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**MARXIST SUMMER SCHOOL & FESTIVAL**

January 12-20, 1985, Merewether Building, Sydney University

**Look who's speaking at the Summer School!**

- Humphrey McQueen, Peter Mason, Wendy Bacon, Bob Pullin, Andrew Rechase, Bernard Smith, Alex Callinicos, Sue Willis, Joanne Martin, Jack Mundey, Laurie Carmichael, Stephen Sewell, Roger Millis, O'Shanter, Robin Osborne, Denis Kevans, John Meredith, and many more...

**Major themes:** Which Way the Left? And The Resurgent Right, plus: feminism today, overseas struggles, The Accord, peace and disarmament, introduction to marxism, and much more... and a festival! Free entertainment each day, film festival...
LETTERS

Franklin battle

What is a review? Is it a discussion and criticism of a work or own merits or a list of complaints about a work not being conceived or approached the way the reviewer would have liked? Should Indians Jones provide a document on the archaeological significance of the British nuclear testing at Maralinga and Ernabella in South Australia. The Alice Springs Aboriginal Support Group (ASASG) is compiling an index of the available material in conjunction with the Pitjantjatjaras Council. Material available upon request includes:

- press releases from Pitjantjatjaras Council calling for an inquiry into the testing dating back to June 1980;
- a memorandum of agreement between Britain and Australia regarding atomic testing;
- an index of press clippings dating back to 1950;
- a transcript of a speech by Yarn Lister at a Maralinga information night organised by Alice Springs Peace Group on 15 October, 1984. The speech deals with his recollections of the black cloud at Woomera and the role of the politician in the campaign for a full inquiry in the UK. The speech is also available on tape from the National Program Service;
- a chronology of tests and lead-up to the Royal Commission as prepared by Pitjantjatjaras Council;
- a report on the press statements by the Australian government following the lead-up to the inquiry;
- the poem 'The Black Monster', a leader who was 'Never Never' on the northern beach station (next to Woomera) when the Tuniton One bomb exploded on October 1953.

Contact: To obtain copies (enclose a cheque or their equivalent) contact Alice Springs Peace Group, PO Box 2061, Alice Springs, NT, 5750. The address is also available on tape from the National Program Service.

The events were still fresh (in fact still happening) when both these books were published and it cannot be said that one has been valued in the other. The value of the books is in their presentation of what is more or less a collage of images and recollections to evoke the spirit of the campaign. Their attempt to provide an even-handed perspective should not be too difficult.

Although Battle for the Franklin is dangerously selective in appealing to the elite of the campaign, it is a reasonable presentation of the variety of people from a variety of disciplines involved. That activists from the "remote" sectors of the movement (ACP, AMU) and the opposition (Fraser, Gray) have their say in a calmer forum than the daily press is also valuable.

I'd like to take issue on the apparent section of the book which Linda and John find at fault. Here was their chance for analysis. The reason for the dominant number of males interviewed is a direct result of the fields in which people operate. The legal profession, public, a significant part of the academic world and much of the environment movement remain male dominated. The Wilderness Society itself, at a decision-making level being directed by men, may have their say in a calmer forum than the daily press is also valuable.

Roger Green's new book Battle for the Franklin and its review in Chain Reaction #3 miss one very important point. The campaign to save the Franklin River culminating in the blockade was the largest non-violent direct action in Australia's history. It was not a military campaign and therefore not a war.

Roger Green's book is based on a number of false but deeply held viewpoints. The first is that power as understood in the Hydro Electric Commission (HEC) is monolithic and must be confronted head on. The perceived monolithic power just evaporated when people who hold the genuine power (electoral in this case) withdraw their support.

The second idea is that the monolithic power must be engaged in battle which, from the numbers of activists judging the HEC appeared to win. It suited the Tasmanian government and press to see the blockade as war. This is always an excuse for non- participation in any way of resolving the conflict - violently.

In the blockade, leaders were firm in their resolve for non-violent resolution of the conflict. Eventually, through a combination of accommodation, an agreement among Tasmania and federal government) and the HEC, the blockade was called off.

We won! Because it was a peaceful non-violent campaign.

I don't believe lasting social change can be achieved any other way.

Geoff Wilson
Chrysalis non-violence collective
Sydney

BATTLE FOR THE FRANKLIN

Roger Green

You are invited to write letters to Chain Reaction with your comments on the magazine or on other issues of interest. Readers should be kept within 300 words so that other contributors may be published. Longer letters may be published. Write today to Chain Reaction, Room 14, Flinders 4, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Vic. 3000, Australia.

More unroyal treatment

Negotiations with the Australian government for funds for research into Aboriginal evidence to be presented before the McClelland Royal Commission have been continuing for some time. (see Chain Reaction 39, Earth News)

Unfortunately, it appears that the government has abandoned its commitment as outlined in the terms of reference of the Royal Commission to investigate the effects of the British atomic tests on Aboriginal people. Four months have passed since Resources and Energy Minister, Senator Walsh, announced the Royal Commission, but none of the three Aboriginal Legal Services involved have yet received any government assistance in support of their evidence.

Although $80,000 has been promised it has not yet been cleared. Regardless, Senator Walsh has blocked all funding to the Pilbara and Kimberley areas (affected by the Monte Bello tests) and the grounds that there is no prime facie case exists to justify the research. This is in spite of the fact that the largest British atomic bomb (60 kilotons) which is believed to have been exploded in the wake of the Hiroshima bomb) was dropped on Monte Bello in June 1956, and the fallout spread across the entire top third of Australia. Dangerously high radiation levels were reported as far away as Townsville.

The Minister's decision was also contrary to the advice of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clyde Holding, who gave the submission for funding to his full support.

As a result of Senator Walsh's intervention, the Aboriginal Legal Services are now in a dire situation where the administrative workload of preparing their case is draining already over-stretched resources. Meanwhile, deadlines for Aboriginal evidence (scheduled for hearing in March) is now due towards the end of May. The government has not been prepared to receive the submission and is unlikely to be received.

In answer to protests, Senator Walsh's office will only say that the Minister "is not under consideration". The only money that has been received is by way of donations. These have come from peace and anti-nuclear groups, the women's movement, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

Multi-cultural power must be engaged in any way of resolving the conflict - violently.

Therefore, the blockade was called off.

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A conference in Denmark

The international meeting on the status of the antinuclear movement was held in Kolding, Denmark in early September. The conference was attended by more than 80 activists from 17 countries, mostly European. There were ab

A park on a limb

The decision by the Victorian state government to allow logging to continue in Compartment 3 on the Errinundra plateau in East Gippsland has been met with a wave of criticism from environmentalists. The government has repeatedly pledged that areas of Victoria containing the best example of ancient temperate rainforest will be placed in Victoria's main conservation group. Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific groups have been established in a number of European countries. These groups have been formed in response to the Norwegian government's decision to give the government, they are to investig

Compartment 3, Errinundra Plateau

The State Government and the Victorian Environment Protection Authority have been investigating the future land use in Gippsland. This decision comes after the Timber Industry Prevention Commission has recommended that the area should be given national park status. The government's decision has been met with a wave of criticism from environmentalists. The Timber Industry Prevention Commission has recommended that the area should be given national park status.

Antarctic update

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National meeting

A farm house at Busselton, 3 hours drive south of Perth, has been booked from 18 January to 25 January for the FOE Na- tional Meeting. The property is owned by two FOE members, Ross and Dee White, and is close to both beach and forest. It is hoped that in the next few weeks a full hall will be conducted on a proposal for transport assistance. In the meantime it is suggested that groups consult with each other on the possibility of hiring a mini-bus or other transport.

In order to assist in the organisation of the meeting, FOE Perth is conducting a national phone around. It is requested that details of contact person and the best time to phone be sent to Lorraine Grayson, as soon as possible.

