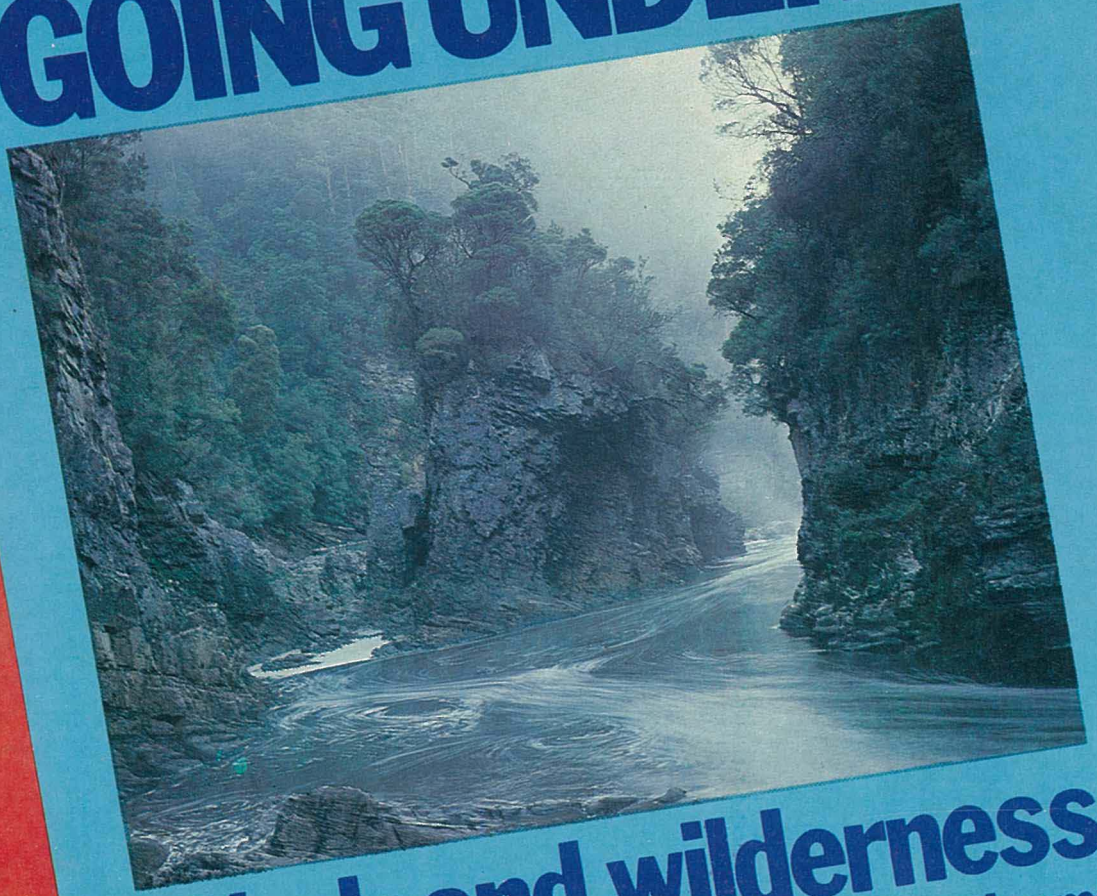


# Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 30 Summer 1982-83 \$2.00

## GOING UNDER?



PLUS

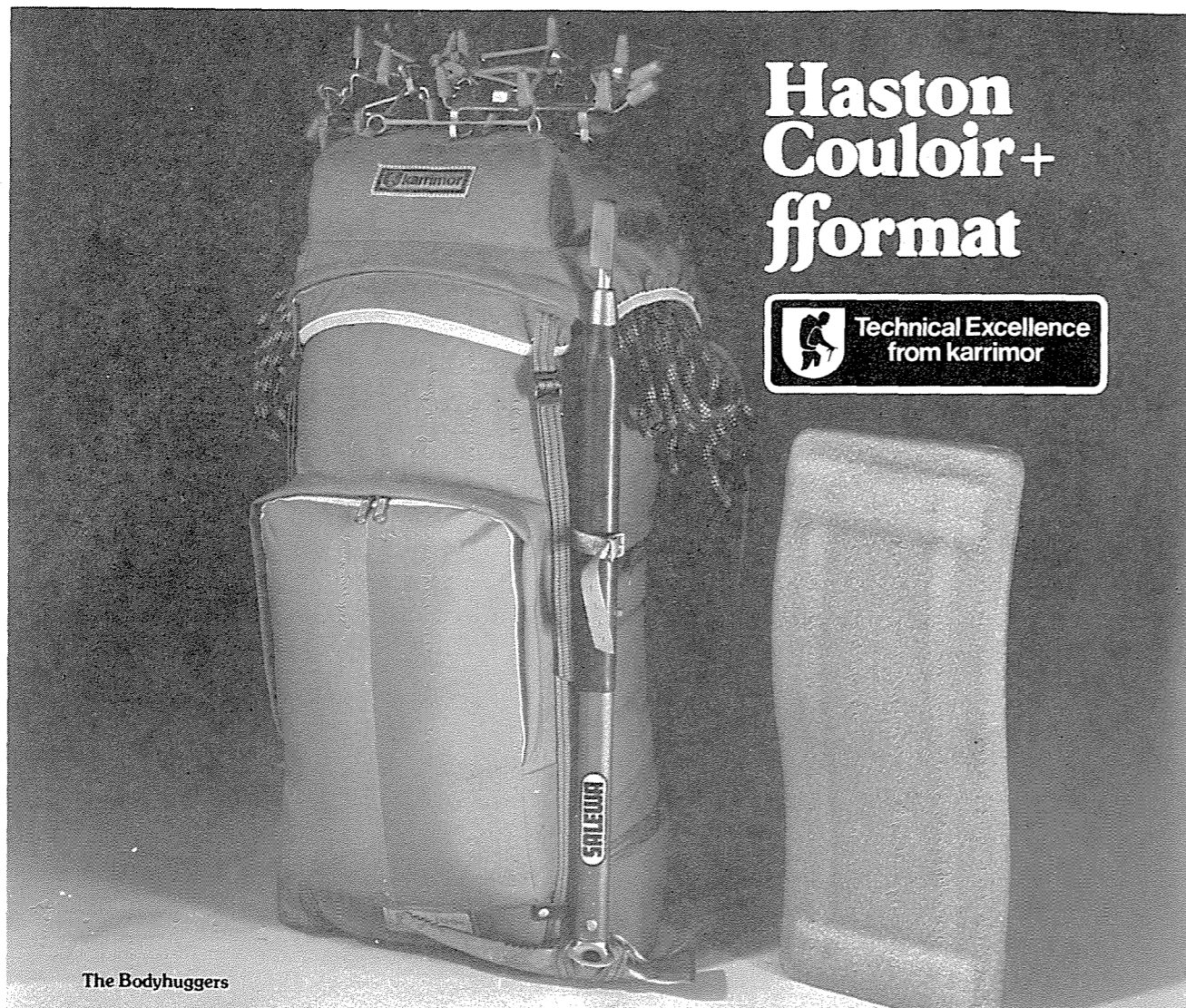
**Work and wilderness**  
Hydro-electric dams generate unemployment.  
What are Tasmania's alternatives?



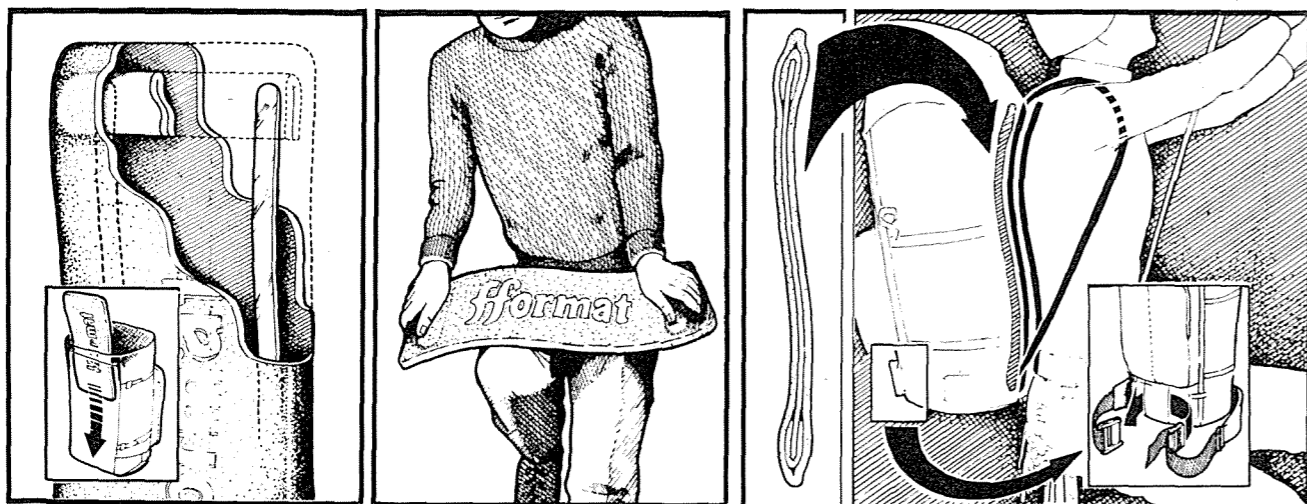
**The Shell  
Report**

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## Chain Reaction

Established in 1975

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Summer 1982-83

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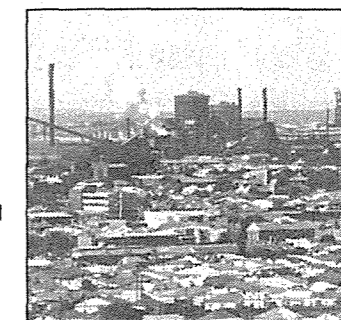
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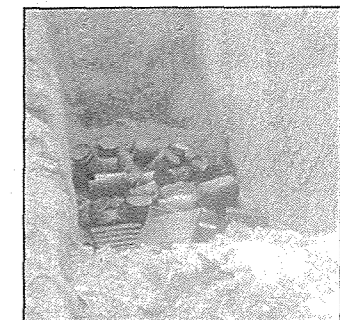
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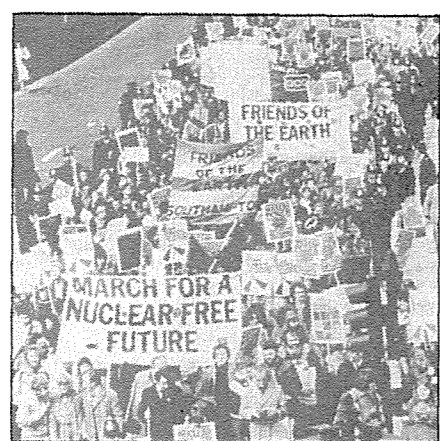
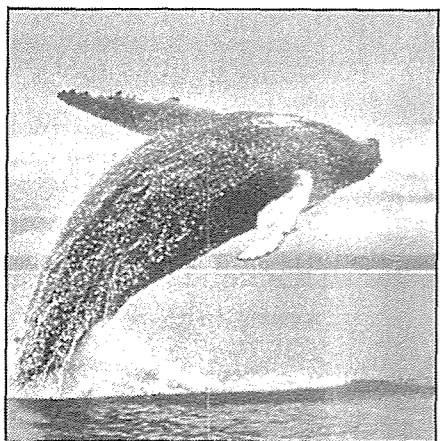
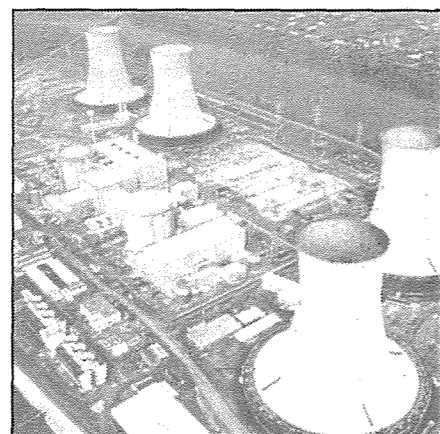
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Design: Richard Shelton.

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We've got lead out of petrol and whales will probably still be around for our kids to enjoy. We're working hard for a fairer distribution of the world's food and an end to nuclear madness, and we've started a recycling campaign. Friends of the Earth is a radical activist group - and that means we don't avoid controversy. We are raising issues today to make a better world tomorrow. We need your support now to continue our work. Join one of our 21 groups, give a donation or work with us. The earth needs friends. Join us.

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## EARTH NEWS

### Homecoming ends

One thousand Pacific islanders have ended their 'Operation Homecoming' occupation of eight islands in the Kwajalein Missile Range, where the USA tests all of its new weapons-delivery systems. After four months of living on their home lands - the first time in almost 20 years since the USA military evicted them in the 1960s - the move back to over-crowded Ebeye Island did not come easy.

The occupation began on 19 June 1982 in protest against a proposed Compact of Free Association between the Marshalls and the USA. The Compact would grant the USA 50 years' military use of Kwajalein in return for annual payments of \$USA1.9 million which is well below the current \$USA9 million yearly rent. A referendum was to have been held on 17 August at which the Marshallese could have chosen between approval of the Compact or full independence. Fearing a majority vote for independence, the USA vetoed the holding of a referendum on that date. The USA deputy assistant secretary of defence,

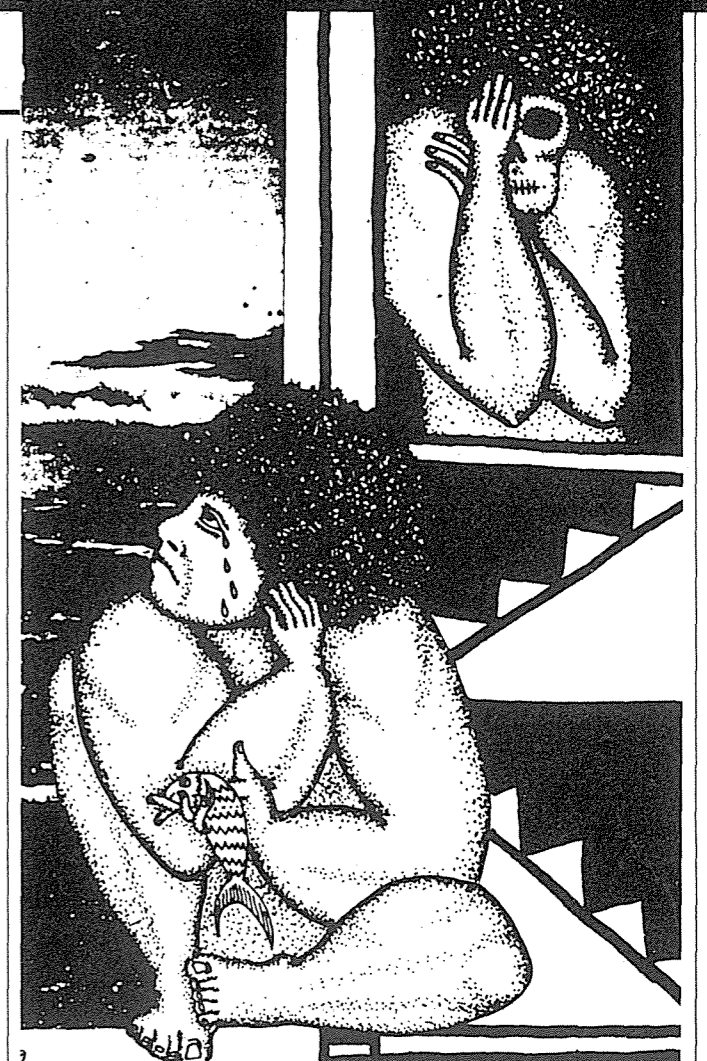
Noel Koch, is on record as saying: '... declaring independence simply isn't an available option to them'.

The Kwajalein Atoll Corporation board has agreed to a compromise agreement which falls short of the islanders' demands.

The agreement does call for a series of capital improvements worth \$USA12 million but limits people's access to their Mid-Corridor islands to three 6-week periods a year. Compensation will stay the same and the agreement gives the USA a 15-year lease with an option to renew it for another 15 years.

The problem of being treated as second class citizens in their own islands is not dealt with. For example there are no provisions for greater access to the hospital at Kwajalein. Many of the Kwajalein landowners say they have no intention of supporting the Compact and will work for its rejection.

Source: *Pacific Islands Monthly* September 1982 and *Pacific Bulletin* October 1982.



### Rich homes, cheap loans

The interest rates on home loans have been a major reason for the decline of the housing industry. Only 8235 new dwellings were com-

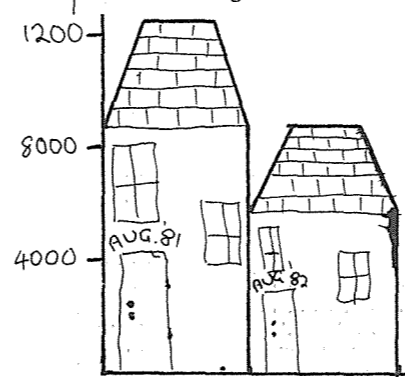
menced in August 1982 compared to 12506 in August 1981.

But not everybody has trouble with the interest on loan repayments. Sir John Westerman, who presides over the Australian Industries Development Corporation, has a \$30 000 loan from the corporation at 3% interest.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October, reported that the chief executive of a leading merchant bank was recently granted a \$500 000 home loan at an interest rate well below market levels.

Source: *Tribune*, 13 October 1982.

RICK MITCHELL



### Low-level science

A USA study to look into the possible effects of radiation on genetic material in blood cells and on male reproductive cells has been rejected in Washington recently, on the grounds that it will provide little useful information. The study was proposed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the Department of Health and Human Services. The proposal was initiated after pressure from unions and others to monitor the health of nuclear workers.

The National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Science,

commented that the study designs were inadequate, and that too little was known about low-level radiation to obtain 'meaningful' results from the study of workers at the Portsmouth naval shipyards in New Hampshire, which services nuclear naval vessels.

As a result of this review NIOSH is undecided on whether to undertake the study or not, despite the need to know more about any effects that low-level radiation may have.

Source: *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 5 October 1982.

# EARTH NEWS

## Bug eats defoliant

A microbiologist at the University of Illinois Medical School claims to have created a bacterium that eats Agent Orange, the powerful defoliant used by the United States of America and Australia in Vietnam.

Ananda Charabarty states that his bacterium 'removes 98% of the main toxic element in Agent Orange in a week'. He 'bred' a plain soil bacterium over many generations to tolerate, prefer and finally crave a diet of poisonous synthetic compounds. This would enable military users of Agent Orange to chemically 'clean-up' a defoliated area before their own soldiers were deployed.

Source: *Not Man Apart* July 1982.

## Tainted wheat

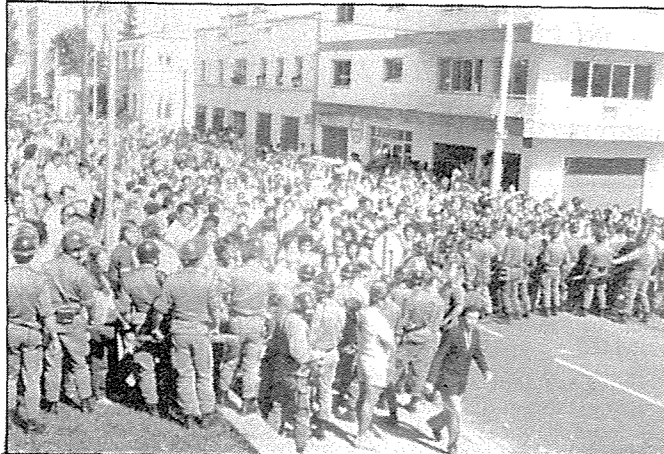
India, early in 1982, imported 750 000 tonnes of Australian wheat which contained the deadly insecticide feritrothion in concentrations of 5-8 mg/kg (milligrams per kilogram) of wheat. For humans the normally tolerated level of this poison is 0.02 mg/kg.

The Indian importers had originally planned to wash the wheat and bake it as bread at very high temperatures, a process which would eradicate the poisonous effects of the insecticide. However, the importers have now realised the impracticability of treating such a large quantity of wheat.

The English-language daily newspaper, the *Statesman*, has said, 'Surprise is now being expressed here as to why the Indian team agreed to contract such wheat when Australian authorities made no secret of it.'

Source: *Asian Environment* June 1982.

## Pacific unions



Independence demonstrators in New Caledonia.

Independence for New Caledonia, and the problem of uniting trade unions against nuclear testing, bases and dumping in the Pacific, emerged as the two key issues at the second conference of the Pacific Trade Union Forum (PTUF), in Noumea, New Caledonia, 26-28 September 1982. The conference was attended by 78 trade-union delegates from fourteen Pacific countries.

The trade unionists found themselves in the midst of a deepening political crisis in New Caledonia. The Kanak (Melanesian)-led independence movement is facing an increasingly violent reaction from right-wing French settlers, who recently stormed the Territorial Assembly and assaulted Independence Front

leaders. The PTUF second conference declared that 'independence must finally be determined by the Kanak people of New Caledonia' and called for New Caledonia to be put on the list of non-self-governing countries before the United Nations Decolonization Committee.

On the issue of joint trade-union action against nuclear activities in the region, PTUF delegates failed to reach agreement on a coordinated approach.

In another major declaration, however, the PTUF second conference reaffirmed its commitment to oppose all nuclear activities in the Pacific, and called for 'developing cooperation amongst trade unions and workers' in the region.

## 1700 drugs pushed

The USA State Department, siding with drug companies, has pressured the Bangladesh government not to proceed with its 31 May 1982 ban on 1711 drugs classed as unnecessary and/or harmful. The ban was initiated on recommendation from the World Health Organisation.

Bangladesh has been attempting to withdraw from its market the same drugs that the USA Food and Drug Administration has withdrawn from the USA market. Eighty multinational companies led the campaign for a 'delay of implementation' of the drugs ban. As a result, bans on 41 drugs have been lifted.

War On Want (a UK-based aid agency) has been requested

to coordinate a response from other non-government organisations to support a campaign in Bangladesh to uphold the policy. John Cunningham from War on Want said:

This is particularly necessary since a smear campaign has recently been launched in the Bangladeshi press and attempts to discredit organisations supporting campaigns to argue for the use of essential drugs. Moreover the smear campaign also attempts to discredit members of the 'expert committee' responsible for making the recommendations with allegations of 'unethical practice'.

Action: Contributions to the campaign should be directed to Drug Campaign, Janata Bank Ltd, BIDD Branch, Motijnel CA, Dacca 2, Bangladesh.

## Media images

A project conducted in South Australian schools by Dr Roger Wiseman of the South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE) asked children 'What changes would you like to see in Australia that would make it a better place?' Among the replies were: 'get rid of the pommies and refugees'; 'shoot the wogs'; and 'not so many Italians and Greeks, they only collect in gangs'. Dr Wiseman found that such prejudice actually increased as children got older.

Very few could give any names for living famous Greeks or Italians. Included among famous Australians were Benny Hill, Elvis Presley, Bjorn Bjorg, ABBA, John Wayne, Bing Crosby, the Queen and Prince Charles.

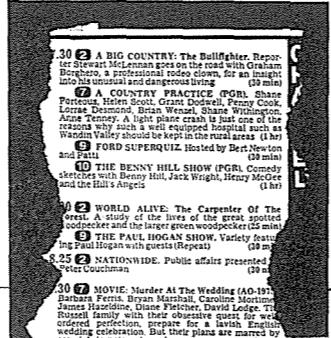
Frank Golding, lecturer in Education at the SACAE comments:

The project demonstrated the powerful impact of mass media on the development in children of ethnic, racial and national stereotypes. Such findings show that television has a much stronger influence on how children see their own national identity than does the school curriculum.

The power of the media in shaping beliefs and attitudes is immense. The presentation of distorted images of ethnic and minority groups and foreigners is only one side of the equation, however. The other is the pointed absence of positive images which provide satisfactory models. There are daily examples of advertisements, TV shows, movies, popular magazines and music which stereotype or pointedly ignore categories of people.

Action: A national conference on Prejudice and the Media is to be held in Adelaide on 20-22 January 1983. For further information write to Frank Golding, Magill Campus, SACAE, Lorne Ave, Magill SA 5072.

Source: *Campaign Against Racial Exploitation Newsletter*, October 1982.



## UTA boycott



UTA

Hopes that the French government would cease its nuclear testing in the south Pacific have now been dashed with the announcement, 7 October 1982, of a massive 18% increase in spending on nuclear forces. The French ministry of defence will now spend one-third of its military budget on nuclear weapons, and has extended the proposed limit on Pacific testing from 1985 to 1991.

The French government has in the twenty years since 1962 conducted 97 atmospheric and underground tests on Fangataufa and Mururoa atolls. It has always claimed that the tests are harmless, but since 1974 has been forced

to test its bombs underground after a widespread campaign of international protest. It still claims the tests are harmless, but refuses to disclose health statistics, which show an alarming rate of increase in leukemia and other cancers in the region. Action: People for Nuclear Disarmament have launched a summer-long boycott against UTA, the French government's airline. You can express your protest against French nuclear arrogance by publicising the boycott and by urging friends who intended to use UTA to use another airline. Public pressure forced the French tests underground in 1974 so join the struggle in 1982 to end the French nuclear tests in the south Pacific.

