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GAMES ANTI-NUKES PLAY

The Government Accountability Project's assault on nuclear energy.

On December 22, 1983, ABC's "20/20" featured an expose of alleged "bizarre activities" at the Palo Verde nuclear plant being constructed in the Arizona desert. According to "Secrets of the Desert," as the segment was called, the Bechtel Corporation, prime contractor for the plant, was engaged in secret massive dumping of new or barely used tools in a giant landfill on a scale so large that it could go at least part way toward explaining the project's huge cost overruns. Several earnest-sounding former employees came before the camera to contend that they had themselves been involved in regular evening burials of electric tools, portovans, acetylene hose, hard hats, welding gloves, boots, wrenches, tape measures, saws—some of them still in crates. ABC's reporter, Tom Jarriel, held up large whirring tools in each hand to illustrate the useful character of the machinery Bechtel had entombed in the shifting Arizona sands.

What was the motive for Bechtel's peculiar management decision? In explanation, "20/20" offered the theory that the tools were supplied by a company Bechtel owned. Bechtel buried them unused or barely-used so as to be able to buy more tools from its subsidiary company, thus increasing profits.

On the program, one of the workers declared, "We know what size the pits are and where they are." The state attorney general vowed to Jarriel that he would find some way to dig up the desert dump site, but lamented the absence of any funds at his command to do so. After the program, the Bechtel Corporation, stung by the dreadful publicity, paid \$300,000 for the attorney general's office to dig up the sites pinpointed by its accusers. In

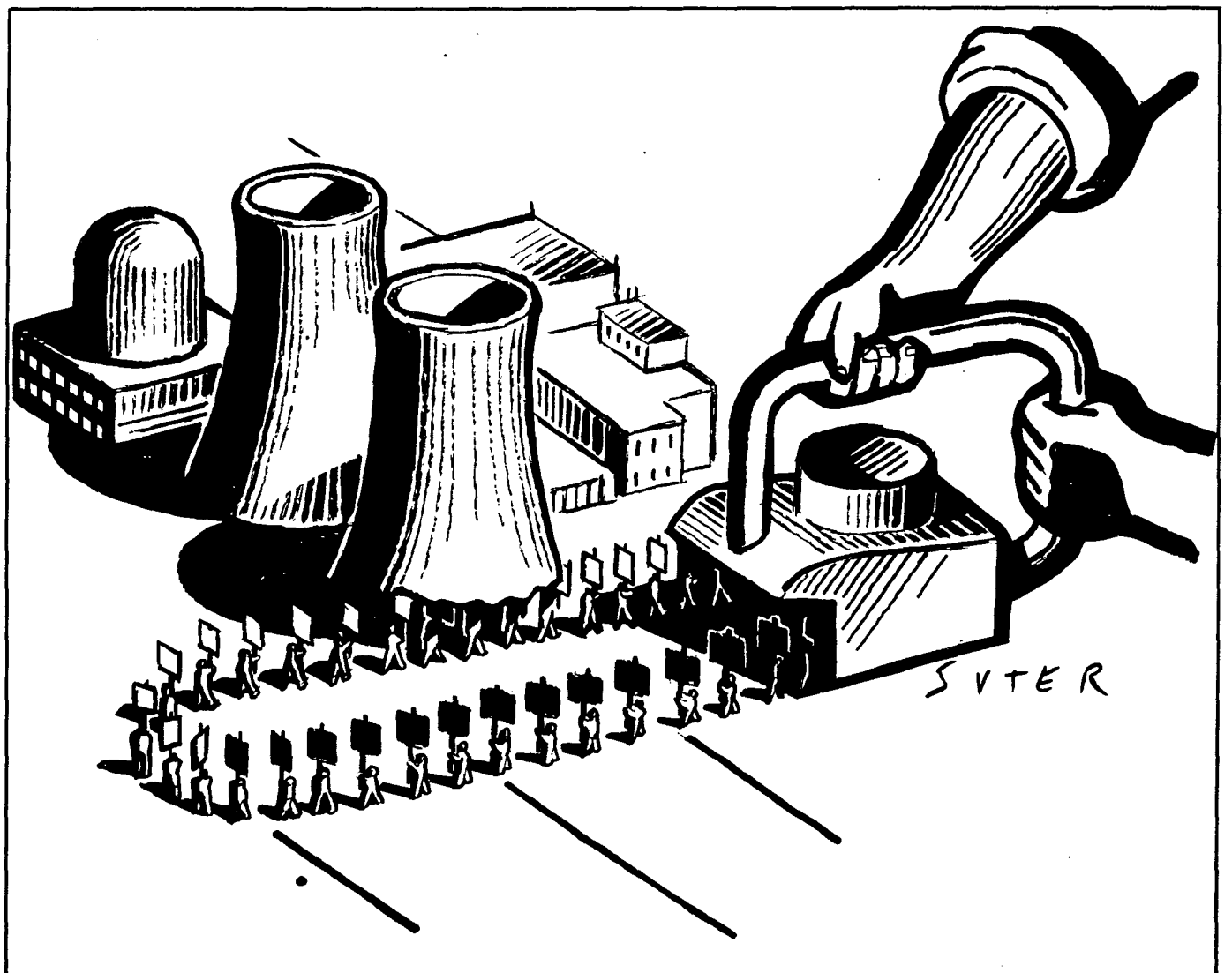
December 1984 the attorney general's office issued its report, which said that apart from a few broken hammers and pieces of wire, it had found nothing at all. Despite the wide publicity accorded the original charges, the revelation that the charges were without substance was confined to such journals as *Highway and Heavy Construction*. While "20/20" could not totally ignore the conclusion of its own story, it used the fruitless search for buried tools as a means to put the knife into Bechtel once again. On March 7, 1985, in the context of yet another attack on the Palo Verde plant, this time focusing on

"rate shock," "20/20" complained loftily that the ratepayer had to pay for such controversies, which "drive up the cost of the already over-budgeted project."

