

February 1981

## Contamination, coverup in French nuclear fire

In the early morning hours of January 6 a major fire broke out in a waste storage silo at the La Hague nuclear reprocessing plant in northwestern France. Though monitors at the facility showed steady increases in radiation all morning, it took seven hours for technicians to discover its source. The fire wasn't put out until the next day. Its cause is still a mystery, and because there was no monitor near the silo no one will ever know exactly how much radiation escaped.

If plant operator COGEMA, a wholly owned subsidiary of the French government, had gotten its way, it's likely that no one would have found out about the fire at all. Workers at the plant weren't told about the accident until later in the day and weren't evacuated while the fire was being fought. Nearby municipal authorities found out about it from a union leaflet.

The accident was kept out of most American newspapers for almost a week. The *Oakland Tribune*, for example, didn't report it until January 11, and then it was buried on the inside pages. The French paper *Le Quotidien* charged in a front-page editorial on January 10 that "it was a very serious accident that officials have vainly tried to hide."

In the past COGEMA has consistently downplayed the importance of accidents at La Hague — and there were six major ones in 1980 alone. It has been left to La Hague workers to break the wall of silence that is buttressed by the French government and the rest of the French nuclear industry. Nuclear advocates in other countries aren't too eager to publicize these matters either, since La Hague is the reprocessing point for spent reactor fuel from throughout Europe.

This time COGEMA initially stated that there was no danger of worker contamination, then admitted

in the large contaminated zone at some point during the day of the fire were sent home that evening with no special cleanup at all. A plant official told a reporter for the leftwing French Daily *Liberation* that if these workers had been contaminated, "the detectors installed at the gates would have signalled it." But, reports *Liberation*, "these detectors had been unplugged because they were ringing without interruption" due to "background radiation" from the fire.

The next day the 1200 workers went on their own initiative to the plant's medical block for radiation checks. Four hundred of them were at least detectably contaminated.

On January 8 over a thousand La Hague workers staged a work stoppage and demonstration outside the management buildings at the reprocessing complex. It was the largest demonstration since the strike of 1976 (see accompanying article, page 6) and was pulled off with the cooperation of all four unions at the plant.

The strikers were particularly upset about the delay in informing them of the accident. But they went back to work when the plant officials agreed to check their homes and families for contamination and to decontaminate the plant cafeteria and all plant and employee vehicles. The workers also asked for the immediate shutdown of all facilities at La Hague until they are checked, the monitoring of the surrounding population and environment and the establishment of an independent monitoring organization. They demanded "a clean nuclear industry." (But, as *Liberation* asked, is such a thing possible?)

Emotions still ran high later in the week when local villagers and anti-nuclear activists joined the La Hague workers for another demonstration, this one at the municipal

**"It was a very serious accident that officials have vainly tried to hide."**

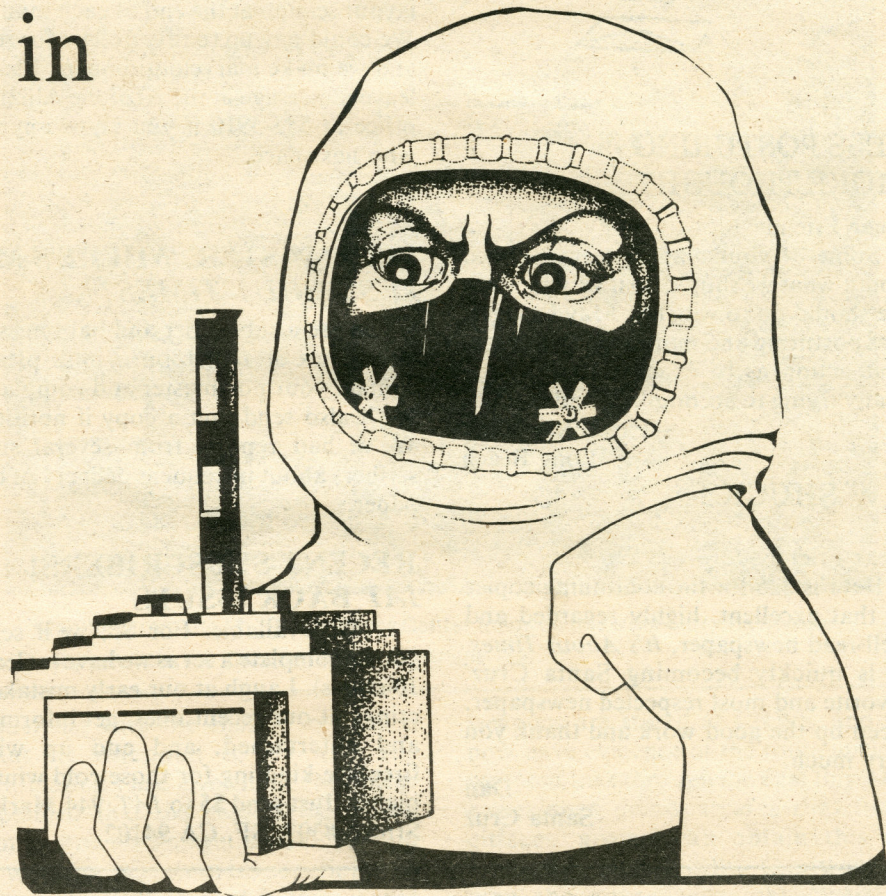
that a painter working near one of the silo's ventilation grills had received the maximum allowable annual radiation dose. Nineteen more workers were taken to the medical block, but plant officials were quoted in *Nucleonics Week* as saying "they too were declared safe after washing."

About 1200 workers who had been

offices in nearby Cherbourg. The slogan of the day was "Halte a la politique du secret" — down with the politics of secrecy. A man from the village of Beaumont told *Liberation*, "I'm not anti-nuclear but I'm not an imbecile either. This time la coup est pleine (this is too much)". One of the unions demanded that the management of La Hague be replaced and the anti-nuclear forces announced a national day of protest.

According to *Nucleonics Week*, COGEMA officials are still claiming that the "small amounts" of cesium 134 and 137 that escaped during the fire remained within several hundred square meters around the silo. There was no way, COGEMA said, that cesium could have escaped the plant site in doses high enough to be harmful to the surrounding populations. But the

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courtesy People's Translation Service

## Modesto, Santa Clara and Redding Cities deal for nukes

Despite strong opposition the cities of Santa Clara, Modesto and Redding are going ahead with plans to buy electricity from the Palo Verde nuclear plant, under construction 36 miles west of Phoenix, Arizona. The Santa Clara City Council gave notice of its intention to "seriously consider" the purchase with a 6 to 1 vote at its January 13 meeting.

The Council chambers were packed with Santa Clara residents demanding to know more about the potential cost of the Palo Verde deal. A public referendum was suggested many times throughout the meeting, but the Council refused to consider one. Mayor Bill Gissler said that it was up to the Council to decide about the Palo Verde purchase. "You can vote us out at the polls," he told his angry constituents. Council member Auralee Street remarked that nuclear power is "too esoteric" for the average voter.

The Council also refused to delay its decision pending a cost analysis report, although Council member Eddie Souza joined many others in pointing out the lack of cost/benefit knowledge and the many key unanswered questions about the city's liability.

Richard Hubbard and Gregory Minor of MHB Technical Associates raised some of the economic concerns — the cost of piping treated sewage effluent from Phoenix to cool the plant, the cost and power losses involved in transmitting power 1000 miles to Santa Clara, and the cost of safety modifications required because of Three Mile Island.

Others at the meeting complained about sending \$140 million out of state with no guarantee of power delivery. Reservations were raised about construction cost overruns, hikes in the price of uranium, waste disposal and decommissioning costs, and the cost of substitute power in case of plant failures or accidents.

All these possible additional costs could lead to rate hikes for Santa Clara electric customers if the plans go through.

Santa Clara, Modesto and Redding make up the MSR Public Power Service, which would deal for Palo Verde power. The plant's three 1270 megawatt reactors are 75%, 40% and 15% complete, with estimated completion dates of 1983, 1984 and 1986. Reactors IV and V were cancelled when Southern California Edison backed out in 1979. Several other utilities have been trying to sell portions of their interest in the project because of decreases in projected electrical demand. Current plans call for MSR to buy 225 megawatts, or 5.91% of Palo Verde's capacity. Santa Clara would get 39.37% of this capacity for \$140 million, financed by ratepayers through privately backed MSR bonds.

In the past Santa Clara has

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## Letters



—Susan Dembrowski

### LESS POSTURING MORE THOUGHT

Dear Friends,

Some of your readers seem worried about what we should do if we win, what we should do to win, etc. May I suggest less posturing and more serious thought and action as to exactly what we are really trying to accomplish, and do that!

—Farrel Sveslosky  
Long Beach

### AW SHUCKS

Dear Friends,

Here is \$25 for the continuing copies of that excellent, highly regarded and well-read newspaper, *It's About Times*. It is quickly becoming Santa Cruz' favorite and most respected newspaper. Keep up the good work and thank you very much.

Dan  
Santa Cruz

## IAT needs office space

How dare they evict us! *It's About Times* is suddenly out on the cold streets and searching for a new office in the East Bay or San Francisco. We need about 5 by 10 feet for storage of files and materials and 15 by 20 feet for a darkroom. In addition, we need the use of roughly 20 by 20 feet for one weekend layout session at the end of each month. We could pay up to fifty dollars for rent and we make marvelous dinners. Please leave a message at the Abalone Alliance office at 543-3910 if you know anyone who has space.

### POSTMASTER, WHERE'S MY IT'S ABOUT TIMES?

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## Nuclear transport regulations Feds bump local rules

New federal regulations on radioactive shipments which override 87 local ordinances were enacted on the eve of the Reagan inauguration by outgoing Secretary of Transportation Neil E. Goldschmidt. The new regulations mandate the use of interstate highways for nuclear shipments, though they recommend that travel time is to be minimized and urban areas avoided. Depart of Transportation (DOT) public relations officer Ed O'Hara reports the regulations seek "to balance local and national interests, while providing for uniformity and consistency" in radioactive shipments.

Corporations that ship nuclear materials pressed hard for the new regulations which limit local governments to communicating their safety concerns through public hearings set up by state governments. The states can make recommendations to the Department of Transportation. The states can then make recommendations to the Department of Transportation (DOT). The US Conference of Mayors complained to the DOT last July that "states usually do (only) what is minimally required in consulting with local governments."

New York City plans to ask President Reagan to rescind the ruling in the interest of state and local rights. Most communities, however, do not have the resources to chal-

lenge the new law in the courts. Precedents for radioactive shipments will be set before a formal challenge is ever heard.

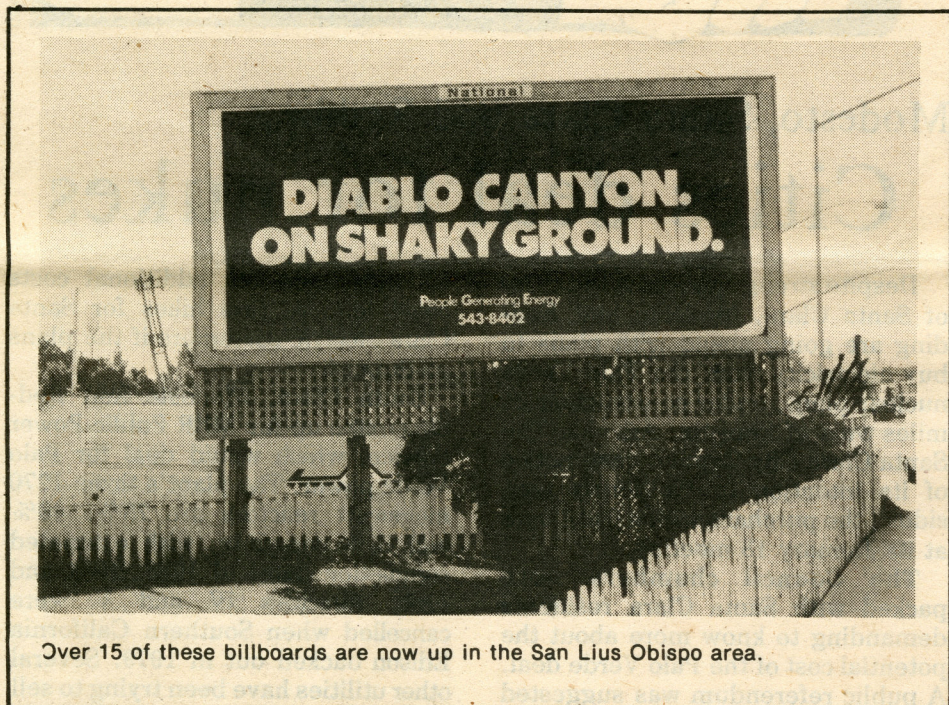
Under the new regulations, local communities will not be informed of impending shipments. Though carriers are required to submit a report to the DOT ninety days prior to shipment specifying the route and time schedule to be followed, the DOT is not required to pass the reports on to state governments.

Drivers of trucks carrying nuclear materials are required to take classes every two years on the hazards of their cargoes and what to do in case of an accident. They are to carry emergency phone numbers for every state they drive through. But the new regulations make no mention of emergency preparedness training for communities along the designated shipping routes.

