

The Nuclear Syndrome
Victory for the Irish Anti-nuclear Power Movement
By Simon Dalby

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This is the original text of the pamphlet as published, excluding photos and illustrations, with some minor alterations (e.g. removal of typographical errors)

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This pamphlet is an edited extract from a thesis written by Simon Dalby entitled *'Political Ecology: a study of the Irish anti-nuclear movement'* written for the University of Victoria (Canada) in 1982. [The original pamphlet listed the total contents of Simon Dalby's thesis and what was included or excluded in the pamphlet; this is not included here – Web edition Editor]

We decided against including updated material (e.g. on the rise of Irish CND) in this pamphlet but rather to let Simon Dalby's material stand, with the story taken to 1981-2. Perhaps we will return to more recent disarmament history again...

Editorial

Repeating mistakes is not something peculiar to Ireland, though we are certainly good at it. And while it is highly unlikely that the prospect of nuclear power will be as close for Ireland in the foreseeable future as it was in the 1970s, being informed and prepared is the starting point of opposition to the contemplation of any such plans in the future.

But it is not just because of the importance of the nuclear issue, and of the victory won against it (more by external circumstances than by actual Irish opposition) that we are publishing an edited version of Simon Dalby's thesis on the Irish anti-nuclear movement. Within the movement there were important debates taking place about the shape and variety of opposition that was appropriate; what form of organisation should be adopted, what priorities should be dealt with, etc. These are the kind of organisational questions which occur in any mass political movement.

And since then there has been the rise of the anti-nuclear bomb movement, to which in many ways the anti-nuclear power movement was a precursor. These questions of organisation, strategy and tactics are vital. Simon Dalby's analysis of the way the Irish anti-nuclear movement in the 1970s dealt with these questions is an important one which will repay careful study and consideration. It is as much for the nitty-gritty politics of the movement, then, that we are publishing this pamphlet as for the importance of the issue concerned. A victory was won. And while that victory was more to do with economic questions and the international concern over nuclear power, the Irish anti-nuclear power movement had done an important job in conscientising people as to the dangers. It is good to be able to tell a success story, and we think if you stick with it you'll find it an exiting read. And if we are able to learn some lessons about organising present and future campaigns then the read will indeed have been a worthwhile one... - **Dawn group.**

The Nuclear Option

In November 1968 the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) first announced that it was examining nuclear power as a possible method of diversifying electricity supply options. In the late 1960s, contemplating a projected 9% per annum growth rate in electricity demand in the 1970s, and the imminent completion of an interconnection with the Northern Ireland Electricity Service (NIES) grid, a 350 MW nuclear power station was thought to be possible by 1978 at the earliest. At least a 10 year lead time is involved in bringing a nuclear station on stream due to planning and construction and training. Four people went to the UK in 1968 for training in nuclear technology, in accordance with the traditional ESB policy of training their own personnel to operate new technologies.

Since the initial announcement of the possibility of developing nuclear energy, plans have been changed and postponed a number of times. The initial ideas of the late 1960s were postponed in 1972 when the then minister of Transport and Power, Brian Lenihan, argued that it should be postponed until the implications of the newly discovered Kinsale natural gas field were worked out. A new government was elected in 1973 and had to deal with the oil crisis and the subsequent oil price increases. The new administration established a Nuclear Energy Board (NEB) to deal with regulatory matters under the Nuclear Energy Act of 1971. The government encouraged the ESB to push ahead with its plans for a nuclear station at Carnsore Point in the extreme South East of the country. The ESB duly filed for outline planning permission to the Wexford County Council in September 1974. The planning permission was for four 650 MW units, only one of which was to be built immediately. Although at this time no technology was specified the preferred design was a Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR).

A number of objections were received by the County Council and under the section 26 of the 1963 Planning Act the County Council requested more information, some of which was forthcoming. The recession in the mid-1970s caused a decline in electricity demand and in 1975 the ESB reduced its generation construction programme by 45%. This cutback included a postponement of the nuclear plans.

The economic upturn of 1976 led to a renewal of growth in electricity demand. Fianna Fail were re-elected in 1977 and Desmond O'Malley, an enthusiastic proponent of Nuclear technology became minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy, a new portfolio. In 1977 the plans for a station at Carnsore Point were once again put forward.

Nuclear Power has been claimed to be a surrogate form of nationalism. In the Irish case this interpretation is at least partly true too. In the growth mania of the early years of this Fianna Fail government, nuclear power seems to be seen as the consummation of the growing relationship with international capital and advanced technology which started in the late 1950s. It was seen as the symbol of national manhood. Ireland would have a shining nuclear plant too. Controversy soon arose however, both in a Dail debate and at the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis (annual party convention) and also in public forums over the winter of 1977-78. The national anti – nuclear movement dates from the spring of 1978 when the Friends of the Earth group was restarted in Dublin.

Subsequently the government published a discussion document on energy in July 1978 which outlined its case for nuclear power. The rationale outlined in this publication was quite simple and in keeping with the philosophy of government intervention to promote rapid economic growth. The Fianna Fail government elected in 1977 initially forecasted a 7% increase in Gross National Product (GNP) per annum for 1978, 1979 and 1980 with rapid industrial expansion hopefully providing the impetus within the economy to increase employment by 25,000 jobs per annum.

A number of themes came together in the analysis of energy possibilities in the Green Paper. First, although not much emphasised in this document, are concern with financial considerations, cheap energy is deemed essential to maintain the competitiveness of export orientated industry, the king pin of the government's growth strategy.

Our standard of living and continued well being are largely dependent upon the future availability of adequate supplies of energy at reasonable cost. In formulating energy policy we must be conscious of the fact that energy is an important cost factor in our industrial and agricultural production and that excessive energy costs will inevitably have adverse effects on our export business For this reason we can never afford to let our energy costs be significantly higher than the energy costs of our competitors. (Government of Ireland: Energy

Ireland, Discussion Document on some Current Energy Problems and Options. Dublin: Government Stationery Office 1978.)

A second theme is the necessity to increase energy usage in the industrial sector, and the lions share of forecasted increased energy demands goes into this sector. Flying in the face of stated EEC policies of de-coupling economic growth from energy consumption increase the Green Paper boldly states:

In the past there has been a close relationship between economic growth and energy consumption and there is every expectation that this pattern will repeat itself in the future. To opt for economic growth in the future as we have done is to opt also for significantly increased energy consumption. Industrial development is energy intensive and increases in GNP are usually accompanied by higher proportional increases in energy consumption. (ibid., p. 23)

The resultant forecasts suggested that by 1990 the industrial sector would be using 57% of the total energy demand. As Friends of the Earth (FoE) were quick to point out this is completely at odds with the experience of other industrialised countries where the industrial sector rarely consumes more than 40% of total energy consumed.

The third theme in the Green Paper is a stated intention to move away from a dependence on imported oil which provided 75% of Ireland's total energy requirements in the late 1970s. This is in line with the EEC policy of reducing imported energy dependence to below 50% by 1985. In addition the effect of large energy imports on the balance of payments deficit is noted as an additional cause of concern. Having said this, however, the projections in fact advocate an increase in the use of imported oil.

The stated intention to reduce oil imports is carried over into the fourth theme; the rapid expansion of electrical power. Having forecasted a large increase in industrial activity and a big increase in energy demand in the future, and compared these projections with the current situation, the authors remark;

What is expected to develop over the coming decade is a large energy gap which must be filled in one way or another. (ibid., page 26)

The bulk of the Green Paper is spent outlining possibilities for filling this 'gap'. Suggesting that the electrical sector can more easily switch away from oil, the Green Paper forecasts an increasing swing towards electricity use. Few concrete suggestions emerge as to what to do with the non-electric sector but two chapters deal specifically with the nuclear option. They argue not only that:

The primary purpose of going ahead with the provision of a nuclear power station in Ireland would be to lessen our level of dependence on imported oil and to diversify our sources of energy supply. (ibid., page 67)

but also that nuclear power is safe and is a financially competitive electricity source. As partial justification of this claim they quote recent U.K. figures on competitive generation costs showing nuclear costs to be significantly cheaper than those for coal or oil fired stations. The fact that these were historic costs and not projected cost estimates for new generation facilities was quite ignored. A figure of £350m (1977 prices) is posited as a reasonable estimate for a 650MW station at Carnsore.

In summary it can be seen that the nuclear project was an integral part of the industrial development strategy being pursued by the government. That the reasoning was flawed, the long term economic picture all but ignored, inaccurate figures used to support projected energy use figures and many controversial statements made with no attempt to provide sources of information did not seem to matter. The euphoria of growth mania was infectious and optimism for an economic miracle rampant.

Post-War Ideology

The enthusiasm behind the nuclear power promotional effort in the U.S., and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the 1950s and 1960s tapped into the twin features of post-war liberal ideology: the faith in science and technology, and the belief that economic growth, sustained by Keynesian management techniques, would provide the resources to tackle any remaining 'social problems'. Technological development premised on ideas of the domination, or mastery, of nature, found its ultimate expression in the harnessing of the fundamental processes of the universe in the form of atomic power. In turn the projections of economic growth required large inputs of energy, a purpose for which the apparently unlimited potential of atomic power seemed ideally suited.

But this document was in part to be the government's undoing as many critics demolished its arguments, exposed its errors and criticised its assumptions and projections.

The following month a large weekend rally was held at the site of the proposed nuclear plant attended by approximately 25,000 people. From this time until February 1979 when Mr. O'Malley finally announced that there would be a full scale public inquiry into the issue, a constant political campaign of opposition kept up. A government reshuffle in late 1979 following the resignation of Mr. Lynch as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) removed Mr. O'Malley from the energy department and his successor Mr. Colley, announced that there would yet again be a postponement. Ostensibly the reason was to await the results of the reports from the Three Mile Island accident but declining electricity demand growth rates had already weakened the case for the plant. It is worth noting that the pro-nuclear perspective was not the only one taken by government departments and agencies. The Department of Economic Planning and Development was more sympathetic to alternative energy strategies. The Irish National Science Council published a study on solar options. The National Physical Planning Institute (An Foras Forbatha) published a detailed study on insulation, Crutchfield criticised the nuclear option on safety and environmental grounds in a paper published by the Economic and Social Research Institute (1978) while the coalition government commissioned a study on conservation measures.

Demonstrations and protest actions against nuclear power have continued with other issues such as uranium mining, toxic industries, waste disposal and the dumping of nuclear waste off the Irish coast broadening the focus of the movement as the Carnsore proposal became less immediate.

In 1981 nuclear power had faded from the scene and the ESB announced that it no longer figured in its plans while the 1981 coalition government announced that it would not develop nuclear power as long as 'environmental' problems remain.

Local Opposition

'The local opposition' provides a starting place for a number of studies of the opponents of nuclear power. The local opposition has a number of noticeable characteristics which appear to occur with minor variations in most cases. Close parallels can be found with opposition to other large technological projects.

The typical pattern of events is structured into a number of stages. Initial enthusiasm follows an announcement that the plant is going to be built. Local businesses (often with the notable exception of tourist and amenity-related concerns) respond favourably, seeing the influx of jobs and business as an opportunity. Local dignitaries are favourably impressed by the new employment and business prospects and the prestige that go with a major development. Concern is often limited to a few outspoken critics and those whose economic and leisure interests will be disrupted. A group labelled 'Parochial Opponents' may oppose the projected development because of fears of the impact on the social life of the community. (Nuclear plants are often sited in rural areas with small and conservative settlements.) The opposition coalesces gradually around a group of concerned citizens who are unsatisfied by the assurances given by the utilities and government spokespeople. These people hold meetings, organise a committee and do their own research. A common method of getting information is to organise public debates on the issue. Polarisation rather than consensus is often the result of public debates. Initially at least, the opponents are often the more experienced and educated people with a sense of political acumen who challenge the received wisdom of the conventional viewpoint.

Contact with other groups reveals others opposed to nuclear development and supplements the information gleaned from newspaper clippings and the local library. They also find a few scientists and experts who are critical of the development and this adds acrimony to the public debates and meetings. Participation in regulatory hearings in many cases occupies a lot of opposition groups' time and effort and they are often forced to use graduate students and less well known experts at hearings. They also run into problems getting legal representation. The limited opportunities for public input in the siting decisions and licensing hearings lead to a questioning of the political basis of the decision-making processes and reveals a duplicity of interests and a system heavily stacked in favour of the nuclear industry. These groups tend to cling to the view that enough information widely enough disseminated will vindicate their stand and ensure that the industry is controlled. Public petitioning and demonstrations often accompany the local opposition's attempts to gain leverage on the process through court and legislative action.

In the late 1970s in the U.S. and earlier in Europe the larger movement against nuclear power became involved in local issues. These ideological opponents often used direct action tactics and site occupations in their campaigns, which are sometimes ambiguously supported by the local opposition who prefer non-confrontational and legal interventions to protest. In most cases, however, the local community contains considerable segments who are not opposed to the nuclear plans.

The local opposition in Wexford in Ireland has many of the above features although allowance must be made for the specific historical situation.

The Nuclear Safety Association

In early 1971 it was learned in Wexford that Carnsore Point was one of the possible sites for the ESBs planned nuclear power plant. A group of people from the South Eastern Science Council, the local branch of An Taisce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and local development associations formed a study group in July 1971 to investigate the effects that the plant might have on the area. The group included a doctor and a number of scientifically qualified people. They studied the literature on Nuclear Power, visited the Wylfa nuclear power station in Wales, studied the Carnsore Point site and its main amenities, and had discussions with the ESBs nuclear project team. They published their findings in 1972 in a 55 page report (A.M. O'Sullivan, ed.: *A Nuclear Power Station at Carnsore Point Co Wexford: The Socio-economic and Environmental Implications*, Wexford 1972.) which concluded that a well planned nuclear power station should be supported by the community. They opined that stringent safeguards would ensure that there would be no danger to the public from radiation and that apart from a shortage of fresh water, the site is an excellent one. They argued that the provision of 800 construction jobs and 200 long term jobs in addition to the multiplier effect would provide a significant boost to the local economy. They went as far as to suggest that this new technology could provide a focal point for tourists! While the bibliography following the first chapter shows that the study group was aware that literature critical of nuclear power existed, they concluded that the inherent problems could be overcome by good design.

