

# Chain Reaction

Friends of the Earth Australia

Number 28 Winter 1982 \$2.00

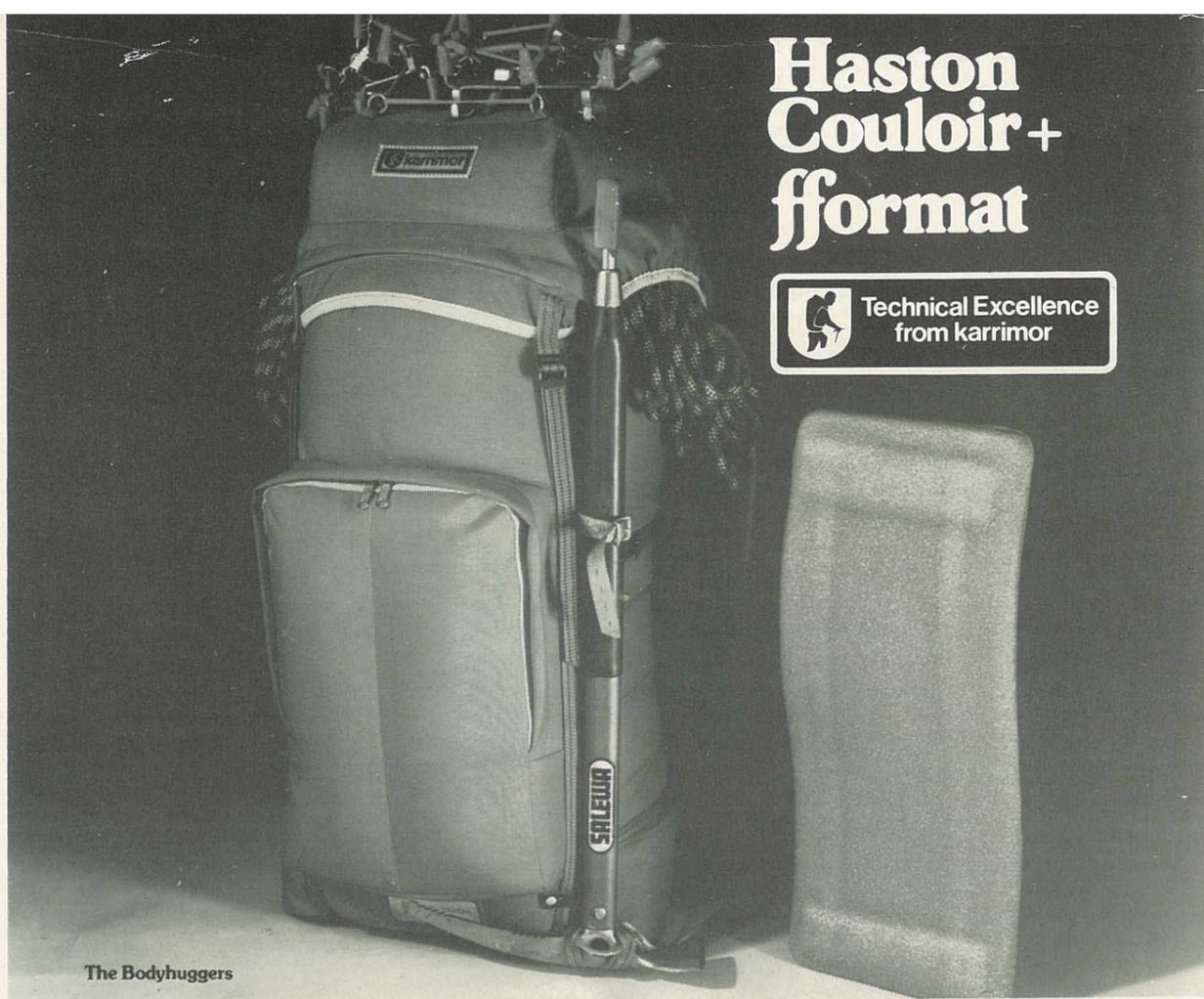
## Wollongong Jobs & Environment



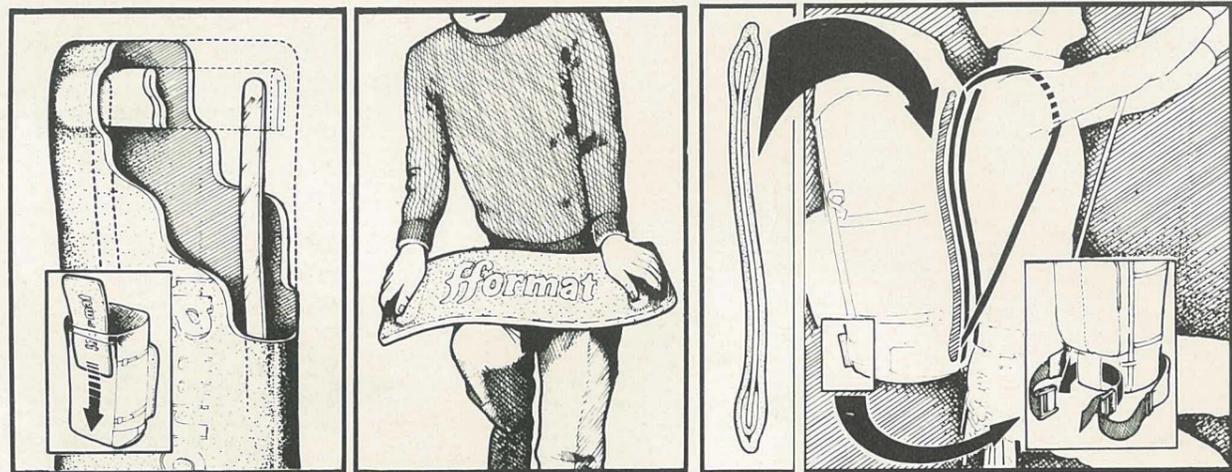
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## Before you read anything else

This is no ordinary magazine. It doesn't make profits. It doesn't seek to. **Chain Reaction** is not published to sell you products or con you with illusions of comfort. We try to let you know of things you may otherwise not hear.

It's important to understand what's really going on out there. We want to find solutions to a large number of problems.

We think you do too.

Be it seed patenting, energy programmes, developments that threaten jobs and the environment, wilderness, or the land rights struggle we want to explain the issues and show the potential for action.

So we produce **Chain Reaction** . . . voluntarily.

Just some of the **Chain Reaction Melbourne** team:  
From left: Mark Carter, Robyn Carter, Jonathan Goodfield, Leigh Holloway, Richard Shelton, Linnell Secomb, Tim Darling, Judy McDougall, Jill Taylor, Mark Cole, Peter Gravier, Bess Secomb, Candy Strahan.

We of the page one credits column. The authors and illustrators. And the people in Friends of the Earth groups, other community organisations and shops around Australia who under take the crucial work of getting the magazine into your hands.

We now sell over 5000 copies per edition but even after seven years' publication we are still unable to do all we'd like.

## We don't even own a filing cabinet

Or a typewriter or a photocopier.

No writers, illustrators, layout artists,

accountants, office, distribution or subscriptions staff are paid.

Our travel and telephone expenses have been subsidised for our 28 editions by Friends of the Earth Australia. Supplements and full-colour covers are sponsored by community groups and unions. Advertising income has increased, but there's a limited number of non-sexist, non-racist advertisements around. The free labour. The sponsorships. Even with them the lack of resources stops us from doing the job you want of us.

The cover and subscription prices have gone up, but distributors take \$1 for every magazine they sell.

We beg and borrow whenever we can.

But uranium mining proceeds.

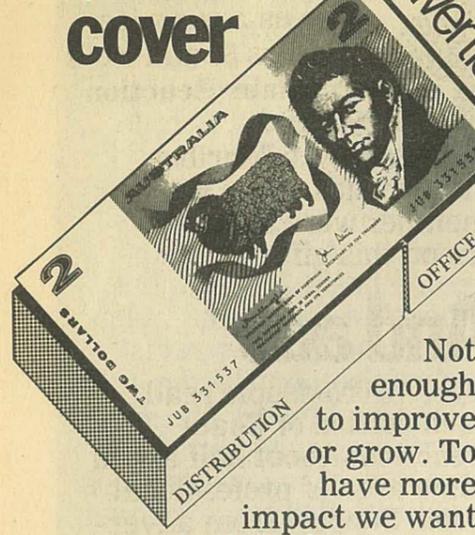
*Continued over . . .*



BILL EDMUNDS

Chain Reaction

# What your \$2's cover



Not enough to improve or grow. To have more impact we want to do both.

# So we go to the people...

We are convinced that there are thousands of people interested in the issues Chain Reaction reports, but who have yet to complete a subscription coupon or join a Friends of the Earth group. They pour into the streets for anti-nuclear rallies, join diverse community groups.

# ...for a sustainable Chain Reaction

There are a number of ways we can reach them. A number of ways we can convince them that Chain Reaction is worth buying:

- Through better articles

Subsidies Advertising OFFICE COSTS DISTRIBUTION

(with funding for special investigations) improved coverage of issues (with a bigger phone budget), better photos (a camera for Chain Reaction), and more thorough research (with an increased wages budget).

- Through more publicity posters and subscriptions leaflets (with a bigger printing budget), ads in other magazines (with more money for advertising), increased promotional work (a bigger postage budget).
- Through more efficient servicing of subscribers and distributors (a photocopier for Chain Reaction).
- Through more frequent publication (more money all around).

But to get people interested, to increase sales, to secure the magazine's future we need your help.



# Your tax deductible help

If you are one of Chain Reaction's many readers in paid employment this next bit is very important. Leap on over if you are on the dole or a low income.

- \$10 will buy us two 5-minute calls to Perth.
- \$20 pays for 1000 subscription leaflets.
- \$100 gets one of us to Sydney.
- \$500 prints 1200 more Chain Reactions.
- \$5000 will pay one of us wages just above the poverty line.

Should we leave examination of public affairs to *The Bulletin*?

If you'd like more, then you need to pay for it. Already we provide stacks of free labour and much inventiveness in the use of facilities. But we can only stretch a dollar so far.

We are serious about the need for you to give money. How about giving the equivalent of a day's pay or 10% of a month's wages or some other generous amount? Please examine your priorities for spending. Isn't there some sizable amount you can re-direct?

Right now is the perfect time for you to make



a donation to Chain Reaction. Send it direct to us or to the Australian Conservation Foundation with a request that they make an equivalent donation to Chain Reaction. This way your donation is tax deductible. Put it in the mail to reach the ACF by 30 June 1982 and you can claim it on this year's tax return.

Be imaginative. You may have some shares that could be sold, or an inheritance that you'd like to spread around. Even if you are writing your will please give the magazine some thought.

# Renewals

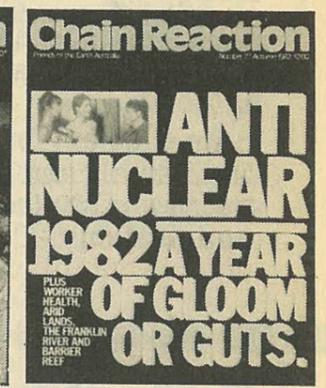
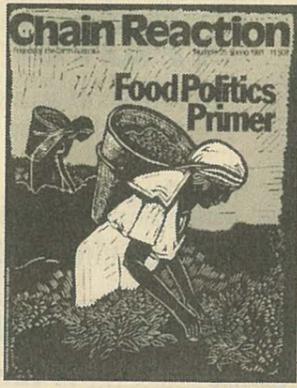
Please. Like most magazines we have trouble with people forgetting to renew

their subscription. Unlike *Reader's Digest* we have neither the time nor the funds to frequently remind you to send in your subscription payment.

Please renew promptly.

From this edition we are starting the reminder process a bit earlier. We hope you don't mind our persistence. You are our closest friends. (If you get the magazine through membership of Friends of the Earth consider equally strong their desire for you to renew your membership.)

# Multiple subs



To help get Chain Reaction to more people we have decided to start multiple copy subscriptions. Five copies for each edition can be sent to you for a year for just \$26.

Schools, libraries and other non-profit organisations can save \$14.



# Gift subs

Give some friends an unexpected surprise. Give us a surprise. Send us \$8 and we'll send Chain Reaction to a friend.

If every subscriber and Friends of the Earth member were to give a friend this gift . . .

# And ads

Over 18 000 people read each edition of Chain Reaction. About half are in some area of professional work. Support from advertisers is very necessary for the magazine to maintain its present quality.

If you would like to advertise please contact Leigh Holloway on (03) 63 5995, today. The rates are low.

We need your help. If we are to do the job you expect of us.

# Thanks

Mark Carter, Leigh Holloway, Linnell Secomb

# Rip out this page

Post this to: Chain Reaction, Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000.

Hello from: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
 of (Address) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Postcode) \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Donation

I want to support Chain Reaction's work. Here is a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation.

## 2. My subscription

Please add me/us to Chain Reaction's subscription lists (give name above)

for the next four editions — \$8 (individuals and non-profit groups) or \$20 (commercial organisations)

## 6. Tax deductible donations

Post this to: Australian Conservation Foundation, 627B Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Vic 3122.

Enclosed please find a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

Chain Reaction

for the next eight editions — \$16 (individuals and non-profit groups) or \$40 (commercial organisations)

## 3. Multiple subscriptions

Please send me five copies of each of the next four editions of Chain Reaction — \$26 (schools, libraries . . . anyone).

## 4. Gift subscriptions

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## Chain Reaction

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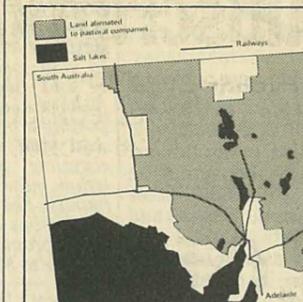
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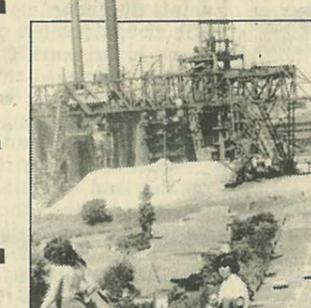
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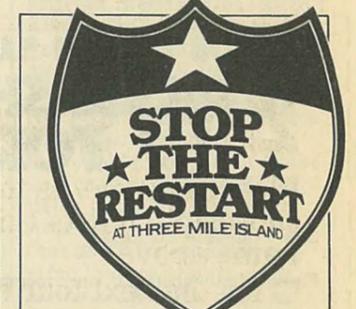
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Cover design: Mark Carter

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Contributions to Chain Reaction are invited. Please try to send items typed, on one side of the page, double spaced and with wide margins. Keep a copy. We do not have sufficient resources and people to return manuscripts. These few guidelines help in bringing out the magazine better and faster. The spring edition will appear in early September 1982.

# FOE GROUPS

## Recycling campaign

Friends of the Earth (FOE) Collingwood has recently established a recycling campaign. The aims are:

- the introduction, in Victoria, of deposit legislation along the lines of the Beverage Containers Act now operating successfully in South Australia, to reduce the amount of litter generated by making all beverage containers returnable;
- the removal of economic and structural barriers which are facing councils in their efforts to establish municipal waste-recycling centres;
- the encouragement of recycling of all items which can be reused or re-manufactured at a net gain in terms of energy and resources compared to making the item from new materials;
- the furthering of resource conservation in all areas of society.

## FRIENDS OF THE EARTH MEMBERSHIP FORM

Dear Friends of the Earth

Please find enclosed my membership fee of \$ . . . . . (as per rates below).

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

Postcode . . . . .

Telephone . . . . .

Membership fees: New South Wales and Victoria \$15 (or \$7.50 students, unemployed and pensioners). Queensland \$15 (or \$10 students, unemployed and pensioners). Other states and territories \$10 or what you can afford. *Chain Reaction* is sent free to all members of Friends of the Earth and some groups also send members newsletters and provide discounts at their bookshops. Enquire from your local FOE group. Make cheques payable to Friends of the Earth and post to the group nearest you - see list at right. Donations are very welcome. Contact us for details on how to make tax deductible donations to FOE.



Making all drink containers returnable would create new jobs at no cost to the community by using funds now thrown away on one trip containers. Pollution and energy consumption would be reduced. Roadside litter would be visibly reduced. Beach and roadside clean-up costs should be reduced by at least 25% after a beverage containers act has been in operation a short time. More important perhaps is the fact that in South Australia domestic

## FOE Brisbane

Since 'regrouping' in January this year, Friends of the Earth (FOE) Brisbane has raised itself above the general Queensland political morass, thanks to the generous financial support from FOE Australia via the FOE national conference.

So far this year our activities have included a membership drive and the development of a bimonthly film programme. We are in the process of employing coordinators to increase our effectiveness as the only radical ecology group in Brisbane. Occasional papers on various current environmental issues including animal welfare, rainforests, and plant patenting are being written for inclusion in educational kits.

After holding a successful film night on the land rights issue, FOE Brisbane has met with other groups who are

### Friends of the Earth Groups

- BLUE MOUNTAINS** 94 Waratah St, Katoomba, NSW 2780 (047) 82 2701
- BRISBANE** PO Box 667, South Brisbane, Qld 4101 (07) 44 1616 AH
- BURNIE** PO Box 350, Ulverstone, Tas 7315
- CANBERRA** 17 De Burgh St, Lyneham, ACT 2602 (062) 47 8868
- COLLINGWOOD** 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066 (03) 419 8700
- DARWIN** PO Box 2120, Darwin, NT 5794; Shop 6, Simply Foods Arcade, The Mall, Darwin, NT 5790 (089) 81 6222
- ELTHAM** PO Box 295, Eltham, Vic 3095 (03) 435 9160
- GLEN WAVERLEY** 1092 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill, Vic 3128 (03) 88 1610
- HOBART** 102 Bathurst St, Hobart, Tas 7000 (002) 34 5566
- LA TROBE UNIVERSITY** c/- The SRC, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic 3083 (03) 479 2977
- MITCHAM** 17 Beleura Ave, Vermont, Vic 3133 (03) 874 6099
- MONASH UNIVERSITY** Community

litter has been reduced by about 25% by weight and 35% by volume within a year of the South Australian Beverage Containers Act being implemented with concurrent saving to councils in tip-space required, and in garbage collection costs.

**Action:** Send donations to the Recycling Campaign, c/- FOE Collingwood. Read The Packaging Rip-Off, a recently produced broadsheet available from your local FOE group. Contact your local council and inform them of your approval of municipal waste-recycling programmes. Write a letter to your local MPs in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council outlining your feelings about wasteful packaging and supporting a beverage containers act for Victoria. Add your name to petitions in favour of recycling programmes and deposit legislation now being circulated in the community. See if your local milk bars and health food shops are willing to place these petitions in a prominent place in their stores, for mailing to MPs when they're filled.

**Contact:** Richard Nankin, Recycling Campaign, FOE Collingwood. See address below.

organising protests against the black land rights legislation and the Commonwealth games. We will be involved in campaigns linking these and pointing out how the games are being used to promote Queensland to investors while denying our basic civil rights.

FOE Brisbane meetings are organised on a cooperative basis where the aim is for consensus decision-making. Where a consensus cannot be reached a non-binding vote is taken and if there is still strong enough feeling among some of the members against the majority view they may pursue the issue under minority rights provisions. The aim in organising this way is to promote freedom of speech which is not possible under normal majority voting procedures.

FOE Brisbane membership rate is \$15 per year, with a concession rate for unemployed, pensioners, and low income earners of \$10.

- Research Action Centre**, Monash University, Clayton, Vic 3168 (03)541 0811 ext3141
- NORTHERN YORKER PENINSULA** c/- Valinor, 734 Moonta Mines, Moonta, SA 5558 (088) 25 2813
- OAKLEIGH** 1/7 Monash St, South Oakleigh, Vic 3164 (03) 579 4302
- PERTH** Office - 537 Wellington St, Perth, WA 6000 (09) 321 5942 Shop - 373 Oxford St, Mount Hawthorn, WA 6016 (09) 444 6017
- PORT PIRIE** PO Box 7, Port Pirie, SA 5540 (086) 34 5269
- RYDE** 18 Kokoda St, North Ryde, NSW 2113 (02) 88 2429
- SOUTH AUSTRALIA** 310 Angas St, Adelaide, SA 5000 (08) 223 6917, (08) 223 5155
- SYDNEY** 101 Cleveland St, Chippendale, NSW 2008 (02) 698 4114
- UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA** Guild of Undergraduates, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009
- CHAIN REACTION** Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic 3000 (03) 63 5995, and 101 Cleveland St, Chippendale, NSW 2008 (02) 698 4114

## LAND AND DAMS

At the last meeting held by the Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils, the Tasmanian delegates gave a report, and the following resolution was passed:

That the Federation of Land Councils publicly condemns the Tasmanian Wilderness Society for its deliberate failure to publicly support Aboriginal land rights in Tasmania, whilst at the same time abusing the Aboriginal struggle for its own ends, and calls on all conservation groups throughout the country to withdraw their support from the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, until such time as the group publicly supports the Tasmanian Aborigines in their struggle for the return of their lands.

The Aboriginal people in Tasmania have called on the Tasmanian Wilderness Society to publicly state their stand on Aboriginal land rights. The Wilderness Society has failed to consult with the Aboriginal people in Tasmania when discussions on their land was being considered. They have been asked to leave meetings of the Wilderness Society when they have voiced their opinions. The Wilderness Society has failed to support the Aboriginal people on land rights issues, but has instead used the existence of Aboriginal sites in the Tasmanian south-west area to further their own ends in preventing any damming of the Franklin River.

If conservationists throughout Australia truly support the concept of preservation of the land then they must publicly support Aboriginal land rights, so that the land is once again in the hands of the true conservationists, the Aboriginal people.

We therefore call on your group to withdraw any support your group may give to the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.

John Watson  
Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils  
Kimberly Land Council  
PO Box 332  
Derby, WA 6728.

## PACIFIC PEACE

Where is the campaign for a nuclear-free Pacific today? Doesn't the ANZUS Treaty bind Australia to full support of United States nuclear

forces in the Pacific?

Doesn't the Australian Labor Party see renunciation of ANZUS as electorally unviable?

How can the nuclear-free Pacific campaign look like being a success when it doesn't address the complicated but incredibly important issues of ANZUS and ALP policy?

If nuclear's out then what defence arrangements are being proposed for Australia and the Pacific region by the campaign . . . in the short and the long term?

It's when we start discussing questions such as these that the campaign becomes more directly relevant to Australians. And so, with considered answers, success is more likely.

Simon Bain  
Carlton, Vic

## FLUORIDATION

*Chain Reaction* is to be congratulated on publishing Ms J P Miles' letter on fluoridation. Discussion of this important issue is usually suppressed by the media, for fear of offending powerful vested interests. Yet the fluoridation issue raises basic questions about the politics of food and of environmental pollution, the ethics of compulsory medication and of medication with uncontrolled doses, and the value judgements made (but rarely admitted) in the practice of science.

