

eco news

ECOLOGY PARTY NEWSLETTER

№1 March~April 1979

ECO looks to Europe

European history interlocks two themes: the rivalries of state, and a variegated culture bound together by the continual interchange of traders, scholars, craftsmen and refugees. Similarly, British history, so bound up with European affairs, is none the less marked by the colonizing world view of a sea going nation.

It is then hardly surprising that debate about Britain and Europe should be contentious. Attitudes reflect either the divisive history of battles and treaties, or the unifying history of thought and art. Contraction of Britain's role on the world stage and doubts about association with Europe encourage island independence.

Amidst this confusion, can the ecological perspective indicate a clearer form for international relationships? I believe it can, given careful definition. Some eco-politicians take the concept of self sufficiency to its limits and look at the EEC only as it operates now. Understandably, but without vision, they veer towards "fortress Britain".

"Self sufficiency is an unsatisfactory term. It predicates tight economic boundaries. Ecologists must oppose universal free trade which leads equally to the ultra-specialisation of manufacturing in Europe and to the exploitation of the third world. Yet while Europe is broadly self sufficient in food, Britain cannot be for some time to come. Short of catastrophe, the unequal distribution of natural resources will always stimulate trade. And until the economies of "developing" countries become ecologically sounder we would do them no service by arbitrarily impeding their exports.

"Self reliance" is the better term. It emphasises the ability to cope without external aid, but it suggests ground rules for limited and sustainable trade beneficial to the quality of life. It discourages cultural parochialism, and within it is the germ of an international order of communities, smaller than most existing nations, self reliant, but acknowledging their common interests.

In this light, the economic pre-occupations of the Treaty of Rome, and the absurdities they create are irrelevant. Withdrawal appeals superficially, but none should underestimate the difficulties or the dangers of isolation. It is better that ecologists should enlarge the debate by stressing the international dimension of many environmental problems and the attractions of a successful, all-Europe, but decentralized "federation of the regions".

An elected European Parliament could be, for all the reservations, the first brave step. Continental ecologists are taking it. It is inconceivable that the Ecology Party in Britain should falter. On the contrary, "Europ-Ecologie" could be the only significant trans-national movement thereby adding credibility to our national campaign. That is why the NEC, having sensed the Party's mood, is actively seeking funds to contest 4 constituencies on June 7th.

Jonathan Tyler.



Sally Willington, Jeremy Faull, Jonathan Tyler, Jonathon Porritt and Peter Frings at London press conference. Photo courtesy UPP.

Election plans announced at London press conference

The Ecology Party's intention to contest fifty seats at the forthcoming General Election was announced at a national press conference on February 19th.

The conference, held in the cellar of a Fleet Street pub, was a resounding success. Thirty journalists turned up to hear details of the party's philosophy, policies and election strategy from Jonathan Tyler and Jonathon Porritt, and their questions were answered by a panel of five members. Besides many national and local press reports, we also achieved television and radio coverage: Jonathan Tyler took part in a phone in on L.B.C., Jonathon Porritt was interviewed on the 'Today' programme and Capital radio while Sara Parkin appeared on BBC TV (North). The Ecology Party is now well and truly launched.

Since the press conference, we have made steady progress towards turning our election plans into reality. The general election fund now stands at £6000, and money from our appeal in Vote and The New Ecologist is still coming in. Three scripts for our TV broadcast have been roughed out and are now in the hands of a firm of media consultants

who are giving us their assistance free of charge.

Copies of 'The Reckoning', our latest pamphlet, are already with branches, and the election manifesto, entitled 'The Real Alternative' will soon be at the printers. Eye catching posters have been produced, together with car stickers and badges. A range of very cheap and effective small leaflets is being printed by the hundred thousand.

An election campaign guide has been produced and sent out to all candidates, many of whom attended a special candidates conference in Bristol on February 24th. Across the country, the finishing touches are being added to election addresses.

Our campaign of fifty candidates is now in top gear. It will bring ecology into the forum of national politics, and totally transform the party in terms of its credibility, its strength, its organization, and its future.

The Ecology Party is now on the threshold of a major breakthrough - lets go with ECO!

Peter Frings
Keith Rushworth

econews

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A GOVERNMENT OF ECOLOGISTS

The Ecology Party is limbering up for its first major intervention in a general election. The immediate objectives of this strategy are to bring ecology into the nation's collective consciousness and to win members, with which there can be little quarrel. It is undoubtedly the only way to escape from our present condition of "well meaning but ineffectual oblivion".

But in the haste to raise our quota of fifty candidates, we are perhaps in danger of losing sight of our long term aims. What do we ultimately hope to achieve by playing the parliament game? Is the objective to form a "government of ecologists", a notion stated in party literature, and cherished by many prominent members?

Such a prospect is repellent to me and many others. The case against representative politics has been forcefully put by anarchists over the years, and their arguments have never been satisfactorily answered. Space precludes a

repetition here, but the kernel of the matter is surely that representative 'democracy' and all its trappings necessarily precludes the majority of the population from having a say in running their own affairs. The idea of a "government of ecologists" contradicts another avowed aim of "giving power back to the people" - the two are incompatible. The morbid fascination displayed by many members with the existing political process misses the point entirely: voting is not political action, it is political abdication.

The first act of a truly ecological parliament would be to dissolve itself. It would be replaced by a body solely concerned with defence and foreign affairs, financed by sovereign regions, and composed of accountable delegates from the regions. Ideally we would do away with any national body whatsoever, and join in a federation of European regions. At the same time I believe we should continue to contest parliamentary elections - but for purely pragmatic reasons, as the only way of getting ecological ideas across to the great mass of people who have not yet gained membership to that exclusive, select coterie, the "alternatives" movement.

A "government of ecologists" should be no part of our vision of the future. The Ecology Party surely stands for participatory democracy - what other kind of democracy is there?

INTRODUCING ECONews

Welcome to the first issue of ECONews. At this moment it is appropriate to re-examine the role of the party newsletter, and the direction it should take in the months ahead.

