

# FIRST STRIKE

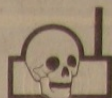
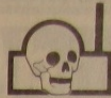
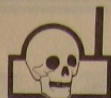
FOR NUCLEAR

DISARMAMENT

march 84 no.5



# Contents



BEYOND THE BACKYARD	2
LONG MARCH TO COMPROMISE	3
WARSHIPS RALLY IN PORT PHILLIP	4
CLASS POLITICS AND URANIUM MINING	6
SOCIALIST FEMINIST CONFERENCE	10
PND – INTO THE WORKPLACE?	15
FOR OUR DIARIES	16
REVIEWS – SILKWOOD, TESTAMENT	17 18
LETTERS, OUR ADDRESS	19

## The Voice of the Angry Dove

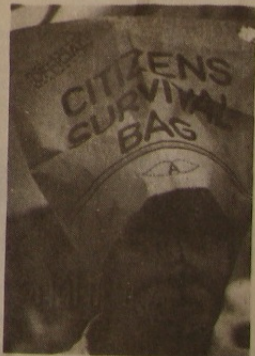


ON APRIL 15, in Hobart, anti-nuclear activists will carry a piece of rope the length of a Trident submarine to achieve world disarmament. In other places, marchers will lie on the ground with paper bags on their heads.

The fact that these symbolic actions are all that are proposed indicates just how narrow the disarmament movements' strategies have become. While they talk of building a broad movement the options are steadily being eroded.

A broad perspective in fact requires an understanding of all facets of oppression within the society. This is why *First Strike* tries to include discussion of a wide range of issues.

If you want to be involved in *First Strike* or the activities of the "Left Tendency for Nuclear Disarmament", the next meeting will be held at 7.30pm, Wednesday March 28, at the Unemployed Workers Union, 301 St. Georges Road, Nth Fitzroy.



# Beyond the Backyard

**PND SHOWDOWN! (AFTER PALM SUNDAY).**

It seems that PND will have to once again water down its policies to make sure that everybody who's anybody stays in the movement.

After months of PND lobbying, five vital city councils have promised either complete indifference or outright hostility to peace activities in their areas.

Caulfield, Prahran, Malvern, St. Kilda and Brighton all decided that anti-nuke activities were none of their business, despite the fact that St. Kilda and Brighton are official nuclear-free zones.

One of the Councillors, Mary Duffy from Prahran, broke the general apathy concerning the PND April rally and strongly attacked the concept of nuclear disarmament. She said that "the emotive campaign for nuclear disarmament is a disguised attack on uranium mining and the nuclear industry... nuclear energy is an integral part of nature, as much god's creation as sunshine and rain".

Councillor Duffy then continued with the usual drivel that all this anti-nuke stuff is naive, idealistic etc. etc. and that she was proud to have withstood the "emotive standoff tactics of PND".

PND Convenor Joe Camilleri, not to be outdone in the absurdity stakes, was quoted as saying in reply that at the moment PND was busy, but that it would take a "tough stand" with the rebel councils after the rally. The various Councillors have reportedly noted the threat and are expected to shake with fear at their next Council meetings.

7/3/84

## SELECTIVE CRUELTY?

The quest for justice in Australia never ceases. An unemployed migrant was brought to the Prahran Court for cruelty to animals. The man, Antonio Venuto, apparently threw a kitten off his balcony because he did not want it any more. But at the trial an interpreter said that Venuto, knowing little English, had not expressed himself properly to the Police. He said on Venuto's behalf that the cat had fallen while he was trying to clean up some split milk. The magistrate considered the testimony of the RSPCA of the vet who had been called to kill the injured animal and of the police, and duly convicted Venuto, ordering him to pay \$870. The magistrate added that his state of unemployment had been taken into consideration in fining him.

In the previous week, another blow was dealt to the perpetrators of violence and cruelty towards animals. A farmer had allowed a number of his cows to develop infections which had become infested with maggots. As he had not attempted any treatment, he was charged with Cruelty: The commercially worthless sick cows were acquired by the RSPCA and were destroyed. The farmer was then fined. But he was fined a lower amount than what the RSPCA had paid him, thereby making a net profit on the conviction.

The magistrate did not mention it, but obviously his state of employment was taken into consideration.

By the way, no hen battery farms were prosecuted for cruelty during the week.

## PATRIARCHAL TIME

Typically, Time Magazine ran an article on millionaires in January, repeating the usual "anyone can make it in America" mythology. However, as usual, little holes appeared in their ideological universe. Apparently, all the millionaires who have "made it" are men.

This prompted the following letter in the next issue:

"I am a 15-year old Portuguese who was disappointed with your article on millionaires. Is it true that girls do not have a chance to get rich in the US? Do men still control everything? I ask these questions because I would love to go to America and make a fortune. I could do this with a big idea or with my skills, which I hope to improve every day."



1/3/84

# Long March To Compromise

Fear of foot-soreness has forced PND to abandon plans to march to, from, or by the US Consulate. Or so some would have us believe. The three month back-track, from firm commitment to absolved conscience, indicates much of the political nature of PND.

At the November General Meeting, PND resolved to march to or by the US consulate and also an appropriate Soviet establishment if available (which it wasn't). This reflected the dominant feeling of the meeting that a more political stance was necessary. Even the PND Convenor, Joe Camilleri, adamantly supported the proposition of politicisation.

In the light of this policy, three proposals for the march route put to the December 14 rally general meeting were significant.

First, a march north from Queen Victoria Gardens was proposed by a conglomerate of members of local groups in the eastern suburbs. This, in fact, misses the US consulate altogether, a fact well known to supporters of the proposals who put it forward as a deliberate attempt to depoliticize the march. That it arose indicates not necessarily anything about the support for nuclear disarmament among local group members but that most of these members, perhaps especially in the eastern suburbs, are not prepared to carry the struggle for nuclear disarmament beyond the measures that have been used in the past. It is just a little amusing to note that the supporters of this motion resisted pressure to drop it from those who feared that "the left", those who were committed to the march's politicisation, would turn it southwards to the US consul-

The other two proposals were a march from the city to the US consulate (St. Kilda PND) supported by the "Lefts" and the now (in)famous radial march proposal which was effectively a compromise position. When it came to the voting, of course, the US Consulate march was vehemently opposed by both those wanting depoliticisation and those prepared to accept "compromise". The few raised hands for the radial march, which at last stood unopposed, indicated the spontaneous support it had gathered.

