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# **Uranium, Superpowers, Independence**

With the inevitable green light for uranium mining and export given by the Fraser Government on August 25th, the question of building and strengthening of an ultimately victorious broadly-based Australian people's movement is of paramount importance. The central question involved in the struggle around uranium is — who owns and controls Australia's uranium resources? And linked with this is the much wider question of who owns and controls Australia? The uranium struggle fires the struggle for Australian independence.

Over the past few years a great deal of valuable research and mass work has been undertaken, particularly by groups such as the Friends of the Earth. With all due respect to these groups, which have proven themselves to be hard-working groups of dedicated people, the central question of the ownership and control of uranium and consequently Australia's independence (or rather, lack of it), has largely been ignored. It is in this context

that a detailed analysis needs to be undertaken to correctly appraise the movement of social events so as to ascertain how best the movement against uranium mining should proceed, to go on and win victory. We need to know exactly what strategic and tactical position we are in, so that all positive factors can be exploited, and all negative factors neutralised or turned into positive factors. We need to take a look at who are our friends and who are our enemies in this struggle.

#### **WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS?**

#### **WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES?**

First, let's take a look at some of those individuals and forces who can be easily recognised as enemies in this struggle. Without doubt most progressive people recognise the Fraser Government and the mining companies as clearly defined enemies in this struggle. The magnificent demonstration against Fraser at the University of N.S.W. on August 26th is a shining example of the people's anger being channelled constructively into militant opposition and mass action. However it is not enough to recognise Fraser as an enemy without recognising who he represents, who he serves, and in whose interests he governs.

Fraser without doubt is the mouthpiece of the U.S. multi-national corporations in Australia who dominate our economy and hold state power in this country — he is their thing. The mining companies are largely foreign-owned U.S. monopolies (with some notable exceptions).

### **EXPORT FRASER – NOT URANIUM**

Australia's uranium will largely be used to supply U.S.-owned or -controlled industries, and nuclear reactors in other countries, particularly Western Europe and Japan. In a very real sense Australia's uranium is being used as a weapon by the United States in its struggle against the Soviet Union, to maintain its hegemony and domination over large parts of the world. It is also a fact, without question, that our uranium will be used by the U.S. to build newer, larger and more sophisticated nuclear weapons. (No reassurances to the contrary by the liars and thieves of either the U.S.A. or Australian Governments will alter this fact.)

Uranium mining and milling began in Australia at Rum Jungle, N.T. in the early 1950s to serve the nuclear weapons development programs of the British and then the Americans. The Australian people were never told about this at the time either. Maralinga, in the middle of aboriginal reserve land in South Australia, is still a spot of total desolation, and is part of an extensive prohibited area. The proliferation of top-secret and nuclear U.S. war bases throughout Australia, the purposes and functions of which are still hidden from the Australian people (and in most cases even from the Australian Government) is evidence enough that the interests and rights of the Australian people are never taken into account. Such is the case with uranium mining.

It is therefore indisputable that the U.S. multi-

nationals constitute, in a certain sense, the main target for opposition as they are the real owners and/or controllers of Australia's uranium.

### **THE TWO SUPERPOWERS – CONTENTION OR DETENTE?**

However, to leave the analysis at that would be to seriously weaken the strategic position of the anti-uranium and independence movement because it does not take into account all the social phenomena affecting the relations between countries, classes, and historical developments. Everything is in a process of coming into being, or going out of commission. Nothing remains static. Imperialism which today is strong and vigorous, tomorrow is weak and moribund. So it has been. Britain was strong and declined; the U.S.A. rose and now declines; while the Soviet Union rises. Hence comes the need to base tactics on the movement of events.

No matter how many loud-mouthed proposals and slogans are put to the contrary, the failure to understand this elementary fact leads to propositions for struggle and tactics which in essence are betrayal. The process of things coming into being, and others going out of commission is called the process of seeking the truth through facts – dialectics. It is important to understand how the law of the uneven development of capitalism operates. Some people try to blind people with "science" and surround the truth with mystery, but events show that such people are great bags of wind.

The ordinary worker is far more educated than all such windbags.

