

GREEN *Line*

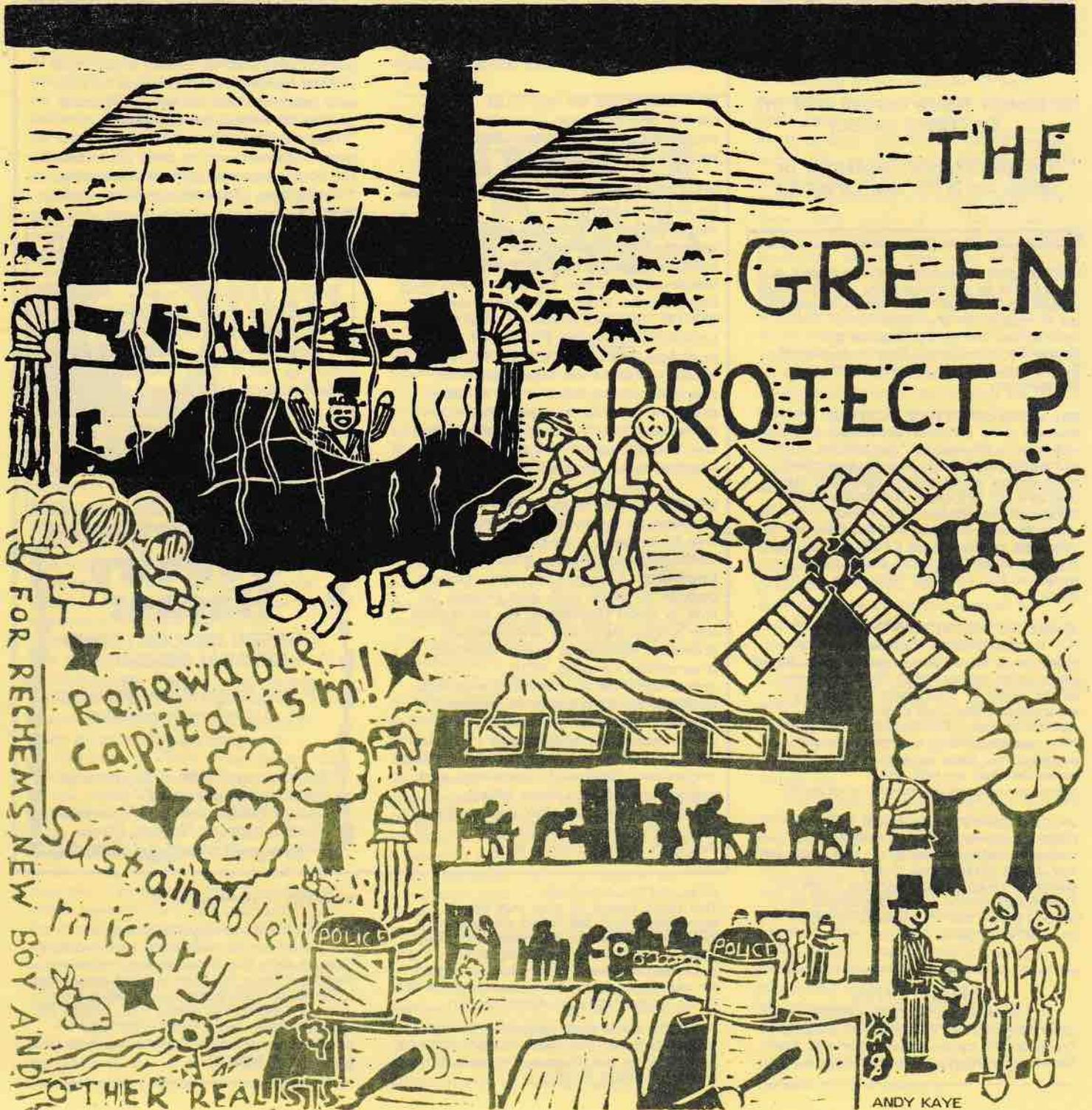
No 58 / OCTOBER 1987 / 60p

JEREMY SEABROOK
The greens and hope

Inside Nicaragua

The futility of green opposition

Conference reports; Aston & Stockholm





GREEN Line

34 COWLEY ROAD, OXFORD OX4 1HZ
TEL: 0865 245301

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE OF
GREEN POLITICS AND LIFESTYLE

GREEN LINE is published ten times a year, and is produced by a collective based in Oxford. This issue appeared as a result of the efforts of Tim Andrewes, Jerry Spring, Leigh Shaw-Taylor, Barry Maycock, Carol Guberman, Sarah Tyzack and Jon Carpenter.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Normal rate £6, low/unwaged £5, voluntary hi-waged "supporter subscription" £10. The "supporter" rate helps build our publishing fund (we are all unpaid); our thanks to those subscribers who have contributed already. Overseas readers please add £1.50 to all these rates (surface mail), or enquire for air mail rates to your area.

BULK ORDERS

5 - 9 copies only 50p each; 10 or more only 45p each - post free. Send cash with order first time, please; after that, if you want a regular standing order, we'll give you a month to pay. For special occasions like demos or big meetings, we'll supply you sale or return. Normally, however, we do not give sale-or-return on monthly orders.

ADVERTISING

Display advertising is only £75 a page, smaller sizes pro rata. 10% off for cash with copy. Send camera-ready copy by the 10th of the month prior to publication, or enquire for our typesetting and layout charges.

SPECIAL OFFER! BACK ISSUES

Six recent back issues for £2 post free, or 20 back issues for £5. An ideal offer for new subscribers.

Small Ads

5p/word

GREEN PARTY GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO £2 post free from EOA Books, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ.

GRANGE-OVER-SANDS. Holiday at Prospect House. Ideal for South Lakes. Superb walking and cycling countryside. Noted for imaginative meals (vegetarian and traditional). No smoking dining room. Tea makers. Residents' bar. Brochure from Bill Lambert (Green supporter), 04484 2118.

TIPIS, handmade to the traditional Sioux design. We offer a complete service, including roof racks, at a realistic price. Also "Tipi Living", 40 page booklet, £2 incl p&p. Patrick & Co, Lockyer's Farm, Compton Dundon, nr Somerton, Somerset (0458 74130).

PHOTOCOPYING ON RECYCLED PAPER (white and colours) from 3p a sheet plus postage. Ring 0865 726229 for details.

SUSTAINING AND SUSTAINABLE - guide to living healthily, free of exploitation of humans and other animals. With menus and recipes. 75p incl postage. **WHOLE NEW WAYS** - imaginative vegan recipes using only ingredients that could be grown in the UK. 75p incl postage. The two booklets together £1.30 incl postage. **FOOD FOR EVERYONE:** ten A4 display sheets on importance of plant foods in solving world food problem, £1 incl postage. From: Movement for Compassionate Living the Vegan Way, 47 Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey.

WOMEN. Young 36 busy full person wanting to move out of London to live in or near a small town in Cotswolds or nearby November / December. Looking for new friends, people to work with and places to live, a good therapist. My interests are magic, Reichian and Gestalt therapy, massage, green politics, anarchism, healing, NFIP, astrology/tarot, camping, walking, cycling, living outside in summer, reading, talking. Interested in part-time work 1/2 days environmental issue, bookshop. Good organiser. Trained in massage and carpentry. If you have ideas, friends, contacts who you feel might be helpful, please write. Kerry, 107 Foulden Road, London N18.

DEADLINES

The next issue is due out on **November 1st**. We need all news by **October 15**. When sending articles, please note that in general all articles are read and discussed at an editorial collective meeting on the first Wednesday of each month.

TYPESET by Greentypes, 33 Newton Road, Oxford, OX1 4PT - 0865 726229. **PRINTED** by Dot Press, Thames Street, Oxford - 0865 727207.

WHY NOT LIVE your values? Established rural ecological community has vacancies. Seventeen acres, organic garden, livestock, workshops. Separate accommodation. Capital contribution £4,000 / negotiable. SAE to Geoffrey Syer, Redfield, Winslow, Bucks.

WHOLEFOOD COOK wanted to work and live as part of community looking after mentally handicapped. Contact Jeanne Steinhart, Delos, 7 Poplar St, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 4PL

LOWER SHAW FARM WEEKEND EVENTS
16-18 October - Women's walking weekend
13-15 November - Games galore...coming out to play?
20-22 November - Music and singing
4-6 December - Circle Dance...specially for the newcomer
Low cost wholefood meals. SAE please to Lower Shaw Farm, Swindon, Wilts (0783) 771080

GAMES WEEKEND at Lower Shaw Farm (13-15 November). A chance to play and learn a wide variety of games, games to introduce ourselves, "Theatre Games", roleplays, silly games. Come just to play or to build up your personal games vocabulary for parties, classes, courses and events.

FULL MOON FUTONS

Send see for
lethal and
swatches to
20 Burners Road
Reading RG1 5RU
Reading (0734) 65648



We make Japanese style mattresses, (single, double, king size, cot size), cushions, pillows, yoga/massage/shiatsu mats, to individual orders. All 100% cotton, range of colours. Pine bases. Deliveries arranged. Competitive prices.

Country Bazaar

**GREEN THOUGHTS AND
PASTORAL DELIGHTS**

The most beautiful and informative
of all countryside magazines

Sample copy £1.50 + 37p postage
Subscription per year £7.50
Bazaar Publications, 33 Worcester
Road, Chipping Norton, Oxon.

Help needed

Green Line is always looking for people in or near Oxford who would like to join the production team. Readers from further afield who have specialist interests could also help out with editorial work. You could do something, if only help fold and staple the printed copies. Ring Jon on Oxford 726229.

The green movement and the renewal of social hope

This is the text of the speech JEREMY SEABROOK gave to the Green Party conference at Aston.

ONE OF the most spectacular yet least remarked of all the privatization programmes has been under way for many years. It certainly precedes and dwarfs even the present government's celebrated sale of British Telecom or BP; for it is nothing less than the privatizing of social hope.

The electoral decay of Labourism in Britain, and of socialism more generally in the Western world is not, as the Labour Party prefers to believe, a result of the distortions of the media, real though these undoubtedly are. It has far more to do with the waning of faith, the decline of collective hope vested in those political formations. Hope, having been virtually eclipsed in the public domain, reappears the more powerfully in the lives of individuals; and there, shows itself in the hope of the big win, the lucky break, hitting the Jackpot, the golden scoop, the number coming up, the wheel of fortune, Lady Luck; of being in the right place at the right time, of having the face that fits, of striking it rich and being dealt a winning hand.

If the language is that of the gambling industry, this is perhaps a fitting metaphor for the increasingly random distribution of riches in our time. The great increase in crime in the West is one of the clearest symptoms of the fading of social hope: individuals must seek private remedies for their sense of deprivation; and in so doing, they are merely obeying the dictates of a culture which insists that people have no other recourse than to help themselves, with all the ambiguity that such a phrase suggests.

The loss of faith in socialism has been accompanied by a growing faith in the power of money. There are no secular societies in the world: all must be cemented by some deeply shared and unifying belief. The weakening of faith in alternatives has only reinforced the process of, first, remoralizing the market economy, and second, the sacralizing of people's capitalism or the social market or whatever noble euphemism its zealots may have dreamed up to designate the capitalist system.

And indeed, the vigour, dynamism and energy of the market economy do make it the most conspicuous and inescapable feature of our lives. The

fact that it is amoral has no importance: its vitality absorbs our credulity as effectively as the most ardent proselytizing religion. Its very strength and salience in our social life leads us to invest it with quasi-magical powers. It commands our reverence as nothing else can. When Mrs Thatcher utters her incantatory phrases about the "creation of wealth", these sound like readings from the Book of Genesis. Small wonder that these processes have laid hold of both the imagination and the homeless faith of the majority of the people in the Western world.



There are important consequences of these developments. When economic processes become a sort of religious cult, the system that delivers the goods is no longer seen as that which also delivers the evils. The abundance of commodities, services and sensations that can be had for money are so supreme a good that they exist in a state of shining purity (haloed with universal desirability by the busy advertising profession), in a quite separate realm from all those wrongs, indeed barbarisms, which they bring in their train to disfigure the life of society. If hope has been privatized, then so has despair.

Thus, if addiction to drugs or alcohol, child abuse, rising violence, outrages against the elderly, family breakdown and disorder, assaults against women, psychiatric illness, loneliness, racism are also omnipresent in our experience, these must be declared the misdeeds of deranged individuals. They no longer have any connection with a system that has been elevated above all suspicion, and which projects itself in the lives of the people as the source and origin of all plenitude and fulfillment.

It is, however, these evils that are the sign and evidence that the market economy takes as heavy a toll upon humanity as it ever did, that it is an autonomous force with only the most random and tangential relationship to human need. It

distorts the lives of people even in the richest corners of the world, before we even take account of its violent visitations upon the poor of the earth.

