

Zealanders in schools, and a concern for preserving Maori culture through Maori kindergartens or "language nests" (*ohanga reo*). There is a growing resentment on the part of more radical Maoris of the commercialization of specifically Maori artefacts based on the human figure: the *tiki* and the *manaia*. These, it is claimed, belong only to the Maori, not to the *Pakeha*. The *Marae* movement is extending to the cities (a *Marae* is a traditional Maori meeting place, a place where decisions are reached collectively after extended discussion and consultation).

There is indeed a backlash against things Maori, especially among the farming community and the petite bourgeoisie more generally. These concerns link with support for sporting and other ties with South Africa, with Anglo-supremacy and white ethnocentrism, and with concerns for maintaining the "traditional" ANZUS defence alliance against communism and left-wing subversion. But, as compared with the Australian situation, there seems to be a greater commitment by the majority of New Zealanders to the anti-nuclear policy, against South African contacts, and for the independence movements such as that of the Kanaks in New Caledonia. We were surprised to hear strong anti-American and anti-French sentiments from even quite conservative New Zealanders. Clearly the events surrounding the bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior* have not been forgotten. On the other hand, one suspects that this is for some more an issue of national sovereignty.

And yes, there is a strong fundamentalist and moral conservative sector in New Zealand. But in spite of this, the present government has

repealed legislation against homosexuals and resisted pressure for greater controls on abortion. And it still seems determined to put a Bill of Rights in place --- at a time when the Australian government has effectively stepped back from such action.

On "lifestyle" issues overall New Zealand currently seems more small-l liberal. Conservation concerns seem to do better too --- certainly much better than in Queensland or Tasmania. And while New Zealand Labor has no formal factional groups, it has been effectively colonized by feminists and in some degree also retains a sympathy for Maori concerns. (This last is a matter of some importance, since it needs the Maori vote to remain in power).

Another pleasant surprise was the apparent greater "balance" of the NZ press. As compared with, for example, the *Courier Mail* or the *Australian*, the leading NZ papers presented a greater range of views on world events, and there was little evidence of domination by New Right themes and agendas. This may have some connection with the lack of any Murdoch-type control thus far.

On the other hand, the TV combines the worst features of Australian and overseas TV. While the two stations are run by the NZBC, they rely not only on licence fees but also on advertizing for finance. The majority of their programs are reruns of the worst American and British television: *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street*, *Dallas*... ugh!

Yet New Zealand "culture" is alive and well. Writers, poets and crafts-persons are fresh and vital (perhaps echoing the growing independence of

the nation). Even in provincial cities there was a flourishing little-theatre movement, poetry groups and literary societies.

But what about the economy? The NZ dollar is certainly worth considerably less than ours (about \$A0.80 while we were there). Subjectively, the cost of living seemed higher, while real wages were lower. Even locally grown tomatoes cost us \$8.95 a kilo in autumn, falling to \$4.95 to \$2.95 in summer.

Rents and the cost of housing seemed as high as in Australia. The price of cars and most imported goods is astronomical. The sheep and dairy industries were in deep recession, the manufacturing and contracting also. At the same time, the (Labor) government was cutting back rural subsidies, refusing to prop up endangered industries, and calling on regions to embark on programs of self-help. Mrs. Thatcher would have loved it.

Certainly some of the big

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ECO-FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

by Ariel Salleh*

500 women and men attended a first international meeting of eco-feminists at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, March 27-29. Called *Eco-Feminist Perspectives: Culture-Nature-Theory*, the conference was opened by Susan Griffin, author of *Woman and Nature: the Roaring Inside Her* (1978). Griffin spoke about the origins of modern scientific culture and why it produces dehumanized and dissociated people --- "space cases", to quote her.