### **THE THREAT FROM THE SOVIET UNION**

An external factor is driving the U.S. imperialists to consolidate their position in the world, and in Australia this is reflected in many ways. The Soviet Union has emerged, after a relatively short period of time in which capitalist restoration has been consolidated in that country (under Khrushchov and Brezhnev), and has developed into a full-blown imperialist superpower. It openly challenges the economic, political and military power of the United States. It hides its aggression and expansion under the signboard of "socialism". Because of this, because it is a new, aggressive and deceptive imperialist superpower, it constitutes a far greater threat than the declining imperialist U.S. superpower.

Its development, growth and expansion drive the U.S. superpower into a frenzied reaction to maintain its position in the world, to consolidate its "territories", and to increase the input of economic returns into the U.S.A., so that it is able to keep up its military preparedness to counter any threat from the Soviet Union. This contention and struggle between the two superpowers is the major determining factor of how the U.S. operates in Australia. At the same time, because the Soviet Union is driving to secure new markets and areas of influence, it, too, operates, invests, and takes an active interest in fostering its own position in Australia. This contention and struggle between the two super-

powers led directly to the semi-fascist coup in Australia in November, 1975. The U.S. multi-nationals through their control of the state apparatus used their willing agents Kerr, Fraser, Barwick and so on to remove the Whitlam Government and replace it with the more subservient Fraser Government. The Whitlam Government had a tendency to play the two superpowers off against each other, and in some areas lean towards the Soviet Union. The final straw for the U.S. was Whitlam's decision to seek a loan from non-U.S. sources backed by the Moscow Narodny Bank. Whitlam was taught the folly of flirting with the new Tsars of Soviet social-imperialism!

For reasons already given it would be folly of the highest order to underestimate the powerful determining forces of this contention between the two superpowers both internationally and within Australia. It is already the driving force behind Fraser's forced march to fascism. It will lead inevitably to war on a world scale, and fascism locally, if it is ignored and not combated. A powerful bloc of Third and Second World countries is already forming against the two superpowers and the threat of a new world war.

But how is this related to the struggle in Australia to stop uranium mining and export? As has already been pointed out the uranium struggle fires the struggle for Australia's independence. Australia and Australia's uranium are being used as pawns by the U.S. in its struggle with the Soviet Union. The imperialists of the

Soviet Union would also like to get their hands on Australia's uranium. Even if they do not need it for their own use, they would firstly like to deny it to the U.S. imperialists, and the loss of Australia would be a serious blow to U.S. imperialism. And secondly, they would like to control its use, so that countries using Australian uranium for energy purposes would be put in a position where they would be dependent upon the Soviet Union for their uranium supplies. To this end the Soviet Union has already proposed to the Deputy Prime Minister Anthony, when he was in Moscow in 1976, that the Soviet Union would like to enter into a commercial arrangement to process Australian uranium in Soviet nuclear reactors, to be channelled to markets in Europe and so on. The logic of this is self-evident. Anthony was exuberant over this proposal, and it was only the diehard adherence by the Fraser Government to the dictates of U.S. imperialism that prevented Anthony from consummating his scheme. It can truly be said that Anthony is a despicable lickspittle toady who bows and scrapes to the highest bidder, in this case the Soviet social-imperialists.

On another level, the fifth-columnist stooge group, the "Socialist" (without socialism) Party, headed by the notorious Clancy, publishes regular treatises on the benefits to mankind of the "peaceful atom" and in one four-page glossy publication they hit out at anti-uranium protestors as "conscious or unconscious dupes of the U.S. oil monopolies". What treacherous rubbish! Clearly

the traitors of the "Socialist" Party have only one interest in promoting the anti-uranium struggle, and that is to make it one-sided and to deal all blows solely against the U.S. imperialists. This would have the effect of letting the Soviet bosses off scot-free and, if victorious, would leave Australia an "open market" into which the Soviet imperialists could move in and ultimately dominate. There can be no unity with the Soviet imperialists or their local collaborators. There is no room for compromise or appeasement with the Soviet imperialists. Everything they stand for is against the interests of Australian independence and the Australian people.