Then, in the formation of the Committees for the march's arms, the south arm, coming from the US consulate and BP House, was effectively sabotaged. The "apolitical" or even "anti-political" elements that the local groups are mostly composed of became in large part the membership of the Regional Rally Working Committees, at least in the South and East. The former fact meant that the majority of Southern Regional Working Committee (SRWC) looked



for any excuse to abandon the US consulate. They found it: length.

A last ditch effort was made to get a march going to the US Consulate at the February Rally General Meeting - it failed. Instead, the SRWC, against PND policy, refused to take the march up from the US consulate, proposing that the starting point be moved northward to opposite the Arts Centre - accepted. To absolve the collective conscience of PND though, the meeting voted funds to MAUM and FoE, marching from BP House and Women for Survival, marching from the US Consulate.

So whence politicisation, the fervent hope of a disappointed left.

Jonathan Strauss



Where Will You Be On April 15?

# Warships Rally in Port Phillip

It's hard to predict when nuclear-powered ships are coming into Port Phillip Bay. The State Government doesn't know anything about it, ever since Cain put his foot in it by supporting A.L.P. anti-nuclear policy.



Still, we might have predicted that the U.S. would try to test the latest federal government sell out (drydocking is not Australian soil) with a provocative little visit to the reputed heartland of disarmament activity.

If only it was true. Even the americans can't fail to realise that the response of the Victorian disarmament movement to nuclear visits has been dismal. Since we were handed an opportunity to organise effectively against warships after the visit of the U.S.S. Goldsborough in 1982, PND has done virtually nothing.

The rally then had been called hastily, after the ruling forces in PND had struggled for weeks to prevent any rally taking place around Hiroshima Day. The arrival of the student and local group rally onto Station Pier saw detachments of PND "goons" acting as a third row of police, trying to halt the momentum of the student march breaking through the police cordon on the pier. But it is strange that the "goons" didn't say that they were only "protecting the protesters from dire consequences". After all, there are reports that US marines stood ready with guns should any protesters manage to climb on board the Goldsborough. The Goldsborough rally showed that PND was not then prepared to respond to visits with any initiative.

Now, with the visits of the U.S.S. Whipple and Schofield, we are finding exactly the same hasty, kneejerk response by PND, the same aversion to action and the same complete lack of coherent strategy to deal with the visiting warships issue.

The problems associated with the warships issue have been recognized by the (now defunct?) warships

committee. But repressive legislation (the Defence (Visiting Warships) bill 1982 has not yet been repealed), ALP sellouts, lack of forewarning of visits, and the problem of maintaining action when ships are continually visiting (are they? Or do they only visit when a little "gunboat diplomacy" is called for?) - are minor compared with the problem of PND's political priorities.

Victoria compares badly with the record of disarmament activists in Western Australia, where the technical problems outlined above are compounded by the continuous invasion of US forces.

It is obvious that a well thought out and long-term strategy is called for and perhaps even some of the "heavies" realise this. However, the obligations of religious observance and the lowest common disarmament factor currently take precedence over organised opposition to nuclear targets, nuclear alliances and nuclear disarmament.

## Sounding the Nuclear Alarm - Alarmingly Silly.

The demonstration at Station Pier was clearly envisaged as a run-up to the April 15 Star Rally. This contrasts to the strategies of other movements (this even includes Tas. Wilderness), who base their action on political targets, and on drawing public attention to them and reveals the relative importance that PND places on the actual manifestations of Australia's nuclear alliance. Apparently "sounding the alarm" on Station Pier before an invading nuclear ship is considered a runup to a few more people "sounding the alarm" outside the Commonwealth Offices. Here, even the rampant "symbolism" which grows out of NVDA\* has been turned into rally-building for Palm Sunday.



..... And who's behind the placard?

Still, sounding the nuclear alarm at Station Pier compares favourably with the techniques employed at the Watsonia Demonstration last year. Here "broadly-based non-violence" extended to keeping off the road (or was it the nature strip?) and welcoming "States are our Mates" disrupters into the ranks.

The most militant aspect of the Watsonia demonstration was a mass civil disobedience action which had caused great consternation at organising group meetings. However, on the day, the State in its tolerance chose not to charge the 1,000 or so "militants" when they pointed their cameras which had no film in them anyway. It was all a case of "ignored publicity stunt", which just about describes the whole demonstration.

By contrast, the "Whipple" protest was a more valuable exercise. Although there was a serious lack of organisation and nobody had much idea of what to do once people were confronted by the warship and armed american marines (batons and guns), the fact that demonstrators actually marched onto the ship is impressive in today's climate. The protesters actually seemed angry and chanted the anti-american slogans which the PND leadership considers "premature".

Then again, the very fact that

the Victorian cops and the US Navy allowed the "most militant" section of the demonstration to wander freely onto their ship says a lot about what sort of threat the movement poses to the nuclear armed facilities of our "allies".

If PND had been capable of organising an effective protest various actions could have been planned. For example, the whole demonstration could have occupied the ship(s), and effective picket blocking the gangplank could easily have been organised.

Instead, all the US was presented with was a relatively trivial "nuclear alarm".

Is it simply that PND has failed to recognize that "creative protest techniques" are no substitute for political organization? Or are we seeing a very effective sabotage of the nuclear disarmament struggle and of the long-term prospects for "peace" by the neutralization of the oppositional forces in society?

\*NVDA - Non-violent Direct Action

Tim Humphrey

# Class Politics and Uranium Mining

The anti-uranium movement developed rapidly during the mid-seventies. It grew partly out of other environmental issues and the - still unresolved - problem of nuclear wastes, partly out of a growing awareness of the health hazards associated with the uranium industry, partly because of the potentially disastrous accidents nuclear power plants can generate, and more recently, because of a greater understanding that plutonium produced in nuclear power plants can be - and has been - used to make nuclear weapons



Yet in general, opposition to uranium mining has remained a middle-class activity. Apart from the involvement of a few unions, the issue has never been taken up by the broad mass of the working class in any substantive way.

