Incineration of toxic waste

Is the CES working?

Pine Gap revisited
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...
The start of the problem

We notice that a lot of the writing in Chain Reaction aims at saving the environment by political reform through elections or by appeal to an existing political party. At the same time Peter Christoff in 'A Long Drought Ahead' (CR50) protests that 'the environment movement had developed no new strategies for extra-parliamentary action'. The creative ideas between elections that he is suggesting are likely to suffer from a type of fragmentation inherent in industrialism. That sounds a bit vague but isn't really. In medicine it fails to grasp the significance of broad understanding, in technology the long term benefits, and in education the importance of broad understanding, in technology the long term benefits, and so on. Nothing is efficient technology. The industries, the earth's crust to pieces to feed its machines, dependent on those machines for a living and a lifestyle, dependent on all the people out of work: a type of parasitic dependence, the people in areas of the world in minds' will be open to new ideas? Is this the field where Christoff's new strategies can be practised? The idea of the long term benefits is not a realist's position. Just by thinking of what we can do to help ourselves, the ideas of the long term benefits are not realists. Just so I am inclined to believe that this is the right field for our own struggle towards an understanding of the cycle of nature.

Parallel to this is the problem of convincing people that post-industrialism can and must hold more advantages for them than their present lifestyle does, that in owning less they will have a great deal more and that the more sophisticated and technologically developed societies will succumb to the industrial revolution. If we have a clean source of electricity and some idea of what is happening to the planet, we will have water, toilet, and heating of our homes. If we can be convinced of that, we will have better health care, better homes, and less pollution and no pollution. Just as we have found the idea of the cycle of nature, a thing that is not realisable, we can find the cycle of nature as a thing that is not realisable. That is why we are convinced of the idea of the cycle of nature. If we are convinced of the cycle of nature, we should try to fit them into a whole pattern. It is time we put our heads together and did it. It is not a nut or an alternative lifestyle group, and both I and my husband would be very pleased to have more literature from you.

Jessie Holthaworth
Schoof Park SA.

Energy to burn

At last some of the world's governments are taking seriously the predictions of the greenhouse effect — that is, the gradual increase in the mean temperature of the atmosphere and consequences such as the melting of the polar ice-caps and glaciers. It is likely that we will approach this situation within the next ten years. It is a problem that will takes some time to solve. But it is possible that the consequences of the greenhouse effect will be less than the consequences of the present situation. If we can find a way of controlling the greenhouse effect, it will be a great relief to all of us.

As the aspirations of the ordinary people are obviously unattainable, what is the solution? It is obvious from the forefathers of the greenhouse effect that the major cause of over-population. The American solution, the American solution, direct or indirect, to prevent the development of the economics in the countries that class themselves as being recently politically liberated, must be rejected on humanitarian grounds. Besides, poverty and war stimulate birth rates. Certainly, a narrowing of the range of living standards is attainable right now, but such action will not be taken by governments controlled and owned by the extractive industries. Consumption of energy and energy intensive products could be made prohibitively expensive, a thought which is anathema to factory owners, politicians in power and those in opposition, all of whom seem to show a deep desire to convert raw materials into rubbish, via a temporary stage as consumer goods, at as fast a rate as possible and with no obvious source for the lack of world consumption. Ideally, those of us with relatively high incomes will still be able to have a comfortable life, but it will be at the expense of the rest of the world. The situation that the major cause of over-population. The American solution, the American solution, direct or indirect, to prevent the development of the economics in the countries that class themselves as being recently politically liberated, must be rejected on humanitarian grounds. Besides, poverty and war stimulate birth rates. Certainly, a narrowing of the range of living standards is attainable right now, but such action will not be taken by governments controlled and owned by the extractive industries. Consumption of energy and energy intensive products could be made prohibitively expensive, a thought which is anathema to factory owners, politicians in power and those in opposition, all of whom seem to show a deep desire to convert raw materials into rubbish, via a temporary stage as consumer goods, at as fast a rate as possible and with no obvious source for the lack of world consumption. Ideally, those of us with relatively high incomes will still be able to have a comfortable life, but it will be at the expense of the rest of the world.
Let's Lofthouse
Lower Flinders, Vic

The next step?
The analyses and proposals of such writers as Ted Trainer and Joseph Camilleri are important for New Left/Environmental action.

Perhaps Chain Reaction readers generally agree that capitalism and current economic practices are destructive of human values — that they promote inflation, inefficiency, unemployment — that they promote poverty and despair on the disadvantaged — that they use diminishing resources and high technology for military terror and to destroy or pollute fragile environments. It is scarcely credible that any economic system could exist in such destructive error.

CRS raised so many issues — military spending and world development; uranium mining and land rights; ecological disaster and Roxby Downs; Pine Gap etc. and the American alliance. It is difficult to know where, or how, to start putting things right. We seem to be wringing our hands — Those things should not be — They ought to reform economics and social practice.

The participatory nature of the Democrats allows members to make the running — so the opportunity is there for public exposure of our long-term objectives for those willing to enter the fray.

Let's use diminishing resources and high technology for environmental protection and sustainable development. Our climate has already undergone dramatic change from the burning of fossil fuels. We must act to reduce our impact on the environment and promote a sustainable future.

The recent revelation by Senator Evans that the Roman in Letters to Maralinga test sites is majority of Australians and one hundred thousand. As a sincere and long-time supporter of POE's aims, I recently subscribed to your journal, only to be confronted, in the very first issue I received, with this pathetic bit of nonsense. I am writing, in all friendship, to urge you to be more discriminating in choosing the material that goes out in POE's name. Ignorant and illogical articles such as this one will only serve to turn off many deeply concerned people — just think of what this sort of badly edited rubbish will do for the support from members of SANA and other scientists, and other educators, scientifically oriented people in general!

A Van Roop
Gilberton, S.A.

Maralinga lingers on

The recent revelation by Senator Evans that the Roman in Letters to Maralinga test sites is majority of Australians and one hundred thousand. As a sincere and long-time supporter of POE's aims, I recently subscribed to your journal, only to be confronted, in the very first issue I received, with this pathetic bit of nonsense. I am writing, in all friendship, to urge you to be more discriminating in choosing the material that goes out in POE's name. Ignorant and illogical articles such as this one will only serve to turn off many deeply concerned people — just think of what this sort of badly edited rubbish will do for the support from members of SANA and other scientists, and other educators, scientifically oriented people in general!

A Van Roop
Gilberton, S.A.

Nativity Blockade

The US Hoel, a nuclear armed guided missile destructor berthed in Brisbane on 23 December. The Hoel was returning from active duty in the Persian Gulf where the US Navy has escalated its interventionary presence. The Hoel is armed with first strike ASROC nuclear depth charges. They are short range anti-submarine devices launched from rockets on the destroyer. They play an important role in knocking out the opponents submarine capacity in the event of launching a first strike.

As the Hoel docked in Brisbane it was not by members and friends of the Catholic Worker community. Dressed as angels, shepherds and wise magi, the Catholic Workers kept a vigil as a manger scene near the wharf. As the US sailors looked out from the ship of the names and actions of the imprisoned war resisters in the US were read to them. When the sailors finally disembarked they were spotted by the officers of the ship. As the ship left the dock the officers read a message that said, "Disarm the States".

Eight people were arrested by State police and charged with resisting a police officer in the Execution of His Duty. They were all released on their own undertaking to appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court on February 22nd.

Source: Catholic Community Worker January 1988

Chlordane Banned in USA

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has banned further use of the pesticides chlordane and heptachlor to still terminates but environmentalists say that the EPA has not gone far enough fast enough. The EPA was preparing to ban chlordane outright in August, 1987 but cut an eleventh hour deal with methyl Chemical Corp, the nations only chlordane and heptachlor manufacturer. It would allow applicants to use up existing stocks.

The EPA estimated that the outstanding stocks would last about two months and were sufficient to treat 100,000 homes. A number of environmental organisations including POE USA sued the EPA. They argued that since the EPA had declared that chlordane is harmful to health there is no basis to allow applicators to use up the inventory. The EPA estimates that about 30 million homes have been treated for termites. The agency has known for years that chlordane probably causes cancer. Chlordane and heptachlor were banned, by the EPA, for use in agriculture and general homes uses in the mid 1970's.

Source: Not Man Apart
October 1987

Continued on page 39
Zambian Pesticide Problems

The Zambian Government has banned people from buying milk direct from farmers because of the high concentrations of the pesticide dieldrin found in unpasteurised milk and other dairy products. Dieldrin has been recognized by the United Nations as being linked to cancer, yet it is still used widely in Zambia to control termites. Dieldrin runs off from the fields into the water supply where the cattle drink the water. Since the ban, many farmers have been selling their dairy produce to pig farmers. However this may merely shift the problem from milk to pork.

Source: Panscope October 1987

Nuclear Testing at Mighty Oak

An underground nuclear test blast held in 1986, at Mighty Oak, accidentally radiated into nearby tunnels at the Nevada Test Site. As a result, $32 million in equipment was destroyed. US Department of Energy officials said they don't know what went wrong with the test and might never be able to find out. And this is where some important members of Congress want to store the nations high level nuclear waste.

Source: Not Man Apart December 1987

Sealing Ban

Australians have been banned from taking part in any commercial exploitation of seals in Antarctica. The Minister for Science, Mr. Barry Jones, said the Government had formally approved the ratification by Australia of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals. The Convention is designed to ensure the protection of Antarctic seals whilst allowing their scientific study and national use said Mr. Jones. However Australia has gone a step further by implementing regulations which specifically prohibit Australian citizens from any sealing in Antarctic which is directly or indirectly for commercial purposes.

Source: Traffic Bulletin November 1987

Public Protest Stops USSR Nuclear Plant

Soviet authorities have abandoned construction of a nuclear power plant near the Black Sea in the face of public opposition generated by the 1986 accident at Chernobyl, according to Pravda. The newspaper also disclosed that all twenty of the operating nuclear power plants in the country, and most of those under construction, were 'terribly opposed' by local residents. The report on the abandoned project near the city of Krasnodar was the strongest official acknowledgement that since the Chernobyl accident, public opinion had turned sharply against nuclear power and posed a serious threat to the country's ambitious nuclear power program.