We have now defined the two *main* enemies of the Australian people's movement against uranium mining and export, and the struggle for the completion of Australia's independence. The two superpowers are in fact the main enemy of all the peoples of the world.

#### **AUSTRALIAN NATIONALISM IS APPLIED PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM**

The struggle to stop uranium mining and export, which is owned and controlled by the U.S. multinationals is both a national as well as an international struggle. The struggle within Australia will be fought and won by the Australian people, and nobody else. But in fighting and winning this struggle, a great service will be rendered to the peoples of the world. The uranium struggle is also being fiercely contested in many other countries including New Zealand, the U.S.A., England, France and West Germany. Australia

is within the mainstream of these struggles. The patriotic and progressive nationalism of the Australian people's anti-uranium and independence struggle is the practical application of our international spirit. Workers of all countries, unite!

#### **THE LABOR PARTY IS A PARTY OF CAPITALISM**

Who are some of the other enemies of the uranium struggle? The Labor Party comes readily to mind. Many people might say that this is not so – they trot out the resolution from the last A.L.P. Perth National Conference, or they point to the large number of A.L.P. members and supporters who are active in the uranium struggle. Firstly, let us say that we distinguish between the Labor Party leaders and the Labor Party rank and file. We believe that many good people still have illusions and misconceptions about the nature of the Labor Party and about parliament itself. However we believe that these illusions in most cases will be shattered during the course of the unfolding of events. (For a more detailed analysis of the A.L.P. see E. F. Hill's excellent book "The Labor Party?" and his "Looking Backward: Looking Forward – Against Trade Union and Parliamentary Politics".) The Labor Party leaders on the other hand (without exception) are unreservedly committed to the maintenance of capitalism (which is imperialist domination) in Australia, albeit with a human face.

As a further warning to people to place no reliance on the Labor Party, we will quote at length from the

Parliamentary Hansard, 25/8/1977, from a speech by Deputy Prime Minister Anthony. Whitlam was present in parliament when Anthony spoke and he did not challenge any of the facts Anthony revealed. The following are the relevant portions of Anthony's speech which proves conclusively that the Whitlam Government paved the way for uranium mining and export:

*Australia is presently a uranium producer. Australia has had a long history of mining and export of uranium. Uranium mining and milling began at Rum Jungle and in the Alligator River Region in the Northern Territory, at Mary Kathleen in Queensland, and at Radium Hill in South Australia in the 1950s. Production at these sites was exported to the United States and the United Kingdom both for defence purposes and for electric power generation. The total amount exported was 7,680 short tons of uranium oxide. Although uranium mining at Radium Hill did not commence until 1954, mining for radium commenced there early this century.*

*Mining at Rum Jungle ceased in 1963, but treatment operations continued until 1971 and the output of about 2,250 short tons of uranium oxide was stock-piled by the Government.*

*Following improved market conditions for uranium early in the 1970s and discoveries of substantial new Australian deposits, export contracts were obtained by Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd., Peko/EZ and Queensland Mines Limited amounting to 11,757 short tons of*

uranium oxide for delivery over the period 1976 to 1986. The contracts were approved by the then Government and negotiations with Peko/EZ, Queensland Mines and Noranda Australia for development of the Ranger, Nabarlek and Koongarra deposits were in progress at the same time the Whitlam Government took office on 2 December 1972. The Whitlam Government gave undertakings that the export contracts would be honoured and it subsequently made arrangements for the recommissioning of Mary Kathleen and for the development of the Peko/EZ project at Ranger and for subsequent development of other mines in the Alligator Rivers Region.

A feature of the uranium development policy of the Whitlam Government was direct Commonwealth participation. The Whitlam Government obtained a 42 per cent shareholding in Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd. On the basis of these arrangements recommissioning of the mine began in 1974, and production commenced early in 1976. Production and export of uranium is continuing at Mary Kathleen and to date 690 short tons of uranium oxide have been exported for electric power generation in Japan, the United States and West Germany.

Following its decision on the Mary Kathleen project the Whitlam Government tabled in the Parliament on 31 October 1974 a statement announcing a program of large-scale uranium development in the Northern Territory of Australia commencing with the exploitation of the Ranger deposit to be followed

by development of Nabarlek, Jabiluka and Koongarra deposits.

