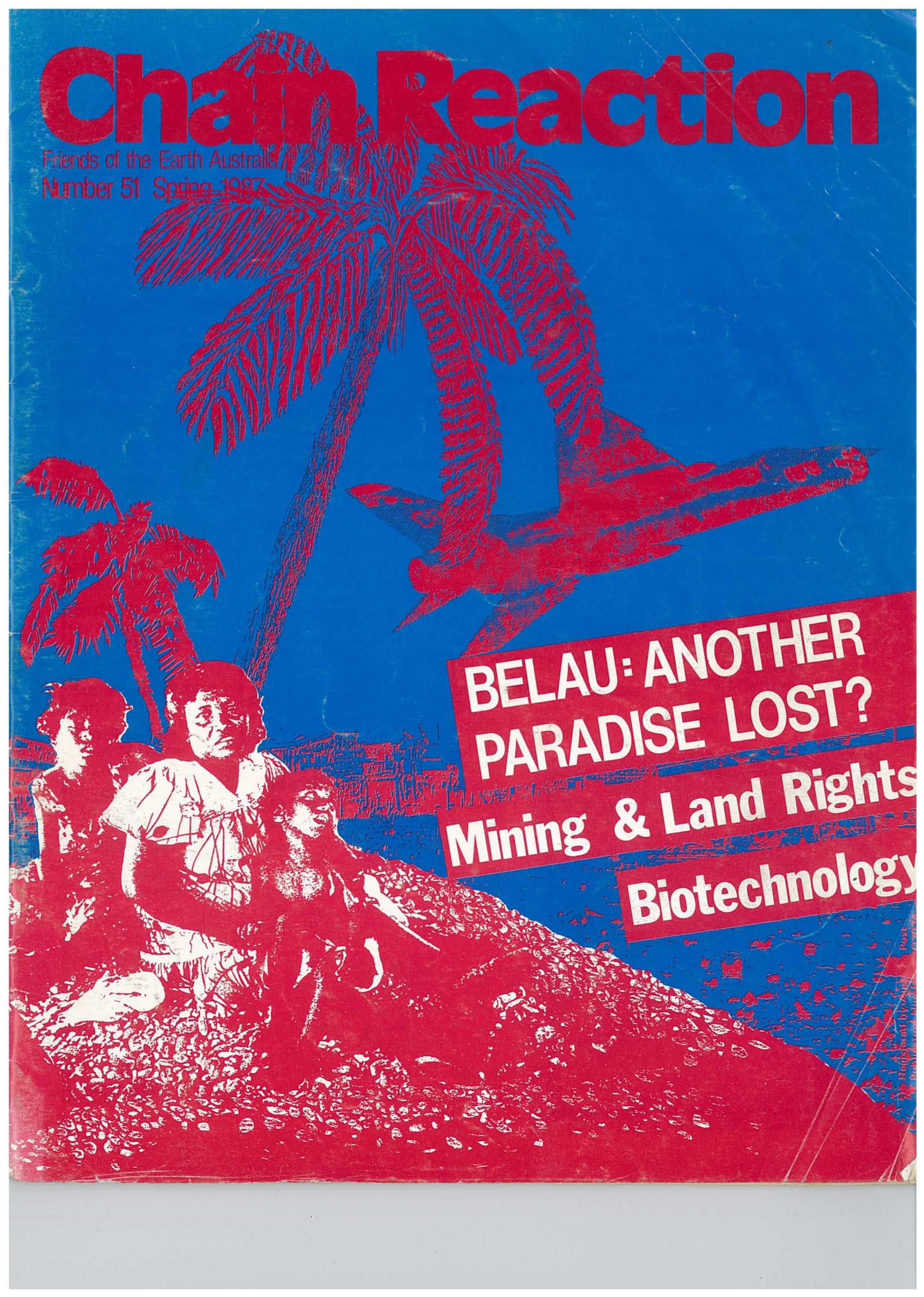


# Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia  
Number 51 Spring 1987



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PARADISE LOST?**

**Mining & Land Rights**

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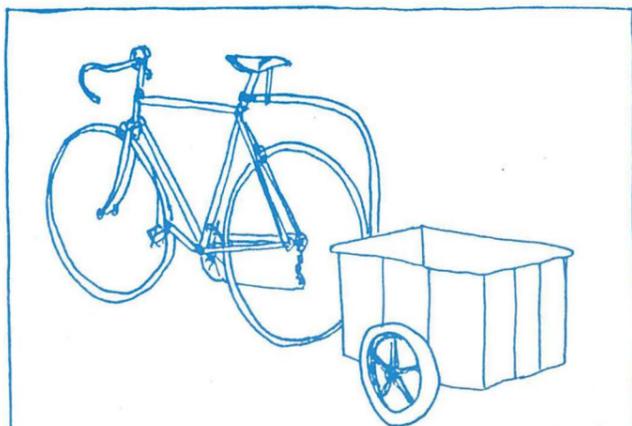
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# LETTERS

## The Year of Shame

1988 should be called the year of shame and those who celebrate the Bicentennial should think of what they are doing. What have we really done in two hundred years? We forget all those nasty things we don't want to remember. The re-enactment of the First Fleet is a sickening event. Do we ever consider what the Aboriginal people must have thought when their country was being invaded? Also the convicts who were treated like sub-humans on the ships that they came on and what for? Stealing food, clothes etc. Is this something to be proud of, our treatment of the Aboriginal people? How can people just turn their back on their situation and just say nothing at all? But what do we expect when some environmental groups are joining the Bicentennial celebrations? These people and groups should feel ashamed of themselves. I feel quite ashamed myself and have opposed it all the way. What I can't understand is that we can get along without these funds. I think that these groups have a lot of thinking to do and need to come face to face with the

issue at hand — sovereignty for the Aboriginal people. When will the environment movement wake up from its slumber and come to terms with the situation!

John Renshaw  
Canberra ACT

## Food Irradiation — A Footnote

There are two points regarding food irradiation which I have not seen raised yet so I thought I had better make them. They have nothing to do with whether the food thereby becomes dangerous for human consumption — they relate to the economic motivations and consequences of extending the shelf-life of foodstuffs and the unstated wish for doing so.

- Food irradiation would lead to greater centralisation and capitalisation of the food retail industry. Since one of the main limiting factors on the size of supermarkets is shelf-life, huge quantities cannot be put out. Extending the shelf-life would allow larger stocks and larger buildings. The humble shelf packer would be made redundant as stores were stocked by one or two workers driving forklifts. The result; more unemployment and larger profits going into fewer hands (sic).
- This food is probably bunker food, nuclear war fallout stock! It would probably help prepare public consciousness to fatalistically accept nuclear war, firstly by softening up the whole radiation issue (begun

with the advent of the microwave oven) and secondly by holding out the carrot of survival.

Justin Moore  
Collingwood Vic.

## Help in India

In India the environment and conservation of natural resources is still to be taken up seriously. The population pressure and a loose political system have wrought havoc in the country. We have only ten per cent of our land under forests though the constitution states that 35 per cent of the land must be under forest cover. Hence we are experiencing droughts and floods all over the place.

There are very few pockets of virgin sholas (tropical rain forests) in our hills. Most of the sholas were and are being cleared for commercial plantations. I am a member of a local conservation group and we are trying to save the remaining forests. But I am not sure how long we will last against the big companies like Swedish Match-Wimco and Hilleshog AB who want to convert the rain forests into eucalyptus plantations for pulp and viscose fibre. If you have any data on eucalyptus monocultures like water use, effect on land, soil fertility and climate, kindly send me the same. India is still committed to develop nukes so any information on the adverse effects of nukes is also welcome.

Kannan Raveendran  
12-3/8 Batlagundu  
Main Road

Pattiveeranpatti — 624 211  
Tamil Nadu, India

## MAUM Talk

Re. 'Nuclear Dumpsite' *Chain Reaction* 50, page 6.

This story is word-for-word from the Autumn 1987 issue of the MAUM Newsletter (United States: Worse than Bhopal? page 9). Although you sourced it as 'Earth Island Institute Journal' — though it should have included WISE as a source as well — it was written up by the MAUM Newsletter. We would naturally have liked some acknowledgment and hope that if you lift material from the newsletter, now called *The Third Opinion*, you'll give us the appropriate credit.

Aside from this formality, congratulations on your 50th issue. Quite an achievement. I've especially enjoyed the features on the future directions of the environment/anti-nuclear/peace movements. Keep it up.

Steve Broadbent  
Third Opinion Collective  
Sydney NSW

**If we quote *Earth Island Institute Journal* as our source than that is our source. It's most likely that they picked it up from WISE who picked it up from you.**

You are invited to write letters to *Chain Reaction* with your comments on the magazine or on other issues of interest. Letters should be kept within 300 words so that as many as possible may be published. Longer letters may be edited. Write today to *Chain Reaction*, GPO Box 530E, Melbourne, Vic 3001, Australia.

## An Answer and a Question

'Why is the British Government so keen to suppress Peter Wright's memoirs?' asks Justin Moore in his review of Richard Hall's *A Spy's Revenge (CR50)* and adds: 'We can only speculate.'

His speculations are, however, quite baseless. The Atlanticist hegemony that has dominated Western Europe for the past forty years, effectively conscripting its nations into the service of the US as proxies for its foreign policy goals, has wedded the British bureaucratic and military establishment almost indissolubly to its American counterpart. Only if the US withdraws from Western Europe — as it shows signs of doing — would the marriage be broken. In that case, the British establishment is more likely to seek closer ties with its counterparts in Western Europe in order to construct an alternate nuclear security system — as, again, it shows signs of doing. But an Anglo-Soviet rapprochement of the kind envisaged by Justin Moore, welcome though it may be, is not at all likely.

The reason for Thatcher's attempt to suppress Wright's book is as given by Hall: its account of the way a group of rogue operatives in MI5 and MI6 attempted to destabilise the Labour Government's of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan during the 1970's — tapping minister's telephones, planting evidence, manufacturing smears, the whole gamut of surveillance and dirty tricks methods — very often with the connivance of the senior civil servants involved. In itself, this is of only historical interest, but what makes it damaging for Mrs. Thatcher is that the

information obtained was fed straight to the Conservative Party via her friend the late Airey Neave MP. If it can be shown that the then opposition worked with supposedly impartial security services to violate the constitution, the Tories will obviously suffer colossal political harm.

The same information may be emerging from another route in any case. Two former army officers who served in Northern Ireland in the 1970's, Fred Holroyd and Collin Wallace, worked for a time in a 'black propaganda' office established there by MI5 and MI6 to undermine the Wilson/Callaghan initiatives on power-sharing and co-operation with the Irish Republic — a sideline to Wright's wider destabilisation campaign. But a particular interest in their work was taken by the very same Airey Neave, then the opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland.

Vigorously pursuing Peter Wright, the Government seems to have overlooked the Holroyd/Wallace allegations, which have been surfacing in small-circulation magazines for the last couple of years but are now being taken seriously by the British national press. In particular, *The Observer* of 5 July 1987 proved that the paper and ink used by Wallace for his anti-Wilson forgeries dated before 1976 and that they could not therefore be recent inventions. At the very least, this helps substantiate Wright's own story; at best it steps up the pressure for the full-scale inquiry Mrs. Thatcher continues to resist. Because such an inquiry has only to implicate Airey Neave to destroy her completely.

Joseph Nicholas  
London UK

PS. I'm afraid I couldn't make head or tail out of Eric Mack's letter about John Dixon-Jenkins (Letters *CR50*). Wouldn't it have been better for Mack to explain precisely what 'threats' Dixon-Jenkins made, and what he was charged with, before launching into a tirade about our failing to campaign around his allegedly unjust imprisonment?

For further information regarding John Dixon-Jenkins, see the article written by him on page 17 of this issue.

## Where There's Smoke There's Fire

It is good that there is a magazine like *Chain Reaction* to cover the important environment issues of the day and congratulations on reaching fifty editions. It goes to show that you must be doing good work to have got so far. But there is one issue I think you have omitted which I think is becoming very important, and if *Chain Reaction* doesn't cover it, no-one will. The issue is high temperature waste incineration and the problem is that if we don't do something about it soon we will have at least one, and possibly more, of these devices to make things easier for the polluters and manufacturers of some of the most dangerous substances ever developed. I have read some brief pieces from overseas which indicate that although high temperature waste incinerators may be a short term technical solution to the problem of getting rid of some of the more intractable chemicals, the problem remains that the chemicals are still being used and in some cases manufactured,

and if there is a way of getting rid of these things, the manufacturers may keep on coming up with even worse compounds. Please present some articles on this subject, because if you don't, I'm worried that even some conservationists will be sucked into believing that we should have high temperature waste incinerators.

Peter Williamson  
Maryborough Vic

We hope to have some information about this very topic in our next issue.

## AIDS

Thank you for publishing such a thought provoking and informative article about AIDS in your latest issue (Kenton Penley: 'Straightening a Bent Disease', *Chain Reaction* 50).

May I take this opportunity to clarify one point? The author, Mr Penley, described by you as an 'AIDS counselor', has for sometime been associated with the AIDS Council of South Australia in important areas of its work. The opinions expressed in the article referred to, however, are those of Mr Penley himself and do not necessarily reflect those of the AIDS Council of South Australia.

Edward Dudzinski  
Chair, AIDS Council of SA

## Ted Trainer Replies

I think Bren and Lois (Letters *CR50*) are illustrating one of the most encouraging things happening now, which my 'Getting Red and Green Together' article was intended to reinforce; the incredible focus on the need for fundamental change to a more simple and self-

# LETTERS

sufficient society before we can solve the big problems facing the growth and greed society.

Bren rightly calls for synthesis of Marxist analysis and feminist perspectives but I would stress that the first element in the mix must be one that many Marxists still do not recognise — viz., simplicity. The good, sustainable society cannot be an affluent one. There is absolutely no chance of all people in the world rising to the present Australian level of per capita resource and energy use.

Lois is rightly concerned about the money system but I see that as just one more absurd consequence of a capitalist economy. There is ceaseless pressure to reinvest ever-accumulating wealth and it is now very difficult to find sufficient profitable ventures. As a result we now have vast quantities of speculative investment plunging on any casino in sight. Mr. Keating has recently completely opened the Australian door to them, driving one of the last nails into the coffin containing our capacity to run our own economy for our benefit. In a sane world finance and all other economic phenomena would be organised within small local regions with little flow between them, let alone between nations. The savings of the people in Fairfield should be mainly used to enrich the quality of life in Fairfield, but at present they are probably being used by Boeing to make more bombers. It is the need of late capitalism

for maximum global success and economic integration that produces absurdities like our financial casino and the coexistence of poverty, wealth, unmet needs and unemployment in Fairfield.

This connects with Lois' point about the Democrats. It is not good enough for them to make nice but vague statements about being for democracy and a sustainable society without spelling out the fact that to achieve such goals we must abandon affluence, growth and therefore capitalism (and lots of other nasty things like big-state socialism). Of course, if the Democrats said this clearly hardly anyone would vote for them. And this gives us the clue for where to put our efforts, a clue which I hope the current movement for a new political force in Australia will follow. As I see it by far the most important thing we should be doing is grinding away at the long and slow educational task, working to raise a public awareness about the fact that this is not a sustainable society and that only eventual change to a more simple, self-sufficient and co-operative one can solve our problems.

Unfortunately, at present most of the energy of socially concerned activists seems to be going not into this purpose but into fighting specific noble campaigns, such as stopping woodchipping, and it is quite conceivable that even when such campaigns succeed they make no contribution to helping people realise that

fundamental social change is needed. My plea is not that we should reduce our efforts on these campaigns, but that we should see them as platforms which give us ideal opportunities to work on by far the most important task; that of getting the majority of Australians to see that transition to a sustainable society is needed.

Ted Trainer  
Sydney NSW

## Another Reply . . . to Senator Bolkus

I have the greatest respect for Senator Bolkus and did not intend my comments to be an attack on him personally. My comments were just the introduction to further musings on the proposals for the electoral alternatives being explored. My article wasn't intended to be an attack on the Labor Party nor a discussion on the possibilities of reform or change of existing parties. It is clear, however, that I have touched upon a nerve.

Senator Bolkus highlights some one of the key issues I raised: *How do we ensure that parties are bound by policy?* It is not, I suggest, sufficient to join the ALP and prepare appropriate policy. As we have seen, particularly in the case of uranium mining, the Federal Government is prepared to ignore policy. They will act and policy will reform around the Labor Government. The ALP had

a strong policy of opposition to uranium mining. Under pressure from a Prime Minister (who has always been in favour of mining, even during the ACTU debates) and a pragmatic Treasurer, the policy was turned around.

So tied are the Government to party policy that they wouldn't even support a number of anti-nuclear bills moved by the Democrats in the Senate, despite the fact that the wording was taken verbatim from the ALP policy platform!

The move to reform the ALP from within requires not only that reasonable policy be adopted but also that the candidates elected will adhere to the policy. In South Australia this means not only the control of sub-branches, but also of the delegates to the State Conference and the pre-selection of appropriate candidates. This is a major undertaking, and it is not surprising that some activists have decided that it is more productive to work through pressure groups or to form their own party (e.g. Joe Camilleri).

Another question is whether the ALP can be considered to be a radical alternative or (at best) a party of reform. Perhaps in the Whitlam era it was radical, but few could claim that of the present ALP. Where was the courage to take a stand on Land Rights when they were under attack by the AMIC and the New Right? Subsumed to the

Continued on page 47

# EARTH NEWS

## XS Widowmaker

The US Air Force, already struggling with delays in the deployment of its highly-touted new MX strategic nuclear missiles, has decided to suspend all MX flight tests and empanel a special study group to resolve new questions about the missiles' accuracy.

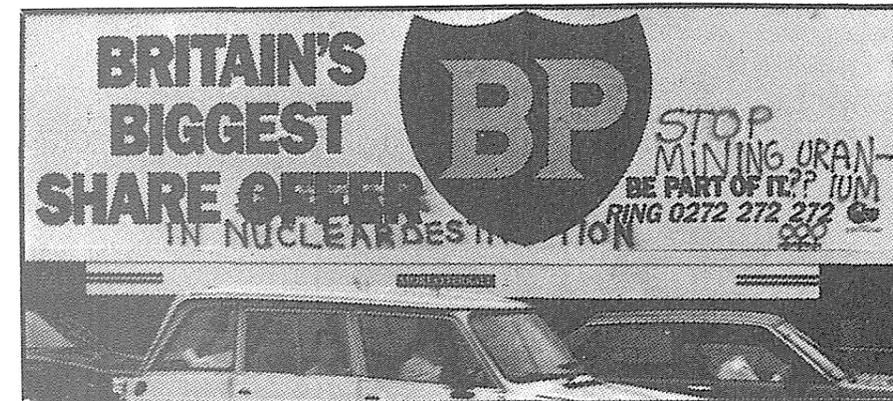
Source: *Washington Post*

## Canada pushes food irradiation

Canada is involved in projects to provide food irradiation units to some Third World countries even though the government has not sanctioned the widespread use of the controversial technology on foods consumed by Canadians.

Canada has approved use of irradiation only to inhibit sprouting of potatoes and onions and to de-infest wheat and flour. Nevertheless the External Relations Minister recently signed agreements under which Canada will provide Thailand with a semi-commercial and multi-purpose food irradiator.

Source: *Consumer Currents*



Graffiti by Bristol Greenham women in protest at BP's role in the nuclear fuel cycle. BP is one of the

major backers of the giant Roxby Downs uranium mine at Olympic Dam in South Australia. The British

Government is selling its 31.5 per cent holding in BP shares from October this year. Photo by Helen Tann

## Cadmium ban

Officials from the EEC are seeking to ban cadmium pigments from paints that are 'designed to come into contact with humans'. They say that in several European countries levels of cadmium, a toxic heavy metal, exceed those considered tolerable by the World Health Organisation. The EEC wants the governments of member states to 'reduce drastically' the use of cadmium. It seeks support for improved monitoring of cadmium and urges governments to find alternative pigments. The Commission is also keen to reduce the amount that enters Europe in phosphate fertilisers imported from the Third World.

Source: *New Scientist*

## Rainforest traded for debt

Bolivia has agreed to protect millions of hectares of tropical rainforest in the Amazon Basin in return for a reduction of its foreign debt. The agreement involved the bank Citicorp purchasing outstanding Bolivian debt at a discounted market price and selling it Conservation International, an ecological organisation.

Conservation International then took the note which is valued at \$A918,060, over to the Bolivian Government which then agreed to set aside and protect 1.5 million hectares in the northern part of the country.

The agreement seeks to deal simultaneously with

two critical and interrelated global problems: the huge external debt pressing down on many developing countries and the rapid destruction of tropical rainforest.

Momentum is now building to make further use of this 'debt for nature' concept.



Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*

# EARTH NEWS

## Renegade Elephants Stampede

Elephant rebellions continue to increase as humans continue to poach and encroach upon them and their habitat. Both species of elephant, Indian and African, survive in drastically reduced numbers, but it appears that the Indian elephants have become most disgruntled at the powers that oppress them. The latest Indian elephant uprisings include the trampling of a logging company boss near Sungai Siput, Malaysia; the stampeding of nine villages in northern Sumatra, Indonesia; and the crushing of 65 houses in southern Sumatra.