The Greens represent a beginning - and it is only a beginning - of a renewal of social hope. We have seen the socialist myth of the redemptive power of the workers fall into ruin; and in the space created by this collapse, the revalorizing of the myth of the market economy as the true emancipator of peoples. The Greens represent the growth of a new myth to challenge this supremacy; myth, not in the sense of untruth, but in the sense of an energising and informing belief that can create new collective and solidaristic resistances. Individual salvation is, after all, no adequate answer to the exhaustion of the planet, to which faith in existing industrial practice inexorably leads. The creation of wealth, whether capitalist or existing socialist, is the very root of the degradation of the natural base which sustains life on earth. And no accounting systems of traditional economics can remain unaffected by this awesome dislocation.

If the Green movement sounds like a crusade, then this is only as it should be, for it is pitting itself against one of the most totalitarianising faiths that have ever appeared in the world - faith in money, that superstitious veneration of wealth, the love of which was, in an earlier form of faith which it ousted, the root of all evil. Labour's conversion to the same destructive processes means that it has forfeited its claim to be able to transform a society to which it is now in only nominal opposition. Labour demonstrates that it never was more than a sectarian heresy of capitalism, to which its ragged religious clichés testify - the broad church, the party faithful, the message that people wilfully won't listen to.

The Green movement offers a more challenging and radical faith; perhaps less exalted than the pretensions of socialism to social redemption, but certainly more vital, for it speaks of faith that humanity can survive the consequences for its habitat (the earth!) of its archaic faith in the transforming power of industrial development; for it is daily becoming clearer that such development, whether capitalist or socialist, cannot provide a decent life - and possibly in the future no life at all - for the majority of people on the planet.

CONFERENCE LESSONS

• TIM ANDREWES

Some 300 Green Party members gathered at Aston for the Autumn conference and AGM. Motions were passed against aerosols, the poll tax, the new Local Government Bill and the expansion of Menwith Hill listening station. Conference was in favour of the Additional Member System for national elections and the liberation struggles in Nicaragua, Namibia and South Africa.

However, the main theme was political futures. After an exhausting general election, party members attempted to reach a clearer understanding of their party's identity and future strategy.

Three outside speakers at the Futures forum shed light on whether and where greens might find allies. Felix Dodds (see GL 55), former president of the Young Liberals, would join the greens if the merged alliance parties became pro-nuclear, consumerist and in favour of economic growth. Eleanor Lieven, vice-chair of CND, was unwilling to join any political party, believing that Thatcherism could only be defeated by extra-Parliamentary forces changing the climate of public opinion. Jeremy Seabrook said after the debate that his support would only be forthcoming if the greens stopped being the 'nice' party and got tough on issues such as the redistribution of wealth.

Sadly, I felt the debate became aimless and bogged down in talk about possible political coalitions (factors largely outside the party's control), and in discussions about the party's position on the Left-Right spectrum. Sara Parkin

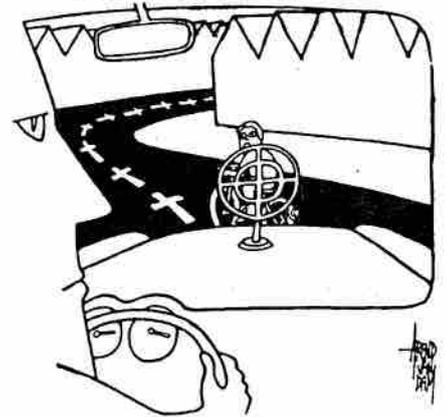
provided a note of realism by insisting that in seeking to define themselves and find their future, greens should seek answers and inspiration from their European sister parties, not the established political parties of Britain.

By the end of the weekend, members were urging the party to 'get our act together' and stop waiting for the other parties to fall apart. For Dave Fitzpatrick and others, this meant putting energy into local campaigns rather than drawing up a national strategy.

In some respects the party is at last getting its act together: a colourful new introductory leaflet has been printed; Econews has been transformed into an outward looking and readable newspaper; an Artwork Pack has been produced for local parties to improve presentation and efficiency; a revitalised fundraising committee claim already to have boosted income by £350 a month; and there are signs that the party is responding to events more quickly - with John Morrissey's thorough and thoughtful discussion paper on HIV infection and Alan Steven's condemnation of the Menwith Hill expansion.

By and large however, these developments have come about outside of the party's conferences through the initiative and drive of individuals and groups. "Now that we're well known", said Jean Lambert in her farewell speech, "people are looking for us to do something." Slowly, members are realising that this is the party's only worthwhile future - a future that conference cannot create - and they are taking matters into their own hands.

ON YER BIKE!



Cyclists are 17 times more vulnerable on the road than car drivers, according to the DoT. 74% of journeys made in the UK are less than five miles long - i.e. ideally suited to the bicycle. A cycle travels 1,800 miles on the energy equivalent of just one gallon of petrol.

All these facts and more are included in FoE's booklet "PRO-BIKE", an excellent informative campaigning aid for green groups. Policies are set out that would create 100,000 jobs as well as ease congestion and reduce pollution. Well worth getting. Send £1.20 to FoE, 26-28 Underwood St, London N1 7JQ

MILITARY ACADEMIA

The MoD is currently funding £2m worth of projects annually around 36 universities on chemical warfare research. The Campaign against military Research on Campus CAMROC is being launched to challenge this use of our money. A briefing pack has been prepared on known contracts and their importance. It is available from CAMROC, 190b Burdett Rd, Bow, London E3. All donations would be welcome.

The women at Greenham have found that the Morning Star, which claims to support them is really little different from the Sun, Newbury magistrates et al. The paper thoroughly misrepresented the non-aligned, independent and autonomous position on nuclear weapons of a delegation from Greenham at the World Congress of Women in Moscow.

After the paper had ignored requests to put the record straight, the women mounted a blockade outside its offices. In true Wapping style, the police were called and the usual tactics of delay and intimidation were used. In the end NVDA did produce a meeting, although the outcome was not satisfactory.

For more on this, contact Sarah Hipperson, Katrina Howse, Beth Junor c/o King's Cross Women's centre, 71 Tonbridge St, London WC1 9DZ.

WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?



Protesting outside the Morning Star

TOWARDS SANE FARMING

The Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association has adopted a policy document to be presented to both government and public. It includes demands for increased research funds for organic agriculture, the inclusion of organic farming in agricultural college courses, reallocation of resources to

encourage conversion of conventional farms, stricter regulation on spraying and a pledge to help the government oppose the threat of nuclear disaster.

As the document says: "The results will be healthier food, people and environment, reduced EEC food surpluses, decreased imports..."

AGREEMENT MANIA

◊ JERRY SPRING

Everyone must be in two minds at the moment, for here we are with a UN agreement signed to protect the ozone layer and the prospect of an INF treaty to come. We have to applaud ourselves since, of course, it's only our efforts that have forced the politicians to the negotiating table. "I protest therefore I am": we've vindicated our existence. But then, what have we achieved? The INF treaty as presented will top a mere 3-4% off the existing nuclear megatonnage. Is it any comfort to be blown up 19 times over rather than 20?

The ozone agreement has more loopholes than an Arran sweater. It won't stop ozone depletion (GL 55), it'll only slow the rate of destruction. And, due to the long lifetimes of the CFCs involved, we still have a backlog of trouble to come from our accumulated emissions over the last 20 years.

The agreement itself allows countries to step up exports to the Third World, it sets some production limits at future levels rather than current and even these limits are well within what the more intransigent countries like Britain were demanding. But if this is all too much for our industrialists then they can circumvent the agreement by importing CFCs back into Europe from subsidiary countries in non-signatory countries (and only 25 countries did actually sign the treaty).

So we are in danger of being marginalized by the appearance of substantial agreements which do nothing to resolve the fundamental problems. As usual, it's up to us to ignore the politicians and take our own action. FoE have made a start by publishing a list of CFC-aerosol products. Predictably, the aerosol manufacturers (BAMA), supported by the Tory government, are doing their best to block any labelling information about the aerosols' propellants. BAMA reckon it would "serve no useful purpose in environmental terms" and "further clutter the labelling area".

Enough said...?

FROM BATTERY CHARGES...

On its return, parliament will be debating the "Welfare of Battery Hens Regulations 1987", providing a minimum 'living' space for the hens of 450 sq cms. Although this brings us into line with an EEC directive, it will actually make the hens worse off.

Compassion in World Farming point out that it makes no sense for farmers to spend vast amounts of money swapping over to different sized cages when this money could be spent on introducing humane systems. Letters of outrage will be most welcome at the House of Commons, so send them now.

...TO OVEN-READY DEER

Newly-elected Tory MP Emma Nicholson has managed to corrupt the English language significantly with her Farmed Deer (Welfare at Slaughter) Bill, fully backed by the government. It calls for deer to be killed for meat in commercial abattoirs. Her address is also in the House of Commons.



MUCKDONALDS

Reminder about London Greenpeace's worldwide day of action against McDonalds to take place on World Food day, October 18th. A chance to focus on the perils of the fast food/junk food industry and show that alternatives exist to the obscene rubbish that is typified by McDonalds. London Greenpeace are at 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1



ANOTHER FIFTY farms in Wales have been prevented from selling their sheep by the Welsh Office from 17th September. Apparently the radioactivity from Chernobyl is, after a year, still spreading. Most unusual. It still puzzles me how there has been no similar radioactive contamination anywhere in the vast tracts of land between Russia and North Wales and Cumbria. One could be forgiven for thinking that maybe these clouds of radioactivity have some kind of intelligence of their own and maliciously dropped in on the area surrounding Sellafield and downwind in North Wales (possibly in North Wales they were attracted to the homely indigenous reactor at Trawsfynydd - which according to some reports nearly blew its top last year).

However this esoteric idea fails to explain why levels in some areas haven't fallen in eighteen months and have even risen in other places. I suppose a cynic might conclude that these areas have been seriously contaminated for a very long time and will continue to be contaminated for many many years and that the levels were never measured before Chernobyl (or the results suppressed) and that only since Chernobyl precipitated the measurements did the contamination become apparent. More than a year after the ridiculous official story surfaced I've seen the first mention in the press of the alternative interpretation (maybe I missed other reports). I'd love to hear from anyone with any real information either way. (BNFL employees or their agents need not reply).

Meanwhile it's good news for three hundred thousand sheep who get a few weeks' respite from the butcher's knife.

◊ LEIGH SHAW-TAYLOR

GREEN COUNCILLORS

A new gazette for green Councillors has been set up to help link up the increasing number of greens and greenish independents in local government. The gazette (25p an issue) is relying on your contributions to make it happen, so write to Green Councillors Gazette, Greenacre, Beyton, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9AB.



Your home and car - powered by wind and water!

WIND GENERATORS in your garden can now be linked directly to a hydrogen energy storage system to provide domestic power. The Swedish initiative 'Welgas' (Wind, Electricity and GAS) promoted in the UK by the Pure Energy Trust is spearheading this remarkable breakthrough in hydrogen technology.

Hitherto, hydrogen produced by electrolysis of water as an energy storage option has had to be stored by being liquified; and since it liquifies at only a couple of degrees above absolute zero this has been regarded as very much a high-tech option. It could work for a power station, but it isn't too promising for a car fuel tank.

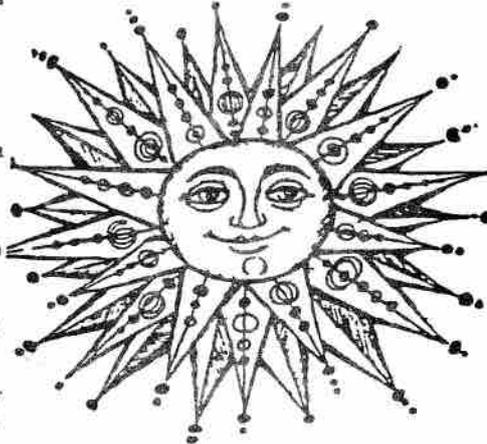
The Pure Energy Trust now has a converted Saab whose fuel tank is made of iron and titanium. This stores the hydrogen as hydride. The fire risk is said to be less than that for petrol, as the hydrogen is effectively bound as the metal hydride. The product of combustion is merely - water. So it is indeed 'pure energy'.

The car runs some 150km on four litres of water! Ten kilowatt- hours is required beforehand to electrolyse it into hydrogen and oxygen. The sole pollutants are oxides of nitrogen, but the mode of fuel injection keeps these to a very low level.