Together with the Whitlam Government statement on 31 October 1974 there was also tabled in the Parliament an agreement with Peko/EZ for joint development of the Ranger deposit by the Commonwealth of those companies. The agreement was signed by the then Prime Minister (Mr. E. G. Whitlam), the then Deputy Prime Minister (Dr. J. F. Cairns) and the then Minister for Minerals and Energy (the late Mr. Connor) and by the Chairman of Peko Mines Limited (Mr. Proud) and the Managing Director of the Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australia (Mr. Mackay). That Agreement was elaborated further in a Memorandum of Understanding dated 28 October 1975 also tabled in the Parliament. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the then Prime Minister (Mr. E. G. Whitlam) and Mr. Proud and Mr. Mackay of Peko/EZ.

The Whitlam Government also announced in its uranium development policy statement of 31 October 1974 that the Government stockpile of uranium remaining from the earlier operations at Rum Jungle would be available to Peko/EZ and Queensland Mines Limited to allow early deliveries to be made under the approved export contracts of those companies prior to the mines at Ranger and Nabarlek coming into production.

It should be recalled that central considerations in the Whitlam Government's policy of uranium development were the economic benefits to Australia which

would accrue and the responsibility Australia has as an energy rich nation in meeting the energy needs of other countries.

The Whitlam Government's statement on uranium development which I have already referred to and which was tabled in the Parliament on 31 October 1974, opened with the following words:

"... this statement is to outline the Government's program for the rational development of uranium resources in the Northern Territory; a program which will return substantial economic benefits to Australia from our supply of this vital energy resource to our overseas trading partners who face such grave difficulties in securing their energy requirements..."

The Whitlam Government's commitment of Australia, and Australia's companies, to meeting the uranium requirements of our trading partners continued and reached the very substantial amount of 100,000 tonnes of uranium. The then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Les Johnson) said on 16 October 1975 in the second reading speech on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill that:

"International assurances have been provided by Ministers that Australia will meet the uranium requirements of our major trading partners, which could amount to a total of about 100,000 tonnes of uranium by 1990."

Very clearly the Whitlam Government recognised – and responded most positively to – the urgent and

legitimate energy requirements of other countries. Like our Government, the Whitlam Government recognised the inter-dependence between Australia and other countries and our responsibilities as a nation rich in energy resources to supply these resources to others.

#### **BALANCING ON TWO STOOLS – BOUND TO FALL**

The Labor Party at the same time is tending to lean towards the Soviet Union, and the A.L.P. National Conference resolution tends to support this view. The A.L.P.'s "even-handed" approach favours the U.S.S.R. because it slows down, holds up U.S.-controlled uranium mining. It also has another feature, because it acts as a deception in which it hopes to channel the people's mass movement into (the sham of) parliamentary politics, and it attempts to prevent the people from organising themselves, and thereby challenging the continued imperialist domination of Australia. But everything is not static. Within the Labor Party leadership there are vast differences, both of tactics and alignment (some favour U.S. imperialism, while others favour Soviet imperialism). Hawke, for instance, uses his so-called "trade union movement" to bludgeon down struggle. Hawke is the multi-nationals' industrial relations officer. He will not let himself be tied to any progressive rank and file decision. He manipulates, wheels and deals, and everywhere sells out the workers whenever he gets a chance. He cannot be expected to do anything but actively push for uranium export. He is a personal friend of the uranium exploiter Carnegie



(boss C.R.A.), his private secretary is Carnegie's former secretary. Carnegie's C.R.A. will make millions out of uranium exploitation. All nice and cosy. Hawke does U.S. imperialism's bidding, but at the same time he keeps his options open. His referendum proposal is a smoke-screen; it will not stop people's struggle. But it is designed to divert the struggle. The A.C.T.U. position is to the right of even the A.L.P. Both the Labor Party and this A.C.T.U. constitute the main social props of capitalism and, in Australia's case, the main social prop of Australia's continued dependence upon imperialism.

