

ENDING THE 1977-1979 STREET MARCH BAN

A COLLECTION OF PAPERS FROM TOOWOOMBA

[Originals in the possession of John E Ransley]

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TOOWOOMBA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

PRESS RELEASE FRIDAY 16TH MARCH, 1979

END OF THE MARCH BAN IN TOOWOOMBA?

The Toowoomba Campaign Against Nuclear Power was today granted a police permit to hold a street procession on Saturday morning, April 7th, 1979.

Two CANP spokesmen said the permit was only the second to be granted in Queensland during shopping hours since the selective street march ban was imposed by the Premier in September, 1977.

They said it was also the first such permit to be issued to any Queensland anti-uranium group.

The spokesmen – Mr John Roberts and Mr John Ransley – said that a previous permit for a mid-morning Saturday march had been issued to the Townsville Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee on May 27th, 1978. But they said that since the Premier's march ban had been imposed no other permits had been issued to anti-uranium or civil liberties groups in Queensland for marches during shopping hours.

“The Toowoomba CANP had earlier been refused one march permit for April 1st, 1978, and granted another on August 5th, 1978, to mark Hiroshima Day; both applications were for marches on Saturday afternoons,” the spokesmen said.

“Permits were also issued on August 5th to anti-uranium groups in Mt Isa, Rockhampton, and Townsville for afternoon marches, as part of a general relaxation of the selective march ban in provincial cities at this time. However, it was very significant that a similar application by Brisbane CANP for an August 5th march had been summarily rejected,” they said.

“The restrictions on CANP street processions in Toowoomba have passed through three stages – outright prohibition, partial relaxation, and now complete relaxation.”

“Our members are obviously very pleased to have their right of peaceful procession restored,” the spokesmen said. “Unfortunately we have been given no guarantee that future applications for street processions will be treated so sympathetically. The events of the past 18 months have shown the ease with which the permit system can be politically manipulated.”

“For this reason, as well as the fact that the Brisbane Campaign Against Nuclear Power has never been permitted to march legally, even on Saturday afternoons, Toowoomba CANE supports the introduction of a notification system for street marches, similar to that used in South Australia.”

“Only notification it seems, would guarantee Queenslanders the right of peaceful protest enjoyed by all other Australians,” the spokesmen said.

Mr Roberts and Mr Ransley said they emphatically rejected the view that Brisbane members and supporters of CANP were any different to those in Toowoomba. They said that last

year's May Day procession had demonstrated beyond all doubt that Brisbane people could march in an orderly and peaceful way if they were allowed to.

For further information, contact J M Roberts, Ramsay St. Ph 35 5870. J E Ransley, 2A Gladstone St.

May 25th, 1979

TO ALL CANP/CANE GROUPS IN QUEENSLAND:

DISCUSSION PAPER RE HIROSHIMA DAY, 1979

(from some members of Toowoomba CANE)

Preamble

This paper argues that the right to hold street marches (processions) should still be a major objective of the movement against uranium mining in Queensland.

It arises out of a concern that Brisbane CANP may have given up the struggle for street marches altogether.

Some kind of new initiative is required if our movement is to make any kind of progress on this issue.

To date no attempt has been made to coordinate action between Brisbane and provincial groups on marches.

This paper suggests one such action that may help to gain this fundamental right for our movement.

By implication it rejects the view expressed at the recent National Uranium Moratorium Consultation that rallies and marches are no longer appropriate types of action for Hiroshima Day.

Why Street Marches?

Street marches are one effective way of getting our message across to the public, as well as being an attractive form of demonstration to many of our supporters.

Experience suggests more people will participate in marches than will go to rallies (Compare Brisbane April 7th). Rallies are often seen as boring because of their consumerist nature. Legal street marches are a valuable means of demonstrating support for our issue, in part because a certain level of commitment is required to participate in them (Yes! even in legal ones). They provide an activity in which large numbers of people can take part, and they have been a traditional form of entry into the movement.

Anti-uranium street marches in Queensland have been selectively banned. This has made marches in this State more important, not less, and makes legal street marches an important step in our legitimisation as a movement in the community.

This is not to say that street marches should be our only form of public demonstration or educational activity.

March Dilemma

It appears Brisbane CANP and some other groups have given up applying for march permits and endorsed the notification system.

Some people believe that Brisbane will never be given a march permit while this government is in power, others think that there should be no applications on principle. The government's record on the permit issue has certainly been illiberal and repressive.

Last year on two occasions – April 1st and August 5th – Brisbane demonstrators voted against marching after permit applications had been refused. This year on April 7th the idea of marching in Brisbane was dropped altogether.

IF NO PERMITS ARE APPLIED FOR AND THERE IS NO SUPPORT FOR ILLEGAL MARCHES, THE MOVEMENT EFFECTIVELY GIVES UP THE OPTION OF MARCHING ALTOGETHER.

A way out of this dilemma is to apply once again for a permit, this time during shopping hours (Saturday or Monday).

An outright refusal would strengthen the repressive image this government already has in the eyes of many Queenslanders, and increase sympathy for our cause.