Hydrogen looks like being the big alternative to plutonium. The lightest or the heaviest of the elements; which will we choose? Though not in itself an energy source, it enables AT to get going, because it resolves the storage problem. Burgeoning hydrogen technology includes certain plastics which can separate the oxygen and hydrogen produced by water electrolysis. The generator in the Welgas house in Sweden produces about one cubic metre per hour of

hydrogen, and is the first in the world to achieve an efficiency of 80%; others have achieved only 40% - 50%, so they're claiming almost twice as much hydrogen for the same energy input. A hydrogen stove uses stainless steel catalytic burners: otherwise a hydrogen is rather hot, and there is a tendency for oxides of nitrogen to be formed.

Hydrogen is highly explosive mixed with air, so doesn't this mean that the odd few houses will be blowing up as this irresistible new

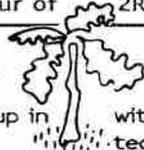


technology moves forward? A hydrogen gas stove is equipped with a couple of leak detectors supposed to give warning of a leak at 1/40 of the explosive level. Time will tell.

The Welgas organisers are seeking to launch 'Project Eco-Village', and plan a tour in October and November using the Saab hydrogen car. A video cassette is also available from them; you can also book a speaker for your local group. The Pure Energy Trust is a non-profit body currently seeking charitable status. Inquiries to its director Berit Pegg-Karlsson, Fair View, Polperro, Cornwall PL13 2RB.

NORFOLK OASES

Two new projects are starting up in the East Anglian agro-chemical desert. The Hethel Land Group Co-op are aiming to bring 10 acres into full, long-term organic health. The 'AIRBORN' group hope to develop an organic farm in inner-city Norwich



with working examples of "new-age" technology - and right next to a Sainsbury's supermarket! All donations of plants, tools, wood, money and help welcome. Both projects can be contacted through the Third World Centre, 38-40 Exchange St, Norwich.

NEW UNIVERSITY NEWS

The New University in Hockley, Birmingham is looking for more members, particularly women. It hopes to expand into another house along the road. Future plans include setting up a 'rural centre' and an 'economic outlet' - possibly a veg./vegan cafe. A similar university

is being planned for Bristol. On November 30th there will be a follow up to this Summer's Knowledge and Skills Sharing Week. Guaranteed no national curriculum or exams. Does Kenneth Baker know about this? Write to 24 South Rd, Hockley, Birmingham B18.



FINGER ON THE BUTTON

FoE's campaign on the ozone layer continues to put the frighteners on the polluters. MacDonalds have already promised to find alternatives to their foam-filled hamburger boxes which previously used CFCs (the box, not the burger). FoE have also got hold of a British Aerosol Manufacturers Association letter warning of an impending boycott of CFC products.

Their latest effort is a leaflet listing spray, oil and paint products that use chemicals which do not damage the ozone layer. So if you want to clear your conscience by pumping other chemicals than CFCs into the atmosphere then here's your chance. Write to 28-28 Underwood St.

LOVE ME, LOVE ME - I'M A LIBERAL

THE NEWS that Meg Beresford, General Secretary of CND, has applied to join the Liberal Party (often described as "Tories with an uneasy conscience") cannot have come as any great shock: out of the ruins of 'single-issue' causes many campaigners will be rushing headlong into a newly merged 'centre' party, if it is able to shed its reactionary Owenite wing.

"If we are going to achieve nuclear disarmament", said Meg, "it is essential that all our different views are accommodated and that we spread out as much as possible into the middle ground of British politics as we can."

Ah, that elusive middle ground, that phantom, that Holy Grail, that shimmering will-o-the-wisp! But how many angels can stand on the razor edge of the centre? (We have set our chairs down in the middle - thus spake Zarathustra; this however is - mediocrity: though it be called moderation.)

It may seem strange that CND's General Secretary will be supporting David ("if the deterrent fails I will press the button") Steel and a pro-nuclear party, and opposing an anti-nuclear Labour; so it just goes to show that a hatred of socialism will always prevail over a hatred of the bomb. Or as Reagan might say: better dead than red.

PARTY FARM

Winchester Green Party have started selling organic produce from a local smallholder. It raises funds and supports the green economy.

SUE MILES was at the 3rd International Green Congress held between August 28-30th in Stockholm, Sweden. Here, she records her impressions of the conference and the people.

THE ABIDING impression which I, and I'm sure all the other foreign participants in the 3rd International Congress will have, is of the wonderful hospitality of our Swedish hosts. 28 nationalities were represented (or 28 if you include the Catalans and Sami as nations). The British contingent was small, presumably because there is really no cheap way of getting to Stockholm!

The organisers were not at all sure how many people would be attending until they actually turned up, but coped with this with superlative Scandinavian sang-froid. In the event, rather more than 300 gathered in a hall which officially held 250. (The Guardian report on August 29th, in referring to the meeting-place as a 'disused brewery', is very misleading. It was indeed once a brewery but is now a community centre cum youth hostel cum day centre for the elderly - and extremely comfortable.)

All non Swedish participants were accommodated with local members of Miljöpartiet. I did not discover whether this was done randomly or by a match making computer, but it seemed to work admirably.

To my mind, the plenary sessions were the least satisfactory part of the conference but this may merely

reflect my over exposure to such events at Green Party conferences. The speakers were very good but I felt the organisers were attempting to cover too many major topics (e.g. green ideology, green strategy, green economics) and to cram too many speakers into each session. This led to frustration for some of the audience, who had no opportunity to put their point of view.

As always at green gatherings, the real value was in meeting lots of other people over lunch, coffee or in the workshops. Each workshop lasted for the duration of the congress so the members had time to really get to know each other and to do a useful amount of work. This work will be published in the conference proceedings and should be well worth reading. I was disappointed and surprised that the workshop I chose to join had to be disbanded because of lack of interest. I don't understand why this was since the subject was arms exports and the facilitator was Ingvar Bratt, the man who blew the whistle at Bofors.

The participants worked hard at this conference but had light relief as well, beginning on the first day when we were all guests of Stockholm city council for a magnificent Smorgasbord lunch, and continuing with a (no doubt highly polluting) steamboat ride into the Stockholm Archipelago on the Saturday evening.

•Arctic warmth

After the congress proper, a small group of us spent some days in the

far north of Sweden, again as guests of Miljöpartiet members. It was thrilling to visit the party office in Jokkmokk, which is north of the Arctic circle, or the farmhouse home of Per Holmqvist, not very much further south, in which on a day last January when the temperature outside was -37°C the "Stop Now" (nuclear power, that is) movement was founded.



Our time as guests of Per, of Robert Svartholm, who is a GP and Jokkmokk town councillor, and also members of Miljöpartiet's political committee, confirmed the impression gained at the congress; that 'being green' manifests itself very differently in different parts of the world, but that there is a remarkable underlying unity of values and beliefs.

Those people who were disappointed at not being able to go to Stockholm can take heart: there is not long to wait for the next International Green Congress - 9/10 April 1988 - and it's being held in Antwerp, so there is little cause for anyone from the south of England at any rate not being able to get there. The theme is local politics, including a session on Europe and local democracy.

Further details from Antwerp greens, c/o/ Agalev Antwerpen, Rodenbachstraat 20, B-2200 Antwerpen

GRUNEN BREMEN

The German Greens increased their share of the vote (and their representation in parliament) from 5.4 to 10.2% in Bremen in the recent state elections. In Schleswig Holstein their vote rose slightly to 3.9%



Nobel physicist Hannes Alfvén making the opening speech of the congress



• BARRY MAYCOCK

CONSENSUAL TYRANNY

THE 'earthquake' of the Molesworth rapes continues to be felt within the peace movement; while the women concerned have called for the peace camp to be closed, Molesworth Cruisewatch has decided to work with the people who currently live there. For this reason Manchester Cruise Action has decided that 'as long as Molesworth Cruisewatch continues to work with the camp, Manchester Cruise Action does not feel able to link actively with their network'. It seems clear that if the women have called for the closure of the camp, then this should be respected; most peace campaigners, however, seem to want to carry on as if nothing has happened. I remember once entering our local CND office, and being surprised to hear someone exclaim: "Not more mauling on the Molesworth rapes! I'm sick of hearing about them!" This I suspect is the majority view - along with a token gesture at dealing with this 'problem' in workshops.



Surely it is time we seriously examined the political role of workshops, the way they are not in any sense 'neutral' but can be used to muffle controversy and debate within the peace movement (committees of inquiry are set up for the same purpose - that of prevarication - on the level of parliamentary politics). Far from being 'progressive', the workshop will be used at this year's CND Conference, I'm sure, in a reactionary way, to fragment and divide any opposition to the prevailing 'consensual' tyranny, and deflect and dilute controversy.

A LETTER FROM A GROUP OF WOMEN FROM MANCHESTER TO ALL WOMEN.....

Dear Women,

A group of women from the peace movement in Manchester have continued to meet since the Molesworth rapes to consider the possibilities for tackling male violence in CND and the peace movement. The results of those meetings were twofold:

Firstly, a large well-attended meeting in Manchester on Women's International Day for Peace, Justice and Disarmament in May entitled 'Women and War' at which there were speakers from the peace movement and Northern Ireland, followed by workshops discussing the many ways that women are involved in war and violence and its effects on them.

Secondly, an agreement that CND ought to be encouraged to look at ways of tackling male violence in the peace movement. Various suggestions have been made to CND National Council in July. These included encouraging local CND

groups to discuss male violence in mixed or women-only groups, to print articles in Sanity and other journals raising the issue, to agree to a national women's conference in order that further discussion may take place to help progress made in local groups. It was proposed that a conference would be of benefit and we have suggested the possible date of May 1988.

Women in Manchester would co-ordinate a conference but are very keen for all women nationally who are interested to help determine the content and structure so as to make it useful to all women concerned.

There will be the first of a national pre-conference planning meeting in Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester on Saturday October 31st from midday to 5 pm. A creche will be provided - please bring your own food. Please come, or send suggestions to Pam or Carol at: Grass Roots Books, 1 Newton St, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1 HW, tel: 061.2366 3112.

Yours in sisterhood,
Manchester Women.

PEACE DIARY

- OCTOBER 4: Ex-Services CND Snowball at Molesworth. Details from John Steel, 0277 654471.
- OCTOBER 5: Oxford Christians for Peace, 5th Anniversary Meeting, 8.00 pm, Blackfriars, St Giles, Oxford. Speaker: that rising young star of the movement, Bruce Kent.
- OCTOBER 10: Liverpool 10 km Run for Peace and the Third World. This will raise money through sponsorship of runners, for a list of peace and development agencies, including CND. Contact 18 Orford St, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 8HX.
- OCTOBER 10: Sizewell Action: march and demonstration at Sizewell B, 12 noon till around 3 pm. Contact Charles Barnett, Tudor House, St. James Street, Dunwich, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3DU, 072-873 300. In a recent 'Peace News' they were calling for a solo bagpiper to play a lament on Sizewell Beach on this day - I hope they find one. Clearly they must get in touch with that most elusive of organisations, Lone Bagpipers Against Nuclear Power (LBANP).
- OCTOBER 10: Windscale Commemoration Ceremony. A tree will be planted as a symbol of life and a plaque dedicated to the victims of the 1957 fire and its fallout. People are asked to bring sprays of flowers with messages in them to lay at the base of the tree. Details 0229-33851.

NOTE: The danger and extent of the Windscale fire of 8-10th October 1957 has only recently been fully realised; at the time it was only marked by government orders to

WAR Doesn't Decide Who's Right - Only Who's Left

pour away two million litres of milk - a diversionary tactic as it happened, because the milk could simply have been dried and stored for a few weeks until the radioiodine had decayed. There was no attempt to keep track of people who were near Windscale during the fire.



As for the fire itself, it raged out of control for 24 hours before being doused by ordinary water. Molten uranium and cladding, steeped in fission products, burned fiercely in about 150 fuel channels; the graphite too was ablaze. No-one knew quite what to do to put the fire out; some idiot suggested carbon dioxide, which only fed the flames; eventually water was used and the firehoses turned on - by

CRUISE - A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

AS THE two superpowers inch their way towards a deal on intermediate nuclear weapons, the peace movement is planning various celebrations (the lighting of 'beacons of hope' has been suggested; CND has called for motorcades and poster parades). And why not? We could argue endlessly about the cynical reasons behind this INF deal, indeed we could choose any reason we like, according to our political perspective: has such a deal been made possible by Western intransigence, or peace movement pressure? It hardly matters - peace campaigners deserve their celebration, they have earned it a thousand times over, after all the exhaustion of years of incessant struggle.

The last thing I feel like doing, though, is rejoicing. The world doesn't seem any safer as an INF deal approaches; in any case the missiles will be shifted somewhere else, remote and unreachable, and more deadly. Also, there are more personal feelings involved. The very

this time only three people were left in the plant, one of whom became a local legend, celebrated in the press as 'Britain's most contaminated man.' (He is still alive, a tourist attraction, thriving as he claims on the radioactivity). The full report of the inquiry into the disaster was never published; evidence on the incidence of cancers and cancer deaths seems never to have been considered worth collecting.