Much of the early research on fluoride was funded by the aluminium industry which subsequently profited from the results of this research, which permitted fluoride to be presented to the public as a valuable medication instead of a toxic environmental pollutant.

However, the industry which gains most from the scientifically unproven notion that fluoridation is a 'magic bullet' which harmlessly and effectively stops tooth decay, is the junk food industry. This industry exerts pressure for fluoridation through such esteemed bodies as the Dental Health Education and Research Foundation (DHERF), one of Australia's principal promoters of fluoridation.

The DHERF Annual

Report for 1979 shows that one of the Foundation's governors was Coca-Cola and that financial contributors to the Foundation included Arnotts biscuits, Australian Council of Soft Drink Manufacturers, Cadbury Schweppes, Coca-Cola, CSR, Kellogg's, and Scanlans sweets. Although some donors to and office-bearers of dental foundations will have the sole motive of trying to improve children's teeth, it is clear that others may have conflicting interests.

An informative leaflet on fluoridation can be obtained by sending a large SAE to Community Action on Science and Environment (CASE), PO Box 1875, Canberra City, ACT 2601. Incidentally, CASE has also produced leaflets on salt and on caffeine.

Mark Diesendorf  
Lynehan, ACT

## ECOLOGY/IDEOLOGY

I was indeed perplexed by the array of opinions presented in the article 'Ecology and ideology' (*Chain Reaction* 27) because to me they were needlessly cynical, if not bitter - and generally born of narrow personal experiences.

I also was at a loss to understand why you should endeavour to columnize an issue of the depth of 'ideology' and 'the environment movement', both being so complex. Thus, rather than producing anything meaningful for the reader, this article gave out totally negative signals, and was representative of the types of individualistic and obstructionist sentiments which have in the past hindered much collective action.

Having worked on FOE's uranium campaign for nearly three years - a great deal longer than Margie Kaye's few months - I feel qualified to state that my experience has always been one of positive encouragement from both women and men. If I have been forestalled in acting in a certain way, it has been because collective opinion has run against me, not because of discrimination on sex grounds.

Mark Cole's column tells us that the environment movement lacks 'a (sic) historical and class perspective'

# LETTERS

and that it must ally itself with workers and their political organisations.' His garbled use of textbook Marxism is pure old hat. In this day and age the 'workers' are the relatively 'lucky' ones, and the chasm between those who have work and those who do not is growing.

Geoff Evans similarly misperceives contemporary social alliances. He states that the environment movement has bypassed issues of the environment in 'working class suburbs'. If he looked closer at these areas he would also find the relatively cheaper rents a refuge for newly arrived migrants, Aborigines, unemployed, single mothers, students, pensioners, and impoverished environmental activists. Besides this, there have been environmental battles fought in inner city areas - the F19 freeway in Melbourne and the Redfern redevelopment in Sydney are two major examples.

I could go on, but if I have any chance of getting this letter published, I'd better stop here - except to say that as FOE's national magazine, please don't waste precious space in such an unconstructive manner in the future.

Judy Wilks  
Hawthorn, Vic

I congratulate you on your initiative, 'Ecology and ideology', *Chain Reaction* 27.

The issues raised by the capable thinkers who presented their viewpoints touches what I believe is the crucial focus for the movements for change. That is, how indeed is the ecology movement, and I believe this applies equally to other major movements of change, how are they to move effectively to challenge present social, economic and political structures?

Those of us seriously intent on seeing significant change occur to preserve our environment, the remaining species, human rights and

## LETTERS

freedoms, and who strive for a sustainable high quality lifestyle for all, must get their heads together and present an integrated and comprehensive package which will illustrate to society as a whole that a viable future does exist which can take account of the numerous claims being struggled for.

Furthermore, the presentation of theory and even of strategies is not enough. So far as is possible every effort must be made to demonstrate its viability. And as Margie Kaye and Geoff Evans' articles point out, it is crucial, if cooperative action is to occur, that the strategies and internal behaviour of such movements must demonstrate their commitment to the concerns of the other progressive movements.

It is with precisely these objectives in mind that the People's Environment Action Co-operative Enterprise, PEACE has formed.

PEACE, having already demonstrated 20 000 voters' support at the NSW state elections, believes that it's time these movements presented their concerns as a cohesive platform at elections.

Currently, PEACE is concentrating on extending the network which is the prerequisite for coordinated action.

Dudley Leggett  
PEACE  
PO Box E106  
St James, Sydney

It is fifteen years since Jerry Rubin first declared 'ideology is a brain disease'. As the ideological leader of the hippy movement he was expressing how the old left had totally discredited itself in many people's eyes.

Free-thinking approaches to political problems were being suppressed by established 'leaders' invoking hoary political dogma. The search for 'ideological purity' had created deep-set faction-

alism within groups that consumed people's energy and diverted attention from the goals of political change.

Judging by some of the comments made in the articles on 'Ecology and ideology' it would seem the wheel has turned full circle. The achievements of the environment movement in pioneering collective forms of decision making and grass roots political organising are dismissed as a 'microcosmic reflection of western capitalist society.'

The extensive body of thought on achieving self-management in the context of a sustainable society is dismissed as mere 'formulation' because it supposedly lacks a historical and class theoretical perspective.

It is all very well for the educated few to demand that everyone else have an 'ideology' to explain everything they do but this means very little to most people ('the workers') who act on the basis of the social and economic pressures they are under. If there is any one flaw which constricts the work of environmentalists it is that the movement is already too elitist and out of touch with the general community experience.

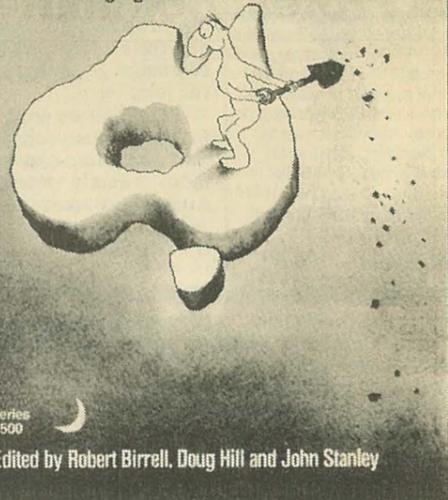
There is no denying Bob James' point that environmentalists must work harder at integrating their short-term and long-term goals to create a sense of direction. However, should ideology be used to suppress diversity of thought in groups and belittle community groups' efforts to create political change through collective action, it has surely once again earned its 'brain disease' tag.

Andrew Herington  
Melbourne

You are invited to write letters to *Chain Reaction* with your comments and criticisms of articles, or on other issues of interest to you. We are more able to publish your letter if it is under 250 words. Write today to, The Editors, *Chain Reaction*, Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanson Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3000.

## QUARRY AUSTRALIA?

Social and environmental perspectives on managing the nation's resources



## QUARRY AUSTRALIA?

Edited by Robert Birrell, Doug Hill & John Stanley

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## EARTH NEWS

### Black Protest Committee formed



LILLA WATSON/BPC

The Queen of England, it was announced in April, would start the 1982 Commonwealth Games relay from London to Brisbane. The relay will begin on 24 June and end on 30 September in time for the Games opening in Brisbane.

In Liverpool, England fresh outbreaks of race riots have occurred in the Toxteth district. The Liverpool Fight Defence Committee, a militant black organisation, say the riots are again a result of police heavy-handedness.

In late March 1982, two Aboriginal delegates from the North Queensland Lands Council left Queensland for the Caribbean and Central America to rally support for a boycott of the Games or for demonstrations in those countries if they send athletes to the Games.

The black community in Brisbane has appointed the Black Protest Committee to organise activities for the Games. The Protest Committee has issued the following policy statement:

Black Australians have been in a state of crisis since the whites first invaded our land. We have been the victims of exploitation, genocide and racism for two centuries. There is no indication of conditions improving for us. Black Australia has to take the initiative for her own survival. The Brisbane Games provide us with an opportunity to expose the racism of Australia to the rest of the world.

To embarrass and expose Australia to international scrutiny is one positive aspect of peaceful and dignified protest at the Games - but most important is the fact that Black Australia asserts herself as an active part of history. We are part of the human family. Our children and oppressed people all over the world will know that we, Black Australia, have not succumbed to the inhumanity of the Invader. To this end we mean to communicate to Australia and the world that we are protesting against:

- the refusal of meaningful land rights to Black Australia;
- the Aboriginal Acts and Regulations of Queensland;
- the racist aspect of white psychology;
- the consistent denial of human rights to our people; and
- the destruction of Aboriginal land and culture.

From a combination poster and information sheet issued by the Black Protest Committee.

Action: Financial support is needed to mount an effective campaign. Donations may be sent to the Black Protest Committee, PO Box 2025, Brisbane, Qld 4001.

### Bangladesh drugs

In Bangladesh the Gonoshasthaya Kendra (People's Health Centre) has recently expanded its operations.

As well as providing general health services for the local population at rates far below market prices, it has now opened a pharmaceutical factory. Since January 1982, the factory has been producing six commonly prescribed drugs. These are marketed under their generic names and sell for between 30% and 50% less than similar drugs offered by multinational pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh.

Source: Multinational Monitor, March 1982.

### Paid in poison

Hundreds of agricultural labourers in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh have been crippled by an incurable disease known as *lathyrism*. This disease, which causes complete paralysis of the legs, is a result of daily consumption of toxic lathyrus seed. Bread or gruel made from the ground seed is the staple diet of the labourers.

A recent survey conducted by the Gandhi Peace Foundation has revealed that the labourers are forced to eat the seed because it is the only payment they receive for toiling on the fields of the village landlords. Nearly all victims are poor, landless and totally dependent on day labour for which they receive about 1.3kg of poisonous lathyrus seed, despite a law stipulating a minimum payment of 7 rupees a day (\$A0.70).

While the use of lathyrus in food is banned in most other Indian states, there is no ban in Madhya Pradesh. Nor does the state government propose to ban cultivation of the seed.

Another finding of the survey is that bonded labour, banned in India seven years ago, continues to flourish in Madhya Pradesh. The GPF have petitioned the Supreme Court, and the Madhya Pradesh government has been ordered to provide details on the incidence of lathyrism and bonded labour.

Source: The Guardian Weekly, 25 April 1982.

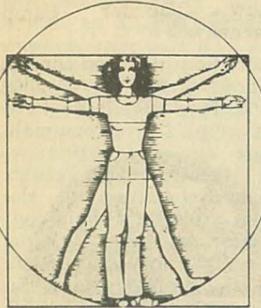
### Earth news wanted

Contributions to Earth News are welcome. Items should be under 300 words and with visual material.

The deadline for contributions to *Chain Reaction* 29, spring edition is 9 July 1982.

# EARTH NEWS

## Women's art



A Women and Arts Festival will take place throughout October 1982 in New South Wales. Activities and events are planned for Sydney's inner and outer suburbs and at least twelve country centres.

The festival will include a variety of arts organisations and individuals.

The major focus of the festival will be on NSW, but participation from interstate and overseas women artists is being encouraged.

Contact: For further information write to PO Box R105, Royal Exchange, Sydney, NSW 2000.

## Nicaragua renews

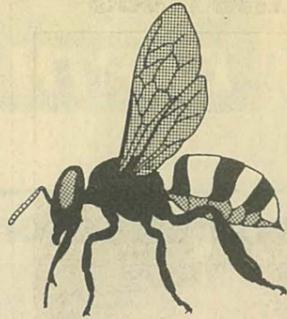
Nicaragua's Sandinista government is building a major geo-thermal power station in the bowl of the Momotombo volcano, near Managua, the nation's capital. The plant is expected to provide 75% of the nation's electricity requirements.

In addition to the geo-thermal plant the government is supporting eleven other schemes which involve the development of biogas, solar desalination, and windmill facilities in rural areas.

Technicians at Nicaragua's National Energy Institute predict a nation almost completely powered by renewable energy sources by the end of the decade. Source: World Information Service on Energy, April 1982.

## French bees

French farmers used thousands of bees to stop test drilling at a proposed reactor site in Carnet, western France, 18 February 1982. The incident was part of their continuing struggle against four pressurised water reactors planned for Carnet by Electricite de France.



Several of them had to be treated for bee stings.

Source: World Information Service on Energy, March 1982.

## Abortion by command

In South Africa, Depo Provera, an injectible contraceptive which is banned in the USA, is being widely used on black women. The Western world is dumping Depo Provera on the Third World, and SA-government funded agencies are administering the drug to young black women without their consent.

The director-general of the racist SA Department of Health and Welfare has made statements with terrifying implications for black women in SA. Confessing concern with the continuing increase in the black population, he said, 'it is not easy to get the birthrate down other than by

penalising people and having sterilisation and abortion both on demand and by command'

Last year in Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Health ordered the phasing out of Depo Provera for contraceptive use. Around 100 000 Zimbabwe women were using the drug which often has dangerous side effects.

The Zimbabwe government plans to withdraw from the International Population Control agency and establish Zimbabwe's own independent birth control service.

Source: Spare Rib February 1982, and Right to Choose.

## Chips down

Japanese woodchip buyers have told Australian mills that they won't be lifting their import levels this year.

Major mills in New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia last year had to cut production by 25%. This year they will have to cut back further.

The general manager of the Japanese-owned woodchip mill at Eden on the south coast of NSW, said that, 'I wouldn't like to be starting off from scratch in the wood-chipping industry in Australia today.'

Source: ABC Radio Two, news item, 22 February 1982.

## Jabiluka

Big Bill Neiji, a traditional owner of the Jabiluka uranium site, recently accused the Northern Land Council of pushing him into signing the go-ahead for the mine.

His letter to the NLC was tabled in federal parliament by the Labor member Clyde Holding. 'Everybody is pushing us. Pushing, pushing, pushing. Now they want us to sign but they don't understand what it means for us. This is our life.'

Deputy Prime Minister Doug Anthony has already given Pancontinental, the major partner in the Jabiluka mine, permission to seek overseas contracts, pending NLC approval of the mine.

A lawyer acting for the traditional owners initialled the Jabiluka agreement which the NLC also endorsed. But Big Bill Neiji and about 40 other traditional owners have refused to sign.

Under the Land Rights Act, traditional owners have to be advised of all options on mining, including a no-mines option. Clyde Holding said this had not happened at Jabiluka.

The NLC is broke at the moment and is in hock to the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund. Land Councils, particularly the NLC, have called heavily on trust fund reserves which, consequently, have less money to grant to Aboriginal communities who don't get direct royalties from the mining companies as the Land Councils do.

Source: Tribune 31 March, 1982.

## Watering down the rules



ENVIRONMENT AUDIO VISUALS

Near the Rum Jungle uranium mine where severe pollution of the Finiss River occurred.

In November 1981 the Ranger uranium mine was closed in response to the appearance of two islands in the tailings dam. Ranger had a number of pumps going trying to keep the tailings covered.

By law, Energy Resources Australia, the company that mines Ranger, had to keep the tailings covered by 2m of water. This law represented an agreement entered into by the Northern Territory government, the mining companies, and the supervising scientist. The water coverage minimises the release of radioactive radon into the air.

The islands were dispersed by blasting and the mine was reopened, four days after closure. The supervising scientist then announced that the regulations had been changed so that the tailings had to be covered by water rather than covered by 2m of water.

Willy Wabeke, a retired mining engineer who works in the Friends of the Earth

Stop Uranium Mining Collective, has claimed that the loss of water may be due to opening of fractures in the floor of the dam caused by shockwaves from blasting at the open cut.

In the period 1979-1981, Ranger mined 4 000 000 tonnes of uranium ore. To break up this much ore it took 1000 blasts, each yielding 4000 tonnes of ore. Each of these blasts would register approximately 4.2 on the Richter scale within a radius of 1.2 km. The tailings dam is within this radius.

Mr Wabeke said that the safety regulations were weakened to allow Ranger to fill its contracts by the end of 1981. He called for a truly independent monitoring team to be set up whose advice and recommendations would be taken seriously.

Contact: The Stop Uranium Mining Collective is based at FOE Collingwood, 366 Smith Street, Collingwood, Vic 3066.

## 2NP response

In December 1981, the ACTU/Victorian Trades Hall Council Occupational Health and Safety Unit issued a health hazard alert on the paint and ink solvent, 2-nitropropane as a suspect carcinogen (Chain Reaction 27 reported the alert).

The alert named several companies which had bought supplies of 2NP within the previous twelve months for

use in paints and inks. At least four of these companies have now ceased all handling of 2NP. They are: Triton Paints Ltd; Croda Paints (Vic); BJB Paints (Berger Paints, British Paints); and Dimet.

Contact: ACTU/VTHC Occupational Health and Safety Unit, Trades Hall, Box 93, Carlton South, Vic 3053. Tel: (03) 662 3511

Source: ACTU/VTHC Health and Safety Bulletin April 1982.

## Black Hills update

The court battle launched by the Ogala Sioux tribe of Pine Ridge, one of the Lakota nations of South Dakota, USA, in their efforts to reclaim the Black Hills (see Chain Reaction 27) ended Monday 18 January 1982, when the USA Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal. The appeal was against lower court rulings limiting the Lakota (Sioux) nations to a cash settlement rather than the land itself.

'The court's decision was flagrantly political' the tribe's lawyer Russell Barsh maintains, 'and the American people have a right to know that it puts their own civil liberties in peril.' It sets a precedent whereby congress may limit or abolish civil liberties without fear of judicial intervention. 'The Sioux are only the first. Tomorrow Congress may snatch away the rights of women, or blacks, or the poor in this country and send them treasury cheques, say \$500 for the

right to vote, or \$200 for free speech,' Barsh continued.

In another action, activists are attempting to have passed through congress legislation to protect 320 hectares of the Black Hills from mining and logging, reserving it for the religious and cultural activities of the Yellow Thunder Camp residents.

Source: Keep it in the Ground, March 1982. World Information Service on Energy, March 1982.



WISE

## Health hazard alert: Pentachlorophenol

A health hazard alert has been issued on pentachlorophenol (PCP), which is widely used as a wood-preserving agent and wood pest control agent as well as a weed killer and a slime and algae control agent, and is used in the paper, paperboard, leather, paint, and adhesives industries.

PCP contains several dioxin contaminants, which are now known to cause cancer in animals as well as birth deformities, liver damage and skin eruptions. No commercially available PCP is free from these dioxin contaminants. There are no restrictions on the use of PCP in Australia.

The major alternatives for PCP as a wood preservative are creosote and inorganic arsenicals. Both creosote and arsenicals have long been known to cause cancer. Arsenicals are also well-known causes of reproductive hazards such as birth deformities.

Source: ACTU/VTHC Health and Safety Bulletin March 1982.

NOT TO BE  
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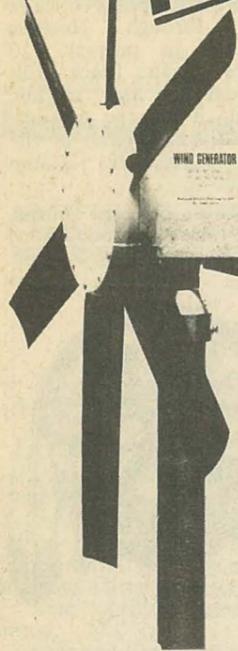
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## EARTH NEWS

### The Franklin crisis

The effervescence of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society's national campaign to save the Franklin River will be severely tested following the Liberal victory in the state election of 15 May 1982.

It will take 10 years to build the power scheme. During this time there will be two state and three national elections at which the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS) will campaign against the dam being built.

The tragedy is that much damage may occur as bulldozers move in soon to start road-building. Spokesperson of the pro-dam Association of Electricity Consumers, John McKean, has predicted that people will 'lay down in front of the dozers'. A road in the area will increase the fire risk. A major fire might cause even greater damage than the dam, as many of the trees are hundreds and even over

a thousand years old. Some, such as the myrtle, do not regenerate after fire.

Only 3% of Australians vote in Tasmanian state elections, but all Australians will be providing the funds for this new electricity scheme. A senate select committee report on the issue is due later this year and may recommend federal funds for alternatives to destroying the heartland of the South West wilderness. But there will need to be enormous electoral pressure on senators to ensure that this report does not just collect dust like so many other similar reports.

The high court has recently ruled that the federal government can act throughout Australia where international treaties are relevant. This power should be used to protect the South West, giving meaning to its nomination to the World Heritage list by the federal government.

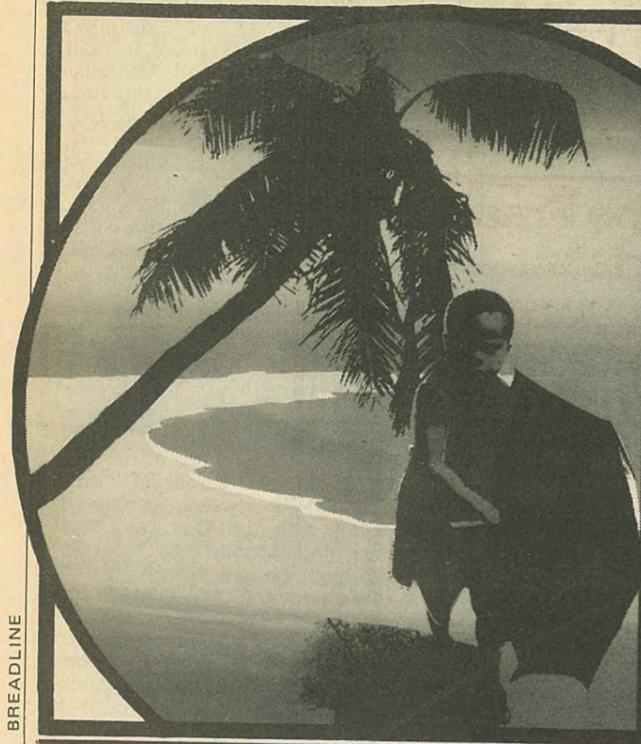
While the Franklin issue may have been forgotten by the Tasmanian voters in their rush to sack the Holgate Labor government, TWS director Dr Bob Brown confidently predicts, 'It will become the centre of the greatest conservation battle in Australian history and the Franklin will be saved'. Already the Australian Conservation Foundation has called for a national referendum on the wild rivers.

### Irenabys on the Franklin River



P DOMBROVSKIS

### Pacific myth and reality



BREADLINE

During a luncheon in Honolulu on 10 February 1982 William Bodde jr, a former USA Ambassador to Fiji, said in his speech on 'The South Pacific: Myths and Realities':

'...the most potentially disruptive development for US relations with the south Pacific is the growing anti-nuclear movement in the region. The movement... has resurrected the call for a "nuclear-free Pacific". Given our strategic needs, freedom of navigation on the high seas in the Pacific remains a necessary component of our strategic posture.

'I have no doubt that many people active in the anti-nuclear movement in the south Pacific sincerely represent widespread antipathy in the region towards the use of the Pacific as a testing or dumping ground. However, the nuclear-free Pacific concept is also being put forward by people who do not wish to see the United States maintain a presence in the south Pacific!

