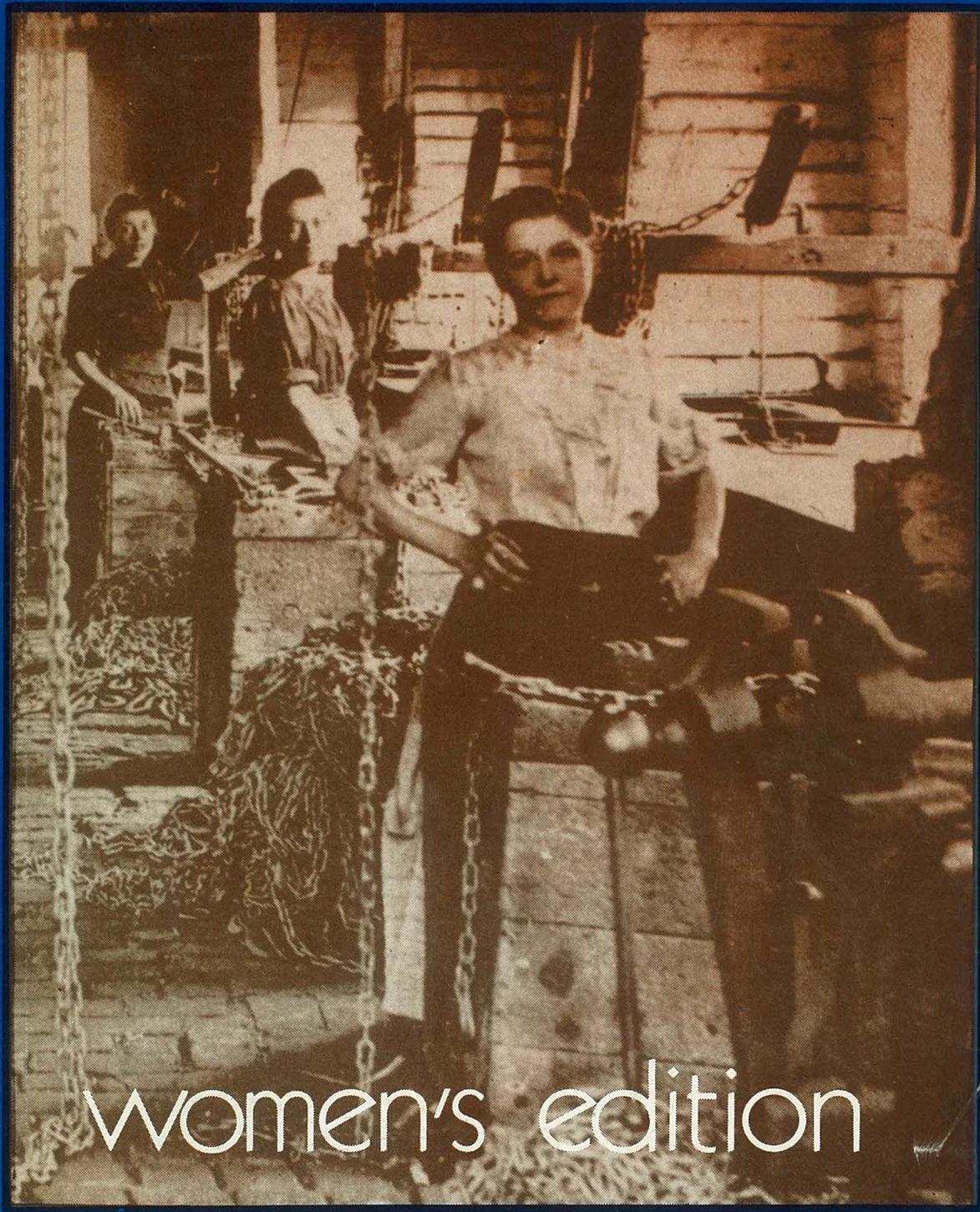


friends of the earth CHAIN REACTION



women's edition

vol. 3 no.4 1978

EDITORIAL

chain reaction

vol.3 no.4 1978

This edition of Chain Reaction was written and produced by women who were concerned with the position of women in the environment movement and in society as a whole.

By working together on this issue, we have all learnt a lot in the sharing of skills, co-operation and constructive criticism which took place. During the production of the magazine feminist issues, so often put to the back or ignored, were brought to the front and we hope worthwhile discussion resulted within the movement on account of our presence.

This is not and was not intended to be a definitive journal on feminism and ecology. To date very little has been written on this topic, however many feminists in the environment movement are becoming concerned, meeting together and discussing the issues.

When it was first suggested we have a women's edition of Chain Reaction women all over Australia became interested, many supplied the articles and ideas in this issue. In the next months we hope to get more feminist and ecology articles for future editions. This issue is only a starting point for continued national communication and on-going discussion.

It is not aimed at women only, but rather is an attempt to make their position in the environment movement known to all and to make women more aware of roles they may unwittingly be forced or have fallen into.

For too long F.O.E. campaigns have assumed that all people experience societal ills and joys in the same way. However the word "people" is usually used unconsciously as a pseudonym for "men". Women in our society have a different set of social experiences and in many areas women are doubly disadvantaged.

Women often have difficulty being accepted as an in-

tegrally important part of any decision making within the movement. In a competitive hierarchical system those who have not been conditioned to be part of a power structure, as have many men, find their ideas and actions are at worst ignored, at best tolerated. They are often secretary, never president. Those women who do not see entering this hierarchy as a viable approach have found very few avenues open for their energies.

In the political arena, women are often seen as a conservative force, with more women than men voting for conservative governments. Trade unions and other organisations in the work force have been a major element in the radicalisation of many employees. Since the 1900s, relatively few women have been in the work force, or exposed to such influences. The woman at home is isolated from many of the more progressive movements and thus becomes a supporter of the conservatives.

In the home, women are blamed for continuing the consumer cycle that is a basis of our capitalist society. The stream of garbage that flows in increasing quantities from the suburban home is destroying the earth. The home and the woman however are not the originators but rather the victims of this system. It is the patriarchal capitalist society which continues the cycle by using women in advertising to define the standards by which they will be accepted. Women are used by bosses, exploited by advertisers, cheated by manufacturers and blamed by society. Once women realise this the greatest potential for change lies in themselves.

Feminists do not want to set up yet another hierarchical structure to run the world. Feminism with its loose structure and non-competitive nature is potentially one of the most egalitarian and therefore profoundly radical movements of today.

☆ ☆ ☆



"Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationship continues to be one of domination."

Rosemary Ruether "New Woman, New Earth"

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This edition was produced by Linnell Secombe, Karina Veal, Barbara Hutton, Karina Menkhorst, Kim O'Sullivan, Ros Livingstone and Rosie Cousins. Artwork by Jill Anderson, Elizabeth Honey, Jill Redwood, Marian Rennie and Karina M. Thanks also to Alison Parks and Liz Van Houten.

Chain Reaction is the quarterly magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia, publishing feature articles and news on national and international environmental issues.

• correspondence
Chain Reaction,
51 Nicholson St., Carlton, Vic.
3053. Tel. (03) 347 6630.

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ATOM BOMB FODDER

The U.S. Defence Department has begun searching for an estimated 300,000 people who witnessed nuclear weapons test in late 1940s and 1950s. The search was prompted by eight reported cases of leukemia amongst 2,100 to 3,200 people present at tests in Nevada, August 31, 1957. A Pentagon statement said the search was "to determine if there are any health hazards in connection with the tests".

The first man to seek compensation died of acute leukemia early in February, 1978. Extracts from a letter from his wife to "Another Mother For Peace" tell of the complete disregard for human lives during the detonation of a 44 kiloton bomb at Yucca Flats, Nevada.

"When they started this test they wanted to know what reactions the men would have during atomic warfare. The soldiers were moved from the protection of the trenches to an open hillside ... with nothing between them and the bomb but open desert. In other words they were used as guinea pigs.

My husband said that just before they set it off they told the men to turn their backs to the bomb and place their hands over their eyes. He said when the bomb detonated they could see the bones in their fingers

through their closed eyelids like some kind of awful X-rays.

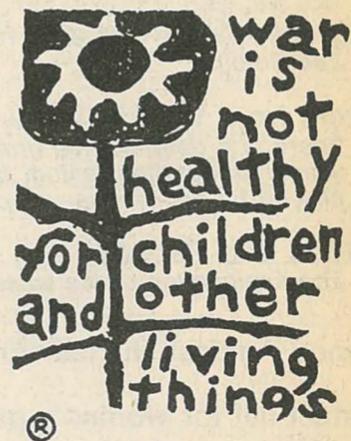
They didn't even give those men protective clothing. All they did afterwards was dust them off and hose down their boots. They didn't change clothes until hours later."

"Through the pressure of the news media and the Disabled American Veterans Association my husband, Paul, has finally received 100% disability — but the government still won't come out and admit that his sickness has resulted from the atomic test he was in".

"He told one reporter he felt cheated out of half his life and he only hoped he could live long enough to see the government admit its responsibility to him and all those other 1000s of men like him who were used in those atomic tests. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki they should have known".

"Another Mother For Peace" is attempting to make the consequences of nuclear war real and visible.

"Hundreds of atomic bomb tests were made in Nevada ... but 98 also took place in the Pacific ... 2 at Hattiesburg, Mississippi ... 3 at Amchitka, Alaska and others at Alamogordo, Carlsbad and at Famington, New Mexico and at



Grand Valley, Colorado.

Some of the men present may have illnesses which they may not realize are a result of exposure to radiation ... some may not be ill but some may have children who were born with defects. All who witnessed tests should be alerted to have medical examinations."

"Another Mother For Peace" charges the American Energy Commission (National Regulatory Commission/Energy Research and Development Association) and the Department of Defence with:
— criminally inhuman actions in deliberately exposing 100s of thousands of Americans to atomic bomb radiation.

— failure to notify these men of the grave health hazards to which they were exposed, so that they could get proper medical examinations and treatment.

— refusing to provide service-connected disability payments to those suffering damage from these tests, and death benefits to their families.

Above ground nuclear tests were stopped after the U.S. and U.S.S.R. concluded a test ban treaty in 1962.

Age 11/2/78

Another Mother For Peace
December 1977.



X-Ray danger

In the last four years, 280,000 American women have had breast x-rays in a programme sponsored by the National Cancer Institute. Last month however, the NCI made a sudden volte-face. Having spent thousands of dollars persuading everyone that x-rays were safe, and routine breast check-ups essential, they have finally come to realise what the majority of us knew already, i.e., that they were wrong. In their statement they conceded that the potential risk that x-rays themselves cause cancer could outweigh the benefits of detecting a malignancy early. As a result, they have recommended that routine x-rays should be restricted to women over fifty and younger women who stand a high risk of developing breast cancer. How long before they too are excluded?

The Ecologist, Nov. 1977

FRENCH ELECTIONS

With general elections in March, French ecologists are facing their first chance to enter the political arena. It appears likely that they will be a decisive force if the election is a close one, as is expected.

A recent poll in the daily 'Le Figaro', shows that French youth is supporting the ecological banner. Out of a sample of 5,000 female and male students 33% said they would vote for an ecological candidate should one be presented at the forthcoming Presidential election.

However the ecologists' loose coalition, made of over 100 local and regional groups, is suffering from internal dissension. The disagreements seem to centre around the issue of whether ecology should become a political force in itself or as an influence to already existing political structures. Brice Lalonde of Les Amis de la Terre wants to align some 200 sympathetic candidates with other candidates who may not be strictly ecologist but who are willing to incorporate ecology into their platforms.

Not Man Apart March 1978; *The Ecologist* Nov. 1977.

KILL WEEDS MAIM KIDS

Possible side effects resulting from the use of the herbicides 24D and 245T have been brought to light by a Yarram doctor, Mr. Brian Woodward.

Mr. Woodward claims that dramatic increases in birth abnormalities occurred in 1975-76 after weeds in the area had been aerially sprayed. Fourteen babies in eighty-three showed major malformations at birth. This represents a 17% abnormal birth rate, compared to a national average of only 3%, half of which are not detected at birth and might not be discovered until the child is 5 years old.

Dr. Woodward first reported this sudden four-fold increase in abnormal births to the Health Department over one year ago. Only recently has the government taken any action to investigate, and in the meantime the herbicides are to remain on the market "pending an urgent medical investigation".

Herbicides such as 24D and 245T have similar chemical and biological characteristics to plant growth hormones, however they cause an explosion of growth resulting in the death of many plants and malformations in others. Used on ragwort it stimulates growth till the plant exhausts itself and dies.

The Chief Chemist of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. R. S. Belcher, claims that "Control (of ragwort) is only practicable by spraying with the herbicides such as 24D and in much of the infested country aerial application is the only satisfactory method of applying it".

However, as Dr. Samuel S. Epstein noted in the July-August issues of "Environment" — "continued use of these herbicides (24D and 245T) in the environment constitutes a large scale human experiment in teratogenicity" (birth abnormalities).

Since extensive aerial spraying of these chemicals stopped, births at Yarram have returned to normal.

Sun 17/2/78; Age 16/2/78; Warragul Gazette 19/12/77; Warragul Gazette 17/1/78.

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URANIUM MINING LEGAL?

Last December, Pancontinental Mining and Queensland Mines bought out environmental impact statements for their uranium projects at Jabiluka and Nabarlek. We were able to put a series of submissions to the Department of Environment, Housing, and Community Development. The most important single conclusion to come out of our analysis of the companies statements was that all the companies mining uranium in the Alligator Rivers region, and particularly Queensland Mines will expose their workers to a high cancer risk, and will probably have to break the law on radiation safety.

If uranium mining does take place, it will do so under the provisions of the "Code of Practice on Radiation Protection in the Mining and Milling of Radioactive Ores." The Ranger Inquiry recommended that this code, based on International Labour Organisation, and International Atomic Energy Agency standards, and US practice (which has already put a number of mines out of business), should be made law. In its statement on August 28th giving the go-ahead on mining, the government promised it would do this.

The Code of Practice seeks to limit the risk of lung cancer in uranium miners by limiting their exposure to radon gas and its decay products, which in the 1870s caused up to 75% of the miners of the Austro-Hungarian empire to die of lung cancer. Studies done by the US health department show there is still a high death rate amongst uranium miners.

Research done at FOE Carlton, the conclusions of which have been cross-checked by Professor Kerr of the Ranger Inquiry, Sydney University Nuclear Power Study Group, and Melbourne University's radiation protection officer, Rob Robotham, indicates that uranium mining companies may have to break the law to operate profitably.

Radon gas is produced by the radioactive decay of radium, itself produced from uranium 238. It is 8x as heavy as air, and tends to accumulate in the bottom of pits, such

as mines. It is itself radio-active, and decays to form what are called 'daughter products' such as Polonium 218 and 214, which desintegrate inside the lung, ripping through the soft lung tissue and causing cancer — sometimes 10-20 years afterwards when mining companies can claim no responsibility.

The concentration of radon and its decay products are measured in what are called 'working levels', a working level being whatever quantity of the decay products of radon in 1 litre of air will produce 1.3x100000 mev of alpha energy.

The code limits miners' exposure to 4 'working level months' in a year. (A working level month is 170 hours exposure to working level). This works out at a continuous exposure of no more than 0.33 wl.

Our investigations suggest:

1. Radon levels in mines will be much, much higher than the 0.33 wl limit.

2) Miners will be able to run up almost a year's exposure in less than 3 weeks by having to work on broken rock (a powerful source of radon), particularly doing repair jobs underneath broken down machinery.

3) There is virtually no way mining companies can replace skilled people such as welders, fitters, electricians, etc., who have exceeded their annual dose limits. If mines are to keep operating, they will have great difficulty in remaining within the provisions of the Code.

4) The figures quoted by the companies in their impact statements are quite misleading. Pancontinental gives a figure of 0.33wl in 2.7 hours. The EIS doesn't bother to point out that this means levels will reach 1wl in 8.1 hours, 2wl in 16.2 hours, and 3wl in 18.9 hours. Periods of 18 hours without wind are quite common in the mining area.

5) The levels quoted are averages for the entire mine. As such, they give no clue about what doses miners are actually likely to be exposed to.

6) The research done by the companies and their advisers, notably Professor Thompkins of Queens University, Ontario, has been of a surprisingly low standard.



WOODCHIP BREAD

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is investigating ITT for possible deceptive advertising for its product known as "Fiberbread", which contains a high percentage of "powdered cellulose" i.e. sawdust! Canada has already banned the bread because of its wood pulp ingredients. The bread label has the word wheat displayed across a wheat field, and describes the plant fiber as, "finely powdered food-grade cellulose ... similar to that found in fruits, vegetables, and common food". FTC investigators suggest it might not even be legal to call the stuff bread. *Not Man Apart — January '78 Vol. 8.*

ASBESTOS

Recent investigations have found that blue asbestos dust, used to line the carriages of about 220 blue trains, can definitely cause a form of cancer called mesothelioma.

Dr. B. Gandevia who has been studying the problem for twenty years rejected government claims that the health risk was "remote for railway workers and even more remote for passengers". He claims that fibres from the asbestos insulation can cause an incurable cancer which may not show until twenty, thirty or forty years after initial exposure.

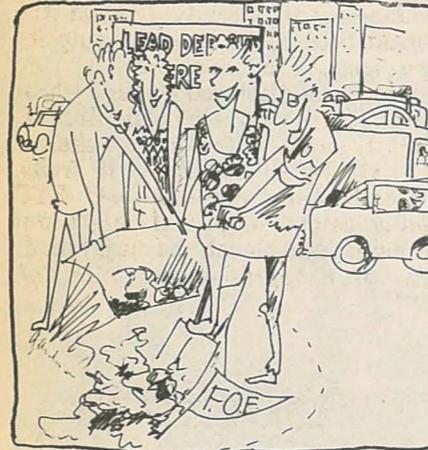
Passengers may come into contact with the asbestos fibres when broken wall panels or loose fittings around ventilation shafts and windows expose the lining to the travelling compartment.

Concern for railway men working

on rebuilding train carriages caused a union to ban the handling of asbestos material from three Vic. Railway workshops. Workers at the Bendigo workshop claim that they are often covered with asbestos dust from head to toe. The Health Minister, Mr. Houghton, claims that protective clothing worn when working on or near the material ensures there is no danger to workers. British rail authorities, however, banned the material from their trains ten years ago, and have ordered the blue asbestos to be ripped out of the remaining trains as part of a £30 million decontamination programme. VicRail are taking no action to remove the material.

Mr. Frazer, The Australian Railways Union state Secretary, said the Australian Railways Union would ask VicRail to introduce stringent safeguards and the union also will seek a register of all workers exposed to asbestos so illness records can be kept.

Age 3/2/78; Sun 2/2/78; Age 2/2/78.



FOE N.Z. takes mining lease

FOE NZ reports that gasoline in New Zealand has a lead content between 50 and 300 percent higher than is acceptable in other countries and that lead pollution is consequently something fierce.

In a novel way of calling attention to the problem, a group of Christchurch citizens applied for a licence to mine an area of the inner city where concentrations of lead from auto exhausts are said to "assay out in near-commercial quantities".

Not Man Apart — January '78 Vol. 8.

SET YOUR CHICKENS FREE



Every year in NSW approximately 7 million layers, 63 million broilers (chickens we eat) and 100,000 pigs are reared intensively. In the broiler industry this involves keeping the chickens in sheds, usually artificially ventilated and illuminated, each chicken with only half a square foot of space, fed on synthetic food, and killed at 8 weeks of age when the bird has reached maximum protein potential for minimum food intake. Layers suffer a similar fate except they live out the 18 months of their life in a wire cage with usually 3 or 4 hens to a cage, unable to rest, unable to stretch their wings, unable to scratch in the earth or make a dust bath.

The Bramble Report, produced by experts in Britain, found that even animals kept in intensive units generation after generation still retain their instincts, and they never lose their desire to react to natural stimuli, such as pecking at a worm or rooting in the soil. Contrary to claims that animals do not suffer because they do not 'know', the Littlewood Report, an investigation into animal experimentation in Great Britain, found that 'animals suffer pain in the same way as human beings'. In the intensive units, because animal society is disrupted there is extreme stress suffered by both pigs and chickens. This results in 'vices' such as cannibalism. To prevent this the chicken is debeaked and the pigs have their tusks sawn off.

