

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH'S

chain reaction



ABORIGINES: LAND RIGHTS UNDERMINED

THIRD WORLD TECHNOLOGY: AID DIRECTOR SPEAKS OUT

UNEMPLOYMENT: A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE

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EDITORIAL

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Late last year Federal Parliament hurriedly passed what must be one of the most corrupt pieces of legislation to go on to the Australian statutes — the Foreign Proceedings (Prohibition of Certain Evidence) Act 1976.

The Act is a blatant clamp on freedom of speech (see p.2). Information which is needed for overseas litigation and which has been put under orders by the Attorney-General "in the national interest" may not be revealed or discussed in Australia, nor brought before foreign courts by an Australian. The "national interest" is decided by the Attorney-General alone without the possibility of challenge from Australian courts. People who reveal information without checking the Government Gazette for Orders first are liable to a \$5,000 fine or 6 months in prison.

The Act was hurriedly designed, in the first instance, to protect uranium mining companies in Australia from substantial damage claims and the possibility of criminal actions, both being pursued in the U.S. Because of the haste of the Liberal/NCP Government's actions and the inaction by the Labor Opposition, one may be forgiven for wondering to what extent these two parties are implicated as well. There are no benefits in this legislation for Australian citizens, unless you happen to be in league with the Government in some embarrassing project or other.

Similar legislation to conceal dirty documents currently exists in the U.K. and Canada, but that is no justification. We suspect that those nations are run by the same multi national companies as appear to run Australia. Besides, in the U.K. the Attorney-General's orders at least may be over-ruled by a vote in Parliament.

We view with considerable alarm the power of the Attorney-General to assess the "national interest" without challenge. Our belief, contrary to Mr Ellicott's, is that the national interest would best be served by dismantling the uranium companies, not sheltering them un-

der a legislative petticoat in Australia. All actions of the Government should be subject to democratic control. Furthermore, as pointed out by Mr Tony Whitlam, this kind of legislation will only provoke similar legislation overseas and hinder future Australian investigations into multi national corporate crime which affects us all.

With little more than a few remarks, this Act was passed almost unopposed. As active conservationists who survive on freedom of speech, we are frightened to contemplate how much oppressive and undemocratic legislation could be slipping by without our sleepy Opposition calling public attention to the fact.

The Australian public has also been kept in the dark about the latest proceedings of the Ranger Inquiry, which dealt with Aboriginal claims to the land where uranium has been found in the Northern Territory. The mass media ignored these hearings in Darwin during late February so totally that one wonders if a D-notice or similar restriction was placed on reportage of them.

Mr Justice Fox chose to delay the second and final report of the Inquiry for about three months until evidence on Aboriginal Land Rights and the local effects of mining could be taken in the context of the new Federal Land Rights Act. This Act is another example of watered-down easily-abused legislation allowed through with abysmal media coverage. There is no guarantee that this Act will ever really protect the land rights of Australian Aborigines (see p.6).

Freedom of information — and the associated freedoms of thought and lifestyle — are crucial to a non-nuclear society (i.e., survival). While the mass media fail to give us information on such important developments, and while legislation such as the Foreign Proceedings (Prohibition of Certain Evidence) Act remains on our statutes, the illusion that Australia is a free country will remain just that.



What is it you want whiteman?
What do you need from me?
My culture? My dreams?
You have leached the substance
Of love from my being.
— Kevin Gilbert.

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Chain Reaction is the quarterly magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia, publishing feature articles and news on national and international environmental issues, and searching for the way towards a sustainable, convivial society which lives in harmony with its environment.

This issue was produced by John Andrews, Mark Carter, Peter Baird, Graham Barron, Olga O'Hanesian, Richard Nankin and John Cotter, but wouldn't have appeared without the invaluable contributions from Julie Senior, Alastair Machin, Wieslaw Lichacz, Sarah, Kim, Geoff Evans, Frank Muller, Neil Barrett, Don Siemens, Pat Mullins, Lyndon Shea, Steve Myers, Dick Borton, Nicky Gray, Jill Van, Les Dalton, Dave Elliot, Adrian Harris, David Hughes, Linnell Secombe, Lowana Veal, Jenny Talbot, Julia Knight, Peter Shaw, Ross Parks, and last but not least Peter Nicholson for doing the cover.

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Original contributions to Chain Reaction — articles, news snippets, leaks, photos, drawings, cartoons, poems or short stories with some sort of environmental association — are very welcome, but we can only guarantee to return them if they are accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Address all correspondence to Chain Reaction, Friends of the Earth, 51 Nicholson St., Carlton, Vic. 3053. Tel. (03) 347 6630.

Vol.3, No.1 will hopefully appear in June and will be a special on transport. Ideas are welcome — please get in touch with us if you want to help. Also how about a few letters to get a bit of discussion going in these pages!



PARLIAMENT SHELTERS U-COMPANIES

A report in *The Age* (2nd Feb, '77), stated that nine Australian uranium-mining companies, most of them controlled by Rio Tinto Zinc, have chosen not to deny price-fixing charges made against them in a suit brought by Westinghouse in the United States.

(Details of an alleged price-fixing club were published by *The National Times* — Aug. 16, 1976 — following release by FOE of strictly confidential documents leaked from Mary Kathleen Uranium.)

The suit could claim up to \$7 billion. There is also a US grand jury inquiry to establish a case for criminal prosecution of the parties alleged to have been involved.

"Well, are they innocent?" you ask. It is curious that only nine days after subpoenas for evidence were lodged by the US in the Supreme Court of New South Wales last November, the matter was raised in Federal Parliament (18/11/76) by Mr Jacobi.

That evening, at 8.57 pm, a debate on defence was interrupted and the Foreign Proceedings (Prohibition of Certain Evidence) Bill was presented by the Attorney-General, Mr Ellicott.

The purpose of the Bill was to counter provisions of US anti-trust legislation which may be applied even to non-US citizens, if their actions may have economic effects in the US.



The Attorney-General may, at his discretion, and, amazingly, without fear of challenge in any Australian court, restrict the availability of evidence to foreign courts if he considers that the requests are not consistent with international law, or are against the 'national interest'.

The Bill was handed to Parliament at a few minutes notice only and without advance notice. Copies were not properly distributed prior to the

readings according to one member, Mr Bryant. The Opposition, excepting two or three members, chose not to speak against the Bill, presumably because the Attorney-General asked the House to accept the Government's "assurances" and pass the Bill before the NSW court's proceedings that week.

The Bill received three readings before 10pm, and was assented to the next day, just in time to prevent the NSW court from coming to its own decisions as to whether the requested evidence should be sent to the US.

So now, our uranium miners are protected "in the national interest" due to a dazzling display of last-minute efficiency by the Government and apathy (at best) by the Opposition.

(Our advice to FOE document leakers, who wish to contribute to the financial cannibalism of the international nuclear industry, is to arrange for the overseas beneficiaries to pay your \$5000 fine in advance, or make some arrangement for your 6 months in gaol, or leak the stuff **without telling** the Attorney-General first. That way he won't have put a restraining order on the info first and you'll be OK.)

SEC HINDER SOLAR DEVELOPMENT

Enquiries to the State Electricity Commission of Victoria have revealed that only one type of commercial hot-water tank designed for use with solar collectors and an electric booster is currently eligible for off-peak electricity rates for the booster.

The sole solar tanks that have SEC approval for off-peak rates in Victoria are those marketed through Autonomous Energy Systems, Mount Waverley, according to Jim Lacey, SEC Commercial and Domestic Development Engineer.

As yet, the tanks made by Beasley, Braemar and other solar manufacturers would be charged the full rate

for the electricity used by the booster.

This would mean that the pay-back period in Melbourne for such a system would jump to a prohibitive 20 years, compared with around ten years if off-peak tariffs applied.

To approve a solar tank for off-peak rates, the SEC require it to give at least 160 litres of hot water ($\geq 57^\circ\text{C}$) under worst-case conditions.

The thermostat in the tank, which operates the booster, must therefore be positioned so that there are at least 160 litres above it which can be warmed electrically each night.

For households of four or more, such a requirement is not difficult to

meet. What is holding up approval of certain manufacturers' tanks is that they are labelled by their total capacity, rather than, as the SEC demand, by the capacity above the thermostat.

The SEC say that any do-it-yourself solar system must have its tank approved by them if it is to qualify for off-peak boosting tariffs.

1. See *Chain Reaction*, 2(3), 1976, p.19.
2. "The Measurement of Solar Water Heater Performance", J. C. Lacey, SEC (Vic.) 1976 — available from SEC (Vic.).

AMBASSADORS SPOT NEW

REACTOR

Work began in late February on the construction of a brand new 35-MW research reactor for the Australian Atomic Energy Commission (AAEC) at its Lucas Heights site near Sydney.

FOE's owl-eyed "Atom-Free Embassy", which was set up just outside the main entrance to Lucas Heights in November last year in protest against the Government's decision to go-ahead and fulfil existing export contracts for uranium without waiting for the Second Ranger Report (see page 18), was quick to notice the start of concrete pouring for the new reactor.

The Embassy reports that the public have not been adequately consulted about this new project, the AAEC has not justified the need for the extra generating capacity, nor has it proposed adequate solutions to the problem of disposing of the radioactive waste-products from the reactor, which include some plutonium.

International Alliance formed to Protect Antarctic

An international committee, to act as a watchdog over attempts to exploit Antarctic resources was formed at the Friends of the Earth International meeting in Amsterdam on 1 February, 1977.

The committee consists of representatives from four environment organisations in nine countries:

1. International Institute for Environment and Development;
2. International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources;
3. The Sierra Club;
4. Friends of the Earth groups from the USA, UK, France, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The meeting resolved to campaign to safeguard Antarctic resources on-shore and off-shore against harmful exploitation, and called for the support of people of all nations, particularly those which are signatories to the Antarctic Treaty.

...and a lot of litter

This summer has been hot and thirsty and no-one has felt it more than the pioneers of the "Atom Free Embassy".

Close by is a weir on the Woronora River, a popular swimming resort, and on their first visit they were horrified to discover that the area was so litter-ridden, it could have been an overgrown council tip!

What to do? — Organize a clean-up. It would, firstly, please the council (it did), and the swimmers (it didn't), and be a very good springboard for the anti-packaging campaign that FOE Sydney is waging (it was).

About 50 people descended on the site on the weekend of 15/16 January and although they built two great piles of rubbish, the area is still far from clean.

An incident occurred between 'FOE' and about 40 swimmers, after one family's car got blocked by the mounting pile of rubbish, and the

driver, in madness or desperation, tried to drive his big limousine right through it.

He failed and his mates had to pull the rubbish out from under him. So the rubbish went flying back into the bush and the abuse (at FOE) came thick and thorough.

This incident was enough provocation for the media to take interest. The newspapers and radio stations, vultures for any confrontation, played on the scene at the Woronora River, but FOE, more willing to expand its implication, was quick to point out that the blame for our litter problems cannot fairly be laid at the consumer's hands alone. In fact, it has been because of the intensive advertising schemes of the packaging industry that we now have such a problem.

No one could have hoped for as much publicity as we got from as simple an activity as a clean-up. Some of the satellite groups which are being formed in the metropolitan area are using the same idea as a media lure to announce their establishment.

But for others interested, beware that you avoid a 'Keep Australia Beautiful Council' image — and point the finger at the packagers!



GERMANS SAY NO TO OUR URANIUM

A national meeting of German anti-nuclear campaigners in Hamburg on 16 January, 1977, unanimously passed a motion giving support to Australians fighting against the mining and export of Australia's uranium.

The meeting was attended by 400 people, including two representatives of FOE Australia, Frank Muller and Paul Marshall.

It was called to discuss the next stage in the fight against a proposed nuclear reactor at Brokdorf. Earlier demonstrations against this project have involved up to 25,000 people.

The full text of the motion relating to Australia was as follows:

"That this meeting of representatives of citizen initiatives against atomic power stations from all over Germany supports the actions of Australian citizen groups to stop the mining and export of uranium. We do not want Australian or any other uranium for use in the Federal Republic of Germany. We resolve to demonstrate our opposition to the import of Australian uranium."

THE FLYING BUNKER

It is hard to believe that Dr Strangelove himself is not behind the latest American innovation in the balance of terror. By 1983 the US will spend just short of US \$900 million buying and equipping no less than six jumbo jets as flying command headquarters — three for the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and three for the Supreme Commander of the armed services: that is, the President himself.

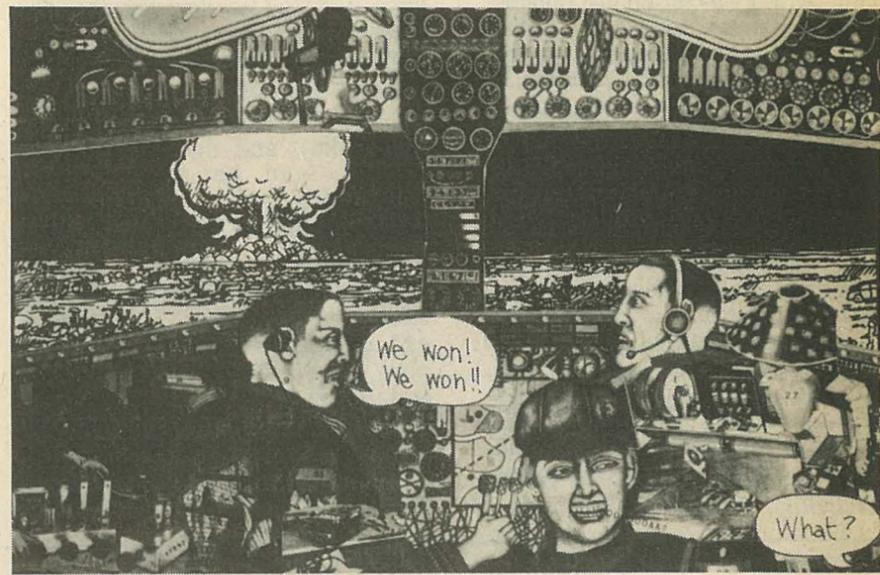
At present there are three 'Flying Fuehrerbunkers' — otherwise known as National Emergency Airborne Command Posts (NEACP, which the Pentagon pronounces 'kneecap') — and President Jimmy Carter has already taken one to show the folks in home-town Plains, Georgia.

When the whole project is completed by 1983, each jumbo will house an ADP system tied in with the ground-based WWMCCS (no one has managed to create an acronym out of these initials yet — WWMCCS stands for World Wide Military Control Command System, ADP for Automatic Data Processing). The idea of having three each for the SAC and the President is to allow for one on the tarmac, one in

reserve and one in maintenance.

On the day that it all starts happening, the President leaps aboard his 'kneecap' full of communication and computer gear and, from high above the rising mushroom clouds, does his best to ensure that 'mutual assured destruction' (i.e., MAD) is carried out to the best of his and the services' abilities.

Unfortunately, the one Jimmy Carter took home to Plains is not quite up to the job at present since the highly sophisticated ADP system needed to tie in with the WWMCCS



ADP system has not been built yet. "The Flying Fuehrerbunkers", writes Alexander Cockburn in *New Statesman* (18 Feb. 77) "[are] the most expensive planes in history. Carter now says he is planning to call 'some surprise alerts' to test defence readiness. Given the possibility for confusion inside the WWMCCS and among all the ADPs this will certainly lead at once to a holocaust. Thus the American people (and everyone else) will learn at first hand about what Carter called 'the existing threat of nuclear war'."

A long cold winter

It is hard not to be sceptical about the onset of yet another American 'crisis' since the word is just as likely to be applied to a breakdown in hamburger production as to anything with truly serious implications. Thus the latest 'energy crisis' has to be seen in the unique American cultural context of a well-cultivated addiction to a high-energy life-style.



An illustration is provided by *Time Magazine* who quote a Chicago barber's reaction to President Jimmy Carter's appeal to the populace to lower the thermostats on

their central heating to 65°F (18°C): "My thermostat at 65?" said the barber. "Hell, no. I got two small kids who sleep uncovered."

The knowledge that everyone has a highly efficient central-heating system which needs only to be adequately insulated by clothing seems to be a piece of folk-lore lost forever in the transition from the frontier to the industrial age.

Nonetheless, the US has suffered what may prove to be the coldest winter on record. Virtually all the land mass east of the Rockies has been affected by the cold-snap and eight States called an emergency as stockpiled supplies of natural gas dwindled, power stations faced continuing high electrical demand, crops were nearly wiped out by the cold, and normal-commercial operations were disrupted by power shortages, ice and snow.

First to suffer have been, of course, the poor — least able to insulate themselves figuratively and literally from freak conditions and

spiralling heating costs. Natural gas, in most states, is stockpiled during warmer months to meet peak demand in winter when natural flows are unable to cope. In many areas this year, gas stored for use in February and March had been piped out in January. Emergency legislation was hastily enacted to raise regulated price ceilings on gas delivered inter-state by private utilities. In at least one state, poor residents were forced to seek loans from a special fund to help pay their fuel bills.

The second casualty has been the environment and public health as fuels such as high-sulphur coal — long outlawed by anti-pollution laws — were shovelled back into the furnaces of industry and power generators. Under conditions of meteorological blitzkrieg, pollution can become a patriotic call as Ohio's governor revealed: "We can go back to coal and save the schools, save the jobs, save Ohio and save the nation."

For environmentalists and conservationists, the North American winter of 1977 can offer little cause for optimism.

Whether or not it can justly be termed a crisis situation is beside the point — it has been successfully projected as such and energy measures taken to meet the freak demand levels were, in those terms, adequate.

Rationally, of course, the obverse argument of the conservationists has just been given a rather stark demonstration — that resources are limited, that energy dependence is a fragile relationship and that we must arrive at a more harmonious scheme of organisation than one which demands abandonment of every agreed pollution restraint at each appearance of the unexpected.

Woodchip Report

No export licences for woodchips should be issued to new projects until the environmental problems associated with clear felling have been satisfactorily resolved, recommends the Interim Report on the current woodchip industry by the Senate Standing Committee on Science and the Environment which was released last December.

The Report lists depletion of soil nutrients, wild life preservation, and conservation of genetic characteristics as the principal areas of environmental concern.

But it says that woodchip projects using only waste from "genuine saw log operations" should be allowed to proceed, though subject to immediate withdrawal of an export licence if any additional felling operations (i.e. for woodchips alone) were begun after a project had been approved.

The latter recommendation is of immediate importance in the fight to prevent the establishment of a woodchip operation based on Coffs Harbour in northern NSW.

This scheme cannot operate on a viable basis using only waste from saw logging.

The recommendation is therefore, a clear guide to the Wran Government that the Coffs-Harbour-based woodchip project should not proceed.

The Report compromises on the question of the renewal of the woodchip export licence for Harris-Daishowa, the Japanese company operating at Eden. If the conditions of the Report's recommendations are met, then the negative effects of the project will be somewhat reduced and at least the important Merrica and Nadgee River areas will be protected.

Carter's Team

Liberals and optimistic environmentalists have been notably cheered by some of the statements which have come from the wide smiling mouth of the new American President, Jimmy Carter.

His solar-heated reviewing stands on Inauguration Day were a nice touch and his early promise of low priority for nuclear technology and an accent on energy conservation and alternative energy sources warmed the hearts of many looking for an American Moses to lead the Western World out of the wilderness.

Many, of course, are more cynical. Alexander Cockburn here offers a brief tour of the Carter cabinet which provides some illumination of the gap between rhetoric and reality:

"It would be tedious to run through all Carter's appointments, but for a precis we may note that his cabinet includes three directors of IBM, four members of the Trilateral Commission (sponsored originally by David Rockefeller) and two members of the executive committee of the Rockefeller Foundation. The firm of Coca-Cola need not feel that it lacks a friend in the White House — the Atlanta-based company can observe its former counsel in Washington, Joseph Califano, appointed secretary of HEW (Health, Education and Welfare), its (Atlanta) law firm of King Spaulding at the President's elbow in the forms of Griffin Bell and Charles Kirbo, and a former executive now appointed deputy Secretary of Defence.

"What brave dreams can Carter gesture to in the first moments of his presidency? His campaign opposition to nuclear power will surely be somewhat muted, since James Schlesinger — a noted advocate of

nuclear power under Nixon — is now his energy Tsar. His spasmodic opposition to the B-1 bomber is evidently being rapidly extinguished by Harold Brown. Price controls — touted during the campaign — vanished the moment a steel company raised its prices in December. Carter, unnerved by the inflationary menace, promised he would never even think of price controls again.



"Insiders are coming back to power in Washington now, in the shape of the men who gave us Vietnam in the 1960s. Outsiders are coming to Washington in the shape of men who so far have not been given a chance to get their hands inside the cookie jar. The air is scarcely crackling with promise. Brave words are being spoken . . . but the honeymoon is really over before the bridegroom steps out of the church."

