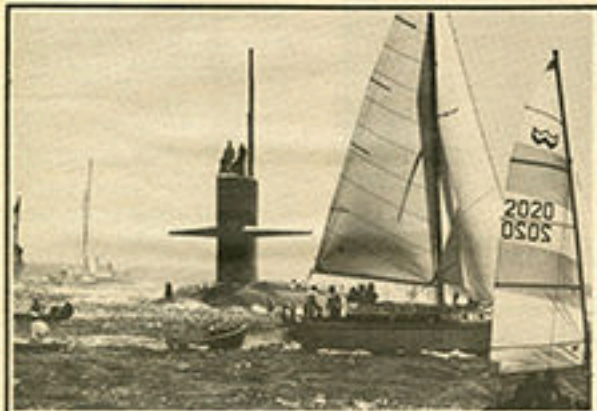


IT'S ABOUT TIMES

NOVEMBER - MID-DECEMBER, 1979



New Zealanders blocked the nuclear sub U.S.S. Poseidon when it attempted to enter a harbor there earlier this year. Nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines regularly slug it out out of the San Francisco Bay on their way to Maui Island for refueling.

(Night) Mare Island

The Mare Island Naval Shipyard on the southern tip of the San Francisco Bay is one of the three West Coast refueling facilities for the U.S. Navy's 113 nuclear-powered submarines. Although the Nuclear Regulatory Commission itself is now warning about nuclear reactors used near population centers, nuclear submarines regularly slug it out of the San Francisco Bay to stop at Mare Island. Earlier this year, the shipyard added decommissioning to its other nuclear tasks. The U.S.S. Nautilus, the Navy's first nuclear-powered sub, will be dismantled at Mare Island, its waste eventually going to Idaho and the old fuel headed for the East Coast.

Several earthquake faults surround the Mare Island base. About twenty miles south of the island runs the Calaveras fault, which caused one of the worst earthquakes in the history of California in the 1900's and a major series of tremors in August of this year. The Hayward fault, also recently active, runs 5 miles southeast of the facility. The town is built on sand dunes which could act very much like quicksand if an earthquake should occur.

Jim Watt of the California Department of Health has been concerned about the refueling depot. He has asked the Navy about the accident potential and evacuation planning, but many of his questions remain unanswered because the information is "classified".

When I contacted Mare Island, public affairs officer Gerry Hall focused primarily on sea questions. Navy policy, however, dictates that no media queries be answered on the spot. A week after my phone

call, I received a written reply that had been approved by the Maryland command. This response and information granted from Report N7-0-4 (Environmental Monitoring and Disposal of Radioactive Waste from Nuclear Powered Ships and Their Support Facilities, January, 1979) are the sources for the nuclear nightmare described here.

Submarines sit in dry dock during the refueling process. A "cooling down process" of one to three months is necessary before new fuel can be loaded. The submarine fuel is 94% Uranium-235, a nonproliferable fuel for nuclear weapons. A commercial reactor's fuel is 3% U-235.

(continued to page 10)

NRC halts licensing

On November 3, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced a moratorium on licensing new nuclear power plants until it "thoroughly examines" recommendations made in the wake of the Three Mile Island accident. The moratorium is expected to last at least until spring, and possibly as long as two years. Diablo Canyon is one of four plants affected.

The NRC decision was made November 2 in a closed-door meeting, according to NRC officials who asked not to be named. One reason given for the decision was the NRC's desire to study some 40 recommendations made by the Kemeny Commission. That panel, appointed by President Carter to study the TMI accident, released its study on October 10. The NRC is also awaiting the findings of Washington attorney Michael Ragozin, who is hired to independently investigate the accident. Ragozin's report is due at the end of the year.

When the NRC investigation reports, Diablo safety hearings will probably begin to consider safety issues raised by TMI. One of these issues is a defect in the Westinghouse reactor design which might prevent core cooling in the event of an accident. That defect, related to uncontrollable gas blocking flow in the steam generator, was pointed out in the Kemeny report. It may not be correctable without extensive redesign of the plant.

Despite the good news from Washington, the case against Diablo suffered a setback with a decision last month by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. The ASL&B ruled that the plant could withstand a magnitude 7.5 earthquake, and therefore was safe to operate. Seismic safety has been the international main issue in legal proceedings to stop the plant, and they will probably appeal the Board's decision.

PG&E's response to all that? Despite a 25-drop in electric sales last year, the utility is still producing (eventually) power shortages next summer if they don't get to run their nukes. The plant now represents a quarter of the utility's net worth, and they doubtless have a few tricks up their sleeve to get it licensed.

Keep that blockade cooking, folks.
— Bob Van Stry

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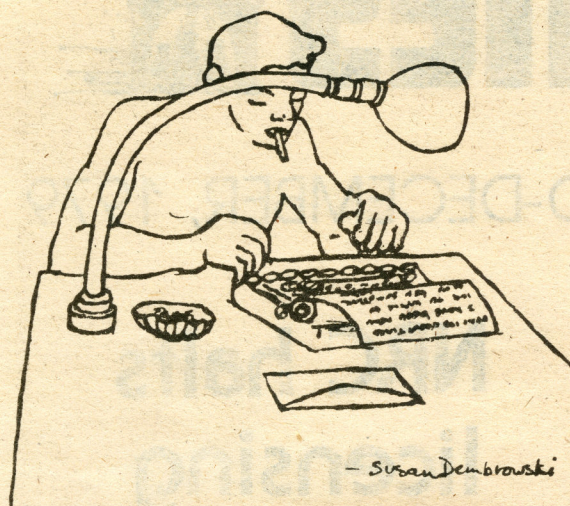
AMERICAN FRIENDS
SERVICE COMMITTEE
1418 Lata Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

North Pacific Organization
U.S. Friends
FPO
American Friends Service
Committee, Inc.



Over 100 people gathered in Sausalito October 28 - 29 to protest the Trident missile system. Party-chairs were arrested, while leafleting workers at the Lockheed plant. For more on the action, see page 3.

LETTERS



Stop Paying for Power

Why are those of us in the anti-nuke movement waiting for the NRC to do something? The utility companies and the government have maintained the initiative and offensive for too long. It is time for the movement and the people to retake the initiative and regain momentum and the spirit of possible victory. No one believes that the moratorium on licensing will become permanent without further confrontations, and certainly those plants already operating will not be closed without strong direct action against those who insist on keeping them running (i.e., the state and finance capital via the utility companies).

Direct Action should be seen to mean more than camping out on a plant site. It means refusing to pay either the utility companies or the government by withholding payment of bills and taxes. It means attacking centers of control like NRC offices, utility offices, Wall Streets east and west. It means establishing the seeds of an alternative system by developing alternative and locally controlled energy sources where possible. Finally, direct action means workers refusing to work under radioactive conditions and refusing to turn off the gas and electricity of rate strikers in a show of solidarity.

We propose selecting a date for a utility rate strike. People would not pay their utility bills, and instead fund alternative neighborhood and affinity group projects, much like war tax resisters and rent strikers have done. In addition, occupations of facilities of institutions directly involved in nuclear plants or weapons, including utility offices, university and NRC offices, would occur on the first day of the strike, and waves of occupations would occur at intervals thereafter. Heavy leafletting of utility employees in the form of an appeal for solidarity should precede these actions. If it should happen that utilities begin shutting off power, utility personnel should be directly confronted on the street as well as in the offices with blockades and occupations.

The movement has done well to get people into activist roles, but it seems to be losing momentum. The last few demonstrations have communicated a sense of powerlessness, indicating an escalation of tactics is necessary. There is no guarantee of success for this escalated strategy. But then there was no guarantee for those few who initially went over the fences at Seabrook, Diablo, etc. In fact, in terms of shutting the plants down, the tactic has not been a success. But in terms of expanding the numbers of people committed to a different society than one based on nukes, it has so far been a success and has increased the chances of ultimately shutting plants down. However, this has been done not due to a particularly good image, but to a militance that says we can take control of our lives.

A friend and companion has said that the movement has become too nice; Malvina Reynolds said, "NICE WAYS ALWAYS FAIL."

It is apparent that the success of a rate-strike will be proportional to the number and tenacity of the people committed to it. Direct Current is testing the waters. If this is an action you can participate in, we ask you to call or write us.

Direct Current
731-1465
495 Frederick #5
San Francisco 94117

Dear *It's About Times*:

A check for \$750 arrived in my mailbox for the Abalone Alliance the other day. The sender is the mother of a close friend of mine, a woman of 70 who was recently told that she didn't have much longer to live.

Ida Kaplan is doing the most remarkable thing: she is imbuing everyone around her with spirit and stamina. I have spoken to three people close to her, and each one is in awe of the way she is living her dying -- with humor, generosity, warmth, and matter-of-factness.

Enclosed with her check she sent us this message: "Continue the good work."

Ricky Jacobs

[Ida Kaplan, 5048 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15232]

UPSET WITH TEACH-IN FUNDING

Dear Editor:

At the October spokes meeting a decision was passed which granted \$1000 from Abalone budgeted projects (i.e., Project Office, the blockade, the Statewide office, etc.) to Shendl Tuchman and the teach-ins. This was a request from a project initiator, and her supporters, for priority and privilege to a group of representatives without the empowerment to grant it. But it was granted and the money spent. For the following reasons, I and a group of other people hope that in a spirit of love and fairness the money will be repaid.

First, at the Santa Barbara conference Shendl was informed that the Abalone Alliance endorsed the teach-ins but could not afford to help finance them, except that the local groups were encouraged to do so on their local level. This appeared to be a positive step to decentralization, as well as a sound financial decision in light of funds promised and funds available.

Second, since the representatives at that Santa Barbara statewide conference were having difficulty in agreeing upon the myriad of restructuring proposals, they consented upon a spokes meeting to iron out the difficulties. These spokes were not empowered to act as both the Coordinating Committee and the Finance Collective. Though the status of the C.C. and the F.C. may have changed, the designated recipient projects for the funds have not changed. Neither Shendl Tuchman nor Steve Leeds nor a host of representatives without financial decision-making or coordinating empowerment can change that. But the money is spent.

The Blockade collective once took many meetings to arrive at a consensus on pre-blockade acitons; that decision was overturned in a subsequent meeting. I and a group of concerned Abalones hope this one will also and the money will be repaid.

—Dennis Burgess

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

We would like to lend some perspective to the September 29th spokes council decision to allot \$1000 to the teach-ins. At the Santa Barbara Conference, the Abalone decided to co-sponsor the teach-ins without any direct monetary support. The finances would be dealt with totally by local groups. This was an acceptable process until it became obvious that the cost would be prohibitive not only to the smaller participating groups, but to the larger ones as well.

In the meantime, the U.C. Nuclear Weapons Labs Conversion Project was footing whatever bills occurred, to get the teach-ins moving, i.e. office space, phones, postage, etc. It was at this point that the Labs Project requested that we again ask our organization to match their financial undertaking for the teach-ins. They had strong fears that whatever costs or subsequent debts arose from these events would be totally their own responsibility. They were beginning to regret working with an organization which had no accountable body or shared financial responsibility. We were in no position to refuse their request to ask the Abalone for funding.

Considering that the spokes council was the only representative body of the Abalone meeting at the time, it seemed the only logical place to bring our request. A number of people, some representing groups doing teach-ins, understood they were not empowered to allocate money.... but who was? Most wanted the money to be spent, but did not know if indeed anyone has that authority. Needless to say, the decision was not any easy one. We applaud the spokes council for taking the initiative, risk, and responsibility to help correct the Abalone Alliance's position with the Lab's Project, while our restructuring has rendered us somewhat dysfunctional. Coalition building with anti-nuclear weapons or other organizations is not a haphazard affair. We feel we need to present ourselves as an equal organization with those we work with.

It is regrettable that this decision had to be made in this fashion, and hopefully the restructuring will prevent this situation from occurring again.

—Shendl; Steve Leeds

REGRETS THE SITUATION AROSE

At the September 29 restructuring spokes council meeting, a need was expressed for \$1000 to be utilized for the teach-ins. An attempt had been previously made to take the decision to the Finance Committee, but it had ceased to meet. The Coordinating Committee had also ceased to meet.

Some felt that the people at the restructuring meeting should take it upon themselves to approve this funding for the following reasons:

1. The teach-ins are an approved AA project.
2. People who had blocked consensus on funding at the conference had apparently done so because it had been reportedly stated that there weren't enough AA funds.
3. The U.C. Nuclear Weapons Labs Conversion Project as co-sponsor had given \$1000, and for the AA to not fund equally could create tensions that would affect our work together in the future.
4. There was no other process for awarding the money.
5. The money was needed.

Some felt that the money should not be granted for these reasons:

1. The spokes meeting had not been empowered to discuss or decide any items not pertaining to forming a restructuring proposal.
2. To award the money would be a violation of process.
3. Our not having a process was our own fault and we should pay the price.
4. There may have been other reasons for people having blocked consensus on the funding.

The spokespeople after lengthy discussion, agreed to fund the teach-ins in the amount of \$1000.

The situation around the request for a decision clearly represents a breakdown in AA process. The restructuring spokes council regrets that the situation arose, and is committed to using that example of breakdown, among others, in its attempts to devise a structure that will prevent those problems from reoccurring. The Restructuring Council has made a binding decision to not consider making such decisions again.