We believe that ECONews should fulfill three functions. It should act as a forum for member's ideas and opinions on policy and party organization; it should be a means of communication between members; and it should keep members informed of party activities.

There seems to be a consensus within the party that ECONews should restrict itself to these objectives and not attempt to be an ecological 'journal' directed towards the general public. Nevertheless, we do aim to produce a newsletter, attractively laid out, which will be of interest to potential members and sympathizers as well as current members. Extra copies of ECONews will be available to branches at a few pence each, should they wish to distribute it outside the party.

The allocation of space between the different sections in this issue gives a broad indication of editorial policy. Several pages are devoted to reviews and articles on party policy, and in future issues we hope to include articles assessing Illich's contribution to ecological thought and a discussion of the controversial 'Women in Society' sections of recent party literature. Many areas of ecopolitics are at best hazily sketched out and the newsletter

should play its part in the development of a coherent ecological philosophy. For this reason, we intend to give a considerable amount of space to the discussion of ideas and ideology. With the article on the Torness Alliance, we introduce a regular 'Green Politics' feature, which will cover the activities of other ecological groups both at home and abroad.

We hope to expand the letters section in subsequent issues - this should be the place for short topical points, replies to articles in previous issues, and an arena for dissent and debate.

It is not our intention to build up these sections at the expense of news coverage, which in many ways is the lifeblood of the party. However, many branch reports have fallen victim to a fairly ruthless editorial blue pencil, partly due to pressure on space, and partly because they were not considered of sufficient interest to the rest of the party to warrant publication. The Ecology Party is about grass roots action, but so much is going on in the branches that we can't report it all!

Ultimately though, the newsletter must reflect the views of party members, and not just those of the editors and the NEC. If you disagree with the editorial policy broadly outlined above, please let us know; but above all send us reviews, letters, and articles on any subject you think other members will be interested in. Make ECONews your newsletter by writing for it!

We look forward to hearing from you.

Peter Frings, David Fleming, Keith Rushworth
Alan Clarke.

NEWS

S.W. CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

S.W. threatens UDI!

A resolution from Don Grimes (Bath) that the South West region should become autonomous in financial and administrative matters from November 1979 was the main talking point at the annual S.W. conference, held in Exeter on February 3rd. The proposal inspired a major debate on party organization, and generated considerable sympathy from the floor, but was strongly opposed by NEC members, who dominated the debate.

A compromise solution, setting up a working party to look at regional organization was finally adopted. The report from the working party will be presented to another S.W. conference in the summer, and will also be published in ECONEWS.

Don's other resolution, proposing to elect a regional co-ordinator and a National Executive Committee representative fared better, and was overwhelmingly approved. Later in the day, Richard Carder (Bath) was chosen as Co-ordinator, and David Taylor (Bath) returned as NEC rep.

Incestuous practices

Gundula Dorey (Bristol), aroused members' prurient interest with her resolution concerning the NEC's "present incestuous practices. Contrary to expectations, this motion did not refer to sexual excesses at NEC meetings, but proposed that the NEC should delegate responsibility for specific tasks to branches, instead of attempting to tackle everything itself - it was unanimously carried.

In response to the CEGB's threat to build a nuclear power station "west of Exeter", North Cornwall branch volunteered to produce a report on nuclear developments in the South West. This will be published as a policy statement, and also used as the basis of our case in any public enquiry.

A discussion on Trade Unions became somewhat heated - suggestions for party policy on the subject ranged from the ludicrous (centralised wages board composed of CBI, TUC, and government) to the distasteful (small scale capitalist enterprises with paternalistic

employers will eliminate the "union problem"). Bath branch were requested to prepare a paper in time for the candidates conference in Bristol on February 24th.

Divisive

The EEC was an even more divisive topic. Discussion quickly polarised around two seemingly irreconcilable positions. Howard Hoptrough (West Cornwall) believed that we should leave the Common Market immediately and go for national self sufficiency and independence, while Nick Hildyard (North Cornwall) among others, argued that we should develop a federation of European regions. Both sides claimed doctrinal authority, and the debate did not progress far beyond an exchange of opposing views. Bristol members were among the few who appeared uncommitted either way, and their offer to research the subject and produce a report as soon as possible was gratefully accepted.

The conference was generally agreed to have been fairly productive. The principle of delegating tasks to branches was successfully established, some initial progress was made towards the decentralization of party administration, and study groups were set up to look into three important policy areas. Drafts of all documents from these groups will be circulated to S.W. branches through the regional co-ordinator, and will undoubtedly resurface at the national AGM.

Peter Frings

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

ECOROPA appeal

ECOROPA, the group for European ecological action, is planning a series of whole page advertisements presenting their declaration for a green Europe, in all the leading newspapers of Western Europe.

Its aim is to ensure that the voice of the environmental movement is heard at the European elections, and that the ecological perspective is made central to the arguments put forward.

Declaration

The declaration calls for self reliance, communities of a human size, decentralization and regionalization, conservation of energy, the banning of dangerous technologies, and an immediate halt to the nuclear power programme.

"Unless the new European Parliament includes at least a sizeable minority of ecologically minded candidates, the views of millions of Europeans will go without representation. Should this happen, we can be certain that the matters debated by the Parliament will simply be matters of degree: whether we should build 100 nuclear power stations or only 50; whether the modernization of agriculture will drive 4 million farmers from their land, or only 2 million...The vital issues of conservation, regionalization, self reliance, freedom from bureaucratic domination and disarmament will be ignored."

To publish the declaration, ECOROPA desperately needs funds. Please send donations to: ECOROPA, 73 Molesworth Street, Wadebridge, Cornwall.

THE FLAT EARTH BUNCH OF
STONE-AGE MACHINE-BASHING,
FACT-FLINGING ECO-NUTS
ARE SO EMOTIONAL



(From Peace News)

AT LEAST THEY
BELIEVE IN
PARLIAMENTARY
DEMOCRACY



NEWS

ECO candidates

From the table below, you can see that our candidates are predominantly concentrated in three areas - the South West, London, and Leeds. This is partly the way it turned out, partly deliberate strategy, so as to make the best use of our limited resources by fighting in clusters of constituencies, rather than through isolated campaigns.