## Ranger dam leaks

The federal shadow minister for conservation and environment Stewart West made statements in parliament in late September 1982, alleging faulty construction of the Ranger uranium mine tailings dam. Mr West said that the dam had not been built down to bedrock as it should have been, and that hydrostatic pressure of the water in the tailings dam was forcing radioactive contaminated water underneath the dam wall.

The minister for home affairs and the environment Mr McVeigh had been told of the situation at Ranger two months previously and had not acted on it.

Source: *Hansard*, 23 September 1982.

## Butler retracts

Harry Butler no longer works for the Tasmanian government. Speaking at the 20th World Congress of Landscape Architects he said he would no longer advise the government on the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme because he differs strongly with their views.

He claimed that when he first went to work for the previous state government, it was to assess and determine the best way to balance the amount of control needed to safeguard the environment with Tasmania's developmental needs - not specifically to try to give respectability to the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme.

Source: *Wilderness News*, Vol 3 No 5

## USA island option

The fate of Tinian, the small island in Micronesia from which the USA launched the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, will soon be decided. Time is running out under the terms of a commonwealth agreement signed into law in 1976. Under this law the USA must exercise its option of use of more than 6900 hectares of Tinian, or have them revert to the Marianas Government.

Such is the strategic importance of the island that the Pentagon is pressuring the USA Congress to pass funding for a military base. The base would cover two-thirds of Tinian's most productive farming land, and mean the relocation of hundreds of local people to make way for thousands of USA military, construction, and operating personnel.

A 1974 USA air force study outlined the dramatic

impact that such a base would have on Tinian. From this study the Micronesia Support Committee assert:

With the projected population density, these [subsistence] agricultural activities will be severely limited and the present standard of living will deteriorate. Family agricultural plots are likely to be eliminated due to the pressures of land demand and the lure of better paying jobs... A minimal tenfold increase in population will engulf the present population [of 900].

The Micronesia Support Committee is calling for strong worldwide citizen action to stop the USA Congress approving funds in the 1983 budget appropriation. In that way, the land under option would be allowed to revert to agricultural use by its inhabitants, and the Pacific would be relieved of yet another USA base.

Contact: Micronesia Support Committee, 1212 University Ave, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96826.

## Chemical index

TEGACID	fatty acid monoglycerides	Hatrick
TEGIN	fatty acid monoglycerides	Hatrick
TEGO	proprietary amphoteric surfactant blend	Hatrick
TEGO BETAINE L7	fatty acid amide of dimethylamino propylamine	Hatrick
TEGODOR	combination formaldehyde/glutyaldehyde/quaternary ammonium compounds	Hatrick
TEGODOR FORTE	combination formaldehyde/glutyaldehyde/quaternary ammonium compounds	Hatrick
TEGOMUL	fatty acid monoglycerides	Hatrick
TERIC	nonionic surfactants	ICI

Workers in the chemical industry often bear the brunt of chemical companies' secrecy. All too often a product is labelled *XT240. Handle with care*, without the slightest hint offered as to the product's chemical composition.

The Australian Chemical Industry Council (ACIC) has recognised this problem and moved some way to meeting trade union demands. The latest edition of the *ACIC Chemical Directory and*

*Emergency Guide*, issued September 1982, gives an index to more than 800 branded products in Australia, listing their major chemical constituent and supplier.

Contact: The *Directory* can be obtained from the ACIC, 130 Albert Rd, South Melbourne, Vic 3205. Price \$4.50.

Source: Australian Council of Trade Unions/Victorian Trades Hall Council Occupational Health and Safety Unit *Health and Safety Bulletin* October 1982.

## Pesticides

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is about to conduct a survey on the farm use of pesticides and herbicides. However, Queensland and South Australia will not be included because agricultural authorities in both states have

decided that data on pesticides is a low priority.

The information is being collected to enable identification of regions where herbicides and pesticides have been used to control and eradicate weeds and insect pests, the types of crops treated and the methods of application.

# EARTH NEWS

## Sign here

The House of Representatives has, as from 19 August 1982, changed the wording of formal petitions. The wording to be used at the head of each page of signatures is:

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The petition of certain citizens of Australia (electors of the Division of . . . .) shows . . . . (state the circumstances of the case here)

Your petitioners therefore pray that . . . . (state the terms of action petitioned here)

## Hawaiian land rights

A recent report from the Reagan-appointed Native Hawaiian Study Commission has been blasted by a united group of Hawaiian land rights activists.

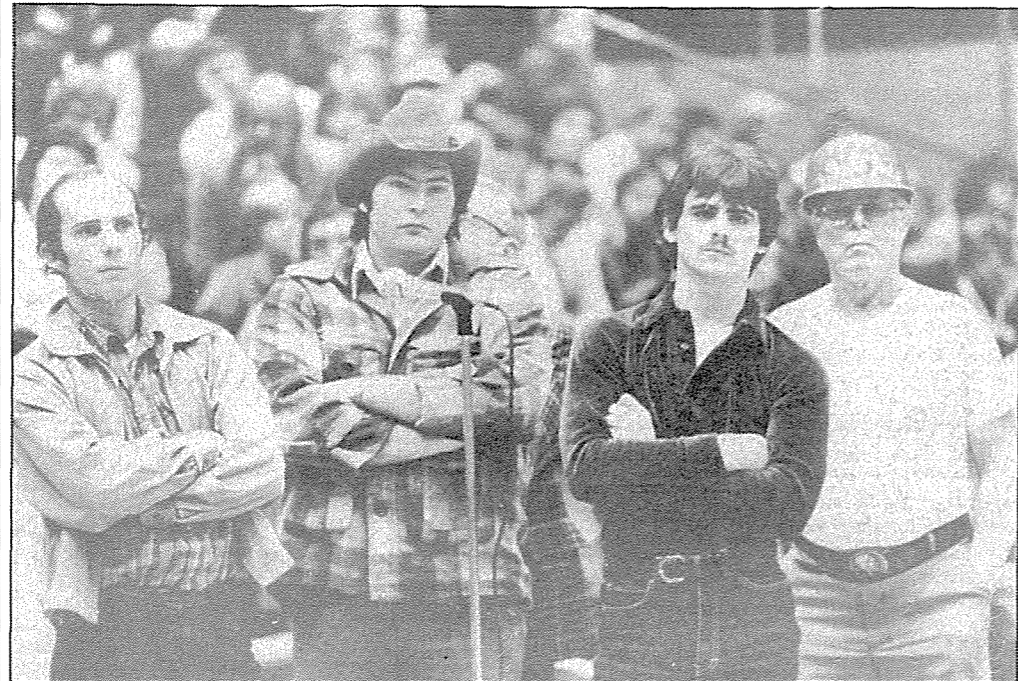
A spokesperson, Kawehi Kanui-Gill, states that the conclusion of the report, that Hawaiians have no claims to self-determination as a sovereign people, is:

based on narrow, biased readings of Hawaiian history . . . . Written in part by historians at the USA Naval Historical Centre, the report serves only as a defence of American actions during the overthrow, and of continued American domination over Hawaii.

Four activist organisations under the banner of 'He Hawaii Makou' (We Are Hawaii) have aligned with the first American Indian International Tribunal, utilising this forum as a platform to the World Court and the United Nations. The tribunal has 'called for an end to military abuse of lands sacred to indigenous peoples', and recognises that the 'policy of genocide against native peoples is continued in the recent draft report of the Native Hawaiian Study Commission'.

Source: *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 6 October 1982.

## USA ratepayers revolt



Ratepayers register their anger at a WPPSS hearing.

Electrical utility ratepayers in the USA are battling the public power industry. Reacting to skyrocketing bills for cancelled nuclear power plants, consumers are demonstrating their outrage by marches, blackouts and angry meetings with elected utility commissioners.

The strongest uprising is sweeping the Pacific northwest, where thousands of citizens are staging candlelight marches, burning electricity bills at utility board meetings, and organising blackouts. This consumer uprising was sparked by electricity rates doubling and tripling due to the financial situation of the

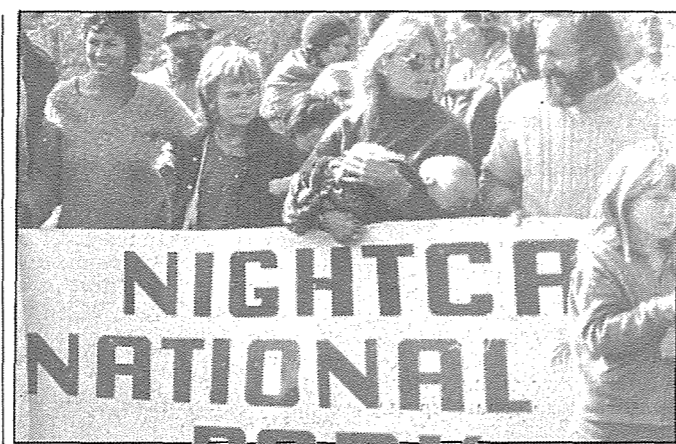
Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS). WPPSS sponsored a five-unit nuclear power project. In January 1982, two of the units under construction were cancelled and ratepayers were left to pay \$USA10 000 for the cancelled plants. The rate increases were particularly enraging for people of the northwest, an area made up of primarily all-electric homes, where unemployment reaches as high as 25% and where many farms require electrically-powered irrigation. If ratepayers in the northwest refuse to pay their electricity bills, as they are threatening, economic analysts believe

that WPPSS could collapse.

Consumer groups in Oklahoma are urging ratepayers to withhold their payments and participate in a blackout to protest against the \$USA350 million in costs for the cancelled Black Fox nuclear units. In Tennessee, 16 000 people signed a petition protesting against charges for eight deferred Tennessee Valley Authority nuclear plants. In Ohio, a state court sided with consumers and ruled that utilities cannot charge customers for the \$USA246 million loss in the cancellation of two Erie and two Davis-Bessie nuclear units. Source: World Information Service on Energy, 12 August 1982.

## Rainforests

A NSW state cabinet committee decided on 26 October 1982 to protect rainforests from logging by declaring many areas as national parks and providing a \$1 million subsidy to the timber industry to allay costs for use of alternative timbers. Areas to be declared national parks are Washpool, Nightcap and New England, and extensions to the Border Ranges and Werrikembe National Park. A total of 50 000 hectares of rainforest is to be declared.



BOB BURTON

## Not just green

Regular readers of *Chain Reaction* will have noticed a distinct shift in content of the magazine. For some time now each edition has included some pieces which are not strictly 'environmental'. These have dealt with topics such as land rights, sexual harassment, workers and unions, the economy and so on. And there has been the controversial 'Ecology and Ideology' series.

*Chain Reaction* remains, of course, fundamentally an environmental magazine. We are, as always, committed to an environmentally sustainable world and consider the magazine an invaluable resource for all those working to prevent ecological destruction, be it by nuclear power or nuclear war, the devastation of wilderness or native forests, threats to entire species of animals and plants, or the thousands of other ways by which the earth's delicate ecosystem is damaged or destroyed. However, the environment and the environment movement do not exist in isolation. There is a logic, however crazy, to contemporary society which causes not only disregard for and destruction of the environment, but also oppression of workers, women, blacks and other non-Caucasian races, an unworkable economic system, war and the threat of nuclear war, incredible

wastage of resources and lives, and all the other symptoms of the so-called crisis.

We believe that a much more wide-ranging approach than a strict focus on traditional 'green' issues is essential if we are to understand our world and work to save it. The other issues which we cover are not just sidelines that we dabble in to satisfy personal commitment or to broaden our appeal. They are extremely important in themselves, and to include them needs no justification. But it is also important to understand that they form part of a whole and have a definite relationship to environmental issues.

Of course *Chain Reaction* could not hope to give adequate coverage to everything of importance. What we try to do is publish articles which give a social and political analysis of environmental questions, or which explore the links between other social and political phenomena and the environment. The Wollongong article in *Chain Reaction* 28 is a good example, and the 'Ecology and Ideology' series is an explicit attempt to improve our understanding and approach.

This policy has drawn considerable comment, positive and negative. We have been accused of being partisan and irrelevant. Partisan we are certainly not. We have no political line to push but rather we encourage contributions from as diverse a range of views as possible.

## National Con

Alistair Machin is far too polite in his criticism of the discussion paper *Towards a National Conservation Strategy* (*Chain Reaction* 29). While one must agree with his critique, there is much more that is wrong with the document.

An outstanding weakness of the Strategy are its glaring omissions. Note some of the issues not raised, or glossed over, including:

- energy, uranium, nuclear war
- pesticides and hazardous chemicals
- packaging
- population control, including migration and decentralisation
- kangaroo management — given less than one line of text

The above list is by no means exhaustive.

By contrast, some of the positive statements are either false or at best misleading. We are told for instance that:

- we have already an excellent system of national parks
- small reservations are good enough to safeguard special ecosystems

- soil conservation measures are adequate
- forestry departments/commissions are doing a great job

These observations are going to be endorsed by a carefully selected committee of yes-people, and hailed as representing a 'consensus'. The whole deal will then be enshrined as gospel, and anyone disagreeing will be branded a heretic, or worse.

The main thrust of this exercise seems to be to ensure that activities are safely channelled into collecting a never-ending stream of data, so that hopefully the exhausted collectors will have no time, or energy, left to actually act on it.

We were faced with a catch-22 situation here. Had we ignored the Strategy, as we might have been tempted to, then we would have been told we missed our chance to influence it. However, we will have wasted our time by contributing, because all but the most minor objections will be over-ruled. It will of course be claimed that our views were taken into account in reaching what to us will almost certainly

be an unacceptable 'consensus'.

Clearly, we were not meant to win either way, but we should at least let it be known loud and clear that we condemn this thoroughly cynical exercise. That is why I think Alistair has not been anything like outspoken enough.

Peter Springell  
Clifton Beach, Qld

## Warning

I would like to warn *Chain Reaction* that the magazine is getting away from our original intentions — the conservation, restoration and rational use of the ecosphere — and is weakening our cause, we are trying to be all things to all people and this is making the magazine a hodge-podge of ideas and actions.

We will not be able to keep up interest in it unless something drastically different is envisaged. A couple of well-researched, well-written articles on the environment are much better than little snippets of chit-chat.

Bette M Beckwith  
FOE (SA)  
Adelaide, SA

# BACKSTAGE

Not to do so would be self-defeating as there is yet no adequate theory or 'line' on the politics of the environment.

And far from being irrelevant, we believe we can only promote successful activism by a more political and social approach. Activists, after all, must know what they are up against. It is also clear that new alliances can and must be formed to challenge our society and way of life thoroughly if any of our progressive movements are to be successful. Women, blacks, workers, environmentalists and others must unite, and to do that we must recognise that we are all fighting on common ground.

*Chain Reaction*, we hope, can help to provide at least a starting point for finding common ground, laying the foundations for unity. We need your help to do the best we can. Any comments, suggestions, or contributions are welcome. *Chain Reaction* is still the best environment magazine in Australia and with your assistance we can be better yet.

Keith Redgen  
Chain Reaction Editorial Group

# LETTERS

## Congrats

Congratulations on publishing the article by Kimberley O'Sullivan in *Chain Reaction* 28.

Kimberley, like any other FOE worker, should have the right to be read, to have her thoughts published in CR.

R Wiltshire  
Perth, WA

You are invited to write letters to *Chain Reaction* with your comments on the magazine or on other issues of interest to you. Letters longer than 300 words may be edited or may not be printed. Write today to *Chain Reaction*, Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic 3000, Australia.

# Land rights after the Games

The 1982 Commonwealth Games provided an opportunity for Aborigines to expose the Queensland and federal governments' racist policies. With the Games over, **Harald Klein** analyses the effectiveness of the Black land rights protests.

The campaign for Aboriginal land rights, conducted during the Commonwealth Games, started badly with the official body, the Black Protest Committee, organising only one rally, on 26 September, leading up to the Games. The committee had vigorously opposed any action during the Games as a diversion from its proposed cultural festival.

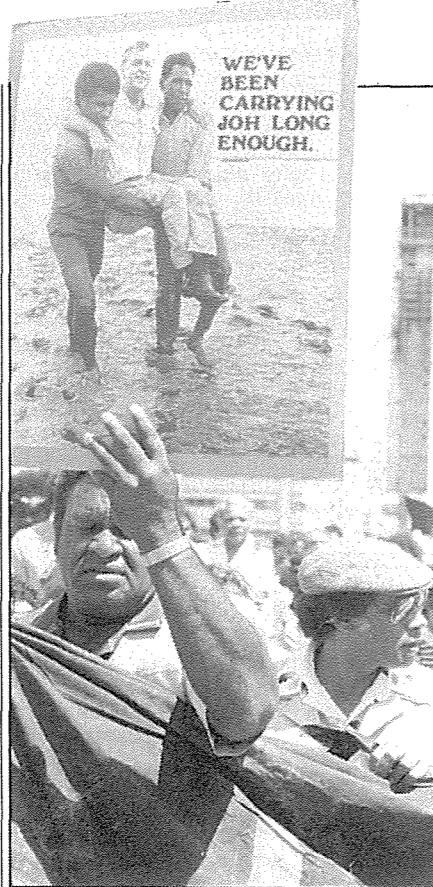
The committee also failed to organise any billeting for Blacks arriving from interstate and the reserves, forcing them to camp at Musgrave Park. These problems resulted in a bitter meeting of Blacks where the Black Protest Committee resigned and a new Black leadership group, the National Black Unity Committee, emerged and established itself in the Park.

... the consensus approach to decision making at the Park, the relaxed pace and a willingness to respond to events as they developed, produced a community that provided the necessities of life, a political program and a range of cultural and sporting events. People came and went for a lot of different reasons and in a variety of frames of mind, but the Park went on. (S Stockwell, 'The Games Campaign', *Semper* 11 October 1982)

The Park community started organising numerous successful protests beginning on 29 September with a march to be held with or without a permit. Bjelke Petersen, realising arrests before the Games would taint its 'friendly' image, was forced to back down and allow the 2000 protesters to peacefully march through the crowded lunchtime streets of Brisbane. Black activist Gary Foley remarked on the success of this march:

We had a great victory today. This was the first time since Petersen introduced his draconian legislation that there has been a

*Harald Klein works for Friends of the Earth (Brisbane) and was involved in protests during the Games.*



Protesting for land rights before the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, 29 September 1982.

march through the city streets in the middle of the day.

From then on there was another march to the QEII stadium, a picket at the stadium and a picket of Malcolm Fraser's attendance at the Brisbane Greek Club. These actions resulted in a total of 373 arrests. In the hearings arising from these, Bob Weatherall of the Foundation of Aboriginal and Islander Research Action said:

I'm only guilty under white law. I'm not guilty under Aboriginal law. I have the right to walk on my own land.

It was the militancy and the activism at grass roots levels of organisation that were the key to the success of these protests. The only deterrent from greater success was that the day-to-day decision making often left little oppor-

tunity to leaflet and build marches. However, the direct confrontations that occurred did ensure media coverage.

Had the Land Rights movement been restricted to the proposed cultural festival, all the anger and protest would have been swamped with stories about 'cultural revival'. (P. Griffiths, 'Press On For Land Rights, *Battler* No 135)

Instead, reports about Aboriginal land rights appeared in the overseas and Australian media, including the *British Guardian* and *Newsweek*, *4 Corners*, *Nationwide*, local commercial television, and even the conservative Queensland press.

However, international media was not the key to winning land rights - what was really important was the campaign in Australia. As Ross Watson, the editor of *Black Nation* remarked:

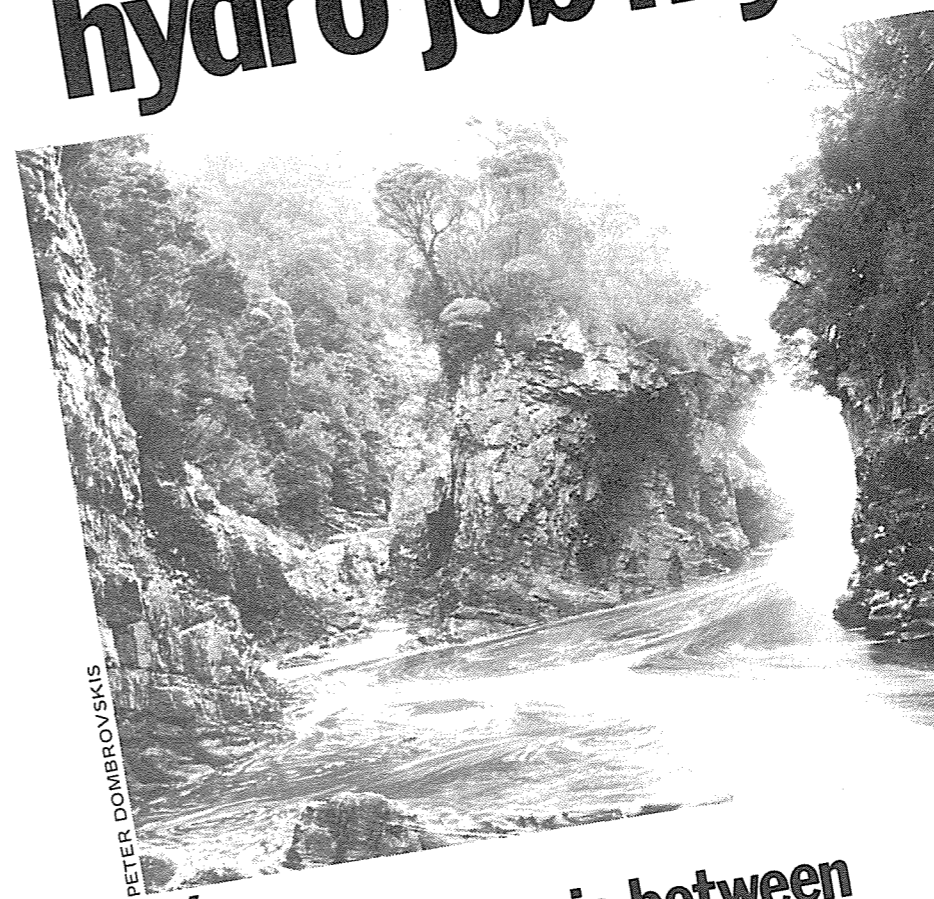
The fact that all the black agencies, institutions and government funding could not provide a meaningful program of activity reflects the government's racist attitude, and the stumped tied to money allocated to the Black community. We weren't going to let a government-funded Black body tell us how we're going to operate. We are going to learn about ourselves, our own history, and take action ourselves... The more effective and active we are the more positive the effect it will have on Blacks in Australia. When people leave here (Musgrave Park) communication channels will be stronger because we've met each other face-to-face.

Aborigines who came to Brisbane from all over Australia left with greater confidence and pride in being Aborigines. They also experienced the emergence of a united Black movement based in grass roots communities. (A Stephen, 'Success Beyond Our Wildest Dream', *Tribune* No 2257)

Now there is the need to use the success of the campaign during the Games to build an on-going movement to win land rights. However, no clear direction has emerged and there exists a basic contradiction between the white supporters who wish to help define strategies for the struggle and the Blacks who see the white support groups as belonging to the culture of the oppressor. Although Black groups may need white support to win their battle, they do not see white-based initiatives as a way to gain their liberation. The possibility of an alliance of the Black movement with concerned white organisations seems to have vanished with the Musgrave Park community.

SCOTT O'KEEFE

# Exploding the hydro job myth



PETER DOMBROVSKIS

“The real choice is between dams and alternatives which meet Tasmania's employment and energy needs”

By Bob Beatty, Tina Perinotto and Keith Tarlo

Employment has always been the bottom line of arguments in favour of flooding the Franklin and Gordon Rivers in South West Tasmania for hydroelectricity. Supporters of the scheme argue that it will provide jobs in construction and operation, and indirectly through the electricity generated. Yet despite continual hydro development and a 57% increase in power consumption since 1970,<sup>1</sup> Tasmania had an unemployment rate of 10.1% in September 1982<sup>2</sup> and workers were being laid off from the very industries which benefit most from cheap electricity.

Prominent among arguments in favour of the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme is the need to maintain the Hydro Electric Commission's construction workforce as a source of jobs. How important is it?

As of 30 June 1981 the Hydro Electric Commission employed 4682 people, of whom 1617 were directly involved in construction. The HEC suggests that 3574 jobs depend on its construction activities if both directly and indirectly employed workers are included.<sup>3</sup> This is 2.1% of Tasmania's workforce of 173 600.<sup>4</sup>

The Gordon-below-Franklin scheme will maintain an average of less than 600 jobs in the Commission's construction workforce over the 12-year construction period with a peak workforce of less than 1000. When completed, the scheme will employ only 29 people for its operation.<sup>5</sup>

Despite claims that the HEC's workforce is a stabilising influence on employment in Tasmania, it fluctuates considerably in size and composition, and declined overall by 1000 between 1969 and 1979. Labour turnover was much higher than the Australian average for both staff (four times the average) and award employees (eight times). Labour shortages on construction sites have prompted advertising interstate. The major reason for the labour shortages appears to be the remote location of the employment.<sup>6</sup>

Women will gain little direct employment from the scheme. Employment of women averages 8% in Australia's electricity supply industry, but this falls to 1.9% in those areas of activity which include the construction and operation of power-stations.<sup>7</sup> These facts raise questions of how valuable jobs on the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme will be to Tasmanians and to the state's economy.

