



Nuclear research threatens Indians in New Mexico

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by Gabriela Jaskulla

New Mexico. Traveling from Albuquerque to Santa Fe. The eyes need a while to get used to the ups and downs on the freeway, to the steady slide past the other cars, mostly big pickups and SUVs, like the giant fish swim past. Only two colors in this basin of sand and stones: ocher and gray - and a stunning blue sky heavy, cars, rocks and petrol stations depressing. The south-western desert state, though almost as large as Poland, has lost. 40 percent of residents receive government support here. Warning said the friends from Maine and New Jersey: "Do not think that the U.S. is there - that's Third World."

Right now the trees on the mountains, slate-colored and folded as determined by a hand. The Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the Spanish conquistadors named the so called because all the setting sun dip in blood-red light is. The first Native American casinos, called names: "Buffalo Thunder" and "Ohkay Owengeeh Resort". The casinos are owned by natives, the Indians, who have been mentioned recently, members of First Nations. Who once in here was familiar, from everywhere, because the interior is always the same: Near the entrance a bar, then right and left of the machine, a corridor, which passes within a wide arc to them, in the middle of the tables for poker and Billiards.

The dismal pleasure is a good thing, then you will be taught: The casinos are on Indian land, they do not belong to the American government, and thus benefit from the revenues of Indian self-government for nearly 100 percent - only that it is primarily the Natives themselves who spend their time here. Hardly any other in sight, no Hispanics who now represent the majority in the state, few Anglos, ie whites.

Continue north. The sun glistening dark, amorphous mass without edges. The entire country and ash gray, but still glowing. Signs and billboards on the freeway clump edges. Steadily up, it goes to the 502 to Los Alamos. The historical research center is open to visitors - unlike the 'Labs', run the laboratories, nuclear research.

And then it hits you like a punch to the stomach: the beauty. At Pojoaque River, the road winds up into a sudden generous enthusiasm; aspens and poplars lining the banks, their branches glisten in the sunlight like fine silver threads. The hills have curves like Hollywood beauties in their fifties, Ava Gardner hips have them - and the waist of Vivien Leigh. In the vicinity have been in the forties, the

physicists and engineers of the Manhattan Project with intellectuals met for tea. Hostess was Edith Warner, who at the Bridge Ottowi ran a crossing keeper's hut. Her biographer, Peggy Pond Church, had to leave with her family as one of the first hill of the Pajarito: The school, the business her father there had been confiscated by the military. It seemed the ideal location for developing the bomb.

Edith Warner, a lady who looks at photos and really cool and the British one has nevertheless present as an almost spiritual mediator between the worlds, wrote: "I realized that here we do not need more than the small capacity, the peace and Beauty in the record and pass, with whom he surrounded the gods. "

The sky is to build new clouds to rotate on its axis by a huge flow of air, there are more clouds twirled towers as puffy pillows, but they also seem to swing, to sway. And then dive right into Mesaberge. Six, seven huge stone blocks that rise up from the canyons and the plains and in the middle - the Black Mesa, the Holy Mountain of the Indians, dark and full of imposing grandeur. The Mesaberge stand like enormous game table, on which gods do mysterious things. It is hard to believe that this area should be developed from geological coincidences, out of pure volcanic activity. Cologne Cathedral is a coincidence? No more and no less than it is the spirit of this casino.

Suddenly, the thought arises, to drive further up, to Los Alamos, a kind of fear one. Finally, here is "in the interest of national security" further research, as in the prospectus of the authorities is, therefore: to arms. For 20 years the Los Alamos Study Group tries to figure out a citizens' movement, based in Albuquerque, what research is being conducted. In May, they have achieved at least in public hearings that the objectives of the new, gigantic research project must be publicly justified - and that protection measures are being considered at all. The old prejudice that here this "third world" is, in anyway, "only a few Indians and crazy artist" living will, zupass Washington.

Without hesitation I turn off the freeway to San Ildefonso, in one of the pueblos, which is famous for its pottery. San Ildefonso is nestled in the vast plain between the mesas as in an open hand. The village, the large, circular plaza with its distinctive cotton tree and the house of the local community reveals itself at first glance. The village of Mesa provides the forehead and adheres to the River: The Rio Grande flowing past, therefore thrive here even flowers, columbine and pennyroyal - in an area where there are sometimes a few people wonder about a single tulip.

"Nobody there," says the man falsely, the blocking of a barrier next to the entrance of the village runs a small shop. "Today is a holiday." Visitors must register. I'm undecided about. Is there anyone who represents the management people? "But," the man says he gets up without another word from his folding chair and slowly disappears into one of the adobe houses, flat mud huts, inhabited by the Pueblo Indians for centuries. Inside, a kind of counter - and behind my new acquaintance. About ten dollars he puts out a ticket to shoot a Map and permission. "Just not today." Why not? "Today is a holiday."

