Green Election Fever
Nurrungar — Non-violent Confrontation
“We need a change of heart” — Hugh Stretton interview
also: Coronation Hill; Nuclear News; and more
East Gippsland
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Celebrate East Gippsland's magnificent forests!
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* a two-week walk through East Gippsland’s forests, visiting an amazing diversity of forest including areas now protected in National Parks, and National Estate forest that is threatened by logging

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Ruddall River Aboriginal's fight against uranium mining - the death of Bondi - quest for a nuclear free and independent Pacific - plastic, what future? - Greens & unions - are just some of the green issues Tribune covers.

As well as the best left coverage of current affairs in Australia and internationally.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER
8 ISSUES OF TRIBUNE FOR $4

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Multi Function Polis

It seems to me that the proposed Multi Function Polis (MFP) could critically and dangerously, shape future Australian research and technology, economic paradigms, and industry/labour relationships.

The implications are enormous. In fact, although environmental research, as the latest bandwagon, has recently become one of the critical intervention, the MFP proposal, it seems resources, and competitive market economics’ (with the concomitant exploitation and establishment an international play-off of alternative, sustainable ‘workers’) ... or retains any independent control of its national future, or environment.

If confronted now, we can expect to publicly demonstrate election, leap in the present deregulation, privatisation, the trends towards deregulation, privatisation, the 'rational' economics hierarchy generally, including foreign ownership of Australian property, industry and intellectual resources into the bargain.

As a joint Australian-Japanese Government project, initiated by MITI and funded by a selected membership consortium of major Australian and Japanese corporations, such has been very little public opinion, or debate, on its goals, structure, or implications. So far it has surfaced only in brief, vague, media 'kite-flying' statements, obviously testing public reaction, teasing up enthusiasm, and laying the grounds for post-pulp 'we told you so' - when we have been told nothing.

I suggest that it is urgent to establish a network of critical debate within the trade nations, green movement, universities before it becomes a fait accompli - possibly in March 1990.

Eric Mack
Glen Osmond SA

Euro not Eurasian

In reading Peter Springell's review of David Suzuki's new book (Chain Reaction) 33 he states some figures on the energy consumed by aircraft and ships. Direct energy consumed by aircraft is about 32,000 kj/km, as compared to 600 kj/km for ships. One reason for the energy difference in these figures is the large amount of energy used by aircraft in overcoming the force of gravity. It's a bit like comparing a cyclist. The walkers legs use a considerable amount of energy supporting his/her weight. A cyclist can travel about 5 times the distance using the same amount of energy.

Obviously the figure of 600 kj/km can be reduced significantly if ships make more use of our abundant supply of wind power.

Ashley Campbell
Black Forest, SA

Flying into the Greenhouse

In reply to Margret Dingle's letter (Chain Reaction) 34 here are some figures on the energy consumed by aircraft and ships.

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Ashley Campbell
Black Forest, SA

You are invited to write letters to Chain Reaction with your comments on the magazine or any other issues of interest. Letters should be kept within 300 words so that as many as possible can be published. Longer letters may be edited. Write today to Chain Reaction, GPO Box 9001, Adelaide, South Australia.

Alternative Economic Policy

In his article "Is Growth So Bad?" (Chain Reaction 57), Ian James's advocacy of a no-growth economic policy is most unhelpful and personal levels of consumption (Chain Reaction 57), and to seek the transition to a sustainable future, with a minimum of dislocation by planning the necessary changes in good time, and by increasing public awareness of the problems ahead.

All twenty Objectives remain current and form the basis of progressive policy updates over the years.

To resolve or alleviate this country's economic and environmental problems (and the two are fundamentally interrelated), we need both reduced production and consumption of socially, environmentally and economically wasteful products and processes, as well as an alternative economic policy which is based on actual economic, monetary values, but also on social and environmental values.

In his article "Growing Pains" (Chain Reaction 58), John Young advances the debate and points out correctly that 'GNP makes no distinction between good growth and bad growth, and doesn't consider the costs of growth'. Both James and John call for a new way of measuring our national accounts which would more appropriately reflect our social, economic, and environmental well-being.

When the Australian Democrats formulated amongst our twenty Policy Objectives at that time were the following:

To accept the challenge of the predicament of humanity on the planet with its exponentially increasing population, disappearing finite resources and accelerating deterioration of the environment; and to seek the transition to a sustainable future, with a minimum of dislocation by planning the necessary changes in good time, and by increasing public awareness of the problems ahead.

All twenty Objectives remain current and form the basis of progressive policy updates over the years.

One of our most recent policy updates, balotted by Democrat members, was "The Economy - Towards a Sustainable Society". The policy is designed to realise the interdependent goals of social equity, environmental sustainability, democratic control and international responsibility.

Without going into all the details of the policy here, some of the major and progressive elements include:

• replacing GDP with more appropriate measures of national well-being to include environmental costs and social costs (e.g. the loss of soil fertility from farming and the social cost of car accidents) - similar to John Young's suggestion of Net Human Benefit;
• reviewing the definition of work: This would be done in the context of technological change and our social and ecological objectives, and would include changes to working hours, work patterns, the relationship between paid work and domestic labour and income needs, and an expansion of both socially useful work and the recognition of employment beyond traditional occupations;
• introduction of a National Income Scheme (or guaranteed minimum income) to ensure that all citizens receive a basic income which is guaranteed and maintained while enabling people to contribute to their income as their abilities permit. This scheme would ultimately replace all existing social security and benefit payments and ensure that people may move in and out of formal employment with dignity and without fear for their livelihood;
• the reduction and, where possible, elimination of environmentally unacceptable (polluting, resource wasteful) products, as a requirement for industry plans to incorporate environmental and social responsibility into production processes and products, and the development of national and international Environmental Development Fund to assist in the creation of industries and employment with the interdependent goals referred to above, including the development of import replacement industries;
• economic policy making and planning processes which maximise the decentralisation and democratisation of decision-making within a framework of an integrated approach to social, economic and environmental decision-making oriented to equity, sustainability and democratic control at national, regional and local levels.

(The processes employed for the development of a sustainable society are themselves the successful achievement of such a society.)

John Young states that "like most of the worthwhile reforms of the past, the transition to a sustainable economy will be difficult and frustrating - there will be setbacks and blind alleys as well as progress". There will also be setbacks for varying degrees as we have seen in the articles by James and John and the airing of these views is of itself refining the debate and ensuring that mainstream decision makers. As with environmental issues generally, we are now seeing the concepts of growth and sustainability discussed at all levels of government and throughout the community. (Of course we all need to be ever-vigilant to ensure that the real meaning of sustainability is not watered down or corrupted as it becomes part of mainstream policy making and plans.)

It is only by exploring the diversity of views that we will be able to refine and present fully integrated social, economic and environmental policies capable of achieving widespread understanding and support, recognised by James as being necessary for their implementation. Indeed, that is the process the Democrats have been engaged in for the past 12 years.

Heather Jeffcoat
Australian Democrat

Copies of the policy, "The Economy, Towards a Sustainable Society," can be obtained by writing to me at 10-12 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, ACT, 2600, phone (062) 721059.

Spring 1989 • 3
Somehow or another, you are reading another excellent article which have led to the extra pages of this issue, and perhaps go some way toward explaining its delay.

We have also managed to be students, workers, parents and friends, all of which seemed to take up some of the time we could spend on Chain Reaction. And, of course, something must be said about the creative chaos that surrounds the production of each Chain Reaction. With more or less co-ordination, a group of unpaid workers beg, borrow and steal (and sometimes pay for) access to equipment and services to produce the magazine. And then we rush to try to get the magazine mailed to all our subscribers, those who have renewed their subscription and have queried us because they haven't yet received the latest copy.

There are few, if any, of the previously promised design changes to this edition, as we have focused on production first, with any re-design to occur when we have time available.

We will try to do something special for our next issue, which will be number 60. This may include some design changes, but we will also try to include some positive alternatives for environmental change.

The next edition will also include the activist contact list, which is currently being compiled — if you have any information on activist environment groups, please get it to us quickly. On a sad note, we would like to pass our condolences to the friends and family of Peter Springell, who died recently. We will miss his contributions, which have been regular, well-written and covered a broad range of issues over a number of years. Although the environment movement will continue to bring forward new writers and activists, it is still a great loss when someone as intelligent, committed and articulate as Peter is gone.

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**POSTGRADUATE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

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For details contact: Coordinator of Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart, Tasmania 7001. Ph: (03) 20 28 26 12

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**SYMPOSIUM ON SOCIAL DEFENCE**

Wollongong, 16-18 February 1990

This symposium is designed both as an introduction to social defence and as an opportunity for activists in the area to meet, share experiences and plan future activities.

In attendance will be Johan Niezing, Professor of Peace Studies at the Free University, Brussels and author of important writings on social defence.

There will be no charge for attendance. Child care available (please give a week's notice). Some billets available, or accommodation can be arranged.

An invitation is extended for expressions of interest in giving talks, organising workshops or nominating items for the agenda.

Phone: Brian Martin — (042) 28 78 80 (home)
(042) 27 07 83 (work)

Allison Rawling — (042) 28 45 79

Organised by Schweik Action Wollongong. Hosted by the Board of Studies, Peace and War Studies, University of Wollongong.

Complete and return to: Brian Martin, STS, University of Wollongong, PO Box 1144, Wollongong, NSW, 2500.

I am interested in attending the Symposium on social defence.

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

Postcode ________________ Telephone ________________

[ ] Please arrange a billet for me if possible
[ ] Please arrange child care for children aged
[ ] Please arrange accommodation for me (about $20/night), for the nights of
[ ] I would like to present/lead the following talk/workshop:

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**BANNING IVORY TRADE TO SAVE THE ELEPHANT**

Environmentalists are hailing the decision by the 103-country Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to ban all international trade in ivory.

During the meeting in Lusanne, Switzerland in October, CITES approved a vote, 76 to 11 with four abstentions, to place the African elephant on Appendix One of the Convention, which bans trade in all ivory products. It joins the Asian elephant, already upgraded from Appendix Two, limiting and regulating trade.

However the ban may be undermined by the declaration by Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Burundi that they might file a reservation, which would allow them to sell and export ivory then becoming a dump for illegal ivory which would be laundered and sold as clean ivory.

Two other loopholes of the ban are the exemption of trophy hunting and the local use of meat, skin and even ivory.

Owing to increasing illegal ivory trade, elephant numbers across Africa have more than halved, from 1.3 million a decade ago to 600,000. An estimated 3 million are still being slaughtered each year.

Zimbabwe and Botswana have proposed selling their ivory presently and channeling the proceeds into conservation. The proposal includes plans to set up a single auction floor at which raw ivory from southern Africa would be sold once or twice a year. The auction would be run by a new body, the Southern African Centre for Ivory Marketing (SACIM), which would regulate the marketing of elephant products from these two countries.

Enforcement of strict regulations to eliminate illegal ivory dealing would mean that only whole tusks would be exported. SACIM would set a quota for each country, and earnings would go to wildlife bodies, minus a levy to cover costs and finance setting up a conservation fund.

But these plans could be frustrated by pressure to refuse imports put by anti-ivory lobbyists on countries like Japan. Until its June decision to restrict imports, Japan was the world's largest ivory market, accounting for about 40 percent of sales. Before the meeting, Japan intended to vote against the ban. However, endorsement of Japan as host of the next CITES meeting would have made this position politically embarrassing. Japan abstained.

Dealers in Hong Kong — which as a British colony has no voting rights in CITES — were angered by the ban. Hong Kong is now faced with the disposal of its 670 tonne stockpile of tusks. Dealers have argued that they acquired the ivory legally under CITES regulation, and have threatened to sue Britain over the issue.

