

Australia needs an environment group that is prepared to take risks and say things that might make people uncomfortable. Friends of the Earth is the group that most fits that bill and since 1975 Chain Reaction has been its uncompromising mouthpiece. My heartiest congratulations on the 100th issue of this gutsy, bold and always provocative magazine.

Greg Buckman  
Author/researcher,  
member of Chain Reaction Advisory Board, Hobart

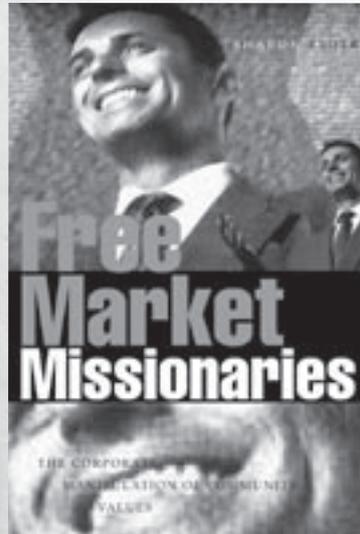
Tristy Fairfield's article 'How environment groups are financed' (edition #82) is Chain Reaction at its best: clear-minded reflective reporting on how the best intentions can be compromised by the relationships we choose to take on. For Friends of the Earth there are no considerations about keeping quiet so as not to alienate funders - the frequent struggle for funds is the harsh side of keeping it real. Subscribe to Chain Reaction and give to Friends of the Earth and know that your dollars, whether they go toward a campaigner's wage, maintaining the photocopier, or paying for the printing of Chain Reaction, are feeding a movement for cultural and biological diversity both within Australia and internationally.

Anna Demant  
Lonely Planet Foundation, and former Chain Reaction editorial team member.

**Now more than ever we urgently need action to halt the escalating environmental crisis and Chain Reaction provides the information, analysis and discussion to fuel activists in this campaign. Congratulations to Friends of the Earth for an impressive and important publication!**

Kerryn Williams  
Green Left Weekly

## Free Market Missionaries Suiting Themselves



Sharon Beder, author of 'Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism', summarises her two latest books:

'Free Market Missionaries: The Corporate Manipulation of Community Values', Earthscan, London, 2006, 260pp.

'Suiting Themselves: How Corporations Drive the Global Agenda', Earthscan, London, 2006, 258pp.

In the early 1930s the heads of some of the largest US corporations started meeting regularly for dinner in New York. It was during the Great Depression when public confidence in capitalism was at an all time low and Roosevelt was threatening to regulate corporations and curb their power. The group, calling themselves the 'Brass Hats', oversaw the corporate takeover of the National Manufacturers Association (NAM), and turned it into a propaganda vehicle for big business.

NAM's conversion marked an historical turning point. Until this time, business people had used advertising, public relations and lobbying to sell their products and services, to promote individual companies, industries, or political views such as their preference for private ownership of public services. But they had never teamed up to sell business values as the primary guiding principles for a nation. Now companies that were supposed to be competitors colluded in a united effort to spread the 'free' market message to the public using every available public relations avenue.

This was the first of several mass propaganda campaigns conducted by business associations and coalitions that combined public relations techniques developed in 20th Century America with revitalised free market ideology originating in 18th Century Europe. The aim was to persuade people that it was in

their interests to eschew their own power as workers and citizens, and forego their democratic power to restrain and regulate business activity.

The second major 'free enterprise' campaign occurred in the immediate post war period, key business organisations were concerned about government intervention and controls on the one hand, and union activity on the other — Big Government and Big Labour. What followed was 'the most intensive "sales" campaign in the history of the industry' according to Daniel Bell, then editor of *Fortune* magazine. What was being sold was market dogma, and the full weight of business resources were poured into it.

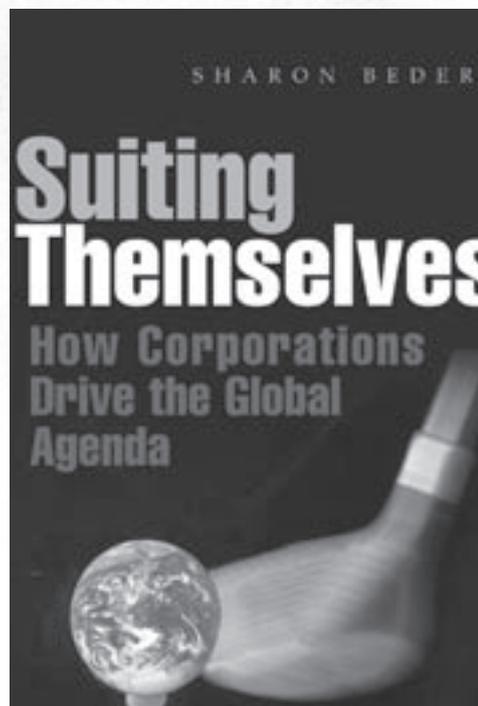
During the early 1970s business was again under attack and public interest groups were challenging the authority of business and seeking government controls over business activities. The first-wave of modern environmentalists were blaming development and the growth of industrial activities for environmental degradation. Their warnings were capturing popular attention, resonating as they did with the experiences of communities facing obvious pollution in their neighbourhoods. Worst of all, from a business point of view, governments were responding with new environmental legislation.

