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# Chain Reaction

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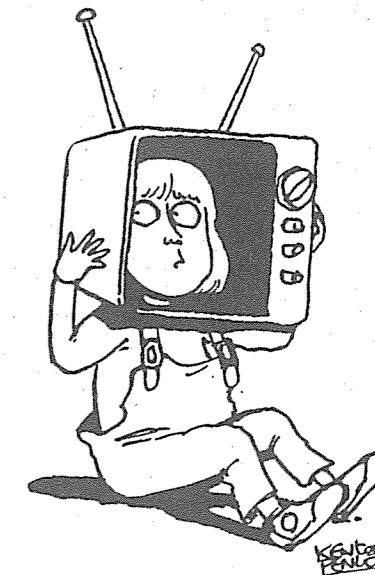
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## Chain Reaction

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# Letters

## Greenpeace reply to 'Hazel Notion'

All at Greenpeace took strong exception to Hazel Notion's article, 'Greenpeace - getting a piece of the green action' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64). This is the level of debate we would expect from a right wing think tank like the Institute of Public Affairs, not from a supposedly experienced political activist or a magazine that purports to support environmental issues and campaigns.

Greenpeace took exception to the article on two grounds. Firstly, the attitude that Greenpeace was adopting a 'business as usual' approach to campaigning and, secondly, the astounding level of factual inaccuracy contained within the article. Before addressing these inaccuracies a few general comments.

An experienced political activist knows that anyone who makes allegations of the nature of Hazel's has no credibility if they do not have the courage to support those allegations in person; not via pseudonym. The use of a pseudonym is a cowardly way of making statements that are supposedly based

in fact but on which the author cannot be directly challenged. At Greenpeace we have always been of the belief that one of the major philosophies behind activism is that one must stand up and be counted and have faith in what you believe and stand by those beliefs even in the face of adversity, ridicule or censure.

Hazel's unwillingness to do so is comment enough on the depth of his or her commitment to activism.

A second general comment is that I am astounded that the editors of *Chain Reaction* were prepared to print such an article without one single attempt to clarify some of the supposed facts. This is by no means to suggest that they should have taken any responsibility for the opinions expressed by Hazel. There is however, a responsibility upon editors to ensure that the material printed in their publications is factually correct, particularly when they choose to print articles by anonymous authors. Many of Hazel's facts were wrong and a simple phone call would easily have clarified this situation.

Now to the article itself. The following comments do not, unfortunately, deal with all the issues arising from the article that Greenpeace believes need to be addressed. To do so would require significantly more space than is available. The following addresses what we saw as some of the more serious issues.

The article suggests that Greenpeace has become 'soft', that we support a 'business as usual' ap-

proach to society. If the concepts of zero pollution, clean production, the creation of a World Park for Antarctica, the stopping of uranium mining in Australia, international nuclear disarmament, dramatic reductions in the emissions of Greenhouse gases leading to the phase-out of fossil fuel usage, restoring the ozone layer, the prevention of future offshore oil exploration in Australia, (and the list goes on), are symbolic of a 'business as usual' approach to both campaigning and the environment, then the author has a very different definition from Greenpeace of 'business as usual'.

Hazel seems to believe that Greenpeace is involved in environmental activism purely for the purpose of making more money, to get bigger, to promote Greenpeace more effectively, to make more money and so the cycle goes on. But let us examine the sense of this and try to understand why Hazel would have such an opinion.

Greenpeace is a large successful international environmental and peace organisation. The reason for our existence is to preserve the environment and species that inhabit planet earth. In an attempt to ensure that Greenpeace Australia is effective in our attempt to meet these goals Greenpeace Australia approached Greenpeace International in Amsterdam and asked for help in 1989 to restructure our national office and make us more effective in the environmental battle we all faced as we entered the nineties. Steve McAllister was asked to

come and he agreed. It was not, as Hazel suggests, that Greenpeace United States forced McAllister on an unwilling Greenpeace Australia.

There were a number of references in the article to Steve McAllister's personal financial situation and the salary package that he received while in Australia. I fail to see how these issues are anything but his own personal business, but to set the record straight the following is the correct account.

Whilst employed by Greenpeace Australia, McAllister received a salary of \$45,000 Australian and a Holden station wagon. This salary package was equal to or less than that paid for equivalent positions in at least two other major environment organisations in Australia. The McAllister family rented a large and run down house which was due for demolition, for the eleven months that they were in Australia. This accommodation was not paid for by Greenpeace but by them personally. Greenpeace rented one room in the house for the use of international Greenpeace visitors to Australia. The house was shared with a number of other people and some of them still live there.

Concerning his personal assets, he and his wife own an organic fruit farm that is fully operational as a farm. The farm is their family home, there is no 'high density residential development' and there were never any plans for such. Upon leaving Australia, Steve became the Deputy Executive

Director of Greenpeace International, which is based in Amsterdam. He has recently resigned this position to return to the United States and run the farm.

It is an extraordinary invasion of privacy that someone's personal and financial situation should be discussed as it was in the pages of *Chain Reaction*. That the details should be so appallingly incorrect, only adds insult to injury.

It would appear that Hazel, the so called 'experienced political activist', does not approve of direct action, especially if it is effective. Direct action has been a fundamental part of Greenpeace since its inception in 1971 and something that we make no apologies about. On the contrary, we are extremely proud of the environmental gains that non-violent direct action has achieved. For Greenpeace it is about 'bearing witness' to environmental

wrongs and attempting to stop them whenever possible. The choice of issue and timing is dictated by environmental pressures and an analysis of whether a direct action or some other form of campaigning is the best approach to take at the time.

Hazel claims that one complaint levelled at Greenpeace is that we don't have the commitment to follow issues to a conclusion. S/he however provides no details of from whom such complaints have come. Greenpeace on the other hand, can identify scores of community groups that we are currently, and have previously, worked with to the successful completion of an issue.

The next complaint was that Greenpeace uses 'canvassers' who doorknock and 'ask for donations and sell subscriptions' and are then paid 40 per cent of what

they raise. (Hazel's comments imply that canvassers shouldn't be paid. I'm sure that if they were unpaid Hazel would be up in arms about slave labour! It is a case of damned if you do and damned if you don't.)

Canvassers are an extremely valuable part of every Greenpeace campaign. They are environmental ambassadors who promote awareness of environmental issues throughout Australia. Greenpeace considers that getting out into the community and talking personally to people who have little direct contact with our issues is a critical and valuable part of environmental work. We also value the people who do this difficult and demanding work and, yes, we pay them for it. We don't believe that the long-tried political approach of sitting around feeling warm and pure and talking to each other is a

very effective way of changing the world!

Hazel, it seems, is confused. S/he states on one hand that if Greenpeace receives information from canvassers about an issue of environmental concern amongst the public then 'this may lead to Greenpeace adopting the relevant cause'. However, in the very next paragraph Hazel says the 'most cited criticism of Greenpeace is the centralism of power, the old boy promotion network [a comment that many members of staff found somewhat sexist] and the rigid bureaucratic authority structure'. Now Hazel, you can't have it both ways; either Greenpeace is rigid and bureaucratic or it will pick up an issue of concern among the general public and campaign on it. But it would seem that we couldn't be both.

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# Letters

ing criticism of Hazel's article. The far from subtle suggestion that Greenpeace receives satellite information from foreign governments in return for providing them with favours is an insult to each individual staff member and public supporter of the organisation and does not deserve further comment. It is exactly this type of comment that leads Greenpeace to assume that Hazel's political activism has been on the far right hand side of the political fence.

For reasons known only to him or herself, Hazel seems far more concerned with spending time writing articles that promote divisions within the environmental movement. Hardly, one would have thought, the sort of thing on which someone concerned about political activism would be interested in spending their time.

Hazel, next time you want to write such an article may I suggest that you take the time to research it properly and that you pick a target that enhances your goals and aims for the world. But then again, maybe you did.

Paul Gilding, Executive Director, Greenpeace Australia.

## Let's hear it from the workers

Well, imagine our surprise to learn that our employment at Greenpeace Australia was due to the fact that we were 'better suited to the new conservative and bureaucratic requirements' of GP OZ (*Chain Reaction* 63/64).

Gee, and we thought that our history of working in the trade union movement, anti-racist groups, the public housing lobby and other radical social change groups might have had just a little to do with our being here at Greenpeace. Just goes to show how wrong you can be!

Seriously though, folks, the article printed in the last edition of *Chain Reaction* was extremely nasty, bitter even, and in our opinion does not come close to reflecting the reality of Greenpeace Australia. If it did we would not be here.

What the article did was try to undermine the work of us here at Greenpeace who, in common with the rest of the green movement, are committed to working long hours to protect the planet and effect real social changes. To us personally the article was insulting and upsetting.

The fact that such an article appears in a journal like *Chain Reaction* at a time when Greenpeace Australia is under severe attack from companies like BHP and Nufarm and individuals like Peter Walsh and Arvi Parbo is at best disappointing and at worst makes us wonder what were the intentions of the editors.

We don't believe in shying away from open and

honest critical debate, and for this reason were especially disheartened that the article was published under a pseudonym. Why isn't the author prepared to stand up and defend his/her personal views? It's cowardly, and taken to a logical extreme, begs the question; 'Was Arvi Parbo the author?'. If the author is not Arvi and Hazel Notion is, as the byline states, an experienced political activist then one might imagine that s/he would respect the long held traditions in the social change movement for openness and honesty in criticism.

Greenpeace is not a perfect organisation. Like all groups working to achieve radical social change we do make mistakes and there is certainly room for improvement both in our organisation and in our campaigning work. But to suggest as Hazel does that we are of the business-as-usual-school of light green greenies is untrue. Greenpeace is not a grass-roots organisation, but works closely with many. We believe we occupy an essential niche in a range of environmental activism, especially in terms of our commitment to direct action, and after many years of trial and error, some pretty well honed media skills.