Why is this? Despite its computerized inroads a hydrogen bomb is unlikely to distinguish between a Glen Waverley resident and a person living and working in Clayton. A nuclear holocaust will undoubtedly

wipe out as many factory workers as social workers, but it is the latter group and their ilk who seem most concerned about uranium mining, the stockpile of nuclear weapons, and so on.

So let us look first at middle-class activism. Unless we are prepared to delve a little deeper, it is pointless to say for instance that "throughout the twentieth century, and even before, certain sections of the middle-class have shown a propensity to become do-gooders." This may be true, but if so, why is it true?

I suggest it has developed out of a particular type of socialisation, which often included enough abstract/theoretical knowledge at a certain level to prick the collective conscience of this group into "trying to do something about the ills of the world they live in."

But because they are in a relatively comfortable economic position, because they do not perceive their interests as being diametrically opposed to the interests of the ruling class they honestly believe they can get rid of all the nasty, threatening, or dangerous elements in society without changing the power structure in any significant way.

## Starting Halfway Up the Tree.

This is what I call "starting halfway up the tree" - lopping the branches to try to effect a cure when the tree is diseased at its very roots. It is perhaps more than coincidental that middle-class do-gooders, half-way up the social scale, feel they can challenge

certain uncomfortable aspects of society from this intermediate position. Their starting point reflects their social position.

It is also easy for critics to say that the philosophy of non-violence put into practice by anti-nuclear conservationists and others is a middle-class wank which can never be successful against the economic power of the ruling class. But unless we analyze and explain this statement environmentalists will immediately jump up and down with cries of "What about the Franklin Dam?"

Well, what about the Franklin Dam? In actual fact, the proposed dam created something of a schism between the powerful state-owned Hydro-Electricity Commission and Big Business.



The Franklin River: saved

Tasmanian MP's had been searching the world for private corporations willing to commit themselves to establishing industries in Tasmania, to avail themselves of cheap electricity. Yet, according to Barry Jones, MHR, the one and only company ready to give such an undertaking was a book-binding firm!

**THE MERCURY**  
**FRANKLIN**  
**SAVED IN**  
**POWER**  
**DECISION**

Therefore, because private profits would not be threatened by any failure to build the dam, virtually no economic pressure was brought to bear on the managers of the Australian economy, ie. the Federal Govt. Transnational Corporations were simply not interested in the project, hence from an economic viewpoint the Franklin Dam could easily turn out to be a bigger white elephant than the Ord River Scheme.

## The Difference with Roxby.

However, the Roxby uranium mine was in a different category altogether. Here Big Business had its sights set on millions - if not billions - of profit dollars. It was naive indeed for protestors to think they could make any impression on the Roxby Management by using the same passive methods they had used in Tasmania.

Most of the demonstrators failed to realize that this time, the material interests of the capitalist class made it imperative that the mining of uranium should go ahead. They did not seem to understand that non-violent tactics can and will be met with violence if ever they become a threat to profits. However, generally

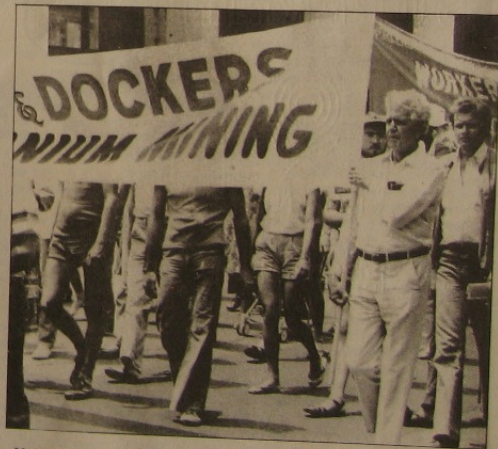
non-violent strategies have been so naive in application that they have been treated with disdain.

It is very nice and self-virtuous to believe oneself incapable of violence but protestors who try to lay down rules that the opposition can ignore are out of their political depth.

After all, if Western Mining, British Petroleum and the other Roxby Downs partners believed in non-violence, they would not be mining uranium in the first place!

It is interesting to note that in their pamphlet "Strategy Against Nuclear Power", Friends of the Earth (Canberra) still advocate that: "using the techniques of non-violence action training - such as reaching decisions by consensus - has many advantages over other techniques - such as voting."

Though in many respects this booklet is an improvement on FoE's recent naivety - at least the major power structures within capitalism are being recognized again - nevertheless



Unionists take part in anti-uranium demonstration in Brisbane.

(the modified?) adherence to non-violent training and consensus decision-making indicate there is still a long way to go. Consensus is pushed as being non-hierarchical whereby domination by small groups or single individuals is avoided. But in practice, many of us have seen meetings dominated by the organizers.

Another criticism I have of this type of decision-making is that proposed actions are watered down until they are acceptable to the most conservative person, but FoE's booklet carefully avoids any mention of such criticism (which has often been expressed). Strangely, it praises the feminist movement for initiating this type of decision-making at the very time when the more progressive womens groups are reverting to the vote.

Experience has shown that strong actions are dependent on decisions which can be supported by strong arguments, whereas the many compromises required to reach consensus can only result in weak action or no action at all.

## Mindless Violence?

Yet despite my opposition to the philosophy of non-violence, I am no advocate of mindless violence for its own sake. Strategies must be well thought out, with the long-term effects of short-term tactics kept in mind. However, the possibility of violence - by them or reactively by us - must always be taken into consideration. Also, it must be clearly understood that the media can always define "violence" any way they choose - pushing over a three foot wire fence can be portrayed more violently than the shooting of trade unionists in El Salvador.

At Roxby, four hundred protesters in the middle of the desert had no chance of closing the mine irrespective of what tactics were used. The best we could hope for was nationwide publicity to try to reintroduce the uranium debate, the ALP backdown, and the strong-arm tactics of big business, into the public arena.

Some of us judged - rightly I believe - that to do this, solid confrontation would be necessary. The Franklin Dam tactics had had their day. Now was the time to show we were angry - angry at the relentless drive of capital for profit, angry at the betrayal of the ALP (though we hadn't expected anything else), and, to some extent, angry at the apathy of the Australian people who refused to see that it was in their long-term interests to demand that uranium should stay in the ground.