In April 1974 the ESB announced that Carnsore was their preferred site for the project, subject to: the successful completion of their studies on the site, to Government approval, licensing by the NEB and their receiving of planning permission from Wexford County Council. The then current County development plan had already reserved the area for a nuclear power station so it is clear that the County council favoured its development. In the subsequent months opposition began to be heard in the Wexford area. Doubts had existed before this time and a few informal meetings between people in the Rosslare area had occurred late in 1973.

The initial focus of concern was based in the Rosslare Development Association who held a meeting soon after the ESBs announcement of Carnsore as its preferred site. The Association contacted local organisations in the south of the County to organise a debate on the whole issue. The Association insisted that the action was not a protest against the station but merely an attempt to hear the negative side of the debate which they thought had been glossed over. The chairperson argued that the 200 full time jobs would be for highly skilled technicians and hence would probably not employ local people.

The planned meeting took place a few weeks later in the Gulf Hotel in Rosslare with an attendance of 100 people and was chaired by Harvey Boxwell. After this meeting Harvey Boxwell, a member of the Rosslare development association took the first steps to establish the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC).

This committee started researching safety and environmental concerns which they considered the original study group had dealt with inadequately. An influential debate was held in June 1974 between Sean Coakley of the ESB project department and Dr. McAuley of the physics department in Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in the Talbot Hotel. The speeches were followed by a series of questions from the floor which indicated a deep suspicion of the proposed plant. The morality of nuclear power was questioned and the reply is indicative of why the clash of ideologies in the controversy is so heated.

Question: Is it fair to hand down the poisonous waste to our grandchildren and future generations for thousands of years?

Mr. Coakley: That is a moral question and ethical question. Our job is to make electricity.

In the summer of 1974 the NSC organised a number of other meetings in the south of the county and Harvey Boxwell, who was then the chairperson of the committee, contributed a stream of letters to the newspapers on the results of his research on technical aspects of nuclear reactors. Local organisations took stands on the issue in public.

During 1974 the NSC outlined its aims and the organisational format which converted the group into an association (The Nuclear Safety Association (NSA)) with regular meetings, an elected working committee, membership dues, etc. Despite this formal setup the committee continued to operate on an ad hoc basis and the newsletters were infrequent. The NSC made a strong statement against the nuclear plans at a major seminar organised by the ESB in July, but the audience which included four T.D.s and many community leaders were apparently unimpressed, favouring the project because of perceived employment opportunities. The two political parties in the coalition government, Labour and Fine Gael continued to support the Carnsore proposals. The NSA had by now developed many of the attributes of a small pressure group with a lobbying and information dissemination function. The radical criticism of the system which are part and parcel of the larger ANM had not yet emerged. The political dimensions were to emerge later.

At the end of August the ESB took the formal step of applying for planning permission. They published the required notice in *The Irish Press* on 23 August 1974 and the NSA called a special meeting a week later to discuss its response. At that meeting the secretary, Helen Scrine, argued that the 1963 Planning Act was inadequate to cover the moral and ethical objections to the nuclear technology. The NSA decided to object to the granting of outline planning permission on eight grounds.

- A nuclear plant conflicted with the high amenity nature of the area.
- Cancer and leukemia risks to the local population.
- The bird sanctuary at Lady's Island Lake would be disrupted.
- Radioactive waste continued a national security risk which the 1963 act was not capable of dealing with.
- The added fresh water consumption would aggravate the already limited local supplies.
- The build up of radiation in local ecosystems presented a long-term hazard.
- Tourism would be severely disrupted.
- No provision is made for the long term storage of radioactive waste if export proved impossible.

The debate continued through the winter of 1974-1975 with the highlight for the NSA coming in February 1975 when two local students collected over 2,200 signatures against the nuclear plant in two weeks and presented them to the County secretary.

In October of 1975 the ESB announced that it was postponing the development of the plant due to the economic situation which had reduced the increase in demand for electricity. This marks the end of the first distinct phase of the controversy. The possibility of renewed debate when the economy recovered from the economic slump of the mid 1970s remained and the NSA remained intact and continued its watching brief on nuclear developments.

Alternative Energy

While the NSA provided a focus for concern which gradually turned into opposition, two groups came together in Dublin voicing concerns about the hazards of nuclear power and advocating alternative energy strategies.

In Dublin a Friends of the Earth group was established in 1974 and produced a series of information leaflets on nuclear power late in that year (Friends of the Earth, Ireland, 1974). These dealt with the technical details, history and unreliability of nuclear technology, the effects of radioactivity, and questions of insurance and alternative energy strategies.

Friends of the Earth (FoE) policy at this stage was to oppose the introduction of a Light Water Reactor (LWR) in Ireland until the technology was further evaluated and the Emergency Core Cooling System (EGGS) and waste storage problem resolved. They advocated contacting local representatives and informing them of the issues as well as personal energy conserving lifestyles.

In an attempt to expand the NSA into a larger and more effective lobby organisation, a group calling itself the Council for Nuclear Safety and Energy Resources Conservation (CONSERVE) was formed in Dublin in January 1975. This was a group of mainly technically qualified individuals and people with a professional interest in alternative energy strategies who they set themselves a somewhat different agenda. Their four objectives emphasised conservation of energy and changing institutional structures to promote a national energy policy.

Dr. Roy Johnson of Trinity College Dublin acted as convenor for a provisional committee of six people from Dublin and Wexford. A series of meetings were held in 1975 to produce a memorandum for circulation to public representatives. This document was completed in July (R. Johnson: *Legislation, Energy Conservation and the Balance of Payments*. CONSERVE memorandum, mimeo., 1975.) and argued that nuclear power is dangerous and inefficient. It also outlined the institutional and legislative barriers that existed which limited the development and efficient use of primary energy sources. It suggested that practical measures must be taken rather than mere exhortation to conserve energy (at that time the Department of Transport and Power was running a series of television commercials on the theme of 'use energy wisely'). It argued for the decentralisation of electricity generation and the industrial co-generation of heat and power. Combined heat and power stations were advocated while it warned against high grade natural gas on electricity generation.

This document is noticeable because it introduces ideas of energy analysis and end-use consideration which underlie the ideas of alternative energy strategies. These ideas were to be used later by groups like FoE to criticise the case for nuclear power. It further advocates the creation of separate independent centres of energy expertise and major changes in electricity pricing policy. It also suggests that the NEB be made independent of the Department of Transport and Power. A number of people connected with this group were later to become involved in the formation of the Irish branch of the Solar Energy Society (SESI). The roots of alternative energy ideas were set in 1975 in Dublin. Another document foreshadowed future developments. The largest Irish trade union, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) published a document on energy in 1975 (ITGWU: *Energy in Irish Society*. Dublin 1975). This emphasised the problems with nuclear technology and advocated a consideration of social factors including manpower training. They argued that nuclear power might prove a useful source of power but that it would not help to develop the skills of the Irish workforce. As yet, the ITGWU was not committed to opposing nuclear power

The Intervening Years

The Irish economy recovered in 1976 and 1977 from the economic slump of 1974 and 1975 and concomitantly energy demand increased. Fianna Fail, out of government since 1973, won the June 1977 general election and gained a large majority in the Dail. Armed with a very optimistic programme for economic expansion, heavily dependent on foreign borrowing, they foresaw a golden age of economic progress ahead. The plans inevitably called for an increase in energy consumption and before long the new energy minister, Desmond O'Malley, was keenly promoting nuclear power. The nuclear option had not been mentioned in any detail during the election and a wave of concern swept through opponents in the Autumn of 1977.

Before the election the NEB had moved to spacious new offices in Hatch Street in Dublin and its first chairman, Professor C.T.C. Dillon had moved on to become the ESB's chairman. The NEB's first secretary had also moved to the ESB while Dr. T. Murray moved in the opposite direction. Personnel changes like this one have been recurring events in other nuclear establishments around the globe and have led critics to doubt seriously the impartiality of regulatory agencies. *Irish Business* commented acidly:

Certainly the appointment of Professor Dillon from chairmanship of the Nuclear Energy Commission to chairman of the ESB is an indication that the government views both bodies as synonymous when in fact one is supposed to be the watchdog of the other's infant nuclear division.

The nuclear debate did not entirely cease during 1976 and 1977 although with the postponement of the ESB plans the immediacy was removed. Articles continued to appear in the media on the topic both supporting and opposing nuclear power. Dr. Robert Blackith of TCD, who played a major role later, emerged on the scene in 1975 and published his critical book on the subject of nuclear power promotion in Ireland the following year (R.E. Blackith: *The Power that Corrupts*. Dublin: Dublin University Press 1976.). With academic interests in zoology and the mathematical modelling of biological systems and a concern for social issues and conservation, he became probably the most articulate and determined public speaker against nuclear power in Ireland. Alerted by what he considered a one-sided approach by the ESB and pro-nuclear spokespeople he was suspicious that 'all was not well'. Research into the question of nuclear technology and the inability of the ESB representatives to answer his questions adequately confirmed his fears. His first public statements on the subject came in a debate about the NIES proposal to build a Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor (SGHWR) at Kilchief in Co. Antrim which was broadcast by BBC (Ulster) TV in December 1975. This debate was the culmination of a series of lectures organised by Professor Newbould of the New University of Ulster in Coleraine on the nuclear issue. The NIES proposals were scuttled by a British inquiry into the finances and demand projections of the NIES in 1976 before the plans were far advanced.

The Controversy Rekindled...

In November 1977 *The Irish Times* published a letter by David Byres and Andy O'Connell, who were subsequently to become involved in reforming the Friends of the Earth, which succinctly summarised the political implications of the debate which until then had scarcely been commented on amid the talk of melt downs, radiation damage and health effects.

The question of the Carnsore reactor is not merely a technical decision, to be left to the ESB's engineers, but a truly political one, which will determine whether we head towards a resource-wasteful, hierarchical society much as today, or a diverse, small scale, truly democratic system based on 'soft' energy and a simpler life style.

A feature article by Dick Grogan in *The Irish Times* in January 1978 quoted a Solar Energy Society of Ireland (SESI) statement calling for a full scale examination of the nuclear implications and emphasising the need to use each available energy source to maximum effectiveness. The profound social implications of energy decisions were also noted in this statement and Dick Grogan goes on to caution against the abrupt dismissal of opponents. In this context he quotes Dr. Guido Brunner's infamous outburst against the anti-nuclear movement

... those who rail against nuclear energy and at the same time plead for full employment should realise that there is a direct connection between the two...

These jackbooted nuclear objectors carry on their revolutionary trade in the guise of peaceful ecologists ... Some are against that form of society because they dream of a return to the simple life and a no-growth, sandal wearing society – not a convincing model.

With concern about the nuclear issue growing, people began discussing how to organise to resist the government's plans. Late in 1977 a group of concerned people attended a meeting in TCD organised by the campus group of the Student Christian Movement. Dr. Blackith addressed the group on the dangers and problems of nuclear power and it was agreed that they should establish a group to oppose it. Subsequent meetings were held in TCD and later in a building owned by the Student Christian Movement which was run as a resource centre for minority groups and small political and pressure groups. The group adopted the name Friends of the Earth again and it was decided to focus the group on the campaign against nuclear power, although subsequent environmental campaigns on other topics were not ruled out.

To set the campaign in motion they organised a seminar in TCD in February 1978 at which speakers included John Carroll of the ITGWU, Sean MacBride, Dr. Blackith, Michael Flood of London FoE and Brian Hurley. These presentations were edited and printed as a booklet which included the standard FoE statement on the Carnsore proposal criticising government energy policy and demanding a public inquiry into the issue (FoE: *Nuclear Power: The Case Against*. Dublin 1978.). This group held regular weekly meetings in the spring of 1978 and drew increasing attendances at their meetings. They started printing a monthly newsletter and enrolling formal membership and became for a few months the focus of opposition to nuclear power. The group appointed an ad hoc committee, which included two Ph.D. research students in biology who devoted much of their time to working on the issue, and favoured a classic pressure group/information/lobby campaign approach to the issue. Many activists with more overtly political backgrounds challenged this and left FoE to organise more militant political actions against the Carnsore project.

...and Develops

Mr. O'Malley came under attack from within his own party at the annual Fianna Fail Ard Fheis (annual party convention). A composite motion from a number of local branches opposed nuclear power. In reply he stated that he favoured open debate on the subject and had instructed the ESB to release information to 'responsible bodies'. He also intimated that if people in Wexford remained in opposition to the nuclear plant then he would authorise its siting in Co. Sligo, where the local population would welcome the construction jobs.

Barry Desmond, a Labour party Dail member, introduced a private members bill in the Dail on 21 February 1978 calling for the establishment of a select joint committee of the Dail and the Senate to review the nuclear plant proposals and hold public hearings on selected topics of energy policy. This bill, however, still operated within the framework of the 'energy gap' philosophy. This planning perspective remained the under-lying argument in favour of nuclear power.

The point that emerges clearly from the debate at this time is the widespread agreement within the major parties on the 'need' for large increases in energy used to fuel economic growth. At this stage Mr. O'Malley only really differed from the opposition in the degree of his enthusiasm for nuclear power and his optimism about economic growth rates. The conventional wisdom of industrial development and its consequences for energy planning and public policy were not challenged with the exception of a contribution by Mr. John Horgan. In addition, because this conventional wisdom was so widely accepted, the actual amount of understanding and knowledge shown by the members of the Dail was small; few members had apparently done much thinking or research on energy issues. Not until two years later after much public debate on the nuclear issue had occurred, did Fine Gael incorporate conservation and alternative energy ideas into their energy policies, and rethink some of the long taken for granted assumptions underlying the conventional wisdom as epitomised by the 'energy gap' philosophy.

