

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Nevada-Semipalatinsk, the International anti-nuclear movement

REF N° 2004-22

PART A. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The documentary heritage proposed is a single collection of documents concerning the action of the international antinuclear movement (IAM) “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” that put an end to nuclear arms tests at the Semipalatinsk Polygon that had caused great harm to the environment and genetic pool of the people of Kazakhstan. The collection is kept in two archives in the Republic of Kazakhstan – the Central State Archive of the RK (CSA RK) and the State archive of film, stills and sound recordings.

The IAM “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” was the first antinuclear non-governmental organization (NGO) created in 1989 on the territory of the former USSR as a natural demand of life directed to the protection of mankind from general nuclear dangers. Its purpose was to destroy all nuclear test polygons on the territory of Kazakhstan, create public control over industrial wastes, and establish an ecological map of the region. The movement has a Charter, organizational structure and cultural symbols.

For more than 40 years since August 1949, the steppes of Kazakhstan were a test polygon, centres for uranium processing and places for the burial nuclear technological wastes. In summary, the total impact of nuclear explosions in Kazakhstan exceeds the power of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb by 45,000. As scientific research shows, in Kazakhstan approximately 2,6 million people fell victim to genetic mutation as a result of prolonged exposure to radiation.

The movement placed on its agenda, the:

- organization of actions directed towards the complete prohibition of nuclear tests, the banning of nuclear, missiles and other types of weapons of mass destruction and the illegal burial of radioactive and toxic wastes;
- protection and revitalization of nature, man, culture;
- protection of human rights;
- problems of ecology at the national and international levels.

Nevada-Semipalatinsk played a positive role in the understanding by the general public of the necessity to fight against nuclear threats. It gained wide support throughout whole world and, became a real historical factor in finding solutions to global ecological problems.

2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (Private person or organization)

The Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA, RK), the State Central Archive of cinema, photos and sound recordings.

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated:

Custodian

2.3 The contact person(s):

Zhanaev Bolat Tazhibaeovich, director of the CSA of the RK.

Seitova Alla Fedorovna, director of the CSA of cinephotodocuments and sound recordings.

2.4 The contact details (including address, phone, fax, e-mail)

Abai av., 39. Almaty, Kazakhstan, 480091, tel./fax: 671462, e-mail: achiv@cga.kazarchive.kz

Abai av., 39. Almaty, Kazakhstan, 480091, tel.: 671454, fax 671462 (for Seitova)

3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated.

Audiovisual documents of the International antinuclear movement “Nevada-Semipalatinsk”.

3.2 Description

a) Films:

- 1) “Sary-Ozek. Farewell to arms”; film about the Sary-Ozek polygon, where the demolition of small-range missiles started. The date and place of shooting: the Taldy-Kurgan region, 1988. The archive No. 4389
- 2) “Nevada-Kazakhstan” The cinema journal “The Soviet Kazakhstan”, 1989, No.4. Activity of the antinuclear movement “Nevada”. The archive No. 4485
- 3) “Minus four”. On the demolition of 4 medium-range missiles at the Sary-Ozek military polygon within the framework of implementation of the Kazakhstani-American Treaty on the liquidation of medium-range missiles. The date and place of shooting: the Taldy-Kurgan region, 1989. Archive No. 4611

b) 30 photos (archive numbers: 2-94773, 2-94775, 2-94793, 2-94973, 2-98539, 2-100222, 2-104134 – 2-104137, 2-104147, 2-104159 – 2-104161, 2-104166 – 2-104167, 2-110930, 3-28287, 3-28507, 3-28828), that reflect the activity of the ANM in the regions of Kazakhstan with members of the Committee of the movement

c) print material: Fond 2208, Inventory 1, Dossier 262, 313 Lists 2, Fond 2225, Inventory 1, Dossiers 91-92, 171, 296, 337-347, 349-352, 354-355, 357-363, 366-369, 372, 275-380, 410. Lists 41 (Altogether: 43 sheets)

d) threat:

1. The collection on paper carriers is represented by manuscripts (in pencil and ink) and typescripts, and also print editions (newspapers, journal articles, monographs). The typescripts are characterized by the fading of texts, superimposition of color and lines, punching-through by the keys, which makes them difficult to be read. The paper is in pencil and ink and has faded and yellowed. The press-cuttings with articles about the movement are yellowed and the folds are sometimes torn.
2. The character and condition of the film, photo and sound documents is diverse and problematic. Films are black-and-white, and include both positives and negatives. Some are on cellulose nitrate; the rest are on cellulose acetate base.

Sound documents. The sound is of poor quality. All the film-, photo-, and sound documents are in a state of degradation, they are brittle and abraded with scratches and breaks.

The long-term safeguard of documents is one of the most important goals of the CSA although it does not always succeed in maintaining normative safeguarding regimes. Almaty is situated in a dangerous seismological zone. The archive building is situated in ecologically polluted region where levels of air pollution are very high. The process of deterioration has accelerated. Important documents are preserved in simple boxes in which hydrogen peroxide can appear under periods of long preservation. This archive does not have means to maintain optimal humidity/temperature regimes.

