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The AIDEX '91 Protest: A Case Study of Obstructive Direct Action

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Abstract

In November 1991 the biennial Australian International Defence Exhibition (AIDEX '91) was held in Canberra at the National Exhibition Centre (NATEX). Organised in the context of the drive by the Australian Labor Party to double domestic military exports between 1987 and 1992, the event attracted overseas and domestic arms manufacturers and buyers, as well as up to 2000 protesters from across Australia. There had been a similar demonstration at the previous AIDEX exhibition, held in 1989, and this one occurred in the wake of recent disruptive protest activity around issues such as rainforest imports and old-growth logging as well as events such as the first Gulf War.

During the eleven-day protest a number of events occurred across Canberra including religious ceremonies, concerts and a series of rallies at Parliament House and in the city centre. The majority of protesters camped across the road from NATEX and picketed its main gates. Tactics as varied as lying passively on the road and setting barricades on fire were employed, causing much debate during and after the event. Media coverage was widespread and often sensational, leading many protesters to complain of misrepresentation. The protest was also marked by allegations of extensive police violence and over 200 arrests were made.

In the months leading up to AIDEX '91 the government of the Australian Capital Territory had announced that it would not allow another arms fair to be held in the region. The poor publicity generated in the build-up to the 1991 event also saw the number of exhibitors fall from 234 to 138. During the protest, displays, military vehicles and other items were either delayed or prevented from entering the site. Afterwards, attempts by the event organiser, Desiko Pty Ltd, to organise similar events on federally owned property in the ACT and in the adjoining town of Queanbeyan, New South Wales were blocked by local and state authorities wary of the disruption caused during AIDEX '91. Although air shows and smaller events have continued to be held in Australia, there has not been an arms exhibition on the scale of AIDEX since 1991.

This thesis will provide a history of the AIDEX '91 protest. In doing so it will seek to understand why the issue of arms fairs arose at this time as well as how and why

a particular repertoire of contention, which I have labelled ‘Obstructive Direct Action’, was employed by activists as part of a strategy of ‘coercion’. The organisation, promotion and unfolding of the protest will be examined and evaluated along with the outcomes it produced. The ways in which protests such as these reflect the tactical, organisational and strategic choices that activists make, consciously or otherwise, will also be considered along with how such choices are shaped by the context in which they occur.

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Masters,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is 38 867 words in length, as approved by the RHD Committee.

Signed

Iain McIntyre

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my supervisors, Dr. Sean Scalmer and Professor Stuart Macintyre, for their invaluable advice and guidance. I am grateful to Dr. David Nichols for initially suggesting I undertake postgraduate study. I thank my parents for their lifelong encouragement. Lastly, this thesis is dedicated to Naomi Evans and Ruby Evans-McIntyre, without whom it would not have been possible.

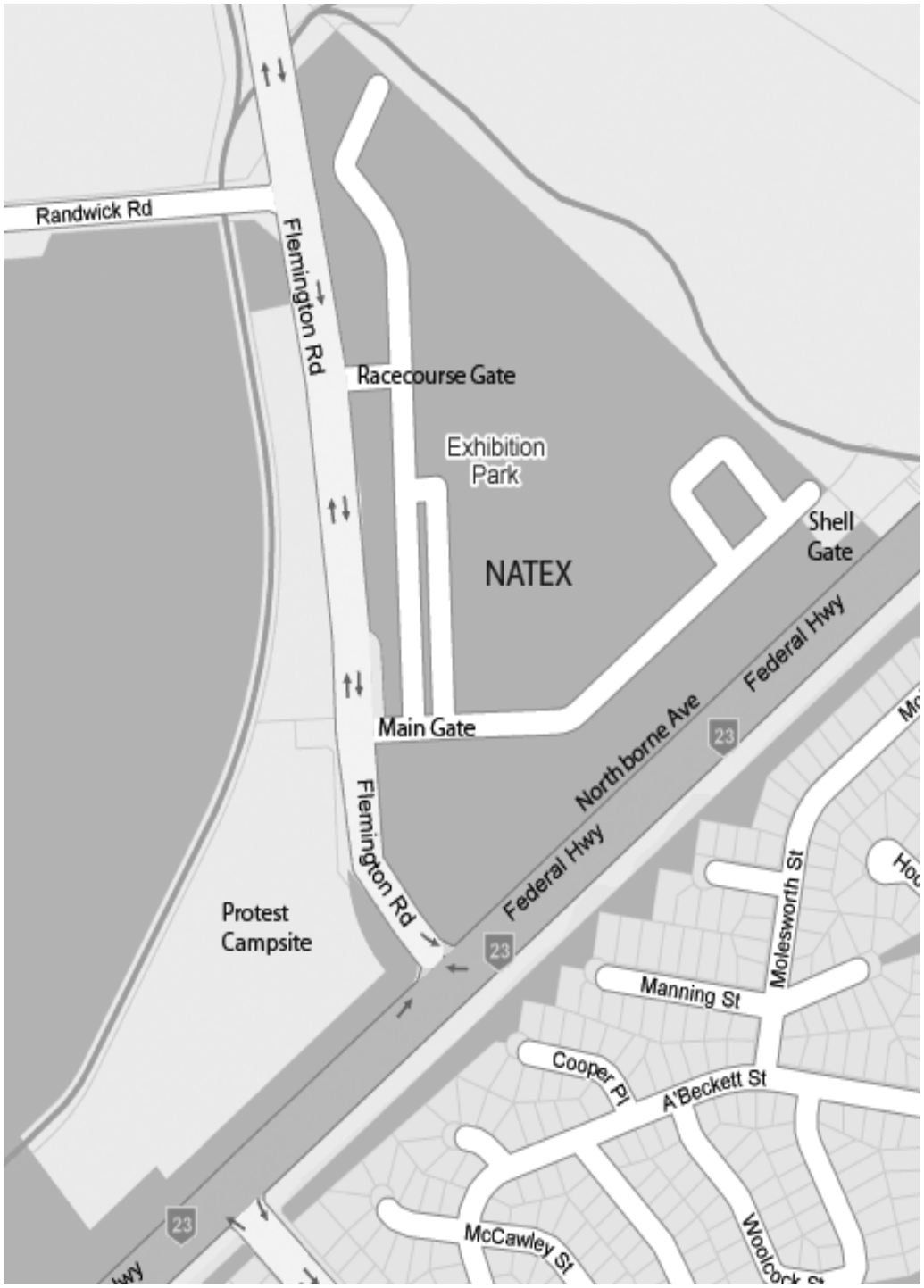
Table of Contents

Table of Abbreviations

AABCC	Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTAD	Australian Capital Territory Assembly Debate
ACT-TLC	Australian Capital Territory Trades and Labour Council
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AGPS	Australian Government Printing Service
AIDEX	Australian International Defence Exhibition
AITEX	Australian International Technology and Equipment Exhibition
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANU	Australian National University
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AUSTRADE	Australian Trade Commission
BWIU	Building Workers Industrial Union
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CAM	Campaign Against Militarism
CPD	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debate
CPP	Canberra Program for Peace
DOD	Department of Defence
DSP	Democratic Socialist Party
G20	Group of Twenty (Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors)
ISO	International Socialist Organisation
MAPW	Medical Association for the Prevention of War
MAUM	Movement Against Uranium Mining
MP	Member of Parliament/Member of the Legislative Assembly
NSW	New South Wales
MRAG	Melbourne Rainforest Action Group
NATEX	National Exhibition Centre
NDP	Nuclear Disarmament Party

NEFA	North East Forest Alliance
NfP	Network for Peace
NSW	New South Wales
NUS	National Union of Students
NVA	Non-violent Action
NVDA	Non-violent Direct Action
ODA	Obstructive Direct Action
OSG	Operations Support Group
PADEX	Pacific Area Defence Exhibition
RCP	Radical Christian Pacifism
RSL	Returned Services League
SA	South Australia
SAC	Stop AIDEX Campaign
SAFE	Stop Arms For Export
SPS	Sydney Peace Squadron
TWS	The Wilderness Society
QPF	Queanbeyan Peace Forum
WA	Western Australia
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Map of AIDEX ‘91 Protest Site



Introduction

In November 1991 the biennial Australian International Defence Exhibition (AIDEX) was held in Canberra at the National Exhibition (NATEX) Centre. As the largest exhibition of military hardware ever held in the southern hemisphere, the event attracted overseas and domestic arms manufacturers and buyers as well as up to 2000 protesters from across Australia. There had been a similar demonstration at the previous AIDEX exhibition, held in 1989, and this one occurred in the context of recent disruptive protest activity around issues such as rainforest imports and old-growth logging as well as events such as the first Gulf War and the massacre of protesters in East Timor.

During the eleven-day protest a number of events occurred across Canberra including religious ceremonies, concerts and a series of rallies at Parliament House and in the city centre. The majority of protesters camped across the road from NATEX before picketing its main gates. Tactics as varied as lying passively on the road and setting barricades on fire were employed, causing much debate during and after the event. Media coverage was widespread and often sensational, leading many protesters to complain of misrepresentation. The protest was also marked by allegations of extensive police violence and over 200 arrests were made. In the wake of the blockade the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Federal Privacy Commissioner and the Community Law Reform Committee of the Australian Capital Territory all examined aspects of police behaviour.

In the months leading up to AIDEX ‘91 the government of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) had announced that it would not allow another arms fair to be held in the region. The poor publicity generated in the build-up to the 1991 event also saw the number of exhibitors fall from 234 to 138. During the protest, displays, military vehicles and other items were either delayed or prevented from entering the site. Afterwards, attempts by the event organiser, Desiko Pty Ltd, to organise similar events on federally owned property in the ACT and in the adjoining town of Queanbeyan, New South Wales (NSW) were blocked by local and state authorities wary of the disruption caused during AIDEX ‘91. Although air shows and smaller events have continued to be

held in Australia, there has not been an arms exhibition on the scale of AIDEX since 1991.

This thesis will provide a history of the AIDEX '91 protest. In doing so it will seek to understand why the issue of arms fairs arose at this time as well as how and why a particular repertoire of contention, which I have labelled 'Obstructive Direct Action' (ODA), was employed by activists as part of a strategy of 'coercion'. The organisation and unfolding of the protest will be examined along with the outcomes it produced. The ways in which protests such as these reflect the tactical, organisational and strategic choices that activists make, consciously or otherwise, will also be considered along with how such choices are shaped by the context in which they occur.

In exploring these questions I will provide a case study for the efficacy and use of ODA in Australia. I will make the following key arguments:

(a) That the anti-AIDEX '91 campaign brought together a cross-section of participants from Australia's social movements to obstruct and disrupt the 1991 Australian International Defence Exhibition and prevent similar events from taking place in the future.

(b) That opposition to the arms trade and defence exhibitions was triggered by a series of changes in Federal ALP policy and the way in which private companies and activists interacted with them.

(c) That by the time of AIDEX '91 a significant section of Australia's peace and environment movements had come to favour a repertoire of contention based on informal organisation and the use of disruptive and extra-parliamentary activities; and that this development was related to a faltering in the alliances forged between the ALP and social movements during the 1980s.

(d) That the use of ODA during the protest indicated the renewed popularity of disruptive repertoires of contention as well as the framing, organisation and promotion of the protest by the Stop AIDEX Campaign (SAC).

(e) That the the styles and tactical forms of ODA employed were influenced by the framing and organisation of the protest by SAC; the tactical and strategic debates that were occurring within contemporary social movements; and

reactions to the strategies and tactics employed by the police, the ACT government and AIDEX organisers.

(f) That the 1991 protest was larger and broader than previous protest action against the arms trade because of the way in which SAC posited the arms trade as a 'totalised enemy', and extended and reframed existing critiques of defence policy and militarism.

(g) That the campaign was based upon a strategy of ODA and that this strategy, along with related media coverage, played a major role in the campaign meeting its desired outcomes.

As the concepts of ODA, disruption and coercion are central to the thesis, the Introduction will discuss the literature concerning them and how they will be employed here. The remainder of the Introduction will review other relevant literature before outlining the sources that will be drawn upon and discussing the theoretical and methodological framework underpinning the analysis and interpretation.

Obstructive Direct Action, Disruption and Coercion

AIDEX '91 was opposed by a campaign predicated primarily upon using what participants described as 'direct action' to disrupt the event and impose significant economic and political costs upon its organisers and supporters. Direct action is a practice that is extensively covered in social movement literature, yet the exact meaning and parameters of the term are rarely defined.[1] Where definitions are provided they are often vague and allow for such a wide range of activities as to make the term indistinguishable from 'protest' in general.[2] Although space limitations preclude a more detailed discussion, the following section will trace how this and related ones have been used historically and how they will be used in this thesis.

[1] Examples of texts quoted in this thesis which do not provide a definition include: Donna Della Porta and Mario Diaini, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006); Timothy Doyle, *Green Power: The Environmental Movement in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000); Verity Burgmann, *Power and Protest: Movements for Change in Australian Society* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

[2] For example: David Lowes, *The Anti-Capitalist Dictionary* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2006), 73-5.

A cross-section of the relevant literature indicates two main uses of 'direct action'. The traditional sense of the term stems from the nineteenth-century syndicalist movement, which aimed to abolish capitalism via industrial action, and other activities under workers' control such as cooperatives. Such direct action was posited as an alternative to parliamentary strategies and the use of the state. The term had a clearly prefigurative sense in that present-day tactics and strategies were to match the society that the movement wished to achieve in the future. This use of the term has continued to be employed by anarchist and autonomist movements that use 'direct action' to denote activities through which 'individuals assert their ability to control their own lives and participate in social life without the need for mediation or control by bureaucrats or professional politicians'.[3]

The second broad use of 'direct action' is to describe a repertoire of contention, defined as 'the ways in which people act together in pursuit of shared interests', through which social movements create 'disruption', a term which itself indicates the interruption of 'routine activities of opponents, bystanders or authorities'.[4] The forms of contention indicated by this use of 'direct action' can include, but are not limited to prefigurative ones. Indeed, their primary aim in Australia has generally been to influence institutions, corporations and governments rather than to remove or replace them.[5] Such 'direct action' can include activities as varied as destroying property, picketing workplaces and resisting arrest, as well as the use of provocative symbols and refusal to play customary social roles. Some of these actions may be construed as 'violent', but stop short of armed insurrection and guerrilla warfare, strategies which Melucci termed the 'deliberate and continuous use of violence and a military-type organisation'.[6]

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[3] Reclaim The Streets. 'Propaganda.' Available [Online], http://rts.gn.apc.org/prop15.htm; [30 January 2010].
[4] Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 41; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97.
[5] Damian Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia: From Vietnam to S11' (PhD thesis, Monash, 2001), 1-2.
[6] Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Direct Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 378-9.

Australian social movements have long made use of disruptive direct action. Since the 1960s contemporary activists have periodically used barricades and other physical installations as well as protesters' bodies to interfere with a variety of forestry, land development and military related activities and/or prevent the movement of people, resources and vehicles connected to them. The types of action and the dynamics of organisation involved in such physical obstruction differ from non-obstructive kinds of disruptive activity such as the singing of banned songs and the wearing of non-conformist clothing. To distinguish these physically obstructive forms of disruptive 'direct action' from others I will employ an original term, Obstructive Direct Action (ODA).[7]

ODA's primary advantage is that it physically impedes, even if just temporarily, the activity it is opposed to. It also shares benefits with other forms of disruptive activity by allowing activists to draw attention to their concerns and demonstrate their commitment to a cause. Further common attributes are that disruptive activities can broaden the field of conflict, expose the state's complicity with an activity, and gain extra time for other strategies to progress.

Most importantly for this thesis, ODA can give activists the power to coerce their opponents and supporters. Coercion is a concept that has been widely dealt with in social movement literature. Turner and Killan define it as 'the credible threat of punishment in case the target group does not support the movement goals', and distinguish it from other means, with which it can overlap, such as persuasion, facilitation and bargaining.[8] In terms of protest activity Michael Albert argues: 'At a given moment, elite policy-makers have a whole array of priorities. Change occurs... when movements raise the social costs that policy-makers are no longer willing to endure and which they can only escape by relenting to movement demands.'[9]

[7] Sharp characterises such obstructive actions as 'physical intervention', but his term only allows for the use of human bodies and does not include barricades and other physical installations. Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Extending Horizons Books, 1973), 371-89.
[8] Ralph Turner and Turner Killian, *Collective Behaviour* (Sydney: Prentice-Hall, 1987), 299.
[9] Quoted in Cynthia Kaufman, *Ideas for Action: Relevant Theory for Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2003), 292.

Although disruptive activities such as ODA can give 'weak actors leverage against powerful opponents', Tarrow argues that they are not commonly employed as they rely upon 'a high level of commitment, on keeping authorities off balance and on resisting the attractions of both violence and conventionalisation'.[10] This has generally been the case in Australia as the majority of social movements since the 1970s have sought to achieve their goals via legal challenges, education, lobbying and serving on government committees, as well as by organising non-obstructive protest action.[11]

Despite its costs, a minority of activists have nevertheless consistently prioritised the use of disruption. As a particular means of creating disruption, ODA has enjoyed popularity at times, such as in the period leading up to and including AIDEX '91. ODA has generally run parallel to and complemented other strategies, particularly when activists have used it to buy time and garner media attention. It has less often been viewed as the primary vehicle for permanently ending an activity or as the primary means of exerting coercion, as was the case with AIDEX '91.

Literature Review

Since the AIDEX blockade attracted extensive coverage in mainstream and activist media, and was the largest protest in Australian history against the arms trade, it is surprising that the event has barely been discussed in the literature concerning Australian military exports, defence policies and social movements. The only substantial analysis of any aspect of the protest, in this case solely concerning its portrayal in print media, occurs in a chapter of Paasonen's unpublished thesis 'Building the Beast: Media Construction of Protest and Protesters and the Assignation of Responsibility for Violence'.[12] I will fill this gap by providing a detailed history of the event and the context in which it occurred.

There are a number of academic studies dealing broadly with Australian social movements. This literature touches on ODA, but has primarily concerned itself with

[10] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 98.
[11] Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia', 29-31.
[12] Karl-Erik Paasonen, 'Building the Beast: Media Construction of Protest and Protesters and the Assignation of Responsibility for Violence' (MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1996), 46-58.

general theories and histories of social movements, providing biographies of key personalities, and examining the development of the policies and strategies of formal organisations.

The small body of scholarship specifically concerning ODA in Australia primarily analyses it in regard to media portrayals, government responses and the application of law. Other than overviews by Branagan, Grenfell, Doyle and Burgmann, and a small number of specific case studies, there has been little examination of the dynamics and forms of ODA in the period preceding AIDEX '91.[13] In analysing questions concerning mobilisation, framing and organisation, I shall seek to provide a deeper understanding of one particular campaign, and broaden awareness of the practice, emergence and coercive use of ODA in general.

In considering why activists came to employ ODA against AIDEX '91, I shall study the impact of ALP policy upon contemporary repertoires of contention. A number of works examine Labor's interaction with Australian social movements during the time it held national office from 1983 to 1996. Many of them explore how the involvement of peace and environmental organisations in government decision-making processes led to a decline in informal organisation and disruptive activity. Little has been written about the way such co-option eventually promoted a return to disruptive means on the part of some activists.[14] Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the issue exhaustively, I shall make these connections explicit. In doing so I will identify the specific dynamics of the period and more generally, the conditions under which ODA might be adopted.

A further question is why activists employed differing forms of ODA during AIDEX '91. The choices that activists made and the consequences that flowed from

[13] Verity Burgmann, *Power, Profit & Protest: Australian Social Movements and Globalisation.* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003); Doyle, *Green Power* ; Martin Branagan, 'Art Alone Will Move Us: Nonviolence Developments in the Australian Eco-Pax Movement 1982-2003' (PhD thesis, University of New England, 2006); Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia'.

[14] Two exceptions are Doyle, who deals with the mid-1990s and McQuire, who briefly touches on the early 1990s. Timothy Doyle, 'Direct Action in Environmental Conflict in Australia: A Re-Examination of Nonviolent Action,' *Regional Journal of Social Issues*, no. 28 (1994): 8; and Stuart McQuire, 'Nonviolent Action and Television News: The Case of the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group, 1989-91' (MA thesis, Monash University, 1991), 29.

them will be considered. Earlier Australian studies have primarily framed tactical selection in relation to what has been termed 'Orthodox non-violence' or 'Non-violent Action' (NVA). In focusing on these ideological positions they have tended to obscure the diversity of ODA actors. In the third chapter of the thesis I shall identify a variety of factors influencing tactical choices before taking up two areas of particular importance to AIDEX '91. In analysing choices related to definitions of non-violence and appropriate protester behaviour, existing understandings will be broadened and refined and two positions that are usually ignored, which I refer to as 'Radical Christian Pacifism' (RCP) and 'pro-violence', will be canvassed. A second aspect, the impact of protest organisation upon tactics, has been under-theorised in Australia and internationally. I shall therefore delineate a series of choices that key organisers must make prior to any large ODA event, including how decisions will be made and whether the protest will be expected to act in a unified manner.

There is a much larger international literature on ODA and disruption generally. I shall apply concepts developed by Tilly, Tarrow, Jasper and others in regards to the internal and external conditions under which activists are mobilised and particular repertoires of contention adopted. [15] Concepts such as 'political opportunities', 'mobilisation targets' and 'frames analysis' will be explained and employed in the course of the study. Analyses of anti-globalisation and environmental protests during the 2000s will also be drawn upon to identify the similarities between the AIDEX protest and later events.

Sources

The thesis draws on a wide variety of primary sources produced before, during and after the protest. The AIDEX protest dominated the headlines of the *Canberra Times* and also featured regularly in other daily newspapers and TV and radio reports. Although the accuracy of this coverage was often disputed by protesters, it will be of use in establishing the series of events that occurred and in analysing how the media, AIDEX supporters and other actors responded to the use of ODA.

[15] Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*; James Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.

Coverage on community radio stations as well as in a wide variety of social movement and religious print publications, was also extensive. Combined with the large range of promotional ephemera, minutes and newsletters produced by anti-AIDEX coalitions and individual organisations, these sources will assist the description and analysis of protester opinions of how and why events occurred and particular tactical repertoires were adopted.

From 1989 to 1994, debate concerning AIDEX featured in both the Commonwealth Parliament and ACT Assembly. Two government reports and a paper dealing with events arising from AIDEX '91 were also made available to the public in the period following the protest.[16] These will further assist in establishing the events of the protest as well as the reaction of politicians, government departments and the police to them.

A small number of books, pamphlets and documentaries chronicling and analysing the protest were also produced by activists. In the period immediately following the protest the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) produced a pamphlet entitled *The Lessons Of AIDEX*. Radio Skid Row's John Jacobs produced a three-hour episode of the Graffiti program in December 1991 before releasing his 1992 CAT TV documentary *AIDEX 91 - Inside the Australian Arms Trade. Piecing It Together: Hearing the Stories of AIDEX '91*, was published in 1995 by a group called 'Friends of the Hearings'. This 474-page document was compiled from a series of hearings initiated by the Canberra-based Network for Peace (NfP). It is primarily made up of first-person accounts, but also includes primary and secondary source material relating to the political context of the protest, media coverage and issues related to policing.

[16] *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991,* (Canberra: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, 1993); *Disclosure of Arrest Details of AIDEX Demonstrators : Australian Federal Police and Department of Social Security. Advice and Report to Ministers* (Canberra: Australia Privacy Commissioner's Office, 1992); *Public Assemblies and Street Offences*, Issues Paper Number 10 (Canberra: Community Law Reform Committee of the ACT, 1994).

The majority of this movement-generated material is highly selective and inflates the role of one tendency or another. The point of view of the key organisers of the blockade, SAC, have not been treated in any depth and almost none of the literature attempts to situate the decision to blockade in the context of developments within the social movements of the time. In order to rectify this shortcoming, and to add another dimension to my account, I have conducted nineteen interviews with protest organisers and participants from a variety of political backgrounds.

In analysing the political context and tactical dimensions of the protest I have also drawn upon activist accounts and discussions of other ODA protests during this period. The academic materials concerning ALP policy, social movements and ODA identified in the literature review were also important secondary sources, as were a variety of government reports and parliamentary debates unrelated to AIDEX.

Finally, I have previously produced three works on the topic of AIDEX'91: a radio documentary for 3CR in 2007 as well as an article for *Chain Reaction* and a self-published oral history in 2008.[17] Although the materials contained in these have informed this thesis, it differs markedly in providing a sustained analysis and narrative history informed by social movement theory and a much wider set of sources.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

In providing an account and analysis of the protest and its organisation I shall seek to combine the use of social movement theory regarding the context and emergence of ODA with an approach that Bevington and Dixon describe as 'direct engagement'. This involves 'putting the thoughts and concerns of movement participants at the centre of the research agenda and showing a commitment to producing accurate and potentially useful information about the issues that are important to activists'.[18] In line with this, I shall primarily reflect on and analyse the issues and opinions raised by activists rather

[17] Iain McIntyre, 'You've Got to Party for Your Right to Fight: AIDEX '91.' Community Radio 3CR, CD, 90 minutes, in author's possession; Iain McIntyre, *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life: The AIDEX '91 Story* (Melbourne: Homebrew Books, 2008); Iain McIntyre, 'A Tale of Two Arms Fairs,' *Chain Reaction*, December 2008, 28-30.

[18] Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon, 'Movement-Relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism,' *Social Movement Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2005): 200.

than those of politicians, media commentators and police. In part this is because many of the questions this thesis deals with — the forms, dynamics and efficacy of ODA — are primarily of interest to social movement actors and have mainly been debated and written about by them.