New Statesman, 21 Jan., 1977

THE KAREN SILKWOOD CASE

Since the day Karen Silkwood — a laboratory assistant at a giant American plutonium processing plant, owned by the Kerr-McGee Corporation — died in a car crash on

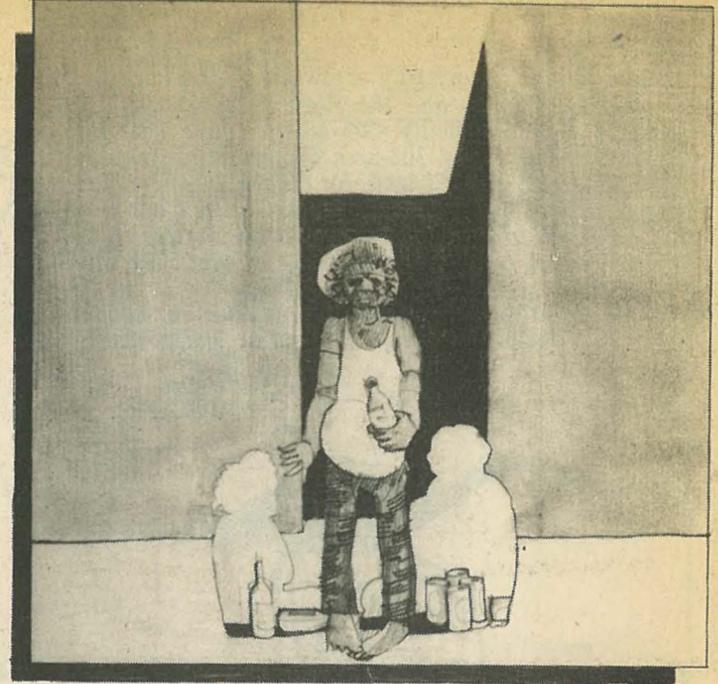
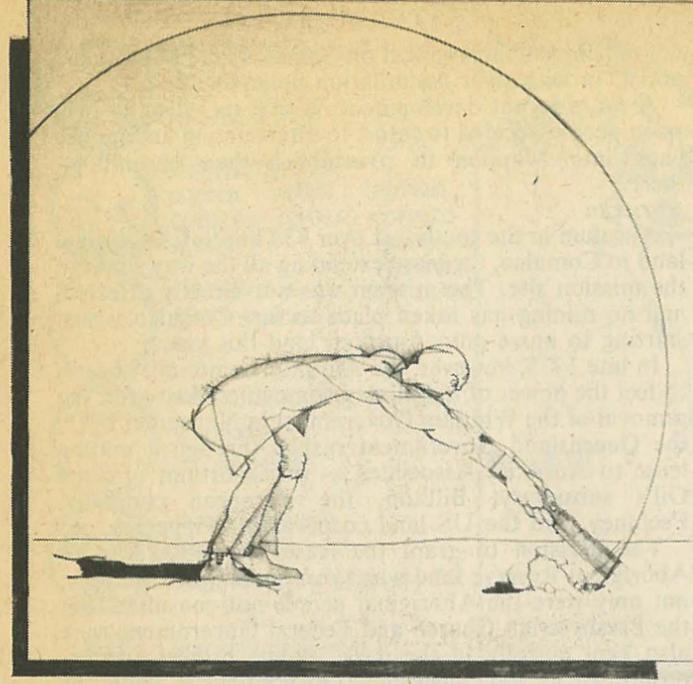
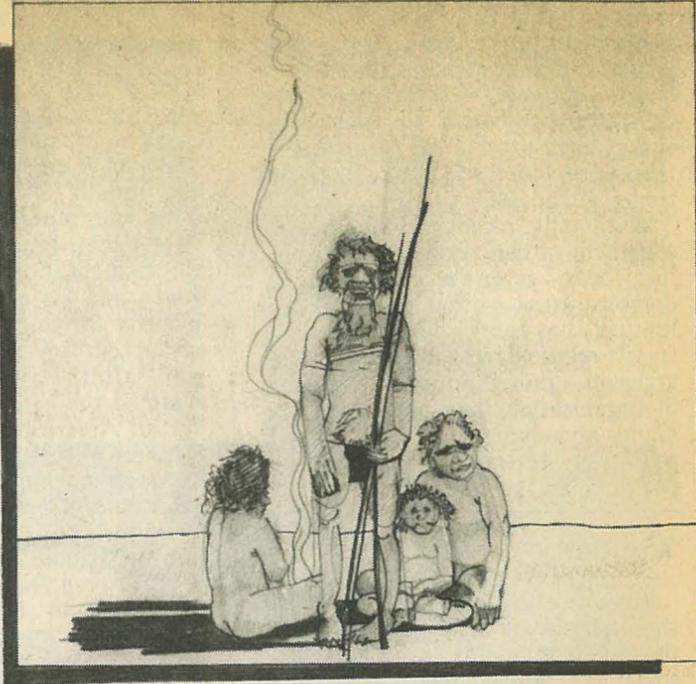
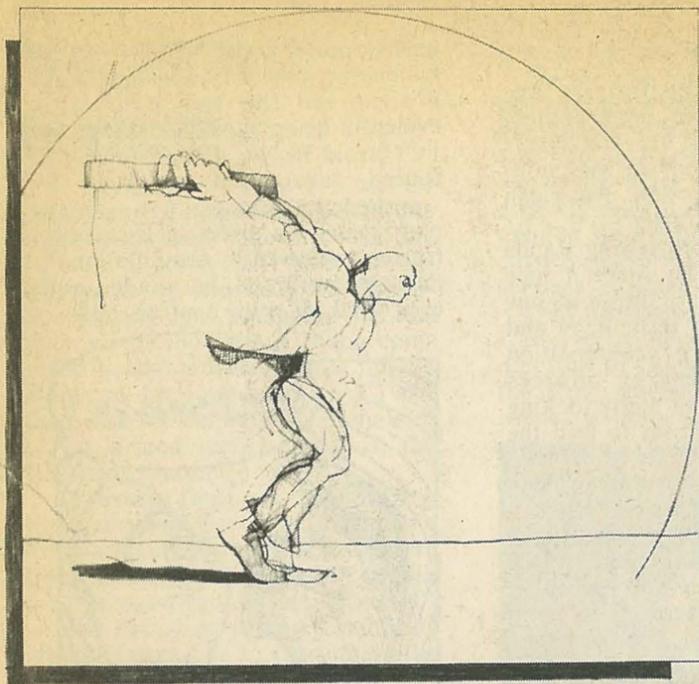


November 13, 1974, it has been abundantly clear that very powerful people wish to keep quiet some chill-

ing truths about the state of the nation's plutonium inventory.

As more and more bizarre facts surrounding the death of Karen Silkwood slowly emerge in spite of the official gag, it becomes increasingly probable that she was killed because she had unearthed evidence of a massive illicit trade in plutonium — whether a blackmarket or a CIA operation is a matter for speculation.

Readers interested in learning more of the Karen Silkwood case are directed to the January 13, 1977 (no. 229/230) edition of *Rolling Stone*. See also *Rolling Stone* No's. 183 and 201 for earlier descriptions of the case.



ABORIGINAL LAND

The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 came into force on 26 January of this year, an Australia Day — the day commemorating the first fleet's arrival at Botany Bay in 1788, when, under 'white law', the whole continent suddenly ceased to belong to Aborigines and instead became Crown Land.

Here we take a detailed look at the provisions of this Act, and at the Aboriginal Land Rights issue as a whole. With the Ranger Uranium Environmental Commission due to br-

The aborigines came to this continent from the north upwards of 30,000 years ago. Living solely by food gathering and hunting they established a sustainable way of life in close harmony with the natural environment. They lived well in good seasons; they suffered in bad years.

First and foremost the Aborigines' link with their land is a spiritual one. As Vi Stanton movingly described to the Ranger Inquiry in Darwin last year, "She (the Earth) is the source of our true beings, our soul and our life . . . from her we have our traditional dreaming places, our most sacred areas and the keeping places of our lore".

The commonest form of 'earth link' is between a clan and a particular area of land². Membership of the clan is usually determined by patrilineal descent — that is, a child automatically becomes a member of the father's clan. Aborigines regard the link between a clan and its land as being timeless — a link between those living now, their ancestors and their Dreamtime spirit beings.

This spiritual link involves both rights and duties: "The rights are to the unrestricted use of its natural products; the duties are of a ceremonial kind — to tend the land by the performance of ritual dances, songs and ceremonies at the proper times and places"³.

Groups which live and hunt together, however, are

made up of people from a number of different clans, since marriage cannot take place between man and woman from the same clan.

It has been estimated that about 300,000 Aborigines were living on this continent when Europeans first arrived in 1788. Right up until their first contact with white settlers, Aborigines lived in a manner closely similar to that of their earliest ancestors. What happened when the white people came was succinctly described by Woodward in the Second Report of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission set up by the Whitlam Government in February 1973⁴:

"At the beginning of the year 1788 the whole of Australia was occupied by the Aboriginal people of this country. It was divided between groups in a way that was understood and respected by all.

Over the last 186 years, white settlers and their descendants have gradually taken over the occupation of most of the fertile or otherwise useful parts of the country. In doing so, they have shown scant regard for any rights in the land, legal or moral, of the Aboriginal people.

There are now about one hundred white citizens of Australia for every one Aboriginal or part-Aboriginal. (i.e., there are approx. 160,000 people of Aboriginal descent.)

ing out its Second Report around the middle of this year, we pay particular attention to how the Act affects Aboriginal claims to the land on which uranium has been found in Arnhem Land. This Second Ranger Report will deal with the effects of uranium mining on local Aborigines and the local environment.

But before we can start to get a feel for what their land means to Aborigines, we must look back in time, well beyond even half life of plutonium ago . . .

These basic facts and the human tragedy they represent are, I believe, not sufficiently understood by the Australian community."



ABORIGINES AND MINING

Old attitudes die hard and the colonisation of Aboriginal land, such as there is remaining, continues to the present day. The most recent wave of invaders has swelled over the past 25 years, as mining companies have penetrated previously remote regions, mainly in the Northern Territory and Queensland, in search of the mineral ores for supplying metals to the world's expanding industrial economies. This wave now threatens to reach a new peak with the discovery in the Alligator Rivers region of the N.T. of vast uranium deposits, on land claimed by Aborigines and only a short distance from an existing Aboriginal settlement, Oenpelli.

For an understanding of the origins of the Aboriginal Land Rights movement, the reaction of Aborigines to the Land Rights (N.T.) Bill passed by the Fraser Government in December 1976, and also their determined stance against uranium mining, it's essential first to review some examples of what mining ventures have done to Aboriginal communities in the past.

Bauxite Mining on Cape York Peninsula⁵

The west side of Cape York Peninsula contains the largest known deposits of high-grade bauxite in the world. Here also there used to be three Presbyterian missions and Aboriginal Reserves: in the north, Mapoon, then Weipa and Aurukun in the south (see map). The missions had been founded at the end of the last century in an attempt to control the conflict between Aboriginal people and white settlers. The cattlemen, Jardine and Kennedy, had killed 250 people from the Batavia River (inland, south-east of Mapoon) alone.

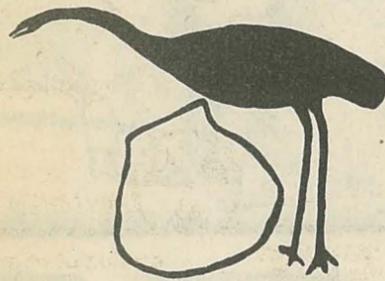
The missionaries set out quite deliberately to 'civilise' the Aboriginal people. They did not succeed as efficiently as it might appear, for it was as late as 1957 that the last of the Aboriginal groups living near Aurukun was settled at the mission.

By the 1950s the bauxite deposits in this area began to be attractive to mining interests. 1957 saw the Comalco Act, giving control to the company over more than 5,000 km² of reserve land on the west coast of Cape York — from 60 km north of Mapoon to the Aurukun settlement. In 1965 Alcan got a lease on 1300 km² of the Mapoon people's land.

Weipa.

After much negotiating between Comalco, the Presbyterian Church and the State Government, the Weipa people were finally allowed to remain near the mission site, on a tiny 308-acre Weipa South reserve. They lost almost all their land, for the dubious benefit of living near the Comalco mining town. Comalco has paid some \$500,000 to finance housing, electricity and so on for the Reserve, out of pre-tax profits of over \$160 million to 1974.

Let's look at the benefits that Comalco have brought to Weipa. The main things claimed to come out of



Comalco's mining operations were good housing, employment and education.

Comalco provided only \$300,000 for the resettlement of the Weipa people — enough for 62 homes at \$4,840 each. (At the same time Comalco was building white miners' family houses at \$28,000 each.) The money did not run to wash basins, sinks or internal painting, let alone laundries or sewerage. Most important of all, the Aborigines, who had built and owned their houses at the Mission, now no longer owned the houses in which they live.

Employment? Until recently Comalco never employed more than about 20 Aboriginal people on a permanent basis. Rather the Company had at its disposal a pool of reserve casual labour. Further, Comalco has avoided offering training to potential workers. Instead of building a trade school as promised, a pre-school was built with government assistance.

In other words the Weipa community lost its land with no thought of royalties or compensation to become a fringe settlement, dependent on Comalco as much as on the Queensland Government. The process was aptly described by Frank Stevens as 'pauperisation'.⁶

Mapoon.

The Weipa community were at least partly rehoused by the company. Mapoon people have lost their land, and were even forced by armed Queensland police to leave their homes at the Mapoon settlement in 1963. The police then burnt the people's homes and belongings.⁷ There was no compensation, royalties or recognition of the Mapoon people's rights. The company even refused to aid the resettlement of the Mapoon people at Weipa South, Thursday Island and Bamaga.

The people were forcibly evicted by a coalition of interests: the mining companies who needed as much control over the land as possible (especially with the bay near Mapoon as a possible port site); the church authorities who wanted to rationalise their operations, because they were unable to finance Mapoon as a 'modern mission'; and the Queensland Government to whom Mapoon was

not only an embarrassment on Comalco land but also did not fit in with their assimilation policy.

A more recent development is that in 1974 the Mapoon people decided to resort to direct action and moved back into Mapoon to re-establish their community there.⁵

Aurukun.

Aurukun in the south lost over 750 km² of Aboriginal land to Comalco, the lease extending all the way south to the mission site. The mission was not directly affected, and no mining has taken place so far. Comalco is just starting to move onto Aurukun land this year.

In late 1975, however, the Aurukun community began to feel the power of the mining companies. Just after the removal of the Whitlam Government in November 1975, the Queensland Government rushed through a mining lease to Aurukun Associates — a consortium of Shell Oil's subsidiary, Billiton, the European company, Pechiney, and the US land corporation, Tipperary.

The decision to grant the lease over 1800 km² of Aboriginal Reserve land was taken in complete secrecy: not only were the Aboriginal people not consulted, but the Presbyterian Church and Federal Government were also kept entirely in the dark. Public protest and exposure forced the Queensland Government to allow the companies to negotiate with the Aurukun people — negotiations which they have shown little sign of taking seriously. The companies have what they want: a legal hold over the bauxite fields. Now they can afford to wait.

In short the bauxite mining companies' entry to Cape York Peninsula has meant a new stage in the colonisation of the Aboriginal people. The missions and reserves settled the people, setting out to destroy their original economy and culture. But now the mining companies are taking the land to which the people belong — they are taking away their potential economic independence, their future as well as their past.

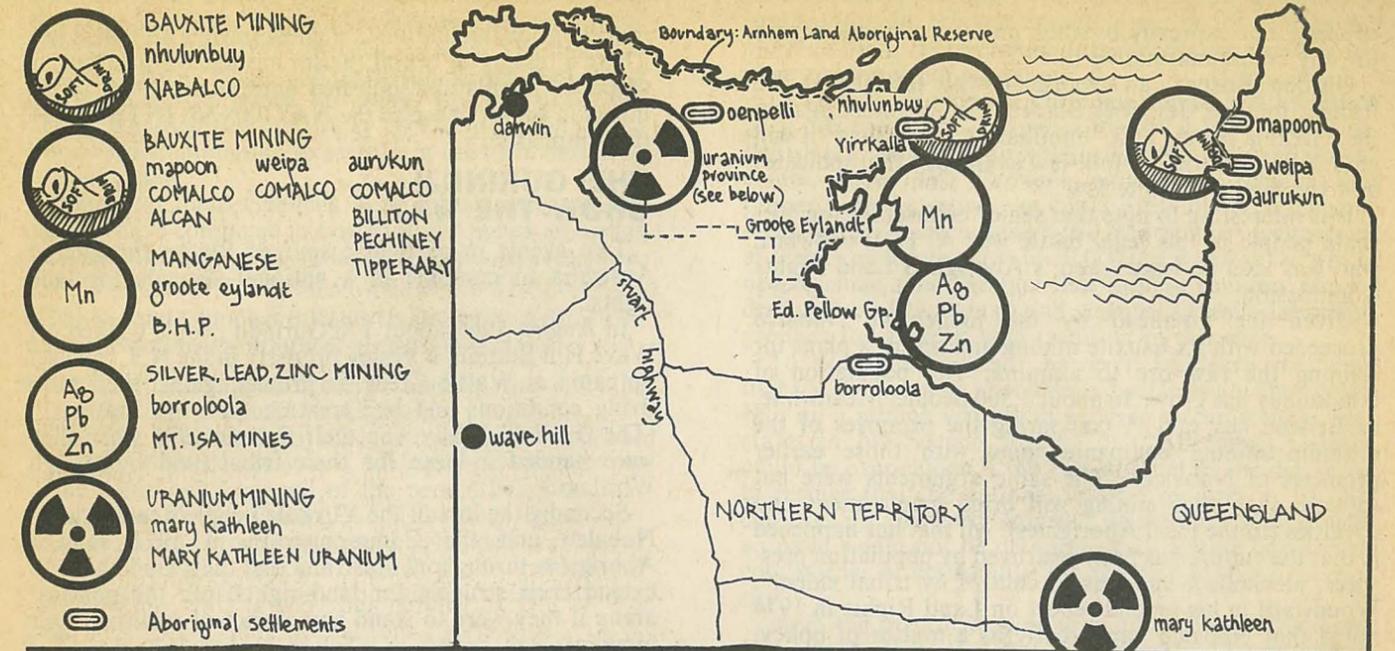
Nabalco on the Gove Peninsula

On 30 May 1969 the Commonwealth of Australia granted a lease to Nabalco Pty. Ltd. (70% owned by Swiss Alumina Aust. Ltd., 30% by an Australian company, Gove Alumina) for the mining of bauxite on more than 20,000 hectares of land on the Gove Peninsula, the traditional land of the Yirrkala Aboriginal people (see map). There was also provision for building a mining town, Nhulunbuy, nearby.

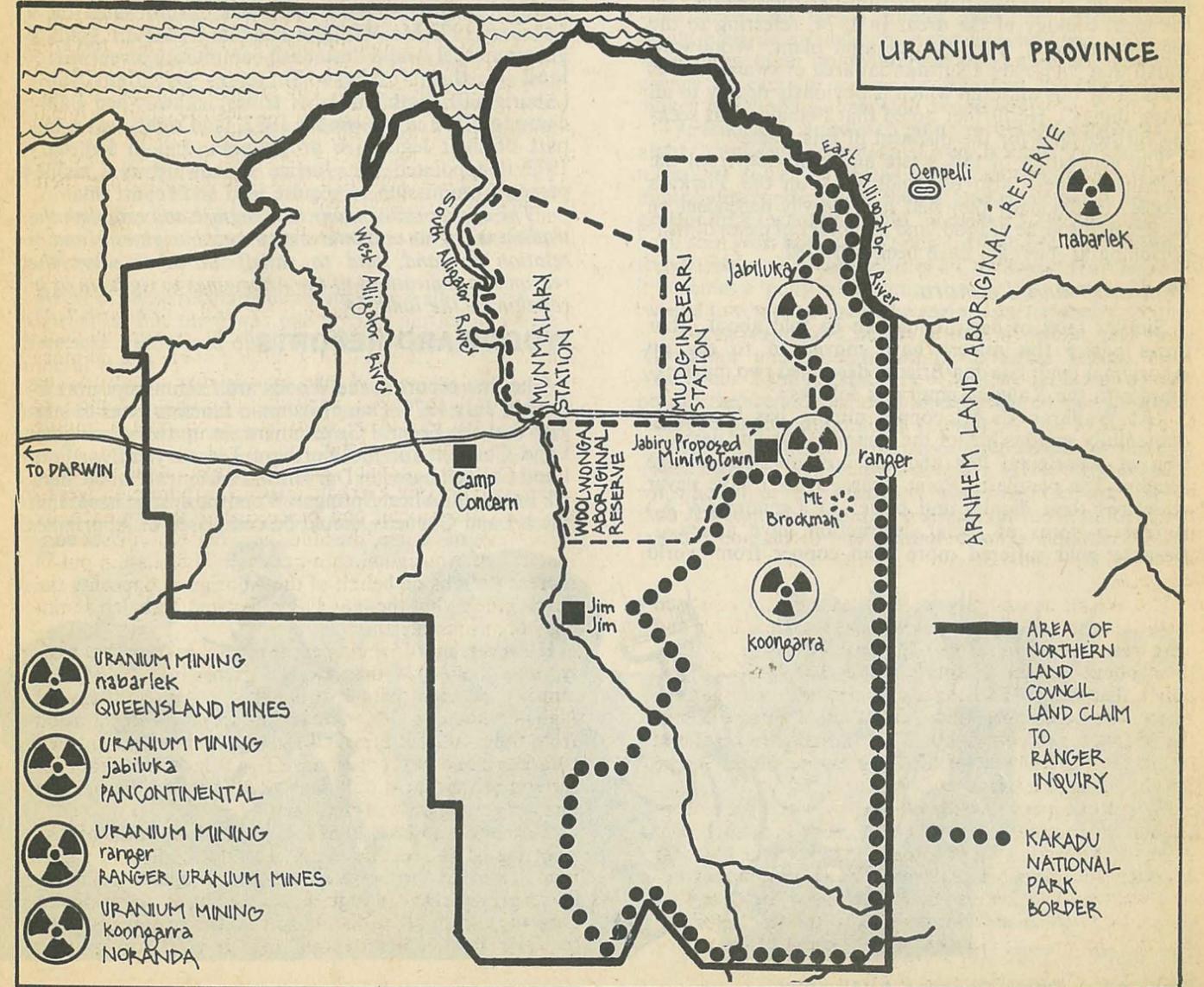
The mining company and the Government regarded white people at the Yirrkala mission as representatives of the Yirrkala people, and proceeded to appropriate, by legislation, of course, the land they wanted, without consent of the Aboriginal community.⁸ The mission put in representations on behalf of the Aborigines opposing the development, but these had no effect and Nabalco's mining operations began.

However, the Yirrkala people did not give up that easily, and looked to the law for protection. In 1971 a number of their people brought a court case against Nabalco and the Commonwealth, seeking a declaration from the court that the Yirrkala people should be entitled to occupy and enjoy their traditional land free from interference, and also that they had rights to the bauxite and other minerals in that land.⁹

Their legal counsel tried to bring out and dust off the 'doctrine of native title' from the attic of British Common Law to prove their claim. Judge Blackburn, however, rejected the arguments, finding in Australia "a long succession of legislative and executive acts designed to facilitate the settlement and development of the



BLACK MARKS FOR MINERS Location of resources and Aboriginal communities affected.



country, not expressly by white men, but without regard for any communal native title".¹⁰

Gordon Briscoe, an Aborigine who testified at the Ranger Inquiry, describes Blackburn's judgment against the Yirrkala people as a "humiliation", and says "it will go down in Aboriginal folk-law as the day that indicates that the law is a 'white law'".¹¹

It is interesting to note that senior counsel for the Yirrkala people in this legal battle was A. E. Woodward, who was later to head Labor's Aboriginal Land Rights Commission.

Given the go-ahead by the judgement Nabalco proceeded with its bauxite mining and set up a plant for refining the raw ore to alumina. The population of Nhulunbuy has grown to about 3,500 people. Meanwhile, as Briscoe has said¹², comparing the promises of the uranium mining companies now with those earlier promises of Nabalco: "The same arguments were put forward then that mining will bring employment and royalties (to the local Aborigines). All that has happened is that the culture has been destroyed by population pressures, alcoholism and loss of control by tribal elders". Woodward in his second report on Land Rights in 1974 noted that Nabalco "apparently as a matter of policy, employs and trains practically no Aborigines"¹³.

And it is not just that mining has had such a devastating effect on the Yirrkala people, as if that was not enough. It has also had a terribly destructive effect on the local ecology of the area. In 1974, referring to the red-mud effluent from the alumina plant, Woodward stated that "Already a substantial area of swampland is covered by this material which is obviously deadly to all living things". He further noted that Nabalco was seeking further land for the disposal of this waste¹³.

The generation of this waste and pollution from the Nabalco refinery also rebounds back on the Yirrkala people. Traditionally they had been heavily dependent on the sea as a source of food, and a number of cases of fish-poisoning at Yirrkala have been reported¹⁴.