Source: World Information Service on Energy, March 1982.

### Honeymoon

On Sunday 16 May, 450 protestors from around Australia occupied the Honeymoon uranium exploration site 75 km north-west of Broken Hill.

Work was effectively stopped for 3 days as management suspended the normal 7 day working week by sending workers to Adelaide.

Protestors received a warm welcome in Broken Hill where they assembled before moving to the Honeymoon camp. Broken Hill Council and the Barrier Industrial Council (which represents the



TONI CHAFFEY

Protesters at Honeymoon.

town's unions) both oppose the Honeymoon mine.

On the day before the occupation, there was a demonstration of 500 people including locals, and some 50 Aborigines who mainly came from Wilcannia, 200 km north-east of Broken Hill.

### Animal lib

This year the animal liberation movement has run a series of demonstrations against rodeos in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland.

In the recent World Cup Rodeo in Melbourne, calves under 3 months of age were used in rodeo events contrary to state legislation. Travelling at speeds of over 40 km/h they were lassoed and jerked violently off their feet. One calf was destroyed after this event having incurred serious spine injuries.

A veterinary surgeon at the rodeo commented that all animals involved suffered severe trauma. The rodeo manager was fined \$2000 on charges of cruelty to animals.

### Sociology conference

The annual conference of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand will be held at the University of New South Wales on 26-29 August 1982. The conference will deal with the 'social and cultural aspects of the environmental crisis'.

Some of the areas covered will be: technology and social organisation; pollution; iatrogenic and work-related disease; relation of the ecology struggle to the worker, land-rights, anarchist, and feminist movements; the Marxist critique and other theoretical analyses of environmentalism.

Contributions, including films, from environmentalists and active groups outside the Sociological Association are very welcome.

MCARTER

Action: Proposed titles and abstracts should be submitted by 30 June. Contact Kay Salleh, Sociological Department, University of Wollongong, NSW 2500. Tel: (042) 29 7311.

### Alcoa cries poor

Alcoa of Australia has welcomed the new Victorian Labor government with a tale of poor prospects and a warning that it may abandon its Portland smelter and build in Western Australia.

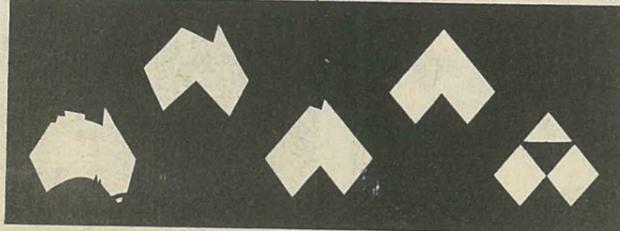
The Labor government wishes to ensure that Alcoa's electricity charges cover the full cost of supply. Alcoa has already had its tariffs investigated by two consultants, and argues that higher charges would force it to withdraw from the project.

Its public relations push is a simple case of crying poor: demand for aluminium has fallen; the industry is in trouble; plans are being chopped. Certainly plans for aluminium smelters, once the mainstay of the resources

boom, have been set back. The BHP Lochinvar smelter in the Hunter Valley of NSW and a smelter in WA have been formally abandoned. The Alcan smelter for Queensland has been indefinitely deferred. And now Alcoa is challenging the new Victorian Labor government's position by flirting with the WA government over a proposal to produce aluminium for export to Korea.

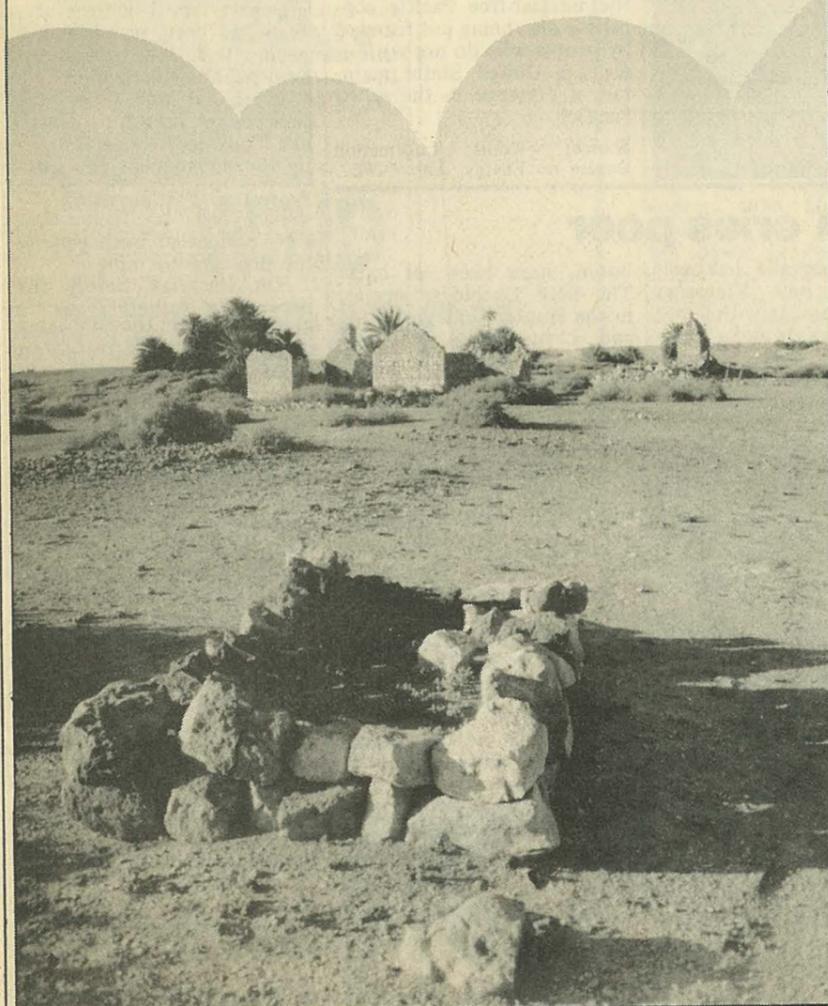
Alcoa are looking for partners to spread the cost burden of the Portland smelter. The possibility of the state government participating has been raised.

The state Labor government is committed to a public enquiry into the industry.



# Land barrens

The South Australian government and the Northern Territory administration have both recently introduced legislation to give away vast tracts of land in perpetuity to a small group of pastoralists and pastoral companies. Paul Reader reports.



Dalhousie, a monument to pastoralism, on the desert's edge.

On April 8 1981, the South Australian Minister for Lands, Peter Arnold, and the Member for Eyre, Graham Gunn, descended out of the blue Central Australian sky to a town which would normally go unnoticed from 2000 metres.

Once proud, with avenues of date palms, market-gardens, goats, a bakery, a butcher, and camels loaded for the trek north to Alice Springs, Oodnadatta was at the end of the railway and the beginning of the road north. The route and the surrounding country were once dotted with settlements remaining now only in name. Alberga had a store, Algebuckina a gold mine and a homestead, Wanilla Spring a homestead, Warriner and Edwards Creek were friendly settlements of Aboriginal and white folk together. They are all gone.

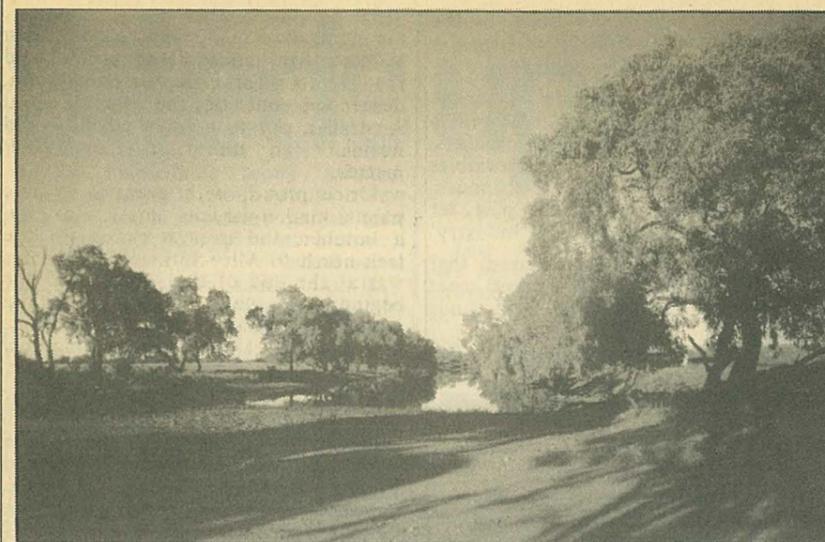
For the minister it was only a refuelling stop and a brief moment to see the town and meet a few of the local inhabitants. At the aerodrome there were ten, maybe twelve, people all eager to talk with him. One was a local pastoralist, but he reserved his comments till later, because the others were the landless poor and they had only one question: When were they going to get some say over land matters? Each person had been born in a different place throughout the Oodnadatta region. Customarily, where you are born is important, and in Aboriginal tradition it would be normal to have some say in the matters of people in that land.

No-one wanted to live in the town all the time and drink all day, and this they told the minister, though one or two were already fairly drunk and expressing themselves quite strongly.

There was not much time to talk that day, the minister was due to see one or two other people before leaving. He had just enough time to see the drunks in the streets paved with broken glass, but he saw no camels or market gardens. There are none.

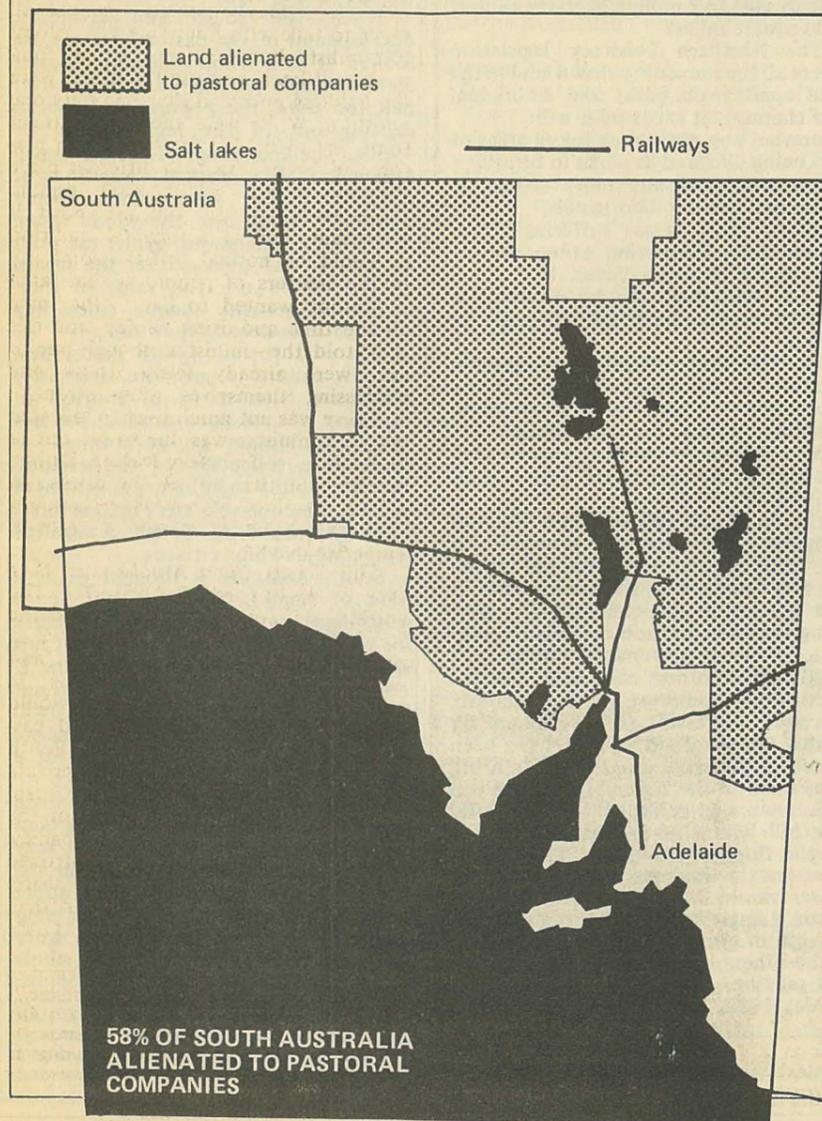
This March, Peter Arnold must have been trying to forget 8 April 1981. The minister has introduced a bill into the South Australian parliament designed to give perpetual or continuous lease of, and restrict access to, pastoral lands. In other words near-freehold title would be given to the existing 240-odd pastoral leases. In reality 58% of South Australia would become the private property of the companies who control the current leases. Whilst many of the leases are held by single companies, many of the companies are controlled by one parent company whose shareholders are hardly more numerous than the little gathering that day at the Oodnadatta aerodrome.

*Paul Reader spent two years as a community development worker in northern South Australia. He now acts as a resource person for community-based organisations wishing to engage in developmental and community arts activities.*



Kathleen waterhole in the good times.

P READER



Pastoral leases are only grazing rights at present, and all Australians are free to roam at will in this northern sector of the state. In the world of social discourse however, a certain etiquette is acknowledged in the inland. Station managers are land-barons. It is a world of private planes and pastoral leases run like medieval kingdoms. Some have benevolent autocracies, and others have tyrants. Some have harmonious racial integration, but many maintain strict segregation between accommodation provided for white and black labour, and many more avoid black labour and make it quite clear that they are unhappy about blacks 'trespassing' on their land.

There is an award wage for pastoral workers that requires overtime pay to be claimed and substantial deductions to be made for accommodation provided. Few workers dare to ask for overtime pay for the sun-up sun-down seven-day week they do. The worker wouldn't be re-employed, and this is pretty important when the company you work for controls all of the land in which you were born.

None of this is a consideration of the Lands Department. It is the Pastoral Board which has been responsible for the management of land resources in the northern region. Whether you want to claim Aboriginal land rights, plant jojoba beans, or set up a tourist resort, you are not likely to get an informative reply from the department this side of doomsday. The future of the north of South Australia is sealed with a cloven hoof mark. The course of the state government has been fixed from the outset: it is intent on providing secure holding to the vested interests. In doing so it is taking a gamble that the average South Australian will not care or will remain unaware of what happens in the northern 80% of the state and the top 2% of the social strata.

So far the Roxby and Honeymoon uranium projects are proving the general public and the environment movement to be inconsequential factors in the development of such projects, but in pastoralism the government is running in the face of a much bigger opponent. The land itself.

The SA Conservation Council's submission preceding the minister's legislation (contrary as it is to the findings of his own department) stressed the limited knowledge existing on arid lands ecology in South Australia. The few studies it could quote all demonstrated deterioration of the land since pastoralism commenced.

Old Aboriginal people confirm this. One or two remember the days before the rabbits came, and can remember seeing their first rabbit. The Lands Department in its report favoured large pastoral holdings, arguing that they are more economically viable, and thereby reduce the temptation to over-graze. As one looks at the stations that have fallen by the wayside — swallowed by

bigger and bigger enterprises — such as the empty shells of homesteads at Dalhousie now on the edge of the Simpson Desert, one wonders exactly what the department means. Has the land become so marginal that the area required to support a station must increase, or is it just a reflection of the force of monopoly capitalism? There are one or two small sub-leases left. The successful ones like Copper Hills run a mixed economy, some pastoralism, some tourism, even support services for the mining exploration teams. The fear there is whether the lease will be renewed when it expires. It is businesses like

Copper Hills that make holes in the Lands Department strategy of bigger is better.

It is late but not too late to manage the arid lands. Stopping pastoralism is not an answer, because the rabbits, donkeys, camels, and wild brumbies go on eating just the same, if not more. We have yet to pay for the past, let alone the cost of the present industry. At this stage, it becomes apparent that private landholders could never meet the cost of managing the arid lands properly.

Water is another problem. Not too

little as one might expect, but too much. Blown bores and holes drilled in the early days of exploration pour millions of gallons endlessly from the Great Artesian Basin. Where the water runs, salination follows. When there are stories from the United States of America about California's artesian water running short, it might be time to start asking questions about how long it would take to refill the Great Artesian Basin?

If the issues of ecology are not enough, the aspects of tourism and the development of the arid lands come into the question also. The bill provides for the creation of a private state in the north where current pastoral interests would also benefit from tourism if they were given control of access to the places of scenic beauty such as Coward Springs, Dalhousie Springs and the waterholes and ranges throughout the region. What is currently free could become yet another source of income for the already rich.

When the social and economic development of the pastoral regions are looked at as a whole, we see a disaster area. A single industry dominates over half the state, the population has been drifting out of the region since the 1930s. The economies of the few small towns look like Marxist caricatures of capitalism. The corner-store keeper eventually takes over the whole town, becoming a millionaire, whilst the poor get poorer and own neither the means of production nor the value of their own social security cheque, since they are already in debt to the store.

The past obsession with pastoralism and the failure to promote alternative development in terms of tourism or any kind of arid zone product has not been a reflection on government so much as a reflection of the pastoral interests' ability to influence government in the absence of any real interest from the bulk of South Australia's temperate-dwelling citizens.

South Australia is thought of as a state of small-L liberalism but South Australians have to take responsibility for the actions of their government just like Queenslanders or South Africans. If land reform and social justice are not effected soon, South Australia will quickly gain a reputation for racism and corruption to the advantage of a privileged few.

If individual South Australians do not oppose the bill and make efforts to make their point known, then it may become law. It has been passed in the lower house and comes before the upper house in June this year. This is the time to ask for proper land reform in order that a sustainable economy for the whole of South Australia can be developed.

**Action:** Let Peter Arnold know of your opposition to the bill. Send a letter or postcard to him at Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000.

## Northern Territory

At the moment Northern Territory pastoralists hold 50-year leases which entitle them to graze cattle on crown land. The average size of the pastoral leases is about half a million hectares (2000 square miles), and the legal maximum is 1.3 million hectares (5000 square miles) — however there are two corporate leaseholders who have bigger leases, obtained before the size limit was introduced in 1953. Because of the difficulty of finding out which companies leaseholders represent, it is possible that a single company could control tens of thousands of square miles in the names of different directors.

The Minister for Lands established an inquiry, 26 February 1980, to report on the most appropriate form of tenure for Northern Territory pastoral land. Eight months later, in October, the report landed on the minister's desk. In March 1981 the Martin Report was tabled in parliament. The terms of reference had not required any investigation of impacts on the conservation of the ecosystems of pastoral lands. They had required the investigation of the views of the Northern Territory government, and the needs of the community, yet no evidence was given on either.

That March, bill serial number 123, the Crown Land Amendment Bill, was also tabled. It provides for the handing over of 243 pastoral leases, making up 65% of the territory's total area, to leaseholders including CSR, the British-owned company Vesteys, AMP, Unibeef, WR Grace and Co., and members of the pastoral establishment in the NT and interstate.

Although the bill purports to give only 'perpetual leases' to the grazing interests, these 'leases' are unlike any others seen before in the area. The government could not revoke the leases, even if the lease owners broke the terms of the agreement. They could only regain the land by buying it back at market prices, and then only under special circumstances.

If the Martin Report, on which the legislation is based, is acted upon then

lease owners would also be allowed to subdivide and sell off subleases, and to use the land for commercial purposes; and the maximum size of holdings would be increased to 2 million hectares, (about 7800 square miles).

The Northern Territory legislation covers all the remaining crown land in the state apart from parks and Aboriginal land claims. If it is passed it will:

- prevent any more than token areas of land being declared as parks in future,
- put a stop to any more claims on traditional land by Aboriginals,
- mean that areas suffering from erosion and overgrazing cannot be set aside by the state to recover,
- mean that there will be no bank of publicly owned land left to grant to settlers.

The Northern Territory legislation went almost unnoticed when introduced and would probably have been passed immediately but for last minute objections by the Australian Conservation Foundation and supporters of Aboriginal land rights.

On 16 March this year bill 123 was withdrawn and replaced by a very similar bill, serial number 195. This bill is even more favorable to pastoral interests in that it removes all possibility of a lease being forfeited for non-compliance with pastoral land covenants. Strider, a Northern Territory councillor for the Australian Conservation Foundation, described the tactic as 'government by stealth'. 'Several other bills have been passed in the same way,' he said. 'A bill was tabled in the Assembly, then it was withdrawn and replaced with a totally new bill which no-one had seen till it hit the floor of the house. The government has the numbers; applying the gag, it was rammed through its three readings in a single day. They haven't treated this bill in quite such a cavalier fashion as the others but it's already through its first reading.' The house sits again from 25 May 1982.

Thanks to Rabelais, LaTrobe University students' newspaper.

# Seeds update

By Judy Messer

Over the past five years the industry lobby group backed by Shell Oil and Continental Grains has spent thousands upon thousands of dollars lobbying Australian plant breeders, farmers' groups, and politicians to accept and promote the Plant Variety Rights (PVR) Bill, legislation designed to give companies the exclusive reproductive and marketing rights over seeds and plants of new ornamental and food crop varieties. Despite this high-powered seed industry campaign, the public campaign to halt PVR, or any other scheme which might block access to seeds or vital genetic resources, is grabbing attention in Canberra.

At the time of going to press the PVR Bill is awaiting debate in the Senate.

The initial deluge of opposition (including thousands of telegrams at the time of the 1980 Australian Agricultural Council (AAC) meeting in Brisbane) succeeded in both changing the form and deferring the presentation of the bill to parliament until May 1981. Calls for more information and public debate caused the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Nixon, to table it for six months. This was the first time a bill had been tabled since the Trade Practices Bill in the sixties. New evidence of adverse aspects of PVR and increasing public opposition led Mr Nixon to the desperate measure of over-ruling the AAC. He announced at the March 1982 meeting of the AAC that he would proceed with the bill without waiting for a consensus decision. This was despite the fact that a substantial economic analysis of the USA seed industry is underway and despite the fact that the Australian industrial patent system is under review.

After the March 1982 meeting, and as a result of pro-PVR lobbying, Nixon presented wide-ranging amendments on the day before parliament rose for a three-week break prior to the second reading debate, knowing there would be no party committee meetings until the day the bill was slated to be debated in the lower house. The amendments made all food crops eligible for patenting and extended the arbitrary powers of the Department of Primary Industry in administering the proposed system of plant patents.

Judy Messer is a spokesperson for the Plant Diversity Protection Committee of the Total Environment Centre.

Just prior to the second reading debate in the House of Representatives, a national coalition was formed opposing the introduction of PVR. All major Australian consumer and conservation organisations as well as church, citizen, and farmer action groups opposed to the legislation are members of the coalition. Members include the Australian Consumers Association, the Australian Conservation Foundation, and all state conservation councils. Representing a total membership of nearly 500 000, the coalition issued a ten-point statement and coordinated a national media campaign. At the same time the Australian Council of Churches and Community Aid Abroad issued statements of opposition.

