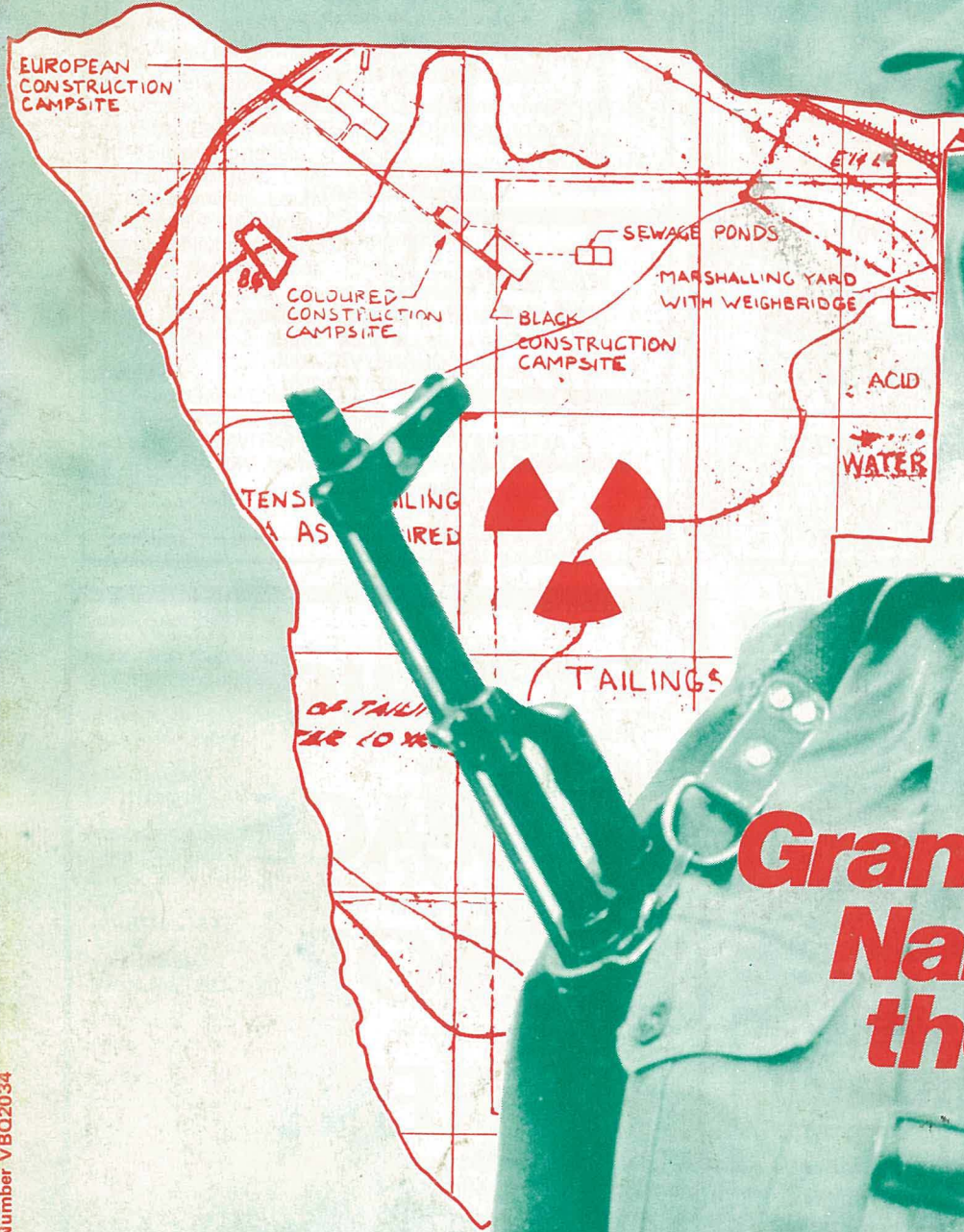


# Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 44 Summer 1985 - 1986 \$2.50



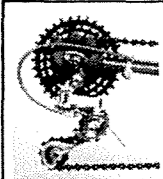
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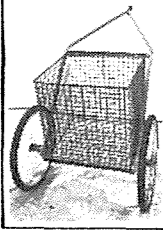
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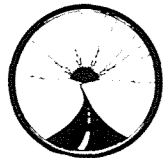
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Cover: South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) guerrilla (Photo: Per Sanden); insert: detail from plans for Roessing uranium mine. Cover design: Ben Kilmartin and Jonathan Goodfield.

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Contributions to *Chain Reaction* are invited. Please try to send items typed, on one side of the page, double spaced and with wide margins. Keep a copy. We do not have sufficient resources and people to return manuscripts. These few guidelines help in bringing out the magazine better and faster.

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## LETTERS

### ► Bega threat

In this far South Coast area of New South Wales there is some of the most pristine and valuable countryside in Australia. Its management and protection are, I believe, the major concern of the residents and should therefore be the major concern of the local council and all level-headed Australians. As a former councillor on the Bega Valley Shire I fear that this is not the case. A recent unanimous decision by the shire to continue the woodchip industry indicates where their thoughts lie.

Having experienced the totally obstructionist attitudes of some councillors towards ratifying this shire as a nuclear free zone, following a successful community referendum in 1983, I can only assume that their base attitude towards the future well-being of our shire and its residents is questionable. Their beliefs are that we have infinite land and resources available and that everything will sort itself out in the future. Not so!

Unless they learn to project ahead I fear they will 'overkill' or 'overwork' our land and forests. Right in the middle of this dead-end approach is the ever-devouring and parasitical woodchip industry.

The Japanese-based Harris-Daishowa has recently 'celebrated' chipping of the ten millionth tonne of wood. To my mind it is now time to take stock and re-examine the entire industry, and close it down.

I don't for one moment question the controlled use of a small percentage of timber by the traditional and community-supportive saw-milling operations, and that this timber consumption may be regarded as a renewable resource, but I most certainly question the rampant exploitation of Australian forests and the subsequent siltation/erosion problems that chip-milling is inflicting on the soils and rivers in our area. Why do we allow such an industry when from a proper community-based perspective, all it really does is compound year after year these problems of erosion, siltation (plus the risk of bushfire from summer logging operations), and systematically eliminate the natural beauty of the region? The latter is the very reason why the South Coast is so popular, from a tourism perspective.

The Japanese company is not left with the scar (they do not woodchip their own forests) and they will certainly not repair, if indeed it is possible, the damage that the woodchipping operations unleash. That task will be left to future generations of Australian taxpayers, whilst the present generation of taxpayers are effectively subsidising the industry and its cohorts via the continuing saw-milling, agricultural and fishing economies and its growing tourist economy. One could say that our councillors and our quite-removed Labor politicians cannot see the forest for the trees.

The supporters of woodchipping argue that:

- it does not harm the environment.
- it creates employment (overall?)
- it gets rid of 'useless' timber

The council has heard all of these claims through an address by a representative from Harris-Daishowa and has, in its wisdom, agreed to continue supporting the industry — even before the contents of an impending

environment impacts statement have been debated and evaluated by the community it purports to represent.

Bob Arthur  
Kawangi, via Candelo, NSW

### ► Law enforcement

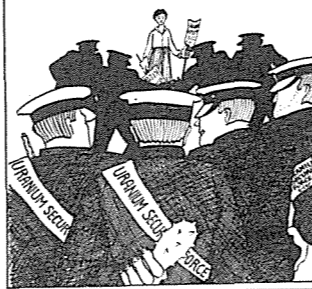
I have recently given some thought to the issue of how relatively powerless people can achieve social change. Often the focus of politically involved activists is on introducing new laws — for example, to ban cigarette advertising, and to protect particular species of animals. I believe that this can be productive, but it should be complemented with a concern to ensure that current laws which are supportive of one's cause are enforced.

In Canberra, Australia there is a law that animals are kept in confined conditions should be exercised daily. This has never been enforced and yet, in relation to battery hen egg production, it could be a more effective tactic to see such a law enforced rather than attempting to get a specific law introduced banning the keeping of hens in battery cages.

In Canberra it is also illegal to sell cigarettes to those under 16, or to smoke in lifts. As a long term goal an activist may wish to see cigarette advertising banned, and all persons having the right to breathe smoke free air, but in the short term a 'powerless' person's energy could well be better used up in ensuring that the laws already on the books in relation to these matters are enforced. This would complement progressive politicians attempts to introduce laws relating to such things as cigarette advertising. As an activist I am becoming increasingly concerned that progressive politicians may get laws on the books, but if individual citizens do not ensure they are enforced, the social change resulting from the new law is mainly cosmetic.

Andrew Freeman  
Belconnen, ACT

## URANIUM CREATES A POLICE STATE



### ► Sympton and cause

Thank you for publishing the Libertarian Workers for a Self-managed Society poster 'Uranium creates a Police State' on the back cover of the August issue of *Chain Reaction*.

We produced the poster in 1978 because we felt the anti-uranium movement was only looking at the dangers of nuclear power. It was not looking at the wider problem that nuclear power is centralised power and centralised power sources are controlled by a few people. In order for these power sources to be effective they need to be controlled and protected by the state.

Nuclear weapons are the result of the defence policy of the modern state. The nuclear bomb is a symptom — the state is the cause. As anarchists we advocate the abolition of the state and the replacement of the state by community and workers' councils federated via horizontal links which are based on equal decision-making power and an equal distribution of wealth for all.

Joe Hart  
Parkville, Vic

You are invited to write letters to *Chain Reaction* with your comments on the magazine or on other issues of interest.

Letters should be kept within 300 words so that as many as possible may be published. Longer letters may be edited.

Write today to *Chain Reaction*, GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia.

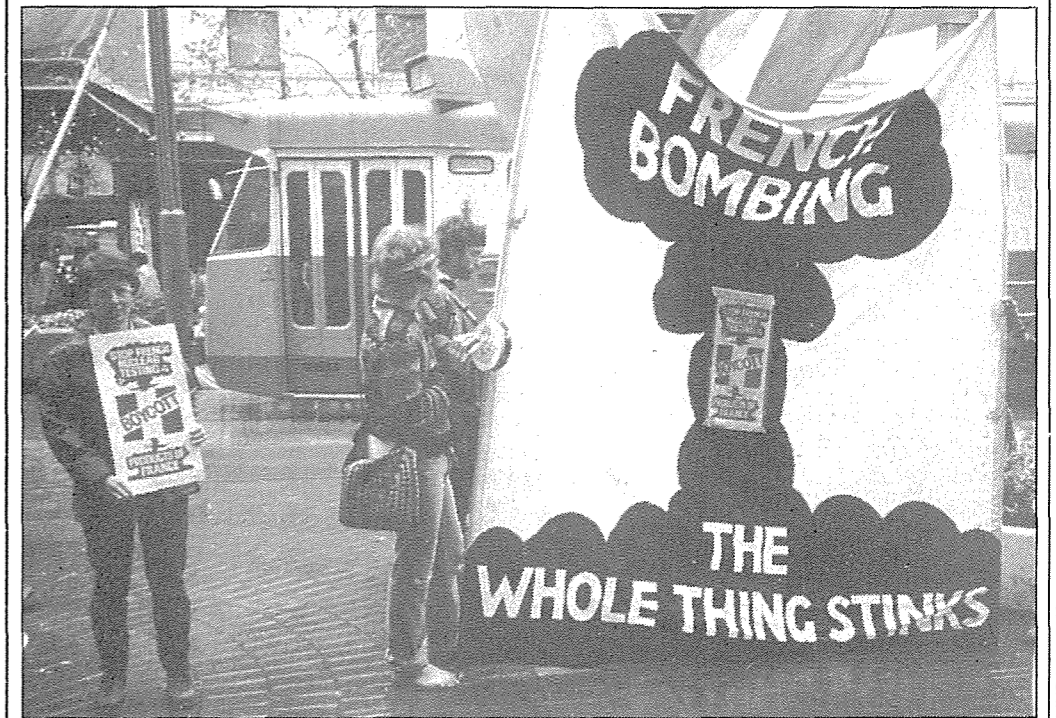
## Par avion

Following demonstrations at its Melbourne city store where a 'Fete de France' was held in October, the department store, Myer wrote to French president Mitterrand explaining how its customers are unhappy about French activities in the Pacific. Protestors had called for a boycott of French products and supported the New Zealand stand for a nuclear-free Pacific. Myer were embarrassed by the poor attendance at the fete's inauguration which was attended by the French ambassador.

The letter to Mitterrand began by explaining that the fete was held in 'the largest and most prominent store in Australia, often called Le Galerie Lafayette', Myer stressed that they were not a political organisation but believed it their duty towards this section of their customers to let the French government know the concern about recent events around the *Rainbow Warrior* in New Zealand and nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Source: *Tribune*, 30 October 1985.

## EARTH NEWS



One of the many protests outside Myer in Melbourne. October 1985.

## DDT deaths

Government authorities in Indonesia have confirmed that wastes from a DDT packaging plant, about 40 km south of Jakarta, have contaminated inhabited areas in its vicinity. But they were quick to reject allegations from two leading non-government organisations that the deaths of 25 local villagers were caused by pollutants emitted from the plant. The Indonesian Environment Forum and the Volunteer Network Against the Misuse of Pesticides reported that the PT Montroso Pestindo Nusantara, a privately-owned DDT formulating plant, burnt discarded pesticide packaging material at night. No autopsy of the bodies of the 25 dead villagers has yet been carried out. Meanwhile the government has ordered the plant to improve on pollution control measures.

Source: *Earthscan Bulletin*, 4 September 1985.

## C3 pollution

More news about the C3 Link between freeways in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. (See *Earth News*, *Chain Reaction* 42/43). The Gardeners Creek Valley Residents Association accuses the state government of covering up potential air pollution risks from the C3 and criticises its lack of action on the Environment Protection Authority report, which dealt with a claim by the Road Construction Authority that the air pollution associated with the freeway would be controllable, revealed serious deficiencies:

- The effect on visibility of the arterial road in the valley was ignored.
- The effect on lead and oxidant levels of the road had been dismissed without justification.
- The proposed measurement program was inadequate to determine how often pollutants

levels exceeded target levels or to monitor the transport pollutants within the valley.

In the light of these findings the Association is asking the local council to rethink a proposal to place a children's playground near the freeway; also to consider whether recreational sporting activities should be encouraged in the area. They have also called on the council to make evacuation arrangements for residents at risk.

Source: *Tribune*, 23 October 1985.

## Gay youth

The Gay Youth Conference 1985 was held in Melbourne in early September; 135 people turned up for the event. The conference was organised after a national network of young lesbians and homosexual males was set up at the National Youth Council Conference in Adelaide in January. Due to the 25 year age limit, the crowd was a mixture of people involved in gay politics

and others less familiar with issues or with expressing their opinions or feelings in groups.

The two days were broken up into four or five workshops every hour, with some sort of resolution or recommendation being achieved out of the discussion that took place. Workshop topics included: coming out to parents and friends, sexuality, feminism, pornography, abortion, discrimination, gays and the media, AIDS, health, relationships, communication between lesbians and gay men, and gay youth groups. Because of past experience with the police and media, it was decided not to run a workshop on paedophilia.

The workshops divided vaguely into three themes: education, personal development and legal issues. People were free to suggest new workshops or to hold women-only workshops, providing an opening for unstructured and relaxed discussion.

## Salt class action

On 6 November 1985, Australia's first class action commenced in the Supreme Court of Victoria. The case has been brought against the Victorian Rural Water Commission by 131 northern Victorian farmers, some of whose properties are located around the perimeter of an area of farmland that is being compulsorily acquired for the construction of two salt evaporation pans.

(A class action is where a group of people with a common interest can take legal action against a single defendant, rather than having to take individual actions for each person. Victoria is the only state with this provision, which was introduced in May 1985.)

The proposed ponds are the latest stage in a 150-year project for diverting water with a high salt content that formerly flowed into the Loddon and Murray Rivers from the Barr Creek anabranch. Since 1974 that water has been partly diverted into natural lakes between Kerang and Swan Hill. Lake Tyrrell has also been mooted as a possible future evaporation pond via the construction of an 80 km pipeline.

Overall, \$8.5 million has been allocated by the state government to acquire 3000 hectares of farmland for two new evaporation ponds, located south of Lake Boga. Farmers tried unsuccessfully in 1981 to obtain a restraining court order. To date, the Rural Water Commission has spent \$5 million of the initial allocation.

Since the early 1970s, northern Victorian farmers have been expressing their concern about the government's approach to the salinity problem. The class action they are undertaking could take up to six

## PADEX axed

The peace movement in Australia has won a victory by forcing the cancellation of the Pacific Area Defence Equipment Exhibition (PADEX) which was to be held in Darwin in May 1986. The exhibition had originally been planned for Sydney, but recently changed to Darwin because of the threats of union bans and actions by the peace movement, only to be met by the same threats there. Exhibition organisers Desiko Pty Ltd gave federal government opposition as the official reason for the cancellation, but Bob Day, Desiko's managing director, admitted he had been 'perturbed by the ferocity of the peace movement'.

Source: *Tribune*, 13 November 1985.

## Nuclear cycle

An around-Australian bicycle ride, visiting uranium mines, nuclear installations and foreign bases is being planned for 1986. Simply called 'The Bike Ride', it begins in Adelaide in February 1986 and plans to circle Australia, eventually arriving at Pine Gap. Through personal contact, street theatre, workshops and audio-visuals the organisers hope to highlight Australia's role in the nuclear fuel cycle and the arms race, and to add to the world wide movement against nuclear activities. They need funds, publicity and of course people to come on the ride.

Contact: Bike Ride, c/- Friends of the Earth, 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066 Tel: (03) 419 8700. Bike Ride, c/- Greenpeace, 310 Angas St, Adelaide, SA 5000

## Darwin blockade

On 21 September 1985, Greenpeace protests and union stoppages commenced a blockade of the export of uranium from Darwin. The vessel *Clydebank* was occupied by Greenpeace members who chained themselves to it. At the same time, a letter released by Greenpeace from the West German mining company Urangesellschaft exposed the link between Australian uranium exports and French testing in the Pacific, and the weakness of the Australian government's ban on exports to France. The letter confirmed that six containers of uranium from a shipment of sixteen exported from Darwin in February 1985 was meant for a French customer, Enership. After processing in France, it was up to Enership to decide how the material was used. A spokesperson for Greenpeace, Michelle Sheather, said this showed that 'once uranium leaves the country, where it ends up is anybody's guess'.

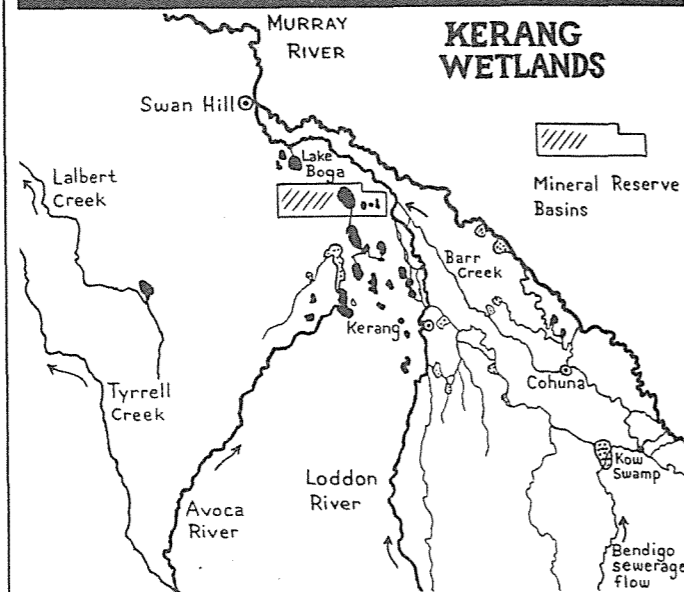
Source: *Tribune*, 25 September 1985.

## The last round-up?

Protestors at Courtenay and at Kyaquat on Vancouver Island in Canada want the provincial forest service to let them manage forest areas instead of hiring contractors to spray 'Roundup' herbicide. Use of this water soluble herbicide contaminates natural water supplies nearby.

In Kyaquat, fisherman and mussel farmer Frank Chidly, one of 350 villagers objecting to aerial Roundup spraying, is proposing experimental forest management for land near his mariculture lease. An official with the forest service has discussed Chidley's proposal with him for an experimental area and has withdrawn the forest service's two pesticides permits to spray Roundup aerially because of strong community protests.

Source: *The Sun* 4 September 1985. Vancouver Canada.



weeks to be heard. Their main objection to the construction of the new evaporation ponds and the resultant salt accumulation is that salty groundwater from beneath the ponds will gradually move into their properties and ultimately to the Murray River. The Rural Water Commission content that it will be able to prevent this happening by constructing bores around the evaporation ponds and pumping the outward-moving groundwater back to the ponds.

In essence, the Rural Water Commission is proposing an engineering solution to the problems of Victoria's most

salt-degraded region. The local farmers are advocating an ecological approach, which includes alternative agricultural practices which may be more effective in controlling the movement of underground saltwater tables.

The Victorian government is attempting to prevent the class action from succeeding by introducing legislation which gives the Rural Water Commission retrospective statutory power to enforce abidance with its Mineral Reserves Basin scheme. The bill is being debated in state parliament as *Chain Reaction* goes to press.

Lyndon Fraser

MAP BY LYNDON FRASER

## Coop boycott

In early October 1985, the Coop became the first big British retailer to sever all trade links with South Africa. The move will eventually ban the republic's products from more than 1200 stores and marks the retail today's most forceful condemnation of apartheid. The most immediate effect will be on the import of fresh citrus and other fruits. Tinned goods and South African sherry had been largely outlawed from the stores during the past few years.

The ban affects two sections of the Cooperative Retail

Service Ltd, the largest retailer in the movement with 800 outlets in England and Wales and the Cooperative Wholesale Society (CWS) which acts as a supplier and manufacturer. The CWS has sought alternatives to South African products since 1978. It now intends to ensure that no goods packed under the Coop label are imported from the republic and that all fruit imports are banned. The deputy secretary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, Kate Clark, said that she hoped the move would be the first of many by stores groups.

Source: *The Guardian*, 13 October 1985.

## Business as usual

The Three Mile Island number 1 reactor, the undamaged twin of the TMI-2 reactor which experienced a core meltdown in March 1979, has been poised for re-start for the last six years. On 30 May 1985, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) gave General Public Utilities Corporation (GPU) permission to operate the plant, but they have been prevented from re-starting by a court-ordered 'stay' while further objections are heard.

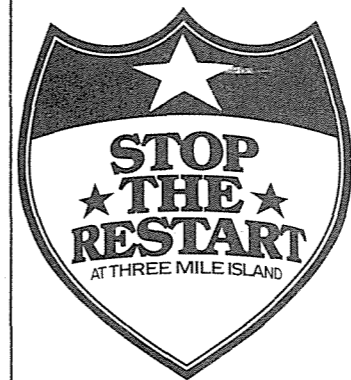
The opponents to the re-start argue that the NRC has not adequately investigated issues of management integrity and competence at the TMI-1 and 2 plants. However, the real problem of the TMI-1 plant is that the safety defects contributed to the TMI-2 accident are fully present in TMI-1 and no attempt whatsoever has been made to correct them.

It seems that while there has been ample time in the past six years for litigation aimed at avoiding fixing the safety problems, there has been little time for the relatively straightforward changes that were recommended in the wake of the TMI-2 accident. This hardware problem is not limited to TMI-1. A survey showed that these safety fixes will not be done until at least 1989 on 54 reactors in the USA.

An especially scandalous example of how electricity utilities in the USA have refused to implement the post-TMI safety recommendations has been at the Davis Besse plant in Ohio, operated by Toledo Edison. On 9 June 1985 the plant experienced a series of safety failures similar to the TMI-2 incident, but staff managed to close a valve and shut down the plant. It was revealed in later investigations that the NRC had in fact ordered Toledo Edison to make some technical modifications in July 1979. Instead Toledo Edison conducted a study to show nothing needed to be done, and promised to make minor changes which it did not do either.

The French, Japanese and Swedes all made major modifications to their reactors within two or three years of the TMI accident.

For further information: contact John Hallam, Friends of the Earth (Sydney).



## Steel women win



As anticipated the Wollongong women steelworkers won their case (see *Earth News*, *Chain Reaction* 42/43). In Sydney on 28 September 1985, before a packed hearing of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, Justice Barbour stated:

With regard to the 55 individual complaints of sex discrimination against Australian Iron & Steel (AIS) by 34 women former employees, I find all the complaints to be substantiated.

The Equal Opportunity Tribunal found that AIS had discriminated in refusing to hire women as production workers, placing their names on a separate list from male applicants; and in retrenching women who were employed in 1981 as a result of the campaign by the 'Jobs For Women Action Committee', because they had lost seniority due to the rejection of their original job applications.

The judgement has wide implications for the Australian industry. It means that Section 36 of the Factory Act, barring women from lifting 16 kg or

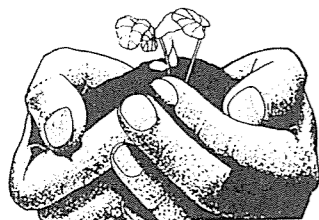
more, cannot be used as justification to discriminate against hiring women. At present the Act says nothing about weight limits for men. It also means companies will have to look closely at their practices in hiring and training workers and giving promotion. It should mean women have some protection against retrenchments if past discrimination can be proved.

Carmel Niland, president of the Anti-Discrimination Board, summed up the position after the judgement:

In Australia there is widespread sex segregation in the workforce. Men have moved easily into women's jobs, such as nursing and childcare. Women have not been able to move easily into traditionally male jobs. In blue collar jobs there have been major barriers. These have now been broken down and there will be a flow-on effect to all women.

It is almost certain AIS will appeal against the decision which could mean over \$1 million in compensation to the 34 women.

Source: *Direct Action*, 2 October 1985.



## PVR decision near

The long-running debate over whether Australia should adopt plant patenting — Plant Variety Rights (PVR) — legislation seems about to be resolved. The federal government hope to announce its intentions shortly after Professor Alec Lazenby completes his inquiry into 'Australian plant breeding, PVR, and its alternatives', which he plans, a bit hastily, to do in early February 1986.

A clear majority of farmers, conservationists, consumers, people who are actively concerned with overseas aid, churches, ALP voters, state ALP branches, Australian Democrats and perhaps National Party voters, are solidly against PVR, for any of a dozen good reasons. Most realise that there must be more to the intentions of the legislation than the rewarding of plant breeders in an effort to stimulate plant breeding as is claimed, because this could be achieved using the traditional, 'no fuss' product levies, or any of several other non-disruptive methods. (See Mark Cole, 'Alternatives to plant patenting', *Chain Reaction* 40).

There is little doubt that the adoption of PVR will preclude the possibility of any form of agriculture other than large-scale, chemically dependent methods. The large and medium scale monoculture-type agriculture which feeds the 90% plus of urbanised Australians depends on plant breeders breeding high yielding crop and pasture plants. However plant breeders have also tried to breed plants that were hardly enough to withstand pests and diseases.

## Peace conference report

The first National Peace Conference, organised by the Australian Coalition for Disarmament and Peace (ACDP) and hosted by People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND), was held from 29 August to 1 September 1985 at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). ACDP is a broad coalition of organisations involved in nuclear disarmament issues and includes trade unions, churches and environmental groups.

The conference had over 100 workshops, 13 panel discussions and keynote addresses by Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque and Ferenc Kozzegi from the independent Hungarian peace movement. Although the conference was not envisaged as a decision-making meeting, it was hoped that with representatives from over 200 groups present, some common threads and

In the last twenty years since the introduction of PVR in Europe and the USA multinationals (often with petro-chemical interests) have largely taken over the European and US seed-breeding industries and now even seem to be dictating the direction of plant breeding in public breeding institutions. It's all yield, and why bother with pest resistance, we can always spray the crop.

Australia is pioneering some of the most promising types of 'non-chemical' farming. The yields are usually 10-15% lower than high technology methods in good seasons, but 'non-chemical' farmers' yields are more dependable in years when chemically grown crops suffer moisture stress. However this type of agriculture depends on fairly hardy varieties being available in commercial quantities. Such varieties are slowly but surely disappearing in Europe and the USA, and will continue to in any country in which plant patenting is instituted.

**Contact:** If you need to know more about the defects of plant patenting write to: Robert Bell, Free Access to Seeds Committee, 7 Edward St, Brunswick, Vic 3056.

directions could be gleaned from the discussions.