I shall also concentrate on activist accounts in an attempt to bridge a gap between the concerns of academic and activist intellectuals that has been identified in a series of books and articles. Academic work on social movements has been characterised as being of a generally abstract, rarefied and complex nature, seldom engaging with the practical, immediate concerns of the activists being studied.[19] These concerns have been described as in short, 'what works and how'.[20] Activists in turn have been criticised for being reactive and indifferent 'to thinking through the strategic implications and broader meanings of their efforts'.[21] Such deficiencies are said to weaken the movement's efficacy, with Meyer arguing that in lieu of detailed analysis activists resort to 'habits and belief, familiar routines and well established scripts for action that may not have ever been particularly effective or – even if optimal at one point – are less adapted to current circumstances'.[22] By combining what McAdam describes as an analysis of 'the role of system level factors in either facilitating or constraining movement activists' with accounts of 'the lived experience of activism and everyday strategic concerns of movement groups', I hope to create a work that will inform the theoretical and practical concerns of both audiences.[23]

My interest in activist accounts also reflects my 'insider' or 'emic' role as an active participant in extra-parliamentary and ODA activities amongst Australian social

[19] Sarah Maddison and Sean Scalmer, *Activist Wisdom : Practical Knowledge and Creative Tension in Social Movements* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 37-9.
[20] David Meyer, 'Scholarship That Might Matter,' in *Rhyming Hope with History: Activists, Academics and Social Movement Scholarship*, ed. David Croteau and William Hoynes (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005), 201.
[21] Marcy Darnovsky, Barbara Epstein, and Richard Flacks, 'Introduction,' in *Cultural Politics and Social Movements*, ed. Marcy Darnovsky, Barbara Epstein, and Richard Flacks (Philadelphia: Temple Press, 1995), xvi.
[22] Meyer, ' Scholarship That Might Matter,' 196.
[23] Doug McAdam, 'The Framing Function of Movement Tactics: Strategic Dramaturgy in the American Civil Rights Movement,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Meanings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 339.

movements since 1988. In the case of AIDEX '91 I was not involved in the organisation and promotion of the blockade, but attended six out of eleven days of the protest and participated in some of the ODA activities under analysis.

According to Pike 'the etic viewpoint studies behaviour as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential approach to an alien system. An emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system'.[24] Branagan holds that an emic perspective can rectify the 'chasm between theory and practice' by bringing 'valuable insights into the field that an etic or outsider researcher would have much more difficulty obtaining'.[25] Other advantages of the closer engagement an emic position brings include the ability to overcome the suspicion of researchers that many activists hold, to identify academic and media omissions, and to relate to the experiences of interviewees.[26]

The prime disadvantage of the emic position is the potential for greater subjectivity. I have sought to counter this by reflecting on the ways in which my assumptions and biases may have impinged on the research process. Maintaining the integrity and validity of the thesis is an important goal in itself. The intent to do so also stems from my involvement in social movements as I believe I am obligated to produce high-quality research of use to myself and fellow activists. As Bevington and Dixon argue, 'movement-relevant scholarship' should not involve 'uncritical adulation' or 'reiteration of the pre-existing ideas' of favoured movements or factions because such an approach will not 'aid [movements] in identifying and addressing problems which may hinder [their] effectiveness'.[27]

In considering all events, whether I was present or not, I have cross-referenced a variety of activist and media accounts. This has served to both balance any presuppositions I may have held and allowed me to analyse and work through

[24] Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Human Behaviour* (The Hague: Mouton & Company, 1967), 37.
[25] Branagan, 'Art Alone Will Move Us', 18.
[26] Allan Kellehear, *The Unobtrusive Researcher: A Guide to Methods* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 16-28.
[27] Bevington and Dixon, 'Movement-Relevant Theory,' 191.

divergences between sources. Where this has been the case, I have always been disciplined by the available historical evidence.

To identify different political positions regarding tactics, organisational forms and ethics, and evaluate their impact and efficacy, I have drawn on interviewees and sources from a variety of backgrounds and sought to summarise their opinions clearly and accurately. Interviewees and peers, including those with very different opinions from my own, have also been given the opportunity to review the thesis and question my findings.

As some of the events of AIDEX ‘91 and many of the debates concerning ODA were only discussed informally at the time and remain otherwise undocumented, sections of the thesis will draw on oral testimony. The key problems concerning the use of oral history arise from issues of bias, distortion and memory. As with all accounts and records, I shall scrutinise the evidence by taking into account factors such as the passage of time, the changed political environment, altered personal circumstances, likely biases and the reliability of the narrator’s observations. I have checked the testimonies for internal consistency, cross-checked with other sources, conducted further interviews as required and interviewed a cross-section of participants in the protest. To assist the interviewee in recalling events, I was well prepared on the subjects under discussion and provided written questions in advance. At all times I was aware of my role in guiding the interviews and producing the written versions of them, and requested that interviewees comment on the analyses I produced and approve where I had quoted them as a source.

Chapter Outline

The first two chapters examine the political context in which the AIDEX ‘91 protest took place. The first explains how a series of Federal government policy decisions, and the ways in which activists and commercial interests interacted with them, led to defence exhibitions and arms exports becoming important social movement issues during the early 1990s. Chapter two then assesses the impact of ALP policy in leading a significant section of Australia’s peace and environment movements to favour a

repertoire of contention based on informal organisation and the use of disruptive and extra-parliamentary activities, including ODA, by the time of AIDEX ‘91.

The third chapter of the thesis turns to the role of activists in promoting and organising ODA-based protests against AIDEX events in 1989 and 1991. It pays particular concern to the activities of SAC and the way in which these key organisers successfully built a national coalition by framing the event as a ‘totalised enemy’ against which a variety of social movement members could employ a strategy of ODA-based coercion.

Chapter four examines how the breadth and forms of ODA tactics employed during the AIDEX ‘91 protest were influenced by a variety of factors. It concentrates on two key areas of activist agency: choices regarding appropriate protester behaviour, and decisions made prior to major ODA events concerning organisational and decision-making structures. The efficacy, interaction and development of various tactical and organisational forms are explored further through the following chapter’s day-by-day account of the eleven days of protest action. In providing a detailed history of the event this chapter also examines the degree to which the event was disrupted, the debates which took place between differing activists, and the impact of policing styles upon their actions.

The final chapter analyses the consequences of the protest. It will examine the political and economic costs associated with AIDEX ‘91 and how activists coercively used the threat of ODA to prevent the holding of further large-scale arms fairs. The way in which the media portrayed the 1991 protest and activists used these representations to achieve their goals will also be considered.

Chapter One: The Context and Development of Opposition to Australian Arms Fairs

This chapter explores why a movement opposing defence exhibitions and arms exports emerged during the early 1990s. It will argue that this opposition was triggered by a series of changes in Federal ALP policy, and by the way in which private companies and activists interacted with the ALP. It will also detail the critiques that activists used to mobilise their constituencies and garner new supporters.

In analysing the impact of Labor policy, both this chapter and the one that follows will draw upon the concept of 'political opportunities.' Sawyers and Meyer define these as 'the broad range of external social and political factors that affect the claims, tactics, mobilisation and ultimate impact of social protest'.[1] Political opportunities, such as form of government and strength of civil society as well as the composition and policies of elites, can facilitate or constrain the emergence of collective action and social movements.[2] Such factors are important to consider because, as Meyer contends, activist 'agency' can only be 'understood and evaluated by looking at the political context and the rules in which those choices are made (structure)'.[3]

Some analysts have criticised the tendency for concepts concerning context to be employed in ways that are too deterministic, narrow and invariant, or conversely too broad.[4] By acknowledging these critiques, this study will draw on the concepts in such a way as to blend an understanding of specific external factors affecting mobilisation while also emphasizing their changing nature and the way in which activists, consciously or otherwise, interpret and respond to them.

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[1] Traci Sawyers and David Meyer, 'Missed Opportunities: Social Movement Abeyance and Public Policy,' *Social Problems*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1999): 189.
[2] Della Porta and Diaini, *Social Movements*, 196.
[3] David Meyer, 'Tending the Vineyard: Cultivating Political Process Research,' *Sociological Forum*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1999): 82.
[4] James Goodwin and James Jasper, 'Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory,' *Sociological Forum*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1999): 27-54; Sarah Maddison and Greg Martin, 'Introduction to 'Surviving Neoliberalism: The Persistence of Australian Social Movements',' *Social Movement Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2010): 108-9.

ALP Defence Policy, 1983-1991

With the US scaling down its involvement in the Pacific during the mid-1970s successive Australian governments sought to increase the nation's independent military capacity. In line with this the Federal ALP, from its election to office in 1983, promoted policies seeking to create 'Defence Self Reliance.' The roots of the AIDEX protest can be linked to this policy as it initiated 'the largest defence capital investment in Australia's peacetime history'.[5] The $25 billion of extra spending involved was largely justified on the basis of regional instability, expanded, yet nebulous, threat perceptions and the need for continuing integration with US forces.[6]

A number of critics within the peace movement were alarmed at these policy directions. Activists believed that increased military spending posed a threat to Australia's diplomatic goals of closer cooperation with Asia and ran the risk of triggering a regional arms race. Opponents also claimed that the country had lost credibility on disarmament and that spending on defence outstripped that of foreign aid. The cost to the taxpayer in terms of spending diverted from areas such as community services was also cited as a concern, as was the effect of defence imports on Australia's balance of payments. Finally, the increased spending on military advertising and the use of ADF personnel and resources to break the national pilots' strike and police the Nurrungar anti-base protest in 1989 were taken as worrying signs of increased military involvement in civilian life.

ALP Defence Manufacturing policies, 1983-1991

The domestic arms industry, a sector that Defence Minister Beazley deemed the 'second pillar of Australia's defence self-reliance' in 1989, was a key target for reform and investment.[7] In keeping with ALP micro-economic policy, the Department of Defence's (DOD) manufacturing capabilities were restructured and privatised, and increasing numbers of civilians and private contractors employed. As a result of these policies the

[5] Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia* (Canberra: AGPS, 1987), viii.
[6] Gary Smith, 'Two Rhetorics of Region,' in *The New Australian Militarism: Undermining Our Future Security*, ed. Graeme Cheeseman and St John Kettle (Leichhardt: Pluto Press Australia Ltd, 1990), 116; Kim Beazley, 'Response,' in *The New Australian Militarism*, 215.
[7] CPD (10 May, 1989), 2348.

proportion of the defence budget spent within Australia rose from 34.6% in 1986-87 to 62.7% in 1989-90.[8] Despite this, imported armaments continued to weigh on Australia's balance of trade. Such an expense was of major concern at the time, not least because the Federal government was desperately attempting to overcome the major deficit in Australia's balance of payments via spending cuts and privatisation rather than traditional protectionist means.[9]

Despite increased domestic production, the government continued to place large overseas orders and looked to arms exports to help ameliorate the situation, commissioning the *Review of Australia's Defence Exports and Defence Industry* (or Cooksey Report) in 1985. The report recommended that exports be doubled to $400-500 million annually within three to five years.[10] In line with this, the ALP directed the DOD, the Australian Trade Commission (AUSTRADE) and other government bodies to provide marketing, testing and sales assistance to local firms. The DOD and various Australian trade bodies also began participating in overseas arms fairs.

To facilitate increased exports the ALP Cabinet eased the guidelines governing the overseas sales of locally produced materials in 1988. This allowed trade with countries engaged, or likely to be engaged in conflict, as well as those with poor human rights records, so long as 'there [was] no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against [their] citizens'.[11] Responsibility for export approvals was transferred to the Minister for Defence and DOD, with all applications to be responded to within 21 days. The onus was shifted to government regulators to demonstrate why contentious applications should be vetoed. Items defined as 'non-lethal' or of minor military significance no longer required approval. Despite these changes, and a significant

[8] Cheeseman, *The Search for Self Reliance*, 44.
[9] Sharon Beder, *Suiting Themselves: How Corporations Drive the Global Agenda* (Camden, Sterling: Earthscan, 2006), 68-9.
[10] Exact figures regarding Australia's military exports vary greatly depending on whether they are based on the nature of the product or its end-user as well as whether they include military aid, equipment on loan, expected or actual sales and other variables. Cooksey admitted that his estimate of $200 million in sales for 1985-86 was inexact and based on industry sources. Other analysts considered them high with the government itself estimating average sales in the region of $46 million a year between 1975 and 1985. Robert J. Cooksey, *Review of Australia's Defence Exports and Defence Industry* (Canberra: AGPS, 1986), 251-4, 307-50; Cheeseman, *The Search for Self Reliance*, 46-7, 251.
[11] 'Australian Controls on the Export of Defence and Related Goods: Guidelines for Exporters,' (Canberra: AGPS, 1989), 2.

increase in the value of permits to export, actual sales stalled. This was attributed to decreasing demand in Europe and the US and a glut of military surplus in the wake of the Cold War as well as to the entry of new exporters with lower input costs than Australia.[12]

The primary objection to arms exports remained that Australia should be doing all it could to reduce the harm that weapons were designed to inflict and which 'non-lethal' supplies could facilitate. The push to increase arms exports was also held to be contradicting official Australian positions in the UN concerning arms control and the use of non-military solutions. Increased domestic reliance on sales was further perceived as potentially compromising Australia's foreign policy. Critics were concerned at the role of exports, often given in the form of military aid, in fuelling regional conflicts, and it was claimed that Australia's relations with its allies could be undermined by aggressive export sales. Peace activists further argued that increased exports would have a negative effect on the economies, environment and social spending of Australia and its customers.

The ALP's decision to align export approvals with a narrow set of defence concerns drew particularly strong criticism as it was claimed that this policy allowed Australian industry to arm dictatorial regimes. During the late 1980s the Defence Minister Robert Ray approved sales to countries such as Myanamar, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In response to new international arms control measures and domestic pressure (much of it generated in the build-up to the AIDEX '91 protest), Ray tightened the provisions relating to sales in May 1991. Critics, however, highlighted the fact that the new amendments streamlined sales to countries viewed as uncontroversial, thereby opening the way for third-party sales to repressive regimes.[13]

Desiko Pty Ltd and AIDEX

The most obvious impetus for the anti-AIDEX protest was the decision by the Sydney-based exhibition organiser Desiko Pty Ltd to host a series of domestic trade fairs aimed

[12] *Report on the Implications of Australian Defence Exports,* (Canberra: Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1994), 15-6.
[13] Richard Bolt, 'Arms Exports: The Legal Dimension,' *Social Alternatives,* vol. 10, no. 4 (1991): 11.

at bringing together arms manufacturers, buyers and investors. Founded in 1984, Desiko announced the following year that it would hold the Pacific Area Defence Exhibition (PADEX) at Sydney's Royal Agricultural Society showgrounds from 12 to 16 May 1986.

PADEX initially attracted interest from over 100 potential exhibitors from 15 different countries. A number of Campaign Against PADEX coalitions were established around the country, bringing together church, union, peace and environmental organisations. Following threats from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to take industrial action against the event, Desiko director Bob Day moved it to Darwin.

The Federal government's position in 1985 did not support private defence exhibitions, and government ministers stated that it would be 'inappropriate' to support PADEX during the International Year Of Peace.[14] Once it became known that PADEX would not be receiving assistance and endorsement from the Federal government, exhibitors began to withdraw. After the Northern Territory's Chief Minister — in the face of union resolutions and threats of a major protest — declared his government could not provide its endorsement, Day cancelled the event, claiming losses in excess of $250 000.[15]

Following the PADEX debacle, Desiko appointed the Returned Services League (RSL) National President Sir William Keys a director in 1986. Using his connections, the company was able to rebuild confidence in its abilities. It hosted a smaller scale event mixing defence and other technologies, entitled Australian International Technology and Equipment Exhibition (AITEX), in Sydney in 1987 before announcing a new major exhibition focused solely on defence, AIDEX, for 1989. Billed as the 'the biggest display of military equipment ever to be held in the southern hemisphere', admission was limited to accredited industry, government and military representatives.[16]

[14] Peter Young, 'Peace Ideals Torpedo Defence Show Plans,' *Australian*, 19 April 1985, 2.
[15] Clare Arthurs, 'Defence Trade Fair 'Undermined,' *Australian*, 7 November 1985, 2.
[16] Desiko Pty Ltd, 'AIDEX '89 Brochure,' (Sydney: Desiko Pty Ltd, 1989), 1-2.

By this time there had been a change in the balance of political opportunities affecting the issue. The peace movement (as will be canvassed in the following chapter) was on the wane and with little opposition to AITEX, the Defence lobby's position was strengthened. As a result the Federal government lent much support to the venture. Defence Minister Beazley was careful to stress that it was a privately run event, but nevertheless officially endorsed and later visited AIDEX '89, stating that 'the extent of this year's exhibition reflects Australia's standing in international defence circles and emphasizes our efforts to vigorously market Australian defence goods and services overseas'.[17] This support was to continue for the 1991 event with the new Defence Minister Robert Ray providing a letter of endorsement for the *AIDEX '91 Exhibition Update* and a statement to the *Australian Defence Intelligencer* welcoming 'visitors and exhibitors to AIDEX '91'.[18]

The Gulf War, Bougainville and East Timor

Following the defeat of PADEX, opposition to Australia's arms trade was largely confined to low level lobbying, parliamentary statements from the Australian Democrats and independents, and the publication of academic papers and books. Alongside new efforts on the part of activists (which will be explored in Chapter 3), it took Australia's involvement in the Gulf War, as well as developments in Bougainville and East Timor, to remobilise a broad cross-section of social movements.

The Australian decision to join the US-dominated coalition against Iraq in 1990 was criticised on many grounds, not least that it represented the first active Australian military deployment since the Vietnam War. In the relative absence of Parliamentary and media debate, the Australian peace movement articulated and led opposition to Australian involvement.[19] Once it became clear that the situation would escalate to war, large street demonstrations numbering 10 000s nationally were held alongside peace

[17] Kim Beazley, 'Defence Policy's Contribution to Industrial Development,' *Pacific Defence Reporter*, vol. 16, no. 5 (1989): 70.
[18] Robert Ray, 'Statement from the Defence Minister, Senator Robert Ray,' *Australian Defence Intelligencer: AIDEX '91 Supplement*, November 1991, 1 Robert Ray, 'AIDEX '91 Letter,' *AIDEX '91 Exhibition Update*, April 1991, 3.
[19] Kim Nossal, 'Quantum Leaping: The Gulf Debate in Australia and Canada,' in *The Gulf War: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Michael McKinley (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 48; Milton Cockburn, 'The Politics of Australian Involvement,' in *Australia's Gulf War*, ed. Murray Goot and Rodney Tiffen (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 42-56.

camps, vigils and smaller protests.[20] These encompassed unions, religious organisations and members of the traditional peace, socialist and environmental groups as well as a new generation of protesters.

The anti-Gulf War protests focused attention on US, and to a lesser degree Australian, involvement in arming Iraq in the years prior to the invasion of Kuwait.[21] Similarly, the ALP's push to expand Australia's own armaments spending and offensive capabilities was now viewed in the light of the military's integration into US operations.

Although the opposition to the war failed to move the majority of public opinion and declined as the bombing offensive took place, the protests nevertheless mobilized many of those who would protest against AIDEX '91. The hostility of the mainstream media and the failure of peaceful, mass protest to influence the ALP Cabinet — ministers derided their opponents as 'mindless', 'vacuous' and 'sickening and obscene' — also helped push a significant minority toward more disruptive action in the future.[22]

Another issue that garnered public attention was the ALP's response to the Bougainvillian rebels' 1990 declaration of independence from Papua New Guinea. Concerns about the direction of Australian foreign policy were increased by the fact that Australian military training, aid and equipment were facilitating attacks on civilians and a blockade of food and medical supplies by the PNG military.[23]

Australian activists had also long been sympathetic to the plight of the East Timorese. By the late 1980s an estimated 200 000 Timorese had been killed following the occupation of the country by Indonesia, but interest in the issue had waxed and waned since the 1975 invasion. This was to change dramatically with the massacre of protesters in the Timorese capital Dili in November 1991. In the weeks leading up to

[20] Tony Hewett, 'Thousands Join the Fight for Peace,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1991, 23.
[21] Stewart Firth, 'The Peace Movement,' in *Australia's Gulf War*, ed. Murray Goot and Rodney Tiffen (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 113; Jan Grech, 'AIDEX '91,' *Social Alternatives*, vol. 10, no. 4 (1991): 5-6.
[22] 'Introduction: Lessons of the Gulf War,' *Peace Dossier*, no. 28 (1991): 1; Firth, ' The Peace Movement,' 113; Mark Mountford, 'Creating the Gulf: War Coverage in the Age,' *Arena*, no. 94 (1991): 18-9; John Docker, 'Failing the Test: Commentary in the Sydney Morning Herald,' *Arena*, no. 94 (1991): 21.
[23] *Under the Barrel of a Gun: Bougainville: 1991-93*, (Sydney: Amnesty International Sydney, 1993), 5-15, 23-6.

and after AIDEX ‘91, demonstrations and actions against the occupation of East Timor took place around Australia. In Canberra itself the ACT Trades and Labour Council (ACT-TLC) placed a ban on supplying the Indonesian embassy and endorsed a picket staffed by East Timorese and their supporters.

Critics of Australia’s policies towards Indonesia were quick to claim that while Australia had been rearming to cope with any conceivable military threat, it had long ignored the political threats arising from its neighbour’s annexation of West Papua and East Timor. The Australian government had also provided military training and material to Indonesia, and this energized and focused the minds of many attending the AIDEX protest.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how a series of policy decisions made by the Federal ALP allowed the holding of an Australian arms fair to become economically and politically viable in the late 1980s. It has outlined the arguments mounted by the peace movement against such policies and analysed a series of military and political developments that influenced the level of political agitation against the arms trade. In doing so it has supported the argument that opposition to the arms trade and defence exhibitions was triggered by a series of changes in Federal ALP policy and the way in which private companies and activists interacted with them.

Chapter Two: The use of ODA by Australian Peace and Environment Movements, 1983-1991

The ALP and Social Movements, 1983-1991

Following a series of economic and political crises that saw the Federal ALP lose power in 1975, the party's leadership took a conservative turn. Hence Labor turned away from its social-democratic roots to advocate and implement neo-liberal economic reforms including privatisation, deregulation and the phasing out of tariffs. These policies privileged economic growth and efficiency over equity, diminishing the government's ability and willingness to intercede in the market in the interests of workers and disadvantaged groups.[1]

Despite Labor's pursuit of market-oriented policies, its success in the 1983 election saw a shift away from the Fraser era of polarisation. Indeed, a core factor allowing the Hawke government to enact reform was its ability to create 'consensus' by incorporating business, unions and other stakeholders into government decision-making structures.[2]

Political incorporation is a process that has been well documented in social movement literature. It sees organisations that have previously largely operated outside, or in opposition to, established political parties and bureaucracies adopt strategies characterised by an orientation towards lobbying; direct access to and involvement in government; compromise on core interests; and the use of protest that does not disrupt public routines. This process, also referred to as 'elite channelling', is often accompanied by increased 'professionalisation' of social-movement activities and the migration of activist leaders into hierarchal 'elite organisations'.[3]

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[1] Tom Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia : A History from Flood to Ebb Tide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 98; Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 20-4.

[2] Carol Johnson, 'The Hawke Government and Consensus,' in *The Hawke Legacy*, ed. Gerry Bloustein, Barbara Comber, and Alison MacKinnon (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2009), 3-6.

[3] Stephen Valocchi, *Social Movements and Activism in the USA* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 21, 70-5; John Dryzek et al., *Green States and Social Movements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-16.

The ALP's incorporation of social movements was pioneered with the Prices and Incomes Accord in early 1983. Under this the union movement agreed to maintain industrial peace and support economic reform and wage-fixing in return for the government pledging to contain inflation, restore employment and increase social spending. Following this landmark agreement the ALP created a series of mechanisms and bodies through which the leaders of various social movements entered into decision-making processes alongside government and business. Such outreach transformed a number of social movement organisations and representatives from 'outsiders' seeking radical grassroots change into professional lobbyists committed to the political survival of the ALP as well as compromise with government, business and bureaucracy.[4]

The policies pursued by the ALP and its increased engagement with business saw its membership fall by more than 45 000 between 1983 and 1992.[5] As the traditional base of Labor's support shrank, the electoral preferences of social movement lobbyists, particularly those from the environment movement, became crucial to the party's electoral fortunes.[6]

Incorporation arguably produced some immediate results for social movements, but ultimately 'mainstreaming' made them more reliant on favours from the ALP as the dilution of their demands and the demobilisation of their memberships diminished their ability to apply extra-parliamentary pressure. The 'absence of a credible and socially progressive electoral alternative' and the often-conflicting consequences of 'consensus' and economic rationalism also created confusion and fragmentation on the Left, further reducing extra-parliamentary activity.[7] As a result, by the early 1990s the ALP found that 'appropriate rhetoric and occasional activity', as well as the threat of the New Right — a powerful faction of business and politics that pursued further neo-liberal reform

[4] Nicholas Economou, 'Greening the Commonwealth: The Australian Labor Party Government's Management of National Environmental Politics, 1983-86' (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1998), 63-5.
[5] Boris Frankel, *From the Prophets Deserts Come: The Struggle to Reshape Australian Political Culture* (Melbourne: Arena Publishing, 1992), 109.
[6] Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, 525; Economou, 'Greening the Commonwealth', 65.
[8]Burgmann, *Power and Protest*, 251-73; Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia*, 125- 60, 242.

and socially conservative policies via confrontation — were enough to garner electoral preferences.[8]

These developments affected a number of the social movements whose members took part in the AIDEX protests. The trade union movement arguably underwent the biggest changes as incorporation, as well as structural changes in the labour market that reduced traditionally unionised sectors, the recession of the early 1990s, and the centralisation of power in the ACTU, both weakened union support for non-industrial issues and undercut their ability to influence them.[9] Although significant sections of the feminist, student and Indigenous movements were also transformed, I concentrate here on environment and peace movements as these were the main proponents of ODA during the period.