ABC may have extricated itself with admirable agility, but what had led it to broadcast the report in the first place? The source of ABC's story, it seems certain,¹ was the Government Accountability Project (GAP), at the time part of the Institute for Policy Studies, the Washington, D.C. based "think-tank" which for two decades has served as the intellectual hub of radical activism in the United States.

(Like other successful IPS projects, it has now formally "spun off" from the mother organization, although its headquarters remain in the IPS building.) GAP has become the most successful anti-nuclear organization in the country, stopping at least one multi-billion dollar project cold (Cincinnati's Zimmer plant), playing a role in stopping Consumers Power's Midland facility in Michigan, and running up many millions of dollars in costs for other plants whose operations it has delayed by a variety of means.

GAP's *modus operandi* in the tale of buried tools was a variation on its nor-



Rael Jean Isaac's most recent book (with Erich Isaac) is *The Coercive Utopians (Regnery Gateway)*.

procedure. It was typical in that GAP worked together with a local anti-nuclear group (in this case, the Palo Verde Intervention Fund), that it relied on "whistleblowers," usually former workers at the targeted plant, and that went directly to the media with their stories. Normally, however, GAP ignores allegations until a plant is almost complete—sometimes awaiting the plant's license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to operate at low, or even full power—before it declares the plant is unsafe and should not be permitted to operate. (In the case of Palo Verde, the timing coincided with hearings scheduled by the Arizona public utility commission on the utility's request for emergency rate relief.)

Whatever the details of GAP's approach in the particular case, the group owes its success to its masterful playing of an anti-nuclear "game." GAP has devised the rules, and it has made the media, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the courts, and the utilities play by them. GAP established the pattern of its game in 1980 when it first entered the anti-nuclear energy arena to stop Cincinnati Gas and Electric's Zimmer plant, which was then 97-percent complete. GAP's chief whistleblower in this case was Thomas Applegate, a private detective who had been hired by the utility to check rumors of time-card cheating by workers at the plant and who claimed that, in the course of his investigation, he had discovered dangerously bad work at the plant, above all faulty welds.

GAP went to the media with its charges, triggering an NRC investigation. While no one ever proved there were faulty welds at Zimmer, GAP had tumbled onto something. It turned out the utility had neglected its paperwork, and was helpless to prove that the welds, or other work, were good.

I say "seems certain" because ABC refuses to confirm that GAP was its source. Pressed by Reed Irvine of Accuracy in Media, George Watson, vice-president of ABC News, would say only that GAP had been "among [their] sources." I tried to elicit information on the origin of the story from the "20/20" segment's producer, Kathy McManus, who said she was unable to speak without permission of Mauri Perl of the ABC public relations department. Miss Perl would not give the necessary permission. The circumstantial evidence, however, is overwhelming. The Palo Verde Intervention Fund's press conference in December 1983 first publicly airing the charges could not have triggered ABC's interest because ABC had already filmed its interviews with local whistleblowers months earlier. GAP had acted as counsel for the Palo Verde Intervention Fund, a tiny group, and so it seems obvious that GAP used its media connections to bring "20/20" to Palo Verde.

In the end, pounded by the media, excoriated by politicians leaping on a popular bandwagon, placed under a stop-work order by the NRC, and facing huge costs to tear down large parts of the plant so as to start the paperwork all over again, Cincinnati Gas and Electric in 1984 abandoned its plant, announcing it would convert it to coal. Paul Sieck, a business executive active in Energy Ratepayers United, a group that fruitlessly did battle against GAP, says that Zimmer had become such an emotional public issue the utility had no choice: It simply saw no light at the end of the tunnel. Ironically,

were missing. While this is indeed a tribute to bad paper work, it is also an indication of the paper quagmire into which those who construct plants are pushed by NRC regulations and of the propitious conditions under which GAP works.

In any event, the media never failed to rise to the bait, and the NRC dutifully launched last minute investigations in plant after plant, even though the allegations of GAP whistleblowers were repeatedly found to be inaccurate or of no consequence for safety. What GAP achieved in most cases was significant delay that drove up costs to

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once the decision was made to abandon the plant, an independent study commissioned by the Ohio Public Utilities Commission, while highly critical of what it called Cincinnati Gas and Electric's "substantial mismanagement," concluded that the plant had in fact been well-built overall but had "become the victim of an elusive unknown percentage of unacceptable work which cannot be identified."