Granting of the permit is extremely unlikely because everyone would see it as a major concession by the Premier.

A compromise offer by the Police of a permit for Saturday afternoon or Sunday (Hiroshima Day falls on August 6th, Monday) is a real possibility and could be anticipated. In our view it should be rejected because it concedes the “disruption to traffic” argument and establishes a precedent for future marches, but in fairness we must note that in Toowoomba this was not the case.

In terms of the wider Right to March movement Brisbane CANP is perhaps the only banned group in that city that is still in a position to apply for permits.

Notification

The notification system of regulating street marches is used in South Australia and may soon be adopted in N.S.W.

In the eyes of activists at least, notification is infinitely preferable to permits, because it gives legal backing to the right to march.

If we are to be realistic however, notification can only be a long term goal, because it has to be introduced by Parliament.

Neither of the coalition parties is ever going to endorse such a progressive, ‘Labor’ notion, and the prospects of the Queensland ALP endorsing the concept are not much better. *

Even if the Queensland ALP does adopt notification the chances of them becoming the

government are very slim, and only slightly better if the Liberals cross the floor the pass a fair electoral bill (compare Adrian McGregor's article, May 5, National Times).

If CANP adopts a strict policy of notification and there is no support for illegal marches, the Campaign will be banishing itself from the streets for the foreseeable future. Is this what we really want?

* Correction: the Qld ALP adopted notification at the Rockhampton Convention.

* * * * *

The vast majority of politicians, media commentators and the informed public haven't yet the faintest idea what 'notification' means.

Within our movement most informed people are agreed that notification should be our ultimate goal, but there is disagreement about the strategies we should use to attain this goal.

Some would argue that the best route to notification is to start practising it now and persuade the public later. This course has a lot of merit when the government/police are unequivocally refusing to issue permits. It was used to great effect prior to last December 7th, but lost credibility when expectations (perhaps unreal) as to numbers on that occasion were largely unfulfilled. The tactic succeeded insofar as it forced the government to make last-minute offers of permits, but it apparently alienated large sections of the Labour movement who would have preferred to see a permit applied for and refused.

If we want to enlist wider support it would seem better to win the struggle on the permit system BEFORE we seek to introduce an 'alien' system from South Australia.

Both the Labor and Liberal parties in Queensland support a return to the judicial right of appeal in relation to street processions. If they succeed in restoring this right it would probably reinstate legal street marches in Brisbane (otherwise it wouldn't have been repealed). It would also be a significant defeat for Joh.

By adopting a rigid policy of notification we leave the government room to make offers of permits that we feel bound to refuse. It is then very easy for them to dismiss us as "extremists", who want to march "anywhere, anytime", and "the public be damned". Such a policy could also convince the ALP and the Liberal Party that we are not serious about our desire to march, and lead to them dropping their right of judicial appeal campaign.

Perhaps the only chance CANP has of building a stronger will on the march issue is by repeated refusals of march permit applications.

CANP/CANE Objectives

At this point some readers will be thinking that this paper is solely concerned with a "Civil Liberties" matter – the right to march.

The contrary view taken here is that the march issue is a central one for the Queensland anti-uranium movement.

Our general objectives are to stop uranium mining and the introduction of nuclear power in this country, to assist in stopping the nuclear power industry elsewhere, and to work for nuclear disarmament.

The Bjelke-Petersen government is an active supporter of uranium mining and nuclear power and is prepared to set aside our civil liberties to get its way. One of our primary objectives must be to oppose this government and highlight the links between its support for nuclear power and its anti-democratic methods.

The civil liberties movement has successfully used the street march ban as a rallying point for opposition to the government on a whole number of issues. There is no real reason why CANP can't use the ban in the same fashion. After all the original ban was imposed on all anti-uranium groups in Queensland.

There is now a very widespread feeling amongst activists that civil liberties and CANP objective are very different and the march issue belongs to Civil liberties. Thus nearly everywhere in the State people involved in both groups have been arrested in civil liberties marches but argued against this type of action in CANP. So far there has been only one illegal march from a CANP rally – in Brisbane, Oct. 22, 1977 – and that was unplanned. The two arguments for this view have been (a) Queensland issues are not central to our main objective to stop uranium mining, and (b) the large numbers of 'conservative' and 'apolitical' elements in CANP are opposed to illegal marches. The first argument is rejected above. If the second has any validity these 'elements' are certainly not going to accept the premature adoption of notification. But in the present political climate they may be receptive to a more militant stand if another permit is refused.

The street march campaign has produced a widespread feeling in the community that refusal of permits is unjust. Why not capitalise on it?

Toowoomba March

Since May, 1978 the selective ban on street marches has been gradually relaxed. The government has encouraged a dualistic policy whereby the ban remains in force in Brisbane but is relaxed in stages in provincial cities.

Thus last Hiroshima Day march permits were issued in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Mt. Isa and Townsville, but only for marches after shopping hours, i.e. when the streets were deserted.