In analysing them I shall, unlike some writers, treat the two movements separately. They did overlap, particularly among the informal groups that operated as amorphous networks. However during the 1980s the peak formal groups — those with clearly defined memberships, leaderships and areas of activity — with an orientation towards incorporation dominated the environment movement, while the peace movement included a wider set of organisations and strategies. This meant that actors associated with the two movements generally interacted with the ALP separately and in differing ways. [10] As a result those campaigns broadly associated with issues of war, nuclear weapons and uranium will be dealt with as part of the 'peace movement', while those dealing with forestry and development will be analysed under the rubric of the 'environmental movement'.

As noted previously, a number of writers have focused on the way in which extra-parliamentary strategies were curbed by incorporation during this period. Yet most have ignored what happened once movements became dissatisfied with the

[8]Burgmann, *Power and Protest*, 251-73; Bramble, *Trade Unionism in Australia*, 125- 60, 242.
[9] Paul Norton, 'Accord, Discord, Discourse and Dialogue in the Search for Sustainable Development' (PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2004), i-ii, 124-34, 275-6.
[10] Doyle, *Green Power*, 16-21; Economou, 'Greening the Commonwealth', 7, 12-3, 26-9, 66-8; Libby Connors and Drew Hutton, *A History of the Australian Environmental Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 262; Burgmann, *Power and Protest*, 206-7.

outcomes of these processes. This is surprising as a return to 'outsider' strategies commonly occurs among social movements when incorporation fails to produce results. Carter notes that confrontational tactics are often used where activists perceive a 'democratic deficit' in which 'non-conformist views [are] effectively screened out by the media and ignored by decision-makers'.[11] Grenfell has similarly observed that in Australia 'increasingly radical protest can emerge when the political system fails to resolve social conflict'.[12] As this chapter will demonstrate, this was the case in the late 1980s when a closure of political opportunities saw a significant section of the environmental and peace movements in Australia reject incorporation and employ ODA. In turn this trend affected both the size and tactical orientation of the anti-AIDEX protests.

The Peace Movement: Incorporation and ODA

The modern peace movement emerged during the campaign against conscription and Australian military involvement in Vietnam. After Australia's withdrawal, and a series of protests against French nuclear testing in the early 1970s, the movement, in the absence of an urgent issue to organise around, entered one of its regular periods of 'withdrawal and pessimism'.[13] Yet within a few years a new campaign against uranium mining grew into a broad movement, drawing tens of thousands to mass demonstrations.[14]

The ALP had supported the mining and export of uranium since the 1950s, but with elements of the trade union movement placing bans, the party's 1977 conference made the phasing out of mining part of its platform. One of the effects of this was to weaken grassroots opposition as activists adopted a strategy of campaigning for an ALP victory while relying on union action to slow the industry's development in the short term.

[11] April Carter, *Direct Action and Democracy Today* (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 2005), 28.
[12] Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia', 53.
[13] Burgmann, *Power and Protest*, 189.
[14] Brian Martin, 'The Australian Anti-Uranium Movement,' *Alternatives*, vol. 1, no. 6/7 (1982): 26-35.

The ALP's subsequent decision in 1981 to water down its opposition, under renewed pressure from the mining industry, signalled the fracturing of these alliances. This widened when the party, having come to power, further expanded its position in 1983-4 to allow for three mines. With trade union support also crumbling, many anti-uranium activists demobilised or moved onto other issues. A significant portion of those remaining turned to the use of extra-parliamentary protest strategies, including ODA. May 1982 saw the first nationally coordinated occupation of an Australian uranium mine at the Honeymoon complex before two major blockades were mounted against the construction of a mine at Roxby Downs in 1983 and 1984.

During this time the peace movement began to focus more specifically on nuclear weapons as it rapidly expanded in response to an increase in superpower tensions as well as the growth of similar movements overseas. Uranium mining remained an important issue alongside opposition to visits by US warships and the operation of joint intelligence facilities on Australian soil. As support for all of these had been affirmed at the 1984 Labor conference, much of the peace movement was to operate independently and in opposition to the ALP over the coming years.

By 1985 more than 350 peace-related organisations were operating in Australia.[15] Having expanded beyond the older anti-nuclear movement, which was based around the Communist Party of Australia and the ALP Left as well as dissenting sections of the Christian clergy and laity, many of these new organisations were run informally with a predominance of women in activist roles. Eschewing conventional party politics, peace organisations embraced a range of protest activities, with the majority of participants joining disarmament rallies that drew up to 250-350 000 people a year from 1980 until 1988.[16] Broad support for the movement was reflected in the success of anti-nuclear political parties at the 1984 election, which saw the newly

[15] Jan Pakulski, *Social Movements: The Politics of Moral Protest* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd, 1991), 174.
[16] Malcolm Saunders and Ralph Summy, *The Australian Peace Movement : A Short History* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, 1986), 51.

formed Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) receive over half a million votes. [17] ODA was also a regular feature of movement activity and included women's peace camps at Pine Gap in 1983 and Cockburn Sound in 1985. Regular actions involving the blockading and occupation of US warships occurred from 1983 onwards.

The substantial support for peace issues saw the ALP respond with a number of concessions from 1985 onwards, including reversing PM Hawke's support for MX missile testing, providing funding for peace-oriented academic bodies and the 1986 International Year of Peace, and appointing a high profile Ambassador for Disarmament. For the most part, however, the ALP's core defence policies were reframed rather than substantially changed, and the government was careful not to destabilise relations with the US. Minor concessions were enough to ease internal party pressure and create dissension within the peace movement. [18]

Although the peace movement had forced the government to respond to its criticisms, it was unable to capitalise on its popularity and faltered from 1987 onwards as international tensions eased. An over-reliance on mass protest further damaged the movement as numbers dwindled and divisions deepened over how to respond. Lacking a major victory to build on and unable to generate the same sense of crisis as they had with nuclear weapons, peace activists found themselves unable to mobilise their constituency against the emerging defence policies outlined in the previous chapter.

The more radical peace tendencies continued to engage in ODA activities during the late 1980s and early 1990s. With the reduction in mass protest, they largely became the public face of the movement. In 1986 the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC) was formed and organised large protests at Pine Gap in 1987 and Nurrungar in 1989. Anti-warship protests also continued during the period.

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[17] Gillian Fisher, *Half Life: The NDP, Peace, Protest and Party Politics* (Sydney: State Library of NSW Press, 1995), 31; Marian Quigley, 'The Rise and Fall of the Nuclear Disarmament Party,' *Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol. 62, no. 11 (1986): 12-19.

[18] Joseph Camilleri, 'Labor's Disarmament Policy,' *Arena*, no. 64 (1983): 41-51; Richard Tanter, 'Preconditions for De-Linking Australia from the Nuclear System,' in *The Pacific: Peace, Security and the Nuclear Issue*, ed. Ranginui Walker and William Sutherland (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1988), 145-9.

The 1991 Gulf War reinvigorated the peace movement, bringing new activists together with those who had been operating outside of, and in opposition to, the ALP for some time. As a result of these developments, by the time of AIDEX '91 a section of the peace movement involving hundreds of activists was engaged in extra-parliamentary activity and had shown that it was willing to use ODA should a popular issue arise.

The Environment Movement: Incorporation and ODA

In contrast to the peace movement's mix of formal and informal organizations, the 1980s saw the environment movement dominated by a small number of peak bodies whose activities were largely oriented towards lobbying the ALP. As a result, the use of ODA and strategies aimed at creating broad grassroots change had been greatly reduced by 1987.

In the period leading up to the 1983 Federal election leading national groups, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and The Wilderness Society (TWS), had forged an electoral alliance with the Federal ALP. This was built upon a previous agreement between members of the ALP Right and rainforest campaigners during the 1982 NSW state election and was further facilitated by the Federal party's promise – in the midst of a high-profile ODA campaign – to prevent the damming of the Franklin River. Although the initial period after the election saw a cooling in the relationship, key environmental organisations continued to court the Federal Labor government as its decision to protect the Franklin had demonstrated that it could be played off against the more pro-development state governments.

With this strategy in the ascendancy the ACF, the majority of the State environmental peak bodies and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) were steadily transformed into professionalised interest groups, dominated by elite activists who sought to reach out to their counterparts in the government and bureaucracies (and occasionally traded jobs with them). TWS maintained some distance from the ALP and continued to support moves towards creating Green parties; it used ODA campaigns, including anti-logging blockades in Victoria and Tasmania, where it perceived that its relationship with the ALP was not bearing fruit. However, since TWS shared the

perception that the Labor government was the primary vehicle by which land use issues could be resolved, it too joined the trend towards basing its activities on lobbying Federal Labor as well as campaigning for its re-election.

With a precedent having been established for federal intervention in development issues on the basis of perceived electoral benefits, the ties between lobbyists and the ALP became even closer following the appointment of Graeme Richardson as Environment Minister in 1987. Both Richardson and the environmental elite took advantage of a series of crises concerning Wesley Vale Pulp Mill, Kakadu and NSW forests to improve their respective positions. Although some major successes were achieved, the focus on bargaining established the ALP as the key arbiter of environmental issues, meaning that battles over land were increasingly fought out in Cabinet rather than in public.

From 1990 onwards pro-development factions in the ALP and the bureaucracy attempted to inaugurate an Accord-style relationship with the peak environmental organisations. In doing so they hoped to shift the movement away from mounting short-term campaigns around specific issues and contain its efforts to consensus based discussions around long-term planning and outcomes.

Despite a global upsurge of interest in green issues during 1990 and a combined membership of between 200 000 and 300 000, the peak environmental groups were increasingly sidelined following that year's election.[19] In part this reflected the rise of a pro-development bloc within the ALP. Added to this was the fact that lasting compromise over long-term policy direction was always going to be difficult to reach between parties whose understandings of growth and sustainability were based on very different world views. The recession that began in the late 1980s, the rise of neo-liberalism and a series of anti-environmental campaigns by business groups and unions further strengthened the trend in Labor policy away from social issues in favour of a narrowly defined economic productivity.[20]

[19] Connors and Hutton, *A History of the Australian Environmental Movement*, 1, 231.
[20] Ibid., 233-8; Elim Papadakis, *Politics and the Environment: The Australian Experience* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), 79-84, 98.

With the ALP perceived to have broken many of its election promises, despite environmental preferences arguably delivering them victory, an increasing number of activists became impatient with existing strategies. Most of the peak bodies would continue with engagement for some time, but TWS and the now thriving Greenpeace began to switch back to issue-based campaigns including the use of ODA.

A host of new, largely informal, ODA-oriented groups also emerged. Some, like the Melbourne Rainforest Action Group (MRAG), which had begun as a section of the ACF, were breakaways from larger organizations, whilst others like the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) were entirely new entities.

Although these new groups included and were influenced by a small number of veteran protesters, such as Ian Cohen and the Non-violence theorist Robert Burrowes, they were for the most part made up of recently mobilised activists. Jasper notes that as new activists respond to 'problems in the broader society' and 'existing movement activists, their activities and their identities', they not only create new factions and groups, but also promote developments in tactics. Innovation is often driven by a tendency to 'negatively assess the efficacy' of older tactics or because newcomers 'have identities bound up in certain tactics'.[21] This was largely the case in the 1990s, as many of the new groups viewed ODA as more than an adjunct to lobbying. As part of their pre-figurative politics they also embraced a style of informal organisation that Doyle characterises as 'deliberate non-organisation, deliberate non-formalisation, deliberate use of dispersed networks and the articulation of the need for fun'.[22]

Despite constituting a minority tendency within the environmental movement as a whole, these groups were to engage in ODA-based activities that captured much media and public attention. MRAG alone organised dozens of blockades of ships carrying imported rainforest timber in 1989 and 1990, while forest and anti-development blockades were established at a number of sites along the Eastern seaboard

[21] Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest*, 241.
[22] Doyle, *Green Power*, 45.

from 1988 onwards.[23] The majority of the new groups involved in these activities had little or no interest in attempting to force the Federal ALP to intervene in issues. They instead focussed directly on confronting the companies, bureaucracies, state governments and workers involved in environmentally destructive activities. Their success and the popularity of the issues they tackled saw some socialist organisations such as the New Left Party and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) officially incorporate environmental concerns. A small number of left-leaning unions also adopted environmental policies regarding issues such as the use and importation of rainforest timber.

Conclusion

By the time of AIDEX significant sections of the peace and environment movements had come to favour a repertoire of contention based on informal organisation and the use of disruptive and extra-parliamentary activities. This development was related to shifts in their relationships with the Federal ALP. The ability of activists to mobilise large numbers against the arms trade at AIDEX reflects the fact that this protest was taking place within a period of increased ODA and extra-parliamentary activity. Having canvassed the recent history of environmental and peace campaigns, the following chapter will examine just how anti-arms activists took advantage of this upsurge.

[23] Branagan, 'Art Alone Will Move Us', 52-3, 205-12; McQuire, 'Nonviolent Action and Television News', 11- 21.

Chapter 3: The Organisation and Framing of the AIDEX ‘89 and ‘91 Blockades

The preceding chapters have explored how arms exports emerged as an important issue for Australia’s social movements as well as why a significant number of environmental and peace activists were engaged in repertoires of contention involving ODA. I now turn to the role of key organisers in linking the two developments to facilitate action against AIDEX ‘91.

In canvassing this aspect of mobilisation I shall advance four key arguments:

(a) That the anti-AIDEX ‘91 campaign brought together a cross-section of participants from Australia’s social movements to physically obstruct and disrupt the 1991 Australian International Defence Exhibition and prevent similar events from taking place in the future.

(b) That the 1991 protest was larger and broader than previous protest action against the arms trade because of the way in which the key organizational force, SAC, posited the arms trade as a ‘totalised enemy’ and extended and reframed existing critiques of defence policy and militarism.

(c) That the use of ODA during the protest reflected the renewed popularity of disruptive repertoires of contention as well as the framing, organisation and promotion of the protest by SAC.

(d) That the campaign was based upon a strategy of coercively employing ODA against an arms fair and that this strategy, along with related media coverage, played a major role in the campaign meeting its desired outcomes including preventing further large-scale arms fairs from taking place.

Framing

Although contextual factors explored in previous chapters and individual activists’ values are important aspects of mobilisation, they do not fully account for why and when specific kinds of action are taken. Since key organisers, and movements in general, expend much energy in crafting messages and meanings and conveying them to audiences, it is important to analyse how ‘collective action frames’ are created and

disseminated, and discuss the impact they have upon the popularity and course of a protest.

'Frames' have been defined as 'schemata of interpretation' that 'help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action'.[1] 'Collective action frames' are 'action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization'.[2] Collective action frames have three main dimensions: a 'diagnostic' frame through which a problem is defined and blame attributed; a 'prognostic' frame, through which solutions are proposed; and a 'motivational' frame, through which action is inspired.[3]

Political activists seeking to mobilise constituencies engage in 'frame alignment', which involves the presentation of a movement's beliefs in such a way that they 'resonate with a wide range of potential supporters'.[4] This is an interactive practice which can include four overlapping processes: 'frame bridging', which involves activists presenting their messages to 'ideologically congruent, but untapped supporters'; 'frame amplification', which involves an appeal to values and beliefs already held by existing supporters; 'frame extension', which sees activists link their specific concerns to more general goals as well as currently unrelated issues and concerns in an attempt to widen their support base; and 'frame transformation', which involves provoking a complete change in the way that individuals view everyday life as well as a particular issue.[5]

Frame alignment theorists have been criticised for their treatment of ideas and beliefs as static, cognitive structures and their privileging of rational decisions made by leaders over those of grassroots participants. It has also been argued that they tend to

[1] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 21.
[2] Robert Benford and David Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,' *Annual Review of Sociology*, no. 26 (2000): 614.
[3] Valocchi, *Social Movements and Activism in the USA*, 25.
[4] Derek Wall, *Earth First! And the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), 143.
[5] Robert Benford et al., 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, no. 4 (1986): 468.

undervalue the influence of emotions and the direct experience of collective action upon activist decisions.[6] Although these criticisms have some validity, and will be incorporated into my evaluations, frames analysis is nevertheless a useful and widely employed tool for providing insights into why some issues and strategies enjoy popularity at particular points in time.

The Stop AIDEX Campaign and its Framing of Opposition to AIDEX '89 and '91

Opposition to the first AIDEX held in 1989 was initially organised through Stop Arms For Export (SAFE), a coalition of 18 groups which began meeting in Canberra during early 1989.[7] Differences soon emerged and the campaign split in May, leading to the emergence of a new group called SAC. This development was to have a major effect upon how the 1989 and 1991 protests would be framed, organised and promoted.

One of the key protagonists in the split was the Renegade Activist Action Force (RAAF). A small and highly informal group, whose activities largely revolved around key members Jan and Jacob Grech, RAAF came into existence during anti-logging protests in NSW's South-east forests in 1989. Its formation was inspired by debates that saw a significant minority of protesters, amongst them RAAF, reject NVA principles (defined in the following chapter) that required openness with opponents, and begin a blockade that required secrecy.

As debates concerning tactics and strategy were to form the basis of divisions in the AIDEX campaign, it is hardly surprising to find that the prognostic solutions being promoted from 1989 to 1991 were a key point of difference. SAFE advocated the use of letter writing, court action, lobbying and non-disruptive protest in order to mobilise public opinion to pressure the Federal and ALP-dominated ACT governments to abandon their support for arms exports. They also aimed to 'bear witness', which Diciano defines as being 'present at the site of an activity to which the witness objects

[6] Alexandra Plows, 'Praxis and Practice: The 'What, How and Why' of the U.K. Environmental Direct Action (EDA) Movement in the 1990s' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, 2002), 104; Della Porta and Diaini, *Social Movements*, 185-7.
[7] Peter Jones, 'Strong Opposition to Canberra Arms Fair.,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 13 (1990): 9-10; Interviews with Jacob Grech; Peter Jones.

in order to register his or her opposition'.[8] In contrast, SAC primarily advocated a blockade and other ODA activities aimed at directly disrupting, if not halting, the arms fair. They also publicly, and privately in their lobbying activities, promoted ODA as a means of imposing prohibitive political and economic costs on the companies and state authorities involved in such events.

In utilising the prognostic and motivational frames of blockading and coercion, SAC's activists hoped to appeal to existing militants in the peace movement as well as reach out to similarly minded activists in other social movements. It repeatedly stressed the need for a diversity of action and deliberately kept the concept of how AIDEX would be 'stopped' broad and undefined beyond stating that 'all actions by any of the groups listed [in the SAC newsletters] will follow the non-violent principles'.[9] What these principles were and whether groups who were not connected to SAC would be expected to abide by them was not stated. In taking such a position, SAC hoped to attract a more diverse range of activists than SAFE's strictly non-disruptive outlook would have allowed.

In framing the arms trade as problematic, SAC and its allies largely drew on diagnostic frames similar to those of others opposed to the arms trade. These critiques focused on the role of arms exports in promoting war and political repression as well as their effect on women, the environment and the economies and foreign policies of Australia and its markets.

In advocating such positions SAC engaged in frame amplification and extension in novel ways. Arguments linking the arms trade to areas such as social justice and the environment had long been employed, but without the vigour with which SAC pursued them, particularly after 1989. SAC members attended a large number of political rallies, meetings, and protests and pitched their messages, through print materials, personal contacts and speaking engagements, specifically at others involved in ODA. This

[8] Margaret Dicanio, *Encyclopedia of American Activism: 1960 to the Present*, Second ed. (Lincoln: iUniverse Inc., 2005), 208.
[9] Stop AIDEX Campaign, 'Updates and Supporters,' *Stop AIDEX Campaign Newsletter*, no. 2 (1991): 7; Renegade Activist Action Force, *AIDEX Activist Handbook* (Canberra: RAAF, 1991), 3, 12.

included briefing organisations such as the Sydney Rainforest Action Group and Sydney Peace Squadron (SPS) as well as attending the Earth First! Festival and NEFA forest protests.

In doing so SAC attempted to position opposition to arms exports as linked to whatever issue or injustice activists were already working on. This had a precedent in communist methods, which connected particular concerns to the broader logic of capital, and also paralleled the anti-globalisation movement's later use of neo-liberalism to create what Helena Norberg-Hodge describes as a 'totalised enemy'.[10] By similarly identifying a 'single source that is damaging social health in many ways', SAC hoped to mobilise what Klein has described, also in relation to globalisation issues, as a 'movement of movements'.[11]

SAC also amplified the appropriation of blame in traditional frames on the specific companies involved in the industry and organising AIDEX. SAC member Jacob Grech states: 'In 1989 the Left in Australia hadn't really taken on issues of corporatisation in the way they have now... What AIDEX '89 and the arms trade enabled us, and others, to do was talk about the links inherent between the military-industrial complex and the corporatisation of world industry.'[12]

By framing the role of corporations and their involvement in AIDEX as central to arms exports, the SAC not only aimed to include protesters who might have been opposed to these companies' activities in other spheres, but also to posit AIDEX as a key point at which they could be opposed. Various writers have indicated the importance of tangible 'mobilisation targets' in channelling the often disparate energies of movements otherwise concerned with more fundamental, or abstract, structural and

[10] Quoted in Amory Starr, *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000), 42.
[11] Naomi Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons,' *New Left Review*, no. 9 (2001): 81; Tom Mertes, 'Introduction,' in *A Movement of Movements*, ed. Tom Mertes (London, New York: Verso, 2004), viii; Interviews with Colin Charlton; Grech.
[12] Grech interview.

cultural change.[13] Wall asserts that such targets provide crucial 'condensation symbols or points at which particular concerns can accumulate, creating a threshold at which protest may occur'.[14]

When opposition to the arms industry was meshed with the idea of a blockade, the AIDEX '91 arms fair provided a discernible antagonist in much the same way as economic bodies such as the World Trade Organisation would in years to come. As Melbourne activist 'Delilah' states, 'AIDEX represented a perfect focus for the peace movement because all the governments and all the big and small arms companies were represented there. They may as well have painted a target on themselves.'[15] Similarly, the nature of the event allowed those opposing it to garner a higher level of support than they did for other issues. The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Victorian Anti-AIDEX Coalition activist Marcus Banks recalls: 'For the most part people were quite outraged that such a thing could be taking place in Australia. This applied to not only the many social justice and Left organisations that came on board, but also to co-workers and people I handed a flyer to on the street.'[16]

SAC's approach was also novel in that it sought to bridge and extend its frames to new audiences within the counterculture which overlapped with, but were not actively involved in political protest. Although there were precedents for this in anti-war organising, it had not previously been pursued in relation to arms fairs. SAC members attended national music festivals and countercultural events such as Confest in Victoria and the Channon markets in NSW, and networked with sections of Canberra's alternative music, education and drug user subcultures. By targeting people whose primary focus was more oppositional than overtly political, SAC activists pursued a grassroots recruitment campaign that accentuated the cultural and 'fun' aspects of the protest as much as the moral and political ones. They also attempted to promote the

[13] For example: Wolfgang Rüdig and Philip D Lowe, 'The Withered 'Greening' of British Politics: A Study of the Ecology Party,' *Political Studies*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1986): 34, 262-84; Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York, Toronto: Random House, 1971), 130-2.
[14] Wall, *Earth First!*, 132.
[15] 'Delilah' interview.
[16] Banks interview.

1989 and 1991 blockades as major events in Australian protest history that no activist would want to miss. Jacob Grech sums this approach stating:

> We knew that the socialists would come so we didn't have to lobby them. We also knew that we needed people who didn't have preconceived formulas and who were available to travel. RAAF didn't hold big public meetings, others did, but we went to events and just talked to everyone we could. It was a very effective form of grassroots organising… Many people later came not from any entrenched political understanding, but because they'd heard that this was where the action was going to be. But the argument was that entrenched political understanding was not what was needed, a sense of outrage was.[17]

AIDEX '89

While those involved in SAFE planned for three days of protest, including a variety of activities organised by peace and Inter-Faith groups, SAC set about organising a blockade of the fair. A campsite across from NATEX was secured and arrangements made to provide toilets, food and other essentials.

Regular actions, information stalls and personal networking in Canberra raised the profile of the blockade and AIDEX itself. Jacob Grech describes some of these:

> RAAF started by building a giant arm with slogans, about twenty foot long with a fist on the end whose every finger joint was made out of a drum. You could fit twenty people inside and we would wheel it around Canberra. We also held stalls in which we sold boxing gloves as an alternative to missiles with the slogan 'Causes less collateral damage', and offered self-defence classes as an alternative to militarism.[18]

Through links with other ODA-oriented groups such as AABCC and SPS, the SAC grew into a national coalition, with RAAF playing a coordinating role. All of the groups

[17]Grech interview.
[18]Ibid.

were encouraged to produce their own publicity materials and the blockade was promoted heavily at national protests against the Kangaroo '89 defence exercises and the Nurrungar joint defence facility.

AIDEX '89 opened on November 28 and ran for three days. From November 26 onwards up to 300 people participated in three days of protest across Canberra. Activities organised by those involved with SAFE included an unsuccessful attempt to end the event via a High Court challenge, a silent vigil at the War Memorial and an Inter-Faith service outside NATEX. From 26 November onwards between 40 and 130 demonstrators a day tried to keep out attendees via a picket line, organised by SAC and endorsed by the ACT TLC, but failed to do so.[19] Other ODA activities included the occupation of a NATEX building and the attempt by a number of naked men to ram the gates of NATEX as part of a 'Penises For Peace' action. A protest was also held outside a conference at the Australian National University (ANU) addressed by Defence Minister, Kim Beazley. Relations with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), whose local operations had only recently come under the control of the newly formed ACT government, were poor. 33 protesters were arrested and many others complained of rough treatment.[20]

Following the conclusion of AIDEX '89, Desiko immediately began promoting its 1991 event. Although the blockade had failed to create major disruption, the SAC's framing and promotion had brought together the basis of an ongoing national coalition and mobilised over 100 picketers at short notice. It had also generated media coverage and signalled to Desiko and the ACT government that future fairs would attract ODA. Such outcomes gave anti-arms activists the confidence to also begin preparing for AIDEX '91.