OCTOBER 11: UKWMO exercise at ROC bunkers. Contact K Barrett on 0250.4594 after mid-September for more details.

OCTOBER 24: Anti-Apartheid Movement has organised a national demonstration in London calling for 'Sanctions Now!' - a march followed by a Hyde Park Rally. Contact AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1: tel: 01.387 7966.

OCTOBER 31: Youth CND Dayschool, 10 am - 5 pm, Catholic Chaplaincy, Bristol University.

OCTOBER 31: A Halloween Peace Festival will take place in Lambeth Town Hall in Brixton. The all day event will feature stalls, films, videos, live music, entertainment, etc. Also - balloons. Contact: London Region CND, 6 Endleigh St, WC1; tel: 01.388 1628.

CND ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1987 HACKNEY EMPIRE 20-22 NOVEMBER Seminars, meetings, workshops, discussions, debates, skills sessions. This year's conference returns to London. The registration fee is £14 except for delegates from youth groups for whom the fee is £5. For more details contact Martin Jones, 22-24 Underwood St, London N1 7JG. Tel: 01.250 4010.

word 'rejoice' brings back that bitter day when a wild-eyed Thatcher shouted the word at an astonished press after the capture of South Georgia; but I am also reminded of the words of Robert Graves (in 'Goodbye to All That'), his description of how he reacted to the news of the armistice and the end of the first world war: 'The news sent me out walking alone along the dyke above the marshes of Rhuddlan (an ancient battlefield, the Flodden of Wales), cursing and sobbing and thinking of the dead.'

For us there is not only the dead and dying and all the victims of superpower machinations to think of, and weep for, but also those nearer home: those peace campaigners who have been mentally



shattered and physically broken over the years, whose lives have been split apart; those who have been beaten up, often quite badly; those women who have been strip-searched, hurt, raped; all those who have been humiliated, abused, and ridiculed during the course of campaigning; those who have suffered the sneers of magistrates and the lies of the press; those who have watched the prison doors close, and close again; those whose vehicles have been smashed, whose telephones have been tapped, whose lives have been invaded, whose jobs have been lost; those women at Greenham who have been ill from zapping, and who continue to suffer.

I remember the first time I saw

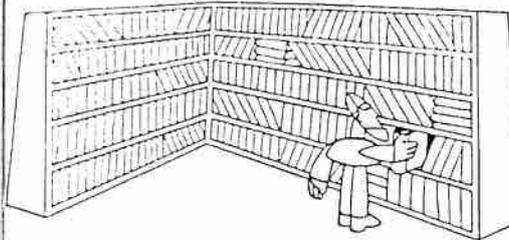
the Cruise convoy - this was several years and several sightings ago, but no matter how many times you witness the convoy, no matter how much the whole experience becomes a routine, nothing really prepares you for it: the experience is re-created anew, with all the intensity of that first moment. Though the convoy only takes a minute or two to pass, those moments seem to go on forever, hurtful, unendurable, as you watch this thing, and listen to the thunder of its passing with the horror growing inside, increasing and increasing; some of my friends, I remember, were able to shout with rage, relieving their feelings with all manner of descriptive epithets while I felt frozen inside, a cry growing inside me but dying away on my lips so that I could say nothing and do nothing, only stare and stare: so this horror has fixed itself inside me, a scar that is with me always - how can I not be contaminated by it? Surely it is something visible, a shadow against the light, for everyone to see?

The journey back was a return to a different world as we travelled home and saw the dawn light grow as we entered Oxford - such a fairytale city, all silvery spires and towers, islands of beauty in the dawn mist. Before we left Greenham we had called briefly at Blue Gate where the flames of the camp still shone out, bright against the hideous backdrop of the Base. At that moment those small fires, flaring bravely in the dark, seemed to embody all the hope there could possibly be for this world, and all the poor creatures in it.

So perhaps there will after all be a celebration, a private one - for I have been so proud of my friends, and all peace campaigners: the ones who never gave up.

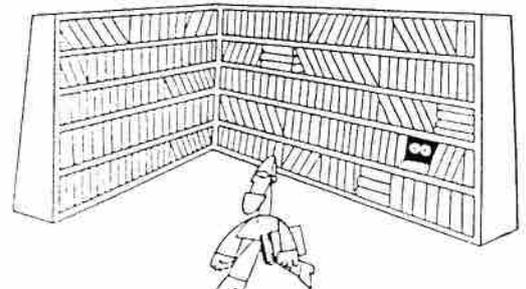
GREEN LINE:

NOT THE 'SPYCATCHER' ISSUE.



THE Peace News 'Spycatcher' issue of 14th August defied the government and the law lords and printed extracts from the banned book. Members of the collective had obviously weighed up the possibility that they all might be imprisoned as a result: 'We have balanced the political importance of doing this with the problems that might ensue. But we feel we have to assert our basic freedom to communicate, to publish whatever we choose.' Would Albert Beale end up in the dock? It

was not to be: the government decided to ignore the whole thing! So at 'Green Line' we decided NOT to publish extracts from 'Spycatcher': it made sense before in terms of publicity, but as it is it would be a worthless gesture, which is a pity: the prospect of Jon Carpenter in jail would have outraged the whole of the Green Party, and maybe boosted our circulation into the dizzy heights of 1,800 copies.



NICK BERGE spent two months in Nicaragua last summer as a member of a 'brigade' helping to support the Nicaraguan economy. He went on a trip organised by a Spanish trade union (Nick lives in Barcelona, where he teaches English). After reading heavily distorted reports about life in Nicaragua today, particularly an article in the Guardian Weekly of August 24, he decided to write down his experiences in some detail.

THE BRIGADES that go to Nicaragua do many types of work. They are involved in building construction, medical schemes, administration, agriculture and education. Examples include the construction of schools, setting up health surveys, and training teachers. I did nothing so exalted, and spent my time trying vainly to match the working speed of campesinos in the fields of state farms.

The agricultural land of Nicaragua can be classified as 62% privately owned, 19% state owned, and 19% controlled by cooperatives. This is in line with the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional) policy of a mixed economy.

There are two types of cooperative in Nicaragua. On the first, the Cooperativas Agreras Sandinistas (CAS), property and land are collectivised. On the second, the Cooperativas de Credito y Servicio (CCS), property is individual but the workers come together to apply collectively for credit and supplies. Of the land in private hands, only 11% is on large latifundias (vast private estates) as opposed to 36% before the '79 revolution. The rest is to a large extent owned by poor campesinos. Historically, the FSLN approach to agriculture can be broadly summarised in three stages. Immediately after the revolution, cooperatives were encouraged as the most politically desirable form of agricultural organisation. This proved to be difficult to implement as many campesinos didn't have any tradition of this form of organisation. Emphasis then switched to state farms on which the workers are fed and paid a wage. This is ideologically less appealing, but more efficient in terms of productivity. However, it became apparent that a huge demand for land on the part of the campesinos was not being met: in recognition of this, the government has recently distributed vast numbers of small plots of land to such people, free of charge.

My brigade arrived in Managua on July 2 1986. The next morning we travelled the 149km to the north-western town of Esteli. Its altitude makes it much cooler than lowland Managua. I was to work there on the San Nicolas UPE (Unidad de Produccion Estatal, or state farm) for three weeks. San Nicolas was very close to Esteli and devoted almost entirely to tobacco. During the time I was working there I did many of the jobs the campesinos do day in day out, often from the age of 11 until infirmity prevents its continuation. The level of physical stamina and stoicism these people possess is truly difficult to believe. I would never claim to have such abilities and didn't meet a single brigadista capable of matching the ordinary campesino in this respect. On top of working from 7 am to 3 pm with only two short breaks, there are "rojo y negros" ("red and blacks", the FSLN colours) on many farms. This is the name given to Sundays when the people work for no wages to increase productivity. It's an indication of both the economic plight of Nicaragua, and of the dedication of many of its poorest people to their system of government, that these take place.

We lived in a barn, sleeping on mattresses with a whirl of intrusive insects ever present - the least welcome being scorpions and very aggressive wasps. The food consisted of rice, frijoles (the bean that is the country's staple food) and maize tortilla three times a day. After two days, two people were despatched to Esteli to buy peppers, onions, garlic, fruit and eggs. Even the most stoic among us made no objection to this rapid retreat from the campesino diet. Before going to Nicaragua I had read an account that mentioned this phenomenon



Nicaragua The Brigades

amongst brigadistas, and I had scoffed at their weak will. Reality took a very short time to alter my attitude.

Work varied from day to day. Fumigating frijoles, weeding by hand and with the ubiquitous 'azadon' (hoe), land clearance, fence building, thinning seedlings, and - for the women in the brigade - work in the tobacco sheds, during the interminable process of producing a carcinogen. Two years after the planting of the crop, the end product rolls into the packets. The work in the tobacco sheds is dusty, dangerous, humid and conducted in deep obscurity. Children bring lathes strung with the leaves down from the serried beams, and the women remove them and tie them in bundles. It has been known for a child to fall, with fatal consequences. Tobacco, along with cotton and coffee, is one of the most important export crops needed to provide the precious dollars to combat the US inspired economic deterioration.

The standard product of three weeks of work in the fields was a very small increment in agricultural production, plus a hatted, red, skinny brigadista and much hilarity amongst the Nicaraguan workers. Some of us with a natural affinity for agriculture and country life, learned. Other 'townies' never really made the adjustment. Both inside and outside waking hours, unobservant extranjeros (foreigners) were bitten, stung and swarmed upon by a terrifying variety of seemingly indestructible insects. The ability of various species of ant to ascend a foolishly placed leg was truly astonishing. Despite these diversions, most of us found the work very tiring, and were glad at weekends to return to Esteli for other kinds of entertainment.



dista's tale

The second farm I worked on was bigger, further north, and much colder. It was situated near Pueblo Nuevo. The border with Honduras was about 20km to the west and 40km to the north. We were there for only 12 days, as a result of a government decree that all foreign workers were to be withdrawn from the areas near the borders; this followed the murder of three foreigners and a Nicaraguan in a Contra ambush near Wiwili. The Nicaraguan government received warnings from the relevant European governments to the effect that, if more of their nationals were killed, the supply of aid would cease. We had to return to Esteli where there was a huge meeting of some 600 foreign workers with the FSLN representative of the Esteli region to explain the move. The lack of clear answers to some of the questions was, for me, an indication of the lack of organisation of the brigades that go to Nicaragua. An efficient governmental coordinating system is badly needed, but the country has other, more pressing problems.

The main crop on this farm was coffee, as well as many cattle. During the coffee harvest there were perhaps 800 workers including brigades of Nicaraguan students. Food and sleeping conditions were similar to San Nicolas, with the addition of friendly rats and an indifferent cold gale at night. We all slept in our clothes. The workers there were the least dedicated to the revolution I met. The war had somehow missed that area. This and its isolation meant that the farm was dirty and unless well supervised, some of the campesinos would allow the facilities to fall into disrepair.

The war and the blockade are crippling the Nicaraguan economy. Prices rise, wages don't. Unless the people understand this cause and effect relationship, they become discontented. The US foreign policy makers understand this very well. The only weapon against this insidious war is political and historical education. Where these are lacking, problems arise. The calls for extra effort, for extra production, fall on deaf ears. Appeals to nationalism and solidarity with the people don't have the desired effect. Fortunately this is still the exception in Nicaragua.

• Democracy in Nicaragua

Before I left for Nicaragua I had certain doubts about the system of government. "Is there true democracy? Is the Frente truly a government working in the interests of the poorest, most exploited classes?" Despite my reading, and conversations with friends who had visited Nicaragua, these doubts were there. I have been immersed in more or less extreme capitalist propaganda for 25 years. It works. Fortunately, the reality of Nicaragua dispelled these doubts.

True democracy does exist. It exists according to the national Directorate's definition of democracy as:

The participation by the people in political, economic, social and cultural affairs. The more the people participate in such matters, the more democratic they will be. And it must be said, once and for all: democracy neither begins nor ends with elections. It is a myth to want to reduce democracy to that status. Democracy begins in the economic order, when social inequalities begin to diminish, when the workers and peasants improve their standard of living. That is when true democracy begins, not before.

The development of this democracy in Nicaragua is being hampered by the very people on whose lips the word is constantly heard: the US policy makers.

