

green line

No. 3
JUNE 1982
25p

Ideas and Action from the Ecology Party and the Green Movement



If you want peace

Peace
prepare for ~~war~~



Green Line 4 will be 'Green Gathering Special'. It will include several background articles by people leading workshops at the Gathering; the Green Declaration to be promulgated at the Gathering; a 'keynote' article from the collective setting the Gathering in its political context; Trevor Houghton on NVDA principles and the need for careful training; the week's programme in detail; plus the usual Green Line features. All coming your way at the beginning of July ...

BULK ORDERS

Buy 10 copies (or more) and they're only 17p each, post free. A sure money-raiser on bookstalls, and just the thing to sell to friends and generate discussions. Send your cheque to Green Line, 14 Alexandra Road, Oxford, OX2 0DB for quick despatch.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Write your name and address on the back of a cheque for £2.80 and post it to Green Line Subscriptions (Dept. 3), 16 Lundsfarm Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire. Remember to tell us which issue you want to start with.

BACK ISSUES

No 1, with articles focussing on Eco-feminism, Direct Democracy, and Brandt, is almost sold out. The special supplement by Richard Hunt on Brandt, 'Brandt Report Con-Trick', is available separately in bulk as a discussion document at £1 for 10 post free. For a single copy, send a 12½p stamp plus a s.a.e.

No 2, which includes part 1 of 'Theories of Unemployment', and an article on access to local media, is still available: single issues are 40p post free. Normal rates for bulk orders apply as above.

DEADLINES

All material must be in by June 15 for the July issue. GL5 will be out September 1st: deadline August 15th.

CONSERVATIONISTS - now read Eric Mc Graw's "Proposals for a National Policy on Population." 50p post paid from Population Concern, 27/35 Mortimer Street, London W1.

S.E.M. NEWSLETTER: news and views of Student Ecology Movement. £1.60 for 4 issues from Robin Wiles, The Hawthorns, Keele University, Keele, Staffs.

ECO PENS - blue ink, green-and-white barrels with Ecology logos and Green Party slogan. Great for stalls / publicity. Only £1.25 per dozen, + 25p p&p all orders. From Greenwich Eco, 32 Cantwell Road, London SE18 3LW.

BOOKS POST FREE! (if orders over £1.95). Towards an Ecological Society (Murray Bookchin, £5.15). Ecology as Politics (Andre Gorz, £2.95). Eco-Philosophy (Henryk Skolimowski, £2.95). Ecology for Beginners (Croall & Rankin, £1.95). Socialism and Ecology (Raymond Williams, 75p). Towards a New Cold War (Noam Chomsky, £5.95). Turning Point (Fritjof Capra, £9.50). When the Wind Blows (Raymond Briggs, £3.95). Or ANY



SMALL - ADS

Small ads cost 5p a word, max 100 words.

BOOK to order. EOA Books, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford.

CYCLING WEEKEND 25-27 June; **NEW SKILLS WORKSHOP** (Healing and Therapy) 14-18 July; **ART AND CRAFTS** 24-30 July; **LOOKING AT ALTERNATIVES** 9-15 August; **'STRETCHING OUT'** (Yoga, dance, etc) 24-30 August. **SAE** to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts. (0793) 771080.

Peace tipis

TIPIS ARE THE ideal form of shelter for year-round outdoor living - fully mobile, easy to erect, comfortable (with central open fire) and visually attractive. The Black Valley Tipi Community in rural Wales has already supplied tipis to Greenham Common, Molesworth, and Caerwent Peace Camps.

Unfortunately it is only our most ageing tipis that we have been able to afford to give away, and even these are in short supply. We would really like to be supplying brand new tipis to the expanding peace camps movement. Although we have all the equipment and expertise necessary to make them, new tipis cost £200 - £400 each depending on size, and we do not have the necessary funds.

To help us carry on the good work, please send donations to Peace Tipis, Marchoglywn Fawr, Llanfynydd, Carmarthen, Dyfed. Cheques should be made payable to Talley Ecology Party. An acknowledgement will be sent for every donation received.

We are also very pleased to make available to peace campers the benefits of our many years of experience in the art of outdoor living in the British climate, and to welcome visitors from peace camps - please write for details.

Student Ecology Movement

ALTHOUGH NOT QUITE gaining a place on the NUS executive, the Student Ecology Movement has made its mark on the National Union of Students and the political groupings within the Union. SEM contested the sabbatical posts of president, vice-president education, and vice-president welfare, gaining a sound vote each time coming just behind the Tory students. In the elections for non-sabbatical posts it was clear from watching the counts that SEM was a popular choice for second, third and fourth preference (out of about 11 candidates) in the transferable votes for multi-post positions.

However, this was not perhaps the main achievement of the week. After the first day, with about 15 election speeches behind us, the stall was very busy with enquiries about ecology and SEM. Literature was sold at a rapid rate.

And various other NUS political groupings have expressed an interest in joining with SEM on issues of common concern.

An open SEM meeting will be held at Exeter University on June 25-27. Details from Will Atkinson, c/o the Ecology Group, Exeter University Guild of Students, Exeter, Devon.

Neil Jacques

Cabbages will not grow from Rape seed

Or: How Greens view the Cultivation of Peace

MOST - PROBABLY ALL - of those who hold positions of power on Planet Earth declare with righteous piety that they wish only for peace, while they gaze with sentimental solemnity and pride at poppy wreaths remembering the poor fooled sods who died for their cause. The least offensive observation to be made is that perhaps they honestly do not understand that by both supporting and clinging to the present world order and systems - be they capitalist or state socialist, democratic, dictatorial, or communist - they make conflict inevitable and peace an alchemist's dream. We are assured that a sow's ear will, one fine day, produce a silk purse; but the wrong seeds for peace are stubbornly sown. Cabbages will not grow if we insist on planting rape-seed.

The economic system that dominates the world is the perfect medium in which conflict will and must flourish. By demanding that our economies must always grow, we accept that the human race will continue to plunder and lay waste the planet that sustains it, until the day when our habitat will no longer be able to support us. Is there another animal stupid enough to do that?

A Cardiff professor, in a letter to the press about the Falkland Islands, states with academic confidence: "The fact is that overall the world is nowadays a very peaceful place." He goes on to assert that one of the assumptions of this peace is, "Thou shalt not take by force that which you covet." Is it possible that one of our intelligentsia believes that, and has such a superficial view of peace? A hard and realistic look at the world shows it to be a tinderbox just waiting to flare, where coveted goods are taken by force every day.

Force does not mean only military might: multinationals, big business, state monopolies, and centralised governments use a force whose effect is quite as devastating. They exploit people, animals, plants, the soil, everything this planet needs to survive - and all in the name of 'growth', which they call 'progress'. The developed countries of the world demand this progress, 'aiding' the Third World with immense hypocrisy whilst guzzling all their wealth and telling them that their time will come - what will be left when that time comes?

The planet is not a magic pot; the continued recklessly extravagant use of raw materials, fossil fuels,

arable land and food will lead inevitably to fighting and war as everything becomes scarce and each tries to grab what they can to satisfy their own needs and greed. The biggest and strongest will win. Weapons get bigger: strength and power concentrate. The powers at the centre, surrounded by concrete, air-conditioned nests - bunkers? - communicating by machine, lose contact with the mass of beings who from that distance appear as toy soldiers and counters in a sick, macabre game. Their very home, Earth, fades into unreality and becomes a chess-board for their manoeuvring: what, not too long ago, would have seemed like science fiction, today has a most uncomfortable, familiar ring.

Greens, political ecologists, say that it does not have to be like this. We can put peace in a political framework that tackles the causes of conflict and that works positively towards a stable and sustainable way of life. With a new perspective on economics comes the realisation that aggressive competition for finite resources cannot, logically carry on for ever. We must stop demanding economic growth: we will need to recycle raw materials and will have to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels by conservation measures and the use of renewable

energy sources like sun, wind and waves: our aim must be to become as self-sufficient as possible, so that we can stop demanding an unfair share of resources from all over the world and stop exploiting the Third World, so that they too may have the chance to realise their own potential for self-sufficiency.

A different view of social and political institutions brings an understanding of the dangers inherent in the disharmony that arises if we allow too much power into too few hands by apathetically giving up our responsibilities.

We need to decentralise our society in work, community and politics, to break the hold of large-scale remote concerns and faceless bureaucracies. We can put the world back on a human scale and give each person the chance to control their own lives and take real responsibility for the community in which they live. Change begins with an individual, a person has to decide and do, there is no point in waiting for somebody else to start something - somebody else is you and me. Green politics recognises the important part that everyone must play in the cultivation of the roots of peace.

* There are many other facets to the Green view of peace, but no space here to go into them. Contact Green CMD, 4 Bridge House, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs., for more details.

Jenny Carpenter

Doctors united against the Bomb

DOCTORS AND OTHERS in the health services are perhaps more aware than most of what nuclear war would mean. Medical care, even the alleviation of suffering, would be unavailable to the vast majority of victims. This is the message on which they focus in their campaign against nuclear weapons.

