

the little
green book

the facts on

GREEN BANS



WHAT IS A UNION BAN?

Traditionally a union ban, referred to as a 'black ban', has been a refusal to supply materials or labour to an industry or a workplace because the employers at that place have employed non-union labour, have failed to observe reasonable safety conditions on the job or have treated an employee or union official unjustly. Almost always such black bans were employed for purely industrial reasons, that is to secure better working conditions for the workers of the particular union involved. But some unions have used broader definitions of their role in society and have involved themselves in issues which were not industrial in the usual sense. Recently, during the campaign against the Vietnam War, the Seamen's Union placed a black ban on the ships Jeparit and Boonaroo because the seamen on those ships did not wish to use their labour to carry arms to aid the South Vietnamese government.

WHAT IS A GREEN BAN?

During the last two years one union, the Builders Labourers' Federation of N.S.W. has widened its definition of the legitimate scope of union activity to a consideration of conservation and environment issues. The first 'green ban' was imposed in 1971, at the request of residents of the area, on a piece of harbour frontage bushland, Kelly's Bush, which was scheduled to be 'developed' by A.V. Jennings, a company wanting to despoil this bush area by building home units. The local residents of Hunters Hill – middle-class people not accustomed to approaching unions for support – sought the help of the union that would be first involved in building these units to help preserve this public recreation area. Since then, the Builders Labourers' Federation has imposed more than 40 green bans. In each case the Union has acted either because residents of the area affected have asked them to or else to support the recommendation of the National Trust that a particular building was of unique historical significance and ought to be preserved. In each case, the areas declared green have been threatened by 'developers', usually huge companies or government instrumentalities for whom progress and profits are more important than the wishes of the people affected by the development.

RESIDENTS WANT GREEN BANS

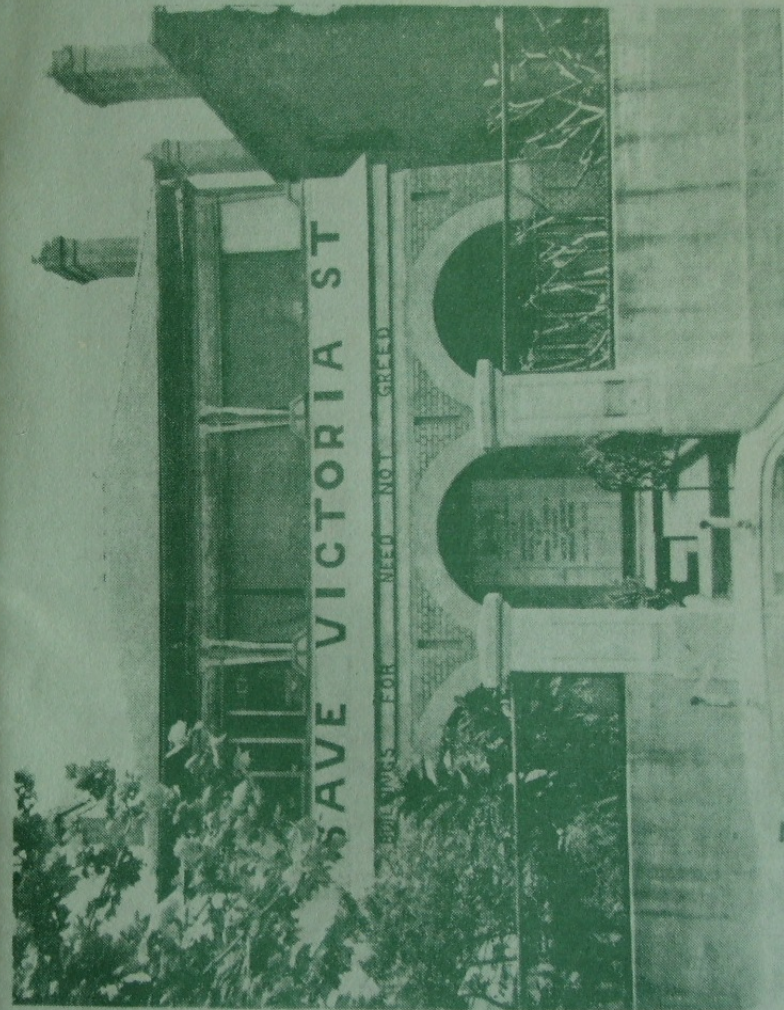
Although it is the BLF which has received the most press publicity it is not the only union to impose green bans. The Federated Engine Drivers and Fireman's Association has placed a green ban on the Rocks area and other unions including the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union have indicated their support for existing green bans.

Although the Premier, the press and the developers try to maintain that green bans are the irresponsible action of a minority within a militant union, in fact these bans exist because residents have asked for them and they are supported by thousands of people in Sydney as the recent rally of over 4,000 people at Circular Quay demonstrated.