[19] The *Sydney Morning Herald* incorrectly reported that SAFE had organized the blockade. 'Defence Exhibits Hit by Protests,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 27 1989, 6.
[20] The figure of 33 is Jones'. Media reports provide details about some arrests, but do not give a total. Jones, 'Strong Opposition to Canberra Arms Fair,' 9-10.

National Actions and Organisation Prior to AIDEX '91

From 1989 to 1991 the groundswell of opposition to AIDEX increased. In part this was due to the political and military developments outlined in Chapter 1, but it also resulted from the successful framing and promotion of the issue by SAC. As the issue of arms exports became an important one for Australia's social movements, and the use of ODA became more popular, the blockade which the SAC had framed as a prognostic and motivational solution become the focus of much activity.

Travelling around the east coast of Australia, RAAF continued to address activists, organise coverage by community radio and other alternative media outlets, and reach out to new audiences via attendance at festivals and other events. It also leafleted the employees of companies planning to attend AIDEX '91, organised protests and arranged for speakers to address churches and schools that the families of figures in the arms trade were known to attend. In 1991 RAAF produced and distributed over 1000 copies of the 130-page booklet *Australians Dealing In Death and Destruction: AIDEX '91*. Including information about more than 250 companies involved in the arms trade, the guide not only strengthened the anti-corporate arguments of its authors, but also provided targets for actions that might take place in the lead up to the blockade. [21]

During 1990 and 1991 anti-AIDEX coalitions were set up in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide, and the networks already established in NSW and Canberra continued to grow. As the campaign developed, these coalitions became increasingly responsible for promoting the blockade, although RAAF retained an important coordinating role. Melbourne activist 'Delilah' recalls:

> RAAF did a lot of networking and also cajoled different groups to get them involved. They also spread a lot of information and resourced people. This was in the period before email so they acted as a conduit so that the different interstate groups, like ourselves at Friends of the Earth (FOE) [in Melbourne], weren't replicating each others' roles too much… Having people on the ground in

[21] Renegade Activist Action Force, *Australians Trading in Death and Destruction: Stop AIDEX 91* (Sydney: RAAF, 1991), 1-130.

> Canberra was vital. I think that just a handful of people acting in a concerted way made all the difference. [22]

In Victoria 15 groups formed the Victorian Anti-AIDEX Coalition.[23] As part of this coalition, various social justice, political and church organisations such as Community Aid Abroad (CAA), the National Union of Students (NUS), Pax Christi and the Australian Democrats produced newsletters, posters and educational material. Friends of the Earth (FOE), Campaign Against Militarism (CAM), Network for Peace Geelong, and Western Suburbs for Peace engaged in similar efforts and also coordinated a series of rallies and actions. These included protests in the city and a rally held outside the Australian Defence Industries offices in Footscray. An action was also held at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation offices in Fishermans Bend, which involved a banner drop from the West Gate bridge, an overnight protest and a site invasion that ended with four arrests.[24]

In Queensland members of the Brisbane Peace Network, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU) and other organisations launched the Queensland Stop AIDEX campaign in June 1991. As well as distributing thousands of posters and leaflets and garnering statements of support from various unions and church groups, QSA held protests outside the ALP national conference and the offices of companies and state government bodies attending AIDEX. They also held a funeral march through the city, picketed a visit by the Prime Minister and leafleted the People's Day at the Royal Show.

Among a variety of meetings and forums held on the arms trade in NSW, Australian Catholic Relief, the Australian Council of Churches and the Joint Task for One World Week, organised a major seminar in Sydney looking at Christian responses to war. ODA-oriented groups and individuals associated with SAC (primarily RAAF members who based themselves for a number of months in Sydney), AABC and SPS

[22] 'Delilah', interview.
[23] Victorian Anti-AIDEX Coalition, 'Victorian Anti-AIDEX Coalition Meeting, Minutes September 26,' (Melbourne 1991), 1-2.
[24] Andrew Masterson, 'Brawls Break out at Peace Protest,' *Melbourne Leader*, 12 November 1991, 5.

arranged transport for the blockade and distributed petitions and promotional material. They also engaged in pickets of arms companies and the Richmond Airshow, held rallies outside the Sydney Stock Exchange and the Commercial Opportunities and Defence Procurement seminar, and hung anti-AIDEX banners from cranes on Cockatoo Island.

The Newcastle University Students Association and the Newcastle Trades and Labour Council passed motions against the fair, with the former also organising transport to Canberra. Six other local organisations issued statements condemning AIDEX and the Newcastle Peace Forum held public meetings highlighting the region's involvement in arms production as well as a series of non-violence training workshops.

In Perth a Stop Arms For Export coalition was formed, bringing together members of the Australian Peace Committee (APC), People for Nuclear Disarmament, Greens WA, Australian Democrats, CAA and others. Representatives of the coalition lobbied state departments and held protests outside the offices of Honeywell and Australian Defence Industries as well as a seven-day vigil during AIDEX itself.

The United Trades and Labour Council of South Australia passed a resolution against AIDEX, and various South Australian peace groups began organising for a one-day conference entitled 'World Without Weapons', which was attended by 130 people on 29 November.[25] Local activists based around the Stop Arms For Export Adelaide group also organised concerts, transport to Canberra, the production of educational materials and a rally, attended by 300, for 23 November.[26]

In Hobart, CAA, Womyn Against AIDEX, The King Island Peace Group and the Asia Pacific Action Group promoted opposition to the fair at market stalls, film nights and public meetings. Others in towns and cities such as Alice Springs,

[25] 'APC Actions,' *Peace Courier* (1992): 8; Friends of the Hearings, *Piecing It Together* (Canberra: Penniless Productions: 1995), 60.
[26] The West Australian and South Australian Stop Arms For Export groups were not formally related to the Canberra coalition of the same name and did not necessarily oppose the use of a blockade. 'Adelaide Anti-AIDEX Rally,' *Nurrungar News*, October 1991, 1-2; Campaign Against Militarism, 'October 1991,' *Campaign Against Militarism Newsletter*, October 1991, 3-4.

Townsville and Darwin also took part in lobbying, rallies and promotional and letter writing activities as well as raising money so that people from their communities could attend the Canberra blockade.

Alongside these local efforts came a national lobbying and education campaign run by a variety of churches and social justice organizations including the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Pax Christi, the Uniting Church, Action for World Development, the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes and the Australian Council of Churches. CAA organised skills campaigning workshops in four cities, held mock referenda on arms sales, distributed 80 000 postcards as part of a campaign directed at Defence Minister Robert Ray, and serenaded delegates with peace songs as they entered the ALP Federal Conference.[27]

Greens WA Senator Jo Vallentine and the Australian Democrats produced educational material and newsletters, asked questions in the Senate and moved an urgency motion calling for the cancellation of AIDEX. 51 state and Federal politicians signed a statement calling on the Federal government to withdraw its support for the fair.[28] By 19 October, 103 petitions calling for an end to AIDEX '91 had been tabled in both Houses of Federal Parliament and more would continue to arrive.[29]

Beside the resolutions passed by a variety of union branches and bodies around the country, the ACTU called on the 'Federal government to ban all future AIDEX exhibitions and [urged] its affiliates to support the protest'.[30] A national women's telephone link-up was also organised so that those involved in feminist networks could share information and organise a women's action in Canberra. The protest was also promoted through student networks and newspapers; the timing of the event, after the university year had ended, ensured that student activists were available.

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[27] Community Aid Abroad, 'Opposition to Arms Exhibition,' *Community Aid Abroad Campaign Partners Update*, Spring 1991, 1.
[28] 'Joint Statement by Australian Parliamentarians to Withdraw Government Support from AIDEX '91 Arms Bazaar,' *Campaign Against The Arms Trade Newsletter*, no. 7 (1991): 2-3.
[29] Jenny Hutchinson, 'Ring the Bells: 19 October 1991.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, Transcript, 2.30 minutes, in Parliament of Australia Radio Programs database.
[30] *International Affairs*, (Canberra: ACTU Congress, 1991), 3.

Although many of the activities listed above were not specifically aimed at building a blockade of AIDEX, they nevertheless fed into the efforts of those doing so. As increasing numbers of ODA-oriented activists made AIDEX the object of their activities, and garnered widespread public and internal-movement attention in doing so, the prognostic solution of ODA was able to gain parity with the more traditional one of lobbying. As it did, differences between traditionally mainstream and radical groups around the country became less noticeable, and organisations such as the Australian Democrats began to organise transport to the blockade and publish the SAC's proposed plan of action. By the beginning of the protest two years of activity had not only raised the issue of AIDEX nationally, but also mobilised thousands of activists in support of ODA against it.

Activism in Canberra

Despite the growing popularity of the blockade, tensions between those who advocated ODA and those who opposed it persisted. Nationally they were largely muted, but in Canberra the split between SAC and those previously associated with SAFE (which had disbanded following the 1989 protest) deepened. Via an informal network, members of groups such as NfP, Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Movement Against Uranium Mining (MAUM) joined together to lobby, educate and organise events not related to the proposed blockade. The Canberra Regional Meeting of the Quaker Peace Committee applied for a stall within AIDEX and hired two part-time workers to organise the alternative Point Of Impact conference in concert with the ANU's Peace Research Centre.

SAC continued to blend its disruptive approach with the building of alliances with sections of the ALP, unions and public service that were unhappy at the direction of government policy. The group became the key point of contact for the local media and held regular protests across the city and stalls at suburban shopping centres.

The combined campaign achieved its first major victory in July 1991 when the ACT government moved to cancel Desiko's booking at the NATEX showgrounds. It

backed off from the cancellation after receiving legal advice that this would require the government to pay out $5 million in compensation, but held firm in directing NATEX to adopt a policy of not allowing events 'where the sole or primary purpose of the exhibition or event is the displaying, whether for sale or otherwise of arms, armaments, munitions and other equipment used for military purposes'.[31] A motion to 'endorse the principle that the ACT should not be used for promoting the international arms trade' was subsequently passed on 6 August.[32]

The successful lobbying of the ACT government was largely related to a change in the balance of political opportunities available to local activists. In 1988 the Territory was granted self-government and many of the ACT's decision making powers, including those related to facilities such as NATEX, passed from the Federal government to its newly constituted counterpart. The ACT's first elections saw a hung Assembly. Following an initial period of ALP dominance, the Liberal-led Alliance took office in 1989, during which time Desiko's booking of NATEX was approved. Following the Alliance's collapse in June 1991 a minority-led ALP government sympathetic to the event's opponents once more assumed office.

In explaining the decision to withdraw access to NATEX, members of the government primarily drew on diagnostic frames concerning support for peace and the negative effects of the arms trade. These arguments had been put to them by a number of local and interstate organisations as well as the internal ALP grouping, Labor For Peace.

The threat of economic costs arising from ODA was cited as a supporting argument. Labor's Attorney-General in the ACT claimed: 'On the question of policing costs, it actually costs the ACT Government more for AIDEX to be here than if it is not here...'[33] This was an issue he returned to during the AIDEX blockade, when he cited estimates of '$250,000 to $300,000 [costs] in police resources and court resources' as

[31] ACTAD (6 August, 1991), 2438, 44.
[32] MLA Michael Moore moved the motion. The four members of the Liberal Party were the only dissenting voices. ACTAD (6 August, 1991), 2439-42, 56..
[33] ACTAD (6 August, 1991), 2439-43, 48, 53-56.

vindicating the argument the 'Labor Government put in the last debate on AIDEX that AIDEX does not generate revenue or income for this town, that in fact the holding of this arms exhibition in Canberra is a net cost to the revenue'.[34]

The burgeoning campaign appears to have also affected Desiko's customers. Despite Naval reservist Anthony Grazebook hailing an 'AIDEX bookings triumph' in the pages of the *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter,* the number of stalls booked for AIDEX '91 was down from 1989.[35] The fact that the company and its supporters also felt the need to publicly defend the event, and that the Federal ALP had begun to downplay its involvement, were clear signs that oppositional frames were having an effect.[36]

As these lobbying efforts had been taking place, members of RAAF, SAC, AABC and Canberra Program for Peace (CPP), working out of the Canberra Peace Centre, had begun creating the infrastructure for the protest. The tasks included organising transport, negotiating with government authorities, setting up media and police liaison contacts and booking the car park across from the NATEX site for a campsite. As in 1989, the ACT TLC endorsed the proposed picket of NATEX and placed union bans. It also increased its assistance for the blockade's material infrastructure by funding and providing portaloos, site sheds and water tanks.

As part of its coordinating role SAC had also prepared, in consultation with the state-based coalitions, a programme of events for the week in which AIDEX '91 would be held. This included specific days of action related to women's issues and the

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[34] ACTAD (27 November, 1991), 5065; Peter Clack, 'ACT to Foot Bill for $300 000 Protest Damage,' *Canberra Times*, 30 November 1991, 1.

[35] A. W. Grazebrook, 'AIDEX: Bookings Triumph,' *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, vol. 18, no. 5 (1991): 65-6; Grech, 'AIDEX '91,' 5-6.

[36] Defence Minister Ray had initially given AIDEX his firm support in a statement, featuring his photo, which was distributed prior and during the event. However, the campaign against it appears to have lessened his enthusiasm. His statements to the Senate in October and November minimised the Federal government's involvement. In response to a question in the Senate, on 15 October 1991, about the event's future he stated, 'It would not be the end of the world whether or not we have an AIDEX exhibition'. CPD (15 October, 1991), 1977; David Sibley, 'Cancellation of AIDEX Would Be a Folly, Says Keys,' *Canberra Times*, July 27 1991, 9; Tom Muir, 'AIDEX and the Politics of Peace,' *Australian Defence Intelligencer: AIDEX '91 Supplement*, November 1991, 2; Brigadier Adrian D'Hage, Interview, Pru Goward, 'Daybreak: 29 August 1991.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, Transcript, 2.00 minutes, in Parliament of Australia Radio Programs database.

environment as well as dances, concerts and a series of events outside Parliament House.

Conclusion

By November 1991 a broad national coalition had been established against AIDEX '91. This chapter has argued that the strength of the coalition rested on the SAC's diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing of the arms trade as a 'totalised enemy', with AIDEX '91 as a 'mobilisation target' against which ODA could be deployed. The SAC's artful activism underpinned vigorous planning for a blockade of the exhibition. It also contributed to the ACT government's withdrawal of support for the event.

Chapter Four: Tactical Choices and ODA

This chapter will examine the tactical dimensions of the AIDEX '91 blockade by exploring two key sets of questions faced by organisers and participants involved in any large-scale ODA event. It will analyse how choices regarding protester behaviour and organisation shape the tactics that activists employ. In doing so it will provide evidence for the argument that the the styles and tactical forms of ODA employed during AIDEX '91 were influenced by the framing and organisation of the protest by SAC and the tactical and strategic debates that were occurring within contemporary social movements. This discussion will also background the full account of the AIDEX '91 blockade contained in the following chapter and highlight the role of activist contingency.

Tactical Choices and ODA

The success and shape of any protest flow not only from the context in which it occurs and the overall strategy it employs, but also from the tactical choices that participants make. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, concepts involving political opportunities and framing are useful in understanding why movements tend towards particular repertoires of contention. However, as Jasper argues, they are less helpful in 'explaining how [a protest group] will pick and choose among the tools of this repertoire' as this 'requires more attention to culture, biography and the art of protest'.[1]

Tactical decisions can be considered or spontaneous, conscious or otherwise. They are influenced by a range of complex factors. Drawing on the work of culturally-oriented social movement theorists, such as Jasper, Crossley and Poletta, it can be seen that protesters at AIDEX '91 carried with them dispositions towards certain tactics and organisational forms.[2] In the days that followed, the tactics they selected would be shaped by factors such as perceived efficacy, desired outcomes, personal experience, cultural identification, moral values and political ideology. Also of importance was the

[1] Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest*, 240.
[2] Ibid., 234-50; Nick Crossley, 'Repertoires of Contention and Tactical Diversity in the UK Psychiatric Survivors Movement: The Question of Appropriation,' *Social Movement Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2002): 51-68; Francesca Polletta, *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 21-3.

behaviour and tactics of their opponents, the constraints of time, and the emotional response of all participants to an often stressful situation.

Limitations of space make it impossible to explore the full range of tactical choices and the factors that shaped them. I shall concentrate upon two areas that were to have a major impact upon how the AIDEX'91 protest unfolded, as well as its outcomes. These areas have been chosen because they were highly influential in determining when and which tactical forms of ODA were employed, and were subject to a high level of debate among activists during and after the event. The first set of questions is concerned with definitions of non-violence and appropriate protester behaviour. The second involves choices related to forms of protest organisation and decision-making. As few activist or academic sources deal with these issues specifically, or canvas more than one or two of the options available, the typologies that follow are largely original.

Choices and Dilemmas Related to Non-violence and Appropriate Protester Behaviour

Almost all the organisers of major Australian environmental and peace protests in the past 30 years have defined their events as 'non-violent' in the sense of what Amory Starr describes as 'eschew[ing] offensive violence against persons'.[3] By this definition the majority of protests have also been non-violent since their participants have rarely initiated violence against their opponents.[4]

Beyond this minimalist interpretation, the meanings ascribed to non-violence and violence have been contentious. This was particularly so in the period leading up to AIDEX '91 when one tendency, NVA, strenuously advocated strict adherence to a set of practices (outlined below) at a variety of ODA events. Although NVA was not the dominant form of direct action in Australia the adoption by its adherents of a clear position, and their attempts to impose it on others, created a situation in which more nebulous philosophies were defined against it. Major state and national protests using

[3] Amory Starr, *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2005), 134 .
[4] Tim Bonyhady, *Places Worth Keeping: Conservationists, Politics and Law* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 41, 54; Doyle, *Green Power*, 49; Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia', 76.

ODA, such as Nurrungar ‘89 and those in NSW’s South-east forests and during the Gulf War, saw deep rifts develop between NVA adherents and others. The different positions that emerged around these practices, and the choices that flowed from them, are important to consider as they heavily influenced the tactics and debates that occurred at AIDEX ‘91.

The primary tactical dilemmas relating to non-violence that came out of these debates can be summarised as follows:

(a) Attitude and behaviour towards others: how do activists regard and treat their opponents and relevant state actors such as the police, politicians and bureaucrats? Is any form of hostility, abuse or violence acceptable during actions? How should activists legitimately respond to hostility, abuse or violence directed towards them? Should activists avoid arrest and which, if any, forms of resistance to arrest are legitimate? Should activists comply with punishments meted out by the legal system?
(b) Secrecy: what degree of openness is adopted towards opponents and state actors and how much, if anything, are they to be informed of prior, during or after an action takes place?
(c) Property damage: does damage to property constitute a violent act and are any forms of sabotage acceptable?
(d) The role of training: should all participants in an action first undertake training?

In relation to these questions four broad positions can be identified amongst Australian ODA actors at the time of AIDEX ‘91. I have labelled these: NVA, Radical Christian Pacifism (RCP), Non Violent Direct Action (NVDA), and pro-violence. This is partially in keeping with conventions of the time, but also to avoid confusion, as both activists and academics have used a variety of terms to describe these practices, often interchangeably. Academic material relating to non-violence and ODA in Australia primarily considers the first and third positions, but all four were active during the period.

As the strictest tendency, the NVA position is the easiest to define. It was heavily influenced by Gandhian theory and American theorists such as Gene Sharp and the Movement For A New Society. Adherents believed that any form of physical and verbal aggression, property damage or secrecy dehumanized all involved and created an inconsistency between means and ends. Influential theorist Robert Burrowes criticised the use of secrecy by groups such as Greenpeace on the basis that '[secrecy] is rooted in fear and contributes to it, whereas non-violent struggle is essentially about learning to overcome fear'.[5] NVA groups did not resist arrest and followed a strategy of fully briefing and engaging in dialogue with the police, the media and other parties before engaging in ODA. In doing so they attempted to convert their opponents, state actors and the public at large by reaching out to their humanity via dialogue and a willingness to suffer for their beliefs. Police violence at broad-based events was often attributed to other protesters' failure to use NVA methods, with the fear generated by secrecy creating 'the basis of much violence that occurs at direct action situations'.[6] At NVA-organised events repression was put down to the 'frustration' of individual police as well as a 'distrust of [non-violent activists'] ability to maintain our non-violent discipline'.[7] As part of their actions NVA activists organized workshops, role-plays and non-violence training aimed at preparing activists for actions and minimizing unpredictable situations, which to their thinking often resulted in violence.

As will be seen in the next chapter, NVA adherents formed a distinct tendency during AIDEX '91. Although far from tightly coordinated, at times they organised specific actions in which participants were expected to abide by NVA principles. When they joined in mass meetings and broad based actions, NVA adherents advocated for openness, and against property damage and hostile behaviour towards opponents.

A second position, whose adherents were primarily active in Brisbane and Melbourne during the period, was RCP.[8] RCP activists cooperated through informal

[5] Robert Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defence: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 231.
[6] Len Constantini, 'Brisbane Rainforest Action Group,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 17 (1990): 12.
[7] Robert Burrowes, '*Jupiter Island* Blockaded in the Yarra River,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 8 (1989): 9.
[8] This is not a term that was in use at the time or since. I have adopted it as this tendency was influenced by Christian pacifist traditions, but differed from most Christian activists in that they employed ODA and

networks. They were influenced by Gandhian philosophies, but also claimed inspiration from Christian traditions and the Catholic Worker movement. Unlike the NVA activists, this tendency often used secrecy, rarely briefed the authorities and media before an action; engaged in property damage as a form of 'bearing witness'; and did not always insist upon training. In keeping with Gandhian tradition, however, its adherents attempted to convert their opponents and to establish dialogue by taking responsibility for their actions; this usually occurred after a protest had taken place. RCP activists conventionally submitted to arrest. This practice, combined with a refusal to pay fines or to comply with legal process, often resulted in imprisonment. For RCP activists, such punishment expressed commitment to the issue.

Small but highly active, RCP adherents engaged in actions such as breaking into and blockading the Watsonia Army Barracks in 1988 and 1989 to hold Easter prayer services and pouring (their own) blood onto the decks of the *USS New Jersey* and *USS Belleau* as part of exorcisms held in Brisbane during the same years. During AIDEX they took part in a variety of actions and argued against the abuse of police, but only initiated one tactical course that reflected their particular practices. The Brisbane-based Catholic Worker activist Jim Dowling recalls:

> Six of us from Brisbane signed a pledge saying that we would do a continuous blockade for the length of the exhibition. Two of us were arrested three times and assaulted numerous times by the police. In the end they set bail conditions which involved agreeing not to go back to the site. I refused to sign them and was locked up in the watch house until the end of the protest.[9]

Few, if any, other protesters were arrested this many times during the protest. Dowling was later imprisoned for ten days for refusing to pay fines arising from these arrests.[10]

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engaged in property destruction. Catholic Worker communities in Brisbane and Melbourne were the most identifiable adherents, but as this position included protesters drawn from other religious traditions I have not used the label Catholic Worker.

[9] Jim Dowling interview.

[10] Maurice Sibelle. 'AIDEX Protester Arrested.' 23 June 1993, Available [Online], http://www.greenleft.org.au/1993/104/6011; [13 April 2009].

The third position, which in keeping with other commentators I will refer to as NVDA, included those who adopted a minimalist definition of non-violence in relation to the treatment of opponents.[11] This was by far the largest tendency in Australian ODA campaigns, including AIDEX '91. Its non-formulaic nature, which allowed adherents to choose from a wide palette of tactics so long as they did not involve initiating physical attacks upon opponents, make the tendency's exact practices harder to define. Unsurprisingly, few theoretical and ideological materials were issued by its practitioners, many of whom would not have even consciously seen themselves as members of a broader faction.

The heterogeneity of the NVDA tendency saw a series of rapid tactical innovations in the late 1980s. Following a split in the 1989 South-east forests anti-logging campaign over the adoption of NVA rules, a minority faction improvised and built on a range of earlier tactics to create 'physical installations in which protesters risked personal injury or death in order to impede the access of earthmoving equipment into contested forest areas'.[12] These tactics, including living on platforms in trees and running into the forest during logging operations, eschewed the use of 'mass arrest' tactics, in which large groups were taken into custody as part of ODA, and made a virtue of the small number of activists available.[13] They became commonly used at protests around the country after they gained success at Chaelundi in 1991, where activists were able to obstruct work until litigation and legislation put a final halt to logging.

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[11]This Australian use of NVDA departs from international practice, in which the term has often been synonymous with NVA. A number of Australian analyses use the term in the way I have here. Some theorists, such as Sharp and Burrowes, prefer to use the term 'tactical' or 'tactical-pragmatic' non-violence to describe what I have labelled NVDA. I have not used these terms as they imply that NVDA adherents are less ethically driven, willing to abandon non-violence should it prove ineffective and only interested in short to medium term goals. In the case of many activists involved in NVDA activities this was inaccurate. Rick Humphries, 'A Question of Balance?,' *Greenpeace Australia News*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1991): 4; Barry Brown, 'Direct Action and Nonviolence,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 11 (1989): 11; Karl-Erik Paasonen, 'Review of Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Roadbuilding,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 59 (1998): 7-9.

[12] Aiden Ricketts, 'Om Gaia Dudes: The North East Forest Alliance's Old Growth Forest Campaign,' in *Belonging in the Rainbow Region: Cultural Perspectives on the NSW North Coast*, ed. Helen Wilson (Lismore: Southern Cross University Press, 2003), 139.

[13] Ian Cohen, *Green Fire* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1997), 175-202; Branagan, 'Art Alone Will Move Us', 224.