--- Restructuring Council

Still Wish To Attend Meetings

Friends of the Abalone,

We, Citizens for Safe Energy of San Mateo County, feel compelled to clear up a few matters after reading the minutes of the Sept. 29th restructuring meeting.

We were bothered by the fact that things were inferred that were not expressed by us, i.e., that we are not interested in being a part of A.A. Contrary to what was said, we *are* interested, we did feel frustrated after the meeting, we felt that the process was so time consuming that it left little time for accomplishing anything. Despite our unhappiness with the results of the last meeting attended, we *do* still wish to attend meetings, in fact we were sending representatives from our group to meetings before we even belonged to A.A. Next time we'd appreciate being able to speak for ourselves instead of having others interpret our opinions.

We feel that Abalone Alliance *does* tend to *alienate* people when it gets caught up in petty differences instead of working towards a common goal. There will be differences in a group as diverse as Abalone Alliance, but the differences will be worth putting up with in order to achieve our common final goal.

—Maureen Goldrath
Mary Anderson
Cynthia Cornell



Stop San Onofre

As we go to press, thousands of people rallied against the San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant, midway between San Diego and Los Angeles. The rally kicks off a new program aimed at stopping the licensing of the two new reactors.

The Coalition to Stop San Onofre requests help in stopping the licensing of two nuclear reactors at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), located amidst one of the largest population centers in the world.

Members of the Coalition include: the Alliance for Survival, California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG), Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED), Community Energy Action Network (CEAN), Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

We believe we have an unprecedented opportunity to stop the licensing of these plants through the legal intervention process. Construction of the two 1100-megawatt reactors (SONGS 2 & 3) is approaching completion. These are each twice the size of the original San Onofre reactor (SONGS 1), operating since 1968.

The massive documentation on the inappropriateness of opening more reactors at San Onofre leads us to conclude **we can stop these plants in the licensing hearings.** This will set a precedent for the shutdown of unit 1. A recent poll by CALPIRG and the San Diego State University Social Science Research Laboratory shows more than 70% of San Diego residents disapproving of licensing the two new plants.

Legal intervention is taking place on several issues, including:

- **Seismic.** Recent geological research reveals the presence of several previously unknown faults within the vicinity of the plants.

- **Marine Environment.** The cooling system of the plants is expected to have major disruptive effects on nearby kelp beds. No studies have taken place to determine if radioactive residues in the expelled cooling waters are having effects on the fish population in the vicinity. The waters off San Onofre are major commercial fishing grounds for the San Diego and Los Angeles markets.

- **Evacuation.** Ten million people live within a 70 mile radius of the plants. No effective evacuation plan exists to cover the event of a serious accident.

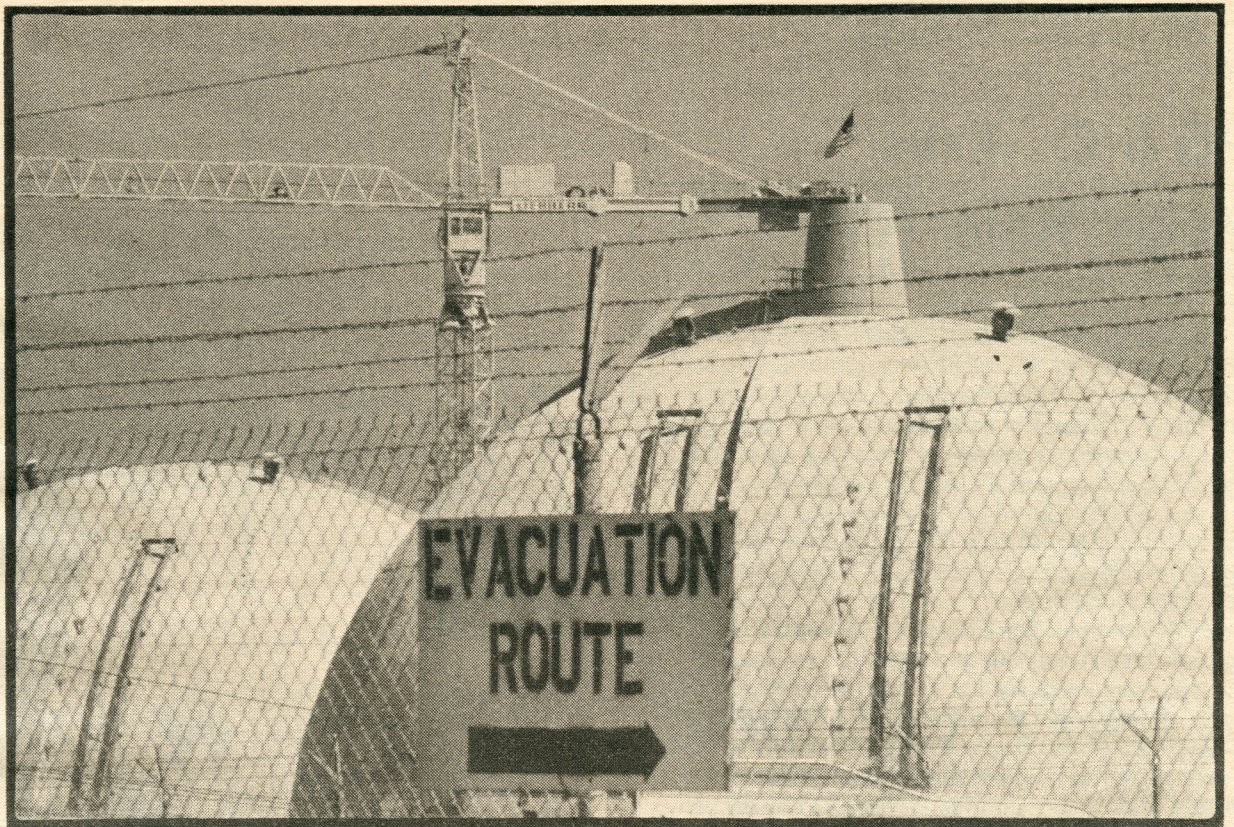
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We are organizing local communities on the San Onofre issue. We intend to keep the nuclear issue on high media focus through the hearings. We are doing fundraising to retain expert witnesses for the legal defense. With the active public participation we hope to stimulate, we expect SONGS 2 and 3 to not be licensed.

The November 10 rally is a key in our organizing strategy. The theme of the rally is **personal empowerment, what the individual can do.** Through an integrated program of door to door canvassing, petitioning, letter writing, attendance at the licensing hearings, active news media coverage and a successful legal intervention, these plants will not be licensed.

For more information call the Coalition to Stop San Onofre (213) 738-1041 or (714) 236-1684.

—Jack Lazareck



Construction continues on San Onofre Units 2 and 3, near San Clemente. The reactors are scheduled for completion in the early 1980's.

TMI Panel Says Nukes Can't Be Safe

On October 30, the President's Commission on Three Mile Island turned in their report on the March 28 accident, and they recommended major changes in reactor construction, operation and regulation. However, the commission claimed that adopting these changes could not make nuclear power safe since a broad range of deficiencies in the nuclear program make reactor accidents inevitable. Most of the news media chose not to mention that part of the report, even though it was outlined in the original Associated Press wire story.

The panel also recommended abolishing the NRC, and advised that any future regulatory body insure all safety issues are resolved before plants are licensed. These issues might include the possibility of "class 9" accidents, the most serious, which were previously ignored because they were "impossible".

The NRC has quietly admitted that TMI was a class 9. Whether licensing procedures will reflect this change is questionable.

The Kemeny Report will directly affect Californians in two ways. First, the commission recommended that licenses for nuclear power plants should be contingent upon disaster response plans. If that advice is taken seriously, it will affect Diablo Canyon, which currently has no viable evacuation plan.

Also, Three Mile Island and Rancho Seco are basically twin reactors. The industry has always considered Three Mile Island's operators' training superior to Rancho Seco. The President's Commission stated that the Pennsylvania utility lacked the knowledge, expertise and personnel to operate their plant. That suggests fairly grim possibilities at Rancho Seco, even though the commission blamed poor instruments rather than operator error for the TMI accident.

The report wasn't a complete success for anti-nuclear forces. The panel made its recommendations to President Carter, who has agreed to uphold them only "if it seems practical". Actual changes in current nuclear administration, regulation, etc., would have to be effected by Congress.

The panel did not recommend a moratorium on nuclear licensing. This reflects the intense pressure the nuclear industry has put on the Kemeny Commission over the last 6 months, and especially recently, when national media was spreading news that the panel would make such a recommendation.

—Maureen Hogan
—Julia Randall

Clean-up and Cover-Up at TMI

As part of the proposed "clean-up" of the damaged Three Mile Island nuclear facility, two million cubic feet of krypton-85 will be released directly into the atmosphere. "Clean-up" will continue with the dumping of one million gallons of water from the reactor core, containing 6,000 curies of tritium, into the Susquehanna River. Met Edison officials, the owners of the facility, propose to put the water through a purification process. The demineralization process, called EPICOR II, will take most of the radioactive contaminants out of the water, but it won't remove the tritium. Still, one Met Edison official has offered to be the first to drink the "purified" water before it is dumped into the river.

Hot Milk?

Official NRC reports indicate that 10 million curies of radioactive material were released into the environment by the Three Mile Island reactor. A few days after the accident, the radioactivity in goat's milk measured 110 picocuries per liter, and 40 picocuries per liter in cows' milk. (A curie is a measure of radioactivity. A picocurie is one trillionth of a curie.) The federal government allows up to 300 picocuries per liter in milk. However, these standards apply to healthy men. During the first trimester of pregnancy, a fetus is 10 to 50 times more sensitive to radiation than an adult.

Stillbirth on the Rise

Doctors in Harrisburg are privately admitting that the county is experiencing a dramatic increase in stillbirths. City College of New York physics professor Michio Kaku told *It's About Times* in a telephone interview. While visiting the Harrisburg area, Kaku found that York Hospital is reluctant to release any firm statistics — perhaps, he surmises, because one of their directors is also on the board of General Public Utilities.

A two-year study of births has begun, but it will be some time before preliminary data is made public. Meanwhile, stillbirths are the number one topic of conversation at the doctors' cocktail parties.

Other Cover-ups

Though the reactor core at Three Mile Island came very close to melting down, Met Edison is still trying to convince the public that the accident wasn't serious. The only reason the core didn't melt, according to Kaku, was that it was cooled by steam. In normal operation, the core is covered by 15 feet of water. During the crisis, it was uncovered three times, leaving only steam to cool the fuel. Ninety percent of the core, including much of the zirconium cladding, was damaged. (For more on zirconium, see article in this issue by Dave Troup.)

— Mark Evanoff

500 Protest Trident

"The guards said, 'Halt! You can't go there!' But we continued to leaflet the workers and walk toward the administration building," recalled George Veasey, one of the 43 people arrested October 29 at the Lockheed weapons plant in Sunnyvale. Their acts of civil disobedience concluded four days of activities protesting the Trident missile system.

The protests began on October 26 with a vigil outside the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco calling for immediate nuclear disarmament. On Sunday, over 500 people gathered for a march through the industrial area of Sunnyvale. Silent vigils were held outside the Lockheed and Westinghouse facilities. The day ended with street theatre and singing in a nearby park.

The following day, 150 support people joined those risking arrest for leafletting the workers. Many of the employees were friendly towards the protesters and accepted the leaflets. Police conducting the arrests asked questions about the Trident system.

After arrest, the experiences of men and women were remarkably different. Women were strip-searched, handcuffed and given jail clothes. The men escaped both the jail clothes and the handcuffs.

During arraignment, men were allowed to lounge

and stand during breaks, but the women were not. Gayle Greely protested, demanding the same rights as the men. The situation was corrected by limiting the men's rights to those the women enjoyed.

The arraignment judge offered a \$70 fine to those who pled guilty, but no one accepted it. Alternative service was the next offer; some took that. Eleven men and seven women refused these options and were given three-day jail sentences, which they spent in a medium-security jail since the County Jail was full. Some people pled not guilty, and received a court date.

People for a Nuclear Free Future are now gearing up for an initiative drive that would prohibit the manufacture and testing of any part of a nuclear weapon in Santa Cruz County. This would affect the Trident missile and submarine and the MX missile, since parts for all of them are manufactured in the county.

A second part of the initiative establishes an Industrial Conversion Commission to research weapons system conversion and alternative energy, and to help find new jobs for workers affected by the changes. For more information, call PNFF at 408-425-1275.

— Mark Evanoff

PG & E Asks Huge Rate Hike

On October 31, PG&E requested a rate increase totalling nearly \$1 billion, believed to be the largest in the history of American utilities. If granted by the Public Utilities Commission, the hike in gas and electric rates would take effect January 1. It would add \$11 per month to the average residential customer's bill. Combined with a previous \$330 million request that is expected to be granted soon, the rate boost could double some customers' winter heating bills relative to last year.

PG&E spokesperson Leland Gardner called the increase "regrettable but unavoidable," and said the company had no choice but to pass on increased fuel costs to customers. But Sylvia Siegel of Toward Utility Rate Normalization (TURN) claimed that PG&E prefers to purchase high-priced Canadian gas instead of cheaper California gas because it owns two companies that transmit the gas from Canada. PG&E's Dennis Pooler confirmed that the company owns Alberta and Southern and has a 53% interest in Pacific Gas Transmission. But he denied that any conflict of interest was involved.