Wallaroo and Leonora

Similar tales of destruction can be told about other areas where the miners have moved in to dig up Aboriginal land. Gordon Briscoe described two more examples to the Ranger Inquiry as follows:¹⁵

"At Wallaroo (S.A.) copper mining has been fundamentally responsible for the dispossession and destruction of Aboriginal law and the creation of a fringe society. The people at Point Pearce (S.A.) have never recovered their dignity and pride. At Leonora (W.A.) similar patterns of social destruction have arisen ... Because gold suffered more than copper from world

market price fluctuation ... a ghost town is all that is left. There a history of brutal racism has left the previous indigenous population squashed onto Government settlements in subservience to the NATIONAL INTEREST" (his emphasis).

THE GURINDJI SHOW THE WAY

Two events in particular spurred Blacks throughout Australia to combine in a national struggle for land rights.

In August 1966 about 170 Gurindji people walked off Wave Hill Station, a Vestey property in the N.T., and set up camp at Wattie Creek, in protest against their poor living conditions and bad treatment on the Station¹⁶. (The Gurindji finally won their fight in 1975 when they were handed a lease for their tribal land by Gough Whitlam.)

Secondly the loss of the Yirrkala people's case against Nabalco and the Commonwealth in 1971 showed Aborigines throughout Australia that they would have to extend their struggle for land rights into the political arena if they were to stand any chance of realising their aims.

Consequently, in January 1972 the Aboriginal Embassy was set up outside Parliament House in Canberra, one of the principal demands being for land rights. This bold action brought at least one quick result, since on 9 February 1972 Mr. Whitlam said that if the ALP got into government it would "establish community ownership of land in the Northern Territory by identifiable (Aboriginal) communities or tribes". Thus when Labor came to office in November 1972, land rights was a key part of their legislative programme, and in February 1973 it appointed Mr. Justice Woodward as a single-person Commission to inquire into and report on:

*"The appropriate means to recognise and establish the traditional rights and interests of the Aborigines in and in relation to land, and to satisfy in other ways the reasonable aspirations of the Aborigines to rights in or in relation to the land"*¹⁴.

WOODWARD REPORTS

The first report of the Woodward Commission was issued in July 1973. One of its main functions was to suggest that the Federal Government set up two Aboriginal Land Councils for the Northern Territory, a Northern Land Council based in Darwin and a Central Land Council based in Alice Springs. Woodward suggested that these Land Councils should be comprised of Aborigines

representing the various Aboriginal communities in their respective areas, and that the Government should pay for independent legal advice for each Council. The Councils were intended to encourage discussion of the land rights issue among Aborigines, to collect opinions from the various communities, and relay this information to the Woodward Commission to assist it in the formulation of its final report.

These two Land Councils were subsequently set up, and they have continued in existence as Aboriginal bodies pressing hard for action on land rights issues ever since, often to the embarrassment of the Federal Government.

The Second Woodward Report, released in April 1974, made the following principal recommendations:

- That all Aboriginal Reserve land in the N.T. be handed over freehold to Aboriginal people.
- That the title holders of the land transferred should be Land Trusts comprised of Aborigines nominated by the community council of the people living on that land, and/or the Land Council for that region.
- That vacant Crown land should be handed over only if the Aboriginal people could prove traditional ownership or if some Aboriginal community required it to live on.
- That land already alienated (i.e., owned, or rights to it owned) could be purchased for its traditional Aboriginal owners if it was for sale.
- That minerals in Aboriginal land remain the property of the crown, but the Land Council for that region could, on behalf of the traditional owners, refuse consent for exploration and mining of minerals, provided it did so before exploration started. This veto could only be overruled if both Houses of Parliament voted that it was in the national interest that this mining venture should proceed.
- That all royalties and payments in connection with mining should be used for the benefit of Aboriginal people, and be divided up between Land Councils, the local communities involved and an Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund.

Most of these recommendations were well received by Aborigines, but there was one area in particular where there was widespread dissatisfaction — that concerning mineral rights¹⁸.

Realising that the new 'minerals rush' by Governments and mining companies posed perhaps the greatest threat to the future existence of Aboriginal communities in the Territory, both the Northern Land Council and Central Land Council placed strong submissions before Woodward asking for an 'absolute right' to all minerals, including gas and oil, found in Aboriginal soil. The NLC

followed this by stating: "We believe that any attempt to compromise in relation to this question of mining or minerals may largely undo the benefits of granting to them ownership of their land"¹⁹.

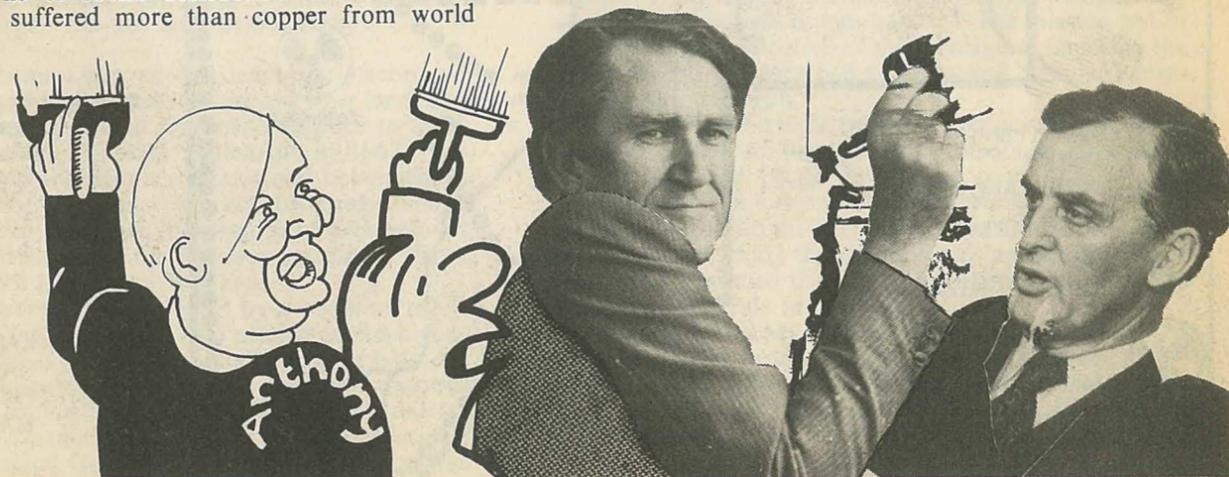
Of course, Woodward did compromise and knocked back these requests. As a judge steeped in the tradition of British law, according to which all minerals in land which comes under the Crown's jurisdiction remain the property of the crown, he could presumably accept no other option — even though the Aborigines' occupation of their land for upwards of 30,000 years before the white people came, and the fact that mining ventures are so destructive of their land and culture, surely established grounds for a break with tradition in this case.

To Woodward's credit, however, he clearly intended that the Government should only over-rule an Aboriginal veto on a mining venture in extreme circumstances. He states in his Second Report²⁰: ("Aborigines") views could be over-ridden if the Government of the day were to resolve that the national interest requires it. In this context I use the word 'required' deliberately so that such an issue would not be determined on a mere balance of convenience or desirability but only as a matter of necessity".

So in the present case of uranium mining in Arnhem Land, where there is certainly no 'necessity' for mining to go ahead (and even monetary benefits would only amount to 0.5% of national income at best²¹) then we would interpret Woodward as meaning that, if the Aborigines said no to mining, then the Government would have no grounds for over-ruling their veto. (But as we shall see later, the Aborigines won't even be given the chance to exercise a veto on uranium mining, which makes this finding somewhat academic!)

The trouble is we have to 'interpret' Woodward on this highly contentious question of what is in the 'national interest'. If he really wanted to protect Aborigines from mining developments he should have spelt out in much greater detail what he meant by the term. Because, as we have seen with both the Woodward Reports and the Fox Report, as soon as the report of a Commission is released it becomes a 'political document', to be cut, stretched and twisted to whatever shape the various parties desire. With a Liberal/National Country Party in power, and the Australian and foreign mining interests group, the Australian Mining Industry Council, working away behind the scenes, 'national interest' can all too soon be reshaped into 'multinational interest'.

Another weakness of the Aboriginal veto over mining as proposed by Woodward was that it had to be exercised when an exploration lease was being sought, or not at all; thus Aboriginal consent to exploration for minerals entailed a consent to any mining which eventuated later,



provided the mining proposed was in substantial accordance with the proposals submitted to the Aborigines before exploration.

As Geoff Eames, solicitor to the Central Land Council has noted²²: "... very considerable difficulties ... will face Aborigines to reach an agreement at the exploration stage which provides for all the possibilities which may occur after exploration has been completed". After all, if a mining company knows all about what it is planning to do before exploration, why bother to explore? Unfortunately this weakness, and the others mentioned, in Woodward's original recommendations have been carried over into all the land rights legislation proposed since.

LAND RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Nearly all of Woodward's recommendations were incorporated into the Aboriginal Land (Northern Territory) Bill 1975 presented to Parliament by the then Labor Government on 5 November 1975. The Bill had a very short life since the Labor Government were removed from office only six days later.

The Labor Land Rights Bill was opposed by the Liberal/Country parties and when they came into office they set about amending it. When they presented their



Silas Roberts

own Bill to Parliament in June 1976, the Bill was described as a 'sell-out' by Land Rights groups throughout the country. Under this new Bill, Land Councils, which had proven such effective advocates of the Aboriginal cause in the past, were to be stripped of practically all their powers and finance; the Country party dominated N.T. Legislative Assembly was to be given the power to make laws concerning Aboriginal land and right of Aborigines to enter pastoral properties; and most alarmingly, the Federal Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs could him/herself over-rule an Aboriginal veto on a mining venture in the 'national interest' without even airing the matter in Parliament.

A national campaign was organised to secure amendments to the Land Rights Bill, aiming to bring it back to the terms of the 1975 Labor Bill and to guarantee that it followed the principles of Woodward. According to those limited aims, the campaign was reasonably successful since the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Viner, introduced a substantially amended Bill on 17 November 1976. Further amendments followed during the ensuing debates on the Bill in Parliament, until it was finally passed on 16 December 1976.

Only now, however, is the true measure of this Bill becoming apparent. Indeed, it did return to most of Woodward's recommendations, as they are outlined

earlier in this article. Land Councils were retained, though doubts about their funding remain; the N.T. Legislative Assembly's powers over Aboriginal land were cut back somewhat compared with the first Liberal/NCP Bill; and the Aboriginal veto over mining returned to its Woodward form — ie. over-ruling in the national interest was subject to disallowance by either House of Parliament.

But as argued earlier, the Aboriginal veto over mining suggested by Woodward had serious weaknesses as it was. And just in case these weren't enough, some of the late amendments to the December 1976 Bill ensured that the Aborigines had **no power of veto at all** over practically all the major mining, and oil and gas, ventures at present contemplated on land claimed (or which will be) by Aborigines in the Territory. We will deal with the uranium mining case separately; first of all, though, let us look at all the other proposed developments.

ROLLING IN THROUGH THE DOORS

One sub-clause 40(5), in the Land Rights Act provides a convenient loophole through which any company that has already been granted a lease for oil or gas exploration on land claimed by Aborigines can now go ahead with any further developments without Aboriginal consent. This means that the oil and gas deposits at Mereenie which Magellan Petroleum Pty. Ltd. are seeking to exploit, and the deposit on Aboriginal land at Palm Valley discovered by Palm Valley Oil and Gas, can both go ahead whatever is said by the Aborigines claiming this land.

Another sub-clause, 10(3), under which any mining lease granted before the date of commencement of the Act or "in pursuance of an agreement entered into by the Commonwealth before that date"²³, sees to it that Mt. Isa Mines are not prevented by Aboriginal opposition from digging up the 1,000 tonnes of silver, lead and zinc 45 km south of Borroloola on the McArthur River (see map). The plan is then to pipe this fine-grained ore to the Sir Edward Pellew group of islands for shipment.

On a visit to Sydney last August to draw attention to the plight of the Borroloola Aborigines, one of their spokespersons, Jack Isaacs, repeated a familiar story: "The pipeline hasn't gone through yet, but if it is built it will go through our sacred lands. Our whole community — and the old people — they worry about that. They want to put mining on our tribal land and we don't like it ... Somebody ought to stop it".²⁴

The Fraser Government played a direct role in removing the right of the Borroloola people to say no to this mining development. In July 1976 the Government instructed the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner appointed by the previous Labor Government, to stop hearing the land claim of the Borroloola people. Geoff Eames, solicitor for the Central Land Council, continues the story:

"After the order from Fraser to stop the hearing of the Borroloola cases, the Commonwealth entered into an agreement with Mt. Isa Mines Ltd., the terms of which are still secret but which one can reasonably assume provided a right of a lease and a guarantee of mining in the area ... It is quite obvious to me that the biggest mine in the N.T. was going to receive the protection some Liberal speakers in the House of Representatives' debates felt it deserved".²⁵

As Geoff Eames told us recently when we phoned him in Alice Springs, "The mining companies are now rolling in through the doors. The land rights legislation is a start, but I'm afraid it's all we're going to get for a long time".

Finally it should be stressed that the 1976 Land Rights Act only applies to the Northern Territory. Other land-rights legislation has been passed over recent years in each State, except Queensland, but all of it is very limited in extent. The need and struggle for genuine land rights continue — not only in the N.T. but throughout Australia.

LAND RIGHTS AND URANIUM MINING

Let us now look at how the Land Rights Act 1976 safeguards the rights of Aborigines who are claiming the land containing the uranium deposits in the Alligator Rivers region of the N.T. (see map for their location). The short answer is that it doesn't! Again escape clauses in the Act see to it that only one, or possibly even none, of the proposed uranium mining developments can be held up by an Aboriginal veto, should the land come under Aboriginal ownership in the future. So far as the landrights question is concerned, the Act gives a bright 'green light' for mining — and no doubt the Fox Commission will be unwilling to adopt a tougher line to protect Aboriginal interests.

It is important to note that **all** the main uranium deposits in the Territory are on land currently subject to Aboriginal claim to ownership under the Act. On behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners, the Northern Land Council are putting before the Fox Commission a claim for land in the Alligator Rivers region as shown on the map below. The Fox Commission has been empowered by the Land Rights Act to deal with claims involving the Ranger project area. The NLC claim includes the land occupied by the Ranger, Koongara and Jabiluka uranium deposits, and the site for the proposed mining town. The NLC are suggesting that this area, which also encompasses the proposed Kakadu National Park, should be jointly managed by Aborigines and the National Parks Service, under Aboriginal ownership²⁶. The other major uranium deposit, at Nabarlek, is within the present Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve, which will come under Aboriginal ownership directly under the terms of the Act.

Ranger

The Ranger project itself, managed by Ranger Uranium Mines, is specifically exempted from any Aboriginal veto by sub-clause 40(6) of the Land Rights Act. From the miners' point of view this is just as well



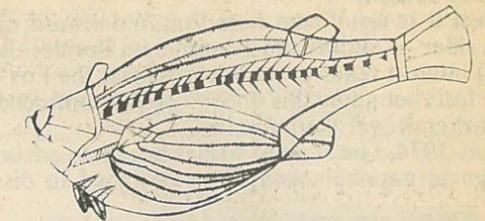
Mt Brockman

since the 25 descendants of the original owners of this area have a very strong claim to this land which Mr. Justice Fox will find hard to deny²⁷.

The traditional owners are particularly concerned that two sacred sites on the nearby Mt. Brockman escarpment

will be desecrated, or physically damaged by blasting at the mine, if the Ranger project goes ahead.

The sites are *Djidbidjidbi*, a sacred presence taking the form of a big quartzite boulder on the rubble slopes; and *Dadbe*, the Rainbow Snake, a deep rock hole with permanent water on which blue water lilies float, on top of the escarpment at the north-west tip²⁸. The Aborigines



say that if *Dadbe* or *Djidbidjidbi* is desecrated, so the whole country will be wiped out. Currently there is a token fence across the track leading to the sites on Mt. Brockman, but when the Ranger Inquiry visited the area it was discovered that someone had run right through the fence with a truck²⁸.

Jabiluka and Koongara

The neighbouring deposit, Jabiluka, for which Pancontinental Mining Ltd holds the exploration licence, is not subject to an Aboriginal veto because the company applied for mineral leases before 4 June 1976, and is thus exempted by sub-clause 40(3) of the act. Noranda Australia, which holds the exploration licence for the Koongara deposit, could presumably have taken the same course of action, but our information at the time of going to press suggests that this company was not quick enough off the mark to exploit the veto-exemption the Government was offering.

Nabarlek

Queensland Mines at Nabarlek, however, did get their mineral-lease application in before the 4 June 1976 deadline, and is therefore exempted from any Aboriginal veto — another blow to the traditional owners of Nabarlek who have been battling against the company since it first discovered uranium there in 1970²⁹.

Queensland Mines was off to an especially bad start here. Early on, when prospecting, one of their drilling teams sunk an exploration hole within the area of the *Gabo Djang* (Green Ant) sacred site, without consent of the Aboriginal owners at the Oenpelli Settlement. This was regarded as an act of desecration. To the Oenpelli people, the green ant nests in the large boulders at this site are sacred, and they believe that if the ant eggs are broken by human action, dire consequences will come to all people.

When Queensland Mines sought further leases in the area, the Oenpelli people objected, but finally compromised on an area of possible mining which they believed protected the *Gabo Djang* site. Later, in 1972, however, they discovered that the company had misled them in its description of the location of the ore body, and they withdrew their approval³⁰.

Woodward in his second report described the next development as follows: "On 26 July 1973, Queensland Mines made the Aborigines an offer which I can only describe as contemptuous, which amounted to arranging the sale to them of 173,040 shares in the company at the then full market price of \$1.70 per share. The offer was rejected by the Nabarlek Aborigines"³¹. In February 1974 the company made another offer including a lump

sum payment of \$600,000, but this was also rejected.

Woodward went on to say that "...it is to my mind unthinkable that a completely new scheme of Aboriginal land rights should begin with the imposition of an open cut mine right alongside a sacred site"³², and he recommended that "Queensland Mines should not be permitted to develop mineral deposits in the Nabarlek area without Aboriginal consent"³³.

We feel it is significant here that Woodward did not add the rider — 'unless the Government decides that the national interest requires it'. We trust that the Fox Commission feels bound by this unequivocal recommendation of an earlier Royal Commission.

In May 1974, Queensland Mines began an advertising campaign in national newspapers designed to discredit



Looking along the Arnhem Land escarpment.

the Oenpelli people and force them to withdraw their opposition to mining. The text of one large ad in *The Australian* (13, 16 May 1974) read: "50,000 Australians (Qld. Mines Shareholders) demand equality with Aborigines. The uranium cannot be mined because a small group of Aborigines now say they don't want it mined ... Has someone told them they might get the land and the uranium — and be able to sell to the highest bidder?"

Under this and other pressure, the Nabarlek Aborigines eventually did 'consent' with Queensland Mines about the development of the Nabarlek ore body. But this consent must be seen in the light of recent statements by the Oenpelli people that "Aborigines have recognised the inevitability of mining"³⁴. In other words, even if they said no, they know that mining would go ahead anyway. As Mr. S. Maralngurra said during a recent Oenpelli Council discussion: "balanda (white men) push, push, push — soon pubs everywhere and they will kill the race — look at the Larrykeahs, Darwin is their country and they are living on the tip"³⁴.

Basic Opposition to Mining

Both the Northern Land Council (NLC) and the Oenpelli Council expressed their basic opposition to uranium mining in their final submissions to the Ranger Inquiry³⁵. They fear the destruction of their land which will result from mining, and the likely desecration of their sacred sites. In addition they fear the effects on the local Aborigines — mainly the 600 people at the Oenpelli settlement — of such a vast mining development on their doorstep. The proposed mining town with a population of more than 15,000 would be less than 60 km from Oenpelli; some mines would be even nearer.

Silas Roberts, Chairman of the NLC, said of this town: "It will do nothing for us, only hurt us. Drink and

men looking for girls and everything. We want to keep this city a long way from our land and particularly our sacred sites"³⁷.

However, in the final parts of their submissions to Ranger both the NLC and the Oenpelli Council show clearly they believe mining will take place whatever they do, and they outline suggestions for reducing its impact on Aborigines and their land. Unfortunately these 'compromise' proposals are likely to be siezed upon by the Fox Commission as a way around Aboriginal opposition.

In short, about all the Aboriginal Land Rights (N.T.) Act 1976 will do for Aborigines so far as uranium is concerned is to guarantee them compensation — monetary compensation, of course. To this Silas Roberts of the NLC has the poignant answer:

"It is only when we lose our land and our culture that we have a greater need for money"³⁸.

ABORIGINES AND ALTERNATIVISTS

Even if the Land Rights Act is in reality another 'sell-out', there is a very positive development emerging mainly as a result of Aborigines' struggle for land rights — a rediscovery by Aborigines of their identity and a regaining of their confidence. This was illustrated recently at a National Land Rights Conference in Sydney when the following statement by Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy from Arnhem Land was acknowledged with unanimous applause:

"I accept Aboriginal as meaning the original people of Australia who have been separated into those at the top and those down here by the whites when they first arrived. It doesn't matter if you are half, three-quarters, quarter or full-blood in the amount of your Aboriginal blood, even if you have some small amount of Aboriginal blood in you we of the N.T., accept you as Aboriginal. Aborigines — whether URBAN or TRIBAL — who have a spiritual awareness of themselves as Aborigines and identify themselves as Aborigines are Aborigines".

There is also the growing demand among Aborigines for self-determination — the right to determine their own future. And here there is a confluence of interest with all those white 'alternativists' who are seeking an alternative to the materialistic environmentally-destructive Australian society of today. We too are seeking a devolution of centralised political power so that smaller regions and the communities within them can have a much more direct say in the running of their own affairs — economically and politically. In this search we have much to learn from Aborigines, who have been friends of this earth for much longer than we have.

**Our Culture is like a great bird
It was born aeons ago in the mists of Creation
On the winds of Heaven it came to this planet
Its eyes are the stars
Its feathers are golden like the sun
Its legs great trees of the forest
Its claws are like the rocks
Planted firmly in the earth
Its breaths are the clouds
That turn to rain
And when it sings!
It is the sound of life itself**

**John Andrews Pat Mullins
Don Siemens Mark Carter
Lyndon Shea**

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RESOURCE LIST

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Cairns, Qld. 4870.

Subscription: \$5.00.

Newsletter published bi-monthly, contains news on land struggles in Nth. Q'land, local news, poetry, racism.

THE MAPOON STORY

I.D.A.
73 Little George Street
Fitzroy, Vic. 3065.

Price: \$4.60 for the set of three (90 cents extra for postage) or can be bought individually.

Three books giving a comprehensive and in-depth coverage of the Mapoon people's story and the behaviour of the invaders; the Mining Companies, the Church and the Government.

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER FORUM

G.P.O. Box M931
Perth, W.A. 6001.

Subscription: \$5.00.

