

GREEN LINE

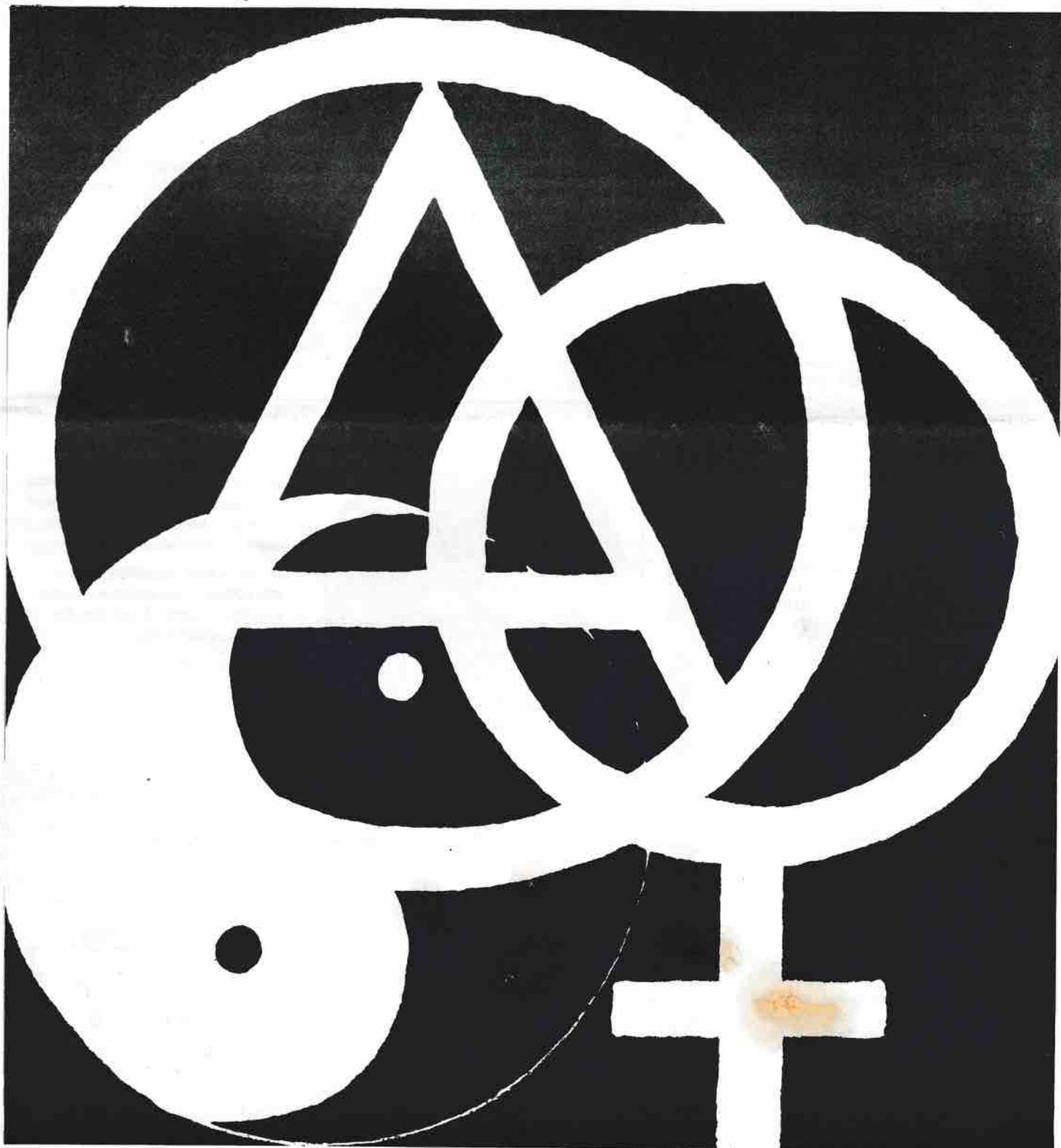
Authority and control:
Green alternatives

FoE's political dilemma

Gandhians or Gandhians?

Greening David Owen

No.26 October 1984 30p



GREEN LINE

34 Cowley Road, Oxford
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GREEN LINE is part of the international green movement. It reflects the concerns of the alternative consensus which is rejecting most of the norms of capitalist industrial society as well as the established ideologies of right, left and centre. The greens are far from exclusive: greenness is a perspective rather than an ideology. Anarchists, socialists, pagans, Christians, feminists, gays, punks, hippies, vegans and so on all rub shoulders.

Thanks, Richard!

Green Line has benefitted for 2½ years from the considerable artistic talents of Richard Hunt. It is difficult to overstate his contribution to the magazine, particularly the covers he has designed for all the issues to date. But with 'Green Anarchist' making more demands on his time, he has to make a choice - and leave us. So our style will change to a degree. And we'd like to hear from anyone within striking distance of Oxford who would like to help on Green Line: typing, drawing, pasting up, editing - you name it, we need it. A few hours a month would make all the difference.

Deadlines

Next issue out November 1. All articles in by October 6, news and shorts by October 13 please.

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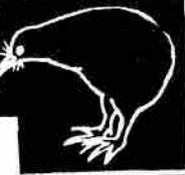
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CHANGE THE SYSTEM

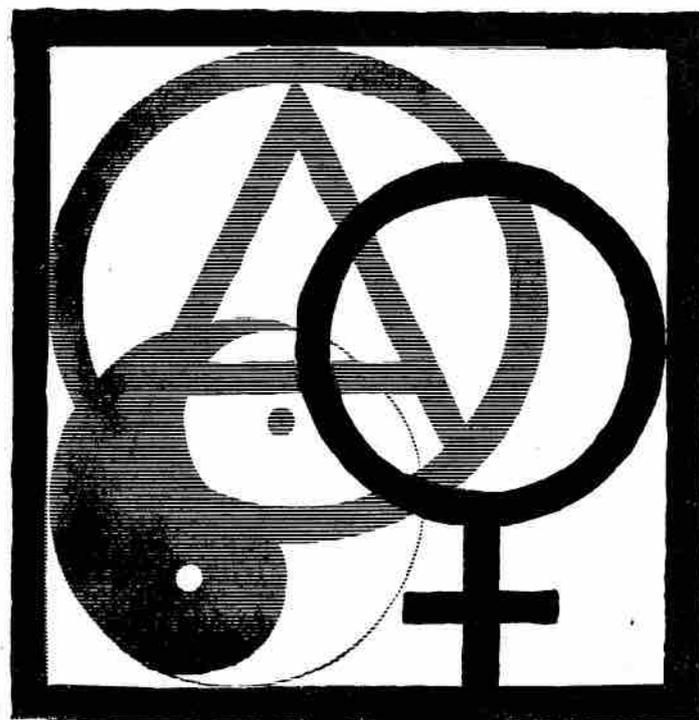
I FOUND THIS very hard to write, but have some very strong feelings and thoughts which I wanted to explore. I would like to stress that these are only my personal feelings at the present time, feelings that have been bounced around with other women and men. Writing this has made me even more wary of the isolating, one-sided nature of this form of dialogue, but it did help somewhat in clarifying my thoughts.

For me, I feel there's a connection between anarchism, feminism and the green movement, and that's in the way we organise, whether it be organising for effective political action or organising our personal, domestic lives. Anyway, the personal is political, isn't it? And for me, anarchism, that word and idea which conjures all kinds of negative and fearful images, is liberating.

It's the means and the ends argument. If we want to live in a world with a holistic, ecological approach to our relationship with each other and the natural environment, then surely the process of getting there should intimately reflect that. Everyone involved in working for social change is involved in different aspects of society, has come from different social and political backgrounds with different ranges and depths of experience and of education, formal and informal, but it's the way we relate to people in organising our daily lives that reflects what we are working towards.

It's the way we organise

It seems we have to work out new ways of organising that will challenge the unquestioning belief in the necessity of the state and break its hold on our hearts and minds, and for women to come into their own. They should be the antithesis of hierarchical methods because hierarchy and its intrinsic value system is the very method that has put the world on this road to disaster. And it's the hierarchical, competitive system that supports the functions of the state which in turn perpetuates the hierarchical system through the bureaucratic institutions of law, education, military and government. That then gets legitimated every few years through the fallacy of



the electoral process.

We, the people, don't need the state. It disempowers and divides us while maintaining those with economic and political power, and that power is derived from the competitive hierarchical view of the world.

For me, alternative politics is about your way of life - not party politics, which is a power game where people (usually men) fight it out to have the veto over the direction of society. One can organise politically without having to be a "party". It has to be a movement of and from the people, involving us in the process of empowerment. Energy needs to be eroded and drained from the central bureaucracy, so that decisions affecting the direction and quality of a person's life are made with their direct involvement. This involves giving space to people to allow them to explore their own understanding of the world. It's an ecological process that understands the need for diversity and tolerance, through cooperative and collective organising and decision-making.

In a decentralised society with a federation of autonomous communities and tribes, there is no need for the tentacles of the state, and I don't feel we'll get there unless the state and its power base withers away at the same time.

I go by experience from a long time ago, but I do feel that delegated power corrupts. At the age of 9 I was put in a position of authority at school as team leader, and stood in for the teacher while he'd gone out of the class. I took a point off a girl for talking (as I was supposed to) which resulted in her getting the cane because at the end of the week she had three minus points. She pleaded with me to forget that last point, but no, the rules had to be obeyed; and I felt even then how that position of power had separated me from the rest of the class in some unconscious way.

Delegated power corrupts

It deeply affected me, and I have never forgotten it. I vowed at the time that I would never accept a prefectship if offered at the next school. When

that occasion arose I was even more unshaken in my belief and watched in horror as my friends, now prefects, were unthinkingly dishing out discipline and enforcing the arbitrary rules in order for them to obtain their sixth-form privileges and respectability for university - something they had moaned about in their earlier years. They had changed through their compliance. For me, that model of unquestioning obedience to hierarchical authority at school was the rehearsal for fitting in with the demands of the state and the maintenance of the exploitative unjust society we live in. By not challenging it the model was reinforced.