It was evident this hope was fulfilled by the agreement and feeling of common purpose expressed at the final plenary session. At this plenary the combined reports all the workshops were presented. It was an inspiring session where we heard well thought-out reports which expressed recurring themes including:

- the need for a strong commitment by the peace movement by the Aboriginal land rights struggle;
- the importance of strong opposition to visiting nuclear-armed warships;
- the need to critically analyse Australia's foreign policy including our foreign aid programmes;
- the importance of focussing on Pacific issues; and

• the more immediate campaigns around the signing of the Pine Gap and North West Cape treaties in 1986 and opposition to uranium mining.

The final plenary was extremely useful in bringing together all streams of the conference, indicating priorities and more importantly showing that delegates recognised that issues such as disarmament, Aboriginal land rights, human rights and Australian foreign policy were inter related and should be campaigned on as such.

### For further information.

The reports and proposals of the final plenary are available from PND offices. In addition much of the conference was taped by Hidden Agenda Productions. They have a catalogue of talks and interviews available and can be contacted at 75 Leveson St, North Melbourne, Vic 3051. Tel: (03) 329 9947. This report was written by Joe Wachter, Friends of the Earth (Sydney).

## Youth wages

Early in 1985, McDonalds hamburger chain in Western Australia offered twenty cadetships for fifteen-year-olds, offering \$103 for a five-day week — \$9 less than the current award. In October, because of strong union pressure and the difficulty they would have in proving they could not afford to pay award wages, McDonalds backed down from this cadetship scheme. They denied they had been trying to press for junior wage cuts and said they intended to hire workers another way under the government traineeship program.

In the wake of McDonald's backdown, the West Australian Confederation of Industry (WACI) announced it would be formally applying to the Industry Commission to scrap its Youth Wages Scheme. The original guidelines for the scheme were that any workers employed must be additional and that employers must show that they could not afford to pay full award wages. There was an embarrassing reluctance on the part of employers to apply to participate in the scheme, despite WACI claims that it would open up thousands of job opportunities.

**Source:** *Tribune*, 9 October 1985.

€ MCDONALDS\*\*\*

4 hr shifts if don't finish stay back.  
hats compulsory not for managers  
70 bags of refuse @ day  
2 gallons of detergent  
buns on floor (occasionally)  
packaged shredded lettuce (real tomatoes)  
chickens + mop water → UKAAT  
speed considered more important  
→ messy food on clothes  
mop water not changed often.

**McDonalds ex-employee vents her frustration.**

## Identity crisis

On 19 September 1985 Federal Caucus approved the introduction of identification (ID) cards without photos. Apart from threats to civil liberties, it has become accepted that ID cards will not work in preventing the types of fraud and evasion which the Hawke government says it will. The police have admitted that misuse of the card won't be controllable, and the Department of Social Security have told the government that cards will not be effective in controlling fraud. Business will still be able to find loopholes in the taxation system which has always favoured their interests. Basically the cards will only affect already disadvantaged sections of the community such as low-income earners, people on social security, people who have been in institutions, 'illegal immigrants' and women, who once again will be the worst hit.

People Against Identity Numbers (PAIN) was set up

following a public meeting opposing the cards held in August. Since then PAIN has been working in two directions. The first involves publicity and the distribution of as much information as possible to the public, unions and people working in political parties on the ID cards and how to oppose them. The other is to 'fill in a false' campaign which seeks to disrupt the scheme both before and upon the introduction of the cards in 1987.

PAIN has recently released a booklet outlining opposition to the cards and showing where and why the cards will affect all people. Also included are methods of opposing the cards and details of the false ID campaign. Another booklet is due to be published soon which will be devoted exclusively to the techniques of setting up false ID's.

**Contact:** PAIN, 49 Peel St, West Melbourne, Vic 3003. Tel: (03) 328 4988.

## Anti-nuclear victory

On 15 October 1985, eight residents of Kampung Baru Bukit Merah in Malaysia obtained an interlocutory injunction in the Ipoh High Court against the Asian Rare Earth company, restraining it from producing or storing radioactive wastes in the vicinity of the village. The High Court ordered the factory to take immediate steps for the removal and proper disposal of radioactive waste, failing which it may have to

close the factory. This decision is the latest development in Papan dump controversy, which arose when the people of Papan learnt in November 1983 that their town was chosen as a dump site for the radioactive waste products of Asian Rare Earth. (See 'Papan says no to thorium', *Chain Reaction* 39 and subsequent updates).

**Source:** *SAM Features* (Friends of the Earth Malaysia), 7 November 1985.

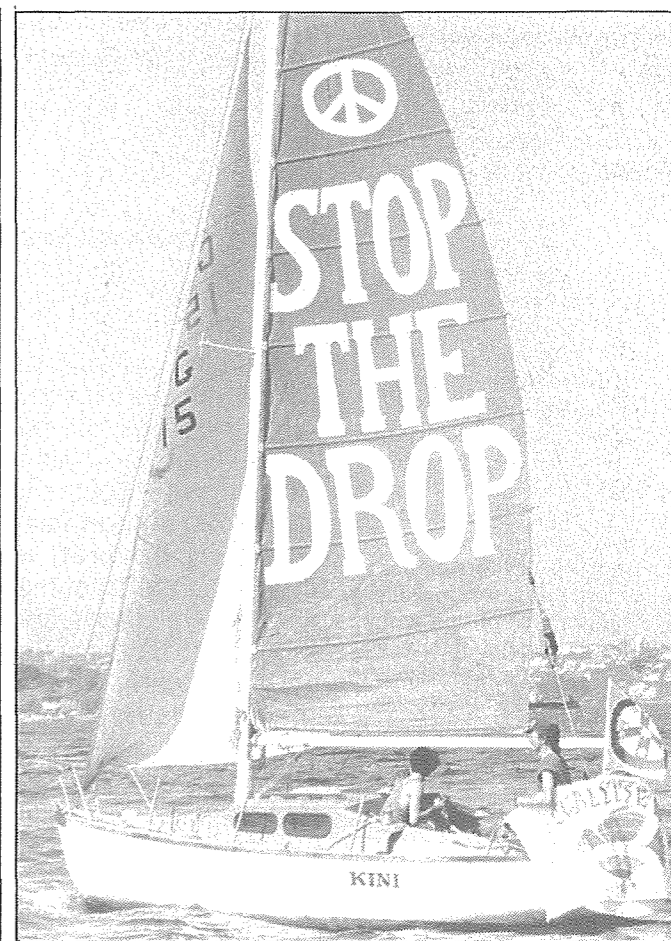
## Roxby doubt

Apparently forward sales of Roxby Downs uranium have been a little slow, so slow in fact that the Western Mining British Petroleum consortium excavating the copper-uranium-gold deposit, have had no orders at all. In a bid to speed the process along a bit, Western Mining are flying fifteen state and federal government officials from mining and resources departments, to the Olympic Dam site in the remote wastes of South Australia to 'familiarise' them

with the operation. This is expected to give the officials new enthusiasm to use their contacts in overseas bureaucracies to help sell the yellowcake to potential clients, most of whom are semi-government electricity authorities.

There are rumours that if orders are not forthcoming before Christmas 1985 the mine, which has caused so much controversy in South Australia and nationally, may have to revert back to desert.

**Source:** *Peace Action*, People for Nuclear Disarmament (NSW).



SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

## Squadron afloat

With the visits of nuclear armed warships likely to increase in many Australian ports in addition to Fremantle, several peace squadrons have formed to oppose them by direct action. The Sydney Peace Squadron was formed early in 1985 and is an energetic and cohesive group. They have weekly meetings and have organised several actions including two against warships and they are attempting to build contracts with other peace groups and trade unions.

Their most recent action, in September against the *USS Brook*, received wide and fairly favourable media coverage despite the small number of boats involved. The *Brook*, which is armed with ASROC nuclear missiles accompanied by the conventionally armed *USS Reid*.

The Peace Squadron was out in force on the morning of the

ships' scheduled arrival, assembling over fifteen craft including power boats, large and small yachts, and canoes. Unfortunately the ships arrived a day later than schedule; the US commander claimed they had run out of fuel. Many people had taken the day off work so that when the ships arrived the next day, only half a dozen boats were there to protest.

The *Reid* entered the harbour first and allowed through without interference. The *Brook* came through the heads in a wide arc to build up speed for the confrontation with the protest boats. This forced the police boats to precede the *Brook* at speed, allowing two small sailing boats to get close enough to hit the side of the warship and yell up to the crew, 'are you carrying nuclear weapons?'

**Contact:** If you are interested in warship actions send your name and telephone number to: Peace Squadron, 787 George St, Sydney NSW 2000. Tel: (02) 211 0500 or (02) 211 3953. People are needed on land as well as on water while ships are in port.

## Rock returned

On 26 October 1985, the federal government officially declared the return of (Uluru) Ayers Rock and the surrounding area of 'Uluru National Park' to its traditional owners. The long-awaited event follows extensive negotiations between representatives of the Aboriginal people concerned and the representatives of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Northern Territory's Chief Minister, Ian Tuxworth, has issued strong objections to what he considers to be the federal government's intervention in a solely territory matter, but in view of his government's record in its relationship with the Aboriginal community, it is not surprising the Aboriginals chose to negotiate with the federal government.

The transfer of Uluru back into Aboriginal hands will not diminish accessibility of visitors to the area and in fact the Aboriginal people have given written guarantee that the rock will remain open and accessible to all Australians. The Aboriginal people have agreed to lease the park to the federal government for an annual fee of \$75 000 and a portion of its admission fees.

Source: *CARE Newsletter*, November 1985.

## Obituary

Jim Gale, National Convenor of the Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (CARE) passed away suddenly on 19 September 1985 in Adelaide. CARE has, for the past eleven years, been the commitment of the Jim and Irene Gale partnership. During this time Jim made CARE a significant and stable part of Australian political life. He nurtured the growth of a viable movement out of a whole host of small interest groups and linked it into a vast international network. He persistently wrote letters to newspapers and did a great deal towards the establishment and funding of offices of the African National Congress and the South West Africa People's Organisation in Australia.

# Wet tropics deadline

International scientists have described it as 'priceless and unreplaceable'. It is the richest place in Australia for wildlife and contains 30% of Australia's marsupial species, 29% of the frogs, 62% of the butterflies, 60% of the bats, 23% of the reptiles and 18% of the birds. It dates back to 130 million years ago when rainforests covered most of the continent. Due to climatic changes and upheaval, these ancient forests diminished except in certain areas where the warm humid conditions remained relatively unchanged. It is the Wet Tropics — an area of lush tropical rainforest which hugs the coast between Townsville and Cooktown — and its under threat. **Anne Hingston reports.**

In 1984 the Australian Heritage Commission recommended the Wet Tropics for World Heritage listing. Whilst the commonwealth accepted this recommendation it decided not to nominate the area without the consent of the Queensland government. The Queensland government refused and announced that it had a policy of opposition to all nominations covering any areas of the state for World Heritage listing. The commonwealth also failed to use its powers and legislation to protect the area against the construction of the Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield road which affected a key section of lowland rainforest and the adjoining Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The commonwealth's failure to act, in spite of its obligations under the World Heritage Convention to which it is a signatory, indicates a very poor attitude to the protection of our natural heritage.

The threats to the Wet Tropics are many and varied. For the past 100 years the North Queensland timber industry has operated on the basis of logging virgin rainforests. But these areas are rapidly running out and the industry is now desperately cutting the very last of them. The 1986 logging season (during the dry winter months) will continue the logging of virgin rainforests such as Downey Creek and the Mount Windsor Tablelands.

Not only are these areas of crucial biological importance but they are also essential for the future economic viability of many towns in North

*Anne Hingston is Natural Environment and Wildlife Project Officer with the Australian Conservation Foundation.*



Logs awaiting collection at Downey Creek.

Queensland. Together with the reef these rainforests provide employment alternatives in areas suffering a severe depression due to overproduction in the sugar industry and overcutting by the timber industry.

The construction of the road from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield caused enormous destruction to the national park through which it passed. Bright orange silt from the roadworks flowed down through the rainforest streams and out over the fringing coral reef. It was a disaster which even the Queensland Minister for Main Roads, Russ Hinze, admits was badly constructed, badly aligned and will be financially impossible to maintain.

Throughout Australia, advertisements are appearing for small (1 hectare) plots of freehold rainforest. Clearing of these plots to provide access and homesites will ultimately destroy the rainforests. There is continuing pressure in the region to convert leasehold land to freehold title for real estate speculation and tourist development.

Numerous proposals for tin mining exist in the Daintree area. The beautiful Roaring Meg and another area west of Rossville are threatened by mining which would have a destructive effect on the rainforest and drastically reduce its scenic appeal.

Other threats include clearfelling for agriculture and degradation associated with unmanaged recreation. With all these threats to our tropical rainforests it is imperative that the federal government nominate the Wet Tropics for World Heritage listing. They have the ability and the duty to preserve this magnificent area but they must nominate it by the 31 December 1985 if the ancient rainforests of Downey Creek and the Mount Windsor Tablelands are to survive.

**For further information:** Australian Conservation Foundation, 672B Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn, Vic 3122. Tel: (03) 819 2888

ANNE HINGSTON

they don't have  
**Chain Reaction to annoy  
them in some countries.**

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## New South Wales

**BLUE MOUNTAINS** 9 Harvey St, Katoomba, NSW 2780. Tel: (047) 82 2701.

**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY** c/- SRC, Union Building, Macquarie University, North Ryde, NSW 2113.

**NEWTOWN** PO Box 169, Newtown, NSW 2042. Tel: (02) 517 2139.

**RYDE** 18 Kokoda St, North Ryde, NSW 2113. Tel: (02) 88 2429.

**SYDNEY** Floor 2, 787 George St, Sydney, NSW 2000. Tel: (02) 211 3953.

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND** c/- SRC, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2350.

**UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** PO Box 364, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, NSW 2006.

## Northern Territory

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## National

**NATIONAL LIAISON** Cathy and Peter Brotherton, c/- GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic 3001.

**CHAIN REACTION COOPERATIVE** GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic 3001; Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne. Tel: (03) 654 5995.

## Queensland

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## South Australia

**ADELAIDE** 120 Wakefield St, Adelaide, SA 5000.

**WILLUNGA** PO Box 438, Willunga, SA 5172.

## Victoria

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**COLLINGWOOD** 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066. Tel: (03) 419 8700.

**ELTHAM** PO Box 295, Eltham, Vic 3065.

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY** c/- SRC, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic 3083. Tel: (03) 479 2977.

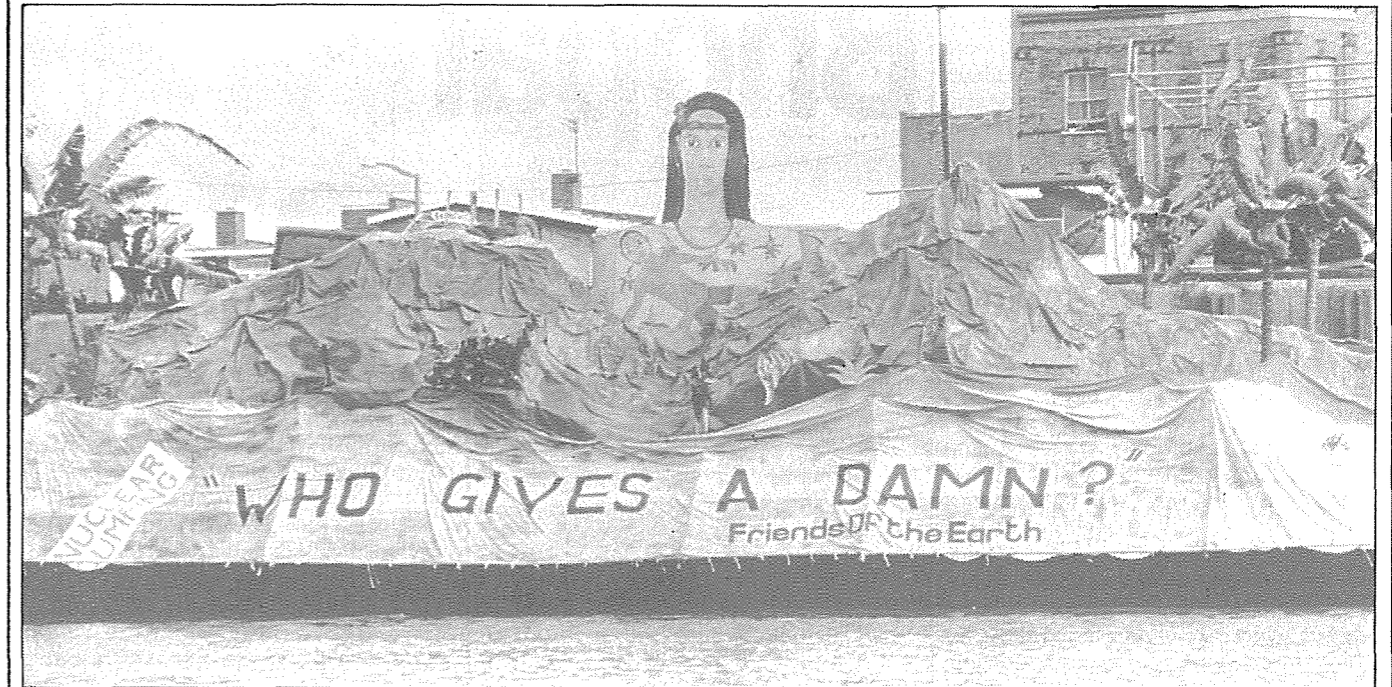
**OAKLEIGH** 69 Waratah St, South Oakleigh, Vic 3166.

**ORGANIC FRUIT AND VEGETABLE COOPERATIVE** 408 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066. Tel: (03) 419 9926.

**PENINSULA** PO Box 319, Seaford, Vic 3198.

Friends of the Earth is an association of over twenty local groups around Australia, working for the conservation, restoration and rational use of the ecosphere, and to stimulate a movement of social change towards an ecologically stable and self-managed society. For further information on Friends of the Earth activities and membership details contact your local group.

# Dumping ban



'This is probably the most significant victory for Friends of the Earth International ever.' So claimed Jonathon Porritt, Director of FOE (UK) at the FOE International Conference in London in October 1985. Indeed the indefinite ban on the dumping of radioactive waste at sea supported by a majority of voting nations at the London Dumping Convention three weeks earlier was cause enough for jubilation at the London offices of FOE. FOE (UK) had devoted considerable resources to a campaign similar to FOE's efforts at the International Whaling Commission over the past twelve years. **Andrew Brophy** reports from London.

The London Dumping Convention (LDC), like the Whaling Commission, is a voluntary international treaty organisation. First signed by a group of nations in 1972, the LDC was established to control the dumping of pollutants into the world's oceans. Article I of the convention states:

Contracting Parties shall individually and collectively promote the effective control of all sources of pollution of the marine environment, and pledge themselves especially to take all practicable steps to prevent the pollution of the sea by the dumping of waste and other matter that is liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life, to damage amenities or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea.

The week 23-27 September 1985 saw the ninth consultative meeting of the contracting parties to the LDC in London. It was to be a particularly important meeting as the dumping of radioactive waste at sea was at the top of the agenda once again. When the seventh LDC consultative meeting took place in February 1983, a two-year moratorium (pending the completion of scientific studies) was imposed upon dumping at sea. This followed growing international concern over sea dumping, which had developed amid much publicity generated by a series of spectacular direct actions by environment groups in the UK, Germany, Holland, Belgium and on the high seas.

European countries are responsible for nearly all the radioactive waste dumped in the world's oceans and so it wasn't surprising that these actions were European-based. Ninety percent has been dumped by the UK, so it was obviously appropriate

*Andrew Brophy worked as office coordinator with FOE (Collingwood), and represented FOE (Australia) at the FOE International Conference.*

**Friends of the Earth 'Pacific Island' moored on the Thames. Henry Kissinger said of nuclear activities in the Pacific: '90 000 Micronesians, who gives a damn!'**

that FOE (UK) should spearhead the environment movements' attack at the LDC in 1985. The UK is still seen as the captain of the international dumping club. It refused in 1983 to heed the two-year moratorium decision, noting that LDC resolutions were 'non-binding' on member nations. The government's determination to continue dumping was quickly thwarted by transport unions led by the National union of Seamen, who prevented the transport of waste destined for disposal at sea, and thereby stopped the 1983 dump and any subsequent plans.

As early as 1981 sea dumping had ceased to be solely a European issue though, when Pacific nations voiced their concern over Japanese plans to dump radioactive waste in the Marianas Trench in the Pacific. It was the Pacific nations of Kiribati and Nauru which first pushed for a permanent ban in 1983, and the threat of more nuclear pollution in the Pacific motivated much of the protest action at this year's LDC meeting.

Some twenty FOE volunteers built a 'Pacific island' on an old Thames barge. The island, complete with palm trees,

turtles, exotic birds and a huge painted figure of a woman holding a child was floated down the Thames and moored outside the building where the meeting was taking place.

Women from various countries maintained a protest outside the LDC meeting for the entire week. Two women from the Northern Marianas, the island closest to the proposed Japanese dump site, were brought to the UK by the Greenham Common women. The women, Maria Pengelinan and Jacoba Seman of the Marianas Citizens Committee Against Nuclear Waste Dumping, joined the FOE delegation at the meeting.

FOE and Greenpeace had secured observer status at the LDC, and the groups jointly published a daily paper, *ECO*, which reported on proceedings at the meeting. *ECO*, proved a useful lobbying and media tool throughout the week, and was more than once the subject of heated debate within the meeting.

The subject of radioactive waste dumping dominated the week's proceedings and it wasn't until late on Thursday that a decision was pushed through. The final resolution, passed by 25 nations to 6, with 7 abstentions, was actually a compromise position prepared earlier in the week, in the hope of achieving a consensus position, by the Spanish delegation. The resolution put three significant obstacles in the way of pro-dumping nations:

- An indefinite ban on dumping was imposed.
- The burden of proof, has been transferred to the minority of nations which support dumping; in order to dump they must prove that radioactive dumping is harmless to human life and does not cause significant change to the marine environment.
- Social, economic, political and legal matters must be considered when waste dumping is discussed at the LDC; thus broadening the scope of objections allowed to dumping.

The battle will continue for environmental groups at future LDC meetings, and perhaps before. British authorities have already made clear that again they may ignore the LDC decision. They are particularly nervous about the closure of options to them at a time when they face intense public opposition to land dumping proposals. Also, as in the USA, imminent decommissioning of nuclear plants poses huge waste problems. Component parts of nuclear reactors, as well as spent nuclear fuels, have to be dealt with. Already the talk is of 'deep sea-bed emplacement', rather than plain sea dumping, so FOE will have its work cut out at the LDC in 1986.

**Further information:** Juliette Majot, Friends of the Earth, 377 City Rd, London, EC1V 1NA, UK.

# Beyond Bhopal



By Bert King

The world's worst industrial accident ever, at Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesh state of India, made methyl isocyanate (MIC) and Union Carbide (UC) household names around the globe. (See 'Bhopal', *Chain Reaction* 41). This was on 3 December 1984. It was certainly the chemical industry's Three Mile Island.

Now the journalists have come and gone, the instant news has dried up. But the poverty remains, the cries of anguish remain, the agony lingers on.

The lawyers have come and gone too, but in their offices they fight like jackals for a share of the spoils, the compensation that the victims may receive. UC are on the defensive; no doubt their lawyers are busily at work to fight a delaying action. Will UC seek to frustrate payment by declaring some form of bankruptcy as the Manville Corporation did over asbestos claims?

The tug of war goes on — will the legal cases be heard in India or USA? It will be a war of attrition in the legal world, the victims may have to wait years for any retribution. Even the distribution of the compensation is likely to be hindered by the Indian elite and bureaucracy.

How to apportion the blame? The plant was designed by UC, but it was managed by Indians. Did UC transfer to India obsolete technology requiring the storage of MIC in large quantities, whereas a more modern process does not require such storage? But the Indian management had been incredibly lax in failing to maintain both the refrigerating equipment to cool the chemical in its storage tanks and the vent scrubber to render any escaping gas harmless.

UC did their public image even more harm, if that is possible, with another leak of a dangerous gas, this time from their plant in Institute, West Virginia, on 12 August 1985. This may well harm their defence in the Bhopal tragedy.

But there are even more intriguing social

*Bert King is an experienced engineer.*

questions. Is development more important than safety in the Third World? As Mrs Ghandi has said, 'Environmental safeguards are irrelevant, poverty is our greatest environmental hazard.' UC have corrupt accomplices in the Third World where occupational safety has low priority, where controlling and monitoring bodies are understaffed or bought off.

There is a form of racial arrogance in the developed countries that says life is cheap in the Third World, so safety and environmental practices as stringent as in the First World are not warranted. We have this attitude which treats people as dispensable in pursuit of profit. So Marx would say, 'It's new?!'

People have to question the 'green revolution technological package, of which the Bhopal pesticide plant was a part. Is it in the long term the answer, is it advanced or is it destructive, wasteful and anti-nature, anti-people and beyond the reach of subsistence farmers?

Then there is the huge question. Could an underdeveloped country dedicated to social justice chart the correct path? The path between subsistence farming and care for the environment and the application of science to farming, not for the benefit of a few but for the longterm benefits of the community.

Could Mozambique in Africa, for example, or Nicaragua in Central America follow the correct path for agriculture — if they could be free of the repression of South Africa and the United States? Can China continue along a correct path to feed their population without environmental damage, yet with modern methods of agriculture? These are fascinating questions.

In the case of India the need is first for a social revolution, for radical social change. This is the inescapable conclusion. This is the wider perspective of Bhopal. Only with this social change can conditions be such that Bhopal will not be repeated, and only the Indian people themselves can achieve that.

# Law and order in the UK

By Rob Hitchcock

It was a day of nonviolent direct action at the Molesworth cruise missile base in Cambridgeshire, England. The heavily decorated old bloke sitting next to me was grumbling as he pulled off his boots. 'This is worse than the Somme.' I didn't ask him if he had been at the Somme, but I could see his point — the mud stank.

An hour or two later we were ringing the perimeter fence of the base preparing to tinkle our little bells and blow our whistles with all the symbolic significance we could muster in the pouring rain, when I heard the old bloke a few yards away shouting orders to 'Stand close!' and 'Hold the line!'. A minute later he was lying flat on his back in the mud as four friendly bobbies (transported up from London complete with dogs) walked straight through him.

Maintaining 'law and order' is extremely important in the UK these days. In April 1985, Ann Francis, a peace campaigner from Wales, was sentenced to one year in prison by a county magistrate for cutting the perimeter fence at Greenham Common. The judge was evidently not impressed with her plea for mitigation, which included a direct reference to the teachings of Jesus, and described her as a 'habitual lawbreaker'.

The Conservative government came to power in 1979 with 'law and order' as a central plank of its platform. Years later, after the Toxteth riots, the sinking of the Belgrano, the miners' strike and the Belgian football disaster, the government is still determined to stamp out the 'criminal element' in society, both at home and abroad. Recently, at the Conservative Party's convention in October 1985, immediately following the riots in Birmingham, Toxteth and London, the government gave police total support to use whatever means necessary to keep disaffected minorities in line.

The police have only rioted twice in the past eighteen months, even though they have had opportunities to do so more often. The first occasion was during the

*Rob Hitchcock is an Australian who has recently returned from Britain.*



MOTHER JONES

miners strike at Orgreave in May 1984, when several thousand people gathered to picket the local coking plant. They were surrounded by an equal number of police and then smashed. (Up to May 1985, the Police Complaints Department had considered 74 cases of assault, oppressive conduct and incivility arising out of the miners strike but no officers have yet been disciplined. It is very difficult to identify a rioting police officer). The second occasion was near Stonehenge in June 1985, when a mobile convoy of some 500 people was re-routed into a nearby paddock and then attacked. Internal police inquiries into both incidents are being conducted.

In order to assist police in their public duties which have been frustrated by old-fashioned laws, certain proposals have been floated in a recent government White Paper. The paper, which deals principally with the *Public Order Act*, recommends the abolition of certain offences such as 'rout', which no-one seems to do any more, and proposes a range of new offences. The White Paper's proposals seem to be written with the marches, rallies, peace camps and direct actions of the peace movement in mind; the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) believes it was prepared specifically for them.

For example, spontaneous action is effectively ruled out by the suggestion that all demonstrations be notified to the authorities seven days in advance. If approval to protest is not given, then a new offence of 'knowingly participating in a prohibited procession' can be applied. The White Paper also suggests that police be

given the power to arrest for conduct intended or likely to cause fear or violence. CND believes that these proposals, if put into effect, would severely restrict their protests. They are also concerned about a recommendation that police be empowered to recover any costs incurred from organisers if any conditions of a lawful march are breached. As every good monetarist knows, the real way to stamp out the peace movement is to hit them in the coffers.

