

# Chain Reaction

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Number 50 Winter 1987

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*Reporting on  
the Environment*

**50 ISSUES** **50**  
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## Chain Reaction

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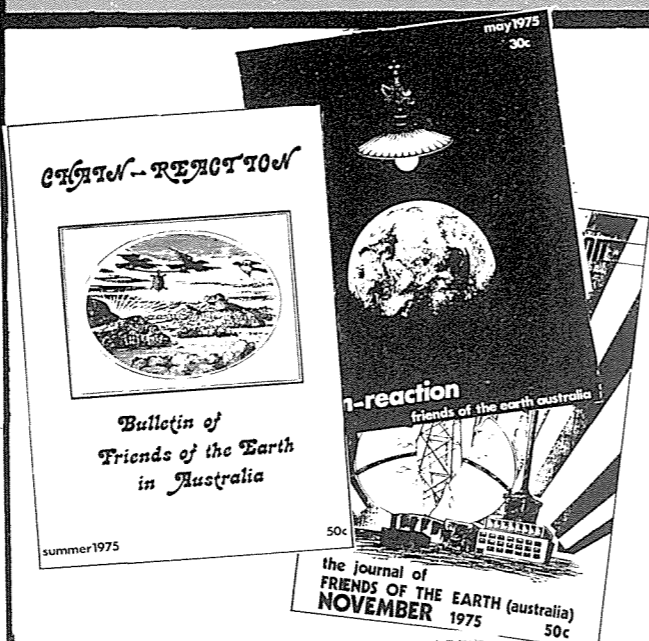
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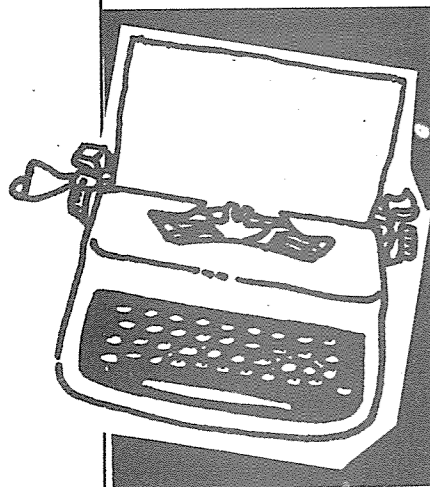
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## BACK COPIES



all 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 \$57. Add another \$2.75 to include this edition.

## Letters



### Another viewpoint

I enjoyed your last issue and hope your publicity campaign gets the support it deserves.

I have a different perspective from Ted Trainer (*CR49*) on the Red and Green philosophies which I would like to share.

My experiences in some peace/environment groups agree with his observation 'activists don't seem to realise that no solutions can be expected before we carry out quite radical social change.' I find these organisations to be hierarchical and disempowering, structured in the patriarchal mould. People, especially women, stay away from them in droves.

However, I would not call them 'green' activists. The Getting Together conference showed that thinking had moved well beyond the

finger-in-the-dyke mentality which typifies the more establishment groups. I quote from *A Green Viewpoint*, the Green Electoral Movement, SA.

Our goal is the creation of an ethical society built not on greed, but on the concern for the very life system that supports us. This society will be sustainable through the recycling of materials and the use of renewable energy and materials. It will be participatory, ensuring the sharing of labour, resources and the decision-making process. Above all this society will be just, guaranteeing that every citizen has the right to pursue their own lifestyles and beliefs, consistent with the rights of others and the environment, without discrimination or denial of opportunity.

'Green activists' recognise that economic activity, controlled either by capitalism or by the state, which has no social/environmental cost/benefit analysis is not appropriate in a post-industrial society. Left activists, as expressed in the Left Charter Group's recent policy statement, also accept this position. These groups represent the vanguard of new political thinking and the gap between that two is closing.

What is now necessary is a synthesis of the Marxist analysis of class oppression and the feminist perspective of power structures which emphasises change through empowerment, non-violence and adopting an appropriate lifestyle.

Ted did not spell out the nature of the 'radical social change' necessary to achieve social justice. The dialogue should be considering the pivotal issue of achieving land reform by peaceful means, from which spring all other survival strategies.

Bren Davies  
Blackwood, SA

### And the Democrats

As a new subscriber to your magazine, and with experience of the trials and tribulations of producing a journal, congratulations on *Chain Reaction*.

I'd like to respond to the articles in the Autumn edition (*CR49*) on the need to bring together the 'green' and 'red' activists by Ted Trainer and 'green' electoral alternatives presented by Roman Orzanski.

The Trainer article makes the point that conservationists seem to disregard the need for radical social change, while socialists are often rabid believers that growth and technological fixes often build a better society.

Growth which depends on non-renewable resources, i.e. the object and operation of our present economy, cannot of course continue — we must have a society that is sustainable if humans are to inhabit the earth indefinitely.

A sustainable society is one in which the economy and social conditions ensure that resources are not to be depleted and justice and the necessities of life are available to all.

A major factor influencing the kind of society we have at present is our monetary system. While it operates well in times of economic growth, we have stagnation and unemployment when growth falters.

A sustainable economy, when growth will be limited, will have to have a very different method of creating and distributing money to that at present.

The importance of the monetary system is not mentioned in Trainer's article.

The article on electoral alternatives for 'greens' shows the various ways

people are grappling with needed electoral reforms in order to achieve a democratic, caring society in which parliamentarians are close to the people.

Solutions to these problems are, I believe, written in the basic concepts of the Australian Democrats.

The need to move to a sustainable society underlies all policies, and the Party structure of providing participatory democracy to members is advocated for all society's organisations and institutions — it is particularly important in the workplace to give workers a say and a share of the cake.

It seems to me a tragedy that the Australian Democrats, with an agenda for radical reform, having obtained a toehold in the Parliament are not supported by like-minded groups.

There is a curious blockage of not wanting to know what the Democrats are on about, and when told, of not believing it!

The opportunity is there for activists to join in with the Democrats, take advantage of the Party structure and help to bring together elements which are needed to achieve the very different society which must evolve if humanity is to survive.

Lois Loftus Hills  
Lower Plenty, 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.

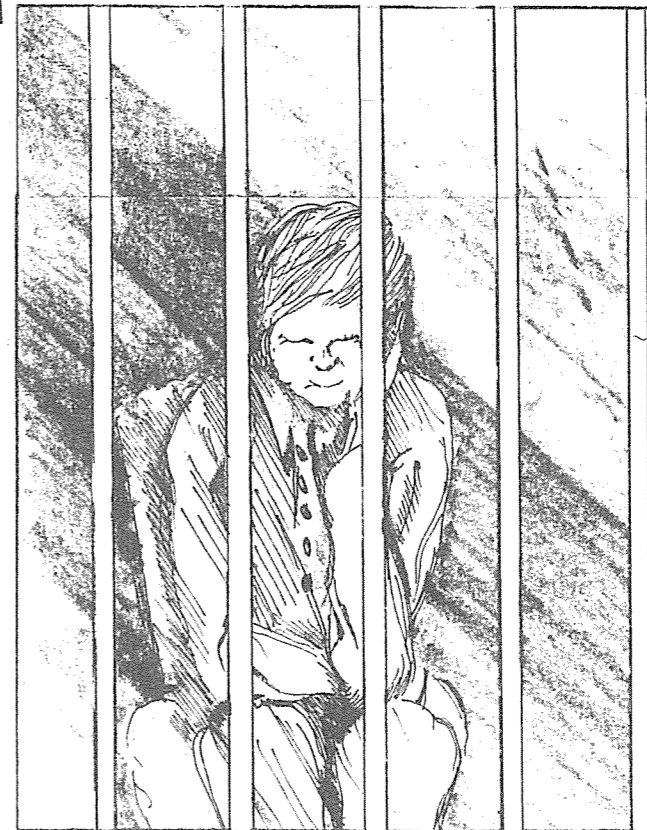
### Mistakes in the Zoo

Thank you for your letter of 8 May, in which you enclosed a copy of Number 49, Autumn edition, 1987 of your publication *Chain Reaction*. The article 'Animal Politics' by John Lark was circulated to members of the Board of the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia. There are a number of errors in the article, some of which were highlighted in your media release to *The Advertiser*, of 23 April, 1987.

The most important errors concern the composition of the RZSSA's Board. There are nine members — five elected by the Society, three appointed by the Governor of SA on the advice of the South Australian Government and one member elected by the permanent staff of the Society (of which Mr Lark was one). The staff representative is there to represent the views of staff and to ensure that information flows from the Board to staff and vice-versa. The government members are drawn respectively from the Departments of Environment and Planning, Treasury and Tourism. The five members elected by the Society include a veterinary surgeon, a senior zoologist and a secondary-school science teacher.

The Board wishes to express its disappointment that your magazine did not do it the courtesy of checking its facts before going into print.

RM Baker  
Director, Royal Adelaide Zoo  
Adelaide, SA



The continuing imprisonment of John Dixon-Jenkins in Victoria is an appalling reflection on the fragmentation, narrowness of focus and political naivette amongst the movements of social change in Australia. Dixon-Jenkins was gaoled for six years in 1984 on charges relating to threats which he staged solely to create an opportunity to present arguments in court which would not only dramatise the issues of the peace movements, but also establish through existing legal principles that actions by workers against existing social order in the cause of disarmament and so on was legally justified — thus establishing a principle of immense future importance to activists throughout the movements. He demonstrably had no intention, and no means, of endangering others, and voluntarily surrendered to police as part of his intended

demonstration.

He was not allowed to present his defence in court, however. Thus his whole effort was smothered by officialdom — which may be an indication of how critically important and effective his actions could have been. He acted individually, without backing of an 'official' peace movement, because he did not want to involve others in risk or discomfort. Perhaps this is why (in the best traditions of the bureaucratic structures of the society we all want to change!) he was ignored and abandoned by the movements. It seems his unorthodox and individual initiative embarrassed these organisations as much as it did the established authorities!

Yet here was, and is, a case through which *all* the movements for social change could demonstrate their solidarity in their will for deep social change, their

## Letters

support of individuals to confront society's status quo peacefully — and at the same time, by forcing a proper hearing for Dixon-Jenkins case, publicise vital arguments for peace and possibly establish a landmark precedent of law which will assist activists in the dark future as the confrontation between the thrust for change and the defence of 'the old order' grows more bitter and dangerous.

A fine, sensitive and intelligent man is being held in gaol for six years, like some 'Man in the Iron Mask', while others who make real threats against the lives of humanity at large bask in public glory, and thugs,

rapists and others are paroled in mere months . . . and the only response from most of those he has suffered for, is to make rationalising excuses for uninvolved, or to 'look the other way', focusing on their own pct hobby-horses.

Dixon-Jenkins' case is not merely a disgusting indictment of the society we live in and the way its legal processes operate to protect existing power, preconceptions and prejudice. It is an indictment of the human mentality itself — for alas, as ever, we will mow our own lawns, pick our own navals, pursue our own cause and whatever principles we may profess, we remain sheep divided in our flock; and the wolves will pick us off as individual victims or in the numbers they choose while we bleat and mistake our milling round for progress.

Eric Mack  
Glen Osmond, SA

# Letters

## Uranium Lingers

A somewhat belated response to the Mayingee article (CR 47). My memory of the closure of Honeymoon and Beverley mines, both uranium mines in South Australia intending to use the *in situ* leach mining method, is somewhat different to that suggested in the article.

The Honeymoon mine was the more developed of the two mines and undertook field trials of the *in situ* method. This method proved not only potentially disastrous, but actually so in that excursions of the solution occurred, that is, they were able to turn the uranium into solution quite successfully but were unable to pump that solution to the surface.

Fortunately, information relating to these problems was leaked to the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE) and CANE ran a very successful media campaign over the course of a week or so, embarrassing both the Government and the companies involved. It was this campaign which led to the Government announcement of the closure of the Honeymoon mine.

The Government justified the closure of the mine in two ways; firstly, that the process itself was causing problems, and secondly that the economics of the mine were not viable given that Roxby Downs was to proceed. That latter argument has two facets; one that Roxby would have the better market possibilities and the other was that the South Australian

economy could live without Honeymoon because we had Roxby.

The Beverley mine was closed at the same time and for the same reasons. However, it is important to realise that although both mines are not currently being developed, the companies retain their leases and have merely 'mothballed' their operations. A change of the political climate could see a swift commencement of operations.

Anne-Marie Delahunt  
South Australia

## Traditional Law

The recent cases of abuse of human rights seem to have escaped the attention of those ever ready to condemn the socialist countries for alleged similar abuses.

I refer to the chaining up of a woman for 12 months at Ali-Curung by her tribal husband because she objected to the marriage — which included an alleged abduction, in itself a serious offence under the NT Criminal Code. The member for McDonnell, Mr Neil Bell, should be congratulated for bringing the matter to public attention.

The second case was the reported statement by a representative of the Peppamemarti community that he had prevented the women of that community from attending the Barunga festival because they had refused to dance in traditional costume at that festival.

Implicit in both these instances are two concepts that must be opposed by humanity.

The first is that women are chattels of man, the second that persons can be deprived of their liberty by whim, without reference to law — in these cases because of

their sex.

In both cases an explicit assumption has apparently been made that traditional law takes precedence over criminal law where Aborigines, particularly female Aborigines, are concerned. There can be no acceptance of such an assumption where human rights are involved.

Aboriginal traditional law evolved to sustain and control a nomadic tribal society. There are no nomadic tribal societies in Australia now.

Because there is no longer any real need for traditional law, it is being perverted and used by local despots for their own benefit.

Aboriginal societies are just as money oriented as European society. Two recent examples of the abandonment of traditional values for financial benefit were the decision by the Djauan tribe to allow mining at Coronation Hill, and the Lake Bennett decision to agree to the latest amendments to the *Land Rights Act*.

Both will bring short-term financial reward to the traditional owners, both will hasten the destruction of the environment.

There is a legal responsibility on the Federal and Territory Governments to uphold and enforce both the law and the United Nations conventions concerning human rights, but they are obviously not doing so.

C. M. Friel  
Alawa, NT

## The ALP replies

In your Autumn edition (CR49), Roman Orzanski details his concern with the Federal Labor Government, particularly over environmental issues. In a simplistic and dismissive way, Orzanski concludes that

my '... adherence to Party line is more important than individual conscience'. Quite frankly, I am sick of this kind of simplistic response.

It is quite clear that the attitudes Orzanski expresses, and the policies he pursues, are alive within the Labor Party. It is also clear that they are a minority within the Party. If they are concerned about such issues, people like Orzanski cannot allow themselves the self-indulgence of not participating in the ALP. I can understand that members of other political parties cannot join the ALP, that is fair enough. But to Orzanski and all those others who are deeply concerned about a particular issue or range of issues, the best way to pursue them is to join, and subsequently influence the ALP.

At present, the South Australian branch of the ALP is precariously balanced. It needs more people and ideas to stimulate it to a much more progressive line. With less than 100 of these people, in various sub-branches, the progressives in the Party will be able to control Party policy in South Australia. Not only this, but those extra 100 people would bring into the ALP a much-needed source of policy expertise and advice, particularly if they come from the peace/environmental movement.

Given that many still acknowledge that parliamentary politics has an important role in the decision-making processes in Australia, we should realise that any such influx of people would have a direct influence on attitudes presented within the parliamentary process, and particularly in Government.

Nick Bolkus  
Senator for South Australia  
Canberra, ACT

# Land Rights

An important meeting took place in the Kimberleys in mid-May 1987 attended by representatives of the official Aboriginal Land Rights Councils and many of the unofficial ones and was regarded by those attending, including most Euro-Australians, as a very significant breakthrough in communications between the two peoples.

The following resolution was passed:

That the people attending the conference Aborigines and Development in the East Kimberley 11-13 May 1987, convened by the Centre for Continuing Education,

Australian National University, affirm that no meaningful arrangements are possible to reconcile the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, on the one hand, and the interests of economic development and nature conservation on the other hand, until Australian law and Australian society recognise the original and continuing ownership of land by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under the ancient Aboriginal law and the primacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision making in respect of that land, and in particular, until land rights legislation for Western Australian Aboriginal people is passed through the Commonwealth Parliament. The Western Australian Government commissioned and received the Seaman Report and recommendations on land rights and has now ignored them.

Accordingly the Federal Government should legislate for communal and inalienable land rights for Aboriginal people in Western Australia and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait



This photo was taken on the border of South Australia and Western Australia on the Emu Road (one of the roads built during Maralinga). The blokes produced this sign which had ceremonially been torn down on a previous trip, then explained that:

*'This is not land rights, this is Aboriginal land. Land rights is for white fellas, mining companies. This is Aboriginal land. Anangu land.'*

Source: Jon Lark

Islander people throughout Australia and recognise in that legislation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereign rights and prior ownership of Australia and which gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- The right to claim all unalienated land, including public purpose land.
- The right to control access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.
- The right to control access to rivers and waterways on or adjacent to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.
- The right to all minerals and resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.
- The right to marine resources of the sea and seabed up to a limit of 10 kms where the sea is adjacent to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.
- The right to refuse permission for mining and other development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.
- The right to negotiate terms and conditions under which developments take place; and the right to statutory mining royalty equivalents.
- The right to compensation for lands lost and for social and cultural disruption.
- The right to convert Aboriginal properties or leases to inalienable freehold title.
- The right, guaranteed by legislation, to living areas (excisions) on pastoral leases, these areas to be of sufficient size to allow for the development of economic activities and to be made available on the basis of needs and/or traditional or historical affiliation.

Source: Judith Wright  
McKinney

McKinney who states that: 'Australia is now challenged not only by its past actions and attitudes on the indigenous owners of this land with whom we have made no treaty or agreement over the ownership of what is now acknowledged to have been Aboriginal land owned and managed according to Aboriginal law and methods of decision and management but by our present continuing invasion of lands hitherto occupied by Aborigines and in their terms owned by them, such as the Bungle Bungle area in the Kimberleys.' She feels that no more momentous issue for 1988 can be posed for environmentalists.

# Earth News

## Uranium Decision

A decision will be made in June 1987 by a West German court as to whether a uranium deposit in the Black Forest with a potential annual output of 100 metric tons of Uranium (MTU) will be exploited commercially. The mine is Menzenschwand, owned by Gewerkschaft Brünhilde. It is already yielding about 30 MTU/yr in precommercial exploitation. The ore from Menzenschwand is processed into yellowcake at Brünhilde's own mill at Ellweiler in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Surface mining was ruled out due to environmental considerations and a permit to expand mining was denied on the grounds that even subsurface mining and transport of uranium ore would detract from the recreational value of the region. In 1983, the state government of Baden-Wuerttemberg ruled that, due to current low uranium prices, the uranium should stay in the ground as a reserve resource. Brünhilde is challenging these rulings arguing, amongst other things, that the Euratom Treaty mandates exploitation of any German reserve that may be found.

In the early 1990s, if mining commenced at both sites, proponents say that 10-15 per cent of German utilities' uranium demand could be met. But for the next 10 years, 40 per cent of the uranium that Germany will use will come from Australia.

Source: *Nuclear Fuel and WISE* Amsterdam

## Nuclear Dumpsite

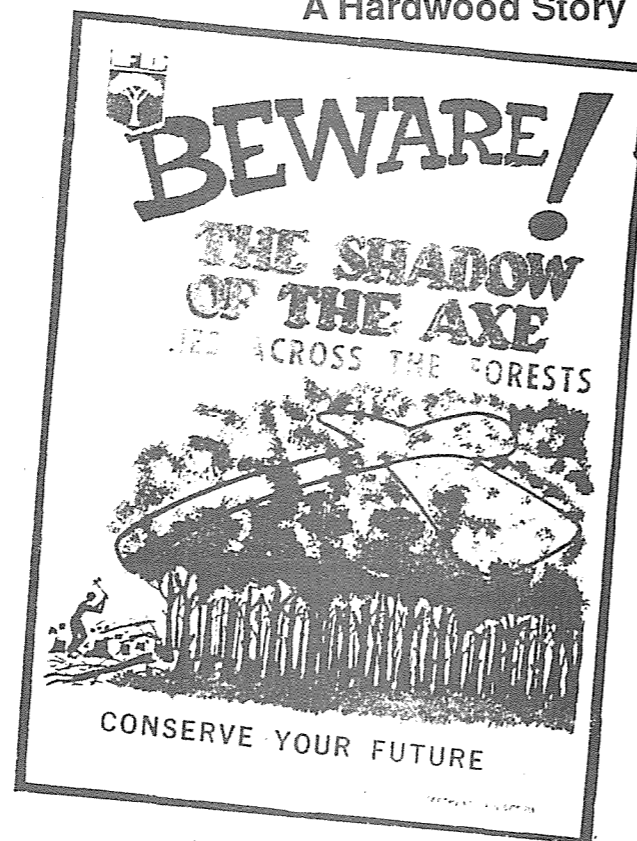
Since 1953, the Savannah River Plant — an 800 square kilometre complex of nuclear facilities in the American state of South Carolina — has served as a dumpsite for nuclear waste from America's weapons program.

Now the US Environmental Policy Institute (EPI) warns that more than 100 million litres of intense long-lasting radioactive waste stored in 51 tanks above ground poses a serious hazard. The EPI says 'an explosion or earthquake rupturing these tanks would probably have much more severe long-term consequences than Bhopal'. The risk of earthquakes in the area, it said, were underestimated and already many of the tanks had developed cracks, making them more susceptible to quake damage. Leaks and other accidents have so far severely contaminated the soil and shallow aquifers on the site and now threatens the region's most important source of underground water supply. The worst possible accident involving the rupture of the tanks would cause 230,000 extra cancers, 2,500 genetic defects among nearby residents and \$14 billion in property damage.

The EPI also says that even without a natural disaster the area will become another 'national sacrifice area' joining the uranium states in the south-west — Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Arizona — and the other US nuclear weapons and waste complex at Hanford in Washington.

Source: *Earth Island Institute Journal*

## A Hardwood Story



According to a report funded by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and launched in March 1987 with Friends of the Earth by WWF of Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and UK, some 5 million hectares of tropical forest are lost to logging each year. The report, 'A hardwood story', gives a detailed breakdown of the European trade in tropical timber and its sources of supply.

The authors, economist Francois Nectoux and biologist Nigel Dudley, point out that the European Economic Community (EEC) is the world's second largest consumer of tropical timber (after Japan) with 40 per cent of trade by volume and 32 per cent by value. The study shows European loggers to be dominant in West Africa and notes that the main countries supplying Europe's tropical timber now have forest reserves in 'critical' condition.

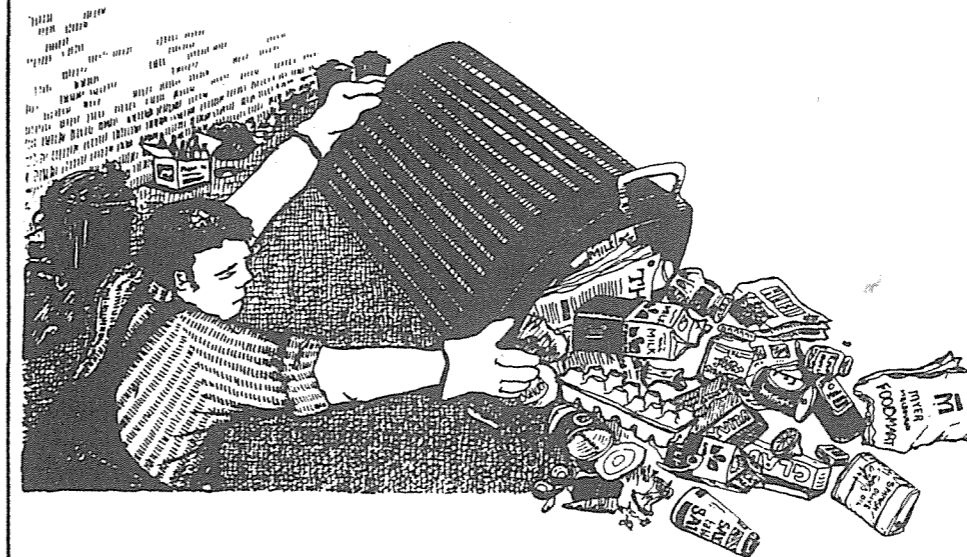
As the report was being published, WWF called on the EEC to contribute to the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) Project Fund, noting that the EEC's own Fourth Environmental Action Program launched as part of the European Year of the Environment states that the twelve-nation community should back the ITTO 'with a view to supporting conservation objectives'.

'Now is the time for the EEC to put such words into action — Europe has a responsibility for tropical forests', said a WWF spokesperson. Sadly, to date, the EEC has made no contribution.