On Wednesday 21 April 1982, after a Resources Committee meeting the night before, the federal ALP caucus decided to oppose the PVR Bill. On Friday 30 April Australian Democrat Senators made public their decision to oppose the bill. That bill, now before the Australian parliament, will not be passed. However, as evidenced by parliamentary debate, neither party is implacably opposed to the concept of PVR itself.

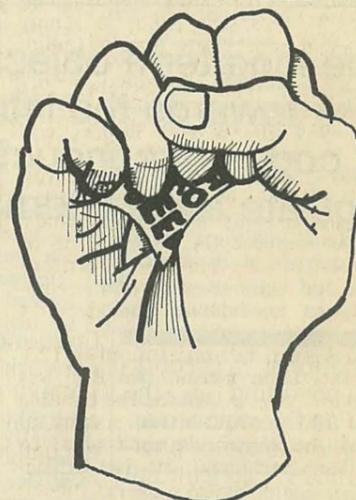
To date all parties have chosen to see the seeds debate as purely an agricultural issue, rather than a social and environmental one of global significance. This has occurred despite the fact that environmental concerns are supposed to be a key part of the Democrat platform and despite the ALP's philosophy — a philosophy which should lead the ALP to firmly opposing the legislation on the basis of PVR's facilitation of transnational corporations' control of food and genetic resources.

Internationally the seeds campaign is making strong headway. Austria has decided not to join the existing international convention on plant variety rights (UPOV) and Norway has shelved plans to introduce PVR legislation. The biggest step forward occurred in November 1981 when the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation general conference called for a legally binding convention governing the exchange of plant genetic resources. Already the USA and the UK have declared that they will not sign any such germ plasm exchange convention, signalling future international conflict on the issue.

At a United Nations Council for Trade Aid and Development (UNCTAD) conference on Patents and Trade Marks in



early February 1982, the group of 77 unaligned nations pressed hard for an UNCTAD study of the economic and social implications of plant patents in the Third World. In late January 1982 officials from international agricultural research centres meeting in Rome endorsed a position paper which flatly opposed the spread of plant patents in the Third World.



**Action** The major parties need to be lobbied to ensure that the wider implications of the bill are recognized. If there is to be a Senate standing committee the national coalition will be organising the presentation of submissions and media campaign around the hearings.

Another focus of attention for the campaign is the Victorian Labor government. ALP policy in that state is one of outright opposition to PVR, yet the Victorian Department of Agriculture has played a major role to date in promoting the legislation.

# Consumer Interpol's Anwar Fazal

The long term objective is to work towards the introduction of codes of conduct that will regulate trade internationally.

Transnational corporations operating in the Asia-Pacific region market a wide range of pharmaceuticals, agricultural and industrial chemicals, processed foods, and infant products that have been shown to injure, maim, or even kill.

Anwar Fazal is president of the International Organization of Consumers Unions (IOCU). He toured Australia between 25 March and 1 April 1982 to publicise the recent formation of

Consumer Interpol — a network introduced by IOCU to foster international information exchange on consumer health and welfare as they are affected by the export, promotion, and sale of dangerous goods. IOCU is the international coordinating body of consumer groups in over 55 countries. The concept of the Consumer Interpol was supported unanimously by delegates from over 125 countries at IOCU's international

congress in The Hague last year.

Fazal's tour was hosted by the Australian Consumers' Association (ACA). In the Australian context, ACA assesses that the Interpol will monitor the role of Australian-based companies in South East Asia and the Pacific, publish social audits of these corporations, and lobby government, business, and scientific bodies.

Anwar Fazal is trained in economics, business administration, and education. He founded the Consumers' Association of Penang in 1969, now the largest private consumer group in the Third World. Fazal was appointed IOCU regional director for Asia and the Pacific in 1975 and manages the IOCU office in Penang, Malaysia. He has served as a consultant on consumer protection in Hong Kong, Mauritius, and Rome with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). He authored a code of ethics for International Trade in Food, which has been adopted by the Joint World Health Organization/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission.

While in Australia, Anwar Fazal was interviewed by **Kate Short** for *Chain Reaction*.

**Anwar, many people in the western nations view consumer associations as middle class organisations concerned with cost and quality considerations — which toothpaste to buy, which stereo, fridge, etc. What relevance have these types of issues to the needs of people in the Third World?**

Well, in fact these issues are *not* the major concern of many consumer movements in the developing countries.

There are many problems in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the countries of Africa and Latin America that are much more urgent than choices relating to luxury products which have become the basis of the affluent lifestyles of the west. The basic consumer needs in the Third World are for clean water, adequate and nutritious food, safe cheap medicines, and a clean environment. Their basic consumer problems concern the compulsory consumption of pollutants and the involuntary consumption of dangerous and hazardous products, particularly pharmaceutical drugs.

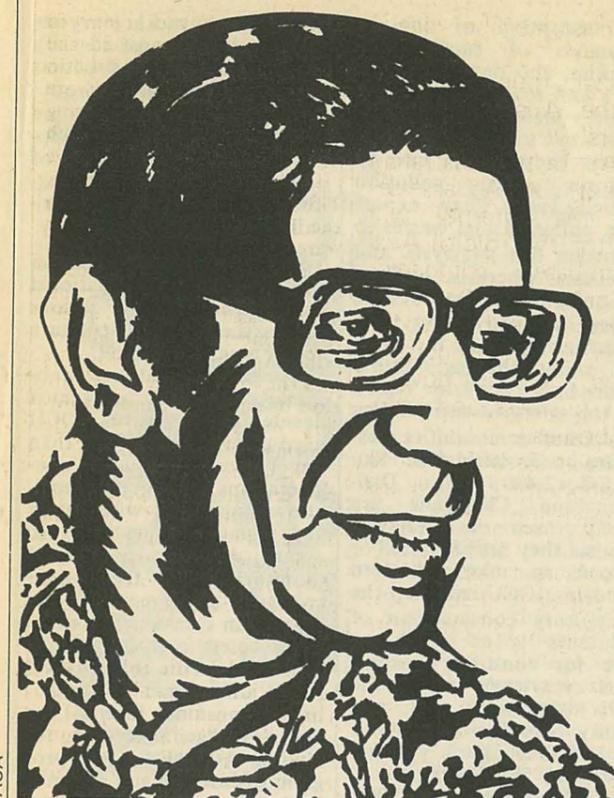
Dumping is our major concern. Lack of control of the international trade in dangerous products means that Third World nations are the importers of drugs and chemicals banned or restricted in the West.

**What then, is the role of the International Organization of Consumers Unions? Is it tailored to this sort of consumer problem?**

Increasingly, yes. IOCU specifically addresses itself to the needs of poor consumers in the Third World and particularly to the problem of dumping. We have established Consumer Interpol — a dangerous and hazardous products-warning network that will warn consumers about the problems of food, drug, and chemical consumption. For example, IOCU was one of the groups that lobbied, over a ten-year period, for the development of a code of conduct for the marketing of breast milk substitutes by multinational corporations like Nestles.

Infant formula is a product that is both dangerous and hazardous when marketed in the Third World. The water is usually bad and there are few facilities for bottle and teat sterilisation. Besides, many mothers are too poor to afford the infant formula product in the right dilution.

They water it down and the baby does not receive enough nutrition. Sometimes they get very ill with diarrhoea. One million children have died from what has been dubbed 'commerciogenic malnutrition'. It is quite clear that the multinational companies are responsible in some way for



Anwar Fazal

Over 10% of the food imported into the USA contains pesticide residues that exceed WHO standards. Most have been made in the USA where they are banned for domestic use.

this since their promotions have, in the past, encouraged bottle feeding and played down — even discouraged — the practice of breast feeding.

So IOCU and associated consumer groups in the Third World joined with many other socially concerned groups to pressure the companies to be more responsible in their marketing practices. The result has been the adoption, in 1981, of a World Health Organization Code of Conduct on the marketing of infant formula. Many companies including Nestles have agreed to abide by this code.

**How can you ensure that they do? Surely big firms are not obliged to conform to the**

**code, as it is voluntary and not strictly enforceable.**

Yes that is true enough. The code is only voluntary. But the point is that world opinion now upholds the principle of socially responsible marketing practices and it will be much more difficult for the infant formula companies to get away with bad practices like marketing of infant formula — a product which in most instances is inappropriate in Third World countries. The companies know that they are being monitored by women's groups, health groups, and consumer groups. They are aware and responsive to consumer pressure and in fact just two

weeks ago the head office of Nestles issued a press statement indicating their willingness to abide by the guidelines set down by the code.

**What will IOCU do in the future on the general issue of dumping? Infant formula is only one product. What are some of the others that have caused consumer problems in the Third World?**

The long-term objective of IOCU is to work towards the introduction of codes of conduct that will regulate trade internationally. The importance of this is attested to by the fact that trade in banned goods from the United States alone is in the order of \$USA1.5 billion per year. Of course it is a difficult and time-consuming task to stop such a massive and entrenched economic activity but the example of the infant formula shows what can be done through international cooperation between public-oriented organisations and the pressure they have collectively applied at the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and on the corporations themselves.

The international trade in dangerous pharmaceutical products is currently causing many problems in the general health of the population. Because of the lack of 'medical infrastructure' in the Third World — that is doctors, clinics, hospitals, and the like, the correct usage of western drugs and essential back-up medical services are just not available to the majority. Many drugs which are banned in the West or in Japan, or restricted to prescription only, are freely available over the counter. The drugs are not accompanied with appropriate labels indicating side effects; they are sold in doses of one or two only; they are sold to pregnant and nursing women and young children without due care for their specialised health needs.

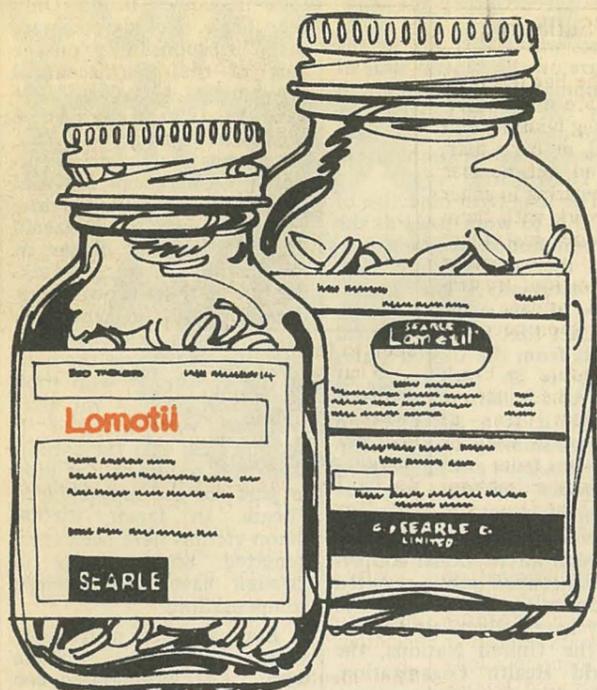
For example, the USA-based company, Withthrop, markets anabolic steroids in the Third World as appetite stimulants for children. These powerful drugs are used to offset puberty in young athletes. They cause permanent sex changes in young children. We at the IOCU regional office in Penang have an idea

what the effects on child health must be, but it is our job to monitor products like anabolic steroids and assess their impact on health. Only then can we demonstrate social irresponsibility on the part of the pharmaceutical companies. Actually, there have already been cases where this has been done. In Japan, the international pharmaceutical firm Ciba Geigy has paid out millions of dollars to drug victims who contracted Smon, a crippling disease of the nervous system, after taking the anti-diarrhoeal drug, Clloquinol. At first the company denied responsibility, implying that it was the fault of the consumers who took too many pills — but after evidence was collected it became clear that the corporation was responsible at least in part for the drug-induced disease. In Japan, 40 000 Smon victims have been compensated. Some people in Sweden have also received compensation.

But, as with many consumer issues, the problem with Clloquinol-induced Smon disease remains with us. The company still makes and distributes the product. It is available over the counter in many Third World countries, often without adequate instructions of the type that are often required by western law. It is even available in your country, Australia, in the form of Entero-viaform, a popular drug for 'travellers diarrhoea'. Of course it is restricted to prescription only, but since many Australians travel to Asian countries, it may well be the case that Clloquinol could cause problems among Australians.

Another potentially dangerous anti-diarrhoeal drug is Lomotil. Like Clloquinol, this product has little therapeutic value. It just clogs up your bowel and stops you getting diarrhoea — which is very inconvenient especially when travelling. The problem is that Lomotil should not be used for children under two because it can mask signs of dehydration and cause fatal toxic reactions. Even in adults the drug can be dangerous since there is a very narrow range between allegedly therapeutic and toxic dosages.

The situation with Lomotil



## IOCU urges associations concerned with health and women's issues to think about drug and chemical monitoring in their own country.

in the Third World is that it is a dangerous and inappropriate drug, especially for children. The company that makes it, GD Searle, encouraged its sale to infants despite strong medical evidence warning of dangers to child health. In Britain, a group called Social Audit, with assistance from War on Want and IOCU, collected evidence on labelling and promotion of Lomotil and has finally got the company to contra-indicate Lomotil for children under two. This is a small but significant victory against irresponsible marketing practices. We still have a lot to do!

You speak of drugs and the associated dangers to consumer health. What other products is IOCU concerned with?

Well, we have to focus in on a few key areas, otherwise our small resources will be stretched to the limit and just not be effective. Drug dumping is a major concern for us since it seems that we can make some headway, as the case of Lomotil has demonstrated. But agricultural and industrial chemicals are also a big problem. In Malaysia 50 rivers are now so polluted with effluent and poisons that they no longer support life. This has meant

the disruption of life in thousands of small communities who depend on the rivers and seas for their livelihood. Many transnational firms come to the Third World because they do not have to conform to strict pollution control laws. They export their pollution and wastes to countries like Malaysia and Indonesia where a weaker, less enforceable, legal system allows them to dump their industrial wastes in the rivers and spray the agricultural chemicals without due regard for the safety of surrounding agricultural communities. Pesticides and herbicides like 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D, Aldrin, Dieldrin, and Chlordane are widely used in Malaysia whereas they are restricted or banned in many Western countries. IOCU feels that the compulsory consumption of pollutants is as much an issue for consumer associations everywhere as are the more traditional cost and quality considerations. After all, 30 000 people a year are poisoned by agricultural chemicals alone; over 5000 of the victims die after their unwitting consumption of the poison. This sort of problem is a consumer issue. Besides, we all eat the fruit and vegetables that have been sprayed.

Pesticide residues are now a problem for consumers. It is estimated that over 10% of the food imported into the United States of America contains pesticide residues that exceed WHO standards. Most of the pesticides have been made in the USA where they are banned for domestic use, exported to the fruit-growing countries of Central and Latin America, sprayed on the bananas, coffee, sugar, etc, then shipped back to the USA as residue. A truly bizarre circle of poison.

On an international level, there are a number of consumer and health groups concerned to stop the international poison trade. After all, if a chemical is banned in the USA, then it should be banned everywhere. What poisons an American will also poison a Malay, a Nigerian, an Australian.

Later this year there will be some discussions on the question of monitoring specific agricultural chemicals - it is

impossible to tackle everyone at once so we must identify a couple of leading products that are used internationally. Once we do this then we are well on the way to developing an appropriate code of conduct for the marketing, distribution, and use of agricultural chemicals.

**You have spoken of action strategies at the international level. What about actions within the national structure and at a personal level?**

At the national level, consumer organisations must decide for themselves. IOCU encourages a wider brief than merely cost and quality considerations, and urges associations concerned with health and women's issues to think about drug and chemical monitoring in their own country and region. The Australian Consumers Association based in Sydney has a close link with the regional IOCU office and has established Consumer Interpol for the Asia-Pacific Region, including Australia. Their program of research and action is being developed now and we hope that the contribution of ACA will assist IOCU and other international groups to develop codes of conduct on the marketing of many products. Even if the codes are voluntary, they will at least provide us with a yardstick against which we can assess corporate responsibility or its lack.

At the personal level, I feel that increased awareness as consumers is a good starting point. Be aware of four basic issues: manipulation through advertising, seduction through advertising, the violence of the technology when used in the wrong conditions (as with infant formula), and the waste associated with much of modern production. Be conscious of the fact that we are made to waste a good deal. Of course, changed awareness is only a beginning. Action on these issues is essential and within the year we hope that IOCU-ACA cooperation will promote actions by governments, corporations and consumer groups on behalf of consumer rights.

Contact: ACA, 28-30 Queen St, Chippendale, NSW 2008. Tel: (02) 698 9200

# Ecology and ideology

By Kimberley O'Sullivan

The men of Friends of the Earth should ask themselves (if they are at all interested) why so many strong wimmin and feminists have left FOE in particular, and the environment and anti-nuclear movements in general, declaring in anger that they would never work with them again. Before I left (under just these circumstances) I saw many other wimmin leave in exasperation, frustration and anger. After all, beating your head against a brick wall soon becomes pointless and painful.

It was standard procedure to brush aside the demands of these strong wimmin by putting them down as ratbag feminists or, worse, as lesbians who had become drawn from the movement into some minor sidestream issue, that of feminism. That feminism, a revolutionary movement which affects a womyn's entire life, should be seen as a sidestream issue is itself illuminating.

Oppression of wimmin within and by FOE and the anti-nuclear and environment movements takes two broad forms: harassment by particular men, on a daily basis and using time-honoured tactics; and the consequences for wimmin of the unspoken value system (an almost ideology) of the movement.

**Individual men.** For many, and I'll even stick my neck out and say *most*, wimmin the anti-nuclear or environment movement has provided their first political involvement. To become involved in this movement while so politically 'green' means that wimmin are more easily conned and less likely to be assertive about the things they want. I could hardly believe that any young womyn who has become involved in FOE hasn't been sexually approached or harassed by FOE men. They want free fucks with no responsibility and that's usually what they get. Most young wimmin (like me when I first became involved) want the men to like them and a desperate sort of approval is knowing they want to fuck you.

**The campaigns.** For too long FOE's campaigns have assumed that all people experience societal ills and joys in the same way. While the word 'people' is carefully used it is still an unconscious pseudonym for 'men'. Wimmin under patriarchy have a different set of social experiences and in every area are at least doubly disadvantaged compared with men. FOE campaigns should recognise that wimmin and men do not face the same problems in the same way. FOE should ask itself what 'role' wimmin play in the movement. How prominent are wimmin in formal decision-making processes that are in most instances



alien to them?

What campaigns are most wimmin involved in? Mainly the 'soft' ones (whaling, wildlife, packaging) with few involved in uranium or alternative energy. What sort of work do wimmin do in these campaigns? My experience has been that it is either fund-raising or clerical work, and that few women are media or union contacts.

Why is childcare provided at demonstrations (when the numbers are needed) and not at major decision-making meetings?

**The ideology.** On what basis are wimmin appealed to to join the environment movement and in particular the anti-nuclear movement? Mostly by the good old patriarchal values of motherhood, self-sacrifice, passivism and guilt-tripping. A few examples:

- The notorious *What do you do in case of a nuclear accident? Kiss your children goodbye* poster (to say nothing

**'That feminism... should be seen as a sidestream issue is itself illuminating.'**

of yourself). Could the production of such a poster happen again?

- The Melbourne anti-nuclear banner *Women Want a Safer World* is based on an appeal to wimmin as universal providers, protectors, and mothers. Nuclear power, we are told, will hurt your lover/husband/kids - act for them and become involved. (Implicit: don't be selfish and just act for yourself. Also implicit: all/most wimmin are mothers.)
- The philosophy of pacifism/non-violence has specific ramifications for

Continued over

How effective is the environment movement? We continue discussion, started in *Chain Reaction 27*, with four longer contributions. We hope to continue debate in future issues. Your comments are invited.

wimmin because of its quasi-religious overtones (quakerism) of the He-church and the He-god. Who directs all the violence in patriarchy and who bears the brunt of most violence? Is it violence if you are fighting back? A feminist opposition to war is based on the recognition for us that the war has been going on, over our bodies and lives, for as long as any of us can remember.

At the Feminism and Uranium Conference held in Melbourne in 1978 Karina Veal looked at a few demands of the environment movement from a feminist perspective. They are still pertinent four years later:

- Why is it that men are happy to discuss the possibly harmful effects on human health of food colourings or asbestos dust, yet couldn't care less about the possibly harmful effects of the pill or of the make-up all women feel under pressure, and some women compelled, to wear?

- Why is it that men clamour for more extensive bicycle paths yet not demand an end to rape so that women could safely use those bicycle paths?

- Why is it that male animal lovers would scratch their heads and query 'if only we could stop women buying fur coats' without so much as considering patriarchal stereotypes of beauty, who own the furriers, and in whose interests it is to have women continue to wear such coats.

The best thing about being involved in the anti-nuclear or environment movements for many wimmin, and certainly for me, was that increasing activity led to a questioning of traditional female 'roles'. To take part in a struggle gives wimmin the opportunity to develop their self-assurance and self-confidence. We realise not only that a deepening political analysis grows through action but that there is still a long, long way to go.

*Kimberley O'Sullivan worked for FOE in Sydney and Melbourne until 1979 and has since been active in the feminist movement, including work at the Sydney Rape Crisis Centre.*

#### WE WERE WRONG

We wish to apologise to Margie Kaye for errors made in her contribution to 'Ecology and ideology', *Chain Reaction* 27. Her second last paragraph should have read:

'The movement, as a microcosmic reflection of western capitalist society, doesn't recognise women's work, or encourage it unless it be as a flattering backup or on male terms. Women will continue to leave or be frustrated.'



By Nic Maclellan

The April mobilisations against nuclear war indicate the concern many people feel over the growing nuclear threat. This resurgence of opposition to nuclear weapons provides the opportunity for the environment movement to make connections between the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation and other concerns - particularly the hazards of nuclear power and the mining and export of uranium. But the mobilisation against nuclear war is similar to many environmental campaigns - it cannot continue to grow without strategies being formulated and political issues being raised.

Much of the opposition to nuclear war - as with many environmental concerns - is based on moral outrage. While a healthy dose of outrage is important when faced with the lunacies of destruction which threaten us, outrage alone cannot give the political direction which can show us how to win.

Major rallies are vital events, to show the strength and solidarity of the movement. But they are just that - events. Many activists simply leap from rally to conference, from one event to another, without attempting to build a political process which can challenge the power of the transnational corporations which dominate our economy, and the governments which aid them. This is not simply a matter of a few nasty politicians and mining companies, but of a social system based on private ownership and exploitation (and environmental degradation) in the interests of profit.

The campaign against uranium mining emphasises this problem. The experience of the late 1970s was vital in raising some economic and environmental issues amongst a wide section of the population, and it did succeed in delaying uranium mining. But the momentum of the movement collapsed when mining actually started at Nabarlek and Ranger. People had been

marching so often to 'stop uranium mining', that many felt we had 'lost' when mining actually began. Bring on the next issue!

