

AUSTRALIA

Uranium, jobs ignite debate in December vote

By Kathy Gordon
and Andrew Hewlett

SOUTH CAULFIELD—After only two years of a three year term, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has hurriedly called a general election Dec. 10 before the economy gets still worse next year.

With Australia already experiencing its worst unemployment since the Great Depression, the economy is sure to be the main issue, but uranium will also figure prominently in election debates. The Fraser government has given the go-ahead to mining, but the opposition Labor party wants an indefinite moratorium until problems of weapons proliferation and waste disposal are solved.

Recent shipments of yellowcake ore from Sydney and Melbourne have been greeted by demonstrators. In Brisbane last month, 400 people were arrested at an anti-nuclear rally, including a Labor party senator.

Big prize at stake.

Australia has a key place in global discussion regarding nuclear development. Between 20 and 25 percent of the capitalist world's uranium supplies are located in Australia. More significantly, approximately 60 to 70 percent of the uncommitted reserves are located here.

With such a prize at stake, the battle is quite fierce. On the one side are the big mining companies (most of whom are grouped in the Uranium Producers Forum), the Fraser government, the state governments of Queensland and West Australia, the Northern Territory Legislative Council and the mass media.

The Uranium Producers Forum has spent vast sums of money on a campaign of glib television and newspaper commercials. In their attempt to sway the Australian people, it has concentrated on the alleged economic benefits to Australia and Third World countries and attempted to portray anti-uranium activists as technological luddites. It consistently refuses to debate anti-uranium representatives.

The Liberal and National parties, which make up the ruling government coalition, strongly support uranium mining. Fraser has aligned himself strongly with President Carter's nuclear policies insisting that Australia has an obligation to supply uranium to the world to prevent the development of breeder reactors. In an adaptation of OPEC resource diplo-

macy, the Federal Government is hoping that Australia can contract to supply uranium to the Common Market countries in return for more open markets for Australia's primary products.

Awe-inspiring growth.

While the pro-uranium campaign is relatively cohesive, the anti-uranium movement is extraordinarily diverse.

Its growth has been awe-inspiring. Hiroshima Day in 1976 was marked by a rally of 500. In Melbourne (a city of approximately two million) this year Hiroshima Day was commemorated by a rally of 25,000 people. A national anti-uranium moratorium on Oct. 22, with the theme "Rally for a Non-Nuclear Future," attracted over 50,000 people Australia-wide—something like one out of every 280 Australians.

While initially based on the environmental movement, it now encompasses church people, trade union activists, the Australian Labor party, virtually all left-wing political parties, the peace movement, the Aboriginal movement and the women's movement. The Australian Council of Churches has expressed its opposition to uranium mining as has the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace. The movement has central committees but also expresses itself through a proliferation of local groups raising the issues at grassroots level.

Union ban.

Periodically, the railways union and major branches of the longshoremen's union have banned all work connected with uranium. At the Australian Council of Trade Union (ACTU) congress in September a motion calling for an indefinite moratorium on mining was rejected. A compromise motion was passed calling for a national referendum on the question within two months; and if that be refused, a vote by members of the unions involved to determine whether they would participate in the uranium industry. Fraser immediately refused to hold a referendum but now the early election has intervened. The ACTU's next step is unclear. The Australian Labor party has recently changed its uranium policy to unqualified opposition. At the federal conference in July of this year the Labor party called for an indefinite moratorium on mining. It has warned the industry that contracts entered into under Fraser's blessing will not



Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (above) has backed uranium mining. The opposition Labour party and anti-nuclear movement want uranium mining stopped until waste and arms problems are solved.

be recognized by future Labor governments. This puts both producers and buyers on rather shaky footing.

Most of the large uranium deposits are located in the top end of the Northern Territory, the traditional homeland of several Aboriginal tribes. Silas Roberts, Aboriginal Chairman of the Northern Lands, said earlier this year, "In my travels throughout Australia I have met many Aborigines from other parts who have lost their land and by losing their land, they have

lost part of themselves.... We in the Northern Territory seem to be the only ones who have kept out culture." These fears have been the basis of the involvement of Aboriginal groups in the anti-mining movement.

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CANADA

Quebec has its first nuclear power clash

Quebec doesn't need nuclear power, but U.S. energy companies see it as a haven.

