

# Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 41 April - May 1985 \$2.50



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ROXBY WATER DISPUTE

WEST GERMAN PEACE MOVEMENT

MX TESTS

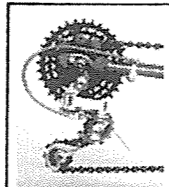
A RED AND GREEN COALITION?

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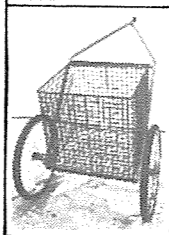
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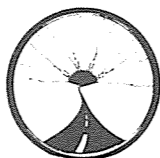


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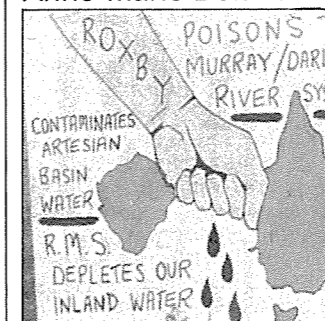
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In South Australia, the driest  
state, two mining projects  
threaten underground water  
supplies.

Cover: Drawing by Karen Vance.

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Please feel free to contact us at CIDC (663 3677) if you have any queries.

### ► Environmental Costs

This coming year is a crucial one for the anti-nuclear movement, and the anti-uranium movement in particular. We should develop campaigns where the emphasis is on the environmental aspects of uranium mining in Australia, right up to the possible use in nuclear weapons.

For some years now, the economic aspects of the uranium issue have been highlighted and, initially, this was a deliberate ploy. The intention was to lead people to believe that lower uranium prices would cause an automatic end to the uranium industry.

Economics fluctuate. What's economic today is perhaps uneconomic in the near future or vice versa. Therefore, conducting the uranium debate on economic grounds only or, as has occurred, by putting the emphasis on economics, is very shaky indeed. But the destruction of the environment is everlasting.

Although the use of uranium for production of electricity has been falling off because it has been found not to lead to profits, uranium is still in strong demand, and we don't have to look into a crystal ball to see what is the intended use.

Early in 1984, we see ERA/Ranger achieving new uranium contracts for delivery of up to 8240 tonnes at US\$33 a pound. These two new contracts are with American Electric Power and Pennsylvania Power & Light, for a total price of US\$550 million.

This is despite having been continually told for years that only about half this price (approx US\$17) could be expected. And these new contracts are with companies in the USA where considerable uranium deposits exist locally. What is behind such a situation?

The Fox Report on Ranger stated that it required approximately 450 tonnes of uranium bearing rock to produce one tonne of yellowcake. This means up to 4 million tons of further extraction from the Ranger mine. This will aggravate extensively the well-known environmental damage to

areas of the Northern Territory.

Does the USA wish to remove such damage from its own shores? For obvious reasons, the environmental aspects far outweigh the economics in regard to the imminent collapse of the US uranium industry.

Any narrowing of the uranium issue to mere economics is highly suspect and detrimental to the anti-uranium movement and the debate as a whole. And it is a smokescreen to hide the most dangerous end use of uranium — nuclear weaponry.

Weapons of war are a major source of capitalist profit which leads to a continual proliferation and therefore ever-growing dangers of war, including nuclear war. Uranium mining is the initial step in the manufacture of nuclear weapons and, at every stage, an environmental hazard.

Our Australian uranium must be left in the ground:

Willy Wabeke  
Collingwood, Vic.

### ► Stockpile

I continue to find most interesting the issues of *Chain Reaction* which I receive. In particular, the article by R K Leeks on 'Mining the Stockpile', (*Chain Reaction* 39) is quite well done and certainly is a good presentation of one notable school of thought about atomic energy and its materials.

It has been interesting to watch the quality of *Chain Reaction* improve during the year. It certainly is better edited and produced. Congratulations.

Warren H Donnelly  
Washington

### ► Another con job

A couple of years ago I spelled out my misgivings in these columns about the National Conservation Strategy for Australia (Letters, *Chain Reaction* 30). It seems my fears were well founded. The NCSA has simply not addressed itself to two of the main environmental issues of the day, namely the question of peace and disarmament and the Cape Tribulation/Bloomfield road. Instead, the

NCSA is quite satisfied with meaningless platitudes, as expressed in the recent issue of *Ecofile* (vol 2, no 1, December 1984).

Not satisfied with that exercise in futility, the government through its Department of Foreign Affairs, is now embarking on yet another bit of window-dressing, namely the International Year of Peace (IYP) in 1986.

The peace movement is to be conned into participating in harmless, ineffective activities with the intention of depriving it of time and energy to pursue much more important matters. Being government sponsored, the agenda will obviously have to exclude issues not approved by it, such as stopping uranium mining, getting rid of US bases, preventing nuclear ships and planes coming to Australia, and generally fighting for a genuine nuclear-free Indo-Pacific.

Naturally, if we choose to ignore the IYP, we shall be accused of not being genuinely interested in peace. As with the NCSA, we are once again being put in a no-win situation.

Peter Springell  
Clifton Beach, Qld.

### ► Sharp overview

I was very pleased to read the interview with Gene Sharp in *Chain Reaction*. It presented a good overview of non-violence and helped give prominence to some practical applications of non-violent action.

The interview also reminded me of how fortunate we are in Australia with regard to oppression and persecution such as what exists in Nicaragua and El Salvador. We don't have our backs up against the wall so we haven't been forced as yet to adopt any form of resistance like non-violence.

*Chain Reaction* thoroughly impresses me as an unbiased informed magazine. It is reassuring to see the power of the press not being abused for a change.

Andrew Broadley  
Arncliffe, NSW

### ► Bahro error

I'd like to correct a mis-print that occurred in my book review of Rudolf Bahro's

## LETTERS

From Red to Green in the last edition of *Chain Reaction*.

The second-last sentence of the middle column reads 'Bahro is an academic theorist . . .', but it should read 'Bahro is not an academic theorist of the left nor an opportunist, political novelty seeker.'

It is worth pointing this error out as my meaning was reversed. Perhaps a following sentence would have made it clearer that I meant to draw attention to the fact that he has pursued a course between these two, ie he avoids being too academic and abstract in his writings and interviews but at the same time is well-informed and convincing rather than just rhetorical.

Julian Hinton  
Canberra

Dr KD Chauhan of the Hill Tribal Commune, North Gujarat, India requires resource material to build up a library. He is particularly interested in Aboriginal issues and is requesting activist groups to send him information on their activities as well as books, photographs and magazines. He regrets the commune has no funds available. His address is PO Unjha 384170, North Gujarat, India.

You are invited to write letters to *Chain Reaction* with your comments on the magazine or on other issues of interest. Letters should be kept within 300 words so that as many as possible may be published. Longer letters may be edited. Write today to *Chain Reaction*, Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic 3000, Australia.

# Maralinga: Australian science on trial



By Peter Springell

For almost 20 years the rosy, reassuring official accounts of the British nuclear weapons tests in Australia were generally accepted as representing a truthful record of events. It was only in the early 80s that the first doubts began to be expressed about the conduct of the tests<sup>1</sup>. Since then, these doubts have escalated into a major scandal, forcing the authorities to hastily set up the Kerr Inquiry, and then to go further, and establish a royal commission into the effect of the tests.

Australian scientists have been deeply involved on both sides of the controversy. On the one hand, the establishment position was taken by some of the biggest names in Australian science — Sir McFarlane Burnett, Sir Leslie Martin and Sir Ernest Titterton — while among the critics Sir Hedley Marston and Rob Robotham<sup>2</sup> are the most prominent.

Marston's position is most interesting. It has been claimed<sup>3</sup> that his original paper on the extent of radio-iodine contamination of sheep thyroids<sup>4</sup> was abridged, so as to fit in better with the official accounts of the tests. One is left to wonder whether the officially approved papers were not in turn also doctored to fit the political climate of the day.

It is of course a fact of life that no reputable historian would ever depend entirely on sanitised official reports to

*Peter Springell is a retired scientist who ran foul of CSIRO, got involved in the uranium issue in Darwin, and was spirited away to Alice Springs, prior to escaping to Queensland. He is now a member of the People for Peace in Cairns.*

secure unbiased, reliable information of past events. The simple reason is that such accounts are designed to provide justification for particular government sponsored activities, rather than giving a genuine critical analysis of such actions. For instance, are historians likely to believe official German records of what happened in Nazi concentration camps, and disregard the mass of anecdotal evidence of the unfortunate victims to the contrary?

Recently I gave Sir Ernest Titterton an opportunity to put the record straight<sup>5</sup>. However, it appears the professor is unrepentant<sup>6</sup>. His argument is that critics of the tests have failed to produce well documented data to contradict the official line. Did he really expect nomadic Aborigines to write up their experiences in an acceptable form suitable for the type of prestigious publication which he would be prepared to believe? My contention<sup>7</sup> is that under the circumstances, the video they produced<sup>8</sup> is surely the best that could be expected of them.

As to the collecting of information from ex-service personnel, the threat of the harsh punitive clauses of the Official Secrets Act was surely enough to discourage, until recent times that is, all but death-bed revelations<sup>9</sup>. Only now that immunity is guaranteed to royal commission witnesses, are disclosures from this source coming to light. Even then, the accounts must of necessity be now blurred by the passage of time. Furthermore, such witnesses probably not only lacked scientific training, but their access to instrumentation and permanent records was no doubt severely limited.

The professor made much of the fact that his side was being taken by Knights of the Realm, Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS), and even a Nobel Prize Laureate. At the same time he resorted to stripping me of my Ph.D. and ignoring the fact that the one and only independent scientific researcher of the time (Marston) also happened to be a Knight FRS to boot.

A recent article in the *National Times*<sup>10</sup> pointed out that all may not be revealed, because of Britain's touchiness on this subject. Given that, and the probability that the royal commission will end up being a white-wash job, the sheer volume of evidence now accumulated is enough to suggest that a cover-up and carelessness had almost certainly taken place.

The very calibre of the test apologists that Titterton boasts of must inevitably reflect on the integrity of the Australian scientific establishment, and the credibility of Australian scientists in general in the eyes of the community at large. More specifically, it is my belief that it is now obligatory for Titterton:

- to explain his actions to the scientific community to preserve his reputation as a scientist of integrity; and
- as a human being of compassion to do all he can to secure belated financial restitution as part compensation for the suffering of innocent victims of the tests.

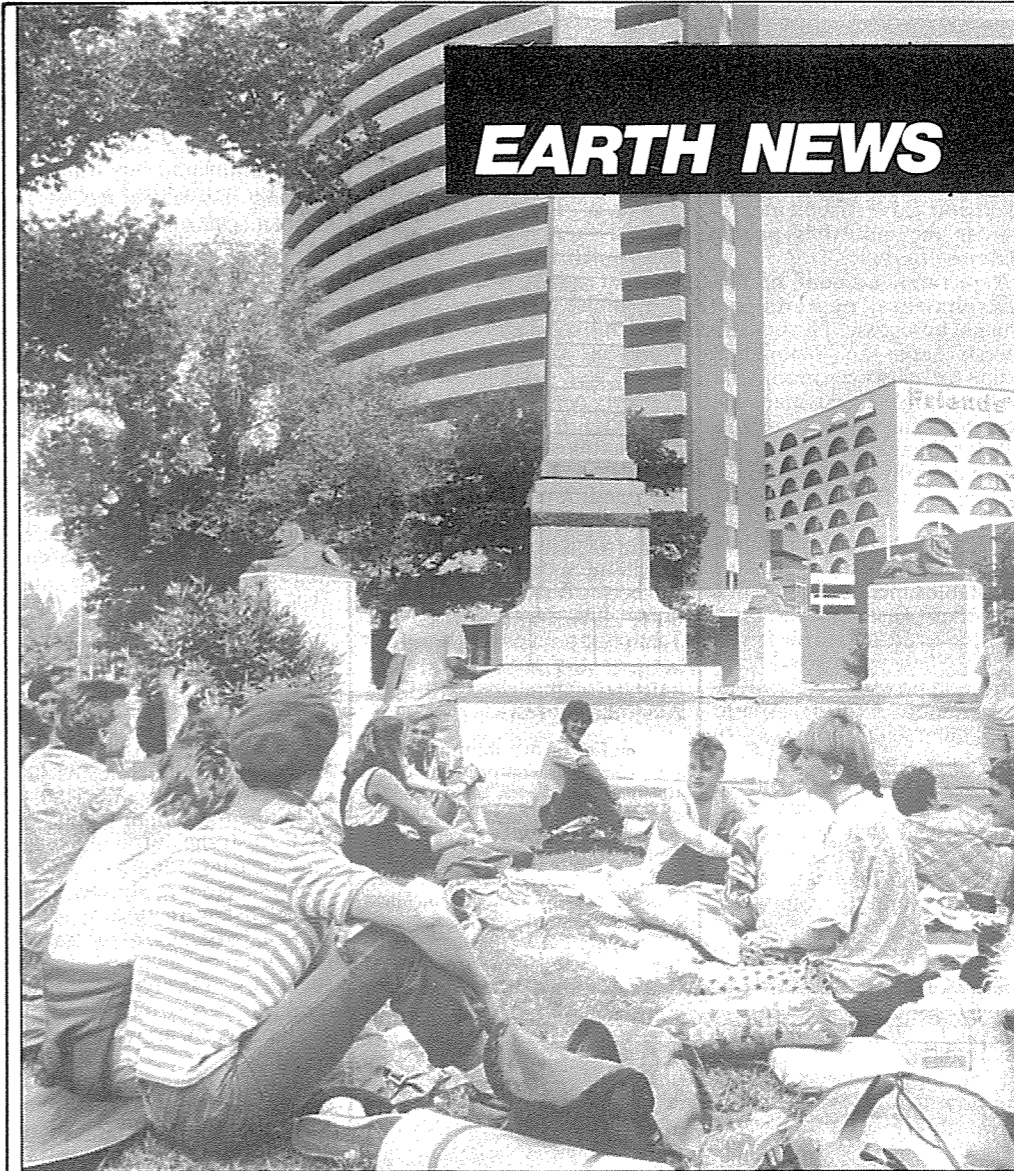
I have recently also followed this up with a similar private letter to Sir McFarlane Burnett.

In conclusion, I refer readers back to earlier articles in the Earth News section of *Chain Reaction*<sup>11</sup> on what follow-up action people can take to help the Aborigines get belated justice.

## Notes

1. B. Martin, *Nuclear Knights*, Rupert Public Interest Movement, Canberra, 1980. In particular, see note 128, p 78.
  2. A Tame & FPJ Robotham, *Maralinga: British A-bomb legacy*, Fontana/Collins, 1982.
  3. D. Smith & D Snow, *National Times*, 4 May 1980, p 3.
  4. H R Marston, *Australian Journal of Biological Science* 11, 1958, p 382.
  5. P H Springell, *Search* 15, 1984, p 200.
  6. E W Titterton, *Search* 15, 1984, p 262. In particular note reference to reports on nuclear test safety.
  7. P H Springell, *Search* 15, 1984, p 309.
  8. Pitjantjatjara Council, videotape interview telecast on ABC's *Nationwide*, 10 May 1984. Quoted in the *Courier Mail*, 11 May 1984.
  9. For example, see article in the *Courier Mail*, 30 April 1984.
  10. R Milliken, *National Times*, 7 December 1984, p 15.
  11. 'Unroyal treatment', *Chain Reaction* 39, p 5; 'More unroyal treatment', *Chain Reaction* 40, p 3.
- For further information on the British tests cover-up, see: B Toohey, *National Times*, 4 May 1984, p 3; B Toohey & D Smith, *National Times*, 8 June 1984, p 17; M Diesendorf, *SANA Update* 19, August 1984, p 10.

## EARTH NEWS



## MX vigil

On Sunday 3 February 1985 a vigil against the Hawke government's decision to provide logistic support to the MX missile testing program began outside the US Consulate in Melbourne. The vigil, the result of quick action by Young People for Nuclear Disarmament (YPND), commenced just a few days after Hawke's secret sellout had been made public.

YPND's move provides the established peace movement with an example of the kind of spontaneous action it must adopt to overcome the burden of its present slow-to-act bureaucracy. Through rapid action YPND and its supporters at the vigil were able to obtain maximum possible media coverage and public awareness.

The vigil was intended to be

for one night only and was spent on the steps of the consulate. 'Honk Against MX' signs were placed on busy St Kilda Road and produced much response. On Monday morning after being moved on by police, it was decided to continue the vigil in parkland opposite the consulate. Anne Fahey, the Mayor of South Melbourne, was quick to offer support and to give permission for the vigil to continue on the parkland. Tents were erected and it was decided to maintain the vigil for nearly two weeks until Friday 15 February when a highly successful rally against MX organised by anti-nuclear groups was held outside the consulate.

The vigil also organised its own rally. On the Monday of the eviction it was decided to hold a rally on the next day. Plenty of hard work met with

good results when over two hundred people turned up to hear speakers, including Jean Meltzer, at less than twenty-four hour's notice.

In the course of the vigil many people driving or walking past dropped in to find out the purpose of the vigil. Offers were made of tents and food. \$180 collected from individuals at an emergency anti-MX meeting was used by the vigil to print leaflets outlining opposition to MX and publicising the large Friday rally.

Much is to be learnt from vigils such as those held in Melbourne. Their worth as a useful form of immediate action is a factor which the established peace movement should recognise.

Contact: YPND c/- People for Nuclear Disarmament, 252 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Tel: (03) 663 2846.

## Eco-socialism

Environmentalists and socialists met together for a weekend discussion in late 1984 to critically evaluate their common interests and the possibilities for united action. Among the many issues raised in the workshops was the need to develop an environmentally sound economic strategy based on broad-ranging community discussion.

The meeting ended with decisions to establish groups in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales which would both continue discussion around these issues and plan and organise future conferences and publications. Over the coming year the groups hope to organise state conferences leading up to a national forum in late 1985.

Contact: Jack Munday, Tel: (02) 265 9056.

## CITES

The international wildlife trade, worth billions of dollars annually, has been responsible for massive declines in the numbers of many species of animals and plants. The scale of over-exploitation aroused such concern that an international treaty was drawn up in 1973 to prevent international trade from threatening species with extinction.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, known as CITES, was formed on 1 July 1975 and now has more than 85 member countries. These countries act by banning commercial trade in endangered species and by regulating trade to protect other species.

The fifth meeting of the signatory nations of CITES will be taking place in Buenos Aires from 22 April to 3 May 1985. Information on the Australian government's proposals is available from the Parks and Wildlife Service in Canberra.

Contact: TRAFFIC, 53 Sydney Rd, Manly, NSW 2095. Tel: (02) 977 4786

# EARTH NEWS

## Woodchip draft

The long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Tasmanian woodchipping was released in early March 1985. The media has recognised the significance of the document and forestry now dominates the front pages of the local press in Tasmania. (See 'Woodchip Exports', *Chain Reaction* 40).

Woodchipping is also being viewed as an important issue in the forthcoming state election, particularly if the federal government can be portrayed as intervening in state affairs. An election is not due until May 1986 but dates as early as May 1985 have been rumoured.

The conservation movement is gearing up for the campaign:

- The Forest Bus toured Tasmania with a major display, holding public meetings.
- The Wilderness Society is running an expensive series of television advertisements to counter the industry's public relations offensive.
- A pictorial account of the environmental degradation wrought by logging, 'Devastated Forests', and the 'Woodchip Action Kit' have been produced. An alternative forest management and employment report will be available soon.
- A major rally is being planned in Hobart on 19 April.

Meanwhile Premier Gray has called for feasibility studies on the establishment of a pulp mill in northern Tasmania and for a pulp and paper mill in the Huon Valley. These mills would use pulpwood presently committed to woodchip exports. While Tasmanian environmentalists have supported the principle of further domestic processing to increase local employment, they are sceptical that the studies will favour the mills. Previous reports seem to indicate that it is more profitable for companies to export unprocessed woodchips.

The Tasmanian woodchip

licence reviews will culminate in the setting of conditions by the federal government in July 1985. Canberra's decision will be crucial in determining the future of Tasmanian forest management into the next century. However it also has a national significance.

A similar review of the Eden woodchip scheme in New South Wales has already started, and is expected to commence in Western Australia in the next two years. It has agreed at the National Woodchip Summit in Melbourne last November that the conditions placed on the Tasmanian licences would set the precedent for reviews in other states, and for any future projects in Victoria or Queensland. The campaign to the Tasmanian licences must be seen as the first stage of a national campaign to protect Australia's forests.

**Action:** For further information on the present woodchip situation and to obtain your copy of the Woodchip Action Kit and the draft EIS response kit send \$1 to cover postage and printing costs to: Forest Action Network, 102 Bathurst St, Hobart, Tas 7000. Tel: (002) 34 5566. These may also be obtained from the Australian Conservation Foundation in Melbourne, environment centres and Wilderness Shops.

## FOE meet

Transcontinental bus trips are great for writing bad poems.

On a cattle farm in Busselton Near where karri forests grow, Friends of the Earth gathered For the annual get-to-know.

Delegates travelled from afar By bus and car and train. A few wise ones from the east Had the sense (cents?) to catch a plane.

For four days n January We had our national meeting. The talk was often broken By tours, drinking, eating.

Thanks must go to Janet Whose beans were full of bounce And also to Ross and Dee — Their farm's name I can't pronounce.

The 1985 Friends of the Earth national meeting was held in the south-west of Western Australia on 19-22 January, hosted by FOE Perth. The meeting discussed issues of common interest to all groups, including the administration of FOE Australia during the year, and heard reports of each group's activities during 1984 and plans for the future.

Perhaps because of the travelling distance involved, many groups were not represented at the meeting. Also disappointing was the low proportion of women present.

However, many of the group reports received were encouraging, and showed the diversity of FOE groups around Australia, in size, organisation structure, approach to and choice of issues to campaign on. Two new groups were welcomed, Willunga in South Australia, and Murray River Region based at Yarrowonga in Victoria.

The national liaison officer, Lorraine Grayson, was reappointed for another 18 months, and the *Chain Reaction* editorial collective were also given renewed tenure.

Among the decisions of the meeting was the proposal that FOE groups initiate discussion on the question of 'environmental parties', and the most appropriate role for environmental and peace groups in the electoral process.

The next national meeting will be held in January 1986 in Victoria.

**Contact:** For further information, contact Lorraine Grayson, c/- FOE Perth, 794 Hay St, Perth, WA 6000. Tel: (09) 321 2269.

## Turkish protests

A group of Turkish political activists based in the Victorian electorate of Wills has called for an immediate and general amnesty for political prisoners in Turkey. The Committee for a General Amnesty and Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Turkey links progressive and democratic individuals and groups in the Turkish community around Australia.

The committee seriously questioned the 'transition to democracy' which is said to have taken place in Turkey. The four-year old military regime held elections on 6 November 1984, yet writers, artists and scientists still fill the prison cells.

Political prisoners in Turkish gaols are subjected to systematic torture and brutality. Resistance by the prisoners themselves has mainly taken the form of a series of hunger strikes, beginning in July 1983 and repeated in January, February, May and June 1984.

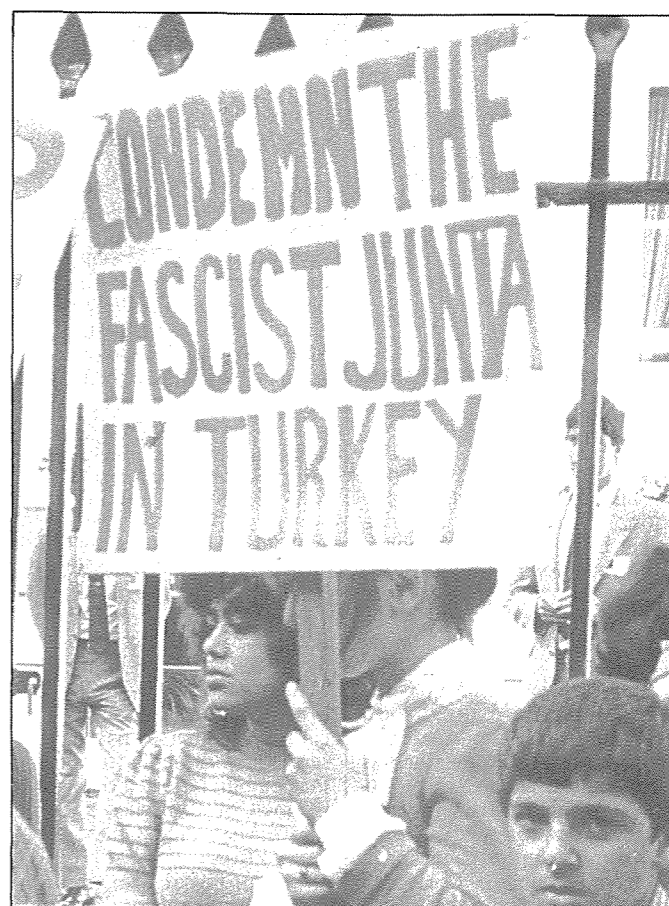
Independent evidence prepared by Amnesty International gives a horrifying picture of the

toll taken by the military government on political prisoners. More than 200 000 political suspects have been arrested in four years. Most have been subjected to beatings, breaking of arms and legs, electric shocks, exposure to extremes of hot and cold, burning, being hung up by the feet, or rape.