In the last couple of years we have widened our work and are now making a

concerted effort to deal effectively with the concerns of the trade union movement and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, two sections of society the green movement, including Greenpeace, have a not very proud history of dealing with. We have also made a real attempt to improve our relationship and work with local groups and we enjoy a good working relationship with such groups across the length of Australia.

In short we at Greenpeace are not corporate careerist yuppies but activists who come from disparate backgrounds but who all share a desire to work together and with others to protect our planet.

Ultimately, it's disappointing to be attacked on the basis of a lot of rumour-mongering and assertion...those very activities of which the 'forces of darkness' accuse all of the environment movement, and the very activities we should take absolute care to avoid.

Meanwhile, there's a planet to save and, despite the best efforts of the Parbos, Walshes and, it seems, the 'Notions', we at Greenpeace intend to continue working hard and effectively to this end.

Lynette Thorstensen & Alastair Harris, Greenpeace Australia.

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

***Chain Reaction*, GPO Box 90, Adelaide 5001, South Australia. Fax: (08) 293 8535.**

## Politics of manipulation

Thank you for your feature on 'Corruption in the environment movement' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64). I was particularly tickled by Tim Doyle's article, as it once again confirmed all my prejudices about elite groups and the ALP.

Indeed, this is stuff people ought to know. It illustrates just how a politics of manipulation can operate, and can appear to succeed in the short term.

I share Tim's belief that, in the long run, such a politics will weaken the 'organised movement', making it narrower, shallower, and less able to resist the economic rationalist approach to conservation. An increasingly pervasive P.R. campaign to 'privatise' environmental controls is already under way.

The question, I suppose, is what to do about it. I don't believe confrontation is in order.

For one thing, to somehow fight for 'control' of the existing organisations from within would invite bitter recriminations, ugly scenes, hysteria, burn-out, and probable destruction of the goal anyway. This has been my past experience with the ALP, and other technocratic elites.

All my own experience and reading leads me to believe that 'real' long-lasting power is to be had through grass roots organising (as distinct from organisations), which can take place under even the most adverse circumstances.

For example, even in the horribly technocratic office of the Wilderness

Society in Brisbane, grassroots action groups form and reform as 'need' arises. Here, people are empowered, and cast their awareness much further afield than any office, political party or elite preferences. I only worked with one such group, the Brisbane Rainforest Action Group, around the blockade of logging on Fraser Island. So perhaps my experience isn't representative.

This group had visions of how the world should be, and were looking for their own ways to make it happen. They felt able to refuse suggestions by TWS and ACF leaders to 'postpone' NVDA for a year or so, and they eventually succeeded in laying down an extensive and effective blockade which, for a few weeks, stopped all logging activity on the island.

I watch some people in the environment movement, taking up the weapons of power politics - over-simplifying issues, creating false dichotomies, seeking glossy photo-opportunities - and apparently looking towards a glorious future of 'eco-fascism' (with themselves on the Board of Directors). Sometimes I find it hard not to despair when I think of all the resources and labour going into an electoral strategy I believe is wrong, based on issues I believe are right.

So the more direct community power we build now, the better off we will be in future. Even if 'we're' the ones who are wrong, I don't think we can do too much harm with such a strategy.

Brian Law, Malanda, Queensland.

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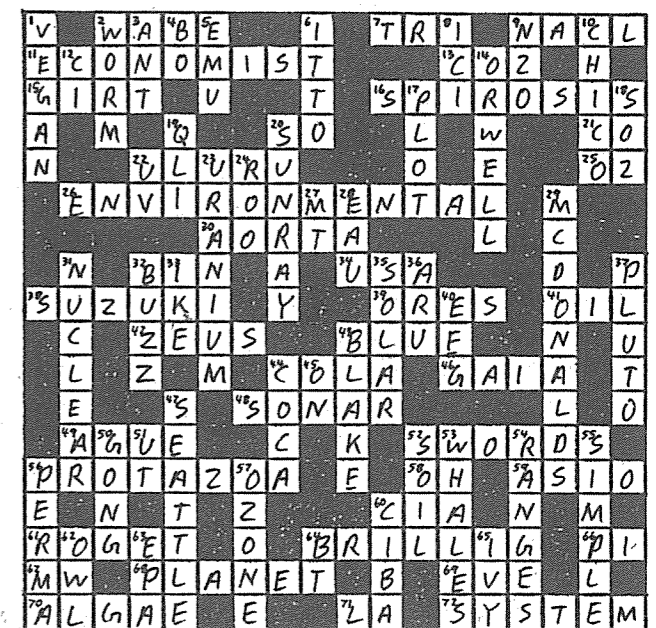
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## Greenword solution 63/64



# Letters

## ... and one from Jon West

Tim Doyle's nasty allegations against The Wilderness Society, in 'Corruption in the Environment Movement' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64), are wrong in both fact and interpretation.

It is a gross exaggeration to assert that the 'voluntary membership was quite shocked' by the Society's decision to support the ALP and had not been consulted. While it was inevitable that some members would disagree with the choice, the decision was supported by the vast majority of The Wilderness Society. It was taken after an extensive formal and informal decision-making process.

Tim Doyle is the only person I know of who believes The Wilderness Society's leadership is 'intensely Labor Party oriented'. I doubt even Robin Gray would agree with Tim on that one. Of the nine 'key individuals' he lists, only one, maybe two, have ever been associated with the Labor Party. None could be described as 'intensely oriented' to the ALP and none were currently active in the ALP in 1987. Certainly the Labor Party

leadership at the time did not regard either the Wilderness Society or ACF as the least bit 'ALP oriented'.

It is not true that environmentalists have 'seldom' backed political parties. Offering electoral support is an established tactic. Environmental groups have repeatedly supported various candidates and parties when it advanced our cause. A notable example was the highly successful, and virtually unanimous, support by hundreds of groups across the country for the Democrats and ALP in the 1983 election (when the Franklin River faced destruction).

No 'trade-offs' or 'deals' were made between the ALP and the environmental organisations. Tim offers not a shred of evidence for this assertion. This is an important clarification because a 'trade-off' suggests that environmentalists gave away something to conclude a deal. I ask Tim to specify: Which wilderness areas or other conservation issues did the environmental leaders sacrifice in this alleged 'trade-off'? The answer is: none. There was no such 'deal'.

In reality, the process leading to the decision was quite open. The Government considered and then announced its policy on the major environmental issues (certainly with considerable input from many conservationists). Environmentalists saw that the policy was sharply superior to the Liberals' alternative, and, after much discussion, decided to support it. Unfortunately for those who

like to see conspiracies, it was as simple as that.

No gifts of either money or free advertising were accepted by The Wilderness Society (or to my knowledge any other environmental group) from the Bond Corporation during the 1987 federal election. This claim is simply false. Nor was the content of the Wilderness Society's advertising in any way influenced by anyone associated with Channel 9. We did, however, receive several calls from a rather anxious Channel 9 advertising-account executive wanting his bills paid.

The Wilderness Society paid for its advertising with donations; a couple of large ones from wealthy supporters and many small ones from less-wealthy backers. (One of the wealthy sympathisers was Richard Farmer, no doubt considered a highly suspicious character by Tim Doyle because he was a friend of, and occasional adviser to, Bob Hawke. I'll now let Tim into a 'secret': Farmer had in the past made other donations to The Wilderness Society, including some wine for a raffle. Shall we look forward to a thorough investigation of this 'corruption' as well?)

Much of Tim's conspiracy theory seems based on the fact that I had worked briefly for Environment Minister Barry Cohen before becoming TWS director. Tim implies that I was some kind of ALP hatchet man sent into the environment movement to secure its support. Unfortunately, Tim either did not know, or conveniently ignored, the fact that I had

worked with The Wilderness Society and ACF for years before becoming Cohen's environmental adviser. In the light of events both at the time and subsequently, to suggest that the ALP-environment movement link is strongest in my home state of Tasmania is truly laughable!

The Wilderness Society did not drop arguments about aesthetics and spirituality, nor science and economics, when it intervened in the election. As all who saw our publicity will remember, these remained the centre of our campaign.

I am reminded of a comment made some years ago by Lech Walesa. Walesa recalled that - contrary to popular belief - his most stressful battles had not been against Moscow's tanks and Warsaw's Stalinists, but with extremists within Solidarity, his own movement. The hotheads refused to be satisfied with anything less than permanent confrontation, regardless of whether such conflict helped or hindered Solidarity.

These internal disputes were especially tiring because they too often cross the threshold from legitimate discussion of ends, means, and tactics, to become slanging matches about the personal morality and loyalty of individuals. Walesa himself was repeatedly accused of having 'sold out' (given in to 'corruption') because he sometimes counselled compromise and creative tactics.

Unfortunately, Tim Doyle has crossed this threshold. His venomous tone and disregard of truth

introduces a style of debate that environmentalists have tried to avoid.

The overwhelmingly important fact is that the Wet Tropical Rainforests are now safe from the chainsaws. This is because the ALP - not the Liberals - won the election. In his fruitless quest for non-existent 'corruption', Tim disregards that vital reality. Nonetheless, it remains the only reason environmentalists backed Labor in 1987.

Jonathon West  
Former Director  
The Wilderness Society.

## Editor's response

There were other letters in response to the 'Corruption' articles, and we're sorry we haven't the space for all of them, or for all our replies, but we will reply briefly to criticisms of the editors.