Political Opposition

In March and April 1978 the FoE weekly meetings drew increasing attendances and debates over the best way of opposing nuclear power developed. The positions polarised approximately into those who wanted to follow a route of militant protest action, with street theatre, agitational propaganda leaflets and demonstrations and those who preferred to maintain FoE as a lobby group with information and legal approaches through the planning process. The issue finally came to a vote on proposed constitutions and the lobby approach won this technicality. In the meantime some of the more radical activists, inspired by the massive demonstrations and attempted site occupations in Europe in previous years had made contact with NSA members and the emergent Wexford Town-based 'Nuclear Opposition Wexford' (NOW) and proposed the idea of a large rally at the site on Carnsore Point. Other groups were established in Cork, Limerick and Galway, among other places, in the spring. Public meetings increased in frequency and speakers were in great demand. The newspaper correspondence columns filled out with contributions on the energy question. A loose collective formed to organise the rally which was planned for August. Noticeable was the involvement of many folk musicians who offered their services to raise money at benefit concerts and who worked and played hard at the rally itself. This cultural aspect was an integral part of the ANM and added tremendously to its appeal among people who could identify with this medium and with anti-nuclear protest songs, if not with the arcane technicalities of reactor design and epidemiological statistics.

The Dublin FoE group launched a national appeal for people to lodge objections with the Wexford County council which had still not come to a planning decision on the ESB's application for planning permission. In June the Quaker Peace Committee lodged a formal objection with Wexford Co. council to the ESB's application. Concerned about nuclear waste, proliferation and decommissioning it says,

By the beginning of the next century we could find ourselves with a large dangerous, radioactive and heavily guarded complex which would be an eyesore, fill no useful purpose, threaten the lives of people in the area, and would require not only a permanent military guard, but the construction of adequate security measures and the necessary facilities for the people guarding such a 'white elephant'.

The summer months brought the controversy to a head with the publication of the government Green Paper on Energy and the first large rally by the ANM at Carnsore Point.

A Hot Summer

In July the government found support for its position on nuclear power in a statement from the Institution of Engineers in Ireland which argued that,

... the economic future of Ireland depends upon commitment to the generation of electricity from nuclear fission to the extent of at least 30% of its requirements by the end of this century.

Also in July, the long awaited government Green Paper on Energy made its appearance. This document outlined the government's rationale for nuclear power but excluded from detailed consideration many other possible avenues for energy policies.

The Green Paper contained many figures that had been presented earlier by Dr. Richard Kavanagh in a paper to a conference on energy options in a European context organised by the Irish Council of the European Movement held in Malahide in May. These figures had been harshly criticised by many people at that meeting but they were retained in the Green Paper. Unfortunately published in a light brown cover, one critic, writing in the music magazine *Hot Press*, dismissed the Green Paper as more 'the colour of diluted bullshit'. This article by the paper's Jack Lynch went on to comment,

Nuclear power is the most destructive expression of international technocratic capitalism. It also reveals perfectly the fatal contradiction of the same exploitative power which puts profits before people.

With criticism of the Green Paper mounting and FoE finding a major flaw in its calculations the ESB announced that it was commissioning a survey on the acceptability of nuclear power among the general public. As plans for the weekend rally at Carnsore Point were hecticly finalised, six local doctors issued a statement against the plant.

Thousands of people converged on the rally site by car, bus and specially hired trains for the weekend of 18-20 August. Estimates vary widely as to how many people made it to the site but a figure of 25,000 is often mentioned. The media gave the protest wide coverage including photographs on the front page of the national dailies and television coverage by both the BBC and RTE.

The free festival was organised in a completely ad hoc way with volunteers, of which there was no shortage, doing all the jobs that needed to be done, from patrolling the danger spots on the beach to manning the crèche and supervising the carparks. The rally drew people in far greater numbers than the organising collective had believed possible. Run as a free forum for the exchange of information it drew support from traditional musicians who provided sound equipment and entertainment. The local parish committee set up a successful food stall and raised money for parish activities. Many environmental and political groups set up stalls, sold badges, leaflets, magazines and books and exchanged information. Following a large open air meeting on Sunday (20 August) a procession of those attending the rally built a memorial cairn to all those who had suffered or been killed by nuclear technology. The rally created a festive but determined atmosphere among those present. A number of 'sign up' sheets were posted near the information caravan and people signed names and addresses on a county basis to start local groups and to put people in contact with others in their areas who were concerned. The organising collective disbanded, its job done, and a plethora of local groups started campaigning in the following months including groups as far away as Derry and Belfast. FoE's

campaign of filing objections to Wexford Co. Council received a boost and after the rally one member claimed that 7,500 letters had by that time been lodged with the council.

At the Sunday afternoon meeting the idea of a mass movement with autonomous groups and no formal centralised structure, which had been strongly advocated by many groups, came to the fore in the open air meeting which had no formal chairperson but just a microphone at the stage which speakers used in turn to address the audience. Speakers included locals, people from various anti-nuclear groups, activists from abroad, and members of political groups. A large windmill was on site provided by Alternative Energy Limited of Galway.

The organisers maintained very cordial relations with the local police, some of whom were also opposed to the project, a very different situation from the continental experience and one that amazed European activists in subsequent years. On a number of occasions, in subsequent years, however, plainclothes 'special branch' and drug squad police were 'escorted' peacefully from the site, their presence not being appreciated by the more politically aware elements at the rallies.

The government reaction was noticeable by its absence until ten days later when Mr. O'Malley issued a small statement repeating that an inquiry was unnecessary and unjustified. John Kelly of Fine Gael was more concerned and the rally had obviously worried him. He warned that if the government did not concede to a public inquiry, the protest might escalate:

To continue to refuse it, and to treat those who seek it like children, is the course which may eventually leave us with something like the new Tokyo Airport shambles on our hands at Carnsore.

The national daily papers were also concerned and called again for an inquiry. Although maintaining his support for the nuclear proposal John Kelly expressed his fears again a few months later when he questioned the wisdom of not holding an inquiry to 'allay the fears of the public',

This is a peculiarly explosive issue, and the Minister is going the wrong way about it. There should be an inquiry to set people's minds at rest, and we should be careful not to allow subversive elements the excuse of joining the protest.

Despite the massive opposition O'Malley remained apparently unmoved. In October he announced that he would be submitting his case in favour of nuclear power to the Cabinet within a few weeks. He added in typical style another dismissal of the need for an inquiry.

'If there was anything to inquire into, I would have no objection. But I do not think there is.'
And later; *I am open to be influenced by any real arguments. But I have not encountered any genuine rebuttal of the obvious advantages of getting 15% of our electricity needs from nuclear sources by the end of the 1980s.*

Showing either a remarkable ignorance, or a deliberate avoidance of the sophisticated case against nuclear technology, and the glaring holes in the Green Paper, which FoE were busy documenting he continued,

I want to assure people as best I can that there can be no objective grounds for (that) fear. 'Nuclear' is associated with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the atom bomb, but this is fundamentally wrong, for this is abuse of nuclear power. A nuclear station will in fact be safer even than a coal fired station and will be better in terms of cleanliness in human health and environment.

In early November the Confederation of Irish Industry issued a statement in favour of using coal and nuclear power to provide the energy it claimed was essential for industrial development. While O'Malley continued to be intransigent the ANM took to the streets and the political meeting places.

The Amorphous Network

The ecologists use the word which probably best describes their organisation-network. The ANM is an amorphous collection of formal organisations, individuals, local groups, small research groups, lobbyists, newsletters, magazines, dissident scientists and counter-cultural collectives. Imbued in some places with formal lobby group ideas, standing committees, respected presidents, sponsors and all the other paraphernalia of pressure group politics; and in others with the 1960s ideas of non-structured participatory democracy and mass meetings with an overt political dimension. Still other parts include ideas of affinity groups, non-violent action and consensual decision-making.

The National ANM

Following the Carnsore anti-nuclear power show in August many local groups organised meetings, debates, self-education sessions, petitions and demonstrations in all parts of the country. A series of county meetings were held to bring activists from scattered groups together. Large meetings in Cork and Dublin included stormy exchanges on how to organise the movement. The meeting in the Mansion House in Dublin on 23 September produced a loud condemnation of the ESB who had bulldozed the memorial cairn on Carnsore Point a few days earlier on the grounds that it was dangerous to children! The NSA was also furious at this insensitive act. In November a group of actors and musicians including the Freddie White Band and Christy Moore organised a whistle stop 'Roadshow' tour of the country playing music, anti-nuclear songs and performing a play which included not a little character assassination of government ministers. This provided a lead up to the second major anti-nuclear meeting held in the State theatre in Dublin in November. Prior to this an anti-nuclear newsletter was organised. The newsletter idea was to provide all groups with a forum to communicate with each other. Each group sent a gestetnered sheet to an agreed place and the group organising its production collated the submissions and circulated them to all groups. Although the scheme worked for a few issues to coincide with the three monthly national meetings it never functioned perfectly smoothly, and the content and production of the newsletter was less than originally intended.

The national 'Monster Meeting' held in Dublin on 25 November 1978 was an all day affair with a loosely structured agenda for discussion, to be followed in the evening by the last performance of the anti-nuclear roadshow. Many motions on questions of organisation were discussed and attempts to put issues to votes were not very successful. To some participants the open unstructured nature of this meeting seemed like chaos, to others the very lack of formal rules was exciting and encouraging them to become involved. The local groups remained operating autonomously, organising meetings, preparing leaflets, doing street theatre, etc. In Dublin in particular the autumn of 1978 was a time of intense activity between meetings, benefit concerts and discos, leaf letting campaigns, demonstrations and street theatre.

A third national anti-nuclear power mass meeting was held on a cold snowy Saturday in February 1979 in Wexford town. The Wexford organisers had arranged a formal format with an agenda and a chairperson. They had requested that each group around the country send three voting delegates to make decisions. This arrangement was quickly dispensed with when the meeting started and a series of small discussion groups formed to discuss nuclear power and issues arising out of the previous few months experience. The debate over structures and organisation remained an issue throughout the ANM in Ireland in subsequent months.

O'Malley Gives Ground

Apart from the numerous local actions staged by the ANM, nationally opposition continued to mount FoE published their critique of the government Green Paper in October 1978, cheekily entitling it '*Energy Ireland: A Commonsense View*', FoE, Dublin 1978. In twenty-four tightly packed pages they demolished many of the Green Paper's arguments and introduced well documented material to argue that a soft path approach was feasible and desirable. The SESI published their '*Towards Energy Independence*' in December (Dublin 1978) outlining the possibilities for an ambitious programme of renewable energy source development which would make nuclear power irrelevant.

This document set out in detail a phased plan to develop native renewable energy resources. By using Ireland's traditional agricultural infrastructure and technology developed to process turf to build a large bio-mass programme, and by developing a large grid of wind powered electricity generation systems, they presented a plausible technical case for energy self-sufficiency early in the twenty-first century, even if energy demand continued to rise. Also in the Autumn of 1978 Mathew Hussey and Carol Craig published a short book criticising the Green Paper. Illustrated with pointed cartoons by Martyn Turner, this book attempted to explain simply the anti-nuclear position (M. Hussey and C. Craig: *Nuclear Ireland?* Dublin: Co-op 1978.). The Labour Party produced a statement on nuclear power prepared by Barry Desmond, the Party's spokesperson on Energy, in which he deplored the failure of the government to concede to a public inquiry. This statement also said that the reduction of energy policy debates to a choice of either coal or nuclear powered plants was unacceptable. In November and December 1978 RTE radio ran a number of programmes on nuclear power. This was followed in

January 1979 by a special edition of the popular TV show 'The Late Late Show' devoted entirely to the issue. A stormy, controversial show resulted with a heavily anti-nuclear audience protesting strongly against the statements made by Dr. McAuley and Mr. Burke, the Minister of State for Energy, who were on the panel. Dr. Blackith, Dr. Petra Kelly and John Carroll amongst others opposed the nuclear plans and musical interludes included Christy Moore singing anti-nuclear songs. The proceedings were interrupted frequently by comments, heckling and booing from the placard waving audience.

In January 1979 the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission withdrew its endorsement of the Executive Summary of the Rasmussen Report and FoE were quick to demand the withdrawal of the ESB status report then being widely circulated, and the Government Green Paper both of which drew heavily on the Reactor Safety Study (The Rasmussen Report). Pressure for a public inquiry continued to grow as the opposition in the Dail repeatedly demanded one and other sectors of society including the Medical Union joined the chorus. Pressure within the rank and file of Fianna Fail grew too and at the Ard Fheis in February 1979 Mr. O'Malley grudgingly bowed to the pressure and announced that there would be a public inquiry into nuclear power and energy policy. As one journalist later put it,

Energy Minister O'Malley hated every moment of announcing the establishment of a special tribunal to consider the ESB's nuclear plans. The official statement patronisingly allowed that there would be 'freedom for all points of view – even the most irrational – to be expressed'.

Anti-nuclear groups were quick to respond favourably but hoped for wide terms of reference which included social and economic questions. The FoE statement, issued hurriedly from their annual conference which was being held in TCD that weekend, said

We hope that the public inquiry will cover the full implications of energy policy in the areas of jobs, balance of payments and security of resource supply among other.

The programme announced by Mr. O'Malley involved a number of stages. First, the ESB was to complete its planning to the draft specification stage. Second, an interdepartmental committee would study energy policy financing, environmental factors, etc., and issue a report to lay the groundwork for the tribunal. Finally the inquiry tribunal would publish its report following which, presumably, the government would make a decision on the matter.

In late March the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania happened, adding support to the anti-nuclear cause. In April Gerald Foley, the Sligo-born author of *The Energy Question* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1976) wrote a feature article in *The Irish Times* arguing that the Harrisburg incident suggested that a major rethink was needed on the issue of nuclear safety and suggesting that Ireland should delay its decision on nuclear power.

The Controversy Continues

During the summer of 1979 the ANM put its energies into organising another major festival at the Carnsore site. The second rally was a smaller affair than the previous year but there was greater political content and more organised workshops in which the connections between nuclear power, uranium mining, toxic waste and noxious industries were explored. The media reporting was less extensive this time but one *Irish Times* correspondent trivialised the whole affair with comments on sunbathers and balloons while a tabloid went looking for nude swimmers. *The Irish Times* received a barrage of objections from outraged activists. This problem recurred; in 1980 *The Cork Examiner* printed two thirds of a page of photographs of painted faces and small children without any explanation, implying that only clowns and kids were present.