Between 180 and 200 prisoners have died from the effects of torture. Only 48 have been legally hanged, but over 100 are now on death row awaiting execution, and a further 3000 have been committed for trial for offences punishable by death.

The committee believes that international public opinion may help to bring about an improvement in Turkey. In August and September, 1984 it organised a series of exhibitions, meetings and rallies around Australia to raise public awareness of the plight of Turkey's political prisoners.

**Action:** The Committee for General Amnesty and Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Turkey welcomes enquiries from all Australians. Anyone wishing to express support for the committee, apply for membership, or simply obtain more information should write to the committee at PO Box 84, Moreland, Vic. 3058.



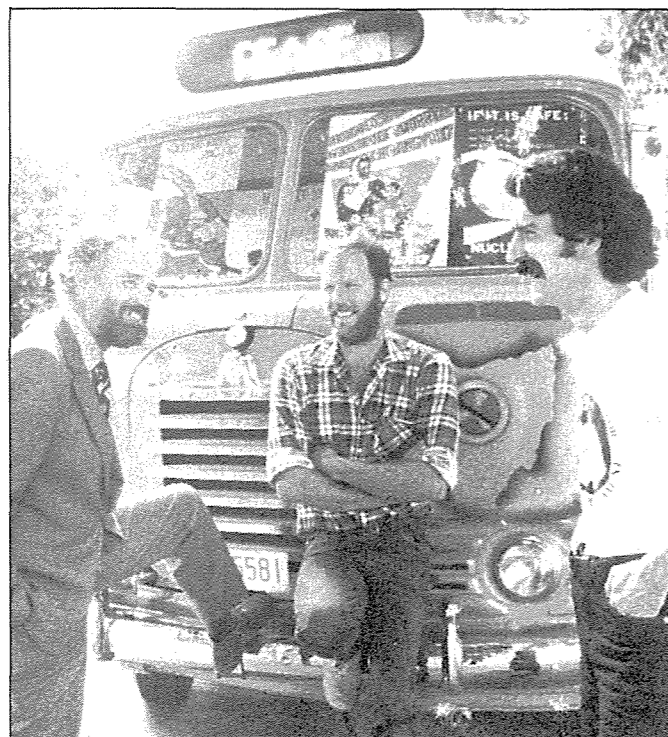
## Peace bus

The Tasmanian Peace Bus on its first tour of Tasmania increased the number of peace groups in the state by approximately 20%. A long-neglected 1959 Bedford had been restored by a team of interested people, not formal members of any peace group. Funding was obtained by donations from members of the team and, to a larger extent, from Hobart business people. The 'on road' expenses were covered by the generosity of people whom they met while on tour.

Venues were provided by local peace groups and concerned individuals. A good selection of quality anti-nuclear films and videos were shown backed by a wide range of free literature and a number of guest speakers.

The response to the tour confirms a need for this project but its future depends on continued funding.

**Contact:** Kit Hokanson, RMB 585, Murdunna, Tas 7178.



Senator Norm Sanders, Kit Hokanson and Rod Baker with the Peace Bus in Franklin Square, Hobart.

## Radio on skids

Radio Skidrow Sydney, a community radio station, first went to air via landlines in 1982 reaching a number of community welfare centres around the inner/metropolitan area. In September 1983 the station went to air on FM, its broadcast area encompassing the Sydney City, Botany, Leichardt and Marrickville suburbs.

There have been many difficulties, both financial and administrative. The station relies on one-off grants, subscriptions and donations. A grant received in 1984 for the employment of workers and trainees was terminated prematurely when the Board of Directors took the station off the air on 24 June.

After a long and bitter struggle to get the station back to air, Skidrow resumed broadcasting for 12 hours a day on 16 July. Two weeks later this was increased to 15 hours a day. Because most of the equipment was sabotaged during the clos-

ure it has been technically impossible for Skidrow to resume its 24-hour programming schedule.

There are no paid workers at the station. It is run by volunteers who produce news and interviews, look after administration and raise money for the station. Community groups participate by producing their own programs, bringing more community involvement into the station.

Management problems were fairly well eliminated on 24 November when a new board was elected. Radio Skidrow now has representatives from the Aboriginal community, Girls on Tape, Women on Air, migrant groups, Redfern Legal Centre, Prisoners Action Group, station workers and students. All have a firm commitment to the station and its practised policy of providing equal and unlimited access for all members of the community who are otherwise denied access to media channels.

The station resumes 24-hour broadcasting on 1 April 1985. In preparation for this, the

station has set up a number of collectives to work on improving and expanding the record library, increasing subscriptions and producing a subscribers newsletter, reformulating the programming structure, and setting up an independent news agency.

**Action:** Public support is vital for the station's survival. Radio Skidrow invites people to visit them at: Level 1, Wentworth Building, Sydney University, NSW 2006. Tel: (02) 660 4677.

## Penney drops

The Australian Royal Commission (into the British nuclear tests in the 1950s) in London was told in January 1985 that soldiers were told to crawl, lie, walk and run in radioactive dust to see what effect it would have on them. This was despite instructions to service chiefs that radiation was harmful. Lord Penney, the man in charge of the atomic tests at Maralinga and Monte Bello said he knew about the experiments on the soldiers but claims he was not aware of the documents warning

of the dangers.

A document dated January 1951 released to the Royal Commission gave instructions from the Lords of the Admiralty on exposing servicemen to gamma radiation:

In the application of the calculation expounded here there is one overriding principle which must never be lost sight of. It is this. All radiation dosage, however small, is harmful. The only excuse for exposing men to it is demonstrable operational necessity.

Documents were put before Lord Penney which emphasised the need to 'indoctrinate' Australians, as well as 'propaganda' articles written by him and others. One of Lord Penney's letters said: 'There were a whole lot of cranks in Australia equipped with geiger counters waiting for radioactive rain.'

Lord Penney said that the ground burst test called 'Maicoo' Maralinga was carried out for military reasons. Ground bursts were 'very dirty stuff' and were considered successful if they killed as many men as possible. **Source:** *The Guardian Weekly*, 27 January 1985.

## Rearming

During the heady days of the 1984 federal election, the aspirations of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) were easily definable to a single focus. Simply put, to achieve a voice in the process of power by electing as many candidates as possible.

This goal was achieved by the successful candidature of Jo Vallentine in Western Australia, and a very solid vote gained in other states. The NDP outvoted the Democrats in the four states and territories where there was time to put together a planned campaign. The party was formed just six months before the election in Canberra.

Having established itself as a viable political force, the NDP must now settle down to exploring for what and for whom it exists. Not the least of these questions is the production of guidelines for Jo Vallentine to use when it comes to voting on legislation that cannot be directly linked to the nuclear issue.

The press widely touted the belief that the NDP would abstain from voting in such a case. This was never a formal decision of the NDP as a whole. Abstaining on a piece of legislation can be the same as voting against it.

In addition to the problems of the party's constitution and possible expansion of policy, the above question will be addressed at the first national conference of the NDP over four days in late April 1985. Representatives of the party from all over Australia will be in Melbourne at the College of Advanced Education, Carlton during 25-28 April. Attendance is open to party members only.

**Contact:** Membership and other enquiries to NDP, GPO Box 5228BB, Melbourne, Vic. 3001. Tel: (03) 63 1466.

## Kiwi peace

The New Zealand government is considering a proposal to establish an independent peace institute. The proposal went before the Labour government's caucus in early January 1985. The promoter of the peace institute, Waitakere member of parliament Ralph Maxwell, believes its establishment will enhance the international prestige New Zealand has gained from its handling of the nuclear issue:

Historically it is time to get tough on the subject of peace and development... small nations have a responsibility to opt in to the struggle on the nuclear issue. The solution is unlikely to result from merely leaving it to the superpowers.

The institute would have both teaching and research functions. Its board would comprise of members from the Federation of Labour, Employers Federation, Returned Services Association, members of parliament, senior government officials, the Peace Foundation, the National Council of Churches and the University Vice Chancellors Committee.

The proposal also provides for a disarmament ambassador. Its structure is based on the Institute of Policy Studies which was established by New Zealand's Victoria University in 1983.

**Source:** *New Zealand Times* 12 February 1985.

## Shining

Some signatories to petitions circulated in Czechoslovakia against the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Europe (including Soviet) are reported to have been pressured to withdraw their signatures.

Students at Prague's Charles University have found a risk-free way to protest new missile deployments. Early in 1984 a sign appeared on the main faculty of the university bearing the simple text: 'Down with the missiles... if you agree with us don't sign your name, draw a picture of a sun.'

It was not long before thousands of little suns covered the wall. When police later white-washed the decorated wall, suns began to appear on other walls. Other schools and colleges followed this example.

**Source:** *Peace Action*, November 1984.



Support for Ingkerreke at 1984 National Aborigines Day in Alice Springs.

## Ingkerreke

Ingkerreke is an Aboriginal initiative designed to achieve self-management for outstation communities. The organisation was established as the Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Service at a meeting of delegates from 30 Northern Territory outstation communities early in 1984.

It has only won very limited and qualified support from politicians and Department of Aboriginal Affairs officials, even though they admit the need exists for a coordinated approach to meeting present and anticipated outstation community needs.

Ingkerreke is an Eastern Arrernte word meaning 'People working altogether'. In keeping with this spirit, the organisation aims to assist member communities to obtain land, housing and essential services, and also to improve basic living conditions.

Through the establishment of regional resources centres in the Ti-Tree, Plenty River, Kings Canyon and Finke regions, a decentralised structure will be developed under the control and direction of local communities. The objective is to develop and support self-management and self-sufficiency of member communities.

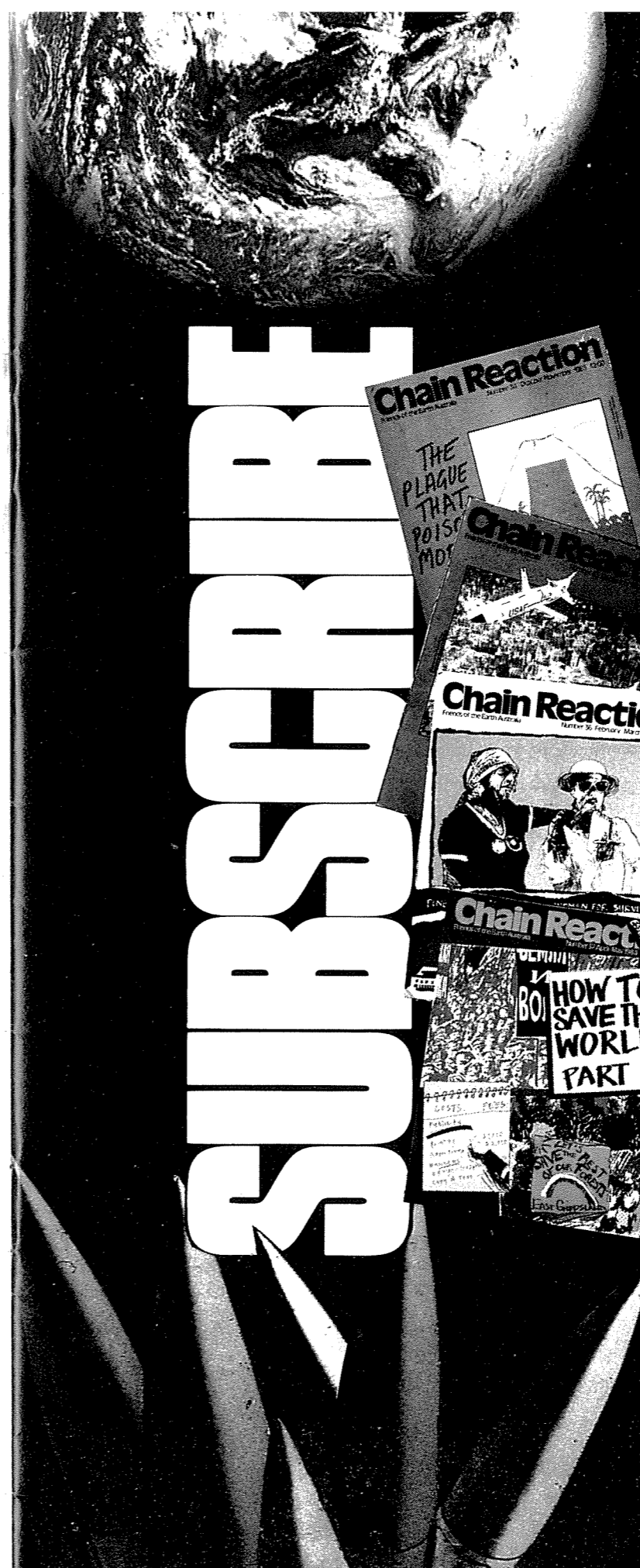
Regional officers will eventually be employed to establish these centres and coordinate their essential service programs,

as well as help manage financial resources (pensions or benefit payments), to obtain community vehicles and other camp requirements. Field officers would be recruited from local communities to assist in meeting organisation, community consultation and delivery of services. Government liaison will be provided by two Aboriginal directors representing the major language and cultural groups (Arrernte and Luritja) and will be based in Alice Springs.

Although it has the full support of all the Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs and its 30 member communities, Ingkerreke has not received any government funding except for an interim coordinator. Lengthy submissions have been written, but further government assistance still appears doubtful because of a policy of cutting new or expanding programs in low priority portfolios in an effort to lower the national deficit. Money is urgently needed to cope with the needs of its member communities.

**Action:** Given the present situation Ingkerreke appeals for financial assistance from individuals concerned about the human rights and land rights of Aborigines. Donations of \$10 or more will entitle donors to receive the quarterly Ingkerreke newsletter. Contributions over \$2 are tax deductible. Donations can be sent to: The Interim Coordinator, Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Centre, PO Box 2363, Alice Springs, NT 5855. Tel: (089) 52 5855.

INGKERREKE



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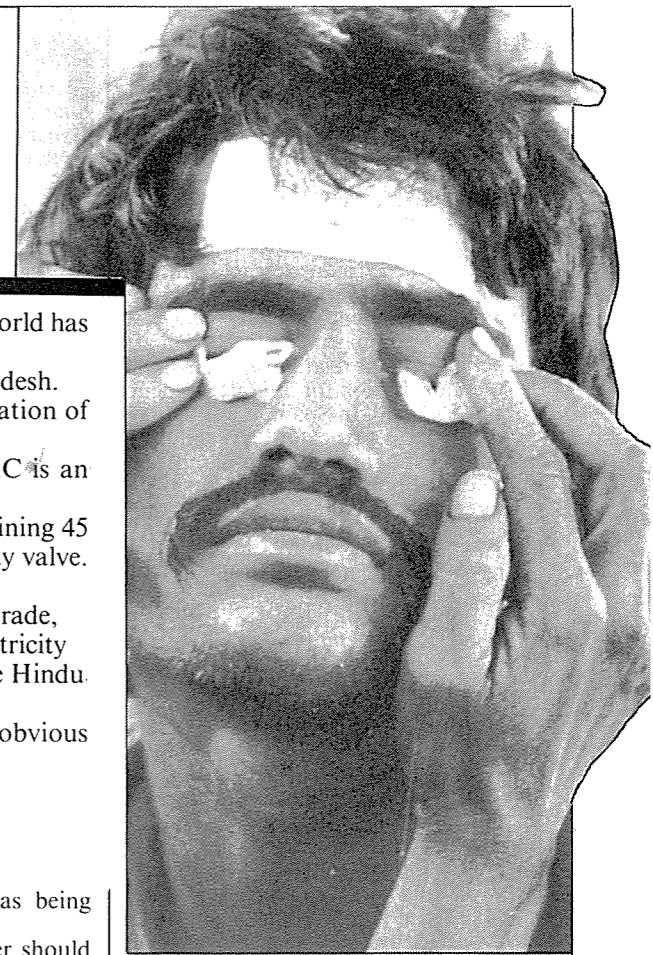
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# MEMBERSHIP

# Bhopal



On 3 December 1984 there occurred the worst industrial accident the world has known. Where? The city of Bhopal, in central India, in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The industry? A pesticide plant owned by the Union Carbide Corporation of USA and the Indian government. The deadly agent? A volatile liquid, methyl iso-cyanate (MIC). (MIC is an intermediate product in the manufacture of the pesticide Sevin.) Around midnight, pressure began building up in a storage tank containing 45 tons of MIC. Within an hour, the chemical began to escape via a faulty valve. The gas hung low in the cool night air and drifted over the city. Close to the plant are the 'suburbs' of Jayaprakesh Nagar and Kali Parade, slum dwellings haphazardly grouped on government land with no electricity or water. Many of the inhabitants are 'untouchables', the lowest of the Hindu castes impoverished and illiterate, employed in menial tasks. As the gas spread and night turned to day, the massacre became obvious —people and cattle alike lay dead. The official toll is 2500 people dead and perhaps 200 000 injured. But who would say this is accurate?

By Bert King

MIC reacts with almost any other substance. The most likely explanation for the catastrophe is that water entered the tank. A workman had been washing out a pipe that had not been properly sealed, under instruction from a novice supervisor, about two hours before.

The plant had been closed for maintenance for two weeks before the accident. Both the storage tanks and the pipes connecting them were under repair.

An Indian scientist, Dr Srinivarsan Varadarajan, made the first statement about the cause of the disaster. He told a meeting of scientists in Lucknow that the gas leak was caused by a small amount of water in the tank of MIC. This started a runaway reaction, generating heat and pressure. MIC boils at 39°C; there is evidence that the temperature in the tanks reached 60°C. The relief valves which permitted MIC to escape were meant to allow the pressure to drop. But cracks in the tank wall show that the valves did not relieve the pressure quickly enough.

The faults in the safety system add up to an overwhelming indictment of Union Carbide (UC) and its Indian management:

- There was no computerised early warning system, unlike a similar UC plant at Institute in West Virginia, USA.
- The cooling system of the MIC tanks was out of order.
- Any MIC that escaped the tanks should have passed through a vent scrubber to

render it harmless, but this was being serviced.

- Any gas escaping the scrubber should have been burnt off in a 24-metre flare tower. This too was shut down.
- The warning siren which sounded had become commonplace and was ignored. A critical panel in the control room had been removed, preventing warning of the leak showing up on the alarm panel.
- Excessive amounts of MIC were in storage. The German company, Bayer, who produce MIC in Europe, only produce it in small quantities for immediate use. At Bhopal, the production process was prone to frequent breakdown so MIC was stock-piled.

CS Tyson, a safety inspector for UC in the USA, attests to the poor safety procedures and inadequate inspections of the Bhopal plant. An operational safety survey in 1982 had listed ten major deficiencies. Employees and their supervisors at the plant were poorly trained, often maintenance workers signed documents they could not read. Recent staff reductions due to cost-cutting at the plant would have done nothing to improve safety.

### Methyl iso-cyanate

There are four chemical reactions involved in the production of Sevin:

- carbon monoxide and chlorine yield phosgene (carbonyl chloride)
- ammonia and methanol yield methylamine
- phosgene and methylamine yield MIC

Many Bhopal residents will never see again.

- MIC and 1-naphthol yield N-methyl carbamate, a carbaryl.

The carbaryl series of pesticides were introduced in 1956 by UC: Sevin and Temik are their tradenames. The carbaryl range has replaced DDT because, unlike DDT, carbamates degrade fairly rapidly, reducing dangers to humans through storage in body fat and to wildlife.

Sevin is a contact pesticide with slight systemic properties, recommended for use against insect pests on fruit, vegetable, cotton and other crops. Phosgene, an intermediate product in its manufacture, is well known as a highly poisonous gas used in the First World War. Its permissible level is 1 part per million (ppm). MIC is even more deadly. The safety standard for MIC has been set as low as 0.02 ppm.

MIC is water-soluble and attacks the eyes and lungs. Damage to the lungs can cause longterm damage to the rest of the body through reducing the supply of oxygen, and damage to lung tissue leaves it vulnerable to infection such as bronchitis and pneumonia, about ten days after the damage occurs.

Atropine treatment will save many patients' eyes. If not treated, a membrane will grow between the undilated tissue around the pupil and the cornea, causing blindness. Many Bhopal people were thus affected.

Bert King is an experienced engineer.

### What price an untouchable?

Legal actions for compensation for the victims of Bhopal will be tortuous, involving both Indian and US law, and both UC and the Indian government. An army of lawyers have descended on Bhopal like leeches for the pickings.

Under US law, negligence does not have to be proved. There is strict liability, no matter how the substance escapes. But UC will mobilise their defences and use delaying actions and manoeuvring behind the scenes. Justice will be despairingly slow. What can the victims or their relatives expect? In the USA, compensation for aircraft accidents is about \$300,000. In Spain, it was \$70,000 per victim when a truck of LNG (liquefied natural gas) ran into a holiday camp. One estimate for Bhopal is around \$25,000.

There is the possibility of a lump sum settlement between the Indian government and UC, eliminating legal actions. But it would be naive to expect a simple, quick settlement. Recent reports suggest the Indian government plans to file a lawsuit against UC in the USA on behalf of the victims, and to hire a law firm that specialises in mass disaster cases.

However the Indian government, with a 49% share in the plant, surely has a share of the responsibility. Blame also lies with the state and national governments for the lack of housing regulations and their failure to prevent slums growing so close to a potentially dangerous plant. India may have won the World Series cricket, but at Bhopal, the Indian government lost much world respect by their poor management and supervision of the plant and also by their collusion with UC to cover-up their negligence.

### Action against Union Carbide

Around the world there have been actions against UC and MIC. In December, Brazil stopped the unloading of a freighter carrying 13 tonnes of MIC in 68 drums from UC's West Virginia plant, destined for a pesticide factory in Brazil. The governor of Rio de Janeiro state declared MIC could not be used, stored, or transported in the state. UC officials were reluctant to receive the returned shipment.

Meanwhile a Scottish planning authority has knocked back a UC plan to manufacture MIC and Sevin in southern Scotland.

US has suffered financially on the stock exchanges (but it was the Indian poor who really suffered). Since Bhopal, UC is no longer a multinational with a shiny image.

From the early days of the environment movement in the USA, UC has been considered 'uncooperative'. The latest addition to its record was in February 1985 when the US Environmental Protection Agency fined UC \$3.9 million for waiting until September 1983 to notify them that a 1979 study indicated that one of its chemicals used in dyes, drugs and textile finishing, diethyl sulphate, causes skin cancer in mice.

Perusal of books such as *Who Owns Whom* and *The World Directory of Multi-*

*national Enterprises* reveals the vast empire of UC. Over 250 subsidiaries operating in 52 countries report back to UC's headquarters in Danbury, Connecticut or UC Canada in Toronto. UC is thirty-seventh on the scale of US industry in terms of sales and is the third largest US chemical company after Dow and Dupont. The company's products cover an amazing range — chemicals and plastics, industrial gases, metals and carbon products, batteries and automotive products, agricultural products, food processing and packaging, electronic components and medical products.

UC was incorporated as Union Carbide & Carbon in 1917, adopting its present name in 1957. The company has a long history of expansion by acquisition, and for many years remained a loosely knit federation of businesses. Operating profit has been declining since the early 1970s, from \$1,005 million in 1974 to only \$79 million in 1983.

### Lessons to be learnt

There are gigantic lessons to be learnt in the chemical industry after Bhopal — just as Three Mile Island caused a shock wave in the nuclear industry. But the changes that result need to protect people, not just company profits.

Bhopal has raised broad ethical questions relating to the role of multinationals in Third World countries. It is sometimes said that environmental protection is a luxury of rich nations. The success of the ecological movement in developed countries in limiting (some of) the activities of chemical corporations has had the effect of forcing the companies to move their operations to the Third World, where generally there are less stringent environmental standards.

For example, the manufacture of pesticides that are banned or restricted in the USA are now made in 'formulation' plants in the Third World. UC has one such plant in the Philippines, producing and selling a number of restricted pesticides such as DDT and Heptachlor. India has pesticide plants owned by multinationals UC, ICI, Bayer and Hoechst.