Without making connections between issues, and developing long-term strategies for political action, ecology groups will continue to leap from one cause to another (this is not a call, however, for groups of heavies to draw up plans for environmental campaigns - indeed, such strategies must be based on the experience of people on the ground, and reflect their immediate concerns and needs).

Environment groups alone cannot halt ecological devastation. But rather than simply appealing to humanity in general, we must make some concrete political decisions, and that involves taking sides: who are our allies, and who are our enemies?

There is great potential for the environment and trade union movements to work together on common

**'outrage alone cannot give the political direction which can show us how to win.'**

issues. Often, environmental struggles can only be won with the involvement and support of workers and their organisations. But working people and 'greenies' are often divided - through simplistic 'jobs versus employment' arguments, but also through different class interests which are reflected in opposing priorities. The environment movement has often neglected workers' concerns over employment, health and safety, and other social needs.

Divisions between environmentalists and the union movement were highlighted at the time of the ACTU executive's decision to drop bans on the export of uranium. Criticism of the decision often failed to recognise the splits within the unions, the strength of the right-wing push within the labour movement, and the nature of government and corporate attacks on working-class organisation. These attacks on progressive unions come from government legislation, business propaganda, organ-

*Continued on page 19*

## Chain Reaction

# ACTIVIST CONTACTS 1982-3

**Chain Reaction** believes that citizens can take a strong and active part in public issues. This, our second annual lift-out guide is presented to help you contact groups working in the areas we report. Not every active group could be listed; but these organisations will be able to help you find others working in more specific areas.

It'd be great if you sent a donation to help **Chain Reaction** keep publishing activist information and urge another person to subscribe.

### Energy

#### ANTI-NUCLEAR AND URANIUM-MINING GROUPS

**Campaign Against Nuclear Energy**  
310 Angas St, Adelaide, SA 5000  
(08) 223 6917

**Campaign Against Nuclear Power**  
PO Box 238, North Quay, Qld 4000  
(07) 229 7143

**Campaign Against Nuclear Power Central Queensland** PO Box 795, Rockhampton, Qld 4700

**Coalition for a Nuclear Free Australia and Campaign Against Nuclear Energy**  
537 Wellington St, Perth, WA 6000  
(09) 321 2269, (09) 321 5942

**Goldfields Against Nuclear Energy**  
PO Box 889, Kalgoorlie, WA 6430  
(090) 21 1323

**Movement Against Uranium Mining**  
PO Box K133, Haymarket, Sydney, NSW 2000; Room 72, Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, Sydney, NSW 2000  
(02) 267 2459

**Movement Against Uranium Mining**  
250 George St, Fitzroy, Vic 3065  
(03) 419 1457

**Nuclear Free Pacific Action Group**  
c/- 310 Angas St, Adelaide, SA 5000  
(08) 223 6917

**Nuclear Free Pacific Campaign**  
73 Little George St, Fitzroy, Vic 3065  
(03) 41 6898

**Nuclear Free Pacific Coordinating Committee** c/- PO Box A243, Sydney South, NSW 2000 (02) 264 6831

**Uranium Fighting Fund and Uranium Collective** 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066 (03) 419 8700

**Women Against Nuclear Energy**  
c/- The Women's Place, 323 Pier St, East Perth, WA 6000 (09) 328 5751

#### OTHER

**Alternative Technology Association**  
366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066  
(03) 419 8700

**Australian Wind Energy Association**  
PO Box 1965, Canberra City, ACT 2601

**Hunter Region Community Forum**  
Room 6, Trades Hall, Union St, Newcastle, NSW 2300 (049) 2 5641

**La Trobe Valley Community Forum**  
PO Box 497, Morwell, Vic 3840

**SEC Action Group**  
c/- 290-292 Wellington St, Collingwood, Vic 3066 (03) 419 3555  
**South West Alcoa Action Group**  
PO Box 146, Warrnambool, Vic 3280

### Environment

#### AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

**ACF Head Office** 672B Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn, Vic 3122 (03) 819 2888

**ACF (ACT)** PO Box 1875, Canberra City, ACT 2601 (062) 47 3013

**ACF (NSW)** Floor 3, North Wing, 18 Argyle St, Sydney, NSW 2000  
(02) 27 1497

**ACF (Qld)** 8 Clifton St, Petrie Terrace, Brisbane 4000 (07) 36 4586

**ACF (Tas)** c/- Environment Centre, 102 Bathurst St, Hobart, Tas 7000  
(002) 34 5566

#### CONSERVATION COUNCILS AND ENVIRONMENT CENTRES

**Australian Capital Territory Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre Inc** PO Box 1875, Canberra City, ACT 2601; Childers St Buildings, Kingsley St, Acton, ACT 2601 (062) 47 3064, (062) 48 0885

**New South Wales Barrier Environment Group**  
PO Box 576, Broken Hill, NSW 2880

**Environment Centre (NSW) Pty Ltd**  
399 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000  
(02) 267 7722 *Telex: NSWEC 24041*  
**Katoomba and District Wildlife and Conservation Society** c/- The Hut, Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782 (047) 88 1033

**Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales** c/- Environment Centre, 399 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000  
(02) 267 7722 *Telex: NSWEC 24041*

**Newcastle Ecology Centre** Room 6, Trades Hall, Union St, Newcastle, NSW 2300 (049) 2 5641

**North Coast Environment Council**  
PO Box 29, Kendall, NSW 2439

**Northern Rivers Environment Centre**  
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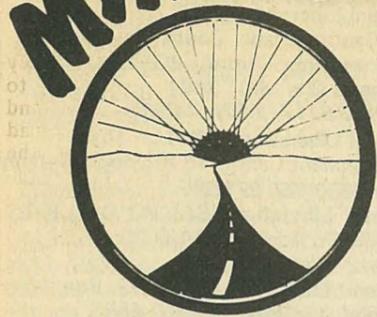
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**Australian Consumers Association**  
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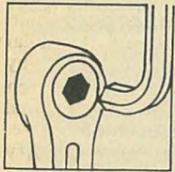
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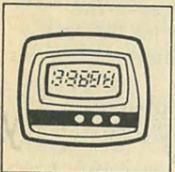


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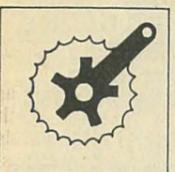
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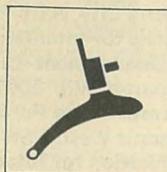


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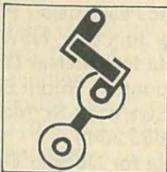


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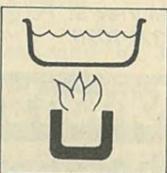
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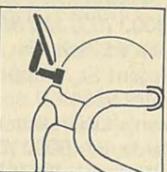
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## Ecology and ideology

The tension between how things are supposed to work and how they actually *do* work leads some people to disillusionment with the movement and so dropping out. But it can also lead others to a new perspective on the society and on the need for fundamental change. The environment experience is the potential basis for a critique of society which is both anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic. (Thus few environmentalists who have dealt with organisations like forests services or the HEC find it easy to believe that the solution lies in increased state ownership, even with the safeguard of regular parliamentary review as suggested by some.) This critique points to — much more thoroughly than the conventional labour-based alternative — the waste, consumerism, and social irresponsibility of capitalism. It also points out the need to dominate and alter the face of nature which is so characteristic of our society and of the conventional socialist alternative.



learn that the collective interest represented in a good healthy environment, in unpolluted air and water, in healthy diverse forests and undisturbed natural areas, is regularly sold out to various powerful private interests. They learn that the system regularly turns out decisions which favour private profit, and that they do not have anything like equal access to the decision-making process and are usually powerless to halt even the most damaging activities. They learn that the decision makers are often *not* responsive to public opinion, and that even where environmentalists have majority opinion on their side exploitation will normally be allowed to proceed.

*Nic Maclellan has been involved in the anti-nuclear movement, and helps produce TransNational Brief (the quarterly magazine of TNC Workers Research).*

By Val Plumwood

The experience of environmentalists cannot easily be reconciled with the established pluralist paradigm of how society works. According to this conventional wisdom, elected decision-makers who are responsive to and reflect the needs and wishes of the society guard the public interest, balancing the conflicting interests of various groups which have basically equal access to the power process. Bureaucracies are ultimately responsive to and under the control of the democratic process, and, with occasional exceptions, operate in the public interest.

People who have worked on a range of environmental issues over a long enough period usually learn that this is not how things *really* work. They

They know that bureaucracies such as the forest services are 'captured' by the industries they were meant to regulate and now act in their interests, generally behaving not as allies but as the opponents of those who wish to see the environmental values of public forests protected. They know that such organisations respond to increased criticism and scrutiny from the public they are supposed to serve not by re-examining their policies but rather by trying to silence their critics and by increased propaganda and manipulation of public opinion through 'education'. They know that organisations such as the Tasmanian HEC wield enormous power and are outside any real democratic control, and that they see as paramount the preservation of their domination and growth and that of the industries they are allied with. They know that these organisations subscribe to an ethic of nature domination and manipulation which recognises no value in wilderness and no way forward except through unrestrained growth, however wasteful this may be and however clear the alternatives are. To most environmentalists these things are so normal and familiar that they cannot be seen as mere anomalies and abuses.

'...a critique of society which is both anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic.'

Some thinking along these lines has already been done, but there is much more that is needed. The critique needs to be deepened, strengthened, and sustained over a wider range of issues (especially nature conservation issues where it is still not well known or developed) and brought home to a wider audience, as well as being lived out personally. The movement should not just fight for specific, limited victories on particular issues within the system but should also attempt to achieve awareness of the need for basic value and structural change through those issues, in the way that was successfully done in the anti-nuclear campaign at its high points. For this it is necessary to relate the specific issues to more general questions of the kind of society we have and of alternatives to it, and to link action on specific issues with a wider strategy for fundamental change.

*Val Plumwood is a research scholar in the Human Sciences Department, ANU. She co-authored The Fight for the Forests.*

# ALP uranium policy

By Paul Pedevrexakis

The only real threat to the uranium plank on which the ALP will fight the next federal election would be Paul Keating, or one of his close associates, rising on the floor of the ALP national conference in July 1982 at the Lakeside Hotel, Canberra.

At present the Labor party policy commits a Labor government to declare a moratorium on the mining and treatment of uranium, and to repudiate any commitment made by a non-Labor government to the mining, processing, or export of uranium. The ALP policy points to the proven contribution of the nuclear power industry to the spread of nuclear weapons, and to the absence of procedures for the storage and disposal of waste, and states that no commitment should be made to the world's nuclear fuel cycle until the many problems are solved.

The leadership of the parliamentary party — Hayden, Bowen, Keating, and Button — were not happy with the policy when it was adopted as a result of rank and file action at the 1977 conference. The four are still not happy with it and have now an additional parliamentary ally in Bob Hawke.

Hayden has continually tried to downplay key parts of the platform, such as that section which points to the links between the nuclear power and nuclear weapons industry. He has tried to paint the problem as a purely technical one, leading some to doubt the thoroughness of his briefings and reading on the subject.

The ALP's thirty-fifth biennial conference will consist of 99 delegates: the 7 state leaders, 4 federal leaders, 1 Young Labor delegate, and state delegations from New South Wales of 23, Victoria 19, Queensland 14, Western Australia 10, South Australia 10, Tasmania 8, Australian Capital Territory 2 and Northern Territory 1. The actual membership of the New South Wales, Victorian, South Australian, and Queensland delegations will be determined in June, while the Western Australian ballot was held in May.

The preliminary rounds in the development of the conference uranium policy have already been played out with the resources platform committee making no move to change the policy. This has been widely interpreted to

Paul Pedevrexakis observes federal environmental affairs from the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra.



mean that those opposed to the present policy have concluded that they will not have the numbers to change it at the conference.

However, it is also possible they have decided that their best tactic might be a surprise move from the floor of the conference. Paul Keating is likely to be the mastermind behind any such move. A possible tactic might be to paint the issue in terms of support for the party leadership. To what extent Keating would risk a split in the party over the issue remains to be seen. The ALP cannot simply be divided on left/right lines in determining how a vote on uranium would go.

Mick Young, for example, warned his colleagues late last year against publicly advocating a change in the uranium policy. Mr Young, well known as a political pragmatist, pointed out that the beneficiaries of a move to change policy would be the Australian Democrats. In the parliamentary party, Mr Clyde Holding, who is generally regarded as a Hawke supporter, favours the present uranium policy. And the left of

the parliamentary policy, centred on Tom Uren and Stewart West, will also fight solidly to retain the policy.

At a more grass roots level, attitudes again can't clearly be divided on left/right lines, with many of those people usually characterised as conservative seeing the question in moral terms and taking a firm anti-nuclear stance.

Trying to break down the numbers to determine how a vote would go, if there is a move from the floor, is a near-impossible task.

The issue on which change might be sought is that of repudiation of present contracts. The party has already had legal opinion that there is no constitutional obstacle to this. But those opposed to the present policy will try to argue that the Labor party would lose support if it took away miners' jobs. However, only a handful of people are employed by the industry: 350 at Ranger, 90 at Nabarlek, and 300 at Mary Kathleen Uranium. The 300 at MKU will lose their jobs regardless of Labor's policy as the mine is set to close.

The poor state of the industry, as exemplified by the withdrawal of Exxon from the Yeelrie project, also eases the problem a Labor government would face in relocating people who lost their jobs as a result of the closure of the mines.

A rough assessment of the numbers suggests that 10 of the 23 New South Wales delegates will support the current policy, but the majority from Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland will hold firm. Tasmania is unclear. This should ensure retention of the policy but it is no cause for complacency. Every effort must be made to remind Labor members that the plank is crucial for continued conservationist support for the party.

The present ALP policy finds uranium mining guilty and it is up to those advocating mining to prove its innocence.

Labor members should be reminded that in the recent South Australian by-election for the seat of Mitcham, the anti-uranium parties achieved a majority of the vote. Similarly, the by-election in Darwin following the resignation of John Isaacs resulted in the retention of the seat for Labor.

The leadership must be reminded that a watering down of the policy will lose the party votes, and every opportunity should be taken to tell them that it is about time they presented the policy clearly, and in a united fashion, to the public.



By Brian Martin

The peace movement in Australia has undergone a rapid resurgence since 1981. It is time to reflect on the goals and methods of peace activists in Australia. I have the greatest respect for all those who work in their own way to challenge the war system, and especially for those who struggled during the many years when public interest in peace issues was minimal. My comments are to help widen debate on goals and methods.

To begin, there do not seem to be any clearly articulated long-term goals which are widely shared within the Australian peace movement. Ideally goals and strategies should be developed through informed debate among peace activists. At the moment such debate is the exception rather than the rule. Goals and strategies do exist, but are for the most part implicit rather than explicit, and are multiple and conflicting.

Possibly the most widely shared goal among peace activists is removal of USA strategic military bases from Australian territory. This is reasonable, since the Pine Gap, Nurrungar, and North West Cape bases in particular represent Australia's most immediate link with the continuing confrontation between the two nuclear superpowers, the USA and the USSR.

How can removal of the bases be achieved? In spite of the large amount of concern expressed about the bases, I have not come across a single analysis presenting a convincing series of steps by which their removal might be achieved. The basic approach seems to be to convince the ALP to adopt a policy against the bases, for the ALP to be elected to federal government, and for the policy to be implemented, with

widespread community opposition to the bases providing much of the pressure forcing implementation of the policy.

There are several difficulties in this picture. First, achieving an anti-base ALP policy will be a sizeable effort in itself. Second, the ALP must be elected to government. Third, and most important, the ALP must enact its policy. Since the ALP did nothing to implement its anti-bases policy when in office 1972-75, and has since rescinded the policy, the obstacles are considerable, to put it mildly. So long as the bases remain strategically important for the USA, Australia's national decision-makers are more likely to be swayed by USA government and military interests — and their Australian allies in government bureaucracies — than by popular opinion, at least in any situation short of a potential social revolution. A fourth difficulty is that even if the bases were forced out of Australia, they could readily, though perhaps not cheaply, be relocated elsewhere in the region.

In light of these difficulties there is room for a lot of thinking about strategies for opposing USA bases, and even for questioning whether the goal of removal is sufficient.

'Disarmament' is a key catch-cry of the Australian peace movement, yet its meaning in practice is far from clear. Most of the concern expressed is about world military spending, with an emphasis on USA technological innovations in the arms race, such as the Trident submarine and the neutron bomb. The implications for Australia of the call for disarmament are seldom elaborated.

Is the goal a fully disarmed Australia? Or a conventionally armed, socialist Australia? Or simply a minimal level of armaments, sufficient for deterrence? Or, indeed, more conventional armaments to defend a neutralist Australia? Would the military forces (if any) be professionals? Or would there be a citizens' militia as in Switzerland, or perhaps guerilla forces? The lack of clear goals regarding disarmament reflects in part divided feelings about violence and non-violence as a basis for social struggle, as well as ambivalence about Australian nationalism.

The standard generalised appeal for disarmament is unconvincing to many people who see no alternative being offered to defend against potential aggressors, whether the threat is real or imaginary. The problem is a serious one, and arises in part from the lack of a positive alternative to military defence.

One such alternative is social defence (also called non-violent defence, non-military defence, and civilian defence). Social defence is non-violent community

resistance to aggression using means such as strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, non-cooperation with orders, and setting up parallel institutions. It is based on the insight that no regime, however ruthless, can survive without passive support or acquiescence from most of its subjects. The potential of non-violent resistance has been demonstrated in quite a number of instances, such as the collapse of the Kapp military government in Germany in 1920,

**"Disarmament" is a key catch-cry... yet its meaning in practice is far from clear.'**

resistance to the Nazi occupation in Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, and the resistance by the Czechoslovak people to the Soviet invasion in 1968. Since in most cases such non-violent resistance has been almost entirely spontaneous, preparation and training for social defence would increase its likely effectiveness, just as preparation and training improves military defence. The methods of non-violent action training are admirably suited for such preparation and training.

Social defence requires widespread participation by members of the community rather than a professional defence force. As a campaign goal, social defence requires extensive grass-roots organising; provides a positive alternative to military forces; is based on participation rather than following leaders; and can be used by any group opposing authoritarian forces, including those in communist countries. Because the methods used in social defence are valuable for social action campaigns of all kinds, from feminism to workers' control, social defence provides a basis for linking campaigns for peace with other campaigns for social change in the direction of equality and self-management.

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*This Contribution is edited from a longer essay to appear in the June issue of Development Dossier.*

# 'Stony Point' resources rip off

Events to date indicate that procedures for investigating and assessing the environmental impacts of the fluid hydrocarbons pipeline to 'Stony Point', South Australia, and the fractionation plant and oil tanker terminal at 'Stony Point' were a scandalous farce. **John Scott** reports.

During the past decade Santos and other exploration companies associated with the Cooper Basin gas-oil fields have promoted the idea of piping fluid hydrocarbons to the South Australian coastline. Here they wanted processing plants and a shipping terminal to be established so that they would gain access to lucrative markets for oil, condensate fractions, ethane and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

Throughout the decade various large corporations developed proposals and investigated their economic feasibility and environmental implications. In 1980 Dow Chemical Company released its environmental effects statement for a proposal for a pipeline to a fractionation plant, gas tanks, condensate tanks, oil tanks, and jetty to be built along with a petrochemical plant at Redcliff on the eastern shore of upper Spencer Gulf (see *Chain Reaction* 21).

As the map shows, upper Spencer Gulf is a narrow waterway extending southwards from Port Augusta for approximately 55 kilometres to Lowly Point and Ward Point. A large sandbar known as Ward Spit projects most of the way across the gulf from Ward Point, forming a narrow throat to the head of the gulf.

The Department of Environment reviewed Dow's statement and in August 1980 it forwarded its assessment to the SA government, recommending general approval - except for one very important part of the proposal: the loading of crude oil and condensate fractions at Redcliff and their shipment down the ecologically sensitive upper Spencer Gulf was determined to be 'unacceptable'. The SA government accepted its department's assessment and announced its general approval but

*John Scott works with the Whyalla Action Group*

for economic reasons Dow steadily lost interest in the proposal and eventually abandoned it.

Following the official condemnation of the proposal to ship crude oil through the upper reaches of the gulf and as Dow's interest for the balance of the Redcliff proposal waned, Santos and ten other companies set about promoting a scheme of their own - The Cooper Basin Producers' Liquids Development Scheme.\*

Late in 1981 they announced their intention to run a 659-kilometre pipeline from Moomba on the Cooper Basin to a terminal site which is approximately 30 km south of Redcliff but on the west side of upper Spencer Gulf. The terminal, to cost \$150 million, would include a fractionation plant to separate the various gases and liquids, refrigeration plant and storage tanks, and a jetty 2.4 kilometres long. The cost of the total project, including new plant at Moomba, would be of the order of \$750-800 million.

The rapidity with which the project progressed from then on was amazing. Environmental studies were undertaken and the draft environmental impact statements for both the pipeline and the terminal were issued in seven months. Prior to this a contract for supply of liquefied petroleum gas to Japan had been signed and orders had been placed for the large quantity of pipe which would be needed if the project was approved by the SA and Federal governments.

Three months after the two draft Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) were released, final supplements responding to public comment were issued and in the following month, November 1981, the governments announced their approval. By this time thousands of lengths of pipe had arrived in Whyalla and the clearance of vegetation from the services corridor and terminal site was well advanced.

\* The Cooper Basin producers, and their respective interests in the liquids scheme, are Santos Ltd 39.4%, Delhi Petroleum Pty Ltd/SA Oil and Gas Corporation Pty Ltd 31.52%, Bridge Oil Ltd/Bridge Oil Developments Pty Ltd 7.93%, Vamgas Ltd 7.88%, Basin Oil NL 3.96%, Reef Oil NL 3.96%, Crusader Resources Aust NL 2.88%, Alliance Petroleum Aust NL 1.58%, Total Exploration Aust Pty Ltd 0.89%.

Since November 1981 the landscape at the terminal site, which is not actually at Stony Point itself (see map), has been completely transformed from a tranquil and beautiful seaside retreat.