Dunde of Paper Recycling

New Zealand could have the worst record in the world for recycling paper, a survey by the United Nations of all OECD nations and several Third World countries has found that New Zealand has the worst recovery rate for paper. The recovery rate is less than a quarter of that in countries such as Thailand, Mexico and Egypt.


Daintree Update

The Greater Daintree Action Group and the Daintree Blockade Information Centre have recently produced the Blockade Report, a 40 page submission to the Federal Government World Heritage Inquiry regarding the future of the track between Cape Tribulation and the Bloomfield River in the Daintree coastal wilderness, North Queensland. This report outlines the dangerous nature of the new road, the damage caused to the forest, the spread of vandalism, introduction of feral animals, silting of the fringing coral reef and the loss of the wilderness character of the area.

Public Protest Stops USSR Nuclear Plant

The recommendations of the report include:

- the total closure of the vehicular track and appropriate measures to ensure swift establishment of natural regrowth
- the blockade site should be the end of the road, from where a Coastal Walking Track should begin
- the upgrading and sealing of the Daintree Highway to Cooktown

Public Protest Stops USSR Nuclear Plant

Purchase of available freehold land in the Daintree area for inclusion in the National Park
- replacing the present Douglas Shire Council by an Administrator who can sympathetically co-ordinate environmental protection, tourism, primary industry and the needs of local people.

Copies of the report are available from Greater Daintree Action Centre, Cape Tribulation, via Mossman Queensland 4873, Care of, including postage.

Source: Greater Daintree Action Centre Dec 1987

South Australian ID card

The South Australian government is apparently setting up its own, more limited, version of the ID Card. Known as the Justice Information System, it will keep track of people known to various departments which have some law enforcement role. As well as the Department of the Attorney-General and the Police, this includes the Department for Community Welfare. One of the recommendations for creating a more efficient organisation is that their client information systems will be able to be shared. The Group say this raises serious issues of confidentiality in relation to health data being linked in to the Justice Information System. More generally, the application of information technology in the health, welfare and judicial areas raises important questions of confidentiality and due process, which the SA government must deal with publicly.

Source: Chain Reaction reader SA

Amalgamation Action Group. This is a group of health and welfare workers who are concerned at the nature of proposals to amalgamate the SA Health Commission with the Department for Community Welfare. One of the recommendations for creating a more efficient organisation is that their client information systems will be able to be shared. The Group say this raises serious issues of confidentiality in relation to health data being linked in to the Justice Information System. More generally, the application of information technology in the health, welfare and judicial areas raises important questions of confidentiality and due process, which the SA government must deal with publicly.

Source: Chain Reaction reader SA
**Dirty Tactics**

A British company, W&E Products, is planning to manufacture soap containing mercuric iodide for export to Third World countries. The soap is popular in some African countries where it is used to lighten the skin and can be purchased illegally in the UK for the same purpose.

The European Economic Community (EEC) has banned the sale of soap containing mercury because the chemical can cause a wide range of health problems if absorbed over a period of time. The ban does not extend to the manufacture of toiletries containing mercury.

**Source:** Consumer Views October 1987

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**Brazil Producing Thalidomide**

Thalidomide, the drug which caused thousands of children to be born with severe handicaps during the 1960s is being produced and prescribed to pregnant women in Brazil. It is a powerful painkiller, and is still prescribed for treatment of the acute stages of leprosy. In Brazil 40,000 women of child bearing age suffer from leprosy. Brazil is the only country that continues to manufacture the drug, but it is being exported to France and the Middle East for use in leprosy treatment.

**Source:** Panscope October 1987

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**Dolphins killed by Pollution**

A group of researchers from Ehime University in Japan have found that dolphins and other sea mammals are endangered by Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) which have found their way into the sea. PCBs were first produced in the United States in the 1930s for use in electrical transformers. The compound is difficult to dispose of and is known to accumulate in fish, shellfish and the human body. Now the research team have found that liquid PCBs evaporate and re-enter the atmosphere to become dispersed throughout the globe and find their way into the seas. Dolphins and other marine animals are particularly at risk as they cannot metabolise the chemical which interferes with the reproductive processes. In Dalls Porpoise of the Bering Sea the team found levels of 2-3 parts per million but in the Blue White Dolphin of the North Pacific they found levels of up to 50 parts per million, indicating that if things continue as they are there will be a severe reduction in dolphin numbers over the next few decades. Even if 50 per cent of the remaining PCB stocks are disposed of in the next five to ten years, the present concentrations in the seas will remain unchanged for at least another century.

**Source:** EC News December 1987

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**Nuclear Industry Scandal**

The leading handler of enriched uranium and nuclear waste in West Germany, the Nukem GMBH Group, is under investigation following allegations of:
- bribery of power industry officials to obtain contracts to remove nuclear waste
- having illegally transported nuclear waste across the Belgian border
- illicitly storing more than 2,000 barrels of nuclear waste throughout West Germany, many of which were falsely labelled, disguising highly radioactive contents
- conspiring to ship weapons-grade nuclear material overseas, allegedly to Pakistan and Libya.

**Source:** Financial Review January 1988

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**Production of 2,4,5-T to cease**

Ivan Watkins-Dow Ltd. (IWD), the only known producer of the herbicide 2,4,5-T in the world, is scheduled to stop production of the herbicide. The company which is based in New Plymouth was the New Zealand, was the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry into the correlation between the company's operations and its effects on the health of the residents of New Plymouth. The inquiry recommended continued manufacture of 2,4,5-T but that pesticides containing it be banned from use in public places pending further study. IWD will be introducing a replacement product for 2,4,5-T based on the herbicide triclopyr.

**Source:** Consumer Currents October 1987

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**Energy: renewable sources winning favour**

Renewable energy sources could provide for 5 to 6 per cent of the needs of the European Community by the year 2000, compared with 1.2 per cent now.

European Community Energy Ministers agreed recently that their governments would take measures needed to better evaluate the possibilities offered by renewable energy and to eliminate the legal, technical, or administrative obstacles to their development.

**Source:** EC News December 1987

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**Statistics on Animal Experiments**

A report is now available which provides the statistics on the use of animals for scientific experiments in Victoria for the year ending 30 June 1986. The report costs £2.50 (including postage) from Dept. of Agriculture Bookshop, 166 Wellington Pl., East Melbourne 3002.

**Source:** Victorian Update December 1987

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**Disarmament Door Knock**

A National Door Knock on Disarmament is being planned for 1988 by People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND) in various states. Discussion with people from local groups have shown much support for the idea. It is starting to shape up into the biggest national campaign for peace for many years.

The door knock will allow PND to engage the community in a dialogue, and will provide them with the views of the Australian electorate on these issues to present to the government and to the general community. It was agreed by representatives from PND that the 'questionnaire' would focus on three areas: Global security and disarmament; Perceptions of nuclear war and Australian Sovereignty.

A core questionnaire will be used so that the same information is collected all around the country. However local groups will be able to add questions to canvas opinions on local issues. Householders will be left with information about PND, the local peace group etc. They will be asked to sign a petition. It is proposed that the door knock be launched on Palm Sunday 1988 (27 March). Results will be published on several landmark dates. Possible ones include: 28 June 1988, when the North west Cape agreement comes up for renewal; in time for the ALP Conference; in time to send a message to the 3rd United Nations Special Session on Disarmament; Maralinga Day 1988. It is hoped that around 100,000 households will be contacted around Australia over a four to six month period.

**Source:** People for Nuclear Disarmament NSW.

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**Energia Nuclear? No Grazie!**

**Anti-nuclear Victory for Amici Della Terra**

In three referendums held on 8th November in Italy, a majority of voters said no to nuclear power, which represents a big victory for Amici Della Terra (FOE Italy) and the rest of the environmental movement.

The Italians were asked to revisit three laws concerning:
- the choice of a site for nuclear or coal-fired plants
- financial contributions or incentives from nuclear authorities to encourage the acceptance of nuclear or coal-fired plants in their regions
- the participation of the State energy utility ENEL in international projects involving the construction and operation of nuclear plants

Between 72 and 80 per cent voted to repeal the laws. The Italian Parliament then had 120 days to prepare new laws to replace the repealed ones. Given that, in the aftermath of Chernobyl, there is no longer a majority in Parliament in favour of nuclear power, it is unlikely that any new laws passed will restore what the great majority of Italian people have rejected.

**Source:** FOELink December 1987

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**Chain Reaction Summer 1987-88**
The meeting place was the Kosmos Building, Amsterdam— an apt name— Kosmos meaning 'a complete and harmonious system' inasmuch as it was a coming together of people who had a common interest—Friends of the Earth, defenders of the environment.

The three days of the Conference were a great experience—October 12, 13 and 14. The various sessions were different in so many respects from group meetings ‘back home’ largely, I suppose, because except for Milieudefensie Amsterdam, ‘back home’ was a formidable distance so no one was looking at their watch with some other appointment in mind. The sessions were expertly chaired and facilitated, any heatedness in the discussions skillfully manoeuvered to constructive debate and although there were no professional interpreters the language differences were no problem.

The majority of FOE groups all over the world were represented—diverse people with their own particular story to tell, some quite affluent, others fundless, but all dedicated to their areas of concern.

Close friendships were established in an amazingly short time and everyone felt that their contribution was worthwhile. Thank you Milieudefensie Amsterdam for your friendly reception, marvelous organisation and looking after us. We will always remember you, Jaap, Ton and everyone else at Damrak 26.

If you would like an account of all the business, phone or write to Eileen or Jane at 222 Brunswick St, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065, phone (03) 419 8700.

---FOE Australia---

The Friends of the Earth national meeting held in Sydney 16-17 January, 1988, once again demonstrated the variety of organisations which come under the umbrella of the name, Friends of the Earth.

Although the actual number of groups who attended was small, there were reports from most of the groups that are listed in each Chain Reaction. Sydney, Newtown, Fitzroy, Willunga and Chain Reaction each sent delegates. The reports will be covered in detail in future issues of Chain Reaction, and only brief discussion is possible here.

FOE Willunga is continuing to campaign on coastal and wetland environment issues relevant to their locality south of Adelaide in South Australia. The group recently organised a public meeting on the proposal to re-establish a lagoon, which has been crudely drained to be used for farming, firefighting practise, Bicentennial bonfires and rubbish dumping. The meeting filled the venue with twice its usual capacity and will put further pressure on the local council which has come up with a proposal to develop the site as a marina edged with high-priced building blocks.

