

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014

March 13, 1978

TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is an exchange of correspondence about anti-nuclear work between myself and Comrade Bob Kutchko who is active in this work in Kansas City. Bob has agreed to making this correspondence available. Also included is a copy of an interview with Sam Lovejoy, one of the founders of the Clamshell Alliance about strategy for the movement.

Comradely,

Doug Jenness

Doug Jenness
SWP National Office

14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014

January 26, 1978

Bob Kutchko
Kansas City

Dear Bob,

I appreciated receiving the antinuclear materials you sent and the report on your activities in Kansas City. Since the word went out that we have scheduled a report on this matter at the coming plenum, we've received several letters with helpful information and suggestions.

I would like to offer some considerations about one point you raise: That's the question of civil disobedience. As you indicate civil disobedience is being projected by many in the antinuclear movement as a strategy for achieving the movement's goals. We of course, are not in principle opposed to the utilization of civil disobedience tactics, but we are opposed to a strategy that makes civil disobedience its central feature.

Thus, in discussing what approach we should take to civil disobedience in the antinuclear movement, I think it's important to first start with our view of what strategy can most effectively help advance this movement.

It's clear that the capitalist ruling class is deeply committed to the use of nuclear power, both for weapons and for energy, and is not going to willingly give up this commitment. Therefore the key to an effective strategy for the antinuclear movement is political power--power sufficient to force the government to halt the use of nuclear energy. The only safeguard against nuclear radioactivity or a nuclear holocaust is for the working class to take the power over nuclear technology out of the hands of the capitalist rulers. This means replacing capitalist rule with a workers government.

To become a political force the antinuclear movement must win mass support and mobilize masses in action. It must win broad support in the working class. At this stage, this means systematically organizing to get the truth out to the American people about the hazards of nuclear power and to effectively refute the arguments of those who champion nuclear energy. Concrete answers must be given to the fake trade-offs the ruling class offers to working people (e.g. urging us to accept the

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relatively "low risks" of nuclear energy as a lesser evil to unemployment and the exhaustion of our fossil fuels).

Part of this propaganda task of antinuclear activists is to explain that the use of nuclear energy can only be ended through political action. We ought to help strengthen the current in the movement that seeks to place demands on the government; mobilizes actions against the government; helps to expose the government's role in launching and aiding the nuclear industry and the use of nuclear power; and places the blame squarely on the government for stubbornly refusing to safeguard its citizens, its future citizens, and citizens of other countries. Our strategy is based on the premise that national governmental action is required to halt nuclear power.

This propaganda effort includes organizing demonstrations, rallies, teach-ins, picket lines, debates, referenda, and so forth to attract the attention of potential supporters, to show the extent of opposition, and to exert increasing pressure on the government. At a certain stage one of the most effective propaganda actions is a good old-fashioned march on Washington which focuses attention on the fact that a political solution on a national level is needed.

No effective mass movement against the capitalist government and its policies can be built if it relies on the capitalist parties. Both parties support nuclear power and cannot be counted on to aid the struggle. Rather than looking toward capitalist politicians, the antinuclear struggle must look to the tens of millions in the labor movement, in the Black community, and on the campuses who are the potential supporters of a genuinely massive movement.

In the party's propaganda we should also point to the impact the formation of an independent labor party would have for advancing the antinuclear struggle. Such a development would put labor's political power behind this struggle.

To win broader and broader support the actions and organizations of the antinuclear movement should be open to all who agree with their aims, regardless of political views or affiliations. They should attempt to unite the widest range of forces possible.

This can most effectively be achieved if these propaganda actions are legal and peaceful. The reason for this is quite simple. There are far more persons opposed to nukes, who are willing or could be convinced to participate in peaceful, legal actions, than there are who are willing to get arrested for violating the law. And it's the numbers that will maximize the political impact of the actions.

While occupations of nuclear plants, especially Seabrook last Spring, have certainly brought the anti-nuclear movement into the public eye, these actions involve only a relatively small number of committed activists. They are not designed to draw really massive numbers into action. Thus as propaganda actions they are far from being the most effective. And the relationship of forces between the occupants and the capitalist state is far too unfavorable to give any credence to the view that the occupations have sufficient power to halt the use of nuclear energy.