A full report to the ITTO second Council meeting, including copies of ECO magazine are available at WWF International, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.

Source: *WWF News* May-June 1987

## A Load of Rubbish



According to a 1985 publication of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the residents of Melbourne and its suburbs threw away over 2¼ million tonnes of rubbish in 1984. After being compacted, this rubbish filled up over 4 million cubic metres of space in municipal tips. This averaged out to 15.3 kg of rubbish each week for every man, woman and child in the 53 councils of the Greater Melbourne area.

Later figures are not available but it is reasonable to assume that these amounts have increased rather than decreased.

The only real solution to the problem of rubbish disposal involves composting, recycling and extensive packaging regulation. If paper, glass, rags, metals and aluminium were recycled, the amount of rubbish would decrease by 44.5 per cent and composting food wastes and garden wastes would account for 42.9 per cent — an overall reduction of 87.4 per cent of our domestic garbage. Unfortunately it is difficult for householders to recycle metals other than aluminium and, although all glass can be recycled, many bottles in Victoria are not returnable.

Ten years ago, two-thirds of glass containers were returnable, now three-quarters are just thrown away. So, while households can lessen the rubbish problem through recycling, the problem itself can only be solved by legislation which bans plastic drink containers and which requires all bottles and cans to carry a deposit.

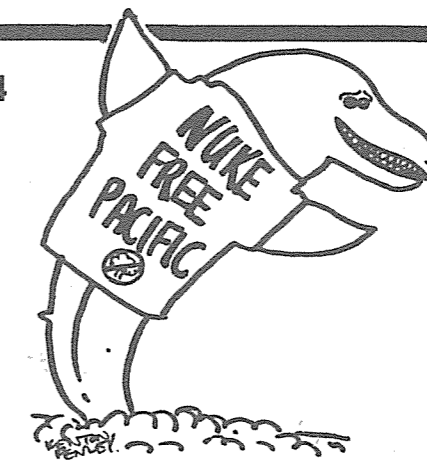
Related articles appeared in *Chain Reaction* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1978, and in No. 35, Jan. 1984.

Source: From an article by Ray Radford *City Alternative News* May-June, 1987.

## French Test number 144

On May 20 1987 at 5.05 pm NZ time, a 30 kiloton bomb was detonated at Mururoa Atoll. It was 2½ times the strength of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It was the 144th test in the region.

Source: *The Environment Centre Northern Territory Inc. Newsletter* June 1987



## Marshall Islands Update

Early in 1987 Greenpeace International approved a proposal to fund the construction of a motor-sailer for the people of Rongelap on Mejato in the Marshall Islands. The boat will be a 40 ft catamaran outfitted with a 20 hp. diesel engine as well as sails. It will be built in Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands, by three Rongelap boat builders and an American boatbuilder. There will also be a refrigeration system so that longer fishing trips can be made, and to enable fish to be sold in Ebeye. Because there will be seating space and room to lie down, patients can now travel in more comfortable conditions when requiring medical care. The construction of the boat will begin in October 1987 and is scheduled to be completed by May 1988.

Source: *Greenpeace News* (New Zealand) Winter 1987

## Tax Concessions

Multimillionaire Alan Bond was able through tax avoidance and tax concessions to reduce the tax on his gross profit of \$522 million (1986) to only 3 cents in the dollar. The official rates for companies is 46 cents in the dollar.

According to the Stock Exchange Research Service the top 15 corporations paid only 28 cents in the dollar instead of the required 46 cents, and thereby cost the rest of us \$900 million. These same companies also showed large profit increases.

Source: *Greenpeace News* (New Zealand) Winter 1987

# Earth News

## Acid Rain Problem

The Environmental Agency has issued a report that says that acid rain and snow — a serious ecological problem in North America and Europe — is also falling across Japan, and about 10 per cent of the major lakes in Hokkaido and Honshu have recordable acid levels.

The agency surveyed the pH level and other rainfall factors at fourteen locations across the nation once every week for 2 years from April 1984. Results showed that the average pH level at all locations was below 5.6. A pH level below 5.6 signifies that the rain is acidic. The lower the level, the higher the acidity of the rain.

The amount of sulphuric acid ions and nitric acid ions contained in the rainfall, which are believed to come from motor cars and factory exhaust, recorded almost the same levels as in the European survey, underlining the worsening situation of nitrogen oxide and sulphur oxide pollution in Japan.

The agency also checked the acidity of 97 lakes in Hokkaido and Honshu. As a result, eleven of them were judged to be 'acidic lakes' with pH levels below 5.6.

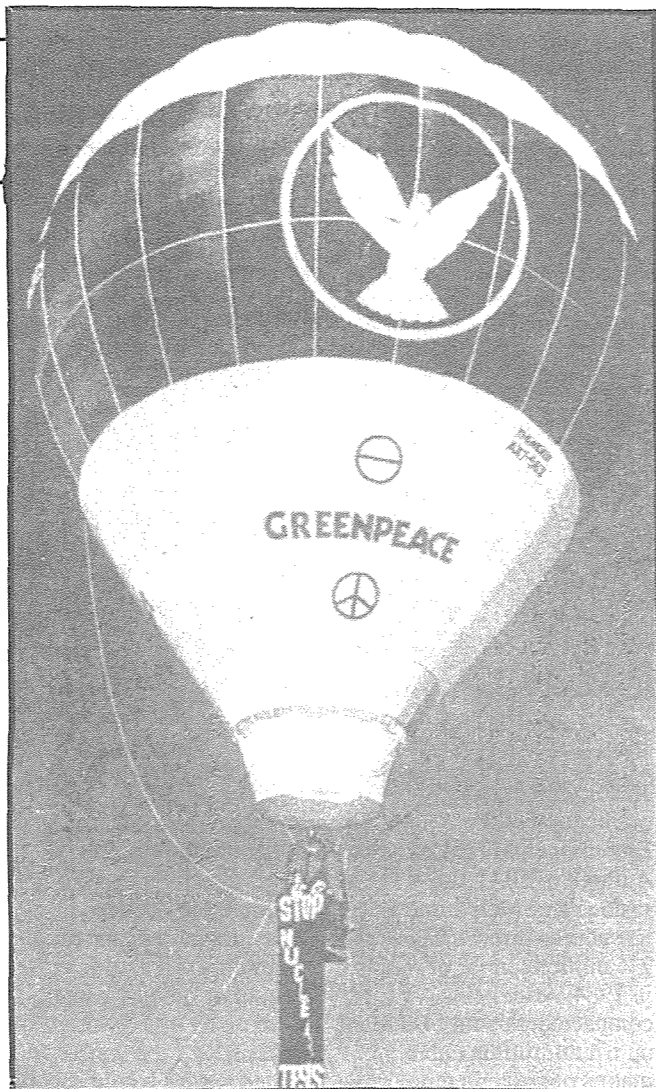
Famous lakes like Lake Tazawa in Akita Prefecture recorded acidic levels of 4.5, illustrating environmental pollution at popular tourist spots.

Source: *Revealing Japan* May 1987

## Code — 'Hazebrook'

In what was easily the largest demonstration in the history of the Nevada test site: an estimated 1,800 people gathered at the gates of the remote desert location to demand an halt to all nuclear weapons testing. As protesters gathered in an act of mass civil disobedience the Greenpeace hot-air balloon 'Trinity' took off in a spectacular flight across the boundary of the site. The test, code named 'Hazebrook', was detonated two days ahead of time in an apparent attempt to circumvent the protest. The Soviet Union had announced its firm intention to resume its test program should this test go ahead. And thus they have . . .

Source: *Greenpeace New Zealand Newsletter* Winter 1987



GREENPEACE

## Police Get Heavy on Light Rail

Protesters against the Victorian Government's proposed Light Rail replacement of the Port Melbourne and St Kilda railway lines have faced police using desperate tactics.

Police strip-searched a blind man in one incident which is now being investigated by civil liberties groups.

In another case, police arrested John Kirby, who was carrying his 20-month-old son in a backpack at the time. Kirby, whose wife is a full-time teacher, now faces a care application in the Children's Court where the police will attempt to prove that the boy requires a level of State intervention for his good care.

Chain Reaction will report on the outcome of the case, which is believed to be unprecedented.

Meanwhile the protest against the scheme continues on the basis that:

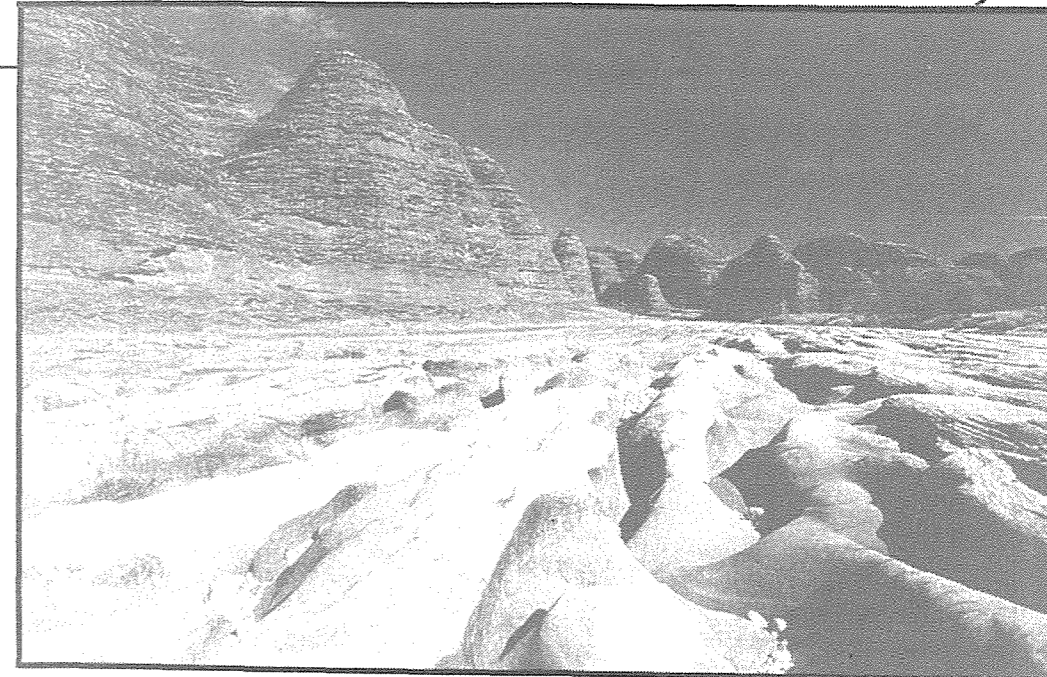
- it is a land grab by the Government to allow them to sell off surplus railway land. Many of the major private developments in the area rely on large proportions of what is currently railway land;
- the trains will be replaced by trams which will be able to run in the middle of a road, which will allow the development of a six-lane freeway through the seaside suburbs;

- the tram will provide less services, including less accurate schedules, more inconvenient routes and reduced access for disabled, elderly and children in prams;
- parallel services will be threatened as the Government reduces nearby tram and bus services to increase use of the Light Rail.

Source: *Chain Reaction* report

## Bungle Bungles

The Bungle Bungles are an amazing and delicate sandstone formation in the Kimberley area of Western Australia. Last year (1986) the West Australian Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended that the Bungle Bungle formation, together with adjacent tropical grassland areas, be protected within a 'A' class national park. The EPA also recommended that the area would be best jointly managed with traditional Aboriginal owners similarly to several parks in the Northern Territory.



While the Western Australian government has moved to declare the Bungle Bungles a national park, they have disregarded a number of important EPA recommendations and fail to adequately protect the area. The park is to be a mixture of 'C' class national park and

conservation reserve which leaves the area open to mining activities. The government has not recognised aboriginal ownership or arranged for joint management provisions. The Environment Centre has a copy of the Bungle Bungle report and urges you

to write to the Western Australian Minister for Conservation and Land Management indicating your concern at the inadequacies of the provisions for protection of the area. Source: *Northern Territory Environment Centre Newsletter* May 1987

## Activism Cracks Down

The Community Research Action Centre, which has an illustrious, star-studded history of involvement in campaigns concerning controversial social issues and support for disadvantaged groups in society, is about to be crushed by the growing forces of the Right-wing student movement. In a trial test of their strength, a coalition of Liberal 'dries', NCC supporters, Right-wing ALP members and religious fundamentalists have earmarked the Centre as the first to go in their bid to depoliticise campuses. This is part of a heavily financed nationwide strategy, evinced by the Right at ANU, Queensland, WA and Sydney

Universities, who have emerged in similar strength with identical strategies.

The chairperson of the Centre, Andrea Millsom, said: 'Monash becomes a campus dominated by the Right-wing if the centre goes, and along with this goes all hope of any students being able to express any progressive social thought, or organise effectively around any issue of general student concern. Monash is already the most reactionary of the Victorian universities. The others have organised themselves against the Federal Government's fees; Monash's student Union has not directed students in any

way against this attack on the right to education.'

The Centre began in 1973 as a centre for environmental research, and broadened through the 1970s and 1980s to cover gay rights, Aboriginal communal issues and Aborigines' perspectives on the 1982 Commonwealth Games, uranium mining, current energy production and alternative sources, disarmament and nuclear proliferation, disabilities faced by women, including child-care, sexual harassment, the *in vitro* fertilisation issue, issues involved in Anzac Day beyond its commemorative function, prejudices faced by disabled people at Monash,

and community radio 3CR and 3RRR as people's access to media.

These days Monash makes the headlines with the economic and social policies produced by the Centre for Policy Studies, and ethical issues raised by the *in vitro* fertilisation program undertaken by Monash medical researchers. Meanwhile institutionalised learning becomes predetermined by post-tertiary employment opportunities at the cost of progressive education outside the academic framework.

Source: Community Research Action Centre, Monash University.

## Willunga

There has been growing concern for over 2 years regarding a rare reef in South Australia following allegations by the Scuba Divers' Association that the reef is declining and taking on a grey, dead appearance.

South Australia has twelve aquatic reserves of which the Aldinga reserve, situated approximately 40 kilometres south of Adelaide, is probably the most beautiful. It is an example of a rare temperate zone reef, and is home to many beautiful and rare fish; it also has large fans of soft gorgonia coral reaching a height of 4 metres.

The Scuba Divers' Association says that the reef is silting up from storm-water drainage sited nearby in 1975. The siting of the drain was decided by the South Australian Engineering and Water Supply Department; an environmental monitoring program was promised but not undertaken.

Following pressure from several organisations, including the Scuba Divers' Association of South Australia, the Marine Archaeological Society, the Conservation Council and FOE Willunga, a study into the source of the silt was undertaken at a cost of \$55,000 and the result (yet to be finalised) points to two major creeks nearby, Port Willunga and Cactus Creeks, as being major contributors to the problem. Poor soil management techniques by local farmers, loss of trees in the area and changes to the

original drainage system make the siting a complicated problem.

The drains make a fast channel for pollutants; a chemical spillage in the area could have serious consequences. In winter, if septic tanks fail, some residents pump effluent into the streets which then goes into the storm-water drain.

Following 2 years' research, Friends of the Earth Willunga expressed concern over the problem in a submission to the Department of Environment and Planning.

They blame the sludge pipeline discharge offshore, engineering methods and removal of sand dunes for the state of the metropolitan coastline.

The group believes that if 20,000-45,000 people are housed in the area close to the reef and a proposed marina built without a proper effluent and storm-water management system planned, then the reef will not survive.

Source: Friends Of the Earth Willunga SA

## Contaminated Spice

According to a Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry Report, thyme and sage harvested after the Chernobyl accident and imported from France and Turkey have been found to be contaminated with radioactive substances Cesium 134 and 137. The Ministry ordered the spices to be sent back to the producing countries and believes that radioactive substance blown up into the sky from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant seeped into the soil was absorbed and became enriched in the plants.

Source: *Revealing Japan* May 1987

## Change of Course

Admitting the World Bank had stumbled in its attempt to limit environmental consequences of development projects it has supported, Bank President Barber Conable announced bold measures to step up environmental protection in developing countries. Speaking at the World Resources Institute in Washington DC recently, he said the Bank was creating a top-level Environment Department to integrate environmental considerations into the overall lending and policy activities.

The Bank will also begin an urgent country-by-country assessment of environmental threats in the 30 most vulnerable developing nations including the Sudan, Burkino Faso, Indonesia and the Philippines. Mr Conable also pledged to strengthen the Bank's long-standing policy of scrutinizing development projects for their environmental impact and, where necessary, withholding funds for those with inadequate safeguards.

Source: *World Wildlife Fund News* May-June 1987.



A World Bank stumble

Tropical forests, Mr Conable declared, 'demand priority attention. If the World Bank has been part of the problem in the past, I intend to make it a leader in finding solutions for the future.' Citing an example where the Bank had erred he said that mistakes in the Brazilian project, known as the Polonoroeste Project, became obvious in 1985 and the Bank interrupted payments to encourage corrective measures. What we learned was not that we should avoid projects with environmental implications, but rather that where institutional safeguards are weak, the Bank must be a positive force to strengthen them.

Inviting the help of environmental activists worldwide, Mr Conable said, 'We need your advice, your expertise, your influence and your imagination to make the urgent work of the environmental protection a co-ordinated campaign.'

# Old FOE News

Leading up to the fiftieth edition of *Chain Reaction* we asked for anecdotal history from people who have been involved with Friends of the Earth and *Chain Reaction* over the years. We also flicked through previous editions and found the passages we are reprinting here. Since we didn't have space for it all, we will include another 'historical' section in the next edition.

## Friends of the Earth Adelaide University

Possibly the first FOE group in Australia was that at Adelaide University. The early seventies were times of social upheaval, and many ideas were imported from overseas. In 1971, a University group called Social Action produced a number of major articles which appeared in the campus newspaper, *On Dit*, about waste, pollution, and the environment.

Social Action had subgroups and was active in a number of areas, yet there was enough interest to also form a Friends of the Earth group. Information from overseas about happenings on the environmental front was circulated and soon there was a core of students concerned about the environment. From the first, FOE called itself a radical ecology group.

By March 1972 regular meetings of FOE were held under the auspices of Social Action/Abschol. A seminar was held entitled '*Is technology a blueprint for destruction?*'. This concern with the effects of technology was an important part of questioning the purpose of universities. The proceedings were later published for distribution.

## The First Campaign

Appropriately enough, the first target for FOE was waste in the packaging of refectory goods and the litter created by disposable containers. The concern with packaging quickly led to the first *King of the Krap* award, to Coca Cola. The award was announced in *On Dit* on April 11, and students were invited to collect empty Coke cans and join a march to the Coke factory on the Friday.

About 300 people took part. The offending items were returned, and the award presented to Coke. The threat to

target polluters and undo all their careful public relations work had an amazing effect upon the large packaging companies:

I found it very heartening to realise that within hours of somebody wandering around Adelaide University and noticing a notice stuck up saying FOE were going to organise a demonstration against Coca Cola in 10 days time and someone (either an employee, or a son of an employee of Coca Cola) rang Coke and within hours 20 top executives of six of Australia's largest companies all round the country were panicking. That's an indication of what it was like. People were flying to and fro. They didn't know what to do. They flew me over to Adelaide to see if I could head off the demonstration.

There were seven options open to them — ranging at one extreme from doing nothing at all, to at the other extreme preventing the march from ever leaving the University — and that was an option which they obviously regarded as just being perfectly normal within their capacity. They eventually decided to allow the march to occur and not to call the cops, but just make sure the cops were hovering in the background on the grounds that they've got a brand new plant on a major road out of town with acreage of glass on the front which is operating eight hours a day, so three quarters of the entire week it's unmanned.

(Gabriel Lafitte, a former employee of Image Australia, which handled the steel can account, Interview in *On Dit* 1973).

A few weeks after the visit to Coke, a similar march visited Parliament House, where cans were left on the steps and a deputation went to chat to Glen Broomhill, then Minister for the Environment.

## Steel Can Blues: FOE vs. BHP

After the assault on Coke, the Steel Can People, who were trying to promote a community conscious, responsible image for BHP (as a producer of steel cans), decided to try to tame FOE. They invited them to observe recycling opera-

'We held our first national meeting (and pillow fight) in December last year (1974). The politics of the middle class and FOE were much debated. One delegate believed that all FOE has done has been to continue in the tradition of middle-class politics of manipulation. It was emphasised that what must be changed are the attitudes of the population at large, and that it is all too easy to slip into a mode of action of the lobbying of different elite strata — trade union leaders, politicians, students other environmentalists — and then to imagine that we are making headway. It was agreed that FOE's objectives are to consolidate the alleged conservation power base in the community, and to crystallize the vague environmental awareness into specific demands and action.'

*Chain Reaction* Summer 1975

WWF NEWS

'FOE appeared to me to be fragmented. Some campaigns were run on a liberal-authoritarian structure, while in others attempts at collectivism were made. Some argued that FOE's many varied campaigns required equally varied methods and that a uniform structure or commitment to an ideology would be repressive. I found the lack of uniform policy did not lead to freer thinking, but to confused practice and internal faction-fights. Often there was a sense of *reaction* rather than planned action.'

*Chain Reaction* No. 29, 1982, Margaret Jones discussing the links between ideology and ecology. This debate raged in *Chain Reaction* for several issues.

'We cannot separate and compartmentalise actions and issues in our society. While the present system fosters such separation, it is merely a technique for keeping the forces apart that might begin to bring real changes to the world.'

*Chain Reaction* No 42 1985, Susan Keon and Nina Swain.

### Friends of the Earth Adelaide University (continued)

tions, and gave them \$3,900 to make a film about recycling. Ultimately, the film was a damning indictment of the whole steel can scam. At the film's premiere, February 6 1973, FOE issued a detailed analysis of the lies and half truths told by BHP.

Gabriel Lafitte blew the whistle on the whole mess. He also provided a very interesting insight into the workings of large companies. The debate over cans continued well into 1974, when another demonstration was staged, this time with people dressed as Coke cans, in support of the can deposit legislation.

### French Tests in the Pacific and FOE Australia

June 1972 saw the focus on the French nuclear tests in the Pacific, with a double page spread in Monday's *On Dit*, a public meeting on the Tuesday, and a march from Elder Park to the French Consulate. This was the first sign of FOE's continuing concern with all aspects of nuclear operations.

At this time, the group at Adelaide Uni wasn't officially connected to FOE groups interstate or overseas. In 1973, FOE at Adelaide Uni was visited by Peter Hayes, from FOE Melbourne. He had permission from overseas to use the name *Friends of the Earth* in Australia, and was worried about the *illegal* use of the name. Close cooperation developed between the groups, particularly on the uranium broadsheets subsequently

produced.

FOE Melbourne shared offices with Greenpeace Australia. In 1974 FOE groups around Australia organised the national 'Greenpeace' actions against nuclear testing in the Pacific. Chain Reaction started life as the Greenpeace Pacific Bulletin in 1974, with the idea of providing a united front against the Pacific tests.

### RedCliff and Public Transport

1974 saw major campaigns on uranium, petrochemicals, and public transport. FOE continued to follow up issues such as Redcliff — a site on the Gulf which was proposed for a petrochemical plant. Considerable concern was expressed about pollution from vinyl chlorides during the processing.

The campaign started in July, with a series of broadsheets on Redcliff which covered health and employment, effects on the environment and 'Blue waters or Red cliff'!

About 200 people joined a protest march on 26 July, from the University to the State Administration Centre in Victoria Square, where further access was blocked by police. FOE also prepared a 15 page submission to the Redcliff Public Inquiry.

The public transport campaign involved Friends of the Earth, Plumbers and Gasfitters Union, Australian Railways Union, AFULE, the Cyclist Protection Committee, the Bowden Brompton Anti-freeway group, the Radical Technology groups, and others. The campaign worked to protect and improve public transport with stated aims being

## — EVERY MONTH — FRIENDS OF THE EARTH PRESENT KING OF KRAP AWARDS

... to those companies that make our group necessary.

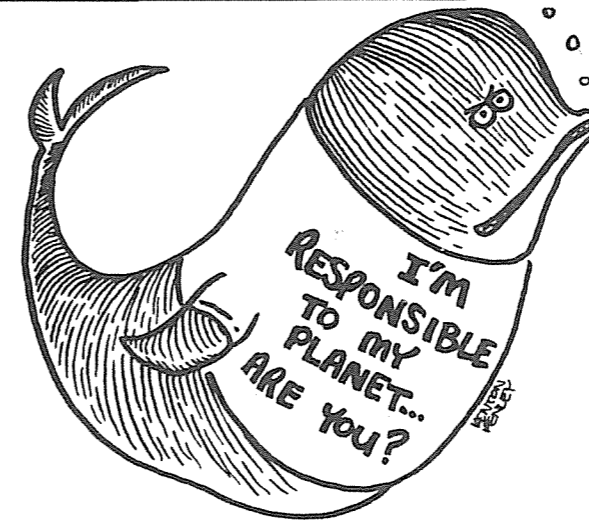
The first of these is on this week. Presentations of their own pollutants will be made to various firms at suitable ceremonies. Usually, this will be preceded by PURPOSEFUL PROCESSIONS.