In spite of the commitment to law and order, not everyone in Britain is accountable to the laws of the realm. There are over 60,000 US troops stationed in large military installations throughout Britain and these soldiers swear no allegiance to the Crown. These bases, and the unoccupied acres around them, are out of bounds for the British public. The peace movement's Snowball Campaign, which has taken off in the way the name implies, consists of peaceful protestors cutting the fences of the bases and then waiting to be arrested. The number of Snowball participants imprisoned or fined since January 1985 is over 500. The British government recently decided to make trespassing onto military land a criminal offence, which has made it easier to prosecute 'habitual offenders' like Ann Francis.

It has been suggested that the proposals of the White paper are indicative of a determination to return to the old values of Victorian Britain. However, the proposals are more the product of a modern nuclear state faced with deteriorating material conditions and a popular movement which threatens its existence.



# Picking for the revolution

Since overthrowing the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza six years ago, the Nicaraguan people have launched an impressive campaign to rebuild the ruins of their country. But the efforts of the Reagan administration to oust the Sandinista government are undermining the progress made by the Nicaraguans. International support for the Sandinistas is essential, according to **Bert King**, who will be travelling to Nicaragua early in 1986 on an Australian work brigade.

The first Australian work brigade to Nicaragua flew to Nicaragua via Houston and Mexico City in January 1985. A second brigade of thirty people is due to leave on 1 January 1986. This is a work mission, not a tourist jaunt. After a briefing session in Managua the brigade will be taken to San Jose farm, 20 km from Matagalpa town, north-east of Managua.

Why go to Nicaragua? Well, if one wants to oppose the Reagan administration's foreign policy, there is no more direct way to do it than to support the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan people.

In this case the support will be by helping to harvest the coffee crop. The Aussies and other international groups will pick in the more difficult areas, leaving the locals to pick in the easier areas, so that with their greater skill this will maximise the crop. Food production in a Third World country needs to be balanced between food produced for local consumption and the major crops to bring in export income. Nicaragua's major exports are coffee, beef, cotton and sugar.

The San Jose farm has a three-tiered system of agriculture — each family has a private plot on which they can grow their own produce, there is a communal garden and there is a state farm producing the

*Bert King is an experienced engineer*

highly important export crop of coffee. Work is six days a week. Production meetings are held on the farm, showing how the revolution is gradually extending to the countryside. For the first time workers are participating in decision making.

Life will be harsh and the Aussies will suffer from severe 'culture shock'. They will be housed in dormitories, sleeping on boards. Poverty in Australia compared to poverty in the Third World is infinitesimal. But the difference is that in Nicaragua there is now hope.

Nicaragua is a country at war, with the Contras — counter revolutionaries — armed and supported by the CIA and the US government, poised on the Honduran border and invading Nicaragua. There is also attempted economic strangulation by the USA.

But the greater the attempted subversion, the greater is the support for the Sandinistas. International work brigades are just one small manifestation of this. Solidarity movements in many countries are a major part of the struggle.

One important contribution is 'Barco de la Pag' ('Ships for Peace') whereby various nations sponsor a ship to take material aid to Nicaragua. The first such shipment was a Canadian one, the second was from Norway and Sweden. Cargo included medical supplies, urea fertiliser, milk powder, wheat and typewriters. This was an enormously important gesture of



opposition to the policy of the Reagan administration. It is hoped that Australia can promote its own 'Ship for Peace' to Nicaragua.

The Contras are avoiding direct confrontation with the Sandinistas; instead they concentrate on 'soft targets' — disrupting harvests and destroying new economic projects. The country is also in trouble due to drought — the harvest of corn and beans is down markedly, as is millet and sugar.

Meanwhile the second work brigade will pick the coffee beans. Last year only 70% of the crop could be picked because of the war. There are also construction projects at San Jose farm which Australia will sponsor. The work brigade will be on a diet consisting largely of beans and rice. But in the grim reality of a country like Nicaragua, **POLITICS = BEANS + RICE**.

The Nicaraguan people can withstand the present shortages of many items we take for granted. As long as the people can be fed, the Sandinista revolution will succeed. The work brigade will take with them supplies which can be left with the Nicaraguans — medical supplies, writing materials for schools and industrial clothing.

And why is it important that the revolution succeed? It is not that Nicaragua as a country is important. The USA has no investments there. But it is enormously important as it epitomises the struggle for peace and social justice. This in turn means the struggle against US imperialism, against the very bastion of capitalism.

**What can you do?** If you feel inspired as so many do by the Sandinista struggle for a just society, you can help. The Australian equivalent of Ships for Peace is the 'Tools for Peace in Nicaragua' Fund. The aim is to buy essential materials, medical supplies, educational materials and farm tools. Your money will be well used as there is no army of bureaucrats in Nicaragua to ruin an aid program. Money will be channelled through the Australian Council of Churches.

Send money to: Tools for Peace Campaign, Australian Council of Churches, Box C199, Clarence St PO, Sydney 2000. (Donations are tax deductible.)

LATIN AMERICA BUREAU

# West of Eden

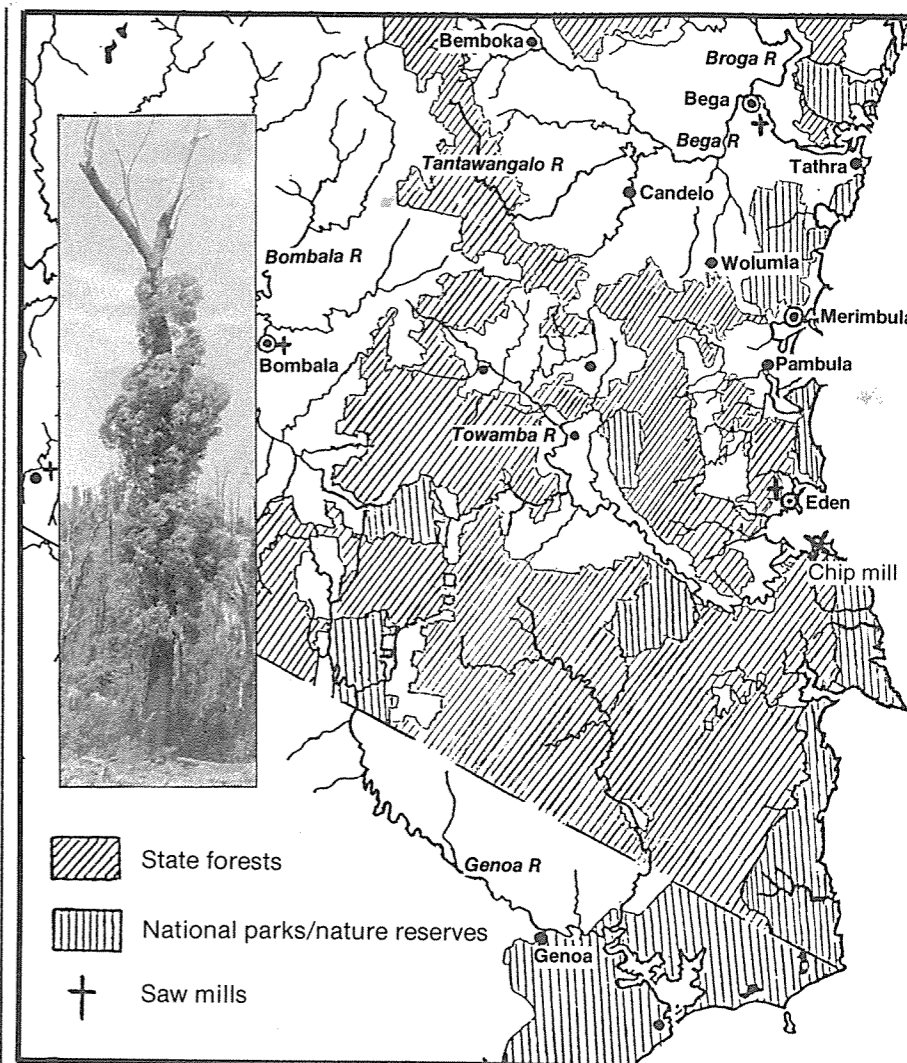
While Tasmanian woodchipping operations are currently being reviewed by the federal government, the cogs are turning faster in regard to the Japanese Harris-Daishowa chipping operations at Eden, on the south coast of New South Wales. Its licence will expire in 1989, but a decision on its renewal is scheduled for late 1986. The Labor governments of New South Wales and Victoria both have a stake in the Eden chipmill issue, and if certain planning decisions in these states are any indication, both have already prepared the ground for the renewal of the licence. **Terry Cox** reports.

The Eden chipmill commenced operation in 1970. At present, it is being supplied by 80 logging trucks from along the south coast; each truck makes an average of two trips a day, five days a week, with loads of 35-38 tonnes. In addition, the mill receives wood from the forests of East Gippsland in Victoria.

Along the South Coast, various environment groups are organising themselves to fight the informal decisions which have already been made in the bureaucratic empires in Sydney and Melbourne. The Eden chipmill issue gained momentum in the latter part of 1982 when the New South Wales Forestry Commission announced plans to log the Tantawangalo water catchment at the headwaters of the Bega River Valley. The Tantawangalo River is a pristine mountain stream which is the sole source of supply domestic water for the rapidly growing tourist townships of Merimbula and Pambula, plus a number of smaller towns in the area. The same catchment also partly supplies Eden itself.

At the time of the announcement, the Bega Valley was towards the end of a six-year drought period. Local residents were existing under extremely tight water restrictions, and the 1982-83 summer

*Terry Cox is a freelance writer with an interest in government and departmental decision-making behaviour. He has had a relationship with the South Coast forest areas since 1975.*



South Coast of New South Wales. Insert: 'Management' in Nadgee State Forest on Victorian border.

tourist influx was yet to commence. By early January 1983, the small Tantawangalo weir could not satisfy even a moderate demand and the crowded camping grounds of Merimbula were being supplied by water pumped from beneath the dry bed of the Bega River. Water was relayed by tanker throughout the season uphill to Wolumba, and fed via pipes to Merimbula. The tankers were operating at one every half hour.

Needless to say, the experience sent a shockwave through the community. Apart from continuing anxiety about the quantity of water, the South Coast had also been confronted with a threat to the quality of

its water if logging of the Tantawangalo catchment proceeded. The timber industry, mainly the established regional sawmills at Nimmitabel and Eden, perceived public meetings called by local environmentalists as a threat and organised bus-loads of employees to attend them.

Behind this situation was the Eden chipmill, which was the real culprit for the planned assault on water catchments. Demands for logs by the chipmill was forcing the smaller sawmills to intrude further into publicly owned forests. The timber industry must be ruing the days back in 1982 when they organised worker against worker; Harris-Daishowa would

FAR SOUTH COAST ENVIRONMENT GROUP

be laughing all the way to the bank.

Harris-Daishowa obviously 'has the ear' of bureaucracies and politicians. In late 1982, environmentalists, in a bid to head off the intention to log the Tantawanglo catchment, quoted the rules of Victoria's Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works which prohibited the logging of Melbourne's water supply catchments. In May 1983, the Victorian government opened up Melbourne's northern catchment for logging, via a Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands report. The proposals in this report were approved in August 1983.

That decision by the Victorian government, however, pales in comparison with the New South Wales government's support for the continuation of the woodchipping industry. In liaison with the federal government it has authorised the preparation of an environment impacts statement (EIS) to evaluate further woodchipping after 1989 by a consultant selected by Harris-Daishowa. The EIS, which is soon to be released, has been prepared by Ray Margules & Associates, a consultancy group based in Bombala. The prime author is also director of Kapunda, a firm which specialises in acquiring marginal rural land, such as that situated along the Towamba River which contains much of the area's forest. The natural forest component of such land is then logged and replaced with pine forests. It is reported by a variety of South Coast sources that this company is funded by Philippines investors.

The attempt to guarantee the continuity of the Eden chipmill with an EIS prepared by the industry, has much in common with environmental issues throughout Australia. The much-vaunted 'public participation' in decision making, which Labor governments have been espousing, is merely treated as a process of 'going through the motions'. The Eden chipmill inquiry is a more extreme version of this cynicism. The Labor governments are sowing the seeds of the longterm demise of the Labor Party — a party founded on the concept of 'fair play' and an abhorrence of stepping beyond acceptable behaviour to get on in the world, commonly referred to as dignity.

**Contact:** The following groups are calling for support in their campaign to close the Eden chipmill:

- Far South Coast Environment Group, PO Box 18, Tathra, NSW 2550.
- The Environment Network, Carp St, Bega, NSW 2550. Tel: (0649) 23 210.
- Towamba Valley Catchment Protection Association, C/- Bill Insch, PO Wyndham, NSW 2550.
- Concerned Residents of East Gippsland, c/- Fiona Mellroy, via Bonang, Vic 3888.
- Dusty Wolfe, c/- PO Genoa, Victoria. 3889. Tel: (051) 58 8233.
- TNC Workers Research, GPO Box 161, Sydney, NSW 2001.

# Youth on Elder Street

By Robert Williams

Over the week of Friday 30 August to Saturday 7 September 1985 a peace camp organised by Young People Against Global Violence (YPAGV) was held on Elder Street Reserve near the Watsonia Army Barracks in the Melbourne suburb of Watsonia. It is believed to have been the only peace camp in Australia organised by young people for young people and sympathetic 'adults'. YPAGV is made up mainly of secondary students.

Watsonia Army Barracks is the site of a satellite ground station known as Project Sparrow. This terminal transmits to the USA naval intelligence information gathered from a network of radio-intercept stations located around Australia and in Aotearoa (New Zealand). This information, which is processed at the Victoria Barracks in St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, by the US National Security Agency and its Australian counterpart, the Defence Signals Directorate is used by the USA to target Tomahawk cruise missiles at Russian ships and thus contributes to the US first strike nuclear capacity. This makes Watsonia a potential nuclear target.

The camp itself was well attended with an average of about twenty people attending at one time. Over the duration of the camp more than 60 people passed through and signed the attendance book. Campers included two people from Queensland and one from Aotearoa.

Many activities and actions were carried out at the camp. A young women's day allowed women campers to discuss women's

*Robert Williams is a member of YPAGV and Chain Reaction collective.*



issues. Speakers from trade unions, international solidarity groups and peace and environment groups provided a focus for debate and education. Banner painting, street theatre and music were also important camp activities which proved useful in actions at the base and later at a rally held in Melbourne on the last Saturday of the camp. This rally, organised by YPAGV, was quite successful, ending with the participants travelling to Watsonia to protest outside the Project Sparrow radar dish. Other actions included fence weaving with wool, mass singing actions outside the dish and a mass trespass onto the base in which seven people who tried to paint the words 'Dish Out — World Peace' on the dish were arrested.

One 'distinguished' and frequent visitor to the camp was the Watsonia base commander Millie. On his first visit he offered a guided tour of the base which the campers declined on the grounds that they would not be shown the nature of the information passing through the satellite terminal. The next visit came after the mass trespass when Millie arrived early one morning with a large contingent of media people. However, the visit was never reported as Millie was humiliated by questions from the protestors which he was unable to answer.

Although the peace camp was organised by YPAGV all decisions regarding actions and the running of the camp were made through consensus by the campers themselves. A communal kitty provided vegetarian food for all, and cooking and cleaning up was done collectively (with the young men doing their fair share). On the whole the camp was a success though the campers were disappointed by the lack of support from larger peace groups, who were busy with the Australian Nuclear Disarmament Conference held at the same time as the camp. It is hoped that the camp will be the first of many such actions by young people all over Australia.

**Contact:** Young People Against Global Violence, GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic. 3001.

# Peace year, a hollow cake

By Peter Springell

The United Nations (UN), and just about every member of government has an enormous credibility problem when it comes to the peace issue. Each and every government claims it stands solidly for peace, and yet this has failed to slow the ever accelerating arms race or reduce the massive expenditure on preparations for war, which currently run at more than \$1 million a minute globally.

Agreement among member nations is not easy to come by normally. However, when it came to salvaging the collective consciences of governments, it was not difficult to get agreement on the launching of a UN-sponsored International Year of Peace (IYP) for 1986, particularly as this did not commit any of the parties to doing anything other than making the already well-rehearsed, and all-too-familiar appropriate noises at the right time. It was therefore hardly a big deal for Australia to have co-sponsored a Costa Rican resolution on the IYP at the UN General Assembly on 8 November 1984<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, cynics may be excused for seeing a connection between that action and the then forthcoming election.

There have of course been plenty of International Years of this and that before, and they have achieved very little in the long run, despite their cost. The UN was founded to ensure peace, and yet after 40 years of non-stop effort by the very best diplomats the world has to offer, very little progress has been made. It would therefore be very naive to suppose the IYP could achieve what the UN has so far failed to do. This view is obviously shared by the pragmatists in the Hawke government, as Australia voluntarily gave the princely sum of \$10 000 as a one-off gesture over and above its normal UN contribution<sup>2</sup>. Readers will be aware that at the same time our government chooses to spend over 500 000 times as much annually on defence,

*Peter Springell is a retired scientist involved in the peace movement through Scientists Against Nuclear Arms, People for Nuclear Disarmament and People for Peace, in Cairns.*



leaving little doubt as to where its priorities are.

Australia of course has its own particular brand of credibility gap on the peace issue. Few would find much to argue with in the ALP policy on this subject, with the exception of uranium. However, as we all know, implementation has fallen very far short of rhetoric on this, as on so many other issues. While such behaviour has been the hallmark of the present Labor government, earlier administrations have little cause to be proud of their efforts in securing peace.

The peace movement in this country, as elsewhere, is obviously in the ascendancy, as shown not only by the increased Palm Sunday attendances, but more importantly

in the Senate vote for the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) and Democrats, not to mention the massive informal vote in the Lower House. However, it is also a very divided movement, as the government well knows, and as amply illustrated by the differences between the Democrats, the Green Party, the NDP and, more recently, PANDA. Apart from encouraging ASIO to maintain the split, the government would also see the IYP as a means of adding to the divisions within the movement, while serving as a useful public relations exercise to demonstrate its supposed dedication to the cause of peace.

The divisive nature of the IYP is perhaps best expressed by Brian Martin<sup>3</sup>. His views on participation are most appropriate, as is

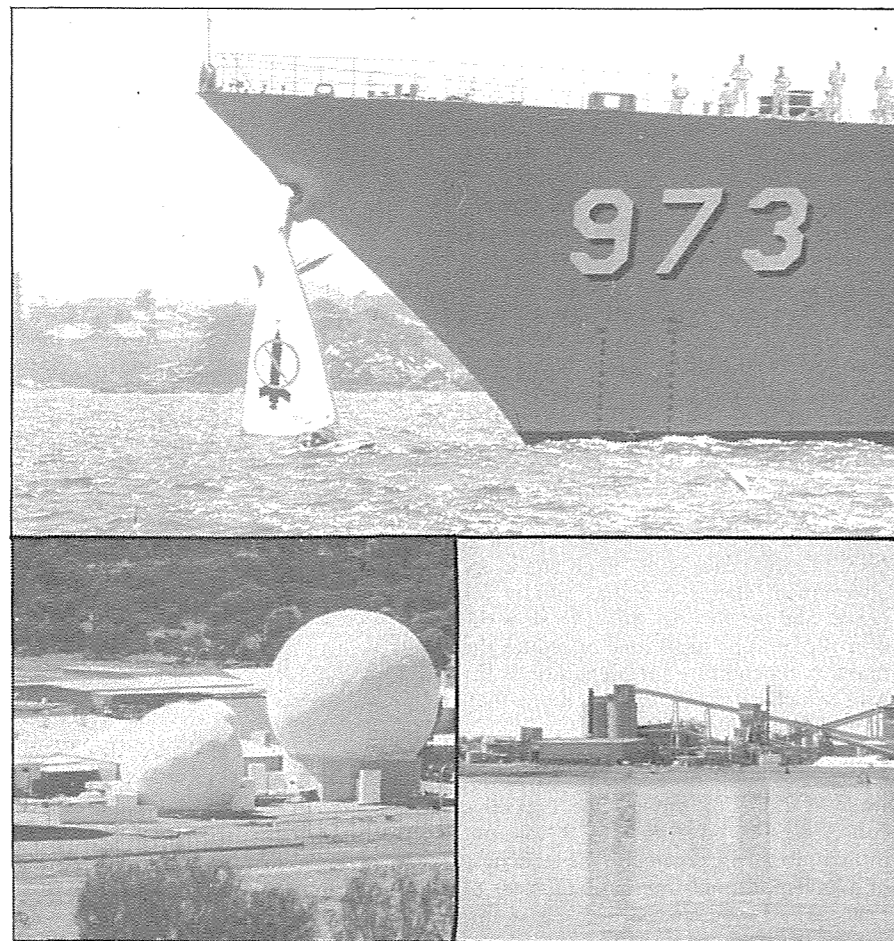
evident from the following quote:

In many cases agencies of the State can act without consulting or involving members of the public. But when the community disenchantment or outright opposition begins to play a major role, then the State may sponsor limited participation which helps to mobilise consent for its policies and actions . . . Low level participation can serve as a form of social control. It ensures that 'participation' takes the form of consultation or placation rather than community control. It also serves to co-opt and absorb many social activists, and to isolate radicals from their constituency.

At this time we need to take a closer look at what the IYP in Australia is all about. It may have been more than coincidental that Stella Cornelius was appointed to the directorship at the start of the long pre-election period in September 1984<sup>4</sup>. However, it can not be stated too strongly at the outset that Cornelius has excellent credentials, and that any criticism levelled at the IYP is not to be taken as a personal attack on her. Indeed, her impressive record in the peace movement includes being Vice-President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Patron of the Australian Peace and Development Research Institute, Convenor of the Peace Program of the UN Association of Australia, and founding member of the Inter-Religious Council for Peace. She also initiated the Media Peace Prize in Australia, which has subsequently been followed by thirteen other countries.

The press release dealing with the appointment of the Director<sup>4</sup> lists as possible activities a major peace conference, establishment of peace research fellowships, production of a special film, and the inclusion of peace studies in school curricula. In the meantime, some seven distinguished guests had already visited Australia between the end of 1984 and May 1985, including Joanna Rogers Macy (author and scholar), Maj Britt Theorin (Chairperson of the Swedish Disarmament Commission), and Australian author and lecturer John Burton. Although these visits were being publicised by the IYP, it is not immediately clear why or how they are connected with it, particularly as these trips must have been arranged well before the start of IYP activities in Australia.

A December press release<sup>5</sup>, in addition to announcing the above visitor list, further elaborated on some of the IYP plans, although the all-important question of funding of projects was still up in the air at that time. Only the funding of the Secretariat was assured then. There was to be a National Consultative Committee (NCC) of non-government organisations, while IYP officers were to be designated in every state/territory office of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and in every diplomatic mission abroad. The establishment of IYP



Some issues not on the IYP agenda: Visits by nuclear ships (USS Buchanan in Sydney Harbour, September 1985); US bases (Pine Gap radomes); uranium mining (Ranger retention pond).

Resource Centres in each state/territory, and regionally in existing libraries, community centres and peace organisation offices was also envisaged. Here meeting facilities would be provided, together with access to information and outlets to the media. The IYP further intends holding many conferences, meetings, seminars, workshops etc, which are to culminate in what is described as a 'magnificent' conference in August 1986, with international input. Some other activities mooted are commemorative stamps, medals, flags, balloons, planting of peace groves, concerts, exhibitions, and some sort of input into education, and government legislation, administration and/or international stance.

Individuals and organisations were also sent a questionnaire. The IYP wanted to know what peace programs were in progress, and how these could be developed. There was a vague hint that there could be some assistance given to improve communications, access to resources and even funding. This could have been the most valuable aspect of the program, but unfortunately it now turns out that no program in direct opposition to federal government policies will be accepted<sup>6</sup>.

Perhaps the most objectionable feature of the survey was a quiz, which seemed to be designed to sort out the radicals from the rest. Respondents were asked to define what peace meant to them by agreeing or disagreeing with the following points (in order of listing): justice, human rights, humanitarian aid, multilateral disarmament, community development, more equitable distribution, conservation, peace education, better communications, peace within self, good personal relationships, good community relationships, good international relationships, and nonviolent action. One would hardly disagree with any of these, but of course what was most significant was what had been left out, including the following in particular: US bases; visits by nuclear-powered and/or capable ships; landing rights for nuclear-capable aircraft; unilateral disarmament; ANZUS; alternative defence; militarism, sexism, racism, colonialism and other forms of oppression; uranium mining; and genuine nuclear-free and independent Indo-Pacific. In short, all the most vital issues on our agenda. Clearly, these are all issues the government does not want the IYP to get involved in, and yet they are all matters

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that can not just simply be ignored, if we are to have genuine peace.

More recent developments are that the government has allocated \$3 million over a two-year period to the IYP<sup>7</sup>. Note once again that this still only represents 0.03% of the annual defence budget. Furthermore initial allocation is \$600 000 for government programs, presumably to tell us what a great job the government is doing, while only \$500 000 is for the use of peace groups unattached to government.

The composition of the NCC has now also been made public. It will consist of eighteen members, of which only half will be from what are generally understood to be groups directly involved in the peace movement. Some of the more horrific representation will be from the RSL and the Confederation of Australian Industry, who are there to ensure the NCC remains a toothless tiger.

These two organisations had been strong supporters of the Pacific Area Defence Equipment Exhibition (PADEX), originally planned for Sydney in May 1986, but now abandoned due to pressure from government, unions and the public. The representatives of these organisations on the NCC indicated to me by letter that they personally favoured the holding of the PADEX arms bazaar during the IYP. Their continued membership of the NCC

would seem to be most inappropriate.

The function of the NCC will supposedly be to vet national projects, and to liaise with the Disarmament and Arms Control Branch of the Foreign Affairs Department. Unlike the state committees, whose function is not as clear, the NCC will not be disbanded at the end of the IYP. While the peace movement will have a limited input into the NCC as instituted, the position may well deteriorate if some future government decides to stack the council even more.

Since expressing these and other reservations, my name appears to have been black-listed by the IYP office, and information now only comes to me second-hand. Furthermore, this article had been submitted elsewhere earlier this year, and I have reason to believe that it was deliberately mislaid, and eventually suppressed. Also, recently published criticisms by me of the IYP<sup>8</sup> have never, to the best of my knowledge, been replied to, even though the IYP had been made aware of them. Hopefully, this article will elicit a belated response.

In summing up, it is obvious the IYP will largely engage in non-controversial topics, which will only scratch the surface of the problem. The issue will be largely trivialised for the benefit of the regrettably large section of the community, which either

does now really want to get involved, or which is still ill-informed. It is doubtful if we can reasonably expect to convert large numbers of people to become active and knowledgeable when the official message will be that the government has all in hand. Nevertheless, some will no doubt argue that a few converts are better than none, and that making the general public a little more aware can do no harm. My own view is that a great opportunity to discuss matters of vital importance to the future of this country will have been missed.

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# Mmm...coalitions?

**MAKE MELBOURNE MARVELLOUS!**

A DRAFT FOR WIDE DISCUSSION ON SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE MELBOURNE 2000

WRITTEN BY THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE MELBOURNE COLLECTIVE

There is increasing discussion among people involved in movements for social change on the need to build broad coalitions among the now splintered movements in order to bring about an effective force for change. One initiative in this direction is the Socialist Alternative Collective. **Faye Eisentraut** and **Keith Redgen** report on a recent discussion day on the group's first publication, *Make Melbourne Marvellous*.

The Socialist Alternative Melbourne (SAM) Collective was brought together by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) to investigate programs, ideas and visions

for the short term future of Melbourne. Its intention was both to set goals for a socialist alternative and to suggest ways in which these goals could be achieved. Although basically a CPA project and collective, particular emphasis was placed on the values and potential contributions of the women's, environment, community and trade union movements, as well as the role that could be played by local government.

SAM produced a booklet entitled *Make Melbourne Marvellous (MMM)* in April 1985 (see 'Bourne again', *Chain Reaction* 42/43). The purpose of *MMM* is twofold. First, it contains proposals for an alternative Melbourne, particularly in the areas of socialist industry and the structure of the alternative, socialist metropolis. Strategies for achieving this are also discussed and include possible structures for democratic control, winning independence from transnational corporations and building a

coalition for change.