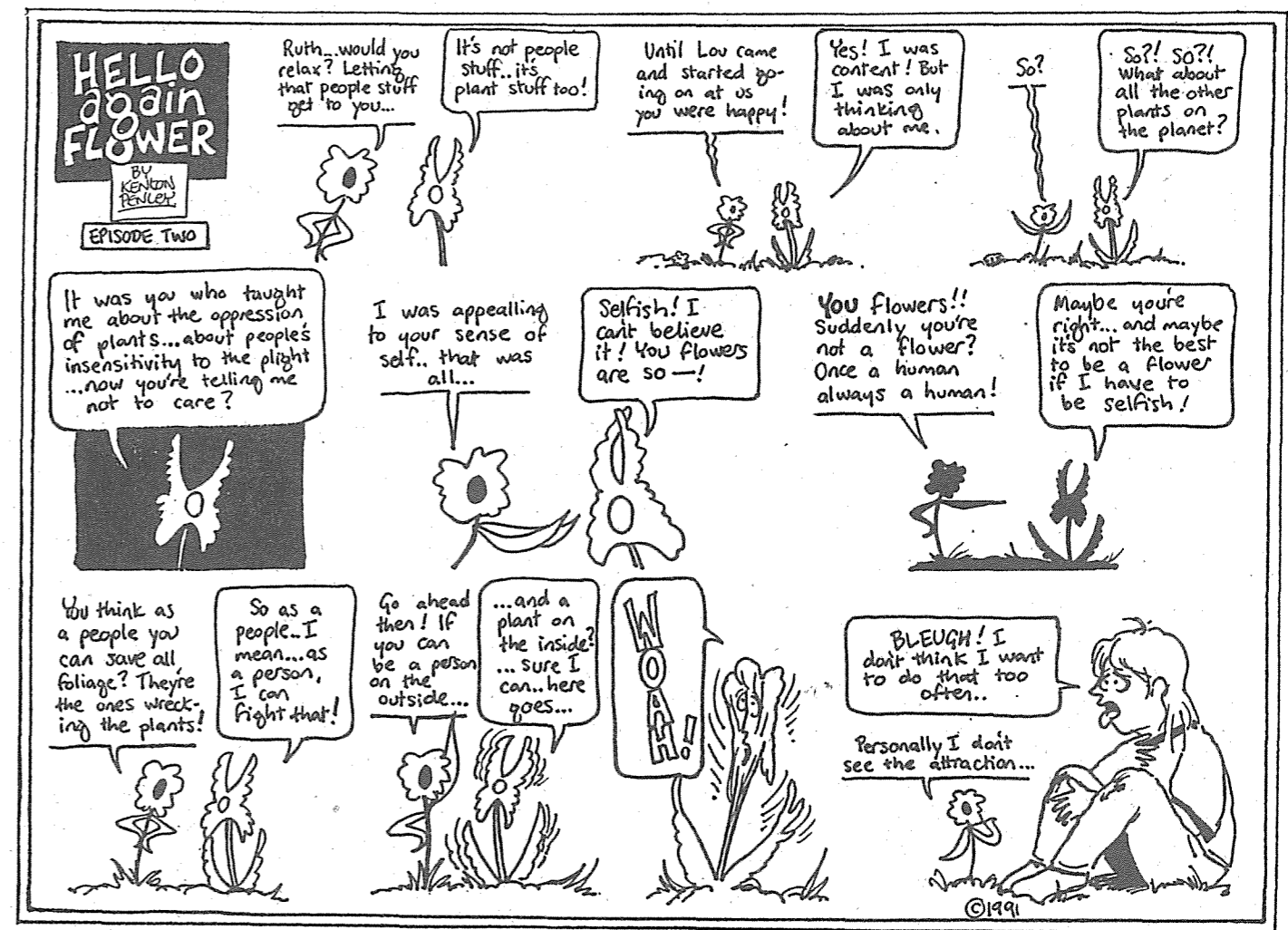
*Chain Reaction* aims to encourage debate on important issues and there will sometimes be unpopular articles. If there are, however, any sacred cows in the environment movement, we do not know what or who they are, and would welcome suggestions. We do not edit the substantial opinions out of articles we publish, even if

we don't agree with them.

We do not contact every organisation we mention, whether to verify facts or not, because of the potential for inordinate pressure on us not to print. As it stands, the facts in the article and the Gilding response are very similar. The divergencies are between the facts according to Gilding and statements attributed to the former Executive Director, which Gilding cannot say were never made because he was not always at McAllister's side.

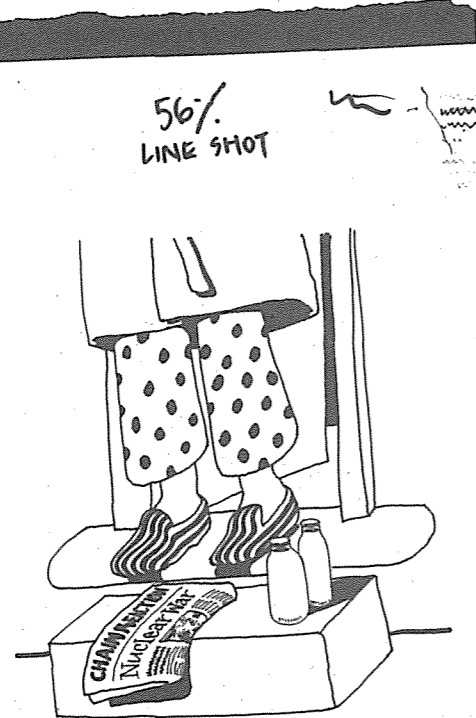
There are problems for editors in publishing work written under a pseudonym. We published, in this case,

because it was referred to us by someone we respect and trust, it had already appeared in another journal and it did raise some of the many issues about Greenpeace which deserve an airing. Hazel's choice of anonymity may have been wise for Hazel, given the threats that followed, but, sadly, it allowed the use of diversionary tactics such as the suggestion that it's all a Right Wing plot. *Chain Reaction* is not involved in any such conspiracy, but, at the same time, it should not be expected to sit on issues while waiting for the Right to go quiet.



# Backstage

We have been quite busy since the last *Chain Reaction*, and the pressures of life conspired to force us to prioritize making a living for a while. It would be nice, but not likely, for *Chain Reaction* to be able to pay its editors a living wage, allowing them the time to concentrate on the administration and production of the magazine. Money is necessary in our society and it is currently difficult for



**1992?**

We found this artwork while sorting through old *Chain Reaction* files, in an effort to fit everything into our new and smaller office. We don't know when it was produced, but it's obviously a fantasy someone had that there would still be milk bottles around in 1992.

**W**ELCOME to another issue of *Chain Reaction*. It's been so long since the last one that we have included a Backstage, to let you know some of the things that have been happening behind the scenes in the production of the magazine, and perhaps make some tentative predictions for the future.

many of us to get adequate quantities of it, but we have tried by taking short term and part time work and chasing full time work. This erratic type of living has made it difficult to plan issues of *Chain Reaction*, and they do need a lot of planning and preparation.

We talked about this situation at the annual meeting of Friends of the

Earth Australia, and received support and understanding. We, Clare Henderson and Larry O'Loughlin, were again elected as editors, and a number of measures were proposed to assist *Chain Reaction* to come out more frequently and regularly, without overloading or overlooking the editors.

One proposal was that guest editors be used to produce a substantial portion of the magazine. In most cases, the guest editors would solicit, edit and find graphical material for many or all of the major articles in an issue (usually twenty to thirty pages), and the regular editors would prepare Letters, Earth News, FOE News, Reviews, Resources and other 'regulars' such as the back page cartoon, Hello Flower and Greenword.

This will be trialed with the next issue, when FOE Nouveau, the Adelaide-based Friends of the Earth group, will be guest editors in conjunction with the Eco City 2 conference to be held in Adelaide in April 1992.

We will also be approaching other people to do some of the hard work of gathering appropriate, stimulating articles for other editions during the year. It should be very interesting and will, hopefully, reduce some of the workload on the regular editors.

Friends of the Earth groups also promised to provide more material to the magazine, not just about things they have been doing or strictly local issues, but also contacts with good writers on interesting subjects.

We editors will also try to stabilise and secure our own incomes. This is not entirely up to us, as we are part of an economy which is not very successful at providing for everyone's needs. But we have to try as it will assist us to bring out *Chain Reaction* regularly.

The *Chain Reaction* office has moved to make it more convenient for the editors, and we have a new, combined telephone and fax number: (08) 293 8535, though bear with us if there are problems getting through. You will usually be able to leave a message if there is no-one in the office. Our postal address remains the same: GPO Box 90, Adelaide, SA, 5001.

# Earth News

## Cows, people and BST

It appears that a decision has been made that genetically engineered agricultural microbes will be assessed for commercial application through existing controls, despite a lack of public consultation as to whether this is an appropriate regulatory structure.

It is likely that Bovine Somatotropin (BST), a genetically engineered growth hormone designed to increase milk production of cows, is being assessed for use in Australia. The Australian Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Council, in the Federal Department for Primary Industries refuses to deny or confirm that BST is currently undergoing a 'clearance' process under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1988*. If cleared by the Council, BST could then be registered for commercial use.

BST is being promoted by Monsanto, American Cyanamid, Eli Lilly and Upjohn Company. It is unclear which of these companies is seeking clearance for BST in Australia. Yet these companies are having difficulty finding a market for BST.



In 1990 the Commission of the European Communities placed a moratorium on the use of growth hormones, including BST, and it has been extended for another two years until the end of 1993.

The rationale for the moratorium was the lack of adequate data on the socio-economic, ecological and health effects of growth hormones. Part of the debate surrounds the concept of the 'fourth hurdle' which brings in questions such as the 'need' for the product as well as the traditional questions applying to the registration of agricultural

products which were limited to 'efficacy, toxicity and safety'.

BST has been equally controversial in the United States, and is currently under review by the Federal Food and Drug Administration and its use is outlawed in several US States.

Given the restrictions on the use of BST in the United States and Europe, the companies with an interest in BST are conducting field trials and promoting the sale of BST in the third world.

BST increases milk yields by 10 to 25 per cent - yet cows injected with BST suf-

fer from an increase in mastitis (udder inflammation), decreased fertility and signs of stress. There are also concerns that BST will wipe out the small dairy industry and the debate rages as to whether it poses adverse health risks to humans.