Others have pointed out that most of the ivory was probably poached, and that Hong Kong is the centre of the illegal ivory trade. In an effort to clean up its image, Hong Kong earlier this year announced a moratorium on ivory imports. HK authorities have now agreed to abide by the Convention's rules, and may consider compensating private traders.

In spite of a ban on ivory trade within Kenya, its elephants have declined in the last ten years from 65,000 to 17,000. Since a shoot-to-kill policy was introduced a year ago, game wardens have shot more than fifty poachers dead, yet the poaching continues. Even more alarming, in Tanzania 55,000 elephants in the Selous game reserve have been wiped out in just two years, bringing the number from 55,000 to 29,000. These countries and their supporters such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) are convinced that anything but a total ban will allow trade to flourish. According to the WWF, illegal trade in ivory, including live animals, skins, furs and bones is a US$3 billion a year business, second only to drugs in illegal commerce. With elephant tusks currently trading in Hong Kong at up to $400 a kilo, ivory is a lucrative business.

Source: Dede Esi Amanor, Third World Network Features/Africa Events
EARTH NEWS

The Greens in Europe

The Greens achieved the highest vote of any of the European Greens in the Euro-Parliament elections. Had they secured the number of seats their votes would entitle them to under proportional representation, the Strasbourg Green group would have been the third largest in the European assembly. As it was, the Greens and their allies almost doubled their seats, from 20 to 39. Overall, the parties of the Left and the Greens now command a small majority in the Parliament. In France, the Green Party was set up as the European Parliament for the first time. Another notable success was in Italy, where the Greens boosted their vote from 2.5 per cent to 6.2 per cent, guaranteeing them five seats.

New Green Party organised in the East

The Greens of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) were founded as a party at a conference in late November. The Party has adopted three principles: it calls itself ecological, feminist and non-violent. They see themselves as a political force at the side of all those who advocate democracy and freedom through radical reform. Their founding statement says they regard themselves as part of the Green movement in the GDR and as part of the worldwide Green movement, and in particular the European Green movement.

Efforts are underway to set up a 'Green League' to exist parallel with the Greens Party. The Sixth Berlin Ecological Seminar, at which the Party was founded, was largely dominated by a dispute about the relationship of Greens either a party or a league. Initially the representatives of ecological groups from all over the country seemed to be more in favour of a grass roots association of such groups. Supporters of a Green Party argued that this would be fine as far as local efforts were concerned, but that a Green League would play no role in the planned election. This argument eventually carried the day. A Green Party was founded, but the Green League is still to be set up as well, probably in February 1990.

This does not point towards a split among the Greens, though. The Green League is in the process of bringing together a variety of groups, among whom the well-established Society for Nature and the Environment, church groups and various local groups, who will continue their political responsibility through the Greens Party, on the other hand, is seeking political responsibility through the Greens Party. The Green Party, on the other hand, is seeking political responsibility through the Greens Party.

A recently formed consumer group, People Against Dioxin in Sanitary Protection (PADS), aims to get these unmentionables on the list of green issues. PADS have called for a boycott of all sanitary products likely to contain dioxins — Stayfree, Modern, Sure 'N Natural and Kotex pads and Tampons, Fleur, Meds and Carefree tampons.

PADS' concern is that the paper pulp used in sanitary pads is, like most paper pulp, chlorine bleached. Tampons are made from a combination of cotton and rayon, which is derived from wood pulp. Bleaching removes the unwanted properties of the wood pulp, making it suitable for feminine hygiene products.

Highly toxic organochlorines, a family of chemical compounds which includes dioxins, are a by-product of this process. Dioxin in pulp mill effluent can enter waterways and may also escape into the environment. When paper products are disposed of as waste, dioxins are known to accumulate in the food chain and the body. They have been associated with cancer, birth defects, and damage to the immune and reproductive systems. Some scientists believe there is a safe amount of exposure.

There is no medical agreement about whether or not they can enter the body from sanitary pads or tampons — PADS believes it’s better to be safe than sorry.
Rainforest activists load timber ship

The Melbourne Rainforest Action Group (RAG) recently attempted to blockade the rainforest timber ship Aroa Bay as it travelled up the Yarra River into Melbourne. Two members of the group managed to bow-ride the vessel as it ran the blockade. It was the seventh RAG blockade of a rainforest timber ship in 1989. RAG is one of a global network of RAGs campaigning to save what is left of the global rainforest heritage. Melbourne RAG has a deep commitment to the principles of nonviolent struggle; the impact of its campaign so far is ample testimony to the effectiveness of this strategy.

On Saturday 18 November 1989, 80 members of RAG gathered at North Wharf in Melbourne. At 9:40am, as RAG had advised the police and port security authorities several days before, 60 activists climbed the forklift and illegally entered Victoria Dock where the latest shipment of rainforest timber from Malaysia was being unloaded from the Aroa Bay.

Once inside the fence, RAG members picked up long planks of sawn rainforest timber and carried them 30 metres to the side of the wharf where they were stacked ready for reloading.

As a result of previous negotiations with the Waterside Workers Federation, the waterside workers stopped work as soon as RAG activists were on the wharf.

Despite a substantial police presence, RAG activists resisted timber for several hours; however, an agreement to load the timber by building human pyramids against the side of the wharf was thwarted by a police blockade.

The group had several meetings with waterside workers and police and confirmed a decision of the previous week that it would occupy the wharf indefinitely — thus preventing the unloading of the ship. With the media long gone, the police eventually gave us two warnings and then reluctantly made 32 arrests at 2:50pm. Unloading had been delayed for five hours.

Seventeen activists refused a bail condition and spent two days in the watchhouse in solidarity with Penan tribespeople in Malaysia who are in jail for blockading logging roads in their rainforests. RAG activists are due in court 24 January 1990.

Source: Melbourne Rainforest Action Group

Scott Paper project recycled

Scott Paper's decision to withdraw from the $804 million eucalyptus plantation, woodchipping and pulp mill project has been cheered by environmental and human rights groups worldwide. It was widely held that the project located in Meruwar, Western New Guinea (Irian Jaya), would bring environmental and human rights devastation to the area, and wreck the lives of 15,000 tribal people living in the 800,000 concession.

But local and international environmental organisations have realised that the story of the Astra-Scott joint-venture has not yet ended. The Indonesian Government is determined to see this highly publicised project go ahead, with or without a foreign partner. Scott's decision to withdraw took the Indonesians by complete surprise and has taken them lightly. Indeed the government has been dealt a severe blow. The government — Indonesia's biggest inside the oil and gas sector — had already been included in the Investment Coordinating Board's widely heralded foreign investment figures for 1988.

Scott's explanation for their decision was taken with a pinch of salt by both the government and the environmental and human rights organisations. According to Richard Leaman, President of Scott World-wide, 'extensive studies' indicated that 'the Company can meet its needs for pulp from other sources'.

"Other sources" could mean Scott's planned project with Shell and Citibank at Nacimento, Chile, and there is also speculation that the company is interested in Brazil. The Indonesian Director of Astra-Scott Cellulosa, Barry Korek, was quoted as saying: "NO pressure was the only reason why we withdrew."

Government officials agree with this version, Director General of Rehabilitation and Land Rehabilitation Armanda Dardiri attributing the decision to withdraw 'the campaign ... made by environmentalists and non-governmental organisations who claimed that the huge forestry project would destroy rich plant genetic resources in the area ... and to Scott's fears of a consumer boycott'.

There are signs that government fury over Scott's withdrawal is being directed towards the organisations which campaigned against the project. Some organisations are beyond the reach, the government is turning on more vulnerable Indonesian groups.

Local conservation groups like ISP and Prose and Nature have already made the same point. The companies have now had serious difficulty delivering timber to the main trading company.

It is rumoured that there will be a program that displays, in Russia, a greeting: "To err is human, it takes a computer to really foul things up."

Source: The Australian, 19/12/89

Electricity planning in NSW — moving backwards into the 1990s

The Electricity Commission of New South Wales (Elcom) has published its 30-year Strategic Plan, entitled Meeting Customer Demands. The publication arose from legislation passed by the Wran Government after the McDowell Inquiry into Elcom's activities. Although there were initially great hopes that the preparation of a 30-year plan would result in a significant improvement in service at Elcom, and provide for broader community involvement, the Strategic Plan shows that Elcom has changed very little in recent years. The change may not be for the better.

Meanwhile, foreign investors seem to be wary of environment campaigns and have not jumped into the void left by the Indonesian government's encouragement to Astra to seek support from other Indonesian companies, and Astra is already negotiating with the government in East Kalimantan for the other eucalyptus plantation and pulp project.

Source: Down to Earth, No. 6, December 1989 c- Conservation International, 310 Edgeware Rd, London W2 IDY, UK

Soviets to get high technology

In a reflection of recent political developments in the Soviet Union, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the Pentagon has allowed two US companies to export relatively powerful computers to the Soviet Union.

One company, Compaq, is selling six mainframe computers to be used in the Soviet nuclear power program, including a site at Chernobyl.

The Pentagon has not set conditions on the sales, as the companies are doing that themselves, and have included a clause that they be allowed on-site inspections to ensure that the computers are being used solely for the civil nuclear power program.

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FOE NEWS

Stanthorpe

Eighteen people attended the first meeting of FOE Stanthorpe (Qld) August 10 1989. Topics discussed were:

- Recycling - encourage local council to provide organised collection points and transportation to Brisbane. Encourage more businesses, schools and government departments to purchase APM Right.
- Burning at local dump - encourage council to refrain from burning plaster etc.
- Public surveys - possible health risks from using chemical sprays (Stanthorpe is a predominant fruit growing area). Obtain doctors' support and provide questionnaires; local community's attitude to recycling.
- Need for unbleached paper

Contact: Lynn Alexander, c/- Post Office, The Summit, Stanthorpe Qld 4377, Ph: (07) 3731634 or Jasmine Payget (04) 495 376.

Perth

Friends of the Earth Perth is lobbying the Federal Government to ensure that all taxation laws reflect a commitment to the conservation of resources. For example, they claim that recycling of soft drink bottles will be discouraged as a result of actions of the Australian Tax Office.

The changes to these taxation laws also contradict the Federal Government's Environmental Policy. The Tax Office has acted without thinking of the wider consequences and the office of the Federal Minister for Environment was not aware of the changes until informed by Friends of the Earth.

The changes have developed as a result of a reinterpretation of the Sales Tax Act. This reinterpretation effectively means that a sales tax will be imposed on second hand goods. It also contradicts an express exemption for bottles for repeated use where the manufacturer does not part with ownership. This exemption also discouraged recycling because it encouraged branded-marked bottles.

Consequently, the dominant manufacturers can control the re-purchase of their own brand marked bottles, preventing recycling companies from offering the bottles to other manufacturers at a better price. FOE Perth is also calling for a ban on brand marked bottles and the standardisation of all to allow a free recycling market.

South Australia

FOE Adelaide voted in October to change itself from a Friends of the Earth group to a Green Party in South Australia. Bob Lamb, contesting a has-cumumber for council support, need for unbleached paper products supplied by our supermarket.

Education - involve school children to participate in as many of our projects as possible, e.g. nominate a high school representative to both provide and get feedback for council support; need for unbleached paper products supplied by our supermarkets.

Give support to international as well as local issues.

Contact: Lynn Alexander, c/- Post Office, The Summit, Stanthorpe Qld 4377, Ph: (07) 3731634 or Jasmine Payget (04) 495 376.

FOE International

Five new groups have joined the FOE International network as associate members: Arche - East Germany (DDR); BUND - West Germany; Environment Management Society - Pakistan; Fundacion Defensa Ambiental - Caracas (Dutch Antilles); and Friends of the Earth - Sierra Leone.