The names of 3 independent experts:

1. Peterbridge G. – the international Advisor of the “Memory of the world” Programme, Director of “Ausheritage” Network
2. Eleusizov M. – Chairman of the ecological union of associations of enterprises of Kazakhstan “Tabigat”. Tel.: 72-97-05, fax: 50-18-27. Zheltoksan str., 115, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 480091.
3. Abishev M. – Director of the social-humanist institute of the Kazakh National Agrarian University. Tel. 65-15-17.

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

Authenticity was determined by the experts: Eleusizov M., and Abishev M.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

Documents of the International Anti-nuclear movement “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” contain unique source study materials reflecting the history leading to the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear polygon. Their actions received wide support all over the world, and led to people making their government announce a moratorium against nuclear tests as in Kazakhstan.

4.3 Criteria related to (a) time, (b) place, (c) people, (d) subject and theme, (e) form and style

Time

The nuclear era started on July 16, 1945 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki – a symbol of barbarian, criminal use of the great achievements of science against mankind.

The STNP, which was created on August 21, 1947, was part of the military-industrial complex (MIC) of the USSR. It had complete monopoly of all issues connected with the testing of nuclear weapons, including issues of health, protection control and the environment in territories adjoining the polygon. The MIC was interested in the deliberate hiding of consequences of nuclear explosions.

The nuclear polygon was a symbol for Kazakhs of their national oppression (because it was created on Kazakh land by the order of Moscow). Kazakhstan, for many years, was a polygon for the testing of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons. It is the only state in the world where the full-range of nuclear-strategic programmes was carried out: the mining and processing of the strategic raw materials, the manufacture and testing of nuclear warheads and demolition of missile units.

The “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement, which was initiated by the poet Olzhas Suleimenov and sought the closing down of the nuclear polygon in the Semipalatinsk region, was started at a time when it was not safe to be in political opposition to the regime; and even put forward radical demands in the sphere of ecology.

The decision to create the International antinuclear movement was made on February 28, 1989 and was the equivalent of a challenge to the then all-mighty military-industrial complex of the USSR.

From its creation, the “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement carried out non-stop protests actions against nuclear tests at the STNP: thousands of meetings, peace marches, international and regional conferences, antinuclear alliance Congresses and also delivered addresses to national and international organizations to stop nuclear tests. For the first time in the world, it used the new model – interaction of popular and parliamentary diplomacy.

The “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement found wide support and approval in the whole world and people made their governments declare a moratorium on nuclear tests following the example of Kazakhstan. At the present time, branches of “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” have been created in all regions of Kazakhstan, and in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, the Altai, Yakutsk, Bishkek, the USA, France, Germany, Turkey, Mongolia, South Africa, Italy, Israel and Canada.

Of decisive importance for the cessation of atomic weapons testing in Kazakhstan was the gaining of sovereignty by the Republic. On 29 August 1991, the President of Kazakhstan N.A.Nazarbayev signed a Decree on the closure of the STNP that was the most important step for mankind to achieve a nuclear-free world.

According to O.Suleimenov “there is to be singled out in one’s consciousness as a separate factor the threat from geni, from quiet, modest personalities in hidden laboratories”.

Place

For a long time our Republic was a place of “ecological war”. The vast territory and scarcity of its population once served as the reason for the irresponsible attitude of the leadership of the former Soviet Union towards the environment. The military policy led to the huge territory of Kazakhstan

being taken up by military complexes. Taking into account the amount of radiation in some places and the doses received by those living near the polygon, the “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement proposed to declare the STNP and the districts adjoining the polygons of the Karaganda, Pavlodar and Eastern-Kazakhstani regions to be an ecological disaster zone. The ecological crisis situation that encompassed the vast territory of Kazakhstan reached a critical point when it led to the disruption not only of people's health but of the nation's genetic pool.

About 2 million hectares of agricultural lands became radioactively contaminated on the site of the former Semipalatinsk test nuclear polygon (STNP). On the initiative of the IAM “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” and the Government of the RK, the UN General assembly assessed the situation in Semipalatinsk and adopted a resolution addressed to the international community, to render assistance to the leadership of the RK in its efforts to rehabilitate the population that suffered from nuclear testing at the polygon.

People

The normal development of any society depends first of all upon the health of the younger generation. Nuclear weapons tests inflicted irreparable damage on people's health, and caused general illness among the population, who over the course of several decades, are severely affected not only by what happened in Semipalatinsk but in the other polygons (Lobnor, Azgir and others).

The people of Kazakhstan undertook the first real step to universal nuclear disarmament by stopping tests in the USSR. **The majority** of the countries of the world approved the treaty on the prohibition on nuclear weapons testing.