The Malaysian uprising occurred when the timber executive and three others entered wild elephant territory. A herd charged them, allowing the less guilty three to escape but stomping the boss into the dust in disgust. One Indonesian insurrection occurred when oil company helicopters and explosions so enraged a herd of forty that they charged through an electric fence out of their nature reserve and ran amok through villages, scattering (but not hurting) residents and crushing buildings.

Source: *Earth First*

## Brazil's nuclear test site

Brazil plans to turn a remote rainforest into an underground nuclear test site and storage dump for radioactive wastes from the country's nuclear power industry. Already the Brazilian Government has built facilities for the test site in the Xachiribo mountain region. Since 1983 the military has blocked off a 100 kilometre stretch of highway and introduced tight security over more than 40,000 square kilometres of land adjacent to the Xachiribo air base. In July last, Brazil finished building a well over 300 metres deep. The plans will be finalised by 1991. Survival International, an advocate for the protection and rights of indigenous people, claims that 8,000 forest Indians live within a 600 kilometre radius of the site. The area is also inhabited by farmers and mineral explorers.

Source: *Not Man Apart*

## Recycling a necessity

Recycling is now compulsory in New Jersey. In an effort to cut non-industrial garbage by 25 per cent in the next two years, legislation passed in April requires households and many businesses to sort at least three of four materials — glass, aluminium, paper or plastics. As the State's ten remaining tips fill up rapidly with the 17 million tonnes of non-industrial garbage thrown out every year, Governor Thomas Keane warned that New Jersey could soon 'choke' on its own garbage.

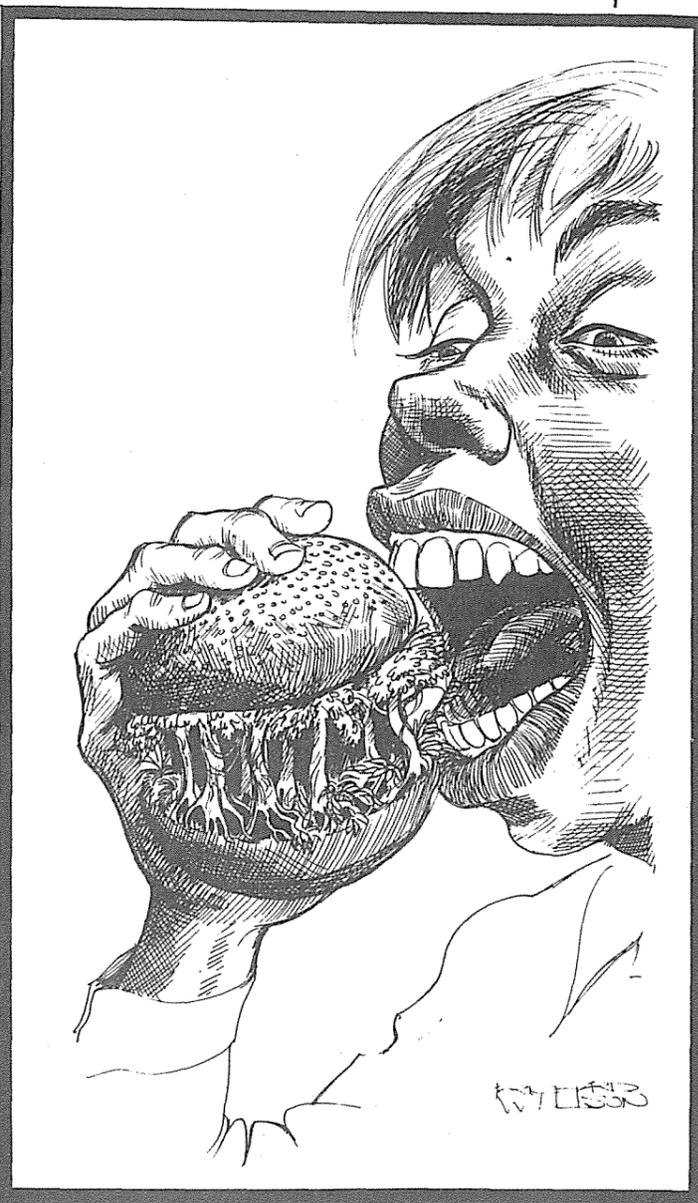
Source: *Not Man Apart*

## Rainforest or hamburgers

In the last thirty years, Central America has lost almost two-thirds of its rainforests to cattle ranching. The forest soils are thin and quickly

overgrazed and often within five to ten years the ranchers have to abandon the deforested areas and move on to destroy a new part of the forest. Most of the beef is exported for North American hamburgers.

Source: *Panscope*



## Don't visit Kakadu

The increasing popularity of visiting wilderness regions such as Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory is having an effect on the regions in question. Whilst it is good to see people take an interest in the environment, it may deal the death blow — saved from uranium mines to be trampled underfoot!

The NT Government wishes to build an airport at Kakadu to accommodate the 170 per cent increase in visitors to the park. More than 200,000 are expected to venture to Kakadu over the next twelve months. Kakadu is controlled by the Aboriginal Land Trust and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (a Federal body, most National Parks are run by State National Park Services). For the NT Government to build the airport it would require the permission of both the Federal Government and the Northern Land Council. A speaker for the Northern Land Council has said that the airport, and an associated hotel, are contrary to the internationally accepted park management practices.

The former Minister for the Environment, MR Cohen said: 'Tourism is not the guiding principle of park management for Kakadu or any other national park, but the level of support for national parks and the principles for conservation which currently exist in our country will only be maintained and developed if citizens are able to visit, experience and learn about national parks such as Kakadu and why their values are . . . so very precious.'

Source: *The Age*

## Toxic dinners



Food is the major non-occupational exposure pathway for humans to persistent toxic chemicals. Dr Kate Davies, a chemist at Toronto's Department of Public Health, reached this conclusion based on analyses of food samples from Toronto food markets and numerous other studies of human exposure to contaminants. Dr Davies determined that 86 per cent of non-occupational exposure comes from food, 11 per cent from drinking water and 3.5 per cent from breathing air.

Calculations based on average dietary intakes suggest that the average annual intake of selected contaminants from food would be around 36.5 mg of PCB's, 5.6 mg of all organochlorides and 0.2 mg of dioxins and dibenzofurans. Almost one third of the organochlorides and PCB's are taken in from eggs and meat; milk and leaf vegetables are responsible for another 20 per cent. Fruits are by far the largest source of dioxins and dibenzofurans, over two thirds.

Source: *Infoetox*

## Nuclear medicine

Brazilian Police have indicted three doctors who own an abandoned radiation therapy unit. It all began in September this year when scavengers found a lead-encased capsule containing Cesium-137 in a partly demolished medical clinic. They sold it to a scrap metal yard for \$A39. The owner of the yard then smashed open the container to reveal a glowing powder. Residents rubbed the powder over their bodies and the yard owner's six year old niece ate some. Now 243 people have been contaminated, forty of whom are in hospital, ten in a critical condition. A total of 24,000 people have been screened for contamination.

Officials from Brazil's Nuclear Energy Commission have begun plastering over the contaminated areas in the city of Goiania in central Brazil. Seven residential areas have been sealed off and evacuated, sports events and congresses due to take place there have been cancelled. It will be 30 to 50 years before all traces of the contamination have gone.

Source: *The Age*

## Food irradiation

The European Economic Community (EEC) has accepted recommendations made by the European Parliament to ban importation of all irradiated food products. The decision could severely restrict Australian food exports if irradiation goes ahead in this country.

Source: *Greenpeace*

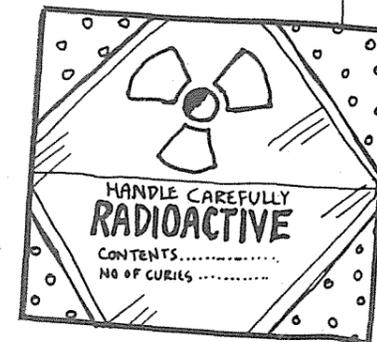
## Geraldton spy base

A \$25 million satellite spy base is to be built near Geraldton, 600 kilometres north of Perth. Construction will begin next year and should be completed by mid-1990.

The base will be run by the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), Australia's largest intelligence gathering organisation. DSD's other SIGNIT facilities are at Pearce Airbase in Western Australia, Shoal Bay near Darwin, Carbarban in Queensland and Watsonia in Melbourne. DSD's operations are intrinsically linked to the American National Security Agency (NSA) and the most important overseas facility is run jointly with Britain's GCHQ in Hong Kong.

With both US and UK personnel stationed at DSD facilities it is not surprising that when Kim Beazley, Minister for Defence stressed that the base would be Australian owned and operated, doubts and criticisms arose.

Contact: PND Western Australia Ph: (09)321 4838



## Reactor closed

The LaCrosse nuclear power plant, the fifth oldest operating reactor in the USA, closed down this year after 18 years of operation. The reason given for the closure was pure economics. It seems that the cost to run the aging reactor was rising and a large surplus of electricity meant that the reactor was no longer needed. The decision to close the plant demonstrates the fact the nuclear power plants become increasingly difficult to operate with age and may not be able to operate for the thirty to forty years which it is expected current utilities to survive.

The problem lies in the fact that the radiation causes embrittlement of the reactor and its components. A 1975 study showed that a reactor will produce two per cent less power every year after its fifteenth year of operation. A more recent study by the Department of Energy found a 'dramatic decline' in performance with age.

The problem now remains to decommission the plant. LaCrosse was only a small 50Mw plant but a cost estimate given in 1983 was \$20 million. However, the Special Nuclear Projects manager at the time said that estimate was 'pulled out of the wall'. As for today's estimate, according to spokesperson James Taylor, 'we don't know'.

Source: *Public Citizen*

## An eye on Roxby

A Uranium Information Coordinator (UIC) is to be employed to monitor the mining of the world's largest uranium deposit. The UIC will monitor accidents and breaches of regulations and provide this information to the public. Has the Government decided to watch out for the environment or has the mining company had an attack of the guilts? Neither. The position is being funded by concerned individuals (like yourself) and will be accountable to a steering collective consisting of a broad range of environmental and political groups and trade unions. And it will be funded through the donations of concerned individuals (like yourself). If you would like more information you can contact *The South Australian Uranium Information Fund, 24 Rankine Road, Torrensville 5031*

## Return of the milk bottles

The milk corporations in three West German cities have started selling full cream milk in refillable glass bottles. These new refundable deposit bottles are being advertised as non-polluting but the milk carton producers who stand to lose business if the bottles become popular claim that the aluminium bottle tops will cause pollution and the milk will turn sour. The bottled milk is 35 per cent dearer than the milk in cartons.

Source: *Bogong*



"I THINK WE'VE FOUND A SOLUTION TO THE WASTE DISPOSAL PROBLEM"

## Waste below 'regulatory concern'

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Committee (NRC) have proposed new regulations that would effectively deregulate the disposal of radioactive wastes which the NRC considers 'below regulatory concern', allowing it to be disposed along with regular garbage.

## US Boycotts UN disarmament conference

The US boycotted the 128 country UN Conference on Disarmament and Development held in New York during September 1987. All other Western countries

The new rule neglects evidence that any level of radiation is potentially harmful. It ignores the possibility of 'mixed waste' which may contain both radioactive and other toxic wastes. The proposal also ignores the cumulative effect of a large number of small and unmeasured radioactive sources disposed in the same landfill or incinerator. And lastly, the rule puts the financial interests of the nuclear industry before responsible safety measures.

Source: *Public Citizen*

participated in the three week conference which examined the link between military spending and spending for economic development. Third World diplomats who initiated the conference hope that cash saved by disarmament agreements could be used to finance Third World development.

Source: *The Guardian*

## Our common future

The change needed in our relationship to the environment is going to require a revolution as daring as the ones against slavery and colonialism, and as vigorous as the ones for workers rights, women's rights and human rights. To realise our common future we will need some uncommon action. It is not just international economic orders that have to be changed. More so, it is national economic orders that have to change because so much of global misery is rooted in a poverty of vision and action, and an abundance of corruption and violence at nation/state level.

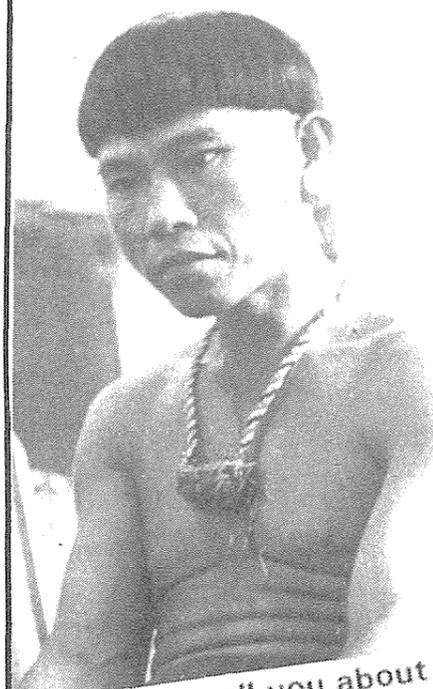
Anwer Fazal, speaking at the Nordic Conference on Environment and Development, Sweden 1987  
Source: *Consumer Currents*

## Supercard

We will soon be testing new 'Supercards' which will not only include debit and credit facilities but may have other features such as a calculator, a digital clock, security access to buildings — even personal medical information. Despite evidence that consumers are having trouble with plastic money, financial institutions are determined that it is here to stay. Meanwhile, little is being done to educate consumers of the dangers. Australia's consumer debt rose to \$20,714 million in 1985 and is rising.

Source: *Consumer Views*

## Tribal blockade halts logging in Sarawak



"Come here to tell you about how my people are but my heart bleeds because at this moment my three children are in the blazing sun laying their human barricades at a blockade site."

— a Penan chief

Several thousand tribal people from over thirty communities in the headwaters of Sarawak's Baram and Limbang Rivers have halted massive logging operations that are destroying their forests. Already one third of Sarawak's unique forests have been logged, yet

despite the destruction the quotas are increased annually.

The Penan tribe have persistently called on Chief Ministers from both the Sarawak State Government and the Malay Federal Government to redress their grievances. To date there has been no adequate response to the tribes' demands for a halt to logging and a recognition of their land rights.

Survival International is appealing to people to send letters supporting the Penan tribes' demands to the Chief Minister of Sarawak at the following address:

YAB Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud  
The Chief Minister of Sarawak  
93502 Kuching  
Sarawak, East Malaysia  
For more information:  
*Chain Reaction 48*

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## FRIENDS OF THE EARTH GROUPS

### FOE Collingwood becomes FOE Fitzroy

Friends of the Earth (Collingwood) and the Organic Fruit and Vegetable Co-operative are now joint lessees of a building in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, in a move which promises much for the environment movement and for people who enjoy organic fruit and vegetables. The building is emerging as a focus for much activity, combining campaign offices with ecologically aware businesses and includes a venue space which has already been used for an art exhibition, parties and discussion nights.

The sale in late 1986 of the Smith Street, Collingwood building which FOE had leased since 1978 came at a time when many people at FOE had been discussing moving to a better location, sharing premises with the Organic Fruit and Vegetable Co-Operative, and expanding to give a number of new campaigns a bit of room. The large rent increase proposed by the new owner gave added incentive to the search for a new building.

We decided in early 1987 on a great building at 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, started renovations in July after an Informal Party on election night, and moved there in mid August. Our new home comfortably accommodates all of the FOE Campaigns, the FOE Bookshop, the FOE Dry Foods Co-Op, the Organic Fruit and Vegetable Co-op, Chain Reaction, the Alternative Technology Association, the Anti-Bases Campaign, People for Nuclear Disarmament and the Owner Builders Association, and still has room for a display area, a meeting room and a resource space.

We are excited about the new building and are eager to ensure that it succeeds as a practical demonstration of FOE's environmental and political philosophy. All the groups and campaigns in the building want to encourage the development of the environmental movement and its many inter-related aspects by example and educational work. 222 will be a venue for developing and displaying cultural resources, for encouraging political debate and for like-minded people to meet.



FOE has always tried to promote viable alternatives in order to have a credible voice in the community. So 222 is painted with a non-toxic natural paint, and our commitment to the conservation, restoration and rational use of the environment will be implemented through energy conservation and recycling resources wherever possible.

At the new building the campaigns of FOE will be complemented by positive alternatives. The Anti-Uranium Collective, the Food Irradiation Group and the Hazardous Chemicals Campaign will continue to warn Australians of the dangers associated with the nuclear fuel/weapons cycle and toxic chemicals, in an effort to avert another Chernobyl or another Bhopal.

On the other hand, the Alternative Technology Association and FOE's Soft Energy Group will, in theory and practice, demonstrate that it is possible to move from an imminent nuclear future and/or widespread acid rain to more socially-acceptable, safe and efficient energy usage. The FOE Dry Foods Co-op and the Organic Fruit and Vege Co-op will still provide viable outlets for food free from hazardous chemicals and additives, and also put into practice a co-operative method of business.

On the educational side, the FOE Bookshop will publish alternative information and provide an outlet for books that mainstream bookshops do not handle. Chain Reaction has clocked up 50 editions and will continue to promote the issues and ideas of the environmental movement.

Underlying all activities at the new building is a commitment to co-operative growth through collective human efforts. All tenants have agreed that decision making will be democratic, and they will take an active role in the management and direction of the building.

There will be no discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, age, race, sexual preference or class, except for groups within the building such as FOE who recognise the historical and cultural discrimination against women and have a policy of positive discrimination in employment practices. We expect there to be continuing discussion about improving ways for different organisations and people to work in harmony.

Friends of the Earth and the Organic Fruit and Vegetable Co-op and the tenants look forward to making 222 a major resource building, and to publicly demonstrating the strength of the multi-faceted environmental movement.

### • NATIONAL

Chain Reaction: PO Box 530E, Melbourne, 3001 Ph (03)419 8700

### • VICTORIA

Fitzroy: 222 Brunswick St, Fitzroy 3065, Ph (03) 419 8700

Oakleigh: 69 Waratah St, South Oakleigh 3166

Organic Fruit and Vegetable Co-op: 222 Brunswick St, Fitzroy 3065, Ph (03) 419 9926

### • AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra: PO Box 1875, Canberra, 2601

### • NORTHERN TERRITORY

Darwin: PO Box 2120, Darwin 5794, Ph (089) 81 1984

### • SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide: 120 Wakefield St, Adelaide 5000

Adelaide University: C/- Clubs Association, Adelaide University, 5000 Ph (08) 228 5852

Willunga: PO Box 438, Willunga, 5172

Williamstown: C/-Post Office, Williamstown 5351

### • NEW SOUTH WALES

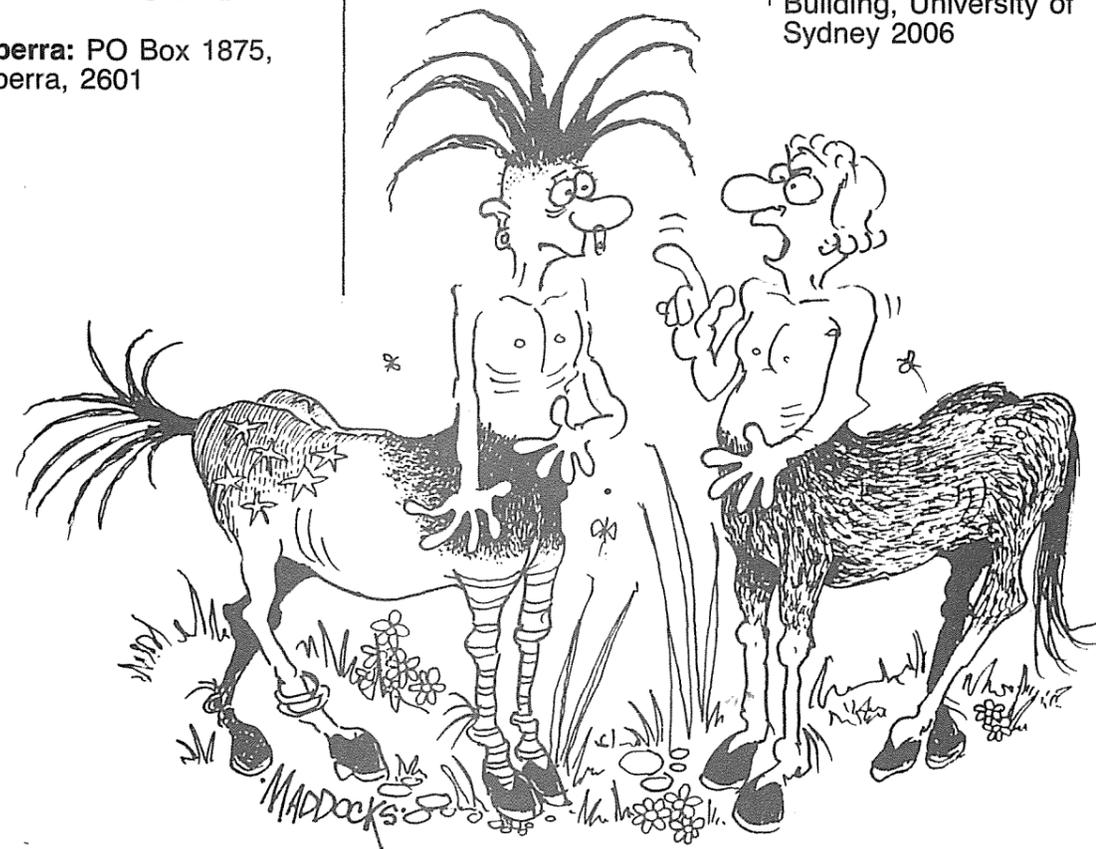
Blue Mountains: 156 Megalong St, Leura, 2780  
Macquarie University: C/- SRC, Union Building, Macquarie University, North Ryde, 2113