FOE Fitzroy has established itself in its new premises at 222 Brunswick Street Fitzroy, and is now building up in campaigns and businesses.

FOE Sydney is continuing to be involved in energy and sewerage and other issues, as well as supporting research on uranium issues. They are looking forward to developing their membership this year and received money at the national meeting to that end.

The meeting considered issues relating to Friends of the Earth having national spokescreatures and eventually nominated Stuart White from FOE Sydney to speak on behalf of FOE Australia on energy issues. It is possible that FOE could nominate other spokespeople in the same area and there are a number of conditions to be met before national statements can be made, including extensive consultation with other FOE groups who express interest in the subject. A disputes mechanism was put in place in case there is ever any disagreement with any statements made and if the dispute is not settled, then there will be no further statements on behalf of FOE Australia. Local groups will continue to speak as local groups as they always have.

Stuart White was also nominated to be the Friends of the Earth representative at the meetings between environment and conservation organisations and the Federal Minister for the Environment. He replaces Peter Brotherton who has done good work at those meetings, and it is hoped that Stuart will be able to build on Peter’s work.

The next ordinary FOE national meeting will be January 20-22, 1989 at 222 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, with FOE Fitzroy as the host group.
There is considerable debate within the environmental movement over whether environmentalists should support the establishment of a high temperature incinerator in Australia. It seems that governments are dependent on this support to be able to site such a facility. Previous attempts have been thwarted by protests from local communities who do not want a high temperature incinerator and all the accompanying hazardous traffic in their vicinity.

On the one side, environmentalists argue that the storage of intractable wastes poses a potential hazard which responsible environmentalists should help solve. For this reason they support the construction of an incinerator and will lobby to make such a facility as environmentally sound as possible.

Here Sharon Beder argues that the establishment of a high temperature incinerator in Australia to burn intractable wastes will be counterproductive to the ultimate goal of minimising hazardous waste generation. She points out some of the risks associated with high temperature incinerators and explains why the short-term risks involved with the storage of intractable wastes are preferable to the long-term risks associated with the continual waste production which will occur if industry is helped to solve this problem in a way that does not alert the public to the folly of indiscriminate industrial growth.

Sharon Beder is a member of FOE Sydney and Engineers for Social Responsibility

The establishment of a high temperature incinerator in Australia to destroy intractable wastes such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and hexachlorobenzene (HCB) will provide industry with a relatively cheap solution to some of its more worrying waste disposal problems. At present intractable wastes which are generated by industry must be stored as there is no environmentally safe way of disposing of them.

The storage of intractable wastes poses an ever increasing and on-going cost to industry as wastes take up more and more space and are subject to higher and higher insurance premiums. ICI Australia which generates most of Australia's intractable wastes (76 per cent) and is responsible for the largest part of Australia's existing stockpile of these wastes, has been forced to spend considerable amounts of money on research aimed at minimising their wastes. This research would not have been undertaken if a high temperature incinerator was available.

The Incinerator as an Incentive for Waste Production

Until the mid-1970s ICI Australia directed its research and development towards recycling liquid wastes from its Ethylene Dichloride (EDC) Plant. By 1977 2400 tonne/year of liquid organochloride compounds from the EDC plant were being recycled. There remained a stock of 1500t of liquid waste which had been produced before the recycling operation and was unsuitable for recycling. This was incinerated by the incinerator, Halcon, which was chartered for a once off visit in 1982. (Cumming, 1986; 103) ICI was still, in 1977, recycling 600 t/year of a heavy tarry liquid waste and the heavy ends material from the solvents plant was also accumulating. Further research lead to the establishment of a heavy ends treatment plant in 1977 to recycle the liquid portion of the waste from the solvents plant leaving only the solid hexachlorobenzene (HCB) and in 1983 a thin film evaporator facilitated the recycling of a further 350 t/year of liquid waste. A flash evaporator was planned for 1987 to recover the rest of the liquid waste. (Cumming, 1986; 103)

ICI Australia has therefore been forced to solve its liquid waste problem in a way that its operations overseas have not because a high temperature incinerator was not available. Rather than recycling...
the liquid waste from EDC Plants overseas, high temperature incineration was just slated onto the end of the manufacturing process. At present ICI is directing research towards solving the remaining problem of the solid HCB waste. An ICI spokesman stated in 1986 that:

During the 1970s and early 1980s HTI (high temperature incineration) was regarded as the most appropriate disposal option for both technical and economic reasons. The economic justification is not so obvious now by comparison with recycling processes. (Cumming, 1986; 104)

ICI may not come up with an ecologically sound alternative for dealing with HCBs or a more efficient process which eliminates the production of these hazardous wastes, but one thing is for certain, once a high temperature incinerator is made available, the research will stop. An incinerator will remove any incentive there may now be for recycling intractable industrial by-products, for changing manufacturing processes that will minimise their production and for seeking out substitute products which can be made without creating hazardous by-products. An incinerator would not only act as a disincentive for research, but would also be less economic viability of new substitute products which could be competing with products like those from ICI's Solvents Plant in the near future. Substances refrigerants and solvents which do not rely on chlorine for a feedstock would not only overcome the problem of creating intractable organochlorines as by-products but would also be less threatening to the planet's ozone layer and climatic balance.

**Risks associated with a high temperature incinerator**

Proponents of the establishment of a high temperature incinerator in Australia are not to mention any of the uncertainties or risks associated with such a facility. Rather they emphasise the burning efficiencies that are possible given unlimited amounts of money and condition whereby anyone who want to promote incinerations should at least inform themselves of the risks and to openly public about them if they are to retain any integrity.

Combustion is largely an uncontrolled chemical reaction and it is conceivable for any organic material to be formed, especially when feedstocks are not pure. An Australian incinerator is likely to be fed with impure liquids and mixtures of chemicals. Moreover, it is not just the composition of the input which is of concern. All variables, including rate of input, must be kept relatively constant if high processing efficiency is to be achieved. For this reason, the solid HCBs generated by ICI are a problem since they cannot be fed into the incinerator in a smooth continuous flow as a liquid could be. (Cumming, 1986; 103)

Problems are created if all the waste is not burnt uniformly at a high temperature. In particular, a molecule trapped in a particulate matrix may not be heated to the incinerator temperature or attacked by a reactive radical (Tsang & Shab, 1982; 55). This is significant because new compounds may be formed during incineration if combustion is not complete. For example, if PCBs are not burnt at a high temperature, different environmental compounds are formed and this substance, which is even more toxic than the PCBs, would be released into the atmosphere.

Scrubbers do not solve this problem. The scrubbers associated with incinerators are designed to prevent the sulphur compounds formed as a by-product of incineration, such as hydrogen chloride (HCl) from being emitted. Incinerators with pollution control devices have been shown to consistently and effectively destroy or remove organic hazardous constituents from stack emissions (Greenberg & Anderson, 1984; 35). Moreover, substances containing volatile metals such as lead, mercury and arsenic form fumes which are difficult to remove (Wilson, 1989, 94). It should also be noted that the fundamental combustion characteristics of chlorinated hydrocarbons are not completely understood. It is known, however, that some of these chlorinated compounds can produce intermediate species that are more stable than the parent chlorinated hydrocarbon molecules (Exner, 1983, 50). Not only can the ash and the waste sludge from the stack collector contain hazardous compounds (Piascik, 1984, 118) but also the emissions consist of extremely fine particles that can be extremely dangerous because they can be carried huge distances whilst suspended in the air and are small enough to penetrate the natural defences of our lungs (Miller, 1982, 424).

Past experience overseas has shown that incomplete combustion is commonplace. Chlorinated dibenzofurans and dioxin have been identified in stack gases in low concentrations when PCBs are burned and there have been reports of ill-health downwind of high temperature incinerators. For example, at Bonnyridge in Scotland concern was expressed after an unusual number of cases of rare congenital eye deformities were identified in babies born in the vicinity. Similarly at Ponypool in South Wales, several cases of other types of uncommon congenital eye malformations were discovered. (Pearce, 1985)

At Bonnyridge, there was also an increased rate of cancer amongst people and an unusual number of deaths, illnesses and birth deformities, including blindness, amongst local cattle. A local farmer claimed the symptoms suffered by his cattle were very similar to those suffered by animals given feed contaminated with a relation of PCB, PBB in Michigan, U.S. Dioxins and furans were found to be in toxic form from his farm, and from milk and fat samples from his cattle. (Pearce, 1985)

Government reports have found that neither incinerator is to blame. The increase in cancer since the mid-1970s was said to be due to changes in diagnostic procedures; more notification of cancers by doctors and 'chance'. The reports admitted the 'unusual state of morbidity' amongst cattle but argued that it was unusual because of the numbers of the would that had died rather than because the diseases contracted were unusual. (Pearce, 1985)

The premise that an incinerator will burn to 99.99 per cent or higher efficiencies is not as certain as it sounds since standardised monitoring procedures are still being developed. Moreover less harmful by-products such as carbon monoxide are monitored as an indicator of combustion efficiency rather than the whole range of compounds that are of concern all being monitored. (Piascik, 1984; 177)

**Public perceptions**

The risks associated with the storage of intractable wastes are also very real, although not necessarily greater than those of incineration combined with transportation of wastes from all over Australia to a central national high temperature incinerator. There are two major differences however. The risks associated with an incinerator relate to a continuous emission and are concerned with the health effects from the everyday operation of a facility rather than, as in the case of storage, the possibility of an accident. Secondly, and more importantly, an accident at a storage facility, be it a fire or a flood, is immediately obvious to everyone. Action can be taken, blame can be sourced. An accident or a continual dangerous emission at an incinerator is invisible and, as in the case of bleaching, can be denied.

A major chemical accident makes headlines and becomes a social problem; a missed baby, even if it is in the tenth that month that is told, is seen as a personal problem. A major chemical accident, beyond questions to be asked about the generation of hazardous waste and a reappraisal of our way of doing things; no one wants to know about an unproven health risk in a remote locality from a facility that they are told is necessary. The dangers or faulty operation of such a facility are too easily hidden.

