

East Timor – Independent or just Semi-autonomous?

by Warwick Fry

The jury is still out (in spite of the efforts by the Australian mainstream media) on whether or not the (now ex) prime minister of East Timor, Mari Alkatiri, should share responsibility for a 'special squad' set up to eliminate a so-called 'political opposition'. It's a nicely emotive set of words that may or may not be a more, or less than accurate description of a more or less true situation, describing (interior minister) Rogerio Lobato's implication (exposed in the Australian *Four Corners* TV Program) in illegally arming a paramilitary unit. The link between Lobato and Alkatiri is yet to be established and confirmed, Australian media headlines notwithstanding.

James Dunn in a *Canberra Times* (June 28) article wrote that "...we should not regard Alkatiri insensitively. His resignation was demanded for alleged misdeeds exposed by the foreign media, and not considered by the Timor Leste Parliament. It may well turn out that his main misdeed was one of omission."

James Dunn is leaving for East Timor this weekend as a foreign affairs adviser to the Timorese Government at the invitation of

the Timorese foreign minister, Jose Ramos Horta, as a conciliator. A few days before he left he gave an exclusive interview to community radio 2Nim-FM, which will be available for podcast on the 2NimFM podcast site at: <http://nimbinradiomedia.libsyn.com>.

Alkatiri is not the main issue, although it is pretty obvious that that is what the Australian media would like him to be. His guilt or innocence, his demonisation or his sanctification will be media fodder for times to come.

His achievements though, are more interesting. He was instrumental in rebuilding the Fretilin organisation in exile, in the same way that Xanana was instrumental in rebuilding the Falintil (the armed guerrilla) inside East Timor, after the demoralising death of the charismatic guerrilla leader Nicolau Lobato, in 1978. The Central Committee of Fretilin was a result of Alkatiri's work. Alkatiri was largely responsible for sustaining and rebuilding the organization of Fretilin, working in exile, to resist pressures to negotiate with the Indonesians, just as Xanana Gusmao had to, when he emerged from the apparently defeated guerrilla movement as the leader of Falintil in 1978. Gusmao, too had to salvage the movement after disastrous losses, the death of

Lobato, and the savage Indonesian reprisals, of 1978 when some elements of the Falintil were willing to negotiate with the Indonesians.

Beyond Ancient History

More recently, Alkatiri led the Fretilin government of East Timor to hold out for a better deal on the Timor Gap Oil in negotiations with the Australians, resisting Horta's and Gusmao's rather overeager willingness to accept the Australian deal. Similarly, both Alkatiri, and former Fretilin guerrilla, Longuinhos Monteiro, the Chief Public Prosecutor for East Timor's UN sponsored Serious Crimes Unit disagreed profoundly with Horta and Gusmao prevailing in the decision not to pursue senior Indonesian military officials for their responsibility for war crimes against the Timorese people – particularly the 'singing General' Wiranti, who orchestrated the massacres, and the burning, and the looting of Dili by pro-Indonesian militias in 1999.

Jim Dunn, who was one of the UN advisors involved in setting up the Serious Crimes Unit, and even the influential Catholic Church have expressed similar dissatisfaction with Horta and Gusmao's argument that by opposing a UN call for a war crimes trial they avoided alienating 'the new Indonesia', and that it

was a higher priority to "build the institutions of [this] country..."

It is some comfort that Monteiros will be the prosecutor when Alkatiri is brought to book. He has demonstrated his impartiality by establishing Rogerio Lobato's role in the setting up of a paramilitary squad and he has also demonstrated that he is not easily swayed by arguments of political expediency, in his opposition to 'moving on' from Indonesian war crimes.

Where were the Australians?

The establishment of the clandestine paramilitary squad coincided with the 'rebellion' of Lieutenant Reynado with his unit of 600 dissatisfied personnel who claimed that they had been passed over in the military career structure. Perhaps it is not surprising that the paramilitary squad was set up (by Lobatao) as a response to a perceived threat. Reynado had been trained, along with some of the more notorious Indonesian units, in Australia, under one of Australia's aid agreements with Indonesia, and when the Australians intervened in East Timor he was one of the first people they contacted.

The simplistic version of a complex series of events we have seen presented in the anglocentric media becomes more deeply coloured when we access the Portuguese. Ana

Pessoa, Minister of State and Public Administration in East-Timor, and member of the Central Committee of Fretilin, in an interview with *Expresso* magazine makes the point (missed by Australian media) that most of the burning and pillaging and threats against people occurred after the Australian troops arrived, when the Timorese and Portuguese military police were confined to barracks. (Ana Pessoa is the ex-wife of Ramos Horta, and one of the people slated as a serious candidate for the East Timorese Prime Minister).

John Pilger, in his article reprinted below, makes a similar case that the Australians had a hand in exploiting the fragility of the new East Timorese democracy for its own purposes. And that was before the news of tenders for an Australian military base to be built in East Timor designed to accommodate 3000 troops for a minimum period of three years.

Clearly, if Alkatiri bears even indirect responsibility for setting up a paramilitary squad, he should be brought to book. But the issue of his guilt (or even his innocence) should not be allowed to obscure the broader picture. He, his supporters, and the Fretilin party as a whole, seem to be aware of this. It would be a pity if the Australian media could not do the same.