An international network of medicals is growing rapidly. The British Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, which has been in existence for 18 months, was host last month in Cambridge to the second congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Doctors, other health professionals and students from 31 countries participated. There were addresses from senior Russian, American, Japanese, Dutch, German and British physicians. Three military ex-commanders from the US, USSR and UK took part in a panel discussion on how a nuclear war

might start.

Lloyd Dumas (US) talked about how a nuclear war could start accidentally. There have been many near accidents; the men who mind the missiles work under unnatural conditions of isolation, frustration and secrecy, and the incidence of neurotic breakdown, alcohol and drug abuse among them is high - and increasing. The outbreak of war may well not be under rational control.

The most important thing about this Congress is that it took place; that across national barriers doctors and other health workers are uniting to use their professional knowledge and their life-saving vocation to help counter the threat of nuclear war.

Further information about NCANW can be obtained from Claire Ryle (National Organiser), 23a Tenison Road, Cambridge.

Barbara G Cowie

IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF GREEN LINE DAVID TAYLOR PROPOSED A GREEN CHALLENGE TO TRADITIONAL POLITICS. IT WOULD BE BUILT ON THE FOUR CORNER-STONES OF ECOLOGY, FEMINISM, NONVIOLENCE, AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY.

IN THIS FOLLOW-UP ARTICLE, RICHARD OLDFIELD TURNS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN - THE WAYS IN WHICH THE ELEMENTS OF THE GREEN MOVEMENT ARE ARTIFICIALLY KEPT APART.

Dividing Lines

'REALIGNMENT', INCLUDING THE potential for further, more genuine political mould-breaking, is the key feature of British politics today. After decades of conformist orthodoxy, the era of slow-moving political dinosaurs is over. We see unprecedented splits in the Labour Party. In the Liberal Party there is a widening gap between what may be called the 'orange' faction - led by David Steel and including moderates, supporters of growth economics, and those who favour nuclear deterrence - and 'green' Liberals including radicals, ecologists, and those opposed to Cruise missiles. We even hear rumblings of discontent from the Tories. The manufacture of the SDP and their subsequent alliance with the Liberals, far from being a cause and much less a final effect, is merely a further symptom of a powerful wind of change. Such upheavals are both the beginnings of, and a call for, a clear-cut fundamental re-grouping within British politics. In this respect no amount of cosmetic gloss can change the SDP from the old era party it really is.

NATURAL PARTNERS

To fully realise the opportunity presenting itself, we must first recognise the family of political sub-groupings that have set this wave in motion. Whatever their origins - and some have a long history - this family today includes such as CND, feminist groups, the anti-nuclear campaign, FoE, animal and human rights campaigners, libertarians, as well as green socialists, green liberals, and the Ecology Party.

These are natural partners, sharing an interlinked set of aspirations and radical attitudes which reflect their broadly youthful basis - young radicals of the sixties, seventies, and now, ever stronger, the eighties. Youth is always a harbinger of change, and only youthful support could have given the zestful energy needed to spark and carry such a momentous wave.

The interlinked calls for nuclear disarmament, peace and nonviolence, for the recognition of feminist principles and women's rights, for a more direct democracy and for ecological awareness are at the root of current major political displacements - if only we look deep enough.

DISUNITY OF NATURAL ALLIES

Yet where these calls should sound in harmony, we too often hear either a babble of political in-fighting or a deafening silence. This is the crux of the problem: the disunity of greens and radicals today. Natural allies are kept artificially divided and confused by the entrenched subterfuge, hostility and obsolete preoccupations of 'leaders' and political establishments - hierarchies which many of these sub-groupings, through lack of a credible alternative, blindly continue to support.

There are of course differences between these partners over this or that particular, but the general convergence of their world views far outweighs these. Indeed the potential exists to create a genuinely green and radical movement of such energy, with such broadly based support and so clearly distinguished, as to form one of the most powerful political forces in this country.

BETRAYAL BY THE POLITICIANS

As it is, the 'fudgers and mudgers', the politically bankrupt, old-style careerists continue to control and mystify, to diffuse vital forces into fringe pressure groups or isolated campaigns. The trade union movement provides a classic example of this, being bogged down in the shallow and largely diversionary conventions of percentage-point wage negotiations, productivity bonuses, and so on. Their protests and concerns are directed within a narrow, isolated range of artificially prescribed limits. Thus they've come to support the techno-industrial world view; worse still, with their largely uncritical approach to

industrial expansion and economic growth, they actively oppose much of the radical and green movement.

A HONEYMOON OF EXPEDIENCY

A further example of this dilution process may be drawn from the Liberals' supposed outright opposition to nuclear energy. David Steel and cohorts make the right noises when necessary - in order to deflect green Liberals. In reality however an Alliance government would at best merely tone down the scale of the nuclear power programme; especially so considering the nature of the SDP. Similarly, despite the token rhetoric of the Liberal/SDP leadership, it is clear they do not seriously believe in any significant measure of decentralisation. Steel's rejection of the Liberal Conference vote against Cruise shows his disregard for even this elementary form of decentralist decision-taking.

Further illusions are woven by 'orange' Liberals over the question of an ecologically based economic policy. For despite politically expedient reassurances, it would again be mainly 'business as usual' and their SDP alliance only serves to confirm this. Despite the immense lure of political success and the consequent pressuring calls for unity, the Liberal/SDP honeymoon is even now wearing thin as the true nature of their political programme becomes clearer and the 'greens' glance uneasily around them.



But where can these greens turn to? Certainly not to the Labour Party - a party which supports nuclear power, supports the illusory creed of democratic centralism, being preoccupied with central economic planning and nationalisation. Certainly not to a party which is disinterested in the debate between economic growth and sustainability. Even when green socialists manage briefly to focus the party's attention on relevant issues, they see it fail to draw full conclusions, fail to adopt a holistic approach to policy-making.

What can the result ever be but piecemeal - even damaging - tinkering? What little 'red' socialists know of political ecology they view as diversionary, delaying the progress of Keynesian economic thought or irrelevant to

the welfare of the working class. Thus they continue to advocate solutions that are themselves effectively part of the problem. In any case, the considerable opposition in Labour's ranks to unilateral nuclear disarmament is depressingly familiar to the restless green Liberals.

On the other hand, where can the frustrated green socialists turn to? Not to the Liberals or Social Democrats - who are seen as pro-EEC, anti-'socialist', and completely split on the bomb. Nevertheless envious glances are cast at the apparent success of the anti-nuclear power lobby within the Liberals, and weary comparisons made with the massive defeat this cause faces at successive TUC and Labour Party conferences.

THE BOMB: NO CHOICE AT THE POLLS?

In all of this, the ways in which political leaders distort, oversimplify and often completely obscure the strands of thinking in rival groupings plays a key part in the continuing mystification of party labels and in the separation, as enemies, of many who would otherwise be natural allies.

Perhaps the most indictable aspect of this confused and pathetic state of affairs is the probability that the electorate in the next General Election will not even have the chance to vote for a party they know would actually implement a policy of total unilateral nuclear disarmament if elected. As for the 'don't knows' and those who, for one reason or another, never vote, it seems that no established political option is of sufficient inspiration or radical originality

ECO'S CATALYST ROLE

Some of us, of course, have turned to the Ecology Party. But the realisation is dawning that Eco's main role at this time must be that of a catalyst in bringing about the unity of the greens and radicals, rather than believing that electioneering offers a way out of the present impasse. The catalyst role is something that Eco, with its combination of wider political vision and a national network of activists, is uniquely able to fill.

It involves recognising the need to unite natural partners first, before realistically expecting mass support for green politics.

It also means recognising that historically diverse elements will only unite through a federal structure.

The creation of a green federation is the most urgent task before us today.

Surely after Hillhead, after Croydon, ecologists will think again? As though it was not enough to be humiliated by the National Front, now the lunatic fringe does it too! Something has to be done. If it is not done deliberately (in which case there is hope) it will be imposed by events and that will be finis.

At the Green Gathering last year I put the case for extra-parliamentary democracy and noticed that it had strong, albeit minority, support. The point is that green politics have to be genuinely alternative or they are not green. It is a structural, i.e. a constitutional matter; it is not a question of injecting a few ecological ideas into the old bottles of party politics on the Westminster model. And it is no use trying to emulate the German success: theirs is a quite different tradition.

The SDP may or may not break the two-party mould: but the mould that counts is Westminster itself and that, to the SDP, is utterly sacrosanct. It is exactly at that point that new thinking needs to begin.

WHERE THE POWER LIES

About ten years ago there was much talk about 'participatory democracy' and 'community politics' inspired by the Young Liberals with Peter Hain very much in evidence. Then someone high up, presumably Jeremy Thorpe, said: 'That's enough; get back on the electoral knocker!' and they did. The thing died. A pity: it was the right track.

