

GREEN LINE

Opposing Reagan's
politics of war
Stop the 'Scargill Levy'
Childbirth reclaimed

February 1985
No. 29 40p



**BIRTH
RECLAIMED**

GREEN LINE

34 Cowley Road, Oxford
OX4 1HZ
Tel: 0865-245301



There has been a tremendous upsurge of interest in GL over the last few months. We're interested in becoming a publishing co-operative, and branching out somewhat. If you have any interest in becoming involved in a green publishing venture (in any aspect of it), please write to us.

Coming shortly: the illegality of nuclear weapons; green antecedents in Crete and ancient Greece; how can we stop riding on the backs of the Third World; John Papworth's practical politics; Seeing Green reviewed; more news from Molesworth... and lots more that's coming in every day. If only we had more pages!

Deadlines Unless it's very urgent we can't consider an article unless we have it four weeks before publication. We can take letters and news items up to the 15th. But always the earlier the better, and if you want to submit a late article please ring us first so we can plan ahead.

We welcome your cartoons, pictures and photographs. All will be returned safely to you. We don't usually return articles: if you want to keep the original, send us a copy.

Bulk Orders

Each month dozens of people up and down the country take batches of GL to sell to friends, at meetings, rallies, and so on. We'll send you FIVE or more copies for only 30p post free; if you order TEN or more copies, we charge only 25p post free. You could try it out with this issue: if they sell well, you can start a standing order. We'll give you 30 days to pay.

Subscriptions

Don't miss the next issue: take out a subscription! The next 10 issues in the post for only £4 - the same as if you buy them in a shop. Overseas rate is £4.60.

If you can't afford £4, we're happy to accept £2 subscriptions to the next 5 issues.

Small Ads

5p/word

GREEN CONFERENCE - Swindon. Saturday March 23, Friends Meeting House, Eastcott Hill. Day long workshops and discussion includes Guy Dauncey on "The Magic of Ecology" and James Robertson on "Green Politics and the New Economics". Tickets and details (£3, £2 unwaged) from Bill Hughes, 24 Ashford Road, Swindon (0793 27278)

ROOM TO LET in shared household, Tottenham. Reasonable rent, share bills, etc. Phone Peter Lang 01-806 5935.

TALES FROM THE LAND OF THE AFTERGLOW The Witan. 22 track musical concept, the first major Green recording, in two parts, on real time (C60 chrome cassettes £3.75 each incl. p&p) from Witan Creations, 65 Audley Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent.

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE in vegan household (non-smoking, sugar/salt free, etc) for singles or couple. Share food, bills. Own rooms. Rural. Veg. garden, workshop space. Contact Pete and Steph, 3 The Old Shop, Much Birch, Hereford - Tel. 0981 540348.

LOWER SHAW FARM: SPRING PROGRAMME
8-10 March: Wildlife Gardening
5-8 April: Easter Weekend
19-21 April: Wholefood Cooking
3-6 May: May Celebration
24-27 May: Women's Weekend
21-23 June: Cycling Weekend
These events are low priced with concessions too. Children are welcome on most events. For details send sae to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts. Tel 0793 771080.

YOUNG FAMILY interested in shared organic smallholding, seeks new home from the end of April onwards. South Wales and Welsh Border areas preferred although anywhere considered. Contact Jonathan or Ali, Mayfield House, Bunwell Hill, Bunwell, Norfolk - Tel Bunwell 797.

CA ESAS IDO. La kato regardas la muso. La muso regardas la fromago. La taso esas sur la tablo. Me trinkas teo de la taso. Me sidas ye la tablo. Me skribas letro. To learn Ido, write to Nic ap Glyn, 135 Keppoch Street, Cardiff CF2 3JU.

COMMUNES NETWORK magazine is produced by and for people involved - or just interested - in living and working collectively. Costs £5 per 10 issues, 50p for 1. For further information send sae to: Communes Network, c/o Some People in Leicesters, 89 Evington Rd, Leicester LE2 1QH.

This issue comes to you through the efforts of Heather Acty, Patricia Ashmore, Jon Carpenter, Andrej Kaye, George Oldham and Sarah Tyzack.

COAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



THE WALES ECOLOGY PARTY
20p

Full of background facts for the present dispute; an analysis of the strike and government policy in terms of economic demands; and a way forward for coal towards a sustainable energy future.

20p + 13p stamp from Green Line.

Back Issues

SIX ASSORTED for the special price of £1.50 post free.

SUNFLOWERS

(Green Collective Trading)

T-shirts "The Greens Are Gathering" and sunflower motif, yellow on green cotton. S,M,L £3.50 each, £2.75 in bulk.

Envelope resealers (green, gold and black), £2 per pack of 100; 5 packs or more, £1.85 each.

1½" badges, "The Greens are Gathering", "Friends of the Earth". 25p each; 10 or more 15p each.

1½" peel-off stickers "The Greens are Gathering: 50p for sheet of 20. 10 or more sheets 40p each.

4¼" peel-off stickers: "The Greens are Gathering", "Animal Liberation", "Women's Liberation". 30p each; 10 or more 15p each.

Green star reflector badges, metallic, ¾" diameter. 50p each; 5 or more 40p each.

Please include 15% with all orders to cover postage and packing.

Make cheques payable to "Sunflowers", and send to: Sunflowers, c/o Ann Gunn, 8 Wordsworth Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 5SX. (Tel 0376 21184).

STOPPING THE BEAST

THIS REPORT WILL concern itself with one of the most central issues facing peace movements the world over: what strategy and tactics must we develop in resistance to U.S. intervention in Central America. In order to best address this problem we will focus on what we consider to be the important factors in the formation of such a strategy in Europe and specifically Britain. In particular, we will examine recent developments in this, the heart of the beast, both among the ruling circles and within the growing anti-intervention movement. Lastly, we hope to relate this analysis of the politics of the war in Central America to the immediate and practical concerns of the British and European peace movements.

The U.S. Domestic Situation: A Brief Overview

The Reagan re-election "victory" will undoubtedly give a new sense of confidence to the ideologues of the New Right. Nationalism, anti-communism, militarism, sexism and racism dominate the thinking behind their agendas. The missionaries of "peace through military strength" are finding the soil unusually fertile and, with the eagle on one shoulder and the moth-balled House Un-American Activities Committee on the other, are hoping to carry through a program of strip mining that will leave a torched and wasted earth both domestically and internationally. But the most clever of these missionaries realize that a state must have some degree of support at home if it is to fight a war abroad. For this reason state repression against domestic opposition to the war in Central America is on the increase.

Data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service reports reveal that at least ten "detention centers" have been constructed or are now under construction in this country for the purpose of jailing and deporting Central American refugees. In the state of Louisiana alone there are facilities for over 9,000 refugees. The expression detention center is naturally Orwellian doublespeak at its finest - in fact these modern American concentration camps will ultimately serve the purpose of isolation, interrogation, and repression for which detention is only a technical necessity. It is important to understand that these centers represent a state reaction to the fact that the Central American people living in this country play a crucial role in building and educating the movement of opposition to the war. They pose a significant threat to the interventionists who remember how quickly domestic opposition can grow. In addition, the FBI and other organizations of state control have been keeping close surveillance over, and frequently raiding the offices of, anti-intervention organizations. This much is perhaps to be expected, but what is most frightening is the fact that the general atmosphere in the country begins to evoke memories of the McCarthy era.

The political climate in this country is changing rapidly and this makes it difficult to develop a coherent analysis of what will emerge when new forces are consolidated. The atmosphere is very



charged and all forms of criticism and opposition are increasingly characterized as being "unpatriotic". To this extent the ideology of the New Right is determining the terms of the debate. For example, many demonstrators who heckled Reagan as he travelled across the country making campaign speeches were met by strong resistance. In many cases the demonstrators were carried out of the hall by Reagan supporters and often were physically beaten. Though secret servicemen and police were often involved, it was usually Reagan supporters who took it upon themselves to silence the opposition.

Another example may help to illustrate exactly how the "new patriotism" finds expression in everyday life. A few weeks ago in Randolph, Massachusetts, a seventeen year old high school student refused to participate in the daily pledge of allegiance - a traditional and "patriotic" exercise that involves standing with one's hand over the heart, facing the flag and reciting the pledge: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." For those not familiar with this masonic ritual, suffice to say that the pledge is usually recited in all the "traditional" institutions including the schools, the church, the military, etc... It is part of the mysticism inherent in a modern day "democracy", but it is rarely practiced, much less insisted upon, in high school. The student said that the American flag and the pledge did not mean anything to her. Many of her classmates were angered at her "disrespect" and some threatened to beat her if she continued in her refusal to stand. In the last month she has only returned to school when she has been able to get police protection. It would appear, then, that Americans are increasingly policing themselves.

Again, it is dangerous to draw too many conclusions from this, but the pattern is very disturbing and has the practical effect of making protest all the more difficult. It therefore becomes all the more important that we in this country are able to gain strength from protest in Britain and Europe. We may do well to return to a study of Germany in the 1920's and 30's.



The Reagan Administration: Politics is War Carried on by Other Means

There is little debate within the present administration over whether to escalate the war in Central America and, in particular, Nicaragua. The real debate is over how to escalate the war abroad without creating a war at home. The memories of the anti-Vietnam War movement are still vivid. Recently, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State George Schultz found themselves at odds on an "appropriate" military strategy in Central America. Weinberger does not want to use America's military force in a situation where the outcome is uncertain. He is quite clear about his position: be prepared to fight virtually everywhere but do not make a military commitment unless you are sure of winning. Schultz, on the other hand, argues that military force can be used effectively as a "diplomatic" measure and need not be guided by ultimate considerations of victory. It is revealing to note, however, that Weinberger has in mind "domestic turmoil" as the great danger of a protracted military engagement. "Employing our forces almost indiscriminately and as a regular and customary part of our diplomatic efforts would surely plunge us headlong into the sort of domestic turmoil we experienced during the Vietnam War, without accomplishing the goal for which we committed our forces." (28 Nov., 1984)

Weinberger's concern over domestic opposition is revealing on two counts. Firstly, it expresses the measure of our significance as an anti-interventionist movement. Secondly, it communicates that the administration is determined to learn the lessons of Vietnam. The administration knows that the anti-war movement in the late 1960's only emerged as a strong force after American soldiers began to be flown home in body bags. In

Central America, it is therefore using local armies to fight the war on land and has been able to arm, advise and direct its proxy forces without shedding much American blood. And by staging local elections, as it has in El Salvador, it gives a degree of legitimacy to the local government, and thus portrays America's economic and military policies as merely defending "democracy" against "communist" aggression. When it actually uses American troops, as happened in Grenada, the government imposes a media blackout or manipulates the news in the same way that the Thatcher regime did during the Malvinas War. In either case, this administration establishes for itself a monopoly over all information, which the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations failed to do during the Vietnam War.