Contact: Lorraine Grayson, Na- tional Liaison Officer. Friends of the Earth, National Office, Friends of the Earth, 794 Hay Street, Perth, 6000. Tel: 9332 2290.

What is APHEDA?

APHEDA's 'skills for work' packages include:
- sponsoring Indonesian and Lebanese nurses to gain hospi- tal and community health experience in Australia.
- health worker teacher training in Fiji.

APHEDA's main objectives, in part, are to encourage the Australian community, through the Australian trade union movement, in assisting people in developing countries and people in refugee situations throughout the world in becoming self-sufficient in a number of areas through programmes.

Palestinian nurses at a civic event

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Timber industry termites

Downey Creek, 25km west of Cairns in northern Queens- land, is about to be savaged by termites. The Downey Creek property is owned by two FOE members, Ross and Dee White, and is close to both beach and forest. It is hoped that in the next few weeks a full hall will be conducted on a proposal for transport assistance. In the meantime it is suggested that groups consult with each other on the possibility of hiring a mini-bus or other transport.

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**BACKSTAGE**

The Art of the Wide Wing

Backstage of the last issue of Chain Reaction expressed a marginal gloom about finance, this has lifted somewhat in the last couple of months. The Sydney collective received a grant under the Community Employment Scheme in New South Wales which pays the wages of two workers for nine months. We have opened a Sydney office at Gile Fraser and the new coordinators are Dale Kiln and Rosemary Nichols. The new office is already a hub of activity and visitors and volunteers are assured of a welcome. The Melbourne collective will continue to be the main coordinators in the publishing of the magazine with part-time workers and volunteers. With all the effort of organizing Chain Reaction as an incorporated co-operative over the, the Melbourne collective will have more time to charm new volunteers with the promise of lots of hard work. Meanwhile, the Sydney collective will be taking on an increasing role in the production of the magazine and the long established tradition of providing the opportunity for volunteers to learn a wide variety of new skills, and for those with skills the opportunity to use them and share them. Richard Shelton, who for many years had a lot to do with the quality of presentation of the magazine, came out of retirement for a couple of weeks in November to pass on his skills in design and layout. A volunteer team of interested people has already begun to form so please give us a call if you would like to help.

You have noticed the hard work that has gone into the Earth News in these last two issues. This has been the inspiration of two new collective members, Sue Armstrong and Tony Ainsley. We invite readers to make this an encouragement. The most important communication and information section by sending items of interest or copies of your newsletter, and early notice of conferences and seminars to Tony in Sydney.

Another Sydney initiative, shared with the ACDI of Sydney, Friends of the Earth has been several successful environmental politics and philosophy discussion groups. These have been held fortnightly at the Sydney office address and have been planned to recommence in February 1985. The discussion groups have been very interesting in continuing and extending debates that concern activists from a wide range of groups and backgrounds and which have been reflected in articles and the letter column of Chain Reaction to a large degree. Two faithful contributors to our magazine, Val Plumwood and Ariel Sellah, have acted as facilitators in the sessions so far and we would like to thank them. These groups are open to all and the subjects for discussion are suggested by the group.

Producing a magazine like Chain Reaction takes a lot of time, effort and of course money. A lot of the effort is fun and we try to make it so but always there are the quiet and careful toilers in the night. If you feel your contribution is small and unappreciated, it's not. The lift a letter of praise and encouragement, and we do get them sometimes, keeps us going for days. We feel we make a valuable contribution to the initiatives for change that are reflected in the content of the magazine.

Those we criticise have, at times accused us of a degree of fiction. Perhaps we should test out this hypothesis with an application for a grant to the Literature Board. We suspect we would be unsuccessful. With this source of assistance to small magazines unavailable to us we depend even more on the support of our readers and contributors. So we would like to take the opportunity to thank past friends and hope we meet or hear from many more of you in the coming year.

Rosemary Nichols
We've got less out of petrol and coal than we probably should for our life today. We're working hard for a fairer distribution of the world's food and an end to nuclear madness, and we've started a recycling campaign. Friends of the Earth is a radical activist group - and that means we don't avoid controversy. We are raising issues today to make a better world tomorrow. We need your support now to continue our work. Join us.

**Friends of the Earth**

**MEMBERSHIP**

Dear Friends of the Earth

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

Name .................................................................

Address ..............................................................

Telephone ............................................................

Membership fees: ACT $20; NSW $20 ($13 concession); NT $10, Qld $10 ($10); SA $10 ($5); Tas $10; Vic $24 ($18); WA ($10)

Chain Reaction is sent free to all members of some Friends of the Earth groups. Some groups also send members newsletters and provide discounts at their bookshops. Check with your local group for details. Make cheques payable to Friends of the Earth and post to the group nearest you. Donations are very welcome.

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**Taking Roxby to town**

Members of the Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Australia (CNFA) held an Australia-wide day of action on 31 October 1984. Opposition to Roxby Downs uranium mine - British Petroleum (BP) and Western Mining Corporation (WMC). Each group delivered some radioactive material collected from the Roxby tailings dam (evaporation pond) during the blockade, so giving management the task of disposing of the mine's by-products personally.

According to the Draft Environmental Impact statement for the mine, the tailings liquid contains significant amounts of toxic substances such as arsenic, chromium, cadmium, mercury, radioactive isotopes. The liquid is very acidic, with a pH of 1.5, about one part battery acid to seventy parts water. BP and WMC persist with the mining of uranium but take no responsibility for the disposal of uranium mining waste personally. Chain Reaction 11

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**Thoughtful police free Melbourne demorstrators from Bondage, 1984 style**

In Sydney, two people managed to get on to the roof of BP house, dropped a banner over the side which read 'BP - the Quiet Deceiver'. They delivered and left tailings. Six were arrested in the office, others left the street outside.

In Melbourne nine people entered WMC's office in Cluny Street posing as student teachers doing an assignment. Seven chained themselves to the office doors and effectively frustrated BP's operations.

---

**Contact:** South Australia: Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Australia, 31 Morphett St, Adelaide 5000 Tel:(08) 3162 Victoria: Anti-Uranium Coalition c/- Friends of the Earth, 366 Smith St, Collingwood, Vic 3066. Tel:(03) 419 8700
By Ivan B Grossmith

For three months the circuits never stopped. Four hour watches, eight hours off. Headphones in place, reading alongside the man you were relieving, before he took his fingers from the typewriter keys. You sliding into it, fingers on the keys of the machine, already working, automatically.

'Synops', five-figure groups of high speed morse broadcast from Coonawarra, Bells broadcast, reputed to be the fastest on Earth. Figures, never ending, never repeated, always figures. They represented, when decoded, a singularly accurate weather forecast, and they had to be accurate.

The ship — HMAS Campania. Its location — roughly 50 miles off the north-west Australian coast. Its purpose, our purpose — the detonation of Britain's first nuclear device.

At about midnight, the hops ceased. Headphones still in place. Fingers ready over typewriter keys. Silence. The odd crackle of static. Nothing. The date — just turned into 3rd October 1952. Calm sea, brilliant starlit Australian night, warm, muggy. Sweating, trickles from the forehead, rivulets down the naked back, running from the armpits. Still silence. 0400, relieved. Nothing to turn over, tension in the air. Ship as still as a rock, no noise at all.

To the north lay another ship, a small ship, a frigate. Four anchors, two from each bow, two from each stern. Black and white stripes covered the entire port side. HMAS Plym. Campania rode silently at anchor, bows towards Plym's port side, just under ten miles distant.