The maintenance of the HEC construction workforce must be balanced against employment opportunities lost elsewhere. In 1981/82, the HEC spent 52% of all Tasmania's public capital expenditure (see Figure 1). This money

*Bob Beatty, Tina Perinotto and Keith Tarlo are members of the South West Tasmania Committee of NSW.*

was raised both in the public sector and on the open market.<sup>8</sup> In this way, hydroelectric development draws capital away both from public sector capital works such as schools, health services, public housing and transport, and from private sector activities such as home building and local manufacturing. Long-term employment per dollar invested in these activities is clearly far greater than the 29 jobs created by investing in a \$440 million power scheme.

Those who support the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme claim that 4000 jobs will be lost if the scheme does not go ahead.<sup>3</sup> This is not so. Such statements imply a simple choice: either a dam or no scheme at all. In reality, it is a choice between dams and a number of alternative ways of meeting Tasmania's energy needs, each of which has job-creating effects. The most commonly discussed alternative is a thermal power station using local Tasmanian coal from the Fingal Valley. A single unit 200 MW thermal station would create permanent jobs for 70 operators and 150 coal miners, compared with 29 operators on the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme. In total, a 1-unit thermal station would provide 32 200 job years against 25 540 job years spread over the construction and 60-year operating life of the hydro scheme<sup>9</sup> (see Figure 2). Further, these jobs would be located in the settled north of the state rather than in the isolated and temporary hydro construction camps.

More challenging is a proposal by two scientists at the University of Tasmania, Chris Harwood and Michael Hartley, to meet Tasmania's energy need until after the year 2000 through a comprehensive program of insulation, improving the energy efficiency of homes, commerce and factories, and cogeneration of electricity as a by-product of existing industrial processes such as steam raising. This program

The second way in which Tasmania's Hydro Electric Commission has sought to justify building dams is by claiming that increased energy production will lead to increased employment in new and existing industries. The policy of trying to attract industries to Tasmania by offering abundant cheap electricity is called hydro-industrialisation.

This policy dates from 1914 when the Tasmanian government bought Tasmania's first significant hydro scheme at the Great Lake from the Hydro Electric Power and Metallurgical Company, and established the Hydro Electric Department. The company had been constructing the scheme for a calcium carbide works it was building in south-eastern Tasmania. From its first year of operation, the Hydro Electric Department (later the Hydro Electric Commission) was trying to attract large power-consuming industries to Tasmania from interstate and overseas.<sup>11</sup>

would create 5300 job years spread over 15 years, but would cost much less than building a dam. Harwood and Hartley argue that the remaining capital should be used to provide infrastructure for industries needed to provide jobs for Tasmanians.<sup>10</sup>

Neither of these energy alternatives help the specific employment problems of Tasmania's west coast. These problems are partly due to the effects of the recession on the west coast mining towns such as Queenstown, Zeehan and Roseberry, and partly due to the run-down in the construction workforce for the Pieman River Power Development. West coast workers have looked to the Gordon-below-Franklin dam as providing at least a temporary respite. For this reason, the decision not to build the dam must be accompanied by alternative schemes to generate jobs on the west coast. The most promising proposal is to further develop the west coast's tourist potential. This is already a major industry in the area with the historic mining towns, the Maquarie Harbour/Gordon River scenic cruises, Strahan and wilderness recreation being the major attractions. Tourism could be further developed with:

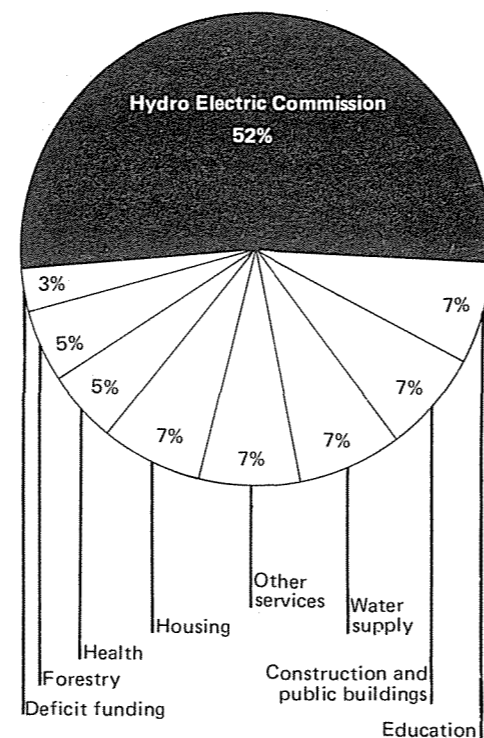
- reconstruction of the ABT railway from Queenstown to Strahan, via the Queen and King Rivers and Macquarie Harbour;
- provision of access to the Montezuma Falls near Williamsford;
- development of the King River Gorge as an accessible example of South West Tasmania's magnificent river chasms; and
- adaptation of the Emu Bay railway from Burnie to Roseberry for tourist use.

All these would provide short-term construction jobs but they would also provide stable permanent employment in the operation of the tourist industry.

Hydroindustrialisation had some early successes with contracts to supply bulk electricity to the Risdon zinc works (now Electrolytic Zinc), the calcium carbide works at Snug (the now defunct Electrona Carbide works), the Mt Lyell copper mine, and the cement works at Railton (now Goliath Portland Cement). Subsequently, Comalco established its Bell Bay aluminium smelter in 1955, and BHP its ferro-manganese alloy plant (called Temco) in 1962, also at Bell Bay. There are now sixteen industries with contracts for bulk electricity - these include woodchip, pulp and paper plants, as well as the mining, metal refining and smelting, and the chemical operations already mentioned.

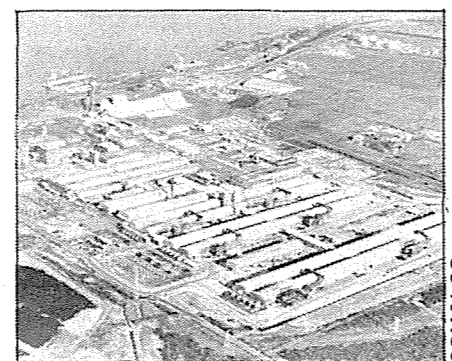
Despite these past successes, it is now clear that hydroindustrialisation is a failure. The industries which benefit from it do not provide many jobs for the amount of electricity that they consume, they do not provide any new

Figure 1  
Tasmanian government expenditure 1981/82.



From June 1982 the HEC is no longer subject to loans council limitations on borrowings.

## Hydro industry - an economic burden



Comalco, Bell Bay, Tasmania.

jobs in return for increases in their electricity consumption, and they do not create many jobs indirectly. Hydro-industrialisation cannot attract any new industries to Tasmania, yet it remains a burden on Tasmania's smaller and more labour-intensive industries and on all of its offices, shops and households.

At the heart of the failure of hydro-industrialisation is the type of industry which has benefited from the policy. It is important to recognise that cheap electricity is available only to those industries which are large and energy-intensive enough to justify taking out a contract for continuous bulk electricity. In Tasmania, these industries are of two types:

- 'footloose' electro-metallurgical industries which import most of their raw materials, export all their products, and are located in Tasmania primarily for its cheap electricity (notably Comalco, Temco and to a lesser extent Electrolytic Zinc); and
- industries engaged in initial and intermediate processing of Tasmania's forest and mineral resources. These industries share a number of characteristics which help to explain the failure of the hydroindustrialisation. These characteristics are:

- high energy intensiveness;
  - resource processing rather than the manufacturing of finished goods; and
  - ownership and control from outside the state.
- In 1978/79, they consumed 67% of the electricity sold in Tasmania, yet provided only 6% of Tasmania's jobs.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the remaining 94% of jobs used only a further 10% of Tasmania's electricity.<sup>1</sup> The metal smelting and refining industries are the most energy intensive. Comalco alone uses 26% of Tasmania's electricity while providing only 0.7% of the jobs (see Table 1).

If the huge investment in hydro-electricity generation benefits only a small section of the total workforce, it benefits an even smaller proportion of women workers. In 1978/79, the contract industrial consumers employed only 621 women, or just 1% of women in the Tasmanian workforce.<sup>6</sup> Women comprised only 5% of these industries' workforces compared with 17% in mining and manufacturing generally and 34% in the labour force as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

The workforce employed by these industries is mainly unskilled. Because the companies are owned and controlled from outside the state, many of the managerial, administrative and technical jobs are located elsewhere. This is reflected in the occupational structure of the major industrial power users, in which there are low proportions of professional, technical, administrative, clerical and skilled workers.<sup>6</sup>

One of the aims of the Hydro Electric Commission in building the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme is to provide increments of power to existing industries. There is no evidence that this

will result in more jobs. During the 1970s, contract electricity sales increased by 45% as significant proportions of the outputs of new power schemes (the Mersey-Forth and the Middle Gordon which flooded Lake Pedder) were used to add to the existing contracts.<sup>1</sup> Yet far from creating any new jobs, this increased energy production and use was associated with a decline in the number of jobs in the industry sectors using most electricity. In the basic metals sector, which includes Comalco, Temco and EZ, between 1969 and 1978 the number of jobs fell by 20%, while electricity use increased by 25%. In the paper and paper products sector (which includes several major power users) electricity use increased by 99% while employment fell by 5%.<sup>6</sup> During the same period, manufacturing employment fell by 16%<sup>13</sup> and, between 1971 and 1979, mining employment fell by 15%.<sup>14</sup>

The declines cannot be explained by recession because overall employment in Tasmania grew by 11 500 or 9.1% during the 1970s, the gains being mainly in community services, public administration, entertainment and recreation, finance and business services, and wholesale and retail trade.<sup>14</sup>

Increased electricity consumption did nothing to arrest the decline of manufacturing industry generally; it has clearly been used to increase the energy intensity of these industries, that is, to replace workers with electricity instead of increasing work opportunities. In fact, the increase of 50% in the energy intensiveness of Tasmanian manufacturing industry in the 1970s was far greater than the increase of 16% Australia-wide.<sup>15</sup> A clear example of this process occurred in 1979 when Comalco sought an increase in its electricity allowance for a production boost that would not have created any new jobs.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from their increasing energy intensity, several of the characteristics of the major industrial electricity users mitigate against their providing many more jobs. Because they are owned and controlled from outside the state, profits made in Tasmania do not necessarily mean investment and jobs for Tasmanians. For example, Comalco has been investing its profits in aluminium smelters in New Zealand and Queensland (Gladstone) rather than on expanding its Tasmanian smelter.

Because all the major industrial power users are engaged in resource processing for export, they and the jobs they provide are very vulnerable to fluctuations in the world metal and other commodity prices. This has been particularly so recently with layoffs in Electrolytic Zinc, Temco, Australian Pulp and Paper Mills and others,<sup>16</sup> and with the long-running problems of the Mt Lyell copper mine.

Often the number of jobs created indirectly, in supplying raw materials and

Figure 2  
Construction and operation employment for thermal and hydro schemes.

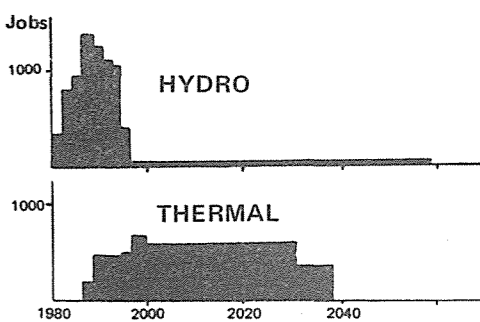


Table 1  
Electrical consumption and employment

Company	Demand (MW)	Jobs	Power per job (kW)
Comalco	237	1200	197
Electrolytic Zinc	108	3500	30
Temco	73	425	170
ANM	58	1260	46
Savage River	35	688	50
APPM (Burnie)	32	1446	22
Electrona	14	83	162
APPM (Wesley Vale)	13	422	31
Goliath	10	271	37
Furniture factory	0.002	14	0.14

in further product processing, exceed the number of people directly employed in an industry. However, with Tasmania's major industrial electricity users these multiplier effects are minimised. The most extreme cases are the two biggest electricity consumers in Tasmania, Comalco and Temco, which both import virtually all their raw materials (except electricity) and export all their products without further processing or fabrication.

While the existing industries cannot provide the jobs, the prospects of attracting major new energy-consuming industries to Tasmania looks bleak. The last major new industry to establish in Tasmania was Temco, in 1962. In its report on the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme, the HEC made 'no allowance for any new major industry which may wish to become established in the future'. It only considered additions to the contract demands of established industries and found that these were 'much larger than can be supplied from hydro sources'. The HEC itself admitted that, in this situation, 'there must be some restriction of industrial expansion in the state'.<sup>5</sup> In other words, far from building hydro schemes with the expectation of attracting new industry and jobs to Tasmania, the HEC is in fact limiting industrial development to that which can be accommodated into its dam-construction program. It is this fact which prompted the Evers Committee to comment on the 'role which the HEC has tended to fill as a de facto economic planning agency'.<sup>17</sup>

Even if the HEC could accommodate major new industries, the current electricity pricing arrangements discriminate against new industries. The HEC sells contracts for bulk electricity from specific power schemes as they are completed. The price paid depends on the historical capital cost of the scheme (which declines in real terms) and the current operating cost. New industries are forced to pay the price of power from new schemes, which is generally

If the Tasmanian economy is to have any chance of providing jobs for Tasmanians, the state government's industrial development policies must change from subsidising the existing energy-intensive industries to providing assistance to more labour-intensive industries. A first step in this direction would be to remove the subsidy for contract electricity customers from the electricity pricing system. One alternative is a 'neutral' pricing system that charges all customers the average cost per unit of producing and distributing electricity. A progressive pricing policy which charged small users less per unit than large users would encourage smaller and labour-intensive industries. An added benefit of such a pricing policy would be that it would encourage conservation of energy.

Further steps to encourage job-

higher than the cost of power from old schemes or than the average cost of power from the system as a whole.<sup>11,18</sup>

Instead of attracting new industries, Tasmania faces the possibility that one of its 'footloose' metal smelters and refineries will leave the state. For example, as part of the interstate and international restructuring of the aluminium industry, Comalco may close its Bell Bay smelter and concentrate its activities at Gladstone where it has a large new smelter near its aluminium refinery and uses Queensland's abundant coal-fired electricity.

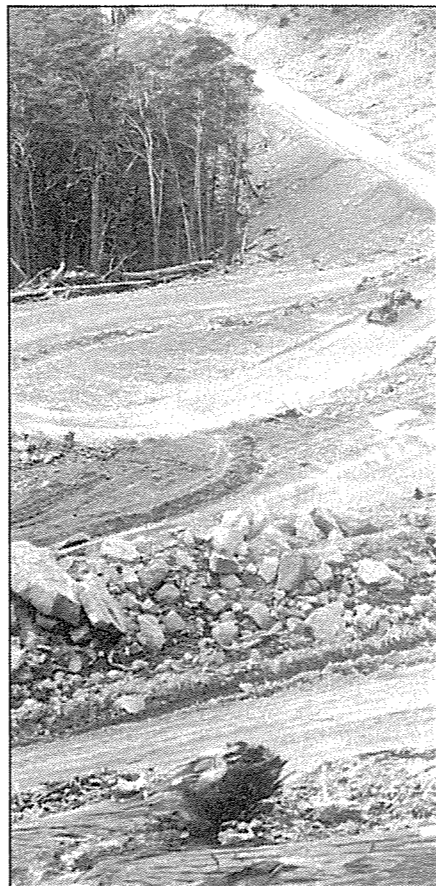
Hydroindustrialisation's failure to generate jobs or attract new industry might be tolerable if it did not place a burden on the rest of the state economy. However it does place such a burden via the price structure. The average price paid for bulk electricity in 1981 was 0.96 cents per kilowatt-hour, while the average price paid for 'retail' electricity was 3.64 cents per kilowatt-hour.<sup>1</sup> (Both these average prices cover a considerable variety of tariffs paid by different categories of customer.) The price difference in Tasmania is several times greater than it is elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>9</sup>

The HEC claims that this price differential is due to the lower cost of distributing electricity to contract customers. However, several independent analysts, using data published by the HEC, have allocated the HEC's costs to the different types of customer and shown that the price structure still contains a subsidy of \$25 million per year for the contract electricity customers.<sup>9,18</sup>

Further, because of the historical pricing of contract electricity, the retail customers bear the cost of the more expensive schemes. As a result, the ratio between the prices of contract and retail electricity has increased from 3.43 in 1970 to 3.79 in 1981. This implies that the subsidy was also increasing.<sup>1</sup>

generating industries include the provision of infrastructure and direct subsidies. The major proposals that could be encouraged include:

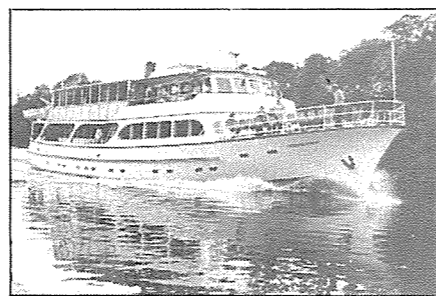
- production of fuels such as alcohol from beet and charcoal;<sup>10</sup>
- the regeneration of Tasmania's derelict forests;<sup>19</sup>
- further processing of Tasmania's forest, fish, mineral and agricultural products before export;
- design-based industries using, for example, wood;<sup>20</sup>
- high-value, high-technology, low-volume products such as precision tools;<sup>21</sup>
- manufacturing of energy equipment such as slow combustion stoves, solar water heaters and cogeneration equipment;<sup>10</sup>
- craft industries;
- tourism.<sup>11</sup>



Dam construction offers only temporary jobs in remote areas, such as road building.

THE MERCURY

## Job intensive alternatives



Tourism on the Gordon River.

TAS FILM CORP

Why has belief in the effectiveness of hydroindustrialisation continued so long in the face of the job-destroying effects catalogued in this article? The answer lies in the role and power of the HEC. It is basically a hydroconstruction authority, which also has responsibility for the generation, marketing, pricing and distribution of electricity and much of Tasmania's economic planning.

The Commission is the most powerful public authority in Tasmania. Until recently, it was not responsible to a government minister and it had uncritical support from parliament. Its links with the media ensured support from that quarter, while Tasmania's unions chose not to see the job-destroying effects of an energy-intensive industrial strategy. The companies benefiting from subsidised bulk electricity naturally support the HEC to the hilt.<sup>11</sup>

None of the alternatives discussed in this article will be seriously considered, let alone implemented, while so much power is concentrated in the hands of a single authority. The HEC needs to be split into a construction authority and an energy authority. The energy authority would be responsible for generating and purchasing electricity and for its marketing, pricing and distribution. Part of its charter would be to encourage energy efficiency and to utilise a variety of energy sources, including decentralised sources such as cogeneration and solar heating.<sup>18</sup> If necessary, the energy authority would commission the construction authority

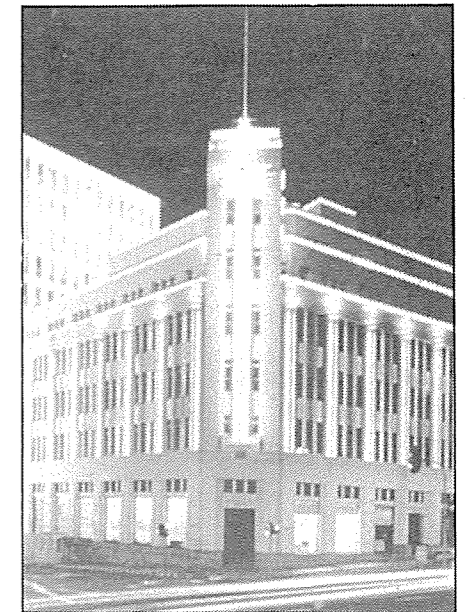
to design and construct a power scheme. However, the construction authority would be used for a range of other public works as well. As the HEC itself admits, 'the wide range of skills required of the construction workforce employed by the Commission . . . are typical of those required by a building industry'.<sup>5</sup>

The former Labor government took a step towards the establishment of an energy authority with the creation in 1978 of the small Directorate of Energy to provide independent advice to the government on energy matters. However, the Directorate of Energy was abolished in December 1980 and replaced with an energy policy unit in the premier's department with a staff of one.<sup>11</sup>

The energy authority's policies need to be placed in the context of the state's industrial development strategies: ' . . . electricity production is not an end in itself but should be seen and managed within the context of some broader socio-economic strategy'.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, the employment benefits of dam construction are small, short term and costly, especially when they are compared with the alternative ways of meeting Tasmania's energy needs. The concentration of economic development policy on increasing energy production has increased industries' energy intensity, rather than providing more jobs. The alternatives proposed — encouragement of labour-intensive industry, progressive electricity pricing, energy alternatives, and tourist development of Tasmania's west coast — also require the structural reform of the HEC.

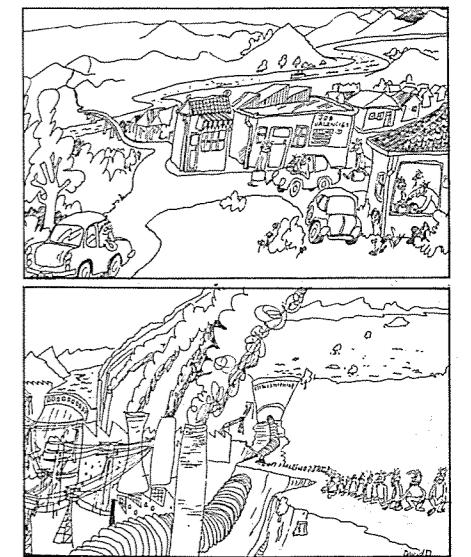
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# Running wild

How can the South West be saved? Karen Alexander looks at the future direction of the struggle.

The wild Franklin River, on a southern island far from the main centres of Australia's population, has inspired thousands of people to spend time and money in fighting for its survival. Hundreds of Tasmanians still fight to have a fair say in the future direction of their state. Mainland Australians fight to have any say whatsoever in what is obviously a national issue, the fate of one of Australia's few remaining wildernesses.

The river presents a fascinating dichotomy. It has a timelessness which is a product of the natural forces which have shaped the earth, yet it could be gone in a few years. It is enormously strong, totally dominating people and capable of killing them, yet it is vulnerable: our machines can destroy its beauty and its power.

Such gut-feelings rarely win battles. Fortunately for the Franklin and the South West the stage is set for federal government intervention. All that is needed is public pressure — strong, constant and determined. And public pressure can work because eventually the politicians face the people at an election. The choice may be limited, but it is there.

There are a number of reasons for suggesting that the federal government will intervene:

- The federal government now has clear advice from its Attorney-General's Department that it not only has the power to intervene on the dam issue in Tasmania, but also has an obligation to intervene. The Commonwealth could acquire the area as a national park under the Wildlife Conservation Act and the Land Acquisition Act. If necessary it could make all future grants to Tasmania conditional on not building the dam. Any decision not to intervene in Tasmania will be purely for political reasons, not for lack of legal power. The federal government now needs the political will to preserve this part of Australia's heritage.

- In November 1981, with the agreement of the then Tasmanian premier, Doug Lowe, the federal government nominated the western Tasmanian national parks for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The area nominated has already been accepted by the executive body of the World Heritage Committee, but has yet to be formally ratified by the full committee which will meet on 13-17 December 1982 in Paris. Unless the federal government can give some guarantee that it will protect the area, the final acceptance of the South West onto the World Heritage List may not occur. Such rejection would be a strong embarrassment to the government.

- The area has also been nominated

Karen Alexander works with the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in Melbourne.

for its cultural significance. All the limestone caves containing Aboriginal artefacts found so far would be flooded. Among the discoveries was evidence of Aboriginal habitation 15000 to 20000 years ago, indicating the southernmost human presence at the time of the last ice age. The flooding of the sites would be clearly a tragedy, which many of the world's archaeologists are trying to avert.

What is to be done if conventional methods fail to resolve the situation and destruction of the area is imminent? Under these circumstances the Tasmanian Wilderness Society will urge civil disobedience and peaceful direct action in the South West. Large amounts of time and money have been spent in preparation for such action. Since there are intense feelings on both sides of the conflict, the potential for violence is high. But the TWS strongly believes that violence is of no value in the long run in convincing the general public and the government of the need to pass effective legislation protecting the South West wilderness, not only from dams but also from forestry and mining incursions.

In the end the trade-off is between our last major temperate wilderness or 180 MW of power for which there are alternatives if the power really is needed. There is no compromise; a dam, no matter how small, or a road, no matter how narrow, destroys the wilderness.

As with so many issues, if all those who care act together, the battle can be won. The saving of the Franklin River and the South West wilderness can be the next big step along the road to a change in the attitude of governments towards the environment and in the ability of people to effect that change.

**Action:** When the rational and emotional arguments are on our side, it should only take public pressure to force the government to act. Letters, telegrams, telexes, and phone calls to politicians are all needed. Unless this is done, the politicians have no idea how strongly the community feels about an issue. A complaint to a friend does nothing.

