

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Special
double issue

CHAIN REACTION

RANGER JUSTICE
WHITEMANS GAINED A LAND
RIGHTS ACT & URANIUM MINERS GOT THE
ABORIGINES' LAND



• THE POLITICS OF FOOD
• THE END OF WHALING?

Registered for posting as a publication Category B.

VOL · 4 NO · 2 / 3 · 1978 \$1 · 75

The Other Side of Affluence

This special double issue of Chain Reaction focuses on third world issues: the system of food production and land ownership which leaves half the world undernourished; overpopulation; and the activities of baby food manufacturers and nuclear reactor salesmen who sell their wares — at a price — to the underdeveloped world.

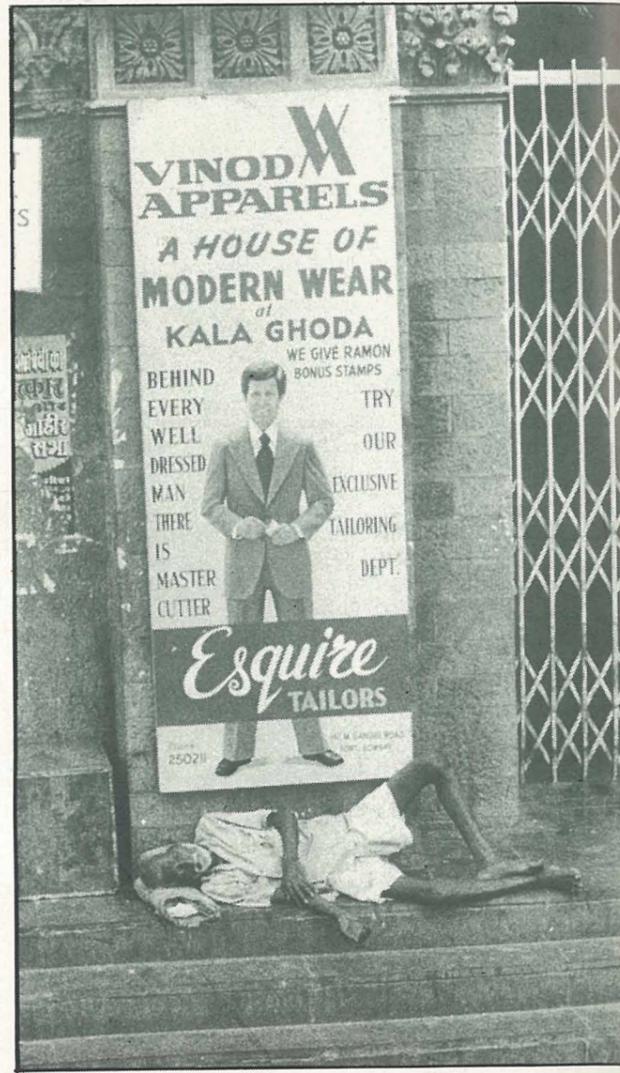
Also included is a major section on the Ranger Agreement, the Kakadu National Park and the methods used in inducing the Northern Land Council to agree to sign away traditional Aboriginal land in the interests of a quick start to uranium mining.

There are similarities between the situation of the Aborigines in the Northern Territory and that of third world countries. The Aborigines are being forced to give up their subsistence lifestyle, with its myths and respect for tradition, and pushed onto the lowest rung of white-controlled Australian society, thrown into contact with the roughest side of a dominant culture. Most third world countries have already been through the same degrading process: they have been colonies in the past, and are still being exploited by Western companies.

Agribusiness is forcing a situation where food is a commodity to be produced for profit rather than to meet the needs of people. This perpetuates starvation in the third world.

In Australia we see the other side of the coin: a lifestyle which puts people (those with jobs) under subtle pressure to spend more, eat more, smoke a lot and waste more. The problems of the third world are linked with ours on many levels. Land in the third world which was once used for growing food is turned over to the production of coffee beans, sold to us courtesy of Nescafe and completely free of nutritive value. The unwanted nuclear reactors of the west are sold to the Philippines for \$1.1 billion.

It is important for Friends of the Earth to recognise the global nature of these problems and incorporate them into their critical perspective. Our concern for appropriate technology and development is shared by other groups, such as International Development Action and Community Aid Abroad. We have scratched the surface of these issues in Chain Reaction, and hope to continue to cover them in future issues.



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Association, Michael Keano, Lyndon Shea (Campaign Against Racial Exploitation).

Chain Reaction is the quarterly magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia. Opinions expressed in Chain Reaction are not necessarily FOE policy. Articles, letters and orders welcome. Address correspondence to:

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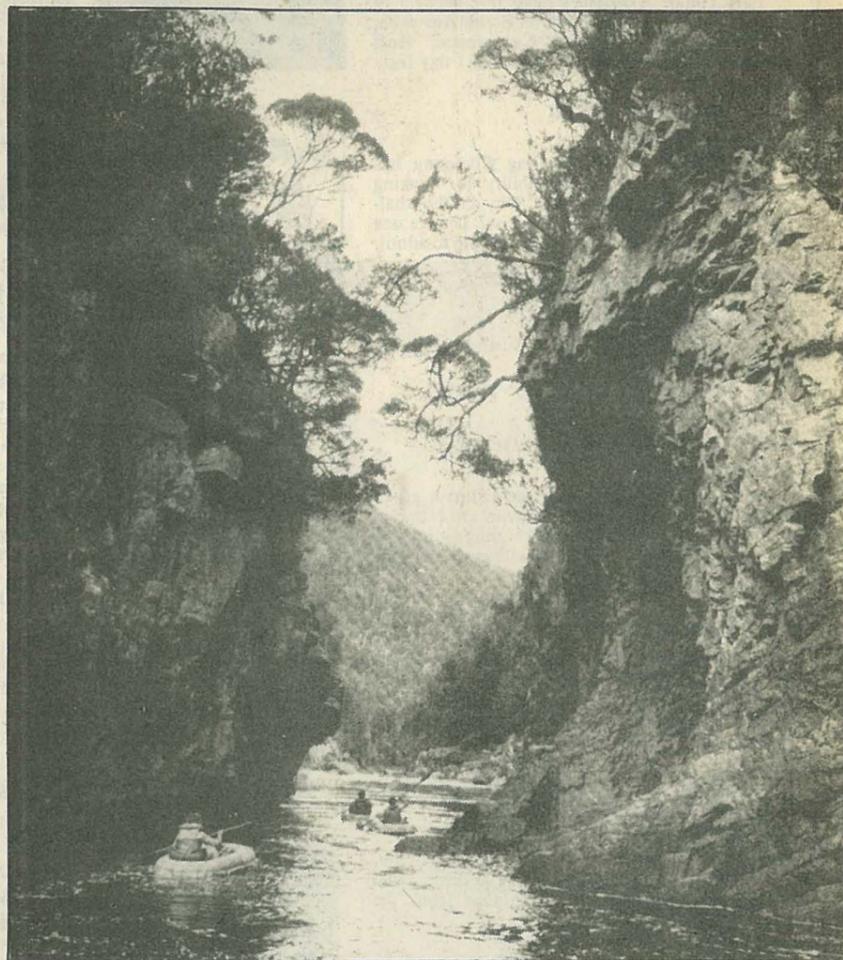


Franklin: biggest campaign since Lake Pedder

The Franklin River is the hottest conservation issue in Tasmania at the moment. It promises to be bigger than the Save Lake Pedder Campaign, and to be more successful. The HEC's Franklin Lower Gordon Power Development scheme proposes to flood the rest of the Gordon River (the Upper Gordon vanished with Lake Pedder) and the wild and beautiful Franklin River.

The Franklin is the last major river left in Australia still without the noxious blackberry and exotic willow, which indicates how little it has been tampered with. It is only accessible by road at one point, and few people have so far floated down it in canoes or rubber duckies. The only scars on the river are from HEC survey routes hacked through the bush, gouged out working areas and equipment at the proposed dam sites, and garbage thrown into the river by HEC workers. Those who have floated down the river claim it to be one of the most beautiful experiences in their lives. From a scientific viewpoint the Franklin is a highly important reference point for botanists in particular. It is also a significant area of wilderness where people may still commune with untrammelled nature in peace and solitude.

Since Pedder the issue of control over the HEC has been a touchy political dilemma. It does not come under the jurisdiction of any government minister, and yet it uses vast amounts of public money in its dam-building programmes (people estimate the Franklin Lower Gordon scheme will cost over \$750 million). Politicians have been loath to take on the institution because of the jobs involved in dam-building and the electricity-intensive industries lured down here with cheap power. However, the truth seems to be sinking into a few heads nowadays that energy-intensive industries are not necessarily labour-intensive and also that with rising fuel costs it is increasingly unlikely that any new



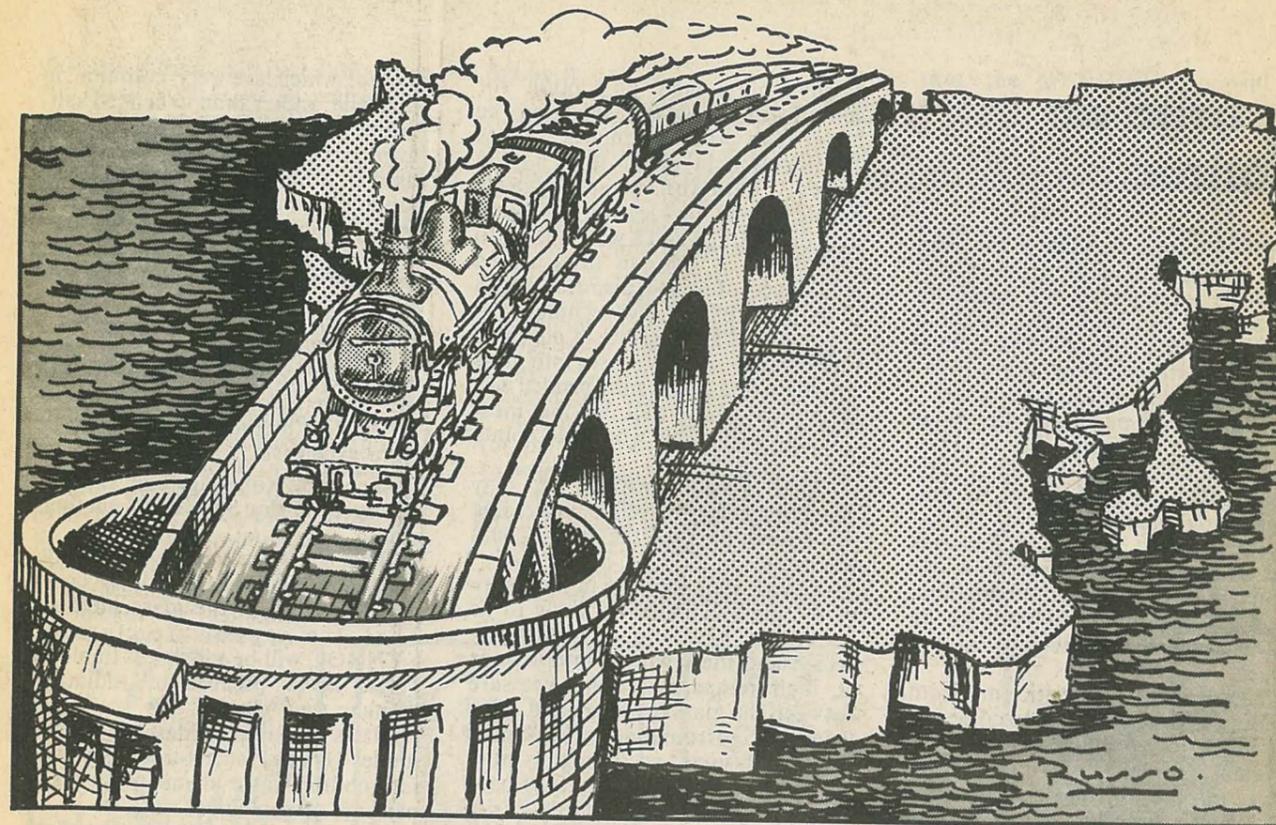
large-scale industries will migrate to our temperate shores. Some are actually leaving.

At the time of writing, political moves are at last under way to bring the HEC under some ministerial control. Its jurisdiction may be extended so that it becomes a total energy authority rather than just a Hydro Electric Commission. However unless some decision-making power is transferred to the government, the HEC's penchant for grandiose, centralized power systems could well lead it to start planning

for (you guessed it) a nuclear power plant. They'll never get away with it.

The Tasmanian parliament will have to decide whether or not to allocate funds for the Franklin-Lower Gordon scheme, probably in early 1979. The fate of the Franklin hangs on the support of environmentalists from all over Australia. Pedder was almost won by massive national support. This campaign has a better chance.

— Di Elliffe, Friends of the Earth, Tasmania



The Tasman's Last Run

On July 28, 1978, the only regular passenger rail service in Tasmania bit the dust. The Tasman Ltd. ran between Hobart, Launceston and Wynyard. Its demise followed more than 30 years of shameful neglect by the Tasmanian State Government: very little track maintenance and meagre funding. The fate of the Tasman Ltd. was finally sealed when the State Government handed the ailing product of its inefficiency and short-sightedness over to Australian National Railways in February, whereupon the Tasman's service was chopped back to three days a week instead of six.

Surprise, surprise, train travel became immediately much less attractive for travellers and out of the question for weekend picnickers. So ANR regretfully announced the end of the Tasman Ltd. The State Government made ineffectual objections and still didn't allocate any money to

save the Tasman Ltd. Friends of the Earth in Burnie announced that they were going to sit-in at the Wynyard end of the Tasman's route as a protest against its service being stopped. FOE (Hobart) planned a similar sit-in at the Hobart end.

The Tasman Ltd. on that historic last run, was alive with raving train enthusiasts who reeled off non-stop statistics about trains, old-age pensioners and school children, the people who had benefited most from the slow but peaceful Tasman Ltd. The media were in force. Very few of the passengers seemed upset at the loss of part of Tassie's public transport system. More were actually getting off on the thrill of the TV cameras, photographers and journalists. The token politician on the train said all the right things (nothing dangerous), and it was painfully obvious that no surge of public opinion was going to

sway the government at the last moment.

As for FOE's sit-in: the railway workers were actually frightened of us! Police were waiting at most of the stations in case hordes of FOEs were to storm the train, armed to the teeth and frightening the little old ladies. Friends of the Earth is a relatively recent phenomenon in sleepy Tasmania and new = suspect down here. The threats of sit-ins (big news!) gained wide publicity for the public transport issue and FOE, and thus were quite successful.

It's ironical that FOE Tasmania's first public meeting was held on the last Saturday train, and was publicised as a protest against the service being cut back to three days a week. Few of us then knew how irrevocable that reduction was. Perhaps if we had occupied the train that day, we might have achieved more.

— Di Elliffe

Synroc or Conroc

On 28th July, we woke to the news that the nuclear waste problem was 'solved'. I remember the adrenalin starting to rise as I read the bold headline in the *Age* "N-Waste made Safe — Artificial rock is the solution, say Australian researchers", with a smiling picture of Professor Ringwood of the Australian National University, author of this 'solution', a detailed report on p.4, an editorial, and a feature on Professor Ringwood. The *Australian* was just as enthusiastic. "Nuclear Waste Problem Solved. A fail safe method, says ANU team", it said, also giving the item a feature in the paper's inner pages.

Then replies and criticisms from FOE and MAUM began to come out — much less prominently than the original splurge! The *Age* ran a story back on p.4, giving criticisms of SYNROC (as the 'solution' was called) by Allen Roberts, and Rob Robotham. The *Canberra Times* ran a piece about 2x3 inches entitled "Reporting of SYNROC 'Highly unethical'", quoting FOE's Paul Marshall, while the *Age* ran a very small piece, "Critics query SYNROC waste research", the result of a press conference given by MAUM's Jim Falk and myself. It was attended by a single reporter. We must have got about four paragraphs of space.

Contrast Ringwood's technique with the media:

We learned later from an article by Mungo McCallum, that before a press conference of "unprecedented size and disorder", opened by the A.N.U.'s vice chancellor, Professor Anthony Low, the University's public relations section had spent some time teasing the press with lines like "It's bigger than Gough Whitlam's appointment, and it gets Fraser off the hook".

So what was the proposal that made so much publicity, and is it in any way a solution to the waste problem, or 'a good snow job'?

The SYNROC disposal strategy is

hardly more than an option for solidification of waste, which may be better than other techniques such as solidification in glass. It is not an overall solution to the waste problem, and tackles only a small part of it. Ringwood's work falls into two parts: A critique of accepted techniques of waste disposal and a description of the new technique.

Ringwood's criticisms of accepted proposals to solidify waste into glass cylinders and put it into bedded salt formations may well be the most valuable part of his work. He points out:

— That glass is unstable and may de-vitrify to form crystals, increasing the possibility that the waste could leach out.

— That the temperature in the centre of the glass cylinders is likely to be quite high (300°C) due to radioactive decay, and there will be interactions at high temperature and pressure between the glass cylinders and brine from the surrounding salt. Under these conditions, according to him, borosilicate glasses of the type used to immobilise waste could de-vitrify in as short a time as a few weeks.

Ringwood has thus administered a blow to the accepted waste disposal strategy, while the media attention given to his work at least has the merit of emphasising that the waste problem exists and is important. However, he offers nothing resembling a solution.

The SYNROC proposal involves joining the radioactive wastes by a chemical process with other elements, to form crystalline rock. This is a solution that appeals to geologists because it seems to mimic the natural world: radioactive elements are often found in naturally occurring crystalline rock (pitchblende, a rock which contains uranium and other radioactive elements, is one example).

The vitrification method appears primitive by comparison. There is no chemical bonding of the wastes: wastes are simply mixed with glass, and left hanging in suspension, and there is a much greater danger that they could be washed out.

Ringwood's proposal entails burying the wastes in deep shafts in crystalline rock formations such as

granite, which are very common in Australia, rather than in bedded salt. Before being buried the wastes (formed into SYNROC) would be cased in a nickel-iron alloy which is stable in geological formations over long periods. This would be surrounded by a mixture of crushed magnesite and serpentine rock to prevent corrosion by acid or alkaline water, and the whole would be held in another nickel-iron bucket. The entire process is more cumbersome and more sophisticated than the vitrification method. It would also be more expensive.

According to Ringwood the advantages of the SYNROC method are:

— That the waste component is only 2-10% of the whole solid, as compared to 25% in the glass method. Thus the crystal structure of SYNROC will be much less liable to break down because of radiation damage than glass.

— It is possible to design "tailor-made" crystal structures that will immobilise waste elements for long periods, of geological time.

However, there are quite a few questions raised by his system.

- The suggestion for solidification is supported by 12 months laboratory work; the suggestion for burying the waste in granite formations is supported by no tests at all.

- There is no guarantee that SYNROC will be immune to radiation damage as Ringwood says it will be.

In order to test SYNROC's immunity to disintegration from radiation damage, he would need to test it with the most radioactive materials he could find. He has carried out tests only with small quantities of uranium.

According to Ringwood we can "confidently expect other tetravalent actinides to display similar behaviour" ("tetravalent actinides" include Plutonium, Curium and Americium). The tests done on uranium were meant to predict the behaviour of these elements and Neptunium as well, all of which have widely varying properties.

Nothing at all has been done with fission products such as Strontium 90 or Cesium 137, from which most

damage during the first 400 years will result. As it is, we have absolutely no basis to predict the behaviour of SYNROC containing wastes over even 20 years, let alone the million year periods needed.

All Ringwood has shown conclusively is that he can create an artificial equivalent of a uranium ore-body.

The geological side of the whole proposal is also very sketchy. The SYNROC proposal requires us to know, with a higher degree of certainty than would ordinarily be required in geological surveys, that:

— The granite is free of groundwater at great depth, and that the shaft itself will not allow water to get in.

— That if any water does get into the waste repository it will not, under great heat and pressure, penetrate the nickel-iron container by cor-

roding it.

— That there are no faults in the region where the waste is buried, and that the container will not be crushed to pieces by rock pressure.

What are we to make of Ringwood's breezy statement that "even if a small amount of radwaste somehow escaped from the SYNROC cylinders, and diffused out along joints in the granite, it would be trapped by the overlying dome of folded sediments, precipitated, and absorbed"?

And how is the SYNROC scheme (or any other waste disposal scheme) to be implemented with the necessary extreme reliability, when the one thing that *can* be guaranteed is that there will be mistakes?

One is left wondering why the *Age* and the *Australian* accepted the story as uncritically as they did. The fact is

that the SYNROC proposal is simply too sketchy to be convincing, to anyone who actually reads it and sees what it is about. Part of the explanation may be that they were taken in by the fanfare with which it was announced — that they were to some extent conned. The other side of the explanation may be that they were *looking* for something like this anyway, and so were quite willing to be conned by CONROC -er, SYNROC. Ringwood told them what they wanted to hear, which was that the problem was solved and science was wonderful, not that there were holes in the solution, and there were problems science could not solve, and it would require a lot of hard work before we could be sure of anything anyway.

John R. Hallam.



Tasmania gets A-bomb

Members of Friends of the Earth in Hobart have assembled an atom bomb in a State Government machine shop. The bomb, weighing 45 kg, was made from mild steel and lead using information obtained from the State Library. According to the builders, Chris Harries and Paul Dimmick, terrorists could build a similar bomb in two weeks if they worked on it solidly. The bomb is complete, except for 5.6 kg of plutonium which would be required to fuel it.

It was built to demonstrate how easy it would be for terrorists to construct an atomic bomb if they could get access to plutonium.

Referendum closes nuclear plant

In a referendum held on November 5, Austrians have voted not to open the country's first nuclear reactor, which had already been built at Zwentendorf, 30 km from Vienna.

The decision to leave the reactor

closed was passed by a narrow margin of 50.47% to 49.53%. Five hundred and thirty million dollars had already been spent on building the reactor.

The Austrian chancellor, Mr Kreisky, had earlier accused the anti-nuclear movement of being "nazis", and had threatened to resign if the vote went against opening the reactor. He said after the referendum, "It's a shocking defeat, but the result of the referendum must be respected." Zwentendorf is known to be an earthquake zone. The anti-nuclear movement campaigned on this, and the Government's inability to solve the waste-disposal problem.

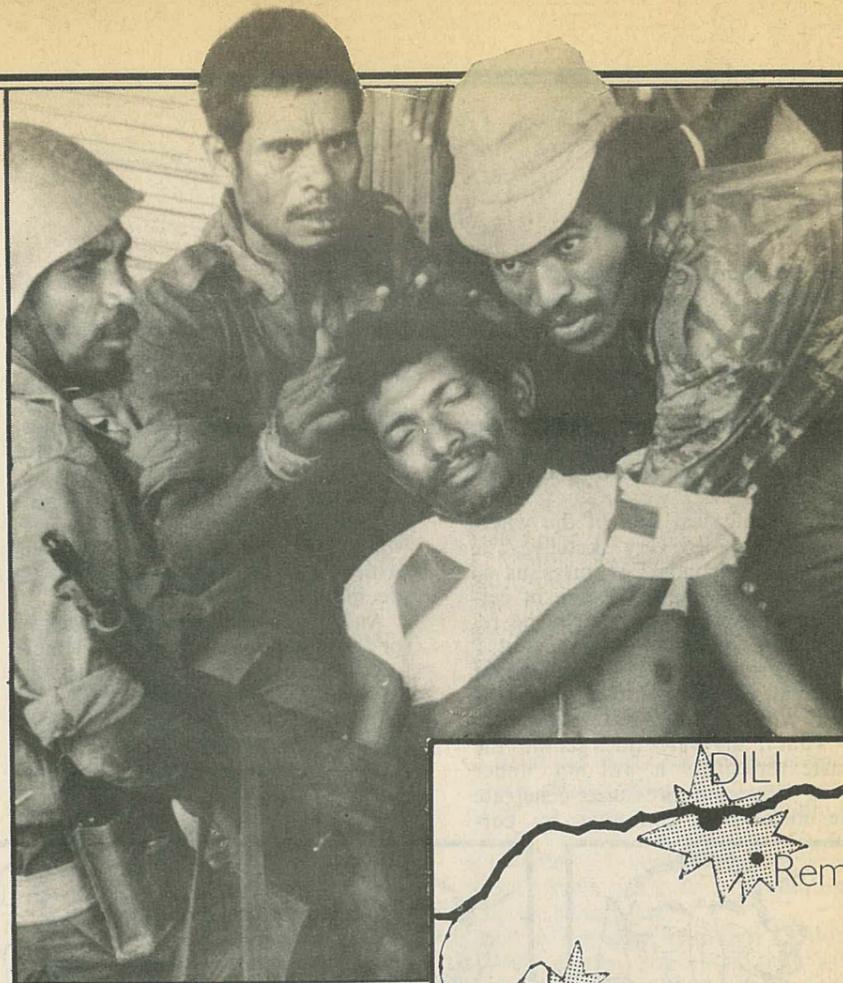
UNITED PRESS, Vienna

East Timor Can Fretilin Survive?

The Indonesian Government has claimed recently that resistance to the take-over of East Timor is almost completely ended, following the capture of Arsenio Horta and Xavier do Amaral last September. According to reports in the *Melbourne Age*¹ a military spokesman in Jakarta claimed that Arsenio Horta, a "prominent leader" of the Fretilin independence movement, had "surrendered with his followers to Indonesian troops after realising their struggle was useless". Another spokesman said that there were about 400 Fretilin soldiers left, and only a quarter of them were armed. He said the capture of Horta was "bound to accelerate their final disintegration".

The capture of Arsenio Horta and former Fretilin leader Xavier do Amaral were announced less than a week before the scheduled visit of a party of foreign diplomats to East Timor. Peter Hastings, who accompanied the diplomatic party, sent back a story to the *Sydney Morning Herald*² which told of refugee camps where thousands of people were suffering from malaria, tuberculosis and malnutrition. He was told that the people had been forced up into the hills by Fretilin soldiers and had only just come down, driven by hunger. Officials told Richard Gill that there were still about 5,000 people in the hills who were being forced to clear land and grow food for Fretilin remnants, and "others being intimidated by Fretilin" who were "too scared or too ignorant to come down".³

The Australia East Timor Association, which monitors Fretilin broadcasts from Darwin, is cynical about the Indonesian claims. According to the AETA neither Arsenio Horta nor Xavier do Amaral were in a position of leadership in Fretilin at the time of their capture. Arsenio Horta's only connection with Fretilin was through

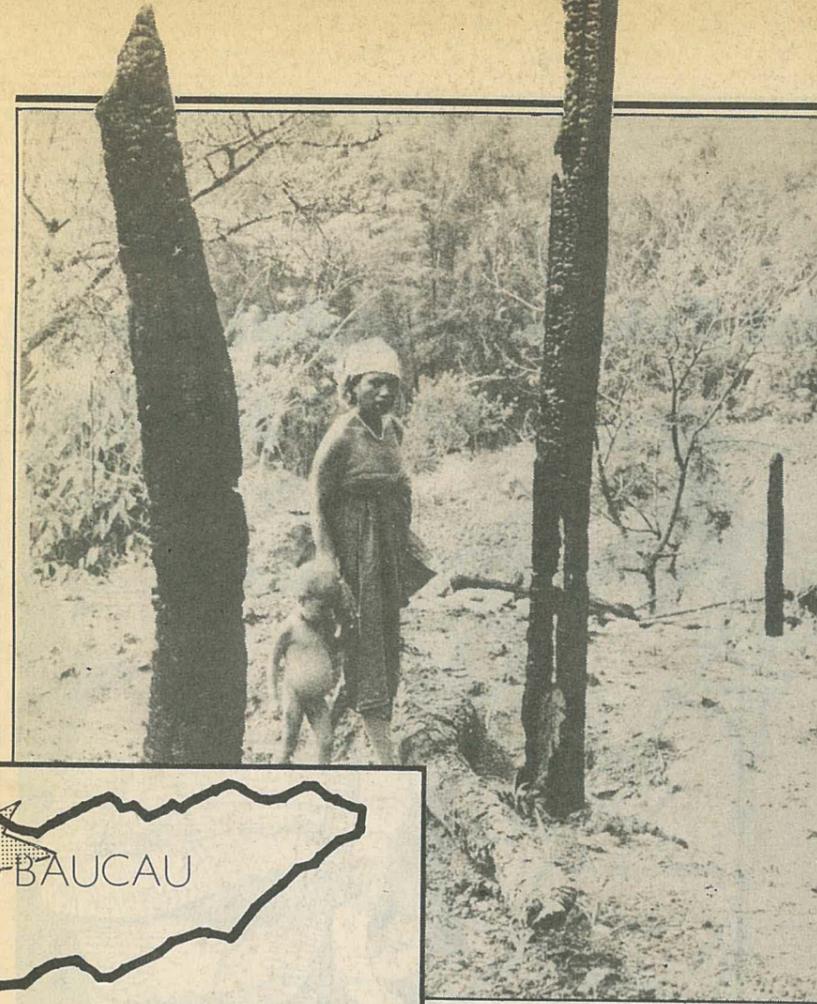


his brother Jose Ramos Horta, who is Fretilin's Representative to the United Nations. Arsenio was in fact involved with UDT, a rival party. He had been captured by Fretilin soldiers some years before and taken up to the hills with them. Xavier do Amaral had been accused of disloyalty and held a virtual prisoner by Fretilin since August 1977. One account of his capture, from an official in Timor, said that Xavier do Amaral, who was in very poor health, had been abandoned by Fretilin soldiers, along with 30 other prisoners. They had given themselves up to a patrol of home guardsmen.⁴ The Fretilin broadcast on the subject said only that "Xavier do Amaral has betrayed us once more by surrendering to the enemy". It is possible, however, that Xavier do Amaral had no alternative as he was extremely weak and needed medical attention.

The AETA claims that, although Indonesian troops have captured the major towns in East Timor, Fretilin still controls the hinterland which is hilly country, almost impassable except by foot or on a donkey. The Association points out that the diplomatic party which visited East



Timor did not go to any inland areas and had to fly from township to township. Of the four towns visited, Maliana is on the border with Indonesian West Timor and was among the first targets of the Indonesian assault, as were Dili and Bacau, the two biggest towns in East Timor, and both are easily accessible by sea. Indonesia has had several years to pacify these towns. The fourth town, Remexio, is only 15 km from Dili, and is the nearest town to the capital. As late as June, 1978, when Richard Carleton, a journalist for the ABC, asked if he could visit it the town was not under Indonesian control, much to the embarrassment of local officials. The town was not captured till after July, and 10,000 Indonesian troops were required to



"rehabilitation" and "instruction" before being allowed back to their land. The AETA claims these people are being held in concentration-camp conditions because they have supported Fretilin.

It is impossible to get an accurate picture of the situation in East Timor while reporters are not allowed in to observe the fighting. However Indonesian propaganda and Australian diplomatic sources seem questionable, especially after the diplomatic cover-up of the deaths of five Australian newsmen in December, 1975.

Arsenio Horta and Xavier do Amaral have been produced in support of Indonesian claims that the Fretilin struggle is hopeless. However, both these men are prisoners of war. Their statements may have been made under duress. Jose Martins, another East Timorese leader, spoke in favour of Indonesian take-over at a United Nations meeting in 1975. He said later:

"On 16th of December, 1975, I addressed the Security Council of the United Nations as president of the KOTA party ...

take it.⁵

Timor is a rural country and most of the population is still on the land, not in the cities. The AETA has received repeated reports that crops have been sprayed with defoliants and rural areas bombed. Napalm has also been reported.

The East Timor News Agency also reports that thousands of people are starving in refugee camps.⁶ It says, however, that the people have been kept in these camps longer than was reported in the press. They have been given inadequate clothing, food and medical supplies and are not allowed back into the countryside to grow crops. According to one Indonesian official (quoted by Warwick Boetler of the ABC⁷) people at the refugee camp at Maliana are being given

"I came in December not as a free man. I was forced, like the others then, [Guilherme Goncalves and Mario Carrascalao] as a prisoner, to read what the Indonesians had written ..."

Under such circumstances there is no reason to believe that the war in East Timor is over. The East Timor News Agency is strongly of the opinion that resistance to the Indonesian take-over will continue for several years — in fact it may not end till Indonesia has wiped out most of the original population of East Timor.

The Australian Government has picked this time to recognise the Indonesian annexation of East Timor, and Indonesia is lobbying for recognition by the United Nations Security Council.

Unfortunately, until foreign observers and the International Red Cross are allowed into East Timor, official recognition of the Indonesian take-over will not stop the war, nor will it be any guarantee that people in refugee camps will get help. Official recognition will only legitimize Indonesian control of the island, allowing the Indonesians to carry on the war and make reprisals against political opponents at will, free of international scrutiny.

Further information about the situation in East Timor is available from:

EAST TIMOR NEWS AGENCY,
4th Floor, 232 Castlereagh St.,
SYDNEY, NSW, 2000.

(Subscriptions to ETNA: \$5 for six months or \$10 for one year.)

Or:
TIMOR INFORMATION SERVICE,
1st Floor, 183 Gertrude St.,
FITZROY, Vic. 3065.

Sources

- ¹ Melbourne Age, 6 & 7/9/78
- ² Peter Hastings, Sydney Morning Herald, 11/9/78
- ³ Richard Gill, Sun, 11/9/78
- ⁴ Melbourne Herald, 9/9/78
- ⁵ East Timor News, No. 41, 14/9/78
- ⁶ Warwick Boetler, ABC Radio, News from Asia, 10/9/78
- ⁷ Jill Jolliffe: East Timor — Nationalism 9 Colonialism, 1978 (p. 182)

Aborigines Resist Takeover at Aurukun

Aborigines at Aurukun and Mornington Island are refusing to co-operate with Ken Brown, the administrator appointed by the Queensland Government. According to Mick Miller, head of the North Queensland Land Council, "the chairmen of both the communities have said that they will go bush and live off the land rather than accept money from the Queensland Government."

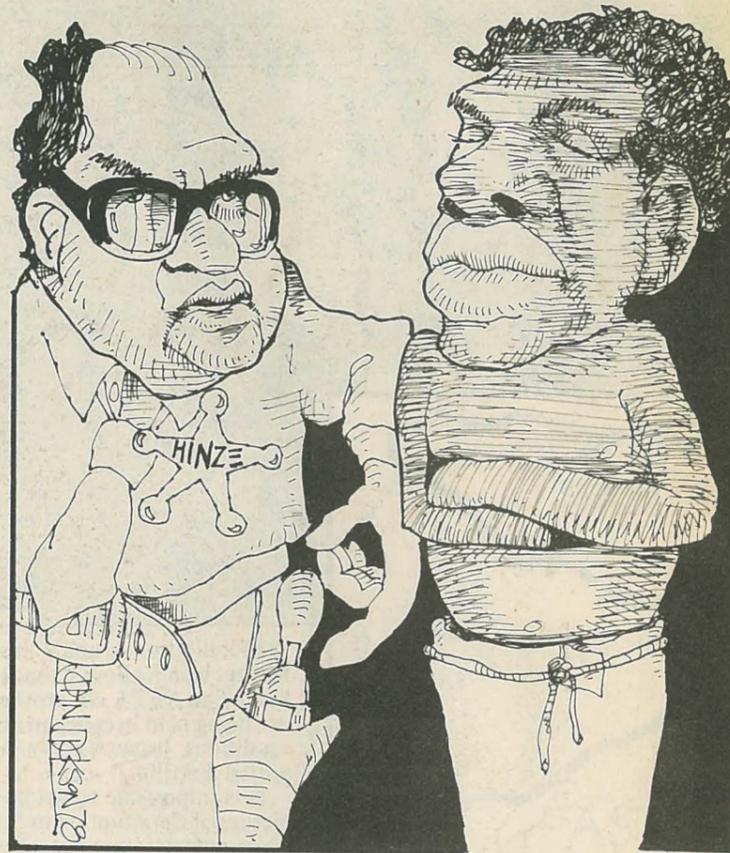
Mr Hinze, the Queensland Minister for Local Government, admitted that Mr Brown "had encountered some difficulty in establishing his authority" and said an Act had been passed to give Mr Brown power to control access to Aurukun and Mornington Island and throw out "agitators and stirrers". Mr Hinze said there were about 12 people he would describe as drop-outs, agitators and stirrers and that the "necessary steps" would be taken to overcome this. Five policemen have been stationed at each settlement.

Aurukun and Mornington Island were put under the control of an administrator in August this year when their local councils were sacked.

The councils had been set up only about three months earlier as a "compromise solution", after Mr Bjelke-Petersen seized the two missions from the Uniting Church and stripped them of their legal status as Aboriginal Reserves (see Chain Reaction last issue).

Mr Brown is officially only managing the two communities as an interim measure till new council elections can be held. However previous experience suggests this will not happen for a long time: Mr Brown is also in charge of the Torres Strait Islands, which he has administered on the same basis for several years, without setting a date for council elections.

The sacked councillors complain that they met with constant frustrations in dealing with the Queensland Government and there



are doubts as to whether Mr Bjelke-Petersen ever seriously intended to allow the Aboriginal local councils to take control of their own affairs.

The leaders of the two communities have been unsuccessful in their attempts to have them taken over by the Federal Government. According to a report by Cameron Forbes (AGE, 17/8/78) they were told in a meeting with Mr Bjelke-Petersen, "I know Fraser ten times better than I even know you. I talk to him nearly every week. Every second day he rings me up . . . they won't do anything, I can tell you right now."

