

Guest Editorial:

## American Peace Test follows Gandhi, King

by Vip B. Short

The American Peace Test is a national organization, now based in Las Vegas and Washington, D.C., which had its origins in Eugene. APT's purpose is to bring about an intentional suspension in U.S. nuclear testing (matching the Soviet gesture of the past 17 months) as a first step out of the otherwise fatal nuclear arms race.

APT participants believe that our means must be consistent with our goal. We therefore designed and implemented a nationwide, non-violent direct action campaign as the vehicle to achieve our purpose. Our focus is self-empowerment for meaningful action. Required elements are a commitment to truth and honesty about our actions, an attitude of complete harmlessness, and the willingness to shoulder personal sacrifice in the pursuit of our goal. In this way, we believe our opponents' hearts will be changed and nuclear testing will stop, as a larger truth becomes apparent to all concerned. We try to carry on the high spiritual/political

**"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they crack down. Then you win."**

tradition set out by such "truth force" pioneers as Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, the Suffragettes, the Abolitionists, and the founders of this country—to name a few.

More than 900 people have been arrested for civil disobedience at the Nevada Test Site since Hiroshima Day 1985, when the USSR began its testing moratorium. Among those willing to go to jail over this issue have been scientist and writer Carl Sagan, actor Martin Sheen, former defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg, and the top national leadership of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the American Public Health Association, and the National FREEZE Campaign.

Gandhi, speaking of the normal life-cycle of

nonviolence campaigns, said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they crack down. Then you win." A recent sign of APT's effectiveness and momentum is the indictment by Nevada officials of several Peace Test staff members for conspiracy charges. We are told that the maximum penalty of one year in prison will be sought if these people are found guilty of conspiring to commit misdemeanor crimes.

This is an outright attempt to crush a successful and growing national movement of conscience by putting away its perceived leadership. Just like the United States' continuing refusal to entertain a no-risk, temporary moratorium on nuclear testing, this attempt to crush dissent is much more in keeping with what we have

been taught to think about aggressive totalitarian societies. Perhaps the first "enemy" we need to deal with is the deliberate trampling of our own country's sacred principles.

Please write the President and your legislators, urging an immediate suspension of U.S. nuclear testing. Also write District Attorney Phil Dunleavy, P.O. Box 593, Tonopah, NV 89049, to protest this move to eliminate citizen dissent. (A copy of your letter should be sent to Justice William Sullivan, P.O. Box 188, Beatty, NV 89003.)

Finally, you can make this pre-emptive and selective prosecution more difficult by obtaining and signing a "co-conspirator statement"; write the American Peace Test, P.O. Box 26725, Las Vegas, NV 89126.

The nuclear arms race is everyone's problem and one which, if not resolved successfully, will render all other issues moot.

[Vip Short is a Eugene chiropractic physician who helped to found the American Peace Test.]



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Elisabeth Lyman

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