

# UC Santa Barbara

## Journal of Transnational American Studies

### Title

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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0sn66459>

### Journal

Journal of Transnational American Studies, 11(2)

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### Publication Date

2020

### DOI

10.5070/T8112049586

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# The Nevada Movement: A Model of Trans-Indigenous Antinuclear Solidarity

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## Introduction

Corbin Harney, Western Shoshone elder and spiritual leader, rises in prayer. He lights a ceremonial pipe, and, upon inhaling, offers it to Olzhas Suleimenov, Kazakh national poet and leader of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement in Kazakhstan, who smokes it in turn (see *Figure 1*). After completing the Western Shoshone Pipe Ceremony, the two reach down into the earth, each pulling up a stone, which they then proceed—in accordance with Kazakh custom—to throw at the *face of evil*—in this case, the face of nuclear fallout.<sup>1</sup> This face is everywhere at the Nevada Test Site, and yet, nowhere to be seen.<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for direct action campaigns at the test site caution would-be activists to be afraid of it—to be afraid of the dust. Contaminated from decades of nuclear weapons testing, this dust kills—just one more thing the Western Shoshone share with Kazakh downwinders, who, nearly a year-and-a-half earlier and halfway across the globe, gathered at Mt. Karaul near the boundary of Semipalatinsk, the Soviet counterpart to the Nevada Test Site, to hurl their own stones at the face of this very same evil.

In 1989, inspired in part by Western Shoshone attempts to reclaim their ancestral homeland from the United States and end nuclear weapons testing on *Newe Sogobia*, the Western Shoshone name for their land, the Kazakhs, under the leadership of Suleimenov, rose up against the Soviet Union to demand an immediate cessation of Soviet testing at Semipalatinsk. They not only named their nascent movement *Nevada*, in solidarity with the antinuclear activism taking place at the Nevada Test Site, they also adopted a logo that sealed the relationship: a Kazakh nomad sharing a peace pipe with a Western Shoshone elder (see *Figure 2*).<sup>3</sup> Between 1989 and 1992 Western Shoshone and Kazakh activists jointly toured the United States, educating US citizens on the deleterious effects of radioactive fallout from nuclear weapons testing and also



Figure 1. Corbin Harney and Olzhas Suleimenov sharing a peace pipe at the Nevada Test Site, January 5, 1991. Photograph by Linda Putnam, courtesy of Pelican Pond Publishing.

engaging in cultural and political exchanges that sent delegates to protest in each other's respective homeland. Soviet officials have repeatedly credited the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement in their decision to halt the USSR's nuclear weapons testing program.<sup>4</sup> On August 29, 1991, Semipalatinsk closed. Without a credible Soviet threat or antagonism, the US Congress was pressed by activists at home to end nuclear weapons testing at the Nevada Test Site. Following the closure of Semipalatinsk the year before, the United States halted its own nuclear weapons testing program in 1992.<sup>5</sup>

Historians of the antinuclear movement, however, while noting Nevada-Semipalatinsk's role in shuttering the Semipalatinsk Test Site, have either overlooked or chosen to ignore Nevada-Semipalatinsk's transnational and Indigenous dimensions, which had a pronounced effect on both the movement's direction and success. Scholarship on the history of the antinuclear movement, in general, suffers from an acute lack of sustained or book-length works on Indigenous antinuclear activism. And where Indigenous voices emerge in extant literature, they usually take a backseat to non-Indigenous concerns or materialize as unlikely alliances in broader struggles.<sup>6</sup> Scholarship on the history of the antinuclear movement must work harder to include and re-center Indigenous and trans-Indigenous voices, which have been overshadowed by national perspectives and a focus on elite organizations.<sup>7</sup> I hope to address this defi-

ciency and add to a growing body of Indigenous antinuclear scholarship by charting the trajectory of this early trans-Indigenous antinuclear alliance through an examination of Nevada-Semipalatinsk's origins, communications, and strategic action plans.

Methodologically, I employ Astrid Mignon Kirchhof and Jan-Henrik Meyer's framework for analyzing transnational networks through their concomitant transfers of knowledge, ideas, and culture, and I apply it to a *trans-Indigenous, inter/national* case study of Kazakh–Western Shoshone antinuclear solidarity in the hopes of answering two fundamental questions: How does a focus on trans-Indigenous antinuclear activism complicate our understanding of the global antinuclear movement, and how can trans-Indigenous and inter/national methods further our understanding of Indigenous resistance to the ongoing projects of nuclear colonialism and nuclear imperialism?<sup>8</sup> Moreover, what limitations inhere in such study?<sup>9</sup>

The second question is easier to tackle as trans-Indigenous and inter/national perspectives are crucial when dealing with nuclearism—a colonial/imperialistic ideology that targets Indigenous peoples.<sup>10</sup> Between 1945 and 1992 the United States detonated 1,149 nuclear devices, sixty-six of which were executed on Indigenous atolls of the Marshall Islands and another 1,021 detonations were carried out on Western Shoshone land at the Nevada Test Site.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in an oft-cited passage from Winona LaDuke, “seventy percent of the world’s uranium originates from Native communities.”<sup>12</sup> That figure rises to an astonishing ninety percent within the United States when accounting for mining and milling concerns operating on or bordering Native land.<sup>13</sup> Indigenous antinuclear activism, therefore, must be seen as anticolonial/anti-imperialistic practice. Trans-Indigenous frameworks uniquely foreground the imperialistic and colonial dimensions of nuclearism that are often occluded in non-Indigenous studies of the antinuclear movement, while inter/nationalism provides an invaluable lens for comparing and juxtaposing Indigenous experiences under, and resistance to, nuclear colonialism, which are simultaneously experienced locally, while global in production. Both, however, have certain limitations related to the study of transnational networks.

Transnational studies of 1970s and 1980s antinuclear movements have found that seemingly independent national movements were actually linked by the cross-border exchange of scientific knowledge and protest strategies, which fostered cooperation and the formation of formal and informal transnational networks. This collaboration, however, was often limited to a small number of “highly skilled and committed” mediators with the necessary capital—both financial and social—to overcome the physical distance and cultural differences inherent in such networks.<sup>14</sup> Much the same can be said of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, where overseas participation in direct action campaigns was often limited to movement elites. Given the limitations of communication in a pre-internet age, most Nevada-Semipalatinsk correspondence was directed at nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations, which acted as clearing houses of information between Kazakh and Western Shoshone activists. While relevant archives contain numerous Western

Shoshone and Kazakh voices, direct communiqués between the Western Shoshone and Kazakhs remain elusive. In many cases, NGOs and grassroots organizations served as the lowest common denominator, through which communication between Kazakh and Western Shoshone activists was made intelligible. The most common hurdles that transnational Indigenous solidarity faced were distance, money, and differences in language. But once these barriers were overcome, cooperation flourished. This essay is a glimpse into their shared journey, and it begins with an origin story.