Given the controversial nature of BST, and genetic engineering in general, it would seem that any consideration of its use in Australia should be fully and publicly debated.

Source: *Genewatch*, March 1991; *RAFI Communiqué*, October 1990; *New Scientist*, 2 December 1989.











# The Federal EPA: States vs Commonwealth

*The Federal Government is currently considering a range of options for a Federal Environment Protection Agency. Paul Rutherford and Rob Fowler argue that the cooperative federalism approach and the failure to adopt new approaches to environmental management may result in the EPA becoming a 'lame duck' organisation. They outline features they believe should be part of the new EPA.*

IN February 1991, the Australian Conservation Foundation and Greenpeace Australia submitted a report to the Commonwealth Government, outlining proposals for the proposed Federal Environment Protection Agency (EPA). The report, prepared by Rob Fowler, advanced two fundamental propositions.

Firstly, the EPA should be structured in a way which would not see it hamstrung by traditional forms of cooperative federalism arrangements which require protracted negotiations at the ministerial level between Federal, State and Territory governments.

Secondly, the EPA should introduce new approaches to the protection of the environment that do not rely exclusively upon existing methods such as standard-setting and risk assessment, but rather implement a pollution prevention philosophy by promoting clean production and by applying the 'precautionary principle'.

## Constitutional issues

There is a long standing view that the States have primary legislative responsibility to protect the environment, and that the Commonwealth has little capacity to act unilaterally in this area.

Constitutional interpretation by the High Court over the last fifteen years shows that this view is no longer appropriate and is based on political expediency and bureaucratic practice, rather than constitutional necessity.

The Hawke Labor Government was first elected in 1983 on a platform that included using Commonwealth powers to prevent the State of Tasmania from damming the Franklin River World Heritage Area. These powers were subsequently confirmed by a High Court ruling.

Despite the use of these powers in some very high profile conservation disputes, the Federal Government is now unwilling in environmental matters to go beyond the 'States' Rights' thinking it previously opposed.

There has been a political decision by Labor not to use those powers which are clearly available to it for environment protection.

The sources of Federal power to

# Behind the EPA

ONE of the objectives for the establishment of a Federal Environment Protection Authority (EPA) was the development of a national approach to the environment, such as uniform environment quality standards and national strategies to promote those standards. The process of establishing an EPA has been tied up with wider concerns with Federal-State relations, however, and political compromise has been at stake as much as environment protection.

On 19 March 1990, in the lead up to the 1990 Federal election, the then-Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, made an address which outlined the Labor Party's environmental record and future initiatives if re-elected. He said:

Unlike the Coalition, which has recoiled from assuming a strong role for the Commonwealth in acting in the national interest to protect the environment, we will strive for national strategies of air and water quality – and national strategies to implement them. We accept the value of an Environment Protection Agency to co-ordinate this work and will move to establish such a body in our next term of Government.

In a media release on 21 May 1990, Federal Environment Minister, Ros Kelly, announced that her department had started work on the establishment of an EPA and that the first step would be the establishment of an Environment Protection division within the Department.

Subsequent to the ALP's re-election, Hawke declared open for consideration the entire field of Commonwealth-State relations, with the intention of developing a new consensus between the Federal and State governments, including an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment. Hawke called this process the 'Closer Partnership' initiative, but it became commonly known as Hawke's 'New Federalism'.

Initial drafts of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment were circulated within governments before the cancelled Special Premiers' meeting due late July 1991.

Environment Minister Kelly also released an EPA discussion paper in July 1991 which rejected decisive use of Commonwealth powers in favour of the continued reliance on negotiated compromise by a Ministerial Council made up of State and Commonwealth environment ministers.

After a meeting with Kelly in September 1991, a number of Australia's major environment groups issued a

statement that New Federalism and the draft Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment would spell disaster for Australia's environment, arguing that 'without strong Commonwealth leadership on the environment recalcitrant States will set the pace and our environment will continue to suffer'. The Australian Conservation Foundation also argued in a paper, 'Background to New Federalism', that the process was going on in secret and that agreements were 'being negotiated behind closed doors by State and Federal bureaucrats with no public input'.

The November 1991 Special Premier's Conference gave informal support to Kelly's Ministerial Council approach to the Federal EPA. In addition, although the States are insisting that any EPA established by the Commonwealth should be a joint Commonwealth-State body, they are unwilling to contribute to its funding.

Paul Keating, on 22 October 1991, made a major speech criticising New Federalism, in which he said that 'there is no case to allow a State a veto over Commonwealth actions in areas of concurrent interest, such as the environment ...'. In December 1991 Keating was elected Prime Minister, and while his derailing of New Federalism raised doubts about the future of some aspects of it, it is not certain that this extends to questions of environmental policy. It is rumoured that Environment Minister Kelly is still enthusiastic about the idea of a Ministerial Council approach.

In February 1992 Dr Ian McPhail, previously Director-General of the South Australian Department of Environment and Planning, was appointed as head of the EPA in Canberra, and it continued in the process of filling Senior Executive Service positions. The functions of the EPA were described as assisting the Commonwealth

to establish, monitor and maintain arrangements for the ecologically sustainable future of Australia. In cooperation with State and Territory Governments, Industry and Interested Groups, the Agency is involved in developing national environment quality standards and programs, including environmental impact assessment and state of the environment reporting. The Agency actively encourages new attitudes in support of pollution prevention and waste minimisation.

Western Australia, New South Wales, and South Australia are also at various stages of establishing state EPAs. Victoria has had an EPA since 1970.







stantial a concept should have become the object of such inflated hopes and fear' (BAB p. 123).

This may be an important point. But if the concept is insubstantial, to those of us who reside in Adelaide the proposed investment of \$800 million-plus is emphatically becoming part of material reality. To this extent, what is especially disappointing about all four texts is the conspicuous absence of any sustained and coherent analysis of the economic, political and bureaucratic interests which are already embedded within the unfolding momentum of the MFP.

Put simply: whilst from these studies one learns a great deal about Japan's recent political economy, the role of leisure resorts as well as ekibentopia in Japan, and the supposedly special relationship between Japan and Australia, how the MFP is the product of particular political and economic forces inside Australian society is an issue scarcely addressed. Nor, more importantly, are we allowed even a glimpse as to the composition of the MFP bureaucracy, how it is funded, how it stands in relation to other political and business élites, how it is internally organised, and indeed how it thinks - in other words, what its ideology looks like and how its power is being exercised.

Despite all the academic interest evidently generated by the MFP, what comes through quite clearly is that no one as yet has been able to penetrate, even in modest degree, the evidently tight-knit social and political network of politicians, business interests, and senior bureaucrats, both national and regional, who manage to keep the project in motion, despite the obstacles it repeatedly encounters. This analytical vacuum is all the more striking as leading Japanese interests now work conspicuously hard to put some distance between the MFP and themselves. The head of the most important Japanese mission to date was quoted, on his departure, as follows: 'No matter where the idea came from, this is an Australian project and the idea is that Australian companies small and large with specialist interests should be the

ones involved'. *The Australian* (6 December 1991) reported this under the page one banner headline 'Japan mission pulls plug on MFP investment', which is, as one might say, to put it mildly. Yet there is no way that this represents a fatal blow to the MFP, for there are, quite straightforwardly, too many varied and interdependent interests already built into it.

The important point to underscore is that the technocrats of the MFP have been singularly successful in sustaining a high level of secrecy about themselves, and of disseminating to the population at large relatively little information about a project which will, most likely, begin to impinge on and influence their life worlds within the relatively near future. Just about everyone who has written on the MFP, whether from right or left, has commented on this collective leaning to secrecy; and if anything, the tendency becomes the more pronounced as time passes.

To some degree, this has to be put down to the nature of the technocratic élite which gravitates towards such projects as the MFP. Their training, expertise, occupational status and social prestige, are such as to reinforce rather than challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions about progress, expansion and development which are built into such an enterprise. In similar fashion, it readily remains their collective assumption that what they consider to be appropriate for the future should be unproblematically accepted by the population at large. Under such circumstances there is no pressure from within to engage in open debate and the free exchange of ideas. But this is also surely symptomatic of how power is characteristically exercised in Australian society at large. For ruling élites do now routinely function as if the very principle of accountability is both redundant and inconsequential. Secrecy is not so much the exception as the order of the day: and it is perhaps only recently, through a succession of extraordinary scandals and disasters hard on the heels of one another, that we have come to realize the centrality of secrecy in the political culture of ruling circles.

Under these circumstances, it is to be expected that, notwithstanding the continued reference to democratic consultation in the bundles of MFP publicity material, in practice its bureaucratic machinery displays minimal interest in such processes. More specifically, it inclines to exploit the ambiguities and anomalies which quickly surface when one asks what such democratic consultation might entail. For example, who specifically is to be consulted on a project of this scale? Residents in the Gillman area, residents in metropolitan Adelaide, all in South Australia; and who can say where the boundary should be drawn? Then again, consultation can only be properly described as such when all parties can equally access much the same body of essential information. But how could an ordinary urban resident possibly access, never mind take on board, even a fraction of the complex material which this project generates? Again, inasmuch as some representation is clearly essential, how is a complex urban population to be segmented into voting blocs in order to raise a peoples' voice? Last and by no means least, if democratic consultation is to have any meaning at all, then it should entail the right of veto. But how, and according to what criteria, could a veto possibly be raised vis-a-vis a project of the MFP's magnitude?

So we are back finally with the woman with the microphone in the Adelaide Town Hall asking how to put to flight the MFP technocrats. For the pertinent issue is whether the role of public opinion is of any consequence at all when politicians, senior bureaucrats, and industrialists, develop mammoth projects such as this, and then direct them in ways which best suit their collective interest? The course taken by the Adelaide MFP thus far suggests that public opinion is neither here nor there. If this is the position whilst it exists on paper only, how much more worrisome is that same prospect when in late 1993 the MFP takes physical shape over the flat terrain of Gillman?

