

The beginning of January saw my visit to the East Coast of the USA, the first step towards another Round-the-World Journey, again in the westerly direction. I attended the AAAS Meeting in Washington DC, visited my good friend Derek Price [see Titles 403 and 404] at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut, and stopped briefly in Princeton, New Jersey to meet with Harry Woolf, then the Secretary of the Institute of Advanced Studies. Both were Members of my Editorial Board.

By the middle of January, I treated myself to a weekend with my old friend Dr Peter Witt, whom I had known since my youth in Berlin. He had studied medicine in Switzerland and Psychology in the USA and settled in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he carried out intensive research at the University into the behaviour of spiders spinning their webs under the influence of hallucinogens, soft drugs, and narcotics, hard drugs. [See "Spider Webs: Design and Engineering" ISR 1/4, page 322; 1976]

He lived with his wife in a delightful country establishment which included his private Zoo, where he had an ostrich, a herd of llamas and a rare species of goats. During my visit, a young llama was born and in my honour he named her *Antonia*. It was the only time in my life that I witnessed an actual birth.

A week later I checked in at the Los Alamos Inn in Los Alamos, situated at a height of 2200 m on a plateau in the Jemez Mountains. By the middle of the 20th century the name of this small city in North Central New Mexico had become a legend for any scientist interested in current affairs. It was there, in the Atomic Research Laboratory of the Manhattan Project, that the first nuclear fission atomic bombs had been developed under its distinguished and later much maligned Director, Robert J. Oppenheimer.

My visit in 1982, in the middle of the Cold War (1947-1991); was a scientific pilgrimage to this historical site, where the thermonuclear bomb, H-bomb, had also been conceived by Edward Teller, designed, developed and constructed. The first USA atomic bomb was exploded in 1945, the first thermonuclear bomb also by the USA in 1952, followed by the USSR less than a year later in 1953, by the United Kingdom in 1957, China in 1967 and France in 1968.

During my officially arranged press visit, I did not expect to learn any secrets, and was not disappointed when I was only shown the outside of many laboratory-huts. However, I learnt that Oppenheimer himself had chosen this isolated site on top of a mountain, as he had been a pupil at the Los Alamos Ranch School for boys founded in 1917 by Ashley Pond. He had given the area the name Los Alamos, the Spanish name for a 'cottonwood tree' of the willow family.

See Watercolour Title 314, inside Back Cover