0800. Campania's crew about their business, noise and bustle, breakfast. Tension strong on the mess decks. At about 0830 the tannoy system: 'All hands on the flight deck.' Every thirty seconds, the reminder: 'Time 0900. Signals in front of him. One meant failure, the other success. 0845. 0900. About two or three hundred men on Campania's flight deck. Admiral Torelesse on the bridge. Dr William Penney in a forward gun turret. Long range binoculars on a stand, for his benefit. Flight deck bows littered with dozens of automatic cameras, all homed in on the black and white stripes on Plym's port side.

Time 0920 and 30 seconds. The tannoy: 'The nuclear device will be detonated in eight minutes from now.' Every thirty seconds, the reminder: 'Eight minutes. Seven minutes. Six minutes. Five minutes. Four minutes. Three minutes. Two minutes. Minute. One minute. Thirty seconds. Twenty seconds. Ten seconds. Nine seconds, eight seconds, seven seconds.'

Two to three hundred men — officers, scientists, ratings — all turned their backs towards Plym. The cameras whirred. Other than that, total silence. 'Thirty seconds now.' Twenty-five seconds, twenty-four, twenty-three . . . three, two, one, now.'

A soaring flash. The bright Australian blazed out. Eyes closed, redness getting through. Silence. 'You may turn round now.' The mushroom, it stem, it base, seemed carved out of rock. Colours, black and red predominant. Water and muck pouring out of the mushroom head. The horizontal spread of the base rapidly expanding outwards. The vertical hard seemed to move, but it did. Through the atmosphere, into the troposphere. Upwards, always upwards.

About 45 to 50 seconds later, sweeping across the water, the blast. Water churned up. Could see it sweeping in towards us. The crushing sensation. The two loud booms. It passed. The cloud continued to rise.

Below in the radio room, six feet two inches of Petty Officer Parncutt crouched over his morse key. 'Success.' So quick was his transmission and so failure, the other success. The two loud booms. It passed. The cloud continued to rise.

Ten minutes later

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Ten minutes later
In October 1984 peace activists in Australia and New Zealand began a series of protests at US Signals Intelligence (SIGNIT) communications installations. These included a two-week peace camp in Melbourne's suburbs, a women's action in New Zealand, a vigil in Queensland, 'Observe the Base' in Perth, and a 'mystery tour' in Darwin. The purpose of these demonstrations was to point out the role of these spy bases in US global military strategy.

The USA has a network of approximately 2000 SIGNIT facilities scattered around the NATO countries and the Asia-Pacific region. They are operated by the super secret National Security Agency (NSA) with the cooperation of the host countries. An integral part of the NSA's monitoring of military operations on the world's seas and its ability to monitor the locations and status of warships and submarines, is the SIGNIT program known as the Ocean Surveillance Intelligence System (OSS). By picking up the radio emissions of Soviet vessels via sophisticated strategically spaced antenna arrays, the SIGNIT installations which are part of the OSS network snoop on Soviet vessels. There are SIGNIT bases in Australia at Pearce Air Force Base in Western Australia, at Carabah near Tweedsmuir in Queensland, at Shoal Bay in Darwin, and at Watsonia Barracks in Melbourne. With other SIGNIT installations at Tangsimu in New Zealand, in Japan and Hawaii, they make up the Pacific OSS network, an increasingly important group of stations given the changing focus of US global ambitions.

While the US military buildup is mainly focused in Asia, with Korea becoming a highly militarised centre for Cold War conflict, and in the Philippines, where the strength of the anti-Marcos, anti-US movement puts both US bases and economic investments at risk, the Pacific is also considered an important region. The USA would see any independent stance coming from countries in the Pacific, for example Vanuatu or New Zealand, as a weakening of its security; as this may potentially indicate a move to the Soviet bloc, however unrealistic and unlikely this seems.

The OSI network is specifically signed to meet the needs of US nuclear submarine warfare against the Soviet Union, and to force off the region from potential Soviet interests in the Pacific area. US allies like Australia and New Zealand are then implicated in any changes in US military policy including their attempts to destabilise the balance of nuclear power, with the deployment of first-strike nuclear weapons and the development of Star Wars technology, and the increasing presence of US forces in conventional warfare around the globe.

Any change in Australia's relation to the USA would be of critical importance. William Bodde Jnr (US diplomat and former ambassador to Fiji and Tonga) has said clearly that:

"The growing anti-war sentiment in the south Pacific poses the biggest potential disruption to US relations in the region. .I am convinced that the US government must do everything possible to counter this movement."

The demonstrations against the OSI network system, then, for all these shortcomings in size and media coverage can be seen as an important part of the movement to redefine the Pacific Asia region as a nuclear and politically independent region.

**Watsonia**

**By Watsonia peace campers**

Project Sparrow, so innocuously named, is the radar dish in the Watsonia Army Barracks, right in the heart of Melbourne's north-east suburbs. The dish, twenty metres in diameter, is the terminal point for a network known as ONS — Ocean Surveillance Intelligence System operated by the US National Security Agency, with the cooperation of the Australian intelligence gathering agency, the Defence Signals Directorate.

On 21 October 1984 the Watsonia Organising Collective (initiated by People for Nuclear Disarmament) established a peace camp in the Elder Street Reserve in Watsonia. Combining with United Nations Disarmament Week, the protest aimed to inform the public of the uses and implications of the US base and eventually, through public pressure, have it removed. There were about 150 campers at the peace camp on the weekends, and about twenty on weekdays, although this sometimes dropped to as few as eight during the weekdays.

An Ecumenical Church Service was held on the first Sunday by Pax Christi. They distributed blue ribbons to the congregation of about one hundred, asking everyone to write on their ribbons the names of those they would like to preserve from nuclear annihilation. The crowd then took a short walk to Project Sparrow, and tied the ribbons onto the fence. The action was an attempt to remind people of the personal tragedy a nuclear war would involve, something the military-technological language of batteries and defenders of nuclear arms tend to obscure. By next morning all the ribbons had been removed.

On the same day the peace campers staged a 'die-in' at the main gate of the barracks, simulating the results of an atomic bomb attack. Stretcher-bearers carried away the 'bodies', followed by communal singing in a circle around the gate. Television coverage of this was quite good. Back at the camp, people made aluminium foil kites to fly in the wind and interfere with Sparrow's transmissions.

Several of the Peace Camp women travelled to the city on 25 October International Women's Peace Day with banners and a large colourful web into which they invited women passing by to attach flowers.

Young People for Nuclear Disarmament (YPND), held an imaginative protest entitled 'Books Not Bombs'. They marched from the Watsonia railway station to the barracks front gate, forming a human chain across Greensborough Road. A 'cheque' for six million dollars was symbolically passed from the barracks to Macleod Primary School, opposite. They were stressing that resources should be used for peaceful pursuits like education, rather than for war. Then they lay down a pile of books across the barracks entrance. The authorities, in their wisdom, just redirected the army traffic through alternative gates. Peter Garrett spoke to the group earlier at the peace camp, and with his singing, lively banners and chanting, the YPND attracted good media coverage.

The Sunday Rally on 28 October was perhaps the zenith of public participation. Over a thousand people gathered on the Elder Street Reserve, wandering around the dozens of colourful tents of the campers. Some people panned, listened to music and the speeches of local politicians and people from the peace movement. Holding banners against the wind, they marched a short distance to Project Sparrow. One thousand black helium balloons, each with an aluminium foil tail, were released in front of the radar dish to momentarily disturb transmission. Music, provided by Children's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was heartwarmingly received. People then drifted back to the peace camp to talk with its residents.

There had been a lot of letterboxing to acquaint local residents with the reasons for the peace camp. A well attended public meeting was held prior to the camp for about one hundred and fifty locals. The letterboxing continued during the camp and local shopping centres were leafleted as well.

