

# Don't Watch What We Say...

## Mendelsohn sings a new tune

Environmentalists like greenery as a rule, and San Francisco County Supervisor Robert Mendelsohn is no exception.

Mendelsohn, a favorite of many environmentalists, sometimes genuinely and sometimes because he is the lesser of evils on the State Coastal Commission, apparently sought greenery recently when the commission voted on proposed sites for state acquisition along the California coastline.

The commission voted to accept almost every one of 200 sites which were endorsed by their respective Regional Commissions. The sole exception was a 160-acre wetlands tract in Marina del Rey owned by Howard Hughes' Summa Corp.

When the Hughes property, recommended for state acquisition by the South Coast Regional Commission, came up for consideration by the Coastal Commission, Mendelsohn, who lives hundreds of miles away, objected.

Although it was known that Archisystems, a division of the Hughes Summa Corp., has plans to develop a 600-acre marina in the area, including the wetlands tract, Men-

delsohn argued that controls on development would be sufficient to protect this last restorable wetlands area along the Santa Monica Bay shore. A similar argument might have been made against acquisition of any of the other 200 sites. None was. Still, Mendelsohn "convinced" a slim majority on the commission.

South Coast Regional Commission member Rimmon Fay said angrily after the commission deleted the wetlands from the acquisition list, "It is an arch betrayal of what we're here to achieve."

Fay refused to speculate on Mendelsohn's motives, but Katy Butler of the San Francisco Bay Guardian, said she was not surprised by the Supervisor's position.

"He still has a \$200,000 campaign debt left over from his unsuccessful race for state controller," she said.

We'll be watching to see who fills the kitty after that decision.

Dave Lindorff

If readers have any tips, we invite you to send them in for the "Don't Watch What We Say" Column.

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Beauchamp

# LETTERS

Vanguard readers interested in easing repression for Argentinians are asked to sign this letter and send it to the Solidarity Committee with the Argentine People: 715 S. Park View, Los Angeles 90057

Dear Congressperson,

As you must already know, on Wednesday, March 24, 1976, in Argentina, the government of Isabel Peron was destroyed by an unconstitutional military junta led by General Jorge Videla. With the continuing revelations about U.S. involvement in the destabilization of the legal government of President Salvador Allende of Chile and the misery the Chilean people have since suffered, I feel the following actions are imperative:

1. Suspend all military and economic aid to Argentina until such time as it can be determined that human rights are not being violated and concrete steps are being taken to reinstate a constitutional, democratically elected government.

2. Begin a thorough congressional investigation of possible U.S. involvement in the Argentine coup.

3. Set a definite humanitarian immigration policy for Argentine political refugees and all those from Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay who previously took refuge in Argentina because it had the only non-military, constitutional government in the southern zone.

As a concerned citizen, I do not want to see the United States involved in another Chile. I urge you to do everything in your power to enact the above suggestion.

Respectfully,

Dear Editor:

A good first issue. I recommend some humor, some alternatives, and in places, a little less serious. But the paper is written and laid out well. Good luck.

Richard Kagan  
Asian History Department  
Hamline University  
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Editor:

Editorial efforts sometimes introduce confusion, and I am afraid that happened to the paragraph of my story "California Funding Plans Blocked."

It suggested that the "proposals for California legislation came primarily from the rank and file of the community; perhaps representatives they came primarily from the Joint Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Some support from the rank and file. The funds currently available were appropriated not by the Arts Committee but by the Legislature. And it is not the Committee which is worried about its role and aims. Governor Brown's California Council, an altogether different organization.

—Win Blevins

The VANGUARD staff is anxious to know how you feel about issues and problems around you and your reactions to the paper. Whatever you have on your mind, let us know. This space is reserved for readers' comments.

In the interest of preserving the environment, please, after this issue from cover to cover, RECYCLE THE VANGUARD.

**HAWKERS  
WANTED**

**★ CURRENT CRISIS COMIX ★**

**The 'APRIL FOOL'S BUDGET'**  
(APRIL 1, 1976) IS **'AUSTERE'**

THE CITY COUNCIL VOTES ITSELF A RAISE.... AND 250 CITY LAYOFFS + MORE COUNTY LAYOFFS.