Paul McCartney has dedicated his new world tour to the international environment movement, especially to FOE International. During his concerts, he calls upon the audience to fight for a world without environmental destruction, and points out FOE groups around the world. Room is also provided at the concerts for FOE stalls and literature.

The introduction to the tour book says: people need to no longer accept that the destruction of the world is inevitable, they need to act.

VICTORIA

- FOE Fitzroy
  222 Brunswick St
  Fitzroy, Vic, 3065
  Ph: (03) 419 8780
- Organic Fruit & Vegetable Co-op
t: (03) 419 9926

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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NATIONAL

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Advocacy groups around the world called off their seven year boycott of Nestle products in 1984 when the Swiss-based multinational agreed to abide by an international baby milk marketing code. But five years later, Nestle continues to supply hospitals and Health clinics with free infant formula. A second Nestle boycott, begun last October, is gaining strength. Fauziah Varusay, writing for Consumer Lifelines, reports.

When breast-feeding advocates in the United States and Germany announced a second Nestle boycott last October, it was with angry resignation. They had little choice.

Nestle, the largest baby-food manufacturer in the world, has continued to violate international baby milk marketing recommendations by supplying free formula under the guise of charity to hospitals and maternity wards, especially in the Third World. Groups monitoring the corporation's activities say Nestle's marketing tactics have become more subtle, but are as effective as ever.

The call has gone out from the Minneapolis-based Action for Corporate Responsibility (Action) for a renewed campaign against Nestle and other companies. Groups in the UK, Sweden, Norway and Ireland joined the boycott in March this year. Groups in another 20 countries have pledged their support.

The first seven-year boycott of Nestle products was called off in 1984 when boycotting groups were satisfied that the company would keep its promise to end its unethical marketing practices. Millions of babies in developing countries have died from malnutrition and diarrhoea because mothers who had neither the money nor the hygienic conditions to prepare infant formula safely have been led to believe through the promotional tactics of baby milk companies that it was superior to breast-feeding. Nestle was targeted because it controls most of the market.

The practice of giving free supplies is the industry's "most damaging entry into the lucrative market," says Action's national chairman Douglas Johnson. It creates the impression that health professionals recommend it. And, of course, once bottle feeding starts, breast milk begins to dry up. When mother and baby leave the hospital there is a physical need to buy more formula — both are hooked.

Reports of Nestle and Wyeth practices by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) show that free baby milk substitutes are still being pushed in hospitals and maternity wards in over 20 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia. According to UNICEF, 1988 annual report, bottle-fed babies run a 15 to 25 times higher risk of sickness and death from diarrhoea in their first six months than children who have the immunological protection of an exclusive breast milk diet.

Nestle appears nervous about the renewed boycott. The company hired the New York public relations firm Ogilvy & Mather to help it fight the negative backlash from the boycott. In March, the agency produced a strategy called Proactive Neutralization, a plan that recommended, among other things, infiltrating groups that are organizing and supporting the boycott. Ogilvy & Mather also suggested that Nestle cultivate a more positive image through news programs for high school students, funding foster care for children with AIDS, a tutor-by-phone homework help-line system, and a racial awareness program.

Nestle says it rejected the recommendations, but Nestle critics wonder if that's the end of it. The company should devote more attention to the well-being of infants than to its corporate image, they say.

Fauziah Varusay is a Malaysian journalist who specializes in issues relating to women and food. She is based in Penang, Malaysia.

Breastfeeding code of practice

The WHO/UNICEF Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 1981, but it wasn't until three years later that Nestle agreed to comply with its conditions. These are to stop advertising to the public; stop giving free samples; eliminate baby pictures from labels; place warnings on packages and promotional literature about the potential hazards of bottle feeding; and to stop donating free supplies of formula as a sales inducement.

But bottle feeding is still on the rise in developing countries. The US$107.4 million spent on infant formula imports into the Philippines in 1984 was enough to feed 252,000 poor urban families in metro Manila for ten months. BUNSO, the country's national breast-feeding promotion group, estimates that infant formula consumption is increasing by 15 to 20 per cent a year in the Philippines, despite deteriorating economic conditions.

And in Pakistan, where 47 per cent of households earn the equivalent of only US$21 a month, formula feeding of a three month old infant takes 40 per cent of a family's wages. According to the country's Federal Bureau of Statistics, national imports of powdered milk more than doubled from US$2 million in 1982-3 to US$4.4 million in 1987-8.

Pressure groups say breast-feeding will catch on only when the formula industry abides by the WHO code. "Underfunded hospitals are in many ways innocent victims of corporate promotional schemes," says a Baby Milk Action (BMAC) briefing paper on the Nestle boycott. "When free supplies of formula are no longer provided to maternity wards, formula will be treated as any other food. The hospital, therefore, will have a practical incentive to encourage breast-feeding."
Threats to Kakadu

A National Park is affected by more than that which is contained in its boundaries. Kakadu National Park contains almost an entire ecosystem, and Friends of Kakadu argue that uranium mining operations, officially outside the Park, are akin to cancer.

Consider a melanoma or skin cancer. A small spot, a blemish, hardly anything at all. Yet, if you had one you'd probably be worried — very worried. Why? Because you'd know it's not just a speck of grime that can be washed off, or a stick-on patch. Through connections with your lymph system and bloodstream it is linked to every part of your body and, in a malignant state, has the capacity to cripple your vital functions and cause death. This may not happen overnight. In terms of your life it could take a very long time to become malignant or, as some of these latent dangers are known, it might never amount to anything at all. You could leave it there, and hope that it wouldn't develop further, but for most people this is not the sort of risk they'd feel comfortable with.

Your body, after all, is a pretty special organism, like a human body only much more complex. Of necessity it is big — huge. An outstanding example of the preservation of northern Australia's heritage for future generations. All Australians should feel immensely proud of it.

Presently, there is one mine in Kakadu. It is a uranium mine at Ranger, near Jabiru. On the map of the Park it's a small spot, a blemish, hardly anything at all. It has been argued, technically, that the mine is not part of Kakadu. This is akin to drawing a line around a skin cancer and arguing that it is no longer part of your body. Through connections with water and wind, and plant and animal life, the mine is intimately linked to all the vital life support systems in the surrounding Park. Thankfully, the operation is heavily regulated and the mining company is under continuous scrutiny to ensure that harmful levels of mining-by-products don't escape into the Park. So there is nothing to worry about.

The risk you take with a skin cancer is usually a long term risk: you might not see harmful effects for 20-30 years. It's the same of the mine in Kakadu, but 'long term' takes on a whole new dimension. In terms of the life of the Park you need to gaze 200-300 years into the future, maybe longer, to harmful effects if one day the mine is shut down.

Kakadu is only just keeping ahead of its existing weed problems and doesn't need to be encumbered with any more. Another long term problem relates to the toxic substances being so carefully kept kept out of the Park today. Don't be misled, they aren't magically disappearing — they're merely being stored, stock-piled, in an enormous tailings dam. When the mining stops, this huge body of waste will be either buried in a pit, or worse, be covered where it is. Either way, after the mining company and the supervisory authorities have gone, the entombed tailings will be left sitting there, possibly unattended, a toxic time bomb strapped to the heart of the Park.

The Ranger mine is, decade upon decade of years, being prevented today. The life support systems of Kakadu National Park will continue to function at least just as long as it takes radioactive waste to become non-hazardous. The mine is not part of Kakadu, this mine is not part of the Park, this mine is not part of Northern Australia. The National Park Service in Kakadu is only just keeping ahead of its existing weed problems and doesn't need to be encumbered with any more. Another long term problem relates to the toxic substances being so carefully kept kept out of the Park today. Don't be misled, they aren't magically disappearing — they're merely being stored, stock-piled, in an enormous tailings dam. When the mining stops, this huge body of waste will be either buried in a pit, or worse, be covered where it is. Either way, after the mining company and the supervisory authorities have gone, the entombed tailings will be left sitting there, possibly unattended, a toxic time bomb strapped to the heart of the Park.

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In the Top End of the Northern Territory is the Kakadu National Park. An area has to be a pretty special place to become a National Park. Very few National Parks are judged so special that they gain protection from being mined.

One of the most unique features of the Kakadu area is Mission Grass. The grass is unique and vital, as it is an amazing example of the preservation of the Top End's Australian biodiversity. It's an aggressive tall grass that has taken to undisturbed areas in the Ranger lease with alarming efficiency, displacing native vegetation as it spreads, its wind-dispersed seeds surely won't stop at the mine lease perimeter fence, so before very long Kakadu is going to inherit what could be a major biological headache that may take generations to get rid of. The National Park Service in Kakadu is only just keeping ahead of its existing weed problems and doesn't need to be encumbered with any more.

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In October, the Federal Cabinet decided to defer mining in Kakadu Stage III for twelve months. However, Senator Richardson says Coronation Hill could go ahead eventually.

The so-called "conservation zone" includes the South Alligator River catchment area. The Cabinet decision returns 2,200 square kilometers back to Stage III of the park. The mineral deposits at Coronation Hill and El Sheriff were not returned. These deposits are on the South Alligator River which feeds Kakadu's wetlands.

Pat Jessen interviewed Elena Eldridge, environmentalist in the Northern Territory, about what the decision means to the Jaowyn custodians of the Coronation Hill region.

PJ: It's not unusual for an exploration site to become a mine site overnight once given the green light. What is happening at Coronation Hill?

EE: It's preparation for mining. They have built benches around the Hill and I believe building the tailings dam has begun. The country is suffering terrible degradation.士and soil are going into the South Alligator already.

That is not even looking at the cultural and social disruption that exploration activity is having.

You have to understand Aboriginal Law. The custodians of part of the country are responsible for anything that happens to that country. They are responsible to other groups linked to that country.

If that country is damaged in any way, the custodians are responsible. They have the payback system — if the custodians fall down in protecting that country they are paid back. That could mean death. So they are locking down the barrel of a gun.

PJ: What is the process now?

EE: The traditional owners and tribal people of Anmatjertj Land, who are linked with the Jaowyn and the Bula site, are preparing to take their own actions to try and force a decision as soon as possible. They do not want any more consultation with the mining companies or government, there is no point.

They just want a decision not to mine and for no more exploration in the area.

One proposal is to undertake some rehabilitation of the area during the wet when no exploration can take place, planting trees and fixing up areas.

EE: The conservationists pledged total opposition to mining and exploration and support for the Jaowyn. I think the Jaowyn are having difficulty with the lack of action since the referral decision — it wasn't really a decision. There doesn't seem to be much conservation support for the Jaowyn claim for land and sacred sites. So the Jaowyn are planning their own action. They hope conservationists will join them in trying to force a Government decision before the next election.

The price of Uranium has dropped so low that it is often more expensive to mine it than buy it. The official Australian minimum price is almost three times that on the world market. FOE's John Hallam suggests a solution.

Years ago, when uranium prices started to fall, cartoonist Bruce Peat did a cartoon of the then minister for minerals and energy, Doug Anthony. Doug was depicted in the process of selling Australia's soul to the devil for thirty pieces of silver. The devil however, wasn't particularly interested, because even then, there was a uranium glut on. Anthony, determined to sell Australia's soul, was saying "I'll take fifteen..."

This cartoon, though dated, sums up the dilemma that faces Anthony's successor, Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, John Kerin. Since Whitlam, Australia has operated a "floor price" system for uranium exports. Australia has similar systems for wheat, coal, iron ore, etc. The idea is not to permit export prices for particular commodities to dip below a certain minimum, and all contracts are supposed to incorporate this floor price.

Floor prices have particular relevance where Australian prices have the potential to force down the market price for a commodity globally - as they do for uranium, as well as wheat, coal, etc.