This raises the question of pesticide use in developing countries. Oxfam, the British relief agency, estimates that 1.2 — 2 million persons suffer acute pesticide poisoning, and pesticide-related deaths number about 10,000 each year in developing countries. There should be less reliance on pesticides and more education in their proper use, but this is difficult when those in control encourage their overuse. Nicaragua's efforts towards achieving the sensible use of pesticides provides some hope.

Bhopal is a classic case of grafting a high-technology, dangerous industry onto a low-technology infrastructure. Pressure needs to be placed on multinationals such as UC to maintain identical standards at home and abroad, regardless of lax local laws, and to take responsibility for transferring technical skills in pollution control and environmental management to developing countries.



### Union Carbide in Australia

In Australia, UC operates on a relatively small scale, essentially involved in two consumer products — packaging and dry cell batteries. UC phased out its manufacture of agricultural chemicals in western Sydney a decade ago, leaving behind drums of the deadly poison dioxin in storage in its plant at Rhodes. (Senator Mason of the Democrats drew attention to the unsolved problem of disposing of this menace.)

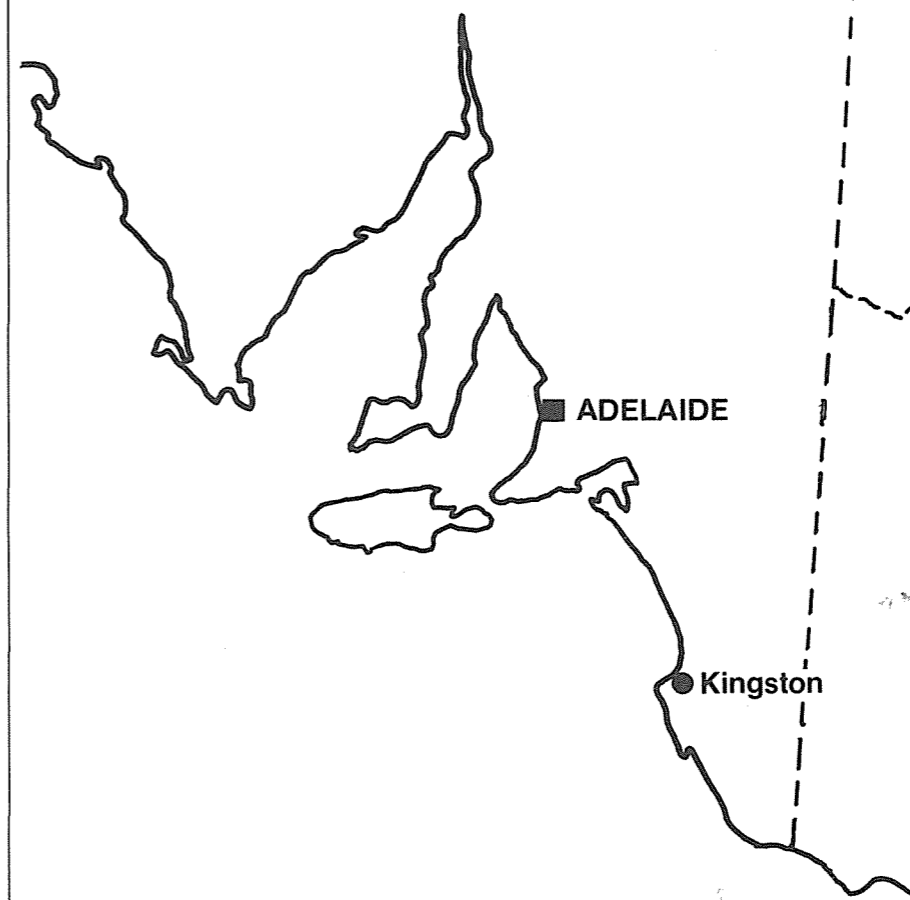
Also, in early 1983, UC sold off its, polythene manufacturing plant in Altona, Victoria, to Commercial Polymers.

UC's batteries are marketed under the 'Eveready' or 'Energiser' brand name and are made in Singapore and Sydney. In the packaging field, 'Glad' plastic food wrap and bags are UC's big products. There is also another company, Chemos Industries of Brisbane, which was bought out by UC in the 1970s; it markets aluminium foil and plastic film and bags under the 'Oso' label. 'Oso' products do not refer to the parent company. In addition, UC markets a wide range of general and specialty chemicals in Australia that it manufactures overseas.

UC Australia & New Zealand Ltd employs about 1,000 people, and operates with a (gross) profit around \$8 million a year. Its headquarters is at 157-167 Liverpool St, Sydney (GPO Box 5322, Sydney), with a branch in Melbourne at 14 Queens Rd (GPO Box 1227L).

# Western Mining in deep water

● Roxby Downs



Pastoralists and conservationists are currently struggling with Western Mining Corporation over water rights at two locations in South Australia. One is Roxby Downs. The other is at Kingston, site of large coal deposits which could supply the state's proposed \$1,000 million power station.

Ian Grayson and Anne-Marie Delahunt report from Adelaide.

South Australia does not have an abundance of water. It is often referred to as the driest state in the world's driest continent. However, on 6 December 1984, the Western Mining Corporation (WMC) and British Petroleum (BP), the two joint venturers in the giant Roxby Downs mining project, pulled off a coup. The largest licence ever issued for the extraction of underground water in South Australia was granted to the companies for their mining operations at Roxby Downs by the South Australian government.

Under the terms of an indenture agreement entered into earlier with the companies, the state government had offered to make water supplies for the project available. In such a dry state the available options were extremely limited. The desalination of seawater 270 km away in the Spencer Gulf and the exorbitant pumping costs were rejected as too expensive. The River Murray was considered but its available supplies are heavily committed and in times of drought supplies would be cut. The groundwater basin below the mine site at Olympic Dam contains water which is much too salty and too expensive to treat.

Just 100 km north of Roxby, however, there is a seemingly huge water supply — the Great Artesian Basin. This underground water source underlies one-fifth of the continent and contains water of a suitable quality. It was decided upon as being the only feasible water supply for the project.

So critical is the water from the Great Artesian Basin to Roxby's economic viability that the special water licence for the project was issued in a secretive manner by the South Australian government. Vital reports upon which the licence was assessed were not made public until after the licence was granted, despite complaints from Democrat member of parliament, Ian Gilfillan, the Conservation Council of South Australia and the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE) in Adelaide.

The supply of water to Roxby Downs has caused problems for WMC since the start of the project. To haul water from the proposed borefields at the edge of the Great Artesian Basin, a road had to be constructed beside which a pipeline will eventually be laid. This road had to be bulldozed through Aboriginal sacred sites

Ian Grayson and Anne-Marie Delahunt are active conservationists and members of the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy in Adelaide.



at Cane Grass Swamp, and only after a prolonged physical blockade by the Kokatha people was an alternative, more expensive route, involving a detour, reluctantly agreed to by Roxby Management Services (RMS), operators for the joint venturers.

Having finally constructed the road and sunk their first bore, the companies then proceeded to haul the water day and night by truck convoys to their then newly constructed pilot plant 100 km away. (The pipeline is still yet to be laid). What appeared at the time to be legal provisos were placed upon this borefield operation. The state government had earlier stipulated the operation was only to be on a trial basis. Further ongoing studies on the effects of the mine's water consumption, previously agreed to, had yet to be completed and assessed. Only then would the companies be granted their special water licence.

It appears the South Australian government had now become the victim of its own indenture bill with the joint venturers. It had agreed to make water supplies available for the project, yet at the same time had expressed reservations about the environmental acceptability of the borefield operation — hence the necessity for the further studies. A classic catch-22. It is difficult to see how the government could have refused the licence despite its doubts.

Roxby's borefield is on the rim of the Great Artesian Basin situated at the closest point to the mine in order to keep haulage and pumping costs down. Unfortunately for the operators, scattered around the area and surrounding the borefields, are a series of 50 natural springs known as the Great Artesian Mound Springs. These natural springs, which have been of cultural significance to the Aboriginals for thousands of years, are causing big headaches in the boardroom of WMC. Containing unique flora and fauna, found nowhere else in the world, the Australian Conserv-

ation Foundation has recommended they be nominated for world heritage and the area be declared a national park.

Conservationists and scientists fear Roxby's bores will literally suck water away from the springs causing them to dry up. They are concerned about the loss of unique species of freshwater shellfish and grasses, survivors of an era when Australia was a much wetter continent, which are of immense scientific interest. The Curator of Marine Invertebrates at the South Australian Museum, Wolfgang Zeidler, has warned these unique habitats could be wiped out by any reduction in water pressure.

There are freshwater snails and small crustaceans unique to individual springs that are survivors of a much wetter age. Yet here they are out in the desert. There is nothing like them in the world.

RMS, unable to deny that their borefield operation would threaten the springs, was asked by the state government to conduct further environmental studies on the Mound Springs. Recognising the cultural significance of the springs to the local Arabana Aboriginals, the government also requested the Department of Environment to conduct anthropological and archaeological reports on the area and that an assessment be undertaken 'before borefield development proceeds'.

These requests were not fulfilled. The anthropological and archaeological reports were still incomplete when the special water licence was granted. It appears the indenture bill has left the state government powerless to enforce its own recommendations. The environmental report on the mound springs was completed, but only made public after the granting of the licence. South Australian Premier, John Bannon, told CANE 'there is no statutory requirement for a period of public comment on such reports'.

The special water licence paves the way

for Roxby to become the largest single industrial consumer of underground water in Australia. In full production it will require 33 million litres of groundwater per day, most of which will be used for industrial processing.

Conservation groups in South Australia claim water as a public resource has effectively been privatised by WMC and that existing environmental law is totally inadequate. CANE organiser, Kathy Paine, said:

The granting of a special water licence without adequate provision being made for public comment makes a mockery of the state's environmental law. The Great Artesian Basin is already under severe environmental threat. The numerous bores sunk over the past 80 years have lowered the water pressure, older bores no longer flow, and new bores have to be sunk deeper and deeper to get the water. Roxby will escalate this threat enormously. Water is already being extracted faster than its natural replenishment rate.

WMC continually refute these claims in the Adelaide press, 'ludicrous' and 'nonsense' being their favourite adjectives. The manager of WMC, John Reynolds, in a letter to the *Adelaide Advertiser*, claimed that if wastage from free-flowing pastoral bores was eliminated by the government's ongoing bore-capping program, Roxby's water requirement would be catered for and no net increase of water usage from the Great Artesian Basin would occur.

Conservationists say this is just 'passing the buck' on to the pastoralists, who have an established practice of allowing bores to free-flow. This is more economic giving stock a larger grazing radius. They further claim the government bore-capping program is having almost no success due to insufficient government funding. Presently only four or five bores are capped per year, some of which are free-flowing bores left behind by mineral exploration and petroleum companies.

Conservationists also point to WMC's recent track record on water disputes in South Australia, in particular the proposed mining of coastal coal deposits at Kingston.

## KINGSTON

Early in 1984 WMC purchased land overlying large coastal coal deposits at Kingston in the state's south-east. Over \$10 million has been spent by the company surveying the deposit.

The state may need a new coal power station in the 1990s and potential sites near suitable coal deposits were being evaluated by the Stewart Committee, set up for this purpose. Mr Stewart, the chairperson of the committee, was previously the general manager of WMC and his appointment has been criticised by members of the Kingston community. Peter Lewis, Liberal member for Mallee, also stated to the local press, that people in the south-east know that Mr Stewart's family have 'an excellent grazing property which could become the subject of a compensation claim as it is located in the immediate vicinity of the coal deposit'.

WMC obviously want their own deposit mined at Kingston. Kingston, a small community of only 1500, has no deep water port for the proposed power station, so shipping in alternative supplies, if and when necessary, would not be possible. This would effectively give WMC a monopoly, enabling them to hold the state to ransom over coal prices, and if the project commenced it would be difficult to stop or reverse any environmental damage due to huge capital outlay. A power station alone is worth \$1000 million.

Kingston is a pastoral and farming area, very dependent on ground water for its produce. To mine the area's coal deposits which lie underneath the local aquifer, WMC proposed going through the local aquifer and releasing over 200 million litres of usable groundwater *daily* into the sea. Irrigators in the area, the Biscuit Flat Irrigators Association, at a meeting, claimed the Department of Mines and Energy actually helped WMC by suggesting changes to the computer modelling (used to predict the effects on local groundwater) in order to 'lessen the impact and bring the figures down to acceptable levels as far as government departments would be concerned, but certainly still not acceptable to us'.

At one stage of the campaign some locals suggested that they would have to get the 'greenies' in to publicise the issue, however this was not necessary as eventually even the Liberal and National Parties opposed Western Mining's proposal.

The proposed mining method has now been dropped and replaced by another proposal which WMC says will use less water. The original mining method was not rejected by the government, the Department of Mines or the Department of the Environment, institutions which conservationists claim should have acted as public watchdogs. It was rejected when a group of alarmed people, many of whom were local

**What point is there in conducting environmental impact studies if they only serve the interests of the mining companies? To seriously consider such abuse of invaluable water supplies in such an arid part of the world clearly demonstrates that Western Mining's profits override everything and that they have no sense of social or environmental responsibility. Only community groups appear able to stop the excesses of companies like Western Mining. The government appear to have done nothing. (Kathy Paine, CANE organiser)**

farmers whose water supply was at stake, formed the Underground Water Protection Committee and fought the proposal.

The newly proposed mining method, wet dredging, is yet to be environmentally assessed. The South Australian Minister of Mines, Ron Payne, claims that preliminary assessments of the wet dredging concept made by WMC now show the likelihood of considerable cost savings over the previously proposed mining method involving the dewatering.

Many local people remain suspicious and are adopting a wait-and-see attitude. In December 1984, Councillor Ralph England stated:

The District Council of Lacipede would require assurance that Western Mining would not be permitted to change to the open cut method should the wet dredging method prove to be uneconomical, even if preliminary works on the new power station had already commenced.

Conservationists like to point out that the company which conducted the environmental studies on the ground water for WMC at Kingston, Kinhill Stearns, also conducted the ground water study for WMC's other large project — Roxby Downs.

## BACK AT ROXBY

It now seems another dimension may soon be added to the Roxby water dispute. Just a few kilometres south of Lake Eyre is Finnis Springs Station, a large pastoral property, adjacent to Roxby's borefield. The owner-operators are of Arabana Aboriginal descent — the traditional inhabitants of the area. WMC has admitted some mound springs on nearby properties will run dry as a result of the borefield operations. Finnis Springs Station is one of these properties. The special water licence allows WMC to drop the water table in the local area by two metres.

According to the indenture bill, a survey of existing uses of water in the area was to be carried out and submitted by RMS, with the application for a special water licence. The Department of Mines says this survey was submitted but 'only some' local users were directly contacted.

The operators of Finnis Springs claim they have never been consulted by RMS on this issue as required by the indenture.

They also say Roxby staff frequently drive around Finnis Springs Station as if they themselves own it, without so much as a 'g'day' or other civilities. Manager and part-owner of Finnis Springs, Reg Dodd, is unimpressed. He says the operators are not happy about offers of pumped water from RMS as required by law, when their springs inevitably run dry as a result of Roxby's water consumption. 'Pumped water is not the same', says Mr. Dodd, 'the springs should not stop flowing.'

The Arabana value their springs, not only as a water supply, but as natural springs. According to Paul Reader, former Aboriginal Heritage Researcher, in the Antikiranya, Arabana and South Aranda Lands:

Engineered alternatives are not good enough. The recommendations of the Environmental Assessment are likely to be unworkable. In the past, bore capping programs have not succeeded in bringing springs back to life, in fact springs eventually collapse in on themselves after a period of disuse. There is no justification for the issuing of a water licence while the effects remain unknown.

The operators of Finnis Springs Station claim to have been given little say in the matter. Both the indenture bill and the special water licence were passed without their consultation. 'I first heard of the granting of Roxby's special water licence when I read it in the newspapers', says Mr Dodd.

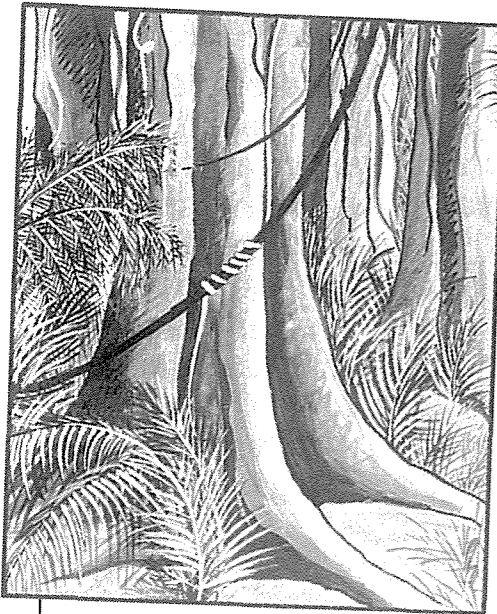
Another point of contention is the anthropological report, the object of which was to precisely assess the cultural and mythological significance of the mound springs to the Arabana. The traditional inhabitants operating Finnis Springs Station, where most of the important springs are located, claim never to have been consulted for this study either, despite the fact that they are the affected party.

Having observed the protracted Cane Grass Swamp dispute between the Kokatha people and RMS along the borefield road in 1983 they are naturally apprehensive about their own position. The Arabana are currently taking stock of the situation and seeking legal advice about the protection of their water rights.

Contact: Campaign Against Nuclear Energy, 291 Morphett St, Adelaide, SA. 5000. Tel (08) 51 3821.



Protestors enjoy a dawn wash under emergency showers at Roxby Downs uranium mine, August 1984.



# Desperate options

## Forestry in Papua New Guinea

K VANCE

Facing a severe revenue shortage in the 1980s, Papua New Guinea is desperately encouraging foreign investment in logging projects. **Michael Wood** looks at the development of the country's forestry policies from Australian colonialism in the 1950s to Asian multinational exploitation today, and the effects of these policies on Papua New Guinea's economy and people.

By world standards Papua New Guinea (PNG) is well endowed with tropical rainforest. PNG's Office of Forests has recently noted that compared to the major South-East Asian producers of tropical hardwoods (Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines) PNG has a much higher operable forest volume per capita. Given this comparative abundance the Office of Forests believes that the exploitation of forests should provide very considerable benefits to PNG's citizens.

In this article I want to critically assess this argument by first briefly reviewing the current organisation of forestry production in PNG, then outlining the nature and distribution of the major costs and benefits of forestry projects.

### The Australian contribution

A major factor in PNG's forestry sector has been the influence of colonial policies. In 1946 the Australian colonial government established a Department of Forests in the unified Territory of PNG. This department attempted to encourage the development of sawmills throughout the Territory. It was thought that this emphasis would result in the Territory being able to satisfy its own demand for timber, and also spread capital and employment opportunities throughout the Territory. Rights to log were granted only on the condition that the operator would establish a sawmill and process a set amount of timber.

These policies had the effect of preventing indigenous entrepreneurs from entering the forestry sector since none could raise the capital required to establish a sawmill. As a result all forestry concessions were owned by Australians. Insofar as the colonial government during the 1950s and early 1960s was primarily interested in preventing an indigenous elite from forming and thereby allowing Australians exclusive access to various fields of economic activity then its policies in the forestry sector must be judged a success.

### Multinationals as log exporters

In 1965 the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) made a report on the economic development of PNG. This influential report called for an

emphasis on the sectors that were likely to give the highest returns on any investment. The Bank noted that the forestry sector was one of PNG's best prospects for economic growth. It recommended that PNG's forestry be opened up to exploitation by international capital with emphasis on the development of log exports. A very rapid increase in log exports was to be achieved by the establishment of a few large logging projects operated by foreign corporations.

The broad thrust of the Bank's recommendations — the development of a foreign-controlled export-orientated forestry sector — has been followed by PNG until the present day. The result is that PNG's forestry industry is now totally dominated by foreign, especially Japanese capital.

Despite indications, outlined below, that the forestry sector may not be under the effective control of the PNG government, it still attempts to attract multinational corporations to invest in forestry. The government has done this largely by increasing its rights to timber in desirable areas. The areas chosen have usually been close to shipping, associated with economically accessible stands of timber and were, ideally, sparsely populated. By mid-1978 rights over 2.2 million hectares of land had

*Michael Wood is an anthropologist who has done field work in the Western Province, PNG. Some of this research concerned the social impact of a logging project in the Western Province.*

been purchased by the government. It is worth noting this constitutes about 4.3% of PNG's total land mass of 46 million hectares. Having secured rights to timber from the owners in exchange for a royalty payment, the central government then has to attract a foreign investor to exploit the timber. In exchange the government gains revenue, increased employment, and usually requires the company to provide some social infrastructure (airstrips, roads, aid-posts, schoolrooms etc). Such services are often very important for residents in and around the forestry project simply because the areas favoured with tropical hardwoods are often very poorly provided with government services.

### The Asian connection

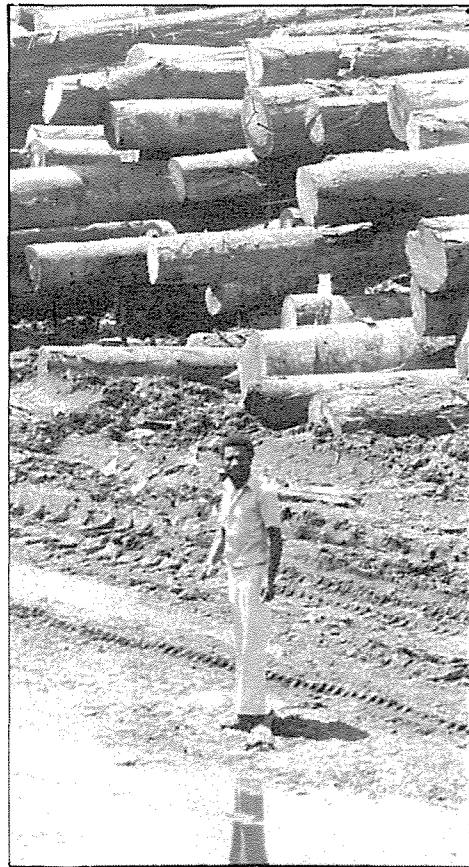
As a result of these policies, combined with rising Japanese demand for logs, some (mainly Japanese) corporations did invest in PNG's forestry industry. However PNG was a relatively marginal supplier to the Japanese market since Japan's demand was largely being met from South-East Asian sources. Yet from PNG's point of view Japan was the crucial market. Up until 1979 Japan was virtually the sole buyer of PNG's logs. This monopoly position was broken in 1979 when a company started exporting logs to Korea. As a result of this sale PNG's guideline minimum export prices were raised, in some cases, by almost 100%.

Since the late 1970's Asian, as opposed to Japanese, capital has entered PNG's forestry sector. This trend was exemplified by Korean capital's involvement in the Kapulik project, attempts by a Philippine conglomerate to exploit the lucrative Vanimo area and the logging project I have researched which involved a Singapore based company. None of these companies had previous experience in the timber industry despite PNG's official forestry policy of the time that stated any foreign company wishing to be involved in large log export developments should have a good international reputation in the operation of tropical hardwood projects.

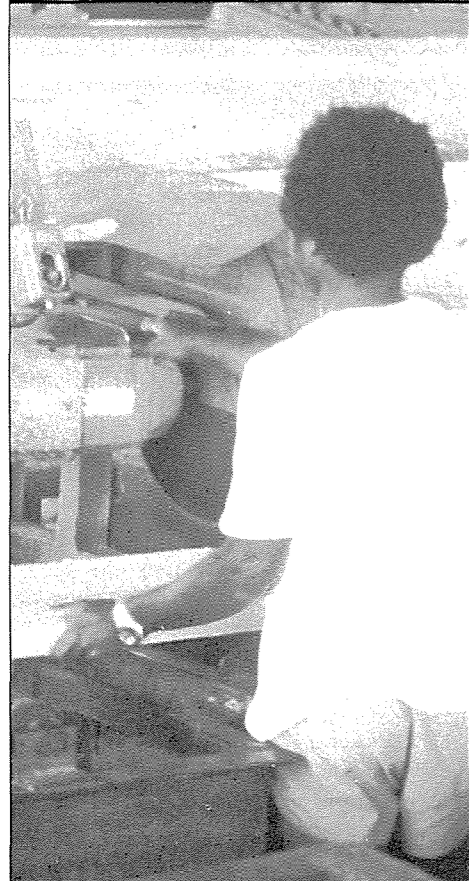
The entry of these inexperienced firms into PNG was also associated with increasing public disquiet concerning the forestry sector. The attempts of the Philippine company, Heturi Meja, to exploit the Vanimo area were, especially in 1982, a matter of continual comment in PNG's newspapers. Heturi Meja tried to get the PNG government to guarantee that it would borrow the capital to establish the project. The Philippine company proposed to employ over 700 expatriates on the project hence reducing the local employment effects of the development. The company also tried to ensure itself an annual return of around 24% on its investment. The then Minister of Forests strongly supported the Heturi Meja proposal and even over-ruled his own negotiating team's position and adopted one more favourable to the company. It was also the case that the Minister's own personal lawyer was, at



ROB PARDY



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Above and right: Log export jetty and sawmill operated by West New Britain Timber Company at Kimbe.

the time, acting for Heturi Meja, and was a director of its PNG subsidiary. The networks among PNG's emerging elite and their alliances with different foreign companies can have an important influence on forestry projects — often at the expense of official government policy. Alliances with the elite are also important for the foreign companies — with the defeat of the Chan government negotiations with Heturi Meja were broken off. The Somare government is currently attempting to attract other foreign firms to 'develop' the Vanimo forests.