Meanwhile the government had further annoyed nuclear opponents and further damaged its legitimacy with an announcement by the Taoiseach that two reactors would be needed if economic growth continued. He subsequently denied that such comments pre-empted the findings of the Inquiry. The NSA was furious and the secretary, Helen Scrine, said that the announcement reduced the proposed inquiry to 'an expensive and futile irrelevance' and argued that the EEC now ran Irish energy policy. The NSA reiterated its call for a referendum on the issue. Mr. O'Malley continued to show his contempt for the opposition and the inquiry that he had conceded:

People talk of nuclear power as if it existed... But in fact we just do not have a choice if economic growth is to continue.

The EEC stated publicly that the European Investment Bank would give loans covering half of the costs of a nuclear power plant in Ireland on the same day in June as An Taisce (The National Heritage Trust) published its major policy paper suggesting that any nuclear decision should be postponed.

In July 1979, Mr. Lynch, in answer to questions in the Dail, said that effectively Wexford Co. Council would be relieved of its planning obligations with regard to the Carnsore project and that new legislation would be drafted to deal with the situation.

The EEC heads of state summit meeting took place in Dublin in November 1979 and a small group of activists in Dublin occupied the EEC commission offices to mark the occasion and to make a dramatic protest against nuclear power and the EEC's role in its promotion. This incident resulted in nine arrests as the Gardai forcefully removed the seven occupiers and two supporters outside who failed to 'get out of the way quickly enough'. The EEC heads of government meeting also produced an anti-EEC and anti-nuclear march that evening in Dublin. The government in another small but significant step announced that the special legislation on the inquiry was now being delayed until the findings on the Three Mile Ireland accident became available.

A New Year, a New Minister, a New Policy

With increasing economic gloom appearing ahead and a down-ward revision of energy forecasts, Mr. Colley announced that he was postponing plans for a nuclear plant at Carnsore. He further announced that his energy policy would emphasise conservation and speeded up development of alternative forms of energy supply. The ESB also seemed less enthusiastic and at last the ESB chairman Caries Dillon had come to realise more fully the political dimensions of the issue.

... nuclear power brings with it enormous problems ... the intrinsic safety of a whole series of nuclear related problems, Nuclear power has a much wider dimension than mere technical problems It raises fundamental political, social, economic and environmental questions.

Mr. Colley was much less sanguine about nuclear energy than his predecessor who continued to promote it. Mr. Colley's tone was completely different:

As far as I am concerned the evidence available in regard to the safety of nuclear stations is not thoroughly convincing.

In the spring of 1980 the Department of Energy pushed ahead with four pilot windpower projects and showed more interest in biomass fuel production. The result of the Swedish referendum in March 1980 offered little reprieve to the battered nuclear industry in that country and placed it under closer public scrutiny. The resistance to French government plans to build a nuclear complex at Plogoff in Brittany was also in the news that spring.

Despite the decision to postpone the plans for Carnsore Point, Fine Gael were still not happy and John Kelly demanded that the inquiry go ahead to investigate aspects other than safety issues so as to leave everyone better informed on the issue. In April 1980 Mr. Colley again stated that he wanted more information on nuclear safety and in June he initiated a major energy conservation campaign. In May it was hinted that the government was prepared to drop the nuclear plans altogether. In May also those arrested for occupying the EEC offices came to trial and received a two year suspended sentence.

In May 1980 Fine Gael published a major policy paper on energy which argued that nuclear power was unnecessary and undesirable. They argued in favour of using biomass, conservation and efficiency improvements presenting many arguments that the FoE and SESI, not to mention the earlier CONSERVE group had presented years before.

Despite Mr. Colley's reversal of the nuclear policy, two system analysts in the National Board for Science and Technology had different ideas, and their 1980 report *Energy Supply and Demand: The Next 30 Years* still operated in the framework of rapidly increasing future demand requiring large projects to meet these forecasts (R. Kavanagh and J. Brady, Dublin 1980). FoE in Dublin, who were slowly rebuilding a nucleus of people to pick up environmental causes again following a dispersal of key personnel early in 1979, did not let this pass and publishes a critical article in *The Irish Times* arguing that the basic reasoning of the model was faulty. They pointed out its lack of consideration of government policies on controls, prices and incentives and the avoidance of the socio-economic dimensions of energy policy. John Brady and Richard Kavanagh replied a week later-arguing that low

or soft technologies couldn't meet forecasted demands and that their report was only a discussion document, not a policy paper.

John Carroll and other trade unionists, including representatives of the ESB's officers' association tried once more to pass an anti-nuclear resolution in the annual conference of the Trade Union Congress in July but the congress still insisted on keeping the option open. The revival of the peace movement in Europe in 1980 was marked by a number of ceremonies around the country on Hiroshima Day in August 1980, organised by the reformed Irish CND, the NSA and other groups.

The third annual rally at Carnsore Point in August was a smaller affair than those in previous years and the workshops reflected the influence of new issues with uranium mining, nuclear weapons, and noxious industry being important themes of discussion. The music content was played down this time following requests by a number of groups concerned about its perceived 'pop festival' image. Non-violence seminars and workshops on trade union matters organised by the recently formed Trade Union Anti-Nuclear Campaign (TUANC) were well attended.

The most noticeable silence in the whole nuclear controversy in Ireland was from the Roman Catholic church. Despite expressed concern by many about the moral issues raised by the nuclear fuel cycle, the church did not make a major statement on this issue in 1978 or 1979 when the public debate was most active. This reflects in part the changing role of the church in Ireland, its partial withdrawal from direct social intervention in addition to its traditional reluctance to become involved in issues identified as obviously 'political'. The 'moral' concerns that the church deals with centre on issues of personal and sexual morality and education related to family structure and behaviour, the family unit being seen as the basic and most important unit in society. Apart from calls to take action against poverty and unemployment and statements on housing issues, especially in the Dublin area, the church has recently refrained from commenting at length on many detailed aspects of public policy. In September the churches finally emerged with a statement on the nuclear topic. Arguing that nuclear waste is a major problem they suggested that no nuclear project be undertaken until a safe way of disposing of nuclear waste was developed.

Late in 1980 the issue of rebuilding the electricity grid inter-connector with the NIES system was raised again. Also on the agenda of new proposals were schemes to develop a pipeline gas grid connecting North and South. Running against the tide of current opinion in 1981 in Ireland, the European Centre for Public Enterprise, which includes representatives of a number of large Irish semi-state bodies, issued a report in April advocating nuclear power in Ireland. George Colley went to Denmark early in 1981 and was given a tour of their alternative energy systems including several huge windmills. In April Ray Burke, Minister of Environment, in the new cabinet, announced that the 1976 draft building regulations, which included insulation guidelines, would be operationalised from early 1982, and the ESB announced that it was seriously thinking of district heating schemes in Dublin and conversion of some plants to combined heat and power stations. In the previous month the ESB had announced that R ISO, the Danish national research agency, had presented them with a report on health, safety and environmental factors concerning the proposed Carnsore plant. They also admitted that the demand for electricity in Ireland had declined 1.8% in the previous year because of the economic recession which was by now once again gripping the Irish economy and also because of increased consumer opposition to rate increases on electricity bills. Despite the on-going research work on the site and the continuing debate about energy policy, for the foreseeable future there will be no nuclear plant in Co. Wexford.

The ANM continued to function into 1981, but a 'mass' meeting held in Cork in March could muster barely 50 people. Nevertheless a smaller Carnsore festival was held in August 1981 as much to maintain tradition as to oppose a plant on the site.

The Radicals

Patriarchal society is fundamentally aggressive, competitive and hierarchical. Contemporary high technology can be seen as its apogee, concentrating, as it does the power and profit in the hands of a small elite of technocrats; their attitude to the earth is one of exploitation, of domination as opposed to dwelling in and with it. Trained in the methods of so-called scientific 'detachment' they detach themselves utterly from the implications of their technological toys Long term risks (even short term), damage to the environment, dangers to human health, are all dismissed in favour of immediate 'effectiveness' or to put it more bluntly, the quickest profit.

... the anti-nuclear movement is not a defensive reaction, against something which would cause enormous damage in the event of an accident. The movement is rather against the hierarchical, computerised, authoritarian state which takes decisions by reference to its own peculiar values Thus the movement is a political and social movement... It is not a pressure group, it is a movement of cultural revolution and social struggle.

Douglas Johnson: *More than a Protest*. In: *New Statesman*, August 1980.

Mary McNamara. In: *Wicca* No. 8.

The structure of the movement itself, its organisation and type of leadership is consistent with the style of politics chosen by much of the movement. The attempt to create organisational structures where people could actively participate without an authoritarian hierarchy arising around and above them has been a cornerstone of the movement.

S. Vogel: *The Limits of Protest: A Critique of the Anti-Nuclear Movement*. In: *Socialist Review* 54, 1980, 130.

The second phase of the Irish ANM was a much broader campaign than the first phase. Widespread public support was gained, numerous established groups made statements in favour of a public inquiry and at the spearhead of resistance was an active and vocal mass movement which established itself at the first anti-nuclear rally at Carnsore Point in August 1978.

This chapter deals with the political debate within the movement and shows how the ideas of mass democracy and a rejection of the established political process permeates the ANM. Barkan's analysis of the U.S. ANM is a useful starting point. He divided the internal tactical and political debates into four headings:

- consensus decision-making and political organisation,
- non-violence and civil disobedience,
- multiple issues versus single issues,
- the use of the court system by activists.

This chapter deals with the first two of these factors and also considers briefly the approach of activists to the government public inquiry. Chapter 13 deals with the question of multiple issues. Only 10 activists came to trial for activities relating to the ANM in Ireland and the questions that Barkan raises are not of importance.

Organisational questions were central foci of concern in the Irish ANM, and while questions of violence and civil disobedience were never seriously faced in tactical situations on a large scale, they were central to discussions of strategy in many groups. Mass democracy and participatory political activity were considered essential by many activists in the building of a movement to oppose nuclear power and the technocratic state. Before discussing these issues it is worth noting some of the key groups. In the early stages the Dublin FoE group was a focus of activity. The Revolutionary Struggle group (RS) through their activists scattered throughout the country and through their periodical *Rebel* were ardent proponents of mass democracy. At the height of the activity, late in 1978 there were as many as fifty local groups around the country opposing nuclear power. These constitute the 'mass movement', the key component in the campaign against nuclear power.

Cork FoE and the Tralee Nuclear Opposition Workshop were important in the 1979 attempts to establish a delegate structure to co-ordinate the local groups. The Wexford NSA was still campaigning in the local area throughout this period.

Mass Movement or Lobby Group?

Early in 1978 the embryo ANM organised in Dublin under the umbrella of the reformed FoE group. A major debate developed over how best to enlarge the opposition to nuclear power. The debate polarised between those who wanted to build a lobby organisation and those who wished to take a more militant approach. In making a distinction between the 'lobbyists' and the mass movement advocates, it would be a mistake to see it as a split between conservative committee types and the rest. It was widely agreed in the early FoE group that the organisation should be as decentralised and as non-bureaucratic as possible. A special meeting was organised on 6 April 1978 to thrash out questions of organisation, tactics, political philosophy, non-violence and other issues. For this meeting three discussion papers were prepared; one by two members of the self-appointed ad hoc committee of FoE, one identified with the RS group and some other activists, and a third by some unaffiliated anarchist activists.

Taking these in reverse order; the anarchist document suggested that a separate anti-nuclear movement should be established so that it would not be diluted by FoE's other environmentalist interests. It also argued for direct action and suggested that it should not limit itself to only legal approaches. On the question of organisation it advocated a recallable rotating facilitating committee.

The document identified with the RS group set its perspectives on political ecology clearly in the first paragraph:

Friends of the Earth is an organisation concerned primarily with ecology – for us that implies that the organisation sees, and intends to fight against, the misuse and destruction of nature and its resources – for that misuse and destruction are against the interests of the working people

and later,

Members of Friends of the Earth, whether democratic, progressive, socialist or communist, or perhaps considering themselves apolitical, agree though on one thing: that the economic and technological so-called development effectively underdevelops people, all over the world, through illiteracy, disease, poverty, unemployment, war, plunder, and the destruction of finite resources

Further, that such underdevelopment while serving primarily the short term interests of rulers acts against the long-term interests of humanity. And if that is to change, it would be necessary to build a new way of life based on human concepts of growth, control of technology, understanding and respect for nature – for the interests of the majority of the people.

On the question of organisation they argued that few, except those involved with capital intensive industry in Ireland, stood to gain from nuclear power but that confrontation with them was inevitable. Hence they argued '...our strength will depend and rest on the depth and broadness of mass support for our projects.'

From this perspective they derived their policy aims for the organisation:

Friends of the Earth will oppose the building of a nuclear power plant in Ireland by any means necessary. In other words, we resolve that we are a serious organisation which is going to stand up and be counted and not going to disappear or back down at the first sign of confrontation with the State.

They at this stage went on to advocate a movement of local autonomous groups deciding aims, etc., at 5 general assembly of all members. For day to day tasks of co-ordination they suggested a small secretariat to be supplemented by special committees to organise such things as finance, publications, security fund raising, etc. Tactics were to be decided at the local level.

The third document was prepared by two members of the central FoE committee. This placed FoE in the context of the developing 'embryonic political movement' around ecological principles, drawing together a number of different threads including;

...the need for greater harmony between man and the life supporting ecosystems on which he depends, political and economic decentralisation, non-violence, sustainable self-sufficient communities, small human scale industry and business, alternative technology, etc.

The outlined objectives included generating a sense of personal responsibility for the environment, making environmental issues the subject of widespread debate. On the question of legality:

We intend to campaign against specific projects which damage the environment, or squander our resources, and fight for their correction by every legal means at our disposal.