East Timor: the coup the world missed

by John Pilger

In my 1994 film *Death of a Nation* there is a scene onboard an aircraft flying between northern Australia and the island of Timor. A party is in progress; two men in suits are toasting each other in champagne. "This is an historically unique moment," effuses Gareth Evans, Australia's foreign affairs minister, "that is truly uniquely historical." He and his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, were celebrating the signing of the Timor Gap Treaty, which would allow Australia to exploit the oil and gas reserves in the seabed off East Timor. The ultimate prize, as Evans put it, was "zillions" of dollars.

Australia's collusion, wrote Professor Roger Clark, a world

authority on the law of the sea, "is like acquiring stuff from a thief... the fact is that they have neither historical, nor legal, nor moral claim to East Timor and its resources." Beneath them lay a tiny nation then suffering one of the most brutal occupations of the 20th century. Enforced starvation and murder had extinguished a quarter of the population: 180,000 people. Proportionally, this was a carnage greater than that in Cambodia under Pol Pot. The United Nations Truth Commission, which has examined more than 1,000 official documents, reported in January that Western governments shared responsibility for the genocide; for its part, Australia trained Indonesia's Gestapo, known as Kopassus, and its politicians



Mari Alkatiri, 'economic nationalist'.

and leading journalists disported themselves before the dictator Suharto, described by the CIA as a mass murderer.

These days Australia likes to present itself as a helpful, generous neighbor of East Timor, after public opinion forced the government of John Howard to lead a UN peacekeeping force six years ago. East Timor is now an

independent state, thanks to the courage of its people and a tenacious resistance led by the liberation movement Fretilin, which in 2001 swept to political power in the first democratic elections. In regional elections last year, 80 percent of votes went to Fretilin, led by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, a convinced "economic nationalist," who opposes privatization and interference by the World Bank. A secular Muslim in a largely Roman Catholic country, he is, above all, an anti-imperialist who has stood up to the bullying demands of the Howard government for an undue share of the oil and gas spoils of the Timor Gap.

On April 28 last, a section of the East Timorese army mutinied, ostensibly over pay. An eyewitness, Australian

radio reporter Maryann Keady, disclosed that American and Australian officials were involved. On May 7, Alkatiri described the riots as an attempted coup and said that "foreigners and outsiders" were trying to divide the nation. A leaked Australian Defense Force document has since revealed that Australia's "first objective" in East Timor is to "seek access" for the Australian military so that it can exercise "influence over East Timor's decision-making." A Bushite "neocon" could not have put it better.

The opportunity for "influence" arose on May 31, when the Howard government accepted an "invitation" by the East Timorese president, Xanana Gusmao, and foreign minister, José Ramos Horta – who oppose Alkatiri's nationalism – to send troops to Dili, the capital. This was accompanied by "our boys to

the rescue" reporting in the Australian press, together with a smear campaign against Alkatiri as a "corrupt dictator."

Arriving with a force of 2,000, an Australian brigadier flew by helicopter straight to the headquarters of the rebel leader, Major Alfredo Reinado – not to arrest him for attempting to overthrow a democratically elected prime minister but to greet him warmly. Like other rebels, Reinado had been trained in Canberra.

John Howard is said to be pleased with his title of George W Bush's "deputy sheriff" in the South Pacific. He recently sent troops to a rebellion in the Solomon Islands, and imperial opportunities beckon in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and other small island nations. The sheriff will approve.

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Welfare to Work Reforms

Alert – new changes start on 1st July 2006.

from Natalie Meyer, team leader NNIC

NNIC is very concerned about the new changes under the Welfare to Work scheme commencing on 1 July 2006. We are committed to doing whatever we can to minimise the effects of the changes upon the community. People should be aware that these changes have been brought in by the Federal Government (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations), rather than by Centrelink itself.

The change we are most worried about is the automatic 8 week breach period which will be imposed upon any customers who fail to meet their participation obligations (which will become more onerous after 1st July) three times.

NNIC is opposed to the new punitive measures and have been part of a sector-wide campaign to fight their introduction.

Unfortunately the sector has not been able to prevent it.

NNIC is advised by Centrelink that the key to customers avoiding breaches is to maintain contact with Centrelink. We will be installing an additional phone in the NNIC Centrelink Agency in anticipation of increased demand for telephone contact.

If you or your family experience any problems in relation to the changes to centrelink benefits... please come and see us. We can help you!! We can advocate on your behalf and will do whatever we can to assist. We can also refer you on to welfare rights lawyers if necessary. We will also be collecting information from consenting customers regarding the impact of the changes to help us continue the campaign against them.

Changes to Work for the Dole

Another significant change under the reforms relate to mutual obligation and Work for the Dole

requirements. It seems that many more Centrelink customers will be required to do Work for the Dole. Some customers may be required to do WFTD for 30 hours per week for 10 months. The welfare sector has strongly opposed this requirement, but again we have not been successful at defeating it.

It would seem that doing WFTD will no longer remedy a breach, as has been the case until 1st July.

Many of you will know that NNIC conducts an ongoing Work for the Dole placement project in Nimbin and is able to place up to 10 participants around town at any one time. NNIC will continue to work to assist people to find worthwhile placements, and to provide support for them whilst placed in the WFTD program.

We are interested in hearing from any current registered Host organisations about any ideas you may have for the future in relation to WFTD activities, including any costs that may be involved.