GAP had developed a game-plan so successful it saw no reason to alter it: Go in with accusations of defective welds and inadequate paperwork, known in the trade as "quality assurance," and demand the NRC issue a stop-work order until a full investigation of all safety-related issues could be completed. GAP could hope, with good reason, that the millions in interest the utility would be forced to pay at this last minute stage of construction would force it to abandon the plant before such a study could even be undertaken. In the wake of Zimmer, GAP was flooded with requests from anti-nuclear groups from around the country, and it selected eleven plants that looked particularly promising.² To be sure, the game has never gone quite as smoothly again, if only because the other plants GAP targeted did not suffer from such overwhelming paperwork failures. In the case of Zimmer, an NRC official estimated that 4 million documents

consumers, and creation of a climate of fear and distrust of nuclear power among the public to be served by the plant.

Whistleblowers, the key to GAP's game, were solicited, with the cooperation of local anti-nuclear groups, through everything from printed appeals to plant workers to visits to their local hangouts. When despite such efforts insufficient workers came forward, GAP accused the utility of intimidating workers and demanded the NRC "break down" the plant's "omniscient image." At Duke Power's Catawba plant in North Carolina, for example, where GAP teamed up with the local Palmetto Alliance to stop the plant, GAP announced that its "previous experience" with Zimmer and Midland had given it "a good idea of what to look for and what we will find at Catawba." Although GAP managed to wring three separate investigations from the NRC, it suffered from an embarrassing paucity of whistleblowers, and Catawba was ultimately licensed earlier this year.

What motivates GAP's whistleblowers? Jay Harrison, whom the NRC's Office of Special Cases assigned to investigate many of GAP's 190 allegations against Midland, summed up his experience: "You get some real strange people making charges for various reasons. . . . When you go to interview them they are incoherent or vague for whatever reason." Harrison found there were people who were disgruntled, who had vendettas, who were getting even for having lost their jobs. Sometimes allegations were the by-product of tensions, typical of all

the plants, between workers and safety inspectors, who often faced verbal abuse for refusing to approve work.

Whatever the motivation, GAP after a while even had "traveling alibers," workers who discovered hazards at more than one plant. E. Earl Kent had been employed by Bechtel at the Midland plant for three months. He came forward with GAP's favorite charge of defective welds. It turned out Kent had been fired after twice failing the certification exam for his job as welding inspector. Moreover, it appeared that Kent had earlier worked for Litton Industries, building ships for the Navy. After being fired in 1971, Kent sent a 26-page telegram to President Nixon, claiming the ships being designed and built would create "a bunch of widows and orphans." The Navy set up a board of inquiry, which found the charges without merit. (One senior welding engineer remarked that Kent wanted tungsten steel around the turbine exhaust so thick and heavy it would have sunk the ship.) All the ships challenged by Kent remain in safe operation today.

Undaunted, after Midland Kent turned up on the West Coast at another GAP-targeted plant, San Onofre, to allege thousands of defective welds. At a cost of \$200,000 these charges were duly investigated by the NRC with the assistance of Southern California Edison and Bechtel, and found to be without merit. GAP lashed out at the investigators, announced that Kent's credentials were "impeccable," and declared the NRC would be held accountable for his "shabby treatment." There was even an effort to bring Kent to testify at Catawba, although he had never been there, to back up the testimony of one Howard Nunn, fired for excessive unexcused absences, who had announced: "I'm concerned [Catawba] is permeated with laminated, stinking rotten pipe."

In playing its game, GAP is greatly helped by an even bigger player: the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. As one disgusted Commonwealth Edison of Illinois official put it, the NRC's licensing process "in no way lends itself to the objective of licensing nuclear power plants. Rather it seems to be designed to offer opponents every opportunity to interfere with licensing."

The NRC's rules provide that allegations against a plant can be brought forward in any form or forum (for example, the rules specifically mention phone, letter, newsmedia reports, offices, business meetings, even social functions), at any time, by anyone. There is no cut-off point, which permits GAP to store up its allegations—and, in the case of California's Diablo

² Apart from Zimmer, the main GAP targets have been Callaway in Missouri, Catawba in North Carolina, Comanche Peak in Texas, Diablo Canyon and San Onofre in California, LaSalle and Braidwood in Illinois, Midland in Michigan, Palo Verde in Arizona, Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, and Waterford in Louisiana.

Canyon, to unload thousands of them on the unfortunate NRC commissioners at one time. There is no requirement that the allegations have any relation to safety or that they be backed up by proof, and there is no penalty for false charges, although investigating them can consume vast quantities of taxpayer dollars and, because the cost of delay is so high, increase the cost of the plant by millions of dollars.

In a single eight-month period (from November 1983 to June 1984) the NRC calculated that it devoted 18,000 staff hours to examining GAP allegations at Diablo Canyon alone. Of course, no issue is ever resolved to GAP's satisfaction. During an NRC meeting on the plant, one commissioner observed: "You know, collectively we have spent several years and probably a billion dollars dealing with the seismic issue." Yet most of GAP's last minute allegations were based on the "seismic issue." One of GAP's attorneys, Tom Devine, cheerfully dismissed the NRC's efforts: "We don't know any better now whether Diablo Canyon can withstand an earthquake than we did in 1981." Perhaps the ultimate effrontery came from Mothers for Peace, the anti-nuclear group that invited GAP to Diablo Canyon. A leader of the group, which over the years had thrown up every possible roadblock to completion of the plant, from mass demonstrations to legal challenges, complained to the NRC: "That plant is fourteen years old. The whole plant is old. It's an obsolete plant."