These practices used what Brian Doherty has described, in relation to British ODA, as 'manufactured vulnerability.' By deliberately placing the 'responsibility for the protester's safety in the hands of the authorities', they not only allowed activists to disrupt work and raise opponents' costs, but also carried out 'a sustained performance of their own moral commitment for a media and public captured by the epic quality of the confrontation'.[14] The success of such tactics and the safety of the activists was dependent on 'the care taken by evictors to avoid causing injury.'[15]

During AIDEX '91 tripods were used on a number of occasions alongside other physical installations and barricades that did not involve manufactured vulnerability. As an unidentified interviewee informed Radio Skid Row during the protest, 'Tripods are three poles about nine metres long joined together by wire and rope. Someone sits up the top. The object is that they don't fall off the nest whilst it blocks the road. The only way to get them down is to cut them down which is very unsafe and uses up a lot of police time and power.'[16] Due to their association with NVDA forest protests and the newly emerging forms of ODA pioneered at them, the use of tripods at AIDEX was as symbolic and cultural as it was instrumental. In some cases, particularly where one activist used a bicycle lock to secure his neck to the top of a tripod, their use was successful in blockading entrances to the NATEX site. In others, particularly when the mainstream media was not present, they were less so as police officers attempted to push them over.

The use of secrecy was central to many NVDA practices and full openness with opponents was often seen as resulting in actions that were rigid and ineffective. Activists clearly would have been unable to lock their bodies to machinery or place a tripod across a road if they had first informed authorities of their intentions. Many other actions, involving trespass on military bases and in logging coupes, also involved secrecy and the avoidance of arrest.

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[14] Brian Doherty, 'Manufactured Vulnerability: Protest Camp Tactics,' in *Direct Action in British Environmentalism*, ed. Benjamin Seel, Matthew Paterson, and Brian Doherty (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 70, 3-4.
[15] Ibid., 71.
[16] Unidentified Female #1, Interview, John Jacobs, 'Graffiti AIDEX Special: n.d. [December 1991].' Radio Skid Row, CD, 180 minutes, in author's possession.

Although some form of communication was maintained at most NVDA actions, not least to request that opponents not endanger activists' lives, attempts at extended dialogue with police or the provision of detailed plans were rare. Indeed, some viewed such communication as a form of intelligence gathering and a means of manipulating protesters and their leadership. During AIDEX '91 limited police liaison was carried out, but the majority of participants did not communicate their intentions to the police.

Although the use of these NVDA tactics required highly-developed skills, formal training and role-plays were rarely engaged in, and spontaneity was encouraged. Extensive preparation concerning promotion and transport occurred nationally before AIDEX '91, but few, if any, non-NVA activists engaged in formal tactical practice, discussion or training.

Sabotage in the form of minor property damage, such as cutting through fences, digging up roads and removing cattle grids and barricades, took place as part of many events promoted as non-violent in Australia. More controversial amongst NVDA adherents was the question of whether it was legitimate to engage in 'ecotage' and 'monkeywrenching.' This form of sabotage was rarely directed at harming human beings, but involved the clandestine disabling of opponents' machinery and the outright destruction of property.[17] Although writers such as Doyle and Bonyhady correctly point out that ecotage has played a very small role in Australian ODA, the symbolism of monkeywrenching has nevertheless been very powerful among radical eco-activists and its use has often been debated within campaigns. Few campaign organisers publicly endorsed such tactics despite some privately conceding its efficacy. [18]

As will be seen in the following chapter, some activists took part in inflicting minor property damage during AIDEX '91. Mostly this concerned people banging on vehicles attempting to enter the site or was incurred when roads and entrances were

[17] David Foreman and Bill Haywood, eds., *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*, Second ed. (Tucson: Ned Ludd Books,1987), 14.
[18] Doyle, 'Direct Action in Environmental Conflict in Australia,' 10; Bonyhady, *Places Worth Keeping*, 40-2, 54-5; Branagan, 'Art Alone Will Move Us', 73-7.

damaged during the erection of barricades. The use of road spikes in one barricade had the potential to damage car tires and thereby cause accidents and injury, but as the police were informed, vehicles were kept away, and such injuries did not occur. Despite this, the AFP and others accused protesters of secretly and maliciously deploying road spikes against police motorcyclists. As no documentation or footage of their use for such purposes exists it is difficult to confirm the accuracy of this claim.[19]

As one of their defining points was a lack of unanimity around the definition of 'violence', NVDA activists held attitudes towards opponents that varied from the use of verbal abuse and physical violence in self-defense to politeness and compliance with police instructions. Many participants viewed individuals within the police and legal system not as potential allies, but as ardent 'upholders of the status quo'.[20] For some the causes of conflict were also seen as a logical outcome of the police's structural role in containing dissent with 'a strong social determination of the functions of police and state security personnel that is not reducible to the personal will of the policeman or policewoman to enforce prescribed sanctions on a particular opponent of the established social order'.[21] Conflict with authorities was not always to be avoided and in some cases, such as when Army troops were deployed against protesters during an anti-bases action at Nurrungar in 1989, it was interpreted as playing an important role in raising public consciousness and ensuring media coverage.

This diversity was reflected in the behaviour of many protesters at AIDEX '91. Amongst those who ostensibly saw themselves as 'non-violent' were activists who verbally abused their opponents and acted aggressively towards them and their property, but did not inflict physical harm. When police removed protesters from picket lines or employed violence, some activists struggled or responded verbally. A minority complied with police directions and many went limp forcing officers to drag them away. Debates over the position of the police in society and their individual and

[19] Nick Hillier, 'AIDEX Demonstration: Nick Hiller,' *Education: Journal of the NSW Teachers Federation*, vol. 72, no. 12 (1991): 14; Angela Cole, 'Melbourne Channel 10 Evening News Report: 24 November 1991.' Channel 10, DVD, 1.20 minutes, in author's possession; Richard Blackburn, 'Protesters Arrested at Arms Show,' *Australian*, 25 November 1991, 2; Interviews with Gareth Smith; Grech.
[20] Cohen, *Green Fire*, 69-70.
[21] Ian Wilson, 'Rainforest Action,' *Arena*, no. 92 (1990): 140.

collective motivation in acting against the blockade and/or employing violence included a variety of viewpoints.

A final position regarding appropriate protester behaviour encompasses those who believed in potentially initiating violence against opponents while pursuing diverse tactics related to property damage and training. For some, such as members of trade unions and the feral subculture, the implied and actual use of violence was largely tactical and reactive. For others, primarily members of socialist and anarchist groups, it was also based upon ideological theories of revolution. Although pro-violence advocates included women and men of all ages, some were also likely motivated by what Juris describes as 'the kind of risk taking and bravado traditionally associated with male rights of passage and achievement of masculine political identities in many parts of the world.'[22]

Many pro-violence adherents identified capitalist society as marked by a hidden or 'structural' violence, evident in the hurts suffered and inequalities endured by oppressed groups. [23] The presence of such hidden violence was thought to justify an insurgent's physical force. Violence would be a necessary part of the revolutionary dynamic that would eventually destroy capitalism. Protests and campaigns were themselves elements of this dynamic; violence could therefore be justified by the rightness of the cause.

Carter observes that the use of physical force has also been seen as an 'emotionally and morally positive' way of 'demonstrating justified rage or despair' as well as allowing activists to express militancy.[24] Juris further notes that violence 'can help define boundaries between different groups', with 'specific violent performances often linked to particular oppositional identities, styles, and practices'.[25]

[22]Jeffrey Juris, 'Violence Performed and Imagined: Militant Action, the Black Bloc and the Mass Media in Genoa,' *Critique of Anthropology*, vol. 25, no. 4 (2005): 416.
[23] Carter, *Direct Action and Democracy Today*, 39, 44.
[24] Ibid., 43.
[25]Juris, 'Violence Performed and Imagined,' 416.

Comprising a substantial number of the explicitly revolutionary organisations that took part in peace, and to a lesser extent environmental, campaigns, pro-violence activists rarely undertook actual violent action. Grenfell observes that 'violence as a strategy of protest remains relatively uncommon in the movements that have emerged in Australia' since the early 1960s.[26] Indeed many, such as the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), who believed in the use of and violence during revolutionary periods and supported its use overseas, counselled non-violence in the context of political struggle in Australia.[27]

Within Australia, offensive violence generally only occurred in contexts such as industrial disputes and anti-fascist rallies. It took limited forms such as scuffles and attempts to push through police lines as well as the tossing of small missiles, like eggs, mud and stink-bombs. Much of this violence was 'performative.' Juris describes such acts as 'symbolic ritual enactments of violent interaction with a predominant emphasis on communication and cultural expression'. He contrasts this with 'direct political violence, meant to cause death or injury to human beings', although he notes, 'the difference is often one of degree'.[28]

Despite media reporting and police claims to the contrary, few, if any, activists appear to have initiated violence against their opponents during AIDEX '91 beyond pushing and shoving and the throwing of stink bombs. Former squatter Rohan Wightman states: 'It would have been insane to actively start fights with the police. I didn't associate myself with non-violence, however. For me it was a matter of resisting anything that was being done to me or others by the police by using whatever force was necessary.'[29] ISO member Marcus Banks asserts: 'The ISO was neither non-violent or pro-violent, for us the use of force was always a political question. We didn't advocate beating up police, that would have been pointless, and I didn't see anyone doing it during the protest. What we did argue for, along with other protesters, was that where

[26] Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia', 76.
[27] Democratic Socialist Party. 'The Program of the DSP.' 1990, Available [Online], http://www.dsp.org.au/node/69; [23 June 2010].
[28] Juris, 'Violence Performed and Imagined,' 415.
[29] Wightman, interview.

possible we should free people from arrest and push through police lines to block roads.'[30]

Of the few who were charged with crimes of violence, only one protester appears to have been prosecuted for assault, and in that case the individual claimed to have injured a policeman inadvertently while falling from a car.[31] No one was charged with the possession or use of weapons. Activist and mainstream media coverage includes footage of some protesters abusing and pushing opponents and acting aggressively towards them and their property. However, no footage appears to exist of protesters employing weapons or initiating serious violence. Activist accounts deny claims that such tactics were commonly employed, if at all. [32]

As the above discussion has shown, the forms of contention employed during AIDEX '91 were greatly influenced by choices that activists made in regards to issues related to non-violence and appropriate protester behavior. These choices in turn reflected the tactical and strategic debates that were occurring within contemporary social movements amid the renewed popularity of ODA. The following discussion of choices related to organisation and decision-making will explore a second key set of factors influencing tactical choices, and illustrate how they influenced the diversity and breadth of action at AIDEX '91.

Organisational and Decision Making Dilemmas for Key Organisers

Before and during any large-scale protest, key organisers make decisions about how they want elements of the event to proceed. Many of these relate to the degree of control they wish to exert. Of particular importance are the proposals or choices they make regarding organisational structures. Initial organising structures may be changed, undermined or ignored by the majority of protesters or factions within them, but the

[30] Banks, interview.
[31] Hillier, 'AIDEX Demonstration,' 14.
[32] A sample of such accounts includes: Sister Helen Kearns, 'Magnify the Splinter and Miss the Plank,' *Catholic Voice*, no. February (1992): 6; Rhodes Hart and Shelley Houghton, 'Response to the Canberra Protest,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 25 (1992): 11; Kel Dummett, 'AIDEX Demonstration: Kel Dummett,' *Education: Journal of the N.S.W. Teachers Federation*, vol. 72, no. 12 (1991): 15.

way in which the direction of the protest is initially framed greatly affects the range and forms of contention that are later used.

The following section will address four interrelated sets of organisational choices. These are:

(a) Deciding who will be in charge of organisational matters prior to the protest
(b) Whether protest participants will be expected to engage in unified or diverse actions
(c) Whether there will be basic rules or guidelines put in place and/or enforced
(d) What kind of decision-making structures will be employed during the protest

This discussion will outline the various options related to these areas as well as how key organisers, SAC, dealt with such questions in the period leading up to AIDEX '91. The chronological narrative that appears in the following chapter will build upon this discussion by further illustrating how these decisions and structures influenced the protest and were interpreted and modified by its participants.

Most work dealing with the decision-making and organisational structures required for large protests has been written by activists. Few academic analyses deal with these issues, with the result that organisational questions are generally under theorised, particularly in the case of Australia. A sample of manuals, guides and accounts produced by both activists and academics shows that the majority are primarily descriptive or prescriptive, or limit themselves to discussing a small range of options, often in a dichotomous fashion.[33] Although limited by space constraints, the following discussion will help fill this gap by illustrating the range of choices available.

The first set of choices involves deciding who will be in charge of organisational matters prior to the protest. If one group is to be responsible, then its form can vary

[33] The only source I was able to locate which lays out organizational issues as a clear set of choices is *NVDA: Preparing for Nonviolent Action*. Due to its brevity it does not provide much analysis about consequences. Howard Clark et al., *NVDA: Preparing for Nonviolent Action* (Nottingham, London: CND Publications Ltd, Peace News, 1984).

from a small committee with closed membership and meetings to a larger collective holding widely publicised forums open to all. Many protests are made up of coalitions of existing organisations. These may support a central body and agree to take on specific tasks, or representatives from each of the coalition's members may make up that body or operate in working parties. Decisions at all levels can be made via formal or informal consensus processes or through voting.

As is often the case, the AIDEX '91 blockade involved a mixture of these options. As the previous chapter illustrated, SAC initiated the 1989 blockade and then heavily promoted the 1991 event. It also took on responsibility for networking between the various state-based coalitions and for organising physical infrastructure during the protest itself. Many of the promotional tasks fell to the state-based coalitions and individual organisations that were encouraged to produce their own materials. These groups also took on responsibility for organising local actions and transportation to Canberra.

Despite the fact that they encouraged diversity and autonomy amongst the various coalitions, SAC, and particularly the key members of RAAF within it, exerted a great deal of control. As they were the initiators and key networkers for the event, and were primarily based in the city where the protest was taking place, some activists viewed this as partially unavoidable. However it was also a conscious decision. As Jacob Grech explains:

> RAAF, being an anarchist organisation primarily, didn't want to go down the standard path of controlling the protest. People saw RAAF as control freaks, but we weren't. What we did was control things to the point that no one could take over the whole thing. We had the churches and the NVA activists saying that everyone would have to follow a particular set of rules and do non-violence training to take part. We didn't want them or anyone else dictating how it would function so we took on organising the infrastructure of the protest. We insisted on central control and then abdicated all control and said 'Protest however you

want to protest.' We tried to create a place where all the tendencies could come together and pursue their different ideas at once.[34]

A key reason for the SAC wishing to prevent any other faction from exerting control over the tactical direction of the protest relates to the common dilemma of whether protest participants will be expected to engage in unified or diverse actions. Some ODA events, such as the picketing of businesses during industrial disputes, will see all participants employ the same tactics as a unified group. Alternatively, many large protests involve a variety of groups carrying out different actions and employing diverse tactics within the one event. This can occur consciously through the use of affinity groups, defined as 'self sufficient support systems of about 5 to 15 people working together', or the zoning of areas for particular actions and tactics, or it may be the result of factions breaking away from a unified event.

Whether or not key organisers can effectively control or channel the actions of protest participants, or indeed desire to, varies. In the case of AIDEX '91, SAC hoped that protesters would act in diverse, spontaneous and unpredictable ways. Although it initiated picket lines at various entrances to NATEX, coordinated the camp's physical infrastructure and initiated actions such as Jan and Jacob Grech's picket-line wedding, SAC made little attempt to coordinate or direct the actions of the protest as a whole. It was not necessarily opposed to the protest acting in a unified manner, as it did at times, but did not advocate such a course and instead called for a diversity of tactics via the proposed timetable as well as in promotional materials and informal meetings.

This decision was partly rooted in SAC's anti-authoritarian politics, as the majority of its half-dozen core members eschewed uniformity and centralisation. It was also related to more instrumental concerns. As SAC member Gareth Smith explains, 'The more decentralised and unpredictable things were, the less the police would be able to know or predict what was going on. It made it harder for them to stop us and also helped guard against the effectiveness of them infiltrating the protest.'[35]

[34] Grech interview.
[35] Smith interview.

Even where they anticipate or hope participants will act in a diversified manner, most large-scale ODA events lay down basic ground rules for action. These usually involve expectations relating to appropriate protester behaviour towards opponents and property, but can also concern other issues such as drug and alcohol use and relations with the Indigenous people of the area.

The degree to which protest organisers attempt to inform participants of such rules and enforce compliance varies greatly. In the case of both the 1982-83 Franklin Dam protests and the 1988-89 MRAG ship blockades, participants were expected to engage in training before taking to the water. The expectation that all would adhere to NVA principles was explicit and discipline was largely maintained in both campaigns. At other protests, such as those held at Roxby Downs in 1983 and 1984, handbooks and meetings stipulated guidelines regarding property damage, training and relations with opponents, but little was done to enforce them. The central organisers also did not publicly condemn the behaviour of those who broke the rules. Some protests, such as those in NSW's South-east forests in 1989 and at Nurrungar in the same year, saw much debate regarding whether guidelines should explicitly allow for a diversity of action and require protesters to give police details of arrestable actions.

The way in which SAC handled questions concerning the promotion and enforcement of guidelines and rules was influenced by its cultivation of diversity as well as a belief that the behaviour of other protesters could not, and should not, be controlled. As an unidentified member of SAC told the Friends of the Hearings, 'There comes a point where you have to say that [the protesters] are responsible enough to come and have a passion about the issue and that they then have to act in a way that their own consciences can deal with. I do not see myself as being any sort of police person of the movement.'[36]

Through its domination of networking, SAC blocked attempts by others to impose stringent rules and promoted few guidelines on tactics and behaviour. As mentioned previously, SAC included references to 'non-violence' in the protest

[36] *Piecing It Together*, 312-3.

handbook and other materials. This was largely done to satisfy the demands of some coalition members, but it deliberately kept what was meant by non-violence undefined. SAC also made no attempt to block the involvement of those who rejected the concept of 'non-violence' altogether. Furthermore the protest handbook only stated that the actions listed in the proposed timetable would be non-violent (not those outside it).

SAC's desire to maintain diversity and block factional control also guided how it dealt with questions relating to the decision-making structures employed during the protest. These structures vary greatly and are reflected in, and affect, the degree of unified or diversified action. Unified actions often see a rotating or permanent leadership lay down a pre-prepared plan of action to be followed or decided upon. Alternatively, the mass of participants may themselves initiate and negotiate an agreed course of action. Diverse protests involve affinity groups, factions and other groupings organising or leading their own actions. These may use decision-making forums for coordination and information sharing as well as to set and modify agreed guidelines for behaviour. Whether the protest is diverse or not, decisions may be made at mass meetings or meetings attended by delegates or representatives of various groups. Decisions may be reached via a variety of processes, including consensus and voting, and the meeting may be run by a facilitator, committee or chairperson and involve the input of the majority of participants to varying degrees.

AIDEX '91 was unusual and innovative in that SAC chose not to establish any decision-making structure at all. The AIDEX'91 protest handbook stated:

> Most people will be here as part of a larger group and these groups are the ideal places for decisions to be made… In order to facilitate the tasks necessary to ensure everyone's comfort and safety there will be meetings for the camp as a whole at sunset each evening. These meetings will be a good place for groups to share information, action plans, etc… please don't attempt to turn the [evening] meeting into an action planning meeting there and then. It is futile to attempt to

> convince every activist to agree with you. Organise a planning meeting of those who wish to be involved.[37]

SAC's decision not to initiate or control such a structure was motivated once more by the belief that spontaneity and diversity would be important factors in making the blockade succeed. RAAF member Flick Ruby also recalls that it was motivated by 'an assumption that there would be too many people for [any structure] to really work'.[38] An unidentified SAC member interviewed by Friends of the Hearings argued that such structurelessness was democratic, stating: 'If there were no central organising structure, individuals and groups could participate equally with no individual or group feeling they could or should impose their particular agenda on the group as a whole'.[39]

During the protest SAC did not actively prevent protesters from setting up a formalised decision-making structure. In many ways it did not have to as the lack of an existing structure, combined with broad disagreement concerning the best model, and the need for one, made it difficult for protest participants to create anything other than ad hoc forums.

As the following chapter will illustrate, there were repeated attempts made to turn the scheduled evening meetings, as well as ones initiated in the mornings or held at other times, into decision-making bodies. These meetings were often acrimonious and served as forums for the expression of opinions rather than for the generation of formal agreements. Some felt that they were a useful way of debating ideas that were later adopted during blockading. Others found them frustrating and boring and avoided them altogether.

The absence of a unifying structure arguably achieved some of the SAC's goals in that it prevented any faction from taking complete control and initially made it difficult for the police to predict and counter the diverse tactics adopted by blockaders. Some protesters contended, both during and after the protest, that it also allowed certain

[37] Renegade Activist Action Force, *AIDEX Activist Handbook*, 15.
[38] Ruby, interview.
[39] *Piecing It Together*, 312.

groups, most notably the ISO, to manipulate meetings and the actions of other protesters, thereby privileging certain tactics over others.[40] For their part ISO members later claimed that while they took a leading role in advocating, sometimes successfully, that protesters blockade in a unified manner, they lacked the numbers and degree of cohesion that would have allowed them to dominate such a large protest.[41]

The lack of coordination might have wrong-footed the police and AIDEX organisers, but it also created confusion amongst many of the protesters. Communication across the entire NATEX site relied on roaming protesters and the use of walkie-talkies that were issued at the beginning of the protest and passed between different groups. As a result, rumours were rife — the heightening tension exhausting the blockaders further and often causing them to respond to situations in reactive, rather than strategic ways. As Interviewee 15 told the Friends of the Hearings: 'It was sort of chaotic and management by emergency rather than actual planning'.[42]

Due to the lack of formalised processes, as well as factors such as the passage of time and the disorderly nature of the event, it is difficult to quantify how the majority of tactical decisions were made. From interviews conducted with participants, as well as those accounts that deal explicitly with decision-making, it is clear that most tactical initiatives either emerged in the course of blockading or were introduced by individuals and groups that had met prior to them. In many cases protesters would spontaneously respond to an action undertaken by the police, exhibition organisers or attendees. While there was much discussion in the course of and after, a tactical decision, they were rarely voted upon or formally agreed to. Instead the majority of protesters appear to have showed their degree of support for a course of action by either joining or refraining from it.

Conclusion

[40] Louise MacDonald, 'How Was AIDEX?,' *Chain Reaction*, no. 65 (1992): 27-30; Margaret Pestorius, 'An AIDEX Experience,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 25 (1992): 9-13.
[41] Sandra Bloodworth and Penny McDonald, 'Letter: AIDEX Protest a Victory,' *Chain Reaction*, no. 65 (1992): 2; Interviews with Banks; Schulz.
[42] *Piecing It Together*, 112.

This chapter has illustrated how decisions made prior to AIDEX ‘91 concerning organisational and decision-making structures were an important influence upon the style and breadth of ODA tactics that were subsequently employed. By choosing options that encouraged diversity and spontaneity, SAC not only made it difficult for any one faction or set of tactics to dominate, but also stymied considered and coordinated decision-making.

By also outlining the varying positions of activists related to non-violence and appropriate behaviour, the chapter has provided further evidence for the argument that the styles and tactical forms of ODA employed during AIDEX ‘91 were influenced by the framing and organisation of the protest by SAC and the tactical and strategic debates that were occurring within contemporary social movements. The efficacy and development of various tactics and organisational forms during the protest will be further explored in the following chapter’s day-by-day account.

Chapter 5: The AIDEX ‘91 Protest

This chapter will present a narrative of the eleven days of protest that occurred from 18 November 1991. In order to provide a detailed history of the event and outline how tactics and dynamics changed and developed over the course of it, the chapter is organised into a day-by-day chronology, featuring quotes and perspectives from participants. By using such an approach the account will build upon the work of previous chapters to illustrate how the frames, organisation, and tactics developed before the protest unfolded in practice. A daily narrative approach will also allow the impact of changing factors such as policing styles and legal proceedings upon rapidly evolving tactical repertoires to be properly canvassed. It will also suggest the degree to which AIDEX was disrupted at different points.

Monday 18 - Friday 22 November

AIDEX ‘91 was held at NATEX, which is located on the outskirts of Canberra. It is a large site with an approximately 14 km perimeter, which includes several buildings, car and racehorse tracks and a number of paddocks. The area is surrounded by a high fence and includes a number of vehicle and pedestrian gates and entrances.

Eight days before AIDEX ‘91 was due to open, the ACT TLC-endorsed picket lines were set up by SAC at the various gates leading into the site. Although blockading was to take place at other points, such as the rear access roads to the site, the main pickets were established at three locations. These came to be known as Racecourse Gate, which was located at the front of NATEX on Flemington Road and near Randwick Road; Main Gate, which was also located on Flemington Road, but was closer to Northbourne Avenue/Federal Highway; and Shell Gate, which was located just off Northbourne Avenue/Federal Highway near a Shell Petrol station (see map on page 3 for all locations).

A protest campsite was also established in a car park across the road from NATEX. This provided accommodation as well as toilets, water, first-aid and other essential services. The location of the campsite so close to the protest site was to give

activists a decided advantage. As former ISO member Dwayne Schulz recalls, 'The camp made it a lot easier to sustain the protest over a number of days as people didn't have to leave the area and all their basic needs were attended to.'[1]

These early pickets were staffed by a small number of protesters who attempted, with some success, to prevent vehicles from entering NATEX. This was achieved by either blocking the road with their bodies or by requesting that drivers respect the picket line. Most of the picketers were drawn from the Canberra community, including members of the BWIU and high school students from the alternative institution, School Without Walls.

Despite some harassment from drivers who had been turned away, no major incidents occurred until the morning of Thursday 21 November when trucks crossed the picket line at Shell Gate and one protester was arrested. The picketing continued on the following day and a second campsite was set up near Parliament House.