We are also keen to hear from



any potential new Hosts who may have work to offer WFTD participants. Hosts must be:

- Not-for-Profit organisations
- Able to offer at least 6 hours work per week (and possibly up to 30 hrs per week)
- Must be able to provide on site supervision for the participants at all times
- Must have current Public Liability insurance and must not displace paid staff with WFTD participants.

NNIC pays all Hosts a host support fee for each placement (currently \$180) plus we provide cash support (as available) for

materials etc in relation to work to be performed by the participants.

Participants in the program receive \$165 towards work clothing, plus NNIC provides support and training if required.

NNIC is investigating the possibility of developing some land-care type team projects under the WFTD program and would be interested to hear from local landcare and environmental groups in relation to this.

If you have any ideas about how we can make WFTD a positive experience for the community and the participants, please contact Nat or Annie at NNIC on 6689-1692.

The Power of Community

How Cuba survived without oil and fertiliser

by Wayne Wadsworth

A new film documentary from Cuba shows how the Cubans survived and prospered after losing most of their oil supplies when the Soviet Union disintegrated.

In 1989 I visited Cuba for the first time. Cuba still had a plentiful supply of oil from the Soviet Union. The Cubans had a sweetheart deal with the Soviets to supply sugar and a set price against the cost of oil. The Soviet Union and the Eastern Blok countries bought most of Cuba's oil and in return they received oil, low quality industrial goods and preserved food.

It looked increasing likely that Gorbachov was pushing the Cubans to take on their own form of Perestroika, which the Cubans were not having a bar of. It was also obvious if the Soviets cut



became critically low. Food became so scarce that many people were very seriously undernourished.

The US Government and administration were licking their lips in anticipation of the return of Cuba to Uncle Sam. They were so confident that Miami real estate agents were selling Cuban land vacated by Cubans who had migrated to the US. Fidel rightly pointed out that much of the land was now freeways and roads!

Cuba's reaction to the

crisis was firstly to introduce thousands of Chinese bikes into the economy as the main means of transport. This had an immediate effect of allowing Cubans to remain mobile and had a side effect of vastly improving the health of the populace.

Feeding the Population

A chronic food shortage developed very quickly. Food was rotting in the paddocks, as there was no fuel to power the tractors and trucks used to supply food for the cities.

The reaction of the Cuban Government was to make freely available city land for agriculture. Anyone

who wanted to grow food in the city could get access to vacant land or parks in around the cities.

The Government also allowed people to grow food commercially in the city and started farmers markets where fresh vegetables fish and small amounts of meat could be bought by city folk. All schools were instructed to supply lunches for students to make sure young people were getting at least one meal per day. Also city commercial growers had to donate 10% of their crop to the local school.

Cubans went from a diet of pork beans rice and uka, to a diet of vegetables and fresh greens. Again the health

statistics changed as organic locally grown food came onto the market. Cuba has had the biggest transformation to organic farming, from nothing in the early 90's to 80% and growing.

The US Administration Economic Blockade

The US Government has maintained an extremely hostile attitude to Cuba since they lost control after a popular reevaluation against Batista, a Yankee stooge who helped bleed the country dry in return for US backing. Let's hope the US blockade continues, and Cuba finds new and exciting ways to localise their economy and develop new ways of building community.



A showing of 'The Power of Community' will be held at Djanbung Gardens on Friday 4th August at 6pm. Cost will be \$20/\$15 which includes a light dinner from Robyn's marvellous kitchen. For bookings or further information please contact Sue Stock on 6689-1148.

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Anaid a crowd



Our very own Diana Anaid invites you to The Nimbin Bush Theatre, Saturday 29th July from 6pm-12 for a very unique, once-in-a-lifetime event: to be recorded and filmed for a live CD and film clip. Dress as wild as you want, and if you have a trick or skill, get ready to show it off to the world!

This is proudly a 100% local event, showcasing our colourful culture as well as Diana's incredible songwriting and performance

(it's also one of the last chances to see her before she heads back to the USA to work on the next studio CD)

The show will include jugglers, acrobats, fire dancers, hula-hoop girls, uni-cycling, fortune tellers, stilt-walkers, and a whole lot more, including the very talented special guest Peppa Rose.

Raw and Unplugged at the Nimbin Bush Theatre, Saturday 29th July, 6pm-12 \$5/3.

Nim FM's Fundraiser a great success

On a cool winter's night the good folk of Nimbin turned out in full to support their community radio station.

The Bush Theatre proved to be a beautiful venue. The old building by the creek with warm fires and colourful lights made an inviting space. When the delicious aromas started wafting from the restaurant and DJ Katsu played his warm tunes, we knew we were in for an enjoyable night.

Cecil Roberts gave the night his Bundjalung blessing before three big bands took centre stage: Stipsky, The Shed and Blue Mango.

A big, big thank you to the many musicians who gave their time and talent. We love you for it. Gummie was the soundman. Thanks for being such a pleasure. Omega Breakspear and Kaleidoscopic Chris were behind the lighting and stage projection. Thank you: it was the best!

Paul le Bars was honoured for being a legend in the community radio sector. He was especially acknowledged for being the driving force behind the formation of Nim FM. Due to his expertise, Nim FM gained the holy grail of radio; a permanent broadcast licence at a very early stage. Paul was presented with a Nim FM lifetime membership award and the prestigious award for "Radio Excellence" was named in his honour.

