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Petition for a Denuclearization Law Takes off

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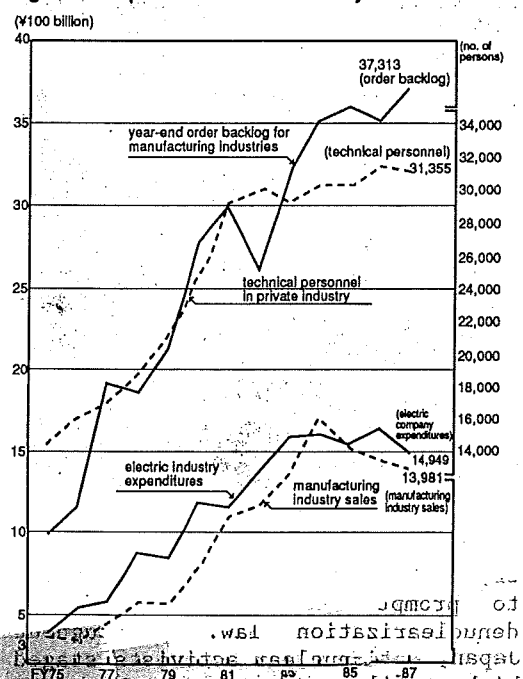
A nationwide drive began on Jan 22, to collect 10 million signatures to prompt the Diet to pass a denuclearization law. Throughout Japan, anti-nuclear activists staged high-profile actions to inform the general public of the petition. In Tokyo hundreds of people paraded through the middle of a busy shopping area carrying banners and started to collect signatures. As many as 1,400 signatures were collected within a few hours. (See Nuke Info Tokyo No.6 for detail.)

Nuclear Industry is About to Peak Out

Every year the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum (JAIF) performs a survey on the nuclear power industry, and at the end of last year the report on the FY1987 survey was released. Fig. 1 clearly shows that Japan's nuclear power industry is about to peak out. Meanwhile, JAIF maintains that the industry has the largest backlog of orders ever, and has high expectations for recovery of the market.

Let us now take a general look at each of the indicators in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Principal Nuclear Power Industry Indicators

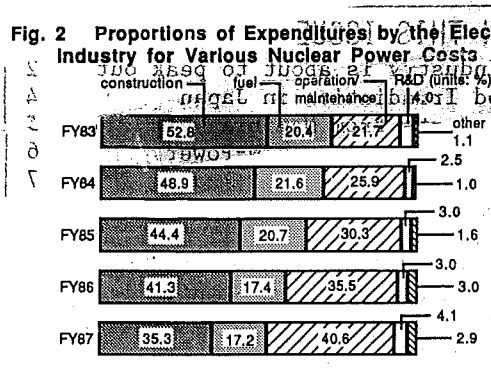


Expenditures by electric utilities for nuclear power — First of all, 72.3% of all sales by the manufacturing industries go to the electric industry. Thus, the nuclear power expenditures by the electric industry is the most important indicator of trends in the nuclear power industry. According to the JAIF report, expenditures for FY1987 were ¥1,494.9 billion, representing a 10% decrease over the previous year. The breakdown is as follows:

operation and maintenance costs	¥607 billion
construction costs	527 billion
fuel costs	256 billion
R & D costs	61.3 billion
other	43.6 billion

Construction costs have accounted for less and less, while operation and maintenance costs account for an increasingly large proportion, and this trend is evident from Fig. 2; in FY1987 operation and maintenance costs finally topped those for construction. The reason that electric industry expenditures have stopped growing is due to the decrease in construction costs, and if there were no increase in operation and maintenance costs, expenditures would have dropped even more.

Fig. 2 Proportions of Expenditures by the Electric Industry for Various Nuclear Power Costs



From here on, operation and maintenance costs will steadily grow due to the appropriation of funds to cover the rising repair costs for the early nuclear plants, as well as the processing and disposal of nuclear wastes, which is now becoming a major undertaking.

