

NUKEWATCH

WINTER, 1998-99

PATHFINDER

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Radiation Industry Spreading Disease

Illnesses Surround U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex
Town Garbage Irradiated by Hot Hanford Bugs
Radioactive Soil, Spinach & Pigeons in the UK
Cancer Victims Win Millions from Reactor Operators
Hot French Mushrooms Confiscated
Roots Draw Buried Radiation to the Surface

By John LaForge

Even years after the shutdown of reactor operations, even after the burial of nuclear waste, radioactive contamination continues to spread and to make people sick. News of nuclear recklessness comes into the Nukewatch office from almost 40 journals and newsletters. A few examples illustrate how wide-ranging is the health threat being left by the nuclear power and weapons industry.

Unexplained illnesses around the nation's mothballed nuclear weapons production complex are today the focus of major controversies. On Sept. 29, 1998, *The Tennessean*, in Nashville, published a comprehensive and scathing investigative series, by Laura Frank and Susan Thomas on the mysterious cancers and other diseases afflicting people living near 13 former nuclear weapons reactor sites in the U.S. Among the report's grim findings:

- 1) The message that the federal government has been sending to the ill around the nation's nuclear weapons plants: "Prove we've harmed you before we help you."
- 2) The DOE has done nothing to take a comprehensive look at health concerns around all its sites.
- 3) The government has paid private attorneys more than \$54 million since 1991 to fight thousands of people who believe Hanford releases have already made them ill.

The report, "An Investigation into Illnesses around the Nation's Nuclear Weapons Sites," can be found at <http://www.tennessean.com>

On Oct. 7, the DOE announced that 35 tons of radioactive trash must be removed from the Richland, Washington City dump and returned to the Hanford nuclear weapons site on

the Columbia River. Two weeks later they upped the estimate to 210 tons. Fluor Daniel Hanford, the company that manages the DOE site, claims that radioactive insects were contaminated at Hanford and carried their contamination to the city landfill where they lighted on wet garbage and subsequently contaminated the trash. Although the waste is being taken to the government site for burial, Fluor Daniel officials said the radioactivity of the pests is "slight and no threat to neighboring communities."

Spinach grown near the waste reprocessing machinery in Sellafield, England is reportedly poisoned with radioactivity seven times higher than "normal." Technetium-99, a beta radiation emitter with a half-life of 213 million years, was found to exceed by seven times the European Union's standard for food contamination. The Sellafield facility (which extracts plutonium from waste reactor fuel) is responsible for radioactive contamination of the soil around the site and of the Irish Sea, which for years has been used as a sewer for its liquid wastes.

The University of Bremen, Germany, concluded in September that soil around the Sellafield facility is just as contaminated, if not more so, than soil around the destroyed Chernobyl reactor in Ukraine. Samples taken 800 meters from the Chernobyl explosion contained americium-241, for example, emitting around 1,300 Becquerels per kilogram (Bq/kg). Soil taken 11 kilometers from the Sellafield facility was so polluted with this isotope that it emitted as much as 30,000 Bq/kg.

Greenpeace reported in April 1998 that game pigeons near Sellafield were also radioactively contaminated. In a typical act of trivialization, the British government announced a ban on the consumption of the birds for 10 miles around the factory. The pigeons will presumably be trained to recognize and stay within the ten-mile no-eat-zone.

In September, the former owners of nuclear fuel production systems in Apollo, Penn. (Atlantic Richfield Co. and Babcock & Wilcox), were ordered to pay \$36.5 million in damages to cancer victims or their survivors who proved that their illnesses were caused by the companies' gross negligence. The factory, which produced fuel for propulsion reactors aboard U.S. missile-firing submarines, was run from 1957 to

1986, and torn down in 1992. Dr. James Melius, an occupational and public health specialist, testified during the month-long trial that, "one in five people living close to the plant were diagnosed with cancer from 1990 to 1994, compared with one in 125 outside a one-mile radius."

This October, several metric tons of wild mushrooms contaminated with cesium-137 and imported from Austria in October were removed from French supermarkets and confiscated by French customs. Most of the seized mushrooms contained over 2,000 Becquerels of cesium-137 per kg, well above the European Union limit for import of 600 Bq/kg, according to the French radiological protection agency, OPRI. Some boxes measured over 8,000 Bq/kg. The confiscated mushrooms were to be incinerated by France's rad waste agency, a process that will loft some of the cesium back into the atmosphere. The contamination stems from cesium spewed by the 1986 Chernobyl explosion's fallout, which, in France, fell heavily on the mushroom-laden Mercantour region.

Finally, Three Mile Island Alert reports that even buried nuclear waste can escape to the surface—by climbing up the roots of plants. Tests in both Britain and the U.S. confirm that radioactive particles, buried under sand inside steel cylinders, were carried to the surface in water absorbed naturally by the roots of tiny plants. Colorado State University's William Sanford, who studied waste buried at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, said, "This could result in direct exposures and off-site releases from underground storage facilities."