LET'S DEAL 'EM.  
I'LL RAISE US \$3,000.

ED DAVIS' POLICE DEPT. BUDGET INCREASES \$3 MILLION. CRIME PREVENTION CONTINUES AS ONE OF L.A.'S BIGGEST GROWTH INDUSTRIES. LAW + ORDER. NOW. MORE THAN EVER.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

WOE IS ME.

IT'S SO LAS VEGAS!

TRIFORIUM the GIANT JUKEBOX.

I'M LAYED BUT I'VE GOT THIS MUSIC TO LISTEN TO

COMING ATTRACTIONS: ANOTHER PROPERTY TAX INCREASE!  
(HIGHER CITY REVENUES. ANOTHER BENEFIT AFFECTED FAVORABLY BY INFLATION)



## IGHT BACK

## The Nuclear Initiative

Tim Brick

Brick is co-coordinator of SE; formerly an anti-war ist.

he passage of Proposition 15 will cost Californians \$40 billion in the next 20 years." That's the view of the top U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration official devoted "both by law and personal conviction" to pushing nuclear energy, but it intensifies the high stakes involved in the bitter battle over Proposition 15 — the Nuclear Safeguards Initiative — upon which voters will decide June 8. It points to the kind of sensational claims that have well clouded the vital issues.

In the last few years soaring energy price increases have driven many to most Americans the necessity of the energy crisis. The depletion of dwindling resources has been passed to inflation-battered consumers while the energy industry is plagued with record profits. But the carefully orchestrated crisis has left a profound impression in the minds of Americans about the reliability of the energy industry. Assumptions once taken for granted have now become hotly debated issues.

Nuclear fission power is one of the essential elements in the energy scenario designed by those who believe in virtually unchecked energy use. Scientists, though, who speak of nuclear power as an unlimited source have now come to question its promise. Industry spokespeople, who claimed that there would be no need to meter electricity because nuclear power would be so cheap, are now checking their calculations. And the public is finally involved in the debate.

On June 8th initiative summarizes those concerns but concentrates on the question of safety safeguards. Proposition 15 calls for a public review of the safety mechanisms, demonstrated by the nuclear industry to the satisfaction of the state legislature. Emergency systems work as well as that nuclear wastes be stored safely, and full compensation to the public in the event of a reactor accident.

Proponents of the initiative, the Californians for Nuclear Safeguards, believe that these fundamental requirements should not be left to the nuclear industry, to agencies or to regulatory agencies. The public through elected representatives must decide. The initiative then sets up a schedule by which operators of nuclear power plants must meet safety requirements to the satisfaction of two-thirds of the legislature. Failure to do so would lead to a shutdown and even the banning of nuclear power generating stations.

Proponents of the initiative claim in practice it would eliminate nuclear power as a power source in California — a view rejected by 15 supporters. The organization represents not only the nuclear industry and utilities but leading political movers in the state including former Governor Brown, former L.A. League of Women Voters leader Catherine Lap, and Bill Robertson, head of the L.A. County Federation of AFL-CIO. They consider the initiative as an unnecessary restriction on energy development necessary to maintain our standard of living. Present safety

requirements, they say, are more than adequate; or, at least, they are willing to trust the industry's contentions.

There are 56 nuclear power plants licensed to operate in the United States today. Together they provide only about 5% of the total electricity supply. Three plants are in operation in our state at Humboldt Bay, Rancho Seco near Sacramento, and San Onofre near San Clemente, but many more are in various stages of planning and construction. By the year 2000 there could be as many as 50, so it is urgent now to assess the safety and reliability of nuclear plants before our societal commitment shackles us to a source Ralph Nader calls "unsafe, unnecessary, and unreliable."

The \$40-billion argument the Energy and Research Development Administration official used represents the thrust that the nuclear industry hopes will carry them to victory, but it is based on distortions of the real costs involved, outdated projections of electric demand, and inflated prices for alternative sources.