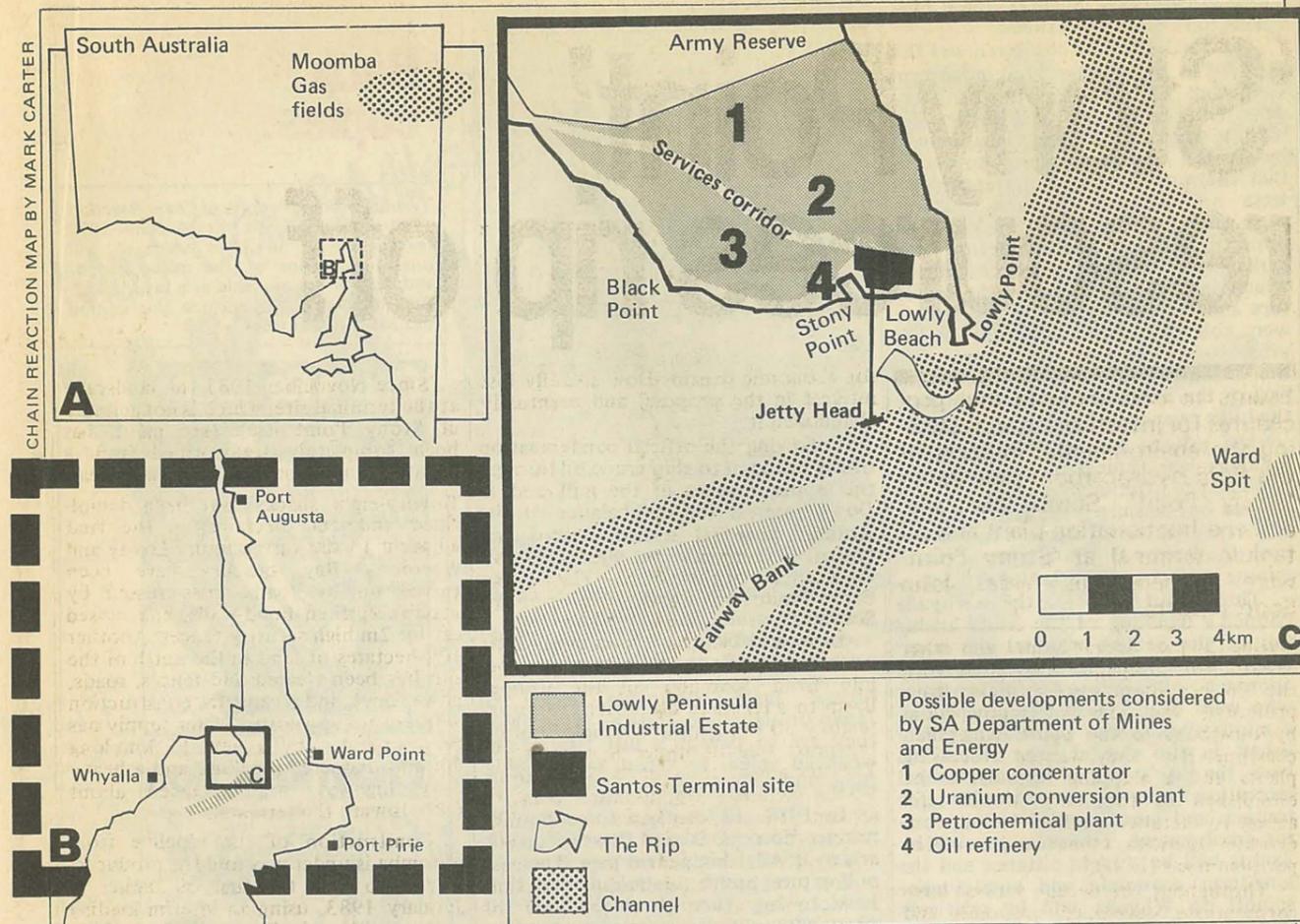
Twenty-eight shacks have been demolished and 100 hectares of the land adjacent to the very popular Lowly and Weeroona Bay beaches have been carved up by roads, criss-crossed by massive earthen bund-walls, and closed off by 2m high security fences. Another 100 hectares of land to the north of the site has been cleared and fences, roads, power lines, and a camp for construction workers are appearing. Water supply has been provided by a new 15 km long 200mm diameter pipeline, and a heavy-duty highway has advanced about 6 km toward the terminal.

Construction of the pipeline from Moomba is under way and the producers intend to load the first oil tanker in January 1983, using an interim loading system with a pipeline on the bed of the gulf until the jetty has been constructed.

The one aspect of the project which has dragged on and has still not been resolved is the determination of the nature and extent of hazard zones around the terminal which will necessitate prohibition of public access to the Lowly Peninsula coastline. The government established a working party to finalise a report on this by March 1982, but the outcome of its work is still awaited.

The acute brevity and inadequacy of environmental studies undertaken by consultants before the compilation of the draft EIS for the terminal is apparent from even a cursory glance through the background papers. The arrogant manner in which the outcome of the EIS preparation and assessment procedure was pre-empted by the signing of gas sale contracts and orders for pipes confirmed that the procedure was only a paperwork gesture with an assured government approval at its completion.

Perhaps the most disturbing and farcical aspect of the procedure was the ready willingness of the SA Department of Environment to accept the proponent's rationale for dismissing alternative terminal locations and for justifying



'STONY POINT' TERMINAL, UPPER SPENCER GULF

the selection of 'Stony Point' 'in view of the economic benefits to the proponent'. The inconsistencies in rationale as set out in the draft EIS and its supplement are too numerous and complex to canvas here but a few points are worth noting with reference to the map of Lowly Peninsula.

Firstly, the notion of a gulf boundary along an imaginary line connecting Lowly Point and Ward Spit may be convenient in an academic sense but its existence in real terms is denied by the 'rip' around Lowly Point, the upgulf travel of waves generated by the prevailing south westerlies of summer, the mobility of marine life, and the strength of tidal currents up and down this region of the gulf. It follows that the idea of this boundary providing some protection to the upper reaches of the gulf from oil spills emanating from the jetty head just 2 kilometres to the south-west is just as academic as the idea of the boundary itself.

Perhaps it may one day be established that the upper Spencer Gulf does have a southern hydrodynamic boundary - in the vicinity of Whyalla/Port Pirie or somewhere further south. In the meantime all we can be certain

of is that the risks to the upper gulf ecology, and the \$10 million per annum fishing industry which springs from it, are as significant for the 'Stony Point' jetty as they would have been for Redcliff.

Recently 2490 hectares of land were transferred from army use to create a major industrial estate on Lowly Peninsula. A concept plan which the SA Department of Mines and Energy has formulated for possible future developments on this estate includes an oil refinery, a petrochemical plant, a uranium conversion plant, and a copper concentrator.

Santos argued, in support of the 'Stony Point' site, that land appropriate for allied developments such as an oil refinery and petrochemical plant was available in the vicinity. It is apparent that the environment authorities and state and federal governments have shared this view from the outset although no studies have been undertaken to ascertain the environmental impacts of such allied developments.

The failure of the SA Department of Fisheries and the SA Coast Protection Board to present submissions

during the period of public review of the Santos Draft EIS contrasted sharply with the contributions made by them in response to the Dow proposal for Redcliff. Some public servants have privately expressed the view that any critical contribution which they may have wished to make would have been dismissed out of hand in the face of the Tonkin government's policy of 'resource development at any cost'.

The same logic perhaps explains why town and city planners and the State Planning Authority stood by in silence whilst all previous planning guidelines for the Lowly Point area were abandoned to allow industrialisation to proceed. Previously the quiet charm and the outstanding scenic appeal of the coastal recreation area had been protected in accordance with the recommendations of the Whyalla Planning Area Development Plan which was authorised in 1970 under the Planning and Development Act. Shack extensions were prohibited in some instances and the provision of electricity from the state grid was refused on the grounds that the power reticulation system would detract from the visual character of the locality. In the face of syndicated

corporate interests however, these provisions have proven worthless.

The final stage of the farce was the manner in which the Tonkin government and the Bannon opposition cooperated to get the ratification bill for the indenture through parliament before the Christmas recess, to ensure that the proponent's loan arrangements were not delayed. Whyalla residents were given less than three days notice of opportunity to appear before the parliamentary tri-party select committee which was set up to review the indenture and its ratification bill. Few people were able to obtain and peruse the bill prior to the hearing but in any case the hearing was merely an irrelevant part of the procedure to 'rubber stamp' the bill's passage.

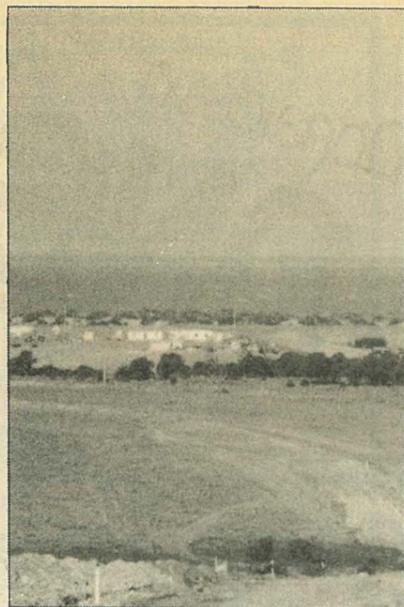
The role of the ALP in these proceedings was typical of that which it had played throughout the year. It copped out because it thought it politically expedient not to be seen to criticise both the Roxby Downs copper/uranium mining project and the Santos project.

Throughout 1981 the Whyalla council's handling of the issues arising out of the Santos proposal was hopelessly inept, reflecting the amateur approach of small-town personalities who were overawed by the prospect of a multimillion dollar plant being established in the district. The result has been the city's loss of its only coastal recreation area with potential for tourism and much needed tertiary sector employment. The rates payable by Santos will be a mere pittance and the long-term economic and employment spinoff to Whyalla will be relatively minor — about 40–45 full-time jobs with the plant's life expected to be about 25 years. The costs to the community in terms of degradation of the environment and quality of living in the district are immeasurable.

The efforts of concerned Whyalla residents to draw attention to issues arising from the Santos proposal were sustained throughout the year with considerable vigour but they met with very little success. The Adelaide press, which had a strong nexus (directors, shareholders) with some of the proponents, was particularly unsympathetic and the *Whyalla News* was on some occasions downright hostile towards critics of the proposal. The environment movement generally seemed to be pre-occupied fully with other matters while the proposal swiftly went ahead.

No summary of the progress of Santos' proposal would be complete without some consideration of the significance it has for the Adelaide metropolitan area and South Australia generally.

Although politicians and the media praise it as a 'resource development project' the proposal will actually accelerate the depletion of the state's oil and gas reserves. The proponents hope to sell our hydrocarbons at the



Services corridor and Santos Development terminal site, upper Spencer Gulf with Flinders Ranges in background.

highest price obtainable, either in Japan or elsewhere, but the price which they are to pay us is just 10% of the wellhead value. In effect we will give them 90% of reserves.

In 1987 the contract for supply of gas to Torrens Island Power Station, which is Adelaide's main power source, will expire. South Australians may then have to buy their gas back from the proponents at inflated prices or foot the bill for converting the station for coal firing — which would cost some \$200 million. The power output of the plant would be reduced by approximately 30% and there would be a significant increase in particulates discharged into the atmosphere of the metropolitan area. High-grade coal would have to be purchased from NSW or a high-grade coal mine developed in SA — another \$500 million or so to be found. Whatever the course taken, the result will be dramatic increases in the cost of electricity in SA and a reduction in the ability of this state's enterprises to compete with interstate enterprises. A downturn in economic activity and further unemployment may well follow.

In short, the Cooper Basin producers have embarked on a scheme to convert the common wealth of all South Australians into corporate incomes and then private wealth of shareholders, under the guise of 'resource development'. One can only wonder when this enormous confidence trick will be generally recognised as such and whether strategies will be developed to ensure that it is not repeated elsewhere.

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# WOLLONGONG IN CRISIS

Mark Cole & Mike Donaldson

**THE JOBS AND ENVIRONMENT COAL**

current crisis in Australian capitalism has had a devastating effect on the region of Wollongong on the south coast of New South Wales. Out of a regional workforce of 110,000, 10,000 people are eligible for the dole, and are further 10,000 are out of paid work but are ineligible for the dole, and are not included in the official unemployment statistics. More than one-quarter of the manufacturing establishments in the region closed down between 1971–2 and 1978–9. In the same period 3,000 workers lost their jobs in the non-steel manufacturing industry.

With so many people without jobs or underemployed there is widespread poverty: 14% of households survive on less than \$5,000 per year. In some areas such as Coalcliff and Clifton one household in four is in this situation. An editorial in the *Illawarra Mercury* recently noted, 'The unpalatable fact is that many families in Wollongong aren't getting enough to eat.' The Wollongong Smith Family (a local non-government relief agency) were approached by 16,000 people in 1981, representing a rise of 9% on 1980 figures.

The economic organisation of the Wollongong region is built around coal and steel production. Ownership of the industry is largely in the hands of Broken Hill Proprietary Limited (BHP).

Subsidiaries owned or controlled by the 'big Australian', such as Australian Iron & Steel (AI&S), John Lysaght, Commonwealth Steel, Australian Industrial Refractories, Tubemakers, and Blue Circle Cement, dominate the manufacturing sector in the region. In 1976 three-quarters of the male local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, and Kiama were employed in the steel industry. The most important plant in the region is the 20,500 workers at Port Kembla which the steelworks use coking coal mined by the largest coal producer in the region, AI&S Collieries, a subsidiary of BHP, Shell, British Petroleum, and Conzinc Riotinto Australia. The last three companies control the mining sector in the district. The last three companies derive their profits in the region solely from the production of coal for export.

**THE**

drive to export. One of the most significant ruling class responses to the current crisis of capitalism in Australia has been the shift in investment away from manufacturing into minerals and energy developed by the Fraser and Wran governments which export itself out of the present depression. Both these governments have particularly encouraged the increased production and export of coal. By 1977–8 coal and coke exports already accounted for 14% of Australia's most important single commodity exported that year. The Department of Trade and Resources has forecast that Australia's net energy exports will rise about sixfold in the next seven years with most of that increase going to Japan. Coking coal exports from the southern and south-western fields of New South

# WOLLONGONG

Wales are expected to reach 150-300% of their present volumes by 1990.

With a drive to export coal, British Petroleum (Australia) and Shell Oil have bought into the coalfields in the Wollongong region. Shell have become the major shareholders in Austen & Butta and in Bellambi Coal Company, two mining companies operating in the district. BP owns the giant Clutha Developments which operates all the Burragong Valley mines and has commenced feasibility studies on coal mines in Tahmoor, Tongarra, and Wedderburn. CRA now have substantial interests in the Wollongong region having gained 100% ownership of Kembla Coal & Coke as a result of the carve-up of Broken Hill South in 1980. Shell, BP, and CRA, all with head offices in London or The Hague, are now the chief exporters of coal from the region. BHP has also commenced exporting coal.

The massive increase in coal exports that is planned will mean that reserves of coal will be rapidly depleted. The present rate of increase of between 6% and 8% per year, if maintained, will mean that the mines on the coast will be exhausted in 27 to 34 years. The ability of companies to rip coal out of the ground depends on taxpayers' money to provide the infrastructure required such as roads and railways for haulage and port facilities. A key element in the planned developments for the region will be the construction of a new coal ship loader at Port Kembla and suitable transport to the port. In 1975-6, 4.2 million tonnes per annum (mta) were loaded at the port and by 1978-9 the old loaders' capacity of 6.2 mta had been reached. Stage 1 of the new coal loader will commence operating this year and will handle 14 mta, 5000 tonnes per hour.

It is planned that stage 2 of the coal loader will be operating by December 1985, allowing for a capacity of 24 mta. It is presently planned that stage 3 of the loader will have been introduced by 1996, making possible the export of 40 mta.

## EFFECTS

on workers. The coal companies argue that increased production will mean more jobs. In the rail electrification and upgrading programme, a maximum of 1000 jobs will be created. But these jobs will be only temporary. Permanent jobs created in the railways, at the coal loader and in the coal pits will number about 1700. This increase in permanent jobs will be more than offset by mine closures. Local Coal Board officers have indicated that four mines on the south coast, employing 1800 workers,

are estimated to have a life expectancy of ten years or less.

There are a number of advantages to workers in slowing down the rate of coal extraction. The greater the rate of extraction of coal and the greater the volume of coal mined, the more attractive it becomes for the coal companies to invest in labour-saving devices. Since the introduction of mechanised mining machines called 'continuous miners' in the 1950s, the proportion of miners employed in the industry has dropped and the proportion of tradespersons and tertiary qualified staff has increased. With increased production more longwall mining units are likely to be introduced. The greatest threat to employment will be the introduction of these new machines which allow for semi-automatic and fully automatic control of shearers and chocks. With this system, surface computers are able to control underground production by digesting information from the coal face relayed through micro-computers attached to television cameras and sensors. As well as making many underground jobs redundant the longwall mining system greatly increases the control the bosses have over what goes on underground.

Unemployment and technological change are important issues in Wollongong. Women bear the brunt of unemployment in the area and are forbidden by law to work underground. The Miners' Branch and the Women's Collective of the Communist Party of Australia on the south coast have been campaigning to some effect to have this law repealed. Of the population over 15 years of age, 75% have no qualifications. Any reduction in the jobs available to them is a matter of major concern. Between 1970 and 1980 total employment at AI&S rose by 6%. These new jobs were, however, all in professional or sub-professional categories. The number of jobs for general labourers actually decreased by 2%. With the introduction of depreciation allowances in the last budget BHP has been given the incentive by the Fraser government to further rationalise its national organisation, providing for the possible closure of small steel plants like Kwinana, the introduction of labour-saving capital investment and a further reduction in the number of jobs for unqualified workers.

Coking coal is essential to the steel industry and the rapid depletion of reserves threatens the long-term economic viability of the region and future prospects of employment for those presently living and working in Wollongong. Because BHP's major profits now come from oil and gas production and, increasingly, coal exports, BHP itself may not be

overly perturbed by a depletion of coking coal stocks in the region.

## JOB

safety. The rush to rip coal out has caused a dramatic increase in fatalities and injuries in the coal industry. Between 1970 and 1979 the number of lost-time accidents in the NSW coal-mining industry more than doubled, rising from 140 to 309 accidents per million hours worked. The number of lost-time accidents per million hours worked is higher now than it was in 1955. During 1978-9 there were approximately 10 000 accident claims in a workforce of about 16 000.

In the CRA Darke Forest and Coal-cliff coal pits, 1116 accidents were reported over a 30-week period in 1979-80. These pits employ about 1000 workers, giving an average of slightly more than one accident per worker over a period of 7½ months.

Toward the end of 1979, a disaster at Appin Colliery, owned by BHP, took the lives of fourteen miners. Dr Andrew Hopkins of the University of New South Wales, in a recently completed study, claimed that the disaster was directly attributable to the operation of the production bonus system. According to Hopkins the bonus system encourages workers to cut corners in order to maintain or increase production.

## EFFECTS ON

the environment. There are a number of environmental consequences for the Wollongong region as a result of the rapid increase in coal production. A report prepared by the New South Wales Department of Environment and Planning indicates that the Wran government may decide to permit coal mining inside and under National Parks in selective enclaves. Opposition to these plans has come from a wide range of groups and individuals which includes trade unionists, environmentalists, and parliamentarians such as south coast MHR Stewart West, the federal opposition spokesperson on the environment.

Environmental problems are posed by the disposal of large volumes of coal wash and mine water. AI&S is planning to turn the only open space in the suburb of Cringila into its next coal wash and slag disposal dump. The proposed site is behind the local primary school. Residents fear that the remaining open spaces in the district will be earmarked for future slag heaps. There

*Continued page 28*



is now an urgent need for proper planning, with the community interest as a first priority, to ensure satisfactory disposal of waste or alternatively to make use of the waste in electricity generation.

The Cringila coal wash dump will mean 640 truck journeys a day for three to five years through a working class residential area. These truck movements will join the 1200 daily return trips already made through the district by coal trucks carrying export coal to the coal loader.

The notorious Mt Ousley Road, the main linkage road which runs down the precipitous escarpment overlooking Wollongong, is referred to as 'death mountain' road in the local newspaper. Just over two years ago coal trucks were involved in accidents which claimed six lives in one week. The CRA collieries alone will put more than 600 coal trucks down the Mt Ousley Road when in full production.

## A REGIONAL

strategy. There is much to be gained from slowing down the rate of extraction of coal from the region. At stake is the conservation of jobs in the mining and steel industries, the safety of the work environment, and the halting of the acceleration of environmental decline in the region. Other crucial gains to the community could be derived from the higher real prices for coal which will be obtained with a slower rate of extraction as a result of the soaring price of oil and growth in the demand for coal. These gains to the community could be won if the national government were to super-tax the enormous profits of the mining companies and use those taxes to create useful jobs and to invest in new industries for the region. Such a scenario will not be possible with the present Fraser government in power. Nor could a national ALP government be expected to initiate such a programme unless put under a great deal of pressure from the workers and the wider community.

The people of Wollongong have not fared well under the ALP state government. In such strong ALP areas as Newcastle and Wollongong regionalist criticisms have remained unvoiced except by local non-ALP independent centre politicians. These critics do not come from or represent the working class and are described by many locals as being 'Liberal' politicians. Frank Arkell, the independent Mayor of Wollongong, who missed out on the state seat of Wollongong by just 51 votes, plays the regional game most skilfully. In his campaigning Arkell concentrates on

unemployment, coal transportation, and the deteriorating quality of life, blaming the crisis in Wollongong on the state bureaucrats in Sydney.

The left has now begun to develop a regional strategy in confronting the threats to employment, commerce, and the quality of life and the environment in the Wollongong region. The best example to date of a regionalist approach in action is the Port Kembla Task Force. In July 1980 the Wollongong Workers Research Centre completed a report for the Port Kembla branch of the Waterside Workers Federation on the bypassing of Port Kembla. General cargo tonnages to the port have been declining rapidly over the last decade, and with them the jobs of waterside workers. The report outlined this decline and in June 1980 was published by the WWF. A public meeting was called at the launching of the report and at the meeting an interim committee was established to set up a port task force committee. This action is important for two reasons; firstly, the regional nature of the appeal to reverse the degeneration of the port, and secondly, the class composition of the task force itself.

The labour movement has the numbers on the committee but despite this the petite bourgeoisie are well resented. The owners of the 170 manufacturing shops in the region which employ less than four people, together with the retailers, the owners of small stevedoring companies, and the assorted self-employed make up the middle class in Wollongong. Along with the working class, which is bearing the brunt of the recession this traditional petite bourgeoisie is also feeling the pinch. Noticeably absent from the committee are those who hold real economic power and whose decisions largely shape the future and nature of the district. BHP, the major user of the waterfront, is absent despite invitation, as are the other major users, the coal companies. Port Kembla Task Force, then, is a coalition of representatives of sections of the working class and of the petite bourgeoisie. Their main target is the state government and to a lesser extent the national government.

The task force has set about negotiating contracts for the port in non-steel and coal exports. Steel and coal comprise 70-80% of exports from the port but they represent bulk tonnages and their handling is highly mechanised. Other exports may provide greater employment opportunities for waterside workers. All the ports in New South Wales are controlled by the Maritime Services Board, but the task force is considering campaigning for the establishment of an independent port

authority for Port Kembla. The task force has just received a \$30 000 grant from the state government and has commissioned the Illawarra Regional Information Service to carry out a study on ways in which the port can be successfully upgraded and both tonnages and employment increased. It is hoped that the results of the study can be used to lobby the state government to inject much-needed funds into port improvements.