In the U.S., the Energy Department manages rad waste left from nuclear weapons production while simultaneously defending and promoting the development of nuclear power and weapons. Sen. John Glenn (D-OH) has complained that the DOE's attempts at waste storage and "clean up" have often made matters worse. The renowned Institute for Environmental and Energy Research (IEER) in Maryland, has recommended that the DOE be removed from waste management programs and be replaced by an independent rad waste authority, "that does not suffer a conflict of interest between nuclear power and weapons production and environmental and health protection." We heartily agree.

Confronting Project ELF

• October Action

Celebrating the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi and St. Francis of Assisi, Duluth's Loaves and Fishes Community organized another gathering and action against the Navy's Project ELF system October 3 and 4.

Following a Saturday loaded with workshops and a keynote address from Ojibway Elder and disarmament activist Larry Cloud Morgan, 65 people gathered Sunday at the gates of the ELF transmitter to honor the history of nonviolent action—by doing some. Four more nuclear resisters were arrested for trespassing; Joel Kilgore and John Heid, of Duluth's Loaves and Fishes Community, Nukewatch's Bonnie Urfer, and Sarah Arndt, from Lena, WI. All face fines or the suspension of Wisconsin driving rights.

Project ELF uses extremely low frequency electromagnetic (non-ionizing) radiation to send one-way orders to submerged British and U.S. missile-firing submarines around the world. Two ELF transmitters—one in Michigan and another in Wisconsin—operate simultaneously to generate an ELF signal that encircles the earth and penetrates seawater.

The October action was the 36th since 1991, when the collapse of the Soviet Union eliminated the Navy's rationale for nuclear weapons. With the nuclear arsenal's defenders and profiteers scrambling for other justifications, Anathoth Community Farm, Nukewatch, students at Northland College and others began a campaign of regular civil resistance actions and galvanized a Coalition to Stop Project ELF. Its most active groups now include the Loaves and Fishes Community in Duluth and Laurentian Shield Resources for Nonviolence in Maple, WI.

The Coalition includes over 30 peace groups, among them the International Physicians for Social Responsibility (winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize), the War Resisters League, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Alliance of Atomic Veterans. In addition, 20 attorneys have signed on to an informal indictment of the system, saying that ELF, as a part of the Trident submarine system, "is likely to be operated in violation of international law."

• ELF "Improvement" Proposed, U.S. Forest Service Carries Water for Navy

In September, the U.S. Forest Service announced plans for a so-called "ELF improvement" project. The Navy wants to dig a series of up to thirty 200-foot "wells" to be drilled at three of the four ELF grounding sites in Ashland County.

The U.S. Forest Service office in Glidden, WI, "is propos-

ing to allow the Navy to drill test bore holes" in the vicinity of three of the sites. The grounds are at the four ends of the X-shaped antenna system that extends seven miles from the center near Clam Lake, WI (see map). The ELF antenna—cables strung on poles through the Chequamegon National Forest—uses the grounds to jolt the bedrock with millions of watts of electricity.

The Forest Service rather than the Navy announced the "improvement" in a Sept. 9 *Sawyer County Record* story—with the zinger that the public comment period would end Sept 10! The Forest Service's phone number was listed as a contact for more information on the plan. When questioned about the report, Head Ranger John Bisbee at the Glidden office said the test phase is "insignificant" (just one well is to be drilled at each of three grounds) and that no formal notice of action was legally required. Bisbee said that if the tests, completed in Nov., are successful, then his department is required to produce a draft environmental assessment and take public comment as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Forest Service's involvement in Navy submarine warfare operations might seem a diabolical stretch of its mission. The FS/Navy connection is outlined in a bland six-page, 1986 "memorandum of understanding" between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (the Forest Service's parent agency) and the Department of the Navy. The memo grants the Navy the use of the National Forest to build and operate the ELF system. Nowhere in the memo does the Forest Service agree to do press work and handle public relations for the nuclear Navy.

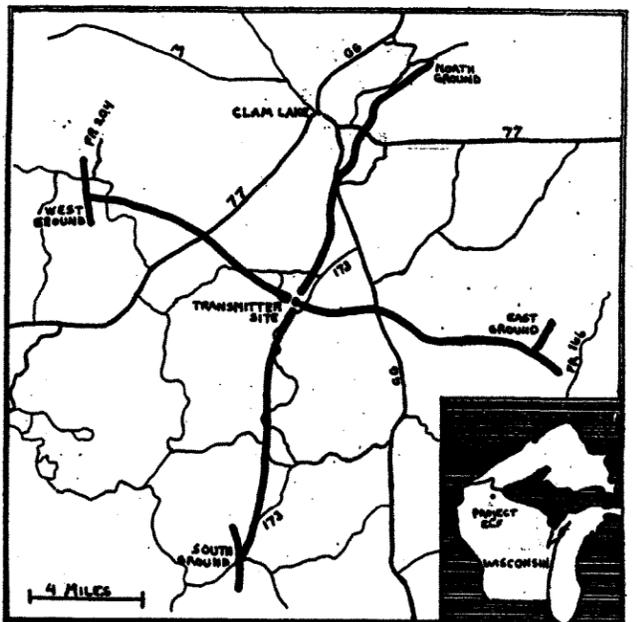
• Celebrating 30 Years of Struggle

In response to the most recent ELF action, an October 6 editorial in the *Duluth News Tribune* noted the longevity of ELF opposition, now 30 years old, and suggested we give up. The *Tribune's* editors said in part:

"A quartet of protesters—two of them Duluthians—was arrested Sunday for trespassing on the Navy's ELF site... That's become so routine, it's hardly news anymore when demonstrators break the law to show opposition to the low-frequency communications system used to communicate with nuclear-armed U.S. Navy submarines.

"With their demonstrations, protesters have been damaging and illegally entering the ELF site for 30 years. And what have they gotten for their trouble? Some low-voltage political support; no change. ...

"If 30 years of trespassing at the ELF site has yielded little more than lip service from a few politicians, then maybe the protesters should file for public office and push their goals themselves."



Not a word in the *Tribune's* complaint was directed toward nuclear weapons or to questions of their legality, morality or efficacy. With most of the world's editors calling upon the nuclear-armed states to abolish their nuclear weapons, it is shallow and obscurantist to "kill the messenger."

The October arrests brought to 450 the number of citations issued for "trespassing" on the site since the end of the cold war. Of course, prior to 1991 there were hundreds of organized and ad hoc demonstrations, protests and nonviolent actions against the ELF system, including statewide referendums, three individual disarmament actions and even a federal court injunction, *State of Wis. v. Weinberger* (1984). In 1979, President Carter canceled the program outright on the recommendation of the Navy itself.

Much of the early opposition was organized by the original Stop Project ELF, Citizens Against Trident and ELF, The Alternative Survey and a handful of other groups in Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota. All of these organizations have helped keep the issue of nuclear weapons in the public eye and in the face of congressional representatives who continue to oppose the system.

Civics lessons abound. ELF is operated in spite of widespread public and congressional opposition. In Wisconsin, six of nine U.S. Representatives and both U.S. Senators now oppose funding the system. In 1986, an ordinary Ashland County jury concluded that ELF cannot act defensively, but is an aggressive, "first strike" system. Five Wisconsin dailies and one weekly have called for ELF's shut down, including the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* which says, "It's time to give Project ELF a dignified retirement."

17 Arrested at StratCom

By Bonnie Urfer

About 35 people attended the Missile Silo Activists (Re)Union, sponsored by the Lakes and Prairies Life Community, in Omaha on the weekend of October 17-19. The event coincided with the War Resisters League's "Day Without the Pentagon" action in Washington.

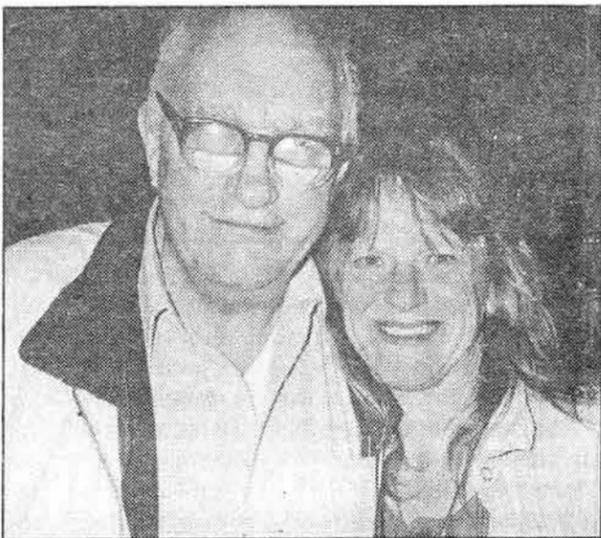
Seventeen "Citizen Inspectors" entered StratCom (Strategic Command) at Offutt Air Force Base at noon on the 19th to conduct an investigation into the threatened use of weapons of mass destruction. The Air Force waited at the property line and began arrests immediately. After crossing onto the base, inspectors were searched, handcuffed and loaded onto a waiting bus. The inspectors received "Ban and Bar" letters, forbidding them entry onto the base for one year, in a process that took a couple of hours. All of us were released at the gate where supporters waited with banners and song.

The statement carried by the inspectors was short, and read in part, "In solidarity with other war resisters gathered today in Washington, DC, we deplore the planned use of weapons of mass destruction, the possession of which is in clear violation of international law, and all of which constitute a theft of resources from the poor in this country and around the world."