At this stage, 32 candidates have definitely declared their intention of standing - the remaining constituencies in the table are still to be confirmed, for the most part because the branches concerned have not yet selected their candidate.

The number of campaigns that will be fully fought depends very much on the timing of the election - the party should be in an adequate

state of readiness for a snap election by the beginning of April.

In the South West, media attention will be focussed upon two seats: North Cornwall where Teddy Goldsmith will be taking on John Pardoe, and North Devon, where Tony Whittaker will be fighting Jeremy Thorpe. Chris Retallack's intervention in Bodmin, an exceedingly close Liberal/Tory marginal, should also prove interesting!

Leeds ECO candidates will be fighting 11 seats including those of Merlyn Rees, Denis Healey and Richard Wainwright's marginal Colne Valley constituency. In London, Irene Coates should make an impact with her campaign in Brentford and Isleworth, a very close Tory/Labour marginal.

SOUTH WEST

Definitely declared

St Ives (Howard Hoptrough)
 Cornwall North (Teddy Goldsmith)
 Bodmin (Chris Retallack)
 Exeter (Peter Frings)
 Bristol N.E. (Gundula Dorey)
 Bristol West (Roger Levett)
 Bath (Don Grimes)
 Somerset North (Richard Carder)
 Devizes (Raymond Burcham)
 Chippenham (Bert Pettitt)
 Dorset West (Margaret Bacon)
 Lymington & Christchurch (Jim Keeling)
 Bournemouth East (Jacky Dempsey)
 Devon North (Tony Whittaker)

LEEDS AREA

Definitely declared

Leeds N.E. (Sara Parkin)
 Leeds N.W. (Keith Rushworth)
 Barkston Ash (David Corry)
 Ripon (Alastair Laurence)
 Batley and Morley (Clive Lord)
 Shipley (David Pedley)

LONDON

St Marylebone (Jonathan Porritt)
 Kensington (Nicholas Albery)
 Brentford & Isleworth (Irene Coates)
 Chingford (Steve Lambert)
 Hendon South (Geoffrey Syer)

ELSEWHERE

Birmingham Edgbaston (Jonathan Tyler)
 Worcestershire South (Guy Woodford)
 Warwick & Leamington (Peter Sizer)
 Norwich (George Hannah)
 Gillingham (Colin Fry)
 Rye (Anne Rix)
 Crosby (Peter Hussey)

To be confirmed

Torbay
 Taunton
 Bristol South East

To be confirmed

Leeds East
 Leeds South
 Pudsey
 Colne Valley
 Bradford

To be confirmed

Islington Central
 Hackney Central
 Hammersmith North
 Holborn & St Pancras South
 Beckenham
 Hampstead.

To be confirmed

Coventry
 Carmarthen
 Worcester
 Brighton



REGIONAL AUTONOMY

At the South West Region's AGM on Saturday 3rd February, a resolution was proposed that the region should become autonomous in administrative and financial matters. The resolution was amended to allow a working party to look into the whole question, with a view to presenting a draft plan for 'regionalisation' at the summer South West conference. The Somerset branch was elected as the working party.

In order that any proposal should embrace as many viewpoints as possible, could you send your suggestions for setting up a regional organization to Garth Mutton, Orchard Leigh, Compton Dundon, Somerton, Somerset, as soon as possible. Please note that it is not the intention of this plan to alter in any way the policy making process of the party.

Garth Mutton.

CHEAP PRINTING

The South West region litho machine is now housed and operational at 15 Lower North Street, Exeter, together with a process camera and a processor. I can therefore provide a cheap, comprehensive printing service to branches, at roughly half commercial rates. If you want either general or local election leaflets printed, get in touch for an immediate quote. I may also be able to help with artwork, reductions and enlargements of ECO logos etc.

Should I get more requests than I can cope with, South West branches will get priority - get your order in now!

Peter Frings

NO CONTEST!

The last two months has seen the emergence of four new political parties, one of which may share some common ground with the Ecology Party.

The Wessex Regionalist Party are concerned with "reawakening Wessex cultural consciousness" and their platform is reportedly mildly ecological - but apart from a hazy commitment to decentralization, and the patronage of an obscure peer, Lord Weymouth, they appear to have little going for them.

The other three - the United Country Party, started by right wing technomaniac Patrick Moore; the Christian Democrats, based in Mansfield, who object mainly to the country being run by 'southern intellectuals'; and the very bizarre National Reorganization Party - seem to be chasing the Tory vote and are united only by the complete irrelevance of their policies.

NEC REPORTS

Manifesto review

On Sunday 25th February, the National Executive Committee took the first steps towards resolving two subjects on which there has been some uncertainty: the Manifesto and the European Elections.

On the Manifesto, it was agreed that this offers an opportunity for the party to test the truth of its devolved structure: the branches ought to have a major part to play in developing the Manifesto. It was also agreed that it would be healthy to adopt a system which allowed the Manifesto to be updated regularly, to reflect changed conditions and improved analysis in each of the policy areas.

The details of how this is to be done have yet to be resolved but at present the system looks like this. The Party in conference agrees a core document, a brief statement of principles and objectives. This would form the basis for the Manifesto, and under normal circumstances would not be subject to change.

Detailed policies for subject areas would then be submitted by branches, and would be subject to quality control based on principles which are yet to be decided. Agreed branch submissions would then be debated by conference, and, if agreed, would be included in the Manifesto.

The Manifesto would be produced in a loose leaf format, and sections would be inserted and removed as agreed by successive party conferences. The NEC agreed to work out the system in more detail before formally proposing it to the party. Watch for developments.

The NEC agreed that the European Elections offer a unique opportunity for the party to become better known before the general election, and the debate at the Candidates Conference on Saturday suggested that the disagreement in the party about Britain's membership of the Common Market is not as great as was supposed. The party is practically unanimous on the need for devolution to smaller nations and regions, and the continent of Europe as a whole would (according to several speakers at the conference) provide a more logical framework for a federation of regions, than could the nation state.