In the past, electric companies spent hardly any money on research and development, leaving this totally up to government-sponsored institutions. In recent years, however, there are many technologies said to have attained the demonstration stage, such as those concerned with advanced reactor types and the nuclear fuel cycle, and a shift has begun in which the electric industry has to pay for construction costs in those technology areas.

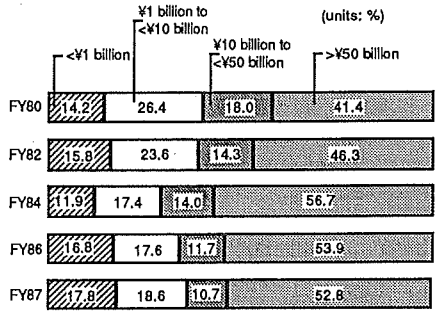
To express this in another way, it means that expenditure increases will be seen only in those areas which do not result in revenues.

Sales of Manufacturing industries — Though said to be topping out, the manufacturing industries had substantial sales of ¥1,398.1 billion. Of this total amount, ¥1,253.3 billion was accounted for sales to end users, which excludes intra-industry intermediate transactions. The breakdown is as follows:

to the electric industry
¥1,011.6 billion
to the government
172.5 billion
to universities and hospitals
50 billion
for export
13.5 billion
to other manufacturing industries
150.5 billion

In FY1987 sales to the government were up 46% over the previous year, and this made up for the 1% reduction to the electric industry. Sales to the government included uranium enrichment devices and the reactor equipment for the FBR prototype "Monju." However, the construction activity on Monju has already peaked, and it is therefore expected that sales to the government will now decline.

Fig. 3 Proportion of Sales in the Manufacturing Industries According to Level of Capital



A look at the sales proportions according to capital level (Fig. 3) shows that sales are concentrated in the large corporations with over ¥50 billion in capital. These consist of 15 companies (FY1987) in such fields as electric equipment, shipbuilding, and engine construction. On the other hand, there were 178 companies (FY1987) with less than ¥1 billion in capital, and this means that whereas the per-company average stands at ¥49.2 billion for the large corporations, it is ¥1.4 billion for the small ones.

The reason that the proportion of sales for the ¥10 to 50 billion class is falling is that the large construction companies belong to this class, and the decrease reflects falling construction costs. Let us note in addition that the ¥1 to 10 billion class includes a great many machine manufacturers, and that the less than ¥1 billion class consists largely of radiation instrument manufacturers, and maintenance and service firms.

Number of technical employees in private industry — Private industry here means the total of the electric industry and the manufacturing industries. The electric industry has 6,468 technical employees, and the manufacturing industries have

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Food Irradiation in Japan

On Dec. 21, the Science & Technology Agency of Japan announced its intention of promoting food irradiation, after attending the Geneva Conference on the "Acceptance, Control of, & Trade in Irradiated Foods" held by FAO, IAEA, WHO, UNCTAD, & GATT. Japan sent 16 delegates to the conference including 9 representatives from related industries. The Japanese delegation included Radie Kogyo, a company which was found guilty of the illegal irradiation of baby food in 1984.

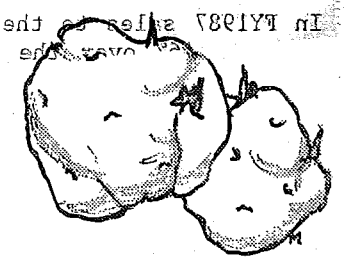
Food irradiation is not permitted in Japan at the moment, except for potatoes. Since 1967, research has been conducted on seven different food items; potatoes, onions, rice, wheat, mandarin oranges, wiener sausage, and fish paste products. In 1972, permission was given to irradiate potatoes and irradiated potatoes were put on the market in 1974. However, only 2 to 3 tons are irradiated annually for processing purposes, because of mounting opposition from consumers. Following potatoes, permission was to be given for the irradiation of onions, but experiments on mice produced some abnormal results. The government had to extend the period of experimentation and permission has not been granted to any of the six items to date.