### Dependency and desperate options

What has emerged from past and current forestry policies is a sector which from the government's point of view is about in balance, that is, revenue from export tax, corporation and income tax and the central government's share of royalties only slightly exceeding its expenditure on administration and development expenses. However, the benefit of the forestry sector to citizens and government has been reduced by the substantial leakage of potential surplus out of the sector (and the country). One astute observer has estimated that this leakage was about K13 million (1 K is about Australian \$1.30) a year. This loss of potential surplus was due to inefficiency and transfer pricing.\*

Given these sort of figures it is worth asking why PNG persists with its current emphasis on developing the forestry sector. While policy advice from international finance agencies such as the IBRD and World Bank and alliances between the indigenous elite and foreign capital are important factors it is also the case the PNG government confronts fiscal and balance of payments difficulties. The government believes that during the 1980s the price of most of PNG's major export commodities are likely to decline in real terms by between twenty and forty per cent. There is little reason to doubt the rough accuracy of such projections. It is also known that Australian aid is likely to decline during the 1980s. Hence it is possible that PNG could confront a severe revenue shortage with imports massively exceeding exports. In this context forestry appears to be one of the very few possibilities by which the PNG state could quickly increase its revenue. World Bank's claim that timber prices would steadily rise in real terms has had a strong influence on the government's choice of forestry as a sector to be encouraged. This optimistic forecast was, in part, based on the World Bank's belief that the forest areas in developing countries

\*Whether exports benefit a poor economy depends critically on the price. When global corporations buy from and sell to their own subsidiaries, they establish prices that often have little connection to the market price. Such 'transfer prices' as they are called, deviate from market prices to maximise the total profits of the parent corporation. Often, if taxes are higher in the exporting country than in the importing one, it is advantageous to direct the exporting subsidiary to undervalue its exports.

could, on current rates of consumption, disappear within 50 years.

### Winners and losers

It is by now commonplace that the extension of commodity production into the Third World often creates and intensifies social inequalities. Forestry in PNG is no exception.

Those bearing the major environmental costs of logging are also usually those who receive least out of the project. The landowners whose timber is to be logged lose all rights over the timber. Moreover the central government believes that it must own any land required for follow-up agriculture or reforestation. Ideally acquisition of such land is supposed to take place prior to the commencement, but in some cases no attempt has been made to acquire land for 'post-harvest' development. If land is acquired for such purposes then the original landowners lose a crucial basis to their autonomy and security. In the case of follow-up agricultural developments, they may find themselves converted into cash crop producing peasants working small blocks while being closely controlled by state officials and foreign development experts. If no follow-up development is planned then the owners may be left with a denuded environment and little opportunity to generate further income — their major asset, the timber, having already disappeared.

While logging proceeds landowners do have the chance to accumulate surpluses from royalties and wages. Yet of the total royalty of K3.20 a cubic metre of timber logged landowners usually only receive K0.8, the remainder being divided between the provincial and national governments. Wage labour may be short-lived or intermittent and whatever surplus is saved has to be productively invested. Opportunities for profitable investment are often difficult to find in areas favoured by loggers. While the project may develop infrastructure that crucially benefits landowners, in some cases the benefits may not be long-lasting eg cheap roads and bridges get washed away and are not rebuilt. In one case a company was obliged to build and staff only one schoolroom. While admirable, without further government support such a development is not, in itself, likely to result in the emergence of well educated children.

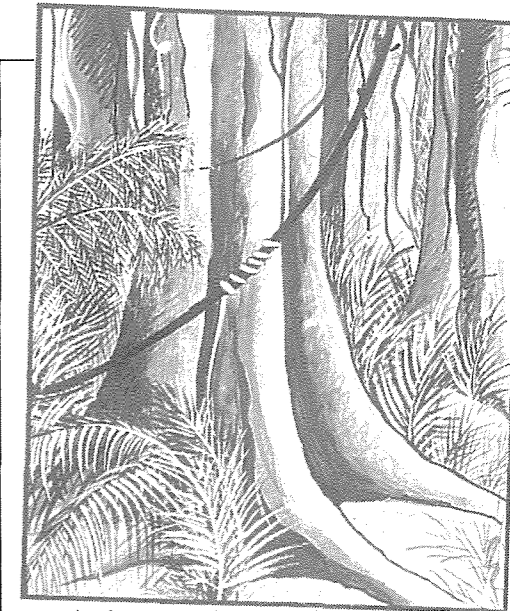
Moreover logging companies are generally interested in short-run profit maximisation and try to minimise costs — hence fulfillment of obligations concerning social infrastructure is often perfunctory or avoided. Given transfer pricing it is difficult to accurately establish the profitability of forestry projects in PNG. Even where joint ventures are established with a majority of the equity in indigenous hands it seems that the foreign investor is likely to be the major beneficiary. In one case where a foreign firm had only 25% equity in a logging project, through a marketing and management agreement it was able to secure about 84% of the total export value of the output even before receiving any dividend.



ROB PARDY



ROB PARDY



As indicated earlier the national government is a beneficiary, but only marginally since revenue from forestry just exceeds its expenditure in that sector. The other level of government that does benefit are PNG's provinces — they receive part of the royalty, and also receive from the central government a payment of 1.25% of the value of any exports deriving from the province. Increasingly provincial governments are entering into partnerships with foreign corporations interested in logging. However, since forestry operators seem to run at a loss or make relatively small profits the effects on provincial revenue may be fairly minor.

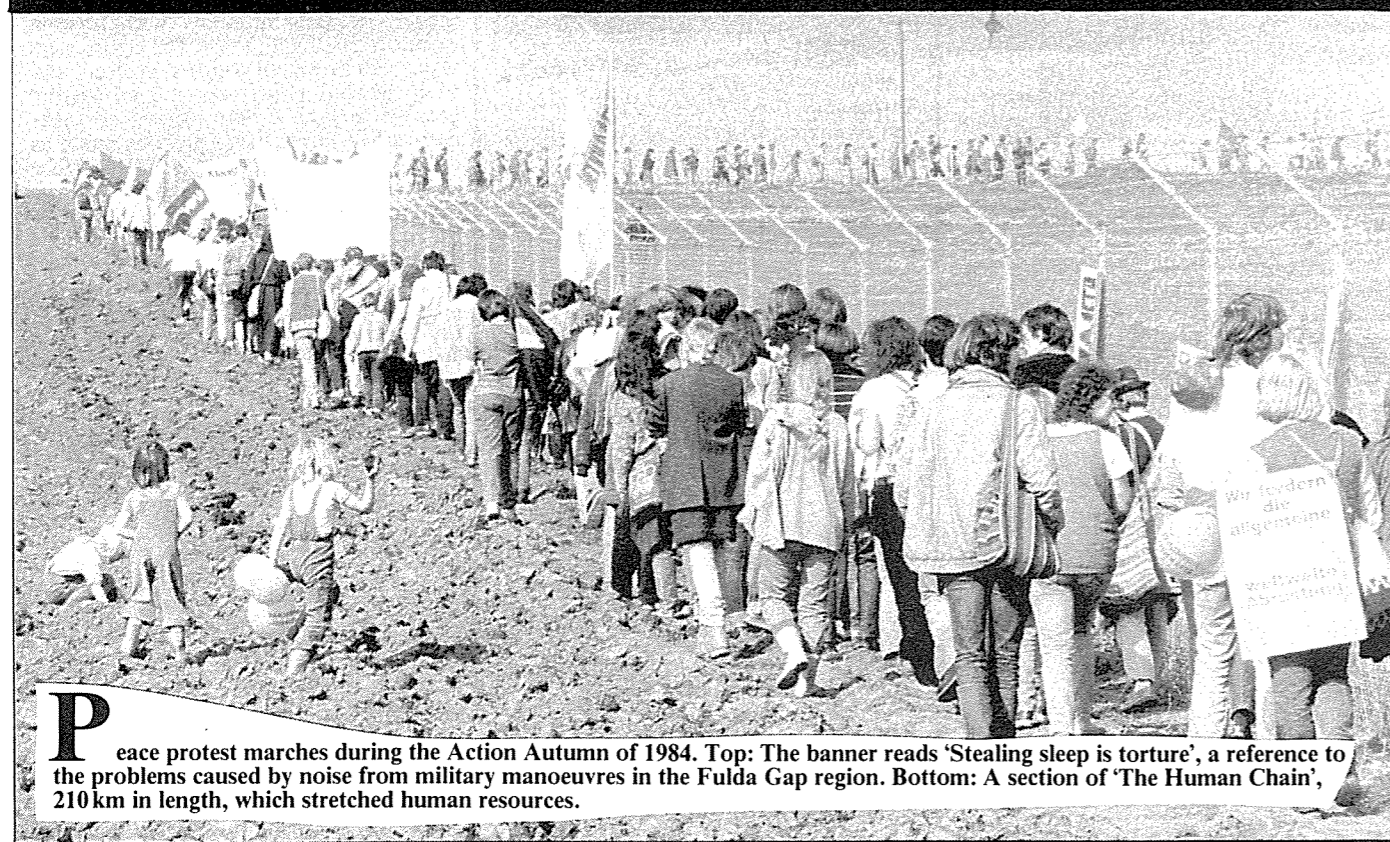
On the rather poor evidence available it seems that government in PNG is not a major beneficiary of forestry projects. It is clear that the landowners receive the least from such developments with foreign investors gaining the most. The landowners to an extent accept logging projects and their limited short-run gains possibly because they have been offered no alternative. Moreover they know, as much as did Keynes, that in the long run they will be dead. Some kind of 'development' is better than none at all. The problem for them is that in the long run the forests may also be dead. It is incumbent on us to think out constructive ways of preventing this from occurring while at the same time meeting the landowner's aspirations for appropriate and prompt social and economic development.

In the interests of brevity, I have avoided referencing this paper. Full details of sources are found in my paper 'Logs, Long Socks and Tree-leaf People: the timber industry in the Western Province, PNG'. Anyone interested in acquiring a copy of this paper could write to me c/o Chain Reaction. I have relied largely on the following useful works:

- C De'Arth, *The Throwaway People: Social Impact of the Gogal Timber Project, Madang Province*, IASER Monograph no 13, Hebamo Press, Port Moresby, 1980.
- A I Fraser *Issues in Papua New Guinea Forest Policy*, Institute of National Affairs, Port Moresby, 1981
- W J Jonas 'Capitalism in periphery: the Papua New Guinea Timber Industry', in J Camm and R Loughran (eds), *Newcastle Studies in Geography*, University of Newcastle, 1979.



## Head counts



**P**ace protest marches during the Action Autumn of 1984. Top: The banner reads 'Stealing sleep is torture', a reference to the problems caused by noise from military manoeuvres in the Fulda Gap region. Bottom: A section of 'The Human Chain', 210 km in length, which stretched human resources.

The events of the 'Action Autumn' in late 1984 attracted significantly fewer people than had been expected by West German peace movement organisers. Conservatives gleefully celebrated the demise of the peace movement.

**Peter Mares**, an Australian anti-nuclear activist resident in Frankfurt, argues that the movement is just struggling to find a new focus and motivation. 'There are many people in West Germany who would dispute my analysis and I in no way wish to claim that I possess the absolute truth on such a complex issue. My hope is to provoke discussion, especially within social movements in Australia, as I feel there are a great many parallels and a great deal to be learnt from experiences made in Germany.'

### PERSHING II MISSILES DAMPEN MOVEMENT MOOD



**M**utlangen is no longer in the papers every day. It is over a year now since the first Pershing II missiles were stationed in the small town in southern Germany and the mass sit-down blockades that took place in the 'Hot Autumn' of 1983 are a thing of the past. During 1984's 'Action Autumn' the on-site peace camp — the oldest in West Germany — was struggling to survive, suffering a shortfall of both money and activism. A desperate plea for help touched the consciences and pockets of West Germany's peace movement, and for the moment the crisis is past. The camp continues to work as a small centre of direct opposition, a minor but persistent irritation to the smooth running of the NATO nuclear weapons system, but in the long term its future remains uncertain.

The difficulties experienced in Mutlangen are an indication of the peace movement's problems generally. While some found the Hot Autumn of 1983 to be only lukewarm, last year's Action Autumn was definitely cold in comparison. At almost every event the participation was way below organisers' expectations, with often less than half the hoped-for numbers. The gleeful speculation from some conservatives that the peace movement is dying can no longer be so easily shrugged off; much of the force and vitality of 1983 is gone, the level of discussion in society and the political influence of the peace movement are considerably reduced.

*Peter Mares is an Australian currently living and studying in Frankfurt. He has worked with the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy and public radio station 5MMM-FM in Adelaide.*

But this run of events is explainable, and could perhaps have been predicted, had one only been able to stand back far enough to take a critical look. In West Germany's Hot Autumn all effort was concentrated on stopping an imminent event: the stationing of the first new missiles. The optimism and idealism which made this aim seem achievable crashed head-on with the reality of political power structures in West Germany. The missiles arrived.

It is not surprising, and in fact probably unavoidable, that this climax should be followed by a slump. A new orientation is required, and a new analysis. After the shock of such a defeat, time is required to restock on motivation, the individual prerequisite for involvement. Motivation arises from the perception of a way forward and it is this 'way forward' that the peace movement in West Germany is currently seeking. Despite their limited success, the events of the Action Autumn show some of the potential directions.

### NEW DIRECTIONS, POSSIBLE PROTESTS



**T**he peace activist's autumn began with the call to hinder NATO manoeuvres at the end of September 1984.

Every year in West Germany, as in other parts of the world, the Western alliance goes through the routine of muscle-flexing in the form of major troop exercises. For the last few years this massive NATO mobilisation has been centred around Fulda Gap, an area roughly 100 km north-east of Frankfurt. NATO strategists regard Fulda Gap as the potential starting point of World War III. It is here that the Warsaw Pact stretches to its most westernly

point and hence, according to NATO logic, it is here that Soviet tanks would begin rolling over the frontier. Fulda Gap is militarised (on both sides of the border) with thousands of troops and hundreds of army installations, including depots of conventional, chemical and atomic weapons. There is even a board game on sale in the USA, called 'Fulda Gap: First Battlefield of the Next World War', which coolly takes into account the destruction of the whole area. American soldiers have been directed to play this game before manoeuvres to help develop their strategic thinking!

When it became clear that the 1984 manoeuvres would take place in other parts of Germany it appeared that the decision to target actions around Fulda Gap might fall flat. However there was still plenty of military activity going on; in Fulda gap 'routine' manoeuvres occur on 300 days of the year.

The decision to disrupt manoeuvres was surrounded by a great deal of controversy in the peace movement. A number of its prominent figures, including (ex-Green) parliamentarian and ex-NATO general Gert Bastian and the novelist Heinrich Boll, spoke out publicly against the planned actions, warning of the danger of violent confrontation and arguing that it is not the movement's role to set itself against the normal soldier, who is, after all, only following the orders of those higher up. They had somewhat missed the point. Instead of a simple call 'No Pershings! No Cruise!', an attempt was being made to politicise completely new areas, to demonstrate that the missile stationing was not an isolated event. The aim of disrupting manoeuvres was not to annoy individual soldiers, but to expose the role of such manoeuvres overall. They are not just war-games to keep the boys amused, but tactical military preparations, an integral part of US and NATO strategies. It is these strategies, and the military infrastructure accompanying Pershing and Cruise, which make it likely that these weapons may one day be used. This is what many in the peace movement wished to make clear.

### OFFENSIVE MILITARY STRATEGIES IN PRETTY PACKAGES



**C**oncentration was focussed explicitly on the current US military doctrine 'Air Land Battle' (ALB). According to ALB, the purpose of military operations is not to

'prevent defeat' but to 'win'. ALB is the military manifestation of the spirit of the Reagan era, a decidedly *offensive* strategy taking into account such measures as a 'preventative first strike'. ('At the level of atomic weapons there can be no difference between first strike and retaliation' wrote US Colonel Hanne.) The whole doctrine is constructed on the premise that a limited ('tactical') nuclear war is not only possible but also winnable. The aim is to push the battlefield as far east as possible with the *immediate* use of conventional, atomic and chemical weapons (the 'integrated battlefield'). In practice this means attacking deep behind enemy lines with fighter planes and missiles (including Pershing IIs).

ALB conflicts with official NATO defence planning which envisages (on the basis of the nuclear deterrent) repelling any 'conventional' attack back to the border with 'conventional' means, but which excludes an invasion or attack into foreign territory. There is considerable pressure from the USA to get the other NATO states to adopt ALB (and its even more offensive update ALB-2000) —and it already has the support of some sections of the West European military. (General Glanz, Inspector of the West German Infantry has already signed his 'in principle' support for the ALB-2000 concept.) It is also known that West German soldiers have been involved in manoeuvres based on the ALB strategy.

The US military recognise the difficulty in convincing the Europeans to give their complete support for a 'defence' doctrine which foresees the destruction of most of their own continent. Hence the USA attempts to sell it in a different packet. The 'Roger's Plan' (US General Rogers is the Commander-in-Chief of NATO) argues that due to the Warsaw Pact's 'conventional military superiority', Western Europe must massively 'upgrade' its conventional forces, in order to 'raise the nuclear threshold' (the point at which it first becomes 'necessary' to use nuclear weapons.) The Roger's Plan is similar to ALB, envisaging a 'deep attack' into the opponent's territory but excluding nuclear and chemical weapons. However, as these weapons are under the control of the US military, the Roger's Plan actually serves to integrate West European forces as a conventional component of the ALB concept.

Other US strategies were also highlighted by the Fulda Gap actions, most notably 'Reforger' and the 'Wartime Host Nations Support Agreement'.

Reforger is an acronym for 'Return of Forces to Germany'. Envisaged is a situation, like a military conflict in Central Europe, where the US military feels it necessary to suddenly strengthen the 300 000 troops already stationed in West Germany. West Germany's practical support for the stationing or transfer of US troops is assured under the Host Nation Agreement. A massive movement of US troops may, however, be related to a conflict somewhere else, especially in the Middle East, should US interests there be threatened. The Agreement holds nonetheless, making West Germany a staging,

or even *starting* point for US Rapid Deployment Forces and the movement (and storage) of military hardware en route to the Third World. The military importance of various large scale civil projects, like the much protested western runway of the Frankfurt airport, or the equally disputed motorway A6 from Frankfurt to Fulda, becomes obvious.

## TARGETING THE MILITARY BOARDROOMS



**T**he week of action in late September around Fulda was based in a number of peace camps.\* The actions were numerous and varied: forest walks to inspect military sites, discussions with soldiers, blockades of military vehicles (often tanks) and installations, graffiti actions and tampering with equipment. On the Friday the various camps joined up for a combined action: the occupation of, or at least the deliberate trespass onto the troop practice area Wildflecken, a 72 sq km area containing barracks for 3000 soldiers, ammunition stores, a missile base, radar equipment, and around 20 shooting ranges for tanks.

Wildflecken is in constant use and there are plans to 'improve' it with more shooting ranges and an added 10 000 soldiers. The local population have protested against the plans; they get little enough sleep as it is. US and NATO strategies not only increase the likelihood of nuclear war, but the daily preparations for war have a severe effect on social and natural environments. Residents suffer especially from noise pollution and a loss of recreational space and the environmental destruction caused by daily activities such as tank practice and incessant detonations is also immense, not to mention the damage caused when over 60 000 soldiers are involved in large scale manoeuvres!

The number of people involved in the peace camps was not as high as had been hoped — in the hundreds rather than the thousands. It is probably true that many 'peace friends' (*Friedensfreunde*) were hesitant to become involved in direct action, especially given the scare campaign

\*There were also camps in some other areas, notably Hildesheim, where British troops are stationed and are in training for 'civil war' conditions (that is, preparation for service in Northern Ireland); and around Hansu, where the companies NUKEM and ALKEM are both involved in reprocessing and fast breeder reactor technology, the military side of nuclear power.

that took place in the media beforehand. It was hoped that the more symbolic action of a human chain, which took place in Fulda Gap on the final Saturday, would draw around 100 000 people. That only 40 000 turned up was proof for the conservative media of the peace movement's decline, and they could speak of nothing else. Even some sections of the peace movement argued that the 'failure' of Fulda showed the need to steer a more middle course, and to reverse the trend of 'radicalisation' and 'marginalisation' that threatens to alienate large sections of the population.

Many activists had a more optimistic analysis however. What had been undertaken in Fulda was a fundamental shift of emphasis, away from the *obvious* threat of Pershing and Cruise, to the much more complex, but equally important *background* of military planning and preparation. In the weeks leading up to the disruption of manoeuvres it was possible to bring ALB and related strategies constantly into public discussion, to force debate on issues where there had previously been silence. That 40 000 came should be seen as a positive sign, a demonstration of increased awareness of the 'new' issues and of passive support for the chosen form of action. The whole movement against Pershing and Cruise began with much smaller numbers, and it took three years to build up a mass base for protest. Now, in the light of past experience, the attempt has to be made to change from an anti-missile to an anti-war or anti-militarism movement. This process takes time and Fulda was the starting point. Forty thousand is a good beginning.

## NEW GOALS MAY MOTIVATE A MOVEMENT



**A**fter returning from Fulda myself, tanked up on inspiration and energy, I was much inclined to share this analysis. But coming from Adelaide, and having only previously experienced such numbers at football grandfinals, the last Saturday in Fulda had perhaps given me an overdose of optimism. Observing the rest of the autumn actions from a more critical distance (via alternative and conventional media) my enthusiasm was somewhat dampened.

The 'Human Chain from Hasselback to Duisburg', the 'Peace Star' in Stuttgart and a large demonstration in Bonn (all on 20 October 1984), mobilised, according to the

Coordinating Office of the peace movement in Bonn, 400 000 people. The 210 km human chain was to link the US base where the first Cruise missiles are to be stationed in 1986, with an (un)employment office in the industrial Ruhr area. As with the demonstrations in Stuttgart and Bonn, the aim was to make plain the social consequences of massive military spending — unemployment, failing social services etc. There were numerous points, even within city areas, where the chain came nowhere near to being closed. In Hamburg, organisers had reckoned 160 000 but in the end they claimed 80 000 had participated. The police estimate was 20 000, the Green's and the Social Democrats' was around 40 000. Whatever number you chose, they all pale in comparison to the 400 000 who gathered before the town hall in Hamburg in 1983.

The 20 October demonstrations showed that 'peace' can still mobilise hundreds of thousands (even with bad weather) but it also showed that the growth of the peace movement cannot be automatically assumed, and that mass demonstrations cannot be maintained with the intensity that was possible in 1983. Many activists feel that it is necessary to broaden the aims of the movement, to politicise new areas and thus set new goals, in order to reawaken people's motivation. The Fulda actions can be seen as an attempt in this direction, but it does not look like being an easy process. There are for example, powerful interests within the peace movement, especially those linked to the Social Democrat Party (SPD), which will actively oppose such a change, as it automatically calls the role of the West German army and membership in NATO into question. These issues are too prickly for the SPD; they prefer a more superficial approach of opposition to the missiles.

## TIP TOEING AMONGST THE FACTIONS



**T**hese tensions within the peace movement manifest themselves at different levels. The Coordinating Office in Bonn, an alliance of involved organisations, is currently debating its own dissolution. One faction, representing groups such as the Christian organisations, feels that the office is becoming increasingly the instrument of party political interests. Hence they recommend a move away from an organising role to a loose information exchange. The SPD faction are opposed to

this plan, which essentially removes the emphasis on grassroots decision making. (The Moscow-orientated KOFAZ faction is also against the dissolution; they wish to limit criticism of Warsaw Pact militarism.)