Intensively reared animals are fed on synthetic foods, taking money and effort in research to find new types of vegetable protein. Protein produced in green leaves of plants is fed to a hen, her effluent dispersed by automatic machinery onto the patch of pasture that produced the protein

to feed her. The amounts of fuel necessary to manufacture food, harvest it, transport it, automatically distribute it to the hens, to build the housing, to disperse the effluent and to produce antibiotics not necessary in a free range system, is horrendous. One wonders if scientists have forgotten that hens are capable of converting solar power to food.

This energy consuming system which raises the productivity of the chicken by entirely unnatural means results in egg surpluses, and the Egg board then spends thousands and thousands of dollars trying to encourage people to buy more eggs. To do this they use further energy wasting devices such as egg rolls, packaged and refrigerated as a 'convenience' food, egg white marketed separately from egg yolk, etc.

Mr. Day, Minister for Primary Industry, has assured us that 'the welfare of stock is adequately protected'. He also claims that farmers have 'a genuine feeling and understanding for all their stock'. Yet it appears that the industry journals, veterinary journals and all other relevant literature have forgotten animals are living things and biologically similar to human animals.

In 1950 Denmark banned egg batteries. In 1977 Switzerland proposed a 10 year run-down to a ban in 1987. In Britain the movement against intensive live-stock farming is growing so strong, those in the business fear that they will soon have to turn to other methods of production. Let us hope that our own government is sufficiently humane to call a public inquiry, examine the matter thoroughly and pass some similar legislation.

Ref. Christine Townend's book "In Defence Of Animals".

ABORIGINES

how mining will affect them

"We are black people, that is why you don't believe us, that is why you decide you want the land quickly and the Government who is in charge of us all doesn't ask us black people first about the land . . . it seems like we have no land, us who are black. We don't keep each other's word; we keep your word but you don't keep ours."

—Rachel Maralngurra, in evidence to the Ranger Inquiry.

The issue of aboriginal land rights goes hand in hand with the uranium mining issue. Most of the uranium in the Northern Territory is on land traditionally occupied by aborigines. There are mine sites in the Oenpelli Reserve and nearby in the Kakadu area: in fact, most of the area is under claim by the aborigines. The mines will be close to Oenpelli, where tribal people live, and they will be greatly affected by the mining and the miners; perhaps irreversibly affected. The aboriginal people are frightened: some of them have seen what has happened at other mining areas in the Northern part of Australia and do not want the same thing to happen to them.

The effect of mining on the aborigines' way of life is devastating. Mining canteens bring people in contact with alcohol. Rachel Maralngurra gave evidence about this to the Ranger Inquiry into uranium mining. This is her testimony, spoken through an interpreter:

"I was born at Oenpelli. This is where I grew up and where I have always lived. Now I want to talk about why we are frightened. We don't hate it if they dig the ground, we just hate it if they come and keep disturbing our sacred sites . . . One other thing we are upset about, if a lot of white people come and work and they bring a lot of alcohol, that's the thing we absolutely hate. Aborigines from Oenpelli will go and drink as well as doing all the other things they do (including prostitution) . . .

"That is what we are frightened of, one thing we are scared of is the children who are growing up now will just know this one kind of life that is happening now; that is what they will follow; we might not know the white man's law or our own law either. We just want the sacred sites and land to stay as they were in the past, and that's it . . . let us not always keep on asking us Aborigines about it."

Later on she described how the families are split up by drinking, and children stop going to school — "in the wet season they go well . . . They don't go in the dry season, there is too much beer, alcohol . . . the drunken disturbances disturb the children's sleep, also the mothers of the children take the children a long way from the problem . . ."



Photo from "Uranium Mining in Australia" (see facing page).

In the dry season, she said, the roads were open (during the long rains the roads flood) and some people would drive as far as Darwin to get beer, which would be brought back for everyone to drink. Alcohol, she said, had killed three people at Oenpelli that season alone: one baby was run over by a drunken driver and two people drowned. If this goes on year after year it is easy to see how entire tribal groups could die out when they come in contact with white people: a small community could not support such a death-rate. If mines open in the area alcohol will be available all the time, in all seasons.

Alcohol is not the only worry. Vi Stanton, an aboriginal social worker also spoke at the inquiry. Quoting from the transcripts of the inquiry:

Commissioner Kerr: . . . people have written to us about their views on what will happen if a lot of miners come into an area. You know a big mining town starts, and they're worried about the women, these aboriginal people, and they say two things will happen; the women will get interfered with and attacked, or secondly that . . . some of the women would prefer the white miners and cause trouble with their own men. Have you got any views on that sort of thing happening?

Mrs Stanton: Well, I've heard fears expressed in that way too, that usually the white men come and steal the women. And I even have heard aboriginal men say, "What would happen if we went and stole the white women? You know, we'd have to suffer strong punishments . . ."

Commissioner Kerr: You think these are genuine, these concerns?

Mrs Stanton: These are genuine concerns . . . some of them say that the white men will dump the women afterwards and leave them with a lot of children and then the children will be, probably, put into institutions or homes. And this is something that's very close to me because it happened to my mother . . . she was brought away when she was six years of age and put in a compound in Darwin, and this is where she met my father. And she was actually brought up here to be a domestic servant for white officers, and the women were to be domestics, and the men were to be labourers.

The aborigines' communities cannot survive when they are thrust into contact with white men. If the aborigines owned their land they could stop these things happening; they could keep people out. But the Land Rights legislation has not given them a single piece of land. They have to fight every case in the courts, at a cost of thousands of dollars. Ironically, the money for fighting these battles is to come from mineral royalties: the aborigines are expected to let the land be dug up before they can afford to claim it.

Uranium mining is not the only kind of mining which has eaten into the aborigine's land. There is bauxite mining at Gove, Weipa and Aurukun, manganese at Groote Island . . . traditional aboriginal land all over the country has been taken for mines. This is no accident. Mining companies know that if they find minerals on land which is occupied by white people they will have a struggle to dislodge them, and will have to pay heavy compensation. So instead they prospect on "unused" land. For years prospectors have been going onto aboriginal reserves — getting permits and going to places where other white people are restricted from going. Aboriginal land rights are a relatively recent idea (dating from the last Labor government) and mining companies did not think they would need to consider the aborigines' wishes seriously.

These mines are a long way from permanent settlements of white people (other than the miners themselves) and hardly anyone knows or cares what goes on up there. The aborigines are powerless to stop the destruction that vast mining projects cause.

Bauxite mining requires huge areas to be strip mined.

The refining process leaves behind it ponds of "red mud" which has been treated with caustic soda. Red mud kills fish, and is so alkaline that no seed can take root in the red dust. The Weipa aboriginal settlement is like an island surrounded by a sea of man-made dust. The land where people used to go to gather food, with its network of myths associated with land-forms, the sacred places, is now devastated. The psychological effect is impossible to imagine.

— Barbara Hutton

NEXT ISSUE. Pat Turner Kamara of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders writes about aborigine's demands for land rights, and the question of conservation on aboriginal land.



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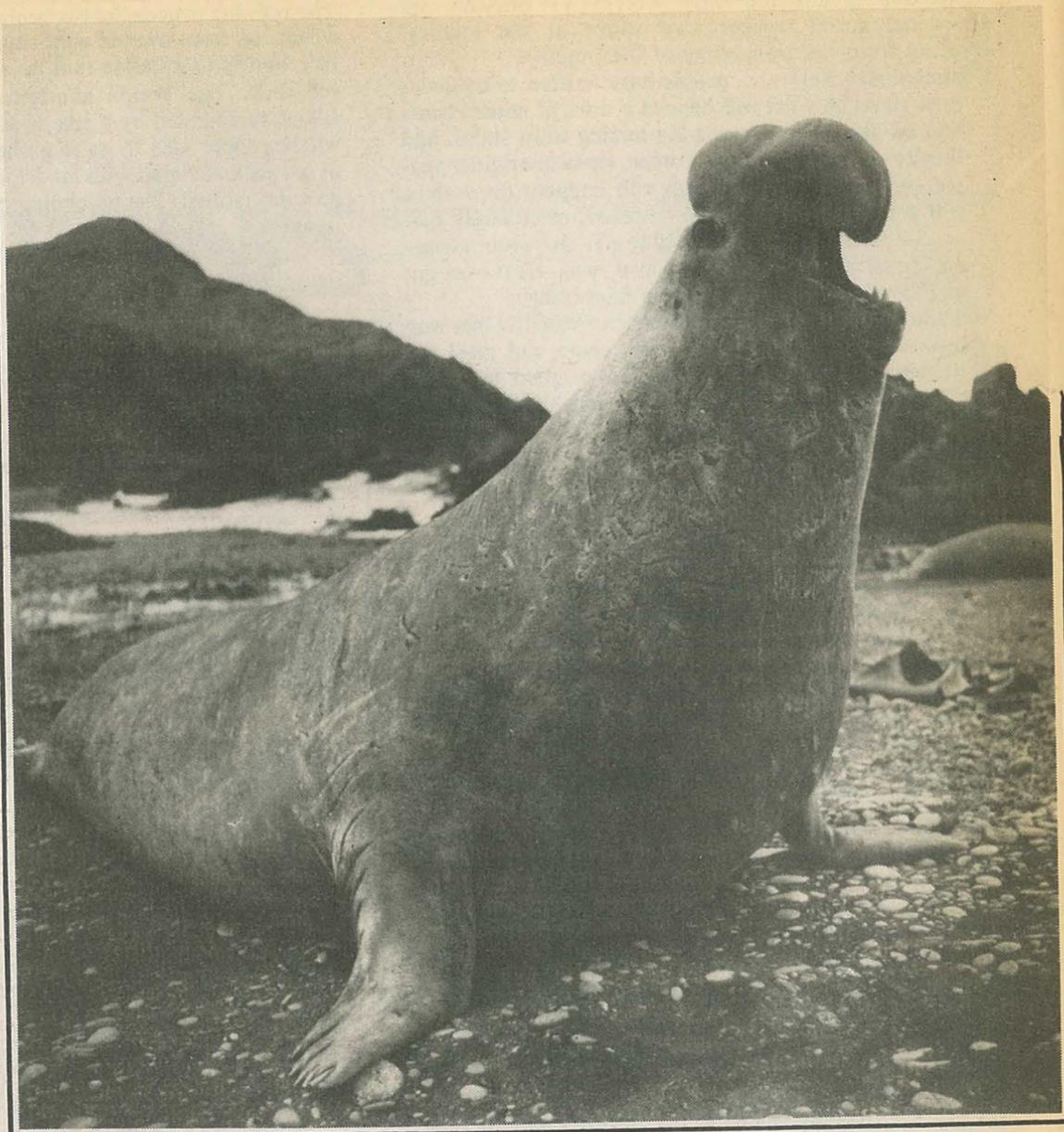
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ANTARCTICA



the season for exploitation?

The Antarctic Treaty Nations see Antarctica as a potential source of food and of fossil fuels. They are at the moment working on a "Conservation Regime for Antarctic Marine Living Resources", and are already discussing the question of mineral exploration, although exploitation is as yet neither technologically nor economically viable.

The so-called "Conservation Regime" actually encourages the exploitation of marine species. In the final report from the Ninth Consultative Meeting it is stated that "the word 'conservation' . . . includes rational use, in the sense that harvesting would not be prohibited". It goes on to say that "the regime would exclude catch allocation and other economic regulation of harvesting." It is obviously an exploitation, not a conservation regime.

Antarctica is the last remaining relatively unspoiled area on earth. Everywhere else the destructive hand of people can be seen, with its resulting ugliness — affecting sight, sound and smell — and contamination of water systems and of the atmosphere. Even in Antarctica the activities of people outside the area have polluted the seas; the ice (radiation levels have increased beyond normal background radiation levels); and animal species (DDT has been found in penguins). To eliminate these effects we would have to stop activities that produce these pollutants on a world-wide scale.

Antarctica should be preserved not only because it is the earth's largest remaining wilderness but also because of the possible global consequences of any interference to it.



Currents from the rich bottom water of the Antarctic flow north, till the warming waters well up to the surface, carrying nutrients which feed the phytoplankton that grows in the sunlight. The surface water flows back to the Antarctic, completing the never-ending cycle. The whole southern ocean depends on this cycle to sustain its ecosystem. The ecosystem of Antarctic waters is extremely fragile and could easily be disturbed.

Antarctica's effect on weather patterns is another area of concern. The winds that scour the earth's surface are directly affected by the temperature difference between the Antarctic ice and warmer Northern zones. It is not known whether and how human activities may interfere with the weather patterns, or with the Antarctic ecosystem. It is certain however that they could induce another ice-age or the melting of the poles, which would raise the world's sea-levels, perhaps submerging coastal cities. Once a change in the weather patterns occurred it would be difficult if not impossible to reverse. Influences from outside the Antarctic, such as the build-up of CO₂ causing a hot-house effect, or the increase in airborne dust particles reflecting more heat — could trigger off the change.

Another possibility, from within the region, is that an oil spill (which would be impossible to clean up with present methods because of the extremely cold temperatures) could cover a sufficient area of the ice surface to affect its ability to reflect the sun's radiation. The ice would then begin to warm up and melt. The effect would multiply in relation to the amount of melting area and would be uncontrollable. There is much dispute over the possibility and likelihood of this happening but it seems ridiculous to risk this situation while uncertainty exists.

Nuclear wastes in the ice?

Another threat to the Antarctic region is the possibility of dumping nuclear wastes there. While at present the Antarctic Treaty prohibits the dumping of wastes, the very fact that it is included in the treaty suggests that it was and perhaps still is regarded as a serious possibility. It would be very convenient for nuclear nations — out of sight, out of mind. The first suggestion was to melt the wastes into the ice. The dangers, however, from such a storage place are great because the constantly-moving ice layer could damage or crush containers. It is also thought possible that the ice could melt with the radiated heat from the slowly degrading radioactive materials, dislodging the ice into the surrounding oceans . . . This proposal

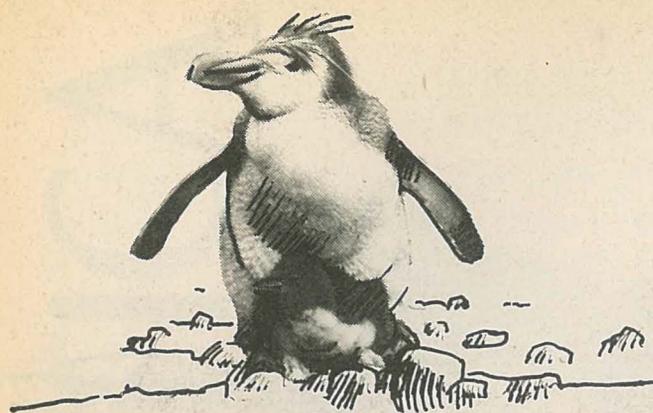
is no longer taken seriously by most authorities because of the obvious problems. However the possibility of storing wastes in rock outcrops is now being considered. Some geologists claim that the Antarctic rock is very stable. But how about transporting it there? Icebergs, sudden and forceful storms and the world's fiercest weather could pose a problem. Can we afford to lose a ship containing nuclear wastes?

The krill harvest

The dangers involved in the exploitation of Antarctica are known. Why, then, are we taking the risk? The planned resources regime is concerned with "harvesting" the Antarctic marine species, particularly krill, a shrimp-like crustacean which plays an extremely important role in the ecosystem of the Antarctic oceans. Krill is an important part of the food web. Whales, seals, penguins and other seabirds all depend on it. Human beings have depleted the whale population to a fraction of its natural size. How will harvesting krill, the baleen whale's food, affect the recovery of the whale population?

What will happen if we overfish krill to the extent that catch exceeds regenerative capacity? Looking at previous similar situations this is very likely. Consider the world total fishing record. In *World Watch Paper 14—Re-defining National Security* — Lester Brown explains, "The productivity of scores of oceanic fisheries is falling as the catch exceeds their regenerative capacities. In a protein hungry world, over-fishing has recently become the rule, not the exception . . . Between 1950 and 1970, fish supplied a steadily expanding share of human protein needs, but in 1970 the trend was abruptly and unexpectedly interrupted. Since then the catch has fluctuated between 65 and 70 million tons, clouding the prospects for an ever-bigger catch. Meanwhile world population growth has led to an 11% decline in the per capita catch and to rising prices for virtually every edible species."

It would not be necessary for us to fish even to the extent of catch exceeding regenerative capacity of krill to effect the Antarctic environment. The Antarctic marine eco-system is extremely fragile. The biomass, population dynamics, ecology, biology and distribution of krill are not clearly understood. The Antarctic treaty nations are formulating an exploitation regime that defines conservation as "rational harvesting" and *resource* as any species, "not limited to commercially exploitable species". Given our record in exploitation of other species it is reasonable to assume that the Antarctic marine eco system has very little chance of being unaffected unless some radical



changes in thinking and action take place very shortly.

If krill were used to feed millions of people who would otherwise starve and if krill were the only possible solution to this problem, we would obviously have to consider closely whether it would not be better to risk the destruction of this unique environment and the possible wide-ranging consequences. Again previous experience has shown that the food is unlikely to get to those who need it. Krill has already been exploited to a limited extent by Russia, Japan and other nations. It seems to have been so far mainly for stock-feed. The world's economic system is based, at the moment, on ability to pay rather than on need. It is likely that richer nations will be able to pay more for this commodity, to use for feeding stock, than the poorer nations who need it to feed to humans. Therefore the richer nations will get it. It is well known that fruit has been allowed to rot on trees, grain moulder away in granaries, and that governments have paid farmers not to grow food while people starve. Redistribution of food and full use of supplies would seem to be a more permanent solution to the problem.

Even if this is done it may no longer be possible to support the world population. Erosion of soils, desertification, deforestation and over-fishing are leaving the earth more and more unable to sustain past yields. Food must not only be redistributed more equitably, but the rehabilitation of the earth's ecological systems needs urgent attention. The exploitation and eventual destruction of another ecological system seems short-sighted to the point of blindness.

Oil from Antarctica is seen as an answer to the energy crisis. This solution to the problem can only at best be short-term and at worst could have wide-range consequences on the earth's weather patterns and ecological systems. It would seem more logical to develop longer-term solutions, to be found in the use of renewable energy sources. It seems that the reason for the exploitation of Antarctica is greed, not concern for humanity. The treaty nations want to gain economically from "their" area, and they want to retain control of it.

Given the realisation that the Treaty is beginning to collapse in its original aim of preserving Antarctica and reserving the area for scientific research, consideration must be given to some different form of control. Firstly, the area should be declared a Natural Wilderness Area. Secondly the exclusive club of nations that now forms the Antarctic Treaty should have no special privileges

and all nations that show an interest in the preservation of Antarctica should share in the management of the area on an equal basis to interested states. Every attempt must be made to protect this last remaining unspoilt continent.