Yet relatively few protesters were willing to confront the opposition in this way. Confrontation of this kind is more in line with working class politics (some workers can clearly define "the enemy"), than with the middle class (who cannot). Nevertheless, as previously stated, Australian workers have largely ignored uranium mining and its relationship to the nuclear arms race.

8

True, the Waterside Workers placed bans upon the export of uranium for some considerable time. Then the ACTU, after much wrangling and opposition from one R.J.Hawke, came out theoretically against the mining and export of uranium. But many unions only saw that uranium mining created jobs, and were not interested in the questionable nature of those jobs.

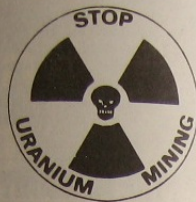
The working class as a whole was not keen to join hands across class barriers to initiate some sort of mass movement against uranium mining.



## Basic Differences

Just what is the fundamental difference between the working and middle classes that produces such different political outlooks?

Briefly, the "middle-class" has not recognized that it is directly exploited, hence it views life from an unreal perspective. Perhaps because it lacks an intuitive class perspective, it is frequently willing to join forces with the working class on specific issues, and it cannot understand why the workers are less than eager to reciprocate.



However, unionized sectors of the working class generally see life in concrete, black and white, "them and us" terms. Probably only a few industrial workers would have heard of Marx's theory of the dialectical relationship between capitalist and worker, but in practical terms, they live within, they are part of, this relationship. Their actual experiences of exploitation, interdependency, and oppression have created in them and internal understanding of class friction.

Yet, because this group is usually limited to dealing directly with concrete proposals and counter-proposals they are prevented from taking the next step. Confrontation with their boss is one thing, but the long chain of events between the mining of uranium and the production of a plutonium bomb is sufficiently abstract for all but the most politically aware to be able to ignore it. The Waterside Workers Federation, however was one of the most political unions in Australia, hence they saw the connections early in the piece.

But as for joining forces "en masse" with a lot of "middle-class, anti-nuclear trendies who don't know what life's all about" ... Thanks, but no thanks!



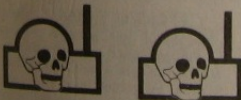
## Real Life Exploitation

There are other, less politicised sections of the working class who do their best to simply ignore all aspects of workplace exploitation. They work "only for the money", and are sufficiently conditioned by the ruling ideology to believe that their "real life" is outside the factory - it has no connection with their paid work or working conditions.

Women especially are socialised into thinking that only the time spent with the family, or doing things for the family, is important. Time spent at work is necessary only "to earn money to buy this or that for the family". Boredom on the job can be overcome by daydreaming - always about a life of luxury that will ever be beyond their reach.

Surely this is an indictment of the values of patriarchal capitalism - a high proportion of workers only able to "survive" reality by pretending it doesn't exist! And afterwards, their notion of reality is confined within the four walls of the family home.

Whether uranium is mined or not is of little interest to these workers. They only want to be left in peace. Their horizons have been strictly limited by the ruling class values imposed from above, and they are not about to rock the boat. Besides, the government wouldn't allow uranium mining to go ahead if it was dangerous, would it?



A third group of workers tends to identify with the capitalist class. These workers openly support uranium mining, nuclear power-plants, and the nuclear arms build-up. They accept pro-nuclear propaganda without question, and agree wholeheartedly with US imperialism that every conceivable nuclear missile must be built, "to catch up to the Russians".



Needless to say, this group of workers is hardly likely to join any anti-uranium movement. Some of them, in fact, have acted as provocateurs at past demonstrations.

## A Pessimistic Conclusion.

How then, can we put an end to the mining and export of uranium in this country? Frankly, short of a bad accident occurring somewhere at a nuclear power-plant, I believe there is nothing we can do to stop Roxby going ahead, and other uranium mines are likely to follow as long as they are seen as profitable ventures.

In the present economic climate, the anti-uranium movement lacks industrial muscle, and mass working class commitment is negligible. Until workers perceive that it is in their own interests to leave uranium in the ground, they will continue to mine it.

The one ray of hope on the horizon is that nuclear power-plants may prove to be uneconomic. There are already grave doubts about their long-term profitability, since they are extremely costly to build and maintain. Also, they have a very short life-span of only twenty or so years.

Yet the internal dynamics of capitalism are such that the drive towards capturing and using energy must go on regardless. Without colossal amounts of energy capitalism must fall in a heap. No doubt investors believe that ultimately, the consumers will pay as they have in the past. But this would mean a reduction in living standards of the populace, which in turn could precipitate another crisis in capitalism.

The contradictions within the capitalist system are increasing and becoming more and more difficult to resolve. In the meantime, the capitalist class will not even consider putting an end to uranium mining - since energy has become its very life blood - unless we can come up with an alternative suggestion of an energy source that is cheaper and more reliable.

The other alternative, of course, is revolution, but that would seem to be far into the future. However, with the crises of capitalism growing greater and closer together, it is quite conceivable that masses of people could be catapulted into radical politics action much sooner than seems likely at the present time.

Neile McLaren

9

# Socialist Feminist Conference

The Socialist Feminist Conference was organized by a group of women who felt that such an event was appropriate and necessary. Ten years have elapsed since the last SF conference in Melbourne. The women formed an organizing collective on the basis of a commitment to feminism and a belief in the necessity of a class analysis.

For six months preceding the conference, workshops, discussions and education sessions were held to facilitate understanding and familiarity with the issues raised.

The conference was held over the weekends of March 3-4, 10-11, and was attended by many more women than anticipated. On the first weekend registrations had closed due to numbers being above that comfortably accommodated by the venue, but these women who missed out were contacted and many attended the second weekend.

The conference intended to bring women together from both a feminist and a socialist perspective and to develop both understanding and a strategy for the future. Plenary sessions and workshops for each day of the conference centred around a particular theme: Day 1 - Women and the Distribution of Wealth; Day 2 - Women and the Labour Movement; Day 3 - Women and the State; and Day 4 - Organization and Strategy.

## Women and the Distribution of Wealth

### CAPITALISM AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Belinda Probert was quite scathing about the difference between the ideology of capitalism, with its principle of equality, and the fact of capitalism, which relies on inequality for its very existence.