So the NEC felt it was not inconsistent with ECO principles to put up candidates in the European elections. A target of four was adopted; whether this target is achieved will depend largely on funds. It was recognised that this should in no way be allowed to divert money from the general election campaign, but that there are a number of potential sources which could only be tapped for a European election.

Jonathan Tyler reported that forms for the new membership system are printed, and instructions for the system have been drafted. Biff Vernon was appointed the new membership secretary with immediate effect. Biff and his family will be moving house soon, so it was agreed that a single address should be used for all party literature and membership forms: 217 Unthank Road, Norwich.

The location for the annual conference was confirmed. (Keele University, 7-9 September) Suggestions for names of guest speakers are invited, and will be discussed at the next NEC meeting.

The results of the Press conference on 19th February were reviewed: thirty representatives from the press, twenty newspaper mentions, seven radio and TV broadcasts, over sixty letters and phone calls from enquirers, and hundreds of inquiries reported by the Daily Telegraph Information Bureau.

ECOBUG

GOOD EARTH

From this issue onwards, the Ecology Party will no longer be buying Good Earths to be sent out with the newsletter. Members who wish to continue receiving Good Earth should send £1.20 to Ron Andrews at 18 Cofton Lake Road, Birmingham, for a years supply.

RENEWALS

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 1979, PLEASE COULD YOU DO SO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

ECOLOGY PARTY

Registration Form (Please use CAPITALS)

Name.....

Address.....

Tel..... Constituency.....

Local govt. district.....

The annual subscription is: Standard £4, Couples £6, Students and pensioners £2, Couples (students and pensioners) £3.

Membership is valid for one calendar year (1 January-31 December). Subscriptions starting January/July will be renewable on 31 December of the same year. Those starting in August/December will be renewable on 31 December of the following year.

The above rates are the minimum fees which will qualify you for membership. Any donations in addition to the membership fee will be welcome and warmly acknowledged.

I have enclosed a membership fee of £.....

I have enclosed a donation of £.....

Making a total of £.....

Signature..... Date.....

Standing order.....

..... Bank

..... Branch Address

..... Account No.....

I wish to pay the following amounts by standing order:

Membership fee £.....

Donation £.....

Making a total of £.....

Please pay to Barclays Bank Ltd., 150 The Parade, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire (Ecology Party, Account No. 40347140) the sum of £..... on receipt of this order (first payment) on 31 December 19..... (second payment) and annually thereafter until cancelled.

Signature..... Date.....

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Please return this form with your remittance to Ecology Party, 217 Unthank Rd, Norwich, Norfolk.

New membership record system

A new membership record system is now in operation. The growth of ECO membership, the need for rapid and easy collection of subscriptions and donations, and for efficient communication between the membership and branch secretaries, has led to the replacement of the old, cumbersome card index, by a system of "multi copy forms". These can store more information in less space, allow accurate mailing list updates, and enable the membership secretary's work load to be shared among several people. The new system should be fully up to date and functioning properly by early April.

With ECO's present relatively small size, it seems essential to maintain a central record of membership. In the not too distant future we will out grow even the multi copy system and be forced to decide whether to maintain central records (which will probably involve a computer file) or whether to devolve all such bureaucracy to regions and branches. We should think out the issues involved before we reach this point. Please send your views to the Editor.

Biff Vernon.

Branch policy groups?

Jeremy Faull is co-ordinating attempts to set up policy study groups and get the manifesto up to date. So far, three groups, consisting of widely scattered members, have been set up: on Education, Defence and Land. Distance and money combine to make meetings difficult, and little progress has been made.

One way around this logistic problem would be for branches to act as study groups: as an added advantage, this would increase grass roots participation in the formation of party policy. Branches interested in tackling a policy area should contact Jeremy Faull first to avoid duplication of effort.

Ecologically acceptable development

A 'development fund' has been established to help build up the Party organization. It will be used to provide working capital to pay for secretarial services for NEC members, the production of literature, the initial printing costs of the new membership system, and for an electric typewriter. The latter is urgently needed in the preparation of ECONews and election leaflets.

The fund has been set up with an initial loan of £1,000 from an NEC member, to be repaid over a period of five years. Any other member who would like to contribute, say £200 plus on a similiar basis should contact the chairman, Jonathan Tyler.

BRANCH NEWS

New branches in Wales

From the tone of Anne de Boisgelin's letters to Peter Frings, it would be more than my life's worth to omit a report on the new Welsh branches, so I'll make a start there - I'm too young to die!

Following a successful public meeting arranged by Brian Kingzett, the Dyfed co-ordinator, a second meeting in Camarthen resulted in the formation of ECO's first branch in Wales on January 15th. Brian Kingzett is Chairman, David Poulter is Secretary, and Anne de Boisgelin is Press and Publicity Officer. Branch Treasurer is Virginia Isaacs, daughter of the late E.F. Schumacher.

A second branch was formed in Haverfordwest on February 9th at a public meeting to which David Taylor was invited as guest NEC speaker. The branch will be known as the Pembrokeshire Ecology Party, and the contact there is Wendy Gillett, New Briton, Cresswell Quay, Kilgetty, Dyfed.

I'm looking forward to more news from Wales - especially news of further branches! Anyone who can help in this respect should contact Brian Kingzett, Alltgoch, Gellywen, Dyfed. (Madox 463).

North West

As a native Lancastrian, I am particularly interested in developments in that part of the country. We have already heard of the formation of the Merseyside branch; I am now informed that regular meetings have been arranged for the first Thursday in every month, starting at 7 pm., at the Merchant Navy Hotel, Canning Street, Liverpool - just around the corner from the Anglican Cathedral. Contact: Peter Hussey, 167 Gardener Road, Formby, Merseyside. (Or John Wareing - see 'Noticeboard').

I was hoping to have heard more about Richard Slaughter's efforts to organize a Lancaster branch, but nothing has been forthcoming - no doubt this will be rectified in the fullness of time. Contact Richard at 8 Vale Terrace, Garstang for local

information. A situation report for the next issue of ECONews would be appreciated.