And yet, were it not for the bottomless credulity of the media, it is doubtful that GAP's game would work. Local media are crucial in arousing the public and politicians, forcing the NRC to bend over backwards in its dealings with GAP. While typically the media invite the utility to respond to GAP's charges, the utility, which has no prior knowledge of the charges, is afraid to call them groundless without a detailed internal investigation; GAP wins the battle, because in being unable to deny the charges immediately, the utility has given them credibility. GAP is equally successful with national media. For example, ABC, in addition to the Palo Verde fairy tale, earlier this year featured GAP's charges against Texas's Comanche Peak in a three-hour anti-nuclear documentary entitled "The Fire Unleashed," whose segment on nuclear energy must go down as one of the silliest performances in television history. A national television audience was soberly treated to a collection of old wives' tales about staggering cats, deformed dandelions, under-producing ducks, waves of heat, hair turning white overnight—all the result of Three Mile Island, whose clean-up GAP successfully delayed by a full year.

Ultimately GAP's game rests on the pretense that we all share the same goal, namely the safe operation of nuclear power plants. Thus in a 1983 statement submitted to the NRC, GAP was careful to insist that "the Project [GAP] is not an 'anti-nuclear' organization"; its purpose was rather "to prevent health and safety dangers, corruption, fraud and other abuses." When Energy Ratepayers United, the citizens' group that tried to save Zimmer, sent letters-to-the-editor trying to expose GAP's real purposes, Louis Clark, GAP's executive director, took the trou-

bled even after a plant was on line. At that point, according to the memo, GAP could demand that the utility prove its ability to compensate all claimants in the event of an accident, and to pay for all possible future repairs. In the event of an accident or even "major unanticipated repairs" the notion of "psychological trauma" could be introduced. For, said the memo, the economic consequences could be "devastating if a significant percentage of the population tried to leave due to fear that the facility will reopen."

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ble to write to the group's leader, Robert Acomb, denying the charges. In his letter of April 16, 1983, Clark said that the purposes of Energy Ratepayers United and GAP were the same: "At least I have been given to understand that you want the Zimmer Nuclear Power Station to operate safely. . . . The Government Accountability Project has no hidden agendas." A bare two weeks later, however, GAP prepared a memorandum for its own use analyzing a Supreme Court decision permitting the state of California to rule out nuclear plants on economic but not on safety grounds; the decision, the GAP memo said, could be used "creatively," so as "to impose a statutory ban on construction and probably on operation," since economic impact studies could be

The hypocrisy can get wearing. When the anti-nuclear groups have their annual get-togethers under the aegis of Ralph Nader's Critical Mass, they let their hair down. Robert Hager, a member of the law team that represented the estate of Karen Silkwood, told the assembled activists in 1983: "Let's face it. We don't want safe plants—we want the ones being planned to be blocked and the ones operating to be shut down."

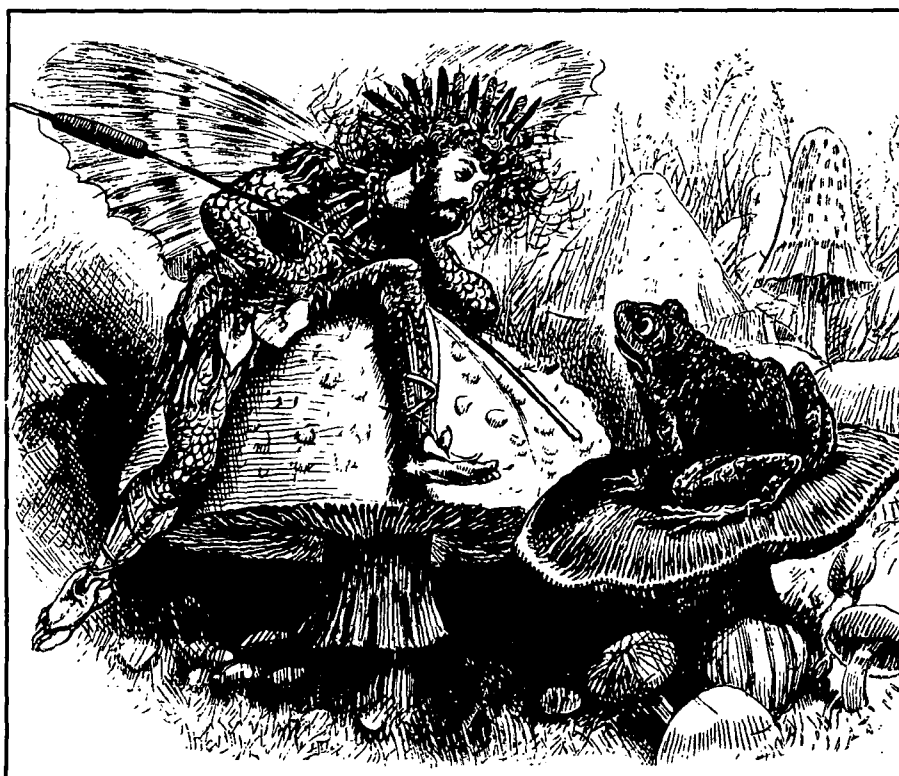
The media never question GAP's public persona. In the hundreds of stories on GAP's activities that I read in local papers near GAP-targeted plants, not one described GAP as an anti-nuclear group. It was an "environmental watchdog group," a "government watchdog group," a "national public interest organization."