Second, and perhaps more important, the intention of *MMM* is to try to bring together all strands of activism to build a broad and therefore powerful political force. By being sensitive to the concerns of all the major oppositional political movements, and developing proposals which include the main features of their values, SAM hopes to initiate debate. If one of the main reasons why the 'left' is ineffective now is that it has splintered into narrow issue movements, then *MMM* was intended to find some common ground and possibly a common program. Discussion could lead to coalitions and unity, and a powerful and successful political force could be built.

With this in mind, *MMM* was not intended to be a blueprint for a socialist Melbourne. Its authors wished the proposals to be open-ended enough to allow all groups and movements to have further input into both the objectives and the strategies.

A conference to discuss *MMM* was held on 13 October 1985. SAM wanted the conference to be attended by as many people as possible from outside the CPA and from as broad a cross-section of the Melbourne left. The intention was to get feedback from sources outside the traditional socialist organisations who were not involved in the preparation of *MMM*. From this SAM could gauge the broad acceptance or disagreement on the values and proposals in the document and canvass possible changes to both the 'plan' and the 'strategies'.

The conference itself was reasonably well attended, with perhaps 30 participants. The large majority were CPA members although there were probably enough



Melbourne: Clothing factory.

20 Chain Reaction

outsiders to allow some judgments to be made on *MMM's* acceptance. However the small turn-out probably reflected the lack of penetration of the booklet and its advertising.

The main body of the conference, after introductory speeches on the three main headings in *MMM*, were workshops to deal with Industry, Metropolis, and Coalition for Change. The workshops then provided feedback to the group as a whole.

Most of the business of the workshops was taken up with responses to specific proposals put forward in *MMM*. Many of the reservations of both CPA and non-CPA people were with the utopianism of a socialist, non-sexist, ecologically sound plan for the near future. Briefly *MMM* proposes a major urban reconstruction on what is called a 'cluster and connect' model,



which emphasises a community based lifestyle. Social, and as far as possible working life, would be concentrated locally, with localities connected by an effective public transport system. This would minimise the need for private cars, overcome alienation, especially of those engaged in domestic labour, allow a new, more or less community controlled system of home ownership and tenure, as well as break the control of major corporations over many aspects of our lives. Industry would become ecologically responsible, producing only truly useful goods and services, and managed on socialist, democratic lines.

While all of this may sound appealing and is well presented in *MMM*, no clear strategy for achieving these goals is established. The workshops included much interesting discussion on the details of the plan, its likely negative effects on people's



Melbourne: Victoria Market.

lives and how to overcome them, as well as clarifying many of our ideas on the kind of city and world we would like to work for. However all of this remains utopian wishful thinking unless a strategy for achieving it can be devised. This was the job of the Coalition for Change workshop. To bring together all the groups necessary to build a truly effective political force is an enormous task. The question of how to build a coalition and what kind of coalition is extremely difficult. Given the historical splits between the movements, unity is probably impossible, but there may be a way to work together both on individual campaigns and perhaps larger things like a socialist Melbourne (or Australia).

The difficulties of building coalitions was acknowledged in the workshops and ideas on how to overcome them were raised. For example, should a political party be established, or a centralised coordinating body, or regular meetings and conferences, or simply *ad hoc* arrangements? Also to what extent is ideological agreement necessary? Is it possible to build a coalition for change using groups and ideologies that currently exist, or must something completely new be built?

**Contact:** SAM Collective, c/- Communist Party of Australia, 12 Exploration Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Tel: (03) 662 3799. Copies of *Make Melbourne Marvellous* can be obtained from the collective for \$5/\$3 concession plus \$1 postage.

Two conferences planned for Easter 1986 in Sydney, the 'Broad Left' and the 'Getting Together' conferences will focus specifically on the possibilities for broad-based coalitions. See page 30 for further details.

*Faye Eisenraut and Keith Redgen are members of the Chain Reaction collective.*

# Laurie goes for lorries

Jan Ardill looks at a new style of 'consultancy' that is emerging in the wake of proposals to build the Eastern Distributor expressway through inner Sydney. While an improvement on the government's past roughshod treatment of local communities affected by 'development', the process is also effectively stifling public input into overall transport policy.

In July 1984 the New South Wales Minister for Public Works, Laurie Brereton, announced that an expressway, the 'Eastern Distributor', would be constructed through the inner Sydney residential areas of Woolloomooloo, East Sydney, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills. The road would take the form of a 'trench' running from the Harbour Bridge exit through to Anzac Parade, a distance of 1.5 km. Hundreds of houses and commercial buildings were to be demolished.

Following strong opposition, this plan was scaled down to a proposal for twin tunnels, with a ten-lane expressway leading through Woolloomooloo to the tunnels' entrance. (Some cynics have suggested that the first outrageous proposal paved the way for community acceptance of the second, which had been intended all along.) In all, this proposal would cost \$140 million, achieving a saving of several minutes in travel time for motorists destined for Sydney's north shore suburbs.

The story of the Eastern Distributor illustrates the renewed vigour with which the roads lobby<sup>1</sup>, and particularly the road freight industry, is determining transport policies in New South Wales. Once again one section of the community is paying heavily for the material and social gains of a privileged few.

Generally speaking, the areas affected by the Distributor are characterised by a unique inner city population mix, substantially different in character from the general metropolitan area. There are less children, and a larger proportion of single aged and young single adults ('refugees'

*Jan Ardill is a fulltime worker with Friends of the Earth (Sydney) and has worked as a social worker for several years.*

removal of low income earners from the inner city area. In order to avoid wholesale gentrification, residents are concerned that positive steps be taken to retain the supply of low income housing.

Many observers doubt that the tunnels will ever be built. They fear that the first stage alterations, providing semi-freeway conditions on surface roads, are the only changes residents are likely to see. This will then leave the area suffering more heavy traffic than at present. Even if the tunnels are built, trucks carrying chemicals and flammable materials will not be able to use them.

Ironically, part of the area affected by the road was saved from demolition by the 'Green Bans' of the 1970s. Since then, continuous action by resident groups has been necessary to prevent encroachment by commercial interests. Heavy traffic has long been a major concern for the area, where 70% of households do not possess a car yet suffer greatly from heavy trucks and cars using residential streets. Residents have pressed for improved public transport,

Inner Sydney traffic, Lilyfield.



Chain Reaction 21

and particularly a light rail system, which would serve their needs better than expressways. The desire to preserve the unique residential character, and to prevent environmental degradation, has long been a priority of residents groups in these areas.

From the beginning the road has served as a vehicle for the advancement of Brereton's political career. An energetic 'rising star', he has impressed observers with his capacity to pick up languishing schemes and push them through despite adverse public reaction, at times playing one interest group against the other.

When the road was first announced, residents responded with the formation of several groups, in particular the Anti-Freeway Action Committee (AFAC) in Woolloomooloo and Communities for Action on Traffic (CAT) at the Surry Hills end of the road. From the beginning these groups were faced with a dilemma: while both shared a strong, well developed commitment to public transport as the solution to the city's traffic problems and their own transport needs, they were also faced with the necessity to ensure the best possible outcome for the communities they represented, given that a road was presented as a *fait accompli*. Thus both groups had different concerns and priorities, reflecting the road's varying impact along its route.

From the outset, the consultants employed by the DMR began to liaise with residents in order to carry out a demographic survey and to seek residents' opinions. Shortly after Brereton's initial announcement, residents were invited to comment on a series of six options displayed locally. (Public transport was included as an option at this stage, but it was clear that it would never be fully evaluated or considered seriously.) Later, after the tunnel proposal was announced, the consultants distributed a brochure to every household in the area, entitled 'The Eastern Distributor, Preferred Scheme (We'd Like to Know What You Think)'. Frequent meetings were held between the consultants and community representatives where the groups were able to raise their concerns about the road's impact. The members of AFAC and CAT were run off their feet during this year-long process: studying proposals, calling public meetings to discuss 'options' and issues with residents, meeting with the consultants and writing submissions.

To some extent this type of consultancy process is valuable in that communities can feel they have some control over 'development', whereas previously they had none whatsoever. This was the first time in which the DMR employed consultants to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement for a road and to seek community



Builders Laborers march in support of Green Bans, 1974.

reactions to a road proposal. Some people maintain that such processes expose technologically oriented bureaucracies such as the DMR to the broader social and environmental impacts of road schemes. On the other hand, the whole exercise could be viewed as an attempt to legitimise a development by appearing to involve respected community groups in the planning process, while serving to defuse and devitalise resident reaction.

Brereton displayed characteristic aplomb in utilising the wider media to announce the various road proposals, while the DMR and its consultants concentrated on local groups, with the effect of limiting debate to the local level. The continued seeking of responses to the various proposals and exhibitions also played some part in pre-empting the Environmental Impact Statement which appeared in August 1985, about one year after the initial announcement. By this stage the Distributor had become old news and the groups involved found it difficult to obtain media coverage for their responses. One group, Action for Public Transport, attempted to draw media attention to the fact that the cost-benefit analysis contained within the EIS had a negative value<sup>5</sup>, but had little success.

It is likely that the Eastern Distributor provided the opportunity for a 'dress rehearsal' for the DMR's new style of 'consultancy'. In October 1985 the first of 30 000 glossy brochures were distributed to householders living along the route of the planned \$70 million freeway leading from Sydney's western suburbs into the city. These also featured the phrase: 'We'd like to know what you think.'

While no grand plan has ever been announced, activists are convinced that the DMR, under Brereton, is progressively implementing part of the earlier scheme

which would have seen Sydney crisscrossed with 550 km of expressways. This is occurring in the DMR's characteristic manner of developing short, separate freeway stretches that create uneven traffic conditions and thus the pressure to link the pieces<sup>6</sup>.

Should the DMR repeat 'consultation in isolation' with each group of local residents affected by a freeway then the whole process must be regarded as a cynical and deceptive exercise. Consultation at this level is a poor substitute for broad community determination of transport policies.

Since the forties, Australian transport policies have been dominated by the roads lobby, while residents, environment and public transport consumer groups have usually found themselves on the defensive. This imbalance has been and still is reflected in the relative strength of the DMR compared with the public transport authorities. The DMR's road budget has always been generous and the resources available for research and planning on roads have dwarfed those available to the public transport sector. No one body exists to review the state's transport needs in a comprehensive manner; road planning has become a substitute for transport planning.

To many it may have seemed that the successful anti-freeway campaigns of the 1970s signified some kind of definitive victory for the anti-freeway lobby. When the Wran Labor government fought and won the 1976 state elections public transport featured as a major plank in the electoral platform. The Wran government did in fact fulfil many of its promises and rehabilitated the public transport system which had suffered from thirty years of neglect<sup>7</sup>.

However the roads lobby has not been inactive, and public transport has slipped from the public agenda. During 1984 the

DMR received an extra \$26 million to take its roadworks budget to a record \$978.9 million; this had risen to \$992 million in the 1985-6 budget. By contrast, public transport received what is referred to as a 'subsidy' of \$425.4 million, a drop in \$29 million from 1984-5 funding<sup>8</sup>. There has been a steady decline in funding since 1982, which has led to a progressive cut-back in some services and the development of a 'private enterprise' mentality. At the same time the National Road Motorists Association continues with frequent calls for extra road funding, using misleading, familiar arguments involving petrol levies and increased traffic<sup>9</sup>.

Some observers link the state government's turn-about on public transport with the privatisation philosophy which increasingly pervades the Labor Party. There are other links and interests operating: the fact that every union represented on the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council voted unanimously in favour of the Eastern Distributor illustrates the interplay between industry, unions and government.

The resurgence in freeway activity coincides with developments in the road freight industry. New container terminals have been built or are planned for White Bay, Pyrmont and Botany Bay. These will involve thousands of extra truck journeys daily, often with hazardous loads<sup>10</sup>. Since the opening of Port Botany in 1979, an increasing amount of freight has been handled at Botany Bay; between 1981 and 1984 the throughput of containers jumped from 80 000 per year to 200,000 per year<sup>11</sup>, and another four new container terminals were under consideration in March 1984<sup>12</sup>. The opening of the port has attracted hazardous industries and storage facilities for hazardous goods to the Botany area.

In 1979 the Kirby Inquiry was set up to look into the question of transport for goods handled at Port Botany. However, the recommendations of this inquiry, including one that loaded containers be compulsorily railed from Botany Bay, have never been implemented. Although the government agreed to implement these findings in February 1982, the matter has since been referred to a committee of review<sup>13</sup>. Indications are that the Kirby Inquiry's recommendations have been unofficially overturned, and that policies favouring road, as opposed to rail freight transport are being implemented. It is commonly believed that the demise of the Kirby Inquiry was largely due to intense lobbying from the Transport Workers Union.

During 1985 residents faced with various freeway proposals met together and compared notes. It became apparent that these roads formed part of a grid designed primarily for the benefit of freight trucks travelling to and from various container

terminals and particularly the growing complex at Botany Bay. A feeling of frustration and bitterness is developing amongst activists; in spite of government lip service to 'consultation' there has been little real consideration given to the community's health, environmental and transport concerns.

All this sits uneasily with the New South Wales Labor government's present attempts to portray itself as environmentally aware and to promote its record on rainforests and national parks to attract the 'conservation' vote. However one analyst<sup>14</sup> has suggested that this is the only area of environmental policy where significant differences exist between government and the opposition, and the government's stance serves to divert attention from urban environmental issues, where performance has not kept up with rhetoric. Transport is a perfect example of this. Efforts by one section of the bureaucracy to control air pollution and encourage positive lifestyles are rendered futile by larger scale activities promoting dependence on road transport.

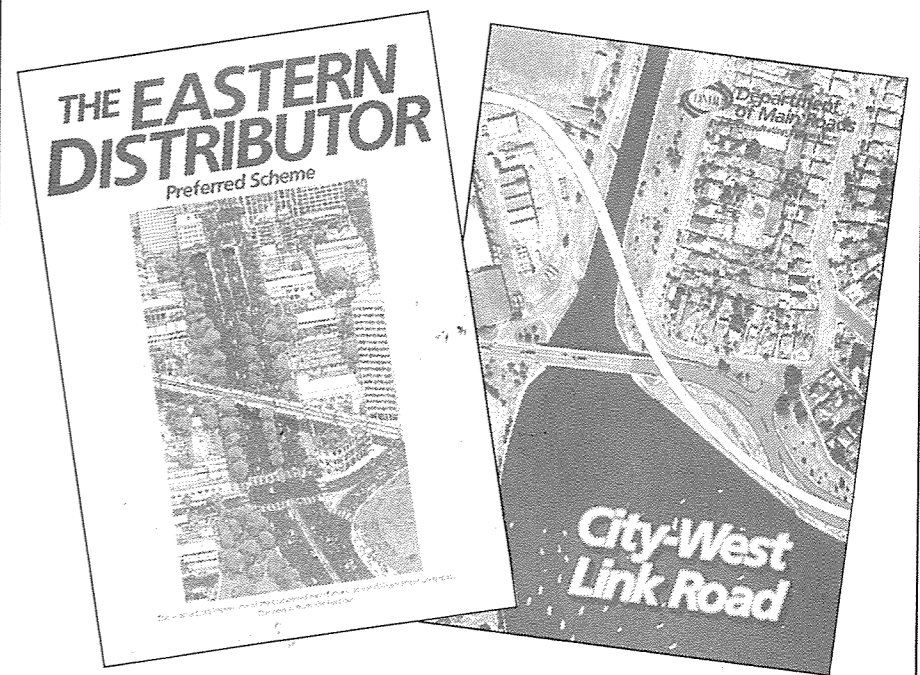
Transport policies in New South Wales are currently being determined at a covert level which is inaccessible to the general community. In order to democratise this process it is necessary to expose what is occurring and to open the area to public scrutiny and debate. The Inner Regional Transport Group (which represents a coalition of residents and community groups) has called for a full inquiry into the transport issue, believing that this would be a good first step. There is also a need for renewed public education on basic environmental principles, so that transport

questions are viewed from a broader perspective than at present. The present scenario, in which authorities appear locked into an expansion of the freeway system, is creating deep disenchantment. It has become yet another impetus for those who are seeking alternative political strategies for achieving change.

## Notes

1. Leonie Sandcock in *Cities for Sale* (Melbourne University Press, 1977, p 194) describes the roads lobby as 'the car and oil, tyre and spare parts companies, and the automobile users' pressure group, the National Road Motorists Association'. See also *Getting on the Right Track — The Public Transport Crisis in Australia* (National Action for Public Transport, 1976).
2. Pak-Poy & Kneebone Pty Ltd, *Inner East Sydney Transport Study*, prepared for the Council of the City of Sydney, June 1985, pp 31-35
3. *Ibid* p 26
4. *Ibid* p 29
5. P.W. Mills (Action for Public Transport), *A Review of the Eastern Distributor Environmental Impact Statement*, August 1985.
6. *Ibid*
7. 'Five years of Wran Government', *Action for Public Transport Newsletter*, May 1981.
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 1985.
9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 1985, *Daily Telegraph* 24 October 1985.
10. 'City Traffic War Escalates', *Inner Voice*, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, March 1984.
11. H. Westerman, 'Public Meeting 17/6/84. Container Movement in the Botany Bay Sub-Region', *Inner Voice*, July 1984.
12. *Inner Voice*, March 1984, *op cit*.
13. H. Westerman, *op cit*.
14. D. Shanahan, 'Wilderness a Winner for Carr', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1985.

## 'We'd like to know what you think': DMR propaganda.



# The political economy of grand larceny

## Namibia and the international trade in uranium

By George Venturini

Namibia is the largest vestige of colonialism in the southern African continent. It occupies a large territory of 824 000 square kilometres of semi-arid, mineral-rich land — an area slightly greater than that of New South Wales. Bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, Namibia borders on the north with Angola, on the east with Botswana; by the narrow Caprivi Strip — extending 500 kilometres eastward — it shares borders with both Zambia and Botswana; on the south and south-east it faces South Africa. South Africa occupies it illegally and has all but annexed it.

Namibia's population, which is estimated at 1.5 million, is composed predominantly of peoples of the Bantu language family: the Ovambos, the Hereros and others. Persons of European descent (Africans, English and Germans) make up about 11% of the population.

Last century Namibia was occupied by English and Germans; during the First World War by South Africa. After the war, in 1920, Namibia — then called South West Africa — became a League of Nations mandate under South African administration. After the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations (UN), the UN General Assembly called on members administering mandated territories to place them under the Trusteeship System. Only South Africa refused to comply. In 1949 South Africa enacted a law which in fact converted the territory into its fifth province.

Under the pressure of world public opinion and the demands of the people of South West Africa, on 27 October 1966 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2145/XXI in which it affirmed the inalienable right of South West Africans to self-determination and independence. The resolution abolished the mandate and declared that the UN would assume direct responsibility for the territory. In 1968 the General Assembly changed the name of the territory to Namibia and called on UN member states to render aid to the Namibian patriots in their struggle for independence.

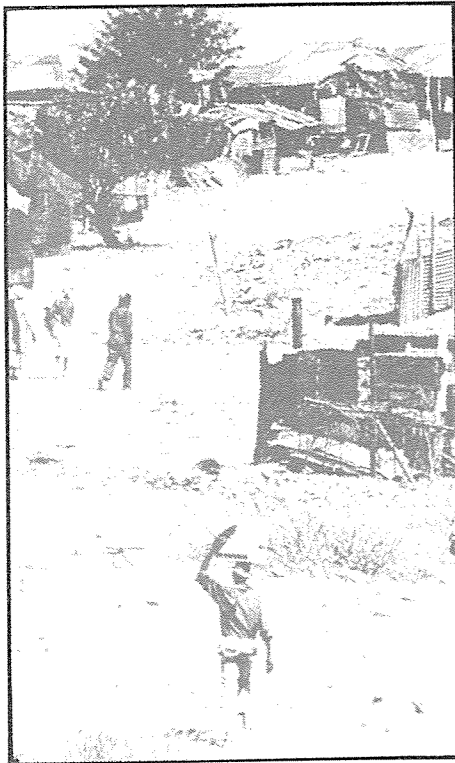
An advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, handed down on 21 June 1971, declared that the continuing presence

of South Africa in Namibia was illegal. South Africa ignored the court's opinion and embarked upon an extension to Namibia of its apartheid policy. Until the late 1970s, Namibia was administered as part of the Republic; since then, South Africa has been devolving administrative power to persons of its trust in Namibia. The UN Council for Namibia, set up in 1966 to take responsibility for the territory, has been unable to establish a presence there.

In April 1977 the Western members of the UN Security Council — Britain, Canada, West Germany, France and the USA — began discussions on the constitutional future of the Territory with the South African government through a group of officials — the Contact Group. The activities of the Contact Group led to the UN Resolution 435 on 29 September 1978. The Resolution has formed the basis of all subsequent UN and Contact Group negotiations. It proposes the establishment of a ceasefire, the holding of free elections — one person, one vote — for an assembly to draft a constitution and further elections for a parliament to lead Namibia to independence. For specious reasons South Africa refused to abide by Resolution 435.

Since 1958, when it was founded, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) has led the struggle for the liberation from colonialists and foreign economic interests. SWAPO has been engaged in a guerrilla war against South African occupation since 1963. In 1973 SWAPO was recognised by the UN General Assembly as 'the sole and authentic representative' of the people of Namibia, while the UN Security Council set May 1975 as the deadline for South Africa to announce its withdrawal. South Africa responded by only reluctantly acknowledging Namibia's separate international status in 1975, and continued to set up an apartheid regime.

Since 1982 the UN has continued to pass resolutions against South Africa, while in 1983 the puppet administration set up by South Africa disintegrated, and was quickly replaced by two men, both South African appointees. In mid-April 1985 President Botha announced that South Africa would re-establish an interim government with limited powers in Namibia, which would exclude SWAPO. South Africa would retain control of Namibia's defence and foreign relations. The SWAPO President said that if South Africa took unilateral steps to declare independence for Namibia, SWAPO 'would crush it'. The transfer of powers took place in mid-June. By the end of the month, in a move seen by many as a step towards establishing a docile puppet regime, the South African government set up a 'transitional' government in Namibia.



Three faces of South African occupation. Top right: Police break up SWAPO rally in Windhoek. Top left: Housing in the Rehoboth 'homeland'. Bottom: South African Defence Force in Namibia.



FRANK SPOONER PICTURES

PETER FRAENKEL

THIS IS NAMIBIA

In an official UN publication containing data available as at mid-1974, the economy of Namibia was described as a dual economy, consisting of a predominant modern European exchange sector and a traditional subsistence African sector. The simplicity of this symmetry embodies the tragedy of Namibia.

The exchange sector is represented by large mining companies controlled by foreign economic interests and guided entirely by whites. Africans provide the unskilled coerced labour for these enterprises. The traditional subsistence economy is practised exclusively in the reserves — lately designated 'homelands' — which make up less than half of Namibia.

Namibia is the world's second largest supplier — after South Africa — of gem diamonds which lie beneath the barren soil. In addition to diamonds, Namibia has a great variety of mineral deposits including copper, lead, zinc, tin, vanadium and petroleum. Statistics after 1965 are scarce. South Africa's first act after economically incorporating Namibia was to prohibit information on production of specific minerals, prospecting and concessions in the territory.

Foreign investment has increased rapidly since 1966. Namibia has become the largest refined lead, the second largest cadmium, the third largest zinc and the fourth largest diamond producer in Africa. Encouraged by low taxation and generous concession areas, mining companies — based in Britain, Canada, West Germany, South Africa and the USA — have made the mining industry the largest employer of African labour and the largest single contributor to Namibia's exports, gross domestic product and government revenue.

Uranium and diamonds were the dominant mineral subsectors by 1979. Diamond production on a large scale dates to the 1940s, that of uranium oxide to 1976. Copper, lead and zinc are, like diamonds, older industries. They have been adversely affected by post-1974 prices, but are in a position to recover if the anticipated mid-1980s price boom occurs.

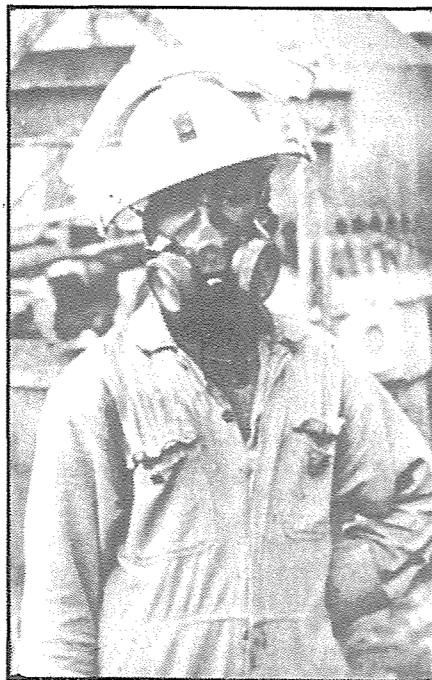
Comprehensive data beyond 1979 are not available, but some figures are. It is possible to state with considerable certainty that at the beginning of this decade Namibia had sufficient resources to form the basis of an independent and self-supporting

economy — if it could have gained its independence.

Namibia's proven resources are significant in global terms for gem diamonds, uranium, arsenic and germanium. Minerals remain central to the economic structure of the territory, contributing to almost half the gross domestic product and making up about 95% of goods exported. Because foreign interests operating in Namibia concentrate on the extraction of minerals for quick profits which are in turn repatriated, other sectors of the economy are neglected to the extent that the territory has become highly dependent on imports for most of the basic requirements, including food. Most of what is produced is exported, and most consumer goods are imported. The economy is thus tremendously dependent on forces over which the Namibian people have no control.

Development in Namibia has been subordinated to the need of foreign corporations to maintain shareholder dividends. Because of this, in a country with one of the highest gross domestic products per capita in Africa, the black population is among the poorest in the world.

A black labour force is employed in Namibia's economic activity. It consists almost entirely of workers from the north of the territory — migrant workers in their own country. According to statistics published by the South African government, nearly one-third of all Ovambo workers are employed in the mines. These miners undertake some of the most arduous, dangerous and unpleasant jobs going. One observer, writing about a copper mine in Namibia, has remarked that:



Miner at Tsumeb copper mine.

It is difficult to imagine, let alone describe, these working conditions without actually experiencing them. To gain a small impression, try to imagine 15 pneumatic drills going full blast in a small enclosed room with a temperature of over 99 degrees Fahrenheit and the operators working knee-deep in water and drilling not down, but horizontally.

A black worker on a recently opened mine concluded:

We are just helping whites to get a lot of money. You get 20 rands and he gets hundreds of rands. Many whites are just people who stand behind others and call for progress.

The low level of taxation and the generous concession area offered by the South African government have encouraged many companies to invest in Namibia. The most important of these new ventures has been RTZ (formerly Rio Tinto Zinc, a British-based transnational corporation with global interests in base metals and uranium) with its enormous open-cast mine at Roessing. Located near Swakopmund, inland from the central coast, in the middle of the barren coastal Namib Desert, Roessing is the only active uranium mine, the most important single economic project in the country — and currently the largest single producer of uranium in the world.

The mine is run by Roessing Uranium Ltd, a company which has been controlled at different times by a consortium; it has always included companies from some or all of Britain, Canada, France and South Africa. The following table, from a 1984 study, discloses what is publicly known about the current shareholding in Roessing.

**Roessing Uranium Ltd shareholdings**

Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ)	41.35%
Rio Algom (Canada) (subsidiary of RTZ)	10.0%
General Mining and Finance Corporation of South Africa	2.3%
The Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa	13.47%
Minatome SA (France)	10.0%
Others	22.88%

Sources: RTZ and Rio Algom's shares are taken from the RTZ 1978 Annual Report. The other figures are based on slightly conflicting data from a variety of sources.

These shareholders are not the only foreign and multinational companies directly connected with the extraction of Namibian uranium. Urangesellschaft of West Germany prospected for uranium in Namibia and helped develop the Roessing mine; a US company, the Western Knapp Engineering Division, held the management contract for the design engineering, procurement and construction of the mine.