Monthly newspaper with a good coverage of national Aboriginal issues.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIAL EXPLOITATION NEWSLETTER

C.A.R.E. Box 178
Wembley Post Office, W.A. 6014.

News and information about Aboriginal issues in W.A. Includes also material about other countries, especially Southern Africa and Timor.

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER IDENTITY

Aboriginal Publications Foundation
International House
Shop 9, 2 Irwin Street
Perth, W.A. 6000.

Subscription: \$3.00.

This glossy monthly contains stories, poems and photos as well as letters and articles on Aboriginal issues.

ABORIGINAL HUMAN RELATIONS NEWSLETTER

C/- D. Ric Johnstone
P.O. Box 429
St. Mary's, N.S.W. 2760.

Subscription: write for details.

Occasional magazine from Northern N.S.W. covering a wide range of Aboriginal subjects.

BOOMERANG BULLETIN

C/- Mike Clark
P.O. Box 114
Albion, S.A. 5014.

Subscription: send donation.

Newsletter with local and general news on events and issues concerning Aborigines in S.A.

KOORI-BINA

Black Women's Action Committee
P.O. Box 141
Redfern, N.S.W. 2016.

Subscription: \$5.00 (individuals); \$7.00 (organisations).

Monthly newspaper covering national and local Sydney events and issues.

AKWASASNE NOTES

Mohawk Nation
Via Roosevelttown
New York 13683
U.S.A.

BUNJI

C/- Gwalwa Daraniki
P.O. Box 4751
Darwin, N.T. 5794.

Subscription: write for details.

The Gwalwa Daraniki Association is a group of Aborigines from several tribes who are fighting for their rights and their land around Darwin. Bunji is the continuing story of that fight.

LAND RIGHTS NEWS

Northern Land Council
P.O. Box 3046
Darwin, N.T. 5794.

Subscription: by donation.

Regular publication on the latest news relating to Land Rights in the Northern Territory — for the local Aboriginal people and their supporters.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA LAND RIGHTS NEWS

Central Land Council
P.O. Box 1960
Alice Springs, N.T. 5750.

Subscription: by donation.

Local and national news on the Land Rights movement, for local Aboriginal people.

WE HAVE BUGGER ALL! — THE KULALUK STORY

Black Resource Centre
P.O. Box 345
North Brisbane, Qld. 4000.

Price: \$1.00.

The story of the Larrakais and Gwalwa Daraniki's struggle for their land.

THE QUEENSLAND ABORIGINES ACT AND REGULATIONS 1971

P.O. Box 345
North Brisbane, Qld. 4000.

or

P.O. Box 27
Carlton, Vic. 3053.

Price: \$1.00.

Written by the Black Resource Centre Collective, 1976 — So that anyone can read and understand these Acts.

BLACK LIBERATION

Black Resource Centre
P.O. Box 345
North Brisbane, Qld. 4000.

Distributed free.

Broadsheet on the struggles for land and for freedom of Australian blacks. Occasional.

BLACK NEWS SERVICE

Black Resource Centre
P.O. Box 345
North Brisbane, Qld. 4000.

Subscription: \$10.00.

Regular and complete coverage of Aboriginal affairs in Australia; Also news in solidarity with Indians and African struggles.

RAMPAGE

C/- Bill Rosser
Student Union
University of Queensland
Douglas Campus
Townsville, Qld.

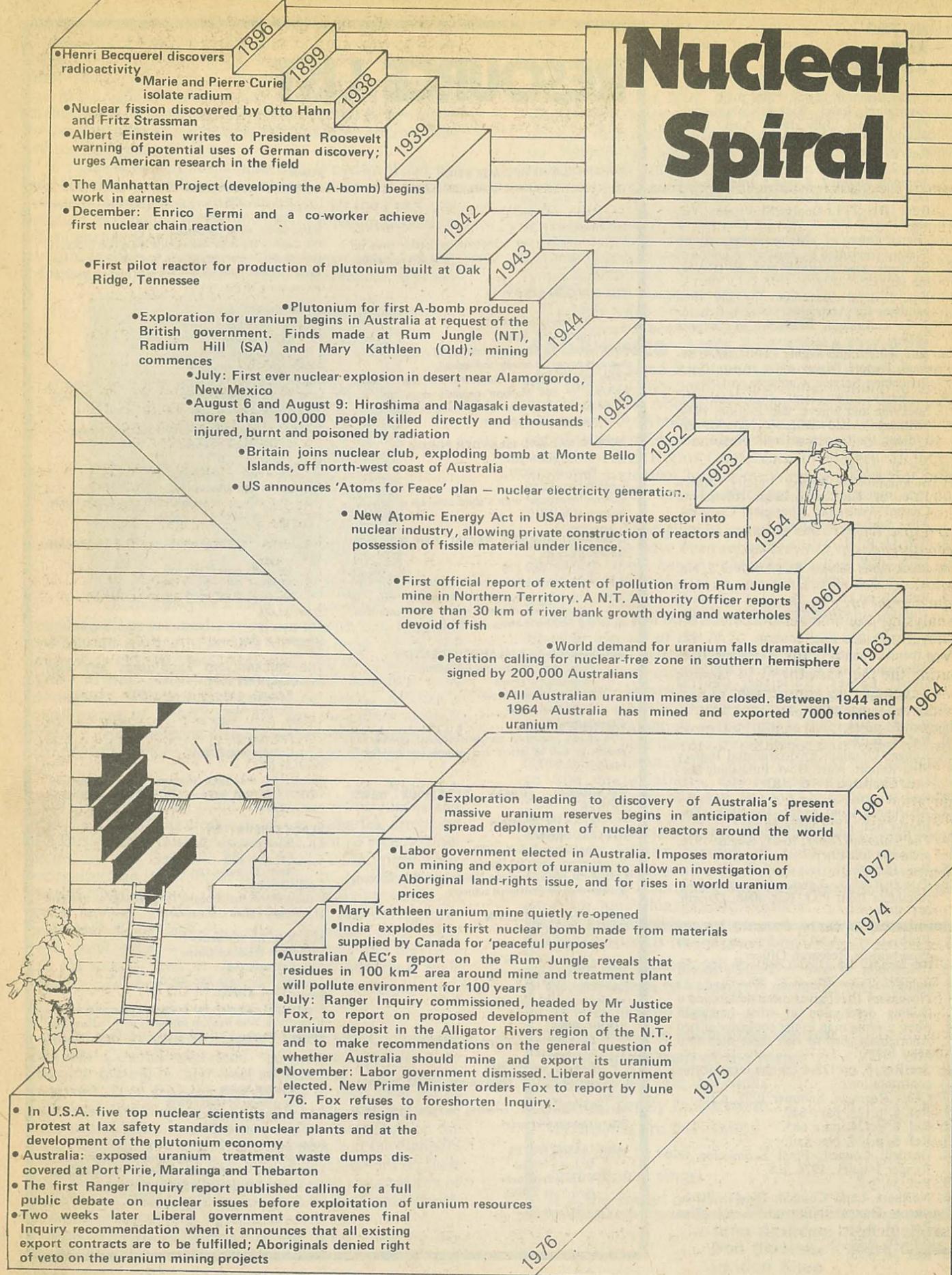
Subscription: \$5.00.

Aboriginal writings, articles, stories and poetry. This will probably be the publication of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Student Union.

URANIUM MORATORIUM



Nuclear Spiral



Soon after the release of the Ranger Report, a National Committee of the Uranium Moratorium was set up from a coalition of community bodies. Over the previous two years, there had been several National Consultations and during this time a good deal of effort was spent with the Ranger Inquiry. Many doubts were expressed by activists about the worth of making submissions, but as the Commission did allow witnesses to submit wide-ranging material, most were encouraged to continue.

Out of the July 1976 Consultation came this prejudgment of the Ranger Inquiry which by and large has been shown to be fairly accurate:

"Irrespective of the nature of its recommendations, the Inquiry will prove useful only in so far as its report gives rise to an extensive educational program."

Analysing the Ranger Report, Joe Camilleri, Convener of MAUM (Vic.), says that "there is no disputing the fact that the Commission has accepted the main thrust of the evidence submitted by the proponents of nuclear power." We have now to take that evidence to the public.

A programme of activity and education is now under way in the Moratorium Campaign. In each state there is a campaign centre for the coalition. Hopefully, the members of the various coalition bodies will come together with other concerned persons to form action committees to carry on with group discussions, seminars, workshops, leaflet handouts, information tables in shopping centres and so on.

Friends of the Earth, with their experience of activism and environmental education, have contributed significantly in the past to the anti-nuclear campaign and are very involved in the current campaign. Other bodies taking part include: INSPECT, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Pax Christi, the Australia Party, people generally of all political persuasions and significant

sections of the organised Labor movement, including of course, strong support from many trade unions. There is also support from the Aboriginal land-rights movement and from the women's and students' movements. This all adds up to wide commitment over the whole community.

NATIONAL MOBILIZATIONS

There will be a series of national rallies during the year to demonstrate public support for a uranium moratorium. Contact your local FOE group for the details (see page 40 for addresses and phone numbers).

URANIUM DECLARATION NATIONAL SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

A Uranium Declaration calling for a five-year moratorium on uranium mining is to be brought before the whole Australian people on April 1 for their endorsement. It is intended that this **National Signature Campaign** should be completed by Environment Day, June 5, 1977. It is a vast project. In Victoria the Movement Against Uranium Mining, which is co-ordinating the effort, will need the help of 5000 people to collect signatures. A Declaration (see inset) will be delivered to every house in Australia.

In the spirit of the participatory nature of the campaign to allow people the right to decide the uranium mining issue, the declaration is not worded as an appeal to Parliament. After all, the Parliament spent only a bare three hours with never more than 20 members present in the House debating the issue — scant consideration for what has been described as the most crucial issue of our time. In any case, one of the key recommendations of the Fox Report was that the ordinary person should decide. The issues are ultimately social and ethical: they are for all to decide.

LES DALTON
Movement Against Uranium Mining (Vic.)

NATIONAL URANIUM DECLARATION

The people's right to decide!

The final decision on the mining and export of uranium must rest with the Australian people, after a full public discussion.

The Fox Report pointed out the many dangers, hazards and problems associated with nuclear power. These include:

1. the increased risk of nuclear war;
2. the real prospect of nuclear theft, sabotage and blackmail; and
3. the lack of any safe means for permanently disposing of the high-level radioactive wastes from nuclear power plants.

The Fox Report also pointed out that uranium mining would create very few jobs and make very little contribution to national income. Moreover, in Australia uranium mining would have harmful effects on Aboriginal land and culture and the natural environment.

Because of these and other problems, we, the undersigned, call on the Australian Government to —

1. Agree to a five-year moratorium on the mining and export of uranium;
2. Promote full public discussion of all the questions raised by the mining and export of uranium, leading to a decision by all the Australian people; and
3. Develop a national energy policy which concentrates on energy conservation and research and development of safer energy sources.

ATOM FREE EMBASSY

WIESLAW LICHACZ describes the setting-up and activities of the "Atom Free Embassy," which now nestles in the bush only 200 meters from the front entrance to the Australian Atomic Energy Commission's research establishment at Lucas Heights, near Sydney.

While it might have seemed very appropriate in 1954, with today's knowledge of the dangers of nuclear power it is nothing but the height of irony that the site then chosen for the Australian Atomic Energy Commission's (AAEC) research establishment was named "Lucas Heights," after John Lucas who built a water-mill at Liverpool in 1823 for grinding the first wheat produced in Australia. Lucas Heights, 23 miles south of Sydney's city centre, is now the home of Australia's only nuclear reactors, two small 'research' units — Moata (10 kW) and Hifar (10 MW). Also on the site, in a large aircraft hangar near Hifar, is the Government-owned 2060-Tonne stockpile of uranium oxide (yellow-cake), mined and milled some years ago at the now deserted Rum Jungle uranium mine south of Darwin.

On 11 November 1976 the Government announced its uranium policy, barely a fortnight after the Ranger Inquiry had released its First Report recommending a wide public debate on the uranium issue. The plan was to go ahead immediately and fulfil existing export contracts using the Lucas Heights stockpile of yellow-cake, plus production from the Mary Kathleen uranium mine in Queensland.

Export of Australian uranium was thus to proceed, even before the Second Report of the Ranger Commission had been released. Worse still, fulfilling existing contracts alone could involve opening a new uranium mine since the Lucas Heights stockpile and maximum Mary Kathleen production still leave a shortfall of approximately 1000 Tonnes from the uranium contracted for.

At midnight on 17 November, within seven days of the Government policy being announced, a tent marking the "Atom Free Embassy" was erected by FOE Sydney only 200 metres from the main gate into the Lucas Heights site, initially to try to prevent the uranium stockpile inside from being moved and to protest against the Government's refusal to abide by the Ranger Inquiry's recommendations.

The Embassy was not noticed for 48 hours as it was carefully nestled into the surrounding bushland. Then someone allegedly filed a complaint with Commonwealth Police. The police, rather disturbed that we had escaped their notice and not aware of exactly how long we had been camped there, proceeded to threaten the Embassy with arrest for trespass and gave an ultimatum of one hour in which to move on. This tactic failed after we urged to have a discussion with Professor D. George, the new Chairman of the AAEC. (George has had involvement with the development of alternative energy devices during his terms at Newcastle and Sydney Universities.) The Commonwealth Police then tried other methods of intimidation such as the tearing down of banners which had been erected in the trees and aggressively destroying them without prior consultation with us. When we ap-

proached them during their aggressive act and asked whether a complaint had been made they stormed off and said "Why don't you fuck off".

After these incidents, the Commission refused the Embassy permission to use their phones; the nearest public phone is two miles away. It had at one stage got to a point where out of sheer frustration one of the Commonwealth Police officers had threatened the Embassy with the Summary Offences Act, (an incredibly repressive act which gives wide-ranging powers of arrest to NSW State police). So far no more significant action has been taken to shift us, except for a passing vehicle whose occupants discharged a firearm over our heads late one night.

A Leak is Sprung

As the vigil went on an Indian-style tepee was erected to serve as a local branch of the "Friends of the Earth Leak Bureau". We had numerous confrontations and discussions in the AAEC staff canteen with the Commission's employees, and eventually a leak was sprung. A copy of a letter was received, dated 3 November 1976 from Mr G.W.K. Ford, Chief, Engineering Research Division, to Dr J.M. Gregory, Programme Manager, Nuclear Science and Applications, about a paper on solar energy by Mr I.F. Mayer.

The letter reveals that the AAEC has placed an indefinite embargo on publication of certain aspects of solar energy, except for one item appearing in its 1975-76 Annual Report. Mr Mayer's paper on solar energy, the letter says, had certain areas "which it is considered desirable to omit for policy reasons". The Chief of the Engineering Research Division believed that to have a note on solar energy research in a special solar issue of *Engineers Australia* would be quite acceptable if its substance was "confined to latest thinking and said little in detail, or even nothing, concerning experimental investigations by the AAEC". These experimental investigations into solar energy are at present believed to be a sensitive issue so far as the AAEC is concerned. Mr Mayer, however, considered it "most desirable to establish in the minds of all interested parties, our position in the overall solar energy scene through informing the technical community concerning what we are doing, and to sustain this awareness by further statements and reports of findings at intervals not too long separated".

Safety Doubts

While some Atom Free Embassy people were receiving abuse from a minority of Commission workers about our standards of dress in the staff canteen, we also gained information about conditions on the "D₂O (heavy water) plant room", which houses pumps for the heavy water used in the Hifar reactor. It was reported to us that often a worker could only stay in this very hot room for up to 5 minutes, since this period alone would be sufficient to give a full day's dose of radiation. We learnt that many workers had inadvertently shut down the reactor by accidentally 'tripping' the mechanism which withdraws the fuel elements from the reactor core. Also we were told that fire alerts are very frequent at Lucas Heights.

We have made numerous attempts to obtain information about evacuation plans in the event of a reactor getting seriously out of control at the establishment, but none have been forthcoming, even though we now have a direct personal interest in such plans through living so close to the site.

Our concern as local residents has increased to the point where we decided to gain access to sensitive scintillometers at the NSW Institute of Technology, and we have engaged in a preliminary investigation of the waters around the establishment, taking samples of water, algae, and aquatic vegetation. As we awaited the results, the Commission was provoked into admitting that discharges of radioactive materials did occur from the establishment but that contamination was within the limits set down by the State authorities. The State Maritime Services Board was approached for information about the nature, quality and quantities of contaminants but claimed that "this scientific data is confidential".

Tip-Off

At one stage we were tipped off that the ship "ACT 3" at the Glebe Island Container Terminal, Sydney, would be loaded with uranium oxide from the Lucas Heights stockpile, to transport it to West Germany or Japan via Canada. In addition, at 9 pm on Saturday 22 January we saw two trucks leaving Lucas Heights, one being a container truck apparently with radiation warning stickers on it.

On the following Monday night, FOE and MAUM (Movement Against Uranium Mining) decided the affair merited action, and only two hours later, at 9 pm, six people were camped at the gates of the Glebe Island Terminal.

By 10 pm there were 60 people and the numbers later swelled to about 80. The traffic in a nearby four-lane highway was slowed so that leaflets could be passed to drivers. At about 12-1.30 am the police arrived to clear the road. Apart from the odd daily newspaper, no media turned up until the morning...and when they did, we nearly got raped in the rush. If you gauge successful action by the media's response to it we had struck a bonanza.

The point to be made was not that there was or wasn't uranium on that ship (for we were never sure of it), and still don't know but that the anti-nuclear lobby in Sydney (and Australia-wide) is more than just emotionally or intellectually opposed to uranium exports; and that, far from the often-quoted appearance of it as "a motley band of half-witted uninformed long-haired idealists", we are in fact organised well enough to get 70 people on the streets at 3 hours notice if we have to. And it wasn't a one-time thing. Two nights later, following another alert, we got 40 people at 3 hours notice to travel 25 miles to Lucas Heights to block a container truck loaded with (what we again believed to be) uranium which was due to leave at 3 am. It was a dreadfully cold and miserably wet night too and the truck never left. Perhaps we're being fed wrong information purposefully so as to test our response, or maybe we've put the wind up the guards and the Commission on these two occasions so that they've hesitated to proceed with shipment.

If no one else is prepared to make a noise in this state, let it be known that when uranium from the stockpiles at Lucas Heights does start moving, there will be large numbers of very committed people prepared to withstand the hazards of weather, police and lack of sleep, so that this government experiences every hassle imaginable in 'honoring' these contracts.

The Embassy gained incredible public support for its activities after it initiated a major clean-up of litter at a

popular picnic resort on the nearby Woronora River. More recently we've spotted the start of construction of a third reactor for the AAEC. (See *Earth News* for these stories.)

AAEC Staff opposed to Mining

It would appear from our discussions with workers of the Commission that many are actually opposed to uranium mining and export but are unable to speak out for fear of their jobs. Before Commission workers are employed they go through a security clearance and must sign the Official Secrets Oath. Once employed they come under the oppressive Atomic Energy Act (1953), which provides for penalties of imprisonment for 7 years and searches without warrants if 'unauthorized' information of any sort is passed on. This makes it extremely difficult for them to pass on information which the public should know about. Many however, have shown that they appreciate that the Embassy acts as a 'brake' on the Commission, preventing it from going too far too quickly without the necessary safeguards. These people are openly pleased that some constructive criticism can be levelled at the Commission, which they themselves are hampered from providing.

We have also learned that some of the unions on site have made representations to the Commission over our Embassy. One such representation involved the refusal by the Metal Trades' Unions to fix the main gate into the Establishment if there was any heaviness from the police during a demonstration held at the time first shipments of uranium from Mary Kathleen were being blockaded by the Townsville people. The Embassy staged a protest at the gate and people chained themselves to it, but were eventually removed by the police armed with large bolt-cutters.

Domesday not Domsday

On 11 February, to coincide with the beginning of the school year, we opened an anti-nuclear, pro-alternative-energy exhibition at the Embassy, housing it in one of the large geodesic domes loaned to us by the Down-to Earth Trust who organised the Cotter-River Alternative Lifestyles Confest last December. The AAEC engineers showed keen interest in the geodesic living spaces!

After three months operation the Embassy now has a fairly regular population of six, swelling to 35-40 people on weekends. Vegetable and herb gardens have been established around the array of tents, lean-to's, tepees, domes and compost pile. We even have a kitchen sink to prepare meals for large numbers of people. Many materials for the Embassy have been recycled from the local tip.

But we are in desperate need of tools, waterproofing materials, office equipment and money. We also need people, volunteers to look after the 'alternatives' exhibition, run the office and be involved in organising weekend workshops (contact FOE Sydney — see p.40 for address/phone number).

The Embassy's stated policy is to stay where it is, continuing to promote public discussion, until there is a definite shift of AAEC policy towards to alternative energy strategies, involving first energy conservation and then, increasingly, renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power.

The First Ranger Report said that the people should decide whether Australian uranium should be mined and exported, and FOE has initiated certain projects to involve people in their unquestionable and inalienable right to make that decision. The Atom Free Embassy is one such project. Please Join us.

ENVIRONMENT BIKERIDE

Unlike the majority of people at the Alternative Lifestyles Confest at Canberra last December, not everyone rolled up in a car or van, or even in the odd train or bus that happens to connect up with the national capital. Two groups from Melbourne and Sydney showed that there was 'alternative transport', by cycling to



the festival. The groups met at Eden to protest against the destruction of native forests by the woodchipping in that area, and then rode on up the mountains to Canberra via Cooma.

Here's one rider's impression of the ride — did the journey mean as much to those of us who went the quick way?

"...lots of people, lots of New Games, sunshine, laughter, campfires, banana whips and a purpose (anti-woodchipping). Everyone frolicked in the glory of summer as we slowly pedalled by the rolling hills of the south coast.

The stops were more enjoyable than the starts, and everyone was at least honest enough to admit that cycling in such heat was madness; but being on a bike in the late evening, in the country (better still in the forests), feeling the breeze on your face and picking the splattered night bugs from your eyes was sheer bliss. The riders were all beautiful,



young and old alike, very communicative and easy to get along with, food was a treat, the surf a blessing and the whole experience was a rewarding education in human relationships, in the abilities of a bicycle and rider, and in the stunning recognition of the destruction of our native forests by the woodchip industry."



The first National Alternative Lifestyles Conference/Festival (Confest)—held over five days last December on the banks of the Cotter River near Canberra—seems certain to mark the beginning of a new coherence in the previously fragmented counter-cultural undercurrents of Australian life. The movement is now firmly established in all states and, in Victoria alone, there have already been two mini-Confests this year.

The Canberra Confest was essentially a personal experience. DAVID HUGHES' description here retains that individual perception, yet, through his use of the anonymous 'Alternative Person' interviewee, he has a go at reflecting the general feelings of those who attended.

From December 10 to 14 some 4000 to 5000 people of diverse interests and philosophy met together to participate in a new kind of people's happening. Call it a 'confest', it had many of the elements of a folk festival but welded to more serious-minded conference and discussion. For most of those there it was a beautiful taste of what effective grass-roots social democracy can mean.