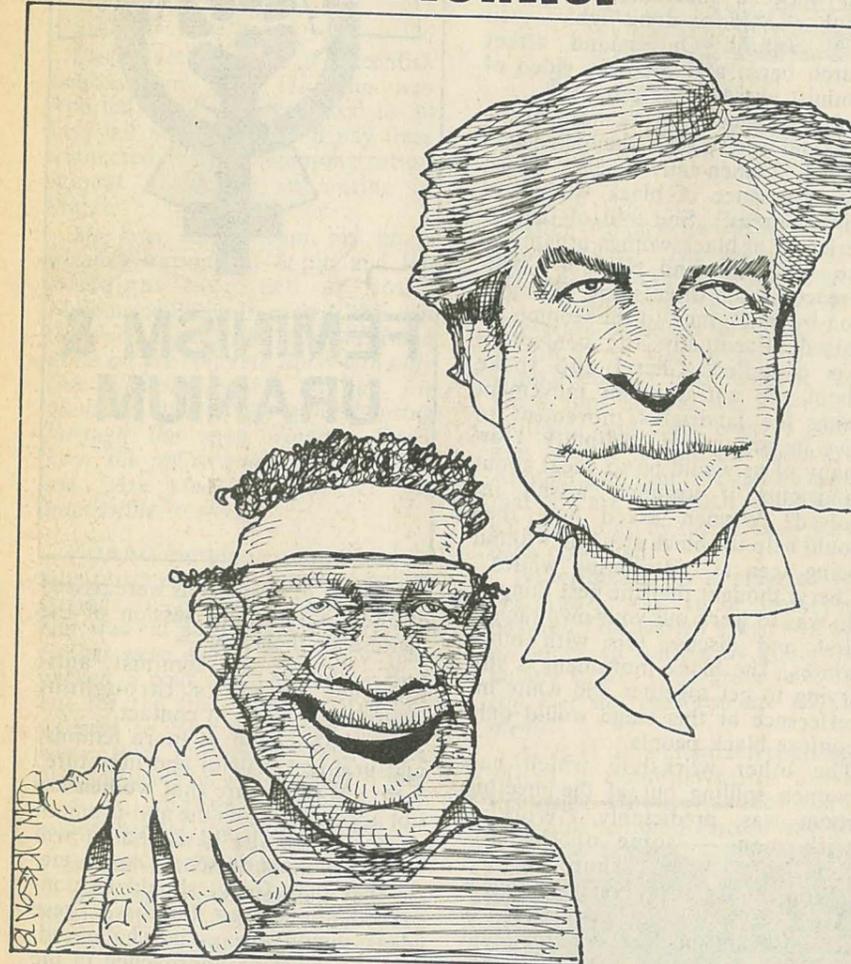
Aboriginal people believe Aurukun is being taken over by the State Government to allow bauxite mining to go ahead in 1980. The bauxite is richer at Aurukun than at Weipa, and company plans indicate

that the Weipa mine will be phased out in favour of Aurukun. According to Mick Miller, who has flown over the area, "The companies have already marked out huge areas where they plan to mine — you can see them gouged out from the air, ready for strip mining. The leases come to within a mile of the Aurukun settlement. When the Queensland Government says that bauxite had nothing to do with the decision to move into the reserves they are lying."

SOURCES

Melbourne HERALD, and SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 29/8/78, Melbourne AGE 17/8/78, Comments from Mick Miller from the transcript of a meeting of Aboriginal leaders.

Signs of Light on the North West Frontier



The South Australian Dunstan Government has at last decided to haul down the tarnished flag of white supremacy. It is to grant the Pitjantjatjara land-rights over much of their traditional lands within South Australia. Those who are alarmed at the way Bjelke Peterson is enabling the Aurukun mission in Queensland to be set aside for future bauxite mining, and at the way Sir Charles Court is clearing the way for the unfettered exploitation of the Kimberleys in WA should take hope.

Pitjantjatjara land spreads over the borders of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern

Territory — from the southern flanks of the Musgrave Ranges north to Lake Amadeus, east to the Basedow Ranges and west to the western limits of the Musgrave Ranges. Out of the ranges the landscape is dominated by parallel lines of sand ridges; spinifex is the dominant vegetation. The climate is hot and dry (rainfall 5 to 8 inches, humidity 25%).

The area granted in South Australia covers nearly 7 million hectares. It is to be vested in a new type of land-owning body called the Pitjantjatjara Peoples. Membership will be the right of all those who have

rights, duties and obligations by Aboriginal tradition to those lands. The Pitjantjatjara will be able to control entry, to deal with simple offences by tribal law, to prevent mining, as well as having rights to all mining royalties should they allow it. In a long-awaited echo of the Woodward Commission's statement that, to deny Aboriginals the right to stop mining on their own land is a denial of land rights, the South Australian Premier (Mr Dunstan) has said:

"The Pitjantjatjara feel that if they are given title to their land, but are not given a final say in what could be extensive mining developments, then the legislation would not be worth introducing."

There is believed to be some potential for base metal deposits in the eastern Musgrave Ranges and for hydro-carbons in the Officer Basin. There are quantities of low-grade nickel associated with chrysophase — Australian jade. Aborigines have been mining chrysophase in the area, at Pipalyatjara for the past 10 years.

Provision will be made for Pitjantjatjara control of the management and conservation of the land. Controls can be implemented through the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act, but they can only be put into effect by "the making of recommendations by the Pitjantjatjara Peoples for the creation of controlled areas. Such areas should have status similar to a National Park" (Report of the Working Party on Pitjantjatjara Land Rights, Recommendation 31).

Compare this to Kakadu — the land the Ranger Inquiry recommended should become Aboriginal Land as a national park. It will only be Aboriginal Land if the owners sign a 100-year lease with the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Control of the area will lie with the Director within the terms of an agreement "negotiated" with the Northern Land Council. As with the Ranger Agreement, the Government can appoint an arbitrator if the Land Council refuses to sign, and sign on its behalf if it refuses the arbitrated agreement.

Women Against Uranium

On the weekend of 19-20 August over 200 women from every state in Australia attended the first-ever "Feminism and Uranium" conference in Melbourne.

Well, why a feminism and uranium conference?

Throughout Australia a great number of women are becoming active in the anti-uranium movement (many in local anti-uranium groups) and have found that increasing political activity has led to a questioning of traditional female roles (e.g. what do women DO in the anti-uranium movement—work as activists or as supporters for male activists?) Contact with feminists working in the movement has further accelerated and given depth to these ideas. Similarly, feminists whose previous political activity has been in the women's movement have found that the spectre of a nuclear society with its vast infringements of civil liberties threatens to destroy the reforms they have fought so hard to win and make long-term feminist goals impossible to achieve.

It is obvious that the two are linked, especially now as we see our feminist anti-uranium demands knocked back especially now as we see our feminist and anti-nuclear demands knocked back by the same sections of society. Feminists are helping to broaden the anti-uranium movement into one for a non-nuclear and non-oppressive world.

The conference structure was one of workshops and discussion and included: 3rd World Women and Nuclear Power; a feminist's view of the environment crisis; Women in a Nuclear State; Alternate Energy Systems; Women, Non-Violence & Peace Movements; Women, Technology and Nuclear Power — the list went on and on. Practical help for women involved in the anti-uranium movement included workshops on "Meeting Procedures", learning how to chair

meetings (and wondering why you never knew before) and a "Graphic Skills" workshop. Women's video and films were screened throughout the weekend including, "Me and Daphne", "If you don't fight... you lose" (about Queensland street march bans) and overseas video of feminist anti-nuclear groups.

The most popular workshops of the weekend were Cheryl Buchanan's on "Black Women activists; land rights; the experience of black women in mining areas". She told of the experiences of black women organising the "Racism and Sexism" conference — the threats and intimidation by black men to the women involved. Eventually the conference was cancelled. Cheryl also spoke about the anti-uranium movement using the landrights movement to give its arguments credibility. How many of us would be so vocal about landrights if uranium wasn't involved? Women asked how they could help the black struggle without being seen as "interfering whites". Cheryl thought that the best thing to do was to work out your own racism first and discuss this with other whites. The black movement is still trying to get together and white interference at this stage would only confuse black people.

The other workshop which had women spilling out of the meeting room was, predictably, "Working with men — some of the difficulties". A workshop entitled "Women Against Nuclear Power Are Everywhere" included overseas feminist anti-nuclear contacts and copies of German and British feminist anti-nuclear literature.

Unlike most anti-uranium conferences where you have to be aggressive and quick off the mark to get your point across (or just be heard) the structure of the conference and the attitudes of the women attending allowed for free, constructive discussion and criticism. At some of the larger workshops there were nearly seventy people present yet there was no shouting or confusion. People seemed actually to LISTEN to one another! Sadly, this is the exception rather than the rule at anti-uranium conferences and meetings.



FEMINISM & URANIUM

A number of resolutions were passed at the final plenary session of the conference including:—

- ☆ Setting up feminist anti-uranium networks throughout Australia to keep in contact.

- ☆ Publication of more feminist and uranium articles and literature.

- ☆ Making sure that women are not appealed to join the anti-uranium campaign on the basis that it will hurt their kids, husband, home etc. or that they (only) should be concerned about their families. These ideas should always be challenged. Women must be approached in the same way men are approached for their support in the anti-uranium issue — that they personally will be affected and they have a right to say how the world will be run, in their own right not just on behalf of their children.

And a personal reaction?

Well, I sailed throughout the rest of the week on the energy. I received from that conference and the women there — feeling we can win! Because, sisterhood UNITES all women. Sisterhood IS powerful.

— Kim O'Sullivan

(Right) Rolf Heimann's view of prison life (from *Nation Review*)

(Below) Rolf Heimann addressing crowd after his release from Pentridge.

Heimann Released from Pentridge

Last issue the arrest of Queenfish demonstrator Rolf Heimann was reported. Rolf was sentenced to 30 days jail after refusing to pay fines connected with a demonstration against a nuclear submarine in March.

He was taken from his house without warning at 8 pm and left overnight in a cell at South Melbourne Police Station. "This was the worst night I had to spend. I had to lie on the concrete floor with only two stinking pieces of rag for blankets, and an icy wind blowing through the open window. Every hour the police came in and asked me, 'Are you all right?' It was impossible to sleep."

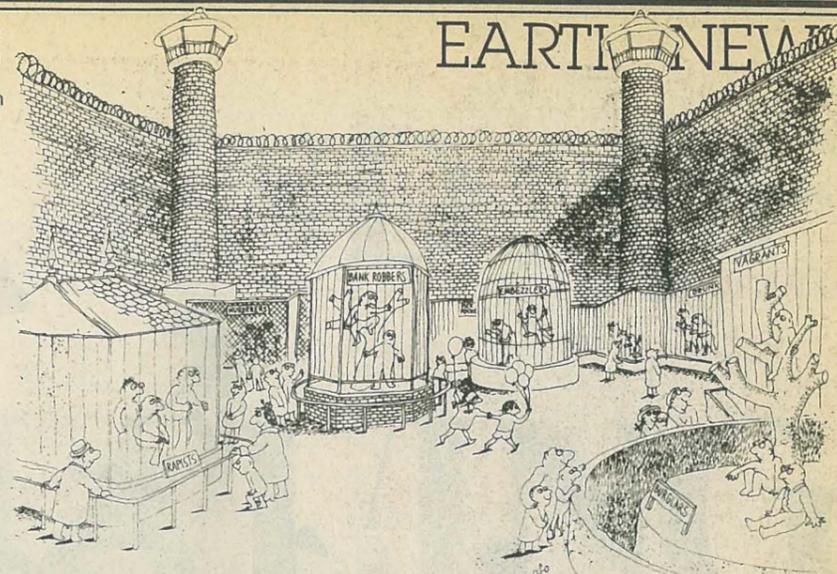
The next morning a van arrived to take prisoners from suburban police stations to Pentridge, where their hair was cut and beards shaved. No clothes were issued. Rolf's wife had packed a coat and jumper for him but for the first week he was not allowed to have these and had to wear thin clothes he had been wearing when he was arrested. There was no change of clothes or underwear for the whole period.

Conditions in Pentridge

The Pentridge exercise yard was freezing cold in August. Most of the prisoners seemed hopeless and depressed: old men with nowhere else to go and other people who could not speak properly and seemed to be retarded. Medical examination consisted of going into the doctor's room and almost directly out again.

"The doctor asked me what my name was and whether I had any complaints. I said 'no' and he ticked everything off on his list without looking up."

Rolf was weighed every day, however, as he went on a hunger strike as soon as he was admitted to Pentridge.



After two days he was moved into a private cell. "This had graffiti on the wall which read 'Workers Unite for Communism!' I think this is where the 'politicos' are put."

Some of the wardens were sympathetic to him. One of them heard that he was an anti-nuclear protestor and came over to talk to him about radiation poisoning. Another told him, "It can be argued that you are a political prisoner, but we have to go by the rules — you've been convicted."

Nevertheless, as a prisoner Rolf Heimann was in a powerless position. One warden asked him what he hoped to achieve by going on a hunger strike. The warden said: "We can just say that you ate all your meals."

After 11 days Heimann supporters called a demonstration outside Pentridge. However as they had not been able to communicate with Rolf

they did not know that Lela Heimann, his wife, had paid his fine that morning. Lela is Samoan and is frightened of Australian cities, especially so as she had been receiving threatening phone calls since the case was heard. She did not want to stay alone at night any longer.

Rolf, weighing seven kilos less than when he went in, was out in time to talk to the crowd of sympathisers and launch his book "Unfair to Hippocrits". Asked later whether he thought it was worth going to jail as a protest he said that if the Nuclear Codes Act is invoked many people may be sent to jail who cannot afford to go and will suffer. "I think it's important to do everything we can to show that we object to being treated like this."

"If we really want to achieve anything, however, we must have group action."

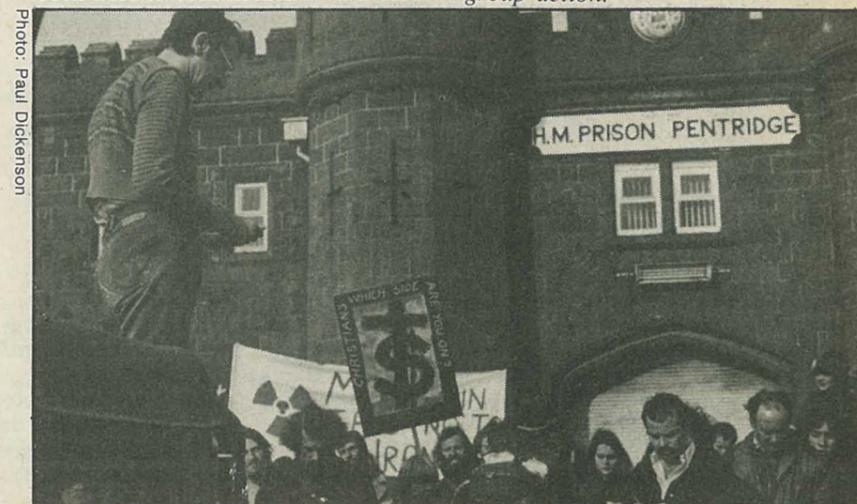


Photo: Paul Dickenson



Photos: Michael Vale

THE END OF WHALING

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On Monday 31 July the Inquiry into Whales and Whaling, promised at the last federal election, opened at Albany, WA, near Australia's sole remaining whaling station at Frenchman's Bay.

The Inquiry was the result of an intense campaign, in which 100,000 signatures were collected for a peti-

tion to ban whaling and thousands of letters of protest were sent to government ministers. In defence of whaling, Cheynes Beach Holdings, the company which owns the station, claimed that about a thousand people were directly or indirectly dependent on whaling, and the township of Albany would suffer enormously if it

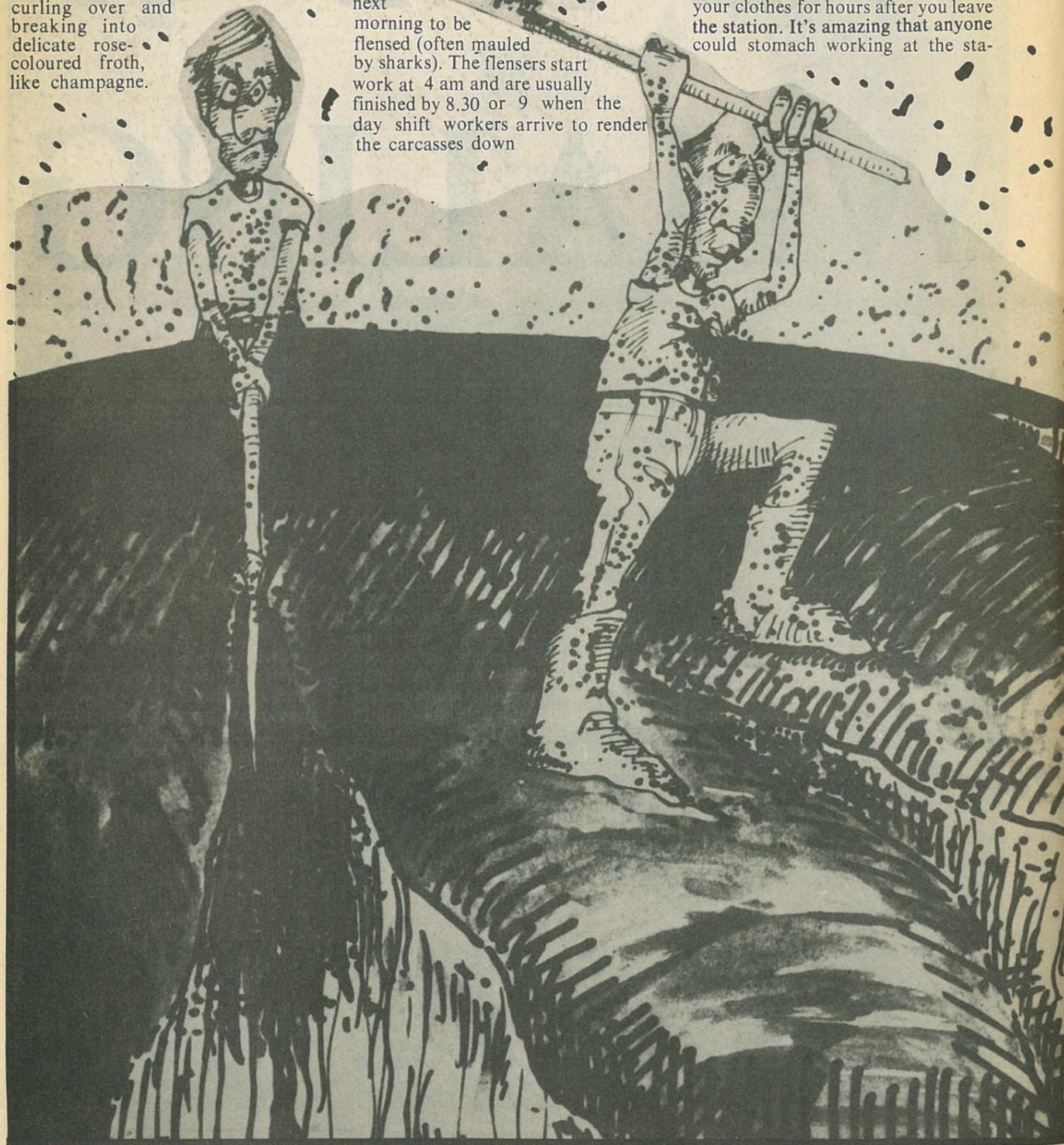
were banned. At the time the company actually employed 102 people, with 208 dependents between them, and 17 of the workers were sacked during the Inquiry. Only a handful of people were involved — few enough to be ignored by state and federal governments — but to them the closing of Cheynes Beach was a disaster.

The whaling station at Frenchman's Bay is a dilapidated old structure, with its barbed wire, rusty corrugated iron and smell of rotting meat. Giant whale carcasses half hacked up were littering the cement flensing yard.*A huge head had rolled over and leant against the fence. The sea was dyed with blood; the waves curling over and breaking into delicate rose-coloured froth, like champagne.

Tourists crowded forward in excitement as another whale was brought in. The day before 14 whales had been sighted and 9 were killed — an exceptionally good catch. The whales are moored off the station overnight and brought in the

next morning to be flensed (often mauled by sharks). The flensers start work at 4 am and are usually finished by 8.30 or 9 when the day shift workers arrive to render the carcasses down

into oil, protein solubles and meat-and-bone meal, which is used as stockfeed. Because of yesterday's big haul, however, the flensers were still working at 11.30, peeling away the streaky white fat in slices and chopping the meat. The flesh and blood of the whales is almost black, with a rich, nauseating smell which clings to your clothes for hours after you leave the station. It's amazing that anyone could stomach working at the sta-



* flensing — stripping the whale of its blubber

tion, but the flensers enjoy showing off to the perpetual audience of revolted, fascinated tourists.

Meanwhile the souvenir shop and whaling museum was doing a brisk trade in carved whales' teeth. None of the people working at the station knew that Mr Saleeba, the Executive Director of Cheynes Beach Holdings, the company which owns the station, had announced that morning that the whaling operations would be closing down.

The shore-based workers knew nothing about the announcement till they heard it on the news later that morning. Most of the seamen, who were out catching whales all day, would not have heard the news till they got home that night.

Because of the timing of the announcement, (9.30 am on the first day of the hearings) it was generally assumed that the decision to close Cheynes' Beach Whaling Company was forced by the Inquiry. However the decision had actually been made well before the hearings started and shareholders had already been notified. They had been told that overseas buyers were reluctant to commit themselves to ordering sperm oil in advance and had made a serious move towards using alternative oils. "Invariably the reason given was doubt of supply from Australia. In our opinion this was an unforeseen effect of the Public Inquiry."

There was however another good reason for winding down the industry, which was not mentioned by Mr Saleeba. It did not surface till the Inquiry moved to Melbourne, late in August.

For many years scientists working for the International Whaling Commission (IWC) have calculated whale populations from sighting and catching statistics, supplied to them by the whaling fleets. They have worked on the theory that any decline in the number of whales will be reflected by the statistics — that there will be fewer sightings and catching will take longer. The theory however did not take improvements in the whaling technology sufficiently into account. As whales become more difficult to find the spotter planes have started to cover a greater area than they did in the past, and catching methods have improved. The technological improvements have worked so well that the men who worked at Frenchmen's Bay had not noticed any decline in the number of whales.

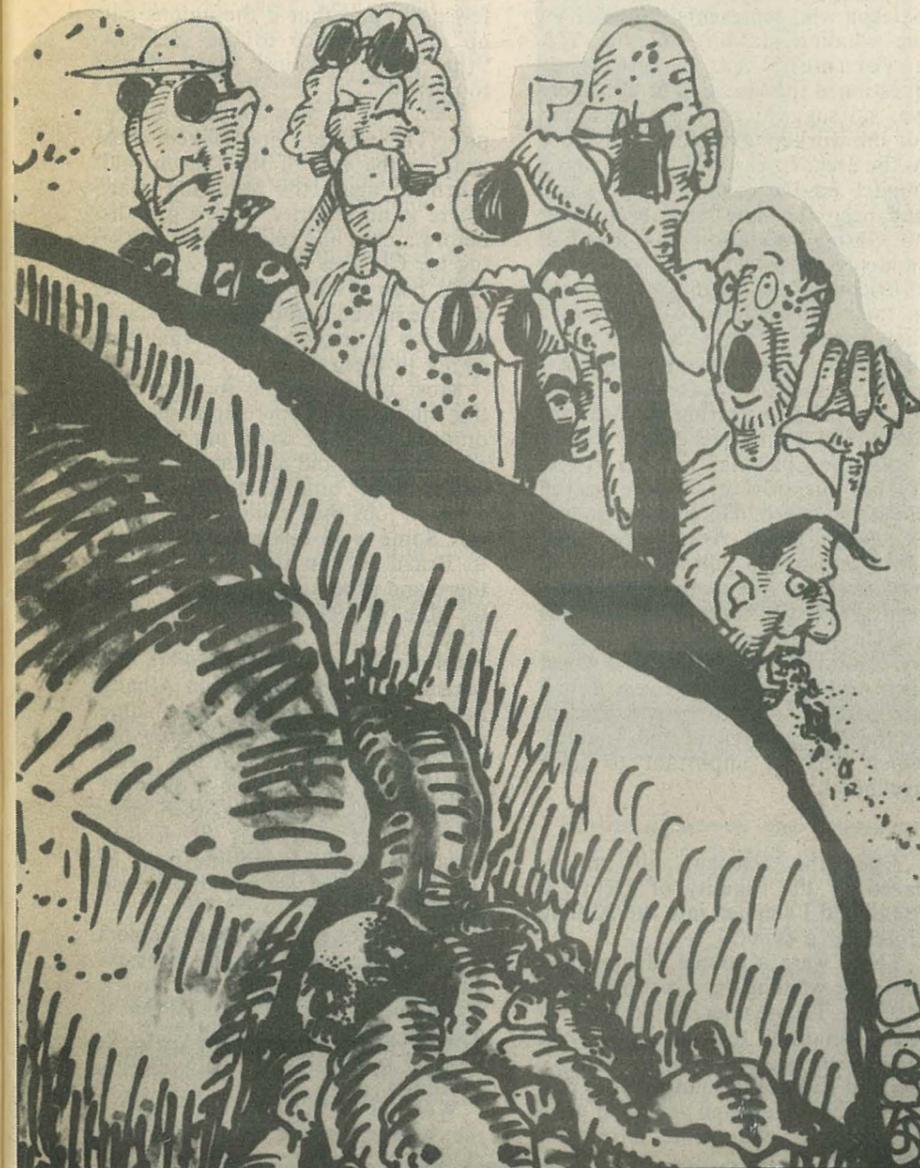
However a decline has certainly occurred. Far too many male whales have been killed. Pregnancy rates are now so low that even if whaling were to stop right away the numbers would continue to drop for some years. This became obvious when the figures for "Division 5", the area of ocean off WA, were recalculated, allowing for improved whaling technology.

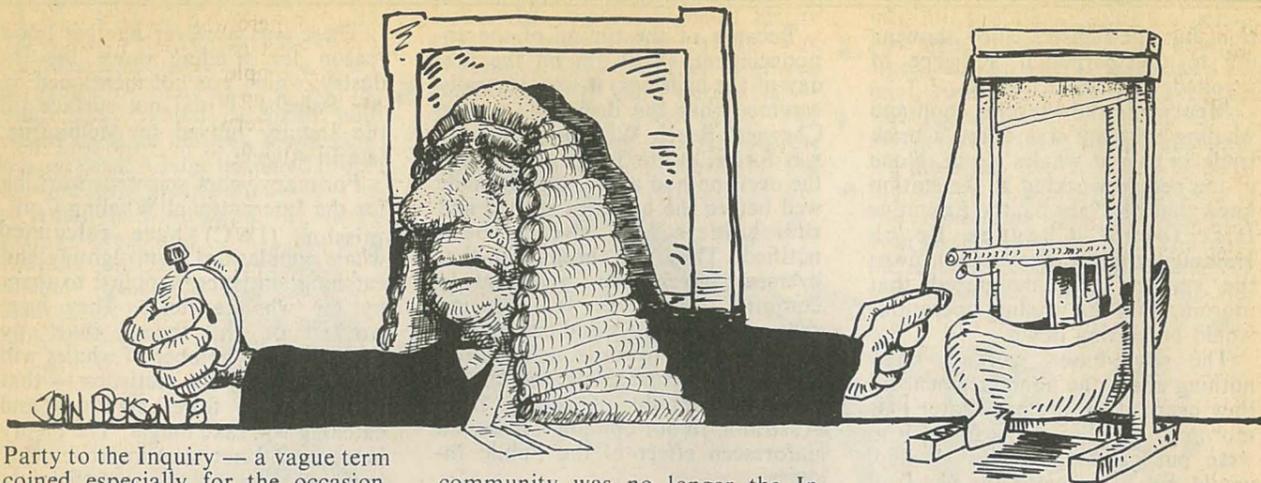
It was fairly clear even in June, when the IWC met at Cambridge to set quotas for the next season that Division 5 had been overfished. Mr Saleeba was at that meeting in Cambridge, as were several of the major European oil-buyers.

It now seems certain that apart from the quotas for 1979, which have already been set, no further quotas will be given for Division 5 till stocks recover, which will take many years. Whaling off the coast of Albany will be banned completely, by international agreement. The Australian whaling industry will close down, not because of the Inquiry, but because too many whales have been killed already.

☆ ☆ ☆

We had some difficulty finding the Inquiry into Whaling. It was not held in the old Albany Courthouse as we had expected but at Tara Hall, a dance hall on the first floor above the Double Happy Chinese Restaurant. Friends of the Earth was a Major





Party to the Inquiry — a vague term coined especially for the occasion, not to be confused with Principal Party. It meant that we *might* be allowed to question witnesses during the Inquiry if the Chairman thought it was worthwhile. Project Jonah was in a more secure position; it had even been given a grant of \$25,000 for legal advice and plane fares to bring out experts on whaling. Cheynes Beach Holdings, representing the whalers, had been given a grant of \$5,000 (notwithstanding an annual profit of \$½ million) towards typing expenses for its 45 page submission.

There were also various representatives of the state and federal governments at the Inquiry, including one from the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. The Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development had been prevented from putting in an independent submission and was not allowed to send along a representative.

The Inquiry opened in an atmosphere of tension: both sides were expecting it to be hard-fought. Mr Saleeba's announcement that the station would close by the end of the season left the conservationists temporarily dumbfounded and I do not think any of the townspeople were expecting it.

After Mr Saleeba's announcement, the afternoon session of the hearing moved rapidly. Several items which had been listed in the Inquiry's terms of reference were dispensed with, among them the item dealing with "the economic impact on Albany of closing the station, in particular, any considerations for employment in the area."

We were told that the decision to close the station had already been made on economic grounds, and therefore the impact on the local

community was no longer the Inquiry's responsibility.

Strangely enough, neither Mr Saleeba who represented the staff of the whaling station, nor the WA government representatives questioned this decision at all. There was no suggestion of compensation for the workers or special assistance to the area. It was as if the economic impact on the local people, which had been the only valid excuse for not closing the station years ago, had suddenly ceased to matter.

Friends of the Earth had requested in their submissions to the Inquiry that workers made redundant when the station closed should be compensated in some way. It still seemed worth pursuing. During the next adjournment I approached Sir Sidney Frost, the Chairman and asked him if the question of compensation could be raised. He told me it was "irrelevant". Mr Arnott, his assistant, refused to allow us to call workers from the station as witnesses. Anyway, as Mr Arnott was quick to point out, there was no-one we could have called in sight. Apart from company executives not a single station employee was present at the first session of the Inquiry, which was so important to their livelihood.

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After the hearing, still mildly dazed by the rapidity of events, a friend and I stepped into the Albany Hotel for a drink.

There were a couple of crewmen from the whaling vessels drinking at the bar. The seamen work for two weeks solid and then take one week off. These two were on their week off, and had not been at sea that day so they had heard the news and were discussing it with some bitterness.

They had already heard that several men would be given notice in the next few days, and that if the unions put up any resistance to the sackings "the station would close down tomorrow".

There was no question of severance pay. The whalers are sacked each year at the end of the season and taken on again the following year. There is no security. A few months before a man had retired after working for Cheynes Beach for 25 years. He'd been given a gold watch. The men we talked to thought they would be lucky if they were paid what was owing to them.

Most of the people we spoke to that night were experienced seamen or flensers. They could not imagine any other life, and most had minimal educational qualifications. There were no jobs they could be retrained for. Some were talking about going to Brazil to join the whaling ships there and others thought they might be able to get work as shearers. However there is high rural unemployment in WA: there were 800 registered as unemployed in Albany at the time. There has been some suggestion of setting up a trawling fleet based at Albany, but this is still vague talk. If and when it does get going it will involve six-week trips out to sea and will be highly seasonal. In the meantime none of the local industries are taking on staff.

We suggested that the whalers should come to the Inquiry the next day. They had not been told that it was a public inquiry, let alone that it was being held at Tara Hall ("Where the hell is Tara Hall?" they wanted to know).

We told Willie Williams, one of the seamen, where Tara Hall was

and decided it was time to go. The word had gone around that there were "conservationists" at the pub, and men kept pouring in the doors, keen to take issue with us over the question of whaling.

By and large, no conservationists had ever bothered to talk to them before and they did not know sperm whales were declining. From their observations there are more than ever: they say they often see pods of hundreds of whales. However it was no time for arguing. They were pretty angry about losing their jobs. It looked as if it was going to be a long and action-packed night at the pub.

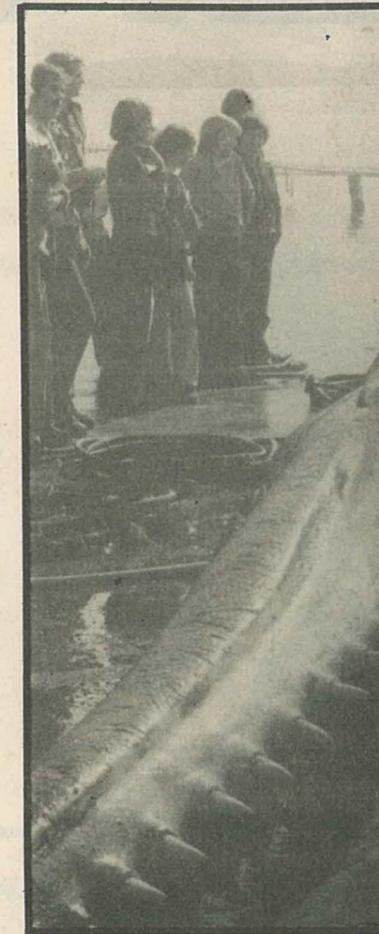
The following morning at 9.30 we met Willie (with a fresh blackeye) and another man, waiting outside Tara Hall for the doors to open. By mid-morning there were about 20 people connected with the whaling station, lining the back seats of the Inquiry hall: virtually everyone who was off-duty must have been there.

They sat there for three hours, as silent as convicts in a chapel while members of Project Jonah cross-questioned Captain Cruikshank, the gunner from one of the whaling vessels, on the cruelty involved in the killing of whales. When everyone had finished with Captain Cruikshank, Sir Sidney Frost declared the hearing closed. The Inquiry left Albany three days early and did not return. The final sitting of the Inquiry, which was scheduled to be held in Albany was cancelled. The whalers never got a word in. After the hearing was over I asked them why no-one had stood up and raised the question of compensation for their jobs. They said "we didn't know we were allowed to", "It didn't seem to be the right time to do it." It was true — no-one wanted to hear them.

★ ★ ★

The following day (Wednesday) Mr Saleeba, Mr Hunt and Mr Riley, managers of the whaling station, called a meeting of all the men at the station, and told them that 17 would be given notice. If the unions involved refused to accept this the station would be closed outright. Mr Riley said there was "no way" the company could afford redundancy pay. There was no possibility of checking up on this, as Cheynes Beach Holdings has gone off the stock market listing and its books are no longer available to the public. "The conservationists have got us this time" said Riley.

".....the conservationists have got us this time....."



In the afternoon the executives held a private meeting with union representatives, including Mr Barr, Secretary of the AWU (the Australian Workers Union) and Chris Wells of the Maritime Workers Union. This was the first time they had spoken to the union representatives. Mr Riley suggested to the AWU Secretary that he should send a telegram to the Prime Minister, asking for a subsidy for Cheynes Beach Whaling Company.

He said there was no point in asking for direct assistance for the unemployed people: there would be no hope of getting it.

Shortly afterwards the telegram was sent. When Mr Barr spoke at the Inquiry at Perth it became obvious why: he didn't know the whaling industry was closing for good. He thought that if it could be kept going till the end of the season "the conservationists would drop off".

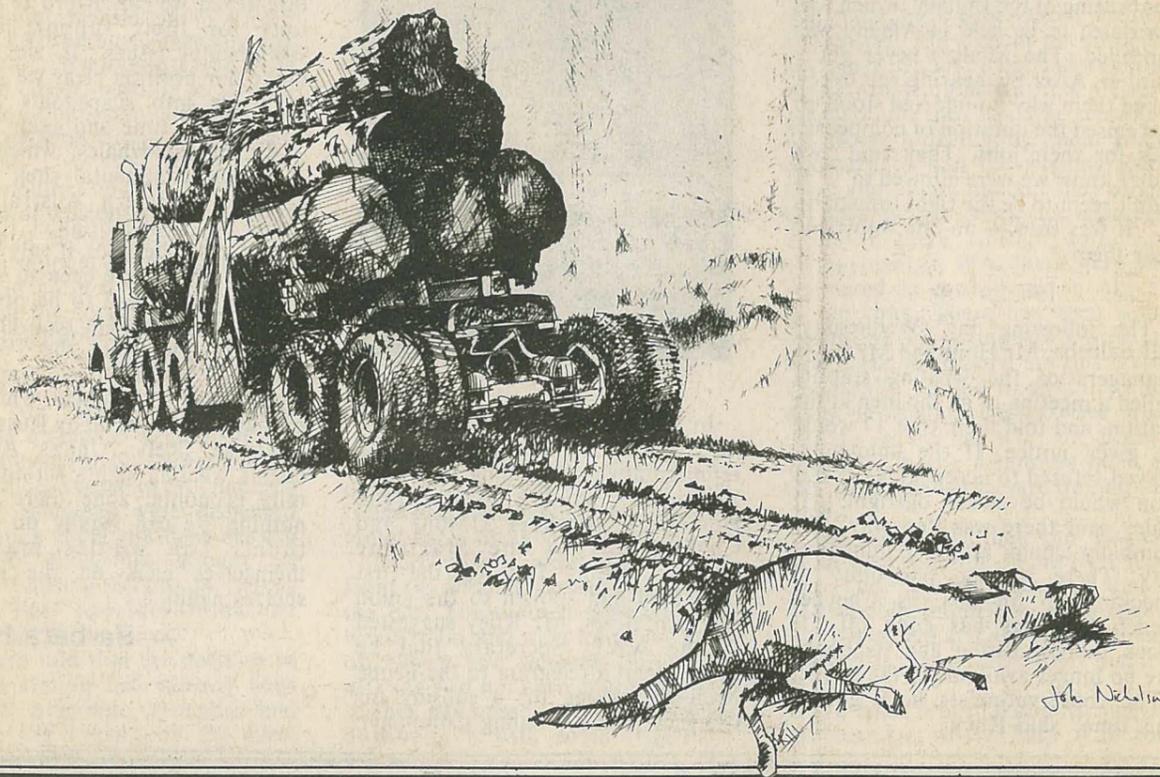
The next day headlines appeared in the Perth daily papers, "COURT SLAMS MILITANT CONSERVATIONISTS". Sir Charles Court, premier of WA, and the company executives of Cheynes Beach Holdings relegated the blame for the closure of Cheynes Beach Whaling station onto the conservationists, absolving themselves of all responsibility for the people of Albany, just as Sir Sidney Frost had absolved the Inquiry a few days earlier.

