

econews

ECOLOGY PARTY NEWSLETTER

No 6 January 1980



Nigel Jeskins, Jean Lambert and Jonathan Porritt at an election meeting

Respectable result

The Ecology Party maintained its respectable election record in the South West Herts byelection on December 13th, achieving a steady 1.6% vote and convincingly defeating the two independent candidates standing. Eco candidate Nigel Jeskins described his 602 votes as "a result I feel we can build on" and the recently formed Watford branch, who supported him in his campaign, are understandably pleased with the outcome.

The overall result of the contest was never in doubt – the Conservative candidate emerged with a majority of almost 7000 – but both Labour and Liberals improved their share of the vote over the May General Election result. Only 48% of the electorate bothered to vote anyway, on a cold, wet day, and it is therefore clearly pointless to attempt to draw any firm conclusions.

Public meeting

Indeed, the Eco vote might have been even higher had there been a little more time for preparation. The local branch is small, with no previous political experience, and the date of the election was not announced until 21 days beforehand, the statutory minimum requirement. From thereon, distribution of the 40,000 leaflets occupied most of the helpers' time, although a public meeting held on December 11th gave people a chance to rest. Jean Lambert chaired, and the meeting was addressed first by Jonathon Porritt and then Nigel Jeskins, who drew attention to the transportation of nuclear waste on local railway lines and concluded by answering questions from the audience.

All in all, then, a satisfactory result for the party and a welcome one – it would have been a pity to end the year with another Manchester Central. Nevertheless, it is the Manchester result that is more significant, for it highlights what will be one of our major tasks in the next few years – making our voice heard in the poorer inner-city constituencies. In that light, the SW Herts result can be seen to be satisfactory, but hardly more than that – we cannot afford complacency.

R. Page (C)	17,031
S. Reeves (Lab)	10,259
D. Clouston (L)	8,752
N. Jeskins (Eco)	602
D. Bundy (Anti EEC)	288
N. Ffooks (Father Xmas)	143

Anti Nuclear Campaign

Almost 600 people attended the inaugural conference of the Anti Nuclear Campaign at the Polytechnic of Central London on November 24th. A wide range of national organizations attended the conference, including the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Socialist Workers Party, the Young Liberals, SERA, and the Scottish and Welsh Nationalist parties. Forty four other organizations, representing virtually all the local anti nuclear groups around the country, also participated. Eco members attended in respectable, if not overwhelming numbers, and National Council Chairman Jonathon Porritt represented the Party from the platform with a well received speech.

The conference decided to form the Anti Nuclear Campaign (ANC) on the basis of the following three point platform:

- Stop Nuclear Power
- Reduce waste of energy, and develop an alternative energy programme
- Guarantee employment during the changeover.

A key part of the Campaign will be the formation of working groups designed to bring together people active in different aspects of the struggle against nuclear power. A number of these were set up at the conference itself, notably groups

concerned with radiation and health, waste dumping, uranium mining, civil liberties and trade union rights, and waste transport. These groups are now producing information papers, pamphlets and other campaign material.

Sean Thompson, who was at the meeting, writes: The conference would have been more successful had it not been for the sectarian attitudes displayed by certain

The Steering Committee of the Anti Nuclear Campaign, elected at the ANC inaugural conference, has decided to organize a national demonstration in London on March 29th. The Committee intend to make this the largest anti nuclear demo Britain has yet seen, and are appealing for an all out mobilization from every anti-nuclear group in the country. Large numbers of leaflets and posters advertising the event will be available in the third week of January from 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. For further details, phone 01 253 7303.

groups within the anti nuclear movement. London Greenpeace distributed a leaflet at the conference condemning the whole idea of a national anti nuclear campaign, while the leadership of Friends of the

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Eco says no to nuclear power

No compromise whatsoever. No second thoughts. ECO is committed to the tough and simple proposition: "Stop nuclear power in Britain".