Saturday 23 November

Hundreds of protesters, including many from interstate, gathered at Parliament House for a rally at 9am. A march to NATEX began two hours later. During the 11-kilometre trek, which stopped outside the offices of companies involved in the arms trade, there were incidents of allegedly aggressive policing.[2]

Those involved in the procession and the protest included a broad cross section of Australia's social movements. 'Delilah' notes: 'You had nuns and priests, medical professionals, anarchists, musicians, street theatre groups, all the different socialist groups, the NVAers, ferals, community lawyers and workers, women's groups, etc. It was like the refugee campaign in the 2000s in that it involved every part of the social justice movement and not just the hard core political types.'[3] Rohan Wightman concurs, adding 'I remember arriving and being blown away by how many people there were

[1] Schulz, interview.
[2] Dwayne Schulz, Sandra Bloodworth, Mick Armstrong and David Glanz, *The Lessons of AIDEX* (Melbourne: International Socialist Organisation, 1992), 4.
[3] 'Delilah', interview.

compared to the previous AIDEX. It wasn't just the same old faces that you saw at every major protest.'[4] Jim Dowling further notes that 'I was impressed by the involvement of religious organisations in the campaign and by the number of Christian activists who were there at the blockade. Many of them weren't radicals and I hadn't seen them before at these kind of events.'[5]

The march reached the NATEX site by 3pm. Those at the front rushed through the gates, but were quickly forced out by the small number of police present. One protester, who climbed under a fence, was allegedly assaulted by police.[6]

During the rally that followed, speeches were heard before the approximately 300 to 500 people present joined the already existing picket lines. Having discovered that a number of trucks had already entered the site during the march, some protesters began dragging material in front of Shell Gate, but for the most part the entrances were blocked only by human bodies.

An incident that occurred in the afternoon at Shell Gate set the tone for much of what was to come. During an attempt to escort a truck out of NATEX, police arrested two protesters for obstruction and allegedly employed violence in clearing others sitting on the road. This resulted in five protesters being hospitalised, some having been hit by the vehicle.[7]

A second incident at the Main Gate soon followed when a yellow car rammed into picketers sitting on the road. Once again activists accused the police of using violence to clear the picket.[8] The car involved was escorted onto the site and its driver was not arrested.

Following these incidents, there was an attempt to a hold a mass meeting to discuss how to deal with the police and best blockade the site. As explained in the

[4] Wightman, interview.
[5] Dowling, interview.
[6] *Piecing It Together*, 104.
[7] Interviews with Ruby; 'Delilah'.
[8] *Piecing It Together*, 105-6.

previous chapter, SAC had not convened or proposed an organisational structure for decisions concerning the entire camp. On this occasion and subsequently, little consensus could be found on how to run the meeting, let alone deal with the issues it was meant to consider. Eventually one group left to continue barricading Shell Gate. In their wake the remaining protesters moved off to picket other areas and the blockade split into three main tactical tendencies, each gathering at a different gate.

The Racecourse gate was picketed by protesters adhering to NVA principles. This blockade was initiated by members of the Perseverance Affinity Group, a collective of 12 activists who had, in the preceding weeks, engaged in NVA training in Melbourne. They were joined by dozens of others over the next 24 hours, most of whom were briefed as to the tactics that were considered acceptable at this gate. Generally vehicles were blocked by clusters of up to five people who lay on the road and joined hands in star formations while others attempted to politely and calmly negotiate with both the police and drivers attempting to enter the site. Barricades were not erected and abuse of opponents was disapproved of. Those attending the National Capital Horse Show at NATEX's racetrack, which was taking place over the weekend, were allowed through this gate only after their vehicles had been searched to ensure they were not related to AIDEX.

A number of protesters viewed the NVA approach as ineffective and attempted to convince those at the Racecourse Gate to erect barricades. Melbourne activist Anthony Kelly recalls: 'In true strategic non-violence fashion we argued against that as it would alienate a third party and force us to also block a major Canberra sporting event… Besides that, our tactics were working. We were stopping [AIDEX related] vehicles effectively, turning them away each time.'[9]

In contrast, those who assembled at Shell Gate were drawn from activists adhering to NVDA and pro-violence positions. These protesters engaged in more confrontational tactics. Metal stakes were hammered into the ground, the gates wired shut and a car body, road spikes and other materials dumped in front of them. When

[9] Anthony Kelly, interview.

police made an approach, timber barricades were set alight. Fifty-gallon drums were also set afire and used as barricades and sources of warmth. Attempts to breach this gate were met with aggression and verbal abuse from the picketers, some of whom were drawn from the 'feral' subculture.

This subculture was still developing its early style at the time of AIDEX '91. According to Aiden Ricketts, it had begun to emerge in the late 1980s when 'inner-city subcultural communities in the capital cities displayed cultural features that fused aspects of the previous hippy movement (organic food co-ops, communal living, political activism) with the punk version of the anarchist intellectual tradition (inner city collectives, squats and confrontational politics)'.[10]

Although there were parallels with Britain's new-age traveller scene, feral had a distinctly Australian flavour. In its initial stages the subculture was closely associated with ODA at anti-logging blockades and the veteran activist Ian Cohen dubbed its members 'punks for the forests'.[11] Rohan Wightman notes: 'Lots of people from the punk music and squatter scenes had moved to the country or begun to travel. A circuit was created where people moved from one protest, festival or squat to another. AIDEX '91 became part of that. The confrontational nature of Shell Gate was influenced by what became known as the feral scene, as was the use of tripods at other gates.'[12]

A third picket, at Main Gate, attracted those NVDA, pro-violence and RCP-oriented activists who were unwilling to conform to NVA principles, but did not fit in with the more aggressive picketing of Shell Gate. People involved in this picket linked arms and created movable barricades out of a 40-seater bus, a giant fist prop and metal and wood off-cuts. 'Delilah' notes: 'There was huge debate about tactics, how long we could maintain what we were doing, how to deescalate the police violence, etc. There wasn't as much debate on Shell Gate or the Racecourse Gate because they knew exactly what they wanted to do.' [13]

[10] Ricketts, ' *Om Gaia Dudes*,' 137.
[11] Cohen, *Green Fire*, 183.
[12] Wightman, interview.
[13] 'Delilah' interview.

As with many decisions at AIDEX '91, the establishment of these pickets on the basis of tactical and philosophical affinity appears to have been largely spontaneous. Protesters simply gravitated toward one area or another depending on their personal preferences, existing friendships and whether an area was under threat. In many ways this spatial arrangement anticipated the more conscious decision of anti-globalisation protesters to designate separate 'zones' for different tactical tendencies to operate in at a number of protests from 1999 onwards. According to Starr, such zoning 'maintains a united front of solidarity among activists and organisations with divergent beliefs about tactics while also isolating (geographically and temporally) within a protest day actions involving different levels of "risk"'.[14] The adoption of specific areas for varying tactical positions appears to have been initially successful at AIDEX '91, as few vehicles entered the site over the next 24 hours.

With the established entrances closed, some suppliers attempted to use access roads located in the paddocks behind NATEX. As a number of protesters were roving around the perimeter, small pickets were rapidly established at these points, but not consistently maintained. These primarily employed the tactic of blocking entrances with protester's bodies, but did not generally adhere to NVA principles or use barricades. An incident involving police in this area during the afternoon saw a number of protesters injured and two sent to hospital.

Police responses on this day and those that followed were often erratic. The 1993 *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991* found that a lack of intelligence and proper preparation had led police to act inconsistently. On an individual level some police engaged in dialogue and jokes with protesters whilst others were aggressive from the outset. As a body, police officers occasionally attempted to clear the blockades during this early period, but as they were heavily outnumbered they generally had little option but to observe events.

[14] Amory Starr, "... (Excepting Barricades Erected to Prevent Us from Peacefully Assembling)': So-Called 'Violence' in the Global North Alterglobalization Movement,' *Social Movement Studies,* vol. 5, no. 1 (2006): 66.

Policing at any event is dynamic. It is shaped by the (sometimes different) views of individual police, by protester tactics, by governmental directives, and by the reactions of the media.[15] Although specific police tactics varied greatly throughout the AIDEX '91 protest, the general trend was one that shifted from relatively low-key policing to the use of what Della Porta and Diani characterise as an 'escalated force model'. Under this set of strategies 'innovative forms [of protest] are poorly tolerated, communication between police and demonstrators is reduced to the essentials and there is frequent use of coercive means or even illegal methods'.[16]

The use of such force in situations such as AIDEX '91 is not unusual. As Grenfell observes, 'When the military security interests of the state are challenged, or when dissent moves beyond the parameters permitted by the state, such forms of dissent can be rendered illegitimate and, if need be, the coercive apparatus of the state used to forcefully repress such protests.'[17] The 'parameters' of dissent that are enforced have both a tactical and spatial dimension. As Epstein and Iveson argue, in relation to the policing of the 2007 APEC protests, state actors often make a distinction between 'virtuous' and 'unruly' citizens on the basis of where and how they protest, with the latter open to punitive sanctions for creating disruption within proscribed areas.[18]

Late on Saturday, 'escalated force' was evident when the AFP brought in approximately 50 extra officers. Larger numbers, including members of the paramilitary Operations Support Group (OSG), were to be mobilised in the coming days. This increased deployment appears to have been primarily related to a failure by AFP command to anticipate the size of the demonstration and the breadth of protester tactics. As one officer later told Friends of the Hearings: 'We were surprised. We were caught

[15] Donatella Della Porta and Olivier Fillieule, 'Policing Social Protest,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David Snow, Sarah Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 217-36.
[16] Della Porta and Diaini, *Social Movements*, 198.
[17] Grenfell, 'The State and Protest in Contemporary Australia', 88.
[18] In the case of APEC 2007 such areas were designated and announced before protest occurred. At AIDEX '91 the roads around NATEX were implicitly off bounds to protest with the exclusion of protesters only becoming explicit when police attempted to remove blockaders from the area. Kate Epstein and Kurt Iveson, 'Locking Down the City (Well, Almost): APEC 2007 and Citizenship in Sydney,' *Australian Geographer*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2009): 276-9

out badly. We had to bring police down from Sydney to help us.'[19] In an interview subsequently released via a Freedom of Information request, the AFP Forward Commander at AIDEX '91, Detective Superintendent Colin Rowley, admitted that his officers had been unprepared, having only expected demonstrators to lie passively on the road as a 'human mat'.[20] This was in marked contrast to briefings DOD had given to its members attending AIDEX, advising them to dress in plain-clothes due to the 'potential for personal injury, damage to clothing and unnecessary publicity'.[21] Despite being ordered to staff long shifts, the extra AFP officers deployed were inadequately briefed, improperly equipped and largely untrained in dealing with demonstrations. [22]

Regardless of the particular picket or actions they were involved in, complaints about police violence were a key feature of activist reports and interviews and commonly quoted in the news media. Almost all of these accounts expressed surprise and dismay on the part of the protesters as to the degree of police violence they perceived had been deployed against them. As Interviewee 32 told the Friends of the Hearings: 'I have been on demonstrations, organised demonstrations before… I had not seen any violence like at AIDEX… It was a bit of a shock really.'[23] As will be seen, protesters would react to the use of 'escalated force' in various ways, some responding with aggression while others attempted to 'de-escalate' the situation by advocating NVA tactics.

During the protest two Justices of the Peace, with the aid of the office of Australian Democrats' Senator Sid Spindler, collected Statutory Declarations concerning police behaviour. These efforts, and those that occurred in the months that followed, allowed 169 people to lodge 410 separate complaints.[24] In response the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman launched an investigation. Due to the number of

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[19] *Piecing It Together*, 315.
[20] Val Plumwood and Sean Kenan, 'Military Displays: The Australian Federal Police from the Hilton Bombing to the AIDEX Protests,' *Arena Magazine*, no. 9 (1994): 38-9.
[21] Quoted in Mark Metherell, '200 Arrests in Defence Display Rally,' *Age*, 26 November 1991, 1.
[22] *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991*, 5.
[23] *Piecing It Together*, 315.
[24] *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991*, 3.

complaints involved, its report was not released until September 1993. Only six individual complaints were upheld, a result the Ombudsman largely attributed to under-resourcing of her office, the removal of police identification badges during the protest, and poor work carried out by the AFP's Internal Investigation Department (IID).[25]

Despite the small number of successful complaints, the Ombudsman was highly critical of police behaviour and tactics. The report cited examples of officers engaging in 'irregular holds' involving hair pulling, ear pulling and kneeing as well as the dragging and throwing of protesters by their arms. The use of what were described as 'painful and potentially injurious' compliance holds against 'compliant protesters' was also criticised, as was the inappropriate and unnecessary employment of police batons and dogs. Officers were admonished for the practice of removing their ID badges and for refusing to give their name and identification number when requested. The report also found that AFP planning had been inadequate and operations poorly supervised, resulting in a 'breakdown in control and command.' [26]

Although the majority of the claims made by protesters regarding police behaviour and tactics were credible, a minority were not. A question in the Senate put to the Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs, Bruce Childs, asking if AFP officers active at AIDEX were being paid by Desiko, was dismissed on the basis that the police were funded solely by the government. Allegations later put to Childs and raised in activist publications, that the AFP had turned away ambulances seeking to assist injured protesters and prevented portaloos from being emptied at the protest campsite, were rejected by the company involved, GKN Rentals, and by Superintendent John McLaren of the ACT Ambulance Service.[27]

[25] The Ombudsman's report also noted that the burden of proof in AFP disciplinary hearings was of a criminal standard and that with little footage of police actions and the problems with identification it was difficult to prove 'beyond reasonable doubt' that protesters had received the treatment they claimed. Ibid., 3, 10-11.
[26] Ibid., 5-8, 10.
[27] CPD (28 November, 1991), 3585; CPD (2 December, 1991), 3826; CPD (19 December, 1991), 5060; Leanne Booth, 'Anti-AIDEX Protests,' *Peace Courier* (1992): 5, 8; *Piecing It Together*, 327.

Sunday 24 November

In the morning an Ecumenical service was held at Parliament. This and other events originally timetabled for this site were poorly attended as most protesters concentrated on picketing NATEX. More demonstrators arrived from interstate and the pickets, now numbering up to 800 people, continued to prevent trucks from delivering supplies.

During the morning the AFP once more attempted to bring vehicles through entrances located at the rear of NATEX. These had been wired shut and barricaded the previous evening. After 20 to 30 protesters were removed by police, a truck entered through one of these gates. The picket was quickly reinforced and during the ensuing standoff a number of vehicles were kicked and marked by graffiti; their tyres were also let down. Scuffles saw a protester's arm and a policeman's nose broken, and a car windscreen smashed before the convoy left the area. These incidents accounted for the majority of coverage on evening news reports.[28]

In the afternoon relations between the protesters and police continued to deteriorate. Depending on their philosophical outlook, activists attributed this to a variety of causes. Some felt that aggressive policing was at fault whilst others, mainly from an NVA perspective, blamed the abusive behaviour of some blockaders. Negative portrayals of protesters in the media were also seen as placing pressure on the AFP and the ACT government to be seen to be upholding the rule of law. The exhaustion protesters and police were now experiencing and the frustration felt by the AFP over their inability to remove the pickets were further cited as contributing factors.[29]

In the late afternoon the AFP brought in two rescue vans to remove barricades at Main Gate. Using this as a diversion, other officers cut holes in the fence near Shell Gate allowing up to 20 vehicles to enter NATEX.

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[28] An ABC news report claimed that car tires had been slashed. Channel 7's report stated that they had been let down. 'Canberra ABC Evening News Report: 24 November 1991.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, DVD, 30 seconds, in author's possession; Lexy Hamilton-Smith, 'Canberra Channel 7 Evening News Report: 24 November 1991.' Channel 7, DVD, 1.10 minutes, in author's possession.

[29] Ron Guignard, 'Letter: Counterproductive Violence ' *Green Left Weekly*, 11 December 1991, 8; Stefany Douglas, 'AIDEX Demonstration: Stefany Douglas,' *Education: Journal of the NSW Teachers Federation*, vol. 72, no. 20 (1991): 14; Wendy Joseph, 'Letter: Verbal Violence,' *Green Left Weekly*, 1 April 1992, 8; Interviews with Denis Doherty; Grech; Laura MacFarlane.

At around 6.30 pm two buses and ten police cars, backed by up to 100 police, forced their way through the NVA picket at Racecourse Gate to set up a cordon. During this time three protesters were arrested and a number injured. After a convoy of vehicles (at least some of which were connected to the equestrian show) exited NATEX, protesters sat down and blocked the section of Flemington Road immediately adjacent to the police perimeter. Forty to 50 members of the OSG were then brought in. Dressed in riot gear, these officers paraded and performed practice manoeuvres that involved banging on shields with batons. Although the presence of paramilitary police at large Australian protests has become common since the early 1990s, it was unusual at this time. Many protesters were surprised by their appearance and felt that it marked a major escalation on the part of the AFP.

Ignoring warnings that they would be arrested, hundreds of protesters continued to sit on the road. Previously protesters of different tactical persuasions had largely kept apart, but with the police mounting a serious threat to the blockade, the various tendencies now came together. Internal tensions and disagreements arose, but the protesters remained united in blocking the entrance by sitting down and linking arms rather than building barricades. Despite the police preventing supporters from delivering food and water, these blockaders stayed in place for several hours singing songs such as Monty Python's 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life' and Black Sabbath's 'War Pigs'. Street theatre satirising the OSG further alleviated tension.

Throughout the night the police made a series of unsuccessful attempts to drag the protesters away and set up a permanent perimeter. During this time a further seven blockaders were arrested. Fearing further injuries, some protesters negotiated with the police and brought back an offer from the AFP to withdraw if they were first allowed to erect a fence and set up a caravan. In one of the few cases where a mass decision was formally made protracted discussions amongst the picketers ensued before the offer was firmly rejected. With the situation at a stalemate the police withdrew from the area in the early hours of the morning.

Monday 25 November

With the exhibitors unable to get many of their displays on site, the DOD's public relations officer Brigadier Adrian D' Hage, along with AIDEX organiser Bob Day, increased pressure on the ACT Government by claiming it was 'tacitly encouraging' the protesters.[30] Day stated that many of the exhibitors and potential attendees were feeling intimidated, and called on the ACT to institute a State of Emergency.[31] Attorney-General Terry Connolly later rejected claims that his government had prevented police from making arrests, and went on to criticise protesters for being violent.[32]

The Federal ALP continued to distance itself from the event. Although Defence Science Minister Gordon Bilney attended the exhibition, he claimed the ALP had 'neither endorsed nor not endorsed' AIDEX '91.[33] Desiko later stated that a senior ALP Minister, believed to be Robert Ray, had cancelled a planned appearance. For his part Ray, who had previously provided statements of support and a letter welcoming attendees, claimed on 28 November to 'not know where AIDEX is; I assume it is up the road somewhere…'[34]

During the morning a small protest was held outside Parliament House. At NATEX Greens WA Senator Jo Vallentine, who was arrested later in the day, gave a speech outside the Main Gate. Public transport to the NATEX area was cancelled and some nearby roads blocked by police.

Early in the morning tripods were set up outside Main Gate and Racecourse Gate with crowds and drummers gathering beneath each. As this was seen as the main focus of police activity, the majority of the protesters would remain in the area and engage in largely unified actions in the days to come. As with the previous evening's activities, this change in dynamics was largely reactive and dictated by AFP tactics rather than being the result of a considered and coordinated decision on the part of

[30] 'ACT Govt Blamed for Violent NATEX Demos,' *Canberra Times*, 25 November 1991, 1.
[31] Ibid., 1
[32] Chris Uhlmann, 'ACT Govt Condemns "Hypocritical" Protesters,' *Canberra Times*, 26 November 1991, 5.
[33] Gordon Bilney, interviewed by Fran Kelly, 'PM: 25 November 1991.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, Transcript, 2.00 minutes, in Parliament of Australia Radio Programs database.
[34] CPD (28 November, 1991), 3593.

protesters. The police called the Fire Brigade in to remove the tripods, but its members left the site, to the cheers of protesters, after being told that it was part of an ACT TLC-endorsed picket.

One truck managed to enter through the Racecourse Gate in the morning, but the rest of its 60-vehicle convoy was held up for three hours. At a later point another truck driven by Army personnel attempted to force its way through the same crowd. A number of people danced on its roof and smashed its windows before it was eventually turned away. A further incident involved a utility truck being driven through the crowd at speed while a man in the back swung an iron pipe.

At approximately 1pm, 150 AFP officers encircled the picket outside Main Gate. All removed their identification badges and donned latex gloves. The protesters were told by AFP commanders to leave the area or face arrest. Those who remained sat down and linked arms. Forty members of the OSG then removed them one by one from the picket line before they were photographed and processed on site. Some resisted arrest, verbally abused police or engaged in 'tug of war' contests while others went limp and allowed themselves to be removed. According to news footage, photographs, the 1993 Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's report and activist testimony, many suffered pain and injuries from the use of compliance holds, being dragged along the road and being struck and kneed by arresting officers.[35]

By this point communication between the protesters' police liaison representatives and AFP command had broken down. Some protesters who were initially told by senior police that they could leave the site now found themselves unable to do so.

Over a two to three hour period, punctuated by periods of waiting for more police vehicles to arrive, the AFP arrested up to 200 protesters.[36] An attempt by Uniting

[35] *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991*, 6-7; *Piecing It Together*, 164, 8-9; Matthew Frost, 'National SBS Evening News Report: 25 November 1991.' Special Broadcasting Service, DVD, 2.05 minutes, in author's possession.
[36] Media reports variously cited figures of 150, 163, 180 and 200 arrests. Peter Clack, 'Police Move: 180 Arrested at AIDEX,' *Canberra Times*, 26 November 1991, 1; Paul Chamberlin, 'More Violence as Arms Fair Opens,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 1991, 7; 'Police Arrest 200 at Arms Protest,'

Church Minister Neville Watson and a friend to mount a cross outside NATEX resulted in their arrest. Banners and props belonging to members of the Sydney Peace Squadron were confiscated. A recorder belonging to Community Radio 3CR, and much of the work done by its media team, were taken away, along with half the team itself.

Following the arrests, the police removed the tripods and cleared Flemington Road. By dusk the Racecourse and Middle Gates were opened and a barricaded fence-way erected. With the remaining protesters contained, the exhibitors began to rush equipment and displays onto the site via these entrances and holes cut in the fence.

The number of arrests overwhelmed the AFP, which did not have enough space for all of those detained; many were held for five to seven hours before facing court. Some complained of strip searches, a lack of food and water and rough handling by police during their detention.[37] A series of adjournments took place in the Canberra Magistrates Court amidst confusion over whether or not the majority of protesters had yet been charged and, if so, what they had been charged with. The police eventually stated that they had taken the blockaders into custody on the basis of common law powers, which allowed them to detain anyone they believed was about to 'breach the peace'.[38]

Although the arrests had succeeded in allowing the police to remove protesters from the NATEX site, an attempt to have them 'bound over to keep the peace' and prevented from returning to the area failed; the magistrate instead ruled that each arrestee be tried individually.[39] The court did, however, request that the arrestees comply with an order to keep the peace until the end of AIDEX '91. Most stated that they would resist the order and were released without bail until a test case could be run.

Australian, 26 November 1991, 4; Tony O'Leary, 'Sydney Channel 10 Evening News Report: 25 November 1991.' Channel 10, DVD, 1.37 minutes, in author's possession.

[37] *Piecing It Together*, 171-3; Doherty interview; *Ombudsman's Report of Investigations into Complaints Arising from Demonstrations Held at AIDEX, November 1991*, 8.

[38] Rod Campbell, 'Police Learn That Mass Arrests Are Rarely the Way to Deal with Protests,' *Canberra Times*, 28 November 1991, 4.

[39] Ibid., 4.

With the mass arrest tactic failing, in the days to come the AFP would primarily rely on force to remove large groups of blockaders, while continuing to lay charges of hindering, obstruction and resisting arrest against select individuals. The majority of charges against the more than 200 people arrested during AIDEX'91 were later dropped. Most activist accounts and interviews saw the success of the protest as the prime motivation for the AFP's use of this tactic, even if they were personally critical of their fellow activists' behaviour.[40] In keeping with this, NVA adherent Anthony Kelly argues: 'It was the actual act of blockading the gates, not the abuse from activists that meant that use of such force was inevitable. Despite the fact that we should expect a violent response when we physically get in the way of state militarist infrastructure, some activists were more emotionally prepared for the violence than others.'[41]

Tuesday, 26 November

On the opening day of the exhibition an ecumenical service was held at Mount Ainslie. In other activities not aligned with the blockade, members of WILPF protested with placards at various city intersections and the Quakers opened their peace stall inside AIDEX. The Point Of Impact conference, exploring the state of the global arms trade and alternatives to it, also began at the ANU.

The morning's edition of the *Canberra Times* quoted Desiko board member Sir William Keys as claiming: 'The organisers of AIDEX would be most happy to arrange an escorted visit over AIDEX for any of its critics. I rather doubt however that any of them will accept that invitation.'[42] When a large number of protesters, including 40 members of MAPW, attempted to take up Keys on his offer, they found it had been withdrawn, although four were later given a tour.[43] An ACT TLC delegation, which sought to address union members working inside NATEX, was also denied entry.

[40] For example: Hart and Houghton, 'Response to the Canberra Protest,' 12; Phil Shannon, 'Letter: AIDEX and ISO,' *Green Left Weekly*, 6 May 1992, 8; Interviews with MacFarlane; Grech.
[41] Kelly, interview.
[42] William Keys, 'AIDEX Protest Is Anarchy, Emotion Versus Logic,' *Canberra Times*, 26 November 1991, 9.
[43] Bill Williams, 'The Fire and Forget Fair,' *Chain Reaction*, no. 65 (1992): 29; *Piecing It Together*, 204-7, 34-35.

A small number of protesters had pre-purchased passes or obtained them through a promotion run by a defence magazine. Most, including WA Greens Senator Jo Vallentine and SAC member Gareth Smith, were not allowed inside. A small number were able to enter by donning suits and posing as arms investors. Independent film-maker John Jacobs toured NATEX to shoot footage for his documentary, 'AIDEX 91: Inside the Australian Arms Trade'. Another group sprayed butyric acid (a pungent, but physically harmless compound) into various exhibits, causing the evacuation of one pavilion.