- Ring your member of federal parliament. Ask to speak to the member personally. If you don't get through, make an appointment to see her or him.
- Send a hand-written letter to each federal lower house and senate member in your state, especially Liberal Party members. It doesn't have to be a long letter.
- Encourage other people to do the above.
- Send a telegram to Malcolm Fraser, c/-Parliament House, Canberra.

**Contact:** Tasmanian Wilderness Society  
*Adelaide:* 310 Angas St, Adelaide, SA 5000. Tel: (08) 212 1955.  
*Brisbane:* PO Box 238, North Quay, Qld 4000. Tel: (07) 221 0188  
*Canberra:* PO Box 188, Civic Square, ACT 2608. Tel: (062) 49 8011.  
*Hobart:* 130 Davey St, Hobart, Tas 7000. Tel: (002) 34 9366.  
*Melbourne:* Shop 8, 399 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Tel: (03) 67 5884.  
*Perth:* 537 Wellington St, Perth, WA 6007. Tel: (09) 321 5942.  
*Sydney:* South West Tasmania Committee, 399 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000. Tel: (02) 267 7722.

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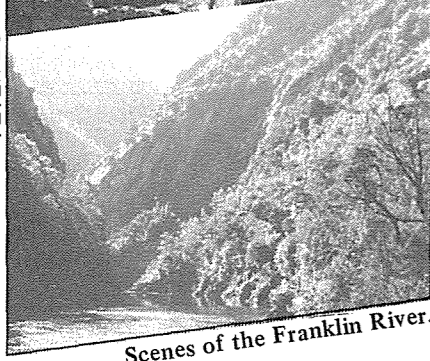
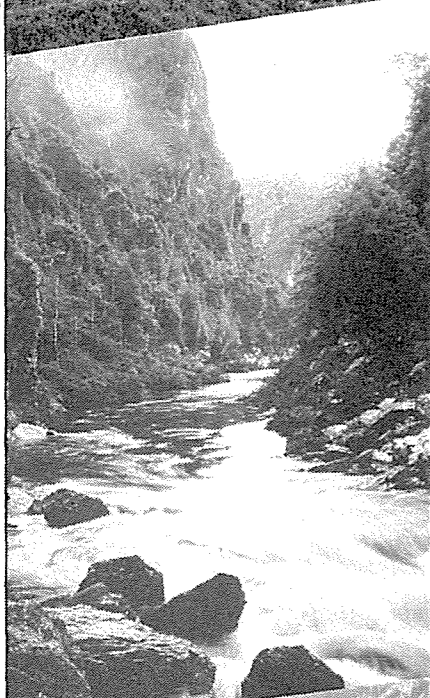
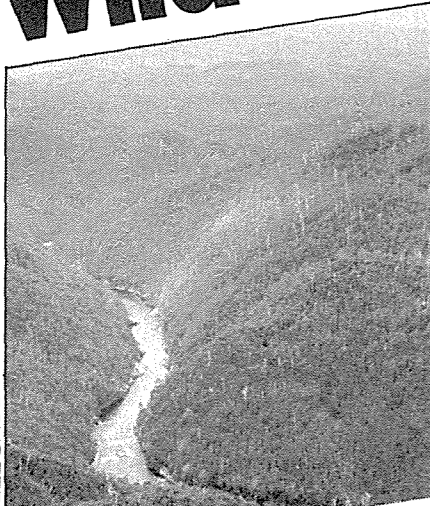
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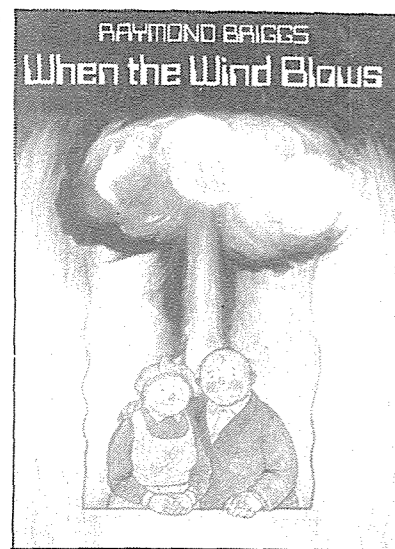


Scenes of the Franklin River.

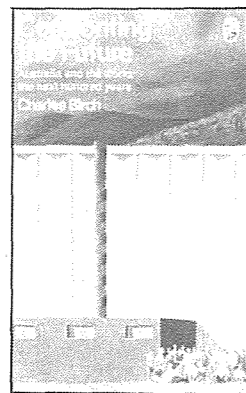
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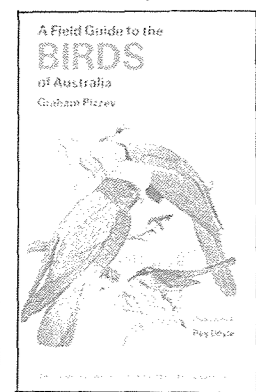


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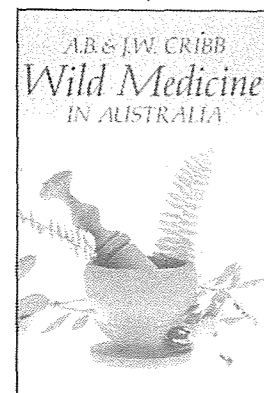


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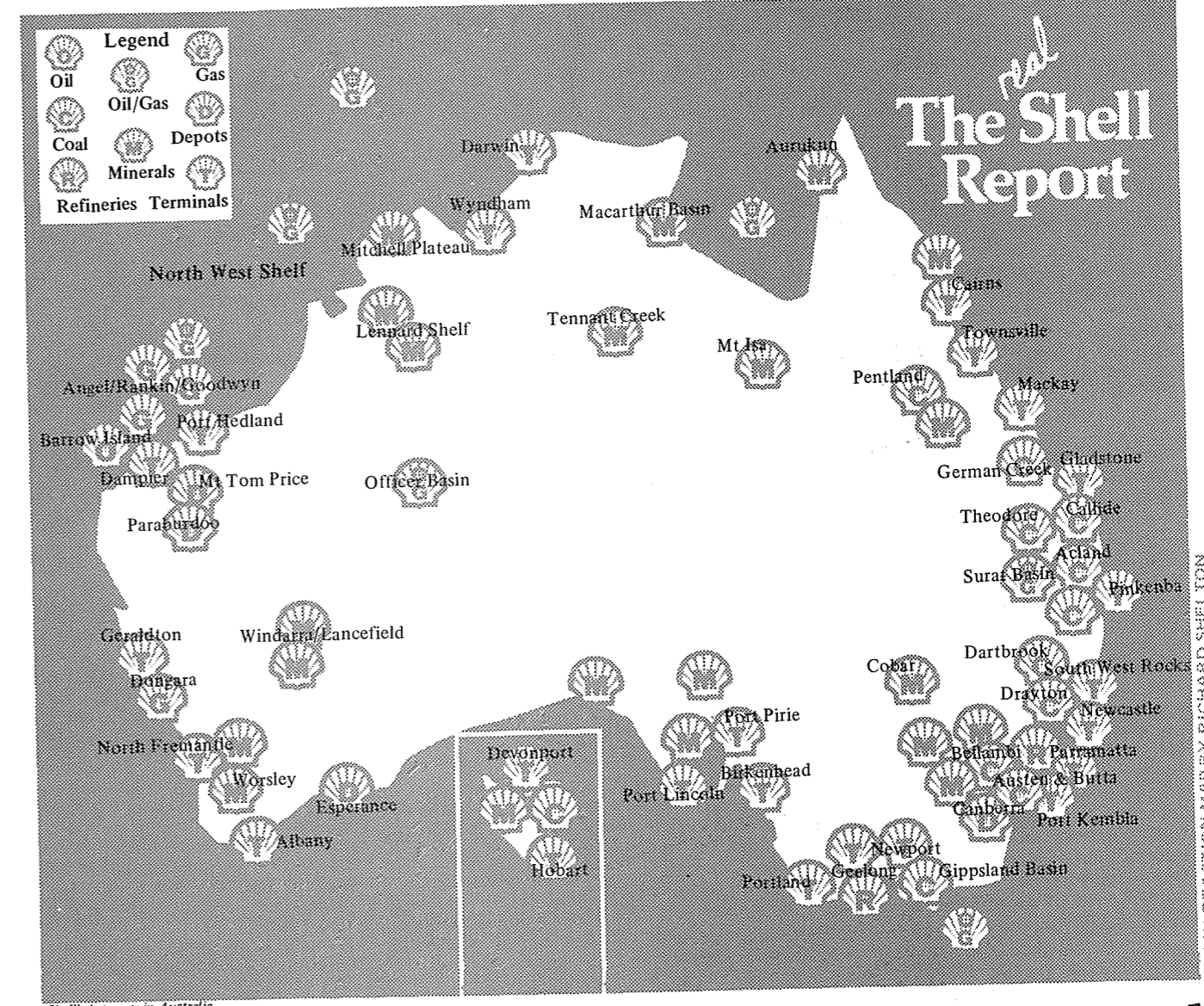
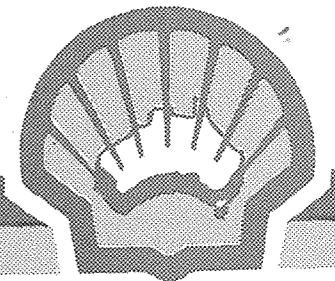
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## Shell's Australia: mined, refined and undermined

By Jenny Hocking

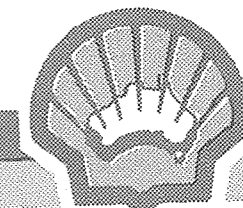
The operations of Shell in Australia, through their diversity and immense size, represent key sources of political and economic power. The current effect of this company on Australia's political economy, and the potential effect of its planned investments, are clearly significant. The extent of this influence raises the question of how individual nations can successfully control, or at least regulate, the power of corporations such as Shell to undermine a government's economic and fiscal policies, or to ensure the introduction of particular legislation.

Shell began its Australian operations in 1902, as a marketer and distributor of refined petroleum products. In 1927 Shell bought the small Clyde refinery in New South Wales, which it rebuilt during the 1950s. A refinery in Victoria was established in 1954 at Geelong. Together these refineries give

Shell the largest share of Australian refining capacity, approximately 24%. Shell also is the largest seller of petroleum and related products in Australia, with 22% of that market.

Like the other major oil companies operating in Australia, Shell is involved in both the refining and marketing sectors, owning a large number of retail sites and supplying many others. The involvement of refiners in the marketing operations of the industry secures outlets for the sale of their products, and further concentrates control in the industry.

Shell has traditionally operated in all countries as it has in



Australia, but recent investment decisions are expected to reduce the traditional base of refining and marketing petroleum to just 50% of the company's Australian assets by 1990. By that time, Shell will have invested an estimated \$4000 million (at 1980 values) in Australian projects to become a major producer of coal, alumina and liquefied natural gas. Through these investment plans the company hopes that the 1980s will be 'Shell's most eventful decade in its eighty years in Australia.'

'Shell' is the name by which the transnational corporation, Royal Dutch/Shell is commonly known in Australia. Transnational corporations (TNCs) are usually made up of a single parent firm which owns or partly owns a group of subsidiaries in several countries. Royal Dutch/Shell has two parent companies, Royal Dutch Petroleum Company, registered in the Netherlands, and Shell Transport & Trading Company Ltd, registered in London. These merged in 1907, with 60% and 40% equity respectively in the group's holding companies, Shell Petroleum NV and Shell Petroleum Company Ltd, and it is these two companies which ultimately own the Royal Dutch/Shell companies throughout the world. Royal Dutch/Shell's interests in Australia are through the Australian parent company, Shell Australia Ltd.

## Transnationals at work

The global scale of the operations of TNCs gives them several unique characteristics:

- The TNC is generally one of very few firms operating within a particular sector of industry, and accounts for most of the activity in that sector.
- TNCs build up a system of vertical integration whereby they control all or many aspects of their major production processes. This means that a large proportion of the company's transactions takes place between its own affiliates or subsidiaries, and through this internal trade the TNC can set its own price for the various elements it uses. These prices are called 'transfer prices', and by their arbitrary setting a TNC is able to shift profits between its subsidiaries. For subsidiaries operating in countries with high taxation rates, inflated prices charged for parts or materials provided by subsidiaries operating in low-tax countries will reduce the official profits on which high tax would otherwise have been paid.
- Although TNCs are concentrated within specific industries, each TNC spreads its own operations across various industries. This diversification of interests enables a TNC to subsidise losses in one sector with the profits made in another, giving it a vital economic edge over other firms and enabling it to buy out unprofitable local firms, since the initial losses can be carried by profits made elsewhere.
- The financial decisions of TNCs can move massive amounts of money either into or out of countries within which their subsidiaries operate, giving these companies the potential for over-riding, distorting or destabilising the economic policies of national governments.

Through each of these aspects Shell has a significant influence on Australia's political economy in a way typical of large TNCs. As the size of Shell's investments grows there is even less of a distinction between the political and economic character of an investment decision - what may have once been seen as a strictly economic decision will have wider political and social repercussions. There are two aspects of this investment expansion which are of particular significance in their effects on Australia's economy - the diversification of Shell into other energy industries, and the timing and extent of its investments generally.

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## Forcing up oil profits

Shell's investment spending in Australia declined between 1972 and 1975, then increased from 1976 onwards, a pattern followed by the mining industry as a whole. The reluctance of the industry to invest between 1972 and 1975 is generally linked to the oil-pricing policies of the then Labor government, which continued to pay at less than parity with Middle Eastern crude oil for existing local crude oil finds.

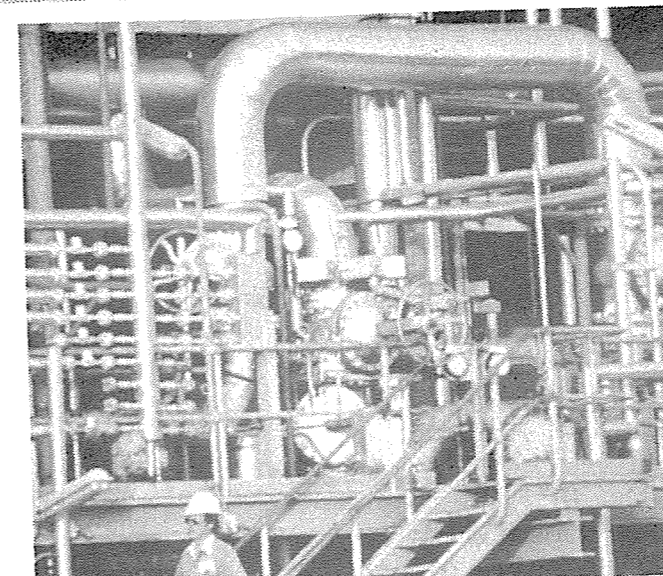
The oil companies in Australia had been arguing for an increase in the price of local crude oil ever since the massive October 1973 increases in the price of Middle Eastern crude, set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Since September 1970 the price of a barrel of Australian crude oil had been set according to the average price of imported crudes between 1967 and 1968. The Gorton government set this price (with the agreement of the major oil companies in Australia) for a five-year period. Until the OPEC increases, this local price was higher than the price of a barrel of imported crude. To ensure that Australian crude found a market despite its higher price, it was allocated to all oil companies importing crude oil into Australia, and 'disincentives' were introduced to guarantee that all importers took up their allotment of local crude. The workings of the market have not been particularly important to the pricing and distribution of oil and petroleum products in Australia despite the claims of Shell's latest annual report that 'Shell believes in markets, not price controls.'

Despite the fact that the 1970 price had also included a margin for future investment, following the OPEC price increases it became, overnight, an inadequate compensation for oilfields that had already proved their profitability. The 'appropriate cost to the consumer', industry representatives now claimed, was the higher import price. 'It is the objective measure of the cost to the community of doing without domestic crude.' Any pretence at a market supply-and-demand-determined price for local crude was effectively dismissed by statements such as these.

Acceptance of the view that the price for Australian crude should be determined by the opportunity cost of that crude was strengthened by accompanying claims that Australia's supply of indigenous crude was rapidly being depleted, that Australia's consumption of petroleum products was growing, and that the likelihood of successful exploratory drilling was extremely low. Forecasts abounded in the media at that time that Australia's crude oil production by 1985 would meet only one-third of its consumption (in 1976 it met two-thirds), that Australia's import bill would increase by up to three times its 1976 value by 1985. Even the CIA released a report predicting a critical oil shortage in Australia by 1985 under



Shell on the North West Shelf



Shell's Geelong oil refinery

existing government policies. This involvement indicates the extent of the political significance of resource policy - not so much of the immediate domestic repercussion of possible petroleum shortages or current pricing policy, but of the broader resource policies of the Whitlam government, in particular the Seas & Submerged Lands Act which established national sovereignty over the continental shelf and its resources, and the Petroleum & Minerals Authority Act through which the Australian government could search for, refine and distribute petroleum and other minerals.

This then was the background to the Fraser government's decision in January 1977 to grant all Australian crude oil parity pricing by 1985 at the latest. The effect of this decision was an instant windfall for companies already successfully and profitably producing local crude oil. The events which followed the announcement of this decision highlight the problem of relying upon the advice and information of industry spokespeople, particularly for an industry dominated by a few companies. The decision to grant parity pricing for all Australian oil finds in order to provide oil companies with adequate funds for financing future, drastically needed, local production, was based on an acceptance of the predictions by company representatives or by the companies' joint organisation, the Australian Institute of Petroleum. Of the predictions made prior to the announcement of parity pricing, only that of the future import bill has proved correct. The success ratio of exploratory drilling has quite remarkably changed, with recent assessments seeing an 'extraordinary' success ratio of one in every four offshore wells in 1981. Similarly, Australian consumption of petrol and related products in fact fell in 1980, and Australia remains two-thirds self-sufficient in crude oil, as it was in 1977.

It has been to the benefit of the large oil companies that their predictions have proved to be inaccurate. They now enjoy greater profits from the higher price paid for new finds precisely because indigenous crude is being found in larger quantities than originally estimated. Further, there have been no guarantees that the increased returns from current oil production will be reinvested in oil exploration. In fact, as Shell's traditional oil-based operations do not present much prospect for growth at present, more attention is being given to developing Shell's interests in resources and other energy forms.

## Cornering the energy market

The most obvious and extensive of Shell's interests in other energy forms is in natural gas, since this is often found in conjunction with crude oil. Shell's biggest investment commitment is in the North West Shelf project. The natural gas reserves of the North West Shelf are controlled by a consortium in which Shell and BHP have a 19% equity. The Rankin Trend fields of the North West Shelf hold Australia's largest known natural gas reserves. Production and profits will not be immediate but will be well rewarded.

Shell's other investments in natural gas interests include its 28.7% share in the WAPET consortium off Western Australia. This field currently supplies natural gas to Perth, but is expected to run out by 1985. Shell has invested a further \$60 million in onshore and offshore exploration through the WAPET consortium. It has also invested in gas explorations in the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Officer Basin, in the Surat Basin in partnership with Western Mining Corporation, and in the Great Barrier Reef in partnership with Pacific. Shell is also exploring for natural gas off the eastern coast of Victoria in the Gippsland Basin, in the Bonaparte Gulf in Western Australia, and off Barrow Island in Western Australia.

Shell's increased interest in natural gas is given a new perspective by the comments of Shell's gas project coordinator, that 'this natural gas business has a hidden advantage... Gas tends to be more secure than oil because the production is inextricably linked to the final customer. With oil, the host government can cut off supplies to one customer and divert the oil to another. In gas you've got tankers and pipelines, and you can't divert a pipeline.'

Shell's major investment shift has been into coal exploration and production. The investment pattern followed by Shell has been to buy a share in several existing coal operations, rather than buying 100% of a large coal producer. This has given Shell a cautious introduction into its new interest, but one which has been successful in that Shell now has the most wide-spread control within the coal sector of any of the major oil companies. In mid-1977 Shell bought a 16% stake in Theiss Holdings Ltd and 37.2% of Austen & Butta Ltd; late in 1979 Shell purchased Bellambi Coal.

The extent of Shell's recent investments has given rise to suggestions that Shell should now fulfil a promise made in 1965 that it would 'facilitate the introduction of local share capital at some future date'. Following Shell's purchase of a 30% stake in the Callide mine, and its 40% share of the Theodore steam coal project, the treasurer, Mr Howard, invited Shell to issue shares to allow a 25% Australian equity to be reached. Just five days later this invitation was withdrawn, an action described by the Labor Party's economic spokesperson as 'a capitulation to a powerful foreign corporation'.

The coal industry is currently going through difficult times - rising operating costs, high interest rates and the need for improved infrastructure are reducing potential returns and keeping production levels down. But the major oil companies can afford to sit out this downturn with the backing of their vast profits in other areas, and are in fact able to take advantage of these economic conditions to further reduce local ownership in the coal industry by buying companies as they sell out in the face of uncertain and low returns. Shell's managing director, Kevin Gosper, said recently that Shell was looking for long-term consolidation of its position in the coal industry. 'I've asked my management to very critically review

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any opportunity that may occur that results from people getting nervous.'

The purchase by Shell in 1979 of a 50% share in SW Hart, the manufacturers of 'Solarhart' solar energy hot water systems, is a further extension of Shell's interests in the energy industry. Before being bought into by Shell, Solarhart was a fully Australian-owned company, with a large share owned by employees.

The movement of oil companies such as Shell into other energy forms further restricts the market for energy generally. The oligopolistic powers of the seven major oil companies have been threatened by the development of alternative energy sources which followed the OPEC price rises ten years ago. However as the oil companies have bought into these newer energy industries they are restructuring the oil oligopoly into an energy oligopoly. The energy market is being effectively reduced to the workings of these corporations.

## Mining Aboriginal land

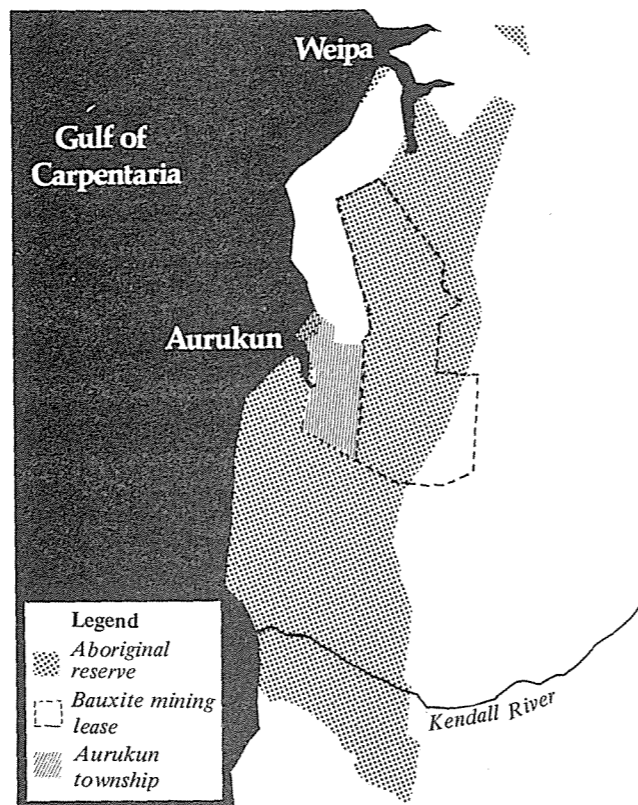
Shell's broad investment approach also takes in the mining and refining of bauxite. Through acquiring 100% of Billiton Aluminium, Shell gained immediate access to production in the aluminium sector. Although plans for partnership in an aluminium smelter in Western Australia have been shelved, Shell holds a 33% stake in the Worsley aluminium refinery. Planned investments in this sector include exploration for bauxite through the Worsley joint venture at Worsley in Western Australia and in the Darling Ranges; through Billiton, Shell is exploring in the Mitchell Plateau in Western Australia and at Aurukun in Queensland. Shell also owns 10% of the Alumax Bauxite Corporation which holds leases on the Mitchell Plateau, where large bauxite reserves are thought to exist.

Shell's investment in the exploration and mining of bauxite at Aurukun highlights the incompatibility of interests which cannot be quantified in a strictly economic sense with a corporation's investment decisions. Shell's part in Aurukun came about through Billiton's shareholding in the joint venture Aurukun Associates, for which Shell handles management and public relations. This consortium holds leases in the Cape York Peninsula to the south of the existing Weipa mine, running through the centre of the Aurukun Aboriginal reserve.

The provisions and conditions for mining at Aurukun are set out by the Aurukun Associates Agreement Act (AAAA), which was, in Senator Neville Bonner's words, 'rushed through the Queensland Parliament like a cyclone' in late 1975. The Aurukun community, the elders, the shire council and their legal representatives were all completely unprepared for the legislation; they had been neither consulted nor informed. The AAAA provides for a mining lease of 1905 sq km, 1800 sq km of this on reserve land (total reserve land is 7503 sq km), as well as a possible refinery in the Aurukun area, a port at nearby Pera Head and a town of about 3000 people. It also allows for a possible smelter on the east coast of Cape York. Under the agreement the consortium has been granted an effective 63-year lease. After the third year of mining operations they must 'pay to the director on behalf of Aborigines 3% of annual net mining profits'.