Unfortunately almost everyone in the Albany region believed them, perhaps because the anti-whaling groups made the mistake of not contacting the workers *before* the Inquiry. Only Chris Wells was perceptive enough to get in touch with us and find out where we stood. He made me aware of one thing: as long as environmentalists actively cooperate with unions and support assistance for workers whose jobs are threatened we can afford to ask unions for their support on environmental issues. If we do not make our position clear we stand to be made into scapegoats for unemployment time and again.

As for the whales, which travel along the continental shelf off the coast of Western Australia, the future is looking brighter for them than it has in decades, if only because their numbers have been so depleted that they have had to be protected. However if numbers recover within the next few years the IWC will presumably start to set quotas for them again — quotas which will probably be taken up by Russian and Japanese fleets. Unless Australia claims whaling rights within its 200 mile economic zone there will be nothing we can legally do to stop them. The whales may find themselves back on the pet-food shelves again.

— Barbara Hutton

DIEBACK



The death of the Jarrah forests

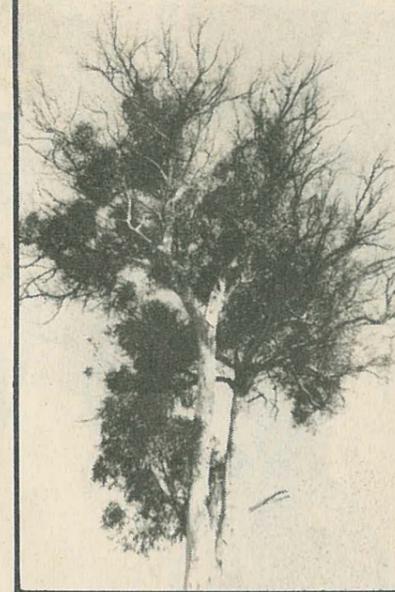
Australia, in general, was a good find for white people who live in clusters around the edges of the continent in affluence and comfort. They have not been so good for Australia. Among other things they introduced her natives to alcohol and disease; her fauna lost habitats on a grand scale to agricultural clearing; and to the remaining flora they have brought *Phytophthora cinnamoni* — dieback.

First discovered in Java, in 1922, this plant fungus disease is now widespread throughout the world. It was recorded in Victoria in 1952-53 and has now infected a forest area there in excess of 400,000 hectares.

But the south-west of Western Australia is the part of the world where the dieback fungus has the potential to cause the most serious damage. It has already destroyed some 300,000 ha and is spreading at a rate of 20,000 ha a year. According to the Western Australian Forests Department, the disease, unchecked, could result in the irreversible destruction of the majority of the great jarrah forest and of the banksia woodlands and many other vegetable types occurring in the area. The destruction is not only to the forest trees but to most of the other plants associated with the jarrah ecosystem. And with the destruction of their habitats, of course, goes destruction of innumerable animals and birds.

In the West the disease is commonly called jarrah dieback, but it represents only one of the dangers that threaten to destroy this fine and unique species. The relatively tiny amount of land remaining as State Forest (1.8 million hectares — 0.72% of W.A.) is threatened in the north with destruction by strip-mining for bauxite, and in the south by clear-felling for woodchips.

The bauxite mining industry destroys the native forest completely and no replanting of jarrah takes place. In addition there is a direct



relationship between mining and the spread of dieback to adjacent forests. In the woodchip production areas the operations involved will effectively spread the disease and create conditions favourable to fungus growth.

In March, 1976, the State Government placed about 200,000 hectares of the northern jarrah forest under quarantine in a belated attempt to halt the spread of the disease. At that time an area reserved for bauxite mining by the Alwest Consortium was excluded from the quarantine area. This group has benefited from legislation, passed in April this year, which allows the establishment of an alumina refinery in State Forest. It plans to locate a railway or conveyor system, from its mining areas, partly through the quarantine region and mostly in areas marked "Certain

protectable" (Dieback risk category), to the refinery site.

In fact the quarantine legislation forbade access to the forest to almost everyone except the miners. The mining act in W.A. overrides those acts relating to the forests. Thus the other major bauxite mining company, Alcoa, which has leases covering almost the whole of the northern jarrah forest, is completely unaffected by the quarantine laws.

In many ways the miners are the ideal carriers of the disease. The drilling and surveying teams from the mining companies penetrate all parts of the forest as part of their investigatory work. Vehicle wheels and machinery tracks are recognised as being prime transport media for the fungus spores. Only one cubic centimetre of soil is required.

Heavy machinery is used extensively in the clearing and mining operations and heavy trucks are used to bring in gravel for the extensive road systems and to move ore to the crusher sites. The current rate of spread of dieback is almost entirely a result of artificial transportation of infected soil. Moreover, the fungus, which moves very slowly by natural distribution on level ground, moves much more quickly downhill especially in wet conditions. Most of the mining takes place on uphill sites where the bauxite deposits lie, so that the movement of fungus spores is facilitated to any areas lying at the lower elevation.

The relationship of mining and the spread of dieback is recognised by all the parties concerned. The Forests Department conservatively estimates the ratio of mining areas to areas affected as a result by dieback as 1:3. However, Dr Malcolm Hollick, university lecturer and member of the Hunt Steering Committee (a group involved in monitoring the effects of mining), says that experts believe this to be too low and that the actual figure may be over 1 to 5.

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Whatever the real ratio may be it is certain that mining efficiently spreads the disease. A look at a map of mining areas in the forest shows how it is done: the areas actually mined — and remember they are on the crests and slopes — are distributed scattershot throughout the lease area of forest currently being "developed". They could be likened to large polka dots on a piece of material. And they are all connected together by very wide haul roads, with other areas of forest intersected by either a conveyor or railway system. The whole process could not have been better designed to aid the spread of dieback.

A spokesman for Alcoa and a State Government Minister, whose words sound strangely similar, have claimed that as mining will occur initially only in forest severely affected by dieback (or in forest that is "rid-dled by dieback") then there is no cause to worry. However, as a correspondent to "The West Australian" newspaper said on this issue: "If a patient is suffering from cancer we do not savagely attack the infected part of his body so as to rapidly spread the disease." Another correspondent, a commercial bee-keeper familiar with the forest, claimed that many of the areas being mined are not infected. He referred specifically to Del Park, near Dwellingup, and, in fact, a visit to the area shows that mining there is destroying prime jarrah forest unaffected by the disease.

The quarantined area does not extend to the jarrah forest in the far south-west of the State. This is surprising when it can be seen from a map of dieback occurrence that the proportion of forest infected by the disease in this part of the State is generally low. It is here that 490,000 hectares have been licensed by the State Government for woodchipping operations. This area contains karri forest and also jarrah and marri in



various admixtures. But it must be remembered that it is not only jarrah that is killed by dieback.

The CSIRO submission to a Senate Standing Committee relating to the woodchip industry considered that clear felling would increase the spread of the disease. Not only does the clear felling process spread the fungus, but soil conditions are made more suitable for it. The increase in soil moisture levels favours the growth of the fungus and aids its swimming spores. Clear felling or heavy selective cutting and culling leads to greater exposure of the soil. The resulting warmer soil conditions also favour fungus growth.

The attitude of the Forests Department to the disease in this region sounds strangely fatalistic or even indifferent. It said in its En-

DIEBACK

vironmental Impact Statement relating to woodchipping: "Dieback is already present throughout much of the woodchipping license area and the extensive operations envisaged with much movement of heavy machinery will undoubtedly ensure its spread throughout the JM (jarrah-marri) type of area . . ." It forecast the long term destruction of the native flora within this forest type.

It is not even certain that the beautiful karri is immune. It has been suggested that young karri trees may be less resistant and that the resistance of older trees may be the result only of growth under optimum nutrient conditions. It is possible that the reduction of nutrient levels following clear-felling may make the trees more susceptible to the fungus attack. What a gift we would then have made to this magnificent forest: like our bequest of trachoma and tuberculosis to the Aborigines!

It is easy to adopt the attitude of the Forests Department and of the Government Minister and say that as the disease is already prevalent then the woodchip and mining operations might as well go ahead. The truth is that it is these industries which have been and are a major factor in the spread of the disease. What the forests need is a drastic reduction in the scale of these industries. They need to be left alone in peace until such time as a solution has been found to what has been described as the worst plant epidemic in recorded history.

The last thing they need in these circumstances is the massive destruction and disruption of the bauxite and woodchip industries. A few paltry dollars in royalties today will not buy back our forests tomorrow.

— Bernard Mahon,
Campaign to Save
Native Forests,
537 Wellington Street,
Perth, W.A.

THE POLITICS OF FOOD



• Food
for profit
or people

• The
Baby killers

• Mac Yabbie

• Plastic
food

• Mother India
misconceptions
about
population

THE MYTHS BEHIND FAMINES

FOOD

FOR PROFIT OR PEOPLE?



A boy herds cattle in Western India: 1975 drought

Photos courtesy Community Aid Abroad

"The real causes of world hunger lie in an economic and political system of resource use that sees food as a commodity to be produced for profit rather than for people . . . Basically food is produced to meet the demands of people who have the power and money to buy it . . . if you have no land or money . . . you will be hungry."

- The facts of world hunger are bleak and blunt:
- 2000 million people — or about half of the world's population — are badly nourished.
 - According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, 462 million people are actually starving, with about half of these being children under five.
 - Of these, 301 million are in the Far East, 67 million in Africa, 30 million in the Near East, 36 million in Latin America and 28 million in the developed countries.

These figures raise the inevitable questions of why so many people are starving and badly nourished, and what can be done so they can feed themselves.

The Western world keeps the poor at bay by a mixture of myth, distortion, technical jargon and paternal reassurances that it has the desire and the means to feed them. The media simplifies the issue by highlighting the occasional devastating famine and encourages the simplistic view that the problem can be solved with food aid and relief assistance. The media helps to defuse any consideration of structural reasons for world hunger. The traditional Western diagnosis of chronic hunger on a world scale is that there are too many people and not enough food and land to meet their needs. Thus, its prescription is two-fold: birth-control programmes to reduce the populations of the Third World

countries and technical research to improve the productivity of agriculture.

The sober reality is that this analysis of the problem does not go deep enough. The real causes of world hunger lie in an economic and political system of resource use that sees food as a commodity to be produced for profits rather than for people. The solution lies in a redistribution of power from the minority to the majority. Only then will the problems of world hunger be solved. The failure of the Indian birth control programmes and the Green Revolution demonstrates the fate of traditional solutions unaccompanied by any change in the status quo.

Basically, food is produced to meet the demands of a minority of people who have the power and money to buy it. If you have no land or money, no food will be produced for you and you certainly will not have the opportunity to produce it for yourself. You will be powerless and consequently hungry. The world food system is largely controlled by a handful of giant multi-national companies who direct resources away from the poor of the world to the rich elites, who consume a far greater proportion of the world's food than their numbers would warrant. A deep analysis of such factors must be made before realistic solutions to world hunger and the control and direction of food resources can be reached.

Don't Panic! There's enough to go around

There is presently enough food in the world to feed everybody. One conservative estimate puts food availability at 4% more than requirements. Another estimate claims that at present levels the world is producing enough food for more than five billion people. Even in the world food crisis of the early 1970's there was plenty to go around — enough in grain alone to provide everyone in the world with ample protein and 3000 calories-a day, not counting the beans, root crops, fruits, nuts, vegetables and non-grain-fed meat produced. (3000 calories is about what the average American consumes daily.

A major problem is the distribution of this food, rather than the absolute amounts of it. The world produces about 1300 million tons of food and feed grains per annum. The developed countries eat about half of this, whilst accounting for only about one quarter of the world's population. People in the Third World eat their

grain directly, and on average (although averages are very misleading) consume about 506 lb. annually. (Figures are for 1969-71.) During the same period in the USA, people averaged 1760 lb. of grain, 90% of which was in the form of meat, poultry or dairy products. Susan George notes that "in the past ten years alone, the average American has added 350 lb. of grain to his annual diet — about the equivalent of the yearly consumption of a poor Indian. Obviously, this American was not seriously malnourished in 1966, and this addition has not been imperative." Animals in the developed world eat about half of the world's grain which is the equivalent of the total human consumption of China and India put together — about 1.3 billion people. Livestock in the developed countries are fed large quantities of humanly edible plants which are converted very inefficiently into meat protein. According to one estimate, of the 140 million tons of grain and soy fed to beef cattle in the USA, only 20 million tons was returned in meat protein. The remaining 120 million tons of humanly edible plant protein in the grain and soy became inaccessible for human consumption. This waste is enough to provide every single human being on earth with more than a cup of cooked grain each day of the year!

FOOD - for profit or people?

The myth of "not enough land"

It is not necessary to labour the point that the developed countries take the lion's share of the world's food. To do so is to run the risk of believing that hunger should be overcome by redistributing food from the rich to the poor. This solution is only a slightly more sophisticated version of the catch-cry of Western mothers when faced with reluctant children at the dinner table — "Think of the hungry children in India and finish your meat and vegies."

We are so often told that North America is the world's last remaining breadbasket and food security of the world is invariably measured in terms of the reserves held by the developed countries. The burden of feeding the world does not rest with the developed countries. This is the philosophy of the multi-national company way of feeding the world which has proved to be so disastrous for the poor of the world. Redistribution of food is not a solution to hunger — redistribution of the means of growing food is. The real question is how can people democratise for themselves the control of food resources.

The problem is not that there is a scarcity of cultivatable land to meet the needs of an expanding world populace but that land use is heavily skewed against the basic nutritional needs of the majority of people and geared towards the greed of the world's well-fed. The most protein-needy continents are the main suppliers of animal protein food — and they supply those who have plenty. Cash crops, owned and controlled by the giant

multi-national food companies, occupy enormous areas of many countries' best land: 55% in the Philippines, 80% in Mauritius, 50% of land devoted to peanut-production in Senegal. The small farmer is alienated onto marginal land and scarce export earnings are devoted to irrigation, pesticides, fertilisers and machinery for cash crops, at the expense of the needs of a country.

Haiti illustrates the disastrous ecological implications of the present system. The majority of impoverished peasants are trying to eke out an existence on the once green mountain slopes. The peasants have been exiled from some of the world's richest agricultural land which is in the hands of a rich Haitian elite trying to emulate a Western life style, and its American partners. The land is used to produce low-nutrition crops (sugar, coffee, cocoa) and feed-crops (alfafa for cattle) almost exclusively for export. Grazing land is also export-oriented. US firms have begun to fly Texas cattle into Haiti for grazing and re-export to American franchised hamburger restaurants.

A World Bank study of Columbia states that "large numbers of farm families . . . try to eke out an existence on too little land, often on slopes of 45 degrees or more. As a result, they exploit the land very severely, adding to erosion and other problems, and even so are not able to make a decent living." Columbia's good level land is in the hands of absentee landlords who use it to graze cattle, raise animal feed and even flowers for export to the United States (\$18 million worth in 1975).



SAHEL FAMINE: While drought and famine were rampant thousands of the best acres and a large share of the scarce water resources were assigned to export crops by the trans-national agribusiness corporations. Many people starved just fields away from abundant crops that were being harvested and shipped overseas . . . the export of groundnuts actually rose.

Sahel Famine

One of the most pertinent examples of the "myth of scarcity" is in Africa's Sahelian region. The Sahel is a wide belt of bush and scrub bordering the southern edge of the Sahara desert. In 1973, the world was shocked to learn of widespread famine in the area. Hardly any rain had fallen since 1968. Hundreds of thousands died of starvation. The media delighted in highlighting an obvious cause and effect — no rain. Without rain, no food. Without food people starve. A simple analysis that directs attention away from the reality of the situation.

Cash crops had long been replacing food crops for local consumption. During the 1960's multi-national food and textile companies had been very active in the Sahel. With inputs of expertise and technology from this source there was a very large increase in the amount of land given over to export crops. The land devoted to growing food for local consumption just dwindled. Mali, for example, produced 60,000 tons of food crops in 1967, but today it has an annual total of no more than 15,000 tons. Production of cotton for export, on the other hand, went from 22,000 tons (1961-65) to 42,000 tons (1973). Peanut production for export to feed Europe's cattle increased 70%. While drought and famine were rampant, thousands of the best acres and a large share of the scarce water resources were assigned to export crops by the trans-national agribusiness corporations. As a result, many people starved just fields away from abundant crops that were being harvested and shipped overseas where there was "effective economic demand".

During the worst period of the famine, the export of high protein crops such as groundnuts actually rose. There are about 1200 varieties of groundnuts in the Sahel. These have been developed primarily for the sake of drought resistance. Thus, groundnut crops continued to increase despite the drought conditions. Sorghum and millet crops constitute the staple diet of 80% of the people in the Sahel. But they are not cash crops for export. Despite being pushed onto marginal land, a suppressed FAO report shows that every Sahelian country, with the possible exception of mineral-rich Mauritania, actually produced enough grain to feed its total population, even during the worst drought year. However, much of it was hoarded for speculation, which had two disastrous consequences. Firstly, hundreds of thousands of people died because they did not have access to food. Secondly, it distorted the resource use of the area. Nomads found that one month they could exchange one head of cattle for four bags of millet, while next month one head was only "worth" a single bag of millet. Pastoralists tried to increase the number of their herds to survive in a food speculation economy. By everyone trying to have a herd large enough to survive meant over-grazing and encroachment of the desert.



The food industry

"The common threat is the worldwide tightening of control of wealth and power over the most basic human need, food. Multi-national agribusiness firms right now are creating a single world agricultural system in which they exercise integrated control over all stages of production from farm to consumer. Once achieved, they will be able to effectively manipulate supply and prices for the first time on a worldwide basis through well established monopoly practices. As farmers, workers and consumers, people everywhere are beginning to experience the cost in terms of food availability, prices and quality."

—Frances Moore Lappe

Over the last fifteen years, the food industry, firstly in America, and now on a worldwide basis, has been taken over by monopolies — agribusiness — which control

FOOD - for profit or people?



every stage of production from manufacturing farm machinery, fertiliser and seed, to cultivating and processing, storing, retailing and export. In America, 1% of all the farms produce 25% of the nation's food, whilst 8% get more than 50% of sales. From 1940-1970 the number of farms has decreased from six million to three million. These farms produce grains, cattle and other feedlots and vegetables. In each of these areas, the multinationals operate in monopoly conditions.

In the grain belt of the United States, the Midwest, six companies (Cargill; Continental Grain Inc; Louis Dreyfus and Sons; Bunge Corp.; Cook Industries and Archer-Daniel Midland) buy 90% of all US grain and Cargill and Continental Grain make 50% of the world's grain shipments. Of these companies, only Cook is a publicly owned company; even the minimal public accountability demanded of most corporations is not demanded of the grain companies.

Berthold Brecht once said that "Famines do not occur, they are organised by the grain trade". World grain shortages can generally be traced back to the grain companies' policy of keeping grain off the market to drive the prices up.

A similar situation exists in the American meat industry. At one time the industry could be broken down into the ranches that bred cattle, the feed lots that fattened them up and the slaughterhouses that killed and processed the cattle. Each stage would be under separate

control and ownership. Today, giants like Iowa Beef, Western Beef and Missouri Beef own their own ranches, feedlots and slaughterhouses, as they exercise top-to-bottom control in the meat industry. In 1970 alone, more than 14,000 smaller independent feedlots and thousands of ranches were driven out of business or bought up by the big meat companies in their drive toward monopoly.

In the food processing business, giant corporations like Del Monte and Libby grow a contract 80% of all vegetables produced in America. Del Monte, the world's largest vegetable food processor, grows much of its own food on its own farm land, and contracts with its own farmers. It makes its own cans and then fills them at its own canneries. It moves its products on its own trucks to its own terminals. Food is stored at Del Monte warehouses and shipped by Del Monte shipping services. In addition to selling to grocery stores, Del Monte sells to Del Monte food vending operations, cafeteria services, and frozen food plants. Del Monte manages to make a separate profit at each of these stages of integrated production.

This picture of a vertically integrated monopolized industry makes for grossly distorted prices of food. The US Federal Trade Commission revealed in a 1972 study that consumers were being overcharged by more than \$2 million a year from monopolistic practices in just 13 food lines. In the breakfast cereals industry, for example, 90% of the total volume of sales is controlled by the top four firms. The F.T.C. alleges that the prices of cereal would be reduced by as much as 20% if competition were restored to the industry.

These characteristics of modern food production are not merely of relevance to the American economy and to American consumers. Food companies transmit a structure of food production overseas where their basic strategy has been to gain control over the world food crop, develop the international market for packaged and processed foods and make the world dependent on US food and technology. The Third World produces the raw foodstuffs which are processed, and packaged overseas and sold back in finished form to the rich 10% of the Third World population. This policy is nutritionally disastrous for the other 90% of the population.

Multi-national companies have turned much of the Third World into a modern-day plantation-style economy, producing cash crops like tobacco, rubber, coffee and cotton while being forced into dependence on US food imports. This policy has been enforced through the systematic and wholesale destruction of Third World agricultural production. Two-thirds of all available land in Latin America is now planted with non-nutritious cash crops whose production is largely controlled by huge US firms. A potentially rich agricultural country like Brazil — roughly half the size of the US with less than half the population and more available land than all of Europe —

"the best strategy is retreat from Western patterns of industrialisation and development, and consolidation of power in those groupings able to aim at land reform. Basic to this will be the curtailment in the growth of the privileged classes . . . The alternatives have all been tried and their effects are predictable: land consolidation, eviction, agricultural capitalisation, urbanisation, food exports, domestic shortages, hunger, social and cultural disintegration."

grows coffee for export while 40 million of its people face starvation. US companies own the fishmeal industries of Chile and Peru (including the high protein anchovy crop) and sell most of its entire output to the US, Western Europe and Japan. The two most protein-needy continents, South America and Africa, are exporters of the largest quantity of animal feed in the world.

The Third World has been sold on the idea that an under-developed country's best hope for development is to rely on export crops in which it has a natural advantage and to use the earnings to import food and industrial goods. This is a myth for two inter-related reasons. The first is the uneven nature of such a trading relationship between the developed and under-developed world. The major problems for Third World exporters have been isolated by the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). There is a tendency for the terms of trade (which is the relationship between a country's exports and imports) to move against Third World countries. Inflation and rising prices in the West and falling demand for commodities from the Third World have meant that the price of imports for an under-developed country have risen in proportion to the earnings derived from exports. Sri Lanka has to sell over twice as much tea as it did in 1970 to buy the same tractor. Tanzania needed to produce five tons of sisal in 1963 in order to buy one tractor. By 1970, she had to produce about 10 tons of sisal to earn enough to buy that same tractor. This has meant that countries relying on a single commodity export have to dig deep into reserves to pay for imports.

The second reason why this development policy is inappropriate is that the imports that a developing country is able to buy are geared towards the needs of rich elites in those countries. These are the people who can afford to buy the imported goods and are thus the targets for the multi-nationals. An official has stated that "It is a sad fact that the most nutritional food products marketed by commercial firms are aimed at the segment of society least in need of them."

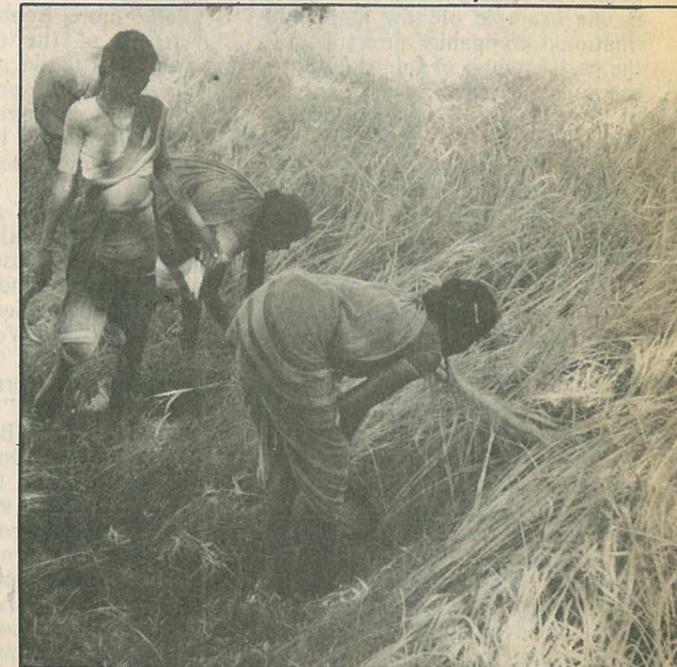
What is necessary is that people have the power to produce food for themselves — not for multi-national companies and the developed world or for rich elites within their own country. The solution does not lie primarily in a reorganization of trading relationships so that the poor countries get a better deal. Despite the obvious inequalities in trading relationships, the masses of the poor in the world today are poor because of an inability to control the *domestic* source of their own exploitation — not the external source.

Self-reliance is a primary goal in food production. It is the small farmer who is generally more productive than larger farm holdings. A study of Argentina, Brazil,

Columbia, Ecuador and Guatemala found small farms to be three to fourteen times more efficient and productive per acre than the large farms. In Thailand, plots of two to four acres yield almost 60% more rice per acre than farms of 140 acres or more. As Frances Moore Lappe says: "We need not romanticise the small farmers. They get more out of the land precisely because they are desperate to survive on the meagre resources allowed to them. Nevertheless, many believe that our food security is enhanced by entrusting production to large agricultural entrepreneurs. Fewer and fewer rural people are left able to grow or to buy adequate food."

The most basic solution to the crisis is that food production must be democratised. David Pollard writes that "the best strategy is retreat from Western patterns of industrialisation and development, and consolidation of power in those groupings able to aim at land reform. Basic to this will be the curtailment in the growth of the privileged classes and the marshalling of their energies for human development. This has nothing to do with export-based agriculture and nothing to do with the New Economic Order . . . The alternatives have all been tried and their effects are predictable: land consolidation, eviction, agricultural capitalisation, urbanisation, food exports, domestic shortages, hunger, social and cultural disintegration."

Peter Leman
Community Aid Abroad



AGE MONTHS	AVERAGE WEIGHT	LIQUID LACTOGEN		COOLED BOILED WATER	
		ml	fl.oz.	ml	fl.oz.
0-1	up to 4 kg up to 9 lb	240	8	510	17
1-2	4-5 kg 9-10 lb				
2-3	5-6 kg 10-13 lb				
3-6	over 6 kg over 13 lb				

Who influences the food we choose to eat and to give our children? Here is one example of how large multinational companies directly affect the earliest food of our children — the milk they drink, and an account of what action groups have tried to do about it.

Since 1973, there has been growing awareness of the dangers of infant milk companies persistently advertising and promoting their products in inappropriate situations — especially in the third world.¹ In 1975, a film called "Bottle Babies"² was made which clearly depicted the malnutrition and severe illness caused by bottle feeding in Kenya, in situations where pure drinking water is not available, where fuel for boiling and sterilization is scarce, where domestic refrigeration facilities normally don't exist, and where correct feeding would cost up to 50% of the family income. Urban and rural mothers, wishing to do the best for their babies, are convinced by clever, constant advertising (radio, hospital wall posters, free calendars, gift sam-

ples) that powdered milk is at least as nutritious as breast milk, and certainly more sophisticated.³ Little warning of the disastrous consequences of the incorrect use of milk formulae is given. Also through spending foreign currency on expensive milk powder imports, countries are economically weakened through the deal.⁴

Certain groups and governments, overseas and locally, have acted on the infant milk issue. In 1974, Nestlé, the largest and most criticised of the milk companies in question, sued the Swiss Third World Action Group for defamation. The group had published in German the booklet "The Baby Killer"⁵ with the new title "Nestlé Kills Babies". In June 1976, Nestlé won one libel charge (having dropped three) against the group, but in his summing up of the case the judge strongly advised Nestlé to rethink its marketing methods in third world countries.

This was the first of a series of actions in several countries: **Bristol-Myers Court Action (US).** In

early 1976, an order of nuns (The Sisters of the Precious Blood), shareholders in the Bristol-Myers company, filed a lawsuit against the company claiming that they had misled shareholders about their sales promotion practices in developing countries. This court action is still in process.

Papua New Guinea. In September, 1977, the PNG government passed the Baby Feed Supplies (Control) Bill prohibiting the sale of infant feeding bottles and teats without a prescription. PNG is the first government to introduce such legislation. Advertising of infant milk products is also banned, as it is in Sweden and Guinea-Bissau.

Nestlé Boycott (US). In mid 1977, INFAC (Infant Formula Action Coalition) launched a national boycott of Nestlé products. Nestlé has the largest share of the infant formula market in the third world, is the second largest food company in the world and has resisted demands to change its advertising policies. The boycott is aimed at challenging

Nestlé to immediately stop the promotion of artificial formula in third world countries, stop mass media advertising of formula, stop distributing free samples to hospitals, clinics and homes of newborn babies, discontinue the use of Nestlé's "nutrition advisers", and stop promotions through the medical profession.

In mid 1976, a small group formed in Adelaide to carry on the action against Nestlé's. It is called the Baby Food Action Group. The group keeps up a constant (and frustrating) dialogue with Nestlé's representatives in Australia, shows the film "Bottle Babies" and researches the infant food situation in Asia, Papua-New Guinea and among Australian aboriginals. Nestlé's has at least 9 different trade names in Australia, including Lactogen, Nan, Tongala, Bear Brand, Sunshine and Ideal Evaporated Milk, Maggi soups, Nestlé's chocolates and solid baby foods, Nescafe, International Roast Coffee, Quick, Milo, Girgar butter and coffee substitutes such as Caro and Ricory.

Reliance on Sunshine Milk has been implicated in vitamin C deficiencies among aboriginal children, deficiencies so serious that many children have died.

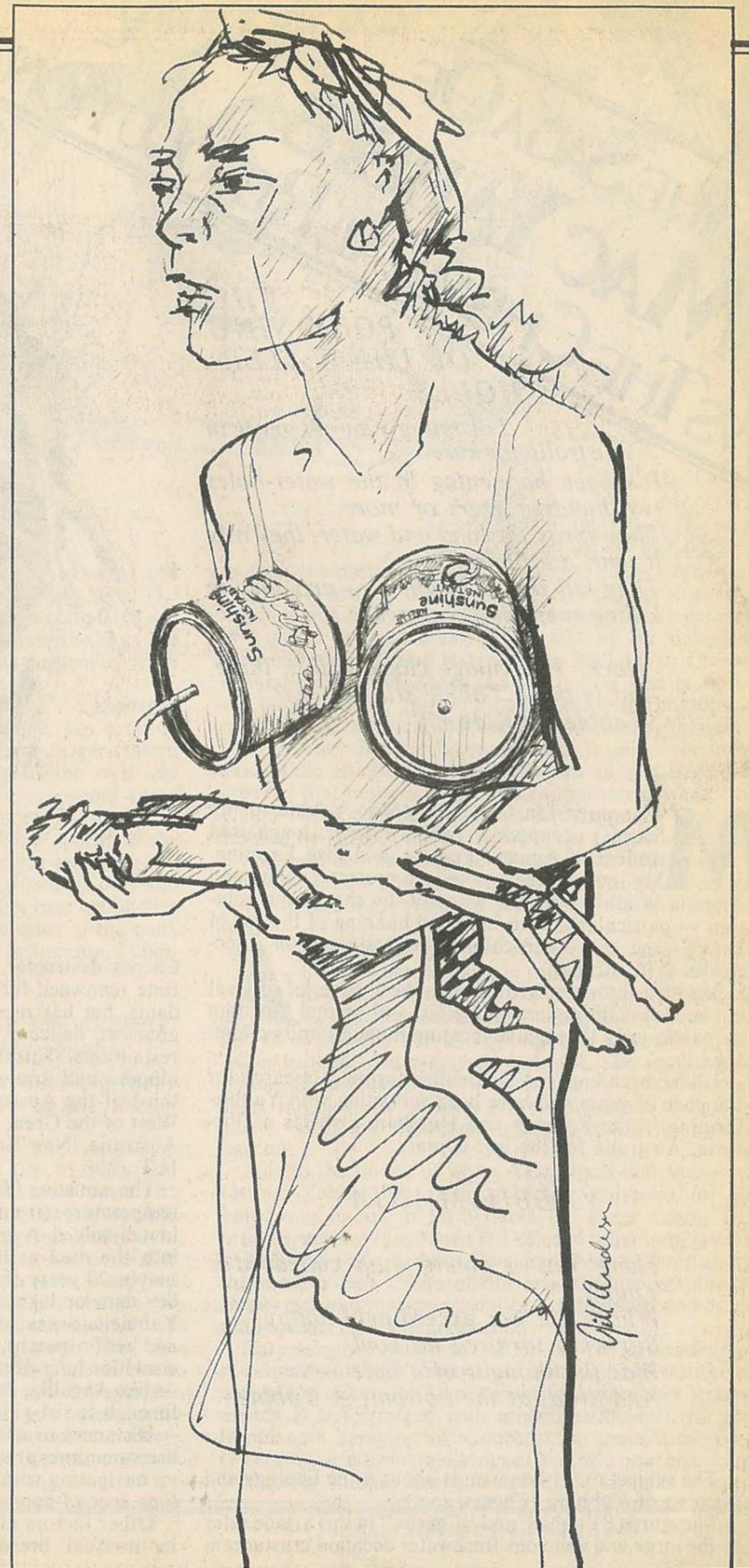
The Baby Food Action Group is calling for a boycott of all Nestlé's products.

Contact: *Fiona Lumb,*
Baby Food Action
Group,
22 Porter Street,
Parkside, 5063.

"Bottle Babies" available from:
Action for World Development,
Melbourne: phone (03)
63 9675,

Fiona Lumb,
Adelaide: phone (08) 272 3219.

1. **Bottle Babies — A Guide to the Baby Foods Issue**, compiled and edited by Jane Cottingham. ISIS, Switzerland.
2. **"Bottle Babies"** — film, 30 minutes, 16 mm, color, 1975. Peter Krieg, Teldok Films, Federal Republic of Germany.
3. **The Decline of Breast Feeding: Sales, Sloth or Society?** Johanna T. Dwyer, UNICEF News, Issue 86, 1975/4.
4. **Human Milk — A Natural Resource**, Alan Berg, The Ecologist, Vol. 4 No. 4.
5. **The Baby Killer**, Mike Muller, "War on Want", England, 1974.



THE SAGA OF MAC YABBIE VS THE CHEMICAL REVOLUTION

THE POISONING OF THE WATER- HOLES

Poisoning's an old game in Australia for sure. It's been happening in the water-holes two hundred years or more. They spray the land and water, they mix it with the flour. They kill the Aborigines — and they're killing me; what's more!

"Hark! The village clock strikes three,
And is there Yabbie still for tea?"
"Yabbie's off, dear!!"

My name is Ian Carstairs, (Mac Yabbie to my friends) occupation Yabbie farmer, longhaired student of Aquatic Ecology and Fish Farming. My immediate purpose is to protect Yabbies and Aquatic Wildlife from the worst of the chemical revolution — particularly to recommend banning of the use of D.D.T. and the other chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticides in Australia.

My long-term aim is to improve the chances of survival of the fittest throughout the plant and animal kingdom — particularly through advocating human family planning.

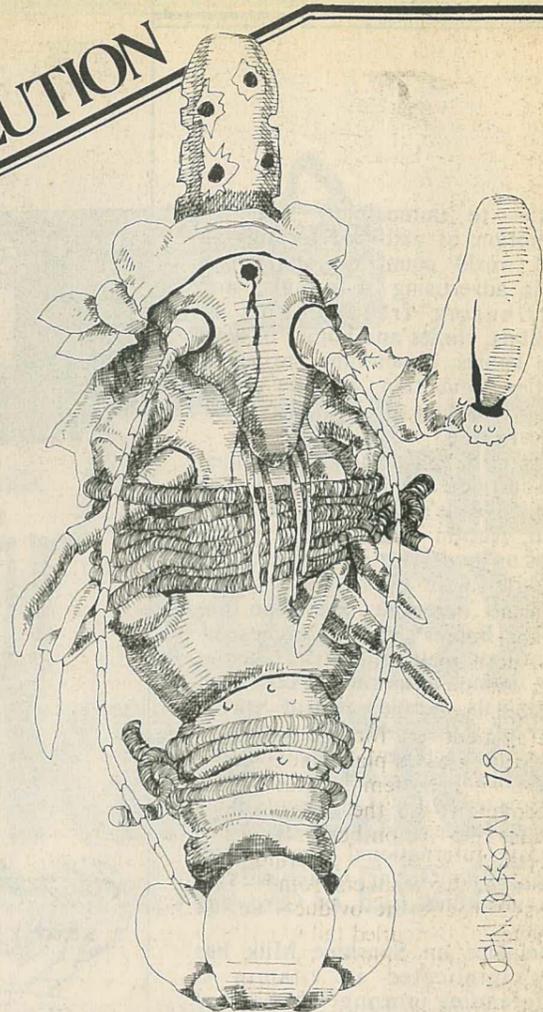
I have been engaged in shellfish farming research for the past 10 years and have been subsisting with Yabbie-farming in the Kyneton and Horsham districts of Victoria, Australia for the last 6 years.

YABBIE MANIA

*There was a young man called Mac
Yabbie
Whose life was exceedingly happy.
But what tortured his soul
Was the thought of a hole —
And dead, at the bottom, A Yabbie.*

The subject that I know most about is the Ecology and farming of Yabbies, (*Cherax* spp.).

The words "Yabbie" and "Cherax" in this article refer to the large and delicious freshwater decapod crustacean,



Cherax destructor. This freshwater crayfish was at one time renowned for burrowing through the walls of farm dams, but has recently won fame as a sweet flavoured, gourmet delicacy, both in Australian and European restaurants. This Yabbie, (the large one with the sharp nippers and smooth back) is distributed through one third of the Australian Continent on the Eastern half, West of the Great Dividing Range — in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, A.C.T., Queensland and N.T.