It is only when everyone becomes, painfully aware of the stores of intractable wastes all over the city that the real costs of our industries will be weighed against the increasingly marginal benefits of economic growth. Whilst the environmental costs of our affluent lifestyles remain hidden, they will never be far from the minds of many of the politicians who are looking to come up with a solution to hazardous waste problems, surely our first priority must be the long-term minimisation of wastes rather than a short-term technological fix that will allow everyone to breathe easier for a while but not too deeply!

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


What are they incinerating?

Geoff Evans attended the Second National Hazardous Waste Management Conference in Sydney in November 1987 as a representative of the NT Environment Centre. The conference was attended by about 200 people, mostly from the engineering and chemical industries, but also representatives from various federal, state and local government bodies and various environmental groups from around Australia. Here he discusses the problems and proposed solutions to our hazardous waste problem.

Hazardous chemicals and their 'management' is a growing industry. Thousands of new and toxic chemicals are released onto the market each year, and into industrial, domestic, agricultural and other processes which become interwoven with contemporary industrial/consumer lifestyles. To solve the problem effectively involves a long-term strategy tackling the whole direction of dominant economic, political and social relations, and taking on the vested interest of some of the world's most powerful corporations and their cosy relationships with governments. The problem of toxic chemicals in Australia is small compared to that of industrialised powers and many developing nations. However, in response to community and environmental movements the Australian Government has recently set up a National Hazardous Waste Task Force to examine the problem and make recommendations.

The problem of toxic chemicals, and participation of the environment movement and its activists in Government-sponsored committees raises serious moral and tactical dilemmas. These dilemmas are similar to those faced in the early days of the anti-nuclear/protest movement, regarding dealing with a problem at its source, and the relationship between short-term goals and long-term objectives. The anti-nuclear movement decided to raise the demand 'stop uranium mining' rather than, for example, 'develop safe re-processing or waste disposal sites and technologies'. The issue of eliminating the problem at its source is also relevant for campaigns around domestic hazardous chemicals and garbage, agricultural chemicals and ozone-destroying chemicals. The availability of 'disposal' technologies, provides the illusion of a technological 'fix', and rather than assisting to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals provides instead an incentive for rapidly expanding production of more, and more toxic, products. The absence of disposal options, in particular high temperature incineration, has been a major incentive to corporations to implement elimination, minimisation and recycling strategies.

This has been illustrated most clearly in the Australian context by the position taken by ICI, the major producer of toxic chemicals in Australia. Spokespeople for ICI now state 'the consistency and intensity of opposition to incineration... led to the conclusion that disposal (of chlorofluorocarbons) by incineration was not socially or politically feasible'. ICI is now looking at alternatives including source elimination, recycling and chemical and biological disposal methods.

Unfortunately there is an assumption, stated by the Federal Minister for Environment, Senator Graham Richardson, and supported by the 'industry', but also some environment organisations and activists, that a high temperature incinerator will be built somewhere in South East Australia. This assumption seems to be carried over into the guidelines and likely outcomes of the National Task Force.

Only when the elimination of toxic chemical production has been achieved should the environment movement consider proposing disposal strategies. Once 'disposal' facilities are established it is extremely difficult to remove them or to shunt dependency on 'in place' technologies and promote alternatives. This is likely to be the case even where incinerators are established as a temporary or mobile facility, or originally proposed only for chemicals no longer in production such as PCBs. Governments have been known to break promises, and communities have become locked into development strategies dependent on hazardous industries. In the meantime we can pressure for alternative production processes, monitoring and safe storage.

Chemical and waste management companies have developed very sophisticated techniques for winning support for incinerators, land-fills or other facilities in various government departments and in some communities, especially in economically-depressed areas.

The town of Emelie, in Sumner County, Alabama, USA is an example. In this depressed area of the South, ChemWaste Inc., a subsidiary of the world's largest waste disposal company Waste Management Inc., established a landfill for hazardous waste from the US Environment Protection Agency. Years later, with a legacy of accidents, leaks and lack of information to the community, the region is heavily dependent on the taxes from the waste disposal facility. Opposition to the facility has united black and white people in the region for the first time, as did a proposal for a toxic waste incinerator in my own town of Tennant Creek in Australia's Northern Territory.

Environmentalists should not support a technology which can assist to increase the production of more, and more toxic, chemicals until the more basic problems are resolved. While at the Conference I was told that a report commissioned by the NT Department of Mines and Energy, from Bechtel corporation, regarding a high temperature incinerator proposal for the NT has been completed, but has not been released to the public as was promised by the Government. I urge your support to get the report released.

An indication of the craziness of the industry was the game I played at the Conference, entitled 'Identify the site of Australia's high temperature incinerator'. This game, a variation of 'pin the tail on the donkey' involved conference-goers being invited to clip on their eyes and place a pin on a map of Australia, to see if their pin happened to be placed at a pre-selected, 'imaginary' site of Australia's incinerator. Blow me down if the winning pin didn't happen to be placed in Tennant Creek, just north of Tennant Creek. Just a humorous game for the enjoyment of the conference-goers we were told. Some joke.

Geoff Evans is an activist with the Northern Territory Environment Centre.

Earthquakes end plan for toxic waste

The Northern Territory Government has abandoned proposals for a high-temperature waste incinerator in the Tennant Creek area in the wake of a series of earthquakes.

The former Chief Minister, Mr Ian Tuxworth, the local member of Parliament and a long-time advocate of the toxic waste plan agreed. "The earthquakes have shown the area is not geologically stable, as previously thought," he said.

The Northern Territory Government has been investigating the possibility of establishing a large toxic waste incinerator near Tennant Creek for the past two years.

The earthquakes recorded on Friday and Saturday of last week were felt all the way to the Richter scale upper limit of seven on the Richter scale and were the strongest recorded in Australia this century. A team of scientists who investigated the area this weekend said they produced an earthquake of magnitude 5.2 which was felt for 35 kilometres along the coast of Tenfert Creek.

More small tremors were felt in Tennant Creek and other parts of the Northern Territory on Saturday.

Geoff Evans is an activist with the Northern Territory Environment Centre.
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE — THE PINE GAP ACTION
by Jo Valantine

I believe one of the most important points to emerge from the recent Pine Gap action in Alice Springs was a message about the effectiveness of nonviolent, civil disobedience.

Members of the peace movement, and, hopefully, the wider public were able to see through the events at Pine Gap that civil disobedience on a large scale is a most powerful and necessary tool for social change. There is, of course, a section of the peace movement that has always acted upon that knowledge. But I feel that Pine Gap was an empowering demonstration of this belief.

The organisers and participants held on to their commitment to non-violence and, as a result, were able to prevent the widespread and destructive confrontations that have sometimes happened in the past.

It was obvious that the authorities were on their best behaviour as well and, in the main, were well organised and even helpful! This was all helped to encourage community media coverage throughout Australia — and there certainly was a lot going on. In this regard, the action succeeded in raising the level of debate in the community about the function of bases such as Pine Gap.

I was very impressed with the decision making processes employed at the Pine Gap action. In fact, there was good attention paid to process in general. There were a number of workshops before the direct action took place which covered topics such as decision making processes, group facilitation, and strategies for nonviolent direct action. There was also an excellent session providing information on the function of bases in Australia so that everyone was well informed.

The events of the week were then followed up by evaluation meetings which generally were very positive. Given that there were so many different groups involved at Pine Gap, these workshops and meetings were very valuable, and I feel they were essential for the smooth running of the week’s events.

If the Government will not tell Australians what is happening at these foreign military installations then we are denied the chance of debating whether we want them here or not. In this respect, the Pine Gap action, as part of an ongoing education campaign, is therefore vital to us if we are to have any say in our future.

Of course, along with a commitment to civil disobedience is an understanding of the guiding Nuremberg principles. During my time at Pine Gap I invoked these principles and even tried to educate members of the media to their significance.

Nuremberg obliges us to act. According to these principles, the Australian Government is guilty of crimes against peace through its hosting of a military base that contributes to preparations to fight a nuclear war.

Our government makes it possible for the Australian Government is guilty of crimes against peace through its hosting of a military base that contributes to preparations to fight a nuclear war. We have a moral duty to break domestic law.

I hope that this case will be an important contribution to the ongoing action around the country opposing foreign military bases. Hopefully, it will once again focus attention on the individual’s moral duty to act and to speak out about our future.

With regard to other campaigns, PND in WA has been working for about twelve months to Take Back the Cape in ’88, aiming to see the US Naval Communications station at Exmouth in WA removed from American control and returned to Australia for use by the Australian Navy.
The base is an integral part of the US Maritime Strategy. Under the current agreement, in the event of a nuclear war, North West Cape would be able to transmit the signal for the US submarines to fire their long range nuclear missiles. The PND campaign aims to educate the community about the functions of the North West Cape so that people can then lobby the Government not to renew the agreement which covers the base and which falls due on 27 June, 1988.

In terms of my involvement in this campaign, I have been able to get North West Cape onto the parliamentary agenda at every opportunity in 1988.

Jo Valantine is the West Australian Senator for Nuclear Disarmament in the Federal Senate.
Perhaps one of the most revealing and sinister aspects of the deterrence debate is that it is possible to make jokes on the subject. Nikita Krushchev was quoted as saying that although the United States 'may be able to destroy us two times over, we're still capable of wiping out the United States, even if it's only once.' Another example from an unknown source - 'Deterrence must be the only subject is not in any way funny; so why about them are not appropriate. In fact, the need to, make it palatable with sinister aspects of the deterrence debate comedy? These jokes are revealing because the need for them is burned. Many people consumed in burned for half a day), in which every substantive, including the oxygen in the air, is consumed. Many people consumed in such a phenomenon, before dying from burns, would suffocate. Now, suffocation does not mean that lungs stop operating - if a person drowns, their lungs suck in water in an attempt to obtain oxygen. In the firestorm of a nuclear blast, then, suffocation would mean something like sticking your head in a blast furnace and taking deep, desperate breaths. Nuclear deterrence is a concept developed to stop humans being deliberately doing this to each other. That humans are capable of inflicting unacceptable costs upon them in a second strike. Hence both powers are deterred from using their weapons. This has supposedly been the basis of all developments, whether positive or negative, in the nuclear relationship between Russia and the US. It is supposed to be the basis of Australia's involvement in ANZUS. It is a lie.