PUT YOUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER — CONVENIENCE NOW, SURVIVAL LATER?  
DIRECT ACTION IS NEEDED — MARCH AGAINST CAPITALIST HYPOCRISY AND COMPLACENCY.  
LAWN RALLY FRIDAY, APRIL 14 — MARCH TO COKE PLANT ON PORT ROAD.

FOR EARTH'S SAKE, ACT NOW.

ONDI



'to upgrade public transport and encourage the use of bicycle transportation as well as opposing the construction of freeways.' Some activists got a car wreck, sprayed it bright yellow, and deposited it outside the State Transport Department in Victoria Square to highlight the dominance of the motor vehicle in transport planning. A request to University Council for more bike racks on campus brought the response 'we don't want unsightly bicycles scattered about the place ...'

### Anti-uranium campaigns

Late 1974 saw discussions with the Australia Party, and the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union to set up a Campaign Against Nuclear Energy. FOE's uranium subgroup met regularly in January 1975 and public meetings were held at the Adelaide CAE. CANE was set up in the first week of March, and a workshop was held with Peter Hayes and Dr John Coulter on March 15 on the problems associated with mining uranium. On April 19, CANE held a demonstration at Elder Park.

Nationally FOE groups participated in the anti-uranium bike ride. On May 20, 150 cyclists from around Australia converged on Canberra.

Everyone helped make the procession through the city to Parliament House one of the noisiest and most exciting ever. People had slogans on their clothes, or held banners high in the air, or kept their bells and horns going, at the same time as shouting lines in unison with loud hailer. After all, they had collectively traveled over 25,000 miles to make a loud protest at the Federal Government's uranium policies. (*Survival*, June 1975)

They reached Canberra at 5pm, cycled

through the city centre and arrived at Parliament House at 6pm, pitching tents for 24 hours of protests.

1974 and 1975 were the years of anti-uranium protests: the Fox Commission, the Ranger inquiry, the ALP National Conference, the State Elections and the Amory Lovins tour.

### Off-Campus at last

1975 was the year FOE moved off-campus, in March, to an office in Payneham Road, and by July the office was staffed every afternoon according to a roster. During the year FOE prepared submissions to four inquiries: two on uranium mining, one on packaging materials, and one on the proposal for a National Park at Kakadu.

Easter saw the Radical Ecology Conference in Melbourne, organised by student groups, unions and ecology groups — 600 attended, 40 from Adelaide. As the FOE newsletter said, ... the conference was optimistic and exciting because it revealed a substantial ecology movement whose members had similar basic beliefs.

Roman Orszanski, FOE Adelaide University.

### Writers Note:

Not all the early seventies are well documented, nor all the documents well preserved. Even some of the dates mentioned above may be incorrect. I have had to rely on human memory, a notoriously ingenious device, for some details. My thanks to Peter Bill, Sandy Pulsford, Ally Fricker, Anne McMenamin, Liz Osman, and Rob Ranzijn for filling in some of the gaps.

'Chain Reaction aims to do a whole lot of things — to act as a voice for Friends of the Earth, to expose issues which receive too little coverage elsewhere, and to act as a national link between controversies and campaigns.'

*Chain Reaction* Vol. 5, No. 4, 1980, editor's letter.

'How effectively does the environment movement organise itself? Well, after nearly 10 years in it, I'm not sure that it is not an organisation rather than a happening. To be an organisation it must become a type of bureaucracy, loaded down with the onerous duties of finding funds, writing submissions and letters, keeping politicians aware of the transgressions of industries in matters of clean air, water, earth and the rational use of our resources. To be a happening it must involve large numbers of caring people, and although there are many, so far not a caring majority.'

*Chain Reaction*, No. 27, 1982, Betty Beckwith discussing the effectiveness of the environment movement.



'The ideological dynamics of FOE are not secret. The FOE magazine *Chain Reaction*, which should be required reading for all concerned with the future of the mining industry, contains a lift out on the Chernobyl disaster (No. 46) . . . Issue No. 47 reports on the anti-woodchipping campaigns in WA, a long attack on the evils of the US bases in Australia, an interview with a renegade CIA official . . . and an expose on uranium mining in WA . . . What does this have to do with conservation? Everything.'

*Australian Journal of Mining* April 1987

'As for the suggestion that *Chain Reaction* is a socialist rag, we do not follow any political party line. We consider people's welfare and the environment to be more important than economic development for its own sake — if that is socialism, then what is wrong with socialism? We do not think that there is any great virtue in always being in the middle on moral or political questions.'

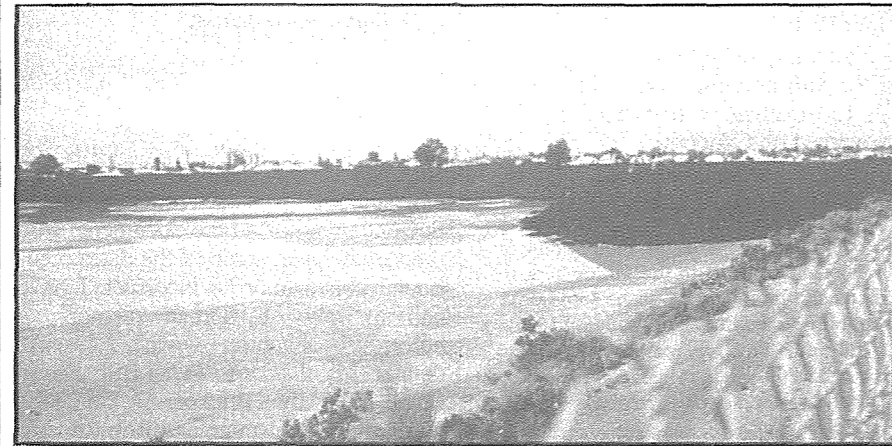
*Chain Reaction* Vol. 4, No. 1, 1978 *Editor's reply to letter from a FOE member accusing FOE and Chain Reaction of 'equating socialism with ecology'*.

## Friends of the Earth Port Pirie

Port Pirie, on Spencer Gulf South Australia, is the site of a large lead-zinc smelter and also the site of an uranium enrichment plant situated on the northern edge of the town. This enrichment plant was set up by the State Government to treat concentrates from the Radium Hill mine, producing uranium oxide, yellowcake. This was sold under contract to the UK Atomic Energy Authority. Operation proceeded from 1955 to 1962 when the contract ran out, Radium Hill was shut down and has not been mined since — much better deposits were found, especially in the Kakadu National Park! Left at Port Pirie was an extensive series of uncovered tailings dams, about 15 hectares. A playground for kids.

Then in November 1976 all hell broke loose. 'Hot spots' were by chance discovered in the dams. But they did not arise from the Radium Hill material. There had been another treatment plant on the site. From 1968 to 1972, a small under-capitalised private enterprise, Rare Earth Corporation, had treated monazite sands there. Monazite arises from treatment of beach sands. After recovering rutile and ilmenite, monazite remains as a source of rare earth oxides. Attempts were made at Port Pirie to separate the rare earth oxides into marketable, higher value forms. The crunch line is that the final tailing then is a thorium oxide residue. Thorium is radioactive and has a decay chain similar to, though not identical with uranium. The hot spots were due to the thorium residue.

These 'hot spots' were covered with



Filling of the tailings dam with slag, the early stages 1983.

spent slag from the nearby smelters, 4000 tonnes of it. But that only started the saga, it didn't end it. The readings on the dams had been quite appreciable in some areas — 8-10 milirems an hour.

Hugh Hudson was then Minister of Mines and Energy in the Labor Government. The first action was to fence off the dams and erect danger signs. But a fence does not prevent radon emission from uncovered tailings — there was still 15 hectares to cover.

A committee of concerned citizens was set up when the subject became hot — no pun intended. Early in 1977, this committee then established a branch of FOE at Port Pirie. We debated whether we should be FOE or MAUM and wisely selected FOE as there would be other environmental issues to tackle apart from uranium.

Those who helped to establish FOE were Ian Hall, a graduate in electronics who understood the nuclear fuel cycle and Ally Fricker, a wonderful activist. Also involved were Judith Sherry, a local resident, and Harm and Tinky Folkers who ran the Special School for disadvantaged pupils. Later came Andy Alcock, a school teacher. There was an infusion of outside talent and fresh thinking here. So many country towns need this, they can become so insular.

The branch prospered, it regularly had 10-12 at meetings, as many as city branches can muster. The civic fathers resented this intrusion by 'outsiders'. But the tailings dams were still there. Ally Fricker was outstanding in her understanding of the dangers of low level radiation, from the work of Alice Stewart, Rosalie Bertell and our own Helen Caldicott.

Near the northern edge of the dams was a tidal creek, running to the Gulf.

With ultra high tides, as happened in June 1981, the dam wall could be breached, and some tailings material flushed out to sea.

As a result of FOE's submission to Hugh Hudson that the dams should be completely covered with a metre of slag — which was free — this eventually happened, five years later, in 1982. So despite all the denials — *no effect on local health, radiation levels acceptable etc* the Government by now Liberal, had to accept that the situation was unacceptable.

FOE then turned its attention to lead, another toxic material. The town was too close to the smelter. Much controversy led to tighter controls over lead burning materials passing from the smelter into the town environs, leading to lead absorption and especially, possible harmful effects on children.

The uranium treatment plant area remains as an eyesore, a relic of an unsavory episode in the life of the town. At one time, the Council were advertising it as a *suitable piece of real estate* for prospective industries. Valuable indeed — not at all.

So the lessons were that citizens must join together at grassroots level on local issues. Put pressure on politicians. FOE proved to be the medium for this. And South Australia's problem has now been transferred to a much bigger one in Kakadu.

*Bert King, is now an activist with Friends of the Earth Collingwood.*

## Friends of the Earth Sydney University

FOE Sydney University has been a small but enduring group, which has concentrated on providing a forum for speakers and helping to spread awareness of environmental issues. It is also a contact point for people at the University who are interested in environmental issues to meet people with similar perspectives.

Our most active and memorable year was 1984 when we took part in the Roxby Downs blockade. The preparations for the blockade, such as the non-violent action training weekend, helped strengthen the group. Many of us formed close friendships which was fortunate because twenty of us spent three days crammed together on the bus. The blockade itself was a powerful ex-

perience due to the energy of the blockaders, the overpowering atmosphere of the desert and the chance to express our anger against uranium mining.

This year we have hosted speakers on woodchipping and rainforests, sewage pollution of Sydneys beaches, and Val Plumwood spoke on environmental philosophy and Kakadu. A member of the group, Andrew, attended the Ecopolitics Conference in Tasmania in May and gave a paper on environmental theology. Another member, Barbara, has prepared a submission to the Department of Main Roads about Sydney's road program. We hope to concentrate more on urban environment issues, which have become even more compelling since the Sydney City Council was sacked by the State Government in March, to the glee of the developers. Our other main project is to start a paper recycling project on campus.

*David Vincent, FOE Sydney University*

## Friends of the Earth Williamstown

In early 1985 a small group of people interested in the objectives of Friends of the Earth decided to form a local branch in Williamstown, South Australia. Although a low profile group we have spent much time and energy working on two different levels. Wherever possible we try to support the initiatives of the Adelaide, National and International FOE. We also concentrate on the local issues. Such as:

- Council usage of herbicide.
- Local watchdog on proposed expansion of timber mill in residential area.
- Actively campaigning to save specific trees and encouraging replanting.
- Propagating plants for sale.

We have produced a comprehensive booklet about the Williamstown area which includes local information as well as activities with an environmental focus for families and children.

When our group first began in this small rural community we were viewed with suspicion, however we are now seen in a more positive light so much so that we are being approached by groups and individuals for advice on environmental related issues.

*Deborah Madgen, Friends of the Earth Williamstown*

'*Chain Reaction* is the quarterly magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia, publishing feature articles and news on national and international environmental issues, and searching for the way towards a sustainable, convivial society which lives in harmony with its environment.' *Chain Reaction* Vol. 3, No. 1, 1976

'We were talking about activism, and how to evaluate its effectiveness. Judging activism by its media coverage alone seems to ring quite hollow. One of the things that I've discovered is the value of having fun as an objective, while being politically and environmentally active . . . just the buzz from standing up to all those authorities I was told to respect without question from childhood. It is this enjoyment of the experience of activism which I value beyond most other aspects, and it is this aspect which is almost always overlooked by people discussing the subject.'

*Chain Reaction* Vol. 5, No. 1, 1979. *Micheal Russo discussing Rolf Heimann's journey of protest, on the yacht La Flor, against French nuclear testing in the Pacific, which he considered to be one of the great success stories of activism.*

# Election Rundown

The Federal election has been the focus of much attention lately so *Larry O'Loughlin* scanned the election offerings to come up with some highlights and offer some opinions.

The election for all members of the Federal Parliament on 11 July will not go down in history as one of the more exciting, as it was not called to decide issues, but to take opportunities to attain power.

If the ALP loses, the ensuing theoretical struggle in the party would be to come up with credible excuses. I can remember Federal elections since 1975 and it seems to me that the ALP never had it so good. Most media outlets are giving them a dream run; 'financial indicators' are picking up just nicely at the right time; the Opposition parties are proceeding as if they have two right feet, both in their mouth; there is no opposition from the major national organisations which exist such as the ACTU, or the ACF, and there are no

strong organisations in key areas such as among students or the Left; and the ALP itself is giving a good impression of being united, especially with the prospect of at least four new Ministers after the election.

On the other hand, the ALP has probably never done more to deserve to lose. The litany of their crimes almost fades into the recesses of my memory as the latest outrage or three emerges. I was an ALP member when Hawke became Prime Minister four weeks after winning an uncontested leadership ballot following the resignation of Bill Hayden. At first we called for the implementation of 'Party Policy' — a quaint phrase often used back then — then we started to rumble with discontent as we saw moves to ignore that policy, and then we could do nothing

but join the public protests which started to build over issues such as: support for the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the refusal to give humanitarian aid to Vietnam, the use of the 'Hogg amendment' to allow the mining of uranium at Roxby Downs, financial deregulation, the use of the Accord to cut real wages without respecting the Social Wage parts of the deal, the refusal to introduce national Land Rights legislation, the cutback in child care centre places after keeping to their commitments at first, the sale of uranium to France, the axing of the dole to 16 and 17 year olds, and the threat of the Australia Card.

Everyone would have a list of things they think the ALP has done wrong, but even my own shortened list above would not have been enough in itself to stop me voting ALP. The real problem is that I feel that there are very few other ways that I can affect their exercise of power. I am unconvinced by arguments that the others would be worse because the distinction between bad and worse has blurred, and there can be no guarantee that the ALP will not adopt more of the Liberal-National Party policies after the election.

There are things to do with this election that won't leave a bitter taste in the mouth. There are good candidates in a number of areas, especially the Senate with 'progressive' candidates in most States.

The Democrats, as Roman Orzanski puts it, 'are turning greener by the bushel as conservative elements leave' (*Chain Reaction* 49) and deserve con-



16 Chain Reaction

## HOW TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES YOU WANT

The usual way of voting in Australian elections is to express preferences and for these preferences to be distributed to eventually go towards electing some candidates. This is a reasonably good system if all the candidates you express a preference for are candidates you would like to be in Parliament. But with 255 candidates for the 76 Senate seats and 613 candidates for the 148 House of Representative places, there are bound to be some stinkers, and your vote might get to them without any of your favoured candidates being elected.

There are a number of ways around this problem. One way is not to vote (although there may be other reasons for not voting). Either don't turn up at all, or go through the motions of voting, and mess up your ballot paper.

A new way has emerged for people to vote only for the candidates they want, following changes to the *Electoral Act*. The system is different in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

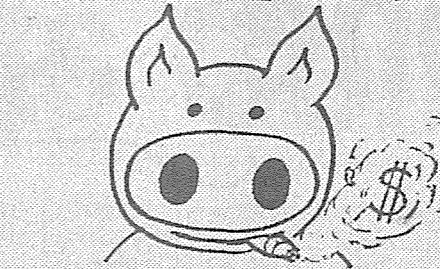
### SENATE

It is possible to 'ticket vote' in the Senate where you indicate by a single tick or cross that you support the preferences already registered by the party of your choice. This is the only time you can use a tick or cross, all other ballots must be marked by num-

bers. However, they tend to be parliamentary-oriented and have failed to deliver in the past on environment-related issues such as repealing section 45d of the *Trades Practices Act*. This repeal may have done more to stop the export of uranium than any other pious resolution, because it would have removed legal restriction on unions applying 'secondary boycotts'.

The Nuclear Disarmament Party has re-emerged for the election, although it has not been visible doing grass roots work since the last election, and seems not to have addressed the issue of how it relates to the environment movement. I will not trust anyone who does not have a record of some sort to judge, or processes for relating to people outside the party.

WHOEVER YOU VOTE FOR



A POLITICIAN GETS IN!

If you decide not to 'ticket vote' then fill in your preferences, numbered accordingly, on the lower part of the ballot paper.

For your vote to be valid, you must have a clear first preference, using the number '1'. Then you must also place numbers in at least 90 per cent of the remaining boxes. However, you need not use the traditional order of preferences — 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. — so long as they are proper numbers they are valid. You could vote '1' for your candidate then '2' or '10' or whatever for everyone else. Or you could vote '1,2,3...' until you run out of good candidates, then put the same number in the other boxes.

This system was introduced to reduce the number of invalid votes which occurred in the last election, where there was a multitude of candidates, and it was quite possible to mistakenly use the same number twice. So, there may be some dispute about the effect of these changes as they were not intended to allow you to vote only for those candidates you want. The Australian Electoral Office will be looking closely at its Act but it is quite likely it will not be able to stop people voting for their candidates in this election. Changes to the Act will almost certainly occur after the election.

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The system is similar to the Senate, except that there is no 'ticket vote', and you must express a preference in 100 per cent of the boxes (except for the last, which will be assumed). For your vote to be valid, you must have a clear first preference, using the number '1'. Then you must also place numbers in the remaining boxes.

### SLOGANS AND STICKERS

You may place slogans and stickers on your ballot paper, provided they do not obscure your voting intention. So long as your preferences are not obscured, your vote will be valid.

George Georges would be my favorite candidate of any in Australia and he has a good chance of being elected. He is standing in Queensland with a good 8 point program, which includes peace and disarmament, civil and industrial rights (especially against the Australia Card), Aboriginal rights, free education, return of privatised public enterprises to public control, and the environment. He is also supporting animal rights and has strong support from groups in this area.

Senator Jo Vallentine will again contest the Senate in Western Australia where she heads a 'Vallentine Peace Group' (VPG) ticket. The VPG platform stresses disarmament and has been widened to include social justice and environment issues.

Michael Mansell, who is Director of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Centre, will put himself forward as a candidate in the Senate who will represent those people who don't get a voice under the current system; recognition of Aboriginal sovereignty will be one of his major themes.

One hope we have is that Paul Keating will win in his seat. That is, the real Paul Keating, who is also Secretary of the Community Radio Federation. He is running against the Treasurer, the imposter Paul Keating, in the seat of Blaxland, and has a chance, as he is above the imposter on the ballot paper.

And finally, people have the opportunity of not voting or voting to deplete your preferences as quickly as possible (see *How to vote for the candidates you want*).

# ACF takes the bone

VOTE FOR THE FORESTS  
BECAUSE ONLY YOUR VOTE CAN SAVE THEM.



By Larry O'Loughlin

One of the most publicised of the Hawke Government's secret political strategies has been its attempt to use environment issues to win votes. It gained votes in the 1983 election when the damming of the Franklin River was an issue, but lost many due to the influence of the Nuclear Disarmament Party in 1985. Party strategists recognised the value of these votes and believed that they could be won by relatively cheap means.

A number of things revealed this ploy as hollow. The Government announced that it would allow the resumption of sales to France, despite the fact that France had not ceased testing nuclear weapons in the Pacific. The Government also went very slowly on the issues of the Daintree Rainforest and Kakadu National Park — both areas where the Federal Government had powers to act to prevent or limit despoliation. And finally, the environment movement seemed to have started to see its issues as being more than trees and furry animals by being involved in conferences and discussions on a wide range of issues such as Land Rights and civil liberties.

However, the body which regards itself as 'a national organisation that is active on all major conservation issues including the Great Barrier Reef, forests, toxic waste, nuclear issues, arid Australia and Kakadu' has now decided to endorse the election of the Labor Party in the Federal Election.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has also decided to endorse the election of the Democrats, and some independent candidates in Western Australia, in the Senate.

It is interesting to note the ACF's publications on the election. They first announced that the organisation would be campaigning on the theme 'Vote for the Forests' and that the members of the Foundation's Council were being polled to decide ACF's position. That vote was taken and the following reasons were put forward:

- if a Liberal-National Party Government was elected, Australia would have to kiss goodbye much of our natural heritage including the wet tropic rainforests of Queensland, other native forests, parts of Kakadu, Shelburne Bay, Fraser Island, and even the Franklin River;
- the Liberal Party announcements last week that they would abolish the Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and grants to the Australian Conservation Foundation and other bodies show how little the Liberal Party cares for the environment and those who want it protected.

The ACF media release goes on:

Although the ALP has made some decisions we disagree with, their policies are overwhelmingly better than the Liberal-National Parties. And the Democrats are needed in the Senate to force Governments to introduce bills protecting the environment and to stop Governments pushing through anti-environment bills.

ACF plans to hold public meetings, distribute leaflets and 'campaign heavily on the ground'. A special newsletter will be produced (contact your nearest ACF office or call, toll free, 008-33-8928 for your copy). Their major effort will be in marginal seats in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart and Adelaide.

It is very good to see the ACF getting organised and making a splash in the media but I believe they are very wrong in supporting the ALP. I have my reasons:

- ACF has ignored the Government's total environment record, and it has demonstrated it can be insular and single-issue oriented. It is also going against the trend in most other parts of the environment movement of seeking to have a more holistic view of the environment;
- although only 10 per cent of its annual budget comes from Federal Government grants, it does look as though this has gone towards buying the ACF's electoral support;
- if you were going to support a parliamentary party for its environmental record, you would support the Democrats, and in the ACF material they come second, with most focus on marginal seats which the Democrats are not contesting;
- like it or not, it is possible that the Liberals and the Nationals could win Government and ACF's lobbying ability would be severely reduced, although the organisation would then be able to re-assess its role vis-a-vis governments.

If ACF is going to gain credibility in the environment movement as *the* national organisation then it is going to have to do more than circulate lots of bits of papers about saving trees. ACF must be prepared to take an overall view of the environment and take a stand everywhere there is an issue of concern, not just where there is obvious public support for a particular issue.

Larry O'Loughlin is a member of the Chain Reaction collective

# The Fight for the Forests Continues

The West Australian Government has just released the drafts of a timber strategy for managing the states forests for the next ten years. The plan is not as good for the forests as all the publicity that surrounds it suggests. Basil Schur reports.

In April 1987 the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) released drafts of 10 year management plans and an associated timber strategy for Western Australia's south west forests. It also launched a public relations campaign with the claim that 'if the plans and timber strategy are accepted, 520 000 hectares could be added to parks and reserves for conservation and recreation . . . that is a 300 per cent increase.' The aim of this article is to reveal that this claim is nothing short of an attempted hoax on the public and that in fact the draft timber plans represent a backward step for forest conservation in Western Australia.

The categories of proposed conservation reserve now include 'National Park', 'Forest Park/Reserve', and 'Nature Reserve'. State Forest Parks would be similar in status to National Parks but smaller in area. Forest Parks are termed conservation areas by CALM but in many cases would have areas zoned for logging and other commercial exploitation. It is proposed that all these 'reserves' have 'A'-class security of tenure and purpose.

Virtually all areas proposed for conservation under these management plans are already supposedly being

managed for conservation. In fact the area reserved for conservation appears to decline under the new draft management proposals. According to the draft Timber Industry Strategy (p34), 116 000 hectares of karri forest is to be 'production forest' as is 1 257 420 hectares of jarrah forest. For karri forest this amounts to about 69 per cent of the publicly owned karri forest and is much more than the 50 per cent previously claimed by the government to be reserved for conservation. The claim that the draft plans propose an increase in conservation areas is thus false and an attempt to deceive the public.