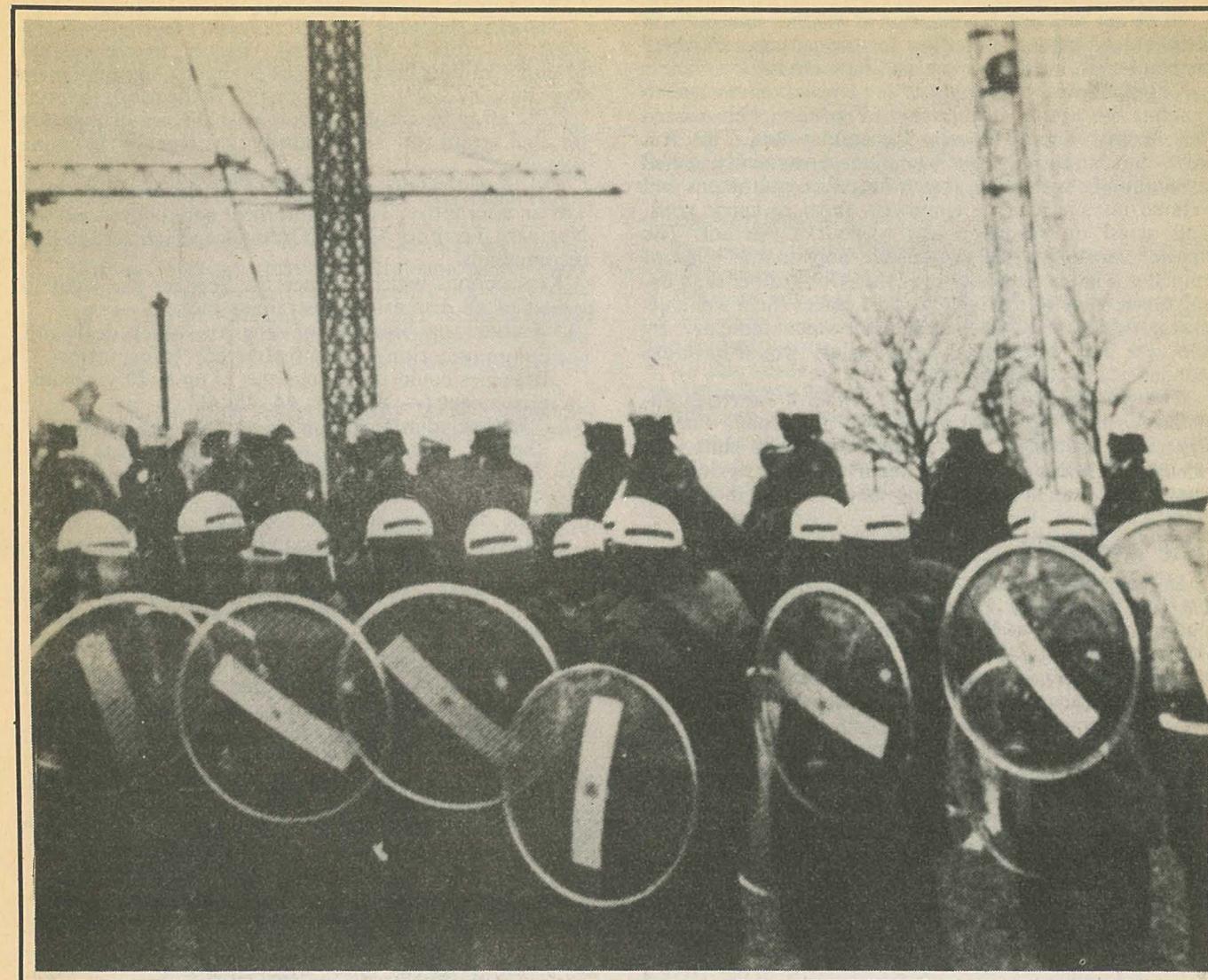
— Linnell Secomb,
Antarctica Collective,
Friends of the Earth,
51 Nicholson Street, Carlton, Vic.

The Treaty Meeting referred to above was the Special Antarctic Consultative Meeting held in Canberra Feb. 27-March 17. Three newspapers, called "ICE" were printed during the course of the Meeting by a group of FOE people there. These are available from FOE at a cost of 10c each.



Che d' Squark, delegate for the Antarctic penguins, meets other delegates to the Antarctic Consultative Meeting, at Canberra.

Friends of the Earth members also went to Canberra for the meeting to press for conservation of Antarctica.



CIVIL LIBERTIES IN A NUCLEAR STATE

Nuclear power has been alternately envisaged as a panacea for the world's energy ills (clean, safe, and so cheap they'd pay you to use it); as, theoretically, Pure Alchemy; and as a technological Messiah discovered in the nick of time to save the world from the energy crunch. The Faustian bargain made, and — presto! The flagging fortunes of capitalism, consumerism and consumptionism are revived.

Sadly, this vision has not come to pass, and it is apparent that capitalism has spawned yet another dinosaur, or more specifically, a particular sort of dinosaur — Tyrannosaurus Rex. (Tyrannosaurus Rex was a vicious carnivore and became extinct during the Ice Age due to its inefficient metabolism and excessive size.) Like Oedipus Rex, this particular offspring seems destined for the destruction of its economic parent.

Of our new term for nuclear power, Tyrannosaurus Rex, it is the tyrannos which strikes us. It is particularly

apt, since as our society is integrated into this particular technology; it will be increasingly monitored by tyrannical and authoritarian governments. It is this aspect — the impact on our fundamental freedoms — which concerns me here.

The Natural Law of Nucleardom

— that erosion of a citizen's liberties increases exponentially in direct proportion to a country's involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle.

It is outside the gambit of this article to reflect upon the political economy of nuclear power — suffice it to say that even taking the most naive and optimistic view of Western "democracies", the unprecedented toxicity of the materials used or produced (ie. Plutonium, Strontium 90) make stringent security measures inevitable. Sir Brian Flowers, Chairman of the Royal Commission into Environmental Pollution, stated,

"I do not believe it is a question of whether someone will deliberately acquire plutonium for the purposes of terror or blackmail, but only when and how often."

To give but one example of the legislation enacted to counter this threat, Britain on 23 February, 1976 passed the Atomic Energy Special Constables Act. This Act gave the Atomic Energy Agency a permanently armed constabulary with wide powers to police plutonium and related installations. It empowers them to carry arms, and arrest on suspicion and without a warrant. The special constables are responsible only to the relevant minister (via his authority over the AEA) rather than being answerable to parliament. This places them well outside normal controls such as an independent judiciary. By the year 2000 the special constabulary would have expanded to about 5,000 men.

The British National Council for Civil Liberties announced that "the brutal message of the Atomic Energy (Special Constables) Act seems to be that plutonium security is not simply more important than democratic controls. It may actually be incompatible with those controls"

The Atomic Energy Act

In Australia, the most dramatic example of this is the use of the Atomic Energy Act of 1953 to grant an authority to mine at Ranger. This act is a statutory relic dug up from the Cold War.

Section 41 (1) for example dealing with uranium supplies in emergency situations was enacted with an eye to America's preponderance in atomic weapons (1953), and no doubt was intended to ensure its continuance. Australia, at that stage huddled under the nuclear umbrella even more than it does today.

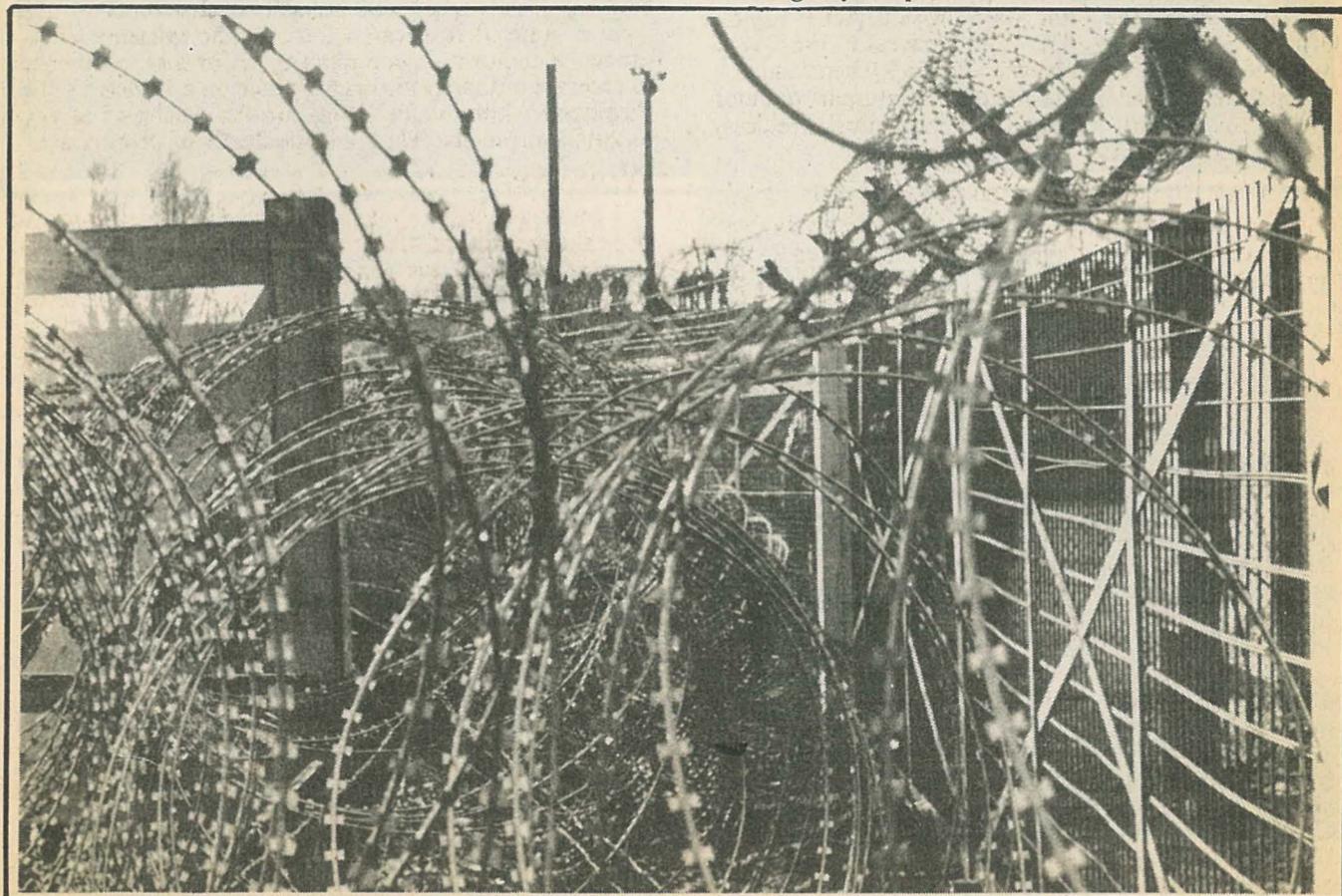
The essential point is that it is **defence legislation** being used to protect commercial, largely overseas-based uranium mining interests. The Ranger Commissioners were unequivocal in their opposition to the use of the Act: "We strongly recommend **against the use of that Act** for the grant of an authority to Ranger to mine uranium".

This opposition is made sharper by the fact that there was an alternative. The Government could have used the Northern Territory Mining Ordinance which Justice Fox recommends.

Key sections which infringe the liberties and right to protest of all dissenting Australians include —

1. Sections on breaches of security (which deal with communication of "restricted information"). Breaches could incur penalties of **up to 20 years imprisonment** (— Sections 44, 45, 46).
2. "Restricted information" is very broadly defined by the Act. This severely restricts public access to information, particularly if, as suggested, we develop enrichment plants.
3. The defendant may be convicted on "the circumstances of the case, his conduct or known character as proved" (— Section 47.) This might be, if we may take the Special Branch affair in South Australia as an indication, membership of the ALP, FOE or the Australian Conservation Foundation, or attendance at a demonstration.⁴

The Prime Minister's stated intention to collect dossiers on anti-uranium protestors may signal his aim to use section 47. Under this section the normal law of the land is laid aside; the burden of proof of guilt does not rest on the Crown, rather **the accused is guilty till proven innocent.**



Photos show attempted occupations of a nuclear reactor site in Brokdorf, West Germany: police and razor-sharp barbed wire.

4. If the associated Approved Defence Projects Protection Act is used, a person **hindering** a uranium mining project in any way can be **fined \$1,000 to \$10,000 or jailed for 6 to 12 months** for "speech or writing (which) advocates or encourages the prevention, hindrance or obstructs the carrying out of an approved defence project", or any person "publishing any declaration of boycott, or threat of boycott". This clearly affects unions most particularly.
5. There are powers to search, detain and arrest without warrant, thereby centralising power away from the independent (sic) judiciary into the hands of a central minister, police and technical elite. Former deputy leader of the opposition, Tom Uren, denounced the use of the Act in no uncertain terms:

"The use of the Atomic Energy Act now makes an outlaw of any worker, union or Australian citizen who does not fully comply with the mining and export of uranium." He further termed it the "legislative equivalent of war on any person opposing the government's hasty commitment of Australian uranium to the unstable and dangerous nuclear fuel cycle".⁵

The citizen's response.

The State, in this hasty attempt to usher us into the Atomic Age, has thrown down the gauntlet. The main thrust of the legislation is directed at unions and workers.⁶ Note that sections of both pieces of legislation hit directly at that most fundamental right of any worker: the right to withdraw labor.

The Atomic Energy Act is not an isolated instance; others include the Fuels, Energy and Power Resources Act (WA, 1974); the Vital State Projects Act (Vic); the Official Secrets Act; The Commonwealth Employees Act; and banning of street marches in Queensland.

What then should be the citizen's counterpart to union action, to prevent unions from becoming needlessly isolated and vulnerable?

The way forward — direct action?

It is up to the dissenters not to stand by in apathy and impotence, not to accept the infringement of liberties and the possibilities of further authoritarian control as a fait accompli, but to arrest this trend. One method which has been used with remarkable success overseas, has been mass, non-violent civil-disobedience. This does not preclude other action, such as legal obstruction, but is seen as part of an overall strategy. Clearly, at times it may be foolhardy and politically stupid, at others brilliantly stupid. At present the movement may not be ready for it. It is essential that the central tenet of this tool of liberation be grasped — that it must be deployed as part of a tactical decision — where it can win!

Unity and solidarity, particularly in the form of a worker-citizen alliance, is essential, since the legislation could be used to isolate individuals or unions:

"In any confrontation that develops over the mining and export of uranium, it is going to be crucial that there be close understanding and co-ordination between the trade unions and the whole anti-uranium movement. . . . It may be that the anti-uranium movement will need to demonstrate in support of civil liberties for trade unionists even by acts of civil disobedience, as part of the common struggle!"⁷ — Jim Roulston.

What then is civil disobedience and the prerequisites for its success?

Civil

1. **Civil as the opposite of military** — a non-violent, and undemocratic power, whose inspiration is peace, whose strength is the harmony of the collective, whose decisions are not arbitrary but consensual.
2. **Civil as public** — as the opposite of privatised alienation and frustrated apathy — as a vigorous and radical alternative to acquiescence to violence and oppression.

Disobedience

The key to the justification for disobedience turns on the following principles:

1. That no law that is an unjust law need be obeyed,
2. For each rule of law there is a more fundamental one; the rule of justice,
3. In the words of a former English Chief Justice, Lord Hailsham (now Quinton Hogg) "No law is enforceable if a sufficient number of people choose to disregard it."
4. Law ought to protect people, not property. As pointed out earlier, the Fraser Government has shown a flagrant disregard for such principles.
5. A primary purpose of politics ought to be to protect human life and expand the freedoms enjoyed by some to all on an equal basis. If this is not the case. "To the extent that his government pursues illegitimate aims, in his judgement, or employs means subversive of and menacing to the values a just government must uphold, civil disobedience is an effective means of dissent, a successful tactic for opposition, and an integral part of any strategy for change."

— Christian Bay.

6. Law requires our compliance and consent. As citizens we must neither comply nor consent to the use of the Atomic Energy Act. Democracy is threatened not only by institutional and legislative structures of the modern state. It is threatened too by the existence of attitudes of conformity, compliance, uniformity, obedience to external authority and dependence on a leader; by the Eichmann within us all. These are the lynchpins of any totalitarian society. They are the death of democracy.

Non-violence

I emphasise the non-violent aspect since we cannot oppose the violence of the Atomic Age simply by transferring that violence from one group to another, substituting new injustice for the old. The same personal qualities which are essential in all ways to a non-nuclear future, must be a part of the means we use to achieve that state — which is after all not merely a set of social and political structures but a state of being, a state of individual consciousness. The means then, not only reflect, but determine the end. This must be the politics of an alternative society.

The Clamshell Alliance and the success of Seabrook.

In a previous edition of Chain Reaction there was an account of the Clamshell Alliance's occupation of a reactor site in Seabrook (CR vol. 3(2) 1977). The clear message from the Seabrook demonstration was that non-violent civil disobedience is an effective means of dissent a successful tactic for opposition, and an integral part of any strategy for change.

Its extraordinary success appears to have been determined by the following factors (this is drawn from a transcript of an interview with Peter Jones, a participant in the occupation who has wide experience in Europe and the USA.)

1. **Structure** — core units were affinity groups — an idea borrowed from the Spanish Anarchists — where the participants form small groups which trust each other and have done non-violence training together. These groups draw strength from the social bonds forged through the mutual sharing of experiences prior to the occupation; talking out fears, sharing food, making music etc.

2. **Clear articulation of aims** so that all understood why they were there.

3. **Decisions made by consensus** — legitimacy through consent not authority, solidarity through trust, not via obedience to an appointed leader or a priori acceptance of authority.

4. **Plenty of time** to plan tactical decisions as to where civil disobedience could be effective. For example they did not take on an operating reactor, but occupied the site before it was built.

5. **Non-violence** — to avoid serious confrontation, no one who was not in an affinity group was allowed to take part in the occupation, but an alternative demonstration was arranged.

6. **Practical assistance** — the groups took names of the occupiers, addresses and details of jobs, dependents etc., in case of arrest. Legal aspects were clearly defined in printed leaflets. Possible action was acted out (by role-playing) so that they could anticipate likely problems — eg, what food to take and clothing to wear (glasses are usually smashed by police; sharp objects should not be carried in pockets etc.). They also acted out the policeman's role in order to understand their position and to learn how to lessen violence; perhaps to see them as potential allies. Peter Jones made the point that "A lot of police will do anything to avoid physical violence". They also acted out what to do when police are violent — rolling into a ball to protect the kidneys, staying together, linking arms etc. — and ways of maintaining morale; cheering when someone is dragged off, rather than being intimidated.



Photo: Reg Morrison

Role-playing pinpointed potential "hassle lines", such as conflict between two members of a group. A major factor in the Clamshell Alliance's success in popularizing the issue of civil disobedience was the non-violent discipline which secured public support and sympathetic media coverage.

"What was impressive was that it was completely non-violent — a lot of guards were impressed by this — it didn't break down anywhere". Much can be learnt from

the overseas example, while bearing in mind earlier considerations of its selective use, as a counterpart for other action, and local conditions affecting its likely success.

The stark reality of the nuclear state looms ahead. Steady and remorseless erosion of our liberties will be not merely incidental to, but in fact the lynchpin of such a state. Action today while we still have liberties to defend, may be the only alternative to a belated attempt to swing the clock back.

— Anne Doble

Footnotes

1. While nuclear technology is the logical society — the key characteristic of which being strict hierarchies, inequitable distribution of power and income, unequal division of labor and (recently) increasingly central control — nuclear power also holds the incipient seeds of capitalist destruction, being economically irrational, socially undesirable, demonstrably insane and politically suicidal.
2. Quote from the British National Council for Civil Liberties, in **Nuclear Prospects**, by Michael Flood and R. Grove-White. (Foe, London, 1976).
3. From the **Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry — Second Report** (Commonwealth Govt., 1977) p. 248.
4. During the South Australian Inquiry into the Special Branch of the police force, Mr. Justice White said of police files, "Some well-known moderate figures have recorded about them scandalously inaccurate opinions about their political standing . . . The mass of information about Labor organizations and personalities must be contrasted with the paucity of information about the Liberal Party and the Country Party . . . One of four cards on the latter parties characterised a senior Liberal Parliamentarian as a Communist because some decades ago he had been seen at or near a Communist bookshop." — National Times, 23-29 January, 1978, p.7.
5. Press statement 5 September, 1977.
6. The use of defence legislation to protect overseas mining companies and their domestic counterparts — i.e. the notion of opposition to a commercial enterprise as equivalent to treason — gives an insight into the nature of this government and its interaction with business interests.
7. Jim Roulston: "The Trade Unions, Uranium Mining and Civil Liberties" (paper produced by the Movement Against Uranium Mining, Melbourne office).
8. Christian Bey: "Civil Disobedience: Prerequisite for Democracy in Mass Society", in **Political Theory and Social Change**, by David Spitz, NY 1967. Christian Bey is a professor of political science at the University of Alberta.

FEMINISTS
 wanted
 to help start
 a small community
 in the Gippsland
 mountains.
 aims * to find suitable
 land to squat
 on or lease
 * to build shelters
 grow veges etc
 * to live as
 equally as
 possible with
 nature
 contact - Jill, Rosey or
 Karina Menk. cloFOE Melb.