### The Birth of a Movement

The Nevada movement was born on February 28, 1989 at the National Writers' Union hall in Alma-Ata (now Almaty), Kazakhstan. Just two days earlier, Suleimenov had appeared on Kazakh national television to announce his candidacy and platform for the newly organized Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union. But instead of reading from his prepared script, Suleimenov broke into an impromptu speech on radioactive releases from two recent underground nuclear tests at Semipalatinsk.<sup>15</sup> These emissions, Suleimenov disclosed, were neither inert noble gases as reported in the Soviet press, nor were they harmless.<sup>16</sup> At the end of his address, he called on all concerned citizens "who love [life] and want to fight for life on their land" to meet at the Writers' Union in Alma-Ata. With over five thousand in attendance, Suleimenov named their nascent movement *Nevada*, with the hope that their "confederates" at the Nevada Test Site would find common cause with their Kazakh "brothers in trouble."<sup>17</sup> While Suleimenov named the Kazakh antinuclear movement, Nevada, out of solidarity with the antinuclear activism taking place at the Nevada Test Site, he envisioned a truly global antinuclear effort bolstered by transnational NGOs like Greenpeace. It was his desire that activists at the Nevada Test Site would assume the name Semipalatinsk in turn. This never materialized. Within days of the February 28th meeting, Suleimenov registered Nevada-Semipalatinsk as an official non-governmental entity within the Soviet Union, with the expressed goals of (1) the closure of the Semipalatinsk Test Site; (2) the cessation of nuclear weapons production and reallocation of funds used to create them to the rehabilitation of the test site and local populations affected by the Soviet's nuclear weapons testing program; (3) citizen control over nuclear waste; (4) the creation of a map outlining zones of ecological damage where agriculture and cattle pasturing would be prohibited; and (5) the release of USSR Health Ministry data concerning Kazakhstan's radiation victims.<sup>18</sup>

While short of advocating Kazakhstan's independence, Nevada-Semipalatinsk's demands to close Semipalatinsk, a Soviet-controlled military installation operating on occupied Kazakh soil, and to mandate citizen control over the republic's nuclear waste, can be read as both an indictment of the Soviet's nuclear weapons testing program and also as anticolonial pushback against Russian and subsequent Soviet colonization of Kazakhstan.<sup>19</sup> Such anti-Soviet sentiment had been fermenting since the *Jeltoqsan* (December) events of 1986, when thousands of protesters gathered in Alma-Ata to

express their anger over Mikhail Gorbachev's decision to replace Dinmukhamed Kunayev, an ethnic Kazakh, with the Russian-born outsider Gennady Kolbin as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>20</sup> Back in 1986, Jeltoqsan protesters were met with heavy police and military reprisal. Thousands were arrested, hundreds were beaten, and at least three were killed during the protests. As many as one hundred demonstrators were left to die when they were "driven out of the city, stripped, and forced to walk back to town in sub-zero temperatures."<sup>21</sup> Just two years removed from the December events, Gorbachov's glasnost and perestroika reforms provided the necessary space for disaffected Kazakhs to gather in Alma-Ata and voice their ecological concerns, while the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement furnished the vehicle with which to vent their mounting discontent.

Although glasnost and perestroika were a boon to the formation of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, the history of Soviet authoritarianism also bequeathed the young movement with a leadership inexperienced in grassroots activism. "It is necessary to stress that the first steps of the movement were not the easiest ones," Suleimenov wrote on the first anniversary of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement. "We had many difficulties at the initial stage. Very often we acted intuitively under influence of emotions but not of knowledge." In fact, he continued, "We had no experience in the organization of mass actions."<sup>22</sup> This lack of experience prompted Suleimenov to reach out to Western activists and organizations with the requisite expertise in mass mobilizations. With "the appeal to unite," Suleimenov called on the international antinuclear community for assistance. "We look forward to receiving suggestions on the coordination of joint actions."<sup>23</sup> Suleimenov's appeal was initially answered by Yeshua Moser, a nonviolent direct action trainer with the Nevada-based American Peace Test (APT), who was in Moscow when the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement was coalescing in Alma-Ata.<sup>24</sup> At the request of APT leadership, Moser flew to Kazakhstan to be of assistance to the fledgling movement.<sup>25</sup>

Kirchhof and Meyer stress that transnational transfers of ideas between social movements "do not necessarily require direct contact between individual members" of each movement, but they do "require *media* or *mediators*, which transmit relevant information."<sup>26</sup> These mediators may take the form of transnational grassroots activists, like Moser, who cross borders to aid protestors in other countries, armed with little more than their experience, or movement elites like Suleimenov and Murat Auezov—Kazakh public intellectuals who went on to become foreign ambassadors under the newly independent Kazakh republic—who use their social capital to attract international support to their cause.<sup>27</sup> The mediation, itself, can take a logistical or material form or it can be organizational, something as simple as outlining a more effective protest strategy. For instance, the first major action undertaken by the Nevada movement in Kazakhstan was an American Peace Test-style occupation of the Semipalatinsk Test Site near the village of Karaul. Timed to coincide with an international commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 1989, this demon-

stration proved to be the first joint action between US and Kazakh activists.<sup>28</sup> Moser demonstrated nonviolent tactics that had been employed by activists at the Nevada Test Site—tactics that would be internalized and reproduced by Kazakhs at Semipalatinsk. While recognizable in video footage from the event, these tactics were not wholesale transpositions of those used in the US. In fact, as Kirchhof and Meyer argue, such “transfers of ideas may—indeed may have to—involve an *adaptation and transformation of the ideas received to make them compatible in the new context*” (173). For the Kazakhs, this involved making the APT tactics compatible with the resurgence of an indigenized and rural Kazakh worldview.



Figure 2. Kazakh purification ritual, Karaul, Kazakhstan, August 6, 1989. Still from *Nevada Semipalatinsk* (1989), directed by Sergey Shafir (“Kazakhfilm” named after Shaken Aimanov Studio, 1989).

In Sergey Shafir’s 1989 documentary *Nevada Semipalatinsk*, elements of Kazakh adaptation can be seen in culturally inflected rituals performed during the occupation of Semipalatinsk.<sup>29</sup> Video footage from the occupation documents the procession of Nevada-Semipalatinsk activists and rural villagers through what appears to be two pillars of fire made from tree branches (see Figure 2) and the tying of white strips of cloth or ribbons to a tree (see Figure 3). Under Russian colonization, Kazakh nomads had been subjected to an intense program of Islamization by Tartar missionaries.<sup>30</sup> Imperial Russia had hoped that their nomadic subjects would abandon their shamanistic traditions in favor of a monotheistic religion. These assimilationist policies, however, were only partially successful. While the majority of Kazakhs adopted Islam as their official



Figure 3. Tying white ribbons to the Tree of Life, Karaul, Kazakhstan, August 6, 1989. Still from *Nevada Semipalatinsk* (1989), directed by Sergey Shafir (“Kazakhfilm” named after Shaken Aimanov Studio, 1989).