However, there are good proposals to upgrade the status of a number of important areas to Nature Reserves or National Parks. For example, national park proposals cover the Shannon River Basin, Wattle/Soho forest blocks and Ludlow Tuart forest. These improvements represent a welcome step in the right direction towards proper conservation of Western Australia's forest heritage.

But there are major problems with the reserve system proposed. The old 'management priority area' (MPA) system has been abandoned and most of the old conservation and recreation MPA's (with some boundary modifications) are to become Forest Parks/Reserves. The 'Forest Park/Reserves' which would have timber production zones include the Lane Poole in the Murray River Valley, Blackwood, Boranup and other areas in the central region. These 'Forest Parks' thus represent nothing more than 'Claytons' reserves. This category of reserve, as proposed, is little more than a recipe for future land use conflicts.

There are other proposed changes in vesting to particular areas which are anti-conservation. For example, CALM

proposes to vest the Kent River catchment reserve as State Forest, with production therefore a principal priority. It also wants to downgrade areas of State Forest in the Northcliffe area to vacant Crown Land. This move has sinister implications and these areas could be alienated for agriculture, in alleged compensation for private land acquired by CALM for pine plantations.

Under the draft plans, over two-thirds of the public forest estate would be State Forests and would have timber and water production as principal priorities. These areas would have A-class vesting for these purposes.

The management practices to be applied in State Forests would remain unreformed, despite intense public criticism over the last 10 years and scientific evidence pointing to the adverse impact of these practices. Short rotation prescribed burning, large scale clearfelling of the mature karri and virtual clearfelling of the jarrah would continue unabated. Thinning operations would be increased considerably, in both jarrah and karri forests, and road, river and stream reserves would be 'selectively' logged.

Much stronger measures should be taken to retain what mature native forests remain because of their irreplaceable ecological and social values. This requires major reform of current intensive forestry practices which are rapidly converting Western Australia's mature forests to regrowth tree farms. A new system of land use planning in State Forests should involve zoning State Forests to indicate where wood production is a subordinate land use to conservation and such uses as recreation, scientific research, education and catchment protection. But, most important, improvements are needed to the proposed reserve system.

CALM's proposed 'Forest Parks' should become national parks or nature reserves. Additional important areas of karri forest near Pemberton such as Hawke, Beavis and Giblett need to be reserved as do areas in the northern jarrah forest. The justification and detailed maps for these additional reserves are presented in the books *Karri at the Crossroads* and *Wandoo Woodland Conservation*.

Far more extensive ecological and heritage assessment research is needed in Western Australia's forests to establish what further additions to the reserve system may be required. Thus the option to reserve further areas of state forest from wood production should remain open.

The 'draft' timber strategy contains proposals to radically increase the intensity of exploitation of Western Australia's native forests on both public and private land. It places profits before environment, completely neglects major ecological problems already being expressed in our forests, and is geared towards increasing production and consumption of wood products both in Western Australia and overseas. Its concern with 'sustainability' is purely motivated by the dictates of commercial wood production.

The few good proposals in the strategy include:

- an emphasis on further processing of native hardwoods
- increasing the royalties paid by industry
- the establishment of a hardwood share-farming scheme that, if it was entirely confined to already cleared land, would have merit.
- regulation of the level of cutting by changing the allowable cut to include all sawlogs taken, not just first grade logs.

However, it also contains many undesirable proposals and policies. It would commit CALM to:

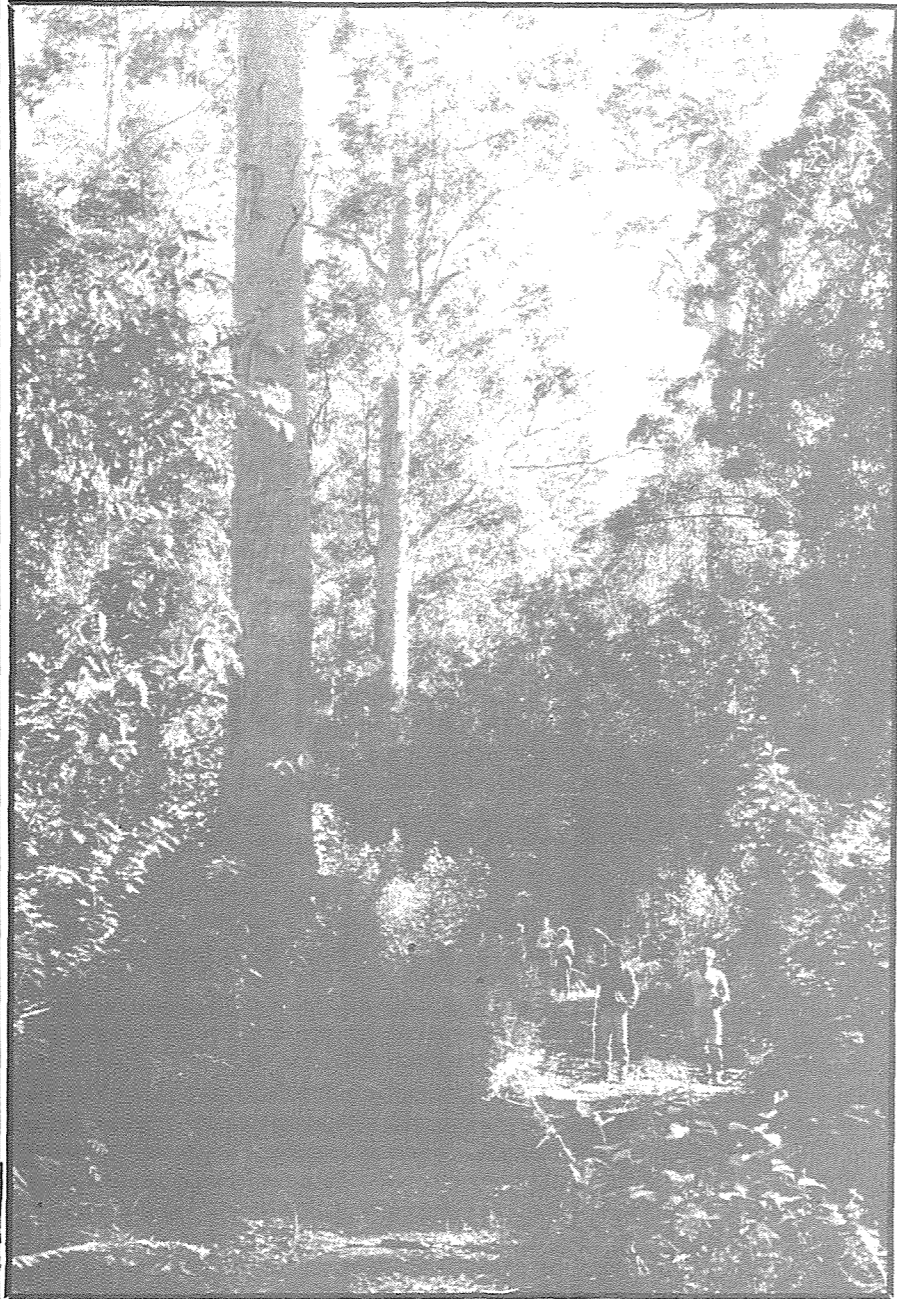
- maintaining environmentally unsound clearfelling and virtual clearfelling techniques
- intensifying logging in important water catchment areas
- strongly promoting intensive logging and thinning operations as a means of converting mature native forests into even aged regrowth wood farms
- maintaining present levels of WACAP's State Forest woodchipping

- supporting, in principle, McLeans Sawmills' woodchip proposal
- providing support for increased logging of privately owned forests
- endorsing environmentally unsound 'jarrah residue' industrial projects such as the Wundowie silicon smelter/charcoal proposal
- providing 10-15 year contracts to a few big timber companies such as Bunnings Ltd, with no improvement in log allocation for small sawmillers
- encouraging expanded export of hardwoods (either as industrial firewood/woodchips or as value added

wood products).

- remaining as a captured bureaucracy serving the needs of the timber industry at the expense of other forest values.

The draft strategy ought to have considered how to restructure and reduce the scale of the woodchipping industry away from being predominantly based on chip logs from mature forests to, instead, full dependency on sawmill residue and plantation resources. As well it could have discussed:



Mature Karri forest near Pemberton, soon to be clear-felled

BASIL SCHUR



- reduced consumption and increased recycling of wood products
- the log allocation system, fundamental changes are required to favour labour-intensive, efficient, competitive, small sawmillers
- encouraging the substitution of certain low value wood products with other materials
- increasing the use of karri as a sawlog and plantation species
- reducing the export of Western Australian hardwoods
- halting the continued loss of native forests from private land and ensuring that it is conserved
- accelerating the rate of privately funded plantation establishment on already cleared land
- providing opportunities proposed to allow for regular public reviews of the timber industry and forest management

The deficiencies in the draft timber strategy are so serious, and so many problems and questions remain unresolved, that there is an overwhelming case for the government to initiate an independent public inquiry into the woodchip/timber industries and forest management in Western Australia. Such an inquiry appears to be one of the few avenues open to the conservation movement to prevent CALM committing the Government to an irretrievable and disastrous plan of management for Western Australia's precious forest estate.

Basil Schur is with the Australian Conservation Foundation in Perth as a Research Officer.

# Rainforest Bashing in Daintree

The blockade at the site of the then proposed Cape Tribulation Road brought national and international attention to the threatened despoliation of the Daintree rainforest. Alex Colley compiled this article from correspondence with people maintaining the original blockade site.

The original blockade site still has a band of dedicated conservationists carrying on a long battle against all odds. The site, supported by the Greater Daintree Action Centre, is the best thing going for the rainforest issue in North Queensland. It has remained a thorn in the side of the Douglas Shire Council who are still producing media releases condemning the dirty greenies of Cape Tribulation to smokescreen the rainforest issue.

Recent observations on the Bloomfield Road, the so-called 'tunnel through the rainforest section' from Cape Tribulation to Emmagen, reveal

that the canopy is cracked almost right down to the beach in places and is a mess. The invasive vine *Maremia elata* has taken a stranglehold on much of the roadside forest verge from Cape Tribulation to Emmagen. The steep hillside is slumping badly and the many standing dead trees and smashed trunks make an ugly sight. There have been many vehicle accidents and there is a large amount of litter including dumped cars as well as the usual beer cans and smashed Coke bottles.

The Council's ultimate intention is to turn this road into a bitumenised section of highway one. They are declaring this

all the time and arranged a visit from Ian Sinclair in the pouring rain and managed to get along about two kilometres of the new road. This was sufficient for him to announce his support for further works to the tune of millions of dollars, should his coalition win the next election.

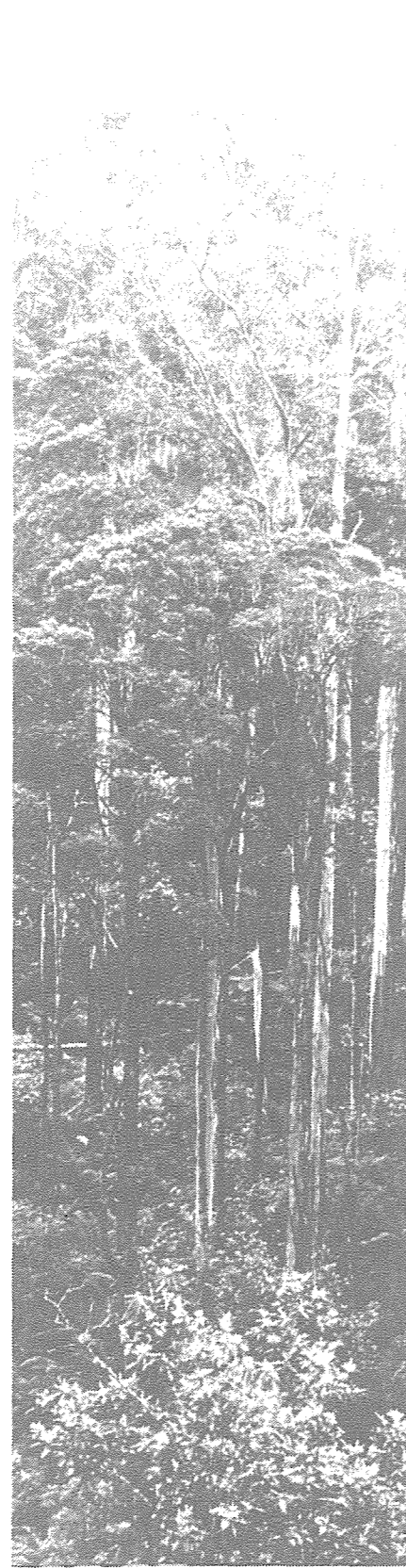
A gravel pit is planned for Emmagen Creek — Cape Tribulation's Garden of Eden — and a works depot as a bulkhead is in store in the wilderness at the base of Cowie Range.

It seems no one camps or walks up the coast anymore. Gone are the droves of walkers on the Bloomfield Track and

it is scandalous that two years since the blockade, camping is still illegal in Cape Tribulation National Park. Youth hostel travellers don't stay long in Cape Tribulation now. Invariably they are disappointed, having no walking track for retreat from the dangers of the road. There is no free campsite anywhere in the vicinity. If they camp at Emmagen the police harass them and in the National Park the ranger, whose job was once to guide people into the forest, now has his hands full hunting people out. People just *do* the road and drive back to their motels to talk about it. Cape Tribulation is just another place along the road to the many speeding, inconsiderate, 4WD tourists, although the road is still only a fair weather track and becomes inaccessible when the wet returns and Donovan's Hill runs like a red river onto the reef.

It was sad to watch lots of speeding trailbikes. The swimming pool at Tachalbadga has been ruined and the campsite ripped out by a bulldozer. The whole creek has been nearly sucked dry by water trucks. And at the bottom of Donovan's Range a bulldozer set upon the creek in a most disgusting manner. The best example of pollution of fresh water supplies is Melissa Creek at North Cowie. The run off from the Cowie Range has filled the bottom of the best fresh water supply in the whole area with sediment to a general depth of 6 inches. The water is distasteful and takes hours to settle after a brief wade in the pool. These creeks are becoming health hazards, and it is suspected that a 1986 malaria outbreak at Cape Tribulation was facilitated by the declining water quality.

One Sunday we observed about 100 vehicles on the road. We stopped at South Cowie and watched ten or twelve other 4WDs pull in to be stuffed with coconuts. Ugly campsites made by 4WDs are being knocked in beside creek crossings such as Emmagen and the Woobadda, but the worst example of campsite destruction is the disaster to have befallen the best natural campsite in Bloomfield at the causeway crossing. A bulldozer has run in and flattened an area on both sides of the river which before was extremely picturesque. It is becoming a sort of rest area for 4WDs. We sat at the causeway all afternoon and watched a herd of cattle trying to cross but continually being repulsed by horn-blowing ignoramuses in 4WDs.



The Aboriginal kids came down to swim but were chased away by the traffic. The huge monster belonging to AAT Kings and Austrek stopped there for an hour with about 30 mums and dads milling around with cameras and videos — it's a real circus. If they had seen the place before, they would cry to see it now.

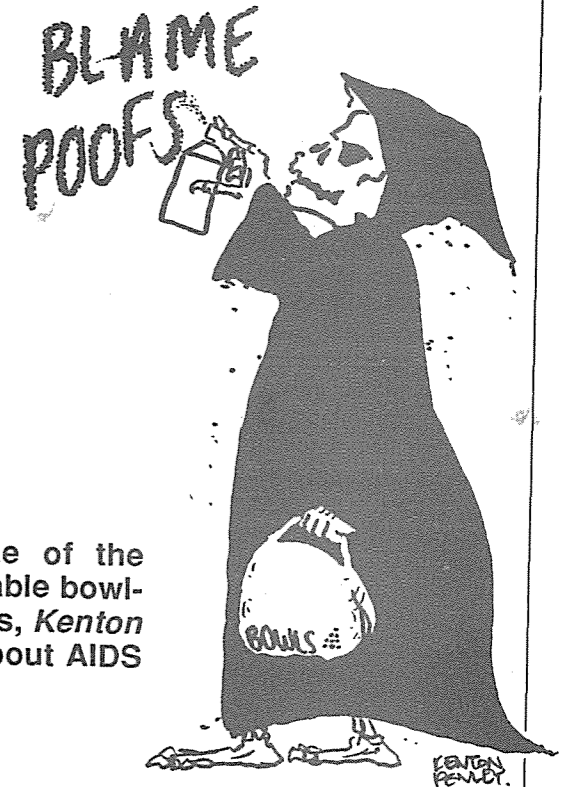
There may well be some surprises in store for the Council though as it digs itself into a deeper hole. The road has already been the source of a major bushfire that destroyed property and hundreds of hectares of forest in the Bloomfield-Kangaji Bay area. This has raised the ire of locals, who, despite a 60 per cent increase in rates in the last three years, are provided with no services apart from a road they did not want and do not need.

Honney, the local rainforest dingo that used to visit the place was run over and killed. That made everyone mad. The road is a major disturbance to wildlife. It is common to find dead monitor lizards and to hear startled wildlife. The forest is still in shock, for every time a vehicle travels the new road it is as though the forest has been raped yet another time. The Council now intends to allow the natural revegetation of the Bloomfield Road verge, i.e. two-thirds of what the greenies were trying to prevent from being destroyed in 1984. This leaves us exasperated as to why they cleared it in the first place.

The original blockade site still attracts a many to stop, sign petitions and talk about the issue. We have seen two busloads of tourists line up without murmuring a word to sign the world heritage petition.

Warwick Purser has been appointed as Director of Tourism for Far North Queensland and favours anything which enhances World Heritage Status for Daintree, because it would provide 'international recognition that would greatly enhance tourism' — true enough if the natural features of the area were preserved. He is opposed by Councillor Mijo who can't bear to lose rateable land. There has been a considerable drop in the flow of State funds, which was about \$250,000 a year when the road was built. Funding is now on a dollar for dollar basis with the Council. The Federal Government refuses to give any money for such an environmental disaster.

# Straightening a Bent Disease



According to a current advertising campaign, one of the greatest threats to human life is being hit by unavoidable bowling balls. But while Death has them rolling in the aisles, *Kenton Penley* takes a serious look at some of the things about AIDS the ads missed.

Apart from giving the Grim Reaper a status almost as notorious as the Dingo, what did the television advertisement accomplish? Certainly not the suggested aim: to warn the entire community that we are all at risk and to educate everyone in ways of avoiding the AIDS virus and preventing its spread. What we have been left with is an under-informed and panicked nation of people who are, in their present stage of denial, re-perceiving AIDS as an unwanted gay plague.

O yea verily, with the most moribund of medieval imagery, foreboding tones warned us that more people than World War II are sure to perish unless the disease is held in check. Babies spun in mid-air and the grating chuckle of Death filled us with a loathing for the enemy — an enemy to be terrified of, judging from the concerned citizens at the business end of the bowling alley, but not an enemy that the advertisement identified clearly.

As a worker on the AIDS information hotline set up by NACAIDS in Adelaide, it was my experience that the instantly controversial campaign succeeded admirably... in terrifying people and putting sensible education about AIDS back into the Dark Ages. A small percentage of the populace contacted the hotline number, barely legible at the bottom of the screen after the Reaper faded into grisly mists. Most of these people were alarmed at the level of crisis, truly these figures of 50,000 people infected with the virus seemed to have leapt from nowhere, and anxious to know if they might have caught the disease.

If it was unlikely that they had, how might they avoid it? Should they stop inviting their male homosexual friends to dinner? Can they still drink from the communion cup? What about mosquitoes biting their children and infecting them? What about, I ask, a responsible television campaign?

Hugh Mackay, director of the Centre for Communication Studies, worded it well in his *Times on Sunday* article: 'The AIDS ad is so frightening, you can't hear a word it's saying.'

After years of experimentation and millions of research dollars, the advertising industry now knows that shock-horror gets short-term attention which quickly fades unless the emotional arousal it creates is instantly channeled into positive behaviour.

... No doubt, the next phase of the campaign will be more explicit and informative about strategies for preventing infection by the AIDS virus.

... In the absence of this kind of information, a great emotional vacuum will be created in the community. If NACAIDS doesn't fill it quickly, it will be filled either by a strong emotional barrier against involvement in the horror, or by an outpouring of moral outrage which will completely mask the hygiene issue.

*Kenton Penley works as an AIDS counsellor in Adelaide.*

This is beginning to happen, with slim strands of discontent weaving their way to public attention. Michael Gawenda in *The Age*, (2 May 1987), was among the first to counter the general public emphasis of the Reaper's intentions. He noted that 'Most of the evidence in Australia suggests that the AIDS virus has not yet spread beyond the high risk groups — homosexual men and, to a much lesser extent, IV drug users.'

On the AIDS Information hotline, 'drug users' is the accepted term, over the morally laden 'drug abusers' in more common use. However, 'high risk groups' is a phrase we also want to obliterate. Firstly, it denies the reality that every sexually active person is currently at risk if not practising Safe Sex. Secondly, it perpetuates the myth of 'high risk groups' over 'high risk behaviours', the phrase that should be emphasised. Homosexual men infected with the disease did not catch the virus because they are gay, but rather, because some of the sexual practices they engaged in allowed for the transmission of the virus. I've found that the easiest way to shock an audience in an AIDS education talk is not to mention fist fucking, as certain governmental educators are wont to do when they notice people's attention slipping, but to tell them that not all gays have anal sex.

When AIDS first splashed on to the banner headlines and eyewitness news services of this country, it was perpetually presented as being a gay focused disease. As John O'Hara in *Metro* put it:

One key response has been the development of a syndrome of horror, shock and anger. The horror is expressed in descriptions of what are represented as bizarre sexual practices; shock that the disease could happen unchecked in an era of high-tech medicine and nothing much else to believe in, and anger at the group held responsible. (*Metro* Spring 1986).

The disease became a moral retribution on homosexuals and, later, drug users. There was a divine justice after all, bringing punishment as fittingly ugly as the perverted practices of those foolish enough to have turned their backs on the clear moral guidelines offered by such saviours as the Reverend Fred. If there is justice, it is a perverted twist of the universe that we gays, alongside other conscientious workers, are now doing our best to educate the whole of the population, many of whom

would have delighted in our damnation by disease. Try to avoid developing a cynical attitude when people and news services which previously scoffed or reported deaths of homosexual men with indifference, now talk in fearful tones: now that it is a disease that affects all of us.

On the whole gays responded well to the challenges the disease posed. AIDS is like the video industry, beyond the conception of our supposedly culturally advanced minds of the late-seventies, but now by necessity a gritty daily reality. AIDS is far less visible though, and arguably more dangerous. Homosexual men, generally only drawn in clusters by either a shared sexual drive or an inexplicable need to endure tacky drag shows in low lit venues suddenly became 'the gay community'. Safe sex was treated as a joke until deaths of people we knew made it or celibacy the only choice.

Thrown over the edge of a precipice and realising we'd better learn how to fly, and quickly, gay men developed networks, fought for funding, developed new ways of infighting, took on the ridiculous role of people who have to wear condoms during intercourse (hadn't we all become gay to avoid just that?) and then to handle the extra bashings (somehow not reported by the mainstream media, some of which might have carried the headlines or reports that encouraged the beatings of pooftas), and the re-rejection of homosexuals by society.

These people you could invite along to dinner parties to ensure Oscar Wildean wit, or rely on to trim your hair, or, although you weren't aware, could be the people who sold you beer, fixed your phones, or lent you money, suddenly became a danger. Homosexuals became the Other, as attractive as plague-carrying black rats, a threat now not only to the economically self-serving nuclear family and the innocence of children, but to your health as well. When the first heterosexual victims of AIDS made it to public attention, the hysterical focusing of blame grew worse. These people became 'innocent' victims as opposed to the 'guilty' bastards who had so obviously gone out of their way to contract the disease.

The mythical edgings of society don't hold so fast and true however. Mr Quite-Happy-As-Father-of-Three-and-On-His-Way-Up-at-the-Office knows

that it will threaten his marriage and job security if anyone suspects the attraction he feels towards people of his own sex. So he will get his jollies at the toilet of his train station on the way back from work, never pausing, probably, to consider the irony that other people's disgust at the circumstances under which he has sex with men is one of the main contributing factors towards those circumstances. If this gentleman, and the thousands like him, can't face the homosexual aspects of their nature, how are they ever expected to make sure the sex they don't want to admit to is safe.