Newtown: PO Box 169, Newtown 2042, Ph (02) 517 2139

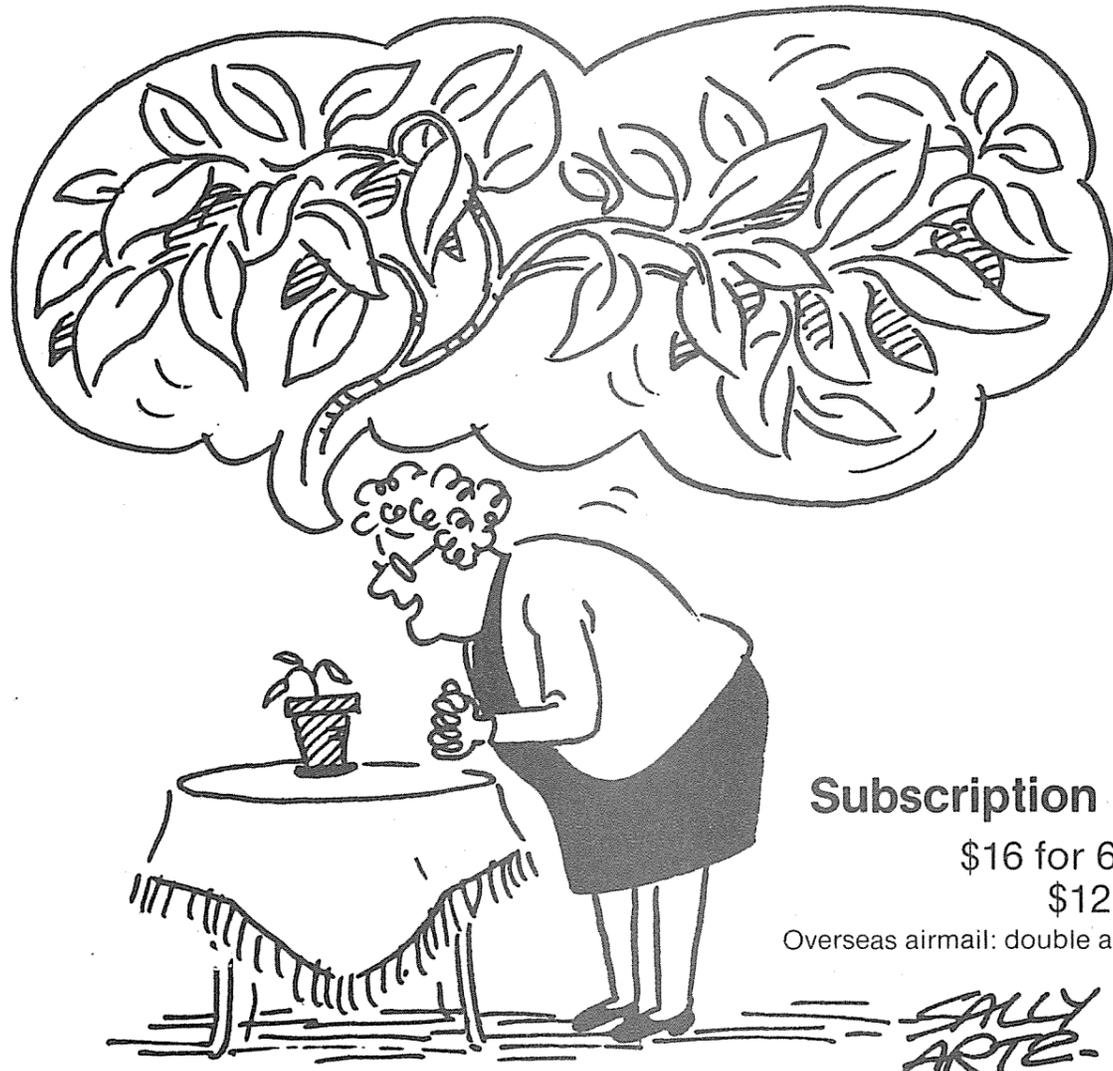
Ryde: 18 Kokoda St, North Ryde 2113, Ph (02) 88 2429

Sydney: PO Box A474, Sydney, 2001 Ph (02) 211 3953

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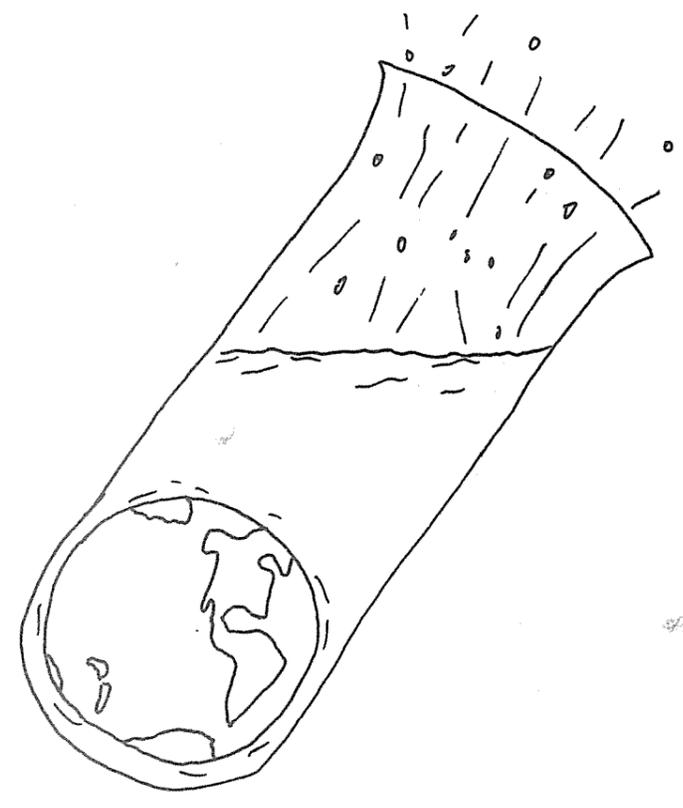
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# The end of the natural world



Worldwide investment in biotechnology runs into billions of dollars and now investors are pushing for their returns. To obtain these, agribusinesses plan to create and market strains of genetically engineered bacteria for use on the world's food crops. These strains do not exist in nature and could well wreak havoc with the environment, tropical rainforests are under specific threat. In June 1987 guidelines were sent to research groups around Australia concerning the release of genetically altered bacteria. Australia, one of the world's major food exporting countries, released its own first batch of artificial bacteria that same month. *Ian Grayson* reports on this new technology and some possible consequences.

The first authorised release of a genetically altered organism into the environment took place on 24 April 1987 in California when a small field of strawberries was sprayed with a product named 'Frostban' by scientists from Agricultural Genetic Services (AGS). Frostban, it is claimed, can retard the formation of frost on food crops until temperatures drop to around minus -5 degrees Celsius.

The testing of Frostban, or ice-minus bacteria, aroused much opposition. Environmental groups challenged the tests in the courts and managed to delay the release for a staggering four years. During this time AGS carried out a secret, unauthorised outdoor test on the roof of its building. The public outcry that followed its discovery forced the company to move to another location. This same company is now negotiating with the Victorian State Government to test there.

When the US courts finally gave permission the test patch was sabotaged, the plants being ripped out of the ground. The spraying went ahead however with increased security including barbed wire fences and floodlights.

AGS proclaimed the test a success, claiming that their genetically altered organism did not spread to neighbouring plants. But spraying is, by its very nature, a random release — so how can such a claim be proved? The spread of such organisms is a major environmental concern and such a statement can only be seen as public relations of the worst kind. Since this release another has been carried out in California on a small plot of potatoes.

Tests have now moved to the southern hemisphere and the world's third outdoor release took place at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in Adelaide on 15 June 1987.

Nancy Mills, Chair of the Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee, claims that the bacteria is only gene deleted and that 'there is no novel information being put into the system'. Such rationalisations are reminiscent of the arguments put forward by the nuclear industry and the food irradiation lobby. It is the commercial patentability of genetically altered organisms that makes the technology so attractive to corporations. The same arguments were used by AGS for

Frostban. On the one hand they claim patent rights for their artificial organism while on the other they claim that its perfectly safe and really nothing new. Such double talk only hinders rational debate.

### Biotech on the Land

At first glance many people may welcome the introduction of this new type of technology, after all, frost, disease and insects pose major threats to the world's food supply — at least under the world's current agricultural regime. However, we need only look at the track record of agribusiness with its excessive and destructive use of fertilisers and pesticides to realise that the present push for genetically altered organisms is motivated by profits, not human welfare.

Using increasing amounts of fertiliser is reducing the lands natural fertility. So much so that in some areas increasing amounts of fertilisers are now needed to merely maintain current yields. Many observers claim, quite rightly in my opinion, that this is mining the soil, not farming. The big profit maker is the fertiliser industry which now has a virtual monopoly on the world's grain production.

Likewise with pesticides. The pesticide plague hits hardest in the Third World where workers are paid a pittance for spraying deadly chemicals on crops

destined for the affluent west. Contract growers are signed up by agribusiness interests and advised to liberally use the appropriate pesticide — many of which are, ironically, banned for use in the importing country.

From South America to the Philippines there are many documented cases of death and injury caused by pesticides. More often than not workers are denied protective clothing and the dangerous nature of the chemicals is not stated on the labeling. The profit motive overrides everything. Under such a scenario the claims about the benefits of biotechnology should not be believed or at least regarded with a healthy cynicism.

Common sense should tell anybody that the wholesale application of mutant strains of bacteria on the world's crops is fraught with danger. The proponents of biotechnology argue that many accidental releases of viruses and genetically altered bacteria have already occurred and that no problems have arisen. This is in itself a very questionable assumption, but they go on to claim that the wholesale release of mutant strains will be no different and that the chance of an ecological disaster is remote.

That such misleading arguments can be presented in prestigious scientific journals is a clear indication of the power of the biotechnology lobby. Studies show quite clearly that this is a false and expedient assumption. The size of a species source

pool can determine whether or not it will proliferate or 'swarm'. The larger the pool, the greater the chance. In a few years time, if the biotechnology industry has its way, the source pool will be large indeed spanning all the fertile regions of the world.

The patentability of organisms which do not exist in nature has resulted in a flood of research companies now queuing up for authorisation to test and market their strains. In the USA for example, Biotechica International have applied to field test three genetically altered strains of the bacterium *Rhizobium meliloti* said to increase nitrogen uptake in alfalfa sprouts improving yields up to 15 per cent.

In many cases the companies have their marketing campaigns all worked out and ready to go. Such corporate pressure will inevitably open the flood gates for this dangerous and unproven technology as it has for many other industries. As history clearly shows, once a new industry becomes established it is much more difficult to get rid of no matter how dangerous it is — witness the entrenchment of nuclear power even after Chernobyl.

### Goodbye Rainforest

Apart from the risk of ecological disaster there is another indirect but unavoidable threat — the threat to the world's remaining rainforests.

These still exist because humanity is not yet capable of converting them to profitable agriculture. This 'non-viability' of rainforest land is the single most powerful conservation force. Wherever land can be converted to agriculture, wilderness has disappeared.

This can be easily seen in the case of the tropical dry forests which are now almost obliterated except for a small area covering parts of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. These forests once covered more of the earth's surface than the tropical rainforests. Where dry forest once stood is now where cotton, rice, peanuts, sorghum, millet and a host of other tropical crops grow. According to Daniel Jansen, a biologist from the University of Pennsylvania, in a letter to the journal *Science*, 5 June 1987.

Within one to three decades organisms modified through genetic engineering will be capable of making agriculture profitable

on virtually any tropical land surface. The power to finally obliterate the wildlands that have always been an integral part of our intellectual lives has finally appeared and is undergoing intense development.

He goes on to predict an 'economic flush' in the tropics when the new organisms become available. It is significant that the proponents admit to this possibility in their response. Such an assault on the rainforest should not be allowed to proceed unchecked. It has far reaching consequences for the future of all life on the planet and short term corporate interests should not be considered as a rationale for its introduction.

If the technology is permitted then the normal corporate drive for increased sales and profits will ensure that its application is promoted in all habitats — in much the same way as pesticides are now. Fully patented organisms available off the shelf will give manufacturers a stranglehold over agricultural enterprises.

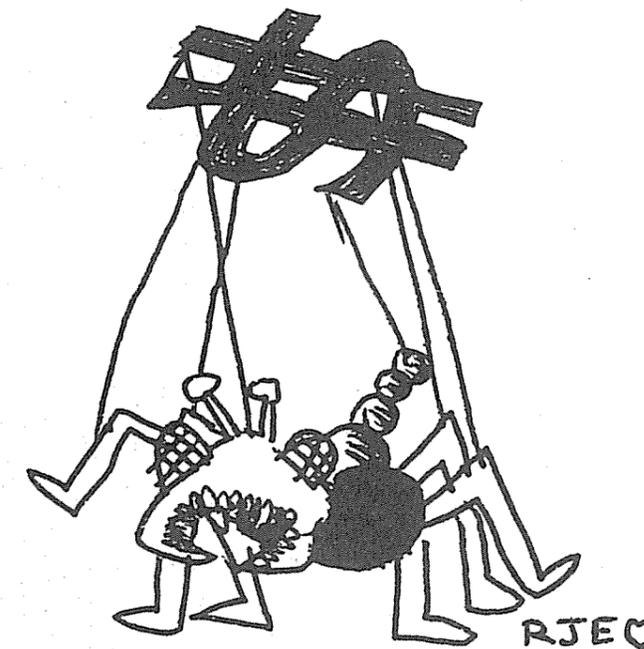
If such a scenario seems incredible then consider the implications of Frostban, mentioned earlier. Any artificial organism that reduces the frost risk will be welcomed by growers and will inevitably spread agriculture into new and previously unviable area — all at the expense of the wilderness. And Frostban is only the tip of the biotechnology iceberg!

### Australian Implications

The experiment at the Waite Agricultural Institute involved the release of genetically altered bacteria known as K11026. The test is being carried out in the institutes open grounds. Professor Nancy Millis, chair of the Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee and the then Minister of Industry and Technology approved this first Australian release.

Of particular concern is that the approval was given without publicity or opportunity for public debate. No environmental impact statement was required. Much more ominously, there were no ecologists on the committee which approved its release.

This is quite in keeping with the situation in the USA where scrutiny of genetic engineering by ecologists is bitterly resisted. American scientific journals are full of remarks by biotechnologists about the attempted intrusion of ecologists into their field, often accusing them of only wanting to expand their field so to obtain increased funding.



The developers of Frostban, are planning to test their products over here soon. They are negotiating with Daratech, a company owned by the Victorian Government, to speed the introduction of biotechnology into the Australian food industry.

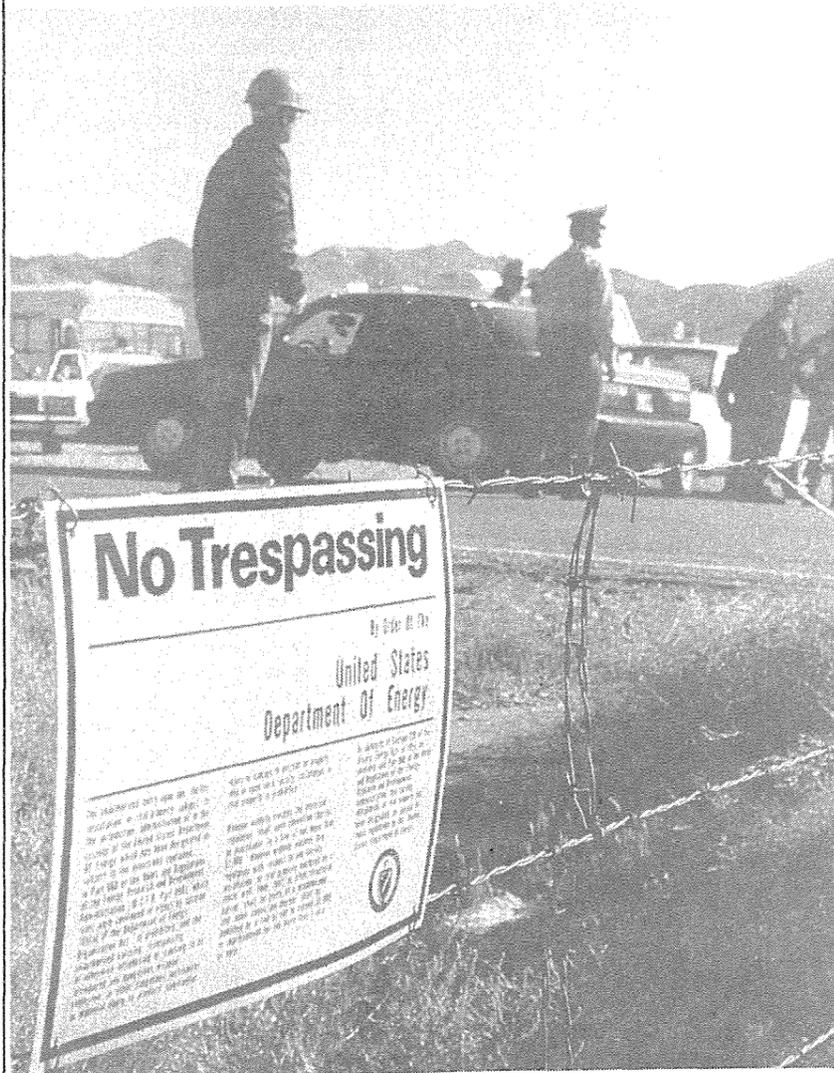
The company claims that there are advantages from testing in the Southern Hemisphere because test can be revised in six months rather than twelve halving the time it takes to get a product to market.

However it is clear that opposition in California to testing is strong and has successfully delayed company research. It is therefore not surprising that such companies are now considering Australia as a testing ground for their organisms. Obviously they are of the opinion that they can get away with it more easily over here. Let us hope that this assumption is not proven correct.

*Ian Grayson is an activist living in Adelaide.*



# Arresting the arms race



by Jo Vallentine

During a recent trip to the USA I participated in two actions involving non-violent civil disobedience. The first was at Ground Zero Bangor, near Seattle, against deployment of the eighth Trident submarine *USS Nevada*. Twenty demonstrators went across the line to be arrested.

This is a Christian community and the action coincided with the fourth anniversary of the Catholic Bishops' statement on nuclear weapons. One of the Bishops, Archbishop Hunthausen, spoke at a devotional rally which preceded the action. It was a spiritual occasion — Christians witnessing for life in contrast to the immorality of nuclear weapons.

It was also a carefully organised and well disciplined action. Only those trained in non-violence were included in the civil disobedience. Others formed supportive affinity groups for all arrestees. Everyone was reminded of the principles of non-violence.

Obviously a great deal of liaising had taken place with the 'authorities'. Mutual respect was evident — the authorities would look rather foolish responding to gentle and principled protesters with behaviour that wasn't courteous.

Many of the same themes were evident at a Mother's Day action at the Nevada test site. Because of the desert heat, the action began at dawn with the erection of tents and support facilities. Three thousand people gathered to commemorate Mothers' Day as a peace day, as it was intended when it was declared in 1870.

An American woman wrote a poem to the effect that women do not bear children to kill other mothers' children. A Western Shoshone Indian woman invited us all to be present on the land considered by that tribe to be still theirs. The crowd received my brief speech with great enthusiasm. It felt really good to give Australian support to efforts for peace by American people.

When the US Government ignored the Soviet moratorium on testing it became obvious to Americans that it was their Government creating the holdups in signing a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They are angry about it and know that it is tied into the Government's blind insistence to proceed with the Star Wars program.

The people of the United States have written letters, signed petitions and personally lobbied their representatives to no avail. Polls show that around 70 per cent of US citizens want a Test Ban Treaty.

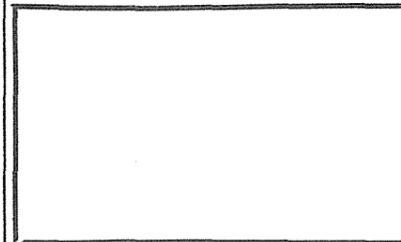
So now pressure is being applied by civil disobedience. Nearly 2,000 people have been arrested at the test site this year. The courts cannot keep up. It was announced prior to Mothers' Day that because of the anticipated large numbers the trespassers would be arrested and then all charges would be immediately dropped.

And this is what happened to me and 770 others. We crossed the line in an orderly fashion, were handcuffed and then transported in Department of Energy buses to a special trailer set up for the occasion where fifteen workers cordially processed us. We were given citation slips, put back on the buses and released outside the area.