I still go to meetings where great issues are discussed and cringe with embarrassment when the Chairman, or someone, offers his final advice to the assembled legionaries of the good: 'Write to your MP.' If ever there was a counsel of despair, that was surely it, because the power has long passed from Westminster. The Treasury, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office took it away years ago. One reason why Mrs Thatcher is bound to fail is because she presumes to think she rules the Civil Service. The presumption of the woman! The SDP is known as the Permanent Secretaries Party already and that is why it will succeed. Mr Jenkins can be relied on to do what Whitehall tells him to do.

THE NEW POWER BASE

Westminster will never be green, never in a thousand years, and trying to make it so is literally pointless. A backbench MP is

Messing about in votes

Peter Cadogan

poorly informed and powerless. If an MP is of any consequence, like Tony Benn, it is because he has had the sense to get himself a power base elsewhere, outside the House and the official party structure. We need a polycentric Britain in a polycentric Europe.

The green task is to invent people-power as the Poles have done in Solidarity. It is done by breaking through the class barrier and integrating the best of the intelligentsia with the mass powers of the workers and the enthusiasm and vitality of the young. There are plenty of small signs that it will happen here too, but small signs are not obvious and they have to be written as well as read.

People-power has to be where people are and most certainly they are not in Westminster or Whitehall. People can only function in localities and regions and in connection with special functions. This does not necessarily make for parochialism in the old pejorative sense, and the new slogan from across the Atlantic is a good one: Act locally, think globally. To be for decentralism and for Westminster is a hopeless contradiction in terms.

Thinking globally means, first and foremost, having done with the Cold War and putting an end to the absurd dominion of the two super-powers which now both take refuge in that same Cold War that has taken the place of the American dream (following Vietnam, Watergate, and Central America) and the Soviet communist dream (following Budapest, Prague, and Gdansk.) Green means peace, and the organised cause of peace needs to be upgraded in the priorities of greens. The Green Gate at Greenham on March 21 was not a bad start.

Can we begin to think in terms of a confederate, polycentric, demilitarised Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals? Today it is only big ideas that will work.

We must risk all

CHRIS SAVORY reports from the US

OVER THE LAST few weeks I have been fortunate enough to be able to spend a good deal of time with Rich Sauder, a young American Catholic (he's 27) who is engaged in a series of protests involving civil disobedience (trespassing) at missile silos across the USA.

These completely nonviolent protests have already cost him his job and any chance of further employment in his home state of Louisiana. He has been followed and harrassed by the police and although he has so far spent only 9 days in jail he is on probation and likely to spend longer behind bars after his next protest.

What has he done to deserve this treatment? He has simply dared to speak the truth. And that truth is that American society is profoundly immoral. It was founded on genocide, built up on slavery, and survives on militarism and exploitation. Racism is still rampant, and to a great extent society is still segregated. The American Indians still face a government policy which for all its rhetoric still in practice points to extinction.

The USA has 6% of the world's population yet uses around 40% of the world's resources; yet degrading poverty is all too evident here. The US is responsible for over 50% of the world's arms sales. The government is talking about spending a billion dollars in the next 3 years to top up a nuclear arsenal that could already destroy the world many times over.

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

And there is a silence that is terrifying in its intensity. Just like the silence that must have existed in Nazi Germany as the mass murder went on. What Rich Sauder is doing is helping to break that silence by attacking the fear and ignorance that it is based on.

In Britain the situation is substantially the same. We are 1-2 years ahead in our awakening to the nuclear threat. That increase in awareness is now starting to dawn in the US. The 'nuclear debate' is starting to rage in the media and people are taking to the streets to demonstrate.

So there are no more excuses. We know what the issues are and what

is at stake. The survival of the human race is in jeopardy. Deep in our hearts we know this to be true. We are also beginning to realise that marching in demonstrations, standing in elections, writing letters and signing petitions is not going to be enough to precipitate the necessary change.

So we begin to think and talk about direct action. And some people take tentative steps. This is where Rich Sauder comes in again. What I have learnt from him is that you don't need large numbers or elaborate plans before you can act. As the movement progresses they become more necessary. Rather what we need in order to act is the courage of our convictions. The strength and faith to live out our ideals with our whole beings. Not just as an intellectual exercise. Most of us don't do this, so in a deep sense we are schizoid.

But what stops us from acting is FEAR. Fear of losing our financial security. Fear of losing social acceptance. Fear of physical pain. Fear of imprisonment. And ultimately fear of death. We are literally petrified. Immobilised by fear. Rich admits that when he climbs over the fence at the missile silo his knees are shaking so much that he can hardly stand up; when the guards come sneaking up with their automatic rifles his belly is in his boots. Being interrogated by the military police and going to jail are not pleasant experiences.

But he realises that there is no choice. Either he pursues his ideals to their logical conclusions or he becomes insane, incoherent, morally emasculated and spiritually empty.

INEVITABLE AND NECESSARY RISKS

Tony Benn drew far and away the best response from the crowd at the CND rally last October. Yet as Energy Minister he presided over contracts

for uranium mining in Namibia and the continued growth of British nuclear power. Most of the people in the crowd returned home to pay their taxes which support the military build-up. Some no doubt returned to companies who rely on 'defence' contracts or to universities who are doing the basic research for the military.

We can protest against militarism but until we are prepared to risk at least our financial security and social standing and at most our lives, we shall never overcome such a great evil.

We can talk about the evils of racism, but until we start to live and work and intermarry with people of other races we shall achieve nothing.

We can see the insanity and injustice of our gross over-consumption of resources. Until we live simply any protest is hollow.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

These are painful truths, truths which I have been trying to avoid. Anything which shatters our security is hard to face. But this seems to be a paradox of human existence. The more we are prepared to face up to insecurity and the more we are prepared to risk, the more we shall gain in the end.

Ultimately we are all responsible for our own actions and in that way responsible for what happens. We can all no doubt find many excuses for not doing those things we know we should. I know I can. But they still remain excuses.

Rich Sauder is not perfect. He is a human being with human frailties. But he has the courage to admit that he has run out of excuses. By continually speaking out against racism, militarism, injustice and exploitation, and by living out these protests through courageous actions, he is an example and inspiration to us all.

TWO GREAT PEACE SLOGANS THAT SHOW HOW.

Stickers and badges
Green on a yellow
background with
red letters



5" Sticker
25p each plus S.A.E. (window or bumper)
20p each for 15 or more (inc. p&p)
15p each for 30 or more (inc. p&p)

1 1/2" Sticker
40p per sheet plus S.A.E. (20 on each sheet)
30p per sheet for 10 or more sheets (inc. p&p)
20p per sheet for 20 or more sheets (inc. p&p)

1 1/2" Badge
20p each plus S.A.E.
12p each for 10 or more (inc. p&p)
10p each for 30 or more (inc. p&p)



Badges only
Grey on a red
background with
white letters

1 1/4" Badge
20p each plus S.A.E.
12p each for 10 or more (inc. p&p)
10p each for 30 or more (inc. p&p)

Alexander Croal
11 Leaside Avenue
LONDON N10

France: Back to Square One!

SARA PARKIN reports

0.006% (sic!) was the vote for the ecologists in the second round of the French regional elections. A sad figure for, although it represented one lone ecologist, sole survivor from the first round, it was a grim comment on how the French ecologists have wasted the million-plus sympathisers that Brice Lalonde's presidential campaign unearthed.

In the first round the ecologists gained 0.51% of the poll, a mere 0.04% better than the same round in 1979. No one is quite sure how many candidates there were this time. Mouvement d'Ecologie Politique (MEP) recognised 29, with the others standing either as independents or loose groupings. The 29 MEP percentages looked very similar to those of Eco in the UK, with votes of 7% - 10% being polled predominantly in Alsace, scene of previous very strong anti-nuclear campaigning.

But with the French polling system you have to come first or second out of an often impressive array of varying shades of red, pink and blue to go on to the second, first-past-the-post round. So, as in Britain, the French ecologists have to be thinking about big percentages before seats are gained.

FRANCE'S ECO-SHAMBLES

So where are the French ecologists? It is not easy to find out; but they have certainly got problems, most of them attributable to the

evolution of the political movement from widely-ranging individual protest groups - anti-nuclear and environmental. This shambles was belied by the apparent unity of Brice Lalonde's presidential campaign.

But Amis de la Terre is considered to be frankly left-wing, and Brice Lalonde's personal 'takeover' as figurehead of the campaign was hugely resented, especially in the MEP who considered themselves the establishment in Eco-politics.

It was not so much the best as the first organised group that grasped the initiative - and Aujourd'hui l'Ecologie, as an umbrella organisation formed for the elections by Lalonde, was the winner. Lalonde's media charisma did not, however, extend to his colleagues sufficiently to make his personal appeal for continued unity succeed. Aujourd'hui l'Ecologie was dissolved, Lalonde returned to Amis de la Terre, and rancour continues with insinuations about the disposal of Aujourd'hui l'Ecologie's funds! Now MEP is hoping to launch an 'official' party with as many other official groups adhering as possible. The platform and organisational difficulties (!) have delayed this launch, now due to have taken place in May.