Some of the leaders in the movement take the polar opposite approach to the strategy I've just outlined. For example, in an interview in the November 17-23, 1977 Portland Scribe, Sam Lovejoy, one of the founders of the Clamshell Alliance explains, "If you set up a national organization what you get is a national orientation. Pretty soon, you start tapping away from that local focus and you start looking more and more to state capitols for demonstrations, Washington, D.C. for demonstrations--and you haven't stopped the nukes. I believe the only way you stop the nuke is to take the site, take the nuke. Stop the actual, physical machine." (I've attached the full interview for your information.)

However, most of the participants in these occupations are relatively new to politics and are just beginning to radicalize. They are angry militants, and want to do something now to stop this crime. They are learning through their experiences and many are open to our suggestions if presented positively.

Our strategic approach to the antinuclear movement is the same as for all other movements and struggles we participate in. This is the orientation we try to win antinuclear militants to. Within this framework we determine our tactics on the basis of how best they can advance this perspective. This may mean that we participate in actions which include both a legal rally and an illegal occupation and even in certain instances we may decide to have a comrade or two get arrested if we think it will help our strategic objective.

But we reject the concept of those who argue with you that, if we don't advocate civil disobedience or participate in it, we are leaving the "dirty work" to others or that we are less committed. We arrive at our strategic position on the basis of what is politically effective and the implementation of that perspective requires a lot of "dirty work" and commitment.

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There is one point you raise which I think is wrong and I think after considering it more you will agree. You seem to be saying that we should be more open to tactical participation in the antinuclear movement than other movements because the scope of the hazards presented by nuclear energy justifies it. Radioactivity you say is not limited to one nation's borders, one race's skin color, etc.

The essential point to keep in mind here is that our methods for fighting the evils of capitalism and ultimately establishing a workers government is not determined by the relative repugnancy or scope of the evil; but by what decades of class struggle experience has taught us works. Why would greater participation by us in antinuclear civil disobedience actions be more effective than participation in antiwar civil disobedience actions?

In addition, I don't think you have a very good case in arguing that the scope of the Vietnam war was limited to one nation or the struggle against racism is limited to persons of one race.

Leaving aside the fact that the Vietnam war directly involved combatants from several nations, this struggle was for a period of time the central issue in world politics. It was a major testing ground between imperialism on one hand and the world revolution on the other. The danger of increased escalation including nuclear war with China or the USSR always hung like a shadow over the war. The stakes were high and they affected everybody in the world. Millions in scores of countries recognized this and participated in the international antiwar movement. If you haven't had a chance yet I suggest you take a look at the Education for Socialists bulletin Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight Against the Vietnam War (Pathfinder Press, \$2.00).

The struggle against racism is not only of concern to the oppressed national minorities, but is a life-and-death matter for the labor movement as a whole. Insofar as the labor movement equivocates or opposes the democratic rights of national minorities the working class is weakened in its fight against the employers; and without a correct position by labor on this question there will be no socialist revolution in this country.

Of course, how we present our ideas for building the antinuclear movement is an important tactical matter. A lot depends on how long we've been established in the group, the experiences of the group's members, etc. If there's strong sentiment for occupying nuclear plants we don't usually rush into a head-on confrontation with

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activists in the committee. Comrades in several cities have reported that even where civil disobedience actions are planned, many activists are very open to holding legal rallies at the same time.

The movement in this country is only in its infancy and we can expect it to go through all kinds of experiences and debates on the road to becoming a mass movement.

I hope this response to your letter is useful. I'm giving copies of my letter and the sections of your letter on civil disobedience to the Political Committee for their information. If you wouldn't mind I'd also like to make this exchange available to party organizers and National Committee members. I won't act on this without hearing from you first.

Comradely,

Doug Jenness
Doug Jenness
National Office

[Excerpts from January 1, 1978 letter to Doug Jenness
from Bob Kutchno]

Civil disobedience seems to be the main political question of the anti-nuke movement. Even amongst the different groups there are widely varying views on it; witness the fragmentation of the Great Plains Energy Alliance. Many KCPEP[Kansas City People's Energy Project] people can hardly wait to occupy Wolf Creek; fortunately they so far listen to reason on the grounds that more popular support is needed to give a chance of success. Sometimes individuals seem to sport a suicidal desire to be locked away in jail after being dragged from an occupied site! To them the anti-nuke movement is a way of getting back at the establishment.