Flexible Response

MAD, like massive retaliation, was a transitory phase of the nuclear weapons balance. It has long since been superseded, for parity was, of course, quite unacceptable to American pride. Disintegration of the nuclear balance of the early fifties, to a nuclear imbalance in the seventies, was motivated by this pride, and by fear (not knowledge) of 'falling behind' in the already accelerating arms race. Further, it was justified in relation to minimal deterrence, as described above - constant modification was supposedly needed to ensure a second strike capability was maintained.

The result of these factors was technological innovations that gave missiles greater distance and accuracy, more warheads (and hence more targets) per missile, and a wider range of delivery options (most importantly, from submarines). Such changes went hand-in-hand with changes in deterrence theory. Some theorists (notably Herman Kahn) had been wondering how to make nuclear weapons usable for some time. The continuing innovation of weapons brought this possibility ever closer. Being able to realistically threaten to use nuclear weapons was seen as imperative. At the time, all the US could threaten to do is Russia dropped one bomb on, say, Munich, was initiate a full-scale nuclear holocaust. Europeans were probably doubtful that the US would so. (Having big bombs was no good if the enemy didn’t believe you would use them.) Developing nuclear weapons technology so that some types were available for use in varying levels of conflict was essential for the US to provide its NATO allies with a credible commitment of protection. So the doctrine of using nuclear weapons was adopted, and veiled under the term 'flexible response'. Minimal deterrence, and all that stuff about a balance of power, was deliberately left behind. Smart boffins who picked this up were hopefully apprised with the notion that a more usable threat was synonymous with a more credible threat, which was less likely to be actually used. If you missed the logic there, it’s a healthy sign.

Counterforce

Once nuclear weapons had achieved the status of usability, the question became how and where to use them. Groundwork laid down by the theorists in earlier years now began to show real promise. Even a deterrence' moderate, Bernard Brodie, offered thoughts (in 1959) on the next step to be taken. Imagining a scenario in which Soviet forces successfully struck first at US military targets only, he then saw US nuclear forces, aimed at Soviet cities, as only able to serve one purpose - 'to initiate an exchange of city destruction'. The obvious inference from this is to aim your weapons at the enemy's weapons - 'counterforce' was Kahn's word for this. He, however, took these ideas much further, into the realm of fighting and winning a nuclear war, by extending the enemy's territory to bring in the first exchange.

Technology designed for this purpose has been produced in frightening quantities ever since. Waves of armaments revolutions and build-ups have coincided with official US endorsement of Kahn's 'applied deterrence' by McNamar, Schlesinger, Nixo, and of course Reagan. Modifications have been made to satellites and their ground stations, including those in Australia, to bring them into line with the doctrine of nuclear war fighting. So the lesson of nuclear history is that for our political leaders to be still mouthing phrases such as 'deterrent value' and 'stabilising effects' in an age of nuclear war fighting plans, is for them to be engaging in a pretty sick program of mass deception. So much for history.

Some writers have picked up on this, and come out strongly against flexible response and counterforce, with good reason. They worry about just how much of today's global political tension stems from the sheer number and size of nuclear weapons waiting to participate in any crisis. Communication via weapons of mass destruction is a tricky business — one side builds a sophisticated weapon it never intends to use, and yet threatens to use it. In today's climate of political scepticism, how can the adversary, respond in kind? The other great fear expressed about flexible response is that of escalation. Flexible response carries with it the notion that nuclear war can be 'limited' in scope and force, but if nuclear war broke out in the Persian Gulf next week, does anyone really believe it could stay there?

In desperation and despair, such writers cast their minds back to a forgotten age of minimal deterrence, when that minimal deterrence, when everyone knew that if nuclear war ever broke out, 'they would kill us all. Yes, they say, 'the MAD days were the good old days'. If only it was that easy. So the lesson of nuclear history is that for our political leaders to be still mouthing phrases such as 'deterrent value' and 'stabilising effects' in an age of nuclear war fighting plans, is for them to be engaging in a pretty sick program of mass deception. So much for history.

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At the end of the week of actions against the US spy base at Pine Gap organised by the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC) in October 1987, over 200 arrests had occurred.

Despite this large number, the heavy hand of the law had been largely unsighted. Both the Territory and Commonwealth police were paragons of virtue. There was little violence, provocation or even crowd control to be seen. Many participants have since argued that the behaviour of the police was a positive result of our use of Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA).

Others have argued that the civility of the police was no more than a reflection of our political ineffectiveness. Put in the extreme the argument goes that if we consider that god is the ultimate sanction against political activity then what does it reflect on our political campaigns that we are not being beaten or gaoled?

How then should we assess the police response and what does it mean in terms of our political effectiveness? How should we organise future demonstrations and what should be our attitude to the police?

I think that for a start there are a number of contributing factors, not only those suggested above, which explain the behaviour of the police. I also think that demonstrations need to be viewed in terms of our objectives both short and long term.

The police as I see it are empowered to use violence to enforce compliance with the laws of the state and to deter actions which threaten the interests of dominant sections of society. Whilst individually police might attempt to apply the law equally they are constantly informed by the Government which sections of society enjoy protection of their use, and which sections pose a threat. At Pine Gap, whilst the police had a vast array of draconian laws to choose from, including the Commonwealth Defence Special Undermining Act and the Territory Protection of Persons and Property Act, all demonstrators were charged with relatively minor offences. These included trespass, wilful damage (for digging under and cutting the fence) and the antiquated charge of ‘failing to cease loiter’ for blocking the Pine Gap work bus.

During arrests the police accepted the obvious alibis such as Christopher Boyce, Montachil Vananu and Karen Silkwood and had obviously been directed to avoid violent confrontation. Once arrested we were escorted to our custom built scaled lock-up complete with access to portable toilets, icy water and a varied selection of fruits!

The official charging and bail proceedings at the watchhouse were done by Territory police with somewhat less civility than our proceedings treatment by the Commonwealth security guards. However, compared with the treatment us usually meted out to ‘real criminals’, (harassment, intimidation, physical abuse, delays etc.) we were given the proverbial royal lunch-shake. Furthermore the police indicated to some protesters that they were not going to be overzealous in pursuing the charges.

The court cases resulted in penalties which were very moderate when viewed within the context of the maximum allowable (although not moderate in terms of many protesters’ income). However the magistrates appeared to take it upon themselves to provide ideological instruction to protesters, an example being — ‘Why don’t you use Parliament instead of illegal means to voice your concerns?’

The choice of minor offence, the generally civil behaviour of police during arrests, and the leniency of punishment noted out by the magistrates with the addition of the ideological instruction (as opposed to ideological instruction), must be seen as a reflection of the fact that we did not pose a real threat to dominant interests in society. We were obviously not about to ‘protest with violence’ or ‘use force’. Hence we were not worthy of their protection, and which sections pose a threat.

Why then were the police so lenient?

I think that we were demonstrating in somewhat stylidic conditions produced by previous political action against Pine Gap. Not only was the current Federal Labor Government a little sensitive about Pine Gap being raised on the country’s political agenda because of their Labor predecessors’ opposition, but the general public was already familiar with Pine Gap given the sympathetic and extensive media coverage of the Women’s Camp in 1983.

We should add to this that there was very probably a directive from the Federal Government to the police force to avoid confrontation, given the complaints made of police violence and lack of adherence to basic legal rights, by the women in 1983 to the Human Rights Commission. The Commission found these complaints to be substantiated although they had very little power to effect any change.

With this background as well as a number of demonstrations organised against Pine Gap in 1986 around Australia, I think there was an expectation on the part of the media that there could be a showdown and quite possibly a violent one at that. Pine Gap was certainly on the public agenda.

Given this, I think that either non-violent or more confrontationist methods of demonstrating would have been equally effective. We were something not only because of the factors mentioned but also by our numbers, by the extensive media presence and by our respectability as representing a broad spectrum of ‘middle’ Australia.

As for the methods we chose we were the most politically effective, I think that non-violence with the addition of more confrontationist means was well chosen as it challenged the media to take up the issues in the absence of violence. It was also beneficial in encouraging people to participate. Many more were prepared to be arrested because it could be done in such a respectable way and they had the safety of numbers.

It was also well chosen for building support from outside the ‘converted’ as it generated such a positive atmosphere and was not alienating. One goal in planning a demonstration must surely be to achieve the greatest political effect on the audience we are seeking to influence. For future actions, in deciding our methods we nonetheless have to use what we have, the material conditions, alliances, well known identities and so on.

Unlike many who are sold on ‘non-violence’ as the new demonstrating mode, I do not deplore the use of more confrontationist methods and I do not think that it has ever been convincingly argued that our ‘audience’ out there is automatically alienated by violence. My experience has been that views on violence are generally influenced by views on the issue.

Having said this I do not support indiscriminate violence particularly directed at persons and regard violence against persons as a last resort.

We were in a privileged position to air our views on Pine Gap. For those who have less access to voicing their concerns or whose struggles are largely ignored, violence is the only means to fight back. Ultimately also non-violence as an ideology relies on moral persuasion. It is unfortunately the reality that those with vested interests have few morals.

Ariel Couchman was a member of the legal support group at the anti-Pine Gap actions in October 1987.

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PINE GAP REVISITED

Action ahead

Inspired by the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific conference in April 1986, and a Melbourne production 'Pine Gap on the Agenda', anti-bases activists around Australia began linking together. Members of the Alice Springs Peace Group, who live only 18km from the sinister white radomes of Pine Gap were very conscious of the base's presence. A number of protests had already taken place there, including the Women's Camp in 1983.

Contact between the Alice Springs Peace Group and the Melbourne Anti-Bases Campaign led to a National Consultation in July 1986 when about 70 people gathered together to discuss the feasibility of campaigning nationally against US bases in Australia. At this meeting the proposal to form a national anti-bases coalition was forged, with a conference to launch this coalition planned for December that year.

The conference, held in Sydney, was an important step in the history of the anti-bases campaign. A Statement of Unity was accepted as the political basis for the coalition. In this statement the bases struggle was put into a regional perspective, where the struggle of indigenous people, especially Australian Aborigines, was seen as an integral part of the campaign.