The nonviolent resistance action followed a long day of educational presentations that included Daniel Sicken, participant in the August Minuteman III plowshares disarmament in Colorado; Bill Sultzman with Citizens for Peace in Space; Sam Day, working to free Mordechai Vanunu; Dion Lovett, with Homeless On the Move for Equality (HOME) from Chicago; John LaForge, who related Barb Katt's and his research into the locations of all 1,000 land-based missile silo sites and Mary Knebel, speaking about the advantage and disadvantage of support activism. Numerous 1988 Missouri Peace Planters attended the event.

One decade ago, fourteen peace activists occupied ten missile silo sites in Missouri, calling themselves the Missouri Peace Planters. All trespassers received jail or prison time ranging from a few weeks to more than two years. Dozens of additional resisters put in years worth of support work, including producing and publishing an account of the action and its consequences: *Prisoners on Purpose*. It's still available from Nukewatch.

Since that time, almost one-half of the missiles buried in underground silos in the Midwest have been removed including all of the silos in Missouri. The Omaha (Re)union focused on the past, the present and also motivated us to work toward further disarmament by crossing more lines for peace.



Sam Day and Linda Urfer, both former Nukewatch staff members, pose with a smile.

Sam Day Honored

Sam Day, Nukewatch co-founder, longtime Nukewatch staffer and board member, was honored by the Snake River Alliance which presented him with its Boise Peace Quilt for his work as coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu is the former Israeli nuclear technician who was kidnapped by secret police, tried in secret and imprisoned for 18 years for revealing to the world, as an act of conscience, Israel's nuclear weapons capability.

Sam is also the recipient, in 1992, of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Award from the U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation.

On January 16, 1998 Sam will be the keynote speaker at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday celebration and nonviolent resistance action to stop Project ELF at Northland College in Ashland, WI.

2 Nukewatch Pathfinder



Photo by Jo Peterson

Citizen Inspectors holding their "Ban & Bar" letters issued after crossing the line into Strategic Command in Omaha, Nebraska. The inspection was part of the Missile Silo Activists (Re)Union, motivated by the 10th anniversary of the Missouri Peace Planters. The action took place at the same time that 700 people marched in Washington for the War Resisters League's "Day Without the Pentagon."

Community News

By Bonnie Urfer

Nukewatch moved to the Anathoth Community Farm on the Plowshares Land Trust near Luck, Wisconsin, in the Fall of 1996. For nine years before Nukewatch arrived, Anathoth engaged in social justice organizing, nonviolent resistance, educational work and non-chemicalized gardening. That tradition just grows stronger.

This year, students came from Vermont, Illinois and Minnesota. Some groups visited for 10 days and each day was filled with hard-hitting, informational workshops.

Rachel Ries, from Freeman, SD, joined Anathoth for the Summer and spent plenty of time helping in the Nukewatch office and keeping the garden weeded. We were lucky to have Rachel with us as she shared her amazing music, wisdom, patience and energy.

Dozens of guests stayed with us during the past year. Fifty people came for the Mothers' Day weekend.

In order to meet a growing need for more hospitality space, we recently purchased an 18'-by-20' house. An ad in the local shopper said: "Houses, Delivered!" With a bit of work building a foundation, insulating and sprucing up, it will serve Anathoth well as a dormitory and guest cottage.

Based on the amount of time and money it would have taken us to build a guest residence from scratch, we're elated with this one. By Spring we hope to have it seated, heated and habitable.

Plans are underway for the January Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday gathering. Mothers' Day at Anathoth and Project ELF proves to be an exciting event every year. Please plan on visiting the community, meet-

ing activists from around the country and participating in nonviolent resistance at Project ELF.

Two student groups are already scheduled for Spring and we're looking forward to another year of maple syruping and gardening. But that's getting a bit ahead of schedule; first we must make it through another long and hopefully snowy Wisconsin Winter.



Rachel Ries, Anathoth and Nukewatch Summer volunteer.



The little red house arrived at the Anathoth Community Farm in October. It still needs a bit of work including a foundation, insulation and sprucing-up of the floors and walls. We hope to have it ready for students visiting in the Spring.

Calendar of Events

December

29-Jan. 1—The 7th International War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns conference will be in New Delhi, India. Contact: National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, P.O. Box 774, Monroe, ME 04951; Phone: 800-269-7464.

January

4—Gods Of Metal Plowshares sentencing in Federal Court, Southern District, Greenbelt, Maryland. Contact: Jonah House, 1301 Moreland, Baltimore, MD 21216; Phone: (410)233-6238.

15-17—Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration at Northland College and Project ELF. Sam Day-keynote speaker, nonviolence training, action planning, music, pot-luck dinner, caravan to Project ELF on Sunday. Contact: Nukewatch, (715) 472-4185; or Peace Studies Club: Monica Balderas, (715) 685-2571; bm5059@wheeler.northland.edu

20—Minuteman III Plowshares sentencing hearing in the Federal Courthouse in Denver Colorado. Contact: Bill Sulzman, Citizens for Peace in Space, P.O. Box 915, Colorado Springs, CO 80901; Phone: (719) 389-0644.