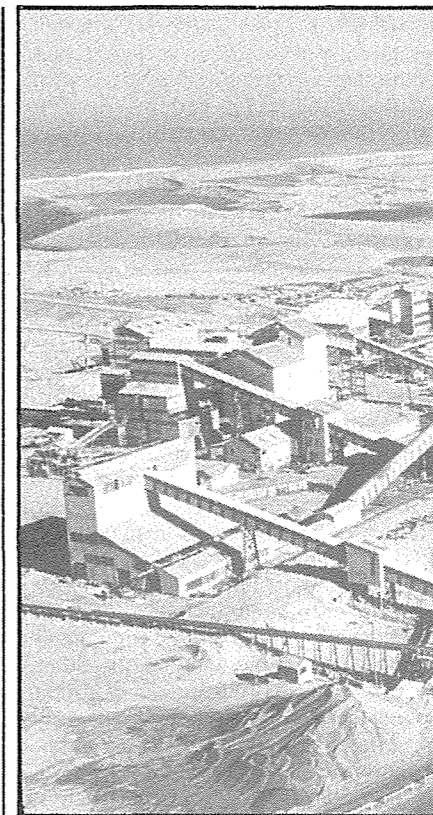
Attempts at commercial production at Roessing began in 1975, but problems with abrasive ore that damaged machinery and a fire which destroyed one facility in 1978 caused delays in the actual start-up of the mine. It was not until 1979 that the mine reached the target production of 5000 tons of uranium oxide per year. Uranium has now surpassed diamonds as Namibia's major mineral export and, while all uranium currently exported comes from Roessing several other mines are under development.

Witnesses testifying at the Uranium Hearings held by the UN Council for Namibia in 1980 estimated that Namibia's reserves range from 100 000 to 180 000 tonnes of uranium oxide — enough for 25-40 years of mining life. As an independent producer, Namibia has the potential to become the fourth largest producer of uranium, after Australia, Canada and the USA.

Special mention needs to be made of the working conditions at Roessing because of the health hazards connected with uranium mining. Such mining is dangerous in the best of circumstances. The water supply is easily contaminated. Waste from the millings — tailings left in the open — continues to release radioactive materials into the atmosphere. Inhaled uranium ore dust and thorium attack workers' lymphatic systems.

Miners are exposed to varying degrees of radioactivity throughout the mining, milling, and waste disposal of the uranium. The consequences of this exposure are both short and longterm. It may take 15 to 20 years for lung cancer to develop, but respiratory diseases and genetic risks occur in a much shorter time.

Working and living conditions at Roessing are frightening. The mine is an enormous open pit. The millings are not covered and the prevailing morning winds blow dust from the tailings into the compound



Consolidated Diamond Mines' operation at Oranjemund in south-west Namibia.

where the non-white miners live. All workers have been supplied with respirators but they are required to wear them only in very dusty areas or when one of the chemical plants breaks down. When there is a breakdown, a thick acrid smoke covers the mine and people feel sick even if they wear the respirators.

Roessing has not been in operation long enough for longterm damages to be visible, and it is even doubtful that health statistics are being kept. What is shocking is that the danger is known, the exposure is deadly, and yet the conditions continue. White workers, who live away from the mines and do not suffer night-time pollution, are given thorough medical tests several times a year. Tests include x-rays and blood tests. In contrast, non-white workers are only x-rayed.

As the question of Namibia's independence has become an international issue, the mining sector — which more than any other is dominated by transnationals like RTZ — has become obliged to take a close look at its treatment of its non-white workers. But despite all these pressures, the inherent inequalities of the system and the vast discrepancies between the earnings, experiences and expectations of white and non-white workers have remained in all essentials unchanged. In other sectors of the economy, the conditions that workers can expect are even worse.

The foreign economic interests which exploit human and natural resources of Namibia are among some of the world's largest corporations and financial institutions from North America and Western Europe. In time, exploitation has become more frantic in pace and aiding and abetting by governments has become more overt.

In large part the involvement of transnational corporations in Namibia is accounted for by three principle corporations operating in the mining sector: Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa (CDM), a subsidiary of De Beers Consolidated Mines, an affiliate of the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa; Tsumeb Corporation Ltd, controlled by Newmont Mining Corporation and Amax, both US corporations; and Roessing Uranium Ltd. These three corporations account for about 95% of mineral production and exports and hold approximately 80% of the territory's mineral assets. In addition, a number of corporations based in South Africa control the fishing industry, and firms based in Canada and the UK are involved in marketing another of Namibia's major exports, karakul furs.

The foreign corporations are cooperating to a great degree with the occupying army and puppet government to defeat SWAPO and preserve their privileged position. South African Defence Force and Air Force strength in Namibia is presently estimated at between 80 000 and 100 000; in addition there are 10 500 police, reserves, mercenaries and vigilantes. The foreign corporations are part of, and contribute to, this military force in several ways.

Firstly, there are strategic products supplied to the army. The most obvious of these is oil, without which the military machine could not run. There is also a substantial financial contribution made to white interests both in Namibia and South Africa in the form of salaries and taxes.

Secondly, the corporations are setting up their own security forces. Roessing has a private commando force of 69 which, according to Sir Anthony Tuke, chair of RTZ, is 'to protect' its employees and its equipment. In this case, 'protection' means close cooperation between Roessing security guards, South African police and armed white employees. The protection extends to action against non-white workers, particularly during industrial unrest.

In the case of uranium, the colonial condition of Namibia is aggravated by the confluence of the economic interests of huge transnational and the strategic interests of their host governments. Roessing uranium mine has a key place in South Africa's nuclear strategy and is major exporter of uranium to the industrialised world. From 1976 to the end of 1981 deliveries of uranium oxide under existing supply contracts from the mine to its customers — including Britain, West Germany, Japan and Spain — are believed to have totalled at least 13 400 tonnes. These contracts commit Roessing to the export of at least 65 000 tonnes of oxide up to the year 2000 — most of it to Britain and Japan.

Because of the political sensitivity of the project, details of Roessing's contracts have been kept secret by the mine's management, RTZ and the South African government. The extraction and purchase of Namibian natural resources is banned by the UN Council for Namibia Decree No 1, of 27 September 1974. This however has never been accepted by the major Western powers, all importers of Roessing uranium, though they have been worried they could face an international protest.

In the case of Britain it is now an open secret that the uranium produced at Roessing went first, and for years, to the

British Nuclear Fuels Corporation, which has signed a longterm contract to purchase 7500 tonnes of uranium oxide between 1976 and 1982. RTZ had managed to acquire longterm contracts to supply the entire uranium requirements needed to fuel Britain's nuclear power stations. Compounding danger with danger, Britain is dependent for uranium on a single, privately owned concern.

News about commercial activity involving uranium just pops up unexpectedly — and then there is silence. That was the way in which, on 24 January 1983, John Moore, British Under-Secretary of State for Energy, announced that Britain cease buying Namibian uranium oxide from the Roessing mine, and that the contract would end in 1984.

Regardless of the party in power, the British government has played a consistent and major supporting role in formulating Namibian uranium policy. Its longterm contract with RTZ, on the one hand, underwrote the mine and, on the other, gave Britain a low-cost oxide source. Britain does not accept the validity of the 1971 International Court of Justice opinion, especially the section which makes post-1966 natural resources projects such as Roessing analogous to 'contracts' between thief and receiver. In general it has argued that the contract with British Nuclear Fuels and the existing RTZ role are in Namibia's interest — a perception not shared by SWAPO.

The British stand is not surprising. RTZ has counted among its directors Lord Carrington, currently North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Secretary-General and formerly British High Commissioner to Canberra and Foreign Secretary with the Thatcher Government; former prime minister, Sir Anthony Eden; Lord Assheton, a prominent Conservative; Lord Shackleton, former Leader of the Labour

Party in the House of Lords; Lord Byers, former Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords; Baron Green of Harrow Weald, former Chairman of the Trade Union Congress; and Lord Charteris, former secretary of the English Queen.

Originally Japan was to have been a major customer, but it insists that it withdrew in 1976 because of the political implications of importing uranium from Namibia. However, according to a report prepared for the US Department of Energy by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1982:

Political pressures ultimately lead to cancellation of the Japanese contracts for Namibian uranium, although contracts for a similar amount were instituted with the parent company RTZ. Some reports tie the Japanese contracts with RTZ Namibian production and it seems unlikely that RTZ could supply such large amounts without using Namibian production . . .

Japan, the major importer of Namibian uranium, now 'launders' its supplies through a Swiss tax haven: RTZ Mineral Services in the Swiss canton of Zug. According to the MIT report, Japanese power utilities signed contracts in the early 1970s for 30 000 tonnes of Namibian uranium — a surprisingly large quantity — to be delivered between 1977 and 1990. This amount represents just over half of Roessing's anticipated output.

France has never given details of its contracts with Roessing. But the MIT report disclosed that the country was due to receive 11 000 tonnes between 1981 and 1990. When the socialists took power in France, it was announced that the Namibian uranium imports would be halted. But in 1982, the Minister for Cooperation and Development, Jean-Pierre Cot, made the revealing remark:

As for Namibian uranium, if it continues to arrive in France, it is not in the form of direct import. France imports uranium only from South Africa.

France is eager to ensure sources of uranium outside of US control. A French energy company has a 10% equity stake in the Roessing mine, and uranium dealings appear to be tied to sales of French nuclear weapons and delivery systems like Mirage jets and Crotale guided missiles, and billions of dollars worth of uranium enrichment plant and equipment to South Africa.

Finally, France was involved in the distribution of Namibian uranium. For years, uranium oxide from Roessing was airfreighted to Paris and used to meet RTZ's contract with British Nuclear Fuels. Flights from Windhoek began in secrecy early in 1978, shortly after Roessing had reached regular levels of production. The secret flights might have ended in 1979, after workers at a French airport planned to protest the secret shipments. Today

other routes of delivery to Western states are reported to be in operation, as shipments from the Roessing mine continue.

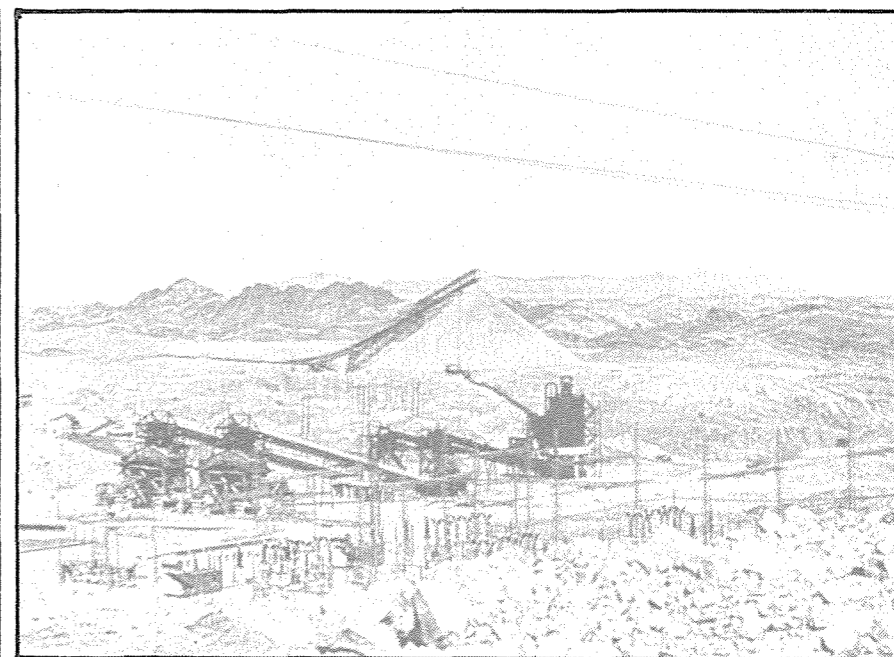
In general the conversion of Namibian uranium first from uranium oxide to uranium hexafluoride and then to enriched uranium, is carried out by private and state-controlled corporations in France, the UK and the USA. Additional enrichment is also carried out by a consortium known as URENCO, which is a joint operation of Uranit of West Germany, Ultra-Centrifuge Nederland of the Netherlands, and British Nuclear Fuels.

West Germany has not disclosed how much uranium it is purchasing from Namibia. The MIT report showed that two companies, Urangesellschaft mbH (which has a 5% stake in Roessing) and Veba AG, had contracted to buy 6140 tonnes of Namibian uranium between 1975 and 1986. Germany's nuclear power program has sought to build up assured sources of uranium oxide by joint ventures and research abroad. There has been substantial cooperation in atomic research between German enterprises and state entities in South Africa.

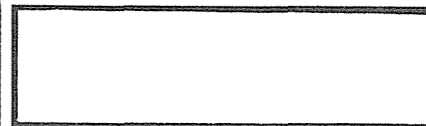
The position of Canada is indicative of the complexity of the situation. Although Canada has enormous reserves of uranium, Canadian corporations are involved in the extraction, prospecting, processing and sale of Namibian uranium. In addition to RTZ's Canadian subsidiary's stake in the Roessing mine, Falconbridge Nickel Mines of Canada (which already operates the Oamites copper mine in Namibia) has exploration claims in the Roessing area. It is also involved in prospecting in Koakaland in the far north-west of Namibia, following the decision of the South African administration to open the so-called 'homelands' to prospecting in 1978.

In September 1981 press reports revealed that Namibian uranium was being imported into Canada for processing by Eldorado Nuclear Ltd, a crown corporation, on behalf of RTZ. Greenpeace investigators had discovered early in 1981 that Namibian uranium had been imported into Canada on vessels of the Kerr (Canada) Lines. The Canadian shipping company would receive from an agent for RTZ in Cape Town a shipment of 'ore concentrate' without any warning about the radioactive nature of goods. The Canadian port and road transport authorities knew nothing either.

Canada does not seem excessively concerned that it imports Namibian uranium from South Africa even though it does recognise South Africa's jurisdiction over Namibia, or that it exports non-Canadian uranium in full knowledge that this export removes the material from the more stringent safeguards that apply to uranium of Canadian origin to prevent it being diverted for military purposes.



Roessing uranium mine.



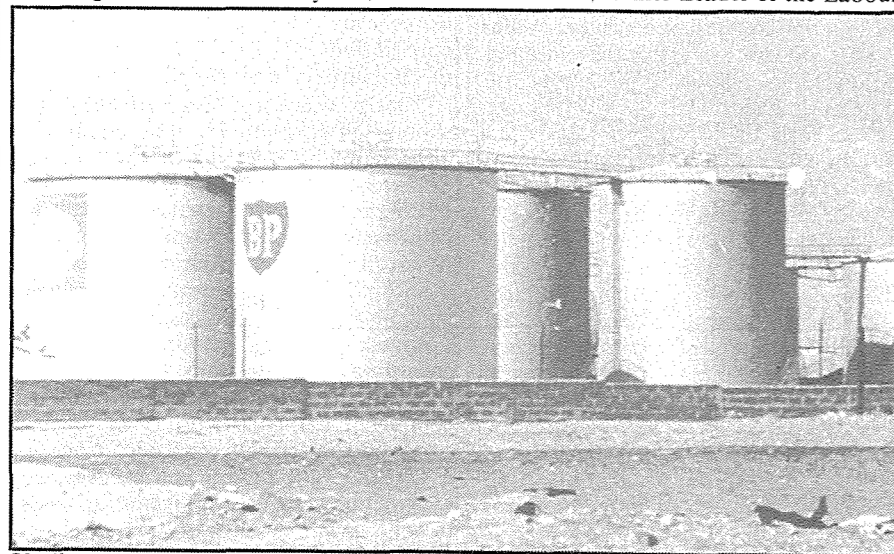
This gives some impression of the complexity of sale, security of supply, technology, defence and financial issues involving Britain, Canada, France, West Germany, the USA, the Netherlands and Japan. This complex of issues faces SWAPO, a liberation movement which is seeking to establish a rational policy for the management of uranium reserves.

For the last twenty years at least, transnationals and their host governments have practised the political economy of grand larceny, stepping up production while the taking is good, and almost expecting — should Namibia gain its independence — nationalisation without compensation. Namibia's mineral resources, while large, are not infinite, and various estimates put the life of the gem diamond deposits and Tsumeb base metal deposits at no more than twenty years. By the time depletion occurs, foreign companies will have taken out billions of dollars worth of minerals from Namibia. The rapid rate of mining and the impending exhaustion of established mineral resources will cripple the prospects of the development of an independent Namibia in the future. The exploitation of these resources has led to a substantial flow of wealth to foreign economic interests. It has not benefited the Namibian people.

Transnationals were lured to Namibia because of unusually high profits made possible by the extension to the territory of the South African government's apartheid regime, which essentially guarantees foreign economic interests an abundance of cheap, enslaved labour. In complete disregard of the relevant resolutions and decisions of the UN and the worldwide campaign against South African and other foreign economic interests operating in Namibia, certain Western nations continue to maintain their wide-ranging economic interests in Namibia and South Africa. Moreover, the unwillingness on the part of these countries to prevent the activities of transnationals and their subsidiaries operating in Namibia has contributed to the unscrupulous illegal exploitation of the territory's human and natural resources.

This article is an edited excerpt from a paper presented by Dr Venturini at the Canberra Conference on Namibia, 30 August-1 September 1985, organised by the Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (CARE) for the United Nations Council for Namibia. The full paper, 'Namibia and the International Trade in Uranium', looks in more detail at the issues covered in this article, and also examines Australia's role *vis-a-vis* the Namibia issue, the uranium industry, the transnational marketeers and the trade in uranium. Copies of the paper are available for \$5 from: CARE, PO Box 51, Kensington Park, SA 5068. Tel: (08) 332 6474. Reports from the conference are published in the October 1985 edition of the CARE Newsletter.

Further information on the Namibian people's struggle for independence (and how you can offer support) can be obtained from the Australasian and Pacific Mission of SWAPO, Room 207/9, Floor 2, 328 Flinders St, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Tel: (03) 61 2792; 61 2793.



Shell and BP oil tanks at Walvis Bay, Namibia.



## POLITICAL DIRECTIONS FOR THE PEACE AND ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENTS

In view of the interest expressed and the amount of material received for the 'political directions' series of articles, we have decided to continue the discussion into the 1986 editions of *Chain Reaction*. One notable gap we hope to fill has been contributions from women. Sexism operates in the peace and environment movements as in broader society; women are given less opportunity than men to develop confidence to write and voice their opinions. We hope that women will feel encouraged to contribute.

We also hope that articles will be written in accessible language and avoid pretentious diatribe. This is not because we are anti-intellectual; rather we wish to encourage the better 'educated' to communicate their ideas in ways that are neither alienating or disempowering, such as by avoiding mystifying language. Many people, because of their gender, race, class etc., are denied access to education and so are often excluded from serious discussion. We believe they should be given every encouragement to be heard.

Perhaps there are one or two points you would like to make — please don't feel intimidated by the length of articles we have published so far. We welcome short contributions, as well as long ones. Once again we would prefer an outline of what you plan to write (especially for long articles) so the collective can discuss it and offer suggestions.

The response we have received has been excellent. We even received a mention from the inconsequential Micky Barnard, in his predictable article attacking the introduction of peace studies into schools ('Peace studies nonsense unmasked', *The Age*, 15 October 1985). Barnard exposes the 'seamless web' of peace studies — the incorporation of anti-nuclear, pacifist, feminist and other perspectives into the subject — which he links with 'the informal debate about strategies for "social change" taking place outside the schools among elements of the "peace" and environmental movements'. He continues:

For instance, discussion this year in the pages of *Chain Reaction* . . . as cited approvingly by the [Communist Party of Australia] newspaper *Tribune* last week, canvasses a symbolic merging of banners that would present 'a new vision which unites the green of the ecology movement, the red of traditional socialist

ideals, the purple of the women's movement, along with the flags of the Aboriginal and Third World movements'. It all leads back to the theory that capitalism is the centre of exploitation, social injustice and all other evils of the day.

Like wow . . .

We have also received news of two conferences planned for Easter 1986 in Sydney — the 'Broad Left' and the 'Getting Together' conferences — which will discuss similar areas to those canvassed by the 'political directions' project. Both are aimed at building links and greater cooperation between people in various social movements and discussing possibilities for forming a broad coalition or network between the movements.

The idea of 'Getting Together' came from an affinity group of activists, the Liffey Group, who had worked together on the Franklin campaign. The conference organisers outline their aims:

In movements ranging from natural healing and human potential therapies, to land rights, the women's movement, peace and environment movements and many more, people are moving away from the narrow perspectives of exploitative materialism and living with a different view of the world. A view which places the needs of people and the needs of the Earth before the needs of the systems (industrial, social, and political) which control us . . .

The aims of the 'Getting Together' process are to facilitate the deliberate and careful discussion of our options for united action; to encourage the development of understanding between people in the various movements; and to promote the exploration of new and creative means towards our common goals.

A conference is being organised for next Easter. It will bring people from a wide range of movements along with individuals who share our goals and aspirations. A great deal of liaison work is being done around Australia well before the conference to set the discussion process going, and a series of pre-conference newsletters is being produced to act as a forum for ideas exchange and debate.

The 'Broad Left' conference was initiated by a group of eleven individuals from a variety of organisations in Sydney, who sent a draft statement of aims to activists around Australia in August 1985, asking for sponsorship of the conference. Over 200 have agreed to date. The statement begins:

Pressing issues of current concern strongly suggest that broad left and socialist forces should come together in an open atmosphere to discuss perspectives for the left in Australia.

We believe that it is both desirable and timely for those broad left forces who share similar perspectives to discuss how to develop more effective left responses to current political developments in Australia, and to the vital issues of the 1980s and 1990s.

The left faces two major strategic issues at present:

- Firstly, the emergence of a much more radical and ideologically confident right wing, which has launched a new conservative offensive against the labour and progressive movements, designed to roll back many social reforms and to put in office hardline conservative governments of the Thatcher and Reagan models.
- Secondly, the challenge of building effective mass movements for progressive reforms and more far-reaching changes in a period of Labor governments and the relationship of left and progressive forces to the existing Labor governments.

Among the concerns listed in the conference statement are the nuclear arms race, the influence of multinational corporations, the rundown of manufacturing industries, continuing unemployment and growing poverty, Aboriginal land rights, failure to implement key aspects of the Accord, discrimination against women, re-emergence of racism, growing media monopoly, environment protection, sustainable resource use, and assaults on progressive reforms in education.

The statement continues:

. . . these and other issues should be discussed by the broad left forces with the aim of developing agreed perspectives for work in the labour and progressive movements to:

- combat reactionary and conservative force;
- develop pressure for progressive and democratic changes;
- promote the need for more far-reaching changes which really tackle basic social problems;
- build a more effective left in Australian politics.

We believe that a national broad left conference could make a significant contribution to these tasks . . .

While it is unfortunate that the two conferences will clash, it is encouraging to hear that the organisers are looking at possibilities for interaction between the two meetings, such as joint discussions or social events. For further information on the two conferences:

- Getting Together conference c/-130 Davey St, Hobart, Tas 7000. Tel: (002) 23 5112.
- Broad Left conference, PO Box 17, Railway Square, Sydney, NSW 2000.

*Chain Reaction* collective.

Please send letters and outlines c/- Sue Armstrong.

# Networking for change

By Trevor Blake

The struggle of people within various social movements for a more humane future has reached a crucial and delicate stage in Australia. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the anti-war, women's, environmental and other movements, seeking a radical reordering of social priorities, or even of basic social structures, reflected a sufficiently broad politicisation to unsettle dominant interests and win important victories. Elements of the union movement played an active role in some of these struggles, while the electoral fortunes of the Labor Party rose on a tide of reformist fervour.

Yet the tempo of struggle and level of overt popular commitment for social change has diminished significantly. In recent years the ALP, dominated by its right-wing, has assumed the mantle of responsibility for effective management of the capitalist economic juggernaut, working from a premise of the essential reconcilability of the interests of capital and labour. At the same time, the increasingly cynical competition among the major parties for the hearts, minds and votes of 'middle Australia' has, with the cooperation of the mass media, greatly narrowed the scope of public debate regarding the future of Australian society. Resurgent conservative political groups, backed by corporate interests, are the dominant force shaping the political agenda and rolling back hard-won social reforms. While the left of the ALP fluctuates between inter and intra-factional skirmishes, and licking its wounds, the Australian Democrats have taken the front-running in promoting aspects of social movements' concerns in the parliamentary sphere — though these movements have now begun to participate directly in the electoral fray.

Predominant trends suggest that political pragmatism, corporatist accommodation, electoral convergence and a profound cultural lethargy threaten to undermine social movements seeking nonviolent, radical social change. This is so even in the face of continuing social oppression and misery, environmental destruction and military lunacy. What, then, are the signs for hope? How can we move forward?

*Trevor Blake is a lecturer in the Graduate School of Environmental Science at Monash University, Victoria, and has been involved with Environmentalists For Full Employment.*



### The state of social movements

Following a period of expansion and consolidation, a number of social movements have entered a phase of reflection and dialogue regarding their goals and tactics as they attempt to confront the complexity and magnitude of structural and practical obstacles to desired change.

The labour movement represents the longest established and seemingly still the most broadly-based and powerful non-capitalist political force in Australia. Consequently, relations between the labour movement and other progressive groups are of pivotal importance in the struggle for a more humane society. Yet it is glaringly apparent that increasing bureaucratisation and conservative influence within the trade unions and ALP has been paralleled by the faltering strength of the socialist or left-wing of the labour movement. However, some socialist groups have begun to move beyond past preoccupations with the production and distribution of economic factors, and the role of the state in regulating these processes, to take up the concerns of and build links with other movements — for example, the women's, environmental and peace movements. The eco-socialist dialogue, the program of the Socialist Alternative Melbourne Collection<sup>1</sup>, and the proposed Easter 1986 gathering of the 'broad left' are notable recent initiatives in this context.

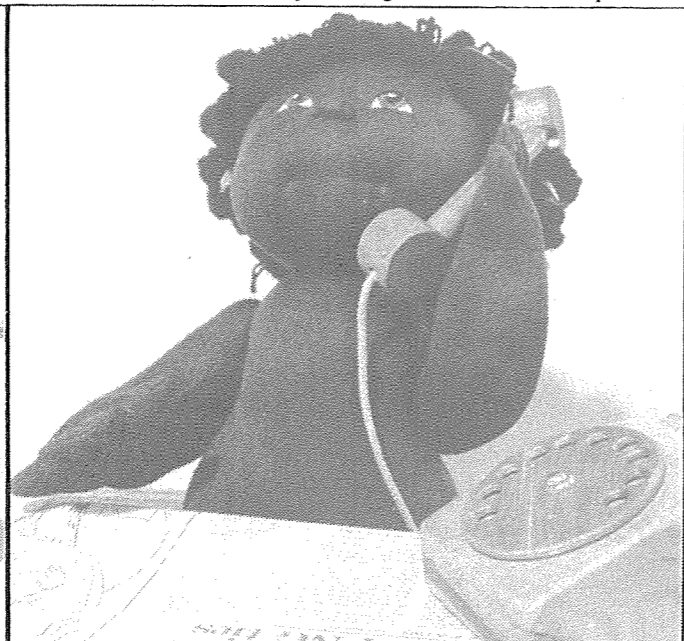
Unfortunately, a significant degree of suspicion regarding tactical motives as well as basic commitments has retarded the development of cooperation between progressive sections of the left and other social movements.<sup>2</sup> Many feminists point to the continuing dominance of patriarchal, authoritarian attitudes and structures within the left, while many environmentalists point to the pervasive failure of the left to transcend the anti-ecological, utilitarian values of industrialism. For their part, many socialists assert the primacy of class relations and emphasize the naivete of a large proportion of feminists and environmentalists regarding the political-economic obstacles to structural social change<sup>3</sup>. In the face of the domination of patterns of economic development by multinational corporations and financial institutions, coupled with the obeisance of political elites, the reality of extensive exploitation, unemployment and impoverishment, and the oppressive and alienating labour processes experienced by most people — in 'developed' as well as 'underdeveloped' countries — assume a priority in the minds of most socialists, displacing attention from less tangible or even

'secondary' issues of transformation of cultural values and interpersonal relations.

It would appear that the left has tended to underestimate the depth and strength of challenges to its analyses, tactics and goals<sup>4</sup>. However, other movements are beginning to come to terms with the left's traditional concerns — although within an expanded framework. Thus, radical elements within the environmental movement are beginning to explore the cultural and political implications of an 'ecological world-view', as well as linking this perspective with political-economic issues implicit in the formulation of strategies for ecologically sustainable development. Similarly, the far-reaching implications of a growing feminist consciousness have found political expression in both practices within the women's movement and the generation of critiques of and alternatives to current economic and social policies and structures.

