

HAT AND CLOAK

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WRITTEN AND STUCK TO-
GETHER COLLECTIVELY BY
SOME ANARCHISTS. x x x

We would like to investigate the possibility of getting a Film circuit together. There are lots of really good films easily available, and they come much cheaper if they are booked for a week or so. We want to hear from any group or person who has a projector and/or a suitable venue for showing films. We would also like to hear from anyone who fancies a full time job for say a 4 month season, booking, advertising and projecting the films at the various venues.

This could be a really good fund raising activity, and a whole lot of fun, so please get in touch if you are at all interested, or if you know anyone else who might be.

HELL NO! WE WON'T GLOW.....

Britain produced the first movement of popular resistance to the development of Nuclear Technology - the G.N.D. with its opposition to the military applications of atomic power. It is sad that this country now stands conspicuous among the western nations for its failure to generate a popular movement against the further application of nuclear technology.



This failure has been attributed to a lingering (even if somewhat diminished) faith in the 1950's vision of unlimited cheap power fuelled by clean, efficient nuclear reactors. A far more likely explanation is that here we have a case of good old-fashioned APATHY. Apathy fuelled by a system of 'D' notices and a process of more or less informal censorship of the mass media, part of a conspiracy of silence enjoined by all major interested parties to the nuclear industry.

There has never been a full debate on the nature and likely consequences of the nuclear industry in this country. The only form of scrutiny which it has undergone has been a very superficial and unduly optimistic financial assessment whose predictions have failed to materialise. The nuclear industry has swallowed up massive quantities of capital in research grants and subsidies. The UKAEA grant in 1976/77 was £114 million, and given the impending research and development costs for a working breeder reactor, it is unlikely that this body will pay for itself in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the first commercial fast breeder reactor in this country is now expected

to cost over £2 Billion - which means that in its own right it could never make a profit. This "unexpected turn of events" has received no real consideration in any public forum - WHY?

Safety issues were never seriously considered at all in making the decision to proceed with nuclear development. It was simply assumed that as the program went ahead, everything possible would be done in this area; and in most cases we can take this as probably true (if we ignore such things as the attempt by Westinghouse to build a reactor straddling the San Andreas Fault line at Bodega Bay just north of San Francisco). But the question that needs to be asked at this point is whether it is actually possible to provide adequate safeguards for the nuclear industry. The evidence suggests a negative answer.

The problem of dealing with nuclear waste simply has not been faced up to. The release of low level wastes into the general environment has already produced significant incidence of disease and mortality, and the question of high level wastes remains completely unanswered.

Also, on the subject of safety, nuclear authorities in the U.K. and Australia have already admitted liability for the deaths of workers exposed to supposedly "acceptable" levels of radiation whilst at work.

And what of 'accidents'? In a situation as risky as those created by nuclear technology there can be no room for human error however unlikely or unforeseeable. Only 100% certainty is acceptable and to ask for that is to ask the impossible - as the nuclear industry has already demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt. (After all, who would have thought that a maintenance electrician in a working reactor plant would burn through the wiring circuits of all five emergency cooling systems with a