Further Reading

Jim Falk's 'Taking Australia Off the Map' (Penguin) is an excellent introduction to the nuclear debate, from a helpful Australian angle and is widely available, even from public libraries. For the historical theorists, a good collection is L. Garrett's 'Theories of Peace and Security'. The alternative theorists should find flipping through Johan Galtung's huge 'The True Worlds' quite mind-expanding.

Finally, many thanks to Myrine and Wendy for their skills and hours.

Les Tate is a member of PND in Victoria and attended the anti-Pine Gap activities at Alice Springs in October 1987.

What next for the AABCC?

The next main event on the calendar of the AABCC is its Annual General Meeting, in the form of a conference, to be held in Melbourne on 27 and 28 February this year.

The Coalition is committed to a focus on North West Cape in 1988. This is not a household word in the way that Pine Gap is, but will be before long, if the plan of the AABCC succeeds.

Several working groups were established at the AABCC meeting in October ’87 — an indigenous Peoples Group and a Regional Links Group. The February conference will address the way in which these groups can work within the anti-bases campaign. Other campaigns, including one calling for a Public Inquiry into the bases, will be discussed at the conference.

Those who wish to learn more about the bases will be able to view videos on the evening of 26 February, and see an excellent slide set US Bases In Australia during the weekend of the conference. Reading material will also be available.

On behalf of the Coalition, I would like to extend an invitation to all interested people to attend this conference.

Dora Berenji is a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign in Victoria.
Warriors and terror

The articles by John Dixon-Jenkins in Chain Reaction and his continuing incarnation in Victorian gaols has led to a number of responses which are prickly in tone. There is a number of important issues being discussed here, including the meaning of non-violence, the use of fear, and the relationship between political and military action. This article provides a response to the articles by John Dixon-Jenkins, namely the continuing threat of nuclear holocaust, the defence of necessity, and the conditions in prisons. The Chain Reaction Collective believes that these issues are important, and we act in clear public discussion. Further contributions are welcome and Chain Reaction will attempt to keep readers up-to-date with developments in Dixon-Jenkins' situation.

Terror is terror

John Dixon-Jenkins is in gaol for threatening to kill school children and other people in the week following the 1984 Palm Sunday rally. He signed the death threats 'the anti-nuclear warrior', and demanded the Australian Government meet his demands for nuclear disarmament. Recently he repeated the tactic by threatening to blow up himself and other inmates in Bendigo prison.

Dixon-Jenkins maintains (CR 51) he is guilty of no crime, describing his actions as 'non-violent'. The logic of the situation, he maintains, 'dictates that there is virtually no act, no matter how terrible, which would not be legally justified if it could be used to put an end to the nuclear threat...'

In a world saturated by violence and acceptance of cruelty Dixon-Jenkins voices the true tone of the terrorist. His actions are an attempt to defend himself and his principle, with feigned reluctance, that it is 'the logic of the situation' that leads him to threaten death to himself and others. If he is guilty of no crime he would be clear that it is his decision, his preference. Dixon-Jenkins maintains that he is guilty of no crime. This is self-serving and immoral nonsense. He made clear in the design of his mock bombs that he placed in schools and shopping centres that he knew how to kill. He was threatened to kill. He was intentionally seeking to induce terror amongst those children, their parents, the workers in the shopping centres. And he was successful. He made many feel immediately and palpably afraid for their lives and for the lives of their children and friends. There is not a single moment in which he was not threatening to kill. He was intending to seek out terror amongst those children, their parents, the workers in the shopping centres. And he was successful. He made many feel immediately and palpably afraid for their lives and for the lives of their children and friends.

The articles by John Dixon-Jenkins in Chain Reaction and his continuing incarnation in Victorian gaols has led to a number of responses which are prickly in tone. There is a number of important issues being discussed here, including the meaning of non-violence, the use of fear, and the relationship between political and military action. This article provides a response to the articles by John Dixon-Jenkins, namely the continuing threat of nuclear holocaust, the defence of necessity, and the conditions in prisons. The Chain Reaction Collective believes that these issues are important, and we act in clear public discussion. Further contributions are welcome and Chain Reaction will attempt to keep readers up-to-date with developments in Dixon-Jenkins' situation.

Terror is terror

John Dixon-Jenkins is in gaol for threatening to kill school children and other people in the week following the 1984 Palm Sunday rally. He signed the death threats 'the anti-nuclear warrior', and demanded the Australian Government meet his demands for nuclear disarmament. Recently he repeated the tactic by threatening to blow up himself and other inmates in Bendigo prison.

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nuclear 'gun' pointed at every person on this planet' (The Tactics of Non-Violent Terrorism: a personal statement). Thus 'the defence of necessity'—that given one's sense of personal (and universal) threat to all life on the planet, there are certain actions that one might deem necessary to attempt to remove that threat. He therefore proposes 'non-violent terrorism'—a tactic designed to arouse prominent figures and the public from their torpor.

It is not hard to see enormous difficulties with the theory of non-violent terrorism. Firstly, 'non-violent' only makes sense if we confine 'violence' to physical acts. But bomb hoaxes and threats cause severe mental strain and may well result in physical manifestations of stress and heart attack.

Secondly, if these tactics were seen as defensible in a court of law, others with desperate causes (who would not act out of Dixon-Jenkins sense of moral imperative) may be encouraged.

My personal feelings towards John Dixon-Jenkins through reading his work and speaking with him across wire barriers at Pentridge Jail, are that he is, "a very courageous and highly moral person, acting from a fundamental vision of life, a vision that most people on this planet share. Dixon-Jenkins may well have misjudged the situation to have embarked on such a dangerous course of action. His theory and his tactics may be abhorrent (in fact he has always admitted this himself). However he should not and must not be abandoned by any of us working for deep social change in our society."

I suggest three courses of action —
1. Write to Mr. J. Kennan, Attorney-General of Victoria, c/- Parliament House, Melbourne, requesting a fair trial.
2. Write to the Victorian Ombudsman on the same basis.
3. Contact — The Committee for Justice for the Anti-Nuclear Warrior, co-ordinated by Eileen Goodfield. Address: 344 Stephenson's Road, Mount Waverley, 3149. Phone (03) 277 2066. For the Earth!

John Martin
Harrickshale, Vic.

Is the CES working?

by Stewart Dawson

The CES has two distinct functions. It acts as a 'work test' register and employment agency for the Department of Social Security (DSS) to monitor compliance with the provisions of Section 107 of the Social Services Act. This is concerned with the eligibility of unemployed persons for benefit and with the steps taken to secure employment. Second, the CES administers a variety of employment and training programs — JOBSTART, Training for Aborigines Program, Youth Access Centres, Career Reference Centres etc. But it has a third function; the evidence available suggests that the primary reason for the existence of this large and costly bureaucracy is that the Government must be seen to be doing something about unemployment and that it soaks up on the government payroll persons who would otherwise be unemployment statistics.

Thirty-two per cent of CES staff time is concerned with administration, management and staff training. In the financial year 1985-86 (latest available figures) this cost the taxpayer over $50.5 million. Sixty-eight per cent of staff time was spent on 'client servicing' — jobseeker servicing, servicing employers, self service job seeking etc., at a cost of more than $108 million, of which $11 million were spent on supervision of labour programs, that is, employment and training programs, which took 7 per cent of staff time.

What do the public get for this colossal expenditure? Only 7 per cent of staff time is spent on direct, constructive employment and training programs, the
intentions of which are laudable but the effectiveness of which are questionable. The rest is spent in running the comparatively small and very well-paid, and very well-operated, and very well-funded employment agency which does not have to compete with private agencies in terms of efficiency, results, resources or culture, at which the unemployed managers of the CES which frequently create hardship and suffering for its clientele.

The CES, according to its own literature, is required to provide an equitable and effective service to the unemployed and to the jobseekers and employers, develop and deliver employment training programs and provide them with the information on the labour market. It is supposed to respond to changing labour market pressures, varying community expectations and government priorities. It fails dismally and in 1985-86 it cost the taxpayer $82 million.

The Work Test

The 'work test' is a check on unemployment benefit claimants as to whether they satisfy the Social Services Act. This specifies that claimants must be actively seeking work to the satisfaction of both the CES and the DSS (Section 107a and 107d). The fortnightly income statement returned by claimants contains a declaration that this requirement is being adhered to.

In 1983 an appeal was lodged with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) against the DSS policy of compulsory CES registration in order to qualify for unemployment benefit. The AAT, following the case and the professional awards, indicated that the request for information on the CES does not have to be provided. It was noted in the AAT's decision that the CES registration is in order to qualify for unemployment benefit on the grounds that at the time, registration was a matter of DSS policy, not law (This requirement became law in 1986); that the CES failed to operate effectively that this statement returned by claimants contains a declaration that it is being adhered to.

All available evidence, from the Fraser Government's Williams Report onwards, using the ABS figures, indicates that practically all unemployed persons actively and desperately seek work. The backwards logic of blaming the victim by a bureaucratically and insensitive administration work causes irreparable psychological damage to the unemployed. It causes financial ruin and distress through its bungling misapplication, selective malicious application, and above all, in its application to the average CES does not operate effectively that it presents another form of mindless and unnecessary harassment. Self Service

Self service is the process whereby persons attend the CES and engage about jobs posted on the job boards, and is provided on newspaper advertisements in which a minimal amount of information — type of work, age requirements, wages, and so on — is provided. After selecting a job, the unemployed then write down the coded information number, see reception and wait to be interviewed. The name, address and phone number of the prospective employer are not listed on the job board. At this stage, the applicant cannot assess for themselves whether it is actually worth the wait to investigate the job advertised. It may be a company they have previously worked for; it may be a place they have already been sacked from. It may be located well away from public transport; the address is not given; it is impossible to make a realistic decision. And because the phone number is not given, the unemployed cannot make their own enquiries as mature adults.

When a clerk is available, the jobseeker is taken to a booth, where the clerk examines the person's CES file. Irresistibly, if the person has been unemployed for more than about four months (the average term of unemployment is now approximately a year), the interview is first and primarily concerned with the person's previous attempts to obtain employment. This has two effects: first, the person's self-confidence is shaken as they are made aware of their previous failures at job applications. Second, the clerk will question the person about whether they are serious about looking for work, the degree of questioning varying with the number of times the person has previously been interviewed by the CES for other jobs — each interview is recorded and dated. Note that this does not indicate how many times the person has been to the CES in search of suitable work, only the number of times they have been interviewed.