The peace movement of the 1980s has emerged out of the coalescence of sections of the anti-war, environmentalist and other movements of the 1970s, with the support of some progressive christians. This movement has succeeded in triggering a high level of concern in the community regarding the nuclear threat by identifying the moral issues involved and also tapping more basic anxieties. The mainstream media has been crucial in sustaining public awareness of the peace movements' concerns — though attention has focussed on 'newsworthy' events rather than empathetic, critical exploration of the issues involved. Actions aimed at specific national issues like foreign bases, visiting warships and uranium mining have received less sympathetic attention from the media (and the federal ALP government) than mass rallies with more diffuse aims related to international disarmament. Nevertheless, the increasing consciousness of the interdependence of peace, social justice and environmental issues — in relation to political-economic and socio-cultural structures — which is slowly emerging reflects an important aspect of maturation within the peace movement. Despite this, the relationships between militarism, imperialism, and industrialism, and underlying political, economic and cultural factors, and therefore alternative approaches to societal organisation, development and defence, remain poorly understood<sup>5</sup>.

The black land rights movement has been, and still is, of enormous significance in the broader struggle for progressive social change. As well as providing a focus for blacks' political



In conversation with Fred, Natty suggests a 'Coming out of the Woods' conference.

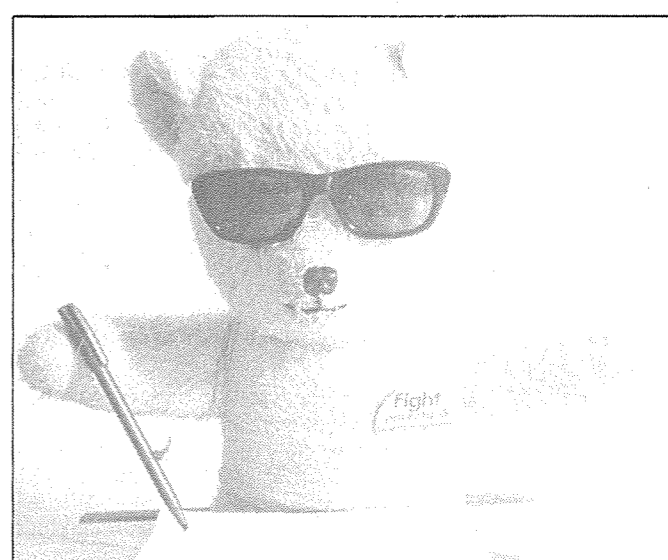
RUTH FORD

identity and economic demands, the land rights issue has exposed the arbitrariness of legal property relations, the narrowness of economic definitions of the value of land, the political power of mining and grazing interests, the links between cultural oppression, economic exploitation and environmental destruction. Related issues have been highlighted by groups supporting community-based development and the struggles of oppressed peoples in the Third World, though the connections and parallels with the Australian context have not gained widespread public recognition.

Community-based social welfare organisations and related political groups committed to improving the situation of, or winning social justice and basic rights for the poor, unemployed, disabled and other marginalised sectors of the population, have engaged in a variety of practical and tactical initiatives. At the neighborhood or community level, important grassroots developments have occurred with the establishment of neighbourhood houses, child care, food and health cooperatives, tenants unions and the like<sup>6</sup>. Communal cooperatives are still an important manifestation of alternative lifestyles, and, in varying degrees, alternative social values and structures. However, the signs are that the deep psycho-social roots of individualism or privatism in Western culture are being reflected in the erosion of an orientation toward cooperative practices, and, more fundamentally, of a concern for the cultivation of caring relationships between people and with the environment, in the communal settlements or collectives of the 1980s<sup>7</sup>. Though there are many exceptions, these communities tend to be inward-looking and somewhat isolated from radical oppositional struggles. Nevertheless, their experiences undoubtedly offer vital lessons with respect to the potentials for and obstacles to cultural transformation. Both communal and self-help collectives represent positive manifestations of a movement toward a more humane society.

Over the past twenty years there has developed a growing reaction to the materialism of patriarchal, industrial culture, characteristic of both capitalist and socialist societies. A self-conscious concern with the meaning of life, and openness to the non-material or spiritual level of existence, began to gather impetus in the 1960s with the growth of the counter-culture's interest in Eastern religion and personal development (paralleled by the growth of evangelical christianity). More recently, concern for the spiritual sources of creativity, mutuality and 'inner peace' has begun to occupy the attention of 'green' environmentalists as well as some feminists. Furthermore, parts of the christian church have begun to assert with renewed vigour the connection between true spiritual integrity and support for the oppressed<sup>8</sup>. The development of politically-conscious, christian communities amongst the Third World poor over the past few decades has raised the question of what appropriate forms of action might be undertaken by Western christians in the quest for a more caring society.

The relationship between political ideologies, cultural structures and spiritual awareness is obviously complex — and is the subject of much debate. Similarly, the relationship between the psychology and tactics of political activism is receiving increasing attention, especially in relation to the dynamics of aggression and authoritarianism and the alternative ethos of nonviolence. While the building of mutualistic, caring relationships within affinity groups of activists is undoubtedly desirable, given that our daily praxis will reflect our progress towards the creation of an alternative society, the cultivation of a spiritual awareness of our interdependence might be seen to be a necessary dimension of the process of transformation. Indeed, the cultivation of such an awareness would appear to be linked with the emergence of a non-egoistic, socially committed, moral passion which is essential to sustain a synergistic momentum towards both psychic/spiritual and social emancipation.



Ralph writes a pre-conference discussion paper.

### Points of Convergence

A number of general features of the state of social movements in Australia are worthy of comment. First, at an intellectual and ideological level, amongst the diverse groups committed to nonviolent, radical social change we may note:

- highly contrasting theoretical perspectives in terms of analyses of causal relationships and practical priorities;
- limited understanding (though growing awareness) of the interdependence of different social issues; and
- a striking convergence of basic social values.

Secondly, at a practical, organisational and individual level we may note:

- largely divergent organisational goals with typically little communication or cooperation between movements, except through overlapping individual involvement (though this situation is rapidly changing);
- contrasting styles of organisational operation and tactics;
- pervasive difficulties in linking the political activities of organisation; with the personal needs, expectations and interactions of individuals;
- highly limited and over-stretched resources (money, facilities, people) for sustaining political activities.

In sum, there is both a great diversity and a substantial commonality of orientation and experience. Two aspects warrant close consideration here. First, the malaise and faltering momentum of most social movements may reflect, in part, the intellectual, moral-political and personal uncertainties of people comprising these movements. A simplistic, dogmatic intellectual and moral purity may stimulate or sustain — at least for a time — a political commitment based on emotional zeal. However, individuals whose political preoccupations are wholly externally oriented, and who fail to recognise their own egoistic motives and aggressive modes of behaviour, will inevitably provoke conflict<sup>9</sup>. A maturing of perspective, reflecting an expanded awareness of both real world complexities and personal motivations, will contribute to the growth of, paradoxically, both a more critical pragmatism and an authentic openness at an interpersonal and at a collective level. Acknowledgement of uncertainties, ambiguities and interdependencies is essential for the broadening of perspectives and maturing of political commitment and judgement. Unless mutual tolerance and cooperation exists within and between social movements struggling for a more humane future there can be little prospect for winning broadly based and active support in the community at large. More than that, goodwill

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must be combined with a sense of humour and affirmation of the joys of life!

Second, granted the improbability of a radical consensus regarding the relative significance and interrelations of class, patriarchal and ethnic domination, industrialism, imperialism and militarism, material, psychosocial and spiritual human needs, grassroots initiatives, mass opposition and parliamentary politics, what common ground or meeting point can we identify and build upon? It would seem that most of us share a commitment to a struggle for a more *just, participatory and sustainable society responsive to basic human needs, democratic involvement and ecological realities*. Indeed, a number of value imperatives appear to be widely shared amongst radically oriented people:

- All people should have access to their basic material needs and be able to achieve a minimal level of comfort.
- All people should have opportunities for personal fulfilment through work, creative activities and social interaction.
- All people should have substantial control over their own lives, including opportunities for involvement in decision-making affecting their work, community and environment.
- All people should be able to live in freedom from fear of war and personal violence.
- Ecological systems and natural resources should be conserved to provide for human needs in the future.
- Other species should be protected and suffering of animals minimised.

While certain of these value statements might be open to a plausible, essentially conservative interpretation, taken together, especially in the context of the imperative of involvement in decision-making, the integral radical thrust is sustained. If the validity and interdependence of these value imperatives is accepted, the key question is: what political response is appropriate?

#### A rationale for linking social movements

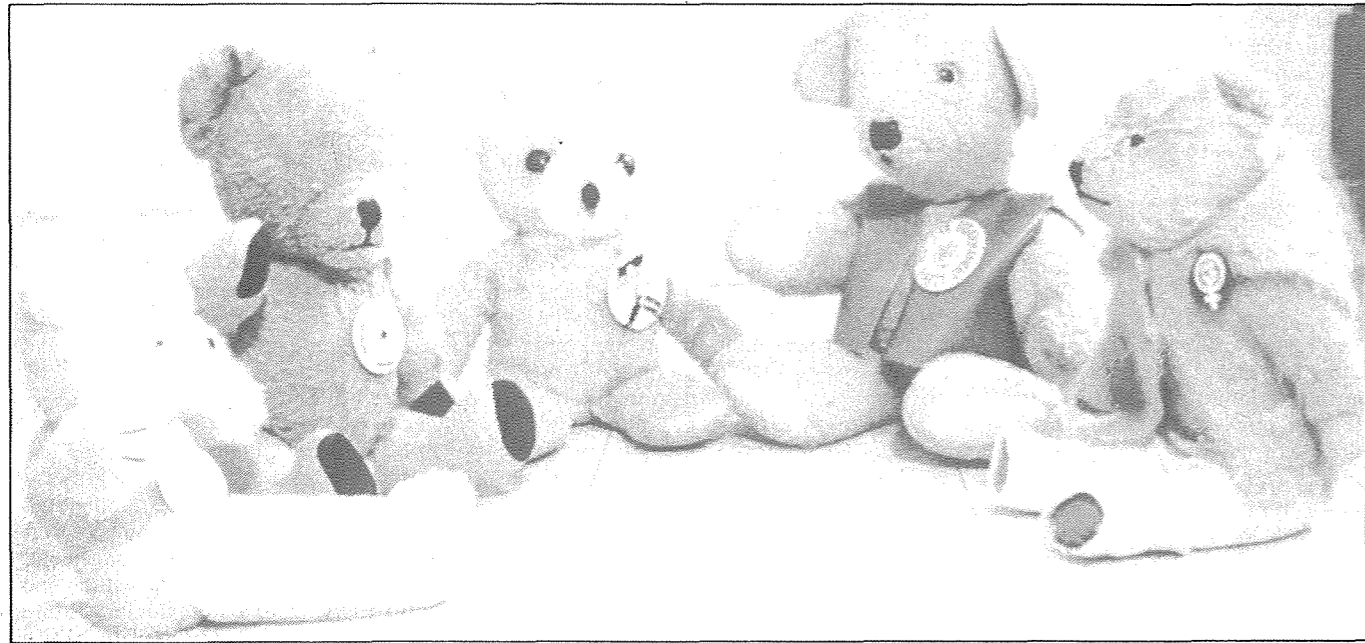
In view of, on the one hand, the substantial commonality of values held by many people in diverse social movements, and on the other hand, the profound political-economic and cultural obstacles to realisation of these values, a good case can be identified for significant cooperation between organisations involved in different movements. The limited — though important

— achievements of individual movements in recent decades suggest that some linkage of efforts may be a prerequisite of a renewed, expanded and powerful mobilisation for progressive social change<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, if a major part of the Australian population is to be persuaded that it is within *its* power to contribute to the creation of a more humane society, then it will be necessary to articulate a cohesive alternative vision which would be meaningful in the context of people's current experience. So long as the various social movements pursue their goals in virtual isolation, they may be played off against one another by dominant interests (eg 'jobs versus environment', 'employed versus unemployed'). It is essential that we both explore the connections — including conflicts — between our various concerns and begin to articulate and propagate the elements of an alternative vision.

What linkages might be forged between different social movements? There are a range of possibilities:

- information-sharing (newsletters, research etc);
- resource-sharing (office space, equipment, paid staff, media skills etc);
- dialogue to promote constructive criticism, mutual understanding and sharing of experience regarding organisation, tactics etc;
- dialogue to develop shared positions on specific issues;
- cooperative action on specific issues;
- formation of a network of organisations committed to ongoing cooperation encompassing the above possibilities ('Network for Action');
- formation of a network or coalition of organisations committed to a broadly based struggle toward structural change ('Coalition for Change');
- formation of a broadly based extra-parliamentary organisation committed to radical social change ('Radical Change Movement');
- formation of a broadly based radical parliamentary party ('Radical Party');
- formation of a network of organisations engaged in practical, cooperative activities ('Grassroots Network');
- formation of a broadly-based radical organisation integrating political action directed toward structural change with practical, cooperative activities ('New Society Movement').

Important initiatives corresponding to a number of the above options have, of course, already occurred in Australia. Our challenge is to broaden and strengthen the linkages.



Teddies in workshop on coalition structures.

RUTH FORD

#### Some anticipated objections

At this point we should perhaps consider potential reasons why closer linkages between different social movements might be judged either impractical or undesirable.

First, it is apparent that radical political organisations tend to operate at the limits of their capacities, in terms of immediately available skills, energies and resources. Substantial interaction with organisations outside (or even within) the movement of which they are a part may appear impossible. Two observations may be made here. First, choices inevitably have to be made between concerted responses to current issues and strategic actions in response to longer term structural goals: the basic problem is that of strategic intergration. Secondly, the building of links with other organisations may, over the medium-term, significantly increase capacities to respond to current issues — indeed, such an increase *might* be regarded as a measure of the justification of inter-organisational cooperation. While a strong, mutual commitment to cooperation would be essential, longterm success would depend upon a gradual engagement, slowly building effective relationships and trust.

Secondly, substantial centralisation of radical political activities might lead to bureaucratisation and the concentration of organisational power, weakening the opportunities for grassroots involvement and the impetus for creative initiatives within particular areas of concern. This very real danger underscores the necessity of organisational structures which pivot upon grassroots involvement, though the problem of effective interaction or coordination must also be confronted. Decentralised activities may be politically effective if they are at least informally linked within a broader strategy of action. Some form of network linkage would appear to offer an appropriate structure. Arguments for 'strategic separatism' espoused by many black activists, radical feminists and some disabled groups — so that they might sustain their own public voices and organisational styles of practice, and so avoid being swamped by more dominant groups of activists — command respect, yet potential modes of networking need not have undesirable consequences.

Thirdly, quite fundamental divergences of goals, ideologies, interests, structures and tactics do exist between radical organisations — these cannot be wished away. Yet even if these differences are undeniable, to emphasise their significance as against areas of mutual concern or shared values can only perpetuate the relative political weakness of radical movements. The challenge is to identify and build upon what we do have in common, rather than persistently indulging in pious dogmatism or myopic parochialism. The reality is that our various concerns are highly interdependent, and only through constructive mutual criticism and cooperative action can we promote a movement toward viable alternative structures. If we cannot aspire to a comprehensive radical consensus, areas of agreement can be defined and actions coordinated. Beyond that, the inevitability and desirability of a radical pluralism must be accepted. If we cannot begin to overcome the fragmentation of our various movements, there can be little hope of convincing the population at large of the practicality as well as the desirability of radical social change.

At the same time, it is also apparent that radical alternatives are only likely to prove attractive if they incorporate the possibility of substantial diversity of social structures and lifestyles. Rigid blueprints prescribed by dogma will inevitably alienate the yet-to-be-converted, as well as being inconsistent with the creation of an alternative 'social ecology' through an experientially grounded, participatory, reflective process. Ahistorical revolutionary strategies of transformation imposed through authoritarian edict may be expected to result in catastrophic social dislocation and continuing oppression.



RUTH FORD

Edward, burnt-out activist at twenty-six. Life's no picnic.

The appropriate form of linkage between different organisations and individuals committed to radical social change cannot be prescribed. Attitudes toward such a prospect will vary markedly and a range of forms of interaction might be adopted within an evolutionary process of gradual linkage.

#### Notes

1. Socialist Alternative Melbourne Collective, *Make Melbourne Marvellous*, SAM, 1985.
2. For an international overview see: C Rootes, 'Protest, social movements, revolution?', *Social Alternatives*, vol 4 no 1, 1984.
3. A British perspective is provided by: B Fine et al, *Class Politics: An answer to its critics*, Leftover Pamphlets, 1984.
4. See: ID Balbus, *Marxism and Domination*, Princeton University Press, 1982; and J Porritt, *Seeing Green: The politics of ecology explained*, Blackwell, London, 1984.
5. For an early critical examination of these issues see: J Camilleri, *Civilisation in Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, 1976.
6. For a listing of Victorian organisations see: *Resource Directory for Self-Help Groups 1984*, Collective of Self-Help Groups. A critical evaluation of community initiatives is provided by: M Mowbray, 'Localism and austerity: the community can do it', *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, no 16, 1984.
7. See: P Cock, 'Sustaining the alternative culture? The drift toward rural suburbia!', *Social Alternatives*, vol 4 no 4, 1985.
8. For example, see: L Boff, *Church, Charism and Power*, Dove, Blackburn, 1985.
9. See: H Crago, 'The paradoxes of change', *Australian Society*, December 1984.
10. See: B Frankel, *Beyond the State*, Macmillan, 1983.

Trevor Blake is currently organising a conference with the tentative title 'Gathering for Change', with the aim of bringing together people involved in different movements committed to nonviolent, radical social change, to discuss cooperation and interaction between movements. It will be similar to the Getting Together conference planning for Sydney at Easter 1986, but will have a predominantly Victorian focus. For further information, contact Trevor c/- Environmental Science, Monash University, Clayton, Vic 3168.

# A rainbow alliance

By George Venturini

McMenamin's and Wishart's analysis of the limitations of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) campaign was quite correct: 'The nuclear arms race is only a result of twentieth century industrial civilisation and the rivalries between different blocs. A frightening consequence, but a consequence, nonetheless. For the NDP, the basic question of causes will remain its stumbling block.' ('Towards a red and green coalition', *Chain Reaction* 41)

I hope I may be forgiven for two faults: firstly, for not contributing to the laceration of the NDP. I leave that to media personalities who left, or threatened to do so and are now counting heads to decide finally, and to many of those who have remained but insist on contributing nothing more than their heartfelt emoting and their aimless babbling. Secondly, for repeating myself to some extent: see 'Open letter to an accidental Senator [Vallentine]', *Peace Studies*, April 1985.

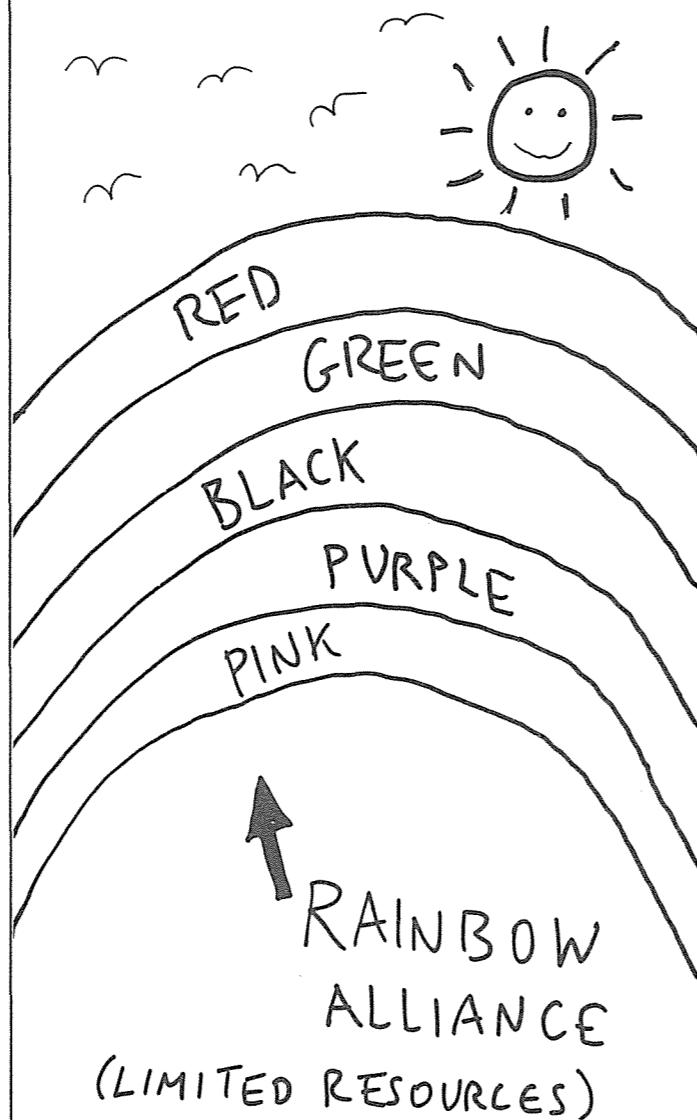
My view in the debate is put simply thus: we either sink our differences and unite in a grand Rainbow Alliance, or we will continue to be electorally irrelevant and our differences will sink us separately, one by one.

Before I explain who we are, I may be allowed to declare my position. I have been studying the issue of uranium in its legal, economic, political and social implications for the last nine years. As I came to understand the link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons I broadened by interest in peace studies, if the description fits, and disarmament — nuclear at first, and then of all kinds — to reverse the trend of our society towards nuclear omnicide. Of course, I share the three basic goals of the NDP. But my position is more than a point of arrival.

If we wish to translate into action the rhetoric about their being 'millions of us', then our constituency must be enlarged to the blacks, the migrants, the women, the conservationists, the youth, the pensioners, the unemployed and the political non-conformists and social outcasts. Among the latter I would place all those who have an unconventional style of loving, living or thinking — such as the consumers of various brands of socialism and communism. What would it matter if, in the interests of unity and success, the cherished liturgy and the imported ways of thought need be made more consonant to what my friends identify as 'Australian conditions'? That is, I submit, a broad coalition, gathering all the colours of a Rainbow Alliance under one banner. Of course, the organisational demands and the electoral strategy may be difficult to agree to — but not impossible.

The signs however are not auspicious — both here and abroad. As usual, I hope I am wrong. The 'free world' is moving rapidly to the right.

*Dr Venturini is a Friend of the Earth and was a Senate candidate for the Nuclear Disarmament Party in the December 1984 election. This is an edited version of a longer article available from the author.*



BRENDAN REA

Here in the province a most shallow prime minister, a Paul Hogan with a law degree, has recently returned to the Lodge. There at home, just earlier, six out of ten of the two out of three Americans entitled to vote returned Reagan to the White House. In all but one of his 53 films Reagan played the successful good guy, the hero, the rescuer. During the fifty-fourth, the filming of which has cost untold miseries to powerless Americans, he was cast as truth, justice and 'the American way'. The message remained simple: 'traditional values' at home, a heavily armed presence abroad.

The posology worked like a dream, largely because Americans are living in a dream. The dream is induced by a down-home style, genial smile and practised delivery of inanities: free enterprise, hard work, moral values, love of country, religious fervour. They find sustenance in the loudness which covers and drowns ignorance of things foreign. Ironically, the razzamatazz amounts to silence. Life becomes a four-year Hollywood production. Kinematic illusion becomes reality. That dream and that illusion are like an opiate, necessary to support the silence about real life, which would otherwise be impossible. Who would not want to believe that one lives in a good country, where it still makes sense to build a house, to have babies, save money, go on vacations, develop one's career?

Overseas the 'Western Democracies' have some problems but — speaking personally — there is nothing I can do. Such sense of vicarious worth — powerlessness really — is gnawing away the heart of the 'Western Democracies'. Much of the paralysing fear the Americans have, we have. The language of their fear is ours. The tune is familiar; it goes like this: We cannot trust the Russians, they want to take over the world, so how can we negotiate with them? I do not think I could do anything politically, I have only got one vote, and besides the politicians just make promises and break them. You cannot trust them either. I do not read the papers anymore. It is too discouraging. Maybe everything will work out.

War is certainly coming, the prophets have told us so, but if we get in a safe place and purify ourselves we will be saved. I'll probably be killed right at the start, thank goodness.

I try not to think about it too much. (Incidentally, when the thinking gets tough I turn off and declare the whole effort 'academic' — an eight-letter word. I would not want to run the risk of being labelled an 'idealist' — another eight-letter word). Our nuclear weapons are protecting us from a Russian attack. If we keep our military strength up, we will be safe. We can afford whatever it costs. It is our survival.

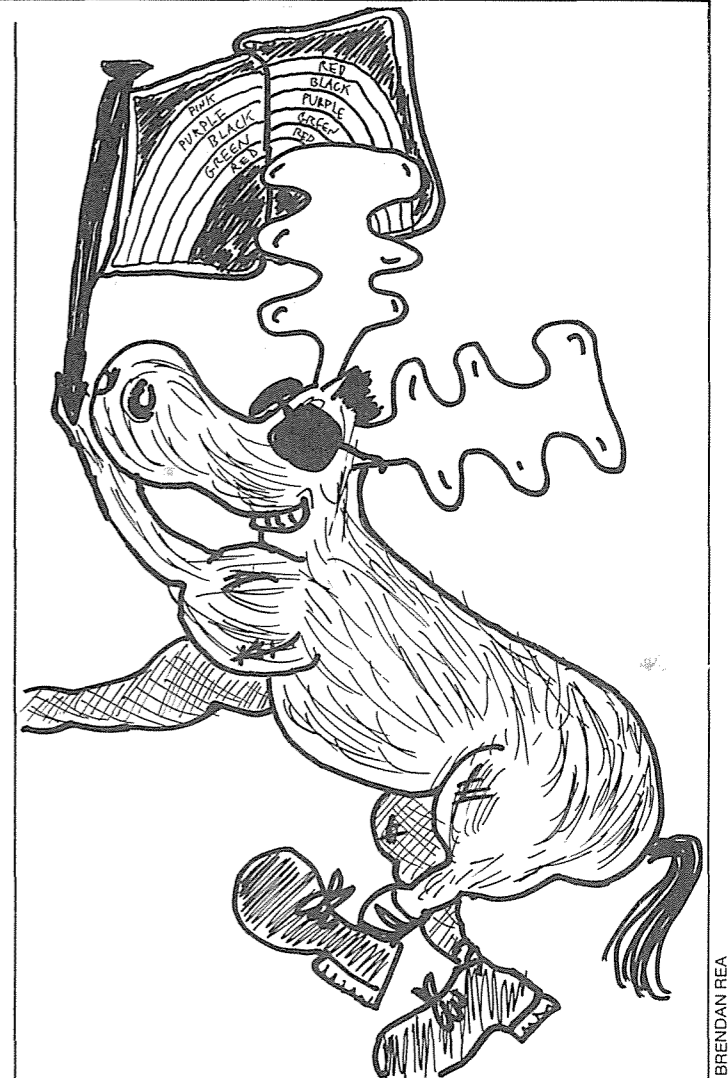
Yes, you cannot trust the Russians. They are not like us. Murderers and despots, they lie when they feel like it. Our bombs will protect us and our friends, preserve freedom, democracy and free enterprise.

This is the scenario, this is the script. And it was all acted out to consummate perfection before cameras and microphones. Is it any wonder then that a modern Jeremiah from Minnesota, reasonable, knowledgeable and decent could not have a chance to be listened to? Americans and their dependants are in no mood to listen to any rational argument, particularly when it requires a lengthy presentation and it poses what the French would call *la problematique*.

The political process is then debased to a collection of quips or one-liners: 'You ain't seen nothing yet', to deny the reality of what has actually happened, and keep the electors away from their real interests. That pap earned Reagan four more years. We are treated to no different meal: 'The only trust I seek... is your trust that we will continue to put Australia first'.

If this is not the solution what is then the problem, *la problematique*? It calls for the study of an interrelated set of challenges to human existence caused by human actions.

A new coalition of forces must first of all address a policy of atonement for the ravages on the Aboriginal inhabitants of this



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land, recognise their rights — a particularly difficult endeavour, as this will require the application of a system which is still foreign to them and imposed on them, to preserve their religious life and sacred sites. This must be done by having the Aborigines on our side, because past promises made to them either have been betrayed or have not attracted their confidence. We must act as a matter of duty, without any expectation. This must be an act of conscience. We must look for the support of those men and women whom the Aborigines still respect. Perhaps the Aborigines may trust us once more.

It is this trust which will encourage other minorities to believe that we are not some new brand of racket in the 'ethnic industry'. I am thinking of people like the Greeks, who twice voted for Mr Hawke's party, soon to find that their country of the heart was spied on from space by appointment to the CIA. How many nautical miles between Greece and Italy? Forty. And how many kilometres from Greece to Yugoslavia? None.