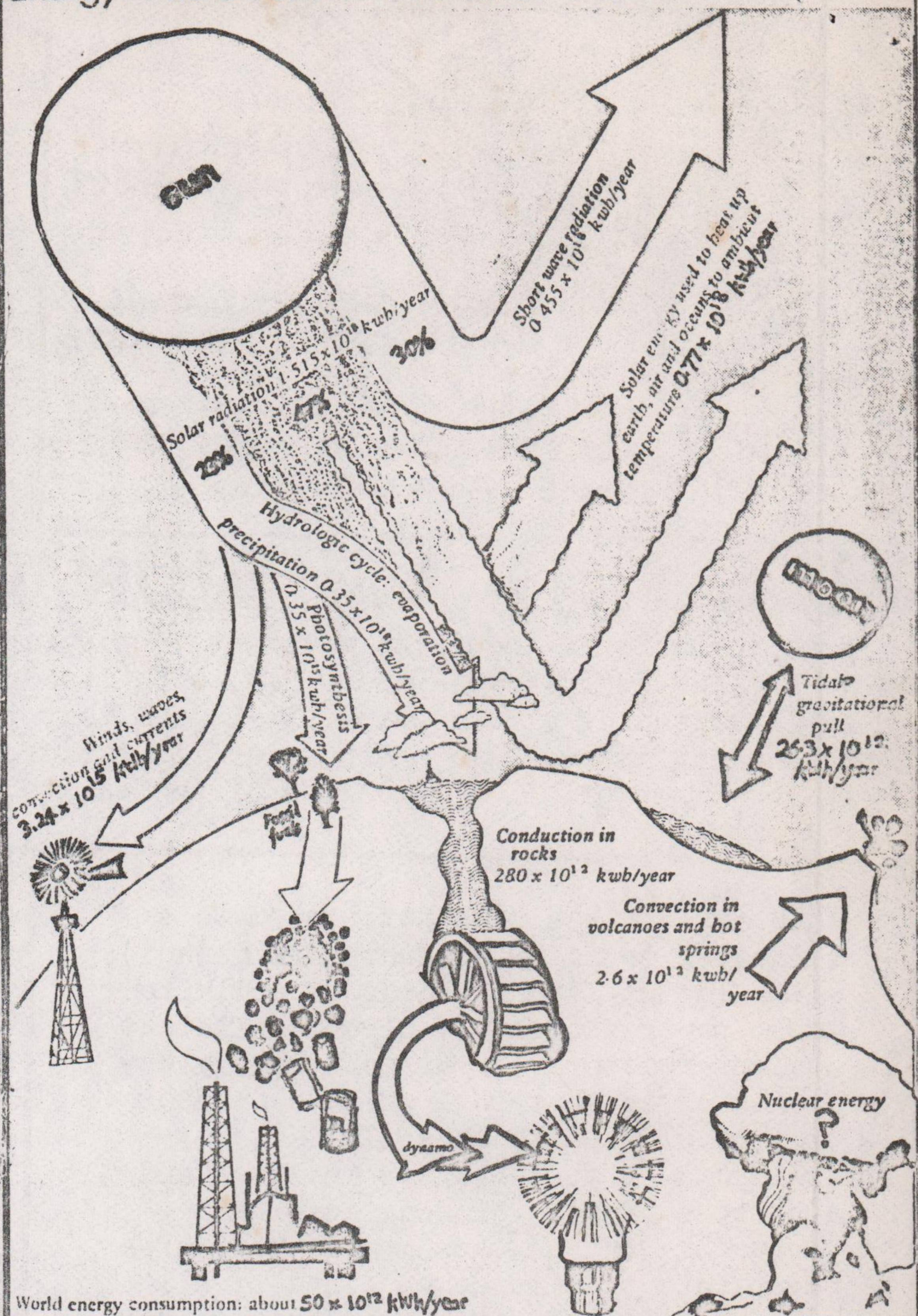
candle he was using to see his way around? But it happened last year in the U.S.A. and the reactor had to be switched off, fortunately nothing else happened before the core was brought off line, but a failure in the standard cooling mechanism, or any kind of emergency, and we could have kissed goodbye to Idaho as a human habitation for the next few decades at least). Nor is there any room for any other sort of malfunction; like the ones which led to seepage from a waste storage pond in the U.S.A., contaminating surrounding farms; or the untraceable leaks of radioactive gasses from the existing Windscale plant; or the two separate occasions on which the sodium coolant system at the Dounreay experimental Fast Reactor has exploded in the past five years. There has been no debate on any of these points, or on any other safety aspect of nuclear development - WHY?

Because the pursuit of a nuclear future is accepted as inevitable, so the ecological and social environments which this entails are accepted as equally inevitable. There has been no discussion of what they involve, and yet they each offer commanding reasons for abandoning the nuclear power industry. Let's look first at the ecological scenario. Firstly, if the chances of a major reactor accident are one-in-a-million per reactor per year, and this is the figure generally offered by the industry, then given the present rate of expansion we can expect a major catastrophe by the end of the century. The only doubt is which city we might lose: Wilmington? San Francisco? New York? Bristol? London?; depending on the nature of the accident and the wind direction at the time, it could be any of these, or even a county, a state, or a small country!