We have now defined two additional enemies of the Australian people's anti-uranium and independence struggle – the A.L.P. and the A.C.T.U. However, it can be clearly seen how they are merely aspects or, as it has been said, social props of the main enemies of the Australian people – the two superpowers.

#### **LEFT IN FORM – RIGHT IN ESSENCE – THE FAKE “LEFT”**

This brings us to a third type of enemy – a more deceptive and insidious enemy because they use the language of the people. They are hidden within the ranks of the working class and the people's movements. They go under the signboard of “socialists”, “communists”, “supporters of national independence”, “the natural allies of the anti-uranium struggle”, and so on. This group is concentrated within the ranks of the “Communist” Party (of Aarons, Carmichael and Munday), the “Socialist” Party (already mentioned) and

various Trotskyite sects, along with other anarchist and disruptive anti-social grouplets. Their leading spokespeople are persons such as Munday, Carmichael, Halfpenny, Goldbloom, Pringle, Clancy and company. Their treachery knows no bounds. They habitually call black white, and white black. In reality, they have nothing in common with socialism, or independence.

The danger comes from these people because of their method of worming their way into people's movements and organisations through militant-sounding rhetoric, press and television exposure as “leaders”, and an efficient, well-financed “machine” for pushing out propaganda etc. (The source of their finance is dubious to say the least, but the “Socialist” Party quite openly receives regular stipends from their masters in Moscow). Having thus attained positions of “responsibility” and “authority” they actively collaborate to disarm the people through failing to propagate methods and ideas aimed at directing the main blows against the main enemy. They push all sorts of diversions, style themselves the Left-wing conscience of the Labor Party – which would make them the left-wing of imperialism.

This is precisely why in this article we have set out in some detail to analyse who the enemy is, so that people can be appropriately armed with all the facts, and thereby seek the truth and correct tactics, from the understanding and interpretation of the facts. Many people, are only too well aware of the tactics of these mis-leaders. For instance, at demonstrations and other

such activities, these people employ dual tactics. They make demonstrations and processions as boring as possible with countless irrelevant speeches, and numerous laps of the block (i.e. marching around city streets with no objective in mind, or activity to generate people's interest or support). Thereby people who have little experience at demonstrations, or who have come simply to express their opposition to uranium mining, become frustrated through the lack of direction and purpose.

This leads to a general feeling of futility and is a great way to ensure that many new people don't get further involved in the movement. Their other tactic concerns demonstrations where they are aware they are not able to contain people's anger, so instead they employ either the ultra-left tactic of isolated acts of individual violence (terrorism), or they lead people into mass acts of suicide; e.g. futile charges into lines of numerically superior police, where the result is mass arrests. The first act leads to an excuse for increased police violence (which is always there), which has a tendency to isolate public opinion, while the second enables the police through the power of mass indiscriminate arrest to intimidate and cower demonstrators. The end result is the same – the number of people prepared to act dwindles and the issue can tend to become isolated, while at the same time these fakes cultivate an image as "militants" (the three stooges

Munday, Owens and Pringle are particularly good at this).

When you counterpose these tactics against the correct tactics of uniting all who can be united with, in a common mass action with clearly defined objectives and with constructive, creative and informative activities designed to win over and mobilise even more people, it is not hard to see the dangers that the fake "left" pose. Another aspect of their methods is that the police, as the main repressive instrument of state power at demonstrations (with the army always readied in the background), get an image as omnipotent unbeatable barriers between the movement against uranium mining and its objectives. It is true that the police are bullies and thugs, but when faced with the organised, united power of the people they become the whimpering puppy-dogs and cowards they really are – if the facade of their power cracks, they run like scared rabbits. This is not to say that their brutality and violence should not be taken seriously. It certainly should, and that is another reason why the fakes should be exposed and opposed.