The promise of profit-sharing is not at all adequate, for two reasons. Firstly, these payments are to be made to a general 'Aboriginal Welfare Fund'. It is not a direct involvement of the Aurukun people in profit from mining on their land. Secondly, the ability of TNCs to move profits between countries raises the possibility that Aurukun Associates will

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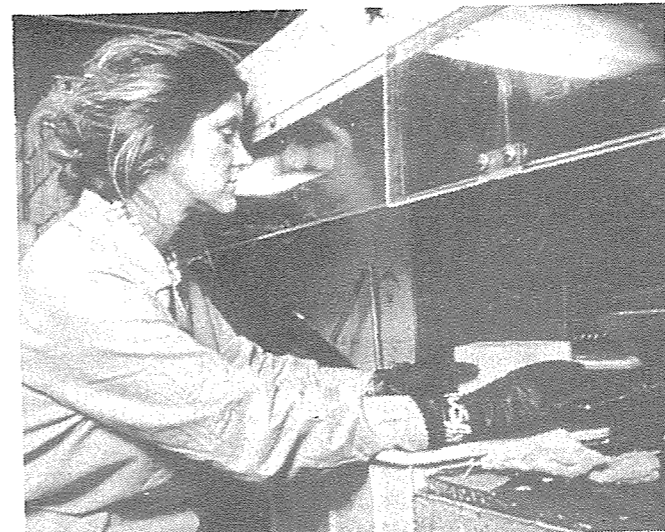
Shell stakes out Aboriginal reserves, North Queensland

show an artificially low profit rate. A more secure arrangement would be royalty-sharing, which would guarantee the Aurukun community a set percentage of the value of bauxite mined.

## Moving in on seeds

Shell dominates the international seed industry, controlling 30 seed companies in Europe and North America. Over the last ten years the seed industry has been dramatically transformed from a number of small enterprises into a chemical oligopoly. This restructuring has been the result of the introduction of 'Plant Breeders' Rights' (PBR) or 'Plant Varieties Protection Laws' in many countries. The concept of PBR is a form of patent control over plants, enabling seed companies to patent seeds and cuttings of newly developed plant strains and to charge fees for the use of their seeds. As the seed industry has become dominated by the large chemical and/or oil companies, high-yield strains have been developed and patented which are highly dependent on the use of fertilisers and insecticides manufactured by these companies.

Australia's Plant Variety Rights Act is currently under consideration by the federal parliament. Shell has been a major financial contributor to the Joint Industry Committee for Plant Breeders' Rights, which has been strongly lobbying for the introduction of PBR in Australia. To some degree Shell's interest in introducing PBR relates to the poor performance of its chemical concerns here in recent years. In order to avoid future depressed markets, the seed industry would become vertically integrated into Shell's established production, distribution and marketing chains for its insecticides and fertilisers, selling essential seeds as a package in combinations with those products.



Shell's chemical concerns: worker making Shelltox peststrips

## Shell in the wild...

Shell's exploratory investments in South West Tasmania similarly indicate the incompatibility of profit-based investment decisions with considerations of a non-economic nature. In 1980 Shell successfully applied for a permit to explore an area of 614 sq km north of Adamsfield in South West Tasmania. In February 1981 the Tasmanian Conservation Trust challenged this application in a mining warden's court hearing, on the grounds that most of the area lay within the South West Conservation Area. The mining warden ruled that 'public interest groups do not have an economic interest in the area to be affected and are therefore not granted the right to argue the actual objection'.

## ...and on the Reef

Another of Shell's investments which is of particular environmental concern is their holding of an oil and gas exploration lease in partnership with Pacific in the Great Barrier Reef. Exploration leases in the Reef region were suspended from June 1979 until the federal government has



Mining and the environment: open cut coal mine, Callide, Queensland

completed an investigation into the effects of oil pollution on coral and marine life. The fragile ecosystem of the whole Reef is threatened by the destruction of any one area. Oil presents a massive danger to the Reef even without drilling, for the passage of oil tankers, about 350 each year, through its narrow shipping lanes expose the Reef to the risk of oil spills. Earlier this year, 1982, the prime minister, Mr Fraser, could not state unequivocally that there would be no drilling on the Reef.

## Outside control out of control

Shell's operations should be considered in the context of the general foreign control within certain sectors of the Australian economy. In the sectors in which Shell largely operates in Australia - mining, oil refining and chemicals - foreign control is particularly high. The latest official figures available on foreign control in the mining industry are for 1978 (the Fraser government no longer collects this information) and show that 54% of the industry was controlled by foreign corporations. Foreign control of the oil-refining sector is 91% and of the chemical sector, 78%.

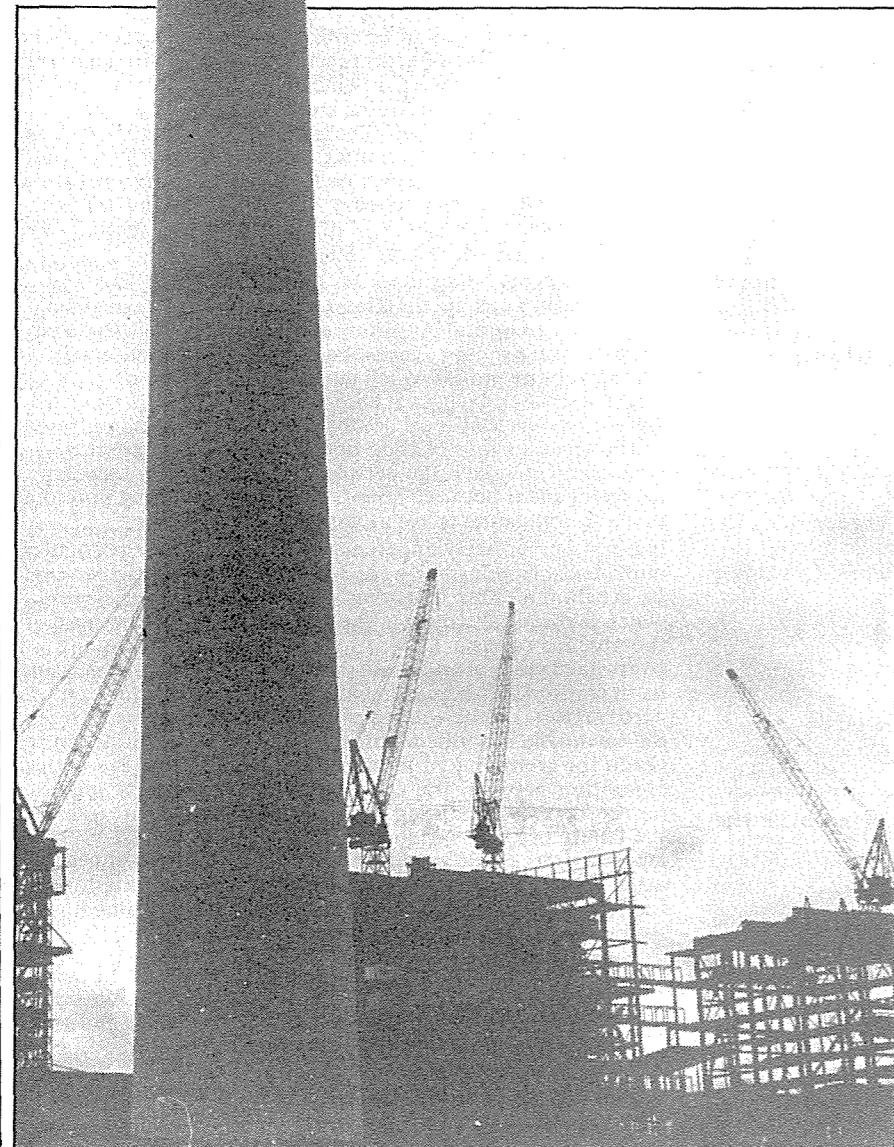
Would national enterprises be preferable to TNCs? The activities of Shell in the Great Barrier Reef, Tasmanian wilderness areas and Aurukun emphasise the political and social consequences of investments by capitalist enterprises. The search for profits which guides the decisions of transnational and national enterprises alike should make us wary of claims that local companies would be less indifferent to the repercussions of their operations. To the extent that local companies lack the networks through which they can channel capital between countries, the destabilising potential of these companies is not as great as that of TNCs.

It is not immediately apparent to whom, if to any particular individuals, responsibility for a transnational's activities can be attributed. This heightens the sense of powerlessness which is often felt towards the activities of TNCs because of the absence of clear delineation between ownership and control. There is a deliberate emphasis by Shell in presenting its operations and management as international and participatory, as the actions of a team, which serves to mask the essentially despotic nature of their transnational structure. Given the grounding of Western legal systems in a theoretical separation between the economic and the political spheres (as the Tasmanian mining warden's decision indicates), and the failure of these systems to confront the political repercussions of global economic activities, there appears little hope that Western nations can control transnational economic power within the confines of their parliamentary systems.

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# Fighting for work in Newcastle



The Eraring power station which is not yet completed has already been sold off to private sources. A similar fate awaits the Bayswater station which is still under construction. These will supply half NSW's power by 1986. This trend toward private control makes the state more vulnerable to economic and political manipulation.

Predictions of an Australian resource boom have been shattered by massive lay-offs, plant closures and development cancellations around the country. David Ross reports on the effects of the recession in Newcastle and the community's response.

The shift of funds from the major service areas to huge capital-intensive projects that will require few staff will have a long-term impact on employment. (NSW Government Capital Investment)

The service sectors, notably education and health, employ large numbers of people. Until two years ago they were among the major employment growth areas, but now staff at hospitals is being sharply reduced and school projects dropped. Education, health and housing in New South Wales face a 30% slash in capital expenditure for each of the next few years if the state government continues with its massive electricity and industrial support program.

These warnings, with the implied widespread loss of jobs in the traditional construction and manufacturing areas, were spelt out in a still-suppressed government report of 1981, which was produced by senior government economists and titled *NSW Government Capital Investment*.

As the Hunter Region is the focus for all this capital investment, one might expect some levelling of unemployment there and in the rest of NSW. However the state and the region have the second highest unemployment level in Australia.

The Hunter Region is the main energy base area in NSW, being the state's major exporter and power producer, and Australia's second largest steel producer (after Wollongong). Also, a wide range

*David Ross is the director of the Newcastle Ecology Centre, secretary of the Newcastle Trades Hall Council Environment Subcommittee, and coordinator of the Hunter Region Community Forum.*

of manufacturing occurs mainly in the lower Hunter area (Newcastle). Until the late 1970s, the 500 000 people of the region enjoyed an economy evenly balanced between agriculture, manufacturing and primary resource (mainly coal) export.

The main problem at that time was the lack of jobs for white-collar workers and in the traditionally accepted areas of women's employment.

NSW state premier, Neville Wran, then unleashed in 1978 his version of the Fraser-Anthony energy export boom scenario. Wran's proposal was supposed to create 40 000 new jobs in the region at a price of 'some' downgrading of the environment, agricultural pursuits and 'aspects' of the manufacturing sector. It goes something like this:

- Newcastle to be the world's largest coal-exporting port, up from 11 million tonnes in 1979 to 65 million tonnes in 1995-2000. (Coal export is near 20 million tonnes in 1982).

- Doubling of NSW's power generation (85% of NSW's power is already produced in the Hunter).

- Rise of primary aluminium smelting from 90 000 tonnes to 590 000 tonnes, all for export.

As with most of the 'resources booms' in Australia, the main spin-off is not jobs but the removal of public and private investment from the labour-intensive manufacturing area, accelerating 'structural' unemployment and increasing stresses on the environment.

However, all is not lost! The spending of over \$3000 million of state taxes by 1985 to build industrial infrastructure for 'the boom' has some definite beneficiaries: major multinational energy companies, the NSW Electricity Commission (SEC), land speculators and the handful of workers directly involved.

Given the very capital-intensive nature of the power industry (\$1.5 million public investment to create each new permanent job) and of the related aluminium industry (\$1 million per new permanent job), it would be virtually impossible to design a job-creating scheme which generated less direct employment for dollars invested. As economist Dr Howard Dick writes in his 1981 publication *Power Subsidies to Aluminium Smelters*: 'The main effect of power price subsidies is not to generate employment. It is to encourage an excessive use of electricity'.

Aside from the 'bigger is always better' mentality, such a philosophy also assists significantly in widening the political base of the ultra-conservatives who effectively control the NSW Labor Party. This dominating faction in the NSW ALP has a long-standing integration within the NSW Electricity Commission at both administrative and union levels, and therefore a strong vested interest in the expansion of the SEC's bureaucracy.

As Dr Dick explains '... the point is that much of the discussion of "job creation" is in effect a political trick that

can remain undetected only as long as the subsidies and who pays them remain hidden from public gaze... jobs can be created in any industry from aluminium smelters to making crystal chandeliers, provided there is a large enough subsidy... the catch is that someone else has to be taxed to finance the subsidy. The resultant taxes may lead to reduced employment in other industries' (my emphasis).

This is precisely what is occurring in the manufacturing area in general, and the steel industry in particular. Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd (BHP) and the directly dependent downstream industries employ about 15% of Newcastle's total workforce. However, retail and other like industries would have perhaps another 10% of Newcastle's workforce dependent on the spending power of BHP's workers. In Wollongong, the figures are somewhat higher.

More than 10 years ago BHP set in train investment policies which have prepared the ground for the virtual cessation of major steel making in Newcastle by 1985. This company's growing investments in oil and coal, and its attempts to break into the aluminium industry in the Hunter (and now in Western Australia) underline clearly its chase for profit maximisation at all costs. Such a policy will mean the direct loss of 3000 steel jobs in Wollongong and Newcastle and another 3000-5000 spin-off job losses in both cities by early 1983 if BHP is allowed to proceed with its 'restructuring'.

Responses have varied from seething anger by many workers directly and indirectly affected to apathy by the majority of those in work, fear that if they rock the boat their own jobs may in some way be put in jeopardy.

The environment movement in NSW generally has had little to say about these circumstances. While this is understandable, I believe that the situation needs some criticism if environmentalists are to further develop their credibility with broad sections of the community. The reasons for this silence lie partly in the lack of an economic social critique within the environment movement and partly in the social issues of recession and unemployment not being seen to be connected with major clearly environmental issues such as the struggles to preserve South West Tasmania's wilderness areas.

The official NSW ALP's response was to hold public meetings in Wollongong on 27 September 1982 and in Newcastle on 5 October 1982 with a maximum of top-heavy speakers such as Wran, Dolan and Hawke and nil local input either in organisation or in participation at the meetings. The meetings were essentially controlled by the NSW Trades and Labour Council, which is based in Sydney, and the conservative Federated Ironworkers Association, the main union in the steel industry.

The Newcastle meeting was attended by only 800 people. Several irate steel-

workers expressed their concern at the totally undemocratic manner in which the meeting was conducted. Amanda Orr, one of the first women labourers to be employed at BHP, said: 'many of the workers had been put on the defensive because they were not allowed any say in the meeting. There is no point holding a public meeting on retrenchments in the steel industry unless you allow the participation of steelworkers'. Not even questions to the speakers were allowed.

In Wollongong, where the labour movement is probably the best organised in Australia, and where the planned closures will be socially more critical than in Newcastle, the meeting was attended by only 400 people.

Local community groups warned long ago that one-sided energy-intensive investment policies would inevitably lead to such a situation. Back in 1979, the Newcastle Ecology Centre and the Newcastle Trades Hall Council observed that:

... the proposed capital intensive developments are wasteful and inefficient in terms of job creation and should be scaled down. A far greater number of socially useful and environmentally sound jobs could be created for the Hunter Region's people by alternative investments in manufacturing associated with solar technology and the Tourist Industry and which... create jobs in the areas of greatest social need.

In 1980 the Hunter Region Community Forum was established with 28 groups of the most diverse political nature, including the Liberal-Country, Labor, Democrat and Communist parties. However, the Forum's largest membership was non-aligned individuals. There are now 50 associated groups, from most parts of the region. The Forum's role in the present situation is to raise awareness and stimulate community action around the major environmental and social issues. It is campaigning for balanced and practical investment policies that will lead towards a more self-sufficient economy and environmentally compatible future for our region.

The Forum wants to make people aware that premier Neville Wran, in concert with prime minister Malcolm Fraser, has virtually bankrupted NSW, making us more dependent on an export economy, and therefore more vulnerable to foreign economic and political manipulation. A good example of this trend is the forced sale of the Hunter's and Australia's biggest power station, Eraring, which is not yet complete, to private sources. A similar fate awaits the Bayswater station which is also still under construction. These two stations will supply half the state's power by 1986.

Other more noticeable public effects are the massive cutbacks in state services in the social area alongside unprecedented rises in power charges and other direct and indirect taxes which are just beginning to bite.

The Community Forum, together with a number of other organisations, supports the following proposals for the steel industry as a serious attempt to combat the slide of our region's economy:

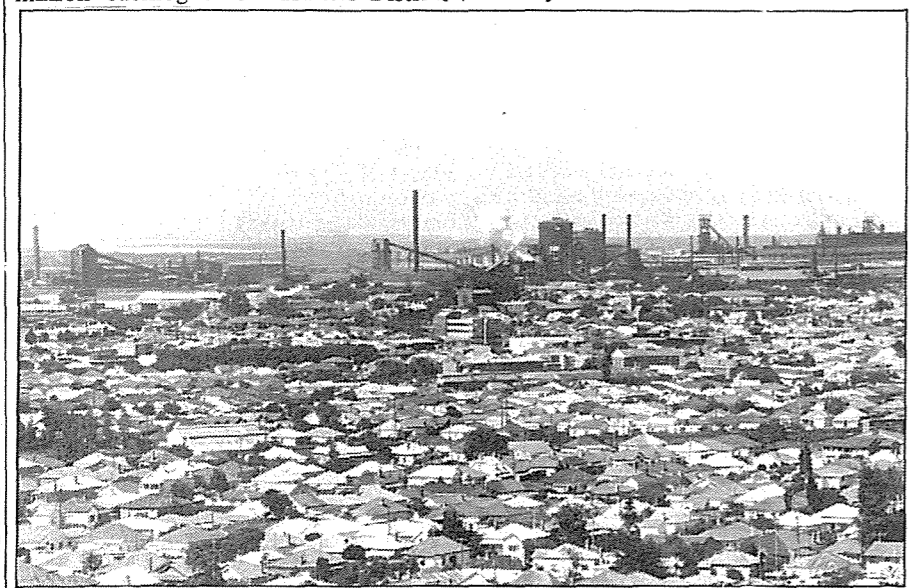
- A moratorium on plant closures and redundancies including: a planning and advisory council of government, union and industry representatives to advise on investment, the introduction of new technology, job health and industrial relations; and enactment of job security legislation to stabilise employment by a moratorium on job losses pending alternative employment and retraining.
- A modernisation program funded from BHP's oil and gas profits.
- Access to company books and accounts through appropriate legislation.
- Government equity in the company commensurate with any assistance given to the industry.
- Support for an inquiry into the steel industry crisis to investigate causes, the present position and its future.
- Support for a broadly based and representative regional committee to convene public meetings, seminars, etc on the crisis in the industry.
- Support for a future federal government that is committed to: acquiring a substantial equity in economically strategic industries, including the steel industry, in return for assistance and short-term protection; and establishing a planning and advisory council on the economy formed from government, unions, employers, and environmental and consumer organisations.

Further to these recommendations, the Hunter Region Community Forum and its affiliates have begun to campaign around the following job creation proposals:

- Because of the admitted \$150 million backlog of the Hunter District

Water Board's capital works of the last twelve years, that the state government make a special grant to the Board so that these works can proceed. This could create 200-400 new permanent jobs within two years.

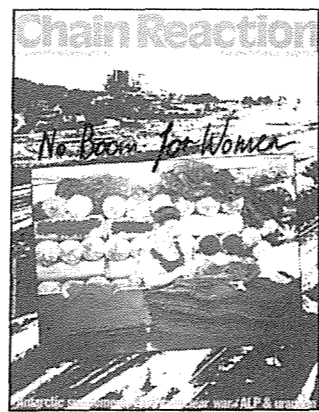
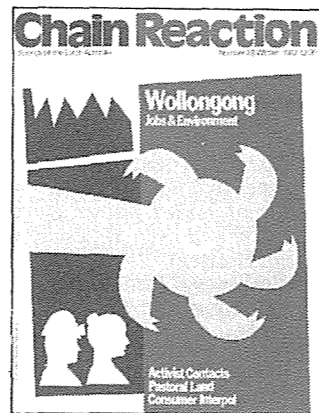
- That the new federal taxation office to service Newcastle and northern NSW, with its 800 direct jobs plus at least 1200 indirect jobs, be sited in the Newcastle area and not in a Sydney suburb as planned.
- That the offices of the NSW Electricity Commission be phased out of the Sydney area and transferred to the lower Hunter, as a further attempt to redress the serious lack of white collar jobs in the Region.
- That because of the need for a major new solar water heating manufacturing facility to meet projected NSW demand in the next five years, pressure be applied by the NSW and federal governments to ensure that Rheem (owned 67% by BHP) sites such a plant in the Newcastle area.
- That the NSW government should take serious steps to encourage, with significant economic incentives, a solar marketing scheme similar to those operating in a number of other countries, and to examine the early entry of the state into the field of manufacture and sale of the products.
- Industry figures show that the tourist industry has been the biggest job growth industry in the Region for the last two years. Last year, 2.5 million tourists visited Hunter vineyards, beaches, etc. The Forum would like to see the state government directly involved in the industry by providing the required infrastructure and investment, and particularly in schemes that would return considerable revenue to the state treasury.



BHP dominates the Newcastle skyline. But its present economic restructuring will mean the loss of 3000 steel jobs in Wollongong and Newcastle and another 3000-5000 spin-off job losses.

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# Why nuclear war is more likely

By Joanne Pemberton

In 1950 a top-secret presidentially approved National Security Council memo (NSC-68) written by Paul Nitze (today president Reagan's chief negotiator for nuclear arms control) outlined the purpose of nuclear weapons use: 'Our overall policy at the present may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish.'

The policy has changed little since then. Today, the director of USA Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Eugene Rostow, asserts: 'We carry on the foreign policy of a nation with global interests and defend them if necessary by conventional means or theatre forces.'

This 'defence' of 'global interests' (read: the creation and expansion of markets and multi-national corporate investments), which includes the first use of nuclear weapons, was not engendered with Carter's famous PD59, nor even Schlesinger's equally publicised 'counterforce strategy' of the early seventies. The first use of nuclear weapons has been official USA government policy for the past 37 years. According to the Brookings Institution study prepared in cooperation with the Department of Defence, the USA government threatened the use of strategic nuclear weapons no less than eighteen times between 1946 and 1979.

And to complement its plans to convert the USSR into a 'smoking, radiated ruin', the USA also readied nuclear war plans against Europe and Third World countries.

The USA has displayed a continued will to power in the post-war period which has found expression in a globally based nuclear weapons system and the export of terror and economic oppression. The world nuclear arsenal has grown to some 50 000 nuclear weapons since the end of World War II, mostly owned by the USA (about 30 000) and the USSR (15 000), as well as United Kingdom, France, China, India and Israel, with South Africa, Pakistan, and Argentina well on the way to nuclear military status.

It can be stated quite matter-of-factly that we are on the brink of disaster, but how and why did we get here? EP Thompson has proposed that an 'exterminist' mentality pervades our thinking. A particularly abhorrent mindset that would resign itself to the assumption of generals and politicians that a loss of 10% or 28% of a population in a nuclear war is tolerable. Other analyses have situated the 'current crisis' in the accumulation of money and power that is to be got from pumping plutonium into every tin pot dictatorship and market around the world. It is to such corporate greed, coupled with multi-national paranoia due to the success of people's armies in the Third World, that we owe our precarious existence.

In mapping out the crisis even further, Eqbal Ahmad of the Institute for Policy

Studies in Washington has looked to specific 'causes', the first of which is the increasing sense of insecurity on the part of decisive political and military lobbies and interests in the USA from the early seventies on. He argues that Nixonian detente did not produce a world balance overly favourable to the USA. From Vietnam, through Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Iran and Nicaragua — not forgetting OPEC — Third World revolution recorded serious upsets for the USA in the seismic graph that records the fundamental conflict between capitalist and post-capitalist forces.

Secondly, the USSR has now arrived at a state of rough strategic nuclear parity with the USA. And USSR intervention in Afghanistan, Poland or Czechoslovakia have done little to cool the cold war fires.

Thirdly, global recession/depression and accelerated inflation and unemployment in the USA have engendered a defensive aggressiveness which, though perhaps understandable, is nevertheless extremely dangerous.

The final reason, by far the most powerful in the sponsorship of the production and elaboration of nuclear and conventional weaponry, is one that has been repeated endlessly since it was first coined by President Eisenhower in 1968: the military-industrial complex, or the Iron Triangle. This term has been invoked to describe the nexus of defence contractors, Pentagon bureaucracy and congressional promoters as well as academic collaboration from the military intellectual research centres.

To justify the continuing research and expense, a range of threats — symbols and discourses — have been deployed. Each year brings fresh disclosures of the new 'threat' posed by the enemy. The examples are manifold. At a time when the USSR had just four ICBMs, Kennedy declared the famous 'missile gap', subsequently withdrawn in 1961. The installation of nuclear weapons in Europe was justified by the supposedly overwhelming conventional forces possessed by the Warsaw Pact. MIRVs were developed by the USA in response to the supposed USSR anti-ballistic missile threat which did not in fact exist.

