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Corruption and the environment movement

Could it happen? Would the environment movement ever be tainted by influence, power or money? Would it be possible for a small group to take control of the movement for brief or extended periods of time? Would the movement ever adopt the strategies and tactics of the corporate world, and eschew the membership involvement and consensus politics that have been so much a part of its history?

The Macquarie Dictionary presents ten definitions of corruption, including "... the perversion of integrity; ... corrupt or dishonest proceedings; ... bribery; ... debasement, as of a language; ... putrefactive decay."

The issue of corruption is important for the environment movement. It often relies on moral arguments, and attacks governments and corporations for their lack of integrity, and therefore it must ensure that it is itself beyond reproach.

The movement relies on adherence to *principles* when campaigning, and it is this commitment which makes it so important as a harbinger of social change. If these principles can be bought, sold, diluted or compromised, then what makes the movement any different from the engines of society and culture we are trying to change?

Chain Reaction presents here three articles published for the first time in Australia. Each looks at facets of corruption in relation to different groups within the environment movement.

Two articles, those of Doyle and Notion, were first published in the Indian journal *Philosophy and Social Action*, while the Hungry Coyote article was in the *US Earth First!* journal.

Timothy Doyle presents his analysis of the development of an elite network which effectively decided the shape and

direction of the environment movement's involvement in the 1987 Federal election campaign. He looks at the issues of endorsement of political parties, and the acceptance of corporate sponsorship by an Australian environmental group. He exposes the secret decision making by members of a green 'élite', and describes how fundamental decisions were made without the consultation of members.

Hazel Notion presents a view of Greenpeace Australia as an organisation with radical roots and external appearances, but with some very conventional aspects, and discusses it in light of the many shades of green reflected in the environment movement.

Hungry Coyote, a Friends of the Earth (US) worker sacked in a purge in 1986, looks at the fall and fall of Friends of the Earth (US), and the machinations and attitudes which transformed a major grass-roots organisation.

The articles are presented to raise a number of issues which face environment groups, and which must be considered for the movement to attain integrity between its principles and its actions. If the centralisation of power occurs, there will be a loss of internal democracy in environmental groups.

In the estimation of our three authors corruption has occurred, and there are lessons to be learned. Their writing will assist the necessary debate that will be part of this learning process.

Many things have changed since these articles were written, and updates, additional information and replies will be printed in the next edition of *Chain Reaction*. The intention in publishing them is to raise general points about openness and accountability in environment groups — issues which are currently being addressed by

many grassroots members. The problems have not received the airing they deserve, and the environment movement as a whole has remained uninformed.

We are not presenting evidence that money has changed hands for the benefit of individuals in the the environment movement, or that people have used the movement as a means of gaining power and influence for themselves or their associates, although these may happen. The issue at stake is the corruption of the internal democracy of the environment movement by the abandonment of principles and the seeking of power for short-term political ends.

— Larry O'Loughlin.

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The green élite and the 1987 election

Despite widespread perception of the environment movement's 'success', little attention has been given to the internal politics of the movement itself. Tim Doyle presents an analysis of operations within the environment movement during the 1987 Federal election campaign.

The Wet Tropical Forests of North Queensland was one of the foremost conservation issues in Australian politics during the 1980s. This particular environment was deemed unique and, as a consequence, the environment movement campaigned for its conservation.

The campaign was waged by many different networks of environmentalists over the decade, and each network enjoyed the primacy of the political limelight at different stages.

In 1983 and 1984, the blockaders at Cape Tribulation dominated proceedings. The main arguments for conservation of the area revolved around aesthetics, wilderness, and survival. The key network consisted mainly of local inhabitants.

In 1985 and the first part of 1986, Brisbane was the centre of a more formal Wet Tropics environmental campaign. The Rainforest Conservation Society of Queensland, the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland and the Queensland Conservation Council were key organisations.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and The Wilderness

Society (TWS) — two national environmental organisations — recognised Brisbane as the campaign hub and established branch offices there. Because the focus of the campaign was now in a northern state capital, the focus of politics was at the state level also. The movement argued interminably with the Queensland Government to list the Wet Tropics as a 'World Heritage Area'. The conservation arguments were now based on science and economics.

Élite power brokers

During the final eighteen months of the campaign the focus moved out of Queensland into the south-eastern cities. An informal élite network of up to a dozen professional environmental activists now dominated all Wet Tropics environmental initiatives. As a direct consequence of this dramatic shift in the movement's power base, the environment movement became totally immersed in the 1987 federal election. This was quite remarkable, as previously party endorsements by environmental groups had seldom occurred. Gone were the arguments about aesthetics and spirituality; gone were

those of science and economics; the era of political expediency had arrived.

The environmental movement's involvement in the 1987 Australian federal election was a 'success' in the terms of the political game as defined by the dominant, mainstream agenda. The movement, or more correctly, parts of it, managed to prove their political clout in the electoral game. The swing in the voting in the movement's targetted eleven seats was 0.89 per cent to the Australian Labor Party (ALP), compared with a 1.31 per cent swing away from the ALP on an Australia-wide basis. The claims were, therefore, that the campaign contributed an average 2.2 per cent of the ALP vote in this election. Even if this figure is somewhat exaggerated, even hard-headed political analysts do not deny the movement's electoral might.

The Wet Tropics campaign had been fought throughout a decade. Why, in the twilight years of the 1980s did the movement finally achieve this 'success'?

Part of the answer lay with the ALP's willingness to accommodate the movement's wishes in a trade-off for electoral support. More importantly, various changes to the movement's structure, goal-seeking and power distribution all contributed. The environmental movement involved with the Wet Tropics, however, originally operated in a way which valued consensus and demanded that the processes of democratic representation be fulfilled before any initiative be implemented.

Who are these élites?

Members of this élite network had three essential characteristics. First, they were professional activists. They were not volunteers; nor were the majority

honorary elected officials. They were employed to do a job. Secondly, members of this exclusive network worked for either the Australian Conservation Foundation or The Wilderness Society. Finally, all members were strategically located in the four south-eastern capital cities: Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. Despite the intense involvement of Queensland groups over the past years, not one Queenslander was in this network.

The de facto membership of this network was determined by asking several key individuals to nominate the network participants who dominated environmental proceedings in the election campaign. By cross-referencing names, I compiled this list:

- Jonathon West, Director, TWS, Hobart
- Karen Alexander, Councillor, ACF, Election Officer, TWS, Melbourne
- Michael Rae, Co-ordinator, TWS, Melbourne
- Phillip Toyne, Director, ACF, Melbourne
- Bill Hare, Campaign Director, ACF, Melbourne
- Jane Elix, Campaign Director, ACF, Sydney.
- Margaret Robertson, Co-ordinator, TWS, Sydney
- Judy Lambert, Liaison Officer, TWS, Canberra
- Joan Staples, Liaison Officer, ACF, Canberra.

It was this network which bargained with the Labor Government before and during the 1987 election campaign. It was not representative, in any way, of the environmental movement as a whole. But, due to the key positions of power held by this national élite, it was possible for it to portray its actions as representative to the politicians, the media and the general public.

The decision to play electoral politics — and back the ALP — was in no way representative of the broader movement in either a direct or indirect sense. Consensus was no longer practised by the dominant groups involved in the campaign to save the Wet Tropics.

The decision to play the electoral game and to back the Labor Party was first made by TWS and later endorsed by the ACF. In the past, the ACF has been the front runner in electoral involvement. In the 1987 election, however, TWS had the upper hand all the way.



The National Meeting of TWS constituted an attempt by the organisational élite to gain ratification from the membership for its electoral strategies. The voluntary membership was quite shocked at the extent of preparation which had been undertaken by the organisational professionals. Two extensive documents had been prepared by élite network members who had set the agenda. One TWS volunteer wrote of the decision at the National Meeting to play party politics:

All those supporters of TWS, ... who believe that TWS should take no party political stance at all could very rightly feel angry, misrepresented and wonder just whose decision ... that really wasn't consensus decision-making at all. I see TWS as losing what has always been its most attractive quality, that of grass roots involvement ... Power ... is vested in those who are paid ...

Indeed, few volunteers were admitted to the network; but this is not the full extent of the division between élites and non-élites. The organisational profes-

sionals operating in Brisbane, Cairns, Adelaide and Perth were equally surprised. Harry Abrahams, Co-ordinator of the Brisbane Branch, wrote:

The Brisbane Branch was not thinking strongly about elections before the meeting, hence some members may have felt there was a bit of 'steamrolling' going on.

This strategy of not consulting organisational workers 'outside' the network continued throughout the campaign. The Brisbane employees of both the ACF and TWS presented a brief report for the campaign post-mortem held in Melbourne the week after the election. They voiced disappointment about being left out of the central nexus of decision-making. They wrote:

We were not told who was working where and what numbers were to be used to contact whom when the branch offices were established. We found out ... rather than being told. Somehow we felt that we were not aware of where and when decisions were being made in Melbourne. Did regular meetings exist between the

ACF and TWS? We felt more that we were finding out the decisions after the meeting rather than that a meeting was going to be discussing XXX [sic.] this, what do you think?

