



Australia's Anti-Nuclear Movement: a short history

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In: Green Left, No 30, 1998

The article examines the linkage between activists concerned about Australia supplying uranium for US and British nuclear weapon programmes, and its close military alliance with the US, and the environmental groups focusing on the dangers of civilian nuclear energy. Green argues that resistance to nuclear energy was weak and isolated before the 1970s, but gained significant, nationally coordinated, support in 1976-77, which swung the Labor Party against uranium mining and exports. The movement highlighted the dangers of uranium mining for Aborigines and workers in the mines, as well as the environmental impact; and it opposed Australia's role in the cold war nuclear confrontation (having US bases and allowing US nuclear warships to visit Australian harbours). It also publicized the secret history of the health impact of British nuclear testing in Australian deserts on Aboriginal people. However, the movement lost momentum in the 1980s and failed to prevent the Labor Party, when in government from 1983, abandoning its strong opposition to uranium mining.

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