Low-level radioactive shipments of medical and industrial wastes are not formally affected by the ruling. Carriers are free to choose their own routes. They are supposed to inform drivers of the contents of their cargo.

The regulations do not formally go into effect until February 1, 1981 and will be evaluated by DOT a year later. Reagan has made many promises about dismantling the federal government, but he is unlikely to let communities control their local nuclear policy.

—Mark Evanoff  
IAT staff



Over 15 of these billboards are now up in the San Luis Obispo area.

## Diablo "230" appeal

The appeal related to the "Diablo 20" case — a trial of 20 of the 500 occupiers of the Diablo site in August 1978 — is finally scheduled for hearing. Oral arguments will be heard February 6 in

### Modesto, Santa Clara and Redding

continued from page 1

pursued renewable resources and has done well at keeping its electric rates low. Two thirds of its electricity comes from federally subsidized hydroelectric plants, and the city has implemented solar heating and one cogeneration plant. It is investigating wind generation.

Mayor Gissler explains the current plans for importing nuclear electricity by saying, "We don't like to put all our eggs in one basket." But many Santa Clara residents consider the Palo Verde deal "a rotten egg."

For more information, contact the Santa Clara Ratepayers Association, 3098 Fresno Street, Santa Clara, CA 95051, 408-243-5871.

downtown Los Angeles.

The case has been moved to the Los Angeles Superior Court because all the judges at the appellate level of the Superior Court in San Luis Obispo disqualified themselves. Arguments at this hearing will address the actions of the San Luis Obispo trial court in denying defendants their rights to present defenses of necessity, free speech, self-defense, etc. Matters pertaining directly to nuclear power or the facts in individual cases will not be heard.

Two hundred ten people have attached their cases to those of the "20." If the appeal loses at this level, the case will be taken to the Court of Appeals. If it is won at any level the District Attorney in San Luis Obispo will have to decide whether to drop charges or retry 230 cases.

The February 6 hearing will be held at 10 am in Room 614 of the Superior Court Building at 111 N. Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles. For more information contact the Diablo Appeal Committee at 1824 Lake St., San Francisco, CA 94121 or call 415-752-8433.

—Barbara Levy

## PUC studies decommissioning

The California Public Utilities Commission has issued an order to investigate the potential costs of decommissioning nuclear plants and ways to finance the decommissioning process. Pressure from anti-nuclear groups, political leaders and the Diablo rate withholding campaign was instrumental in securing this decision. The order of intent (OII #86) explains that "public health and safety considerations will require decommissioning and that the costs will be significant."

Commissioners are concerned the utilities won't have enough money set aside to cover the cost of decommissioning when it is needed. Under the present law, money for decommissioning is collected from the ratepayers as one element of a plants depreciation expense, but it is not set aside in a separate fund.

Proposed financing schemes vary. One requires the utility to set aside cash to cover decommissioning in an investment account prior to a plant's start-up. Another would allow the money to be accumulated over the life of the plant from charges to ratepayers receiving its electricity, as part of "the true cost of nuclear energy." The Commission feels it is

unfair to "impose the economic burden on future ratepayers who may receive no benefit."

The major California utilities have been ordered to propose financing schemes to the Commission within 4 months. The Energy Commission and the public have been invited to participate in preparing and evaluating alternative plans. Public hearings will be scheduled following a prehearing March 13. For more information, contact the PUC, 350 McAllister, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Anti-nuclear groups are pleased with the OII, but would like to see more done. An ad hoc committee organized by the Californians for Nuclear Safeguards is pressing the PUC to conduct generic hearings on Diablo examining the costs of decommissioning, fuel and waste storage, premature shutdown, and maintenance. One step would be to assess how much electricity from the Humboldt Bay plant has actually cost ratepayers, reflecting all the plant's expenses during and after its operation. When the costs are understood, it may be cheaper to the ratepayer never to put Diablo into operation.

Mark Evanoff  
IAT staff

### Abalone Alliance Newspaper

## It's About Times



*It's About Times* is the newspaper of the Abalone Alliance, a California anti-nuclear/safe energy organization consisting of over 60 member groups. (See page 11.) The opinions expressed in *IAT* are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Abalone Alliance.

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"The FBI will call you"

# Tracking the bomb trucks

Since mid-September the Concord Naval Weapons Station Task Force of the Mt. Diablo Peace Center has been monitoring the transportation and storage of nuclear weapons at the facility in order to document and dramatize their presence. Our group has spent many hours with cameras pointed at the "Special Weapons Area" where nuclear weapons are stored.

On December 18 we spotted three "Safe Secure" trucks backed into bunkers in the nuclear weapons area. These nuclear weapons carriers are distinguishable from other five-axle trucks by their unique antenna systems, their communication lifeline to the Department of Energy's (DOE) nationwide radio and tracking network. According to a 1977 Energy Research and Development Agency description, the trucks are armor-plated, with inch-thick bullet-resistant windshields and special devices to immobilize them and secure their cargo in the event of an accident or hijacking.

After several hours the trucks were joined by a flock of small red DOE pickups, Navy vehicles and a "chase car", described by ERDA in 1977 as the escort for nuclear weapons shipments. The three trucks and chase car soon headed out towards the main gate. As they proceeded I took photographs to document their route.

I followed the trucks as they went west on Highway 4/24 through Concord to Interstate 680, south on 680 through Pleasant Hill. As the three

trucks went through the weigh station in Walnut Creek, the chase car and I stopped to wait along the highway. After we started up again, they rolled down their window, asked me what I was doing and advised, "Why don't you shut it down — take it home."

We continued south on 680 through the San Ramon Valley to Interstate 580, then proceeded east on 580 towards Stockton. I overtook the trucks on Altamont Pass, pulled over where 580 meets Interstate 5 and took my last picture as the trucks continued south toward Fresno and Los Angeles.

As I turned, I noticed a CHP car following me and as I got back on the freeway heading north, another CHP officer emerged from in front of a stopped vehicle and signalled me to pull over. The CHP asked about my interest in these vehicles and I explained that I was trying to get pictures of Safe Secure Trucks and chase cars to document the transportation of nuclear weapons through our area.

The officer asked for my identification and a person from a second chase car, which I hadn't previously noticed, told me that I was breaking the law. The CHP officer asked, "You mean to tell me that it's illegal for a citizen on a public highway to take pictures of a truck?" The chaser replied, "Of our trucks it is." The patrolman said I could go, but the chaser told me not to do anything with the film until the FBI contacted me.

As I was leaving, the officer was

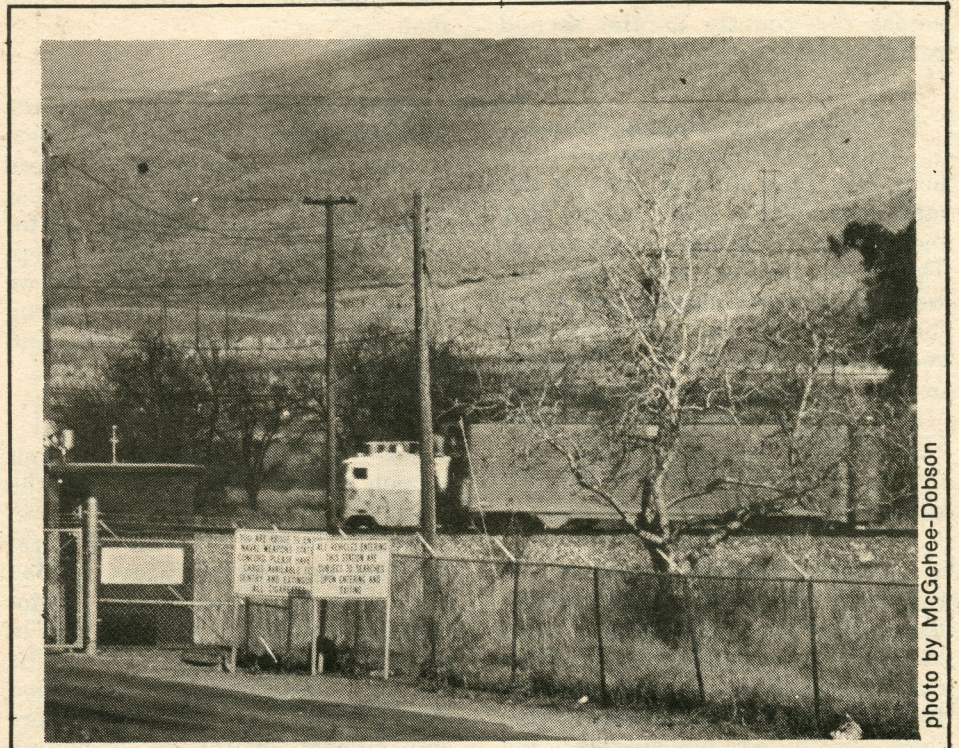


photo by McGehee-Dobson

Monitors from the Mt. Diablo Peace Center followed this truck carrying nuclear weapons from the Concord Naval Weapons Station.

conferring with the chaser, so I asked what he intended to do with the information I had given him. The officer explained that the chasers had asked him to stop me and get my ID. He said he would pass it on to his superiors and that if the FBI wanted it they would have to get it from them.

Last fall's KQED documentary "Broken Arrow" showed that nuclear

weapons are stored at CNWS, and we now have evidence of the route nuclear weapons take through the East Bay. Our experience demonstrates that local citizens' groups can obtain this information quite legally. One wonders why the government can "neither confirm or deny" the presence of nuclear weapons in our communities.

—Gary McGhee Dobson

## Rest In Pieces

# Humboldt tries to bury its nuke

There are few experts in the field of decommissioning, since no commercial reactor has yet been laid to its final rest. But PG&E's Humboldt Bay Nuclear Power Plant has been dormant for five years, and northern California's Redwood Alliance wants it permanently closed. On January 10 and 11 the Alliance held the Second Annual Humboldt Decommissioning Conference to talk about that prospect.

The Redwood Alliance and other nuclear critics believe that PG&E is stalling on a final solution at Humboldt in order to avoid opening a discussion of the technical and financial problems of

decommissioning — a discussion that could further sour an already skeptical public on nuclear power. And with the licensing of its Diablo Canyon plant so close, PG&E is particularly sensitive about the seismic problems that forced it to shut down Humboldt in the first place. PG&E spokesman Ed Slingland, however, denies this and claims, "There is no connection between Diablo and Humboldt."

The Decommissioning Conference brought together some of the few people in the US with experience in at least thinking about decommissioning. The Redwood Alliance invited both pro-

nuclear and anti-nuclear speakers. Even PG&E was asked to come, but the utility politely declined.

Most of the speakers agreed that ratepayers will eventually pick up the tab for reactor closures. At the Humboldt facility this will come to at least \$30 million, according to Dale Bridenbaugh, a nuclear engineer and consultant at the Three Mile Island cleanup. Bridenbaugh warned that the Humboldt procedure could be complicated by radioactive fuel pellets that fell into the reactor vessel during the first refuelling of the plant.

Larger modern reactors like the 2100-megawatt Diablo Canyon facility will cost even more to decommission than the outdated Humboldt unit. PG&E's estimate of Diablo's funeral costs is \$192 million.

Until now it has been assumed that any utility with enough money to open and operate a nuclear reactor will have the cash to decommission it. But Carl Feldman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said at the conference that he expects that situation to change. He predicted that soon utilities will be required to prove their financial ability to decommission a plant before they are allowed to operate it. They may have to come up with the money even if the plant is unprofitable because of a premature shutdown.

Feldman also expects new rules requiring plant operators to detail their decommissioning plans and provide safety training for workers who are doing the dismantling. There are no such guidelines now.

Some conference participants urged that utilities be required by the NRC to decommission a plant after it has been shut down for a certain length of time, as

Humboldt has been. But Feldman defended a utility's right to simply leave a facility closed for whatever length of time it feels necessary.

As things stand now, PG&E is allowed to leave the Humboldt plant in its present state of cold shutdown indefinitely. In fact, PG&E's Slingland has told the Redwood Alliance that the utility isn't even considering decommissioning. "It's off in the future," he said. "It is a field in which new technology is quite likely."

Most of the conference speakers didn't foresee technical problems with decommissioning. Aside from a powerful torch developed to cut through the thick steel reactor vessel, most of the procedures involved are standard demolition techniques, though they are complicated by omnipresent radioactivity. But Ralph Nader, the conference's keynote speaker, was skeptical about any claims of technical prowess involving the nuclear industry.

In a two hour talk which closed the conference, Nader railed against the oil and nuclear industries. He warned, "We're seeing the emergence of a no-fault, no-risk corporate establishment. They don't go bankrupt anymore, they go to Washington. The nuclear industry is in the forefront of this movement. They capitalize their profits and socialize their risks."

Nader prescribed getting involved in changing this system, both as protection against corporate attacks and as an antidote to feelings of powerlessness. Activists aren't bored," he said. "They're happier because they're working to improve their lives."

—Damon Maguire and Honest Savage  
Redwood Alliance





# More draft protests

Anti-draft demonstrations disrupted business as usual at post offices across the country as the second round of registration began.