The Nim FM Radio Awards were designed to highlight radio excellence. It was a way to acknowledge our presenters and behind the scenes people for their volunteer enthusiasm. The winners received a certificate featuring the vibrant Nim FM logo designed by Jamie Heathen Lovechild.

From an impressive range of nominees Paul presented "The Paul le Bars Award for Radio Excellence" to radio personality, Pam Pussy Cat. In honour of his deceased son, Paul also presented "The Marcel le Bars Youth Encouragement



Award". There were two winners, Zac Price and the Bayles girls, Tara and Kirra.

Not to be outdone, Martin Preedy took the night to new heights with his obvious auctioneer talents. An enthusiastic crowd bid on all sorts of items ranging from Michael Balderstone's hat, to a beautiful linen chest made by a local craftsman.

A very big thank you to Motdang Thai, Bring A Bong, The Emporium, Nimbin Gourmet, Rainbow Wholefoods Lismore and everyone else who contributed to such an entertaining and successful auction.

Thank you to Elspeth for the event banner, Judy Hales for the raffle, Tonia,

Judy and Gail for providing the musicians with a green room and beautiful food, Martin Jansen for his tireless recording efforts, Justin on the door, the Nimbin Community Technology Centre and their printing services, Adam at the Nimbin Bush Theatre and Paul Roguszka for the Paul le Bars award.

Nim FM is racing into the 2nd half of the year. The new weekly program guide is available from the Nim FM office and on the web www.nimfm.org.

The next round of Nim FM Radio Presenters courses will commence on Tuesday 18th July from 10-12 noon and Thursday evening 20th July 6-8pm. These courses are available to Nim-FM members plus \$15 for photocopied material. They run for 6 weeks and the subjects cover the spectrum needed for presenters to feel confident on air. Enrol now by ringing Marie on 6689-0279 or call into the Nim-FM office in the community centre complex.

The 12 award categories and winners are -

Longest Serving Nim FM Presenter – Chigano King.

Morning Show *Nimbin Time*, Tuesdays 8-10am.

Most Personable Presenter – Pam Pussy Cat, *Four Footed Fury Faced Friends Show*, Tuesdays 8-10 pm.

The Hidden Diamond Award – Mim & Keiran, *Eco-Centric* environment show, Fridays 11-12 noon.

Best Spoken Presenter/Velvet Tonsils Award – Christine Strelan. *Nothing Sacred* Wed 2-4pm.

Best Music Program – Two winners.

Wolfgang Stemmer, *World Music and Jazz*, Thurs 12-4pm.

Frank Brehe, *Roots N All*, Mondays 6.15-8.30pm.

The Best Consistently Prepared Program – Peter Pedals, *The Power & The Passion*, Saturdays 12.15 – 2pm.

Most Thought Provoking Show – Peter Pedals.

Most Favourite Show – Christine Strelan.

The Sedition Award – Martin Jansen. *Scam Dot Org/ Radio International*, Saturdays 7-9pm.

The show that best reflects Nimbin Culture. Bob Tissott, Michael Balderstone & Gerald Taylor. *The Hemp Hours*, Fridays 12-2pm.

Pre-school fundraiser

Nimbin Community Preschool held a hugely successful fundraising auction at The Rainbow Café during June. Not only were many bargains snaffled, but over \$1000 was raised to help make up for the shortfall between government funding and the running costs of the centre. Funding for community-based preschools has not been increased since 1989, and Nimbin Preschool, like many others, relies upon the generosity of the community to stay afloat.

Diana Anaid whipped the crowd into a spending frenzy with a few of her original tunes. Barkers Vale Primary School principal Peter Lanyon was a superlative auctioneer, who

managed to squeeze every last cent out of the bargain-hungry punters.

Nimbin Preschool would like to thank everyone who supported the event, especially the following businesses who donated goods: The Rainbow Café, The Nimbin Hotel, the Nimbin butcher, The Nimbin pharmacy, The Hemp Embassy, Hempling Around, Kids Quest, Charters Hardware, Nimbin Hair Saloon, Barbara Mills, Fun Fruits, the Aquarius bakery, the Emporium, Nimbin Bowling Club, Daisy's, Bringabong, The Apothecary, Perceptio's, Nimbin Pizza, The Retro Café, Gondwana, the Goanna Bakery, the NRMA garage and Nimbin Motors.

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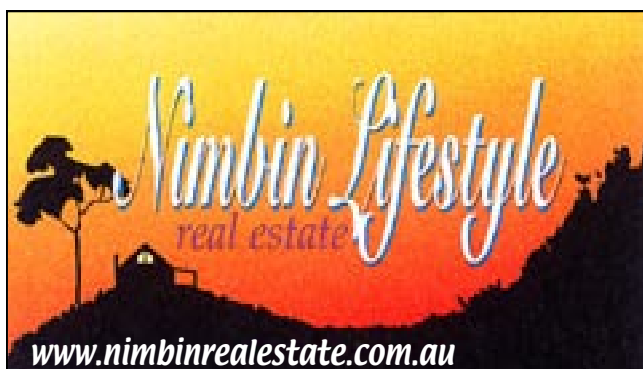
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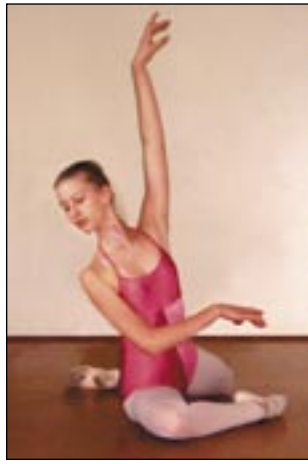
by Williamina Bowers

Khadi's concert was generating excitement even before the curtain went up. Start was delayed 10 minutes whilst more seats went out – some still had to stand. Then it was 'ladies and gentlemen the show will begin in three minutes' how important we felt, to be called in.