The USA journalist, Alexander Cockburn, has argued that it is in this sense wrong to talk about an 'arms race' for that implies a contest between two or more competitors. The USA arms build-up has proceeded in a fashion generally divorced from what the USSR have been producing. He writes:

In the early 1980s the US military-industrial complex is once again seeking and mobilizing 'threats' which are becoming patently more ludicrous: supposed missile vulnerability to a Soviet first strike; the particularly outrageous allegation that 'verification' of SALT II was a stumbling block to ratification. The next generation of nuclear technology being introduced by the US will make verification significantly more difficult than it was four years ago.

Cockburn continues that further justifi-

'The USA has displayed a continued will to power in the post-war period which has found expression in a globally based nuclear weapons system and the export of terror and economic oppression.'

cation is given in the rubbery art of bean-counting. Bean-counting is brought into play by way of estimating forces on the basis of partial numbers.

Proponents of the overwhelming USSR threat will point to USSR superiority in tanks, but omit NATO superiority in anti-tank weapons. They will stress the USSR advantage in missile submarines but omit the fact that they carry fewer warheads. They will point to the superior 'throw weight' of some USSR nuclear missiles, but omit the fact that most USSR ICBMs are still liquid-fuelled and hence some twenty years behind USA technology. They will point to the alleged boom in USSR defence expenditure without disclosing that such figures are often arrived at by applying USA defence costs to the USSR. USSR defence spending has remained constant in recent years and NATO currently outspends the Warsaw Pact.

The sum conclusion must be that there is no gap and if there is one then it favours the USA.

More disturbing than any supposed USSR threat is the development of the next generation of nuclear systems, even more geared to 'launch on warning', which will produce a greater likelihood of accidental nuclear conflict, unstoppable after the first detonation. This is further compounded by the proliferation of nuclear technology by plutonium and high-technology hucksters from Westinghouse, Bechtel and General Electric who are busy opening up a new generation of global commerce. Already moves are afoot to water down the 1978 non-proliferation legislation to assist corporations to develop international business in advanced technologies. New markets are essential to the corporations since the collapse of the domestic market in building nuclear power plants.

But Pentagon support in furthering the demand for high technology products must be linked to the fundamental shift in USA nuclear strategy in the last ten years. Vietnam provides an obvious turning point; for the first time a USA nuclear threat could not prevent the defeat of the USA military.

Nuclear war is most likely in the Middle East, South Africa or Central America. Tactical nuclear weapons are now deployed by the USA in the Middle East and the USA sixth fleet has increased its nuclear arsenal by 25% since 1979.

For the first time in 400 years all the major territorial disputes in Europe have been resolved. In the past ten years trade between Eastern Europe and the EEC has grown by 480%. The Siberian pipeline will eventually go through. The EEC and the Soviet Bloc are deeply tied to each other. In Europe, Ostpolitik has worked. But such stability in Europe has not been matched in the Middle East. By the end of 1981 Alexander Haig, as secretary of state, had introduced a trip-wire strategy and established a ground presence in the region.

The 'ground presence' troops, it was said, could not stop a USSR invasion, instead their function was based on the assumption, as president Ronald Reagan put it, that:

The Soviet Union is not ready yet to take on that confrontation which could become World War III. They would like to be able to continue making gains without conflict. And I think that our presence there indicates that, all right, this is of interest to our national security . . . And they're going to have to take that into their computations.

The trip-wire strategy meant that the area to be protected by the USA 'nuclear umbrella' included not only pro-USA countries in the region but also the southern part of Iran. If the USSR should move into Iran the USA would 'still fly 500 men (to) the oilfields and there they would stay. If any of our boys are shot then the Russians know we will retaliate in any way we choose anywhere in the world.' And, 'If our troops get killed by the Russians anywhere in the world it would be much easier to sell an escalation into nuclear war.'

Escalation is even easier to sell when you also possess neutron bombs (enhanced radiation weapons) or any other weapon of mass destruction. The smart new binary nerve gases, the cluster bombs and napalm, all have contributed to eroding the firebreak between nuclear and conventional weapons. The most destructive conventional weapons are now as powerful and deadly as any tactical or mini nuclear missile.

It is, then, a mistake to focus on only nuclear weapons. The presence of non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction has certainly lowered the threshold for nuclear war. Casper Weinberger has described the neutron bomb as a 'particularly useful weapon in several theatres of the world including Europe'.

The USA over the past 40 years has, because of its expenditure on and command over technology, set the tone and character of an extremely lopsided arms race. It emerged as a superpower in the twentieth century as if from nowhere, developing its own institutions, the multinationals, 80% of which are USA-based. And the main threat to hegemony of the multinational corporation since World War II has arisen from the liberation struggles of people from the Third World, particularly those struggles to establish economies independent of multinational corporations.

Nuclear weapons have been primarily aimed at thwarting these struggles and at preventing the USSR and China from aiding these movements for independence. The USA policy as noted in the NSC-68 was to:

Foster a world environment in which the American system can flourish . . . embraces two subsidiary policies. One is a policy which we would probably pursue even if there were no Soviet threat. It is a policy of attempting to develop a healthy international community. The other is the policy of 'containing' the Soviet system. These two policies are closely interrelated and interact on one another.

What is essential then, is to examine the relationship between the USA strategic deployment system and the needs of the multinationals, because as they have become more dependent on the export platforms of the Third World they have also become more dependent on the coercive powers of the state. Multinationals don't have armies, governments do.

The crisis for the multinationals is that the machinery for policing the world broke down in Vietnam. Terror, the most successful USA export, is being challenged in the Third World. Moreover, the achievement of nuclear parity by the USSR and the growth of the anti-war movement have made the world of today a fundamentally different place militarily from the world of the fifties and sixties.

But the response of the multinationals to the crisis they face has been reactionary. It consists of trying to re-establish a domestic consensus for wars in the Third World (ending the Vietnam syndrome), of building up conventional and nuclear forces and of attempting to regain nuclear superiority vis-a-vis the USSR. Thus the war in Central America, the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force, the production of the neutron bomb, the MX missiles, chemical weapons, the Pershing II and cruise missiles to be installed in Europe, all are of a piece. They are the concrete manifestation of the reactionary strategy of attempting to regain USA hegemony over the world.

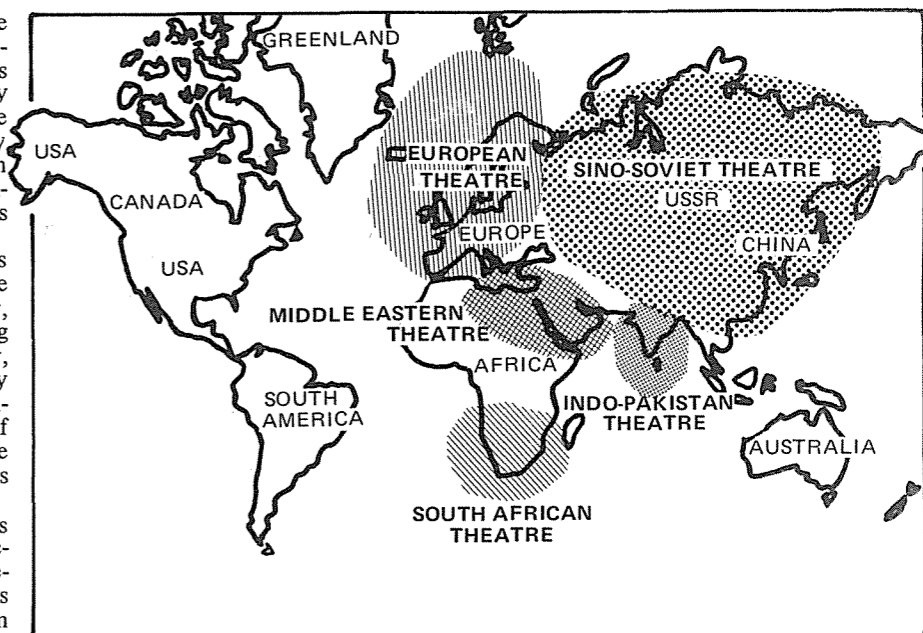
The nightmare is that an increasingly desperate and reckless USA government, pushed on by embattled multinationals, might succumb to the temptation of using nuclear weapons. START (strategic arms reduction talks), of course, is a fraud. Eugene Rostow has said:

The notion of having arms control agreements and a nuclear stalemate so as to make the world safe for conventional war and for guerilla war and wars of national liberation is nonsense. It explodes in your face. In order to eliminate nuclear war, you must eliminate war itself.

By any standards the USA leadership is insane. The American century, which created the world of haves and have nots, has left a world in ruins. The threat to the survival of humanity is, perversely enough, due to the resistance of peoples to an inhuman system. But that resistance, and in particular the peace movement, must move beyond its rhetoric of crisis.

Inspired by fear, mass movements have emerged in both the East and the West to take the nuclear policy out of the hands of fallout-breathing generals and politicians. But fear can also be used to manipulate people. An 'extremist mindset' must be countered by analysis of that system of oppression that threatens to engulf us all.

Joanne Pemberton is a Sydney journalist who attended the 1982 United Nations Special Session on Disarmament as part of the Australian Peace Liaison Committee delegation.



### Glossary

**Counterforce:** Nuclear first-strike attack which eliminates effective retaliation.

**ICBM:** Intercontinental ballistic missile.

**MIRV:** Multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle, a multiple warhead missile capable of striking at several targets.

**NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization, major military alliance of Western European and North American countries.

**Ostpolitik:** Policy adopted by West Germany in the early 1970s aimed at breaking down barriers with Soviet Bloc countries, in particular East Germany.

**PD59:** Presidential Directive number 59, issued in 1978, publicly stating USA first-strike policy.

**Rapid Deployment Force:** A special USA force for intervening in 'trouble spots' like the Persian Gulf.

**SALT:** Strategic arms limitation talks, between the USA and the USSR, begun in the late 1960s.

**SALT II:** SALT agreement signed in 1979 but not ratified by the USA.

**Schlesinger:** USA secretary of defence 1973-74.

**START:** Strategic arms reduction talks, 1980s successor to SALT.

**Strategic nuclear weapons:** Very long range weapons.

**Tactical nuclear weapons:** Intermediate-range weapons.

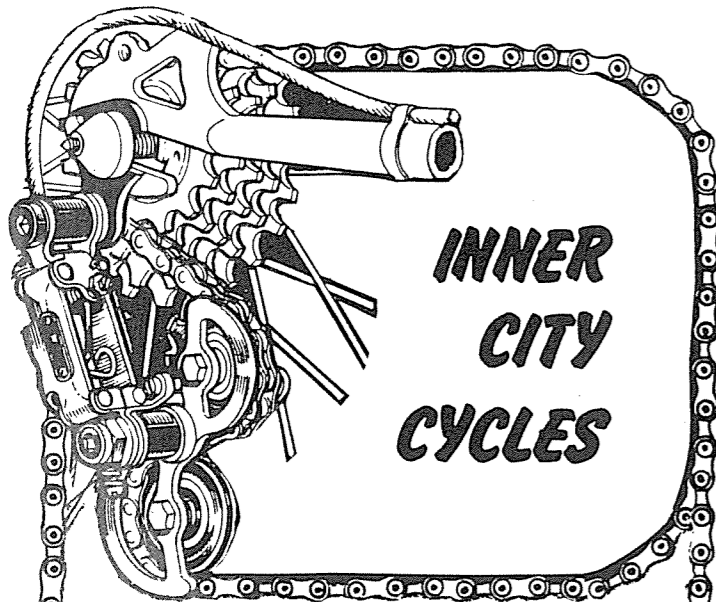
**Theatre nuclear weapons:** Short-range weapons intended for battlefield use.

**Warsaw Pact:** Military alliance comprising the Soviet Bloc countries.

**Weinberger:** USA secretary of defence from 1980.

### Theatres of tactical nuclear war

The concept of theatre nuclear war has emerged as one of the ways in which the use of nuclear weapons might be contemplated. In most of the potential theatres, escalation to strategic (intercontinental) nuclear war would be an everpresent risk or 'local' conflicts.

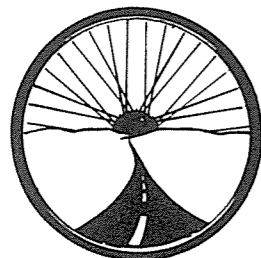


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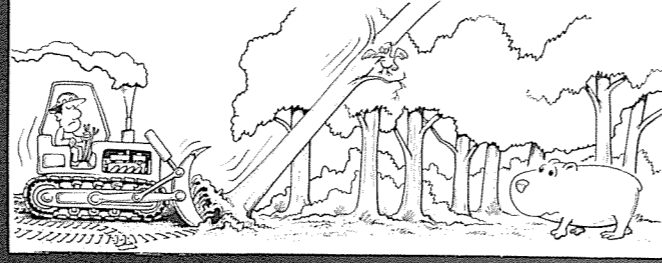
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# Sydney's toxic wastelands



Fish deaths in nearby Rickabys Creek, attributed to a lack of oxygen, may have been due to high biological oxygen demand from brewery yeast wastes used at the Castlereagh dump as fertiliser.

By Wieslaw Lichacz

Toxic liquid wastes have been produced in military and agro-industrial complexes over the past century. The rate of production and the consequent dangers to environmental and public health have reached worldwide crisis levels. Recent disasters involving intractable wastes produced by such industries have occurred in Seveso in Italy, at Love Canal near Niagara Falls, USA, and in Hungary. Closer to home, at the Willawong dump near Brisbane, stored toxic wastes have leached into the Brisbane River.

A citizens' revolt is rapidly becoming evident, with increasing awareness and concern about the effects of chemicals such as dioxin, agent orange, pesticides and heavy metals. Sydney has witnessed intense local residents' resistance to the siting of a hazardous liquid wastes treatment plant at Castlereagh and a high temperature incinerator in Fairfield.

Wieslaw Lichacz works with Friends of the Earth (Sydney). Thanks to Neva Wendt and Herbert Beauchamp of the Total Environment Centre for their assistance.

both working-class and semi-rural suburbs west of Sydney. Avalon, near Geelong in Victoria, was the site of another incinerator proposal which met active resident opposition.

Well before any legislation was enacted to control the handling of hazardous wastes in Australia, the manufacture of agricultural chemicals, pesticides, plastics, paint, petroleum and paper, and the metalliferous industries produced toxic wastes which were stored or disposed of around urban industrial areas. Some of these wastes included polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs), chlorinated hydrocarbons such as pesticides and their breakdown products, organic wastes such as solvents and oils, cyanides, and physicochemical wastes including acids, alkalis, heavy metal solutions, inert wastes such as cement and latex, and biological wastes from grease traps and tanneries.

In December 1969 most local councils in Sydney ceased accepting liquid wastes in their landfill tips as a measure to prevent environmental pollution. Many industries, faced with expensive storage problems, took to illegal 'fly-by-night' dumping of wastes down sewer mains,

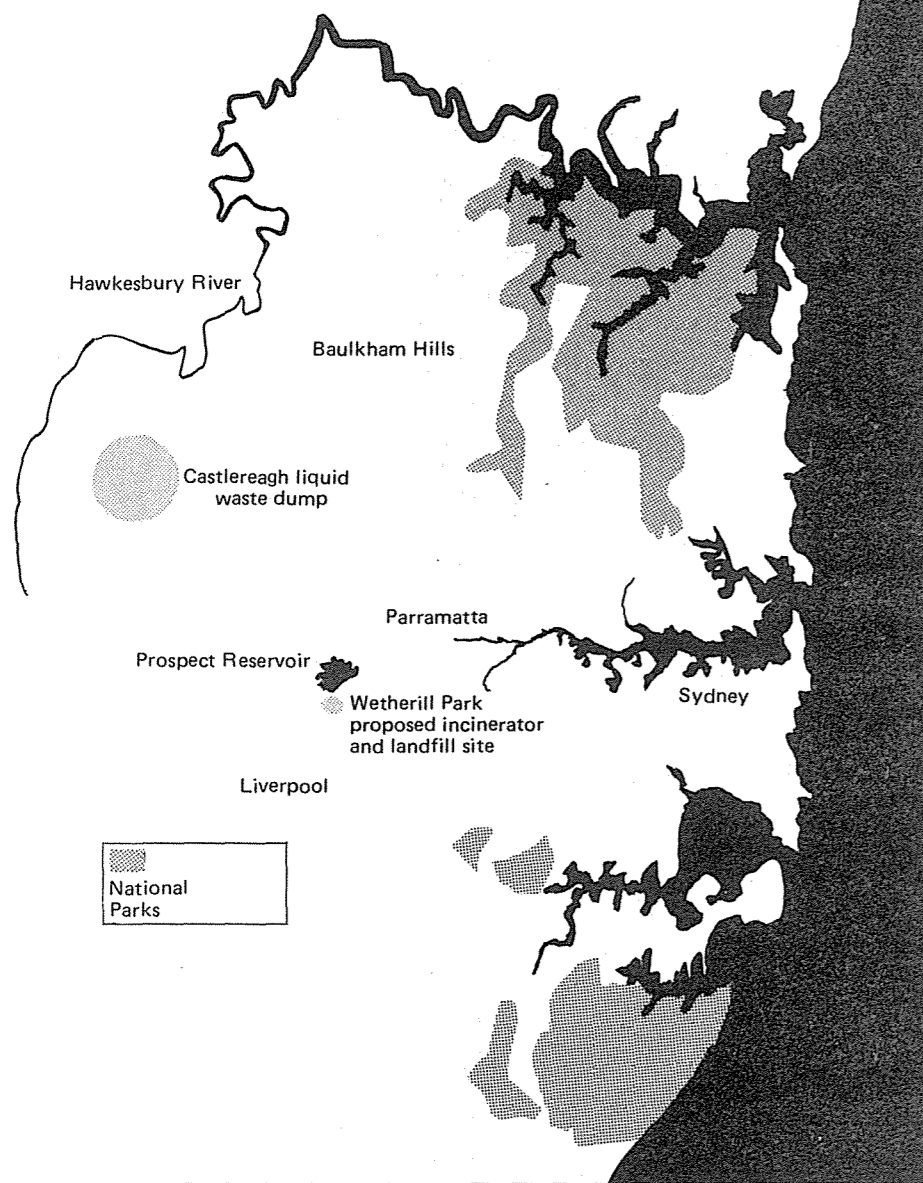
onto vacant land or into rivers in well-orchestrated and sometimes heavily armed operations. Successful prosecutions under the Clean Waters Act usually ended in minimal fines and the loss of a driver's licence. Huge tracts of bushland remain affected.

The Metropolitan Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) was established by the then NSW Liberal government in June 1971. The MWDA now operates almost all the solid landfill and liquid waste disposal sites in the Sydney metropolitan area, and finances its whole operation with fees charged at the dumps and income from other investments.

In the early 1970s, reports were prepared on the suitability of various sites around Sydney for liquid waste dumping. A site at Castlereagh was evaluated and rejected on grounds of the difficulty in preventing seepage from the wastes. However, when a private waste dump was closed due to court action, the MWDA declared a crisis situation and the Castlereagh liquid waste dump was established in May 1974.

Amid pressure by industrialists to





that leakage is occurring. After recent periods of heavy rain, Friends of the Earth Sydney members assisted some local residents in their monitoring efforts. Preliminary results from water samples of discharges from the dump show evidence of surface leakage.

On 20 December 1978, one local campaigner witnessed a horrifying explosion at the dump in which a man unloading some solid waste into one of the cells was badly burnt; he died shortly after. The witnesses were on a 'safety tour' of the dump at the time and the huge explosion lifted the back wheels of their car off the ground.

Local residents have reported hearing a series of explosions emanating from the dump and have witnessed a 'black fallout, like burnt paper' coming from the dump area. A series of spillages from tanker trucks have been reported. Trucks can be heard arriving at the tip into the early hours of the morning. Very little action from the authorities has followed these reports.

Over the years the MWDA has persistently refused to admit that the dump leaks. However in 1978 one environment minister, Mr Jensen, did admit to a PRANG delegation that it does. The admission did not lead to closure or improvements at Castlereagh, only a decision to install a high-temperature incinerator. A pilot incinerator was tested and eventually withdrawn after observations of blocked control valves and corrosion of pump impellers.

The landfill operation was designed as an interim facility, prior to the establishment of a liquid waste treatment plant. Ten hectares of land are consumed annually at Castlereagh — land which can never be used again. Stockpiles of toxic organic chemicals which are not accepted for landfill continue to grow; 9500 tonnes of material is now stored in Sydney, mostly at one site in the Botany area. This site has been subject to three fires in the past year.

The MWDA are obviously concerned with finding a solution. Early in 1982 an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the siting of a liquid waste treatment complex which included a hazardous waste incinerator was prepared for the MWDA by the engineering consultants, Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey (who had assisted in the preparation of the controversial Ranger Uranium EIS in the early 1970s). The report concluded in favour of Wetherill Park, a residential area on the outskirts of the western suburbs.

Soon after copies of the EIS were made available to the local Fairfield city council in March 1982, Fairfield residents formed the Action Committee for a Toxic-free Sydney (ACTS). The group was made up of people from all walks of life including professionals, migrants and local politicians. Several very impressive and unprecedented local rallies in local shopping centres, and numerous meetings, were held across

CHAIN REACTION MAP BY MARK DAVIS

have a dump located close to their factories, local residents had launched a very strong campaign in opposition to siting at Castlereagh. A state Liberal government minister assured residents at a public meeting that the dump would not be situated there while Penrith council opposed it; but it went ahead anyway, initiated by the Liberal government and carried through by the following Labor government.

The local people formed Penrith Residents Against Noxious Garbage (PRANG) in 1976. PRANG has actively campaigned against the dump, monitoring leakage from it, sending numerous deputations to successive environment ministers, and circulating petitions. In 1977 they collected 24 000 signatures on a petition calling for the immediate closure of the Castlereagh operation.

The depot is situated approximately 40 km west of Sydney and is surrounded by a healthy stand of closed eucalypt forest with occasional pockets of poorly drained paperbark swamps and inter-

mittent floodways. Any leaks from the dump from either underground seepage or surface flow will eventually find their way into the Hawkesbury River via rural and domestic land holdings. This river has been recently subject to gross pollution from undefined sources. One source of this pollution may be the Castlereagh dump.

Within the site the land is cleared of vegetation and topsoil, and large cells are dug 5 m into the clay to store the liquid wastes, which are mixed with 'selected' industrial and domestic garbage to absorb the fluid. The MWDA has continually assured the public that very little seepage from the cells would occur due to the low permeability of the clay. Design of the plant includes a surrounding 'bund wall' of clay, built over a clay-filled 2 m deep trench to prevent migration from the site. However the design may not have taken into account all the gravel deposits which criss-cross the site.

Independent observations have shown

the district. The effect of these successful gatherings was to bring the toxic waste issue into prominence in Fairfield to the point where it was a common topic of conversation amongst shoppers and migrant groups.

The public outcry forced the MWDA and the environment minister Eric Bedford to shelve the development application in early May 1982. The local residents' group is now preparing a strategy in case the proposal resurfaces in the near future, and are calling strongly for the siting of a plant away from any residential area.

The question of worker safety in the handling of hazardous materials was ignored in the Wetherill Park EIS, and inadequate information was provided on most aspects of air pollution from the incinerator. A major part of the Fairfield

suggest they may be of greater toxicity than the original wastes being incinerated. Information received from Friends of the Earth USA suspects that some incinerators are affecting the health of people living downwind from them.

Hazardous waste disposal is not a problem confined to Sydney. It is common to all industrial areas throughout Australia. From state to state, governments and their instrumentalities differ in the scale and level of their disposal strategies. Most state government policies could be described as being in the formative stages.

Federally, the house of representatives standing committee looking into the production, storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous wastes mainly dwelt on the urgent need to register the producers of the wastes so that an



PRANG



PRANG

Left: The explosion at Castlereagh liquid waste dump in 1978. One man was killed. Right: Liquid toxic waste is mixed with 'selected' industrial and domestic garbage in the Castlereagh dump cells.

residents' case was doubts about the operating safety of an incinerator. Any toxic air pollutants from the incinerator would settle on highly populated areas and on the nearby Prospect Reservoir, the main supplier of Sydney's water.

Serious questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the policing of effluent gases from the stack of an incinerator such as the one proposed by the MWDA. There is evidence that accurate measurements of the composition of the stack gas cannot be obtained. There is also a provision in the design of the incinerator which allows for the bypassing of the stack gas scrubbers in the event of an emergency, which would result in the release of toxic gases over a wide area. Emergencies could occur regularly with so many unknown reactions and explosions taking place as a variety of chemicals are poured in, or dropped into the kiln in drums.

Current investigations into the gas emissions from the high-temperature incineration of some intractable wastes

adequate inventory of the amounts, composition and hazards may be made. The media were quick to seize upon the recommendation for a national incinerator, since the Wetherill Park campaign was in an advanced stage at the time. The more important issue of registration of waste producers has not been so well publicised. Ideally, this registration should be public so that communities could place pressure on manufacturers to act responsibly, and to allow the option of legal defence in the event of accidents.