The differences within the movement became most obvious in relation to the Nicaragua demonstration at the beginning of November, just before the US and Nicaraguan elections. The action was to show support for Nicaraguan independence and self-determination, and opposition to the aggressive and militaristic US foreign policy. A heated debate arose in the coordinating group over the proposal that SPD and Socialist International Chairperson (and ex-West German Chancellor) Willi Brandt should be invited to speak. By a small majority the SPD group managed to get their way. This decision was seen as highly provocative by many peace and 'Third World' activists, as the SPD had, in years of government, played a supporting role in exactly the sort of international political oppression which was here to be criticised. The current conservative foreign policy (and the decision to deploy Pershing and Cruise) has its roots in the era of the Social Democratic Governments of Brandt and Schmidt.

Around 25 000 turned up for the demonstration in Bonn, which was once again well below expected numbers. The conflict centering around Brandt reached gross proportions when he came to speak. Shortly beforehand, several dozen police officers with drawn batons, gathered to the right and left of the stage (which had been sealed off from the crowd). A large section of the crowd responded to this insult by throwing rotten eggs, paint bombs and fireworks while Brandt spoke; he had to shelter behind body-guards holding open umbrellas.

## FROM ANTI-MISSILES TO ANTI-MILITARISM



**T**he final event of the Action Autumn was the 'Tage der Verweigerung' ('Days of Refusal') at the end of November. This was a campaign to convince young men to refuse military service, based on the argument that since the stationing of Pershing II missiles, the role of the West German army can no longer be said to be purely defensive (as it must be under the West German constitution). This attempt to alter the military system from below, seems potentially to be an important way of

bringing about change. Despite atomic weapons, the ability to plan and fight a war is still very much dependent on the willingness of the majority of men to act as soldiers and of women to provide for their psychological and physical well-being.

Three years ago women made this an issue, carrying out actions under the motto '*Die Schwestern helfen nicht mehr*' ('the sisters aren't going to help anymore'). Many men in the peace movement regarded this as a side issue and preferred to concentrate on the missiles. The lack of women organisers and speakers in the peace movement today is an indication that the priorities have not changed much since. Over the previous ten months the refusal campaign had not been marked by immense success and the *Tage der Verweigerung* also passed relatively unnoticed.

This is a further indication that the optimistic analyses following the Fulda Gap action remain some distance from reality and leaves the future of the peace movement, like the future of Mutlangen peace camp, somewhat unclear. Nevertheless actions which concentrate on the overall structure, and which involve a more fundamental analysis than the call 'No Cruise!', seem to me to be necessary. Disrupting manoeuvres and refusing to do military service for example, could signal the way from an *anti-missile* movement, to a broader movement *against militarism*.

The task is extremely difficult. The essentially conservative nature of society means that, while a perceived new threat (like the new missiles) can be a successful point of departure for political activity, questioning an already existent structure (like NATO or compulsory military service) is much harder. It is, however, not possible to remove the new threat without first altering the structures which create it.

The peace movement in West Germany is not disappearing, just undergoing a period of recuperation. There will certainly be a new wave of mobilisation centering around the planned deployment of Cruise (to begin in 1986). My fear is that concentration on this one event may lead to a repetition of the same experience. Half a million will demonstrate before parliament and the missiles will come anyway. The result could be a slide back into disillusionment and a feeling of powerlessness. A broader anti-militaristic movement would not stop Cruise in the short term either, but it would provide a more solid basis on which to continue the struggle after Cruise arrives.

Although there are important differences in the problems faced by the peace movements in Australia and in West Germany and in their organisation and history, there are lessons for the movement here in the experiences reported in 'Head counts'. *Chain Reaction* invites readers to comment on the observations made in this article and how they relate to the strategies of the peace movement in Australia.

# Not just a drop in

The MX missile tests to be held in the Tasman sea are vital to the perfection of first-strike accuracy for these missiles. This report by **Owen Wilkes** describes the activities and facilities associated with the tests and suggests ways in which peace activists can harass and disrupt them. (*Aotearoa, the Maori name for New Zealand, has been used instead of its colonial title.*)

The MX missile is widely regarded as one of the most dangerous developments in the nuclear arms race. The MX will be a land-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). Each missile will have ten warheads and these warheads will each be about 20 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb. More importantly, the MX incorporates a very advanced guidance system which gives it the accuracy necessary for pre-emptive destruction of Soviet missiles in their hardened silos. MX will be able to fly 13000km and come down within 30m of its target.

Also significant is that MX will be based in silos which are themselves vulnerable to a Soviet first strike. MX is thus the perfect candidate for a US first strike – it has the accuracy and power to destroy Soviet nuclear deterrent forces and it is too vulnerable to be held back for a second-strike US retaliatory attack. It is a missile for starting and fighting nuclear wars, rather than a retaliatory weapon for deterring them. MX was renamed 'Peacekeeper' by the Reagan administration but somehow the name doesn't seem to have caught on.

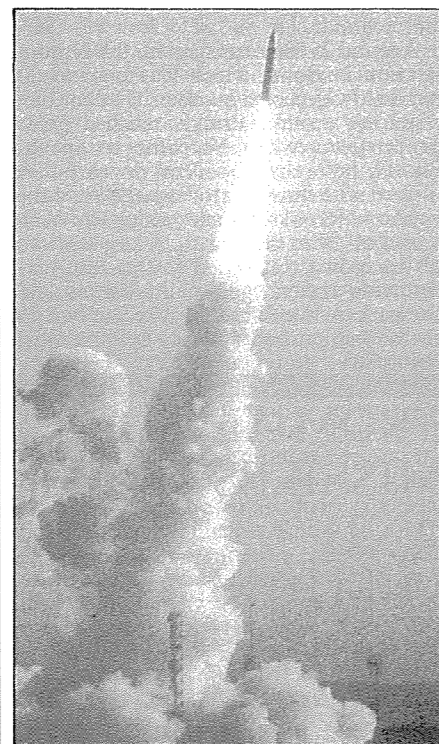
## Background to the tests

The MX tests in the Tasman Sea are not the result of an impulse to frighten Aotearoa with some nuclear sabre-rattling. The tests have actually been planned since at least 1981 and it probably works against US interests that they have been revealed just recently. There are important military reasons for having them.

All MX tests start at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California and up until now

*Owen Wilkes is a researcher working with Peace Movement Aotearoa.*

have finished in the lagoon of the world's largest atoll, Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands. This gives a flight path of about 6500km, while in real nuclear war, the missiles would have to fly over 8000km. Also, the flights to Kwajalein are in an east-west direction, whereas in reality the missiles will go in a north-south direction, over the North Pole. The USA suspects that the Earth's rotation, the upper atmosphere, and variations in gravitational force will have a different effect on a north-south trajectory than on an east-west one. This is the reason for wanting to test launch into the South Pacific – over a longer distance (about 11000km) and in a different direction.



MX missile blasts off from Vandenberg.

The USA has already carried out one such test, which came down in the vicinity of Oeno Island, near Pitcairn Island.<sup>1</sup> This was regarded as a successful test at the time but the much more accurate MX missile requires precise measurement of the factors which influence its accuracy, hence the new test series.

In 1981, the final report of an ad-hoc committee set up to make a 'Strategic Systems Test Support Study' (SSTSS) concluded that it was necessary to carry out tests of both the MX and the navy's Trident missile in the South Pacific.<sup>2</sup> The Trident tests were

first proposed with target zones at Oeno Island, at Aotearoa's Chatham Islands and at Wake Island. The splashdown zones for the MX were more secret and were only identified as BOA-1, BOA-2 and BOA-3 (BOA standing for Broad Ocean Area). The committee's secret report was partially released in 1984, and when publicised in November 1984 in Aotearoa it caused a minor stir because it mentioned the Chathams. The prime minister, David Lange, said that the New Zealand government had not been consulted, and that his government would not have consented to the tests.

It turns out that this is not the only use of Aotearoa considered. A confidential memorandum entitled 'Does Kwajalein Missile Range Have a Future?'<sup>3</sup> notes that studies had been made of the possibility of shifting the Kwajalein facilities to a new location. The memorandum, dated 10 September 1981, notes that:

The best site [location and name classified] with islands spaced far enough apart to permit accurate measurement of re-entry and impact by triangulation, involved precipitous volcanic islands with rugged surfaces, posing very difficult and costly construction problems.

A poor quality photocopied map accompanying this memorandum appears to show the Kermadec Islands as the 'best site'. Certainly the description would fit the Kermadecs.

The memorandum notes the need to test over longer distances and in different directions from what was possible at Kwajalein, and points out that:

... if the KMR [Kwajalein Missile Range] – derived models are inexact, then the billions spent on improving the hard-target kill capabilities of US strategic offensive missiles may have been wasted. Worse still ... the United States, with smaller warheads, may be ineffective against hardened targets because of unmeasured inaccuracies caused by unknown or imprecisely known natural forces.

The memorandum carries on in what one hopes is a flippant way by commenting that:

The only way to resolve the uncertainties concerning the exactness of trajectory and accuracy prediction is the absurd option of fighting a nuclear war. [The next best thing is to test] on a north-south azimuth and aiming at a target with geodetic and atmospheric characteristics which differ from Kwajalein.

It can now be recognised that the test zone to be set up in the Tasman Sea is the one described as BOA-3 in the SSTSS report. Much of the information about BOA-3 was censored out of the report as released, but it was noted that the aircraft involved would be staging out of Sydney, and it was stated that: 'The exact location of the BOA-3 impact area is not yet firm.'

# the ocean



PEACELINK

The MX tests — not just nuclear sabre-rattling.

By December 1983, three MX tests had been held, with at least another seventeen to go. Lieutenant-Colonel Dick Heilmichief, public affairs officer at Vandenberg, was quoted as saying: 'We have to seek a location that is somewhere further away', but he could not say where.

## The Tasman Sea tests

The present tests were secretly arranged with the government of Malcolm Fraser about three years ago, and were secretly agreed to by the Hawke government without caucus or cabinet being consulted. Hawke merely requested that the USA hold the tests in international waters rather than in Australian territorial waters, to reduce the visibility of Australian involvement. Permission was given for American aircraft to operate out of Sydney.

Each of the two test missiles will probably carry ten dummy warheads. The main objective of the tests is to measure the accuracy of these warheads. This is done by using hydrophone buoys anchored to the seabed which record the splash as the warheads hit the sea. From the timing of the splash recordings, the splashdown location can be pinpointed to within 15 m. The buoys will float at the surface, and each will have a small radio transmitter to send splash data to special P-3 Orion aircraft cruising in the vicinity. It has been reported in Australia that these buoys have already been planted in the ocean.

The missiles themselves and the dummy warheads will transmit data ('telemetry') while in flight. This will include information about speed, acceleration, height, temperature, guidance system performance and so on. This data is recorded by a fleet of seven specially instrumented Boeing 707s, known as advanced range instrumentation aircraft (ARIA). Besides telemetry receivers these aircraft, as well as some of the Orions, carry various kinds of tracking and photographic equipment.

The USA is also using two advanced range instrumentation ships (ARIS). These are big ships top-heavy with all kinds of fancy antennas used for tracking and telemetry reception. Other smaller vessels will probably be used for retrieving the warheads after splashdown.

Since the tests will be in international waters there is nothing to stop the Soviet Union participating as well. The Soviet Union has several big tracking ships for monitoring its own tests and spying on American ones. Since US missile technology is far ahead of Soviet technology, the Soviet Union can get a free ride by observing what the USA does and how successful it is. The Soviet Union will probably learn a lot about how to make its missiles fly more accurately in a north-south direction. Geography prevents the Soviet Union from testing in this direction; it cannot do so without flying over the territory of other nations. So the Tasman tests will probably result in technological advances for both sides of the arms race.

Normally a missile test involves vast amounts of data being relayed between warheads, aircraft, ships, land-based facilities and the USA. The aircraft and ships are fitted with satellite communication antennas and most of the data will be transmitted back to the USA in this manner. Extensive use is also made of ordinary high frequency (short wave) radio, and it may be that the USA will require access to short wave radio facilities in Australia and even Aotearoa. According to the SALT-2 treaty, neither the USA nor the Soviet Union are allowed to encode the telemetry transmissions so the Russian spyships will be able to eavesdrop on any US data.

The two scheduled tests are probably not the last the USA hopes to hold in this part of the world. It is quite likely that the US navy will want to test its Trident-2 in this direction too. Trident-2, a follow-on from the Trident-1 (already deployed in the Pacific region aboard Trident submarines), has a vastly superior capability. Together with MX it will make a US first strike feasible.

## Taking the buoys from the boys

The target zone will probably be about 100km in diameter. The USA will have to reveal its location several weeks in advance of the tests to allow publication and dissemination of warning notices to mariners and aviators to keep out of the way of the incoming

# Greenpeace voyage

Several Australian peace and disarmament groups are forming peace squadrons or considering the effectiveness of water-based actions as ongoing protests. Their source of inspiration is the Greenpeace organisation whose boat the *Vega* (also known as *Greenpeace III*) recently circumnavigated Australia, its crew involving themselves in actions where appropriate and in discussions with activists and the general public.

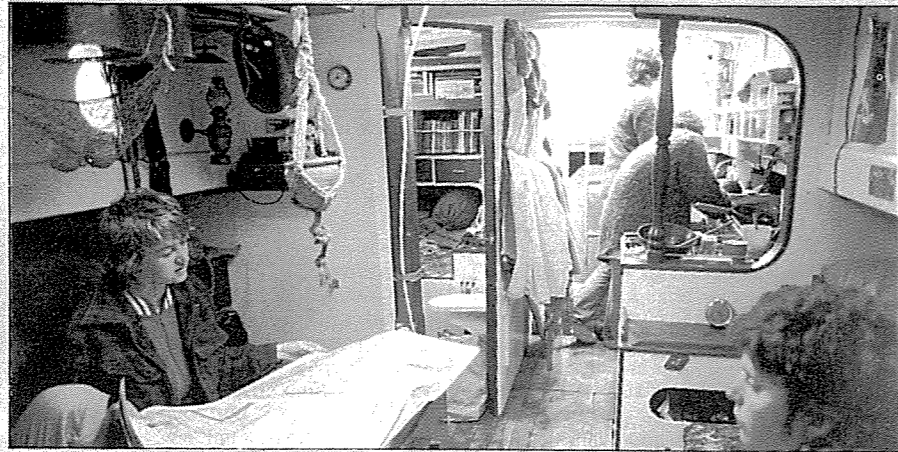
Many groups, recognising the achievement of New Zealand activists concerning the visits of nuclear-powered ships, are looking to their methods to gain a similar stand in Australia. The extensive water-based campaigns in New Zealand in which Greenpeace played an important role (eg voyages to Moruroa and actions in Auckland harbour) were successful to a large extent in capturing the imagination of the New Zealand people.

The *Vega* is a Canadian registered double-ended ketch, New Zealand built, constructed entirely of a native timber, Kauri pine, and built by Alan Orams over a two-year period without the aid of any power tools.

The yacht was purchased in 1970 by a Canadian ex-business person and athlete David McTaggart who, in 1972, hearing of the Greenpeace organisation's planned protest voyage to the French nuclear test

missiles. Under international law the USA can only request non-US citizens to keep out of the test area; it cannot order them to do so.

If the peace movement gets moving now there should be ample time to organise a Moruroa-style peace fleet of small craft to occupy the test zone and disrupt the tests. If we are lucky the tests may even coincide with the visit to Aotearoa of the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior*. It will be much easier to get a peace fleet down to the Tasman than all the way across to Moruroa. While a peace fleet at Moruroa is mostly of symbolic value – it is difficult to stop an underground nuclear test from 20km offshore – one in the Tasman Sea could actually stop the missile tests. All the boats have to



Aboard the *Vega* in Bass Strait.

site at Moruroa in the South Pacific, volunteered to take *Vega* on the forbidding 5500 km voyage from New Zealand. And so the missions of *Greenpeace III* (renamed for the voyage) began and these acted as a catalyst for widespread protest throughout South Pacific nations including Australia and New Zealand.

In 1972 the newly elected governments in both these countries each pledged to support a ban on nearby atmospheric tests, especially those conducted by the French. Following the cessation of atmospheric tests at Moruroa atoll, concern at the damage caused by the continuing underground tests conducted by the French government was brought to a head by the return of *Greenpeace* in 1981 to the test area, eight years after the first historic voyage.

Its continuing presence in the South Pacific region has provided both a focus for action and inspiration for the individuals and groups working to make the Pacific region nuclear free. *Greenpeace III* arrived in Sydney in December 1983 – the first visit to Australia of an active Greenpeace campaign vessel. Starting up the east coast on a voyage

circumnavigating Australia, it gave support to the Daintree campaign in late May 1984 and then in Darwin in July 1984 supported an action to stop a consignment of uranium leaving from Europe. From there they sailed to the Monte Bello Islands (site of British nuclear weapons testing in the 1950s) where the crew investigated the significant radioactive contamination. The voyage continued down the west coast to Perth where the yacht was involved in an attempt to stop the US nuclear submarine *Dallas* from entering the harbour. Then on to Hobart where it tried to prevent a supply ship leaving for Antarctica with machinery which would be used to build a French airstrip directly through a penguin rookery.

The yacht sailed to Port Albert in Victoria and after some much needed maintenance left for Adelaide in early January 1985. It visited Melbourne in late February on its way back to Sydney, where it arrived in time to take part in the effort to prevent the destroyer, *USS Buchanan*, from entering Sydney Harbour in early March.

Contact: Greenpeace Australia, 787 George St., Sydney, NSW 2000. Tel: (02) 211 0089.

do is stay there, which they have a perfect right to do.

Within the test zone will be the deep ocean transponder (DOT) buoys. While waiting for the tests to start, or waiting for the USA to call off the tests, the peace fleet could keep itself occupied hunting for the DOT buoys. If any are found, they could be disabled by snapping off their whip antennas, and set adrift by cutting their anchor lines. Unfortunately they are probably too big to be brought home as trophies.

Such activity would put the USA in a very different position. As a long-time advocate of freedom of navigation on the high seas, the USA would be quite embarrassed at having to exercise exclusive jurisdiction in international waters by attempting to

forcibly eject 'foreign nationals' from the test zone.

It might be so embarrassing for the USA that Mr Bjelke-Petersen feels called upon to offer Moreton Bay for future tests. Mr Gray will try to get into the act by offering the Franklin Valley. A partial solution would be to ask Hawke to remove his 'foreign nationals'. New Zealand 'foreign nationals' could only be got rid of by giving them honorary Nicaraguan citizenship, then blowing them out the water. Fortunately, however, the USA will be reluctant to set a legal precedent which will be thrown back at them in future Law of the Sea negotiations.

Peace fleet crew need have no moral qualms about undertaking the actions described above. The USA refuses to allow its

freedom of navigation to be impeded by a Pacific Nuclear-weapon-free Zone; why should we allow our freedom of navigation to be impeded by a US Nuclear-missile Test Zone?

## Other anti-test protests

There are a wide range of facilities in Australia and Aotearoa which may be used, openly or covertly, by the USA in the course of the tests. Peace activist groups near these facilities should make their own investigations and plan actions at or against these facilities. These actions may be designed to publicise the use of the facilities, or, preferably, to impede their use.

**Airfields.** There will be all sorts of aircraft supporting the tests. Undoubtedly there will be several Starlifter loads of equipment to be airlifted into Australia, possibly by way of the Operation Deepfreeze base in Christchurch. There may even be outside equipment that requires the use of Galaxy transports. Six Caribou terminal area support aircraft will serve as runabouts during the tests.

According to the SSTSS report up to sixteen aircraft may be involved in the tests themselves. This will include the seven

ARIA aircraft. Some of these planes will make their presence known in no uncertain way – their engines produce considerable noise during takeoff. This noise problem, plus the likelihood of physical interference with the planes, will probably ensure that the planes are based at Richmond RAAF base rather than Sydney International Airport. Richmond already serves as a staging point for Starlifters flying from Operation Deepfreeze to the big US bases in the interior and west of Australia.

There will be up to nine P-3 Orions participating in the tests, monitoring any DOT buoys left unmolested by the peace fleet.

**Ports.** The ARISs will probably need to dock at an Australian port for refuelling and provisioning. In addition the USA has probably chartered a vessel of the type used for servicing oil rigs to implant and maintain the DOT buoys. Maritime unions may be able to help in identifying this ship. Peace squadron port blockades and other protests should attempt to keep these ships out of port, or attempt to keep them in once they have got in.

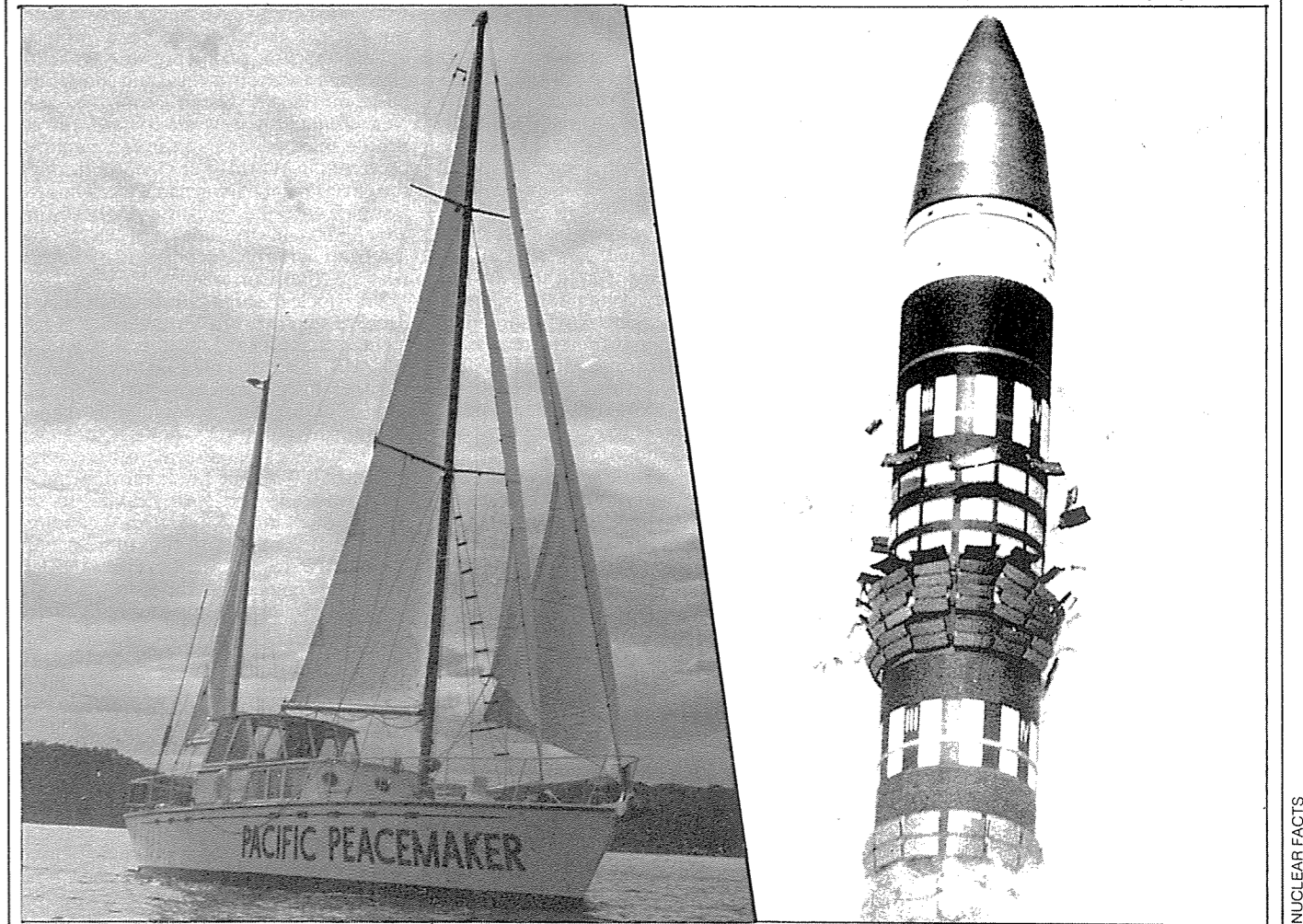
**Omega.** According to the 1976 official *Range Instrumentation Handbook*,<sup>5</sup> the Omega navigation system is utilised during missile tests for measuring winds in the

upper atmosphere which affect the accuracy of the re-entering warheads. Gippsland activists could try to have the Omega station in Victoria shut down for the duration of the tests.

**Lorac.** During the missile tests a temporary very high accuracy radio navigation system called Lorac will probably be set up on the Australian mainland. It will consist of four small transmitter installations, and is used for accurate positioning of the ships and aircraft when they track the warheads and for accurate positioning of the DOT buoys. Using simple radio direction finding equipment peace activists could track down these stations and mount vigils or other forms of protest.