So many men ringing our service identify themselves as straight after talking of their male-male sexual encounters. So many heterosexual men



and women, fearful of possible consequences of secret affairs beyond their partners' knowledge rang for reassurance of any sort. Michael Gawenda made at least one interesting point in his article when he said:

AIDS is appallingly fascinating; for all the talk of the sexual revolution in the last two decades, it has been AIDS which has allowed us — forced us — to publicly discuss aspects of sexuality in a way which was impossible just a short time ago. And what that discussion has revealed is that there is so much of which we are ignorant.

How many homosexual men are there in Australia? ... How many of them are married and keep their bisexuality a secret? ... How many gay men also have heterosexual relationships? ... Who does what to whom and how often?

Regardless of the sources of the leap the disease has taken from minority hosts to that great big tupperware party of society, the cold hard fact is that it has happened. The danger now though, is that those Government bodies and community leaders taking up the fight seem to be ignoring the lessons available from the homosexuals' part in the battle, to the extent that they are undoing some of the good that has been done.

This slip shod public education has

done little to dispel the myths of the early eighties: it is doubtful that anyone exposed to government education would be able to tell you the difference between someone who has AIDS, and someone who is infected with the virus, or even that the virus is only transmittable by sexual fluids or blood. Anyone observing Dr Scott Cameron in action for example, would be horrified to be hearing a South Australian Government official 'educating' people that QANTAS stewards were the main sources of transmitting AIDS from Australia to

Singapore. If this man, in a medical talk to Aboriginal Community Health workers, insists on using value laden homophobic terms, what hope is there for those he 'teaches', or others like them?

The crime in misinformation is in not catering to the thirst for real knowledge that people have. They are left with a void to fill, and with myths and rumours being far more readily available than the latest sensible data, the consequences are disastrous. Pointing to the multitude of AIDS carriers as being homosexual men, many are now turning their backs on the validity of, say, what the advert has told them. People are letting themselves ignore the value of the current campaign as a preventative one, that if they don't have the disease they should avoid it, because it hasn't been packaged effectively as such. In a country where you are advised not to show how to use a condom on television, there can be no effective safe sex education.

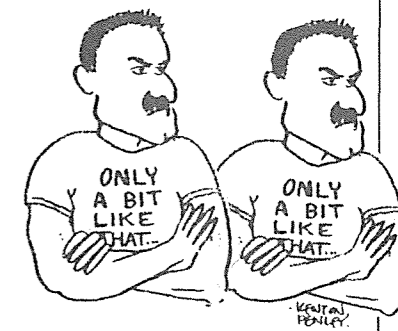
I'm not advocating corruption of youth either, whatever that implies exactly. The best safe sex education for gay men points at the value of kissing and fondling, puts an emphasis on sensuality, and even, in some quarters, faintly suggests that emotional involvement may heighten sexual activities.

Part of what is filling the void is a dreadful denial. It isn't a heterosexual disease: how dare the advert suggest children get AIDS. Although the City Council will deny it, Wagga Wagga has the highest count of AIDS victims outside of Sydney. It is not important for the purposes of my argument to suggest why. What is important is the ongoing cover-up, the need for the place to try and disguise the fact that their hospitals are full and that they are constantly offloading sufferers to Sydney, one could almost imagine under the cover of darkness. In Melbourne we have about forty-seven children under the age of nine with AIDS in the wards. Denial of these realities is a denial of needed facilities.

As with rape and incest there has been an irrational blaming of the victims. This does nothing to lower the number of rape and incest occurrences, and it will do nothing toward reducing the transmission of AIDS. I have my personal hates, and these are a few of my Least Favourite Things.

- The present governments' thoroughly inadequate, sensationalist, non-informative campaign on AIDS.
- Gay men who adopt the Elsie attitude, (in the song 'Life is a Caberet Old Chum', she was 'the happiest corpse I'd ever seen'), and are determined to enjoy life to its fullest, including unsafe sex.
- Anyone who suggests taking the test for the AIDS virus antibodies, as if, in any way, this is going to help the person beyond telling them whether or not they may be carrying the virus. Urges to 'have the test' are produced with a sincerity that is reassuring, meaning that it denies Western medicine's inability to present a cure.
- People who suggest isolation of the virus carriers, those who are HIV positive, ignoring that as long as AIDS can't be transmitted by casual contact, but other viral infections that can destroy a body without an immune system can, HIV positive people are in more danger, health wise, from them.

AIDS boils down to a simple question of life and death, and the quality thereof. I'm afraid that in my heated reaction against the Reaper campaign I've slipped into adopting its simplistic life versus death arguments. There are many ways to die; the manners which AIDS makes possible are among the worst. To decide against death or suffering where it can be prevented, is to desire a quality of life. Like most people, I'd like relative quality in my life, that is, as full as limits allow. AIDS is only another limitation, it can be avoided, the rest of our lives can be enjoyed. Learn about AIDS, lobby for a sensible education of people by the government or whatever, just please, if you're at all doing so, stop hoping or pretending that it was only ever a gay plague and will remain so. To do so is possibly to ask for a bowling date with the Grim Reaper.



# Chernobyl — the Meltdown Reaction

It is now over a year since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. **Elizabeth Kox-Rich** is a wine grower in Luxemburg. In this interview recorded for the *Stick Together Show* on Radio 3CR she tells how the meltdown has affected the people living in Europe. For the last few years she has been one of the millions of Europeans actively opposing nuclear power.

*Why are you an opponent of nuclear power stations?*

About 13 years ago I received some literature about atomic energy, written by a Swiss anti-nuclear group. It convinced me so much that I became an opponent of atomic energy, really, from one day to the next. And besides that, I have a wine growing enterprise, and thermal contamination from an atomic power station with water cooling is a threat to the existence of our industry.

*What was the immediate reaction to the effects of Chernobyl on the European population?*

Firstly, an enormous amount of fear and a great feeling of powerlessness, which one could feel. One couldn't revoke the existence of the contamination, it was just there. And there was a great sense of helplessness... What can we eat now, and what not? Gradually, of course, this fear became somewhat suppressed; one suppressed the reality of the situation, although contamination of the ground and vegetation exists and the food chain must eventually become contaminated.

*For months after Chernobyl many anti-nuclear demonstrations took place in Western Europe. In your opinion, did the Chernobyl accident make a lasting change to the European anti-nuclear movement?*

Yes, by all means. It strengthened the movement. What also happened was that many young women became much more worried and many groups — parent and children initiatives — have arisen, like *Mothers Against Contaminated Food* and so on. And they are very active. So, the resistance has become much stronger.

*I believe many demonstrations at this time were heavily suppressed by the police, at Cattenom in France and in Germany, for example. Have the tactics of the anti-nuclear movement changed because of this or for any other reason?*

At Cattenom the police have become much more restrained. They aren't as provocative as before but that of course also depends on the demonstration. If no one infiltrates the demonstration, people who provoke confrontations, then everything proceeds peacefully. We've only had peaceful demonstrations at Cattenom.

*Have the various national nuclear industries lost credibility since the accident?*

Yes, of course. I always speak of the second nuclear accident, that the politicians want to minimise the catastrophe and the effects. One can again feel a very massive trend towards nuclear power everywhere, but mainly in Germany and France. In Germany the anti-nuclear movement is very strong but so too is the will to extend the

nuclear industry. In France the population wasn't as sensitive but they are slowly getting there. In the last poll 52 per cent of the French were against the nuclear industry. Here in Luxemburg it is 80 per cent.

*Did Chernobyl have a lasting effect on the governments and political parties of Europe?*

Actually only on the socialist and green parties. The conservatives still have a very strong pro-nuclear stance.

*Did it have any positive effect for Europeans?*

Yes, but one can't say immediately. It is somehow positive. I myself feel that I have become rehabilitated as an anti-nuclear activist. One isn't seen as a 'Luddite' or as someone who is anti-progress. They have accused us of wanting to go back to the trees! But now you can answer 'If you want to go back to the trees you can't, there aren't any left'. Because the forests are dying as well. So in this regard it's somewhat positive. All the anti-nuclear activists were proven right. But it still has to develop a whole lot in the parties and the population. The people still aren't active enough. They've all woken up but they aren't active enough to pressure the politicians.

*You are a wine grower on the Mosel in Luxemburg. What were the agricultural effects of the accident generally and on you personally?*

For us personally, nothing yet. Luxemburg was the least contaminated. We have radiation levels in the milk of 10 becquerel per litre. In Bavaria and Austria it is 100 Becquerel. In Sweden and Finland the contamination was worse. Here in Luxemburg, and in France and Portugal, it was somewhat weaker. Although the contamination isn't perhaps as life threatening as in other areas it does have some consequences. One is forced to eat everything. One just has to be careful not to buy from areas where the contamination is worse.

*I think recently there was a meeting in Luxemburg of so called experts from the European Economic Council (EEC) who wanted to raise the acceptable*

*levels to 2000 Bq/Kg. Have you heard something about that?*

In Russia an American doctor, Dr Gale, has said that people can deal with more radiation than first thought, that you can raise the 'acceptable levels'. These levels are political levels. They aren't determined for the protection of the population, they are set for flexible use so that industry can work in a flexible way. That's why they determine acceptable levels. Naturally, if they raise the levels for foodstuffs, that is a sign that foodstuffs are still highly contaminated and that they're raising the levels so that there is no economic damage for some industries.



*So you see that as somewhat cynical?*

Yes, of course, because tolerance doses begin at zero. There is no cut off level which is not dangerous.

*Would you like to say anything else?*

Yes I'd like to make an appeal to Australia not to export uranium, because uranium only causes misfortune and destruction. It would be a great help if the uranium export would be stopped. If people continually exercise moral pressure, then one eventually gets results. Here in Luxemburg we've been able to prevent an atomic power station.

The Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC) was formed in Sydney last December at a National Conference organised by the anti-bases groups in each state. Over 70 organisations were represented at this meeting and the Coalition now comprises over 100 groups nationwide.

One of the main undertakings of the Coalition this year is the organisation of a camp and protest actions at Pine Gap in October. A Coalition affiliate, the Alice Springs Peace Group (ASPG), is inviting people from all around Australia to participate in a week of forums, workshops and action culminating in non-violent direct action and civil disobedience on 19 October.

The ASPG workshops will include discussion of non-violent direct action. Intending participants are advised to form affinity groups as soon as possible, in preparation for the 19 October actions.

The Coalition expects many people to travel to Alice Springs for the October protest but also intends to organise protests in the capital cities as well as in regional areas.

#### Camping and Accommodation

The ASPG has made a block booking at the Heavitree Gap Caravan Park and Motel, where a campsite for up to 800 people has been reserved between 13 and 20 October. This caravan park is located 3 kilometres from the town centre on the banks of the Todd River. It features powered caravan sites and air-conditioned vans. The camping areas are grassed and some have electricity. There is also LPG, a large laundromat, a barbecue area, an STD phone, a swimming pool a licensed supermarket, moped and cycle hire and plenty of shady trees.

Provision has also been made for a women's space. This will not be at Heavitree Gap. Any women requiring separate accommodation can contact Glenys at the office of the Alice Springs Peace Group, phone (089) 526 782, or by writing to ASPG, PO Box 1637, Alice Springs, 5751.

# Help Close the Gap

#### Prices

Powered Sites: 1 or 2 people \$11.00 per night

Unpowered Sites: 800 booked \$3.00 per night

Motel: 80 self-contained units, 4 of which are designed for disabled people

Single ..... \$45 per night

Double ..... \$50 per night

Bookings for the caravan park and motel can be made direct to:

Heavitree Gap Motel

Ross Hwy

Alice Springs 5750

Tel (089) 524 866

Telex HEAVITAA 81032

It will be necessary to identify the group or individual as coming for the Alice Springs Peace Group activities in order to obtain the discount rates. For further information, ring:

Sydney.....(02) 267 1761

Melbourne.....(03) 419 6937

Alice Springs.....(089) 526 782

Confirmation of bookings and a rough idea of numbers arriving will be required by the last week of July. A deposit of 10 per cent is required by the first week of September.

# Atomic Oceans

by Margaret Howes

At a recent symposium of the International Physicians for the prevention of Nuclear War held in Auckland, New Zealand, a biophysics professor from the University of Paris, Dr Behar, said that after 22 years of testing, Mururoa Atoll was seriously damaged. The need to place more recent tests deeper into the deteriorating rock had made it technically impracticable for many more blasts to be conducted.

At the same symposium an Auckland engineering professor, Michael O'Sullivan, said that serious radioactivity would begin to leak from the atolls lagoon and into the ocean within the next ten to 100 years. His findings on major cracking of the volcanic base contradicted French claims that no leakage would occur for at least 1 000 to 10 000 years.<sup>1</sup> Sources within the French army and scientists from its nuclear program believe a move from Mururoa to the Kerguelen Islands, south west of Western Australia, is imminent.

The Kerguelen Islands are in the southern extremity of the Indian Ocean, 3 400 kilometres south west of Western Australia and about 14 000 kilometres from Paris. The archipelago, covering 7 215 square kilometres, is made up of one main island, Grand Terre, surrounded by hundreds of small islands with innumerable islets and rocks with the highest point being Mount Ross at 1 850 meters. It features glacial lakes, glaciers that reach right down to the sea, hot springs and boggy peat marshes. Due to the rugged terrain the interiors of the islands have remained relatively unexplored. The whole coast is broken up by deep fjords bounded on each side by cliffs. The region is swept by great westerly winds, averaging a gale a day.

The islands have a large continental shelf where there are many 'bottom' fish. Japanese and Russian fleets concentrate in this area. A Franco-Soviet

agreement allows the USSR to engage in sub-Antarctic deep sea fishing. French vessels also fish the region for crayfish.

The islands are volcanic in origin although there has been no recent volcanic activity and there is no active volcano. However, questions concerning the geological stability of the Kerguelens have been raised by a former senior lecturer in geology at the University of Adelaide, Dr Robin Oliver.<sup>2</sup> According to Dr Oliver the islands connect via a subterranean ridge with the Antarctic volcano, Gaussberg, and they are located on a subterranean plateau which includes the Australian territory of Heard Island, an active volcano.

The islands base at Port aux Francaix accommodates about 200 people engaged in astrophysics, astronomy, geology and biology. Last year a fishing trawler, *The Southern Raider*, was sunk by the French Navy while fishing near the islands. Skipper John Chadderton and first officer Alister Annadale have no doubt that the sinking had some connection with Kerguelen.<sup>3</sup> In an interview, Chadderton said

They accused us of illegally fishing in French waters but interrogated us endlessly about espionage, not fishing. During the three months we were held by the French on Reunion Island we became convinced that France was planning to move its nuclear tests to Kerguelen. This is commonly accepted as fact on Reunion, the French administrative centre closest to Kerguelen.

Any radioactive leakage from testing weapons in the Kerguelen Islands would be carried by wind and sea to Australia. The islands lie in the path of the roaring forties and the furious fifties, prevailing westerly winds that flow across the Southern Hemisphere between 40 and 50 degrees latitude. Ocean contamination would be brought to Australia by western currents which

sweep along the west and south coasts of the continent. This radioactive debris would contain strontium-90 which has a half-life of 28 years and constitutes a major health hazard causing bone cancer and leukemia.

*The Southern Raider* affair has helped to focus on another possible French nuclear connection, that the Kerguelen Islands are to be used for the storage of nuclear wastes. At present France dumps its waste at sea or converts it to vitrified glass. Selection of a burial site for 250 tonnes of glass blocks is expected in 1988. Sources in Reunion say that the large quantities of concrete being shipped to Kerguelen could be used for the purpose of preparing the site or sites.

The possibility that the islands have been used for French chemical weapon testing has been raised by Dr J Perry Robinson of the Armament and Disarmament Information Unit of Sussex University. Dr Robinson conjectures that the extreme secrecy surrounding *The Southern Raider* plus the timetable for establishing the station at Port aux Francaix tallies with the timetable of the French binary program research and testing. The Algerian test area for nerve gas was closed to the French in 1969 after the War of Independence. The station at Port aux Francaix was established soon after, even though Mururoa still had a decade or more of 'service' left as a nuclear test site.

Nerve agents are both very long lived and very toxic. The effect of leakage is dramatic. Near Bloody Foreland in Galway, Eire, wartime stocks of Tabun, a poison used by the Nazis, has been leaking and tide after tide washes up poisoned sea birds and fish by the thousands.





### The South African and Israeli connections

The South African Government has become embroiled in an international outcry regarding military developments on their territory of Marion Island, midway between the African mainland and Antarctica. Dr Frank Barnaby, a former director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, believes that South Africa probably exploded a nuclear test device in the area in 1979. Many experts believed this was conducted by South African scientists with Israeli assistance.

Speculation about joint South African-Israeli nuclear cooperation has increased recently following revelations from Mordechai Vanunu, the nuclear technician who appeared in court recently after being spirited out of Britain. He told reporters in London that Israeli nuclear scientists frequently visited South Africa. During the past two years scientists based on Marion Island have reported visits by South African and Israeli military personnel.<sup>4</sup>

The South African Minister for Environmental Affairs and Fisheries, Mr John Wiley, after initially denying any knowledge of a plan to build an airstrip on the island has since confirmed that an ecological evaluation was underway. Apart from the possible siting of a nuclear missile testing site on Marion Island, the building and maintaining of an airstrip for Hercules transport aircraft on an island which has known nothing more than foot traffic would be an environmental disaster.

In 1971 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution which declared that 'the Indian Ocean, within limits to be determined, together with the airspace above and the ocean floor subjacent thereto, be designated for all time as a zone of peace.' This declaration called for the elimination of all bases, military installations, nuclear weapons and so forth. The following year the Ad Hoc committee on the Indian Ocean was established. In December 1981 the General Assembly expressed its regret that this Committee had failed to reach consensus on the finalisation of the dates for the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean — a necessary step for the implementation of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. In 1983 the same regret was expressed and to date the idea has not progressed

BLOODY HUMANS! ABSOLUTELY NO RESPECT FOR OTHER ANIMALS! DON'T THEY REALISE THAT WE'VE GOT TO EAT ALL THESE FISH. YES, I KNOW, NOW THEY'VE THEY ALL GLOW IT IS EASIER TO SEE THEM BUT, ALL THIS STUFF ABOUT IRRADIATED FOOD... I READ ABOUT IN CHAIN REACTION... AND WHAT ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICANS?! I MEAN TO SAY, I'M HALF BLACK!



any further.

The Antarctic Treaty states in Article Five that 'any nuclear explosions in Antarctica and the disposal there of radioactive waste material shall be prohibited'. Both France and South Africa are signatories to this treaty. However, this treaty only applies to areas south of 60 degrees south latitude. Kerguelen Islands and Marion Island both lie north of this.

The Antarctic Treaty recognised the importance of conservation and, in 1964 at the third Antarctic Treaty Consultative meeting, signed the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Flora and Fauna. Additions and amendments are made by recommendations from the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR). SCAR is part of a non-governmental International Council of Scientific Unions and the subantarctic islands fall within the SCAR area of influence although all are under effective national control.

Another conservation measure is the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which was signed in Canberra in 1980. The boundaries for CCAMLR were established to approximate the Southern Ocean and seeks to develop an 'ecosystem approach' to life in the Antarctic. (see map)

The signatories of CCAMLR, which include France and South Africa, recognise 'the importance of safeguarding the environment and protecting the integrity of the ecosystem of the seas surrounding Antarctica' and believe 'that it is in

the interest of all mankind (sic) to preserve the waters surrounding the Antarctic continent for peaceful purposes only and to prevent their becoming the scene or object of international discord.' The Kerguelen Islands and Marion Island are within the CCAMLR area of influence although, again, remain under national control.

The Indian and Southern Oceans can be protected from this latest ecological insanity by strengthening CCAMLR to become more than just another fishing treaty. It already provides an opportunity to deal constructively with environmental, conservation and political issues.

The Antarctic Treaty has, because of its nuclear free provision, been an example of scientific endeavour for peaceful purposes in a spirit of goodwill and friendship. The governments of the treaty nations together with non-treaty nations must be convinced through disarmament and environmental groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth and non-governmental organisations such as the International Council of Scientific Unions to support and implement a nuclear free Southern and Indian Ocean Treaty as a step to total nuclear disarmament on this planet.

#### References

- 1 *The Age* 11/2/87
- 2 *The Australian* 1/12/84
- 3 *New Zealand Sunday Times* 4/1/87
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# Des Wilson

Des Wilson, International Campaign Director of Friends of the Earth, will be in Australia in July this year. He will be speaking at public meetings organised by FOE Sydney and FOE Collingwood. He will be placing local issues in a global context, drawing out the root causes of world poverty and injustice, environmental degradation and the threat of nuclear war, and providing hope by enunciating where analysis and action can and do make a difference. In a recent paper on the 'fate of the earth', Des Wilson explains the importance of environmental issues.

A while back I had to travel from the UK to New Zealand and back, circling the planet. It was an opportunity to observe all of the continents from high above, and I was left with two contradictory impressions. From the viewpoint of just one individual the planet is colossal, its resources apparently unlimited. But, if you look at it as the habitat of the entire human race, it is small and becoming smaller. It is easy to see from the air why it is that 70 per cent of the planet is uncultivable, and at least two thirds uninhabitable... so much of it is sea, desert, mountain, ice or dense jungle.

There was also time to think of us human beings and how our technology have in effect made the planet smaller. But it is not just by technology that we have made the planet smaller. First, there has been a dramatic increase in population. In this century the number of people on Earth has tripled. Second, the world has been made smaller (in effect) by the concentration of power and wealth in fewer hands. It is said that by the end of this century 10 per cent of the population will possess 80 per cent of its wealth. The concentration of wealth and power makes the planet an easier place for those few to dominate and exploit.

Is the word 'crisis' too powerful to describe such a condition! My dictionary defines 'crisis' as a *turning point... a moment of danger and suspense*. Given that our planet has ex-

isted for hundreds of millions of years, the lifespan of one generation of its inhabitants could be fairly described as a moment, and the word 'crisis' is justified by the overwhelming evidence that it is this generation — you and I — who have been so careless of our habitat, so wasteful of its resources, and so irresponsibly developing a lifestyle and technology mindless of its long term implications, that we have become a threat to our own home, the earth, to its multitude of species, and to generations to come.

But it's not all gloomy, according to the World Resources Report,

Notwithstanding the formidable challenges posed by population growth, widespread resource degradation, and diverse sources of pollution, there are few, if any, problems on the horizon that are in any fundamental sense unsolvable.

Just the same, to solve problems you have to face them — there is the need to create public knowledge of the nature of the crisis and possible solutions, because it is lack of political will, national and international political will that stands in the way of radical action.

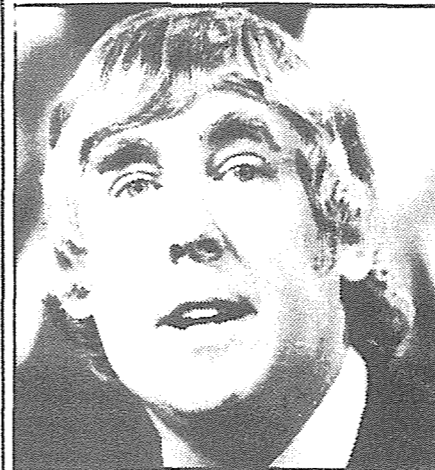
Friends of the Earth is just one of the many organisations concerned to develop this popular knowledge and will. Primarily an environmental movement, it understands the links with the causes of peace, sustainable growth in the third world, and control of power. There are many myths about environmentalists:

- that environmentalism is a cause for the privileged — yet it is the poor who suffer most from environmental damage and pollution.
- that environmentalists are negative — we have for years proposed the only viable longer term strategies. Environmentalists don't just say 'stop pollution' but also *develop environmentally sound technologies*. We don't just say 'stop exhausting non-renewable resources' but *share limited resources fairly or develop sustainable uses for renewable resources*.
- that environmentalism is a fringe issue, that it is not of equal importance to that of peace, or third world poverty, or the problems we live with day by day in the developed world. All of these are inter-related and environmental issues are central, fundamental and deserve the highest priority in our lives.

A full copy of the text is available from the FOE Collingwood office.

So don't miss him in Australia:

- Public Meeting — Sydney, Wednesday, 29 July.
- Public Meeting — Melbourne, Friday, 31 July.



Des Wilson is:

- Campaign Director for Friends of the Earth International. (He was Chairperson of FOE UK 1983-86)
- Co-chairperson of the CAMPAIGN FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
- Campaign Advisor (and former chairperson) to CLEAR, the Campaign for Lead Free Air.
- Member of the Board of SHELTER, the National Campaign for the Homeless, and of the Council of the International Year for Shelter for the Homeless 1987.
- Vice-president of the ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY
- President of the LIBERAL PARTY (1986-87)

He was born in New Zealand in 1941, is a journalist by training, and became widely known in Britain for his campaigning activities in the late 1960s onwards.