She remarked briefly on the way capitalism affects womens position in the paid and unpaid labor force. Because men and women do not enter the labor market on an equal footing, women will always be disadvantaged while the capitalist system exists. Gender equality pre-supposes the end of capitalism.

I agree that the ability of the state to improve the condition of women is limited - the state will always be constrained by the resistance of private capital.

Although Belinda is herself an academic, she was not too complimentary about the "academic marxism"

which flourished in the seventies. She saw this as separate from, and secondary in importance to, the actual labor movement.

Alternatively, I sensed an underlying criticism of those people who naively believe they can prevent capital from installing the latest technological equipment. It is in the very nature of capitalism to improve its technology, for how else can investment capital be used, how else can it improve its position over its rivals?

Belinda was critical about those women she called "femocrats" who think they can make a contribution to the womens movement by helping "feminist opportunists" further their careers. Such women do nothing to help the womens movement as a whole since they are willing to work in a mans world without trying to change it.

I am however, critical of Belinda's claim that all other political issues pale into insignificance against the threat of nuclear war. She should realize that it is often by getting involved in other issues that people become politicized. They may then take up the disarmament issue and try to politicize the movement, if it still exists - for in my view, PND is in danger of fading into apolitical oblivion.

Belinda finished on a light note, remarking that she was about to exchange her role in the university for "the pitter-patter of tiny contradictions".



The Sexual Division of Labor.

Pat Gowland claimed Marxist/Feminists have had to broaden their perspective from the traditional Marxist line, to encompass both unpaid home labor and emotional labor as work. Having defined it, it is necessary to look at the relationship between the sexual division of labor and capitalism.

According to Pat, there are three main streams of socialist/feminist thought regarding this relationship which are quite diverse:

1. The first stream claims that capitalism determines the form of the sexual division of labor - if capitalism is overthrown, gender equality will automatically follow.
2. The second stream adheres to the 'dual systems model' - that capitalism and patriarchy are two separate systems. One group of women work for the capitalists, another group works at home for men. This stream does not seem to come to grips with the linkages between the two.
3. The third stream believes that the sexual division of labor cannot be separated from the total social system.

Pat went on to say that there have been many changes in the sexual division of labor in the past decade. It has been reconstituted in a different way. Consequently, women's oppression is now less visible.

The content of this talk was okay, but unfortunately many women tended to lose concentration since the presentation was not the best.

## THE WAGES GAP

Jenny Macklin spoke mainly about money. She used diagrams and tables to illustrate her points, and managed to hold her audience for the fairly short duration of her talk.

She started off with the wage-fixing system - in 1912 mens' work was clearly distinguished from womens' work, hence women became a source of cheap labor without threatening the jobs of the men, which were in the more interesting areas. At that time the minimum wage for a female was set at 54% of the male's wage.

During the second world war, many women took over mens' jobs, but still earned only 75% of the male wage. It was not until the mid-seventies that equal pay for women became a theoretical fact.

But equal pay has existed since then only in theory. Many devices have been used to ensure it does not become a practical fact. For instance, a man and woman may be doing exactly the same job, but frequently the male's job will be re-classified with a higher grade.

Jenny had statistics to show that the position of women vis-a-vis men was actually worse in 1982 than it had been in 1980/81, this was because part-time work was making inroads into full-time employment, and 77% of part-time workers are women...

The values of our society are most clearly reflected by overtime earnings. Men are offered overtime by their male bosses as a matter of course, but women are seldom offered it, since it is always assumed women have to get home to the family. Hence men earn more than five times the amount of overtime than women earn.

Another point - women are frequently employed in industries which are trying to compete with cheap imports such as the textile and clothing industries. This means they are often faced with little chance of improving their position - since the threat of closure of the factory can be held over their heads.

All in all, the economic position for women does not seem too bright if we just go on as we have been.

Unfortunately, because this plenary session started very late, there was not enough time left for questions.



## KOORIE WOMEN

While the speaker did not direct herself directly to the particular situation of Koorie Women, she did present some insights into the aboriginal community, the sense of aboriginality, and the diversity of opinion present within the aboriginal community regarding strategies, the use or acceptance of areas of the dominant white male culture.

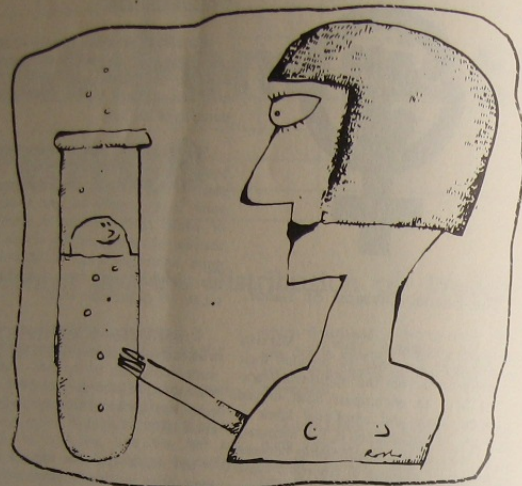
One interesting point made by the speaker, Christine Stewart, was that this culture, generally accepted by us gubs (whites) is not regarded as such by Aborigines. For them, it is an alien culture and we have no right to expect them to either accept, or feel comfortable within it. How many of us would assume that we would be asking a speaker to come into an alien environment and to even attempt to make that atmosphere less alien and uncomfortable?

The major emphasis of this workshop was the problem that Aboriginal people face with unemployment, and what is seen by the dominant culture as the unemployability.

Working conditions are often threatening and culturally alienating in a non-aboriginal environment.



12



## REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The workshop on feminist ideology and reproduction technology was extremely interesting and informative. In fact, so much interest and enthusiasm was generated by the discussion that moves have been made to continue meeting, so that women can work through many of the issues raised by the in vitro fertilization program which have, up to now, been discussed very little.

Reproductive technology involves not only the in vitro program alone. It may involve methods of contraception, treatment of vaginal infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, treatment of menstruation and menopause, pregnancy and childbirth. However, the ramifications of the in vitro fertilization program and its future possibilities were felt to be an area which needed greater discussion and input by women.