But even without an "accident", the low level radioactive waste emissions will slowly poison vast areas of the Earth's surface. 'Safe' absorption capacities are already exceeded in some localities, and plutonium and strontium are incredibly toxic (fatal doses are measured in small fractions of a microgramme). Besides all this, some organisms such as shellfish selectively absorb radioactive particles, so we may soon be saying a permanent farewell to major parts of our diet.

From the social point of view the prospects are even more frightening, because for every risk of accident there is a bigger risk of sabotage; whilst the proliferation of nuclear technology increases the risk of nuclear war (Israel

Energy: where it comes from & how it is used



From 'RADICAL TECHNOLOGY' Wildwood House 1976

is rumoured to have nuclear weapons already, and Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and Chile are all known to be acquiring weapons grade plutonium. These are all militarist states in potential or actual war zones.)

The theft of weapons grade fissile material by independent terrorists is also a real possibility - Friends of the Earth in America have produced a blue-print for a home-made bomb to demonstrate the potential danger, and there are even rumours circulating in Australia that radical ecologists have exploded a tiny home-made nuclear bomb to prove that it can be done.

Whilst these problems are serious enough, the measures with which the industry is bound to try to deal with them are even worse because they will be systematic and widespread:-

- 1) Travel restrictions, including quarantine and exclusion laws concerning areas with nuclear plant or waste dumps.
- 2) Total surveillance of actual and prospective employees in the industry.
- 3) The forbidding of Union, or any other political affiliations, at or outside

work, will be inevitable for all workers in the nuclear industry.

- 4) The setting up of special para-military police forces - In the U.S.A. they are already planning a nuclear police force to guard materials and sites, with orders to shoot on sight any unauthorised personnel found in the area of nuclear materials, and with absolute powers of search, arrest and inquisition without need for warrant or justification.

It is hard to see how any left or other dissident group could be tolerated in a nuclear society. Eventually a one-party state and suppression of free speech are inevitable if the nuclear industry continues to mushroom. In fact, given the lack of credible discussion on these vital issues one wonders if it hasn't arrived already.

Leading on from this we come to the question of alternative energy strategies, and again we are struck by the lack of any debate! The possibilities for clean or 'soft' energy sources are many and varied. First of all there is energy conservation through increased efficiency in energy use - this is receiving some superficial attention in this country; also energy conservation can be achieved by eliminating wasteful consumption (e.g. the vast majority of private car journeys) This area hasn't even been considered. Secondly, modern windmill technology is extremely highly developed and eminently suited to electricity generation in a country such as Britain.

Thirdly, solar power units have already achieved commercial viability in the U.S.A., and even in the British climate could provide almost all of our low grade heat (up to 100°C) requirements, which currently account for over half of our total energy use.

Fourthly, a number of other promising technologies are now receiving attention, among them wave and tidal generators. Most of these 'soft' energy paths differ from nuclear power sources in the following crucial ways:-

They are proven technologies - known to be viable. They are non-polluting and generally safe; and they are applicable to small scale social organisation and self managed life situations, and this, I think, is why the decision has been made to ignore them in favour of the nuclear monster with its necessarily concentrated, large scale, centralised and authoritarian social implications! The lack of debate is due to the fact that nuclear technology has to do with POWER in more than the one sense.



The so-called defence industry in which the nuclear establishment has its origins has, of course, nothing to do with 'defence', at least as far as you or I are concerned; but rather it is the instrument for maintaining the power of those in power. Nuclear technology is inextricably bound up with this, both in its civil and military applications.

In the field of external relations this is obvious, nuclear weapons are an effective threat for staving off aggressive neighbours or imperialist interests, whilst they can be used to exhort various concessions and tributes from less well-endowed states. But the internal applications are likely to be far more compulsive. Obviously the government is not going to bomb Notting Hill carnival in the event of a Paris Commune style insurrection, but with a highly centralised power industry, the power supply of any community which protests, refuses to co-operate or threatens any sign of revolt can be cut off at the flick of a switch. Or, more likely, the power supply to remote areas will never be established, forcing the population into large concentrations where we are comparatively easy to manage. Energy starvation could be used to enforce other things as well as residential patterns; cutting off energy to those who won't work (or can't find work) or to those who won't or can't pay rent, the list is potentially endless, and the power involved is almost impossible to argue with, let alone fight. And there you have a sure-fire recipe for slavery, sweat shops, super profits and the utter degradation of the mass of the people.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE, (IF THEY DON'T GET TO IT FIRST)

To challenge the nuclear establishment is to challenge the most powerful sections of our society. If ever a ruling class could be defined, surely this fight will do it, by lining them up against a single wall. Indeed in challenging the nuclear industry we challenge the very essence of our oppression, and that is why low level campaigns of the FoE variety are simply not adequate in the present situation.