Public Not Told TMI Bad News

A task force of the Kemeny commission on the Three Mile Island accident charged that NRC and Metropolitan Edison officials covered up bad news as the accident progressed. In a report made public October 30, the commission's Task Force on the Public's Right to Information said company and NRC statements showed a "conscious decision to impart only available evidence and avoid discussing its implications."

The report noted that by Wednesday afternoon, 12 hours after the accident began, numerous experts in both Metropolitan Edison and the NRC knew the core had been uncovered and badly damaged. But at 10 p.m. that day, an NRC official stated, "At this point we have found no mechanical damage at all." In response to questions, he stated, "as I have just said, there appears to be no significant core damage." By using the word "significant," the official left the impression of no damage even though he had provided contrary information to Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton earlier in the day.

San Francisco Chronicle



Tom Price

Diablo Appeal Begins

The Diablo appeal will get underway in November with the filing of an initial brief in the San Luis Obispo Superior Court. The appeal challenges the conduct of the trial of the "Diablo 20" late last year.

The "20" were among 487 people arrested in a nonviolent action at the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant in August, 1978. About 200 of the original arrestees have chosen to join the appeal, and will get the same legal treatment as the "20."

The 60-page initial brief filed by attorneys Ephraim Margolin and Nicholas Arguimbau argues that the "20" trial was unfair on several grounds. These include the suppression of First Amendment rights and the judge's prohibition of a defense of necessity.

After the brief is filed, the state has 30 days to file their brief, and the appeal attorneys 30 more days to reply. Then oral arguments begin, probably in mid-January.

A few defendants still have not contributed to the appeal fund. If you are one, please do so. Send to: Diablo Appeal Fund, c/o Barbara Levy, 1824 Lake St., San Francisco, CA 94121, (415) 752-8433.

SHORT CIRCUITS

POOF! IT'S GONE, WITH NEW NRC

On November 1, the NRC summoned 52 nuclear industry "fuel experts" to Washington to begin emergency meetings on possible fuel rod swelling during nuclear accidents. The summons immediately followed the report of a two-year laboratory study by NRC staff, which suggested that the swelling could block the flow of cooling water and increase the severity of an accident and the chance of a meltdown.

But on November 2, the NRC said there was "no cause for concern," citing new information provided by fuel suppliers over the previous 24 hours. NRC chair Joseph Hendrie declared that the problem is "now something of a non-problem." Darrell G. Eisenhower, the NRC's deputy director of operating reactors, was quoted as saying, "The problem completely went away."

NEW ENERGY CZAR

Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Charles Duncan is new Czar at the DOE. He is Carter's wealthiest cabinet member, with extensive land holdings, energy and mineral investments worth \$10 million, and 170,000 shares of Coca-Cola stock. A few words of wisdom from him: "Free market forces can price and allocate energy efficiently," and "nuclear power will continue to play a substantial role" in the country's energy future.

—Groundswell

DOE TO "PAY OFF" STATES?

The DOE may pay off states to accept nuclear waste dumps and to provide an incentive to keep sites in operation. DOE acting deputy Under Secretary Worth Bateman recently told a congressional subcommittee that a continuing series of payments may be made by waste generators like utilities and the federal government to offset public opposition. High level DOE sources called the payments "like a rent or something". Also, Bateman said, the Dept. will have soon awarded grants "to smooth the way for repositories" by providing grants to states for their assessments of DOE repository plans. New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas will receive the first grants.

—Groundswell

IT MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE

Dozens of federal and company investigators are searching for 20 to 30 pounds of highly enriched uranium missing from a Nuclear Fuel Services plant in Erwin, Tennessee. The missing material would be sufficient to build an atomic bomb. "We haven't been able to uncover the reason, be it an equipment failure, diversion, or something else," said a government official. The shortage was discovered this summer.

-- San Francisco Chronicle

EQUAL TIME FOR PRO NUKE

Three anti-nuclear TV spots featuring prominent San Luis Obispo County physicians were recently dropped by KSBY-TV in SLO, pending review by the FCC to determine if the station will have to provide equal time to representatives of the other side.

—San Luis Obispo Telegraph Tribune

SAFE NUCLEAR POWER IN CALIFORNIA?

Three Senate bills were introduced in August to the California Senate designed to make nuke plants safer. SB 1183 requires that the county and state emergency plans be updated to deal with the most serious nuclear accidents. Current plans do not consider the possibility of these accidents because prior to TMI, these accidents were considered "impossible".

SB 1184 requires operators of nukes to install radiation monitoring systems which continuously transmit readings to the state and local agencies responsible for emergency activities. Currently, off-site monitoring is a process that may take 8 hours.

SB 1185 requires nukes to have an automatic alert system to notify state officials in the event of an accident.

—Amador Dispatch

UTILITIES WANT INSURANCE FOR ACCIDENT

Southern California Edison Co. Vice President Allen admits the nuclear power industry has made mistakes in the past, and Industry spokesmen launched a million dollar campaign to let people know the changes the utility companies in LA are making. In addition, they disclosed plans for an industry wide insurance pool to cover member utilities who are forced by a nuclear power accident to purchase energy from outside sources. As a result of the shutdown of TMI, in the first 2 years Metropolitan Edison will have to spend more than \$200 million for replacement electrical power, in addition to the estimated \$400 million price tag for decontamination.

—Van Nuys Valley News 10/7/79

REACTOR OPERATOR CALLED DUMB

The Virginia Electric and Power Company is taking steps to defend its title as the utility which has been fined the most times by the NRC for safety violations. VEPCO has just landed a \$15,000 penalty for an April incident in which a shift supervisor deliberately entered a high radiation area at Surrey 2, exposing himself to over 10 rems in 15 minutes. After hearing his explanation, his actions were described by an NRC spokesman as "dumb".

—Groundswell

What the Hell is Zirconium?



photo courtesy Pacific Gas and Electric Company

photo courtesy Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Uranium fuel is made in pellet form, sealed in long tubes. These tubes are made from zirconium.

Here's proposing that we start a new contest — a "Nuclear Weak Link Contest". Of course, choosing the weakest link among so many will not be an easy job, but then, there will be no winners in this pageant anyway.

To start things off I'd like to nominate my favorite weak link — Zirconium. "What the hell?", you ask. Remember — the weak link is sometimes the one not seen until too late. Zirconium is notable because it is absolutely essential to our nuclear technologies, because its supply is vulnerable, and because it's a very dangerous thing when put inside a reactor.

Zirconium (Zr: atomic number 40, atomic weight 91) is most commonly known for its use as cladding of the fuel rods in light water reactors (LWR's). Its mission is to contain the deadly fission products, uranium, plutonium, and that whole gang, while at the same time allowing the neutrons to pass easily through it to interact with other fuel rods. Free flowing neutrons are to a fission reaction what beer is to a good fraternity party. Ideally, the zirconium alloy (or ZIRCALOY) fuel cladding would contain all the fission products, and the reactor coolant water would be fit to drink. But the intense corrosion, temperatures, pressures, and blistering radiation is too much stress for the cladding, and it buckles, warps and leaks, resulting in the primary coolant water becoming highly radioactive even under normal conditions. There is no substitute for zirconium in a light water reactor.

Remember that of the U.S. power reactors, all but one is of light water design, and hence all but one use Zr. In fact, world-wide, 85% of all power reactors outside of Great Britain are light water. Great Britain has thus far resisted the worldwide marketing efforts of the U.S. nuclear industry (Westinghouse, GE, and the like).

Now, back to my nominee: Zirconium alloy has the very dangerous property of reacting violently with water under conditions very likely to occur in water-cooled reactors.

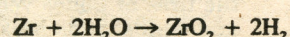
Zr And The Hydrogen Bubble

Remember the now-famous hydrogen bubble which was discovered to be inside the reactor vessel at Three Mile Island? The formation of this bubble aggravated the already serious problem and threatened to bring on a core meltdown. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and industry "experts" looked at each other with their hands in their pockets, and claimed that the occurrence of this hydrogen bubble was a new twist and a surprise. That something so potentially dangerous should be unforeseen scared all of us. But, actually, the truth is more frightening.

It is well known that the use of Zr in a reactor can easily result in the formation of hydrogen gas. This fact can be found in standard textbooks on basic nuclear engineering.

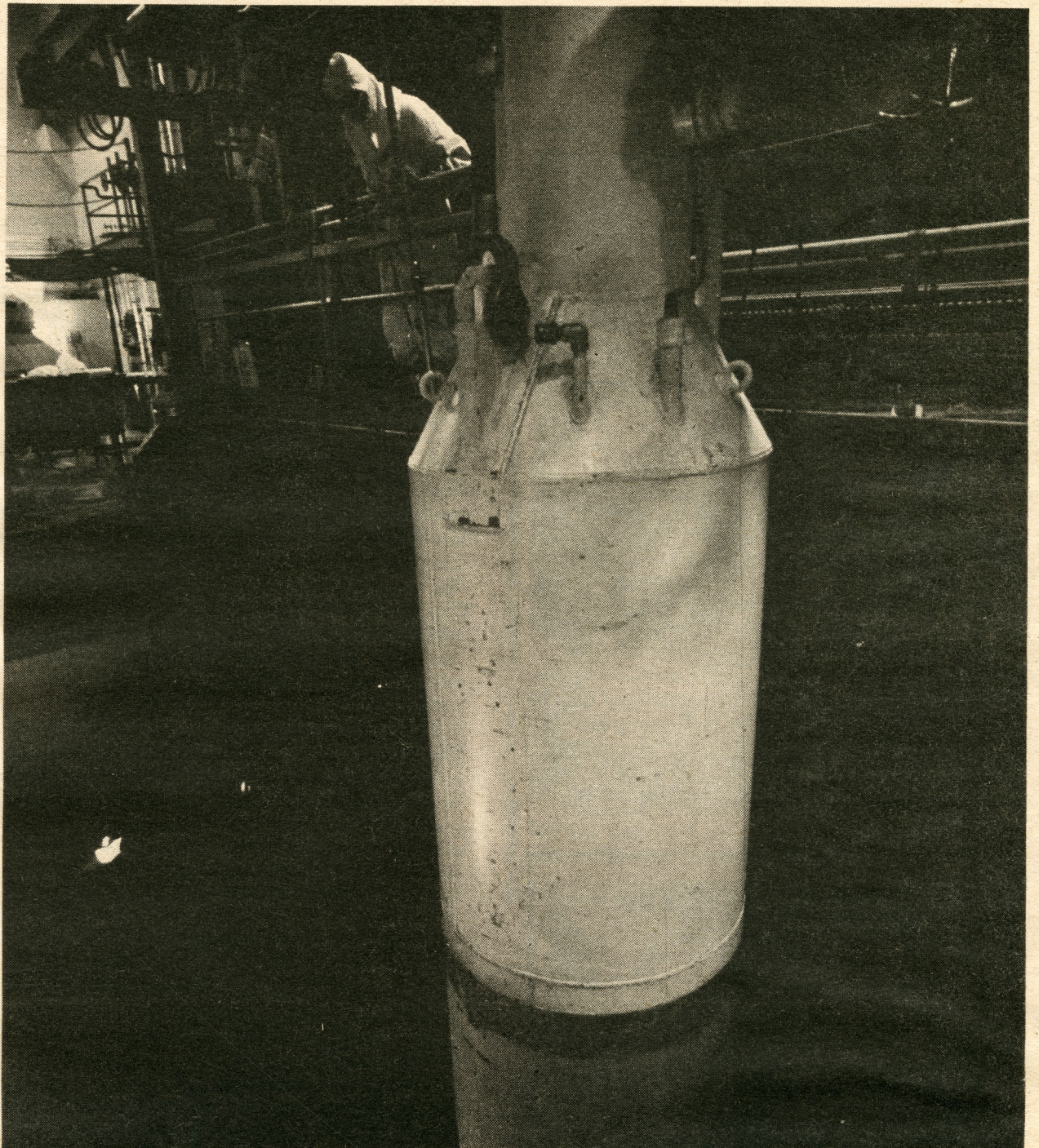
Daniel Pisello, a Fordham University high energy physicist, is convinced that the bubble at Three Mile Island resulted from a zirconium reaction. In fact, the hydrogen bubble should have been no surprise at all.

Here's how it works: Zirconium, and many other metals, will oxidize spontaneously with water or steam at high temperatures. Zirconium will actually catch on fire in steam at about 2000 degrees F, well above the normal "cruising" temperature in a light water reactor of about 500 degrees F, but also well below the 5000 degrees F melting point of the uranium fuel. "Hot spots" of 2000 degrees F can be expected to occur in any loss of coolant accident. The water-zirconium reaction:



has three effects; 1) free hydrogen gas is produced with its danger of explosion, 2) heat is released, adding to the problems in the reactor, and 3) the zirconium cladding itself is damaged and weakened.

A hydrogen explosion within a reactor happened as early as 1952, at the NRX reactor at Chalk River near Ottawa, Canada. In that accident, some of the melting uranium fuel stripped oxygen from the water molecules, leaving free hydrogen, which exploded and demolished the core.