Even specifically business-oriented segments of the national press are more probing. The *Wall Street Journal* has referred to GAP as "a private watchdog group" and *Business Week* describes it as a "public interest group."

Under these conditions the NRC for the most part is helpless to do anything but play the fly to GAP's spider. Occasionally the commissioners flap their wings in protest. When in October 1984 GAP, two days before the NRC's final hearing on granting a full power license to Union Electric Company's Callaway plant, came up with forty-eight new allegations, two of the commissioners lost patience. One of them declared, "I simply find it difficult to believe that many of these [allegations] were not known for some period of time," and added that GAP's effort to toss all the charges on the table at the last minute "just isn't going to work." And in a rare show of unanimity, all five commissioners promptly voted to license Callaway.

But for the most part the NRC has meekly played GAP's game. Even when presented with opportunities for bringing GAP to heel, the NRC has been afraid to act. In 1982, Consumer Power received permission from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board to subpoena GAP affidavits alleging serious safety problems at its Midland plant. When GAP claimed it was concerned about keeping the identities of its whistleblowers secret, Consumer Power said the identities of GAP's sources could be deleted from the affidavits—the utility wanted only the substance of the charges so that it could correct any problems that might exist. But the last thing GAP wanted of course, was for the utility to investigate the allegations; when GAP was ready to demand a stop-work order, the utility might be able to refute the charges or say the problems had already been addressed. GAP refused to honor the subpoenas, and it was then up to the NRC to request court enforcement. The NRC put off making any decision until the end of June 1984. By then the issue was moot: A week earlier Consumer Power had thrown in the towel, postponing the project indefinitely.

Allowing utilities to know what allegations are pending against them is not the only means to stop GAP's game: A more courageous NRC could change the rules. Whistleblowers could be required to provide evidence for their charges. There could be a cut-off point after which charges could no longer be submitted. Above all, there could be penalties for false allegations. Intervenor groups like GAP and the local



anti-nuclear groups it works with might have to post a bond which would be forfeited if the allegations proved untrue. (In courts of law, those who are found to bring a case frivolously can be forced to bear its costs.) Ironically, the Government Accountability Project's ability to operate rests on the fact that it is accountable to no one and nothing.

The NRC does little to impede GAP's game because of fear, and the NRC has good reason to be intimidated. For it would be taking on not only GAP and its formidable parent, the Institute for Policy Studies, but the entire complex of organizations seeking to eliminate nuclear power. GAP has taken on the task of administering the last blows to a nuclear power industry already on the ropes, thanks to the earlier efforts of organizations such as Ralph Nader's critical Mass, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Mobilization for Survival. If the NRC dared to take on GAP, the weight of the entire anti-nuclear complex would be thrown into the lists, with the media as its propagandist.

As it is, the NRC reaps no gratitude from GAP for its forbearance. GAP community organizer Billie Garde appeared on ABC's "The Fire Unleashed" to say of the NRC: "The agency is ideologically corrupt. They believe that the public is the enemy and it is their job to help the industry figure out a way to break the law and survive." Nor does GAP allow an NRC decision to go against it without a fight. When an NRC investigation of GAP allegations at the San Onofre plant in California failed to come up with the result GAP desired, it demanded—and got—an NRC investigation of the original NRC investigation. When that too exonerated the plant, GAP, along with the local anti-nuclear Orange County Alliance for Survival, staged a press conference in March 1985 demanding an investigation of the investigation of the investigation!

And when the NRC, after years of delay, finally issued operating permits for both units of Diablo Canyon (one at full power), GAP went to court. The U.S. Appeals Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the issues GAP raised were the province of a federal court in California, and at this writing GAP has readied its mandamus action for filing in that state. Simultaneously GAP has turned to Congress. Last June Massachusetts Congressman Edward Markey, chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power (and author of *Nuclear Peril*, which calls for the elimination of nuclear energy), blasted

the NRC in words that directly echoed Billie Garde's on "The Fire Unleashed." The NRC, admonished Markey, should "stop looking at the public as 'the enemy,'" and he demanded a written statement within 30 days explaining why hearings on the earthquake issue should not be held now. Through Congress it appeared GAP might well succeed in reopening the seismic issue after even the NRC had done with it.

There are in fact signs that GAP may be shifting its tactics to make the NRC

they were published by the *New York Times*, Victor Marchetti (of the CIA) and Robert Wall (of the FBI). The Project on Official Illegality served to assemble sensitive information and leak it to the press. In 1976 it was expanded beyond the national security and intelligence agencies to include other branches of government and renamed the Government Accountability Project. This gave it greater legitimacy. (Congress, with only ten dissenting votes, passed a whistleblower protection act partly based on model

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its primary target. Both in its current effort to prevent restart of the undamaged TMI reactor and to block the licensing of Commonwealth Edison of Illinois's Braidwood plant, GAP has dispensed with worker allegations to focus instead on charges that the NRC has failed to follow its own rules. For the courts this might seem a more clear-cut issue than deciding disputed safety claims—and could be equally effective in stopping nuclear plants.