SUCCESSES IN GERMANY AND BELGIUM

To move to much more positive news and to provide relief from what seems like never-ending sagas of struggles and problems, two European countries offer inspiring success stories.

Die Grünen, in the regional

elections in Lower Saxony, have recorded an average of 6.6% of the vote. In places this was as high as 11% and 14%. With the German PR system this gives Die Grünen 11 seats in the regional parliament, with only 9 seats going to the SPD who suffered a major set-back. The German greens are obviously delighted and anticipate an even greater success in the Hesse regional elections in September, an area in which they are extremely active and well-favoured.

An even more spectacular success was achieved by the two Belgian green parties, Ecolo and Agalev, at the end of last year in the national legislature elections. They had elected, for the first time in Europe, 9 greens to a national parliament: 5 to the 106-seat Senate, and 4 to the 212-seat Chamber of Representatives. They report sympathetic treatment from the media and much activity with matters ecological since their election.

But, perhaps equally important as electoral success, the Belgians offer an example that the rest of us could do well to emulate. The two parties have developed in separate areas that do not even speak the same language: Agalev in the Flemish-speaking and Ecolo in the French-speaking. Their cooperation, before and after the election, can only be described as admirable, rightly highlighting that the cause in which we are all involved should transcend relatively unimportant difficulties and differences.

As others see us: the Russian view

This 'Question and Answer' feature is reprinted from 'Socialism: Theory and Practice', published in Moscow in September 1981.

● **Broad public movements for the protection of the environment have appeared in many capitalist countries whose members believe that they are "outside politics" and regard themselves as fighters for "neutral ecology". What, in your opinion, are the prospects for these movements!**

These movements have actually taken shape as a manifestation of spontaneous protest on the part of broad sections of people against the destructive effects of capitalist economy on the environment.

These "ecological action" organizations, regardless of whether their participants realize it or not, are functioning in one of the epicentres of the class struggle. The practical fight to protect the environment will inevitably face the participants of the movement with the question: against whom and against what are they to protect nature? The experience they gain will urge them, people of various ideologies, political positions and party affiliations, to determine their social stand.

What does this mean?

This means above all that they will have to realize that measures for the protection of the environment, including the most urgent ones, are inseparable from the preservation of peace on Earth. Indeed, the desire to protect nature would be purposeless or even blasphemous, if it did not stem from faith in the future of mankind.

One cannot fail to see the tremendous damage that is now being inflicted on the environment by the unprecedented, mounting militarization

of the economy in the capitalist countries, reckless squandering of funds on non-productive military needs, while environment protection programmes are being more and more delayed. The fight against further deterioration of the environment, for the preservation and improvement of the ecological conditions for man's existence has again exposed the sheer madness of the arms race, the preparations of the imperialists for war and produced additional weighty arguments for peace and cooperation between peoples.

That is why the role of the ecological movement is above all determined by its anti-war character and efforts to prevent the outbreak of a third world war with all its disastrous consequences.

Another point. Stopping the destruction of the environment and rehabilitating it are global social and political tasks. But in the face of capitalist-bred egoism and anarchy they will be impossible to accomplish completely. Their fulfilment hinges on a wide range of measures that must be taken by the state and the public. All this ultimately implies the need for transition to socialist organization of the economy and for combining its advantages with the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution. The greater part of the present ecological movements and organizations are bound to realize this.

Finally, practical politics reveals every day that there is no such thing as "neutral ecology". Environmental protection closely intertwines with social, economic, scientific, technological, psychological and ethical questions, and those of home and foreign policy. That is why life itself will compel the ecological movement ultimately to overcome its state of social indecision and adopt clear-cut social and political positions.

Theories of Unemployment

by Tim Cooper

BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC DECLINE has increasingly caused politicians to strengthen their policies in order to try to convince the electorate that they were capable of solving undeniably deep-rooted problems. To the proponents of such policies they are seen as 'radical', whilst to opponents they are 'extreme'!

THE CONSERVATIVE APPROACH

The Conservative approach to the worsening problems in the economy in the 1970s was to shift towards adopting a more strictly monetarist approach. They now argued that to increase public expenditure, even during a recession, would be inappropriate. It might reduce unemployment in the short term but it would also increase inflationary pressures and, in the longer term, Britain would become less competitive and overall more jobs would be lost.

This argument appeared particularly strong because Keynesian boosts had in the past only been applied when inflation had been low or falling, whilst inflation was now accelerating at the same time as unemployment was growing (partly the result of further oil price rises.) Applying the assumption that Britain should increase her share of world trade, the need to improve her relative competitive position through reducing domestic inflation was used as an excuse to prevent (even minor) economic expansion.

The Conservatives have implicitly professed a belief that governments are effectively incapable of reducing unemployment beyond the short run through macroeconomic policies. The remedy proposed for unemployment in the short term is for the employees to accept lower real wages (as 'unrealistic' settlements 'price people out of jobs'), for the unemployed to be more mobile (the use of bicycles being recommended - to stimulate bicycle production one presumes!), and for governments to ensure that no one could be better off without a job (by reducing the real value of state benefits).

For the longer term, Conservatives argue that unemployment will be permanently reduced only through the restoration of industrial growth, a prerequisite being the need to shift resources from the public to the private sector. Thus public expenditure, being largely unproductive in this narrowly defined sense, must be reduced to enable tax cuts to aid the private sector. Similarly the high public sector borrowing requirement is assumed to have prevented the private sector investment needed for recovery - through its effect on interest rates - and thus needs to be reduced. Export-led growth is the means through which jobs should be created.

THE LABOUR PROGRAMME

The Labour Party appear to agree with the Conservatives that the world recession is partly to blame for the growth in unemployment and that economic growth in Britain is needed in order for unemployment to be reduced. However, they differ significantly in the means by which they claim such growth could be achieved. Their policy is effectively the traditional Keynesian line of increasing public spending which,

they claim, could stimulate growth to reach 4% p.a. from 1982 to 1986 (a level not in fact sustained for well over 20 years.)

Peter Shore, the shadow chancellor, has suggested injecting an extra £8 billion of public funds in 1982 and borrowing the money as and where needed. The Labour argument is that the scale of the problem demands such an enormous sum and that industrial recovery in the private sector would follow. In

Part 2: The Varied Solutions

addition, the party proposes selective import controls, reducing interest rates to encourage investment (although Keynes himself was in fact sceptical of this relationship), increasing state planning in industry, and a major training programme.

THE LIBERALS' ALTERNATIVE

The policy of Liberals centres on a sustained Government incomes policy, presumably to reduce real wages (though they may deny this), and thus following the Classical remedy but implying greater state coercion. In addition they argue for the need for a revived programme of public works as a short term boost to employment and for reduced interest rates.

Their other policies towards solving the crisis are in many ways not dissimilar to some of those of the Ecology Party - encouraging companies to demerge, promoting conservation, reducing employers' National Insurance contributions, and developing community and voluntary services. However they also propose building relief roads and expanding airports, and they steer clear of controversial proposals such as redirecting defence expenditure.

It is not possible, of course, to list any official SDP policies. Shirley Williams has said that they agree with the need for a public works programme such as that proposed by the Liberal Party, and has argued that in the longer term demographic trends will ease the problem. The SDP also appear to believe that reform of wage negotiation procedures and certain trade union practices is particularly important, and they will probably suggest pay norms and refined arbitration procedures.

THE ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE

Where then does the ecologist stand? Mainstream economists are united in the belief that economic growth is a precondition for increasing the level of employment, although they accept that a growth in output (GNP) might not result in increased employment if labour productivity improves. The Ecology Party is clearly in conflict with those who proclaim that greater output guarantees more jobs. Indeed the very fact that labour productivity has to be 'improved' in order for Britain to remain competitive might suggest

that the quest for export-led growth is doomed to create sustained unemployment.

In the past economists have argued that the labour market tends towards equilibrium in the long run and thus to full employment. Mainstream economists are now suggesting that even with economic growth unemployment could remain at around 2 - 3 million, the 'natural' rate being rather higher than previously envisaged. Full employment has been maintained in the past because the reduced use of labour per unit of output (caused by changing technology) was counterbalanced by rising output (i.e. growth). Such growth is no longer feasible.

The prime need, therefore, is not so much to seek how economic expansion might be possible but rather how that work which needs to be done can best be allocated. There are radical changes needed to encourage work sharing, such as the creation of better opportunities for part-time work, reducing overtime and creating a shorter working week, and enabling early retirement where requested.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES MUST BE CHOSEN

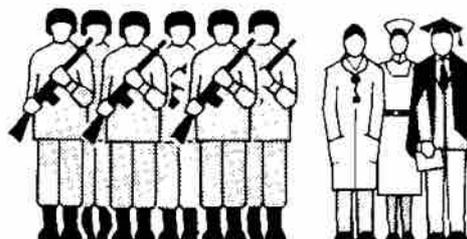
It is vitally important to consider and select the most appropriate forms of technology and not, as others do, accept particular trends in technological change as inevitable. The quest for economic growth, however, inevitably results in increasingly capital-intensive industry as firms expand and automation becomes more 'economic' as a result. As David Ricardo pointed out over a century ago relative labour- and capital-intensity determine prices - and thus output - of particular commodities. To encourage more labour-intensive methods of production the Ecology Party is committed to radically changing the relative cost of different factors of production and so making labour cheaper and capital (including raw materials) more expensive.