February

13-14—Trident Plowshares 2000 Nonviolent Direct Action against Trident in Coulport Scotland at the Faslane Peace Camp. Contact: Trident Plowshares 2000, 42-46 Bethel Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR; Phone: (01603) 611953; Email: reforest@gn.apc.org

May

7-9—Mothers' Day Weekend at Anathoth Community Farm and Project ELF. Camping, speakers, music, pot-luck meals, tours, caravan to Project ELF on Sunday. Contact: Anathoth, 740 Round Lake Rd, Luck, WI 54853; Phone: (715) 472-8721 or Nukewatch (715) 472-4185.

7-10—"Love Your Mother" gathering at the Nevada Test Site. Contact: Healing Global Wounds, P.O. Box 3518, Freedom, CA 95019-3518; Phone: (831) 661-0445; Email: hgw@scruznet.com; Website: www.shundahai.org/HGW

15-16—Trident Plowshares 2000 Nonviolent Direct Action against Trident in Coulport Scotland at the Faslane Peace Camp. Contact: Trident Plowshares 2000, 42-46 Bethel Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR; Phone: (01603) 611953; Email: reforest@gn.apc.org

NUCLEAR SHORTS

Cassini Plutonium Pretext Debunked—by NASA

Cape Canaveral, FL—The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) rebuffed critics of its Cassini Space Probe by claiming that its power pack—72.3 pounds of deadly plutonium-238—was necessary in 1997 because solar cells couldn't produce enough power in deep space.

Now comes NASA's Deep Space 1, launched Oct. 24—a so-called "test-bed for new technologies for probes sent to explore the solar system and beyond." The craft carried a solar power array of 3,600 electricity-producing cells that will create 15 to 20 percent more power than similar devices the same size. While these solar cells debunk NASA's Cassini rationale, Deep Space 1 still depends on the nuclear waste industry: the craft carries 186 pounds of radioactive xenon gas (for fueling an ion-engine that failed Nov. 8 just after it was first turned on), the dispersal of which in the event of a launch accident would irradiate a large part of central Florida. —*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Oct. 25, 1998, p. A4; *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1998, p.B15.

"Bagpipe" Exploded, Five Arrested

Jackass Flats, NV—In the face of worldwide protest, the DOE set off a plutonium weapon test below the Nevada desert on Sept. 26. The CTBT bans "any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion." The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan condemned the test saying, "The U.S. trampled on the wishes of the people of the world," and "At a time when hopes are rising for nuclear disarmament, it is necessary to criticize the U.S. at the international level." Code-named "Bagpipe," it was the fourth so-called "sub-critical" test—a new method of testing nuclear warheads without actually exploding them—and was part of the "Stockpile Stewardship" program, a \$60 billion enterprise working to hide the development of new H-bombs. The cost estimates do not include the price of radioactive waste management, decontamination or decommissioning.

—*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, October 5, 1998; *Citizen's Watch*, Sept. 1998; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Feb. 29, 1986.

Selective "War on Terrorism" Blind to Reactor Dangers

Los Angeles—In August, the U.S. carried out missile attacks against the Sudan and Afghanistan, initiating what the government declared was an unending, open-ended war on terrorism. "This is, unfortunately, the war of the future," said the Secretary of State. "It's going to persist. We are in this for the long haul," said the Under Secretary. Observers around the world complained that the attacks were simply a distraction from the President's perjury scandal. Is the government really interested in fighting terrorism? A hint comes in the September cancellation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's counterterrorism program. The office worked to identify site security failures at commercial nuclear power reactors. The nuclear industry's vested interest in scrapping the Federal program was political and economic, since it had previously "identified serious security lapses at nearly half the nation's 104 nuclear power reactors," the Los Angeles Times reported. —*New York Times*, Nov. 4, & Aug. 23, 1998.

Sierra Blanca Nuclear Dump On Hold For Now

Austin, Texas—The Sierra Blanca Legal Defense Fund (SBLDF) and its allies won a battle, but not the war against 760,000 years worth of radioactive waste for the proposed Texas dump site. SBLDF's legal points against the dump include racist environmental and socio-economic effects, danger to health and safety, a fault beneath the site and the 1983 La Pas Agreement.

Thirteen cities, 20 counties, 82 percent of Texas voters and the Mexican government are on record opposing the dump. The Mexican Congress plans to pursue legal action against the proposal with the NAFTA Commission on Environmental Cooperation, the World Court and the United Nations.

Three Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commissioners, all appointed by Governor Bush, have the option to overrule the judge's recommendation and to issue the license.

Texans are marching, speaking and educating in a struggle to avoid joining the company of leaking low-level nuclear dumps across the country. Six out of a possible six leak including: Beatty in Nevada, Maxey Flats in Kentucky, West Valley in New York, Richland in Washington, Sheffield in Illinois and Barnwell in South Carolina.

