loretto Sister Cecily Jones of Denver, "Loretto people realize our kinship with all of creation and with the fragile structure of the earth. Being here continues the work of relating the struggle for nuclear disarmament with care for the earth and with justice for native peoples."

"For Divine Word Missionaries," said Father Mark Weber of Chicago, "our missionary charism is cross-cultural in service to the Third World. In coming here, we enter the belly of the beast. U.S. militarism and foreign policy is enmeshed in global structures of injustice. We confront these powers that cause oppression in the U.S. and other countries."

So, on the first day, all gathered in the desert as Dominican Sister Margaret Diener prayed, "This desert in the middle of nowhere is a fragile ecosystem. In our name, the U.S. government claims to protect national safety. In our name, the earth in this place has been scarred. We

are here in keeping with the tradition of penitence, reconciliation and peace."

Other participants commented on their reasons for being there:

• Sister St. Joseph of Peace Suzanne Golas said, "Just being here in the desert creates a sense of urgency. We must say no to bombs, war and the defilement of the earth."

• "I had a profound experience here two years ago and needed to come back," said Franciscan Capuchin Father Daniel Crosby, who ministers at a Montana Indian reservation. "I found myself as close as a man can come to experiencing rape. I could feel the earth inside me — the terrible violence done to me, to us, when another nuclear weapon is plunged into the earth and explodes. I had to return to say our government can't do that to us, to the earth."

• Lansing, Mich., diocesan priest Father C. Peter Dougherty said, "The source of my charism is Saginaw Bishop Kenny Untener who has challenged priests to be prophetic and speak the truth to injustice. This has led me to protest at the Wurtsmith Strategic Air Command Base where B-52s are deployed and now at the Nevada test site."

Yet, the peacemakers were warned by Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister that there may no longer be a "peace movement" in the United States. "The inability to call 'stop' to the collateral damage of the Gulf War may prove that the peace movement is dead or that there was no peace movement at all. But we must build a peace movement in the church," she said as she reminded religious communities that, "just as we took the lead in providing education, health care and social services in the past, we must now speak prophetically to power and sound the call to cosmic consciousness."

The day the protesters were arrested a test-site guard was overheard to say, "Imagine, we have 265 nuns here in the pen and our pastor can't find two sisters to work in the parish."

But the point these protesters were making is that the globe is one people, one world, one parish. ■



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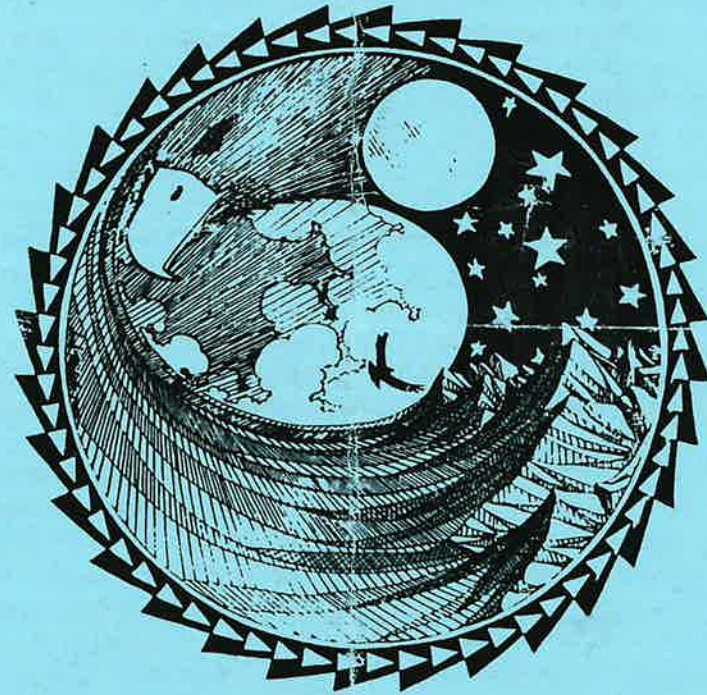
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# HEALING GLOBAL WOUNDS

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**STOP NUCLEAR TESTING  
END 500 YEARS OF INJUSTICE**

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**OCTOBER 2-12, 1992**

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**NEVADA TEST SITE**

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**(702) 386-9834 PO BOX 4082, LAS VEGAS, NV 89127**

Sunday October 11

## **MULTI-CULTURAL RALLY**

At Test Site Entrance. Please bring seating or blankets.