The BLF itself has realised that in its ten-year campaign during the boom in building in Sydney to win better wages and working conditions for its members that it had unwittingly collaborated in the destruction of some of Sydney's most beautiful areas and buildings, replacing them with tall concrete and glass constructions which have turned Sydney into a grotesque replica of the ugliest of American cities. The former secretary, Jack Munday, has said that the union began to realise that it was important for the workers on building projects to have some say about what they were constructing. The BLF is not against building but it is concerned about the uses to which the buildings are to be put: 'Yes we want to build. However we prefer to build urgently required hospitals, schools and other public utilities, high quality flats and houses provided they are designed with adequate concern for the environment, not to build ugly unimaginative architecturally bankrupt blocks of concrete and glass offices.

'Likewise we wish to build for those aged people who gave their working lives to improve their own country only to end up in some pent-up squalid room in the city. Though we want all our members employed, we will not just become robots directed by the developers - builders who value the dollar at the expense of the environment. More and more we are going to determine which buildings we will build.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, January 1972)

Thus the BLF was receptive to the approach from the residents affected by the Kelly's Bush proposed development and



agreed to help them by refusing to provide labour for the area. The term 'green ban' was coined some time later – after other groups had realised that the only way they could stop the rapacious developers was to enlist the support of the union which would actually be involved in demolishing the buildings they wanted to save.

Within a short time dozens of green bans had been imposed and the list has continued to grow as people from all over Sydney have asked the BLF to cooperate in their efforts for planning a better environment for their area.

WHERE ARE THE GREEN BANS?

The following list of green bans illustrates just how many diverse groups have asked for and received BLF support:

Kelly's Bush

On the Parramatta River, near Hunters Hill, Kelly's Bush is one of the few surviving pieces of natural bushland on the Sydney foreshore. Nevertheless, A.V. Jennings wanted to cover it with home units. The local residents tried petitions, meetings and deputations – all of these failed. As a last resort, they made contact with the BLF. The A.V. Jennings group was then warned that if it persisted with the destruction of Kelly's Bush it could face a ban on all its Sydney projects. This, the first green ban, has been effective in preserving the bushland.

The Rocks

Perhaps the best known of the union's bans, the green ban on the Rocks has held up the \$500 million development, planned by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, set up by the State Government.

The Rocks, the setting of the first white settlement in Sydney Cove, is publicly owned and traditionally a lower income area. It is also valuable real estate however and knowing that foreign investors would pay high prices for leases, SCRA envisages a development of motels, offices and high-cost residential. There would also be some preservation of terraces but this would be for professional men and trendy businesses rather than for the old inhabitants of the Rocks.

When residents of the East Rocks were told they would have to go they formed the Rocks Resident Action Group and asked the BLF to place a green ban on the area. This was done.

In January 1972, SCRA tried to break the green ban. Thirty locals placed themselves in the path of the bulldozer. After this, FEDFA joined the ban. The AMWU and the BWIU also offered their support although the BWIU was later to lift their ban.

The Rocks group prepared the first People's Plan; a committee of 'experts' – architects and sociologists – and residents was formed. The planning committee recommended and the residents accepted a proposal for a mixed residential development with infill housing on some vacant land. All of the old Rocks residents would be able to stay; of new residents an acceptable proportion must be lower income.

In October 1973, SCRA again attempted to break through the ban. Silverton, a company with connections with Parkes Development and with Dillinghams, the giant construction company leased some land and planned to knock down sheds and build home units, to be sold at market price. Occupations, picketing, demonstrations by residents and builders labourers were not able to prevent the sheds being demolished by scabs working under heavy police protection. The BLF however announced that the now vacant land would become a park.

Eastlakes

Parkes Development used an area of land to induce people to buy home units, promising them it would be used for park land. They then announced that they intended to build more units on it. Again the BLF put a green ban on the area and no construction has taken place.

Victoria Street

There has been a complete ban on Victoria Street, from the Crest Hotel to Potts Point since April 1973. Most of the action of the resident group has centred on Frank Theeman's properties (nos. 55-115), but other developers, Spatial Holdings (Sol and Joseph Brender), Simon Rutkevitz and Parkes Development also have valuable property in the street.



Before the green ban! People's homes, like these in Elizabeth Bay Road, Kings Cross, were demolished and the residents dispersed - to where?

Victoria Street was classified by the National Trust in May (if it had not been for the green ban it would have been demolished before that) and this forced the developers to change their plans for complete demolition and high rise towers of office and motels to ones which allowed for the retention of at least the facades of most of the terraces. The National Trust has provisionally accepted Theeman's plan for a commercial and high cost residential development (he offered a token 10% content to the old occupants of the street – the low income earners). The RAG however, believing that people as well as buildings must be preserved, wish to keep the street essentially as it is in physical character and predominantly for low rent housing. The BLF, which places bans on buildings classified by the Trust, agreed to back the residents and continue the ban.