—Sierra Blanca Legal Defense Fund, Sept. 16, 1998

Nuclear Phase-Out Announced in Germany

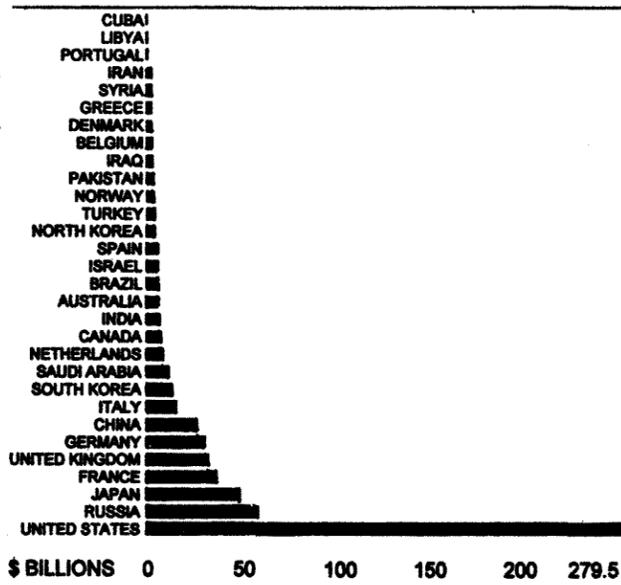
Berlin—By the end of 1999, Germany's newly elected Social Democrats and the Greens intend to have an agreement with utilities to shut down the country's nuclear power industry. Germany now has 19 operating reactors.

Germany's nuclear industry including the Federation of German Industries and the Information Agency of the German Power Suppliers (IZE) however, is using the twisted environ-

mental argument that nuclear power reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and vows to continue the use of nuclear power.

The Rocky Mountain Institute estimates that for every dollar invested in energy efficiency, seven times more CO2 emissions are cut than that same dollar invested in nuclear power. One-third of Germany's power comes from reactors. Nuclear power is the most expensive source for energy and each reactor is responsible for tons of radioactive waste in the form of tailings, irradiated fuel and routine isotope emissions.

The German government plans to store irradiated fuel on site instead of increasing plutonium stockpiles through the sale of irradiated fuel to COGEMA in France and BNFL in



Source: Center for Defense Information

Britain. Both companies stand to lose the most in revenue as they currently hold contracts for reprocessing weapons grade plutonium from Germany worth \$1.4 billion.

—*NucNet*, Nov. 4 & 6, 1998; *New York Times*, Oct. 16, 1998; Greenpeace International press release, Oct. 16, 1998.

Your Taxes at War

Washington, DC—During recent budget negotiations, ex-Speaker of the House Gingrich promised that any agreement "must include one dollar in defense spending for each dollar in non-defense spending." In October Congress added \$8.4 billion to what the Pentagon had requested, raising its gigantic tab to \$279.5 billion for the new fiscal year. The last minute give-away may have "opened the way for increases of as much as \$25 billion—nearly 10 percent—for each of the next several years." The deal includes \$2 billion for secret military projects that are exempt from public oversight and rife with fraud. Another \$1 billion is set for the speculative "missile-defense" program even though, as the *New York Times* reported, "More than \$40 billion has been spent toward that goal in the past 15 years, but no working system has been invented."

—*Omaha World Herald*, Oct. 17, 1998; *New York Times*, Oct. 16, 1998

Pentagon Accused of Rigged Depleted Uranium Studies

Washington, DC—Calling a Pentagon study's errors "startling and troubling," U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) called for an independent investigation into whether U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf in 1991 were poisoned by "depleted uranium" (DU), the radioactive toxic waste now used in shells and armor. Depleted only of uranium-235, DU is uranium-238, a dense and extremely hard metallic waste left from nuclear weapons development. It's now used in most U.S. military munitions and tank armor. Some 300 tons of the DU waste was dispersed by exploding shells in the Pentagon's 1991 bombardment of the Persian Gulf. (The UN's World Health Organization recently recommended that a W.H.O. mission visit Iraq to verify radiation levels there and find the cause of reportedly higher cancer rates.) Exposure to the uranium oxide, especially its inhalation or ingestion, can cause liver damage, cancer and immune system dysfunction. DU has long been a suspected cause of dozens of illnesses referred to as the Gulf War Syndrome. Saying he was "appalled" by the Pentagon's failure to warn troops of DU's danger, Sen. Feingold noted the work of the National Gulf War Resource Center in countering official denials and finding flaws in the Pentagon's DU studies.

—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Sept. 4, 1998; Reuters, Oct. 20, 1998; *New York Times*, Aug. 12, 1998.

