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U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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In the Matter of	
Consolidated Edison Company of New York (Indian Point, 2)	Docket Nos. 50 - 247 - SP
Power Authority of the State of New York (Indian Point, 3)	50 - 286 - SP
	October 6, 1981

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Memorandum In Opposition

The following petition is submitted in support of the position of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and in opposition to the continuance of nuclear power generation at the above mentioned installations.

America: A Portrait In Black

Heralding the current thought wave, the national press trumpet praise of militarism, and exhort support from every level of society against a threatening world of opposing ideologies. Our leaders are master playwrights; inventing situations, covering mistakes, controlling, coercing, confusing an apathetic audience in the stalls. Finally, the directors pose America, the premier nuclear power, as an aggrieved hero locked in a fateful struggle with powerful forces bent on world domination.

Years ago, the United States seemed to provide a haven for genius, a refuge from oppression, this combination unlocked the atomic riddle. During the early development of nuclear power, physicists extended the fission process; they developed a method of extracting man-made plutonium from the spent ashes of uranium and neutron isotopes. By compressing a small amount of plutonium rapidly the result

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was an enormous explosion; an atomic explosion.

The next step was experimental. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed in 1945. Both events, minutely recorded, detail the effects of radiation and give evidence of history's best-documented nuclear incident.

Since the moment "Little Boy," a uranium-core atom bomb floated down on Hiroshima at morning of August 6, 1945, and "Fat Man," a plutonium-based device, exploded over Nagasaki three days later, the United States has been ruled by nuclear thinking. These macarbe nicknames highlight the first mistakes made in the name of nuclear power, an uncontrolled virus that has since spread around the world.

During the 1950's, the 'Atoms For Peace' program was instituted and the United States farmed out the reprocessing of nuclear fission waste. This dirty job went to former WWII Allies with explicit instructions to extract the plutonium, experiment, and develop the breeder reactor, a nuclear plant theoretically capable of creating its own fuel and hopefully fulfilling the elusive dream of perpetual energy. Although this goal has not been attained, man-made plutonium has found sinister usefulness.

"America now has a staggering 25,000 to 30,000 tactical and strategic nuclear warheads," explains Doctor Helen Caldicott in the April-May 1980 issue of New Roots. An Australian-born physician who has been waging a public-education campaign to inform the world's people of the hazards of the Nuclear Age, Caldicott steadfastly opposes its continued development and petitions women in particular to rise up against nuclear power armament. She says, "In spite of the fact that America has enough bombs to <u>overkill</u> the Russian population 40 times, and Russia has enough to overkill the American population 20 times, America continues to make three

to 10 new hydrogen bombs a day."

A leading cancer researcher, Harvard's Nobel Prize winner Professor James D. Watson says, "The nuclear power industry will be an irreversible calamity for the human race. Particularly scary is the thought that we shall senselessly march in wide-scale employment of breeder-produced plutonium, the most dangerous atom man has yet tried to assimilate into his industrial life. Only the tiniest traces of plutonium are needed to induce cancer and if its use becomes widespread, the possibility must be faced, of awful incidents, either accidental or deliberate, that will cause wide regions of our earth to become forever uninhabitable."

A typical nuclear power plant produces several hundred pounds of plutonium annually, a pound of which, efficiently spread around the country, would be more than enough to give lung cancer to everyone. The growing concern that terrorists might steal enough to make nuclear explosives is a realistic possibility. And uncertainty that countries to which the United States is selling nuclear reactors may use the by-product plutonium to build an arsenal of atomic weapons is a matter of serious concern.

The United States has thousands of nuclear devices in readiness, either stockpiled in secret underground silos or stalking the high seas in Trident submarines, yet the government feels unsure and finds it necessary to maintain an atmosphere of insecurity and hysteria.

The latest conscription effort, a mobilization ploy that fastens militarism upon the country and practically guarantees another conflict by conceding the government absolute power. While military jobs may excite Congress's appetite for conscript labor, there is no meaning in serving one's country when we realize our world could end in two hours on the whim of nuclear power-crazed leaders.

A probable nuclear war description as constructed by Helen Caldicott tells the story: "If the button is pressed in Russia or America, the weapons go out into space and re-enter the earth's atmosphere at 20 times the speed of sound. And, they're accurately on target. Meanwhile, the satellite from the other country has detected the attack and the button is pressed in that country. So a nuclear war takes about one to two hours to complete. If you live in a targeted area and you do manage to get into a fallout shelter, you won't survive because the firestorm will be so huge. One 20 megaton bomb (20 million tons of TNT equivalent) will create a firestorm of 3,000 square miles. The fire will use up all the oxygen in the air, so if you're in a shelter, you'll asphixiate."

Today, nuclear technology remains fraught with numerous pitfalls, unsolvable problems, the looming spectre of eventualities. Yet, its intelligensia disregard the warning signs that nuclear power is threatening to hang a miasma of environmental destruction over all mankind. They prefer to stare with myopic vision at a futuristic fantasy, a golden dawn of plutonium economics, while we all move toward extinction.

"I think in the face of catastrophe to do nothing and be passive is very depressing because you feel so powerless," said Helen Caldicott, summing-up the antinuclear movement's credo. "But if you try and do something, its the most exciting action you can take. If I'm feeling I'm having an effect and other people are starting to be mobilized, there's a tremendous reward. So I say to myself, 'Even if the bombs go off, at least I'll be able to say I tried.' For me, it's a religious committment to continue evolution, to continue God's creation. We are the curators of life on earth. But

with the press of a button, we can wipe it out."

Whatever motive triggers concern about the confrontations ahead, some hints exist that point toward a decision about man's preference for survival or suicide. The precious moments shift from Eliot's "heap of broken images," to Rilke's "pain, prayer and revelation," even present-day nuclear madness may be condoned, but scant time remains for the luxury of indecision by those who choose survival.

Respectfully submitted,

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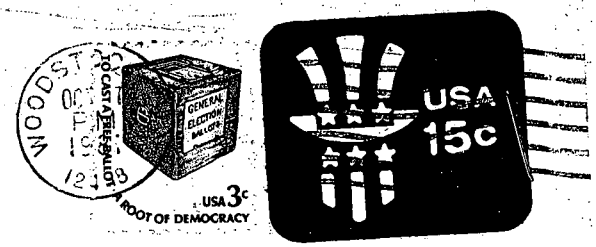

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