We're at a very experimental, exploratory stage, but I feel we must be aware of the links between hierarchical structures and the role of the state in perpetuating and maintaining the divorce from our spiritual and physical connection with the earth and the cosmos. Conforming to the hierarchical structures entails the development of the ego. Women have been less pressured than men to develop their egos because of the role this patriarchal state has given them. Therefore women are more likely to take the lead in working on the antidote and are closer to it. If there was a matriarchy before this era of patriarchy, then maybe now is the time to develop a self-regulating balance between the sexes, which also involves looking at our sexuality and the development of green feminist technology

By working cooperatively/collectively, one's relationship with the world and people changes, and with that comes a change in one's self. The urges to dominate, butt in and control have to be subdued. By really listening to others and helping them express their thoughts and feelings, everyone is learning, and people regain their direct connection to decisions that affect their lives. One is working for the group rather than legitimising and strengthening one's position in the pecking order.

On equal terms

We're all caught up in this chain of oppressive relationships and it does seem necessary, initially, to organise autonomously for a while in the groupings of sex, race and class that this society has divided us into. Eventually then we can break down the divisions and work together. By coming together separately each grouping is allowed the space to express their ideas and feelings and develop their skills and needs in a supportive, more understanding and less oppressive environment. People don't have that additional pressure of overcoming that ingrained expectancy of the worth, role and skills of another group.

We have to meet each other on equal terms before we can truly work together effectively: otherwise the same old patterns of relating perpetuate themselves. Organising separately is far from being divisive, it's a healing process - we're all working towards the same ideal.

Greenham seems to demonstrate the power that can come from creative autonomous organising and living. Support groups are spread throughout the country taking Greenham everywhere. Although the issue of Cruise and peace has been denounced by some feminists as diversionary and middle class, it's that open collective discussion and decision-making process among women, which is both anarchist and feminist, that has enabled the links in the chain to Cruise to be increasingly exposed and acted upon. It has brought more and more different kinds of women working and organising together, because the

divisions created through hierarchy are being broken down over common ground. Connections have now been made to the whole of the nuclear fuel cycle with attention increasingly focussed on the British multinational RTZ and its illegal apartheid supporting uranium mining activities in Namibia; to racism; to supporting miners' wives; making connections with women in prison and others who have come against the arbitrary powers of the police; and with the movement for a nuclear-free and independent Pacific. Who knows what will happen during the women's action of September 20 - 30, but many more women will be empowered with that infectious, positive, liberating energy.

However, the personal change necessary for collective processes to work ideally, comes slowly in practice because we - men and women - have so much conditioning to overcome. But that change is part of the process, and I do feel that if new structures for organising our collective lives are going to come about, they have to develop from the base of true collective decision-making and cooperative working practices. □

Sigrid Shayer

BREAK UP MASS SOCIETY

I LIKE the questing liveliness of Green Line, but from whence comes its pronounced whiff of 19th century political polemic?

Perhaps there is a failure to grasp something of considerable importance to what it is seeking to do; a supposition that the mass society in which we now live is a moral entity subject to moral considerations and responsive to moral postulates.

Since most Eco Party members and those, even those, who promote green groups, appear to suppose that this is the case, it thus becomes of considerable importance to define and promote what one believes is the correct moral approach.

Shall it be socialism, or anarchism, or communism, or liberalism, or not? Or what? Shall it be Christian, Buddhist, Feminist, Vegan, Taoist, or what? One can go on and on, but once a stance is adopted then all sorts of consequential matters become important.

Is the stance to be based on a hierarchical structure? Can such a structure in any case be avoided? And since by definition all other stances can scarcely fail to be unorthodox, if not heretical, how can they be incorporated without the dangers of a split? How to preserve the crucible of the one true faith in the fires of controversy and discord?

And so we are back where we were, I mean where we were more than a hundred years ago, worrying ourselves about structures and barricades, about orthodoxy and heresy, about loyalty and betrayal, about the need for a strong central voice and how to combine it with the need for unambiguous local autonomy and so on. All old stuff and quite beside the point of our present predicament.

For despite whatever we may assume, or whatever we

may be encouraged or conditioned to assume, a mass society is not a moral entity at all, it is a power entity. It is an entity based on the twin drives for profit (which of course is a form of power), or for power itself through political office.

A firm which does not seek to maximise its profits sooner or later finds itself displaced by the forces of the market, forces which favour those firms which do. The same holds true in mass politics: the politician who does not devote all his or her energies to getting to the top of the greasy pole is likely to be outdistanced by others who are more singleminded in reaching their objective.

Moral considerations are either non-existent or subordinate in both cases; in neither case are they determinative.

Hence, to put it very mildly indeed, it is not a scrap of use addressing the language of morality to entities of power. The only language such entities are able to respond to is the language of power itself. Exceptions to this rule will no doubt spring very readily to mind, but since they are exceptions it may be more worthwhile to focus on the general drift.

How then can any moral principle, be it peace, fair shares, holistic living or whatever, be advanced? I want to suggest that the language of morality can only be addressed with any hope of effectiveness to moral social entities, as distinct from power entities.

Moral entities by their nature are bound to be small. The reason for this is that there are stark physical limits to the size of any unit of society in which the members can have a moral measure of their relationships and of each others' concerns. As Gandhi wisely observed, you cannot have morality without community.

We may thus define a community as:

A social unit in which the personal relationships of its members are the strongest force determining its nature.

This does not mean that within a community people will not quest for profit or power; what it does mean is that such forces can only operate within the constraints of the community's consensual moral judgement. It also means that within the mass society there are no such constraints for the simple reason that within the last century and a half the mass society has effectively destroyed community. That is what a mass society is, an entity without any organic internal structure, one in a continuous ferment of profit- or power-orientated turmoil in which the scum invariably floats to the top.

Let us be clear that only an organically structured form of society can respond to moral pressures, and it is because we have allowed the forces of profit and power to destroy organic community life, whether in our rural villages or our urban neighbourhoods, that we are now confronted by a global crisis of war and ecological disruption at all.

The challenge before us then is as unfashionable and unpopular as it is inescapable; we need to set about the task of recreating neighbourhood. I am not talking here of cosmetic exercises in the provision of table tennis tables for teenagers, or of a monthly bowl of soup from a community stockpot for the elderly and the indigent, however desirable these may be.

We need now to break up the mass society before it destroys us, and one way to do this is to reassert

the power of community in both political and economic matters.

Every community, of let us say a mere 500 adults, needs to have its own community council elected by its members. Each council needs to regulate economic affairs within its area, run its own school, organise its own finance centre for banking, insurance, pensions and so on, appoint its own police, run its own clinic and other items of social furniture and so on.

Where any single task is beyond its resources, such as running a secondary school, it will be free to work in association with other local councils, always assuming that such a step involves no surrender of its own decision-making prerogatives.

The long and the short of all this is that the revolution towards peace, wholeness and decency is not up there at Westminster nor at the next Eco Party Conference (and another spate of quite the most eminently immaculate resolutions), nor in the next Green Gathering, or in the next international congress for peace, friendship and love all round; it is quite simply here, for each one of us, on our doorstep.

When Jesus said, "Love thy neighbour," he surely supposed each one of his hearers had a neighbour. It is noteworthy he did not say, "Love thy fellow citizen of the Roman Empire." This is a challenge we dare not duck.

This item is already too long, and I must reserve the question of how we go about restructuring the whole basis of our life in society so that power really does emanate from the base and really does control the top, to another occasion.

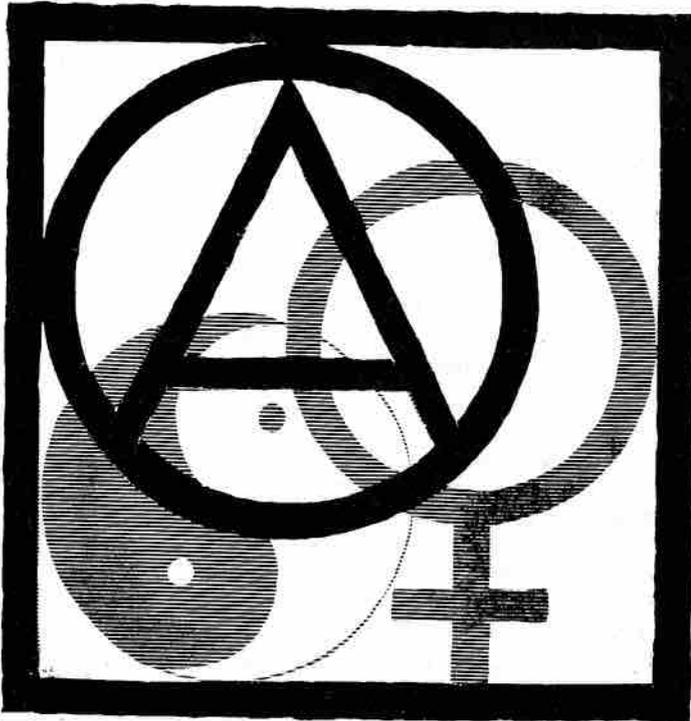
Here I would only observe that in the unpropitious circumstances now confronting us we will get nowhere if we simply go to our neighbours and say, "Let us form a community." The shortest distance between two points is seldom a straight line, especially where obstacles are apt to be mountainous, and the task of community building will require far more tact, diplomacy, persistence and genuine human good will than has ever been displayed in the to-ings and fro-ings in the chancelleries of the great powers. □

John Papworth

BREAK THE SYSTEM

LIKE HOARY PROPHETS very much alone in the universe, Greens have preached the vision, the ideal of what a future ecological society could be like, alternative enclaves have been constructed and blueprints proclaimed. The ideas are there, the thought is there, and in small-scale pockets the practice is also there. What is missing is the means of social transformation - or how any of this might come about on a meaningful scale.

To be realistic, this means how the power structures which govern our exploitative world can be broken, the recognition of the necessary unity of destruction and creation for change. This does not entail a rigid revolutionary ideology to be adhered to and awaited; it means a tenuous theory of social change, I think necessarily of 'revolution', to give direction, to be discarded, amended and used only



where useful. We must look at how social control is maintained, who maintains it and in whose interest; and how it can be undermined and by whom. My suggestions are tentative, and if some of what I say seems unfair, my views result as much from rejection of my own past opinions as from others'.

Let me first look at an existing green position. Roger Hallam wrote in a letter to Green Line (GL24): "I'm sure I speak for many readers in saying that every side of the barricades is the wrong side." I'm sure he does, but he also speaks of what he would like the world to be like, and not of what it is; he is re-stating the ecological ideal and prescribing a course of action from it. His statement reflects much of what is inadequate in Green thought; the denial that there is an 'enemy' and the refusal to initiate conflict, supported by a strict Gandhian consistency of means and ends. It is a rejection of any class-based politics, of the control over everyday lives and the powers that govern them and conflict with them.