ABC Network News: Radiation Schmadiation

Richland, Wash.—Trivialization of workplace hazards has reached new heights in reporting on nuclear weapons facilities. *The ABC News* web site recently described the radioac-

tive poisoning of a federal Hanford employee this way: "No workers are believed to have received a dose of radiation from the contamination. An ironworker was found to have radiation on a boot and socks in his laundry hamper at home." The man works at the Hanford nuclear "reservation in SE Washington state, a 560-square-mile site that for 40 years used caustic chemicals to extract plutonium from irradiated fuel for nuclear warheads. Hanford's plutonium-laden liquid wastes are stored in 177 giant steel tanks. At least 68 of the tanks are leaking, contaminating the aquifer that feeds the Columbia River.

—*abcnews.com*, AP, Richland, Wash., Oct. 7, 1998

Spanish Cesium Accident was Covered-up & Legal

Cadiz, Spain—The May 30 accidental melting of an unknown amount of radioactive cesium-137 by the Spanish steel firm Acerinox, sent clouds of radioactivity up the furnace stack, and across Europe sent radiation monitors off the charts. Atmospheric cesium-137 levels were reportedly 2,000 times higher than normal in parts of France and northern Italy.

A commissioner of Spain's Nuclear Safety Council (CSN), Jose Azuara, has reported that, "neither scrap trade activities nor industrial processes using this material are submitted to any specific regulation to cope with the presence of improper active [radioactive] material." Under Spanish law, he said, steel companies are, "not obliged to have any systems installed to detect the presence of [radioactive] materials nor to make an early report of the incident to CSN." Azuara said CSN had to conclude that the company, "should not have to face any legal responsibility" for its actions. The company's nine-day delay in reporting the accident, "was the cause of the main negative consequences" of the cesium-137, he said.

Azuara said mill operators, not knowing they had melted the cesium, operated the filtering system as usual. The company trucked 150 metric tons of waste "dust" to the town of Huelva, hundreds of kilometers away. There, the material was mixed with cement and sand and "spread out in layers" over a marsh in a so-called "conditioning" process—increasing the amount of contaminated sludge to 500 metric tons.

The first notice of its radiation accident came three days after the melting, June 2, when a contaminated waste-hauling truck leaving the Huelva factory set off alarms. Acerinox then covered-up the accident for a week, informing the CSN June 9.

CSN says only six workers were "slightly" contaminated. Still, commissioner Asuara called the accident "important," because the absence of radiation monitors resulted in a 400% increase in the volume of irradiated material and "irrevocably contaminated the marshland with cesium."

—Mark Hibbs, *Nucleonics Week*, Sept. 24, 1998.

Resources:

- *Alliance for Survival, 230 E. 17 Street, #210, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, (714) 722-7574
- *CARD, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, 144 Harvard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 266-2663
- *Greenpeace, 1436 U Street, NW Washington DC 20009, (800) 326-0959
- *Laurentian Shield Resources for Nonviolence, 12833 E Hwy 13, Maple, WI (715) 364-8533, laurentn@cpinternet.com
- *National Gulf War Resource Center, 1224 M ST NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 628-2700, ext. 162
- *NucNet Central Office, Belpstrasse 23, P.O. Box 5032, CH-3001 Berne, Switzerland, Phone: (011) 41-31-320-6111
- *Save Ward Valley, 107 F St., Needles, CA 92363, (760) 326-6267, swvl@ctaz.com
- *Shundahai Network, (702) 647-3095, shundahai@radix.net, or on the web at www.shundahai.org/HGW
- *Sierra Blanca Legal Defense Fund, P.O. Box 18087, Austin, TX 78760, (512) 447-8906, heart@igc.org
- *Three Mile Island Alert, 315 Peffer St., Harrisburg, PA 17102, (717) 233-7879, tmia@pipeline.com
- *WISE News Communiqué, P.O. Box 59636, 1040 LC Amsterdam, The Netherlands, (011) 31-20-612-6368, wisemaster@antenna.nl

The Pathfinder is the quarterly newsletter of **Nukewatch**, a project of **The Progressive Foundation**, founded in 1979.