So, at some stage before the National Meeting of TWS, the professional élites had made two decisions: one, to play the electoral game, and two, to back the Labor Party. Proof of the second point is found in Geoff Lambert's report to the National Meeting. He writes:

This morning's [23 March 1987] report that Howard [leader of the Liberal Party] would abolish everything including motherhood, if elected to office, opens up greater scope for differentiating between Liberal and Labor in the eyes of the conservation-minded voter. Perhaps Labor is a viable choice. Howard has turned rather dry on conservation, as evidenced by his promise to abolish support for the ACF (and us too?)

But the decision to back Labor goes even further back. One does not have to be a genius or a conspiratoralist to work out that a deal had been struck by Barry Cohen — Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment — and Jonathon West. Before November 1986, West worked for Cohen as his private secretary.² West's timely departure from under Cohen's wing to the directorate of an organisation which would take the lead in the environmental movement's election campaign is far from coincidence. According to one TWS source, the decision to make West Director of TWS had been made some eighteen months before by the TWS élite. It was just a matter of timing.

West was the leader of the movement during the election campaign. Trade-offs and deals were achieved through his negotiation with both parties. It is irrelevant to ask which entity is more important to Jonathon West: the movement or the ALP. What remains crucial to this analysis is to recognise the key role he played in the movement's election campaign and the consequent endorsement of the Labor Party.

Although the environmental movement cannot be delineated on party political grounds, this élite group — particularly the TWS members — is intensely Labor Party oriented. The connection between these two entities will be later discussed. Thus, the TWS

move to focus on the 1987 federal election, and the consequent support it gave the Labor Party, was in no way representative of its membership and, more importantly, of the movement as a whole: yet it portrayed itself so.

TWS is not an organisation which operates around a tightly constructed constitution. The constitution was not designed to restrict powers. Four people can 'exercise all such powers and functions that are required by the Association'. The inbuilt flexibility of The Wilderness Society's constitution has been used in the past to act quickly in certain crisis situations. Unfortunately, without these constitutional controls its organisation has been seized by a small band of élites.

The ACF voiced its support for the Labor Party officially on 15 June. The Adelaide *Advertiser* printed the following the next day:

The 20,000 strong Australian Conservation Foundation will endorse the Hawke Government and the Australian Democrats in the election campaign ... The decision, based on a two-thirds majority vote in the ACF secret ballot of its members, is a big plus for Labor, which has made several pledges to woo the conservation vote

The general public, on reading this story, would have been convinced, wrongly, that two-thirds of ACF's 20,000 members had voted to support Labor in the election. In both previous elections, the ACF membership was polled to ascertain whether or not the ACF should back a political party. In the case of the 1987 election, however, the ACF did not adopt this policy. Instead, the broad decision to back the Labor Party was left to the ACF Council, whilst the nuts and bolts of the campaign were formulated by the seven-member Executive.

The ACF argued that this process saved time and money. It also substantially disempowered its membership. The ACF Council decision was not representative of its membership. Consider the response of the WA ACF branch President, Colin Hall:

We were notified of Council's decision three weeks before the election. We weren't consulted. We are sick and tired of not being consulted ... Some individuals within the chap-

Getting to print

Doyle tried to present the issues raised in this article to a wider audience, way back in 1987, when he wrote a short piece for the now defunct *Times on Sunday*. Although the *Times* usually delved into matters far more thoroughly than other papers dared, this time it had a different approach. Having acquired the idea for the story from Doyle, they asked their staff journalists to cover it, refusing to print Doyle's article.

The journalist contacted the organisations concerned and wrote the story.¹ The individual members of the environmental elite denied the implications of the analysis.²

One year later, evidence supporting Doyle's contention of massive corporate donations to environmental organisations was published in Brian Toohey's rebel paper *The Eye*,³ and later in *The Australian*.⁴

The article was then printed in *Journal of Philosophy and Social Action* in 1990, and has been edited by *Chain Reaction*.

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ter challenged the Council's decision. But they were heaved out of this stance by Labor Party sympathisers ...

One ACF Councillor made the following statement about his role in the Labor Party endorsement:

We had been lobbied heavily before we cast our vote. It was a secret ballot; but in reality it was a foregone conclusion.

The ACF members of the élite network, unlike their TWS counterparts, did go through the formality of seeking some sort of ratification from its membership. But this was merely a formality.

The ex-Director of the ACF, Dr J.G. Mosley, sees the changes in the ACF's election procedures as just one example among many of the increased élitism in the organisation. This unrepresentativeness is rarely a deliberate ploy of the professional élite. Some of the élites are equally concerned with this increasingly unrepresentative decision-making process. For example, Michael Rae, Co-ordinator of the Melbourne Branch of TWS — and élite network member — wrote of his uneasiness:

... that of the "executive decision making process", I do not deny that such a thing exists. I have my own concerns about this but I will have to take this issue up in a future letter. My apologies but I am not able to write about this at the moment due to the pressures of time and the fact that elections are screaming around my head.

This is a perfect example of the fact that this network was dictated to by the short-term time frame and the agenda of political parties. By playing the electoral game, the structure of decision-making and the scope of the movement's goals were dramatically affected. The long-term effects were that the terms of reference fell out of the membership's hands.

The ALP Connection

The 'necessary and sufficient conditions' for movement support of the ALP were spelt out at the Sydney meeting of élites in late May:

- Unilateral nomination of the Wet Tropical Forests and the commitment to use Commonwealth powers to stop the degradation of this area (logging, roads, real estate, etc.)
- Injunction to stop illegal logging and forestry operations in Tasmania.

The Labor Government did promise to meet these two criteria, thus satisfying the movement élite that a substantial bargain had been struck. What helped the élites further in their endorsement

of the ALP was the disastrous performance by the opposition parties in terms of the environment in the lead-up to the election.

Given stark differences between the political parties' environmental stance, it could be rationalised that the movement picked the lesser of two evils. But if the policies and past performances were the only criteria, then the Australian Democrats should have received support in both houses. The issue of ALP endorsement by the movement élite is far more deeply entrenched.

There is no evidence which suggests that the ALP has deliberately infiltrated the movement. Despite this, from 1985 to 1987 it attained increased access to movement politics. This phenomenon is explained by a number of factors.

First, it is necessary to re-emphasise the importance of the role one person: Jonathon West who has played 'the middle man'. West was influencing the movement's path directly, even whilst in Barry Cohen's employ. While working for Cohen, West has used ACF and TWS letterhead when expressing his views to the organisational élite. One such paper — written early 1985 — entitled 'The Wet Tropics: What can we expect from the Labor Government in its second term', is an excellent example of the dual role and political world of West. It begins:

This paper aims to set out briefly some thoughts on how the re-elected Labor Government might react to the tropical rainforest issue in 1985 and how conservationists can orient in the new circumstances.

Apart from supplying advice to movement participants, West directly involved himself in the organisational élite power-plays of the environmental movement in this country. He was instrumental in the link between the ALP and the environmental movement. He operated in the Federal party political forum, and his perceptual boundaries of environmental issues remain confined to this mainstream 'appeal to élites' agenda.³ He brought the ALP much closer to the movement. In the words of Michael Rae (TWS Convener, Melbourne), West 'provided us with far more access to the Labor Party political machine and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy'.



The relationship between the professional élites and the ALP during the election was far more closely linked than just a mutual back-scratching exercise. Some members of the élite network had ALP membership. But this is not the crucial factor in the explanation of the extent of the ALP-movement link. Instead, and more importantly, top Labor Party organisation officials became part of the movement élites' network during the election campaign. Bob McMullan (Federal Secretary, ALP), Peter Batchelor (Secretary, Victorian ALP) and Peter Beattie (Secretary, Queensland ALP) were the key Labor members of this network, and were involved in discussions relating to movement strategies.

As evidence of this direct involvement of the ALP in the movement's affairs, one has to look no further than



the ALP is in government. Over twelve months directly prior to the 1987 election, the professional élite concentrated its efforts more on direct lobbying techniques aimed at influencing the politics of powerful people in the mainstream political sphere. The days of mass mobilisation campaigns, for which TWS is renowned, were over.

The power of the movement seems now to be in the hands of a small group of professional élites who, in turn, are far more interested in dealing with their counterparts in government than generating grassroots action. Thus, the movement has moved closer to government in recent times: the ALP just happens to be in government.

The professional élite speaks the language, utilises the same arguments, and is beginning to think in the same way as the governors of our society. No more arguments about wilderness; no more talk of scientific diversity; instead the game is mainstream politics: deals, bargaining, pragmatism and money.

The movement is now playing the political game, as defined by the dominant power-brokers, and playing this game properly requires large quantities of money. The actual source of movement funding during the election campaign illustrates the ultimate authority of the professional élites, who, on their rise to power, brought with them an ideological package reflecting mainstream values. Means are not especially important to the élites. Ends — short-term ones — are top priority.

Corporate Sponsorship

For the first time in the history of the Australian environmental movement funds came from corporate sponsors.

In the 1987 federal election, vast sums of money came from corporate sponsors in a bid to influence the outcome of the election in favour of Labor.

This occurred for two major reasons. First of all, some of the largest and most powerful corporate bodies in Australia were backing a Labor Government. Secondly, the movement — or those networks which dominated it — witnessed a fundamental change in the structure of its power distribution. This transfiguration was matched by dramatic ideological changes.