The impetus is such that the S.W.P. will have to expect civil disobedience as a trademark of the early United States anti-nuke movement. As the really serious opponents of nuclear power learn from experience that their tactics present many problems (eg., frame-ups, provocation, possible adverse public opinion, detention of seasoned leaders, etc.) we can look for a more sensible attitude than seems to presently permeate the movement. The S.W.P. must in the meantime decide on its initial tactical recommendations when civil disobedience actions are being discussed. Care must be taken to explain the implications for the movement if these actions are decided upon, but without leaving the impression that we would be holding back the movement. And if civil disobedience is decided upon in spite of our recommendations, as they most assuredly will be, then we must decide how to participate in these actions.

I can honestly say I sympathize with anti-nuke feelings. The widespread and rampant utilization of this dangerous technology present a safety hazard to both current and future generations. World cancer rates have been increasing according to recent statistical studies; accounts of soldiers who witnessed atomic blasts being affected by radiation-induced disease; all this evidence continues to point to a stronger case against any radiation-producing source, whether it be weapons or nuclear power plants, with their accompanying fuel cycles. The anti-nuclear power movement can be said to be an act of self-defense; for the first time in history a movement of worldwide nature consists of members not merely struggling for the rights of others, but for their own very existence and the existence of their descendants.

So whereas a racist can ignore a Black man's call for equality, few rational people can ignore a threat to their very lives; such is the character of the anti-nuclear power movement. As its evidence and accusations are made more and more public, mass opinion will be swayed in the movements direction. Strong arguments must be made to these people to prevent acts of civil disobedience; it is too easy for them to act to stop

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this threat to their lives without fully thinking the situation through. Due to the nature of the anti-nuke movement much jumping-the-gun attitudes will be expressed. The danger of radioactivity makes this movement one of self-defense.

If acts of civil disobedience are decided upon in the movement as a standard tactic, and non-violent in nature with appropriate training, I believe that the S.W.P. must participate at least with token numbers in occupations as long as the total number of occupiers is Seabrook 1976 in size or greater. In Kansas City I am aware of feelings by certain individuals criticizing the S.W.P. for not participating in Seabrook on the grounds that we leave the dirty work to others. If the early character of the movement is non-violent civil disobedience in this peculiar, unique movement of self-defense, we can't take the risk of ignoring these tactics, but must join in with at least token representation, to avoid "missing the boat."

Furthermore, we must look ahead to the time when a large-scale nuclear accident occurs which harms innocent persons in the vicinity. Such an accident will immediately trigger widespread national actions and probably civil disobedience. The S.W.P. must have texts for this occasion prepared so that no time is lost in issuing statements and assisting in demonstrations. Such an incident could happen tomorrow. And even if it never does, radiation levels will rise and increase disease rates. Anti-nuclear activists have nothing to lose; we can't overvalue our organization's security by staying aloof from civil disobedience, regardless of past experience with movements such as Vietnam. As a recent S.W.P. enlistee I readily see differences between the nuke movement and these past movements which give it a character that justifies utilization of tactics we wouldn't ordinarily employ. I find that older comrades too readily try and compare the anti-nuke movement with the anti-war movement without seeing the big difference: radioactivity is not limited to one nation's borders, or one race's skin color. It damages all human beings, causes genetic mutations, and harms the environment; only intense action can avert this radical departure from normal biological evolution.

Why the Sea is Boiling Hot and Whether Pigs Have Wings

by Manny Frishberg

Sam Lovejoy lives on a farm near Montague, an area of western Massachusetts, near Amherst, populated with small farms, small colleges and ghosts of colonial America.

In 1974, Sam pulled down a 500 ft. meteorologic tower being used to design Montague's evacuation plan as part of the preparations for building a nuclear power plant in the area. He turned himself in and was acquitted in a jury trial seven months later.

Since then he has worked against nuclear power in New England and is a founder of the Clamshell Alliance in Seabrook, N.H. Clamshell has occupied the Seabrook Nuclear Power plant site three times since its beginnings in July, 1976. The first two occasions were small, symbolic actions with a strictly local scope; the third brought over 2,000 people to the site.

Q: Let's start with last April.

