

—VIEWPOINTS—

The Dangers of Nuclear Waste Transport

By Ellen Andors and Alex Brooks

Potentially lethal nuclear waste will soon be transported through Manhattan, Queens, Harlem, the South Bronx and many other major population centers in the United States. The Federal Department of Transportation overturned the New York City health ban, prohibiting transportation of spent fuel and bomb grade waste through our city streets. It is urgent that our entire city—working class men and women, university students and faculty, and professionals immediately become aware of the facts, and work to prevent it now.

The population density in Manhattan is over 75,000 persons per square mile. The New York City Bureau of Radiological Control openly states that even a small spill of these materials in NYC streets could cause 160,000 cancer deaths and make the entire city a wasteland for at least 194 years. Even without an accident, thousands of people living along the shipment route (such as Amsterdam Avenue, Third Avenue and the South Bronx) would be repeatedly and continually bombarded by low level radiation releases from the trucks as they go by. Repeated doses of low level radiation are cumulative in the body and dangerous to human beings. A single fuel assembly will radiate a person standing 12 feet away with gamma rays at a rate of 25 rads per second. Five rads to the body is the total annual allowed dose for a radiation worker. Spills are common. Even the Department of Transportation said that since 1971, there have been 463 reported incidents on our highways involving radioactive material, most of which resulted in contamination.

Last June, 25,000 New Yorkers signed a petition against waste transportation. When these petitions were presented to the Department of Transportation in Washington D.C., one of the representatives suggested that they might use an alternative route over the Throgs Neck Bridge, through the South Bronx and Harlem, stating "... that's not a densely populated area." Jim Haughton, director of Harlem Fightback states, "On top of all the problems that the poor in these communities suffer, it would seem that the Department of Transportation is coming up with a final solution for racism in this city and the nation."

Shipments of spent fuel and other radioactive waste through NYC endangers millions of innocent children and adults. A single fuel assembly of spent reactor fuel contains many millions of lethal doses of cancer-causing and mutation-causing radioactive, deadly isotopes. Spent fuel is to be reprocessed and stored by the government in centers like Barnwell, South Carolina and West Valley, New York. Once the door is open to the transportation of this material through our city streets, it is only a matter of time before such shipments are a daily occurrence and we have an accident with enormous consequences.

Enormous amounts of waste from Brookhaven National Laboratories on Long Island must be moved immediately for lack of storage room, and when the Shoreham Nuclear facility is finished the spent fuel from that plant will also be driven through NYC streets. All of the proposed routes are through ghetto neighborhoods. However, one spill could kill every man, woman and child in a six mile radius, which in

New York, makes for a classless genocide. The government states it needs these routes to transport waste cheaply. We must not allow this to happen here in any neighborhood.

The position of Harlem Fightback demands "... no transporting of radioactive materials through this city or any other city in the nation ... on behalf of the poor, Black and Hispanic folk, on behalf of all New Yorkers. They continue, "There is no such thing as a 'safe route' for nuclear waste transportation. The use of this concept only sets each community, town or group against each other. It makes us divisive among ourselves at the very time we need to unite over all the issues in every city in the nation."

A final awesome touch makes these facts difficult to swallow. While there is no safe storage for nuclear waste, all the waste to be taken right by our homes is headed for storage at Barnwell, South Carolina and West Valley, New York, because the Federal government has a vested interest in moving the waste. At reactor sites such as Indian Point and others, waste sits as a catastrophic danger for explosion or meltdown, and is not profitable for the government. If moved to West Valley, Barnwell, etc., the refineries there are equipped to make the three to 10 bombs a day which are currently the number in production in the United States. Helen Caldicott states that "According to many eminent scientists, we have a 40 percent chance of reaching the year 2,000 before we blow ourselves up in a global holocaust."

(Ellen Andors is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at City College of New York.)

Condemning NYPIRG

By Gideon Isaac

This article is a reply to a reply on my original viewpoint entitled: "NYPIRG: political and moral?" (Nov. 3). The answer, by Stephen Johnson (Nov. 19), said I presented a staggering amount of misinformation.

First he said that SUNY central is not trying to find out what NYPIRG does with student funds as I claim. Let me quote from the Stony Brook Press of Oct. 9:

"... Recommended was that each NYPIRG chapter provide a breakdown of the way it spends the money it receives from its student organization. Currently, all NYPIRGs turn their funds into a central pool to be allocated by the NYPIRG state board, and so funds from each student government do not necessarily come directly back to campus

Elizabeth Wadsworth, vice president for Student Affairs is quoted in the same article: "I have been concerned about trying to get specific information on what they do with their funds."

I said in my viewpoint that NYPIRG students democratically elect their staff, that they claim to avoid moral and political issues, etc. I said further that "... the issues NYPIRG addresses by their nature, have to be moral and political." Johnson's reply: "... we avoid political issues by being nonpartisan." Nonsense. Because both Republicans and Democrats are for a bill does not make it non-political. Passing laws against the wishes of a segment of the population is political by definition.

Marijuana decriminalization is a moral issue as is redlining unlimited liability compensation and the professional misconduct bill to name three offhand.

Johnson says that NYPIRG never claimed Marijuana safe: "Tobacco and alcohol use are not safe, but people do not go to jail for it." He assumes that these are in the same league. Since some social workers have testified to the loss of drive and motivation of even moderate users who they work with, and researchers find neuronal and chromosomal damage to moderately exposed

animals, this is not at all clear. He takes full responsibility for passing the marijuana act. That means the increased use after decriminalization and the harm it causes is NYPIRG's responsibility.