In Berkeley on Monday, January 5, two hundred people attended an hour-long noon rally in front of the main post office, after which they moved into the building to occupy it. The crowd chanted and sang anti-war and anti-draft slogans and songs for half an hour until police announced that they must leave the building or be arrested for trespassing. "They were preventing people from registering by their sheer numbers," explained police spokesman Andrew Goodman.

About half the protesters soon left the building and police began asking to see letters and packages in order to distinguish demonstrators from customers. Those without this new form of "identification" insisted that they were there to buy stamps. "We had to use our best judgement as to

who were demonstrators and who were customers," grunted Goodman.

Those who fit the police profile as demonstrators were physically escorted, pushed, shoved and dragged out the door. During this process police tried to keep one door open for postal patrons, but protesters kept filtering back in. Eventually seven people were arrested for trespassing and one more for trespassing and resisting arrest.

On Tuesday, January 6, four women threw red paint on the entrance of the armed forces recruiting center in the Hearst Building on Market Street in San Francisco. They handcuffed themselves to the center's doorhandle in protest of draft registration. "The red paint symbolizes all the blood shed by the U.S. Army everywhere and against everybody, including women," explained spokeswomen



photo by Steve Stallone

Sallie Werson. Police used bolt cutters to release the four handcuffed women, all members of the War Resisters League, and arrested them

on two misdemeanor charges of trespassing and malicious mischief.

-Steve Stallone  
IAT staff



photo by Steve Stallone

Protestors stop draft registration "by their sheer numbers."



photo by Steve Stallone

Police escort anti-draft demonstrators out of the Berkeley post office.

## Does one bad army deserve another?

The anti-nuclear movement and the anti-draft registration movement meet in their opposition to the American military apparatus and the threat of war, particularly nuclear war. It is tempting to see this shared opposition as the basis for a common movement. That would be all for the best, but there are problems.

For instance while the anti-nuclear movement and anti-nukers themselves are pretty much one and the same, this isn't true of the anti-draft movement. Anti-draft militants are only the visible

part of the anti-draft movement, and their ideas about militarism and co. are not necessarily those of their so-called constituency, the draft resisters.

In Berkeley the anti-draft organizations are small and already surprisingly bureaucratic. A major demonstration draws 200. The number of resisters, who have little contact with the political movement, is several times higher. These young men, who either don't register or register under duress with every intention of avoiding military service, just don't want to be jerked

around by the government for any reason. Their "analysis" doesn't go much further than distrust of the mentally defective reptiles who run this country.

But the sectarian leftists in the anti-draft movement are largely dissatisfied with this attitude. For them it's not enough to want to stay home, stay in school or stay on the street — they would like to see the movement "expand" to include uncritical (verbal) support for nationalist-stalinist revolutions in Latin America and Africa.

The movement was similarly confused during the Vietnam War. While the Leninist left endorsed first the National Liberation Front and then the North Vietnamese, some anti-war activists like Noam Chomsky took the position that one could be fully against the imperialist intervention without feeling called onto glorify the other side's "alternative militarism," Pol Pot's, for example.

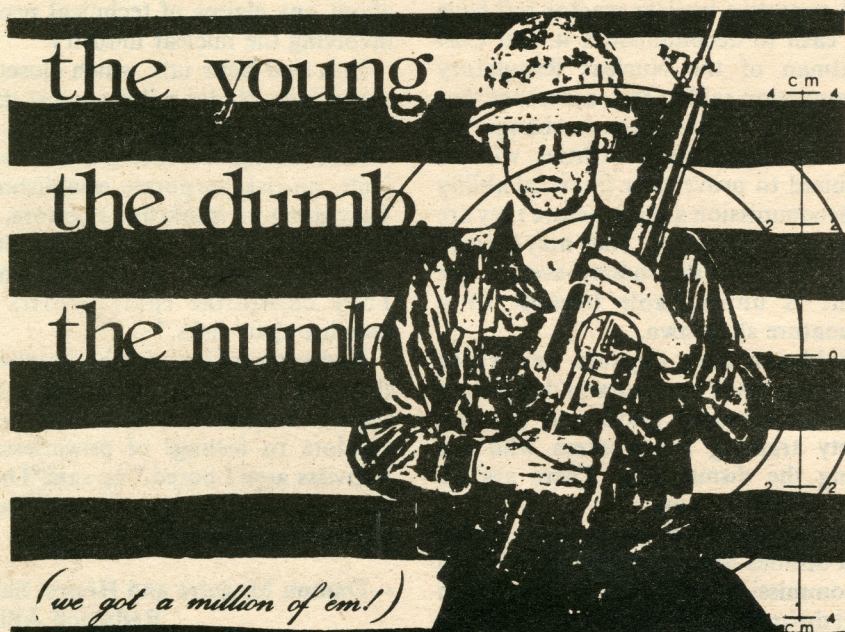
From a certain angle it's to the advantage of the dominant power to militarize the struggle because that encourages the growth of hierarchy and authoritarianism in the opposition. We can see this happening in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala as well as among the "urban guerillas" of Western Europe. The anti-imperialists have been known to win wars while suppressing the most radical tendencies in their "ranks".

In general draft-age men perceive the issue of registration versus non registration differently than anti-draft militants who often push non registration as the only moral response to the threat of conscription. Potential registrants, blacks especially, have recognized in this a demand for self-sacrificing — theirs. But just how moral is it to require that others risk criminal prosecution for draft evasion? If registration considered as an institution is wrong, it does not follow that individuals who register are living in sin. The point is to keep men out of the military, by whatever means — including legal deferments.

On the other hand, nonregistration looks more appealing when the odds against prosecution or forced induction are considered. The average non-registrant runs little risk of being apprehended and even less risk of facing prosecution. Most of those who register, though, have just two legal options: fail the induction physical (about 50% do) or file for CO status, which favors the better educated. About 25 percent of CO applicants succeed.

Nonregistration is arguably the most secure deferment and the easiest to get. Some 25% took advantage of this "classification" last summer and at least in the Bay Area, it appears that even more did so during the last registration week.

—J. Brook  
Draft Counselor





## Mideast scramble for nukes

# All God's chilluns gots bombs

The Middle East figures prominently in the current global oil scene, but its growing role as a market for nuclear technology has been virtually ignored. Israel, Iran, Iraq and Egypt all have nuclear reactors. And with the nuclear power comes the potential to produce nuclear weapons, increasing the chances of a spark that will set off a nuclear conflagration.

Though its government denies it, Israel has already built nuclear weapons. With assistance from France, its nuclear research program was initiated in the late fifties. Soon afterwards enriched uranium of weapons quality was diverted from an Apollo, Pennsylvania plant to Israel, an operation that netted 200 to 400 pounds by 1968.

According to CIA documents obtained by *Rolling Stone*, Israeli agents reacted to the sealing of this crack in the US security wall by hijacking uranium ore in the US, Britain and France, including a major haul from an Italy-bound freighter. This was allegedly done in cooperation with French and West German authorities in return for cash and research information. Enough material was stolen to make 100 bombs. Recent reports allege that Israel and South Africa have undertaken a joint program to develop nuclear weapons and a delivery system.

The Arab states are engaged in a multi-sided fight, and at least two of them, Iraq and Libya, are well on their way to possession of their own bombs.

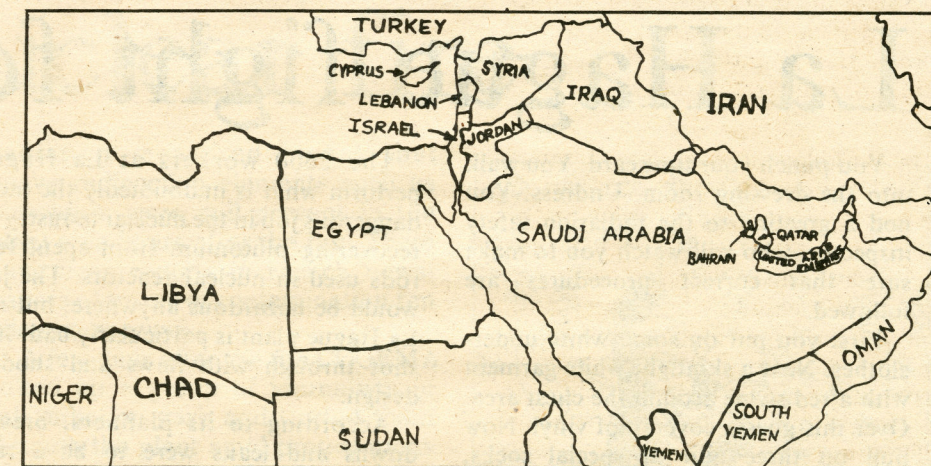
Iraq's nuclear development has been fueled by oil export earnings and aided by Brazil and France, which rely on Iraqi oil imports. Italy recently furnished Iraq with a "hot

cell," a lead-shielded laboratory reportedly useable for plutonium extraction. The Italians insist that it will be used only to study uranium for medical agricultural and food preservation work.

Israel and Iraq have been in a state of war since 1948. Israel has apparently carried out a number of actions against the Iraqi nuclear program, including the sabotage of reactors under construction in France and the murder of a key scientist visiting Paris. Soon after the beginning of the Gulf war, unmarked F-4 Phantoms swooped out of the sky during an Iranian raid on Iraq and bombed a nuclear facility near Baghdad. They are believed to have been Israeli planes taking advantage of the fact that Iran uses the same model of fighters.

If Iraq does develop the bomb, Israel will not be the only concerned party. Libya's Colonel Qaddafi has used his nation's vast oil earnings to spread his influence in many directions. Sparsely populated Libya has obtained such a large quantity of military equipment from the USSR that much of it is stored in large depots, with no personnel to use it. Libya has also purchased weapons from France.

Qaddafi has advocated the overthrow of several governments in the region, including Iraq and Egypt. He has provided weapons to the Poli-



sario guerillas who are fighting US ally Morocco for the independence of a large phosphate-rich section of the Sahara.

Qaddafi is convinced that Libya needs its own nuclear arsenal. In 1971 and again in 1978, he tried in vain to get nuclear aid from China. In 1975 he attempted unsuccessfully to put together an Arab scientific complex to build an atom bomb. In 1976 the USSR agreed to construct three reactors in Libya, but the program keeps getting delayed.

Still, Libya has the financial resources needed to build a bomb. In these days of slow sales and many competitors, odds are that some nuclear exporter will find a deal with Libya hard to resist.

Early this year Libya and Pakistan appeared to be cooperating on nuclear development, Pakistan obtaining nuclear technology through its Dutch-trained scientists and Libya uranium ore from the neighboring nations of Chad and Niger. But mutual suspicions have put an end to

this Islamic partnership.

Iran's nuclear program at one time called for twenty reactors by 1995, to be supplied by France, West Germany and the US. The program is at a standstill. Only two nukes, constructed by the German company Kraftwerk-Union were even started, and construction on these has been suspended due to non-payment. Egypt is still waiting for a Westinghouse reactor purchased in 1975 to materialize, though it has an advanced research program. Saudi Arabia recently established a research center and Turkey's program has been mauled by its particularly bad economic situation.

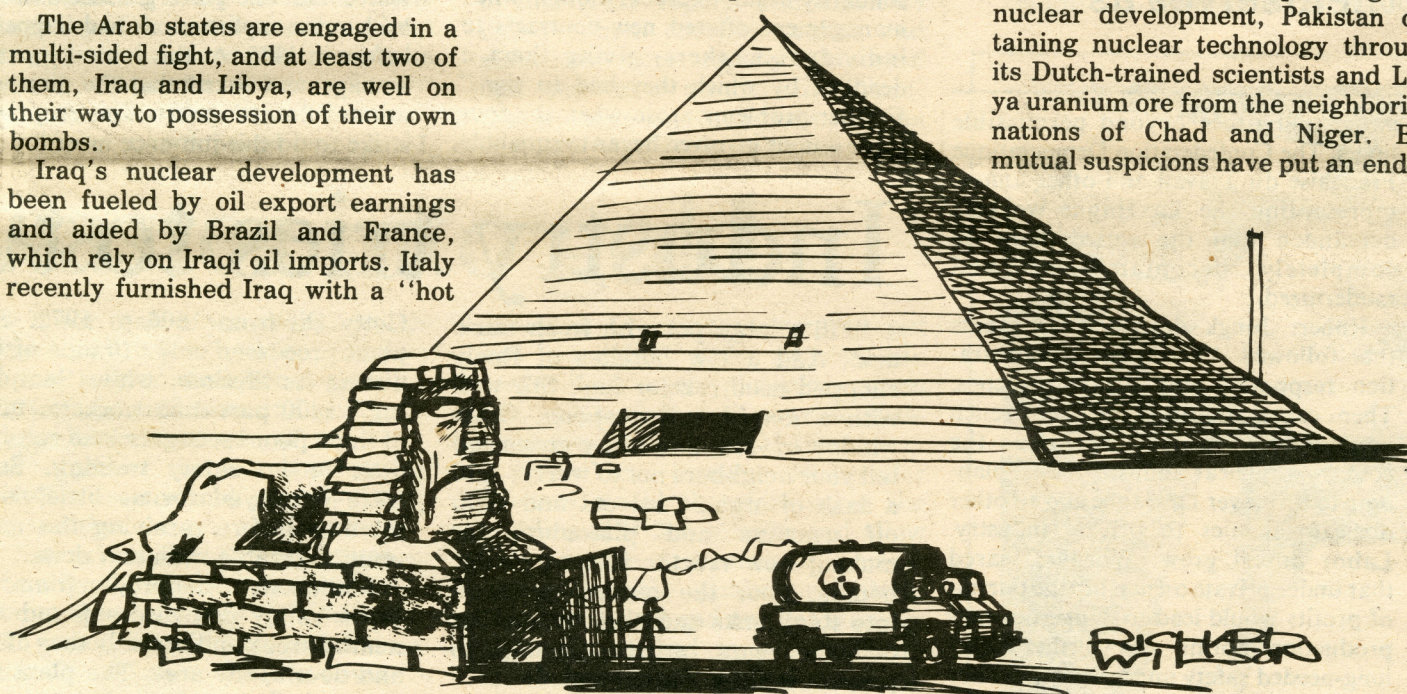
The Middle East has long been a zone of contention. During the periods of global depression which preceded both world wars, rivalries between the major powers for domination of the region intensified.