Only then will the clerk key the job code into the computer to reveal the name, address and phone number of the employer who must interview a reluctant jobseeker. It is a common exercise in harassment. It is a common procedure not to interview the person to whom it presents simply a reduction in unemployment and the lengthening of duration of unemployment since the CES now stocks jobs from at least half of the towns on the job contact information. Again, the CES does not respond to complaints from jobseekers who have found gross discrepancies between the nature of jobs advertised and the reality of the situation at the job interview. Frequently, job cards are not replaced when the position vacant has been filled. Jobseekers are externally applying for jobs which no longer exist — a bit like accidently using last week's newspaper. Employers frequently do not notify the CES when they have filled a vacancy, particularly when they have filled it from the job boards.

Jobstart

This is the successor to NEAT and the CEPEP. The CES has had nothing to do with the creation of the CES, which is the largest source of jobs in the city of 30 Chain Reaction Summer 1987-88

unemployed. If they are 'genuinely seeking work' they will be happy with the employee, having had sufficient time to train them to the point that they may well then retain the services of the employee. Both these assumptions are totally wrong and have
cost the taxpayer millions of dollars for nothing — but the employment figures look better, for a while.

According to a study made in 1986 by the ANZ Bank, for years, a common complaint from employers has been that labour was too costly in Australia. That situation exists now also. The study indicated that on a gross national basis Australian workers were paid less for their skills than those in several other comparable countries. Similarly, labour-costs are substantial but not exorbitant on a world scale (The Age, 16/9/86). A report by the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia has also questioned the assumption that many Australian businesses that labour costs prohibited expansion (same source). The assumption of labour programs is that 'high labour costs' must be subsidised during training.

SYETP subsidised for 17 weeks, Jobstart subsidies for 6 months. Most people on training are 'trained' to fill supermarket shelves. This is at most two days. Mick Young again: 'Not only has the training element been a farce, but the poor young person has been subjected to what the Brotherhood (of St. Lawrence) rightly calls a discrediting personal effort! — Perhaps his opinions have changed now that he is in office. The training programs are used by employers not to train staff but to pocket the difference between the subsidy and the wage they would have paid.

CIS 'marketing' of Jobstart is not concerned with job creation but with the financial saving to the prospective employer. Employers often do not retain the services of 'trainees' after the subsidy finishes. SYETP was notorious for this. A round robin of subsidised labour programs is now being used by employers to fill trainee positions that are not needed. The subsidy, then, although not as nothing during training.

The CES is successful in filling vacancies (around 80 per cent are filled each year), only because of massive unemployment and its promoted but unartists image as a large employment agency. In filling these vacancies, much undue hardship of the unemployed jobseeker occurs. On the only available figures, the CES filled less than 20 per cent of all job vacancies. Most obtained work through newspaper advertisements and through direct approaches to employers. The government would be better off to pay the papers for space in employment sections giving employers free recruiting space. Employers do not prefer to recruit through the CES and jobseekers are harassed by the CES if they grow reluctance to use its services.

The total cost of running the CES and its programs was $228 million in 1985-86. Only 14 per cent of that time was spent jobsearching and administering labor market programs. Although there are significant problems in both these areas, the biggest and most unnecessary problems are on administration, working test, and on duplicating the function of a newspaper advertisement — the most effective method of securing employment. The CES worstokes create a massive hardship in the community. Because of its low position in the overall job market, the CES is not as effective as an employment agency.

The CES should be abolished in its entirety and the few special programs it runs given to the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce. The problem however is that scrapping the CES would lead to 6000 clerks and bureaucrats on the dole queue, and this is politically unfeasible. The solution is probably for both jobseekers and employers to treat the CES as an unnecessary relic, and hope that it fades into oblivion.

UNEMPLOYED! NEED OTHER HELP!

Well, after all of this good advice, if you still cannot comprehend the good of the CES.

They have more about what you started than practically anyone else.

And free to front up and ask for advice. Like how you stared, or what to do in an interview, or how to sit.

It’s simple. You tick up the questions and the CES can help you get the answers. And remember, there is much more the CES can help you with, aside from only telling you about vacancies.

Every week, ask...

If you have been out of work for a while, ask about special CES programs.

Like Job Search Training, it’s a CES scheme that’ll help improve your job search skills and show you how to get the job. Especially if you’ve been unemployed for 6 months or more.

Or Community Programs like CYSS and the Youth Support Scheme and Community Volunteer Programs. They’re programs that have been specially devised to encourage you personal skills to help you GET AND KEEP A JOB.

From a CES pamphlet

Wednesday 10 February 1988

Gloom keeps shares falling

Australian shares prices fell again as gloom about the international oil and gold markets deter local investors. The all ordinaries index loses 22 points to its strong lowest level since October.

Meanwhile, the ANZ Bank reports that the sharemarket crash continues to weaken the job market. The number of jobs advertised last month fell by 6.8 per cent since May 1985.

Gun rebellion warning

From the Age "they that they..."

Seven anti-nuclear and environmental activists involved in the protest against the, sitting of a radioactive dump first at Papan, and then at Bukit Merah, have been prominent amongst those arrested in the recent Malaysian governmental crackdown. They include Mr. Tan Ka Kheng, the Vice-President of the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia (EPSM), an ardent campaigner in the Papan-Bukit Merah anti-radioactive movements; Mr. Menonhalu Raman, one of the lawyers acting for the residents of Bukit Merah; Mr. How Yoon Tat, the President of the Papan Anti-Radioactive Committee (PARC) and other ordinary residents of Papan and Bukit Merah.

The protest first began in November 1983 when the residents of Papan (a small agricultural town of about 2,000 people) discovered trenches being built near their vegetable farms and the tin mines where they were employed. These trenches, they soon discovered were to be dump sites for radioactive waste from a nearby factory Asian Rare Earth Sinn Bhd. (ARE). The main principals of the company are the Japanese corporation Mitsubishi Chemicals and two Malaysian concerns: the Pilgrim Management Fund Board and BEH Minerals. Sources close to government are said that if that should occur, more than 100,000 people who live around the river would also be affected.

After a year's licence from the Malaysian Atomic Energy Licence Board however, ARE started production again on 5 February 1987, in defiance of the court.

On 12 April 1987, 10,000 residents from five villages surrounding the ARE factory staged a protest march. This followed the resumption of production by ARE and the visit by Atomic Minister Ernesto Bertarelli, the internationally renowned scientist, who had found that radiation levels in the area were extremely high. A recent government study by another radiation expert revealed that 40 out of 60 children in Bukit Merah suffered from abnormal bloodcounts.

Consequently, the residents of Bukit Merah filed a suit against ARE on 8 September 1987 seeking:

• an injunction restraining the company from producing, storing, and keeping the toxic and radioactive wastes upon its land and adjoining lands;
• an injunction to restrain the company from repeating or continuing the nuisance set out above or any similar nuisance;
• a mandatory injunction for the removal and proper disposal of the toxic and radioactive wastes in ARE's land and adjoining lands;
• damages, interest and costs, plus other relief deemed fit by the court for the purposes of the above claim.

During the five-day hearing, protestors marched from Bukit Merah to the High Court wearing PARC T-shirts with anti-radioactive Arings. On the grounds that the march and assembly were illegal, some protestors were arrested.

On 19 September 1987, the residents of Bukit Merah applied for another court order seeking to compel the deputy managing director of ARE, to prison for contempt of court. They claimed that ARE had produced and stored radioactive wastes on its land adjoining land, despite a court injunction issued two years ago preventing this.

It is significant that the arrests of the seven people involved in the Papan-Bukit Merah protest has occurred at this time. Court hearings on the on-going suits are to be conducted very soon. Tan Ka Kheng, one of those arrested, was reportedly going to be a prime witness on the plaintiff's behalf.
In the early hours of 2 June 1987, Katya Komisaruk broke into Vandenberg Air Force Base in Southern California and dismantled an IBM mainframe computer used for NAVSTAR, a guidance system for targeting missiles. A 28 year old woman of Russian Jewish descent, Katya named her action after the White Rose, a group of university students executed in Nazi Germany for leafletting and protesting at the treatment of Jews.

In an interview she described the similarity between the Third Reich and US Government today with the degree of xenophobia, distrust of other nations, expanding militarisation, the fact of a demagogic leader who bemuses the public, uses the media in a particularly effective way, who presents very simple answers to complex questions and who somehow maintains popular support despite evident corruption.

The action was carried out alone and only after much careful planning. Katya had no difficulty getting into the base after studying government survey maps and was surprised to find the gates open. After entering the base she locked the gates, leaving behind a note saying she was unarmed and that her action was non-violent. She also left some flowers and cookies. Once inside, Katya entered a building labeled NAVSTAR by breaking a window, located the computer terminal and proceeded to remove the chip boards and damage them beyond repair. She then drilled holes in the satellite dish and sprayed slogans on the buildings.

The original plan allowed five minutes to elapse before Katya was arrested but after two hours she realised that the security were still unaware of her activities and so she hitch-hiked home and joined the rest of San Francisco at that time of day and had a shower and breakfast.

The following morning at a press conference, Katya described her actions inside the base and explained her reasons. She was then arrested by the FBI.

Katya was charged with destruction of government property and destruction of national defence materials (sabotage). The only civilians successfully prosecuted for sabotage in peacetime are the four Silo, Pruning, Hooks and Martin Holladay, all of whom damaged nuclear missile silos in Missouri.

Her defence involved the Nuremberg Principles which state that a citizen not only has the right but the duty to interfere with a government when it is preparing for a war of aggression, a crime against humanity. However, during the trial the judge ordered that the words 'nuclear missile' and 'first strike' were not to be uttered in the courtroom and Katya was precluded from talking about her motivation in destroying the computer.

On 13 November, Katya was found guilty and on 13 January this year was sentenced to five years jail and ordered to pay $US500,000 ($A700,000) to cover damages to property. The defence lawyers feel that the judge made a number of reversible errors and there are grounds for an appeal. Katya is at present in a women's prison in San Francisco.

The NAVSTAR Global positioning system (GPS), when fully operational later this year, will consist of eighteen orbiting satellites broadcasting navigation signals to any point on the planet. These signals will provide Trident II and other nuclear missiles with the necessary guidance to give warheads unprecedented accuracy to knock out hardened targets like Soviet missile silos and command centres in a nuclear first strike. The satellites and their ground based support system are integral to any US plan for first strike.