The amazing Yabbie can tolerate extremes of water temperature, (from 0°C to 30°C), high salt levels and very low dissolved oxygen levels. *Cherax* can burrow 3 metres into the mud at the bottom of a dam and survive for maybe 20 years of drought in sealed-off burrows below a dry dam or lake. This adaptability has meant that the Yabbie survives where predatory fish (like Murray cod and redfin perch), perish. The amphibious Yabbie can crawl for long distances at night in the cool, damp grass — like *Anguilla*, the eel — absorbing oxygen from the air through moist gills.

Distances of over 2 km between river and water hole are sometimes travelled by freshwater crayfish in winter — navigating with their chemosensory receptors on two, long second antennae.

Other factors aiding the success of *Cherax* have been its unusual breeding cycle and diet. Unlike related



marine decapod crustaceans, (crayfish, prawns and crabs), the Yabbie has no planktonic larval stage. The egg development up to the juvenile stage is completed under the shelter of the mother's tail, where the eggs are waved gently backwards and forwards suspended from hairy pleopods, for about one month.

Mating takes place under water at night in a sheltered spot with the female exuding pheromone, (an exciting hormone), into the water to attract her larger-clawed mate. She lies on her back in true Australian style and the male secretes a gelatinous blob of amoeboid sperm over her two oviducts from his two penises. The eggs then pass through the oviducts and fertilising sperm to the shelter of her curled tail where they become securely glued to the hairy pleopods. Once I caught a pair, (Louis and Jan), in the act of mating inside an empty beer can shelter and great was the excitement on both sides of the can!

With apologies to Bazza McKenzie in London, I commemorate the occasion in verse:

*Oh, the beer over here isn't fit to drink,
And the girls are cold and crabbie.
I wouldn't say "No" to a nice cold beer,
And I wouldn't say "No" to a Yabbie!*

There are comparatively few eggs (up to 800), and good maternal care of offspring until they leave the mother for the last time. Then, if they are wise, they move out of range of her or any larger Yabbies' reach. Cannibalism is often the major limiting factor of the Yabbie population in an old farm dam with many old warriors on the prowl for tasty youngsters. In an old dam, the Yabbies are one-clawed and thick-shelled as a result of territorial fighting and slow growth. They can grow new appendages to replace those lost in battle at a speed regulated by hormones from their eye stalk glands.

Contrary to popular mythology and Australian tradition, the Yabbie is not a great meat-eater nor beer-drinker. Its diet consists of the decaying plant material and accompanying algae, fungi, protozoans and dead in-

sects at the bottom of the dam or river. This freshwater crayfish is low on the food chain, (at the decomposing level), which helps to explain the remarkable abundance of Yabbies in some areas. Up to 80% of the biological production of a turbid water-hole is available to *Cherax* in the benthic mud. Meat and fish are the best baits for catching Yabbies, but too much of either in their diet is fatal. It is paradoxical that this incredible crayfish, which is so tolerant of environmental stress, is one of the most susceptible animals to insecticide poisoning. I have discovered that many a long-faced restaurateur who complains of sudden deaths in his aquarium has used an aerosol fly spray, (like Mortein) in the same room. Only a few droplets reaching the water surface kill all of the Yabbies within one hour. Forget the Mortein and do your health, the environment and the Yabbies a good turn.

An enormous quantity of diverse Australian wild life depends on a large proportion of Yabbie in its diet, starting from the native fish, (Yellowbelly, Murray cod, Callup, Galaxiids) to introduced fish (trout, redfin perch) and add eels (*Anguilla*) fresh water tortoise, water-rat and platypus. The aquatic bird predators include the cormorant, heron, spoonbill and egret families, the pelican, plover, mountain and pink-eared duck, all dependent on the bountiful Yabbie harvest.

It is to the shame of white Australians that the sweet tasting Yabbie has been ruthlessly poisoned for its burrowing habits in farm dams for many years. The broad-spectrum insecticide D.D.T. and other long-lasting chlorinated hydrocarbons (Dieldrin, Aldrin, Endrin) are the most potent killers of not just Yabbies but all the freshwater and marine crustaceans and insects and eventually many of their predators.

Surprisingly enough, D.D.T. is still recommended for the elimination of Yabbies from farm dams by state river authorities. Even the Department of Agriculture recommends D.D.T. (mixed with other insecticides), for the broad acre spraying of a dozen crop pests. Last year (1977) in the Wimmera district of Victoria near Horsham (where my Yabbie-farm is situated) D.D.T. was sprayed

THE SAGA OF
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VS THE CHEMICAL REVOLUTION

over 30,000 hectares for the insect pest, "wheat cutworm".

Farmers from all over Australia complain to me, "Why can't I catch Yabbies in my dams any more?"

I ask them, "When did you or your neighbour last spray insecticide over the dam catchment area?"

The inevitable answer is insecticide pollution. 200 years ago the Aborigines could have warned them about the dangers of widespread poisoning of one whole group of animals, (such as the Arthropoda).

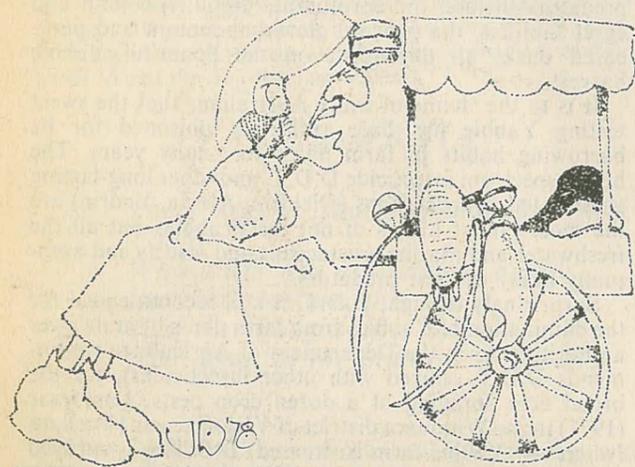
Perhaps you can begin to understand my frustration and indignation at the chemical revolution that is impoverishing Australian wildlife not just today, but for the next 100 years or more. It is a blind madness, where the traditional economics of the dollar in the hand overshadows the modern economics of total cost. This latter subject involves thinking about environmental values (like bushwalking, bird-watching, canoeing) and recreational values (such as tourism, fishing, yabbing and duck-shooting).

D.D.T. is the most ludicrously expensive chemical; ecologically speaking completely uneconomical so far as tourist, fishing and farming industries are concerned. This has been recognized by New Zealand, Asia, Europe and USA for years. Why is it not recognized by Australian authorities?

The lucrative Yabbie export industry is declining rapidly; perhaps another promising primary industry is being sacrificed to the rural chemical industry? There are plenty of theories but no measurements to test them.

SWEET MOLLY MALONE!

She died of a fever, and no one could save her,



And that was the end of sweet Molly Malone.

*Now her ghost wheels her barrow
Through streets broad and narrow
Crying "Platypus? Yabbies?
Oh, where have you gone?"*

Here I sit, in a small mountain kampong, (West of Bali) — exultant amongst a happy farming community. Few chemicals and incredible productivity of rice, vegetables and fruit, (in total — 9 tonnes/hectare/year).

The fish (tilapia, gouramy and carp), are farmed in ponds and channels, while delicious eels are caught in the padi and creek with prawns, water snails, catfish, small crabs and frogs. A total yield of over 1 tonne/hectare/year of high protein food is being harvested in some districts without chemicals.

They tried to sell D.D.T. here several years ago to kill the insect "wereng" that damages the rice. The rapid decline of the fish harvest was detected immediately and now D.D.T. is only used in a few selected areas where human health problems, (like Malaria) are prevalent.

Many organophosphate insecticides have replaced D.D.T., but the farmers still worry about the dead fish after spraying, and the sickness that comes from drinking insecticide — polluted waters. "Diazinone" and "Sevin" are among the major pollutants here. The farmers crave for information on cheaper, more natural organic means of repelling and controlling insects. I have found them very receptive to ideas of growing their own repellents, and learning more about biological control.

The harsh effects of D.D.T. and other insecticides are recognised quickly in the island of Lombok where the fish harvest is highly prized and beautifully integrated with local agriculture.

The Australian monoculture farming and fish farming methods are very primitive and unproductive by comparison. The fish harvest is not so valuable and few people see the horrifying death dance of the poisoned owl, eagle and cormorant in the Australian bush.

Many Australian farmers seem trapped by the technological and chemical revolutions — mixed with an illogical marketing system and enormous wage bills which are forcing many to sell out and leave the land.

"REEDY RIVER"

*Now still by Reedy River the groves of wattle sigh,
The waterholes still mirror the changes in the sky.
The bed of sand has shifted across the rocky bars,
And over all for ever go sun and moon and stars.*

THE SAGA OF
MAC YABBIE
VS THE CHEMICAL REVOLUTION

But of the hut I builded, there are no traces now,

For many rains have flattened the furrows of my plough.

*The glad bright days have vanished —
for sombre branches wave,
Their wattle blossom golden above the Yabbies' grave.*

The farmers supply an indiscriminating housewife who does not care or wish to know that there was kerosene in the water that rinsed the mud from her bright orange supermarket carrots (sweating in their hygienic plastic bags!). The same carrots, tomatoes, apples and other vegetables are often full of Dieldrin and the rest of the chemical cocktail, but they look so delicious from the outside!

Compare the diet of my Lombok teacher friend — striving for self-sufficiency in fruit and vegetables. His fence is of growing Hava trees, supporting his beans and shading his vegetables. Fruit trees and cassava are thriving everywhere.

Weekend happiness is fishing for eels with his children. Every square centimetre of soil is productive, every c.c. of water is sustaining whole foods. All this in a kampong of 10,000 people! No electricity, no TV, just a great cultural richness. These people laugh freely — their deep dreams are intact. Of course, there are problems in the kampong — a great lack of family planning and the worldwide drift of the young people to the glitter of the city, but their kampong and family structure is strong enough to cope with many problems.

The Australian materialistic dreams of owning a car, house, caravan, boat, colour TV, weekender and business seem too easy, too empty by comparison.

How much better to dream of living in tune with the universal reality? This is the essence of the dreams of beekeepers, organic and traditional farmers and gardeners, fishermen, friends of the earth, ecologists, conservationists, many ministers, teachers, students and children. Any one who is open-minded and anxious to learn how to do and say and write with the pure motive of trying to further beneficial change is welcome to join their ranks. First of all you must discard that most horrific of materialistic slogans, "Time is money". No one can be too busy for self-fulfilment.

The word "Yabbie" conjures up dream-time images of the sunny, muddy days of childhood in Australia. Muddily armed with meat and string, remember how you slowly tugged the strangely neolithic monster from the turbid depths of some familiar waterhole. Will "Yabbie" be just a word to your grandchildren?

Unite!! You Yabbie lovers of the world, unite and try to defend them, and Australian freshwater ecology, in their hour of need. Defend them from "the hidden persuaders" lurking near the waterhole. The rural chemical industry, and its political allies are ready to defend the

use of D.D.T. (and the rest of their killer chemicals) with traditional economic arguments.

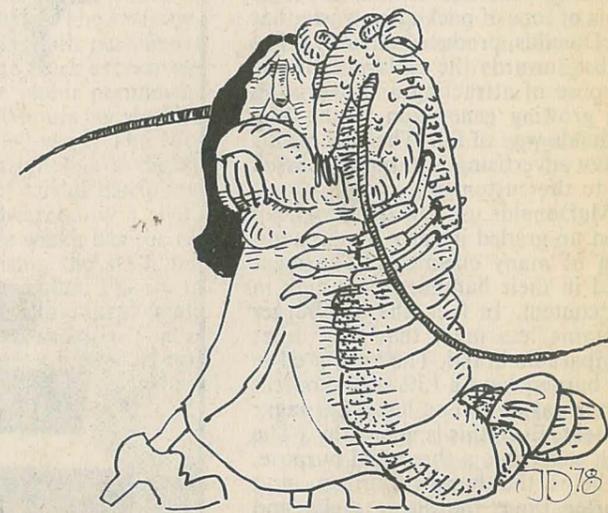
It will take your combined talents to fight this with the modern economic arguments of TOTAL COST.

Maybe you were moved by the 'Save the Whale' campaign? The whale is quite possibly more intelligent than modern man and certainly more in tune with this planet than westernized man. We can easily identify with warm bloodedness and loving care of offspring and companions. What about the animal of your childhood dream time? Can you try to "SAVE THE YABBIE?"

The Yabbie does not cry and gush warm blood when he is killed by insecticide — he just stops living suddenly at about the same time as his companions. The whale is hunted without remorse and killed savagely; death of a Yabbie is dealt out more subtly and insidiously—disguised by a clean, well-packaged, brightly-labelled container. A respectable thing, this can-symbol of man's technological progress to COMBAT Nature. It is the work of a lifetime to understand the full complexities of one ecosystem. Oversimplifying the problems and selling patent insecticides is an easy profitable task by comparison — long term effects will not be noticed until after the next election.

THE LINGERING LAMENT

*Up jumped the Yabbie and dived into the billabong
"You'll never catch me alive" said he.
And his ghost may be heard as you pass
by that billabong,
"Will you come a-waltzing Matilda,
with me?"*



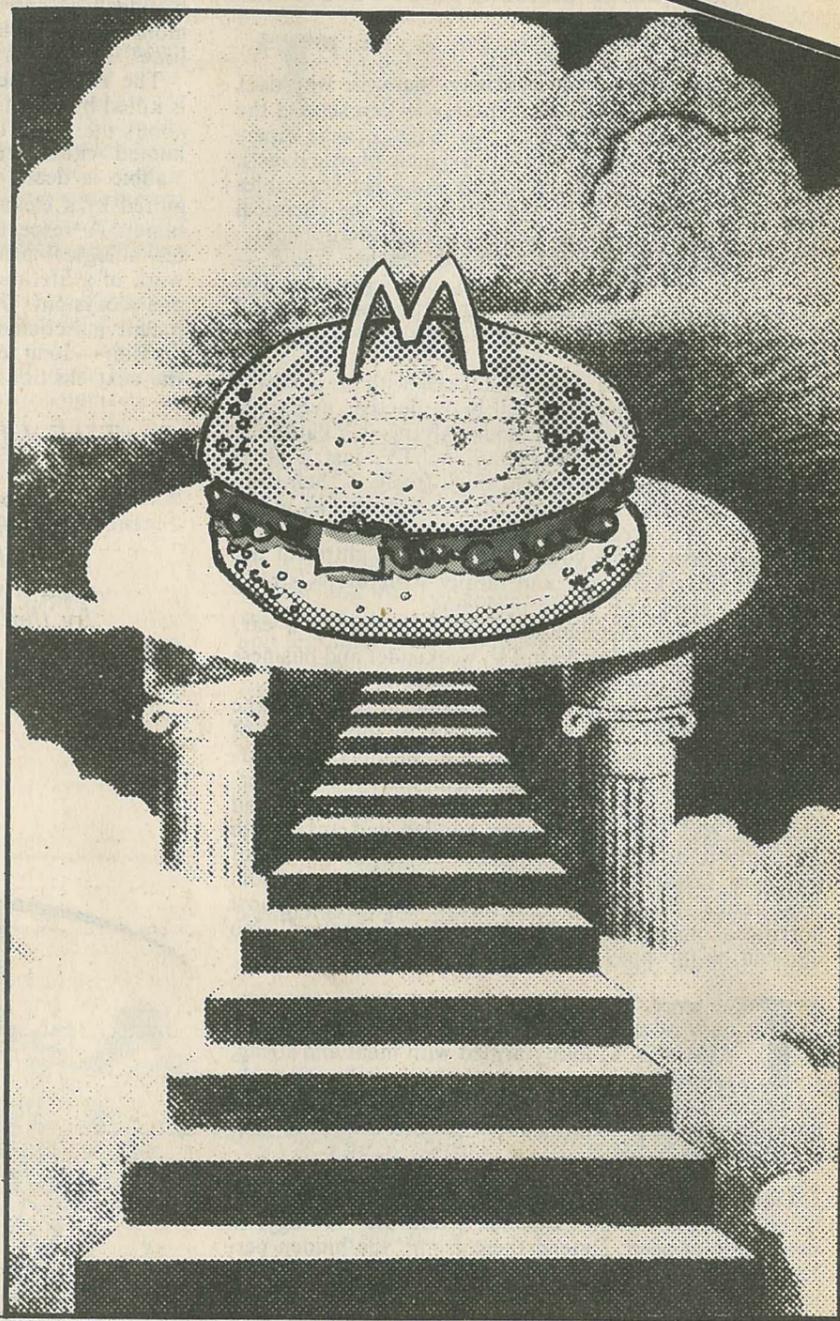
McDONALD'S THROWS UP PLASTIC

McDonald's is the quickest growing fast-food in this country along with its fellow American chains, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Huts. McDonald's, which is a million dollar corporation based in Chicago, has over 4000 outlets in the US and twenty other countries. In Australia they plan to eventually have one store per 10,000 people. What lies behind the "clown" facade of McDonalds and their claim — "we've got it all"?

McDonald's basic aim is to revolutionise the eating habits of the Australian people. They have a ten year plan to establish their organisation and monopolise the fast food market in this country.

The local fish and chip shop will be a quaint memory of the past. Thus the heavy emphasis in their advertising is towards the children. Ronald McDonald, the deceptively sinister clown, attempts to indoctrinate innocent children to the "Mac" habit. McDonalds offer "free" gifts (with purchases) such as the so-called "Ecology Kit". This kit attempts to show kids how to dispose of the litter from McDonalds foods. However, it carefully fails to mention the millions of tons of packaging waste that McDonalds produce annually. The thrust towards the children has the purpose of attracting and capturing the growing generation to the McDonalds way of life. The cost of this heavy advertising is naturally passed on to the customers.

McDonalds use low quality cheap food up-graded in taste by the addition of many chemicals. The meat used in their hamburgers is high in fat content. In fact, the hamburger contains less meat than any other comparable brand. The buns used in the burgers have a 13% sugar content (a normal white bun has a 3% sugar content. Even this is unhealthy.) The high sugar has a three-fold purpose. It helps the buns to brown in a shorter time, the sugar melts and



FOOOO! THE BIG MACABRE

Hey Kids!
Forget all that fruit and
vegetable rubbish —
you want our
hamburgers!



crystallises to form a butter substitute and sugar is highly addictive. That is why after eating a "Big Mac" you feel unsatisfied and want another one. The lettuce and pickles which give the burgers some semblance of flavour are chemical laden. The lettuce alone contains 12 chemicals which keep it — "fresh, green and crisp". These include sodium disulphite, citric acid, ascorbic acid, calcium silicate, sodium citrate and sodium hexanetro-phosphate. The pickles are loaded with polysorbate 80. Overall, the McDonald's products are the epitome of junk food. High in calories, low in total food value, or in the words of a Californian doctor — "I recommend the air between the buns as the most wholesome part of the McDonald's hamburger".

McDonald's are ripping off our children. Over 60% of their employees are in the 15-17 age group. These children do adult work for one third of adult wages. Mc-

Donalds regard joining the union and any attempt to agitate for improved pay and conditions as troublesome. In fact if this occurs, employees are always sacked. This insidious use of child labour has a dual motive; firstly to maximize profits and secondly the inexperience of the youth prevents them from organising. The extremely low wages force both permanent and casual youth to work excessively long hours. Some junior permanent staff work up to 70 hours per week to accumulate a "fair" wage. The McDonalds organisation has a highly developed code of trivial discipline. All actions are governed by a slick, mechanistic policy which has the effect of dehumanising the staff and turning them into robots. Failure to adhere to this behavioural code results in immediate sacking. That is why they have such a high staff turnover.

It is no coincidence that McDonald's donated \$250,000 to Nixon's 1972 election campaign at a

time when debate was taking place in the US Congress to include a sub-minimum wage for teenagers in the Minimum Wage Bill.

The following list of prices are approximate cost prices for McDonald's products. Packaging and labour have to be added. We leave it to you to decide if those two costs are worth the difference in Cost and Retail prices, or if you are getting ripped off.

Raw Cost:

Big Mac	..... approx. 20c
Paid price	..... 90c
Chicken & chips	..... 35c
Paid price	..... \$1.65
Apple Pie	..... 13c
Paid price	..... 47c
Fillet of fish	..... 25c
Paid price	..... 85c
French fries	..... 4½c
Paid price	..... 30c

Milkshakes are synthetic with minimal amount of milk powder.

Coke is coke essence (50%) mixed with soda water (50%).

—from Hawthorn Community Forum

MOTHER INDIA

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT POPULATION



CALCUTTA: families living on the railway line

Photos courtesy Community Aid Abroad

In the Northwest of India lies the state of Rajasthan, stretching from the Eastern Highlands, with an annual rainfall of 20 to 30 inches, to the harsh Thar Desert in the West, which receives about 5 inches of rain a year. Rajasthan, with an area of 132,150 square miles (one third the size of South Australia) and an annual rainfall comparable to that of Ceduna, Bourke or Swan Hill, supports a population of over 25 million people.¹ 21 million of them living on the land. It also carries at least 37 million head of livestock: cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep and horses.

In the dry season the land is stripped bare by animals till not a blade of grass is left. The children climb up trees and throw down branches of leaves to the goats below. Not many trees are left. A few years ago there were carefully preserved forests, where wild deer and boar were kept for the sport of Rajasthani landowners, but now even these forests are gone, chopped down for firewood. Skeletal cows wander in the streets, eating pieces of scrap paper. Severe overgrazing is causing the desert to spread further, year by year.

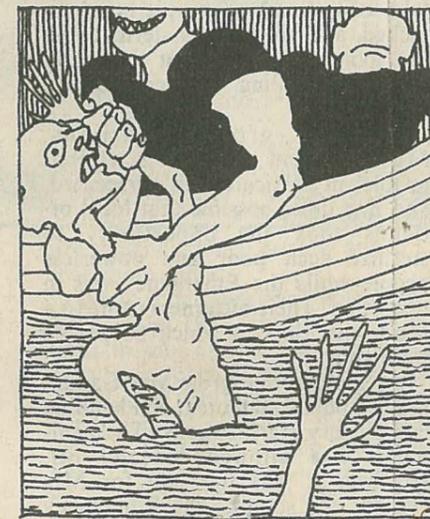
But Rajasthan is not the most heavily populated part of India by any means. In big cities such as Delhi and Calcutta the crowding is hard to believe. Every piece of vacant land, even the verges of the railway lines, and river banks that are periodically flooded, is crowded with families. The mud huts have no furniture, nothing. There is less in these huts than there would be in a prison cell. Most of the people living in city encampments have no job. Some people scrape out a living selling cakes of dried cow dung as fuel for the cooking stoves: it burns with a blue, acrid smoke that hangs in the evening air like mist. Others beg, or steal, or keep trying to find work.

Nothing is free. The dung sellers pay the cow-owners for the dung, and they also buy sawdust to mix with it. There is no great litter problem in India: every scrap of paper, cloth, wood or animal dung finds a use.

In 1972 the Club of Rome published a report on the predicament of mankind, entitled "The Limits to Growth". Using a population growth curve first derived by the United Nations in 1958 it predicted that if the population continued to grow at the rate it was going it would reach six billion by the year 2000. However before that point was reached it would outstrip the earth's resources and there would be a massive collapse.

It now seems that the Club of Rome's first report was unduly pessimistic. The models used did not take social or political factors into consideration: "It (the model) assumes that social variables — income distribution, attitudes about family size, choice among goods, services and food will continue to follow the same pattern they have followed throughout recent history."² In fact people are capable of responding to necessity and deliberately limiting their families' size. China has succeeded in keeping its population growth under reasonable control, and this has had a big effect on the total world population. The Club's second report, produced in 1975, did take these factors into account and came up with less depressing predictions. The hysteria has died down, but the insidious growth of population goes on in other countries, every day making the solution of their problems more remote.

The "Ethics of the Lifeboat"



Since the '50s, millions of dollars have been poured into birth control programs in the third world (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) starting with India, which opened the world's first official birth-control program in 1952. Westernized countries see birth control as being of paramount importance for poor countries; the rationale for this is that "the more mouths there are to feed the less of the cake will go to each person".

An article which appeared in "Not Man Apart", the newspaper of Friends of the Earth in the USA, exemplifies this attitude to poverty:

"Are there already too many passengers aboard Planet Earth? Has the 'carrying capacity' of the Earth already been surpassed? It seems clear that, for the long term, it has. But what is that carrying capacity?"

"Subordinate to those fundamental problems are others. The problem, for instance, of individual freedom: What constraints are permissible to cope with population pressure? The problem of human distribution: Should migration be restricted or redirected? ... The problem of feeding hungry nations: Should it be conditional on each nation's population policy? Should we practise the "ethics of the lifeboat", whereby, to conserve supplies for those most likely to survive if helped, we deliberately withhold food aid from today's direst sufferers from famine because their rescue would breed even more hungry mouths (and suffering) in the future? ... Coercion by many governments will undoubtedly be required at some time in the future, probably sooner than most of us like to think ... Perhaps some day childbearing will be deemed a punishable crime against society unless the parents hold a government licence. Or perhaps all potential parents will be required to use contraceptive chemicals, the government issuing antidotes to citizens chosen for childbearing.

"To protect ourselves in the US against such far-reaching infringements of liberty, it behoves us to undertake at once such lesser steps as may most surely promote the population decline we need. Certainly

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for instance, we must support the Equal Rights Amendment, for it will encourage women to have careers . . . Pronatalist economic practices such as reduced transit fares for children should be discouraged, perhaps by legislation . . . International aid should be most generous to nations that conduct effective population-control programs."

This article is typical of much "Western" thinking in that it makes no basic challenges to the status quo. Although it proposes tough anti-natalist policies for the US, it does not propose that US citizens should be coerced to prevent them from having children. This would be an infringement of civil liberties. The more unpleasant measures, such as government coercion, withholding aid to starving people, and restrictions on immigration, are all implicitly reserved for people from the third world countries, and the poorest countries would be hit the hardest.

It is well known that birthrates fall naturally as people reach a certain living standard and have access to education, yet there is no suggestion of helping them to get there. There is no conception of encouraging villagers to set voluntary limits for their communities. Government coercion is seen as the only practical solution for such people. Nor is there any suggestion that people in the United States, who admittedly use up to 50 times as much of the world's resources as people in third world countries, should cut down their consumption to leave more for everybody else. On the contrary, the article makes mention of the "ethics of the lifeboat", whereby the weakest are tossed out first.

This "ethic" is akin to the idea of triage, which was developed in wartime, when medical supplies were short. The wounded were divided into three groups: those who would survive without treatment, those who would need help to survive, and those who would probably die even if they did receive medical attention. This latter group was left without medicines and only the second group was treated. The idea of triage was raised in the "Five Minutes to Midnight" documentary, about starva-

tion in the underdeveloped world, and the idea has many adherents, who advocate cutting off aid to the poorest countries such as India.

For many years India has followed a policy of industrialisation (although this policy has been modified recently) and for this money was needed: the Government was most anxious for foreign aid. Aid from the US had been cut off. The Government, led by Mrs Gandhi, saw every advance it had made being eaten up by the growing population, and civil unrest emerging.

The Emergency was proclaimed: Mrs Gandhi assumed dictatorial powers and gagged the press. Her son, Sanjay, led the campaign to limit family size. Before the Emergency, government slogans had called for a family of two children (one for each parent). Sanjay called for only one child per family.

Over a period of seven months, until September 1976, four million people were sterilized in India. While many operations were performed voluntarily, other people were forced. According to one local leader, "Troops drew up in jeeps before dawn and each village was ordered to provide 40 men between the ages of 17 and 60 for compulsory sterilization. There was no discretion. They carried guns, they were messengers of the devil." There are tales of busloads of people being hijacked, and all the men sterilized on the spot.⁵ This was what the world had been calling for: compulsory sterilization.

Minority groups: Harijans, Muslims and Adivarsis (tribal people) in particular felt persecuted, and it is quite possible that local officials took the opportunity to sterilize such poor and powerless people while the Emergency was in operation. Their bitterness came to a head with riots in which 50 people were shot.

As the reaction grew Mrs Gandhi made a public statement condemning compulsory sterilizations. The campaign was allowed to cool off. However it was too late for Mrs Gandhi. As soon as the Emergency was lifted a reaction against the cor-

ruption, the loss of civil liberties, and the high-handed sterilization campaign that had been carried out under the cloak of Emergency swept India. Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party lost the next election to the Janata Party, with its proclaimed policy of attacking corruption and restoring freedoms. Despite the enormous hardships of Indian life people rejected the idea of dictatorship, because of what George Fernandes, a socialist minister in the Janata Party, described as "the inherent commitment of the Indian people to freedom", and probably also because of the fear of sterilization. Yet the need for birth control is widely recognised in India, and sterilization is quite popular. It was the compulsion that people objected to.

It is amazing that despite the overwhelming rejection of dictatorship in India, and the stories of sterilization fiascoes filtering out under the Emergency, some people are still in favor of birth-control by coercion in India. The article in "Not Man Apart", quoted above, was published in December, 1977, well after the compulsory sterilization had been abandoned in India. The lesson should have been learned: it is impossible under a democratic system to force birth-control on people who don't understand it or don't want it.

Methods of Birth Control

Condoms are one of the most popular methods of contraception in India. They are on sale all over the place: at cigarette stalls, everywhere. However these things cost money, especially when used regularly. They have been given out free at some birth control centres but not everyone has access to them, or else they would not be on sale. The really poor people could not afford them.

The pill is a similar case. It is expensive, not very popular, and there are not enough doctors available to prescribe it. The Loop was once hailed as the answer to India's population problems and many were fitted in Indian women (the loop is inserted into the womb and prevents the woman from becoming pregnant). However, according to stories I heard while in India, many



of the loops were inserted by inexperienced doctors. Some fell out (a common problem with women who do heavy work in the fields) or pierced the uterus. This is extremely dangerous: it can cause a fatal infection. Horror stories about the loop spread like wildfire among the peasant women, and they are now extremely wary of it. Even if the loop is properly fitted it tends to induce heavy bleeding. Many Indian women

are anaemic. They cannot afford to lose more blood.

What about abortion? When I was in Asia in 1973 abortion was not legal in any of the non-communist countries except Singapore and Japan, and then only to Japanese or Singaporean citizens. An Indian woman would not legally have been able to get an abortion anywhere, even if she could afford one. I believe abortion has since been legalized in

several countries, but the shortage of doctors would make it extremely hard to get one.

This leaves sterilization for men. Despite its frightening irrevocability, millions of Indian men have had the operation, mostly voluntarily. Indians are accused of not trying hard enough to control their family size; yet many of them will try anything, because they are desperate. One problem is that most Indian people are not used to going to the doctor. When they are sick they put up with it. They never see the doctor so they do not ask about birth control, and they are very shy about going to a birth control clinic, especially when it is in the main street of the village and everyone knows what you're going in there for.

Women are particularly afraid of going to male doctors. This may be one reason why condoms and sterilization for men are the most popular form of birth-control in India: they do not involve the woman at all.

Doctors are trained in Western medicine and they may be quite ignorant or even contemptuous of the villagers. One doctor I met in Darjeeling told me, "It's no wonder the people are so undernourished here. For a proper diet you must have eggs, meat, fish, milk, cauliflower, pumpkin . . . it costs 20 rupees a day just for food here!" At the time I was only spending about six rupees a day as a tourist, eating the local food: yoghurt, wholemeal cakes of bread, lentils, onions, chillies, fruit juice . . . the doctor did not know these local foods had any nutritional value.

The primary schools in India are free, but upper class children generally go to private, fee-paying schools where they learn English, study Shakespeare and Chaucer and finally sit for the Cambridge University Entrance Exams. Administrators are largely drawn from this class. The official language in India is Hindi (spoken by about a third of the population, mainly in the North) and English is the unofficial lingua franca, spoken by a small minority of educated people all over the country. Educated people may be able to understand each other, but they frequently cannot understand

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the people they are supposed to be supervising or helping. There are 1652 separate dialects in India, and if a public servant is transferred away from home, he may take years to learn the local language.

There is a tea-plantation in Darjeeling where the pickers are Nepalese and the manager is from Rajasthan. His wife told me, "I'm learning Nepalese. It's so lonely here I want to be able to talk to the servants." Not everyone would have bothered.

Apart from language itself, caste and education create a vast gulf between the villagers and government officials. Thus, while everyone in Delhi is talking about the latest birth control program, the people in the countryside may not have heard of it at all.

Who gains from a population explosion?

The real power in the villages lies with the landlord and the moneylender. Some religious groups, such as Muslims and Catholics, are opposed to birth control, and religion still has a great influence over people.

It seems at first sight that everyone is worse off when the population starts to grow like wildfire. However there are some that profit from a growth in population:

- The labour force grows and there is plenty of cheap labor. The great demand for jobs makes it impossible to hold a strike and unionism can be squashed. Workers will slave in intolerable conditions just for their keep. It's good for employers.
- Overcrowding cities forces the rent up. Dozens of people will pack into a single dwelling. Landlords can charge whatever they like for rent. It's good for them.
- Overpopulation leads to food shortages which send the price of grain skyrocketing, as people frantically try to buy it. Good for country landowners who produce food.
- Moneylenders can charge exorbitant interest. The struggling peasants have no choice but to pay as

their debt can never be paid off and thus the peasants are forced to work virtually as indentured labour for the moneylender

- In the interests of national security it is wise to have a large population, so that there will always be a surplus of men wishing to join the army.

In many developing countries, including the Philippines, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand, the rate of population growth is much higher than it is in India. Poor people, beggars and subsistence farmers are already suffering, but the industrialists are not complaining: they have a pool of cheap labour. Under such circumstances governments are slow to take



decisive action, and when they do they are constantly met with indifference; the passive resistance of vested interest from the top to the bottom of society. It's only when refugees flood into the cities, when famines break out and basic services such as water supply, public transport etc. are stretched to breaking point that the comfortably wealthy begin to understand the enormity of the situation and belatedly realise that something must be done.

The need for children

Even when the country has a policy of encouraging birth-control, the poor people are generally the last to take advantage of it. This is partly because of the hold of tradition, and also because the people do not know of any cheap, safe method of contraception. (Even in 1973 it was estimated that less than 10% of the fertile females in India received any contraceptive advice or supplies.)⁵ However there are economic reasons for wanting a big family. Peasant children start work very young, tending animals, fetching firewood and water, minding the younger children. These simple tasks free the adults for more difficult work. In the cities, the children can often find work in factories. When the children don't go to school, and sleep all together on one mat, it doesn't cost much to support an extra child.

Middle-class people, however, send their children to school and sometimes university. This is expensive; the children are a financial burden for years. Landowners must think of their children's inheritance: they do not want to divide the land up among too many children.

Poor people, on the other hand, often work on someone else's land and do not have to worry about such things. As has often been pointed out, children are a security for their old age. It is particularly important for Indian women to have sons to protect them when they are widowed. Widows are expected to mourn and fast — sometimes they are even thrown out to beg. A daughter, living with her husband's family, may be in no position to help her mother, but a son can be relied on to look after her.

It has often been pointed out that the birth-rate falls as people are better educated. However you don't have to go to school for 12 years to understand the mystery of birth. Education probably affects the birth-rate in a more subtle, indirect fashion. Education affects the position of women in society. It can allow them to compete with boys on equal terms. Girls can do as well as boys at school: the boys must recognise this and treat them not as chattels, useful only because of their

biological function, but as intelligent people. Education gives women the hope of a job, other than unpaid domestic work. Educated women become less dependent on their husbands for the livelihood, and childbearing is no longer the only reason for living.

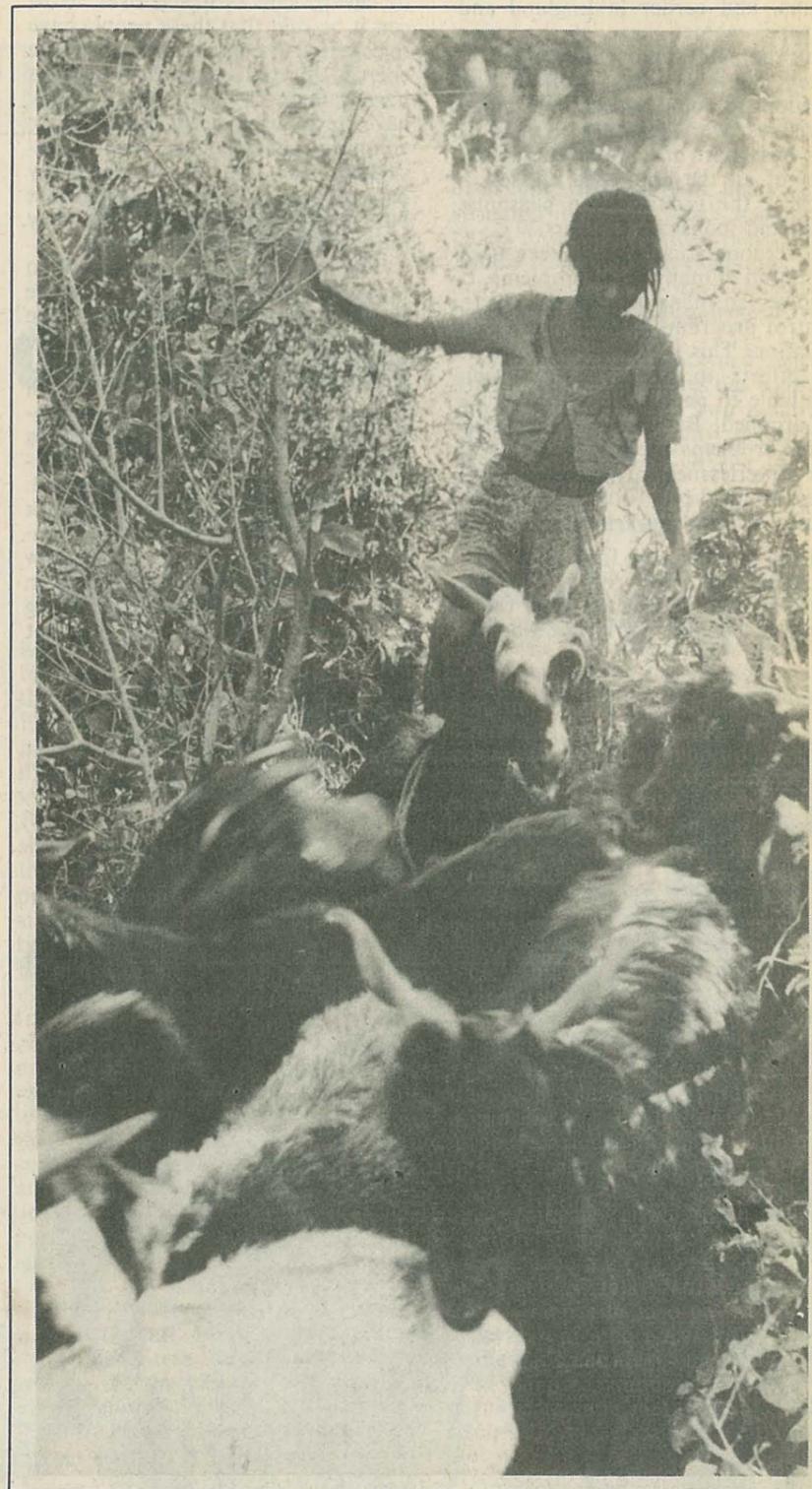
The monopoly on knowledge is broken by schools. The young mother has no chance of defying her mother-in-law, tradition or her husband without knowledge. The same holds for men: they can challenge authority more easily if they have access to knowledge, and thus break the traditions that are holding them down.