By Henry Milner

GENTILLY, QUEBEC—On Oct. 22, 700 people gathered in the small town of Gentilly, some 80 miles east of Montreal. They were protesting the Quebec Hydro's plan to construct a nuclear power plant there. This was the first significant public expression of the anti-nuclear movement in Quebec and was coordinated by the Front Commun Anti-Nucleaire, a group that brought together 25 ecologically-oriented citizens groups from various

parts of Quebec including small local opposition groups in several of the six cities along the St. Lawrence River that are slated for nuclear plants.

Quebec is relatively late in entering the nuclear power club and in developing an opposition toward it. It has the water power to generate all the electrical energy it could reasonably need well into the 21st century. The strong push for the development of nuclear power comes from the financial and power monopolies in the U.S. who, faced with strong internal opposition, see Quebec as a relatively welcome haven. The large provincially-owned power monopoly, Hydro Quebec, has a deplorable record of encouraging the waste of electricity and has shown no interest in the wide environmental and local questions posed by the opponents of nuclear power. Hydro Quebec has always prided itself on its high return on investments

and resulting attractiveness to New York bankers and has always worked very closely with them.

The newly-formed opposition to nuclear power includes the new Parti Quebecois Minister of Energy, Guy Joron. Before entering the cabinet Mr. Joron published a book attacking nuclear power and Quebec's tendency to waste energy.

But he faces opposition to his views within his own cabinet. Other cabinet ministers believe that nuclear power development would make Quebec independent of Western Canada's oil and gas supplies. They are evidently not as concerned that the expansion of nuclear power would bring greater dependence upon the financial empire to the south.

In the next few months the strength of the anti-nuclear and ecological sentiment will be tested both at the level of the cabi-

net and in the population at large. The cabinet will be bringing out its White Paper on Energy in the future and the content of this paper and the content of the debate that will follow should prove decisive.

The ability of the anti-nuclear movement to gain mass recognition still remains to be seen. Although the demonstration at Gentilly received support in the form of free buses and access to publicity from certain unions in the Montreal area, the involvement of the workers movement on the whole has been rather limited. If the wider environmental questions posed by the anti-nuclear movement are to come anywhere near attaining public importance in Quebec comparable to Europe or even English-speaking North America—then Gentilly is only a bare beginning. Much remains to be done.



Sam Krieger, Chambers' Communist party sponsor, being interviewed.

Richard Bermack



Whittaker Chambers testifying

Whittaker Chambers: self-

IN 1950, IN A CASE THAT LAUNCHED the senatorial campaign of then Rep. Richard M. Nixon, and that involved leading Democrats like Adlai Stevenson, Supreme Court Justices Stanley Reed and Felix Frankfurter testifying in his behalf, Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury for denying that he knew and was involved in espionage with Whittaker Chambers.

Hiss, who served 44 months in prison, has steadfastly maintained his innocence and has attempted to secure vindication. He has insisted that Chambers lied, both in his original testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (in which Chambers testified that Hiss was a Communist party member, but not a spy) and when he reversed himself, after being sued by Hiss for libel, and accused Hiss of engaging in espionage with Chambers acting as courier. At the trial Chambers testified that he received from Hiss government documents, retyped on a Woodstock typewriter that Hiss owned. Chambers produced the documents and the defense produced a typewriter on which the documents were allegedly typed and which was said to have belonged to Hiss.

Hiss' conviction hinged on the credibility of Chambers' testimony, which the typewriter allegedly corroborated.

Recently, as a result of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) suit that Hiss filed, he has secured documents that apparently show that an investigator on Hiss' defense team was also an agent of the Justice department, and also that the Woodstock typewriter used to convict him was a forgery.

On the basis of this new evidence, Hiss has told *IN THESE TIMES*, he is planning to go into federal court in January or February 1978 to secure a writ of error coram nobis. The writ, based on FBI documents secured under the FOIA proceedings, will allege prosecutorial misconduct in withholding evidence of Hiss' innocence and, if granted, would lead to an expunging of the conviction.

Following is an interview with Sam Krieger, by the Radical Elders Oral History Project of Oakland, Calif. It does not speak to the typewriter or Justice department misconduct but to the character and reliability of Whittaker Chambers

himself, Krieger, a former Communist, was Chambers' sponsor when Chambers joined the Communist party in 1926, and a close friend of Chambers' during his Communist days.

A stocky young man in a shabby overcoat walked past my desk in the Public Library and studied me. Then he walked back and studied me from another angle. He did this several times. I thought: "He is the man. He is the contact with the Communist Party."