The time in the bus was well used. I distributed material about the bases in Australia, answered lots of questions and even conducted a quiz to see how much people knew about their Government's role in the South Pacific and Indian Oceans. It was my first arrest. I have to admit to being grateful for all the preparatory work and the pervasive non-violence that ensured a peaceful occasion. It was worthwhile, enjoyable and empowering.

I was also impressed by the discipline in the crowd, especially considering that there were people at the site who supported continued testing. The anti-testers refused to be provoked.

As long as people have any choice they cannot abdicate responsibility by claiming that they were merely following orders. Crimes against humanity, punishable under International Law, include planning for, preparation or initiation of, or the waging of war. Testing weapons of mass destruction is a violation. As citizens of the world, people belonging to any nation involved in preparation of acts of genocide, must act.



Jo Vallentine is the West Australian Senator for Nuclear Disarmament.

# The anti-nuke warrior

**John Dixon-Jenkins** is presently serving a six year sentence for charges relating to a series of bomb hoaxes in 1984 which involved the planting of fifteen imitation bombs. The Crown alleged that his acts caused 'fear and disruption'. **Dixon-Jenkins** claimed the defence of necessity (which he was not allowed to present), that his actions were of self-defense against the nuclear insanity going on in the world. More recently, in an attempt to make public prison conditions, he took a number of people hostage in Bendigo prison where he was being held. Here, **Dixon-Jenkins** explains the reasoning behind his actions.

I wish to unambiguously state my position, leaving no doubt as to where I stand.

I say that the use of the drastic tactics of terrorism can be legally justified as a means to put an end to the undeniably dire and possibly imminent nuclear threat. Given the insane conditions created by the nuclear threat, which must be introduced into human decision making, the concept of legal justification has expanded beyond all legal boundaries. The logic of the situation dictates that there is virtually no act, no matter how terrible, which would not be legally justified if it could be used to put an end to the nuclear threat; a threat which, unless stopped, will destroy all life on our planet.

When resorting to such extreme measures there is the compelling obligation to take the least harmful course of action that can successfully achieve that goal, ending the nuclear threat. Happily, as it turns out, there is a course of action, admittedly radical, which through large scale, though non-violent, social disruption can bring a quick end to this horrible nuclear threat. It is to this end that I proposed, and have taken public action in accord with, the tactics of non-violent terrorism.

Government leaders quickly realised there was no way to argue against the logic which supports this proposition. It was for this reason that government authorities denied me the opportunity to present my defence to a jury. It became immediately clear that a jury, upon being allowed to hear and consider the legal justifications for my actions, would find me guilty of no crime. Government officials have been willing to disregard the most basic tenets of justice in order to ensure that the people do not have a chance to hear and judge for themselves whether my actions, directed to bringing an end to the nuclear threat, were legally justified in the eyes of society.

The 'danger', seen so clearly by those who wield power, is that the successful defence of my actions would not only publicise vital arguments for peace and disarmament, it would also establish a landmark precedent of law. The existence of such a precedent, allowing legal justification for action taken by workers for necessary social change, establishes a principle of immense importance for activists struggling in the future as the confrontation between the thrust for change and the defence of 'the old order' grows more bitter and more dangerous.

# THE RIGHT TO PUNISH...

All of us serving prison sentences are being punished by the government for our actions. Who gave the government the right to punish anybody? I certainly never gave the government the right to punish me. I resent the government punishing me so much that sometimes I feel like I can't stand it. If the government thinks punishing me will result in me felling sorry for my actions and will 'reform' me they are indeed foolish. Being punished angers me; I want to escape, I want to strike back. I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels like that.

Perhaps the government will consider such an attitude to be wrong thinking, but what can they expect? There has been lots of psychological research into the effects of punishment. The results of that research show anger, desire to escape and the desire to strike back are the normal responses to punishment. In reality no government has the right to punish; governments have taken it upon themselves the power to punish, and try to pass off the brutal exercise of power as their right. We allow ourselves to be punished because if we don't submit the government will hurt us. Ultimately the government would be willing to kill us rather than lose its power to punish.

Punishment by the government has nothing to do with rehabilitation. Punishment is really about revenge. Punishment is hardly an action of a healthy society. Punishment is a barbaric act. The overall effect of the government's policy of extracting revenge is to increase crime, increase violence, and increase drug abuse. Obviously governments can have no right to act in a manner which

brings greater harm to society. I often wonder if governments actually want to reduce the crime rate. Crime provides the ideal opportunity and justification for governments to increase their authoritarian and totalitarian control over the individual. The police, the courts, and those running the prisons are the lackeys of the rich and powerful, serving their selfish needs at the expense of those who have so little.

While satisfying its appetite for revenge the government cares nothing for the wrongs perpetrated against those of us caught in its unfeeling grasp. The government steals important years from our lives, forcing us to live a boring, meaningless existence, suffering emotional and occasionally physical indignities at the hands of prison authorities, as we are not cared about, neither does the government care about the harm and sadness its cruel punishing actions bring upon our families and our loved ones.

Any government which sincerely desires to reduce crime, reduce violence, and reduce drug abuse can only do so if they give up their primitive demand for revenge and provide truly humane treatment for those of us who violate the laws of society. It is only those countries whose prison programs are humane and positive which have any success in reducing the crime rate of repeat offenders. For myself, I am perfectly willing to reform, but no matter how willing I am I cannot reform so long as the government maintains its insane and offensive policies. Give me a right world and I will be a right person.

*Both these pieces were written whilst John Dixon-Jenkins was in Bendigo Prison, that is, prior to his taking hostages in that prison during July of this year. John Dixon-Jenkins is presently in Pentridge Prison where he is, to the best of our knowledge, being kept in solitary confinement.*

# The Mound Springs

The unique Mound Springs in South Australia are in danger of drying as the regional level of Great Artesian Basin is lowered by water being pumped for the Roxby Downs uranium mine at Olympic Dam, 100 kilometres to the south west. The Mound Springs, already degraded by pastoralists and poor management and maintenance in the past, could be lost forever. *Ila Marks* has just returned from the region.

The Mound Springs lie along the southern and western edge of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) in an arc of permanent water holes in an otherwise dry landscape. The springs are significant to aboriginal life, past and present, and are rich with evidence of their ancient association and occupation of the area.

The explorers McDouall, Stuart, Warbuton and Babbage used the springs as stepping stones in their exploration of the centre. The early explorers looked at the land through the eyes of pastoralists. Stuart's expeditions were equipped by prosperous landowners and he reported 'good grasses' and 'plenty of grass and saltbush'. Such was the ignorance of the fragile nature of the environment in the Mound Springs area that the over 4,000 head of cattle that followed Stuart in 1859 had, after only four years, eaten the area out and twenty years of dust storms followed. The same blinkered view of the early explorers is being repeated by the mining companies, only on far larger scale.

The springs have historical and cultural links with white settlement. Many stations and settlements take their names from the springs. The Afghan camel trains that carried supplies to the early white settlers followed the line of the springs, the old Kahn railway from Adelaide to Alice

Springs stayed close to the springs as do the tracks that link the outback towns.

The South Australian Department of Environment and Planning recognise the Mound Springs area as one of 'national and international importance', and the Australian Conservation Foundation has recommended it as a World Heritage Area.

A number of us have recently returned to Melbourne from South Australia where we were able to visit a number of the springs affected by the Roxby bores. While living in the area we came to recognise the familiar shape of a mound spring and the plants and mineral deposits that surround them. Many appear as

Extinct springs stand like bare and ancient monoliths to an active and flourishing past. Flowing springs, some large mounds, others seeping in an otherwise dry creek bed, are small oases and hosts to local and migratory birds and animals. The springs support rare plants including cutting grass (*Gahnia trifida*) and button grass (*Machaerina juncea erioaulon*) and aquatic fauna in the form of unique gastropods and amphipods. It is thought that these species are surviving remnants of an earlier time when the area was part of a larger tropical region. Complete studies of the unique fauna and flora associated with the springs have not, as yet, been undertaken.



small hills or plateaus formed when water forces its way through a weakness or fissure in the crust of the GAB. The minerals, water and sand are cemented together in a mound shape, some more than 200 feet high and some up to 200,000 years old.

It is a country rich in culture and history, both black and white, rich in minerals, rich with a diversity of plant and animal life, rich with artesian water and rich in colour. All of this is finely balanced giving the richness a precarious vulnerability. The Roxby uranium mine

at Olympic Dam, 100 kilometres from the springs, is putting in jeopardy the fine balance of this environment.

The South Australian Government has granted Roxby Management Services (RMS) a licence to pump 15 million litres (ML) of water a day from the GAB from the area around the springs. When the mine is fully operational a further 18 ML per day will be required. The water will eventually be drawn from two areas; Borefield A and Borefield B. At the moment water is being drawn from five bores in Borefield A and piped to the mine 100 kilometres away. Borefield B is a further 50 Km.

RMS, in an environmental impact study found that there were over 25 springs in the wellfield area likely to be affected by the pumping of 33 ML per day from their bores. Venable and Beatrice Springs are estimated to have a 100 per cent flow reduction while the Hermit Hill Springs, only a few kilometres away are estimated, in the same study, to have a reduced flow of 17 to 33 per cent. The study itself is questionable as the computer model used was based on ideal conditions, not on the natural environment. Further, it is not known

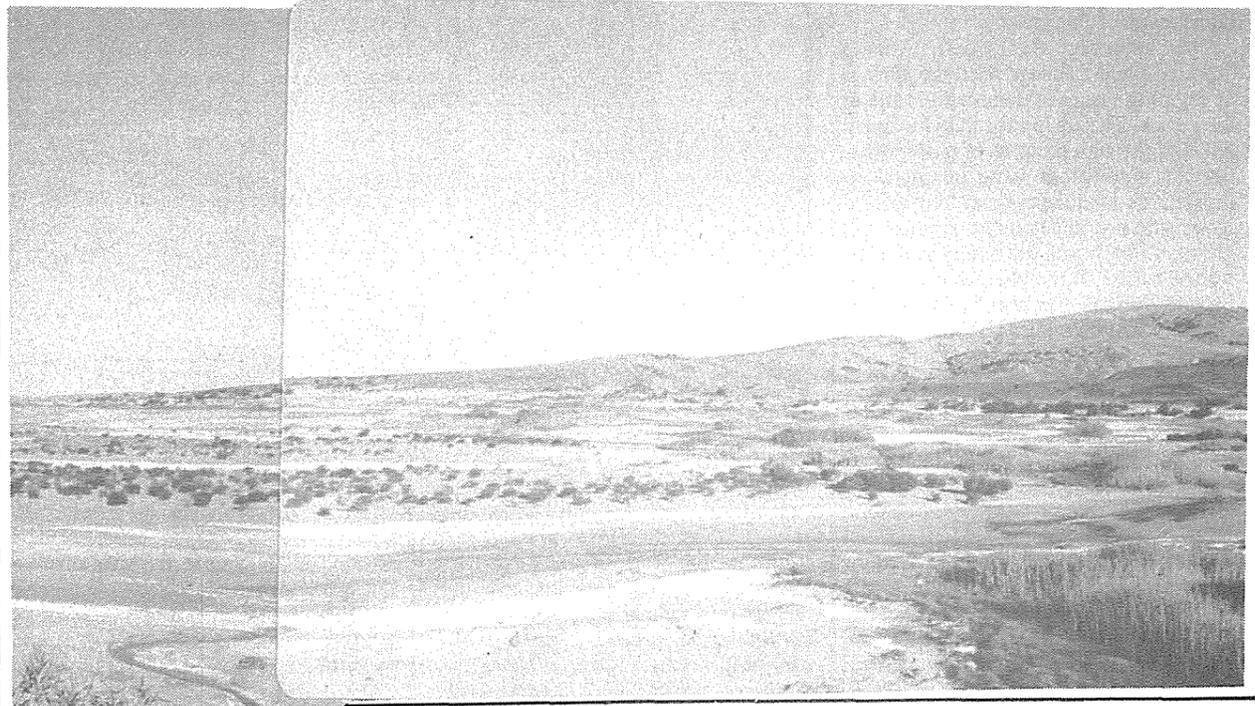
whether the ridge separating the Hermit Hill Springs from the Roxby bore is an impermeable or semi-permeable fault.

The GAB is a finite resource. The water, after entering the basin in Queensland and New South Wales takes 882,000 years to reach the springs. Prior to 1880 and the use of artesian water by pastoralists and white settlers there was an equal balance between discharge and recharge. Since 1920 there has been a noticeable drop in the aquifer water pressure. The South Australian Department of Mines and Energy have estimated a 2 per cent reduction in the recharge rate per year.

RMS in their draft Environmental Impact Statement state that '... if this resource were to be developed to its full potential, the flow rates of existing bores and springs would be progressively diminished ...' and that proper management of the basin is required to maintain 'levels sufficient to sustain existing users'. Further, that 1350 ML per day is wasted from bore discharge. Without establishing who is responsible for 'proper management' of the basin, apart from stating that the South Australian Department of Mines and

Energy commenced a bore rehabilitation program in 1978, RMS use the wastage argument to support their claim to 33 ML per day.

RMS do not have a very good record in their treatment and maintenance of the springs. At a site, identified by the Department of Mines and Energy as being 'some 500 metres from a spring complex known as Gosse's Springs', during the drilling of Bore MB 1, very high water pressures were met and they were unable to control the flow. The drilling was abandoned. Pressure cementing was unsuccessful and the broken nature of the ground allowed some fractures to open and allow seepage, estimated at 0.173 ML per day, to form a lake. It is acknowledged by the Department in a letter to the late Kerry Martin of the Mounds Spring Collective that any attempts to repair the damage may in fact worsen the situation. This is an admission of irreversible damage to the site. The full extent of the damage has not yet been assessed. It is admitted that vehicles and animals could become bogged. Locals report that a fresh water quick-sand lake has been created and the stony ground has become unstable, shaky



20 Chain Reaction

and sodden. At another spring a test bore was not capped properly and water has spewed out over a large area causing salting and mud traps.

We visited the Hermit Hill springs which represent a significant site to the Arabanna community, the traditional owners of the land. Here RMS have acted irresponsibly and without respect or consultation with the Arabanna people. They have constructed a road to the springs through sand dunes which site traditional stone workshops and meeting places. The road has also been built up over salt pans, creating mud traps for cattle and local fauna. A test bore has been fenced in close proximity to the ruins of buildings that housed Aboriginal, European and Afghan communities and close to large Aboriginal meeting places where people come from as far away as the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Unique plants have been tampered with, plants that are known only at a particular spring have been potted, moved to other springs and hidden from view.

These actions by RMS at Hermit Hill have taken place without consultation or the permission of the Arabanna people or

the owners of Finnis Station where these springs lie.

When we visited the area in June members of the Arabanna community and local environmentalists were most concerned with the reduced flow at many springs. During regular visits to the various springs they have observed less surface water, dying reeds and grasses and less energetic flow at the springs sources.

RMS have undertaken to ensure that existing users of the water are not disadvantaged. This undertaking does not satisfy the Arabanna community or local conservationists. The Mound Springs are more than just watering holes. They are unique ecosystems supporting rare flora and fauna, they are places of significance to the traditional owners, they are places of beauty and wonder that offer water to animals and people in an otherwise dry land and they have historical links for Europeans and Aborigines. The springs have a tourist and educational potential that the traditional owners may wish to promote. Spring destruction and reduced flow can only lead to further desertification of the area.

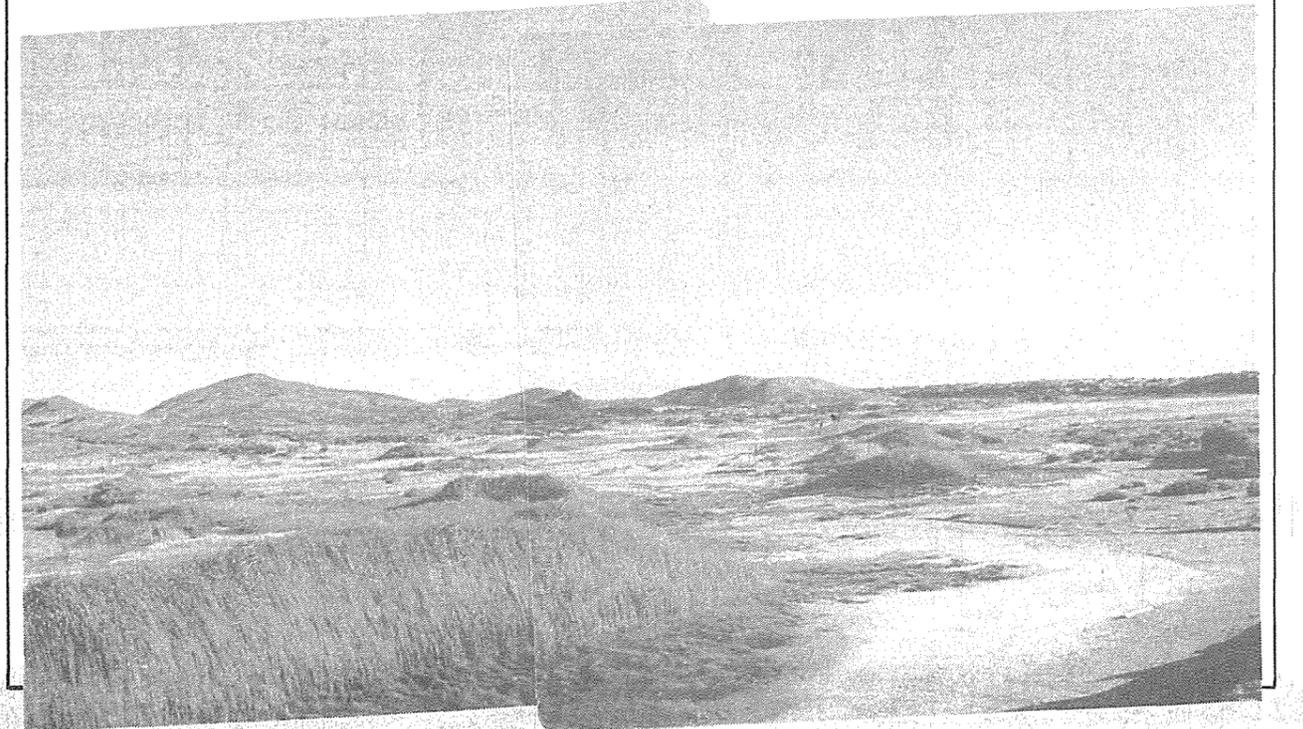
A further concern is the fact that,

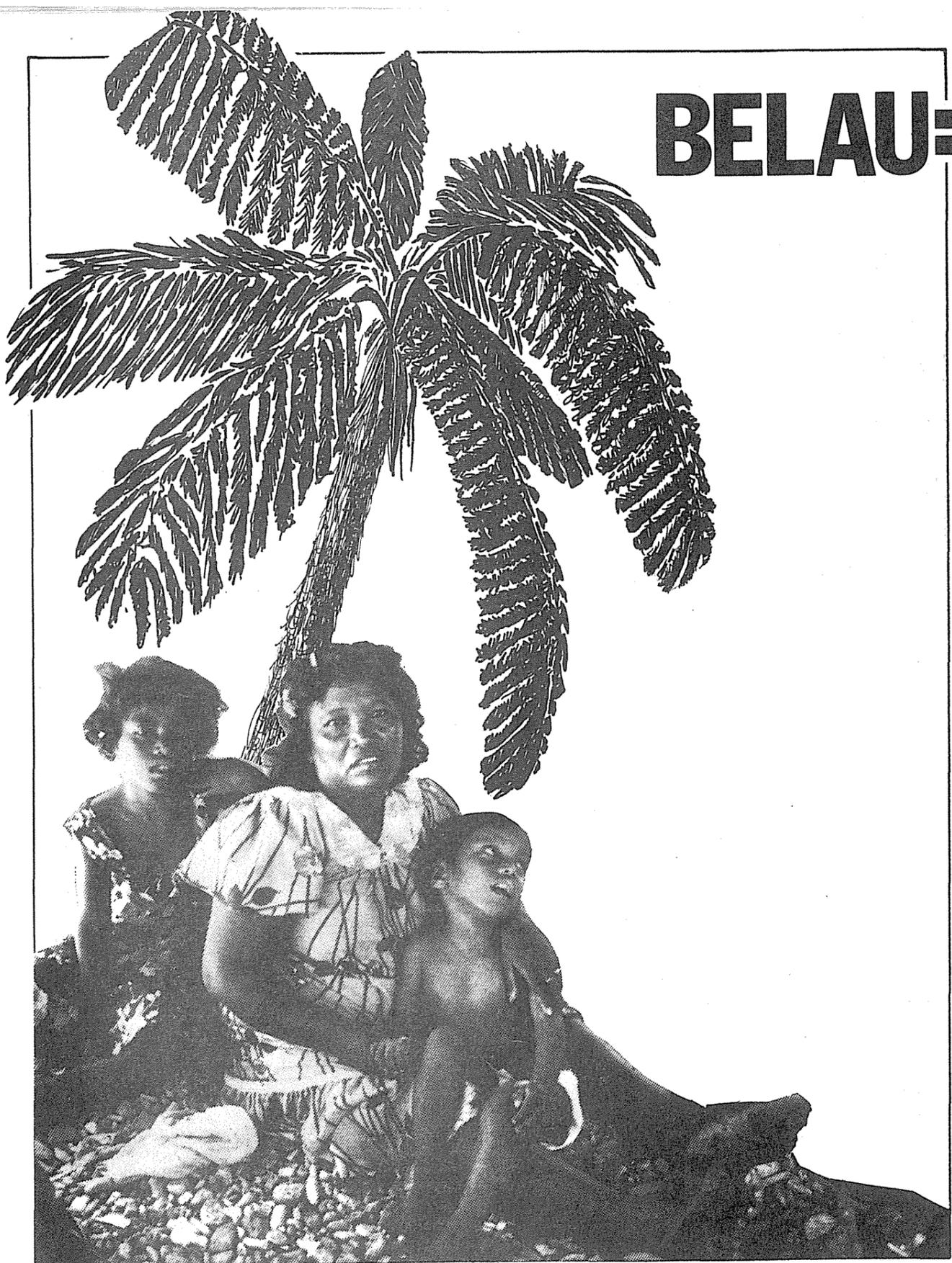
although RMS have an obligation to monitor the wellfields and report to the State Government, they are under no obligation to make their findings public. Nor is their monitoring supervised by an independent body. The RMS Draft Environmental Impact Statement states that insufficient data are currently available to accurately assess the impact of the Roxby bores on the Mound springs.