The administration is today desperately wanting knowledge about how Americans in particular - and the world generally - will respond to an escalation of the war in Central America. It is particularly interested in how we will respond to an aerial bombing or an outright invasion of Nicaragua. In the week following Reagan's re-election we were told that Soviet MIG jets were being unloaded in crates in Nicaragua. On the television we were shown footage of these bombers in action. There was much discussion, even among the most "liberal" of democrats, about the alleged expansionist designs of Nicaragua. In the newspapers we were shown that with three extra tanks of fuel the MIG fighter would be able to fly as far north as Florida. And as expected the question was posed as to whether these crates should be bombed, which necessarily determined that the debate would be over how Nicaragua should be invaded, not whether the United States had a right to intervene in



Nicaragua in the first place. The national polling stations were fully conscious of the two-fold task ahead of them: they had to set the boundaries of the discussion and provide the administration with some reasonable measurement as to how Americans would respond. It did not matter at all that the story was entirely fabricated; it was merely a testing of the waters.

It has become clear that in some ways we are being prepared for another Cuba, different of course but in many important respects the same. The administration has little more effective a weapon in its arsenal of propaganda techniques than reinvoking the mythology of yore. It is the early 60's, Nicaragua is Cuba, Reagan is Kennedy, the eagle must not flinch in the face of the bear. If the administration is returning to the tactics of the early 1960's, we too should re-examine the time and learn from it. How did the "first wave" in Britain respond to the Bay of Pigs? To the Cuban missile "crisis"? What can we learn from our tactics then, that might help us today?

Resistance in the Heart of the Beast

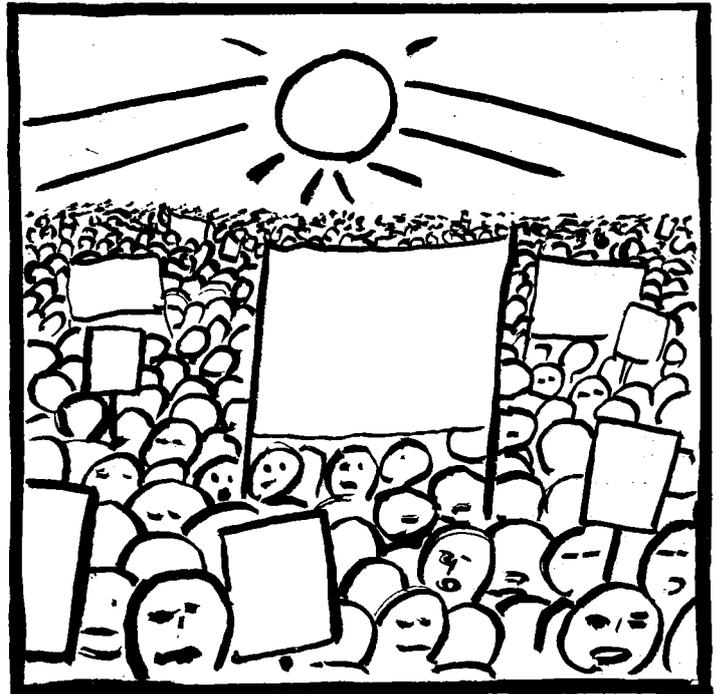
In stating that this administration has learned the lessons from Vietnam we in no way mean to suggest that it has learned the most important lessons. The fact is that there is a movement of opposition to intervention in this country today for which we can find no parallel in the early 1960's. And though it is very different from, and not as strong as, the movement which developed here in the late 1960's, its significance is precisely that it is developing at an earlier stage in the war. Over four years of educational and organizational work has already been accomplished and we have yet to see any headlines of Marines landing in Managua. There is certainly a degree of truth to the argument that without this movement the U.S. would already have overtly invaded Nicaragua. Weinberger's recent statements are emphasized here as an admission to this fact.

It is extremely difficult to reduce the complexities of any opposition movement to the simple level of a label, but most activists who are working to build the U.S. movement characterize its present form as a movement of solidarity. As we will show, they maintain that it must be distinguished from what we could otherwise call an anti-intervention movement. Before we turn our attention to the present "solidarity" movement, it's perhaps useful to briefly describe its origins, which lie in a series of events that occurred in the late '70's and early '80's. Specifically, the reintroduction of registration for the military draft, the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force, the consolidation of opposition forces in El Salvador into the FMLN-FDR, the Nicaraguan and Grenadan revolutions, and the election of Reagan. It is within this context that the first nationally coordinated organization of solidarity - the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador - was formed, and the first sizable national demonstration (100,000) took place. This movement has grown to such an extent over the last year that it is now the principle concern of activists across the country.

Since its inception, the solidarity movement has been reformist. It is almost entirely concerned with raising the consciousness of, and support for, the process of change in Central America. Under the pretext of avoiding "alienation", it has remained committed to the political process, directing its mainstream energies toward Washington. While it has served the very useful purpose of laying a good base of awareness in the last few years, a base which we have suggested distinguishes the situation today from the period in the early 60's, its

tactics render it little more than another pressure group lobbying in the capital.

It is for this reason that many activists insist on labelling it a solidarity movement and not an anti-intervention movement, which they define as a movement of direct action which is concerned with raising the political costs of U.S. intervention to such a level that it becomes politically impossible to continue the war. In this sense, an anti-intervention movement seeks precisely to raise the level of "domestic turmoil" that Weinberger so fears. The movement is undergoing rapid change at the time of writing as there is an increase in the amount of direct actions, and many activists are working to build an anti-intervention movement upon the foundations of the solidarity movement. It is important to recognize that the growth of this solidarity movement has coincided with the decline of the anti-nuclear power movement as well as with the rise and fall of the nuclear weapons freeze movement. This transformation had far less to do with coincidence than with the failure of these movements to recognize in practice their fundamental relationship and common interests. If we limit our analysis to the relationship between the now deceased peace movement and the growing solidarity movement, we must ask why the peace movement failed to broaden its agenda to include an anti-interventionist position. It is precisely because the peace movement presupposed that nuclear weapons exist in a vacuum that it has all but withered away. It is



not at all dissimilar to the failure of the first wave in Britain to recognize its relationship to the Vietnam War.

Just two years ago the peace movement in this country was able to bring over a million people to a protest in New York. In all the demands, opposition to the war in Central America was little more than a footnote. Today there are now plans for what is hoped will be an equally large demonstration on April 20, 1985, organized in protest of U.S. intervention in Central America. It is yet to be seen whether the connection between the nuclear arms race and intervention will be made.

Conclusion: "Great Bedlam" and Trans-Atlanticism

In the final analysis, then, there are two major constraints to an overt U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. The first lies with the people of Nicaragua who, having experienced generations of U.S. domination and having learned the lessons of Grenada, are now mobilized and ready to defend themselves as best they can from a direct U.S. invasion. As our sisters and brothers say in Nicaragua, "We know they can get in but can they get out?!!" The second major constraint lies with movements of opposition to intervention in the U.S. and elsewhere, and our ability to generate sufficient and coordinated resistance to U.S. intervention, covert or otherwise, in Latin America and other parts of the world. In this respect, European resistance is essential, and the peace movement because of its unique position and experiences can and must play certain crucial roles.

In the first place, it must be realized that the American ruling class has traditionally been "concerned" with European "developments", and they would certainly be hesitant to openly invade Nicaragua if they believed that it would stoke the fire of resistance to American cold war and nuclear policies. However, they too have learned the lessons of the Grenada debacle between Britain and the U.S. and will consequently tread in evermore deceptive and deceitful ways. It is extremely important that the peace movement in Europe transform itself by insisting on the symbiotic connection between nuclear weapons and intervention if it is not to "miss the boat" and write itself out of existence. The European movement must learn the lesson that is being presented to it by the U.S. peace movement today; that is, it will wither away unless it can adequately link issues and realize that nuclear weapons do not exist in a vacuum. We can no longer sit in the comfortable world of single issues, of "Neil the process" and "Walter the lesser of two evils". Instead we have to address the Cold War head on by insisting on the connections between (among other things) self-determination and peace, sexism and militarism, racism and exploitation, and all of these to nuclear weapons and intervention.

These connections, though, must not only be made in writing, discussion and in theory, but most importantly in practice. Consequently, the banners of anti-militarism and non-intervention must both be carried to those points that are associated with, or that have been made political symbols by, the peace movement (i.e. Greenham, Faslane, Molesworth, Upper Heyford etc.). In this way, the peace movement will be forcefully and directly making the connections between these movements, and at the same time it will be avoiding the mistakes of the British movement of the 1960's (i.e. failing to take up Vietnam), and the American peace movement in the 1980's.

These actions at U.S. military bases, though, must not only be symbolic demonstrations of opposition, but must also be forms of resistance that are based on direct action. One of the lessons of the Vietnam War was that, as a tactic, direct action was the most effective. It is the turmoil of mass direct action, by creating situations in which it becomes politically impossible for the military to conduct its operations, that ultimately constrain the militarists.

It is important, then, to reiterate the necessity

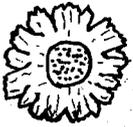


of carrying out actions at the nuclear shrines that have been focussed on by, and associated with, the peace movement, for these are the sites where action is most effective in opposing U.S. intervention in Central America. In particular, the form and content of these actions can be similar to actions such as those which took place at Wethersfield in March '84 and Chilwell in July '84. That is, an appropriate criterion for choosing a site might be the presence of, or accessibility to, U.S. military personnel, especially if they happen to be "interventionist" troops such as the Rapid Deployment Force. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that a large segment of U.S. military personnel "happen" to be people who have been forced into the services because of their economic positions in the U.S. As is always the case, these military personnel, a large percentage of whom are black and hispanic, are now being asked to kill their brothers and sisters in Central America.

In Solidarity,
Bryn Clark
Dan Coughlin
David Riker
91 Irving St., Somerville, Ma. 02144

VICTORY TO THE MINERS!!!

Jonathon Porritt
"Seeing Green"
£3.95 post free
EOA Books
34 Cowley Road Oxford



GREENS at SHEFFIELD

CRAMMED INTO the back of a vehicle watching the light ribbon they call a motorway (why don't I travel by train?) I realise this will be the fourth national CND Conference I have attended - a conference at Sheffield which resembles more and more the political circuses to be witnessed at Brighton and Blackpool. Tailored partly for the media and partly to ensure the continued smooth running of the campaign. What it is really, however, is a blood-letting exercise attended by the CND faithful, the political manipulators who enjoy weaving in and out of standing orders, amendments and resolutions and the vast majority of us, animals of eternal hope and naivete.