Because of the traditional role of women in India, girls are not kept at school very long. They are taken away to prepare for marriage. Under the traditional formula, given in the laws of Manu, girls should be married to a man three times their age: e.g., a girl of 10 would marry a man of 30.⁶

In 1929 a law was introduced by the British forbidding marriage for girls under 14 years of age, but this law was broken so often that the fine imposed came to be regarded as part of the wedding expenses. At that time it was considered good to have as many children as possible. A Muslim man explained the advantages of early marriage: "In one case (a marriage in my family) the girl was only 10 years old and she gave birth to 28 children, and all are living." The girl was 12 when she had her first baby.⁷

As late as 1953 a survey of married women was conducted in Poona, and 90% of the country girls questioned had been married by 14 years of age. The custom of child marriages is gradually being stamped out, but attitudes take a long time to change. Girls are still married very young, and this adds to the rapid rate of population growth. And how can a girl who has just reached puberty at marriage be expected to understand birth control? Sending the girls to school is one way of delaying marriage, but perhaps the whole question of the woman's role should be faced directly.

In every country where population control has been achieved: Japan,



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China, and earlier in England and Europe, women have at the same time gained some independence. They have at least gained the freedom to come and go, and make decisions over their own lives. This has been part of a wider emancipation of all the oppressed classes in society: the ground-down peasants, serfs and industrial workers.

Overpopulation can be seen as a symptom of many other problems. It involves so many factors that birth control programs cannot succeed in isolation. This is not to suggest that all efforts to make contraception available to people should therefore be dropped. But it does mean that other problems must be considered: the powerlessness of women and all peasants in the third world, and the causes of their powerlessness.

Even in India, the first country to sponsor birth-control programs, there are still thousands upon thousands of people who have no access

to cheap, safe contraceptives. How can it be said that these people have rejected birth control and need to be coerced, or that voluntary methods have failed? In many places, they have never even been tried. Where voluntary controls have been unsuccessful, the reason is generally economic: people can see no future but grinding poverty, whether they have more children or not.

The most successful campaigns to limit population growth, for example those in Singapore and China, have attacked economic problems at the same time. People in these countries can see concrete benefits which will flow to them if they limit the population; it is regarded as part of a national effort to increase productivity and raise the living standard. In China, commune members work out how many mouths the community can feed and thus decide how many children each person can have. This system would create a strong compulsion to limit family size, but

at least the reason for it is obvious, and the benefits are shared.

The best method of controlling population is not to apply repressive measures from above. These measures may simply lead to a backlash, bringing all birth control programs into disrepute. A method that involves people at the village level, lets them go about it their own way, is much more likely to succeed.

A final comment: in 1974 (the most recent survey I can find) Holland had a population density of 319 people per square mile. Japan had 281, West Germany had 245 and Britain was close behind with 241. India had only 168 people per square mile, China had 65 and Egypt 34. Admittedly much of Egypt is desert, but the productive parts are much more naturally fertile than Britain. Is overpopulation the only reason for the poverty of the third world?

NOTES

1. Figures taken from *Statistical Abstracts, 1972, No. 19*. Population figures were actually compiled in 1971, stock figures in 1966. The numbers have probably grown considerably since then.
2. Club of Rome: *The Limits to Growth* 1972 p.142.
3. Stewart Ogilvy: "Population Strategy: Towards a New Ethic of Numbers" in *Not Man Apart Vol. 7, No. 22, Dec. '77* (San Francisco). Also appearing as a chapter in *Progress As If Survival Mattered* (FOE, USA, 1978).
4. *National Times*, June 13-18, 1977.
5. George Morris: *Overpopulation: Everyone's Baby* 1973.
6. A. Nevett: *Population: Explosion or Control?* 1964.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *World Atlas*, 1974.



The PHILIPPINES

Bribes and Corruption Surround Bataan Reactor

Why is the Philippines buying a nuclear reactor for \$US 1.1 billion? Why is the reactor to be built near a fault in the earth's crust, the site of volcanoes and earthquakes? And do the people of the third world really want or need nuclear power? This article, written by the people from the Philippines Action Support Group delves into these questions, and describes the situation of the people in Bataan, where the reactor is under construction.

Negotiations are going ahead to use Australian uranium as fuel in a nuclear power plant presently being constructed in Bataan province, in the Philippines. The building of this controversial reactor is attracting world-wide attention due to the allegations of corruption and disregard for human life involved in almost every aspect of the project.

There are many grave environmental problems associated with the project. In particular, the Philippines is earthquake prone and the reactor is being constructed close to a fault zone. The reactor is also surrounded by five volcanoes, four of which are classified as active.

In August, 1968, a strong earthquake occurred in the area of the reactor. In October, 1971, there was a tidal wave. One of the active volcanoes, Mount Natib, is only ten miles from the reactor site. The outer edge of a huge mudflow that resulted from the last eruption of this volcano is less than two miles from the site. According to the United States' Nuclear Regulatory Commission, all volcanic hazards are possible at the site — ranging from ash-fall and lava-flow to volcanic earthquakes. Ash-fall alone could clog filters and cooling ponds, and create havoc with the plant's complex machinery, and earthquakes could cause breaks in the plant's cooling system.

The Philippines Atomic Energy Commission itself recognises that, since the Philippines is in a volcanic

belt, it cannot provide for the long-term storage or ultimate disposal of the wastes produced by the plant. However, to the Philippines Government, the lack of any viable plan for disposal of the radioactive waste is immaterial. Commissioner Librado Ibe, of the Atomic Energy Commission, has said, "the construction of the nuclear power plant . . . will be pushed through even if no storage site is found for the plant's radioactive waste" (Philippines SUNDAY EXPRESS, 4/12/78).

The design of the Philippine reactor has never been rigorously reviewed. As M. Rosen of the International Atomic Energy Agency has explained, exported reactors are usually compared to "a similarly sized plant under construction in the country of origin". This procedure attempts to ensure that the plant design meets the standards of the exporting country and is therefore licensable. As there is no demand in the USA for "small" reactors such as the 600-Megawatt plant being built in Bataan, there is no plant in the United States suitable for comparison. So the plants being sold to the Philippines (and to Egypt and South Korea) are compared to a similar plant under construction in Yugoslavia. This plant in turn has

been compared to a plant under construction in Brazil, which was compared to a Puerto Rican plant. The Puerto Rican plant, incidentally, has never existed; it was cancelled because of seismic problems at the site.

The Union of Concerned Scientists in the United States has warned President Marcos of "two hundred major technical problems" in the Bataan plant. (See NOT MAN APART, May 1978).

Political instability

In Australia concern has been expressed that waste products from such plants should not fall into the hands of terrorists. Who are the terrorists? President Marcos has been ruling the Philippines through the barrel of the gun ever since he declared Martial Law in 1972. The Australian Government has stated that Australian uranium will be sold only to politically stable governments. The Marcos dictatorship cannot be considered stable: there is widespread underground resistance to it, and democratic opposition is stifled. Marcos' main political opponent is in prison. There can be no guarantee that any contract entered into with the present regime will be honoured when Marcos loses power.

One widespread myth in Australia is that nuclear energy supplied to third-world countries will be used to raise the living standards of the people there.

At present only 5% of houses in the Philippines are connected to electricity; and agriculture, fishing and forestry, which together employ nearly half of the population, use only 2.4% of the country's electricity.

However the electricity from the Bataan reactor will not be used to raise the living standards of the poor people who work in these areas. The electricity is destined for Manila and the nearby Bataan Free Export Processing Zone. This zone is a tax-

free haven for overseas companies, above all, cheap labor. There are no unions or pollution controls, and workers are denied the right to strike.

The electricity produced by the reactor will benefit only these companies and a small urban elite who can afford it.

The reactor threatens massive disruption to the lives of at least 11,000 Filipinos living nearby. Already the construction of the plant has caused loss of grazing fields, flooding of ricelands, and the destruction of fruit trees and fish-spawning areas.

The Marcos Government has attempted to suppress all opposition to the plant, but several letters have come to us through the Catholic Church, which is too popular to be suppressed. The following letter is from one of the local villagers. We have been asked not to reveal the person's name in case of Government retaliation.

Under the conditions of Martial Law, suppression of local opposition to the plant has been direct and vicious. For example, as part of its "public acceptance" campaign, the National Power Corporation staged a meeting with local residents. As soon as people gathered, they were surrounded by local police and sixty soldiers. Someone who asked how the government would control airborne pollution was silenced by a colonel with the threat, "Surely you're an activist aren't you? I'll have you arrested." Various people opposed to the plant have been forced to leave the area.

★ ★ ★

The Bataan plant represents an attempt to transfer to poorer nations an unsafe technology which is increasingly being rejected by people in the industrialized nations. The aggressive efforts of companies like Westinghouse to sell nuclear plants to countries like the Philippines are a direct consequence of the drastically reduced demand for reactors in the United States.

One reactor for the price of two

Extensive corruption surrounds the Bataan deal. The Westinghouse

local Officials paid off by Westinghouse

Letter from the Barrio

To whom it may concern:

Comparing the past and the present situation in our Barrio, I can see that there is a big change happening now. This change has to do with the construction of the nuclear power plant by the National Power Corporation. This project is increasingly creating restlessness among us because our rights are slowly being taken away from us. Our right to fish in the sea is one. Part of our fishing ground is already covered with earth and in other places the water is no longer as clear as before. Without our consent our farms were taken over by the National Power Corporation. We depend for our livelihood on these; now they are part of a reservation area. Parts of the mountains were flattened for a housing project for engineers and other people who will work in the plant. They did not consider if our source of food and livelihood will be affected. They only saw their needs, and will meet them at the expense of all of us. For me our town is one of the most beautiful places and if we will be relocated we can never find another place equal to it. I think this is the most tragic thing that can happen to all of us here. I am praying that this will not come to pass.

May people who are in a position to help, reach out to us soon, so that this impending tragedy will not befall us.

Corporation was chosen to supply the reactor despite reportedly lower bids and better terms offered by the French, West Germans and General Electric. Westinghouse admitted before the United States Securities and Exchange Commission that it had made questionable payments to foreign officials. According to a report in the NEW YORK TIMES (14/1/78) Mr Disini, head of the Filipino firm doing the sub-contracting for the deal, may have received as much as \$US35 million.

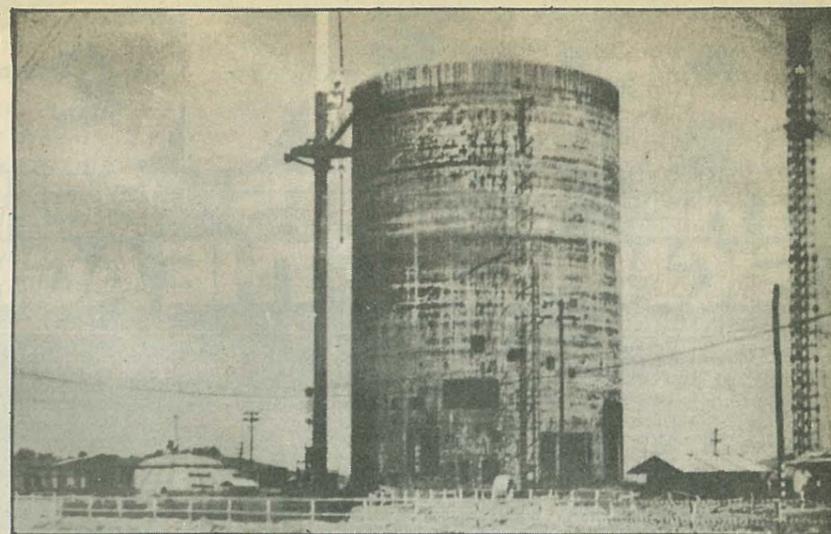
Government officials, quoted in the same report, suspect that the project is overpriced by several hundred million dollars, including construction costs and interest on the \$US1.1 billion in loans needed to build the reactor.

The United States Government is providing \$US668 million for the project, through the Export-Import Bank. This is the biggest deal ever made by the bank, and there have been allegations of collusion between the bank and Westinghouse. Suspicions have been aroused because the bank made its commitment without requiring any set of safety standards to be met and without seeing Westinghouse's final bid for the contract. It went ahead with the loan before an export licence had been received and never questioned a rise in price of over 400% between 1974 and 1975.

The Westinghouse Corporation has been so eager to make sure the deal goes ahead that it has even misled the Australian Government. The Melbourne AGE (21/4/78) revealed that Westinghouse had informed the Government that it had final approval to complete the plant. In fact the Philippines Atomic Energy Commission has still not issued a final construction permit, apparently because of continuing doubts about the plant's vulnerability to earthquake damage.

The Bataan reactor project is a gross misuse of public funds. The Philippines has a foreign debt of \$6.6 billion. Eight million children suffer severe malnutrition. Yet the Government is spending, on one nuclear plant, over three times what it invested in agriculture in 1975.

The Morong Nuclear Power Plant in Bataan Province.



The plant will sharply reinforce the Philippines' dependence on outside countries: it will constantly require American expertise to keep it running, as well as use of US facilities to enrich the uranium. Even if there were a radical political change in the Philippines the country would still be dependent on outside technology, whether from America, the USSR or elsewhere.

The movement of concerned citizens of Bataan has made an appeal: "Our people are not ready for the nuclear age. We cannot afford it with its socio-economic-political implications. WE DO NOT NEED NOR WANT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS! But we can do very little to register our protests, much less to stop the present regime from carrying out its plans... Can you help us? The future of 44 million Filipinos and those still to be born is at stake."

One specific request is that people write letters of protest and concern, both to President Marcos, Malacanang, Manila, and to the relevant government officials in Australia — particularly Mr. Fraser, Mr. Peacock and Mr. Anthony. —PHILIPPINES ACTION SUPPORT GROUP (MELBOURNE) P.O. Box 94, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065



Non Proliferation by Proliferation

In March 1978, a top level Philippine Government delegation visited Canberra to discuss the long-term supply of Australian uranium to the Philippines. The government made it officially clear that it hoped to depend entirely on Australian uranium for all its basic nuclear fuel requirements.

But in May 1978, the Philippines also approached Canada to see whether it could supply uranium for the Bataan reactor, which is scheduled to be brought into peak power by October, 1982.

Major reasons for this move are: Continuing delay in bringing new Australian uranium mines into production and in clearing the way for guaranteed long-term exports, in the face of trade union and other opposition and a tough bargaining stand by Aboriginals, Canada's willingness to enter into additional uranium export contract.

The Philippines was told Australia would not be in a position to supply an initial charge of 350 tonnes of uranium. This is needed early in 1979, to be converted, enriched and fabricated into fuel rods in the United States by Westinghouse by early 1981. In addition, Australia might not be able to provide the annual charges required in 1980 and 1981. Canada may well be a more at-

tractive source of supply.

The stakes for the Australian Government and the uranium industry on the outcome of this situation are considerable. The Philippines has been one of the immediate potential buyers of Australian yellowcake. The Fraser Government wants orders for uranium to give impetus to its plans for expansion of the uranium industry in Australia, including future acquisition of refining and enrichment capacity. In two and a half years of office, not one contract has yet been concluded.

On the 8th August, 1978, Doug Anthony signed a Nuclear Safeguards Agreement with the Philippines, providing 'stringent safeguards to ensure that Australian uranium for peaceful purposes is not diverted to nuclear weapons...'. In fact, the Australian Government's intention to sell uranium to the Philippines fits in well with President Carter's Asian atomic strategy to retain United States reactor markets, along with control of strategic fuel supplies and reactor wastes, and has little to do with non-proliferation. Exporting uranium for use in plutonium-producing light water reactors is not much different from exporting plutonium.

RANGER

THE EVENTS BEHIND THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT



- Terms of the Agreement
- A Chronology of the Ranger Crisis
- The Media Response
- Cartoonists View

Last August an Agreement was provisionally reached allowing the Ranger Company, a partnership which includes the Australian Government, to mine uranium on Aboriginal Land in the Alligator Rivers Region. The Ranger Agreement will give the Aborigines 4¾% royalties on mining — puny in relation to the royalties paid under recent agreements with indigenous people in New Guinea, the USA and Canada — and it contains only weak provisions for environmental protection.

Reluctant delegates to the Northern Land Council were told that they "must" accept the Agreement. If not, the Chairman, Galarrwuy Yunupingu warned them, they would "lose

everything". The councillors accepted the Agreement, but within a week an injunction had been taken out to prevent the Agreement being signed, on the grounds that the traditional Aboriginal owners had not been properly consulted.

Yet on Friday the 3rd of November the NLC again ratified the Agreement and the same day it was formally signed by the NLC and the Government.

Below: RICHARD GRAVES examines the Ranger Agreement (and the related Kakadu Park Agreement) in detail and documents the events that led up to its sudden acceptance.

THE AGREEMENT

The Northern Land Council

The Northern Land Council was set up in 1977 to represent Aboriginal communities in the "top end" of the Northern Territory. There is also a Central Land Council, based in Alice Springs and the Federal Government has recently announced the formation of a third council to cover the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands. These councils consist of delegates elected by the Aboriginal people of each area and they are responsible both for representing traditional owners in land rights cases and negotiating on proposals for the exploitation of Aboriginal Land. The Act setting the councils up made it clear that in doing so they are obliged to consult the traditional owners.

The Land Councils have only limited powers on development proposals for Aboriginal land. In the case of mining companies which obtained a mineral lease prior to June 4, 1976 (this includes Pancontinental at Jabiluka and Queensland Mines at Nabarlek) and quite specifically the Ranger mine, the Land Councils are required to make an agreement for mining whether or not they consent to it. In all other cases Aboriginal veto can still be overridden by a national interest provision.

The Ranger Agreement

Negotiations on the Ranger Agreement began on October 5th 1977. After an early leak — from the mining side — of the NLC's initial draft proposal, they have been kept secret. It was not until August 1978, after the Agreement had been initialled by the respective negotiators for the Commonwealth and the NLC, that details of its terms were leaked, and published in the National Times. This report still represents the most detailed and accurate published account of the environmental protection measures of the Agreement, even though it would only occupy two columns. That this is so demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Press, which concedes the importance of uranium mining as an environmental issue, and yet continually criticises anti-uranium organisations for their allegedly emotive approach and scant concern for the real issues.

The agreement offers little scope for environmental protection, no scope for an active role for the NLC, some scope for independent supervision, and sweeping power for the Commonwealth Government. Machiavelli would rejoice in the way in which it combines the weaknesses of the Land Rights Act, the strengths of the Atomic Energy Act (a relic dug up from the Cold War) and a division of responsibilities between the Darwin and Canberra Governments.

Terms of the Ranger Agreement

1. The Minister for Trade and Resources (at present this is Doug Anthony) has the power to relieve the mining partners of their obligations to environmental protection if "it is impossible to comply with both the applicable law and the said Environmental Requirements set out in the Agreement". The minister is to be the sole judge of this.

2. The Agreement does state that the "best practicable technology" should be used to prevent environmental damage, but its definition of "best practicable technology" is dominated by cost-benefit considerations. The criteria for evaluating the technology are:

- technology elsewhere, and its effectiveness relative to the degree of protection achieved,
- the physical location of the mine,
- the age of equipment in use at the time,
- social factors "including possible adverse social effects".

This is in contrast with the Ranger Inquiry's definition of "the best technology".* The Inquiry pointed out that

* "The term 'best practicable technology' does not refer to a level of pollution control technology representing the economic optimum between the cost of investment in equipment and the cost of environmental damage. The way in which cumulative and insidious environmental effects tend to be produced by successive minor increases in pollution makes it doubtful that such an economic optimum could be determined before major pollution actually occurred. Even then it might not be possible to determine the cause of the observed environmental damage. . . . In the case of the Ranger proposal where there is a combination of the prospects of a highly profitable venture with an environment of great sensitivity and value, interpretation of the terms should not be restricted to technology used in other industries in Australia or in the uranium industry in other parts of the world" — Ranger Inquiry: Second Report p147.



Land Council at work. Wadjigan traditional owners discussing their right to claim vacant crown land in an area near Port Paterson, east of Darwin, with an NLC field officer and a Department of Aboriginal Affairs community adviser.

Consultations like this, with or without DAA staff, form the basis of the land Council's work in representing the interests of traditional owners. Videotapes of some of them are used in Land Claim hearings. The feeling that they had not been properly consulted, led many communities and NLC delegates to successfully seek a delay to the signing of the Ranger Agreement.

Photos courtesy LAND RIGHTS NEWS

even if only small quantities of pollution were permitted the cumulative effect would be unpredictable. Given the sensitivity of the area and the high profits to be expected from mining it recommended that "the best technology developed anywhere which can be applied to the uranium industry in Australia" should be introduced.

The NLC's initial proposal was in line with this definition. At the time the Australian Mining Industry Council attacked the NLC's proposal. Amongst other things it criticised the statement that new technology should be implemented even if environmental damage had not been detected, saying that, "*The nearer the end of the mining operation, the more unreasonable, objectionable and imprudent such a condition must become.*"¹³

The Agreement's definition of "best technology" is a clear rejection of the NLC's initial proposal. It seems that the arguments of the Mining Industry Council have won a major victory, and the NLC — not to mention the Ranger Inquiry — has lost out yet again.

These two provisions affect all the environmental protection measures of the Agreement. Regardless of any other provisions presently in the Agreement, or which might be inserted later, it is impossible to guarantee an environmentally acceptable mining operation as long as they are present.

3. Tailings (crushed ore) and stockpiles of low-grade ore will be returned to the pits. But the mine pits will not be filled level to the ground, and thus will fill up with water to form lakes. The waste rock dumps will remain, a vast mound 300' high and half a mile wide.

This provision is in line with the Ranger Inquiry, but the Ranger report did not anticipate the general weakness of the Agreement.

Aborigines are concerned at the threat posed by polluted, radioactive lakes to waterfowl in the area, particularly those on which they depend for food, such as magpie geese.

4. There is no guarantee that the tailings dam will be watertight. During the Ranger Inquiry it was revealed that an earth-walled dam would allow 1900 metric tonnes of water to escape from the dam per day.⁴ The tailings will still contain much of their radioactivity and will have been treated with sulphuric acid, which would contaminate the water that escapes from the dam. The Ranger Inquiry therefore recommended that the dam be lined with an impervious membrane, or failing that suggested an alternative method of catching seepage. This alternative has not been adopted, and the decision as to whether an impervious membrane should be used has been left to the Supervising Authority to determine in the light of the Agreement's definition of "best practicable technology". Knowing smiles all round in the AMIC.

5. The Commonwealth is only obliged to use its "best endeavours" in research into the health of people within the Region. This may lead to a situation where it is impossible to prove a need to introduce improved technology.

6. The mining company will be allowed to locate an explosives magazine as close as 4.9 km to Mt Brockman, and 500 metres to the tailings dam. The Ranger Inquiry recommended that it be placed 8 km from both, although the Agreement does stipulate that not more than 15 tonnes of explosives should be placed in the magazine at any one time.

7. The Supervising Authority to oversee environmental protection includes bodies of the Northern Territory Government, meaning that the NLC will have to deal with two separate Governments, as well as the mining company.



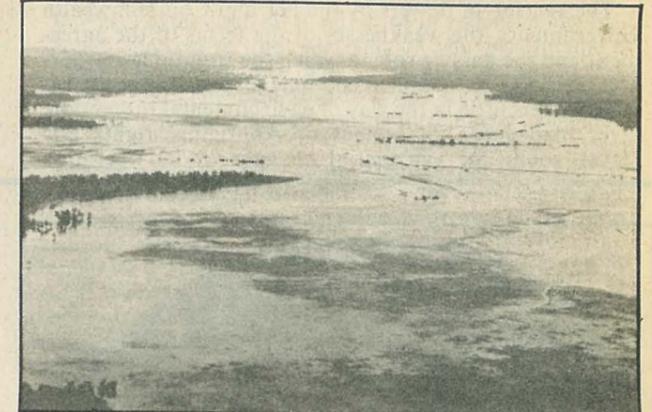
White advisers, Stephen Zorn, Eric Pratt, Stuart McGill and Alex Bishaw, discuss Ranger with traditional owners.

Stephen Zorn negotiated on behalf of the NLC. Eric Pratt is the NLC's chief legal officer, Stuart McGill was the NLC's Legal Officer until his dismissal on September 19, Alex Bishaw is the NLC's manager.

KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

Terms of the National Park Agreement

1. A 100-year lease of the Aboriginal Land within the area of the proposed Park to the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service,
2. the further lease of any land in the area which later becomes Aboriginal Land, should the Director request it,
3. the Director is only obliged to **discuss** variation of the Agreement every ten years. Action on an Aboriginal request for variation before this would be left to the Director's discretion. Any variation can only be by mutual agreement.
4. the Director may sub-lease any area of the Park, with a proviso that such land must be set out in the plan of management,
5. the Director is only obliged to **consult** the Aborigines in the preparation of a plan of management,
6. he is only obliged to take whatever action he considers "**reasonably practicable**" (emphasis provided) for the protection of the marine and estuarine fauna and flora in the waters below low water mark adjacent to the Region. This is the only point where the Agreement touches specifically on protection of wildlife,
7. he is only obliged to:
 - train "reasonable" numbers of Aborigines,
 - employ as many numbers of Aborigines as is "**practicable**",
8. the rights of access of traditional owners of the area, and official representatives of the NLC **only** are protected by the Agreement. Even with these people, the Director can restrict access to any area for reasons of "security, safety, privacy or the protection and preservation of the park or property or things in the park",
9. use of vehicles, boats or aircraft by these people can be restricted by "such reasonable conditions as are determined by the Director, having regard to the need to preserve the park or property or things in the park".
10. no other Aboriginal rights are mentioned in the Agreement. The ability of the Aboriginal people to freely assume the rights and responsibilities of their own land is thus left to the Director's discretion.
11. The N.T. Government is given a role in the day to day operation of the park — against previous undertakings to the NLC.



The Magela Creek in flood, below the proposed uranium mines. Jabiru (Ranger) and Jabiluka (Pancontinental) are both within the Magela catchment.

By subsequent legislation the Government has determined that the land to be granted **must** be leased by the Aboriginal owners to the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. As with the Ranger Agreement, should the NLC fail to sign an Agreement on this, the Government can step in and appoint an arbitrator, and can sign on the Council's behalf.

Thus the NLC has been forced into the position of having to make a quick decision on two agreements at once: the Ranger Agreement and the terms of the Kakadu National Park lease.

The terms of the Park Lease (see box) have not been reported. Nor have they been widely read, by conservationists, NLC delegates or the traditional owners of the area they affect. As with the Ranger Agreement, negotiations were conducted in secrecy, and the NLC delegates were first acquainted with the terms of the lease at the September 12-14 meeting at Red Lillies Lagoon. It appears that the Kakadu lease agreement was given little if any discussion there, certainly not in detail. Nor has there been any adequate discussion of it since. As its terms cut right across the spirit of the land rights movement, this needs some explanation.

The declaration of a National Park has always been advanced as a benefit for the Aborigines of the Region, and for the general well-being and protection of communities to the east, in Arnhem Land. Hypothetical benefits, rather than the actual terms of the Agreement, have been discussed. As well as this, discussion has been submerged by the immediacy and weight of the Ranger issue. Consultation has been stifled by the secrecy

**The Aborigines did not win all the land in their claim. The Ranger Inquiry, which heard the case, made no recommendation on two large areas, the Djindibi and Djoned clan areas, for which it found insufficient evidence of traditional ownership. The traditional owners of Munmalary and Mudginberri were unable to claim the areas, as both had been leased out for pastoral purposes. The Inquiry recommended that the leases on the two cattle stations should be resumed, to allow the land claims to proceed. It recommended that the whole area of the claim, the two pastoral leases and the former Woolwonga reserve, which was already Aboriginal Land, should become a National Park.

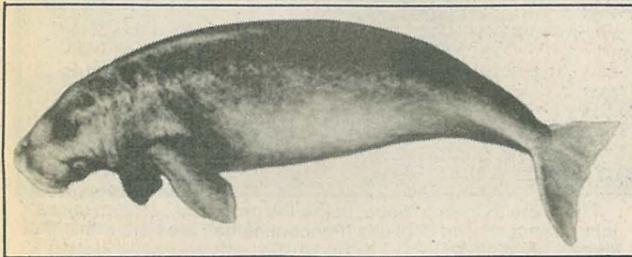
When Aborigines claimed their traditional land in the Alligator Rivers Region, an area which took in the Ranger site and several other uranium finds, they agreed that if they won their case they would allow the land to be made into a National Park. (See CR, Vol 4/1, p.19 and CR, Vol. 2/4 p.).**

adopted for the negotiations, the failure to inform NLC delegates and Aboriginal communities in general, and the action of coupling the Park Lease with the Ranger Agreement as one package, which must be signed without delay.

The sharing of powers by the NT and Commonwealth Governments, the weaknesses of the terms of the agreement and the passive role to which the traditional owners and the NLC are confined combine to give an Agreement which offers little in the way of environmental protection, gives inadequate guarantees of Aboriginal rights and leaves room for substantial changes in its operation

following changes in the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The presence of one NLC representative on both the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission offers the Aboriginals little influence.

Since the setting up of the Ranger Inquiry which heard their land claim, the Aboriginal people of the Alligator Rivers Region have received only part of the land they claimed, a National Park whose benefit to them is largely a matter for the discretion of a Commonwealth Government official, and the prospect of a number of uranium mines in what should then be called a controlled disaster zone rather than a National Park.



THE DUGONG

The dugong, found in Australia from Broome to Moreton Bay and well known around Van Diemens Gulf and the waters off Arnhem Land and the Cobourg Peninsula.

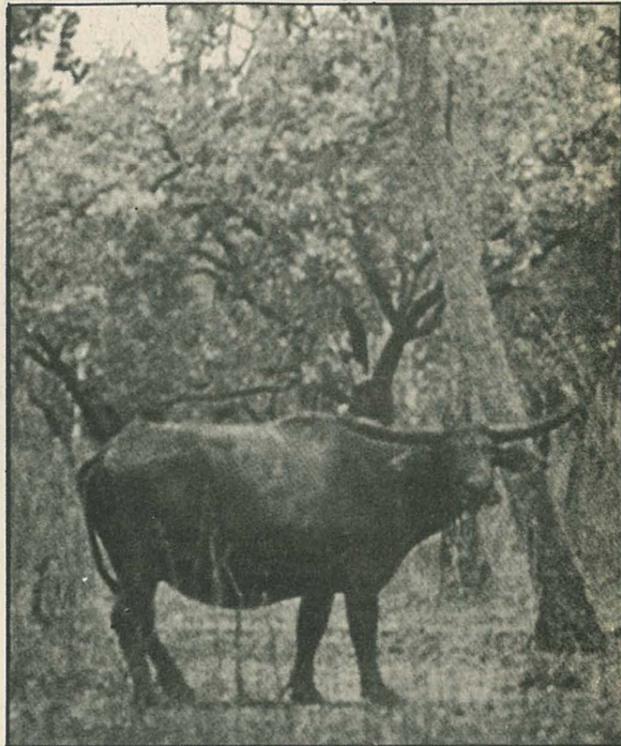
Dugongs have proved notoriously difficult to study. They are totally aquatic, living almost continuously submerged, and surfacing only briefly for air. They also tend to be wary and surreptitious. Consequently, little research has been done on them.

No mention is made of them in either of the reports of the Ranger Inquiry. Similarly, the Alligator Rivers Fact Finding Study excluded them from the scope of their investigation. It comes as no surprise then to find that the environment protection measures of the Ranger Agreement stop at the estuary. Under the Kakadu Agreement, the most the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service is required to do is to take what action he considers necessary for their protection.

Dugongs belong to the Sirenia order of mammals, along with manatees. In external form, they are sharply distinguished from all other mammals except Cetaceans. These two orders — Sirenia and Cetacea — are believed to be descended from different ancestral types, their resemblance being the result of independent adaptation to aquatic life. Evidence of fossil remains suggest that sirenians and the Proboscidea order of ungulates, now represented by the African and Indian elephants, are descended from related ancestral types.

Dugongs graze on the seaweed of shallow coastal waters. The impact of herbicides on their feeding grounds and their accidental capture in shark and commercial fishing nets are known threats to their continued strength. Some research is being carried out by the James Cook University, Townsville.

A third genus of Sirenia, Stellers sea cow, is now extinct. It first became known to western people when specimens were taken in the waters off the Commander Islands in the Bering Sea. The species was exterminated within a quarter of a century.

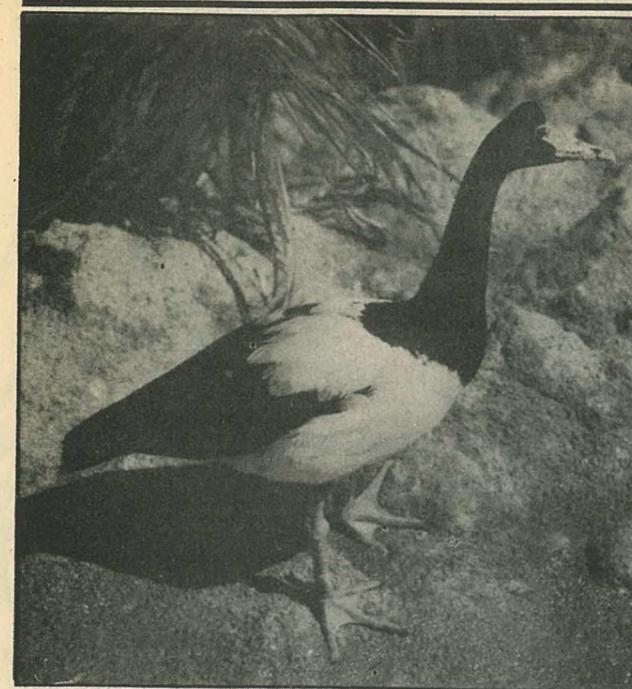


WATER BUFFALO

Water Buffalo were introduced into Australia last century, and have since thrived in northern tropical areas. Their wallows and the heavily grazed and trampled areas they leave behind them, make them easy to detect. Weed species tend to take over these areas.

The habitats most susceptible to degradation by the buffalo are rain forest areas and floodplains. Within the Alligator Rivers Region, the animals most affected are the ground dwelling megapode, the scrub fowl, the rainbow pitta and the mosaic tailed rat in rain forest, and the yellow chat and false water rat in the swamplands.

Kakadu includes two former pastoral leases, Munmarlary and Mudginberri, which had been set up in 1969 to exploit the market for buffalo. With the establishment of a national park, control measures will be applied throughout the park area. One of the recommendations of the Ranger Inquiry was that action be taken to reduce the numbers of buffalo, and if possible, to eradicate them.



THE MAGPIE GOOSE

Magpie Goose, *anseranas semipalmata*, waterbird under threat. As a study jointly commissioned by the Australian Government and the Australian Mining Industry Council has found, areas essential to them are the most vulnerable of the various habitats of the whole Alligator Rivers Region.

Magpie Geese are distributed along coastal areas of northern Australia between the Fitzroy River in Western Australia and Bowen in Queensland, and in New Guinea. In October and November, at the onset of the first storms of the tropical wet season, they descend in flocks on the swamps of the river floodplains. As the wet progresses and the swamps fill up, they break up into breeding pairs and trios (two females and one male). They build floating platforms out of spike rush, using them at first for courting, mating and resting, then for nests when water depth and vegetation are most suitable, around March and April. During this time, they feed on the abundant quantities of swamp grasses — *panicum*, *paspalum* — and wild rice. Each female lays six to nine eggs. At six weeks, the young can fly.

As the waters decline, the families range wider over the swamps. Then, as the dry season intensifies, from May onwards, they extend their ground, congregating in flocks and feeding on the bulbs of spike rush and other plants which they scratch up from the now bare plains with their bills.

Their main breeding grounds are on the black soil floodplains on the Northern Territory rivers between and including the Daly and East Alligator. The greatest number concentrate on the Daly and Mary. In the dry season, the greatest number concentrate on the South Alligator. The study referred to above said this about their habitat here:

"The most vulnerable of the various habitats are the swamplands which are also important because those along the South Alligator River are the main dry season refuge in the Northern Territory for enormous numbers of water-birds. Swamplands are susceptible

to water level controls and changes in water quality. Surface water control, if extensive or intensive locally, could jeopardise the survival of the swampland's fauna. Water quality change is also a hazard for mangroves. The rain forests occur in small isolated patches and have already suffered damage from buffalo."