Last May Jim Cairns suggested there should be a national conference or festival. The seven months up to December 1 saw about 2000 people in cities right around Australia involved in dissecting, moulding and reforming the myriad possibilities for masses of people with a common, basic concern to share differences in approach and orientation. The strong hope was that the development of an inward self-search by many, might become through the sharing an enlightened, outward, active orientation. Of course everyone turned up with their own expectations

ROBYN (the fictional interviewer): Firstly, what does the term 'alternative lifestyle' imply? What is its relevance to those who participated? How can anyone relate to those ideas in practical terms?

ALTERNATIVE PERSON: In one of the handbills that appeared relatively close to the scheduled opening date, Jim Cairns said this:

"All those who feel the need for radical change — Aboriginals, ethnic communities, women's liberation groups, peace activists, homosexuals, lesbians, members of rural and city communes and co-operatives, and those concerned with self-management and work democracy, law reform, ideology, theories of social change, and alternative food, health, energy, living structures, education and psychotherapy, yoga and meditation — they will all be participating."

Of the 4000 to 5000 people who, for convenience, could be referred to as the 'regulars' (with no elitism intended

CONFEST

... it's just that this number was present as a minimum over the entire confest period, although *The Canberra Times* reported weekend numbers of between ten and fifteen thousand late arrivals and the curious from Canberra, most were of the mid-to-late twenties or early thirties age group. A large, but (probably) not predominant proportion of these were the "60s' counter-culturalists" — that is to say, the people most affected and alienated in this country by the divisive Vietnam War.

Now, that term 'Alternative Lifestyle' ... Really, anyone that does pottery or weaves, makes their own clothes or services their own car, or is into any form of community welfare programme, or someone with a solar water heater for their house — they are already trying less conventional forms of recreation, pass time or concerned involvement. It can be considered an alternative if it is more your own idea or personal approach, rather than something that has been made available commercially. Also the alternative approach is usually less harmful to the total environment, often costs less to purchase, install and operate, and may utilise materials that wasteful people might treat as scrap. I would also add that thrift and ingenuity are basic philosophical tenets of anyone whose aim is to find true self and harmonise in a more natural environment. Thus many of the people at the confest have been experimenting for years with non-manic low technologies that simultaneously allow money savings for real needs, limit tension and dependence levels and significantly reduce individual contributions to environmental impact.

R: Would you like to detail either daily 'routine', or describe significant main events? Try to keep your jargon down to consolidated slang we all know.

A.P.: No risk. It would be best to outline the main surprises first. Among the surprises the following stand out: the presence of a group of Quakers; the friendliness, openness and (eventual) marked frankness of members of the ACT police force invited onto the site by the organisers; the breadth of socio-economic and age representation among 'regular' participants; the degree to which the great majority of people gradually came, through films, discussions and displays, overwhelmingly to acknowledge uranium as the greatest most-immediate



On Monday 13, hundreds of Cotter 'residents' took their energy to the streets of Canberra in a demonstration against uranium mining.

issue facing peoplekind everywhere; the large number who evaluated yoga and its (e.g. Tantra) consciousness, perhaps for the first time; the degree of participatory democracy at meetings and their tolerance, plus the degree to which natural 'leaders' and chairpeople emerge in discussion groups, meetings, etc.; the humanity and understanding of complex aspects of society shown by the feminists and gay-lib groups — a total perspective that plainly exposed the pernicious aspects of deeply-ingrained, often subtle (thus superficially trite) sexist divisiveness... At the confest the radical feminists were the most lively elements. And overall their message was well put with little of the aggression and over-rapid intolerance that marked many a male's initial experience of feminism. The feminists did in fact provide the metaphorical sheet-anchor for everyone to base notions of freedom on.

R: What are some of the tangible results of the confest evident at this stage?

A.P.: As I will detail later in picturing hour-to-hour activities, some 1500 people participated in the synthesis of a manifesto to emerge as a press release. Here is how the final draft begins; it encapsulates the maximum of our unanimity:

A CALL FOR A NEW SOCIETY We the people gathered at the Down to Earth Sharing at the Cotter River are practising, or are in the process of developing, alternative ways of living, and feel that the time has come to renounce a society where possession, success in personal striving, self-assertion against others, unlimited material growth and ecological imbalance are considered elementary needs. We feel that the time has come to put an end to the state of anxiety and alienation produced in each individual, to expose the abnormal, divisive and destructive character of the accompanying value system, and reject the current ideology designed to pronounce this inhuman state as natural. We are dedicated to the survival of the earth and all life upon it, convinced that if humankind is to overcome the crisis of today ALL PEOPLE MUST BE ALLOWED TO DEVELOP IN FREEDOM.



R: That does carry some force. Where is all this leading?

A.P.: My own ideas prior to the confest, in reading Jim Cairns explanatory handbill, was that here at last was an attempt to get all types of progressive people together to share experiences; the beginning of heightened cross-communication of ideas and aspects of lifestyle that would mark the birth of a truly democratic grass-roots movement — part of an early demonstration of a New Age of tolerance, humility and loving. It could eventually set such an example of dynamic alternative politics and cohesion — where miles and fences no longer exist — that the community at large will reject current 'freedoms' ('freedom' to conform).

Clearly there will be the 'scene' people who enjoy festivals perhaps, but can't and won't miss out on their share of materialism and dollar-worship. And the media, especially the demon Advertising, will misrepresent our efforts to return us all to ethical life style strategies. Those that are so co-opted are, or will be, a loss, but increasing numbers of 'ordinary' people who cannot stand the tyranny of exponential growth in whatever form, will see us grow.

But you must note that 'radical', as we take it, excludes any belief in the relevance of force (i.e., physical or verbal aggression) For us, true politics is (as the dictionary historically defines it), simply the relationships between groups of people. We see people functioning on spiritual, physical and intellectual levels — with that being the rough order of undertaking a personal re-orientation. Obviously a person won't get her — or himself together very rapidly if they work within an inwardly directed vacuum. That there must be some balance between the above three levels was, for many, the message of the confest. The people deeply involved with environmental concerns were lacking in some human qualities, to the diminution of their success; some of the highly spiritually orientated people lacked reformist zeal; some radical feminists, while actively delineating non-sexism, appeared to work within a vacuum as far as any other cause went . . . And so it can go on until I have no friends left! Seriously though, this is being very critical of many people and it must be said that before the confest there were hordes of people active in different areas at the same time, even though it is natural for there to be some specialisation according to experience, personality, etc. The confest has already heightened communication and cross-involvement among specialist groups.

R: You spoke earlier of a "grass-roots social democracy". How was this demonstrated at the confest?

A.P.: Ah-huh! Day-to-day and hour-to-hour events may show this to be so. Numbers of hard-working, more serious-minded individuals arose — as did the Hare Krishnas — just after first light to convene several brainstorming sessions. For example, they initially helped to get rather jumbled expectations and ideas from the hectic 'official opening' meeting into a form that would cater simultaneously for discussion, sharing and recreational happenings to somehow take place — and over some 15-hour period each day. Later they drafted versions leading up to the manifesto we have already glimpsed — a very difficult task considering that 1500 people all tried at one

assemblage to be both general and specific as to what a manifesto might convey. Incidentally that was, I believe, the only meeting Jim Cairns chaired. It split itself into arbitrary groups of varying size and, over an hour-and-a-half of frustration, circumlocution and lobbying, one or two things happened — much to everyone's relief. Either the irregularly noted statements of unanimous agreement assumed identities of their own or the individuals arguing specifics gave way to reserved individuals (traditionally excluded!) who proceeded to sum-up *everyone's* feelings with ease. For many, this whole process of mass decision-making and intimate involvement was as intriguing as it was new and successful.

By and large, people awoke naturally to the warm early-morning sunshine. The quiet tent city became, by about 9.30, a kaleidoscope of activity. Hundreds had time enough to sit quietly in the shade and survey the flow-on of activity generated by the really early risers before they too became part of events — a marked contrast to many-a-family's computerised and hectic early-morning rush in the 'smoke'.

A feature of the confest idea was the Early Morning Sharing. This was an encounter group situation of mirth and simplistic touch exploration designed to help people come together in a more physical sense. Coordinators later showed the film 'Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence', illustrating the informed scientific basis for all of us overcoming the 'no-touch' syndrome. That people are not only out of touch with their own bodies, as it were, but further alienated from people around them by this social taboo, is brought home by neuropsychologist, James Prescott in an article (of the same name as the film) which analyses laboratory experiments and cross-cultural data. ('Natural birth' and Leboyer birth techniques are intimately connected with this doctor's scenario of human violence.)

But back to the sharing. One memorable episode saw three to four hundred people formed into two, then three, then four concentric circles with everyone linking hands. Someone experienced in this sort of thing suggested — demonstrated really — that it might not be a bad idea if everyone was massaged to loosen up. The outer circle had a brief go at massaging the inner circle; then, before less relaxed people could react to what anyone else thought might be 'inappropriate', or to how amusing were some spontaneous gestures, a new line of people raced around the outside to encircle the others. Without any apparent cues or leadership, the idea was generated that the masseurs hadn't yet had their massage . . . and it was on. Humorous quips and child-like abandon — ears were twiggled, scalps scratched, spines rapped . . . everyone was rapt. Ring upon ring formed as bemused on-lookers were attracted to the performance like moths to a flame.

One facetious remark overheard at the inconclusive finish to the exercise and fun and games — after a cross-cultural African tribal dance-cum-corroboree-cum-cancan and Irish jig — was this: "Right — now *that's* over, if anyone so much as brushes past me, I'll expect an instant apology!" Those in earshot *felt*, rather than realised or heard, the irony of that encapsulation of a Victorian Era hangover. Years of training had produced individuals afraid of their own reactions to touching other humans. Ridiculous nonsense. We all discovered anew at Sharings such as this the essential kind of implicit information to

be gained from *just feeling*. Abandoning this conventional no-no — which is 'conventional' only in the so-called advanced nations, where violence is also on the advance and police "get-tough" remedies are only a (poisoned) band-aid measure — and revitalising our texture sense was what this minimally implied, and the degree of rubbing, bumping, chaffing, fondling, upset no one. That this inalienable human faculty for even disregarding a person's sex and finally eliminating remaining sex-role hang-ups should surface so readily, is staggering. So many of us have preached *love* and *peace* as the road to *happiness* in the past: when all is said and done, we just flew through a big public prac exam. People really are organic, feeling creatures after all.

In suffering the same socialisation and the same conditioning (read,

RIDE AGAINST URANIUM MAY '77



This May, hundreds of people will again be pedalling to Canberra to protest against the mining and export of Australian uranium.

The style of this year's ride will emphasise a cooperative approach. Small self-sufficient groups of up to 50 riders will travel along different routes, all to arrive in Yass on the same day, and then ride on to Canberra and set up a protest camp on the Parliament House lawns.

These small groups will fan out over their States in a massive education campaign. The aim will be to stimulate debate on the uranium issue and on our future energy policy in general. In Canberra there will be a five-day Alternative Technology Festival where various forms of 'soft' technology will be demonstrated.

If you don't wish to ride all the way, you could organise a train or bus to meet us on the route or in

Canberra. Or you could sponsor a rider — contact your local FOE group for sponsorship details.

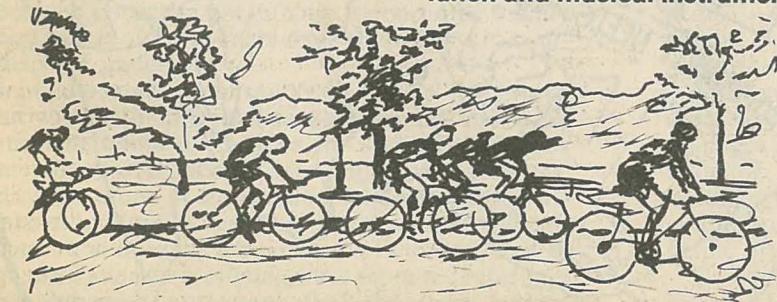
Victoria

On the ride each autonomous group will be responsible for planning its own route, cooking, accommodation, support vehicle (if needed) and will liaise with the Bike Ride Committee.

A number of alternative routes with starting points throughout the State have already been suggested, but others can be planned if people joining the ride want them.

Most rides will start on May 7, arriving in Yass on May 16, and in Canberra on May 18.

If you would like to join the ride, please attend the first bike ride picnic/meeting in the Fitzroy Gardens (near Captain Cook's Cottage), Melbourne, at 12.30 pm on Sunday 20 March. Bring your lunch and musical instruments so



'alienation from others' plus 'estrangement from ourselves') as most average Australians, is it a fluke we are so basically friendly? Though neurosis is known everywhere, and psychologists suggest Americans, or 90 percent of them to be accurate, are neurotic, and Australians couldn't be very far behind . . . we at the confest, in accepting that conditioning and sex-role training may have been less successfully administered to us, can only hope our experience was seen — the press failed dismally except for accounts of nude bathing (ahhh!) — or at least listened to . . . hence this.

In relation to the significance of the fun-and-games component of the confest: I defy anyone to pronounce the participants *hippies* — that is, anyone who was there and has a full idea of just how way-out of reality the true American hippies of the late '60s and early '70s were.

that we can enjoy ourselves while planning the ride and getting to know each other.

If you can't make this date, come to the next meeting at Melbourne University on April 3.

Everyone interested in coming on the ride should contact: Ross (380 6568), Glen (49 1060), Giuliano (338 7267), or FOE (347 6630 — 51 Nicholson St, Carlton 3053) as soon as possible for further details.

NSW

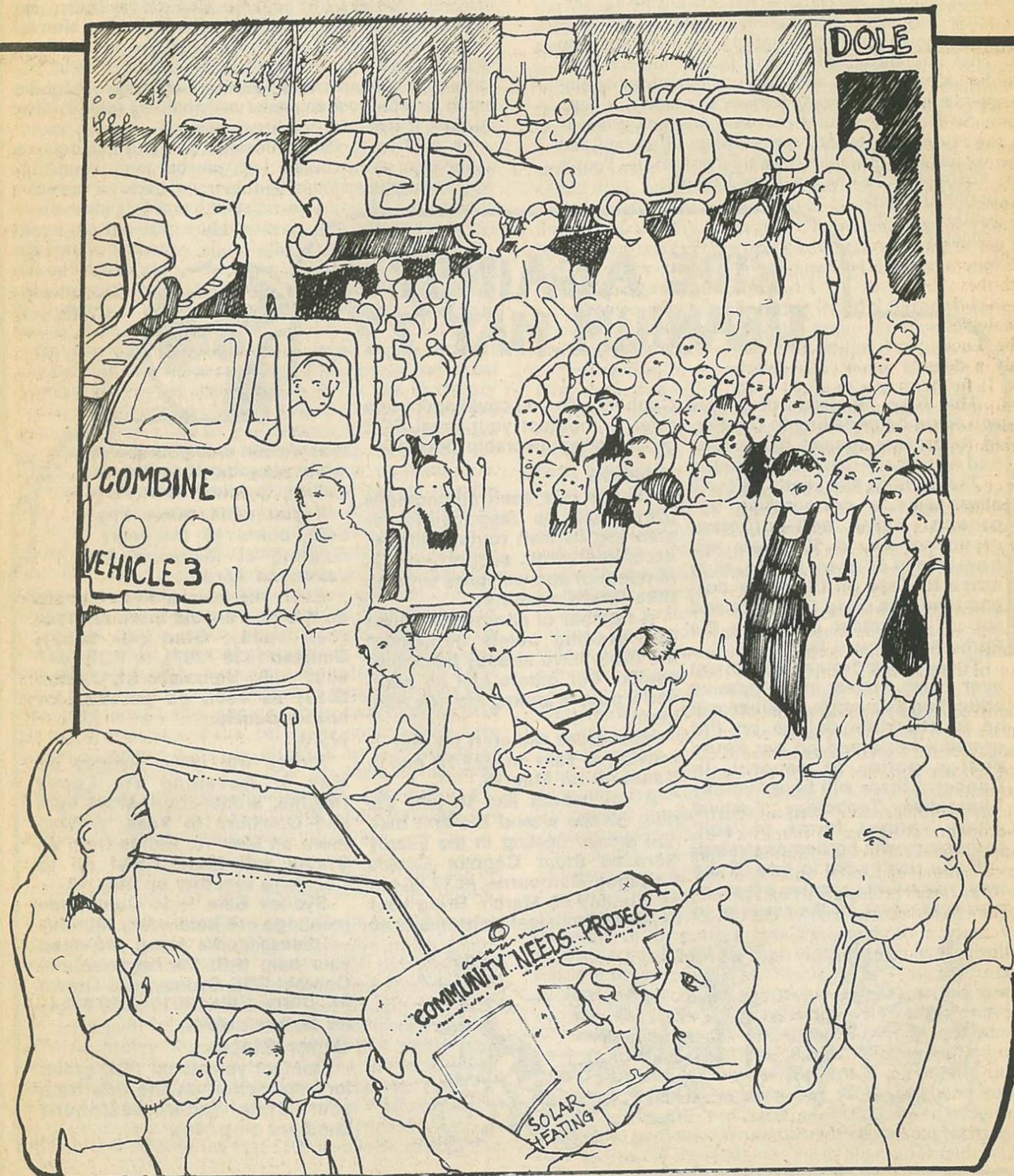
Riders will leave Sydney on May 9, travelling via Lucas Heights, Wollongong, Moss Vale and Goulburn to Yass, arriving there on May 16. Riders from all States will then travel on to Canberra together on May 18.

Sydney Bike Ride Committee meetings are held every Monday — please come along, we need your help with the organisation. Contact FOE Sydney, 423 Crown St, Surry Hills, 2010 (698 9714) for further details.

Other States

Contact your local FOE group for information on the ride from your State (addresses/phone numbers on p. 40).

6 . . . we've seen that ordinary workers, if they put their minds to it, are well capable of designing things and developing them, and deciding what they need in the communities in which they live.



MAKE CARS, JOIN THE DOLE QUEUE OR WHAT?

The 14 000 workers of the Lucas Aerospace Company in the UK have come up with a novel way of dealing with the threat of redundancies.

Instead of fighting to keep working on the existing product range of the company, mainly products for military aircraft, the Lucas workers have put to their management a complete alternative corporate plan in which they demand the right to work on socially useful alternative technologies.

The Lucas plan is therefore not simply a defence against unemployment. It further suggests a means of transforming existing large-scale industries towards more socially and environmentally appropriate production.

As one of the Lucas Shop Stewards has pointed out, the choice facing, say, car workers in a declining industry is not just between producing

rubbishy polluting cars or joining the dole queue. There is a third way: get professional and manual staff together and see if there are more socially useful products that could be made with the skills and facilities available.

Lucas-style initiatives have in fact recently spread to a Chrysler car plant in the UK, as well as to a textiles firm.

We believe that the Lucas approach could well have relevance to the Australian scene, as structural unemployment grows, and the environmental problems resulting from certain industrial processes and products become even more acute.

Significantly, there are 100 000 less jobs in the manufacturing industry sector today than there were in 1971.

Rising oil prices and the increasing environmental degradation caused by

the motor car are likely to mean a sharp decline in the Australian car industry over the coming years.

It may also be noted that employment in the textiles industry fell from 51 000 to 42 000 between 1973 and 1976.

Dave Elliot, one of editors of *Undercurrents*, has sent us the following article giving the full story on the Lucas initiative and discussing the new form of trade unionism it embodies. The quotations interspersed throughout the article are from Mike Cooley, a Lucas Aerospace Shop Steward (thanks to ABC Radio, *New Society*, for permission to use them).

We shall be sending copies of this article to trade unionists throughout Australia, in the hope of receiving their comments on the relevance of Lucas-style initiatives here.

TRADE UNIONS are usually depicted by the press as narrow-minded self-interested greedy wreckers. Some union spokespersons even obligingly provide quotes to reinforce the impression, such as: "We are going to be at the top of the tree and if that hurts anybody else, then I'm sorry . . ."

The issue of income differentials is one that few trade unionists have yet fully faced — except in theoretical or rhetorical terms. Levelling up is their ideal — and, as far as it goes, a sound one. Even so, it still sounds pretty materialistic.

But trade unions are, after all, part of the current socio-economic structure. They may have been created as an 'oppositional' movement aimed at radically altering (or even removing) capitalism, but over the years they have, to a considerable extent, had to adopt a reformist role. They have become part of the system, in that their main activity, collective bargaining, is concerned mainly with the division of the roughly fixed share of the cake allocated to the workers.

Now of course when you say 'trade unions' this means different things to different people. For the press it's either the top union officials or the sinister shop-floor militants who surface briefly into public consciousness. In reality the union is the membership: the elected officers are only there to carry out the mandated policies and protect and advance the interests of the members. If some of the trade union officials have espoused reformist policies, this does not mean that the trade unions themselves as a whole are necessarily reformist institu-

tions — although that is the danger. There are some countervailing tendencies at the grass roots, as the current rise in shop steward, rank-and-file, and cross-union combine activity illustrates.

But in society which trains its members to chase the carrot of material possessions, applauds conspicuous consumption and celebrates affluence as an end in itself, it is not surprising that institutions which are partly incorporated into it, like the trade unions, will absorb some of these values.

And there are quite strong tactical reasons why trade unionists will reduce all issues to economic 'wage' issues — they are easily understood, quantifiable and, in theory at least, such demands attack profits and thus change the economic imbalance between wage-labourer and capitalist. In reality of course, and particularly in an inflationary situation, wage demands do not attack profits — they just lead to price increases, withdrawal of capital investment and further recession. No real redistribution is produced.

Management also prefer (to some extent) to deal with cash issues rather than the more diffuse (and unmanageable) 'control' issues — such as those concerning manning, safety, pollution, long-term policy and so on. Management quite consciously introduces or accepts conflict-reducing institutions which force workers to define grievances in cash terms.

So wider issues are consciously reduced to economic issues. The fact that this tactic fuels inflation illustrates how unstable the system is. The tendency of management

In many ways alternative technology, at least in Britain, has meant people going off into the countryside on a sort of permanent sabbatical. And if things got too bad they'd come back and write a book or something. That is not an option which is open for the vast majority of the working class.

to encourage aggressive economism, for the sake of short-term ease of managerial control, leads to longer-term instabilities.

Furthermore, this economism might cause workers' expectations and aspirations to rise to a point when they cannot be satisfied within the present economic system — a point not lost on those who are working for the overthrow of capitalism. The problem with this tactic, in its revolutionary context, is that it does not equip workers with an awareness of, and an ability to organise around, the many equally-important *non-economic* issues and problems. After all, workers are not just faced with economic exploitation. Although this may be the central mode of their oppression, other more diffuse forms of control are in operation which help sustain, underpin and legitimise the economic exploitation.

In their daily experience at work, as well as in the community or as consumers, workers are forced to realise that they lack even the basic elements of control over their lives. They are closely supervised at work, paced by machine and clock, bought and sold according to the needs of the capitalist system, and cajoled to adopt its required consumption and lifestyle patterns. They are just hands and mouths.