In practical terms, what activity results from this perspective? The ecological ideal of a nonviolent and harmonious world is taken, and any action inconsistent with it is denied. Useful work is put into creating viable alternatives to existing means and structures, but this does not in itself threaten the power structure: the state will wither away by self-sufficiency alone, as Gandhi desired. Similarly, Green ideas are communicated in a variety of ways, although these often appear a long way from public preoccupations. But what these activities amount to is a general waft of social consciousness as if, with the good ground, ears would be opened, the rough ground recognise the error of its ways, and society evolve into a harmonious ecological pasture. Evolution, not revolution; co-operation, not conflict: that is the ideal and that is how to manifest it. Thus Greens campaign to change people's minds in order to change the system - somehow these new-found opinions will evolve into a new-found reality.

What lies at the heart of this is the belief that without conflict, without violence, we can make ourselves a better world. We campaign to make incremental or profound change in the nature of our

society. But this belief is itself part of the problem, part of the illusion, and stems from a limited critical perspective.

Firstly, we are not simply trying to make a better world, but fighting actual death and oppression now. And secondly, we are fighting a system whose material base is also its means of social control, and there are those who will not allow that system to be cast aside. We have been sold a democratic con - that we can talk people round and achieve substantive change by gaining support: but not only have those above closed their ears to the arguments below, but by attempting liberal democratic reforms we talk ourselves back into the system which is itself the problem. It is attempting to separate the cause and effect, when in modern capitalism they have become united to the degree that the end is the means, and the only possible end is of everything.

The walls must go

I am not simply talking of revolution rather than reform, but of struggle for liberation now, since only that can free us from the system, its masters and its inevitable consequences. Capitalism and the commodity system, both sides of the Iron Curtain, has the strangle-hold and provides the barricade. A leviathan, it sucks up everything and spews out its own self-justifying double-speak ideology under the invisible controls of our businessmen, our generals, our politicians, and other "defenders of the public interest". Its exploitative and dangerous nature is undeniable; it threatens to destroy us all and our world in war or eco-crisis, every day it kills physically in the Third World and mentally in the slavery of our factories, and reduces life to the sedentary image consumption of the universal peep-show. To talk of introducing any truly Green perspective in terms of liberation into this is simply to attempt the impossible: to make the prison self-sustainable. The walls themselves have to go, and their defenders. When we challenge them, the kid glove is replaced by the water cannon and the pistol; though ours may be a satin-padded cell, try to break out and they make stark your prison walls.

The pyramid of control

So by the very definition of liberation struggle there is an enemy and a means of control. Capitalism supports a pyramid of competing and hierarchical interests which now stretch from London to Johannesburg, from New York to the slums of Rio (which is worth remembering for those who sympathise with SWAPO or the ANC and yet condemn violence on picket lines or in the City of London; nonviolence as another Western luxury). I exploit by my consumption of offered goods, but at the top of this pyramid are those who control, who make conscious decisions, who use their "invisible hands", and who will pay others to maintain subservience. They are ultimately "the enemy" since they will not deny their interests; and down the pyramid lies a whole range of relative exploitation which must be broken apart. The miners, for example, represent an exploited group with the choice (or none) of a life's ill-paid labour or the dole under the con of the work ethic; they should be supported for that alone, and recent wildcat actions give the best sign of individual rejection and defiance. But the exploited are now not only the traditional "workers", but all those who are "proletarianised" by the rule of the two-

sided coin of the commodity system and wage labour.

How then is control maintained within this structure? Capitalism has developed into a circular system where the ideology, the culture, the value-system, has become the material reality and vice versa. The two complement and perpetuate one another in a cycle of material production and reproduction. Thus the means of social control has both a material and ideological angle - ideology in the sense of defining life and its possibilities, what the situationists call the spectacle. By the nature of the material system we must work to survive; through the pervasion of the "spectacular" perspective there seems no other possibility, and this in effect becomes what we "want". So the commodity system, through separation from our desires in material life and in our goals, becomes both the material problem and the means of social control. "That's life," and so in one sense it is, but only within the confines of a world defined by those who profit from it, and any attempt to overturn this must recognise both the material conditions and the spectacle which complements it.

Anger into energy

The attempt must always be made to bring both rejection of this system and positive action against it, in ourselves and in those we meet, leading ultimately to struggle. To preach peace and nonviolence is to bring rejection but may also bring pacification; the end of the nonviolent road often seems to be passivity amid an exploitative structure. Nonviolence can only be viewed within the context of the necessary struggle; anger is necessary to bring forth the love we want, and it is a question of channeling the anger, converting it to energy - the energy that can cause change. Nonviolence may often be exactly what suits the ruler.

Self-controlled groups

Ultimately what we look for is autonomous struggle by self-controlled groups with a critique of the power structure and its means of control; a rising of the subject where nothing remains outside itself - where people make up their own minds beyond the images and the defined possibilities. This comes from praxis - critical thought leading to action - and this must be aroused in every struggle against outside control and from every street corner. The miners' strike is a struggle against control of work and the conditions of survival, a basic clash of interests which broadens with every conflict, going beyond the slave-bound "right to work". Such conflicts should be supported as the threats to power and the rejection of material slavery they are; it is from such conflicts that real change is born.

To reject is to starve

But how to achieve this praxis? Like Leninists on a picket-line, Greens often present a neatly packaged manifesto marked "policy and ideology" which sits on the shelf for the confused political shopper to consume. Possibly the ecological soft-sell has its purpose, but in itself it is no more than that; another ideal, another ideology. To subvert is to question; to continually pose those

questions which the system cannot afford to have put. Why should I do their work today? Why should I obey my teacher, my parent, my boss, my union leader, my politician? The answer may simply be "To survive"; but this leads to the rejection necessary for affirmative action. Paulo Freire has done pioneering literacy and cultural work in Brazil towards what he calls "conscientization"; the individual understanding, defining and acting upon their own world. This is his pedagogical cultural action for revolution; we too must continually question and subvert our culture and its assumptions.

This can be done by questioning in posters, leaflets, by speaking, and by juxtaposing the spectacle and the unanswerable question so as to expose the control and the contradictions. But above all this can be done with drama - unavoidable, emotional and intellectual - with street theatre, "guerilla theatre" (anywhere may be a forum), and other forms of direct action. These questions may at times seem rude or patronising, but they must be asked in order to see beyond the advertisement to the selling of images and the profit and control it engenders, beyond the "right to work" to the acceptance of slavery for survival, beyond parliamentary democracy to the facade which shrouds the ruler; and to move towards saving ourselves and the earth and making our own decisions. In any town, a small group can do so much towards this.

Not by their rules

This provides one side of the coin, but the material aspect remains; for many, to reject is to starve. The rejection must lead to positive action, to struggle, but always within the subject's control. Direct action may take two forms: rebuilding our lives, and confronting the hostile power. Alternative ways of life and survival are already being created and must continue to grow; they can provide the necessary basis but remain within the capitalist context and rarely directly threaten it. So the conflict must be built and faced through direct action in existing struggle and the creation of the new. At present much of this remains at the symbolic level. During Reagan's visit, thousands went to Trafalgar Square to hear preachers, some sat down in front of an empty embassy, and a handful went to Lancaster House and vainly attempted to affect the Summit. That Saturday there were 250,000 or more people in London, all against the Bomb, and I saw Reagan drive past smiling and waving; the Summit was a success. We could have stopped them planning international death and changed something directly; instead we asked them nicely and played the numbers game under the control of CND - "a successful, peaceful demonstration".

Some may say such action is undemocratic. It is anti-parliamentary; yet direct democracy - control over our lives - is direct action. This action can be taken into all spheres of life, and individual action can grow. The Angry Brigade, whose strategy I don't endorse, wrote in a communique: "To believe that our struggle could be restricted to the channels provided to us by the pigs, WAS THE GREATEST CON."

The law is their protector and no substantive change in the power structure may come within its limits. We have to stop playing their game, by their rules, in every part of our lives, or we conform to their structure and play right into their hands. □

Mike Hancock



THE ARMS RACE has not occurred in a vacuum. The present world situation stems from centuries of trends of thinking and behaviour. We humans are only now beginning to realise how powerful we are - our thoughts and words influence our deeds and the deeds of others in our own and future generations. This is known in Eastern philosophies as the law of Karma, and in the West as the law of cause and effect - "as ye sow, so shall ye reap." We have generated the present dangers by believing, propagating and acting upon several serious fallacies. I will outline a few and suggest to the reader some remedying thoughts which, if repeated and integrated into the conscious and unconscious mind, will serve to change the context of perception, and thereby ultimately the experience of the physical world, for the better.

The first fallacy is that man can control nature. Women know that we can't so they don't try. All peoples who live in harmony with the earth know that the earth will feed, support and nourish us if we respect the balance of life. Our Western culture has since about 1500 AD concentrated on male-dominated, yang, linear, analytical, reductionist ways of thinking that have created great technological progress and, in parallel, a serious loss of contact with the yin qualities of intuition, receptiveness, feelings, love, and a holistic approach to our lives and purpose. (See Fritjof Capra - "The Turning Point".) A new awareness is growing that sees more interconnectedness in all phenomena and that is more responsive to natural rhythms and planetary needs. Thoughts which help create this awareness include:

I NOW RESPECT ALL HUMANS EVERYWHERE AS MY FELLOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

I NOW LOVE AND RESPECT THE BEAUTIFUL EARTH AND ALL HER PRODUCTS.

IT IS SAFE AND HEALING FOR ME TO FEEL AND EXPRESS MY EMOTIONS, RIGHT NOW, TODAY.

I LOVE AND APPROVE OF MYSELF AT ALL TIMES.

(Do not expect these words to trip off the tongue with ease at first - most of us have been conditioned to believe the opposite! Reprogramming any computer, bio- or otherwise, takes time and commitment.)