One of the key explanations of Britain's growth in unemployment is that the total cost to employers of actually employing people (i.e. including National Insurance, pension schemes, etc.) has increased enormously in recent years - twice as fast as wage costs alone. This shocking trend should be reversed immediately through appropriate fiscal measures such as phasing out employers' National Insurance contributions. (Equivalent revenue may be gained from a resources tax: if the two were balanced this would not be inflationary.)

To summarise so far, the Ecology Party should stress the need to plan technological change, to reduce the cost of labour, and to counter the pressure on firms to increase in size.

A TRANSFER OF RESOURCES TO THE LESS WEALTHY

As it is not possible for real wages (i.e. buying power) throughout the economy to grow if economic growth is not attainable, any measures to create a more just and equitable distribution of economic power must necessitate a transfer of resources to the less well-off through tax changes on income, land, and other forms of wealth. This is desirable not just because of the social unrest which would occur if the aspirations of the poor were not at least partially met whilst people grew accustomed to our zero-growth future; but also because such people save proportionately less and higher employment in this transitional period could therefore be attained (cf. Malthus). In any case, an ecological society would be one in which the growing role of productive independent work (greater domestic self-



There are now about twice as many people in military occupations as there are doctors, nurses and teachers in the world

sufficiency, increased DIY, more use of home-grown and home-processed food, etc.) would proportionately diminish people's dependence on wages from employment.

EXPANDING THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

The Conservative, Liberal and SDP parties are unified by their ostentatious belief in free trade, arguing that Britain could increase domestic employment by expanding her share of world trade. Even discounting the industrial growth and cheap energy prices (in line with competing countries) on which such an approach depends, it would not succeed.

In the foreseeable future it is clearly the newly industrialised countries' share of trade which will increase, as their wage costs are so low in relation to ours because of their workers' lower aspirations. As regards trade with industrialised nations, as Ecologists foresee an inevitable long-term surge in energy costs it makes no sense to transport products over long distances when such trade will become increasingly uneconomic to sustain as these costs increase. Economic decentralisation, not world trade expansion, will provide secure jobs for the future.

To properly plan for the long term there must be far-sighted employment planning, taking into account both demographic trends and social factors. For example, although the size of the male labour force was static during the 1970s an extra 2½m married females sought employment. Further, it is clearly unsatisfactory for the elderly to be jobless against their wishes merely because unemployed youths use more anti-social means of expressing their discontent at being out of work and so receive disproportionate attention. Provision must be made for all sectors of the population and for this reason the flexibility of ecological policies is crucial.

In conclusion - does all this mean that Ecologists base their principles on either New Classical or Keynesian thinking? The changing world has meant that neither is strictly true. Ecologists might accept the need to reduce real wages, although this would not be in order to enable a subsequent surge in production, but rather because there should in future be less need for earned income as the 'informal' economy expands.

Possibly there should be a minor increase in government expenditure as Keynes may have recommended in the short-term - indeed many Ecology Party policies would necessitate this. However the growth of government involvement in people's lives which has been a long-term consequence of repeated Keynesian injections must surely be terminated if individuals and communities, rather than the State, are to increase their power.

A changing world demands a change in politics. It also demands some changes in conventional economics ...

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT, UNLESS THE ECOLOGY PARTY IS IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SHAPE BY THE END OF ITS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NEXT OCTOBER, IT WILL NOT SURVIVE. Several party members have written to GL recently with their views on the party's future. We put this suggestion back to them - and asked them to comment ...

Is the Party Over?

John Morrissey

At the Bridlington conference in March the need to pursue and extend our broad thrust on the electoral front was sadly neglected during tedious discussion of the footling issues of NVDA and feminism. Some of our potential supporters see us as middle-aged stuffed shirts who prefer words to action. Many more consider us to be delapidated ex-hippies incapable of running a hamburger stall, let alone restructuring society. Neither is true, but convincing the public requires we meet them part way. Unless we believe in bloody revolution, which we do not, there is no way of changing society except from the inside, through argument, through electoral politics, and ultimately through the exercise of administration and law. Even Eco-Community Action, with its many merits, can have no more than an educational and illustrative effect.

We suffer from a woolly self-image, lack of expertise, and a tendency to become obsessed with trivial fringe issues. The importance of discussing the minutiae of the philosophical basis of feminism disappears beside the need to address ourselves to the real issues that concern ordinary people: housing, energy costs, job satisfaction, unemployment. The Eco message is failing to reach vast areas of our society: the working classes, the trade unions, the immigrant communities. We are overwhelmingly middle-class and white. The message will not get through until we act in a manner people can respect, speak language people can understand, and present policies which provide answers to everyday needs.

Face-painting, goats, and feminism are not the answer.

Robin Smith

AS REPORTED IN GL2, at the Ecology Party's Spring Conference I floated the idea of a Green Troika, a regrouping of the party designed to enable what I see as conflicting tendencies within the party (as presently constituted) to develop

their own strengths and rationales in a symbiotic relationship of mutual co-operation and support.

These three tendencies are:
i) policy formulating and constitutional electoral politics;
ii) the politics of pioneering the development of the sustainable society within the disintegrating edifice of industrial society;
iii) the politics of confrontation and directly combatting the institutions of the decaying established order.

Bottled up in one organisation they can only develop by engaging in constant parasitic warfare each upon the other to gain control of the party's resources and energies. Any one tendency could, indeed, gain dominance within the party; such would be a hollow victory as the dominant parasite would soon find itself the lonely inhabitant of a withered and lifeless carcass from which the supporters of the thwarted tendencies had decamped.

Yes, the coming AGM could be the symbolic venue for Eco's extinction. But the choice is ours and is yet to be made. We can stop fighting for power within a unitary party and release our energies upon society in a symbiotic growth towards peace, stability, and a humanely stable way of life; or we might be mad enough to toss aside our hope for a viable future and remain tightly huddled in a vampire embrace until each tendency - every one of which has a vital job to do in building the sustainable society - has sucked the strength and use out of the others.

David Taylor

THE ECOLOGY PARTY is not going to make electoral progress between now and the general election; that much is clear to all except for the most optimistic of the ostriches!

The vast majority of people with green sympathies are going to continue working through pressure groups or the Liberal and Labour parties. There is no chance of this changing before the general election. After that, possibly with PR, there might be some room

for manoeuvring, but it will remain unrealistic to expect historically diverse green and radical elements to unite around a conventional political party. In the short term we should not concern ourselves so much with fighting elections, but rather with developing contacts with green socialists, anarchists, and Liberals. We need to create a political soil fertile enough to allow a strong green initiative to take root.

Ironically, the Ecology Party's demise can be matched by a gradual increase in support for such green principles as nonviolence, feminism, social justice, ecology, direct democracy, and personal growth.

What we clearly lack is the political context within which these mutually re-inforcing values can be effectively introduced. At present they 'exist' on the margins of political orthodoxy. The potential of a united green movement is quite simply staggering.

'The Ecology Party recognises the prime importance of building a re-alignment of radicals in this country, and supports in principle the establishment of a green federation' (Ecology Party conference motion passed in March). Our philosophy, experience and network make us uniquely qualified to perform the role of catalyst in building this green federation. If we cannot take up this challenge, Eco will continue its slide into political obscurity.

John Valentine

THE ECOLOGY PARTY is at a crisis point - the heady days are long gone, new people and new approaches are thin on the ground, and we are all a bit older and tired. We could carry on as we are, trying to be all things to all people (or at least all articulate, ideas-type people), and carry on wondering why no one listens to us when we are so obviously right, and decline into the comfort and irrelevance of a new Progressive League, murling our truths to each other through another half-century of conferences and summer gatherings.

Or we could choose our constituency with care, narrow our electoral sights a bit, and concentrate with those people most likely to be in sympathy with our views. This constituency, surely, is the 'alternative' movement - in particular the peace and anti-nuclear movement. The people we need to talk to are those who have learnt, through involvement in the single-issue campaigns, of connections like those between arms and world hunger, between Sizewell and slow genetic degradation, between greed and unsustainability.

This approach would imply a change in style - less conventional campaigning, more involvement in and influencing of the events and activities of the people we are working with - and becoming, as far as we can, a focus. The most important single move in this direction would be a change of name. It's time to leave behind that four-syllable, grin-evoking word and become, simply, the Green Party. (Or Movement, or Federation, or whatever - but Green.) That one word could epitomise and crystallise change, new emphasis, new strength.