I admit that there is an inherent difficulty in running an organisation with a 110,000 paid-up national membership with 2000 delegates. West Region CND proposed that conference be abolished and replaced by a system of policy making through regions and CND elected council. This resolution didn't get onto the final agenda, as most of us obviously enjoy this ritualistic ordeal.

On the steps of the Town Hall where the conference is held live the peddlars of persuasion and hopeless causes. The arrogant rub shoulders with the timid. A broadsheet "Forward with the Proletariat" is thrust into your face three times while a shy Turkish woman pleads with you to sign a petition for the release of Turkish peace activists. I have second thoughts about giving my support to the Black Motorcyclist Gays against the Bomb! Missing however are the Socialist Workers (a directive from on high that CND is now considered too middle class), and that doyen of anarchist love poems Dennis Gould. The greens join the foray with the Eco Peace Broadsheet and Green Line.

We seat ourselves close to a microphone. Green CND's constitutional amendment, "The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is opposed to the total nuclear energy cycle; this includes mining, reprocessing and enrichment plants, nuclear power stations, and nuclear waste dumping on land and at sea," was lost by 166 votes (934 for, 1100 against). If the debate, skilfully introduced by Brig Oubridge, was anything to go by, we should easily have carried the day. Certainly we won the moral argument. What went against us was the trade union lobby, one TGWU delegate hinting that if this resolution were carried his union would have to disaffiliate from CND. Obviously we hadn't done enough lobbying among trade unionists. Others were concerned that CND's terms of reference shouldn't be too wide and that we already had resolutions opposing nuclear power.

Barbara Heslop and Helen John gave impassioned speeches saying that if we believed something to be right we shouldn't pander to vested interests, and nuclear power plants were bomb factories in disguise. David Taylor rounded with a good green perspective. But CND is happiest when it sees

things in black or white, at opposing weapons systems and shining bombs. It is less sure of itself when looking at the links, not fully understanding that uranium mining might just have something to do with the final product. It was a good discussion, and I'm sure it helped the credibility of the greens.

Over the years it has become the custom for political factions to bring their own intellectual wrangle onto CND's conference floor. This year it was the turn of the Communist Party, last year the Labour Party, and previously the Socialist Workers. The opportunity came with a resolution about the Soviet Union, part of which read, "To campaign vigorously against Soviet nuclear weapons and policies, while taking care to avoid cold war rhetoric and the distortions practised by the media and right-wing politicians." It was agreed that it was a clumsy composed resolution. Suzette Starmer (Green CND) attempted to get the conference arrangements committee to change the words "and policies", but to no avail. What happened next I found hard to believe. Soviet apologists, who I thought had been buried 25 years earlier, came teeming out of the woodwork. The Soviet Union needed regrettably nuclear weapons. How individuals had gone to the Soviet Union and how ordinary people had grabbed them by their collars and with tears in their eyes said how they wanted peace. Now I don't doubt that the Soviet people want peace, but I've heard this story so often now that I do wonder if the Soviet authorities only allow people with weak tear ducts to meet westerners! Or perhaps it is because the weather in Russia is so bloody cold it makes you cry.

Ian Davidson, a Scottish delegate and also a CP member, made the clever point that if we voted for this resolution and called for a demo against the SS20, and this was poorly supported, then it would be seized upon by the press. As it was the press did seize upon it the next day - the more liberal press saying that CND couldn't quite make up its mind about Soviet weapons. For Joan Ruddock, seeing the potential damage that could be done if conference rejected the resolution, called for no vote to be taken.

Subsequently a number of people have come together to ensure that the Soviet 'defence' policies are understood and taken into account, and that CND maintains an independent position. For further information, and for people who can speak on nuclear weapons, east-west issues, etc., write to 38 Lonsdale Road, Oxford OX2 7EW.

An issue greatly discussed at Sheffield was Molesworth. Green CND held two well-attended meetings, and Rainbow Fields produced a leaflet on the subject. It was fortuitous that the Guardian ran an article on Molesworth that weekend.

Greens did comparatively well in the election for CND council. Linda Churnside was elected, closely followed by a cluster of green candidates who, though unsuccessful, were all in the first half of the 60 candidates.

John Marjoram



the CND conference



STOP the SCARGILL LEVY

IN OCTOBER, THE Guardian reported that:

"Treasury ministers are committed in principle to raising electricity prices in April to help to meet the cost of the coal dispute" (Guardian, 3/10/84).

"City stockbrokers, Laurie Milbank and Co. have estimated that to pass on the extra costs the average electricity bill will have to rise by £15 next year, while an all-electricity household will face a £40 increase in its bills" (Guardian, 8/10/84). These costs will be passed on to 'the consumer' through a so-called "Scargill surcharge" marked as such on our bills, "which will explain why the prices have gone up".

The Government has two motives in imposing this levy. Firstly, it intends to make electricity consumers pay the massive bill it has clocked up as a result of its own strike-breaking policy:

"The main item of extra cost in keeping up electricity supplies is the increased use of oil at the power stations. City stockbrokers Laurie Milbank estimated that the four-fold increase in oil burning in recent months was costing the Central Electricity Generating Board an additional £45 million a week The brokers put the CEGB bill so far at £430 million and estimated that if the strike continued into December the net cost to the CEGB would be £650 million".

Secondly:

"The Chancellor believes that there is a valuable political message in showing the public that they have to pay for the miners' strike".

In other words, by distinguishing the special surcharge from the ordinary bill, the Government intends to step up its propaganda war against the NUM and swing 'public opinion' even more against the strike.

We must organise against this. The 'Scargill levy' presents us with a great opportunity to extend support for the miners. Because guess who is going to be hit hardest by it?

-All the people who have already borne the brunt of Tory cuts. The unemployed. Single parent families. Pensioners. The disabled. Students. People who live in substandard private-sector bedsitland and flatland, on council estates, in tower blocks with under floor heating they can't afford to use. The poorest people very often have to use electric heating, in its most expensive forms. And they already have problems paying their fuel bills.

DISCONNECTION FOR
NON-PAYMENT OF
ACCOUNT

... be legally responsible for
with Section 17 of the Electricity
The Board has the right to discon-
nect the supply if it is necessary to cover the cost of disconn-
ecting the supply for further supply.

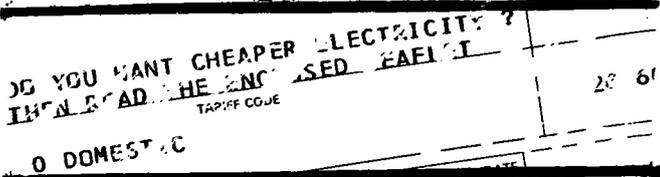
-Every year people are disconnected for non-payment. Every winter old people die of hypothermia, and households with babies and young children sit in the cold because they can't afford to turn the electric fire on. **ELECTRICITY PRICES ARE ALREADY TOO HIGH!** Now these, and other working class people are to be forced to foot the bill for the miners strike.

Why are electricity prices so high anyway? It's not because of the 'high price of coal'. The NUM produce the cheapest deep-mined coal in the world, with the exception of apartheid South Africa. The price of electricity is so high because the Government fix the price!

"The electricity board announced in August a profit of £901 million for 1983/4, £33 million more than in the previous financial year".

And where does that profit go? - Into the Treasury.

"The current target is for the industry to pay the Treasury £740 million from its surpluses this year, a big increase on the £406 million target set in the last financial year".

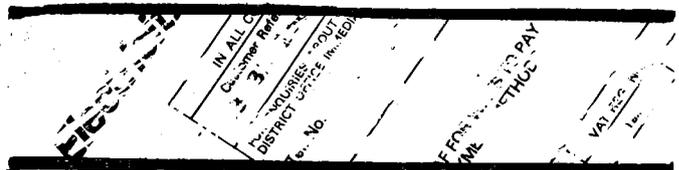


The Government, in other words, imposes its own criteria of profitability on the electricity supply industry, just as it does on the mining industry. Both the NCB's definition of 'uneconomic pits' and the 'Scargill levy' are the result of political decisions about the political management of nationalised industries. Neither industry is being run according to the criteria of public ownership upon which they were originally established after the war. The Government is milking the electricity industry for all it can get at the same time as it attempts to run down the coal industry for being 'unprofitable'. The profits of the one are being made at the expense of the other.

The 'Scargill levy' itself shows just how expensive electricity would become if it is forced to depend on increased oil-burn and nuclear power - which is the longer-term aim of this Government's energy policy. The astronomical costs of nuclear power themselves give the lie to the Government's 'profitability criteria': investment goes where it is directed. Nevertheless, cash limits and profitability criteria are imposed without regard for their human consequences. The poverty and hardship of many, many working class people is a direct result of the Tories' harsh monetarism and politically motivated cuts and closures. With the Scargill levy they want to add to it.

Arguing these links, and contesting the Tories' narrowly economic arguments with the idea of production for social need has always been at the heart of the NUM's case against pit-closures. Why close mines with good coal still in them when pensioners are going cold? But the case was never adequately represented in the media, and as the strike has progressed its principles have been buried under all the verbiage about violence and the NUM's attitudes to the courts. Many people who are now, still, passive observers or even actively against the strike, can still be won if these connections are made, and the principles restated. Organising against the 'Scargill levy' is an ideal opportunity.

How? We can organise a mass consumer boycott of the levy, along the lines of the Anti-Nuclear Campaign's 'Consumer Campaign'. Quite simply, when the quarterly bills go out in April, we refuse to pay the 'Scargill levy' - en masse.



-We can organise collective with-holding, through trades union and party branches, political groups, tenants and housing action groups, pensioners associations etc.

-We can use and extend the contacts made by Miners' Support Groups on supermarket food collections, door-to-door money collections, benefits etc. We can campaign on housing estates. The campaign offers a way of deepening the strong community politics which has been such a strong feature of the strike so far. We can mobilise the many people who want to be active in the strike, but not on picket lines - elderly people, for instance.

-Miners' households themselves are now massively in arrears with their bills, so we'd be developing a new form of solidarity! Support for such a campaign in the mining communities would surely be high.

-Arrange to with-hold together, sending a letter with your bill explaining why you are refusing to pay the levy, and demanding that it be scrapped.

-In arguing the case against the 'Scargill levy', we can also put the miners' case against pit closures, and the arguments against Thatcherism, to people who might so far have been immune to them.

-Support Groups have sprung up all over the country. If they co-ordinate and develop the campaign in their own area, we can spread it right across Britain, and demonstrate the extent and depth of solidarity.

-Those who can afford it could perhaps pay their 'Scargill levy' to the NUM?

The finer points of the campaign can be worked out as we go along. The important thing now is to start building the support. April isn't far away, and the 'Scargill levy' will be applied even should the strike be over by then.

Graham Dawson and Clare Jones, for Brighton Miners' Support Group: contact address 124 Ditchling Rise, Brighton, E.Sussex.