When the fuel bundles are removed from the reactor, they must be surrounded by heavy shielding.

Cover-Ups Continue

In 1975, Earl Gulbrandsen, upon retirement from 35 years as research scientist for Westinghouse, wrote a very clear letter warning that the use of zirconium as fuel cladding is "very hazardous", although there is no alternative to its use, and that "the current design and materials cannot give us a safe and well-engineered nuclear power plant". (Where have we heard that before?) His warnings were not heeded by government and industry, and the controversy was kept out of the media.

The problem, of course, has two disturbing aspects. The first is the inescapable design flaw in all of our light water reactors. And, second, is the obvious cover-up by the NRC and the industry. The news media has been controlled.

In the weeks following the March 28th Three Mile Island accident, the only public exposure of the connection between zirconium and the hydrogen bubble was in the British press. (Remember that of all the large nuclear nations, only England has no light water reactors.) No doubt, the zirconium question is being kicked around in industry and scientific circles.

The stakes in the issue are high. At risk is the entire U.S. nuclear power industry. In efforts to protect this industry, the NRC has focused on the Babcock and Wilcox design. It would be far more acceptable to scapegoat B & W and their eight reactors, than to lose the whole industry.

The Weakest Link

There is yet a second reason why I nominate zirconium as the weakest link in the nuclear chain. Zirconium is essential to light water reactors, to the Navy's nuclear fleet, and to the nuclear weapons program. But, the production of the material is very limited.

One Source of Zirconium

Zirconium comes from Zircon ore. It is essential to separate zirconium from the rest of the ore in as pure a form as possible. This separation requires a very complex industrial process. It is so complex, in fact, that the "free world" has only one production plant, located in Albany, Oregon. (The Soviet Union also has a zirconium facility.) From this plant comes all of the zirconium for commercial reactors, the Navy's nuclear fleet, and the weapons program.

The Oregon plant's name is Teledyne Wah Chang Albany (TWCA). "Wah Chang" in Chinese means "great development", which suits the history and nature of the plant.

• TWCA's zirconium production has increased from two million pounds in 1976 to about ten million pounds in 1978, with about 75% presently going to commercial nuclear power plants.

• The TWCA factory has a long history of blatant air and water pollution and worker health and safety violations.

• In May, 1977 the State of Oregon discovered that radioactive residue covered (and still does cover) two and a half acres of sludge ponds near TWCA. The plant has been notorious in its gross failure to meet pollution guidelines for chlorine, ammonia, sulfates, fluorides, acids, carbon monoxide and other chemicals.

No Control Over Plants

Governmental agencies are not capable of controlling the TWCA facility. The federal government is reluctant because of the plant's key role in the weapons program. TWCA has great influence in Oregon state politics. The Albany area has two representatives to the state legislature. They are Bud Byers, an electrician at TWCA, and Mae Yih, spouse of former TWCA president Stephen Yih. TWCA donated nearly \$2500 to defeat Oregon's 1976 Nuclear Safeguards Initiative. TWCA and United Steelworkers (which represents labor at TWCA) donated heavily to successful 1976 and 1978 state election campaigns. Present Governor Atiyeh is very sympathetic to TWCA.

At the local level, both government and private citizens are intimidated from cracking down on the plant's worker safety and pollution problems by TWCA's threats to move. TWCA presently employs some 1500 people, a large chunk for the Albany area. Whether or not the threat is a bluff is debated. In 1977 TWCA announced plans for a new plant to be built elsewhere, to augment current production. The plans were soon abandoned, however, when the company realized the market was not expanding fast enough. Remember that 75% of production goes to commercial nuclear power, a stagnating industry at the present.

The United Steelworkers of America, local 6163, is caught in the dilemma. The union is well aware of the health and safety questions, but also aware that TWCA offers well-paying jobs in an area which has high unemployment.

It would appear that the TWCA facility and the Albany, Oregon area would be a good target for local organizing around the issue of nuclear hazards and worker health and safety. And since the plant is such a crucial link in the nuclear power industry, the nuclear weapons program and the Navy's nuclear fleet, TWCA is also the likely target of activity by a terrorist group (either domestic or foreign).

There you have my story on zirconium. Please write in to tell everyone about **your** favorite "weak link".

—Dave Troup

Seabrook in

The attempted Seabrook occupation on October 6 was controversial even from 3000 miles away. This month we are printing some impressions of the action and its implications for the anti-nuclear movement. We hope they will be the beginning of a productive discussion.

The attempted occupation of the Seabrook nuclear power plant last month poses some important and complex problems for the future of the anti-nuke movement. What is the relationship between direct action and civil disobedience? What targets should the anti-nuclear movement aim at? And -- perhaps the most controversial -- what criteria do we use to make these decisions?

The Coalition for Direct Action, sponsor of the Seabrook occupation, attempted to answer these questions in their own way. What they accomplished and where they fell short of the mark must now become an area of careful scrutiny for the rest of the movement.



1977 - arrested occupiers are put into National Guard bus following civil disobedience.
photo by Terry Baynourt

Direct Action and Civil Disobedience

The Boston-based Coalition for Direct Action created a politics and an organization around the distinctions they drew between direct action and civil disobedience. To understand this (and the split it ostensibly caused within the Clamshell Alliance) requires a certain knowledge of the history of the struggle against the Seabrook nuke.

The residents of Seabrook have twice voted against the plant being built in their town. Years of painstaking leafletting, organizing and education work have been conducted across New England. In May 1977, the Clamshell Alliance moved onto the plant site to occupy it in an attempt to stop construction in a non-violent civil disobedience action. Over 1400 were arrested and carted off to jail. By their sheer numbers they jammed New Hampshire's prisons and courts. The cost of legally processing all these people, weighed against the seriousness of their "crime" forced the state to make the political decision to let them all go free. The Clams had made their point and scored a moral victory. But still construction of the plant continued.

In this context, another occupation was proposed. This time, things were to be done differently. In the 1977 occupation, the Clamshell Alliance had told the authorities when and where they would move on to the site and even went out of their way to give the state an accurate estimate of how many occupiers to expect. And the authorities opened the gates of the plant for them before making the arrests for trespassing.

"At this point, civil disobedience has become so contrived that it doesn't mean what it used to," one Coalition organizer told us in Boston three days before this year's action. This time, the Coalition refused to talk to the police about the occupation. New Hampshire Attorney General Rath whined for weeks about how he wished the Coalition would cooperate with him and state law enforcement agencies so that the event would not "get out of hand."

The occupiers planned to nonviolently resist arrest and dispersal. A whole section of the Handbook for the action explained non-violent self-defense against mace, tear gas, high pressure water and dogs. If arrested, Coalition members planned to refuse cooperation, giving their names as John and Jane Doe, and demanding unconditional release.

Their rejection of state authority was coupled with a rejection of corporate authority: the plan also called for tearing down the fence that surrounds the Seabrook site. The occupiers were willing to violate a corporation's private property when it violated the health and safety of society.

These attitudes are a departure from those expressed in past actions of the Clamshell Alliance. But it is not clear whether they were the result of the need to escalate or were prompted by an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist analysis. It would be unfair to second-guess the motivations of the people involved, especially since they were so many and so diverse. At any rate, the question of whether the attempted occupation was guided by "tactical pragmatism" or "principled politics" is in a sense secondary, since most participants saw the Seabrook action as a fusion of the two.

Direct Action and Symbolic Action

For the Coalition, the other departure from civil disobedience was on the question of the symbolic value of the action.

"Prior civil disobedience demonstrations at Seabrook... had as their purpose to raise the nuclear issue in the minds of the public. The arrest of hundreds of persons was the central element of these demonstrations, with high media impact and symbolic value. October 6 will be a departure from civil disobedience. Our success will not be measured in terms of symbolic value, nor media impact, nor numbers arrested. Our success depends on our effectiveness in directly blocking further construction, and our ability to do so in a collective and non-violent way."

(Quoted from the Handbook for the October 6, 1979 action, page 9.)

There is a problem with denying the symbolism of direct action: ignoring it does not make it go away. In the material world we live in things have "appearances," groups have "images" and actions have "symbolism." If we judge the attempted occupation solely on its "effectiveness in directly blocking further construction" then it was a complete failure.

Many of the participants felt that there was a real chance "to gain access to the construction site" and there to "collectively create an anti-nuclear community of people living, gardening and living." But others, including those who sympathized with the impulse and intent of the action, assessed the likely reaction of the state and the means at their disposal, and felt that the plan was doomed to failure. From this perspective, all the talk about planting vegetable gardens on the site was just plain silly.

Even if the Coalition had recognized how small their chance of success was, they might have decided to try anyway. The joy and sense of possibility felt by many people working collectively and creatively for a better life is a powerful force that we shouldn't ignore. In addition, the symbolic effect of an attempt like the Seabrook action is very important.

"We're not going to arrest you..."

These people didn't really think they'd be able to take over the site," an apprentice iron-worker at the Seabrook nuclear power plant told me as the anti-nuclear forces disbanded. "But they've managed to throw a few good punches, and that counts for something."

The Coalition for Direct Action at Seabrook planned the October 6 occupation as an escalation of the civil disobedience tactics of the past. The commitment to non-violence that has marked the anti-nuclear movement was maintained, but violence against property was excluded. The occupation was to be a direct rather than symbolic action. "At this point civil disobedience has become so contrived that it doesn't mean what it used to," explained Maureen Blasco of the Coalition.

And of course, it brought the opposition.

of the state, the utility, and their police forces.

The police violence at Seabrook was unrestrained but selective. New Hampshire Governor Hugh Gallen (who was elected in part because voters were unwilling to pay for the \$2.6 billion twin-reactor plant before it produced a single watt of electricity) took a publically tolerant stand.

"We want to encourage the broadest spectrum of dissent," his press secretary Dayton Duncan told me, "while protecting private property."

One state trooper revealed the policy to a would-be occupier as they faced off through the ten-foot high fence: "We're not going to arrest you. We're going to beat the shit out of you."

Thus the 250 state police, backed by 200 national guardsmen, took off their identifying badges when they maced directly in people's eyes, delivered concussions and broken bones with their billy clubs, tore off one woman's blouse to spray her front and back with mace, and

went after medics clearly marked by big red crosses on their backs. Newsmen and photographers, including an ABC cameraman, were also singled out for attack, presumably so the police could do their work in private.

The 3000 occupiers stuck it out for three days, tromping through marshes and sleeping in the rain. The logistics of the action were impressive. Seabrook residents had volunteered their land for camping and the Coalition had organized food, medical, transportation shuttles, and communications.

The only problem that hadn't been solved ahead of time was the critical one: exactly how the New Age army was going to get through the fence and exactly how they were going to block construction if they got on site.

The affinity group structure did evolve a series of creative tactics during the three days of confrontation. When bolt cutters proved ineffective in getting the fence down, ropes were used to pull at them from a distance. The police began

slashing through the ropes from inside the fence, so chains were substituted. The frontal assault of Saturday was jettisoned for diversionary thrusts on Sunday.

By Monday, it was clear that no one was going to plant victory gardens on the Seabrook site, and people began returning to jobs and other commitments.

The last skirmish came on Tuesday, when several hundred anti-nukers gathered at a courthouse to surround police vans taking 12 people to jail on trespassing charges. When police moved in with their mace and clubs, they were met with a different kind of direct action: the tires of police vehicles were slashed, and windshields broken.

Reactions to the Seabrook action were mixed, and the evaluation of its impact is just beginning. On the West Coast, it would be a gross exaggeration to speak of "splits" in the anti-nuclear alliances, but the situation in the East is polarized. Some members of the Clamshell Alliance, including its media stars Harvey

Perspective

But because of its rejection of the symbolic terrain, the Coalition did not get the word out as effectively as they could have. Although all the other logistics were extremely well-organized, the media relations were not. Press releases came out infrequently and late, forcing reporters to rely on information supplied promptly but misleadingly by the state. Because they believed the media would inevitably misrepresent them, the Coalition failed to exercise what influence they could over their "image." They didn't take full advantage of an opportunity to communicate with many more people than the 3000 or so who took part in the attempted occupation.

More importantly, the dichotomy between direct action and symbolic importance led to an inability to evaluate the results of the event. The Coalition was unwilling to admit failure, so in their press releases, they claimed victories like "all construction on the site was stopped for the three-day weekend" (but no construction was planned because of a state holiday) and "Route 1 outside the plant was closed" (but this had no effect on plant construction).

Other comments took the symbolic value into account: "They got in a few good punches" was the metaphor of an iron worker at the Seabrook plant. "When your back is against the wall, you have to fight back somehow," said Tony Santasucci, who gave his land to the occupiers for use as a camping area. "They showed that it takes 500 armed guards to protect the production of electricity," another observer commented. "And that shows that something is wrong with nuclear power."

When the symbolic element of direct action is taken into account, the distinction between direct action and civil disobedience becomes blurry. The Coalition tried to heighten this distinction, and wound up in the dilemma described here.

When viewed closely, the direct action tactic of the Coalition was really only civil disobedience with a more radical rejection of state and capitalist authority. But this was its importance: the Coalition's politics and outreach made it clearer who the real enemy is -- capital and its state.

