

# Fish chowder feeds no-nukes ...

By Hagbard Celine

A veritable seafood chowder of anti-nuclear coalitions is spreading across North America in the wake of the highly publicized occupation of the Seabrook, N.H. reactor site last Mayday by the Clamshell Alliance.

Many of the new groups have already swung into action with occupations of their own, and in most cases they have adopted the kind of decentralized organizational model which Clamshell put to such good use in bankrupting the New Hampshire state treasury.

## Anti-Authoritarian Movement

The new movement is feeding on the excitement caused by Clamshell, coupled with frustration over the last few years of fruitless "legal" (i.e., the courts and the ballot box) battles. But its main nourishment up to now has been gathered from an anti-authoritarian consciousness that extends beyond anything manifested in the anti-war movement and the New Left.

On the West Coast, three groups—the Crabshell Alliance in Washington state, Abalone in California and the Trojan Decommissioning Alliance in Oregon—formed within a few weeks of Seabrook. (Groups in other regions, with fish-sounding names like the Catfish and Oyster Shell Alliances, also got started at the same time.)

The Crabshell Alliance staged a demonstration of 700 people in Elma, Wash., close to the site of the proposed Satsop twin plant, on July 19th. The others generally waited for Hiroshima Day, August 6th, and did simultaneous demon-

strations which drew thousands of people across the country and resulted in several hundred arrests. All are planning larger occupations for the near future.

In terms of an organizational model, the new alliances have drawn heavily on the forms developed by Clamshell. The non-violent occupation has been the primary tactic discussed thus far; and a heavy emphasis has been placed on locally autonomous, decentralized structures. The affinity group appears to be the preferred organizational form for actions; many groups are considering integrating the structure into their community organizing as well.

## Sixties' Veterans

The persistent demand for non-hierarchical, manageable-sized working groups reflects a high awareness of the importance of process among many of the people joining the anti-nuke movement. A large number of those who are getting involved are veterans of the struggles of the 60's, many of whom have spent the intervening years largely outside of sectarian left politics, working in food co-ops, health clinics, and other collectives and small community organizations.

The sudden re-appearance of this veritable political underground of the '60's Movement has brought with it ten years' wealth of organizing knowledge and experience, and an insistent rejection of centralized forms of organization. As a result, consensus has replaced voting as the decision-making process in most of the alliances, and people are beginning to challenge the whole language,



Fence at Trident nuclear submarine base at Bengor, Wash., gets heave-ho during anti-nuke demonstration by Pacific Life Community.

as well as the structures, of traditional organization.

For example, at the Crabshell Conference held in Olympia, Washington, on August 20th and 21st, objections were consistently raised whenever someone began talking about "leaders" or "leadership roles". The group's "Steering Committee" was done away with, and replaced by a communi-

cation group whose membership will be rotated frequently, and whose function is restricted solely to facilitating information flow between the various local groups. Specific functions that need to be carried out are taken on by a task force which disbands when it has completed its task. Most of the work to be carried on will occur within the local organizations.

The role of non-violence is also being debated widely. Two general tendencies exist: those who see non-violence as a philosophy or way of life, and those who see it merely as a tactic, an effective way to draw masses of people into confrontation with the State without causing massive bloodshed. Within these two tendencies, there is also debate over whether "vio-

lence" includes property destruction, or only acts of violence against humans and animals. (See accompanying anti-nuke article.)

## Liberal Leadership Resisted

The relationship of these alliances with other groups also remains to be seen. An early summer meeting in Washington, D.C. of over 100 "heavies" of the anti-war movement discussed the planning of a year-long campaign against nuclear power, to be called the Mobilization for Survival. Although the meeting represented the pooling of considerable resources from the left liberal community to join the fight against nukes, it also represented the formation of a self-appointed liberal "leadership" of the sort which much of the anti-nuclear movement has pledged to resist from the outset.

The anti-nuke movement is still young, its possibilities relatively undeveloped, and mistakes are bound to be made. But the possibility of joining in a struggle which is not only a clear matter of survival, but also a process in which everyone can become a direct participant in their own present and future, is the key to the future success of this new anti-authoritarian movement.