One of the most important points brought out by the workshop was that the program was not a treatment of infertility, which is the central problem facing women on the program, but merely by-passes it. No funds are

provided to the same extent to investigate causes or real cures for the problem, usually some tubal blockage which has often caused many women considerable pain, discomfort and anxiety over many years. The medical profession effectively ignores such problems. Why we may well ask?

One other major consideration is the reasons given by many people about the need supposedly fulfilled by the program. For many of the women involved, the desire to have a baby is overwhelming. Not only does this shed light on ideology of women only being fulfilled by childbirth and motherhood i.e. a woman who cannot do this is lacking in some way, an object of pity, but also raises the issue of children as property. In this society, couples must have their "own" children, who belong to them and live with them in a happily-ever-after nuclear family.

The workshop was extremely well attended, and well presented by Lyn MacKenzie. Although large, discussion within the group progressed well. It was certainly an area feminists need to develop ideas upon, and hopefully this workshop will generate continuing discussion.

## Mini-Plenary on The Accord

Anna Pha was the first speaker. She came out strongly against the Accord, which she said represented class collaboration. It is a rejection of the class struggle, a pretence that workers and capital have common interests. In fact workers have agreed not to defend themselves.

The Accord is based on a number of false assumptions - that wage increases cause unemployment (not that they eat into profits) - that profits need to increase vis-a-vis wages - that labor and capital have common interests.

It abandons the stated objective of the ACTU - the social ownership of production. The ACTU policy of 1981 called for price control, the Accord calls for price surveillance. It is designed to restore profitability, it undermines the centralised system of wage-fixing with flow-on. Its purported attempt to control Transnational Corporations is clearly ridiculous - purely bait to pull in the rebel unions.

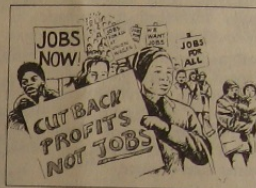
Megan Delahant from the Vehicle Builders Union spoke next, and she was just as strongly against the Accord, which has clearly meant a reduction in living standards. The Hawke governments' "consensus" pattern has meant a widening of the gap between rhetoric and reality.

She noted that those unions which voted for the Accord are finding themselves with strange bedfellows - like NCC unions and so on. She made the point that *the only real guarantees in the Accord are that wages will be restrained.*

Megan pointed out that no government can control prices when Big Business can easily circumvent controls - by moving products 12 miles outside the country and bringing them in as imports, by putting old products in new packets, and so on.

She explained how the British Labour Government adopted right-wing policies in 1979, how the people became demoralised, and how they voted Thatcher in as an alternative.

She claimed that if the ALP refuses to pursue the interests of the working class, in the long term the "social contract" will be broken. This will pave the way for an even more right-wing government, if such a thing can be imagined!



Linda Rubenstein spoke last. Her union, the Liquor Trades Union, had voted in favour of the Accord, which she referred to as a "Statement of Economic Policy". She sees that Accord as a strategic approach to economic problems.

According to Linda, there are other things in the Accord - referred to as bait by the first speaker - which make the Accord worthwhile. However Anna had pointed out that the Accord was deliberately presented as a "package", offering sops of no real value in order to get the thing accepted.

Linda claimed that women will lose out if the Accord fails, that a collective rather than a "free-for-all" approach will ensure women do not fall further behind. This is an unsubstantiated argument, for clearly the Accord prevents any move by women for the fact (rather than the pretense) of equal pay, among other things.

Also, since all the delegates to the Accord were male, the women's case was not put by women. If it was put at all, it was put by men.

Linda's arguments were weak by comparison with the other two speakers. Perhaps she sensed she had a hostile audience, or perhaps there were just not any valid arguments in favour of the Accord.

## WOMEN ARE UNEMPLOYED!

The Unemployed Workers Union Womens Caucus held three workshops during the conference, but there was some criticism insofar as they were labelled only Topic 1, Topic 2 and Topic 3 on the program put out by SF Womens Collective, instead of being given an explanatory title.

At the first workshop Chris spoke about harassment by the state and the dependant status of women. Strategies include counter-harassment of S.S. Field Officers, and a longer term broadbased campaign for Independent Status for women.

The second workshop was mainly about the necessity of a union for unemployed workers and for a womens caucus within it. The categorisation of women is seen as a divisive tactic that tends to marginalise demands (eg. supporting parent, disabled, unpaid domestic labor).

The third workshop was very well attended, and generated lots of discussion. To that point, it was the best workshop I had attended, in terms of differences of opinion and solid debate. The subject was, "Unemployment is Not a Welfare Issue" - meaning it is a political issue.

Lyndall put her points clearly, but some of the welfare workers etc. felt themselves to be personally under attack. Jodie then talked a bit about sheltered workshops, and I'm sure that most people there had not realized just what sweatshops they were.

However, I think this tended to dampen down the argument, though it got going later. A fourth workshop would have been better.

Lyndall expressed surprise that the Social Security Act has been permanently exempted from the Anti-Discrimination Legislation. But the State is not always an ass - if they had not taken such a "precaution", the way would be wide open for women to demand their rights - Independent Status for all women - unemployment benefits paid to all women not in the paid workforce. Can you imagine it?

13



## Organisation and Strategy

This was the strongest session of all. Leesa Wheelahan spoke on the last ten years of the Womens Movement, Lyn Beaton on the continuing struggle for Equal Pay, Cheryl Buchanan spoke of the Aboriginal struggle for identity and land rights, and finally Sue Jackson spoke on organization for the eighties.

Leesa Wheelahan was a very articulate and forceful speaker. During the late 60's and early 70's millions were affected by the Womens Movement. It was a time of intense discussion and debate. Since then, there has been an offensive by the right. In the early years, the movement was not asked to take a stand on other issues and broader conflicts. Leesa advocates that nowadays women return to the streets, to take up issues of unemployment, wages and to take up the fight against the Accord. Women need to organise both in and across unions.

Lyn Beaton, at the Working Women's Centre, discussed the history of the equal pay fight. As was so adequately revealed during the conference, women are still paid less than men. Lyn argued that to rectify this situation, a campaign needs to be waged for the achievement of "comparable work" as a guideline for wage fixation. Such a precedent has been set in the United States where clerical workers won a 35% wage rise by having their wage set to that of truck drivers - on the basis of comparable work. Lyn argued that the capitalist state has been forced by the pressure of the womens movement to publicly recognize discrimination against women - what we have to do now is force them to act on it.