BIRTH RECLAIMED

Part 1

The apocalyptic vision of the depressed mother

THIS ESSAY is dedicated to these parents I have known. E... who at the age of 22 threw herself out of a window thereby breaking her spine and becoming permanently paralysed. Her baby was six weeks old when this happened. M... who loved her child, yet cut his throat and killed him at the age of 4. L... who is still a psychiatric patient although her sons are now adults. I... who suffered seven years of post-natal depression with the second baby and made me realise that any one birth can push a mother over the brink. J... who couldn't get near his wife to make love since she'd had their son eight years before, and was finally considering divorce.

Tears for Fears' "Mothers Talk", recently in the charts contains the line "Some of us are horrified - Mothers never talk about it." I don't know if the words of this song are a reference to childbirth, but read as such it reveals hidden insight. We failed mothers are labelled, via the disease known as puerperal psychosis, with madness. Yes we are mad - mad with anger and rage - yet when you give voice to that anger who would want to take the side of a mad person? Isn't that the definition of insanity, that it is totally irrational and incomprehensible? So we never talk about it.

How to make a bad mother

My first baby - I loved her and I hated her. I loved her enough to cuddle her and nurture her - I hated her enough to kill her. These emotions lived together within me.

By fate of circumstance my first child was born in an unfamiliar hospital. For post-nativity I was induced by artificial rupture of membranes and syntocinon drip, confined to lie in bed, and left entirely on my own for the most part of labour. The hospital never informed my husband of my induction that day so he missed the birth. I was given the narcotic pethidine instead of a human hand to hold. I was eventually attended, well into second stage, by an inexperienced

MARY FIELD describes the birth of her two children, and argues that we need to liberate our animal bodies. There is, she says, an analogy between our abuse of 'mother earth' and our abuse of women as mothers.

midwife who unnecessarily removed the baby as soon as she was born. The routine in that hospital was to bath the baby and administer vitamin K injection outside the room and away from the mother. An episiotomy was performed which wasn't stitched up for three hours after the delivery. "You were made not to listen - now your arse is on fire" (Tears for Fears, 'Mothers Talk'). All this in September 1981

This birth left me feeling I had been tortured and raped. It was the most nasty, violent experience of my life made worse as I was anticipating enjoying the birth of my child. To quote Burns: "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agely and leave us nought but grief and pain for promised joy."

Naturally, having been raped, one doesn't hold out much love for a rapist - in my case a healthy baby girl. I also had an incredible anger towards my spouse for letting this happen to me. Rape, outwardly a sexual abuse, inwardly has more to do with a violent domination of one individual over another. As a mute mother, totally brainwashed and dominated by medical intervention, I felt like a helpless rape victim, being forced to surrender my body to their interference. This was done for the supposed benefit of my baby - her needs were considered to be more important than mine, I was just the passive vessel: they made her dominate me. Is this not a very fascist approach to a potential new family? Dividing off the interests of father, mother and child and playing one off against the other?

So you call it post-natal depression. The acceptable thing to say about PND is that the mother couldn't cope, she was tired and listless, the mother may even fear hurting her child. But I will dare to say the unacceptable thing for my violated self - I would have loved to have hurt my child, it would have given me enormous emotional satisfaction to have enacted my anger and killed my baby. Burns said to the mouse: "Thou art blessed compared with me - the present only toucheth thee." Animals abandon their offspring when birth is disturbed and some species have even been known to cannibalise their newborn. But I could see beyond the immediate satisfaction of rejecting motherhood by infanticide and was fearful of the social consequences of such an act - psychiatric hospital and treatment for years and years.

The only reason I felt so evil towards the baby and my husband was that I was denied the emotional satisfaction of birth, and birth is a truly emotionally satisfying event if the environment for birth is in harmony with the mother's body. The innate mother in me was all but destroyed by inappropriate care in labour. In the Good Book all we like sheep have gone astray. "So what happens if you take a lamb away from the ewe as it is born?" I enquired of Mr Lee, a shepherd. He was surprised at such a foolish question. "You can't do that," he replied, "she'd kick it away because she wouldn't know it as her own - it's nigh on impossible to then get her to suckle it - the best you can do is to foster the abandoned lamb off on another ewe as she lams. If the ewe and lamb are separated too soon - that's how to make a bad mother."

The bad mother - the cursed wretched destroyer. We are all children of our parents - and as children we worship the goddess of divine motherhood - the mother, outpourer of unconditional love. Few people can cope when the real mother, like myself, says this love is not unconditional. You cannot do what you want to a woman as a mother and expect her to endlessly love her children. To make love is to have sex and sexual abuse breeds hate and violence. Birth is the culmin-

ation of the original sexual act and very much part of the love life. Violate a woman during the sexual act of birth and you introduce violence into the family where violence did not previously exist. Violate the animal body of the mother - as we are doing constantly in Western and industrialised society - via drips, surgery and above all suppression of women, you violate the innate (animal) mothering instinct and love has to be learned. Mothering behaviour in the human species comes most instinctively only when birth is a physiology.

We recently celebrated Christmas, the Christian festival of the birth of the Messiah. Jesus, too, was born in a stable like an animal, without pain (Isaiah 66 vs 7) without interference. Christians are proud of their practical religion - does this information of the stable birth not have a practical and real interpretation? The God of Love would surely choose the most loving place for nativity. What did Christ mean when he said you must be reborn (John 3 vs 3)? What is birth, that we should desire rebirth? My first experience was of a loathed untimely rape - this was not birth, and I would sooner die than relieve the experience. Intuitively, I knew birth could be different - this faith led me to seek rebirth, of myself as a mother.

The mother gives birth to the baby - but the baby creates also the parents. In Western society we leave this desperately important transition in the hands of an elitist, distant and male-dominated medical profession. The doctors' speciality is illness and they have redefined birth as a pathology in order to dictate the care of the pregnant woman. This dictatorship is dominated by fear of birth.

"For reasons never explained to me, I was not permitted to hold my son until hours later, when he was wheeled in to me bathed and cleanly wrapped in his first trappings of so-called civilization. I had to unwrap him like a sterile parcel before I could touch his newborn skin.

I hated my husband for leaving me alone (and I hated the hospital for making him go.) It was

incoherent hate. We had not considered it a problem before I went into labour, simply taking it for granted that he would be there. When the hospital told him it was against the rules, he left. And I was alone. It is far from a unique story, but I am sure it brings unique pain whenever it happens. And who can tell what repercussion? (Naturebirth, Dana Brook)

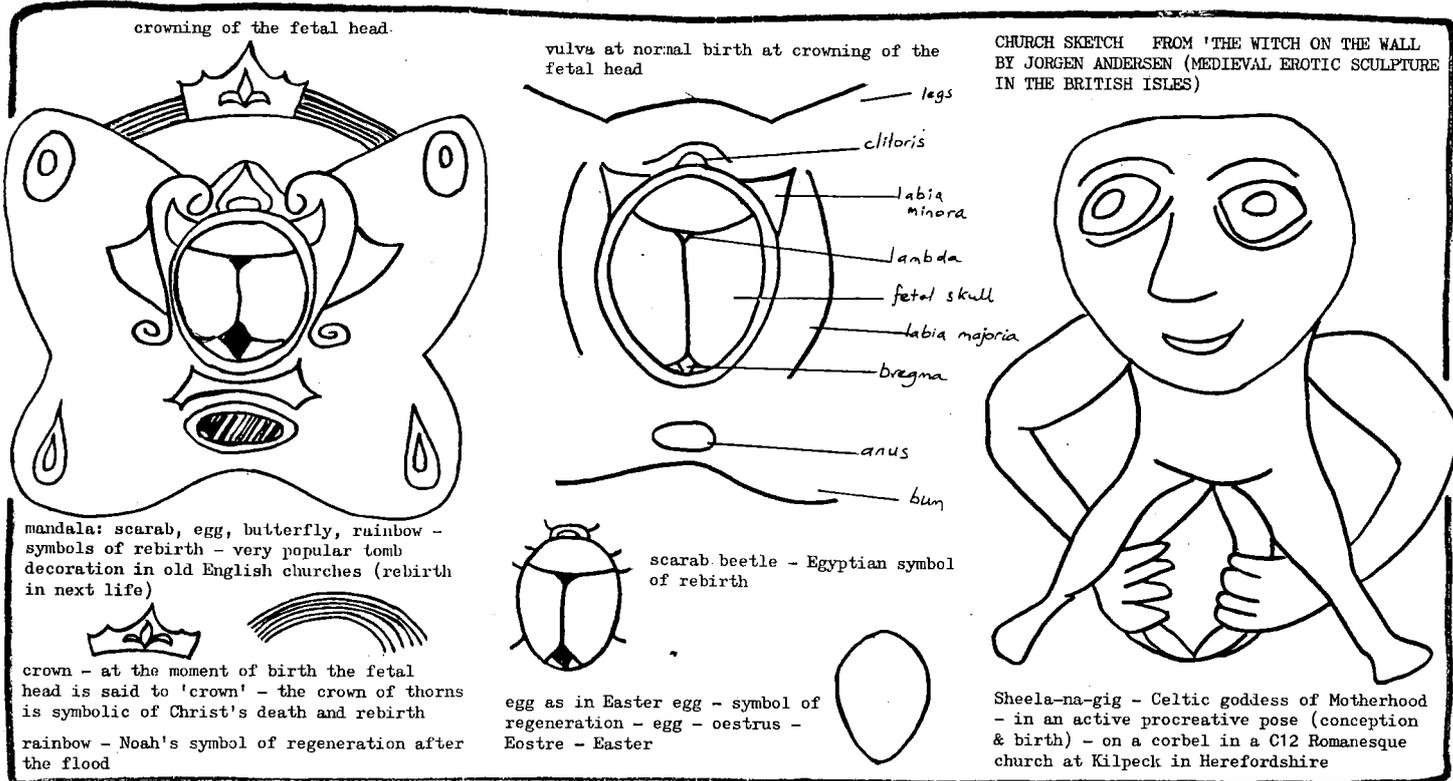
"When the infant had taken its fill the young mother set it upright in her lap, looking into the far distance, dandled it with a gloomy indifference that was almost dislike, then all of a sudden she fell to violently kissing it some dozens of times, as if she could never leave off the child, crying at the vehemence of an onset which strangely combined passionateness with contempt.

"She's fond of that there child though she might pretend to hate en, and say she wishes the baby and her too were in the churchyard," observed the woman in the red petticoat. (Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy - Hardy readers please note what happens later to the baby)

"Isn't being a mother the most wonderful thing you have ever done?" the woman asked me that morning on the phone.

"Not really" I answered, holding back the tears. "Actually it is quite miserable and exhausting," and I put my hand over my mouth so I would stop before it was too late.