During this year there have been mass evictions from those properties owned by developers. The refusal of the owners to relet the buildings, along with a number of fires which have destroyed two houses, led to squatting in eight of Theeman's houses.

The residents, as part of a community plan for the whole area, are preparing a cooperative housing scheme which would allow Theeman, who paid the enormous price of \$7.5 million for his properties to get out of the street with little or no loss, and the street would be kept for low rent housing under community control.

Woolloomooloo

There is a green ban on Woolloomooloo from St. John's Crescent to the cliff face under Victoria Street. There are a number of major interests who intended to demolish and rebuild Woolloomooloo, another traditionally working class residential (with some industrial) area.

Federal Government

Quite a large proportion of Woolloomooloo is publicly owned, including 5½ acres owned by the Navy. Under threat of eviction many residents have left their houses on this 5½ acres. Those who remain are fighting not so much against demolition,

as for new low income housing in the 'loo. The Federal Government so far has given vague indications – ranging from low income housing to a park to a hospital – of what it intends to do with its land. Meanwhile, the green ban preventing demolition is the only bargaining power which the residents have.

Department of Main Roads

Bourke Street lies in the path of the Eastern expressway. Some demolition has already taken place. Although they continue to insist on eviction before buying houses, the activities of the DMR have otherwise been brought to a halt by the ban.

Syd Londish

He is the biggest private owner in the area. He planned \$400 million worth of office towers on his 9 acres. After the green ban was placed, Londish withdrew these plans and replaced them with a \$80 million high cost residential scheme, with prices of home units ranging from \$29,000 to \$50,000. Askin helped arrange overseas finance for Londish's scheme.

IBK

Ian Kiernan is a developer who prefers to call himself a 'preservationist'. His original plan for most of his property was high rise development, but after the green ban prevented demolition, he has preferred to develop existing buildings rather than let them lie vacant. Originally, the Resident Action Group was more favourably disposed to Kiernan than to the other developers but now, having seen the way low rent housing can be replaced by trendy businesses and high rent housing, albeit in the same buildings, they are calling a halt to his activities. A block, bordered by Brougham Street and Rae Place, which Kiernan has already partly converted into offices, will not be allowed to proceed any further unless there is a high proportion of medium and low income housing.

Darlinghurst

From Boundary Street to College Street, Darlinghurst and East Sydney are under a green ban. Major interests in the area include:

the DMR (see under Woolloomooloo)

Home Units

(Directors: Syd King and Gary Bogard, half owned by CSR) is one of the biggest developers in Australia which planned the huge high rise Palisades development near the top of William Street. Demolition was brought to a halt. After the green ban had been on the area for a few months with no immediate prospect of it being lifted, Home Units have begun to reverse their tactic of wholesale eviction, and have agreed to relet some flats which had fallen vacant.

SCEGGS (Church of England Girls' Grammar School)

An elite school in a working class area, SCEGGS is a major landlord in the blocks bordering the school. They planned to demolish these terrace houses and build a high rise commercial development. Since the green ban went on, SCEGGS has allowed some houses to fall vacant, others have been rented out to prostitutes who pay high rents and do not have such a high stake as other residents in remaining in the houses.

IBK

IBK owns many houses, including a whole block which they have converted into a totally commercial development called Squizzy Taylor Square. While the green ban is preventing demolition in Darlinghurst, a key problem, as seen by residents, is to prevent the wholesale replacement of one class of people with another, as occurred in Paddington. The green ban will bring a halt to some renovation; however squatting and a tenants' union to protect existing tenants will also be used.

ARE YOU THREATENED WITH EVICTION?
IS YOUR LANDLORD RAISING YOUR
RENT? FOR HELP RING
THE TENANTS CENTRE
319729

Community Plan for Darlinghurst, Woolloomoo and Kings Cross

The Woolloomooloo residents, along with those of Darlinghurst and Kings Cross are preparing a community plan. The guidelines for this plan suggest that the area remain a low rise one; that rent structures ensure that people of all classes can live there; that residential use be retained in favour of any further commercial development; that the creation of expressways and the domination of the private motor car generally be curtailed; and that the residents, not businessmen and politicians with profits in mind, control the future development of the area. Without the green ban on the whole area, the residents would not have had the opportunity to prepare or fight for this community plan.

Theatre Royal

Lend Lease, headed by G. Dusseldorf, who had the highest profits of all developers last financial year, is about to begin, in conjunction with the MLC insurance company, a huge inner city development. One building destroyed in the preliminary demolition was the old Theatre Royal.

A wide variety of people got together and with the support of Actors' Equity, the BLF and the FEDFA put a stop to the demolition. It was not possible to save the old Theatre Royal but the pressure was sufficient to make Dusseldorf promise a new theatre on the same site. It will seat at least 1,000, be devoted to live professional theatre, with preference being given to local talent and only a minimum rent will be charged.