The largest donation came from Bond Corporation. In mid-June 1987, it made an approach to the ACF and offered

Some recent changes

There have been changes to the organisations described in this article since it was written.

For example, the four individuals named as TWS members or employees are no longer employed by the organisation.

Within TWS, new measures have been introduced with the aim of giving branch members more access to information and decision making. These include unrestricted access to regular (monthly) national phone link ups and access to TWS' own private conference on the Pegasus computer communications network. Further, the April national conference of TWS considered proposals including that each branch be an incorporated body run by a Members Steering Committee (of which no employees shall be permitted to be members).

TWS has also adopted a more independent political approach with its refusals to participate in the Resources Assessment Commission's enquiries, and the Government's Ecologically Sustainable Development committees (despite Government funding for participation).

the selection of seven key seats — this number later swelled to eleven — for campaigning by the movement during the election. This selection was not a movement decision. The Wilderness Society Election Evaluation report spells this out quite clearly: "First decisions (about seat selection) were made at ACF/TWS Sydney Meeting on June 6 on advice from ALP Secretariat."

Not only did the movement endorse the ALP during the election, but its own campaign foci were initially defined by the ALP and, in certain electorates, the movement's campaign became almost inseparable from that of the ALP. The case of the Denison electorate in Tasmania is a classic example. Nowhere else in Australia is the ALP-movement link stronger than in Tasmania. The swing of 4.69 per cent away from the sitting member Michael Hodgman was more than enough to put his ALP opponent into the House. In this electorate, TWS did a substantial amount of the ALP letter-boxing.

There remains another important reason explaining increased interplay between the ALP and the movement:

\$250,000 of free advertising on its eastern seaboard network, Channel Nine.

Bond Corporation specified what type of advertisement it had in mind. Its advertising consultants drew the picture of two trees: one being knocked down — the result of the election of a coalition government — whilst another tree thrived under the Labor Party.

In the months leading up to the election, the seven member ACF executive council met several times. At one such meeting, after much debate, a decision not to accept the Bond offer was made. According to one member of the Executive, the decision was made on two grounds. First, to accept funding from Bond Corporation would be ideologically unsound. On past occasions the Foundation had come into direct con-

flict with Bond Corporation. These actions ranged from a boycott on Bond bottled products in South Australia because of the Corporation's poor recycling record to a more direct conflict between the Western Australian chapter of the ACF and the Corporation over a high rise development in Perth. Secondly, the eventual disclosure would be politically damaging.

TWS accepted the offer. The advertisement was screened in prime-time on Channel 9 and 10 in Sydney and Melbourne; Channel 9 and 0 in Brisbane; and Channel 6 in Hobart. The 'Carleton Walsh Report' also screened the ad.

Only the informal executive of TWS knew of this deal. To this day most of the membership of TWS remains ignorant. In the draft election evaluation document which TWS prepared for its members, there is no reference to this donation. In fact, under the heading of 'Donations', only \$11,000 is recorded, coming from the generous pockets of the general public.

Secrecy existed between this élite network and the rest of the environmental movement. Files were off limits. All was done on the phone.

Conclusions

What have been the effects of the recent dominance of professional élites on the whole environmental movement?

During the 1987 election campaign, a network of professional élites acted unilaterally as representatives of the environmental movement. This act, resulting from the dominance of this network, will change the membership — along with the ideology — of the environmental movement in Australia.

The organised environmental movement will become more narrow in its base and less ideologically diverse. The former President of the ACF, Hal Wooten, supported this contention when he wrote:

Actual party endorsement is divisive and may narrow our base. It brings all the problems of single issue politics. Do we need it? Also, the organised movement is far more homogenised in its belief structures, as the dominant élites continue to demand more uniformity in environmental ideals.

The demand to conform to the professional élites' ideology will alienate large

sections of both the organisational membership and the movement participants who choose to operate outside the structures of formal, constitutionalised organisations. In turn, this alienation will lead to polarisation and conflict.

Most alienated will be the voluntary workers in the more formal groupings; those people who involve themselves in the 'grassroots', everyday, 'nuts and bolts' of any environmental campaign.

Apart from being tied to particular political parties, they have lost all of their power: a feeling of uselessness prevails. Craig Jones, another TWS volunteer who resigned, wrote to the Society Director explaining his disappointment:

I believe that the 'raison d'être' of TWS was that it provided a basis for a 'grassroots' conservation movement ... With increasing executive power ... comes a limiting of the ordinary member's ability to participate in any way ... Not all of us are involved in The Wilderness Society simply to ease our consciences. We need to be active, and we need to be able to participate ... Without this ... the Society will wither and die.

The letters are not unique. Following the election of West to the top TWS job, TWS continually alienated its volunteer members and became increasingly centralised. According to Geoff Holloway, a long-time commentator on TWS, it no longer operated from a 'grassroots' basis. He said that from 1986 to 1987, active TWS branches diminished in number from approximately forty to twenty. This is, arguably, a direct result of the centralisation of decision-making.

And so with the ACF. Similar events occurred in all major capital cities: the organisational membership changed. And who replaces the volunteers who leave?

Could it be that the movement, through continually aligning itself with the Labor Party, will be increasingly attractive to Labor Party members? If so, the movement's environmental agenda will also be increasingly dominated by party politics.

If these trends of élite dominance continue, with emphasis on electoral politics, then the politicians, the government bureaucracy and the developers



will have complete control over the movement's political agenda and its terms of reference. The time dimension; the rules of the game; the extent of the trade-offs; the sources of money; the mutual personnel: all these factors will be defined by the dominant regime.

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Tim Doyle is Lecturer in Politics and Sociology in the Faculty of Social Science at the Warrnambool campus of Deakin University.

Greenpeace — getting a piece of the green action

Greenpeace is very well known but Hazel Notion suggests problems with its approach and that it is losing some of its green.

As scientists continue to confirm the rapid deterioration of the global ecology through the increasing pressures of acid rain, the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of species, contamination of the food chain with toxic chemicals and pollution of the world's oceans and waterways, all rational people have come to agree: the greenies (environmentalists) are right. Naturally enough, everyone now wants to be a greenie. All sorts of people are rushing to don the verdant colours. There are evergreens and seasonal greens, red/greens (those migrating from the left and blue-greens (from the right), verdigris (green rust on copper) and jade, but the fundamental division is between light and dark greens. Dark greens want to change the world; light greens want to clean up the one we've got.

Since most of the major manifestations of the environmental catastrophe occur as expressions of industrial/consumer culture (or emulations of it) the dark green school says there is no way of saving the planet short of a total cultural reformation. Such a cultural deviation would have to be at least as dramatic and far reaching as the one that gave us the industrial revolution in the first place. This school of thought is largely an outgrowth of the hippy/utopian vegetable growing movement so popular twenty years ago. These days, however, they are sometimes more sophisticated in their thinking and often style themselves as 'deep ecologists'.

The light end of the green spectrum, meanwhile, says it's just business as usual. The solution to pollution problems is to have cleaner industries, environmentally safer products and sustainably yielding forests. Furthermore, just around the corner there's a new technology or chemical that will fix whatever it is you're worried about. But whatever you do, don't panic.

In between these two doubtful shades there doesn't seem to be anything but varying shades of inarticulate camouflage, confusion and angst. The situation seems to be giving rise to a slowly growing panic among those too young to say with any degree of confidence, "at least it won't happen in my life-time".

Increasingly it seems people, desperate to be reassured that somebody is doing something to save the planet, are placing their faith in international environmental organisations like Greenpeace. This is unfortunate because many of them will be unaware just how far Greenpeace has gone in aligning itself with the 'business as usual', light green school. A sell-out? Well, yes, but for a good price.

One has to understand that the business as usualists (BAU) are just the leading edge of the free market economy adapting to and exploiting a new market. To them an environmental catastrophe is just a new frontier to conquer and an opportunity to market new products and services. To the BAU environmental engineers, scientists and businessmen the mainstream environ-

mental movement is the greatest promoter and asset their new environmental industry could hope to possess.

Without really realising what was happening, organisations like Greenpeace have become fully integrated into this new environment industry. How did this happen? Well they were just successful and got big. And they started caring more about their corporate fortunes than about changing the world.

In 1989 Greenpeace had a turnover of nearly \$100 million, of which \$35 million was dedicated to fighting environmental campaigns around the world. To the BAU people this was a whole lot of free publicity for their environmentally sound products and pollution control equipment.

In 1989 Steve McAllister came to Greenpeace Australia from the US, to promote the Greenpeace agenda. As Executive Director, he put the corporate image in perspective. He said he'd been sent out from the United States to clean out the hippy image of the local outfit and bring it into line with the rest of the Greenpeace world. He immediately fired a quarter of the existing campaigning staff and replaced them with people better suited to the new conservative and bureaucratic requirements. The survivors of the shake-out tended to be those skilled at internal campaigning. That is, instead of spending their time campaigning on environmental issues, they saved their best efforts for promoting themselves on the internal Greenpeace network. Career orientation and corporate loyalty were apparently the qualities Greenpeace was seeking in employees.

Steve McAllister was quoted offering gratuitous flattery of the Australian Prime Minister, normally more noted for his support for uranium mining,

Australia's nuclear alliance and the pocketbooks of large corporations.