POWER over POWER creates POWER over PEOPLE

Sexism, racism, class, nuclear state oppression — all are the same, all have as their roots oppression by people who desire ultimate power, the control of energy.

A nuclear society will only increase the sexism which women suffer. Because women were deemed useful only for reproduction and child-rearing in the eyes of a male-dominated society, women's intellect, our work, our endurance, our capability, our creativity, etc. have all been valued ONLY in terms of our ability to be good mothers. If we valued men, and gave them public credibility only in terms of their ability to be good fathers we would have an enormous number of men removed from public positions, because they would no longer have social credibility, e.g. Malcolm Fraser would be the only male politician left in the 1976 Federal Parliament — because he was "Father of the Year" at the time! Obviously there would be a reaction to this, and rightly so. Obviously,

also, there has been, is, and will continue to be, a reaction to the narrow definition of a viable woman's role in our society.

Women have broken out of the child-bearing role because of the greater possibility of choosing whether or not to reproduce and because of economic demands: as we have taken an active rather than passive role in society, so we have begun to want to have a greater say in the running of the world. We have begun to use our energy for ourselves to determine our own lives and not just to serve men in the ways they see fit. We have begun to reject many of the attitudes, prejudices and beliefs that grew out of the assumption that woman means mother (and only that). In other words, women are fighting for the power of self-determination. allow self-determination would mean loss of control, loss of power. To allow people to control their own energy would eliminate oppression. It would destroy the power of one group over another.

Oppression is caused by a desire to control other groups and this is dominant in our society which has been created and ruled by men. It may be a male characteristic and is certainly an integral part of male conditioning. It is men who fight to gain power, who have created this patriarchal society, with its sexism, racism, class, and who are creating nuclear power. Under this system, men fight everyone else, and even themselves, for such a goal.

Male-run industries, governments, societies, have been responsible for the development of an "energy short" world, one which distributes the energy it has in a shamefully unequal manner. The Industrial Revolution was important, mostly, because once energy was controlled, so were people. In wars, those who control the most energy (people or mechanical) ultimately win. With dependence on external sources of energy (oil, gas, coal, nuclear reactors, etc.) people are dependent upon those (men) who control the energy. This increases the probability/fact of oppression.

Marxism and capitalism are popular theories about who should control the means of production of energy. But Feminism is even more fundamental. Women want control of reproduction (for the sake of our bodies, for ourselves, for the sake of the world). Women want control to allow self-determination and conservation, not as a means of oppression and exploitation. This is reflected in feminist practices.

Men are fighting, not for self-determination, but for energy control. Part of retaining energy power has been the control of women, of races, of labour; the oppression of people who do not fit into the status quo, the conditioning of children to fit into a pre-ordained society.

Men, especially those who claim to be fighting for a better world, must be prepared to be active to eliminate oppression, to share power. If they do not do this, they will be seen to be battling for their own power, battling to be in control, and not battling to remove the structure which allows oppression to exist.

The civil liberties perspective on nuclear power illustrates this. Men argue that civil liberties will be destroyed in a nuclear society. Women agree! We point out that we already live in and are oppressed in a nuclear society and demand that the civil liberties men take for granted should be given to all people NOW.

Here are a few examples:

(1) The Right to Speak.

Women are socialized into an inarticulate role, to be passive. "Good women, like children, should be seen but not heard."

(2) The Right to be Listened To.

Women are trivialized, told we are being silly, emotional, neurotic, over-sensitive, etc., are chatterboxes, irrational, etc.

(3) The Right to Determine Our Own Future.

Women have limited job opportunities, we are trained in limited directions, trained to have no self confidence to tackle an aggressive world, trained to accept, rather than to initiate . . . we are pressured to rely on a man to have any social recognition ("Peter's wife and Jody's mum").

(4) The Right to be Born into a Healthy Environment.

We don't have control over our bodies, contraception is inadequate and dangerous, abortion often impossible; we are raped, then victimized in the courts . . .

Fraser has just called out the army for security to safeguard the right to safely walk the streets! He is protecting politicians. When has it ever been safe for women to walk the streets, to stay at home without being attacked by a stranger, or a husband?

The list could extend endlessly but it is clear that women are oppressed and a nuclear society will only increase this oppression:

(1) Women fighting for self-determination demand a radical change in society. Such a change could never be tolerated in a nuclear state which must remain stable to be safe. Any demands for self-determination must, and would be, rendered ineffective.

(2) If Australian uranium export proceeded, trade with other countries would result in the influx of manufac-

tured goods (eg. from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, The Phillipines — all of which want Australian uranium), our own manufacturing industries would suffer and result in the unemployment of many women, especially migrant women.

(3) If uranium mining expanded, aboriginal women would suffer wholesale cultural destruction, particularly from alcohol, rape, syphilis and bearing half-caste children who are not recognized by tribal culture. Aboriginal women have already tried to avoid this by the outstation movement.

(4) All women have reason to fear nuclear health hazards. Radiation causes cancer, leukemia, sterility, hormonal displacement, mutations.

(5) Third world women will have nuclear technology imposed upon them. It is completely inappropriate to their demands. They cannot afford electricity but will have any attempts at emancipation from the economic and social grind under which they suffer made futile. The industrialisation resulting from nuclear power will cause displacement, forced urbanization, and loss of the cultural support groups which make their rural existence possible.

For men to not fight to eliminate women's oppression now is tantamount to agreeing that sexism is good.

We women have no stake in the present society which is so structured that oppression is a necessary complement to power. Feminists do not believe that oppression needs to exist.

For this we are abused, told we are being divisive, taking emphasis away from the "main issue". Feminism is said to be a "red herring". Feminist perspective is given, at best, tokenism, eg. "Let the women have a go" NOT "We will listen and seriously consider what they say".

Through collectives, women explore the avenues which lead away from oppressive/power-hungry/dominating forms of behaviour. We have had notable success in our fight for self-determination, not just for women, but for all oppressed groups.

Men in alternative movements, such as environmental, anti-nuclear movements, must be willing to examine and stop forms of oppression which prevent individuals and groups from active participation (eg. types of committee structure, chairing procedure, liaison channels, rhetoric, sexist behaviour, which can exclude those who don't know the rules or are not used to public behaviour). They must be prepared to consider feminist guidelines. If they agree that politicization (not just radicalisation) of all people is important and necessary for an effective movement, they must take the next step of encouraging people to initiate activity, to make their own decisions, to be autonomous.

This is very important, because we cannot successfully fight the nuclear society by setting up, as an alternative, nuclear-organized movements!!

In our struggle for a non-nuclear future it is necessary to examine in great detail alternative forms of energy. We must work towards a future where reliance on external forms of energy is discouraged. To stop the oppression created by the desire to control energy we must utilize energy forms which allow/develop self-reliance.

This is the direction we must take if we are to unite against the oppression of those who seek to control power and people — unite in a way that allows and encourages equal participation by all in the fight to end the present nuclear society and to prevent the emergence of a nuclear state.

Roslyn Livingston

1. See A. Doble's paper on Civil Liberties for a critique of the Atomic Energy Act and the Approved Defence Projects Protection Act.

PROGRESS, PATRIARCHS AND NUCLEAR POWER

A long time ago, it seems that man began to feel himself separate from nature, he began to regard himself as a master. He felt he could dominate it, exploit it, make it serve his own ends. Woman, seen as a symbol of nature was also to be dominated and exploited. Women are oppressed not just by men, but by the assumptions of patriarchal consciousness which we have internalized. Our oppression by sexism, and the Earth's oppression by the results of "Progress" have common root in the alienation of self and world upon which our civilization is founded, an experience which was used to justify Man setting himself up as lord over nature and woman.

In line with the ethnic of exploitation and dominance, the history of this society is the history of wars, of living in the shadow of wars; the history of progress for its own sake.

Progress is the rape of the world. Progress is linear. But when linear progress is imposed upon a non-linear, mutually-independent system like the Earth's ecology, something goes wrong. "Natural Resources" end up as poisons, and Progress ends in nuclear reactors, wastes and bombs. Progress has taken the natural and made it anti-natural, thus it threatens the survival of this planet as we know it.

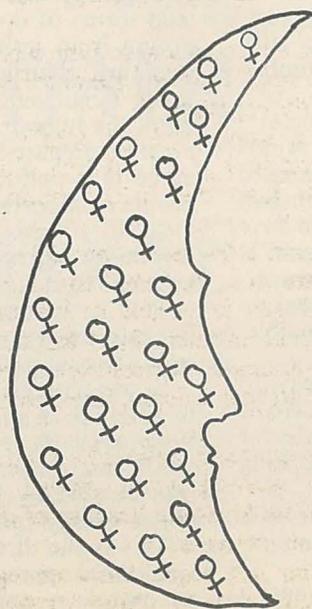
In the name of Progress our social rulers are bequeathing their descendants a permanent legacy of used reactors, tombstones to be scattered over the radioactive wastelands of the future. The mutations and cancers will be intimate evidence of the end of Progress long after other chronicles of our civilization's development have crumbled to dust.

The same people who brought us rape, world war 2, the nuclear family and Hiroshima are now offering us

package deals in nuclear reactors, wastes and bombs. How much longer will we sit back and take the same old shit?

The oppression of nuclear power is not just the cancers and mutations which will increase and make life miserable and painful for the next few hundred thousand years; it is not just the inevitability of global nuclear war and its horrific aftermath; nor is it just the ripping up of Aboriginal homelands for the profits of large companies, though it is all these things.

The nuclear power reaction is supposedly one of the finest technical achievements of mankind — the splitting and harnessing of the forces holding the natural world together. The nuclear world is the perfect playground for the boys who run Uranium cartels, and the lads who design nuclear reactors and lead-



lined jock straps. Politicians and company directors guard, sell and exchange nuclear technology, experts and weapons as though they were prize marbles. It is up to us to make sure the nuclear playground is the last one those boys will have.

A nuclear society by necessity means a rigid, unyielding society which has consolidated the oppressive male dominated power structures which we women are already fighting to change. The nuclear society would not only mean an even greater oppression of women that we already experience, but it would disallow the possibility of any massive social change which would accompany attainment of the feminist goals of self-determination and liberation for all.

The environment movement is seeking to redefine man's relation to nature; the women's movement is redefining man's relation to woman: each is what I consider to be the one feminist struggle. Feminism values co-operation, not hierarchies, it recognises mutual inter-dependence over dominance/submission games. We learnt that power is in unity, not governments. It is now up to women and sympathetic men to bring feminist values to the environment movement, until they are seen to be integral rather than irrelevant to the campaign.

In conclusion, I would suggest that it is strategically necessary for feminists to become visibly involved in the environment and anti-nuclear struggle. Pro-feminist men must support us. Involvement in the anti-nuclear struggle forces us to broaden feminist involvement. We begin to see that the struggle against the patriarchy is to be fought not just for our bodies and ourselves, but for all things on this planet. Lesbians show we can be socially independent of men, let us also reduce our dependence on patriarchal energy sources.

By: Zoe Sofulis, member C.A.N.E. and F.A.N.G. (feminist anti-nuclear group). Zoe lives in Western Australia.



LETTERS FROM WOMAN'S DAY

Almost inadvertently I was interviewed last year for an article about women and the anti-uranium issue in Women's Day. I made sure that at the end of the article all the state addresses of the National Uranium Moratorium were listed. My name and work address were included too. Since the article appeared in January a steady trickle of 2-3 letters a day has appeared in my mail.

These letters are from women whom the anti-nuclear movement has not reached yet — they display a concern and sensibility that make the "activist" realise that there is a deep-seated unease amongst Australian women about the uranium issue which has not been allayed by pro-nuclear propaganda, but neither has it been adequately recognised by the anti-nuclear movement.

It is instructive to look at the sort of women who are asking for information as well as the fears that they express. Most of the women are married and sign themselves as Mrs. . . . Some of them just ask for material, others describe themselves in order to explain why they are ask-

ing for the information. For example:—

"I am a 22 year old factory worker supporting my husband while he does his diploma for four years. So I won't be having a family for a while."

"I am a teacher and as I am working in a small town my views need to be clearly expressed."

"As a woman with a family of seven and four grand-children, I am intensely interested in the uranium question."

"I have a few books but a lot of them are too complex to understand. I am interested in learning more about uranium. But I feel a lot of anti-uranium demonstrators are only out to be in a demo, it makes me mad."

"I am not really politically minded but am worried about mining of uranium in Australia because of the views you expressed."

"(I) do not really know enough about the issue to argue logically and confidently."

"I am 47 years old mother of four grown-up children and I am against nuclear power but I don't know all

the answers, except that I feel Australia wants to rush in too quick before she knows more answers to all the questions."

"These women are largely concerned with the disposal of wastes, genetic mutation and what they term the effects of uranium — the "future consequences." Only one woman wrote about alternative forms of energy and it was an aboriginal woman who mentioned the political aspects of the uranium industry. In a compelling and moving letter she said "I am opposed to uranium. It is the most distrustful and powerful substance in the world today. . . . What safety precautions can be taken? There are none. It simply has to be left in the ground. That is the safe way."

Several women expressed their delight at having come across such an article and many wished the anti-uranium movement well. It is a humbling experience to read through these letters but it also makes me rejoice in being a woman, sharing common concerns with other women whom I'd never meet.

— Deirdre Mason.

PETFOOD AND PERFUME

exploitation of the whale

— Barbara Hutton

Whale products.

Although we know that Australia takes hundreds of whales each year, it is hard to find out what products they end up in. Most of the spermacetti, the oil from sperm whales, is sent to England. It probably comes back, in the form of chemical compounds, leather goods, printers' inks, cosmetics etc. The flesh, blood and bone are used as fertilizer or protein additives for stock-feed and pet-food, especially pet-food which is made in Western Australia.

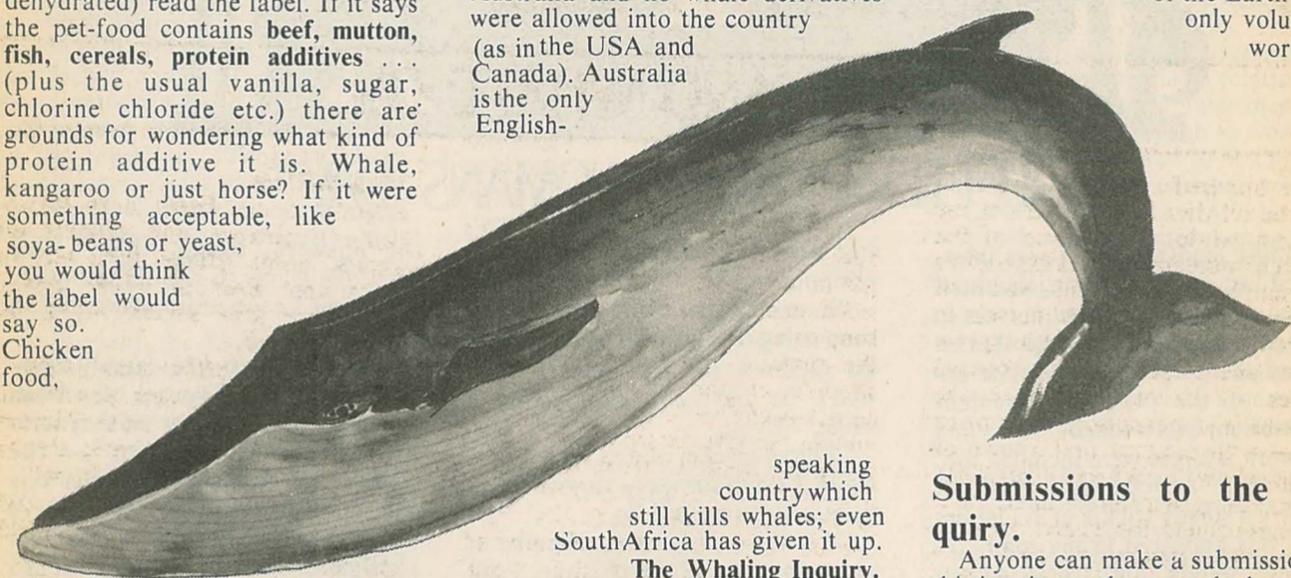
When buying pet-food (tinned or dehydrated) read the label. If it says the pet-food contains **beef, mutton, fish, cereals, protein additives** ... (plus the usual vanilla, sugar, chlorine chloride etc.) there are grounds for wondering what kind of protein additive it is. Whale, kangaroo or just horse? If it were something acceptable, like soya-beans or yeast, you would think the label would say so. Chicken food,

candles are traditionally made out of sheep's fat, but imported ones may contain whale-oil. There are a lot of fairly cheap oily Japanese crayons on the market. One wonders what they are made of. Whale-oil is used in printers' ink, carbon paper, etc. Alternatives are available if the companies want to use them, however. All whale derivatives have been banned in the United States and Canada, and they seem to have managed to do without them.

It would make things much easier if there were a ban on whaling in Australia and no whale derivatives were allowed into the country (as in the USA and Canada). Australia is the only English-

Project Jonah is writing submissions on every aspect of whales and whaling. The whaling industry (the Cheynes Beach whaling company, the International Whaling Commission, and the Japanese whaling interests); and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife are presumably writing in favor of the Industry. The whaling industry has an advantage, in that all the groups have paid employees, and there are millions of dollars at their disposal. The conservationists in Project

Jonah and Friends of the Earth have only voluntary workers.



speaking country which still kills whales; even South Africa has given it up.

The Whaling Inquiry.

This year the ALP adopted a policy of banning whaling within 200 miles of the Australian coast. And the Liberal Party, too, took a stand. Just two weeks before the election, a delegation from Project Jonah was allowed in to speak to Mr Fraser. Even though he was very busy because of the impending election he took the time to see them, and assured them with a chuckle that his daughter Phoebe was strongly against whaling, and would hardly let him forget the issue after the election.

Even before they could put their demands Mr. Fraser handed the delegates a press-release, which announced his intention to hold a full impartial inquiry into whaling, with Project Jonah representing the conservationists.

Submissions to the Inquiry.

Anyone can make a submission to this inquiry — the more the better. If the inquiry is flooded with submissions the Judge will realise that there is great public feeling against whaling.

Friends of the Earth will be recommending that:

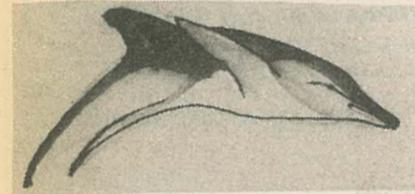
1. Australia cease whaling.
2. Whaling be prohibited within 200 miles of the Australian coast.
3. The importing of products containing whale derivatives be stopped.
4. Australia should retain its quota of whales without killing them.

The last recommendation is quite important. Australia has a quota of 713 whales to kill this season. If it simply gave up whaling, its quota would be given to another country. As far as the whales were concerned, it wouldn't make any difference

whether Australia gave up whaling or not: the same number of them would get killed. It is therefore important to hang onto the quota, and it is possible. Canada has already done this.

We are now looking for other organisations that will support these recommendations, and are willing to put their name to them or write their own submission against whaling. We are also investigating cruelty in the killing of whales, alternative sources of oil, such as the jojoba bean, and the degree of public feeling against whaling.

If you can offer any help or information, contact Barbara or Kim at Friends of the Earth, 51 Nicholson Street, Carlton.



BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

It's impossible to tell which companies use whale oil and which don't. In some cases no-one knows what goes into a preparation except the chemist who makes it up, and guards the secret. However if you use makeup there are some available that certainly don't contain whale oil — Blackmore's, Beauty without Cruelty, coconut oil etc. Perfumes don't normally contain ambergris.

Beauty without Cruelty aims to demonstrate to people that it is unnecessary to buy any cruelly derived products and that alternatives are available.

One of the recognised methods of testing shampoos is to instil the concentrated

substance into the eyes of rabbits and other animals so that the degree of damage can be observed and recorded. Severe swelling, discharge and blistering occurs. These experiments often continue over a period of several days and the damage is then measured according to the size of the area injured. The rabbit's head is held in a clamp-like device to prevent movement and the eyes can then be kept permanently opened by the use of metal clips or strips of adhesive tape which makes certain the eyelids are forced apart. Rabbits have no tear ducts and therefore cannot "wash away" or rid the eye of the irritants.