NO WAR DECLARED
NO STORM HAD FLARED
NO SUDDEN BOMB SO CRUEL
JUST A NEED FOR LAND
A GREEDY HAND
AND A SIGN
THAT SAID
URBAN RENEWAL

Opera House Car Park

The construction of an underground car park was to complete the mammoth Sydney Opera House construction. The car park would have destroyed some giant Moreton Bay Figs in the Botanic Gardens and the fumes from the cars would have destroyed much of the other flora as well. In addition the gathering together of so many cars would have added to the congestion of inner Sydney. The BLF laid down conditions: no destruction of the trees, effective measures to save the flora. Unable or unwilling to cooperate, the Askin Government dropped the plan in August 1972. The Opera House was opened without its car park and people walk or travel by public transport to see performances.



Moore Park and Centennial Park

The Askin Government planned an enormous sports complex in the Moore Park/Centennial Park area. The project would have taken over acres of parkland. The residents argued that the project would add to the traffic that was already spoiling the park; that there were areas in the Western suburbs which unlike Moore Park and Centennial Park lacked sporting and recreational facilities – 'the right idea in the wrong place'. The BLF responded with a green ban.

In June 1972 the government announced the appointment of Walter Bunning who would investigate the project. The Bunning report advocated that the sports complex should be built in the Homebush area and so Centennial Park and Moore Park were preserved.

Cook Road, Centennial Park, once full of comfortable, largish homes has, in recent years, been filling with blocks of 'plastic flats', eight or ten stories high and changing the quiet residential area of owners and occupiers into one dominated by traffic,

from being a quiet residential one to one dominated by traffic, almost impossibly so at the time of the Easter Show or at the time of major sporting events. The BLF, after a meeting of residents, placed a green ban preventing the construction of any more of these flats, until an alternative plan drawn up by the residents had won acceptance from all parties.

Newcastle Hotel

This hotel (Jim Buckley's) was a popular pub used mostly by bohemians, students and waterfront workers as well as businessmen. Like many other inner city pubs however it is threatened with closure and demolition.

In response to the requests of regular drinkers and nearby residents, the BLF placed a green ban (or amber ban?) on it.