Then the first American Communist I had ever seen edged up to my desk, looked at me out of distrustful, rather glassy eyes, and asked: "Are you Chambers?"

—Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*

That man, who Chambers later said "blended easily with the stream of shabby and derelict people" that flowed in and out of the New York library he worked in, was Sam Krieger.

Little did Krieger know that day in 1925 that 23 years later, the man he would sponsor as a member of the Communist Party U.S.A. would brand one man a communist spy and send him to prison while helping to catapult another on a path to the White House. For it was Chambers who in 1948 accused Hiss of communist espionage.

Krieger, now 74, is retired and living in northern California after 30 years in trade union movements following nearly 20 years of work in the Communist party. Recalling those early years, Krieger says Chambers exaggerated his own role with the party and lied to convict Hiss.

Chambers' charges.

Hiss was imprisoned on the basis of Chambers' charges that the two combined forces, as members of the Communist party, to steal secret state documents and turn them over to Soviet agents. Chambers' charges rested on his claims of being an important Communist party functionary in the late 1930s; he maintained that Hiss, while in the State department, had passed secret documents to him, along with his regular party dues. Hiss went to prison steadfastly denying Chambers' allegations and still says that he was framed.

Sam Krieger, who served in the Communist party at the time Chambers claimed he engaged in espionage with Hiss, adamantly contradicts Chambers' views on how the Communist party operated in the late 1930s. Krieger joined the Party—then known as the Workers party—in 1924. Because of its semi-legal status at that time, relations with its recruits had a special quality.

"It was generally understood," says Krieger, "that you took personal as well as political responsibility for any new member you sponsored."

"When you brought a new member into the party, you tried to acquaint yourself with his or her background, guided the individual at practically every turn and took a personal interest in the new member because, after all, he was now becoming a comrade in arms."

The Communist party of the 1930s, Krieger recalls, was a community of sorts. "Even though we made our livings in different ways, we still felt that we were tied together, that we had something very important in common. It wasn't solely a political commonality. We knew we had to protect each other, that we might have to engage in struggles that called for sacrifices."

Sponsoring new members did not entail going through particularly strict channels. "If no one had anything bad to say about you," explains Krieger, "or voiced no critical reason to refuse you, you were admitted without a formal vote. The party was anxious, open and seeking new members. All you really had to do was affirm belief in party principles, pay regular dues, accept party assignments and carry out the collective decisions of your party unit or branch."

Chambers as a communist.

Chambers, under Krieger's sponsorship, joined an English-speaking branch on Manhattan's west side, near Hell's kitchen.

Krieger, who read *Witness* a few years after it was published in 1952, chuckles over Chambers' description of their first meeting in New York's 42nd Street Lib-

rary. "I have to smile at the way he described me in *Witness*," says Krieger. "At the time I was employed in the circulation department of the *Yonkers Statesman*, so I was pretty well dressed. He added the 'shabby overcoat' and 'glassy eyes' for dramatic effect."

Although Krieger found Chambers tight-lipped about his personal background, he recalls Chambers' concern over other party members' feelings about him. "I felt protective of him as his sponsor," says Krieger. "I wanted to make sure that he made a good impression on other party members and he would ask me what did so-and-so think of him. We had these discussions, as friends would have, about how he was coming across to party members."

Krieger considered Chambers a friend, but he "never really got inside the man. He was pretty close-mouthed and didn't speak much about his family or background. He said he came from a very poor household and had had difficulties with his family. They did not agree with his political views."

In addition to the personal relationship Krieger and Chambers developed in 1925 there was also party work. It was Krieger's duty as Chambers' sponsor to assist in making a party assignment. At the time Krieger was using his newspaper skills to help the party's paper. "I went with him many times to the *Daily Worker* circulation department and got him started on the job of collecting copies of the paper," says Krieger.

The *Daily Worker* was distributed by a New York news agency, but the *Worker* staff was responsible for collecting money and unsold copies from newsstands. Chambers, at Krieger's urging, coordinated collections in a large section of the Bronx. Later Chambers began writing for the *Daily Worker* and then *New Masses*.

A party factional fight in the late '20s led to a total reorganization of the party itself. Chambers, in *Witness*, claims that this reorganization brought confusion to the ranks and that he drifted away for a spell while members continued to assume he was still deeply committed and involved.

Krieger, however, remembers that Chambers started to drift away before