

Report from Rome by Giorgio Prinzi

Nuclear engineers prepare revolt

The engineers and operators of the Italian nuclear sector seek a strategy for fighting the anti-nuclear mob.

Failure to complete the nuclear power plant of Montalto di Castro would cost Italy 15-20 trillion liras, according to Arnaldo Maria Angelini, the chairman emeritus of the national electrical company Enel. He addressed the annual Congress of the National Nuclear Engineering Association, held in Rome in collaboration with the Italian Nuclear Society and the Italian Nuclear Energy Forum.

Dr. Angelini's estimate is based on the projected future output of the plant and the likely values for the marginal costs of a nuclear kilowatt hour. His facts and method of calculation won unanimous consensus from the assembly.

The meeting was strongly overshadowed by the recent events linked to the energy referendum, which abolished Italy's national energy plan providing for nuclear power plant construction. It was the occasion for a new awareness by operatives in the nuclear sector, who are realizing that they have reached a turning point, where it is still possible to take action to prevent the national tragedy of an unprecedented industrial, scientific, and technical regression.

Engineer Luigi De Jaco, the director of Enea, the national nuclear energy agency, invited his colleagues to give up their "Archimedes complex," as he chose to label the passive attitude that leads technicians to cave in to lies and violence. "It is time," he went on, "for us to unsheath our sword too, and to combat the anti-nuclear evil with equal arms."

Another interesting intervention

was that of Engineer Paolo Fornaciari, an Enel researcher, who dealt with the problem of deliberate anti-nuclear disinformation. He cited Gallup studies conducted in the U.S.A. and Canada, which showed that results are decisively influenced by how the questions are formulated.

The Gallup study showed a percentage of answers interpretable as pro-nuclear, of at least 77%. Fornaciari wondered what political response would have been drawn from the recent referendum, if the questions had been formulated in the same way as the cited Gallup poll.

Another gross manipulation of information relates to so-called "intrinsically safe reactors." The first clever and unjustified distortion consists of counterposing these machines, which are still being studied, to the existing, proven technologies, which are thereby implied to be "intrinsically unsafe." That is a gratuitous lie, which Engineer Enzo Iansiti, a researcher from Enea and a safety official of the International Atomic Energy Agency, rebutted in no uncertain terms.

The mathematical degree of safety supplied by proven technologies is higher than that hypothesized for future machines, which have not even been sufficiently experimented with to be proposed as alternatives. The latter, in reality, were not conceived on the basis of safety considerations, but on the basis of economic pressures which had demanded the elimination of at least part of the present, costly measures of so-called "deep defense" against accident, which are normally

used in the West.

Engineer Bruno Agricola of Enel also addressed this question, stating that research into future "absolutely safe" technologies is a dilatory and evasive maneuver to stop nuclear energy, by trying to avoid debate on real, concrete topics.

Nuclear energy is an incontrovertible reality, which no one can ignore or pretend to ignore. At the end of 1986 there were 397 reactors in the world, for a total of 4,210 reactor-years of operation. In 11 countries, nuclear power supplies more than 25% of energy needs, and in three countries, 50%. The technicians and operatives of the sector, and particular the scientific associations, should be aware of this, Prof. Carlo Salvetti said, and invited the latter to seek a new role as active protagonists, instead of being reduced to pious congregations devoted to keeping the votive candles lit on the altar of nuclear energy.

Picking up on this combative spirit, the newspaper *Nuova Solidarietà* urged the participants to follow the techniques adopted by the Schiller Institute, in particular suggesting that the convention-goers collect funds to take out advertisements refuting the arguments of the antinuclear mob, denouncing their lies and manipulations of information.

A striking testimony to the anti-nuclear rabble's enterprising methods was given by Prof. Marino Mazzini of the University of Pisa, who announced his decision to resign from the Consultative Committee of the Town of Montalto unless his colleague in the post, the Green Party congressman Gianni Mattioli, is removed from the job. Mattioli, he charged, had circulated in a distorted and incorrect manner, documents that were not approved by the Consultative Committee.