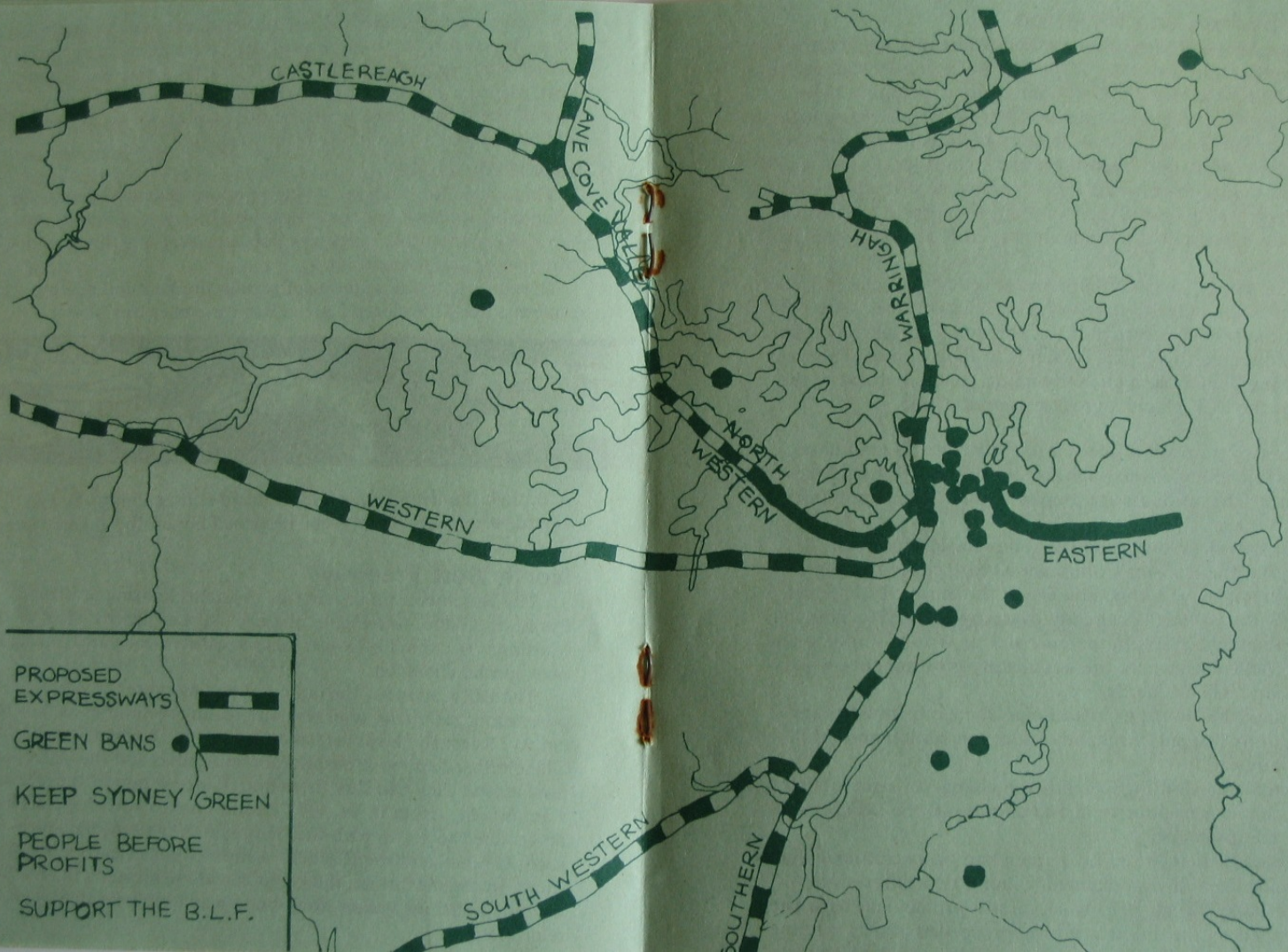


Although the licence was removed and consequently the pub closed, it remains there, to be reopened hopefully, at some later stage.

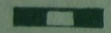
North West Freeway

The Northwestern distributor threatens housing in Ultimo-Pymont, Glebe, Annandale, Rozelle and Leichhardt. Most of this housing is occupied by lower income earners, each area having its own special character.

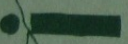
The DMR adopted the policy of paying more for vacant possession, internally wrecking and sealing the houses as they fell empty. Recently, however, some tenants in Darghan Street, Glebe refused to move despite eviction orders and the DMR has now agreed they can stay there until construction of the freeway is imminent. Askin in his 1973 election policy speech claims he is determined to go on with the freeways – Mr Uren, the Leichhardt Council and the Resident Action Groups clearly oppose them. In the meantime, the green ban alone prevents the DMR from demolishing vacant houses and may even persuade them to relet them.



PROPOSED
EXPRESSWAYS



GREEN BANS



KEEP SYDNEY GREEN

PEOPLE BEFORE
PROFITS

SUPPORT THE B.L.F.

South Sydney and Waterloo

During May 1972, the Housing Commission put a freeze on 32 acres of land in Waterloo. A survey conducted by the residents showed that more than 80% of them want to remain in their homes – many of them are migrants, particularly Greeks, others come from families which have been residents of Waterloo for several generations. Although there is a high proportion of owner occupiers, few of them could afford to buy an alternative dwelling in an inner city area if the Housing Commission buys them out. At the request of the residents, the BLF placed a green ban on the area.

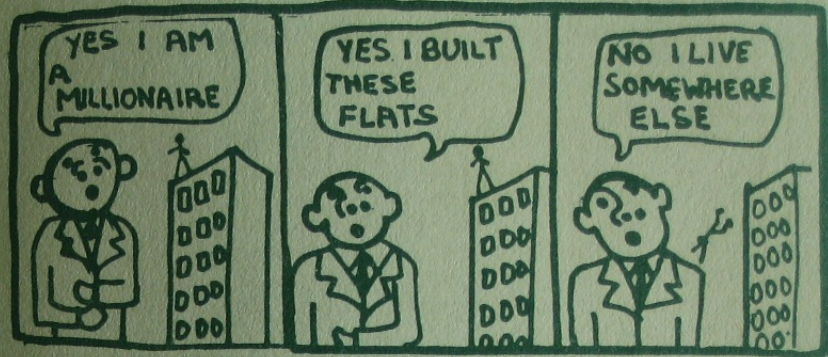
The bureaucratic, uncommunicative attitude of the N.S.W. Housing Commission has resulted in a feeling of insecurity amongst the residents. Much of the energy of the action group has been directed to keeping residents in their homes. This year the Housing Commission buys them out. At the request of the residents, the BLF placed a green ban on the area.

the Housing Commission finally came out with its grandiose scheme, which includes six high rise towers and vast stretches of open space. The residents are preparing their own community plan.

So far they have suggested the following alternatives:

- that the Housing Commission cease concentrating all the provision of public housing in the inner city in South Sydney, which is already overcrowded and lacking in facilities. That alternatives such as Woolloomooloo and the Rocks, where there is already government-owned land be considered.
- that the Housing Commission change its policies and think instead of rehabilitation, renovation and infill housing.
- that the Housing Commission change its structure so that it is responsive to and carries out the decisions of the residents.