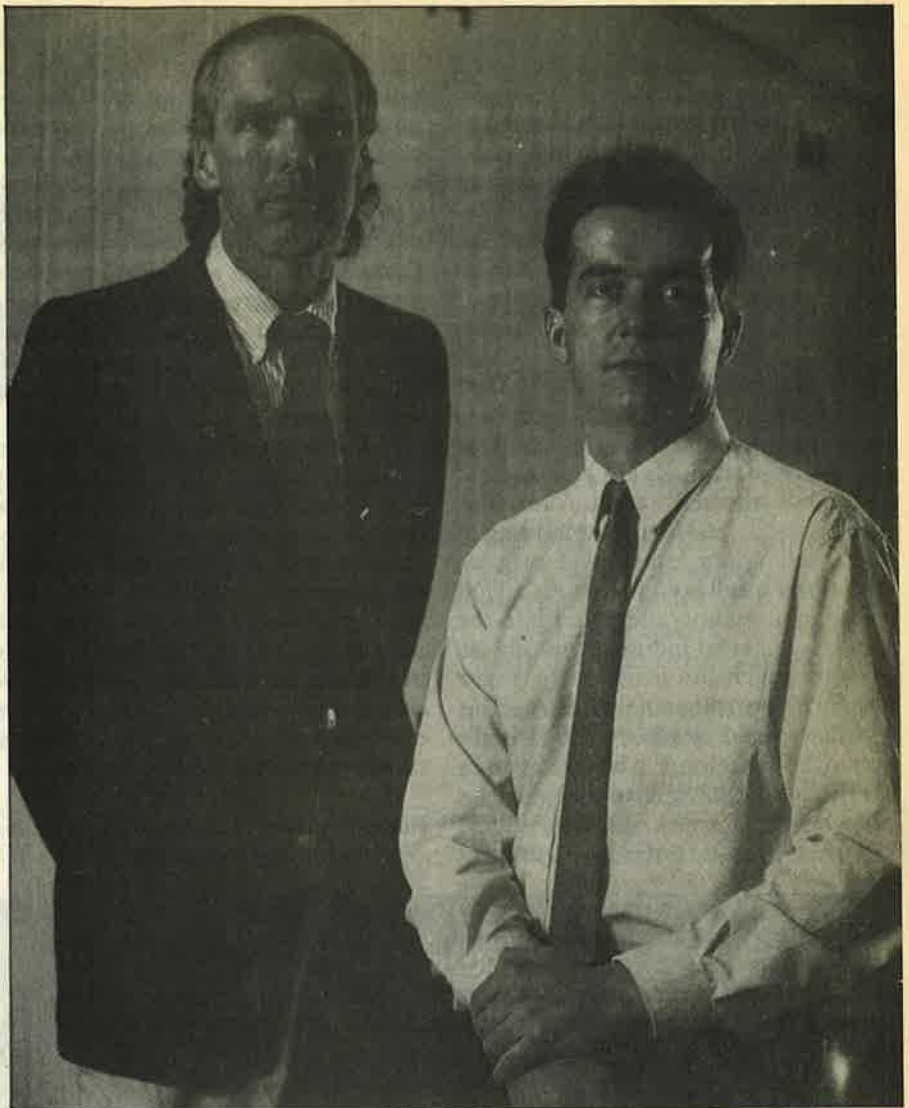
Never before have I seen a leader who is so green. Hawke is doing for the Environment Movement what Gorbachev did for East-West relations. He is ahead of us all.

These are the words of a man who was perhaps capable of making small sacrifices of reality in the interests of pragmatism. Being the Prime Minister's friend, it seems, would have been to his advantage. And those pragmatic interests he states repeatedly. He wants to quadruple the local 'subscribership' to one per cent of the population, 170,000 people, and increase the Greenpeace income proportionally. (At that stage, you could become a subscriber to Greenpeace, not a member.)

Greenpeace Australia no doubt chose a competent person to clean up the hippies and raise money. He was a veteran of the Vietnam war and during a three year sojourn away from Greenpeace managed to turn himself into a multi-million dollar property developer. (He told startled Australian staff members he was planning to turn an organic fruit farm, that he had bought in the US as a speculation, into a high-density residential development. He also confided that if he was successful in re-ordering the Australian branch he had been promised the top job in the US, possibly to be followed eventually by the top job in Greenpeace International.) His salary package for the Australian job included a rent-free mansion with views of Sydney Harbour (worth \$37,000 per year), a car and a \$45,000 annual salary.

With such conventional minds in charge of Greenpeace it makes one wonder just how they ever acquired their radical image and just what function they are actually serving in the world.

In discussions with Australian staff about campaigning tactics McAllister dismissed suggestions that tactics should be adapted to local political and cultural conditions. He said Greenpeace was like McDonalds and it had its own well proven recipe that had worked successfully all over the world. What he was apparently referring to was the Greenpeace propensity for direct action against known polluters to publicise the pollution they cause. This often takes the form of harassing dump



Paul Gilding (seated) replaced Steve McAllister (left) as Greenpeace Executive Director. The hippy image has changed, but how green is Greenpeace?

ships in zodiacs (small sea craft) and placing temporary blockages in disposal pipelines. All done, when possible, with full television coverage.

The dramatic pictures that these actions produce for TV news are often flashed around the world and constitute the recipe of Greenpeace at work that has proved to be so successful. The appeal to the public of this kind of dare-devil opposition to polluters and whalers is undeniable. However, it is obvious that the choice of issues and the timing of actions are more dictated by Greenpeace's need for self-promotion than by an inspired commitment to the environment. One complaint regularly levelled at Greenpeace is that it doesn't have the commitment to follow issues to a conclusion. It just publicises an issue (and itself) and moves on.

Another complaint, linked to the need for publicity, concerns the way it raises money. It has been described as pyramid-selling environmentalism. Every evening dozens of 'canvassers' are despatched in teams to the suburbs of all Australia's major cities to knock on doors, ask for donations and sell subscriptions. The canvassers keep 40 per cent of the money they collect. Their task is made much easier and more lucrative by good news coverage of Greenpeace's actions. If householders repeatedly ask them why Greenpeace isn't doing something about a particular issue, this may lead to Greenpeace adopting the relevant cause.

The most cited criticism of Greenpeace is the centralisation of power, the old boy promotion network and the rigid bureaucratic authority structure.

The commando style actions, coupled with a military command structure, have led many a dark greenie over the years to lift an eye-brow and speculate as to just who the remote and unaccountable leadership might be using as role-models. One question these eye-brow raisers sometimes ask is just how does Greenpeace always manage to locate its target whaling and fishing boats in the midst of vast oceans? Is it possible it might sometimes be satellite-assisted, and, if so, how does it return the favour?

To put the activities of Greenpeace into perspective one has to see it as becoming increasingly a lighter shade of green but with dark green roots. The shift has occurred with the maturing of the small upper echelon of original leaders who still hold power. As a light green organisation integrated into the new environment industry one can see it as packager and marketer of a new product: environmental theatre. This product is sold by subscription to suburban householders who use it as a palliative for environmental anxiety. Regular doses appear to allow suburbanites to continue normal

producer-consumer lifestyles. It is basically advertising and promotion of pollution control equipment and new environmentally-sound products by creating a demand for them.

Whether one sees it as doing more good than harm or vice versa probably depends on what shade of green one is. Certainly the vast majority of people in western democracies are now varying degrees of light green and most of them are bound to give some degree of approval to harmless consciousness-raising activities such as those of Greenpeace.

This growing obsession, however, with what amounts to a civilisation's dirty habits is fast beginning to distract us from those areas of human endeavour, like social justice and spiritual quest, which always seemed so promising for the cultural evolution to a fairer and more enlightened society. That such a society would have the wisdom to avoid ecological self-destruction through the collective expression of greed used to be always taken for granted.

Hazel Notion is the pseudonym of an experienced political activist.

New Broom?

Paul Gilding became Executive Director of Greenpeace Australia in June 1990, and in *Business Review Weekly* acknowledged some perceived problems with the group such as lack of follow through and consultation with local groups, and said that things had changed.

A thorough analysis of whether this is true or not could be the basis of another article, but it is true that the corporate style of Greenpeace has not changed.

Greenpeace 'supporters' are now 'members', but that largely passive, with little scope to participate in the organisation's decision-making process. Greenpeace has an extensive direct mail operation, and canvassing continues in most States. Direct actions are still conducted with the aim of maximum publicity.

Greenpeace dissidents: the Seattle 'phoners

In June 1988, telephone canvassers at Greenpeace USA's office in Seattle, were congratulated by management for taking the largest weekly revenue ever. A few days later, the same canvassers were confronted by an 'efficiency' directive. Following the advice of an 'efficiency expert' from the National Office, management ordered the 'phoners to adopt (on pain of dismissal) high pressure sales techniques which involved suggesting donation levels starting at US\$250 and working down, irrespective of the individual member's financial situation'.

Greenpeace management also announced the installation of phone surveillance equipment at a cost of thousands of dollars to monitor phone calls, "for training purposes". 'Phoners protested against both moves, calling the latter a violation of the trust and privacy of members and as indicative of management's lack of trust in its employees. Many long standing and productive employees quit, halving the number of staff.