A few individual soldiers, ranging from the critical to the sympathetic, came privately to the camp to talk about the dish. A class of students from a local high school visited and a student from Loyola College came to invite a peace camp speaker to address his class.

There was one group of local teenage boys who became frequent visitors. One confided in another local visitor. 'The dish shouldn't be here! We all live here, these people here are dead right! The other fellow jumped with the remark, 'Yeh, but don't say dead.' 'OK,' replied the first youth, 'They're live right then!'"
Tangimoana

By Alison McCulloch

Working on the banner

Mark D Hayes is a post-graduate student at Edinburgh University and a member of the Peace Research and Education Centre in Queensland.

Carbalah

By Mark D Hayes

I've got to be nuts to be doing this, 1 thought. Off to protest at the base. The road near the head of the motley 30 person demonstration was way along the red-earth track, and on the 7th Signals Division Royal Australian Army camp grounds on the east side of the town.

I'm walking up the road, Sunday, 21 October, 1984. Not the bare anything against going to demos, even motley ones if the cause seems right. It was the lowering clouds, the spring rain, the cold wind. Vini's Memory of Memel Hill flooded back.

Easter 1981. A sudden cold snap shuttered the halmy North Easter spring and brought heavy snow, sleet, blasting winds, rain, and cold. There we were, forcing the passing Canadian vodka bottle around, peering into the pite at the Pine Gap Empire, Memel Hill, on the top of a hill in North Yorkshire, huge radomes obscured by the rotten weather. In front of us was the razor wire fence and just behind it, the heavily armed troops, glaring at us with their eyes in the vodka. Our banners fluttered wildly in the howling wind. I was warming the same boats, the same large blue jacket with wind chasers against the cold.

Now the circle turns, and I'm off to a demo outside a Queensland electronic spy base. Not as spectacular as Memel Hill. But, in its own way, just as dangerous. I remember it because there that there are activities at Darwin, Perth, Melbourne, and a) nuclear threat. But even if there, Carbalah in New Zealand doing exactly what we are doing today. Or maybe because they, there where similar spy bases are working. God knows what the weather is like at Tangimoana, Cricksands, Menwith Hill, or anywhere else. The Toowoomba peace movement tourist attraction.

Shoal Bay

By our Darwin correspondent

Until very recently, little was known of the function of the Shoal Bay Communications Base near Darwin. In August 1984 the Northern Territory Police were able to get some idea of the help of Owen Wakes, a New Zealand peace campaigner. As part of the Watsonia intelligence-gathering network, the base acts as a receiving station to monitor transmissions throughout southeast Asia. The station has recently been upgraded and can certainly eavesdrop on all high frequency radio transmissions in the region, both civilian and military. For example Australia would have known about the Indonesian invasion of East Timor had it happened.

At the Peace Council's October meeting, we decided that some action should be taken. We resolved to hire a bus to take us and some of the local community to the site for an exploratory visit — a 'mystery tour'. As none of us knew much about Shoal Bay, we felt that educating ourselves was the first step. We were surprised to find the place almost deserted. We could only see one car in the compound itself, and none in the usual staff car park. There was one person in the guard house at the gate.

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Woodchips exports

Tasmania's forests and farms in the balance

One of FAN's objectives is the maximisation of the employment and economic benefits derived from wood which is harvested. Currently these benefits, in most cases, are declining or non-existent. There are five major activities of forest industries in Tasmania:

- exporting woodchips to Japan;
- making pulp and paper for the Australian market;
- sawmilling and wood products manufacturing, primarily for the Tasmanian and Victorian markets;
- logging and carting, mainly by small contractors;
- forest management, both by the Forestry Commission and by the woodchip and paper companies.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate some of the dimensions of these activities.

The commonwealth and state governments play major roles in all these sectors, through export licensing, taxation measures, import protection, grants, wood concessions and sawing quotas, charging royalties and providing industry assistance and infrastructure.

Historically, Tasmania has seen a steady trend away from a rural-based, labour-intensive and locally-owned industry towards a more modern, centralised, mechanised, and outside-owned industry based on clearing practices. Sawmilling began in the 1830s, since the 1930s this has been overshadowed by paper manufacturing and since 1971, by the export of woodchips to Japan.

The main economic benefits claimed by the forest industries lobby are jobs and financial contributions to the state's economy through royalties and charges. Certainly, the forest industries are major employers. They directly employ 8400 people and 45% of the Tasmanian workforce. This includes 245 of manufacturing jobs in Tasmania. However, despite a 14% increase in wood production since 1970, 3500 jobs have been lost in that period. Why did this happen?

Figure 1. Forest industries in Tasmania: Jobs, 1983/84.

Figure 2. Forest industries in Tasmania: Wood use, 1983/84.

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Tasmania.

The rainforest enhances the tourism potential of an island currently almost entirely dependent on the production of pulpwood. The rainforest should be given to this type of conversion to commercial eucalypt wood. A number of other proposals would maintain employment in the forest industries. In addition, employment in tourism, recreation, and park management would be generated by the areas reserved from logging.

**Forest production.**

Forest management should provide the necessary raw materials to establish a sustainable and financially viable logging industry. The logging of some areas outside the reserves would be carried out by the current concession areas, and the logging of some areas where logging is not permitted would be allowed to degrade or be used to produce a forest reserve.

Since white settlement, half of Tasmania's forested areas have been cleared for woodchip on private land. About 600,000 ha of the remaining forest is not logged and this is not being managed. Much of the logged forest is dominated by eucalypts, and the absence of large trees has led to the loss of many species of plants and animals. This has led to the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the forests.

**Environmental practices.**

For the forests outside FAN's reserve areas, the implementation of environmentally sensitive management practices is essential if they are to be protected. Existing management methods are likely to eliminate the important riparian forest ecosystems. hummock grass, and wetlands, and to reduce the value of the forests for recreation and tourism. Logging is an important activity in the forests, and the need for it can be met by the establishment of forest reserves.

Environmentally sensitive land management techniques could be developed to minimize the impacts of logging on soil and water, and these proposals would be used to protect a range of forest habitats and ecosystems. The implementation of environmentally sensitive management practices is essential if the forests are to be protected.

**Forest reserves.**

In the past, the logging of forests has caused widespread destruction of habitat, and the establishment of forest reserves is essential if the forests are to be protected. The logging of forests has caused widespread destruction of habitat, and the establishment of forest reserves is essential if the forests are to be protected. The logging of forests has caused widespread destruction of habitat, and the establishment of forest reserves is essential if the forests are to be protected.

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Alcoa's contribution to reforestation.

By Basil Schur

Bauxite mining has been taking place in the jarrah forests of south-west Western Australia since the sixty. In recent years, however, there has been an unprecedented expansion of the aluminium industry. Five bauxite mines and four alumina refineries are now operating and there are even advanced plans for an aluminium smelter. This has not gone unopposed and there have been extensive efforts by conservationist groups to have bauxite mining phased out of the Darling Range. In response to concerns about the environmental impact of mining, Alcoa, as the major corporation involved, has put considerable effort into rehabilitation after mining. In the words of one Alcoa employee, although rehabilitation is often seen as a luxury cost associated with mining, it can be the greatest single investment towards ensuring continuity of access to reserves. Rehabilitation may thus be seen as providing a basis for the political security of corporate investors so deeply cherished.

Elsewhere in Australia and the world there is ample evidence of socially and environmentally irresponsible behaviour by multinational mining companies. At Weipa in north Queensland, bauxite mining by Comalco has caused massive disruption to both Aboriginal culture and land. In a report published after the first decade of mining there, it was concluded that:

"no other people have ever had their lands taken from them and so utterly disposed for foreign profit. Comalco's refusal to recognize any need for compensation remains incredible. Comalco's lack of interest in restoring the land is vandals for profit."