GAP has been playing behind the scenes for quite a while. It began as IPS's Project on Official Illegality, which helped whistleblowers from national security agencies, like Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame (IPS had the Pentagon Papers a year before

legislation drafted by GAP.) GAP now described itself as a "public interest group to help restore confidence in the federal system" and handed out brochures to government employees in colors of red, white, and blue, with an American flag on the cover, inviting them to contact GAP with stories of waste and abuse in their agencies.

When GAP turned its attention to nuclear power in 1980, it thus had experience in presenting a mask of "working to make the system function better." Those early red, white, and blue brochures had their counterpart in the appeals sent out by alleged Richard Parks on behalf of GAP to workers at the Callaway plant. (Parks's earlier allegations, focusing specially on a polar crane designed for use in removing the reactor vessel head at the

damaged Three Mile Island plant, held up work there for a full year—the crane was ultimately used and worked fine.) Parks explained to workers that "we are the line of defense to protect the general population" and urged them to come to GAP with their "concerns," assuring them that "our intention is not to stop the nuclear plants."

In respect to energy, the goals of GAP can be inferred from the sketch of an ideal energy system that IPS provides in its proposal for an Encyclopedia for Social Reconstruction, a long-favored IPS project.

The energy will be produced and disseminated through small scale technology. . . . We simply would have got rid of most of the extra high voltage wires strung around the country; closed up the coal mines, oil and gas fields; taken down oil refineries and much of the petrochemical establishment.

Nuclear energy, in other words, is only the initial target, selected because of the ease of arousing public fear, and the broader goal is to eliminate *all* centralized energy. This in turn is seen by IPS as fundamental to the total reshaping of society in accordance with the sixties movement philosophy it espouses. IPS leaders have called since 1971 for "dismantling" what they refer to as the "national-security state." IPS co-founder Marcus Raskin specifically called for the dismantling of America's "Colonies," including "the Violence Colony" (our military and police), "the Channeling Colony" (our educational system), and "the Plantation Colony" (our economic system). Cut energy and you cut the jugular of our way of life.

Given GAP's origin and goals, it is ironic that its funding comes from foundations representing some of the major beneficiaries of the economic system IPS seeks to "dismantle." Yet GAP's funders include one of the largest U.S. foundations, the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, as well as the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation (Mrs. Babcock was the daughter of R.J. Reynolds of tobacco fame), and a member of the Rockefeller family, whose identity is not revealed by GAP, which has disclosed only that it is a younger member of the family who earmarked a \$20,000 contribution specifically for "nuclear investigations."

It is possible, although not likely, that simple stupidity is the explanation for these donations to GAP. But there is no question that much of GAP's money comes from foundations in no way averse to GAP's goals. For example, the Youth Project, which gave GAP \$35,000 in 1984,³ serves as a funnel to

³ All the figures are for 1984, but normally the pattern of donations to IPS and its spinoffs is fairly stable from year to year.



transfer money, much of it from corporate foundations (these, to be sure, in most cases have no conception of the nature of the Youth Project), to radical grass-roots groups. The Playboy Foundation, another donor, has liberally supported IPS, the more radical "peace" groups, and remarkably, women's liberation groups. Another donor is the Funding Exchange, which channels money from nine of the most radical funds in the United States, their money coming from young people whose wealth in turn derives from such fortunes as DuPont, Gulf and Western, IBM, Pillsbury, and General Motors. These funds are quite explicit about their goals. Haymarket People's Fund, one of the nine, announces in its annual report that the fund is "dedicated to eliminating rich people" and to remaking "a sexist and racist system that puts profits for a few people before the needs of the majority." There can also be little doubt that GAP can be straightforward in its dealings with the Fund for Constitutional Government (the single largest donor to GAP), which receives most of its funds from Stewart Mott, a perennial funder of radical causes whose wealth derives from his father's part in building General Motors.

Unfortunately, it looks as if the achievements of GAP and its sister anti-nuclear organizations—halting nuclear energy development and blowing billions of dollars of investment in abandoned plants—may be invisible to those who will pay the price. In February 1985 *Forbes* magazine, self-styled "capitalist tool," published a 17-page analysis of the decline and fall of nuclear energy by executive editor James Cook. His thesis is that nuclear energy had been destroyed not by its enemies but by its friends. Indeed neither the activities nor even the names of "the enemies" are mentioned in the article. One would never know there was such an organization as GAP or the Clamshell Alliance or Critical Mass or even the Union of Concerned Scientists. Cook divides the blame among the federal government and the NRC, equipment manufacturers, contractors and subcontractors, utility executives, and state regulatory commissions. Cook's analysis was then echoed by *National Review* several months later. If even conservative magazines dismiss the role of anti-nuclear activists as inconsequential, there is every prospect that GAP and the others will enjoy the ultimate triumph of seeing the blame for the consequences of their actions fall upon their victims.