It is a landscape where the sky appears as the largest feature and where sunsets are the same colour as the earth itself. It is an area that must be preserved and not offered as sacrifice to the uranium mining industry.

I wish to thank Benny, John, Saul and Reg Dodd for their assistance and encouragement in the production of this article. I also wish to recognise and pay tribute to Kerry Martin who died tragically on Friday 11 September.

Ila Marks is a member of the FOE Fitzroy Anti-Uranium Collective.





**BELAU:**

# Another paradise lost?

Until recently most people would never have heard of the Belau (Palau). Now events there have made front page news. This tiny Pacific republic is engaged in a full scale battle with US military interests. *Paul Greco reports.*

Belau is an archipelago of 343 islands 800 kilometers east of the Philippines with a population of 15,000. Since 1947 it has been a United Nations Strategic Trust Territory administered by the United States whose responsibility it was to prepare the islands for economic and political independence. However since this time the once self reliant non-cash system has been deliberately transformed into an economy almost entirely dependent on US dollars. The people are addicted to imported goods; cars, VCR's, canned food and beer. Fifty per cent of the work force is employed by Government departments which are 90 per cent funded by the US.

The purpose of the US policy is to ensure the cooperation of Belau with US military aspirations. The 'Colonial Administrator' has determined that no agreement with Belau would in any way constrain the Military. There was a problem in 1979 when Belau, in preparation for independence, became the first country to draft a nuclear free constitution. This prohibited the use, testing, storage or disposal of 'harmful substances' — nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and nuclear reactors and waste. Obviously this was going to severely constrain the Military! Although 92 per cent of Belauans approved their new constitution the US declared it invalid and drew up another without nuclear free clauses. This was rejected by 70 per cent. The 'Nuclear Free Constitution' was redrafted and approved by 78 per cent. It also required a 75 per cent vote for any further amendments to the nuclear clauses, an implementation of the traditional process of consensus.

The constitution has remained a source of enormous conflict as the US has tried to seek approval for the 'Compact of Free Association'. Under this agreement Belau

receives a \$US1.4 Billion package. The US buys the right to operate nuclear capable or propelled vessels. It also gains access to virtually all land it wishes for Military purposes as well as denying Belau any action incompatible with US defence interests. The compact provides for the building of an air and naval base and a jungle warfare training area. Belau's economic zone is also then limited to twelve miles (twenty kilometres) instead of the current 200 (320 kilometres).

The US military sees the Western Pacific as vital to its security interests. In recent years Belau has become even more important because of the unstable situation in the Philippines. It may well provide an alternative to the Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base. For this reason the US are determined to win Belau. It also fears that the nuclear free status would encourage other friends to request the same privilege. Finally, Belau's deep water harbour at Malakal is very attractive for use as a Trident Submarine base.

Whilst opposition to the Compact is strong among traditional leaders and grass roots groups the President and younger political leaders are pro-US. The



'It looks to us as if the whole thing is being carried out with the tacit approval if not active participation of Washington. The aim is to put the Compact into force and eliminate our nuclear free constitution and our land rights despite the clearly expressed will of the Belau people'  
 — Ibedul Ytaka Gibbons, Belau's traditional High Chief



temptation of the dollar has been strong. President Saliu is facing several suits charging him with missappropriation of funds. He greatly desires the Compact money to strengthen his hold on the Government and finance expensive investments negotiated with foreign companies.

In the last four years there have been five referenda on the Compact. In spite of expensive campaigns of misinformation, intimidation, bribery and corruption, the necessary 75 per cent vote has never been obtained.

The current situation begun in June this year when the eighth Compact vote occurred. As usual the 75 per cent approval was not obtained. Some argue that it was not even expected and that the purpose of the referendum was to orchestrate a crisis. None the less as usual there was a campaign of intimidation. Prior to the vote there were water and power cuts and reductions in social services. Counterfeit money was produced for bribes.

On 27 June, three days prior to the vote, legislation was prepared for the sacking of 900 of the 1300 government workers. Rumours of this were leaked to create more pressure. On the day of the vote Saliu signed the emergency order and the workers were sacked. The President argued that because of the failure to endorse that pact in the past there was no money to pay government workers. He also cut funding to many government departments.

It is widely believed that the only financial crisis is one due to mismanagement and corruption. A US official said that the shortfalls claimed were virtually impossible. Figures are hard to come by as the people responsible for them have been sacked! At least \$US0.5 million of available money has not been released again because of the lay-offs.

On 7 July the sacked workers began a protest outside the Belau Congress (OEK). They threatened to 'Turn Belau into Hell' unless funding was found, that is, the Compact approved. The house of a leading Compact opponent was fire bombed. Mobs roamed around looting and slashing tyres. Death threats were made. This was all seen as part of the plan to force approval of the Compact.

After a visit from a high level Washington lawyer, the President announced a further two referenda, one on 4 August, the other on 21 August. The first was to amend the constitution to require only 50 per cent approval for a

change in the nuclear free clauses. The second was to vote for the Compact.

Under fear for their lives and safety, nine of the sixteen OEK members approved legislation for the 4 August vote, two voted against and five were absent. The legislation requires only 50 per cent approval in three-quarters of the sixteen states of Belau. Needless to say the result of the vote was a foregone conclusion. There was no public campaign against the vote. In the by now familiar atmosphere of fear and disinformation 71 per cent voted in favour of the amendment. The compact was approved on 21 August by 70 per cent of voters although only half the eligible voters participated.

All of the violence, pressure and intimidation has been allowed if not encouraged by the US Administration who are still responsible for the well being of Belau. Of course it is in the US interest to turn a blind eye. The Interior Department which is responsible for Belau does not even have a representative there. 'I don't see it as a crisis point'

commented an Interior Department official at a US Congressional hearing. The Decolonisation Committee of the United Nations takes the matter more seriously. After discussing the situation on 4 August, the Committee sent a five page report to the US. It reiterated that:

It is the obligation of the Administering Authority (the USA) to create such conditions in the Trust Territory as will enable its people to exercise freely, with full knowledge of possible options and without any pressure of interference, their inalienable right to self determination and independence.

It went on to say:

... the Trust Territory is still ... economically and financially dependent on the Administering Authority and the structural imbalances in the economy appear not to have been reduced. The Administering Authority should increase its economic assistance to the Trust Territory in order to enable its people to achieve economic independence to the greatest extent possible.

A legal challenge to the validity of the 4 August referendum was filed. If this challenge was upheld the Compact would be nullified. The lives of the Chief Justice, Roman Bedor and others were threatened. On 9 September Bings Bedor, father of Roman Bedor, and Bernie Keldermans, a prominent women activist, were murdered. Saliu made a deal with High Chief Gibbons who then convinced the plaintiffs to drop their challenge.

Not to be deterred a group of women traditional leaders filed another challenge. By this time the Chief Justice had stepped down from hearing the case because of intimidation. The new judge is an American Chief Justice from Saipan. However, following Bings Bedor's death and threats to their children, the women have decided not to proceed.

It is essential that steps be taken to quell the current crisis in Belau and curtail the ongoing volatile scenario. A United Nations peace keeping force may well be appropriate. Below are several suggestions for action on your behalf;



Write to:  
 The United Nations Council asking for close monitoring of the situation and an examination of the pressure being mounted by the US. Also ask for a peace keeping force to be sent if necessary.  
 Security Council  
 United Nations  
 New York  
 NY 10017 USA  
 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs requesting more information and asking them to petition the United Nations to intervene in the situation.  
 The American Embassy in Canberra expressing your concern.  
 To Kital Reag, the grass roots anti-nuclear pro-Belau group, expressing your solidarity.  
 Kital Reag  
 Belau Pacific Centre  
 PO Box 55  
 Belau 96940  
 Caroline Islands

# Oils ain't Oils

With the decline in oil output from Bass Strait and our deteriorating terms of trade, the question of future oil supplies has a new significance. The late seventies saw an interest in oil shale and coal to oil technologies and it is expected that authorities will once again push for this option. Apart from the direct environmental impact of such technologies, there is the problem that oil to coal plants proposed for the Latrobe Valley in Victoria will reduce the expected life of that coal resource. Further, if coal to oil is seen as more pressing than coal for electricity, where will future electricity supplies be generated from? Will the Nuclear Free State eventually go nuclear? We continue our series by the *Soft Energy Action Group*.

## How Much Coal?

There is some dispute as to how much coal is 'economically winnable'. *The Australian Year Book (1986)*, the State Electricity Commission Victoria (SEC) and the Coal Corporation of Victoria all state that there is at least 35,000 million tonnes (Mt). The Brown Coal Study Group, in *Fuel for Unrest* disputes this and claims the pre-1977 official estimate of 12,000Mt is closer to the truth.

The SEC Annual Report of 1985-6 forecasted an electricity consumption growth rate for the period to 2001 of between 2.1 and 4.8 per cent per annum depending on the extent to which conservation and co-generation are adapted and whether aluminium smelting proceeds. Using the mid-point (3.5 per cent) and projecting this growth rate past the forecast period, if coal is *only* used for electricity generation, a 12,000Mt resource will last 75 years and a 35,000Mt resource about 104 years.

However the SEC has a history of overestimating the growth in demand. Using consumption figures for the period between 1982 and 1986 as a guide, an average compounded growth rate of just

under 2 per cent is calculated.<sup>1</sup> Using this figure rather than the SEC's figure of 3.5 per cent means that the 12,000Mt resource has a life of 104 years and the 35,000Mt resource, a life of 154 years.

## Coal to Oil

It takes around 1 tonne of brown coal to produce 1 barrel of oil.<sup>2</sup> Australia's oil consumption since 1982 has remained about 600,000 barrels per day.<sup>3</sup> It can be assumed that oil consumption will remain constant throughout the forecast period — this is not unreasonable as cars become more fuel efficient and higher motoring costs, in real terms, counter-balance the marginal increase in registered motorists.

If Australia's *total* oil requirements were obtained from Victoria's brown coal reserves, it would require 219Mt per year. This would reduce the brown coal life expectancy from 104 years to 44 for the 12,000Mt estimate and from 154 to 105 years for the 35,000Mt estimate.

As dramatic as this may seem, it is misleading. One commercial coal to oil plant of 100,000 barrels per day costs about \$6 billion and takes 10 to 15 years to build.<sup>4</sup> To build six simultaneously would be prohibitively expensive so even

if the aim was to supply Australia's entire oil requirement from brown coal conversion, the lead-up time and staggered construction schedules would extend the coal resource life considerably beyond the figures stated here. Further, there is no intention even amongst the most gung-ho proponents of coal to oil to supply Australia's total oil needs from brown coal.

New South Wales and Queensland have 34,000Mt of black coal<sup>5</sup>, equivalent to 338 years of oil supply (black coal produces two and a half times as much oil as brown coal). With the possible loss of export markets for our black coal, a coal to oil plant may seem a 'rational' use for this resource.

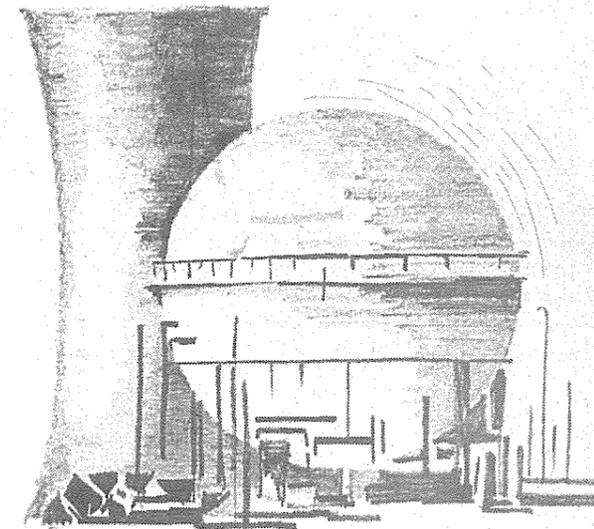
Oil shale contains the equivalent of 23,000 million barrels of oil (105 years worth) in demonstrated resources.<sup>6</sup> A cheaper process than coal to oil, it would be expected to be adopted in conjunction with, if not prior to, coal to oil developments.

Consequently, a more realistic scenario is one commercial coal to oil plant in the Latrobe Valley producing 100,000 million barrels of oil a day and consuming 37Mt of coal per year. It would have the effect of reducing the life expectancy of our coal supplies from between 8 and 14 years. In short, it would make little difference. The environment and anti-nuclear movements would therefore be most effective in opposing *all* syn-fuel developments on the basis of the immediate environmental hazards posed by those industries, not on the marginal acceleration in depletion of our finite energy resources.

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# Where theories fail



by Jeyaretnam  
Thillaimuthu

The well publicised and documented catastrophic reactor failure at Chernobyl last year has resulted in serious thinking about the future of the nuclear fission process. The installation can never be rebuilt and recent reports that the Soviet authorities hope to put back into operation the undamaged unit is either a mistake or propaganda. Explosive scattering of fuel material, graphite and liquid and gaseous radioactive substances with inordinately long half-lives over a wide area will render the site unapproachable for tens of thousands of years. Ironically, the fall-out from atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was, relatively speaking, short lived compared to the fall-out from reactor accidents — not to mention the radio-active wastes. The USA's Three Mile Island reactor, now sealed off following a far less violent leak, is a monument to the folly of science and technology.

The ethos of science in assigning causes for these disasters seems restricted

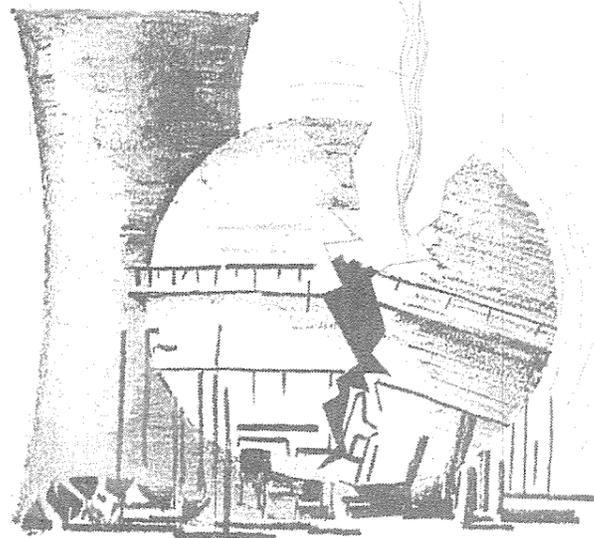
to faulty design, hardware and human error. The possibility of an error in the very theory on which the process is based is never raised. But, in reactor failures the relativity theories and Einstein's famous equation,  $E=mc^2$ , are open to question. There is a very subtle psychological reason for not doing so arising out of our own arrogant reverence for our own learning. The intellect debar's questioning theory learned in schools for which the learned have gained full marks.

Radio-activity was not something that science predicted; it was discovered by accident. In the 1900's scientists were flabbergasted by the heat and other emanations from the microscopic amounts of radium refined by the Curies. Einstein took an interest in this energy from radioactive elements. Blithely relying on notions of the conservation of energy and by assuming that the 'c' of light and the 'v' of mechanics were congruent, he invented his famous equation. If this were in any way true matter of any kind would be capable of being converted *completely* into energy — indeed, there would be *no radio-active wastes or left overs!*

Historians of science will recall that in the early years there were many critics of Einstein's relativity. The most pertinent objection of all was in the 1920's from the late Prof. Percy W Bridgman who held that all the problems with the physics of phenomena stemmed from the traditional notion the light 'traveled' when in reality it propagated.<sup>1</sup> This means that the 'c' of light and the 'v' of mechanics are not congruent at all thus faulting Einstein's equation. Again, the conserving of energy is not observable in the universe. This unfortunate misnomer is of ancient origin and, it seems, was meant to describe the *conversion* of energy from one form to another.

In hindsight we can see that nuclear physics has been progressing on the basis of observation under the umbrella of an erroneous theory. There is nothing wrong with progressing in such an empirical manner if it is done precisely and truthfully. But for tradition and for the purpose of teaching, theory is needed. After nearly thirty years of empirical development, atomic theory and the discovery of the neutron, the chain reaction was discovered. As the world was at war it inevitably led to the development of the atomic bomb. No one bothered about radio-active fall-out then. The great military success of the atomic fission process led to a far greater loss of life in Hiroshima and Nagasaki then expected. This affected not only world conscious but also the body politic of physics. Physicists set about to try to find peaceful uses of the atom and devised various methods of controlling the reaction. The rising demands for energy bought in government support, big business and international rivalry into an incompletely developed technology based on *experimentally unverifiable theory*.

It is well documented that workers were aware of the existence of heat, light and other electro-magnetic radiations and the simultaneous appearance of particulate emissions right from the beginning of work with radio-activity, the dangers of which were only recognised as the scale of the experiments increased. Yet these by-products, lumped under the term radio-active wastes, did not deter the design and construction of nuclear reactors. Technologists and scientists were so sure that they would find some means of disposing of these wastes; no one could halt the development and perhaps it was felt that in the end the promise of pure energy from matter as guaranteed by Einstein's equation would be kept.



The present situation is that over 400 nuclear power plants have been constructed world wide producing power and a great deal of radio-active wastes. Apart from the three disastrous failures there are four or five nuclear establishments that have been abandoned for one reason or another. The unsavoury fact is that is that even if reactor failures could be totally prevented, all reactors, like all artificial devices, have limited life times. Obsolete reactors cannot be scrapped and recycled but have to be mothballed for tens of thousands of years!

### The Status of Theories

The failure of relativity theory is really part of a more general problem of theories which has bedeviled physics for over three centuries. No solution can be found until we come down to earth and honestly accept the truth that theories are nothing more than useful tools of technology and not real in nature. By definition a theory is an empirical and artificial supposition of value to teaching and technology. All theories originated in technology and all

the models we use are grossly artificial. How can we have been over-extending our theories without thinking all these centuries? The first mistake is medieval in origin; the assumption that *useful* theories may be *real in nature*. The second is the tendency to seek out similarities. The third is the arrogance of learning embedded in our examination system.

The last mentioned is an ever present problem and needs an explanation. General science became an introduction to technology and science based professions only in the mid-nineteenth century. In that era there was very little scientific knowledge to be taught. New inventions and discoveries, however, were appearing on the scene. Those in technology were formulating theories so as to teach their apprentices and to communicate amongst themselves. They knew that these theories were artificial and it was natural that these theories were passed into the curricula of the schools. Teachers of that period and ever since, whose primary aim was to get their students to pass exams, began teaching theory as real in nature. Also, in a highly

class conscious era it was probably thought that young students would lose interest if theory was taught as a rule of thumb and empirical. Here lies the impediment to the solving of the problem: the Aristotelian syndrome is with us even in this modern age.

### The Principle Rule of Science

From the very inception of organised scientific knowledge two millennia ago philosophers have recognised that the primary rule is that only that which is observable by any of the human senses can be admitted into science. But now that scientific teaching is aimed at teaching technology we use the concepts, models and theories of technology. The photon model of light or quantum theory is an example and has a story that is pertinent to the issues here. Einstein solved the riddle of the quantum theory by statistical methods and was awarded the Nobel Prize for his work in 1922. However, he was never happy with the theory himself. In his book *Out of My Later Years* written in 1950 he wrote that the theory was liable to mislead us as 'it was an incomplete representation of real things.'<sup>2</sup> It ought to be obvious that the quantum theory, although of immense value to the technologist, cannot be true in nature.

When the errors of theories have been corrected, we may be able to conceive a realistic mechanism for light and related phenomena. Let there be no misunderstanding, those who aspire to go into technologies and engineering have to study the theories as empirical tools and certainly valuable as such. They should also be aware that all theories have limitations and when discoveries revealing contrary concepts are made that these could be of value in arriving at the truth. To date academics have had the habit of passing over such discoveries as 'anomalies', in the belief that it would prevent (sic) confusion on the teaching side! The laws of science are to be challenged and broken.