There was also in Waterloo a green ban on vacant land where the Housing Commission planned to build two thirty-storey blocks of flats. During 1973 work on this project was begun and then stopped by the union – it only proceeded after a meeting of pensioners had voted in favour of building the flats. Despite



the evidence of experts that high rise living can be detrimental to the health of lower income aged people, many pensioners believe, under present conditions quite realistically, that for them it is high rise flats or nothing at all.

Surry Hills

The resident action group in Surry Hills is called the Planning for People campaign. In August 1973, Planning for People asked the BLF for a green ban on the whole of the area, the largest residential one left in the inner city. The area, like other inner city suburbs, is threatened both by demolishing developers (Home Units, George Street East, Progress and Properties, Fund of Australia) and the trendy developers (Ian Kiernan and Gordon Stuart).

The ban will prevent any demolition which is not in keeping with the guidelines of the Surry Hills Action Plan prepared by a consultant to the Sydney City Council. The Action Plan provides for:

- the retention of the area as a residential one
- a stop to the intrusion of commercial interests
- a rezoning of West Surry Hills back to residential
- a mixed income area

Merrylands

In Greystanes Road, Merrylands there were 51 acres of virgin forest surrounded by homes. Holyroyd Council gave approval to Fowler Ware Industries to build a factory for making toilet bowls on the site. The residents formed an action group, and after other methods such as appealing to the Council had failed, they applied to the BLF and AMWU for a green ban. So far, the factory has not been built.

Mascot/Botany

A green ban was placed on this area after a large meeting of residents voted to oppose town house type dwellings and flats if they did not have enough green area around them. The ban applies to all single dwelling blocks.



Mt Druitt

Residents applied for a ban in support of their demand for adequate compensation from the Housing Commission and Lend Lease who are planning to develop the area.

Regent Theatre

A ban was applied in support of the demand by Actors Equity that this building be kept for live, professional theatre. The ban is still operating.

Redfern Aboriginal Centre

The BLF imposed a ban at the request of the Aborigines until such time as they were consulted as to the construction of the Aboriginal Cooperative Housing Project. The ban has now been lifted and work is proceeding.

Port Macquarie - North NSW Beach Resort

At the request of residents a ban was placed on high rise blocks on the beach head and waterfront.

Ryde-Dunbar Park

A ban led to the decision by the local council to keep this park as an open, undeveloped area.

East End, Newcastle

The East End in Newcastle is similar in history and position to the Rocks in Sydney.

A green ban backs the residents' plan to retain the working class content of the area and to stop the extensions of high rise offices and motels in the East End.

St George's Hall

A ban was imposed following the failure of a developer to pay adequate compensation.

Eastern Hill, Manly

A large meeting of residents at Eastern Hill requested a ban on the construction of two huge tower blocks by L.J. Hooker.

PRESERVATION BANS

The National Trust, having up until now no legal means of enforcing its decisions, has been given some teeth by the Builders Labourers who place bans on all buildings classified by the Trust. These have included:

Congregational Church, Pitt Street Although the National Trust considered it to be worthy of preservation, the Church wanted to demolish this building and replace it with a commercial development. The green ban has prevented them going ahead with their plans.

Royal Australian College of Physicians,
Macquarie Street

Colonial Mutual Building Now definitely saved

Helen Keller House, Woolhara. Ban imposed, at the request of residents, only after the Royal Society for the Blind had begun demolition.

A.N.Z. Bank and the National Mutual Building, both in Martin Place



OTHER BANS

In line with their policy that unions must involve themselves in the effects of their labour on their members and the rest of the community, the BLF has placed several other green bans.

Women's Studies Strike

Students and staff at Sydney University were striking in support of a women's course in the Philosophy Department. They applied to the BLF for a ban on construction at the University as a means of placing pressure on the University Administration. The strike was finally successful and the ban was lifted.

Discrimination Against Homosexuals

A homosexual student was expelled from a residential college at Macquarie University. Again a ban was placed on construction at the University until the college authorities had accepted the principle of no sexual discrimination.

New Doctors' Dwellings

As part of the role played by unions against higher fees to be charged by doctors, a branch meeting of the NSW BLF voted not to construct any new residences for doctors.

THE GREEN BANS ARE SAVING SYDNEY

Those who do not support the green bans must remember that without them a vast amount of destruction would have occurred in just two years. Thousands of people would have been turned out of their homes, what remains of Sydney's historic buildings would have been reduced to rubble, acres of park-land would have been savagely ripped up – all in the sacred name of progress and development.

The BLF and the people who support them are not opposed to change per se but they realise that 'development' has come to mean change for profit and that such development has little concern for the lives of the people it displaces. In almost all cases the residents have asked for green bans to be imposed to give them time to discuss what kinds of changes they would like to see in their area, to enable them to consult with each other and with all those affected by the proposed developments and to draw up alternative plans. In some cases, as with Kelly's Bush and with a few buildings classified by the National Trust, the green ban is permanent: these areas or buildings are seen as being irreplaceable or as contributing something important and unique to this city.