Targets and Criteria

How can the anti-nuclear movement get beyond the limitations of its traditional tactics? At this point, the social roles of the people who make up the bulk of the U.S. anti-nuke movement -- marginal, clerical and service workers, students, salaried intellectuals, artisans, small farmers -- severely limit the range of tactics available to them. Without the large scale participation of workers in basic industry, all the actions taken by the movement will have to re-

main "symbolic" on one level or another. Up to now there has been no question of transportation workers blocking the delivery of fuel and components, as in Spain, or of technicians refusing to activate a plant, as in France a few months ago.

The anti-nuke movement needs to find tactics and targets that we can use to win the fight against nukes and the fight for control over our lives and our world. And we are at a point where we must re-evaluate not just our tactics, but our strategy as well. That is, we must choose our targets and tactics according to consciously designed criteria. Our choices should be immediately as well as "symbolically" effective. They should also delegitimize state and corporate authority and expose the difference between our needs and theirs. They should increase our collective power and point to the possibility of a better and radically different world.

Despite the problems with the recent action at Seabrook some members of the Coalition are planning another occupation next spring, hoping for larger numbers. The situation at Wyl, West Germany in 1975 is used as an example of the direct action tactic. At Wyl, 28,000 people occupied the plant site and set up a community. The plant was never built. But the advocates of this view don't talk about the fact that at Wyl only about 1% of the construction had been done -- a big hole had been dug. Seabrook is 25% completed and hundreds of millions of dollars have already been poured into its construction. The state is unlikely to let an investment that large be thrown away. If more people come to Seabrook, so will more police. When many thousands of demonstrators in West Germany tried to block construction of the largely-completed KALKAR plant, they found themselves facing not just police with clubs and gas, but fortifications, barbed wire, water cannons and machine guns.

There is no reason to get stuck on a single tactic, especially if it doesn't work. The occupation of the Stock Exchange and actions at corporate headquarters of companies involved in nuclear business would be symbolically effective, even if nothing else.

One idea that is being discussed in many circles is a rate strike or a holding back on paying rate increases. (In Europe, this tactic has been used not just for energy, but for other necessities of life, and is called self-reduction.) This tactic has several advantages. First, it links the nuclear issue to the energy crisis in general. Since we are being told to accept either nuclear power or austerity, a rate strike would show our refusal to pay for the energy "crisis."

This is a tactic working class and minority people could get involved in and expresses the community



Tuesday, October 9 - an attempt to prevent police from taking away those arrested over the weekend.

photo by Steve Stallone

of our needs against those of the corporate state. Such actions could be organized locally as well as regionally. Neighborhood groups would be able to do sustained networking and face-to-face organizing. They could devise many ways to refuse to pay -- from talking to workers sent out to disconnect power to dealing directly with power meters.

This kind of action emphasizes the rejection of authority, on a new level. It foreshadows a world where production is organized directly for peoples' needs rather than for exchange and profit.

When thousands loudly and simultaneously reject state and corporate authority as well as nukes, the issue will be broadcast across the land. For more and more people the questions are posed of what is produced, by whom, for whom, and to what end -- and posed as questions which can only be decided socially. Unless these questions are resolved in practice, we will continue to face threats to our existence at least as deadly as nuclear power.

by Steve Stallone

Wasserman and Sam Lovejoy, have been quite vocal in their opposition to the Direct Action Coalition all along.

At the MUSE (Musicians United for Safe Energy) concerts and rally in New York City last month which Lovejoy helped organize, grassroots groups were prohibited from selling their buttons and bumper stickers and from passing out leaflets. After the Seabrook occupation Lovejoy commented, "If only the kids had kept their cool."

And Tom Hayden, whose requests to speak at major Abalone Alliance rallies have twice been denied, breezed into Boston the week before the Seabrook occupation to badmouth it to the press.

The negative publicity and especially the infighting hurt badly, according to Maureen Blasco. "During the months of planning, we were forced to spend more time responding to other people's interpretations of our action than working to make it a success."

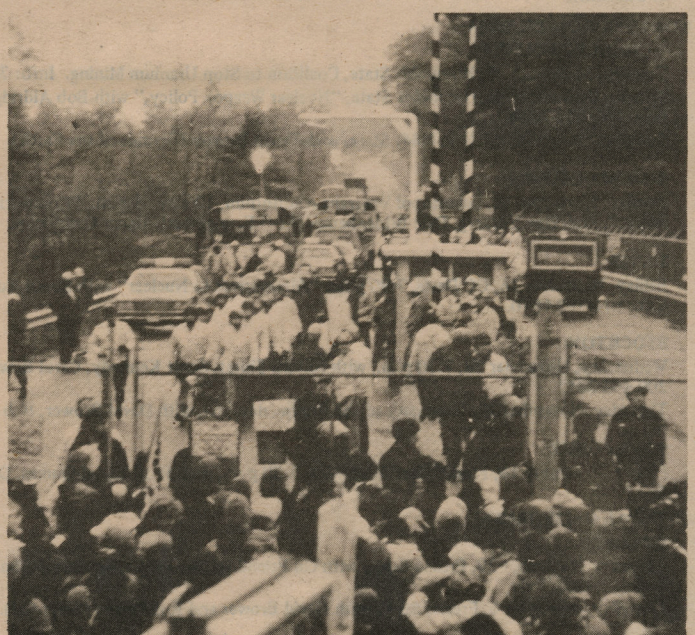
Many participants blamed the relatively low turnout on the detractors and felt that larger numbers would have made the confrontation tactics viable.

Others wanted to ask harder questions about the small numbers, and wondered if blocking construction was ever going to be possible in the face of police violence, no matter how many occupiers showed up.

The occupiers received warm local support (many of the towns in the vicinity of Seabrook have voted against the plant). And despite some protestations of indifference, they generated considerable media attention, including national coverage and live broadcasts from the marshes by Boston radio station WBCN until the police confiscated their transmitter.

Tony Santasucci, the 57 year old ex-mechanic who gave his land to the occupiers for use as a "primary staging area" was worried about the fence take-downs, afraid that someone would get hurt. But he gave the Coalition his support. "This country's a mess now," he told me. "Everyone gets pushed around. And when your back's against the wall, you have to fight."

--by Marcy Darnovsky



Police line up at main gate of Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant on Sunday, October 7.

photo by Steve Stallone

ABALONE

Non Violent Trainers Meet

About twenty anti-nuke organizers and trainers from Northern and Central California gathered on November 3rd in San Francisco. Meeting sessions discussed our problems as trainers and ideas for solving them.

Many trainers expressed frustration because so few of the people they trained were winding up as active members of local anti-nuke groups. We discussed ways to keep in touch with folks who didn't want to be doing day-to-day organizing. Potlucks and newsletters were suggested. We could make it easier for new people to plug in by handing out an orientation and contact sheet.

We have more to convey to new people than will fit into one workshop. So we're distinguishing two or more different types of workshops: a basic introduction to the anti-nuke movement and a preparation for actions. The basic workshop(s) should introduce the basic skills, knowledge and attitudes we want people to have to be active and effective in our groups. It should include the goals and methods of the movement, consensus-decision-making (with a practice session) history and philosophy of nonviolence, listening and conflict resolution, and roleplaying of ways to practice non-violence in our everyday lives. There should be a strong emphasis on building community, helping people form affinity groups, and beginning self-initiated actions within a few weeks.

Liz Walker and Erica Romaine have written a "sample" preparation for action workshop. Copies are available from Liz at AFSC San Francisco. It is

urged that as much information as possible be conveyed in written handouts which people can read before the workshop in order to leave most of the time for participation and communication. All workshop participants should be strongly encouraged to subscribe to *It's About Times* so they can keep up to date.

We agreed we needed more "support" among folks in the Abalone. By support we mean encouragement and constructive criticism, appreciating each other and what we're accomplishing.

Strong support was expressed for inviting Bill Moyer of Movement for a New Society to do weekend workshops around the end of February. Bill has over 20 years experience with nonviolent direct action campaigns and helping grass roots organizations work better. Several trainers said they were having a hard time getting excited themselves, much less inspiring others because of the troubles we're having with "strategy" and "decision-making." These workshops should help us to gear up for spring.

The next workshop for organizers/trainers on January 26-27 at AFSC-SF, will be focused on group facilitation and campaign building. The workshop will emphasize bringing these skills back to local groups.

Further information about the workshops with Bill Moyer as well as suggestions for the workshops should go to Tony Mitchell, PANP-Santa Barbara, 312-1 E. Sola St., Santa Barbara, CA 93010 (805) 966-4565 or Dave Hartsough, AFSC, 2160 Lake St., Francisco, CA 94121 (415) 752-7766.

Office Staff Reflections

It has taken a long time to write this article. Writing about the present health of the Abalone Alliance seems too overwhelming, too complex, and in some instances, too painful. The issues I will focus on have been discussed by many of us numerous times. I still believe that the Alliance will continue to exist as a decentralized, statewide entity.

Since the accident at Three Mile Island, much has happened within the Abalone Alliance. At times, events have moved so fast that everything seems out of control. We have seen the mass "popularization" of the nuclear power issue, two large rallies in San Francisco and San Luis Obispo, and the tremendous growth of the Alliance. And during this time, the Alliance has ceased being a cohesive statewide entity.

And why is the Abalone Alliance in such a state of aimless drifting? Ask any five people and you will get ten answers. I believe we are in the current dilemma because we refuse to make some hard political and strategy decisions.

From all recent indications, such as the Santa Barbara conference and the last two statewide spokes meetings, we seem to be moving away from making any decisions at all.

It is apparent that we mask our political differences under the guise of "restructuring". We avoid discussing our differences at every opportunity. We do not even discuss our points of agreement. Important issues, such as single issue vs. broader issue and concrete ways we can build a broader base movement get lip service. Consequently, two things seem to have resulted. The Alliance is not dealing with larger political questions and we are not looking at how we could seriously start to bring those into the movement who have historically shied away from us (working people, third-world people, etc). Secondly, paranoia and distrust of each other's motives abound. We are immobilized and important strategy discussions are not broached.

Decision Making

People have said that they get frustrated because the Alliance can not reach a consensus decision anymore. Here again, until we have some comprehensive political and strategy discussions, we will not be able to make any decisions.

Furthermore, consensus does not work because of the above and our failure to have a common understanding of it. We are paralyzed in large groups and at times find a few people blocking consensus. People then grow wary of consensus and want to have little or nothing to do with the Alliance.

In recent months, there has been a lot of discussion about "hierarchy" in the alliance. The truth is until we have a representative and accountable body making decisions, we are, in effect, perpetuating an "informal hierarchy". My experience in working with the Alliance, both as a volunteer and a staff person, is that there are usually small (and sometimes large) decisions that need to be made periodically. For example, we as an Alliance should define some definite parameters for staff and statewide bodies to work within concerning endorsements, coalition work, fundraising, etc. This would help to dispel mistrust and the notion that the Abalone is too bureaucratic and cumbersome to make a decision in a reasonable amount of time.

Fundraising is another issue that is avoided and has caused us a lot of problems. Whether we want to admit it or not, fundraising should be an integral part of our overall strategy. It is imperative for two reasons. First, most people at the Santa Barbara conference agreed that we should continue to have two offices and a blockade at Diablo, which is a substantial financial commitment. Secondly, if we do not have a concrete way to raise the funds we need, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the necessity of accepting money from centralized funding sources that are at best politically dubious. Our dealings with Tom Campbell/Pacific Alliance have proven that. The real challenge is to deal with our fears about money and develop a sound fundraising strategy that simultaneously encompasses our political vision and meets our financial needs.

Perhaps the need for an Abalone Alliance is a passing notion. I do not believe it is. We need a strong and decentralized alliance. What lies ahead for us is the necessity to define our politics and develop short and longer term strategies that will help stop nuclear power and weapons and build a new and just society. Until we deal with those harder questions facing us, we will continue to beat our heads against the wall and our political ineffectiveness will continue to grow. The time has come to keep an eye on the past but look ahead to the difficult work that needs to be done.

—Steve Leeds

Forums for a Nuclear Free Future

Listed below are the remaining of 57 "Forums for a Nuclear-Free Future" in 35 cities, co-sponsored by the Abalone Alliance and the UC Weapons Labs Conversion Project. We regret that our late publication this month has prevented announcement of events before the 16th.

BAY AREA:

SAN FRANCISCO:

Wednesday, Nov. 28, Bethany Church, 7:30 p.m., "Nuclear Power: How It Really Affects You." Info: 982-5578.

Saturday, December 1, University of San Francisco, 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., with Daniel Ellsberg, Martha Henderson (AFSC), Dr. Susan Lambert (Physicians for Social Responsibility), David Brower, others. Info: 982-5578.

EAST BAY:

Saturday, November 17, Diablo Valley College, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., with Sidney Lens, Diane Thomas-Glass, Peter Faulkner. Info: 933-7850.

Sunday, November 18, UC Berkeley, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., with Marv Broude (United Auto Worker), Sidney Lens, Sue Mesner (Abalone Alliance). Info: 642-7783 or 626-6976.

Thursday, November 29, Merritt College, noon: "Connecting Nuclear Weapons and Power." Info: 849-2360.

PENINSULA:

Friday, November 16, San Jose State, 11:00 a.m., "Connecting Nuclear Weapons and Power" with Prof. Lloyd Dumas, Dr. Carol Wolman, Dave McFadden. Info: 408-297-2299.