Now, in the opening stages of another depression, the industrial powers are looking at the nations of the Middle East as markets for the nuclear exports their ailing economies need.

They are trying to guarantee their access to the region's resources with financial and military support for their client states. While the US supports Israel and several Arab states, the USSR supplies Libya and Iraq — which are in conflict with each other. Brazil sells technology to Iraq and weapons to Libya, and France sells military hardware to any willing party.

As in other areas of the world, tensions based on shifting geopolitical rivalries are threatening to escalate into nuclear confrontation.

Gus West



courtesy Friends of the Earth

## Korean nuke program sputters

A confidential World Bank/United Nations report indicates South Korea is considering cutting back its multi-billion-dollar nuclear power program — one of the most ambitious in the world and one of the few remaining markets for the stalled US nuclear industry. A South Korean slowdown would delay orders for equipment and technical services from companies like General Electric and Bechtel. According to the January 2 *Wall Street Journal* it would "raise serious questions about the viability of Westinghouse's nuclear division."

Neither World Bank, UN nor South Korean officials have commented publicly on the report. But its author, consultant Salomon Levy, a former General Electric executive, was told by senior Korean officials that decisions on the purchase of plants scheduled for completion in the late 1980's have been put off indefinitely.

Levy's report urged the Koreans to adopt a "more realistic" timetable for their nuclear program, mainly because of his doubts about the country's ability to train nuclear managers and tech-

nicians. The report concludes that plant operator standards are much too lax and that regulatory standards are vague or nonexistent.

Other analysts have suggested that the Korean nuclear cutbacks will be necessary because of declining economic growth in the country that was once considered an Asian miracle. Separate World Bank documents say that the South Korean economy is in serious trouble, with exports falling far behind the pace of earlier years and inflation and unemployment out of hand. The Bank has postponed a decision about a \$3 billion lending program and has held back another \$500 million because Korea can't come up with matching funds.

The World Bank is also worried about South Korea's political stability. A recent internal memorandum calls the new president, General Chun Doo Won, "even more repressive" than his predecessor Park Chung Hee, who was assassinated last year.

The World Bank memos note that the political purge of one tenth of South Korea's administrators has

disrupted managerial capabilities, no doubt further debilitating the nuclear program. According to the Levy report, there is little organized opposition to nuclear power in South Korea, but no information about it is available to the South Korean public.

The reports were released to the

media by Nautilus International, a San Francisco-based public interest group.

—from *The Wall Street Journal*,  
12/23/80 and 1/2/81  
and *The Energy Daily*,  
10/24/80



courtesy Friends of the Earth



# Reprocessing: the nuclear La Hague fight for safety

You punch your time card. You walk into the dressing room. Undress. You nod a greeting to the radiation safety inspector, who will watch you to make sure that correct procedures are followed.

First you put on some white underclothes. Next a skintight white garment with a red stripe around the chest area. Over this goes a coverall of vinyl. Now pull on three pair of special socks, overshoes, three pair of gloves and a breathing mask covering your mouth and nose.

Over all this goes the bulky protective suite — the "Shaddock," as the French call it. Finally you put on another pair of special gloves and a final attachment: an air tube which drags along beside you like an umbilical cord. It took a half hour to get dressed. You're now ready to work.

The world's largest nuclear fuel reprocessing plant sits at La Hague on the Normandy coast of France. As one of the intervention mechanics, your job is to repair defects discovered by radiological safety teams. Mechanical failures have become a daily routine, so you generally have to wear the "Shaddock" every day throughout the shift.

The 2600 workers at La Hague perform what is undoubtedly the most dangerous job in the nuclear industry — recovering plutonium from spent fuel rods used in nuclear reactors. The job would be hazardous anywhere, but the La Hague plant is particularly bad. It is shot through with flaws and shoddy design.

According to its planners, breakdowns and leaks were to be a rare exception. In fact, they are the order of the day. The recent fire that broke out on January 6 is the worst accident to date, but it's only the latest of a long history of major incidents involving contamination of employees and the surrounding area. Of equal significance are the "minor" incidents occurring on a daily basis.

The number of contaminations keeps rising as the plant ages. In 1973 there were 280 cases of workers being contaminated; in 1975 the number had climbed to 572. Plant workers, who call themselves "radiation fodder", claim that the figure today is higher still, but the statistics are no longer publicized.

In the summer of 1976 worker dissent surfaced when a leak in the plutonium shop forced up readings on safety

also worried that the relatively high pay rates would be leveled off and that social services would be cut. The result was a strike at La Hague in September 1976.

"Banner headlines carried the story of the first sit-in by workers at a nuclear installation. The occupation of the plant lasted only 24 hours, until management got a court order to remove the sit-downers. But the strike itself went on for nearly three months, giving workers a chance to publicize their story about hazardous conditions at the plant.

"Demonstrators in 'Shaddocks' flickered like silvery ghosts across French television screens. But somehow COGEMA, the company that manages the plant, was able to prevent these news reports from circulating in the foreign media."

The strikers organized concerts, solidarity picnics and community outreach. It was more than just a strike to them. As one of the strike leaders put it, "It was something of a big celebration. We had crawled out of the darkness into light. For the first time we met colleagues and saw that they were not robots, but comrades and friends. Before that we only talked when necessary — we were always too exhausted, too tense to care."

According to Jungk, "The apparent solidarity began to crack, though, when management offered new contracts to individual workers, giving them a deadline by which they had to sign." Further problems arose when the four trade unions involved began to squabble.



La Hague workers march down the streets of Cherbourg during the 1976 strike.

Nevertheless the workers may still have emerged victorious if not for the *vidanges* (drainage) incident.

Jungk reports that, "After several weeks of neglect because of the strike, the water tanks with their stored fuel rods had become so dangerously radioactive that they threatened to contaminate the entire area. It was feared that the gases generated would lead to an explosion, as had happened before in 1973. At this critical juncture management asked that the men who normally flushed the tanks interrupt their strike to do this job once more."

## Plant workers refer to themselves as "radiation fodder"

As you start to work you begin sweating inside your suit. The oval mask on your helmet fogs over so that you can barely see or hear your fellow workers. Reduced to sign language, you move about with great care, ever fearful that you will bump into something with your clumsy outfit and tear it on a sharp edge.

Robert Jungk in *The New Tyranny* explains what happens then: "A torn 'Shaddock' means a headlong retreat to a 'clean zone', undressing so hastily that one is prone to make a wrong move that can lead to truly serious radiation damage. Such contamination would mean hours, days, or even weeks of painstaking examination in the medical section. Everything would have to be analyzed — blood, saliva, mucous, urine."

gauges 30 times beyond permissible limits. The Confederation Democratique Francaise du Travail and other unions representing the La Hague workers demanded that the entire plant be completely decontaminated and modernized.

Robert Jungk describes the events that followed. "The plant administration responded with delaying tactics. Then came rumors that the French government, which operates the country's nuclear industry, was planning to turn over La Hague and all other nuclear facilities to private industry. Labor unrest grew. Workers feared that under private ownership the pursuit of profits would lead to dangerous new production norms and further delay long-needed safety improvements. They

## Industry tries to turn

"Fill a large pot with fresh nitric acid. Add a few bundles of finely chopped used reactor fuel. Stir well with a long handled spoon. Open window to vent radioactive gases and tell your neighbors not to worry. Add a dash of organic solvent and skim off uranium and plutonium for making new reactor fuel or atomic bombs. Pour the remaining liquid into steel tanks and allow to cool for 500,000 years, stirring gently to prevent boiling. Do not eat."

So goes the recipe for "reprocessing" — and it sounds pretty simple. If it worked the plutonium and uranium in spent nuclear fuel could be recovered to stretch nuclear fuel supplies. But the entire process must take place behind massive shielding because of intense radioactivity, and cleanup and equipment repair become nearly impossible. Degenerating equipment, production pressures and simple human error have made leaks and worker contamination the common features of reprocessing attempts to date.

The accompanying articles describe the incredible history of safety violations and accident coverups at the La Hague reprocessing plant. U.S. nuclear promoters nevertheless often point to La Hague as proof that reprocessing is practical. But even ignoring safety considerations, the plant is a dismal failure.

From 1976 through 1978 La Hague processed only 110 tons of spent fuel, although it was scheduled to process 1200 tons. Only 65 tons were processed in 1979, less than one-fifth of that year's modest goal and a small fraction of the capacity the plant was designed for.

In the U.S., the only commercial reprocessing attempt so far was the West Valley, New York plant run by

Getty Oil from 1966 to 1972. This plant processed only 610 tons of fuel during its lifetime, while "employing" 1400 part-time workers, many of them poor teenagers who received little or no safety training. Some were employed for as little as 15 minutes before receiving the maximum allowable radiation dose.

Radioactive materials from the West Valley plant were found in a nearby creek and in the bodies of fish and deer in the area. The plant was abandoned in 1972, leaving taxpayers stuck with 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste. The cleanup bill is estimated at \$1.1 billion.

Two other commercial reprocessing plants have been built in the U.S. but never used. General Electric spent \$64 million on a plant at Morris, Illinois but concluded that its reprocessing system wouldn't work and never tried to operate it. Allied Chemical and General Atomic have partially completed a plant near Barnwell, South Carolina, but it is sure to be unprofitable. The companies have been trying for five years to sell the plant to the government, and the Reagan administration, despite its "free enterprise" rhetoric, is likely to support a taxpayer-funded bailout of Barnwell. Incoming Energy Secretary James Edwards comes from South Carolina and is believed to favor a bailout although it could cost taxpayers as much as \$2 billion.

### Reprocessing schemes...

Reprocessing makes little sense in view of the present nuclear fuel needs. With the nuclear industry's current slump, there is plenty of mined uranium available at prices





# future looks like a bomb

## French nuclear fire



herbourg in their radiation gear during a

*continued from page 1*

Confederation Francaise du Travail (CFDT), the largest union at the plant, isn't so sure.

A CFDT study released a week after the accident points out that when the spent fuel casings burned, they must have emitted not only cesium, but comparable amounts of radioactive strontium — and the maximum allowable concentration for strontium releases is one hundred times less. Plutonium was probably also present in the emissions.

Tests of the locally produced milk found 10,000 to 15,000 picocuries per liter of radioactivity after the fire,

radiation measured meant that heavy radioactive elements such as plutonium were still present in the plant area hours after the fire. There have been reports in French newspapers of traces of contamination ten kilometers away.

A few days after the fire COGEMA suited up a group of journalists in full radiation garb and trotted them through the plant amid protestations of innocence — "We have been reproached for trying to cover things up," officials said. "We are going to prove to you that this is false. You can see everything."

According to a *Liberation* reporter



JOHN JACOBS

**"I'm not anti-nuclear but I'm not an imbecile either."**

compared to the 20 to 50 picocuries per liter that is normal for the area. Measurements taken at the monitor closest to the silo showed beta radiation to be 26 times the maximum permissible six hours after the fire is thought to have started, dropping to six times the maximum after another four hours. According to the CFDT report, this indicates that the beta emitters cesium and strontium were rapidly dispersed into the area around the plant. A slower decrease in the rate of alpha

who went along, the journalists weren't shown much of anything, but the tour was a great public relations operation for COGEMA. "What lessons are we supposed to draw?" this reporter asked. "Are all these precautions witness to the reality of an invisible danger or to the excellence of nuclear safety?"

Despite COGEMA's soothing

words, it has already shown that its intentions remain the same. On January 11 there was yet another accident at La Hague, but COGEMA neglected to mention it until the 15th. This time, several liters of acidic liquid containing uranium and plutonium overflowed. Fortunately, the potent brew — with one gram of plutonium per liter — was cleaned up before any could escape the building it was in.

Marcy Darnovsky  
IAT staff

## n wastes into gold

far lower than reprocessed fuel. So why does the nuclear industry choose to promote what is clearly a difficult, unprofitable and politically embarrassing technology?

The motive seems related to the breeder reactor and requires some explanation.

Natural uranium is a mixture of two slightly different kinds of uranium atoms. Less than 1% is uranium 235, and the remainder is uranium-238. The scarce U-235, however, is the source of almost all the energy produced in a commercial nuclear reactor, and the energy potential of the more abundant U-238 goes almost untapped.