Many of the buildings from Sydney's earliest days fall into this category and it is to the shame of the government and councils of this state that they fail to recognise this and, instead of acting like their counterparts in many European cities where the destruction or alteration of such buildings is prohibited, actually solicit contracts from overseas firms to tear down areas like the Rocks and turn them into wastelands of motel and office towers.

As Patrick White, winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature has written, 'It is a sad reflection on our so-called civilisation that residents of Sydney in times of threat to their homes or way of life are forced time and again to turn to the Builders



Labourers' Federation, involving them in constant vilification, misrepresentation by the media, and frequent loss of pay. It is a rare thing to find a union with so advanced a social conscience. But how much longer can the citizens of Sydney ask these men to endure the responsibility for protecting a citizen's right to live comfortably and without anxiety. . . . (Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November, 1973)

GREEN BANS THREATENED

Despite the popular support for the green bans shown by the fact that residents continue to come forward and ask for BLF support, it has recently become obvious that the state government and the Master Builders Association are determined to try and have their way. There is now about \$3000 million worth of development tied up because of the green bans and the developers have begun a campaign to try and misrepresent what these bans are all about.

Since the results of the BLF elections, in which a team pledged to continue the green ban policy was elected, advertisements in the press have tried to suggest that green bans are acts of sabotage by a single union. The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority which is responsible for the future of the Rocks has used taxpayers' money to insert advertisements claiming that these bans to preserve the areas and buildings listed above are red bans. By conveniently ignoring the fact that it is the residents who ask for the bans, and by failing to consider the needs of people in the plans it makes for the oldest area of Sydney, this government body has distorted the issue and has collaborated with Askin's 'industrial anarchy and law and order' election campaign.

PROTECT THE GREEN BANS

For nearly two years the retention of the green ban policy has depended almost entirely on the BLF but the state government and the developers have now shown that they will try and stop this situation from continuing.

Despite the ruling by Justice Aird in the Federal Court that green bans fall outside the realms of an industrial dispute and do

not therefore have to be defended in court, the Master Builders' Association has begun proceedings to have the BLF deregistered. The SCRA used scab labour to break the green ban and demolish a building in Playfair Street in the Rocks. More than a hundred people demonstrating their support of the green ban policy have been arrested. The green bans are in jeopardy and it has now become urgent for all those people who care about the future of Sydney and other areas threatened by development to involve themselves in support of the green ban policy.

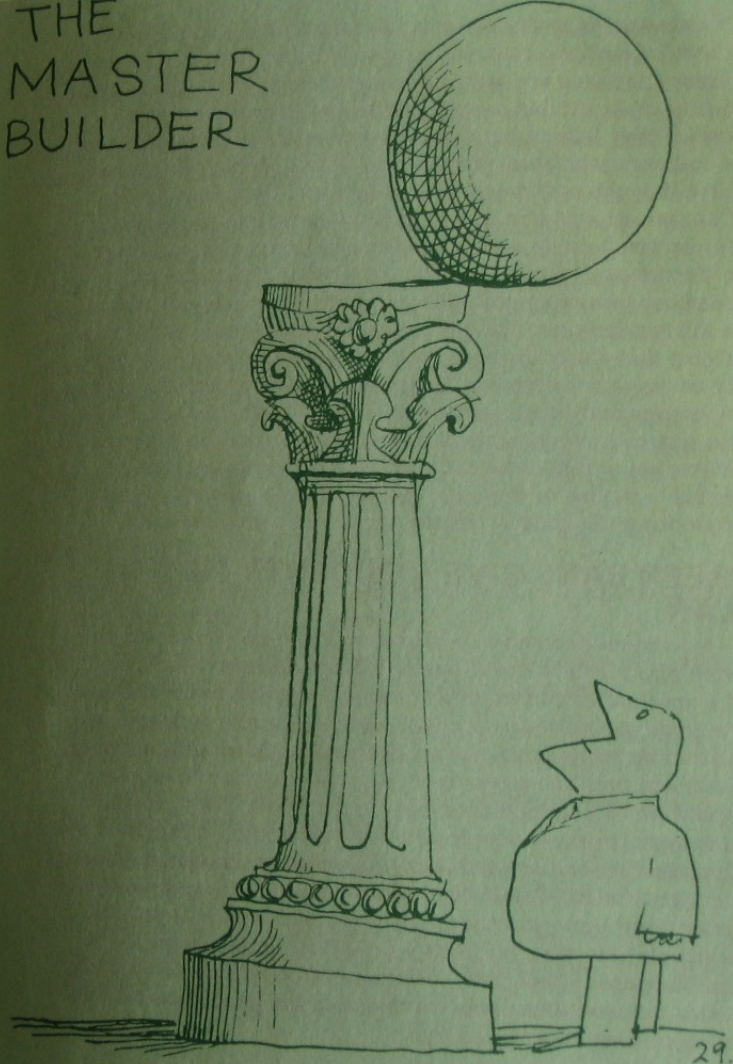
If the green bans are destroyed what would be the consequences?