A second fallacy is that we can always change something or somebody for the better by fighting or force. If we perceive something as wrong, and try to resist it, we give it mental energy and it becomes even bigger in our lives. Most of us do not yet understand the laws governing the principles of creativity of thought. That is why we are creating dangerous imbalances. Those who do understand have consistently advocated a non-judgemental, non-critical attitude - a way of looking at life that accepts what is, without resisting. Resistance leads to persistence. What we accept, we have power to improve. Allied to this idea is the truth that each person on the planet is doing the best they can in the moment, given their upbringing, conditioning, culture and personal awareness. Arguing with someone's beliefs is a waste of time and only causes conflict. All we can do is to say our truth, and if it is of a high life-enhancing content it will make a greater difference. We can't change other people - we can only change ourselves. So.

I NOW TOTALLY ACCEPT EVERYTHING AND EVERY SITUATION IN MY LIFE.

ALL STATEMENTS ARE EQUALLY TRUE.

I NOW FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF LIVING IN A PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS WORLD.

EVERYTHING I THINK, SAY AND DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

I AM NOW OPEN TO HIGHER TRUTH.

Governments conduct "defence" for us because we think that we can be badly hurt and are powerless to defend ourselves. We have such a fear of death that we pass it on up the pyramid until our governments serve us up with the ultimate death machine. The only way down is to take back our power, take back our fear, and to look at the best fortified fallacy of the lot: the fallacy that death is inevitable.

Some readers may find the suggestion that death is not inevitable as outrageous - even heretical! The truth is, however, that we chose to be here, we choose (consciously or often unconsciously) our circumstances, we choose our fate, and we choose how and when to die. Death is not God with a big fly-swatter. Death is not a punishment. Death is not the end. Death is merely a change of focus of existence that most of us have experienced and forgotten dozens of times, and that we can have any time we want. If we fear it, we give energy to it - we have given nuclear energy to it now - enough to destroy all of us fourteen times over! Mass paranoia. I defy any reader to prove to me that he or she will die (don't try too hard please - post-humous awards are never quite the same, are they?!). I am alive right now, and I can prove that very simply. If we face up to death, and also face up to the real opportunities of life, we do not need to give away our power to governments. When we take back that power and take responsibility for our own hopes and fears, we find we can work in love with new clarity, purpose and effectiveness. We can ask our governments to give us a peaceful, harmonious world without weapons, and they will.

I AM ALIVE NOW, SO MY LIFE URGE IS STRONGER THAN MY DEATH URGE. IF I CONTINUE STRENGTHENING MY LIFE URGE, I WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE IN HEALTH AND YOUTHFULNESS AS LONG AS I LIKE.

I HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO CREATE HEAVEN ON EARTH WITH FRIENDS OF LIKE MIND, AND I CHOOSE TO START RIGHT NOW, TODAY. □

Tony Mellows

SEEING GREEN

The Politics of Ecology Explained

Jonathon Porritt
Foreword by Petra Kelly

In **Seeing Green** Jonathon Porritt, Director of Friends of the Earth and a leading member of the Ecology Party, outlines the nature and significance of the recent upsurge in green politics. In a personal, informative style he explains why our industrial way of life cannot be sustained for much longer and looks at many of the hidden costs – economic, social, environmental and spiritual – that undermine our real standard of living. He shows that the problem cannot wait to be dealt with in the future – the crisis is with us now.

Since the election of twenty-seven Green members to the West German parliament in 1983, the unique appeal and importance of green politics have been more widely realised.

Seeing Green is the first book on green politics in the UK and the foreword by Petra Kelly, leader of the Greens in West Germany, draws the book firmly into the framework of the European-wide Ecology movement.

With a refreshing combination of vision, common sense and political realism, Jonathon Porritt presents an alternative approach to our current problems which goes far beyond conventional political solutions, and challenges all politicians to change their ways. It is a compelling case. And one that will make clear why it is that the Green voice – in Europe, America, all over the world – is increasingly making itself heard.

272 pages, hardback **£15.00** (0 631 13892 7) paperback **£3.95** (0 631 13893 5)

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BASIL BLACKWELL

108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF

MOLESWORTH

THE FIFTH national Green Gathering was held, not in the cosiness of a Somerset farm, but on Ministry of Defence land - USAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire. It was a new departure for the Green Gathering in more ways than one.

More important, it was not just a gathering of green people for the purpose of sharing our greenness, but a stage in the process of taking back the land from the military and putting it to good use. At present the base is a wide open area of grassland, and wheat had been planted there in the spring by local greens. The main purpose of the Gathering was to harvest that crop, intended for the starving people of Eritrea, and to prepare the land for next year's crop. It was also an opportunity for more people to settle in and make this land their permanent home before work is due to start on making Molesworth a cruise missile base next February.

The Gathering itself was different from previous ones in many ways. The most important difference was that it was free, financed by a large donation from CND and many smaller ones from individuals. There was no gate and no charge for entry. When you take money off people there is a strong tendency for them to feel they're "punters" and to expect things to be done for them. But at Molesworth people were not only looking for ways in which they could help, but seeing what needed doing and doing it on their own initiative.

A good example of this was the sight of people happily up to their elbows in rubbish, sorting it into compost, burnable, recyclable metal, and glass, etc., and setting up separate containers for the rubbish thereafter. Previously all this energy would have gone into the thankless task of taking money at the gate; at Molesworth it went into work that's positively green.

From the practical, physical point of view this was one of the few signs that this was a gathering of greens rather than any other bunch of pleasant people. There was a stall with a windmill for its electricity supply, and someone cooking on a sawdust stove - a highly economical way of using firewood. But these individual cases were overshadowed by the continuing use of disposable plates, cups and cutlery by the majority of stallholders. The fact is it's extremely difficult to run a food stall economically without using disposables; and it's a problem we must all face up to and not just leave to the stallholders themselves. At future gatherings perhaps we could all carry our own cup and bowl and wash them up ourselves. Sure it involves some effort, but we're never going to save this planet without any effort at all.

This year there was some amplified music. A number of people complained about it, and the volume was gladly turned down. In fact the electric music was a useful contribution because fewer acoustic musicians than usual turned up and the Gathering would have been short on music without it. It also represented a new development, a widening of the circle which a Green Gathering is, without in any way losing the unique atmosphere which by now has grown strong enough to handle a little variety.

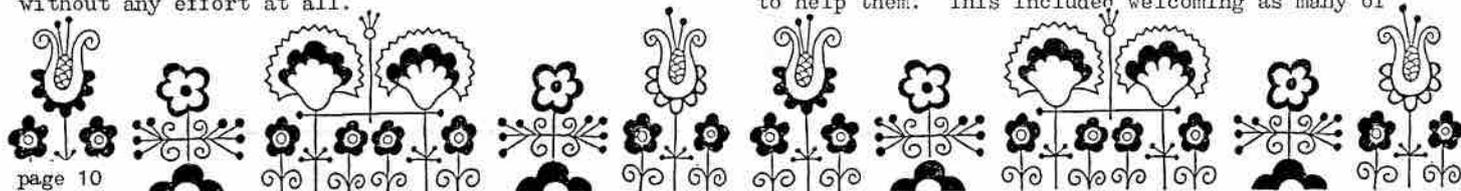
There were puppet shows, theatre, clowns, dragon processions, juggling and fire-eating, swingboats and a roundabout. There were constant workshops on subjects all the way from juggling to the problem of reconciling anarchy with structure, including such things as chanting and drumming, tai chi, rebirthing, and a men's group.

One day was especially for the children, with a party and a show put on by themselves. Some kids who felt they'd been dragged along by their parents began to feel really involved at this point, and the day was certainly a good innovation. It included a sweat lodge session especially for the children, the first time anyone can remember this being done. It was a great success, as was the women-only sweat lodge. The latter was one of the most beautiful spells of the Gathering, with men sitting quietly round the Tipi circle cooking and holding babies, while women made strong magic in the middle.

The harvesting and preparing of the new ground was somewhat separate from the Gathering itself, but many people went down to help with the building of the peace chapel. It was hardly a typical building site: people were chipping the cement off old bricks, gardening, chanting, drumming, building, preparing straw for thatch, and playing music, all together. The Bishop of Huntingdon came to take part in the dedication ceremony, but it was by no means a Christian monopoly. There were Buddhists, Witches, Pagans and others taking part.

The Gathering became a real home in several ways. There were daily site meetings to which anyone could come and discuss the running of the community. The atmosphere at the meetings was very peaceful and non-competitive. Molesworth was a home base from which people went out to the blockade of nearby USAF Alconbury.

When the news came that the Convoy had been attacked by the police in Yorkshire, their homes wrecked, their money stolen, the men arrested and pressured into signing false statements, a feeling went round the site that we wanted to do everything we could to help them. This included welcoming as many of



I WAS THERE . . . I WAS THERE . . .

them who wanted and were able to come and share our home. Previously the Gathering has shunned the Convoy as people too rough and immoral to be associated with - afraid of soiling our image. This time it was different. Though hardly anyone would deny that the Convoy are the roughest end of the travelling people, we saw them as people in need rather than as a threat to our respectability.

At its peak the Gathering numbered about two thousand people. Those who stayed to make Molesworth their permanent home could be numbered in dozens. But the energy that has stayed there is

formidable. One person said, "I want to put my whole energy into this place all winter. I want to build something they'll be ashamed to knock down in front of the television cameras when the construction crews come here in February."

THE NEXT BIG EVENT will be on OCTOBER 20, when a winter wheat crop will be sown on the land ploughed during the Gathering. Following that, at the WINTER SOLSTICE, we will be gathering at Molesworth for an ALTERNATIVE TO CHRISTMAS.

See you there!

Patrick Whitefield



Open day at Fairford

WE SPENT a very enjoyable week at Groundwell Farm near Swindon (Thank you) where we prepared for the Open Day at Fairford on Sunday July 22. We made lots of banners, some of which were put up outside, such as "This is a FAIR we can't afford", "Ideal War Exhibition", and "Don't Open It, Close It." A few days before the Open Day we went road-painting, which was still there large and clear for the visitors (about 50,000).