### ...breeder dreams

This inefficient uranium use would not be a problem if there were only a few hundred reactors to be fueled, and indeed there are less than 200 reactors now operating or on order in the United States. But the nuclear industry has grander plans, running up to several thousand reactors, and in this case running out of fuel would become a serious problem.

The breeder reactor approach would solve this fuel shortage, at least in theory. It takes advantage of the fact that a uranium-235 atom produces two (or occasionally three) neutrons when a neutron splits it. One of these must go on to continue the chain reaction in the reactor core. But the other(s) can be used to transform a relatively useless U-235 atom into an atom of plutonium, which behaves like U-235 and can be used instead of it in reactor fuel.

Each U-235 atom that splits thus generates its own replacement plutonium atom and sometimes and extra one. If the plutonium is

extracted by reprocessing and put into new fuel, this process can continue as each plutonium atom that splits produces its own replacement from an atom of U-238.

A workable system of breeder reactors would therefore solve the problem of U-235 scarcity and allow the massive expansion of nuclear power. Despite public opposition, the government and nuclear industry seem determined to proceed with breeder development in anticipation of this expansion. The Reagan administration will likely fund the completion of the Clinch River, Tennessee experimental breeder and perhaps a larger plant. A similar situation exists in France where a large scale breeder prototype is under construction.

The key to all these breeder plans is reprocessing. Without reprocessing, the newly-generated plutonium cannot be extracted from used breeder fuel for reuse. So without reprocessing, breeder reactors are useless.

Viewed from this perspective, the present attempts to operate reprocessing plants can be seen as tests not only of technology but of political acceptability as well. Consider, for example, that full operation of the Barnwell plant would release twice as much radioactive krypton into the atmosphere every week as did the entire venting of the Three Mile Island containment building — an event which drew vocal protest from local residents. If similar releases can be made to seem "routine" at Barnwell or La Hague, the nuclear industry will have removed a major roadblock to the public acceptance of a breeder economy.

Bob Van Scoy  
IAT staff



La Hague workers must suit up to perform even the most menial of chores.



# Short Circuits

## CHEMICAL WRECK, NUCLEAR JITTERS

Residents of an Ontario community who were forced from their homes by the wreck of a chemical-laden train are twice as likely to expect a nuclear plant disaster as other members of the public. So concludes a recent University of Ontario survey of the 200,000 people living near Mississauga, Ontario, who were evacuated when tank cars containing flammable chemicals and chlorine derailed and exploded last year.

The study found that 80% of the evacuated residents now thought that a nuclear accident in Southern Ontario was likely in the next decade. Only 40% of a comparable group of Toronto suburbanites agreed. The study's authors concluded that "a decline in the acceptability of nuclear and transportation risks" may be one result of the accident. The findings were presented in mid-November to a meeting of Canadian and US nuclear and disaster planning officials.

—from *Nucleonics Week*, 11/27/80

## BIRCHERS MAKE POWER PLAY

A committee of the ultra-conservative John Birch Society is circulating petitions in southwestern Idaho to encourage US nuclear power development.

The group, which calls itself "Promote Our Wonderful Energy Resources" (POWER), claims to have gathered 1,000 signatures on a petition intended to show state government officials that "the people in Idaho are in favor of nuclear power."

POWER chair Stephen Pitino admitted that the group has only "some six to eight members" but said "we're representing a majority" that supports nuclear power. John Birch Society literature describes Southwest Idaho POWER as part of a nationwide network of similar committees. The Idaho group's sponsors include anti-ERA activist Susan Hill and Philip Anderson of the American Nuclear Society.

—from *Oakland Tribune* 12/29/80

## OUR FAVORITE CHARITY

A Congressional report issued in December concludes that US taxpayers have subsidized the nuclear industry to the tune of \$37 billion during the past 30 years — \$165 for every man, woman and child in the country. The subsidies have ranged from early government research on reactors to current federal spending on nuclear waste disposal techniques. The 73-page report, compiled by the House Commerce Subcommittee, calculates that a kilowatt-hour of nuclear electricity is between 1.66 and 2.5 cents cheaper than if the utilities had paid the whole cost themselves.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## SAY WHAT?

A critic of nuclear power in Phoenix thinks her phone has been tapped by the Arizona Public Service Company. Patricia Lee Hourihan met with officials from Arizona Public Service and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on December 10 to work out ground rules for her anti-nuclear testimony at upcoming public hearings on a proposed nuclear plant.

Beginning the next day, she began having trouble with her telephone. Every time she made a long-distance call to her parents in Boston, the phone would be answered instead by workers at an Arizona Public Service office in nearby Deer Valley. The utility describes the misconnections as "a coincidence."

On the East Coast, three groups — the Women's Pentagon Action, the Boston Clamshell Alliance and the Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft — say callers attempting to reach their offices during key protest actions last year repeatedly got tape-recorded messages saying the numbers had been disconnected. The phones were fine both before and after the actions, but it became difficult to get through during the peak times for which extra phones had been installed. The phone company says it doesn't know what was going on.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## THE HARMLESS MELTDOWN

Before Three Mile Island, the nuclear industry was fond of saying that there was only a one-in-a-million chance of a core meltdown accident at a nuclear plant. This claim was intended to take people's minds off the predicted consequences of such an accident, which several government studies have estimated at up to 45,000 deaths and \$14 billion in property damage.

After the near-meltdown at TMI, however, the nuclear industry began scrambling to "prove" that meltdowns weren't so bad, after all. The industry's new public position is that there may be a meltdown now and again (after all, nobody's perfect) but it isn't likely to hurt anybody. Now two staffers at the utility-supported Electric Power Research Institute have made the spectre of nuclear catastrophe go away with a few waves of their pocket calculators.

In a paper presented at the November meeting of the American Nuclear Society, Milton Levenson and Frank Rahn claim that "the natural laws of physics and chemistry substantially limit the distribution of radioactive effluents from any nuclear accident, no matter how severe." They conclude that no deaths would be expected from a meltdown and even suggest that evacuation might be more hazardous than the accident itself.

Ads hailing these "scientific" findings of nuclear safety will doubtless soon appear in local papers, courtesy of your electric company. But the utilities seem to have little interest in moving to repeal the Price-Anderson Act, which gets them off the hook financially in case these predictions of 45,000 deaths turn out to be right. So the public has a right to remain skeptical of claims about victimless meltdowns.

—Bob Van Scoy  
based on *Nucleonics Week*,  
11/27/80

## DON'T EAT BROWN SNOW

Radioactive steam was mistakenly released from Illinois' Dresden nuclear power plant during the first week in January. Sub-freezing temperatures turned the steam into snow which fell on an empty parking lot.

Linda Scott, a spokesperson for plant operator Commonwealth Edison, says the release came as the plant's number 2 reactor unit was being shut down for refueling. According to Scott, the radioactive material had been contained in "crud" on the walls of a water tank in the cooling system. When the water boiled during the shutdown, the "crud" escaped with the steam.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission described the radioactive snow as "brownish." It covered a parking lot the size of a football field, but reportedly no autos or people were in it at the time. The area has been roped off until the NRC figures out how to clean up the hot snow.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## HARDSHIP PAY

Nuclear power plant workers in Australia are demanding a \$25 per week "pressure payment" because their jobs get them into so many arguments. Some workers at the Lucas Heights nuclear station near Sydney report that anti-nuclear slogans have been painted on their cars.

Union spokesperson Chris McArdle says that the extra pay is justified because of these added social pressures. "When a Lucas Heights employee is at a party and the conversation gets around to people's jobs, they get a hostile reaction," he says. "If they worked at a tire factory they wouldn't get any arguments."

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## POLICE PLANT GETS UPROOTED

The American Civil Liberties Union has obtained 134 pages of notes taken by a Los Angeles undercover policewoman who infiltrated southern California anti-nuclear groups in 1977 and 1978. In her role as an undercover cop Cheryl Bell became a founding member of the Committee on Nuclear Information at California State University of Los Angeles in the fall of 1977. She later infiltrated the Alliance for Survival and the May 21st Coalition.

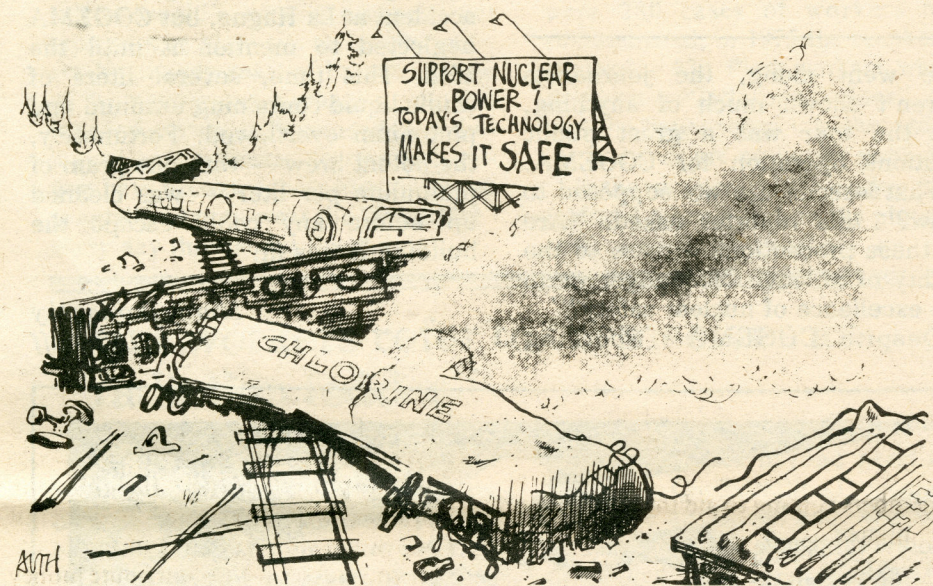
Bell's notes include the identities, descriptions and license plate numbers of those attending anti-nuclear meetings. She was discovered to be an agent in August, 1978 when someone became suspicious and checked her voter registration identity.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## FRENCH PLANTS OPPOSED

Local opponents of four planned nuclear power plants near Chooz, France have personally delivered 18,000 letters asking the Belgian government to block construction at the site, which lies only a few hundred yards from the Belgian border. French plans to build the nuclear complex provoked clashes between demonstrators and French police last summer.

—from *Nucleonics Week*,  
12/11/80



## HOW ECOLOGICAL

The Nuclear Engineering Company, which operates nuclear waste dumps, is changing its name to "US Ecology, Inc."

Some might see the firm's shift to an innocuous new label as just another public relations ploy. But the "US Ecology" name may be quite appropriate, since the company did run a "recycling center" of sorts at its Beatty, Nevada dumpsite. Thousands of radioactively contaminated tools, including a cement mixer, were stolen from the dump in the late 60's and early 70's because of lax security. They are presumably being productively used in homes throughout Nevada — another unexpected benefit from the nuclear industry.

—Bob Van Scoy  
(from *Nucleonics Week*  
1/8/81 and *SF Chron* 11/28/79)

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

The British magazine *New Statesman* has learned that officials are rehearsing the rescue of Britain's art treasures and high-ranking military officials in the event of a nuclear war. But they have not made plans for saving the rest of the population.

*New Statesman* has obtained the minutes of a previously secret war game staged last fall. The hypothetical war included a nuclear attack that eradicated most of London and covered 70% of Britain with lethal radioactive fallout. One of the first responses scheduled in the war game was to transfer art treasures to deep underground bunkers. After that, an emergency was declared and all roads out of London were ordered sealed off except to government use.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## PANEL LINKS BOMB TESTS TO UTAH CANCER

A scientific panel has concluded that exposure to radioactive fallout was the likely cause of a surge in cancer rates in southern Utah following atomic bomb testing during the 1950's and 60's.

In a copyright story, the *Deseret* (Utah) News said an unpublished report by the Interagency Radiation Research Committee found that the excessively high rate of childhood cancer in Southern Utah "remains unexplained on grounds other than possible fallout exposure." The conclusion confirms studies by University of Utah scientist Joseph Lyon that found cancer rates among youngsters in heavily fallout-exposed counties rose from below the national average before testing began to as much as 2½ times the average afterward.

Three congressional committees and a White House Task Force have given opinions from "proven to a moral certainty" to "in all probability" that nuclear test fallout caused the rise in cancer deaths in the state.

—from *Oakland Tribune*, 12/31/80

## WEAPONS FAIR BLOCKED

A California Peace coalition has succeeded in blocking a military electronics trade fair which had been planned for March at the San Mateo County fairgrounds. Pentagon officials and hundreds of corporations such as Hewlett-Packard and Control Data had been expected to attend "Nadex '81". The fair was sponsored by Robert Da Costa, publisher of *Countermeasures* magazine, who agreed to cancel the show after meeting with the coalition.

—from *Zodiac News Service*



# The Mutant Sponges: Involved but not wrung out

Why would anyone want to 9-to-5 it all week and then, instead of kicking back and relaxing, don a scruffy, bizarre piece of foam rubber and tromp around the streets of the East Bay challenging nuclear power?

The Sponges are an Berkeley anti-nuclear affinity group that represents the giant mutant sponges growing on nuclear waste barrels about 18 miles west of San Francisco near the Farallon Islands. And we do it first of all because it's fun.