The Atomic Energy Commission of Japan announced in June, 1987 in its "Long-term Plan for the Development and Use of Atomic Energy" that all 7 foods have been pronounced wholesome when irradiated. Therefore it would promote the safety of irradiated food so that consumers would accept it and irradiation could go on to a commercial basis.

However, there has been no open discussion of the issue. The Ministry of Health & Welfare is charged with enforcing the Food Sanitation Law and has the authority to permit food irradiation. No one from the Ministry of Health attended the Geneva Conference and they say they have no intention of lifting the ban on food irradiation since they have received no further applications for permission.

The Consumers Union of Japan and other concerned groups sent delegates to the Geneva Conference as part of the International Organization of Consumers Unions. They kept an eye on the Japanese official delegates to make sure they did not give any support to those countries which promote food irradiation. They also succeeded in exposing the case of illegal irradiation of baby food.

The Consumers Union of Japan is now preparing to start a campaign against the legalization of food irradiation. Now that the anti-nuclear power movement has got so strong, the nuclear industry is struggling to find other ways to justify itself. It has started advertising food irradiation as another beneficial use for atomic energy. It is now important to present information from all viewpoints to inform consumers fully about food irradiation. □



Uranium Imports from Namibia

Seven of the nine Japanese power utilities (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Tokyo, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku and Kyushu Electric Power Companies) import processed uranium illegally plundered from Namibia in flagrant violation of the 1974 United Nations Decree No.1, which strictly prohibits any removal of Namibian natural resources until the day of its independence.

The Namibian Support Committee (UK) has persuasively demonstrated that Namibian uranium mined at Rossing Mine has been exported through Durban, South Africa to British Nuclear Fuels, Ltd. in England which converts it to uranium hexafluoride. It is then re-exported to the U.S. Department of Energy for enrichment and finally sent to its Japanese customers. We estimate Namibian uranium now accounts for about one third of Japanese uranium imports. Though all of the Japanese power companies (with the exception of Tokyo) have announced they will not renew their contracts with Rio Tinto Zinc Corp., Rossing Mine's holding company, quite a volume of Namibian uranium has been stockpiled in England and in the United States. So even after the expiration of the contracts, stockpiled Namibian uranium will keep coming in for some years.

Recently more and more people in Japan are becoming concerned about these illegal uranium imports from Namibia. Last October 20th, four people living in Kansai, Japan's second core industrial area, launched a "One Week Electricity Boycott" and appealed to local residents to join in a daily picket in front of Kansai Electric Power Co.'s head office in Osaka. These activities drew the attention of a large number of citizens' groups. During Human Rights Week in December 78 establishments, including churches, shops, a city councillors' office, a university dormitory and many private homes, participated in a "One Day Electricity Boycott." On December 3rd about 40 people went to the Kansai Electric Power Co. Service Counter and announced they were cancelling their contracts for purchasing electricity from Kansai Electric Power Co. for one day. The security guards tried to interfere, but the people managed to have the company accept the one-day contract cancellation.

We are now targeting municipal authorities. Specifically, we have discovered that Osaka City is the largest single stockholder in Kansai Electric Power Co. On November 29th we petitioned municipal officials that Osaka should take immediate and effective measures to put an end to Kansai Electric Power Co.'s persistent violation of United Nations Decree No.1. Our negotiations with the Osaka authorities continue. A concurrent offensive against Tokyo Electric Power Co. was also initiated in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly on November 21st. Tokyo Electric Power Co., which alone has refused to terminate its contracts with RTZ Corp., has pledged to continue to import 1,040 tons of uranium per annum from RTZ until 1996.

Through these ongoing actions an unprecedented front is being forged among Japan's anti-nuclear, anti-apartheid and human rights groups at the grassroots level.

Campaign for an Independent Namibia
109-27 Tanaka Oseki Machi,
Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, JAPAN

Citizens Polled on Nuclear Power Issue

Two opinion polls on the nuclear power issue were taken last fall. One was the eighth of a series of polls on the issue conducted by Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan's major newspapers, since 1978.