religion, they never abandoned their Tengri rituals and practices; they merely superimposed them onto Islamic ones. Some of these Tengri practices were readily visible during the August 6, 1989 occupation.<sup>31</sup> Among these was the use of fire. Fire holds a sacrosanct place within traditional Kazakh life. Not only does fire banish and protect one from evil, fire cleans and purifies. When migrating from winter camps to summer pastures, Kazakh nomads would build two large bonfires and drive their herds between them for purification.<sup>32</sup>

Trees also hold a revered, spiritual significance within Tengriism, where trees with the strongest spiritual power are believed to be those that either grow alone or grow near sacred burial grounds.<sup>33</sup> Such places, it is said, can hear the collective prayers of pilgrims and travelers. It is considered “a sacred ritual to touch such a tree and fasten colored and white ribbons to it.”<sup>34</sup> Ribbons placed at these sites are not only a mark of veneration, but they also carry prayers and petitions to spirits living there.<sup>35</sup> In light of these traditional practices, the August 6, 1989 occupation of Semipalatinsk should also be read as an anticolonial reaffirmation of Kazakh national identity.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to instructing the Kazakhs on principles of nonviolent direct action, Moser told them about the Western Shoshone, another Indigenous and colonized people fighting nuclear colonialism on their ancestral land.<sup>37</sup> Though they had never met, Kazakh downwinders deeply identified with the Shoshone’s shared plight, and it





Figure 4. Nevada-Semipalatinsk logo depicting a Kazakh nomad sharing a peace pipe with a Western Shoshone elder.

was at this moment that they took as the symbol of their movement a Kazakh nomad sharing a peace pipe with a Western Shoshone elder (see Figure 4). Hundreds of Kazakh protestors at the August 6th demonstration can be seen wearing placards bearing the Nevada-Semipalatinsk logo, indicating both a sense of inter/national solidarity with the Western Shoshone and a visual and material acknowledgement of their shared struggle as Indigenous peoples. In contrast to network theorists who argue that transnational networks are rooted in the exchange of critical resources such as capital and expertise, Kirchhof and Meyer suggest “that shared problem perceptions and views about possible solutions increasingly integrate actors into a tight-knit ‘epistemic community’ (Haas 1989) that strengthens commitment and trust and intensifies cooperation and effectiveness.”<sup>38</sup> Drawing on theories of inter/national cooperation, I argue that the collective struggle against nuclear colonialism integrated the Western Shoshone and Kazakhs into such an epistemic community that included but went beyond shared resources like expertise and logistical assistance, to successfully end nuclear weapons testing in both the US and USSR.

### A Trans-Indigenous Encounter

Between November 27 and December 6, 1989, Suleimenov toured the US to solidify ties with Western antinuclear organizations. His primary objective, however, was to drum up support for an “International Congress” of antinuclear delegates who would advocate on behalf of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban treaty in their home country. While in the US, he negotiated and received pledges for an International Citizens Congress to be held the following May in Alma-Ata. His choice of sponsors—International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and the Federation of American Scientists—would give the conference a decidedly technocratic and autocratic character, alienating Western grassroots organizations more closely aligned with the Nevada-Semipalatinsk

movement, organizations that provided the bulk of the day-to-day and joint US-Kazakh coordinating efforts. A good case in point: During Suleimenov's visit, Nevada leadership reached out to Pamela Osgood of the Bay Area Peace Test, seeking logistical assistance for Askar Nurmanov, a Novosty journalist and member of Nevada-Semipalatinsk's coordinating council.<sup>39</sup> This request was directed at US grassroots organizations even as Suleimenov was soliciting support from the IPPNW. But before he returned to the USSR, Suleimenov made a personal visit to the Nevada Test Site to establish contact with the Western Shoshone.

Photographs of Suleimenov's visit document certain trans-Indigenous transfers of cultural knowledge and rituals exchanged between Suleimenov, the Western Shoshone, and US activists. One of the ritual symbols employed by the Kazakhs to represent the Nevada movement was an open palm, often used in Kazakh *bata* or blessings.<sup>40</sup> Video footage from the August 6th occupation of Semipalatinsk shows Kazakh protesters brandishing open palms, a ritual Suleimenov introduced to activists at the NTS, and a symbol adopted by APT. Other Kazakh rituals, like the "throwing of stones at the face of evil," had to be adapted to the nonviolent sensibilities of local peace activists. As Terry Tempest Williams describes in *An Unspoken Hunger: Stories from the Field* (1994): "We are invited to participate in an ancient Russian custom: 'throwing rocks at evil.' Each person takes a stone and *places* it in a pile ... Lynne, Steve, and I pick up stones by our feet and quietly add ours to the pile."<sup>41</sup> Tempest's description varies remarkably from video and photographic evidence that show stones being *thrown*, sometimes with great force, by Nevada-Semipalatinsk participants. Cultural transfers like these were multi-directional, and perhaps even reflexive as they traversed the Pacific Ocean, from one test site to the other and back. Others, like Western Shoshone prayer circles, were performed only at the NTS. Photographs from his December 1989 visit show Suleimenov (in a black leather trench coat) participating in a prayer circle led by Harney (see Figure 5). To Suleimenov's immediate right stands Bill Rosse, Sr. and further down, Pauline Esteves, both Western Shoshone elders and prominent antinuclear activists.




Figure 5. Western Shoshone Prayer Circle, Nevada Test Site, December 1989. Photographs by Sister Klaryta Antoszewska. Courtesy of University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Special Collections and Archives.

The Western Shoshone have been active in nonviolent direct-action demonstrations at the Nevada Test Site since 1986, when Bill Rosse, Sr., chairman, Environmental Protection Committee, Western Shoshone National Council (WSNC), began issuing WSNC permits to American Peace Test and Nevada Desert Experience activists, granting them permission to enter and occupy the test site, which rests on Western Shoshone land. “This here permit,” Rosse, Sr. would say, “is to allow you to come onto the land at our request and as our guests, and this shows the government that they don’t have a right here.”<sup>42</sup> Western Shoshone antinuclear activism has always been couched in anticolonial terms of sovereignty and connected to land rights struggles. Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone elder and central participant of the Western Shoshone Defense Project, credits the MX missile siting controversy of 1979–1981 with “open[ing] the eyes of some Western Shoshone people.”<sup>43</sup> Even the proposal to site the MX in the Great Basin was a violation of Western Shoshone sovereignty under the terms of the Treaty of Ruby Valley (1863), which has never been expunged by Congress, and therefore, is still in effect. At the time of the proposed siting, title to *Newe Segobia*, the Western Shoshone name for their ancestral homeland, was still being waged in the courts. Then in 1979, during the height of the controversy, the court ruled against the Western Shoshone, stating that they had lost their land due to “gradual encroachment”—squatters.