*Ade Peace teaches anthropology at the University of Adelaide.*

## How was AIDEX?

*The Australian International Defence Exhibition, held in Canberra in November 1991, was in the news not so much because it was in the business of selling 'defence equipment' as for the fact that there were people protesting against it. Louise MacDonald looks at some aspects of the protest and Bill Williams went into the exhibition itself.*



MANY times since returning from the anti-AIDEX demonstration I have been asked: How was AIDEX? How do I answer a question like that? It wasn't enjoyable. I did not enjoy camping in a car park opposite an international arms trade fair. I did not enjoy the constant threat of brutality from police to myself or those around me. I did not enjoy having individuals control the demonstration because they had the power of the megaphone, the walkie-talkie or the loudest voice. But having said that, I am glad to have been a part of the anti-AIDEX campaign. The impact of the demonstration was that AIDEX will probably not be held again in Canberra and Australia's involvement in militarism was put on the agenda in the media and in the minds of the public.

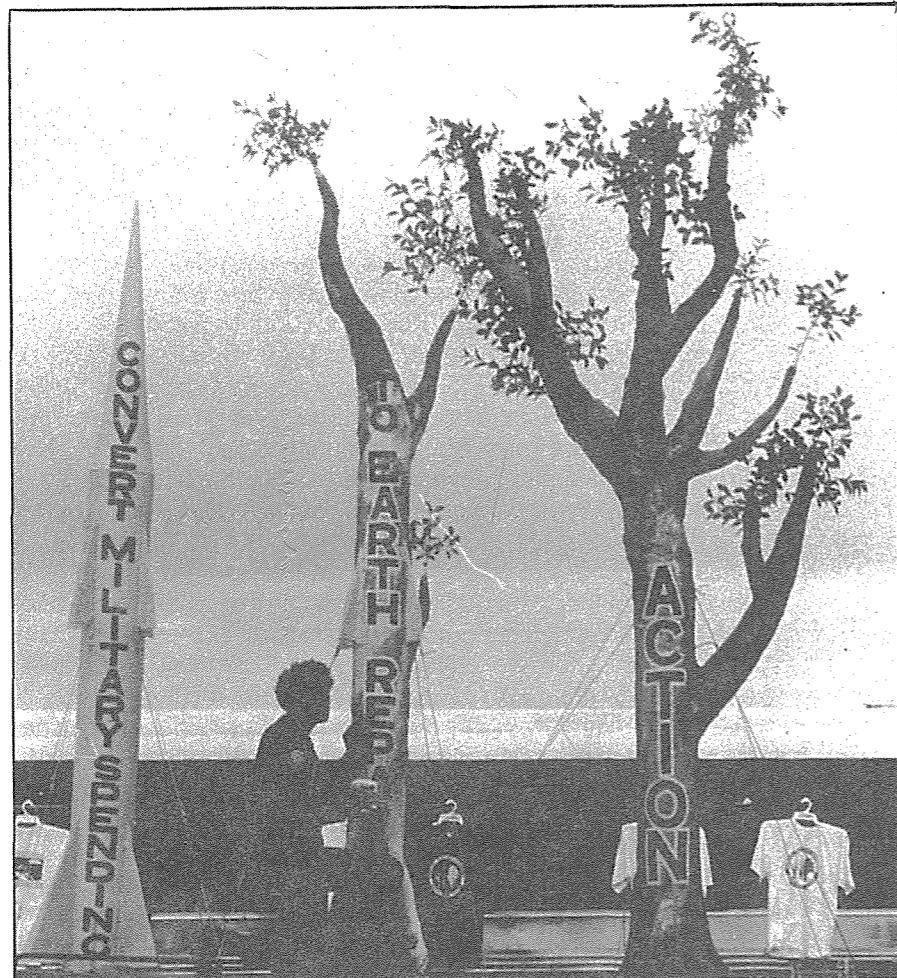
The picket line established at the main delivery gate and the blockading of the other gates of the National Exhibition Centre (NATEX), which were established in the first days of the protest, were effective in disrupting the setting up of the Australian International Defence Exhibition (AIDEX). The effectiveness of the blockade was enhanced by the use of tripods to block gates and street theatre to provoke and entertain. The publicity surrounding this part of the blockade was supportive of the anti-AIDEX campaign. The decline in attendance at the exhibition was due in part to the publicity generated by the protest.

The violence used by the police to pull the blockades apart was unprovoked and unjustifiable, since those who wanted to enter the NATEX site to set up their exhibits were able to do so through back gates or holes in the fence created by the police.

On Tuesday, the day the exhibition opened, police were bused in, (including police from plain clothes branches such as the drug offensive branch and the juvenile assistance branch). Many did not wear uniforms, most did not wear identification. Also present was the notorious Tactical Response Group, who seemed to take particular delight in brutalising demonstrators. The police quickly formed a line and by







meeting) and refusing to give speaking rights to those opposing the IS line – particularly those supporting the environment action. The meeting ended with those wanting to blockade marching off through the camp and the remaining people setting off to begin the environment action.

What began as a handful of people at the environment action quickly swelled to about three hundred. There were speakers on Australia's sale of arms to Malaysia and Indonesia and military spending in Australia, and the impact this has on the environment and indigenous populations. The protesters then started singing (with constant interruptions from IS people asking for quiet as they were holding a meeting ten metres from where the action was assembled). All those involved in the action then walked in single file, singing as they passed the police who lined the road to Northborne Avenue, where banners were painted and hung along

the road past the exhibition. During the banner painting there was an open microphone which people used to speak on issues, including working conditions in the Philippines and Indonesia. The action ended with a discussion on where the \$20 million spent daily on the military in Australia could be better used.

Many people would have arrived in Canberra having read the book on *AIDEX: End the Arms Trade*, published by the Renegade Activist Action Force, which, along with much information on AIDEX outlined the program of events that the anti-AIDEX campaign was likely to follow. People would also have arrived expecting that they might get involved in arrestable activity. Also they may have been aware of the possibility of police violence, given the violence that occurred at lead-up actions around the country and at AIDEX 89.

Under these circumstances it was impossible to set up the infrastructure

to support the demonstration during its operation. People wanted to respond immediately to the police, rather than to cooperate in meetings. Things such as medical and legal support needed to be put into place before the action started and to have collectives maintaining and coordinating them during the week. Likewise, media liaison, whilst very well operated from the Canberra Peace Centre, was happening in a very *ad hoc* way at the AIDEX site. The lack of identifiable media liaison people at the AIDEX site made it easy for reporters to grab sensational comments from demonstrators or only talk to the police before filing their reports.

Similarly, while it is impossible to check everybody's commitment to anti-militarism, some form of vetting of the gung-ho boys on walkie-talkies, who seemed to have control of our own communications systems, would have helped people make accurate assessments of what was happening at the various parts of the demonstration. Reports such as: 'The police have just trashed the camp site and are throwing everyone out', being rung through to the peace centre were not at all helpful.

The decision making forums needed to follow some format and obviously needed to address the issue of the disruptive tactics of the IS. These meetings should also have had a greater emphasis on information sharing rather than being a forum for those in control of the megaphone or those best skilled in crowd manipulation. Because of this type of domination and the violent agenda being set by the police over the road it was impossible to have the necessary rational discussions about tactics and how to carry through actions that were proposed on the draft agenda.

A possible way of avoiding these problems would have been to have people organised in affinity groups, and ensuring structures were in place to enable easy access to information and decision making processes so that the group could have control of the agenda rather than it be controlled by individuals.

*Louise MacDonald is an activist from Melbourne.*

## On the border of peace



*The events of the Gulf War were not just military activities, there were also peace initiatives such as that of the Gulf Peace Team. Liz Denham was with the Team at its camp on the border of Iraq and Saudi Arabia and reports on it and some of the lessons that could be learned.*

**W**HAT happens when peace activists, feminists, non-violent action gurus and some fellow travellers with language, cultural and political differences and limited food and water are gathered together surrounded by mine fields and trenches in the middle of a desert in a foreign country waiting for World War III?

This was the scenario for the Gulf Peace Team, a group of seventy three people from sixteen nationalities camped on the border of Iraq and Saudi Arabia in January 1991.

No one could determine how, when or where the idea originated but it quickly gathered support from networks throughout the world. The organisation was carried out from London by an *ad hoc* committee and negotiations began with the governments of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi government was the only one to respond favourably. The negotiators were given a written assurance of minimal interference and the Border Camp officially began on Xmas eve.

The campers flew in from around the world to Amman in Jordan and travelled by bus to Baghdad, a journey of between twelve and twenty four hours. In Baghdad accommodation was arranged at a village complex a few kilometres from the centre of the city on the banks of the Tigris River. The stay in Baghdad gave an opportunity to organise any last minute details and gather personal items together before travelling to the border camp. The foreign media was still in Baghdad and there was plenty of interest in the campers' activities to be conveyed to the folks back home.

The negotiated site for the camp was an area used by pilgrims on the road from Baghdad to Mecca and Medina some six hundred kilometres south west of Baghdad. The camp consisted of a bitumened area of several acres with large hanger type buildings, shower and toilet blocks and large water tanks. It was also home to numerous stray dogs and cats. Outside the fenced area of the peace camp was a small military establishment with about fifty men whose main function seemed to be to keep the activists from wandering off into the desert but was in

fact the base for the border patrol. Apart from these border guards there were no local people in the area. The nearest major centre of Kerbala was several hundred kilometres to the north.

The desert scenery surrounding the camp did not resemble anything one would expect after seeing films such as *Lawrence of Arabia* or *The Sheikh from Araby*. It consisted of low rocky terrain with not a sandhill in sight. The weather also was not as some would have expected. It was consistently cool. There were some sunny days but mostly the temperature was in the vicinity of ten degrees Celsius with some nights the mercury getting down to zero. Heavy rain together with fairly fierce wind was not uncommon, and presented some difficulties as most of the buildings leaked.