A: The third occupation was called for Apr. 30. We really believed that that was verging on the place where 2,000 people could seize the site. If they went along with arrests, obviously there wasn't a permanent way of keeping the site. But so many people were there that the "vibe" was there that we could keep the site.

Now it's getting to the point of how many people can seize the site. You know, how many people do you actually need to set up the conditions whereby the cops can't "pop" us all. In other words, you get the site, and therefore the nuke is stopped. So that's really what's going on now; how many thousands of people do you need to actually stop the nuke from being built? But that is a change that the Clamshell is going through now. And I think the decision has been made to occupy next June. I think they're setting up the day right now. That cursorily gives you the action.

A third occupation was planned last fall and it was decided that for a lot of different reasons, mostly based on the fact that the Clamshell has grown to a remarkable degree by numbers of people joining it, that it took a while for most of those people to digest the organization, for the organization to digest those people and make them become fully involved. It seemed to be sort of foolhardy to go ahead without the amount of preparation necessary to really pull it off well. In addition, the local people in the seacoast area, particularly around Seabrook were somewhat confused by why we were doing what we were doing. They really didn't understand the logic of civil disobedience.

I think now that groundwork has been laid. I know that we spent all of last winter ('76-'77) doing door-to-door work in the seacoast area so that people understand that we weren't getting arrested for some frivolous, partying reasons. For those two basic reasons we decided not to occupy in October. Instead we staged

a huge alternative energy fair and a giant rally. At the rally 5,000 or 6,000 people came. About 10,000 came to the alternate energy fair. It was held within a stone's throw of the site itself in a huge field. That was quite a success.

And then of course, the big occupation April 30.

Q: You're talking seriously about occupying a nuclear plant site with the goal of holding it. That has been approached in Europe. But haven't people also died in some of these actions?

A: There was only one that I know of, and that was at Malville which I see as somewhat different maybe more verging on what's going on in America. Most of the successful site occupations in Europe, there was a lot of support coming from outside of the local communities, yes. But, they were successful because they were supported by the local people.

What happened at Malville was that people from all over Europe came. Not

only that, but the "fast breeder" [a type of nuclear power plant which produces more plutonium than is used to fuel it] beyond being a nuclear plant is like . . . you know, this is military; this is ego—the fast breeder research program has so many different aspects that I think the government of France was willing to go way farther in using violence to stop the seizure of this site than they might on a "light-water reactor."

I feel the tactic of occupation is based on the European experience. It's not that occupations have not been used by movements of the past. The labor movement was very into occupations before World War II.

Q: Right now there's quite a lot of independent anti-nuclear alliances, Clamshell of course, and Crabshell, TDA, Abalone . . .

A: Catfish, Kudzu, Oyster, Sealions and UPSET, which is in Upstate New York.

Q: Upstate New York—not dominated by people from New York City.

A: No. It's upstate farmers. In fact one-third of the people arrested recently in an upstate action were Native Americans from the Ganabake community.

Q: But getting back to the question, do you see the future politics of the anti-nuclear movement in this country becoming a national network?

A: It is a national network. Okay, I think I see where your point is going. I see the direct action anti-nuclear movement pointed at nuclear plants in a unique sort of way. Trying to spin-off some of the things that we made mistakes on in the anti-war movement in particular. I fight the idea of the anti-nuclear movement becoming a national organization. I support the idea of networking, communication coordination, but not a national movement.

The reason being that, as I said before. I think local people are the only people who can stop nuclear plants. I really do believe that local people can stop that be

cause, you're going to have an awful hard time having local cops popping local people. I think that if people from Ohio come to Oregon and occupy the Trojan nuke; if I were a Trojan official I would say, "Let's hang out for a couple of days and wait for the people from Ohio to leave. And then let's bust the rest." If it's all local people mobilized, then I think you've got a better chance of stopping it.

In addition, when this fight is over, which obviously if you jump into it, you hope to have an end, I hope that a grassroots community-oriented political organizing project will remain.

If you set up a national organization, what you get is a national orientation. Pretty soon, you start tapping away from that local focus and you start looking more and more to state capitols for demonstrations; Washington, D.C. for demonstrations—and you haven't stopped the nukes. I believe the only way you stop the nuke is to take the site, take the nuke. Stop the actual, physical machine.