In conclusion, the FoE committee emphasised that the most important aim was the campaign for the universal adoption of sustainable and equitable life styles. The methods to be used to achieve these goals were fairly standard lobby tactics. These were building a powerful unaligned environmental lobby, lobbying to change laws and using existing laws to defend the environment, making people aware of their rights and taking direct action 'to conserve and promote considerate use of the Earth's natural resources.' In addition, they wished to set up channels to focus energies into these projects and provide logistical support for them. They left the precise question of committees open, saying that a loose federation of autonomous groups could work out the precise details of this at some unspecified future date.

A call for a vote on the documents at the meeting was stalled by the insistence by some that only those who had paid their membership dues should be allowed to vote and that the vote should be a postal one.

The anarchist discussion document was not included in the subsequent mailing. The RS document was slightly changed, the section on confrontation and 'by any means necessary' was changed to the less militant form of;

FoE will oppose the building of a nuclear power plant in Ireland by any means deemed necessary by the members of the organisation after due consideration of the prevailing conditions and fully democratic debate and decision making.

The document prepared by the FoE committee was more drastically changed prior to circulation. An introduction was added saying that there was a disagreement over organisational questions.

These differences crystallised around the issue of non-violent means 'vs' 'by any means possible' in achieving the objectives of Friends of the Earth ... We feel this issue is crucial to the credibility and success of Friends of the Earth Ireland as an environmental lobby group.

Here then is the nub of the political issue summarised in the appeal for support mailed to the membership. They added a formal constitution to the ballot which summarised their ideas of a non-aligned environmental lobby group with a formal national co-ordinating committee and annual gathering. The postal vote subsequently favoured this constitution but events had overtaken this debate in Dublin by the time it was formally decided by ballot. Those more in favour of a militant approach gradually drifted away from FoE meetings and connected with the loose collective which was exploring the possibilities of a major anti-nuclear rally in Wexford. The debate was to continue and acrimonious exchanges were still to come. A few months later a member of the FoE committee hid hundreds of publicity leaflets for the Carnsore festival in a cupboard while nobody was looking. At issue was the slogan 'Working people stand up and Fight' printed on the leaflet to the attribution of the leaflet to Friends of the Earth Ireland. Concerned with the question of the image of the group the committee member decided to prevent its circulation.

Many of the FoE personnel thought that the Rally was an impossible project which was doomed to failure. While not opposed to the idea, they took no part in the organisation and planning of the event which was done by a loose collective with members drawn mainly from Wexford and Dublin.

The Carnsore Rally

The Carnsore rally was the first and arguably the most successful attempt to put the libertarian ideal of mass organisation into practice in the Irish ANM. Despite, or perhaps because of, the lack of a formal organisation structure, it was a real success and there was no shortage of volunteers to do the logistical work and musicians to provide entertainment. The festival generated a spirit of hope and purpose amongst those present and some were to unabashedly claim that the weekend was the greatest 'high' of their lives. The whole event was a new departure in Irish politics. One journalist wrote:

No radical political protest of the past ten years so caught the public imagination or so successfully spanned the chasms between 'alternative society' advocates, flower power hangovers, constitutional liberals and revolutionary Marxists. They were united against the nuclear power station proposed for the wind blasted and beautiful Carnsore Point.

The tent city was the subject of extensive pictorial coverage in the national media and on BBC Television news. Groups around the country hired trains and buses to bring thousands of supporters to the site. A perpetual traffic jam resulted, especially on the Sunday afternoon, as many day trippers arrived to swell the crowds and join the march to build the ceremonial cairn on the ESB site.

The format of the festival is indicative of the philosophy under lying its inception. There was no central organising focus. A rather irregularly manned information caravan and a small stage in one of the large marquees served as focal points for the volunteers who arrived early to prepare the site. No press facilities were provided as no one had any intent of turning the event into one staged for the media. Reporters were forced to contact individuals from the various groups and conduct informal interviews to elicit statements. Also no press passes were issued. The press were forced to park with everyone else and walk onto the site. Food was laid on by a number of groups including a local parish organisation, raising money for parish activities. Volunteers manned the car parks, crèches, and beach patrols and picked up garbage at regular intervals.

Not everyone was completely happy. A number of feminists were disappointed at the lack of awareness of those present of the women's issue and overtly sexist attitudes which some men showed. The national ANM started at the rally, the large meeting on the Sunday afternoon is considered as the first mass meeting of the movement. These were organised on approximately a three monthly basis and rotated around the country to different geographical locations. A national sign up list was also posted and many interested people from most counties signed their names and addresses to start opposition groups around the country. These lists were duly typed up and sent to county co-ordinators who were hopefully to take the next steps and organise county meetings. The lack of formal organisation and a central office reflected the ideology of the activists, strongly emphasising personal responsibility and initiative in organisation.

Debates over tactics and politics continued in the movement and in the autumn of 1978 the Cork group split to form two groups with one faction going for a more militant approach organising demonstrations in housing estates and benefit concerts while the other faction emphasised the more traditional lobby approaches. In Dublin in September there was a major meeting to discuss the organisation of the ANM which came to a rather inconclusive ending. The next major focus of the movement was at the second national mass meeting in Dublin in November. 1978.

Motion Sickness

The second mass (or 'Monster Meeting' as they were sometimes advertised) meeting of the ANM took place in the State cinema in Dublin late in November. This meeting followed the pattern of earlier events and was organised by a loose collective of activists from various political perspectives. The meeting was structured with a very loose chair and a microphone available for anyone who wished to speak. A long and unedited list of motions was presented to the meeting and subsequently an attempt was made to vote on them. A newsletter was also prepared from submissions sent in by groups all over the country detailing what the groups had done in the previous few months and giving an indication of what they hoped to achieve at the meeting and afterwards.

The organising collective proposed a format to the meeting where the discussion was to be broken into four sections each of one hour's duration. The four topics were:

- the aims of the national ANM.
- the form and structures of the movement.
- strategy and tactics of the movement.
- the co-ordination of the movement

The general tendencies of the motions were towards a decentralised approach and a recallable secretariat. In some suggestions the duration of office holding was limited to three months. The motions from rural areas tended to be more in favour of central co-ordination, Longford calling for a central address while Sligo wanted a central organising body made up of delegates from each anti-

nuclear group. The Dublin group based in Dundrum emphasised the need for as little centralisation as possible while Dublin South West argued for a mass democratic movement based on autonomous local groups. The ideas of rotating mass assemblies to make decisions was proposed on a number of occasions. A number of motions also argued for keeping the ANM separate from any political grouping.

The ensuing debate was acrimonious at some stages with one member of the SLP making accusations that RS was attempting to manipulate the movement into accepting a mass meeting structure which it could then direct because of its tightly organised co-ordination. This theme was to occur frequently in the coming months. The voting, when it eventually did get underway was a shambles both because of the contradictory claims as to how many people actually voted, and because contradictory motions were passed. The voting was complicated by the presence of many people (some estimate as high as 40% of those present) who were waiting for the concert due to follow the meeting and provide the culmination of road show project that evening. Many who worked hard in the movement were frustrated that these people were voting and yet had done little if anything for the movement.

This question of who should vote and who should make the decisions was never finally decided in the movement. The advocates of mass democracy stuck to the basic principle that anyone who was present at a meeting had the right to take part in all the proceedings. Although this led to the recurring problems of newcomers being allowed the same say as those familiar with the issues, the movement was so concerned with participation for all that no attempt to organise formal membership votes were carried out, with the noticeable exception of the FoE postal ballot described above. It did however lead to frustration at the meeting. Further, no one was empowered to carry out the motions that were carried on the agenda. Consequently, the movement continued in its ad hoc method of operation with the 40 or 50 local groups continuing to organise events in their local areas. The newsletters prepared for the mass meetings show the diversity of this activity and the vitality of the protest actions around the country which included pickets of meetings involving government ministers, pickets of ESB offices around the country, leaf letting, anti-nuclear theatre, concerts and film shows and even a puppet show on a few occasions. Many groups around the country set up stalls and portable exhibitions in shopping malls and city streets distributing leaf-lets, selling books, and, as they became available, badges and stickers by the tens of thousands.

Spontaneity vs. Effectivity

A fundamental tension existed within the New Left between the expressive ideals of participatory democracy (spontaneity and will) and attempts to deal instrumentally with the centralised bureaucratic organisation of the state and large scale capitalist institutions.

In Wexford Again

The third mass meeting took place in mid-February 1979 in the 'Dun Mhuire' hall in Wexford on a cold and snowy weekend that discouraged attendance. The meeting had been organised by Nuclear Opposition Wexford and NSA people who installed someone they thought would be an acceptable chairperson and suggested that each group send three delegates to make decisions. This was unpopular with mass democracy advocates who arrived by the busload in Wexford determined to put an end to ideas of delegates. They quickly voted the chairman out of a job and divided the meeting into a number of small discussion groups which discussed aspects of the nuclear problem and tactics to be used against the Carnsore proposal. Some present were upset by the change of format but the radicals who enjoyed wide support were determined to stop attempts to structure and bureaucratise the movement. This question of delegates came to be a recurring theme repeated often by those who were unhappy with the organisation of the ANM. The case against delegation was summarised in *Rebel* as follows;

The question of delegates which seems to be at the centre of the debate is not simply a technical one. If we are serious in our struggle, if we truly want to control our own lives, then having others debate, fight and decide on our behalf is a step backwards... We put forward as an alternative MASS ASSEMBLIES, which recognise the autonomy of local groups and initiatives, while retaining a national coherence and perspectives.

In the view of many, the whole point of having delegate meetings was that the mass assemblies were failing to provide this coherence, many participants seeing the whole operation as chaotic. Subsequently *Rebel* returned to this theme, arguing that the Wexford proposals were dangerously divisive. 'There is a healthy aversion to bourgeois forms of organisation inside the movement.' was a

somewhat premature claim when a proposal from a Kilkenny group to the Wexford meeting advocated the use of public relations consultants to promote the anti- nuclear cause. This was too much for the RS and they responded:

... to argue for the movement to employ advertising agencies and professional agencies and professional sellers to sell the anti-nuclear movement is to put bourgeois relations so deep into the movement as to drown it completely.

Later in the editorial on the question of organisation the RS position is clarified thus:

An organisation fighting for a (participatory) society is based on the direct participation of everybody. It cannot have delegates. There is nothing in all of this that could be delegated... Direct action and direct democracy are the tools of such an organisation. It leaves delegate (representative) democracy to the historians.

Indicative of this type of approach was a motion accepted by the meeting 'that a public inquiry is already in the 32 counties where people discuss and debate the pros and cons of nuclear power' indicating that the movement saw itself as separate from the state structure of political decision making and implying that the people intended to make the decision. This view on the inquiry was repeated many times.

The question of the movement's image was to recur frequently too;

... we disagree strongly with those who want to legitimise the movement. Giving the movement the veneer of respectability means sacrificing its vitality and stifling its energy and imagination. It will mean rigidity for local groups and a straight jacket on the movement.

Many of these issues remained unresolved but the meetings continued, leaflets were written and protests mounted.

To Belfast, Carnsore

The fourth mass meeting occurred in Belfast in May 1979 and was marred again by more accusation of manipulation this time by an unidentified SLP member attempting to ensure that an SLP member spoke at the forthcoming June 2nd protest march in Dublin. Despite the internal debates a second rally was organised and held in Carnsore in August 1979 with the slogan this time being 'BACK TO THE POINT'. This was a somewhat smaller affair than the previous year but the number of groups present and the diversity of political and environmental statements had increased.

A common criticism of the movement at this time was the narrow social base that was active in the movement and what some saw as the rather limited appeal of its activities. Remarking on this aspect of the Carnsore rally one commentator returned to the theme of image, arguing that:

It is the image the event projects which will determine The nature of a large proportion of its audience, and the image presented by Carnsore is of appeal to a limited audience viz. it involves en masse camping and a fairly specialised brand of entertainment. It thus attracts 'young trendies' and passes up the opportunity to influence the greater portion of public opinion.

Another related it more directly to the political structure of the movement, asking why the ANM was becoming a clique 'only allowing people with similar political beliefs to work with us?' The debate over structures and alleged manipulation heated up again in the autumn of 1979 with a meeting near Dublin at Ticknock held to discuss the Carnsore festival turning into a 'RS bashing ' session. A number of people in Cork were also very unhappy with what they perceived as RS attempts to control and manipulate meetings. The issue came to the surface again at the sixth mass meeting in Cork in October. At this meeting a group from Tralee put forward a number of proposals for a delegate structure to operate in parallel with the mass meeting structure. Polarisation became acute and suspicion reigned at this meeting which was marred from the beginning by confusion over the venue caused by the last minute cancellation by the University of permission to hold the event in its grounds. The question of manipulation and control are crucial in attempting to understand the movement

Leadership and Control

A number of dilemmas are present in the debate over the political control of the movement. Few activists deny that the ANM would never have been so large and successful if the RS activists had not worked so hard organising the events. There is little doubt that groups like the SLP did want more

power in the movement than they got, although many of their activists considered themselves as just individuals in the movement leaving their party affiliations at the entrance to meetings. The FoE groups were unhappy that their approach did not have greater impact. As the polarisation increased, people on both sides tended to develop conspiracy theories and viewed people with different viewpoints as either agents or dupes of the other side. RS maintain in their publications and in interviews that they did not attempt to control the movement but proudly admit to pushing their point of view within it. They were at a considerable advantage within the movement, being an organised group and at least by Irish political standards, having a sophisticated theoretical analysis of Irish society available to interpret the controversy and guide their political actions. It was this articulated line and enthusiasm that led many to support their arguments on organisational and tactical questions.

For newcomers to political organisation who preferred more conventional approaches however, the presence of an organised group who were very articulate and used radical rhetoric, the experience was unsettling. The concepts of mass democracy assume mutual trust by all participants and at least some parity of experience, political and verbal skills. In addition to having these skills RS thought out what they were going to say prior to meetings. Many unattached activists felt that the meetings ought to be the forum for discussing ideas and were upset to find that certain groups were in positions where they discussed anti-nuclear strategy beforehand. Inevitably RS was seen as manipulative by some of those who did not have another political affiliation inside the movement. However, many others appreciated the guidance that RS could offer to local groups and RS members provided skills and contacts.