Once again an application for a 12 noon march by Brisbane CANP was rejected. (see attached press releases, etc.)

On Saturday, April 7th this year a permit for a march during shopping hours (10.45 am) was issued to Toowoomba CANP (how CANE). Apparently there was also a legal march in Rockhampton. Other groups did not apply for permits in solidarity with Brisbane.

Toowoomba CANE IS quite happy to consider joint actions with Brisbane but not when Brisbane does nothing. Without marches in Toowoomba we are stuck in a park where nobody can see us.

For April 7th the Toowoomba police gave blanket approval to all aspects of a detailed application except for imposing a limit of 3 on the number of banners.

This was a major concession on their part (at least they thought so) and is mainly the result we think of an intensive local campaign involving CANE, the Toowoomba Civil Liberties Group and the Toowoomba United Opposition Committee.

The local District Superintendent of Police told one of us that the decision was wholly his (made in less than 10 minutes), and claimed that at no point in his term of office (since January, 1978) had he consulted senior police or government officials (see press releases).

Our decision to apply for a permit was made only after we had determined that Brisbane CANP had completely forsaken marching on April 7th. Although some of us suspected the permit would be granted, most thought the police would offer us a Saturday afternoon march – as they did with a previous application by the Civil Liberties group for September 16th, 1978. On that occasion we obtained excellent local publicity over the police refusal of a permit for 10.30 am (Sat. morning). It seems clear that the police decision re April 7th was also influenced by the UOC illegal march on December 7th, 1978, where notification was used instead of a permit application (in Toowoomba).

In answer to the possible charge of naivety we recognise the mechanism of political influence via the media but we contend that Police Superintendents still have considerable powers of discretion.

* * *

The main lesson of the provincial relaxation is that if Brisbane CANP applies for a Hiroshima permit this year, the police are quite likely to offer an after-hours march.

Our Proposition

- (1) That all CANP/CANE groups in Queensland apply for street march permits during shopping hours to commemorate Hiroshima Day, 1979;
- (2) That these applications be made simultaneously and well beforehand and that the provincial applications include a proviso that their permits will only be accepted if a Brisbane permit is granted (note: the police can only offer a permit; no permit has been issued until the applicant signs for it);
- (3) That these applications and the rationale behind them be well publicized, particularly the issue of the discriminatory town/country nature of the march ban;
- (4) That in the event the Brisbane application is refused, and the provincial groups refuse to accept permits in consequence, all Hiroshima rallies in Queensland that weekend will be given the opportunity to vote on an illegal march; and
- (5) That a conference be convened before Hiroshima Day that draws delegates from as many groups as possible to discuss this proposal or alternatives; OR AT least that there is an exchange of views on this issue amongst the different groups affiliated with Brisbane CANP.

Note: If Saturday morning is favoured then the march should be timed **before** the rally, say 11 am. The march times would not have to be simultaneous throughout the State, but there would be a distinct advantage in applying for the same day, either Saturday morning or Monday afternoon.

John Ransley, Margaret Riethmuller, Neil Riethmuller

Mon. 28th May, 1979

John Ransley,
C/- CANE,
Box 3158, P.O. Town Hall,
Toowoomba. 4350. Qld

Dear

Please find enclosed copies of a discussion paper on the street march issue. The paper includes a proposal for Hiroshima Day this year, and we would appreciate a response as soon as possible.

A major thesis of the paper is that the Queensland Government is an opponent of our campaign that we cannot afford to ignore. Recent developments that give further support to this argument are the imminent approval of uranium mining at Ben Lomond (near Townsville), the State government's lobbying to get the proposed Australia – Japan uranium enrichment plant (to service the Northern Territory mines) sited in Queensland (again Townsville), the Premier's personal support for nuclear power, and the government's active support of various uranium exploration programmes here. The go-ahead to oil drilling in the Barrier Reef environs, soon to be announced, is also part and parcel of this government's fanatical pro-development, anti-conservation stance.

The Hiroshima Day proposal in the attached paper will be put to the Toowoomba CANE general meeting this Wednesday, 30th May. Our final decision as to a march or alternative activity must be made at our next meeting on June 27th. If possible could we have replies – yes, no or other proposals – by the 22nd June?

Yours sincerely and in solidarity
John Ransley

Also enclosed – copies of press releases around April 7th for comparison. We would like to see copies of your own press releases

PERMIT TO MARCH DENIED
Sunshine Coast CANP June 1979 Newsletter

On April 28th this year, the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International were given a permit for a street march down the main street of Nambour on Saturday morning at 10 o'clock.

Only 3 weeks prior to this, our branch of C.A.N.P. had also applied for a permit to march on Saturday April 7th along the same route as the religious group.

We were refused a permit to march on the grounds of being disruptive to Saturday morning traffic, and dangerous to participants. Either the police don't really care about the well-being of the Full Gospel Businessmen or this was yet another example of political interference with the police force – something which our Member for Cooroora boldly denies.

