On June 27th, the Australian Labor Party decided not to expand its three named uranium mine policy. We can take satisfaction in the fact that we are responsible for this decision. That we did so in the face of formidable opposition from the mining lobby marks the success even greater.

Of the submissions to the ALP Industrial Policy Review Committee, 97% were either opposed to uranium mining or wanted an industry phase-out. The mining companies were not going to let this minor detail stand in their way. Mining representatives promised that Jadukia and Koongarra, which lie in Kakadu, would bring untilled wealth. Thankfully, the Australian public recognised that Jadukia is priceless and too precious to trade.

The uranium campaign of the past year was not one of high-powered, attention-grabbing direct actions. Rather it was a campaign which took on that most vital link — informing the public and the ALP membership about the nuclear industry. There were several key points we addressed.

We had to tackle the presupposition of the black mages. The government had not allowed Coronation Hill to go ahead. Jadukia and Koongarra should be mined. The fact that the prime minister of the planet could be angered by this is utterly incomprehensible. It is interesting to note that mining companies also claimed that future investors would see Australia as a bad risk. We took the time to find out just how many mining leases are already held in this country. The figure is into the thousands.

After the example of Coronation Hill, some mining companies claimed that the issue of mining was so serious that Aboriginals, their aboriginals should be allowed to go abroad. When we were looking at this argument was the silence of CHA, the owner of the Kinyuir uranium mine in the Rupunirr River Native Park, Western Australia. CHA is one of the most aggressive pro-uranium lobbyists, yet it never once mentioned that the Aboriginals of the Rudall River region completely oppose uranium mining.

It wasn't sexy, but it worked

The first step happened in September and October of 1983, when Audrey Harris, Greenpeace National Union's bass, and I undertook a five-week speaking tour of Australia, using the uranium mining sites and the status capitals. We met with local trade unions, Party representatives, and local people. This was to give us the information we needed for the entire campaign. During our campaign we took a proactive stance and worked hard to get what we learned out to Parliamentarians, ALP members and the public.

From November, we produced a series of nationwide roundtables to all state and federal Labor MPs and senators, at all federal MPs and senators of other parties, all ALP affiliated state branches of trade unions, all state and local ALP branches, and environment groups nationally. The six roundtables covered in such places as the town of pubs and the amount of money paid from uranium mining, through to the world of status of the nuclear industry. We held many street stalls around the country, with letter writing and postcard signing, as well as organizing strategic community teams who targeted key constituents.

We lobbied in Parliament House and spoke to eight ALP Caucus Committees. We presented evidence on how we were raising from the effects of radiation on nurses, the economics of uranium mining and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The lobbying round was greatly aided by Dr. Colin O’Flaherty, Cairns, Dr. Colin has lived in the Northern Territory, and his understanding of the issues we are vital in providing the overview that many ALP members needed.

There is no doubt that this campaign had an impact. Many people in the ALP Conference told us that the ALP central office and

MPs had been snowed under by anti-uranium mining letters. A number of MPs I spoke to indicated that they were providing our information and said I had proven invaluable in countering industry arguments. Our information supported the determined efforts of Jeanette McHugh, Richard Milne and Peter Jackson, the three anti-uranium members of the Policy Review Committee. For the most elegant and eloquent argument against uranium mining, look no further than the speech Jeanette gave during the Conference uranium debates.

Equally important, there were those who said that given the pressure they were feeling from grassroots membership, they could not afford to vote for expansion of the uranium industry. This attitude represents a victory for mobilising and empowering the public to take part in political decision-making.

We can all take comfort from the ALP's decision, because we all made it happen. I must, however, take a few lines to thank some special people — Brian Chinnesthy, who worked as a consultant lobbyist; Dave Fremd and Sandy; John Brown; the Altona campaigner; and the Sydney office and fast. But no mention left Magpie Hine, the uranium campaigner in the Adelaide office whose hard work has borne such rich fruit.

We believe the nuclear industry is such a dangerous and expensive that the collapse will be a blessing. We believe that demand for uranium falls even faster than the public's economic of the nuclear industry will become even more bleak. The present three named mines policy, which in truth is only a few years away, is phase-out policy. By the time of the 1983 ALP Conference, the industries will be in even worse shape. And we'll be in a better position to take them off. Greenpeace will not rest until it keeps an onus on the uranium industry. Many of our campaigns are retrospective. But on this occasion we go through to stop the bulldozers and drilling equipment.

Jean McSorely

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