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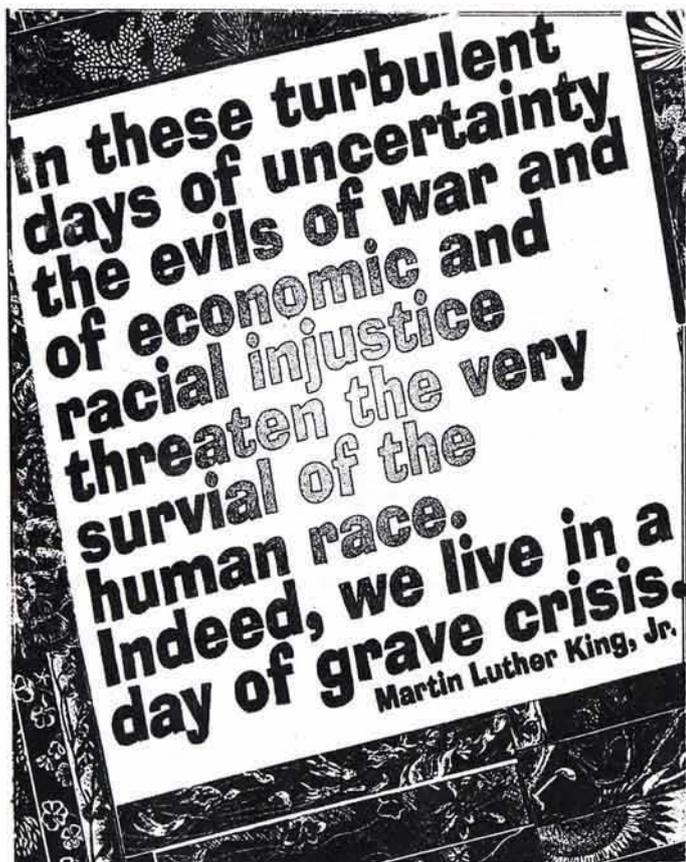
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Nukewatch educates and organizes to nonviolently create an environment free of the nuclear industry and free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Pathfinder submission deadlines:
Nov. 15, Feb. 15, May 15, Aug. 15.

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Guilty of Disarmament

Plowshares Activists in Federal Court

By John LaForge

The Federal prosecution of anti-war activists hit close to home this fall as old friends went on trial September 22 in Maryland and November 2 in Denver. Bonnie and I were able to attend both trials and marveled again at the lengths to which the courts will go to protect illegal weapons.

Last August, Daniel Sicken and Sachio Ko-Yin (the Minuteman-III Plowshares) hammered, chiseled and painted signs on the 100-ton lid and steel rails of an underground Minuteman-III missile in NE Colorado. They were charged with conspiracy, sabotage and criminal damage to "the very tip of the armament pyramid," as the federal prosecutor put it.

In May, at an Air Force weapons display, Kathy Shields Boylan, Sr. Carol Gilbert, Sr. Ardeth Platte, Fr. Frank Cordaro and Fr. Larry Morlan (the Gods of Metal Plowshares), hammered and poured blood on a B-52 bomber, calling it, "the bloodiest weapon of the bloodiest century in human history." They were charged with misdemeanor damage to property. All seven were convicted and jailed prior to sentencing.

Federal judges and prosecutors know, or are instructed, that if the legal case against nuclear weapons is heard by a jury, it will not be able "beyond a reasonable doubt" to find the disarmers guilty. Indeed, it is so easy to understand that nuclear weapons are criminal, that the courts either have to lie about the evidence (the Maryland Judge said he couldn't understand the testimony of international legal expert Francis Boyle), or they must keep the relevant evidence out of the courtroom (the Colorado Judge granted the prosecutor's motion to forbid any mention of moral, legal, religious or ethical references to nuclear weapons).

Both groups of "abolitionists" defended themselves calmly and clearly, *pro se*. Daniel explained to the jury, "Ours is an ethical or human defense. Faced with a choice of evils, we chose the lesser evil. The government has no business protecting these weapons with law."

In both cases, Federal prosecutors had the burden of proving that the hammering of "swords into plowshares" was motivated by "criminal intent." On the contrary, Ardeth described their "healing act of crime prevention" this way: "As citizens we have a legal obligation to interfere with state crime, an obligation to obey and respect the Supreme Law of the Land and to carry out this responsibility even in the face of misdirected and corrupt federal prosecution."

Saying "I think the criminal intent was there," the Judge, hearing the case without a jury found the Gods of Metal participants guilty. The five face fines and a possible year in prison at their January 4 sentencing in Greenbelt, MD.

In Denver, after 2 1/2 days of testimony, the jury took less than 45 minutes to elect a speaker, decipher 47 pages of instructions, vote on six separate verdicts and find Daniel and Sachio guilty on all counts. The two men face fines and more than 20 years in prison when sentenced in Denver, January 20.

Write: Daniel Sicken, 28360-013 & Oliver Sachio Coe, 28361-013, Federal Detention Center, Unit A, 9595 W. Quincy Ave., Littleton, CO 80123; Gods of Metal Plowshares, C/O Jonah House, 130 Moreland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21216.

Join us January 15, 16 & 17 to celebrate the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday weekend, by federal law a day for "reflection on the principles of racial equality and nonviolent social change."



Northland College Campus, Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, 1411 Ellis Ave. (Hwy 13 S.) Ashland, WI.



The weekend includes: speakers (Saturday evening keynote by editor, author and activist Sam Day), music, nonviolence training and a Sunday morning caravan to Project ELF (in the Chequamegon National Forest south of Clam Lake, WI) for nonviolent direct action.



Contact: Nukewatch, (715) 472-4185; email: nukewatch@win.bright.net or Peace Studies Club, Monica Balderas, (715) 685-2571; email: bm5059@wheeler.northland.edu