Previous complacency about the Magpie Goose is indicated by its present distribution. They used to breed in southern Australia, including the Murray and Darling swamps, Western Victoria and around Melbourne. Deliberate destruction because of the threat they posed to crops, the draining of swamps and the degradation of their habitat by cattle, were sufficient, when combined with a couple of disastrous droughts, to wipe them out in these areas.

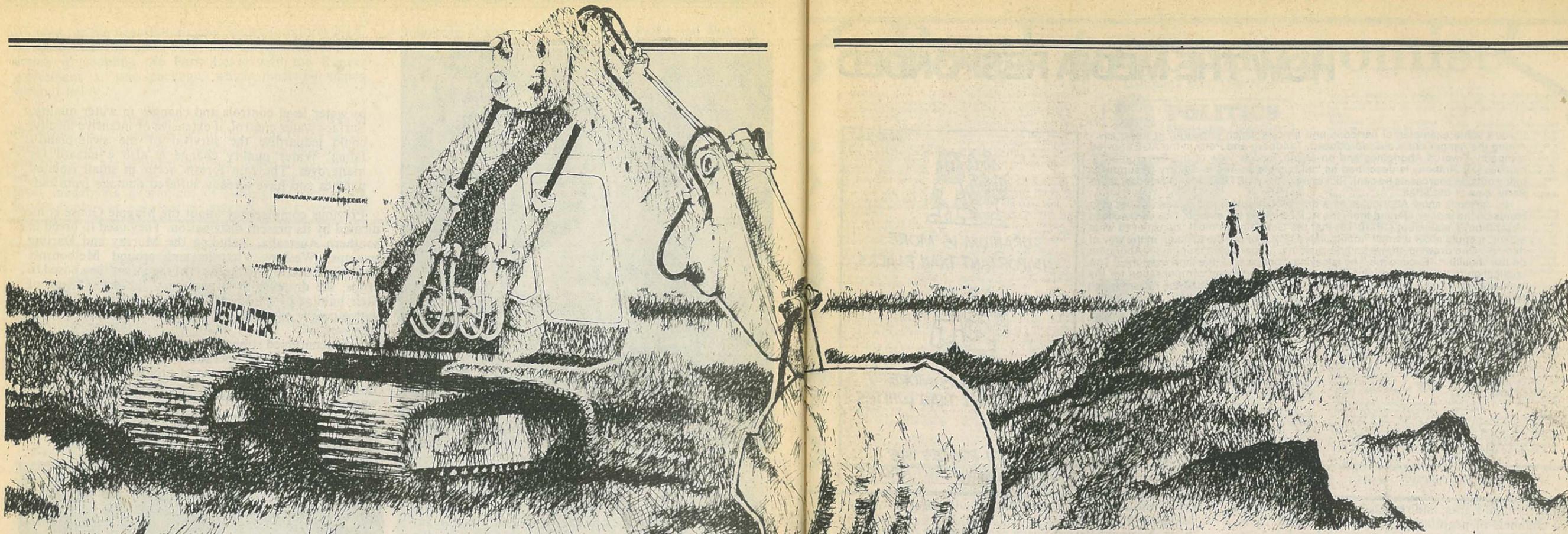
Their continued strength is to a large degree dependent on uranium mining operations and how government ministers and officials interpret protection Agreements. Little has been done to judge the effects of ingesting mine water, or contaminated water in the swamps. The Aboriginals, whose diet has traditionally depended on the magpie goose, await future research on the subject, should such research prove possible or practicable.



AGILE WALLABY

The agile wallaby, common in the pandanus thickets of the flood plains of the Alligator Rivers Region and throughout coastal northern Australia.

It has managed to thrive side by side with pastoral development, feeding on the short green grass which comes up after burning. In the Northern Territory, it has been declared a pest north of the 15th parallel, the higher rainfall areas where pastoral development is concentrated. The declaration of sanctuaries and national parks has given it some protection.



“Dirty White Man’s Politics”

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE RANGER CRISIS

PANCON'S ROAD AND THE COASTAL WATERS

SEPTEMBER 1

A conference of Aboriginal coastal communities was held at Galiwinku on Elcho Island. It was attended by 42 delegates from 19 communities, and called on the NLC to defer signing any uranium agreement until Aboriginals were given control of entry to coastal waters within 2 km offshore from Aboriginal communities. A spokesman, Wesley Lanhupuy, said that “It would be inconceivable if the Northern Land Council by-passed the people it was supposed to represent.”

SEPTEMBER 4

The Federal Government gave Pancontinental permission to proceed with extension to the Arnhem Highway. This decision was announced before Pancontinental had completed final Environmental Impact Statements for its planned Jabiluka mine.

Next day, Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that the NLC would not sign the Ranger Agreement unless the Government withdrew permission for the road. The traditional

owners opposed the road, which would have opened up the Jabiluka site in preparation for uranium mining. Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that the NLC supported their stand.

During the following week, telegrams were sent out to NLC delegates advising them of a Council meeting beginning on September 12 (the Red Lillies Lagoon Meeting).

According to John Gwadbu, a member of the NLC executive, the telegram to Goulburn Island said only that they should send a delegate. It did not say that the meeting was to take the final decision on the Ranger Agreement, and no prior information was given about the terms of the Agreement.

SEPTEMBER 7

Galarrwuy Yunupingu gave a press briefing the day before he was to meet senior Government ministers to discuss the Ranger Agreement.

He said that the NLC would not sign the Agreement until it had the Government's word that the Pancontinental mining venture would not proceed. (he said, however, that withdrawing permission for the road extension would help the Agreement to be signed).

He added that the Agreement was only a “recommendation”. At no stage had he or the NLC accepted that it was a final document. The “recommendation” had to go to the 42 members of the NLC for long discussion. As it was written in English, it would have to be

translated, and once this was finished, the NLC would be prepared to begin the “real negotiations” and thrash areas which they might find unacceptable. All this would not be finished before the onset of the wet season.

Galarrwuy described the Government's decision to allow Pancontinental to extend the Arnhem Highway as “stupid”: “They are supposed to be good politicians. But they picked the wrong moment to do this because I am going to make them suffer.”

He referred to the Ranger Agreement as “a piece of paper Mr Anthony should save for the next time he goes to the toilet,” and refused to go to the meeting if Anthony were to be present.

SEPTEMBER 8

A meeting was held in Darwin attended by Fraser, Anthony, Viner, Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Harry Wilson, an executive member of the NLC.

Afterwards, Anthony and Galarrwuy Yunupingu issued a joint statement which said that Yunupingu would recommend ratification of the Agreement at the next NLC meeting and that Anthony would ensure that the highway extension did not, without Aboriginal agree-

ment, go ahead before the Government had given permission for the Pancontinental mine to proceed.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu describes the settlement as a matter of understanding and compromise, and as “very successful”. He said that “The Northern Land Council is feeling much more comfortable.”

Note: Galarrwuy Yunupingu had refused to attend the meeting if Anthony was present, and unless he could take the NLC's Legal Officer Stuart McGill. Anthony was there, and Stuart McGill was kept out at the Ministers' insistence.

SEPTEMBER 9

Milingimbi community meeting resolved that a formal protest against the Government's pressure tactics should be released to the Press.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu gave an assurance that the NLC meeting to begin on the 12th, would continue into the week beginning the 18th to allow communities such as Croker Island, Milingimbi and Goulburn Island to attend.

SEPTEMBER 12

Stephen Zorn, NLC negotiator, told an AGE reporter that Aboriginals could not expect a better deal from Ranger unless they used violence, and that nothing more was likely to be gained through continued negotiations or by taking the matter to arbitration.

He said that in other parts of the world, people

HOW THE MEDIA RESPONDED

Here some examples of cartoons and articles which appeared in the press during the Ranger crisis are reproduced. Tandberg and Petty in the AGE showed sympathy towards Aborigines and an astute, cynical view of the Government's motives (Mr Anthony is described as "an outside source in a hurry to supply as many outside sources as he can). Pickering in the AUSTRALIAN reflected a Liberal Party view of the affair.

His cartoons show Aborigines as a group of simple boongs, keen to get their hands on the money. Behind them the ALP is pulling the strings. This view echoes Mr Anthony's statement (16/10/78) that the Government must "consider to what extent" it could allow a small "manipulated group of people to stand in the way of mining". One drawing shows an ape-man in a leopard skin tapping an Aborigine on the shoulder: "Excuse me," he is saying, "but he took the land from me." The implication is that the Aborigines don't really deserve any compensation for the land: they don't own it. Basically Pickering's cartoons appeal to the racism which still underlies white Australia's thinking.

However it was newspaper headlines such as "NOBODY WILL STOP RANGER: ANTHONY" which summed up the newspapers' attitude to Ranger: the signing was going to go ahead. There was no point in protesting about it — the Agreement was a fait accompli.



URANIUM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BLACKS



URANIUM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHITES

WHICH PROVES THE GOVERNMENT ISN'T RACIST

fighting for land rights, had resorted to violence when the usual channels of negotiation failed.

"I don't know what would happen if they decided to hold out. They could as a last resort get in front of the bulldozers with a shotgun."

Shortly before this, Stephen Zorn had made his negotiator's report to the NLC.

Attached to it was a graph comparing Ranger royalties with royalties gained under other agreements in the N.T. and elsewhere. The Ranger royalty was shown as 9.25% compared with the Groote Eylandt royalty which was given as 3.75%. The Ranger royalty was in fact only 4.25%. Zorn had added 5% as "Cost of environmental protection". He added nothing to the Groote Eylandt royalty.

The report claimed that the Ranger agreement "included all the recommendations of Justice Fox."

It also said that: "the Council was in a very difficult position because of the Government's involvement in the project and the constant threat that the government would use arbitrators and try to take away what had been gained through negotiation."

Another resources lawyer, Robert Krueger, has since criticised the Ranger agreement on the grounds that it was not equitable and that environment protection was left to future governments. He said that governments have a bad record in these matters.

He added that the agreement, as it was, could only serve as a basis for future negotiations.

NLC MEETS AT RED LILLIES LAGOON

SEPTEMBER 12 - 14

Briefing notes were given to the delegates which described the achievements of the Agreement as follows:

- (a) Thousands of square kilometres of land for the local people.
- (b) A National Park offering protection for the land and work for Aboriginal families.
- (c) The best arrangements ever in Australia for protection of the land and its people from the effects of mining.
- (d) Substantial payments that offer Aborigines the real means of achieving self-determination in Australian terms for the first time.

Alex Bishaw, Manager of the NLC, warned the delegates that Bob Hawke, President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, had told him, the Government would "nail the Northern Land Council's ears to the wall if they did not agree to mining." (Mr Hawke has since claimed that this was a total misrepresentation and Bishaw has publicly apologised.¹²)

Bishaw said that senior Government officials had told him, Cabinet would not hesitate to take away the bargaining powers of the NLC by amendment of the Land Rights Act.

He told the Council that the Agreement had to be signed.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that Fraser had told him at the September 8 meeting that the Government would legislate to change the Land Rights Act if the NLC did not agree to sign the Ranger Agreement. He said, Fraser's words were: "I'm supposed to be the number one man in Australia today, who has the power to control any legislation there is, and I can block it, I can break it up."

He added that Pancontinental would go ahead regardless of the NLC's decision on the Ranger Agreement. He said, Fraser had told him: "Shut up. Just sit down. We're going to dig that hole anyway, we're going to make that hole anyway."¹⁴

According to Leo Finlay, Galarrwuy also quoted Fraser as saying, "Look, Yunupingu, if this Agreement is

Road to compromise

Melbourne AGE, 11/9/78



POLITICS
Michelle Grattan



Mr. Fraser



Mr. Yunupingu



Mr. Bjelke-Petersen

SIX FOR LUNCH: SAME TABLE, SEPARATE WAYS



Mr. Viner



Mr. Anthony



Mr. Nixon

CANBERRA — It was a fascinating luncheon party in the Darwin Travelodge restaurant last Friday.

Around the table were the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, Queensland Premier, Mr. Bjelke-Petersen, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Anthony, the chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr. Yunupingu, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Viner, and the Minister for Transport, Mr. Nixon.

Only the night before, Mr. Yunupingu had tried to ban Mr. Anthony from talks on the Ranger agreement.

And within hours, Mr. Bjelke-Petersen would make a fresh attack on the Federal Government's uranium policy.

The lunch came during a day of tough negotiations between the Federal Government and Mr. Yunupingu to overcome new obstacles to the council's signing of the long-awaited agreement.

The Government had been confident — after the council and its negotiators agreed on terms late last month — that the agreement would be quickly ratified and Ranger's construction underway in the last weeks of the present dry season.

The timing had both symbolic and actual importance for the Government. It would make the real beginning of the implementation of the uranium policy. If the dry season finished with nothing signed, new unforeseen obstacles could arise in the months ahead.

But on September 1 came the announcement that the Government had given Pancontinental permission to extend the Arnhem Highway.

That decision had been made by a Cabinet committee chaired by Mr. Anthony, whose Ministry includes uranium policy.

Apparently some bureaucrats had advised that the extension was not a part of the road about which the Aborigines were sensitive. Nevertheless, Mr. Anthony and his ministerial colleagues showed appalling foresight in their timing. Once again the Deputy Prime Minister has left the impression of poor judgment and over-anxiety to push ahead uranium development.

The council is bitterly against Pancontinental's Jabluika deposit ever being developed because of its environmental effects and its interference with sacred sites.

Mr. Yunupingu interpreted permission to extend the road as implicit approval for the Pancontinental mine. He warned last Tuesday that the Ranger agreement might not be signed.

Coincidentally with this row, Mr. Fraser and a bevy of Federal Ministers were to be in Darwin on Thursday and Friday for the opening of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Fraser and Mr. Yunupingu built up a good personal rapport when they toured part of the Territory together last April. Their famous fishing trip, which landed Mr. Fraser in court, was to pay dividends when it came to their dealing over this latest issue.

As soon as he received Mr. Yunupingu's telex threatening delay to Ranger, Mr. Fraser arranged a meeting with him.

When Mr. Fraser and his accompanying Press party arrived in Darwin late on Thursday, the journalists made a beeline for the council office.

Here, sitting crosslegged on a table, a relaxed but determined Mr. Yunupingu declared there was "no chance" the agreement would be signed the following week.

He said he would recommend that it should not be signed until the Government gave an assur-

ance Pancontinental would not proceed. Reversal of the decision on the highway would be helpful, but not enough, he said.

When someone noted that Mr. Anthony was in town, Mr. Yunupingu declared: "If Anthony is there, I'll refuse to meet them".

Mr. Yunupingu's tough words were partly dictated by anger at the road decision itself. But also the draft Ranger agreement had been coming under attack from

many groups, and the NLC chairman was looking to his own power base. He told reporters: "We are already getting criticism that we are selling out our own people for dollars."

Having made his attack, Mr. Yunupingu went off to an official dinner for the NT Assembly celebrations. He and Mr. Fraser chatted amiably, but Mr. Yunupingu did tell the Prime Minister he didn't want Mr. Anthony at next day's meeting. Mr. Fraser

reportedly replied that officials should not be present, so excluding council solicitor Mr. Stuart McGill.

The Government had agreed that unless the NLC consented, no extension of the Arnhem Highway would take place before a final decision was made on whether Pancontinental should be allowed to mine. In return, Mr. Yunupingu will recommend that the council meeting this week ratifies the Ranger agreement.

It was a useful and sensible compromise.

Of course, Pancontinental has some grounds for complaint about the ad hocery of it all. Last night Pancontinental's chairman, Mr. Tony Grey, claimed the switch would cost the company \$250,000.

He said the road was not necessary to complete an environmental impact statement but would make environmental monitoring during the wet easier.

In one sense, the Government was left looking a trifle ridiculous, reversing approval for the road a fortnight after announcing it. It was no doubt painful to have to make such a backflip when dealing with a company.

But by demonstrating good faith to the NLC, the Government has almost certainly ensured the Ranger agreement gets the green light this week.

The council has flexed its muscles, and shown it was not to be taken for granted. Mr. Yunupingu had demonstrated to his own supporters that he could wield some power with the Government.

And the concession the Government made does not affect the ultimate decision on Pancontinental, which remains to be made after the company presents its final environmental impact statement.

Travelodge. After another hour of talks, Mr. Yunupingu and Mr. Anthony put out a joint statement.

not signed, you will lose the Northern Land Council. I will take it off you, and you will lose the Aboriginal outstation movement. You won't have anything."

Galarrwuy Yunupingu has since denied that Fraser ever made these threats. A denial has also been made by

What the Aborigines were Told

At the Red Lillies Lagoon NLC meeting briefing notes were given to delegates which gave strange descriptions of anti-uranium groups and the Australian Labor Party.

With regard to the ALP these notes said: "The Ranger Company was set up as a partnership with the Australian Government to mine uranium at Jabiru. The Australian Government that did that was a Labor Government. The same Labor Government established the Ranger Inquiry. That Inquiry decided that mining at Jabiru could go ahead despite Aboriginal objections . . . the Labor people say that they have changed their minds and would delay for a while on the other hand if they became the Government, they could change their minds again."

Anti-uranium groups were given the following description:

"These people are against the present proposals for many reasons. Some because they believe that uranium is going to hurt people and land, some because they want to attack the present Liberal Government and some because they want to attack the whole basis of Australian society. Stephen Zorn has said publicly that these people will fight the uranium mines to the last Aboriginal. What he means is that their support might be limited by their assessment of what they can get from Aborigines without endangering themselves."

the then Acting Prime Minister, Mr Anthony, in Parliament.¹⁵

At the same meeting, a proxy delegate from Elcho Island, Wesley Lanhupuy, was not allowed to vote. He had brought a resolution with him from the meeting held on September 1, saying that mining should not be discussed till the Government gave the Aborigines living on the sea control of offshore waters. Galarrwuy said that this question could not be discussed.

Another delegate said later: "I was very unhappy about this as I knew that all the 19 communities that attended the Galiwinku Conference had supported this resolution and that we would be going against their wishes if we supported the Ranger agreement at this stage."

A letter of apology from the NLC delegate from Numbulwar in Arnhem Land was read, but not a statement that the people of Numbulwar opposed mining.

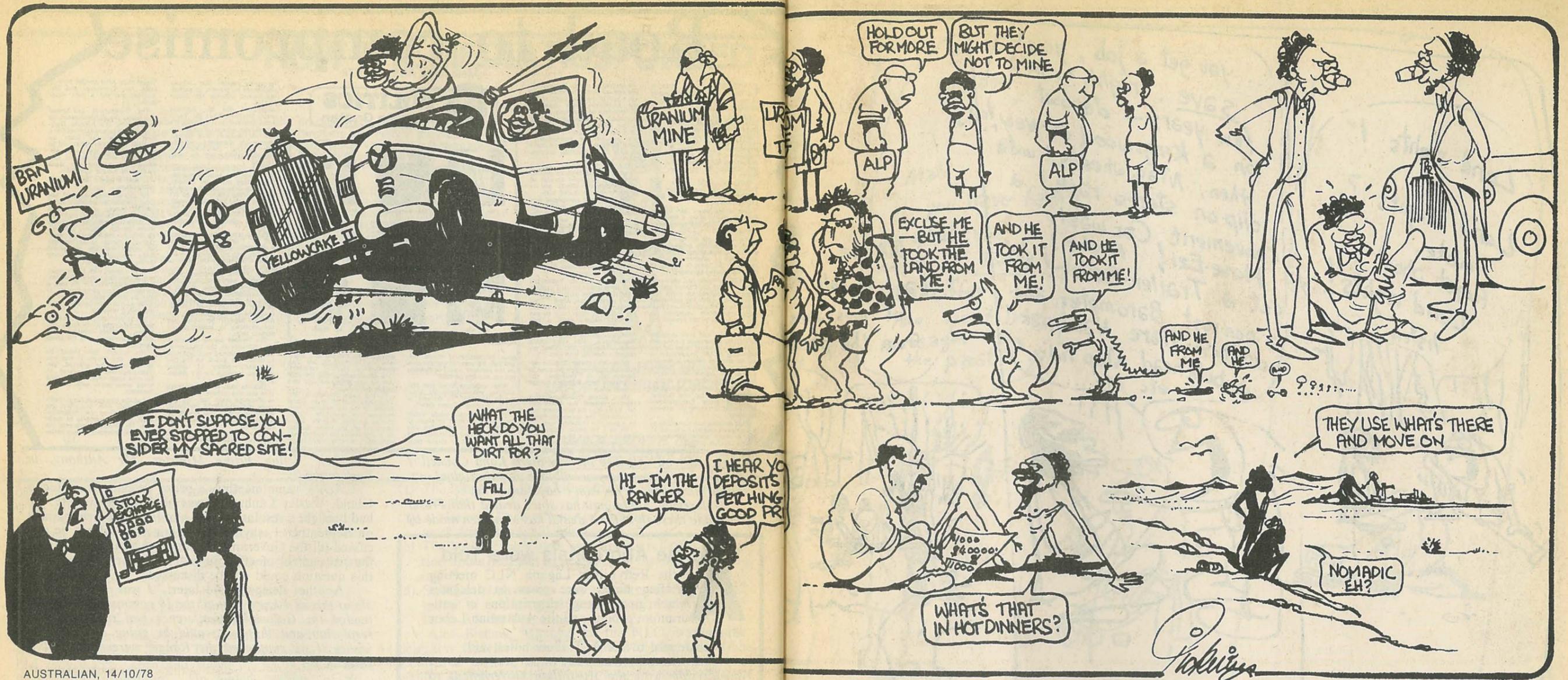
Leo Finlay said, he needed more time to consider the matter and discuss it with his community, but Galarrwuy Yunupingu refused to allow further time. Leo left the meeting before the voting was taken.

Delegates from the Oenpelli area representing the communities and traditional owner most directly affected were not allowed to address the meeting or to discuss the question with delegates.

"Mr Yunupingu refused to allow us to have them address the Council, saying that he would look after this himself."

The Ranger Agreement was barely discussed.¹⁷ It was never read out, nor were any translations prepared,¹⁸ and there was no discussion at all about the extent of protection measures for the land and waterways.¹⁶

On the second day, Galarrwuy Yunupingu told one Land Counsellor in answer to his question as to whether or not the two proposed mining holes would be filled under the agreement: ". . . that is the word of Mr Steven



AUSTRALIAN, 14/10/78

Zorn. The Government said 'Yes, we will fill in the holes'.¹⁶

Galarrwuy had said the same thing to the traditional owners at a meeting at Merganella in July. He had promised that the mining pits "would be refilled level with the ground" and that "the Northern Land Council would insist that this formed a part of any arrangement made with the mining interests.¹⁶ In fact, the mines will not be filled in under the terms of the Agreement.

The NATIONAL TIMES (week-ending 23/9/78) reported that by September 12: "telegrams from black communities around the Territory were flooding into the Darwin office of Bob Collins, the Labor Member for Arnhem in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The telegrams came from Croker Island, Elcho Island, Maningrida and Milingimbi communities and were demanding that they be allowed to send representatives to the meeting."

NATIONAL TIMES reporter Robert Milliken met Harry Wilson at the Border Store on the night of the first day of the NLC meeting. Harry is an NLC delegate from

Daly River. Milliken reported him as saying: "I can't see it being signed. The people don't know enough about it yet. They can't understand it."

Harry had been at the meeting with Fraser, Viner and Anthony with Galarrwuy. He seemed to have formed a very different assessment of the NLC's position from Galarrwuy's.

THE ISSUE GOES TO COURT

SEPTEMBER 15

The Prime Minister announced that Galarrwuy Yunupingu had notified him that the NLC has approved the Ranger and Kakadu Lease Agreements.

At the same time, Aborigines from the coastal communities were flying into Darwin to discuss their opposition to the Ranger Agreement, and on September 17, Leo Finlay and Wesley Lanhupuy said the NLC had been pushed into signing.

SEPTEMBER 18

Dehne McLaughlin, a field officer on the staff of the NLC, resigned. He told the Press:

"Directives given to the main office in Darwin by the field officers were being manipulated rather than implemented.

Aboriginal people are telling the field officers what they want but those decisions are not being carried out by the Council.

I was appalled at the pressure and strong arm tactics used at the meeting last week.

The Ranger Agreement (was) a rush job. The Aboriginal people are finally realising they have some influence. But they feel the NLC is just another part of the Government, like D.A.A. (the Department of Aboriginal Affairs)."

The same day, Bob Collins produced tapes of the NLC meeting. He said that the NLC had acted under misinformation on the Ranger Agreement and cited Galarrwuy Yunupingu's claims that the Government would change the law and break up the Land Council.¹⁹

SEPTEMBER 19

The N.T. Supreme Court granted an injunction restraining the NLC from signing the Agreement. (The NLC meeting had only approved signing. The actual signing was to be done jointly by Anthony, as Minister for Trade and Resources and Viner, as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, around the end of the week beginning September 19.

The injunction was taken out by Dick Malwagu, executive member of the NLC and Chairman of the Croker Island community council, and Johnny Marali No. 1, Chairman of the Goulburn Island community council, both NLC members, on the basis of section 23 (3) of the Land Rights Act, which requires the NLC to have the consent of the traditional owners and to ensure that they, and the Aboriginal communities in the area, have fully understood the terms and content of the Agreement.

The AGE reported that since the weekend, more than 1000 Aborigines from remote parts of the NT have converged on Darwin to protest against the signing of the Agreement.²⁰



The same day, Stuart McGill, the NLC's Legal officer, was dismissed just before finishing work for the day. His letter of dismissal said that his services were no longer required and he should leave his keys with the Manager before leaving.²¹ Galarrwuy Yunupingu says that he was dismissed for leaking information.

SEPTEMBER 20

Mr Anthony told Parliament that the Government was keen to reach a voluntary agreement, and to see that the matter did not go to arbitration.

Ian Viner arrived in Darwin and announced that the future of Aboriginal land rights legislation as well as the

future of uranium mining was at stake.

He claimed that members of the ALP were behind the opposition to the agreement, and named Bob Collins, Member for Arnhem in the NT Legislative Assembly, Stuart McGill, Geoff Eames of the Northern Australia Aboriginal Legal Service and John Waters, another lawyer. Later, Aborinines angrily denied this.

The same day, letters from Milingimbi and Elcho Island were sent to the press. Both stressed that the dispute over offshore waters and the uranium mining issue were linked and asked for more time to consider the Agreement. "The chairman said that . . . (meetings such

as the one at Elcho Island on September 1) were called by Bob Collins to use for the Labor Party. But it is not true. Milingimbi Community are very upset because their representative could not speak at the East Alligator meeting (at Red Lily Lagoon) to express that contamination could ruin the land for our future. We feel that the chairman had the wrong story. He should listen to his own people. We do not want to fight against him, we just want to look after our land."²³

SEPTEMBER 22

After two days of extensive meetings, Aboriginal leaders in the NLC decided to send the Agreement back to the communities for more consideration. This effectively discharged the injunction granted on the 19th September.

Those against the Agreement are reported to have said that they would tear up their affidavits in front of the judge if only Yunupingu would give them more time to talk to their people. At the time, two of the rebels were in tears, as was Galarrwuy when the decision was made.

Wesley Lanhupuy said on the 21st, "This is solely an Aboriginal meeting. We are making the decision, no white fella are manipulating us. We can think for ourselves and make our own decisions."

Viner's charges that the rebels were out to destroy Galarrwuy Yunupingu are said to have enraged all parties, and made them more determined to reach agreement.

After the meeting, Galarrwuy Yunupingu said that he had made a mistake in not translating the terms of the

Melbourne AGE, 16/9/78

agreement into Aboriginal languages so it could be better understood.

He also said that the NLC had been strengthened by the all Aboriginal agreement. But he did say that the actions taken against the NLC had been taken by NLC members who did not actually live in the Ranger area.²⁴

OCTOBER 2

The NLC met in accordance with the Sept. 22 agreement. The meeting was chaired by Gerry Blitner, Deputy Chairman, in Gallarrwy Yunupingu's absence.

At the meeting, Dick Malwagu presented a 21 point plan for the process which was to reconsider the Ranger agreement. It allows for:

- an initial meeting of all traditional owners of the Alligator Rivers area,
- a consultative panel to visit each settlement and outstation in the NLC area,
- translations of the Agreement and other relevant material on paper, tape and videotape,
- a final NLC meeting to make the decision, to be held only after receipt of letters from 30 delegates saying that their communities are ready for a vote. At this meeting, any of the delegates can ask the other delegates for more time.

After the meeting, a press conference was held at which Gerry Blitner announced that the NLC's decision was to take action in accordance with the Sept. 22 agreement and Dick Malwagu's 21 points. He added:

"The world wasn't built in a day and I do not think this will be passed over in a day."

Afterwards, Galarrwy Yunupingu stated that Dick Malwagu's plan had not been accepted. As delegates are said to have left the meeting, convinced that it had been, another meeting was scheduled for the next day, 25, 26.

OCTOBER 3

NLC meeting, chaired by Galarrwy Yunupingu, who afterwards told reporters that the 21 points had been put in the rubbish bin. The consultative process would instead consist of asking the Oenpelli community to nominate which communities should consider the Ranger Agreement. A Consultative panel of four lawyers (two from each side), two linguists and Gerry Blitner would then explain the Agreement to these communities. He said that an agreement with Ranger would be ratified within 6 weeks.

OCTOBER 9

Galarrwy Yunupingu was given a hostile reception when he flew into Goulburn Island. A demonstration of 300 people met his plane at the airstrip. After delivering copies of the Ranger Agreement, simplified and translated, he is reported to have left quickly.^{27 28}

OCTOBER 10

Traditional owners of the Oenpelli region met to discuss the Ranger Agreement and decide which communities should be involved in the consultative process.

The delegates from Goulburn Island said that they were only advised in the morning that the meeting was to take place the same day, although at least two members of the Goulburn Island community had been nominated as traditional owners at Oenpelli.

The following day, Galarrwy Yunupingu said that NLC meetings to decide the attitude of Aboriginals to mining were "just a bloody waste of time". He added:

"If the Government wants to mine uranium, it will go ahead and do it and I am not going to stop them. I am not either an Aborigine or the Government, I am just the person in between handling this matter for the Government and the Aboriginal people."²⁹

DECISION OF THE OENPELLI MEETING

OCTOBER 12

The forty traditional owners at the meeting pass the following resolution:

"The Oenpelli meeting does not accept the proposed Ranger agreement at this time. It requests the chairman to call a meeting of the NLC to report to it the wishes of the Oenpelli meeting and to instruct the chairman on what further action he should take.

"The chairman is to advise the Government of this decision and to report back to the Oenpelli people."

"The Oenpelli meeting requires that consultation with all of the communities represented on the NLC take place. The Oenpelli meeting considers that the Croker Island and Goulburn Island people are their relatives, and have to be consulted on future decision to be taken."³⁰

One of the key traditional owners, Toby Gangali, told the meeting that he would like the Ranger Agreement to "Go away for six months, maybe five years."³¹

Some of Galarrwy Yunupingu's own people from Yirrkala attend the meeting. One of their leaders, Roy Marika, told the meeting: "You must fight."³⁰

The meeting expressed concern at the way in which the Agreement had been simplified by lawyers for the benefit of Aboriginal communities. Toby Gangali said: "They are still trying to trick us."³²

Gallarrwy Yunupingu was at the meeting. He was told by the traditional owners that many tribunal leaders were unhappy at the way in which he was leading the NLC and that he had been expressing his personal feelings and the opinions of white officers rather than the feelings of Aboriginal communities.³²

Galarrwy's immediate response to the meeting was to say that opposition to the Agreement was being orchestrated by the anti-uranium movement and that the matter was now up to the Government to decide. The following day, he said that he would support the decision of the meeting.^{31 33}

OCTOBER 17

Galarrwy Yunupingu argued strongly against the Government appointing an arbitrator, saying that great harm would be done if the issue was taken out of Aboriginal hands. He said that Aborigines and the Government could sit down and come to an agreement without resorting to arbitration.³⁴

At the same time, Federal Cabinet discussed the Ranger issue and decided not to appoint an arbitrator until it was satisfied that the NLC definitely would not ratify the Agreement (under the Land Rights Act, the Government can only appoint an arbitrator if the NLC is either unwilling, or has refused, to sign the Agreement).

Instead, it was decided, Mr Viner would have further consultations with the Chairman of the NLC.

HOW THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED

NOVEMBER 1

An NLC meeting was held at Bamyili, near Katherine. Delegates from Borroloola were sent a telegram before the meeting which said: "NLC meeting next week. Bring a swag as meeting may be out bush, it is to discuss general business."

They were not informed that the Ranger Agreement would be discussed and they were not told the secret location of the meeting until the day before it was due to

start. Several people did not make it to the meeting at all.

Among them were the delegations from Numbulwar, Rockhampton Downs and Roper River. There may have been others missing, too.

Galarrwy Yunupingu chaired the meeting. He had brought several white people with him, including Alex Bishaw, Eric Pratt (the lawyer who "simplified" the Ranger Agreement for Aboriginal communities to read — see box, p.) and two solicitors from Mildred and Partners, the firm employed by Bishaw and Yunupingu to contest the injunction against signing the Ranger Agreement.

According to Leo Finlay³⁵ of the Borroloola Community Council, Galarrwy told the meeting: "We're not going to talk about Ranger today. I'm sick of it so we are not going to talk about it until we hear Viner tomorrow."

Leo Finlay attempted to bring up the question of the Kakadu National Park. He said that the Oenpelli people had asked Galarrwy to "see the Government to get that declared first and leave Ranger till people have talked about it. But when you got to Darwin, you just handed it all over to the Government."

Galarrwy said he "was doing his job".

Leo added: "We really didn't talk about the Kakadu Agreement. . . I said the staff and Chairman must act on our motions. He said, I don't like being told how to run the council. I'll run it the way I think best. . . No-one else said much, just sat quietly."

NOVEMBER 2

Mr Viner arrived at the meeting and made a long speech ("it seemed about 2 hours").

He told the Aborigines that they had no right to stop the mining; that "the Government must act in the national interest and not just for Aborigines," and that "Japan needed these materials". He added, "Your people have been fighting this for six years now. I think you should get the weight off your shoulders. It's been dragging on for six years."

As for the Oenpelli meeting's resolution that the Kakadu National Park should be proclaimed first, before they would sign anything, he said: "I think we should put that issue aside. When the Government gave the land, Fox recommended that the land was to be leased back to the Government and that's why the Government is leasing it."^{*}

After morning tea, Leo Finlay brought a tape-recorder into the meeting. According to Leo's account, Galarrwy whispered to Gerry Blitner, "There's a tape-recorder over there." Blitner came over and said, "What are you doing with the tape? Yunupingu doesn't like taping because you might take it back to play to white people to stir up trouble."

Fraser set for U push

CANBERRA. — The Federal Government is moving quickly to avoid delays to the Ranger uranium mining project.

From DAVID BROADBENT

Negotiations with the NLC were not over whether uranium would be mined on Fraser.

Melbourne AGE, 16/10/78

Ranger bogged until '79

DARWIN. — The Ranger uranium project bogged for . . .

Melbourne AGE, 23/9/78

In the argument that followed, Galarrwy leant over and said to Viner: "You'd better leave".

Leo Finlay asked for a lawyer to give the other side of the story, saying, "We've only got Liberals here. It was the ALP that first brought in Land Rights. The LCP had not approved. Labor set up Woodward." (the Woodward Commission, which recommended granting Aborigines Land Rights). Galarrwy let the argument run its course until Finlay had exhausted himself — without any formal motions being passed. In the afternoon, Viner was called back in, and various objections to signing the Agreement were put aside, one by one. Eventually, Galarrwy said, "I just want one thing now. The Federal Government and the mining company have accepted this Agreement so it's up to us now. Will you accept this Agreement?" I said, "What for? I will not accept this Agreement." A lot of people stayed quiet. Galarrwy kept repeating "will you just accept it, the Government and mining companies have." I said, "The Agreement is too weak. The negotiator himself has said that Agreement was not strong enough." Harry Wilson said, "If we accept that Agreement now, will the lawyers still go out to consult with the communities?" Galarrwy: "Yes. They will still go out to consult. It will be up to the traditional owners to say yes or no to that Agreement."

The people, including me, accepted that the consultation was going to continue. So, people put up their hands. Then someone said, "Well, that's OK. If the consultation is going to go on then we can accept it." Galarrwy asked, "What about you, Leo?" I said, "No, I won't accept it." I knew it was a trick. Before that vote, there had been no discussion at all about the Agreement itself. Harry Wilson actually whispered to me, "What about those weaknesses in the Agreement?" But Galarrwy was too strong. No-one ever got to even talk about the Agreement. There was never an actual motion. We put up our hands but no-one knew what exactly we were agreeing to. I relied on the Oenpelli people because I knew they were strong and would not let the NLC rush them. Galarrwy gave a speech and said he was very happy and the other whites looked really happy. None of the

* He did not mention that the Inquiry, headed by Mr Justice Fox, had recommended that the park should be proclaimed first, before mining went ahead.

Aborigines told: Don't stand in way

ANTHONY'S HARD LINE ON RANGER

Start on uranium mining pledged

By DAVID MANCOCK and DOUG HOLDEN
Minister Mr Anthony

AUSTRALIAN, 17/10/78

Aboriginal people looked very happy."³⁵
NOVEMBER 3

Mr Viner, with Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Bishaw, Pratt and the other two lawyers flew to Oenpelli, arriving before anyone else from the NLC. When they arrived, they found that Silas Maralngurra, the Chairman of the Oenpelli council, had invited journalists from the AGE and a film crew to witness events. As head of the Oenpelli community, Silas was responsible for deciding which whites should be allowed to visit. However, Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Viner refused to accept his authority. According to the AGE,³⁶

In one stroke, the community chairman's authority was overruled: "I am running this meeting and I have given the order," Mr Yunupingu said.

Mr Viner abused the cameraman for shooting film even though the only footage they had at that stage was of Mr Viner stepping out of a Land Rover.

Only three traditional owners attended the meeting — Toby Gangali, Frank Djandjul and Midjau Midjauwu — leaving the Oenpelli people outnumbered by the NLC executive.