It is not surprising that some workers want more than just more money to compensate for this alienation. Not only do they seek to challenge the basic economic alienation (the exploitation of their labour power) but they also seek to have more control over the conditions and purpose of their work.

This goes further than simply asking for better 'working conditions' and welfare provisions, and it is for this reason that management fears the demand for "workers' control". For to press for control over such issues as line speed, job design and work organisation, manning levels, product design, production-system choice — and perhaps even long-term policy on corporate pricing, marketing, employment, the environment and technology — is to challenge seriously the prerogatives and authority of management.

But are there any signs of trade unions transcending wage issues? Yes there are. It has not escaped these workers that current modes of technology and production affect them not only at work, but also in their communities.

If a car worker spends eight hours a day shuffling along a conveyor line contributing to the production of 200 cars, and then has to walk a quarter of a mile, past the 200 000 unsold cars stored in what was the car park, to his own car, so that he can then spend an hour driving through congested streets to his polluted motorway-blighted home — and all in order to pay for his car and the consumer items and services to help him forget his work — then he is likely eventually to see the irrationality of it all.

Increasingly, his response is unlikely to be just a demand for more money to compensate: the demand is now for more control over conditions and policies. Trade unions are probably in an ideal position to influence industries' social and environmental policies — after all, their members are organised around a crucial point in the production and distribution chain: they have a strategic role. They could take a leading part in redirecting industry towards more sane forms of production.

But *are* they taking up this challenge, you ask?

A year or so ago, the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards Combine Committee set up a science and technology consultancy service which was aimed at providing technical advice to members who were faced with new technologies, work methods, speed up, potentially dangerous machines or processes, and similar innovations introduced by management. As such, this was essentially a 'defensive' organisation in the traditional trade union sense.

Recently the Combine decided that they must adopt a more *positive* stance, and develop *counter* proposals rather than just react to and resist management's initiatives. The Aerospace workers are highly skilled and are used to tackling challenging new projects. They, like the car workers, can plainly see the environmental problems associated with current products and production — cars, weapon systems, and so on. In a recession, when government defence (and welfare service) spending is reduced, these goodies are likely to be in less demand. While at the same time the needs of the community — for houses, basic subsistence items, cheap sources of energy — keep growing.

Unemployment is of course the main impetus for the campaign. As the letter from the Secretary of the Combine indicates, it is the threat of redundancies — that has forced them to fight for the right to work on socially useful products.

But the Aerospace workers seem also to have adopted a radical view of what they mean by 'alternative products'. It's not just a matter of a shift in emphasis from military to civilian aircraft and associated systems (such as automatic blind landing systems) — socially useful and radical in the present context though this shift might be. For although the workers *are* considering these types of new priority, and similar socially useful and urgently needed pieces of equipment at present of often only marginal or token interest to the firm — such as medical aids, like haemodialysis units, artificial limbs and other aids to the disabled, eddy current retarder braking systems for heavy vehicles and so on — they are *also* considering alternative technologies which may have more long-term structural implications. They are interested in the whole range of alternative energy technologies, including — windmills, solar collectors, heat pumps, solar cells, hydrogen electrolysis, fuel cells,

THE LUCAS LETTER (spring '75)

We are taking the liberty of writing to you as we understand you are interested in the possibility of deploying the skills and equipment of *technologically advanced firms on alternative technology*, in particular those forms which are socially useful.

We should explain at the outset that this Combine Committee represents all employees of the 17 U.K. sites of Lucas Aerospace. It is therefore unique in the British Trade Union Movement in that it speaks for the entire spectrum of workers by hand and brain, from labourers to senior technologists and engineers. We design, develop and manufacture a wide range of aerospace components and complete systems. A substantial proportion of this work is on defence contracts. It seems to us that the 'energy crisis' will result in a slowing down of many of these projects and the general economic climate is likely to result in *cutbacks in defence contracts*. This we regard as inevitable and even desirable. Our concern however is that cutbacks of this kind have always resulted, in the past, in the break up of teams of skilled workers and design staff, followed by the degradation of the dole queue.

We have, over the past two years, been engaged in a number of bitter disputes to assert the 'right to work'. It is our intention to do so in the future. However, instead of campaigning for the continuation of socially undesirable product ranges we will fight for the right to work on socially needed and useful products. In addition . . . we also want to ensure that the work is carried out in such a fashion that the full skill and ability of our members is utilised, and that we depart from the *dehumanised, fragmented forms of work which are now becoming commonplace even in a highly skilled industry such as aerospace*.

The annual turnover of Lucas Aerospace in the U.K. is approximately £60 million. There are about 14 000 employees, and some 2 000 of these are engineers, draftsmen and scientific staff. A large proportion of the remainder are highly skilled manual workers. It is the kind of work force which, because of its skilled background is extremely adaptable, and would be capable of working on a wide range of products . . . We have just over 5 000 machine tools and about 250 of these are numerically, automatically or digital display controlled. A list of test facilities shows that this is backed up by products, environmental and investigation laboratories.

There is a very genuine desire to work on products which would be socially useful, not only in Britain, but in the *newly emergent and developing countries*. It is certainly not the view of the Combine Committee or of the work force involved that the kind of capital intensive products which have come to characterise the technologically advanced nations will be appropriate to the newly emergent nations. It is therefore fully understood and accepted that entirely different forms of technology will have to be considered.

If you know of alternative technologies on which a work force of this kind could become engaged, in particular if these technologies would be socially useful, we will be very pleased to discuss the matter with you further. We are particularly keen to see that

the very considerable skill and ability of our members is used to solve the wide range of human problems we see about us.

We should like, in conclusion, to point out that *this initiative comes entirely from our workforce itself, through its Combined Shop Stewards' Committee, and as such is completely independent of the normal commercial considerations of a large company of this kind. We will greatly appreciate your advice and suggestions, and would, of course, treat your reply in confidence.*

E. Scarbrow
Secretary

batteries, invertors, electric vehicles, steam cars, stirling engines and even airships.

They are considering in particular how these technologies can be put to use in complete systems to aid people in need, both in the short term and the longer term — for example, cheap heating and power service units for prefabricated industrialised buildings, cheap small-scale power units for third-world farmers, as well as marine agriculture and undersea farming equipment and robotic equipment to automate unpleasant tasks.

You might argue that some of these technologies imply 'reform' rather than radical change of revolutionary alternatives, in that they simply deal with problems thrown up by this existing society. But the implied 'classification' of radical/reform technologies is not necessarily a sound one.

For one thing, medical and safety problems will exist in *any* society. And furthermore, whether a particular technology depends to some extent on how, when, where and by whom it is developed and used — in some circumstances the creation and introduction of quite conventional techniques, or minor shifts in the pattern of production or usage, *can* be revolutionary. For the mass of people to have access to photo-copying facilities would surely be a change which would shift the balance of power somewhat. The same could be argued for telex, radio, TV or even computers. On the other hand, some potentially 'radical' alternative technologies *could* become the base for a repressive society.

This is *not* to return totally to a 'use-abuse' model of technology (i.e. technology is neutral, it depends on how you use it) for the 'means' cannot be separated from the 'ends', but simply to throw more emphasis on the social and political context of its inception, production and use.

With this in mind it is interesting to see that it's not only alternative *products* that the Lucas workers are considering, but also *alternative modes of production*. They are well aware that it is pointless to produce environmentally appropriate products in a way that is socially alienating and environmentally damaging. So they will press for radical changes in the organisation and control of work and demand better designed jobs, autonomous control by work groups and project teams, new forms of management, and so on.

All these changes must, they argue, be geared towards meeting the *real needs of the community* — that is, towards providing socially useful products as opposed to the spurious consumer goodies thrown up by the present mode of production planning and 'market research'.

The urgency of the need for housing, for cheap wholesome food, cheap heating, acceptable public transport and education, does not require a 'market' for it to be articulated.

The fundamental question that is raised by this development is whether an advanced technological com-

There is something seriously wrong about a society which can produce a level of technology to design and build Concorde, but cannot provide enough simple urban heating systems.

pany like Lucas, assembled by capitalism to meet its needs, can be diverted or modified to meet community needs. Can large centralised units produce appropriate technologies in a socially and environmentally desirable way — or must they be broken up into smaller decentralised units?

Now it is important to realise that these large companies represent a huge social investment in human capital — a vast national skill and equipment resource. Many 'alternativists' want to dismantle such units, and they may well be right. But for the moment they exist and we must think about *how* to change them: we need a transitional strategy. The proposals put forward by the Lucas workers are a first step.

For it is not just a matter of technical reorganisation: it's a question of social change. Discussions on the possible alternative types of production have taken place throughout the membership: the emphasis has been on the process of developing new priorities, new ideas, new attitudes to technology and, eventually, new ways to relate to 'consumer' need. All this activity was fed into the final 'corporate plan' which was presented to management in January 1976 as a collective bargaining demand. It was also hoped that it might be treated as part of a long-term 'planning agreement' exercise as laid out in the UK Labour Government's scheme for industrial democracy.

The five-volumed Corporate Plan contained detailed proposals for 150 new products and has received wide arguing support in the media.

Despite hostility by Lucas' Corporate directions, it looks as if production of some items outlined in the plan will be forced through — partly because *local* managers themselves fear redundancy. Development work on heat pumps has already been sanctioned at the Company's Burnley plant. But this is possibly not the most important outcome. Much as it would be good to see windmills or whatever roll off the production lines, the main object from the campaign — from the workers point of view — is to halt redundancies. And the campaign has clearly worked already on those grounds. It has also had an immense 'educative' and consciousness-raising effect on Lucas workers — and workers elsewhere. Lucas-style campaigns have now spread to many other firms — including Chrysler cars, the big electricity generating plant manufacturer C & A Parson, and a textile machinery firm in Manchester. The Lucas approach looks like becoming a standard tactic in British trade unionism.

The Role of the Alternative Technology Movement

The Lucas campaign has naturally attracted the attention of many environmentalists. However, despite the fact that the letter from the Combine (see attached) was widely circulated, few realistic offers of help emerged —

most of the Corporate Plan idea came from Lucas workers, which, perhaps, is all to the good. For many environmentalists and alternative technologists seemed unable to relate *politically* to the workers struggle. They came up with ideas suited to small communes or hill farms — or else talked about reconciliation between managers and workers so that they could 'work together' to fight the eco-crisis.

The result has been that, at least initially, the Shop Stewards at Lucas, lost faith in the 'AT' movement's ability to be of practical help. Personally I feel this was a necessary stage — the AT movement after all is young and has much to learn from the workers' years of experience of struggle. The point for us on the outside to remember is that workers have some degree of power to turn the dreams we have had of 'alternative technologies' into reality.

This initiative seems to me to have partially circumvented the central problem of developing alternative technology in a capitalist society. It is often argued that you can't develop AT until you've got an alternative society. The trouble with this is that it becomes a chicken and egg problem. But some people have argued that you can at least make a start — you can develop premature or semi-fledged alternatives which help stimulate and motivate others. The point is that this requires both social and technological changes to occur together in a sort of dialectical process. The experimental communes have been depicted this way by some people — as embryonic attempts to live in the future now. But the Lucas initiative, and the others that followed it provide a much more viable route and context for this dialectical development. There is an ongoing situation, rooted firmly in reality. Utopian ideas and technical and social reality can interact in a productive way and in a context which links immediately to the lives of large numbers of people — not just the readers of *Chain Reaction* or the commune-down-the-road.

I see this process of technological and social change as crucial, though it's not the only possible vehicle for change. As the capitalist system gets further into crisis many other types of development will become possible and appropriate. Where needs are no longer met by the system, people may move towards self help, self sufficiency and cooperative efforts (although they might also move towards a further state of dependence on centralised authority. And in either case there is the danger of isolationism, privatization and individualism).

The redirection of existing industry by those who work in it, towards new goals using new methods, holds out the hope of keeping the emphasis on collective organisation and control. This does not mean continued centralised bureaucratic forms of control . . . it means struggling

where people are, for new forms of social organisation, and new forms of technology.

Cynics might argue that the whole thing will be co-opted — the workers initiative will be absorbed and their ideas will be used by the company to improve its profits, at the workers' expense. But remember that these workers are well organised. They will campaign for these changes within an *oppositional* frame of references: they are well aware of the dangers of co-option and collaboration. Whereas small, insecure groups tinkering with AT in the hills are much more likely to be ripped off and have their ideas misused by the system.

The point is that well-organised and technically skilled workers are in a good position to develop alternatives and to protect them from abuse — although it should be remembered that the alternatives thrown up by this process *may* not be what we would call 'AT' . . . With this context in mind (and bearing in mind that there's no reason why we should know what is socially appropriate), what alternative technologies *could* be worth exploring?

Tactically, it *might* be wise to 'sugar the pill' somewhat by emphasising fairly 'high' technologies rather than 'low' technologies — although this would only be a temporary expedient. In the area of alternative energy technologies this suggests things like large-scale water electrolyzers producing hydrogen for storage, transport (in cryogenic or metal hydride form) or for transmission as a gas along conventional pipe lines (as a basis for the so called 'hydrogen economy'). Or district heating units using heat pumps run off conventional power stations. Or silicon or cadmium sulphide solar cells — which with new thin film techniques can be manufactured cheaply. Or large scale solar farms and solar furnaces producing steam for turbogenerators.

But I imagine there would be a better case (as far as the 'alternative technologists' are concerned) for less-sophisticated and small-scale alternatives: methane production from anaerobic digestors; the local generation of hydrogen by electrolysis powered by a windmill; small water mills and turbines; electric generation by fuel cells fuelled by methane, natural gas or hydrogen; the development of electric-powered and steam-powered vehicles and so on.

Then come those techniques that we would accept as 'pure' AT — small scale, easily controlled, maintained and understood, amenable to local construction and use. For example, small scale wind-electric machines, flat-plate solar collectors, and small-scale convertors like heat pumps run from windmill-generated electricity — or even directly by mechanical power from a windmill operating the compressor.

Some of the items on this list might not turn out to be appropriate in social and environmental terms. It *may* be counter-productive in energy and resources usage terms to

We think there's something absurd about governments, as in Britain, paying £40 a week to unemployed people to do nothing, when by paying them £60 a week they could be producing socially useful commodities such as kidney machines.

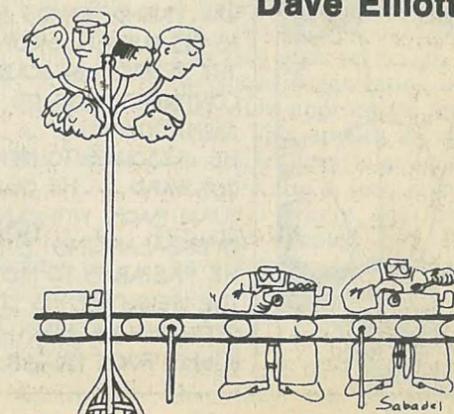
invest in large numbers of small windmachines or solar panels. Some of the more complex technologies, like fuel cells or heat pumps, may be too sophisticated to be classified as AT. On the other hand it *may* be more important (both socially and tactically) to focus on meeting urgent social needs, such as those for safer vehicles, cheap housing, medical aids and so on — areas which many alternativists tend to ignore as being too linked to 'advanced' technology, but which, certainly in the interim, are vital.

These are the sorts of problem that must be thrashed out in the process of selecting suitable priorities for production — and they are obviously the sorts of questions the AT movement has been chewing over for some time.

But now we are no longer alone. We are joined by a group of highly-skilled, well-organised and enthusiastic engineers, designers, technicians, administrators and junior managers. And remember, we are not talking about the absorption of AT ideas into an unchanged capitalist firm. The stewards represent a membership made up of blue and white collar workers and their families and communities. They do not represent financial, government, commercial or military interests. So that the ideas and changes that they introduce are likely to be geared towards the needs of the community. Hopefully they will be able to make links with those groups which are currently trying to get AT introduced into a community context. Initially this might mean dealing with Local Authorities, but ultimately it might be possible to forge links between producing firms like Lucas and local collectives and communities who are trying to work towards AT — whether on housing estates, in rural farms or in production co-ops.

Here is a chance to get it together in a way that can help spread the idea and practice of AT on a mass scale. I hope we live up to our own rhetoric. And at the same time learn from the experience.

Dave Elliott



The Road to The **FUTURE** via Nuclear Power

In our last installment you will remember that our friend reached a fork in the road. Catching sight of some flashing lights on the path going via Nuclear Power, he decided to journey that way.... We left him as he reached a Supply Depot on the edge of The GREAT ABYSS....

HAVING SPENT ALL HIS MONEY ON URANIUM SUPPLIES THE ONLY WAY NOW OPEN TO OUR FRIEND IS FORWARD. HE GIVES A SIGH OF RELIEF AS HE STEPS ONTO THE TIGHT-ROPE. BEHIND HIM LIES THE LAND OF THE HAND-POWERED TOOTH-BRUSH, AHEAD — SOMEWHERE —

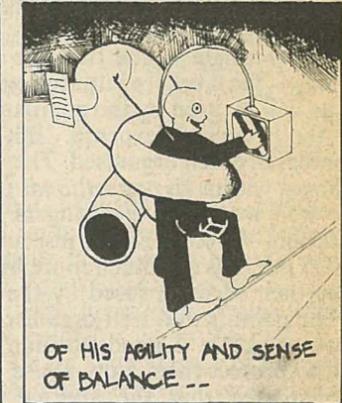


THE REALLY COMFY PLACE.

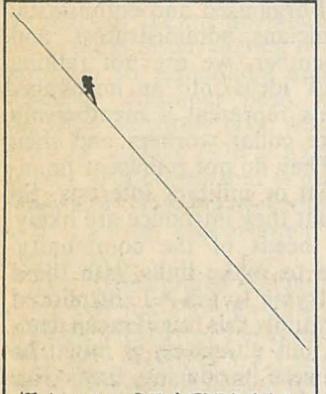


HE CONSUMES SOME OF HIS SUPPLIES...SOON MODERN

APPLIANCES START SPROUTING FROM OUR FRIENDS BACK --- A CENTRAL HEATING SYSTEM CURLS AROUND HIS BODY, AND A TELEVISION HANDS FROM ITS AERIAL BEFORE HIS FACE. WARM AND CONTENT HE SMILES --- SATISFIED WITH HIS PROGRESS AND PROUD



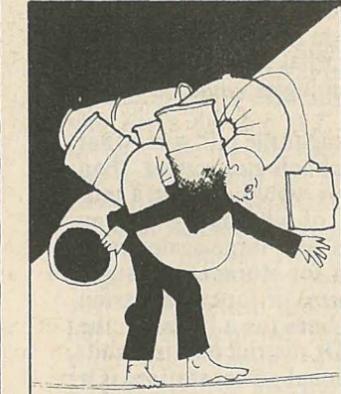
OF HIS ABILITY AND SENSE OF BALANCE --



IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE FALL INTO THE GREAT ABYSS. BUT WITH THE GRIN STILL ON HIS FACE, HIS BACK STARTS TO ITCH AND HE SENSES MORE GROWTHS --- UNWANTED GROWTHS,



RADIOACTIVE GROWTHS --- THE BY-PRODUCTS OF HIS CONSUMPTION. LARGE SHINY CYLINDERS SWELL OUT OF HIS BACK. HE MOVES QUICKLY TO CORRECT HIS BALANCE. BUT HIS LOAD INCREASES. THE HEATING



SYSTEM CONTINUES TO THROW OFF ITS HEAT, BUT OUR FRIEND IS NOT AWARE OF ITS WARMTH. ALL CONCENTRATION IS NOW USED UP IN THE EFFORT OF BALANCING

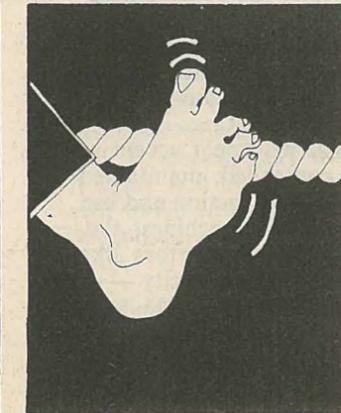


PROGRESS IS ERRATIC AND THE CYLINDERS WEIGH HIM DOWN. HE WILL BE FREE OF THEM ONLY UPON REACHING THE REALLY COMFY PLACE. IT IS AHEAD SOME DISTANCE --- HOW MANY MILLENIA?



HIS EYES SEARCH THE SKIES. BUT THE ROPE GOES ON AND ON.

OUR FRIEND STANDS STILL AS HIS BURDEN GROWS. THE TELEVISION SCREEN CONTINUES WITH ITS ANIMATIONS. HE RESOLVES TO MOVE FORWARD --- HE CANNOT TURN BACK WITHOUT OVERBALANCING. BUT, AS HE PREPARES TO MOVE, THE WEIGHT OF HIS LOAD OVERWHELMS HIM. HIS RIGHT FOOT FALTERS ---



What will happen?
Will he reach The Future?
Where is The Future?

appropriate technology

Adrian Harris



A critical look at 'appropriate technology' in the third world by the Director of Community Aid Abroad.

Intermediate, appropriate, alternative technology — these are now common terms in the language of people concerned with development in the third world.

This new technology is not based on replacing human labour with mechanical devices, which appears to be the yardstick of progress in industrialised societies.

Appropriate technology, the term I'll use in this article, is the technology which many believe will help people to live and work to meet their basic needs with dignity, independence and regard for their environment.

However, in their enthusiasm to promote this supposedly new concept, some of the proponents of appropriate technology fall into the trap of over-simplifying solutions to development, particularly in regard to the poor nations of the world.

In the past thirty years we have been given a series of solutions to under-development. More food, more water, chemical fertilizers, family planning and education have all been put forward as the means to

overcome poverty and help nations develop.

Where a major concentration has been applied in any one of these areas in isolation, it has seldom resulted in a major change for the society concerned. In many cases, such as education and new cropping methods, the benefits have been offset by new problems that have been created.

In this context, appropriate technology is in danger of becoming the new or latest development fad. Well-meaning and enthusiastic promoters are again working in isolation on a single issue, rather than recognising that development requires change and action on many fronts of social, economic and political life.

Hooked on technology

Too often people supporting the concept of appropriate technology are hooked on the technology itself, and give little thought to the kind of society required to make it work.

Thus in Europe, North America, Australia and many other rich na-

tions, a number of institutes and organisations have been established to invent or produce new implements and pieces of equipment for the farmers and village workers of Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Solar cookers, vertical-axis wind-mills, bicycle seed drills and many other gadgets have been produced with great enthusiasm, but very few have been widely adopted in developing countries.

This is not because the equipment is worthless or unsatisfactory for doing a job. It is primarily because few societies give sufficient priority to the social organisation and lifestyle that allow appropriate technology to work. This applies as much to our own rich societies as to the poor.

There are, in fact, many examples in Asia where the development models adopted by Governments have destroyed what could be most aptly called appropriate technology.