On the plaza are a few plastic chairs, otherwise you can feel nothing of party preparations. The villagers do not appear. Whoever is on the Spanish Mediterranean islands at the crowds of noisy traders had skirts - is held here the exact opposite. Silence. Wait and see. Invisibility. You feel that someone is there, that somewhere, behind the black window hatches, just watching eyes, you turn around quickly, because you believe someone roar past you - nothing. Only a few dogs, the rest uninterested in the shade. Then someone shows up but without haste. One asks about the pottery, by the descendants of the legendary María Martínez, who established the reputation of the Santa Clara pottery. María Martínez invented the classic design, the 'Black in Black ', but they perfected it. Today, her vases and bowls, the wedding doppelhörnige vessel and the spherical containers for grain prices reach thousands of dollars in galleries worldwide. No wonder that their neighbors are not in a hurry.

No, no pottery today. But a hard, like I said. And dance. "You can stay if you want," says a man who has appeared out of nowhere, as if someone sent him. He makes an inviting gesture vaguely in the direction of the plastic chairs. The natives have nothing against foreigners. You do not just talk a lot. Nothing is more alien than the trivial exuberance of Anglos. After a while, does well. They know what they are talking: about pottery, for example. And, what is not: about gods. And about Los Alamos.

The people here have learned to live in his shadow. First they fled from the Mesabergen. There, the original village stood since about 1300 Then they settled in the valley on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande. Flows south past the Pojoaque, large cotton trees grow. To the north is the Black Mesa. West limit Jemezberge the panorama. San Ildefonso is like on a big stage. And although it presents itself as spectacular, it was never conquered militarily. Especially his openness, it seemed to protect. Accordingly, self-confident people are accustomed to recognize arriving from afar, friends and foes alike. You have seen invading Spaniards, Anglos from the north - with a modern threat, the "invisible fire", the radioactivity emanating from Los Alamos, they could not count.

The work of the potter has not changed for centuries: no slice, Handsfree, they rotate out of the mud, they are looking for on the mesas and mix them in the long hours, sometimes days of work and wet, narrow strip, the fillets. ON THE Puki, a round base, the basket or wrapped in plastic is necessary, superposed, elaborately interconnected, always smoothed. How is the belly of a vase of scope changes organically, like the vase it layer by layer, until thickened and then narrows again, is to keep as much or fine the wall - which is not measured, the results of its own. From experience. From the individual and the collective. Because the collective is the more important, however, include the family more than the individual artists. The Martínez. The García. The Archuleta. The Paquin. They all have to make pottery their kind, their kind, and the graffiti, the ornaments to complement - and burn it.

The burning is actually the mysterious work. A riddle. Difficult to control. Here, the clay can still break, vases can break suddenly or even explode. It is, say, the potter, the moment of truth. But today is not a good day to burn, the wind freshens. Elloy, who invited me to stay still advises to visit the potters in Santa Clara - and Sharon. Sharon Naranjo. Your name is called out here with similar awe as the French king in Burgundy, a wine. But there is a difference: Pottery is a perfectly sober and yet deeply spiritual activity. Find out is, of course not easy. Because the religion of the natives is secret. You must not talk about it.

This habit has to say, the other, far above earthly minded mystery mongers helped quite decided on the hill. Unnoticed by the public in 1942, the government here could push her to the Manhattan Project, developing the atomic bomb, under the physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and his crew. The locals said it - nothing. After the first attempt in the summer of 1945, which had a big fallout result, they said - nothing. As a long time after the war, in the seventies, the more trials contaminated drinking water - nothing. In 1979, when the uranium mining, a dam broke and the water is contaminated again - nothing.

We had not heard in Europe, Los Alamos would be "in the desert of New Mexico"? But "the desert" does not exist. There are plateaus, there is the immense plain, there is the heartland of 22 Indian tribes living here for over a thousand years. There are archaeological curiosities of the Anasazi culture, the Swiss scientist Adolph Bandelier already enthusiastic about 1890. There are several thousand people directly and tens of thousands on the mountain in the vicinity. And there's fire. The secret nuclear fire, try to tame the Anglos the top of the hill continue.

The tenacious resistance of the Los Alamos Study Group is led by Greg Mello, a Harvard graduate and geologist, who formerly advised the Environmental Protection Agency of New Mexico - the Paul of

the movement. He has something Oppenheimer sticking with his super-intelligence, its extremely sharp, analytical mind. Mello has revealed that the area be built on the "PF4", the new plutonium-testing ground, is extremely earthquakes. New security measures had to be scheduled then, the cost of the new research project increased by another half a billion to 5.8 billion dollars.