However, both long term contract prices and "spot" prices for uranium have long dipped below the US $31/lb uranium floor price that has been in place for years. In May last year, spot prices were US $15.40/lb. By May '89, they had dropped to $9.85/lb, and they are now round $9.80/lb, and don't seem poised to make a comeback. Long term contracts have been affected by the low spot prices, and though there's the odd Japanese or Korean contract for around $30/lb, Saskatchewan, Australia's main competitor, is selling at an average of $18-19/lb, and European utilities are offering $16-17/lb for long term supply.

Although Canadian mining giant CAMCO (recently formed by the merger and privatisation of Eldorado Nuclear and the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) is saying it won't sell 'on spot' at the present low prices, and has cut its workforce by 20% and closed down its Rabbit Lake mine and mill for 6 months, and although some US producers talk about boycotting the market, there is an awful lot of what is called "inventory" sloshing around.

Excess Uranium

'Inventory' is uranium that the owner doesn't need. For example, uranium buyers bought a plant in the US years ago, by a utility that subsequently cancelled that plant. West German utility RWE, a 17% shareholder in ERA, has a 10 years worth of "inventory" for its Multihenn Kureko PWR, while that plant is closed indefinitely by court
All this has put the pressure onto


canadian producers. This would mean that the effective price for long-term contracts might drop to US $15.20/lb, with a catastrophic loss of revenue for Olympic Dam and ERA, the loss of up to SA150-200m/y in export income. One way out of falling revenues due to a fall in prices, is to increase production, as Denison mines of Canada has done. To simply maintain existing export income, ERA and Olympic Dam would have to increase sales and production by 2-3,000luy, wiping out the current supply/demand gap on the global uranium market, and further depress prices - if anybody would buy them, that is.

New Contracts

There’s no way ERA can obtain new contracts for the current floor price, it is unable to persuade renewals of old contracts with shareholder-customers for more than US $26/lb, and will probably have to settle for less. ERA claims that it has successfully renegotiated with its customers, but agreements seem to have been well below $31/lb. ERA is therefore pulling out all stops to get Kerin to lower, modify, or abandon the government floor price.

But abandoning the floor price or drastically lowering it will raise its own problems. Abandonment of the floor price in particular, would mean that ERA and Olympic Dam would have to accept the same ‘spot-related’ contracts that are being written now by US and

“at today’s prices, it’s a whole lot cheaper to buy on spot than it is to mine uranium.”

There is a possible way out. I mentioned that ERA has been rumoured to have bought uranium on spot from Malapai Resources of the US, to fulfil US contracts. With spot-prices as low as they are, ERA, like other producers, will find it more profitable to shut down its operations in Kakadu entirely and act purely as a uranium trading company, rather than continuing mining. The government should encourage it to do so, providing that is uses a fixed proportion of the profit it makes from buying on spot and selling to fill its higher-priced long-term contracts to clean up the mess it’s made of Kakadu.

John Hallam is researching uranium extraction at FOE Sydney.

ATTENTION

- Australian Studies
- History
- Peace Studies
- Sport Studies
- Geography
- Social Studies
- Environment Studies

THE JOURNEY

The Journey is a major film for peace, produced and directed by Peter Watkins. Shot in more than ten countries, The Journey is the first film to explore the global nature of the nuclear threat to peace.

The Journey is designed to be stopped at 45 minute intervals for discussion. While it would make an excellent basis for a complete teaching unit, extracts could be selected for specific purposes.

Introductory notes and a User’s Guide? Discussion Notes can accompany the film to assist teachers to quickly assess this film’s potential for inclusion in their teaching program.

The Journey is available on video or video cassette at rental $75. Full length version 14 hours and 30 minutes. For schools who prefer to organise their Introduction to the Journey in shorter lengths, there are recommended extracts of the film that can be screened on their own. Rental for extracts $40. These extracts vary from 45 minutes to 2 hours.

Contact: Watkins Australian Film Foundation, 25 Bath St, North Fitzroy, 3065. Phone (03) 486 1384
Sean McDonagh is a missionary whose message to the West is that it needs to learn about the religious reality of tribal people. According to him, we need to develop the sense of reverence and wonder at the beauty of nature that they have. Robyn Weston adapted this interview for publication.

Somewhere at this very moment, a man is standing among the trees in a forest. He looks at the immensity of the green life stretching far above him into the sky. Perhaps the music of the forest reaches his ears, perhaps not. In any case, it cannot be allowed to affect his intentions. Neither can the hundreds of years which shaped this massive life be allowed to mean very much to him.

Who is he? At one time either he or his forebears lived closely with the land. These days, in a society eaten away by poverty, he is simply grateful for a job. He starts up his chainsaw ...

Not far away from the logger, a small group of people have arrived in a clearing. They have slashed and burned and cleared what they can. The women have begun to plant vegetables: root crops and corn. Careful gardeners they must be. This small plot of land will give them all their food for the next couple of years — if they are lucky — and it will not be in the clearing very long. For all its rhizoid growth and profusion of life, that forest soil is thin and once the canopy is broken, the earth does not remain fertile.

The governments of the countries which are rapidly losing their forests blame the slash and burn farmers, yet the farmers enter the forest by the roads. Inevitably, as soon as heavy rains fall, the bare earth from road and clearing is swept away and rivers fill up with mud. Game has no habitat and fish die in mud. Huge rivers of mud slide down the naked hills. More people are homeless and without food. Many of them will move into the forest and begin to slash and burn.

Some years ago, Father Sean McDonagh, an Irish Columban missionary who works with the T'BoI rainforest dwellers of Mindanao in the Philippines, was caught in a downpour. He took shelter in the hut of Dodong, a slash and burn farmer, or Kainginero. Their talk that afternoon enabled Sean to understand the plight of the Kainginero. Dodong’s story was and is part of a cycle of events which has affected many people.

Dodong’s father migrated to Mindanao from one of the central islands in the 1950s. A traditional farmer, he acquired a few hectares of rich lowland country. When Dodong married, his inheritance was about two hectares.

In 1969, a local Department of Agriculture technician convinced the younger farmers that they should try some new varieties of seed. Dodong was very keen. He had to borrow money for fertiliser and an irrigation system but the promise of doubling his harvest made the loan a reasonable proposition, and besides, credit was on easy terms.

For two years the harvest doubled, but this was not as exciting as it might have been because the price of rice went down. In 1973 the price of fertiliser increased two and a half times. In 1976 there was a drought. One crop was completely lost and the other was almost lost. Like many farmers around him, Dodong was seriously in debt and there seemed to be no way that he could regain lost ground. The price rise of 1979 finally beat him.

He sold out to a multinational concern: pineapple growers. They gave him a fair price for his land, but virtually all the money was spent paying off debt.

A great deal of the Third World borrowing in the seventies was for agricultural purposes. Much of the borrowing was done with good intentions, but instances were reported of bank officials at international conferences waving Third World finance ministers to offer them easy loans. No word was uttered then of possible currency fluctuations or interest hikes. It was also the time in which the spreading sprees of the outrageously wealthy spiralled.

According to Sean, even Dodong had heard about Imelda Marcos’ thousands of pairs of shoes, but he had not heard that the small debt begun by the country during the seventies was now draining the nation’s budget.

When Sean suggested that in cutting down the forest perhaps Dodong’s six children would find themselves eventual farmers of rocks and rodents, Dodong said maybe, but he couldn’t think about that, he had to feed his family today.

As a missionary, Sean McDonagh has no illusions about bettering the lives of people who in a few brutal years have lost their environment, their food and water sources, and above all, their spiritual reality.

He also has serious qualms about any religious effort which does not address environmental issues. If we import good will, medicine and food for people today, what will we do in twenty years time when possibly there will be no land? To help in a real sense, we have to teach people to protect forest, to plant trees, to save seeds.

Twenty years ago, when Sean first went to Mindanao, he flew over country which was covered with rainforest: some twenty million hectares. Today there is less than a million hectares left. As Sean said recently, the timber businesses and manufacturing companies see themselves as the powerhouses of our industrial economy — they’re not really aware that the world is a living reality. They think it is a mine to be mined until it goes broke, and they forget that it does go broke, that every other corporation in the world goes down with it.

Rainforest in countries like the Philippines presents us with one of the most bewildering profusions of life imaginable. Millions of years ago, during the Ice Ages, countries like this were temperate while the rest of the world froze. Much of what is now our staple food evolved from such forests, as did valuable medicines. Such is the variety of life that we hardly even investigate its potential before we turn to destruction.

This problem requires a careful look at the religious beliefs which have shaped people’s attitudes through the centuries. It has been argued that through our religion we have been led to feel superior to Nature, to treat it with contempt. Through this arrogance, we become conquerors, and dominators.

Yet, says Sean, this perspective is a selective one. Many covenants and creeds within the Judeo-Christian tradition also stress the need to care for
Creation.
Missionaries are not generally seen in a good light these days. They have in the past indicated that Redemption and truth were the exclusive property of the West needing to be carried to the ignorant pagan.

Today the so-called heathen might well ask what the Christian message has to do with Christ if it only serves to inspire European cargo cultures addicted to war, vanity and exploitation. In reality, undisturbed tribal cultures possess a religious awareness of creation which permeates every aspect of their lives.

It is a curious turnabout that Sean McDonagh has become a missionary who preaches that the West needs to inspire European cargo cultures and that truth were the exclusive property of the exclusive benefit of humans.

If we look at tribal culture and call it primitive, this only shows our ignorance. The foundations and boundaries of human existence were set down then and if we want to survive then we must consciously learn from these ancient cultures.

For Sean, an acknowledgment of the value of tribal culture does not mean an abandonment of the Christian message. The compassion and the hope which originally took him to the Philippines, has continued to support his work there and still inspires his writing and his speaking. It is based on his faith. Christian celebration is still the key to his religious message as well as being a tool of criticism against greed.

He refuses to work with what he calls 'sacred symbols', and in a country where rice is eaten rather than bread, it is logical that rice should become the Sacrament.

Sean's congregation has developed liturgies of the Earth. In one of these, the congregation each pour a small handful of earth from their gardens into a pot. The leader, pronouncing a blessing upon farms in the area, then sprinkles Holy Water upon the earth. "Let us never lose our love for the land," they say. A litany of the plants is then sung. When this liturgy was devised, many traditional plants were included, some of which were native to the area. In his services, many old people cry as they extol the plants are recalled.

A congratulation is offered from the earth as the congregation is called upon to remember how God made the soil, how the animals, birds and the fish are made from God's fingers and live, pulsing with life with from God's breath. "O God, Creator of this beautiful Earth which you have filled with an abundance of living creatures, help us to be loving that our life and the life of every creature depends upon your will. Help us always to be grateful for this precious gift, enrich our soil, make it black and fruitful and rich. Protect us from long periods of drought and floods. Bless our land, especially your People.

The traditional T'Boli fertility dance is especially appropriate here at the conclusion of the ceremony. Then following their service, the congregation can take their lands. According to Sean: "In good ritual there is a way of taking action against the terrible things which happen to the Earth. In good ritual we proclaim the problem on the level of the institution, we address the symbols which affect our lives, and we are expected to become the vehicles of healing on this level.

In a traditional world, where symbols still connected the Philippino farmer to the Earth, and also the symbol of the sacred place. The contours of the world of the spirits was also laid down. These operated to guide the community in its activities between the natural and supernatural worlds.

If at tribal culture and call it primitive, this only shows our ignorance. The foundations and boundaries of human existence were set down then and if we want to survive then we must consciously learn from these ancient cultures.