I have no desire to disparage FoE, at least they've done something, which is more than can be said for any other organisation in this country, but FoE activists tend to be at worst reformist, but more often just politically naive. In the Reading area, FoE literature and meetings have been incredibly wishy washy. Their attempts to appear 'reasonable' and present both sides of the argument give the industry a credibility it does not deserve, and so they end up sounding like an advert for nuclear power (at least in its present stage of development) rather than critics.

But the blame for this lies with the more politically aware who have failed to involve themselves, FoE people are not as a rule corrupt or stupid, they are just naive, their programme stands basically worthy of support as a minimum basis for action, but much more activity is needed to fill this out if the movement is going to achieve anything.

WE NEED A MASSIVE MOBILISATION and if it's not spearheaded by the Anarchist movement then it probably won't happen.

STREET DEMONSTRATIONS (starting with the FoE organised anti-Windscale rally at Trafalgar Square on April 29)

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION CAMPAIGNS and A FLOOD OF LITERATURE giving useful, accurate and detailed case studies and statistics about the negative aspects of the nuclear industry, should be produced and circulated as widely as possible, along with badges, posters stickers etc. All this and much more needs to be done. THIS IS LITERALLY A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH, OF LIBERTY OR SLAVERY, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO FAIL. We are fortunate at least that the building of the new Windscale reprocessing facility stands as a threshold or watershed in the growth of the nuclear industry, introducing new dangers and exacerbating old ones to a dramatic

extent. We are also fortunate that FoE have brought this threshold situation into sharp focus via the Windscale Inquiry. Now we must take it up as the issue around which we can mobilise - the fulcrum for our lever against the nuclear establishment.

Clearly the time for 'letters to the editor' has passed, if indeed it ever existed, and parliament has indicated quite clearly its contempt for the humble petitioners who have so far beseeched it of good sense in this matter! There is only one option left. We and all the people must mobilise to exercise the final veto of a popular refusal, and to begin the dismantling of this monster before it grows too large.

And remember, it is not sufficient to demand a pause in the further expansion of the nuclear industry while we reflect on its future. It is not enough to cry out "Halt! No more!" The message which must be hammered home to the power industry is clear and urgent:-

GO BACK! YOU HAVE GONE THE WRONG WAY

Reading Anarchists are holding a workshop on non-violent techniques for Anarchists and Libertarians planning to attend the anti-Windscale demonstration. This workshop will be on Saturday 15th April. We would like it to be attended by as many people from as many groups as possible, so that the best possible co-ordination can be effected.

We also strongly urge groups in other parts of the country to organise similar preparatory meetings. Further details from:- Ms. Shevek, c/o 'Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

or phone (0734) 662285 evenings.

The Reading Anarchists are holding an open discussion meeting on the nuclear power issue at lunchtime (1p.m.) on Tuesday 25th April, in the Student Union Building, Whiteknights, Reading. The speaker will be a visiting Australian Anarchist who has been involved with the uranium movement in his country.

This speaker is also available for other similar engagements, especially around early May, if groups would like to contact Reading Anarchists before May Day.

Reading Anarchists are planning a pamphlet which we hope to publish before 29th April, the emphasis will be on documented facts, statistics and case studies, together with the Anarchist argument on the issue. It is intended as a resource for those who need to write or speak on the subject, as well as being a piece of propaganda in its own right.

STOP PRESS!!! COMRADES IN THE NORTH WHO CAN'T GET TO LONDON ON APRIL 29 CAN PARTICIPATE IN A WEEKEND OF ACTION MAY 6 and 7 AT
TORNESS (30 miles EDINBURGH) WHERE SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN TO RESIST THE ATOMIC MENACE ARE OPPOSING THE BUILDING OF OUR NEXT ATOM POWER STATION