The option of a drastic reduction in hazardous waste production cannot be ruled out. The MWDA commissioned a comprehensive survey of the quantities and types of liquid wastes generated in 1972, and found that 95 million litres were being produced annually. This was reduced to 68 million litres by 1981, less than ten years later. Some of the reasons given for such a dramatic reduction included increased recycling of wastes to extract useable fractions and

in-plant treatment at factory sites. However the MWDA still do not have strong policy planks in their charter to encourage reduced waste production although a service is provided involving waste exchange between industries.

Officials from the MWDA have indicated that an incinerator could not lie idle because of the capital invested in its construction so they have designed their proposed plant to take ten years to process the backlog of stored wastes in Sydney. There is a danger that the commissioning of the plant will inhibit drives to prevent or drastically reduce the initial production of hazardous wastes.

Since the shelving of the Wetherill Park proposal, the MWDA has been looking for a solution to the problem of siting an incinerator; the authority rightly realises that an incinerator near any residential area will receive strong public opposition. It is now attempting to brush up its tarnished corporate image after the hostile reception to its incinerator and waste disposal proposals. At one stage a letter was released from MWDA files into the Castlereagh area, which gave the impression that FOE Sydney members believed that NSW had 'one of the most progressive waste disposal authorities in the world'. If it were not for residents checking, such a letter could have had the effect of isolating and diffusing the active environmental campaigns in Sydney's western suburbs.

FOE Sydney has not adopted a policy on incineration of toxic wastes. Some FOE members formed their own group, the Ecosystem Group, in response to FOE's refusal to adopt a policy. They published a paper *A Solution Nobody Wants* in which they state:

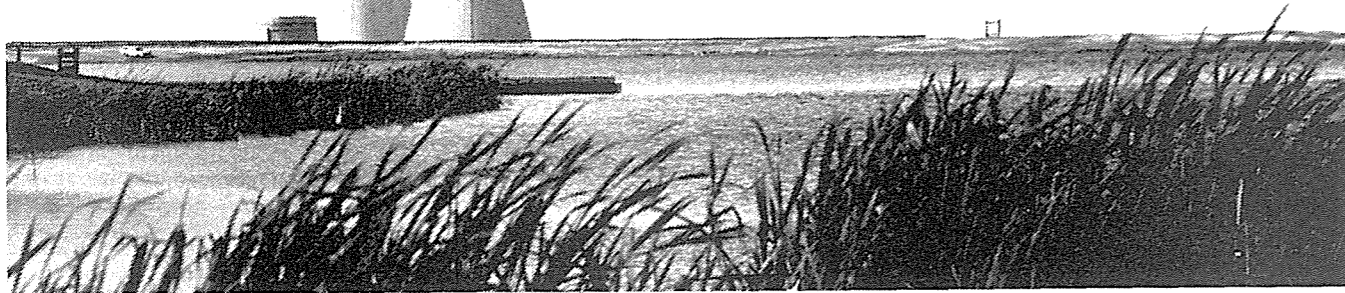
Just as the flush toilet enabled water closets to become an appropriate part of the family home, so does a well designed treatment facility transform waste disposal into an appropriate urban activity.

The report seems to express a confidence in the MWDA which is not shared by other environmental groups and Wetherill Park residents, the people referred to by the Ecosystem Group as hysterical and misinformed. FOE Sydney prefers to keep its options open at the moment and collect information concerning the public health, environmental and technical problems of incineration.

Before Australia seeks its hazardous waste disposal problem solution in incineration, there needs to be full public discussion and agreement. There is also an urgent need to develop an acceptable national campaign strategy to prevent future environmental disasters from hazardous liquid wastes.

Contacts: Action Committee for a Toxic-free Sydney (ACTS), c/- Mike Zborowski, PO Box 130, Fairfield, NSW 2165. Tel: (02) 609 2924. Penrith Residents Against Noxious Garbage (PRANG), c/- Helen Melville, Lot 4, Leitch Ave, Londonderry, NSW 2753. Tel: (045) 725 380.

# Wall Street drops nukes



By John Hallam

The nuclear industry is in trouble in virtually every country that has a substantial nuclear program. Nowhere is this more true than the country in which nuclear power has developed furthest, the United States of America. Nuclear power, Wall Street investors are discovering, just doesn't pay.

The USA has had over half the world's committed nuclear power capacity. In 1972 it was forecast that it would have over 400 000 MW on line by the year 2000. Some estimates put the figure as high as 1 million MW. The USA now has 60-65 000 MW on line, and will have just over 100 000 MW on line if what is now under construction is completed. Just how much of what is under construction will ever be completed is problematic - reactors up to 30% complete are now being cancelled at an unprecedented rate.

Reagan's support for the nuclear industry seems to be dissolving into empty rhetoric as his vaunted 'free market' turns its back on nuclear power. Wall Street, conventionally regarded as the force behind the nuclear industry, has had its fingers badly burned - particularly since the March 1979 accident at Three Mile Island. Wall Street's disenchantment with nuclear power is largely the result of the financial crisis faced by the USA electrical utility industry as a whole, and the mind-boggling capital costs of nuclear projects. However, Wall Street's disenchantment is not confined to nuclear power, but extends to all the massive and costly construction programs being undertaken by the USA utility industry.

Nuclear projects need massive and

*John Hallam researches the nuclear fuel cycle with Friends of the Earth (Collingwood).*

costly construction, including metres-thick concrete shielding, containment structures able to withstand the impact of an aircraft crash or an earthquake, and back-up safety systems. Items such as valves, pumps, and control systems must be manufactured to higher standards than those for conventional power plants.

The result of all this, and of the ever-tightening net of safety requirements which even the most pro-nuclear members of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission feel obliged to ask of the industry, has been to force the cost of plants up from an estimated \$USA300-400 million in 1969-73 when the plants were ordered to \$USA3000-4000 million and rising, today.

At the same time, the USA electricity-generating industry is in deep trouble. Unlike the electricity supply industry in other countries where it is normally state owned, the USA industry consists of a patchwork of privately-owned, municipal, state-owned, and federally-owned utilities. Privately-owned utilities are regulated by state Public Utility Commissions (PUCs) which limit the rates a utility may charge. These PUCs are less and less willing to let private utilities include the cost of Construction Work in Progress into the 'rate base' from which charges to customers are calculated.

The electricity supply industry has sought to raise finance for its massive construction programs, both nuclear and conventional, by raising bonds on Wall Street. The industry is one of the most prolific issuers of bonds in the USA. Wall Street investors look with a very sceptical eye on the financial stability of the utility industry, which as a result can only borrow money on the bond market at ruinously high interest rates.

The utilities themselves are wondering

if, considering the restrictions placed on raising electricity charges by PUCs, they wouldn't be better off in another business. More and more utilities are looking at means to diversify, and many of them are moving into the conservation and solar-energy business.

An increasing number of utilities see the way to financial salvation through scrapping their entire construction programs (of which nuclear power is the most costly component), and in implementing measures to restrict demand to the available capacity.

Wall Street has reacted to utility conservation plans with cautious enthusiasm. When the Potomac Electrical Power Company slashed a \$USA1500 million construction program and initiated conservation and load management measures, as well as applying to the Maryland PUC for a rate increase, it saw its bond rating raised from A to AA by Moodys Investment Services.

At the same time, utilities which persist with nuclear construction programs face difficulties in raising money. The Public Service Co of New Hampshire, builders of the Seabrook plants, had their bond rating, already classed as 'dismal', dropped still further.

In spite of the pro-nuclear Reagan rhetoric, the rate of plant cancellations in the USA has not slackened. Since December 1980, seventeen plants have been cancelled. A further seven plants have been deferred, or have met difficulties likely to lead to their demise.

Statements by the Australian uranium lobby that nuclear power will move ahead inexorably, providing a market for Australian uranium because it is an 'economic necessity', look very hollow indeed as USA utilities, public utility commissions, and Wall Street drop nukes and embrace energy conservation in the name of the same 'economic necessity'.

GEORGE KNIGHT

## Film

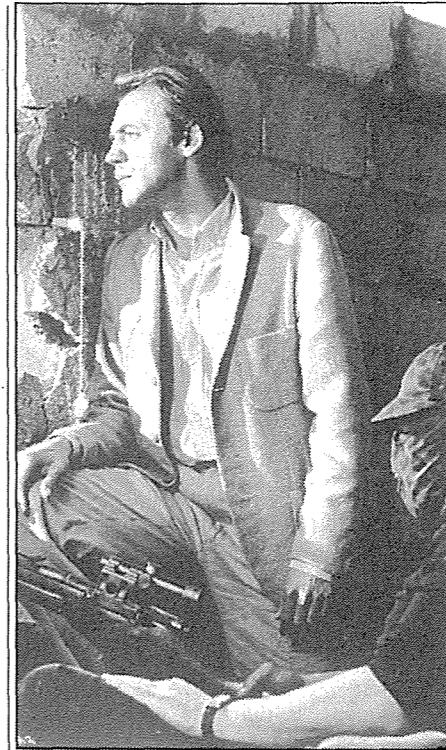
**Circle of Deceit (Die Faelschung).** Produced by Eberhard Junkersdorf, directed by Volker Schlöndorff. 35 mm, colour, 100 minutes. Available from Cinema International Corporation Pty Ltd, Tel: (02) 211 4122.

This film is about a West German journalist - a refined version of George Negus - who one day leaves the warm bed of his somewhat frayed-at-the-edges marriage to go on an assignment to war-torn Beirut, where the Palestinians and Lebanese leftists were battling the Lebanese fascists in the 1976 civil war. Perhaps the fact that the film was being shown in Sydney while 3000 Palestinians were being massacred in Beirut made it a mite too poignant. Perhaps the fact that I watched it with a Palestinian, a good friend who only narrowly survived the civil war in Beirut himself, made me abnormally sensitive to certain nuances. But I am convinced that the film is an example of racism of a highly sophisticated kind - using Beirut, and Arab blood and tragedy, as a titillating backdrop for the boring angsts and lusts of the blond hero in his quest to save his own tiny soul.

If you've read *Orientalism*, the brilliant book by Edward Said, a Palestinian professor of English in the USA, you will understand precisely why this film is objectionable. Said's thesis is that the Arab world - 'the orient' - and its inhabitants have historically been regarded by European writers and intellectuals as 'the other' (in the same way as, according to de Beauvoir, men have objectified women). The syndrome of orientalism is harmless enough in its most benign form - the Arab world is seen as sublimely exotic and its people are as strange, beautiful and unpredictable as a dream. But, as Said points out, in the twentieth century the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, mediated by skilful Zionist propaganda in the Western media, has brought out the most negative and destructive aspects of orientalist attitudes: the Arab world is literally exotic and therefore dispensable, and the Arabs are dehumanised and therefore easily massacred.

*Circle of Deceit*, I hasten to add, is not an exercise in Zionist propaganda of the same ilk as, for instance, Otto Preminger's shameless *Rosebud* (revived

## REVIEWS



From the film *Circle of Deceit*

on Channel 10 recently as part of the Murdoch media's policy of justifying the Beirut massacres). Superficially, the director and the hero are neutral. We learn of massacres on both sides in the 1976 civil war - however we are denied the history which would allow us to draw just conclusions, and the only massacre that we witness in the film was one carried out by Palestinians at Damour, which our journalist hero is supposed to write up. As bodies thud to the ground on screen, a gun-toting Palestinian draws to a halt beside our hero in a cloud of dust and shouts some timely criticism about the amoral and ahistorical practices of Western journalism. Our hero is anyway sickened by the callous and sensational reportage of massacre and disaster, and he resigns forthwith. But does he make amends for his wasted prime by becoming politically active, or even by setting out to inform himself of the rights and wrongs of the revolutions he has reported? No. Back safely to Germany, he dives into the womb; into the bosom of his family and his attractive earth-motherly wife, in a bourgeois version of a rural paradise (no cows to be milked) which contrasts superbly with the shells and savagery of faraway Beirut. The hero has sloughed

off all that oriental horror, which has nevertheless conveniently provided him with a brand new appreciation of the sweetness of family life.

Does he ever confess to his wife about the hot affair he had in Beirut with the young German widow of a rich Palestinian ('I think I'll stay here and go Arab like you', he declaims amid mutual Germanic smirks). He was interested enough in her to loiter in Beirut past his deadline - only to witness the fact, of which she had already courteously informed him, that she was having an affair with a mature-age Palestinian fighter. ('The whore!' he mutters as he sees them embrace.) It's okay for her to be with him, a (married) European tourist of the revolution, but not with one of the natives...

What made *Circle of Deceit* mildly interesting was the director's consciousness of problems like racism and the amorality of the Western media, while still continuing to perpetrate orientalism and sensationalism beneath a superficial critique. For the street battles and shellings in Beirut are of course a director's delight, with the effects of shadowy figures locked in seemingly insane nightlong duels in and out of the stark silhouettes of bombed out ruins. Like the hero we are drawn in *en passant*; like him, we never get to know an Arab or even have a meaningful conversation with one. Arabs - the others - are a moving backdrop for the primary quest: the salvation of the individualist's squeamish European soul. So we see the orientalist stereotypes yet again: corrupt sheikhs and their fabulous women, beautiful belly dancers, macho commandos, picturesque peasants. Sure, the hero knows it is wrong to report the massacres in a superficial and unfeeling way. You can admire him in the scene where he resigns in the newspaper office back home. But that act has not brought him one step closer to understanding, or attempting to understand, the dependence of an inhumane system on concepts of 'otherness'. The film is therefore an updated example of all that Edward Said means by 'orientalism'.

Of course it is not only the Arabs but all Third World peoples who are dehumanised by the Western media and academics. In this film, racism is not experienced in a vicious form. Through the perceptions of a sophisticated journalist, it is simple alienation and distance. His trip to Beirut reminded me of the poem by Herbert Padilla about academic tourists of the Cuban revol-

## REVIEWS

ution:

They get their visas in a jiffy,  
Are informed about anti-war campaigns,  
About protests against the Vietnam war, in short:

They are treading the righteous path of history.

While they lounge in the shiny seats  
Of the international airports,  
Each flight they take an illegal act,  
They feel pleasantly subversive,  
Their conscience is clean.

Caroline Graham

## Video

**Just Part of the Job** produced by the Unemployed Workers Union, 194 High St, Northcote, Vic 3070. Tel: (03) 481 1155. Available in ¾-inch U-matic colour video and ½-inch colour video, 20 minutes. Also available from Sydney Film-makers' Cooperative. Tel: (02) 33 0721.

*Just Part of the Job* is one of the first pieces of work I have seen or heard of which tackles the problem of sexual harassment from the point of view of someone young and out of work. Most earlier treatments have dealt with women in the workplace. Although there is resistance to sexual harassment and other forms of oppression of women, all too often it is through individual actions which may be idiosyncratic and ineffectual. Struggle is often instinctive rather than politically motivated or aware. *Just Part of the Job* may do much to correct this situation.

There is no doubt that most young women are kept ill- or mis-informed of their rights or options regarding work, sexuality, sexual harassment and lifestyle. This is in order to further a state of enforced passivity and compliance that ensures, amongst other things, a pliable workforce which can be used and abused, and acts as a reinforcement to the economic power which the ruling class maintains in a deflated economy. The same is true for all women but young women are the most vulnerable.

This is not to suggest that a boom economy — or any other — has ever been better for women in this respect. Women have always suffered from sexual harassment, within and without the workplace. All women experience it, some accept it, some say they aren't bothered, but most, I would say, seethe in silence. Harassment is more subtle



From the video *Just Part of the Job*.

than overt violence such as rape or economic exploitation, yet acts to keep us in as vulnerable a situation.

The situation presented in *Just Part of the Job* will be familiar to many job seekers. Robyn, in her efforts to obtain work has completed a secretarial/receptionist course, suffers derision from her mother about the need for employment as marriage may loom in the future, and is confronted, in a prospective employer's questions, by indications that the job includes a sexual role.

It is encouraging to see a video where not only is the story viewed through a young woman's eyes, but where young women get together to talk about their lives and barely mention boyfriends. And with a topic as emotional as sexual harassment there is no recourse to exaggeration or sensationalism.

Robyn is lucky. She is self-assured, self-sufficient, articulate and readily able to assess her situation. She has friends to talk to, and the means to obtain appropriately 'attractive' clothes for her interviews. She is middle class. Not so lucky are the not so articulate or confident. My experience is that young working-class women tend not to relate to middle classness on the screen even if young women are depicted, but tend to see it as unreal and unrelated to their lives and decision-making processes.

This is one of the reasons it is essential to use this video as a stimulative piece, as is its intent, rather than as a commentary in itself. The video provides no analysis of the structural implications of unemployment for young women, nor of the relationship of this to ways in which institutionalised sexism is

condoned. For example, the individual incidents of sexual harassment are not placed within the broader political perspective of women's oppression. Nor is sexual harassment defined. Similarly, some may be left wondering what is meant by the title. Or why the introduction is a wolf-whistle.

The video raises a wide spectrum of issues that are related to sexual harassment: marriage, career, 'attractiveness', job exploitation, unemployment benefits, de facto, attitudes towards women in general. An example of the need for post-viewing discussion is apparent in the comments Robyn's prospective employer makes about his wife — they are arrogant, condescending and clichéd. This is not unusual — we hear remarks and attitudes of similar ilk all the time. Such issues are raised by the video, but would remain unanswered unless informed discussion takes place after viewing. Excellent discussion notes are included for this purpose.

*Just Part of the Job* as a video may not do anything directly to better inform young women of their rights. With the discussion notes and actual discussion, it may 'encourage young people to discuss the decisions Robyn faces and the compromises she may have to make, [with which] job seekers will hopefully be better informed and able to deal with the situation when it's their turn to make those same decisions.' It may also act as a catalyst in a socio-political understanding of their worlds. Of the available resources for young women it would be one of the few to do so.

Margie Kaye

## Periodical

**Guidelines on Chemical Hazards: Health and Safety Bulletin No 16** June 1982, by John Matthews and Nick Calabrese. Published by the ACTU-VTHC Occupational Health and Safety Unit, Trades Hall, PO Box 93, Carlton South, Vic 3053.

These *Guidelines* are designed to provide a basic working knowledge for union officials and shop stewards who must deal with the day-by-day problems of chemical hazards at work. They come as a breath of fresh air for anyone accustomed to reading hazards material from industry sources and government departments which is characterised by its duplicity and frantic attempts to avoid any bad publicity for a particular product or company.

The *Guidelines* begin with some basic principles of chemistry and toxicology, written for the person with no formal knowledge in these subjects, and they go on to discuss how chemicals affect workers' health — how they are absorbed into the human body, are metabolised, sometimes to a more toxic form, and their effects on the various bodily organs. Both short- and long-term dangers, such as cancer, genetic effects, and damage to the developing foetus, are discussed in sufficient detail to give an understanding of the basic principles involved. Specific classes of chemicals, such as pesticides, solvents and epoxy resins, are also discussed, and there is a section on the identification of hazards both by the traditional methods of measuring death and disease in exposed workers, and by the more recent toxicological laboratory tests.

The authors are damning in their assessment of present official standards and regulations for chemicals:

The control of hazardous chemicals in Australia is fragmented, dispersed, and for the most part non-existent . . . General chemicals are at present let loose on the market with zero testing requirements . . . out of 40 000-plus chemicals likely to be in use in Australian workplaces, controls on exposure levels have been laid down by the National Health and Medical Research Council for less than 500 materials, and these controls are inadequately enforced by grossly understaffed state inspectorates . . . Similarly controls on the transport and disposal of toxic chemicals are lacking.

Given this situation, the most important section of these guidelines is undoubtedly the workplace strategy to control hazards. This is based on two principles: that every worker has the right to know what chemicals he or she is working with; and that the workplace should be designed and adapted to the needs of the workers, not the other way around. The sort of information provided should be ideal for those union shop stewards who are concerned about a hazard but do not quite know where to

start tackling the problem.

The sources of detailed information about chemicals are discussed — company safety data sheets, government reports and standard textbooks — as well as where to get them. The appropriate policy towards new chemicals — dangerous until proven otherwise — and the preferred method of dealing with existing hazards — use a safer substitute — are strongly emphasised. Workers are warned against being fobbed off with cumbersome and inefficient protective clothing. Enclosure of hazardous substances and ventilation are far preferable. There are details of when and how to insist on monitoring hazards in the workplace, and on medical surveillance of the workforce.

The *Guidelines* should prove a valuable aid to unions and their members who frequently must feel overwhelmed by the deluge of new chemicals appearing every year in industry. Workers now have authoritative, well-researched material from a body with the backing of the entire trade-union movement. The style is at times perhaps too academic for the audience to whom it is directed, but the thrust of the guidelines — that workers should be in control of their working environment — is an excellent one.

The work of the ACTU-VTHC Occupational Health and Safety Unit is an important initiative by the trade-union movement, as it is the only independent institution in Australia which can take up these issues without fear of alienating the vested interests in industry and in government. Its work will consolidate and extend the activities of the workers' health activist groups, who have done much pioneering work over the last few years to raise awareness within the union movement.

Bob Muntz

Other guidelines issued recently by the ACTU-VTHC Occupational Health and Safety Unit are:

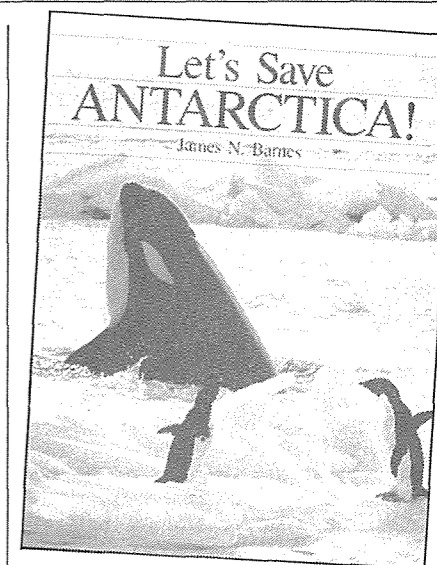
No 12, *Guidelines for Working with Screen-based Equipment*, May 1982.  
No 15, *Guidelines on Working in Heat*, June 1982.  
No 18, *Guidelines for the Prevention of Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)*, August 1982.  
No 21, *Guidelines on the Hazards of Vibration*, October 1982.

## Books

**Let's Save Antarctica** by James N Barnes with photographs by Eliot Porter. Greenhouse Publications, Melbourne, 1982, 96 pages, \$5.95 (paperback).

This publication is very timely, as the critical stage in the fight to save Antarctica has begun. (For more information on this issue see CR 29.)

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, which decided on an ecosystem



approach, may be regarded as a success, although conservationists fear that lack of funds for research, failure to set up an observer scheme, a closed-door attitude to poor Third World nations and other factors may make performance out of step with the high aims of the Convention. However, the still-to-be finally negotiated minerals regime is more likely to prove hazardous for the preservation of the Antarctic, and this book supplies plenty of ammunition for the fight to save it.

The author, well known to the conservation movement, is a lawyer who specialises in international and environmental law. For the past four years he has represented environmental organisations at the Centre for Law and Social Policy in Washington, DC. He has served as a public member on various USA negotiating teams interested in the Antarctic and the Law of the Sea. He was co-founder of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) in 1977. He is also a member of the USA Advisory Committee on Antarctica.

The first 36 pages of this book give information about Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, the Antarctic Treaty, and the present state of affairs in the region. A good case is presented for trying to save this special area and its remarkable and important wildlife from pollution by exploration and exploitation. The section setting out what can be done to save the Antarctic gives a very comprehensive list of what environmental groups and private citizens can do in the developing struggle. It indicates what has already been done by bodies such as the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (and its member groups), the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

The last 60% of this book is devoted to appendices which reproduce all important relevant documents dealing with the present and future of the Antarctic. Having the Antarctic Treaty,

## REVIEWS

the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, agreed measures on the Conservation of Antarctic Flora and Fauna and many other documents collected together in one publication makes this a very useful handbook for anyone involved or interested in the struggle. There are also lists of all the Australian and overseas organisations in ASOC, acronyms of important bodies, a bibliography, a glossary of terms used in literature about the Antarctic, and copies of letters to president Carter and prime minister Fraser.

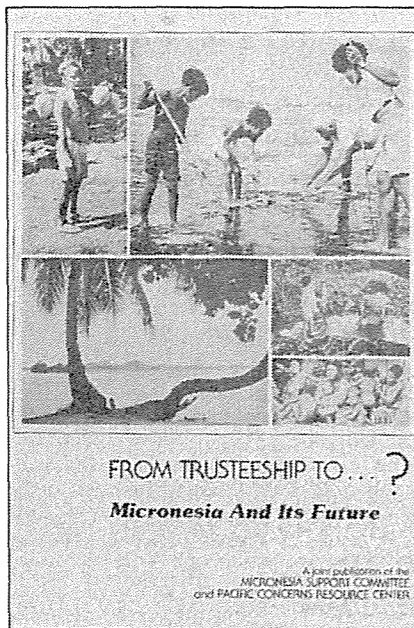
This book, which also contains beautiful coloured pictures of the Antarctic and its wildlife, is very well produced and well worth the price. To fight the battle for the Antarctic you need this book.