**Communications.** All sorts of communications facilities may be needed. When missiles are tested at Kwajalein a big satellite antenna is used to relay all the data back to the USA. This antenna is identical to the Project Sparrow antenna at Watsonia, Melbourne, and it is conceivable that Watsonia may be used to relay data from the Tasman Sea tests.

The NASA satellite telemetry antenna at Orroral Valley near Canberra could also be used for monitoring the missile tests. If high frequency communications are to be extensively used the USA may try to make



Left: The *Pacific Peacemaker*, veteran of Moruroa protests. Right: The Peacekeeper.

covert use of its Deepfreeze communication facilities in Aotearoa, or it may arrange to use Australian military facilities.

**Meteorology.** Obviously knowledge of weather conditions at all levels in the atmosphere is vital during a missile test. There are probably secret arrangements for Australia to supply all kinds of detailed meteorological information.

### Missile testing in the Pacific

The USA has been testing missiles in the Pacific since the 1950s, mostly on what the USA calls the Pacific Missile Range — between California and Kwajalein Atoll. The nuclear arms race is a technological arms race, not a numbers arms race. Most of the technological developments that fuel the arms race, making first-strike doctrines feasible, are developments in missiles rather than developments in the nuclear explosives they carry. Nuclear explosives are already about as 'perfect' as they can be, but missiles are still undergoing continual and dramatic improvements, particularly in accuracy, reliability and payload. Thus it follows that missile tests actually promote the arms race more than nuclear tests do.

Most of America's strategic weapons are tested in the Pacific, as well as many Soviet ones, and all Chinese ones. The USA is not the only nation to test missiles in the South Pacific; the Soviet Union did so in 1975. If we could stop the USA testing in the Pacific we would cut off half the momentum of the arms race — or perhaps somewhat more than half, if one accepts that the USA leads the arms race and the Soviet Union follows. If we could stop the US tests then we would be in a strong moral position to demand that the Soviet Union and China stop theirs.

As long as the US test missiles finished up in Kwajalein Atoll the rest of the world was able to turn a blind eye. Yet for all these years the inhabitants of Kwajalein have been confined to one small island under conditions close to apartheid. The rest of the atoll is out of bounds and used by the USA as the target area and for various equipment.

Any protests against the Tasman Sea tests should be directed not merely at stopping these tests, but at stopping *all* missile tests *anywhere* in the Pacific. Missile tests would not be permitted in a truly nuclear-free and independent Pacific.

### Notes

1. US Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, hearings on defense authorisation for fiscal year 1978, part 10, p 6539.
2. *Strategic Systems Test Support Study (SSTSS)*. Final Report, Volume 1: Executive Summary, November 1981.
3. Memorandum FOR James Moorman FROM Andrew Hamilton SUBJECT Does Kwajalein Missile Range Have a Future? DATE September 10, 1981.
4. See RJ Sedalis, Military Uses of ocean space and the developing international Law of the Sea: An analysis in the context of peacetime ASW's. *San Diego Law Review*, April 1979.
5. *Range Instrumentation Handbook*, 1 July 1976, USAF Eastern Test Range, Patrick AFB, Florida.

# NZ nuclear ships ban

New Zealand's ban on visits by nuclear ships has sparked renewed hope among the peace movement in Australia. **Lynette Thorstensen**, a New Zealand peace activist, spoke to an anti-MX rally in Melbourne City Square 15 February 1985 about New Zealand's stand.

The best thing about owning up to being a New Zealander at the moment is that David Lange is one. The most embarrassing thing about being a New Zealander in Australia is that Joh Bjelke-Petersen is one too.

Lange's stand is regarded by the peace movement as admirably, if surprisingly, firm. The inside story on the cabinet vote against visits by nuclear warships is that it was unanimous. Quite incredible really given that a number of members of cabinet were certainly not very supportive not so very long ago. The reaction of the general public at this stage is 70% all the way with Lange. Either this or Lange is skillfully interpreting his electorate and is all the way with them. He seems rather more skilled at interpreting the wishes of his electorate than Bob Hawke!

The right wing opposition in New Zealand is limited and Jim McLay — Muldoon's replacement as leader of the opposition — made a cringing and pathetic display, embarrassing his party more than anything else. The opposition spokesperson on disarmament and arms control, Douglas Kidd, has remained curiously silent for a fair while now. One long-time near-fascist, known as Jim Spratt, has set up a group called 'Peace Through Security' which apparently has very little support and is as an outrageous a misnomer as Reagan calling the MX missile the Peacemaker!

Media support in New Zealand has generally been supportive with Peace Movement Aotearoa working hard to produce one or two media statements a day. A great deal of favourable press has been given to Lange's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Apparently the kiwis loved the Bjelke-Petersen fiasco (over imports of New Zealand chocolate). A leading story in one of the New Zealand dailies was that a photograph Bjelke-Petersen had given to the people of

*Lynette Thorstensen was spokesperson for Wellington Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and worked at the Peace Movement Aotearoa office. She now lives in Melbourne and is involved in the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Committee, the Campaign Against Nuclear Ships and the Australian Campaign for Independence in New Caledonia.*



David Lange, a 'political animal'.

Dannevirke, the town of his birth, was found discarded and covered with cobwebs in the basement of the council chambers with a 50c sticker on it. Apparently it had sometime ago been up for sale . . . and apparently no-one had been willing to buy!

It is important to realise that Lange is not some kind of wonderful messiah risen from nowhere to save New Zealand from the nuclear threat. Lange is a political animal reacting under pressure from his electorate and from a vocal and committed peace movement. The peace movement in New Zealand has worked hard for its profile since the time of the conscientious objectors in World War One, on through the government of Norman Kirk, who sent a frigate into the Moruroa Atoll Testing zone, and up to today. Much of the forefront of the movement is led by women who are Maori sovereignty activists.

The nuclear ships ban is a major and decisive step forward for the peace movement, a step forward towards dismantling ANZUS, towards a nuclear-free and independent Pacific and a world where the smaller nations can maintain non-aligned and independent foreign policies, and it is a step towards global disarmament. It is the responsibility of the peace movements in both Australia and New Zealand to see disarmament in its political and economic context. It is important that more people become aware that treaties like ANZUS and, more generally, the arms race are promoted by huge multinational conglomerates such as General Electric, Boeing, Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas and even Kodak which profit at the expense of the workers whose labour they exploit.

It is important that the peace movements in Australia and New Zealand not see the nuclear ships ban or the MX issue as isolated from the network of American bases throughout the entire Pacific. The bases are the nuts and bolts of a crazy, dangerous and ruthlessly implemented military strategy.

It's also important that the peace movements in Australia and Aotearoa continue to maintain a high profile, and to work together and support each other's initiatives.

TIME

## POLITICAL DIRECTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT

# Towards a red and green coalition

By Anne McMenamin and John Wishart

The 1984 federal election showed considerable and continuing appeal for an electoral expression of environmental and survival concerns. In 1982 and 1983 the 'No Dams' issue surfaced in a series of state and federal campaigns. In 1984 the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) became a force which the media and the big parties were compelled to take note of. And since its formation in 1977, the Australian Democrats, although not primarily an environment party, have drawn significant support from people seeking a better alternative to Liberal and Labor on environment issues.

The NDP vote on 1 December was truly spectacular, with over half a million people giving their first preference to them in the Senate. Arguments will go on about exactly who composed the NDP vote — disaffected laborites, new non-aligned young voters, left liberals — and what the vote means — opposition to uranium mining, concern about nuclear arms and militarism and so on. But what is clear is that the major parties are failing to satisfy a sizeable constituency which wants some action and better policies in this area and which perceives the electoral process as relevant to environmental politics.

Given this, where do concerned environmentalists go from here? Expand the NDP? Work within the ALP? Form an Ecology Party? Leave parliamentary politics alone and concentrate on grassroots activism? Develop environmentally sound working alternatives? Discussion about these options, and possible combinations of approaches is very important now that the winds of change are blowing.

*Anne McMenamin and John Wishart are both members of Friends of the Earth (Adelaide) and the Communist Party of Australia.*

AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION  
CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY  
CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF W.A.  
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH  
PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Urge you to vote for PEACE and ANTI-NUCLEAR candidates in the SENATE

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1 Nuclear Disarmament Party

2 Liberal Party

3 National Party

4 Australian Family Movement

5 Group E

6 Australian Labor Party

7 Australian Democrats

(Preferences will go to Australian Democrats, followed by Australian Labor Party)

WE BELIEVE THE BEST ANTI-NUCLEAR TICKET IS SHOWN BELOW

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Nuclear Disarmament Party	Liberal Party	National Party	A.F.M.	Group E	A.L.P.	Australian Democrats	Unregistered
[1] Valente	[10] Cockton	[14] Currie	[18] Pascoe	[24] Nanc	[6] Gies	[3] Egan	[28] Van Tongeren
[2] Matthews	[11] Winners	[15] Blight	[19] Van Lun	[25] Stuart	[9] Cook	[4] Jethwa	[27] Suter
	[12] Knowles	[16] Schae	[20] Clark		[7] McKernan	[5] Jervis	[26] Ash
	[13] Nelson	[17] Bannister	[21] Gilmour		[8] Cronin		
			[22] Wright				
			[23] Butt				

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Authorised by: Capt. J.B. Patterson M.B.E.

## The future is ours.

I'm a mother. I'm a grandmother. I'm standing in the Senate in this election because I'm concerned about this country's continuing involvement in the Nuclear Arms Race. This issue is the most pressing of our time. If we can't solve it now all other issues are irrelevant.

**Vote 1 Nuclear Disarmament Party.**

If you can help on election day please contact us:  
NDP, Room 314, 234 Collins St., Melbourne. Ph. 63 1297 63 1466

Nuclear Disarmament Party election material, December 1984.



### The political consequences of environmental harmony

Our starting point is the belief that the achievement of an environmentally sound society/world requires fundamental changes in how society is run and what principles guide development. Even if one is only concerned to save a single endangered species it is more and more obvious that protection of the particular habitat is not enough. Aggregate environmental degradation — of sea, air and land — threatens major changes to the life support systems for humans and many other living things on a global scale.

Many factors have led to this situation, but massive industrialism and growth-orientated economies are central. Almost everywhere one looks, this trend is dominating development and shaping the human future.

Now the essential political point is that it is big companies, powerful governments and privileged elites who are largely in control of this process and who primarily benefit from it. (However vast numbers of people have been encouraged to believe that a bright future for all lies in more material goods, further 'modernisation' and an expanding gross national product.) It is against the interests of the elites to admit that our present path of super-industrialisation is risking major environmental damage. Those who want an ecologically viable society confront a powerful ruling group which vigorously resists any attempt to radically alter social goals. Their wealth and power depend on keeping the system basically as it is. The battle royal over nuclear power and the suggestion that renewable energy alternatives are wiser provides a good illustration of just how tenaciously the big companies and their friends will fight to protect an irrational industry.

Of course, the exact constellation of political forces varies from country to country. In the socialist states, private corporations and big capitalists are largely absent in the key domestic industries (although trade with the west and joint ventures with foreign transnationals are playing a bigger part in economic life). However, powerful central government and privileged elites remain.

In Australia and other capitalist countries, the role of transnational companies is very influential in determining how society is organised and what is produced and consumed.

### How to change this?

Two enormous obstacles block radical change in a society like Australia. One is the integration of the majority into the present mould — the massive popular ignorance about where our path of development is leading, combined with a fear of change, of losing what we have now. The second barrier is the concentrated technological and financial might of the ruling group; allowing it to often contain dissent, and where necessary, repress it brutally.

In modern mass societies, the basic locus of power cannot be shifted without the successful prosecution of a strategy which mobilises a very large number of people in active support of change. (Even then the exercise is hazardous, as Chile in 1973 shows). Individual example and minority group efforts can have a political impact — positive or negative — but they are not sufficient. To really change the priorities of the society, and to sustain the new ones, requires a very large movement, deeply rooted among the population and based broadly in different social/occupational sectors — among workers in different enterprises, people in the communities, among artists and intellectuals, and so on.

The movement or coalition must be able to draw people, issues and relevant perspectives together. It must be an organised force operating at a number of different levels and in different ways — parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, local and national, educational and action-based. And it must relate to people's immediate concerns — poverty, unemployment, discrimination, health, the desire for meaningful participation in what happens as well as the longer term issue of ecological survival.

What sort of vehicle could do the job?

### Nuclear Disarmament Party

The limitations of the NDP, as a case point, emerged in the 1984 election campaign. As a vehicle to express support for nuclear disarmament and opposition to uranium mining and military bases it had value, but the critics could justifiably ask what would the NDP do about jobs, poverty, foreign trade, education, women's rights? What about immigration, or Aboriginal self-determination? Nuclear disarmament simply isn't the central issue from which all other considerations can be derived or traced. The fact that nuclear war, if it occurred, would make all the other issues irrelevant, doesn't mean that everything else can be either explained or solved through adherence to nuclear disarmament. The nuclear arms race is only a result of twentieth century industrial civilisation and the rivalries between different blocs. A frightening consequence, but a consequence, nonetheless.

For the NDP, the basic question of causes will remain its stumbling block. Its membership will have to formulate a full set of policies based on a philosophy of how society works and what must be changed to eliminate the nuclear industry and military bases. This process is likely to split the membership, some refusing to look at the root of problems, whilst others will come to believe that radical change is necessary. If the former position wins out, then the party will remain as a protest group, probably with diminishing impact — ineffective in the long run. If the radical wing prevails then the party will find itself pushed out of the comfortable mainstream, and hence facing the problems and disadvantages experienced by other radical parties.

### Ecology Party

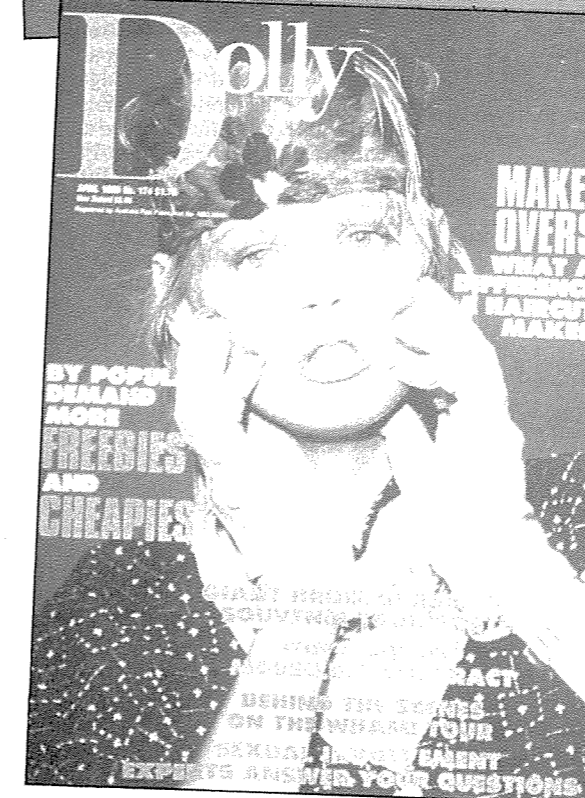
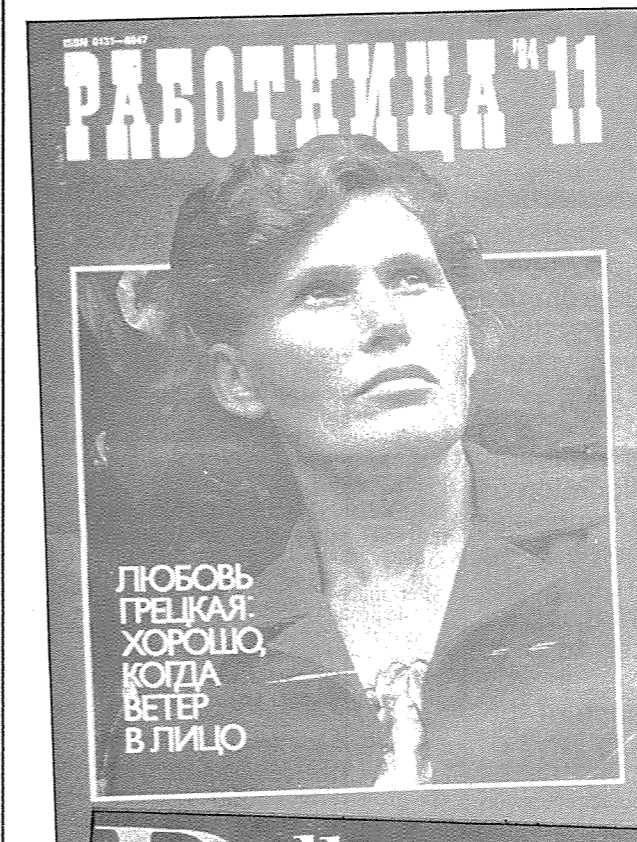
Following the West German experience, there has been a lot of interest in the development of a Greens-type party in Australia. Many environmentalists correctly see that the ALP is not committed to strong environmental action, even when at the policy level its position is reasonable. That it has a strategy which places parliamentary reform at the centre of the political universe, and that its membership is overwhelmingly wed to the status quo. These features have long characterised the ALP, though the Hawke government has gone further in putting the party into the arms of the bankers and other money barons.

The fact is that the ALP, despite the continuing presence of a small minority favouring socialism, has since its formation in the 1890's always been a party content to reform some of the system's aspects without fundamentally changing society.

At the same time many do not see the Communist Party or other revolutionary socialist parties in Australia as an acceptable alternative. This is partly because the existing socialist countries' track record on environmental protection is not good, and also because socialism is conceived of a centralised bureaucracy, devoid of grassroots democracy and the room for expression of creative ideas which diverge from the accepted orthodoxy. Of course, in our country at least 40 years of anti-communist propaganda, containing gross distortions of fact, also goes a long way in explaining why so many people have negative views about socialism.

The big danger here is that environmentalists will completely reject socialist principles, rather than viewing them as integral to a new environmentally sound society. For such a world is not possible without co-operation between people and the sharing of resources within and between nations or regions. Communalism as opposed to individualism, co-operation in place of competition.

Those critical of existing socialist models on environmental grounds can validly say that achieving public ownership of the main industries has not in itself led to an environmentally rational society. (Feminists have made the same point for women's liberation.) The leaders of the socialist nations are as committed to a philosophy of 'man conquering nature' as their capitalist counterparts, even though the motive of private profit is absent. And at the present time the majority of people in the socialist countries seem to want similar consumer goodies and hold similar attitudes to technological progress as people in



Russian and Australian women's magazines are some indication of the similarities and differences in the expectations of working people in the East and West.

capitalist countries. People in socialist countries are not bombarded by corporate advertising, and in general their consumer tastes are far less exotic than in the rich capitalist nations. However there are many similarities in underlying attitudes — that modern is always better, that more is better, that big is beautiful.

What does not follow from all this is that socialist principles are irrelevant or that we can move away from the global environmental crisis under a capitalist order. For capitalism, with private profit as its driving force, has shown itself to be an environmental nightmare — wasteful of material reserves, exploitative of human beings, extremely unjust in how wealth and security are distributed. If this is sometimes blurred in Australia, it is very stark in countries like South Africa, El Salvador or Indonesia. Dependent economies, impoverished populations, ruinous agricultural practices tell a sorry tale. These are the end products of individualism and 'free' enterprise.

Only by collective thought and action can we stand a chance of arresting environmental degradation, the threat of new and devastating wars, and a scramble for food and other resources in which the age old inequalities of sex, race and class manifest themselves even more sharply than at present.

### Red and Green

Our conclusion is that the movement or party we speak of above must be both Red and Green in its character, combining the ideals of equality and collectivity in human life with respect for environmental laws.

It is a matter of some debate whether the time is ripe now for such a political formation. Some initiatives have already been taken but full discussion amongst environmentalists, feminists, socialists and peace activists is essential if a new formation is to be solidly based and thought out in its direction and policies. Perhaps there'll be different attempts at coalition and combination out of which will come a new party. There is no doubt though, that the environmental problems of our civilisation are becoming evident to more and more people, providing the basis for a political movement of real consequence.

Those who formed such a party would determine the details. We would like to see the organisation as:

- indigenous in its character, based on Australian conditions rather than as a copy of some overseas model.
- having a big emphasis on grassroots decision making and action, avoiding the centralism and elitism of most existing political parties.
- concentrating on popular mobilisation rather than on parliamentary strategies for change, but participating in elections — local and national — because this is part of Australian political life and an important arena of struggle.
- respecting the value and independence of more specific organisations and campaigns, attempting to draw people together across areas of concern without dominating or trying to substitute for these specific initiatives.

The time is right for a free exchange of ideas about future directions for the environment movement.

Contributions from readers are welcomed on the issues raised in this article or, more generally, on the themes 'political directions for the environment movement' and 'eco-socialism'. Please send letters and articles to Sue Armstrong c/- Chain Reaction.

# Wimmera water battle continues

The July 1983 edition of *Chain Reaction* publicised the battle in Western Victoria to preserve the Environment Protection Appeal Board decision of July 1982 to halt sewerage discharge from the provincial city of Horsham to the Wimmera River and lakes system. (The Wimmera is a closed and intermittently flowing river system, feeding Lake Hindmarsh, Victoria's largest freshwater lake, Lake Albacutya Park and Wyperfeld National Park.)

The decision resulted from Victoria's longest river pollution hearing, lasting 25 days and requiring an enormous allocation of resources by the successful appellants, the rural shire of Dimboola, downstream of Horsham. Their legal costs at the time were \$160 000. Due to the Victorian government's attempt from December 1982 to overrule the appeal funding via the preparation of a State Environment Protection Policy, the legal bill has risen to over \$200 000.

**Lyndon Fraser and John Kirby** look at the importance of the decision for the protection of all Australian waterways.

The nil-discharge ruling, to be implemented by the end of 1985, is the first of its kind in Australia, the preservation of which is crucial for Australia's water environment. It has effectively exposed the fundamental flaw common in all Australian environmental legislation which permits waste discharges to water, the assumption that the environment has an inherent capacity to safely absorb a base level of wastes (its 'waste assimilative capacity').

The Victorian Environment Protection Act 1970 was copied from the US legislation that existed in the 1960s. In 1972 the USA implemented the Clean Water Act with the objective of ending all waste discharges to water by 1985 and introducing recycling of waste water to land. TD Waite, of the Victorian State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (SRWSC), described the change in US attitudes:

... only by accepting the positive policy of keeping waters as clean as possible, as opposed to the negative policy of attempting to use the full capacity of water for waste assimilation, could the nation adequately protect its water resources ...

In comparison a Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) statement says:

Some wastes may be discharged to the environment in limited quantities without causing harmful effects. These wastes are generally non-persistent and biodegradable. Organic wastes such as domestic sewage fall into this category. The receiving environment is said to have a certain ability (assimilative capacity) to cope

*Lyndon Fraser is a member of the Wimmera River Conservation Group. John Kirby works with Friends of the Earth in Collingwood.*

with such wastes... limited amounts of organic wastes can be broken-down in the aquatic environment without harmful effects. This process of natural purification (waste assimilation) primarily involves the break-down of organic material by bacteria into inorganic pounds and carbon di-oxide using up oxygen in the dissolved water. If too much organic material is released into a water body, the oxygen is used up more quickly than it can diffuse into the water from the atmosphere. The resulting drop



Ribbon reed growth chokes the Wimmera near the Little Desert National Park, south of Dimboola, December 1983.

in oxygen levels may then be sufficient to kill fish and other aquatic organisms. If all the oxygen in the water is used up, unpleasant odours can result.