Obviously, any citizen who objects to a world dependent on the nuclear industry is seen as a rabble-rouser and any citizen who wishes to march for the glory of God is seen as trustworthy. Seems strange to me that one of our most diligent members is also a member of the Full Gospel of Businessmen – and believe me, he doesn't have a split personality! So perhaps, it is another example of political interference in the police force – what do you think?

P.S. The CANP member declined from participating in the religious march because of the biased decision-making.

by Margaret-Ann Stannard

REPLY FROM ROCKHAMPTON

Peter Leaver (secretary)
C.A.N.P. (Central Queensland)
P.O. Box 795,
Rockhampton, Queensland, 4700

26 June 1979

Dear John

Thank you for your discussion paper and replies on the Hiroshima Day activities. Our last meeting (24/6/79) discussed the proposals set out therein.

We found, however, that members were unwilling to drop march plans even after considering the reasons you put forward. Support for any Environmental or Civil Liberties group in this area has always been difficult to attract but through constant public contact by stalls at Flea Markets, the Agricultural Show, and Carnival Processions, participating in street marches has risen from 20 at our first to 75 at the last Hiroshima Day. We have gained supporters following these events.

We have police permission to hold a rally and street march on Saturday, 4th August at 10am. This march will be down part of the main street (East Street) in the main city block. Last year we had unlimited length of march, but outside of shopping hours.

While members took part in, or attended a civil liberties rally and illegal march early this year, any attempt to organise a similar event for Hiroshima Day would lack support and destroy much of our community acceptance via the atrociously blatant National Party supporting local paper.

Yours sincerely
Peter Leaver

TOOWOOMBA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

Spokesman: John E Ransley

PRESS RELEASE MONDAY 9TH JULY 1979

UNIFORM MARCH LAWS

Three South-East Queensland groups opposed to uranium mining have lodged co-ordinated applications for street march permits in an attempt to obtain a uniform march policy from the State Government.

The groups are the Toowoomba Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE), the Brisbane Campaign Against Nuclear Power (CANP), and the Sunshine Coast CANP, and the applications are for marches to commemorate Hiroshima Day, August 6th, 1979.

CANE spokesman Mr John Ransley said today an important condition attached to the applications was that permits would only be accepted if they were offered to all three groups. He said a request had been made to the police to see if a uniform policy could be arranged.

“This move is necessary because of absurd inconsistencies in the treatment of march applications by Queensland anti-uranium groups in the past.”

“Statements by the Premier in September, 1977 had initiated a blanket ban on street marches by Queensland anti-uranium groups that lasted to July, 1978.”

“For Hiroshima Day commemorations the following month, the ban had been partially lifted to allow for after-hours marches in Toowoomba, Mt Isa, Rockhampton and Townsville. An application by Brisbane at this time had once again been rejected, like all previous applications made by this group since 1975.”

This year on April 7th, the Toowoomba CANE was allowed to hold a street march during shopping hours for the first time. The march was peaceful and orderly and produced minimal disruption of traffic.”

“Brisbane CANP and many other groups did not apply for march permits on this occasion – a national mobilisation day – but in an extraordinary display of discrimination, the Sunshine Coast CANP was refused permission for a street march for a time and route that was granted to a Christian Businessman’s Fellowship 3 weeks later (April 28th).”

“For Hiroshima Day this year, Toowoomba and Brisbane groups have applied to hold marches on Monday afternoon, August 6th, and the Sunshine Coast on Saturday morning, August 4th.”

“Mackay and Rockhampton are other provincial groups that have also applied for marches on August 4th.”

J E Ransley, 2A Gladstone Street, Toowoomba 4350 Phone: 34 3983

DISCUSSION PAPER FOLLOW-UP

John Ransley
C.A.N.E. Toowoomba,
2A Gladstone St.,
TOOWOOMBA. 4350.

20th July, 1979

TO ALL QUEENSLAND GROUPS OPPOSED TO URANIUM MINING:

RE MARCH PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR HIROSHIMA DAY, MONDAY, AUGUST 6TH, 1979

1) Background

A discussion paper from Toowoomba CANE has already been circulated to Queensland anti-uranium groups. This paper proposed that applications for march permits for Hiroshima Day be made simultaneously by Brisbane and provincial groups in an attempt to overcome the city/country discrimination that now exists. It also proposed that provincial march permits would only be accepted if Brisbane gained a permit as well.

2) Feedback

Written replies have been received from Bundaberg, Mackay and Caboolture groups. Sandra Bloodworth (former Brisbane CANP worker) has also sent a detailed response (replies were requested by June 22nd). Bundaberg and Caboolture do not want to have street marches on Hiroshima Day this year (letters attached). The Mackay Nuclear Awareness Group has already (letter received June 20th) applied for a permit to march and hold a rally on Saturday, 4th August. Like Bundaberg, they feel they could not get support for an illegal march. Because the Mackay Civil Liberties Group was granted a march permit on April 28th, the NAG is confident of getting one also. They do not want to throw away the chance of marching by tying themselves to Brisbane's permit application, which is likely to be refused.