The processing of food, such as drying meat and fish or producing tempe and tahu from soya bean so that they can be stored without refrigeration or cooking, is surely ap-

appropriate technology. However, today we see more sophisticated and energy-consuming food processes taking over. They are promoted as modern, and therefore necessary. Meat and fish in tins or refrigerators are becoming a necessity for the higher income earners. Tinned milk and icecreams, sliced bread and many other food forms are becoming common.

Not only do foods in these forms require more energy and resources for marketing, but because they are produced through mechanised processes they require less labour. Their steady acceptance means fewer people earning an income at the village level by using traditional means to produce protein-providing foods.

With the introduction of plastics we have seen the demise of many crafts and skills in developing countries used for making utilitarian products. The production of goods in wood, metals and leather by people at the village level would fit into our concept of appropriate technology. But today the skills used to make these products are fast disappearing as the modern, mass-produced, often foreign-owned plastics, take over.

Mechanised mill or charka

In India, Mahatma Gandhi, a man idolised and followed by millions of his people, advocated a strategy for his country that would have been ideal to promote and develop the appropriate technology that already existed.

His philosophy was based on the self-reliance of the village where production at the local level would provide work and basic needs for all. Gandhi was promoting a lifestyle, not a technology, but that lifestyle assumed what we now call appropriate technology. He believed this could make the Indian nation rich and strong without the obvious symbolism of wealth through materialism.

His thinking was perhaps exemplified in the simple *charka* or spinning wheel. He tried to demonstrate that everyone could produce the yarn for their clothing needs with pleasure and at little cost.

Gandhi's advice was not heeded; for independent India saw its future as an industrialised nation, competing with the rest of the world in producing and marketing manufactured goods.

While India has had some success on this front it still faces enormous problems providing employment and income to millions of people.

In the fabric industry, the large mechanised mills of cities such as Bombay and Ahmedabad produce over ninety per cent of the nation's cloth and employ less than one million people.

The *khadi* or hand-made industry produces less than 10% of the nation's cloth, but provides employment and income to more people than those working in the textile mills.

The cloth from the mills is slightly cheaper, more colourful, and heavily promoted, and so outsells the khadi cloth which has to operate under a Government subsidy even though many in India argue that it is more durable and comfortable.



Imagine the enormous numbers of people that could have been employed producing textiles had the Indian Government promoted and protected the village-based khadi industry against the mechanised product. Producing for India's needs alone would create and protect jobs for millions, while the unique product would have found many markets overseas. The cloth may be slightly more expensive than mill cloth, but the hand-production process would give millions of people purchasing power for this and many other basic necessities.

The technology of hand spinning and weaving is not at fault. The problem is the lack of political commitment to protect and support this form of production, and by its nature the lifestyle it enhances. Of course, the problem exists in most countries and is not India's alone.

The political dimension

This is the crux of any discussion about appropriate technology. It is quite pointless inventing or producing simple equipment for the people

if the political and economic direction of a country is working against this form of production.

Papua New Guinea, for example, is a newly independent country, committed through its Eight Point Development Plan to village-based development. At the moment, however, the prospect of the Purari River Basin Project being implemented, suggests that this country, like so many others, uses rhetoric for one purpose and will adopt entirely different development priorities in reality.

If the Purari project goes ahead it will have an enormous impact on uprooting and displacing many thousands of people. Water will be dammed to produce hydro-electricity for an export-oriented minerals-processing plant on the coast.

I understand that there will be little benefit to those village people who can remain in the area as the industries involved are not labour intensive, and the energy generated cannot feasibly be connected to the villages.

An alternative development plan for the area, promoted by the Purari Action Group, has suggested the use of water wheels for providing electricity in villages and promoting village-based industries and agriculture. There is probably little prospect of this alternative programme being adopted even though it would cost far less, be of direct benefit to the people of the area and be far less damaging to the environment.

While it may well be said that the decision for whichever plan is to be adopted is for the people of PNG, one has to speculate on what influence and pressure are likely to be brought to bear by the foreign companies that have an interest in seeing the industrial programme go ahead.

Against the sophisticated and well-financed ability to lobby by the foreigners, the Purari Action Group, people opposed to having their lifestyle and environment destroyed, will have a difficult task in making their voice heard in Government.

This case again demonstrates the political decisions that have to be made, and perhaps fought for, if a community is to be able to adopt a lifestyle suited to using appropriate technology.

A breakthrough is required for a change of attitudes to recognise the limitations of the industrial society and the prospect of developing other lifestyles that are appropriate, desirable and achievable. This is a political issue where possibly the so-

called developing nations of the world are in a far better position to decide on a new form of social organisation than we in the rich world.

Malignant growth

At present, the rich nations are locked into a system based on economic growth, where our economies demand that we consume more for their survival. Efficiency in production looks only at reducing the unit cost per article, presuming, of course, that someone can be convinced they need the article. Employment opportunities, distribution, resource needs in producing the article, and the actual need for the article are usually secondary considerations in our production process.

As long as the goods are produced attractively, another industry, advertising, will convince people they need them.

This process has also been advocated as the solution to the needs of developing nations, and governments and private industry — both local and foreign — have been busy investing in this modern form of production in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Factories have sprung up around urban centres and started producing goods for the community. They are seen as a symbol of development. We are told they provide new jobs and often there are great expectations of foreign-exchange earnings as the new industries are labelled 'export oriented'.

A closer examination may, however, show that the anticipated benefits from the introduction of modern processing are outweighed by the problems created.

The products produced often are only secondary needs or luxuries that a small group at the top level of a country's income bracket can afford. Yet the foreign exchange needed for plant and raw materials is foreign exchange drained from limited reserves that could be used to greater benefit for the society as a whole.

The dream of exporting frequently fades as markets in the world dry up due to the tariff barriers and quotas placed on the goods by potential importers, and the growing numbers of competing nations.

The employment generated is often far smaller than the employment lost as the articles produced by mechanised processes replace traditional products. But perhaps worst of all the developing nations become more reliant on others for

raw materials, energy, capital, skilled experts and markets, at enormous cost.

No longer does the process of providing goods and services rest on production by the local craftpersons from local resources. It is in the hands of outsiders, whether of the same nationality or foreign, who have a primary concern in producing goods at the lowest possible cost to generate profits.

Some developing countries are starting to question this process, and most will have to, as I believe will we in the rich world.

The resources and energy alone required to feed the machines of mass production will become dangerously low if a larger proportion of the world's population consume as we, the rich, do today.

It has been estimated that the rich, western nations use some thirty times more food and natural resources on a per capita basis than do people in the developing nations of Asia.



If development is to be seen in terms of the poor nations increasing consumption to our levels, the estimates, by the Club of Rome in its two reports, *The Limits To Growth* and *Mankind at the Turning Point*, would be optimistic. These reports, and estimates by many other experts see some minerals and energy forms near exhaustion in the next thirty years.

While it will take tremendous political skill and wisdom, leaders in both the rich and poor nations must begin to promote the necessity and advantages in humankind accepting an alternative lifestyle away from a dependence on individual materialism, and towards Gandhi's concept of society which ensures all people have their basic needs.

For both rich and poor it will be a challenging new direction. For the poor nations it means harnessing a country's resources for the benefit of the people of the country, supporting marketing and production organisations where skills can be developed and protected for the benefit of the artisans and the community as a whole.

In the rich world our sophisticated technology is requiring increasing centralisation and will need greater security to protect it against breakdown or sabotage. Our urbanised lifestyle is already producing many symptoms dangerous to the environment with growing emotional and physical stress to the people.

The organisation and security needed to protect water supplies, transport systems, energy services etc., may increasingly erode the freedoms that are so particularly valued in the western world. We could well be moving towards the capsulised form of life so often written about in science fiction.

Newport and uranium

Perhaps the present debate and tensions over the Newport power station in Victoria and the uranium issue in Australia are forerunners of many great issues ahead of us.

With Newport there has been little real discussion in the Press on whether more power is really needed, despite the fact that population projections for the future show only a small population growth rate in the next thirty years. It is assumed that more electricity will be needed to manufacture more goods which our society must buy.

Despite our very moderate climate, more people will be convinced that air-conditioning and central heating (and thus electricity) are a necessity to improve living standards, when in fact medical opinion could probably show that this is not the case.

What thought has been given to using the millions of dollars involved for a sewerage waste-conversion programme to produce energy, or solar heating for buildings, hot water systems etc.? If we are serious about the prospects of conservation of energy and resources, surely we must be able to adapt our lifestyles and find alternatives to ever-increasing consumption, and thus more Newport. While rich nations with such high living standards, are unable to find alternatives, is there any prospect that this can be expected of the poor?

In the case of uranium, one of the major arguments used in favour of exporting from Australia is that we can provide energy for the poor nations of the world. This assumes, of course, that such nations have the hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in nuclear processing plants and reactors, and that the use of such installations would be of major benefit to the people.

Most developing nations have strongly rural-based populations, and it is doubtful that they could sensibly afford to use their limited funds for this purpose. An alternative is for them to become heavily in debt to, or dependent on, foreign sources of finance, a situation which is proving highly unpopular with the people.

The most sensible alternative would appear to be the rejection of such sophisticated energy sources in favour of localised energy production that will help people to live and work in their locality, rather than having to live in centralised communities.

To promote the development of nuclear energy in developing countries would assume further development of urbanised industrial centres that are already proving to be nightmares for poor nations and producing more problems than they solve.

Appropriate lifestyle

To those concerned and involved in the improvement of human life and overcoming poverty, appropriate technology has an important place, but only within the development of an appropriate lifestyle.

There are few societies in the

world where people have not shown ingenuity in developing appropriate technology when they have the opportunity to benefit from its use.

As long as the socio-economic and political systems of developing nations work against the use and marketing of local production, the gadgets and dreams of the appropriate-technology boffins for the third world will remain pictures in journals, displayed in showrooms, or shown off in foreign-organised demonstration centres.

While most developing nations appear to defend fiercely their independence, there can be no doubt that in all but a few cases the values of the consumer society have made enormous inroads in their lifestyle, and it is extremely doubtful whether this has been of benefit to the majority of people.

While many people involved in development programmes are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of transposing inappropriate and foreign values on other countries, there is little prospect that this can be avoided under the present international structures. The rich dominate the economic and marketing system and they have status and power.

Leadership in many developing countries, particularly former colonies, is also largely in the hands of people who have been educated and trained under systems that express our values, rather than those of the people they serve.

For our benefit in the future, we in the rich world should be seriously seeking alternatives to the present

values we have adopted. In our quest for materialism I believe we have discarded many other more important values and this is weakening our social and communal relationships, and damaging our environment.

A change in attitudes and lifestyles in the directions I've suggested in the rich world would also help to demonstrate to third-world countries that we are serious about sharing the earth's resources more equally. It could encourage governments in the third world to adopt the development ideals often so grandly spelt out in their constitutions or manifestos, but which rarely become a reality.

With political commitment to a new lifestyle based as far as possible on the independence and self reliance of communities to control and utilize resources for the benefit of people, appropriate technology will have a natural place in all societies.

However, we must be careful to avoid raising the expectations of people at the village level in the third world by introducing new-fangled gadgets that can really do little to improve their life. This approach can raise false hopes and sometimes precious and ill-afforded funds are invested in failure, at the behest of well-meaning outsiders who have taken little time to study the real problems of a community they want to help.

There is a danger that by concentrating only on technology, changes that are really urgent will be avoided as those with an interest or commitment to retaining present structures try to appease people with hand-outs of equipment.



In a little more time than it takes you to read this message, a harpoon weighing as much as an average-sized person will have been fired into a great whale. Plunging through up to six feet of flesh, its soft metal head will flatten to tear a gaping tunnel in the giant body. Within seconds, a time-delayed grenade will explode sending metal fragments piercing through the animal's organs. Rolling in foamy bloody water, blowing crimson spume from its shredded lungs, the leviathan will suffer agonising pain and die.

It happens today in the coastal waters of Australia. On a world average, one whale gets it every twenty minutes.

There is still one whaling station in Australia, at Albany in Western Australia. It kills and processes Sperm whales only, as they pass by on their migratory path through the Indian Ocean. In 1974, 1147 sperm

whales were killed — a record year. In 1975 the station failed to meet its quota of 1100.

Whales are killed for their commercial products: the oil is used as a lubricant in engines that operate at high pressures and temperatures, and in the textile industry; the meat is processed into a high-protein meal for stock food; and the remainder is powdered for fertilizer (used mostly in WA).

Whaling has a long history, but it was not until the introduction of modern technology (faster ships, harpoon gun, sonar and wireless) that most of the decimation of the stocks of great whales occurred.

Usually protection comes too late. The Right whales were protected 40 years after they were commercially extinct. Population estimates in the Southern Hemisphere range from 900 to 1500. It is still an endangered species.

In 1946, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was formed to manage whale harvesting so as to protect the species from overfishing. It has not managed to achieve this, the interest of the whaling companies usually taking priority.

Since shortly after its formation, the IWC has usually met annually in London to decide the numbers of whales each nation can kill for the following year. It has no power to enforce these kill-quotas and any country objecting to the quota set can lodge an objection in 90 days. Japan and USSR (who take about 87% of the world's annual catch) once objected to a quota of 5000 Minke whales. They decided on 4000 each and in fact 7700 were killed.

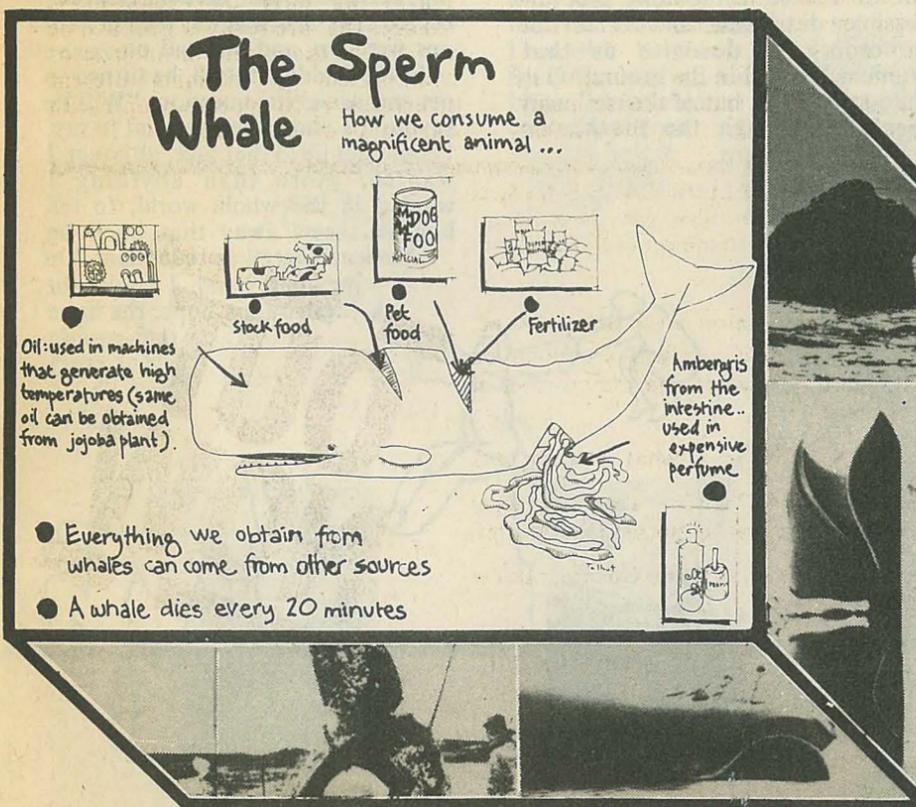
This year, June 20-24, the IWC will meet in Canberra. Project Jonah is planning a series of events to publicise the plight of whales, to have whaling cease globally and to have the coastal waters of Australia declared a sanctuary for the whale.

There will be a symposium entitled "Whales — a New Understanding" at the Seymour Centre, Sydney, June 3rd and 4th, at which a number of international figures will be present, including Dr Peter Morgane, a Ceatcean Brain specialist. A travelling display has also been organised and will be exhibited in capital cities over the next twelve months.

Project Jonah can supply speakers, slides and tapes for schools and community groups.

DONATIONS URGENTLY NEEDED

Your help in saving these mammals is needed. If you are interested, contact Project Jonah, c/o 423 Crown St, Surry Hills (698 9719); Env. Centre, 1st Floor, 537 Wellington St, Perth 6000; 7 Champion St, Brighton, Vic. (92 2109).



RED LIGHT FOR YELLOW CAKE is the first single publication to give the facts about Australian uranium mining and its global implications.

Presented in non-technical language, it looks at: URANIUM MINING — a history of pollution and Aboriginal oppression and the prospect of worse to come.

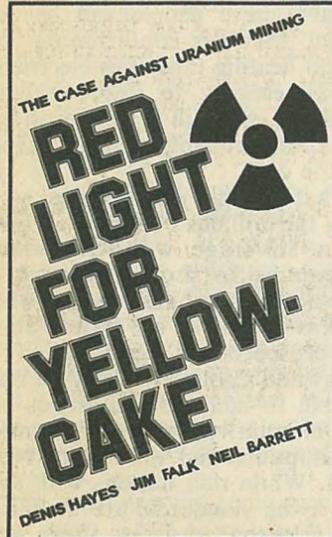
THE FOX REPORT — what it really said. NUCLEAR REACTORS — a spotted safety record and the potential for horrendous disaster.

Nuclear proliferation, waste leakage, nuclear terrorism . . .

. . . and many other key issues.

RED LIGHT FOR YELLOW-CAKE IS AVAILABLE FROM LEADING BOOKSHOPS AND NEWSAGENTS AND FROM FRIENDS OF THE EARTH OFFICES.

OUT NOW



The question is, can you look a child in the face? I don't mean observe the fresh skin and shining eyes and feel good because that transient beauty exists. I mean, can you answer the question in that face? Most children try to put on masks in front of adults. They put on the glazed look of self-defence, afraid to look for knowledge from you. For as soon as they can walk and talk, and then read and observe, they know that the future, their future, is a taboo subject in front of children. They are afraid to ask because they are afraid the adults have no answer. On goes the mask.

They exist, they know, for the pleasure of adults, to provide another chance that through them some answer may turn up. They are expected to grow up in, but not to talk about, a world of push-button genocide. Their question is, why do I have to put this mask on? Why do you adults play this game of "Let's pretend".

In this way, those of us who have given birth to children, use them. The great exploitation racket called procreation plus education is but a support system for a generation that is putting all its problems on the tiny backs of babies. They will provide the answers because we can't. We extend the projected length of our campaigns and talk self-pityingly of "a long struggle". We think a holding action is a success and pride ourselves on standing up to the might of multi-national companies and governments. We feel we are at one with the romantic (in retrospect) revolutionary forces of the past, and enjoy our subversive status. Yes, it's fun to knock nuclear freaks and the square suited gentlemen of Canberra. It's noble to be poor and gratifying to be acclaimed in a rich country for what we do without money. The research we do stimulates our minds, becomes obsessive, and so we are equal to the eighteen-hour-a-day scientist in his laboratory. As

MASK OF FEAR



MARY ELLIOT of FOE Sydney frankly describes her thoughts after long hours of listening and testifying at the Ranger Inquiry's hearings.

normal, imitative, competitive, pragmatic, compromising adults, we've made the grade. We can enjoy the children and tell them: it will all be done in the future.

You tired and worthy people, you may think this is hard talk. Have we not all worked to the limit, met impossible deadlines, and is it not something to do with us that uranium lies still in the ground? Our child says "Yes, but of course", still speaking through the mask, the question still there.

In the last days of the Ranger Inquiry, the girl on the front desk came to me in a state of consternation. "There is a boy," she said, "a little boy, asking for Wieslaw". I went out to meet him. "Wieslaw thought I might assist the inquiry," he said. He looked at most nine years old. In his hand there was a textbook on nuclear energy. I took him in and he proceeded to show me parts of the book we might use in argument. He sat through the next three days silent, holding his book, listening to our arguments. He said he wanted to speak, but the politics of the situation were such that all he could do was to sit, a silent reminder of the existence of children.

He stayed to the end and as the Barristers packed up their briefcases and the Commissioner passed for the last time through the back door, and as we thought of all the things we had said inadequately, or not said at all, the boy put out his hand, and more solemn than the judge, waited for us to shake it and thank him.

I have never seen a more guilty looking group of people. All of us had worked our guts out for a year with Fox. We'd pedalled to Canberra, written and talked, but faced with one child with the mask off we were inadequate. We had shown him the institution we had created to decide his future and his answer was silence. He had known we were trying, listened to our tactical talk, accepted that this was the way grown-ups went on, and on, and on.

In the middle of it all, he turned to me and asked the question: "Will he say no?" I had to decide what to say. I could not lie to that face, although I wanted, more than anything I wanted in the whole world, to tell him to throw away that book on nuclear energy as redundant. On the other hand, I could not destroy his hope, the hope that rose in us every

time Fox made his own declaration of independence. I said: "Whatever happens here, we have things up our sleeve. None of us will let it happen."

The tense little body relaxed and smiled all over. Suddenly, he was smaller and younger. The worry of middle age fell off him and he almost became a happy-go-lucky boy of nine.

But not until it is done. Imagine, if you will, children without textbooks on nuclear energy and the bomb in an aberration of a past primitive time. Imagine being born in a non-nuclear future. You may die by accident, by disease. If you're careful and with medicine you won't until the end of your natural span. Throughout human history, until August 6, 1945, that was the lot of humanity. Pessimists complained throughout history at its limitations. They invented eternal life to compensate for the mere glimpse of earthly beauty that is all we have. But even that brief flash of time, our natural lives, our period, whatever may or may not be before and beyond, of intense sensory perception, is no longer the birthright of our children. No matter what plague, flood or war visited past civilisations, their children, some of their children, lived on. They knew it. Adults and children knew that there was a future.

I was born in a non-nuclear future. Immediately after my birth, and I still feel responsible because

Churchill always said it was fought for me, the Second World War broke out. My father disappeared for four years, for me, fighting in North Africa, while my mother and I sat in front of the empty grate at home. During the Battle of Britain, I was used to the sound of bombs passing over. When the siren sounded, we'd get under the table. It wasn't serious, we were only on the flight path to the airfields. Bombers, on the way home, would simply off-load extra bombs on our neighbourhood so that their fuel would last out.

One night there was a heavy raid on our airfield. All night I lay under the crossbar of the table, my mother on top of it and me, so that she wore a scarred cross over her breasts, almost but not quite, until my father came home. The bombs dropped in a nearby field. All that happened was that our ceiling cracked. I went to school, with my mask, as usual, the next day.

You see, we survived. Millions of people in Europe survived the Second World War. At the end of the war, posters went up on the fence outside our front gate telling us we must defeat the Japanese. There was a slant-eyed picture of a man with long teeth dripping blood. Several days later it was VJ day and pictures in the paper of the people of Hiroshima a la mushroom.