**8:30 am-12 noon:** A morning rally will feature music, dance, and performance from Indian Nations and from delegates around the world will celebrate 500 years of Indian resistance. The Rally will include:

Opening by Western Shoshone Spiritual Leader **Corbin Harney**

Welcome by Western Shoshone National Council Chief **Raymond Yowell, Carrie Dann, William Rosse Sr., and Pauline Esteves.**

**Wah-Pahn-Aquinte** Paiute Dancers from Cold Creek Amongst the Cedar Trees; Lionel, Lydell, Leann and Leo Shepherd Jr.

**Havasupai Tribe** performers from the Grand Canyon where they are fighting planned uranium mining that threatens their religion, land and people.

And much, much more.

## **MASS NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION**

**12:00 noon-** The rally will be followed by mass nonviolent direct action to demand a halt to nuclear testing on Western Shoshone Indian land, continuing and supporting the last 500 years of resistance.

Monday October 12

## **500 YEARS OF RESISTANCE: NATIVE ELDERS SPEAK OUT**

**Early morning to afternoon:** Native American and indigenous elders will speak the truth about what began with the arrival of Columbus on this day 500 years ago and continues to the present day. This international event will counter official celebrations of Columbus' arrival, and mark the beginning of a reversal of the last 500 years of injustice.

## **NONVIOLENT ACTION TRAININGS**

Learn the theory and practice of nonviolent action and prepare for Healing Global Wounds actions. This essential for all who choose to engage in nonviolent direct action and risk arrest. Trainings take approximately 4 to 5 hours.

**Thursday October 8:** 5pm at Test Site

**Friday October 9:** 2 pm at Test Site

**Saturday October 10:** 5pm at Test Site

\* **Directions to Nevada Test Site Encampment** from Las Vegas: Take Hwy. 95 north 65 miles to Mercury exit. Go past exit and get off at Airport Rd. turn around and go south back to Mercury exit



## Nevada Desert Experience Events

1990	Franciscan Holy Weekend Exp.	LV, NV	1 sister
1991	Corpus Christi Retreat	LV, NV	5 sisters
1992	Retreat on Active Nonviolence	LV, NV	4 sisters
1992	Healing Global Wounds	LV, NV	6 sisters
1992	Retreat on Active Nonviolence	San Luis Rey, CA	1 sister

Journaling and sharing with learning partners as preparation for Chapter '92.



Clinton Franciscan Sisters at the Nevada Desert Experience were, from left: Donna Burke; Ida Green; Sister Rosemary Lynch, OSF, originator of the event; Jan Cebula; Mary Smith; Maria Zeimen; and Father Louie Vitale, OFM, also an original organizer.

## Clinton nuns were part of large retreat-protest in Nevada desert

Five Clinton Franciscan Sisters were among 400 U.S. religious leaders from throughout the U.S. and from seven other countries who gathered in Nevada in June for the Desert Experience Faith and Resistance Retreat.

Part of the activity was a demonstration against nuclear weapons testing and a prayer vigil at the Nevada Nuclear Testing Site in the Nevada desert near Las Vegas.

Nearly 300 of the sisters, priests and bishops in the retreat made a symbolic trespass onto the test site at the conclusion of the week-long gathering and were arrested.

Sister Maria Zeimen, president of the Clinton Franciscans, said the retreat "engendered profound reverence for all of creation, particularly for the native peoples who are being deprived of their home and their health, and renewed our con-

cern for ending nuclear testing."

The sisters were among U.S. religious communities which endorsed the 1991 Desert Experience, a retreat which began with a small protest against underground nuclear testing in the Nevada desert staged on Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6, 1977.

Franciscan Sister Rosemary Lynch and Franciscan Father Louie Vitale, who worked in a small spirituality center in Los Vegas, started the retreats as a Lenten experience for religious at the test site. Thousands have come to the site since and taken the symbolic step to be arrested not in civil disobedience "but divine obedience."

Nevertheless, testing has continued, although the number in 1990 fell to six.

Focus of the retreat, the sisters said, is the building of a Church that will resist evils directly and indirect-

ly associated with nuclear weapons. This includes militarism and variations of violence that include sexism, racism, patriarchy, the wasting of the environment and other species, and neglect of the poor.

Pat Kozak, liturgy coordinator for the retreat, said "We gather as the body of Christ, a people of hope who vow to care for the earth and its people and to make choices that will enable future generations to live in health, in peace and in hope."

Along with Sr. Zeimen, other Clinton Franciscans making the June retreat were: Sister Donna Burke, vocation director for the community; Sister Mary Smith, former president of the community and now a spiritual director in Hesperia, Calif.; Sister Ida Green, a nursing teacher in Chicago; and Sister Jan Cebula, an attorney with Missouri Legal Aid in Kansas City.