John Boyd (Mt Isa Group) indicated in a conversation on April 28th in Brisbane that he thought Mt Isa would get a permit if they applied. But they did not apply on April 7th in solidarity with Brisbane.

Margaret-Ann Stannard communicated by phone to Brisbane on June 20th that the Sunshine Coast Group was refused a permit last April 7th although a Christian Businessman's group got a permit for the same route shortly after. Sunshine Coast will discuss Hiroshima Day activities at their monthly meeting on July 2nd.

In a 2 minute conversation on June 10th Senator George Georges commented that he personally would prefer that no permit was applied for, but if it was, to make it "as difficult as possible" for police to grant. He agreed that a refusal would strengthen the stand taken by the Civil Liberties Campaign. He said that if a permit was issued,

he would favour strong participation by civil liberties activists opposed to uranium mining.

Stronger opposition to a CANP march permit application was expressed by some other people who have been actively involved in both CANP and the civil liberties campaign. These people told Bob Phelps (Brisbane CANP organiser) a campaign to fight street stall and leaflet bans in Brisbane would be more appropriate for CANP.

Toowoomba CANE will make a final decision at their monthly meeting on June 27th. It is expected the meeting will endorse the proposal to co-ordinate a march permit application (for either the 4th or 6th August) with Brisbane on July 9th.

3) Brisbane

At their general meeting on June 19th, CANP Brisbane decided to apply for a march permit for approximately 5pm on MONDAY AUGUST 6TH, for the usual route (Albert-Queen-Creek-Ann). They are prepared to co-ordinate this application with other groups. (Bill Hayden has been invited to speak but has not yet accepted.)

Most of those who attended the General Meeting thought it very unlikely the Government would grant a permit for this time. Doubts expressed were: (a) the Government would make a counter-offer of a Sunday permit; (b) an application would alienate civil liberties activists; (c) it was better to remain passive and let the civil liberties campaign make the running on marches.

Bob Phelps suggested that applications for street stall and leafleting permits would serve to highlight the differences in police policy between Brisbane and provincial cities without antagonising civil liberties campaigners committed to notification.

Arguments put in support of the motion included (a) the march issue is an important part of our campaign (the original ban was imposed on CANP); (b) there was a need to keep the issue alive (as opposed to not applying for permits and not notifying); (c) because CANP had last applied for a permit in July 1978 (refused) we do not know for certain the ban still exists (it has been relaxed in the country); and (d) the political situation is such that we can only gain sympathy from 'moderate' and 'conservative' elements within the community (and amongst our supporters) if a permit is applied for and refused.

A complicating factor is the proposed Civil Liberties Rally and March in Brisbane on July 26th organised by Senator Georges and the Civil Liberties Campaign Group (the Trades and Labor Council has been approached but to date is unwilling to act as co-sponsor). Brisbane civil liberties groups (CLCC and CLCG) are committed to a policy of notification and there will be no application for a march permit.

It is possible in this context the government could issue a permit to CANP and use that to (a) brand the civil liberties groups as 'extremists', and (b) defuse the Liberal Party campaign to restore appeals (when march permit applications are refused) to a magistrate. On the other hand, a refusal of our application is the most likely response (especially if Joh or the police make the decision) and this can only strengthen the

civil liberties notification position and the magistrate appeal campaign.

All political actions are risky. Our final goal must be to get our right to march against nuclear power recognised by the government. To get this concession, we may have to keep getting permits refused for some time.

With regard to illegal marches, Brisbane people feel that CANP rallies will not support these even when a permit has been refused. Other centres may be different. However it would still seem a useful exercise to test the feeling of meetings by putting a march motion.

Toowoomba CANE will probably co-ordinate an application for a march permit with CANP Brisbane. It would be good to get other groups to act in concert, as set out in the discussion paper. This would seem to be a good way of attracting publicity.

A suggested date for making the applications is Monday, 9th July. Please inform Toowoomba and Brisbane of your responses to this proposal as soon as possible or at the latest, the 3rd of July.

Yours sincerely and in solidarity,

John Ransley

Summary

Our proposed plan of action is as follows:

- 1) Apply July 9th for march permit for:

EITHER (a) Saturday morning August 4th (say 11 or 11.30 am, before rally)
OR (b) Monday afternoon August 6th (4-5 pm)

To “commemorate Hiroshima Day and oppose the nuclear industry”.

NOTE: please try to request a march time within shopping hours.

- 2) Include in your application a proviso that permits offered will only be accepted if Brisbane is given a permit as well. If the police refuse to accept this condition, please insist upon until they either agree to hold off (suggest they consult their Brisbane superiors) or refuse your application outright.
- 3) Publicity should focus on co-ordinated applications, past inconsistencies in permit administration (particularly Brisbane ban and provincial relaxations), previous peaceful legal CANP marches in Qld, and mass MAUM marches that have taken place in other states without incident and with minimal traffic disruption.
- 4) If permits are refused please consider putting a motion for an illegal march to the rally, even if you suspect the vote to be “no”.