Wednesday, November 28, Palo Alto Cultural Center, 7:30 p.m., "Transition from Nuclear Energy" with Andrew Baldwin (Friends of the Earth), Marilyn Michile (Mid Peninsula Conversion Project). Info: 325-6049 or 328-2387.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:

HUMBOLDT COUNTY:

Tuesday, November 26, Humboldt State, Coalition to Stop Uranium Mining. Info: 707-822-7884.

Monday, November 26, Humboldt State, "Nuclear Weapon Policy," with Bob Aldridge Pacific Life Community). Info: 707-822-7884.

Tuesday, November 27, Humboldt State, with David Brower (Friends of the Earth). Info: 707-822-7884.

SONOMA COUNTY:

Sunday, November 18, Sebastopol Veterans Auditorium, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., "Connecting Nuclear Weapons and Power", with Dan Ellsberg, Dale Bridenbaugh (ex-G.E. engineer), Marcy Darnovsky. Info: 707-526-7220.

DAVIS:

Friday, November 16, UC Davis, 7:30 p.m., "Alternatives to Nuclear" with Stuart Burns, Diane Thomas-Glass. Info: 916-758-6810.

STOCKTON:

Wednesday, November 28, 7:30 p.m., with Natalie Shiras, Scott Kennedy, Carol Bowen, Sam Tyson. Info: 209-464-2213.

Thursday, November 29, University of the Pacific, daytime, with David Brower, Bob Aldridge. Info: 209-464-2213

SANTA CRUZ:

Friday, November 16, First United Methodist, 7:30 p.m., with Prof. Llyod Dumas, Dave McFadden. Info: 408-425-1275.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA:

FRESNO:

Thursday, November 29, Fresno State, with Gil Friend (Office of Appropriate Technology) and David Wald. Info: 209-268-3109.

Thursday, December 6, Fresno State, with David Brower and Ron Lifton (Solar-Cal). Info: 209-268-3109.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

SANTA BARBARA:

Monday, November 19, UC Santa Barbara, with Sidney Lens. Info: 805-968-2886.

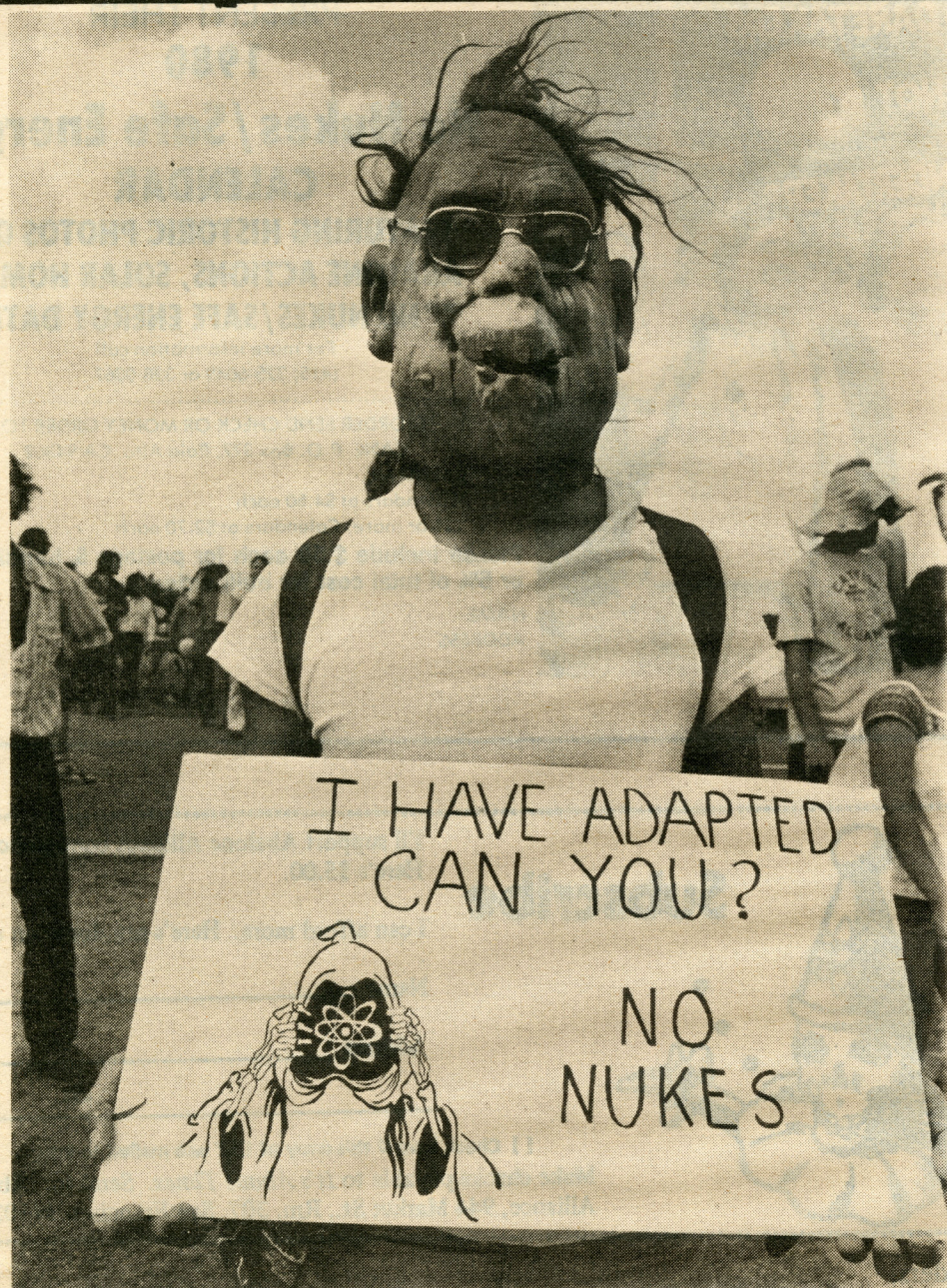


photo by Lionel Delevinge / Friends of the Earth

ABALONE CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

A two-day Abalone conference is set for December 15-16 at Rancho El Chorro in San Luis Obispo. The conference will discuss restructuring and attempt to adopt a final restructuring proposal. Cost is \$15 including food, lodging and refreshments. Contact People Generating Energy, (805) 543-8402.

Sonoma Vigil

SO NO More Atomics recently ended a 22-day around-the-clock vigil in front of PG&E's District Headquarters outside of Santa Rosa. The vigil, originally planned for just one week, was met with such enthusiasm from the community and members of SONOMA that it was extended twice for an extra week each time before the energy finally ran down.

On September 15, after an all-day rock concert in Cotati sponsored by SONOMA, the vigil began. Fifteen people put down their sleeping bags on the five-foot divider strip that separates Highway 12 from the access road in front of PG&E. Sleeping right next to a freeway took a little getting used to, but a core group of about ten people managed to alternate the nights (and days), and they were supplemented by many others who dropped by on a continuous basis. Days were spent in talking to the many people who stopped by to get literature and find out what was going on. Nights were more relaxed, with about 10-15 people dropping by to play quiet music and visit. We received donations of food and money from the Sonoma County community. Two restaurants, The Blue Heron and A Safe Place, contributed dinners. We received over 600 signatures on a petition aimed at the PUC regarding the rate hike for Diablo. We focused our efforts on the impending licensing of Diablo and printed up a leaflet to distribute to the public about the blockade.

After a few days, our little encampment grew from a few pieces of plywood leaning on the barbed-wire fence (which we were told repeatedly not to touch) to an actual free-standing "structure" (after an early morning rain, we needed a plastic roof). This "structure" became a point of controversy between us and the Santa Rosa Police Department. They insisted that we needed an encroachment permit, and we insisted that our "structure" was simply a community bulletin board. This controversy was finally resolved when we gave them an actual "ending" date and suggested to them that we intended to send out a press release notifying the media of this "pressure from public officials." They were satisfied that we were leaving by a certain date, and they agreed to let up on the "pressure."

No officials from PG&E spoke directly to us, but some workers did, telling us their dissatisfaction with certain safety measures of the utility. The first morning of the vigil the workers were quite unfriendly, refusing literature and telling us that they had been instructed not to talk with us. We painted up signs that said "Question Authority" and "We Support Workers." By the last week of the vigil, they were honking and waving to us, and most had accepted our literature. Some made direct contact with us.

We also received incredible response from the Sonoma County community. We became a "curiosity" after awhile, and people would drive by at all hours to get a look at us. Many stopped and talked and came back later with food. Some came and sat with us. From this outreach came a speaking engagement at the Kiwanis Club, a Jr. H.S. anti-nuke bowling team, a coalition with the Grey Panthers, and many, many new friends and supporters. At night we illuminated a large sign facing the freeway by placing Coleman lanterns in large wooden boxes covered with aluminum foil. We received constant honks from the public as they drove by.

But outreach was not the only benefit from this action. The "inreach" within our group was an unexpected bonus. SO NO More Atomics is composed of six affinity groups, and many people in the larger organization don't know each other. The vigil provided us an excellent place to meet in an unstructured way, and we were able to talk out feelings generated by our growing pains. Many of us felt much closer to each other at the end of this action. Financially the vigil was quite profitable. Aside from paying for itself (leaflets, sign materials, Coleman fuel, etc.), we made over \$200 in donations to SONOMA and sold many T-shirts, buttons and bumper stickers.

We ended the vigil on October 6, the first day of the Seabrook encampment. We called attention to this fact with a specially printed leaflet, which we began passing out during the week. On the last day, about 50 or 60 people showed up, along with our one supportive Board of Supervisors member, Eric Koenigshofer, to make a human signboard along the side of the freeway. By 3:00 the last orange peel had been cleaned up, and our three-week "home by the freeway" was no more. Yes, folks, I guess it's possible to get attached to anything. If any groups would like more information about this kind of an action, call the SONOMA office at 707-526-7220, or 7221.

—Mary Moore
SO NO More Atomics

Restructuring Proposal Summary

In a series of meetings following the August Abalone Alliance conference, representatives of diverse member groups have struggled toward consensus on a proposal for a new AA structure. On November 4, they reached agreement. The proposal must now be approved by an Abalone conference set for December 15.

The proposed structure is generally similar to the pre-August one. The idea of dividing the Abalone into "regions" has been rejected, and a state office was retained.

There are significant changes, however, in decision-making process. A "mail process" is described where a proposal supported by at least five member groups is mailed to all other groups. In the absence of group objections within a time limit, the proposal is adopted.

Spokes councils do not meet regularly, in contrast to the monthly meetings of the old coordinating committee. Councils are convened only upon agreement of at least five groups, or when called by the office or finance collective. The spokes councils can be either "empowered" or "unempowered." If a group objects to holding an "empowered" council, the council still meets but loses decision-making powers.

Two strategy conferences and one skills-sharing conference per year are proposed. Decisions may be made at conferences through a process similar to that used in August. Conference agenda procedures are also proposed.

The financial process would be little changed. Budgets would be drawn up twice a year by a financial spokes council, an entity separate from the finance collective. The finance collective would meet monthly to administer the budget and to initiate and promote fundraising efforts.

A process for conflict resolution and procedures to insure accountability complete the proposal.

Important: this is a "once over lightly" of a detailed 10-page proposal, and therefore leaves out much important information. Local groups have the actual proposal, and comments should be based on it rather than on this summary.

-- Bob Van Scoy

Comment

I was surprised to see that this proposal retained a statewide financial structure. As one of the people involved in forming the statewide finance collective last February, I would like to share my views on what we have learned in the past nine months.

The last finance collective formed because we had just received money from the large benefit concerts in January. Some process was clearly needed to distribute the money fairly. The collective agreed on ground rules and a budget, and began distributing money to AA projects.

The approved budget was very large, which created the impression that the AA was rich. Groups began relying on the AA for funding rather than raising the funds themselves. Within a few months, the concert money was gone -- and from then on, the collective just rationed available money among the most immediate needs.

Several activities ran over their original budgets, creating conflicts between organizers and the finance collective. Often financial decisions had to be made quickly, or without proper representation of all those affected. These problems came to a head around the June 30 rally, and had devastating effects on trust within the Abalone. I think these problems were a direct result of a centralized finance structure distant and isolated from the other rally decisions.

I think the only workable solution is to make fundraising an integral part of organizing every Abalone event, and to let those who raise the funds control them. Then the decisions on how much to raise and how much to spend are made by the same people, and few conflicts arise.

In the past, a lot of people have wasted a lot of time travelling to financial meetings and dealing with an unwieldy and bureaucratic financial structure. This time could be spent far more productively raising funds in our own communities, instead of talking about raising funds at a statewide meeting.

I would like to see no statewide financial structure at all. The Abalone Alliance is not, and can never be, a source of money. It can only distribute money from other sources, an unnecessary function if groups fundraise directly. Proposals to fundraise in the AA name could be approved through the "mail process."

-- Bob Van Scoy

According to the California Department of Health, an accident during refueling, triggered by an earthquake or plain old clumsiness, would release massive amounts of radiation into the atmosphere. The Navy responds that all such accident analysis is "classified". Although submarine reactors are subject to "NRC safety reviews," their extent and results are also classified.