B.W.C. has a range of products made from vegetable oils or herbal extracts. They also have information on other outlets for such items.

For those interested in more information B.W.C. has available films and literature and may be contacted through Liesma Rek, c/- 'Nalya' Barbers Rd., Kalorama 3766. Ph. 728 1560.

BALEEN AND WHALE OIL

For hundreds of years whale oil was the oil that lit the lamps of the Western world. The baleen of the baleen or whale-bone whales, such as the humpbacks and rights, was used in everything from ladies' corsets to umbrellas. The teeth of the sperm whale (the largest of the toothed whales — the smallest are the dolphins and porpoises) were often carved with pictures and known as "scrimshaw". When electricity became the generator of light, other uses were found for whale products. Sperm oil is used in fine machinery, such as clocks, and in high-friction engines. There are many other uses. Hundreds of Australian companies have been circularized by Project Jonah asking whether they use whale products. About half of those written to have never replied to letters or follow-up.

Project Jonah have a list of companies who have replied to the letters and **do not use** whale products, so that you know if you buy from them

you are not supporting the slaughter of whales.

If you care about other life forms besides human beings, if you regard life as a totality rather than a one-sided exploitation by humans, the time to act is now. Join the fight for the whales — work with a group like Friends of the Earth or Project Jonah. A change in the psychology of human beings is essential if there is to be any wildlife left in the world. The arms race is another part of the selfish and sick mentality that prevails in the corridors of power of governments all over the world. What arrogance is it that causes us humans to think of ourselves as superior life forms? The agony of the whales is regarded as a symbol of human callousness by conservationists all over the world.

From an article by Jenny Talbot, Project Jonah, C/- VEC, 324 William St., Melbourne.

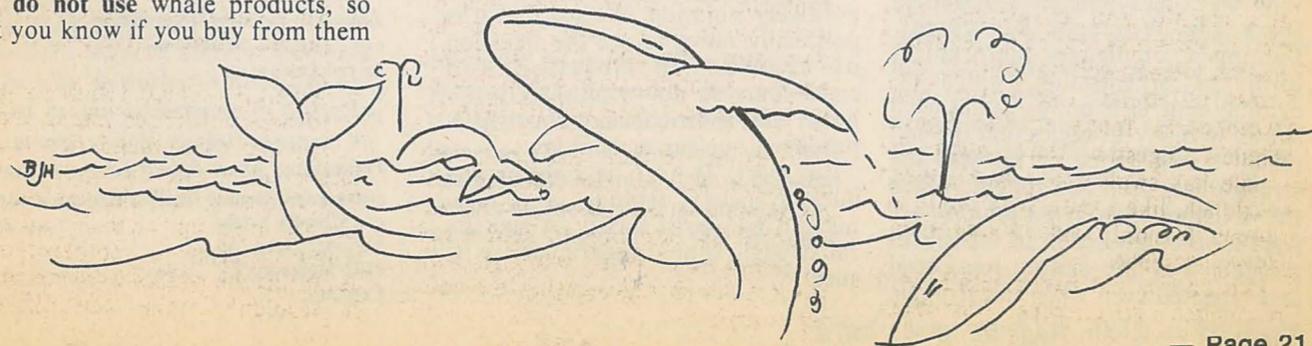
Resources

Friends of the Earth have books, badges, stickers and posters on whales. Some groups have sets of slides and tapes of whale music. There are also several films on whales around.

Whales, Dolphins and Men
Available from Project Jonah and the Victorian State Film Library (other libraries can probably get it).
In Search of the Bowhead
From "Educational Media", 235 Clarendon St., Melbourne, 3205, and from the State Film Library.

Greenpeace: Voyage to Save the Whale
From Greenpeace, 3rd Floor, Argyle Centre, 18 Argyle St., Sydney, 2000.

And God Created Whales
From "Educational Media" (address above).



WOMEN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

Feminist anti nuclear groups have been established in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Women find it essential to fight the anti nuclear struggle from their own perspective in separate groups.

Sydney WANE, with some input from other groups, explain why: The struggle against Uranium mining is not a struggle in a vacuum. The development of nuclear energy, with all its inherent dangers to the environment and civil liberties, is incomprehensible without understanding the economic and political system it grew out of, and is designed to support.

We are up against a system where ownership of the means of production, and therefore power to make important decisions, are concentrated in the hands of a few — nearly all of them male. It is a system which exploits as a condition of its existence, and it is held together by ideologies which rationalize and justify this oppression, using such myths as equality of opportunity and freedom of choice. We observe inequalities of sex, race and class but these are covered up by ideologies of sexism, racism and class which make us accept them as "natural". We want to challenge the common myth that in a "free enterprise" society the ordinary Australian has the same access to power and decision making that is available to the Uranium Producers Forum.

WANE believes that an anti-nuclear campaign should dwell not only on the dangers of the nuclear fuel cycle, but also on the conditions that have created the so called 'need' for nuclear technology and on the strategies for such a campaign to be successful.

Why a women's group?

WANE was started by women from the Women's Movement. Feminists challenge hierarchical forms of organisation, which inevitably centralise power. It has been shown in many struggles that the end result is determined by the way the struggle was seen and fought. When the existing power structures are used by the opposition in a political struggle they are simply reinforced and repeated even when the struggle

is "successful".

We work collectively to minimise the grosser forms of personal power mongering and centralised decision making. Hackwork is shared, people take turns to chair meetings and there are opportunities for all members to participate. We derive strength from acting in groups rather than individually.

We consider that good personal interaction is a basis of all meaningful political action; that good fun means good business.

The left and peace movements have often appealed to women on the basis of emotion and motherhood, an appeal which reinforces the sexist society and discourages women's active involvement.

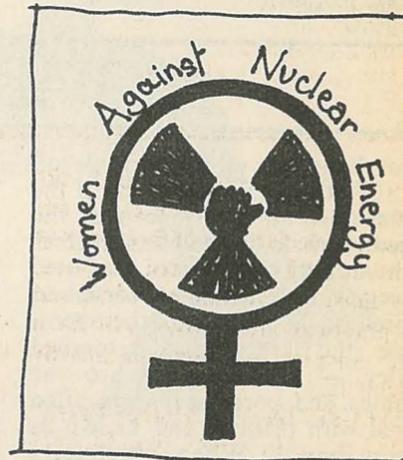
WANE assumes that all women have intelligence and understanding. Previously, some have tried to manipulate them with fear tactics.

The frightening aspects of the nuclear issue should be talked about but we gain little by playing on people's fears and prejudices. What is needed is a way of helping people to gain a critical awareness. It is therefore of great importance that we break down one of the divisions that lie behind the nuclear industry — that between mind and heart, public and personal, male/world and female/world.

WANE also seeks to break down the authority of experts and scientists — mostly male — in the anti-uranium movement. Their prominence makes people believe that the social and ethical questions about uranium are second to the technical aspects; an assumption that is not correct and does nothing to help the active participation of many women.

We see one of WANE's functions as making inroads into women's political isolation. We see that it is politically naive to see the question of uranium in isolation and endeavours to do so ultimately uphold the political system which produced nuclear technology.

In short, WANE is fighting the nuclear society, fighting for a non-nuclear, non-sexist society. A successful struggle cannot separate these issues.



badges available from Melbourne WANE & Sydney WANE. 30¢. (bulk: 20¢)

WANE type groups exist in France, Germany, Denmark and just starting in England (SERA). Women's edition of undercurrents coming up. *Feminism, Ecologie et Revolution* c/o Françoise d'Eaubonne 26 rue Lecluse F — 75017 Paris 17^{ce} 6 France contact for German feminist ecology group c/o Claudia Wiebe Veriungstrasse 155 2102 Hamburg 93 Germany

contact list for women's groups

Western Australia

FANG
Zoe Sofoulis,
27 Lockhart St.,
Como, 6152
or
Gloria Brennan or
Di Smith,
c/- CANE,
537 Wellington St.,
Perth, 6000. Ph. (home) 271 9870.
or
Goldfields against Nuclear Energy,
Marie Horsham,
46 Boundary Rd.,
Kalgoorlie, 6430.

Victoria

WANE,
c/- Women's Centre,
165 Latrobe St.,
Melbourne, 3000. Ph. 662 1037.
or
Ros Livingston,
c/- MAUM,
180 Brunswick St.,
Fitzroy, 3065. Ph. 419 1457.

Northern Territory

Annie Atkinson, (FOE)
N.T. Environment Council,
P.O. Box 2120,
Darwin, 5794.
or
Judy Derrick,
49 George Cres.,
Fanny Bay, 5790.
or
Louise Grave,
10 Dowdy St.,
Millner, 5792.

South Australia

Laurel Jackson,
98, Cremorne St.,
Unley S.A., 5061.
or
Zia or Jane Gunn,
c/- CANE
310 Angus St.,
Adelaide, 5000. Ph. 223 5155.

Tasmania

WANE,
Cris Harries, (Uranium Moratorium),
102 Bathurst St.,
Hobart, 7000.

New South Wales

Uranium Moratorium,
P.O.B. 5017a,
West Newcastle, 2300.
WANE
c/- Women's House,
62 Regent St.,
Chippendale, Sydney, 2000.
or
Carla Cranny
c/- MAUM, 3rd Floor,
18 Argyle St.,
Sydney, 2000. Ph. 241 3004.

Queensland

Sandra Bloodworth,
c/- CANP,
141 Anne St.,
Brisbane, 4000.
or
WANE
28 Queen St.,
Sandy Bay,
Brisbane, 4000.

"The culture which created the ecology crisis has also created our language, our patterns of thought, our whole socially constructed universe; being thus, the creation of conceptual and practical alternatives will be a long, complex and extraordinarily difficult task."

Gerald Gill "Back to Mother Earth" in *Arena* No. 34 1974

"Most of the pollution created by our society is directly attributable to the same forces that require/ensure the oppression of women. The 'growth' ethic (supported by Labor and Liberal alike) and its attendant consumerism and class structure are forces damaging to women and to the environment at the same time. Consumerism is one thing that feminists appear to take for granted, an unchallenged assumption at the centre of modern western society. But look at the way it works: women are exploited by the advertisers in order to sell goods which exploit women as consumers, and which were produced by the exploitation of women as workers."

"Vashti's Voice"

it's worth thinking about

"Women should look with considerable suspicion upon the ecological bandaids presently being peddled by business and government to overcome the crisis of exploitative technology... To compensate for the failures of the system, the individual consumers will be asked to tighten their belts; the system itself will not be challenged to change."

Rosemary Ruether, "New Woman, New Earth"

"Women at home will naturally be pressed into becoming the self-help ecologists in bandaid remedies that increase the dissipation of their energies into trivia, but have minimal effects on the ecological imbalance."

Rosemary Ruether, "New Woman, New Earth"

"(Women) are forbidden knowledge and control of the technology that would place their own biological processes in their own hands (contraception, abortion, gynaecology). Thus the structures of patriarchal consciousness that destroy the harmony of nature are expressed symbolically and socially in the repression of women."

Rosemary Radford Ruether, "New Woman, New Earth" Dove Communications Pty. Ltd. 1975 Australia.

"I feel that in our society, every day increases the hold that doctors have on that very, very normal and female process of birth. Birth is a normal womanly function and I resent any unnecessary interference in that process, no matter how well-meaning and well-intentioned it may be. We are no robots, who perform in a programmed way; we are human beings, female human beings, who function in our own individual way."

Henny Ligtermoet ante-natal teacher in a letter to "Simply Living" No. 4 1977.

WASTED WOMAN-POWER

alienation in a consumerist society

RUTH CROWE

"The women's liberation movement is a final and last ditch stand to stop the mad rush mankind is on to destroy itself. As feminists we cannot separate our struggle for our own liberation . . . whatever that may mean . . . the right to realise our full potential . . . we cannot separate that from the wanton waste of our resources; we cannot separate that from the kinds of things that humanists and environmentalists around the world are doing." — Rosemary Brown.¹

Almost 80% of Australians live in large cities. Australia is thus the most suburbanised country in the world (there are some larger suburban areas in other countries, but in no country is there such a high proportion of the population living in the large suburbanised cities). Thus the problem of women in the suburbs is one that particularly applies to Australia.

There have been disturbing reports about life led by some women in Australian cities. For example, as early as September 1969 Rev. Father Frank Richards, then Director of the Melbourne Catholic Family Planning Bureau warned —

"The greatest punishment on earth is solitary confinement, yet many wives are suffering from it all the time."

In 1975 the YWCA prepared a report called "*Leisure . . . an Inappropriate Concept for Women*". The report stated:

"Women are daily confined to the company of their children, becoming socially isolated and going for long periods of time with no adult company other than their husband. In such conditions women lack all the conditions of a stimulating environment which are essential for satisfactory personal development."

In 1976 the Victorian Department of Health prepared a report on the families in one of Melbourne's outer suburbs — called "*The Knox Project*". Here is a quote about how many women staying at home with children experience the symptoms which are commonly lumped together as "suburban neurosis".²

"A general practitioner described how the doctor sees the syndrome consisting of anxiety, irritability, suspicion, feverish houseproud activity, "do gooding", psycho-motor symptoms such as head-aches and gastric disorders, and over-consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or food. Contributing causes may be summarised as loneliness, isolation, fatigue, monotony, frustration and lack of adequate stimulation, lack of communication with significant others 'especially the husband', and development of dependence on home, husband and children, yet simultaneously having perpetual responsibility for them."

Isolation

One factor contributing to the isolation of women in the suburbs is the reliance on cars. Housing developments no longer follow the railway lines: they follow the highways. Suburbs have spread beyond the areas that are served by public transport. In one-car families the husband frequently takes the car, to get to work. The wife is left more or less trapped in her home. The children also suffer. Thirty-seven per cent of the population is too young to have a driver's licence. This makes it extremely difficult for teenagers in the suburbs to find jobs which they can get to, and increases the child's dependence on the mother:

"The neighbourhood has disappeared as far as the child is concerned. Without the ability to roam freely, make friends, spend money and participate in recreational activities, a child's world is likely to be determined by his parent's propensity to chauffeur him to activities."³

The lack of transport would not have such great effect if there were opportunities for participation in community life in the suburbs. People would not need to travel long distances if there were centres where they could meet and share activities; places with facilities for leisure, learning and communication, for all age-groups.

"The age-segregated neighbourhood . . . which became a feasible urban form only when the automobile became commonplace . . . is the natural breeding ground for insecurity and alienation . . . While the absence of the aged cheats the child of exposure to how other people live, the absence of young adults makes the neighbourhood teenagers unusually cocksure . . . (they lack) someone just a bit older and more mature, a natural big brother or sister."

The trap of consumerism.

But the problems in our suburbs are much deeper than loneliness, isolation, lack of stimulation and insufficient support services for health and child-care. The increase in child-bashing, suicide and drug-abuse are the symptoms of the breakdown of human relationships in Australia where possession of material goods is substituted for real human interaction. The Knox Project in fact identified the symptoms of consumerism:

"Women described the beginnings (of feelings of being trapped) as the unrealistic expectations they were taught to hold concerning the kind of life-style they would lead, 'espoused, housed and pregnant'. The media was blamed for much of this picture that life would be a 'contemporary home filled with the most glamorous up-to-date gadgets . . . and latest model car and a doting,

handsome husband who is supposed to treat her like a queen . . . the children will be angels and models of good conduct (Letter to the Free Press 5/8/'75). The reality where 'her husband is just an ordinary chap . . . the children scream, fight and get dirty' and the house isolates her from the neighbours she's never had the chance to befriend during her married working years prior to pregnancy, may be the beginning of a downward spiral."

The word "consumerism" has been coined to describe the phenomenon of conspicuous waste being made possible through sophisticated advertising and modern technology. The housewife in the suburbs is the main target.

Today, in "advanced" countries like Australia the basic needs are being met for the vast majority of the population. Thus new markets have to be found if the economy is to continue to grow — our present economy can only continue to exist as a growth economy.

On a world scale, damage from such "growth economies" can be gauged in the picturesque proportions given by Ivan Illich in "*Celebration of Awareness*" where he states:

"During the late 1960s it has become evident that less than 10% of the human race consumes more than 50% of the world's resources and produces 90% of the physical pollution which threatens to extinguish the biosphere."⁴

Our suburban homes and gardens, the unprecedented range of our domestic equipment and household luxuries,

our fast cars and vast roadways are possible only because we are part of this 10%.

The lifestyle which prevails in Australian suburbs depends on private ownership. Each family is expected to own privately the goods and services which were supplied in the past by the community, for community use. This privatism assists the market in foisting superfluous goods onto the people who live in the suburbs. At the same time women become more vulnerable to sexual oppression as they substitute the possession of things for relationships with people, and identify themselves with the sexist advertising which is an integral part of consumerism.⁴

"Consumer education (has) become consumer manipulation. Market research has discovered that the most purchase-oriented shopper is socially isolated, technologically uninformed, and insecure about her own domestic competence. The new consumer 'educators', the manufacturers and ad. men, sought to cultivate these traits. The TV housewife is anxious about the brightness of her wash, the flavour of her coffee, or the lustre of her floors."⁵

This puts an especially heavy burden on women who are expected more and more not only to keep up with the Joneses but to go one better; and who are being subjected, continually, to programming to give them an appetite for more and more goods, as if such things can compensate for the loss of opportunity to satisfy the human yearnings for social relationships unfettered by competition.



Elizabeth Honey

People must be helped to become aware of these issues, and more important, to see how they can be active in changing the urban setting into a more human one. This is essentially a political responsibility. There are two main areas where effort is needed:

(1) Demanding that production meets real human needs.

In many different ways the urban action groups, the trade unions and some of the conservation groups in Australia are beginning to face up to this challenge. At the end of 1977 there was a conference of Environmentalists for Full Employment (see CR 3 (2)). This could be the beginning of a broad movement embracing trade unionists, conservation organisations and other community groups.⁷

(2) Planning our urban areas so that transport energies are saved and opportunities for people to participate are maximised.

"Cities are being built for cars, not human beings, and most damaging of all we are building cities we don't want to live in."

Many diverse groups are active on this issue. For example, in Melbourne the Conservation of Urban Energy Group is producing a detailed plan on how to reduce the use of cars, to develop new urban areas and restructure existing areas on a human scale; and to develop mixed participatory communities around strong urban cores served by adequate public transport — see CR, 3 (1) 1977.

Women in the planning process

Women have a significant role to play in bringing in these social changes, not only because they suffer most from the inhuman and anti-social nature of our existing cities, but also because they are not hampered by traditional methods of organisation which have become entrenched in long-established organisation, eg, trade unions.

In many of the newly emerging organisations on urban issues women are the initiators. It is significant to note that in discussions, for example on freeways, whereas the men debate how best to effect the journey, it is usually the women who describe how more human the "front gate" environment would be without the domination of the motor vehicles. Similarly, in discussions on housing there is frequently a pre-occupation by the men with economics — "what kind of housing can we sell?" This tends to favor the nuclear family. They ignore the fact that most people for much of their lives are not living in a family situation; are living singly or communally. Women discuss the type of housing; the need for a variety of accommodation rather than the nuclear family stereotype. Women, because of their experience, can envisage a radical alternative on the small scale.

It is no wonder that to date women have played only a minor part in what has been recognised as town planning. The history of town planning in Australia is a story of how good ideas and good intentions have come to so little. The meagre planning that has been attempted has been frustrated at every level by the influence of private owners of property, speculators and profiteers and the deification of economic growth and political power. Under such conditions it is easy for paternalism to dominate and almost impossible for women to find ways that they can have some impact on the decisions. In

fact it often is impossible for women to see any sense in having any part in such planning.

On the other hand traditionally women have been active on matters that affect the home and environment — education, child-care, libraries, recreation — but because these have been separated from the general problems of society it has been only too easy for such campaigns to be "things in themselves". Historically the piecemeal approach to planning has always helped to conserve the establishment and to discourage social innovation.