In the forests near Perth, rehabilitation after mining, along with a magnesium public relations exercise, is done to blunt adverse public opinion. Thereby ensuring access to extensive tracts of native forest.

Rehabilitation is unable to restore the landscape. It is not only the traumatic operations of bauxite mining which stand in stark visual contrast to the surrounding jarrah forest. Rehabilitation leads to the formation of even-aged plantations that appear artificial and repetitive. Even with the distinct understory of long-lived eucalypts, jarrah, trees, and shrubs, the mining envoles still remain fragmented landscapes because of the edge effects caused by roads, fire tracks, and the breaking of different rehabilitation areas.

Bauxite mining denies free access to large areas of state forest. The recreational use to which selected rehabilitation sites may be put cannot restore the recreational values of the original forests. The picnic facilities at the old Jarrahdale mine, for example, duplicate the range of experiences that may be readily obtained in urban parks. Rehabilitation cannot cater for bushwalking and the tranquil enjoyment of untrewn nature.

Since jarrah is not being actively planted back, there is not even the pretense that the original forest is being restored. Over ten eucalypts, including eastern states species and jarrah, are being used. There is no influx of foreign species that means that rehabilitation is fundamentally incompatible with the conservation of the jarrah forest ecosystem. This is especially so as it is removed, and mining for bauxite actively spreads dieback fungus into the surrounding forests.

The biological communities that have been established will probably need intensive management to prevent deterioration. One of the major problems is fire. The effect of fire on rehabilitation is unknown, but could be very serious as large fuel loads are being built up. There have already been problems associated with nutrient deficiencies, drought stress, and pest attack. It is almost certain that Rehabilitation is highly manipulative thinning and slashing procedures will be implemented. What will be the effects of extremes of drought, fire, pests, and diseases on rehabilitation in the long term is completely unknown. Despite this, clearing for mining is still proceeding at over 300 hectares a year.

Recent rehabilitation plantations comprise mixtures of eucalypt species, because no one species has been found to be "functionally ideal." The longterm implications of these artificial and arbitrary mixtures will be serious because it is highly unlikely that they represent a stable, self-perpetuating forest ecosystem.

There have been quite a number of studies on various aspects of flora and fauna return to rehabilitation areas. This work has been almost exclusively funded by mining companies. Alcoa has been criticized for its refusal to recognize that rehabilitation areas do not conflict with the conservation of jarrah forest flora and fauna. However, it appears that there have been no detailed faunal surveys of the mining area before clearing commenced. In addition there are serious flaws in the design of the comparative surveys that have been done of healthy jarrah forest and the better rehabilitation sites.

In many respects rehabilitation represents a trial and error corporate gardening exercise. The biological communities that have been established will probably need immense management to prevent deterioration. One of the major problems is fire. The effect of fire on rehabilitation is unknown, but could be very serious as large fuel loads are being built up. There have already been problems associated with nutrient deficiencies, drought stress, and pest attack. It is almost certain that Rehabilitation is highly manipulative thinning and slashing procedures will be implemented. What will be the effects of extremes of drought, fire, pests, and diseases on rehabilitation in the long term is completely unknown. Despite this, clearing for mining is still proceeding at over 300 hectares a year.

Adjacent jarrah forests have been greatly affected by the presence of mining. A large proportion of these forests is now operating under a scheme called "The Forest Improvement and Rehabilitation Scheme." This is an attempt to restore or minimise the effects of dieback. Thousands of hectares of so-called "graveyard forests" have been "rehabilitated" with local and eastern states eucalypts. In healthy forests this attempt is being made to eliminate banksia. The ecological treatments also employed in the scheme may be adversely affecting the conservation status of the jarrah forests, in particular the removal of old trees with hollows. The scheme has been extensively applied with little direct research to determine if it is of any benefit.

Bauxite mining has been compared to a game of environmental roulette and this gamble has led to disastrous results. The mortality of the jarrah forests continues. Recent rehabilitation plantations have been destroyed by brown eucalypt dieback, and there is not even the pretense that the original forest is being restored. Rehabilitation is not only the traumatic operations of bauxite mining; it is also the development of artificial and arbitrary mixtures that will be serious because it is highly unlikely that they represent a stable, self-perpetuating forest ecosystem.

Rehabilitation leads to the formation of even-aged plantations that appear artificial and repetitive.
Alternatives to plant patenting

Plant patenting legislation — 'plant variety rights' (PVR) — is being considered by the federal government. The introduction of PVR would greatly increase the control of large seed companies over Australian agriculture, and threaten public plant research. (See Mark Cole, 'Seed issue germinates', Chain Reaction 23; Judy Messer, 'Seeds update', Chain Reaction 28.)

A bill for PVR was tabled in federal parliament in 1982. Opposition to the proposed legislation came from most leading consumer, church and conservation groups, plant breeders, and private individuals. Politicians, mostly Liberal and National Party members, were swamped with letters and petitions. When the Fraser government called an early election in 1983 the Senate standing committee looking into plant patenting ceased and the bill lapsed. It was assumed that the Labor government would call the shots, as state Labor governments had expressed opposition to PVR legislation. However, responsibility for funding is still divided between the Commonwealth and the States, and the free exchange of genetic material, including plant varieties is a matter of national food security. Therefore, it is a determining factor in the quality of indigenous plant breeding.

The Commonwealth stood down the policy of PVR in 1983 and latently that lack of PVR has meant Australian fruitgrowers have been denied access to a vast range of new fruit varieties. Most of the problems of access to overseas varieties appear to involve fruit varieties. These advocates fail to recognize the limitations that quarantine and virus testing places on the number of varieties to be introduced into the country. Further, under PVR licensees would be able to multiply and sell patented varieties without evaluation by departments of agriculture.

The introduction of new varieties of fruit is currently coordinated by the Fruit Variety Foundation Committee, a sub-committee of the Horticulture sub-committee, which in turn is a sub-committee of the Standing Committee of Agricultural Council. (The Agricultural Council comprises the Federal Minister of Primary Industry and State Ministers of Agriculture.) The Fruit Variety Foundation Committee comprises horticulturists and plant virologists.

The committee meets annually to decide which plant varieties will be recommended for importation in the coming year. Each state is allotted a yearly quota for the number of varieties of each fruit species it can import. Importation is coordinated so that there is no duplication, and so that the resources for quarantine and virus testing are not overstretched.

Once brought into the country the imported fruit varieties are evaluated for commercial viability before being multiplied and released by the relevant state department of agriculture. Samples of imported varieties are maintained in screen houses for the committee by state departments of agriculture in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. This system of importation, quarantine, virus testing, evaluation, supply and storage ensures farmers have access to the highest quality plant varieties in their orchards. The scheme ensures that material is used with restriction to all who wish to use it, either in orchards or for commercialization for sale to other farmers.

The establishment of a Fruit Variety Importation Agency would solve any problems of access to overseas fruit varieties that are patented. The agency would operate under the supervision of the Fruit Variety Foundation Committee. Under the scheme the agency would have sole rights to import patented varieties. Upon request by the Fruit Variety Foundation Committee, officers of the Importation Agency would negotiate with overseas patent holders a suitable lump sum payment for use of plant in Australia. After evaluation trials had taken place.

State departments of agriculture would retain rights for multiplication and all farmers and growers would have access to the variety. Any grower would be free to multiply and sell cuttings of the variety.