TOOWOOMBA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

PRESS RELEASE: FRIDAY 20TH JULY 1979

CANP MARCH PERMIT REFUSED

An application by the Brisbane Campaign Against Nuclear Power (CANP) for a permit to hold a street march on Hiroshima Day, Monday August 6th, has been rejected by the police, Toowoomba CANE spokesman Mr John Ransley said today.

Mr Ransley said the application was for a march to leave King George Square at 5.30 pm, following a one-hour rally, and proceeding via Albert, Queen, Creek and Ann streets back to the Square. He said the march and rally had been organised to commemorate the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs and to oppose the nuclear industry.

“As with past applications refused by the police, no reasons have been given for the current rejection. Despite this an appeal has been lodged with the Police Commissioner, Mr Lewis, to try and get the decision reversed.”

“The Brisbane rejection is an ill-considered and arbitrary act that can only arouse the indignation of all people concerned about fair play and the democratic right of dissent.”

“The rejection contrasts strongly with the favourable consideration given to similar march applications in Nambour and Toowoomba. Anti-nuclear groups in both these centres would welcome the opportunity to march legally, but are committed to refusing permits unless the Brisbane application proves successful.”

“Other Queensland anti-uranium groups that have applied for Hiroshima commemoration marches are Mt Isa, Mackay and Rockhampton. So far Rockhampton is the only group granted a permit.”

“Under the Traffic Act regional police superintendents have complete discretion in their treatment of march applications. The history of the selective march ban, however, shows that susceptibility to political influence increases with proximity to Brisbane.”

“There is an urgent need for a uniform march law in this State.”

TOOWOOMBA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

PRESS RELEASE: WEDNESDAY JULY 25TH, 1979

POLICE OFFER MARCH PERMITS

Police have offered street march permits to anti-nuclear groups in Nambour and Toowoomba, Toowoomba CANE spokesman Mr John Ransley said today.

Mr Ransley said both groups had asked that the permits be held over until advice was received about an appeal to the Police Commissioner by the Brisbane Campaign Against Nuclear Power (CANP). The appeal was lodged last week following police refusal of an application to hold a march in Brisbane on Hiroshima Day, August 6, at 5.30 pm.

“Although CANP has been told that a response to this appeal was posted on Monday, no letter has been received and police refuse to reveal the Commissioner’s decision verbally. However similar appeals have always failed in the past.”

“Naturally the Toowoomba CANE and Sunshine Coast CANP (Nambour) are delighted that local police have offered permits. The Nambour group was refused a permit as recently as April 7 this year.”

“However there is a strong feeling in both groups that it would be grossly unfair to accept march permits locally while the largest and most active anti-nuclear group in Queensland was still not allowed on the streets.”

“Members of the Brisbane CANP are drawn from the same wide cross-section of the community as those in Toowoomba and Nambour. Peaceful and orderly street marches in Toowoomba have made a mockery of the Premier’s claims that anti-nuclear demonstrators are violent and disruptive.”

“The continuation of the selective march ban in Brisbane means that the permit system is now completely discredited because of its vulnerability to political abuse. Only the notification system of administering street marches offers a fair and democratic means of guaranteeing the peaceful right of dissent.”

TOOWOOMBA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY

PRESS RELEASE: THURSDAY 2ND AUGUST ,1979

ONLY TWO PERMITS ISSUED TO ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUPS

A statewide roundup of street marches to commemorate Hiroshima Day, August 6, revealed that only two permits had been issued to anti-nuclear groups, Mr John Ransley said today.

Mr Ransley, a spokesman for the Toowoomba Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE), said the two permits were for mid-morning marches on Saturday August 4, issued to CANP groups in Mackay and Rockhampton. He said another march permit had been granted to the Townsville Trades & Labour Council, for either August 4 or 6.

Police had also offered march permits to Toowoomba CANE, Mt Isa CANP and Sunshine Coast CANP (Nambour), but these had been refused as part of a campaign to obtain a uniform street march law. The refusals followed the Police Commissioner's dismissal of an appeal by the Brisbane CANP, against police rejection of an application to hold a city street march at 5.30 pm on Monday, August 6, Mr Ransley said.

"Brisbane police have not yet responded to a further application by CANP to hold a march at 6 pm on Nagasaki Day, August 9," he added.

"Marches without permits are a real possibility in centres where permits have not been issued. Motions to this effect would be put to public rallies. The anti-nuclear movement has tried for years to work within the framework of the law, but the Premier's intransigence on the matter has left them with little other option."

"Toowoomba activities marking Hiroshima Day will begin tomorrow at midday with a fast in East Creek Park. On Saturday, a public rally at the same venue will feature speakers, music and street theatre. The rally will commence at 11 am and will be addressed by Mr Bob Lingard and Ms Joan Austin. A motion to march without a permit will be put to the rally at 12 noon. The fast is planned to finish on Monday August 6, also at noon."

‘NINE MARCH ARRESTS’
The Chronicle, Monday, August 6, 1979 (front page story)

Three people who were arrested in Toowoomba on Saturday during an illegal street march refused to accept bail and are still in custody in the Toowoomba watch-house.

At least one of the three is reported to be fasting.