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# Land rights...

by Judith Wright McKinney

This article should be read as a follow up to the resolution, printed in *Chain Reaction* 50, made at the Aborigines and Development conference held in May 1987 in Kununurra. At that conference, Marcia Langton, representing the National Federation of Land Councils, gave a paper titled *Mining: Telling It Like It Is*, which has now been published (*Land Rights News*, Vol. 2 No 3). Because this paper is not very likely to be featured in the rest of the Australian press, which is heavily influenced by mining interests, here is a brief summary of the main points of the paper:

Mining companies have been running a media campaign about how Aboriginal people have been holding up the development of Australia... we have been trying to put a stop to the lies and tell our own story.

One of the lies is that only one agreement has been reached on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. The whole issue is much more complex than that. When miners want to go onto land, say in the NSW wheatbelt, they have to pay compensation for the power lines, roads and damage to the wheat crops. But they believe that there is nothing on Aboriginal land, so that it will be easier to explore — and cheaper. They want to get rid of the 'inconvenience' of traditional landowners.

So they have marshaled their powerful resources to sell the Australian public a lie. The lie is that the limited control Aboriginal people have regained over some of their land somehow caused a 'logjam' in the processing of applications for resource development.

The paper goes on to examine the last ten years of the Land Rights Act — the first years during which there have had to be negotiations with proven Aboriginal owners. It concludes that:

- Out of 235 exploration licenses



(ELA's) on Aboriginal land being considered by the Northern and Central Lands Councils at the end of April 1987, 17.5 per cent were 'logjammed' in the NT Department of Mines and Energy itself.

- That 335 claims, having been cleared by the NT Government, have been held up by the companies' not having bothered to submit exploration proposals to the Land Council as required under the Act. (Ms Langton points out that, since there are no time constraints or rental liabilities on ELA's, miners can use them to keep land locked up until the economics of mining improve.
- Of the remaining 130 which could be dealt with by the Land Council, mining companies have lost interest in seven.

The economics of the industry have, as the paper points out, been affected by low demand for uranium and tremendous stockpiles awaiting for an improvement in the situation. 'Here, market forces clearly dictate what happens in the industry, yet Aboriginal people are blamed for it.'

Following the passing of the *NT Land Rights Act (1976)*, there was a freeze on mining which was lifted only four years ago. This resulted in a flood of applications reaching the Land Councils all at once, putting tremendous pressure on their staff and demanding an increase in their finances, which has been refused. Once more, the miners have put the blame on the Land Councils for the situation in which they were too hard pressed to deal adequately with the flood.

The downturn in mining has also been blamed on the Aborigines. Examining

this Ms Langton concludes that it is due to:

- ALP policy, which prohibits the development of new uranium mines,
- The NT's isolation, which makes mining expensive,
- Worldwide industrial depression with lowered commodity prices, uranium and other surpluses, high interest rates and low demand,
- Devaluation of the Australian dollar leading to increased costs for imported equipment and goods and foreign debts becoming too expensive to service.

Land Councils, the paper states, have found it easier to negotiate with foreign companies, which have negotiated fairly and quickly, while Australian Mining Industry Council members have been reluctant to come to the negotiating table at all. Moreover, the Federation believes, the NT Government has been deliberately interfering with such processes, for instance in opposition to agreements between Land Councils on a two-stage basis of agreement, first for exploration and later on actual mining. The Federation considers this process less complex and quicker than the one-step method.

Not all Aboriginal attitudes on mining are the same. Some will want nothing to do with it whilst others will agree on fair terms and conditions, providing the integrity of their land is preserved since that it is essential to their existence and spiritual health. Non-Aboriginal landholders, she points out, are 'not all that different', in that for some at least land is an inherited responsibility and a source of social and religious standing. But for Aborigines, with the longest continuing culture and relationship with the land in the world, such issues are 'magnified by hundreds of generations of that relationship.'

The very few years of dealing with the Aboriginal people in matters of land use have done white Australia little credit. It is not yet an unbreakable tradition that mining should override all social, cultural and religious considerations; but it is clear that special interest dealers and politicians would like it to become so.

There are some indications that the present Federal Government is uneasy with this. But the power of money and propaganda can quickly be deployed to convince doubters.

*Judith Wright McKinney is a poet, literary critic, conservationist, peace activist and advocate for Aboriginal rights.*

# ...and mining

CRA exploration camps are encroaching on Aboriginal land in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia. *Rick Humphries* tells how the two Aboriginal communities of Punmu and Pangurr, situated within the Rudall River National Park (Karlamilyi) are being threatened by the development of mines and exploration in the area. CRA has been exploring for uranium, gold and platinum and has upgraded some of its exploration licenses to mining leases.

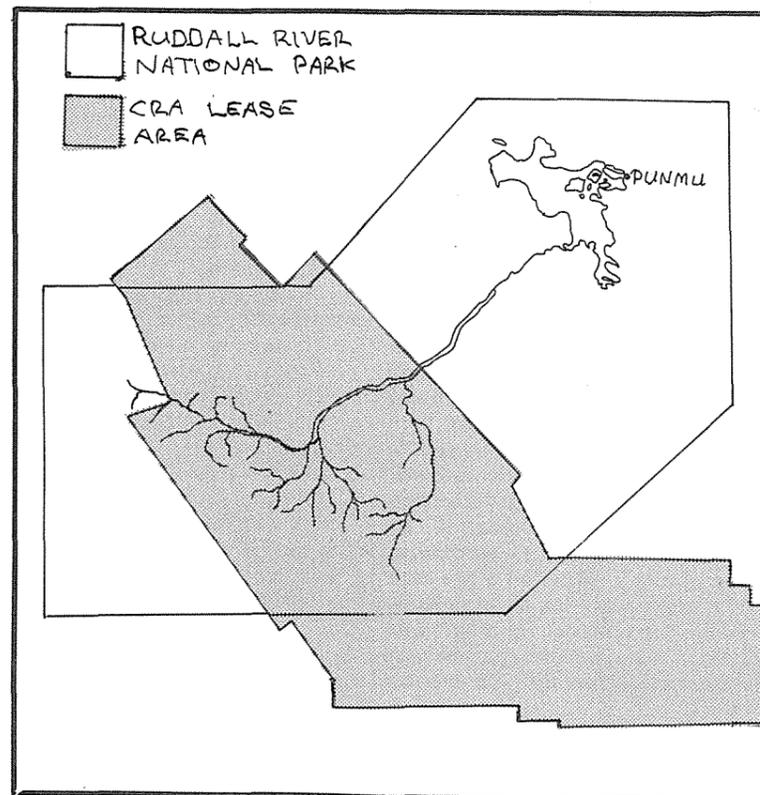
Mr Billy Gibbs, one of the traditional owners of Karlamilyi said 'If they take the sand away, they are going to block up the river, the water should not be disturbed'. Mr Gibbs went on 'They are going to dig up uranium, a dangerous thing. If it gets into our drinking water we'll be sick and dead. It's too dangerous.'

Mr Gibbs lives at Punmu, a homeland community that was established in 1981. A group of Aboriginal people decided to move back to their homelands in the great Sandy Desert, away from urban problems to re-establish themselves in their own country. A major reason for the move was so that the children will grow up knowing their own country and language. The community has a bilingual school run by a council of Aboriginal people and is in many respects a model of the success of the homelands movement.

Aboriginal people in the Western Desert have had little contact with the outside world, the first sustained contact coming from the establishment of the Canning Stock Route in the early 1900's. As cattle drovers increasingly used the route, so too did the Aboriginal people, in search of trading centres where they could trade commodities for food and material goods. However many 'Aborigines did not leave their homelands' until they were forcibly removed to European administered missions, stations and towns.

In the early 1980's, after decades of living on the desert's periphery, those with traditional ties to Karlamilyi began returning. The community of Punmu, on the edge of Lake Dora, was settled in 1981 and three years later about 80 residents of Jigalong relocated to Pangurr in the

# Development, Disarmament and Survival



southern part of the park. For some, the move was a way to distance themselves from the social and physical ills of excessive alcohol use, for others it was a last opportunity to acquaint the middle-aged and younger generations with the environment on which the Aboriginal world view is based. For those who returned to Pangurr it meant saving their traditional land from miners.

Because the Western Australian Government refuses to recognise rights to traditional land, neither community has the security of tenure that would guarantee provision of essential services. Despite this neglect both communities continue to grow providing proof that the Western Desert people have decided to return to and remain in their land.

The threat posed to this and other Aboriginal communities by mining is grave. Exploration in the area has been destructive to country that is significant to people for economic and spiritual reasons. Hunting is still part of their life

and sites are tended as part of a set of obligations to the land. The contrast in attitudes between the mining company and the local people could hardly be greater.

CRA has a reputation for dividing communities for its own ends. In the late 1970's CRA and its subsidiaries found diamonds around Turkey Creek in northern WA. They successfully isolated four traditional owners of the community and had them sign an agreement, the terms of which were never made public, which allowed the entry of mining companies. The division of the community and the establishment of the mine has caused great distress in the area.

Unfortunately there is now evidence that CRA may be engaging in the same tactics at Karlamilyi. The company is obliged to protect sites under the Heritage Act. Consultation with the owners is the recommended way of locating sites but there is concern at Punmu and Pangurr that CRA has not been dealing with all the traditional owners.

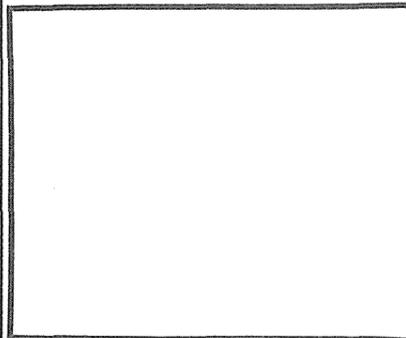
While most of the Aboriginal people who speak for the country now being damaged by CRA live at Punmu and Pangurr they have only recently had an opportunity to discuss the impact of a mine in their area. They have not been able to negotiate an agreement with the company.

CRA exploration sites cover almost a third of the Rudall River National Park, Western Australia's largest. CRA officials at a meeting at Pangurr said that there is plans to have a fly-in/fly-out camp for 150-200 workers servicing a mine pit 80,000 metres square and 150 metres deep. An on-site plant would produce pitchblende concentrate and refine uranium oxide (yellowcake). A tailings dam would also be built. Hundreds of kilograms of ore have already been crushed and sorted in experiments during the exploration phase. It is estimated that the area will produce around 3000 tonnes per year.

Only recently has the Department of Conservation and Land Management established guidelines for the company to comply with. Others like the ACF and state MLC Tom Helm who have been flown over the area have been very surprised at the high level of exploration activity. The ACF reported visible damage to the flora and fauna in 1986. The remoteness of the park makes the policing virtually impossible.

The main failing however is that although the park has existed for ten years and CRA have been exploring for same period there is still no management plan and so no established involvement for the traditional owners.

In addition, the Federal Governments uranium policy allows no new uranium mines and uranium mines in National Parks would appear to be quite contradictory to this policy. Will Rudall River be the first Park sacrificed to the national debt.



*Rick Humpheries is an activist with the Australian Conservation Foundation in Perth.*

No one knows how much is spent on arms today. The layperson has been kept away from arms production and consumption data and professional economists have examined those data according to old systems which hardly ever take into account the impact of political institutions and values. A tendency to specialisation has provided limited views on the subject. It is estimated that between the end of World War II and 1982 between three and four trillion dollars was spent. (That is US\$3-4,000,000,000,000). It is believed that US\$600 billion was spent in 1982 alone. That is more than a million dollars a minute! Since then both the United States and the Soviet Union, which account for the great bulk of the total, have increased spending at about ten per cent per year. That would make current annual expenditure about US\$1,000 billion, equivalent to half the total Third World Gross National Product. The stockpile of nuclear weapons alone is now large enough to kill every person now living twelve times over. In this, the first of two articles, *George Venturini* discusses the global arms race in all its aspects: political, economic and technological.

Three years ago the second United Nations conference on population policy took place in Mexico City. The stark details of population growth were updated. We now know that the world population, 4.8 billion in 1984, increases by over a million each five days and that the bulk of this growth is in the Third World — up to ninety per cent.

The number of people suffering from malnutrition is 500 million and the number of those living in absolute poverty is around 800 million. (This is not 'Australian poverty', it is Third World poverty and a comparison between the two is neither fair nor imaginable.) Enough food is being produced, there are greater supplies than for many years past and international food reserves have grown. But famine disasters — such as in Africa — still occur. Every minute thirty children die from lack of food or clean water or largely preventable diseases.

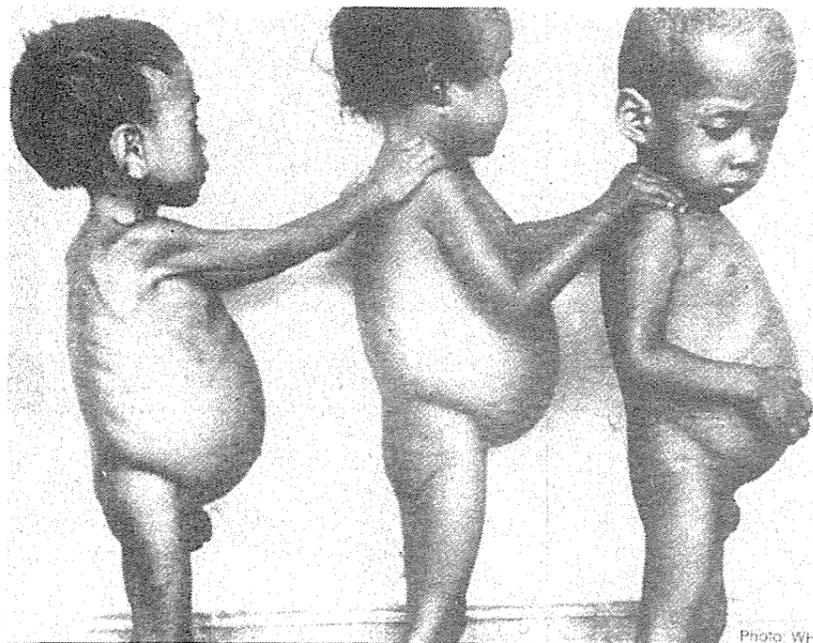


Photo: WHO

The export to the Third World of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the increased militarisation of the Third World severely encumbers development and wastes a great deal of money as well as talents and creative minds; it is estimated that one out of five scientists is occupied with arms technology research, who could be employed to solve much more meaningful problems.

#### Robbing the Poor

**Latin America** now has a collective debt of over US\$400 billion. This is shared by the four largest debtor countries: Brazil over \$100 million, Mexico \$100 million, Argentina \$50 billion and Venezuela over \$35 billion. On this sum of \$400 billion the interest is at least \$50 billion per year. Latin America cannot pay.

One may wonder how such a mountain of debt could have come into being. The answer is only partially given by miscalculations, as in the projected sales of products, and by mismanagement on behalf of the debtor nations which can be noted as well. When loans are granted there is a double responsibility, on the part of the lender as well as the borrower.

In minimising that responsibility some speak of 'incorrect estimates of the scope for debt'. It is seldom acknowledged that the banks themselves indulged in an orgy of credit offers.

Latin America has also been accused of having allowed a severe flight of capital to aggravate its problems. But there is an element of hypocrisy in that. Why should capital show national responsibility for which there is little or no incentive . . . ?

The United States' high expenditure on armaments is known to be extensively financed by budget deficits — as at the time of the Vietnam War. Budget deficits in turn send interest rates through the roof with the result that the developing countries are encumbered to the tune of several billion dollars more.

At the meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1984 even leading figures in the World Bank rejected the Reagan Administration's contention that the activity set off in the wake of the budget deficit compensated for the major burden of high interest rates and that the Third World must invest more resources and labour in exports. The reports of the IMF remark critically upon the fact that the United States is solving its problems

at other peoples' expense, importing capital that weaker countries need for their development.

This is a flight of capital based on rules of conduct other than national responsibility. Those who are constantly demanding performance speculate on interest rates and capital movements. Responsibility for the credit crisis is then upon the debtors — the very victims. While one out of five suffers from absolute poverty and one out of ten from malnutrition, some US\$50 billion from Latin America will end up in New York, London and Frankfurt this year. One suggested metaphor is a 'blood transfusion from the sick to the healthy'.

Along with this material and visible poverty there is another which does not catch the eye but is no less degrading. Three years ago 29 per cent of the world population was unable to read or write. In 24 countries over 70 per cent of adults were illiterate and it has been estimated that at least 300 million children between six and eleven do not attend school. Owing to rapid population growth one must expect this number to increase, despite the great and persistent efforts which are being made.

Adding insult to injury, during the 1984 Brazilian elections, some 300 million people were not allowed to vote because of their illiteracy. In Peru almost 20 per cent of the electorate are illiterate but still allowed to participate, falling prey to manipulators. One should not, however, overestimate the value of formal education as a guarantee of political wisdom and social balance. If that were the case, how could one explain the Germans allowing Hitler to come to power?

#### Defended Into Debt

The arms race is related to these problems. The debtor countries, unable to pay their debts when they fall due, have no other recourse but to go to the International Monetary Fund. The Fund lends the dollars alright, but under very strict conditions. Among them is the surrender of economic policies to the Fund's criteria. Food programs and other forms of social spending, which are essentially 'unproductive', are cut back — as are imports. But wage freezes and devaluations are very popular with the Fund. These measures increase poverty and economic difficulties. The poor, whose food becomes dearer and scarcer, suffer more. Strikes, instability and riots threaten the governments. That means more spending on weapons for security. Meanwhile, the rich invest their money

abroad — mainly in the United States — the interest rates mount further, the Third World countries borrow more money, or reschedule their debts, the round is completed and the process starts again.

Military spending in the Third World has increased five fold over the last twenty-five years. The number of countries ruled by military governments has grown from 22 to 57. Meanwhile the budget for the United States Air Force is larger than the total educational budget for 1.2 billion children in Africa, Asia (excluding Japan) and Latin America. In one year the Soviet Union spends more on military defence than the governments of all developing nations spend on education and health care for their 3.6 billion people.

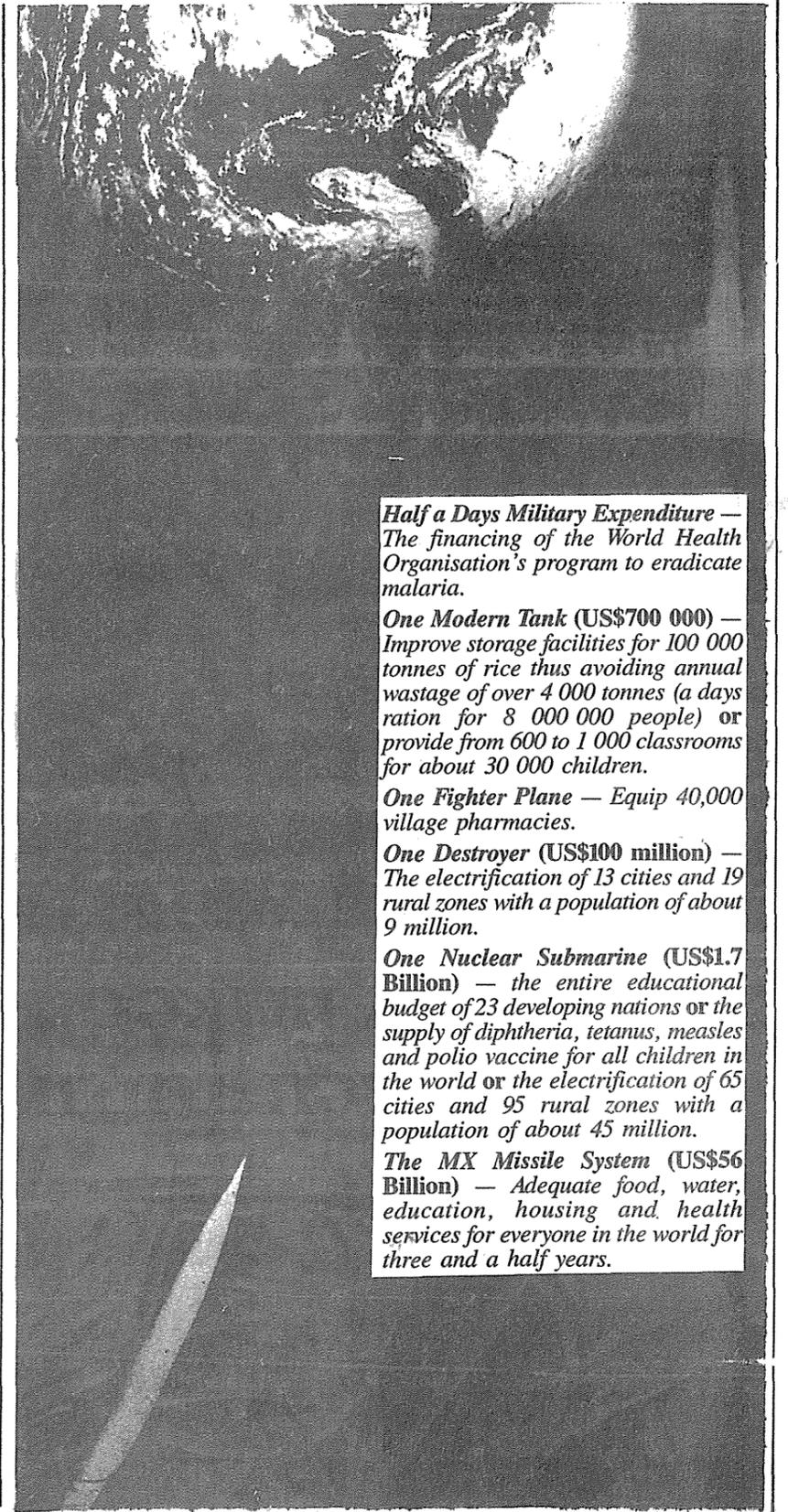
On average the developed nations spend 5.4 per cent of their Gross National Product for military purposes but only 0.3 per cent for development assistance to poorer countries. While there is one soldier for every 43 people in the world, there is only one physician for every 1 030. While an American missile can travel from Western Europe to Moscow in six minutes, an African women must still walk several hours a day for the family's water supply.