Massive amounts of nuclear wastes are generated and transported from Mare Island. The Navy won't say how much high-level waste is in question, but they do give some figures on other kinds of radioactive garbage:

-- Low-level liquid wastes were routinely dumped into the Bay during the 1960's. Since 1972, the Navy has adopted a policy of disposing most liquid wastes at least twelve miles off shore. But 25,000 gallons of liquid wastes per year are still dumped into U.S. harbors from nuclear-powered submarines and ships. The Navy proudly recounts that "it has achieved its policy of reducing releases...to the minimum practicable amounts."

-- The Navy's program of monitoring radioactive releases into the Bay consists of taking five water samples and 20 to 120 sediment samples per quarter-year.

-- 1500 shipments of radioactive materials a year are made under the Navy's nuclear propulsion program, many of them from Mare Island.

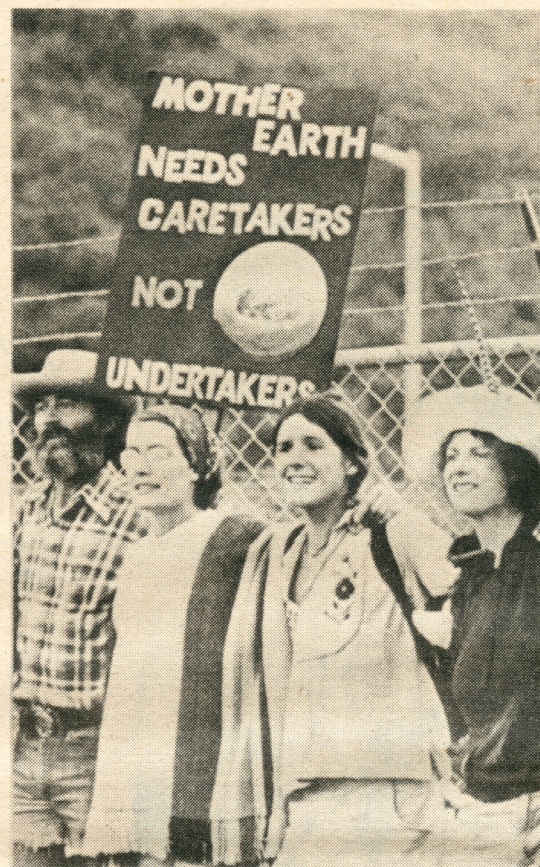
-- Asked how long spent fuel is stored on site, the Navy responded, "Nuclear fuel is not stored at the shipyard. It is retained...only temporarily in conjunction with refueling work." The fuel is eventually shipped to a Department of Energy waste disposal site, where a "return receipt" is required to insure that the material hasn't been stolen or lost en route.

Gerry Bull assured me that emergency plans for evacuation in case of an accident had been coordinated with "appropriate state and local officials." But state officials at the Department of Health admit that they don't know what to do -- or even what to expect -- in case of a nuclear emergency.

Fortunately, Rusk Rigor, Deputy Director of Emergency Services for Contra Costa County, where Mare Island is located, was completely confident about his understanding of the situation. He informed me that there will never be a nuclear accident. Only a "nuclear incident" can occur. Officials at the naval yard would notify his office of any such incident, he assured me. Monitoring devices outside the facility would help locate the direction of the released radiation and its concentration.

Rigor said that he cannot conceive of an incident that will create problems other than "scene control." When pressed, he admitted that gaseous releases could cause something more of a problem, but "gaseous clouds are short-lived and have limitations on how far they can go." After analyzing the specific material released, Rigor went on, "we will decide if it is necessary to inform the public. If it has a short half-life, we sit and wait."

-- Mark Evanoff



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Dear Readers,

The next *It's About Times* will be the mid-December to January issue and should be in your mailbox by December 15. It will feature articles on the new Energy Mobilization Board and on California's energy situation.

Your articles, reviews, letters, photos and graphics are welcome -- but get them to us by November 24. With the February issue, we will be back on our (semi-)regular schedule. Thanks to all those who helped out on this issue.

Safe Energy Groups

ABALONE ALLIANCE OF MARIN*
8N. San Pedro Rd.
San Rafael, CA 94901
415-472-4007 or 472-4047

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WEST VALLEY COLLEGE
1400 Fruitvale Ave.
Saratoga, CA 95070
408-867-1096 or 374-6459

ALLIANCE FOR SURVIVAL
944 Market St. Room 808
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-982-6988

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE
COMMITTEE
2160 Lake St.
San Francisco, CA 94121
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DESTRUCTION
c/c Greta Goldman
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Bolinas, CA 94924
415-868-1120

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POWER
c/o Carroll Child
University of California Medical Center
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Los Angeles, CA 90057
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Chico, CA 95926
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Palo Alto, CA 94301
415-325-6049

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San Francisco, CA 94105

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APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY
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Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-528-6543

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NUCLEAR POWER
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Concord, CA 94522
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Covelo, CA 95428
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Oakland, CA 94609
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San Jose, CA 95112
408-297-2292

LOMPOC SAFE ENERGY
COALITION
238 South J St.
Lompoc, CA 93436
805-736-1897

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

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

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MOTHERS FOR PEACE
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San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805-544-4955

MOUNTAIN PEOPLE FOR
NUCLEAR FREE LIFE
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Felton, CA 95018

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ENERGY ALLIANCE
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Napa, CA 94558
707-255-7493

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PELICAN ALLIANCE
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Pt. Reyes, CA 94937
415-663-8483

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U.C. Berkeley
607 Eshelman Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720
415-642-6912

PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR
POWER
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P.O. Box 14006
Santa Barbara, CA 93107
805-968-4238 or 968-2886

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POWER
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Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-966-4565

PEOPLE AGAINST NUCLEAR
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San Francisco, CA 94102
415-5342

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STANISLAUS SAFE ENERGY
COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 134
Modesto, CA 93354
209-529-5750

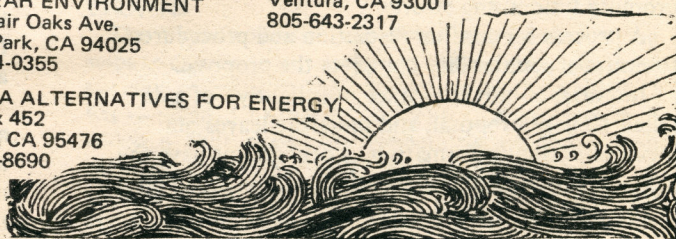
STOP URANIUM NOW
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Ojai, CA 93023
805-646-3832

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580 Lighthouse Ave.
Monterey, CA 93940
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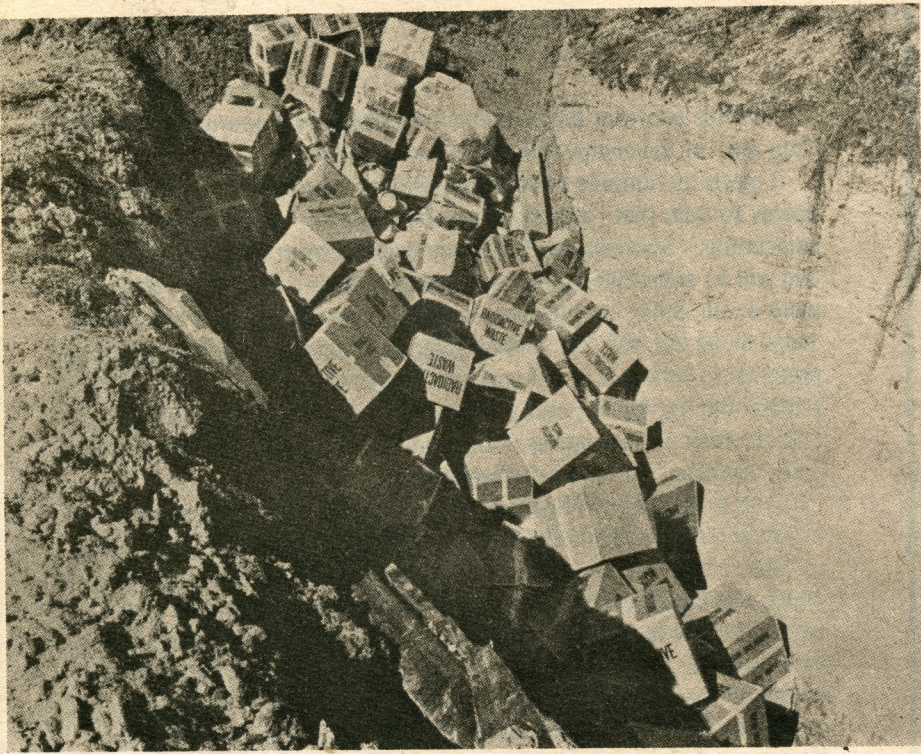
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DOE EVALUATES NUCLEAR GARBAGE



Solid waste with low levels of radioactivity is put in cardboard boxes and dumped into trenches six meters wide and six meters deep at the Savannah River Plant in South Carolina.

photos courtesy Committee on Radioactive Waste Management



These liquid wastes have been buried for five years at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. After careful monitoring, it was discovered that "most of the drums were intact." Can you find the leaky one?

Deep in the underground caverns of the city of San Francisco, in the bowels of the Hyatt Hotel, there was a discussion of the problems of nuclear waste management. Both the anti-nuclear movements and the pro-nuclear movements were there. The occasion was the Department of Energy hearings on the "Generic Environmental Impact Statement" (GEIS), or what should the U.S. Government do with all the nuclear garbage.

One woman clearly stated that the entire hearing was a farce and that the major decisions have been made with or without public hearings. At first I thought her views to be somewhat extreme. Yet the longer I sat there, the stronger was the pervading odor of tokenism. I was reminded of a quotation from "IRREVY" by John Gofman:

"... we create huge regulatory bureaucracies to see that all's done fair and square. Now — instead of just the corporate interest in the venture — we have two new and huge interests: 1) the enterprise simulators, as for example, the Department of Energy (formerly ERDA, and before that, the Atomic Energy Commission) and 2) innumerable protection agencies or regulatory agencies, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. And all three of these very highly vested interests will fight to your death to preserve and extend a new technology, and to extract profits from it."

Tokenism In Solutions

I think that the tokensim was most evident in the science fiction-like solutions offered in the G.E.I.S. itself. Some examples of those unviable solutions offered were to send the nuclear waste into space (not considering the accidents possible in lift-off or incidents such as our falling SKYLAB) and to bury nuclear waste in the polar

ice cap (not considering the tremendous heat generated by nuclear waste material).

At this point I think I began to really feel the smirks and the sneers of the D.O.E. representatives. The G.E.I.S. never explored with any adequacy the problem of containment and transportation in relation to any of the proposed solutions for waste disposal. Nor were these proposals adequately tested. Once again I began to feel the smug assurance of the D.O.E. spokesperson, Dr. Colin A. Health, and the iron fist within the velvet glove of so-called democratic procedure.

Nancy Abrams, an attorney, spoke of the unfairness of the public hearings. She was concerned that the G.E.I.S., as presented, was vague and contained technical questions which the general public could not fathom. Therefore, it was unfair to present the public with this dilemma of highly technical waters to wade through. The D.O.E. only countered these remarks with the amount of money that had been spent. They never addressed the problem of not giving the public time to review the study, nor the technical yet vague rhetoric of the G.E.I.S.

AEC Alumni on Hearing Board

One of the questions I had concerned the validity of the hearing board itself. Professor George Frampton, the head of the hearing board, answered me personally, telling me that the board, which he repeatedly declared to be impartial throughout the hearing, which he declared was not involved in the formation/creation of G.E.I.S. was in fact funded by and selected by the Department of Energy. I wondered just what his definition of "impartial" could be especially since one of the board members, a Dr. Clifford Smith, now an executive administrator at Oregon State University is formerly a member of the

Atomic Energy Commission. Yet, Professor Frampton continued to assure each speaker that the hearing board was unbiased... and not at all connected to the D.O.E.

All of this aside, there was another dismal reality to the hearing. There was no indication given that the production of these nuclear wastes, poisonous and dangerous for thousands of years, would be stopped. And that the nuclear waste, commercially generated, is only a small amount in relation to the huge amounts of radioactive waste generated by the nuclear weapons programs for reactors, missiles, etc. And nothing, not even a token solution is being offered to the public to deal with IT. That is the "Catch-22" of these public hearings. That even if the hearings were fair, and the solutions acceptable, we still would not be getting to the problem at hand. We'd only be dealing with the tip of the iceberg.

I am concerned. No, I'm just plain scared about all the signs and indications I witnessed at these hearings. And hearing daily about nuclear reactor leaks and the news clippings about missing plutonium; I wonder how we, the American public, have been duped so long. And how much it will take to bring us out of our hypnotic slumber.

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." — Frederick Douglas, a slave.

by Jessie Roberts, a citizen

REVIEW

THE ACCIDENT. By Hans Heinrich Ziemann. St. Martin's Press, \$10.95. First published in West Germany as *DIE EXPLOSION*.

Assume that the worst **had** happened at Three Mile Island. A full meltdown of the nuclear core had caused the release of a huge cloud of radioactive gases. Attempts to evacuate had been insufficient and had come too late. Tens of thousands dead; tens of thousands sick and dying; the area uninhabitable.

How would you write about it?