How many times have you been approached by someone thrusting literature and an open palm at you for one of the endless causes? We want people to enjoy being educated, so we don't push ourselves on anyone. If the curiosity isn't there, the openness to new ideas probably isn't either.

We get out our outfits and leaflets for anti-nuclear demonstrations or just wander around in them. When the *No Nukes* movie came out we showed up at theaters with copies of *It's About Times* and flyers explaining the Sponge story. At an Oakland theater blacks and latinos as well as whites were receptive — a signal to us that people are beginning to understand that radiation and chemical poisoning aren't racist at all. They'll kill any color or economic class.

Recently the Lawrence Berkeley Labs hosted a conference of nuclear physicists from all over the world. It wasn't much publicized but it was a big deal, especially since this was the first time it had been held in the US in sixteen years.

We approached with hesitation. After all, these people were steeped in nuclear culture. Few of the participants talked to us, but some did take our handouts. Several who didn't accept stuff on the way in even came back out and asked for papers. Our mutant cells were, pardon the expression, aglow with pleasure.

The only incident was a set-to with a fellow from LBL. He approached me with a strained smile and asked what we were doing. Politely I told him that we were handing out literature with "a different perspective on the nuclear issue." He ranted for a while about how in other countries "we would be shot," but then backed off. Perhaps LBL was

## SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

The Boy Scouts of America have come out with a new merit badge book called "Atomic Energy". The book gives details on atomic shooting ranges and the safe use of atomic bullets. A section entitled "Atomic Power for Peace" includes step-by-step instructions on building a model nuclear plant out of a large juice can, two plastic pill bottles, soda straws, a hanger and a rubber band that simulates an automatic shutdown. Scouts who complete the project earn an Atomic Power Merit Badge.

In the classroom, the nuclear industry is distributing pictures of the mascot Reddy Kilowatt with a poem that goes: "I'm a busy little atom! I split myself in two! I multiply as many times as I have jobs to do! In summer, winter, spring or fall, I'm ready for every hour. Just push a switch and watch me zip with light or heat or power."

And the Hokuriku Power Company in northern Japan has been handing out bags full of chocolates and lollipops to the children of people opposed to the construction of a nuclear plant there.

—from *Zodiac News Service*

## FROM EELPOUTS TO YOU

Tom Lancraft, a researcher at the University of South Florida, has found that radioactive wastes dumped along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts may be contaminating the human food chain by way of a fish called the "eelpout".

The first year of the eelpout's life is



The Sponges affinity group models itself after the mutant sponges living on barrels of radioactive waste off the Farallon Islands.

photo by Steve Stallone

worried about a possible international incident — "Mutant Sponges Hold World Physicists Hostage."

Our most recent event was the "Sponges versus Mad Scientists" volleyball game at UC Berkeley's own nuclear reactor, which sits in a building next to the Hayward Fault. The mutant Sponges kept tossing the world (our painted volleyball) to the scientists (played largely by the Plutonium Players, an anti-nuke theater group) who were so busy making calculations that most of the time they dropped the ball. At one point a terrorist stopped the

game but luckily he was arrested by energy corporation security police, played by the Union of Concerned Commies.

The skit culminated with audience members coming to aid the Sponges and who some scientists who defected. The performance was a bit chaotic, but the 200 people who turned out for the first sizeable event at the reactor seemed to have had a great time.

The volleyball event was draining for the Sponges. We spent about \$500 on publicity materials and a "survival manual" listing some of Berkeley's

seismic, nuclear, genetic and chemical hazards. Now we're faced with the standard problem of raising funds to pay our debts and continue our work. One way or another though, the Sponges will continue — we find Sponge activism a reward in itself.

If you would like to contribute money or energy to our efforts, write Sponges, Box 9177, Berkeley, CA (and make checks payable to the Sponges.) Watch for us!

—Terry Lamphier  
The Sponges

## ADVENTURES IN APARTHEID

Four instructors in the Tennessee Valley Authority's nuclear operator training program have accepted new jobs with South Africa's government-owned electric utility. The men have reportedly been given homes and cars as well as salaries of up to \$75,000 — about double their pay at TVA.

TVA's operator training director R. Joe Johnson called the jobs a "once in a lifetime opportunity" for the four instructors. "South Africa is just beginning its nuclear program," he said, "and this borders on an adventure for our people. They'll be in a position to establish the technical base for training South African operators."

The men were generally chosen because of their experience with Westinghouse reactors like those at South Africa's nearly completed Koeberg nuclear station. Successful operation of that plant, of course, will help strengthen South Africa's apartheid regime and could supply materials for nuclear weapons production.

—based on *Nucleonics Week*,  
12/4/80

spent at the bottom of the ocean, where tens of thousands of barrels full of radioactive waste are now corroding. After a year, Lancraft says, the eelpout migrates upward where it becomes part of the standard diet of tuna, swordfish and other game fish consumed by humans.

—from *Zodiac News Service*





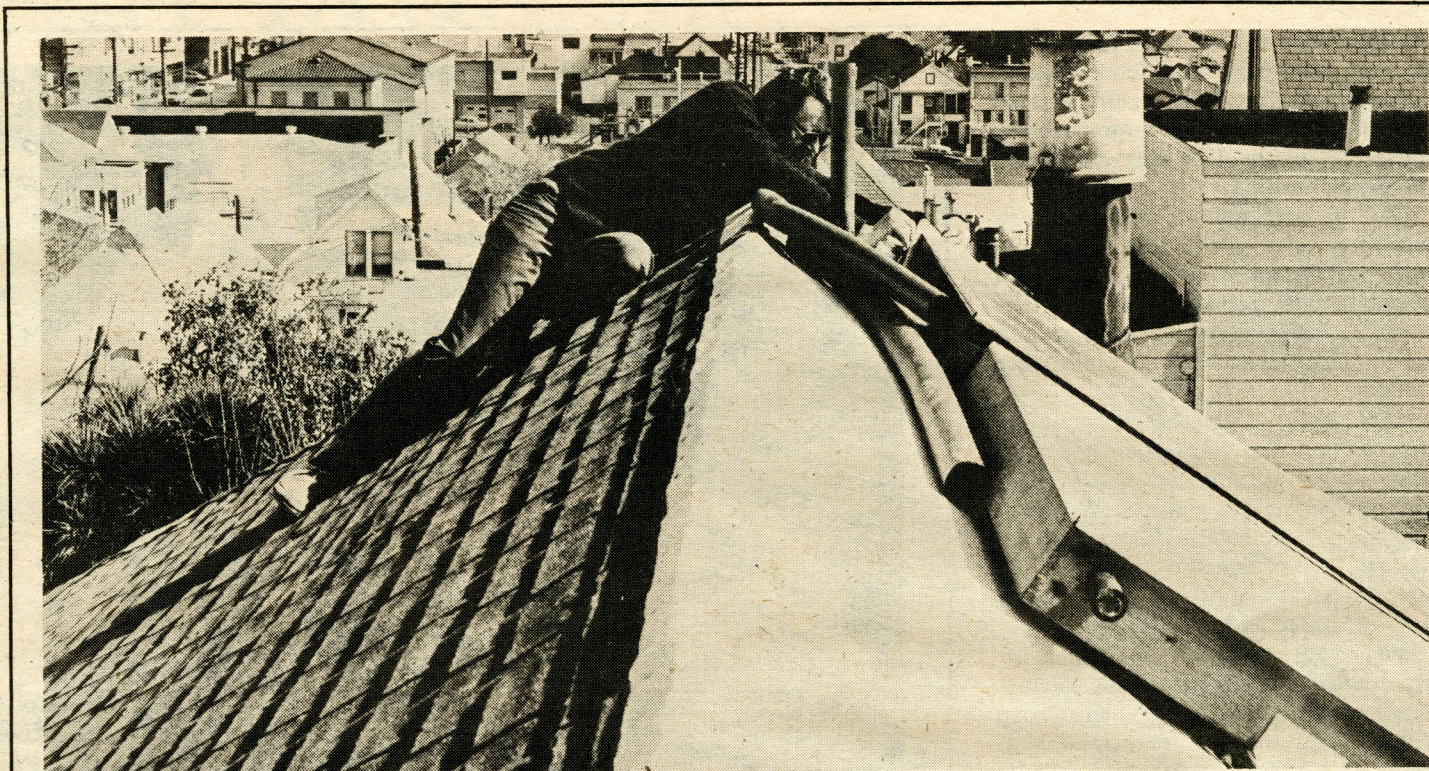
# Alternative energy conference

During the last decade the push for safe, renewable energy production has taken root as a political movement. A recent alternative energy conference in Austin, Texas drew almost 300 state and local policy makers, labor representatives, energy experts and activists. Their goal was to analyze the political choices of the next few years and to examine successful energy initiatives already underway around the country.

The conference focused on the nitty-gritty work that faces safe-energy advocates: financing, organizing, coalition building and making use of federal programs. Dozens of innovative state and local projects were described, including Dayton, Ohio's Energy Task Force with its program of energy audits and community outreach and education. Valerie Pope-Ludlam described how the San Bernardino (California) Community Development Corporation is using its solar development program to provide jobs and housing for the low-income community there.

No single organizing strategy was offered as a model. However, as various projects and programs were described common elements became clear. Several speakers stressed the importance of overcoming parochialism and smugness.

The key strategy identified at the conference was to organize locally and to form broad-based, grassroots coalitions. "The country is going to be saved by the neighborhoods, not by the government and not by the corporations," said Valerie Pope-Ludlam. The



This solar water heater was built by a community safe energy group in San Francisco.

photo by Jon Katz

conference consensus was that the political transition to the soft energy path should be aimed at small business, farmers, inventors, minorities, workers and consumers. Jim Hightower, president of the Texas Consumers Association, summed it up: "Pick up the grub hoes and get back to the grassroots."

Equity was a major issue at the conference. Jose Uriegas of the Mexican

American Research Center in Austin commented that many options advocated by the soft energy movement are not open to the poor who don't have houses they can insulate or retrofit. He said that these alternative energy coalitions must address the needs of the poor and minorities, not simply stress energy.

Both the formal agenda of the

conference and informal discussions emphasized that the move to soft energy has become a political movement, not simply a question of technological innovations. Despite the recognition that there is a tremendous amount of unglamorous organizing work to be done, the mood was upbeat and optimistic.

—Steve Mulford

## AA Strategy Conference

All Abalone Alliance groups are encouraged to send participants to a strategy conference February 27 to March 1 in Sonoma County.

A final proposal for budget priorities for the next six months will be set during the weekend. It will determine the order of funding projects as money comes in.

Time will be set aside Saturday evening for meetings of state collectives and special caucuses. Afternoons will be spent on skills sharing. Anyone who wants to sponsor a 90-minute workshop should contact the state office.

Hopefully the conference will be a time of community building and fun. The conference site is nestled among the redwood trees along the Russian River. The \$12 preregistration fee covers six vegetarian meals and indoor sleeping facilities. A \$5 deposit will hold your space and you will owe \$7 when you arrive. If you don't preregister, registration at the

door will be \$17 — no exceptions. Children will \$6.

Dinner will be served at 7:30 Friday evening. (The Abalone has finally learned pot licks don't work at conferences.) A shuttle service will operate from the parking lot to the camp from 7:00 — midnight. Unfortunately we cannot be in the camp before 7:00.

Please bring eating utensils, a sleeping bag, pad, and any personal things. Showers are available.

Shuttle service will also be available from Old Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa from 6:30 — 8:30 Friday evening. Santa Rosa can be reached by public transportation from San Francisco on the #70 and #74 Golden Gate Transit Bus Lines.

Make preregistration checks payable to SONOMoreAtoms and send to: Helen Mansfield, Jung Haus, 8025 Beverly Drive #112, Rohnert Park, CA 94928.

## AC/DC action suggestion

Dear Abalones,

AC/DC has reached consensus on the following proposal: *The Abalone Alliance should make the upcoming Low Power Testing Hearing a major focus for coordinated action.*

We didn't want to propose anything more specific without more discussion with interested Abalone groups. This proposal is to communicate how important we feel these hearings are — and that Action Community on Diablo Canyon

will organize around them.

*Ed. note:* This suggestion will be discussed at the AA State Conference February 28 to March 1 (see page 10), where it can be formulated into a proposal if four AA groups sponsor it. Consensus could be tested for for the entire AA at a spokes meeting at least two weeks after the conference or through the mail decision-making process. For more detailed information consult the AA structure.

## A call to canvassing

Door-to-door canvassing is possibly the most effective — and most neglected — method of outreach in the anti-nuclear arsenal. Certainly the swiftest. You don't wait for people to come to you, you go to them. Canvassing carries the message to all types of people, unlike teach-ins and rallies which often draw audiences composed of the already convinced.

Personal presence often has a special effect. A flesh and blood person at the door inspires a sense that the issue is alive and urgent. Canvassing also affords a "Who's Who" of your community. And it's an excellent way to circulate pamphlets, *It's About Times*, etc. It's a good idea to leave literature even with those most opposed to your position if they express some willingness to read it.

Effective canvassing begins inside one's own front door. Homework is indispensable — even experts have to keep up on current developments. We hurt ourselves if we go out to educate and end up getting floored by stock-in-trade pro-nuclear sophistries.