It appears that many activists did not understand what the direct democracy approach meant, and old behaviour patterns of waiting until a central office or a big meeting told them what to do reasserted themselves. Equally it appears that rural groups who were already more conservative to begin with, felt particularly isolated and failed to initiate enough contacts to overcome their relative geographic disadvantage. Instead of initiating actions many groups after an initial burst of activity ceased to function because of lack of external inspiration. The problem was aggravated in part by the failure of urban based radicals to realise that this was happening and their consequent failure to take rural calls for a central office seriously. In an unstructured movement the leadership, and what power exists, gradually moves towards those who put in the most effort, develop the most contacts and become most knowledgeable on the issue in question. In his essay *The Limits of Protest: A Critique of the Anti-Nuclear Movement* (*Socialist Review* 54, 1980, p. 130) Vogel puts it:

In reality, leadership is exercised by initiative and attrition. With no elected leadership, whoever stays the longest, puts in the most hours and is most persuasive, effectively becomes leadership.

In the Irish movement in a number of groups this informal leadership came from activists who advocated mass democratic ideas. When these people also appeared to support ideas identified with RS, suspicions mounted. RS are also charged with changing words on leaflets, failing to do things as they promised and identifying their line too closely with that of the whole anti-nuclear movement, but their real problems probably occurred because of their perceived reluctance to address criticism openly. One exasperated activist wrote,

The touchiness of RS members and the tendency of people to grumble among themselves about RS and not attempt to articulate the critique both contribute to this lack of discussion. The 'Rebel' report of the Ticknock meeting where the above criticisms of RS were voiced was not encouraging. The report hopes that they can now work together, now that people have got the criticisms off their chests, with never a thought given to whether there was any basis to the allegations. It is hard to interpret this refusal of self-examination as anything but arrogance and elitism, basically authoritarian and showing a staggering contempt for fellow activists.

Undoubtedly RS were less open and flexible than would have been desirable on many occasions, but the charges of deliberate manipulation on a large scale are unfounded. RS have reaped little direct political advancement from their involvement in the ANM apart, probably, from a considerable amount of experience and some recruits who were politicised in the ANM. The inexperience of many of the activists, including RS people, was partly to blame for the problems that resulted. The suspicion and secrecy to which radical groups are always susceptible is also important in understanding the tensions within the movement; the Irish 'special branch' has taken a more than passing interest in the ANM. A final factor of importance in understanding the problems in the movement is the failure of young and mobile activists who have a political network within which to work, to realise that those who have not developed these supports were lost in the large mass meeting method of organisation. Many groups

argued for a delegate structure in the hopes that they would get information and some indications of what was going on in the movement. These mass meetings lacked a clarity of purpose and steadily the numbers attending them declined. *The Contaminated Crow* commented that:

Certain groups came wishing to make 'decisions', certain groups wished to examine what had been done over the past three months and examine possible areas of activity in the future. Certain comrades wished to exchange experience about organising at the local level, learn from each other, examine their difficulties and problems and return to put these lessons to use. Others wished to make policy decisions nationally. Some wished for activity, some for statements.

The political wrangles within the movement probably had an unfortunate effect in scaring away newcomers to ANM meetings. Potential supporters in search of information were scared away by the apparently endless political discussions.

The political discussions have never been resolved, if indeed that is possible, but in the fall of 1979 they reached a peak of intensity as a Tralee group attempted to set up a parallel delegate structure in the movement. The contradictions in the movement were brought into focus and the polemics reached a new pitch of intensity.

A Delicate Structure?

Following the debates at the Cork mass meeting in October 1979 the Tralee Opposition Workshop set up a meeting for all those interested in starting a delegate structure. The groups involved met a number of times early in 1980 and these meetings were reasonably constructive as far as some of the participating groups were concerned, improving communications and co-ordinating the production of leaflets. At no time did the delegate structure claim to speak for more than its participating groups. In its enthusiasm to prevent undemocratic procedures and manipulation, it effectively hamstrung itself by insisting that all decisions be ratified by members of the participating groups before any action was taken. Essentially the delegate structure acted as a social and communication focus for groups unhappy with the mass movement structure. In contrast to the proposals from the Wexford meeting the previous February, this organisation did not try to force their structure on groups that did not wish to take part. Despite this, the reaction to the proposals was sustained and severe on the part of the mass movement advocates. The proposals put forward by the Tralee Nuclear Opposition Workshop to the October 20-21, 1979 Cork mass meeting summarised the views of a number of groups who found themselves isolated:

There is a crippling lack of communication, co-operation and co-ordination in the movement... While we are in total agreement with local autonomous groups carrying on in their own way we feel that there is a need for those groups to come together every now and then to exchange ideas, literature and experiences... Gatherings such as Carnsore should of course continue, but their function should be merely as a show of strength – the main 'business' should be carried on away from distraction such as music which although it has its place does a lot of damage to the movement by taking away prospective 'older' anti-nukes.

And later, to try and still the anticipated fears and objections to structure and hierarchy, the Tralee group continued:

What we envision is not a tight hierarchical structure. Some seem to think that we have only 2 courses open to us, a tight restricting slow moving organisation and on the other hand a totally unstructured situation such as we have now.

Out of the accusations and counter-accusations at the Cork meeting, the Tralee proposals were circulated to many groups and correspondence flowed. It is worth noting that not all Tralee activists supported this initiative. A few were furious that the group was too busy organising the delegate structure to mount a protest in support of the activists who were arrested in the EEC offices in Dublin.

The first delegate meeting was held in Tralee on 1 December 1979. People representing twelve groups arrived as delegates, or at least ended up as delegates, a few only decided to be delegates once they had arrived. Some groups came to observe what was happening without a firm commitment to participate. A number of letters were read to the meeting before discussions commenced. The Belfast anti-nuclear group opposed delegates because they argued that the delegate idea would divert the movement from issues such as the arrest of the EEC-9. The Limerick anti-nuclear group produced a four page statement

on the delegate structure condemning it roundly and arguing for a continuation of the mass movement and that the case for a duplication of structures was unclear. In response to the Tralee proposals to improve the image of the movement Limerick retorted,

The relationship between image and support is not simply 'better' image 'more' support. We see that support is hard earned by active anti-nukes who go out and canvass in numerous ways – for the support of all the people who have nothing to gain from nuclear power. Unifying and improving our image may make the movement more acceptable to some people... but if that is their condition for becoming identified with the movement we would like to know what their relationship is with those for whom image is of little concern. The phrase 'less alien to the rest of the country' can only imply that somehow the hippies, freaks, communists, anarchists, etc., etc., are damaging the movement. If this is what FoE believes then why not say it?

They go on to point to the crucial issues of personal responsibility for political action:

Mass structures, on the other hand, only allows people who are willing to put the necessary work into anti-nuclear activity to gain influence inside the movement...

and later;

Direct democracy is first and foremost a gesture of faith in the integrity of other people and their inalienable right to learn, decide and determine the direction of their actions.

Two fundamentally different concepts of politics and approaches to social change are present here. Mobilisation and protest by people outside the political bargaining system are crucial to gaining a hearing and getting results. On the other hand, those that accept the basic liberal conceptions of politics and pressure group lobbying tactics, attempt to appear respectable and are concerned with image and credibility. The radicals, those convinced that major structural changes are essential, and that capitalist society is basically antagonistic, are interested in further developing opposition, and causing as many disturbances and problems as possible for the ruling class, to make nuclear power a politically untenable option. This fundamental difference in political ideology is the key to these internal debates, both within the Irish ANM and the international movement. The conflict was quite insightfully rationalised by some members of the Cork FoE group as being a question of priorities. They argued that they wished to stop nuclear power first and then change the world. The pressure group/lobby approach was thought to be best for this purpose. They also suggested that RS wished to change the world and then stop nuclear power as part of their project to fundamentally change society.

The internal wrangles within the movement came to a head and the lines between forceful argument and personal intimidation were crossed several times. The irony of the situation remains because the anti-bureaucratic tendencies remained strong especially within the Cork FoE group who were pushing the delegate idea very hard. They refused to allow a central organisation to be set up and the few delegate structure meetings that did occur rotated on a monthly basis between different groups. The first meeting was held in Tralee in December and it was the scene of angry verbal arguments where non-delegates argued that they could speak and most of the other people present left in disgust, this being the first occasion in the anti-nuclear movement when people had been silenced. This meeting came to a number of conclusions: that a referendum was inopportune because of the lack of public information, that a statement on the issue of the public inquiry should be made and condemned the failure of the government to provide financial backing for a proposed windmill project on a small island off the west coast. The ironies of the occasion came close to farce when the topic of uranium mining was raised. It happened that the only person present who had up to date information on the subject was one of the non-delegates who had previously been forbidden to speak!

Dawn magazine advertised the meeting and outlined the ideas of no-power delegates that had been discussed at the Cork meeting. *Rebel* published a stream of criticism of the delegate idea arguing that it was a bourgeois reaction to the developing political content of the movement. Returning to an age-old controversy in political theory between participatory and representative politics they argue that:

Its objective is to create a bourgeois form of organisation, heavily distorted forms of representation, easy for the press to handle and the government to negotiate with, but inaccessible to the mass of the working people.

Regarding the point about autonomous groups continuing to function they continued:

We are saying AUTONOMY is NOT about everyone doing their own thing. It is about AUTONOMY FROM THE STATE, CAPITAL and BUREAUCRATIC FORMS OF ORGANISATION. Autonomy means refusing to internalise the needs of the state and Capital inside the movement.

This article, one of *Rebel's* most vicious polemics, also castigated the group at the Ticknock meeting dismissing their concern as

'... individual self-expression and spontaneity, stemming from petty bourgeois desire to deny class forces inside (and often outside) the movement...'

A later edition carried a letter appealing against the delegate structure; 'the briefcase, and caucus type, the wheelers and dealers, the self-advancing.'

The delegates met a few times in the spring of 1980, wrote several leaflets, a letter to the new Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey and improved their own morale somewhat. The delegate idea, clearly an anathema to many activists, reveals the radical leanings within the movement. The mass meeting approach would never have considered letter writing to the Taoiseach who was considered part of the system that was being opposed. The delegate structure, like the rest of the movement, suffered from decreasing interest as 1980 passed. The third Carnsore rally in 1980 was smaller than previous years and by this time attention was focused on the other issues of noxious industries, toxic waste and uranium prospecting.

Related to the questions of organisation and politics was the issue of nonviolence which we now briefly discuss.

Nonviolence

The question of non-violence has at times been a surrogate political issue for the debate between the radicals who espouse any means that is available and reformists who don't wish to violently challenge the status quo. To many in the civil rights movements and in the New Left, non-violence provided tactics that were compatible with moral and ethical principles. To many in the ANM, nuclear power is a symbol of violence and the idea of using violence against violence strikes many as being self-defeating. The non-violence ideas in the U.S. ANM have had considerable input from the Quaker movement and in particular from the Movement for Survival group. The literature on non-violent protest philosophy is extensive.

The proponents of non-violence in the Irish ANM were the *Dawn* group and Cork FoE in particular, who studied nonviolence and organised study and training sessions. Cork FoE produced a leaflet in 1978 on the history of non-violence and later collaborated with *Dawn* to produce a longer document which connected non-violence to the nuclear issue in Ireland. The document outlines the basis for nonviolence as a philosophy and political strategy. Nonviolence, it argues:

... springs from a positive philosophy which emphasises action rather than words, possible solutions rather than escalating problems. It is an interventionist philosophy; something is wrong, if there is an injustice, then we are morally bound to, and will joyfully intervene. It does not condemn those who feel driven to violence but emphasises that there are many non-violent actions possible which may not have been tried.

The training sessions involved role-playing games, brainstorming sessions and a number of games working on group dynamic principles. The aims of these sessions were to improve interaction within groups and to develop trust as preparation for direct action situations. These were subject to criticism both within the FoE group and from outsiders, some of whom argued that the exercises were too artificial and that the group dynamic techniques had cultural biases underlying them that were an anathema especially to working-class Irish youth.

The application of these non-violence ideas in U.S. demonstrations have also been criticised. Commenting on the Clamshell Alliance operations Bove in his essay *Fighting Nukes at Seabrooke II: Whither Clam* (*Science for the People* 9:4, 1977, p. 26) argues that,

... through a complex process, they also forced consciously or unconsciously their positions on the group, creating a stultifying 'solidarity'... The Quakers are primarily concerned with diffusing anger to prevent chaos from breaking out. But these tactics were also a good

political move by them because they isolated the dissidents and made them look like 'disrupters'.

Apart from the tactical considerations a major critique on non-violence is that its perspective limits historical analysis of conflict in society. While emphasising common ground and consensus it obscures political and class conflict. As Gutierrez puts it in a different context:

We Christians however, are not used to thinking in conflictual and historical terms We prefer peaceful reconciliation to antagonism and an evasive eternity to provisional arrangement. We must learn to live and think of peace in conflict and what is definitive in what is historical. (G. Gutierrez: *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. New York 1973, p. 137.)

The radical potential of the non-violent ideas has not really been developed as yet in the anti-nuclear movement and the interest in it was limited to a few groups in Ireland. Nonviolence is often confused with pacifism and weakness although one feminist in the Irish ANM writing in *Wicca*, made an articulate critique of the radicals who see police provocation as a radical act:

If there is an occupation/march/demonstration against a nuclear plant, what will be the response to state violence? Sometimes male politicians seem to me to use the tactics of confrontation, of provoking a heavy reaction from police or troops in order to make a point about state violence. But often this seems to deteriorate to male ego-tripping, a conflict of two groups of machos trying to outdo each other.

The left-wing activists in the ANM in Ireland tended to be critical of limiting the movement to non-violent actions. A group of Belfast anarchists took part in the rather confused attempt by Torness Alliance to organise a non-violent occupation of the Torness site in Scotland in May 1979. There were basic disagreements over issues of philosophy and the justification for doing damage to property on the site. The Belfast position was summarised in *The Contaminated Crow*:

... we had assumed that 'damage to property', while a grand philosophical issue to some, was ultimately just something you did or did not do depending on yourself. But some people damaging fences and machinery did annoy people, who wanted it stopped. In trying to force their views on all of us, the earlier spontaneity and enjoyment of the day was lost. Much better that everyone do what they want than have everyone tied down to the whims of how the straight press might interpret our actions.