Never before has so much money been devoted to the development of a technology, and yet enormous gaps still exist in the safe production of nuclear power. The federal government has provided \$50 billion in subsidies to get the industry started. Beyond that they have hidden the costs of the production of nuclear fuel by using cheap hydroelectricity to perform the enrichment necessary to turn the uranium into a usable fuel.

In the last two years the utility industry has cancelled an unprecedented number of plants in an effort to stave off financial collapse because of diminished growth curves, rising construction and finance costs, and increased public opposition. Taken together they reveal a crisis of faith on the part

Never before has so much money been devoted to the development of a technology, and yet enormous gaps still exist in the safe production of nuclear power.

of the industry itself.

Like any other natural resource, uranium exists only in limited quantities. If nuclear plants proliferate the way their advocates project then nuclear fission will be an economically viable method of generating electricity for only a

very short span — perhaps only a few more decades.

The hope of the nuclear tech-

its safety record — not one person has yet been killed by nuclear power generation. But

major accident at a modern plant could cause 45,000 fatalities, 74,000 injuries, contamination of 50,000 square miles and \$17 billion damage. However, even those tragic figures are based on conservative and arbitrary commission estimates. There was no estimate of the genetic damage which would be the legacy of an over confident and over consumptive society to future generations.

An added danger was dramatically exposed in a 1974 nuclear explosion produced by the Indian government. The plutonium produced as a byproduct can, with relative ease, be converted into nuclear weapons. The proliferation of nuclear power around the world has provided the base for a harrowing proliferation of nuclear weapons. The global significance of such irresponsibility cannot be underestimated.

Instead of dealing, however, with the very real safety questions, the industry has adopted an attitude Nader describes as "professional insanity." It has promoted a dangerous technology while negligently minimizing the problems associated with it.

In November a California Assembly committee chaired by Charles Warren held the most complete hearings to date on this topic. There was extensive testimony on both sides, but in the end Warren stated: "The testimony has not assured members of the committee that there is no reason for concern about nuclear reactors. The case for being concerned has been made by those who tell us not to be concerned."

The nuclear industry has developed during the last 30 years under a veil of secrecy. Now that veil is being lifted. In an age of exposed coverups, it is asking the citizens of this state to continue to place confidence in its judgment, rather than taking responsibility firmly into our own hands. There is, after all, only one issue to be decided by Proposition 15 on June 8th: Who will determine whether these reactors are safe — the public or a self-interested industry?

## Big Oil Blackmail Broken

Did you notice the refund on your last natural gas bill?

Credit it to CAUSE — the Campaign Against Utility Service Exploitation. Arco decided to blackmail Southern California Gas Company customers to the tune of \$2.50 per month for a total of \$600 million. The surcharge was to finance the company's Alaska gas pipeline. The Public Utilities Commission approved the deal last August.

But a vigorous grass roots campaign that climaxed with more than a thousand consumers withholding their December/January bills finally broke up the deal. CAUSE saved each of us about \$210 and caused rejection of \$3 billion in similar advance payments nationally.

A victory to remember and a reminder of the power of the people when considering Proposition 15.



nologists is to develop the breeder reactor which would produce fissionable plutonium from low-grade uranium in quantities greater than it would consume. The promise is tantalizing, but is the price too high?

The production of nuclear energy is inescapably coupled with the production of hazardous radio-

such claims are hardly an assurance that we can yet assess the long-term affects of radiation exposure, or that the nuclear wastes can be safely contained for the hundreds of thousands of years that they will emit deadly radiation. Although there are no facilities for the long-term storage of these toxic wastes, the nuclear industry would bequeath the toxicity to future generations for hundreds of thousands of years of storage.

A measure of the confidence of the nuclear industry in their product has been their reluctance to accept full liability for accidents. The accidental release to the environment of even small amounts of the radioactive elements could have grave implications to land, life, and future generations. Because of these problems and dangers, insurance companies will not fully insure the nuclear power plants. Total compensation for all victims of an accident is limited to \$560 million — 3/4 of which will be covered by the federal government. A study made by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission more than nine years ago, however, projected that a