Let no one underestimate the probable consequences of this commitment on the future of the Ecology Party or, indeed, the importance of the anti-nuclear theme to the shape of politics in Britain in the next twenty years. With the anti-nuclear power principle in its baggage train, ECO must come to terms with the following five facts:

First, the Party has declared its position on a question which has done much to muddy the political waters in (to name but one country) Sweden, where a referendum on nuclear power is due to be held in March. "Is it not rather irresponsible," the argument goes, "to put the complex issue of energy and nuclear power to a mass vote?" The answer in Sweden is, "Well, yes, actually": the Swedish government has decided to make the referendum non-binding. ECO's answer has to be "NO". A political party's only mandate is its vote, and ECO now has an obligation to explain the full facts – on both sides of the argument – before the party and

its public really begin to be a match for the experts.

Second, there is a danger of the Ecology Party being taken over by the anti-nuclear theme. Opposition to nuclear power is tailor-made for campaigning rallies, and for public debate at its loudest. But it's only one part of the Ecology Party's whole political and economic platform. There is the distinct possibility that ECO will become identified as the anti-nuclear party, and that much of the rest of its idea-base will be overlooked. The solution to this is not to keep quiet about nuclear power, but to be much sharper and more effective in our campaigning in all the other (non-nuclear) topics.

Third, we now have to become prepared for the incredible complexities of the nuclear debate. To use the example of Sweden again, there's not much dispute there that nuclear power now provides 25% of their electricity, and 5% of their total energy consumption; that without it, energy-intensive industries such as pulp and paper could face electricity price rises of 60–70%, and that households must prepare for price increases of 35–40%.

We believe we know the reply to this kind of argument (and we know the figures will be very different in Britain), but if price increases without nuclear power in Britain can be demonstrated, it will require some very sophisticated campaigning to persuade people to vote against it.

Fourth, nuclear power will rouse the highest passions yet. The days of patronising the Ecology Party – the friendly pats on the head we got at the last election – are over. We will win loyalty and unpopularity in perhaps equal measure. People will both listen to us and try to silence us. It's no longer any good talking in the 1970's generalities about the "problems" of storing nuclear waste. We must argue the case in detail and . . .

Fifth, we must speak clearly about the positive side of the case. We can't stop short at the easily-sloganned anti side. We must show how Britain will work over the next decades without nuclear power. No more generalities about windmills. We need an energy blue-print, and we should start working on that now.

David Fleming

In pursuit of popularity

Over the last few months, Jonathon Porritt has made a number of speeches urging members to "toughen up" in their approach, and for once I find myself in full agreement with him. The time has come, it seems, to show the public our more radical side, for we are otherwise in danger of being dismissed forever as the well-intentioned but irrelevant party of whales and windmills.

One thing that will have to go is the popular notion within the party that we can restructure society without hurting anyone. For instance, Tom Osborn in *Econews 3* argues that we cannot accept the Marxist premise that reform is to be achieved through "struggle and conflict". Unfortunately, the whole of history supports Marx on this point and that should be more than enough to convince

us of its truth.

Having accepted the need for conflict of some sort, all we have to worry about is the manner of that conflict. It must not, of course, be violent – but we must be prepared to be aggressive. If that involves making a few political enemies along the way, then we must be prepared for that as well. Our primary job – to expose the false doctrine of economic growth – does not entitle us to wear the "good-guy" badge that has been pinned to us by the media. On the contrary, it is hypocritical of us to accept it: our philosophy is the most radical on the market and we have the worst of intentions for society as it is at present.

Another habit that we will have to

shake off is the practice of "toning down" our views so as to present them more attractively. Why should this be justified if we have any faith in our philosophy? The intellectual authority of our case is beyond question and most certainly requires no apologies. What it does require is a frank restatement, with no punches pulled, that explains as forcefully as possible the nature of the ecological imperatives facing us.

"You can't learn too soon," says Somerset Maugham, "that the most useful thing about a principle is that it can always be sacrificed to expediency." There are signs that the message is getting through to us. We must not allow our ideals to become diluted in our pursuit of popularity.