For Sean, an acknowledgment of the value of tribal culture does not mean an abandonment of the Christian message. The compassion and the hope which originally took him to the Philippines, has continued to support his work there and still inspires his writing and his speaking. It is based on his faith. Christian celebration is still the key to his religious message as well as being a tool of criticism against greed.

He refuses to work with what he calls 'sacred symbols', and in a country where rice is eaten rather than bread, it is logical that rice should become the Sacrament.

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Australian greens seem to have been captured by the excitement of elections. The election of the Tasmanian independents has raised hopes enormously. But do environmentalists really gain all that much by participating in electoral politics? Brian Martin presents a sceptical view.

Environmental issues in Australia are becoming increasingly linked to political parties and electoral politics. Greens-style parties are springing up all over the place. The traditional parties, both Labor and the Liberals, are desperately trying to improve their image of environmental consciousness, while the Democrats keep pointing out that there is still a lot more to be done.

At the recent Ecopolitics IV conference in Adelaide, politicians from both major parties were aware of this. Now, for the first time in history, environmental issues have been raised in the mainstream. A paradox is that the Greens, who have always been at the forefront of environmental politics, are now being forced to compete with major parties in order to achieve their goals.

Before the last election, the Greens were involved in a campaign to prevent the construction of a new coal-fired power station. The Greens achieved a narrow victory, but the government overturned the decision. The Greens are now preparing for the next election, hoping to achieve similar results.

Some environmentalists argue that participation in political processes is necessary. They believe that the Greens can use the electoral system to gain influence and push their agenda. However, many environmentalists believe that this is not the best way to achieve their goals.

The Greens have been successful in gaining media attention and public support. However, they have not achieved major policy changes. Many environmentalists argue that the Greens need to focus on grassroots action, such as lobbying and direct action, rather than on electoral politics.

One of the biggest problems with electoral politics is that it tends to remove power and initiative from people at the grassroots level. Environmentalists have long been effective at taking issues into their own hands. Public education campaigns, direct action, promotion of alternative technologies and practices—all these can be done without reliance on politicians.

Politicians can be helpful in such efforts, and some undoubtedly are. But that's different from activists getting involved in parties and election campaigns. Indeed, the whole idea of elections is to get someone else—politicians—to take action.

Win or lose, many activists lose heart. After the Liberal victories in 1977 and 1980, and the Green movement lost energy. Partly it was because too much hope was put in a Labor victory. Partly it was because there was no well-developed long-term strategy which went beyond action by the national government. These struggles are indeed long-term. In 1980, many anti-uranium activists were burnt out. Yet now, a decade later, the issue remains of crucial importance.

Election 'victory' can be even more disempowering. After Labor was elected in 1983, activism on south-west Tasmania rapidly declined. Everyone expected the government to take over. Yet the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission was and still is building dams. Elections give the general public little encouragement for personal action. Filling out a ballot paper every few years is hardly a great deal of participation in decision-making in environmental matters, or anything else. To get people involved in elections is to divert attention from the need for people to get involved themselves.

If elections tend to disempower activists and the general public, who do they empower? Politicians and the government of course, and the only ones allegedly given a 'mandate'. The trouble is that politicians are the least people to decide over a really lasting change in the way society is organised—and the way society is organised is the root of most environmental problems.

Politicians and government bureaucrats are subject to incredible lobbying efforts by industry and government enterprises. Environmentalists can do try to compete in this process. Some are very skillful at it and achieve impressive victories. But environmental lobbying and pressure group tactics cannot alter the basic driving forces behind government policy. Governments, among other things, must manage an economy based on large corporate and government enterprises. Policymaking utilizing the basic economic arrangements are virtually impossible.

At best, environmental lobbying and electioneering can achieve reforms in policy. This means protecting some patches of wilderness. Yet more restrictions to industrial emissions, stopping particular projects etc. But most fundamental changes are ruled out.

The Government response to anti-logging campaigns is, at best, to protect some forests. Well and good. But the basic structure of the industry and government remains: the forest industries, the market economy, the forestry commissions etc. In other words, the driving forces remain the same. Some projects can be stopped, but the same battles have to be fought time and time again. After all, pro-environment policies can be reversed. Voting and lobbying change only a few decisions to be enforced? Some environmentalists believe that using autocratic means is justified if necessary. I'm not one of them.

In any list of the disadvantages of electoral politics, it is hard to avoid mentioning the incredible bitterness and bad feelings so often produced. Struggles over parties, candidates, policies and personalities are rife, and are enough to alienate many a potential activist. This is due to the quest for power. People believe their views, or their personal power, are so important that other people can be stepped on. This is basically the philosophy that ends justify the means and that the ends are worth the means.
means: getting elected justifies some rough play along the way. This is the same philosophy that has generated most present-day environmental problems.

Alternatives to elections

It's all very well to criticise electoral politics, but is there any better way to proceed? This is something that has to be decided by all those involved. What I will do here is argue that there are some other ways.

My emphasis is on the long term. That means doing things now with an eye towards many years hence. Many environmental problems are urgent, to be sure. The great temptation is to assume that governmental action is the only way to confront these urgent problems. The trouble is that the driving forces are not addressed, and the urgent problems persist or reappear.

The basic alternative to looking to governments for solutions is to build from the grassroots: popular education, community groups, people's campaign. The idea of the 'grassroots' is vague, but in practical terms it refers to large consensus groups, make for effective participation directly in making decisions. The big challenge is to work towards a more participatory system. Electoral politics is precisely the way not to do this, since electoral politics is based on limited participation and hence reinforces the present system. Grassroots campaigns have limitations, but at least offer the hope of promoting alternative structures.

Participation: what does it mean?

I'm concerned here about people participating directly in decision-making that affects them. Most people seldom do this. Voting every few years is at best indirect participation; it is the elected (as well as non-elected) officials who participate directly in decision-making.

Writing a letter to a politician is similar but more indirect. Even joining a rally or occupation, if the main aim is to obtain media coverage and influence politicians, is a form of indirect participation.

The most important area for direct participation is, for most people, at work. Most jobs offer little opportunity for employees to participate in decision-making. Indeed, most enterprises, private and public, are autocratic. The basic issue is workers' control: the workers collectively make the decisions. For the many enterprises which have managed to win the public, members of the affected community should be involved as well. The goal then is worker-community control.

Australia in the 1970s had one of the most widely admired examples of worker-consensus control: the Green Bans. Also often cited are the British Lucas Aerospace workers' plans, for producing socially useful products. The idea of workers' plans has been taken up in many countries, including in Australia by Victorian railway unions, for example.

In the 1980s, Australian employers such as the timber industry have become more successful in putting workers and environmentalists against each other. Many environmentalists would be wary of giving workers control over decisions, in case they continued destructive practices. These environmentalists would rather give power to governments to intervene from above. Thus, rather than promoting greater participation, environmentalists have reduced it through their focus on governments.

Decision-making

What is the practical meaning of participation in this 'worker-community control'? How are decisions actually to be made? There are a number of methods with special strengths and weaknesses.

One is consensus. This has been great developed in parts of the environmental movement and other social movements. It has great strengths, but also some limitations, especially in large groups of people with fundamentally different interests.

Another method is voting. Voting may have limitations when used to select politicians, but it can often work better with smaller groups, especially when voting directly on policy rather than for representatives to make policy. Voting can overcome the stranglehold of a minority that can block consensus. The danger is that voting allows minorities to be overrun and alienated.

A less well-known method is random selection of a jury. The idea is that a group of people is selected randomly from volunteers, rather like the selection of a jury. A jury has been highly successful in preventing the introduction of nuclear power, uranium enrichment or waste reprocessing in Australia. Both Liberal and Labor governments have responded to campaigns and changes in public attitudes. It should be recognised, though, that a social movement is not a permanent alternative. Grassroots action, like electoral politics, is a way of operating temporarily. Even joining a rally or marching anti-nuclear anti-war stands. In the future, will environmentalists have to struggle against repressive governments and greenocrats? Is green election fever the symptom of a serious disease?

Suggested reading


Brian Martin has been involved with environmental issues and campaigns since the mid 1970s.
to discover one of the best kept secrets of the Gold Coast hinterland. Taking the Bini-Bura road we wind past the Canungra Land Warfare Centre — a huge spread of a military establishment specializing in counter insurgency warfare — and cross the sleepy Coomera accompanied by a gentle breeze down the valley on its way into the Lamington Plateau. The top of the mountain to the east has been cleared of its rainforest trees and is now an expanse of open cattle pastures where the first European child in the area was born in 1889.

Our gaze drops from the mountain top into great landslides caused years ago when the tall trees were felled and their roots lost their grasp of the mountainside as it sagged beneath the weight of the forest. The great scars to be heard are the sounds of bluebells and cicadas as they bask in the warm sunlight. Where the road reaches a lichen covered cliff top and veers left, we pass into a vast area of lush vegetation and cross the sleepy Coomera accompanied by a gentle breeze down the valley on its way into the Lamington Plateau. The top of the mountain to the east has been cleared of its rainforest trees and is now an expanse of open cattle pastures where the first European child in the area was born in 1889.

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the Back Creek Valley being set aside for public education and recreation. At this time, the Army's position remained in favour of live firing.

As we pass a small agility of gleaming white beehives we are greeted by the happy bark of a rather pudgy old corgi that comes to greet us with wagging tail. She proudly leads us to an old dwelling surrounded by thousands of young rainforest trees grown from seed by her son Patrick. He shows us around the nursery telling us of the names and qualities of the many different timbers.

Listening to this elderly ex-digger is like being taken on a journey through time as he tells of the history of the valley and explains the many complex interactions taking place between the biotic and abiotic environments. This is what we used to wish for when we sat in sterile classrooms being lectured on topics that most of us had never seen. This is what learning is really about.

As we leave Pat and wander down to the waterside we see numerous mozzies, fungi, waterlilies and a host of other lifeforms. The creek flows quietly beneath a hugebanner declaring the land an environmental park, as it is in two steps. The smooth ancient rock gathers the waters into a huge bowl before it spills over into the dark depths of the cavern to crash upon the rocks below. Early morning mist is shot with sunlight to form soft rainbows in the pristine air above the cavern and we feel at one with nature. After lunch we shall take the graded track to the amphitheatre deposit to picnic in the forest, or maybe we'll stroll up into the rainforest to see its wonders. Just now, we'll spread a rug on the soft lawn and have a picnic in paradise.

In July 1987 Minister John Brown informed the Fitzgeralds that consideration of the land use question was proceeding and that Mr Beazley would notify them of the outcome. At a meeting in November that year between the Fitzgeralds, the D.A.S. and the Government Solicitor, the family was told that the information supplied by them on land use was 'waste of time on their part and would not be included in the joint advice', and that vacant possession was required within four weeks. However, no action was taken to secure it.

Despite repeated calls for copies of the joint advice the Fitzgeralds have not received such documents. Despite repeated invitations to Ministers Beazley, West, Richardson and the Prime Minister to inspect the area, no inspections were forthcoming, and to date these parties responsible for resolution of this conflict have failed to address the important aspects of the issue.

Throughout this period a revised Land Acquisition Bill was being prepared by a Senate Standing Committee which would attempt to prevent conflicts such as this from occurring in the future.

On 25 May 1989, Mr Beazley stated that the area was needed by the Army to provide 'buffer zones' for live firing ranges to be constructed in the area, and that the danger of stray bullets and ricochets would mean it was unsafe for anyone to reside in the area. He then stated however, that public access to this same area would be allowed between periods of live firing. This last provision is the only alteration to the Army's original demands of 1983. This decision was made despite the fact that the Army's own review papers failed to establish the need for new ranges at Killarney Glen, or that this form of land use is contrary to the long term community interest.