The majority of the remaining 'phoners voiced their disgust by forming a branch of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) and warned that such surveillance was illegal in Washington State. Management responded by stating that such equipment had been installed at the Boston Greenpeace phone bank. Later, negotiations lead to a verbal promise to delay installation of the equipment, yet all other issues were declared to be not open for discussion.

On August 8, twelve 'phoners were sacked for forming a union branch². Allen Thompson of Seattle said that "Greenpeace is very, very obstinate" and recounted that disgruntled Greenpeace employees had staged a sit-in in France. It has been suggested that management called police who broke up the sit-in with clubs and mace³.

Further, Greenpeace canvassers in New York are suing management over alleged misappropriation of funds. The Council for Better Business Bureaus maintains that Greenpeace USA does not meet minimal standards in three separate categories because of incomplete disclosures, including financial data.⁴

Thompson argues that the problem with Greenpeace is structural. "Less than 50 people [in Greenpeace USA] control donations from nearly 1,000,000 people." Greenpeace USA workers must have six years full-time experience before they can get a say as to who forms the board of directors. He adds, "In the long run, Greenpeace will not contribute to saving the environment if they persist with a top-down authoritarian structure."

References:

1. *Industrial Worker*, Aug. 1988, pp. 1-4, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Chicago, Illinois.
2. *Industrial Worker*, Nov. 1988, p. 3.
3. *Industrial Worker*, February 1989, p. 1.
4. *Changing Times magazine*, USA, May 1988.

The corporate takeover of Friends of the Earth

The story of Friends of the Earth (US) is contentious, yet in any telling it shows the potential for corruption in environmental organisations. Hungry Coyote produced this analysis.

In 1986 Friends of The Earth gained the unfortunate distinction of becoming the first national environmental organization to fall victim to a hostile corporate-style takeover. The conflict at FOE was described in *Outside* as:

A clash between two increasingly irreconcilable factions of the modern environmental movement: those grass-roots environmentalists who like David Brower, are most comfortable on wilderness trails; and the 'professional' environmentalists, managers, lobbyists and attorneys for whom the movement is less a passion than a career. Ultimately, the showdown at FOE says as much about the environmental movement today as it does about Brower.

The contemptuous attitude of this new generation of 'professional' environmentalists toward the idealists that gave the movement its initial momentum was perhaps best expressed by FOE's 29 year old Conservation Director Geoff Webb, in a *Mother Jones* interview:

Dave (Brower) hasn't actually done anything in a long time ... If he did do anything at all, it was talking

about Nuclear War ... Dave's moral ability to make that argument is greatly diminished by his personal behaviour. He is just the sort of person he decries ... He is just the one who would push the button."

Webb's cynicism towards Brower, who was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, is matched by his dismissal of grass roots radicals, particularly Earth First!:

They are hard pressed to point to anything they've accomplished. They're basically just doing 'guerrilla theatre'.

David Brower, 76, the indefatigable visionary leader of the modern North American environmental movement, founded Friends of the Earth in 1969 shortly after his forced resignation from the position of Executive Director of the Sierra Club. During 17 years in that post, he led the Sierra Club's evolution from a genteel social club of 2000 hikers to a major environmental force 77,000 strong. Brower went on to found Friends of the Earth in his own image: lean, decisive, decentralised, iconoclastic, prescient in defining new environmental issues, and most importantly, uncompromising. He stated:

FOE would not be clearly organized or directed by some old tired bureaucratic formula from the top. Find good people with the right ideas and let them move ahead their way.

Under Brower's leadership, FOE gained influence in the environmental movement commensurate with the much bigger groups. FOE's role was twofold: to raise new issues and move onto the agendas of the mainstream groups; and, much to the consternation of the larger groups, to take uncompromising stands on issues once thought to be their exclusive domain.

Brower's reputation, style and vision attracted a cadre of loyal staffers. But increasingly members complained, "You're not out there in front of the bulldozers." Many then joined the more militant groups like Earth First!, and when Brower retired from FOE's presidency in 1979, many felt that the organization had lost its centre.

"There has always been great trust that people making decisions shared values, and Brower's views held sway," said Charlie Drucker, former FOE energy staffer. "When he left, it was unclear where new values were to come from".

Brower's improbable choice of successor, Edwin Matthews, a Manhattan corporate lawyer with the international firm of Coudert Brothers, set the stage for the inevitable showdown at FOE. Matthew's role at FOE raised questions about FOE's future direction. Clients of the business oriented law firm included multi-national energy conglomerates and banks, such as Utah International Mining and Citibank.

Matthews was dismissed by FOE's executive committee within a year, but



Dave Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth, was eventually forced to leave the organisation by a new breed of directors on the FOE(US) Board.

remained on the board to become a leader of its anti-Brower majority.

In 1980, Brower yielded to the Matthews-led board faction and acquiesced to the appointment of former Capitol Hill lobbyists as FOE's administrators. These new administrators quickly advanced a 'professional' centralized model to restructure FOE. Predictably, this split the staff into two camps: the Brower-led San Francisco staffers and most of the field representatives versus the Washington D.C. lobbyists and the Seattle office staff.

The next few years saw the gradual elimination of FOE's most autonomous staffers — its far-flung field representatives. Among the first to be axed was FOE Wyoming Representative, Howie Wolke, who went on to found Earth First! FOE staffers were convinced that the cuts were part of a political agenda and an attempt to cover up the administrative inabilities of the new management team.

FOE's 11 year veteran mid-Atlantic representative, Lorna Salzman was fired in May 1984, for 'insubordination' i.e. her demand that FOE's volunteer branches and field reps have veto power over the various endorsements of Congressmen made by the Director of FOE's Political Action Committee (PAC). Salzman rallied FOE's beleaguered staffers with her outspoken criticism of the board and its PAC,

which she described as "a self-congratulatory exercise in career building." She went on:

Just look at this board, they're a power elite. I'm no Marxist but class analysis can be useful sometimes. And there's no way, considering this board, that you're going to get a populist, decentralised, bioregionalist, or radically ecological view.

Salzman views the transformation of FOE to FOE-PAC as symptomatic of the infiltration and corruption of the environmental movement by four groups: "Fast talking political operatives" who suck up to Congressional aides to ensure themselves access to the political power brokers on Capitol Hill, "public-interest administrators" loyal only to themselves and their cronies instead of to issues and members, "power-hungry flakes" and "pseudo liberals" wanting to appear respectable and moderate, and "bland non-entities who live to put another feather in their caps for prestige but otherwise have no environmental credentials."

By June of 1984, the board decided to cut another 30 per cent of FOE staff to pare \$350,000 from the then \$1.5 million annual budget. Predictably, the 12 targetted personnel included a disproportionate number of field representatives and those San Francisco staffers who tried to affiliate

themselves with the United Auto Workers Labor Union (an effort the FOE board allocated \$10,000 to fight).

What the board didn't know was that Brower would not give up. He prepared and paid \$350 for a full page advertisement in the July, 1984 issue of *Not Man Apart* titled 'Save the Team!'

The Brower appeal stated, "the motivations behind these cuts are deeply wrong," and noted alternatives to wholesale firings, including the substantial pay reductions offered by the staff.

The ad was discovered by an assistant executive director and the entire press run was immediately impounded. The papers, a spokesperson assured the Press, would be "ecologically recycled".

On July 2 1984, the FOE board held an extraordinary six hour trans-continental conference call, debated Brower's alleged insubordination and then voted to throw the Archdruid off the board of the organisation he founded.

Brower was reinstated to the FOE Board Chair a month later, after filing suit against the board's illegal action: no quorum was present when the board voted and some directors weren't given the opportunity to vote. Brower also extracted an agreement to restructure the board, cutting it from 27 to 15, and to provide for membership elections of directors. The board agreed to find a new CEO outside the organisation. In February of 1985, the FOE board again turned to an unlikely leader to heal the organisation's wounds. The selection of former electrical engineer Karl Wendelowski from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to be FOE's new CEO (at a \$55,000 salary) hardened everyone's line on the professionalism debate.

The April 1985 election narrowed the board's anti-Brower majority to a one vote (8 to 7) margin. One of the four new directors was former Colorado Plateau Regional Representative, Gordon Anderson, who became the only person ever nominated by members' petitions to be elected to the FOE board. Anderson ran on a campaign to decentralise FOE and allow members a decision making role in setting policies and funding priorities. He recalled "The eight majority directors consistently thwarted every pro-grassroots motion we introduced."

After six months of continued in-

trigue, the September 21 board meeting confirmed the staff's worst fears. Wendelowski outlined his plan for the complete reorganisation of FOE and threatened to resign if the board did not approve it. Under Wendelowski's leadership the 'old' FOE would be abolished, four more San Francisco staffers sacked and the Washington office strengthened. (Only one day earlier, Wendelowski had called the FOE staff together to dispel rumours that a new round of staff lay-offs were in the works.) The renewed targeting by Wendelowski of FOE's International Soft Energy and Nuclear Energy Alternatives programs raised speculation, among critics of the restructuring, of a hidden agenda: Brower criticised FOE's Washington administrators for having been "soft on radiation and radioactive waste," and having taken positions that would "delight the Atomic Industrial Forum."