Even if one concentrates on democracy solely in terms of decision making, the improvements are vast. Under Somoza, to try to influence decisions was to invite arrest. The Frente doesn't dictate decisions, but asks the relevant sectors of society to come up with them. Two outstanding examples are the development of the new constitution, and the plans for the autonomy of the Atlantic coast. Obviously, the final decision rests with the National Directorate and the National Assembly. The former is the head of the FSLN Party, which has 60 of the 90 seats in the national Assembly; the remainder go to the other parties - the Liberals, the Conservatives, Social Christians, Communists and Marxist-Leninists.

However, it is difficult to understand the situation in Nicaragua solely in terms of structures. During the armed struggle the majority of the people fought for freedom, led by the FSLN. The FSLN Party is now composed of people who have proved themselves exceptional. It does not include the vast majority of campesinos and workers, yet the decision makers are accountable to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine a serious rift emerging between themselves and the majority of Nicaraguans.

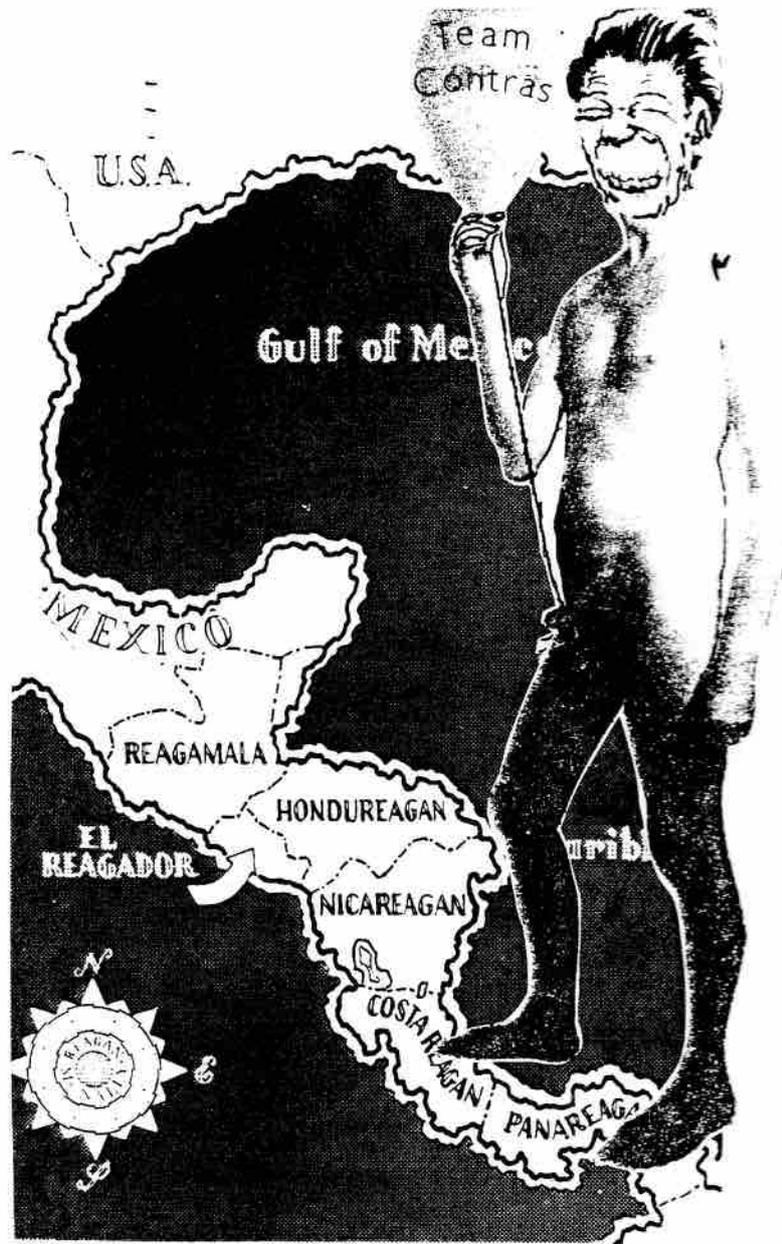
Another worry concerned the level of repression of political views contrary to those of the Frente. Freedom of speech in Nicaragua is valued and protected. The country is involved in an apparently interminable war. Citizens of the state which is effectively running the war are allowed to visit the country, observe and comment. One needs to actively incite support for the Contra to be exiled or imprisoned. Anything less than this is tolerated.

I talked for over an hour with a disgruntled doctor in a northern town. The elections were a sham, the country was under a dictatorship of the left, there was no freedom of speech. The tirade ran on and on. It was delivered on the large porch of the doctor's practice and

witnessed by large numbers of patients and passers-by. The orator showed absolutely no caution in expressing his views, a fact which rather undermined the main theme of his argument. For this to occur in a country at war is extraordinary.

The closure of La Prensa is much talked about. Few people know the paper's history. It is owned by the Conservative Chamorro family. At the time of the revolution its editor, Xavier Chamorro, was sympathetic to the FSLN. He was opposed by the general manager, Jaime, and the aggressively right-wing Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Barrios. The majority of the paper's journalists supported Xavier's editorial line. On April 19 1980 the unionised workforce presented demands which included formal union representation on the paper's editorial council. These were supported by Xavier. A struggle between the editor and the right-wing members of the board had been going on for some time: the rest of the board decided that the time was now right to fire their editor. The union called a strike to reinstate him, but the board remained intransigent. On the 28th Xavier announced he had withdrawn his shares from La Prensa and would be starting up a new paper - Nuevo Diario. 95% of La Prensa's workforce went with him.

La Prensa had enjoyed a reputation for integrity and progressiveness, first under Pedro Joaquin Chamorro who was heavily critical of Somoza and was consequently shot by the National Guard in January 1978, and then under Xavier. In April 1980 all this changed: since then the paper has become more than just a mouthpiece for the right. Foreign news coverage has portrayed a 'free world' under threat from Marxism. False information, rumours and distorted stories filled its pages with the clear object of undermining the people's confidence in the Frente. Its letters pages were full of attacks on the revolution, with no attempt at authentication. The people of Nicaragua are fighting a war. La Prensa became a



focus for US influence and Contra support. How would an anti-government, pro-German paper have fared in the Britain of the 1940s? La Prensa has been shut down.

Another much talked-about issue is that of the Soviet Union. Is Nicaragua 'another Soviet puppet?' The Frente has no wish to come under Soviet influence any more than it wants to be dominated by the US. The war was fought on nationalist feeling. However, they must get some international aid - military, technical and financial - from somewhere. Some of it comes from the Soviet bloc countries.

One of the main aims of US policy is to drive the Frente into becoming more and more dependent on Russian aid. The government can then be labelled 'communist', and this justifies further military intervention. US policy attempts to push the Frente into becoming involved with the USSR, while its press condemns the Nicaraguan government for any move in that direction. Hypocrisy with a capital H.

In reality many of the Nicaraguan people, indoctrinated by 40 years of Somocismo, have an almost reflex dislike of the word 'communism'. Any over-dependence on the communist bloc countries would be very easily exploited by the Right. During my two months there I saw no evidence of heavy Soviet involvement, with the exception of arms: in contrast, I heard about aid from almost every European country, the US and Canada, though I cannot remember the USSR being mentioned in this context. Washington has definitely more influence over the FSLN than Moscow. Perhaps the Left should be more concerned about this issue than the Right. •



A child at his mother's grave - she was killed by the Contra in March 1986

Witness for Peace

Green economics: making a start

• DAVID SIMMONDS

DO YOU REMEMBER 'The Brains' Trust? It was a radio programme some years ago. One of the panellists was Professor Joad, whose favourite phrase was, "It all depends what you mean by..."

This is one of those times when that phrase seems appropriate. What do we mean by 'New Economics'? Indeed, what do we mean by 'capitalism' or 'socialism'?

Penny Newsome looks at the New Economics in her review of 'The Living Economy', but her viewpoint is obviously a socialist one. The problem is that this means her opinions are influenced by socialism, as much as are her arguments or her selection of facts. Her reference to Marx is revealing. "As Marx had pointed out a hundred years before..." She indicates both the ideology, and its age. But Marx was writing about the entrepreneur; in his day, one person was both owner and manager of the company, and that person's goals were the goals of the company.

Since Marx's time we have seen the growth of the big corporation, the rise of the multinational, and the separation of ownership and control. Most companies, and especially the big corporations, are owned by the shareholders, not the managers. The days of the entrepreneur are over; so according to some economists the days of pure profit maximisation are also over.

Economists have taken this change into account, and now there is a whole section of economic theory which looks at other motives to describe the firm's behaviour, apart from profit maximisation. And it's not just theory; they look at how firms actually behave.

The modern corporation doesn't just seek to maximise profits; it wants growth, sales, a good income for the shareholders, and status for the managers, plus a few other items as well. Not goals that we would necessarily support, but nor is it profit maximisation.

But what is capitalism if it has changed so much? Corporatism? And what is socialism? Penny Newsome's definition is interesting - "a belief in the welfare of all". Many people would define socialism as the collective ownership of the means of production - that is, a policy definition. Newsome defines it from a moral stance, but one that could be shared by humanists, Fabians, even Christians - in fact, just about anyone on the broad left. So is isn't really a definition, simply because it doesn't define anything.

But it is a moral stance that could fit in with almost any economic system, and quite a few political ones. Certainly, it would fit in with Green economics. But how would

Green economics put such a goal into practice?

• The small business

Various ideals have been associated with Schumacher's work, and Green views. For example, human scale, economics as if people mattered, and small being beautiful. 'The Living Economy' offers a variety of examples of Green economics; like Michael Philips' description of Briarpatch in San Francisco, a network of related small businesses which support one another by giving business to one another. The small business typifies a lot of Green economics, and does genuinely represent a human scale of operation. It also involves a system of decentralised power. If we have an economy of small businesses, and not just an economy with lots of big corporations and a few more small firms as token bits of competition, then we have a very different type of economic structure.

If it is really a small business economy, then industrial power will be in the hands of hundreds, even thousands of people. It is probable that such power will be too widely dispersed for the business owners to be effective at lobbying government and persuading politicians to introduce legislation that favours business over people. And with small firms, we are talking about a society where people will tend to live in the same area as their company; they will care more about its environment than the corporation executive cares about the surroundings of the factory he runs.

It is in fact very much like the scenario Penny Newsome has envisaged, with lots of Scott Bader firms competing with each other. A world in which people who run their own companies, or jointly owned co-ops, get into commerce perhaps

to find a job, perhaps to make a product they believe in, or maybe just because they prefer working for themselves. They are more likely to care about the quality of the goods than the corporate executive, and they are more likely to care about the welfare of the workers. Very often workers in small firms describe the atmosphere as being like one big family; you don't get that working at Lucas or Sainsburys.

Doesn't it all sound too optimistic? Not like some of the small firms we know about? Well, this isn't a small firm economy. This is a monopoly capitalist economy, and that is a very different matter. But in countries where small firms predominate there is a great deal more concern for the environment, for the welfare of one's fellow beings, and for the quality of life.

And what do you call a system of small businesses, where government is aimed at maximising equality and opportunity? Capitalism? Or socialism? Well, it depends what you mean by...

There are many other issues that Green economists have to consider, from education to recycling, because what we are looking at is the type of society we want for our future. But at least we have made a start.



Opposition: looking on the bad side

Andy Kaye

ONCE, AT a Green Gathering, I sat in a circle. In turn everyone said something good about the gathering. As it progressed I realised it was impossible to say anything bad, that a circle of conformity had been built. Compulsory positiveness.

[1] The necessity of negativity

Truth comes from moods that turn the world to dust. Negativity rips through taboos and cherished absurdities; makes a mockery of all beliefs and hopes. It doesn't ask for reasons, it is unrealistic and impractical, and thus, precisely, realistic and essential. We cannot hope to live without it.

Negativity faces everyone, every day. It is just the ways of handling it that differ. It gives force to many things, but cannot be expropriated.

Negativity cannot be flipped into the positive; it cannot be tamed. For it will only slip away and turn against you some lonely evening. It can induce a spiral of descent that is as blinding as the clarity it brings at other times.

[2] The Greens

The Green movement, in practice, is the system exploring a possible future. Realistic ecologists deal with the fine tuning and problems of the present, and openly support power, while the radicals explore future options and maintain the necessary distance and opposition for their findings to be sold later as change.

The system is not monolithic. It explores every possibility, changes and renews itself, draws in all energies and oppositions. It is truly holistic; everything is grist to its mill. Insoluble problems have been overcome before: overproduction and immiseration being answered by wars and consumer booms. If the system could not only contain but actually draw strength from the unions and political organisations of the working class, who do the Greens think they are kidding? The transformation that the Greens are part of is towards renewable capitalism and sustainable misery. And the transformation won't be non-violent.