"Oh don't say that," she said maturely. So I didn't. And I stopped going to the group. I was becoming convinced that I was the only mother in the world who had such hateful feelings for the child I loved so intensely, who wished over and over that it had never happened, who finally could understand those women I had met when working for the welfare department who had burnt their babies arms, beat their faces, killed them. But I would never breathe a word of such vicious identification, I decided. I would hide my real feelings in order to avoid the terrible looks which say, I am not like you nor have I ever been." (The Mother Knot, Jane Lazarre 1976)





Part 2 Challenging Eve's curse

So I like stories with happy endings and I'm not a person who gives up that easily. I fooled everyone that I was a good mother and eventually I fooled myself as well. I had to have a second baby in order to get over having had the first one! This time I'd seen 'Birth Reborn' on the TV, showing Michel Odent's maternity unit, and I knew there was another way to have a baby that was more appropriate to me. I am not afraid of birth - travelling up the M4 in a motor car is a more hazardous undertaking and I do that regularly. I am now very frightened of being in an inappropriate environment for birth and attended by people who don't know me, and how I give birth certainly helps form the relationship between me and that child.

Safety is always the issue that coaxes (hoaxes) mothers into hospital - it's not safe to have a home birth, but then how safe is post-natal depression with the attendant risk of baby battering, divorce, infanticide, suicide? Can we as a society really afford to have so many young families afflicted with this disease? The fantasy created by the medical model of birth is that the profession controls this animal, primal experience thus making it safe. But the truth is that nobody controls birth and by interfering with this physiological event you destroy it. Civilization has been imposing unphysiological interference on childbirth for many centuries now - for example lying down and being passive when childbirth is a very dynamic and active process. Our civilization's desire to control nature is, in fact, destroying nature; and our medical profession are an important part of our civilization and are deluded in the belief that they control birth. The truth is that nobody controls it - neither medics, nor parents, not even mothers - birth just happens. Astrologers would say that it is rather birth that controls us and shapes our destiny.

A woman really needs to look after herself when expecting a baby - eating good wholesome food and plenty of it, keeping fit by exercising enough and generally relaxing into pregnancy as anxiety and stress are incompatible with healthy motherhood. The advice is simple common sense but motherhood always involves some compromises; however, supported by the love of family, friends and mate, I do enjoy being an expectant mother.

I was quite prepared to deliver the baby myself but my husband wasn't into husbandry as he does respect the majesty of the law; so we decided an independent midwife was the only solution, being completely disillusioned with the state maternity facilities whose philosophy of good care is so pathologically orientated. For me to remain fit and healthy after childbirth I had to sidestep the official system - either that or book a bed at Rampton for post-natal care! I knew I would have puerperal psychosis again if I was violated, and this time I would just give in to myself.

We are lucky to live near London where every alternative is available. I booked with South London Independent Midwives and the medical cover was provided by my own NHS GP - I also saw Mr Terry, the NHS obstetrician, once, which was necessary in this area, and he "allowed" me a home birth - knowing I wouldn't take no for an answer.

The joy of instinctive birth

Two weeks post-mature, having put on 4½ stone while pregnant, I woke up at one a.m. just after Douglas had gone to bed. I went to the toilet and had a very small show - if this was labour, and I wasn't sure, I had to be prepared. We had moved one mattress downstairs to the lounge so that we could have music during labour as the stereo was there. Doug had compiled some tapes of my favourite music - lots of Beatles like "All you need is Love" and some 60's hippies stuff - Mamas and Pappas also Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing".

I prepared the room in the small hours, as labour gently progressed, putting plastic sheets on the floor to catch the blood - birth is a pretty messy event. I ran myself a bath. I noticed the next contraction and in the intimacy and privacy of our home I massaged my vulva and clitoris and this made me feel very sexy and suppressed the pain. I had a natural diarrhoea with the labour and was perfectly at home with the frequent bowel motions, whereas I would have been very embarrassed and therefore tense in the social environment of hospital.

By 4 am my husband was saying that I must let the midwife know I was in labour. The labour was so easy I thought it must be ages before the baby would come. I continued to masturbate with each rush - I have a photo of an Abyssinian cat licking her vulva during labour. Clitoral massage during labour is analgesic. Between contractions I walked around preparing the room for the baby. I tried to ring my mother, who never heard the phone at 5 am, and then I knew I could no longer do anything else but concentrate on the labour. I could put mind and body together much better in the nude so I took off my dressing gown and regressed into a more instinctive state. Doug's presence made me feel both sensuous and secure.

Kneeling in the lounge I put my hand in my vagina and could feel the hardness of my baby's head inside me. With rhythmic movements of my body and lots of vulval massage I could really feel the baby coming. The Beatles "She's so heavy" (Abbey Road) was playing loud but I think Frankie Goes to Hollywood "Relax and come" would have made a lovely background noise. Loud, deep-throated moaning helped ease all this muscular exertion. I still have erotic dreams about this really sexy and painless transition of labour. As the water bag broke spontaneously I knew the labour would get more hectic but Doug was there to comfort me and immediately I went down into the all fours position and began to push. I could hardly believe I was in 2nd stage of labour not having had any pain in the first stage - in fact really enjoying the first stage.

Just as I was anticipating the anguish of the previous labour the midwife arrived - she was like an analgesic in herself - just coming and taking over. The all fours position was the most bearable for contractions and I found my involuntary deep howling actually purged the pain from my body. Yet so often women in labour are told to keep quiet! The intensity of the second stage was the same as before - it was a repeat of that death-like state - however without artificial analgesia and with a natural build up I coped easily, despite at one stage saying "Never Again."

A baby girl was born after 20 minutes of 2nd stage at 6 am in very good condition. She weighed 9lb 5 oz and I sustained a very small tear where the episiotomy wasn't stitched up straight the last time - contrary to many people's opinion the scar tissue does stretch so a cut at one labour doesn't necessitate a cut at all labours. The skill of the midwife ensured I sustained little personal damage and she also handled my newborn baby with gentleness and love.

The third stage was natural, that is without the use of syntometrine. I remained sitting upright - at one point standing to stretch my legs then squatting down again and the placenta was born after 15 minutes. My husband then cut the cord. (Note: after the delivery of the placenta). At no stage did my newborn baby leave my arms, nor did she cry very much. I was quite overwhelmed by the delivery. Doug and I cared for our new baby in bed while the midwife wrote up the delivery notes. Sarah, my toddler, got up and greeted her sister with "Baby's got no glasses!" I then had a bath, walking up the stairs feeling tired but fit. Barbara opened her eyes while bathing and seemed a happy and contented little baby and remains so.

After the midwife left I ate most of the placenta - another intuitive and animal act but the right thing for me. I have an article published in November 1934 issue of the Midwives Chronicle, as I believe placentophagy prevents puerperal psychosis by maintaining the mother's hormone level.

I loved this birth - it is really something to celebrate for all our family as it enabled me to exorcise the evil of the first birth. I have never had any ill feelings towards Barbara although Sarah and I still have a stormy relationship at times, but I get on better with her now as well. It has also brought me and my husband closer together.

I relate the story because any fit and well-nourished woman can follow her own instincts and use all the resources within her body to give birth successfully, provided the people who attend her support her and respect her wishes.

The official approach to childbirth is ruled by authoritative prudery - but individually we British are not prudish nor are we all frightened of birth, although extra care needs to be given to those mothers who are afraid. Because of these attitudes parents who are, after all, the sexually active members of our community, are being inhibited during what is the culmination of the creative animal act, especially for the mother, the act of birth.

The green movement needs to direct itself to the many-sided and thorny political bull-ring of western maternity care - especially the labour wards. This approach to childbirth is imperialistic: even in aboriginal societies the women are persuaded that western techniques are superior and hospital-based maternity care is becoming fashionable all over the world. Women are deceived that natives' design for childbirth is destructive. We need to liberate our own animal bodies and live nearer nature. The human family is created by birth and the love surrounding this event ensures the health and happiness of the family.

Unhappiness in the family has always been fuel for the flames of war. The plea of the green movement is "Stop adulterating Mother Earth." An analogy can be made between our abuse of the mother earth and the way we regard and exploit women as mothers.

Birth is the only eternity of which we have real experience, and therefore each child's nativity is a sacred event. Knowledge is a very powerful force and there are excellent books now available to parents who have it in their power to reshape the system of care.

We all share one birth, in common with the other species of mammals on this earth.

Books

Post Natal Depression

The Mother Knot: Jane Lazarre
Tess of the D'Urbervilles: Thomas Hardy
Of Woman Born: Adrienne Rich
Depression After Childbirth: Katharina Dalton
Motherhood and Mental Illness: edited by Brockington and Kumar

Birth

Pre-natal yoga and natural childbirth: J. Parvati
Let's have healthy children: Adelle Davis
Jane Fonda's Workout Book for Pregnancy Birth and Recovery

*Birthrights A Parents Guide to Modern Childbirth
by Sally Inch

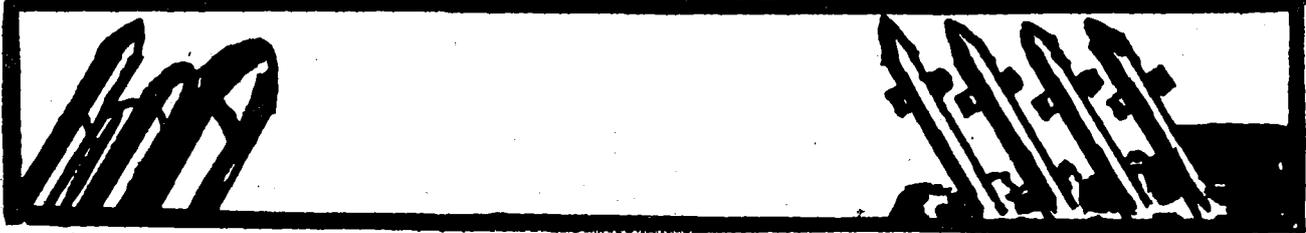
Active Birth: Janet Balaskas
Birth at Home: Sheila Kitzinger

*Birth Reborn: Michel Odent
Breast feeding, the tender gift: Diana Raphael

*Especially relevant

** Next month we shall list some of the traditional alternatives to modern medication in childbirth.

Shoring Up for Non-Proliferation



1985 WILL BE A watershed year in one way or another. It is the year in which the most extensive arms control and disarmament multi-lateral treaty could collapse: that treaty is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which in September comes up for its third 5-year Review Conference in Geneva. It is certain that the meeting will be tempestuous, as the 118 non-nuclear weapon state signatories put the 3 so-called "Depositary States" - the US, UK and USSR - in the "dock" over their promotion of the nuclear arms race. France and the People's Republic of China have always refused to sign the NPT.