The July 1982 Wimmera River appeal decision says:

We are satisfied that the main cause of pollution of the Wimmera River is the proliferation of vegetation growth stimulated by nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) introduced by the Sewerage Authority discharge and that oxygen deficiency, particularly in bottom waters, is the result of decay of this vegetation. (p49)

In obvious reference to the waste assimilative capacity the Appeal Board further said:

After much consideration we think that we should prohibit any further discharge of effluent to the river system on the basis that even if satisfactory rates of dilution could be achieved with certainty there would still remain the problem that any input of phosphorus into the closed system of the Wimmera River and lakes must, for practical purposes, remain there. (p59)

The decision has changed, for the better, the ground rules of environmental impact assessment. It effectively defined the term 'waste assimilation' as the removal of nutrient overload by the rampant growth of weeds, reeds and various algal species, and the subsequent return of this additional organic material to the riverbed and banks upon decay of the vegetation litter. This damaging cycle will migrate further and further down the Wimmera as a result of

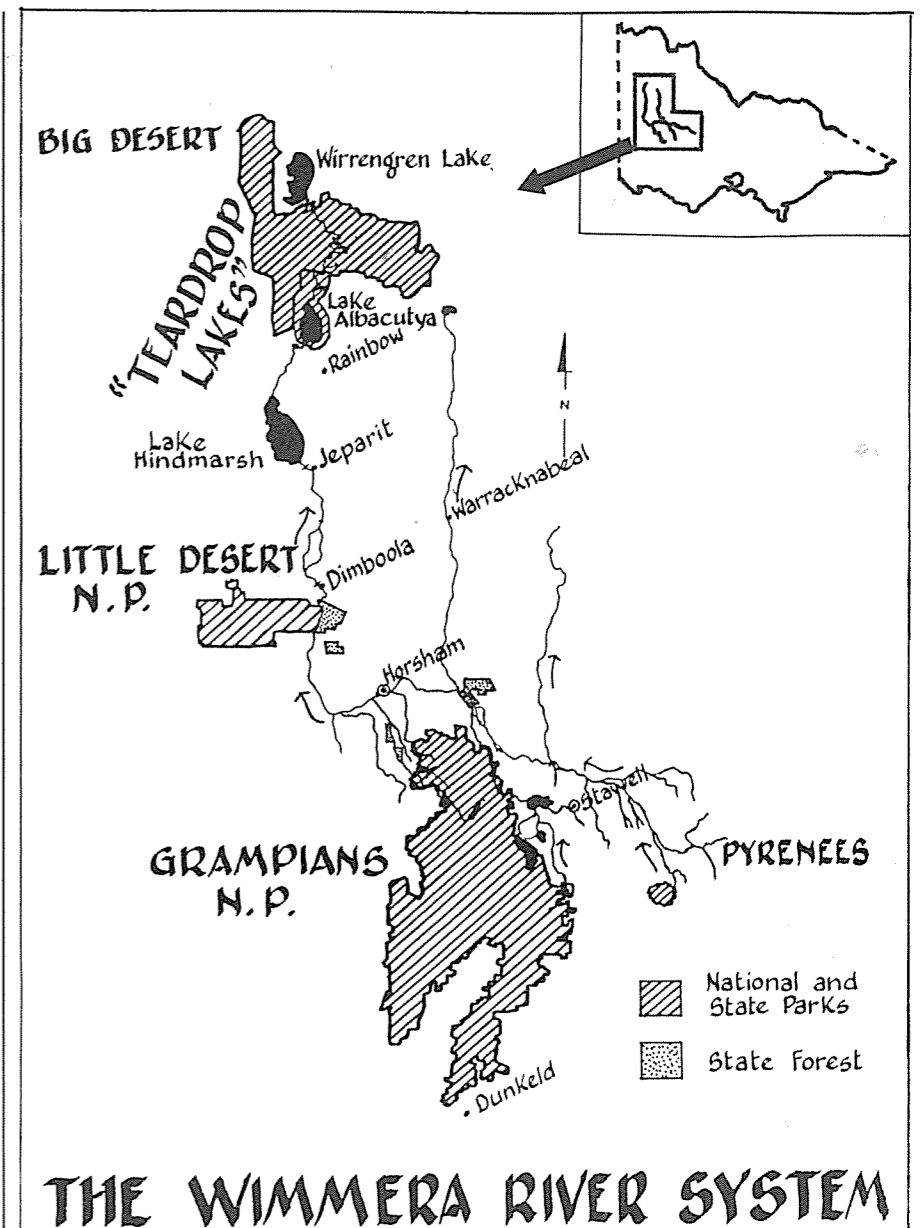
seed blooms plus portions of the long rhizome roots of the main nuisance, *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed), being washed downstream in the seasonal August-September river swell. Due to the abundant supply of nutrients in the water, riverbed and banks, this process, in all probability, would continue for many years after sewage discharge is removed.

The decision revealed that the waste assimilative capacity notion, and the water quality standard used to measure it, are based on a 1912 British model. They assume that all Australian rivers are continually flowing, exist in a typically English temperature of 18-20°C, and that waste-receiving water reaches the sea within 5 days. The Biochemical Oxygen Demand 5 day test, the basis of all Victorian waste discharge licences to water, only reflects the oxygen consumption of the carbonaceous material in an effluent (such as decaying gum leaves) and not that due to nitrogenous and phosphorous material.

In particular the Appeals Board recognised the nutrient accumulation resulting from past and present Horsham sewage discharge which has ranged from raw and partially-treated sewage (mid 1960s to 1979) to what the water quality industry describe as 'fully treated' sewage. Also revealed was that discharge from Horsham has been occurring since 1926, although the information was not acknowledged by the SRWSC to downstream communities until the late 1970s. Since the appeal, knowledge has surfaced of further sewage and factory discharges upstream of Horsham — at Stawell, Halls Gap and Seppelt's Winery, Great Western — plus another 8 licensed discharges at Horsham. Not one of these additional discharges were mentioned by the EPA or SRWSC, who were aligned with the Horsham Sewerage Authority during the 1982 appeal.

This with-holding of crucial information fitted hand-in-glove with the legal strategy of all dischargers and their bureaucratic representatives at appeals — nominate a third party on which to blame water nutrient pollution. The developing scenario across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia is to blame farmers' use of superphosphate fertiliser. The appeal decision retuted this diversionary tactic. Quoting an agricultural scientist appearing for Dimboola Shire, it said:

Yes my experience certainly throughout the whole of Victoria and the east coast of Australia is that the application of superphosphate to land leads immediately to either a take-up of part of the phosphorus by the plant, the balance goes into a stable precipitate which stays in the soil... Soil tests that we have taken in a variety of places including Dutson Downs (the location of Latrobe Valley sewage discharge to the Gipps-



land lakes) and in areas in northern Victoria indicate that there is very little movement... into the sub-surface waters and consequently into the drainage. Surface run off takes practically none. (p34)

What the decision didn't say however, although it was continually emphasised during presentation of evidence, is that superphosphate application and alleged run-off to rivers only has relevance in steeply sloping terrains. The Wimmera River is situated in the southern portion of the flat Murray-Darling Basin.

This red-herring of alleged fertiliser run-

off has deep implications for the tackling of pollution in the Murray River which is effected by 26 sewage discharges from Victoria, either directly to the mainstream or indirectly to its tributaries. Albury/-Wodonga alone discharges approximately 20 million litres of sewage per day to the Murray River. The dissolved salts content of Myrtleford's sewage discharge to the Ovens River tributary is licensed by the Victorian EPA for a permit of 3000 parts per million (ppm), which means that the 'common salt' component is equivalent of 1800 ppm. Water reaching 1500 ppm is

## Obtained under the Victorian Freedom of Information Act

27 August 1982

The Honourable Evan Walker, MLC  
Minister for Conservation

Subject: Horsham Sewerage Authority — Waste Discharge Licence

Dear Mr Minister,

Further to the recent Environment Protection Appeal Board (EPAB) decision to prevent Horsham Sewerage Authority (HSA) discharging to the Wimmera River from January 1986, I have examined the options available to the Government to review the licence requirements. Three alternatives are available:

- The issue by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) of a preliminary determination to vary the licence conditions determined by the EPAB. This would no doubt result in a compulsory conference and ultimately an appeal which could be called in and the licence determined by the Governor-in-Council.
- The Government could exempt the discharge from the sewerage works from the licence provisions of the Environment Protection Act, in which case the licence will become inoperative.
- A State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) could be prepared for the Wimmera River adjacent to and below Horsham, followed by an amendment of the HSA discharge licence to conform with the declared SEPP.

Option (a) involves the EPA pursuing a procedure that is contrary to the spirit although not the letter of the Environment Protection Act, since the EPA is obliged to accept decisions of the EPAB. No change of circumstances since the Appeal Board decision exists to justify the Authority adopting this course.

Option (b) could be implemented quickly and is not subject to third party appeal. Exemption orders must be made upon recommendation of the Authority, I am not aware of grounds for the EPA making such a recommendation.

In general I am strongly opposed to sewerage treatment works being exempt from EPA licensing. It would be difficult for the Government to continue the licensing of treatment works other than Horsham in view of the receiving water problems associated with the Horsham discharge. It should be noted that exempt discharges are subject to prosecution under the pollution provisions of the Environment Protection Act. (The EPAB found that the HSA was heavily polluting the Wimmera River.)

Option (c) provides a procedure for socio-economic considerations to be addressed, matters which are beyond the province of the EPAB. The preparation of a SEPP will enable the Government, with the aid of public participation, to carefully weigh the waste disposal needs of the area against the beneficial uses of the receiving waters desired by the community.

The project would be most expeditiously and suitably handled by consultants... A similar procedure was employed with considerable success in the preparation of the Western District Lakes SEPP, in response to waste discharge licensing concerns in that area...

Any delays in upgrading the Horsham discharge will understandably be opposed by those who spent an estimated \$150 000 in pursuing third party appeals before the EPAB. Options (a) and (b) could well result in this Authority's actions being criticised in the Supreme Court or by the Ombudsman. Option (c) is less likely to be so criticised. If a SEPP was declared in early 1984, sufficient time should be available to enable the HSA to complete or be well advanced with the upgrades (if any) necessary to comply with a licence consistent with the SEPP.

I consider that option (c) is the only appropriate course of action...

Yours sincerely

JH Alder  
Acting Chairman  
Environment Protection Authority.

considered too salty to use.

The Murray has similarities to the Wimmera in that it is a series of 'closed' waterbodies, separated by many weirs and locks and ending in Lake Alexandrina which is cut off from the sea by concrete barrages and a near-permanent sandbar. The River Murray Commission is presently compiling a waste discharge register but as yet has not obtained details from New South Wales. It is bound to resemble the Victorian situation: Canberra is a well-known sewage discharger to the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee river.

The Victorian government's attempts to block implementation of the Wimmera River appeal decision was in the form of a State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) to supersede the decision. (Published below is an edited copy of an internal EPA letter of 27th August 1982, written by an official who represented the EPA at the appeal, which outlines the reasons for this strategy.)

The draft SEPP, released in March 1984, recommends partial land disposal, but is attempting to continue discharging approximately 80 million litres per annum of Horsham sewage to the Wimmera River when there is a 'dilution ratio' obtainable in river flow past Horsham of 100:1 (in winter and spring of most years). This strategy thus preserves the waste assimilative capacity. Furthermore implementation of this watered-down recommendation is at the whim of politicians and will be sometime in late 1987 at the earliest, as compared to the appeal decision which stipulates the end of 1985 as the removal date for all the Horsham sewage. The draft SEPP ignores all other waste discharges.

The consultants hired to augment the socio-economic portion of the SEPP procedure were the infamous Kinhill Stearns. This 'environmental' consulting firm prepared such gems of ecological wisdom as the Roxby Downs Environmental Effects Statement. The role of Kinhill-Stearns in the preparation of the draft Wimmera River SEPP was to show that:

- River-town residents did not value or use the river. This conclusion was the result of a phone survey which interviewed heads of households only. If they did not *now* use the river the reasons why were not ascertained.
- Dimboola Shire residents and riverside farmers downstream of Horsham are uninformed about the effects of sewage discharge to rivers. Interviewees scored a low rating in a questionnaire if they did not realise that it is safe to discharge 'fully treated' sewage to a river, that it does not result in fish deaths, etc. The downstream communities were assessed as having little

knowledge of the effects of sewage discharge compared to their Horsham counterparts. The report failed to mention, however, that a majority of Horsham residents are opposed to the discharge.

- A nil-discharge sewerage works for Horsham is unrealistically expensive. The consultants costed only the most expensive option, assessed at \$2.9 million. The nil-discharge option has since been recosted, as a result of Friends of the Earth's research, at \$1.9 million. Much cheaper options are still available using the recycling of wastes to Crown Land.

The actions of the Victorian Labor government seem to be aimed at avoiding allocation of state funds to a National Party electorate, and of course to prevent

the nil-discharge legal precedent being applied to other areas of Victoria (and ultimately the whole of Australia where intermittent-flowing rivers are the norm.)

**Action:** Environmentalists should vigorously lobby governments for:

- Clean Water Acts in all states involving the principle of nil-discharge to all rivers and lakes.
- the total rejection of the final Wimmera River SEPP (soon to be released) and similar policies in Victoria and New South Wales.
- the implementation of the Wimmera River appeal decision by 31 December 1985.

For further information, contact:  
• John Kirby, 152 Nott Street, Port Melbourne, Vic 3207. Tel: (03) 64 2988.  
• Lyndon Fraser, 8 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, Vic 3039. Tel: (03) 370 7524.

## Films

**Nineteen Eighty-four**, written and directed by Michael Radford, colour, 35 mm, 110 minutes. Distributed by Roadshow and Virgin Films.

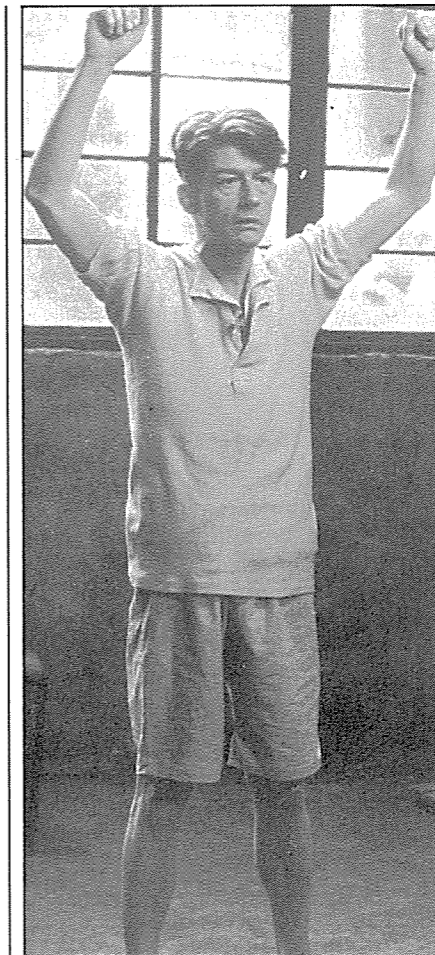
Reviewed by Penny Phillips.

George Orwell was a public school boy. The horrors he described in *Nineteen Eighty-four* are the nightmare of the public school, which goes something like this: The master is always watching you. You can sneak away sometimes, and have secret bread and jam, and maybe even real coffee in the back of the dorm or the cleaner's room, and maybe be real independent. But always the master is looking and always there is corporal punishment to keep you in line. There are bullies and sneaks to add to your discomfort and the known brutality of the fag system to impress on you what power really is. So most of the boys toe the line properly, and pull up their socks regularly, and believe the slogans and support the school teams patriotically.

The film *Nineteen Eighty-four* and the book are different. We have modern knowledge and technology, and daily exposure to violence on TV to allow us a connoisseurship as consumers and an appreciation of sophisticated packaging as producers, which Orwell's generation did not have. The film has modern appeal on this level alone. In cool artistic objectivity and aesthetic excellence, it rivals *Clockwork Orange*. There is something Orson Wellian about the sense of menace it generates; but Orson Wells without the homey gutsiness of the forties which gave his films technical finesse, a sense of reality.

It is the homespun qualities of the symbols and actions within the private world that the lovers create, in their hutch-by-the-exit rather than room-with-a-view, that counteracts the slick technological aspect of the film. The joys and needs of cocoa on the sly to a schoolboy, and the fear of rats under the bed after reading ghost stories under the sheets, work against the slickly superb presentation to bring the world that the producers so carefully created in what they described as a 'period futuristic film' into some contact with ours.

The film's 'period' nature, I suspect however, takes the guts out of Orwell's message, and will raise curiosity about 'the



The headmaster ritual: John Hurt as Winston.

man who created this pessimistic vision', (as the *Metro Study Supplement* available in the foyer suggests). The film suggests that this is the world that that unfortunate man, over-involved with fascism in his personal life and dying in tubercular bitterness, knew. The major war shots and crowd shots, largely from Nazi propaganda films of the period — the children in costumes not unlike the Hitler Youth, Big Brother's face like a more sensitive fuhrer, gazing intensely at us from one uncomfortable scene to the next — all reinforce that comfortable feeling that it could never happen here. Perhaps it could occur in Russia or China — the posters are Russian in format after all, and the uniforms of the executive are Chinese — but not to us, not here.

It's all in comfortably distancing and dating sepia, which gives a nice artistic effect, the 'slightly unreal' look that the directors are said, according to my hand-out, to have aimed for. Artistically this is a good decision, the sense of decay and delapidation is enhanced and there is an almost overwhelming feeling of putrefaction, a visual analogue of the supposed corruption of the regime itself. Unfortunately this also gives it an historical documentary feeling that intrudes on its sense of contemporary relevance.

The suspension of disbelief is well-maintained by this film, and the experience is like watching a TV murder thriller, adventure or sci-fi spectacular. Without pre-knowledge of the novel many viewers are therefore likely to take the story as that of two unhappy lovers who represent the inevitable and awful fate of nonconformists and outsiders when they go against any system in which they find themselves.

Penny Phillips is a Sydney art teacher.

**The Killing Fields**, produced by David Puttnam, directed by Roland Joffe, colour, 35 mm, 133 minutes. Distributed by Starscreen.

Reviewed by Peter Elliffe.

It would seem to be an elementary truth that your average blockbuster, mega-technicolour, wall-of-schlock Hollywood flick is not the most suitable medium for the awakening of Thought. Yet this simple idea seems to have escaped the notice of so many socially conscious directors, producers and Wall Street Entertainment Futures dealers.

The producer of the film *The Killing Fields*, which has an accompanying book — it seems to be a 'spin-off' — by Christopher Hudson, intended to make a statement against war and for friendship. (So says an article on the film in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1985). As implied earlier, *The Killing Fields* grants its audience little aesthetic or intellectual space in which to contemplate these sentiments. As a part of this peaceful orientation, Puttnam chose to reproduce a large number of gruesome barbarities, with the help of quite a few helicopters, lots of (fake?) explosives, crumbling and burning villages (which, one can only assume, were built for the purpose of capturing their demolition on film), and many 'South-East Asian' people with physical deformities (perhaps from a real battle, one that made

## REVIEWS

these look like mere theatrics?). *Apocalypse Now* sprang to mind, as did Baudrillard's comments on the warlike nature of Coppola's filmmaking (and appropriate aestheticising of warmongering).

*The Killing Fields* is essentially a rather disjointed narrative about an American reporter based in Phnom Penh and his friendship with a local Cambodian who worked as his assistant. The film opens with Sydney Schanberg (Sam Waterston) attempting to reach a Cambodian village, rumoured to have been the accidental victim of a US bombing mission around the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. It is August 1973, according to the typewritten words on the silver screen. We all know, at least, that the 'Vietnam War' is still in full swing; we are told precious little else. His assistant is the gentle and courageous Dith Pran (Dr Haig S Ngor), who ingeniously helps Schanberg arrive at the town, which has been devastated. For some reason the two are arrested by rather crazed troops or police. Schanberg is annoyed at losing a scoop story.

Next thing we know it is a couple of years later, sometime in 1975, when the Lon Nol government collapses, the US embassy evacuates, and the Khmer Rouge take over the capital. (It might have been the whole country, but who knows? The film does not tell us.) We hear later, from journalists chatting in the French Embassy, used as a place of refuge from the new rulers, that the latter are in fact fragmented forces in rivalry. Pran, also in the Embassy, is forced to leave by the Khmer Rouge and expects to meet his death because he had worked with an American. The remainder of the film revolves around Pran's experience of the work camp to which he has been sent, his escape during the Vietnamese invasion, and his crossing over into Vietnam (we guess) where he is reunited with the now covered-in-glory Schanberg. Schanberg, in the meantime, had been awarded 'this is a true story, as they say' the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Khmer Rouge takeover.

Despite some able acting and the skilled directing, the whole thing does not work. One reason for this is that the men's relationship is sentimentalised. The music (by Mike Oldfield) and the cinematography attempt to play on the emotions, using techniques which in fact inspire suspicion. You know the sort of stuff — lingering, close facial studies at some moment of great decision, with musical trembles of anticipation. The suspicious feelings are unfortunate because the story itself is quite moving — the hopes and fears for the new



Haig S Ngor as Dith Pran in *The Killing Fields*.

regime, Pran's struggle to stay alive, Schanberg's desperate attempts to learn of his friend's fate. However, while it may seem worthwhile to affirm the bond of friendship, portrayals of people seemingly senselessly killing each other tend to undermine noble sentiments about human dignity.

Which brings me to another problem: that of the apparent senselessness of much of what is going on in the film. It is difficult to establish what is happening because much of the 'dialogue' is really in the form of quick shouts, the content of which is easy to miss. The fact that so much was unintelligible to me helped to foster the impression that what was being said, for example, at the 're-education' sessions in the Khmer work camp was meaningless. We see these sessions through Pran's eyes, and they are clearly meaningless to him. The mental and physical violence caused by the Khmer Rouge in the film gains, through this underhand technique, an aura of senseless brutality. Of course, I am not making a comment about the Khmer Rouge, only one about a method of persuasion in a film. We could perhaps have been told something about the ideology of this now infamous regime, even something of an historical explanation. Instead the horrors of its massacres are left at the feet of that ubiquitous devil, Marxism. Under Marxism, we are prompted to believe, people are emptied of their senses.

Finally, *The Killing Fields* imitates its object and bombards the senses of the unfortunates in the cinema cum chamber of horrors, becoming another rather violent film with a happy ending.

Peter Elliffe is a member of the Chain Reaction collective in Sydney.

**The Legend of Tianyun Mountain**, directed by Xie Jin, colour, 35 mm, 125 minutes. Available from Ronin Films. Tel: (062) 48 0851.

Reviewed by Anna-Maria Dell'oso.

Those who saw *My Memories of Old Beijing* at the 1984 Sydney Film Festival will have some idea of the warmth and charm of the Chinese cinema, a heart-felt intensity that succeeds with Western audiences in spite of a bizarre style that borrows from the West, strangely re-processing Hollywood's corniest film mannerisms with great success.

To our perhaps jaded Western eyes, Chinese cinema is a kind of Walt Disney with innocence, rather than sentimental calculation. Even the most melodramatic scenes, the most full-blown takes of technicolour cherry blossoms, search for a sincerity of feeling rather than leaving us with the suspicion that our emotional vulnerabilities are being exploited.

*The Legend of Tianyun Mountain*, directed by China's finest director, Xie Jin, is an utterly delightful and engrossing film, not only because it is so exotic and political but because it is also so familiar and emotional. It has touches of a kind of sprawling *Gone With The Wind* historical romantic melodrama, complete with a magnificent original sound-track, that film buffs complain, 'they don't make anymore'.

Spanning over twenty years of Chinese history, *The Legend* unfolds, like a complex and beautiful silk, as a story of passion, betrayal, disillusionment and courage. It portrays the lives of three political generations of Chinese, from the innocent and ardent post-revolutionary youths of the 1950s to the alienated realists under the



Young research worker meets the wife of a political outcast in *The Legend of Tianyun Mountain*.

reign of the Gang of Four, to the perky and questioning generation of China's 'New Age'. The film's spirited picture of political and moral integrity and the repressive dangers of purges (of whatever description), caused hot debate in China, where the film was temporarily withdrawn, despite its international awards.

Xin Hie, the director, made the Chinese masterpiece, *Two Actresses* in 1964. It was immediately suppressed. Xin Hie was silenced for 14 years until after the fall of the Gang of Four.

Under its often overwhelming melodrama, *The Legend of Tianyun Mountain* is clearly the complex work of an artist of integrity and insight. The story is told in a series of flashbacks; we oscillate from past to present, with a glimpse of the future. Song Wei is the deputy head of a department rehabilitating those who suffered being unjustly branded Rightists under the Gang of Four. She is a thoughtful, slightly worn-looking woman, who is married, somewhat unhappily, to the head of the department. Song Wei is forced to confront the past, when, in 1978, a young research worker, Ling Yun, visits her to recount her strange adventures in the Tianyun Mountains.

In flashback, we return to 1956. Song Wei and her serious-minded friend, Feng Quinglan, are enthusiastic members of a survey team assigned to develop the Tianyun Mountain area. She falls in love with an idealistic young Communist, Luo Qun. They plan to marry. But the lovers are crossed by politics (rather than the stars). Luo Qun is branded a Rightist in the 1957 purge, and, under great pressure,

Song betrays him to marry a dull but correct young party cadre, Wu Yao.

It is Song's best friend who stays loyal to the disgraced Luo Qun, supporting him heroically in his political struggles. They marry and live in great poverty and political humiliation.

After twenty years, a changing political climate has come to pay its dues to the misguided loyalty of people like Feng Quinglan and Luo Qun, and Song Wei, with a failing marriage, is forced to delve deeply into her conscience, her confused emotions, to grow painfully towards a new future.