The political dangers of regionalism are very real. Progressive forces run the risk of co-option and class compromise, and there is always the risk that the well being of workers in one region will be promoted above that of workers in another. If the left is to succeed in breaking the domination of regionalist politics by centre politicians, by insisting that it, more than real estate speculators and shopkeepers, has the right to speak for the community, then the left's attitude to independent councillors, and the class forces they represent, will be a crucial factor. If a regionalist strategy based on class alliances is to be used successfully the left must ensure that it does not become the junior partner in such an alliance. A high degree of job militancy must be retained and the normal day-to-day struggles continued. As well, unions, progressive citizens' groups and left political parties must learn to deal with the regional issues in a politically creative way.

The signs are that this is beginning to happen. The development of the Port Kembla Task Force, the work of the South Coast branch of the Communist Party of Australia around coal production and transportation, and the emergence of community health action groups suggest that the left in Wollongong is coming to grips with the strategies and organisational requirements for an effective regional movement.

**Contacts:** Wollongong Workers' Research Centre, PO Box 84, Thirroul, NSW 2514. Tel: (042) 29 3611 or (042) 67 3810.

Illawarra Health Consumers' Association, c/- Barbara Quintrell, 45 Morrison Avenue, Wombarra, NSW 2512. Tel: (042) 67 3747 (home).

Port Kembla Task Force c/- Alderman Peter Morton, Wollongong City Council, Burelli Street, Wollongong, NSW 2500. Tel: (042) 29 9111.

**Further reading** *Coal...Our Region's Wealth, Whose Profit?* Communist Party of Australia, South Coast District, 1982. Available (free) from: CPA, 12 Station Street, Wollongong, NSW, 2500.

# Roxby Downs

By John Hallam

On 3 March 1982 an innocent-sounding bill was presented to the South Australian parliament. It was titled *An Act to ratify and approve a certain Indenture between the State of South Australia and others; to make specific provision for Local Government in relation to a part of the State subject to the Indenture; and for other purposes.* It continued 'This Act may be cited as the *Roxby Downs (Indenture Ratification) Act, 1982.*' This bill could be the excuse the South Australian government uses to hold an election on the Roxby Downs uranium project, about mid-August this year.

The Roxby Downs uranium project has had a troubled history. Discovered by Western Mining Corporation (WMC) in 1978, the large copper/gold/uranium/rare earth deposit was trumpeted by the Liberal Party as the solution to South Australia's economic woes. WMC has been more cautious about the project's potential. Copper grades in the deposit are actually quite low compared to WMC's own Benambra deposit in the Victorian alps, and uranium ore-grades are very low indeed. WMC and Roxby partner BP have however said repeatedly that they will not proceed with the project unless they are able to mine and sell the uranium. An illogical stance given the present, and probable future, uranium spot-price of about \$US23 per pound (\$US46 per kilogram) barely covers production costs.

The fall of the Labor state government removed formal opposition to the mining of uranium at Roxby. However, in order for the project to go ahead, an 'indenture bill' would have to be passed to define the relationship between the South Australian government and the joint venturers (WMC and BP) over basic infrastructure. The Liberals failed to gain control of both houses of parliament in the 1980 elections. The balance of power in the upper house is held by lone Australian Democrat, Lance Milne, whose party's opposition to uranium is, if anything, stronger than that of his ALP colleagues.\*

In order to defuse the issue the upper

\* Australian Democrat member of the lower house and most vocal critic of the Roxby Downs indenture bill in the lower house, Robin Millhouse announced his resignation in April to become a South Australian supreme court judge.

John Hallam researches the nuclear fuel cycle with Friends of the Earth Collingwood.

house held an inquiry conducted by the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Uranium Resources. Friends of the Earth gave extensive evidence to

the inquiry arguing that there would be no market for Roxby uranium.

After eighteen months deliberation, and under intense pressure from the Liberal government, the inquiry split straight down the middle, producing a 'majority' report by its government members (favouring development of the nuclear fuel cycle in South Australia, in the form of an enrichment plant, the development of the Honeymoon and Beverley in-situ leaching projects, and Roxby), and two minority reports opposing mining by the ALP and Democrat members.

It is clear from the terms of the indenture that the Roxby Downs project will not pull South Australia out of its economic slump. No royalties are envisaged from it until at least 1985-7. The royalty arrangements are unbelievably complicated. In contrast only one page of the indenture is devoted to the environment, most of it preventing the minister concerned from placing too onerous environmental safeguards on the project.

On 29 March 1982 the lower house established an all-parties Select Committee of Inquiry into the Indenture Bill. The committee was to have taken submissions and evidence from the public and reported back to parliament by 1 June.

Clause 3 of the indenture bill is the real election trigger. According to it, if the indenture has not been ratified by 30 June 1982 it will become null and void, leaving WMC and BP back where they started. It seems unlikely that the ALP and Democrats will allow the bill through the upper house. It is possible that they will send it back with substantial amendments, such as a clause forbidding the sale of uranium from Roxby. Environment groups such as FOE are presently lobbying to prevent the bill from being passed in any form.

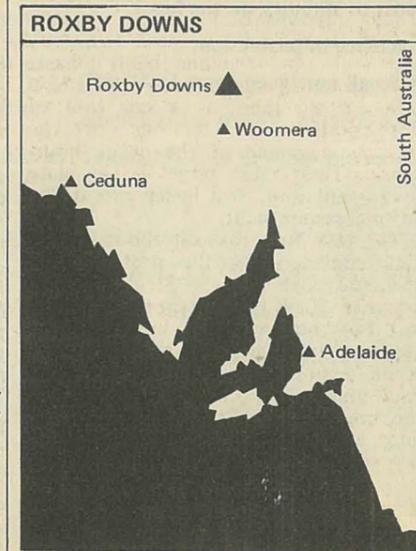
The South Australian government has threatened an election if the bill is not passed. With the 14-15 May occupation of Honeymoon the stakes in such an election are higher. If the Liberals were to lose, uranium mining in South Australia could be permanently halted.

**Action:** People in South Australia should contact their upper house representatives, and make known their opposition to the Roxby project as soon as possible.

**Contact:** Ally Fricker, FOE Port Pirie; John Hallam, FOE Collingwood (addresses see p 2); or CANE, 310 Angus Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000, Tel: (07) 223 6917.

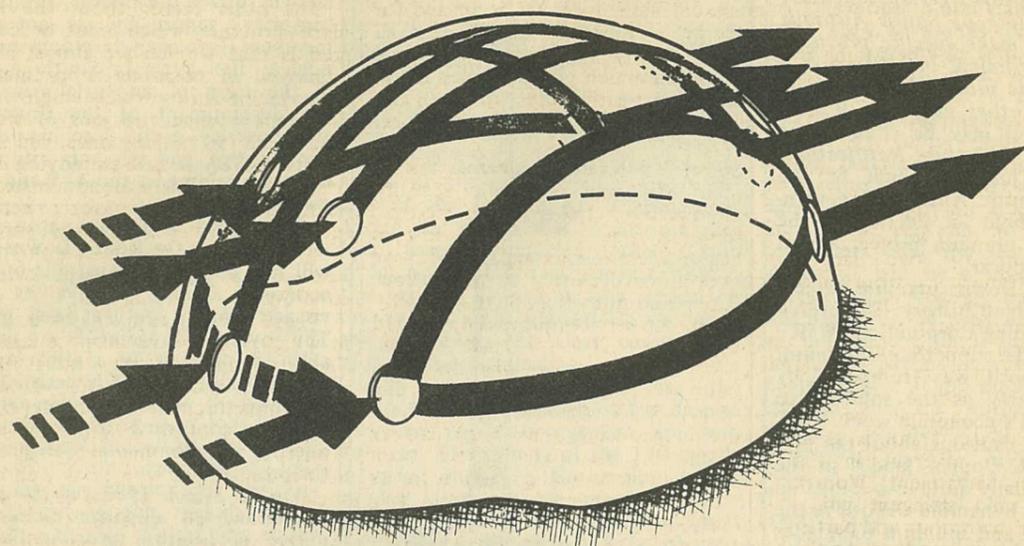


Diamond drilling rig, Roxby Downs during a visit by SA Select Committee on Uranium Resources.



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# Sexual harassment

By Lynn Beaton

Sexual harassment of working women is not a new phenomenon. It is widespread and carries severe and life-lasting implications for its victims. However, it has only recently become an issue of social concern and is now beginning to gain the attention of the labour movement.

But acceptance that there is a problem is only the first step. In order to protect women from sexual harassment at work, guidelines and structures must be developed and implemented which can effectively deal with it.

There are currently two largely unacknowledged frameworks from which this problem is viewed. One view sees the sexual harassment of working women as a moral outrage and as an isolated problem which can be solved largely by education and by challenging the moral or immoral conduct of certain individuals. There is great moral contradiction inherent in the nature of sexual harassment. Women are given strict and stringent guidelines about sexual behaviour and particularly about their own conduct. At the same time they are taught that authority is infallible and beneficent if it is suitably respected. Placed in a situation where that authority is breaking the sexual behavioural code and offering a woman no free choice, she is rendered powerless because all of her guidelines have implied choice.

But to regard sexual harassment merely as a moral violation isolated from other social and working conditions is to miss the real point. The second view sees sexual harassment both as created by the power relations

*Lynn Beaton works at the ACTU Working Women's Centre in Melbourne*

which exist between men and women and as a vehicle for the continuation of those power relations. There are two main contributing and interdependent factors which create the preconditions for sexual harassment to occur and for it to be a universal problem for all women. Firstly the nature of social organisation which places women in unequal power relationships with men and secondly the structure of the workforce itself.

Social expectations decree that a woman will gain economic security from marriage. In order to become married she must offer certain services to her prospective husband. All of these services are tied closely to the notions of caring and nurturing. Sexual activity is one of the services promised; it could be argued that it is the prime service, for its absence alone provides legal grounds for an annulment of the marriage. Since the advent of 'free' choice in choosing a marriage partner the centrality of sexuality has been highlighted, as sexual attraction forms one of the basic prerequisites to any man choosing a wife. A woman therefore largely relies on her sexual appeal to attract a marriage partner and to gain economic security.

To some extent these attitudes must be transposed to the workplace and when we examine its structure we find a very close parallel. In the workforce women tend to be confined to jobs in which their labour produces, socially, one of the services that their domestic labour produces for individuals. Women do these jobs because of their gender.

The sexual stratification of the workforce very closely reflects the sexual demarcation of domestic labour. Since

the duties of a wife include sexual activity it is hardly surprising that at some level women are expected to passively accept the sexual advances of their male associates at work.

The other factor about the workplace structure which must be considered is that women are almost always employed in positions subordinate to men. In industries which employ both men and women the jobs of women tend to be low-ranking ones, and in the almost entirely female employing industries there are often male administrators. Most women in the workforce therefore rely on the benevolence and goodwill of a man for continued employment, advancement and pleasant working conditions.

These factors create the environment in which sexual harassment is rampant. The inequality of pay rates further compounds the problem for it ensures that women remain largely dependent on men for their economic security. Whilst it is the inequality at work between men and women as well as the social acceptance of women's sexual passivity which creates the ground for the perpetration of sexual harassment, the sexual harassment itself acts to enforce the inequality. When a woman is faced with sexual harassment at work she feels afraid and vulnerable in the face of her harasser, guilty and ashamed in a society which suggests

**IT IS VITAL THAT TRADE UNIONS EXAMINE THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND DEVISE POLICY AND IMPLEMENT STRUCTURES WHICH WILL ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF THEIR MEMBERS.**



CANADIAN NURGE

that she must have invited the harassment, and inferior and helpless in a situation which allows her only to act defensively. When sexual harassment takes place at the workplace it evokes all these feelings and naturally such feelings adversely affect a woman's attitudes to her work.

Sexual harassment at work affects women on two levels. Firstly, it places a strain and tension on women from which men are free. It forces them to develop certain styles of behaviour especially to deal with it. This behaviour is usually seen critically by other workers and reinforces attitudes that women are not serious members of the workforce.

Secondly, sexual harassment communicates to a woman that she is seen merely as a sexual object and not taken seriously as a worker or accredited with the personal respect that male workers command from their workmates or supervisors. Thus, her confidence in her own value as a worker is undermined. This depletion in self-confidence makes it doubly difficult for women to fight for their rights as workers, for if they undervalue their own work they are less likely to demand increased pay rates, to apply for promotion, or to fight for improvements in their own work conditions.

When the question of sexual harassment is raised it is often laughed off as 'just a bit of fun' but that misses the point. Any sexual activity which is enjoyable to all parties concerned is obviously not harassment. It is to be expected that where people work closely together sexual relationships will develop between co-workers. However, sexual harassment is often shrugged off and deliberately confused with mutual sexual activity to disguise the fact that it exists at all. To prevent this form of denial from confusing the issue and undermining its importance to women's rights we require a clear and precise definition of what constitutes sexual harassment in the workforce.

The ACTU Working Women's Centre has provided the following definition to ensure that cases can be clearly identified:

Any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- (1) it is unsolicited, repeated and unwelcome, or
- (2) when submission to such conduct is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- (3) when submission to such conduct is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition for decisions which would affect promotion, salary or any other job condition, or
- (4) when such behaviour creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment for one or more employees.

With rising unemployment women are more and more vulnerable to sexual harassment at work. Employers are able to vet female staff to see if they are



**THE FIRST STEP IN A CAMPAIGN WOULD BE TO HAVE CLAUSES INCLUDED IN AWARDS BETWEEN UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT WHICH WOULD STATE CLEARLY THAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN THE WORKPLACE AND THAT PUNITIVE MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THE OFFENDER.**

likely to be sexually cooperative before appointing them to the job. As the job market becomes tighter women are often left little choice but to comply with requests.

In most cases, when women are faced with sexual harassment at work their only recourse is to leave the job, to report the incident to higher level management, or to lay criminal charges of assault.

If a woman chooses to leave her job she does so without any 'visible' reason, thus damaging her employment record and decreasing her chances of re-employment. Even if a woman tells her prospective employer of the reason for quitting her previous job she is more than likely to be considered in a bad light.

Since most women in the workforce are unskilled workers their harassers are often males who are more skilled or in a position of authority. Therefore, if a woman reports an incident to management she risks her job, for even if management believe her it is often easier for them to replace an unskilled female than a highly skilled or authority-holding male. In a case reported to the Working Women's Centre, top-level management had repeated complaints from young women about one of their supervisors. Eventually they agreed to take some action but the action which they took was to stop putting young women in the particular area affected. Hence job opportunities for women were decreased whilst the offender remained in his position. Management are usually male and therefore tend to view the situation with sympathy for the male. Even if they don't, they may find it embarrassing to raise the matter with a male and it is often much easier to dispense with the woman who is complaining.

The only other avenue open to women faced with sexual harassment is to lay criminal charges of assault. This recourse is available only when a crime has been committed and most harassment at work is not covered by a criminal definition of assault. High unemployment rates have meant that leaving a job is no longer a viable solution to minor incidents of sexual

harassment. Consequently many women faced daily by an offender try to put a smile onto an intolerable situation and are seen therefore to be encouraging it. If behaviour then ensues which is covered by criminal law she has little chance of winning her case.

However, once an assault takes place and is reported to the police, women are subjected to a whole new area of harassment as their case moves through the clumsy legal structures. This recourse will often lead to a verdict of not guilty, leaving the plaintiff feeling personally cheated and socially foolish. Some time ago, *The Age* reported a case in which the offender was acquitted because the magistrate 'was not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the man had formed the necessary intention to be convicted of the offences'. The man in question had returned drunk to his office after attending a party, '... forced Ms Bruce back against a desk, leant against her and attempted to kiss her neck.' The magistrate said, as he dismissed the charges of assault, 'to prove intent, the prosecution would have had to prove that Mr Ellis was aware of what he was doing and that he was aware that Ms Bruce did not consent.'

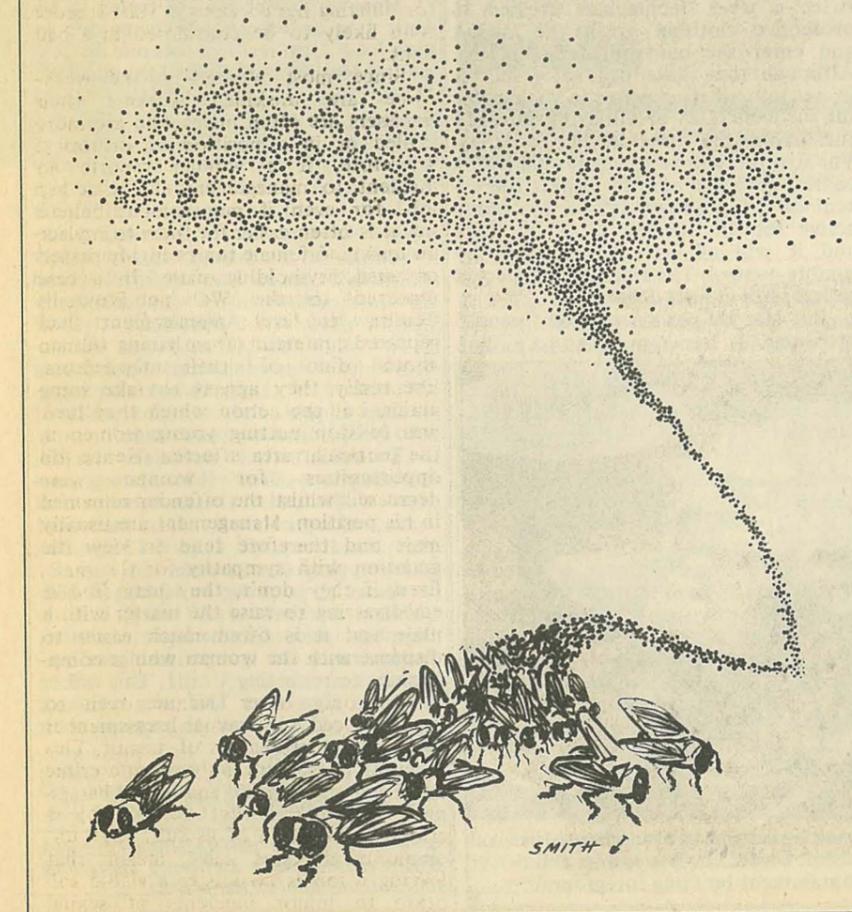
This example clearly shows just how biased and inadequate the current legal

structure is and what little protection it offers even from cases of harassment which fall into the 'assault' category.

Although the incidence of sexual harassment is an inherent part of the social relations of power between men and women, there is much that can be done to alleviate the problem and to increase women's awareness that it can be fought against. In so doing there will be a general raising of consciousness about the nature of women's social role, and the fight against sexual harassment itself will become an integral part of the broader struggle for women's equality.

In order to provide protection against sexual harassment in the workforce we need to campaign for structures to be established which will provide recourse outside the criminal law and which will include all cases. The first step in such a campaign would be to have clauses included in awards between unions and management which would state clearly that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace and that punitive measures will be taken against any offenders.

As common as flies... and if you open your eyes you'll see it. Legislate and exterminate.



Opposition to any formal protection of cases of sexual harassment is often based on a fear that women will use the protection unjustly to get themselves out of a 'sticky situation'. False burglaries are reported to recoup insurance, but that is never seen as a reason to have no legislation covering theft. This excuse is as baseless as its counterpart (that it is all harmless fun), and has no more validity.

Some unions have in fact introduced policy and guidelines for dealing with the problem, and its recognition as an industrial issue is becoming generally accepted as its insertion into the ACTU Working Women's Charter clearly demonstrates.

In Australia so far no legislation specifically covers the problem. It is imperative that legislation is introduced which clearly states that sexual harassment is sex discrimination and that guidelines are set up which hold the employer responsible and liable for any damages claimed.

It is only when employers are threatened with financial loss as a result of complaints that they will take any serious steps to avert the problem. In the meantime it is vital that trade unions examine the problem carefully and devise policy and implement structures which will ensure the protection of their members.

Contact: ACTU Working Women's Centre, 258 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000. Tel: (03) 654 1228

## Moving?

**SUBSCRIBERS**  
Write to Robyn Carter, Chain Reaction Room 14, Floor 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic 3000.

**FOE MEMBERS**  
Please write advising your local FOE group. See list on page 2.

**Tell us!**

# Chain Reaction COMING SOON

## CITIZEN ACCESS TO THE COURTS

Class actions, standing to sue in the public interest and the Law Reform Commission.



# Chain Reaction We were wrong

In the article *The Neglected Environment in Chain Reaction 27* it was stated that two youths suffered permanent brain damage after an accident in Melbourne in September 1981. In fact the youths died several days after the accident, from massive brain damage caused by exposure to the industrial solvent trichloroethylene.

At the inquest in February 1982 the coroner described the incident as 'alarming and disturbing'. He said there was 'a complete disregard for each of the specific safety regulations'. A Health Commission officer had earlier told the inquest of numerous breaches of the Labour and Industry regulations at the factory. Despite this evidence, and the scathing and lengthy criticism by the coroner, no charges have been laid against anyone over the deaths.

In a speech on industrial health and safety prior to the inquest, Mr Bob Hawke had called for a charge of manslaughter to be laid against the factory manager.

Although trichloroethylene baths similar to those in which the youths died are in common use throughout industry, there has been no attempt by government, employers, or unions to tighten controls on the use of the baths.

An Earth News article in *Chain Reaction 27* indicated there would be an ASOC Antarctic educational feature in this edition. The feature will be an 8 page supplement to *Chain Reaction 29*.

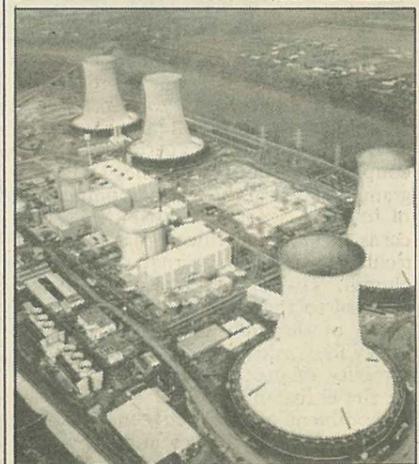
# TMI 3 years on

By Rob Robotham

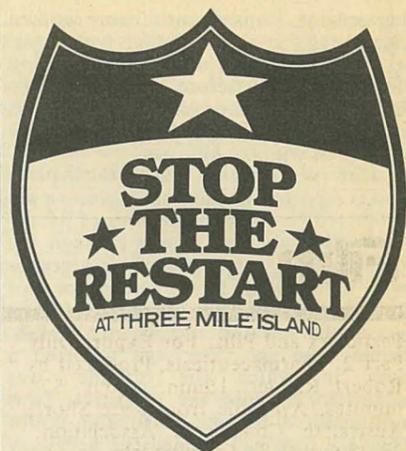
For the world's media the events at the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear reactor, on 28 March 1979, were a nine-day wonder. However for the residents of the Harrisburg area the accident is an ongoing nightmare.