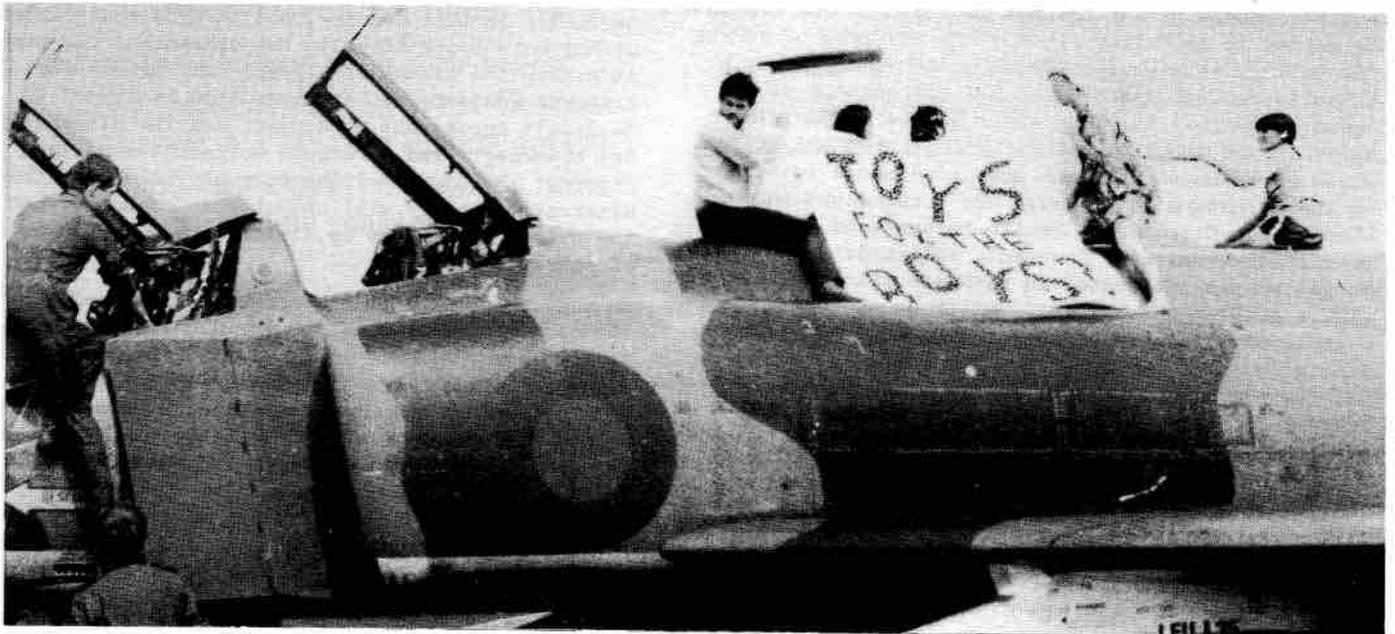
On the day we got in with none of the trouble we thought we might have had. We didn't allow for our feelings of powerlessness in the face of such an overwhelming event where so many come to marvel at all the war machines. So we were unable to do some of the things we had prepared. Fifteen of us inside, and some of us with the local CND group outside, handed out official-looking leaflets. Inside we put "Designed for killing" stickers on suitable objects such as war toys, model kits, and military equipment. Two of us were escorted out of the base just for handing out leaflets, and most of the rest were told to stop by MOD police as the Americans objected to us exercising our democratic rights "on their patch".

At 4.30 and just before the Red Arrows display, five of us climbed on to a Phantom jet and displayed two banners reading "Designed for killing" and "Toys for the Boys". At the same time the others on the ground threw two dolls covered in blood in front of the plane to symbolise all the people killed by such planes. After ten minutes we came down voluntarily and were arrested for a "breach of the peace". The pilot, who had been very anxious while we were up there, rushed up to inspect the plane. We were then accused of removing a screw which we were nothing to do with. Later at Cirencester police station (where we were held for four hours) we were questioned by C.I.D. about the missing screw and about a missing limb from one of the bloody dolls! Had one of us put it down the air intake!!!!

We were released without charge "pending further investigation into the plane", and told to report to Cirencester police station on August 18 to be charged, unless told otherwise in writing.

In the event, charges were dropped.

Andy.



'Head for the lifeboats'

with David Owen

MIKE BELL interviews the leader of the SDP

WORKING ON THE assumption that the change to green consciousness takes place gradually, we ought to be able to detect embryonic green thinking even in people we think of as totally ungreen. I also had an idea that in some areas politicians are not so much against green ideas, as ignorant of them. So I went along to talk to DAVID OWEN to see if I could detect any green fringes.

I met him late in the afternoon, exhausted after an afternoon in the House slating Maggie over the GCHQ affair. It was a really weird experience finding myself on the way in holding the door open for a grey and tired old man who I suddenly realised was Michael Foot; and then later in the middle of the interview having to break off while Owen disappeared for a TV interview. I was left wondering how people exhausted by the process of government could ever implement policies to promote well-being and spiritual values.

I started off giving Owen a long spiel about the way Greens see the world: the whole bit about linking ecology, peace, feminism and the rest, and the complicated bit about Cartesian Newtonian dualism. I didn't want him to get the idea that Greens were single-issue environmentalists! I also suggested to him that Labour and Tory philosophies were stuck into dualistic thinking because they saw the world in terms of competing opposites, and that the only salvation for the SDP was not the present middle-of-the-road position, but some new holistic perspective.

As he was a doctor, I thought I'd start off on health. I spelled out the difference between mechanistic and holistic medicine and brought in diet and environment. He seemed to be fairly clued in on the idea of seeing the patient as a whole. "I am a member of the Holistic Medical Association and the concept of the 'good physician' thinking wider than a mechanistic approach and thinking of the whole person and of the whole environment in which they live seems to me to be wholly natural and wise." He pointed out that when he was Minister of Health he produced the first preventative medicine document, and said: "I tried to get people interested in backache which is, after all, a problem which affects millions of people, and I would personally use manipulative medicine if a disc goes in my back... The idea that you should have to operate on a back when people have had skills like blacksmiths and others to put things back by manipulation is quite ridiculous."

He sees the trend towards prevention, self-help and alternatives as inevitable as pressures on the Health Service budget increase.

We then went on to agriculture, linking it with health through diet. I asked him whether the SDP would continue to subsidise farmers to destroy natural fertility and the countryside. At first his answers

were a bit confused, mixing up pesticides and fertilisers. I then explained about nitrates destroying the micro-organisms in the soil. He appeared not to have heard about this, but agreed that "we have been careless in our application of a lot of these newer chemical fertilisers. We've gone for greater yield without sometimes looking beyond the next two or three years." He then revealed, "I am not a great expert on this... but I do not find it difficult to believe that we are doing serious damage to the soil, to the environment generally, to the hedgerows, to wildlife." He was sympathetic in general terms to the idea of wholefood.

"We are doing serious damage to the soil and to the environment."

I pressed him on the disappearing countryside and asked him about land use planning. He didn't seem aware that urgent action was needed to save the remaining countryside, and did not seem to have considered the subject of land use planning. He certainly didn't have a pat answer, going on about the worries of interference, regulations and bureaucracy.

Taking a link through oil-based fertilisers to energy, I posed him various green ideas on this subject: road transport subsidised while public transport is ignored; wind energy ignored and millions spent on the nuclear programme; did government have a responsibility to restore order? His responses were part promising and part predictable.

He criticised past governments over conservation and said that the SDP would "combine short-term measures to alleviate unemployment with a conservation programme, so that you get an actual return on your investment." He agreed that public transport had been neglected in this country, but thought that "introducing more competition to bus operations ... brought it within the bounds of a great many people who hitherto would never have been able to travel." He didn't agree that wind power and the alternatives had been neglected. Perhaps he hadn't read the figures! He supported the commonly held myth that alternative energy will only become economic when the price of oil goes up, but stressed the importance of conservation.

On nuclear power his answers were less hopeful. "Developed countries of the world have a responsibility to seek their energy sources from nuclear power in part because ... in effect we are taking oil and coal from underdeveloped countries and upping world market prices." He saw no alternative to going ahead with nuclear power, pointing out "the problems of acid rain and the clearer and clearer evidence to link it with coal-fired power stations." The only good bit of news was that he did not like the PWR and wanted to "de-bug" the AGR! He was aware of the problems with the plutonium cycle but thought that "there has been a very considerable tightening up in that area."

Dr Owen thought the fast breeder should be continued and was very enthusiastic about fusion power. I gave him a whole lot of technical stuff on why they wouldn't work: he seemed to understand what I was saying, but it made no difference. When I said that many Greens considered the plutonium cycle to be immoral, he said that if we were talking of morals we have "got to face up to some of the problems that we face in terms of an overall energy problem in the world, firewood being the main source of energy for many people."

He was totally in favour of combined heat and power, but thought that "Greens had glossed over some of the problems of implementation." However, he agreed that "it's a farce really to have these power stations as they are with most of the heat going up the chimney." On acid rain, I told him that Greens felt that the CEGB, in setting up a 5-year study, were duplicating work and wasting time. He responded categorically, "I agree with the criticism of the delay. I think we should act now on sulphur pollution coming out of coal-fired power stations. It's a cost but I think it's rather like lead pollution. The evidence is now so strongly indicative, I think it justifies the expenditure."

I then moved on to economics and asked David Owen whether he agreed with the Club of Rome that there were limits to growth. Unfortunately, by mentioning the Club of Rome I had tied a noose for myself. He immediately hanged me on it. "No. I think the Club of Rome figures have been shown to be wrong. I think it's very interesting, the dynamic model that was used, but I think it's been totally wrong. Like a lot of biological predictions, it's got it wrong. We are seeing growth in a completely different way. We thought we saw limits to growth as a limitation in terms of the use of copper. Now we use optic fibre. We are moving into a completely different era, we are changing technologies... I think some of the most dire predictions of running out have been proven to be incorrect. The whole argument about adopting a policy of low growth, I think, is a flaw in the Green movement. I'll say to you quite bluntly I think it's wrong, and it's where they've lost a good deal of intellectual support."

"A policy of low growth is a
flaw in the Green Movement."

"I think they are right on two grounds. Firstly, to point out that there are certain sectors and certain areas where you can run into constraints because of supplies, and if you are also eating into resources at a very rapid rate by not careful planning. I think that they are probably right too to be rather pessimistic about the prospects for growth, and therefore say that you have got to adapt to a low-growth future... But adapting to low growth as a reality is very different from actually adopting a policy of low growth because you think it is good... We've not talked about some of the other sources of environmental pollution such as awful housing, squalor, poverty, hunger. It's very hard to provide these resources against a background of zero growth or very low growth."