Mr Maralngurra washed his hands of the entire meeting and sat in the car parked at the edge of the meeting place.

At Bamyili, most of the talking had been done in Aboriginal languages.

This time, Mr Yunupingu spoke briefly and mostly in English. The traditional owners listened and said little and the executive declared the Agreement accepted.

Leo Finlay said there were only a few of the traditional owners present: "In my opinion, there were no more than about four out of forty. . . . I could see that the strong-talking owners like Big Bill, Albert Balmana, Rachel and Hanna were not present. There were a few families around but hardly any traditional owners." Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Viner gave speeches saying much the same things as they had said at Bamyili. Then, a few other NLC members were called on to make statements. Finally, Toby Gangali, one of the few traditional

owners there spoke. He said: "I've given up. It's been six years now. I'm not fighting any more." Then, Galarrwuy said, "now, you all heard straight from the traditional owners because Goulburn and Croker Island people belong to the country here and you just heard them speak. Thank you very much for your time and for inviting us here!" He never once said the Agreement was about to be signed. He never asked even the Oenpelli owners who were there if they agreed to sign the Agreement. He just told them that they had heard the traditional owners, i.e., the ones who came with NLC. The People from the community did not say a word. They just sat there.

After lunch, a car came to pick us up. We thought we were going to the airport but we went to the office and saw the Agreement all set to be signed. That was a big shock to me. A lot of people signed and a platinum pen was handed to everyone. I refused to accept one when Viner handed them out."³⁵

Back in Darwin, Mr Viner told the press that the Agreement "had the unanimous support of traditional landowners and vindicated his statements in parliament that black opposition had been stirred up by white anti-uranium activists." Yunupingu said that his position in the NLC had been strengthened by the decision. "I knew the council would work better without whites hanging around."³⁷

SOURCES

1. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 6/3/78.
2. RANGER INQUIRY, 2nd REPORT, P. 147
3. MATTERS OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO THE MINING INDUSTRY, AMIC, Canberra, Feb. 1978
4. Ranger Inquiry, transcript of proceedings, P. ?
5. AUSTRALIAN, 2/9/78; Affidavit by Johnny Marali No. 1.
6. AUSTRALIAN, 4/9/78
7. Melbourne AGE and SUN, 6/9/78
8. Affidavits from John Gwadbu and Johnny Marali No. 1
9. AUSTRALIAN and FINANCIAL REVIEW, 8/9/78
10. Affidavit by Bob Collins
11. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 19/9/78
12. FINANCIAL REVIEW and NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS, 29/9/78
13. Leo Finlay reported in the AGE, 18/9/78
14. Tape of meeting. These excerpts were played back on ABC News
15. AGE, 18/9/78
16. Affidavit by Johnny Marali No. 1
17. According to Bob Collins, SUN, 19/9/78, evidence of this is in the tapes of the meeting.
18. Affidavit by Dick Malwagu
19. NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS, 19/9/78
20. AGE, 21/9/78
21. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 21/9/78
22. NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS, 20/9/78
23. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 21/9/78 and NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS, 20/9/78
24. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 22/9/78 and AGE, 26/9/78
25. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 4/10/78
27. AM and ABC Radio, 11/10/78
28. SUN, 11/10/78

Split in NLC over mining

By JAMIE GALLACHER and DAVID TROUNCE

THE RANGER revolt flared to a new high today.

- Eight Aboriginal communities are seeking a Supreme Court injunction restraining the Northern Land Council from signing the Ranger agreement.
- The Federal Government quickly spatched the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Viner, to Darwin today to settle the row.
- Sacked NLC solicitor Stewart McGill told that Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu had

29. AGE, 12/10/78
30. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 13/10/78
31. AGE, 13/10/78
32. SUN, 13/10/78
33. AGE, 14/10/78
34. FINANCIAL REVIEW, 18/10/78
35. Leo Finlay, NT NEWSHEET No. 3 (Campaign Against Mining Aboriginal Land publication)
36. AGE, 6/11/78
37. AGE, 4/11/78

RANGER REVOLT FLARES

NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS, 20/9/78

Legal Double-Talk

The following is an extract from the "simplified" version of the Ranger Agreement prepared by Eric Pratt QC, the NLC's chief legal counsel:

"The first pit would be filled up with tailings ready for a cover of rocks and topsoil which would fill it up. The other pit (called No. 3) would be about half filled by the rest of the tailings.

"If that was the end of the story and nothing else had to be done, it could be true that a big hole is left that could be filled up with water.

"But that is not the end of the story.

"If we look at clause 30 of the section 41 authority, together with clause 5 of the section 44 agreement to which the section 41 authority is annexed, we notice that clause 5 says that the miners shall observe all environmental requirements specified in the conditions of the section 41 authority.

"So we can make them do all that is in clause 30.

"Clause 30 is grouped together with other clauses under the heading 'vegetation, protection'.

"But that heading cannot be read so as to interpret clause 30 (see clause 21 (b) of the section 44 agreement), so clause 30 has had to be interpreted on its own words within the whole of the section 41 authority.

"This means there is no undue emphasis on 'vegetation' in interpreting clause 30.

"We are dealing with 'environment' (see clause 5 section 44 agreement)."

Last year Pratt delivered a paper on Aboriginal land rights to the ANZAAS Conference in Melbourne. In it he warned:

"If the right people are not brought together and given an opportunity of consultation in their own time and unless they are given adequate assistance in reaching a decision, including due explanation of any proposal, then it cannot be said that true Aboriginal consent or dissent has been obtained."

Perhaps he considers the simplification above adequate assistance.



Dramatis Personae



GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU

Galarrwuy Yunupingu, NLC Chairman. During the negotiations on both the Kakadu and Ranger Agreements, he maintained secrecy on their terms, in accordance with an understanding with the Government. The consequence of this was a continuing confrontation, once the agreements came up for consideration by the full Northern Land Council, with a number of NLC delegates who objected to making any decision until they and their communities had understood and fully discussed both the terms of the Agreements and other matters which they believed should be considered in relation to the Agreements.

Galarrwuy is a traditional leader of the Gumatj people. The Gumatj are the largest group of people living in the area based on the old Methodist mission of Yirrkala, several miles from Nhulunbuy, the township for the Nabalco bauxite mining operation at Gove. He was educated at Yirrkala and, for three years, at high school in Brisbane. He has worked as a youth leader and social worker in Yirrkala, as a clerk for Nabalco at Nhulunby, as sports and recreation officer at Dhupuma College for Aboriginal children in Arnhem Land and as Town Clerk at Yirrkala.

In 1971, he was the main court interpreter in the Yirrkala land rights case before Mr Justice Blackburn. Prior to succeeding Silas Roberts as NLC Chairman in July, 1977, he was senior field officer and then assistant manager of the NLC.

Nobody will stop Ranger: Anthony

From MICHELLE GRATTAN

Melbourne AGE, 17/10/78

CANBERRA. — Neither the Aborigines nor other people could ultimately frustrate the Federal Government's uranium policy, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Anthony, said yesterday.

He said the Government must now consider to what extent it could allow a small "manipulated group of people" to stand in the way of a development of tremendous national and international significance. Mr. Anthony's strong statement

came on the eve of Cabinet's decision on the impasse over Ranger. He put bluntly a point made by the Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Mr. Viner, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, that the Aborigines can negotiate only on the terms and conditions of the Ranger mining. Cabinet is expected to consider Government's options today. This follows last week's decision on traditional Aboriginal land ownership in the Ranger basin to send the matter back to the Northern Land Council for further considera-

Among the alternatives before the Government are to: —
 • Continue negotiations with the NLC.
 • Appoint an arbitrator to settle terms and conditions of the Ranger development.
 • Amend the land rights legislation to shorten the delay.
 Officials have been working through the weekend on the material Cabinet will have before it. Mr. Anthony said yesterday: "It's crazy. It's unbelievable that Australia should have been sitting on uranium for the past six years while

the world waits and we do nothing." Mr. Anthony, also Minister for Trade and Resources, has been very impatient with the delays which have prevented Ranger starting this dry season. He said yesterday that, under the Aboriginal Land Rights legislation, Mr. Viner would need to consult the NLC again before an arbitrator was put in. The legislation required the Minister to ascertain that the NLC could not come to a decision, he said. "I think we're getting very close to that position."

One of the problems, according to some Government sources, of putting in an arbitrator is that the inquiry would take some months. Mr. Anthony said the Government had "bent over backwards" to try to get a satisfactory agreement with the Aborigines "and yet nothing has been finalised". The Labor spokesman on Aboriginal Affairs, Dr. Everingham, yesterday accused the Prime Minister of "totally misrepresenting" a letter Mr. Everingham sent to the NLC Chairman, Mr. Yunupingu.



LEO FINLAY

An outspoken critic of the hasty ratification of the Ranger Agreement — Leo Finlay, one of the two NLC delegates from Borroloola and a member of the NLC executive.

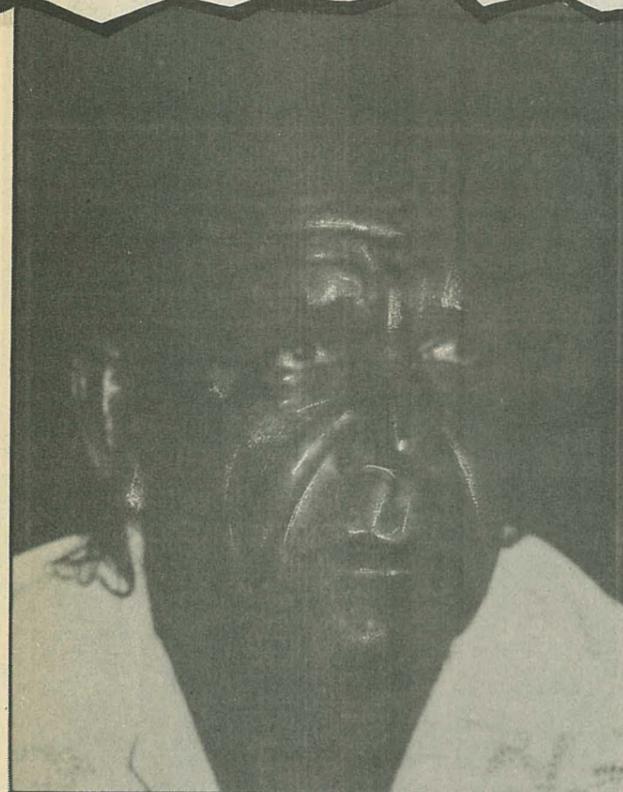
Leo was formerly head stockman of Brunette Downs and is currently community adviser at Borroloola. His people, the Rhumbruriya, are the traditional owners of South West Island in the Sir Edward Pellew Group. Their claim to this was refused earlier this year (see CHAIN REACTION, Vol. 4, No. 1). At the time, Leo called Justice Toohey's recommendations a sell-out of his people and said:

"Better to die in your own country than living, and then white people could have taken over. What's the use of keeping us, tormenting us, pulling us around, chucking us like a football, kick us from one end to the other end.

"So you have to fight this Land Rights out if you want the country. If you don't, you might as well give it away, or get yourself somewhere else, among all white people, chuck all your law, business, everything."

Leo Finlay carried the fight for land rights on through the events surrounding the ratification of the Ranger Agreement. At the Red Lillies meeting, he insisted that his community needed time to consider the Agreement, and when this was refused, he left the meeting before a vote was taken.

After this, he continually insisted that the Ranger Agreement could only be considered through a wide range of consultations involving all the communities of the NLC. He also bitterly attacked the NLC Chairman, accusing him of ambition.



GERRY BLITNER

Gerry Blitner, Deputy Chairman of the NLC, delegate to the NLC from Groote Eylandt, member and spokesperson of the local trust which handles royalties from the mining on Groote Eylandt, and owner of a drive-yourself hire car business.

Manganese mining on Groote Eylandt is carried out by the Groote Eylandt Mining Company (GEMCO), a subsidiary of BHP. Last year, Gerry's community began a campaign to have the agreement with the mining company re-negotiated. Working with the NLC, they shut off access to Aboriginal Land to non-Aboriginal GEMCO employees. This effectively confined these people to the town and mine area.

At the Red Lillies meeting, Gerry supported ratification of the Ranger Agreement, after criticising some aspects of it.



HARRY WILSON

Harry Wilson, one of three NLC delegates from Daly River, and a member of the NLC executive. Harry, together with Galarrwuy Yunupingu, represented the NLC at the meeting in Darwin with Fraser, Viner and Anthony immediately prior to the Red Lillies meeting. Contrary stories have emerged about what was said at the Darwin meeting. Galarrwuy said at the Red Lillies meeting that strong threats were made and that the Ranger Agreement must be signed without delay. Yet, on the evening of the first day of this meeting, Harry Wilson seemed to be in no doubt that the Agreement could not be signed, because the NLC people couldn't understand it.

Harry manages an Aboriginal cattle company called Unia, on the former Daly River Reserve. Unia was set up five years ago when 100 people left the Daly River Mission to re-establish their traditional life. It sends cattle to the Darwin and Katherine meatworks, and has exported live cattle to Hong Kong. One of the first tasks of the NLC was to secure the return of several thousand head of cattle mustered off Unia country by a helicopter working for Sydney car dealer Sir Frederick Sutton's Tipperary Station.



DICK MALWAGU

One of the two delegates who took the NLC to Court and Dick Malwagu, one of the three delegates to the NLC from Croker Island, an executive member of the NLC and Chairman of the Minjilang Council, the council for the Croker Island community. He was a leading participant in the discussions amongst coastal communities which preceded the NLC meeting at Red Lillies Lagoon. At the Red Lillies meeting, he objected to the pressure which was being applied to ratify the Ranger Agreement without an understanding of its terms, and stayed away from the final meeting.

Dick was one of the two NLC delegates who took out the injunction on September 19, restraining the NLC from signing the Ranger Agreement. At the time, he said in an affidavit that many of the people of his community had family, ceremonial and language ties with the Alligator Rivers area and the Oenpelli people, many of them sharing dreaming stories and traditional responsibilities for the land. He also said that the Croker Island community was concerned about the possibility of the land and its waterways being poisoned by the mine — "not only for ourselves but for the white people who may go into the area".

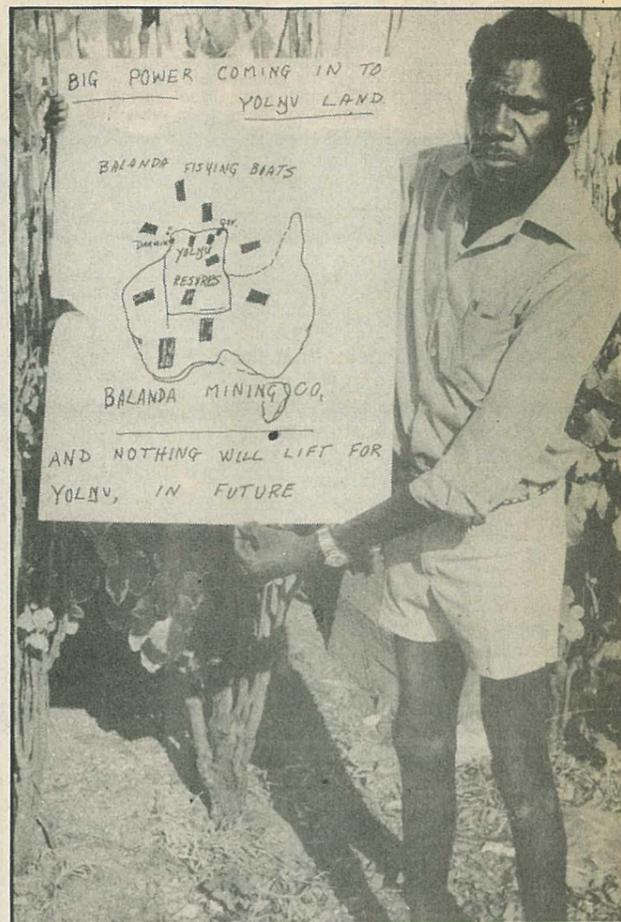
In January this year, he made the following statement about the importance of their traditional land to his people:

"We don't like our land to be cut up, ruining country, knocking down trees, shifting rocks, and spoiling dreaming places . . . That time before, long time before, you think how no-one is lost, it is only when business is done, only then you know, you are not lost. When I go to another country, if I don't know their language, they ask me my skin — then they say, you are there, so I am same by law, we all one people then."

Money is nothing for us — country is something to us. Money come and go; everybody know that . . .

My people in early days didn't have chance like nowadays, didn't have good housing, good nursing, but

only used to be kicked around by white people. Europeans started telling us what to do in our Country. Now, we come along, my generation find things easier, we have good people helping us. Everybody like to live like other people, in their own way — we get plenty of help. I was sad before because we thought we were losing our Country. Now we have our Country (many thanks to people who are helping us), work hand in hand, good way — we all like to live good way, Black, Brown and White."

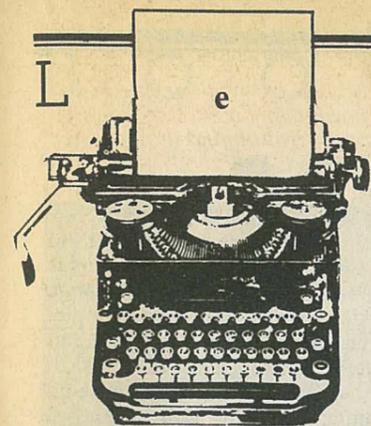


ABORIGINAL LAND UNDER ATTACK

The style is apt when headlines such as "Fraser set for U push" and "Nobody will stop Ranger: Anthony" are remembered.

The poster Johnny Baya is holding depicts the threat Aboriginals see coming to Yolnu (Aboriginal) Land from Balanda (white) fishing boats and mining companies.

Milingimbi is a community of some 820 people west of Gove, on the northern coast of Arnhem Land. Earlier this year it publicly expressed its concern at the way white commercial fishing boats were going right up to river estuaries, and the effect this was having on the Aboriginals' own fishing of barramundi. In September, it joined with other coastal communities to insist that the NLC should not sign any uranium agreements until the coastal waters issue had been settled. After the Red Lillies meeting, representatives of the community, including Johnny Baya, announced Milingimbi's concern that "contamination could ruin the land for our future".



ECOSEXISM

I am writing regarding the cartoon on page 37 of CR Vol. 4 No. 1 which illustrates a letter from Di Elliffe in which she praises FoE for its non-sexist attitudes while condemning other environmentalists for their sexism. She goes on to explain that the environment and feminist movements are going in the same direction with the common aim of stopping exploitation.

Yet, the graphic depicts a woman on a stationary, tombstone-like, feminist symbol staring resentfully back at a woman zapping off in the opposite direction on a racing earth (symbol presumably of the greenies).

The contradiction here is significant, but more important, perhaps, is the fact that the cartoon implies that the women's movement is dead and achieving nothing, while the greenies are zapping around getting places.

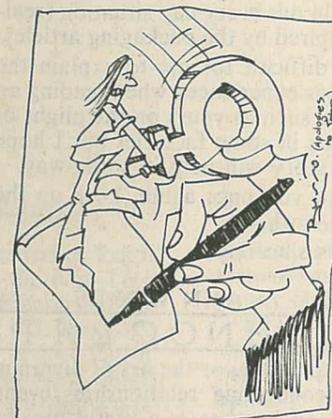
Di praises FoE for being supportive towards women yet, the cartoon hardly reflects this praise. It not only expresses very oppressive attitudes towards women in general and feminists in particular, but also, because it is printed in conjunction with this letter, could be interpreted as a cynical jest at the writer for her naivety in believing that FoE is non-sexist.

FoE as a whole through their national magazine seem to be admitting their sexism with pride. I, for one, can't think of a better way of cunningly and cynically deriding and oppressing feminists. If this is FoE's aim, it's doing well. If not, reading and thinking about what Di has written, would be a start towards changing and clarifying attitudes.

She writes: "The environment movement is trying to teach people to be more aware of their environment, to wake up to the plight of planet earth. If the environment movement is encouraged to look at

the total environment, the socio/political areas of oppression and exploitation in human relationships will come in for much greater depth analysis."

Let's hope it does and that changes ensure.
Love,
Linnell



I am writing to protest or rather query the cartoon by John Dickson on p.37 of Chain Reaction Vol. 4 No. 1. The cartoon is apparently a comment on a letter entitled "Ecofeminists Unite". One statement in the article, linking feminism and ecology, says:

"After all, aren't we all going in the same direction?" The cartoon particularly seems to be a comment on this. Depicting two women, one astride a female symbol which is not moving (as shown by the grass growing around the bottom of it) and a woman moving quickly past her, in the opposite direction, on an earth, this presumably represents the environment movement. Women in the women's movement going nowhere and women in the environment movement going somewhere?

Just what do you mean, John Dickson?

Kim O'Sullivan

I have had a letter of praise about the contentious cartoon from Di Elliffe. So Kim's missive balances it nicely. The drawing was an interpretation as I saw it, not anti-feminist but rather anti-entrenchment whatever the calling.

John

LETTER FROM SPAIN

Nowadays in the Spanish State a nuclear policy inherited from the Franco regime is being followed. The electrical companies, which are private property here, plan the future needs of energy and the way to produce it according to their own interests. They, together with the banks, make up the big core of economic and financial power of the country. They control the economic system and exert a strong influence on the plans worked out by the Government. The present Spanish Government is now reviewing the 1975 Energy Plan, which had foreseen a quite exaggerated increase of consumption of energy that hasn't been confirmed at all. That plan was clearly determined in favor of the energy coming from nuclear sources, and forecast the building of 38 nuclear plants by 1985. In 1975, three of these nuclear plants — Zorita (1968) 160 Mw, Garona (1971) 460 Mw and Vandellos (1972) GCR — were functioning. And seven — Almaraz I: 930 Mw; Almaraz II: 930 Mw; Lemoniz I: 930 Mw; Lemoniz II: 930 Mw; Asco I: 930 Mw; Asco II: 930 Mw; and Cofrentes: 975 Mw — were rather advanced in their building. The present 1978 plan foresees a reduction of nuclear plants to 13 or 14 by 1985, plus the three that are functioning now.

This Energy Plan foresees also a prospecting for uranium in wide areas of the country. Nevertheless, the uranium available in Spain cannot supply more than 20% of the Spanish nuclear program. The remainder has to be brought from abroad (mainly in the USA and Canada). We must say that enrichment plants will not be available in the Spanish State, either, which makes our nuclear program absolutely dependent on countries possessing nuclear technology.

Also, we have to point out that the Spanish nuclear program is favored by the military men, who — besides dominating the Junta de Energia Nuclear (Board of Nuclear Energy), a body that promotes and controls nuclear energy — foresees the building of a centre of nuclear research in the province of Soria,

where they would work with plutonium and the atomic bomb would be made. The Spanish Government has not signed the Non Proliferation Treaty.

The energy plan doesn't foresee the research or the development of alternative sources of energy (from solar energy or geothermal), which would give the country independence in energy and technology. The nuclearization of the country clearly shows our colonial condition as far as technology, energy, economy and politics. This colonization comes mainly from the big American economic groups.

The process of nuclearization has met with opposition. The first three nuclear plants were built without almost anybody being aware of it, but all the others have encountered movements of opposition in the neighboring population, usually villages of peasants and fishermen. Later on, this opposition has become stronger and stronger, even in the cities, with the rise of the ecologist and anti-nuclear movements.

This opposition hasn't been taken into account officially and has been denied access to the main mass media. Nevertheless, it has succeeded in delaying the building of all the plants and reducing the forecast number of them. The struggles have been dispersed and generally unconnected, based on local initiatives in each place. Now, we are building up contacts and co-ordination towards a united campaign for a nuclear moratorium for five years.

To put this campaign into effect, we call on all the anti-nuclear groups and movements all over the world to explain to us how they have mounted their campaigns for a moratorium; which strategies they have followed; which basic principles they have stated, which contacts with different strata of population they have established, which documents, posters, publications, etc. have been edited, etc. All that may help us to prepare this campaign in our country consistently and efficiently.

COMITE ANTINUCLEAR DE CATALUNYA,
Bruc 26, 2
Barcelona - 10, Catalonia (Spain)
Tel: 3014939 (93)

EXCELLENT
ADVICE

Dear Editor/s,

I have just finished reading vol. 3, no. 4, of Chain Reaction, and would like to thank all contributors for an enjoyable and enlightening experience. The ecological articles in this edition gave excellent advice which can be used in our every day situation (really inspired by the packaging article). It is difficult for me to explain the feelings experienced when reading an article such as yours on the plight of women in some factories but I hope your story will help in some way.

Thank you once again, keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

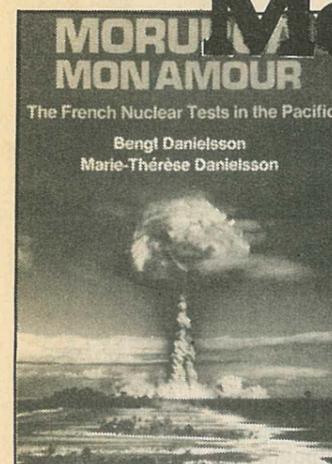
PATRICIA ANN WOODS
TECHNOCRATS

Atomising, or the art of divorcing interconnecting relationships/events from each other, is a useful tool for the technocrat because it ends in a maze of fields, each with its own "experts" and highly specialised language, which only they can understand. Likewise, it is useful for the politicians who can, when it suits them, rest the responsibility for their decisions upon the almost mystical aura which has come to surround the "expert". As for the general public who are fed snippets from "the experts" sandwiched between mountains of trivia, they are generally just a little too demoralised, dehumanised, and unsure of themselves to stand up and demand to be treated like human beings.

Many people who are pro-uranium are so because to be otherwise would require them to challenge the whole pattern of social relationships and precepts through which they relate to the world around them. Are we to believe that nuclear power is a sudden aberration, the unique combination of a power-hungry elite and dangerously self-confident scientists? Or will we find that after chopping out the cancer, a new one springs from its untouched roots? Nuclear power isn't an aberration, but the logical conclusion of the social structure and dominant

values of our society. It is inextricably tied to the attitudes which will (unless we can change them) destroy the aboriginal people, continue to oppress women, and ultimately accept a "1984" as in society's best interests. Oppression of women and the destruction of aboriginal society has gone on for a long time and the fact that only when we are on the verge of a nuclear world have people become concerned, I find very sobering. Yet, at least they are becoming so. I doubt, however, how long for if they find themselves in the same alienating atomised world that they emerged from. The pro-nuclear camp no doubt likes the tendency towards hierarchy and expertness within the anti-nuclear movement, and are similarly gleeful when we bring the debate down to the issues they nominate. An example is nuclear waste, which comes in many forms and even includes dead reactors. The waste problem is tied to reprocessing and thus to proliferation, civil liberties, economics, alternatives, and so on. Yet wouldn't it be convenient for those protagonists of nuclear power if they could bring it all down to just high-level liquid wastes, then drop in a SYNROC, have experts haggle a bit about which process is better and then decide the issue isn't newsworthy any more. Where are the public left? Where they started from? If we are going to have a better society we must start now, with ourselves and with each other. We must tie how we act to what we believe, and stop pretending there is any other way to a better future than by building it stone by stone both within our movement and outside it. How we go about that building is going to determine what we are left with. If people who claim to be fighting for a non-nuclear future do so through manipulation, hierarchies, alienating meeting procedures, and majority vote rather than consensus, co-operation, support and encouragement then I want no part of that future and do not blame anyone for feeling likewise.

Paul Marshall,
Nth Carlton, Victoria



By Bengt and Marie Therese Danielsson

Bengt and Marie-Therese Danielsson arrived in Tahiti in 1948, after Bengt's famous voyage on the Kon-Tiki, and witnessed the events that led up to the French nuclear tests in the '60s. "Moruroa Mon Amour" tells the story of the Polynesian islanders' attempts to break free of French rule. It documents the series of bomb tests which started in 1964 on Moruroa island, and are still going on.

Pouvanaa and Independence

The first champion of independence for Polynesia was Pouvanaa a Oopa. Although his father was a Danish sailor, he had been brought up in the native fashion. He was educated by missionaries and drew his inspiration from the Bible.

Pouvanaa first realised that something was wrong with the system of Government in Polynesia when, as a volunteer in the army, he was sent to France during World War I. French people, he discovered, elected their government. This was far from the case in Polynesia, with its appointed governor who ruled by decree.

During the Second World War a raging black market sent the price of foodstuffs soaring in French Polynesia. Pouvanaa complained that basic items were out of reach of the natives. To silence him, the Governor made use of his war-time powers and imprisoned Pouvanaa. However Pouvanaa continued his campaign as soon as he was released from prison. A brief spell in the lunatic asylum also failed to silence him. Eventually Pouvanaa was exiled to his native island of Huahine.

However the movement for reform of the colonial system did not end there. Three hundred Polynesians had volunteered to fight in the Second World War. They too were disillusioned on their return to Polynesia. They wanted change. Pouvanaa escaped from Huahine in a canoe, and caught the next boat back to Tahiti, where he joined the returned volunteers. They set to work to form a political party, the first ever seen in French Polynesia. This party did not ask for complete independence from France, only for autonomy to run the internal affairs of

Moruroa Mon Amour
A French Affair turned sour

French Polynesia. It was so popular that it soon gained control of the local assembly, but the local assembly was virtually powerless. The Governor still wielded the real power in the islands.

In 1958 President de Gaulle announced a referendum which would allow all colonies to choose independence if they so desired. A notice appeared on every public building in the islands bearing a message from the general urging the people not to choose outright independence but instead to stay with France, as part of "a great community whose inhabitants will all be equals".

It warned that a vote for independence "means that you prefer to fly under your own power, and France will not hold you back. She will wish you luck and let you lead your own life, without giving you any further moral or material help, since you will have come to think of yourself as grown-up and able to earn your own bread."

During the war French Polynesia had backed General de Gaulle and the Free French against Petain. De Gaulle had promised years before that he would free the colonies and the Polynesians trusted him implicitly. Only Pouvanaa was suspicious of de Gaulle's offer. He tried to warn his supporters to vote for complete independence, but he could not contact the people living on the outer islands. The Government schooner had been put in dry dock for a "complete overhaul" and no private ship would carry the Tahitian leader. The radio service was closed to him. People on the outer islands heard nothing of the debate except a vibrant speech by de Gaulle, which was broadcast every day, urging them to join the "French Commonwealth". De Gaulle won a resounding victory in the referendum. Only a few people from the central islands, who had personally heard Pouvanaa speak, voted for independence.

Shortly after the referendum police arrived at Pouvanaa's house, to arrest him and thirteen of his followers. Pouvanaa was left in solitary confinement for 12 months and finally charged with illegal possession and supply of arms (namely some machetes and wooden batons that were found at his house). At the age of 64, he was sentenced to 8 years of solitary confinement, to be followed by 13 years of banishment from the islands.

"Do not be a vegetarian"

With Pouvanaa out of the way, things became fairly quiet in the islands once more. A few years later rumours began to spread that French Polynesia was to be the site for nuclear tests. The islanders immediately blamed the USA, which had recently tested H-bombs on the Christmas Islands, and articles about the nuclear tests appeared in local papers. "Les Debats" reprinted an article containing advice for people living near a nuclear testing site:

"Do not be a vegetarian. Do not adopt a diet consisting basically of vegetables, fruit and milk. It has been established that the people of India, Portugal, Turkey, the Philippines and Japan, with vegetables as their main source of calcium, absorb a much greater amount of strontium 90 in their bodies than do other populations. Do not eat too much fish either. Fish concentrate radioactive pollutants from the rivers and oceans . . ." The article also warned against drinking rainwater (which was the sole source of water for many of the islands). Those who read the article were deeply disturbed by it, and were even more disturbed when the editor of "Les Debats" was summarily banished. The local assembly sent a letter to General de Gaulle, seeking reassurance that France was not planning nuclear tests in the Pacific. They were assured that there was no truth in the articles that had appeared in the French Press. There would be no tests. Not until 1963 was the local assembly told the truth, and shortly afterwards, before anything could be done about it, the French legionnaires began arriving to prepare for the tests.

Explosions in the Pacific

By 1966 the tests were well underway. General de Gaulle himself visited Polynesia to find out how they were going and watch one of the explosions.

When he appeared on the deck of his ship early in the morning the sky was cloudy and a strong wind was blowing from the wrong direction, not only at sea level, where easterly winds are the rule all year round, but at much higher altitudes. The bomb could not be detonated. It would cause too much radioactive fallout over the islands to the west, from the Tuamotus to Fiji.

The General's face became stoney at the news, and he was angered even further when he discovered that the device suspended in the air would not fit in a bomb-casing. All he saw was an iron box larger than an ordinary refrigerator.

"At sunrise on 11 September de Gaulle marched up on deck with a determined look on his face. The wind was still blowing strongly in the wrong direction at all altitudes. In no uncertain terms he let it be known that many urgent problems were piling up in Paris and that he could not cruise around in this way forever. The poor admiral was in a terrible quandary. If the bomb did not explode soon the general would. Having weighted these two

risks against each other he decided that the latter disaster would be the worst. So before the day was over, the plutonium box was detonated."

The effects of this explosion were as bad as could possibly have been expected. Measurements of fallout in rainwater were alarmingly high, even in islands as distant as Fiji, the Cook Islands and Western Samoa, which was 2000 nautical miles away. The figures for French Polynesia, in the shadow of the mushroom cloud, have never been made public.

"No scientific proof whatsoever"

Throughout the series of tests, the Polynesians were kept in ignorance of what was going on. During testing of thermonuclear devices all shipping was warned to keep out of the danger zone 400 km from the test area. Most of the people living on the 7 inhabited islands within this zone were not evacuated and never knew about the danger they were in.

The French had promised to take samples of fish eaten by the natives. Two thousand tons of fish were sold at the Papeete market in Tahiti annually, but no figures were ever given as to the levels of strontium 90 in these fish.

In 1972 the French Government announced that: "Our tests have in no way been harmful to the environment. The UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Radiation has just released a report declaring them to be innocuous. The real reasons behind the criticism levelled at France are political . . . No scientific proof whatsoever exists to back up the accusations made against the French Government.

The following year the UN Conference on the Human Environment condemned the French tests, on the grounds that they had not been given enough data about them.

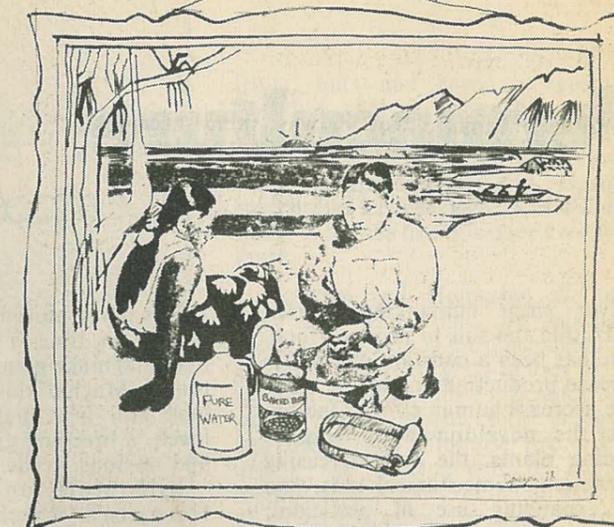
Until the nuclear testing started in Polynesia monthly death statistics were available from the Health Department. Since 1963 the figures have been suppressed, and anyone who asks to see them is regarded as politically suspect. Two of the Autonomist leaders lost sons through cancer. But even now no-one knows how many have died.

The radioactive material left over from the tests is buried in porous basalt at the base of two coral islands, Moruroa and Fangataufa. The water seeps freely through the rock. Currents carry the radioactive particles through the sea, where they are concentrated in the bones of fish, which we eat. Most of the cancers to which the French tests have contributed have yet to appear.

The French underground tests are presumably still going on, as are the American and Russian underground tests. China is still conducting atmospheric tests. How many accidents happen that are never made public?

The destruction of a way of life

"Moruroa Mon Amour" dwells on the frustrations of the local assembly, as it tried in vain to find out the full



details about the tests and to stop them. However none of its official protests and peaceful rallies achieved anything. It was only international pressure that forced the French to take their tests underground. (It appears that the refusal of unions in New Zealand and Australia to handle French cargo was a deciding factor).

Requests by the local assembly for information were met with a series of blithe speeches, which emphasised that nuclear testing would bring great economic benefits to Polynesia, in particular:

- the army would build a dozen new airstrips which would be open to civilian traffic,
- Papeete Harbour would be enlarged to accommodate warships, and big cargo ships would be encouraged to visit Tahiti.

These arguments are reminiscent of those used in favour of building an Omega station, which would supposedly help Australian shipping, and of building Cockburn Sound naval base.

- thousands of jobs would be created for Polynesian workers, building barracks and offices for the soldiers.

The dangers of fallout and the influx of foreign soldiers were played down, and, the Governor added, there would be no inflation.

The reality was that 7,000 French troops, mostly legionnaires, the toughest mercenaries in Europe, converged on Tahiti looking for a good time. Roads became jammed with cars which the soldiers had brought with them. They took Tahitian women away from their husbands and lovers, and savage fights broke out. Soldiers were warned not to go out alone at night, and to walk on the side of the street that faced oncoming traffic, because otherwise "you will be unable to notice the Tahitians on bikes or motorbikes who sneak up behind you and try to hit you on the head." Rape and prostitution were introduced to the islands.

As for the "thousands of jobs", it was true that workers were needed in Tahiti. Ships were sent to the outlying islands to recruit native men, who were offered \$120-\$200 per month to work at Papeete. The subsistence fishermen and copra-growers could not resist this offer of wealth. They left their islands sometimes almost devoid of men, and came to Papeete.

Later some were able to save enough to bring their families out, and a shanty town emerged in Papeete; a corrugated-iron slum with no running water or sewerage, which housed 20,000 people. The inhabitants no longer had the space to grow their own food, and had to rely on what they could buy. As fewer people remained on the islands to grow food and more people arrived, food became very expensive. The price of fish rose by 57% and vegetables by 84%. Tinned food, bread and rice became staples.