A new name, a new direction, a new drive. If we want to, we can do it.

Sally Willington

OF COURSE THE Ecology Party will survive! Survival is our creed. If a constitutional collapse of the present party occurred, then a new party would re-form phoenix-like from the ashes. It would re-form because there is a need for it; because what we are saying is right; and because there is no other party in this country with our ideas firmly nailed to its masthead. We have too a Planet-wide interest in what we stand for. I stand where I stood in 1960. Believing in Democracy, if I find I have no one for whom I can vote in an election, then I stand myself. If others join in (as in the Ecology Party) then so much the better!

Anything a 'Pressure Group' can do is not the business of this party. They probably do it better than we could anyway. This does not preclude individuals from belonging to both pressure groups and the Ecology Party. Recently, our ever-present Anarchist fringe has been harnessed into pressing for diversion into NVDA. This was, not surprisingly, at a time when the party has the weakest National Council in living

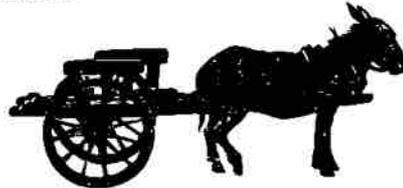
(Continued on page 14)

Fallacies of trade

Richard Hunt

JUST AS MACHINE-PRODUCED cloth from Manchester is cheaper than hand-produced cloth in India, so machine-produced corn is cheaper than corn produced, say, by alternative technology.

But for machines to produce cloth cheaply, it is essential that thousands of yards are made and exported. It is essential to undercut Third World producers, to destroy indigenous manufacture. And the same with food. American wheat, produced by machine, is only cheap as long as they produce enough of it and export it. It is essential to American agriculture to undercut foreign corn producers, i.e. destroy Third World agriculture.



American wheat, made by machine, is cheaper than Nigerian indigenous wheat or its local alternative. So the Nigerians, in a paid-labour/cash/ formal economy, buy the American wheat and the Nigerian farmers are put out of business. Nigerian farm output is now decreasing. Iran's food output, under the Shah, decreased because of imported, machine-produced cheap food.

The implications are shattering. Just as the developed countries have cornered the market in manufactured goods, they will now proceed to corner the market in agriculture, because their industrialised agricultural techniques demand enormous output and sales. The EEC is now exporting milk products everywhere and so destroying indigenous milk production.

Nigerian oil has been exchanged for American corn. The oil is Nigeria's buying power. But in a country which produces only food, food is that country's only buying power.

When Manchester exported cloth it was exchanged for Third World crops. If the developed countries take over world food production, the Third World will have hardly any buying power at all. It will be able to buy neither the cheap food nor the cheap cloth. It will

starve to death, as it is already starving.

The thing is impossible. One part of the world simply cannot export both manufactured goods AND the buying power (food, fuel and raw materials) to purchase those goods. The developed world's agriculture will destroy the Third World's ability to buy either the developed world's manufactured goods, or its food. The whole system must fall apart.

Cheap machine-produced food does not mean a population is better off if it ruins its own agriculture and so its power to buy the cheap food.

IMPLICATIONS AT HOME

The implications within one country are similarly shattering. We keep asking ourselves why we don't eat more locally produced food, why we use scarce oil to transport so much from here to there.

It is the world pattern writ small. It is cheaper to grow 10,000 acres of Brussels Sprouts in Bedfordshire and transport them all over Britain. But because modern agricultural techniques demand enormous output and sales, marginal producers in Shropshire are bound to be put out of business. So the marginal producers no longer have the buying power to purchase either the cheap food or the cheap manufactured goods. They retreat to the city.

Within a country, one part of that country simply cannot export to another part both the food and the manufactured goods to exchange for that food.

So if Wales imports cheap food from England it destroys the agriculture that buys that cheap food. If it pays for the cheap food with manufactured goods or coal and it allows in cheaper manufactured goods or cheaper coal from England, it destroys the factories and mines which produce to buy the cheap English food. So Wales must put a tariff on cheap imported English food and manufactured goods. And so must Scotland, and so must the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire.

One area simply cannot export both manufactured goods and also their purchasing power - food, fuel, and raw materials.

Nuclear barons

THE NUCLEAR BARONS - Pringle and Spiegelman. Michael Joseph, £12.95

This is a big book - hence its price - but that shouldn't put anyone off reading it. Its size is entirely necessary, and nowhere does it lose the conciseness and readability that one might expect from a pamphlet.

It's big because it covers in greater detail than any other non-official publication to date the complete history of the world's nuclear industries or - as its blurb says - "how they created our nuclear nightmare". It does it cleverly by using personalities (hence its title) and chillingly relates how the obsessions of a few people have resulted in the nuclear machine's structure.

As an end-to-end book it's a good read but, more importantly, as a well-researched reference work (112 pages of notes and index) on the world's nuclear industries it is unsurpassed. It's not easy at first to use in such a way - the anecdotes and historical detail can be diversionary - but it has a basis of solid factual material that will make it invaluable to campaigners for years to come.

As a blockbuster novel its plot is less convoluted but much more worrying than many works of fiction. If you really want confirmation of your suspicions that the nuclear industry is dangerously corrupt and manipulated by men motivated largely by self-interest, read this book. And if you don't believe that, then this book may well change your mind.

Chris Church

Save Heat — Save Money

Get REAL economy for home or business from Heat Recovery Units. Designed for boiler or fire and developed over five years. Pay back their cost in under 3 years by saving 10% plus of heating bills.

Send s.a.e. for details and free information on solar panels, heat pumps, etc.

We would like to hear from others in appropriate technology fields so as to exchange information and experiences.

ALTERNATIVE HEAT SYSTEMS,
15, SANDYHURST LANE,
ASHFORD, KENT.

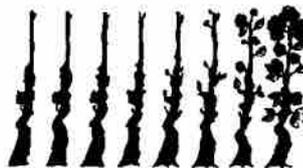


No answers here

DISARMAMENT: THE UNANSWERABLE CASE - John Ferguson. Heinemann, £3.50.

A bit disappointing, this one - very patchy and varied in quality. The book was put together very quickly and has little cohesion: it's a series of lectures (four I would guess) cobbled together with a bit tacked on the front and a bit tacked on the back.

John Ferguson is an establishment figure - the blurb says he is an academic theologian and classicist, and presently chairperson of the United Nations Association. He is



also a forceful and confirmed unilateralist, and repeats throughout the book that there is no alternative to disarmament.

The first lecture deals with the UN Special Assembly on Disarmament, and with recent multilateral and bilateral treaties. The second deals with alternatives to war, and in particular the history of the UN peacekeeping forces. The third lecture, Alternative Defence Strategies, includes the best brief history and survey of NVDA that I've come across, well researched and well written. Pages 56 - 74 could profitably be read by anyone with an interest in NVDA. The last lecture deals with the Braudt Report in the usual apologetic establishment way; and a sort of postscript reminds us to live peaceful individual lives.

No great inspiration for the activist here! A bit short on new information as well, except about the UN. But if you see a copy lying around, the bit on NVDA is worth reading.

John Valentine

LETTERS

Common view

It is easy to dismiss B G Eales' letter (GL 2) as full of sweeping generalisations and leave it at that. But it would be a mistake to do so. The writer exhibits a view held by many - a view which may be described as characteristically male, though not all men subscribe to it - viz. that feminism is peripheral, a limited area for discussion. It may not have dawned upon the writer that far from being peripheral, feminism is extraordinarily relevant to over 2 billion people - all women on this planet today.

The writer states: "To obtain mass support the Party needs to pursue policies which deal with the immediate and contentious issues which confront ordinary people." A good place to start would be a coherent and logical set of policies to combat what can only be regarded as rampant discrimination at every level within our society against women. There is nothing more immediate than sexism.

Perhaps the writer is unaware that one of the most fruitful areas of discussion for a woman who wishes to examine sexism in her own life is to review her sexuality and her sexual relations with others (most usually men). But we may forgive this oversight in someone who has thought little about the subject.

However, to describe a party which openly and honestly confronts the question of sexism as a "fringe group of esoteric cranks" is to talk solely in the terms of the traditional male Establishment which has got us into this disastrous global situation in the first place. For this situation continues and will continue for as long as it is underpinned by the idea that some people may be exploited and humiliated with impunity.

I would suggest that B G Eales does not know what he or she is talking about.

Jo Steranka
49 Sandycombe Road, Richmond

WHEN WRITING TO GREEN LINE ...

:: please keep within 200 words

:: remember we may cut or extract from your letter, unless you ask us not to

:: we shall print your address



based movements. With encouragement and some advice, I feel that catalyst groups of Young Ecologists could be set up, not just to ape the Young Socialists and the Young Conservatives but to support the wider green movement (animal lib, anti-nukes, peace, environmental protection.)

The one existing group - which I co-ordinate - though not always active, provides social events, takes part in debates in school and with other organisations, collects cash for ecological causes, holds meetings, is involved, and mans stalls and does work for the local Ecology Party.