Wide-spread pathologies in the second and third generations, i.e. the state of health of the progeny of persons who lived near “the polygons during the nuclear tests period demonstrate hereditary damage. Over two years field observation in the “Aksai” republican children's clinical hospital, the frequency of pathology was studied among 1,574 children from Abrali and Abai districts of the Eastern-Kazakhstani region and Maisk district of the Pavlodar region. These were the grandchildren of those who had been exposed to radiation in August 1949. The results established an increased likelihood of 3.4% of illnesses of the blood and blood-bearing organs; 6.7% of illnesses of the nervous system and digestive organs; 3.4% of illnesses of the skin and subcutaneous cellular tissue; 2.8% of inborn anomalies; an overall rate of 3.8% times more than that of children of the control districts.

According to the data of the UNO experts, more than 1.6 million people suffered from radiation. Well-grounded evidence attests that the number of people whose health has been damaged by nuclear tests does not decrease. Today the third generation is under threat as children of school age and pre-school age suffer from such illnesses as leukemia, asthma, tuberculosis and other severe illnesses.

Subject and theme

The topicality of the theme can be seen through an estimation of the consequences of the tests that inflicted huge damage on Kazakhstan. In the period between 1949 and 1989, approximately 500 nuclear and thermonuclear explosions were carried out on its territory.

The “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement enriched the world experience of antinuclear fighting, through democratic methods of popular and parliamentary diplomacy, strengthening the international authority of non-governmental organizations – the factor that determines the level of life activity of the individual and which is an institutional aspect of social life.

Information on the problem was inaccessible for a long time at a broad level. People were limited only to rumours and suppositions which precluded the true scientific analysis. That is why the scientific researchers themselves bore “a mythological” character. Only with the gaining of sovereignty by the Republic of Kazakhstan (the RK) did the possibility arise of access to information on the issue, along with objective analysis which undoubtedly stimulated further scientific research.

Of not lesser importance was the creation of different public movements and organizations (non-governmental): in ecology, antinuclear and other areas.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has established that about 80% of modern illnesses are related to negative environment of influences. The priority of ecology is realized by society more and more because the modern man poignantly feels his helplessness before the oncoming ecological disaster. Today the habitat is becoming one of the determining factors that influence the health of people. Ecology at the present time has turned into one of the leading interdisciplinary synthetic sciences that solve the actual problem of the present time – the study of interrelations of mankind with the environment.

The “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement contributed to social needs of closing the polygon, rehabilitating the population after the consequences of nuclear tests and fighting for nuclear-free world. Social institutions appear in society as large non-planned products of social life. The “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement was unplanned. Rather, it was a demand of life directed to the protection of the future fate of mankind from the looming nuclear threat. Thus the “Nevada-Semipalatinsk” movement stepped use antinuclear platform, becoming a powerful organized system with its large-scale actions, programmes, authoritative leaders who won the trust and respect of people.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

Rarity and Integrity

As noted in Section 4.2 above, the archival fonds housed in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan is unique and of unquestionable integrity.

5. LEGAL ASPECTS

5.1 The owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact information)
CSA of the RK.

5.2 The keeper of the documentary heritage (name and contact information if different from the owner)

Seitova Alla Fedorovna, director of the CSA of cinephotodocuments and sound recordings.
Abai av., 39. Almaty, Kazakhstan, 480091, tel.: 671454, fax 671462 (for Seitova)

5.3 Legal aspects

a) category of ownership
State

b) accessibility
limited access

c) copyright

Based on the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the national archival fonds and archives” Astana, December 22, 1998 N326-13 Rk and “The instruction on the centralized state registration of documents of the National archival fonds of the Republic of Kazakhstan” the Committee on the management of archives and documentation of the Ministry of culture, information and public concord of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty, 2000 (the registration N1240 dated 10.09.2000)

d) the responsible department of the Committee on the management of archives and documentation of the Ministry of culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty, Abai av., 39. Tel. 8-321-2-67-

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Daily work is carried out work through all available means, equipment and staff for the preservation and conservation of these documents. With the available equipment regime control and safe-keeping are maintained. The documents are dusted and aired manually. The lack of qualified restorers working with modern, ecologically clean materials and restoring equipment hampers the implementation of these tasks although there is a pressing need for them.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultations were determined by the experts: Eleusizov M., Abishev M.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Threat:

1. The collection on paper carriers comprises printed works (newspapers, journal articles, monographs etc). The typescripts are characterized by fading of texts, superimposition of colour and lines, punching-through by keys, which makes it difficult to be read. Paper in pencil and ink has faded and is yellowed. Press-cuttings with articles and articles about the movement have yellowed, and folds are sometimes torn.
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9. ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

PART C - POSSESSION

This nomination has been proposed by (whom)
The Central State Archive of the Republic Kazakhstan

Please write the name
B.T. Janayev, Director



Date (ex. 2004.06.29)