The campers were mainly white western middle class people with twice as many men as women. Also there were Indonesians, Japanese and Indians. There were priests and nuns, a Buddhist monk, anarchists and conservatives, professors and poets. Ages ranged from 23 to 80, one or two were even disabled.

Some were long-time peace, social justice and human rights activists, such as members of the US Plowshares group with many years of non violent direct action experience and almost as many years of incarceration because of their beliefs. There were women who had taken part in the Women's Peace camp at Greenham Common. One camper from UK attempted to do a nonviolent action every two weeks. For some campers, this was their first experience out of their own country. For some it was their first experience of any involvement with peace issues. Some had never heard of consensus decision making processes or nonviolent philosophy. Some knew nothing and others cared little about gender politics. Some displayed breathtaking insensitivity and behaviour inappropriate in any cultural environment. Some should not have been there including those who incredibly had obviously not given sufficient thought to the potential personal danger of the situation.

Maintenance of the camp was organised by a volunteer roster system

and various committees. The food committee for instance had the responsibility of ensuring adequate supplies in stock. Food was trucked in from Baghdad and Kerbala until January 17 when bombing commenced. Just one of the problems this committee and the camp as a whole had to deal with was some campers helping themselves to scarce items with seemingly little regard to the welfare of other campers. After January 17 and the likelihood of no further supplies being available, rationing became essential although the situation never reached serious proportions.

The water committee monitored the supply and use of water and the availability of purification tablets for drinking water which was trucked in. There was water suitable for washing in plentiful supply from a nearby bore as long as the electricity supply from the army camp to the pump was maintained. The camp was situated in a river valley called a 'wadi'. It was dry at the time, the end of summer, but there was access to underground water of dubious quality.

The medical committee consisted of four doctors among the campers and an Iraqi doctor in the army camp who often came to visit. He assured the campers of a supply of medicines available for their use if the need arose. It is to the credit of these committees and the common sense of the campers that they suffered no major health problems. However there were the usual difficulties encountered by delicate Western digestive systems in a Third World environment.

The energy committee monitored the supply and use of kerosene which was the only source of cooking heat. Electricity from the army camp supplied lighting and power for the hot showers and heaters. Once the bombing commenced and the supply was cut off at dusk, lighting was by torchlight in emergency only and kerosene became the only source of heating during the cold nights. It was decided that with an uncertain supply of kerosene, heating be restricted to one heater at night for the whole camp.

A volunteer roster was set up for various daily tasks. The food was mostly

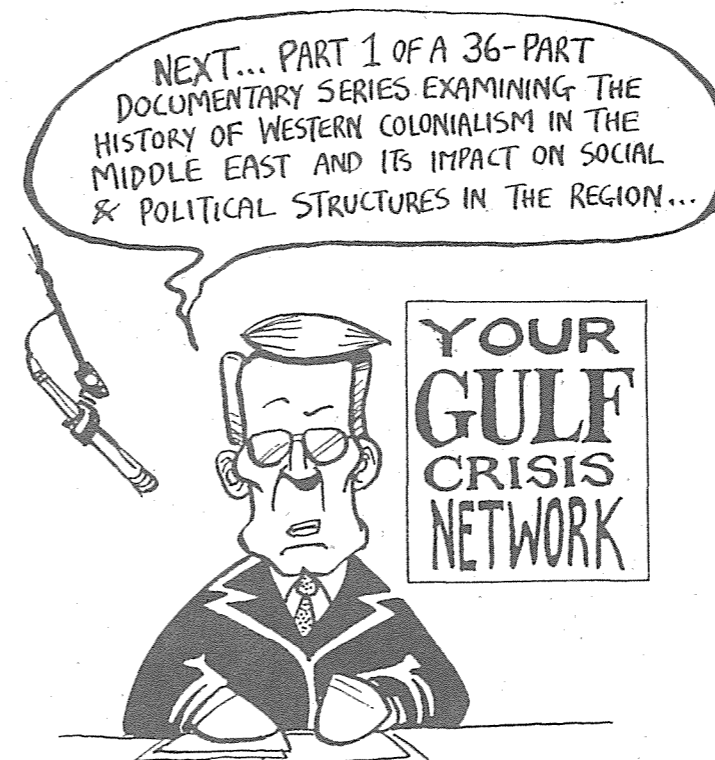
vegetarian and the standard and variety of the meals were amazing considering that all the cooking was done on small single burner kerosene stoves. With no fresh supplies after January 17 meals were reduced to two a day. Volunteers also took turns with cleaning the large common/meeting room as well as the showers and toilets. After January 17 a nightwatch roster was organised to prevent some panicking individual waking the whole camp for no reason. This did occur but happily not after the system of night watches was initiated.

A routine of camp meetings had been established by the early arrivals. They had decided on two a day, one in the morning to organise tasks and general running of the camp and one in the evening to discuss policy. As more people arrived this process, with large numbers, was no longer viable. Those who were long-time activists in the social change movement were amazed that this process was even attempted and struggled with for so long.

The large group meetings were acrimonious and exhausting. They gave most women and some men little space or opportunity to participate. They also allowed the most vocal, almost invariably males, to dominate with seemingly endless diatribes on political theory or in one case a refugee from the 60s hippie generation to lambast the group with such gems as 'Peace Man' and 'You're all fucked'.

These large meetings were constantly interrupted and disrupted, whether by design or by accident, on so many occasions that concerns began to be raised of deliberate actions to destroy the camp. Paranoia is a fairly constant phenomenon among peace activists with very good reasons. These disruptions and suspicions increased an already heightened state of tension along with the continual drone of bombers overhead, talk of bombings and evacuations, shortages of food, not to mention personal differences, etc.

It was finally agreed that the discussions and decisions would take place in affinity groups with a representative reporting to a Steering Committee. Affinity groups are small groups of usually ten or twelve people who have some-



thing in common and feel they can work together. They were structured loosely according to nationalities. For example, the people from the UK formed the Rainbow Group and the Dutch called themselves the Infinity Affinity Group. There were a few problems with those not familiar with affinity groups. Some refused to join any group which meant they were excluded from the decision making process. A few of the vocal ones at the larger meetings were unhappy about participating in a small group for their own particular reasons. The refugee from Woodstock was particularly unhappy about the new process despite continually and loudly voicing his concern about our lack of achievements at the large meetings.

But for the majority these new arrangements were a very positive move. It meant that they had to take part in just one meeting a day at times decided by the affinity groups themselves. The representatives on the Steering Committee were rotated every few days to encourage participation and to give a varied perspective to the decisions affecting the camp.

The change in the morale of the campers was quite evident. Most now felt they were achieving some degree of cooperation and camaraderie despite the deteriorating situation in the outside world.

The larger amount of free time was spent in workshops learning or attempting to learn such things as basic Arabic. One woman from London had brought along her sewing machine and enormous bundles of materials so banners were designed, stitched and displayed. Two olive trees had been planted at Xmas in a symbolic act of Peace. Now campers found time to prepare larger gardens. Future campers can look forward to fresh watercress, chick peas, pumpkins and a variety of salad vegetables.

Maintenance of the camp site improved. An old disused toilet block was investigated and found to be in working order so it was added to the camp facilities after a good clean out of mainly straw. A garbage collective was formed after interminable discussions about recycling and environmentally

sound methods of disposal. It was eventually buried to provide material for future gardens.

Friendly games of soccer and volleyball were organised for the Iraqi guards who seemed to welcome the distraction from the boredom of gate duty and anxious thoughts of families in Baghdad. A highly entertaining cultural night was organised with performances of varying degrees of professionalism to an appreciative if not discerning audience. Stories were told and books read by torchlight at night and the campers even found time to simply chat to one another. Birthdays were celebrated, friendships began and deepened and some just faded away.

After the bombing began at 3am on 17 January it became clear that the dynamics of the camp would once more alter considerably.

Some campers did not intend to stay in the camp after the January 15 deadline and had made travel arrangements to return home soon after. For these people it was a matter of some inconvenience to remain. The uncertainty of

any departure let alone a day in the foreseeable future was of great concern to them. For others there was a concern that the lack of communication with the various support groups at home was an indication of the lack of achievement of our efforts and an indication of the failure of the purpose of the camp.

Some felt a sense of frustration at the idea of being trapped by Iraqi 'hospitality'. In order to resolve this dilemma a small group volunteered to set up a camp another two kilometres in to 'No Person's Land' towards Saudi Arabia. This was not only to become independent but to act according to one of the principles of nonviolent philosophy by becoming a truly neutral presence. This proposal met with such hostility from other campers that it had to be abandoned to avoid conflict.

After numerous rumours the inevitable evacuation occurred. It did not come from US helicopters with guns ablazing as had been prophesied – just two rather ordinary buses and a truck. It was clear that for some this was the rescue mission for which they had hoped. For others it was the very thing the camp had been set up to resist and despite earlier commitments from the majority of the campers to remain it was left to a small group of fifteen to attempt to stay. They staged a sit-down protest and had to be physically carried on to the buses by the Iraqi officials to the delight of some of the campers already on the buses who obviously resented this unnecessary delay.

The now ex-campers were bused to Baghdad and 'interned' in El Rasheed Hotel for a few days where they were requested by their hosts to remain within the hotel grounds. The Iraqi government had offered a reward for pilots of shot down enemy aircraft so this warning was for the security of the ex-campers. This did not deter a few from travelling into the city and taking photos of bombed areas. Others were similarly not deterred by the Islam prohibition of alcohol from staging a noisy, boozy party during a bombing raid. The incredible situation of peace activists partying while the Iraqi people and their country were being destroyed was an indication of the lack of basic

understanding of the principles considered in the setting up of the Gulf Peace Team project.