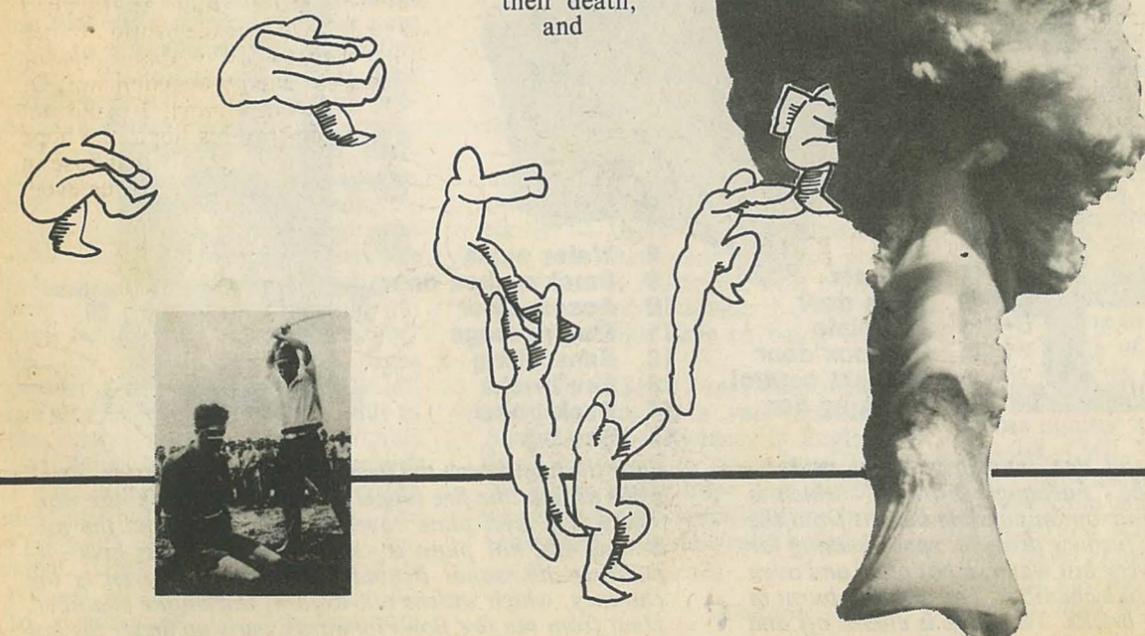
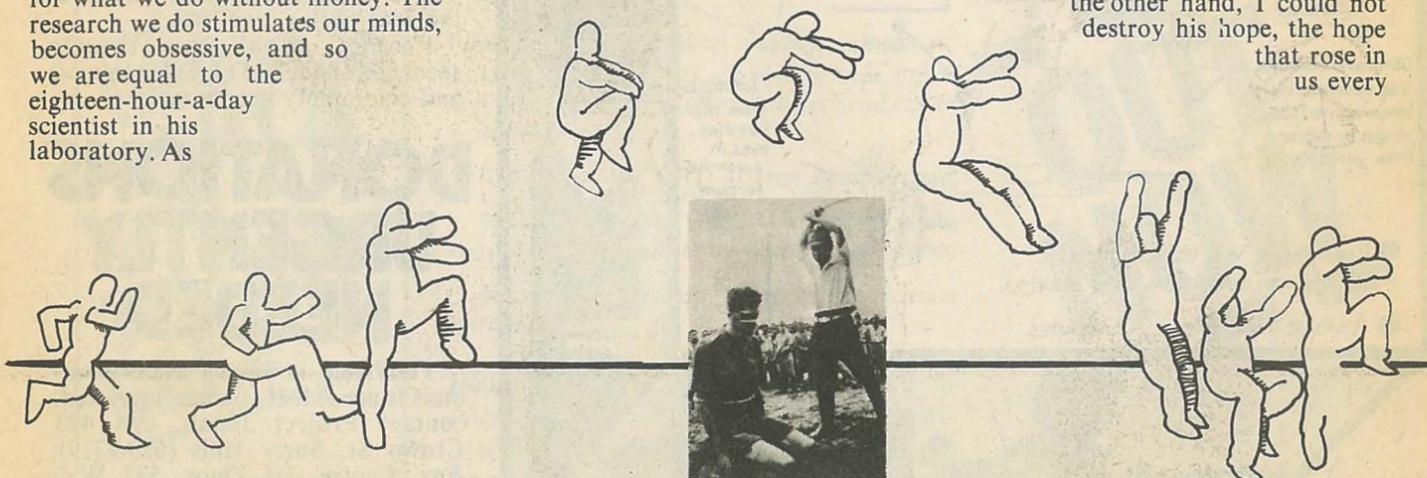
As a seven-year-old, who had listened to five years of Churchill, Lancaster bombers, Spitfires, and sat on knees of billeted Canadian pilots the day before their death, and

survived, which was what I had been told to do by Churchill, mother, Canadian pilots and all, I knew the game was up. You don't get a cracked ceiling from a nuclear bomb.

So I remember a non-nuclear future. I remember learning to read and write in a gas mask in order to be able to keep the human race going after the end of the war. I remember being all those soldiers' and sailors' and armies' future. I even said, on request, in packed railway trains, the Lord's prayer, to young men on their way to Normandy. It was all, they said, for me. And then they exploded the atomic bomb.

I am haunted by the memory of a non-nuclear war and a non-nuclear future.

It is almost inconceivable to me how children can think at all about growing up, as I once did, thinking only to survive and live on after that war. If children cannot and dare not think about their own adulthood, if they must put on a mask at birth, then they will not have the answers. We must stop the nuclear madness now, in our generation, and gently wipe away from the faces of our children the psychologically polluting mask of fear.



The Complete Book Of Self-Sufficiency

by John Seymour,
Faber & Faber, 1976. \$16.95.



It is interesting to observe the functionings of our monopolistic book industry. The glossiest, most-likely-to-sell-quickly books always seem to appear just in time for the annual pre-Christmas book boom. *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency* is no exception.

Lavishly printed, with a hard cover and extra 'nice' picture on the front that depicts mum, dad and the kids, with mum slicing the home-made bread on a table laden with organic vegies, while dad self-sufficiently swills his home-made beer in the background — the outward appearance seems designed to appeal to all those mums and dads out there in Slurbia who have little experience at being self-sufficient in anything at all.

Anyone claiming to have produced the "Complete Book" on self-sufficiency seems to me to be indulging in outright pretentiousness. For a person of John Seymour's ilk to have made such a claim seems almost incongruous. Seymour is a noted author on the subject of organic farming and a respected ecologist with many years of practical experience at small-scale farming on which to base his knowledge.

But this book has an appeal which goes far beyond its glossy cover. With page after page of excellent

layout complemented by beautifully clear and illustrative line-drawings shaded in orange, brown and grey, this is truly a professionally produced book. In many sections one can find out as much from the illustrations as from the text. All the drawings were done by Seymour's first wife, Sally, who also co-authored his earlier book *Self-Sufficiency*, which forms the basis for this new and greatly expanded edition.

Laid out in seven sections, the information is divided into very broad subject areas which are dealt with in varying degrees of detail. Whereas the sections on "The Way to Self-Sufficiency", "Food From The Fields" and "Food From the Garden" have enough self-explanatory and specific information to actually go out and begin to grow your own food, the sections on "Food From Animals", "Food From the Wild", "Natural Energy"

and "Crafts and Skills" serve only to whet one's appetite for more detailed and useful information. If one knows absolutely nothing about these topics, then John Seymour's raves serve as excellent introductory information . . . but that's all. This book is more like a one volume encyclopaedia than a complete handbook on anything in particular. The various methods and skills of family farming in England, using turn of the century farming implements and with the addition of modern day knowledge and understanding, are arranged and indexed for easy referral.

While most of this book depicts farming with hand tools, the introductory chapter on "The Way to Self Sufficiency" urges us to "go forward, not regress" in our striving for the good life back on the land. In fact, the whole basis for this book is ecologically quite sound. But of course, to use all the same plants, animals and farming methods in Australia would be sheer ecological insanity.

Seymour is a meat-eater and so he devotes 44 pages to this topic . . . and I must admit that I found the pages on making cheese and on skinning rabbits most informative. But the full page depicting sheep-shearing with hand-shears would make any Australian sheep-grower cringe with visions of bleeding sheep and wasted wool. Seymour skirts around the issue of the energy-efficiency of animals for food, claiming that most of what they eat goes back to the land as high-grade fertiliser . . . though of course, this would be true if we ate vegetable proteins ourselves instead!

Seymour is also an avid beer-drinker, so he devotes six pages to malting barley and making beer . . . this is the same space he devotes to bread and bread-making. There are only two pages on natural pest control, with no reference on this vital topic listed in the "Useful Reading" list. Of course, the eleven pages devoted to "Food From the Wild" are also just about useless here due to the vastly different native animals and plants in this part of the world.

The largest section has 62 pages dealing with "Food From The Garden". It is clear and succinct. Once one has managed to convert all the charts and diagrams to correspond to the Southern

Hemisphere year, then the information becomes quite useful. With a series of paragraphs on about forty of the most common garden vegetables and on thirty of the most common herbs — plus all the other material on plant requirements, composting, planting, harvesting and so on — one can use this section as a basis from which to build practical experience.

Throughout this book, Seymour makes passing comments about the different requirements and potentialities of growing in the warm, temperate and tropical parts of the world (where the largest proportion of people are actually trying to be self-sufficient!), but from the start he assumes that most of his readers are stuck with cold, wet winters and mild summers. All the information is catered accordingly. There is simply not enough information for those of us in the warmer parts of Australia to achieve a large degree of self-sufficiency. The crops that we would be using that rate a mention are in the main mentioned in passing.

With nine pages devoted to "Natural Energy", it is obvious that this section was put in as an afterthought to appease those of us interested in this vital aspect of self-sufficient living. The only consolation in this otherwise glaring gap on energy is the "Useful Reading" on this topic at the end of the book. This gives enough up to date references on this subject to put the reader in touch with the information necessary to actually begin producing one's own energy.

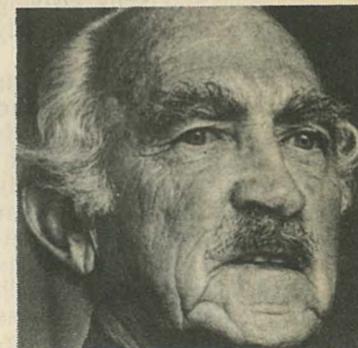
Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the rest of this book. Where there is scant, introductory material — for example, in the sections on metalwork, woodwork, making your own shelter and so on in "Crafts and Skills" — there are few references, and none that would be much good to us here in Australia. This book is therefore not complete: it could not possibly come near to being complete.

At about \$17 a copy, what you are really getting is a very attractive book on self-sufficiency in England. We have much to learn from John Seymour; I only hope that someone produces a book specifically on being self-sufficient in Australia before too long.

Richard Nankin

Poor Fellow My Country

by Xavier Herbert
Collins/Fontana Books, 1975
1463 pp. \$9.95



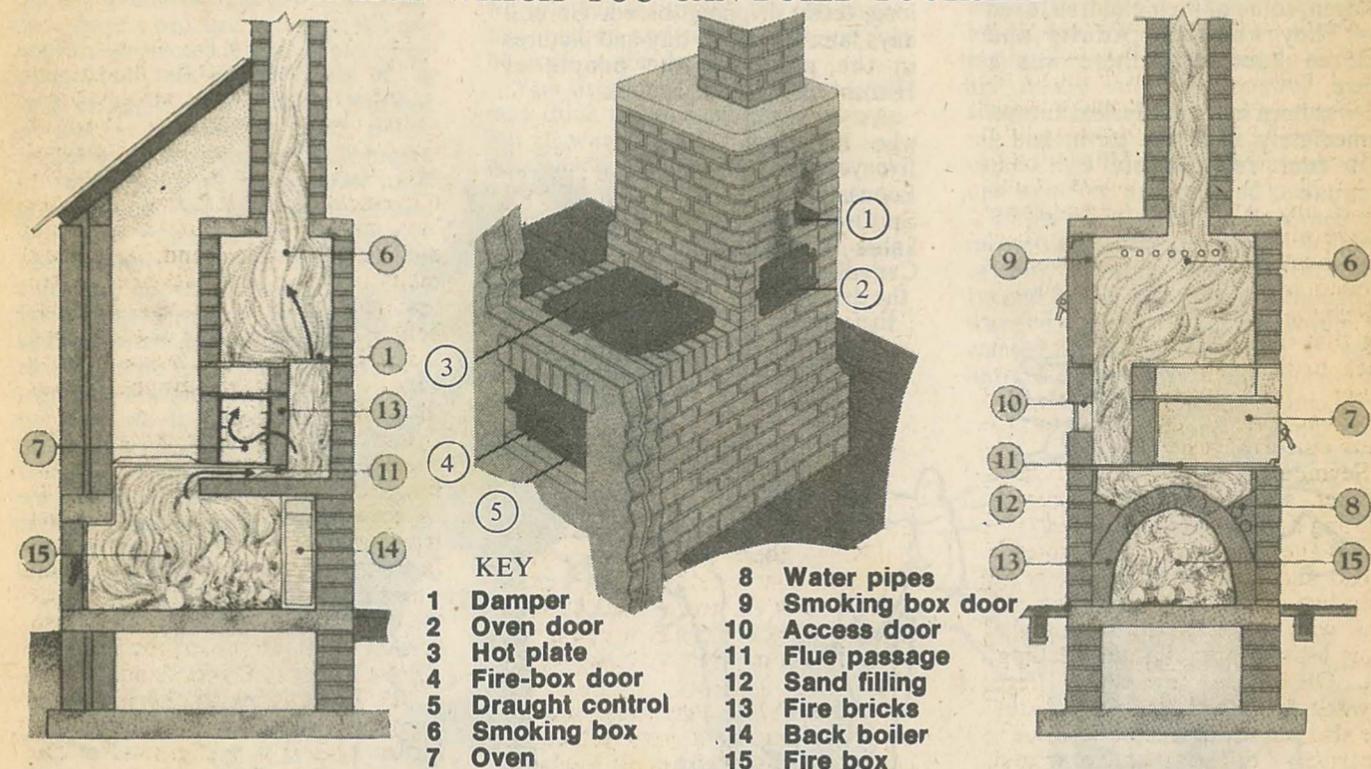
The reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement called this novel "an Australian classic, perhaps the Australian classic". And while I have a lot of reading to do before I could pretend to have a reasonably full appreciation of Australian literature, I suspect that he is right. For no other book about Australia and Australians has ever said so much to me.

In 1500 pages of small type, Herbert really brings home the monstrousness of the crimes committed by white against black in Australia from 1788 to the present day. With the rise of the land-rights movement in the last few years, we have heard the accusation that we are living on stolen land. But do we really live as if we believed it? After reading this book, one can't help but believe it. Nor can one easily escape a deeply felt desire to make in some way a restoration and do penance for the theft.

Herbert also rails against the character of the white Australian. From his various descriptions of us as subservient, cringing, alienated from our environment, stupid and fascist, one can easily understand why he has virtually cut himself off from the insanity of a white urban society to live in an isolated shack in the far north of Queensland.

The book is set in the Northern Territory in the late thirties and early forties against a background of the Spanish Civil War, the European and Pacific wars, the persecution of the Jews, the changing political scene in Australia which came to involve itself in yet another war to defend the Empire, and the ever-present oppression of black by white in Australia.

A VERSATILE FURNACE WHICH YOU CAN BUILD YOURSELF



One of the most useful and innovative ideas in John Seymour's book is the "Fachongle Furnace" which is designed to yield the maximum possible benefit from the burning of wood. The furnace provides space heating for a large area, a lot of very hot water, a hot plate and oven for cooking, and a smoke chamber. The Wood is burnt in a tunnel made of fire bricks. The back is closed off and contains the back boiler for water. The front comes almost up to a hole in the house wall where there is a fire

door through which the furnace is fed from outside. Brick walls around the fire tunnel come flush to the house wall. There is a steel plate covering the hole across the top. Behind the hot plate is the oven, which has heat circulating all round. Behind and above the oven is the chimney, which widens out to form the smoke chamber. Heat from the fire flows forwards, curls up under the hot plate and oven, and on up the chimney. This design can be adapted for your own needs and conditions.

The story line revolves around two main characters: Jeremy Delacy, a self-sufficient man of around 60 years of age, with an Aboriginal wife and a background in the 'squatocracy' which he now despises; and Prindy, a quarter-caste Aboriginal boy, the product of a hasty union between one of Delacy's two arrogant racist sons and Nelly, a young part-Aboriginal woman regularly under siege by white men.

Delacy's property at Lily Lagoons is a haven for dispossessed Aborigines, sick and injured animals and Jewish refugees from Nazism. Delacy loves Australia passionately and craves for an independent Australia, an Australia Felix. Equally passionately he despises Britons (such as Lord Vestey) who have such power over the country, Australians who respect and honour this power, all militarists, and both fascists and communists for their opportunism and inhumanity. He is respected by Aborigines for his genuine appreciation and respect for their culture and his humanity. Most whites, however, cannot comprehend him.

Through Prindy and his tribal teacher we learn much about Aboriginal religion and the totally integrated way in which Aborigines lived with the environment. It is the old teacher (the Pookaracka) whose constant lament is "poor fellow my country". For he not only sees the devastation the whites are wreaking on the environment by their pastoral and mining activities, but he is also

the victim of white 'welfare' officials who do not respect his right to carry out traditional spiritual and legal practices. The cruel officiousness and racism of the whole range of white officials leaves one extremely ashamed. Herbert makes it clear that it was the black man who was civilised, not the white man.

The final chapters reach an almost incredible pitch. Delacy and Prindy, who have gone 'bush' to keep away from the insanity of the war fever, die violently when, ironically and naively, Delacy interferes with Prindy's initiation. Their companion, Rifkah, a beautiful Jewess who had devoted her life to working with the tribespeople, then goes to live with the people in the traditional way. Not long after the missionaries expel her when she accuses them of being in league with the mining companies. And who would argue with this after reading the Mapoon books and the history of the Yirrkala people at Gove?

At the end of the war, Lily Lagoons, which had been commandeered by the military, was handed back to civilians. Soon after, uranium was discovered on this former oasis of peace and humanity. The beauty and meaning of the area was then destroyed by mining pollution and the litter of the throw-away society. As Herbert says: "By now, the western river system must have been bedded with insoluble rubbish all the way to the sea, and not only owing to the efforts of the populace of Knowles Creek (as Lily Lagoons

was re-named to rid it of associations with Aborigines) but of the entire district. Beer cans especially were to be seen winking in shallows everywhere when the river was running clear. Indeed, the beer can had become symbolic of the final conquest of the land. Travellers now carried them as the pioneers had carried their water-bags and pack-canteens, blazing their trails with the empties, even the Aborigines, what few of them still wandered."

The book concludes with the visit to Darwin in the seventies of Prince Philip as one of the leaders of the world conservation movement. During the course of a pompous speech on the need for conservation of flora and fauna, Rifkah heckles him for lack of concern for the Aborigines. However, by drawing a distinction between full-bloods and those who have lost their dreaming, she and her husband antagonise the part-Aborigines and end up being drowned in the nearby river. Rifkah quite willingly let the life drain out of her when she saw the spirit of her beloved Prindy near her in the water.

This book should serve to make any reader ashamed of the record of 200 years of white settlement in Australia. For those who believe it is not too late to do something about it, it should also inspire action. Thank God, there are still people like Xavier Herbert on the planet.

Neil Barrett

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ENERGY STRATEGY: THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

By Amory Lovins. This widely acclaimed article, reprinted from *Not Man Apart*, is an excellent review of an alternative energy policy for the USA and other countries. 50c plus postage.

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Contact your local FOE group. 50c.

FOE'S FOOD CO-OP

We are now using the front room of our premises in Carlton (Vic.) as a shop for our new food co-operative as well as display centre for books, posters, pamphlets and other literature on environmental and land-rights issues produced by FOE and other activist groups.

The Co-Op is an anti-packaging venture with whole foods at a minimal profit margin. Membership is \$5.00 per individual or household. This allows us to buy a variety of goods in bulk without the bur-

NON-NUCLEAR FUTURES: THE CASE FOR AN ETHICAL ENERGY STRATEGY by Amory Lovins and John Price

The authors describe some economic and ethical matters that should no longer escape our attention. The book enables intelligent, concerned people to correct the executive's failure to take notice. In different ways, the authors explain the unattainable amount of capital needed for the nuclear dream, so unattainable as to be ridiculous, yet sought nonetheless because advocates have not bothered to do their sums carefully enough. (Co-published with Ballinger Publishing Company.) 224 pages, \$5.00 plus 60 cents postage. (Price to FOE members \$4.00 plus 60 cents postage.)

GIVE ME WATER

Stories and pictures of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the holocaust. 60 pages paperback, 60 cents plus 18 cents postage.

INSIDE MICRONESIA — WHO GIVES A DAMN?

A reprint of a centrespread, this is a review of the new book in the *Earth's Wild Places* series, entitled *Micronesia — Island Wilderness*. The U.S. is trying to annex the North Islands for Military Bases — and will possibly destroy the Micronesian people in the process. 20 cents plus 18 cents postage. Available from FOE Brisbane — see FOE address list.

IS RECYCLING THE SOLUTION? by Ian Pausaker

This new paperback is perhaps the most comprehensive and hard-hitting book available on the packaging and recycling rip-off in Australia. Full of facts, references and good ideas. Available from FOE at the special price of \$1.20 postage included. 93 pages.

THE INCIDENT AT BROWNS FERRY by David Comey

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INCREDIBLE FRASER ISLAND

This is a 56-page photographic documentary depicting the natural beauty of an island that was threatened by sand mining and timber getting. Published by A.C.F. Price \$3.95 plus 40 cents postage.

den of bureaucratic regulations applied to commercial shops.

Customers are required to bring their own bags and containers as the food in the co-op is all in bulk quantities.

Here are some sample items and prices:
ground wholemeal flour — 14c lb
28c lb; soya beans — 23c lb
70c lb; dried apricots — 90c lb
lb; peanut butter — 85c lb

**COMING
EVENTS**

**URANIUM
MORATORIUM
RALLIES
APRIL 1, 2**

**RIDE AGAINST
URANIUM
MAY 77**

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FOE LEAK BUREAU

Given the way things are in government and industry, a great deal of information vital to the interests of the community never gets out. Some of it is simply not noticed by interested people because of limited circulation and some of it is purposely withheld.

FOE believes that those people who anonymously leak relevant information perform a public service of the first rank. Without their action, bureaucratic secretiveness and corporate self-interest too often succeed in suppressing information, and frustrating the process of informed and democratic decision-making in the community.

If you are a servant of government or industry, and you come across certain information that you consider the public really ought to know about, perhaps the *FOE Leak Bureau* can be of some help in passing such information on to the people who really ought to know about it.

Our thanks to the many people who have sent us information already. Keep it coming.

STICKERS

5c

**KEEP URANIUM
IN THE GROUND**

20c



20c

STOP URANIUM MINING

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