AIDEX '91 began on a reduced scale as a number of exhibitors had either withdrawn or been unable to get their equipment on site. Desiko did not release figures, but Peter Jones, who had staffed the Quaker's Peace Stall, and Defence Science Minister Gordon Bilney, who had also attended AIDEX '91, stated in separate interviews that 138 exhibitors were present. This was a major reduction from the number of companies, variously quoted at 214 or 234, which had exhibited in 1989.[44]

Moreover, many of the stands were not complete. As Senator Jo Vallentine informed Parliament on 2 December 1991, 'I know that people who went to see models and asked for particular things which had been advertised were told that certain demonstration models were not available and that, unfortunately, all the information that was sought could not be provided because the computer links had not been completed on time for the opening of the exhibition'.[45]

A *Canberra Times* article, bearing the headline 'The Inside Story of AIDEX: Not a Gun in Sight', claimed that weapons were not on display. This was later contradicted by eyewitnesses, and other media reports and footage that showed attendees handling rifles.[46]

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[44] Peter Jones, interviewed by Jacobs, 'Graffiti AIDEX Special: n.d. [December 1991]'; Defence Science Minister Gordon Bilney, interviewed by Kelly, 'PM: 25 November 1991'.

[45] CPD (2 December, 1991), 3826.

[46] Amanda Uhlmann, 'The Inside Story of AIDEX: Not a Gun in Sight,' *Canberra Times*, 27 November 1991, 1; Vitali Vitaliev, 'Defence Protests Leave the Hopeful Wounded,' *The Age*, 28 November 1991, 8; Dan Corrie et al., 'Background Briefing: 1 December 1991.' ABC Radio National, CD, 30 minutes, in author's possession; John Jacobs, 'AIDEX 91: Inside the Australian Arms Trade: 1992.' CAT TV, Video-cassette, 60 minutes, in author's possession.

Outside NATEX the protest continued. Although some protesters later reported feeling emboldened by their success in disrupting the exhibition, others complained of a loss of direction. Debates began over whether to continue with mass blockading or return to the earlier tactic of different political tendencies running separate activities. Arguments over these questions reflected different views concerning democracy and effectiveness, and cut across positions related to appropriate behaviour. Some felt that diverse actions were democratic as they allowed different groups to act autonomously, while others argued they were anti-democratic as they allowed a minority to undermine the wishes of the majority. Some held that unified protest was most effective, as it increased the numbers involved in any one action and gave the overall protest a clear focus. Arguments in favour of diversity emphasized the difficulty of the police in identifying and dealing with numerous groups utilising a variety of tactics.[47]

In addition, there were debates considering a proposal that protesters should leave the site and march into Canberra. Differences also arose over whether the protest had lost sight of the issue of the arms trade and become obsessed with defeating the police. In response some argued that attention to police behaviour was unavoidable given their role in the protest.[48]

The AFP's ability to ensure AIDEX '91 would go ahead might have increased debate about specific tactics, but the use of arrests and force also appears to have galvanised the majority of protesters. Various analyses have observed that coercive policing can either force a retreat from collective action or generate and strengthen the grievances that reinforce it.[49] In the case of AIDEX '91, the latter appears to have been true, reflecting Iveson and Scalmer's observation that 'Political scientists have long

[47] Julia Perkins, 'Tactics and Effective Protest,' *Green Left Weekly*, 11 December 1991, 9; Keef Agro, 'A Story About AIDEX Canberra 1991,' *Burning Issue*, no. 3 (1992): 5-6; Moya Farrell and Bob Berghout, 'Stop AIDEX Protest Camp,' *Disarming Times: Journal of Pax Christi*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1992): 1-2; MacDonald, 'How Was AIDEX?,' 28-30; *Piecing It Together*, 259, 312-6; Interviews with Banks; Kelly; Dowling; Schulz; Grech; Smith.

[48] Karen Allen and Jack Sherrington, 'Brisbane AIDEX Coalition Report,' *Nonviolence Today*, no. 24 (1992): 3; Pestorius, 'An AIDEX Experience,' 11; *Piecing It Together*, 221-2; Bloodworth and McDonald, 'Letter,' 2.

[49] Della Porta and Fillieule, 'Policing Social Protest,' 231-5; Valocchi, *Social Movements and Activism in the USA*, 80.

recognised that when violence is used in collective conflicts, the political situation is immediately simplified for those present… Most directly of all, a sense of shared threat is likely to cement a feeling of interdependence and therefore identification with others similarly threatened.'[50]

Divisions continued, but the shared sense of grievance concerning both the issue of arms fairs and the behaviour of the police saw the majority engage in unified mass actions for this day and the next. Despite the often high level of debate, many participants' memories of the blockade emphasize the bonds that were created. As former CAM member Susan Luckman recalls, 'There was a unity of purpose that gave everyone a sense of *esprit de corps*… The strength of AIDEX was that it could include such divergent points of view within a relatively unified protest. You could look at someone on a picket line and they would smile regardless of whether they might go limp or fight back when the police came to cart them away.'[51]

Humour also appears to have been important in creating and maintaining the affective bonds required for continued blockading. Whether it was women re-enacting scenes from the TV show *Prisoner* while being held in the Canberra watch-house or protesters singing 'Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life' during stand-offs with the police, humour built morale, played an important role in alleviating boredom and eased tensions with the police.

These factors might have encouraged protesters to stick together and remain on site, but they did not help them come to any formal decisions regarding what they should do next. An extended mass meeting on the Tuesday morning ended without clear consensus regarding any of the tactical issues being discussed. Instead, when AIDEX attendees began arriving, the majority of protesters simply exited the campsite and began blocking Flemington road en masse with their bodies, police fences, parked vehicles and tripods. Within a short time they would be expelled, only to take another section of the road and begin the process again.

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[50] Kurt Iveson and Sean Scalmer, 'Carnival at Crown Casino: S11 as Party and Protest,' in *Free NRG: Notes from the Edge of the Dancefloor*, ed. Graham St John (Melbourne: Common Ground, 2001), 232.
[51] Luckman, interview.

There were allegations that such walk offs were engineered by members of the ISO whenever they failed to convince all of the protest to engage in mass blockading.[52] While ISO member Marcus Banks concedes this might have occurred, he argues 'It would have only happened if the meeting was going nowhere and there was a need to counter something the police were doing'. He further contends that the ISO 'would not have been the only people walking out'.[53] An interview with former Melbourne squatter Rohan Wightman supports this: 'The meetings would go on and on. People would just leave because they wanted to take action… [Also] the protest became more reactive as it went on. Once the police or a vehicle arrived it was more important to do something about it than continue a discussion.'[54]

AFP officers once more refused to allow food and water to be provided to those blockading, with the result that demonstrators behind police lines threw oranges and bottles of water into the crowd. The AFP would later claim that its members had also been pelted by vegetables stuffed with nails and needles. It was further alleged that on this day a police vehicle's brake cables were cut and that four police received fractures due to assaults by protesters. Claims such as these were rejected by protesters, many of whom believed they were designed to delegitimise the blockade and justify the AFP's use of escalated force.[55]

In the course of covering these events the producer of national Community Radio program 'Undercurrents' was arrested. She and other independent journalists later claimed that police had assaulted them.[56]

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[52] MacDonald, 'How Was AIDEX?,' 28; Perkins, 'Tactics and Effective Protest,' 9; *Piecing It Together*, 259-66, 316-17.
[53] Banks, interview.
[54] Wightman, interview.
[55] 'Police Hurt as Peace Activists Charge,' *Courier Mail*, 27 November 1991, 6; Peter Clack, '26 Arrested, Police Toll at 14,' *Canberra Times*, 27 November 1991, 1; Laurie Wilson, 'Sydney Channel 7 Evening News Report: 26 November 1991.' Channel 7, DVD, 1.10 minutes, in author's possession; Interviews with Banks; 'Delilah'; Grech; MacFarlane; McConvell; Colm McNaughton.
[56] Nadya Stani, 'The Free Media Meet Canberra Cops,' *Green Left Weekly*, 11 December 1992, 6; Matthew Frost, 'National SBS Evening News Report: 26 November 1991.' Special Broadcasting Service, DVD, 30 seconds, in author's possession.

With the protest concentrated on Flemington Road, the majority of vehicles and attendees chose to enter NATEX via its rear paddocks. A number of those who obtained entry through an orange fence leading to turnstiles near the Main Gate were subjected to verbal abuse. In response to the treatment of attendees, and the actions of the protesters in general, Sir William Keys labelled demonstrators 'thugs and terrorists' and 'the dregs of Australia' on a variety of TV programs.[57]

As the blockading continued, some NVA activists initiated separate actions targeting different sections of the road. Briefing police as to their plans and peaceful intentions, up to 150 protesters attempted to set up star formations on the road. Where they were able to do so these blockades rarely lasted for very long and resulted in a large number of injuries.

The barricades at Shell Gate remained in place until the end of the protest. As the police and organisers had abandoned the use of this gate, only a small number of protesters remained in the area. They were threatened on this afternoon by two unknown men bearing tyre irons. Similar incidents involving small groups of men abusing and assaulting demonstrators were reported throughout the protest. These added to the general atmosphere of rumour and tension, as did the various forays police made into the protest campsite. Debate between the police and SAC ensued over whether such actions breached an earlier agreement not to enter the area, and indeed whether any such agreement had ever been made.[58]

Enduring a rainstorm, picketers using tripods continued to close Flemington Road to traffic. Following a final eviction, blockading ended at around 5 pm. A fractious mass meeting once more closed without agreement as to how the protest should proceed.

During the afternoon a contingent of protesters also made their way to Federal Parliament to heckle members of the ALP and cheer senators from the Australian

[57] For example: 'Sydney ABC Evening News Report: 26 November 1991.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, DVD, 2.17 minutes, in author's possession; Wilson, 'Sydney Channel 7 Evening News Report: 26 November 1991'.
[58] *Piecing It Together*, 96, 207, 326-27.

Democrats and Greens WA. A book launch for *Remnants of the Gulf War* and a youth rally were held in the city in the evening, and William Keys engaged in a formal debate over the arms trade with Graeme Cheeseman from the Peace Research Centre.

Wednesday 27 November

From 7am onwards up to 200 female demonstrators took part in the 'Women's Day of Action', which had originally been advertised in SAC's schedule of protest events. Rejecting arguments that it would be more effective to remain with the rest of the protest at the NATEX site or engage in a more militant action, the day began with a breakfast and ceremony at the Canberra War Memorial.[59] This was followed by a march to Civic for a rally involving speeches, religious rituals and singing. The women then marched back to NATEX at 12.30 pm where they decorated the fence with flowers, crepe paper, banners, postcards and posters. During this activity the police attempted to confiscate wool, which was metallic coloured, claiming that it was being used in an attempt to 'electrify' the NATEX fence. This allegation was greeted with derision by protesters, but was later reported as fact in the *Canberra Times*.[60]

These events gave participants a break from the blockading. For some, who associated non-NVA activities with masculinity and violence, it also, in the words of teacher unionist Stefany Douglas, provided 'a more feminised expression of grief and rage at AIDEX organisers and participants, something less military in style'.[61]

Back at NATEX, following another contentious morning meeting, the remaining protesters blockaded Flemington Road with their bodies before being periodically evicted by police, sometimes with the use of dogs. At one point a blockader was allegedly tipped out of a wheelchair by police and left on the road for a period of time.[62] Some who had attempted to provide water and fruit to picketers, such as Uniting Church Minister Neville Watson, were also arrested.

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[59] Bloodworth and McDonald, 'Letter,' 2; Unidentified Female #4, interviewed by Jacobs, 'Graffiti AIDEX Special: n.d. [December 1991]'; Douglas, 'AIDEX Demonstration,' 14.
[60] Unidentified Female #5, interviewed by Jacobs, 'Graffiti AIDEX Special: n.d. [December 1991]'; *Piecing It Together*, 245-308; Peter Clack, 'Police Chief Vows to Get Tough,' *Canberra Times*, 28 November 1991, 1.
[61] Douglas, 'AIDEX Demonstration,' 14.
[62] *Piecing It Together*, 232-33.

Following the return of those involved in the Women's protest, another mass meeting was held. In an attempt to regain the initiative the protesters moved away from Flemington Road to march along Northbourne Avenue. As Interviewee 44 told Friends of the Hearings: 'For the last couple of days at AIDEX our attempts to stampede the road for a sit-in were blocked as we were all scared and felt it was safer to stay together in one big group. By doing this we were very easily contained by one line of police, so I suggested "fluid strikes".'[63] These involved small groups of protesters sitting down on the road simultaneously at multiple points before voluntarily moving on or being forced to do so. In one of the few cases of a meeting finding consensus, the majority adopted this tactic.

The fluid strikes blocked Northborne Avenue for over an hour. During this period an alert went out announcing that police were attempting to breach Shell gate. The majority of protesters marched there to find this had been a rumour. As there were few police present, a debate then began over whether to enter the NATEX site en masse. Some protesters climbed fences, but AFP officers arrived and soon secured the area.

By 3.30 pm the main body of blockaders returned to Flemington Road, where the Main Gate was blockaded. A civil marriage ceremony was then held for two of the key protest organisers, Jan and Jacob Grech. This was seen as an opportunity for the protest to engage in theatre and humour as well as gain media coverage. During the vows, the OSG were brought in to clear the area, but following negotiations they stopped 10 metres short of the wedding party. Following the ceremony's conclusion protesters reported that the AFP took a softer approach in removing blockaders, including the bride and groom, a decision that was attributed to the heavy media presence.[64]

In central Canberra the test case over Monday's mass arrests resulted in ACT Chief Magistrate Ron Cahill ruling that the AFP had been unable to prove that the

[63] Ibid., 241.
[64] Unidentified Male #5, Interview, Jacobs, 'Graffiti AIDEX Special: n.d. [December 1991]'; CPD (2 December, 1991), 3826.

protester involved, Hal Alexander, would have 'breached the peace' had they not arrested him, particularly as he claimed they would not let him leave the area. The police conceded that it would be too costly and difficult to continue with individual cases against the remaining arrestees and withdrew the remaining charges.

Thursday 28 November

By the last day of AIDEX '91, a number of interstate protesters had returned home. In the morning a decisive split occurred amongst those who remained after a group of 70 NVA-oriented demonstrators held a meeting. Unhappy with the lack of existing guidelines regarding protest behaviour and arguing that 'unified' actions were ineffective and compromised their beliefs, they resolved to organise their own action. They decided that this protest would focus upon the theme of the day originally proposed in the protest timetable, 'Arms Trade and the Environment'. According to Margaret Pestorious, it also involved adherence to four guidelines of behaviour, namely 'using open body language; peaceful communication without abuse; avoiding chanting with the megaphone; using the megaphone only for the sharing of information and not for giving orders'.[65]

Having announced their intentions at the main camp meeting, the NVA-oriented group held a rally. Demonstrators listened to speeches and sang songs before marching in single file along the NATEX fence to hang banners. The remaining 200 protesters split into groups of up to 25, which intermittently used fluid strikes to block sections of Flemington road and Northbourne Avenue.

As the day continued a 'Bring Out Your Dead' action, inspired by a scene from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, brought elements of the two tendencies together again. Over 100 protesters who claimed to have been injured by the police lay in a line. This action was partially held in response to police claims that they had been employing restraint in dealing with protesters. It was also designed to counter negative media stories arising from AFP statements alleging that officers had been injured by protesters

[65] Pestorius, 'An AIDEX Experience,' 11.

smeared in excrement and wielding knives, corrosive substances and other weapons.[66] Such claims were vehemently denied by activists, who pointed out that some protesters had used brown ochre as a form of sunscreen and that no one had been charged with possessing or using weapons.[67]

Elsewhere a protest was held outside the Conference on Space Research at the ANU, where the police prevented an attempt by a law lecturer to hold an alternative conference in his office. The *Weapons In The Wilderness* book was launched at Parliament, where members of MAPW also held a protest. A counter-demonstration, involving 30 to 50 AIDEX employees and Canberra residents, was also held in the late afternoon, outside NATEX.

As this was the final day of AIDEX '91, most protesters had left the site by the late afternoon. This allowed the police to outnumber those remaining for the first time. Between 5 and 8pm the AFP made a number of attempts to enter the campsite, but were forced out on each occasion.

A Kevin Carmody concert held at the Ainslie Hotel in the city saw an Aboriginal man escape arrest after audience members came to his aid. The ACT Attorney General Terry Connolly later claimed in the *Canberra Times* that police officers were 'set upon by a mob and bashed, kicked and thumped to the ground'. Concert-goers in turn alleged that up to 80 officers had surrounded the venue making threats and forcing them to leave en masse.[68]

Overnight, flares were shot over the campsite and a police van allegedly played bombing and military sound effects at high volume.[69] At dawn members of the OSG

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[66] Figures quoted put the number of police injured by the end of the protest variously at 27, 30 or 32, with or without another nine officers suffering fractures. Paul Chamberlin, 'AIDEX Week Closes with Vicious Brawl,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November 1991, 28; Peter Clack, 'Public Vote of Support Heartens Police,' *Canberra Times*, 6 December 1991, 2; Antony Catalano, 'Federal Police Blasted: Protest Was Poorly Handled,' *The Age*, 28 November 1993, 5.
[67] CPD (2 December, 1991), 3826; Chamberlin, 'AIDEX Week Closes with Vicious Brawl,' 28; Interviews with Doherty; McLellan; MacFarlane; Grech.
[68] Peter Clack, 'Scuffle: 2 Suspects Escape,' *Canberra Times*, 30 November 1991, 1; Chamberlin, 'AIDEX Week Closes with Vicious Brawl,' 28; *Piecing It Together*, 292-4; Interviews with Banks; McConvell.
[69] *Piecing It Together*, 295-6; Interviews with Doherty; Grech.

woke the remaining campers, claiming to be looking for the escapee from the previous night's concert, but left when journalists arrived. A media conference was then held at which protest organisers denied that knives and weapons displayed to the media by police were anything more than camping equipment and theatre props. After the journalists left, 70-80 police moved in again searching the site and tents before the remaining demonstrators decided to leave as a group, thereby bringing the protest to an end.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the anti-AIDEX '91 campaign successfully brought together a cross-section of participants from Australia's social movements to obstruct and disrupt the activities of those attending, supplying and supporting AIDEX '91. It has described the tactical and organisational repertoire employed and debated by protesters and illustrated how a variety of factors, including police tactics, SAC's organizational choices and differing positions regarding appropriate behavior and protest organization, affected which tactical forms were used at various times and by whom. I will now turn to the question of efficacy and outcomes.

Chapter 6: The Outcomes of the AIDEX '91 Protest

All protest campaigns result in a number of outcomes, many of which extend beyond the stated goals of their participants. These outcomes can be viewed internally and externally, defined narrowly or broadly, and measured over varying lengths of time. The consequences of movements can encompass changes in laws, policies, policy systems and governments; the acceptance of a movement, issue or organisation; growth or decline in social movement activity and organisational size; shifts in norms, cultural images and symbols; the adoption of particular strategies, tactics and organisational forms; and increases in repression or facilitation.

Analyses of social movement outcomes commonly point to the difficulty involved in making clear causal connections between the actions of a particular campaign and the consequences that are attributed to it. This largely stems from the existence of a multitude of actors and conditions involved in any situation as well as the time-lag that can occur between actions and outcomes. When dealing with government and corporate policy, attribution is further complicated by the 'difficulty of reconstructing the causal dynamics underlying particular public decisions'.[1] This is not least because decision-makers are often reticent to admit they have altered their position due to outside pressure and, when they do so, are more likely to credit social movement allies, such as politicians and lobbyists, than social movements. Despite these difficulties, as Amenta and Caren argue, it is important to analyse specific claims and to demonstrate clearly how a particular actor or set of actors influenced their achievement whilst being clear that not all outcomes can be attributed to a sole group or event.[2]

Protest participants and commentators have argued that the AIDEX '91 protest affected matters as varied as policing styles, government and corporate policies, and public opinion towards activism and activist tactics. They have also claimed that the

[1] Della Porta and Diaini, *Social Movements*, 228.
[2] Amenta and Caren primarily focus on how challengers affect the state, but their observations apply to social movement campaigns aimed at other decision makers. Edwin Amenta and Neal Caren, 'The Legislative, Organisational and Beneficiary Consequences of State-Oriented Challengers,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David Snow, Sarah Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 476-7.

event affected a variety of interactions and relationships between individuals and organisations involved in activism, the media, the arms industry and various levels of government. Within social movements the protest is said to have shaped personal and organisational biographies, cultural forms and forms of tactics and organisation.

All of these claims are worthy of further investigation but a full consideration of the many consequences of the AIDEX protest is beyond the scope of this thesis. The following chapter will instead give sustained attention to the immediate and long-term impact of the protest campaign upon the cancellation of AIDEX-style events as well as the role of ODA, and related media coverage, in achieving such an outcome. As Kolb notes, despite the complexities of many campaigns, 'some social movements do have a clearly stated, universal goal that remains more or less constant over the course of the conflict'.[3] Although many involved in the AIDEX '91 blockade had wider and longer-term purposes in mind (including building socialist parties and curbing militarism) and new ones (such as police violence) arose, ending AIDEX was the overarching theme expressed in promotional materials, media coverage and interviews.

Some who attended the protest came with the expectation that AIDEX '91 could be immediately ended through the use of ODA. This perception was fuelled by SAC's promotional efforts even though its members, like the majority of participants canvassed in interviews and other accounts, thought it unlikely that they would be able to do so. Instead, most hoped to disrupt the event to such a degree that their action would have to be acknowledged by their opponents, the media and various levels of government. Depending on their outlook, activists also felt that ODA would encourage the cancellation of similar events through two common means of pressure. The first involved the mobilisation of public support via media coverage, the second the infliction of prohibitive political and economic costs upon organisers, supporters and government authorities. Some activists saw these means as mutually exclusive while others believed they could be combined.

[3] Felix Kolb, *Protest and Opportunities: The Political Outcomes of Social Movements* (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), 24.

The Costs of the AIDEX '91 Protest

As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, AIDEX '91 was only able to go ahead after major delays and at great cost in resources and reputation. During the protest ACT Attorney-General Terry Connolly had claimed AFP operational costs would be in excess of $300 000. The final figure, according to the Federal Minister for Justice, Senator Michael Tate, was $497 940.[4] Added to this were the undisclosed costs of removing graffiti and barricades from around the NATEX site, compensation payments of $30 000 to protesters and $40 000 to police, and up to $500 000 in expenses for the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's investigation of protester complaints.[5]

Other than this financial impost, which he claimed outweighed any revenue generated, Connolly also cited the conflict between police and protesters as vindicating the ACT government's decision not to support arms fairs in the future.[6] Connolly himself had also suffered personally as he was repeatedly forced to justify his government's handling of the issue and defend himself from accusations of leniency towards protesters.

The protest also imposed undisclosed costs upon the event's organisers and participants – damaging Desiko's reputation, along with that of Australia as a suitable country for hosting arms exhibitions. On 25 November, the day before AIDEX '91 opened, Desiko director Bob Day claimed that continuing disruption would affect arms sales and 'the likelihood of Australian companies getting jobs.' He further claimed that attendees had been intimidated with exhibitors asking him: 'What did we come for? Why did we spend thousands of dollars?'[7] Two days later he underscored this point stating, 'The protests are going to make it very difficult to persuade [exhibitors and attendees] to come to Australia again, not just Canberra.'[8] British Aerospace representative David Fried concurred, telling *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Paul

[4] Clack, 'ACT to Foot Bill for $300 000 Protest Damage,' 1; Senator Michael Tate. Letter to Mr A.K. Bull, 22 November 1992, 1.
[5] Peter Clack, 'Aidex Protest Trio Set to Get $10,000 Each,' *Canberra Times*, 9 March 1994, 1; Clack, 'ACT to Foot Bill for $300 000 Protest Damage,' 1.
[6] ACTAD (27 November, 1991), 5065; Clack, 'ACT to Foot Bill for $300 000 Protest Damage,' 1.
[7] 'ACT Govt Blamed for Violent NATEX Demos,' 3; Peter Clack, 'Business to Probe Damage,' *Canberra Times*, 27 November 1991, 1.
[8] Uhlmann, 'The Inside Story of AIDEX: Not a Gun in Sight,' 1.

Chamberlin: 'Companies are going to think twice before coming again for exhibitions in Australia'.[9] Some of these comments may have been designed to pressure police and local authorities to take a harder line with the protesters, but they also reflected reality. After AIDEX '91 had finished, Chamberlin concluded that the event was a 'qualified success' as 'most exhibitors were able to set up', but noted that 'visitor numbers were less than expected and some international exhibitors declared they would not be back to any Australian arms shows'.[10]

Media Coverage and the Imposition of Costs

Various theorists have observed that the volume and content of mainstream media coverage of social-movement activities can have a major impact on the outcomes that they produce. [11] Although activists had imposed many of the expenses identified above, mainstream media coverage also played a decisive role in amplifying the social and political costs, and communicating them, along with the financial ones, to national audiences. Before the thesis turns to the longer-term effect of the protest on the holding of arms fairs, the following section will examine how the protest was portrayed, how activists interpreted such coverage and whether it helped or hindered them in achieving their goals.

The AIDEX '91 blockade led evening television news bulletins for five days and was covered to varying degrees by print and radio outlets around the country. It continued to generate intermittent media coverage for three years, both through sensational feature stories and a series of articles revealing that the AFP had provided details of AIDEX arrestees to the Department of Social Security (DSS) in December 1991.[12] Attention returned to the contentious nature of the protest in 1993 when the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman delivered its report, which was critical of policing practices.