Curtain up and off we went into diverse realities as Khadi drew us firstly into 'Shelob's Lair' convincing with every part of her body from spine to fingertips and toes she was a spider; danced on pointe, despite the 'raked' stage (sloped floor = dancer's nightmare). Then we were carried to the riverbanks of China as she led her young students in a sweetly portrayed ritual of blessing, choreographed herself with traditional steps and arm movements.

Appearing in full classical tutu in autumn hues of liquid amber Khadi breezed lightly through the music of 'A Walk In The Park'. Her tremendous style and poise left in no doubt.

And just to educate that today's ballet is not all tutu, tutu, too much, next treat was a fusion of raw African tribal barefoot dancing, balanced on urgent, hypnotic



music where her complete bodily discipline and strength were evident as she backflipped and contorted through unusually defined manoeuvres.

Interwoven through all the above, her supporting cast really did her proud.

From the delightful surprise of song diva Williamina in a rare personification of coloratura soprano (very high singing and many, many notes) with an impeccable rendition of 'The Doll Song' from Tales of Hoffmann; to the exquisite tenor voice of Paul McGowen, a versatile performer delivering first a delicate high tenor voice in Les Berceaux (The Cradles) then punching out 'Why God Why' from the musical Miss Saigon. Then the pair completely blew us away with 'The Prayer' especially written

for classical tenor/pop diva.

Mum, Elizabeth gave us song too, and not to be left out brother Jareus, leapt through a brisk Moldovan Character dance – we'd like to see more of him please. Diana Anaid, Tub, Chris Harris, trio Bloodwood, all added wonderful variety. The show closed as it opened with those sassy lasses, the Tap Bitches.

Another surprise appearance as presenter was the 'voice behind the voices' Virginia Mason who reaches here in Nimbin, bringing 55 years of theatre, choreography and opera from Britain and the States for our benefit.

Heartfelt thanks comes from Khadi and family for \$2,200 raised. Additional thanks to the tremendous support crew. Also Nimbin School of Arts for maintaining our wonderful performance venue, and eternally fostering the Arts.

Well done Nimbin yet again for your brilliance in recognising and supporting our young talent.

Khadi, you've started something, please treat us to a return concert after your stint in London. Meantime, send us a postcard.

PS. The coffee was great too!

Fibre is fabulous stuff

by Jeni Kendell

Once again the old Blue Knob Hall Gallery has shown us what amazingly versatile and imaginative people are living in our area - this time it is with a stunning exhibition which might have been titled "Hundreds of Ways with Fibre."

Fibre is on show in the form of wool felted onto silk, as in the garments finely tailored by Melissa Hume, and many others funkily idiosyncratic such as Barbara Mills' cheeky hat and scarf. Fibre is also shown as wool felt wall hangings of classical elegance by Helena Herendi, with their incorporation of other plant and animal fibres.

There are plant fibres exquisitely woven into tiny baskets by Chris Hanson, fibres of gourds turned into objects of dramatic fantasy by the skill and imagination of Ginny Wood, plant fibres turned into paper and pressed into stunning images by Miriam Koenig.

The subtle colours and textures of paperbark have



been used by Sue Boardman to create abstract rhythms in her series "Melaleuca, 1,2 and 3"

Among the felt works is a Totem Pole by Pauline Ahern and a fantasy tent depicting the local landscape in the form of a secret retreat as a cubby house or meditation space. This was made by some residents of a local community ranging in age from 5 to 81.

The Bunjum Artists from Cabbage Tree Island have created a whole wall of brightly dyed fabrics which liven up the world with their vibrant colours and imagery, while Enid Taylors subtle plant dyes enrich meters of fine silk chiffon. The stage is full of felted wool and

silk garments ideal for this cooler time of year.

Fibres of many varieties used in a multitude of ways. One of the most useful and beautiful gifts Nature has given the world. The only unintentional omission is the strong and splendid fibre that has helped give Nimbin its world-wide name!

The Exhibition will be open Wednesdays through to Sundays, 10am to 4pm until 16th July.

Remember also that the newly upgraded café is serving delicious meals and drinks during Gallery open hours, and is open on Friday and Saturday evenings from 5.30pm for dinner. Bookings may be made on 6689-7449

Three

An exhibition by local painters at Nimbin Regional Gallery (the Rainbow Building). Showing until Sunday 15th July.

This is an exhibition of new work by local painters Trish Dalmas, Kylie Swan, Joye Spink and Shar Roberts who are all studying at Southern Cross University.

Each painter is responding to the environment, women's issues and spirituality as well as using new technology and responding to it. They have put together an impressive exhibition and although their styles are quite distinct, the works of one painter seem to enhance the works of the others.

The exhibition is open daily 10am to 4pm. Details—phone 6689-1444



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Cyanide Watch SpeakOut

by Graeme Dunstan

Nimbin Environment Centre in conjunction with Peacebus.com will be holding a Cyanide Watch SpeakOut in Casino, gathering outside the Casino Post Office from 11am on Friday 7th July 2006. Lifts and carpools will be available from Nimbin Environment Centre at 9am.