In the US the Advertising Council launched a major campaign in 1976 to promote free enterprise. It was supported by so many major corporations that the Council boasted the list of supporters read like a 'who's who in American business'. The continuous campaign in favour of free enterprise has been described as 'the most elaborate and costly public-relations project in American history.'

In Australia, after the election of a 'progressive' Labor government in 1972, the Australian Chamber of Commerce reacted with a nationwide 'economic education campaign' to promote free enterprise. Enterprise Australia was set up in 1976. It also ran a campaign to sell free enterprise and distributed textbooks, magazines, films and other 'educational' materials in schools, workplaces, clubs and other community forums.

*Free Market Missionaries* examines these campaigns and the other strategies used by large corporations over the last one hundred years – in the US, the UK and Australia – to persuade people that what is good for business is good for the whole community. Such campaigns have touched every aspect of government policy including environmental policy, which is increasingly market-oriented.

*Suited Themselves* investigates the growth of corporate power during the same period, detailing the schemes and tactics that corporate interests have used to pressure government, persuade policy makers against the regulation of business, and propel globalisation.



Since the 1970s corporate coalitions have moved from defending their economic freedom from the demands and interventions of labour unions and governments, to being far more aggressive in their goals. They have conspired to increase their power, consolidating their political influence to pressure governments to make decisions in favour of corporate interests.

An inner circle of corporate executives facilitated the formation of many business associations and coalitions that presented a united front for their corporate members and asserted the power of large corporations in political forums. These associations cooperate with each other and 'perform largely complementary tasks.' They not only share members and even leaders, but associations and coalitions often join other associations and coalitions as members, or create new associations and coalitions for specific purposes.

In this way a vast network of business coalitions and groups, supported by an array of well-funded think tanks, front groups and public relations firms, proliferated during the 1980s and 90s. Their purpose is not only to coordinate public relations campaigns as in earlier times but to exert collective pressure on policy makers to ensure that government policies increase the power and autonomy of those corporations. Many of these coalitions are now global in their reach and seek to implement corporate-friendly, open-access policies worldwide through pressure from institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank.

Corporations have been aided in their quest for more power and business opportunities by economic advisers – educated in economic rationalist university

economics departments – and management consultants, who have advised governments and international development agencies on how to implement business-friendly policies.

The revolutionary shift that we are witnessing at the beginning of the 21st Century from democracy to corporate rule is as significant as the shift from monarchy to democracy, which ushered in the modern age of nation states. It represents a wholesale change in cultural values and aspirations. The eclipse of democratic values by corporate values and the growth of corporate power are not a natural evolution but the consequence of a deliberate strategy employed by corporate executives who have combined their financial and political resources to manipulate community values and set global agendas.

For more information on these books and their availability see: <http://homepage.mac.com/herinst/sbeder/home.html>.

**Congratulations to FoE on the 100th edition of Chain Reaction. As an active part of the worlds largest environmental federation, FoE is uniquely placed to work for a nuclear free future across Australia and around the globe. FoE cooperates with communities, agencies and groups campaigning against all parts of the international nuclear trade on every continent. In Australia the commitment to “thinking globally, acting locally” means FoE works with affected Aboriginal peoples, workers and the wider community to create the awareness and empowerment needed to motivate effective action for a nuclear free future. ACF has worked closely with FoE to highlight the impacts and risks of nuclear developments and looks forward to more work and success in the future. Well done Amigo’s!**

Dave Sweeney  
Nuclear-free campaigner,  
Australian Conservation Foundation

## The Dirty Politics of Climate Change



Clive Hamilton

*Scorcher: The Dirty Politics of Climate Change* 2007

Black Inc. Agenda, Melbourne

RRP: \$29.95

REVIEWED BY JIM GREEN

*Scorcher* is an updated, and more accessible, version of Hamilton's equally important 2001 book, *Running from the Storm*. Both expose the corrupt politics of climate change in Australia over the past decade.

Clive Hamilton, executive director of the Australia Institute, provides a blow-by-blow account of the manoeuvrings of the self-described 'greenhouse mafia' of corporate fossil-fuel interests, and their secretive dealings with the federal government.

Outside of the corporate cabal and the inner echelons of the Howard government, Hamilton probably knows more than anyone about climate change politics in Australia and that depth of knowledge makes *Scorcher* a compelling read. (Guy Pearse, a political insider turned whistleblower, has released a book covering similar ground.)

Alongside the political and corporate collusion and corruption, the media plays an important role in climate politics in Australia. *Scorcher* benefits greatly from Hamilton's analysis of the "studied ignorance" of most of the corporate media.