Cheryl Buchanan was not originally proposed as a speaker for this plenary. However, she approached the collective and was allowed ten minutes. She spoke on aboriginal identity and Land Rights. The land was stolen illegally from the Aboriginal people, a state of war was never declared. Until land rights are won, aboriginal

people consider that a state of war exists. The system has created the greatest divisions within aboriginal society - Koories are fighting to break those divisions, to identify as aboriginal and unite as one community. Aboriginal women are continually frustrated, the struggle for day-to-day survival is so enormous that involvement in broader issues becomes a luxury that often cannot be afforded. Cheryl also made the observation that capitalism is like a creature from a horror movie - you cut off one arm, one evil, and another greater takes its place.

Then Sue Jackson spoke on Organization for the 80's. The organizing collective wanted to have more than just an ordinary conference, to not only look at where we are now, but where to go from here. It would be a pity of we didn't move some way forward. The womens movement has been characterized over recent years by a lack of a clear voice or political clout. We have learnt that there are no contradictions between women as women, and women as workers,

that there are no issues that are womens issues in isolation. Sue put forward the suggestion that out of this conference we set up a womens union, based on a socialist-feminist perspective - not an industrial union but as a model, not to deal with industrial areas exclusively, but all areas of concern. We should recognize that demands made on the state have obscured the fact that capitalism is the problem. We need to contrast the development towards the socialization of the costs of production and the privatization of the products of production which is happening. Sue's ideas were taken up in a workshop later in the afternoon where a large number of women discussed the purpose of such a union, what structure it could take, actions, strategies that it might develop. These are being followed up in the post-conference newsletter, and further meetings.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the conference provided a welcomed opportunity for women to come together and discuss issues relevant to a socialist-feminist perspective. It is hoped that, unlike many such events, concrete plans and strategies will be developed, and some ongoing discussions, forums and organisation initiated.

Like many activities of this nature the conference was not without faults or problems. Some were organizational, such as seating or catering, or late starts and administrative delays. Others were of a more fundamental nature. It was felt that workshops were often too large to facilitate adequate discussion and despite the provision being made for workshops to split into smaller groups after the speaker had finished, it rarely happened. Often, speakers, although interesting, went on far too long, limiting discussion time. Overall, many women felt that too little attention was paid to the differences in perspective or strategy, and that not enough argument or thrashing out of issues took place. Many women felt disappointed by the conference. It did not live up to their expectations - there was not enough questioning of what Socialist-feminism is all about.

However some things did come out of the conference. The campaign for equal rights has been renewed, moves have begun to organize a womens union, further meetings are to be arranged on the issues of reproductive technology. The conference may not have lived up to many expectations, but some things did come about as a result, and something is better than nothing.

Neile McLaren  
Lyn Winzer



# PND. - Into the Workplace?

Over the last couple of years PND has put a lot of emphasis into educating people about the effects of the arms race. Obviously this is important but a strategy for disarmament has to be more than that.

Until recently PND has done little to involve working people in the peace movement. The importance of their involvement can be seen if you look back to the heyday of opposition to uranium mining. Then, there were workers taking industrial action to stop the shipment and handling of uranium. And, no matter how big this peace movement is, without large numbers of workers in it, this sort of action can never happen. Workers are in a position to boycott any work connected with nuclear weapons, and this strength needs to be built upon. PND has formed a workplace group to start trying to bring workers actively into the peace movement.

Let's look at the progress of the group so far. The committee has been made up mainly of paid officials from various unions, like the Plumbers, Liquor Trades, Railways and Primary Teachers. PND has also appointed an official from the Metalworkers' to act as its trade union co-ordinator. Until the third meeting much of the organising has been done through these officials. They were going to unions to get their official support and then send leaflets out to all members of the union. Some job site meetings have been discussed, Bill Davies of the Plumbers and Gasfitters has been trying to arrange meetings at the Rialto building site. But the officials have resisted the idea of activists from the movement going and talking to workers on the job.

An educational program, based on the idea of convincing everyone about the ills of nuclear weapons, and therefore ending Australia's part in the arms race, won't win disarmament. Surely even the world leaders like Reagan and Chernenko realise how destructive this weaponry is, otherwise they wouldn't be building it! So we can't reduce the reasons for the arms race to being the megalomania of a few misguided individuals. Instead we can look at the mass of people who have the interest and ability to stop it.

So the question of who can stop the bomb is answered when you ask who has the power to do this. The Working class produces the wealth that the system is based on; it produces the profits the ruling class relies on to carry out the arms race. If workers around the world refused to cooperate in the production of arms there would be no bombs. This can be seen historically in the successful working class peace movements. In 1917 in Russia the workers' revolution took Russia out of the war, in Germany in 1919 it was the working class who forced the Kaiser to withdraw from World War One.



Rather than having a bureaucratic approach, members of the Left Tendency are going to try to set up job place meetings which PND activists will address. If workers have some direct contact with people from the movement, it's much more likely that they'll be ready to do things rather than relying on a leaflet sent from the union office. We'll be printing a leaflet to be handed out at workplaces. Often when you're handing out leaflets to people outside their work you can talk to them and through this contact get them organizing PND activities at work. The leaflet will include things people can do at work; sometimes even wearing a badge can ferret out people who agree about disarmament and this can build the basis for a workplace group. As well, if you're leafletting you can arrange to have a meeting inside the building. This is the sort of work which needs to be done to begin drawing working people into the peace movement.



When workers are chucked on the scrap heap by their bosses, their kids can't get decent education, and they can't afford health care, they start to

question the system. These ideas don't fall automatically into place. So socialists in the peace movement need to link up sackings, wage cuts, attacks on welfare spending, with disarmament. We need to be a part of workers' struggles over these issues and make the arguments. We need to link the arms race with workers' struggles.

It was workers' industrial action which kept uranium on the front page of the papers, with much smaller demos than PND has. The strikes over the USS Goldsborough and the strikes in the port of Brisbane show that this can be done.

Of course making the links isn't going to be easy. But this is a strategy for disarmament because only the working class has the power to throw out the US bases. Even if PND can build demos of 100,000, they'll never challenge the system which produces these arms. Only the might of the working class can stop the nuclear arms race.