North East

Mike Sellers has sent in back copies of the Leeds branch's excellent local newsletter, but unfortunately the constraints of time and space prevent a detailed report here - the best I can do is to say "keep up the good work"! More to the point as far as I'm concerned is Mike's news of activities in other parts of Yorkshire.

Sheffield has 15 members and several ad hoc meetings have been organized, presumably with the intention of forming a branch - I need more information about this. Local contact is Chris Taylor, 16 Laverdene Avenue, Totley Rise, Totley. (Sheffield 365976). In Bradford two students are trying to get a branch together at the University - anyone who can help should get in touch with Simon Hicks, R 11, Shearbridge Green, Bradford. Robert Halstead is trying to organize Keighley members into a branch - a public meeting is in the offing and everyone interested should contact Robert at 27 Woodlands Rise, Haworth, Keighley, as soon as possible. I should very much like to be kept informed of developments in these areas.

South East

According to Basil Mager, the Regional Organizer, the South East (South of the Thames) Region has a current membership of 126, of whom 38 are in Kent, and 27 in East Sussex. The region has 4 prospective Parliamentary candidates: Anne Rix (Rye), Colin Fry (Gillingham), Dr John Beale (Brighton), and Nick Bagnall (Chichester).

An all day regional conference will be held in

Guildford - in the Guildford Institute starting at 10.15 am. - on March 10th. Jonathon Porritt, John Luck and Biff Vernon will be speaking. If anyone in the region doesn't know about this, I suggest they contact Basil Mager, 1 White Lodge, Collington Lane West, Bexhill on Sea, at the earliest possible moment.

I have had reports from Anne Rix and Fred Clarke of branch activity in East Sussex and Kent; there has also been a letter from John Beale to say that a small group of members in the Brighton area has been meeting at his home, Flat 5, 7 Chichester Terrace, Brighton - the next such meeting is at 8 pm., on Friday 23rd March.

Finally, I have received a report on the first two meetings of the Parliamentary Liaison group for Alternative Energy Strategies from Jean Lambert in London. There will be another meeting on March 19th, featuring a talk by Amory Lovins. Further details from Jean at 3 Howard Road, London, E17 3ET.

Please send all branch newsletters, reports, and other items of miscellaneous information to Alan Clarke, who compiled the above report.

Help!

Dean Wayland is trying to set up the South East (North of the Thames) Region. Could all members in this area please write to him (address on back page) if they could help to organize a regional conference.

Sally Willington, the national Secretary, is still looking for volunteers to organize the North region and the Northern Ireland region. Get in touch with her urgently if you can help.

LETTERS

LIBERALS

Dear Sir,

Before too many myths develop, may I reply to Ian Hatwell's letter in the January newsletter.

The Exeter affair: We were never offered a detailed package of agreements not to fight each other, only examples, and the Liberals always stressed that they are decentralist as the Ecology Party. Liberal confusion about their candidacy in Exeter unhappily coincided with a local mis-

understanding on our part. There was no question of double dealing.

We took into account just the points Ian suggests, although what was starting was the possibility of a more balanced deal than he imagines. Probably rightly, the NEC eventually fought shy, because of our gathering confidence, and the misleading impression a deal would have given to a public fed on a highly coloured view of pacts and the Liberal Party. But does Ian know what happened to our February 1974 votes where no Liberal stood, when one did stand in October - or the effect on morale?

continued on back page.

GREEN POLITICS

Torness Alliance prepares for May gathering

In May 1978, The Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace, SCRAM, organised a march from Dunbar in East Lothian to Torness - the site of Scotland's next nuclear power station, an AGR - followed by a weekend occupation of the site. The event was attended by 4000 people from all over Britain, from Holland and Germany, and even from Japan. At the end of the meeting, the Torness Declaration was signed by thousands of individuals and over thirty organizations. The Declaration states:

"As an affiliation of groups and individuals we declare our total and uncompromising opposition to the construction of a nuclear power station at Torness.

"Nuclear power threatens all living creatures and their natural environment. It concentrates power in the hands of a few, necessitates a military style secrecy, and undermines the principles of human liberty. A nuclear power station at Torness would be another irrevocable step towards a future of which we want no part.

"We therefore demand:

- an immediate and permanent halt to the construction of any further nuclear power stations;
- an urgent and vigorous energy conservation programme;
- the cleaner, safer and more efficient use of fossil fuels;
- the radical rechanneling of resources into the implementation of wave, wind and solar power, and other forms of renewable energy;
- the provision of socially useful work for all in energy and other fields.



"Our stand is in the defence of the health and safety of ourselves, of future generations and of all living creatures on

this planet.

"We announce that we are prepared to take all nonviolent steps necessary to prevent the construction of a nuclear power station at Torness."

The weeks that followed were spent in planning for future action, and the need for mutual co-operation and support prompted the birth of the Torness Alliance, consisting of all groups who were signatories to the Declaration. There was a strong feeling within the Alliance that another demonstration was needed very soon to keep alive public interest in Torness, and in September fifteen people moved onto the site, now officially owned by the SSEB; in doing so they performed Britain's first act of civil disobedience against nuclear power. This occupation had been planned to last a week, but local support for it, particularly through the recently formed Lothian and Borders Anti Nuclear Group was so great that the occupiers decided to stay indefinitely.

Half Moon Cottage

Work on renovating the derelict and roofless Half Moon Cottage on the site was begun immediately, and a rota system for occupiers quickly evolved. The renovation work was featured on the Open Door programme SCRAM produced with the BBC. On 13th November, work on the access roads to the site was begun, and on 14th November the occupiers were arrested, and Half Moon Cottage, on the other side of the site from the access roads, was bulldozed into the sea.

Through the telephone network, the Alliance was called to action, and over the following weekend 400 people gathered at the site. Nonviolent direct action, although something of a cliché among pressure groups, has always been a fundamental principle of the Alliance. For many people, non violence is a governing principle in their lives, and can be applied to every aspect of life. The opposition to contractors which took place on Monday 20th November therefore consisted of

passive resistance. It succeeded in preventing any work being done for most of the day. The former occupiers of the cottage are now living in Dunbar helping to co-ordinate local opposition to the power station.

