

Three Mile Island ALERT

VOL. I, NO. 2

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

JULY 1979

Radiation goes off the charts

For several months, government and utility officials have been telling people in Central Pennsylvania that the releases of radioactivity were minor. Last week, new testimony at the NRC shows that they, at best, did not know what they were talking about - or, at worst, they were telling us some outright lies.

According to the NRC's Albert Gibson, "All the radiation monitors in the vent stack, where as much as 80% of the radiation escaped, went off-scale the morning of the accident.

"So we don't really know what went up there?" questioned Commissioner Victor Gilinsky. "Up through the stack?"

"That's correct," replied Gibson.

"One set of readings was greater than 1000 Rems per hour," he added. "We don't know how much greater because the licensee did not have instruments that measured more than 1000."

These readings, the testimony shows, remained at these high levels for three straight days, starting on March 28th.

Gibson also questioned the conclusiveness of readings taken outside the stacks. He said

that the readings were often taken when the wind was shifting or when escaping radiation was not at it's peak.

"All they will show will be dose rates at the moments when the measurements were made and without knowing the precise weather patterns we don't know if they were made at the appropriate locations," Gibson testified.

Mike Klinger, chairperson of TMIA's Health Committee, called the testimony incredible. "To think that Met Ed even considers starting up Unit 1 and possibly exposing living organisms to many times the debatable 'safe standard' shows an arrogant disrespect for the quality of life inconsistent with the values of the citizens of this greater Central Pennsylvania area."

No More Alert

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A Bloomin' bust

Strong pressure from a coalition of anti-nuke, consumer and neighborhood groups force the Pennsylvania State Senate to reject Gov. Richard Thornburgh's first important non-cabinet nomination, Robert Bloom.

The groups which came from Philadelphia, Harrisburg, York and Pittsburgh put the Senate on Notice that it would not accept anti-consumer, pro-nuke appointments.

The vote was 12 to 36 against Bloom. He needed 34 votes for confirmation. Voting against the nomination were area senators George Gekas (R-Dauphin), Hopper (R-Cumberland) and Hess (R-York, Adams). Voting for the nomination were Sens. Moore (R-Perry, Cumberland) and Manbeck (Lebanon, Lancaster).

Gekas said that while he felt that Bloom had done a good job during his past tenure on the PUC, he felt that the citizens of Dauphin County were strongly opposed to the nomination. So, he voted with the constituents, not his own feelings.

Bloom's defeat was a major victory for the newly formed coalition. In Central Pennsylvania, anti-nuke people put strong pressure that resulted in swinging these normally Republican-voting senators.



Gekas poll results

State Senator George Gekas (R-Harrisburg) published a questionnaire in the Harrisburg papers recently to determine voter opinion on nuclear power. Approximately 1,500 persons responded, and opinion was overwhelmingly against nuclear power, reopening of TMI and consumer payment for ensuing costs. The results of the poll, according to Sen. Gekas' office, are reprinted below.

Do you believe that nuclear energy is safe today? 132 Yes 1021 No

If not, do you believe that nuclear energy can be made safe someday? 263 Yes 733 No

Do you favor the continued use and research of nuclear power as an energy source in our nation? 386 Yes 828 No

Do you favor a moratorium on the building and operation of new nuclear power plants in the U.S.? 736 Yes 321 No

Do you favor the continued operation of present nuclear power plants? 227 Yes 839 No

Concerning TMI, do you wish to: 767 Close TMI forever; 274 Reopen TMI as a non-nuclear energy producing facility; 272 Reopen TMI as a nuclear facility only when improved and tested nuclear safeguards are developed.

Who should pay for the cost of the accident at TMI? Met-Ed 1069
Consumers 42 Federal Government
214 State Government 42 Others 82

PUC holds the line on costs

On March 29, the day after the TMI accident, the Public Utility Commission granted Metropolitan Edison, operator and 50% owner of TMI, a \$49 million rate increase. The rate increase was based almost entirely upon inclusion of Unit 2 in the rate base. The rate base takes into account such factors as operating costs, fuel costs and profits. These factors should equal the revenue.

The cost of building a power plant can not be included in the rate base until the plant is completed and in service, or "used and useful."