The film's actors are required to age twenty difficult years; their performances are very fine, particularly the ensemble acting between the three generations of women. The cinematography, by Xu Qi, is grand, lush and affecting, with many circular and spinning shots reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock, creating a *deja vu* intensity in the flashbacks.

*The Legend of Tianyun Mountain* is the sort of engrossing film that, despite its epic length one is sorry to see end. It ranks among the great Chinese cinema classics, thoroughly deserving China's Best Film Award of 1981.

Anna-Maria Dell'oso is film reviewer for the Sydney Morning Herald.

## Video

**Arms Race: Where do we stand?**  
Produced by John Davis; assisted by

Cathy Miller, VHS videotape, 20 minutes. Available from Classroom Video. Tel: (02) 918 8464.

Reviewed by Jeni Stocks.

It's a shame that when a group of technical writers and producers from an ABC background get together on an issue such as the arms race, they use a formula for their structure of presentation. One of the producers, Cathy Miller, told me that this video is one of a series of ten Classroom Video's 'Resource Tapes '84'. *Arms Race* received the 1984 ATOM (Australian Teachers of Media) award for social issues. It is intended as an introduction for upper primary level students to concepts involved in the debate over the arms race. Fair enough, but there are analogies conveniently used 'to make it easier for children to relate to' that are misleading and in many ways damaging.

The way in which children first learn to think about this issue is important to their development of a long-running, more mature appraisal. For example, *Arms Race* begins by proposing that 'things are the way they are' because of our basic aggressive 'instinct to be dominant where possible', and follows with 'nowadays instincts are backed up by weapons'. The message is that, because of these animal-like instincts — and here the already misused image of the dingo appears — children will find it easier to understand that if dogs fight, then so do people.

Students are led from the outset into an apologetic, Westernised view of the way things are out there. *Arms Race* could have taken a more useful vantage point, that of the unequal distribution of wealth in our world, with a view of the determination that overpowering nations have to hang on to the habit of war in spite of the obvious symptoms of suffering before them. This concept is not too difficult for children to begin to grasp. Children display an early and innate interest in justice, just the opposite to the unnatural quality of aggression that this video imbues us with. Are we to believe that we just can't help it?

There is also a dash through information that leads to worrying statements such as 'The Americans wanted to end the war with the Japanese quickly so during the war developed the world's first atomic bomb.'

Throughout *Arms Race* the presentation of images of war and of excellent film clips of cruise missiles in action, etc, serve somehow to only enhance the image of the modern war machine. And this Australian video sadly focuses almost exclusively on the northern hemisphere, and never mentions the Pacific Region at all. With the impending avalanche of teaching aids available for Peace Studies, it's not necessarily first in, best dressed.

Jeni Stocks is coordinator of the Peace Studies Project at the Inner City Education Centre in Stanmore.

## Art

**Art and Social Commitment: An End to the City of Dreams, 1931—1948.** Curator: Charles Merewether. Queensland Art Gallery to 28 April 1985. Previously on show in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne from September 1984. Catalogue published by Art Gallery of New South Wales, 176 pages, \$

Reviewed by John Warnock.

Number 109 in the catalogue to this exhibition depicts a demonstration in a street of terrace houses near the wharves. An orderly crowd of men and women marches to the pedimented pillars of a rich man's gate. Their leaders carry placards proclaiming resistance to oppression and the promotion of world peace. But they are stopped at the gate and policemen are trying to confiscate a placard; another two policemen are using force to arrest a man; and yet another policeman is harassing a woman who is attending an old man who has collapsed. The plutocrat, seated in a wheelchair pushed by a uniformed servant, holds aloft a little flag with a pound sign on it, and receives the homage of a scholar, a priest and a judge, who grovel on the ground in front of his chair. Meanwhile, just on the other side of the wall separating the garden from the street, a privileged young woman is lying on the grass, reading a book, unconcerned about the struggle so near to her. She is obviously irresponsible.

In this charming oil-on-canvas tract, called *Street Demonstration* and painted by Harry Macdonald in 1945/46, the necessity of individual commitment to political action is set forth uncompromisingly; it invites us to take sides.

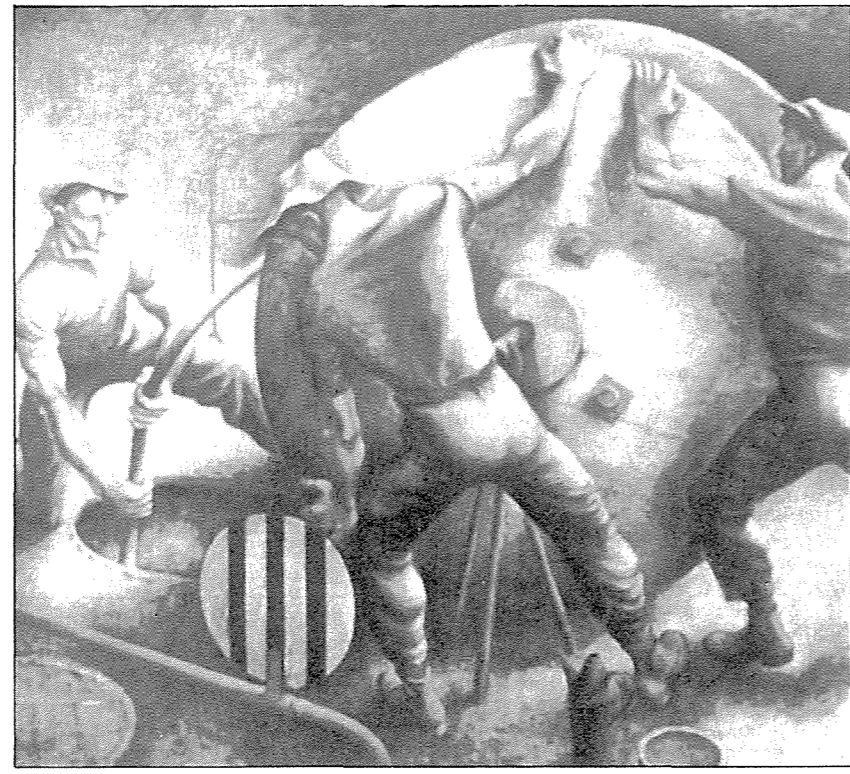
This exhibition acknowledges the seriousness of the issue but does not take sides. Charles Merewether provides an ardently committed introduction to the catalogue, but it becomes significant that the term used in the title is 'social commitment', not 'political commitment'. The debate about the social responsibility of artists was an important one in the years of the Depression and the Second World War: there was an interest in considering how an artist's concern about Australian society could be translated into action for the building of a new society. The catalogue notes appear to interpret the artists' 'social commitment' as their commitment to art, to the imaging of the human condition in their day. It may indeed be considered that the creation of images is the prime duty of an artist, but this endeavour may or may not be a commitment to 'society', to the working class. An image is not an idea, or a program, or a political movement; so a commitment to image-

making begs the whole question of the relevance of art to social struggle.

The images are many and powerful and the recurring motif is the human form 'bent' to express the artists' sense of alienation and horror. The techniques commonly used are those of fragmentation, distortion and exaggeration. To judge by the reaction of many of the exhibition's visitors it still seems to be important to emphasise that this distortion was deliberate. It wasn't that these artists couldn't draw well. They could. Tucker, for instance, was a much better draughts-person than some of the Realists.

Jack Maughan's *Man* (1931), a pen and ink drawing of a working man, hangs alongside his satire of *Civilisation* (1931), a depiction of the morning rush to work in the factories: the workers, all with bent backs, trudge in orderly files to the doors of forbiddingly tall buildings behind which rise even taller chimneys belching orderly streams of smoke. Workers and buildings and chimneys are generalised, but the *Man* is a particular man. These two pictures illustrate two approaches to social comment in art: satire and realism. The spectator can see, as he or she goes round the exhibition, even in the works of the Realists, that the individual bodies begin to express their suffering in ways that resemble those in the more satirical pictures such as Tucker's *Tram Stop, Image of Modern Evil* (1945/46). In Counihan's *At the Meeting 1932* (1944) the light catches and flattens the planes in the coarse faces; and in his *At the Start of the March 1932* (1944) the bodies droop and resemble rounded heavy sacks.

The curator sees in the Social-Realist paintings and their evident sympathy with the oppressed an expression of hope for the formation in the future of a just community. (His reference in the catalogue to 'recovering' a community is a little puzzling, though: for most of us, there never was a community.) It was a point often made in the debate on the Left in the thirties and forties that



Top left: Detail from *Tram Stop, Image of Modern Evil* #26, 1945/46, Albert Tucker. Bottom left: Detail from *Exodus from a Bombed City*, 1942, John Percival. Right: *Portrait of a Man*, 1931, Jack Maughan.

socially-responsible artists should produce hopeful paintings, that artists should be good citizens. This was especially emphasised during the War. Sometimes, as a result, workers (almost exclusively men) were idealised, even to the point of eroticism in works such as Roderick Shaw's *The Cable Layers* (1946). In works by Dobell and Dalgarno, too, working men on the job were a little romanticised.

To paint ordinary people at work or suffering under their oppression is one way in which artists might express their solidarity with the working class struggle. Another might be to express a protest against oppression and war, as John Perceval did in *Exodus From a Bombed City* (1942). This, for me, is one of the most moving and dramatic pictures in the exhibition: the sad and harrowed people stream out of the wrecked city, leaving the dead behind to be ravaged by rats red in tooth and claw. The horizon is almost on a diagonal so that the world itself appears to be tilted, off its axis. The picture was first exhibited in the Anti-Fascist Exhibition in Melbourne in 1942, an exhibition to which many artists of different temperaments and aims submitted works. The war, as Bernard Smith said in a recent radio interview, caused many artists to think in political terms, even when they rejected actual political involvement.

Albert Tucker's *The Possessed* (1942) is another of the pictures that appeared in the Anti-Fascist Exhibition, although its creator was uneasy about participating as an artist in an event organised for a political purpose. He admitted this some years later:

At this time I was in a state of confusion about responsibility, social issues, . . . and the obligations of a painter. It was shortly after this that I came to the realisation that art has its own forms, structures and principles and, for me, a greater validity than politics.

In the Forties, Tucker's private feelings of horror and the feelings of the public about Fascism and the War coincided. It was possible to read *The*

*Possessed* as both an expression of horror at Fascism or War, and also as a visualisation of current ideas about political or social oppression and their effects on the individual mind.

The potential gap between social concern and the expression of individual emotion can be perceived as already realised in the work of John Perceval. To pass from his *Exodus from a Bombed City* to his *Survival*, also painted in 1942 and exhibited at the Anti-Fascist show, is a terrible and confusing experience. At one moment we are looking at an emotional depiction of an objectively awful event; at the next, we are seeing in the hideous grimaces of the figures a cynical depiction of the relationship between mother and child, a horror of life itself.

Such painting is not politically helpful to the working class. Charles Merewether points out that this horror and fragmentation is what survived the immediate concerns of the war years. This, and a commitment to art. This was expressed by Tucker, also; 'Being an artist is something that you have to do, a private compulsion equivalent of a state of consciousness'. Tucker welcomed Viktor Lowenfeld's description of how, for the 'haptic' artist, ' . . . the importance of the environment diminishes and experience is more and more confined to the processes that go on in the body as a whole . . . and their various emotional effects'. Charles Merewether quotes this passage in the introduction to the catalogue but does not go on to show, as Humphrey McQueen does in his *The Black Swan of Trespass*, how reactionary this Idealist belief is.

I don't know who would blame him for stepping around this thorny thicket; after all, Mr McQueen demonstrates the inadequacy of the Communist Party's response in the forties. Mr Merewether's solution to the problem is an elegant one: he offers this selection of pictures as 'a mutually dependent but impossible dialogue of differences'. The exhibition attempts to present the dialogue between the pictures made in belief (Realist/Social-Realist) and those made in despair (Surrealist/Expressionist), and to demonstrate that they have in common a compassionate 'vision of the individual body bearing the marks of violence or denial'.

To let the pictures speak for themselves does not dispose of the problem of the involvement or detachment of artists from the struggle for equality, but it does free us to consider the problem in our own time informed by the experience of the past. The exhibition presents the works of those Australian artists who tried to depict 'the heart of the modern condition as the experience of individual loss, of alienation, and fragmentation', and shows us that they were the heirs to an understanding of the individual in society informed by Baudelaire, the Symbolist painters and Freud. However, since the forties our understanding of the mind and of the self and of society has increased — we are developing a more holistic appreciation of the individual in society, one that might more successfully sustain the struggle to achieve a common culture. This exhibition offers workers in that struggle, especially middle-aged ones, support in our perennial problem of how to relate social involvement and individual growth; when to join the demonstration in the street and when to retire quietly to the garden with a good book.

John Warnock is an ABC writer and actor living in Sydney.

Left: *The Cable Layers*, 1946, Roderick Shaw.

# REVIEWS

## Books

**The Politics of Agent Orange: The Australian experience** by Jock McCulloch, Heinemann, 1984, 252 pages, \$14.95 (soft cover).

Reviewed by **Phil Shannon**

US ingenuity reached new lows in the sixties. Ecological devastation was practised on Vietnam as the USA attempted to 'alter the landscape of a country for political ends' through a massive defoliation and crop destruction campaign, as Jock McCulloch discusses in *The Politics of Agent Orange*.

Agent Orange was one of the chemicals used in Operation Ranch Hand, a ten-year \$120 million program to denude cover and deny food for the South Vietnamese guerrilla resistance (the National Liberation Front) and to force one in three South Vietnamese peasants to flee to hamlets and cities under the control of the USA ('fleeing Communism' we were dutifully told by our Free Press).

Twelve months spraying could destroy 'enough food to feed 600 000 people for a year' boasted the generals. One helicopter could destroy an acre of rice in five seconds.

There were problems, however, with this 'high-technology answer to the politics of national liberation'. Peasant deaths, cancers, birth abnormalities and spontaneous abortions failed to win their hearts and minds. Animals died and agriculture was ruined — the 'friendly crops' of poor Vietnamese that were destroyed along with the 'hostile' Communist crops, were not compensated for (unlike Michelin's ruined rubber plantations). The campaign failed militarily (as the NLF increased its support) and under the pressure of the domestic anti-war movement.

Vietnam, however, still bleeds from its chemical wounds. Not that that worries the USA or its 'branch office' in Canberra, but because white soldiers also suffered from the chemicals, a real threat was posed to powerful political, bureaucratic and corporate interests. The sick and dying veterans threaten to undermine the legitimacy and super-profits of the chemical industry (chemical sales in the OECD alone amount to over \$300 billion per annum). In Australia, the conservative hegemony of the Returned Services League (RSL), farmers, the right-wing parties, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the US alliance is threatened. The 'range of casualties' of the Agent Orange issue is vast. No crude



conspiracy but an 'involuntary collusion of sorts' has united these vested interests against the veterans.

In this fight, however, McCulloch weakens the veterans' case a little by championing their cause too uncritically at times. He presents the veterans in the glossy myth of the noble Digger. He denies that the Australians could have committed any war atrocities. His distaste for the 'indignity' of such 'dark' charges flies in the ugly face of the historical facts about the crimes, the rape etc of all aggressive wars. His concern for truth and justice, for the veterans, wobbles when he asserts that the My Lai massacre was within the bounds of 'war ethics' and 'does not prove US involvement in Vietnam was criminal!'

McCulloch does recognise, however, that the veterans are conservative. They believe that Vietnam was a good cause and do not oppose the wider abuses of chemicals used in agriculture. Their only political difference with the RSL is over compensation for exposure to chemicals in Vietnam. The veterans can thus be bought off (as in the successful out-of-court settlement by Dow Chemicals in the USA without pressing home the wider political questions of capitalism, chemicals and war).

Overall, with a rigorous analysis of the evidence and an awareness of the politicised nature of scientific research, McCulloch makes a strong case for the veterans. Yet if the veterans ('our boys') face tough obstacles, then how much more so do the Vietnamese people in their search for justice and compensation, having to confront Western racism (soured by Geoffrey-the-tyranny-of-dim-sims-Blainey) and anti-communism as well. I would like to think that the veterans' case, so grippingly and fluently told by McCulloch, may yet help us to repay our debt to Vietnam. It is high time that we started fixing up this Third World debt, not the one owed by poor countries to the Western banks, but the one owed by Western imperialism to the poor countries for the military, social, economic (and chemical) suffering we have inflicted upon them.

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

**Overpowering Tasmania: a briefing paper on power supply and demand** by Bob Burton, The Wilderness Society, Hobart, December 1984, 46 pages, \$3.

Reviewed by **Ann Lowder**

The Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission's single minded determination to build more and more power stations led to its attempt to dam the Franklin, one of Australia's last wild rivers. The defeat of that attempt hasn't caused the HEC to reassess its course, according to the Research Officer of the Wilderness Society, Bob Burton. In *Overpowering Tasmania* he argues that the HEC's forecasts of future power demand are wildly inaccurate and that the state government's mismanagement of power developments would lead to higher power charges and will ultimately cost many jobs.

There is, he says, a sizeable power surplus, which will grow in the next few years with the completion of the Pieman Scheme. The surplus will persist into the next decade if the projected King, Henty Anthony and thermal power stations are completed.

The inevitable consequences of Premier Robin Gray's policy will be massive subsidies being offered to energy intensive industries irrespective of the numbers of jobs created, in a desperate attempt to soak up surplus power.

The report provides a detailed critique of the policy of hydro-industrialisation which he argues is not only no longer working but is distorting the direction of the state's economy. He argues that the early success of the policy in facilitating the establishment of Comalco, Temco, Electra Carbide, EZ and APPM also had its limitations.

In recent years the ability of hydro-industrialisation to create jobs has faded as the national and international economies have undergone major transformations and the ability of the HEC to produce power cheaper than available elsewhere has declined markedly. Despite the decline in competitiveness the HEC artificially stimulated consumption by offering massive subsidies to energy intensive industries and heavily promoting domestic consumption. Burton argues that this has resulted in domestic consumers paying considerably more for their power than they should.

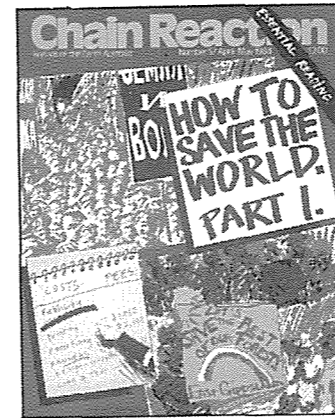
*Overpowering Tasmania* also examines the problems that other states in Australia are having with power supplies, such as the Western Australian gas surplus and the massive surpluses of electricity in New South Wales and Victoria. Burton argues that the existence of these surpluses will have a considerable impact on the ability of the HEC to attract any new energy intensive industry to Tasmania, particularly as the mainland states produce power more cheaply than the new hydro projects and do not suffer the same freight disadvantage as Tasmania.

The report is thoroughly referenced and is so accurate in its analysis that the HEC refused to comment on it.

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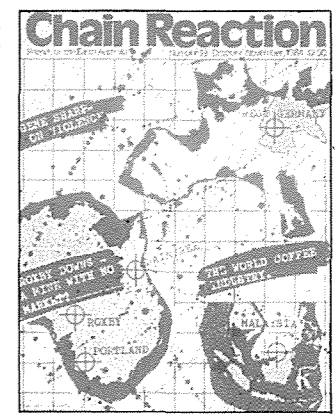
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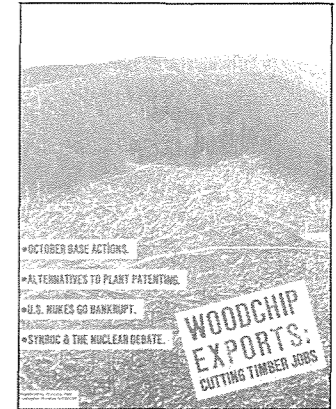
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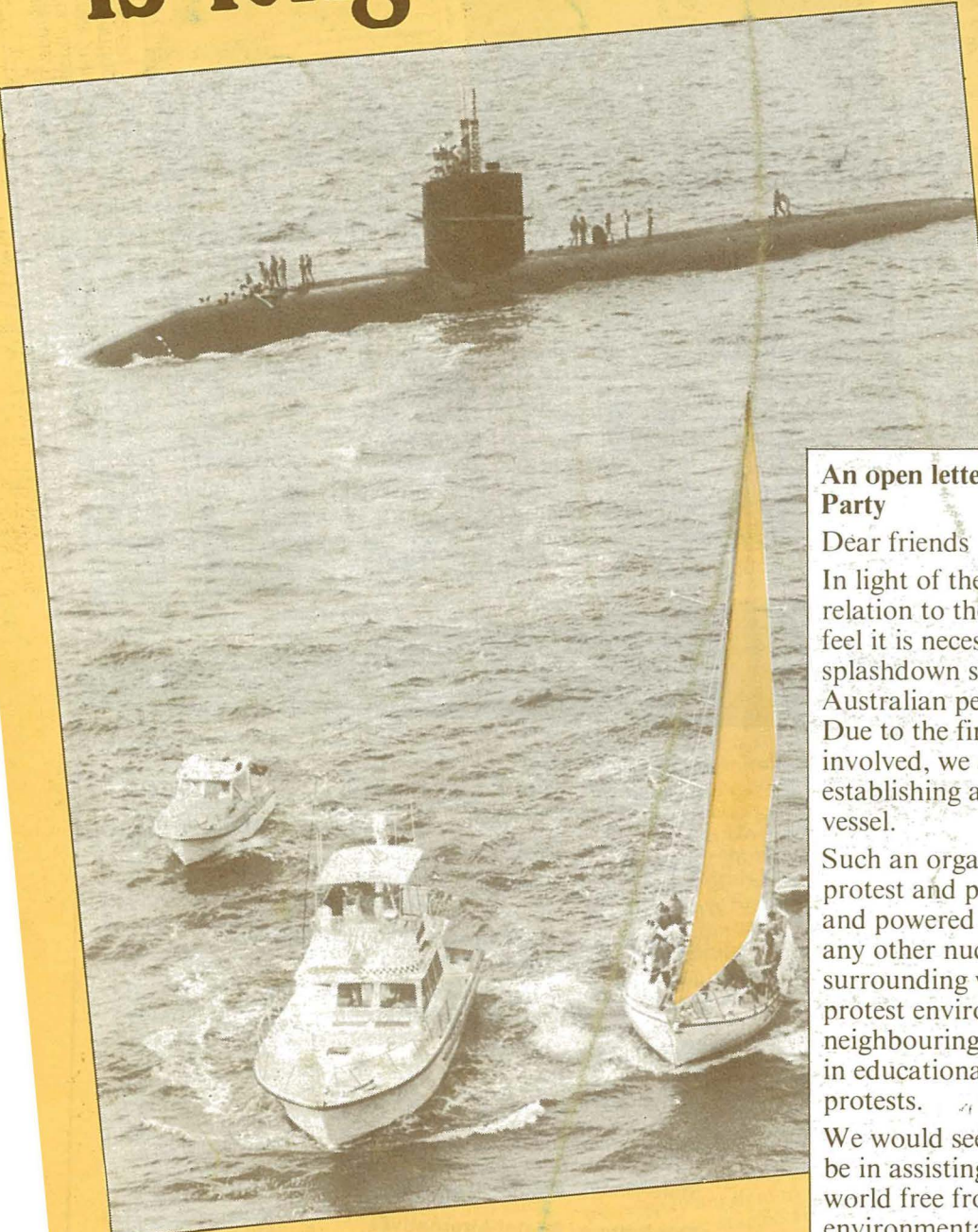
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# An Australian peace vessel is long overdue.



## **An open letter from the Nuclear Disarmament Party**

Dear friends

In light of the Australian government's stand in relation to the MX missile tests off our coast, we feel it is necessary to send a protest vessel to the splashdown site as a representative of the Australian peace and environmental movements. Due to the financial and physical constraints involved, we are asking for your assistance in establishing an organisation and in purchasing a vessel.

Such an organisation would have the potential to protest and publicise the visits of nuclear-armed and powered ships, the export of uranium, and any other nuclear activity in Australian and surrounding waters. It could also investigate and protest environmental pollution in Australia and neighbouring countries, as well as being involved in educational tours and raising funds for future protests.

We would see the overall objective of the vessel to be in assisting the creation of a non-oppressive world free from the threat of nuclear and environmental devastation.

**For further information contact the Nuclear Disarmament Party on (03)63 1466 or c/- GPO Box 5228BB, Melbourne, Vic 3001. Donations are welcome for the 'Peace Boat' — make cheques payable to the NDP, and post to the above address.**