The end result of the work of the fake "left" is the killing off of the mass movement, and leaving the most advanced, militant and active sections open to police attack, provocation and harassment. By using the dual tactics of ultra-conservatism and boredom on the one hand, and ultra-left terrorism and futile arrests on the other, both of which are calculated to kill off the mass movement, they do a great service to the movement

for uranium mining and export. They are despicable treacherous vermin who latch onto the backs of all progressive and patriotic struggles, and the uranium struggle is no exception. It is action that people want, it is mass action and struggle that is decisive, and our tactics should be to cause most harm to the enemy while causing the least harm to ourselves. To do this, and to build a really powerful mass movement requires a great deal of thought, hard work, and much attention needs to be paid to it. It will not do to leave the whole field open to the fake "lefts" who, by their actions, serve the interests of the two superpowers.

#### WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS?

Having gone through a reasonably exhaustive look at "Who are our enemies?" it will now be useful to look at "Who are our friends?" From the outset it should be said that all of those people and groups in the preceding analysis of "Who are our enemies?" at the most comprise only about 5 to 10 per cent of the Australian people. A very small percentage indeed when compared with the number of people who can be united with under the banner of "Who are our friends?"

It is true that nowhere near 90 per cent of the Australian people are united against the mining and export of Australia's uranium. However it is true to say that objectively speaking the best interests of the Australian people would be best served in an independent Australia where Australia and all its resources and people were free from foreign domination and exploit-

ation. Under these conditions Australia's uranium would be owned and controlled by the Australian people and not by the superpowers. It is inconceivable that the Australian people would act against their own interests, or the common interests of the people of the world.

This is a very positive factor, and should always be borne in mind. Because of the numerical superiority of the potentially progressive people, it is not necessary to achieve total, or even majority, support at first. It would suffice to unite with as large a percentage as possible, as is necessary to win victory. But to consolidate victory it would of course be necessary to win over the maximum possible to go on and win even greater victories. Therefore it is conceivable that victory will be won without even having a 50 per cent majority. We must also learn how to unite with all forces who can be united with on this question. The most important class to be won over is the working class because it is directly at the heart of the mining and export of uranium, it is both the most exploited class and the biggest numerical class.

But all other classes and forces must be won over, except the parasitical imperialist comprador class. It means learning to unite in a positive way with all sections of the people, those that are advanced, those that are backward and those in between. It means bringing all the positive features in all individuals and groups to the fore, and neutralising the negative (and thereby turning the negative factors into positive ones).

It means adopting hard tactics and soft tactics to meet the prevailing situation. It means in particular, while respecting and guaranteeing the rights of groups and classes to uphold and present their own viewpoint, the right to maintain one's independence and initiative within such a united front, of all classes, individuals and groups. This is precisely what we mean by "Who are our friends?" Just about everyone.

The future is bright, the road ahead is long and tortuous, but victory is certain if we are prepared to fight, recognise all dangers, and deal our blows at the main enemy.

**FIGHT FOR AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE!  
NO URANIUM FOR THE SUPERPOWERS!  
U.S. OUT! U.S.S.R. OUT!  
THE PEOPLE WILL WIN!**

**FOOTNOTE:**

The role and place of the Aboriginal people in the struggle against uranium mining and export have largely not been dealt with in this article. However, the role of the Aboriginal people in their struggle is vital. Their role is of critical importance and the issue of land rights and black self-determination is integrally related to the uranium struggle — because it is an essential part of the struggle for independence.

**LAND RIGHTS! NOT URANIUM!  
INDEPENDENCE FOR AUSTRALIA!**

**BOOKSHOPS KEEP YOU UP TO DATE ON  
LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS**

*As the struggle becomes more complex, it is important for revolutionaries to read Marxist-Leninist analyses of local and international events. Vanguard, Australian Communist, New China News, Peking Review and other revolutionary publications are obtainable from —*

- **EAST WIND BOOKSHOP**, SHOP 1, 397 PITT STREET, SYDNEY.
- **EAST BOOKSHOP**, 255 RUNDLE STREET, ADELAIDE
- **KALKADOON**, 382 BOURKE STREET, MELBOURNE
- **INDEPENDENCE BOOKSHOP**, 411 GEORGE STREET, BRISBANE.
- **EAST WIND BOOKSHOP**, 42 BEAUFORT STREET, PERTH
- **BARCALDINE BOOKS**, SHOP 23, FYSHWICK PLAZA, 63-65 WOLLONGONG STREET, FYSHWICK, CANBERRA