While in Baghdad the ex-campers witnessed the nightly bombing of the city where there was little food, no electricity, and water for an hour a day for the fortunate. On one occasion a meeting with a high ranking Iraqi official was interrupted by two explosions which shook the hotel and sent the ex-campers scurrying to the bomb shelters. The Iraqi official was in the process of advising the ex-campers of the country's eternal gratitude for their efforts. Their names would be writ in gold in the annals of Iraqi history, they were told. They would be welcome in Iraq at any time and were to regard it as their second home. During this time it was learned that the Iraqi military had in fact staged an offensive in the area of the Peace Camp. The doctors from the Peace Team were keen to provide any additional assistance at the hospitals. Whether the Iraqi authorities now felt the campers' usefulness had been exhausted; whether they were insulted by the behaviour of some of the ex-campers or for what ever reason, soon the campers were once more being bused, this time to the Iraq/Jordanian border.

In an uncharacteristic consensus, the ex-campers agreed that the Iraqi authorities and the Iraqi people had shown them unfailing courtesy and assistance at a time of extreme difficulty throughout the country.

The road to the border had been heavily bombed the night before. Several Jordanian truck drivers had been killed, and their lorries were still burning in the bomb craters together with the wreckage of several civilian cars. The situation at Rushid at the Iraq/Jordanian border was one of desperation and confusion. Many guest workers from Africa and Asia, also Palestinians leaving Kuwait in fear of their lives were attempting to cross the border into Jordan but lacked the necessary exit visas. These people were camped under bits of iron and cardboard boxes in freezing conditions and some had already died.

On the Jordanian side of the border

the ex-campers were met by members of the Gulf Peace Team who had remained in Amman and given fresh fruit, hot drinks and mail from home. Once back in Amman the ex-campers were greeted by more friends, more food, the first hot showers since leaving the border camp and the opportunity to contact loved ones, support groups and media at home.

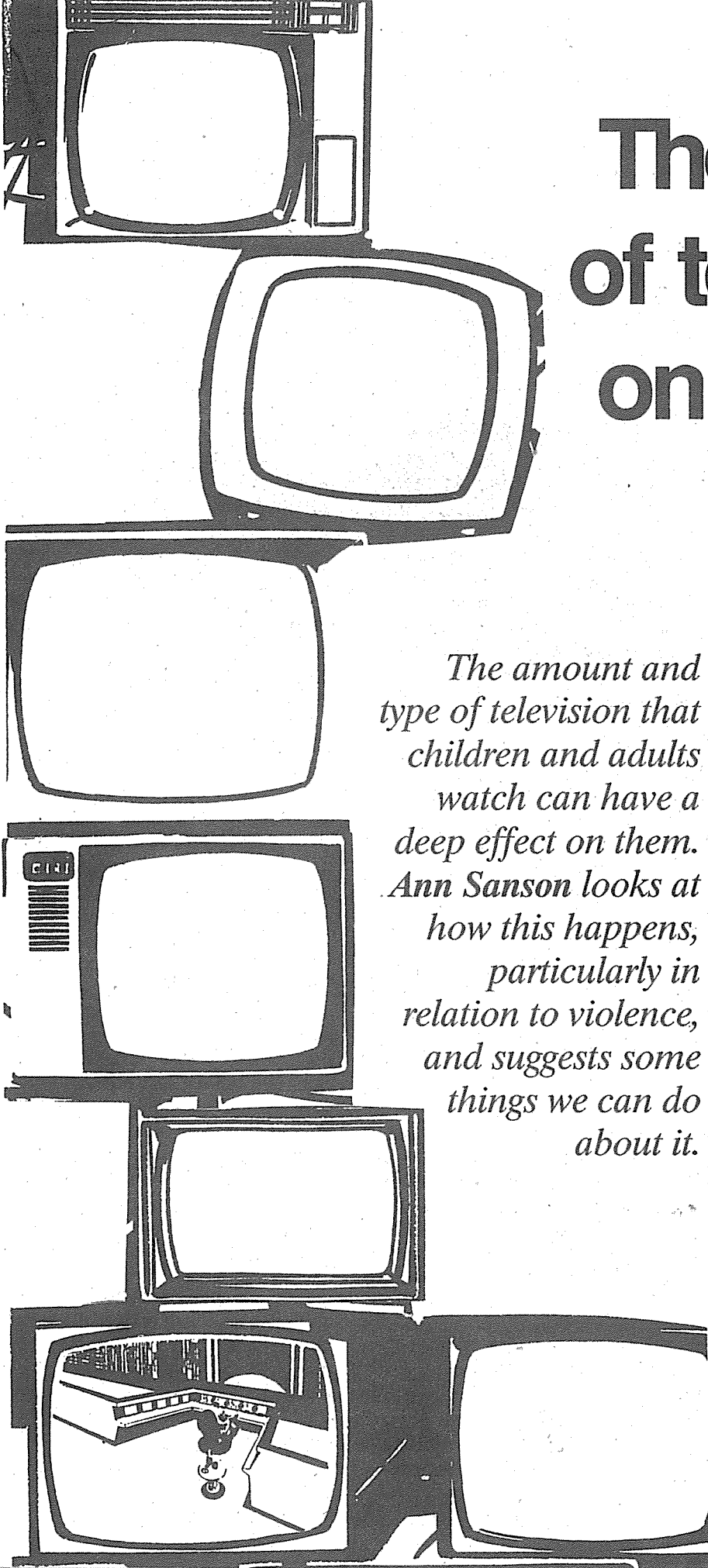
For some, the Gulf Peace Team's task was completed. For others, another phase began which included negotiations to set up a Peace Centre in the Amman with the aim of establishing a Peace Camp in the Golan Heights area. Some were interested in organising humanitarian aid to Baghdad and several trucks with Gulf Peace Team members on board succeeded in taking much needed medicines into the area.

The Team members returning home reported keen media interest in their experiences and in hearing a perspective on the situation different from that of the international media networks. They also reported a high level of interest in their local communities about the camp and the campers throughout the period. This was in contrast to the view of a member of the Australian group expressed while in the border camp that the camp was a failure because of lack of media attention. This was a similar criticism by the same person of the Peace Camp at Nurrungar in 1989, despite evidence to the contrary.

The Border Camp in many ways resembled the world at large. There were political and cultural difficulties, gender and language differences. There were physical dangers, discomfort and emotional stresses. There were scarce resources together with suspicions of deliberate attempts to disrupt any resolution of conflicts. There were those who never accepted group decisions and there were those who worked hard and tirelessly to make the experience so enjoyable and worthwhile for themselves and for others. So it is clear that this particular camp could and should provide invaluable lessons for organisers and participants in any future activity of this type.

Liz Denham is an activist from Hobart.

# The impact of television on children



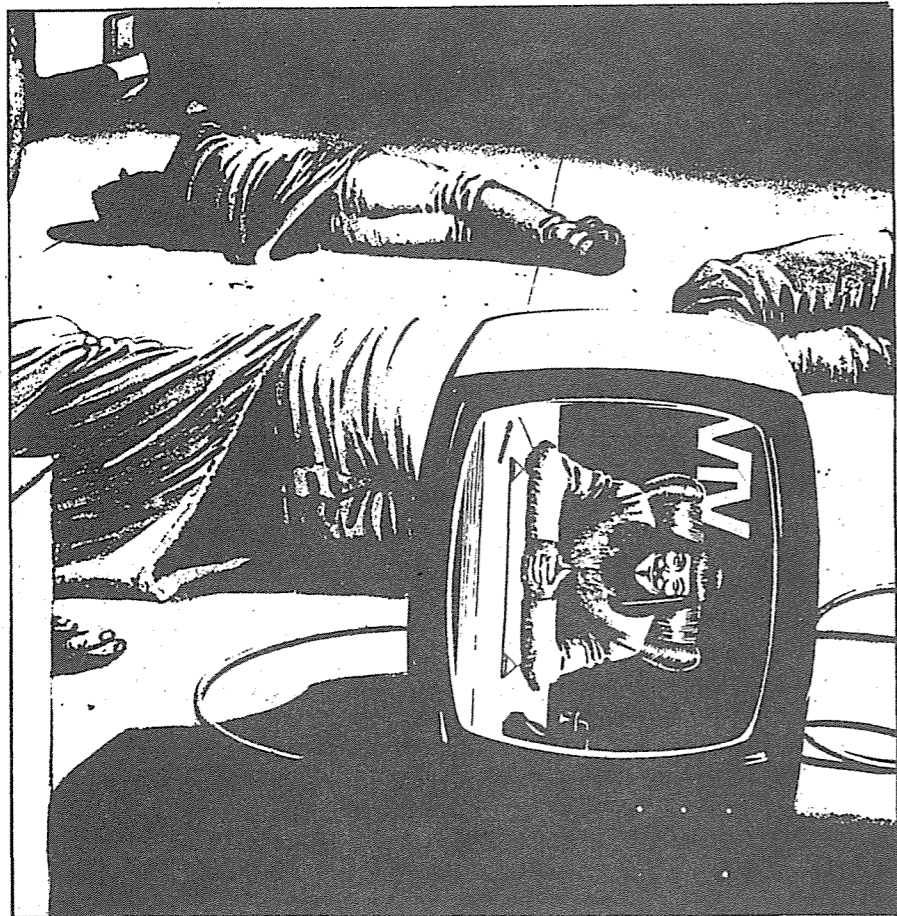
*The amount and type of television that children and adults watch can have a deep effect on them. Ann Sanson looks at how this happens, particularly in relation to violence, and suggests some things we can do about it.*

I WOULD like to explain how I came to be interested in the impact of television on children. For several years, I have been involved in Psychologists for the Prevention of War (PPOW), which is a Special Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society, and comprises close to 900 psychologists Australia-wide. Initially our principal concern was with psychological aspects of the threat of nuclear war: we were trying to address, and reduce, the threat of that ultimate catastrophe, the potential eradication of the human species and of life on this little planet of ours through the grotesque absurdity of nuclear war.