Responding to public outcry against paying for an accident which had already cost area residents so much, the PUC issued in early April complaints against Met Ed and Pennsylvania Electric charging "excessive, unjust and unreasonable rates." This enabled the PUC to roll back the recent increase until hearings could be held to determine who should pay how much.

At issue in the proceedings were cost of including Unit 2 in the rate base; cost of clean-up of the accident and the cost of replacement power.

On June 15, the PUC announced its decision to remove Unit 2 from the rate base, to not include clean-up costs of the accident but to allow Met Ed to collect \$46 million from the rate payers to cover replacement power.

The PUC's decision set a precedent, since no other regulatory agency has yet ordered the removal of a nuclear plant from the rate base because of anticipated long-term outage. Because many nuclear plants are down more than they are operating, the PUC decision could impact on many other nuclear utilities.

The cost of clean-up was not really an issue in the proceeding other than its impact on the short-term debt of the company. Nevertheless, the PUC declared

that "none of the costs of responding to the incident, including repair, disposal of waste and decontamination are recoverable from ratepayers."

The basis of the PUC approach to the problem of replacement power costs was stated in its decision. "The purchase of energy is a reasonable and necessary cost of providing service which must be recovered from ratepayers. Service cannot be provided without cost.

It is equitable for the ratepayers of Met Ed and Penelec to pay the cost of purchasing power since they are receiving service and will be paying none of the costs of TMI-2. With the levelized energy charge which we will order here, the total rates for electric service to the customers of Met Ed and Penelec will be no greater than the rates which would have been allowed had the incident never occurred. We believe this accomplishes a fair and just result for all concerned... The Commission is of the opinion that the recovery of these costs is required by law. The remaining question is, What is the level of recovery?"

The level the Commissioners settled upon was approximately 20% less than that demanded by Met Ed and even less than the level asked for by the Office of the Consumer Advocate. On its surface, the PUC's decision appears reasonable.

However, upon closer examination, several questions arise. TMI-2 was only generating electricity for three months before the accident happened. Before December 30, 1978, Met Ed. did not have those 800 megawatts. What is it replacing? Did Met Ed have to buy power from the grid before January? If so, why do Met Ed customers now have to pay extra for it? If not, why do they now need to purchase power?

Met Ed repeatedly claimed its stockholders could not possibly absorb the cost of replacement power. Yet testimony during the PUC hearings revealed

Rally at Berwick

TMIA assisted the Susquehanna Alliance and LEPOCO on the Berwick rally by coordinating the publicizing of the rally in the Harrisburg area, sponsoring buses to the rally and contributing marshalls. About 2,500 people attended the rally, several hundred coming from the Harrisburg area. Following a program of speakers and alternative energy displays, a short march was made to the site of the nuclear reactor building and a cooling tower.

Although the rally attenders were rain-soaked, most maintained a pleasant disposition and showed great enthusiasm throughout the demonstration. Speakers at the rally were: Susan Cassidy (a pregnant mother, former resident of Middletown), Dr. Michael Gluck (Physicians for Social Responsibility), Mark Widoff (former Consumer Advocate for Pennsylvania), Tim Laidman (a former PP&L engineer), Chris Fried (alternative energy consultant), Betty Thompkins (Susquehanna Valley Alliance) and Dr. Judith Johnsrud (Co-director, Environmental Coaliton on Nuclear Power.)

Most of the speakers addressed the issues of nuclear power hazards and called for stopping construction on the PP&L nuke plant at Berwick. Music was provided by Spiritwood, Kim David Reichley, Bruce Barr, Jeff Vitelli, L.A. Williams, Sharon Sttinger and Jerry Gallagher.

MIA would like to thank all members and other volunteers who helped make this rally a success.



I'm tired of reading that 55,000 people are killed each year in automobiles. I'm tired of hearing this statement being used to say that nuclear energy and its consequential radiation are no more dangerous. If there is no difference between automobiles and radiation then how come Harry Truman didn't drop all our used cars on Japan during World War II?

Middletown Press & Journal

Stuff it!

The use of utility bill stuffers may have come to a halt in New York. Long used to sway public opinion in behalf of the utility companies, the stuffers were held not to be a part of corporate free speech guaranteed by a recent Supreme Court decision.

Two separate cases, one in a U.S. Court of Appeals and the other in a Federal District Court, held that ban ordered by the Public Service Commission of New York was well within their mandate authority.