Three years after the accident that crippled the reactor, the owners, Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed), are still trying to clean up the radioactive mess. About twice a week technicians dressed in protective clothing break the airlock and enter the contaminated building. Although they have had some success in decontaminating water in the reactor the difficult task of removing damaged fuel from the core is yet to come. The first job will be to insert a television camera into the core to inspect the extent of the problem. It's far too radioactive for any person to go in there and it will all have to be done by remote control. The clean-up is expected to last until at least 1986.

But Met Ed has even bigger financial problems. It has about \$A94.5 million



Looking northeast over Three Mile Island. Unit 2 cooling towers and containment building foreground.



left of the \$A315 million it received from its insurance policy. At least another \$A735 million is required to finish the task. The nuclear industry has offered some help. The federal government has also promised aid, although Congress might object. But whatever happens the taxpayer and consumer will continue to pay the ultimate costs as power rates and local taxes rise. Since the accident Met Ed's rates have increased 70%.

Meanwhile Met Ed are trying to get Unit 1 restarted, despite strong opposition from local residents. As one resident said of Met Ed's handling of the accident, 'They blew it. I would not believe anything they say now!' On 7 January 1982 a US Court of Appeals decided in a 2-1 decision that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission cannot permit the restart of Unit 1 until the psychological impact of the accident on the population surrounding the plant has been adequately assessed. In an 11 January 1982 special issue of *Inside NRC* published by McGraw-Hill, the Appeals Court decision was referred to as having the potential 'of not only significantly delaying the restart of (Unit 1) but also introducing a new and complex element into NRC licensing proceedings.'

To make matters worse for Met Ed, investigations show that almost one-third of the heat exchange tubes in Unit 1 are leaking or faulty. It is estimated that the tubes will take 6-12 months to be repaired or replaced.

As we go to press, on 18 May, a non-binding referendum is being held in Dauphin and Cumberland counties, Pennsylvania to gauge residents' reactions to restarting Unit 1. This will be the first time that TMI area residents have an official way to express their view on this issue.

Contact: PANE Inc. for more information about the psychological stress issue. PO Box 268, Middletown, PA 17057, USA.

Rob Robotham is the Radiation Protection Officer at Melbourne University and a long time anti-uranium/nuclear activist.

## Film

**Pesticides and Pills: For Export Only. Part 2: Pharmaceuticals.** Produced by Robert Richler, 16mm, colour, 57 minutes. Available from Kate Short, Australian Consumers Association, 28-30 Queen St, Chippendale, NSW 2008, Tel: (02) 698 9200.



SAHABAT ALAM

African worker spraying DDT to wipe out tse-tse fly.

This film is a fascinating documentation of the marketing techniques of multinationals in selling hazardous medicines. It clearly illustrates the ready availability of such drugs, across the counter, in Third World countries, and shows that safeguards are non-existent.

Clioquinol is one example. Sold in Australia as Entero-Vioform, for use as a treatment for diarrhoea and stomach disorders, it has very serious and dangerous effects. The drug was banned in Japan after it caused sub-acute myelo-optic neuropathy (Smon) or, more simply put, crippling and blindness. This drug is marketed in the Third World with no warnings or doctors' prescriptions, by the same company which had to pay compensation to the Japanese victims of Smon.

Doctors have to rely for drug information on standard prescribing guides which are published in the form of a directory in each country. The film compares listings for the same drugs from the guides of different countries. Where the USA

## REVIEWS

guide for a drug has warnings and lists dangerous effects the guide in, say, Brazil makes the same drug sound like a lolly.

A representative from Ciba-Geigy, the multinational which markets Clioquinol, and the head of an international professional organisation of pharmacists are interviewed. Their explanations of these deceitful methods are a wonder to behold.

The film is factual, interestingly presented, and compelling watching. A little background information connecting the apparently massive need for medicine in Third World countries, with the need for better housing, public health facilities, sanitation, and clean water would have been useful. Even if a code of conduct for multinationals can be established to prevent these marketing practices it would only be touching the surface of the problem.

Serena Zwang

## Books

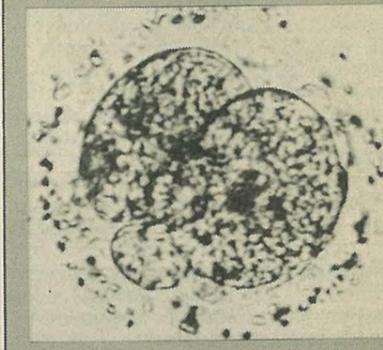
**Test-tube Babies — A guide to moral questions, present techniques and future possibilities** edited by William Walters and Peter Singer. Oxford University Press, 1982, 165 pages, \$7.95 (soft cover).

*Test-Tube Babies* is a frustrating book. It raises many important questions but presents a disappointingly narrow and inadequate discussion of the issues involved.

The book begins with a clear explanation of the technical and legal aspects of the 'test-tube baby', or in vitro fertilization (IVT) and embryo transfer (ET) techniques. It also, quite appropriately, relates the personal experiences of two couples in the Melbourne IVT programme. Most of the guide, a compilation of fourteen separate contributions, concerns itself with ethical questions, particularly those of concern to the christian church. Given the amount of space devoted to these questions — the moral status of the embryo, whether the use of IVT constitutes an attack on the integrity of procreative processes (*vis-a-vis* the christian view that a child is the embodiment of love between a husband and wife), and whether humans should seek to create life artificially (given the christian view that life is a gift bestowed by God) — the reader could be forgiven

# Test-Tube Babies

A guide to moral questions, present techniques and future possibilities



Edited by William Walters & Peter Singer

for thinking that these are the only issues of concern associated with IVT and ET.

Too little attention is paid to the question of whether we should be directing such substantial medical resources to the IVT programme. The editors acknowledge that 'there are powerful institutional barriers to an ideally rational ordering of medical expenditure' but this statement can hardly be regarded as an adequate justification for continuing to support the status quo.

A similarly pragmatic and, I would suggest, inadequate position is taken on the question of surrogate motherhood. IVT and ET now make it possible for a 'surrogate mother' to be hired to incubate a child which genetically is the offspring of another couple (who do the hiring). Alan Rassaby, the contributor of this chapter, argues that the 'social service' factor of surrogacy legitimates it, and that all society need do is carefully legislate to control the procedure, ensuring privacy, a minimum fee, etc. Whilst he recognises that some women could be coerced into the role of surrogate through poverty or unemployment, he states that some people may prefer this type of exploitation to poverty. The editors add that perhaps surrogacy would be more fulfilling than 'activities such as monotonous factory labour or even prostitution'. Will scientific 'progress' lead us to two classes of women, with one class paying the others to

## REVIEWS

incubate?

The treatment of the surrogate mother issue highlights a number of shortcomings in this 'guide to moral questions'. There is no attention paid to the feminist critique which voices opposition to the increasing degree to which control of reproductive processes is being taken over by a patriarchal medical profession. There is also no attempt to locate the development of IVT and ET within the context of scientific 'progress' and to analyse its development and possible future impacts in the way other critics have attempted to come to grips with the consequences of 'high' technology.

The spectre of another industrial revolution, the industrialization of birth, haunts us. If IVT techniques are used in conjunction with the now rapidly developing genetic engineering techniques, the most serious moral question we should be addressing is: Can our humanity survive?

Luisa Macmillan

**Pills that don't work** by Sidney M Wolfe, Christopher M Coley, and the Health Research Group. Public Citizens Health Research Group, 1981, 221 pages, \$USA6.95 (soft cover).

Billions of dollars are spent annually in the USA and other First World countries on extortionately expensive, ineffective, and sometimes toxic medicines marketed by prestigious pharmaceutical companies. This book is an authoritative directory of over 600 such preparations. Each is listed alphabetically under its brand name with details of its presentation and active ingredients. There follows a succinct discussion of the nature of the medicine, its intended action and the reasons why it is ineffective. Alternative presentations of identical drugs are noted in a separate cross-reference index.

The criteria for inclusion of a drug is simply that the pharmaceuticals in question have been rated as 'ineffective' by either the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences or by the Federal Drug Administration. Although the authors are responsible for the information provided under each entry the listing requires no judgement to be made by them which makes the book highly credible because of its complete objectivity.

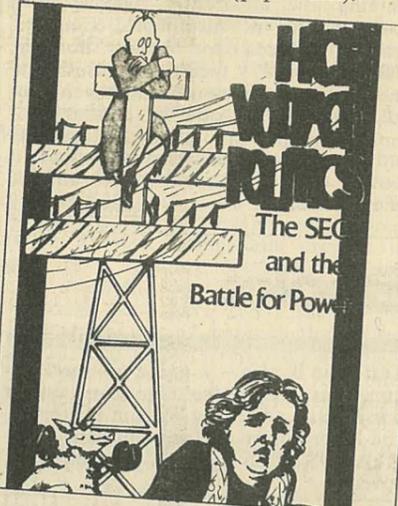
There is, in addition, an excellent introductory section on various groups of drugs used to treat common illness

such as colds and allergies, heart pain, circulatory disorders, digestive symptoms, and locally applied medicaments. The pertinent physiological disturbances and the pharmacological effects of therapeutic substances are briefly discussed. Advice is offered on simple home remedies and warnings given of more serious complications necessitating medical advice. A glossary of relevant technical terms brings the book within the ready comprehension of the non-professional reader.

The Health Research Group have made a very worthy contribution to consumer protection and the book deserves pride of place in every family medicine chest.

Brian Learoyd

**High Voltage Politics: the SEC and the battle for power** by Stephanie Bunbury and Jenny Macklin. Labor Resource Centre/Friends of the Earth, 1982, 48 pages, \$1.00 (paperback).



The State Electricity Commission is Victoria's largest public institution. It is also in a mess. *High Voltage Politics* is a snappy little comic book explaining why, and what we should do about it.

The political comic book is now a flourishing species. This is one of the best done in Australia - clean and clear generally, and a good size (just right for the back pocket of SEC overalls). It is not a story strip a la Marvel Comics, but handwritten text with witty drawings to lighten the reading. This style guarantees the booklet a wide readership - essential if the fledgling coalition between SEC workers, community groups, and environmentalists is to grow.

The election of the ALP state government committed to take serious action on the SECV provides an unusual opportunity for this coalition to start to redirect a major public body to the interest of all Victorians.

*High Voltage Politics* is an essential tool in this process. Read it.

Don Siemon

**Farmland or Wasteland - a time to choose** by R Neil Sampson. Rodale Press, Emmaus, Pennsylvania, 422 pages, \$USA16.95 (hard cover).

Saving soils, unlike saving forests or appealing furred-and-feathered creatures, doesn't lend itself to writing letters to the paper, wearing badges, or demonstrating in the streets. Yet history clearly demonstrates the risk of ignoring the relationships of people to the land and of the land to the people. The neglect of the land has often been the major factor in the fall of empires, as testified by the once fertile Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates valleys.

Australia, like the USA, has only about 5% of its population living on farms. Few votes are likely to be gained from spending money on erosion control, and the farmers can get far more economic return from other investments. The average age of farmers is around 50 and provided the land can see them out, why should they give a care! In any case, 'Australia has plenty of land and we can always knock over another bit of bush!'

In the first half of the book, Sampson clearly describes the magnitude and urgency of the USA problem. Urban, industrial, and mining pressures are removing both water and land from agriculture at an increasing rate. That which is left is being cropped more frequently and intensively than ever before. Erosion rates now exceed those during the 1930s when the Great Plains turned into the 'Great Dust Bowl'. But the impact of the problem is presently concealed, largely through increased fertilizer use and better crop varieties. Change the place names and some statistics and you would have an excellent description of the Australian situation.

The second half of the book is largely concerned with elucidating soil conservation techniques, a new land ethic, and the need for public and federal support for soil conservation programmes. Again, much is applicable to Australia.

The book is both interesting and easy to read, although the journalistic magazine style of writing may not appeal to everyone. It also has plenty of figures and tables to emphasize the major points.

Ian Sargeant

**Electromagnetism and Life** by Robert O Becker and Andrew A Marino. The State University of New York Press, Albany, NY USA, 1982, 211 pages, \$USA10.95 (soft cover).

This book deals with the history and possible medical consequences of the pollution of our environment by electromagnetic radiation. The book is necessarily a mixture of physics, biochemistry, and medicine, but it is

Continued on page 39

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# HAVE A SAY.

Chain Reaction may come out more often. The Friends of the Earth Australia meeting, in January this year, asked the editors to prepare a special report on changes in the format and frequency of the magazine. After much financial research and discussion among the CR collective a report and recommendation was put for increasing the frequency from four to six editions per year, in the existing format.

If you would like a say YES or NO to more frequent Chain Reactions please post this VOTE coupon to the Friends of the Earth group nearest you TODAY. (See address list on page 2 of this edition.)

The FOE groups are to vote on this matter by 30 June.

# VOTE

Chain Reaction should move to being published six times a year, rather than stay at four editions.

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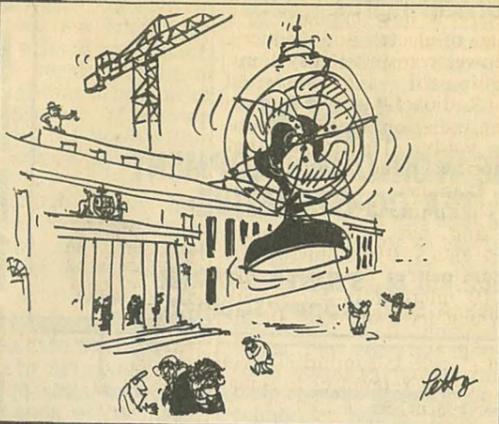
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written in a style which will be intelligible to the lay reader who possesses some knowledge of basic school physics.

The crux of the authors' argument is that our society is now exposed to a very wide range of electric and magnetic fields from power transmission systems, electrical equipment, and industrial operations. (Radioactivity and high energy-ionising radiation is not the subject of their study.) They argue that relevant authorities in the USA have not adequately examined the possible hazards of environmental electromagnetic fields and have set maximum limits far too high (10 000 microwatts per square centimetre) compared with limits of 1-10 microwatts per square centimetre which have been set in the USSR.

The authors' case is supported by a very large number of references to scientific studies (very often carried out in the USSR) and by a good deal of data from their own experiments.

How valid is the authors' concern? One message does stand out loud and clear when this book is read. There is at least a very strong need for extensive research in this area. When large numbers of the public are likely to be affected by a phenomenon, it behoves public health authorities to exercise particular vigilance when evidence of possible hazards starts to emerge.

Terry Quickenden

**Energy** by David Crossley, Barbara Eite and Lowana Cummin. **Water** by David Crossley, Barbara Eite and John van Loon. **Transport** by David Crossley, Barbara Eite and Irena Sibley. All Greenhouse Publications Pty Ltd, Collingwood, Victoria, 1981, 32 pages, \$3.95 (soft cover).

These are the first three in a series of six books dealing with problems Western lifestyles have created for the resources of the earth.

They pose questions for children, suggesting that the consequences of their actions now could cause problems in their future - the pollution of air and water, the depletion of resources like coal and oil. Colourfully illustrated and clearly presented, each book offers concrete ways in which the reader can help save the clean water, conserve energy and use transport rationally.

**Energy**, a fairly complicated concept for middle- and upper-primary age children, deals with the problems associated with coal, oil and gas. The reasons why they are becoming more expensive, creating tensions between the poor and rich, and the dangers to health and countryside caused by their use and misuse. It covers briefly the energy sources from nature - sunlight, wind and moving water - arguing that time is still needed to work out suitable ways of using these to replace traditional energy sources. The book provides a method to allow children to determine how much electricity each



## Transport



appliance uses: a very appealing activity. Many ways of saving energy in the home and day-to-day living are discussed, leaving the children with three further questions to answer themselves.

The other two books follow a similar format, each providing an experiment to be done by the reader and three questions dealing with changing lifestyles to be answered. I hope the last three in the series will continue the high standard as I am impressed by the authors' ability to tie so many conservationist ideas within each book. Well worth reading and thinking about - for both adults and children.

Sue Beale

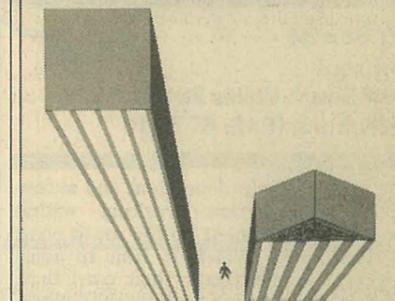
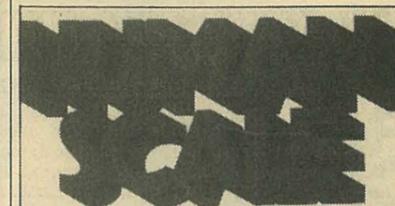
**Human Scale** by Kirkpatrick Sale. Secker & Warburg, London, 1980, 558 pages, £5.95 (soft cover).

Kirkpatrick Sale, like Alvin Toffler (*Future Shock*), apparently believes that an argument is convincing in proportion to the number of examples given to support it. In following this dictum he does us a disservice, for the issue he addresses desperately needs canvassing and he writes well, clearly, and engagingly.

*Small is Beautiful* succeeded in drawing attention to the inappropriateness of the large. Smallness has advantages ranging across technical versatility and accessibility to the minimising of social and personal dependencies generated by large scale. Small mechanisms are within the reach of people, many people, not just elites...which is why elites don't like them.

Sale expands the subtle work of Schumacher and Kohr (Schumacher's Austrian friend and predecessor) and presses it systematically into every corner of human undertaking. He begins by discussing the concept of size, emphasising appropriateness, ie the 'right' size for a particular purpose, rather than

# REVIEWS



## KIRKPATRICK SALE

simply preferring small. He shows how nature transforms structure as dimensions expand or how growth terminates altogether once appropriate dimensions are reached. But, in ranging over some twenty areas where problems of scale arise, he forgets that his audience is likely to be both intelligent and perceptive, and hence able to make the extensions themselves.

A good book, worth buying cooperatively or borrowing from a library.

Frank Fisher

Other books worth mention:

**Women and Work** by Kaye Hargraves. Penguin Books, Australia, 1982, 402 pages, \$6.95 (soft cover).

**Aboriginal Australians - Black responses to white dominance 1788 - 1980** by Richard Broome. George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982, 227 pages, \$8.95 (soft cover), \$16.95 (hard cover).

**The Spiral Path - A gay contribution to human survival** by David Fernbach. Gay Men's Press, London and Alyson Publications, Boston, 1981, 236 pages, £UK3.75 (soft cover).

**An Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Labour** by John Mathews. Victorian Fabian Society Pamphlet 36, \$1.00 (soft cover).

**Massacres to Mining - The colonisation of Aboriginal Australia** by Jan Roberts. Dove Communications, Blackburn, Victoria, 1981, 198 pages, \$12.95 (soft cover).

## ACTION GUIDE

### Wollongong Workers' Research Centre

PO Box 84  
Thirroul  
New South Wales 2515  
Telephone (042) 67 3810

The centre is an independent and autonomous organisation working within the labour movement on the south coast of New South Wales. It aims to assist workers to investigate their own firm, the locality in which they live and work, and the particular economic, political and social problems that working people face in the Illawarra region.

It sets out to assist trade unions, shop floor committees, and disadvantaged groups to develop programmes and strategies around which to mobilise in defence of the living standards, jobs, and rights of their members. It aims to assist activists within the labour movement to better understand the nature of the current crisis. They are then better able to formulate demands around which to organise.

More specifically, the Wollongong Workers' Research Centre (WRC) is most concerned to provide information and research skills for ongoing on-the-job campaigns and struggles. The WRC aims to involve officials, delegates and rank-and-file workers in the research process itself. It aims to assist job activists to take research results back to the shop floor in the form of pamphlets, booklets, slide and video showings, meetings, discussion groups, or any other means.

The centre works with organisations with similar aims. In particular it hopes to foster close working relations with the Newcastle Trade Union Research Centre, the Hunter Social Research Co-operative, the Sydney Trans-National Co-op, research departments of trade unions, workers' and women's health centres, and Aboriginal, migrant, and women's resource and research centres. While seeking close and cordial

relations with international, national, and state organisations with similar interests, the centre retains its autonomy.

The Workers' Research Centre seeks affiliation from trade unions and other organisations, particularly on the south coast. Only organisations which support the aims of the WRC are able to affiliate, and then subject to the approval of the WRC committee. Branches of political parties are welcome to affiliate, although research cannot be undertaken for them. Trade unions and other organisations wishing to involve the WRC in a project are normally expected to affiliate to the organisation. Where appropriate, studies and investigations undertaken by the Wollongong WRC are made available to the community. The WRC attempts to use local mass media. The WRC committee reserves the right to decline requests for assistance. Affiliated organisations and individual subscribers receive all publications and notices.

Power in the WRC resides with the general meeting of subscribers and representatives from affiliated organisations and unions. General meetings are held at the end of each report/investigation or as the committee sees fit. Annual general meetings are held at the beginning of each year. At these, officers and committee are elected. Only subscribers and representatives from affiliated unions/organisations may vote. An affiliated organisation is entitled to send three representatives to the general meetings. Only those present may vote: one person, one vote.

The committee of the WRC includes the president, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary, and seven others. It retains the power to co-opt. Committee members are subscribers or representatives from affiliated organisations.

The centre is financed through affiliation, individual subscriptions, and donation. The annual affiliation fee for trade unions is \$25.00 minimum; for other organisations it is \$10.00 minimum. Subscriptions for wage earners are \$10.00 minimum, and for pensioners, unemployed, students, housewives \$5.00 minimum.

Costs incurred in the course of research and intervention projects are met, where appropriate, by the organisations concerned.

Reports published by the centre since 1979 include *The Hospital Corporation of Australia*, *The Proposed Port Kembla Loader and the Transportation of Coal on the South Coast*, *The Boomtown Cuts: Local Government in Wollongong Is There a Crisis in the Steel Industry?* and *Taking on BHP: A History of the Transfield Dispute*.

For further information, enquiries should be addressed to: The Secretary, Wollongong Workers' Research Centre.



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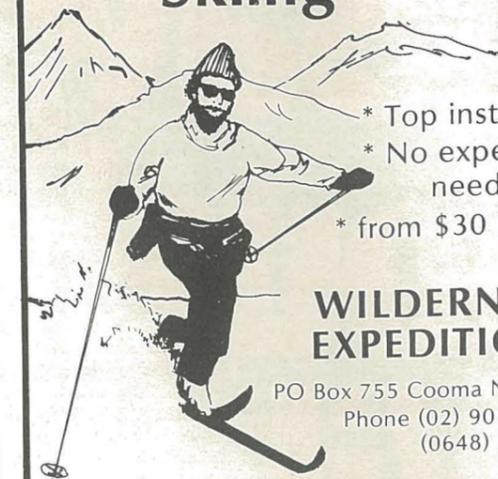
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