There has been no nuclear power accident causing mass death. Any account of such an accident is therefore called "fiction." But *The China Syndrome* has demonstrated how close fiction can come to reality.

The Accident is the first novel of a West German journalist. It concerns "the biggest atomic power plant in the world," called Helios, about to go on line in the town of Grenzheim, not far from Frankfurt. Controversy surrounds the dedication ceremony. As politicians preach sufficiency through nuclear energy, local citizens protest the plant. The police panic and there is a small riot.

One of the politicians flips the switch to bring the reactor to full power, but something goes wrong. A wily terrorist bent on saving humanity had planted a few bombs in the hope of disabling the reactor. Now the bombs begin to explode and, contrary to plan, cause fire, meltdown, and ultimately the deaths of at least 25,000 people.

A Realistic Novel

"Hans Ziemann has written a gripping, persuasive, frightening book," the jacket states. "If the essence of good fiction lies in believability—the capacity to excite

visceral reaction to these 'real' events—Ziemann's book is a triumph."

The trouble is the word "real." If you want to convince me of the reality of the events, you'd better have characters I can believe—and they'd better act believably. *The Accident* fails on both scores; only the very premise of the novel—the nuclear accident—is credible.

Ziemann's writing is cut from the same cloth as TV police drama: it is fast moving (with an ever-shifting point of view), full of superficial details that **try to make you believe**, littered with stereotypes passing as characters.

Anne Weiss, the leader of the Grenzheim Civic Initiative against the Helios plant, seems to be the one exciting, believable character. At a debate, she accuses an industry scientist, "You bask in your infallibility as though you were the Lord God in person!" Bravo!

But 44 pages later, I lost all faith in Anne Weiss, when, for no good political reason, she goes to bed with Martin Born, the director of the nuclear plant. I still don't know what she saw in him. (A bit later, Ziemann gives us some insight into his fiery independent woman activist. Anne Weiss is visited by the mayor, who advises her to quit her anti-nuke work—or else. "She would have liked to call Born," Ziemann writes. "She needed his voice and his security. She thought, 'He's got more important things to worry about.'")

The Accident is decidedly anti-nuclear. Ziemann manages, if a little clumsily, to get in a good deal of information on the issue. And the second half of the book, though no better written than the first, does cover important ground: the aftermath of a nuclear accident, which nobody wants to think about. At great length Ziemann describes the panic of the townspeople, the bureaucratic sloth in dealing with the crisis, the traffic jams, the radiation sickness, the inadequate attempts to evacuate, the mass deaths.

A Tragic Novel

The book begins with a quotation from Gordon Rattray Taylor: "Like the lemming, man too sees only the other side of the river. He is not suicidal by nature. But is he wise enough to turn back?" The rest of the book assumes that the answer to the question is "no"—that we haven't had the sense to turn back, and that because of our stubbornness thousands of people will die.

Thus, Ziemann follows the tragic form: it is inevitable, fate, that the accident will happen; stay tuned to see just how it will happen; to see every step where we (or they) failed to grasp what was happening; to see the ironies of the situation (the plant director's wife, for example, doesn't know the man she's having an affair with is the terrorist). But Ziemann's no Sophocles, no Shakespeare, and he doesn't pull off the tragedy with beauty, or even with much skill. It seems merely contrived.

Beyond the issue of Ziemann's competence, there is the question: Is tragedy an appropriate form to deal with tragedy? If the worst **had** happened at Three Mile Island, Walter Cronkite would have called it a "tragedy." A reporter would have recounted just how it happened, showing footage of the catastrophe and speaking in a "tragic voice." Would this treatment have helped us to understand why the "tragedy" happened—or would it only have intensified our feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness, have reinforced our sense that such tragedies are inevitable?

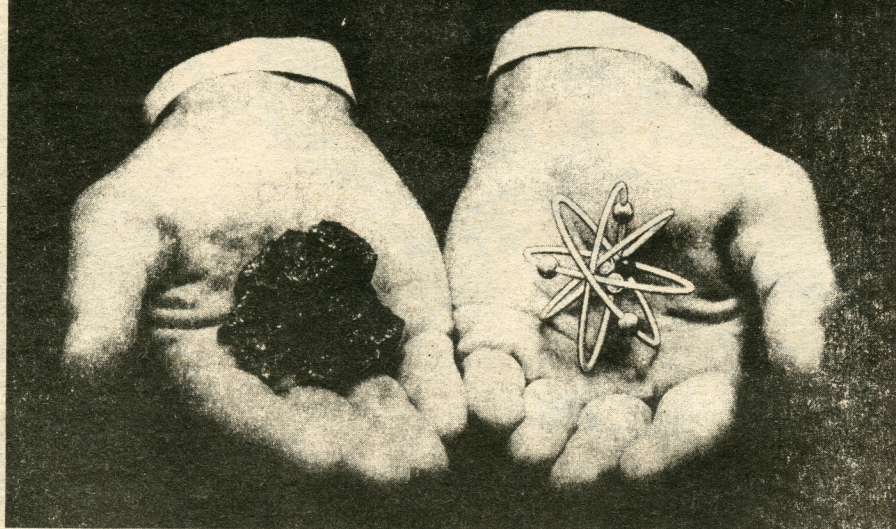
The worst did happen at Ziemann's fictional Helios plant. He chose to do much as a CBS reporter might do: to tell the story with such a heavy hand, such a sense of inevitability, that you forget why the damn plant was there in the first place and why ours is a civilization that builds nuclear power plants.

A major accident at a nuclear power plant hasn't happened yet. When we imagine one, and write about it, let's do it with our eyes open, and not flooded with tears.

—Charles Varon

CORPORATE LIES DEPT.

Making energy that makes sense means taking advantage of all our energy options.



At Middle South Utilities, maintaining a diversity of fuel sources is the most sensible way we know of ensuring reliable electric energy for the future. Someday, America should be able to rely on a variety of new sources including synthetic fuels, fusion, geothermal energy and solar power. But for now, to support the standard of living to which we are accustomed and provide opportunities for improvement for those who desire it, we have to rely on coal and nuclear power, which are available to our country in relative abundance.

In the meantime, the Middle South companies are backing research activities to develop new fuels such as

shale oil, tar sands, geopressurized methane and solvent-refined coal. We're supporting solar and fusion research. But for now we recognize the need to depend on energy sources that we know will work for America.

Nuclear energy has almost limitless potential—especially when our nation begins to make widespread use of the breeder reactor, which produces more fuel than it consumes. And America's known coal supply is enough for centuries.

Nuclear power and coal can reduce our dependence on diminishing supplies of oil and natural gas while helping provide adequate amounts of electricity—economically and reliably. A single 1,200-megawatt nuclear unit can

provide the energy equivalent of 600,000,000 gallons of gasoline per year.

Making the most of what we've got is an old American virtue. So is innovation. At Middle South Utilities, we're working to make the most of nuclear power and coal now, and to develop other promising energy alternatives for the future.

MIDDLE SOUTH UTILITIES

Arkansas Power & Light Company
Arkansas-Missouri Power Company
Louisiana Power & Light Company
Mississippi Power & Light Company
New Orleans Public Service Inc.

MAKING ENERGY THAT MAKES SENSE

This fine ad, from the September 17 Wall Street Journal, is a sort of "top ten" of the energy industry's favorite fibs.

It starts by lumping solar power with synthetic fuels and fusion as energy sources that "someday" will be available -- a sort of 'guilt by association.' Synfuels and fusion are decades from being practical, and will be expensive, hazardous, and corporate-controlled if they ever work at all. Solar, on the other hand, has been in use since the 1800's. Japan alone has over two million solar installations. Yet Middle South pretends to believe it is an exotic and unproven technology. A 1977 Federal Energy Agency study shows that solar electricity could be cheaper than nuclear power in the mid-80's if the cost of ONE nuclear plant was spent on solar cell development.

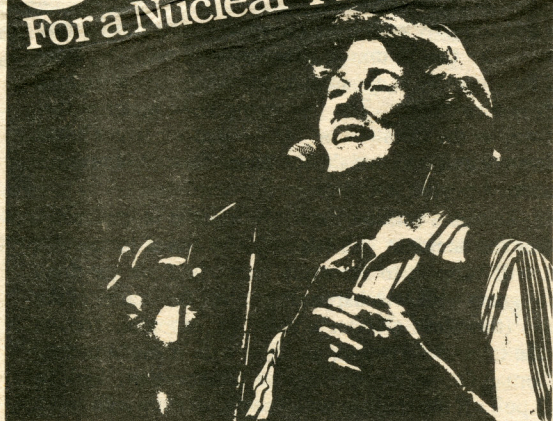
After presenting a refined version of the old "give us what we want or you'll freeze in the dark" line, the ad goes on to plug nuclear power as "abundant." Perhaps Middle South should talk to Westinghouse, which is suing 29 uranium producers that it claims formed an international cartel to jack up nuclear fuel prices. Since 1972, when the cartel started, the price of uranium has gone from \$6 to over \$60 per pound. Price gouging like that makes OPEC and the oil companies look like amateurs. The oil companies can find "abundant" oil, too -- if you pay their prices.

But the ad is at its most absurd when it waxed rhapsodic over the "limitless potential" of the breeder reactor. All American breeder attempts to date have been failures, and two ended with major core melting and near disaster (the EBR-1 in 1955 and the Enrico Fermi plant near Detroit in 1963.) Absorbing federal development money is the only "limitless potential" of breeder technology.

Winding up, the ad pulls an amazing feat of logic. It uses the homily, "Making the most of what we've got is an old American virtue" as a justification for building more power plants instead of conserving energy. And the final sentence could translate to "we'll charge you for nuclear and coal now, and give you solar just as soon as we can find a way to bill you for it."

(Thanks to Richard McGrath for passing along this ad to IAT.)

Holly Near
ON TOUR
For a Nuclear-Free Future



with J.T. THOMAS, piano, and SUSAN FREUNDLICH, sign language interpretation

Saturday, NOVEMBER 17 — Two shows: 7pm & 10pm
ZELLERBACH AUDITORIUM
UC Berkeley, at Telegraph & Bancroft

A fundraiser for Women for a Nuclear-Free Future, Center for Environmental Action, and UC Nuclear Weapons Labs Conversion Project, co-sponsored with Superb Productions and Northern California Ecumenical Council.

Childcare and sign language interpretation provided. Wheelchair accessible.

Tickets \$6 (16 & under, 60 & over, disabled, \$3) at all BASS outlets, UC Berkeley box office, and Bay area women's stores. Or by mail before November 9 from Tix, Olivia Productions, 4400 Market Street, Oakland CA 94608.

For more information, call (415) 655-0364.

Presented by Olivia Productions.

Rancho Seco

- 150-mile danger zone?
- faulty welds in pressure vessel?
- cooling tower engineering data falsified?

Rally—Sit-In—Blockade
State Capitol November 28th

Come and demand that Governor Brown use the Emergency Powers:

Jerry Brown has crowned himself "the spokesperson for the anti-nuclear movement." He has also vowed to do anything in his power to stop nuclear power, with the exception of using the Emergency Powers Act. The governor DID use his emergency powers to initiate the odd-even gas rationing. Now, 8 million lives depend upon faulty welding and falsified engineering data. The NRC is paralyzed. Come and talk to your "spokesperson!"

—10:30: Assemble on East Capitol Lawn

—11:00-1:00: Rally with speakers

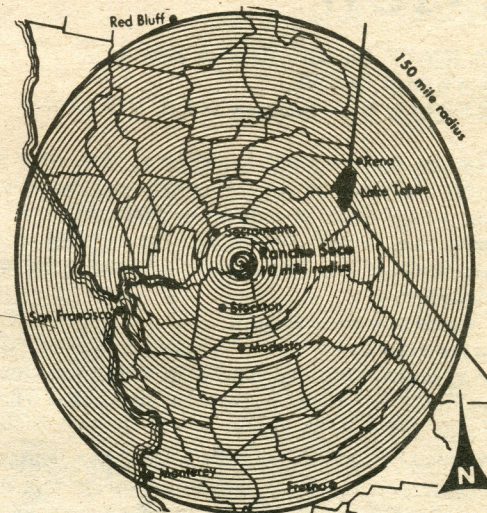
If no shutdown has been ordered:

—1:00: Enter the Capitol, Sit-In at Governor's Office

—1:30: Blockade

A mass canvassing of the Sacramento area is beginning. There will be leafletting of workers at Rancho Seco and SMUD before the 28th. All blockaders are urged to canvass before the action.

Jayne Irwin or Ed Lang: c/o PNFF Davis
Moriah Holland: c/o SAFE Office, Sonoma
Steve Mentor: c/o RANE Palo Alto, or PNFF S.C.
Dorothy Hughes, Marin:
Lynn Grasberg, S.F.: c/o Women A.N.P.



—8 million people with 150 miles are threatened with "serious radiation exposure" if the worst accident occurs.

—The "beltline" on Rancho Seco's pressure vessel may have been welded with materials that would make it increasingly likely to rupture during cold shutdowns—a prelude to a worst accident.

—A misplaced decimal point in critical engineering data for Rancho Seco's cooling towers was ignored by a Bechtel Corp. supervisor. This oversight made building materials appear ten times stronger than they actually are ("New West," November 19, 1979).