Wendelowski tendered his resignation on November 4, 1985, and on November 23 the board met to consider whether to accept it. Unbeknownst to the San Francisco staff, the pro-DC board members and the DC staff had developed a strategy to close the San Francisco office, fire its remaining staff, bust their labor union and oust Brower and the other pro-San Francisco directors.

Meeting participants listened in astonishment as FOE Foundation President Alan Gussow, a wealthy retired artist, described how the Foundation, which contributed almost half FOE's operating budget, had suspended its financial support until "management difficulties" were resolved — and Brower's interference stopped.

"It was the most silver tongued description of blackmail you could ever imagine," remembered one staffer.

As tensions mounted, anti-Brower director and Methodist Minister Paul Burks faced his adversary and screamed, "Shut your god damn mouth!" and led the charge against Brower with an acrimonious character attack asserting FOE's headquarters would be moved to Washington to "get it away from David Brower."

Two weeks later, the majority directors shifted their offensive to the courtroom. Their first law suit against Brower sought to block his use of FOE's mailing list to contact members, and to

"Murky speculations"

In a letter to *Earth First!* journal, (1 May 1989), Tom Turner responded to Coyote's article, alleging many inaccuracies, beginning by quoting the offending sections:

(Brower) led the Sierra Club's evolution from a genteel social club of 2000 hikers ...

Gentility is in the eye of the beholder. The club's membership stood at about 7700 when Dave took over.

"Brower's improbable choice [for a] successor, Edwin Matthews, a Manhattan corporate lawyer ... with Coudert Brothers ..."

Ed Matthews was anything but an improbable choice, and he practised law in Paris, not New York. Brower and Matthews had been friends and co-operators since the 60s, when they worked together to block construction of a restaurant in Central Park. Matthews had sparked the creation of FOE affiliate groups in France, England, and Sweden in the early '70s. He had always been a leading candidate to replace Brower. That his tenure ended in failure and he eventually turned against his former mentor doesn't change what went before.

Coyote misleads readers by neglecting to report that throughout the '80s FOE carried a large and growing debt. The main reason for the final laying off of so many staff was ostensibly a need to pare back the budget. Political struggles went hand in hand with these debates, but the debt was real.

— Tom Turner worked for David Brower from 1968-9 at the Sierra Club, got fired, then worked at Friends of the Earth from 1969 to 1986. He later became staff writer for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in San Francisco.

stop his requested vote by members on their removal.

"They have only one choice to explain why things haven't worked, and that's to try Brower. He's the most visible," said San Francisco staffer David Phillips. The majority directors hired a business-oriented law firm that specialized in over-seeing corporate takeovers to represent them.

Brower again defied the pro-DC directors and sent a letter to members informing them of recent events within FOE they would not read about in *Not Man Apart*. The letter generated about \$25,000 in contributions to fight the DC takeover. In response, the pro-DC directors filed another law suit against Brower for recovery of the funds raised by the letter as well as "unspecified damages". The pro-DC directors' unsuccessful legal maneuvers cost FOE an estimated \$30,000 and were funded by member donations contributed for environmental advocacy.

Brower recommended that the recall election of the pro-DC directors be supervised by an impartial referee, such as the American Arbitration As-

sociation. Instead, led by FOE President, millionaire chemical engineer Dan Luten, the majority directors forced through an election procedure with questionable aspects including promotion of their own candidates at the organisation's expense, in contravention of FOE's by-laws, and production of an election ballot giving nine times the space for the pro-DC directors as allowed their opponents.

Many FOE members, particularly those in California and in remote communities, did not receive these biased ballots in time to participate in the election because the pro-DC directors insisted on sending them by bulk ('third class') mail from Minnesota against the recommendation of a bi-partisan committee appointed by the board.

Although the pro-DC directors insisted that first class mailing would be too expensive, they also authorised the release of three propaganda mailings prior to the recall election as part of their smear campaign against Brower. These were all sent first class.

As a result of what Brower's attorney Brian Kemnitzer called, "the

under-handed tactics used by Edwin Matthews to create what is clearly an unfair ballot and election procedure designed to reduce and skew the vote," the pro-DC directors only survived the recall election by 181 votes out of 5,613 received by the deadline. A year later, incidentally, the FOE board secretly adopted the policy introduced by Seattle Director Mark Terry and abolished free competitive board elections.

With the resignation of Brower and the other six pro-San Francisco directors following the election, the DC hijack of FOE was complete, leaving the organisation with a staggering \$627,000 debt, loss of its most experienced staff and valuable programs, closure of all but one (Seattle) of its 14 field offices, departure of 18 of its 21 branch leaders, and a significant loss of members (from 30,000 in 1980 to 16,000 in 1985).

Despite Geoff Webb's proclamation, "We have wrestled our demons to the ground," the departure of Brower and his supporters did not alleviate the financial problems of the 'new FOE'. In May 1986, the Cook Trust Foundation filed a law suit in California Superior Court against the FOE board for misappropriation of donated grant funds, seeking \$50,000 in actual damages and \$500,000 in punitive damages.

"The Cook Trust lawsuit has had a chilling effect on FOE's ability to raise funds from the environmental foundation community," according to one insider.

The Kendall Foundation, once FOE's largest contributor, also withdrew its annual support grant in 1986. According to one Washington attorney, FOE's directors could also be held personally liable for not fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities should members file an expected class action law suit demanding repayment of the \$300,000 in their outstanding personal loans to FOE.

FOE's continued erosion of foundation support and membership renewals (FOE's membership had by now dropped to 8000 members, from a peak of 39,000 in 1981) may be partly a result of its inability to define a new niche for itself amongst the fiercely competitive Washington based lobbying groups. Tom Turner, former editor of *Not Man Apart* observed, "FOE no longer does what needs doing, it does what it thinks will sell."

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The lessons:

First, it is a lesson of the need for built-in, pervasive accountability at all organizational levels, in all movements, and in particular accountability to members and potential constituents. Second, the environmental movement indulges in little self-criticism and even less of associates.

The dues paid by all the members result in a lot of money being paid out to these groups. But there is no reciprocal right granted to members to participate in or be privy to all organizational decisions. Moreover, money is solicited on behalf of the 'public interest' — by the 'good guys' fighting the 'bad guys', who say: trust us, give us your money and we will protect your interests and the environment. But mostly what members get is a monthly publication telling them what has already been done, or whom to call or write, or asking for more money.

The details:

Here is a partial list of their actions [the actions of the Board] between 1980 and 1986, actions taken over the objections of Brower and his supporters on the Board:

- terminated FOE's anti-nuclear lobbying in Washington D.C.
- vehemently resisted the unionising of the San Francisco office.
- hired a law firm charging \$150 per hour, at FOE expense, to file groundless lawsuits against Brower; refused to set limits to this litigation.
- continued to appeal to members for funds for four FOE programs, three of which had already been discontinued because of staff cuts.
- refused to act on a legally authorised resolution by the Board minority members calling for a special member's meeting.

— Lorna Salzman, *'The Decline and Fall of FOE in the United States', Philosophy and Social Action, July-Sept., 1990.*

"FOE's recent fund-raising appeals solicited support for Acid Rain, Tropical Deforestation and Nuclear Power, three programs for which they have no Washington staff," according to a DC based environmental consultant.

To many former FOE associates, the decline of the organisation can also be traced to public reaction to the board's "the ends justify the means" corporate take-over tactics.

While almost fifty dedicated staffers lost their jobs in the course of the takeover, a dozen subsequently banded together to form the Earth Island Institute and continue their varied programs — including Rainforest Protection, Marine Mammals, Third World Dams — and to publish *Earth Island Journal*, now a highly acclaimed news-magazine. The success of

Brower's new organisation, which has recruited 25,000 members, is a dramatic contrast to the demise of FOE.

Brower's enthusiasm and eloquence continues to inspire a constant upswelling of grassroots radicalism. "The Sierra Club made the Nature Conservancy look reasonable," he preaches. "Friends of the Earth made the Sierra Club appear reasonable, and Earth First! made FOE appear reasonable. Now we need some people to make Earth First! appear reasonable."

Hungry Coyote is a former FOE supporter, is co-founder of Coyotes Would Puke, a Seattle based 'truth squad' dedicated to exposing the facts behind the corporate takeover of FOE. This article is reprinted and abridged from Earth First! 21 Dec. 1988.

Letters



Greenpeace reply to 'Hazel Notion'

All at Greenpeace took strong exception to Hazel Notion's article, 'Greenpeace – getting a piece of the green action' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64). This is the level of debate we would expect from a right wing think tank like the Institute of Public Affairs, not from a supposedly experienced political activist or a magazine that purports to support environmental issues and campaigns.

Greenpeace took exception to the article on two grounds. Firstly, the attitude that Greenpeace was adopting a 'business as usual' approach to campaigning and, secondly, the astounding level of factual inaccuracy contained within the article. Before addressing these inaccuracies a few general comments.

An experienced political activist knows that anyone who makes allegations of the nature of Hazel's has no credibility if they do not have the courage to support those allegations in person; not via pseudonym. The use of a pseudonym is a cowardly way of making statements that are supposedly based

in fact but on which the author cannot be directly challenged. At Greenpeace we have always been of the belief that one of the major philosophies behind activism is that one must stand up and be counted and have faith in what you believe and stand by those beliefs even in the face of adversity, ridicule or censure.