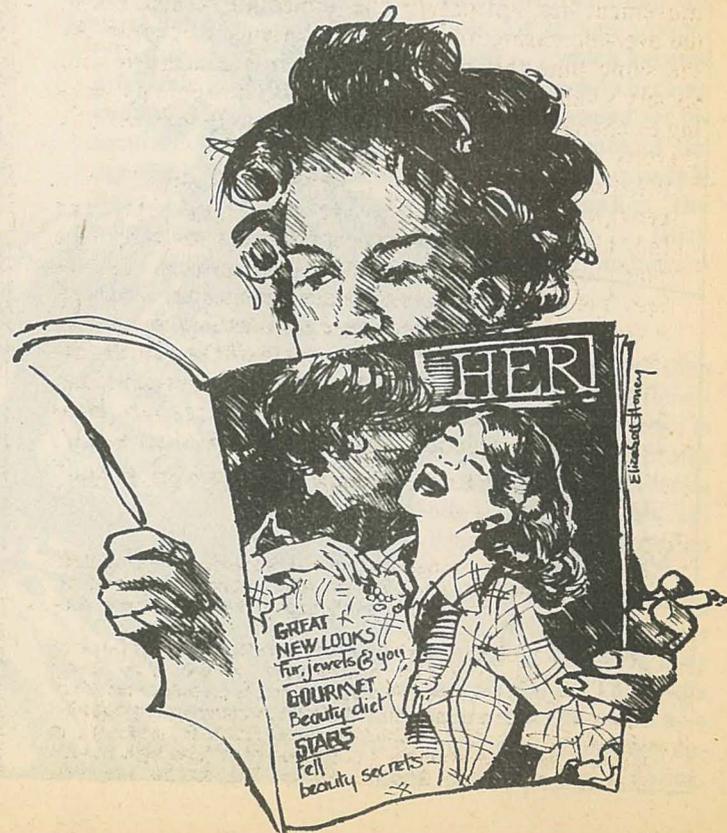
Women are continually being "put down" because technical and administrative functions (in community organisations as well as at government level) are mainly the monopoly of men. This means that the urban movement has been beheaded of some of its most vital people.

Things will only change when there is a generally accepted vision of an alternative urban lifestyle, in which human relationships are more important than possessions. We have not properly even begun to make such an idea popular. It will take time to do so, but already there are examples of the beginnings of such efforts, involving men, women and also children.

Alternative movements: the need for a vision of the future

Some of the urban action groups and anti-freeway organisations have begun to present alternative ideas on city life at various anti-uranium demonstrations, and in more intimate meetings between groups.

However campaigns on urban issues still tend to remain at the protest stage: anti-freeway protests without mention of what sort of life we could envisage if the car were not allowed to dominate our urban areas; anti-power-station campaigns without in some way advocating a lifestyle of participatory activities to reduce



our dependence on fossil fuels; housing policies which only look at economics and ignore the needs of those who will make the buildings their homes; child-care, education, health and so on as if these are needs quite separate from general community needs; and in most cases on all these issues very little consideration is given as to whether the siting of these facilities will lead to clustering of human activity or not.

More and more people are taking the future into their own hands and setting up community-based child-care, community schools, health centres, food co-ops, rural and urban communes, and other small do-it-yourself efforts. But these groups will remain frail and easily co-opted into the conservative stream of establishment institutions unless an overall political movement is developed, with an overall vision into which these small-scale human efforts can be dovetailed.

The way forward is already beginning to be charted, by groups such as Environmentalists For Full Employment, the Mobilisation Against Uranium Mining, and the Conservation of Urban Energy Group (already mentioned). However it is important to realise that at this stage of history people do not know who to blame for the destruction of their neighbourhood; or for the suburban void; or for the grand plans for power stations and nuclear reactors. Many people, particularly women, consider politics the last means to redress the situation.

In the past most political demands in, for example, the trade union movement, or at the local level in school organisations and rate-payers associations, were concerned with easily defined economic issues (higher wages, lower rates, better school amenities etc). The new issues, involving the human environment, are inherently different. How can we measure the quality of life?

The way forward involves people; the fruit of the movement lies, not only in the immediate results, but in the ever-increasing humanising experience of people. At the same time this movement, which is concerned with society's values, must be geared in with movements seeking to change the structures of society, so that eventually there is no distinction between the two:

"Ultimately society as a whole will have to be reorganised by the great majority who are into hierarchical subservience by great majority who now forced into hierarchical subservience by the few. Yet until these revolutionary changes are achieved, a new state of mind, nourished by working community ties, must be fashioned so that people will be able to fuse their deepest personal needs with broader social ideas. Indeed, unless this fusion is achieved, these very ideas will remain abstractions and will not be realised at all."

— "The Myth of City Planning", Murray Bookchin.¹⁰

Footnotes

1. Rosemary Brown, Canadian feminist, socialist and long-time community activist, speaking on ABC Monday Conference. Parts of her speech were published in *Vashti's Voice*, October 1975.
2. "The Knox Project", by Yoland Wadsworth (Victorian Dept. of Health, 1976) is a first assessment of the Knox Early Childhood Development Program. Knox is an outer suburb of Melbourne with a population of 76,000, mostly young people.
3. Quotation from "A Constitution for Cultural Revolution", in *Celebration of Awareness*, a collection of articles by Ivan Illich (Penguin Education Special, 1971). The article was first

published by the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

4. Dr. Alan Roberts states that, for the individual, "consumerist satisfactions are a pale substitute for the avenues of self-fulfillment forcibly excluded from his/her life". Dr Roberts' article, "Self-Management and the Environment Crisis," in *Radical Ecologist* (1), December 1974, is basic reading for those studying consumerism.
5. From "The Manufacture of Housework" by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, in *Socialist Revolution* (USA publication), 5(4), (Number 26) October/December 1975.
6. The Australian Conservation Foundation newsletter and some trade union journals have also published articles on Environmentalists for Full Employment recently.
7. See article on the Conservation of Urban Energy Group in the Learning Exchange Supplement, 57, September 1977. The group's research will shortly appear as a book, entitled *Seeds of Change*.

BIKE RIDE FILM



FOE BIKERIDE FILM NOW AVAILABLE

It's called *Ride Against Uranium* is in colour, 16mm and 18 minutes long. Tells the story of a thousand people making their way to Canberra on their bicycles:

"On the final day of their journey, just 400 yards from their destination, the cyclists clashed with police in a short but violent episode. Eight cyclists were arrested; the remainder straggled on to Parliament House, bewildered, frustrated and angry. Of the ten day ride the country's national news reported only the clash on the bridge."

Ride Against Uranium now available for sale from FOE 1977 Melbourne Bikeride Committee, FOE Melbourne.

The Dying Housewife

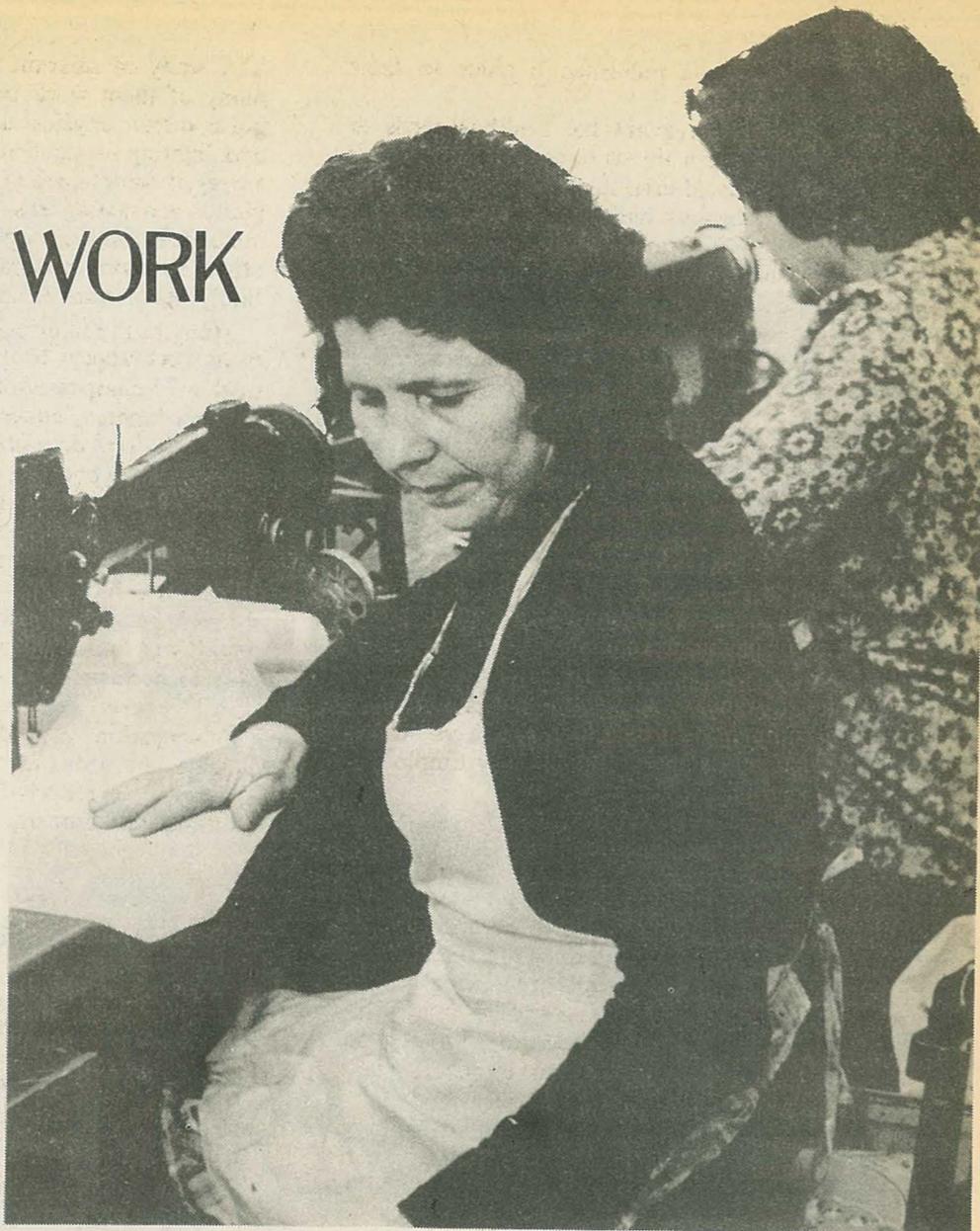
Drowning, drowning in a sea of faces.
Plastic, dollied, pretty-ugly faces.
What shall I do?,
Shall I swim?
trying so hard to keep up with the old school
but doubting; doubting myself, (where is that ring of confidence?).
What do I do when some annoying, unconventional aspect of my personality
or my looks, (yeah, you're right, I am too fat)
stops me from being a "dolly-bird just like you".
Shall I run on the endless conveyor belt
which is the role and position in life I've been given?
an unambitious member of the work force,
a wife, a housekeeper.
Shall I play blind and say I can't see or hear
the endless pressures you put on me, in the roles
you gave, (oh I know, by divine credence of course) and
the goals I'm supposed to reach, (within "my womanly limitations"?!)
The barrage of advertisements,
creating and maintaining the trends,
the social norm and social pressure,
all play havoc with my insecurities and uncertainties.
Am I too fat?,
Are my legs O.K.? (oh, oh, they need shaving again)
Is my face too dull?
It seems like I can't be me,
the me I'd like to be.
Having to play games; your games — your rules.
I spend all my time running around,
— making myself "pretty"/acceptable.
— after the family. . .
I'm running out of time, (not to mention money).
I know I should be grateful for convenience foods, and so many labour-saving devices
you've created for me;
but why should it be me here . . .
Alone.
Struggling through the tins, the processed foods;
the pre-packaged, pre-served, pre-digested foods,
that you my friendly manufacturer insist I must buy?
And what if I do play your games?
Shall I also play dumb and say I can't understand
why we're always getting sick?
why the kids are hyperactive, while I feel like death at 35?
Shall I tell myself it's natural to doubt
and criticise myself so much?:
Shall I drain my energy and ignore the real struggle
of living?
while I just exist, (more for the benefit of others than myself).
Would I pass the big test?
lie to myself, and go on living that lie,
while I see all around and within,
that this society is gradually denuding the earth, (and me)
of all that is natural and living. . .
as it putrefies the air, the water, the soil, (and my body)
with its shit.
Now they offer us nuclear power;
so we can keep all this, and have more,
much more, (of the luxuries, the waste, the inequalities).
I can see the time for my choice is now.
My strength is **your** weakness.
For too long now,
you have lived on **my** weakness.

— Rosemary Cousins



WOMEN AT WORK

occupational health hazards



SYLVIE SHAW

With more and more women entering the job market, the problem of occupational health hazards is increasing. Both traditional occupations for women, and new occupations which expose women to toxic substances involve health hazards, often without the workers' knowledge. Sylvie Shaw, of the Working Women's Centre, examines some of these hazards and the discrimination against women involved in many occupations.

Safety and health at work has never been a vital concern of industry and governments in Australia (viz asbestos) and the health problems of working women have been even more neglected than those of men.

Health problems of women workers revolve around two main areas: — Health hazards associated with traditional occupations of women, and — occupations with potential for damaging the foetus, genetically or by transference of chemicals across the placenta, which may result in birth defects, cancer, or some other toxic effect on the child.

Chemical dangers

Increasing numbers of women are moving into jobs which present chemical and physical dangers that have not yet been studied. A recent decision by General Motors in Canada has prohibited "fertile women" from working in its battery plant because of fears that lead-oxide emissions in the plant could lead to birth defects. This means that women either have to prove their sterility or be transferred to another job — perhaps with less pay. Yet male, as well as female, reproductive systems are affected by lead and chemical emissions¹. Employers have begun to discriminate against women who might be fertile, instead of making the work-place safe.

One US chemical company using chemicals that cause sterility in men actually suggested that, instead of replacing the chemical, they should employ men who wanted vasectomies! At what cost to their health?

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (AFL-CIO)

International Union have published a guide to their women members. It says:

"When a woman is pregnant the health hazards to which she is exposed are a threat to her child as well as herself . . . She must avoid even small exposures to toxic substances . . . (and) she must have a clause in her contract that protects her right to transfer to a safer part of the plant without loss of pay or seniority . . . for the duration of the pregnancy . . . The contract should also require the labelling of substances known to be teratogens (causes of birth defects) and abortifacients. No woman should ever have to choose between her job security and her baby's health"

The ACTU adopted a Charter for working women at its 1977 Congress. It calls for,

"Health and safety information which is both multilingual and comprehensive to be provided on the job" and "Regular medical services including preventative medical care . . ."

Because medical centres in industry are generally controlled by management (which leads to suspicion), or are non-existent, unions obviously need to become involved. Two unions which have started sponsoring their own medical services are the Australian Workers' Union (NSW) and the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union (Vic.).

The Occupational Hazards

Women's dual roles — at home and work — cause excessive fatigue. Women tend to neglect their health because they are too tired to seek medical attention and to have routine check-ups. Studies by the International Labour Organization have shown that working mothers have less than two-thirds of the free time enjoyed by their husbands. Even when working full-time, women feel compelled (and society pressures them) to devote a large part of their spare time to family chores.²

As most women are clustered in low-paid, low-skill occupations with little or no job security, where the work is repetitive and boring, they often turn to psychotropic drugs, analgesics and tranquillizers to help them cope — not only with their paid job, but also with the extra burden of housework. It is believed that some companies actually distribute analgesics to their workers. It is particularly vital to eliminate the need for such products among pregnant workers, as it appears analgesics cause birth defects.⁴

Women who work as key-punch operators or on production lines often injure their hands and wrists. One very common complaint is known as Tenosynovitis. The symptoms of Tenosynovitis is swelling of tendons, generally in the arms and wrists. If the sufferer tries to keep on working it becomes extremely painful. The likelihood of developing this complaint is increased by production incentives — bonus and piecework. Incentive systems have also been cited as causing back injuries.⁵ Working women under these systems complain of the pressure and competition which give rise to many nervous complaints. Management safety-experts sometimes point out that pieceworkers remove safety-guards from their machines to increase production — the rate/speed is set so high that workers are endangering themselves to earn a living wage.

A study of migrant women in industry⁶, found that many of them work under conditions of heat or cold, noise, odour, physical danger, pollution, poor ventilation and lighting — particularly in small factories. Women surveyed complained of headaches, sore eyes, chest complaints and aching legs. Many stood all day on damp concrete floors, increasing the likelihood of varicose veins, others had sore eyes, caused by having to concentrate on fiddly detail work in inadequate light.

Many of the injuries, stresses and strains women have from work appear to them too insignificant to apply for workers' compensation. Many women, particularly migrant women, either do not know how to apply for compensation, do not think their injuries are serious enough, or do not wish to "rock the boat" or get involved in long drawn-out legal procedures. When they do make claims they receive less money than men and cases for women take longer to process to their conclusion. Sometimes doctors advise injured workers to take "light duties", but an unskilled worker who is told to do "light work" will find it almost impossible to find if she is unable to perform constant manipulative tasks.

All workers should be informed about Workers' Compensation procedures and especially about the potential hazards they work with, so they can take collective action to reduce them and create a healthy and safe working environment.

Quotes

"It's not a hazardous industry. We only need to tell the women to keep their hair short and not to put their fingers under the needle. We have no safety notices. But we have a good safety record."

"Safety regulations are in English but they have pictures. Although, the puns (depicted in safety cartoons) would not come across to the women who can't read English . . . We have a good record except for back troubles, which I think are a fiddle."

"If they get a needle stuck in their finger, I pull it out with a pair of pliers."

"In two factories producing cheese and light savouries, workers were prohibited from sitting down and were forced to stand for the whole eight (8) hours even though it seemed that their tasks could have been carried out satisfactorily if chairs or stools had been available. Complaints of leg troubles and tiredness were common. At the cheese factory, women were required to clean toilets and boilers, wash dirty clothes — including overalls used by the management and foremen — and clean the managers' cars. Canteens in most factories were highly regimented and women rushed back to work on the bell with alacrity prompted by fear. At one tinned food and sauce factory the accident rate was extremely high and in a number of cases involved the loss of limbs and fingers in presses."

From *"But I wouldn't want my wife to work here": A study of migrant women in Melbourne Industry* — CURA Fitzroy, Vic.

LETTERS

REPLIES TO CHINA ARTICLE

Ian Pausacker's article, "China, an Environmentalist's Dream?" (in the last edition of Chain Reaction) has raised a storm of letters from Environmentalists and others. China seems to be regarded as a test-case in the debate as to whether the goals of socialism are compatible with concern for the environment. We have published as many of the letters as possible. Space prevents us from publishing them all in full.

China - social honesty

The first is an excerpt from a letter by Peter Hayes, one of the founders of Friends of the Earth in Australia. He also visited China, and wrote an article about the country for Chain Reaction, 2 (1), 1976.

"... Ian quotes the fact that Chinese bicycles have locks. I can only quote many counter-examples to try and indicate that the Chinese are beginning to create a society based on social honesty, not just interpersonal honesty as we know it. The first night in our trip, I wandered... into the older parts of Peking. It was after 9 p.m. and we walked with some anxiety. Years of anti-communist propaganda in formative years of childhood left me with trepidations, even after the friendly welcome, to be walking around mainland China. We came across a street with fruit sidestalls such as those seen in Bangkok or Jakarta. The lights were low in the street, as the Chinese save energy as soon as the need decreases. The street was deserted, everyone had gone to bed, and the fruitstalls had been left open, with all the fruit lying there unprotected. It took many such experiences to convince us that our cultural preconceptions about the impossibility of social honesty were what was wrong.

Of course, how does one explain the drivers who act like they own the road, people who steal bicycles, murder and thief like bandits of old in China (the most recent being Chiang Kai-shek)? The answer lies in the fact that China is undergoing revolution even now as the former

owners of the means to produce, and of information and political power (the so-called "capitalist roaders") fight back... Chinese political philosophy admits, indeed insists upon, the very contradictions in Chinese life he points to. That's what the Cultural Revolution was all about.

... My impression is that we can learn most of all from the Chinese on equity: on the principle of placing the needs of the neediest first. The environment is seen in China as the source of all sustenance — a reality to which most rural Chinese are too close to ignore anyway — and therefore as precious as... people.