Predictably enough RS were not to let the issue go without comment They broached the question early in 1979, arguing that violence as an option for the movement must be left open in case the other side started using it, although later they took a more aggressive stand on the issue when some people in favour of non-violence and strictly legal approaches argued that the second Carnsore rally should not be held on ESB land. On that occasion they replied:

Let those 'non-political' ideologues who want to package the movement into a sophisticated wrapping of passivity and respect of State imposed legality take heed. Cancer cannot be fought with goodwill and 'we shall overcome'. Radiation does not listen to Ghandi and Martin Luther King. Nuclear power is violent, a nuclear society is bestial and the nuclear state would commit genocide if it were forced.

The issue of violence only really seriously emerged on one occasion in a confrontation during the anti-EEC march in November 1979, when a scuffle between police and anti-nuclear power demonstrators occurred. The history of the event is extremely confused and no attempt will be made to comment on it.

As can be seen from the preceding sections the legitimacy of the state was nearly non-existent in large parts of the ANM. Public participation in the controversy was by protest, not consultation. However, the government did eventually concede to a public inquiry after repeated demands from many segments in Irish society. The final section of this chapter deals with the issue of state legitimacy and the proposed public inquiry.

A Public Inquiry?

From early in the second phase of the opposition to nuclear power repeated calls for a public inquiry were made. However no such inquiry had ever been held in Ireland on a planning proposal, with the partial exception of hearings in Dublin surrounding the oil refinery proposal for Dublin Bay.

Few people who made a call for a public inquiry were really clear as to what they thought an inquiry would involve or how they could organise to use it to put the case against nuclear power. What is clear is that many people did not trust the existing policy process or the ESB to make the decision. Reading the numerous statements on the subject it appears that the public inquiry was seen as a 'neutral' forum above and beyond 'politics' and capable of finding the 'truth' in an 'unbiased' way. The implications of the inquiry for planning legislation, and its legal relationship with the rest of the policy process were not widely questioned in the clamour to have an inquiry.

The nuclear issue has raised major legitimacy problems for governments in many western countries:

Essentially, the challenge facing policy makers is how to devise acceptable and practical methods of reaching collective decisions for a technology that involves risks that some people find unacceptable, dissenting minorities who oppose the siting of nuclear plants in the locality, poor understanding of the technical issues among the public and disagreement among technical experts. Clearly, there are no panaceas, for it is a uniquely difficult problem to adapt decision-making procedures to accommodate a wide range of viewpoints on the technical, environmental and political aspects of nuclear power.

(J. Surrey and C. Hugget: *Opposition to Nuclear Power: A Review of International Experience*. Energy Policy 4:4, 1976, p. 306.)

Hirsch draws a distinction between types of public participation process, on the basis of the philosophy underlying them. He distinguishes between the positivist and the dialectical approaches. The former are premised on the approach taken by the

... promoters of scientific and economic progress as we have known it in the last decades – exemplified by nuclear energy – (who) – claim that a neat separation between facts and values, the existing and the desirable, data and decisions is not only possible but highly desirable.

(H. Hirsch: *Public Participation and Nuclear Energy: The Dialectic vs the Positivist Approach*. Draft version of a paper presented to the UNESCO conference *Social Dimensions of the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy*, 20-23 November 1978, Vienna; p.1.)

The dialectical conception encompasses

... those who feel that a less schematic view of reality is to be adopted taking into account that implicit or explicit value-judgements, desires and prejudices will in any case influence those who set out to find facts...

(Hirsch, p. 1)

The positivistic approach has been used in many European countries but the scope is limited because the government usually sets strict rules beforehand, 'defining the terms of reference and admissible procedures a priori' (Hirsch, p. 2). It ignores the vested interests of economic interest groups, entrenched bureaucracies and the politicians themselves with their prejudices and loyalties. Outlining the experience of the Austrian 'Nuclear Energy Information Campaign' and the German 'Citizen Dialogue' he shows how the nuclear issue could not be broken down into neat compartments for 'rational discussion' by 'experts'.

Opinions in the nuclear debate do not simply arise from the possibility of different values for certain parameters, but reflect basic philosophies and political attitudes (Hirsch, p. 4)

Neither did the public accept the role of passive receivers of the information or the thematic frameworks that the organisers set out. The public remained concerned about the nature of the participation process which in both cases started long after construction of nuclear facilities had begun and failed to halt the construction while the process of consultation was underway. The Austrian opponents were not content to remain within the narrow framework of the state-organised debates and

they took the initiative, circulated their own information, and eventually forced the reluctant socialist government to hold a referendum.

The German dialogue concentrated on opinion forming and not on critical discussion of the issues. Hirsch argues that the public information exercises are 'programmed to fail' because of the tendencies of large government bureaucracies to resent any attempt at control over them and the enormously strong economic interests pushing nuclear power.

The more active elements of the Irish ANM were well aware of the possibilities of the same thing happening in Ireland when the public inquiry eventually came to be held. One writer in *The Contaminated Crow* argued that the function of the inquiry was to:

... show that the state is prepared to listen to peoples' objections as long as they are 'reasonable' and peaceful, of course – and they are an attempt to throw the mantel of democracy over decisions the state has already taken. They are also very useful ways to divert opposition.

Many other groups were ambivalent about the whole affair once the inquiry had been granted. RS adopted a 'wait and see' approach but did not preclude disruption and participation. The deep suspicion of the inquiry reflects the opposition to the whole state structure and 'the system of social and economic developments imposed on us to serve the interests of capital and profit.'

The mass movement meetings were not very consistent on the issue. In Wexford just prior to Mr. O'Malley's announcement of the formal public inquiry, the meeting stated that it was not interested in a government inquiry. In a later leaflet the public inquiry was hailed as a victory for the movement while the Belfast meeting in May decided to take no action at all on it.

The Cork FoE group, however, took up the issue and organised a seminar on the topic late in 1979. What emerged was close to Hirsch's ideas of a dialectical approach as being a desirable format. Drawing on some proposals from the Oxford based Political Ecology Research Group (PERG), FoE suggested that the inquiry should be a two stage process. The first stage would identify issues and discuss the submitted material in a discursive manner with a tribunal committee from various backgrounds. A second later stage involves cross examination of the material under oath. FoE further argued that the burden of proof should lie with the proponents of the new technologies rather than the objectors, government bureaucrats should be protected if they gave dissenting opinions, and intervenors should receive financial assistance.

At the seminar on the public inquiry David Nolan of the NSA suggested that an alternative inquiry might be set up to give the anti-nuclear groups an alternative forum to present their arguments. He reiterated his call for a referendum on the nuclear issue and showed little confidence that the government inquiry would be fair, or that the establishment would listen to its recommendations if it did find against nuclear power. He also argued that the NSA had been running an inquiry ever since it had been established.

Fine Gael and the Labour Party had repeatedly called for an inquiry which they saw as a way of defusing opposition by providing a forum without which (as *The Irish Independent* put it) they would 'make their own platforms on the streets and so provoke a lot of what might have been avoidable trouble.' The ANM did create its own forums and carried on the debate on the streets, and inevitably in Ireland, in the pubs. The movement considered itself to be carrying out an inquiry and making the decision which they considered it to be their right to make.

The government, ESB and the NEB all took a line similar to what Hirsch calls the positivist approach. The limited information leaflets available from the NEB attempted to explain the issue in very boring simplified technical manner. The ESB circulated widely. Sean Coakley's *Status Report* (1979) which took a very conventional engineering approach and did not address the fundamental political and social issues. The government line and that of organisations such as the Agricultural Institute was to deal only with technical issues of nuclear technology. Brian Coulter argued that:

The energy debate has many facts Some of them, for example the need for energy conservation, the concept of renewable energy sources and a low energy society are not

specific to the nuclear question, and are not, therefore, at the heart of public concern on nuclear power.

It was precisely the attempts to narrow the issue down to merely technical concerns which aroused the anger of many opponents who saw in this manoeuvre an attempt to avoid the issues and remove them from the terrain of political debate. The 'experts' were seen, not surprisingly, as manipulative agents trying to defraud the public and cover up information that was critical of the nuclear industry. The repeated calls from the public and numerous bodies for an inquiry was an attempt to bring the debate out into the open and it reveals a deep distrust of the process of policy formation and the limited base on which technological decisions are taken by 'experts' as well as a feeling of helplessness to influence a decision of major and long-lasting societal impact. As John Carroll put it:

It is a decision which would bear not alone on the present population, but on future generations who may well have to bear and suffer the genetic and other possible, adverse consequences of a behind closed doors, vested interest influenced decisions by those who claim to themselves to have the most divine right to determine for us, without consulting us or seeking our approval our way and quality of life for generations to come.

In some cases this was due to ignorance of how to go about having one's opinion heard, in other cases it reflected a deep cynicism about getting listened to at all. The policy decisions, made as they are by the inner cabinet of the Irish government, offer little opportunity for public input through the parliamentary process at the best of times, and in the nuclear issue it appeared that the government had made its mind up on a little advice from nuclear proponents.

Protest was seen as the only way to force politicians to reconsider. The public inquiry was seen as a method of making the arguments against nuclear power seriously, while simultaneously educating the public. The radicals were not convinced of the effectiveness of a public inquiry because of their analysis of the power relations in Irish society.

ANM Legacy

The concerns of the ANM reached beyond opposition to the proposed nuclear plant at Carnsore point and activists contributed their energy, insight and experience to other issues. In Donegal a country-wide controversy developed around the issue of prospecting for uranium and this issue interacted with the national ANM in a number of cases. In Cork the students' union and a local anti-nuclear group had exchanges with the university authorities and the NEB over safety and regulations connected with the use of a 'sub-critical assembly' in the Physics department at University College, Cork (UCC). In Cork and Dublin in particular problems with the dumping of toxic wastes continued and in 1980 there was a revival of the Irish CND.

The Anti-Uranium Campaign

Uranium prospecting in Ireland started in 1976 with reconnaissance and preliminary work done by the Geological Survey of Ireland and a number of companies supported by financial grants from the EEC. The EEC has continued to support exploration work giving grants for IR£1¼ m. in the 1980/81 period. Opposition was most determined in Donegal where prospecting activity had the highest profile. Elsewhere opposition existed in small groups of people in the areas that were affected by prospecting activity and among concerned members of the ANM who researched the issue. Early in 1978 it was announced that there were significant uranium deposits in Wicklow and Carlow while in June one company started exploration in Co. Tyrone. This account will focus on Donegal where the controversy be-came a significant county-wide issue.

The first group to attempt to raise consciousness in Donegal on the issue was a primal therapy commune in Burtonport, Co. Donegal which circulated their area with leaflets and in September 1979 organised a meeting which brought activists in the ANM to Donegal to discuss the issue. Unhappy with the way the commune had structured events, these activists split up and organised a few meetings in towns in the West of the County. At that time a reporter from the *Donegal People's Press* found no evidence of opposition to uranium prospecting in the area around Doochary and Fintown where the most active prospecting has taken place. This was to change in the coming months. The Belfast *Just Books* anarchists produced a pamphlet entitled *Uranium Mining in Donegal: The Dangers and Deceits* which outlined the health and environmental hazards of uranium mining and its connections with the international fuel cycle, the EEC and multinational mining companies. Thousands of copies of this

twenty-page pamphlet were distributed free in Donegal. A spur to opposition was an article in *The Irish Times* on the hazards of uranium mining published in November. By December a series of public meetings were hearing many concerns raised and a meeting was called in Fintown just before Christmas to elect a group to ensure that the health of the people and the quality of their environment did not suffer as a result of uranium mining and related activities. The Donegal Uranium Committee (DUG), as this group called itself, quickly issued an appeal for funds to organise a campaign and to do research into the issue so as to inform the people of Donegal about it. Uranium prospecting soon came on the County Council agenda, but despite expressions of concern they refused to provide the £30,000 needed for a preliminary environmental monitoring study by An Foras Forbatha (The National Institute for Physical Planning and Construction Research). Various councillors argued that the government in Dublin or the EEC or even the companies should pay for it.

While the DUG gathered information and the councillors debated, the companies, in this case Munster Base Metals, ran into direct opposition. In February they planned to start drilling near a well used by a few local families as a water supply. When the company refused to provide an alternative source of water the people involved went to the site and a heated confrontation developed. The company backed down and stopped their attempts to drill in that area. The NEB stepped in March to oversee uranium prospecting operations and its spokesperson, Dr. Noel Nowlan, admitted that the public was not getting adequate information but suggested that the alarm was probably unwarranted. A large protest march that month culminated in a public meeting addressed by Brian Flannery, the DUG chairperson, and also by a local doctor, who outlined the health risks from radon gas and mining tailings. That night a cottage used as a store for uranium samples was set on fire and a number of excavators used by the mining companies were seriously damaged. Although the Gardai searched for culprits no one was ever charged. The DUG was quick to disassociate itself from the action.

The DUG took part in the third Carnsore rally in August 1980 with a large exhibition. This rally addressed the issue of uranium mining more fully than the ANM had done previously.

As early as April 1980 the DUG realised that the companies had converted a number of buildings and erected a store without applying for the requisite planning permission from the county council. The DUG pointed this out and subsequently appealed against the retrospective planning permissions being granted. The appeal was supported by ten local anti-uranium groups in Donegal and by the ubiquitous Dr. Blackith who presented technical evidence on Low Level Radiation which suggested that the NEB safety standards and information sources were unreliable. The final hearing before An Bord Pleannala took place on 1 April 1981. By using these tactics the DUG effectively stopped the operations of the more active companies. The focus of this hearing was on narrow planning technicalities and it brings into focus once more the lack of any forum to adequately debate the larger policy issues that are involved in the nuclear fuel cycle. The prospecting licenses are issued in Dublin by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Energy. The only legal resource available to the DUG was to the County Council on a question of planning regulations. The facts that the companies failed to apply for permission and operated badly-sited and designed premises helped the DUG to build a case, but they never had resource to a forum to make many of their other objections heard apart from public meetings and demonstrations.