The US government’s 1979 attempt to usurp Western Shoshone land for the placement of the new intercontinental ballistic missile prompted Western Shoshone activists to reach out to non-Natives. It was the “first time we went off the reservation and said something about the land outside of the reservation that we still considered ours,” said Raymond Yowell, chairman of the Western Shoshone Sacred Lands Association, of his participation in the Great Basin MX Alliance (GBMXA)—an amalgamation of Native and non-Indigenous concerns; though non-Native participants in the GBMXA ultimately backed off from the issue of Western Shoshone treaty rights, Yowell was pleased that they let him talk about it.<sup>44</sup> These early experiences with non-Native allies provided the foundation for later alliances with the American Peace Test and Nevada Desert Experience. And unlike the earlier GBMXA, whose membership included ranchers, miners, and recreationalists—demographic groups diametrically opposed to Western Shoshone treaty rights—both American Peace Test and Nevada Desert Experience leadership explicitly embraced the Western Shoshone’s land rights struggle and incorporated it into each organization’s activism.

Suleimenov’s December 1989 visit marked a new era in Western Shoshone activism and an era of inter/national cooperation between the Kazakhstani and Western Shoshone. It also resulted in a manifesto—the jointly authored “International Appeal to Action,” in which the Western Shoshone National Council, APT, and Nevada-Semipalatinsk called for global coordination of actions between March 29 and April 2, 1990 to end the worldwide production and testing of nuclear weapons. Anticipating

# STOP NUCLEAR TESTING SPEAKING TOUR



**VOICES  
FOR  
PEACE  
AND  
SELF  
DETERMINATION**



*Kazakh people demonstrate at Soviet test site*

*Shoshone elders demonstrate at Nevada Test Site*

**SCHEDULE**

Nat'l SANE/Freeze Conf.	
San Francisco, CA	Feb. 16-17
Santa Cruz	Feb. 18
San Jose	Feb. 20
Chico, CA	Feb. 21
Arcata, CA	Feb. 22
Ashland, OR	Feb. 23
Eugene, OR	Feb. 24-25
Salem, OR	Feb. 26
Portland, OR	Feb. 27-28
Olympia, WA	Mar. 1
Seattle, WA	Mar. 2
Spokane, WA	Mar. 3-4
Boise, ID	Mar. 5
Salt Lake City, UT	Mar. 7-8
Cheyenne, WY	Mar. 10
Denver, CO	Mar. 11
Boulder, CO	Mar. 12-13
Colorado Springs, CO	Mar. 14
Albuquerque, NM	Mar. 16-17
Phoenix, AZ	Mar. 19-20
Tucson, AZ	Mar. 21-22
San Diego, CA	Mar. 24-25
Los Angeles, CA	Mar. 26-28
Las Vega, NV	Mar. 29
Nevada Test Site	Mar. 30

*AN EVENING WITH*

**KAIRAT UMAROV** A writer and representative of the 'Nevada Movement'-a new grassroots movement against nuclear testing from the Soviet Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan.

**PAULINE ESTEVES** A Western Shoshone Elder and National Council Member-the Nevada Test Site is on Western Shoshone land.

**STARHAWK** Author and feminist peace activist.

**SPECIAL GUEST: KATYA KOMISARUK**  
Just released early from a 5-year sentence for disarming a NAVSTAR first strike missile guidance system.

**SAT., FEB. 17, 7:30 pm**  
San Francisco Art Institute  
800 Chestnut (near Columbus)  
\$4; \$2 Students

Co-Sponsored by the Nevada Desert Experience and Bay Area Peace Test

Figure 6. Poster, “Voices for Peace and Self-Determination: Stop Nuclear Testing” Tour, February 16 to March 30, 1990. Image source: Nevada Desert Experience Records, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Las Vegas, Nevada.

national security rationale, Suleimenov proclaimed, “[n]o defense reasons can justify the silent nuclear war of the government against its own people.”<sup>45</sup> This war, however, had been openly waged against Indigenous people long before and long after the first bombs were detonated at either Semipalatinsk or the Nevada Test Site, a point the Western Shoshone National Council was quick to highlight. “We cannot help but see that the United States and other nuclear powers are testing their most destructive weapons on other peoples’ land. We have a map of the world showing how atomic and nuclear tests have been conducted on the territory of native peoples.”<sup>46</sup> With this and together, the Western Shoshone and Kazakhs affirmed their mutual support for one another as colonized nations—“We have paid dearly for the high cost of militarism,” including the “sacrificing [of our] lands, lives and futures [as] Indigenous peoples” and having the state “violating [our] right to self-determination” —a shared struggle that integrated them into an epistemic community of Indigenous activists fighting nuclear colonialism not only in their own respective homelands, but also around the globe.<sup>47</sup>

### **An Inter/National Tour**

To strengthen their newly formed alliance and draw attention to the pernicious effects of nuclear colonialism on Indigenous lives, the Western Shoshone National Council and Nevada-Semipalatinsk helped organize the “Voices for Peace and Self-Determination: Stop Nuclear Testing” tour (see Figure 6). Sponsored in part by the American Peace Test and Nevada Desert Experience, the tour was designed to promote inter/national “support and awareness between movements” and “energize people to bring about change and offer information on how they may become involved in helping to end nuclear testing and the arms race worldwide.”<sup>48</sup> While sponsored by US grassroots organizations, the speaking tour itself was predicated on, and centered, Indigenous voices. Headlining the tour was Kairat Umarov, an English-speaking representative of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, and Pauline Esteves, Western Shoshone elder and National Council member. Consistent with the antiimperialistic impetus of Indigenous antinuclearism, the tour poster juxtaposes Western Shoshone and Kazakh antinuclear activism with their respective struggles for independence and self-determination. Pedagogically, tour organizers hoped to educate the public on three vital issues: (1) the impact of nuclear weapons testing on Indigenous people around the world as well as Indigenous resistance movements rising to challenge these nuclear powers; (2) the US government’s violation of Western Shoshone land rights under the Treaty of Ruby Valley; and (3) to inform people on the international campaign for a comprehensive test ban treaty.<sup>49</sup>

“The schedule was a bit grueling,” reads notes from an organizational post-tour evaluation. Commencing with the National SANE/Freeze Conference in Oakland on February 16, 1990 and concluding with the American Peace Test’s nonviolent direct action against the deployment of the Trident II missile at the Nevada Test Site on

March 30, the tour made twenty-five stops through nine Western states in under six weeks. "In retrospect," the evaluator continues, "we should have allowed a bit more time for R & R along the way." By all accounts the tour was a huge success: the novelty of having representatives from two Indigenous groups from opposite sides of the world come together on one stage to share their similar experiences under and combating nuclear colonialism provided a substantial draw from the general public and not just among peace and antinuclear activists.<sup>50</sup> US Newspapers ran articles with titles like "Indians, Soviets Oppose Testing," "American, Soviet Activists Call for an End to Nuclear Testing," and "Soviet, Shoshone peace activists join anti-nuclear protests."<sup>51</sup> Other publications highlighted Esteves's and Umarov's indigeneity—"Esteves and Umarov represent the native peoples across the world whose land rights, environment and health have been blatantly violated for decades by nuclear weapons testing"—while the official tour press release, "Stop Nuclear Testing Tour: Soviet Peace Activist and Native Shoshone to Speak," claimed that the tour marked a significant move towards "citizen democracy," one that "will build unprecedented links between US and Soviet peace movements and Native Americans."<sup>52</sup> Notwithstanding the spectacle of "this unlikely ethnic pairing," the tour itself provided Esteves and Umarov with a venue in which to put forward their Western Shoshone and Kazakh concerns to a larger audience.<sup>53</sup>