Over the weekend workshop discussions were held on environmental ethics, bioregionalism, reproductive technologies and population control, eco-feminist theory, genetic engineering, eco-development and animal rights.

names in NZ, who are now expanding across to Australia and to a lesser degree to the UK and US, applaud the government's removal of controls on currency and speculation and its attempts to move from direct control of the labour market. And yet unemployment was lower than Australia's (6%).

A mixed bag. We were, after all, only transients. There is surely much that we missed. Yet somehow we found a feeling of hope for the future there which seems to be lacking in Australia.

And the climate (when you adjust to it) is beautifully bracing in winter and delightfully warm in summer. The air which seems to blow straight off the southern oceans is so fresh that you could almost live on it. The water is clean and pure, and the snow is superb.

Would we live there if we could? Yes, I rather think so.

There were also cultural activities highlighting the eco-feminist understanding which ties together exploitation of the earth and the appropriation of women's bodies as different forms of the same logic.

A workshop on anti-nuclear movements was led by Zohl de Ishtar, an Australian now active with other ex-Greenham women in the Pacific region. I contributed to a panel called *Green politics: international perspectives* along with Lilo Wollny, a Green member of the German Bundestag; April Wells from the Vancouver party;



and Charlene Spretnak, the co-author with Fritjof Capra of *Green Politics* (1984).

Lilo Wollny told the conference that in West Germany since Chernobyl there is no avoiding radioactive vegetables, fruit, milk or meat. The federal government would be bankrupt if it had to provide "clean" food for everybody; so the political response is to "adjust" the level of safe intake. According to Wollny this margin has leapt from a pre-Chernobyl limit of 37 becquerels per kilo to

50 becquerels in provinces controlled by the Social Democrats and up to 120 in those controlled by the Christian Democrats. The government has also forbidden universities and scientific establishments to monitor radioactivity levels in the environment. The German Greens, however, systematically defy that ban out of a sense of responsibility to the people.

At the genetic engineering workshop Andy Caffrey, an Earth First activist, and Berkeley Green described a man-made bacterium known as Ice-Minus about to be released in the San Francisco Bay area. Hailed by farmers,

scientists, the city's mayor and investors alike, the new organism will be applied to strawberry crops in order to beat capital losses due to frost. Caffrey pointed out that despite US Environmental Protection Agency involvement Ice-Minus has had only very scanty testing. **Its wider ecological impact on entering the water cycle via cloud formation is not understood;** nor its effect on the human body, particularly in cases where the immune system is already stressed.

This biotechnology project coincides with a US Commerce Department Patent and Trademarks Office announcement that genetically engineered animal life-forms are now scheduled for patenting. Its coincidence with the court decision in the "surrogate-mother-baby-M" case lends yet further support to the eco-feminist thesis. By this judgment **ownership of another human being is accorded to "him who paid good money for it"**.

Other speakers included:

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On April 26, 1987 the media reported that an apparently deranged person had set fire to a series of churches in Nambour (Inland from Queensland's Sunshine Coast). It seems the person's primary target may have been something else.

Rising from the ashes

On Anzac Day, 1987, just after midnight, the town of Nambour, 100 km north of Brisbane in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, was the scene of six major fires causing well over one million dollars' worth of damage.

One of the victims was **Basics Co-op**, a food co-op of 371 members occupying a converted house in an off-street location in the centre of the town. The arsonist deliberately chose the co-op as a target, lighting his fire underneath the office. By the time the hard-pressed fire brigade reached the scene the old wooden building was unable to be saved. We are thankful the fire was contained before spreading to the business premises of neighbours.

Basics Co-op was formed in Nambour in November 1984 with 54 members and \$1700 capital. Its aims are to provide

1. a supply of basic wholefoods at reasonable prices;
2. a market for fresh and organic local fruit and vegetables;
3. a supply of permaculture and sustainable lifestyle requirements;
4. a focus for the community to work together;
5. education for healthy and sustainable lifestyle and for cooperation.

The Co-op enjoys the steady and increasing support of about 100 local farmers and gardeners who market their fruit and vegetables, largely