I think we are in a unique position here for, number one, I think we have a chance of stopping the nukes and number two, I think that we're not making that "nationally-oriented" mistake. But rather, we've got a chance of stopping it because we are local. So I see a need for decentralization. I see a need for staying home staying local. Staying with a non-violent orientation, basically on the anti-nuclear movement. I myself am not non-violent across the boards, but when it comes to nuclear power, I don't see any advantage in being violent.

I see consensus decision-making, which means allowing local people to control local decisions. If you can't reach a consensus then you don't move forward. I think that toleration of local groups and local differences are really what makes this movement unique and does not suffer the mistake of "When the war is over, you have no more organization left." When the nuke movement is over, hopefully an infra-structure will have been created that built alliances around environmental issues but brought in Labor and Women, peace groups, Third World groups. And hopefully a good politic will be the result.

Q: You speak a lot about being local. Just how local do you mean? The reason I asked about the upstate New York group, UPSET, it was because, coming from the east coast, I know the importance of the distinction. [Upstate New York has among all its rural areas and five major cities, a population barely equal to New York City]. Here, the nuke movement has centered itself so far in the "big cities" of Oregon. While in Columbia County, where Trojan is located, there is a lot of local pride generated around the plant. Columbia County resents Portland.

A: Seabrook resents Boston, let me tell you. But Boston is not predominant in Clamshell at all. The idea of local control and the idea that we have 40-50 small localized groups in the Clamshell is really where the Clamshell is at. Literally, every group is equal. Just because Boston has more people, that has utterly nothing to do with decision-making or with their being able to pervert by sheer population decision-making in any way, shape or form.

As a matter of fact, I think one of the major reasons why the regional alliances are working today is because local people, around the nuke itself have, essentially a "black-ball" right. No one can come into the seacoast area of New Hampshire and say—even if it's 99 groups versus that local seacoast group, none of them or all of

them cannot tell the seacoast that "This is the strategy." If the seacoast doesn't know the local conditions, nobody does. So that's where the black-ball occurs.

I'd be really interested in seeing what kind of organizing is in Columbia County. And I think that it's the Columbia County people who have to say "I think we can move now" or "I think it's a mistake to move now" or "This is the strategy we must take." I think the regional groups have to defer to that decision. Unless, through a tremendous amount of discussion, the local people are convinced that they have adopted the wrong strategy. But I think that it's totally up to the local people.

And let me tell you, that doesn't mean that Boston doesn't get excited sometimes when the local seacoast people say "You're crazy." But on the other hand, that deference to local control is the major factor that's made this thing work.

Q: The question is, what is local? Because Portland is 40 miles downstream from Trojan.

A: Within the evacuation zone.

Q: Exactly. Yet the political reality is that Portland is distrusted in Columbia County. They see the anti-nuclear movement as outsiders.

A: Exactly. They're getting tons of jobs. Tons of tax breaks. Suddenly there is a certain economic boom, even if it wasn't what they were expecting. That is a very real problem. And I see a couple of unique situations here that do not exist in Seabrook.

The Seabrook nuclear plant is just barely beginning construction. The town of Seabrook voted against that nuclear plant. They don't want it in the town.

Yes, Boston is included in the evacuation zone of the Seabrook nuke. On the other hand, it is the local people who are organizing against it and who spurred on the movement. Since it is only being constructed, I think it is more of a seacoast reality.

I think Trojan is different and unique because Trojan is operating. The juice is going all over Oregon, if not farther. Also, the reality of evacuation danger is exponentially higher, because the thing is actually real and radioactive.

When I say that, in other words, I am making an argument that people have more of a state right. People can come from Eugene, occupy the nuclear plant or stop the nuclear plant, or make the effort to stop that nuclear plant. I think they have more right because they are more under the gun, than at a non-fired-up plant. On the other hand, I still believe in the local control idea. I still believe that if you're confusing, by your actions, the people of Columbia County—I'm not saying that you need some big vast majority of Columbia County to say to you, "Okay, now you can occupy"—but I do believe that you have to do the door-to-door education so that those people are not confused about your intentions. And are educated about the facts of nuclear power. By definition, if you don't have a fair degree of local support than you have blown it. I don't care if the entire city of Portland rises up in arms—which would be a wonderful thing—but if you don't have Columbia County understanding why you're doing what you're doing, all you are going to do is set the seeds for your own demise.

(Continued next week) □