An official notice to vacate was issued on 29 May 1989 which demanded that Pat take his possessions and vacate by July 31. From this date the conflict and the dispute Hawksworth, Beazley and West have treated the advice of the Fitzgeralds and their exemplary support with sheer bureaucracy and contempt, since the adoption of Beazley's proposals flies in the face of all Hawke's rhetoric concerning land use, environment and conservation.

As public support continues to increase, the Government has abandoned its pathetic justifications of its action and chooses to 'hide its head in the sand' and allow the Army to make these irrelevant statements concerning rent and compensation in an attempt to divert public attention from gross ministerial irresponsibility.

In the last week of September 1989, activists from all over Australia participated in actions at the United States Joint Defence Facility at Nurrungar in South Australia. On the fifth day of these actions, the Federal Defence Minister, Kim Beazley, called in troops against civil protesters for the first time since the Eureka stockade in 1854, indicating a measure of the success of the actions.

Protesters at the camp diverged on appropriate political strategies. Non-violent strategies were particularly contentious and two viewpoints are outlined here. Andrew Nette, Kate Tempamy and Ian Wilson argue that non-violent strategies should take into account the social and political context of power, and that environmentalists should be embarking on a battle rather than "symbolic" protests. Robert Burrowes argues that non-violence principles incorporate co-operation with the police and protests should be well-planned, disciplined and with participants clear on the principles of non-violence.

Nurrungar — non-violent confrontation

This article was written by members of Brisbane Friends of the Earth in consultation with the Fitzgeralds.

Spring 1989 • 31
The limits to non-violence

by Andrew Nette, Kate Tempany and Ian Wilson

As members of the peace movement on and off now for the last six years, we want to focus on the problems we saw in much of the political direction taken at Nurrungar. We especially want to highlight the differences between the various groupings present, differences which were obscured but not diffused by the emphasis camp organisers placed on asserting 'common aims' and a 'community of interests'.

It has been said many times that the Australian peace movement has lacked a coherent critique of imperialism and the state. This weakness was again demonstrated at Nurrungar. The importance of realising the fundamental imperialist nature of the bases, in relation to our own independence, and the way they tie Australia into a network of superpower domination throughout the Pacific, does not need expanding here. However, the particular problems associated with the function of the state were thrown up in a new light at the camp, in the disagreements expressed about the role of the security forces and how we should view their actions. Apart from the fifty soldiers flown in from Sydney, Nurrungar was guarded by about forty members of the Australia Protective Services, Star Force officers, eighty regular South Australian police, as well as the dog squad and mounted police. Overhead surveillance was supplied by the South Australian Westpac rescue helicopter, and of course there was the usual assortment of plainclothes ASIO goons skulking around trying to blend in with the crowd — all in all, an impressive display of intimidation by any standard.

In response to this, there were those, probably the majority present, who advocated structuring all our protests so as to build up a feeling of trust between the security forces and demonstrators and ensure all protest was non-violent. Exactly what this 'non-violence' meant was constantly debated throughout the period of the camp, but early on in the proceedings a large and vocal contingent of activists from the Melbourne Rainforest: Action Group (RAG) managed to impose their conception of non-violent direct action on some of those at the camp. This entailed that all actions should be carried out in a calm and orderly manner, and any behaviour calculated to provoke an adverse reaction from the security personnel was to be avoided at all times. The only way we can suggest that the camp's police liaison group be informed well in advance of the activities was to take the camp as a whole or by affinity groups. The rationale for this was that it was a gesture of trust which would be reciprocated by the police in the form of a respect for our reason for being there and decent treatment of any protesters arrested.

Certainly there were few, if any, who wanted to provoke hostility for its own sake. But many, the authors included, were sceptical as to whether the security forces felt the same way. Many of us had had previous encounters with the police in our political activities, as students, women, squatters and so on, and many of the Queenslanders for their part elaborated on the type of political lessons to be drawn from their encounters of the forces of law and order as they operate under the National Party Government.

This counterpoised to the RAG contingent, an odd assortment of socialists and feminists who had found themselves thrown into a temporary alliance of sorts. It was around the two groupings that debate on the precise details of any actions to be undertaken concrete actions against the base. It was the act of actually getting the military, thus changing the entire nature of the protest. Actions like this pushed to the limits not only the space for dissent established by the security forces, but also by the organisation of the camp itself. Many protesters were not prepared to wait for the last two days when arrestable actions were officially supposed to take place. Their actions caught the security forces off guard and in turn a process whereby small groups of activists were able to set progressively more radical precedents for action, which gradually became accepted as legitimate by larger and larger sections of the camp. As a result the space allowed for political action was always in a state of expansion.

Throughout the proceedings, they consistently cited the good relations they had with the police as proof of the success of their strategies. But as is the case with large parts of the green movement at present, as it was with the peace movement at the height of its influence, most do not seem to question why exactly it is that certain authorities, so overwhelmingly hostile to such movements in the past, suddenly undergo radical changes in attitude as they begin to grow in size and influence. Given the emphasis of much of the green movement on symbolic action, it is little wonder that they appear to get on well with the police. However, if environmental activists were to occupy Western Mining Corporation's main office in protest at its efforts to mine Kakadu, there is little doubt that the appearance of police sympathy would not be maintained.

The last factor to consider about the symbolic style of protest in relation to Nurrungar is its reliance on the mainstream media for most of its effect. This led many present not just to aim for favourable media coverage, but to construct virtually the entire event in terms of what would and wouldn't make good press. Media coverage is important, but if we are to use it as a weapon to break down the power base of the police and military, it is to the point where it dictates our tactics so much that we are forced to conduct politics in a series of short, sharp segments, characteristic of the type shown on most nightly news shows! In this regard, a positive aspect of the camp was the presence of a large number of the alternative left media.

The Nurrungar demonstration brings to a close a definite stage of development for the peace movement. Over the last several years the peace movement has as its main focus attempted to highlight to the public the presence and functions of the 'join'...
Non-violence needs discipline

by Robert Burrowes

One of the groups which attended the Nurrungar protest was a contingent of 21 from the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group (RAG). RAG is an activist group with a strong commitment to the philosophy and principles of nonviolent struggle; its entire campaign to halt global rainforest destruction is based on these principles.

It was apparent on our arrival that there was a diverse range of activists and political philosophies represented at Nurrungar. However, not all of these philosophies were based on politically effective principles, nor were some activists keen to engage in debate about the value of conflicting strategies.

It was also apparent that some activists had a great deal of personal anger to express (including some towards the police) and that they were unconcerned about the political effectiveness of how they did this. There were probably some provocateurs within the camp as well.

While these factors (among others) made politically meaningful dialogue and debate difficult, there were five issues which RAG activists at Nurrungar highlighted in order to generate discussion. These were the decision-making structure being used at the camp, the use of secrecy, the verbal abuse of police, the use of sabotage, and the emphasis on spontaneity rather than well-planned, disciplined and politically effective actions.

RAG activists were also concerned that the type of actions which evolved from these ‘principles’ gave media crews little choice but to focus on poorly planned stunts and side issues rather than well-planned actions which highlighted the main issues.

Decision-making

It was apparent from the first meeting attended by RAG activists that there was considerable opposition among the activists present to the decision-making process being used at the camp. The preliminary organisation and infrastructure for the action had been undertaken by the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) in Adelaide. The decision-making process outlined in their ‘Activist Handbook’ prepared for Nurrungar, was intended to revolve around affinity groups with meetings of group spokespersons to make final decisions.

The idea of affinity groups discussing proposals and representatives taking ideas to a meeting of spokespersons (rather than a large group meeting) is not, in itself, inconsistent with consensus decision-making processes. However, the importance attached to the role of the ‘coordinating group’, its ‘guidelines for action’ (which some felt needed discussion and modification) and the directive that ‘general meetings will be information only, there will be no discussion or debate on proposals’ led many people, especially nonviolent activists and feminists, to question the decision-making structure. This feeling led to a modified decision-making process being introduced which allowed more active participation (not without its problems) by everyone, although the coordinating group still performed some control functions.

Secrecy

According to the ABC ‘Activist Handbook’: ‘No specific details of arrestable actions will be given to the police’. Indeed the policy on secrecy was well entrenched long before most activists arrived in camp.

Attempts to persuade activists at camp meetings of the value of truthfulness and openness were met with limited but loud opposition and impeded by severe time constraints and the disinclination of some outspoken activists to encourage discussion of activist theories in such fora. Activists who attended workshops on nonviolent politics were given more adequate opportunity to discuss this and other theoretical issues.

The many reasons why secrecy fundamentally undermines nonviolent struggle have been dealt with frequently and extensively in the literature.

In brief, honesty and openness help activists to overcome their fear (the...
basis of secrecy). It allows all activists full participation in planning and decision-making, something resisted strongly by those with a vested interest in patriarchal and hierarchical power structures. It has the tactical advantages of undermining police fears (the basis of much political aggression) and of building trust between the groups for future actions. It has the major political advantages of undermining police commitment to their role (thus undermining one source of power available to the state); of establishing a dynamic in which police and activists can engage in dialogue designed to encourage police anti-nuclear sentiment; of portraying positive images of the activist-police interaction through the media; and, most importantly, of building respect and integrity for the movement because of its openness, honesty, trustworthiness, commitment, courage and tenacity.

In relation to the police, it is evident from the personal account of David Fox, a nonviolent activist from Melbourne, that the police officer who used mace on him was undisciplined. Had police been fully briefed on the intended actions of the crowd, such breakdowns in police discipline may have been avoided and the media time wasted on the police use of mace utilised to carry our messages to the Australian public.

Given the subtle dynamics at play in any discipline, nonviolent struggle, secrecy is seriously weakened the campaign. And yet, it is also clear that letting go of every brake (particularly in relation to the police) is something few activists find easy. As an understanding of nonviolent struggle spreads, it is to be hoped that more people will have the opportunity to experience the power of openness rather than relying on theoretical explanations.

Members of Melbourne RAG who have built strong relationships with the police can testify to the values of openness. It manifests itself in several ways: active police assistance in identifying the arrival of rainforest timber ships so that RAG can blockade them in the Yarra River; disinflation of the police to arrest blockaders, and police requests for RAG ‘Police for Rainforests’ to work together as a team for rainforest preservation within the Police Association and many individual activists who have received their support of our cause and the way in which our campaign is being conducted.

Police abuse

During the five days of actions there were several incidents during which police were verbally abused or engaged in physical struggles; for instance, during police attempts to remove activists from the Thursday bus blockade. This verbal abuse and struggling were politically counter-productive and, from the nonviolent perspective, represented a breakdown in appropriate activist discipline.

As there was no camp consensus regarding appropriate activist behaviour, no consideration was given to the use of marshals or a nonviolent peacekeeping team at the actions. While a certain amount of emotion is desirable at any action, the need for activist discipline reinforced by marshals adequately trained to encourage politically astute behaviour is clearly worthwhile. From the perspective of nonviolent struggle, allowing police and struggling with the police are inappropate behaviours because they are not respectful of the police as human beings, they reinforce rather than undermine the police commitment to their role, they create negative images and they distract the media from the real issues.

Even if such action was the result of provocateurs, there are many historical examples where disciplined activists, marshals and peacekeeping teams have been able to contain or isolate politically ineffective behaviour.

Sabotage

It was evident from camp discussions and various affinity group actions that many activists regarded property destruction as appropriate action. Indeed there were several examples of sabotage including damage to a radome, destruction of part of the perimeter fence, attempt by a sixth-strong to permanently close a padlock on the first gate. At no stage did I hear anyone articulate a view which explained the political effectiveness of this type of activity. Even Dave Forrestan, the leading exponent of nonviolent strategies and mechanisms of operation, sabotage is more closely related to ineptitude than to nonviolent activity.