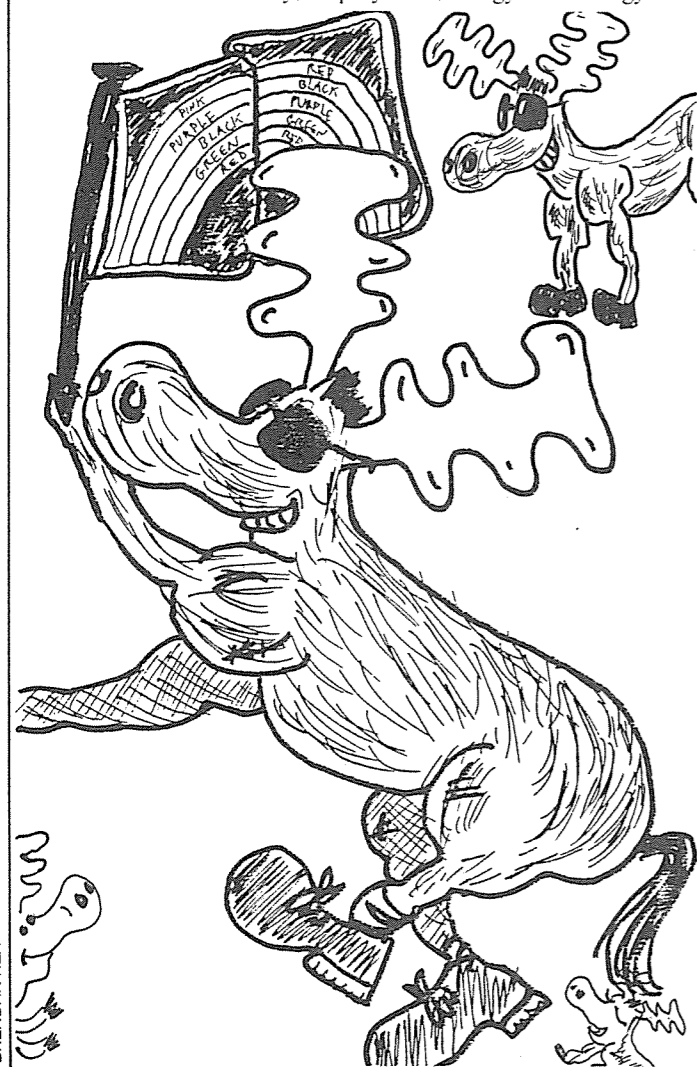
In a world rendered more sinister by growing violence, torture, terrorism, assassination, disappearances, and police or military force by government and would-be governments, Australia may appear as an oasis of peace. A Rainbow Alliance must throw light over the darkest spot of the Australian psyche, the inherited taints of being — still at least in thought — an English colony. For instance, Greek, Yugoslavian and Italian migrants are expected to understand and accept the transliteration of the English custom expressed with the word 'discretion'.

One way of moving to a democratic life is firmly to establish the rights of all social and minority groups, in a peaceful, educated

and free society. We must address ourselves to the sponsorship of land rights, human rights, education, to dismantle the military-industrial-bureaucratic-academic complex, in a spirit of freedom of information particularly about alliances, treaties and bases. The Rainbow Alliance must advocate the abandonment of a life-style given to discrimination, secrecy and clientelism. That would inject a hope for a rosy future, what all migrants to this country shared — and add a new colour to the flag of the Alliance.

Publicity seems to me the best way of doing away with foreign interference in the life of this country, and of removing — to the extent we may domestically do so — the threat of nuclear war and incineration of the globe. Such open attitude to our neighbours — no matter how distant or represented as unfriendly — would go a long way in clearing the skies from gloom and adding a good blue background. And wouldn't that make of the Alliance the peace party?

Abroad (but not exclusively) we should turn our attention to such problems as the population explosion, food distribution inequities causing daily mass starvation, the growing gap between rich and poor, erosion and urbanisation of farmland, destruction of forests, poisoning of the ecosphere by industrial chemicals (both toxic waste and 'useful' chemicals like pesticides and herbicides), garbage, sewerage, smog, and so on. Historically the Agrarian-Conservatives, by recent 'revelation' the Hawke Laborites, because of equivocation the Democrats, none of the extant parties takes more than a perfunctory, amateurish attitude to the four 'E's': economy, employment, energy and ecology. If



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we said it clearly and were seen to mean it, why shouldn't the greenies be with us?

To say that *la problematique* appears to be a single problem caused by our limited awareness, may sound *informed, relevant, academic*. Those are eight-letter words — just like *idealist*. Here in Australia we call it *bullshit*.

Even to remind Americans that their budget deficit is \$200 billion while Reagan advocates a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget may be informed — it certainly is academic. To tell them that their country has reached the highest poverty level since the great depression may be relevant — but again academic. The equation of American elections may very well be this: thirty-five million votes for Reagan over twenty-five million votes for Mondale equal thirty-five million persons living below the level of poverty. *There are eight million more than since Reagan began*. Of those thirty-five millions twenty-four millions are white. The poor are mostly white, not black or brown, mostly women not men, mostly children not adults.

But — I am admonished — if you get a chance to be such a killjoy, to speak like a prophet of doom, to spread your gloom around, it is because you live in a system which is *tolerant*. I pause and count the letters of that word. *Tolerant* is another eight-letter word, here in Australia we identify that with *bullshit*.

Mainly by people who have no first-hand experience, and often know no more than what is peddled by the media controlled by the Farty Foxes, Perry Kaker or Lord Smut, we are told that there is no counterpart here of the American condition. Or is there?

Having comfortably settled the unemployment at almost 9%, the glorious process of reconciliation, recovery and reconstruction continues. There are some minor pitfalls. An unchivalrous critic may insist with the minister for private schools and an infidel may challenge the guardian of youth despair and point this out. But luckily for them there are not many Hollingworths to remind us that one out of five children in Australia is reared in poverty.

We must widen our attention, from proliferation — through population and pollution — to poverty. This must be redefined expansively to include moral, spiritual, educational as well as physical poverty. Those children reared in poverty are ill-educated in a symbiotic private-public system of which they become the victims, until they move to the role of the unemployed — or functionally unemployable. Why should their parents continue to vote for a 'Labor' which will exact from them, without giving anything in return, the last pound of flesh? Its colour could cover a very large spectrum.

Amidst the self-induced emotion and the pompous listing of national priorities: growth, equity and peace, against the lily-white scenario of self-congratulatory alliteration, in the resounding emptiness of reconciliation, recovery and reconstruction, a pot-stirrer may be forgiven for playing a strident note and asking: 'What sort of recovery leaves almost three million people in poverty? What future is contemplated if 35% of them are children?'

These people — who experienced the worst of the recession — have again been taken for granted and pressed into waiting for the fruits of economic growth. Before it benefits them, there is rumour of another recession. On the other side of the social scale, as the Brotherhood of St Laurence tells us: 'In November 1982 a single pensioner's payment was 8.9% below the poverty line; by November 1984, the difference had increased to 10%. Is this what *growth* means?'

Why should not a good, honest campaign intelligently directed to the pensioners attract the vote of 'grey power'?

The Institute of Family Studies informs us that: 'There is an urgent need for action to reverse the trend towards increasing inequality and hardship . . . there is clearly a need for a greater commitment to reversing the increasing slide into poverty by

families with children'. Is that the new meaning of *equity*?

The Salvation Army expresses concern that: 'For those stuck in poverty, the situation is becoming intolerable . . . the Salvation Army is becoming less able to "lend a hand" to the extent required today. But why should people be forced into the situation where they need this kind of assistance? We want to see a reduction in need, not an increase in charity.' Can this be the road to *peace*?

Would I be forgiven for adding that there is a growing gap between those fortunate enough to have regular paid work and those with little prospect? The statistics are all too familiar: 2 million Australians, including 600 000 (officially) unemployed people and 1.5 million pensioners, are today worse off than they were before Hawke came to office. Studies, reports and investigations are scandalously repetitious. The situation does not change. With Fraser or with Hawke, it is not improving: unemployment 'stable' at 8-9%, 25% for the under 24, 50% if one is black and lives in Western Australia. The average period of unemployment is now over ten months. Over 300 000 people have been unemployed for more than six months; 220 000 have been jobless for at least nine months. Men between 45 and 54 spend an average 18 months out of work. For many of these people, the chance of finding work is fading.

A Rainbow Alliance could mobilise the red of their anger, before they yield to the seduction of the red-necks.

To all these people, would it have been, to use the words of the Messiah of platitudes at the Sydney Opera House last November 'a grab bag of unachievable electoral promises' to commit a conservative government to:

- an equitable reform of the taxation system instead of cosmetic exercises which rob Simon to pay Saul;
- a further expansion of employment opportunities;
- housing for low income people;
- an increase in pensions and benefits; and
- an overall meliorist policy which — as Curtin said — 'stands for humanity as against material gain', an instrument of change in the interest of decency and human dignity?

What is so unacceptably 'radical' in this basic program that it would not appeal to a large constituency? Why should this instead be concerned with the intellectually enfeebling exercise of 'wooing the conservative centre'? Women, who must manage amidst incredible difficulties and keep the family together among these abominations, who still receive two-thirds' pay for equal work, who are the largest class of the most abused victims, should contribute the purple of their rebellion.

Or are we all to be asked: 'where is the money coming from?'

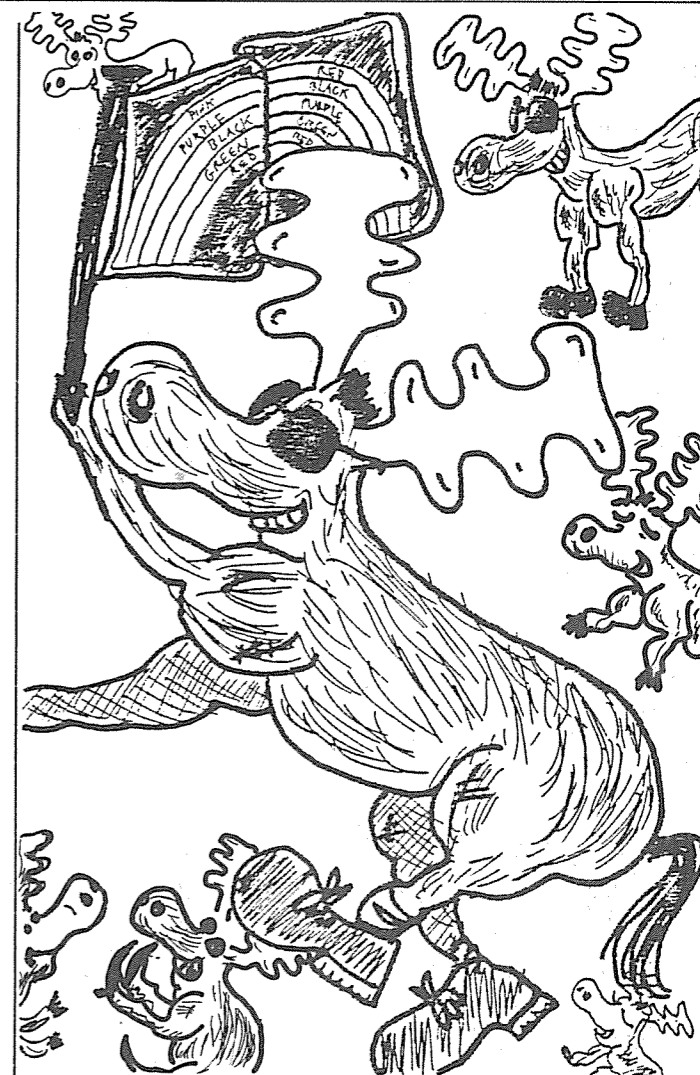
Well, let me rejoin: where did \$50 million come from to buy the yellowcake Queensland Mines cannot — at least now — sell to France?

Prosperity, I am told, will come from peddling uranium, a decision reached apparently on the spur of such moral vacuity as suggests that 'if you do not play the game, you cannot make the rules', for the intellectual profanity that the best way of contributing to non-proliferation is that of opening up the largest uranium mine in the world, and on the rationalisation that if we do not sell uranium others will.

Nuclear ships and nuclear weapon-armed ships which may enter or land in our ports are the premium we must pay for the insurance we seek from a great and powerful friend. If this is not the language of shopkeepers, what is?

Once again, you cannot trust the Russians. The bases — we are told — are part of a world system of detection and deterrence. If this is not the language of courtiers, what is?

There are some noises of whipped-up dissent. A fallen Liberal and former Minister for the Navy between 1960 and 1969, who presided over the effort to bring to the negotiation table the black-pyjama-clad-commo-bastards in Vietnam, by authorising



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the bombing of that land from the sea, has recently come out against those bases.

There has been some yapping by the drover's dog as to the ease with which the bases may be closed, almost overnight. Such re-assurance is no more credible than what the Foreign Minister said in Geneva and at the United Nations. It carries no more credit than the denial of our deep entanglement in Reagan's Star Wars. The electromagnetic railgun which is being developed at Maribyrnong Laboratories directly contributes to the proposed American ballistic missile defence system. And there are other indications of our complicity: a new satellite system code named 'Teal Ruby' to be tested in 1986, laser research, the Australian-designed Jindalee over-the-horizon radar, collection of infrared data of Soviet missile launches from Nurrungar — which is one of the many foreign bases Australia hosts and over which it claims, with decreasing credibility, to have 'joint control'. A Rainbow Alliance could put an end to that.

A Rainbow Alliance need not write a long platform of undeliverable promises, but it may detail — with a simplicity which be the mark of earnestness — a program for an Australia free of fear, prejudice, poverty, secrecy, a colonial mentality of obeisance to big world powers which breeds the spirit of the pimp, the attitude of the enforcer and the ugliness of the local bully — as were recently revealed against Aotearoa (New Zealand).

We will not, indeed should not, present a glossy polish and the slick conmanship of the 'packagers' we have not got. Thank heaven! We ought not to try and become the better local



anachronism, mesmerised by inherited privilege — that too many Australians experience vicariously, as they become distracted from their real interests, oblivious to social injustices, conditioned by Victorian values and other horrors that this monarchical, enfeebling bondage carries. In the end we all pay for it.

The monarchy exerts upon our national life a profoundly corrupting influence. Daily print, radio and box treat even the royals' natural functions of life, especially the business of breeding, as well-nigh miraculous. Even in relating the most banal non-events newsreaders use tones of hushed awe and ceremonious 'respect'. Most Australian politicians — including the present prime minister — have raised sycophancy to the level of a sporting effort.

A populace like Australians, not particularly well-known for a demonstrative nature anyway, is offered day after day, month after month, and year after year this drivel about the royals which satisfies the irrational appetites of the community. Careful administration and acceptance of that drivel feeds off a caste-ridden, horse-riding, philistine nation — throttled by the school tie, full of excrement, living off increment — and makes up this outpost of an empire which is as dead as a dodo.

The question of Australia becoming a republic is not — as an up-start like Mr Hawke would want us to believe — of no value to us. Nor is becoming a republic an end in itself. Even when we become a republic there will be a massive work to do, for we will need to purge ourselves of the archaic influences which still degrade our character, which deform our society and which retard our progress. Only shallow men — and women — such as we have at present both in government and in opposition may assert that Australia becoming a republic will make no difference. When that happens we will be able to substitute rational judgement for ritual, incantation, fantasy, ignorance and fear.

The republic, because of the fundamental equality at birth of its citizens, is the expression of rational judgement. The monarchy is at the pinnacle of that pyramid of power without authority, government without accountability, which makes of this country no more than a client-state, almost fully integrated in the international division of labour and capital which is not of our making, a forward-post for alien interests, the quarry of ill-gotten fortunes and economic privilege, a sub-tropical constitutional dependence of no greater value than a modern satrapy. Nothing could be more greatly misnamed than accusing Mr Hawke of maintaining a presidential posture. He is more the holder of a provincial governorship on behalf of foreign power — a commission agent for foreign capital.

Amidst the occasional embarrassment in speaking of socialism, Hawke's program is simply this: to maintain unchanged the structure of ownership and power. The 'new' formula is to take from each according to her/his consumption and to give to each according to political clout. 'Labor' has painfully become the alternative of the old regime, it has trivialised even the purpose of elections. As such it may carry the heavy responsibility of opening the door to a Reagan and Thatcher-like government, that is, a government right of Mr Howard!

These are not revolutionary ideas, they are not new, they are not demanding a 'leap in the dark'. Dr H C Coombs, an eminent Australian, the embodiment of reason, advocated basic reforms in November 1984 in his John Curtin Memorial Address at the Australian National University. He said: 'The political vacuum created on the Left will be filled, perhaps for a while by a single issue or splinter parties but before long by a more radical party outside the Labor Party.'

The Rainbow Alliance could become that party; it could inherit the tradition of the Australian Labour Movement, which in the words of Curtin — 'has no concern with big business and ... stands for humanity as against material gains and has more resilience, more decency and dignity and the best of human qualities than any other political movement.'

managers of foreign power and privilege on which the present system of government rests. So why should not this Rainbow Alliance be for an Australian Republic?

It is patently absurd that at the heart of what is called a democracy in this country there be a distant, foreign, hereditary institution the most crucial activities of which are secret and unaccountable, and which regards change as something to be embraced only in the last resort. All sorts of rationalisations are urged on behalf of the monarchy — such as it being the surest social cement in a pluralistic society, the personification of authority in 'The Crown', the symbol of the Commonwealth unity. This is outdated colonial rubbish. Should Australia really care about being a pluralistic society and *becoming* a multicultural society, then one of the means is the recognition of the moral equality of its citizens and another is a system of proportional representation which acknowledges the existence of many voices and prides itself about unity in diversity. No person who can read, write and reason in English as well as in another language should accept less than that. What is offered instead is cheap electioneering pap dished out by racketeers of the 'ethnic affairs' industry. No child of the European Resistance is prepared to surrender to the confusion between social indifference and toleration and to mistake election rituals for democratic participation.

If for one see this country as emotionally dependent upon a spent power, tied to its societal money system, alienated from the people of Asia to which we belong, befogged by superstitions and ignorance, paralysed by distant symbols of a resounding

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# Towards a nonviolent revolution

By John Englart

The peace movement and the ecology movement are facing a crisis. A crisis of organisation and of strategy for eliminating the violence of nation states, corporations, and the violence in social relationships. A crisis of means and ends. The harmony of means and ends is essential to achieve a cooperative and caring society based on ecological principles. Our methods of action are as important as the goals we seek.

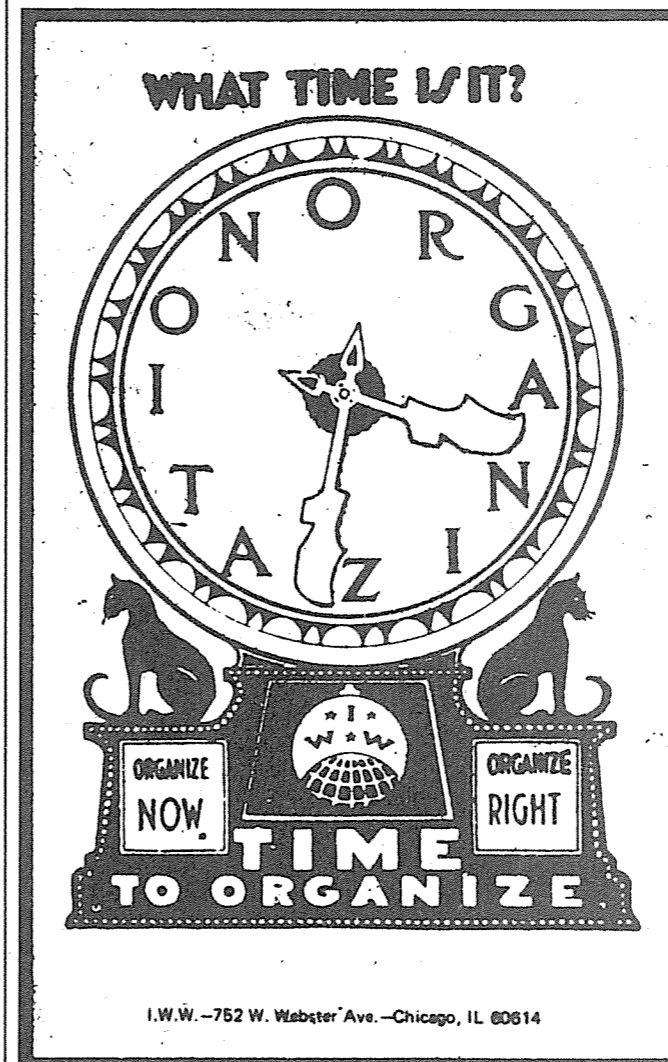
Over the last year in Australia we have seen the growth of the Greens, and the more spectacular formation and growth of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP). A call has also been made for a 'red and green coalition'. All of these have in common an attempt to organise people in the peace and ecology movements into a political party to achieve some measure of reform and change.

The Labor Party also aims at a limited amount of reform, as long as there are votes in reform. Principles have been sacrificed to achieve power or stay in power. Where a well-planned grassroots campaign, like preserving the Tasmanian wilderness, is perceived as vote getting, the ALP will support it. Where a campaign is seen as vote losing, like uranium mining or the Daintree rainforests, it will refuse to take action. The example of the ALP is important to consider because its roots were in a popular movement — the labour movement. Do we want to follow the same parliamentary path as the ALP and end up continually pursuing power at the expense of principles?

My contention is that the political party style of organisation results in the continuation of the problems we face. We need to look at how political parties help maintain the pattern of domination of human by human, and human of nature. We need to look at the value system underlying domination and hierarchy. And we need to adopt methods of organisation in keeping with our goals — to decentralise power and decision making, and to empower individuals to think and act for social change.

The alternative to party organisation is the small group, sometimes called affinity group or collective. It is in the small group where our values and socially conditioned aggressive, domineering, submissive or competitive behaviour can be

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Industrial Workers of the World ('Wobblies') poster.

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challenged. Individuals can feel a sense of their own power to achieve changes in themselves and society. Through building networks of collectives, affinity groups and individuals we can achieve a grassroots culture of resistance based on initiative, cooperation and solidarity. We can nurture non-exploitative lifestyles, undermining domination, the basis of hierarchical society.

### Social conditioning and domination

Our society is based on some people having more decision-making power than other people. The organisation of society reflects this, from corporations, parliaments and bureaucracies, to many volunteer and 'alternative' organisations. In the green and peace movements this method of organisation can often be found. Hierarchies, both formal and informal, are everywhere. With them we see the patterns of domination and competition and a general disregard for life.

This value system has been consistently instilled in each of us from birth, through social conditioning by our parents, sexual repression, our indoctrination in school, and our experiences at work or play. None of us are immune to it because of its predominance in every institution of society.

It is this value system which allows the elite at the top of hierarchies to manipulate the people below them. In this way governments use nationalism and patriotism to prepare for war and to fight wars. The violence inherent in war can be seen as a patriarchal drive to power — of man extending control, of man striving to prove himself above nature, animals, other races and womin. It is a perception of the world as being divided into opposites — one inferior, the other superior. The act of one nation forcing itself on another nation is an act of rape.

In the domination of womin by men, a constant war is waged on womin by the threat and practice of sexual abuse and rape. Womin are portrayed as inferior to men, as objects to be owned and exploited. The institution of marriage has enforced a system of ownership and control of womin's bodies. Control exercised through a male monopoly on medicine and fertility control. The nuclear family which results is an ideal production and consumption unit for a capitalist and patriarchal society. It is in the nuclear family that basic conditioning of children to the dualistic value system of domination and submission takes place.

Womin are allowed to advance in patriarchal society only if they adopt the hierarchical male values of the society. In this way some womin are able to achieve positions of power, through emulating masculine behaviour and adopting a dualistic hierarchical thinking. However, this is only viable for a small minority. The vast majority of womin remain trapped in traditional female roles of caring and nurturance, tending the human wreckage of hierarchy and competition. Their role in patriarchal society is crucial, for if women did not revive their husbands, sons and lovers to take their places in the hierarchy, society would degenerate into unregulated social violence.

The war against nature begins in the domination of human by human. The rape and domination of nature commenced with the suppression of communal and tribal land rights. The holistic spiritual coexistence between humanity and nature was supplanted by individual land ownership and exploitation of nature.

Nature, the earth, had become inferior — a thing to be owned, exploited raped — and assigned the role of womin — Mother Earth. Instead of a sharing, nurturing and cooperation between humanity and nature, we now have relationship of greed, exploitation through mass agriculture, factory farming and production, and a general alienation and separation from nature. Instead of a true spiritualism arising from our relationship with nature, we have adopted patriarchal gods made in man's image.

As Murray Bookchin has described in his book, *Towards an Ecological Society*:

Ecology in my view, has always meant social ecology: the conviction that the very concept of dominating nature stems from the domination of human by human, indeed, of women by men, of the young by their elders, of one ethnic group by another, of society by the state, of the individual by bureaucracy, as well as of one economic class by another or a colonised people by a colonial power. To my thinking social ecology has to begin its quest for freedom not only in the factory but also in the family, not only in the economy but also in the psyche, not only in the material conditions of life but also in the spiritual ones. Without changing the most molecular relationships in society — notably, those between men and women, adults and children, whites and other ethnic groups, heterosexuals and gays (the list, in fact, is considerable) — society will be riddled by domination even in a socialistic 'classless' and 'non-exploitative' form. It would be infused by hierarchy even as it celebrated the dubious virtues of 'people's democracies', 'socialism', and the 'public ownership' of 'natural resources'. And as long as hierarchy persists, as long as domination organises humanity around a system of elites, the project of dominating nature will continue to exist and inevitably lead our planet to ecological extinction.

### Political parties

The problem with organising political parties to achieve the goal of an ecological society is that, by their inherent structure and endorsement of parliament, they perpetuate hierarchies and domination. By its nature, the electoral process is biased against social change. Representative democracy, whether socialist or capitalist, is used to disguise the sources of power. It is provided so that people will be generally content with their submission and obedience to elites as long as the excesses of injustice and exploitation are seen to be controlled. Direct participation in electoral politics acts as endorsement of parliament as a mechanism for social control.

The sources of power do not only belong to the state, but also to the mass media (who manipulate public opinion), local and transnational corporations, bureaucracies, and the underlying value system. The basis of the power of all elites is the power we give them: our obedience and submission to authority. When people refuse to obey the directions or commands of an elite, despite threats or use of repressive sanctions, we challenge the power of the elite. In the conscious act of disobedience to authority, we are making a choice of empowering ourselves.

The form of political organisation needed to participate in the parliamentary process will most likely be a hierarchy. Electoral campaigning means leaders and candidates are selected to represent their followers. Questions such as: who decides policies? how will decision-making occur? what structures are used? who is selected as candidates? all have to be answered. To be electorally effective it needs thousands of members. Because of the size of the organisation and its attempt to use a system based on hierarchical values, there will be pressure to adopt many of those values in the structure of the party. There will emerge leaders and followers, some people will have more influence in decisions than others, and a tyranny of the minority if majority rule decision-making is used. These contribute to alienation and feelings of powerlessness by members and supporters. Running election campaigns will drain money, time and energy from organising grassroots campaigns directly on issues to trying to win more votes.

When candidates are successfully elected, there are constant pressures to compromise principles for the sake of limited reforms, for the elected representatives to have more power than other members in the party, and for a cult of expertise to develop. These attributes have all been exhibited in the German Greens. A growing split is occurring in the German Greens over whether to enter a coalition with the Social Democratic Party, and achieve limited reforms through government. Petra Kelly, a founding member of the Greens, argued strongly against coalitions, saying:

Without ministers, without coalitions, we are capable of politics, because we have a different claim to power than the Social Democrats. We have to make this state system of repression superfluous and not start to repair it. What happens when the Greens start talking about the acceptable limits of dioxin?



ANNIE KNITTING AND PICKETT

The German Greens have also had parliamentary representatives disobeying Green policy and refusing to hand over their positions in parliament to new people.

Even when radical reforms can be initiated through parliament, they will be sterile without the support of an active grassroots movement. It is more likely such radical social changes will be more actively defended if they are initiated by a grassroots activist movement. Parliament then becomes just a very expensive and superfluous rubber stamp for social change.

### The Nuclear Disarmament Party

The problems and the split in the NDP can be traced to its formation. The first mistake was in not adequately working out a structure and decision-making mechanism for the organisation. Because all the effort was put into running a successful election campaign, the necessity for establishing firm structures was left till after the election. This only resulted in deferring arguments over structure, and making the crisis and the split in the organisation more bitter and profound.