However, the plan is not abandoned. But will not give up the Study Group. In scientific papers will be argued in the happenings of the hearings. A grim struggle, conducted with teeth and claws. But not by the Indians. They are the victims. The contaminated groundwater - it endangered the residents of Santa Clara. The experiments with radioactive and chemical and possibly biological weapons - were always affected in an accident the first pueblos.

Why do not you resist? Craig, the ancient-looking 59-year-old from the Council of Elders in Taos, shakes his head. It was not their fight. One can also say you are tired. For decades, Indians have fought for the return of their land. Finally, in 1970, the President gave them right. Therefore depends in many houses of the Indians in addition to the new Obama and an old portrait of Nixon. And since there is peace. Tranquility, the common good. The other, the scare everyone who is looking to shoot on the Pajarito hill just a sign. The others who have built their so-called "science museum", the Bradbury Science Museum at Los Alamos funny as a casino: inside a semicircular path leads to different "Info-Stations" is over. There you can steer with the joystick or bomber atomic nuclei split, some spend the whole day with the nuclear toys. Coke is it for free, in this particular museum of misinformation. The canyon in the area is now infested area just yet. Decontamination Area.

In the former archaeological area is the most important sanctuary of the Indians: the relief of the water snake. The jagged water snake appears on many potters working in San Ildefonso and Santa Clara. If she is angry, it is said, the water turns into a snake fire snake. As in 2000 went up by a fire nearly 400 houses on the hill in flames, as the Indians knew what had happened.

"Was that so?" Sharon Naranjo asked with feigned innocence and continues to build on their vase. "I do not like to talk about, you know," Nobody talks about it, I say angry, but that was premature, because Sharon has her own answer: she speaks, she says, do not like making pottery about it, because everything in her head is flowing through the hands into the vessel. Pottery is a spiritual work. Therefore, each step is accompanied by prayers. Even collecting the clay, the mixing of different layers of the structure, the drying process, using the smoothing of small polishing stones, which are inherited from generation to generation. "Everything in there," says Sharon. Making pottery she looks out the window of her kitchen on the Jemezberge, the aspens in the sandy garden. She sees what she wants to see.

And then they must wait for the right day. The right weather. The correct pressure. Just no wind! Wind can destroy the fragile fire. Wind whipped the disastrous bush fires, which could arise in June threatened the nuclear research center and the fear of a second Fukushima. Wind had been feared, researchers at Oppenheimer in the forties. But not enough. The Trinity Project was implemented. The bomb went off. Only here, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its explosive power was the first problem. The second, dramatically underestimated - the fallout. Nothing to fear here so much as the wind. He always brings destruction. And is always invisible. Like the other fire, the nuclear.

There is no greater contrast than the inhuman, atomic fire up there in Los Alamos and the small fire the pottery at the foot of the mountain. No kiln helps, no addition. Sharon lifts easily from a shallow pit in their garden. In this pit she puts a vase and a bowl - the work of two weeks. They covered the whole with twigs - cedars and pines. The cedar wood burns slowly and deeply, pine wood makes the fire going. Then wait. "It may be that I'm ready, but the sound is not there," says Sharon.

If the goods are received the coveted Santa Clara Black to the fire after a while with cow or horse manure is covered to restrict the supply of oxygen. On the ground smolders and smokes an unsightly gray mass. It smells of earth and animals. It smells and looks as if the earth itself and steaming quietly smolder. The fire is supervised, it is maintained as it is called a laboring mother. After six to twelve hours, the ash is cleared carefully aside. And what comes to light, is like a miracle: soft, sheer, perfect vessels. Using pliers, they are carefully salvaged. The round tubes have something organic, they look like eggs - eggs, the bird has laid the giant planet. Sharon laughs: "Mother Earth brings forth everything anyway," she says. He adds: "And if they sat that us, it throws us off. Tonzeug in pieces like a potter. "

They all have set their hopes on President Obama, who took to end the nuclear arms race. But Obama was the one for the labs has approved \$ 4.5 billion for further research. It's about "national security", it says, and that means the highest level of secrecy. Sharon's nephew, Tim has worked at the airport of Los Alamos - a small airport, there is not even on the radar. The nephew of jeers, he knew how it was to provide "security" ordered up there. And all know that feeling betrayed. Exposed to the invisible fire. "Friendly fire", the nephew of evil laughs. "We are here exposed to a particular friendly fire. We are the collateral damage. "Sharon does not like that the boy speaks Sun He talks too much for an Indian.

It's getting dark over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. A dark-violet light on the mountains, from deep inside. The neon sign at the casino as hectic red spots on the skin of the mountains. The song from the radio sounds. "It's all here," Sharon has said and pointed to a simple bowl. "Nothing is lost, never." She casts one last look at the fire in the small pit, which now goes out. Wind comes up again, the first snowflakes swirled with ash. On the hill from Los Alamos but glows on the other, the nuclear fire. And no one is tame.