Plant Variety Rights (PVR) debate has been defined up to recently by the nature of the legislation proposed. As a whole the debate has been held in a defensive and largely reactionary nature. Industry and government have called the shots and lobbyists have no PVR meant. Now that the legislation has been moved off the immediate political agenda the opportunity exists to develop a more proactive campaign. Such a campaign should develop alternatives which, in an integrated way, lift the quality and efficiency of:

- Establishment of a Fruit Variety Foundation Committee. Under the Foundation Committee, a sub-committee of the Commonwealth Control of Germ Plasm Collection.
- Teaching of plant breeding skills, especially at postgraduate level.
- Plant breeding and associated research.
- Introduction of plant genetic material from overseas.
- Maintenance of germ plasm collections.
- Acceptance of new improved varieties by the industry, and effective promotion and distribution amongst farmers.
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This article raises proposals which it is hoped can form the basis for discussion around alternatives to PVR.

Commonwealth Control of Germ Plasm Collection

The Commonwealth is responsible for the maintenance of germ plasm collections in Australia. The five major banks store temperate and Mediterranean legumes, clovers and sugar. Eight major germ plasm banks are proposed to operate for all of Australia's major crops. However, responsibility for funding is being spread across a range of bodies including State departments of agriculture, the federal Department of Primary Industry, CSIRO, Wheat Industry Research Council and private industry. To ensure that such a network of banks is properly established and coordinated, the Commonwealth government should take on full responsibility for the funding, establishment and supervision of the germ plasm banks.

Establishment of a Fruit Variety Importation Agency

Advocates of PVR have argued consistently that lack of PVR has meant Austra­lian fruitgrowers have been denied access to a vast range of new fruit varieties. Most of the problems of access to overseas varieties appear to involve fruit varieties. These advocates fail to recognize the limitations that quarantine and virus testing places on the number of varieties to be introduced into the country. Further, under PVR licensees would be able to multiply and sell patented varieties without evaluation by departments of agriculture.

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State departments of agriculture would retain rights for multiplication and all farmers and growers would have access to the variety. Any grower would be free to multiply and sell cuttings of the variety.
Leaves on the purchase price of the reproductive material would cover the cost of the lump sum payment. The levy would cease once the cost of lump sum payment and administrative costs had been recovered. This compares to a PVR system where no evaluation takes place, where monopoly rights to distribution and multiplication are held, and where the patent remains in force for 28 years.

Extension of plant breeding resources

Public breeders are by far the majority of breeders in Australia. They operate in all the major field crops as well as in a range of pasture crops. In many of the major crops, farmers are leased on the total tonnage they produce each year to fund research including plant breeding. This has led to a highly cost-effective program of research which has managed to produce seed of new improved non-hybrid varieties at prices well below what private companies could offer. In other fields the Australian seed market. The extension of crop levies for research into other major crops and the cross-subsidisation of research into new and minor crops by levies on major crops would help the extension of plant improvement work in Australia. The Commonwealth should also extend funds available through the Special Research Grants Scheme, which provides grants for research in crops where no crop levies operate. In 1982-83 only $279,000 was allocated for some 36 research projects in 20 different crops.

Promotion of varieties bred by public institutions

At present most public funds are allocated to plant improvement work rather than to marketing public varieties. Australian agriculture is already experiencing the problem of private companies being able to out-sell the public sector with varieties that are of no better agronomic value. What is required now is a public marketing body which has responsibility for:

- The production and distribution of promotional material in rural areas for newly bred and evaluated varieties and coordination of field demonstration days in cooperation with grower organisations.
- Liaison with state departments of agriculture and seed growers to ensure adequate supplies of reproductive material of public varieties are available for distribution when demand exists.
- The existence of such an organisation should be supported by legislation which requires that all seed distribution outlets display educational and promotional material of public varieties and release and recommended by state departments of agriculture.

Incentives for innovative private plant breeding

Incentives to innovative private plant breeding could involve the setting up of a system to collect royalties based on crossing and selfing of varieties released and recommended by state departments of agriculture.

The nuclear power industry in the USA is in trouble. Several major electricity utilities are hawering on the brink of bankruptcy. Partially completed reactors are being mothballed. John R Hallam reports on the state of the industry in the wake of a series of economic crises over the last two years.

It's been known for some time that the nuclear power industry in the United States is in trouble. We are witnessing the biggest industrial decade in history, in which, according to some estimates, as much as $100 billion in investment could be written off. Since the beginning of December 1983, just under 13000MW in nuclear generating capacity has been officially or unofficially cancelled. That is more than the UK will ever have on line. For comparison, Japan has a total of 19000MW on line, and 36000MW total commitment. West Germany has a total commitment of 27200MW.

In spite of the cancellations, the US nuclear program remains the world's largest. It has fallen from a projected 40000MW plant-by-planned-in October 1973 to 129000MW at the end of 1982, to 117000MW in September 1984. At present rates of cancellation, it may fall to as low as 90000MW. The French nuclear program is projected to be 35000MW, and the Soviet program is about 40000MW. At the moment, the USA still has a bit under a third of nuclear capacity operating and under construction worldwide.

In comparison with the highly centralised nuclear industries of France, the UK and the USSR, the US nuclear industry is highly decentralised. In spite of Reagan's plans to use civilian plutonium to make weapons, the civil and the military arms of the industry are more nearly separate than in the UK, France and the USSR, where the prime task of the first 'civil' reactor was to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

THE NUCLEAR JUNGLE

The US nuclear industry isn't a single-dinosaur-like animal. Rather, it consists of a number of monsters lurking in the corporate jungle.

The reactor vendors

The biggest, and probably the hungriest, of the dinosaurus of the post-electric ecological niche that is the US nuclear industry are the 'reactor vendors'. These are companies which supply reactor pressure vessels and the associated plumbing and control systems. The largest reactor vendor in the USA, and the world, is Westinghouse, who supply pressurised water reactors (PWR). Other PWR suppliers in the USA are Combustion Engineering and Babcock & Wilcox, who supplied the Three Mile Island plant. Babcock & Wilcox haven't been saying much lately, and are in financial trouble.

The other US reactor vendor is General Electric, who supply a different type of reactor, the boiling water reactor (BWR). All four reactor vendors are large engineering firms, who sell a lot more than reactors. None of them have had a reactor order from the USA since 1977. These businesses are very hungry for orders, and increasingly stalk prey outside the USA.

The architect-engineers

Also lumbering about the US nuclear jungle are the 'architect-engineers'. These are companies which build all sorts of power plants, not only nuclear ones. They are large construction and engineering companies who do things like design the plant, dig the holes in the ground, pour the concrete, and coordinate hundreds of subcontractors. The biggest of these is Bechtel Engineering, the biggest engineering company in the world.

Both vendors and architect-engineers are trying desperately to induce utilities to stay with the construction of nuclear projects, rather than cancelling them. They have even gone as far as offering plants on a 'turnkey' basis, that is, for a fixed price, which project. The utilities for whom the plants are being built have not been all that receptive. Of three 'turnkey' offers made by vendors and architect-engineers, only one, to complete the Seabrook plant, has actually borne fruit.
The utilities

The electricity generating utilities are a varied group of bodies. Some are traditional utilities, such as Public Service of New Hampshire, the Long Island Lighting Co. and Commonwealth Edison. Others are owned by private investors, such as Bechtel. The utilities are subject to a variety of bodies that regulate their activities.

At the federal level are the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), an arm of the Department of Energy, which regulates the natural gas and electric power industries. Other bodies include the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which is the federal agency responsible for regulating nuclear power.

At the state level are Public Utility Commissions (PUCs), which are regulatory agencies that oversee the activities of electric utilities. Some PUCs are independent, while others are part of the state government. In some states, the PUCs are combined with other regulatory bodies, such as the Public Service Board of New Hampshire, which regulates both electric and gas utilities.

The intervenors

The intervenors play a central role in NRC proceedings. They may be individuals, organizations, or other entities, such as the Public Interest Group, or representatives of the regulated community, such as the utility company itself.