Bernadette Fallon  
for the International Socialists.



## Activist Calendar

March 24 - PND GENERAL MEETING

March 28 - PND WORKPLACE COMMITTEE (but check with PND office first)

March 30 - BOP AGAINST THE BOMB - DISCO FOR DISARMING Fitzroy Town Hall

April 15 - PND RALLY

April 14 - Women from the SF Conference meeting for equal pay for women. About 2pm. All interested women welcome.

April 25 - ANZAC DAY MARCH (in memory of Women Raped in War)

April 11 - PND BENEFIT Crystal Ballroom Featuring DEPRESSION (quality punk)



EASTER - GIGSHEET at the FESTIVAL Workers Unemployed North Entry Union, North Entry Non-secular and lots of fund

# Silkwood

## Goes To Hollywood

FILM REVIEW: SILKWOOD



What has the Watergate scandal got to do with a young woman factory worker in Oklahoma City? The phone-tapping affair that felled a President (so that we are left with justice the American way) also led, to the death of Karen Silkwood. Karen had used her phone to arrange to meet with her union members and the press to present some documents. She never got to that meeting.

The Hollywood version of Silkwood ignored many facts and misrepresented others. This is to be expected. What is important is that the film ends on such a note that compels others to find out more information. The film deals with the politicizing experience of Karen Silkwood which many of the audience can identify with and thus may start them questioning.

The film was lacking in such areas as not showing that 73 other workers were contaminated at the time, that there were other workers who were aware of what was happening to them as well. Hollywood movies do tend to focus on stars: one-person-heroes. As well the film missed out on showing union activities such as strikes and pickets at the plutonium plant. It also misrepresented the fact that the plant was closed down a year after Karen's death. The Cimarron plutonium plant where Karen worked, was closed for a few months for cleaning up purposes.

It helps to know some of the background information before seeing the film. Karen Silkwood was an active union member who was murdered for knowing too much. She was worried about the health and safety of workers and wanted to expose Kerr-McGee corporation for gross negligence, spillages, leakages, accidents and deliberate cover-ups at the plutonium plant.

Karen Silkwood took on the Kerr-McGee Corporation. The Corporation by the 70's owned 1/4 of all known uranium reserves in the US and was the biggest uranium producer in the country. In the year that Karen was murdered, the corporation made \$116 m. profit. They paid Navajo Indians 90cents an hour for mining uranium. Karen couldn't fight the multi-national corporation and all the state machinery which propped it up and that has vested interests without paying the price for it.

After Karen's death, the charge of conspiracy brought against KMC and the FBI in depriving Karen of her rights (bugging of her phone and apartment, harassment because of her union activities) was bootied out by the courts. This smart move preserved the silence around the involvement of big multi-national corporations such as KMC, of the CIA, FBI, NSA and other insidious machinery of the state. The Silkwood estate won in a negligence case against the Corporation. But justice is not done.

While Karen was murdered for her activities, other workers today are still dying as violently from contamination in industries such as uranium, asbestos and coal. Workers also die just as violently from lack of proper health and safety measures. Union members and other workers at the plant were harassed after Karen's death, others still are today.

Despite the shortcomings of the film it is still worthwhile spending some money and time on it. It confirms the exploitative and mercenary nature of the big businesses. It also is one of the better anti-nuke films that are flooding the market today.

Lee Mee Wun

# A Testing Testament

FILM REVIEW: TESTAMENT



I came out of the theatre visibly shaken. Yes, this was the latest nuclear war film from America ("A Day After" clone in fact), but it was then that the full impact of what I'd been watching hit me.

Since seeing "Testament" I've started doubting the viability of the world in general, and American people in particular.

If audiences are flocking to see "The Day After" and "Testament" there is something grievously wrong. And if committed anti-nuclear activists are actually liking and approving of such soppy shit, worse is to come.

I'm not complaining about the actual movie. "Testament" is a well-acted melodrama with average plot, script and directing. But whatever PND may think, it is not an anti-nuke movie.

Like "The Day After" (and the sequels which will come) it is a disaster movie. It uses a plausible disaster: nuclear war, and makes an entertaining story about how the cast (all fine upstanding no-looting-no-panic white middle americans) bravely attempt (and succeed) in surviving it. The widely acclaimed anti-nuke message is presumably in showing how bad surviving (and dying) in World War 3 would be.

Well thanks a lot. It's good to get such a timely advice from Paramount pictures. I suppose no one had ever noticed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and that nobody (in America at least) has glimpsed how pretty disastrous even good old conventional war can be, as shown on the idiot box courtesy of Vietnam, El Salvador, Lebanon, Angola, Grenada, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, etc. etc. etc.

And considering how well the movie was received at our screening by the PND-CICD officialdom present, the fact must be that all the people in the streets with anti-nuke banners are simply afraid of the Kellogs and Credit Card Services being disrupted.

Well, then I suppose it's good then that Hollywood is finally going to show them why they should be protesting: nuclear war is bad for the world!

After that major discovery (it costs \$7.00, no concession) some people may then want to ask how we avoid this coming nuclear holocaust.

Well, the film didn't show that. But then it didn't even show where the bombs came from (superpowers), who has them (them), that an anti-nuke movement in fact exists (us), and what the actual symptoms of radiation poisoning are (extremely messy).

What the film does show, as already clear in "The Day After", is that the nuclear war is survivable, and with a bit of enterprise, faith in god and local government assistance some suburban communities may pull through!

But the PND officialdom will still say that any sort of statement on nuclear war is good, as lots of people will see it, realise how bad things could be (and are) and soon we'll have lots of activists. Of course they forget that even bloody parliamentarians by now know how bad war is and average working people are considerably less stupid than PND and Paramount think. Maybe more activists would appear if PND stopped applauding commercial disaster movies that offer us no new facts, and began working on a real strategy to get rid of the nukes.

Manrico Moro

**FIRST STRIKE**  
FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

*An Activists Perspective*

*Critical discussion of the power structures which underlie the arms race.*

*First Strike welcomes your involvement with articles, production help, criticism, letters, etc. Please send any contributions to First Strike, c/- C.R.A.C., Monash University, Clayton. 3168.*



**The Voice of the Angry Dove**