I feel that the Ecology Party nationally could produce literature aimed at the young. Local groups could speak to sixth forms (most sixth forms would be overjoyed to get an Eco speaker in a general lesson). The national office, Corsham Young Eco and SEM should produce some kind of action guide to encourage local groups to start, and perhaps Eco members could act as area or county co-ordinators while groups are first starting up.

With little or no cash outlay the party could get a large amount of active support, and so too could many other ecological groups. Young Ecologists groups should be radical, decentralised, and aimed at school students and school leavers."

To contact Derek or get a comment published in Green Line, please send it through the Grass Roots address

EAST LONDON RIVER CROSSING

There's the makings of a nice piece of NVDA coming out of Greenwich over this issue. Their 'Echo' newsletter starts: 'Concrete

LOTS OF THE branches' efforts over the last couple of months have been channelled into the local election. But things have not been all elections and some interesting battles are in progress. From Liverpool comes a whole sheaf of press cuttings about the Lead in Petrol campaign which they are involved with. Plaid Ecolog yng Nghyary (Ecology Party in Wales) has been deep in the work to make Wales the first Nuclear-Free Country of the United Kingdom. And of course the community politics goes on apace. And, now that the mind-numbing spectre of the SDP has been laid by the district and regional elections, we can pull ourselves out of the dumps and start climbing again.

Young Ecologists

This is taking up most of this issue's Grassroots because it is extremely important. It deals with a badly neglected section of the Green movement in this country: the Young.

Derek Wall (16), of Corsham Young Ecologists, writes:

"As a recent article in the Guardian observed, the young are turning to Ecology parties in a big way, at least on the Continent: the recent success of Die Grünen and the Belgian parties shows that a large proportion of 18 - 21 year olds across Europe support green politics. This is further backed up by youth support at home and abroad for the now massive peace movement. Perhaps the lack of success by the British Ecology Party is in fact a failure to gain the young vote.

Although admittedly there is proven and large-scale support for ecological politics, few young people join Eco because they feel political parties, with committee meetings, conferences, and little real action, are only for university students if for the young at all. The Student Ecology Movement does little outside higher education, and tends to illustrate to many that the party said to be for deschooling society is hypocritical and middle class in outlook.

I feel that although SEM has a valuable purpose, the Ecology Party and the broad spectrum of green groups have no radical youth-

"How relieved I was to read in GL2 that it is not the house magazine of the Ecology Party! Otherwise members like myself would have to leave it and spend our time and money on something else. I strongly urge that if convinced feminists like David Taylor want their own party they should build one up from scratch, in the open, and not try to convert an existing party to their own ends. If the word 'party' puts off these people, too bad!"

Philippe Epps.
135 Warren Drive, Hornchurch, Essex.

"(Stephanie Leland's) meaning is not clear to me and I even wonder if it is clear to her. I suspect that she has replaced thought with long words."

Adrian White.
36a Wakehurst Road, London SW11.

"Stephanie Leland's article on Feminism had such a clarity I wrote to her direct for more of the same!"

Mollie Baillie.
94 Dartmouth Road, Paignton, Devon.

"It seems to be assumed that the market economy came about as a natural consequence of the industrial revolution. Not so. It was invented in this country some 150 years ago as it was considered likely to be useful as a means of exploitation. They were right. They could not have seen the effect the market economy would have in distorting the whole of society as well as human nature; but we can, and it is about time we found some other way of running the economy of this country!"

Graham Knight.
15 Sandhurst Lane, Ashford, Kent.

"I for one do not understand how those who are actively involved in organising (in their spare time) a political party can honestly be expected to commit themselves in addition to setting up community action projects. It is a distraction, therefore, for Ecology Party activists to be asked to participate in community projects."

Martin Davis,
Hill View, Sevenhampton, Chelt'ham.



Round-up of branch and area activities
compiled by Martin Collins and others

:14:

proposals have recently been unveiled for a river crossing involving a grand-scale bridge and four-lane road through Plumstead and Oxleas Wood.' The piece goes on to describe the effects this would have not only in Greenwich but on London as a whole. It concludes: 'What this means is that local people may one day have to make their voices heard in other ways - even if this means lying down in front of bulldozers.'

THE GREEN AND RED PARTY OF WALES

No, not Eco but Plaid Cymru. There's been a lot of contact between the two parties in Wales with conferences to work out our common ground. Plaid Cymru is, quite naturally, trying to be rid of the lunatic fringe of Welsh nationalism, and the greener we can turn them the better. It seems a number of PC members have joined Eco after an article by Brig Oubridge appeared in their newspaper, Welsh Nation. If we can be on good terms with the Welsh Nationalist party, how are our relations with the Scots, Cornish and other nationalist parties? Shouldn't we have a go at turning them green also?

AND FINALLY ...

In the Noticeboard on the back of Eco-News I see that there is a Womens Group, Students Group, Christian Ecology Group, etc. I assume you are part of the Grassroots, so how about putting me on your mailing list?

ALL GRASSROOTS CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD GO TO MARTIN COLLINS, 46 HYTE ROAD, ASHFORD, KENT.



(Continued from page 11)

memory and the communication chain with members has sunk to an all-time low. Also, many hard-working party members used up a lot of their energies in an ill-fated and ill-advised campaign in the Croydon by-election which left them drained, downhearted, gloomy, and with their perspectives entirely out of focus.

However, recovery has ecologically set in and there now seems to be a new, positive ground-swell gathering strength into a surge-wave towards the next General Election. I believe that, with good preliminary member communication, people will come to the AGM in Bridlington in October and will re-avow their determination to stand for that in which they believe.

Are we losing the way?

Slough and Area Ecology Party's best vote yet in a local government election (12%) resulted from a campaign which may have veered from the branch's own view of longer-term election strategy. This was the conclusion of a branch meeting held within a month of the election.

The branch decided that its experiences, along with reportedly similar events in Cheltenham, are of major importance for election planning throughout the party, and asks, "As the Lib/SDP shine becomes tarnished (as it surely must) we can expect voters to turn to a genuinely radical party: but is Eco jeopardising its prospects by using short cuts to popularity?"

A glance at the results tables reveals a close parallel between by-elections in Cheltenham and Slough. In both cases too the Eco campaigns appear similar in style.

(The parallel cannot be exact, of course, and the comparison drawn below may mask significant differences.)

The description 'based on down-to-earth practical issues and avoiding discussions of political theory' used by candidate Harry Kemp about the Cheltenham campaign might be applied also to Slough Eco's campaign in Burnham, and the charge that in Cheltenham Eco's votes were earned at some cost to party principles (as made by Cheltenham member Granville Sheringham in Green Line 2) may be relevant to our votes in Burnham. Both campaigns succeeded in their aims of capturing 'floating Tory' votes.

Assessing the Burnham campaign, and from reports from Cheltenham, Slough Eco has now identified aspects of a campaign style designed to project a party image which will be sustainable well after the immediate results of an election. And if Burnham and Cheltenham are not isolated cases but striking examples of a general trend, the lessons learned must concern the party as a whole.

Eco candidates should be closely linked to their local communities: they should be keenly interested in 'parochial' issues. But this is no more than a good qualification for a candidate of any party (or of none) and Eco votes gained through purely parochial campaigns will be extremely vulnerable when the Old Line parties

BURNHAM, SOUTH BUCKS (near Slough)

March 25th, 1982

Con	842
Lib	611
Eco (John Lloyd)	235
Lab	225

PARK WARD, CHELTENHAM

Feb 11, 1982

Con	1227
SDP	1089
Eco (Harry Kemp)	253
Lab	140

respond with suitably slanted campaigns in future elections.

Even in local government elections Eco must make clear statements of firm principle, putting environmental and local politics in the context of a radical stance on wider issues. Probably this kind of stance means forgoing votes in the shorter term, but it should allow the party to maintain an identity with longer-term potential for electoral appeal. Otherwise, if we do not now choose principles over votes, we may find in the future that we have neither; that we have in effect invited other parties to adopt 'soft' environmental policies and thereby make Eco look redundant.

Slough Eco plans to get a full airing of the questions raised by Burnham and Cheltenham at the Ecology Party conference in October and believes that by adopting a positive forward-looking election strategy the party can avoid despondency over apparent reverses and so-called 'poor' results in the near future. The party can look forward to widespread electoral success, but only if we ourselves have enthusiasm for the longer-term view we advocate for society as a whole.

Laurence Thompson
Secretary, Slough Eco.

GREEN LINE tries to avoid too much detail of matters of mainly internal interest to the Ecology Party. Elections, we hope you will agree, are of wider interest: after all, supporters of other parties, as well as supporters of none, often have strong views about Eco's election strategy! And as the national press firmly ignores Eco, we must remedy that!

NEW READERS PLEASE NOTE: Green Line is a movement paper, not a party organ. We always welcome your letters, articles, photos, cartoons ... !