In April 1984, Bechtel tried to add PSNH's Saugus station to a 'turnkey' offer to Bechtel, in which it would be willing to design, build, and operate a nuclear power plant. PSNH, the utility that would be bankrupt unless the NRC could be forced to pass an operating licence, was severely criticized by the intervenors, who pointed to the potential for licensing difficulties at Saugus 1, and the NRC's own increasing concern over the bankruptcy of PSNH for the long run.

The federal government

The federal government's role in the nuclear power industry is complex. On the one hand, the NRC is charged with regulating the industry, but on the other hand, the federal government is also a significant owner of nuclear power plants. For example, the Department of Energy owns the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, which was built and operated by the Public Service of New Hampshire.

The intervenors have also participated successfully in NRC proceedings, using both their expertise and their ability to bring attention to issues that they believe are important. For example, in 1984, the intervenors were able to force the NRC to consider the potential for licensing difficulties at Saugus 1.

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The utilities generating electricity are a varied group of bodies. Some are traditional utilities, such as Public Service of New Hampshire, the Long Island Lighting Co. and Commonwealth Edison. Others are owned by private investors, such as Bechtel. The utilities are subject to a variety of bodies that regulate their activities.

At the federal level are the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), an arm of the Department of Energy, which regulates the natural gas and electric power industries. Other bodies include the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which is the federal agency responsible for regulating nuclear power.

At the state level are Public Utility Commissions (PUCs), which are regulatory agencies that oversee the activities of electric utilities. Some PUCs are independent, while others are part of the state government. In some states, the PUCs are combined with other regulatory bodies, such as the Public Service Board of New Hampshire, which regulates both electric and gas utilities.

The intervenors

The intervenors play a central role in NRC proceedings. They may be individuals, organizations, or other entities, such as the Public Interest Group, or representatives of the regulated community, such as the utility company itself.

In April 1984, Bechtel tried to add PSNH's Saugus station to a 'turnkey' offer to Bechtel, in which it would be willing to design, build, and operate a nuclear power plant. PSNH, the utility that would be bankrupt unless the NRC could be forced to pass an operating licence, was severely criticized by the intervenors, who pointed to the potential for licensing difficulties at Saugus 1, and the NRC's own increasing concern over the bankruptcy of PSNH for the long run.

The federal government

The federal government's role in the nuclear power industry is complex. On the one hand, the NRC is charged with regulating the industry, but on the other hand, the federal government is also a significant owner of nuclear power plants. For example, the Department of Energy owns the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, which was built and operated by the Public Service of New Hampshire.

The intervenors have also participated successfully in NRC proceedings, using both their expertise and their ability to bring attention to issues that they believe are important. For example, in 1984, the intervenors were able to force the NRC to consider the potential for licensing difficulties at Saugus 1.
Dear Ms Seddon,

I recently had sent to me an article by you in Chain Reaction entitled ‘A little each day . . . the Uranium Information Centre’s battle for your mind’. Whilst the article was written some time ago, I feel obliged to write to you to correct some false impressions you may have.

1. Limiting people’s access to information

There is no evidence of the Uranium Information Centre trying to limit access to information. Quite the opposite in fact. In the UIC’s teacher’s kit illustrated by you, three of the reproductions are reprints (with permission) of material produced by the International Atomic Energy Agency and World Health Organisation, both affiliated with the United Nations and strongly supported by some 150 nations, mostly socialist and mostly in total (non-profit) production by the International Atomic Energy Agency before.

2. ‘Silences’

You write: ‘The purpose of the Home Mission Division of the Methodist Church in London, could hardly be more fair and open, pointing out as it does, many unacknowledged associations with nuclear energy.’

On the contrary, in a number of publications, to conclude the UIC press campaign, a summary brochure was produced (including all nuclear power stations) and it still isn’t finished!

Whilst it is true that some nuclear power stations construction has been stopped in the USA, 14 new ones will come on stream this year (1984) in that country. No nuclear expansion has lessened its nuclear commitment and the USSR’s doubling its number of nuclear power stations every five years.

Your point about ‘the centralised and anti-democratic character of nuclear power’ has me baffled. Is it different from coal or oil or hydro? Most nations’ power stations are controlled by governments, except in the USA where state-controlled utilities share the burden with private enterprise.

3. Ideological Intervention

You say ‘in the face of the ideological intervention by the UIC acting for the multinational corporations’. Are you suggesting that Westinghouse does not have a moral obligation to the public? To the people who lived in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or Nagasaki, to say nothing of the local people who had no idea of what was to happen, to those who suffer at the hands of the nuclear bomb.

4. Nuclear reactors do not release waste. Windscale (now reprocessing) is a very small plant, not a reactor.

5. Nuclear reactors are not a waste producer, they are energy producers. You pick holes in my list of underplayed or ignored issues. But your points become trivial by focusing on very particular issues and not on the big picture, on the real issues. It is true, Canada’s CANDU reactor generates power, it is not reprocessing the production of the Indian nuclear bomb. The plutonium for the bomb was produced in a CIRUS reactor, a joint enterprise between France, the UK, and Canada, but dependent on Canadian expertise. The necessary heavy water was supplied by the USA.

6. Nuclear power stations are not used for weapons manufacturing, they are used for energy production.

7. The nuclear fuel cycle is as complex as the electronic cycle. You misinterpret my point that expertism is in itself an ideology. Virtual internationalism in terms of the production of same material I shall be pleased to do so.

You say ‘You make the point that nuclear power will be available to the poor. I would argue that nuclear power is as much an ideology as any other’. It is true, one can argue that nuclear power makes a political statement and not just a statement of technology. But I do not see why you would argue that nuclear power is not a political issue, it is as much a political as a technical issue.

8. You say ‘You pick holes in my list of underplayed or ignored issues. But your points become trivial by focusing on very particular issues and not on the real issues’. It is true, Canada’s CANDU reactor generates power, it is not reprocessing the production of the Indian nuclear bomb. The plutonium for the bomb was produced in a CIRUS reactor, a joint enterprise between France, the UK, and Canada, but dependent on Canadian expertise. The necessary heavy water was supplied by the USA.

9. Nuclear power stations are not used for weapons manufacturing, they are used for energy production.

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Dear Mr Drysdale,

Your letter is an interesting response to my article on the Uranium Information Centre in Chain Reaction. You particularly given the article’s main objective: to examine the UIC’s material and method of presentation, an approach which you criticise, and make a case for the UIC to be perceived as a disinterested, independent, non-profit organization.

You misinterpret my point that expertism is in itself an ideology. Virtual internationalism in terms of the production of the same material is as much an ideology as any other. It is true, one can argue that nuclear power makes a political statement and not just a statement of technology. But I do not see why you would argue that nuclear power is not a political issue, it is as much a political as a technical issue.

The substance of your letter ‘corrects’ my ‘false impressions’. But not only are your corrections controversial, but many of the false impressions are the result of misleading, picky concern with facts at the expense of issues, and the use of terms in ways other than I used them.

1. Access

You misinterpret my point that expertism is in itself an ideology. Virtual internationalism in terms of the production of the same material is as much an ideology as any other. It is true, one can argue that nuclear power makes a political statement and not just a statement of technology. But I do not see why you would argue that nuclear power is not a political issue, it is as much a political as a technical issue.

2. You say ‘Considering the centralised and anti-democratic character of nuclear power has me baffled. Is it different from coal or oil or hydro? Most nations’ power stations are controlled by governments, except in the USA where state-controlled utilities share the burden with private enterprise.