As a journalist he has been a columnist with the *Guardian* (1968—71) and *The Observer* (1971-75), was editor of *Social Work Today* (1971-79) and Deputy Director of *The Illustrated London News* (1979-81)

He is the author of eight books: *I know it was the place's fault* (1970), *Des Wilson Minority Report* (1973), *So you want to be Prime Minister* (1979), *The Lead Scandal* (1983), *The Environmental Crisis* (1984), *Pressure—The A-Z of Campaigning in Britain* (1984), *The Secrets File* (1984) and *The Citizen's Action Handbook* (1986).

He is one of Britain's most sought after public speakers, and appears regularly on radio and television.

# Soft Energy

In the middle of last year, a soft energy group was established at Friends of the Earth Collingwood with the aim to redress an important imbalance in the anti-nuclear and environment debate. While many people are quite well informed about the problems of present methods of energy production — nuclear hazards, pollution and the carbon dioxide effects, for example — the majority are poorly equipped to argue and campaign for real alternatives. As a result, there was little or no response in the media after the Chernobyl nuclear accident which argued for a renewable energy future.

Similarly, while publicity material against the nuclear fuel cycle is readily available from anti-nuclear and environment groups, this is not the case for relevant up-to-date information on soft energy.

As a result, we produced our booklet *Soft Energy — the Only Option*, which appeared in *Chain Reaction* 48. (Copies are still available at 20 cents with discounts for bulk orders.) We also undertook to include an article in each subsequent issue of *Chain Reaction* which would, over a number of issues, provide a good source of reference material for individuals and groups on the potential for renewable energy.

In conjunction with the energy supply question we see it as important to raise other questions to which energy is inextricably linked, such as global equity, for example. How can we in the 'developed world' continue to justify consuming energy of orders of magnitude more than the majority of the world's population especially when much of this energy is consumed to satisfy a trivial and materialistic lifestyle?

Furthermore, failure to develop renewable energy systems in the technologically developed countries inevitably leads the developing world to consider a nuclear future since it appears as the only viable alternative.

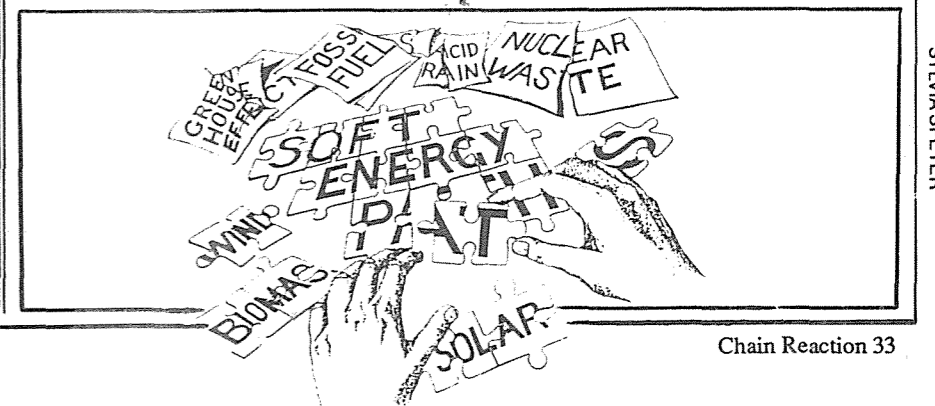
On a political level in this country, energy has a low profile. This is despite the fact that Bass Strait output is declining and by the mid 1990s massive imports of liquid fuel will be necessary with subsequent deleterious effects on our economy. Without doubt the two slumbering technological monsters of synthetic liquid fuel from shale or from coal will be revived in the not-too-distant future. The consequences of this sort of technological route are far-reaching and should be frightening for all of us in the environment movement.

Alternatives *do* exist and we intend to campaign around these issues to support a soft energy society as a real option for future Australia.

We are currently working on a 25 minute slide video which should be completed late 1987. This will be an important educational aid for schools and environmental groups.

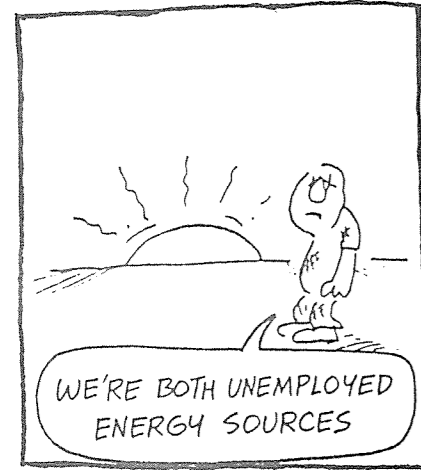
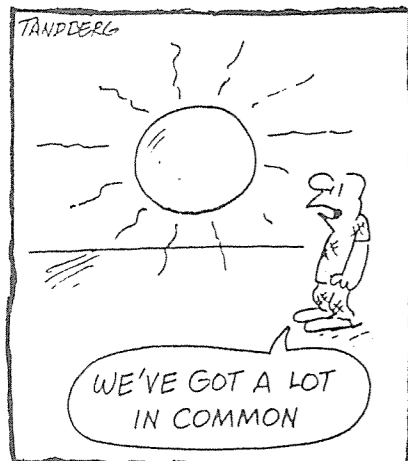
We would welcome feedback on this issue from *Chain Reaction* readers and most importantly new members are needed for our group. Specialist knowledge in the area is not required as everyone has useful skills of one sort or another. In addition working within the group will enable members to become well versed in the issues. The formal commitment is usually only one evening meeting per month.

Further information: contact Clare Henderson (03) 419 8700 or contact the FOE group in your State or Territory.



# Watt Way?

Is a renewable energy supply for South Australia possible? FOE Adelaide has produced a booklet outlining some options. Bert King offers his comments.



A FOE energy group in Adelaide has produced an excellent fifty page booklet on an energy future for that state. It is written by Geoff Lacey with contributions from a group of energy activists. The theme is how to implement in South Australia a change in direction of energy policy from a growth pattern to a sustainable, renewable energy supply.

A somewhat similar study was made in Victoria in and published by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) in 1982, *An Energy Efficient Scenario*. The Victorian study was more comprehensive, really for the energy specialist, where the South Australian report is more concise, suitable for the lay person.

The first question arises — can the size of Adelaide be limited to something like its present level? This is the first requirement for a renewable energy policy.

Situated on plains, Adelaide is ideal for bicycle power which would address transport and health problems in one move. The report outlines other aspects of a sane energy policy such as insulation of homes, higher density housing, more efficient electrical motors and home appliances, use of co-generation, development of wind power generation, solar hot water services, wood for domestic fuel and more efficient, smaller cars.

South Australia's peak power demand in summer is very high, about a quarter of that in winter, due to the use of air conditioners in homes and offices. There is great scope for improvement here, and if the peak power load can be reduced, the need for more power stations will be obviated.

The use of electrical energy for room heating should be strongly discouraged — how few people realise that this is a throw away use of energy and

that room heating should be by gas or wood. The concept of the all-electric home is ridiculous.

South Australia's dependence on natural gas for power generation is also highlighted. This is an absurd use for a valuable and dwindling resource. South Australia's gas reserves, without new discoveries, will last only 18 years.

The report tends to illustrate what can be achieved in the short term within the present mode of living, without too much social change that will really hurt. Yet surely this will have to come. Our affluence is based on car dominance — 61 per cent of total land transport energy is used by cars. But this will be the toughest nut to crack. It needs a gigantic change in thinking as people would lose their supreme status symbol and some mobility.

A real energy plan needs a life style plan. Exponential growth can not continue — there must be a limit to growth. Yet, exploitation can only survive on growth! The technical fix can only achieve so much, it is the first stage. We will still have to reduce energy consumption by reorganising the way in which our wants can be satisfied. Fundamental to any discussion of energy alternatives is a choice of personal values. The values that could make a low-energy society work are not new, they are stored in the 'attic' and could be recycled. While our basic wants are material, high fossil fuel inputs are needed. Non-material needs have low fossil fuel inputs, rely more on human energy, to provide love, security, stimulation, identity. We need a change of emphasis, to things that count, not things that are countable. The report will stimulate your thinking on a supremely important issue.

*Bert King is an experienced engineer.*

# Antarctic Freeze

The rush is on for the material wealth of the Antarctic. But as countries scramble for oil and minerals, Greenpeace is demanding that the Antarctic be saved as a World Park for everybody, now and in the future. To this end Greenpeace is attempting to set up its own Antarctic research base. Trevor Daly explains.

Antarctica, with its unique wildlife, astounding landscapes and ancient beds of moss and lichens, is endangered. As with many other areas on our fragile planet, the threat comes from human greed. In 1986 the Antarctic Treaty nations came dangerously close to concluding a minerals regimen — a mutual agreement which would allow mineral and oil development in Antarctica.

Antarctica is not only the world's last pristine wilderness but plays vital role in controlling global climate. Its rich seas provide nutrients to the world's oceans and its age-old ice-cap holds the secrets of the world's past, allowing us to monitor how we are collectively poisoning the earth.

But today, as the world's resources are being squandered, attention has turned to Antarctica. The oceans of Antarctica have a history of over-exploitation. In the nineteenth century, Antarctic fur and elephant seals were decimated by sealers and earlier this century it was the whales, such as the Blue and the Humpback, which were hunted to the verge of extinc-

*Trevor Daly is wildlife coordinator for Greenpeace Australia.*

tion. Today some fish stocks have been wiped out by the Soviet, Eastern European and Asian fishing fleets.

Recently concern has arisen over another matter — the depletion over the Southern Ocean of the ozone layer which screens out dangerous radiation. Scientists believe that algae and micro-flora critical in the food chain will be destroyed by the increased radiation, not to mention the consequences for the global environment of a possible warming of the planet also arising from the depletion of the ozone layer — the so-called 'greenhouse effect'.

However, mining is potentially the most serious threat facing of Antarctica. In December 1986, New Zealand geologists discovered the first firm evidence of petroleum deposits below the seabed, twelve kilometres off Victorialand in Antarctica. Although it was not an oil find, later analysis proved that oil and gas were once trapped there only to eventually leak out. Meanwhile Japan, France, West Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States are also searching for oil in the Antarctic whilst the USSR and South Africa are searching for platinum.

The New Zealand discovery, in an area free of ice during much of summer, has

come amid the latest round of international negotiations at which governments are now deciding the legal and political frameworks to facilitate mineral exploitation in Antarctica. The consequences of mineral exploitation would be disastrous. The inevitable effects of mining — port facilities, pipelines, oil spills and accidents — would wreak havoc on the sensitive Antarctic environment. All this would be for an estimated 2 years supply of oil at current consumption. Mineral exploitation would also bring conflict to the region as nations compete for its resources.

Greenpeace is one of many environmental groups which, along with nations not party to the Antarctic Treaty, are adamantly opposed to oil and mineral exploration in the sensitive Antarctic ecosystem. Instead, Greenpeace is calling for Antarctica to be preserved in the form of a 'World Park', as a heritage for future generations. The principles behind this idea are that:

- wilderness values, plant and animal life be protected.
- the Antarctic remain a zone of peace, free from nuclear and other weapons.
- Antarctica remain a place where scientists from all nations can meet and work together.

On 6 January *Greenpeace*, a converted ocean-going tug, left New Zealand for Ross Island in Antarctica where Greenpeace established the first permanent non-government base in the Antarctic. A team of three men and one woman will stay at the base through the long Antarctic winter, conducting research and monitoring the extent of human encroachment on the environment.

By establishing a presence in Antarctica, Greenpeace hopes to highlight the concerns of people throughout the world who wish to see Antarctica preserved unmolested. For many environmentalists, the ecologically sensitive southern continent, the world's last relatively undisturbed wilderness, is potentially the birthplace of a new respect for the environment — and perhaps the turning point in our historical relationship with the world.

# A Long Drought Ahead?

by Peter Christoff

*Speculators will ruin this last wild place,  
few will protest, for profit eases consciences,  
In thirty years*

*there will be nothing to distinguish this  
from mined and gutted countries anywhere.  
Our leaders will betray us, sell our heritage,  
what remains is not worth stealing,  
and so becomes an Army weapons range*

Outback Michael Dransfield

For the past three decades, environmental activism has been buoyed by a climate of economic optimism which simultaneously fuelled its criticisms of untrammled growth and made some of the solutions easily affordable. Now, the chill winds of economic austerity and political conservatism threaten to erode the reserves of sympathy on which the environment movement has operated.

Three immediate consequences of this change in climate include:

- a renewed vigour in campaigns for resource exploitation and environmental deregulation;
- the likelihood of cuts in funding for community-sector organisations, including environment groups; and,
- the potential loss of support for conservation in certain sectors of the community.

The great debt that Australia has accumulated with the rest of the world, now reliably stated to be near \$100 billion, is a heritage far less acceptable to me and my fellow Australians than some backblock wilderness pocket, or ones yet to be discovered, that lay claims to bewildering values.<sup>1</sup>

Australia's severe current account deficit adds force to industry's pressure to exploit our national resources. Comments such as the above by Dick Darnoc, Chairman of the National Association of Forests Industries, play on a growing anxiety about a national debt of Third World proportions. They do not admit the dominant sources of that debt rest on private sector borrowing for speculative investment and takeovers and on declining returns for our main primary produce exports, or that our level of consumption may be unsustainable as well as inequitable.

Pressure is being exerted to increase our reliance on 'immediate returns' from exports of unprocessed natural resources such as ores and woodchips even though our present over reliance on primary commodity markets has contributed strongly to the problems that we face — a

*Peter Christoff works for the Commission  
Environment in Victoria.*

declining manufacturing base, increased reliance on expensive imports and vulnerability to fluctuations in global demand for raw materials. These are vulnerabilities familiar to Third World economies.

Conservative Federal and State Labor Governments fear the political consequences of a destabilised money market and slowed investment. Labor and Liberal Governments must maintain a climate favourable to economic growth (private sector capital accumulation). Their electoral success depends on popular perceptions of their success as economic managers. Yet the Australian economy is now increasingly being integrated into an international framework over which Australian governments have little or no control. Not surprisingly, 'reformist' governments (and parties) easily move into crisis under the strain of trying to manage the economy for political as well as economic advantage. Their policies (economic, environmental and social) are of ten internally contradictory, and they have few mechanisms — or in the case of financial deregulation have relinquished many of those available — to minimise the effects of unfavourable domestic and international events.

The Hawke Government is trapped between the need to appease industry, meet the demands of its own constituency (Kakadu and Jackey's Marsh), and woo conservative voters as part of its project to redefine the 'middle ground' of Australian politics. The export of uranium to France must be interpreted as a deliberate signal of reassurance to the international market that conservative forces are in full control of the economy, able to provide a favourable climate for investors and developers despite the Government's own party policies. Yet, this has damaging electoral repercussions for the Labor Government which must also 'manage'.

The same effect often operates on the State level. In Victoria, the Alcoa smelter at Portland, the State Timber Industry Strategy and the variety of major new Central Business District developments — based on the waiver of 'restrictive' planning regulations — all aim to meet the important objective of creating jobs. However, these policies are shaped and undermined by short-term electoral needs. In opting for an economic strategy which places overriding priority on attracting capital investment to the state, the Cain Government has permitted industrial developments which ultimately conflict with environmental, social welfare and budgetary requirements.

The State Timber Industry Strategy is an example. The Government's overriding fear of the industry's public relations machine and the industry's alliance with several right-wing unions has led to a strategy which offers unparalleled control over the forest resource with 15 year

licences (previously 1 year), minimal investment controls and environmental safeguards, accompanied by the introduction of woodchipping into East Gippsland. While aiming to stabilise timber industry employment, the Strategy in fact reinforces the industry's rapid move toward local job loss and increases its power to effect environmental despoliation.

Pressure for 'environmental deregulation' — direct challenges to legislation and regulations established to ensure adequate environmental management, to protect areas of the 'national estate' in National Parks, and to rationalise and humanise urban development and planning — will mount in tandem with challenges to 'State control', labour market and financial regulations made in the name of economic freedom, investment incentives and jobs.

## Cuts to funding?

The economic climate is being used by the Right to argue for reduced Government expenditure public sector borrowing. Keating and the dries in both major parties are already taking up severe austerity measures — public sector cuts in the mini budget and also perhaps the pre-Bicentennial budget.

We face a growing bill for social security related to the growing impoverishment of the community. Yet simultaneously, party political advantage is being bought through promises of tax cuts, increased rebates and assistance to industry. These contradictory fiscal and political impulses make it harder for less politically or socially urgent issues to maintain current levels of funding. We will be fighting severe cutbacks in basic social welfare and environmental funding in the future.

## Reduced support — the case of the union movement

Industry restructuring, tariff reductions, investment in 'labour displacing' technologies all aim to overcome the purported international uncompetitiveness of the Australian manufacturing sector. Many of these measures lead to loss of jobs. Limited economic growth will also do little to reduce chronic unemployment of around 12-15 per cent (including hidden unemployment).

This is one reason for the success of right-wing and development-oriented forces in the union movement. Union alliances with 'resource development industries' are reinforced through 'industry plans' — one of the least successful elements of the Accord — which promise increased investment, large-scale projects and employment or, more often, a slowing in the rate of *decrease* in unionists' jobs. Some of these plans, such as the FAFPIC (Forest and Forest Products Industrial Council) Plan for the Timber Industry, involve environmental exploitation and long-term loss of employment. Such formal plans have been used to lock previously supportive unions, operating within the Accord, into endorsement of plans such as for woodchipping in Victoria, weakening their own conservation policies and traditional links with conservation groups.

In effect, conservative forces within the ALP and the ACTU, and tripartite planning processes established under the Accord (involving industry, unions and Government), have served to systematically exclude broader community

interests (the 'fourth sector') from decision-making forums on environmental and social issues.

Union support for conservation has also been weakened because of vigorous attacks on the labour movement by the New Right. Unions need primarily to defend their own terrain of wages and work conditions. Under these embattled circumstances, more 'remote' issues such as the mining and export of uranium tend to fall off the overfull plate of problems. This rift between the union and environment movements represents a fundamental weakening of political support for conservation and a major limitation on the environment movement's political power outside of parliament.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS

The particular effects of the balance-of-payments problem, and of deregulation, will not be easily or quickly resolved. As a result, until a coherent alternative economic critique and political program is established, environmentalists can expect these conditions to continue to shape the political climate for conservation for some time to come.

This climate affects environment groups and campaigns in several ways. It presents at least three closely interrelated areas of critical concern for the environment movement. These relate to the:

- political efficacy,
- financial viability, and
- legitimacy and credibility of such groups and campaigns.

## Political efficacy

Traditionally, the environment movement has relied upon its power to mobilise people to transform existing political party policies. This pressure-group tactic has relied upon the major two parties having competing platforms. This distinction is no longer clear on many crucial environmental issues.

In the absence of a credible socially progressive alternative party, Labor Governments, both State and Federal, are increasingly willing to implement programs rejected by their own constituency. They do so because they believe there is nowhere for this vote to go except to even more conservative parties such as the Liberals — an option unpalatable to most traditional Labor voters.

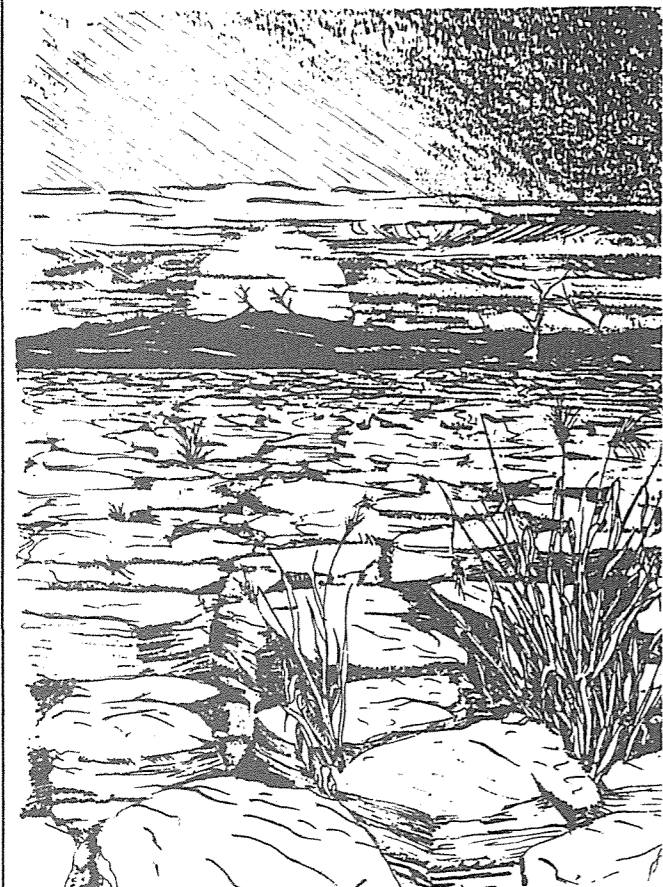
Labor's cynicism fails to recognise that some swinging votes were won from the Liberals in the first place, on the basis of environmental promises, and may return to them if there is little to distinguish the two parties. It also fails to register mounting concern to fill the political vacuum created by the rightward move of the Federal Labor Government. The NDP can, in this sense, be regarded as a precursor and an anomaly: it was the first attempt to register alienation from the ALP but not yet the foundations for unified social movement or of parliamentary action based on a coherent alternative program.

In the absence of this progressive alternative to all existing parties, the environment movement, as with other social movements, has little direct influence over the parliamentary sphere. Unresolved, this crisis of parliamentary efficacy leaches credibility from the environment movement with its constant reiteration of weak electoral threats.

Elections are few and far between and the potential for creating a new and credible parliamentary force in the short term is limited. Creative ideas are needed for the times *between* elections. The environment movement has developed no new strategies for effective *extraparliamentary* action. Reliance on blockades and on the media for accurate and sympathetic publicity has limitations — especially while the environment movement continues to act in isolation from other potentially supportive groups.

### Financial Viability

While Federal funding for government environment activity has more than doubled since 1974-75, the Hawke Government has not yet restored funding to *voluntary* conservation organisations to the level, in real terms, provided by the Whitlam Government in 1974-75.<sup>2</sup> Given the important and cost-effective role played by these groups, this is a major concern.



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State Government support to voluntary conservation groups has also been variable. In NSW it is almost half the level allocated in 1977-78. In Victoria, after a substantial increase in funding in the first years of the Cain Government, there is now a clear indication that the funding is to be cut by 10 per cent in the 1987-88 budget.

In the current climate, conservative governments will not risk allocating *more* funds from 'contracting' budgets to conservationists at the expense of industry subsidies or public works and social welfare, all of which are perceived as meeting more immediate needs and providing greater electoral returns. While such funding has never become

central to the survival of major conservation organisations — the ACF for instance only receives 10 per cent of its total budget from Government grants — it has always been important for educational work and for the viability of small, single-issue groups.

The fall in real incomes is also beginning to have a direct impact on membership and financial support for environmental organisations. This could lead to the extinction of some smaller groups as well as crisis for and conflict between top-heavy 'national' and 'umbrella-coalition' bodies. Alternatively, smaller groups with better 'grass-roots' ties may survive rather than top-heavy organisations, but may exist in fragmented isolation.

### Environment movement's problems of legitimacy

So far I have concentrated mainly on overt political and economic problems yet there is also the problem of environmentalism's ideological legitimacy. Exploiting the economic climate, the Timber Industry is spending over \$3.5 million in a nationally coordinated attempt to discredit conservationists, painting them as irrationally operating against the national interest. The Australian Mining Council has begun a similar campaign with its 'war on National Parks', spearheaded by the New Right and Peko-Wallsend.<sup>3</sup>

Some State Governments — often in close conjunction with industry — are using considerable resources to 'sell' their role in 'responsible' environmental management, passing this material into the media, primary and secondary schools.<sup>4</sup>

Cumulatively, this represents a campaign for hearts and minds, to once again *delegitimise* ('radical') environmentalism by superimposing over it the 'logic' of managerial control by the State and the 'requirements' of a grim economism. This, too, may have something to do with the current stagnation in membership in the environment movement.

### STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Waiting for the mounting toll of environmental and economic disaster to revive community anger is naive and inappropriate. The Forces of History will not automatically become benign and progressive. Once a social movement has lost active support or its hold on institutional gains — such as National Parks and environmental legislation — these are exceedingly hard to rebuild.

In fact, the political vacuum created by the shifting of the Federal ALP, and the disruptions of the present economic climate all suggest new openings, which the 'environment movement' could convert to its advantage.