The second mistake, arising from the unresolved question of structure, was the presence from the start of an informal elite and hierarchy in the organisation. Concurrent with this, Barrie Griffiths (in *Green Alliance Newsletter* no 10, November 1984) alleges:

[T]hose who formed the NDP did so without even consulting with those key people in the organisations and networks which constitute their primary support. Had it been their intention to do so, there would have been no better way to ensure a relatively feeble anti-nuclear/green presence in this election.

The absence of anti-hierarchical structures, the existence of an informal elite and its mass media appeal, made the NDP a target for other groups. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) operated as an organised faction within the NDP and probably contributed substantially to the NDP election campaign. Their reasons for working within the NDP were probably to recruit new members to their own party, and to exert influence through a well-organised faction if the NDP were successful. The SWP has a long history of entering other organisations to achieve its own ends. On the other hand, the NDP was open to manipulation because of its structure (or lack of).

### The Greens and PANDA

Both the Greens and Peace And Nuclear Disarmament Action (PANDA) face the same dangers in organisation as the NDP: of formal or informal elites present or developing in the

organisation; and an organisational structure which is hierarchical or encourages hierarchical values. Neither organisation actively pursues the issue of decentralisation of power and decision making as fundamental in their organisational structure. This could be largely due to elites in these organisations acting to protect their own power and interests. Eulogies and policy statements on grassroots democracy and activism may sound very nice, but mean nothing if those policies are not implemented within the organisation.

With the split in the NDP, Western Australian Senator Jo Valentine has become an independent member of parliament. Although PANDA will work as her supporting organisation, she is not formally accountable to them for decisions she will have to make. Similarly, when the Greens in Sydney ran an independent candidate in the federal election, they were operating only as a support group. There was no formal accountability by the candidate to any individual or organisation. The grave danger is that the people we elect to power are not responsible or accountable to us for the decisions they make.

Neither the NDP, the Greens or PANDA have considered that the participation in parliamentary elections acts to endorse the state as the legitimate mechanism for achieving social change.

### The small group as a method of organisation

Electoral politics and mass organisations have a strong tendency to be ineffective in empowering individuals for social change. In fact, further alienation of people from their own power is more likely to occur. What we need are forms of organisation to challenge all forms of violence, domination and exploitation in society. We must challenge this violence on an individual and social level. To solve the questions of domination, submission and obedience on a personal level, an everyday level, results in attacking the basic problems and sensibility of hierarchical society. To not work on the personal level means that any changes brought about are only reforms to the system, while the patterns of domination remain the same. Success at the broad political level would only be temporary, for the old structures (or even worse ones) will grow back from their basic social and interpersonal roots.

Basic insights to the problem of domination has come through various traditions. The anarchist movement has inspired the need to eliminate hierarchies through organising in small groups and federations of groups. Much of the recent insight has come from the feminist and ecology movements. The feminist movement

awakened a wider audience to the use of small groups for studying the personal aspects of power relationships, and pioneered in recent times consciousness raising and the collective form of organisation. Similarly, the pacifist nonviolence tradition has contributed much in the way of using consensus as a decision-making method, the use of nonviolent conflict resolution, and the dynamics of violence/nonviolence. The ecology movement has put forward an analysis based upon the human domination of nature and our alienation from nature. All of these traditions — anarchist, feminist, pacifist, ecological — have contributed to the use of the small group or collective in effecting radical social change.

It is in the small group where people gain support from each other in their attempts to act differently; and to break with social roles assigned to them. The small group can create free space where individuals can question submission and obedience to authority, sex role conditioning and power relationships. It provides an opportunity for individuals to analyse power and domination from shared experiences, and to develop new skills, new behaviour, new non-hierarchical and non-exploitative lifestyles.

There are still dangers in the operation of a small group. If personal politics and power relationships are not acknowledged and confronted, the small group will become a tyranny of structurelessness. Informal hierarchies do occur in small groups, and power relationships exist when there are two or more people.

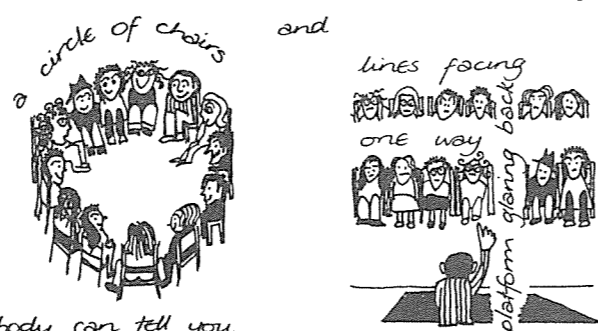
A basic aim of a small group should be to study the power relationships and formulate mechanisms attempting to regulate power. These structures could include: rotation of all tasks and skills like meeting facilitation and minutes keeping; speaking in a certain order; spaces to allow emotions and feelings to be expressed; and spaces to allow criticism and affirmation of individuals and the group.

A further useful mechanism is consensus decision-making. This process of decision-making encourages the participation of all in formulating decisions. This builds group cohesion and trust. It also makes for better quality decisions. Group members learn to practise values and learn skills which foster better relationships on both interpersonal and community levels. Consensus demands that members of the group be more caring, responsible and fair with each other.

And most important, the small group empowers individuals to change themselves, overcoming their own fears and powerlessness, and to act for social change in the community. As individuals, we are isolated and powerless to change society. As a part of many networks and federations of small groups and individuals working together, we can be effective. The range of activities a small group may engage in are endless. Some may choose an educational project, such as publishing a newspaper, running a bookshop or resource centre, or running workshops on particular issues or skills. Others may be more action oriented; organising marches, vigils or direct actions. Still others may be for building alternatives to hierarchical values: agricultural communes and health food co-ops and shops; appropriate technology cooperatives; and housing collectives. Some groups may be purely consciousness-raising groups. The importance of all these tasks is that they form part of a counterculture to the predominant hierarchical values based on domination and exploitation.

Occasionally, there will be the need for small groups to work together on some project or action. Coordinating structures will be necessary. Reaching consensus among all the small groups or individuals participating may be more difficult, but is still realisable and desirable. In such situations the autonomy of the small group must be respected. If it is not, the coordinating structure will become an elitist central control, another hierarchy imposing its will on people.

you only have to look to see the difference between



nobody can tell you only you can look to see for yourself

### Political parties versus the small group

The differences in political parties and small group organisation are many, and the results of their actions differ markedly. Political parties are seen as a shortcut to radical social change, but in fact they tend to adopt and maintain the hierarchical values which are the basis for the threat of nuclear war and ecological destruction.

Our movement must be grassroots to challenge the inherent violence of the state. It must be prepared to educate and act, to take nonviolent direct action to counter the violence of patriarchy and capitalism. And it must be a truly international movement to counter the power rivalry of nation states and transnational corporations. To think globally and act locally is a worthwhile maxim. While developing inter-regional networks, we must pursue social change on a local level. Social change based on personal experiences and our everyday lives. To develop new values which involve responsibility and initiative, caring lifestyles which are ecological and non-exploitative. Only in attempting to free ourselves of all domination, can we eliminate the danger of all war and ecological disaster.

Many of the ideas for this article come from the anarchist or libertarian tradition. Much of the recent experimentation with forms of organisation and structures has come from the feminist, pacifist and ecological movements of the late 1960s to the present. I choose to label these ideas as ecological anarchism or green anarchism, but these are only my labels to identify ideas and a method of organisation. Much of the recent experimentation with small group structures and consciousness-raising has been re-entering and enlivening the anarchist tradition.

It is perhaps significant that the centenary of anarchist organisation in Australia, will be celebrated in Melbourne in May 1986. The anarchist movement in Australia has had its history and ideas consistently suppressed and violently distorted. This centenary celebration should help to cast a new light on the influence of anarchism in Australia's radical past, and at the same time provide valuable insights into the future of anarchist ideas and their impact on social change in the future.

The following books and pamphlets I found useful and inspiring while preparing this article:

- Murray Bookchin, *Towards an Ecological Society*, Blackrose Books, Toronto, Canada, 1980.
- Howard Clarke, *Making Nonviolent Revolution*, (pamphlet), Peace News & Mushroom, Nottingham, UK, 1981.
- Penny Strange, *It'll Make a Man of You . . . A Feminist View of the Arms Race* (Pamphlet), Peace News & Mushroom, Nottingham, UK, 1983.
- Gene Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action* (3 volumes), Porter Sargent, USA, 1973.
- Gaston Level, *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*, Freedom Press, London, 1975.
- *Manual for a Living Revolution, Building United Judgement*, and other titles from New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, USA.
- Handbooks for Franklin River and Roxby Downs blockades.

ANNIE/KNITTING AND PICKETING

## REVIEWS

### Films

**Rocking the Foundations: A history of the New South Wales Builders Laborers Federation 1940-74**, produced and directed by Pat Fiske, black and white, 16 mm and video, 92 minutes. Available from Sydney Filmmakers Co-op. Tel: (02) 660 8999

Reviewed by Joe Wachter

*Rocking the Foundations* is an invigorating documentary of the rise of the New South Wales branch of the Builders Laborers Federation (BLF) as a powerful political and social force, culminating in the 'green bans' of the early 1970s and the subsequent dismantling of the branch by Norm Gallagher and the federal branch of the union.

Jack Munday, BLF secretary in New South Wales from 1968 to 1973, said of the green bans:

... probably for the first time in the world, a union, in the manner in which the Builders Laborers did in New South Wales, set about to not only concern itself with economic issues, but intervened directly on social issues. . . . the linking up of the resident action groups, progressive architects, engineers and other citizens with the Builders Laborers to in fact hold up work [allowed] ordinary citizens a say in the planning process . . .

The New South Wales branch responsible for the green bans emerged out of rank-and-file dissatisfaction with union officials in the forties and fifties. The BLF leadership of that time was unsympathetic to workers' concerns and was characterised by corruption and violence. A Rank and File Committee was formed to oppose the leadership, and gained the support and confidence of workers, eventually winning union elections in 1961.

The new BLF officials set about re-organising the union with particular emphasis on making it democratic. This included instituting a policy of limited tenure for officials, encouraging close liaison between officials and membership, and giving workers the power to negotiate conditions on site. They initiated campaigns



Women Builders Laborers during International Women's Day march, 1973.

for better wages, accident pay and permanency — builders laborers were only employed on a casual basis — and they encouraged women into the building industry. *Rocking the Foundations* shows the appalling working conditions of builders laborers in the forties and fifties and the resulting 'Civilising the Industry' campaign by the BLF.

In June 1971 the BLF and the Federated Engine Drivers and Fireman's Association placed a black ban — later called a green ban — on the clearing of Kelly's Bush, the only remaining bushland on the Parramatta River. This action, taken at the request of the residents of Hunters Hill, was the first of this kind by the New South Wales BLF to protect Sydney's natural, historic and human environment.

Green bans were imposed on low income residential areas including the Rocks, Woolloomooloo and houses occupied by Aboriginal people in Redfern. These areas were under threat from developers and proposals for 550 km of inner city expressways. By November 1973 there were over 40 green bans in place holding up over \$3000 million worth of building

investment. The BLF was also active in the Vietnam Moratorium movement, the Aboriginal land rights struggle and other social issues of the day.

Predictably, vested interests moved quickly to quash the New South Wales branch. In 1972 moves were made to deregister the union federally, which succeeded in June 1974. In October 1974, Norm Gallagher, the federal secretary, with other federal officials, moved into New South Wales and set up an opposition branch. New South Wales branch officials were often not allowed onto work sites, although federal officials had free access. Workers were often refused jobs or their pay packets if they did not join the federal branch.

In March 1975 the New South Wales branch recommended that its members join the federal branch and carry on the fight within the union. Immediately, New South Wales branch officials, many militants and most women were banned from the union. The campaign for permanency was dropped, and most green bans were lifted. However, changing attitudes of government and the community

ROCKING THE FOUNDATIONS



## REVIEWS

(for which the BLF can claim some credit) and declining economic conditions meant that most of the areas protected by the green bans were saved.

*Rocking the Foundations* is comprised of interesting archival footage to illustrate the colourful history of the New South Wales BLF. Even though the film runs for 90 minutes it never drags; it races from early construction sites to demonstrations to public meetings to violent confrontations at evictions by Kings Cross thugs backed by police. There are many humorous commentaries by builders laborers, former BLF officials, residents and activists.

The film was produced and directed by Pat Fiske, a member of the BLF in the green ban years. The film has been in the pipeline since that time but has taken the back seat to many films she was involved in the late seventies. This included the documentary *Woolloomooloo* which Pat made with Denise White and which was a finalist in the 1979 American Film Festival. Pat also narrates the film, and she described her involvement in the BLF:

Like thousands of others, I got involved with this union. In one way or another, we were swept up in what became a powerful social movement when the Builders Laborers put the environment ... and people ... ahead of their own jobs.

*Rocking the Foundations* is an enjoyable and inspiring film which gives an insight into the idealistic and radical early seventies. I came away feeling that in some ways we have not progressed and many even have gone backwards since then. In the film it appeared there was a broad coalition of groups fighting to maintain a liveable environment in Sydney and fighting for other social justice issues. The peace movement appears to be the only area where this coalition exists today.

The film is particularly relevant to Sydney in present times, when some of the schemes that the BLF helped to stop have resurfaced but in less grandiose forms. The only way these schemes will be halted is if they are opposed by coalitions similar to those which existed in the green bans period, especially since the government has become more adept and sophisticated in quelling opposition, as shown in its manoeuvrings to build the Eastern Distributor (see Jan Ardill's article, this edition).

*Joe Wacher is a fulltime worker with Friends of the Earth (Sydney).*

## Books

**Seeing Green: The politics of ecology explained** by Jonathon Porritt, Basil Blackwell, London, 1984, 249 pages, \$9.95 (softcover).

Reviewed by Phil Shannon

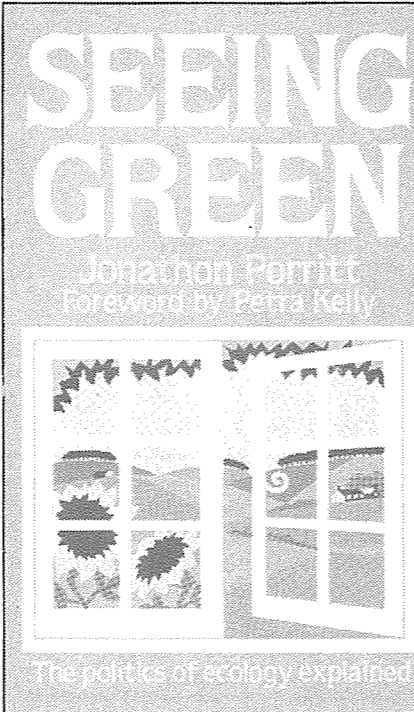
Jonathon Porritt, in *Seeing Green*, notes with satisfaction the 'teeming greenery' of the many groups intervening on behalf of the environment as industrialism threatens to plunge the Earth 'down the plughole of a blighted biosphere'. Porritt, a spokesperson of the Ecology Party and Director of Friends of the Earth in England, believes that the ecological movement (with a formal membership of three million in the UK alone) is no longer a bunch of 'woolly hatted, woolly minded lentil-stirrers'. It is now a political force which, if organised through a specifically green party, can create a revolution in harmonising people and the planet.

Porritt trenchantly reiterates the ecological dangers we face, particularly the crisis proportions they have reached in Britain and the rest of Northern Europe. The gloomy picture convinces him that managing the symptoms of the crisis through 'mere reforms in conservation and pollution control' is not enough. Rather than trying 'to make an unworkable system work' environmentalists should be tackling the cause of the crisis as well, namely industrial-based economic growth.

This is to be done by exercising political power through a green party active on the streets and in parliament. Whilst Britain's electoral system makes any hopes of green members of parliament in Westminster appear demented, the Ecology Party, feels Porritt, does have realistic prospects at local government level for influencing energy-conserving, ecologically sound policies through appropriate financial grants and incentives, research and development funding, and the design and monitoring of legally enforceable standards.

It is not, however, just a rigged voting system that prevents the Ecology Party representing the many people concerned about the environment. Porritt's tone of annoyance with the established political bodies and parties (to which people have traditional and deep-rooted attachments) becomes at times intolerant and dismissive. He offers abuse instead of friendly but principled criticism.

On the one hand, whilst he may lose few friends, he could undercut green unity by his attacks on what he sees as the lunatic eco-fringe. He raises his voice against the 'humbug' of the anti-parliamentary green



fundamentalists, and against the eco-anarchists 'carping on about the inherent evils of party politics', and against the anti-election 'activists' who 'sit around analysing the green fluff in their navals'.

On the other (left) hand, he starts yelling with sweeping denunciations against 'the Left' (=the Labour Party), 'Communism' (=Russia) and 'socialism' (=anti-human, anti-nature marxist materialism). Ecologically he has no time for Reds, or the pale pinks or the gingerly green members of the labour parties or the unions. Whilst much of their track record does provide ample justification for his attitude, his frustration leads him to misrepresent the labour left and is, unfortunately, likely to alienate the environment's potential and necessary allies in the labour movement. Against Porritt's assertions, the democratic left (certainly in Australia) has become much greener. Communist China, as even Porritt notes, doesn't 'turn up its nose' at human sewerage as a source of energy and fertiliser. Porritt's Marx is made of straw — for his time, Marx, whilst no lentil-stirrer, was radically advanced in his awareness of ecological issues.

Nevertheless, if you can stand the denunciatory noise, *Seeing Green* is an educative and entertaining book. Free of any terminal academicism or malignant jargon, it is written with humour and an idealism for peace and ecological harmony that doesn't shirk the need for the environment movement to grapple with questions of power and politics.

*Phil Shannon is a member of the Communist Party of Australia and a public servant in Canberra.*

**Greenham Common: Women at the Wire**, edited by Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, The Women's Press, London, 1984, 171 pages, \$10.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Sue Armstrong.

The women's peace camp at Greenham Common, now four years old, has inspired worldwide actions for peace. Yet Greenham women had to struggle with men supposedly supporting a women's initiative to be allowed to have a women only camp. On communicating their desire to these 'supportive' men that they wanted the camp to be women only the women met with the following response:

The men went completely mad. Their worst elements came out. There was one bloke staying here for a couple of days who had come specifically to give us a workshop on self-control. Well he couldn't take it — he bashed into this cauldron of boiling water almost spilling it all over one of the women, and then he just stormed off. Someone else was going wild saying, 'I built this structure', and picked up an axe and started to chop down the tarpaulin.

*Women at the Wire* documents the history of the camp, weaving the fabric of the book from fifty individual accounts from women involved, with commentary from the editors. From this infinitely readable personal account of the camp the validity of making the camp women only is clearly seen. One contributor argues that as there is so little space in this male-dominated world where women can find their political voice, strength and confidence, that it is a necessity to have some male-free environment. Another poses the question: with so many avenues to oppose the nuclear industry why do men have to work at Greenham?

One story, which perhaps provides the answer, speaks of the chronic emotional malnutrition of women, in the way they are constantly used, manipulated and drained of energy by men. It also describes the way in which women have been denied, their needs ignored to the point they cannot state what they want. 'That's oppression, not to know as a woman that you are oppressed...'

'Emotional malnutrition' goes on all the time, in the home, the street, in 'paid' work. This is why the need for the Greenham camp to be for women only is so important; it is a way of taking power, asserting rights and demanding that needs be fulfilled without being crushed by men's dominant need to take everything.

In the struggle for women to have the room to express our full power and truly become a women's peace camp, men did not give up their power. Women took our power.

This book traces the new realms of action and analysis what Greenham has led people to. It provides a plethora of imaginative

ideas for effective, empowering actions which can be undertaken by women. Actions which make strong statements without being 'macho' are discussed, for example, when 200 women entered the base disguised as furry animals to have a picnic.

The effect of jail on women imprisoned for their efforts is examined, with the resultant broadening of thought and analysis of these women's experiences. Details of the inhumane treatment of prisoners are supplied and attention is also drawn to the racial, class and economic injustices for which the imprisoned are victimised.



The accounts of international tours by Greenham women includes examples of their growing opposition to all forms of militaristic oppression. These accounts also detail the women's struggles with tour organisers not to allow themselves to be made into 'experts', 'leaders' or 'mega-stars', as well as their attempts not to allow themselves to be politically manipulated by both Western and Eastern blocs.

Also described is the verbally violent abuse the women are subjected to from those on the other side of the wire. This was a catalyst for the women to redefine 'peace', to include the absence of rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence — the daily threat all women live under.

Whether the women at Greenham have achieved their 'big' political aims is not the subject of this book. That hopefully will be the subject of some future historian's work, in which case the Greenham women will have contributed invaluable to the ultimate aim of avoiding nuclear war.

*Sue Armstrong is a Chain Reaction collective member and is currently completing a thesis on militarism and sexist repression.*

## Diaries

**(Australian) Big Red Diary 1986: Nicaragua! and Latin American Directory**, compiled by Amanda Goodall, Pluto Press, London, 1985, 160 pages, \$7.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Sylvie Rogers

Would it interest you to know that Allende won the presidential election in Chile on 4 September 1970; or that on 18 June 1954 the US government destroyed the Arbenz government in Guatemala? (Could your dad's birthday, dole form lodgement dates or video payment reminders compete with these anniversaries?)

On the other hand, you may prefer photographs and cartoons from Nicaragua each week to remind you of Latin American peoples' struggles. Or maybe all you want a diary with a comprehensive listing of progressive movements, including peace groups, Central American support groups and left bookshops. Whatever you are seeking, this is the diary for you — the pocket-sized *Big Red Diary 1986*.

Although billed as the *Australian Big Red Diary*, only the last one-fifth of the diary — the 'Australian Big Red Directory' — is specifically for local readers. In part, it seems to be drawn from *Chain Reaction's* 1984-85 Activist Contacts listing, published in *Chain Reaction* 28 (July 1984), with additional sections covering radical and feminist bookshops and publications, political parties, and trade union groups; and more comprehensive listings of gay groups, women's liberation organisations and international development aid and solidarity groups.

The diary has lively graphics, a clear and comprehensive introduction to the history of the Nicaraguan revolution, and, best of all, a guide to how you can help save the tiny nation from a US invasion. The alternative in Christmas presents for an interested friend or that uncle in the RSL...

*Sylvie Rogers is a member of the Chain Reaction collective.*



## BACKSTAGE

# Taking the high road

Dear Readers,

How are you all? I've been asked by that perennial group of people whose labour and life energies go into the pages of this magazine — namely the *Chain Reaction* Collective/Cooperative, — to write a few words about one of the flock who has strayed. One Linnell Secomb.

It seems to me she strayed a couple of years ago, in leaving Melbourne for the sunny and life-force strengthening environment of Sydney. But she remained a member of the *Chain Reaction* Collective, even there. But it will be too far in Scotland, so Linnell has resigned.

Linnell's involvement with *Chain Reaction* and Friends of the Earth goes back many years. In 1980 when I first came along to *Chain Reaction* as a volunteer, a uni student with no skills at all, Linnell was the volunteer coordinator of the Earth News section. She was undoubtedly effective at coordination of volunteers as I learnt many skills in editorial, graphic art and general organisation whilst helping on Earth News. As well, she was involved in the Strategy Groups of FOE Collingwood, which was in the days when *Chain Reaction* shared office space with FOE.

As a result of Linnell's lobbying, FOE Collingwood must have been one of the first community/political activist groups to take on an affirmative action employment policy setting the ratio of women employees to men employees as 60:40.

Linnell's involvement in a group called International Development Action at the time was important for *Chain Reaction's* presentation of articles dealing with the problems of nuclear-militarisation and independence in the Pacific Islands. She organised and edited the very well received 'Free the Pacific' supplement in *Chain Reaction* 23 (Autumn 1981). This



Linnell, circa 1983.

brought to light many of the independent struggles in places such as Belau and the Marshall Islands. It was important not only for informing Australians of the need to support the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement but also strengthened links between Australian and Pacific activists.

Readers who feel frustrated at *Chain Reaction's* lack of coverage of an issue which they know to be in need of public airing should take note. Getting material published in magazines like *Chain Reaction* is not such a hard task. It simply requires a phone call or a letter to the editorial collective with follow-up consultation to see if editorial space can be set aside, and if assistance can be given with costs such as phone and postage expenses; and of course they will

give editorial advice. But remember they are busy, so follow-up contact is important.

In Autumn 1982, Linnell joined Mark Carter and Leigh Holloway as an employee editor of *Chain Reaction*. That period was a hectic time to take that job as the Collective was settling in after a move to a new office, as well as broadening the coverage of the magazine.

Some of our longterm readers probably recall the debate in the letters pages over feminist and socialist content in the magazine. A Backstage in *Chain Reaction* 30 (Summer 1982-83) in response to that debate explained that *Chain Reaction* sought to encourage contributions from a diverse range of views as possible. Linnell encouraged many contributions which gave outstanding feminist and socialist input into *Chain Reaction*. The 'Exploding the hydro job myth' article was considered important for the campaign to save the south-west Tasmanian wilderness.

Linnell left to study at Sydney University in 1983. She continued to be involved with *Chain Reaction* peripherally whilst working on the Communist Party magazine *Australian Left Review*.

I'm sure all readers irregardless of political difference will realise the contribution Linnell has made to the development of *Chain Reaction* as an important polemical journal of the environment movement and wish her well overseas.

Linnell, there's a FOE group in Scotland you know.

Bye, Richard Shelton.

## 1985

Phew! *Chain Reaction* got through its eleventh year of publication, despite lack of funding, dwindling bank account and increased pressures on collective members. A busy year, with lots to distract us from the business of getting the magazine out on time. Among the more momentous of these was the birth of Luke in March, to two of the collective, Faye and Keith.

We have received much encouragement from many sources, and we would like to thank the many people who have given helpful comments and praise during the year, as well as those who gave their time and energy in producing *Chain Reaction*. And not to forget our patient printers, beaut bromiders and terrific typesetters.

Best wishes for 1986 to all our readers.

Jonathon Goodfield  
for the Chain Reaction collective.

RUTH FORD

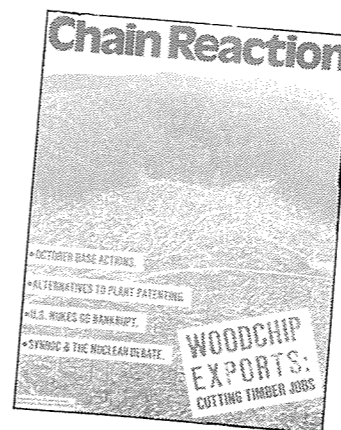
# 1975-1985

## Ten years of chain reacting

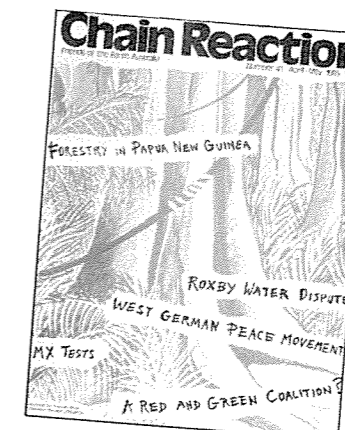


Thirty-six back copies of *Chain Reaction* — all of those published from autumn 1976 (except vol 2 no 3 of which we will supply a reprint of the major stories) — are available as a set for \$53. Add another \$2.50 to include this edition (no 44).

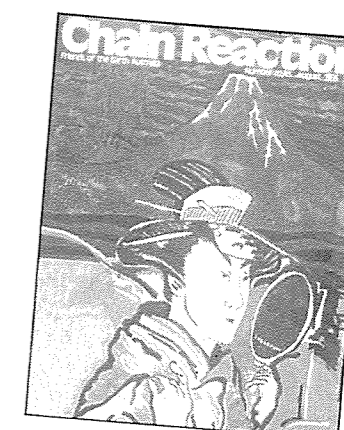
Single copies and class sets of each edition are also available. All post free. Send orders to: Chain Reaction Cooperative Ltd GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic. 3001.



December 1984—January 1985, no 40 — Woodchip exports, bases protests, Montebello tests, jarrah 'rehabilitation', alternatives to plant patenting, US nukes go bankrupt, Synroc. \$2.50.



April—May 1985, no 41 — Forestry in Papua New Guinea, MX missile tests, a red and green coalition?, Roxby water threat, Wimmera water, Maralinga, Bhopal. \$2.50.



August 1985, no 42/43 — NDP split and beyond, a green party?, land rights and the bicentenary, control of minerals in Australia and Canada, forest bureaucracies and the timber industry, Green-peace bombing, Pine Gap, youth peace conference. \$3.50.

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