Bob McMillan

**From Trusteeship To . . . ? Micronesia and its Future.** A joint publication of the Micronesia Support Committee and Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, Hawaii, July 1982, second edition August 1982, 68 pages, \$USA5.95 (soft cover).

For most people, nuclear weapons mean the ultimate holocaust. For the people of Micronesia nuclear weapons are part of their life. The islands of Micronesia joined the nuclear age in 1945 when the planes carrying the nuclear bombs destined for Hiroshima and Nagasaki flew from the island of Tinian. Since then, ironically under the label USA Trust Territory of the Pacific, the islands have been a major site for the development and testing of nuclear weapons. While this use continues, the USA military has further plans to develop military bases and installations throughout the islands.

Micronesia has been under foreign domination since Ferdinand Magellan arrived in 1520: colonised by Spain, bought by Germany, granted as war prize to Japan by the League of Nations in 1919, and then reallocated by the United Nations to the USA in 1947. For the last thirteen years Micronesia has been negotiating a change of political status to 'renew our partnership with the USA as an associated free state'. For three of the four states (Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Belau), this means a Compact of Free Association. *From Trusteeship to . . . ? Micronesia and its Future* is a



booklet which the editors hope 'will stimulate discussion among the people who will be voting on the Compact of Free Association soon'.

The first part of the booklet is an introduction and a political status chronology which is in the same style as another publication of the Micronesia Support Committee, *Marshall Islands, A Chronology: 1944-1981*. The chronology begins with the granting of Micronesia to the USA in 1947 as the world's only 'strategic' trust territory. It then jumps to 1960 and follows the changes in USA policy on Micronesia, brought about by external pressure due to the appalling social and economic conditions on the islands. Even an investigative team sent by president Kennedy in 1963 noted that 'per capita Micronesian cash incomes were almost three times as high before the war as they are now'. The chronology details the steps in the negotiations for the Compact to June 1982, and devotes several pages to the Marianas which has opted for Commonwealth status with the USA. The negotiations for the Compacts have been convoluted and confusing but are by no means over. In fact the booklet, published in August 1982, is already out of date. Operation Homecoming, the occupation by over 1000 members of the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation of their home islands which commenced in June, has delayed the voting, scheduled for 17 August, on the Marshall Islands' Compact. USA authorities are concerned that the Marshall islanders may reject the Compact; a risk that they are not prepared to take.

The third part of the booklet looks at the Compact of Free Association. Pertinent extracts from the Compact are included with comments on the implications. Extracts are included

under such headings as radiation compensation, military provisions, land use, and nuclear weapons and waste. Reading it one is filled with horror and anger at the USA for forcing such a giant swindle on the people of Micronesia. For instance, for approximately \$USA27 per hectare (\$USA11 per acre) a year Belau is expected to give up large areas of land for USA military use and to waive its nuclear-free constitution. There are of course such heartening reassurances as 'The Compact requires that whenever materials or substances, including nuclear weapons . . . or any toxic chemical or biological materials are present in [Belau], the Government of the United States shall handle them in such a way that they shall not be hazardous to public health or safety.'

If one questions why the people of Micronesia have even considered the option of a compact rather than full independence, it is important to remember that the USA does not require compacts to put its bases on foreign soil; that for 20 years Micronesian leaders have been singled out for trips to the USA and other benefits; and that for 35 years the USA has discouraged local development, thus encouraging full economic dependence. For instance the major export from Belau is scrap metal from World War II, which to say the least is a limited resource.

However, the people of Micronesia are not without hope. An important and increasing strength throughout the Pacific is the recognition of a shared colonial past and shared current realities. For those who are interested in supporting the actions of the Micronesia Support Committee and in the issues of independence and a nuclear-free Pacific this booklet is essential for both reading and reference.

Christina Melaluka

**Straight Left** by Katharine Susannah Prichard, collected and introduced by Ric Throssell. Wild & Woolley, Sydney, 1982, 256 pages, \$9.95 (soft cover).

The anti-democratic forces have brought about the position in which we have to choose between yielding to fascism and the prospect of interminable wars, or the defence of democracy and organisation to abolish war. If we have to fight, let it be for all that makes life worth living.

So it was that in 1939 lifelong peace activist Katharine Susannah Prichard (1883-1969) rallied her audience for war. Prichard, novelist, playwright and poet, asked rhetorically 'can the writers and artists of any country remain indifferent when the issues which affect their work and the people among whom they live are so vital?'

Prichard, a foundation member of the Australian Communist Party, appealed for vigilance against creeping fascism at home. Meanwhile Prichard, the private person, reacted to social hostility by

creating a defensive armour, making herself impervious to criticism and effectively stunting her political and literary development.

Prichard's son, Ric Throssell, revealed a little behind the armour in his biography *Wild Weeds and Wind Flowers*, published in 1975. As Throssell comments in his introduction to *Straight Left*, there was little room in the biography for Prichard's political writing. This collection of articles and addresses on politics, literature and 'women's affairs' is intended as a companion volume.

Here is Prichard in her most public guise, tailoring her persuasive arguments to her particular audience over a period of almost 60 years. *Straight Left* includes articles reprinted from Australian and international literary and political journals and newspapers, rare pamphlets, typed scripts of radio broadcasts, and speeches. For those studying Prichard's work this collection will save the considerable time it takes to find these sources.

For the general reader the collection's value is as a touchstone to the outlook of a left-wing activist who fixed her faith on the Soviet Union as the first socialist state and maintained a blinkered loyalty throughout her long life.

Prichard saw in her writing a continuation of the realist tradition in Australian literature established by writers such as Henry Lawson. But whereas Lawson spoke with a melancholy tone, Prichard looked with optimism at a pattern of social evolution that would lead, inevitably, to socialism. Judah Waten calls her 'the founder of socialist realism in Australia'.

While Prichard's novels written in the 1920s were generally welcomed, her activism drew attention to her politics and her later work was dismissed as mere propaganda in all but left-wing circles.

Katharine Prichard's writing suffered from lack of sound criticism. In an article reprinted in *Straight Left*, Prichard draws a reasoned distinction between 'purpose' in writing and in propaganda, but the distinction was blurred in her mature work.

The Cold War took its toll in all camps. Here we see Prichard's expressed views on literature become arrogantly dogmatic as she castigates Arthur Koestler for 'irresponsible and decadent individualism', supports the suppression of dissident Soviet writers, and dismisses Patrick White's work as distastefully pessimistic.

In his introduction Throssell insists that each role in Prichard's life was consistent and that she had long outlived the doubts and conflicts with which her characters wrestle. However, recent studies by women challenge this assertion, particularly in regard to Prichard's attitudes towards women and sexuality. In her novels and plays Prichard's presentation of the particular oppression of women always seems truncated, particu-

## Katharine Susannah Prichard

### Straight Left



## Ric Throssell

larly when she is presenting working-class characters.

Ric Throssell's creation of a section on 'women's affairs' in *Straight Left*, seems rather forced. This section is the shortest and includes articles which could be more appropriately included in the section on literature.

Here Prichard presents with conviction the Soviet solution to women's inequality. This is the public voice of the faithful party activist. The voices of her women characters, as they struggle with unreconciled conflicts, speak more clearly to us today.

Kathie Rea

**Ray Denning Diary** by Ray Denning, Ray Denning Publications, Sydney, 1982, 200 pages, \$5.00 (soft cover).

The *Ray Denning Diary* is a devastating account of the violence meted out to Ray by NSW prison officers (with the consent of the Department of Corrective Services) after he received a life sentence for the malicious wounding of a prison officer in 1974. That Ray has survived this retribution, indeed torture, is remarkable. He has always maintained his innocence, insisting that his conviction was based on an unsigned confession invented by police and prison officers.

Ray remains segregated from other prisoners inside Maitland Jail after a spell in the Goulburn 'Zoo'. Recent reports from the NSW Ombudsman's office have likened the experience of solitary confinement to torture, declaring that this is 'unjust or oppressive conduct' within the meaning of the Ombudsman's Act. Solitary confinement requires the continued use and abuse of special sections ('tracs') - exercise yards, cages and cells, some of which haven't changed since the

## Chain Reaction

### Position Vacant Editor/s

Applications/proposals are invited for the position of Editor/s of *Chain Reaction*, the national magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia. (Since May there have been three people working as Editors.)

The magazine is currently published quarterly, goes to members of Friends of the Earth in Australia, other subscribers (including schools, unions, community groups, libraries and individuals) and is on sale at community centres and various retail outlets. We are planning for the magazine to be published six times a year commencing in 1983.

*Chain Reaction* covers a wide range of issues emphasising the politics of the environment, energy and resources.

The Editors currently work with collectives of volunteers in Melbourne and Sydney, FOE, and other community groups around Australia. The magazine has been based in Melbourne since it was established in 1975.

The Editors' responsibilities include ensuring continued operation of the collectives, encouraging people to work on the magazine, and, with the collective, determining content, organising production, managing the finances, distribution, and promotion of the magazine.

Applicants may be required to attend interviews in late January 1983 at a Friends of the Earth Australia meeting near Adelaide.

Remuneration - negotiable.

The new Editor/s will take office, after a two week introductory period, on 1 March 1983.

Applicants are welcome to discuss the magazine and obtain further information from the present Editors and Melbourne and Sydney Collectives - Tel: (03) 63 5995 or (02) 211 3953.

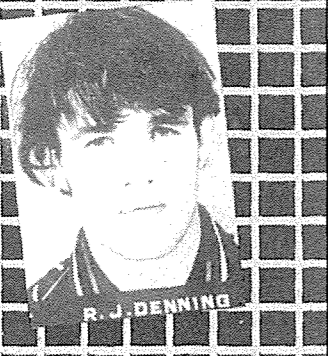
Send written applications/proposals and enquiries to the Selection Committee, c/- *Chain Reaction*, Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston Street, Melbourne, 3000.

Applications close on 14 January, 1983.

## Chain Reaction

# REVIEWS

## THE RAY DENNING DIARY



19th century - which merely serve to isolate and punish those who do not readily assimilate into the mainstream prison community.

The *Diary*, written between September 1978 and March 1980, is a nightmare - a chronicle of vindictiveness and petty punishment inflicted by prison officers. Power is the name of the game, and Ray's major weapon is to keep a record of every punitive technique, detailing names, dates, times and places. The record is meticulous and obsessive. He is repeatedly charged with infringements of prison rules. His notes are searched, read and removed. His cell is periodically 'ramped' and his property destroyed. He is left out in the exercise cage while it is raining. And he is bashed. Repeatedly. This is what he writes about - his daily life.

But Ray is also a survivor. He taunts, answers back, refuses orders, writes endless complaints to every possible authority, disrupts routines, keeps fit through exercise, destroys his cell, and when the going gets really tough, he barricades himself inside. He also learns to anticipate, to calculate the appropriate survival strategy.

The victories are always small and temporary; it is a no-win situation. His big hope is an attempt to get some sort of legal redress through the outside

courts. He charges five prison officers with assault. There is a shift in the balance of power once these charges are laid. Ray is on the attack, but it places him in a vulnerable position.

The assault charges take almost two years to reach court. They fail. At this point, Ray stops his daily record. The silence is eloquent. Failing in another attempt at justice, Ray escapes to 'freedom'. Eighteen months later he is recaptured.

To read Ray's diary is a harrowing experience. In a system that produces misery and violence, it is an important documentation of strategies of survival.

Liz Fell

From *Jail News* September 1982

**The Falcon and the Snowman** by Robert Lindsey, Penguin, London, 1979, 416 pages, \$4.95 (soft cover).

Some of the information on USA bases in Australia has emerged only because of one of the USA's strangest spy trials. This startling book records that trial and much else which is of use to all peace activists.

Andrew Daulton Lee and Christopher Boyce were products of the post-war baby boom and new middle-class affluence. They had so much going for them. But one became a drug trafficker ('snowman' refers to the colour of cocaine) who also acted as a courier between the other, now turned informer, and the Soviet Embassy in Mexico.

Boyce, whose hobby was falconry (hence his code name), went to work in 1974 for TRW, a firm handling CIA work. Coming from a 'good family' (his father was an FBI agent) he was trusted to work in the Black Vault, handling secret cable traffic concerned with one of the most secret of all USA espionage operations: spy satellites. Part of this network was controlled by Pine Gap, Australia. But the USA, Boyce soon learned, was not fulfilling its agreement with the Australian government: it was not passing on all its information to Australia. He noted the way in which USA agents interfered in Australian politics. Boyce gradually developed a distaste for USA foreign policy. Also, he was appalled by the Black Vault's use as a private den for sex, drugs and alcohol.

Lee, meanwhile, was developing his drug trafficking expertise. His career had its ups and downs. He was caught a few times but managed to obtain mild sentences. While he was free, he made large sums of money, especially by his ability to get across the USA/Mexico border undetected.

Boyce decided to sell CIA material to the USSR. Lee was the carrier. The transfers commenced in 1975 and ended in January 1977, when Mexican police arrested Lee for being a nuisance outside the embassy (he was trying to make the last scheduled delivery of material - if Boyce and Lee had stopped

with the previous delivery, they would not have been caught).

If this book had appeared as a spy novel, no one would believe it. First, it is not clear at all why Boyce should want to sell the material to the USSR. He had no immediate need for money. On the other hand, had he wished merely to alert the USSR to what was happening, he could have given the material to them. If he had wanted to expose the CIA's activities he could have copied Daniel Ellsberg's Pentagon Papers technique and sent photocopies to USA newspapers.

Second, the operation went undetected for two years. Boyce had a few close calls at TRW, but throughout his career he was regarded as a very good employee. Meanwhile, Lee, who was on the run again from the police, continued to cross the Mexican border undetected. The Soviet Embassy in Mexico City is under close USA security and yet no one spotted this suspicious visitor.

Third, the CIA had a key role. The delay of ten days between Lee's arrest and Boyce's arrest suggests that the CIA would have been satisfied with Boyce leaving the USA, rather than going on public trial. The CIA monitored the trial and ensured that the full details of Boyce's transfers to the USSR were not revealed - partly to avoid offending the Australian government further.

Lee and Boyce had different arguments for their defence; they were tried separately. Lee received life imprisonment and Boyce 40 years. The book ends soon after Boyce managed to escape from a high security prison in January 1980 (he refused to leave the USA and was eventually recaptured).

Meanwhile in October 1978 President Carter gave a description of the USA spy satellites. At long last, the USA was officially speaking about their operations. Ironically, this admission was prompted by a failure in the high technology of spy satellites: the human factor. The CIA, which can monitor a telephone call between USSR officials in Moscow and read the headlines of documents from spy satellite photographs, took two years to find out about the spy in their own midst - and even then that was because his carrier was found littering in Mexico City.

Keith D Suter

Other books worth mention:

**The Prison Struggle: Changing Australia's Penal System**, by George Zdenkowski and David Brown, Pelican, 1982, 464 pages, \$14.95 (soft cover).

**Nunawading Energy Study** by the Conservation of Urban Energy Group, Conservation Council of Victoria, Melbourne, 1982, 108 pages, \$3 (soft cover). **Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Victoria: An Energy Efficiency Scenario** by BE Manton, Australian Conservation Foundation, Melbourne, 1982, 188 pages, \$16 (soft cover).

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73 Little George Street, Fitzroy 3065

IDA is a research and action group who publish and distribute material on Asian and Pacific peoples fight for self determination.

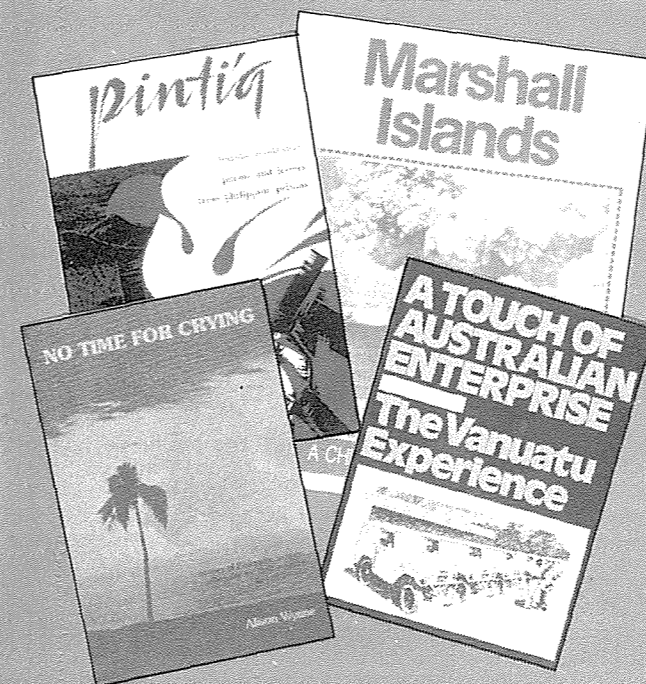
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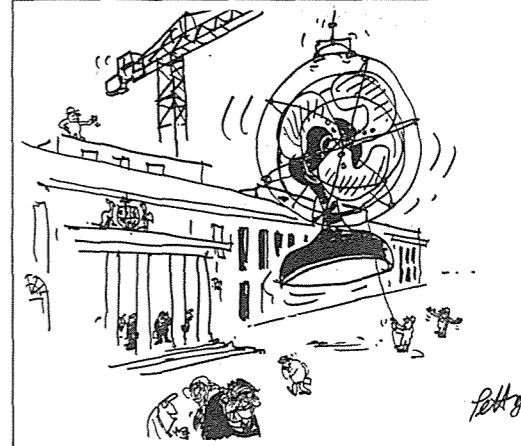
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## ACTION GUIDE

### Animal Liberation Queensland

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Animal Liberation (AL) began in NSW 5½ years ago. In Queensland, AL started a little over 2 years ago, and now has nearly 1000 members.

The basic philosophy of AL(Qld) is that humans do not have the right to cause the suffering of another species in order to satisfy the wants of their own species. This kind of suffering is seen especially in AL's main areas of concern: factory farming and laboratory animals.

For example, eggs are produced from chickens which spend their entire lives in tiny wire-floored cages measuring 30 cm by 45 cm. Three or four birds are crammed together in each cage, with their beaks mutilated to stop feather picking and cannibalism. In Queensland, in 1980, approximately 1 700 000 hens were kept in such battery cages. Yet there are economically viable alternatives which allow the birds to follow their natural behavioural pattern, and which do not cause the stress factors so prevalent in caged birds.

Broiler chickens live in deep-litter houses, crowded into sheds where dim lights may be kept on 23 hours a day to encourage the birds to eat so they will be 'oven ready' at 7-8 weeks of age. They are then transported to a slaughter house, where they are hung by their feet on conveyor belts for up to 6 minutes before they are stunned, have their throats cut, and are dropped into scalding tanks. Many birds miss the stunner or have their throats cut incorrectly. The recently published Ammerdown Report, from the UK, says that pre-stunning is often ineffective, and that some birds may miss both stunner and throat cutting, and so are plunged fully conscious into tanks of scalding water. Under factory farming, poultry are treated like machines for converting grain protein to meat protein in the cheapest and quickest manner possible.

Pigs are also grossly mistreated despite



Animal Liberation display. Lower right: four chickens in a battery cage. Centre: four people in a proportionally sized cage.

the fact that they are classed amongst the six most intelligent animal species — including humans. They are clean, gregarious, exploratory animals which would, under free-range conditions, spend only 8% of their lives sitting or lying down. Yet in Queensland alone approximately 360 000 pigs annually are kept in tiny stalls, sometimes tethered by the neck, so that they cannot even turn around. They are housed in sheds, never seeing the sun, never exercising, many on slatted or concrete floors which often cause foot and joint deformities, especially in the sows kept for breeding.

In England, shoppers boycotted veal produced by a similar system. As a result, one of the major veal retailers converted to a strawyard system that has proved to be economically viable, as well as providing a system more suited to the calves' behavioural pattern. AL(Qld) seeks similar support from the public to encourage the introduction of an alternative to the current factory-farm conditions for pigs.

Dr Peter Hemsworth of the Animal Research Institute of Victoria admits 'there has been insufficient regard paid to the social needs of the pig' (*National Farmer* 19 March 1981). AL(Qld) intends to ensure such disregard does not continue.

It is estimated that over 300 million animals are incarcerated in laboratories throughout the world each year. These animals are burnt, blinded, poisoned, mutilated, stressed, starved, electrocuted; they die to test cosmetics, toiletries, household products, insecti-

cides, weapons, alcohol and drugs, as well as being used for teaching aids and in research for studies and medicine.

Our immediate aim is the total abolition of animal testing for cosmetic production. AL(Qld) is investigating the Australian market to ascertain which cosmetics can be classified as cruelty-free — that is, not tested on animals at any stage during production or not containing ingredients derived cruelly from animals. We will supply a list of these products upon request. AL(Qld) seeks labelling of cosmetics to show which are cruelty-free.

Our group also works for animals that suffer during transport, including those exported live for food, and we are working with politicians to amend the Animal Protection Act. Subcommittees work on the cruelty to animals in the fur trade, zoos and circuses, and to our wildlife.

To achieve our aims to alleviate (short term) and eventually stop (long term) the exploitation of animals for commercial gain, we seek:

- members to add strength to our lobbying;
- to educate the public about animal exploitation;
- to encourage the public to boycott goods produced through animal suffering, write letters to government and authorities which can implement the changes we seek, sign petitions on specific issues and join us in demonstrations and marches.

For further details about our work and membership, please write or telephone the above address.

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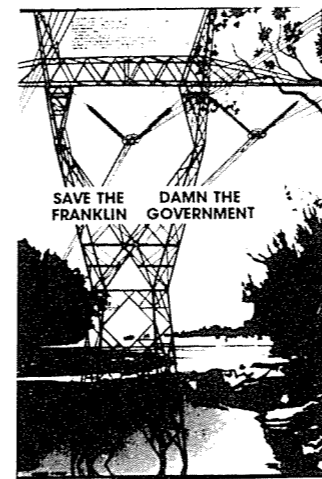
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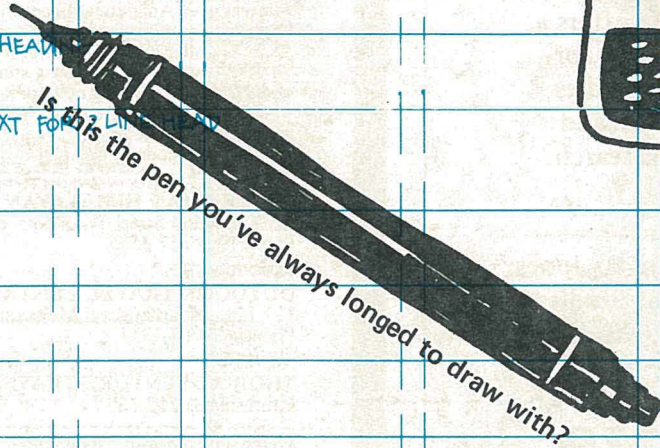
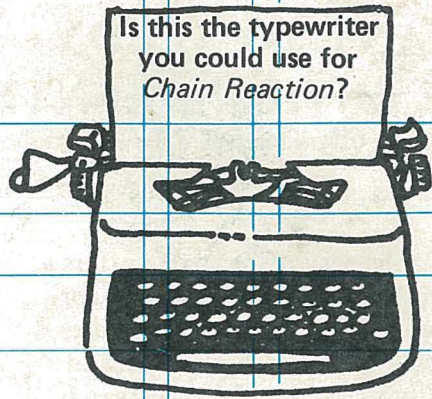
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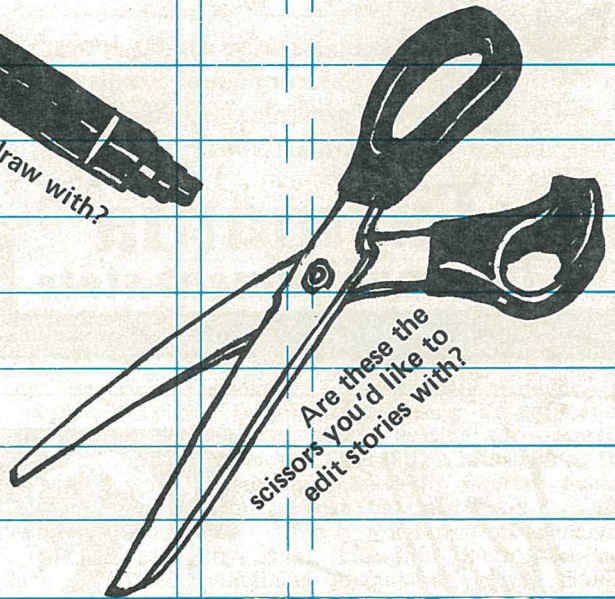
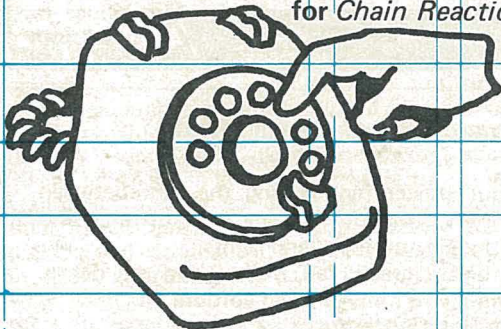
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