Local Elections May 1982

JON CARPENTER looks at the results

HOW DID ECO fare in the local elections? Well, we've two sets of figures to go on: one from GL's own elections questionnaire returned by a total of 31 candidates (giving some quite detailed information), and another from the Eco national agent (covering 93 candidates but showing only the percentage vote, Eco's position, and the number of candidates standing).

Any conclusions drawn from the smaller GL sample will be on the optimistic side: the candidates who completed our forms did significantly better than the average.

Taking the English single-member wards (where the voter had one vote and each party stood one candidate) we find that where there were 4 candidates Eco polled an average 2.64% on the party sample of 38 seats (3.37% on the GL sample of 14). Eco always came fourth. Where there were only 3 candidates per seat, the party sample of 6 wards shows an average of 8.56%, which drops to 5.58% if we discount an 'abnormal' contest in Torridge where Eco faced only Ind and Lib.

In so-called 'multi-member' wards (where the voter votes for more than one (2 or 3) candidate as several seats are filled at once) a small party normally fields one candidate, and hopes that people who vote for other parties as first preference will 'give away' their 2nd or 3rd vote to Eco. In 26 such wards in London Eco actually did worse than in the single member wards in the rest of England: 1.95%. A late arrival to the statistics (Jonathon Porritt's exceptional result in Westminster/St Marylebone) actually raises this to 2.35% - but Jonathon is himself in no way typical!

We have 3 results from multi-member wards in Birmingham (7.5%, 7.1%, and 14.3% - the latter being the ward long cultivated by Jonathan Tyler at Selly Oak). The evidence from Birmingham and some of the London results suggests that in the (often very large) multi-member wards Eco can with effort obtain a vote comparable to - but not necessarily larger than - that obtained elsewhere in single-member wards.

In Scotland, in the 4 urban wards for which we have detailed results, Eco came 5th after SNP with an average 2.32%. In Mid-Argyll, a vast rural ward, the branch used press advertising rather than leaflets and polled 8% in a 3-cornered contest against SNP (who won) and C.

How hard do branches work? Well, in the Green Line survey 13 out of 17 single-member wards received a 100% leaflet coverage, but 11 out of 17 canvassed less than 5% of the ward. (In the 5 wards where 30% - 50% of the voters were canvassed, the vote was an extra 2% above the national average - i.e. an average 4.66%). Our returns from 29 wards suggest about 250 people helping, though some of these are not Eco members and many (most?) do very little. Nationally, probably fewer than 800 people were involved in all.

About 40 branches in England put up candidates, 11 of these in London. 4 Scottish branches fielded candidates. There were no elections in Wales, or in some parts of England.

Does Eco benefit locally after parliamentary by-elections? We don't know. A paper candidate in Hillhead polled 1.1%; a Croydon candidate (we don't know which part of Croydon) got 1%; and the 6 candidates in Crosby averaged only 1.93% despite the fact that 2 of the wards were apparently multi-member.

Student votes? Only 2 branches mentioned high concentrations of students in the Green Line survey: Oxford West polled 6.5% in Central Ward (about 90% students), and in Jill Knight's constituency Birmingham polled 6.7% in Edgbaston Ward - which has a big student vote and is multi-member. (Harborne, also in Birmingham, polled 7.3% - but there's no mention of students here: so does this prove anything?)

What does emerge very clearly is that Eco only does well where there is a well-known, established, campaigning candidate. This year's results reveal at most some 5 or 6 such candidates. Are they standing in inherently promising wards? This factor is hard to measure, but it must be noted that these best results come from both Tory-held and Labour-held seats, and from metropolitan, provincial and rural areas. Indeed it might even be argued that candidates who are well-known locally do less well through standing on the Eco ticket than they would if they stood as independents: certainly there is no evidence to suggest that they would do worse (though to be fair there is little evidence at all!)

How professional is the typical Eco campaign? Well, Green Line has seen leaflets from a dozen or so branches (covering rather more candidates). One branch's leaflets include the publisher's name, but no address and no mention of the printer. One or two leaflets are very scrappily duplicated: most are commercially type-set and appear professional. Only 3 candidates in our survey mention a second eve-of-poll leaflet. Canvassing more than a token street is a rare exception: across the country the Ecology Party probably canvassed no more than 10% of the voters it leafleted.

Conclusions must be tentative. As some areas had no elections anyway, there is no exact indication of the number of 'live' branches. After making an allowance for this, it seems safe to assume that, outside London, fewer than 50 branches nationally are capable of putting up at least one candidate in a local election (33 actually did this year). Most fail to canvas, thus missing one of the most valuable 'cumulative' effects of elections. In some cases votes for Eco amount to little more than the votes of a few members and friends. (The average vote in the 17 English single-member wards who reported to Green Line was 90 - range 22 to 185). Whatever happens, these results must be considered very carefully, along with recent parliamentary by-election results, when the party considers its strategy for the next General Election.

* OUR THANKS to all who completed our election questionnaires.

BY-ELECTION IN PLYMOUTH, Drake/Compton Ward

On March 25 Revd J Storey polled 189 votes (2.7%) for Eco against the three main parties. The Tory won with an overall majority. Last year, when 3 councillors were being elected at once and only Conservative and Labour stood, the same Eco candidate polled 829 (13.2%)

BEACONSFIELD parliamentary by-election

This election takes place while GL is being printed. Slough Eco are trying an 'active boycott', using leaflets and public meetings to focus public attention on a major local pollution issue. Report next issue.

In the beautiful Vale of Avalon, overlooked by mystical Glastonbury Tor, 'Greens' will be gathering to share ideas, to plan, and to celebrate a new way of living.

The Gathering will bring together those involved in radical, alternative, and green activities - ecologists, anti nuclear campaigners, feminists, libertarians, and many others working for a freer, safer, and more just society.

It will run for six days, with workshops on a major theme every day:

- Tuesday - Resources
- Wednesday - Land & Energy
- Thursday - Animal & Human Rights
- Friday - Peace & Nonviolence

Saturday - Building an effective radical green movement
 Sunday - A Celebration!

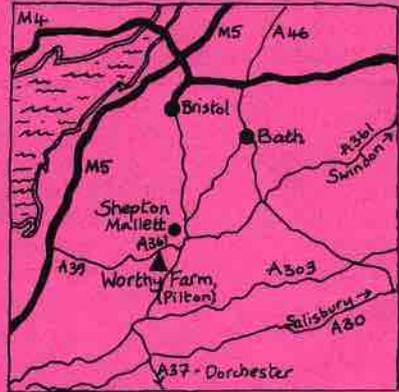
Despite all this, The Gathering is a holiday, too. Come and enjoy good cheap food, sunshine, music and theatre....

It will be a self contained community, with a market place and lots of activities for all ages.

You can celebrate the festival of Lammas with Pagans Against the Nukes, join in with nonviolent action training, visit the natural healing marquee, and see alternative technology in operation.

We have invited a variety of theatre and music groups - Sister Seven, a feminist theatre group, The Tibetan Ukrainian Mountain Troupe, clowns, a Ceilidh band, African drummers and many more....

There will be no electric music, mainly because we want to encourage people to make their own, but also to make The Gathering as much a holiday from 'normal' living as we can.



Worthy Farm, Pilton, Somerset. Pilton is on the A361 between Shepton Mallet & Glastonbury. Follow Gathering signs from the village....

Who are the 'GREENS'?

We believe in the principles of nonviolence, feminism, and ecology, as well as direct democracy, social justice, and personal growth. We feel that these issues are fundamentally linked and we challenge the "old order" of centralised political parties, abuse of technology, hierarchy, patriarchy, militarism, and domination of the earth. To resist 'leaders' and 'experts' we need to work together and find our own strength. Come to The Gathering and celebrate a new way of living!

THE GREEN GATHERING

JULY 27-AUG 1

Wood, Water, Toilets, Marquees, duplicator, daily newsheet - all these are provided.

There will be stalls selling food, crafts, and campaigning material, as well as invited speakers, exhibitions, theatre groups and musicians.

Festival Welfare will be there in case of accidents.

Bring your own tent, sleeping bag, cooking gear, and toilet paper.

For children there will be The Albion Kids Show, face painting, inflatables, plus adventure playground.

The basic framework is there - it's up to us to build on it. If you'd like to know more, contact the ticket office.

Tickets

A limited number of reduced price tickets are available from 2 CROSS HOUSE, FONTMELL MAGNA, SHAFTSBURY, DORSET. Tel. (0747) 811468.

These will be £7.50 for 6 days. Please make cheques payable to 'Green Gathering'. Offer is only open until 15 June 1982.

Tickets at the gate will cost £9.00 for 6 days, £5.00 for the weekend (Friday onwards). Everyone under 14 gets in FREE!!

ALSO AVAILABLE 'The Greens Are Gathering' sunflower three colour badges. Singles - 20p, ten or more, 15p, plus 15% postage. From ticket office, address above.

Badges

Please send me... advance tickets at £7.50 each.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....