3. Nuclear reactors do not release waste. Windscale (now reprocessing) is a very small plant, not a reactor.

4. Nuclear reactors are not a waste producer, they are energy producers. You pick holes in my list of underplayed or ignored issues. But your points become trivial by focusing on very particular issues and not on the real issues. It is true, Canada’s CANDU reactor generates power, it is not reprocessing the production of the Indian nuclear bomb. The plutonium for the bomb was produced in a CIRUS reactor, a joint enterprise between France, the UK, and Canada, but dependent on Canadian expertise. The necessary heavy water was supplied by the USA.

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9. Nuclear power stations are not used for weapons manufacturing, they are used for energy production.
Dr Brian Martin evaluates the scientific claims made by Australian professor Ted Ringwood, for his method for immobilising high-level radioactive waste. Martin also evaluates the political statements made by Ringwood, based on the projected success of the method.

Ringwood presents his research program as a solution to the barriers against uranium reprocessing and export, and to arms proliferation. The situation is critical considering the environmental contamination of the world for such storage. The Synroc will be encased in canisters and waste, especially those based on glass, pointing towards the Synroc as a term waste disposal method.

Brian Martin does research in applied mathematics at the Australian National University and has been active in the anti-nuclear movement for many years. Long-term stability of rock crystals of the syneroc type. Natural rocks for the most part contain impurity elements which are nonradioactive. Syneroc will contain the radioactive varieties (isotopes) of these elements. Full testing has not yet been done with radioactive isotopes of the elements in radioactive waste. Therefore the physical changes in Synroc caused by radioactive decay over long periods of time remains to be determined.

Even if Synroc were technically flawless it would only constitute a partial solution to the problem of radioactive waste. Synroc cannot deal with the major problems of temporary storage of spent fuel, human error, and low level waste. The situation is critical considering the environmental contamination of the world for such storage. The Synroc will be encased in canisters and waste, especially those based on glass, pointing towards the Synroc as a term waste disposal method.

In summary, Synroc is as yet technically unproven. Furthermore, tests can never prove for sure — in advance — that a long term disposal method will be successful in practice.
rather than helping restrain nuclear proliferation, enrichment or reprocessing in Australia was probably contributed to it. The introduction of the technology for uranium enrichment or fuel processing into Australia on a commercial scale, along with the associated scientific and technical skills, would provide an avenue for acquisition of nuclear weapons by the Australian government. Although Australian nuclear weapons are not now favoured by more than a minority in the government or military, the situation could change. The availability of the technological infrastructure and trained personnel for making nuclear weapons could be used by those favouring nuclear weapons in an argument for them. This is not a hypothetical consideration. In the late 1960s a number of prominent politicians and scientists favoured the building of a nuclear power plant in Australia because it could be utilised for making nuclear weapons if desired. The leaked documents on 'The strategic basis for Australian defence', reported on in The National Times in March 1984, show that there is little principled opposition within the Cabinet or the policy-making elite of the Defence Department for the acquisition of Australian nuclear weapons.

Even if the Australian government did not plan or desire to use enrichment or reprocessing facilities for producing bombs, other governments might be worried about this possibility. The Australian government, for example, is using facilities and skills acquired from its civilian nuclear program and from industrial espionage in the country complying with safeguards agreements, in which Ringwood has put his trust, has had limited impact. Investment in the fuel cycle is a powerful incentive to continue those activities, for example, in the French nuclear weapons program. French officials have stated that they plan to use plutonium from the Superphosphate burner reactor — nominally a civilian facility — for its nuclear weapons program. And there are strong indications that the Brazilian and Argentine governments have moved close to the construction of nuclear reactors via their acquisition of civilian facilities. None of these or other relevant examples is mentioned by Ringwood.

Nuclear wastes stored in German salt formations

Rather than restraining the plutonium economy, investment in uranium enrichment or reprocessing would very likely accelerate its cooling. Because of the high capital costs of nuclear facilities, once they are established they are likely to become entrenched. This means that once work has begun on the production of uranium fuel, or on the production of uranium-enriched fuel, the pressure to invest in breeder reactors — with their enormous potential for proliferation — in order to produce fuel for the thermal reactors. One possible scenario would introduce another danger to Australia, the likelihood of attack in war. Precisely because of their potential for aiding nuclear weapons proliferation or reprocessing facilities would be prime targets. An Iraqi re ctor in June 1981 is indicative of the concern generated by nuclear facilities. The environmental consequences of a attack on a reprocessing plant would be much more extensive, with much more long-lived radioactivity released than from a major nuclear explosion.

Contrary to Ringwood, uranium enrichment or nuclear fuel reprocessing in Australia would more likely promote rather than restrain proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Ringwood says that there are only three major concerns about the nuclear fuel cycle: high level radioactive waste, nuclear reactor safety, and proliferation of nuclear weapons. This is a narrow view of the many other important areas raised by critics of nuclear technology.

As noted earlier, high level waste is not the important issue. Also of concern are intermediate level waste, such as tailings and reactors at the end of their economic life. There are other important environmental concerns besides radioactive waste and reactor accidents. Some of these are the dangers of transporting nuclear materials, and health hazards to workers.

The cost of nuclear power has greatly increased over the past decade. This is one major reason why nuclear power programs have slowed so much. This has especially been the case in the USA, where cancellations have exceeded new plants for the past decade. The USA is the one country where nuclear power has had to compete in the market with other energy sources. In most other countries nuclear power has simply been promoted by government without much consideration to costs. Even in the USA there have been vast government subsidies to nuclear power.

The promotion of nuclear power has been associated with attacks on civil liberties in many countries, due to nuclear power's links with nuclear weapons and the strong vested interests in the nuclear industry. The threats of terrorism or criminal use of nuclear materials provides another link with civil liberties. In Australia, uranium mining was given the go-ahead under the repressive Atomic Energy Act in 1966. Uranium enrichment and reprocessing would very likely lead to further erosion of civil liberties. It is noteworthy that only in countries with authoritarian governments, such as the Soviet Union and South Korea, have nuclear programs proceeded relatively unchecked by citizen opposition — though even there economic and technological problems are serious. Of course, the French government, which is nominally democratic, has insulated its nuclear program from public scrutiny and involvement, and run rough over citizen opposition.

• Uranium mining on or near Aboriginal land has had serious negative effects on both the land and on the Aboriginal health and culture. Some of these effects are not even now appreciated — let alone understood. The abor­

Professor Ringwood is to be congratulated for his efforts to find a safer method for disposing of high level radioactive waste. But scientific achievements do not impart any special validity to political views. Ringwood's claims about the role of Synroc in over­

Schematic diagram of Synroc production
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LECTURE AND WORKSHOP BY DR JOANNA MACY

AUTHOR OF "DESPAIR AND PERSONAL POWER IN THE NUCLEAR AGE"

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The chapters on culture and aggression are especially interesting. The book examines the roots of cultural aggression and provides a detailed analysis of the factors that contribute to cultural conflict. The book concludes with a discussion of the role of culture in preventing future conflicts and promoting peace.

The book is recommended for anyone interested in the study of world politics and international relations. It provides a comprehensive overview of the complex interplay between culture and conflict and offers valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working in this field.
Wilderness Calendar 1985, Peter Dombrovski Pty Ltd, $6.50.

One of the many wilderness calendars available this year, this has full colour photographs by Peter Dombrovski and commentary from Jamie Kirkpatrick.


This is the second archival calendar published in conjunction with the Melbourne Women's Liberation Archival Group. Each month focuses on a specific feminist issue and the pages are crammed with "herstoric" information. Bold and colourful design and a menstrual chart is included.

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For those of us who still manage to contemplate the garden, this calendar has a wealth of useful information on cultivation, seasons and lunar influences. Tastefully illustrated with line drawings.

Per Er Elliff is a member of the Chain Reaction collective in Sydney but for Teddi Later, previous member of the Melbourne collective, this is a revelation.

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