During the US tour, Umarov focused upon three central themes when he spoke: the effects of radioactive contamination from nuclear weapons testing on Kazakh downwinders and the land surrounding the Semipalatinsk Test Site (STS), the success of the Nevada movement in frustrating the Soviet's testing program and inter/national cooperation between US and Kazakh activists towards achieving a comprehensive test ban. With regards to the environment, Umarov described how nuclear weapons testing had contaminated the land near Semipalatinsk and all those who lived off the land. Agriculture had been contaminated. Grasslands for the pasturing of cattle and other livestock had also been contaminated. There were no prohibitions on grazing so radioactive particulates in the soil and water eventually made their way into the food chain. As a result, life expectancy in Semipalatinsk had decreased by more than four years and the mortality rate had risen to twice the birth rate. Cancers, leukemia, and congenital birth defects were both common and epidemic. But, there was real hope for a better future. By December 1989 Nevada-Semipalatinsk had become the "largest peace movement in Soviet history." It had not only forced the cancellation of eleven of eighteen nuclear tests, it forced the Soviets to reconsider the viability of the test site, itself. "We put the goal to stop nuclear testing in the Soviet Union," Umarov explained. And "the most important victory for us is that the government made a decision to close the test site in 1993." It was a concession to be sure, but it was not enough. "We will try to bring that date nearer," Umarov promised US audiences, "We have not finished the struggle." But now it's your turn, Umarov advised the crowd. "Fight for peace all over the world, but in your own home first. If you stop nuclear testing here, it will be much easier for the Soviet Union to stop."<sup>54</sup>

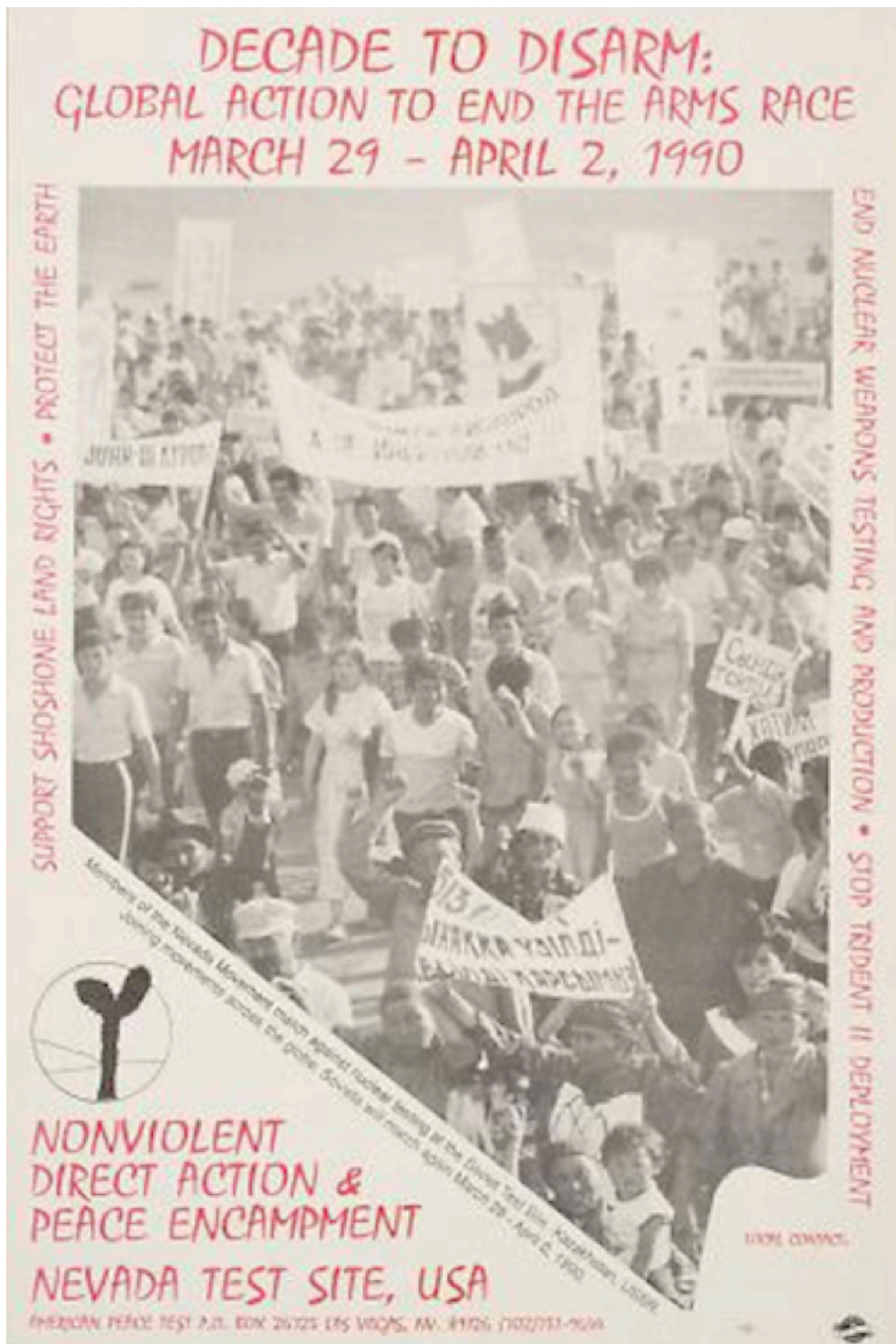


Figure 7. Poster: “Decade to Disarm: Global Action to End the Arms Race.” March 29–April 2, 1990. Image Source: Nevada Desert Experience Records, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Esteves, in turn, pressed Western Shoshone land rights issues regarding the effects of nuclear weapons testing on Newe Segobia. The US government “is using Western Shoshone lands fraudulently,” Esteves said. They are “saying to [us] that [we] have no claim to the land, that it is theirs,” but, she pointed out, the Shoshone have lived within Newe Segobia since time immemorial.<sup>55</sup> “Our history and the story of our way of life,” Esteves explained, “is rooted within those mountains, within the rivers, the valleys, the springs, the rocks, and the animals and the plants.”<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the Shoshone have been the *legal* stewards of the land since the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. That treaty, “was agreed upon by the Shoshone Nation and US government in 1863,” and the Shoshone “maintain that the treaty is still in force.”<sup>57</sup> Nuclear weapons testing on Shoshone land is not only illegal under the terms of the treaty, but the tests themselves are “in violation of international law.”<sup>58</sup> This illegal nuclear war conducted against the Western Shoshone has devastated both their land and their health. The “United States government was aware of the health hazards posed to the people living downwind from the test site,” Esteves disclosed, but “they failed to provide adequate protection for the inhabitants of this area during the operation of the testing program ... the inhabitants of this area merely became guinea pigs in a deadly experiment.”<sup>59</sup> And while the Shoshone have a sacred duty to protect and safeguard Newe Segobia, they also know that “radiation does not respect” national borders. “We Shoshonis,” the WSNC added in a written statement, “are concerned that the Nevada Test Site will negatively affect peoples worldwide.”<sup>60</sup> Reiterating this concern to the crowd, Esteves intimated, “our greatest concern right now is for all mankind.”<sup>61</sup> For Esteves and the Western Shoshone, the tour’s primary goal was to educate people on the consequences of nuclear weapons testing, believing that if they knew the consequences, people would unite against future tests. “I want to see people act,” Esteves said. I want to see them struggle to protect the land.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