Hazel's unwillingness to do so is comment enough on the depth of his or her commitment to activism.

A second general comment is that I am astounded that the editors of *Chain Reaction* were prepared to print such an article without one single attempt to clarify some of the supposed facts. This is by no means to suggest that they should have taken any responsibility for the opinions expressed by Hazel. There is however, a responsibility upon editors to ensure that the material printed in their publications is factually correct, particularly when they choose to print articles by anonymous authors. Many of Hazel's facts were wrong and a simple phone call would easily have clarified this situation.

Now to the article itself. The following comments do not, unfortunately, deal with all the issues arising from the article that Greenpeace believes need to be addressed. To do so would require significantly more space than is available. The following addresses what we saw as some of the more serious issues.

The article suggests that Greenpeace has become 'soft', that we support a 'business as usual' ap-

proach to society. If the concepts of zero pollution, clean production, the creation of a World Park for Antarctica, the stopping of uranium mining in Australia, international nuclear disarmament, dramatic reductions in the emissions of Greenhouse gases leading to the phase-out of fossil fuel usage, restoring the ozone layer, the prevention of future offshore oil exploration in Australia, (and the list goes on), are symbolic of a 'business as usual' approach to both campaigning and the environment, then the author has a very different definition from Greenpeace of 'business as usual'.

Hazel seems to believe that Greenpeace is involved in environmental activism purely for the purpose of making more money, to get bigger, to promote Greenpeace more effectively, to make more money and so the cycle goes on. But let us examine the sense of this and try to understand why Hazel would have such an opinion.

Greenpeace is a large successful international environmental and peace organisation. The reason for our existence is to preserve the environment and species that inhabit planet earth. In an attempt to ensure that Greenpeace Australia is effective in our attempt to meet these goals Greenpeace Australia approached Greenpeace International in Amsterdam and asked for help in 1989 to restructure our national office and make us more effective in the environmental battle we all faced as we entered the nineties. Steve McAllister was asked to

come and he agreed. It was not, as Hazel suggests, that Greenpeace United States forced McAllister on an unwilling Greenpeace Australia.

There were a number of references in the article to Steve McAllister's personal financial situation and the salary package that he received while in Australia. I fail to see how these issues are anything but his own personal business, but to set the record straight the following is the correct account.

Whilst employed by Greenpeace Australia, McAllister received a salary of \$45,000 Australian and a Holden station wagon. This salary package was equal to or less than that paid for equivalent positions in at least two other major environment organisations in Australia. The McAllister family rented a large and run down house which was due for demolition, for the eleven months that they were in Australia. This accommodation was not paid for by Greenpeace but by them personally. Greenpeace rented one room in the house for the use of international Greenpeace visitors to Australia. The house was shared with a number of other people and some of them still live there.

Concerning his personal assets, he and his wife own an organic fruit farm that is fully operational as a farm. The farm is their family home, there is no 'high density residential development' and there were never any plans for such. Upon leaving Australia, Steve became the Deputy Executive

Director of Greenpeace International, which is based in Amsterdam. He has recently resigned this position to return to the United States and run the farm.

It is an extraordinary invasion of privacy that someone's personal and financial situation should be discussed as it was in the pages of *Chain Reaction*. That the details should be so appallingly incorrect, only adds insult to injury.

It would appear that Hazel, the so called 'experienced political activist', does not approve of direct action, especially if it is effective. Direct action has been a fundamental part of Greenpeace since its inception in 1971 and something that we make no apologies about. On the contrary, we are extremely proud of the environmental gains that non-violent direct action has achieved. For Greenpeace it is about 'bearing witness' to environmental

wrongs and attempting to stop them whenever possible. The choice of issue and timing is dictated by environmental pressures and an analysis of whether a direct action or some other form of campaigning is the best approach to take at the time.

Hazel claims that one complaint levelled at Greenpeace is that we don't have the commitment to follow issues to a conclusion. S/he however provides no details of from whom such complaints have come. Greenpeace on the other hand, can identify scores of community groups that we are currently, and have previously, worked with to the successful completion of an issue.

The next complaint was that Greenpeace uses 'canvassers' who doorknock and 'ask for donations and sell subscriptions' and are then paid 40 per cent of what

they raise. (Hazel's comments imply that canvassers shouldn't be paid. I'm sure that if they were unpaid Hazel would be up in arms about slave labour! It is a case of damned if you do and damned if you don't.)

Canvassers are an extremely valuable part of every Greenpeace campaign. They are environmental ambassadors who promote awareness of environmental issues throughout Australia. Greenpeace considers that getting out into the community and talking personally to people who have little direct contact with our issues is a critical and valuable part of environmental work. We also value the people who do this difficult and demanding work and, yes, we pay them for it. We don't believe that the long-tried political approach of sitting around feeling warm and pure and talking to each other is a

very effective way of changing the world!

Hazel, it seems, is confused. S/he states on one hand that if Greenpeace receives information from canvassers about an issue of environmental concern amongst the public then 'this may lead to Greenpeace adopting the relevant cause'. However, in the very next paragraph Hazel says the 'most cited criticism of Greenpeace is the centralism of power, the old boy promotion network [a comment that many members of staff found somewhat sexist] and the rigid bureaucratic authority structure'. Now Hazel, you can't have it both ways; either Greenpeace is rigid and bureaucratic or it will pick up an issue of concern among the general public and campaign on it. But it would seem that we couldn't be both.

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Letters



ing criticism of Hazel's article. The far from subtle suggestion that Greenpeace receives satellite information from foreign governments in return for providing them with favours is an insult to each individual staff member and public supporter of the organisation and does not deserve further comment. It is exactly this type of comment that leads Greenpeace to assume that Hazel's political activism has been on the far right hand side of the political fence.

For reasons known only to him or herself, Hazel seems far more concerned with spending time writing articles that promote divisions within the environment movement. Hardly, one would have thought, the sort of thing on which someone concerned about political activism would be interested in spending their time.

Hazel, next time you want to write such an article may I suggest that you take the time to research it properly and that you pick a target that enhances your goals and aims for the world. But then again, maybe you did.

Paul Gilding, Executive Director, Greenpeace Australia.

Let's hear it from the workers

Well, imagine our surprise to learn that our employment at Greenpeace Australia was due to the fact that we were 'better suited to the new conservative and bureaucratic requirements' of GP OZ (*Chain Reaction* 63/64).

Gee, and we thought that our history of working in the trade union movement, anti-racist groups, the public housing lobby and other radical social change groups might have had just a little to do with our being here at Greenpeace. Just goes to show how wrong you can be!

Seriously though, folks, the article printed in the last edition of *Chain Reaction* was extremely nasty, bitter even, and in our opinion does not come close to reflecting the reality of Greenpeace Australia. If it did we would not be here.

What the article did was try to undermine the work of us here at Greenpeace who, in common with the rest of the green movement, are committed to working long hours to protect the planet and effect real social changes. To us personally the article was insulting and upsetting.

The fact that such an article appears in a journal like *Chain Reaction* at a time when Greenpeace Australia is under severe attack from companies like BHP and Nufarm and individuals like Peter Walsh and Arvi Parbo is at best disappointing and at worst makes us wonder what were the intentions of the editors.

We don't believe in shying away from open and

honest critical debate, and for this reason were especially disheartened that the article was published under a pseudonym. Why isn't the author prepared to stand up and defend his/her personal views? It's cowardly, and taken to a logical extreme, begs the question; 'Was Arvi Parbo the author?'. If the author is not Arvi and Hazel Notion is, as the byline states, an experienced political activist then one might imagine that s/he would respect the long held traditions in the social change movement for openness and honesty in criticism.

Greenpeace is not a perfect organisation. Like all groups working to achieve radical social change we do make mistakes and there is certainly room for improvement both in our organisation and in our campaigning work. But to suggest as Hazel does that we are of the business-as-usual-school of light green greenies is untrue. Greenpeace is not a grass-roots organisation, but works closely with many. We believe we occupy an essential niche in a range of environmental activism, especially in terms of our commitment to direct action, and after many years of trial and error, some pretty well honed media skills.

In the last couple of years we have widened our work and are now making a

concerted effort to deal effectively with the concerns of the trade union movement and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, two sections of society the green movement, including Greenpeace, have a not very proud history of dealing with. We have also made a real attempt to improve our relationship and work with local groups and we enjoy a good working relationship with such groups across the length of Australia.

In short we at Greenpeace are not corporate careerist yuppies but activists who come from disparate backgrounds but who all share a desire to work together and with others to protect our planet.

Ultimately, it's disappointing to be attacked on the basis of a lot of rumour-mongering and assertion ...those very activities of which the 'forces of darkness' accuse all of the environment movement, and the very activities we should take absolute care to avoid.

Meanwhile, there's a planet to save and, despite the best efforts of the Parbos, Walshes and, it seems, the 'Notions', we at Greenpeace intend to continue working hard and effectively to this end.

Lynette Thorstensen & Alastair Harris, Greenpeace Australia.

You are invited to write to *Chain Reaction* with your comments on the magazine or any other issues of interest. Write today to:

***Chain Reaction*, GPO Box 90, Adelaide 5001, South Australia. Fax: (08) 293 8535.**

Politics of manipulation

Thank you for your feature on 'Corruption in the environment movement' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64). I was particularly tickled by Tim Doyle's article, as it once again confirmed all my prejudices about élite groups and the ALP.