The last poll, taken in Aug. 1986, only 4 months after the Chernobyl disaster, showed that, for the first time, more people were against nuclear power than for it. Up until then every poll had showed a sizeable majority of people in favor of nuclear power. The Chernobyl accident was the main factor behind the swing in opinion, which was especially strong among women and less so among men, especially young men.

The latest poll shows even more people are now against nuclear power than in August 1986. And the most interesting feature of the new poll was that quite a few men have turned anti-nuclear. The trend is especially notable among 20 to 25 year olds.

On safety, 56% of people surveyed agreed that "nuclear power can create danger which people have no control over." As many as 62% of people agree that "there is a possibility of a large-scale nuclear accident happening in Japan."

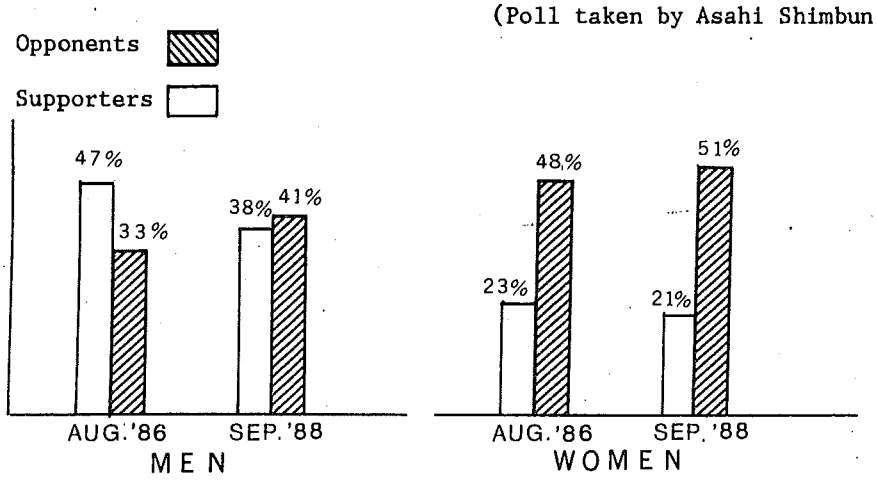
Although 46% of people are against the promotion of nuclear power as a future energy source, compared to only 29% in favor, 55% would like to maintain nuclear power at its present level. Only 17% were in favor of decreasing it and 10% wished to abolish it altogether.

The other opinion poll was taken by the national TV station, NHK. This was a more general poll on "Life and Politics" and there were several questions on nuclear power. Of 1,800 respondents, 52% thought nuclear power "should be promoted cautiously," and 20% thought "it should be stopped completely." Only 7.2% thought "nuclear power should be promoted actively."

These two polls show that the Japanese people in general are more anxious and fearful of nuclear power than before, and are opposed to any further development. □

PERCENTAGE OF OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS OF NUCLEAR POWER

(Poll taken by Asahi Shimbun)



Anti-Nuke Who's Who

Yuto Mionoya far left on hunger strike

At 9 am on October 17, 1988, the first day of test operation at Tomari nuclear plant, protesters staged a strong protest in front of two of the gates of the plant. Yuto Mionoya, together with several other protesters, climbed the nearby power transmission tower and demanded an immediate halt to test operation. By the evening, cold rain had started to fall and a gusty wind, common to the local area, was whistling through the tower. Two platoons of riot police had surrounded the tower, playing a powerful searchlight on Yuto, now alone on the tower. He stayed on it for fifteen hours, supported by the other protesters.

He was then arrested for obstructing power transmission and imprisoned for 23 days, but remained as strong and cheerful as ever in jail. He later said, "we seem to be getting stronger and stronger all the time and our protests are becoming more intense and more creative. I wanted to demonstrate to the public the cumulative energy our movement has built up and celebrate it by firing a big firework. That's how I got to climb up the tower. People's energy made it possible for me to do it."