The NPT, which came into force in March 1970, after a decade of careful diplomacy, is perhaps the most significant arms control treaty ever negotiated. It was drafted collectively by the US, USSR and UK governments - a process that followed the signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) in 1963, although its origins went back to the late 1950s. The NPT essentially comprises a three-part bargain.

Firstly, non-nuclear weapon signatory states agree not to develop nuclear weapons, or receive technical assistance to achieve them. In order that it may be verified that these states have complied, they also agree to have their nuclear facilities - reactors, enrichment and re-processing plants - "safeguarded", along with the nuclear materials such as plutonium and uranium that flow through them. These safeguards are applied by the UN-sponsored International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), through a team of inspectors who assess through book-keeping and physical analysis the truthfulness of the pledge. Clearly this constitutes a considerable concession to those states' national sovereignty. For this reason, and others to be discussed, such states as Argentina, Brazil, Spain, South Africa, India and Pakistan refuse to sign the NPT.

Secondly, the NPT facilitates the transfer of nuclear technology, nuclear materials and technical assistance, thus sharing the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy with those countries that have deemed it necessary to have nuclear-generated electricity. In the past 5 years the world market in nuclear commerce has slowed to a

trickle, as the industrially developing nations have become ensnared in the world debt crisis. Only a very few states such as South Korea and Egypt are currently interested in even minimal nuclear energy programmes. Indeed the increasing call from "Third World" states is for the establishment of smaller scale, thus more appropriate, low-capital intensive energy assistance projects, to the exclusion of high-tech nuclear power.

Thirdly, and most importantly for NPT 85, the Treaty calls on each of the parties of the Treaty to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date.

The whole NPT comprises just eleven short Articles plus a preamble. The issues that will inevitably prove contentious in Geneva in September - and in the diplomatic "circuit" running up to the Review Conference - are enclosed in Articles 1 and 11 and VI.

The early concerns of the depositary states when they drew up the NPT - that of stopping the spread of nuclear arms to additional states (called horizontal proliferation) - has been superseded in the public consciousness and in the diplomatic concerns of the vast majority of the Treaty signatories by the ever upward spiralling of the nuclear arms race (called vertical proliferation) by the "privileged" nuclear weapon powers. If we add to this the emerging evidence on the "nuclear winter" that strongly suggests that even non-combatant - most probably "Third World" states - distant from even a small nuclear weapon "exchange" would be embroiled in a catastrophic climatic and ecological disaster, it is obvious that those NPT signatory states have a material interest in stopping the nuclear arms race to oblivion.

David Lowry



DR-JAK probably England's leading Green musicians - Green Gathering '83, Clastonbury CD '84, Mind, Body, Spirit (Olympia) '84, Festival of the Earth Spirit (Malvern) '84, Green Moon (Cumbria) '84, Garden of Musik (Ickwell Bury) '84, Green Gathering (Molesworth) '84... need we say more!

Black Garden from the old favourites + new winners... Peasant Dance, Sinner, Tapestries of Sand, Tribute..... **£4.95**

MUSIC CASSETTES BY POST

BELOKA

BELOKAL, from Belgium, a fusion of Flemish and Arabic music - now on their 3rd British tour this year!

"Jazz+Folk+Dance+Theatre=BELOKAL! Belgikal play the music of a threatened world... A Pandora's box of mysterious melodies opens the way across oceans and back into time... Music to dream and dance by... Recommended."

Paul Shand, City Life, April '84

£4.95

padma shanti

the name is Sanskrit, meaning Lotus Peace - Lotus, the sacred flowers - Lotus, the vortices of spinning energies within the Subtle Body.

Peace, that heals the heart, the mind - that heals all beings known and unknown - this we strive for.

waves upon the baptismal ocean

these sounds you hear were found in meditation - perhaps we say dance together, as one, on the waves upon the baptismal ocean - an hour of peace.....

£5.95

Normal Delivery 7 Days but please allow 28th case

CHEQUES, P.O.s etc PAYABLE to CHIMERA

CHIMERA MEDIA DISTRIBUTION

Chimera

103 Rockingham Road, Kettering, Northants. Kettering (0536) 511842

BIRTH - to JAN and GEORGE a baby girl. Born 21 minutes to Midnight, MONDAY 21st January, 1985. All our love to those whose help and LOVING THOUGHTS have supported us. JAN & JOSEPHINE are both very well.

Mish-Mosh of Peace Fads

Peace: a Green Broadsheet. Ecology Party, 16pp, 20p.

PEACE: "THESE PAGES say what it is, why we need it and how we can get it." Brave front-page assertions from the creators of this Ecology Party broadsheet. But inside, do we get the goods? Alas, I am bound unequivocally to say; No!

Most readers of Green Line will I think agree that the Ecology Party should be producing more material making its point of view available to the general public than has generally been the case to date. If the material is about wider peace issues and not simply about nuclear disarmament as this broadsheet purports to be, all the better.

Having said that, there is of course a lot of stuff around these days covered by the blanket term "peace". One would therefore expect that the present authors would have something to say that was a little different, a little more incisive, and with a few clues for good measure on how the Ecology Party, distinct from other interest groups, proposes to take us there.

What instead we get is a mish-mosh of articles ranging from the "Economic Effects of Arms Production" (good) through "Civil Liberties in the Nuclear Age" to a quick plug for the Campaign for Real Democracy! Added together these tell us a fair deal about some of the current fads of the Party in question, while the answers to the bold rhetoric on the front page remain as elusive as ever.

To give it its due, this broadsheet is at times intriguing, if not tantalising. "Non-nuclear Defence", for instance, careers from what seems to be a thumbs-up for "emerging technology" (ET), "modern surveillance systems, mines, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, multiple-target air-launched assault breakers" et al to a plea for nonviolent civilian resistance. At the end I was none the wiser on where the predilections of the author or indeed the Ecology Party lie, the article being amply sprinkled with "sayings" from the party's defence policy.

Is it the intention of the party to give a green light for ET to the very same multinational and state concerns and their attendant electronic and computer auxiliaries and subsidiaries who gave us the Tornado, Polaris and the Chieftain tank? Alternatively, how exactly does it propose to "educate" "the majority of the population in methods of nonviolent resistance to an invading or occupying power" when the population is itself still in the grips of social, one might well say class conflict over the miners' strike, to say nothing of much deeper divisions underscored by Brixton and Toxteth?

And what is one to make of this sentence from the Ecology Defence Policy: "Specific supplies of defensive equipment will be considered in the case of neutral countries threatened with attack, including our partners in the new European alliance." What specific supplies? How are they to arise? And if these countries are members of an alliance, how can they be neutral anyway?

For the layperson, uninstructed in the thought-patterns of Ecology Party people, this could come across as very fuzzy and confused indeed. Half-truths and simplifications to the point of distortion don't help much either. For instance, in "Nuclear Power and the Bomb" we are told that the industry is kept going in this country simply because of the military connection. That may be a part of the truth, but it is certainly no longer the whole truth; and when we start to get into arguments ("Uranium and Sizewell B") about the potential number of lung cancer deaths from uranium tailings as opposed to those from coal-fired power stations, we are getting onto very dangerous ground indeed. Surely there are plenty of perfectly good reasons for opposing nuclear power to the hilt without having to paint 'King Coal' in a light as if to suggest that it hardly ever did a spot of environmental or health harm. What about pneumonococcosis, Aberfan, and acid rain?

What I hoped this broadsheet would give is some indication of how wider and more fundamental conflict in the world today might be tackled and overcome within a Green perspective. How does the Ecology Party approach the situation in Nicaragua or Poland, the fighting in Cambodia, or the 'forgotten' Iran-Iraq war? How does it propose to overcome sectarian conflict between Turk and Greek, Jew and Arab, Ulster Protestants and Catholics? What view does it take of liberation movements within the Third World? How, at a more parochial level, does it see peace being restored to the streets of Welsh and Yorkshire pit-villages?

"The politics of peace demand a rejection of industrialism and materialism", we are told near the beginning. But conflict has been endemic for millenia prior to industrialism. Some of the above mentioned conflicts would sustain themselves regardless of it, save only in the significant degree to which it can provide a sharp edge of fire power against the enemy of your choice. Of the Green response to imperialism, nationalism, religious fundamentalism or perhaps more intrinsically, machismo and the nature of societies based on male aggression towards each other and 'their' womenfolk, we hear not a sausage.

Nor do we end up any the wiser on how such fundamental conflict is to be resolved within a Green framework and peace - whatever that is - achieved. Peace, after all, is neither an inalienable or indivisible right. Like freedom and justice it has to be fought for and there is always, certainly where international peace is concerned, a price tag attached. For instance, we live in a peace - of a sort - in Europe now, but it is a lamentably unjust and fragile one, a peace which is the legacy of the last great European war, and the price is the economic, political and social subjugation of the continent to the two great victors of that war, the USA and the USSR.

The great question now is how we can achieve a new more just, safer and green peace without further leaps into totalitarianism or such international destabilisation as to have ourselves and our planet blown to smithereens.

Modes of action in such times and answers to such conundrums are not easy. All the more reason therefore to face up to all the realities, not just some of them, and not be swept away by our own blissful rhetoric.

Come on, Ecology Party, the layout was good, have another try!

Mark Levene

Death by Design

Dear GL,

Jon Carpenter's timely article about famine in the so-called Third World (GL 28) makes some valid and important points about hunger and its causes. For too long, it seems, we have blamed it on overpopulation, inefficient farming, bad government, inequality, multinationals, etc. whilst apparently not seriously considering the fact that we in the North-West, with our over-consumptive lifestyles, are at least partially responsible, indirectly, for Third World hunger.

Readers may be interested to know that a group has been formed round the relationships between our lifestyles and the Third World, called Group for Lifestyles and Action on Development (GLAD). To crib from some of their literature, GLAD "tries to combine personal and political change in working towards a world society in which everyone has enough to live healthily and every person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential." They produce a newsletter, hold meetings, and do some campaigning, with a possible campaign against Unilever (heavily into Third World exploitation) in the pipeline.

Information about GLAD can be obtained from 20a Blurton Road, London E5 ONL. A sample newsletter costs 28p.

Graham Hooper
19 Sylvan Road, Wanstead, Essex



Boring Diet

Dear GL,

I am perturbed by Jon Carpenter's suggestion (GL 28) that organically grown domestic produce can adequately replace imported grains and beans. As far as I can see, that would result in a sadly monotonous and unappetising diet. It's hard enough trying to learn to be a vegetarian without being reduced to bread, potatoes, porridge and field beans as staples, with a garnish of garden veg. What does he suggest the wholefood stores should stock? What does he eat himself?

Joyce Mumford
51 Grove Avenue, Sutton, Surrey

** The point Joyce makes
** will be dealt with in a future issue.

Dear GL,

Yes, we are responsible for all that is going on in Third World countries and also for all that is going on nearer our own doorstep. Jon Carpenter, in describing the plight of the dispossessed in the Third World countries, is also describing the plight of the dispossessed in this country and in all so-called civilised countries:

"Denied access to land, they must earn money if they are to eat, for food is only available to those who can buy it..."