The Cyanide Watch SpeakOut will bear witness to the hazard created for communities and their waterways by the transport of bulk cyanide for the gold mining industry. It will be calling for political accountability for the cyanide hazard, a ban on cyanide gold mining and end to the transport of bulk cyanide.

On 30th March the NSW Government, in response to persistent questions asked by Greens MLC Lee



Rhiannon in the NSW Parliament, revealed that the cyanide route for the newly opened, and much opposed, gold mine at Lake Cowal near West Wyalong, 6090 tonnes each year for 13 years, would pass by rail along the Brisbane-Sydney trunk line.

"Cyanide is lethal," said Cyanide Watchman Graeme Dunstan of Peacebus.com.

"Just a gram ingested is enough to kill an adult human."

"Despite denials by gold miners, cyanide accidents world wide are regular, common and often on a

disastrous scale such as the 1999 Romanian spill that killed aquatic life along 1000 km of the Tizer-Danube Rivers," he said.

Near Condobolin NSW in July 1992, a derailment of a freight train carrying 120 tonnes of cyanide bound for Kalgoolie led to evacuation of homes in a 3 km radius, closure of roads and a clean up that took 10 days work from 40 volunteers from the local fire brigades.

Fortunately no rain fell.

"No community has ever been consulted about the acceptability of the hazard



that this toxic transport creates for the health and safety of local people and the waterways over which the cyanide transports pass," Dunstan says.

Because a NSW Government has never before made public, But the sign off on the Plan to ship 6090 tonnes a year of Lake Cowal cyanide bound for Lake Cowal is just a small part of the secret deals done by the NSW government with the foreign owned gold mining industry and its huge thirst for cyanide.

The chemical giant Orica makes about 80,000 tonnes of sodium cyanide a year at its Gladstone (Qld) plant. Cyanide for gold mines in



NSW and some as far away as Kalgoolie in Western Australia is shipped by rail from Gladstone through Brisbane to Sydney then west.

"We cannot say, for sure because the NSW Government is being so secretive about its cyanide deals, but my guess is that about 30,000 tonnes a year is going through Kyogle, Casino and the catchments for the Richmond and

Clarence Rivers," Dunstan says.

"This means 1,500 twenty tonne containers a year or an average of 300 a week or 40 a day!"

"See a south bound freight train, know that it is carrying secret cyanide and wonder how much faith you can have in the rail infrastructure," he said.

Further information www.peacebus.com/CyanideWatch

Lessons from the Cyanide Spill at Condobolin, 1992

by Graeme Dunstan

The driver of the Superfreighter on the transcontinental line saw the semi trailer truck stopped on the level crossing and had time to toot his horn; but there was no stopping the Superfreighter, which ploughed into the semi, instantly rendering it scrap metal and killing its driver and passenger.

The collision derailed three locomotives and 10 wagons and tore up 200 meters of track; the first two of the derailed wagons each a bore steel shipping containers of sodium cyanide pellets packed in heavy-duty plastic bags.

It was 2pm Tuesday 20th July 1992 and outside Condobolin, western NSW,

The National Party Member for Lachlan and NSW Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Ian Armstrong, is reported in Condobolin's biweekly newspaper, The Lachlander, of 24th July saying 120 tonnes of cyanide was on the Superfreighter. The Lachlan Shire Manager of Environmental Services reported in the same paper reported that 42 tonnes of cyanide were spilled from two ruptured containers from the same derailed wagon. The Sydney Morning

Herald of 22nd July reported the amount as 40 tonnes. All agree that it was from ICI (now Orica) in Gladstone and that it was on its way to Kalgoolie.

According to the Lachlander of 24th July, "the sodium cyanide was in pellet form and strewn over a wide area of the smash". The Sydney Morning Herald on 23rd July reports 5 tonnes spilled on the smash site.

The evacuation of homes in a 3 km radius was immediately effected and for fear of the generation of deadly hydrogen cyanide gas, the whole area was sealed off, including the Newell Highway.

Ten days later the smash was still being cleaned up and roads were still closed. Big cranes had to be brought in to right and re-rail the rolling stock. The Lachlander of 31st July reports: "Police, State Rail Staff, the Fire brigade and State Emergency Services are still at the scene..." and "There are still some cyanide pellets under these carriages and in the ground..."

The Condobolin Airport was immediately closed though by what authority, the Shire Manager was not sure because the decision was enacted before the Shire, whose property it is, had decided. All agreed helicopters stirring up dust

and cyanide were not welcome. For this reason it seems, no city Tv news crews got to the site and recorded it.

The only news photo of the spill published is believed to be of a Condobolin identity who had a role in the clean up, looking at the sky for signs of rain. Dubbed "Luke Skywalker", the joke is that he was looking and praying hard. Fortunately no rain came.

To placate fears of an evacuation amongst the 3,500 residents of Condobolin, The Lachlander of 28th July reported that on Sunday 26th July, State Rail in conjunction with Emergency Services arranged two busloads of residents to be taken to the periphery of the smash site "so they could see for themselves the enormity of the situation".

