



BUGA-UP co-ordinator Geoff Coleman: smoking advertisements are now only one of the group's targets

CONSUMERISM

BUGA-UP's aims may have gone up in smoke

By BOB BROWNING

WHATEVER BUGA-UP was when it began, it is certainly not now the popular crusader against smoking that it has purported to be.

The real origins of Billboard Utilising Graffitiists Against Unhealthy Products are still somewhat obscure. However, recent public statements by formerly anonymous members, now identified through arrests, court appearances and occasional optional jail sentences, have thrown light on BUGA-UP's ideological hazy and political objectives.

Founding member and interstate organiser, Frederick Cole, claims that political views in BUGA-UP have polarised. This polarisation reportedly dates from the promotional and financial upgrading of BUGA-UP which came about with the decision to take out a public postal address, launch a fighting fund, advertise in *The National Times* and publish seasonal catalogues.

Cole, an energetic invalid pensioner now in his mid-50s, supports the anarchist faction in BUGA-UP. This faction largely has been swamped by an influx of radical feminist and Socialist Left activists who installed Geoffrey Coleman in the position of BUGA-UP co-ordinator.

During 1980 Coleman attracted media attention as a leading member of the Radical Left, now Socialist Caucus, group in the Australian Union of Students. It was this faction which produced the now defunct radical magazine *Partisan* to distinguish itself from the Communist Party of Australia-led Left coalition which the *Partisan* group denounced as "too conservative." The *Partisan* group organised the demonstrations in 1980 against the NSW Minister for Education, Paul Landa, and NSW Institute of Technology authorities in an effort to stop reform of the controversial BA (Communications) course at NSWIT.

Coleman, who is a product of the BA (Communications) course, described the demonstrations in a *Partisan* article (June, 1980) which he co-authored. The article was entitled "Buckets of Blood, Buckets of Blood." Coleman and his co-authors compared the BA (Communications) course to the Marxist-orientated Political Economy course at Sydney University.

Coleman wrote in *Partisan*: "For three years the BA (Communications) degree has been under attack from the administration at NSWIT. Our situation is reminiscent of the struggle for courses in political economy at Sydney University in the 1970s."

Coleman described the BA (Communications) course thus: "A Marxist analysis of mass communications is used to examine the development of the mass media and advertising through the economic, political and ideological tasks they perform in monopoly capitalism."

Political observers at the time of the "struggle" over the NSWIT course saw both the Sydney University's Political Economy course and the BA (Communications) course as little more than publicly financed training for future Left-wing activists in key economic and media affairs.

Older BUGA-UP members believe that the installation of Coleman as co-ordinator represents a virtual takeover of the organisation. They believe the Socialist Left and radical feminist factions intend to take BUGA-UP (a good media drawcard) into the mainstream of the currently burgeoning radical "health and safety" campaign which is running parallel with the anti-uranium campaign.

Under Coleman there have been attempts to extend BUGA-UP targets beyond tobacco and alcohol billboard ad-

tributed to the quality of Tasmanian life. They are vital to an island which has zero population growth and a brain drain among its youth.

Some newcomers stick to themselves, work in the local craft industry or isolate themselves in order to enjoy the natural splendors of a landscape scattered with the landmarks of history. Others innocently have avoided the traps of Tasmania by pretending that it simply does not exist, thus not getting caught up in it, while a few have fought it tooth and nail and eventually been admired for their guts, determination, steely qualities or pure silliness.

It is people from that last category who make the true hardy locals, the mountain rangers and fishermen of the wilds, the true politicians and genuine artists.

They — not caring about trends elsewhere — are our reborn pioneers. Confronted with themselves, they become self-reliant. They become the true Tasmanians, the ones who really care. □