Esteves and Umarov concluded the tour with a final stop at the Nevada Test Site on March 30, 1990 to participate in the American Peace Test’s spring action, “Decade to Disarm: Global Action to End the Arms Race.” Timed to coincide with the deployment of the first-strike Trident II missile, “Decade to Disarm” truly demonstrated the trans-Indigenous and inter/national solidarity between US, Kazakh, and Western Shoshone activists. In a follow-up communication to Osgood concerning the logistics of the “Voices” tour, Umarov expressed Nevada’s enthusiasm in taking part in APT’s spring action. “As for spring actions 1990,” Umarov wrote, “we are fully resolved to join you and to hold simultaneous actions at the Semipalatinsk Test Site ... We are also against the deployment of first strike missiles.”<sup>63</sup> APT’s poster for “Decade to Disarm” iconographically visualizes this solidarity. Superimposed on an outline of the state of Nevada is a photograph depicting hundreds if not thousands of Kazakh protesters demonstrating against the Semipalatinsk Test Site. In the poster, the slanted caption below



the photograph reads: “Members of the Nevada Movement march against nuclear testing at the Soviet Test Site, Kazakhstan, USSR. Joining movements across the globe, Soviets will march again March 29–April 2, 1990” (see *Figure 7*). And along the upper left-hand side of the poster it also reads: “Support Shoshone Land Rights,” further coupling American Peace Test’s and Nevada-Semipalatinsk’s nonviolent direct-action campaigns to Western Shoshone sovereignty and land rights struggles.

This essay has attempted to complicate our understanding of the history of the global antinuclear movement through a focus on trans-Indigenous antinuclear solidarity. While the history of the global antinuclear movement has been primarily told through national perspectives that focus on elite organizations such as the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, SANE/Freeze, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament—organizations which were instrumental in moving the US and Great Britain closer to a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty—the abolition of nuclear weapons testing in the US (by 1962 Great Britain was conducting all of its nuclear weapons tests at the NTS) would have been unimaginable if not for the closing of the Semipalatinsk Test Site, which, in itself, was dependent upon a confluence of factors including a Soviet willingness to close Semipalatinsk and a Kazakh will to see it closed. Would Suleimenov and the Kazakhs have risen up in 1989 if US grassroots antinuclear activists and the Western Shoshone had not paved the way? Western Shoshone activism at the Nevada Test Site provided proof and inspiration that Indigenous people could fight back against their nuclear colonial oppressors, and Western Shoshone allies in the American Peace Test had a material effect on the direction of Nevada-Semipalatinsk’s operational tactics. Trans-Indigenous and inter/national methods highlight these dimensions, which would otherwise have been omitted had this history been told from a strict national perspective, but the effectiveness of these methods can be checked by silences in the archive. In the case of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, all the archival material gathered for this essay was contained in allied NGO archives. Neither the Western Shoshone nor the Kazakhs had any input into what was archived, nor how that information is interpreted and presented. Just how trans-Indigenous is this scholarship if it relies on non-Indigenous mediators for communications and archival material? Despite these limitations, ample archival material exists that demonstrates not only a healthy trans-Indigenous solidarity between the Western Shoshone and Kazakhs, but also a trans-Indigenous friendship.

## Notes

I would like to thank Ian Zabarte, Principal Man, Western Bands of the Shoshone Nation of Indians; Dr. Bonnie Eberhardt Bobb, former director, Office of Environmental Protection for Yomba Shoshone Tribe; and Alexey Chasnikov, nuclear physicist and member of Nevada-Semipalatinsk, for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. I would also like to thank my two anonymous reviewers whose comments on earlier drafts not only strengthened this essay but my engagement of trans-Indigenous

scholarship as well. And lastly, I would like to thank my editors for both their patience and their suggestions. Any errors and omissions are mine.

I am also grateful for the support of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, the Western History Association, The American Philosophical Society, and the Joanne Castagna Research Fund, which made this research possible.

- <sup>1</sup> Peace activist and author Terry Tempest Williams describes attending this ceremony in *An Unspoken Hunger*; Terry Tempest Williams, *An Unspoken Hunger: Stories from the Field* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 97–106.
- <sup>2</sup> The Nevada Test Site began as the Nevada Proving Grounds on December 18, 1950. In 1955, its name was changed to the Nevada Test Site; and in 2010, it was renamed the Nevada National Security Site “to more accurately reflect [its] evolving mission.” <https://www.nnss.gov/pages/about.html>.
- <sup>3</sup> The Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement was informally named Nevada on February 28, 1989, and subsequently incorporated as Nevada-Semipalatinsk that March. As late as August 1989, however, movement leaders were still utilizing the name, Nevada, in their correspondence with US activists.
- <sup>4</sup> Peter Zheutlin, “Nevada U.S.S.R.” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (March 1990): 11.
- <sup>5</sup> While a major signpost towards the establishment of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the suspension of nuclear weapons testing at the Nevada Test Site implied neither a change in US policy concerning the production or use of nuclear weapons; rather, full-scale nuclear testing was replaced by subcritical tests that never reached critical mass.
- <sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Matthew Glass, *Citizens against the MX: Public Languages in the Nuclear Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), for a discussion of Western Shoshone participation in the Great Basin MX Alliance; or Ken Butigan, *Pilgrimage through a Burning World: Spiritual Practice and Nonviolent Protest at the Nevada Test Site* (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 2003), for a discussion of Western Shoshone allied participation in nonviolent protest at the Nevada Test Site. Notable exceptions that focus on Indigenous resistance to nuclear colonialism’s continued encroachment on Native lands and lives include Valerie L. Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Traci Brynne Voyles, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Holly M. Barker, *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2004); and Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1999).
- <sup>7</sup> In “Global Protest against Nuclear Power: Transfer and Transnational Exchange in the 1970s and 1980s,” Astrid Mignon Kirchhof and Jan-Henrik Meyer convincingly show how the history of antinuclear activism has been written primarily through national perspectives that marginalize Indigenous voices within settler states. Even within

transnational frameworks, this history is predominately written from the perspective of elite organizations like the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), which minimize both Indigenous and grassroots activism. Conversely, when the history of antinuclear activism is written from below, Indigenous voices, like those of the Western Shoshone, still get drowned out by their non-Indigenous grassroots allies such as American Peace Test and Nevada Desert Experience. In the history of the antinuclear movement, Indigenous activism is marked by a double absence—overshadowed by both national and colonialist accounts. The lack of Indigenous voices in the historical record must be accounted for. Please see Astrid Mignon Kirchhof and Jan-Henrik Meyer, “Global Protest against Nuclear Power: Transfer and Transnational Exchange in the 1970s and 1980s,” *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 39, no. 1 (2014): 165–90, for a transnational critique of the antinuclear movement. For a historical account of the IPPNW and GPA, please see Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); and Phillip G. Scharg, *Global Action: Nuclear Test Ban Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1992). And for a historical perspective on grassroots activism see Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle against the Bomb, Vol. 3: Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