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[9] Chamberlin, 'More Violence as Arms Fair Opens,' 7.
[10] Chamberlin, 'AIDEX Protesters Pack Up,' 2.
[11] Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 114-16.
[12] Following months of debate concerning the release of information and the DSS's subsequent investigation of arrestees the Human Rights Commission privacy commissioner Kevin O'Connor issued a report to Parliament in June 1992 reprimanding both the AFP and DSS for their actions. *Advice and Report to Ministers. Disclosure of Arrest Details of AIDEX Demonstrators: Australian Federal Police and Department of Social Security*, (Canberra: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1992), 1-22.

As various analysts have argued is generally the case with coverage of social movement activities, the overwhelming majority of reportage concerning AIDEX '91 dealt with conflict between protesters and police.[13] Non-confrontational activities and the issues that had motivated the protesters to employ ODA, and by extension brought them into conflict with the police and the exhibition's organisers, received some coverage in print and radio media, but barely any on television.

AIDEX '91 has been analysed by Paasonen in a study concerning major newspaper coverage of six Australian protests from 1982-1993. Paasonen finds that all of these events, including AIDEX, were regularly described through the 'primary metaphorical resources [of] military metaphors and… violent natural events', with the reader being implicitly invited to identify with the police and other state and corporate representatives as fellow rational actors.[14] He concentrates on the attribution of violence, noting that 'While the claim that the police are responsible for violence may or may not be true, the claim that police are not responsible for violence is presented not by contrasting accounts, by doctor's evidence, or by evidence from highly impartial witnesses, but rather through a highly partial set of processes such as selective modification and selective descriptions of acts.'[15] Paasonen concludes that this mode of editorial construction results in protest being seen as 'naturally violent', deviant and irrational, even when actual violence has not occurred. The corollary of this is that by initiating protest activities, 'the responsibility for violence is constructed textually as lying with the protesters', even if only their opponents have used violence.[16]

A review of the major newspaper and television media coverage of the AIDEX '91 protest largely supports Paasonen's contentions. The event was described from its beginning as a 'clash', 'battle', 'skirmish' and 'war', with protesters described as 'wild',

[13] Pamela Shoemaker, 'Media Treatment of Deviant Groups,' *Journalism Quarterly* vol. 61, no. 1 (1984): 66-72, 82; Douglas McLeod and James Hertog, 'The Manufacture of "Public Opinion" by Reporters: Informal Cues for Public Perceptions of Protest Groups,' *Discourse & Society*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1992): 259-74.
[14] Paasonen, 'Building the Beast', 43, 6-64.
[15] Ibid., 68.
[16] Ibid., ii, 2-7, 95-9.

'screaming' 'dishevelled' and 'smelly'.[17] Desiko spokesperson Sir William Keys and exhibition supporters such as Brigadier Adrian D'Hage were also regularly quoted describing demonstrators as 'thugs and terrorists', 'the pits' and 'the dregs of Australia'.[18] Where footage and images displaying police striking, kicking and throwing protesters were shown, they were either framed neutrally in the context of dealing with infringements of the law or featured a voiceover or caption inferring that police were playing a reactive role. A number of media reports featured introductions and voiceovers stating 'protesters clashed violently with police', or words to that effect, thereby assigning responsibility to demonstrators for the images of police actions.[19]

Protester claims regarding their injuries and the behaviour of police received little coverage on television. They were given wider coverage in print, but generally reported as allegations. Information regarding police injuries and claims about protester behaviour, including that they had wielded weapons, bitten police and daubed themselves in faeces, were generally reported as fact, despite a lack of footage, images or arrests confirming such actions. [20]

Other forms of negative framing included the delegitimizing use of quotation marks around terms such as 'peace' and an equal emphasis on much smaller counter-movements. Protest participants were also portrayed as deviant, irresponsible and belonging to marginal subcultures, and the protest's effectiveness was downplayed.[21]

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[17] See for example: Amanda Uhlmann, 'Two Casualties as War over AIDEX Heats Up,' *Canberra Times*, 24 November 1991, 1; Paul Chamberlin, 'Wild Scenes on Eve of AIDEX Opening,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1991, 2; Mark Burrows, 'National Channel 9 Evening News Report: 24 November 1991.' DVD, 1.50 minutes, in author's possession; Cole, 'Melbourne Channel 10 Evening News Report: 24 November 1991'.

[18] See for example: Wilson, 'Sydney Channel 7 Evening News Report: 26 November 1991'; Tony O'Leary, 'Sydney Channel 10 Evening News Report: 26 November 1991.' Channel 10, DVD, 2.00 minutes, in author's possession.

[19] See, for example: Hamilton-Smith, 'Canberra Channel 7 Evening News Report: 24 November 1991'; Christopher O'Hearn, 'Canberra ABC Evening News Report: 25 November.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, DVD, 1.58 minutes, in author's possession.

[20] See, for example: Frank Cranston, 'AIDEX 'Again for Canberra in '93,' *Canberra Times*, 1 December 1991, 1; O'Leary, 'Sydney Channel 10 Evening News Report: 26 November.'

[21] See for example: Peter Clack, 'Stefaniak: Children at Protests Paint a 'Disturbing Picture,' *Canberra Times*, 28 November 1991, 4; Editorial, 'Fighting the Police Brings Us No Peace,' *Australian*, 27 November 1991, 8; Christopher O'Hearn, 'Melbourne ABC Evening News Report: 23 November.' Australian Broadcasting Commission, DVD, 1.30 minutes, in author's possession.

Interviews and activist accounts demonstrate that a consensus emerged among protest participants that their behaviour and the causes of conflict had, with a few notable exceptions, been misrepresented by the mainstream media. Many activists had expected that the blockade would receive critical attention, but reported surprise at the degree to which they were portrayed negatively. With little opportunity to review such portrayals during the protest itself, most only discovered the extent of such framing afterwards, when they needed to defend their behaviour to workmates, family members and others whose only previous source of information had been media reports.

Despite unanimity concerning the content of media coverage, there were differing opinions as to how such portrayals might affect continuing efforts to prevent AIDEX '93. Maddison and Scalmer have identified three main activist positions regarding the mainstream media: 'separate camp', in which activists reject involvement with journalists and focus on their own media networks; 'modernising accommodation', in which activists tailor, and often moderate, their activities to gain coverage which portrays them in a favourable light; and 'expressive militancy', in which activists employ confrontational tactics in the knowledge they are likely to generate coverage, albeit of an often negative nature.[22]

All of these positions were apparent in the debates that took place during and following AIDEX '91. Despite cynicism surrounding mainstream treatment of protests, few protesters advocated ignoring the media altogether and only a small number appear to have acted antagonistically towards journalists.[23] Indeed, SAC worked hard at maintaining good relations with media representatives through the establishment of a media liaison collective and the provision of facilities including a caravan with phones, food and cold drinks. In an innovative tactic, it built relations with television camera-people in the hope that the right footage might ameliorate any damage that prejudicial voiceovers, editing and framing could otherwise inflict.

[22] Maddison and Scalmer, *Activist Wisdom*, 215-21.
[23] In one isolated example a handful of activists allegedly attempted to puncture the tires of a car belonging to a journalist from the *Canberra Times.* Interviews with Wightman; Grech.

Debates concerning the effects of media coverage on the campaign tended to blend into wider discussions regarding the efficacy and validity of differing forms of ODA. Many of the activists who saw the longer-term campaign to end arms fairs as being primarily predicated upon mobilising public opinion via the media belonged to the NVA faction. As NVA activists prioritised open and positive relationships with opponents, they were already critical of the way the protest had unfolded, with some judging it a failure on this basis alone. Since activists of this persuasion also desired a public perception of protest as orderly and peaceful, they felt that the behaviour of non-NVA activists had given the media the opportunity to focus on sensational aspects of the blockade. This in turn was blamed for distracting attention from the central issue of arms fairs and reducing the credibility of those who opposed them.

Although conventional wisdom holds that negative publicity will damage social movements, some activists felt that this need not be the case, or not entirely so. These claimed that any coverage was useful in that it highlighted the fact that arms fairs were taking place in Australia and that opposition towards them existed. Others believed that viewers would not uncritically accept the media's version of events.

It is difficult to gauge the degree to which hostile portrayal of ODA activities may have turned public opinion against peace movement critiques. For some protest participants, such dangers were not considered important since they believed that where government and industry could not be persuaded by moral argument, the threat and use of disruption would provide a disincentive. In this sense many saw the AIDEX '91 protest as successful regardless of how it was portrayed.

Some who argued in favour of such 'expressive militancy' contended further that by dramatising the protest the media coverage had intensified the pressure upon attendees, organisers, the police and the ACT government, and warned potential future hosts of the pitfalls of involvement. In depicting protesters as dangerous the media also magnified the coercive threat of ODA by making the opponents of arms fairs appear more violent and disruptive than they actually were. Such representations, it can be argued, also allowed more confrontational activists to act as a 'radical flank', thereby

bestowing legitimacy upon moderate activists and allowing them to present their demands and behaviour as a 'reasonable' alternative.[24]

AIDEX '93, AUSTECH '93 and APDSE '08

In spite of the controversy Desiko insisted before, during, and after the 1991 event that another AIDEX would be held somewhere in Australia in 1993. The company's clear preference was for the ACT, with Day claiming it might be hosted at Fairburn airbase or on other land controlled by the Federal government.[25] Whether such negotiations took place is not known, but Desiko's goal was never realised. It is likely that both the declining support of the Federal government for the event and the ACT government's clear opposition were responsible for this.

Desiko's next move was to try and hold a new event, entitled AUSTECH '93, in Queanbeyan. On 20 March 1992 the *Queanbeyan Age* announced that National Party State MP, Peter Cochran, who was also a Vietnam veteran and former ASIO employee, had negotiated with Desiko to hold the event at Seiffert Oval, home of the Canberra Raiders rugby league team.[26] This came as a surprise to the local council, which had not been previously consulted about the use of its venue. In spite of this, the Queanbeyan Mayor, Frank Pangallo, was reported to be 'sympathetic', telling the *Canberra Times* that the 'Council will be looking at [the proposal] with an open mind'. He was also quoted as stressing 'he did not want the sort of problems that Canberra had to face during AIDEX'.[27]

Desiko and its supporters were quick to distance this new event from AIDEX. Cochran stated that he would be 'absolutely appalled if the peace movement interpreted AUSTECH '93 as being anyway [sic] linked to AIDEX, because they are entirely different concepts'.[28] Rather than emphasising defence, Cochran and Desiko argued that the event would display a variety of technology. They further claimed that AUSTECH

[24] Valocchi, *Social Movements and Activism in the USA*, 81-2.
[25] Frank Cranston, 'AIDEX 'Again for Canberra in '93,' 1; 'Sydney ABC Evening News Report: 26 November 1991'; Bob Day. Letter to Exhibitors, August 19 1991, 1.
[26] Barrie Gillman, 'AUSTECH '93 Exhibition Plans: City Seems Set for International Show,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 20 March 1992, 1.
[27] Peter Clack, 'Qbn to Get 'AIDEX' in '93,' *Canberra Times*, 24 March 1992, 1.
[28] R.G., 'AUSTECH Protest: Not Arms Fair,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 25 March 1992, 28.

would bring new employment and investment opportunities to Queanbeyan's depressed economy.

Unfortunately for AUSTECH's supporters, others were quick to make the link to Desiko's earlier exhibition, with the *Canberra Times* publishing an article on 24 March entitled 'Qbn to get "AIDEX" in '93'. In case readers had forgotten the result of that event, the article opened with the words: 'The spectre of violent AIDEX '91 anti-arms demonstrations could rise again – in Queanbeyan'.[29] Desiko's economic arguments were also undermined by a submission from the Queanbeyan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which, while acknowledging short-term benefits, stated that 'brief discussion with local industry has led us to believe there is almost no likelihood of long-term local industry benefiting from this exhibition being held here'.[30]

Desiko's plans were further countered by the existence of a strong local peace organisation, the Queanbeyan Peace Forum (QPF). During 1990 and 1991 the group had organised large meetings in opposition to the Gulf War and members had also supported and attended anti-AIDEX protests. With a leading member, Harry Hesse, also sitting on the Queanbeyan council, QPF was to join CPP and AABCC in organising opposition to AUSTECH '93.

Although SAC and the other anti-AIDEX coalitions had demobilised in the wake of the previous year's protest, the announcement of AUSTECH soon prompted a large number of letters, faxes and calls to the Queanbeyan Council offices. Much of this private and media-based lobbying was based upon ethical arguments against the arms industry. However it was also made clear that if the event went ahead, protest action using ODA would follow. AABCC spokesperson Denis Doherty warned the *Queanbeyan Age* that 'All the NSW government can expect is a repeat, in Queanbeyan, of the anti-AIDEX demonstrations, widespread public criticism, and a log jam in the courts'.[31] Hesse underscored this aspect in a letter: 'The AIDEX event, last year,

[29] Clack, 'Qbn to Get 'Aidex' in '93', 1.
[30] Quoted in Sue Bolton, 'Queanbeyan Says No to AUSTECH.' 29 April 1992, Green Left Weekly, Available [Online], http://www.greenleft.org.au/1992/53/3373; [14 April 2009].
[31] R.G., 'AUSTECH Protest: Not Arms Fair,' 28.

produced an intolerable, violent conflict, which did nothing for those police and demonstrators involved; the taxpayers had to pay a massive bill for the police action and the resulting court cases'.[32] Letters from AUSTECH supporters unintentionally reinforced these dangers, with George Lemon writing of the 'growing threat of 'outside' influence and intimidation' in a letter claiming that the ISO and a 'coalition of Trotskyists, anarchists, extreme feminists and gay hardliners', among others, 'were responsible for the chaos at NATEX last year'.[33]

Following a special committee meeting, the Council, delayed its decision from 1 to 14 April in order to further explore what Pangallo described as 'the implications and benefits of such an exhibition'.[34] As their lobbying effort appeared to be winning over the majority of councillors, opponents of the event cancelled plans for a protest, which was to include an exhibition of photos from the AIDEX '91 protest. Desiko's supporters held a rally of their own, but as all they could muster were six people, at least half of whom were National and Liberal Party officeholders, it underscored the lack of support for their position.[35]

Having received presentations from Sir William Keys and peace activist Nancy Shelley, the Queanbeyan Council passed a resolution, by eight votes to two, allowing Desiko permission to use Seiffert Park on the basis that AUSTECH only include 'technology specifically designed for non-military purposes'.[36] In a letter circulated to the peace movement Hesse noted that his fellow councillors had rejected the company's original proposal for a variety of reasons, the first of which was 'concern about demonstrations and social conflict in our community'.[37]

This development was a clear blow to Desiko's plans. Keys initially announced that the exhibition would go ahead regardless of the Council's views, but the following day he stated that it would not be held in Queanbeyan.

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[32] Harry Hesse, 'Letter: AUSTECH '93 Confusion!,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 27 March 1992, 2.
[33] George Lemon, 'Letter: The Travelling Guerilla Group,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 10 April 1992, 2.
[34] R.G., 'Ruling Delayed,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 1 April 1992, 1.
[35] Ibid.; Terence McKenna, 'Letter: Info Requested on Austech '93,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 3 April 1992, 2.
[36] Harry Hesse. Letter to Peace Supporters, 16 April 1992, 1; *Piecing It Together*, 395-6; John Wright, 'Letter: AUSTECH Dropped,' *Queanbeyan Age*, 21 April 1992, 2.
[37] Hesse. Letter to Supporters, 16 April 1992, 1.

Regardless of their earlier claims that at least two state governments were keen to host the event, Deskio made no further announcements concerning AUSTECH. Although the coercive threat of ODA had not forced the company to change its goals, it had removed the support required to make them viable. Interviews and activist correspondence with government officials indicate that overtures made to the South Australian and NSW governments were countered by low-level lobbying, once more based on a mix of arguments citing costs and peace-related issues. A final statement on the fate of AUSTECH was left to Federal Industry Minister, Senator Button, who, in response to a question from the Australian Democrats, told the Senate on 6 October 1992 that 'I understand the proposed exhibition scheduled for early 1993 has now been cancelled'.[38]

No further AIDEX-style event was organised by Desiko and the company appears to have switched its attention to holding police and security fairs and other events. Defence manufacturing exhibitions have continued to be hosted in Australia since 1991, but have been much smaller events catering to domestic purchases and specific areas of defence rather than the industry as a whole. They have taken on a much lower public profile than AIDEX and generally been held in hotels and military bases or at air-shows. These smaller events have attracted protest activity on occasion, but nothing on the scale of opposition to AIDEX '91.

The arms sale boom that government policy had sought to create, in turn facilitating the holding of AIDEX '89 and '91, never eventuated. Actual exports were estimated to have been as little as $17 million in 1991-92, and the DOD found itself paying premiums of up to 80% on locally made equipment in order to keep the domestic industry afloat.[39] As a result the government adviser and former ASIO director Alan Wrigley concluded in 1995 that 'This whole idea of becoming self-reliant in our defense

[38] CPD (6 October, 1992), 1233.
[39] Having noted that official statistics were poorly recorded and deficient a 1995 government report on arms exports arrived at the $17 million figure in actual export sales after removing temporary sales, loans, military aid, sporting goods, cancelled orders and arms offsets from the $187 million of export approvals for 1991-1992. *Report on the Implications of Australian Defence Exports*, (Canberra: Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 1994), 21; Roff Smith, 'Big Bangs, Few Bucks,' *Time Australia*, 17 July 1995, 94.

needs and exporting arms has been a hugely expensive mistake'.[40] Although the anti-AIDEX '91 campaign had likely helped pressure the Federal government into mildly tightening its arms exports approval procedures, it was changes in the global weapons market, which saw a drop in trade of 24.8% in 1992 alone, rather than political activism that had stymied sales.[41] Such developments may have also played into the declining viability of an export-oriented arms fair taking place in Australia again.

Despite static sales, successive Federal governments have remained committed to the creation of a viable export industry. They have continued to streamline approvals processes and provide financial and departmental support. Most recently, this has been coordinated through the creation of a dedicated Defence Export Unit in 2007. Companies and representatives from Federal and state governments have also continued to market Australian exports via major overseas arms fairs and small domestic events.

From 1992 to 2008 activism against these policies was primarily limited to low-level lobbying. This downturn in activity can be attributed to both the failure of the industry to grow and, ironically, to the success of anti-AIDEX activity since by forcing the industry to abandon large scale exhibitions anti-exports, activists also denied themselves a high profile, easily accessible target to organise around. Although a minority of activists ceased activity due to 'burn out', injury and trauma, most either returned to their primary area of activism or worked on new issues. Such 'biodegradability' is a common pattern in social movements with Plows noting that 'Subsets of activist identity, activist networks, [only] exist as long as there is a need for them to do so [and] the resources to sustain them'.[42]

The experience of AIDEX '91 influenced a variety of campaigns and the tactics they adopted. Many NVA activists perceived the event as a partial or complete failure. In response some withdrew from social movement activity altogether, while others turned to discrete NVA activities within or separate from larger protests.

[40] Ibid, 93.
[41] *Report on the Implications of Australian Defence Exports*, 25.
[42] Plows, 'Praxis and Practice', 55.

In contrast, activists of other persuasions reported that they found the experience of participating in a diverse protest empowering. The combination of a positive assessment of the protest's outcome and negative conclusions regarding the behaviour of the police and journalists saw a number of activists take a more militant position towards their opponents, the state and media in the years following AIDEX '91. These developments fed nationally into an already existing cycle of environmental protest, which saw a number of NVDA-style environmental campaigns launched between 1992 and 1996. In Melbourne and Sydney interviewees cited AIDEX '91 as a major influence on a series of protests in which police were confronted and property damaged.[43] These protests included rallies and occupations against tertiary education fees in 1992 and 1993 and a demonstration against US President George Bush's visit in 1992.

In terms of arms exports the mobilising power of a large scale exhibition, the efficacy of coercion based upon the threat of ODA, and the legacy of AIDEX '91 were once again demonstrated in 2008 when a new company, APDS Exhibition Ltd, attempted to hold the first industry-wide and publicly promoted trade fair since AIDEX '91. Within months of the Australia Pacific Defence and Security Exhibition (APDSE) being announced for Adelaide, a national coalition, including activists who had previously been involved in anti-AIDEX activities, came together with the aim of blockading the event. The decision to hold the event on Remembrance Day and its status as the 'the first major arms fair to be held in Australia since AIDEX' were quoted as motivating factors.[44]

Citing policing costs and the threat of disruption, as had been experienced at AIDEX and more recently at protests against the APEC and G20 conferences in Sydney and Melbourne, the South Australian government withdrew its support in September 2008, forcing the organisers to cancel the event. A lack of support from DOD was also

[43] Interviews with Banks, Schulz, Luckman and MacFarlane.
[44] 'Statement: No War Fair! No APDSE! Yes to Peace!'. 27 August 2008, Available [Online], http://www.cpa.org.au/z-archive/g2008/1380apdse2.html; [14 December 2010].

quoted as a contributing factor, and activists speculated whether this had been influenced by recollections of AIDEX '91.[45]

The *Adelaide Advertiser* article announcing the cancellation of the APDSE stressed the potential costs associated with ODA. The Acting Premier, Kevin Foley, stated: 'We had to weigh up a number of factors and the decision was taken that the cost of security, the possible threats of violence, were risks that on balance the organisers of the event and the Government agreed were not worth proceeding with'.[46] APDS Exhibition Ltd executive director, Phil Guy, told the *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter* that despite the 'great financial considerations' involved in 'providing security against these radical and violent protesters', he hoped to relaunch the event in the future. [47] As of May 2011, this has not occurred.

[45] Nigel Hunt, 'Arms Expo Axed: 'Ferals' a Security Risk,' *Sunday Mail*, 7 September 2008, 1-2; Peter La Franchini, 'Adelaide Show Could Reemerge,' *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter*, September 2008, 14;Interviews with 'Delilah'; Doherty; Grech.
[46] Hunt, 'Arms Expo Axed: 'Ferals' a Security Risk,' 1.
[47] La Franchini, 'Adelaide Show Could Reemerge,' 14.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a detailed history of the AIDEX ‘91 protest. In doing so it has served as a case study of the emergence, practice and efficacy of ODA in Australia. Most specifically I have provided evidence for the following arguments:

(a) That the anti-AIDEX ‘91 campaign brought together a cross-section of participants from Australia’s social movements to obstruct and disrupt AIDEX ‘91 and prevent similar events from taking place in the future.

(b) That opposition to the arms trade and defence exhibitions was triggered by a series of changes in Federal ALP policy, and the way in which private companies and activists interacted with them.

(c) That by the time of AIDEX ‘91 a significant section of Australia’s peace and environment movements had come to favour a repertoire of contention based on informal organisation and the use of disruptive and extra-parliamentary activities; and that this development was related to a faltering in the alliances forged between the ALP and social movements during the 1980s.

(d) That the use of ODA during the protest indicated the renewed popularity of disruptive repertoires of contention as well as the framing, organisation and promotion of the protest by SAC.

(e) That the the styles and tactical forms of ODA employed were influenced by the framing and organisation of the protest by SAC; the tactical and strategic debates that were occurring within contemporary social movements; and reactions to the strategies and tactics employed by the police, the ACT government and AIDEX organisers.

(f) That the 1991 protest was larger and broader than previous protest action against the arms trade because of the way in which SAC posited the arms trade as a ‘totalised enemy’, and extended and reframed existing critiques of defence policy and militarism.

(g) That the campaign was based upon a strategy of coercively employing ODA against an arms fair and that this strategy, along with related media coverage, played a major role in the campaign meeting its desired outcomes.

My analysis of questions concerning social movement mobilisation, framing and organisation has not only filled gaps in the existing literature concerning this particular campaign, but also served to broaden understandings of ODA. Among other findings, the history of Australian environmental and peace activism during the 1980s demonstrates that ODA-based campaigns are likely to emerge when activists perceive that governments are ignoring their concerns and making decisions contrary to their interests. It also shows that while the political incorporation of social movement leaders often leads to a downturn in extra-parliamentary activity, this situation can prove temporary should cooption fail to deliver benefits.

In terms of activist agency and framing, AIDEX '91 demonstrates how the promotion of appropriate diagnostic and prognostic frames is capable of enabling the ideas of a small group to resonate with a much larger constituency. More specifically, it illustrates how the framing of a particular industry, practice or ideology as a 'totalised enemy' can bring together a broad coalition, in turn spreading frames to wider audiences. It also illustrates that if its key 'mobilisation target' is removed such a coalition may rapidly dissipate leaving wider issues, such as continuing government support for arms exports, unaddressed.

The anti-AIDEX '91 campaign also demonstrates that the success and direction of any protest flows not only from the context in which it occurs and the frames and overall strategy that leaders and movements employ, but also from the tactical choices that participants make. In this thesis I have paid particular attention to how tactics are influenced by beliefs and decisions regarding protester behaviour and organisation. I have shown how a range of other factors, including perceived efficacy, personal experience and the tactics of opponents, can also influence the breadth and form of tactics adopted by various factions, as well as motivate protesters to overcome exhaustion, division and repression. Space has limited the degree to which the range of tactical choices and the factors that influence them has been delineated and explored. Given that questions relating to tactical choices in ODA have been under theorised, particularly in Australia, this is an area deserving of further research.

Finally, this case study has demonstrated that although ODA may only temporarily interfere with an event or activity, the disruption it causes can be used successfully to coerce and isolate an opponent and its supporters via the imposition of social, political and financial costs. It has also shown that whilst negative media coverage may damage the credibility and image of protesters, it can simultaneously bolster the disruptive power of a campaign. Further to this, the success of the AIDEX '91 protest in making large-scale arms fairs unviable over an extended period illustrates the long-term impact that a successful campaign and protest can have. However, the failure of a sustained campaign against arms exports to emerge during the 1990s also points to some of the limitations of coercive ODA. Space precludes a detailed exploration here, but issues worthy of further consideration include the long term sustainability of ODA campaigns, their ability to address less concentrated, time-restricted targets, and the limits to the effective costs they can impose on larger, better resourced opponents.

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