I asked him about "green growth", a term which appeared in the Alliance Manifesto for Europe. Was it just a politician's fudge, or could he explain it? "The idea behind it is a very simple one. It's possible to get growth which is environmentally sensitive but is conscious of the problems of the environment, adjusts and adapts to it... I think the mistake that is made is to think that economic

growth must necessarily damage the environment, therefore we are against economic growth. By using the word green with growth I think one is trying to demonstrate that it is possible to grow in a way that is environmentally sound and not damaging, and that is possibly beneficial."

I then moved on to the subject of economics and tried a series of questions to illustrate the idea of pursuing growth in well-being or growth in what people receive, rather than pursuing economic growth for its own sake, and introduced the idea of replacing Gross National Product with an index which measured what people received rather than what was consumed by the whole society. I failed to make any progress on this - perhaps my question was not clearly put. After a long discussion he did agree that the calculation of GNP was a "nonsense" - in fact he seemed to assume that everybody knew that.

"I hope the Green Movement
penetrates the SDP."

Moving now to the subject of work, I asked him whether he thought that full employment as we understand it was either achievable or desirable. He had no trouble answering this question: "No, not on present parameters," and went on to say that working five days and retiring at 65 was purely a convention. Having established that he was not one of those politicians who thought that some new magic economic formula would bring back full employment, I pressed home the attack. What would the SDP propose to do when the North Sea oil revenues no longer pay the unemployment bill? "Head for the lifeboats, I should think ... oil revenues start declining from 1986 on ... it could well trigger off a balance of payments crisis again."

I found it rather incredible. Here he was, perfectly prepared to admit that full employment will not return, fully aware that North Sea oil revenues will decline and create an economic crisis at the end of the decade: yet so far as I am aware there is very little either in SDP policy or in the answers to my earlier questions which anticipates and deals with this.

At this point, with questions on Third World and Defence still to go, David Owen's secretary reminded him of his next appointment. I had three minutes left. I fired off a quick question on land in poor countries being used for export crops. He must have misunderstood, because he spent the three minutes criticising the naivete of my question. He did however seem to have taken on quite a lot of the Green criticism of Brandt. He agreed that "instead of us going and selling expensive desalination plants or something like that, that we ought to be trying to look at much lower tech." He also thought that we should be "trying to develop a more balanced economy for Third World developing countries where they are self-sufficient as much as possible."

So my original hunch was right - there are green fringes starting to grow, and there are whole areas where ignorance rather than opposition is the problem. Informing the influential is, in my view, the area of activity the Green movement most ignores.

Owen's final comment seemed hopeful on this: "You ought to be penetrating political movements: that's why I hope the Green movement penetrates the SDP." Anyone fancy taking up that challenge?



Campaign against the M40: a missed opportunity

ANY DAY NOW the Government will announce its final decision on the M40 extension proposals, thus bringing to an end a five-year campaign by Oxfordshire Friends of the Earth. JOE WESTON co-ordinated that campaign, and here he reflects on the ways in which it highlighted many of the problems faced by campaigning environmentalists in Britain.

FOR ME the campaign started in the autumn of 1979 when it became clear that the Tories wanted to build this "last great motorway". Early next year came confirmation of this desire with the publication of the Department of Transport proposals. In Oxford FoE we discussed our response to it, and it became immediately clear that the issues raised by the M40 were too large for a small group to tackle alone. So SMAC was formed. SMAC (Stop the M40 Action Committee) was to be an umbrella group for all local environmental groups to "pool resources, share information and work together for a common cause."

But one reason why we have so many environmental groups is that we cannot work together, nor do we have a common cause. If we could, and if we had, we would have a movement.

SMAC existed virtually in name only. People from other groups were involved but the groups themselves wanted to preserve their identities and so carried on in their own way. Slowly SMAC and FoE became indistinguishable as separate organisations, until SMAC was "disbanded" with the opening of the public inquiry in September 1982.

All this meant that FoE were tackling the campaign with virtually no resources. With no money, we took the decision to concentrate on a campaign which could win public support, funds and media coverage. We decided to use the butterflies of Bernwood Forest and Otmoor's tenuous links with Lewis Carroll as the focal point of the campaign. We eulogised Bernwood and Otmoor, elevating both these wildlife sites beyond their true status and perhaps overstating the threat the M40 posed to them.

As much as I love both these places and would hate to see them suffer motorway construction, wildlife was not the most important issue raised by the M40.

Over 5,000 people die each year on British roads, thousands more are stranded without public transport and even more suffer the economic disbenefits of present transport policy.

The reason these major issues were not the dominant feature of FoE's campaign was partly because we lacked the resources to take them up seriously, and partly because environmentalism suffers from an ideological dichotomy which helped steer us towards

our eventual course. Friends of the Earth is a pressure group with no long-term aims or stated philosophy. This suggests a belief that we live in a pluralist liberal democracy where social change can be brought about by pressure groups. Yet this is contrasted by basically socialist views - as with transport - which argue that the present system is organised around the production of profit. Similarly the 1979 Ecology Party manifesto advocated socialist transport and energy policy while making virtually fascist statements on population.

In our M40 campaign this contradiction was manifested in our attempts to save "nice" places for "nice" people and at the same time boycotting the inquiry for being unfair. On the one hand we play at middle class environmentalists trying to protect wildlife without really attacking the status quo; on the other we accuse the government of being corrupt capitalists who cannot be trusted to arrive at a fair decision after the inquiry.

It is, I believe, this contradiction that has confounded the growth of an environmental movement in Britain. It will continue to do so unless we can break free of the ideological dichotomy that results from mixing middle class values with socialist principles. Groups like Oxford FoE find themselves campaigning on major issues without an ideological base on which to structure their efforts. With few resources they are forced to adopt campaigns which can win public support and media coverage, even if that means supporting the status quo.

As I found out during the campaign, the public don't want to be told that cars and roads are bad - they like them. What they want are arguments that could stop the motorway but not bring any real change. Butterflies and Lewis Carroll are such arguments.

So in a way we sold out and took the easier course. But so long as we have no mass campaigning political movement on which to draw strength, we will all be open to such sell-outs.

Issues like the M40 are far too important to be left to quasi-conservative naturalist groups and ideologically lost environmentalists. The M40 was an opportunity to spell out how environmentalists would save lives, resources and wildlife. But it has been an opportunity lost because we have not as yet produced a clear, definitive explanation of what we want environmentalism to mean. We must break free of this ideological dichotomy and build a movement which can provide the support and philosophical framework on which campaigns can be based. We need a fresh start, and I believe this start must come with the abandonment of existing organisations and the creation of something new. I believe we should start with a summit meeting of people who want to begin again and build a real movement. A genuine summit of British 'greens' where our future can be debated and a new approach formulated. □



GANDHIANS and GANDHIANS

MIKE HANCOCK'S article ('Gandhi Betrayed', GL 24) was provocative and polemical but, as an assessment of the role of Gandhians in India today, it was also seriously misleading. Its major defect stems from his failure to distinguish between different types of Gandhians. He recognises that interpretations of Gandhi's thought are diverse but, because they all rest on the concept of nonviolence, he lumps all Gandhians together and dismisses them as upholders of the oppressive status quo. This is about as sensible as lumping all Marxists together because they believe in one way or another in the materialist conception of history.

Broadly - though they overlap somewhat on the ground - three types of Gandhism have emerged since Gandhi's death:

- (i) political Gandhism, represented in Congress but also in other political parties, which seeks to achieve some Gandhian objectives by conventional political action.
- (ii) institutional Gandhism, which is essentially reformist social work carried out by a variety of organisations set up to implement items in Gandhi's "Constructive programme", e.g. uplift of the Harijans.
- (iii) revolutionary Gandhism. Gandhians of this type, organised mainly in Sarva Seva Sangh (Association for the Service of All) have taken up and developed Gandhi's concept of "nonviolent revolution". They aim to bring about, albeit nonviolently, radical changes not only in individual behaviour but also in the social, economic and political structure. They seek to develop India not as a modern, industrialised nation state but as a society of self-governing and largely self-sufficient village republics, linked together for mutual aid.

As might be expected, revolutionary Gandhians are thin on the ground relative to the others. Political Gandhians are legion and embrace Mrs Gandhi as well as her conservative political opponent, Morarji Desai; there are about 50,000 "constructive workers" in Gandhian institutions; but the number of activists in Sarva Seva Sangh is less than 10,000. Hancock's generalised strictures, which doubtless contain an element of truth, apply mainly to Gandhians of the first two types.

But he also mentions Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's "spiritual heir", the man who did most in the first 25 years after Gandhi's death to develop the concept of nonviolent revolution. Now it is certainly true that Vinoba's strategy emphasised constructive nonviolence - the building of an alternative society within the womb of the old - and, along with it, what he called "positive" satyagraha, as distinct from "negative" (resistive or combative) satyagraha of the kind employed by Gandhi to oust the British Raj. Vinoba's method of peaceful, loving persuasion had more success than Hancock's dismissive sentence about "largely infertile land" donated in land-gifts suggests. After all, roughly half a million landless labourers benefited from the movement's Bhoodan (land-gift) programme! However, the subsequent more radical programme of Gramdan - voluntary villagisation of land - was less successful: except in a few hundred villages it rarely got beyond nominal acceptance by villagers of the idea.

It was in attempting to implement the Gramdan idea that India's nonviolent revolutionaries came face to face with the power structure on Indian rural society. By and large, the dominants in the villages could not be persuaded to accept the degree of equality and power-sharing involved in implementing Gramdan.

In this situation, in the early 1970s, by which time Vinoba had retired to his ashram, Jayaprakash Narayan ("JP") moved to the fore as the effective leader of the movement. In an article comparing Gandhians with Marxists and preaching the inevitability of social conflict, the omission by Hancock of all reference to JP is glaring. For JP had graduated from Marxism to Sarvodaya - a term meaning "the welfare of all" which encapsulates the ideal of Gandhian socialism. Under JP's leadership the nonviolent revolutionaries revised their strategy, or at least the bulk of them did: about 10%, including Vinoba, dissented. A key element in the new strategy was Sangharsh or struggle, which meant in effect re-adoption of resistive satyagraha.

Applied in Bihar in 1974-5, it involved civil disobedience and other forms of nonviolent action on a scale not seen in India since Gandhi's day - but directed this time against the Congress Raj. As students' and peoples' struggle committees proliferated, a popular movement expressive of "people's power" began to develop. The opposition parties, with the notable exception of the Moscow-oriented Communist Party of India, rallied to the support of the movement and it became increasingly clear that the political hegemony of Congress was threatened. "People's power", mobilised by JP, confronted head-on "State power", directed by Mrs Gandhi. The outcome proved disastrous. In June 1975 Mrs Gandhi imposed emergency rule on the country, jailed JP and other opposition leaders, and effectively repressed the burgeoning "people's movement".