The system is quite capable of doing all that is necessary to protect its environment, to create a world totally in the image of capital. What capitalist was ever not concerned about his supplies of raw materials? We should be wary of cries of doom and warnings of things running out - scarcity has always been useful for power and profitable for capital. It is the very urgency of their cause that always betrays campaigners and throws them into compromise, falsehood and defeat. The sum of separate campaigns does not add up to a total critique but simply reveals the fragmented world of the campaigners, dominated by power, and their acceptance of it.

It is possible to foresee a world of environmental harmony in which we will lead lives of organic misery. What's the point in clearing up all the shit except that which we have to swallow every day?

The broadness and tolerance of the Green movement are but proof of its incoherence and compatibility with the present set-up. But the tolerance is merely ritual: some Greens are already squabbling even before they've been offered their shard of power. The ritual blocks all movement towards making essential definitions; like some shuffling dance, the movement goes one step forwards, one back, one left, one right...

Those Greens who declare the necessity of abolishing this society underestimate its strength, its subtlety, and its effectiveness. Opposition will always find itself outmanoeuvred by power and hence become power's ally - when it fails to understand the past, present and future of power.

Has not this whole movement been thrown up by the latest contradiction of capitalism, and is not its function simply to overcome that which gave it birth? Will it not then subside?

[3] Opposition and the media

What of our organisations of opposition, in which organisation comes way before opposition and which measure themselves solely by the media and power?

Media and opposition are becoming one. It's the reflection that counts. Or rather the image which exists only for power and media: witness CND's symbolic signs on the last two London demonstrations, which were visible only from the air. Only reporters and cops were up there.

The broadness and tolerance
of the green movement
are but proof of its
incoherence

Accusations of bias against the media are irrelevant, for the content is irrelevant. It's the form that counts; the thick, opaque medium that transmits nothing but emits much. A speck of reality, any speck, is taken, put through the media's reactor, and then radiated into every home.

Once leftists talked of seizing the means of production. Now it seems they want to seize the means of communication. They are right, but not for the reasons they think. Production and communication; power and the media: they are indivisible.

Opposition has become pseudo-opposition. From the loyal opposition and the happy protesters of CND, FoE and others who only want to be seen as legal, decent and honest, to the militants and revolutionaries waiting for a prosecution or a truncheon, all seem to need authority's stamp to prove the reality of their opposition. We are faced with a whole mass of safety valves which power plays like a virtuoso: opposition is the counterpoint to authority's harmony in a hymn to the organisation of power.

[4] The Earth, We, Us and Them

"There are many ways to speak of the wrecking of the Biosphere. From the standpoint of a single protagonist, Earth itself, it can be said that she is committing suicide. With two protagonists, Mankind and Mother Earth, it can be said that We are murdering Her. Those of us who accept this standpoint and squirm with shame might wish we were whales. But those of us who take the standpoint of the trapped animal will look for a third protagonist." (Freddy Perlman, 'Against His-story, Against Leviathan', p 4 [Red and Black, Chicago 1984]).

[5] Nukes

Isn't it obvious that those in power in Russia and America have more in common than they care to admit? That more unites them than divides them? That the threat of nuclear war suits them very nicely? That they are well aware of the reality of nuclear war? And that thus the likelihood of nuclear war is insignificant? That the real threat is the social paralysis the "threat" induces?

What then of a movement that aligns itself along the trajectory of power images? And of the people who disarm themselves before this great imperative?

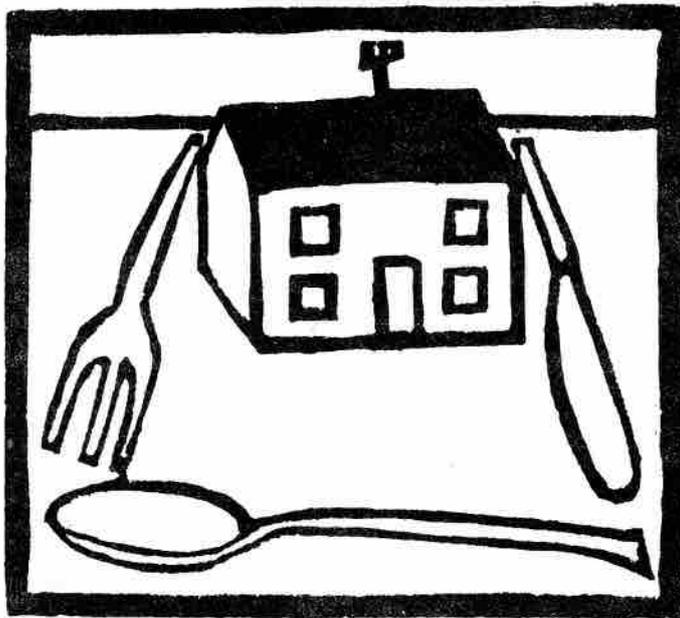
The war industry, like all others, has industrial accidents. As this is an advanced industry, the accidents are equally advanced: babies reduced to formless lumps of jelly in their mothers' wombs, bodies destroyed from the inside. It makes silicosis and brucellosis seem almost homely.

[6] The alternative society

As commercial as the consumer society but not as interesting: CND mugs, campaigning tee-shirts, radical jewellery, olde worlde crafts. That this is being taken over by mainstream commercial interests - such as the Holland and Barratt chain of health food shops - is merely the realisation of its hidden content: the counter culture - the culture of the counter.

The alternative society is a case of putting the cart before the horse, the structures of "change" before real change. It is understandable: a flood of middle class dis-satisfaction attempting to find more acceptable ways to survive. But the flood seems to carry its career ambitions with it: anti-planners, anti-experts, anti-politicos, etc.

I would rather have the open contempt of open capitalism, that leaves one without illusions, than be lost behind a veil of "spiritual" and "ethical" values. Change that is no change: the fashions of the market place rotating. But perhaps this is what the alternative society is all about: exploring ways of hiding the open structure, of finding ways to mask the reality and so prolong it.

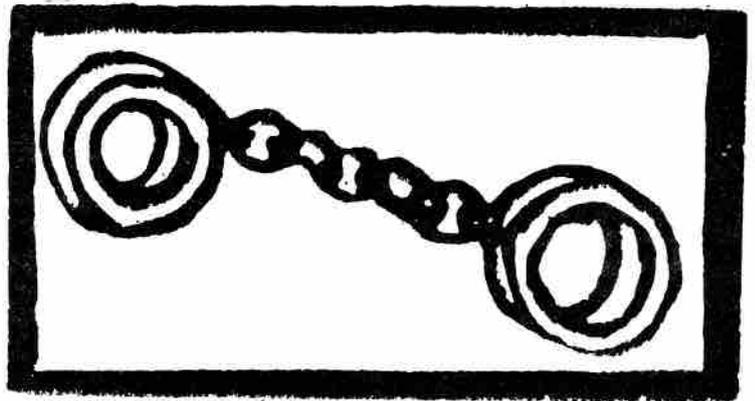


[7] Lifestylism

The lifestyle movement is an expression of inability (or unwillingness) to change our real lives. It reeks of self-satisfaction and sacrifice; sure proof of its unity with power.

In line with other such causes it appears largely as a moral crusade to change the "bad", "exploitative" habits

of the population to "good", "non-exploitative" "supportive" ones. It implies a thorough education or re-education, comparable to the 19th century domestic missionaries remonstrating against alcohol and sex, and complete with the image of the lost/misled masses in need of salvation. It is treading an old path and ignores the real nature of the capitalist system and the social organisation it throws up; it is merely part of the "choice" in the social market place.



[8] Boycotts

One aspect of lifestylism is the boycott, though it may be expressed in more "positive" words such as compassionate consumption, ecological living, etc.

Boycotts only work in very limited circumstances, and not at all in those implicit in lifestylism's stance. What lifestylism calls for is the boycott of "exploitative" cash crops which use land that should grow food for local consumption. The aim of such a boycott - unless one believes that it's only a matter of changing the hearts of the poor misguided bosses - is to destroy the market for cash crops: in other words, to provoke a trade crisis in which, one way or another, the land would be used differently, if not actually transferred to the poor. Naivety. Power is infinitely experienced in turning crises to its advantage; such a boycott would only hurt those it aimed to help. We are all - even those who still possess some land - too enmeshed in the system for such simplistic solutions:

Dr Moises Behar of the World Health Organisation notes, for example, that in Costa Rica there is a strong correlation between the world market price for coffee and the number of children hospitalised for malnutrition. When the coffee price is high there is a lower incidence of disease and malnutrition, and vice versa. Costa Rica is a country where coffee is largely grown by smallholders. [Susan George, 'Feeding the Few: Corporate Control of Food', p 18].

Boycotts are based on the promise to be a good consumer; on the promise that if the given company accedes to the boycott's demands, then consumption of its products will begin again. If this didn't happen there would be no point in the company playing the game, and it would use force to defend itself. Bad consumers only get rifles, batons and tanks.

[9] Outside and inside

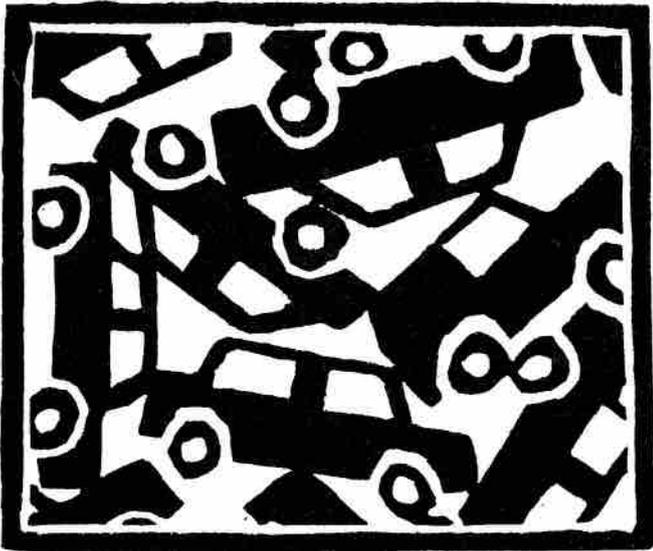
There is no outside of this social system; but there are degrees of involvement. Many people live on the margins and within the cracks: that gives a certain perspective but no guarantees. It can simply be that society hasn't got around to them yet, or that in practice they are finding new ways for the system to survive. Some people take up the role of being outside society, which only proves their greater integration within it. There is no escape either physically or mentally.



[10] Old Power for the New People

The personal is political: an old cliché that says more about the pervasiveness of power than of any new field of opposition; turn it around – the political is personal – and the truth is revealed: old power in new places. For such is the threat posed by the political organisations of the heart, where the poison of past movements wells up in various therapy, religious, spiritual and self-help groups. All those busy announcing that we are unique and individual, all rich in feelings, creativity and unconscious dreams may be but a new stream of power taking over: sensitive authority; moving the cops into our hearts and souls; non-violent brutality.

We face the formalization of feelings and the formalization of changes of feelings. The tyranny of structure/structurelessness threatens to enter our



hearts. Everywhere the experts are at work building and inventing our world.

(11) The End: Jean Baudrillard

Jean Baudrillard's theories about society and resistance turn our normal assumptions on their heads; they mark the end of traditional political, radical and revolutionary concepts and movements. The argument is based on the historical development of power which has moved from needing passive, apathetic producers to wanting active, involved consumers. These contradictory demands, to be both passive and active, both an object and subject, call forth different types of resistance, which Baudrillard compares to those of the child facing the adult world:

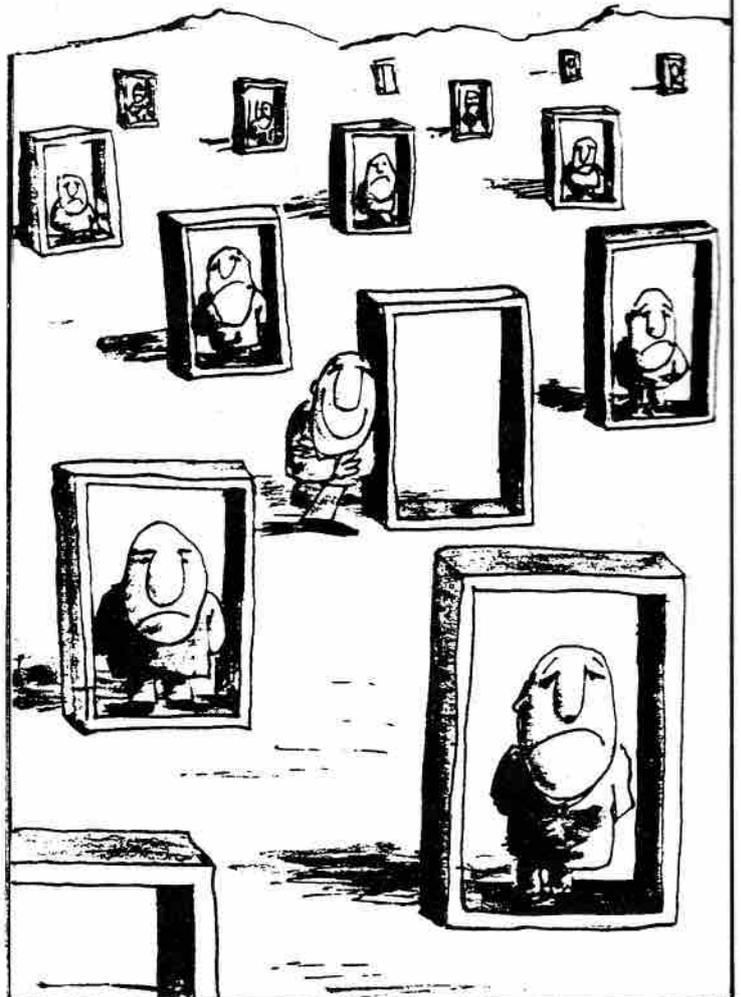
To the demand to be an object, he opposes all the practises of disobedience, revolt, emancipation; in short a total claim to subjecthood. To the demand to be a subject he opposes just as stubbornly and efficaciously with an object's resistance, that is to say in exactly the opposite manner: infantilism, hyper-conformism, a total dependence, passivity, idiocy. (Jean Baudrillard: "In The Shadow of the Silent Majorities", p107, Semiotexte 1983).