Yet Cook's own analysis should have led him directly to the anti-nuclear intervenors. He zeroes in on cost over-

runs as the culprit, and points to the indifference of the NRC to the economic cost of the regulations it imposed. (Although Three Mile Island had a handful of causes, most of them to do with deficiencies in the control room, the NRC imposed 2,000 new regulations resulting in an additional 6,000 required steps to comply with the guidelines.) Cook notes that in some cases utilities had to tear apart nearly completed plants to conform to the changes. He blames contractors and subcontractors for failing "to question the cost-effectiveness of the NRC's dic-

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tates." Yet surely the NRC's behavior cannot be explained without reference to the vociferous demands of the anti-nuclear groups which have been so successful in intimidating it. The costly retrofits that in some instances may have actually *reduced* plant safety,⁴ the often absurd paperwork demands, the delays to examine frivolous allegations were attempts to satisfy the anti-nuclear activists as they rode high in the wake of Three Mile Island. All this is not to say that there have not been management failures or a few companies that have managed to surmount all obstacles, like Duke Power, which Cook singles out as the best of the utilities. (Of course, this did not stop GAP from doing its best to prevent completion of Duke's Catawba plant.) But for the cause of the problems one must look to the intervenors, not management or the NRC, which have merely responded to their challenge in totally inadequate fashion.

At the end of his article, Cook obliquely gives the activists their due. Comparing the surge in nuclear plant construction abroad with the U.S. debacle, Cook notes that like the U.S. France has a two-stage regulatory process, but permits no public participation once the project gets underway. Canada goes France one better and permits no public participation at all. Cook writes that "prohibition may be half the battle. . . . In the end the prob-

⁴In March 1985 James R. Tourtellotte, appointed by the NRC to be chairman of its Regulatory Reform Task Force, delivered a devastating and, in view of his position as an NRC executive, distinctly courageous report. He concluded that the "backfitting" demands of the NRC, which have "cost consumers billions," inflicted "paralyzing delays into the administrative process," and "made nuclear plants more difficult to operate and maintain," may also in some cases "have reduced rather than enhanced public health and safety."

lem may boil down simply to this: Can a technology as rigorous and demanding and for all that as useful as nuclear power find a place in a society as open as the U.S.?" Cook's contention about management failures in the U.S. is ultimately beside the point. Nuclear energy abroad has been successful because plants are built in half the time it takes in the United States. Much of the technology is U.S. technology; the plants built many years ago in the United States provide inexpensive and dependable energy. If GAP had been let loose while these were being built,

who can doubt but that it would have found "allegers" and paperwork deficiencies with which to have demanded stop-work orders? It strains credulity to believe that all over the world, management has the secret of building U.S.-designed plants, while U.S. managers alone lack competence.

While the focus here has been on the Government Accountability Project, it is simply the most effective of the many groups who play similar games. For instance, the Center for Defense Information, an "expert" source for both the media and liberal congressmen, describes itself in a full page newspaper ad soliciting memberships and contributions as an organization that works to "support a strong, but not excessive, military posture." In fact it has opposed all major new weapons systems since its inception in 1972, releases data that obfuscate Soviet superiority in any weapons area, even conventional forces, and works to incite pacifist and neutralist sentiment in Europe. The Center for National Security Studies (which targets our intelligence agencies), the Center for International Policy (which targets our alliances), and the Center for Constitutional Rights are only a few of the most skillful game-players. The Center for Constitutional Rights recently conducted a series of "war crimes trials" of the United States in cities around the country and submitted to the United Nations an "indictment" charging the U.S. with "conspiracy" to unleash nuclear war "against the peoples of the world."

Despite such activities, these groups maintain their credibility with the media as "public interest" organizations. When, in 1985, the Institute for Policy Studies published a handbook disclosing nuclear weapons sites

around the country (based, according to its authors, IPS fellows William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse, on information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and "leaks"), ABC's "20/20" did a respectful segment on the publication, with Arkin explaining the most "interesting" findings (e.g., the high number of sites in New York State). ABC did not question why IPS had put out such a publication—that IPS was dedicated to the public's "right to know" was simply assumed. Nor did the ABC interviewer inquire of Arkin as to the extent to which "leaks" had been used, whether the "leaks" had involved secret documents, and the propriety of publishing information thus obtained. It is true the IPS volume also contained information on Soviet nuclear sites. But there were only 11 pages on this subject in the appendix as against 82 pages on U.S. sites, and the material on the Soviet Union came from published Western sources, while much of the information on the U.S. had not hitherto been published. Thanks to publicity such as that provided by "20/20," IPS could look forward to excellent sales of its book, being called upon by Congress as a source of expert advice, many more articles on the *New York Times* op-ed page, and continued foundation grants.

GAP stands out not because it alone has mastered this game, but because it can boast that rarely have so few wreaked so much damage upon so many. GAP's 1984 budget was a mere \$180,000, its staff three poorly paid lawyers and a community organizer (a fifth staff worker was added in 1985). Yet merely investigating one relatively minor GAP charge at Consumers' Midland plant cost the NRC \$800,000, and overall GAP has cost the nuclear industry (and ultimately the consumer) many billions of dollars. This does not include the much larger damage to the economy that will result from shortages of electricity in the years ahead. For the impact of intervenors has not been solely on nuclear plants. Utilities are reluctant to invest in building *any* new capacity: While it has been eight years since the last nuclear plant was ordered, in the last three years only one coal plant has been ordered. Yet demand for electricity has been growing steadily, and merely replacing existing aging plants makes new capital investment essential. Essential or not, Frederick Mielke, chairman of the board of Pacific Gas and Electric, remarked in February 1985: "No prudent investor will risk the capital needed to build coal or nuclear-fueled plants in California." By their actions, it is clear that utility executives around the country share his sentiments. □

Benjamin J. Stein

THE NEW WAR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Today's battles would make Keats and Byron blush.