Social democratic parties in Australia, England, New Zealand, Germany, France and Spain have failed to deliver substantive social and environmental reform.

Their weak reformism has too often been constrained by an inability to challenge the influences of domestic and global capital on key issues of policy and action. Instead, they have attempted to manage their national crises by removing the parliamentary/governmental party from the close scrutiny and control of its democratic base, and by establishing or continuing policies which seek to 'revolutionise' their national economies and re-establish

them on the world market.

Such hyperdevelopment ultimately is of great assistance to multinational corporations, but does little to resolve the compounded social, economic and environmental problems which these First World countries face domestically and reproduce in the Third World.

The crisis we currently confront in Australia indicates the need for a radically new alternative, an approach to politics which re-enfranchises the mass of people now excluded from decision-making forums which determine their future. We need radically new *policies*, especially in the area of economic planning, as well as new *processes* for political action.

Above all, this will require the creation of a *new sort of political movement* in Australia, which articulates and draws together the influence of existing social movements through a program for change which embraces — in a coherent form — their various issues and concerns. Environmental concerns and the environment movement must become a central part of the articulation of a new program which counters and undoes the effects of the crisis described above and establishes a more equitable and sustainable social and economic order in its place.

The environment movement (insofar as it exists as an entity) must begin to actively recognise its own 'role' in the development of this alternative.

The corporate assault through government and media must be met by a well-coordinated campaign involving increased support *throughout* the community. Yet the potential for broadening active support is largely unrealised. In my experience, the environment 'movement' has major difficulties coordinating its own groups, let alone crossing the boundaries into other areas such as the formidable networks of the churches, progressive unions, land rights, peace and disarmament, aid, welfare and other spheres. This lack of communication is sometimes because of a desire to keep green issues pure. This strikes me as bankrupt: it fails to recognise the social and economic dimension of many ecological issues. Clarity over the economic and social implications of ecological principles and campaigns is vital if these boundaries are to be lastingly breached.

The task of confronting and explaining the often difficult link between jobs and conservation must be a priority for environmentalists. (This does *not* mean a subordination of environmental issues to economic concerns.) The goals and principles of other social movements — such as Land Rights and women's movements — should be a vital and integral part of the moral fabric of the environment movement and receive strong support as such. Some movements are also important to the success of those non-electorally focused environmental campaigns. Opportunities should be used to develop links with these groups. Certain issues provide opportunities for liaison of mutual benefit to the environment movement, the labour movement and the general community. One such example is the problem posed by toxic materials and industrial waste and the need for controls in and beyond the workplace.

The decline of Friends of the Earth as a campaigning force has meant that urban issues have been taken off the green map, despite the fact that Australia is highly urbanised and people's daily lives are filled more with confrontation with industrial hazards than contact with the

bush. It is astonishing that, despite clear indications that issues such as pollution are by far the most popular environmental issues — for all age groups and across Australia — the environment movement continues to disregard this area.<sup>5</sup> Its great disinterest not only betrays its extremely narrow middle-class bias, but also works greatly to the detriment of the movement overall.

### Playing Parliamentary Politics

Links between the environment movement and existing political parties have traditionally been fraught with difficulties, as environment groups are diverse in their collective social make-up. It has been argued that the movement is not amenable to political direction and specific organisations would lose members if they chose this path; that any formal alliance to the Democrats or the ALP would compromise the movement overall and lead to political retribution when an alternative government is elected. It is time to re-examine this problem in the light of the converging behaviour of the two major parties and the 11 July Federal election.

Successful parliamentary political action depends on a strong movement and campaigns. No party will act without a clear indication of popular support for a policy. It is equally important to recognise that the parliamentary sphere is *not the only, or necessarily the most important, forum for political or economic decision making*. Accordingly, the environment movement should not be trapped into overemphasising this arena and should retain a strong commitment to public campaigning and education, as well as to extensive lobbying.

Bearing these points in mind, careful consideration should be given — in the aftermath of the election now looming — to the range of approaches which can be developed for parliamentary action in the longer term.

- These considerations should include:
- an ongoing campaign to influence the preselection of future candidates of other parties at local, State and Federal levels of government, according to a coherent and well-defined program of progressive policies;
  - for this new political formation to stand its own candidates on the basis of such a program, especially in Senate elections.

In this broader context, it would be valuable for the movement to articulate detailed national and State-level policies (on economic development — e.g. in the timber industry, agricultural production, chemicals, etc.). It is only when the environment movement, along with other progressive social movements, have shown that they have a comprehensive alternative to the policies offered to the existing parties, that they will begin to have commensurate influence on the parliamentary process.

### Internationalising the environment movement

The Australian environment movement is breathtakingly insular. Like other parts of Australian culture, we retain a First World perspective, blinkered by our Eurocentric colonial and racist heritage. There is an urgent need to extend environmental analysis and debate beyond local and national boundaries. We pay too much lip service but no attention to the invocation to 'think globally, act locally'. Our interna-

tional links are recognised in relation to other issues. Nuclear disarmament is now seen as an Asia-Pacific regional, rather than national, problem — dealing with the location of military bases; the uranium industry; nuclear-armed warships and testing of weapons throughout the entire Pacific Rim region.

The environment movement's ignorance of Australia's integral role in the Asia-Pacific Rim region and developments affecting this region divorces us from reality. It also leaves us with nothing to say to those critics from the region's developing countries who look to the hyperexploitation of their own resources to redress the imbalance between their economies and ours.



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The causes of environmental degradation in many cases transcend State and national boundaries. For example, the impact of mining, woodchipping, timber and paper demand and consumption all make better sense when viewed in the context of the economies of the Pacific region and the demands of the international corporations controlling them. The problem of rainforest clearance in West Papua, or Sulawesi, or the Solomon Islands are linked to Australia's regional economic role. Equally, forest preservation in East Gippsland can only be clearly understood if analysed in the context of local, Japanese and New Zealand timber markets.

The environment movement should follow the example of non-government agencies in other fields in establishing close working relations with groups in the Asia-Pacific region in cooperation with the community aid sector. Contact with and assistance for groups in Pacific countries, such as Nauru, Malaysia and Indonesia — and regular liaison with our counterparts in Japan and America — should be

regarded as a high priority. Again, we see the importance of a comprehensive alternative *economic* policy to enable a regionally coherent *environmental* policy.

#### Policy

It is hard to speak of the environment movement at present, except in generalities. If it is to develop its own cohesiveness, and forge alliances of mutual benefit with other movements, it will need to consider ways of developing unity within its own diversity.

The need to collectively develop coherent policies as a platform at State, national and international level and as a basis for specific campaigns is only now being recognised. This process has begun to occur in relation to the timber industry but needs to be initiated in other areas such as transport, housing, energy, industrial wastes/chemicals, animal rights.

These basic agreements of policy are vital to the creation of any cohesive social movement and this will develop the movement's longer-term strategic sense, enabling it to move beyond the current situation where greenie groups are in danger of contradicting each other and all are being shepherded along by the Government as they languish in their mutual confusion.

An immediate advantage of such an approach would be its clear indication of the breadth and diversity of support for fundamental principles, aims and goals. Through this support would come greater political strength for those individual, often small groups which pursue a particular issue within the scope of a widely endorsed policy, and it would be a basis for agreements with other movements.

This may seem an impossibly large, and organisationally unmanageable task. Two things should be considered here.

First, the environment movement — through its State and national organisations — could set up a formal *process* by which such policies can be established. The ACF and the State Conservation Councils are well placed to pursue the wide-ranging consultations required.

Second, a process could be established to make constructive contact with other formal organisations, for instance aid and Third World 'development' agencies, the Land Rights movement, and especially the labour movement at State level in a number of industry areas (transport, chemical, energy, timber).

#### Research

There is a great deal of duplication of research between groups — and a need for additional work on topics which extend the present parameters of the environment movement's focus.

One minor means for resolving the problem would be a **computerised national research register**, which would include a listing of completed projects, current projects, and of workers in each field. The environment movement is regularly accused of displaying a disregard for the social and economic consequences of its various proposals. It would therefore also be handy to have on record the now growing body of research and other material which has developed over the past decades.

More importantly, there is a need for active coordination of research people, resources and projects between States.

While this is beginning to occur — again forest-related projects are a good example — many issues are still being tackled in isolation. The interrelated research and policy areas which require attention include:

- flora and fauna conservation
- conservation of the natural environment (forests, landscapes etc.)
- resource management (including oil, mineral, forest)
- environmental education
- transport
- urban development and conservation of the built environment
- energy
- industrial waste management
- toxic and hazardous chemicals.

It is time for us to set up an *independent environmental research organisation* — similar to those existing in the USA — where credible and serious research could be done to provide back-up to the movement at large. This would be similar in general intention and autonomy to the Peace Research Centre established in Canberra.

The movement should establish *Conservation Registers* at the State and National levels to record the achievements and failings of Government authorities at all levels through a system of reporting based on the movement's grassroots organisations. This would provide a comprehensive catalogue of information from which to assess and publicly comment on the performance of particular governments — especially during elections. The movement should also establish its own 'State of the Environment' reporting system as has been done by the non-government organisations in the USA, India and elsewhere. This would be invaluable for watching over government inaction and will assist in keeping official 'Environment Reporting' procedures up to the mark in quality and orientation.

#### Structure and funding

One of the great strengths of the environment movement is its diversity, through the myriad small and locally based groups providing community networks and close attention to detail. This diversity is enormously cumbersome, however, and sometimes counterproductive in its myopia. It seems to me that, perhaps in contrast to the 1960s and 1970s, the environment movement is fragmenting and losing its holistic and radical ecological critique as embodied in alternative transport and energy strategies of that period. Loss of vision is profoundly disorienting. It also inflames the irrational territorialism which exists between groups.

There is also a tendency among the large national and coalition umbrella groups towards an elitism in their formulation of policy and strategies which has repercussions for the movement as a whole. And all are vying for a limited basket of dollars.

There is no quick solution to the problems outlined here. Nevertheless, I believe that the State coalition bodies — the Conservation Councils — are best placed to provide a broad-based, democratic focus for the movement at State levels — recognising that here, too, there are regional variations. However, in many cases these bodies desperately need restructuring to better reflect rural and urban/industrial

concerns as well as green issues, if they are to fulfil their representative role.

Grassroots groups need to be taken more seriously. The most effective resistance against the financial and media power of industry rests in popular support. This has, it seems to me, been ignored by the environment movement in recent times — again, at its peril. The environment movement is at times as undemocratic and moribund as the organisations and parties it would criticise. There is a desperate need to draw in members from urban and rural communities and to give them a voice.

The problem of organisational *demarcation* is pressing. Different bodies — such as the ACF and the Wilderness Society — are assuming mantles which have not been properly allocated them.

The role of the ACF, at the national level, is vital, productive and should be developed. However, the issues of Federal relations — between national, State and local groups, democratic control, policy formulation and campaigning needs to be clarified.

Greater formal representation of State Conservation Councils on the ACF could resolve some of these structural difficulties, especially if the ACF is to increase its responsibility as a coordinating body at the national level. (This does *not* mean being the peak national forum for the environment movement, as I don't believe that the ACF, or any other group, can presently act as such.) The dangers of bureaucratic inertia are ever present in such an approach.

Many other problems remain beyond the scope of this article. The environment movement's generally (uncritical?) reliance on the State's legislative and regulatory processes occasionally lead it into some unnecessary and fruitless negotiations. The State's relationship to capital remains unexamined in the main, as does the political dynamic of policy formulation by Governments, and parties both in and out of power. What sort of legislative reforms are required to secure environmental guarantees in the institutional frameworks of government? What sort of positions, strengths and skills are needed for effective bargaining or political clout?

The need for a unified environment movement, with strong links with other progressive social movements and a clear political strategy to counter the conservative influence of government, union and industry policies, is becoming more urgent. So too is a comprehensive political movement with the credibility and the intellectual and physical resources to tackle the larger national and Asia-Pacific regional issues which are swamped in the minutia of localised concerns.

#### Notes

1. *Bulletin*, 24 February 1987, p32.
2. W. McCormick, *Government Funding for Environment and Conservation in NSW, Victoria and Australia, 1970-1986*, Table 3, Parliamentary Library Legislative Research Service, 1987.
3. *Australian Financial Review*, 3 November 1986.
4. The Victorian Ministry for Conservation, Forests and Lands' *Forest Education Service*, produced in co-operation with the Forest Industries Advisory Council, is one example.
5. *Environmental Issues and Usage of National Parks, Australia*, Tables 2 and 3, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. 4115.0, April 1986.

# Reviews

## Films

The Journey is a fourteen and a half hour film directed by Peter Watkins which had its Australian premiere in June 1987.

Reviewed by Richard Tanter.

How can I tell you about *The Journey*, Peter Watkins' new film about the world and nuclear war? It's not easy, even though it's an extraordinary film, and the most important project I've ever been associated with. I can tell you the facts easily. *The Journey* is mainly about a dozen families in ten different countries. It's about their views and feelings, not those of experts. It opens up all the issues of power and emotion related to nuclear war, rather than closing them down. It was made by Watkins with support groups around the world and financed by community support. I can tell you that it's fourteen and a half hours long, and is to be viewed in a number of parts with plenty of time for breaks and discussion.

But that doesn't really tell you why *The Journey* is so extraordinary, why it is has had such a powerful effect even on those who were involved in making it over such a long time. Those facts don't tell you why it will be even more important to the peace movement around the world than Peter's 1966 Oscar-award winning documentary, *The War Game*.

*The Journey* is not like any other film — but then neither is its subject like anything else. Peter has achieved what he set out to do, almost alone, and with great courage, five years ago. On *The Journey* there are no stars, no knowledgeable experts. We hear the voices of families, ordinary people, in Scotland, the Soviet Union, Norway, Mexico, Tahiti, Germany, Mozambique, the United States, Japan, and Australia. While the film gives an enormous amount of detail about the global system of preparations for nuclear war, it is the voices of this dozen or so families

that we really hear.

We hear them in a dozen languages voicing their fears, their discoveries, their hopes — and their anger about the silencing of their voices by the media and information systems that stand between us and the truth. I don't think I can ever look at television news in the same way again.

*The Journey* is very powerful emotionally, but not in a manipulative way. Whereas most films and television flick the viewer from one image to another every few seconds, leaving our brains far behind, *The Journey* moves slowly, allowing silence, time to think about what we have heard, time for people to say what they really feel, however awkward. To give us more space and to make the point about the need for that space, Watkins sometimes fills the screen with black, like looking up from a book you are reading.

*The Journey* is many journeys. For five years, Peter criss-crossed the world to make a film his professional colleagues said could not be made. In that time, a global network of community support groups sprang up, raised money, helped with research and production and, now, with distribution. It's the journey of the White Train delivering nuclear warheads across the US to the Trident base in Bangor. It's the journey made by the people who speak of their lives in the film. It's the journey we make in watching and talking about this film and this part of our lives. It's about the journey we have only just begun if we are to remake the world before it is taken from us.

In Australia, many organisations supported the film — especially Friends of the Earth, PND Victoria, Actors for Nuclear Disarmament and the Australian Film Commission. On Peter's behalf, thank you. And to the thousands more who gave their own money and resources to fund the Australian and Tahitian filming, more gratitude still. Without that Australian and New Zealand support the film would probably not have been made.

Each step in the making of this film has involved hard learning, political

choices and political struggles. Distribution will be no exception. Distribution will begin in the months to come — briefly at the Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals, and then in commercial cinema release around midyear, and after that, community organisation release, educational video and television. In Melbourne, *The Journey* will have its commercial cinema release at the State Film Centre in a three week season starting on 6 August. We have only just begun to work with the film, to discover its possibilities. Like *The War Game* before it, *The Journey* will be seen more in community meeting rooms than downtown glitter palaces. Above all, it will be seen where people can talk about it.

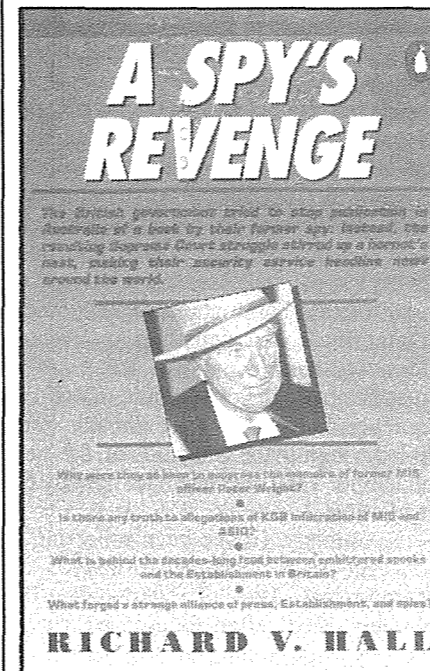
Now we have *The Journey*, we have to find out how to use it, and to expand our ways of inventing the world that could be.

CONTACT: Watkins Australian Film Foundation, 7 Victor Rd, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146.

Richard Tanter works at Monash University and assisted in the production of *The Journey*.



DAVID SPIERS



## Books

*A Spy's Revenge* by Richard V. Hall, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1987, 193pp, \$7.95

Reviewed by Justin Moore

I read this book in less than 24 hours which speaks well for its readability as well as for the fascination of real life spy stories. It deals with the court case in the equity division of the NSW Supreme Court, *The Queen vs Heinemann Publishers* and another of 1986-87. The 'other' is Peter Wright, an ex MI5 agent, and at issue is the publication of his memoirs entitled *Spycatcher* which the British Government wished to prevent.

The journalistic style of *A Spy's Revenge* is very accessible and the character studies in it are factual, human and fairly astute. The cast includes Margaret Thatcher, Gough Whitlam, the late head of MI5 Roger Hollis, a number of Fleet Street journalists, a recent incarnation of Rasputin in the form of a

Russian defector named Golotsin, the English Lords Trent and Rothschild, the double agents Philby, Blunt, etc., plus a host of other security agents, double agents and defectors, several other ex-directors of MI5, the leading British civil servant Sir Robert Armstrong, a judge, an eloquent lawyer and others with improbable names like James Jesus Angleton. It is fortunate that the characters are well drawn for the story that unfolds is murky and tangled in the extreme.

The first section, titled 'Peter Wright vs The Rest', deals with the world of British secret service activity from the end of World War II to the late sixties. In this time Wright cut a rather McCarthyish figure and we see that, politically speaking, the conflict is between tendencies within the extreme right. It is a potted history of post-war anti-communism and Soviet infiltration of British security forces and so contains more names than one can really follow but is intriguing nonetheless. The synchronistic parallels between the initials of MI5 directors and Australian Prime Ministers; Dick Goldsmith White (Gough Whitlam), Micheal Furnivale-Jones (Malcolm Fraser) and Roger Hollis (Robert Hawke), should give coincidence philosophers ample material for contemplation.

The second section, Sir Robert's Ordeal, focuses on the cross examination of Sir Robert Armstrong, advisor to the British Government on security matters. A product of the English ruling class, it is flattering for the Australian ego to see him outwitted by an Australian solicitor, Michael Turnbull. These two engage in an interesting and scholarly exchange. Both are Oxford graduates so the real dispute between them is often couched in classical allusion and cunning. Hall presents it in almost gladiatorial language but tends to deflate Armstrong from the outset. My sympathies, initially with Turnbull as champion of freedom of the press, changed to a detachment from both parties when the lawyer called up Arius, a fourth century theologian, as an authority. The Arian strain of European

culture is something I, for one, would rather avoid.

Hall educates as he writes, explaining many details of the nature of equity proceedings and the NSW legal system and he does a fair job of relating fine points of law to the real issues thus keeping some clear meaning in what is, for the lay reader, an otherwise obscure dispute. Towards the middle of the cross-examination, however, the hyperbola of legal argument seems to escape his understanding, or at least his expression. In the end, Sir Robert Armstrong came out much the worse for wear, both in court and in Hall's book and on his return to England pleaded 'anti-British sentiment'. It seems home ground advantage is a sporting wisdom unknown to bureaucrats.

The final section deals with the judgment given on 13 March 1987 by Mr Justice Phillip Ernest Powell who presided over the entire proceedings. It is brief.

The book still left me wondering what the issue is all about. Perhaps Peter Wright's book will one day enlighten us. It seems that Wright's principle assertion is that British intelligence was and potentially is riddled with KGB operatives and sympathisers. This is high security stuff but it is difficult to see how his assertions would carry anything more than hysterical weight given his paranoiac background and the authority of the opinions weighted against him. This being so, why (as the cover blurb asks) is the British Government so keen to suppress his memoirs? We can only speculate, and I shall.

If Wright knows and is telling the truth, the only logical conclusion is that Anglo-Soviet overtures are taking place at the very top level of British establishment and those involved would rather let this fact remain covert. The cover up, if it is a cover up, already includes a Director-General of MI5 and Lord Trent. It does sound like a paranoid fantasy but this does not mean that it is untrue.

Anyone familiar with *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* will know

## Reviews

that there are at least two ways for something to go unnoticed. One is because it is too small, the other is because it is too big — our field of vision does not extend to its edges. Perhaps this affair takes the form of the latter. Peter Wright's seeking of this fifteen thousand mile perspective in Tasmania makes sense in these terms.

But how could this liaison come about? What would bring the conservative British establishment to secretly befriend the world's most developed communist nation, on the face of it, their worst enemy?

Perhaps Britain's sense of sympathy with Russia as each fought imperilled at the borders of the Third Reich planted something deep, lasting and mistrustful of America in the British establishment's outlook. Perhaps the behaviour of the US during the Falkland Islands conflict has reawakened this attitude and the British Lion, despite language and ideology, is casting its eye around for a geographically closer or more stalwart ally.

On a more cynical note, perhaps the 'establishment' would not want to be cleansed totally of Soviet leanings lest they on their small island be taken for granted by their trans-Atlantic offspring. But this would be a hazardous exercise in doublethink and would not really account for the vigour shown in trying to repress Wright's book.

A *Spy's Revenge* is interesting as a herald to, and perspective on, *Spy-catcher* though the latter sounds like it will be turgid and doughy reading. Australian interest will focus on the light it will shed on the allegiances, orientation and connections of ASIO, for ASIO was formed under the instruction of MI5 during the time Wright deals with.

A *Spy's Revenge* is an informative book on a topical subject and well worth a read.

Justin Moore is a FOE activist.

**The Poisoned Womb** by John Elkington, Pelican Books, Melbourne 1986, 255pp, \$11.95

Reviewed by Chris Sanderson.

*If you want the truth—I know I presume—you must look into the technology of these matters. Even into the hearts of certain molecules—it is after all they which dictate temperatures, pressures, rates of flow, costs, profits, the shapes of towers...*

*You must ask two questions. First, what is the real nature of synthesis? And then: What is the real nature of control?*

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*

These are some of the questions not answered by John Elkington in his book *The Poisoned Womb* which is a very good book nonetheless. Elkington describes the vulnerable foetus floating in its already polluted world. The assault on every stage of our reproductive process. He tells the stories behind the science and weighs it all up judiciously, readably, skillfully. The conclusion — no surprises here — is that we have been, are being, contaminated by our own marvellous products, so that each of us probably has our own chemical signature, telling our history like tree rings or carbon dating. A few parts per billion of PCBs, of DDT, of dioxin. Lead in the bones. Arsenic in the hair. A walking chemical cocktail — but the recipe for what?

Many of us who are environmentally inclined are at some time painfully focused on this sense of contamination. We know, and if we don't know we suspect, what all those chemicals are going to do to us. They are violent molecules which hide in our bodies like patient terrorists until the time is right. We are being invaded, and the war is in our own cells — we cannot trust science, or industry, or government to protect us or inform us. So, a first point about *The Poisoned Womb*. I am convinced that paranoia is a fundamentally unhealthy state. I therefore do not recommend this book to intending, imminent or recent parents. Not because all of us shouldn't know about these issues, but because I'm not sure of how much knowledge we can bear at such points in our lives. What, after all, can we do about PCBs in breastmilk?

This intense level of anxiety is the flip side of this technocrap century. It is an environmentalist truism that the global addiction to plastics and poisons is apparently insatiable. These are the essence of the new, the modern, of our everyday throwaway lifestyle. We have become involved in an escalating junkie/dealer relationship with the chemicals industries, in which we lie to ourselves about how much we use, how much we need it, how much it is costing us and what its effects are. We only notice the extremes. As environmentalists we must face the truth that very nasty chemicals are absolutely everywhere, and are essential to the world as is. Think about the technology that printed and delivered your *Chain Reaction* for example... there are no manifestoes or laws which will rid us quickly of what we have already stockpiled, or pull the plug out of the great machine. First we need to fathom this addiction.