Johnson claims NYPIRG's lobbying for the bottle bill benefits everyone. Then why the tremendous opposition of retailer and unions as well as bottlers even after the bill passed? The statistics on the cost of bottles in states that tried out the bill are at variance, depending on whether one reads the environmentalists or the industry or the government. What is uniformly hard hit in these states is the recycling businesses. For example, in Arizona, which has no bottle bill, the recycling industry has collected more than 139 million pounds of cans, bottles, etc. in eight years and paid consumers more than \$10 million. In metropolitan Detroit, which does have a bottle bill, the recycling business was devastated (Nations Business, May 1980).

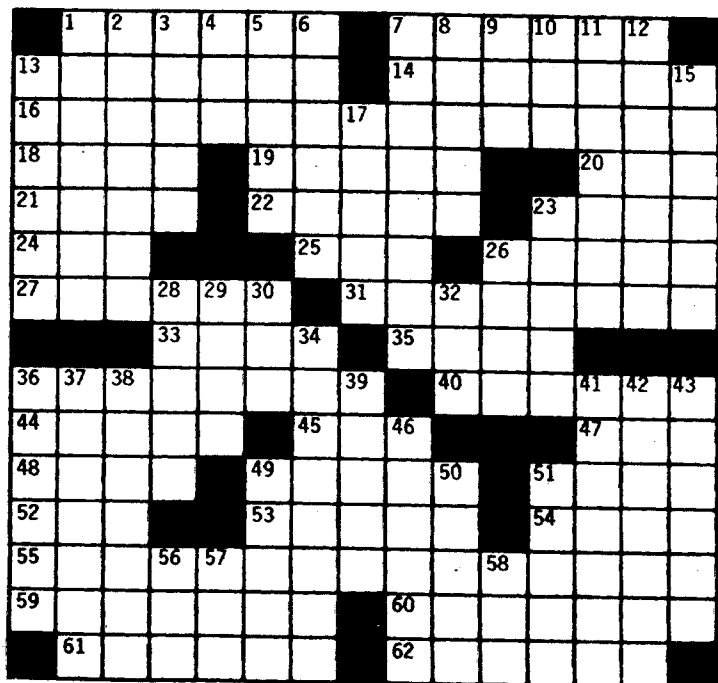
The NYPIRG method forces business to hire cheap labor to clean syrup out of pop bottles and results in major nuisance to industry.

In the above issues, all self-evident to NYPIRG, there are strong counter-arguments. In my opinion, it is not right for NYPIRGs across the country to gather millions of dollars of students' money and lobby for these issues unless the students voluntarily and individually donate.

Last point: Johnson discloses that students can not get a refund from NYPIRG due to the chancellors guidelines. (Though NYPIRG staffers will give it to you if you go down and ask.)

During the '75 PIRG controversy at Penn State, PIRG organizers admitted that voluntary donations would bring them \$30,000, but a mandatory checkoff would bring them about \$270,000. This is because of the inertia of students not going to get refunds of money once taken. At Rutgers, some students along with a public interest group "Consumer Alert" sued for a similar situation. One of the students, Joe Galda, said: "The whole thing is that I am required to pay

collegiate crossword



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(Answers to today's puzzle will appear in Friday's issue)

ACROSS

- 1 Capital of Mali
- 7 More humongous
- 13 Very evil or very brilliant
- 14 Made use of
- 16 Comprehensive cross-section (4 wds.)
- 18 House plant
- 19 Atoll
- 20 Lunar New Year
- 21 Baba and MacGraw
- 22 Bobby of Black Panther fame
- 23 Fateful
- 24 Character in "Little Women"
- 25 Singer Sumac
- 26 More contemptible
- 27 Undermines
- 31 Slow musical movements
- 33 Fraternal organization
- 35 Dutch actor Philip
- 36 Social goal
- 40 Bottomless pits
- 44 Novelist H.H. —
- 45 Soak
- 47 Lamprey

- 48 Orthodontist's concern
- 49 Barbara Eden portrayal
- 51 Actress Powers
- 52 Chemical prefix
- 53 Assessed
- 54 Ardor
- 55 Sinatra movie (3 wds.)
- 59 Daughter of Atlas
- 60 E.P.A. concern
- 61 "— for Television"
- 62 Work with meat

DOWN

- 1 Tool for chamfering
- 2 Explorer Vespucci
- 3 A.M.'s
- 4 Unspecified amount
- 5 Madding birds
- 6 "Purple Dust" playwright
- 7 City in central Florida
- 8 Get — of confidence
- 9 Actor Vallone
- 10 Hodges of baseball
- 11 Snob, in a way
- 12 Sports employee
- 13 Asperse
- 15 Hinders
- 17 Andean grazer
- 23 "— Boy"
- 26 Snide remark
- 28 "The Wreck of the Mary —"
- 29 Cockney greeting
- 30 What Franz Klammer can do
- 32 — good deed
- 34 Cascaded
- 36 Raise letters on a surface
- 37 He loved Dulcinea
- 38 Wild
- 39 Matchmaker in "Fiddler on the Roof"
- 41 Manatee's relative (2 wds.)
- 42 Incongruous mixture
- 43 Jargonish
- 46 In levels
- 49 Raisin-to-be
- 50 Draw out
- 51 Park of Edison fame
- 56 Gad's son
- 57 Tent fixture
- 58 — Hill

a student fee — I'm not given a choice — for a private lobbying organization and one that really does not advertise what it lobbies for. I had a very difficult time trying to find out ... The point is that my First Amendment rights were violated. ...

(The writer is an undergraduate.)