#### Arming Everybody

A United States Congress research study has calculated that United States arms sales to the Third World decreased from the record level of US\$10.2 billion in 1983 to US\$7.3 billion in 1984. But it must be noted that this reduction was due to market saturation and scarcity of money in the Third World. The statistics, however, remain frightening. In 1983 the monetary value of the arms trade was set at US\$135 billion of which some 70 per cent was the responsibility of the two superpowers.

Alarmingly, a number of the so-called 'newly-industrialised countries' such as Brazil, India and Singapore have become significant manufacturers and opened up a new arms bazaar. This is still quite small — only about three per cent of global sales — but growing rapidly. This proliferation of exporters has changed the structure of the arms bazaar. Fewer political strings are attached and, in this buyer's market, governments are successfully demanding state-of-the-art weaponry.

There are at present at least thirty governments engaged in arms sales with an annual turnover of between US\$25 and 35 billion. As with the United States, the



**Half a Days Military Expenditure —** The financing of the World Health Organisation's program to eradicate malaria.

**One Modern Tank (US\$700 000) —** Improve storage facilities for 100 000 tonnes of rice thus avoiding annual wastage of over 4 000 tonnes (a days ration for 8 000 000 people) or provide from 600 to 1 000 classrooms for about 30 000 children.

**One Fighter Plane —** Equip 40,000 village pharmacies.

**One Destroyer (US\$100 million) —** The electrification of 13 cities and 19 rural zones with a population of about 9 million.

**One Nuclear Submarine (US\$1.7 Billion) —** the entire educational budget of 23 developing nations or the supply of diphtheria, tetanus, measles and polio vaccine for all children in the world or the electrification of 65 cities and 95 rural zones with a population of about 45 million.

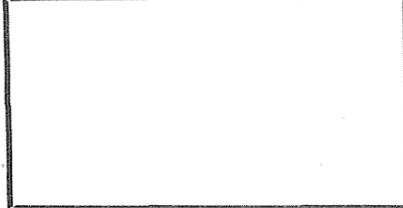
**The MX Missile System (US\$56 Billion) —** Adequate food, water, education, housing and health services for everyone in the world for three and a half years.

policy pursued by these countries is one of 'military Keynesianism'.

The United States has the longest list of customers, more than twice that of the Soviet Union with 39 customers compared to 16. (The United States is also more generous in allocating production licenses to Third World countries.) Next come France, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Australia is twelfth on the list with almost two-thirds of our exports going to the Third World. The list continues with Poland, North Korea, Brazil — a country with 30 million illiterate, non-voting people exported US\$3 billion worth of arms in 1984 — Spain, South Korea, Israel and Switzerland.

The details as to who imports arms are, of course, secret. The Stockholm International Peace Institute and the American Arms Control Agency seem to agree in their estimates that the leading importers of arms are Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Algeria. India and our neighbour Indonesia are also thought to figure prominently.

By now a quarter of the accumulated debt of the Third World is due to arms imports. The financial difficulties of the countries affected has had some slight moderating effect on arms sales. But there is still no doubt that the extent and nature of a country's military equipment have become a status symbol in many parts of the world. At the same time — and why not acknowledge it — a country's military organisation has sometimes had some beneficial effect on literacy, infrastructure building and other forms of modernisation; there is even a name for it — repressive developmentalism! In a world that seems inured(?) to the greatest form of violence — poverty — the acceptance of a military regime may be tolerable if it can bring some form of relief. The truth is that such an acceptance may set the stage for a *dance macabre* of violence and counter-violence, terror, persecution and poverty.



In the next edition of *Chain Reaction* George Venturini looks at Australia's role in the arms race with respect to its position as part of Asia.

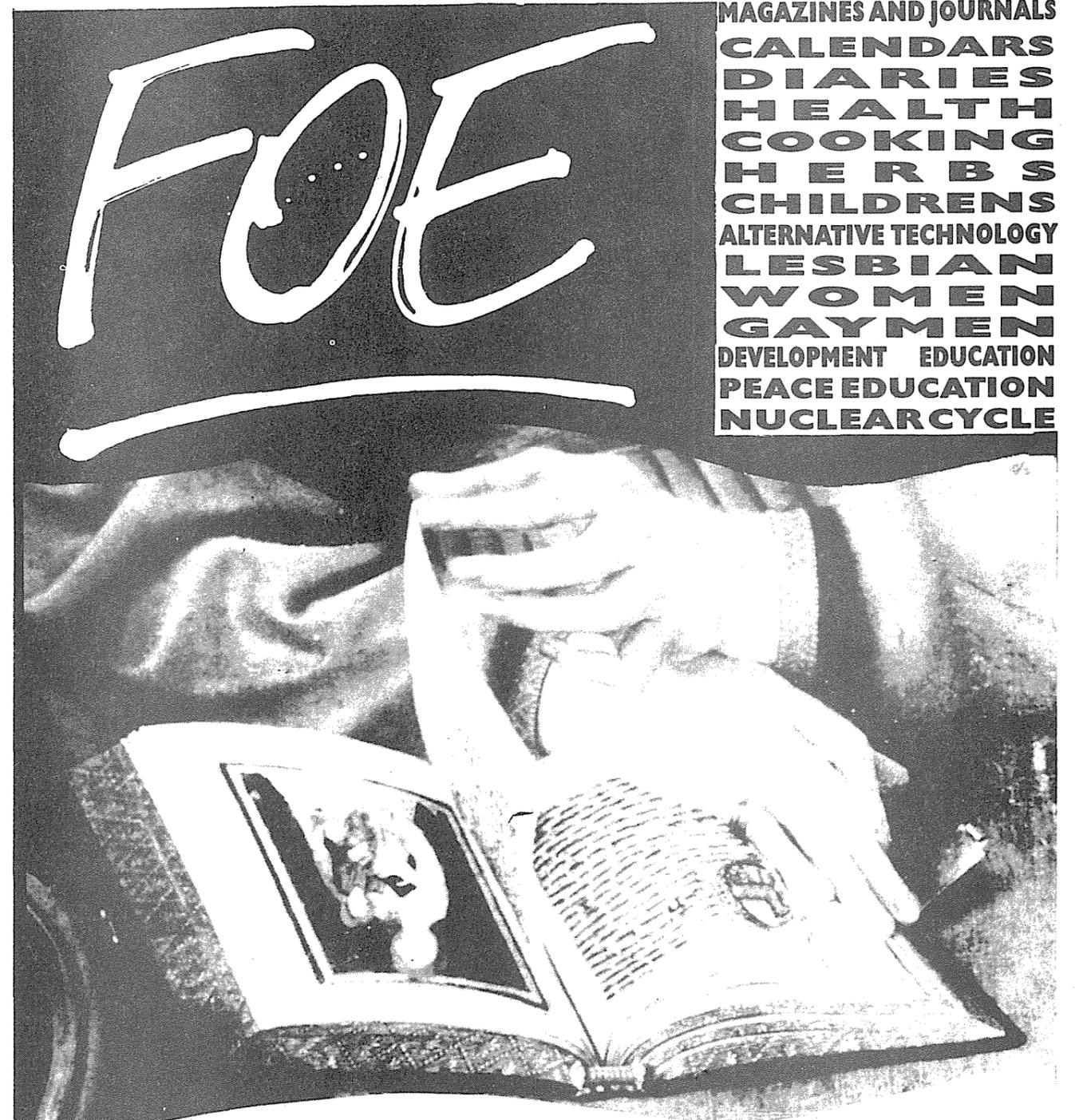
*Dr Venturini is a Friend of the Earth, was a senate candidate for the Nuclear Disarmament Party in the December 1984 election and during the International Year of Peace participated in and read papers at the United Nations Conference on Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies at the University of the South Pacific and International Conference on Higher Education and the Promotion of Peace at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. He has maintained an active interest in the issues of nuclear power, disarmament, development and survival.*

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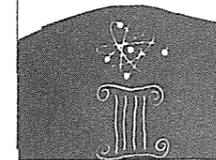


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# Elections: Friend or FOE

by Gavan Thomson

It would appear to be a good time to reassess FOE's political strategy in light of two events. Firstly the third successive election win for the conservative ALP Government and secondly the probability that a new, national green/red political coalition will be launched in the next twelve months.

Before the election there was much coming and going by 'heavies' of some environmental and peace groups and disenchanted socialist/ALP activists at invitation only meetings (it is believed that FOE had no representation). For debate was the platform of this new coalition with the clear objective at that time of running candidates at the coming election.

The 'surprise' election blocked any chance they had of getting it off the ground in time. When I suggested, half seriously, to some ALP members that the election was brought forward to head off this new force, they laughed and pointed out that Hawke was only interested in the centre of the electorate, the left/alternatives he can still take for granted.

The election campaign and the result itself reflected this through the near obsession with the materialism of the swinging voter. The real issues facing us and the planet: nuclear annihilation, environmental destruction, poverty, malnutrition, economic exploitation and community disintegration (to name a few) were ignored.

FOE and other peace, environmental and social justice groups, using the time honoured strategies of lobbying, protest, education and agitation, appear to have little influence on those with power: the Federal Cabinet. We have been thrown a few crumbs in the last few years but there appears to be less commitment now than there ever was, particularly on nuclear issues.

Those few ALP parliamentarians who appear too offer us support and hold out to us some hope now appear silent and powerless within the right wing dominated ALP juggernaut. Any support at the branch level for environmental and socialist policies has meant nothing at the cabinet level. The likes of Gerry Hand, Stuart West and Peter Duncan were publicly silent about the real issues (issues they claim are close to their heart) before,

during and after the election. I am now convinced that agitation to reform or shift the ALP towards implementing an enlightened legislative program while in office is quite futile.

What advantages would be offered by a strong, national green/red coalition campaigning in elections? It promises more than the few Senate seats it would most likely win. Perhaps its biggest impact, irrespective of the seats it holds, would be to force political parties towards, for example, non-nuclear and environmental positions in order to protect previous support bases. From West Germany we have seen the positive effect that the Greens have had on Social Democrat anti-nuclear policy. Another benefit would be forcing the mainstream media, at least at election time, to report the real issues more, in a way separate from and additional to the coverage we get from our campaigning at present.

The disenchantment and disaffiliation with the ALP at the green and red fringes of the old support base were obvious at election time, and yet the Democrats have not been able to gain from this. So many people have expressed their distress at being forced to vote Democrat for want of a better alternative. So there appears to be the possibility of considerable support for a new coalition and once the four per cent vote is reached there is guaranteed public funding. The German Greens have been able to use their public funding wisely so that campaigning has not cost the earth. From them we can take much inspiration and learn many valuable lessons.

One blessing of the early election was that the new coalition was not launched too hastily. Now we have the opportunity and time to decide whether to get involved and, if so, in what way. When the new, national, biodynamic, Green/Red coalition (one mooted name was 'Common Ground') sprouts what will FOE's collective position be? Do the gains outweigh the risks?

One thing is certain; the new coalition will only succeed in being 'not left, not right but in front' if a great many activists ensure that it attempts to be non-hierarchical, non-patriarchal, participatory and process orientated. Otherwise it will become another power base for the more expert political operators and again we will become the 'followers' instead of the 'leaders'.

*Gavan Thomson is an active member of FOE Fitzroy.*

# Reshaping Australia's politics



by Joe Camilleri

The present moment represents an important political watershed. Side by side with the symptoms of global crisis — the widening gap between rich and poor, the threat of nuclear extinction, the deterioration of the global environment — a great many are experiencing, perhaps for the first time since the Depression, an acute sense of economic insecurity. The profit-oriented application of science and technology is depriving personal and social relationships of the dignity, autonomy and privacy to which they are entitled. The ensuing emotional and mental stress, anxiety and neurosis add to the general sense of foreboding which even middle class access to the material rewards of the 'good life' cannot entirely obscure.

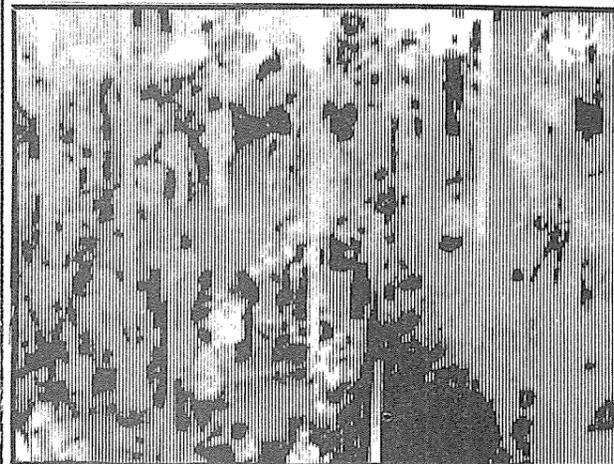
The success of the New Right in Australia owes much to its privileged access to the media and other powerful institutions. Equally important is the fine-tuning of its analysis and proposals to take account of the insecurity, powerlessness and general crisis of identity that characterise the Australian psyche. The conservative reaction has been to blame the crisis on trade unions, dole bludgers, greenies, feminists, Aborigines, immigrants and homosexuals. The scapegoat strategy conveniently externalises the source of the problem and places its faith on political and economic solutions that appeal to the baser instincts.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that there currently exists a political desert which the New Right is attempting to turn to its advantage. The Left is generally too fragmented and its policies too superficial and incoherent to offer a credible alternative. The ALP Left is too firmly tied to party structure and electoral objectives to act as a visible and independent force while the smaller Left parties are lacking the perspective, policies, structures and language to communicate with the public. Organised Labour remains a potent force but in the short run is unlikely to take a significant initiative outside the industrial arena.

Many social movements have waged important campaigns with occasional victories. But, partly because of the political climate, much of their energy is currently being spent defending their organisation base and legitimacy of their cause. Most have neither the will nor the means to propose the economic reorganisation of society.

Yet what is produced, how it is produced and distributed, who controls investment, production and exchange are central to the concerns of numerous campaigns. They largely determine whether demands can be met. This is not to detract from the important role that the movements have played but if they are to gain momentum a great deal of innovation may be necessary.

The question arises: Is it possible to conceive of a purposeful response to the current set of dangers? The conditions appear to exist for a major new initiative that is alive to the enormity of the problem and free of the stifling priorities and practices of established parties. The time may be ripe for the emergence of a *political movement* which builds on the finest traditions of the Labour Movement and the experience of the social movements.



The distinguishing values and policy preferences of such a formation are not hard to anticipate. Its fundamental aim would be to eradicate the exploitation of people and nature, to abolish inequalities based on race, nation, class or gender. It would require a co-operative ethos. It would promote diversity, creativity and initiative not as the prerogative of a privileged few but as the right of all. Here, the importance of self-determination and Land Rights for the Aboriginal people cannot be overstated. An integral part would be the protection of the environment, including all forms of life, a stress on conservation of all infinite resources and the development of renewable energy.

More specific objectives would include the availability of safe, satisfying, socially useful work, the creation of a self-reliant, regulated economy that is not vulnerable to the vagaries of the world market and a national planning married to political and economic decentralisation. In its external relations Australia would pursue an internationalist, non-aligned foreign policy and a non-nuclear, self-reliant and non-provocative defence policy.

The above policies are hardly new or comprehensive. The point of a political movement is that it would present them not as a shopping list of demands but as a carefully integrated program of cultural, economic and ecological reconstruction. The central task is to connect issues to people, to strengthen the bonds of community, to empower people to take charge of their destiny.

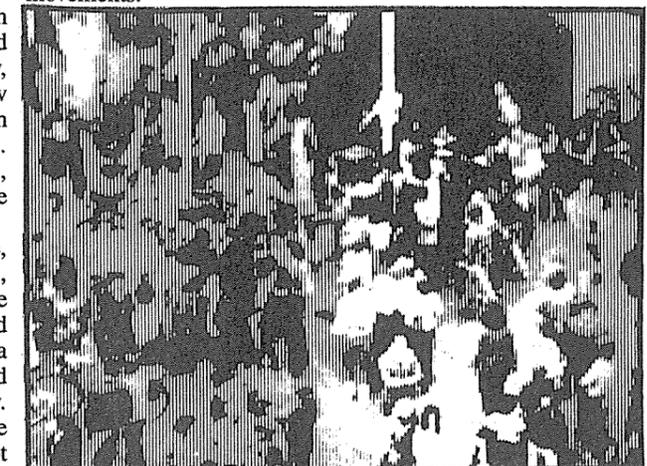
The proposed formation would not be a political party in the conventional sense. It might intervene electorally, not least at the level of local government, as a way of articulating an alternative program. The Green experiment in Europe, especially West Germany, may have some relevance for Australia. Electoral intervention can exert pressure on political parties, enhance the political skills and resources available to a movement and help set the political agenda.

On the other hand, representation in the parliament does not amount to control of the State. Indeed, the historical record has shown it is not the reformist party which subjects the State to its will, but rather the State that redefines or negates party objectives, electoral strategies and functioning of party democracy.

Electoral strategies must play second fiddle. Success cannot be measured by votes. The battle for hearts and minds mainly takes place between elections, in the work-place, where people live, in the social settings where people come together. Only an on-going process of reflection and education married to a sustained program of local, regional and national campaigns can generate the sense of community, political experience and innovative techniques and skills that can inspire confidence and give rise to a new political consciousness.

There are many issues around which it is possible to organise effectively and imaginatively. Many organisations are already engaged in worthwhile campaigns (forest protection, Land Rights, uranium mining). The function of the political movement would be to support rather than duplicate these efforts. There are other areas where activity is less developed, more fragmented, where the issues are less sharply focused. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the economic arena, particularly at a time when the trade union movement as a whole is unable to offer a coherent critique of the Government.

Several inter-related campaigns immediately suggest themselves: the eradication of poverty, the creation of socially useful work, the collective and universal provision of basic needs (health, education, transport, child care). The notion of 'buying back the farm' at a time when our industries, resources and financial systems are under increasing foreign control is another important possibility. Battles fought out in the economic arena are likely to have a great bearing on the fortunes of most social movements.



In determining the demands, strategy and educational content of any campaign, a key consideration must be to arrive at a mix that combines local initiative, national co-ordination and effective projection not only of the specific issues involved but of the wider commitment to the democratic transformation of political life.

But where, one might ask, will the bulk of public support for this movement come? At the most general level, it could be argued that the movement's constituency will be made up of those who are currently obliged to sell their labour, whether in the manufacturing, rural or service sector, as a way of securing their livelihood. To this should be added the small farmer and small business operator whose livelihood is increasingly threatened by corporate intrusion.

Because of stratification and atomising social influences there will be many within this broad grouping who will not wish to identify with the movement's policies and campaigns. On the other hand, a large cross-section of society is likely to find them attractive to the extent that they offer a credible strategy for achieving personal fulfillment, physical security, satisfying work and a convivial human and physical environment. A carefully constructed program which married long-term and short-term objectives is likely to appeal to unemployed, youth, women, Aborigines, ethnic communities and other sections of society and also to other blue collar workers and to a substantial section of the middle-class who have been radicalised by the peace and conservation movements.

By virtue of its size and diversity this support will periodically experience divisions between different regions, industries, ethnic, racial and religious groups, different levels of skill, status and income, between men and women. The function of the movement will be to probe tensions before they escalate, to encourage a process of dialogue that respects the interests of each group and to arrive at a program which preserves diversity but overcomes fragmentation. In this sense the movement will not be an amorphous rainbow coalition but a cohesive political formation whose defining and unifying goal is the abolition of all forms of domination and exploitation.

It remains to say a word about the organisational scope of the project. If the aim is the reshaping of power in Australia, then the principles of democracy and equality need to be embedded in the movement. This will mean an equal share in decision-making by all members, solid mechanisms of accountability, a structure which nurtures the autonomy and creativity of a wide range of groups, be they be based on locality, workplace or other area of common interest. Yet the history of Australia's social

movements also suggests the need for an identifiable national structure to ensure effective communication and co-ordination.