Certainly many beautiful buildings and areas of bushland would disappear forever but even more important would be the effects on people living in areas threatened by development.

Already whole communities of people in inner-city areas have been broken up and people used to spending their working and social lives in friendly, tight-knit environments have been uprooted and dispersed to remote suburbs or to joyless high-rise housing commission flats. This process would continue until the entire inner city, including areas like the Rocks, was transformed into a barren tract of commercial and tourist development, areas where people worked and visited but which shut down at night-fall. All life and vitality would disappear from these places and the 'dead-heart of the city' would be even more horrible than it is at present. So far development has forced low-income earners from the houses and flats where protected tenancies enabled them to pay rents they could afford out to distant suburbs where rents are higher, fares are exorbitant and where there are none of the facilities (pubs, cheap restaurants etc.) which make inner city life attractive.

People in both inner and outer suburbs are threatened by expressway development, 'progress' which the DMR claims will ease traffic congestion, but which as existing expressways show simply bring more and more cars into the roads. The result is a drastic increase in traffic snarls, carbon monoxide pollution and deaths and terrible injuries (more than 1,000 people killed on N.S.W. roads already this year). Thousands of cars pour onto the roads while public transport is curtailed and becomes more expensive.

THE MASTER BUILDER



Governments in this country have permitted a scandalous industry of land and real estate speculation to flourish and prices of houses and land are forced up almost daily. In the past a great majority of Australian people could hope to buy their own houses if they wished but this is becoming almost impossible for low and even middle-income earners. Many people have come to believe that the only way to live is to spend their lives paying off houses, straitjacketing themselves in crippling mortgages, a practice which estate agents and finance companies encourage for they are very profitable. The costs of land, housing and finance are becoming prohibitive – even if you are prepared to live thirty miles from the city – and more and more people are realising that either through choice or necessity they will probably be tenants for most of their lives. But the stranglehold property owners and estate agents hold over tenants through the 5A lease system leaves tenants virtually no rights and no protection against rises in rent every six months. The whole question of housing – buying or renting – has to be reconsidered to save people from the grasp of greedy speculators and landlords.

GREEN BANS GIVE RESIDENTS TIME TO PLAN

A constant demand of residents in green-ban protected areas is that plans for low-cost housing replace high-rise executive-style apartments and expensive trendy town-house developments. The green ban policy of the BLF slows down the destruction, provides an opportunity for an alternative system of housing to be worked out. The green bans give residents time to mobilise opposition to developments they do not want. They provide some hope for those people who have spent their entire lives being pushed around by land agents, government bodies and welfare agencies. The RAGs, backed by the unions – and the strength this unity provides – demonstrates that it *is* possible for people who were previously powerless to have some say in what happens to their lives. For many residents who would like to stay but would be easily intimidated, the green bans have encouraged them to stay and fight.

No area in Sydney is safe from the scourge of development: a whole street in Kings Cross, a row of trees in Wahroonga or an historic cottage in Woolhara may be threatened. Councils in this city have become so accustomed to acting without consulting the people affected that often residents do not even know that development has been approved until the bulldozers arrive in their street. It could be *your* street next, or a park or a building that you especially like. While low-income residents may suffer more, and have fewer resources to fight with, anyone can be affected by developers' greed and ill-considered (or complete lack of) community planning. Only when those most affected have control over change will this process be brought to a halt. In the meantime green bans can stop the violation of Sydney and enable real community planning to begin. Therefore support for the BLF and its green ban policy by all those who care about the future is needed. This booklet has given you the real facts about green bans – don't be misled by the pernicious propaganda of the Askin government and greedy developers.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- * If you see any demolition in areas which have a green ban on them contact the BLF – phone 26 1671
- * Demonstrate your support for the green ban policy by writing to the paper and to your local member of parliament
- * Join your local resident action group. Contact CRAG, the Coalition of Resident Action Groups, phone 663 3378
- * If there is no group in your area, start talking to your neighbours and form your own group
- * Discuss distortions in the daily press with your neighbours, work-mates and fellow travellers on public transport
- * Be prepared to act in support of the green bans, by attending rallies or, if necessary, by occupying threatened sites and buildings



This booklet, produced by Anne Summers, Wendy Bacon, Dave Morrissey, Ruth Gregory and Syd Shelton, is intended to be an explanation of green bans for those who have been confused by the media and to be a reference for resident activists.