Today the "strategic terrain" belongs to the latter as we are increasingly pressed (allowed?) "...to liberate ourselves, to express ourselves at any price, to vote, produce, decide, speak, participate, play the game" (ibid p108); and the "strategic resistance" consists of "a refusal of meaning and a refusal of the word – or of the hyper-conformist simulation of the very mechanisms of the system, which is a form of refusal and od non-reception" (ibid p108).

In this situation those movements which want to free us, to increase our independence – all the traditional radical demands – are "acting in accordance with the system" (ibid p109). It is through the very inertia and apathy of the "silent majority" – dismissed by revolutionaries (and bureaucrats too these days) as alienation and passivity – that the system is losing itself. But this resistance is not the foundation for a new movement, it cannot be made positive, this would merely be to return it to power's perspective, to give a further spark of energy to our society of expansion. There is not much to look forward to as we move from this society of expansion, of explosion, to one of implosion. (Baudrillard characterises traditional and primitive societies as implosive because they are centred on ritual and cyclical processes which tend to return energies to the group or tribe).

The only remaining alternative is between a violent or catastrophic implosion, and a smooth implosion, an implosion in slow motion. There are traces of the latter, of various attempts to control new impulses which are anti-universalist, anti-representative, tribal, centripetal, etc: communes, ecology, ZPG, drugs – all of these undoubtedly belong to this order. But we must not delude ourselves about a smooth transition. It is doomed to be short-lived and to fail. There has been no balanced transition from implosive systems to explosive systems: this has always happened violently, and there is every chance that our passage towards implosion may also be violent and catastrophic." (ibid p 61).

| For some time Andy Kaye has been a much valued contributor to GL, taking on at one time a great deal of the illustration and design work, and always contributing to the editorial and other more mundane activity. With this article he takes his farewell personally and ideologically. Thanks for everything, Andy!





The greening of the MoD

Defence and the Environment.
Published in connection with the
European Year of the Environment.
Ministry of Defence, 28 pp.

IMAGINE this scenario: peace demonstrators are invading Salisbury Plain, in defiance of M.O.D. byelaws; Cruise is in there somewhere, and the red warning flags are flying. Some campaigners even hope to reach the convoy, and improve its drab appearance by decorating it with peace symbols. They don't get very far, however, before being stopped by M.O.D. police, one of whom harangues them in the following manner: "What do you think you're doing, crashing round and wrecking the fragile balance of our delicate eco-system? You've trampled grasshoppers and crickets under your feet, disturbed our rare fritillaries, scared off our kestrels and toads. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

Does this sound fanciful? Well, it shouldn't any longer; according to this new glossy brochure 'Defence and the Environment', the M.O.D. is 'at the forefront of the conservation movement'; perhaps we shall see the emergence of a new type of soldier or M.O.D. policeman, one who treads lightly on the earth, and avoids trampling on rare ferns; one who thrills with a shock of pleasure at the sight of a crested newt in a waterlogged shell-hole, or who dashes to save a green-winged orchid from an approaching tank. His greatest wrath, however, would be reserved for peace campaigners, those louts who leave litter all over the place, wreck whole hedgerows in a quest for firewood, and drape banners over the neat and clean barbed wire.

For the M.O.D. is now a preserver and protector of the environment. In an age when intensive farming practices and unchecked property development are ravaging the countryside, the M.O.D. stands foursquare in the front line of environmental struggle. And as Roger Freeman MP, Under Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, explains in the introduction, there is a concern for aesthetics as well as ecology - one of the most important tasks is the 'removal of eyesores'. So perhaps we shall see the fences twined with creepers,



Friendly bobbies help clear litter from a 'National Park'

and the barracks concealed behind tall ferns.

Of course, as the brochure shrewdly explains, the biggest wreckers of the environment are PEOPLE - which is why we are all kept out of M.O.D. land. So behind this seemingly harsh policy of restricted access lies a motive that is wholly benign - only in these unique conditions can the environment truly thrive. So we may gaze through the fence at a rare Aulonia Albimania Spider, wandering undisturbed over the tank tracks, at a Natterjack Toad, a Northern Marsh Orchid, or a sand lizard, and admit, in the end, that it's all for the best if we're kept out.

The booklet contains photographs (admittedly somewhat blurred) of dormice, frogs, squirrels, lizards, all of which, assuming that they survive the odd gunblast or exploding shell, flourish under the benign regime of the M.O.D. This paragon among organisations protects ancient monuments, restores ponds, plants trees and new woodlands, creates whole landscapes - and in addition to all this environmental activity manages to find time to defend us as well!

So the M.O.D. is truly 'green'. As indeed are the motorway builders, whose wasteland underneath the flyovers and junctions encourages rare species to flourish - mainly because no one goes there (indeed no-one would WANT to go there, except perhaps David Bellamy).

However, things aren't as simple as this. The booklet does hint at one point at the real reason for all this environmental concern: 'The skills of infantry cannot be learnt properly on a denuded landscape; tanks cannot practise properly in areas scarred and pock-marked by erosion. Artillery practice on a bare landscape is easy and unreal.' In other words, it is necessary to create an authentic landscape - in order to blast it to bits during training! Perhaps this is just a lapse. Another illuminating passage can be found at the very end of the book, where it describes the conservation plan for Woolwich Common, put into effect by the M.O.D. 'A marked change in the environment,' it says, 'has been

achieved in a very short time. Colour and birdsong have flooded back: kestrels have returned to nest on the Common. This has saved money by reducing grass-cutting expenditure.' This is the last triumphant sentence in the book, and points to another reason for all this activity: cost-cutting. Though Trident may cost untold billions, at least we know that someone is thinking of the long-suffering taxpayer - and that grass-cutting, so long a burden on the public purse, has been abandoned at last on Woolwich Common.

• BARRY MAYCOCK

FOOTNOTE: This booklet is indeed worthy of derision but it is more than just ludicrous - it is obscene. There is a brief mention in its glossy pages of the village of Tyneham in Dorset which the M.O.D. acquired during the war for 'training purposes' (i.e. as a firing range). The village has stood empty since 1943, the year the whole village was requisitioned for the war effort, and all the inhabitants evicted and given three weeks to leave. They went willingly enough, pleased to be doing their patriotic duty, assuming that their exile would last but a short while. 'When the War Department has no further use for the property you have every right to return,' the government said. On the church door a notice was pinned up by one of the villagers: 'We shall return one day, and thank you for treating the village kindly.' They never returned - or rather they were never allowed to return. In 1947 the government broke its promise in a familiar cynical fashion, and announced that it was there to stay. A few villagers still survive, though the village itself is a ruin; public access is now permitted on days when the army isn't firing its shells, but there is little to do but wander through the ruins. Tyneham Hall has gone, damaged beyond repair, though apparently by army looting rather than shells. Behind the perfunctory reference to Tyneham in this book lies a touching human story, illuminating the role of the worst of all state vandals - the M.O.D.

ANIMAL NEWS



'VICTIMS OF CONSCIENCE'

IN August of this year a group known as the 'Victims of Conscience' was formed. The purpose of the group is to raise money through donations to assist in the expenses of those who have been charged by the police for 'crimes of compassion'.

The compassion relates to the way in which concerned people attempt to bring an end to the abuse of animals in human society. A forthcoming court case prompted the formation of the group. Four voluntary workers in the Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group have been charged with conspiracy by the Cardiff police. Three have been charged with conspiracy to incite others to commit criminal damage and one with conspiracy to commit damage. As a result of an article which appeared in the 'Observer' newspaper and a similar article which appeared in a newspaper in the West Midlands concerning the case and naming the defendants, two have lost their jobs and one has been threatened with the sack. The fourth person is already unemployed. Both articles mentioned contained information supplied by the police in Cardiff and the 'Observer' article in particular amounts to a contempt of court.

Currently, the defendants' solicitors are attempting to bring about a charge of contempt against the newspaper. Due to the fact that the court/police station is so far away from the defendants' homes, 200 miles for all concerned, the travelling expenses are colossal. One has had to return to Cardiff on two occasions and another was kept on remand in Bristol for two weeks before being told that she had to find her own way home. Support Animal Rights Prisoners (SARP) who do an excellent job providing radios, stamps, vegan food and other necessities to animal rights prisoners and the A.L.F. Supporters group are both unable to use their funds for the expenses, and therefore the formation of the group is of great importance. It will not only deal with the forthcoming trial in Cardiff (possibly early 1988) but with all future trials which involve people who have been charged whilst campaigning for an end to the exploitation of animals in a non-violent way. The group will also provide up to date information on what is happening during future court cases. Its success depends entirely upon the donations which concerned people contribute.

Send donations to:
'Victims of Conscience'
BCM 6566, London WC1N 3XX.

CUBHUNTING - THAT MOST SECRET CRIME

CUBHUNTING takes place from late July to early October in the early morning before the heat has dried up the scent. Each year about 10,000 fox cubs are killed in a planned campaign of slaughter in which young foxes, no more than seven months old, are ambushed, surrounded, hunted by hounds, driven into underground holes from which they are dug and finally given to the hounds to eat; sometimes when they are still alive. In October runs in the open are encouraged, so that young hounds can learn to hunt on the right line, to see the fox and to know what it looks like: let's not forget that young foxhounds have to be trained to be effective killers.

So nervous are the hunters about this aspect of their barbaric activity that they advise hunt masters to keep their autumn meetings secret and only invite their most trained supporters to attend. Some, mindful of the unpleasant connotations surrounding the word 'cubhunting' have suggested calling it 'autumn hunting' instead. (Why not 'autumn gatherings, with dogs?' That sounds even more innocuous.)

Also: the hare-hunting season begins in October. Details from the HSA, PO Box 87, Exeter, EX4 3TX.

THE ORGANIC FARM AND THE HUNT

(Quote of the month, from the SDP Conference debate on animal welfare).

Mary Heron, an organic farmer from Scarborough, warned that though many small farmers were now turning to the SDP from the Conservative Party they would not accept an attack on field sports.

Many of her neighbours enjoyed following the hunt once a year on Boxing Day. "They will vote unanimously against any party that will allow townspeople to dictate how country people spend their Boxing Days," she warned. (Taken from the Guardian).

So vote SDP - that traditional party and ancient defender of our old rural way of life.

IF LIBERALS...

If Liberals like Felix Dodds mean what they say (GL55) about wanting to work with Greens, they should start a campaign inside the Liberal Party to commit their party to the Additional Member System (AMS) of PR instead of STV. Under AMS the Greens would make a significant impact on parliament. The Liberal Party or Alliance would then have to move greenwards to try to recapture votes lost to Greens, which would strengthen the influence of greens

BASIC - OR AFFLUENT

I would just like to say how interesting and enjoyable I am finding GL. Penny Newsome's articles about 'The Living Economy' and Ian Lee's about Cruisewatch were particularly good.

I tend to be more anarchic than political, but would nevertheless like to comment on some aspects of the Green Party manifesto. I believe that our future is in communities which are self-reliant in their basic needs and largely independent of any economic system. In the meantime, the Basic Income Scheme and Community Ground Rent would seem to be excellent ways of allowing people to make changes and increase their personal and communal autonomy, without the risk of economic dependence and insecurity.