Since November the Alliance has been planning a rally to take place on the anniversary of last May's demonstration. This will be next to the Torness site, which now has an eight foot perimeter fence, complete with barbed wire (though they are still only working on the access roads!).



The groups in the Alliance take it in turns to hold monthly planning meetings, and a newsletter containing the minutes of, and comments upon these meetings together with any recent developments is produced by another group. The Alliance thus functions in a truly decentralized and democratic manner.

It is aimed to raise \$10,000 to stage the May rally, and by making it also a festival of alternative technology and lifestyles to attract 10 to 12,000 people. The Edinburgh branch of the Ecology Party will be preparing a bookstall and exhibition for the May event, and also hope to leaflet the festival: if you can help with the organization of either of these, please contact Sheila Durie, c/o Dept of Psychology, 60 The Pleasance, Edinburgh.

Even as an active member of the Ecology Party, I believe the work done by single issue pressure groups is, and will continue to be vital, and I would urge anyone who feels they can help with money, or with time and energy (sic), to get in touch with their local group or write to the Torness Alliance c/o SCRAM, 2a Ainslie Place, Edinburgh 3.

Stewart Biggars.

POLICY FORUM

Dual economy defended

The idea of the dual economy has been gaining ground rapidly in recent months. It has also generated considerable controversy. In this article, David Fleming describes the process of building up the stable society while the industrial state winds down. During the period of transition, two very different forms of economy would exist side by side.

There is considerable agreement on the nature of the stable society. It is widely recognised that it would be a largely self-reliant society, in which local communities would be responsible for their own economic welfare, in which industry would be based on small scale units, with more people working on farmland, the soil capital cared for, and crafts and skills rejuvenated. But the distance between that society and our own is clearly immense. The contrast is in fact so great that for many people the road to a stable society seems to be frankly impossible.

We therefore have to address ourselves to the question of how we affect the transition between there to here - and indeed whether the transition is in fact a practical possibility for the developed countries at all.

RECESSION

We must begin by making a forecast about the likely developments in the economy within the next two decades or so.

The main trend is inevitably that of recession. We are already in the shadow of recession, with rising unemployment, declining growth in productivity, and the beginnings of a decline in living standards. It is these developments which, as their effects deepen, will also lead to a very major international economic decline which is certain to bring considerable economic hardship to all the developed countries, and is likely to set the scene for a sharp contraction in our liberties. This is the series of events to which the Ecology Party exists to offer a solution.

There are of course a number of factors which must take responsibility for this decline into recession. But it is worth noting that one of the immediate reasons is the revolution in technology. From the beginnings of the industrial revolution it was discovered that the production of goods and services created wealth in the form of profits, taxes, reinvested capital and wages.

This group of payments may be called the Value Retained. It is the money which remains in the economy after goods and services have been sold, and it is the wealth which makes it possible for Britain to buy the food and materials she needs from abroad.

This Value Retained is now destined to contract by several orders of magnitude. The new micro-engineering technology makes it possible to produce goods and services with minimal labour costs. This means the following:

- (1) Unemployment
- (2) Sharply declining average earnings
- (3) Sharply declining ability to purchase food and raw materials from abroad.

This is the great unspoken crisis which is being introduced by the micro chip. The silence about it is a measure of the irresponsibility of the current debate about the chip. There is much forecasting of leisure - a recent BBC broadcast predicted that there would be an increased need for string quartets in the future! But there is no recognition that there are two different sorts of leisure. There is the leisure of affluence. And there is the leisure of poverty.

Britain is headed for poverty which must be seen in terms not simply of financial poverty, but of real shortages of things which we clearly need for a civilised existence: such as food. No amount of growth in the monetary payments from the Government to the unemployed and to the lower income groups can avoid the reality of material poverty.

The towns - and hence Britain as an urban society as a whole - will be less and less able to afford the things which the countryside provides: namely things whose price will not be brought down by micro-engineering technology. These things - food and raw materials - form the bulk of Britain's requirements from overseas.

If Britain will not be able to afford the things on which she now depends from abroad, she will have to become much more self-sufficient than she is at present. This means a society in which there is very much less waste. It suggests the kind of scenario which we in the Ecology Party mean by a stable society: but the stable society will take some considerable time to set up and it is unfortunately necessary to predict that the coming decline in our living standards and buying power will be a more rapid process than the task of setting up the stable society. Therefore we need to begin to set up the stable society now. We need all the time and money for this task we can possibly get.

TRANSITION

How do we make the time? How do we get the money?

Well, it is clear that we must try and keep the process of decline in our standards of living and international buying power as slow as possible. One way that has been suggested for doing this is to refuse to develop micro technology by, for example, setting up Micro Electronics Limitation Talks (MELT). No, no, New Ecologist! We cannot do that. The developing countries have found the technology in which in many respects they are at least on an equal footing with the developed countries. They will never give up the opportunities (short-lived though they may be) presented by the micro chip.

But there is a more realistic and pedestrian way of slowing up the decline in living standards and buying power. This involves recognising that, whatever economic policy is followed, the conventional industries dealing in manufactures and services will decline at a rate which will have even the most ardent

Luddite wringing his hands in shocked concern. The economy will throw up a large and rapidly growing percentage of people and resources which can and must be turned to the construction of the stable society.

We thus have two developments, taking place in parallel. On the one hand, the stable society is to be set up with all possible speed and urgency. This is a massive national programme in which Britain is bound to work closely with her international trading partners and particularly the EEC. It will be the most significant conscious act of salvage and reconstruction which has ever been undertaken by any civilisation. If successful it will probably be the only occasion in history when an advanced civilisation has been able to change course successfully.