The DUG succeeded in gaining widespread support, and eventually sympathy from the County Council but the initial response was not universally favourable. It appears that the companies involved in the prospecting promoted their shares in Donegal in the early stages of their activities and local people, expecting significant mineral finds, invested in the ventures. This led to resentment when opposition appeared. The DUG also ran into opposition in the county vocational education committee when they organised a seminar on uranium mining. Initially the DUG was invited to participate in the event and to provide speakers. The DUG heard nothing further until a week prior to the scheduled date for the seminar when the line up of speakers was leaked to them. None of their suggested speakers was on the list. The DUG threatened to boycott the seminar and demand that critical points of view be heard at the seminar. In the event, only Dr. Blackith was available at short notice but his presentation apparently went across well. Despite six speakers in favour of the prospecting, few of the audience were apparently convinced, and at the Plenary session at the end of the seminar Brian Flannery received a standing ovation. The explanation for these events is apparently that the education committee turned to the extra-mural department of University College Galway for help in locating speakers. They in turn consulted the ardently pro-nuclear professor of Chemistry, Sean O'Conneide, on campus who suggested

the speakers. The DUG was also victim of a smear campaign and a bizarre scheme to link it with the British army in the North of Ireland which the *Donegal Democrat* newspaper soon exposed.

Attempts by the companies to improve their image by giving donations to candidates in a by-election backfired when one party returned its donation amid considerable publicity. Other attempts by hired public relations consultants fared no better. The DUG was undoubtedly effective in its campaign. They talked the County council into helping to finance a study of the likely impacts of uranium mining being prepared by PERG. Their interventions in the planning appeals and their cool presentation of the factual case against uranium mining helped. But it is doubtful whether they would have been as successful, were it not for the direct action of the people in the prospecting areas who refused to allow the companies permission to work on their land, and the unknown people who set fire to the storage shed and excavators. Undoubtedly the direct opposition got the message through to the companies that they were not appreciated. On the other hand the DUG provided a 'legitimate' opposition that the County council could take seriously. At no time was the DUG in a position to challenge through formal channels the central government policy of granting prospecting permits. Given the situation where the Minister responsible for granting prospecting licenses was Mr. O'Malley, and his brother-in-law was heavily involved in Anglo United, one of the prospecting companies, public credibility in the central government's handling of the issue was strained. Further, the long distance perceived between the Dublin-based experts in the NEB who assured the population that they were not at risk, and the respected local doctors who spoke out about health hazards of uranium, called the legitimacy of the established authority into question.

The links between the DUG and the rest of the ANM were tenuous, the Belfast anarchists' pamphlet was helpful in raising awareness, but the more formal lobbying approach was an anathema to the more direct action oriented approach of many of the ANM activists who preferred demonstrations and grass-roots action. The Donegal controversy does however again bring the issues of legitimacy and lack of consultation to the fore.

The CND Revival

Ireland has not missed out on the revival of the campaign against nuclear weapons in Europe. The world-wide revival of the peace movement dates approximately to 1979 with the failure of the U.S. to ratify the SALT 2 treaty, the Carter regime's rethinking of nuclear strategy, the NATO decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe again and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

The original Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was founded in 1958 but by the mid-1970s it was totally inactive. It was re-launched in October 1979 and developed quickly with membership rapidly increasing and many other organisations hurrying to affiliate with it. A branch has been formed in the North of Ireland and attracted some support. Dervla Murphy, the well-known Irish travel-writer also entered the fray reviewing books and writing articles while working on her new book on things nuclear (*Race to the Finish: The Nuclear Stakes* London 1981). The CND effectively lobbied the foreign minister in May 1980 on recommendations for a presentation to the review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in August 1980, many of which were included in the address which he subsequently gave. On Hiroshima Day ceremonies were held around the country and included a few tree plantings to mark the occasion. Meetings were organised and a number of film shows of 'The War Game' organised around the country.

The differences between the CND and the ANM were considerable, both in terms of the more formal structure of the CND and its inclusion of more religious inputs. The political situation was also very different, Ireland is not a member of NATO and has taken some initiatives on the disarmament issue in the past as well as providing troops for UN peace-keeping forces. This tradition allows for more sympathy in government circles for peace groups in stark contrast to the response to the ANM. The link between Ireland advocating nuclear power while opposing weapons has apparently not been made in government circles. In January 1981 the CND organised a seminar on the anniversary of the assassination of Gandhi which brought 40 people together to discuss the implications of neutrality in the Irish context and to discuss the revival of the European Peace movement. The implications of nuclear war and the slow erosion of Irish neutrality are of considerable concern in Ireland as talk of Ireland joining NATO has been growing since accession to the EEC. This seminar also spelled out the international linkages of the nuclear industry and called for the banning of uranium mining as the materials might be used in weapons manufacture. It was on these questions that the CND challenged the Irish government policies.

Summary

The ANM cannot take sole responsibility for these subsequent events but without doubt its influence has been felt. The Belfast anti-nuclear group initially circulated an influential leaflet in Donegal on uranium mining and the awareness of the weapons connection with nuclear power provided some impetus to the revival of CND late in 1979. The connections between toxic waste and noxious industries drawn in the ANM helped spur the formation of groups opposed to industries and dumping. DARTAG received inspiration from the ANM and some of its people were involved in the Trade Union Anti-Nuclear Campaign and the CND.

The IDA has recently apparently switched its industrialisation drive efforts towards electronics industries and away from chemical industries and pharmaceuticals but the struggle over waste dumping is likely to continue. The opposition in Donegal to uranium mining may well have finally discouraged the companies there. The issues of nuclear weapons and NATO are connected to questions of neutrality and independence. These relate in turn to the changing ideological orientations of the Irish bourgeoisie, increasingly moving toward accommodation with the EEC and inevitably with the British. There remains the possibility in some peoples' minds of a deal on the Northern question in exchange for Irish membership of NATO. What the role of the CND would then be is a matter for speculation.

The influence of the ANM ideas of mass participation directly influenced the groups opposing noxious industries that grew out of the ANM as these remained unstructured, The DUG did develop a more formal structure, but in fact operated in an ad hoc informal way too. The CND has the formal structure of a committee and honorary presidents and vice-presidents including people like Sean MacBride and John Carroll.

None of these other issues raised the same amount of public concern as the ANM. Many activists in the ANM were not present in these related issues although enough of them became involved to influence the directions they took.

Conclusions

We do not inherit the future from our fathers, we borrow it from our children.

... but then, there is this consideration: that if the abuse be enormous, nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.

In the introduction this thesis is placed within three traditions in Geography. It relates to radical geography with its concerns about political ideas and shows how those on the radical fringe of environmental politics worked out a political practice drawn heavily from the New Left and earlier environmental ideas. In addition it has investigated a field normally beyond the considerations of geographers writing on public participation in planning and resources management issues. It charts the murky waters of extra-institutional political ecology and shows how its political strategies interrelate with its other ideas. Third, this thesis relates to geographical writings about energy. The alternative energy/soft energy path ideas in the ANM carry with them implications for future land use and spacial patterns of energy production and consumption dramatically different from those implied by the conventional wisdom. The future geography of energy is being decided in the conflicts over nuclear power stations and insulation regulations no less than in the board rooms of the multinational oil companies.

The Irish ANM follows a pattern closely akin to those elsewhere but with its own dynamic due to the specific historic circumstances of its existence. It was an uneasy coalition of local conservative pressure groups, a variety of left-wing activists and sympathetic establishment intellectuals combining their diverse backgrounds and skills to challenge a single proposal of enormous magnitude for Irish society. Concerns about safety and health together with a desire for a more effective say in major decision-making issues ran together with far more radical critiques of global and Irish capitalist society. Diverse but inspired, its influence reached many segments of Irish society, the Smiling Sun button becoming a widely sported statement of concern and opposition.

This study shows how ideologically inspired activists attempted to take matters into their own hands and to assert their rights to make decisions, as active agents in the political process, rather than passive spectators to an 'expertocracy'. The ideas of protest and opposition present in the mass democracy

concept attempt to pre-figure desired social relationships in a participatory society. The environmental dimension is conscious of the ecological deprivations of industrial technology and struggles for a sane energy-use system. These twin features, the concepts of a participatory society, and a sane technology in symbiotic relationship with society and nature, are the utopia within the ANM, the alternative vision which inspires action.

The ANM again reveals the features of environmentalism that O'Riordan offers as a summary of his book *Environmentalism* (London 1976). It challenges many aspects of Western capitalism, it points out paradoxes rather than clear solutions, it involves a conviction that better societal modes are possible, and it combines politicisation based on the need for action with a lack of faith in Western democratic systems.

By way of a conclusion this chapter offers some generalisations about the ANM and its relationship to radical politics and makes tentative suggestions about the future of radical politics.

Irish Politics

The impact of the broader environmental movement and the New Left in its various forms are obvious from the foregoing material. The questions of political ecology raised not only by the ANM but by the toxic waste, noxious industry and anti-uranium protests clearly reveal the basis for deeply penetrating critiques of the road to 'development' being followed in Ireland. The ANM was far from a coherent group with an agreed philosophy. Tensions between different perspectives constantly emerged and often polarised without many of the groups really understanding why. Nevertheless a forum for political discussion and action existed and the ideas in the movement provide bases for profound criticism.

The full scale of environmental despoilation in Ireland remains to be assessed and accounted for and the sheer scale of the issues and the difficulty of developing a comprehensive critique of industrialisation in Ireland led to problems in the ANM and subsequently too in the Cork Noxious Industry Action Group. Attempts to develop an alternative philosophy and perspective on these matters led to the collapse of this group when the full magnitude of what was needed was realised. Nonetheless the issues have been raised and a generation of young activists alerted.

The immediate future in Ireland looks bleak for radical if not for reformist political action. In the early 1970s the economy went into a recession. A number of general elections have failed to produce a government with any apparently different ideas on how to overcome the economic and social problems looming in the immediate future. The political debate remains locked in the logic and language of the international capitalist system, and the arguments remain largely in the framework of the division of national wealth or, of the 'national cake' rather than questioning the ingredients and recipe of that rather strange culinary metaphor. The radical critiques tentatively surfacing in the ANM are unlikely to have major short-term repercussions. In an era of economic recession and massive foreign debt what industries the IDA manages to set up are likely to be welcomed because of employment possibilities, although local opposition to dumps, toxic waste and environmentally destructive plants will probably continue.

What left-wing incursions have been made into the parliamentary process have been by people and parties making conventional economic demands. It remains doubtful that the endless contradictions and the failure of the political establishment to cope will lead to a wide-spread questioning of capitalist development in Ireland from a radical perspective in the immediate future. The ideology of progress and 'economic growth' is too deeply ingrained, and the fears of 'subversives' and 'godless communists' run deep in the middle classes and in the Catholic church. It also remains to be seen if future political issues will enlarge the political space created by the ANM. The CND issue has politically explosive topics including neutrality and nationalism waiting in the wings should an Irish government move towards joining NATO. The controversy over toxic waste is unlikely to go away, because the waste will not go away- that is just the problem. In the current political and economic climate a comprehensive waste management and treatment programme is unlikely to see the light of day. The political implications of international 'dumping' of dirty industries has been raised, the health implications of asbestos were important in the controversy over the Raybestos plant, and chemical companies are likely to come under closer scrutiny in the future.

The first Carnsore Point anti-nuclear festival was a unique event in Irish politics and pulled many disparate elements together. The future Irish political scene is speculative and the changing patterns of international capital accumulation, EEC policies, and the perennial conflict in Northern Ireland to a considerable extent determine the political agenda outside the dealings with the domestic economic situation. The demographic transition working itself out in Ireland will also influence the coming political situation. Youth unemployment and dissension among the young, educated sectors of the population denied their middle-class expectations may become an increasingly destabilising factor. It is perhaps ambitious to suggest that the ANM was the first time these marginal elements attempted to express themselves politically and picked the medium of a cultural festival to do it. Music festivals have become increasingly popular in recent years with Irish youth, offering a distraction from the boredom and pointlessness of urban life on the dole. The tentative attempt to connect the political issue of nuclear power with this institution of cultural opposition remains one of the most intriguing features of the Irish ANM and the feature which made it unique in Irish politics. These connections between the *logocrats* and, in the new Dutch phrase, *provotariat* has similarities with the New Left elsewhere in Europe. It contains within it an attempt to oppose the apathy and bureaucratic stultification of the commodity culture and to develop a new critical politics in a country moving towards a major period of social and political crisis.

Significant Events

1977	June	Fianna Fail elected.
	Summer/ Autumn	Windscale Public Inquiry, Cumbria.
	Autumn	Nuclear Plans for Carnsore Point Revived.
	December	Nucleus of FoE formed in Dublin.
1978	January	EEC hearings on Nuclear Power in Brussels.
	February	FoE seminar in TCD.
	April	Dail Debate on Energy.
	May	IDA/IIRS/SESI seminar on renewable energy.
	July	ITGWU seminar on nuclear power.
	August	Government Green Paper on energy published.
	September	First Carnsore Rally.
	October	ESB bulldoze memorial Cairn at Carnsore Point. Dublin anti-nuclear power meeting in the Mansion House.
	November	FoE publish critique of Energy Ireland.
	December	SESI publishes Towards Energy Independence.
1979	January	Late Late Show special on Nuclear power screened by RTE.
	February	Fianna Fail Ard Fheis, O'Malley concedes an Inquiry
	March	Three Mile Island accident near Harrisburg
	May	Belfast Mass Meeting.
	June	Dublin Anti-nuclear protest march
	August	Carnsore Rally.
	October	Mass Meeting in Cork. Start of the Delegate Structure.
	November	EEC offices occupied in Dublin, Anti-EEC March. Cork FoE seminar on Public Inquiry.
	December	Colley replaces O'Malley as energy minister
1980	Spring	Colley announces postponement of nuclear plans and supports alternative energy projects. Uranium controversy in Donegal.
	May	Fine Gael energy policy document published.
	August	Third anti-nuclear rally at Carnsore Point.

ENDS