Indeed, this is stuff people ought to know. It illustrates just how a politics of manipulation can operate, and can appear to succeed in the short term.

I share Tim's belief that, in the long run, such a politics will weaken the 'organised movement', making it narrower, shallower, and less able to resist the economic rationalist approach to conservation. An increasingly pervasive P.R. campaign to 'privatise' environmental controls is already under way.

The question, I suppose, is what to do about it. I don't believe confrontation is in order.

For one thing, to somehow fight for 'control' of the existing organisations from within would invite bitter recriminations, ugly scenes, hysteria, burn-out, and probable destruction of the goal anyway. This has been my past experience with the ALP, and other technocratic élites.

All my own experience and reading leads me to believe that 'real' long-lasting power is to be had through grass roots organising (as distinct from organisations), which can take place under even the most adverse circumstances.

For example, even in the horribly technocratic office of the Wilderness

Society in Brisbane, grassroots action groups form and reform as 'need' arises. Here, people are empowered, and cast their awareness much further afield than any office, political party or élite preferences. I only worked with one such group, the Brisbane Rainforest Action Group, around the blockade of logging on Fraser Island. So perhaps my experience isn't representative.

This group had visions of how the world should be, and were looking for their own ways to make it happen. They felt able to refuse suggestions by TWS and ACF leaders to 'postpone' NVDA for a year or so, and they eventually succeeded in laying down an extensive and effective blockade which, for a few weeks, stopped all logging activity on the island.

I watch some people in the environment movement, taking up the weapons of power politics – over-simplifying issues, creating false dichotomies, seeking glossy photo-opportunities – and apparently looking towards a glorious future of 'eco-fascism' (with themselves on the Board of Directors).

Sometimes I find it hard not to despair when I think of all the resources and labour going into an electoral strategy I believe is wrong, based on issues I believe are right.

So the more direct community power we build now, the better off we will be in future. Even if 'we're' the ones who are wrong, I don't think we can do too much harm with such a strategy.

Brian Law, Malanda,
Queensland.

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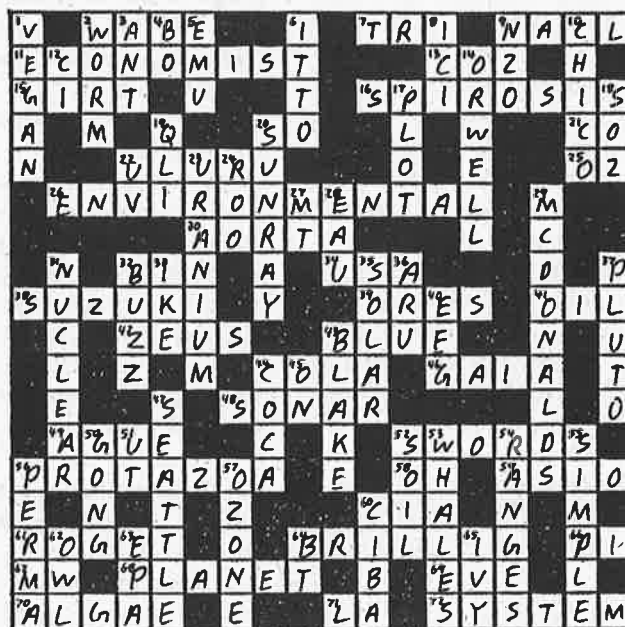
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... and one from Jon West

Tim Doyle's nasty allegations against The Wilderness Society, in 'Corruption in the Environment Movement' (*Chain Reaction* 63/64), are wrong in both fact and interpretation.

It is a gross exaggeration to assert that the 'voluntary membership was quite shocked' by the Society's decision to support the ALP and had not been consulted. While it was inevitable that some members would disagree with the choice, the decision was supported by the vast majority of The Wilderness Society. It was taken after an extensive formal and informal decision-making process.

Tim Doyle is the only person I know of who believes The Wilderness Society's leadership is 'intensely Labor Party oriented'. I doubt even Robin Gray would agree with Tim on that one. Of the nine 'key individuals' he lists, only one, maybe two, have ever been associated with the Labor Party. None could be described as 'intensely oriented' to the ALP and none were currently active in the ALP in 1987. Certainly the Labor Party

leadership at the time did not regard either the Wilderness Society or ACF as the least bit 'ALP oriented'.

It is not true that environmentalists have 'seldom' backed political parties. Offering electoral support is an established tactic. Environmental groups have repeatedly supported various candidates and parties when it advanced our cause. A notable example was the highly successful, and virtually unanimous, support by hundreds of groups across the country for the Democrats and ALP in the 1983 election (when the Franklin River faced destruction).

No 'trade-offs' or 'deals' were made between the ALP and the environmental organisations. Tim offers not a shred of evidence for this assertion. This is an important clarification because a 'trade-off' suggests that environmentalists gave away something to conclude a deal. I ask Tim to specify: Which wilderness areas or other conservation issues did the environmental leaders sacrifice in this alleged 'trade-off'? The answer is: none. There was no such 'deal'.

In reality, the process leading to the decision was quite open. The Government considered and then announced its policy on the major environmental issues (certainly with considerable input from many conservationists). Environmentalists saw that the policy was sharply superior to the Liberals' alternative, and, after much discussion, decided to support it. Unfortunately for those who

like to see conspiracies, it was as simple as that.

No gifts of either money or free advertising were accepted by The Wilderness Society (or to my knowledge any other environmental group) from the Bond Corporation during the 1987 federal election. This claim is simply false. Nor was the content of the Wilderness Society's advertising in any way influenced by anyone associated with Channel 9. We did, however, receive several calls from a rather anxious Channel 9 advertising-account executive wanting his bills paid.

The Wilderness Society paid for its advertising with donations; a couple of large ones from wealthy supporters and many small ones from less-wealthy backers. (One of the wealthy sympathisers was Richard Farmer, no doubt considered a highly suspicious character by Tim Doyle because he was a friend of, and occasional adviser to, Bob Hawke. I'll now let Tim into a 'secret': Farmer had in the past made other donations to The Wilderness Society, including some wine for a rafle. Shall we look forward to a thorough investigation of this 'corruption' as well?)

Much of Tim's conspiracy theory seems based on the fact that I had worked briefly for Environment Minister Barry Cohen before becoming TWS director. Tim implies that I was some kind of ALP hatchet man sent into the environment movement to secure its support. Unfortunately, Tim either did not know, or conveniently ignored, the fact that I had

worked with The Wilderness Society and ACF for years before becoming Cohen's environmental adviser. In the light of events both at the time and subsequently, to suggest that the ALP-environment movement link is strongest in my home state of Tasmania is truly laughable!

The Wilderness Society did not drop arguments about aesthetics and spirituality, nor science and economics, when it intervened in the election. As all who saw our publicity will remember, these remained the centre of our campaign.

I am reminded of a comment made some years ago by Lech Walesa. Walesa recalled that – contrary to popular belief – his most stressful battles had not been against Moscow's tanks and Warsaw's Stalinists, but with extremists within Solidarity, his own movement. The hotheads refused to be satisfied with anything less than permanent confrontation, regardless of whether such conflict helped or hindered Solidarity.

These internal disputes were especially tiring because they too often cross the threshold from legitimate discussion of ends, means, and tactics, to become slanging matches about the personal morality and loyalty of individuals. Walesa himself was repeatedly accused of having 'sold out' (given in to 'corruption') because he sometimes counselled compromise and creative tactics.

Unfortunately, Tim Doyle has crossed this threshold. His venomous tone and disregard of truth

introduces a style of debate that environmentalists have tried to avoid.

The overwhelmingly important fact is that the Wet Tropical Rainforests are now safe from the chain-saws. This is because the ALP – not the Liberals – won the election. In his fruitless quest for non-existent 'corruption', Tim disregards that vital reality. Nonetheless, it remains the only reason environmentalists backed Labor in 1987.

Jonathon West
Former Director
The Wilderness Society.

Editor's response

There were other letters in response to the 'Corruption' articles, and we're sorry we haven't the space for all of them, or for all our replies, but we will reply briefly to criticisms of the editors.

Chain Reaction aims to encourage debate on important issues and there will sometimes be unpopular articles. If there are, however, any sacred cows in the environment movement, we do not know what or who they are, and would welcome suggestions. We do not edit the substantial opinions out of articles we publish, even if

we don't agree with them.

We do not contact every organisation we mention, whether to verify facts or not, because of the potential for inordinate pressure on us not to print. As it stands, the facts in the article and the Gilding response are very similar. The divergencies are between the facts according to Gilding and statements attributed to the former Executive Director, which Gilding cannot say were never made because he was not always at McAllister's side.

There are problems for editors in publishing work written under a pseudonym. We published, in this case,

because it was referred to us by someone we respect and trust, it had already appeared in another journal and it did raise some of the many issues about Greenpeace which deserve an airing. Hazel's choice of anonymity may have been wise for Hazel, given the threats that followed, but, sadly, it allowed the use of diversionary tactics such as the suggestion that it's all a Right Wing plot. *Chain Reaction* is not involved in any such conspiracy, but, at the same time, it should not be expected to sit on issues while waiting for the Right to go quiet.