The accident attracted a lot of experts. The NSW Fire Brigade HAZMAT Unit arrived by helicopter at 5.30pm, three hours after the smash. The Lachlander 24th July reports a Mr Simon de Bell, Industrial Chemicals Business Manager for ICI (now Orica), saying incongruously: "Rail is the safest method of transporting sodium cyanide to reach mining sites in remote parts of the country."

The Hon. Ian Armstrong MLA, who diverted a charter flight he

was on at the time of the smash, was soon on site staying there for two and a half hours, "in constant conversation," reports The Lachlander of 24th July, with NSW Premier John Fahey. In the same article, Armstrong reports how impressed he was "by the way in which local emergency services personnel swung into operation at the crash site to secure the area in a dangerous situation caused by the cyanide pellets spill."

Volunteer firefighters were the heroes of those days. The Forbes Advocate of 4th August reports the NSW Regional Commander North West, Frank Thomas, commending "the efforts of the 40 volunteers who worked tirelessly over 10 days removing toxic sodium cyanide pellets from the scene." Volunteers from stations throughout the district assisted and they came from Parkes, Condobolin, Dubbo, Forbes and Blue Mountains. In particular he praised the Condobolin brigade who were first to respond to the emergency scene.

"They recognized the seriousness of the situation and were able to warn other emergency services to stay away until the cyanide spill was confirmed," Commander Thomas said.

The NSW Opposition Spokesperson for planning and environment, Pam Allen, used the occasion to attack the Fahey government on its reluctance to implement its Chemical Inquiry. "Chemical safety law has been brought to a halt. As long as the Government will not implement the laws these hazards and incidents will continue to happen," she is reported as saying in the Sydney Morning Herald of 22nd July.

"Reform of chemical safety laws has been deliberately delayed because the State Government has been more concerned about its own survival rather than protesting the environment and human health," she said.

The morals of this story are:
1. Rail transport of cyanide may be safer than road transport but it is not absolutely safe.
2. When rail cyanide accidents happen they make a big and life threatening mess.
3. Cleaning up the mess becomes a responsibility for local volunteer fire brigades.

This report is based up the research done by Auntie Ellie Gilbert. Thank you Ellie.

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Whatever happened to Cold Fusion?

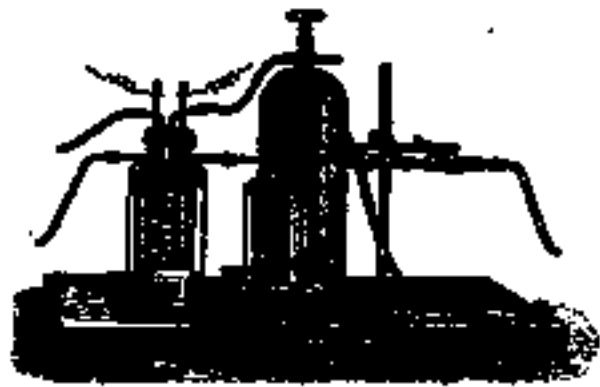
by David McMinn

In March 1989, two academics from the University of Utah, Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann, announced that they had produced Cold Fusion at room temperatures. This was achieved via simple electrolysis, which involved inserting two electrodes - one palladium and another of platinum - into heavy water and running an electric current.

The deuterium (a variant of hydrogen in the heavy water) was apparently undergoing nuclear fusion to create anomalous heat. The story was hyped by the media as a great scientific breakthrough, but the euphoria quickly turned to allegations of fraud and scientific incompetence. Pons and Fleischmann were ridiculed and humiliated, with both having to move to France in self-imposed exile, albeit on a healthy retainer, conducting research for a French energy company.

Since the Pons & Fleischmann debacle, Cold Fusion has dropped out of sight. However, laboratories in several countries are conducting studies in this area and a large body of evidence has been produced supporting the Cold Fusion hypothesis. Despite this research, it has failed to show up in scientific literature as most academic journals refused to publish anything on Cold Fusion. Fortunately, we live in the age of the internet and scientific fascists find it much more difficult to maintain the purity of the prevailing paradigm. There are various web sites devoted to this topic, which make excellent reading, most notably *Cold Fusion Times* and infinite-energy.com.

Most scientists continue to ridicule the concept of Cold Fusion, but there are many highly qualified researchers who support it. George Miley, winner of the Edward Teller medal for innovative hot fusion research and an editor of *Fusion Technology* (American Nuclear Society) for over 15 years, considered that "There's very strong evidence that low-energy



Electrolysis equipment, from *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Scientific American Supplement, No. 832, December 12, 1891.*

nuclear reactions do occur. Numerous experiments have shown definitive results - as do my own."

John Bockris, a former professor at Texas A&M University, believed that "Nuclear reactions can occur without high temperatures. Low-energy nuclear transformations can - and do - exist."

Michael McKubre, director of the Energy Research Center (USA) commented, "I am absolutely certain there is unexplained heat and the most likely explanation is that its origin is nuclear."

Billions of dollars are being spent on hot fusion reactors trying to harness the energy of the Sun. In these reactors, the deuterium gas is heated to temperatures over 300 million degrees Celsius and the deuterium atoms fuse, releasing huge amounts of energy. This process is viewed as having the potential to provide unlimited power, but its commercial development is at least five decades away. Despite the massive expenditures, researchers have failed to achieve a net energy gain. (The energy input to get the process going is greater than the energy released.)

In contrast, Cold Fusion can be achieved for a small financial outlay and occupy a laboratory bench top. The situation is quite absurd and represents a massive misallocation of resources.