That led to considering what are the conditions in society that lead to us (as a species) *passively accepting* this threat to ourselves and our planet; to us not saying 'No', to us not asserting unequivocally that it is unacceptable even to contemplate nuclear war *ever* as a possible solution, let alone to spend untold billions of dollars preparing for it, through the arms race. As Jonathon Schell so powerfully argued in *The Fate of the Earth*, such passive acceptance cannot be psychologically healthy, and has to be non-adaptive.

These considerations led me further to look at the conditions that lead us to accepting violent solutions to international conflicts at all, and from there on to our acceptance of violence at more local levels, in the society of which we are a part. How do we get to believe (or act as if we believe) that violent solutions to *any* problem are *appropriate*, are *successful* and are *rewarded*? And





conflict and all the issues it raised.

What is most obvious about this listing of children's reactions to media coverage of the Gulf War is their variability. Children showed a whole range of responses. And this brings me back to a point raised earlier, that not all children become more aggressive when exposed to aggressive TV.

Two of the important factors that seem to determine how affected children are by viewed material are:

- whether the viewed material matches what they already see and experience around them. If they are living in a family environment that is violent, or go to a punitive school, it is more likely that the violent messages seen on TV will be encoded into cognitive scripts and later towards violence.
- the sort of discussion and communication that takes place about the viewed material. Research has shown that the effects of viewing violence are much reduced if the child has an adult with whom to dis-

uss the material, who can help the child to interpret and analyse what is being presented.

This leads to the topic of Media Education. I think there is an urgent need to make us (adults and kids) discriminating and expert consumers of the media, consumers who notice what is included and what is excluded, who perceive and 'read' the covert messages, and make them overt, so that a conscious choice can be made about whether to accept them or not; thus the messages are disempowered and the viewer is empowered. We also need to educate ourselves to express our views, to learn to make ourselves be heard, both with our brickbats and our bouquets, so that we do influence the media diet which is dished up to us.

Media education of this sort is the responsibility of schools and others, but also of parents. I would say that if you want to protect your child from the negative effects of TV, the single most important thing you can do is to talk about what they watch. Monitor what

they watch, share what they watch, and discuss it – draw out the subtle messages, express your views, let them express theirs. Say: 'Did you notice how only the men did anything, and the women stood by?'; 'Do you think there might have been another way to solve that problem instead of fighting over it?'; 'They only showed us bad things about the (black/gay/poor ... ) person; do you think s/he might have a better side?' – the possibilities are endless.

I attended a media conference organised by Senator Janet Powell on the eve of the UN deadline for Hussein's withdrawal from Kuwait. It was very well-attended, the room was packed. First we panellists had our say and expressed our view that it was unnecessary for the US/UN to use force at this point. We noted how the process that had been followed in the conflict was exactly that which we knew could be just about guaranteed to cause escalation of the conflict – the inflammatory talk, the taking of positions first as ambit claims, then getting entrenched in them and making them even more extreme, the development of the 'enemy' stereotype, etc. And we talked about the probable awful consequences of a war. After all this, the journalists asked in irritation, 'Why have you waited until now to say this? You should have been saying it months ago'.

A groan of exasperation rose from us speakers. We had all been desperately trying to get the media to pay attention to alternative points of view right from August 1990 – and no-one had wanted to know.

It seemed that the journalists were honestly unaware of their power, that it was they (or their bosses) who chose what was news and newsworthy, and what wasn't. Perhaps we need media education for those in the media too.

*Dr Ann Sanson is a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne and Convener of Psychologists for the Prevention of War. This article was first presented at the forum, The First Casualty organised by the Rainbow Alliance and the Australian Journalists Association in Melbourne in May 1991.*

### The Pesticide Handbook: Profiles for Action

by Sarojini Rengam and Karen Snyder (Eds), IOCU and PAN, Malaysia, 3rd Revised Edition, 1991, 413pp, US\$24 for institutions and US\$12 for non-profit, public interest groups.

Reviewed by Richard Hindmarsh

The Pesticide Action Network (PAN) and the International Organization of Consumer Unions (IOCU) have just released *The Pesticide Handbook: Profiles for Action*. This is timely as it coincides with Australian calls to ban outright the poisonous organochlorine group of pesticides, especially aldrin and dieldrin. The book provides easily accessible and useful information on problem pesticides and extremely relevant background information. The editors, Rengam and Snyder, have worked hard to ensure the book is well laid out and interesting to read. For anyone wishing to become more proficient in understanding pesticides and the industry this is a vital source book.

The first section acts as a 'pesticide dictionary' with revised information on fifty pesticides, including each pesticide's common name, chemical group, chemical name, trade names, hazard classification, lethal dose (LD50) values, hazard to human health, main use, regulatory controls internationally, incidences of known poisonings and other problems, and effects on the environment. A more comprehensive section on possible hazards of pes-

ticides and their residues follows.

Section three, of eight concise and powerful background readings, introduces us to the global political economy of the pesticide treadmill, and focuses on a range of specific issues, including occupational safety, pesticide residues, the pesticide industry, alternatives to pesticides, and biotechnology. Such a balanced selection makes for an exciting contemporary understanding of the pesticide issue, at the same time providing insights into the existing problems and the newer ones emerging with the biorevolution and genetic engineering. These insights are necessary in order to comprehend the broader picture and the enormity of the problem to which the agrochemical industry is subjecting us, and the planet. Such is the extent of this problem that Pat Mooney in his paper 'Beyond Biocides' charges that 'with biotechnology (coupled to the pesticide industry), the fight is for our lives'.

The final sections of the handbook complete this informative and grassroots network approach to tackling the pesticide problem. There is an overview of the Pesticide Action Network (and how to join), an account of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) international pesticide code and its weaknesses, a comprehensive list for further reading, and a glossary of terms. All in all, the handbook is a worthwhile addition to the library of anyone concerned about pesticides.

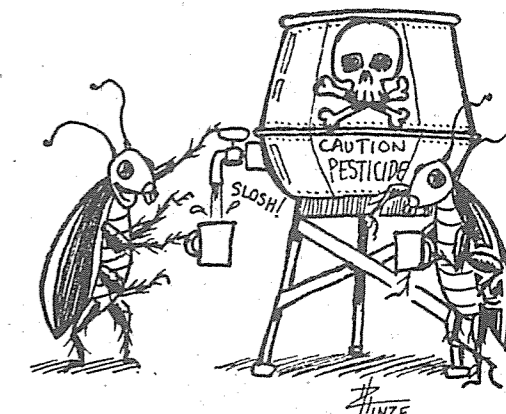
*Richard Hindmarsh is an environmental scientist at Griffith University.*

# Reviews

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THE INSECTS HAVE BECOME RESISTANT TO OUR COMPANY'S PESTICIDE??



OH, I DON'T KNOW... JUST A HUNCH...





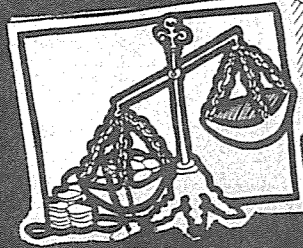




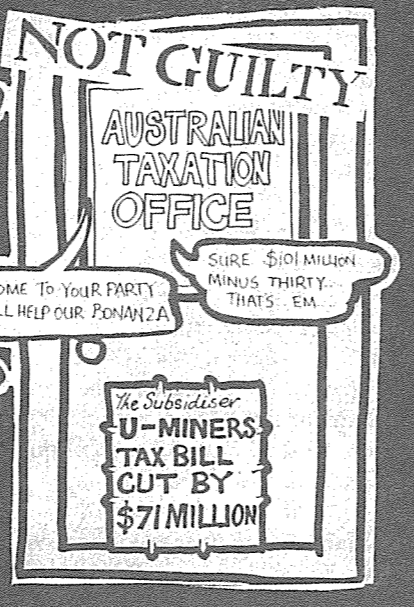
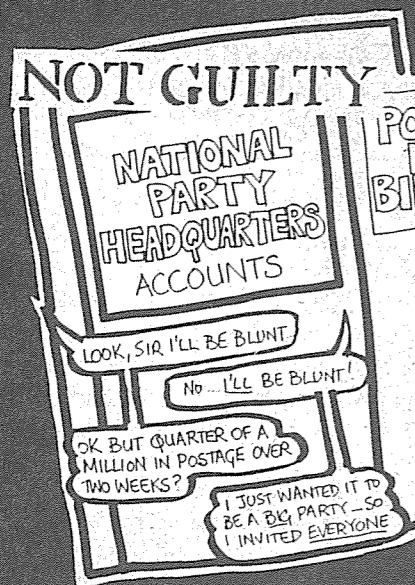
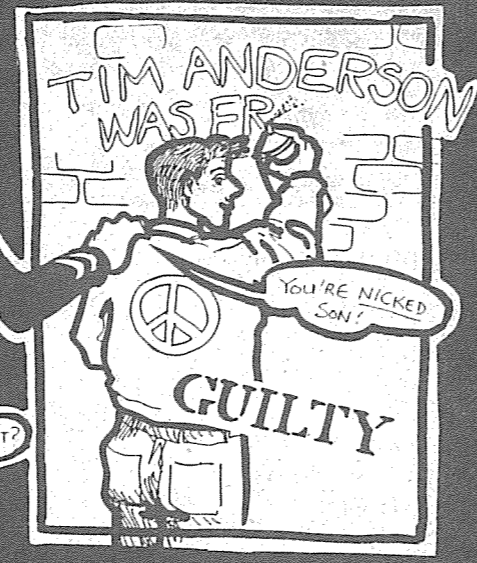




# Justice in our Time



"JUST US IN OUR TIME?" KATE McCANN 1991 ©



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