Yuto is 35 years old. He got interested in communes in the early 1970s and spent about ten years staying at different communes throughout Japan. He then settled down in a small village in eastern Hokkaido in 1984 and started to live a self-sufficient life farming in the summer and running a fish processing factory in the winter. But in March 1988 he closed down his factory and moved to Sapporo, the biggest city in Hokkaido, thinking, "unless we stop Tomari, we will never be able to live in safety again." Since then, he has been active in various ways: he has fasted for fifteen days, gone out in a small rubber dinghy to confront a ship carrying nuclear fuel to the Tomari plant, attended the annual share-holders' meeting of the Hokkaido Electric Power Co. and expressed his opposition, and staged a sit-in at the Hokkaido Governor's office.

Yuto is now planning to walk over the Tomaru pass, the only escape route open to the local residents in the event of an accident at Tomari. This pass is usually completely covered with snow for almost six months of the year and close to traffic. The Hokkaido government has promised to keep the pass open to traffic all through the winter by clearing the snow. But Yuto plans to demonstrate to the public that it is impossible for the government to clear the snow in midwinter by actually crossing the snowy pass on foot!

Although test operation of Tomari has now started, Yuto remains full of energy and a source of inspiration to other people in the movement. □

NEWS WATCH

Farmers Oppose N-fuel Cycle Facility

Representatives of all the Agricultural Cooperative Associations in Aomori prefecture held a meeting on Dec. 29 and approved a resolution to oppose the construction of nuclear fuel cycle facilities at Rokkasho-Mura. All farmers in a region have to belong the local cooperative association — hence they are very powerful organizations. Opposition from such traditionally conservative groups is expected to strengthen opposition to the plan.

Hokkaido Assembly Rejects Plebiscite Resolution

The plenary session of the Hokkaido assembly on Dec. 3 voted 54 to 52 against a petition by local residents that a plebiscite be held to see whether Hokkaido residents support the planned operation of the Tomari nuclear power plant. About one million signatures had been collected for the petition.

The vote was carried only by the slimmest of margins, because Komeito, one of the political parties, switched sides just before the vote and supported the plebiscite, due to strong pressure from their supporters.

Local residents are now more committed than ever to halting the commercial operation of Tomari 1, due to start up next June, as well as scrapping Tomari 2 completely.

Construction of Noto Plant Begins

The Hokuriku Electric Power Co. started construction of its first nuclear power plant, the "Noto" plant (BWR 540MW) on Dec. 1. Residents opposing the plant staged a protest, planting violet seedlings and tulip bulbs along the fence and filing a lawsuit seeking a court order to halt construction.

As construction commenced, the company changed the name of the plant to "Shika," the name of the local town, since "Noto" denotes the whole peninsula.

Meanwhile another city, Suzu, on the tip of Noto Peninsula, has been chosen as a nuclear power plant site by two different electric companies. On Dec. 14, Kansai Electric Power Co. submitted a request to Suzu city to conduct a construction feasibility study for two 130MW APWRs. Chubu Electric Power Co. also plans to build two 100MW plants.

Nuclear Accident Indemnity To Be Tripled

With the current nuclear accident compensation law due to expire shortly, the Atomic Energy Commission has studied the issue and finally decided to increase the maximum level of indemnity for accidents at nuclear plants or reprocessing plants to 30 billion yen from the present 10 billion yen.

It has also extended the term by another ten years.

The indemnity is the ceiling of private insurance and of government compensation in case of immunity (damage arising during normal operation, or caused by earthquake, tidal wave, or volcanic activity, and compensation suits filed ten years after the damage, etc.).If the damage exceeds the ceiling, the utilities are still liable, but can receive government assistance through a special resolution passed by the Diet.