Sharp articulates nine reasons why sabotage will seriously undermine a nonviolent campaign. These include the risk of unintentional injury to opponents or third parties, the need for secrecy in planning and execution, the likelihood that few (rather than more) activists will be engaged in the action, its failure to understand the essentially human context of nonviolent struggle and the way in which the support of third parties is won, the possibility of provoking unnecessarily high levels of repression against the activists, and the complete inability of sabotage to undermine the sources of power of the opponent — the ultimate objective of nonviolent struggle.

One reason why the most perceptive exponents and practitioners of nonviolent action have emphasised the importance of maintaining nonviolent behaviour is that without strict and conscious attention, a series of actions can easily slip into sabotage; it is equally clear that such sabotage is counter-productive from the nonviolent perspective.

Spontaneity versus planning

It was apparent from the beginning that several activists were keen to minimise planning in order to allow what they called ‘spontaneity’. Efforts to encourage planning and preparation were thwarted by such tactics as drawing attention to the time this would take. Whether this tactic reflected a poorly thought-out philosophy of political activism or was a deliberate ploy to allow those wishing to control the group to monopolise the megaphone was never clearly established; it was probably a combination of both.

The result, however, was clear-cut. The group participated in a series of poorly planned, uncoordinated and disciplined actions — particularly on Thursday and Friday. This was most clearly evident in the poorly organised and executed blockade of the bus on Thursday. While the bus with the staff for the next shift was prevented from entering the base for an hour or so, there is no doubt that a properly planned and organised blockade could have prevented access for hours.

Group organisers seemed to have little idea of how to organise an effective blockade and no commitment to doing it in a way which engendered police respect for the activists. Given the nature of the group at that early stage, there was little point in suggesting better ways of organising the blockade.
For activists with a disciplined nonviolent commitment, such blockades are more effective if the police, media and other relevant people (such as the bus driver in this case) are fully informed of the intended actions, as well as the activist commitment to remain in place in a disciplined nonviolent manner. Basic rules for organizing this type of blockade (which should be role-played to embellish it according to circumstances) should be explained.

For instance, the blockaders could sit facing away from the bus thus maximizing the moral pressure on the driver; the blockaders could be linked together using such things as ribbons and balls of wool; there should be prior agreement as to how activists will respond to police directives to move (e.g. ignore them, hold each other tightly, sing to maintain group feeling and discipline, talk quietly to the police to explain commitment and persuade them to discontinue performing their role) and the blockaders could decide if some of their number should join the initial blockade afterwards by enclosing the bus from all directions.

While there is room for limited elements of creativity during actions, politically effective actions are the direct result of planning, preparation, training, role-playing and discipline. Such actions are also more likely to get precisely the media coverage desired by activists.

The media

It is apparent from the media coverage of the actions that the lack of well planned and disciplined actions together with a coherent media strategy also deprived the actions of much possible educative publicity. For nonviolent activists who expect to attract fewer critical adherents in future.

This, I believe, reflects the increasing level of dissatisfaction with branches of alternative politics devoid of a conceptual framework and a genuine commitment to tackling the hard organisational questions — such as those related to hàngarchy and hierarchy.

Activist politics may feel good but more people want it to be politically effective in a more personal way. Hence the search for politically relevant theory and the attraction to networks of smaller groups.

References

5. Sharp, p 609.
6. For a full explanation of all nine reasons, see Sharp pp 608-611.
7. Sharp, p 611.

Robert J. Burrowes is an activist with the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group

Conclusion

It is evident to me that the most valuable aspect of the Nurrungar actions was the learning it allowed the activists involved. We learned a lot from each other.

It is also apparent that there is a gradually expanding interest in learning more about the principles and dynamics of nonviolent struggle as it is classically understood.

In my opinion, activist groups without a theoretical framework and an appropriate organisational model can expect to attract fewer critical adherents in future.

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to National Parks, like Victoria does at Wilson’s Promontory, or do you restrict access by charging high prices?

Thirdly, there are the fundamental environmental issues somebody wittily summed up long ago — “What do I owe to my posterity?”

There’s no harm in such a ban, chiefly because it helps to raise consciousness.

Yes. It happens to be contradicted by other economists who think this is a most impertinent, ignorant, stupid, and unhelpful thing to be saying. But it seems you’ve got to go on saying it. How do such economists respond to your criticism? Do they say that because you’re not trained as an economist you can’t talk about it?

It’s self destructive in that it hopes to turn those resources to private ends, whether it be for the mining industry, how much better off we would be? (Except that we would have some pretty poor relations with our poorer neighbours, who would see from the rich countries that they are destitute, and they would not think it fair.)

The Keatings of this World were to internationalise how much better off we were equipped our present politicians with the knowledge of the world’s economy, environmental changes. They’ve also vied with each other to sell the images of the Keatings of the world to Australia as a basket case not worth the $500,000 to go malnourished every day in the world.

I don’t think I’m just a fashion that will pass, I think it’s the very core of our prevailing mode of economic thinking. So that’s one of the long lasting effects of the first environmental revolution.

The difficulty in the end is going to be to arrive at a workable hard structure, tolerable in its aims and working towards that. The Western democracies remain most of the time morally bare, with not an asset left in public provision. So that’s one of the long lasting effects of the first environmental revolution.

It’s fanciful in view of the opposition to be puritanism hasn’t taken over. Whatever government is doing such ungodly things, the opposition should be offering the opposite. But our problem is that everyone’s vying with each other to sell the images of the world’s economy.

I don’t know how we can escape from such attitudes of mind, except by phlegging the idiocy of it and the short termism of it because it is already beginning to cost Australians en masse considerable sums of money. Borrowing to make up our trading deficit is a quick way to get a bigger trading deficit and start having less and less to spend. I don’t know why simple old fashioned puritanism hasn’t taken over. Whatever government is doing such ungodly things, the opposition should be offering the opposite. But our problem is that everyone’s vying with each other to sell the images of the world’s economy.

Everything has become so much more complex, no one can think clearly any more, no one can even find a clear place to start. When we focus our attention to the social sciences, we should be aware that the disciplines of economics faculties and the social sciences are fungible.

The social sciences of the world are being integrated, or being forced to be integrated, into the public service.

The most important publication of the social sciences in Australia of the last ten years is a collection of papers in the Autumn edition of the Australian Quarterly, which reveals the extent to which it has already become fashionable to regard the economic rationalism now possesses a sense of environmental concern. Some of the social sciences are rediscovering environmentalism.

It’s interesting that in it that it hopes to turn those resources to private ends, whether it be for the mining industry, how much better off we would be? (Except that we would have some pretty poor relations with our poorer neighbours, who would see from the rich countries that they are destitute, and they would not think it fair.)

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The road not taken?

The race to win the hearts and minds (or money and votes) of the environmentally conscious public, the environmental movement may be coming in a poor third behind industry and political parties/governments. Even more seriously, the “business as usual” trend has left us some instances being reinforced by the environmental movement’s efforts. Stuart White looks at these three sectors, and suggests some strategies for the future.

Edelman, a public relations firm which handles the account of ICI (Australia), our largest manufacturer of plastics, is installing environmentalists and PR (opinion makers) about ICI’s image. “What could ICI do to improve its image?” I asked. “An environmentalists happy with pollution control measures?”

I experienced the same sense of frustration answering these questions as I did on a recent visit to the ICI Botany site where I met senior personnel. The problem is this: ICI have the following goals:

(i) to maximize return to shareholders and profits, (ii) to produce as much plastic as can be sold, (iii) to implement pollution control measures and publicity campaigns as are deemed necessary to safeguard (i).

Certainly it is not my intention to argue against pollution control measures as such do force the price of plastics up to a more “realistic” level. However, the bigger problem is (i) and (ii), which is where ICI and I part company. The kind of shifts we are observing in materials use in the post-war period, as outlined by Barry Commoner in *The Closing Circle*, represent a shift in an opposing direction to sustainability. The petrochemical industry is intrinsically hazardous and polluting, as evidenced by recent revelations about the incidence of lung and serious spills and leaks at the Botany site. It’s not just a case of problems of the waste plastic, but also the profits and the process itself, and the way in which the industry is organised. The growth of the market in plastics is itself a worry. The use of plastics in Australia has historically grown at 20% per year and the proportion of plastics in the packaging waste stream has risen significantly. As demand levels off here, companies like ICI look to South East Asia for their markets.

Likewise, Premier Grozinger in NSW recently stated that his government would adopt the Toronto Conference goal of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emission by 2005. What can he mean? The WA government has had one of the highest growth rates in use of electricity (9%) and gas (178%) in the western world, and their development strategy remains unchanged.

Liamster, Premier Grozinger and the National Alliance of Labour and the environment movement? Firstly, we might take advantage of the green wave, but choose our issues more strategically, informed by our seamless overlap with the issues of a campaign about genetic engineering. Sure, we could just look at the environmental aspects of the risks of deliberate release of genetically modified organisms. Alternatively, this could be used as a means of removing interests. Animal rights groups, the women’s movement, peace groups, the deep ecologists, third world activists, all have a stake in the issue. The single focus approach may win a regulatory reform here, a banned species of animals, another is the more interconnectedness. For example, clearly an environmental campaign in a way that provides some level of pollution control and even Greenpeace) and a reactionary rise of the “hero” groups Earth First! and Sea Shepherd.

The environment movement is in a unique and critical situation. Our profile and tactical successes have won us some recognition, but unless there is a clearer vision or strategy. In the US, as the excellent book *Environment as the Crossroads* shows, there has been a bureaucratic consolidation of the major groups (Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Friends Of the Earth and now Greenpeace) and a reactionary rise of the “hero” groups Earth First! and Sea Shepherd.

Stuart White, keeping a sharp eye on business from Lismore

### Green Business?

Sydney’s Regent Hotel, Balmain Two. Breakfast for 250 business people including many from smaller managed agencies, Julia Hailes is speaking. Julia, with John Elkington, wrote the green Consumer Guide and formed the company Sustainability to advise companies how to grow themselves. The occasion was organised by the Green Marketing Services, an Australian Associate of Sustainability, whose clients include Coles-Myer and whose personnel number at least one previously unachivable environmental campaigns, continued by an attractive salary.

Question time was interesting. Plaintice inevitably arrives. According to Julia, the direction in Europe is thumbs-down to photo- and bio-degradable thumbs up to recycling. It seems a green convert feels empirical if they think they can afford the plastic bag. But they feel happy using as much plastic as they want consuming more plastic, increasing the happiness of the board members of ICI and Glad Australia.

But the twist came when Lindsay Showman from Samuel Taylor (and the Aerosol Association of Australia) asked Julia to clarify a comment she had made that every CFC aerosol was a problem. She did, and it was an appropriate reply which Mr Showman would not have heard before. They feel so happy using as much plastic as they want consuming more plastic, increasing the happiness of the board members of ICI and Glad Australia.

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*Chain Reaction*
In response to the new wave of environmental consciousness, business is eager to prove its green credentials, resulting in a rash of promotional activity such as glossy advertisements. While some environmentalists are cynical about the motivations of business, the issue becomes more intense when environmental groups accept such advertising. Linda Siddall responds to the comments made in Chain Reaction questioning corporate links.

In your article "FOE Hong Kong Taken over by Eco-industrialists" (Chain Reaction 58) you attack FOE Hong Kong for accepting advertisements in our magazine One Earth from "such crooked and unscrupulous ugers as Shell, Barclays Bank and Ciba-Geigy", singling out one of Ciba-Geigy's products for particular mention. You then claim that we praise McDonald's only for switching its lack of any energy conservation policy. Largely as a result of FOE's efforts, the company has now required the company to state its energy conservation policy.