A good baseline against which one could measure the Chinese experience is what they have done with what they started with. I suggest that they have been improving themselves and the degraded natural environment they inherited with their socialist efforts. With the two prime-movers of change in Australia being

profit and political power, we are degrading ourselves and that which we inherited. It's fair to ask if there's a structural reason for the difference.

a slap in the face

Letter from W.A. Davis, Victorian ACF Councillor.

I read with interest, Ian Pausacker's article in your informative journal, "Chain Reaction", 3, (3) 1977 entitled "China, Environmentalist's Dream", and I feel compelled to comment on several inaccuracies and also some aspects on which many of your readers would disagree strongly. Let me preface my remarks by saying it was my privilege to lead the Australian Conservation Foundation tour in 1975 and also produce our film, "The Bicycle Society".

Now to some of your writers statements:-

1. **TREEPLANTING** "is concentrated mainly around cities like Peking". NOT TRUE. China's reforestation program is without a parallel in the world. On our trip we visited areas in the North East to the Inner Monogolian border, then rural areas around Nanking, Kwangchow, etc. and everywhere, massive treeplanting.

2. **Grazing Lands:** Here again, in the areas we visited we saw lots of domestic animals and vast grasslands. Obviously, Ian's trip was confined to cities essentially of the Eastern seaboard.

3. Ian's prices appear grossly inaccurate and misleading. Certainly luxury items are expensive but common needs of the people are very cheap. Food costs nothing like 60-70% of their income as Ian quotes. On information we were given, consistently the average wage per family, per month was about \$40.00 Australian. The cost of living (rent, food, clothing, etc.) is just over half this. A bicycle represents two months salary (approximately \$80.00 Australian).

4. **Holidays:** The Chinese certainly do not work 52 weeks a year. They have two weeks annual holidays plus various national days etc.

5. **Sprays and Fertilisers:** Obviously, with 800 million mouths to feed, their fertilisers must be supplemented with chemical substitutes, but most importantly they utilise every available source of natural fertilisers, including vegetable refuse, leaves, animal manures and night-soil. Concerning pesticides, they are very much aware of the problems and where possible they use biological control.

6. To say the Chinese live a dull drab life with little entertainment is simply not true. Ian obviously did not see their huge cultural parks, their children's palaces, the travelling acrobatic troupes, etc. which visit the communes.

7. **Wage gap:** On our information, the wage gap which certainly still exists, is nothing like what Ian quotes. The Chinese are very much aware of this problem, especially in the medical field, but it is a slow process of transformation from Socialism which they now have, to pure Communism. They say it could take another 100 years.

8. The final slap in the face from Ian is to say he was glad to be back in "Clean Australia". What an insult! Without doubt, Chinese cities, considering the population pressures, are amongst the cleanest in the world.

As a final comment, the achievement in just 3 decades, from an illiterate, starving race of slaves of the landlords before liberation, to a well-fed, educated, adequately housed and clothed society of 800 million, is surely one of the greatest achievements in human history, and to be admired, not ridiculed.

We would agree on Ian's points on finite resources, further industrial development, safety in factories, and to a lesser extent, air pollution in some areas.

"Is then the Environment movement a capitalist society's luxury?" This final comment of Ian's can be answered simply. On our observations, China's type of socialism, based essentially on the needs of the people, as against our capitalist society (where the needs of capital is the motivating philosophy), is much more environmentally orientated and to be applauded rather than condemned.

Australia-China Society

Letter from N. R. Macdonald, Hon. Secretary, West Australia Branch, of the Australia-China Society.

Your article "China, An Environmentalist's Dream?" in Chain Reaction 3 (3), 1977, invites protest. Many of our members are also members of F.O.E., and wonder at the tenuous connection between your aspirations and objectives, and such a negative article about people striving to emerge from abject poverty and rapacious exploitation such as existed in China before her liberation in 1949. They do, indeed, seek harmony with the environment.

Your article reveals its author's unfamiliarity with the countries of the Third World in Asia in general, of which China is one, as well as his lack of humanity.

Is he really a Friend of the Earth? It is rather pointless to ask whether he is a Friend of the Earth. Friends of the Earth is not an exclusive organisation. He describes himself as an environmentalist. — Ed.

Pausacker's reply

Reply from Ian Pausacker (edited version)

My initial enthusiasm at evoking a response from Peter Hayes, Bill Davis and others to my China article waned when I realised that none of them had really come to grips with what I was saying. My purpose in writing the article was to explain my personal reaction to a visit to a country painted by many as approaching a utopian society. The response seems to indicate horror at me looking at China in a personal way and through western eyes. I believe we are kidding ourselves if we try to do anything else — who can remove themselves from their whole cultural upbringing?

Now for some of the specific points raised in the letters:

Tree planting

I made my comments to help dispel the myth that China is a magnificently green country. We saw literally millions of newly planted trees — an undertaking of considerable magnitude — yet there is only one word that could be used to describe the 4000 km of countryside we saw: stark. I am well aware of the

reason for this, which is basically a desperate need for fuel for cooking and heating, which still exists today in many of the rural areas of China.

Honesty

The fruit and vegetables we grow at Monbulk are put on a roadside stall with a container in which people leave the money, and as with the stalls Peter Hayes saw in Peking, we always leave our produce on the stall overnight. Very little is ever stolen. Yet we constantly hear reports of crime in the sensation-hungry media, and come to see our society as dishonest.

Cost of Living

The figures in my table are accurate and can be verified by anyone visiting China and spending some time — as I did — wandering around their department stores writing down prices. My basis for conversion to "equivalent Australian prices" is clear — there is a factor of about 20 between Australian and Chinese take-home-pay, and a factor of about 0.5 between the respective currencies; so to convert you multiply the Chinese price (e.g. 190 for a bicycle) by (20 x 0.5). The result (e.g. \$1900 for a bicycle) gives us an idea of how long it would take to save enough to buy various goods.

The families we met indicated between 60% and 70% of their wage went on food: look at the figures in my table (e.g. rice \$2/lb, beans \$6/lb, pork \$8/lb). You could buy enough rice and vegetables to stay alive on, if you budgeted carefully.

Holidays

Bill Davis's comments are simply answered. The only Chinese to receive two weeks' holiday each year are those sent to an area to work which is away from their families. The remaining workers have only the few national holidays each year.

Clean Australia

I am well aware of the extent of pollution of the air, water and land in Australia. What I saw in China was orders of magnitude worse in some places, not just because of population pressures but because of the low priority they place on pollution control. Everyone in our group was impressed — despite themselves — in the relative cleanliness of Australia when we returned; even me who spends much of my time protesting at the lack of environmental concern in Australia. Hence my (much misinterpreted) comments about the relativity of our environmental problems here.

Ian Pausacker

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Sexism in the Environment movement

separatism: is it a valid tactic?

As women become involved in the ecology movement they are faced by the same male domination as elsewhere. Two examples show this clearly: Firstly, in Brisbane in 1976 Friends of the Earth organised a Radical Ecology occasion. One of the discussion afternoons was to be on women and ecology. About 30 women and 5 men gathered for the discussion. The first question raised was whether we were being just as sexist as men if we excluded them. After a 45 minute semantic argument amongst the more politically astute members of the gathering a vote was taken and the men were allowed to stay. Both during the 45 minute argument and the ensuing discussion on where women could begin and how they could work and influence other women, the three remaining males dominated. One in particular decided he wanted to talk working-class politics, Marxism, and the bourgeois nature of ecological activism. Not surprisingly, nothing concrete came out of the discussion, but we learnt an important lesson: at times when women need to discuss things amongst themselves, especially when some of the women may not have spoken in public before, MEN CAN BE EXTREMELY DIVISIVE. The second example involved different women in a completely different setting — the Confest at the Cotter River — but the story was an almost exact repeat.

The presence of men at such gatherings is disruptive in two ways: often the men who attend the gather-

ings are assertive and tend to monopolise attention; and secondly, the argument about whether they should attend a women's discussion can get drawn out, dividing the opinion of the women present and destroying solidarity, and preventing discussion on topics which women experience in common. Women who suggest separatism are often confronted with arguments about the permanence of the tactic, and by politicians who argue that our first fight should be against capitalism . . . hence separation cannot be allowed when we are brothers and sisters fighting the common enemy. Few of the men who put forward these arguments can understand that, in a sense, their ideas and treatment of women and unassertive people in general is part of the enemy. Yet it is widely understood why workers need to organise themselves to the exclusion of their bosses.

Most environment and anti-uranium groups in Australia seem to have the classical organisation structure, with a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and executive committee members. It is unusual to have as many women as men: most women have never had the opportunity to acquire the confidence required. In these organisations and also in many of the more loosely-organised ones the generally greater assertiveness of men can result in them getting the only say on a subject, and in the more assertive men gaining more skills — since they are quickest to volunteer for interesting tasks. Many a good idea has not seen the light of day because women and non-assertive men were intimidated into not speaking. Separatism is suggested here, not as a permanent phenomenon, but as a temporary means for acquiring the necessary confidence and skills to demand equal treatment.

Helen, Friends of the Earth, Brisbane.

are men blaming themselves too much?

Feminists often draw a parallel between Man's exploitation of nature and his treatment of women: the idea of "raping nature". It's more than just a metaphor. Whalers off the coast of California used to make a practice of harpooning baby whales, knowing the mother would turn back to rescue the calf and that they could kill her more easily that way. That's the kind of mentality we're talking about, and it often goes hand in hand with sexism (whalers' shanties are very sexist).

However the implication is that this exploitative mentality is **only** found in men. Hasn't it ever occurred to anyone that women could have it too? Women are quite capable of exploitation. Think of the plantation-owners' wives, ordering the servants about; the cultured tones of the upper-class English lady, as she sacks the nanny . . . the materialism of some women: their expensive clothes, their shares in mining companies . . . the cruelty and narrow-mindedness of respectable women who ostracize unrespectable ones like prostitutes etc. I don't think social attitudes will change till women recognise that they too have a part in shaping society and passing on its prejudices, and that they could use their influence to break them down.

I go into all this because I think there is great consciousness of sexism in the environment movement (particularly Friends of the Earth) and some men are blaming themselves too much. There is probably a certain amount of sexism in the move-

ment, but certainly not as much as you will find outside it, in other work situations.

At one place where I worked (a university) a typist was sacked because she had made a correction (not a mistake) in a letter to the Dean of the Faculty. The situation is the same in most hierarchical organisations: all the mining companies have secretaries and typists who do what they're told to the letter, or else . . .

In the environment movement, in contrast, women can work more on an equal basis with men. I have met men who are, as far as I can see, totally non-sexist. They are supportive, make cups of tea, do the books, clean up, mail out newsletters and lay out pamphlets for other people, answer telephones and ask women for their opinion on things (not all the men are the same of course).

The least offensive males are the most vulnerable to accusations that they are sexist (the really sexist ones would not even be mixing with feminists, or would have enough faith in their own superiority to be unaffected). It's easy to take advantage of the guilt-feelings of the

a feminist reply

Feminist/ecologists are drawing the connections between Man's exploitation of nature and Man's exploitation of women. We believe that both exist under the Patriarchal ethic of dominance. This ethic makes desirable and profitable the practice of exploitation. Exploitation of blacks by whites, of workers by bosses, of individuals by the State, of women by men and of the earth by humans must therefore be seen as linked in common struggle. As feminists we cannot separate our demands for a harmonious earth ecology and our other demands for harmonious human relationships.

Oppression in this Patriarchal capitalist society is pervasive and complex. The interdependence of classism and racism with sexism is one example. Of course some women, by virtue of their class and/or race can oppress others.

vulnerable ones.

Guilt can paralyse men (and sometimes women) into silence. To give an example, the "Kiss Your Children Goodbye" posters. These posters showed a silhouetted figure, kissing a child, with the slogan "What do you do in case of a nuclear accident? Kiss your children goodbye". Some people complained that the image was sexist, so the posters



When we are talking about sexism, however, the institution of Patriarchy is the immediately relevant one. Feminists believe that the "acceptable lifestyle" for women have been, in so many ways, prescribed by Patriarchal ideologies.

Feminist activists, in the environment movement and elsewhere, want all women to recognise our potential power in society. We encourage women to become active in agitating for social change and to reject the stereotype that all women are passive and incompetent. This very magazine, produced by women will benefit from the fighting of sexism, feminism.

There is a growing awareness amongst the men in the radical environment movement of women's issues, and this is pleasing to note. However, we will fight for our rights whenever it is necessary, and must continue to do so if we are true to ourselves. When examples of sexism occur debate must follow so that the

were taken off the market. I didn't think the posters were particularly sexist — they showed a parent, not an unpaid housekeeper. Whether or not this is a good analysis, the point was that no-one at Friends of the Earth dared to say a word, although several people privately liked the posters.

What meaning does a decision such as the one to throw out the posters have if it was not the product of free discussion? Women can use the taunt of sexism to make people go along with them and more vocal, aggressive women are getting their demands met by claiming to speak for all women. It doesn't mean that they have convinced people; it just means that they have managed to shut them up.

I don't want to see men attacked to the point where they begin to have doubts about their sexuality, and even women are afraid to say anything for fear that what they think is just a product of their sex-role conditioning. Feminism should strive to break down self-doubt, not introduce a new kind.

Barbara, Friends of the Earth, Melbourne.

implications are fully understood. It is otherwise a hollow victory. Instead of blaming feminists for raising political issues, initiate discussion on the topic to ensure greater understanding.

Feminists do not claim to speak for all women. Although feminists believe that all women will benefit from the fighting of sexism, we are painfully aware that many Australian women are politically and socially conservative. Although many people oppose women's liberation we will continue to fight for what we believe to be just. Likewise our commitment to a non-nuclear future can not be diminished by public opinion against us. Do we blame individual workers who out of economic necessity, take jobs as uranium miners? No! We probably blame the big business and government who propagate the idea that nuclear power is necessary and desirable. Likewise, we should not just blame women for the un-ecological situations they may find themselves in, but fight to change the society that perpetuates those ideas. Fight the Patriarchal society!

—Karina Veal, FOE Swinburne

PACKAGING...

One word that expertly describes the creed of the 20th century Western existence is CONSUMER. We live in a consumer society and our roles as secretaries, scientists or clerks are mere subsidiaries to our greatest part, that of consumers. The survival of our economic system demands that we consume frequently, thoughtlessly, expensively — food, drink, tobacco, cars, refrigerators, clothes, stereo systems. To ensure our co-operation in the game, the massed forces of industry, advertising and marketing coax, caress and cajole us, until our very existence seems to depend on the acquisition of this and the use of that. And when we've acquired this and used that — throw it away. It's simple.

Planned obsolescence is the key factor. The saying "nothing is built to last" is quite true. If it were there would be no need for the consumer to keep consuming and the whole system would grind to a halt. It would not be in a light bulb manufacturers' interest to market a light-bulb that lasted forever; if they did, they would soon be out of business.

All this producing, consuming, discarding leads to waste. Yet the philosophy of not caring where it came from or where it is going which has characterised and perpetuated our habits as consumers for so long, must now itself be discarded! We can no longer afford to toss valuable resources onto the garbage heap. For if we continue unthinkingly to do so, the next byword of the 20th century Western existence will be SHORTAGE.

To the economist, packaging is one of the "growth" industries of our time. But in the eyes of environmentalists, it is one of the biggest drains on resources and single causes of waste. The necessity of some packaging is quite clear. To protect goods in transit from factory to retail outlet; to contain them, obviously necessary for liquids, and finely divided solids such as sugar, salt and soap powder. For hygienic reasons to protect against moisture and dirt and to quantify them for convenience. But packaging has another role far beyond these purely functional ones — to sell the product! Attractive packaging persuades us to buy more.

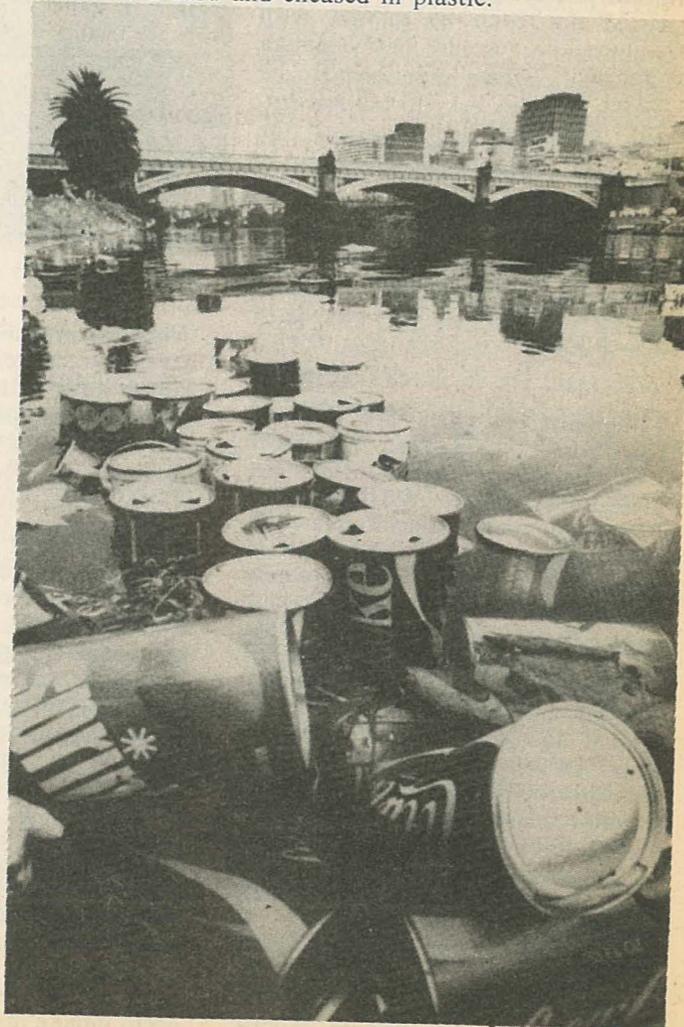
For thousands of years, packaging used to mean materials such as wood, textiles, earthenware, glass; all of which are easily made from natural materials, and were designed for constant re-use. When finally worn out, all of these materials can return to nature, doing little or no harm to the environment.

Today not one of these materials remains as a significant packaging material in an affluent society such as Australia, with the exception of glass, which is almost entirely designed to be used only once, then thrown away. Far from improving the packaging previous generations use, modern technology has perfected the throw away package — throw away glass, throw away steel and aluminium cans, throw away paper and throw away plastics. This is the reason why we now have one million tons of packaging wastes to throw into holes in the ground each year and why the manufacturers of these packages expect we will throw away some six million tons a year by the end of the century.

Convenience. The holy word of the packaging industry, which is used to justify a multitude of sins. In this

regard non-returnable bottles and cans lead the race. Putting beer in cans for example is convenient, for the consumer, who can simply throw the can away when they are finished with it. Non-returnable bottles are "convenient" for the same reason. Coincidentally, selling beer in cans, rather than in returnable bottles is considerably more convenient for the manufacturer who no longer has the expense, or worry of collecting, cleaning and refilling bottles. And remember — 30% of what you pay for a can of beer is for the can, which can only be used once and then thrown away — how convenient can you get? With many items — such as toothpaste, soft drink, pet-food, razor blades and aerosol spray cans — the cost of the package may be as much as the cost of making the contents. With cosmetics, perfumes and pharmaceuticals, the packages may cost far more than the contents.

The growth of supermarkets as the major retail outlets for virtually all consumer goods revolutionised the packaging industry. Items that were bought loose are now elaborately packaged, for example, nails and screws which could be bought once by the handful in hardware shops appear in supermarkets now in "blister" packs stuck to a card and encased in plastic.



...the garbage industry

Ostensibly, this makes life easier for the consumer, who can buy the product in conveniently aggregated quantities. More to the point, it is easier for the wholesale/retail network which can quantify, transport and display items more simply.

A visit to any supermarket will show you shelves stocked with a vast array and a variety of products. Ten different brands of soap powders, eight brands of tinned fruit, jams, biscuits and detergents. Only one thing visually differentiates the brands in any given line and that is the packages they come in.

