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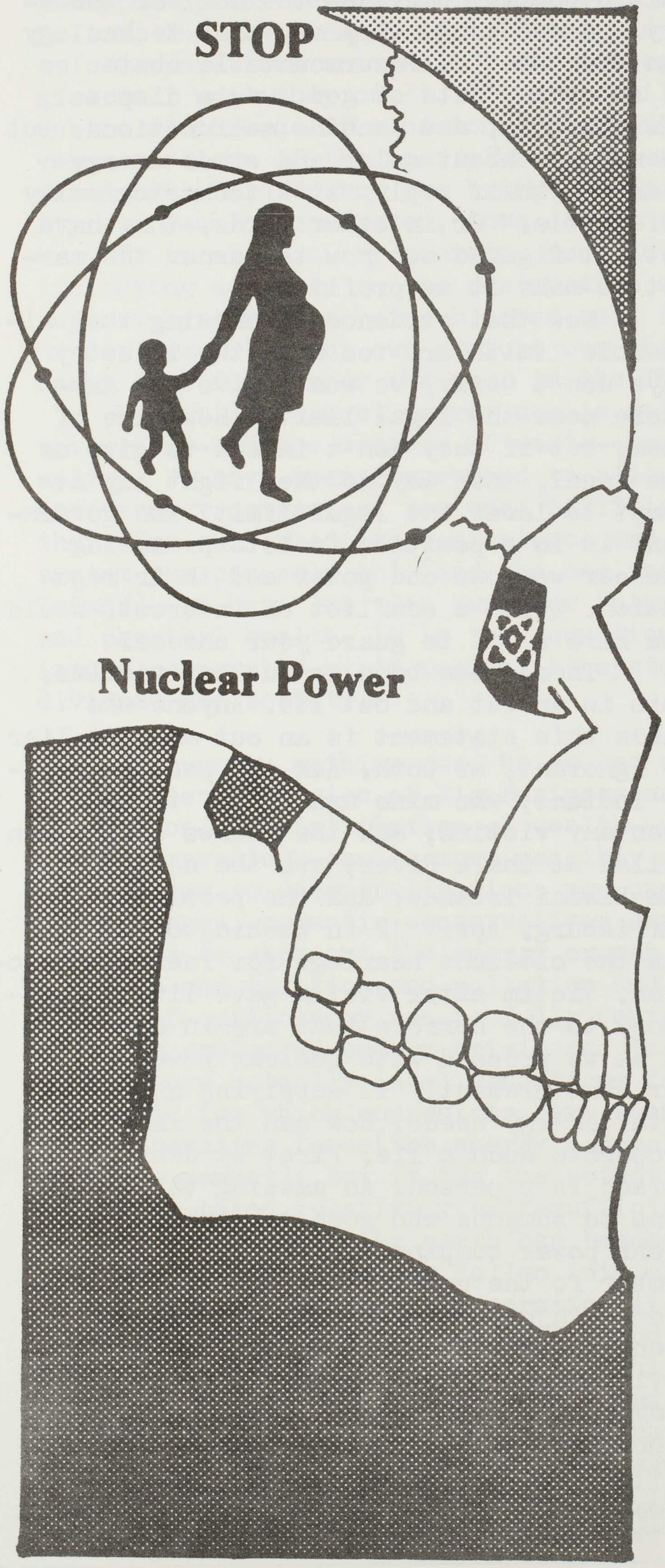

WHY NO NUKES?

I have always had a slight feeling of exasperation when being asked, why is nuclear power unsafe? I have trouble answering because the burden of proof should be to prove that it is safe. In an industry based on one of the most poisonous substances known to humankind there is no room for error. Every single piece of machinery,every component out of thousands and thousands must work perfectly. Every single worker must make no mistakes; a sneeze at the wrong time could trigger off a series of events that could lead to a meltdown. At Brown's Ferry, a workman put a candle too close to flammable material and started a fire that raged out of control for hours incapaciting all back-up systems. This almost led to a meltdown. The fire chief who had no training in dealing with such fires finally put it out. Windscale, Fermi, Rocky Flats, Bikini Islands, Ural Mountains, and Three Mile Island are just several of many nuclear accidents which prove that accidents will happen. Even if a meltdown doesn't occur, all the radiation released to the biosphere will poison us for 500,000 years.

The nuclear industry, of course, states nuclear power is safe, they guarantee it; but, in the same breath, they say they can't be liable if something does go wrong. No insurance company will insure nuclear power, except for a fraction of what the total damages could be. If it's so safe, why can't the industry be liable? After all, nothing will go wrong. But if it does, you and I take the risks as the Price Anderson Act limits the utilities liability.

Upon examining the situation closer, it becomes more ludicrous. Through CWIP and other rate hikes, we are forced to pay for the plants ourselves, before we even receive one watt of electricity. The government handles the enrich-

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