A political movement as outlined here would seek to relate to and influence national society, national economy and national politics. It would articulate policies that are national in scope and make use of national institutions and resources, which is not to say that the bulk of its program would not be regionally or locally organised and inspired. The national profile would reflect and reinforce the communitarian ethic of the movement.

The local and national dimension of the project would be underpinned by an internationalist perspective at the level of analysis, policy and organisation. Local and national self-reliance is morally indefensible and politically counter-productive unless it is attuned to the legitimate aspirations of other countries for self-reliant development. Defence of Australian interests and sovereignty will have to be grounded in world order values that enshrine the principles of equality and mutual benefit, respect for human rights and maintenance of the planet's environment integrity.

A new slogan 'Think Globally, Plan Nationally, Act Locally' may be a useful rule of thumb for a movement intent on converting the inner cries of anguish and despair into a new sense of purpose and belonging.

*Joseph Camilleri teaches in the Department of Politics at LaTrobe University. He is the author of several books including Civilization in Crisis, The State and Nuclear Power and ANZUS: Australia's Predicament in the Nuclear Age (in press). He has played a leading part in the development of the peace/anti-nuclear movements in Australia and overseas and was for several years a prominent member of the Australian Labor Party until his resignation in the wake of the 1986 August budget.*

## REVIEWS

## Books

**Exploring the Environment: Techniques for Biology in the Field** by Peter Macinnis. Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd. Melbourne. 1987, 142pp, \$14.95

Reviewed by **Linda Wells**

*Exploring the Environment* is a book for school students or people who wish to carry out their own investigations into environmental matters. Environmental investigation, as with much scientific investigation, has a tendency to be mysterious, alien, unemotional, factual, tedious, dogmatic, etc, etc. *Exploring the Environment* has overcome this tendency. It is clear, accurate and user-friendly.

*Exploring the Environment* doesn't bombard you with scientific theory and techniques and then think up real life applications for your knowledge. It invites you to discover a natural environment in which you are interested and then it offers methods for exploring and investigating this environment in a methodological manner.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section — Investigating the Habitats — describes thirteen habitats from beach to woodlands to the neighbourhood park. Each of these descriptions is a fairly brief introduction and indicates more interesting aspects of the particular environment, the defining characteristics, dangers to watch out for, the main food relations, factors to consider in scientifically investigating the environment, techniques you may need and then some specific ideas for investigations.

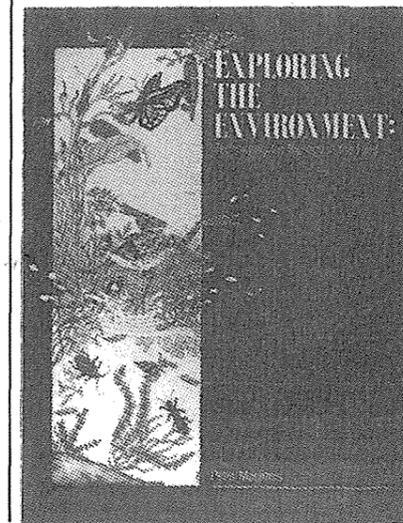
The second part of the book — Investigative Techniques — sets out 45 activities and techniques which have been suggested in part one. For each of these

it describes why the technique is used, how it works and how you go about employing it. The apparatus needed for each is specified with instructions for how they may be simply and cheaply constructed.

There are no rules or guidelines for writing up the information collected. In the introduction, however, it is suggested that you write up your results and try to make them public, at least by placing a copy in your local library.

*Exploring the Environment* invites people to discover an environment, to explore that environment in their own way using the book as a guide and then to record and present that information. It is simple and clear and encourages careful and thorough work, creativity and independence.

*Linda Wells is studying environmental education at Victoria College, Rusden.*



# CHRISTMAS FAIR

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# REVIEWS

**Green Politics in Australia: Working towards a peaceful, sustainable and achievable future.** Edited by Drew Hutton, Angus and Robertson 1987

Reviewed by **Terry Callahan**

To most Australians, the phrase 'Green Politics' is associated with the European, and notably West German, phenomena of the alternative ecological/conservation movement and its quite meteoric rise as a mainstream political force, with its own party (the Greens) and parliamentary representatives. The word 'greenies' is probably more common in Australia, with a narrower connotation, or even stereotype — those trying to save the dwindling forests through direct action. 'Greenie' has been appropriated by the mainstream media and is often used prejudicially, with little or no attempt to understand the deeper philosophical or political roots of those involved in ecological/conservation issues.

*Green Politics in Australia* goes a long way towards remedying this situation. It presents a clear, diverse and optimistic description and analysis of homegrown Australian green politics through the voices of those most qualified to speak — green activists, politicians or unionists.

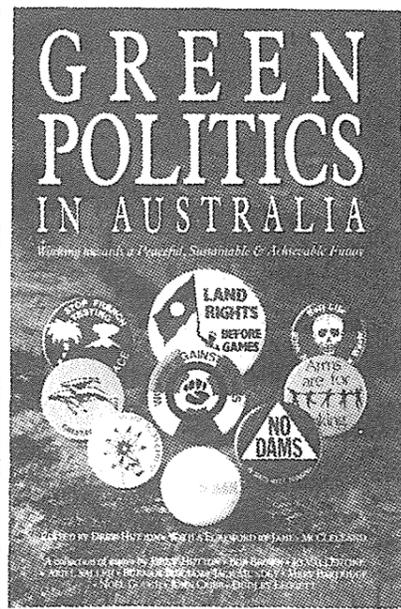
The contributors to this anthology are a 'who's who' of green activism and thinking in this country — Bob Brown, Jo Vallentine, Burnam Burnam, Jack Munday, Drew Hutton, to mention a few. Most of the essays are a satisfying mix of biography, history, political and philosophical analysis; which demonstrates convincingly that the 'personal is the political' and vice-versa. The strong biographical threads in the book also show the transition and growth of most of the contributors, their 'greening' if you like.

Drew Hutton poses the obvious question: What is green politics? While mentioning the famous 'Green Bans' *a la Munday*, Pedder, Franklin, anti-uranium and anti-vietnam war movements as possible seed beds, he moves on to identify the 'interconnectedness' of the personal, political and ecological, the anthropocentricism in traditional humanist approaches, and the need for a new synthesis which Marxism and left politics in this country has failed to provide.

Green politics is about the transition to a new paradigm, away from a mechanistic, dualist and technocratic world view, the logical outcome of which is the present stresses the world as an indivisible dynamic whole, with interrelated parts. Hutton provides a very informative comparative table outlining features of the old and the new, emergent 'green paradigm'. Green politics, for Hutton, is a new self-consciousness shared by a grass-roots movement which can imagine and model a green future, while taking direct political action.

Bob Brown's contribution is the most meditative and reflective of all the essays. He intersperses more analytical and historic passages with a quiet reverie. The tone of the essay is quiet and hopeful. Like Bob Brown, Jo Valentine is also involved in mainstream politics. Her emphasis is, of course, peace, and she establishes the links between militarism, inflation, Third World poverty, unemployment and uranium mining. It is precisely the call to see these links that is a feature of green politics.

Ariel Sallah presents a powerful feminist perspective, defining the global crisis as a by-product of abstracted patriarchal institutions, and outlining a history of women's eco-actions in Australia. Burnam Burnam presents an Aboriginal perspective, calling to mind the 50,000 year old relationship between



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his people and the land. Jack Munday needs little introduction. His essay on 'Citizen-Worker Alliances' is a most inspiring history of the green bans movement as a powerful coalition of middle-class environmentalists, trade unions and residents. He pleads for a critical approach to 'development' and the humanising of the urban environment.

The detailed and thoughtful piece on ethical work and investment by Merv Partridge provides another angle. We must understand *how* business works *better* than the capitalists, but must restrain the accumulation of wealth and avoid unethical and destructive investment. 'Greening Education', by Noel Gough, argues that the present paradigm shift in education — towards generative thinking which is holistic and systemic, and which tries to integrate theoretical, practical and technical thinking — actually converges with much of 'green' philosophy. Greening education does not mean teaching ecology and peace studies, it means an entirely new integrated approach to learning, which is evolutionary, exploratory and participative.

Perhaps the most inadequate essay is 'Christianity and Green Politics'. While John Cribb correctly points us back to the historical Jesus and the gospels, rather than the institutional church, for inspiration, and while his mention of liberation theology, basic christian communities and the charismatic movement are of interest, he seems oblivious of the rediscovery of 'creation theology' in recent times. In creation theology we have a deep and pertinent reclaiming of a christian spirituality which affirms the beauty and integrity of all creation, and of the human person *as part of*, and responsible for, that creation, based on the simple belief that God 'saves'/makes whole *all* creation, not only human beings.

*Green Politics in Australia* demonstrates the vitality, the diversity and the urgent practicality of the 'green'

paradigm in Australia. It has a good 'feel' for the history and development of green theory and practice, backed up by the authority of various contributors' real experience in social change. Jo Valentine's conclusion is more than apt: 'Green politics is neither left nor right — it is way out in front'.

*Terry Callahan is a Chain Reaction subscriber.*

**Fluoride in Australia: A Case to Answer** by Wendy Varney. Hale and Ironmonger, 1986, \$12.95

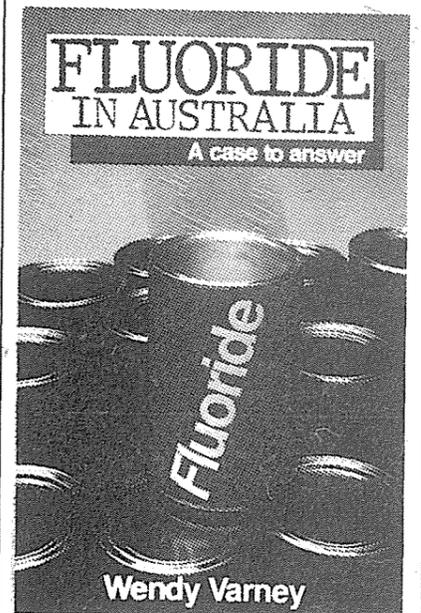
Reviewed by **Justin Moore.**

Wendy Varney's book is perhaps more of a cross-examination than a case. Her critique of the motives, arguments and assertions of the pro-fluoridation lobby is strong. She exposes the very real weaknesses in the 'proof' of fluoridation's benefits and the vested interests of the private industries, professional bodies and governments which pushed and are pushing the concept into practice.

Her counter-case, demonstrating fluoride's damaging effects, is vaguer. She resorts to blanket statements, 'it is widely accepted . . .', and touches on fluoride's possible connection with cancer, musculo-skeletal disease and RSI without presenting many facts or arguments. Given the pecuniary and political commitment to fluoridation it is not surprising that tested facts were hard to come by. Besides this, her argument is often marred by parenthetical qualification and quotes from authorities which seem to bear little or no relation to the thrust of her text (eg pp43-4). This betrays some timidity before her subject, is at times confusing and is ultimately inconclusive.

Overall, an enlightening book in its political and recent historical content, but beyond adding some ideological clarity does not contribute much substance to the anti-fluoridation cause.

*Justin Moore is a FOE activist.*



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ENTON ENLEY

# REVIEWS

**Fluoride in Australia: A Case to Answer**, by Wendy Varney, Hale and Ironmonger, 1986, \$12.95.

Reviewed by **John Drummond**.

Monorails, nuclear power and other questionable projects have made me wary of any scheme bulldozed through by its proponents on the basis that it is 'far too important to be left to laypeople to decide on'. *Fluoride in Australia: A Case to Answer* makes it patently clear that water fluoridation is yet another such scheme.

Australia is one of the world's most fluoridated countries. Europe, which was always less enthusiastic about the notion that the water supply should be a vehicle for 'anti-dental decay' tonics, has virtually abandoned the practice. Even the good old USA, which gave birth to the scheme, appears to take its claimed successes less seriously if the breadth of fluoridation there is any indication.

So why are we stuck with it and what are the risks? The answer is — like so many answers — political. Yet this is the first book to tackle the matter of fluoridation from that angle. Other books have outlined the dangers of fluoridation and have questioned the claimed benefits but have the reader wondering why on earth fluoridation persists if it is not all it is cracked up to be.

the first main chapter of the book, which gives the background to fluoridation and recounts some of those risks and claimed benefits dealt with elsewhere, is slightly heavy compared with the rest of the book, but it does give readers access to the history of fluoridation in simple language. It is alarming to read how little evidence decisions to fluoridate were based on and how poorly conducted the studies were.

The next two chapters are riveting. One, 'Fluoridation's Industrial Beneficiaries', sets out to examine who has vested interests in the scheme, an important question in any project. A band

of beneficiaries emerge, including junk food manufacturers. For them, fluoride is a saviour in that it can exempt their products from the dental carries connection. Carries are seen to be due to a 'lack of fluoride' rather than resulting from a poor diet.

The chapter on fluoridation's chief protagonists not only shows the parts played by a small number of dental authorities in having fluoridation introduced, it is also a concise and thought provoking critique of the medical establishment, placing it squarely in its political and sociological context. Another chapter on the State's part in fluoridation brings the whole picture together.

One of the more interesting aspects of the book is that, though this deals specifically with fluoridation, it has much relevance to a number of other issues. Food irradiation springs to mind. There too there are vested interests (the nuclear industry and agribusiness), industrial (nuclear) waste, experts trying to foist it on us and consumers who will, hopefully, resist.

It was heartening to see a left critique of fluoridation. The deliberate pollution of our water supply is not merely a matter of individual rights, though clearly this is a serious aspect, especially if you are intolerant to even minute amounts of fluoride. More importantly, it is an environmental and health issue. It points to some of the areas that consumer groups should concern themselves with, rather than getting bogged down, as some sometimes do, on matters such as which brand of margarine is the best value.

Overall, this book is highly recommended.

*John Drummond is a Bachelor of Science and a peace activist with an interest in the politics of science and technology.*

## Read Any Good Books Lately?

If you have, or if you have seen a film that you think people might be interested in hearing about why not write a review for *Chain Reaction*. Or you can write to us and tell us what topics you are interested in, Environment, Education, Women's Issues, Land Rights, Third World Development, Peace or whatever and we can send you copies of books or tickets for film previews so that you can review them for *Chain Reaction*. If you are interested, write to:

Reviews Editor  
Chain Reaction  
PO Box 530E  
Melbourne 3001

# LETTERS

.From page 4

desire not to rock the boat in WA.

I maintain that the only way we can trust the ALP to implement progressive policies is to elect candidates who will implement those policies. If we wouldn't elect a progressive Liberal candidate, however 'liberal' because the dries control the Libs, why should we elect a progressive ALP candidate if the right wing controls the ALP? Given the treatment of George Georges by the ALP I fear that the only way progressive candidates will be allowed to represent their electorates is to stand as independents.

Personally, I feel that fundamental change will not arise through parliamentary politics, although much publicity can be gained from that area. I prefer to channel my energy into education, direct action, publicity and research.

I wish Senator Bolkus all the best in his crusade to reform the ALP. We certainly could do with more Senators of his ilk.

... and Lois

Certainly, of existing parties, the Democrats have the best structure and the clearest commitment to a 'Green' future. Indeed, the suggestion was made at the Getting Together Conference that we should adopt the Democrats and Verdify them. I dwell neither on this possibility nor the reform of the ALP (the Libs seem to have been abandoned to Genghis Khan) because most of the energy and interest was in the three proposals circulating.

There is still the problems of the 'Liberal' origins of the Democrats (although the recent resignations reflect the changing nature of the Party) and the question of how clear and radical an alternative they offer. As you note, they are not seen as a radical alternative.

Two other possibilities for a green electoral movement are seen in the USA: individuals who may join a 'Green Lobby' whose purpose is to educate and lobby both major parties in an effort to change existing policies; also, there are 'Green Caucuses' within each party through which party members gather to influence their party's policy.

Personally, I think the extra-parliamentary movement is most important; direct action and community pressure are more likely to change society. A changing society will no doubt be reflected in a changing government if our electoral system reflects the electorate.

Roman Orzanski  
Adelaide SA.

# BACK COPIES



all those published from autumn 1976 (except vol 2 no 3 of which we will supply a reprint of the major stories) are available as a set for \$57. Add another \$2.75 to include this edition.

# BACKSTAGE

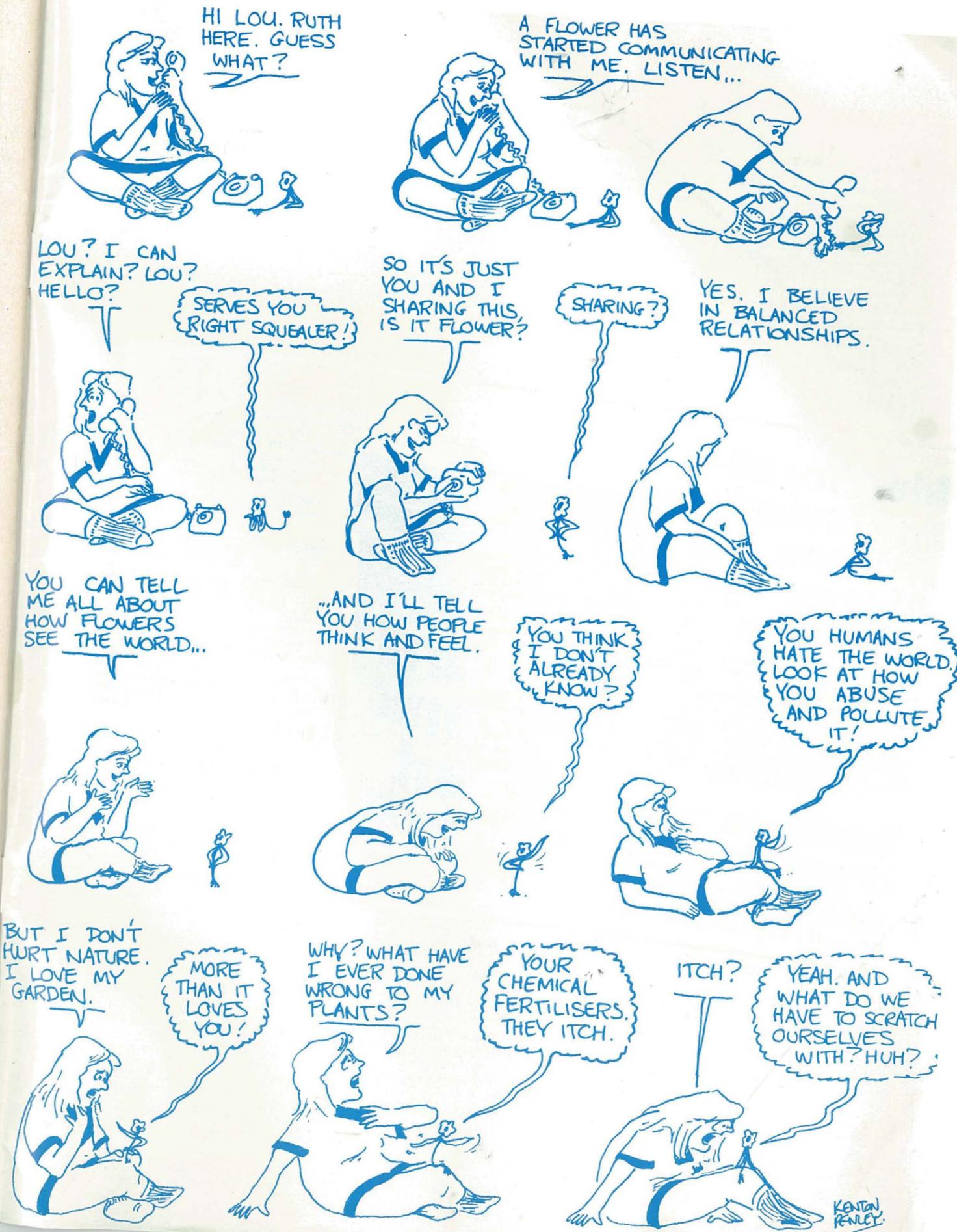
Well, I'm back from overseas to find that Chain Reaction now has a partially built office on the ground floor of the new building. I'm now sitting at a desk - not my desk yet - but certainly a great improvement on the situation before my departure on Sept. 3rd.

I returned just in time to help with the final work on Earth News, so I feel much less guilty about contributing so little to this edition. We now have a busy time ahead catching up with the backlog of office work, accounts etc. but feel sure that by Christmas the office will be organized enough to be able to put our hands on things fairly quickly.

The business part of my trip was spent in Amsterdam and Brussels - a Soil Degradation Conference from Oct. 6-8 in Amsterdam and then one day (Oct.9) in Brussels at the Tropical Rainforest Conference - a very professional event held in the European Parliament Building. Then a different experience and to me the highlight - The Friends of the Earth International Conference in Amsterdam from Oct. 10-12. This was well attended and it was so exciting to find that all the FOE labels on the mailing list for overseas subs are really and truly people. The experience of meeting and getting to know each other amazingly well in such a short time is a great incentive to keep up the FOE Link. A report on the business of the Conference will appear in the next edition of Chain Reaction.

Meanwhile a thanks to those who sent material. Please keep sending, also your comments. Also we greatly appreciate the correspondence we receive - it makes everything worthwhile.

Eileen Goodfield



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