Commercialisation of Cold Fusion would mean the end of energy supply as we know it. Gone would be the problems of greenhouse gases, nuclear fission waste products, resource extraction, power grids, wind

turbines and so forth. Power supply could be completely decentralised and based on plentiful deuterium derived from water. Each home or village could have its own independent power supply. Cold Fusion apparently does not create major difficulties with radiation or radioactive waste.

However, there will be many vested corporate interests trying to block this new energy source from getting off the ground. Uranium and coal reserves would become useless with mining companies losing billions in lost potential revenue. Power generation companies, as we know them, would fade away. For some sectors of the economy, Cold Fusion would pose a serious threat.

The validity of Cold Fusion will ultimately be confirmed or negated by the scientific method, but this could take decades. Scientists like to consider themselves open to new ideas based on scientific observation, but this is not always the case. Scientific conservatism is rife and any radical new concept, regardless of its validity, is attacked and the researchers vilified. Alas, numerous examples of this bigotry litter history.

If it is proven to be a real phenomenon, Pons and Fleischmann deserve a Nobel Prize (hopefully they live long enough) and the Cold Fusion scandal will go down in history as one of the most vicious attacks against scientific reason. It would only be eclipsed by the Catholic Church's censor of Galileo's view that the Sun was at the centre of the solar system. Nothing much has changed over the past four centuries.

Barrick Gold does another Lake Cowal in Chile

by Viviana Ramirez

Pascua Lama (better pascua trágica) is another serious attack on Chilean natural resources by foreign multinational companies. We need to reverse all of them, before one of the richest and most beautiful countries in the world becomes a desert.

In the Valle de San Felix, the purest water in Chile runs from two rivers, fed by two glaciers. Water is a most precious resource, and wars will be fought for it. Indigenous farmers use the water, there is no unemployment, and they provide the second largest source of income for the area.

Under the glaciers has been found a huge deposit of gold, silver and other minerals. To get at these, it would be necessary to break, to destroy the glaciers - something never conceived of in the history of the world - and to make two huge holes, each as big as a whole mountain, one for extraction and one for the mine's rubbish tip. The project is

called Pascua Lama. The company is called Barrick Gold, the same company that is mining at Lake Cowal NSW Australia at the moment. The operation is being planned by a multinational company, one of whose members is George Bush senior.

The Chilean Government has approved the project to start this year, 2006. The only reason it hasn't started yet is because the farmers have got a temporary stay of execution. If they destroy the glaciers, they will not just destroy the source of especially pure water, but they will permanently contaminate the two rivers so they will never again be fit for human or animal consumption because of the use of cyanide and sulphuric acid in the extraction process.

Every last gram of gold will go abroad to the multinational company and not one will be left with the people whose land it is. They will only be left with the poisoned water and the resulting illnesses.

The farmers have been fighting a long time for

their land, but have been forbidden to make a TV appeal by a ban from the Ministry of the Interior. Their only hope now of putting brakes on this project is to get help from international justice. The world must know what is happening in Chile. The only place to start changing the world is from here.

We ask you to copy the text that follows into an email adding your signature, city and country and send it to noapascualama@yahoo.ca to be forwarded to the Chilean Government. Then send it to everyone in your address book.

No to Pascua Lama Open-cast mine in the Andean Cordillera on the Chilean-Argentine frontier.

We ask the Chilean Government not to authorize the Pascua Lama project to protect three entire glaciers, the purity of the water of the San Felix Valley and El Transito, the quality of the agricultural land of the region of Atacama, and the quality of life of the Diaguita people and of the whole population of the region.

Grist Environmental News - July

At Least the Bugs Are Dead

Pesticide use increases risk of Parkinson's disease, new study finds

Exposure to pesticides can increase the risk of Parkinson's disease, concludes a broad, long-term study. Researchers followed the health of 143,325 people since 1982 and found that those regularly exposed to pesticides had a 70 percent higher incidence of Parkinson's. The research, published in the *Annals of Neurology*, found that the amount of exposure seemed not to matter: occupational farmers, hobby gardeners, and determined home bug-sprayers all had the same increased risk. (Exposure to other harmful substances like asbestos and formaldehyde brought no increased risk of Parkinson's.) No specific pesticides were pegged as culprits, though past studies have suggested a link between the disease and the class of 'cides called organophosphates. Parkinson's disease affects about 6.3 million people worldwide and over a million in the U.S.; the disease debilitates muscle control and can severely reduce a person's ability to walk, talk, and maintain a pest-free lawn.

Sudden Impact

Glacier expert warns that climate is warming abruptly

A renowned glacier expert says the earth's climate has passed a tipping point and entered a period of rapid warming that may threaten human civilization. Other than that, he's a barrel of laughs. Lonnie Thompson, who has taken core samples from glaciers for 23 years, suggests that the cool period humans had been enjoying until recently began with an abrupt change 5,200 years ago, which coincided with the rise of cities. About 50 years ago, conclude Thompson and eight other researchers in an article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, our current abrupt warming spell began. The outlook isn't pretty: Summarizing data from ice-core samples in the Andes and Himalayas, Thompson predicts that warming in the high mountains of the tropics "is unprecedented for at least two millennia" and that tropical-zone glaciers will melt completely "in the near future." That means sea-level rises, more floods and droughts, and less reliable sources of freshwater - but maybe getting a tan will be a snap.

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