- <sup>8</sup> I prefer the term nuclear colonialism over nuclear imperialism when discussing Western Shoshone and Kazakh nuclear oppression. Both were colonized peoples whose land had been (and in the Shoshone’s case, still is) occupied by colonial powers—The Western Shoshone by the US and the Kazakhs by Russia and subsequently the USSR from 1920–1991. The questions asked in this paper, however, are also relevant to case studies involving nuclear imperialism: the continued nuclear oppression of former colonies after they achieve independence.
- <sup>9</sup> I find Kirchhof and Meyer’s framework for analyzing transnational networks through transfers of knowledge, ideas, and culture useful for the analysis of Indigenous-to-Indigenous exchange, but incomplete, as the latter requires a more nuanced methodology that can account for the variegated, yet, hauntingly similar experiences Indigenous peoples face under settler colonialism. Chadwick Allen’s juxtaposition of Indigenous texts provides a useful Indigenous counterpoint from which to view transnational transfer (Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012]). For Allen, trans-Indigenous readings juxtapose incredibly diverse texts “across genre and media, aesthetic systems and worldviews,” even across “historical periods and geographical regions” (Allen, *Trans-Indigenous*, xviii). And given the trans-Indigenous antinuclear solidarity involved in this project, I also employ Steven Salaita’s *Inter/Nationalism* as a supplement to Allen (Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016]). In contrast to what he calls Allen’s “critical methodology for the study of literature and culture,” Salaita positions inter/nationalism as critical methodology for the study of transnational

politics (Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism*, 150). Fundamentally, he positions inter/nationalism as a “commitment to mutual liberation based on the proposition that colonial power must be rendered diffuse across multiple hemispheres through reciprocal struggle” (ix). See Allen and Salaita for a detailed description of both methodologies.

- <sup>10</sup> While the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines nuclearism as a “dependence on or faith in nuclear weapons as the means for maintaining national security,” scholars such as Kuletz expand upon this limited connotation to refer to “the entire complex of nuclear weapons testing, research and development, production, stockpiling, and waste disposal” (Kuletz, *Tainted Desert*, note 1, 291). In this article, I follow Kuletz’s understanding of nuclearism.
- <sup>11</sup> See *United States Nuclear Tests: July 1945 through September 1992* (Las Vegas: Department of Energy, Nevada Operations Office, 2000) for a complete listing of US nuclear tests by date and location. Among the other nuclear-armed states, the USSR subjected Kazakhs to four hundred and fifty-six tests at Semipalatinsk and Nenets to another one hundred thirty on Novaya Zemlya, while Britain, France and China combined for an additional three hundred and two nuclear tests against Algerians, French Polynesians, Uighurs, as well as Aboriginal tribes in Australia. See V. N. Mikhailov, Editor-in-Chief, *Catalog of Worldwide Nuclear Testing* (New York: Begell-Atom, 1999) for a comprehensive list of nuclear tests by nation. [https://web.archive.org/web/20131219131618/http://www.iss-atom.ru/ksenia/catal\\_nt/](https://web.archive.org/web/20131219131618/http://www.iss-atom.ru/ksenia/catal_nt/).
- <sup>12</sup> LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 97.
- <sup>13</sup> Danielle Endres, “The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism: Rhetorical Exclusion of American Indian Arguments in the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Siting Decision,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (2009): 41.
- <sup>14</sup> Kirchhof and Meyer, “Global Protest,” 165.
- <sup>15</sup> Almaz Estekov, an organizer for Nevada-Semipalatinsk’s Moscow affiliate, interviewed by Gerard Janco, president of the Eurasia Center. Fall 1991. <http://web.archive.org/web/20010412173440/http://eurasiacenter.org/fall91/estekov.html#1>. [link archived]
- <sup>16</sup> While TASS reported that venting took place due to the underground explosions, it also reported that “the level of radiation in the region of the test and out of the proving ground [was] normal.” See Suleimenov’s “Open Declaration to the USSR Supreme Soviet and KSSR Supreme Soviet.” Box 7, Folder 27, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>17</sup> Sergey Shafir, dir., *Nevada-Kazakhstan* (1990; Almaty, Kazakhstan: Kazakhfilm, 2017), video file. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z28IPcWF14>. In *Free Zone: Democracy Meets the Nuclear Threat* (1989), Naomi Marcus translates this passage from Suleimenov as “their brothers and sisters in common misfortune”; David L. Brown,

Mary Beth Braun, and James Heddle, *Free Zone: Democracy Meets the Nuclear Threat* (1989; San Francisco, California: Energon Films, 2011), video file.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXVr5L9qtA0>.

- <sup>18</sup> See Suleimenov's "High Time" speech for a complete list of the international organizations that he addresses. Box 7, Folder 27, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada, (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>19</sup> I owe this train of thought to Steve Sabol (*"The Touch of Civilization": Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization*, Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2017) who intimated that the Nevada movement "offered an anti-Soviet and/or autonomous position within the fracturing USSR." Steve Sabol, personal communication with the Author, April 12, 2019.
- <sup>20</sup> Joanne Lillis, "Kazakhstan: A Look Back at the Zheltoksan Protest a Quarter-Century Ago," *Eurasianet*, December 16, 2011. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-a-look-back-at-the-zheltoksan-protest-a-quarter-century-ago>; Catherine Putz, "1986: Kazakhstan's Other Independence Anniversary," *The Diplomat*, December 16, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/1986-kazakhstans-other-independence-anniversary/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Jeremy Bransten and Abdougani Jiyenday, "Kazakhstan: Almaty—A Look Back to Events of December, 1986," *Radio Free Europe*, December 9, 1996. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1082701.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> Olzhas O. Suleymenov and Vladimir N. Iakimets, "Public Antinuclear Movement 'Nevada-Semipalatinsk': Aims, Problems and Annual Report," Box 7, Folder 21, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>23</sup> Suleimenov, "High Time." Box 7, Folder 21, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>24</sup> The American Peace Test began in 1985 as a nonviolent direct action project of the National FREEZE campaign. It became an independent organization the following year when FREEZE decided to distance itself from direct action tactics and protests at the Nevada Test Site.
- <sup>25</sup> Yeshua Moser, personal communication with author, October 21, 2019.
- <sup>26</sup> Kirchhof and Meyer, "Global Protest," 173, 172; emphasis in original.
- <sup>27</sup> The power dynamics between the Western Shoshone and Nevada-Semipalatinsk movements are striking. While the Western Shoshone were led by tribal elders with little access to US decisionmakers outside of their grassroots allies, Nevada-Semipalatinsk's leadership was filled with renowned writers and public intellectuals, whose celebrity and charisma drew people to their movement and granted them

access to the highest echelons of government in both the US and USSR. From the movement's inception, it drew the attention of Jack F. Matlock, Jr., US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Mikhail Gorbachev, who invited Suleimenov on a diplomatic mission to Great Britain to discuss nuclear testing with Margaret Thatcher. Notwithstanding this social capital, the Nevada movement relied heavily on US grassroots organizations for guidance and advice. See Pamela Osgood, "Nuclear Resistance in the USSR," *Desert Voices* 2.3 (Summer 1989), 3 for details regarding Suleimenov's visit to Great Britain.