My old pal Michael Shamberg, who used to be a hippie and now makes money in the picture business, tells me that in information theory the greatest value attaches to that piece of information which is the newest. In that spirit, let me start right out by telling you that here in Los Angeles a war is raging: the war between men and women. This is not your old comedy saw, the drawing room battle of the sexes. This is a bitter war, with casualties, fighting in the trenches, and real pain.

Herewith, a few dispatches from the front:

Lunch with my former Valley Girl, Staci. Staci is twenty-two, six months out of college, down at the bars and clubs night after night in the front lines of combat. Staci looks like the young Sophia Loren, only better, with shag hair and braces-perfect teeth.

"This is what I like to do," she tells me over a chicken sandwich at the Hard Rock Cafe. "I go to a really hot club like Voila, where it's all Ferraris and Rolls-Royces out front. I go inside and just stand at the bar. If a guy buys me a few drinks, I'll listen to his lies for a while, and then he'll ask me where I live. So I say to him, 'Get to the bottom line.' And he always says to me, 'To make a long story short, how would you like to come home and have sex with me?'"

"And I like to look him in the eye and say, 'To make a long story even shorter, are you really, really good in bed?' And usually the guy does a double take and says, 'Well, I'm pretty good.'"

"And then I go, 'Well, sorry. That's not good enough,' and I walk away and talk to somebody else. You should see the looks on their faces. It's great."

"I have another thing I like to do," Lois says. She is Staci's roommate. She is a ravishingly beautiful black girl

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about six feet tall, with skin like the cocoa Mom used to make on snow days when I was home from school.

"Sometimes I go to a club like Sasch and I meet a good-looking guy and I talk to him for a while, and I let him take me home. Then, we're just about to go for it, and he's really ready, and I look at him, you know, and I go, 'Oh, sorry, I don't think this is gonna work out.'"

"And the guy always goes, 'Why? What's the matter?'"

"And I go, 'Well, I'm sorry, but I just checked out your size, and I don't really think it's worth my time.'"

"The guys get so crazy, they usually just put on their clothes and walk out of the room and don't say a word," Lois says proudly. "It's great."

"You must be out of your mind," I answer. "That's unbelievably mean. Why don't you just stay home if you don't want to get picked up?"

"We do want to get picked up," Staci says. "But we want to get picked up so we can give some of the dirt back to them they've been giving us all our lives."

"That's the whole point of it," Lois chimes in. "We're not going to find

anyone we really like anyway, so we might as well get some satisfaction out of it by making them feel terrible."

"I talk to rich women all day long," says my shrink pal, P. "They've all been married a few times. None of them can even feel whether it's day or night, except they know that they've been cheated by men some time in their lives, or at least they feel like maybe some time in some past life they have been."

"It doesn't matter if they live in Bel-Air and have two maids and play tennis all morning and shop all afternoon. They feel cheated. They feel angry."

"They want to hurt someone. Usually their husband is the closest man. So they stop having sex with him. Then they stop talking to him. Then they kick him out, and demand ten thousand a month in separate maintenance. The husband goes to a one-room apartment in the Marina, flat broke, and the wife has all the money and the balls wrapped up in her Gucci pocketbook."

"Then they come to me and they say they still feel cheated. They want a man who'll give to them. That's rich. They

don't even know what giving is. The women of Los Angeles know taking, but not giving."

"People ask me all the time why there are so many homosexuals in Los Angeles, why there are a million of them cruising up and down Santa Monica Boulevard with their hands in each other's pockets. You know what I think? I think that if the men in Los Angeles ever realized that the idea of the nurturing woman is a complete myth in this town, they would all become homosexuals."

An executive at a major studio "in the Burbank area" is talking to me. "How come there are so many movies with hookers in them, and the hookers always turn out so well? How come the only nice women in movies like *Trading Places*, *Bachelor Party*, *Night Shift*, *Risky Business*, *Sessions*, or on TV cop shows are hookers? Why does Hollywood love hookers so much?"

"I'll tell you why," he says without a moment's hesitation. "Have you seen the kind of women we have to deal with in Los Angeles? They're tough. They're mean. They want to know how much money you have, what kind of a car you drive, where you can get a good table, if you have a plane, all that kind of stuff before they even look at you."

"Have you ever seen the women we have to deal with in this business? You have to fight with them even about foreplay. Everything has to be negotiated, as if you were leasing a car. And then, first chance they get, they pick up on somebody who's got a better gig, richer overall deal, closer to true gross participation."

"On the other hand, you go over to a hooker's apartment. She's got a drink waiting for you. She's all made up and she smells of perfume. She does anything you tell her to do and doesn't talk back or ask you to do anything for her. All she asks for is a hundred or a hundred and fifty bucks, and that's like free."