From that set-back there was something of a recovery when, in March 1977, Mrs Gandhi called the postponed General Election. Congress was swept from office and replaced by Janata, a coalition of non-communist parties cobbled together by JP. However, the hope that the Janata Government would redeem its pledge "to complete the work initiated by the Mahatma" was belied - partly because the ailing JP was unable to revive the extra-parliamentary "people's movement" which he saw as essential in the drive for radical social change. So "the Janata experiment" ended in dismal failure and the return to office of Mrs Gandhi in 1980.

Since JP's death in October 1979 the revolutionary Gandhians have given up the hope that Janata or any other political party will help solve the country's problems. The people, they insist, must organise themselves and begin to take control of their own affairs from the grass-roots level upwards. As part of their attempt to build "a non-party alternative" to the present system, they have selected 100 or so areas which are designed to be the rural bases for "total revolution" - JP's version of the Sarvodaya nonviolent revolution. JP's line on the need for struggle continues to be endorsed, so that "constructive work" - the setting up of "people's committees", helping to organise landless labourers, small

► peasants, etc. - is combined with the use of resistive satyagraha in seeking redress of popular grievances. If Hancock had looked at some of these areas he would have found instances of social action by Gandhians which are as exemplary, if not more so, than the action of the "grass-roots Marxists" of the Young India Project which he commends. See, for example, the article "Peaceful Class Struggle" by Marianne Charles and Caroline Beatty in Peace News (5.2.82) which gives an account of the struggle in the Bodh Gaya district of Bihar where the Sahgharsh Vahini - a nonviolent youth organisation inspired by JP - have helped landless labourers to liberate land illegally held by the local landowner through a variety of spurious devices which evade the ceiling on landholdings.

In short, there are Gandhians and Gandhians, and not all of them are ineffective do-gooders for whom principled nonviolence encompasses no more than "nonviolent inaction, compromise, and a personal moral stance with a public halo. It is not necessary for Hancock and those who think like him to go outside the Gandhian framework of thought and action in order to find inspiration. And that surely must be right. For there can be little doubt that Gandhism, correctly interpreted, is more consonant with the green perspective that Green Line seeks to promote than anything that is likely to come out of the Marxist stable. Indeed, I would go further. Gandhi should be seen as the true prophet of the green revolution. □

Geoffrey Ostergaard

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Paul Shand, City Life, April '84

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letters

Don't nigggle!

I GREATLY enjoy the magazine and the last one appealed to me even more than most, specially John Graham's article. But all the articles were excellent: it was only when we came to letters and people answering each other that sometimes it got a bit "niggly". This has been so in the past - it seems difficult for people to disagree or to point out errors in a peaceful way without getting personal. I hope that we'll be able to eliminate this streak by degrees because if we're ever going to govern by consensus we'll have to learn to voice our differences calmly.

Women don't seem to get at each other so much - perhaps because they write less often, but I think probably not.

Jessie Brown
5 Esmond Close, Emsworth, Hants

Stop label-bashing!

RICHARD Hunt (GL 23) acknowledges that the word 'socialism' means different things to different people, but then gives a classical marxist or state-socialist definition of it from which he bases his arguments. I agree with his criticisms of socialists who, however deep their disagreement with capitalism, still share its rational, materialist value of progress, science, efficiency, specialisation, growth, centralised state power, etc.; but I would like to remind him that there exists a much wider socialist philosophy than marxism and labourism.

I feel that the radical politics of anarchism, feminism, ecology and socialism have a great deal in common. This diversity of political perspectives is both good and healthy only if the different tendencies are prepared to learn from each other. Of course some ideas are mutually exclusive - Richard gives an example of socialist plans for equality based on industrial growth and centralised state control which will never be acceptable to anarchists and ecologists (and libertarian socialists) no matter how much emphasis is put on pollution control and resource management. But there are many ideas that are mutually accepted.

The word "socialism" is not going to pass into obscurity, not in this century anyway, so let's give it real

meaning. I feel it important to differentiate between marxism, labourism, growth/state socialism, and libertarian, green eco-socialism. Green ideas must be argued and won in the wider labour movement as much as anywhere else, so rather than the divisive label-bashing that Richard indulges in at the end of his article, I feel it is much more constructive that "green socialists" work to get green politics into the mainstream of socialist debate. We must learn and grow together regardless of what colour we paint ourselves.

Peter White
13 Ashgrove, Bradford, W Yorks
BD7 1BN

Sick and tired of crossfire

I AM sick and tired of reading the constant crossfire between critics of the Ecology Party and spokespeople such as Jonathon Porritt. Haven't the Ecology Party and Jonathon P. done much to spread awareness of ecological issues over the last few years?

It is not through a love of political parties that I write. I have sat through days of Eco conferences etc. and been frustrated by the antics of some of the participants - including some of GL's regular contributors!

However, if Eco did not exist something would have to be invented to replace it and I have no doubt that it would eventually become not dissimilar.

The 1983 Eco manifesto, Politics for Life, was as good a statement on green thinking as I have ever seen and (along with Schumacher's chapter on Buddhist Economics and Eric Dammann's "The Future in our Hands") the more people we can encourage to read it the better.

Remember, more progress can be made by moving 20 million people half an inch than by moving a thousand people a hundred yards!

David Swindley
29 Chatsworth Road, Worsley
Manchester M28 4NY

More crossfire

MAY I add my own little comment to the Eco Party / Green Movement crossfire.

In 1983 I withdrew from both the Eco Party and the Green Gathering (as it then was) Collective. I was disillusioned with both groups as being

dominated by mainly rather egocentric authoritarian people - the same people in some cases, some of whom I may say have also been pretty dominant in the pages of GL.

However, after the success of the European Greens in the Euro elections in 1984, I thought maybe things might have moved on a bit in England.

Perhaps there were now people around capable of making the same kind of breakthrough as the Europeans rather than spending their time on in-fighting and jockeying for power positions in their own groups.

So I sent off my renewal subscription to the Ecology Party and asked them to send me the "activist's mailing". Very speedily I received the latter; some hastily stencilled sheets. I couldn't really believe my eyes: after nearly two years it looked just the same as before. It was a pre-conference agenda largely consisting of endless resolutions to change the wording of parts of the Manifesto.

I sent back my membership card, thanked them for their hard work, and said they could keep the subscription as a donation. Bless them for trying, but it wasn't what I was looking for.

Then, the weekend of August 25, thanks to a local green friend, I found myself spending 2 days at the Green Gathering at Molesworth. I came back fired with enthusiasm for the Green Movement.

This is where the living Green Movement is - in the fields, round the camp fires, in the Peace Temple, in the villages, and no doubt also in the nonviolent direct action at Alconbury that is happening as I write. It is not in the dead words, exhumed and re-exhumed, of a Party Manifesto.

Long live the Greens and then the Greens may come through in England's green and pleasant land.

Penny Newsome
21 South Street, Osney, Oxford

Recycled Marx

WADING through the cliches skilfully strung together by David Pepper (GL 25) I was reminded of something that Piet Hein wrote:

To make a name for learning
When other roads are barred
Take something very easy
And make it very hard.

Marx's main claim to ecological fame must surely be the fact that he gets recycled so often.

Harry Alderslade
47 Lake Street, Oxford

Down to Earth in Liverpool: Greening the Arts

Sarah Norman and Sally Morris write:

Great Georges Project in Liverpool (or "The Blackie" as it's known locally) has been a centre for involvement in the arts since 1968.

Its work in art education/youth work/games has taken as target "a society with creative opportunities for all," following in the tradition of William Morris who wrote, "I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few."

The Blackie's 5-day autumn event, "Down to Earth", which takes its starting point in the devastation of soil erosion around the world, takes the riches of our planet's soil as an analogy for the wealth of our people's creativity. It draws a direct comparison between the way that ignorant and exploitative farming can wreck the soil, and the way that inadequate or exploitative planning can ruin people's creativity. And the event looks at positive alternatives to encourage growth, arguing that solutions to both problems involve a shift in priorities to the preservation and nourishment of the whole instead of planning for profit and quick returns. Both involve thinking globally - acting locally.

"Down to Earth" will run from October 31 to November 4, from 11 am to late evening. Throughout that time there will be a photographic exhibition highlighting the devastation of soil erosion and the impact of soil conservation, which draws parallels with the situation of artists working within a community context. There will also be communal weavings where people can join in alongside other amateur and professional craftspeople.

Set within this will be daily conference sessions which people can book into in advance, or on the day. These will look at positive approaches to encourage participation in creative activity - to build a society where people can join in, as opposed to consume. We shall be hearing from speakers from other cultures and other political systems, of their approaches to arts in the community, and we shall be looking at the implications of the view that our planet's soil - and our people's creativity - are gifts.

"Down to Earth" is aimed primarily at those who are interested in a similarly radical approach to the arts and creative opportunities, away from exploitation, towards conservation and participation. We hope it will provide a forum for the mingling and sharing of these concerns in the interests of a greener, more fertile and creative life both for our planet and our people.

** Info: The Blackie / Great George's Project, Great George Street, Liverpool 1. Tel: 051-709 5109.

Eco's AGM

THE ECOLOGY Party holds its AGM and main annual conference in Southport from October 5 - 7. The main political debates will be on green economics and the politics of food; while those few motions put up by members and branches which don't deal with internal matters or the Party's name are concerned with a variety of issues from cannabis to motor-cycling.

A two-thirds majority of those voting will be required to pass a motion from the Greenwich and Lewisham branch which seeks to re-name the party "The Green Party".

Conference will vote on a policy on Northern Ireland, and there will be discussions on a feminist approach to organisation (a paper by Katy Zeserson), the built environment, foreign policy and forestry.

Stop the Cities

AT LEAST two Stop the City actions are taking place shortly. On Thursday September 27 from 8 am to 6 pm there's a "protest and carnival against war, exploitation and profit: a peaceful celebration of life to stop the finance of death." This London action is co-ordinated from Box STC, Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. Birmingham "Reclaim/ Stop the City" takes place on Thursday October 11, meeting outside St Philip's Cathedral at 10.30 am. For info, send s.a.e. to RTC, c/o Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Queensway, Birmingham.