We received literally a stack of evidence from McDonald's refuting the charges, including copies of the letters written by Dr. Norman Myers (the WWF researcher who initiated the allegation that McDonald's was directly or indirectly responsible for clearing Central American rainforest for ranching) and Prince Philip unreservedly retracting and apologising for both allegations after Myers had further researched the situation.

Two examples: we used a full page advertisement from HK's main electricity company (China Light and Power) on the facing page we editorialise against a new power station (and one of its main polluters) China Light and Power. The Government Environmental Committee has now required the company to state its energy conservation policy. Secondly, McDonald's and the rainforests. In the issue you referred to, we praised McDonald's only for switching non-CFC containers, not its environmental awareness generally as you suggested. We put the allegations you make about "the hamburger connection" and more to McDonald's, stating that we proposed to do a story and inviting their response.

We believe a list of mistakes are made and damage done, environmental organisations who (some) accept support do not have to let us be equaly fearfree about giving praise that is due.

Perhaps we should consider a company's achievements and defend their position, why, when McDonald's went to so much trouble to establish the innocence of its 10,000 restaurants worldwide in 1983, it has done so little to let the public know about it since then — particularly as the allegation has continued to gain currency as the rainforests vanish.

You assert that McDonald's is well known for its role in rainforest destruction. Yes, that is the rumour. Do you have any evidence for your apparent endorsement of this rumour?

That FOE (HK) has been prepared to approach and confront industry, rather than criticise from a safe distance, is especially important. This activity is rare in many sections of FOE in Australia.

But to discuss this is to draw the debate. More is at stake than an argument over specifics of particular chemicals and specific incidents of pollution and decroration — there is disagreement over fundamental philosophy. The purpose of my original comments was to generate discussion of broad issues raised by the acceptance of advertising or sponsorship from large corporations by environmental groups, particularly Friends of the Earth.

I stand by my position that it is devious to accept advertising from such companies. Despite your suggestion that we "give the readers credit", there will inevitably be a significant number of your readers who are not in possession of the full facts on an issue, and will accept the paint of view that IC1 is now OK because it supports something as full of holes as the Montreal Protocol on CFCs and ozone depletion.

In Australia, the ownership of the media of news circulation is concentrated in the hands of a few. This is also the case in Hong Kong. In this situation many people are not given the opportunity by the media to fill in critical gaps in their knowledge about the shenanigans of many to act on certain issues.

What a corporation fails to tell the public is usually of far more significance than what they do say. Consider the glossy poster on ozone depletion produced by Du Pont and published in a recent issue of One Earth. As far as I can tell, FOE (HK) failed in its responsibility to provide sufficient detailed information in the pages of One Earth to complement that which Du Pont had deliberately omitted from its poster.

The McDonald's case provides an example of the difficulty environmentalists can have in substantiating their claims. While it cannot be proven that McDonald's does destroy rainforests, it can be shown that the rumours should not be accepted just because McDonald's says so. The problem then becomes an issue of "rumour versus taking industry's word for it". While the latter is a horridly unregulated area in the use of poisons, the former is far more critical.

Of course where mistakes are made and damage done, environmental organisations must say so fearlessly. But when FOE (HK) attack McDonald's, they do not have to let us be equally fearfree about giving praise that is due.

Certainly we should give credit where credit is due, but it would be wiser not to be taken in by the company's efforts to green itself when the matters being taken are not very significant when put into the context of continuing oil spills, the use of toxic ingredients to clean them up, the lack of serious attempts to develop anti-greenhouse technology, and the continued poisoning of some parts of the world against the speedy introduction of unleaded fuel.

Degradable plastic bags are another example of why we shouldn't be taken in by superficial corporate 'greenwash' operations. An article in the Greenspace magazine (Sept/Oct 1989) revealed that five of the top six United States hazardous waste products (by volume) were by-products or inputs of the plastics industry — propylene, styrene, butadiene, polystyrene, and benzene.

The 'profit at all costs' orientation of most companies is the root cause. We must pressure them to consider the cost-effective possibilities of putting money, energy and effort into these along with the economic benefits of making products which have a charter wider than maximum dividends for shareholders at all cost.

Readers may wish to extend the debate.
**Remaking Society**

by Murray Bookchin

We tend to think of environmental catastrophes — such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster in the Bay of Alaska — as accidents: isolated phenomena that erupt without warning. But when does the word accident become inappropriate? When are such occurrences considered inevitable outcomes of our society rather than accidents?

What environmentalists must emphasise is that the global ecological crisis is the result of our social and economic arrangements, not simply the product of random mishaps. If the Exxon Valdez disaster is treated merely as an 'accident' — as were Chernobyl and Three Mile Island — we will have once again diverted public attention from a social crisis of historic proportions: we live in an inherently anti-ecological society. This situation is not a by product of stagnation or the passage of piecemeal legislation. Ours is a society in need of far-reaching structural change.

Perhaps the most obvious of our problems is uncontrollable growth. In modern societies, unlimited economic growth is assumed to be evidence of success. It is a demanding enterprise that industrialised nations, which sport the lowest birth rates, produce a disproportionate share of environmental ills that afflict our time.

Perhaps the most obvious of our problems is uncontrollable growth. In modern societies, unlimited economic growth is assumed to be evidence of success. It is a demanding enterprise that industrialised nations, which sport the lowest birth rates, produce a disproportionate share of environmental ills that afflict our time. The presence of these radionuclides creates special occupational and environmental problems. Their removal from any mining site raises questions of legality under the Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act. Legality is a fundamental issue that must be dealt with before other matters are considered.

This article was first printed in the US magazine The Progressive, August 1989, and was excerpted by Ute Reeder. Subscriptions: US$27.50/yr (12 issues) from The Progressive, PO Box 54615, Boulder, CO 80321-4615.
Environmental groups have asked not to be too hormonal. They are associated with diseases and may affect human health in various ways. Additional value is placed on the minerals.

Thorium from Australian monazite has found its way into nuclear fuelled experimental reactors. Nuclear safeguards do nothing to prevent the uranium from being used in reactors. In any case, safeguards over monazite will be even more difficult to police than yellowcake.

The Wimmera Industrial Minerals (WIM) Project

The 'fast track' record so far:
1987 - CRA applies for development lease.
- Ministry for Planning & Environment (MPSE) issues Assessment approving pilot plant.
- Conservation Council of Victoria (CCV) issues Statement of Concern on behalf of environment and anti-nuclear groups arguing that uranium, at least, has value for the nuclear industry. WIM project would probably breach Section 6 of the Act.
- CCV appeal to Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) against pilot plant.
- AAT rejects CCV appeal.
1989 - Environment Effects Statement on demonstration plant to process 1 million tonnes of sand before pilot plant studies completed.
- CCV makes submission and appears at public hearing on EES.

Proven Reserves (tonnes)

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This article was first printed in the MAUM Victoria newsletter.
... so the image of masculinity to which males aspire is just that: an image, a mask, a shell which...
Elton, of course, had been the public relations man for a number of important Australian evacuations. It is not the greenhouse but the...
of nuclear war. As he becomes less strident about the downfall of the constitution he becomes more strident about the ever present threat to the inhabitation of the planet, holding up for our inspection in more than one speech his "icon" of war, the image of a man in Hiroshima standing in the ashes, his skin in tatters, looking down at his hand where one of his eyeballs is resting. White points out that the superpower governments seem to have lost touch with the very personal aspect of war, and in his later speeches increasingly supports the Nuclear Disarmament Party as the one body that has the right attitude to nuclear affairs.

This is a book that anyone who feels the ordinary person deserves a go should read. This is a book that anyone who thinks we deserve to live in a world with some beauty and freedom should read. And mostly this is a book that anyone who doesn't want to die horribly in the ashes of a nuclear explosion or in the creeping poisonous aftermath that will eventually blanket the earth—"swathed in its contaminated shroud"—should also read.

If you admire White's literary style you could be disappointed by this book. If, however, you wish to survive, you will be in agreement with Patrick White. This volume shows us the political side of a man with very strong views about human rights.

Vetemne West is a member of Friends of the Earth Sydney

**Kids Contact**

**Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign**

This is a magazine for kids which covers issues all over Australia and the world in an interesting format with large easy-to-read typefaces. It also has a companion teachers guide which is also easy to read. The first issue is on the environment, and the second issue will be on food and health.

It looks like it could be very useful in the classroom, but could also be a good read for many kids in other places.

Available from: Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign, 153 Pirie St, Adelaide, SA, 5000.

**The Ethical Buyers Guide**

**Community Aid Abroad — Annerley Group, $2.**

This is "a directory of businesses and organisations which provide an alternative for thoughtful consumers in south east Queensland". It also covers some organisations in other parts of Australia, and many of the listed businesses have mail order operations.

This valuable guide is intended to be updated regularly, and reader's contributions are invited. Every locality should have a similar guide. Printed on recycled paper.

Available from: The Ethical Buyers Guide, PO Box 200, Mt Gravatt, Qld, 4122.

**Environmental effects of Wood-based Pulp Mills**

**Noni Keys, the office**

This handbook examines the different pulp mill technologies available and analyses the environmental impact of each. It is ideal for people who need to be informed on the pulp mill issue, and who want to know about methods other than the craft chlorine bleach process (L.a. Wesley Vale).

The handbook considers alternative processes, and recommends that chemo-thermo-mechanical and thermo-mechanical processes using hydrogen peroxide as a bleaching agent be considered.

Available from: The Office of Jo Valterino, PO Box 137, West Perth, 6005.

**Alternativas Tecnologicas**

**Servicio de Informacion Tecnica de CETAL**

"Ya casi nadie discute que los problemas ecologicos que afectan al mundo no podran ser afrontados con exito, si ellos no se vinculan, finalmente, con las formas de vida y tipo de bienestar que las sociedades aspiran establecer" — Alternativas Tecnologicas — Energias Renovables — "vivamos mejor con menos energia."

**Genetic Manipulation**

**Law Reform Commission of Victoria, free.**

This report is probably the best attempt made so far by legal authorities in Australia to suggest regulation of the area. This makes it important — although not necessarily correct — as it may provide a lead for legislation in this area. The report supports genetic manipulation, and suggests that there should be safety standards. It lists most of the reasons in favour of scientific work and the development of technology in this area, and it contains some of the objections to genetic manipulation.

Available from: Information Victoria, 318 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, 3000.

**Energy from Nature**

Rainbow Power Company Pty Ltd, $10.

This book not only covers energy production in an environmentally sensitive manner, it also contains valuable information on the basics — like how an electric current flows. This book has been commended by absolute beginners through to people who know what they want but not where to get it.

This is a valuable resource for people trying to develop an independent or environmentally acceptable energy source, and it's a good read for people who want to know that it's possible to do that. Printed on recycled paper.

Available from: Rainbow Power Company Pty Ltd, PO Box 217, Nimbin, NSW, 2480.

Friends of the Earth Bookshop, 222 Brunswick St, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065.
So you become a flower? Where's the good in that?

Hello Flower

Actually, that's not true... Nasturtiums are pretty tough customers.

If you see, are you willing to run the risk of becoming a nasturtium?

For a better life... there is no rose...

Are you trying to talk me into it now?

No, I'm not going to get harriet. She's a social worker...

No! What about all our friendship? Our visits?

No! You can visit me as long as you don't pick me...

It's too late...?

Yes?

For a better life... there is no rose...

Please Ruth, don't do it... why not?

It's different. You don't know if you'll like it.

I want different ICU.

No... what about all the things you'll be giving up...

Like...

I'm turning into a flower loul.

What about all your friendship? Our visits?

It's too late...

I'm a flower loul.

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