In an answer to a question from Australian Democrat Senator Norm Sanders last May, Senator Gareth Evans, representing the Minister for Defence, said that the Australian Defence Force will use the NAVSTAR/GPS for survey, navigation of sea, air and land platforms and expects it to increase the effectiveness of the Australian Defence Forces. The Smithfield TRANET station in South Australia, according to Senator Evans, is involved in the research and development of NAVSTAR as is the School of Surveying at the University of New South Wales.

For more information, to express support and/or make donations to Katya's defence, contact:

Katya Komisaruk Defence Collective
170 Fellows St
San Francisco
CA 94134
USA

or

Liz Denham
c/o Peace Centre
102 Bathurst St
Hobart 7000
Tasmania, Australia
Film

Ground Zero Directed by Michael Pattinson and Bruce Myles, based on the original story by Ian Sardi, Mac Gudgeon and Michael Pattinson, released 1987. Reviewed by Chris Sanderson

Skimming briefly over the surface of Australia's nuclear history. In an old red Holden, magic cars, those Holdens, blasting round the outback in the search for truth — but sadly it didn't make it to the end of the movie. *Ground Zero* is a film which is not short on righteous indignation in its search for truth, yet it never really hits the targets despite taking potshots at a few good ones... Menzies, ASIO, the Royal Commission on Australia's nuclear history. In an old red Holden, the clues it dangling in front of us get swallowed for the relentless purpose of driving the film forward — out of that extraordinary country where all the secrets are. But the plot falls down, and the clues float apart, and the connections don't get made. There are several speeches about nuclear hell, but not ones that will sear you with any sense of why, or how, only who dunnit.

A film about Maralinga should have got you by the gut. It didn't. It should have had the stink of corruption and mortality on it, and it didn't. It wanted, to advocate for the Aboriginals and for the nuclear veterans, but it has abused both of these groups in the process of turning them into movie-fodder. That's very sad... Maralinga as a story-opportunity. Wow, what great country for a car-chase. What on earth can the helicopter crash into around here? How do we get to the back to the east coast where the real action is? These questions, and many more, are the ones that stay in your mind after watching this film, but knowing the answers changes nothing.

Chris Sanderson is a Chain Reaction reader.

Books

Political Blues by Peter Garrett, Hodder and Stoughton, Sydney, 1987, $34.95(paperback). Reviewed by Fran Macdonald

Peter Garrett's book, *Political Blues*, is primarily for young people who are seeking to develop a critical consciousness and understanding of social and environmental issues in Australia. For anyone seriously involved in politics, it may appear at first to be fairly light reading. However, it provides a refreshingly clear, assertive and often startlingly direct approach to our political clime. For anyone interested in reaching the personality of this influential and prominent Australian, it is also a real insight. As Garrett states in the book: 'It is time to draw the line. To say quite clearly what we believe to be right and wrong and why we believe it. This is exactly what he does.

The book is a collection of short articles which Garrett originally wrote for the weekly column of a capital city newspaper on topical issues and aimed at young readers. As such, it covers a wide range of subjects from land rights and US bases in Australia to advertising and the In Vitro Fertilisation program.

Garrett does not provide much more factual information than you would be able to read in the general papers, but he does explain, simply and succinctly, how these issues have been manifested in our society which is especially useful for young people who are just introducing themselves to the wider political world and want an overview of what's going on. However, the articles are not meant to be merely neat summations of the facts. Garrett is an activist in earnest against what he sees as the injustices of this 'bankrupt, militarised, mixed up, shook up world' and his writing is really passionate, fast-thumping appeal to Australians to shake ourselves out of complacency, to stop accepting media and advertising hype, seriously question our government's compromising social, economic and foreign policies and realise that we have a responsibility to the wider world. He does not offer many immediate practical solutions to the problems except the most fundamental solution: a dramatic change of attitude, 'a major shift in values'.

In this, he has a good chance of success with his readers because his eloquent arguments are nothing if not forceful and his anger infectious. The style shifts and changes throughout the series of essays. It is often personal and anecdotal, as in the article entitled 'Visits by nuclear-armed ships' where he describes his own involvement in the peace fleet. Sometimes, he presents a more direct submission based on the general state of things, as in the article about the 1986 Budget and the one about the Bicentenary where, in the space of only a few hundred words, he details the decline of Australian civilisation, growing poverty, youth unemployment, over-development of industry and high technology, gene engineering, destruction of the environment, urban congestion and our politicians' lack of integrity, among other things, as the issues we have to face in 1988. Often Garrett's polemic is forceful, although he maintains his sense of humour. Witness this description of what the Australia Card would have enabled the powers that be to find out about us:

Where you lived, where you worked, number of traffic offences, last time in hospital, length of time receiving unemployment benefits, what you bought at the supermarket, last time you visited a counsellor, what movie you stayed in when you last visited Melbourne, how old you were last time you played in town and so on and so on.

Always, he displays a trenchant sense of irony. My favorite article is the first one in the book, the plight of Australia's original inhabitants. Garrett's satirical wit is put to best use in this satiricalprecis of 200 years of history.

His style has always been confrontational and hard hitting and he has never been afraid to tackle issues he feels are important. In his music, political activities and now in his writing, he appeals directly and passionately to our sense of responsibility for our society and for our environment.

As a result, Peter Garrett has become a real force on the Australian political scene. This book is a luminous and persuasive way, confirms the breadth of his interest and extraordinary depth of his commitment.

A last mention should be made of the book's graphics: it is illustrated throughout with drawings by first year students at the School of Design, Randwick College of TAFE. Apart from adding to the book's colour, the graphics strengthen the idea that this book involves young people who will hopefully carry the 'major shift in values' Garrett sees as essential to the future.

Fran Macdonald is a volunteer with FOE Fitzroy.
John Batman and the Aborigines by Alastair H Campbell, Kibble Books, Malmsbury, 1987, 326 (paperback) $20 (hardback) Reviewed by Cam

This is an excellent book which gives a different perspective to the traditional history of white settlement of the Port Phillip region. It dispels a lot of myths about how Melbourne was settled, and how the land was obtained from the traditional land owners and about the motives and character of the early pioneers.

Perhaps the major point of this book concerns the treaty which John Batman is supposed to have made with local Aborigines. Batman claims to have obtained around 600,000 acres from eight tribes.

Reviewed by Cam
their purpose. The creeping strategy takes as long as they need, transferring staff, limiting funds, making useful and thoughtful people disappear. The collective runs on a little nudge here, a little nudge there, whittling away access, transferring staff, limiting funds, making useful and thoughtful people disspirited. And now the collective. I can only go by what I read. But surely pens and paper are the most accessible means of sending our thoughts and that should not be discouraged in a magazine which represents access and freedom of opinion?

The worst thing about a computer is its convenience. And people are into convenience. Yet there are few tasks that a computer can do conveniently or satisfactorily. And most tasks are like this. So why are we moved so quickly from a quirky, handwritten society to a logical electronic version? It is a great big confidence trick. Worse, the push for this particular machine is coming only from those minds who want to limit our use of our own. If this sound fanciful ask yourself what computers have ever done which gave you greater control over your life? How many keyboard users have RSI? How do you feel getting a computer's "print-out" instead of a letter written by hand or, at least, typed and signed by a human being?

And the seemingly participatory collective has joined the computer club; So much for friendship and accessibility! It's not all as bad as it seems, I'm sure. But I do question where convenience should take over from thoughtful and kindly efficiency. My own experience of computers is probably much the same as other people, I took little notice of them, even when they turned up in offices where I would work. Then I came down to a new Earth with a thus. In the past 18 months I've struggled with three different computers and their programs. If you could see this letter you would have recognised a computer printer as its immediate source. Yet I have never felt the computer and its use to be in more urgent need of thorough discussion.

An experience of working with groups which use centralised computers is that they slowly get ground down and little computers are "centralised". So why use the modern office to better and narrow the workplace, touching and feeling. Now it's all cold and oh, so clear logic with its relentless, incomprehensible and certain, or callous and unthinking.

The "central person" feels besieged. But by what, exactly?

When you think about it the computer is the natural mate of the "meat" and uncrushing mind. You know, the corporate easiness that makes the public services and large corporations what they are: vacuum cleaners of the poetic and human world which we have all made help to make liveless. But about the way we would come to think as we come one computers more and more? It's going to be a world of the abstract and logical, it's a world of human beings running on one side of their minds. Do abstract thinkers over picture with their minds? Can they imagine entirely different worlds, full of laughter and joy, of clean water and unmitigated green valleys and unerroring seas. Of people singing at their work. Of younger lovers and older lovers. Of courageous and critical citizens. Places of danger, but no fear, of threats yet no favours.

Computers never work alike as the makers and the minds imply that they can, so the results are flawed. Never has it been so hard to prove one has not been misread, or that a disinformation occurred at the wrong moment and was slipped by the wrong person in the wrong context. Do you know what I mean?

Yet for all the millions of individual examples of deceit and disdain and plain rudeness that we have all experienced at our end of computers and operators how much effort has gone into public debate of their use and effect. Until recently I felt that my experiences were just another example of the intrusive and expressive commercial and administrative sides of our society... that little could be done. But then I read about a computer specialist in the US who asked all these questions and more. His name is Joseph Weizenbaum and he has written a book called "Computer Power and Human Reason." The most chilling part of his writing is his description of the way that computer affects minds begin to change. It is an insidious process and one that eventually makes them very hard to "reach" to bring about reasonable debate about the use of the machines, they have devised themselves to. After experiencing the aching desperation of a man who did not know how to describe what was happening to himself Joseph's book is a wonderful reassurance. It says that there are others facing the same problems and trying to come to grips with them.

That's good to know. For no longer are these minds hiding solely under mountains in Russia and America. They are no friend of Earth, in these circumstances it would be wrong for Chain Reaction's collective to think of demanding computer dictating instrutors for administrative convenience. Let's talk and write thoroughly about this subject and understand precisely what we require of the technology before a change of mind consents us to a course we may regret.

Russell Griffis

Note to Editor: This letter is available on a returnable 3.5 inch Apple disk.
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