The root of our problems today lies in the foundation of our society - going back, in my opinion, to the late 6th century in this country when Pope Gregory's instructions to Augustine (which he set out in a letter to the Abbot Mellitus who became the first bishop of London) were:

"They are no longer to sacrifice beasts to the Devil; but they may kill them for food to the praise of God and give thanks to the giver of all gifts for his bounty. If the people are allowed some worldly pleasures in this way, they will more readily come to desire the joys of the spirit" (!!!)

I expect the indigenous followers of pagan religion loved and devoted their lives to their crops, birds and animals, tending them through spring, summer and autumn; then when food got scarce an animal would be slaughtered. I expect they were vegetarian for most of the year. The author of Holy Places of the British Isles, William Anderson, goes on to say:

"Thus in these wise and gentle instructions we see one of the most formative elements in the making of our holy places and in the continuity that they embody between the changes of religion, of civilisation and of races. The same practice had been followed by the Celtic saints, but here was the greatest spiritual leader of the West lending his authority to a practice that helped to soothe one of the most difficult transitions the psyches of our forebears have had to endure. In the course of the Dark Ages, under the influence of Christianity, there took place a revolution in the attitude of man to nature and his environment as far reaching as the Neolithic change from societies based on hunting to societies based on farming, or the introduction of close communities of cities. The effect of

Christianity was to abolish or to drive underground the love and worship and fear which men and women paid to the tutelary deities of nature and the home. This came about at the same time as the introduction of the heavy plough, drawn by oxen, which enabled men to till the earth to a greater depth than ever before and to extract in bigger yields the energy latent in the earth. Released from fearing the anger of the spirits of wood, stone and forest, man was effectively licensed to hack, carve and delve as he pleased."

I believe it's become obvious by now that coal and oil should be left where nature intended it, in the past. Brought to the surface it is destroying our civilisation, our planet, our Earthly Mother. "And shouldest destroy them which destroy the Earth." (Revelations 11:18).

Cameron Thomson
Muirloch Farm, Muirhead, Dundee

PS As far as the Green Movement and Friends of the Earth are concerned, differences only become noticeable when looked for. Why not join a new movement, John Hamaker's, and discuss and DO SOMETHING about the things we have in common?



Green Departure

Dear GL,

Since Joe Weston alludes to having read Seeing Green, he should by now have familiarised himself with the fact that the green movement has distinctly dissociated itself from the traditional left-right-centre analysis of politics, seeking instead an altogether new direction (ch 4). The question of population control is indeed so central to the green debate that to attempt to foist his worn notions of a 19th century-style class struggle on to the ecological bandwagon, and his seemingly total disregard for the planetary consequences of uncontrolled population growth, is astonishingly and profoundly irrational.

If he really wants to grind an axe or make a lot of noise, it might be more logical were he to direct his invective at the 'profit motive' of the large multinationals. That is probably where the real evils of today's social arrangements lie. But he needs perhaps first to be reminded that the multinationals are a modern phenomenon, cutting across the social stratifications of yesteryear.

Alice Page
Swithland Hall
Loughborough, Leics., LE12 8TD

letters

Greener Ways

Dear GL,

As a member of both PoE and the Ecology Party, I read with a good deal of sadness Joe Weston's tirade against the green movement (letters, GL 28). His class analysis of ecological issues is not only out of date, but also happens to be one of the main reasons why action is still lacking. To quote Jonathon Porritt:

"Still to be thinking in terms of an industrial proletariat of the masses as the vehicle of revolution and of the bourgeoisie as the implacable enemy, is to miss the point about the balance of power in today's world."

I agree with Joe that ecological politics has got to be made relevant to ordinary people and until it is demonstrated to be in their self-interest most people will not change. In fact, social justice and ecology are indivisible; this is why the Ecology Party continues to fight its corner from within the present archaic electoral system. It seems to me to be vital to present radical ecological ideas in a coherent fashion to as many people as possible at the right time, during elections.

Striving for more economic growth and attending to the "environment" is not coherent, neither is opting for unilateral nuclear disarmament whilst remaining in NATO - just two examples of muddled socialist thinking. Survival and the environment are not optional extras!

Graham Leatherbarrow
2 Stanley Road, Heaton Moor
Stockport, Cheshire SK4 4HL

Dear GL,

We were surprised and upset to read the letter from Genevieve Bridgeman in GL 28 attacking our local Ecology Party. We welcome criticism, but can't make sense of that lengthy polemic or what its purpose was.

Genevieve Bridgeman only ever came to one Haringey Eco meeting (these happen usually at least twice a month) nearly a year ago, and said nothing critical: she has otherwise been completely out of contact, but now condemns her local group in the pages of GL. Hmph.

To be silent locally and destructive nationally! There are many better, greener ways than that. We in Haringey Eco do what we can to raise green consciousness, and hope that other greens will work with us - and us with them.

David and Jennifer Burns
832 High Road, London N17.

Phase Out Coal

Dear GL,

The present government in the UK is trying to close the coal mines that produce the most expensive coal, and is shifting the mainstay of our energy base from coal to oil and nuclear power.

If a truly ecological government was at the helm, steering us towards a sustainable post-industrial economy, it would be phasing out coal mines just as fast so as to move the energy base in the opposite direction - away from nuclear power, oil and coal, and towards renewables.

Reduction in energy demand and the rapid development of renewable energy could take place surprisingly quickly if the need for it were a majority or consensus view. Oil and nuclear power stations would go immediately: very soon after that coal could be phased out quite rapidly. Whilst it is possible to remove most of the chemicals causing acid rain from smoke stacks, how do you dispose of these chemicals? You cannot remove carbon dioxide from the

exhaust gases, and it is this gas that is liable to have drastic effects on the global climate. However many centuries of potential coal supply exist, we would probably be better leaving them underground at least until we understand more fully the dynamics of the biosphere.

Small scale hydropower, biomass fuels, etc. are labour intensive, and many of these technologies could be established in communities whose pits were/are being closed. Other ecological measures such as transferring taxation from labour to non-renewable resources and land, and the national income scheme, would in any case mean full employment and cushion the transition of communities to post-industrial and sustainable economies.

Patrick Whitefield's suggestion (GL 28) that coal should be mined until the point at which energy used to mine and transport it is equal to energy yielded by it, is ludicrous.

Malcolm Stewart
99 Prospect Road, Portstewart, N.I.

Diversity

Dear GL,

As someone who has chosen to work in a political party where patriarchy, hierarchy and lots of -isms are many times worse than in Eco (namely the Liberal Party), I can very much sympathise with Genevieve Bridgeman's views (GL 28). So why do I bother?

Well, it's partly the same excuse as that more commonly used by the SDP Greens: that someone needs to at least green the 'system's' edges or there won't be any sustainable, ecological future (or any future) to look forward to. And it's partly because I've always considered it unrealistic (un-green) even to trust any establishment or established group as the sole course for salvation, be it the Liberals, Eco, Green CND or whatever.

A Green society (and, I'd argue, a liberal society) would be different because of its diversity. As individuals we can reflect the society we are working towards by "diversifying" ourselves. Personal decentralisation, if you like. A bit agitprop. A bit self-sufficient. A bit of involvement with mega-groups like CND. A bit spiritual. A bit loving. Etc, etc.

As someone who gets teased for being supposedly dark green in a light green party (so dark green that I reject labels, like 'dark green!'), I found myself having to justify to friends and myself why it's worth all the hassle. Most of that justification came not from what I - and other green Liberals - can and are achieving, but from the general green necessity to confront industrialism, capitalism, possess-ionism etc. wherever they are. Not just where it's ideologically pure to do so. (I don't think greens can ever have a set ideology to be pure to!)

Mike Harskin
Asgard, 31 Newton Ave, London W3

Letter writing is a gentle art. Good letters are short and make one point. We have to cut long letters.

Many readers have said they dislike letters (and articles) which make personal attacks. We shan't print any more. Is that fair?

The Dying Adriatic

EXCESSIVE NITRATES and phosphates in the water are killing the Adriatic Sea: within two years it will be a 'dead sea'. Algae grow in the 'fertilised' water in prodigious quantities, then die and sink to the sea bed where their decomposition consumes all the oxygen in the lower levels of the sea. Fish thus die and are added to the rotting mass on the sea bed, and yet more oxygen is used up. The smell of stinking fish washed up on the Italian coast has reached as far as 15km inland.

Worst affected is the north Adriatic where the outfall of the River Po carries vast quantities of nitrates, phosphates and other pollutants into the sea. The area extends further south each year.

The phosphates come from industry, agriculture and domestic detergents. In Italy they make up a large part of a packet of detergent: actual phosphorus is limited to 5%, and a new law proposes to reduce this to 1% over the next few years. Many ecological groups want it to be banned altogether. Phosphates are also widely used in chemical fertilisers.

Further information from AUM, Via Vecchiotti 7, 63029 Servigliano, (AP), Italy.



Arms and Third World

LINKS BETWEEN militarism and world poverty will be examined at a day school on Disarmament and Development to be held in the British School, Stroud, Glos on Saturday March 23. Workshops will include development in the Third World, development in the UK, civil and human rights, and alternatives. Cost: £4/£2. Details from Naomi (045 387 2214) or Carol (04536 2258).



Major Cruise Conference

HEAVY BOOKING is expected for the National Conference against Cruise to be held in Manchester on March 16/17. The idea is to reverse the trend towards despair over Cruise, through an honest exchange of ideas between all those at present active, and to build coherent plans for

Cadmium in Lego

LONDON GREENPEACE has produced a fact sheet about the toxic heavy metal cadmium and its uses in everyday household articles. Entitled "The Yellow Peril: Cadmium in Lego and Household Articles", the sheet is based on research published in Germany nearly two years ago.

Many plastic household items, particularly those coloured red and yellow, contain cadmium - including pens, toothbrushes and toys. The Germans found cadmium in Lego, though Lego UK say that the use of cadmium was discontinued five years ago.

Greenpeace call upon all manufacturers to withdraw any articles which contain cadmium.

The factsheet is available free for a large sae from: Greenpeace (London), 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1. More information from Bob on 01-471 5711.



Holy Wells

HOLY WELLS were once of enormous importance to local communities. They were the link between the material and spiritual worlds, and a centre for worship and faith: they were adapted for Christian use. But now many wells have been 'lost' or are disused, and the rituals have been forgotten. The Holy Wells Research and Preservation Group has just been set up to encourage research into the history and folklore of the wells, and to rediscover lost wells and, where possible, restore them and put them under local care. There's no membership fee yet: the group is just getting formed. Write to Mark Valentine, 35 Grafton Way, New Duston, Northampton NN5 6NG.



