

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Inasmuch as the Federal Government, its empowered "experts" (the former Atomic Energy Commission and its successor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission), along with private industry, have cajoled us over a period of years into accepting their findings on nuclear energy as factual and utterly reliable,--among which findings were, notably, the following:

1. That there is an acute energy shortage, and a consequent energy crisis;
2. That government regulation has helped nuclear to become the safest power source available;
3. That the resultant wastes from nuclear plants are radioactively short-lived, and can be safely disposed of;
4. That nuclear power is currently less expensive than coal, oil, or natural gas;
5. That solar power requires years of expensive original investment before it can begin paying off, and that its use is severely limited;
6. That, to continue generating electricity, the use of nuclear power must be significantly increased;
7. That nuclear plants afford extensive employment opportunities, in this our employment crisis;

And inasmuch as contrary research and testimony by concerned and highly knowledgeable notables like Barry Commoner, Ralph Nader, Dr. Michip Kaku, Dr. Theodore Taylor, Dr. Helfand, the members of the Union of Concerned Scientists (including eight Nobel Laureates), Robert Jungk, Robert Rodale, and Harriet Van Horne--plus the evidence of a number of disastrous and near-disastrous accidents--have shown us the following to be true:

1. That much more electric generation capacity than actually needed is available to supply U.S. demand,--over 30% more,--even at peak periods (so that closing nuclear plants will not cripple our economy, or cause hardship);<sup>1</sup>
2. That, as the President's Commission Report on the Three-Mile Nuclear Accident has indicated, the NRC did not exercise its office with scrupulosity, in awarding a license to a basically incompetent company like Metropolitan Edison, and that the NRC performed in general with marked ineptitude;<sup>2</sup> that, like the Atomic Energy Commission it succeeded, the NRC appears more concerned with the nuclear industry's profits than with the public's well-being (65% of its officials come from businesses that NRC contracts with);<sup>3</sup> and that, far from being the safest power source available, nuclear is actually an infinitely dangerous one,--to a point where insurance companies have refused to provide the public with full coverage against nuclear accidents, because the risk is too great,<sup>4</sup> inasmuch as a reactor like the one at Harrisburg builds up within one year a radiation equal to that of a thousand Hiroshima-type bombs,<sup>5</sup> and inasmuch as its Emergency Cooling System has never been tested since 1973, when the test on a small replica reactor showed the system to have failed;<sup>6</sup>
3. That no town or city in America wants nuclear wastes buried within its confines, because: a) they remain radioactive for a half-million to more than two million years;<sup>7</sup> b) by the end of this century, the government estimates there will be hundreds of millions of cubic feet of low- and high-level wastes in the U.S.;<sup>8</sup> c) no technically or economically feasible methods have been established (after thirty years of effort!) to dispose of them safely and permanently;<sup>9</sup> d) nearly every waste facility the government has started has leaked radioactivity,--so that if you live near one of the 117 atomic waste disposal sites scattered across the U.S., you could be sitting on a time bomb;<sup>10</sup>
4. That nuclear power, far from being the cheapest power source, is proving fabulously expensive,--frighteningly so: what with the huge research invest-

8002120196

6 Gofman/Tamplin: Poisoned Power (quoted in Rodale's "Nuclear Truth", Prevention, June '79)  
7 The New Yorker, 5/14/79, p.29  
8 Union of Concerned Scientists, Letters to Readers  
9 Idem  
10 Stephen Cao, diagrammatic report in late-'79 Enquirer

1 Robt. Rodale: "Nuclear Truth," Prevention, June '79  
2 The New Yorker, 11/12/79, p.45  
3 Union of Nuclear Scientists, Letters to Readers  
4 Idem  
5 The New Yorker, 4/23/79, p.36

11 New York Times, 12/5/79, p.A31  
 12 Barry Commoner: "Reflections," New Yorker, 4/23 & 30/79  
 13 Quest Magazine, Jan. '80, p.8  
 14 Robt. Jungk: The New Tyranny (quoted in Rodale's Nuclear Truth,"  
Prevention, June '79

15 "More Jobs": pamphlet accompanying 1/24/79  
 "Newsletter" of Council on Economic Priorities  
 16 Business Week Management (quoted in 1/15 Enquirer)

ments the government has afforded private industry, what with the tax write-offs and tax abatements, what with the low 30-40% maximum efficiency of which the plants are capable, what with the cost over-runs now pushing the price to 300% above the original estimate,--and continuing to worsen; so that the nuclear power industry has survived for twenty-five years only by its uncanny ability to shift the risks of nuclear investments to utility consumers, while reserving the benefits for its own stockholders;<sup>11</sup>

5. That nuclear energy and its corollaries, wind and water power, distilled alcohol, and methane, have far more pervasive use than government will admit, voltaic cells being produceable cheaply, given a satisfactory market;<sup>12</sup> and a recent discovery by SRI International affording a one-step method of producing silicon which has slashed its cost from \$60 a kilogram to \$5,--thus greatly hastening the solar cell's economic competitiveness with other modes of generating electricity (add to this that solar energy is a continuously renewable energy source)<sup>13</sup>
6. That public awareness of the fraudulent nature of oil scarcity in America, and its awareness as well of the alarmingly increasing dangers to which nuclear plants have in the past submitted us, render either the need or the likelihood of the continuing proliferation in America extremely unlikely; that if nuclear power uses were to expand as projected, there would be a meltdown somewhere in the world every four years, by the year 2050;<sup>14</sup>
7. That nuclear plants, like armament plants, afford less than half the number of jobs that the same investment in public service employment could afford;<sup>15</sup> and that, of the eleven million non-farm business enterprises, 10.7 million are small businesses, and account for as much as 58% of private-sector employment<sup>16</sup> (understandable, inasmuch as the very nature of highly technological businesses and their automated machinery must discriminate against human workers in favor of machines); furthermore: What price employment (even were it at a maximum) which endangers not only its employed, but as well vast surrounding acres of land and food and water and air,--and inhabitants?:

In view of the aforesaid arguments, and not forgetful of the accidents at Windscale, England; at the Fermi reactor near Detroit; at Idaho Falls; at Hanford, Washington; at Savannah River, South Carolina; at West Valley, New York; at Maxey Flats, Kentucky; and, most recently, at Three-Mile Island: The Gray Panthers--joined by the voice of the Social Action Committee of Sirovich Senior Center--have asked me to express their concern over the "After us, the deluge" attitude which government and NRC and private industry have jointly shown in the matter of foisting on the public, for the past three decades, so costly and so perilous an industry as nuclear plants and their wastes; to express condemnation of the criminal irresponsibility manifest in this matter; and to demand not only the immediate shut-down of all seventy-two nuclear plants throughout America, and the immediate cessation of all plans to build and license new plants, but as well to demand the employment of the best minds of the nation in grappling with the decontamination and/or safe storage of the resultant extant waste matter.

*Hyman J. Sudewitz*

January 15, 1980

(A Paper Addressed to the National Regulatory Commission Emergency Preparedness Workshop)