But as it is promoted by the Green Party, the Basic Income Scheme would seem to encourage affluent lifestyles. For instance, if a single person's income before tax is £170 per week, their disposable income would actually increase with the BIS. Only above about £200 would the tax be greater. Whilst there are many ways to spend this kind of money which are not environmentally and socially destructive, it is more than anyone needs, and something like five times the world average income.

The manifesto is right to say, 'the poor of the world are subsidising us,' but it says little of the role of Transnational Companies in neo-colonial exploitation both of people and the Earth. Optimists might believe that TNCs could be instrumental in stopping exploitation and returning wealth (e.g. if governments insist that plantation workers are paid more than the top management in the industrialised world). Alternatively, if we know the facts, we can take our own action and refuse to buy TNC products. Whatever the view, I think the manifesto could have devoted more than two sentences to TNCs.

Tim Turner
7 Cranside Avenue
Redland, Bristol

inside the Liberal Party. So it is in their own interest to campaign for AMS.

The same goes for greens in the Labour Party. They too would be building future influence for themselves by extending the PR debate in the Labour Party and arguing for AMS.

This is the only way to turn dreams of a Rainbow Alliance into a reality.

Ms G Williams
57 Balfour Road, Ilford

Letters

CHERISHED SITES

I would be grateful to hear from people and groups who actively tend sacred sites with meditation, ritual, song and dance, picnics and children, etc. It is vital to the uplifting of the planet that we are the guardians and celebrators of whatever sites are near our homes, or those places we feel a particular affinity with. It is certain that there are many stone circles, wells, sacred groves and ancient churches that are alive and cherished.

I wish to compile a map with sacred sites marked upon it, with an accompanying articles, for eventual publication in New Age magazines - to affirm the awakening of our precious Albion, and to link up those who sometimes feel alone in our workings.

Annie Durrant
11 Maes Refail, Henryd
Conwy Valley, Gwynedd

Curious that Simon Young's piece (GL 55) is entitled 'Against Intolerance', since he then goes on to be intolerant himself in his reference to what he describes as 'potentially regressive forms of ritualistic paganism'.

In a recent letter to GL I drew attention to several groups involved in eco-pagan activity. I will not disagree that some of the new age, humanist, even enlightened 'religious' groupings concerned in this debate are deeply moved to try to undo ills perpetrated on Gaia. I'm afraid that although other so-called minorities are allowed to live and worship communally within this society (e.g. Sikhs, Hindus, Moslems, and numerous Christian groups) the pagan, though representing the native spiritual roots of Albion, is still misunderstood, not only by lack of knowledge within the general public and the media, but also by fellow travellers in greenness. This

misunderstanding is sad when found within the pages of GL.

Ritual can be regressive, it can atrophy the spiritual dynamic rather than release it. But apart from traditional practitioners in Wicca, who conform to a more strict or formalised rite structure, many others in the more anarcho, eco-pagan / shamanic mould are revitalising ritual to be relevant to healing and celebration, for the individual and the eco-system.

Pagan activists such as Starhawk in the USA 'organise' dynamic and potent rituals, without hierarchy, at all manner of ecological and anti-nuclear protests and rallies. This fluidity is reflected in many individuals and groups working in Britain utilising the archetypal power of god and goddess forms relevant to the seasonal cycle, sacred places, as well as damaged and wounded Nature.

So please, before disposing of what after all is our native spiritual roots before any Christian or humanist appeared on the scene, understand that you are adding more ammunition to bigots and zealots who would see freedom to worship standardised into acceptable and atrophying forms, or perhaps banned altogether.

David Grimbleby
Flat 3, 41 Oxford Road
Southport PR8 2EG

I read with some fury the smug self-righteous spoutings of Milan (GL 55) re cannabis, and in defence of this valuable little herb I would like to raise a few points.

[1] The cannabis plant has a social history extending back in time as far as the earliest cereal crops. As a drug the plant has been variously used not only as a pleasurable intoxicant, but as a pain killer, sedative, a means of enduring harsh social and environmental conditions, and as a vehicle for out of the body Journeys by practising seers and shamans. It can ease all kinds of internal disturbances, from the throat and lungs to the stomach and bowels, and in recent times it has been used in the treatment of glaucoma.

[2] I too regard imported cannabis, grown as a cash crop to sell to the affluent West, as a potential evil in that it takes up land otherwise available for food crops for hungry local populations. Yet in this sense it is no worse than all the other cash crops (fruit, vegetables, grains, tea, coffee, sugar, spices, etc) which the world's hungry population produces - often in near slavery - for export to North America, NW Europe and elsewhere. If we seriously want to change the social conditions brought about by cash crops, we should boycott not only imported cannabis, but also the packed shelves of Tesco's, Sainsbury's and their ilk.

FOR THE WEED

[3] Good quality cannabis can be grown in most regions of the inhabited world. I myself use locally grown weed, a crop I regard as a most reasonable alternative (along with organically grown vegetables, grains and pulses) to most current agricultural crops in our part of the world. I am a member of a small community which grows, without any mechanical aid, nearly all its own food. Cannabis provides a way of dealing with what can be an extremely exacting (but enlightening!) way of life. With the aid of 'the weed', it is possible to work longer,

harder and more consistently, should prevailing conditions demand it.

[4] Presumably the whole idea of revoking or repealing all laws pertaining to cannabis (and in my opinion all plants) is that users can grow their own without fear of persecution from moral crusaders like Milan. I regard the current drug laws and their system of enforcement as a greater threat to my well-being than Sellafield, leaded petrol, and all the various agricultural pollutants put together.

[5] As for the 'discredited drug culture' Milan speaks of, where or what is it?? Drug culture extends back into the mists of time, predating written history and quite likely spoken history too. It will continue, too, while our species maintains any sort of intimate relationship with the plant world.

As for modern or synthetic drugs, they are as out of tune with the natural way of things as all the other 'great' products of our time - irradiated and chemically sprayed food, the odious pervasion of plastics, nuclear power, the built-in obsolescence of consumer goods, the passive escapism of TV, political, sexual and religious bigotry, sophisticated killing systems... I could rant on.

Meanwhile, let's not get too hung up about a friendly weed.

Mary Jane
Ireland



POLITICAL FUTURES

WITH THE election passed and Mrs Thatcher back in power for another term, the politics of the left is in an almost unprecedented state of flux. The re-examination of policies and attitudes which is now going on reaches far beyond the customary degree of post-election navel-gazing; on all sides radical politics in Britain is back in the melting pot, and this is a situation which Greens must surely welcome.

The Liberal/SDP merger/split is the most obvious example of this process, and was probably also the most predictable. At a public meeting during the election I expressed the hope that, whatever the result, the post-election period would produce some much-needed new thinking and consequent realignment. In particular (and to a chorus of appreciative laughter from the whole audience, including the SDP candidate), I hoped that the Liberals might "dump that dreadful Dr Owen and start being radical again".

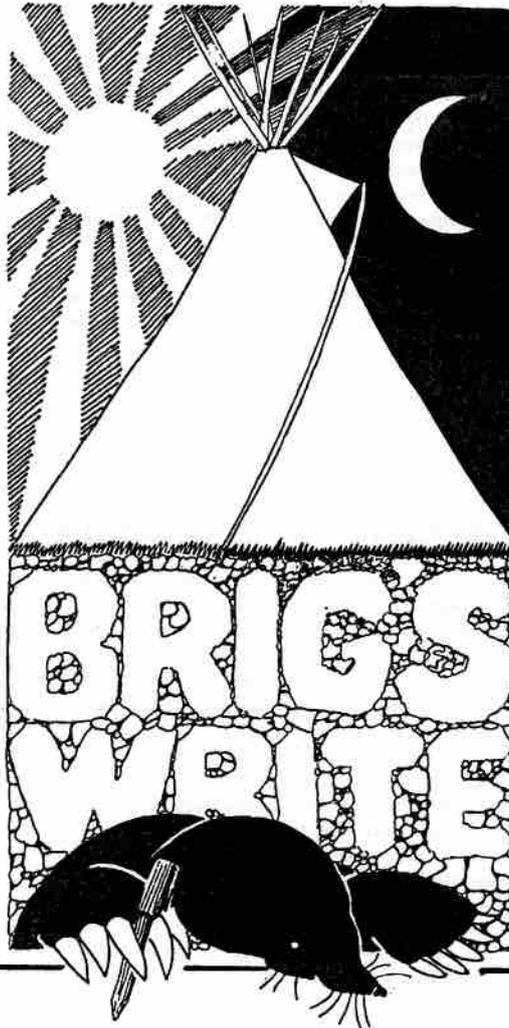
Whilst the first part of that hope has indeed been fulfilled, there is as yet no clear indication of what will happen to the second. The new SDP leader Robert Maclennan has already made it clear that, even without Owen, the SDP remains firmly pro-nuclear and will seek to push a merged party further to the right. Radical decentralist anti-nuclear and greenish Liberals may well find that the merger simply puts a right-wing Trojan horse in their midst, and leaves them even more marginalised. While no one on the left will mourn the political passing of Dr Owen, radical Liberals may find that they have far less cause for rejoicing than at first seemed the case.

However, it is not only within the Alliance that things are happening. The most interesting post-election initiative so far is the conference in Chesterfield next month sponsored by Tony Benn with the aim of "redefining Socialism".

Benn is a man for whom I have a great deal of respect. His capacity

for constantly re-examining his position is most unusual among established politicians, and though he may not yet be described as a Red-Green, his openness to new ideas and perspectives has certainly brought him a long way in a green direction since his years as government minister in charge of nuclear power.

When I heard Tony Benn on the radio describing the Chesterfield conference, I decided straight away to phone him up for more details. His reaction was most gratifying: he was obviously overjoyed that, despite the angle of the interview ("Are you trying to split the Labour Party again, Mr Benn?"), he had managed to get across the ecumenical nature of



the proposed conference. He had very much hoped that the Greens would be interested in taking part, had been very impressed by our general election campaign, and, he said, my phone call had "made his day". It seems that at least some of the Reds are ready to talk and to listen to the Greens. Chesterfield should be very interesting indeed.

To my mind (and for many others too), the plight of the earth is far too urgent a matter for us to be content with a future of impotent rectitude on the political sidelines. We could wait in vain from now until (literally) the end of the world for the magical transformation to Ecotopia with a Green Party majority in Parliament, but I for one am not in politics to waste my time in the self-indulgence of impossible pipedreams. It is no longer good enough to live in an ever-receding ecological future - the Green Party must realise that we are now in the business of the real politics of today.

Green politics (and any other sort of politics under the kind of truly proportional representation to which we aspire) includes the notion of doing things by consensus. A radical agenda for the post-Thatcher era must be laid down now, and the Greens must be centrally involved in that process. To do this, we must talk to radicals on all sides - it would be shortsighted to be looking only towards the Liberals or only towards socialists. In fact, it is perhaps only the Greens who can talk to both, for both are more eager so far to talk to us than to each other!

What would be unpardonable would be to talk to no-one but ourselves, and to retreat into a 'holier than thou' isolationism. It is time for us to take a political lead, for it is Green politics which has the vision which must be central to this new consensus. It would be the height of irresponsibility to shrink from the task of reshaping the direction of real politics, but is the Green Party mature enough to accept the challenge?

TIPIS UNDER THREAT (continued.....)

MEANWHILE ON the home front we are faced with yet another instalment of the government's policy of making life difficult for hippies. As readers will probably have seen in the national media, the new Secretary of State for Wales, Peter Walker (exiled to the colonies for wetness) has released the long awaited verdict of the Tipi Valley public inquiry.

Walker has upheld the enforcement notices originally issued by Dinefwr Borough Council in 1984, despite his inspector's finding that "in land use planning terms I consider that use (the Tipi Village) to be, in principle, acceptable in the special circumstances of the case".

My neighbours now have until next Hiroshima Day (August 6th) to remove all tipis from the land covered by the notices.

Needless to say, the Tipi Village is doing everything it can to get the order set aside. Locally we have pointed out that the cost to ratepayers of rehousing us (in houses which the council does not have) would be over £1 million. If sense prevails, the council could decide to give us planning permission after all before next August's deadline, or at least to withdraw the notices and take things no further.

At the same time, we have now lodged a further appeal to the High

Court in London, alleging that Peter Walker erred in law on various points and exceeded his powers by acting contrary to natural justice. If that appeal fails, it could be the start of the long legal road to the European Court of Human Rights.

I am reminded of an old hippy saying - "Just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they're not out to get you!"

An appeal fund and a petition have been launched. For further details, send s.a.e. to Save Tipi Village Campaign, PO Box 1, Salem P.O., Llandeilo, Dyfed.

N.B. The Tipi Village population is between one and two hundred, NOT 1-2,000 as misprinted in September's 'Green Line'!