"In view of the non-competitive market in which electric corporations operate," the appeals judge wrote, "it is difficult to discern how the promotional advertising of electricity might contribute to society's interest in informed and reliable economic decisionmaking."

In the federal district case, Long Island Lighting Co. (LILCO) had included bill stuffers which touted nuclear power as a "savings." The judge in that case ruled that PSC's ban was legitimate but did allow LILCO to continue sending stuffers which promoted the use of electric space heating.

Next time you get your electric bill here in Pennsylvania, see what they are sending you. MetEd or PP&L may offend you--and if they do get in touch with the TMIA office or file a complaint with the PUC.

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Missing

Along with our other activities, the Health Committee has delivered testimony to and established communications with the Presidents Commission on TMI and the Health Planning and Resource Development. We are also preparing a fact sheet on the TMI radioactive emissions and their effect on our health and environment.

Legal

The Task Force is presently considering the 12 page report from Attorneys Widoff, Reager, Selkowitz & Adler. We have been cooperating with the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power and the Susquahanna Valley Alliance. ECNP will soon petition the NRC to revoke the license for Unit I, permanently.

The Task Force is developing a draft paper with SVA in order to initiate a TMI LEGAL FUND.

We have been in touch with Gov. Thornburgh's office and the Justice Dept. ENCOURAGE area residents to write and phone Gov. Thornburgh to proceed to take whatever legal action may be necessary to prevent the reactivation of Unit I. Phone---
787-2500

Jobs/Conversion

The Harrisburg Area Jobs Conversion Project held its first meeting on June 18, 1979. The Conversion Project is a long-term strategy for converting arms industries to peaceful purposes and the creation of new economic and political institutions which are more responsive to local human needs. The first meeting focused on specific goals and future activities of the Conversion Project. Members discussed various conversion projects underway in other parts of the nation. Special attention was given to the Mid-Peninsula Conversion Project in the

Santa Clara Valley of California as a useful model.

Members decided to consult conversion resources at the National Action Research on the Military-Industrial Complex (NARMIC), SANE, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy and other organizations.

The next meeting will be held on July 2nd at the Friends Meeting House. Anyone interested in joining the Conversion Project should contact Jim Gormley at 944-7011 (TMIA's representative) or Suzanne and Matthew Magda (545-8839 (Project Coordinators).

Last Resort

The Last Resort/Non-Violence Training Committee is the new name for the TMIA Task Force dedicated to training and education. At their first meeting on Sunday, June 10th, The Last Resort established as their purposes: (1) To train people for non-violence for a TMIA-sanctioned civil disobedience, non-violent action that would be employed as a last resort to prevent the re-opening of TMI Units 1 and 2.

(1) To train people for non-violence for a TMIA - sanctioned civil disobedience, non-violent action that would be employed as a last resort to prevent the re-opening of TMI Units 1 and 2.

(2) To develop a training program in non-violence.

(3) To contact local and national groups for help in the development of strategies for our non-violence program.

(4) To reach out to other community groups to train them in non-violence.

(5) To plan for the possibility of a non-violent, TMIA

Editorial: On fear and anger

On Friday morning, March 30th, I was driving 80 miles an hour down the Turnpike. I was scared, about as scared as I was the time I was jumped by four women with switchblades, but this time I couldn't see my attacker. I was also angry, nearly blind with anger. If a cop had pulled me over s/he would have locked me up.

When I returned to Harrisburg, I was just as scared and a whole lot angrier. My fear and anger translated into insomnia, short temper, and long-lasting indigestion. It occurred to me that there were a few things I could do. I could leave the area and find a place far away from any nuclear facilities, (attractive, but deserting a sinking ship). I could deny that anything life-

threatening was happening to all of us and allow myself to be lulled by false reassurances (a lot of people did that). Or, I could channel my anger and my fear into working against those ugly, eerie, dangerous cooling towers in the sky. In the end, the best way to deal with my wholly reasonable emotions was to use them to attack the source.

I've never presumed that my way of dealing with emotions was right for anybody else, but it worked for me. Maybe it's worth a try -- standing in a vigil line or lobbying a legislator has got to be better than bad dreams. Whatever you do, though, don't let your fear and anger die. You were right to feel it. Now use it.

315 PEPPER STREET
HARRISBURG, PA. 17102