The amount and type of packaging around a given product is a crucial factor in its sales appeal. If a package looks not only attractive, but substantial too, the consumer may believe the product inside to be superior to others in the range. The extra cost the manufacturer incurs in excessively packaging its product is thus compensated for by higher turnover and profit. The packaging of products has been refined into an art form of pictorial and graphic allure, to the extent that in some cases, cosmetics and perfumes for example, the package is selling not just the product but the seductive and exciting promise of a better way of life for the purchaser. In some extreme cases packages have created products, instead of a package being developed to contain an existing product for which there was an existing demand. Hair sprays and other aerosol-can products are good examples of products which were unthought of until a new packaging technology was invented. According to the Australian Association of Advertising Agencies, about eight products disappear permanently from the supermarket shelves each week because the public does not want them. Almost invariably all eight were products which would never have existed if it were not for modern colorful packaging: a new ice-cream, instant dinner or canned mixture of vegetables. But — for every eight products which disappear each week, there are eight or nine new ones on the shelves, backed up by massive advertising campaigns.

But — the illusion is not without a price and the consumer is the one who must ultimately pay it.

The sixteen million people of Australia and New Zealand use as much energy as the 720 million of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka combined. They have never used convenience packaging. If they did use resources and energy at the rate Australians do, how much sooner would they run out of them? Are deodorants, pet foods, plastic milk cartons and coca-cola cans the best use for raw materials anyway?

It is not surprising to learn that the greatest proportion of energy expenditure in food production generally occurs in packaging. Modern packaging requires huge amounts of energy to manufacture, all of which comes from burning our limited supplies of fossil fuels. Talk of an energy crisis in rich countries is increasingly common, as we are likely in the next few decades to burn away fuels which have been slowly created over the past two hundred million years. Once we have run out of these fuels — oil, coal and gas — where will we turn? No-one doubts that we will run out, but the estimates range

depending upon how wisely we use these resources. We are becoming increasingly aware that energy is a limited resource and that it takes colossal amount of energy to make packaging. Not surprisingly aluminium cans and aerosolized cooking oil sprays are the most energy intensive food items in your kitchen. To produce a six-ounce aerosol spray of cooking oil requires over twice as much energy as an equal amount of bottled cooking oil requires.

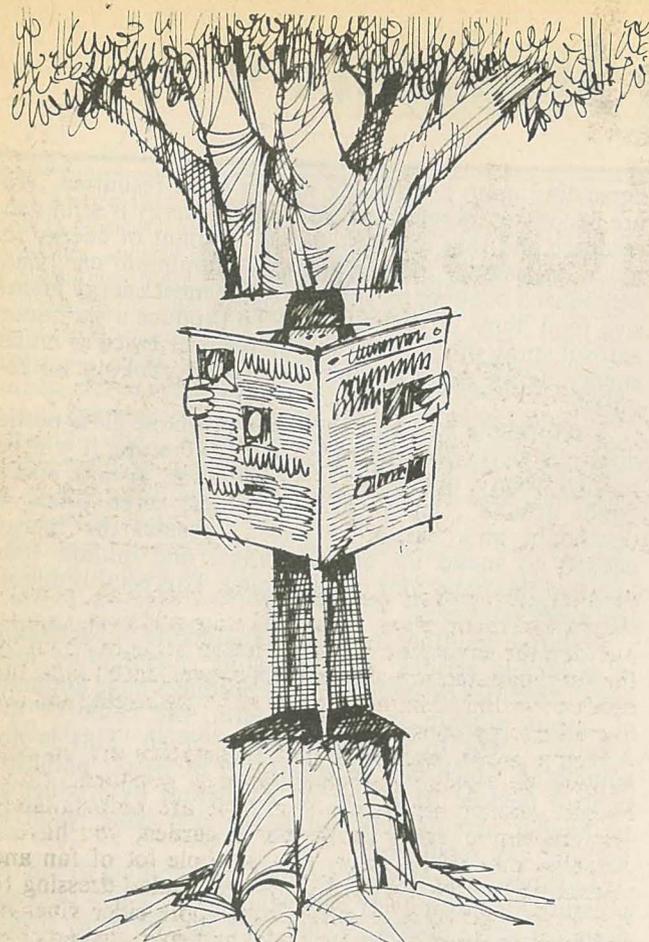
A returnable package, such as a refillable glass bottle does not waste energy nearly so badly because it will be refilled twenty, thirty, forty or more times. A milk bottle "goes around", on an average twenty-seven times, a cardboard milk carton — once. Consider the energy needed to make all of Australia's one million four hundred thousand tons of packaging. This total is doubling every ten years.

Pollution resulting from the manufacture of packaging is extremely serious. All packaging manufacture uses huge quantities of energy, and so produces huge amounts of carbon dioxide, in the long term, this could be the greatest threat to the environment of all. This is not something which can be controlled by better pollution control devices. It is not an accidental by-product of packaging manufacture but is the inevitable result of burning any fossil fuel.

As supermarkets came to dominate retailing so did the pressure for throw away packaging grow. A new package designed to be used once and then thrown away brings greater profits to both the packaging manufacturer and to the retailer. Inevitably, the cost of packaging must be met by the consumer. Where the cost — and amount of packaging is kept to the bare essentials this seems quite fair, but when the consumer is paying some 25% — 50% of the price of a product for the package it comes in, which is quite useless once the product has been used, something is very wrong. After we have put papers, wrappers, cans, bottles and boxes into the garbage they must be collected and disposed of by our local council. Our municipal councils and road authorities have to pay the cost of packing up and disposing of the rubbish the packaging industry creates. To give one example, the Sutherland Council (in New South Wales) states:

"The cost to the Council of collecting and disposing of waste including the bi-weekly garbage service, the twice yearly clean-up, the disposal of waste from parks and beaches etc. is hard to fix in detail . . . However, the figure is about \$1½ million per annum." This figure does not include the cost of paying "two full-time and some part-time officers . . . (which is expensive) when this work has to be done at weekends and holidays on a penalty basis" . . . — reply to a letter, 26th January, 1977.

This money does not come out of their pockets, it comes out of your rates and taxes all to clean up litter and get our waste packaging out of the house and into a hole in the ground. Many councils are turning to huge incinerators to reduce the land disposal problem, at the risk of turning it into an air pollution problem. Because of the rate at which our garbage dumps and tips are filling many are now restricting the type of garbage which may be dumped.



Another way in which packaging lowers our standard of living is by litter. It is an eyesore we cannot escape, but it is more than just that — it is dangerous. We have had throw away glass bottles for only ten years. We have had lacerated feet from broken glass on the beach as a major problem for only ten years. Is this progress?

Well, what shall we do about it — is recycling the solution?

It appears to be a common-sense solution, involving the reuse and remanufacture of the package after it has been used. It seems such an obvious thing to do that many people are surprised to find that of all the packaging materials — plastics, aluminium, steel, glass and paper — only the last two are recycled to a significant degree, and with paper the proportion recycled is dropping steadily. In fact, recycling of most packaging materials turns out to be a very poor way of conserving our resources and energy supplies. With plastics, recycling is all but technically impossible. Plastics which are the big "growth" area of packaging are used for containers of all kinds of liquids from fruit juice to washing up liquid. Ironically, the advantages that plastic has over other containers — its hardness, durability and virtual indestructibility are the very assets which make it almost impossible to recycle, impossible to recycle but not to reuse. With steel cans, some of the materials used can be recovered only at the cost of wasting others. Steel can recycling recovers only one of the four metals used to make it — iron. The other three including tin, which is very scarce, go up the stack.

In most cases the recycling industry is highly centralised, so a lot of energy is wasted in collecting waste packaging and transporting it back to a

remanufacturing plant. In fact energy use is the biggest drawback to recycling. We use energy — produced from coal, oil, gas — to make the packages and when we recycle a used package we use more energy.

What can you the consumer, do? The most important thing is to never underestimate your power. Don't feel that just because you are fighting a huge company you have no power — you do — you have the greatest power of all: your consumer vote.

- Boycott those products that you believe are excessively packaged. Where at all possible buy drinks in returnable bottles only and not in non-returnable bottles or cans.
- Don't buy a package, but a product. Where you have no choice at all but to buy a package, buy one big package rather than a number of small ones (big packages can be used to store things in).
- Support the few manufacturers who are still holding out and sell products in reusable glass containers.
- Contact the manufacturers of packaging, and let them know directly how you feel; as well as indirectly by your choice of what you buy — or more importantly don't buy — at the shops. In this regard group action is most effective.
- Write to your local council and find out exactly how much you are paying to dispose of your rubbish. You will probably be horrified. Try to publicise the fact through your local media.
- Refuse extra layers of wrapping in shops or at supermarkets checkouts and emphasise your point by stripping down the packaging to its bare essentials and leaving the wrapping behind in the shop.
- Join or form a local food co-operative. There you can buy in bulk and save money as well as reducing packaging waste; remember to take your own containers to be filled.

Most importantly, develop a responsibility for everything you buy. If you do not wish to be responsible for what will ultimately happen to plastic cartons, boxes, cans or bottles **DO NOT BUY THEM**. Realise this is the responsibility that comes with everything that you purchase.

Have all these products of so-called modern technology improved our standard of living? Do we really enjoy life more than say, ten years ago with aerosol shaving cream, individual teaspoons of plastic wrapped jam in the canteen, milk in cartons, and spray cans of air freshner? Did we really choose this whole mess or was it forced upon us? The first thing that must go is the "throw away convenience". Disposables are a luxury we can no longer afford. Most packages still end up on the tip no matter what the packaging industry try to tell us, wasting valuable resources and utilising increasingly scarce tip space.

Stop the packaging industry being what it is at present — the garbage industry.

Kim O'Sullivan

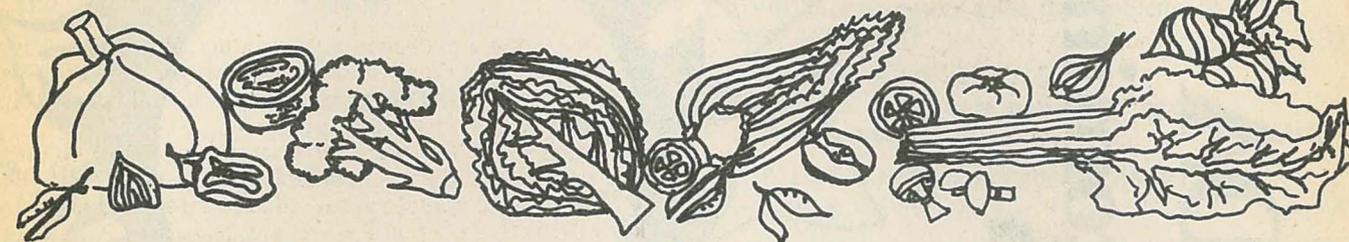
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- Environment Alert — Broadsheet No. 3 10/5/73
- Packaging Plague — A.C.F.
- The Price We Pay for Packaging — C.R.A.C.



backyard revolution

Rosie Cousin



At present, in Australia, (and many other countries) a large proportion of women hold a central position in the home — looking after children, cleaning, cooking, replenishing the household food supply and doing many other domestic chores; a position which is almost never shared or, (even rarer) taken on by men. Much controversy has and still is occurring, over the position of women in society: socially, economically and politically. This article doesn't come close to the solution of the overall problem. It merely suggests some formative steps towards a big change.

The advertising media and manufacturers, fully aware of the social situation many women at present find themselves in, aim the majority of advertisements and products at the 'housewife' person/image. The influence exerted takes many forms, and has as many diverse effects which aim to define our lives and lifestyles. The creation and promotion of competition — amongst women, and between households i.e. "Keeping up with the Jones'" is just one example, achieved and maintained through the setting of "social standards" and the production of consumer goods to fill the needs of these standards.

Also surrounding us is a constant deluge of local and worldwide environmental and social crises . . . we are endangering all life forms, the ecological balances and this very planet by the lifestyles we lead. It's so easy to feel overwhelmed, ". . . but what can I do? How can I help?" There is a lot the individual can do, (and a lot more we can do as a group). Society is made up of individuals: the individual person, the individual household, the individual community. Beneficial change in the personal environment has far reaching effects on the general environment, especially if it is combined with efforts to communicate with people: friends, neighbours, even strangers, about the changes you've made — and why.

Ironically, it is the exploited woman in the domestic situation who has the most potential power to bring about change, in her own as well as her family's life and lifestyle — and consequently has potentially far reaching effects upon the present social system. One of the most basic steps towards changing ones own environment is to concentrate on eating good food: fresh, instead of processed preserved and overpackaged 'foods'. It is too easy to fall back onto "convenience foods" which, while failing to provide the vitamins, minerals and basic nutrients in

our diet, also pollute our bodies with chemicals, preservatives and many other disease-inducing additives, (not to mention the environmental destruction brought about by the very manufacture of processed convenience foods, the production and ultimate disposal of its packaging and the overall energy consumed).

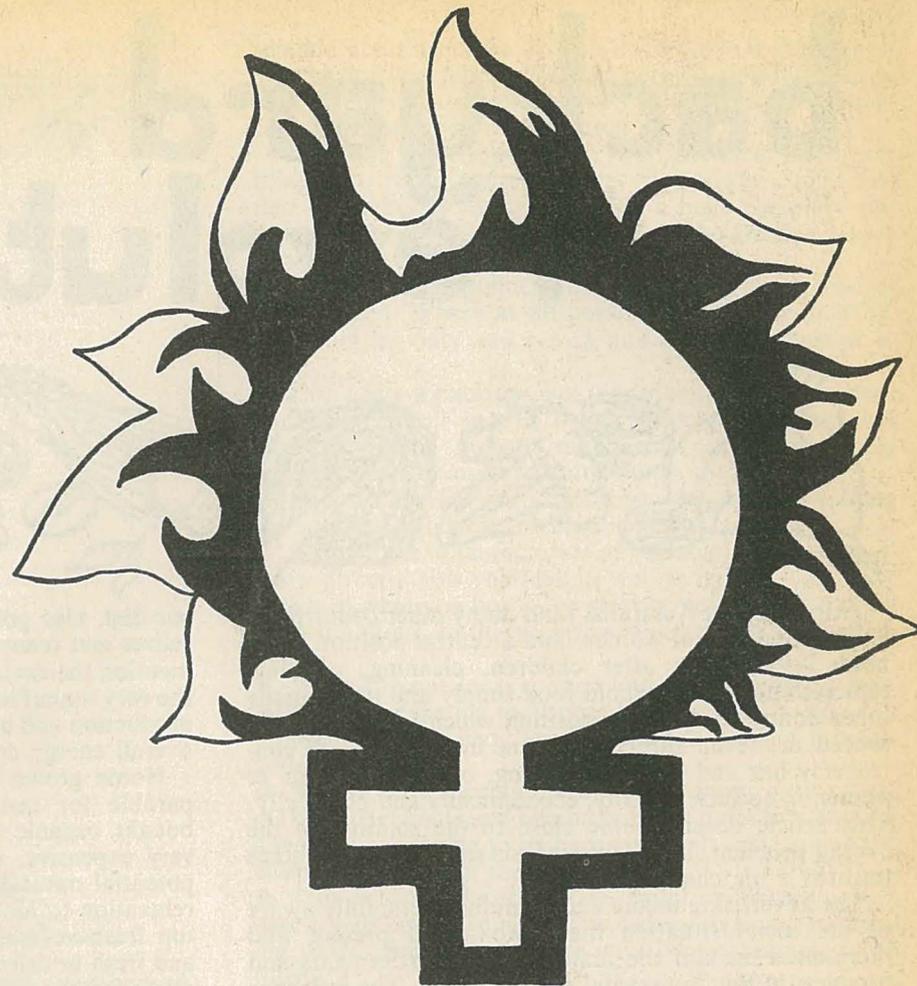
Home grown and/or organic vegetables are uncomparable for taste, and chemical-free goodness. Shop bought organic vegetables and fruit are unfortunately very expensive, so if you've got a garden, you have a potential natural resource, plus a whole lot of fun and relaxation to look forward to. A tasty salad dressing to top fresh vegetables is made from apple cider vinegar, and fresh or dried herbs, (to taste) and cold pressed olive oil. A further area for action in the home is energy, water and soil conservation. Hints on ecological alternatives are available from F.O.E.

Where am I going to get the time to do all this you ask? Well isn't it time to make time for yourself, to look after yourself properly — after all if you're body and mind aren't working, there's not much you could do anyway. Don't try and kill yourself though; get co-operation from the males of the household. Housework should and can be done by everyone, and that includes growing, (if possible) preparing and cooking foods, as well as cleaning up. Good nutrition links many other issues, such as overpackaging, destruction of our forestlands (for packaging and paper production); the prevalence of diseases in our society, such as hyperactivity which is linked directly to poor diet and excess chemicals in food consumed; Nuclear power, so that we can keep up with the Jones' colour TV, electric toothbrushes, knives and footwarmers, (not to mention their cars, boat and holiday house) and have overpackaged processed foods, etc.

Get together with other families in the street, to communicate with them about what you've been capable of doing, and what you'd like to do in future. If possible, try to organise back-yard barter: exchange home grown vegetables for, (for example) home made bread, share as a group in community activities for the benefit of your area. Take a part in community and town planning activities, and have a say whether freeways should be built, whether power stations (nuclear and otherwise) should be built, and consider the alternatives. The individual has the capability and power for change, the community as a whole has more. . . Backyard Revolution . . .

ZELDA

the becoming of a woman



It is a predictable, but disappointing fact that most of the feminist literature of the '70s has come from white, middle-class women, and it doesn't require a great deal of thought to see why: loudest voices get heard first. Zelda stands out as a book by a working-class Melbourne woman. She is middle-aged, from a Jewish background, and has had a lifetime's involvement with factory workers, communist party members and officials, and trade unionists.

Zelda points out that "Working-class women very rarely write books because of our inability to write at the level required by male-established literary standards. Nor are many books written about the lives of working-class women because our lives are considered to be too hum-drum."

Zelda's life was certainly never hum-drum, and her experiences reflect the extreme difficulties of being a working woman in Australia. As such they are riveting reading, especially for those of us who have not, nor ever will, work in factories and union organizations. Zelda was beaten and bruised constantly by the various worker organizations she worked with, and was once sacked for daring to confront her communist boss's sexism. Most readers will recognize the thinly-disguised antagonists (John Quartercent?) and recall the incident where Zelda chained herself across the doors of the Commonwealth Building in Melbourne to publicize pay inequality. Zelda had a way of making her point — paying only two-thirds fares on public transport because women were paid only two-thirds of the male wage, and picketing beauty contests were among the more memorable. It is impossible

to doubt her sincerity and commitment to the working women of Australia.

She fought and became disillusioned with both the Communist Party and the unions, and ultimately believed that her energies would be best directed in the women's liberation movement. But it took 20 years for her to discover the newly emerging movement, during which time her belief in male power structures, such as most worker organizations, was shattered. It is an extreme standpoint, and a barbed criticism of these groups, but one which it was inevitable for her to come to give her experiences. Whether it is inevitable for all working women is something time will tell — perhaps the publication of books like this one will accelerate a change in the union movement. Read the book — it is a personal, gutsy look at Melbourne in the last few decades through the eyes of a participant. It will make you think, and you will be sharing some shattering experiences.

All working women in Australia have benefited from the struggles of Zelda and her sisters in areas of pay, working conditions, abortion law reform and union representation, but few would be conscious of it.

It is books like this which make us aware of the work that has already been done for us, and is still going on. The book depicts the agony and highs of an activist working-class woman and has valuable insights into unionism in the '60s and the very early women's liberation consciousness. Love her or hate her, Zelda made her mark — you must admire her dedicated perseverance.

—Jennie Sproule

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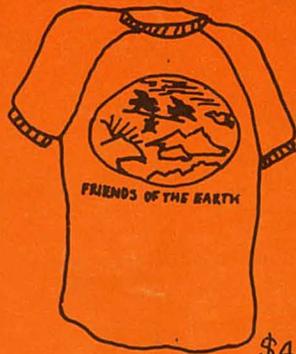
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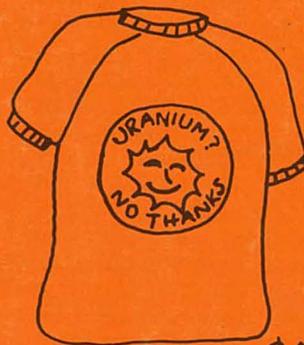
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