On the other hand, conventional industries' decline, though rapid, is to be kept to as slow a pace as possible. Indeed these two trends are entirely complimentary; as more people become unemployed, as conventional industry throws more and more people onto the dole queues, the trend of contraction will in terms of conventional planning saddle Britain with an increasing responsibility to provide the dole and acceptable standards of living to the unemployed. This is a responsibility which conventional industry alone would not be able to bear, since taxes to pay for welfare would have to be raised so far that British goods would be priced out of the world market.

By the creation of the stable society in parallel, the conventional industries would be to some extent, though not entirely, freed from the burden of attempting to maintain living standards among the unproductive unemployed.

This parallel development is one which can begin now. There are already 1 1/2 million unemployed; if you count in the people who are in effect unemployed (though they have "plastic jobs" in the overmanned industries and services) that adds another 4 million to the dole queue. 5 1/2 million ready, here and now, today the moment you read this, to set up the stable society which is ECO's goal. There is the mandate. There is an entirely realistic and overwhelmingly urgent task for us to begin now.

The "Dual Economy" has aroused some controversy in the Ecology Party. It has echoes of the unjust, cynical, dual values of some of the more rapidly growing developing countries - the urban rich and the urban poor. In fact the Dual Economy in this context is entirely different from any such analogy. The growing, the strongest and the durable part of the economy would be the Stable Society which is exploring and discovering the means to self-reliance. The declining but still necessary part of the economy is the market industrial society which has been very successful for two centuries or so.

But that's its limit.

David Fleming

(The unemployed are not necessarily unproductive - some of us produce newsletters! Editor.)

REVIEWS

THE POLITICS OF DOMINATION

THE STABLE SOCIETY, by Edward Goldsmith, Wadebridge Press, £2.60.

The notion of a "stable society" appears to be an important element in the developing consciousness of the Ecology Party, and a central plank in its election platform. But what does the term really stand for? Are we happy with the possible implications of this concept? Does it help us to express our ideals more clearly, or does it merely get in the way? Does this book provide any answers?

It seems to me that as a party that is soon to be fighting its first "serious" election, it is important that we are able to answer such questions. So when I left the Birmingham conference the proud owner of a mint copy of 'The Stable Society' (duly signed by the author), I expected to get some answers. Well I have, and they are not answers that I like. Now my view is no more important, no more ultimately valid than that of anyone else, but if as a long active member of the environmental movement, I react in this way, what will be the reaction of those who are already hostile to our ideas and our cause? Thus the sole purpose of this review is to expose what seem to me to be the central features of this book, and thereby help to stimulate much wider discussion within the party about them. If many others come to share my views, or similar ones, then important consequences may follow.

Social control

The book sets out to examine the systems of social control that, according to the author, once ensured stability in so-called primitive societies. The attenuation of these control systems - religion, the family, recognition of "natural" limits - has contributed to the "undifferentiated" and "unstable" character of modern societies. So far, so good. But what should one do about all this? Well, the central and controversial message of this book is that if we want to live in a stable society then the ONLY way to get to one is to return to pre-industrial (or even pre-Christian - it isn't clear which) ways of life! Women must return to traditional roles, religion be re-established in its role as a societal control mechanism, a cultural hierarchy must be re-imposed, and presumably most forms of technology abandoned. Only thus can we achieve stability and order.

But, you ask, is this not an unacceptably high price to pay for stability? Indeed, are not other social goals equally or more important? What are the actual human costs of such an operation? Were primitive societies ever really that stable or that desirable? Is this really part of our political philosophy? Is he serious? Of these, we may be sure that the answer to

the latter is "yes". Goldsmith is serious, so we'd better deal with this book seriously.

Bleak

Let me say at once that to my mind this is one of the bleakest books I have ever encountered. This is a harsh judgement, so what are my reasons for it? Well, in the first place, it is a difficult book to read. This is not because the subject matter is presented in any intellectually challenging way, or because the material itself is inherently weighty, for it is not. The first problem for the reader is that of Goldsmith's self indulgent style. It lacks discipline, humour and coherence, and betrays no sense of the limits of certainty. Worse, Goldsmith cannot seem to rid himself of the excruciating habit of writing down to his readers, as if he alone had seen the One True Light.

Indeed, admire him as we may for his past work in the environmental movement, it nevertheless remains difficult to warm to a writer who flails out in all directions at those whose vision, experience, profession or way of life differs from his own. His attacks on what he thinks of as "science" (a word concept that bestows a false unity on a very diverse set of values, activities and practices) are frequently quite meaningless when they are not simply banal. (eg p64) We learn for example that logical positivism is "taught as gospel in our universities", that we the gullible public "sincerely believe that science will provide us with the means of solving... (our problems)", and so on throughout the book. Is this the way to win friends and influence people, or for that matter the way to help build up a political party?

The analytical flaws in this work are also numerous, and I can only note a few of them here. One of the most consistent features is the way in which the author presents what are in fact highly arguable assertions as if they were clear certainties. Besides impairing the credibility of the thesis, this also has the effect of continually presenting the attentive reader with the difficult choice of either giving in, and suspending disbelief and rational thought, or of giving up, and finding a more rewarding way to spend his or her time. Indeed, the author seems to have a sure instinct for extreme statements and extreme forms of argument, and an equally sure gift for missing entirely the much more intellectually demanding middle ground where reasonable people usually try to reconcile their differences. (See for example the "discussion" of scientific orthodoxy on page 53.)

More damaging still perhaps are what we might call the philosophical assumptions expressed here. Goldsmith seems totally preoccupied with the

idea that the goals of society are (or should be) those of stability and order. This is, as another reviewer noted (in Resurgence 69), an extremely partial view. He rightly suggested that "liberty, equality and fraternity or the progressive evolution of consciousness" represented just "two other possibilities". Amen to that! We should also note that this strong emphasis in Goldsmith's work on stability and order, strongly imply that at some point the imposition of authoritarian power is envisaged. Hence his continual emphasis on social control, - a concept that comports better with the technocratic view than any other, to my mind. This helps to explain the air of veiled oppression that permeates this book and my dislike of it. (Incidentally other critics have also noted this tendency: see the review of "Deindustrialising society" in New Scientist, 26/5/77.)