A group of about 20 supporters of those in custody mounted a vigil outside the police station until late yesterday afternoon. Some of those mounting the vigil continued a fast they began on Friday to mark the bombing of Hiroshima.

Nine people were arrested altogether on Saturday after they refused police directions to halt an illegal march in Margaret Street.

POLICE READY

The march took place following a Hiroshima Day rally in East Creek Park organised by the Toowoomba Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE). About 80 people attended.

A vote taken at the rally was 45 to 14 in favour of supporting 11 people who decided to march illegally. Two speakers spoke for the motion and two against.

Police gathered at the corner of Margaret and Kitchener streets in anticipation of a march down Margaret Street into the city centre, but the marchers headed east instead. One police car blocked the marcher's progress at Burstow Street until the remainder of the police reached the scene.

Two anti-nuclear banners were confiscated by police and nine people were arrested and taken to the police station. About 40 people from the rally watched the march and the arrests from the footpath, and chanted anti-nuclear slogans and civil rights slogans.

Later about 25 people engaged in a "footpath march" to the police station, and after gaining permission from the police picketed quietly on the footpath opposite the station.

The president of the South Toowoomba branch of the Labor Party, Mr Robert Shaw, said after the march that people were still prepared to face arrest over both the uranium and civil rights issues.

"This action today demonstrates the depth of feeling over the issues," he said.

A spokesman for CANE, Mr John Ransley, said yesterday that Saturday's rally at East Creek Park had voted to give its support to people wishing to march illegally to mark the refusal to grant a permit to the Brisbane CANP.

The awarding of a permit to the Brisbane CANP for a street march on Nagasaki Day, August 9, was a welcome breakthrough. The Nagasaki permit might mean the end of the Queensland Government's ban on CANP, he said.

However, the permit would have little effect on plans already made for Hiroshima Day commemorations. This was because police had still refused a permit for an identical march today, the anniversary of Hiroshima.

“The only difference between the two applications was that the Nagasaki march is timed to start half an hour later,” Mr Ransley said. “This reveals extraordinary inconsistencies in the method police use to assess such applications, and highlights the unsatisfactory nature of the permit system itself.”

AUGUST 4TH RALLY 1979, TOOWOOMBA
Toowoomba CANE August Newsletter, 1979

A small but enthusiastic group of supporters attended the rally held to commemorate Hiroshima Day. The speakers – Joan Austin, Ann Hilhurst, and Bob Lingard were well received. Lighter entertainment was provided with street theatre from CANE'S band of intrepids and music by Will Hogg and Andrew O'Phee. All were much appreciated.

A motion concerning an illegal march was then put to the rally. The motion was carried with 48 voting for the motion, 14 against, and an unknown number of abstentions.

Nine arrests followed the resulting illegal march. Six people chose to be bailed out. The other three – Jane Skelton, John Ransley, and Ron Fraser stayed in the watch-house until they appeared in court on the following Monday. Fines ranged from \$20 to \$60.

An unusual feature of the Monday court proceedings was that both Ron Fraser and Neil Riethmuller were permitted to talk quite extensively of their reasons for marching illegally.

John Ransley – who had continued the fast he had begun on Friday 3rd during his weekend incarceration – pleaded not guilty to the charge of disobeying a police direction. His case was heard the next day. After a gruelling court session on the Tuesday, the magistrate chose to accept the word of the arresting officer despite the testimony of other witnesses supporting John's contention that indeed no direction was given, and John was found guilty as charged. John then refused to pay his fine and was not released from custody in Brisbane until Friday 10th August.

The Saturday rally and march received good coverage from the Chronicle and ABC. Unfortunately other publications obviously had little understanding of the subtleties involved in the decision to march illegally.

Neil Riethmuller, Editor

EASING OF MARCH RESTRICTIONS

Toowoomba CANE August Newsletter, 1979

A Toowoomba initiative has led to an easing of the march ban in Brisbane. A discussion paper was prepared by members of Toowoomba CANE and sent to all anti-uranium groups in Queensland in an effort to stimulate united action in applying for march permits for Hiroshima Day. Members of Toowoomba CANE were concerned by Brisbane CANP's apparent rejection of marching as a viable form of protest. Brisbane CANP did not apply for a permit to march or notify the police of their intention to march on April 7th and no march eventuated from the rally. Previous Brisbane rallies had rejected motions calling on the movement to endorse an illegal march. The only illegal march actually held by Brisbane CANP was on October 22, 1977. A considerable effort to have the ideas embodied in the discussion paper was made by Toowoomba CANE with one member – John Ransley – travelling to Brisbane specifically to discuss the issues involved at a Brisbane CANP meeting.

A major theme of the discussion paper was that only permits within shopping hours should be sought or accepted. It was considered likely that Brisbane could be offered an after-hours permit as community feeling on the march issue had to a large extent shifted away from the government's policy. Eventually Brisbane, Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast anti-uranium movements agreed to make joint applications to the police. Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast applications would include the proviso that permits would not be accepted by them unless Brisbane was also granted a permit. As a result when Brisbane's permit to march at 5.30pm on Hiroshima Day was refused (their appeal to the police commissioner was also unsuccessful), Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast declined to accept permits offered them by the police.