The islanders found that they could not save enough money to leave Tahiti and go home. Workers were paid only once a month; many of them had spent their money long before the next pay-day came around. When this happened, families fell deeply into debt. According to the terms of the contract they had signed the men were supposed to be repatriated when their term expired. But the

ships' captains simply would not take them without money. Many men turned to alcohol, and children who grew up in this depressed slum had no way out. They could not get jobs while a ready supply of strong, full-grown men was still arriving each day.

The destruction of the traditional Polynesian way of life described in "Moruroa Mon Amour" is not an isolated incident. It follows a pattern which has been repeated in many parts of the world.

New Caledonia has suffered a similar fate since the French started to mine the island's nickel deposits. An influx of men from distant islands has sent the prices of food and housing skyrocketing and made the city of Noumea dangerous for women (at one time there were three men for every woman on the island). Unions are non-existent and people work up to 17 hours a day to support their children. Streams on the island are contaminated by the nickel. (This is not apparent to the tourists who stay in expensive hotels, however).

Workers in the aid field expect similar problems of urban slums, social disintegration and rising prices when the Wabo Dam is built in New Guinea. In Australia aboriginal communities have been broken up by alcohol when developments such as mining took place near them.

The story of the French tests in the Pacific has wide implications. And it is not over yet. The Presidents who have succeeded de Gaulle have shown no indication that they will give Polynesia its freedom, or cease the bomb tests. It was recently reported that the French had exploded a neutron bomb in the Pacific. While it is hard to imagine it may be true. The report came from an observatory in New Zealand, which has been the only reliable source of information throughout the French tests. The French Government has denied that it tested a neutron bomb. After reading "Moruroa Mon Amour" it is difficult to believe anything the French Government says.

Barbara Hutton

MORUROA MON AMOUR is published by Penguin Books. It is available from Friends of the Earth, price: \$3.50 (see order form at the back of this magazine).

Permaculture

Dreaming from the City Compost

Ever since humankind started cultivating the soil to produce food, there has been a constant striving to increase production and at the same time decrease human effort. One can plot the development of higher yielding plants, the ever-increasing innovation in mechanical aids, and the expanding use of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers as proof of this desire — worldwide — to produce more food for less work.

Unfortunately such a development, although freeing a large proportion of the population from manual work on the farms, has brought with it a wide range of problems. Massive polluting industries have developed to produce all the machines and chemicals needed by those few still on the land; modern farming techniques have in some cases caused soil erosion, pollution of waterways, plagues of pests and even the creation of deserts; and much of the population, having eagerly left the land, have found waiting for them in the city a life of tension and alienation working on a production line.

In the face of this, small sections of the population have periodically decided to move "back to the land" full of ideas on how to reverse all these trends. I was one of those — back in 1972 — who decided to discard city ties and move to a small farm and live a tangible, stimulating, self-sufficient lifestyle. I was to use no sprays, chemical fertilizers or fossil-fuel burning machines. The sun was to provide the energy, sheep and geese the fertilizer and weed control, and water, well, there seemed to be a lot of rain . . .

I'm still there, due more to circumstances and timely helpful advice than anything else, with many of my original aims painfully abandoned. Most of those city people I knew who bought land in the wave of the early

1970's never moved to it. They went there a few times a year to marvel at it all and make plans that never eventuated. Much of this often unsuitable land still lies unattended and unloved, a breeding ground for rabbits and noxious weeds.

Bill Mollison's and David Holmgren's "Permaculture" concept thus couldn't have arrived at a better time. They promised us what every farmer dreams of: "an integrated, evolving system of perennial or self-perpetuating plant and animal species useful to man". No digging, weeding, spraying. They have captured the imagination of thousands (one radio interview by Bill Mollison resulted in him receiving 3500 letters), and their well-presented book "Permaculture One" (Corgi, \$4.95) will no doubt become a best-seller throughout Australia.

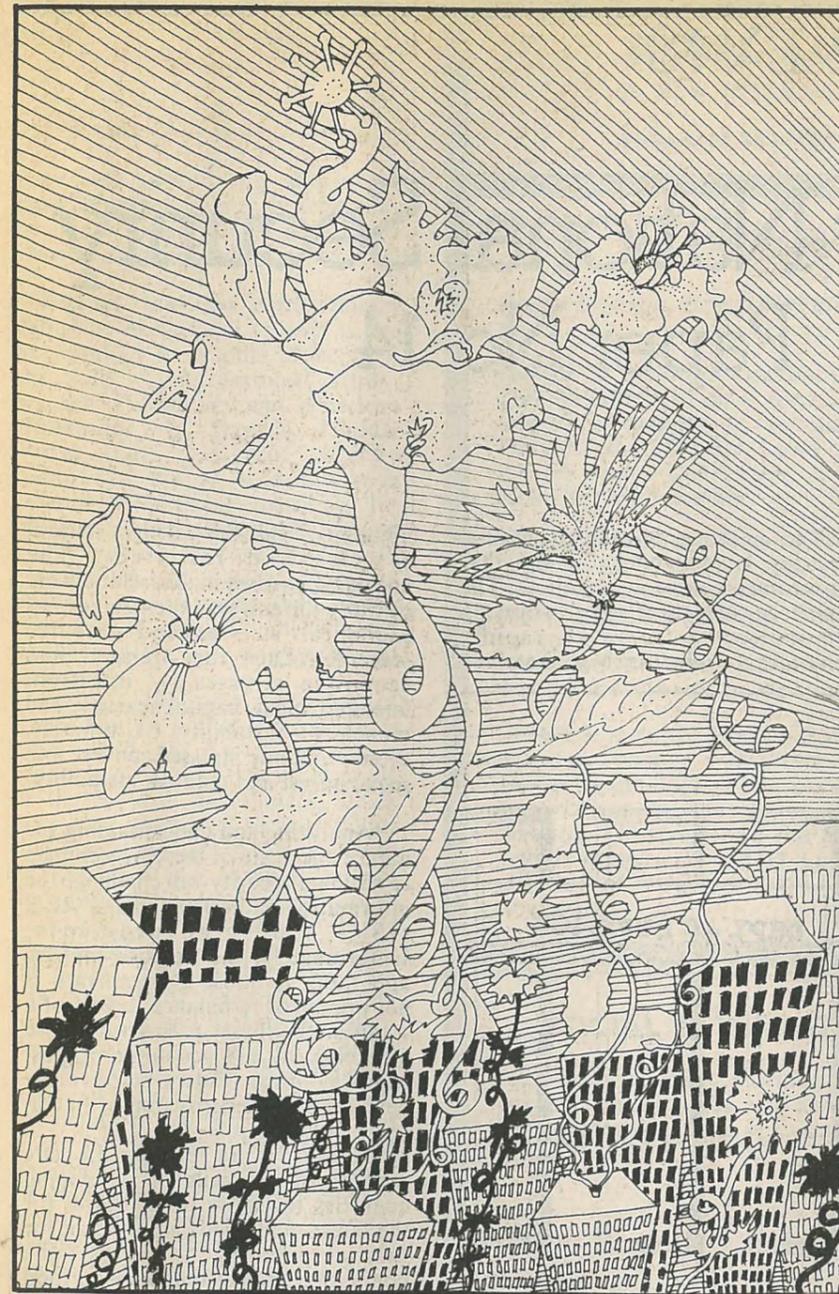
Well what is permaculture? Mollison and Holmgren promote it as a radically new approach to agriculture based on the use of perennial plants. But on P.1 even this interpretation is placed in doubt: "it is recognized that annual cultivation is an integral part of any self-supporting system, but annual crops are not considered here (except in passing) as a component of the total system. It is taken as understood that normal gardening for annuals is part of a permacultural system." Implicit recognition at least is given to the importance of wheat, corn, rice and potatoes in feeding us all.

Realizing that permaculture is a system of perennial farming combined with annuals, it occurred to me that I have been practising permaculture for years — without knowing it. We have planted a wide range of fruit and nut trees, and grow vegetables and berries between the trees (but we use a rotary hoe, buy in manures and other fertilizers, and use some sprays). What I am trying to do is inspired by a belief in the ills

of mass production farming, and the writings of back-to-the-landers in the 1930's like the Nearings, M. G. Kains, Louis Bromfield and Ralph Borsodi in their classic books "Living the Good Life", "Five Acres and Independence", "Malabar Farm", and "Flight from the City". The realization comes: **permaculture is nothing new.**

When one stops looking for a "perennial agriculture for human settlements", stops hunting for detailed information on how to establish and maintain such a system (the authors admit the concept is as yet only a theoretical possibility), realizes that "permaculture" is merely a word which appeals to the imagination and intellect, then one can take a look at the book in a totally new light. Read "Permaculture One" as a book protesting about modern farming techniques and urging more diversity, a shift towards people-intensive agriculture, maximum use of renewable resources, and regional self-sufficiency, and you'll find it has far more relevance.

What specific ideas does the book contain? One of their main arguments is that there may well be more edible foods, particularly from trees, that we could try growing in Australia. Many I haven't even heard of: mesquites, pigodias, honey locusts. One does wonder whether relevant foodstuffs for Australia are lurking behind these names — Mollison and Holmgren recommend we hunt out seed and give them a try. They indicate the nutritive value of the various tree products, and that many trees also could have other functions — production of resins and oils, poles, thatching material etc. Not a new idea, but a relevant reminder. They are particularly keen on nut trees, but choose to ignore discussion of the reasons why, for instance, Australia imports 90% of the walnuts consumed here. The answer



lies partly in the time factor — trees take up to 20 years to produce good crops — but also in the many diseases nut trees are prone to. Root and crown rots of the Phytophthora and Armillaria species kill many walnut trees each year, and bacterial blight can cause the loss of the entire crop. In our area those nuts that do remain are often finished off by the rosellas and cockatoos.

They include a species catalogue listing plants, and an arbitrary figure on the number worth planting for a small community. Such information, without details on how to grow the

plants, harvest their produce and deal with their pests (only scant information is provided in an appendix) is of little practical use. Each unusual variety they suggest would require detailed practical tests over many years to ascertain whether or not its planting would be a relevant and efficient use of land. They seem rather carried away with this whole concept of **diversity** i.e. "as many species as possible should be planted" (p.65). Much disillusion, heartbreak and inefficiency will surely result from such an approach. A plantation of up to 150 types of

fruits, nuts and herbs is recommended, all in together, not cultivated and all requiring different levels of soil fertility, having varying water requirements and being susceptible to differing diseases and pests. It sounds like a farmer's nightmare.

Mollison and Holmgren are at their best when they are talking about taking care in the placement of gardens, orchards, glass-houses and workshops to maximise efficiency of use of human labour, solar energy and water, and minimise fire risk; urging the development of community garden plots on the outskirts of cities and served by public transport; and protesting about the present difficulties people experience when trying to get the use of some land in the country. They are at their worst when they urge public plantings of fruit and nut trees (one of the biggest sources of diseases and pests in Australia is untended plants in home gardens — public plantings would tend to be even more neglected); the growing of comfrey and small fruits in parks; using the motion of trees to provide energy via a system of wires and pulleys; the erection of trellises over traffic ways; and the use of foyers of buildings to grow some of the coffee consumed in the morning break. Such suggestions border on the absurd.

That's the trouble with this book: it's the product of academic minds and not farmers' hands. For all its tables of figures and romantic drawings it doesn't provide much information of practical use. And there's a danger with this book: that by playing with people's hopes and dreams of a self-supporting agriculture, one runs the very real risk of having them crash down amid paddocks of diseased rotting chingmas, reedmaces, jujubes and ugnis later on when they get out and try it. Or worse in a way, of developing a cult of people yelling "permaculture power" and planting a sacred bunya bunya pine in their backyards when they could be growing lots of tomatoes and beans for their dinner. But this book will still undoubtedly prove its worth: it's got us all talking.

—Ian Pausacker

Redefining National Security

Worldwatch Paper No. 14

By Lester R. Brown

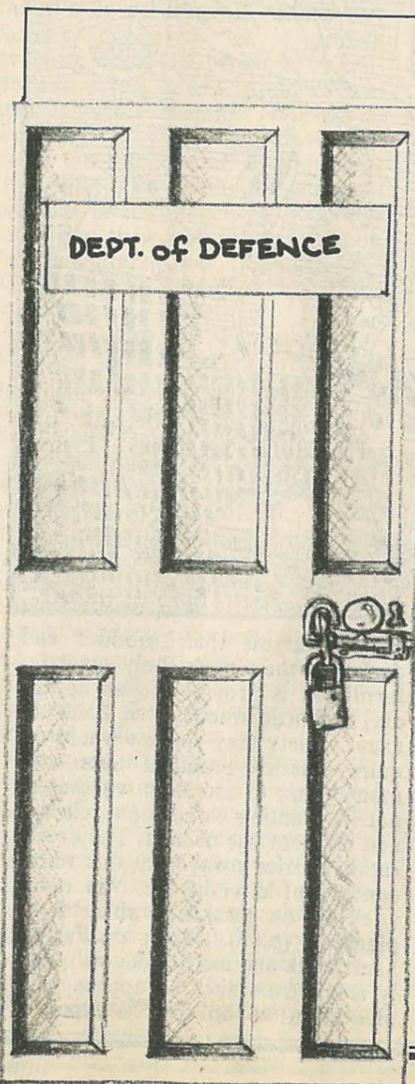
Those familiar with the world-wide ecology movement know the value of Worldwatch Papers which cover a diverse range of subjects vital to survival on this planet, in a compact and readable form.

This booklet does not tell us anything now about the looming resources and population crisis; however, it shows how best to present the facts in a language that is acceptable to the predominantly conservative decision-makers who control Australian politics. The two central preoccupations of the right wing have always been, and still are, economic growth and national security. What Paper No. 14 does is to show the contradiction in current and past decision-making between these two concerns. National security needs are redefined in such a way as to show that economic growth is the principal cause of future adversary relationships at both an economic and political level, creating the conditions for future economic slumps and wars.

I regret that Paper No. 14 was not available at the time of the Ranger Inquiry into uranium mining. If some of the evidence that was presented to the inquiry had been in a language familiar to those who concerned themselves with National Security then that well-meaning and conservative gentleman, Justice Fox, may have been persuaded, as one at least of his colleagues was, that uranium should be left in the ground.

Lester Brown's principal arguments are that existing national security policies maximise military strength but do not maximise national security, because they ignore the growing non-military threats. To quote from his conclusions:

The military threat to national security is only one of many that governments must now address. The numerous new threats derive directly or indirectly from the rapidly changing relationship between



humanity and the earth's natural systems and resources. The unfolding stresses in this relationship initially manifest themselves as ecological stresses and resource scarcities. Later they translate into economic stresses — inflation, unemployment, capital scarcity, and monetary instability. Ultimately, these economic stresses convert into social unrest and political instability.

“Analyzing and understanding the nature and scale of these new threats to national security will challenge the information-gathering and analytical skills of governments. Unfortunately, the decision-making apparatus in most governments is not organized to balance threats of a traditional military nature with those of ecological and economic origins. Many political leaders perceive the new threats to security dimly, if at all

“Thus, it is easier in the government councils of developing countries to justify expenditures for the latest-model jet fighters than for family planning to arrest the population growth that leads to food scarcity. Likewise, in industrial societies vast expenditures on long-range missiles are easier to obtain than the investments in energy conservation needed to buy time to develop alternative energy sources.

The scientific talent required to make the energy transition and to prevent the destruction of biological systems is enormous. The all-out mobilization that circumstances call for entails, among other things, shifting part of that one-fourth of the world's scientific talent now employed in the military sector to the energy sector. At a time when oil

reserves are being depleted, developing new energy systems may be more essential to a nation's survival than new weapons systems.

Perhaps the best contemporary definition of national security is one by Franklin P. Huddle, director of the U.S. Congressional study, *Science, Technology and American Diplomacy*. In *Science*, Huddle writes that “National security requires a stable economy with assured supplies of materials for industry. In this sense, frugality and conservation of materials are essential to our national security. Security means more than safety from hostile attack; it includes the preservation of a system of civilization.”

Perhaps the only criticism of Paper No. 14 is that it is primarily addressed to Americans and probably because of this the example of the Swedish government, which does have a national security policy that allocates funds to the avoidance of non-military threats, is not documented. For instance, stockpiles of strategic materials cost the Swedes 12% of their military budget; the policy of industrial specialisation has been built around ensuring Sweden's survival without oil, hence the land-use planning of suburbs around rail-lines and the industries that make electric traction systems and some of the finest trams and trains in the world. Two thirds of Sweden's primary energy is hydro-electric power, and should all else fail it can survive without oil. Neutral Sweden has not been at war for 200 years and the prime reason for this is its national security policy, which is sophisticated and recognises that neutrality can neither be achieved by military might nor woolly-minded pacifism. Australia's present national security policy if persisted with is a threat to our survival because it wastes human and scientific resources that should be employed in creating alternative technologies.

Distributors: Patchwork Books, 303 Victoria Street, West Melbourne, 3003, phone (03) 328 4740. Price: \$2.

—Alan Parker

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The Nation Review has recently changed ownership. As a publication that always was critical of Government and big business, it never attracted the big advertisers and therefore, failed to run at a profit.

The new owners don't expect to make a packet — they simply felt that the National Alternative Weekly — however much in need of improvement — was worth saving.

Circulation had declined in recent years but is now growing again, no doubt due to new policies, new contributors, new style. At present, the publishers are formulating a scheme of reader-ownership that seems to make sense. Apart from bringing international news, reviews, cartoons and writings, the paper aims for a growing involvement with existing alternative groups, among them the Friends of the Earth. Already it published — free — a weekly list of forthcoming events that are of interest to our movement. If you need publicity for such an activity, send it to Nation Review's "Shortlist", P.O. Box 339, Camberwell, Victoria, 3124. And if you want to know what's happening in your State — buy the paper!

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CASTLEMAINE: 56 Littleton Street, Castlemaine 3450. Phone (054) 72 2838

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ELTHAM: P.O. Box 210, Eltham 3095. Phone (03) 439 8068 or 439 8068.

FRANKSTON: 2 Inglis Avenue, Frankston 3199. Phone (03) 783 5786

GLEN WAVERLEY: 23 Wave Avenue, Mount Waverley 3149. Phone (03) 277 4347

HAWTHORN: Phone (03) 818 5364

LATROBE UNIVERSITY: Environment Resource Centre, c/- La Trobe University, Bundoora 3083. Phone (03) 478 3122 ext 2456

MITCHAM: Phone (03) 729 9241

MONASH UNIVERSITY: c/- C.R.A.C. The Union, Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton 3168. Phone (03) 541 0811 ext 3141

ST ANDREWS: c/- Post Office, St Andrews 3751. Phone (03) 710 1451

SWINBURNE COLLEGE: Contact Centre, Union, Swinburne College, John Street, Hawthorn 3122. Phone (03) 819 8495

WANGARATTA: Greta Road, Wangaratta 3677

WODONGA: Colin McQueen, c/- AWOL Meats, Kelly Street, Wodonga 3690. Phone (060) 26 1306

NORTHERN TERRITORY

DARWIN: P.O. Box 2120 Darwin, Northern Territory 5794. Phone (089) 81 3804

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PERTH: c/- Western Australian Environment Centre, 537 Wellington Street, Perth 6000. Phone (09) 321 5942

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE: 310 Angas Street, Adelaide 5000. Phone (08) 223 6917

Make contact with your local FOE group to obtain these resources.

BROADSHEETS

Ice: Friends of the Earth's Antarctic newspaper (10 cents)
Uranium and the Third World (\$22 per 1000)
Uranium: The World Says No (\$22 per 1000)
Eco: from 1977 International Whaling Commission meeting (free)
Forestry Massacre
Slow Burn

PAPERS

A Queanbeyan Soft Drink Factory (20 cents)
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The Politics of Nuclear Power (50 cents)
Uranium: Citizens Response (60 cents)

URANIUM: CITIZENS' RESPONSE

Rebuttal of government's case for mining and export of uranium

- 1 URANIUM MINING AND NUCLEAR POWER Worldwide Resistance
- 2 ILLUSION OF SECURITY Australian Nuclear Safeguards
- 3 NUCLEAR ENERGY AND THE ALTERNATIVES
- 4 RADIOACTIVE WASTE Nuclear Technology's Fatal Flaw
- 5 URANIUM MINING Negotiation of Land Rights
- 6 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF URANIUM MINING
- 7 URANIUM Questions and Answers

Prepared by: Friends of the Earth, 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic. 3066. Phone (03) 419 8700

THE CASE AGAINST URANIUM MINING

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Uranium Mining in Australia (A-V kit)
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LAND RIGHTS VS THE 'NATIONAL INTEREST'

~ OUR STORY UNFOLDS IN 1835, WHEN A GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN, WHO WERE ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN TASMANIA, DECIDED TO BUY MORE LAND TO GRAZE SHEEP. ~ NOT DESIRING A REPETITION OF THE LESS THAN FAIR MANNER IN WHICH THE TASMANIAN ABORIGINES HAD BEEN TREATED, THEY INSTRUCTED THE LEADER OF THEIR EXPEDITION — JOHN BATMAN, TO BUY THE LAND FAIR AND SQUARE!

BATMAN ARRIVED IN PORT PHILLIP BAY AND WENT ASHORE TO LOOK FOR ABORIGINES. HE FOUND A TRIBE OF THEM ON THE BANKS OF A CREEK —



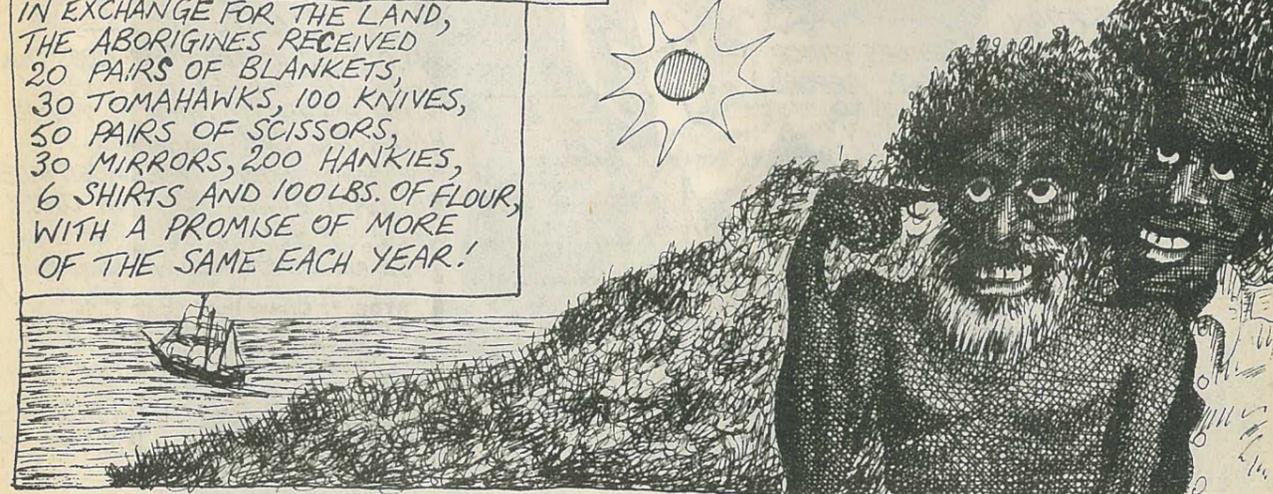
BUT WHEN HE TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT HE WANTED TO BUY 500,000 ACRES OF LAND THEY DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND HIM...



... SO HE SHOWED THE CHIEFS TREATY DEEDS AND HELPED THEM TO SIGN THEM.

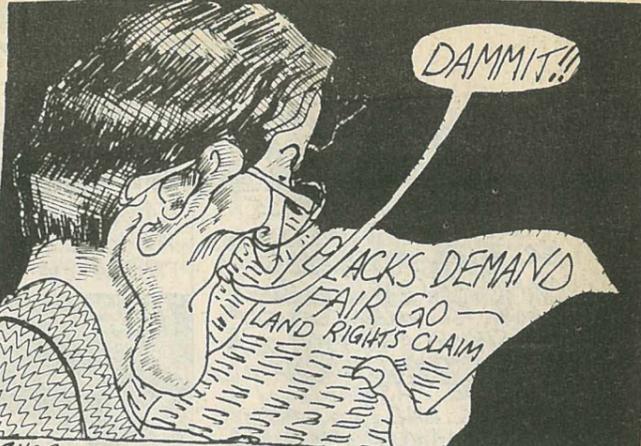


IN EXCHANGE FOR THE LAND, THE ABORIGINES RECEIVED 20 PAIRS OF BLANKETS, 30 TOMAHAWKS, 100 KNIVES, 50 PAIRS OF SCISSORS, 30 MIRRORS, 200 HANKIES, 6 SHIRTS AND 100 LBS. OF FLOUR, WITH A PROMISE OF MORE OF THE SAME EACH YEAR!



MANY, MANY YEARS LATER, A SIMILAR GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN DECIDED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE ABORIGINES OF ARNHEM LAND. BUT THIS TIME THE BUSINESS INTEREST WASN'T SHEEP, BUT URANIUM!!!

HOWEVER, THE LEADER OF THIS EXPEDITION WAS NOT DESTINED TO FIND IT SO EASY...

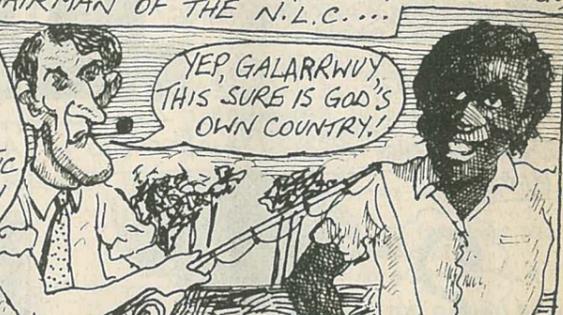


BLACKS DEMAND FAIR GO — LAND RIGHTS CLAIM

A SHORT TIME LATER, MALCOLM HAS HIS FIRST CONVERSATIONS WITH GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU, CHAIRMAN OF THE N.L.C. ...

BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP A SNEAKY MAN DOWN FOR LONG

...AND SO I HAVE ESTABLISHED A NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL, SO THAT WE MAY HAVE JUST AND DEMOCRATIC NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE...



YEP, GALARRWUY, THIS SURE IS GOD'S OWN COUNTRY!



I JUST HOPE HE REALISES WHO 'GOD' IS

WHEN MAL GETS BACK TO CANBERRA HE CALLS A MEETING WITH DOUG ANTHONY AND IAN VINER...

WELL, BOYS, AS YOU KNOW I'M VERY BUSY CURBING INFLATION AT PRESENT, SO I'D LIKE YOU TWO TO HANDLE THIS ONE FOR ME...

BESIDES WHICH, I CAN'T AFFORD THE BAD PUBLICITY!

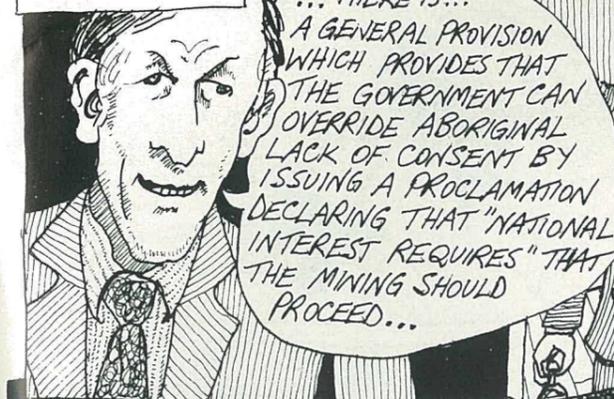
JUST ONE — WHAT IF THEY WON'T SIGN?

I'D ANTICIPATED THAT QUESTION! WELL, THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE! WITH A VIEW TO SUCH A THING HAPPENING I'VE INSERTED A "NATIONAL INTEREST" CLAUSE INTO THE LAND RIGHTS ACT. — IN OTHER WORDS, IF THEY WON'T SIGN THE RANGER CONTRACT, WE'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ASSUME THAT THEY'RE BEING MANIPULATED BY THE A.L.P.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

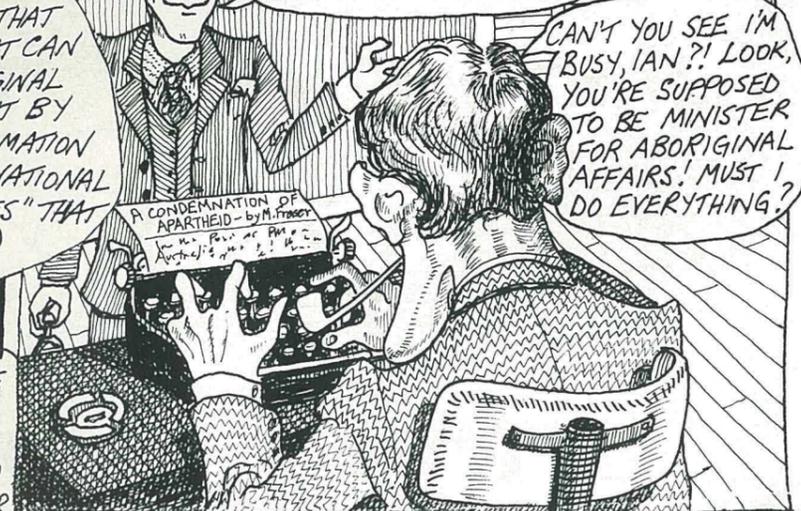
AS HAD BEEN SUSPECTED, THE ABORIGINES REJECTED THE AGREEMENT —

LATER THAT SAME DAY —

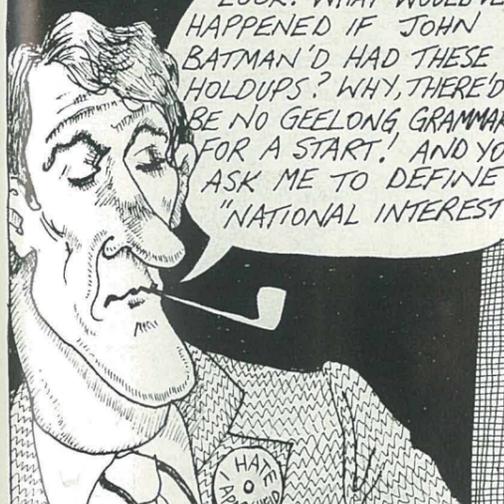


...THERE IS... A GENERAL PROVISION WHICH PROVIDES THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN OVERRIDE ABORIGINAL LACK OF CONSENT BY ISSUING A PROCLAMATION DECLARING THAT "NATIONAL INTEREST REQUIRES" THAT THE MINING SHOULD PROCEED...

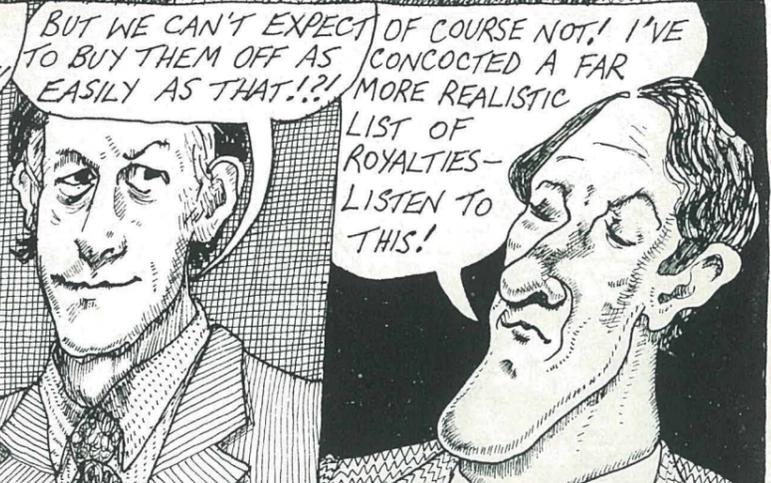
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MAL, BUT THE PAPERS 'RE ASKING ME TO DEFINE "NATIONAL INTEREST"! WHAT'LL I SAY?



CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY, IAN?! LOOK, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS! MUST I DO EVERYTHING?



LOOK! WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF JOHN BATMAN'D HAD THESE HOLDUPS? WHY, THERE'D BE NO GEELONG GRAMMAR FOR A START! AND YOU ASK ME TO DEFINE "NATIONAL INTEREST"!!



BUT WE CAN'T EXPECT TO BUY THEM OFF AS EASILY AS THAT!?! OF COURSE NOT! I'VE CONCOCTED A FAR MORE REALISTIC LIST OF ROYALTIES — LISTEN TO THIS!

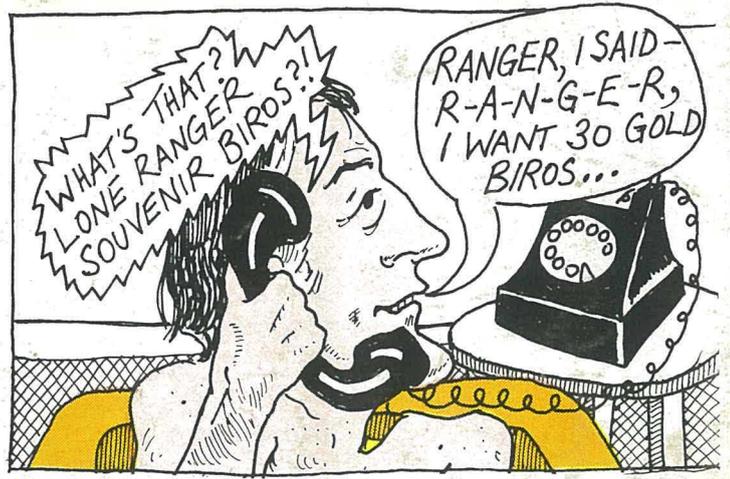
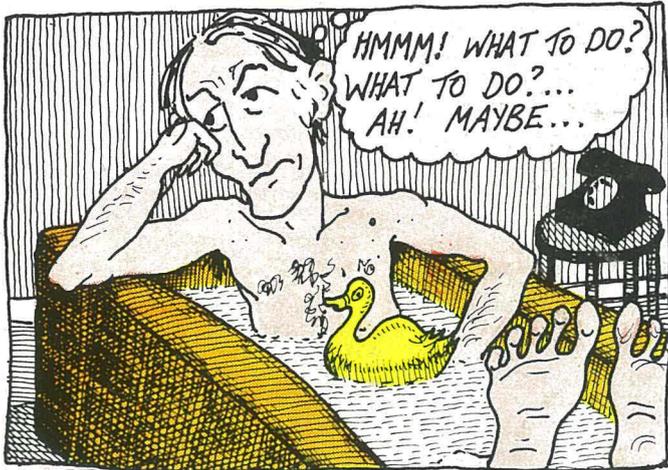
FOR EVERY CHIEF WHO SIGNS THE CONTRACT, AN ARTHUR MURRAY COURSE IN TRIBAL DANCING — A FRISBEE FOR EVERY BLACK CHILD IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY — A CHAIN OF MACDONALD'S STORES THROUGHOUT ARNHEM LAND...



THE RADICALS WON'T LIKE IT!

TO HELL WITH THE RADICALS! IT'S THE ABORIGINES WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT!



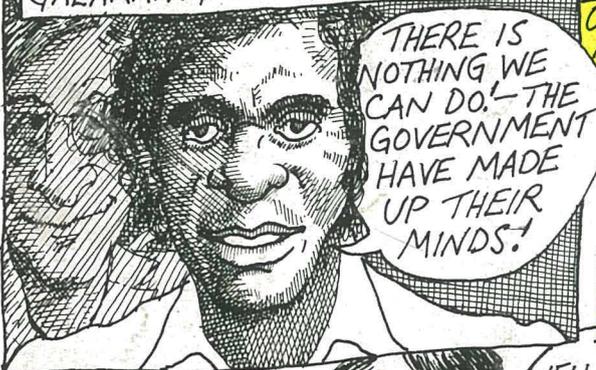


A WEEK LATER, VINER & YUNUPINGU
WAIT AT OENPELLI FOR THE TRADITIONAL
OWNERS TO ARRIVE AT A SCHEDULED
MEETING...

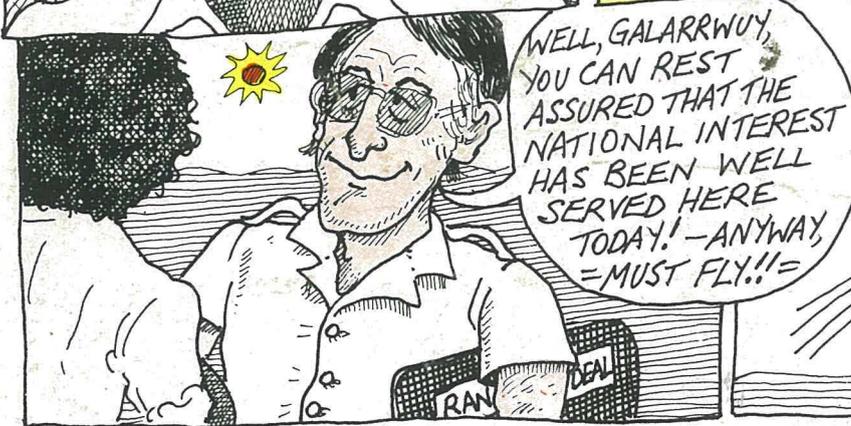
WHERE ARE ALL
THE OTHERS, SILAS?



GALARRWUY SPEAKS TO THOSE PRESENT... SILAS MARANALUNGULA,
OF THE OENPELLI PEOPLE, IS THE
FIRST TO REPLY...



HOWEVER, AS
HISTORY WILL
TELL, THE INSIDIOUS
VINER, ALTHOUGH
LEFT WITH 27
GOLD CHRISTMAS
PRESENTS, DID
GET HIS CONTRACT
SIGNED - WITHOUT
THE CONSENT OF
THE MAJORITY OF
TRADITIONAL OWNERS



MICHAEL VALE '78