Goldsmith's conception of man is also a singularly depressing and unpromising one to say the least. For him, the social context determines the boundaries of life and consciousness. He quotes approvingly from Murdoch, who in part writes "...man is not biologically a social animal...but in every individual case must be bent and broken to group living". (p14). We are also told that the "goal of behaviour (is) to maintain the system's continuity", or again, "the notion of freedom is largely illusory" (p89). Surely we have heard all this before, and not only from writers like Huxley and Orwell?

Soulless

What a bleak and soulless distance this is from Mumford's heartfelt and altogether more promising view of man as "pre-eminently a mind using, symbol making, and self mastering animal". Unlike Goldsmith, Mumford believes of man that "the primary locus of all his activities, lies in his own organism". What a contrast too with the transcendent visions of a Roszak or a Schumacher, or many other writers. Goldsmith's reduction of man to a powerless cypher in a pre-ordained social matrix (i.e., one in which all power relations are not questioned, but taken as 'natural'), represents to me the least acceptable feature of this depressing book. He has written out most of the very qualities and powers of humankind which in themselves give us hope for the future: our sheer inventiveness (not confined to the material sphere), our transcendent gifts, visionary power, our refusal to submit to tyranny, our ability to participate in shaping history as self-aware and self-motivating beings. All this Goldsmith would deny, and in doing so he attempts to deny us a part in creating our own future.

It is thus entirely consistent that Goldsmith fails utterly to convey any sense of the sheer living promise of a truly egalitarian, decentralised society. If the book looks forward at all, it is towards "inevitable collapse". The author clearly prefers the simple certainties of a pre-industrial world, and sees within this frame the only possible pattern for our future. Now I expect most of us would agree that

cont'd over

NOTICEBOARD

Campaign material

Introduction to the Party leaflets:
60p per 50 from Andrea Hodgkinson.
Manifesto (1976 version): £1 from
Andrea Hodgkinson.

ECO badges: 5p each plus p&p, from
Steve Lambert.

Work for a Stable Future - Join the
Ecology Party (car sticker): 5p
each, or 2p for over ten, from
Wiltshire branch, 8 Mount Pleasant
Chippenham, Wilts.

The Reckoning (policy pamphlet): 25p
each, less for bulk orders, from
Andrea Hodgkinson.

Vote Ecology 'X' (A4 poster): £1.20
for 50 from Keith Rushworth, 8
The Mount, Alwoodley, Leeds.

Vote Ecology (car sticker): 70p for
50, from Keith Rushworth.

1 Vote ECO (T shirt): £2 each from
Keith Rushworth.

1 Vote ECO (sweat shirt): £7.50 (!!)
each, from Keith Rushworth.

Election posters, election manifesto
(The Real Alternative), A5
leaflets, and stickers: coming
soon from Andrea!

Anti nuclear posters: 5 different
designs, different sizes. Send
SAE to Mark Robins, 12 Thompson
Road, Exeter, for sales leaflet.

Torness badges: 'Torness - Keep it
Green' and 'Torness - May
Gathering'. 20p each plus postage
from York Safe Energy Group, 73
Walmgate, York, YO1 2TZ.

Events

March 10th: Nuclear Alert South West
A one day workshop about the
proposed S.W. power station.
Starts 10 am., College of St
Mark & St John, Derriford Road,
Plymouth.

March 11th: Save the Seals demo in
Trafalgar Square, London. Contact
London branch if you're going.

March 24/25th: Torness Alliance
national planning meeting.
Contact 54 Allison Street,
Birmingham for details.

May 4/5/6/7th: Torness Gathering.
Be there!!

July 8/9th: Save the Whale demo in
London. For details send SAE to
Dave & Anne Parkins, 4a South
Road, Springbourne Road,
Bournemouth, Dorset.

Stop press

Thanks Howard.

In the hectic rush to get this
issue out on time, I almost forgot
to record the party's gratitude to
Howard Hotrough for the tremendous
amount of work he did as editor.
That his job has now been taken over
by four people gives some indication
of the workload he shouldered for
over a year. If he works as hard at
his election campaign, he's certain
to get to Westminster!

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Goldsmith slaughtered

traditional cultures contained (and
contain still) great wisdom (as well
as great folly, let us not forget).
But instead of translating
traditional insights into terms that
speak to our age, as say, Van Der
Post does in some of his novels,
(see last newsletter), Goldsmith
has unwittingly built of them a
prison for the human spirit.

The title of this book is 'The
Stable Society', but the underlying
concern may lie in another direction
entirely. The pretentious style,
the creeping totalitarianism
inherent in its uncompromising
philosophy, the disdain with which
it treats the identity and experience
of its readers reveal it to be a
book that was not, I am sad to say,
written from a position of
intellectual strength, but from the
opposite. Wisdom does not require
such sterile posturings, rather it
seeks a simplicity and directness
that are utterly absent here.

(Compare for example, Schumacher's
"Guide for the Perplexed")

We may find it in us to admire
Goldsmith's dogged persistence in
following through what must have
once seemed a productive idea -
after all the family probably is the
basis of social structure. But
in my view it is now clear that the
project is a failure. By scorning
the infinitely varied and subtle
realities of history, science, the
human personality and indeed the
twentieth century itself, Goldsmith
has cobbled together a tawdry
little system that borrows from all
of these but gives little back,
except perhaps to its creator. As
an attempt to bolster a self
image, a particular world view, it
may attain some success.

As part of the intellectual
baggage of the Ecology Party it is
a continuing disaster.

Richard Slaughter.

LETTERS

Finally, not only does his attack on
Liberal thinking do an injustice to
many individual members, it presupposes
that that party will never adopt a
serious ecological position, and
forgets that its existence, warts and
all, gives it a significant opportunity
to advance appropriate policies. We may

supplant the Liberals, and our election
strategy is designed to that end, but
let us not forget that British politics
are increasingly fluid, and that
establishment of an ecological govern-
ment, not the survival of the Ecology
Party is what we are about.

Jonathan Tyler.

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econews

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