The best time to hit the doorsteps is between 7 and 9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays. Beginners at least should go in pairs — two heads mean more information remembered.

Petitions make a good focus for the call. Giving your visit a readily perceiv-

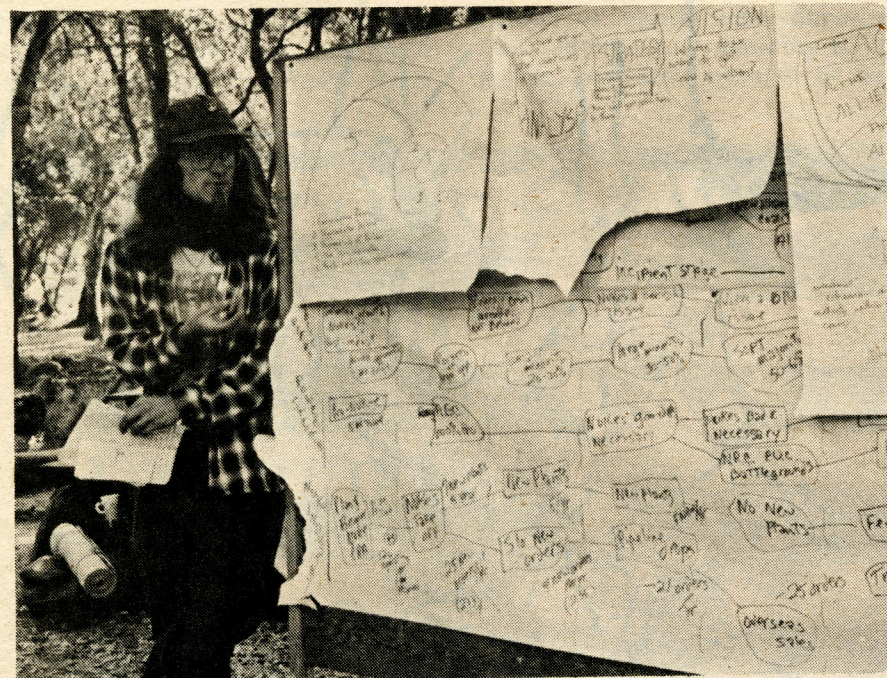
able purpose. The resident's response suggests what steps to take next. If a signature is forthcoming, you can explain current developments in nuclear power and talk about what else can be done to stop it. If the resident refuses to sign, you can ask why. In either case a discussion of the issues may ensue.

Canvassing is an excellent opportunity to test our abilities at verbal non-violence. As I see it, good canvassers are friendly, respectful and knowledgeable. They are quick to get to the point, assertive without being pushy, calm in the face of indifference or opposition, and opposed not to pro-nuclear people, but to the pro-nuke position.

A good canvassing effort ends where it begin — with some homework. It is essential that field work be complemented by well-organized bookwork. Canvassers should catalogue the people they've talked to and the places they've been to, to avoid duplication and so that potentially active people can be re-contacted.

A lot of people are part of the Abalone Alliance, but only a handful are out knocking on their neighbors' doors. It's strange that would-be blockaders outnumber would-be canvassers. Is the difference of a neighbor more frightening than a policeman's club?

—David Martinez



Did you miss last fall's Abalone Alliance conference? You have another chance February 28 thru March 1 in Sonoma.

photo by Mark Evanoff



# La Hague

continued from page 7

Radioactive processes never stop; you can't just shut it down like a steel mill.

The strike in La Hague ended in December 1976 with only partial success. A commission of unions and management was established and made no less than 47 recommendations to improve working conditions. But serious problems have continued — if anything, conditions have gotten worse.

During a four week period in early 1977 there was only one incident-free day. Work areas had to be evacuated five times in a single week because radiation contamination of the floor had reached such dangerous levels. The number of workers treated in the infirmary for excessive doses of radiation soared.

Management has admitted that considerable quantities of radioactive gases and liquids are regularly released into the air and into the nearby Bay of Ecalgrain. The local population, heavily dependent on the fishing and dairy industries for their livelihoods, has found that many of their products have become unmarketable. In response, a sizeable movement has grown to demand a halt to the polluting of the land and water.

In the past year there have been six major mishaps at La Hague. A power failure on April 15, 1980, caused relatively minor contamination, but had the event occurred only an hour later

when plutonium was being processed, a nuclear criticality accident could have occurred that would have contaminated the surrounding land and caused untold deaths.

In another accident on September 22, a pump failure caused radioactive water to overflow the basin in which it was stored. Large quantities of water leaked outside the plant area. Plant officials claimed that no contamination had resulted, but an independent investigation by a local anti-nuclear group found that sands along the nearby St. Helene River contained 52 times the normal level.

The struggle of the La Hague nuclear workers for a safe and healthy working environment is a long-haul effort. They are up against broad and powerful forces, including not only the French government and nuclear industry, but international nuclear interests who rely on the continued operation and expansion of the La Hague reprocessing plant.

On the other hand, the workers have built considerable organizational strength. Their relationship with local anti-nuclear forces appears to be a positive and mutually supportive one. Perhaps our own movement can draw some insights from the experiences at La Hague.

—Howard Ryan  
Abalone Alliance  
Labor Task Force

# Calendar

**February 18:** Public Forum on Diablo. Contact Lompoc Safe Energy Coalition (805) 736-1897.

**February 27 - March 1:** Abalone Alliance Strategy Conference. Contact SONOMoreAtoms (707) 526-7220. For more information see page 10.

**March 1:** *Broken Arrow*, a documentary about nuclear weapons accidents and the presence of nuclear weapons in Northern California, will be aired nationwide on public television. Check your local listings for the exact time.

**March 21:** Diablo Blockade Task Force meeting, 12:00 noon, Diablo Project Office, 452 Higuera, San Luis Obispo.

**March 28:** TMI anniversary rally, noon, San Francisco Civic Center. SoNoMore Atomics is organizing the rally — and is now looking for local groups to help them. Plans include speakers, music and a mass turn-in of PG&E bills to the Public Utilities Commission with the demand that the PUC reopen hearings on Diablo Canyon. Cal Birch, 707-526-9535.

# Announcements

An "Anti-Nuclear Beginners' Kit" is now available. The kit contains:

- an updated list of the addresses and phone numbers of relevant legislators, agencies and institutions,
- letter-writing suggestions and sample letters,
- a rate protest kit,
- pamphlets and booklets about the main facets of the nuclear issue, including Caldicott's *At The Crossroads*,
- a list of suggestions about what one can do in the home and workplace,
- a "no dollars for nuclear power check" to be sent to PG&E's public relations department,
- a medical statement on nuclear power by Physicians for Social Responsibility,
- a large "No Nukes" decal, and
- an Abalone Alliance button.

The cost is \$4 per kit. For information call David Martinez, 415-673-7422. Or write 2735 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94123. Be sure to include your phone number in the return address.

## WISE IS A NEWS SOURCE

WISE — the World Information Service on Energy — publishes a bimonthly bulletin of news from the international anti-nuclear/safe energy movement. A \$15 membership includes a subscription. Weekly press briefs are available for \$7.50 a year. Contact WISE/US, 1536 16th Street NW, Washington D.C., 20036 (202) 387-0818.

## AA Safe Energy Groups

\*Denotes that several community/neighborhood and affinity groups are working in the vicinity.

**ABALONE ALLIANCE OFFICE:** 944 Market St., Room 307, San Francisco, CA 94102 • (415) 543-3910

**DIABLO PROJECT OFFICE:** 452 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 805 543-6614

### NORTH

**ALBION:** WOMEN FOR SURVIVAL, Box 415/95410 • (707) 937-5596

**ARCATA:** REDWOOD ALLIANCE, P.O. Box 293/95521 (707) 822-7884

**CALISTOGA:** UPPER NAPA VALLEY ENERGY ALLIANCE, 2200 Diamond Mtn. Rd./94515 (707) 942-5856

**COVELO:** DOWNWIND ALLIANCE, Box 175/95428 (707) 983-9969

**MENDOCINO:** CITIZENS ALLIANCE FOR SAFE ENERGY, Box 887/95460

**NAPA:** NAPA VALLEY ENERGY ALLIANCE, 2119 Brown Street, #4/94558

**SANTA ROSA:** COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY, 709 Davis St./95401 • (707) 528-6543  
\*SO NO More Atomics, 883 E. Sonoma Ave./95404 • (707) 526-7220

**SONOMA:** SONOMA ALTERNATIVES FOR ENERGY, P.O. Box 452/95476 • (707) 996-5123

**TRINIDAD:** TRINIDAD ALLIANCE Box 60/95570 • (707) 677-3486

### CENTRAL VALLEY & SIERRA

**CHICO:** CHICO PEOPLE FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, 708 Cherry St./95926 • (916) 891-6424

**DAVIS:** PEOPLE FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, 411 5th St./95616 • (916) 753-1630 M-F 12-6 P.M.

**FRESNO:** PEOPLE FOR SAFE ENERGY, 366 N. Van Ness/93701 • (209) 268-3109 or 441-8839

**MODESTO:** STANISLAUS SAFE ENERGY COMMITTEE, P.O. Box 134/93354 • (209) 529-5750

**NEVADA CITY:** PEOPLE FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, 419 Spring St./95959 • (916) 272-4848

**REDDING:** VOLCANIC ALLIANCE, 431 Manzanita Lane / 96002 • (916) 243-5941

**REDWAY:** ACORN ALLIANCE, P.O. Box 773/95560 (707) 923-2258

**SACRAMENTO:** CITIZENS FOR SAFE ENERGY, 312 20th St./95814 (916) 442-3635.

**SHEEP RANCH:** FOOTHILL ALLIANCE FOR SAFE ENERGY, Box 53 / 95250 • (209) 728-2193

**VISALIA:** SEQUOIA ALLIANCE, 3017 South Conyer / 93277 • (209) 733-9050

### GREATER BAY AREA

**BERKELEY:** ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION MINISTRY, 2311 Bowditch / 94704 • (415) 848-1157

**BERKELEY (UC CAMPUS):** PEOPLE'S ANTI-NUCLEAR COLLECTIVE, UC Berkeley, 612 Eshleman Hall/94720 (415) 642-8165

**BOLINAS:** BOLINAS AGAINST NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION, P.O. Box 708/94924 • (415) 868-1401

**CONCORD:** CONTRA COSTANS FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, P.O. Box 743/94522 (415) 934-5249

**EL GRANADA:** COASTSIDERS FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, P.O. Box 951/94018 (415) 728-3119

**OAKLAND:** EAST BAY ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP, 585 Alcatraz, Suite A/94609 (415) 655-1715

**PALO ALTO:** CITIZENS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO NUCLEAR ENERGY, P.O. Box 377/94302

**PT. REYES:** PELICAN ALLIANCE, P.O. Box 596/94956 • (415) 663-8483

**SAN ANSELMO:** ABALONE ALLIANCE OF MARIN, 1024 Sir Francis Drake Blvd./94960 (415) 457-4377

**SAN JOSE:** GROUP OPPOSED TO NUCLEAR ENERGY, 300 South 10th St./95112 • (408) 297-2299

**SAN FRANCISCO:** ALLIANCE AGAINST NUCLEAR POWER, UC Med Center, c/o Michael Kosnett, MU 249/94143 • (415) 666-2010

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, Liz Walker, David Hartsough, 2160 Lake St./94121 • (415) 752-7766

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT, 88 First St., Suite 600/94105 • (415) 777-1984

DIRECT ACTION WORKING NETWORK, 1846 Church St./94139 (415) 826-7776

GREENPEACE ANTI-NUCLEAR COMMITTEE, Building E, Fort Mason/94123 • (415) 474-6767

NURSES FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, 1447 7th Ave./94122 (415) 854-5404

\*PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR POWER, 944 Market St. Room 808/94102 • (415) 781-5342

STUDENTS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO NUCLEAR ENERGY, 1618 Hayes St./94117 (415) 563-3656

**STANFORD:** ROSES AGAINST A NUCLEAR ENVIRONMENT, Box 8842 / 94305 • (415) 854-5404

### CENTRAL COAST

**AVILA BEACH:** A.V.I.L.A., P.O. Box 344/93424 • (805) 736-1897

CITIZENS FOR PEACE, P.O. Box 219/93426 • (805) 528-5626

**LOMPOC:** LOMPOC SAFE ENERGY COALITION, P.O. Box 158/93436 (805) 736-1897

**PACIFIC GROVE:** SOCIETY UNITING FOR NON-NUCLEAR YEARS, P.O. Box 8/93950 • (408) 372-7476

**SAN LUIS OBISPO:** PEOPLE GENERATING ENERGY, 452 Higuera/93401 (805) 543-8402

**SANTA MARIA:** THE UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH, 512 W. Evergreen/93454 (805) 922-1309

**SANTA CRUZ:** ACTION COMMUNITY ON DIABLO CANYON, Box 693 / 95060 • (408) 423-7046

PEOPLE FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, P.O. Box 5204/95063 (408) 425-1275