(To turn on to the anti-nuke movement on the West Coast, contact the Crabshell Alliance, 610 33rd Ave., Seattle, Wash. 98122.; the Trojan Decommissioning Alliance, 215 SE 9th Ave., Portland, Ore. 97214; the Abalone Alliance, PO Box 1598, San Luis Obispo, Calif. 93406; or the Pacific Life Community, 335 Eighth St., New Westminster, B.C.

# ... But next course needs recipe

A sharp debate is beginning to develop within the growing anti-nuclear movement on both sides of the Atlantic over the appropriateness of some of the tactics and organizing methods that have dominated up to now.

The debate has tended to divide pacifists from those who would defend themselves against State-invoked violence, but a more fundamental issue is, who makes the decisions as to the tactical and strategic direction of the anti-nuke movement, and how are these decisions made?

Critics of the established leadership (in Europe, especially France, it's largely liberal ecology groups who run the show, in the States, it's Quakers and pacifists) insist that the much-vaunted decentralization and democracy is a grass-roots phenomenon that does not run very deep.

They say the leadership has actively suppressed all organic discussion of any tactics other than non-violence and civil disobedience, even to the point of exposing thousands of unprepared people to violent attacks by

the police and military. This criticism doesn't only come from militant Leftists, it has also been voiced by radical pacifist groups, such as the British anarchist journal **Peace News**.

## Militants Ostracized

A case in point: At Malville, France, where 60,000 people gathered on July 31

for one of the largest non-violent demonstrations in the history of Europe, the heavily-armed riot police began lobbing tear gas and explosive fragmentary grenades into crowds of peaceably milling people at a distance of 600 yards, wounding scores of people and killing one demonstrator.

The Malville organizers, mainly Les Amis de la Terre (Friends of the Earth) had insisted the demonstration would be non-violent. They even ostracized and attempted to drive away the 4,000 or so people who came equipped with hard hats and gas masks as a simple defensive measure.

When the police started to attack, the organizers' primitive communications system broke down nearly immediately. The militants tried to defend themselves with sticks and stones, but the great mass of people were simply immobilized on a hillside overlooking the scene, as if it were a war movie.

Peace News adds: "When the whole crowd was gathered in a field, up to our ankles in mud, the organizers announced that they had decided nothing more could be done, and we were to retreat..."

"So we began slowly stumbling back down the 12-foot-wide lane we'd come up that morning, many of us not even knowing what had taken place. The display of crowd

mentality was terrifying—no one, but no one, was prepared to move off the lane to let the cars with the injured pass by."

A French anarchist who was on the scene blames the fiasco almost entirely on the organizers: "They said it was to be a non-violent occupation but they didn't say how we were supposed to do it. The ecology groups are irrational about the police; they want to be official, recognized, to run candidates and so forth, and they want to tie the Socialist Party to them."

"They told us we were provocateurs because we wanted to defend ourselves, and they were opposed to the German comrades for the same reason. They whistled and hooted at us, and told us 'We're here to demonstrate, not to make the revolution.'"

The British anarchist journal **Freedom** put it even more strongly in commenting on the performance of the ecology groups and the left-wing parties at Malville:

"This must lead to the recognition by revolutionaries within the anti-

nuclear movement, and by anarchists and anti-militarists in particular, that they are the only real opposition to the plutonium economy and its deep political, social and environmental consequences.

"The ecological groups will not come to their help when needed, and therefore cannot be treated seriously."

The picture was somewhat similar at Seabrook, although the American police don't as yet have the authorization to attack the (white, middle-class) public at anti-nuclear rallies in such an up-front manner.

Prior to the Seabrook occupation, a six-state meeting of Clamshell Alliance "action committees" decided the big day would be open to anyone who wanted to show up—pacifists, environmentalists and revolutionaries.

But, according to an anarchist who was involved in the early meetings, the "self-appointed Clamshell coordinating committee, dominated by respectability-at-any-price Quakers and their fellow-travellers, said the action

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