Like many, I have been reflecting on our chemical dependence, and on our paradoxical fear of chemicals. This anxiety, most often focused on cancer, is very widespread indeed. I have been wondering about how much of our anxiety is a function of our ever-improving skills at measuring and analysing chemicals and our increasing but always partial knowledge of their effects. Panic is perhaps inevitable when confronted with the information that hazardous substances are so ubiquitous, albeit often in minuscule quantities. Like parts per million, billion or even quadrillion. It is not so long since we made the same kind of discovery about germs — first that they were responsible for killer infectious diseases, and then as our microscopic and staining techniques were refined, we were faced with the fact that the little grebbles were everywhere. Are everywhere.

Perhaps this fact is one we have not come to terms with yet. If so, it may be materially connected with part of our chemicals addiction. The passion for cleanliness, disinfection, deodorisation and polish is closely connected to powerful ideas about dirt and germs. Our adverse reaction to these is one of the more profitable inroads that the chemical cartel has made into the human psyche. So, with their assistance, we can and do make war on bugs of every kind, we are murderous in our attitudes to insects and dismayed at any

sign of spoilage in food. We need the molecule-makers to help us attain those pest-free dream homes which gleam whitely and eternally like all mothers' teeth in the ads. No smell in those houses that doesn't come out of a can.

I think we would like to extricate ourselves from our ecosystem, the thriving, buzzing world of creatures with whom we must share our food in one way or another and within which we too end up as food for something. We would rather live in the controlled chemical system we create for ourselves and biology at every opportunity. We create molecules of such monstrous permanence that they will resist all kinds of death and cycle almost endlessly through the biological chain. But our science cannot confidently predict all the hidden potentials of these chemicals, though it can design millions of new ones — that's the easy part. To help us understand the true but secret nature of a new molecule, any other species on the planet can be pressed into service. So in, our laboratories people design tiny, technologically perfect gas chambers for mice. The animals will experience our diseases for us. This, at least, is what we hope.

Thomas Pynchon writes in the novel *Gravity's Rainbow* of the discovery of the structure of benzene and the possibility of synthesising new 'organic' molecules which follow from it, as a kind of parable for original sin in science. It involves one Kekule, the German chemist who first worked out that benzene was shaped like a ring after a particular dream:

Kekule Great Serpent holding its own tail in its mouth, the dreaming Serpent which surrounds the World. But the meanness, the cynicism with which this dream is to be used. The Serpent that announces 'The World is a closed ring, cyclical, resonant, eternally-returning,' is to be delivered into a System whose only aim is to violate the Cycle. Taking and not giving back, demanding that 'productivity' and 'earnings' keep on increasing with time, the System removing from the rest of the World these vast quantities of energy to keep its own desperate fraction showing a profit: and not only most of humanity — most of the World, animal, vegetable, mineral, is laid waste in the process...

No return, no salvation, no Cycle — that's not what They, nor their brilliant employee Kekule have taken the Serpent to mean. No, what the Serpent means is — how's this — that the six carbon atoms of benzene are in

fact curled around into a closed ring, just like that snake with its tail in its mouth. Get it?

The question this article started with was 'What is the real nature of synthesis?' This must partly be a question about science and its possibilities. If science has become a necessary gear in the technological machine and knowledge a commodity in which to invest, then is science capable of seeing the Great Serpent as anything other than a six-atom carbon ring to be broken and rebuilt into whatever new molecule a market can be found for? The implication of such thoughts is that science is a very particular tool which is only capable of giving particular answers. It is a tool for increasing our control of the world, and that is its fundamental premise. In doing science we identify ourselves as outside biological cycles, not part of the chain, more important than other forms of life.

*The Poisoned Womb* might itself have been a parable of the problems of science. Yet the idea of science (or the possibilities for a different kind of science) are basically unexamined by Elkington, although he deals with its findings cautiously and ambivalently. Toxicology testing provides a fascinating instance of science's difficulty in dealing with any problem in its wholeness — the enormous complexity of deducing what a single chemical may do to a biological system like a cell or organism is still a problem to be solved. The issue of how a cocktail of chemicals will behave over time, and even more dauntingly, within the biological fabric of an ecosystem, is something we are only beginning to come to grips with. So as an environmentalist, is it worth knowing in as much detail as one can cope with how the evidence about chemicals is actually assembled and the frilliness of the testing processes? I think the answer is yes because of the political usefulness of being aware of the limits of our knowledge. And if you want to, then this is an extremely good book to read. But if you also wonder about the real nature of synthesis, and of control, then you might try *Gravity's Rainbow*, although that's by no means light reading either.

Chris Sanderson is a Chain Reaction subscriber.

JOHN ELKINGTON

The  
Poisoned  
Womb

Human  
reproduction  
in a  
polluted world



## Reviews

**Turning the Tide** by David Bellamy and Brendon Quayle, Collins  
Reviewed by Anna-Marie Dell'oso

By a quirk of environmental fate, I met David Bellamy, the naturalist, as he was being escorted from a police holding cell in Queenstown, Tasmania, in the summer of 1982-83.

It may as well have been winter. The south-west was squalling with rain and the white winds that buffeted my tent at nights were blowing from the Antarctic. I drove into Queenstown, cold and hungry. Rain spat into my eyes as I ran out of the car to pick up a quick hot chocolate and a toasted sandwich before driving on to the little fishing village of Strahan, headquarters of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society that had been in the national headlines nearly every day that summer.

I had spent the last week working as a legal aide to the protesters of the Franklin River campaign. The work consisted of journeys twice a day from Strahan to Queenstown, to counsel the batches of freshly arrested protesters about to appear before the magistrate in the Queenstown court. I was not a lawyer but my experience in Hobart's Risdon Jail (for lying under a bulldozer) made me useful to both the lawyers and the arrested greenies anxious to get messages to their families or have their backpacks stored.

The week inside Risdon, combined with the difficult camping conditions, had also made me peckish for hot chocolate and toasted sandwiches. I parked my car in the rain and locked it. I rammed a beanie hat over my city punk haircut and pulled on a pair of mittens. In my haste, however, I had forgot to remove my 'No Dams' badge from my japara.

It was a mistake that could have been dangerous. The women behind the counter folded her arms, 'Go back to the mainland, yer bloody filthy greenie — garn, get lost. We don't want youse bastards here.' The Wilderness Society's warnings rang in my ears. All the Franklin protesters had been repeatedly told: don't hang around Queenstown, don't provoke or be provoked by the natives, do your chores

in pairs and get out fast.

Yet somehow, I found it difficult to get used to the idea that I was risking my safety buying a toasted sandwich on my own in a remote Tasmanian town.

I walked nervously out of the milkbar. Suddenly a group of people burst out of a building and began running backwards down the street. Cameras were perched on shoulders and microphones, leads and lights waved in hands. A group of beanie hats followed, wolf whistling and clapping, shouting 'David — hey David — Good on yer David'

I got a glimpse of a burly red-cheeked man in a thick woollen jumper being hustled between police. Bearded and jolly he waved to the cameras and shouted answers to the reporters as he was bundled down a backstreet and into the Queenstown court.

Inside the court foyer, loyal supporters of David Bellamy paced the floor, as there were too many of us to sit in court. Bellamy was soon released on a good behaviour bond. The British naturalist, well-known for his television programs and botanical best-sellers, had flown in for the Franklin fight, giving it international publicity.

David Bellamy's latest adventure is to have teamed with Brendon Quayle, an anthropologist and journalist, to write a hard-hitting television series on our global future. The original scripts were written for Tyne Tees TV in Britain.

*Turning the Tide*, the book of the series, is now available to Australian readers. Subtitled 'Exploring options for life on earth', the book is an absorbing and passionate appraisal of where our planet is heading. Although it can't be denied — particularly post-Chernobyl — that a good deal of the globe seems to be out of control and careering towards disaster, Bellamy and Quayle are not doom-and-gloom merchants. In the middle of even the most terrifying chapters they present a blueprint for hope.

In a chapter entitled 'Feeding the World', they present their philosophy: 'From small healthy acorns, tall strong powerful oaks grow. So maybe there is a chance that the global garden can become green... Think globally, act locally.'

David Bellamy and Brendon Quayle seem to represent the scientifically well-informed fighting spirit of the New

Ecologists, who embrace a range of activities from political parties such as the West German Greens, to Greenpeace and the Rudolf Steiner bio-dynamic methods of farming, an holistic and commercially viable method that is producing pure foodstuffs, fruit and vegetables to an ever-increasing market.

Not that the authors spare us any of the genuinely terrifying facts of humanity's global overspending — mostly in the form of nuclear weapons, the consumption of non-renewable fuels and minerals, the bizarre economics of food-growing and food-dumping and the exploitation of a debt-ridden Third World. The desire to make a fast buck — a philosophy that has underpinned Western societies for so long that we have come to believe it is genetic to human nature — has not always motivated us, nor has it motivated many of societies that have lived in a balanced relationship with the earth.

For the tribal societies of the Old World, (environmentalism) was a fundamental fact of life. To survive and prosper, you had to conserve resources, respect and preserve the environment in which you lived... There was no separation between culture and nature, between the lives of men and the natural world around them.

Bellamy and Quayle are neither Ludites nor romantic hippies. They know the clock cannot be turned back and that not all modern knowledge is the work of the devil. Rather, they argue that to save ourselves and our planet, we must learn from what we have so thoughtlessly discarded from the past, be it entire tribes of peoples or methods of animal husbandry.

The arrogance of modern economic-scientific ethics that believes that the human race is above all limits of nature and that the planet is an Aladdin's cave to be plundered at will, is incurring an awesome backlash from that natural world, not only in terms of pollution, wars and a growing nuclear arsenal, but an increasingly unhappy human race. The great cities of the First World are daily under siege by inexplicable crimes, pathological behaviour and vandalism.

To survive, and indeed to live well as human animals, we need to alter our attitudes and shift our priorities. Are we now in a mood to realise that not all knowledge is necessarily wisdom? After the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior*, the rapid disappearance of the great forests

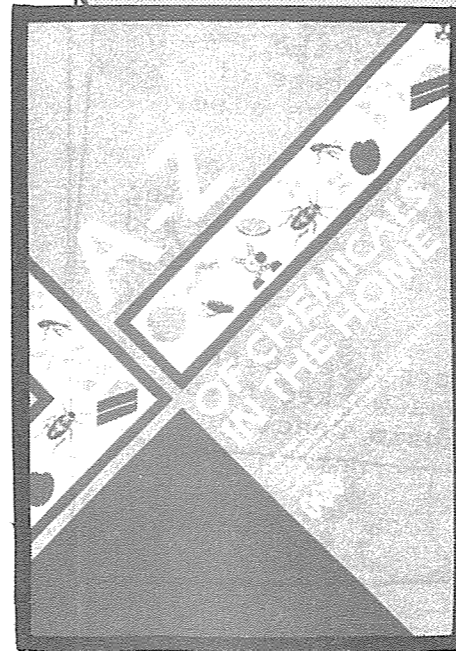
of South America, the indiscriminate damming of rivers all over the world and the eerie quiet following the after-effects of radioactive fallout from Chernobyl, people in the less naive 1980s are more ready to call for the environment bill than they. Looked at in total, the debt seems already too much to pay. Yet Bellamy and Quayle believe that we can reduce our debt in small but increasing installments.

The authors then point to such remarkable small-scale experiments as Benwell Pond. In the middle of industrial Tyneside in England, shrewd green planning changed a vandalised working-class housing estate into a happier and less aggressive community. With the help of conservation volunteers, local youngsters created a small pond and nature park on the fringes of the Benwell housing estate, providing a range of habitats for native English animals and plants. Soon the goldfinches, kestrels and house martins — birds that had not been seen in that part of Tyneside for generations — returned. Better still was the effect on the local humans, giving children space and adults peace, reducing vandalism and bringing 'green hope where before there was only a wilderness of derelict property and soul-less housing development.'

The book is full of such examples,

**A-Z of Chemicals in the Home.** Published by the Toxic and Hazardous Chemicals Committee of the Total Environment Centre, Sydney, 1986. \$9.95

Reviewed by Darcy Henderson.



mainly British, including a biodynamic farming community called Botton Village, which has sprung offshoots all over the world. Bellamy and Quayle explore the possibilities of clean forms of energy, using technologies that trap the power of sun, wind, wave and tide. The wind farms with cows grazing under acres of silent spinning windmills, are the most fascinating. According to the authors, this power source is not just metaphoric hot wind. They say the Californian Energy Commission has set 'a modest target whereby the state wind farms are expected to catch enough wind by the year 2000 to provide over 10 per cent of the state's energy demand... and it's a very demanding state.'

I was excited to see a section on the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and the struggle of that summer. The book devotes an entire chapter, 'Damming the Future', to the shaky economics and disastrous ecology of damming. Clearly David Bellamy was much affected by the large area of unique Australian temperate rainforest that was so nearly drowned for only a mere 180 megawatts of electricity at an extraordinary cost of \$8 million per megawatt — almost eight times the cost of many other hydro-electric schemes.

*Turning the Tide* is designed as a television series and it is not surprising that the book reflects a tight dramatic

structure that is highly imaginative. It makes the reader itch to see it on television. Devices such as taking trips into the English countryside and flying around the world to illustrate ecological points are intensely visual. They make a good read but an even better nights viewing, despite the facts about our world that are deeply worrying.

The book's great advantage over film is that it remains available as a tremendous reference tool, being an environmental encyclopedia, a history book, a blueprint for the future and a greenie's bible all in one. The authors' humanitarian overview, their clear intelligence and urgent honesty make it perhaps the most important of the popular and accessible works on ecology since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

Yet the academic pigeonhole of 'ecology' is ultimately too small for Bellamy and Quayle's book. *Turning the Tide* is a book for and about humanity. It speaks simply, directly and urgently to everyone on board Spaceship Earth, ending with a rallying message of hope, '*Change is in the air, the tide is turning... we will break through the layers of our denials, put aside our faint-hearted excuses and rise up to cleanse the Earth...*'

Anna-Maria Del'Oso is a journalist living in Sydney

This book is a consumer guide to the many chemicals commonly found in the home and garden. It provides easy to read information about the use and the danger to our health and the environment posed by them. The entries include household cleaners, personal hygiene products, glues, paints, termite treatments and pet-care products.

Australian homes are full of chemicals. Unfortunately it seems that most people are unaware of the impact of these chemicals on health and the environment. These products appear to be useful and to make household tasks easier. However, many of them have been developed only since the growth of the chemical industry since the 1939-45 war and for most household and garden purposes the age old natural alternatives do as well if not better without posing the same environmental or health problems.

Each entry in *The A-Z of Chemicals* finishes with a section on alternatives which are non-chemical methods of

dealing with the problem, or the least hazardous chemical product that can be used. All entries are cross referenced with every item having an individual entry being so indicated each time it is mentioned. Original graphics are sprinkled throughout the book which is handily sized for easy reference.

But the size of the book is also a limitation, as it can only skim the surface of the huge field of hazardous chemicals, even if you are only considering those used in the home. Perhaps it could have benefitted by suggesting some further reading.

*The A-Z of Chemicals in the Home* has been used to raise some important issues in the mainstream media, and it is also a useful resource for those people who may be wondering themselves how to get rid of fleas, the hazards of hair dyes or the effects of termite treatments.

Darcy Henderson has been studying hazardous chemicals at FOE Collingwood for the last ten months

# Backstage

Backstage is the occasional page we put into each issue of Chain Reaction to tell readers what has been happening to the magazine, the Collective and other matters of interest, to us at least.

We sometimes explain stylistic changes to the magazine, although we believe that the design developed over the years does not require much amendment. In this issue there have been two obvious changes - Earth News and Letters are "ragged right", or as some would put it, "unjustified", and Backstage looks as though it has been typed rather than set. We decided to make the small column widths ragged because this eliminates the odd gaps which occur when the columns are justified, and Backstage is being typed so we can leave it until the last minute.

The other major change is that we have included a cartoon, the first of a series, and we hope you like it.

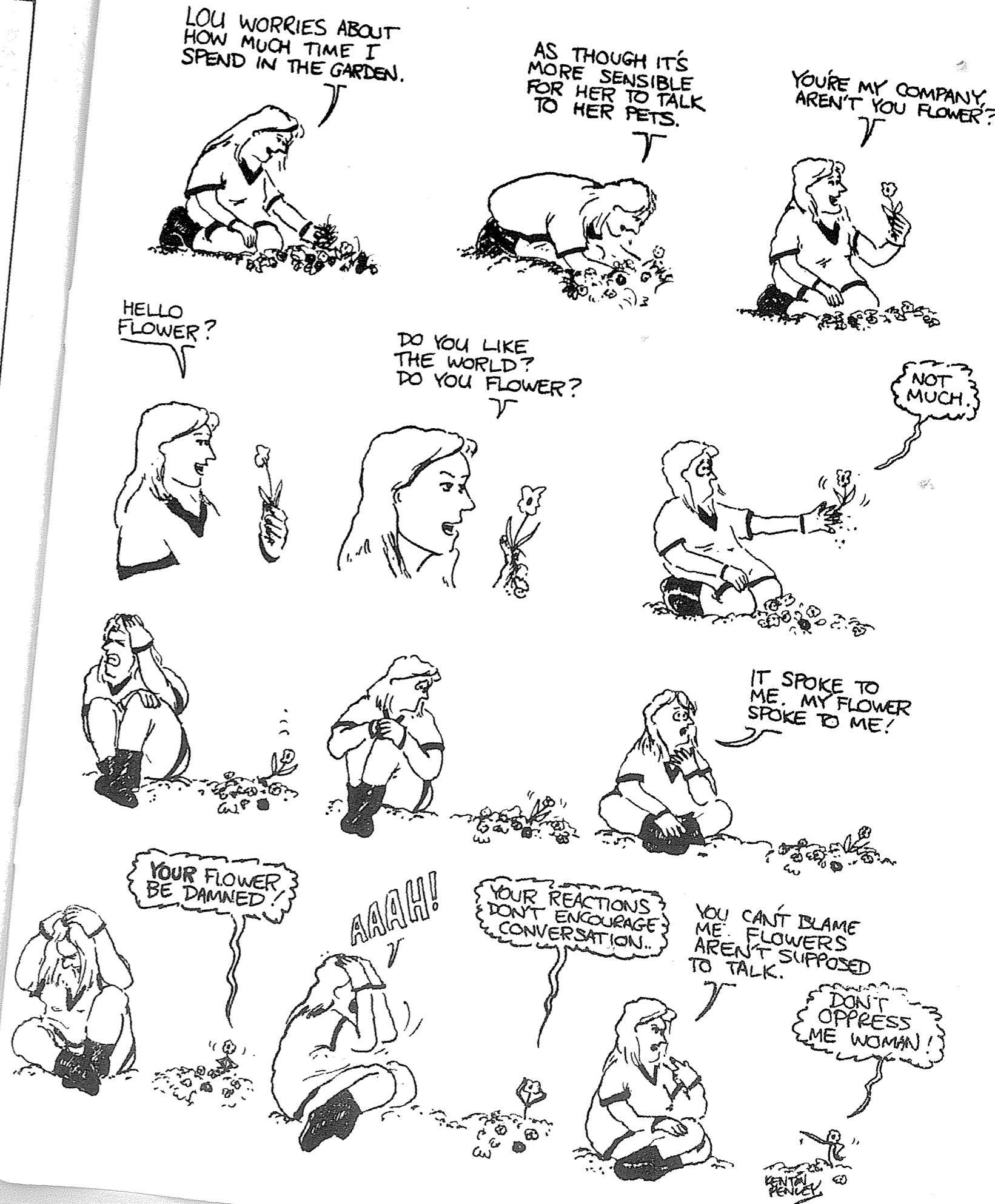
This edition has been put together in what seems like more than the usual chaos, so the collective will be meeting to specifically streamline our production process. We can become more efficient, but we could also use extra help in all stages of the process of production. This is easier for Melbourne people to do, but visitors are welcome, even if only to give us some direct feedback and suggestions for future editions. And you might be able to take away a book to review.

And while we're on feedback, thank you for the comments we've been receiving, both written and verbally, about recent editions of the magazine. It has been very encouraging, and we've started to get the feeling that we must be doing something right. We would still appreciate more, and criticisms are also useful (usually).

There are a number of topics we want to cover in future editions, including: land degradation and soil erosion; children; the economy and the environment; as well as continuing coverage of the environmental issues that won't be dealt with anywhere else.

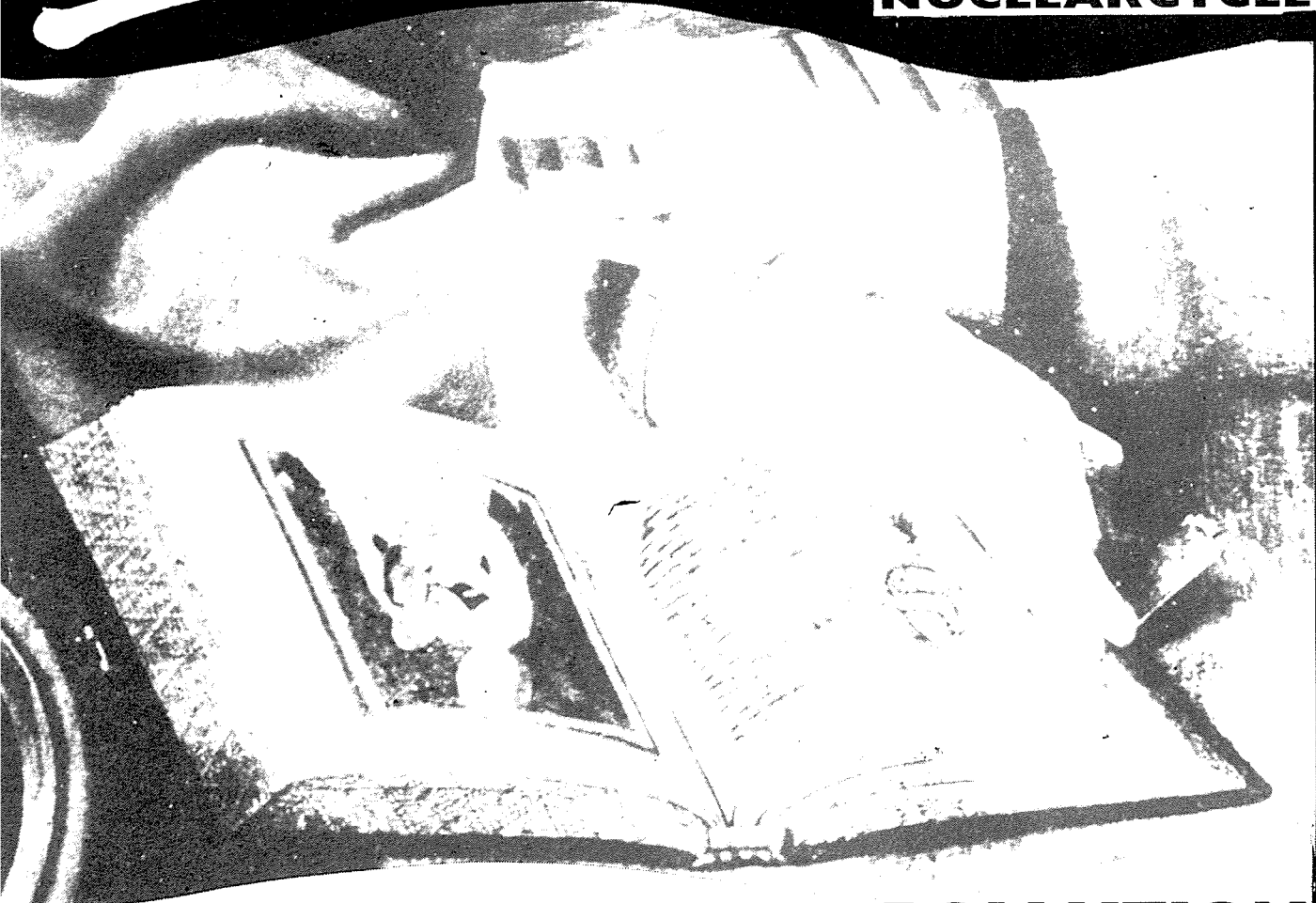
We may also attempt to address issues relating to the use of new technology, because as a magazine we are finding that we are using things like computers, fax machines, laser printers and so on, and even if we continue to do so, we would like to do it in the knowledge of the benefits and problems associated.

Meanwhile, keep sending material, preferably on computer disk, but paper is acceptable. Thank you to everyone who has worked towards making this possible - the fiftieth edition of Chain Reaction.



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NEWTITLES  
POSTERS**