EAST MIDLANDS readers take note! Tony Walker (15 Yelverton Avenue, Leicester LE5 6XS - tel 417423) wants to make contact with groups or individuals who share his interests in communes and organic cultivation.

Brambles Festival

BRAMBLES FARM was once a farm: now it's a weapons factory where GEC-Marconi are carrying out research and development work on the Spearfish heavyweight torpedo. Spearfish (and the lightweight Stingray also under development by Marconi) has the potential to launch a first strike on Russian submarines. When deployed they will have a very destabilising effect on the "balance of power".

Action around the "death factory" centres around the group who last year organised the Brambles Farm Peace Festival. They have produced an excellent information pack, with reprints of a number of articles from the press explaining what is going on. And later this year (August 9 - 10 - 11) they're planning to hold another peace festival on land adjacent to the Marconi site.

They're particularly looking for bands and entertainers of all kinds, and a marquee.

More information (we suggest £1 for the info pack, or a sae for a leaflet) from: Brambles Farm Peace Festival, 100 Cherry Tree Avenue, Cowplain, Hants PO8 8AT. Phone 0705 252887.



Sheila Ernst

SHEILA ERNST will be speaking on "Looking at Group Processes" on February 23 in the Dartington Conference series. Contact: Kathy Taylor, Dartington Hall Trust, The Elmthirst Centre, Totnes (0803 862224 ext. 57).



A BRICK CARTOON showing US and Soviet arms negotiators reaching for tape measures to compare the lengths of their missile penises has been published by Peace News as a comment on the Geneva meeting of the super-powers last month. Printed in colour on A2, the poster costs £1.25 incl. p&p from Peace News, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham 3.

Philippines Re-think?

WE'VE REPORTED before on the British government's involvement, through "aid" investment, in the development of plantations in the Philippines.

The Philippine Support Group (PSG) now reports that the Commonwealth Development Corporation has decided not to push through with stage 2 of its palm oil project in Loreto - because, the government says, Marcos can't provide the necessary roads. But the PSG believes that popular opposition in the Philippines and in Britain has been a major factor. The greens have been active in putting pressure to bear.

The notorious Guthrie plantation which has already displaced thousands of people continues to receive British government investment. The PSG hopes to force a withdrawal of this aid too if the pressure can be kept up.

Stop Fishing!

"ONLY THE SICK deliberately inflict pain" says a leaflet aimed at anglers and issued last year by London Greenpeace. The leaflet suggests to anglers that they should apply the same considerations and feelings to fish that they would accord to cats, dogs, and perhaps foxes. And if it's nice sitting by a river "away from it all", why not bring a book to read instead of a rod?

A useful aid in drafting a letter or leaflet of your own to hand out on the river bank: see to London Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1. They want to hear from anglers themselves too.

Leamington Festival

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL Leamington Festival of International Understanding and Peace will be held this year on June 15/16. It's a free open-air festival where groups and organisations meet together and present their aims to a wide audience. Over 60,000 people attended last year.

There are also craft demonstrations and lots of live entertainment - music, theatre and dance - and children's entertainment.

All inquiries, including requests for booking forms, should be sent to Janet Alty, 18 Lillington Road, Leamington Spa CV32 5YY (0926 27773).

European Green Congress

THE SECOND CONGRESS of the European Greens will be held in Dover from March 22 - 24. It will be preceded by a 24-hour Ecology Party conference. Speakers include Fritjof Capra, Rudolf Bahro, Mary Kaldor and Leopold Kohr: a fuller list will be available by our next issue. There will be special plenaries on the Regions and on Agriculture, with a rally on the Saturday evening. As

seating is limited to 600 (the organisers are expecting 300 participants from the UK and 300 from Europe) there will be no rally-only tickets. Cost of all sessions is £9, plus food and accommodation, and tickets are not restricted to Eco members. Contact the Ecology Party, 36/38 Clapham Road, London SW9 0JQ (01-735 2485).

FoE on Roads and the Law

TRUNK ROADS are by definition unsuitable for towns and cities and should be kept out, say FoE. The group has been giving evidence to the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment. Sometimes low-tech, commonsense approaches to traffic problems could pay off: they cite the case of a study of the notorious Archway Road in north London, where it was found that the same 'benefits' which would accrue from a £40m road-widening scheme could be achieved by one diligent traffic warden tackling illegal parking - for just £6,000 a year plus uniform and notebook!

FoE are also compiling a dossier of cuttings showing how enforcement and sentencing policies are failing to improve road safety and simply bringing the road traffic acts into disrepute. One example they already give is that of a Runcorn mother, fined £100 for non-possession of a TV licence, who saw her son's killer fined the same amount in the same court.

Any Green Line readers who can help with examples of the way courts often play down the seriousness of motoring offences should send reports or cuttings to Don Mathew, FoE, 377 City Road, London EC1V 1NA.

Coal or Nuclear?

COAL OR NUCLEAR? It's a straight choice. Thus begins a leaflet just published by the South-Eastern Anti-Nuclear Network which links nuclear power, the miners strike and energy policy - and calls for active support for the miners. A free copy of the artwork is available with a space to insert local details: send A5 see to 111, Albion Hill, Brighton, East Sussex. Tel 0273 673643.

Eco Fights Fluoride

AS THE FLUORIDATION Bill went into its committee stage last month, the Ecology Party wrote to all MPs on the standing committee urging them to reject "this attempt to introduce compulsory medication into this country".

The Bill has been introduced as a direct result of a legal challenge mounted by Newark Ecology Party, where Patricia Hewis has been working with a local SDP member to serve a writ on the local water authority charging them with illegally fluoridating the local water supply against the wishes of the local people.

Among the grounds given by the Ecology Party for opposing the Bill are that it would be the first time that people could be given compulsory medication against their will and even without their knowledge.

53 Tory backbenchers voted against the government when the Bill had its Second Reading on January 14. At present 9% of the UK water supply is fluoridated, but it is proposed to increase this considerably.

Action on Deposits

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL DEMOCRACY - the Ecology Party's campaign which is currently focussing on the Tory plans for increased election deposits - is proposing a series of actions to coincide with the various stages through parliament of the Representation of the People Bill. These vary from 'soft' tactics to other actions of a more illegal nature, for which affinity groups are organising in different parts of the country. Contact: Paul Elkins, 42 Warriner Gardens, London SW11. 4DU (01-720 4973).

What Green Means to Me

THE GREEN MOVEMENT has grown out of one momentous realisation: the way we are treating this planet is suicidal. It has become obvious to anyone with the honesty to admit it that, if we humans continue to exploit the rest of the Earth in the way we do now, we will soon render her uninhabitable. Once this fact is grasped, all our other concerns, however important, must be secondary.

This has led many of us to the realisation that, if we are to survive, we can no longer look on the rest of the Earth as material to be used to enhance our happiness, but as other parts of an interdependent whole. If we see ourselves as a species apart, as competitors with all the other beings of the Earth, we do so at our peril. If we see ourselves as one organ among many in a single body, and act according to this vision, there is a future of peace and plenty before us. The previously unchallenged assumption that "people always come first" doesn't even represent self-interest any more.

These realisations are what I call green consciousness, or ecology.

Environmentalism is not the same thing. By its very definition it makes a distinction between humans on the one hand and everything else, the environment, on the other. It tries to soften the impact of human greed, without questioning the assumption that human greed is basically a good thing.

The problem with environmentalism is that it doesn't work. A good example cropped up in a recent edition of Greenline: "Paradoxically (acid rain) has been exacerbated by motor manufacturers raising the temperatures to compensate for loss of power encountered by engines which have to comply with lead-free petrol laws. These 'hotter' engines spew out greater amounts of nitrous oxides - a component of acid rain." (Kay Wedgbury, "A Future for Forests?", GL27.)

Environmentalism tries to solve problems of pollution with a never-ending series of technological fixes. Green consciousness goes to the cause, and questions whether we have the right to unlimited amounts of electricity and motor transport. High technology can be very valuable, but it can never be a substitute for restraining our greed. If we take less, we leave enough for the trees to survive, and they in turn keep us alive.

"What a forbidding future," some may say, "A choice between never-ending austerity or certain destruction!"

No way! Green consciousness means freeing ourselves from the obsession with material wealth. This obsession can never be satisfied, and it leaves us little time or energy for the really beautiful things of life, the spiritual and the emotional. When we are free of it, life doesn't just become more wholesome, it becomes more fun. Even if the planet wasn't under threat, the green way would be the best way to live.

There are no rules or dogmas about the green way of life. But as soon as a person has woken up to green consciousness their life will start to change of its own accord. Some may become vegetarian, some may give up their car, some may

refuse excess packaging in shops or refuse to use disposable goods. It's not necessary for all of us to go off and live on self-sufficient small-holdings, but it is necessary for each of us to do as much as we feel able to lessen our destructive impact on the Earth. Green words without green actions are nothing but puffs of wind.

Nevertheless, the need to share green consciousness with others is urgent, and one vehicle for this is green politics.

There are those who see virtue in supporting their own nation, class, religion or other in-group to the detriment of all others. This may be called the competitive world-view. It finds expression in war, class struggle and most politics, especially those of the right.

There are others who realise it's better to co-operate with and help other people, whether of one's own in-group or not. This view finds expression in the compassionate aspect of the political left. It could be called the co-operative world-view, but it is only co-operative up to a point. It is still competitive with regard to all the non-human beings which go to make up the Earth.

The green world-view extends co-operation to all beings, human or not. Although it shares many ideals with the compassionate left, on the most important point of all, our relationship with the Earth as a whole, it differs.

The most relevant distinction in politics today is not between left and right, unanimous in their desire for economic growth, but between greens and the others. No amount of compassion for other humans is any use on a dead planet.

"The Greens" are often depicted as an amalgam of feminism, the peace movement, animal rights, anarchy, co-operatives, organic farming, holistic medicine and so on. This may be useful in uniting people with similar feelings but different priorities behind one banner, but I believe it's dangerously misleading.

Whilst all these concerns flow naturally and inevitably from green consciousness, and a belief in any one of them can lead a person to green consciousness, the connection is not inevitable. Many ardent single-issue activists believe that all will be well once their own specific aim is achieved, and do not accept that if we are to survive at all we need to change the very basis on which we live our lives. To include them all in a fuzzy hodge-podge and call it green is to lose sight of the very fact we most need to remember - and live by. Of course we must co-operate with people who share some of our aims, but we should never forget what green really means.

For green consciousness is not a hodge-podge. Like the Earth herself, it is a single unity. It is the realisation that we humans are not distinct from the rest of nature, but part of one interdependent whole.

This is by no means all I mean by green, but it's the heart of it.

Patrick Whitefield