- <sup>28</sup> Letter from Peter Zheutlin, Director of Public Affairs, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, to American Peace Test, Nevada Desert Experience, and International Comprehensive Test Ban Campaign. The letter was sent on behalf of Olzhas Suleimenov and Murat Auezov, who requested that Zheutlin communicate the invitation to participate in a joint commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Box 7, Folder 21, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>29</sup> Sergey Shafir, dir., *Nevada-Semipalatinsk* (1989; Almaty, Kazakhstan: Kazakhfilm, 2017), video file. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgcvXDCwPkg>.
- <sup>30</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 102.
- <sup>31</sup> Saniya Edelbay, "Traditional Kazakh Culture and Islam," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 3, no .11 (2012): 123.
- <sup>32</sup> Edelbay, "Traditional Kazakh Culture and Islam," 125.
- <sup>33</sup> Maral Kayar and Zada Sakhitzhanova, "Pre-Islamic Beliefs of the Kazakhs and the Spread of Islam in Kazakhstan," in *Transformations in Cultural, Social and Educational Activity: Challenges Towards Contemporary Europe*, ed. Agnieszka Roguska and Alicja Antas-Jaszczuk (Siedlce: Siedlce University, 2016): 113.
- <sup>34</sup> Edelbay, "Kazakh Culture," 126.
- <sup>35</sup> Kayar and Sakhitzhanova, "Pre-Islamic Beliefs," 114.
- <sup>36</sup> Due to space limitations, this essay examines only a few of the cultural rituals exchanged between Western Shoshone and Kazakh activists that were performed at the Nevada and Semipalatinsk Test Sites. For an exhaustive accounting of these rituals please see my upcoming dissertation, George Gregory Rozsa, "The Nevada Movement: Trans-Indigenous Antinuclear Solidarity at the End of the Cold War," PhD diss., (University of Iowa, forthcoming).
- <sup>37</sup> Moser, personal communication with author, October, 2019.
- <sup>38</sup> Kirchhof and Meyer, "Global Protest": 173.

- <sup>39</sup> “If it is possible,” the communication reads, “we’d like you to receive and to help in establishing contacts with other antinuclear organizations.” Unsigned, undated communication from Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement to Pamela Osgood, BAPT. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>40</sup> Eva Marie Dubuisson defines *bata* as a wish-blessing, “a small act-in-the-world, a ritual that occurs at every major life-cycle event” (Eva Marie Dubuisson, *Living Language in Kazakhstan: The Dialogic Emergence of an Ancestral Worldview* [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017], 25). *Sputniknews* calls *bata* “one of the great concepts in [Kazakh] tradition. It is very important for the people and can be understood as a prayer” (“Where Did the Tradition of Blessing Come From, and Who Gave It,” <https://sputniknews.kz/society/20181012/7570543/bata-beru-dastur.html>).
- <sup>41</sup> Williams, *Hunger*, 105 (emphasis added).
- <sup>42</sup> Qtd. in Corbin Harney, *The Way It Is: One Water ... One Air ... One Mother Earth ...* (Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1995), 141.
- <sup>43</sup> Zoltan Grossman, *Unlikely Alliances: Native Nations and White Communities Join to Defend Rural Lands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 110.
- <sup>44</sup> Grossman, *Unlikely Alliances*, 110.
- <sup>45</sup> These coordinated efforts were scheduled to coincide with the deployment of the Trident II missile, universally deemed a “first-strike” weapon. See “International Appeal to Action,” undated communication, Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>46</sup> See “International Appeal to Action,” undated communication.
- <sup>47</sup> See “International Appeal to Action,” undated communication.
- <sup>48</sup> “Continued (Tour),” undated document, Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>49</sup> “Stop Nuclear Testing Tour” and “Cont. (Tour),” undated communications, Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>50</sup> “Report: Stop Nuclear Testing Tour,” undated communication, Box 5, Folder 53. Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).

- <sup>51</sup> J. Sebastian Sinisi, "Indians, Soviets Oppose Testing," *Denver Post* March 13, 1990; Raymond McCaffrey, "American, Soviet Activists Call for an End to Nuclear Testing," *Gazette Telegraph*, March 15, 1990; "Soviet, Shoshone peace activists join anti-nuclear protests," *Las Vegas Sun*, March 30, 1990. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>52</sup> Bill Pratt, "'Stop Nuclear Testing: Voices for Peace' Tour Visits Santa Cruz," *The Monthly Planet*, March 1990; "Stop Nuclear Testing Tour: Soviet Peace Activist and Native Shoshone to Speak," undated press release. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>53</sup> Sinisi, "Indians, Soviets Oppose Testing," *Denver Post*.
- <sup>54</sup> See "Soviet anti-nuclear arms activists urges united action by U.S. groups," *San Diego Tribune*, March 23, 1990; Robyn Seydel, "Banning the Bomb and the Tests: Multinational Activists Unite"; "Soviet, Shoshone Peace Activists Join Anti-Nuclear Protests," *Las Vegas Sun*, March 30, 1990; Pratt, "Stop Nuclear Testing"; Kevin Lumsden, "Activists Says U.S., Soviet Union Need To Meet Halfway on Nuclear Testing," *Wyoming Centennial* March 11, 1990; and "Stop Nuclear Testing Tour," miscellaneous press clippings. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>55</sup> McCaffrey, "American, Soviet Activists," *Gazette Telegraph*.
- <sup>56</sup> "Comprehensive Test Ban," undated document. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).
- <sup>57</sup> Seydel, "Banning the Bomb."
- <sup>58</sup> Seydel, "Banning the Bomb."
- <sup>59</sup> Pratt, "'Stop Nuclear Testing,'" 12.
- <sup>60</sup> Seydel, "Banning the Bomb."
- <sup>61</sup> McCaffrey, "American, Soviet Activists," *Gazette Telegraph*.
- <sup>62</sup> Lumsden, "Activists Says U.S.," *Wyoming Centennial*.
- <sup>63</sup> Undated telex communication to Pamela Osgood, BAPT, from Kairat Umarov, Nevada-Semipalatinsk Movement. Box 5, Folder 53, Nevada Desert Experience Records, 1957–2007. MS-00524, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas, Nevada (NDER-MS-00524).



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