Bruce Doyle and Bob Phelps of Brisbane CANP then decided to apply for a permit for 6pm on Nagasaki Day. They expected this permit to be refused, proving the disruption-to-traffic argument often used by the police and the government to support the march ban was in reality a cover for the political nature of the ban. Toowoomba CANE having expended considerable energy convincing Brisbane CANP of the advantages of joint action was dismayed by this sudden departure from the agreed-upon strategy.

Although the granting of the Nagasaki Day permit was a breakthrough of sorts, many members of Toowoomba CANE felt long term advantage would have been attained by adherence to the action that had been agreed to previously. That is, that in the event of Brisbane's being refused a permit, all three groups would put a motion before their Hiroshima Day rallies on the question of an illegal march. They consider this would have strengthened the growing feeling amongst even conservative sections of the community that the march laws are repressive, and added constructively to the massive efforts made in this direction by the civil liberties movement. This, combined with future joint applications by all Queensland anti-uranium groups could perhaps have achieved more than the acceptance of the 6pm march permit by Brisbane.

The march was undoubtedly a well-deserved tonic for all those who participated – a pleasant change from the seemingly endless roundabout of frustration and confrontation which illegal marches have entailed.

However, an essential element necessary for the Nagasaki Day march to be considered completely successful was lacking – an audience. If we accept that the purpose of street marches is to bring a message to the public and show them the strength of our movement, there seems little point in marching through empty streets after dark holding candles.

The granting of the permit to Brisbane also placed Toowoomba in an awkward position and has resulted in some criticism of the decision to march illegally taken by people attending the Saturday 4th rally at East Creek Park. The decision to put the motion to the rally despite the granting of the permit to Brisbane was made for several reasons:

- Brisbane CANP's request to have the Nagasaki permit changed to 6pm Hiroshima Day was rejected by the police;
- Toowoomba had tied their application to the Brisbane permit from the outset;
- That the motion if passed would enable Toowoomba CANE to point out the continued inequity of the permit system;
- The Brisbane permit was extremely limited being for outside shopping hours and a three-abreast march, and that the struggle against march permit discrimination re CANP is by no means over.

Despite this attempt at unified action leading to a slight disarray, members of Toowoomba CANE feel that substantial gains could be made in the future by unified applications by all Queensland anti-uranium groups. It is fair to conclude that the added pressure of the joint application had some success in forcing a concession from the police.

A better-organised and more unified attempt with all groups applying for permits within shopping hours could make a real impact on the repressive laws which have plagued the anti-uranium movement in Queensland since its inception.

A paper along these lines will be prepared by Toowoomba CANE and distributed amongst anti-uranium groups in Queensland. Another point to be included will be that if Brisbane or any other group is refused a permit, no appeal will be made to the police commissioner as appeal about a police decision to the police is probably the most odious and repressive aspect of the anti-march legislation.

Neil Riethmuller, Editor

TOOWOOMBA CANE GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday, August 29th 1979

Before you all forget about Hiroshima Day marches and get down to things exclusively nuclear, please give some thought to our policy on marches for the next Queensland-wide or Australia-wide anti-nuclear mobilisation.

It seems unlikely that this will be before the end of this year. A National Moratorium is due in November 1979.

One possible date would be the March 1st Nuclear-Free Pacific Day, although this is too early for Southern States which derive a lot of their strength from university students and prefer a month's grace after university commencement.

What policy should we adopt re marches?

It is now clear:

1. Provincial city groups can get permits in shopping hours;
2. Brisbane CANP can get permits AFTER shopping hours – a precedent having been set (certainly for Hiroshima/Nagasaki, almost certainly for other times of the year; once or twice a year).

Should we be satisfied with this?

Toowoomba CANE says No!

We still have the permit system which is still very susceptible to political manipulation. In Brisbane the Hiroshima Day application was refused and the Nagasaki Day application granted. For this Hiroshima Day Toowoomba CANE and Sunshine Coast CANP tied their permit applications to Brisbane. This tactic was very successful. Because of the tie-up Toowoomba CANE held the only illegal anti-uranium march in Queensland on August 4th. We felt it was very important for some groups to make these points:

- The permit system is arbitrary, discriminatory and undemocratic;
- The Hiroshima Day permit was refused although the application was almost identical to the Nagasaki Day application.

This means Toowoomba CANE elected to make the Brisbane refusal more important than local issues. We refused a permit in Toowoomba for Monday 6th August.

Obviously Brisbane CANP could not hold an illegal march on Monday 6th August once they got August 9th. This was the clear intention of the police. Most other groups were committed to accepting permit or had them already. Only Nambour and Toowoomba had a choice. For Nambour, it was the first time they had been given a permit. Their last application had been refused as recently as April 7th. It was impossible for them to march given local politics and

this fact.

Toowoomba had the option and took it.

John Ransley (from notes)