Cardiff Organic Co-op

Ann Lukes writes:

MANY GROUPS of people in this country have been struggling independently to curb the great excesses of a selfish and materialistic society and show the way to a more caring, sustainable and satisfying way of life. A number of people from these different groups are now joining together to form a green movement, and we hope to make it possible for economic, social and personal changes to take place so that we and our world may survive.

As a first step we have set up a co-operative to organise the retailing of organic vegetables in West Cardiff. We intend to buy a shop so that we are able to offer organic food to larger numbers of people, and also sell goods made in non-exploitative production processes. We aim to bring together town and country, working for our mutual benefit and support, independent of the supermarkets and multinationals, bringing unadulterated food and high quality goods to people without exploitation for personal profit, and creating real "good" work.

For more information, and to put in your own ideas, contact Ann Lukes on Cardiff 21841.

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Conspiracy is Back

ALCONBURY IS a US base 6 miles from Molesworth. It's a spy base with various kinds of reconnaissance aircraft - including a number of fighters disguised as Soviet MIGs. Advanced TR-1s are based there, whose role in war would be to direct missiles to their targets in Eastern Europe and fly above the European battlefield monitoring the progress from above. Thus Alconbury is very much tied into the US notion of a "limited nuclear war" in Europe; and the Pentagon is spending over \$27m expanding the base in the next 5 years.

Attempts to establish peace camps

at Alconbury have met with immediate eviction. All nine members of the latest camp were arrested and charged with conspiracy to do £8,000 of criminal damage: the revival of conspiracy charges, which can carry very heavy prison sentences.

The nine are banned from within a mile of the base as a condition of bail, and are next due to appear before Huntingdon magistrates on October 18. Contact Alconbury Peace Camp Defence Committee c/o W Midlands CND (54 Allison Street, Birmingham 5 - 021 632 6909) or 181 Hinchcliffe, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough PE2 OST (0733 235355).

New Green Groups

Glasgow University A Green Group was set up last term at a meeting attended by 35 people. Anyone interested in joining, or with experience to share from elsewhere (ideas for meetings, speakers, etc.) should contact the secretaries: Sandie Miller, 38 Kessington Road, Bearsden, Glasgow; or Brian Gaffney, 382 Calder Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.

Bicester A new Ecology Party branch is being formed in Bicester, Oxon. For further information, contact Peter Morton, 5 Crockwell Close, Bicester, Oxon. (Tel Bicester 245860).

Midlothian Ian Smith is trying to set up a Green Group in Midlothian: anyone interested please contact him at Terranna Cottage, 99 High Street, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian EH19 2ES (tel: 031-663 3225).

Leeds University Martin Sutherland, contact for the University Green Group, has moved to 21 Pearson Terrace, Leeds 6, West Yorkshire.

Northants A collective of greens is producing a magazine for Northants, called Grapevine. It's "about Alternatives of all kinds - eating habits, life-styles, medicine, plus different ways of looking at subjects like human and animal rights, defence, politics, the environment, and more." Send 40p + s.a.e. for a copy to Grapevine, 177 Queen Street, Rushden, Northants

Molesworth for Bread, not Bombs

PLANTING OF food on the base at USAF Molesworth continues on Sat. October 20. Wheat planted last Easter will be sent to Eritrea, and with the help of local farmers a crop of winter wheat will be sown by hand. Lots of help needed.

Info: Molesworth Wheat to the Starving, "Peace Corner", Old Weston Road, Brington, nr Huntingdon, Cambs. Pe17 5SE.

Animal Rights Centre

A WORKING group has been set up to investigate the setting up of an Animal Rights Centre in London. It would gather, co-ordinate and disseminate information, and offer information and materials to the movement and the public.

If you're interested or have anything to offer, contact Don Jenkins, Gorphwysfa, High Street, Penmachno, Gwynedd, North Wales LL24 OUL (tel: Penmachno 315).

New Economic Agenda

THE FINDHORN Foundation are holding a conference on "The New Economic Agenda" from October 13 - 20. The speakers include Paul Hawken, Francis Kinsman, Guy Dauncey, Charles Handy, Jonathon Porritt, Manfred Max-Neef and Keith Roberts. Details from Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Forres, IV36 OTZ.

Disarm and Develop

AN ALL-DAY workshop linking the arms race with world poverty is being held on Sunday October 7 (10 - 6) at Newent Community Centre, Newent, Gloucs. Cost £3.50/£2. Creche available. Inquiries: John King (Cheltenham 574795).

CAROLINE TAYLOR

CAROLINE TAYLOR died in a motoring accident in Chelmsford early in September. She is a truly remarkable person, and people in the movement will miss her and remember her as such. Next month we will be happy to print tributes and celebrations of Caroline's life - we look forward to hearing from you. Meanwhile, Peter Cadogan has written:

SHE WAS a very special person. Wherever she was she made things happen and did it in an undefinable and unobtrusive way. She led from the front, the back and the middle at the same time. Whenever I met her something important seemed to happen.

If a problem was too big or insoluble she would probably say nothing, smile that slow giaconda smile of hers and move out sideways to find another

approach. In lateral thinking, or lateral intuitive response, she was an artist, a genius. She loved the human kind, found it difficult if not impossible to be openly critical of anyone no matter how much she disagreed with them. She would go away and do something else, and do it better. Thus few people carried so much authority with so little apparent effort. She never had an ego-trip in her life, one felt, but she usually got her way. Confrontation was not her style.

Earlier this year I heard she was having a baby and was temporarily out of circulation. The baby, Lucy, was born this spring and was with her at the Green Gathering at Molesworth where we met for the last time. Caroline is dead but her baby lives. Long live Caroline's memory, the ways she worked and the standards she set.

Eating a Hole in the System

Our Monthly
Food Column

I SEE the Green/Feminist/Peace/Anarchist movement as a force for provoking an evolution of society and self away from the insidious control of the state, and towards the small sane green world we all dream of in different ways.

Only when people have changed compassionately can they then make a society with compassion for all things. An attempt at self-sufficiency in wide areas of our lives is part of changing ourselves and our society. In loosening the grip of authority we weaken that authority. But many problems arise. One of these is: What do we eat?

At present people are offered and seem ready to accept the chemical saturated and processed food of state agribiz industries, distributed by massive retail chains promoting consumerism and waste. In 1984 the "big 3" stores in the UK control 39% of all food distribution, with trends showing a steady rise to over 50% by 1987 (IGN, 7.84). This food is produced at great cost to eco-systems and uses vast amounts of oil and chemicals - chemicals that find their way directly into the human body in disturbingly high amounts.

The Association of Public Analysts tested 615 different fruit and vegetable samples, and one third were found to contain pesticide residues. DDT was found in 13 out of 132 samples of apples, mushrooms and lettuce on the same day. (See Sunday Times, August 5 and 19, 1984).

So let's say that we've seen through the "natural" labels that have appeared on packets and jars lately, and have decided to try a wholefood diet based on lentils, beans, grains, rice, etc. But where do these come from? Most of it comes from exploited peasant farmers of the Third World who sell their crops for cash - which goes to pay for a race towards the kind of consumerist, ecology damaging society that we are trying to get away from by buying their produce which would otherwise provide essential protein for large populations.

If we must buy this food we should make sure that what we buy comes from Third World co-operatives who sell surplus and invest in health, education, etc. Ask your local wholefood shop about who they buy from and why.

Britain and Ireland can feed themselves on a vegetarian basis, and there are a number of books available that present a very convincing model of how such a system would work. But we need to take action here and now if such a future is to come about. I think we should make an effort, on our own or with others, to grow some of our own food organically. Some people are doing this in their own gardens and on allotments, others on larger farms: they are getting encouraging results - 80% of existing yields according to Peter Segger, chairman of the Organic Growers Association.

Practical Steps

Here are some thoughts on steps we could take.

(1) Our own gardens, even 15' x 15', can produce an amazing amount of produce. FoE estimate that around £160 a year can be saved by growing your own fresh produce (1979 figures: prices have risen since then).

(2) Contact the Organic Growers Association and find out if your area has an organic produce distribution centre. If they don't sell to individuals, then form a buying group.

(3) Use "dig-ins" on derelict land to bring attention to the lack of land available for cultivation and the length of most waiting lists for allotments. Make sure it's not a last refuge for town-based wildlife. Plant things that will grow quickly and don't need too much attention.

(4) In some areas sympathetic councils and in some cases even landowners may grant temporary use of the land for cultivation. Try this before a dig-in.

People have a right to enough land to grow their own food, and we must show the way for people to take back the land. If we wait for the state to make concessions it never will. After all, if too many people began to disengage from the state in such a way, then society might make a radical shift. What a good idea.

Dave Hayden

** Consumer co-ops for organic produce really do work. Although wholesalers do now exist for organic produce, the organic method is labour-intensive and is not subsidised: growers need a higher price for their produce, and the only way to make sure that they get the price they need and that the price to the consumer is acceptable is to organise a buying co-op. In Oxford several neighbourhood consumer co-ops share the task of driving 35 miles to the nearest organic farm: orders are consolidated earlier in the week and passed to the nursery, who pack and invoice the produce by group. The orders are collected on Friday afternoon and delivered to the contacts for each group who then weigh out their individual members' orders. Payment is sent with the following week's orders. The grower in question has been much encouraged, arranges a supply of green-top milk, goats milk cheese and yoghurt, and is now planning to buy wholesale during the winter to keep us (and other customers and buying co-ops) supplied. We have now arranged for a local baker to bake bread to order from Dove's Farm organic flour, and members of the co-op will shortly be able to have bread delivered as well with their fruit and veg.! More information from me on Oxford (0865) 726229.

Jon Carpenter

Recipe of the Month: Peanut Butter

Take about 8 ozs of peanuts and roast in a low oven until they are light brown only. If the peanuts are roasted too much, the butter will taste bitter. De-husk the roasted nuts by rubbing between the hands and blowing the husks away: or stir the nuts round by hand in a colander, and the husks will fall through the holes. Grind the nuts in a coffee grinder, liquidiser or mincer. Put in a bowl with a little sea salt. Add a few tablespoons of a light-tasting vegetable oil and mix until a paste is formed. Put into a jar. It is very good, and nice for omnivores too.

Joan Hoare