### SOUTH

**AVALON:** CATALINA ISLAND AFS, P.O. Box 1516/90704

**BELLFLOWER:** SUNSHINE ALLIANCE/NO RADIOACTIVITY COMMITTEE, P.O. Box 1135/90706

**LOS ANGELES:** ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL, 1473 Echo Park Ave./90026 • (213) 738-1041

**OJAI:** STOP URANIUM NOW, P.O. Box 772/93023 • (805) 646-3832

**RIVERSIDE:** RIVERSIDE ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL, 200 E. Blaine St./92507

**SAN DIEGO:** COMMUNITY ENERGY ACTION NETWORK, P.O. Box 33686/92103 • (714) 236-1684 or 295-2084

**SANTA ANA:** SUNFLOWER COLLECTIVE, 206 West 19th St./92706

**SANTA BARBARA:** PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR POWER, U.C. Santa Barbara P.O. Box 14006/93107 • (805) 968-4238 or 968-2886

SANTA BARBARA PEOPLE FOR A NUCLEAR FREE FUTURE, 331 N. Milpas St./93103 • (805) 966-4565

**SANTA MONICA:** GEO, 1127 6th St./90402 (213) 394-4139  
UCLA ALLIANCE/SANTA MONICA-VENICE, 235 Hill St./90405 • (213) 829-7251

**SOUTH LAGUNA:** LAGUNA BEACH AFS, 30832 Driftwood/92677

**TOPANGA:** TOPANGA CANYON AFS, c/o Food Chakra, Top. Cyn. Blvd. & Fernwood/90290 (213) 455-2867

**VAN NUYS:** SAN FERNANDO VALLEY ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL, 13615 Victory Blvd., Suite 204 / 91401 • (213) 969-5003

**VENTURA:** VENTURA ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL, c/o Ron Cone, Box 308 / 93002 • (805) 642-6522

**WEST LOS ANGELES:** COMMON GROUND, 2222 S. Sepulveda/90064

**WOODLAND HILLS:** WEST VALLEY ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL, 6123 Lockhurst Drive / 91367



# CORPORATE "SCIENCE" DEPT.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY

DECEMBER, 1980

In October, we reported that PG&E was launching a new public relations campaign to persuade people living near Diablo Canyon that the plant is safe and necessary. We printed a confidential PG&E internal memo that advocated using pro-nuclear scientists as company spokespersons. The memo also suggested getting a "higher visibility" at Cal Poly, the local State University.

With PG&E's budget, no sooner said than done. In mid-October, it sponsored a "symposium" of pro-nuclear speakers at Cal Poly. A company-produced newspaper featuring the event was mailed to area residents two months later. The paper ballyhooed the "symposium" panel as "a distinguished group of scientists and engineers... with a broad range of expertise in the energy field." The handpicked panel, which included no nuclear critics, was supplemented by impressively-titled keynote speakers.

One such speaker was Michael Peevey, who the paper identifies as "trustee, California State University and Colleges." But PG&E forgot to mention that Peevey is also co-chair of "Citizens for Adequate Energy," a pro-nuclear group set up and funded by the utility itself.

So the event was really just an elaborately staged PG&E press conference which the company portrayed as a "Cal Poly symposium." This upset Dr. Warren Baker, the university's president. In a letter to PG&E, he complained that the company's paper "has confused the neutral position of the university and clearly left an impression with a number of people that the university has become an advocate of the PG&E position on Diablo Canyon." He implied that PG&E was responsible for correcting that impression.

Others at Cal Poly were less gentle in their reactions. Perhaps the best overall critique of PG&E's conduct is a letter from a Cal Poly scientist which appeared originally in the December 13 *San Luis Obispo Telegram Tribune*. Here are some excerpts:

To the editor:

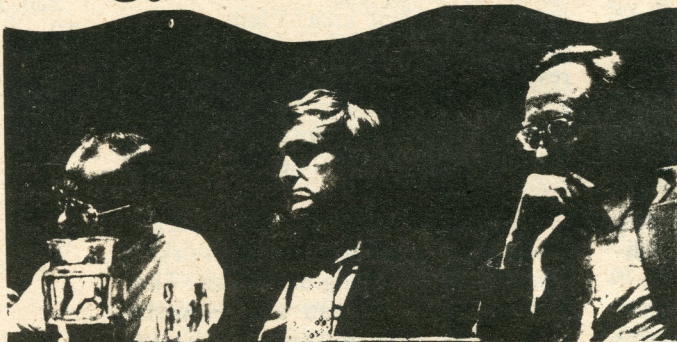
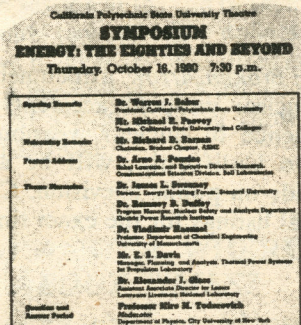
I have received PG&E's propaganda "Public Issue" subtitled "Energy and Diablo Canyon". The cover has a simple format: A series of photos of speakers at the Oct. 16 "Energy" Symposium held at Cal Poly including a centrally-located photo of the entry sign to "California Polytechnic State University". Below this is a picture of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

Two bold headlines grace the page: one states "Scientists at Cal Poly Symposium Assess America's Energy Future"; the other reads "Diablo Canyon Earthquake Safety Affirmed by Experts' Testimony." That's all there is on the front page: a simple message to linger in the back recesses of your mind... Diablo is safe... "scientists"... "experts"... "at Cal Poly"... affirm it.

A clever use of our ratepayer dollars. But consider the advice to the people of San Luis Obispo given by Dr. Arno Penzias, Nobel physicist and keynote speaker who headed up the PG&E dog and pony show: "If I lived here, I'd only trust an (NRC) inspector who would live next to the (Diablo Canyon) plant with his family!" Those words of Dr. Penzias did not make the PG&E review.

Consider also that nowhere in the issue

## Scientists at Cal Poly Symposium Foresee Difficult Energy Future for U.S. and World



Options discussed by Dr. Vladimir Haensel, professor in the University of Massachusetts Department of Chemical Engineering and a veteran of energy research and management, included the production of oil from coal and oil shale.

"By 1995, we'll have 1 1/2 million barrels of oil from coal and oil shale. To achieve this, we're going to have to mine half a million tons of coal a day and a million tons of oil shale a day to produce that total. That's a



**"By 1995, we'll have 1 1/2 million barrels (a day) from coal and oil shale..."**

Dr. Vladimir Haensel, Professor, University of Massachusetts

tremendous requirement from the standpoint of technology," Haensel said.

Haensel said vast deposits of oil in California are still untapped, but it is a very heavy oil, difficult to extract, and will probably not be a usable supply for many years yet.

Nuclear power, said Haensel, "is not a technological problem but a societal problem. And that's where the real problem is until the time comes when we can solve it. Until we do, we are going to be in a very difficult situation."

The potential of solar power—and some of the pilot projects being worked on—was described by engineer Edgar S. Davis, Manager of Planning and Analysis of the Thermal Power Systems Project at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of California Institute of Technology.

"Each year enough solar radiation falls on the state of California to power the U.S. three times over, even if the solar energy was converted to useful forms of energy with only a 10% efficiency. With a 20% efficiency, an area the size of California could supply the current energy consumption of the world," Davis said.

He reviewed work being done with solar panels, parabolic dish collectors, salt-radiant solar ponds, and other solar applications.

"However," he said, "most of these technologies are in a state of development which doesn't make them economically feasible for many years to come."

"We would expect solar energy to become most useful in the Southwest first and then extend around the confluence as the technology becomes more economical than the rising prices for alternative kinds of fuels," Davis said.



**"Most (solar) technologies won't be economically feasible for many years..."**

Edgar S. Davis, Cal Tech Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Extensive programs to analyze and improve safety standards in the operation of nuclear plants were explained by Dr. Romney B. Duffey, Program Manager of the Electric Power Research Institute's Nuclear Safety and Analysis Department, which was expanded after the Three Mile Island mishap.

Duffey, long associated with nuclear research and engineering in the United Kingdom before joining the institute's directing staff, said, "We're learning more and more from our experiences in the nuclear industry—both good and bad—and because of these experiences, we're making gains."

**"We're making gains" in nuclear safety programs.**

Dr. Romney B. Duffey, Electric Power Research Institute



He spoke of efforts to simplify operating procedures in nuclear plants without sacrificing the "defense in depth" control principles. Duffey envisioned a future of better-trained, better-paid plant operators working with more easily synchronized instruments and readings and with constantly improving safety awareness.

Dr. Alexander J. Glass, Assistant Associate Director for Lasers at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, talked about the future of laser technology related to achieving nuclear fusion—a process which would permit a virtually boundless use and re-use of nuclear fuel.

"Nuclear fusion can be an immense source of energy," Glass said, but the timetable for its development—governed by the expense and highly technical problems involved—indicates that commercial use is unlikely before the year 2025. "But remember," he warned, "that world demand for electricity doubles every decade."

In sum for the symposium: many things happening, many things developing for the eighties and beyond, but no sure solutions. Meanwhile, the U.S. faces higher energy costs and the economic and political risks of energy disruptions and unstable energy sources.

The symposium was chaired by Professor Miro Todorovich of City University of New York, who also serves as executive secretary of Scientists and Engineers for Secure Energy (SE2).

Keynote remarks for the symposium were delivered by Dr. Dale Andrews, vice president, California Polytechnic State University; Dr. William F. Horton, associate dean of the Cal Poly School of Engineering and Technology; Michael R. Peevey, trustee, California State University and Colleges; and Richard D. Barzan, chairman, Student Chapter, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

The event was sponsored by Cal Poly's School of Engineering and Technology and the student chapters of ASME, Society of Automotive Engineers, and Students for Adequate Energy.

Cooperating sponsors were Scientists and Engineers for Secure Energy, California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance (CCEEB), Citizens for Adequate Energy, and PG&E.

**"Nuclear fusion can be an immense source of energy... by the year 2025."**

Dr. Alexander Glass, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory



## Wind Rocks, Cows Produce New Energy

does it inform the reader that the other "guest" speakers were members of the pro-nuclear "Scientists and Engineers for Secure Energy" (SE), a group funded and sponsored by utility companies and corporations with vested interests in nuclear power. Nowhere does it inform the reader that these unbiased participants were hand-picked to give the impression of a balanced presentation, yet the overall message was the same as the recent spate of large SE-sponsored and PG&E-sponsored ads, i.e., "to avoid OPEC blackmail, we must utilize all sources of energy available to us, including nuclear, until the esoteric alternative energy sources are economically feasible."

It is interesting to note that the worst speaker and the most pie-in-the-sky performer at the symposium was their supposed solar advocate, a Dr. Davis from Cal Tech, who told the audience about the most exotic of the high tech solar innovations without hardly a mention of the practical and

immediate benefits of simple passive solar design or hot water heating which can save, and is saving, millions of imported barrels of oil otherwise wasted generating electricity to heat homes and water. And, of course, Dr. Davis is quoted extensively but, especially, in bold print, for his words: "Most (solar) technologies won't be economically feasible for many years..."

Last month, PG&E's propaganda sheet was distributed on Cal Poly's campus in tax-supported newspaper delivery boxes. Allegedly this was done by a naive pro-nuclear club on campus. This same "naive" campus club, only organized on campus since June, was able to "sponsor" and put together the Energy Symposium of Oct. 16th, no small feat.

The implications of all this manipulation should be carefully examined: PG&E, along with several of its pro-nuclear groupies, sponsors and funds an "unbiased" energy symposium in a tax-supported state uni-

versity facility. Because it gets a student group to "sponsor" its activity, PG&E doesn't even have to pay the rental fee that other off-campus or non-student groups must pay for the use of the Little Theatre. The speakers are hand-picked and their expenses (travel, lodging, meals) are paid for by an avowed pro-nuclear organization which obtains part of its funding from PG&E. PG&E then turns around and publishes its unbiased review of this unbiased energy symposium with the implied message that "Scientists at Cal Poly"...affirm Diablo safety.

As a Cal Poly scientist, and as one member of the concerned faculty and staff, I object to this unethical use of my tax dollars, my ratepayer dollars, and to the abuse of the name of Cal Poly and/or its president by PG&E to legitimize their pro-nuclear propaganda.

—Dr. Richard J. Krejsa  
Professor, Cal Poly

## Subscribe!

### Get the news that gives the nuclear industry a headache

What's today's only publication with an all volunteer staff, hated but read faithfully by top PG&E executives, providing information on Abalone Alliance events and nuclear-related issues and conflicts throughout the world? **IT'S ABOUT TIMES.**

We try to provide a place to develop alternatives to corporate and government plans for the future—plans that include weapons to "win" nuclear war; repressive legislation for dictatorial power in the energy field and registration for the draft.

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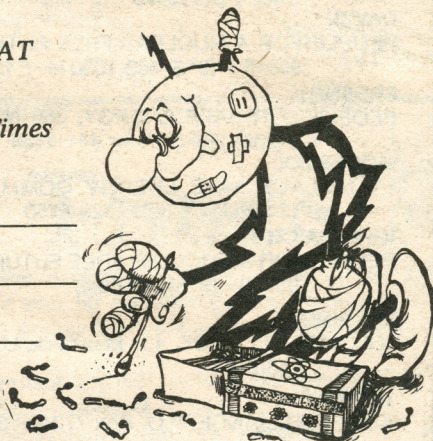
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