Anti-Nuclear Protests in Korea

Simultaneous demonstrations against three Korean nuclear plants were staged on the morning of Dec. 5. They were the first anti-nuclear power protests ever held in South Korea. A total of more than one thousand residents gathered in front of the Yeonggwang, Wolsong and Kori nuclear power plants. The protesters demanded that the managers of the plants disclose accident data, and called for compensation for radioactive contamination and the shutdown of nuclear power plants. In Yeonggwang more than 20 people were injured in confrontations with the police and three were taken to hospital. The action reflects increased concern among Korean people about the safety of Korean plants. Radiation leaks and operational problems are now frequently reported.

On Dec. 9 & 10 the Anti-Pollution Coalition with participants of the Dec. 5 demonstration succeeded in digging up some nuclear waste about one km from the Kori plant and only 300 meter from a residential area. The waste had been secretly buried on an old public sluice site. The episode has become a full-blown scandal in Korea.

There were 52 drums of waste and 2 to 3 tons of work clothes, gloves etc. used in the plant. The Korea Electric Power Corp. stated that they had been buried for three years but are not radioactive. However, measurements taken by the Ministry of Science and Technology of South Korea revealed Cobalt 60 and Cesium 137 in the waste.

Availability of Nuclear Plants Falls

The mean capacity factor or availability of Japanese nuclear power plants fell remarkably in 1988. The weighted average of capacity factors for the 36 commercial plants in operation was 70.4% as against 79.4% for the previous year. According to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the reduced availability is mainly due to longer inspections. While MITI gives no further explanation, these longer inspections can be attributed to the aging of plants (see NIT No.8). Another reason is the frequent incidence of troublesome accidents which have caused plant shutdowns and necessitated prolonged repair works. The trend is likely to continue this year.

Three Successive Shutdowns at Fukushima II-3

On December 3 the unit 3 reactor of Fukushima II plant shut down automatically due to a "neutron flux high" signal. According to the press release by Tokyo Electric Power Company, the signal was initiated by a sudden power rise which was caused by temporary fluctuations of recirculating coolant flow.

9 days later, just after restarting, the same reactor had to be stopped manually because of a valve failure in one of the main

steam lines. Also on Jan. 6 anomalous oscillation was observed in one of the recirculation pumps of the same unit and the reactor was shut down manually.

Scrams of Takahama 3 (Dec. 6) and Tokai 1 (Dec. 20) were also reported. The first event was caused by four control rods being unintentionally dropped during a function test, while the latter was due to operational error during the shutdown procedure for inspection outage.

Doctors Pass Resolution Against N-Fuel Cycle Facility

The medical doctors association, National Federation of Health Insurance Doctor Associations passed a resolution on Jan. 22, opposing the nuclear fuel cycle facility planned in Rokkasho-mura, Aomori Prefecture. The resolution points out that, even under normal operation, the facility will pose the danger of radioactive contamination which will lead to cancer or leukemia among local residents. And it states that, since the association is pledged to protect the life and health of the people, it opposes the facility. □

N-INDUSTRY IS ABOUT TO PEAK OUT

Continued from page 3

24,887. While the electric industry had increases in operational and maintenance personnel, there were decreases in design and construction personnel. Here we see a trend similar to that of the decrease in constructions costs, and the increase in operation and maintenance costs.

Order backlog for the manufacturing industries – The FY1987 year-end order backlog was ¥3,731.3billion, which is 2.7 times the FY1987 sales. The reason is that there are many plants under construction which are scheduled to have their main equipment installed several years from now, but this is no cause for believing the nuclear power industry to have a bright future. This is because there is little hope of any more new orders.

Thus, all manufacturers have been doing their best to export, but due to the worldwide slump in nuclear power development during recent years, the JAIF report notes, exports for FY1987 were down by 3% over the previous year. □

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NUKE INFO TOKYO is a bi-monthly newsletter which aims to provide foreign friends with up-to-date information on the Japanese nuclear industry, as well as on the movements against this industry in Japan. Please write to us for subscription (subscription rate: supporting subscriber $40/year, subscriber $20/year). We would also appreciate receiving information and newsletters from groups abroad in exchange for this newsletter.

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