Alan Clarke

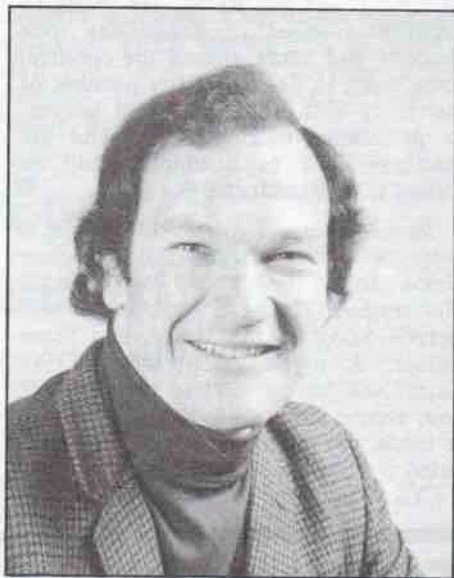
London office set up

The Party has taken the first steps towards setting up a London office. It comprises a room in a member's house which Eco has been offered rent free until funds for a more suitable, permanent location are available.

The room has been offered to the Party by Paul Ekins, who is working fulltime for Eco at no salary. His prime duty is to act as an Assistant Press Secretary and to help the Party maintain a higher profile in the media. Below, Paul outlines some of the activities of the London office during its first six weeks of existence.

"Undoubtedly, we scored our greatest success with the publicity we achieved in response to the Government's nuclear expansion programme. The Daily Telegraph printed our release almost verbatim; Jonathon Porritt broadcast both on LBC and on the Today programme; Eco will be featuring in Southern TV's documentary on Nuclear Power in February."

"Recently we made a submission to the Armitage enquiry, looking into road freight, and we are working on some publicity for this. Many thanks must go to Liz Sigmund in Devon for the way in which she has kept us in touch with Eco initiatives in the South West. With her help, we were able to get a press release on a Dartmoor pollution story to the



Paul Ekins

national papers before they had even heard of the incident."

"This is just a beginning of course. Keep us informed about your local activities, and we'll do our best to ensure national coverage of what the Ecology Party is doing."

Paul's address is 42 Warriner Gardens, London, SW11 4DU. 01 720 4973.

Long live the seventies!

After a long, drawn out illness, the seventies expired noisily at midnight on December 31st. Across the country, people wept openly as the news was announced, and many resorted to alcohol in an attempt to contain their grief. Their were emotional scenes in the streets of Britain's cities as mourners gathered to pay their final respects to the decade. In Scotland, people left their homes to commiserate with neighbours.

The government immediately declared January 1st to be a national day of mourning. Mrs Thatcher, in a tearful speech to the nation, said: "The ten years of Labour misrule have finally taken their toll: the decade is over." But Mr Callaghan said it was eight months of Tory government that had led up to the demise of the seventies.

Independent experts, however, maintained that the exact cause of death remained unclear. The police have not dismissed the possibility of foul play, but stress that they have no plans for a formal investigation at present. A spokesman said that the interminable autopsy conducted by the press indicated that

the decade had merely died of old age, but stressed that no firm conclusions had yet been reached. A man, believed to be Mr Bernard Levin, is helping them with their enquiries.

As the decade was finally interred by the media, tributes began flowing into the Econews offices. One anonymous admirer, who described himself as 'a man on an omnibus in Clapham' said: "It was an experience I will never forget". The opinion of this respected pundit was echoed by Sir John Hill, Chairman of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. "The golden decade is over," he said. "In ten exciting years, we wasted more public money than any other organization in the world".

In a statement released today, the editorial board of Econews added their authoritative voice to the chorus of tributes: "The seventies may be finished, but the ecological movement has only just begun."

A memorial service will be held in Westminster Abbey later this month. Donations to help preserve future decades should be sent to the Ecology Party.

Birthday bike ride

A Malvern man is planning a gruelling bike ride across Britain — in the dead of winter. Dennis Nightingale-Smith has chosen to celebrate his 50th birthday with a dramatic show of pedal power to raise funds for the Ecology Party.

Dennis of 200 Wells Road, Malvern Wells, is busily gearing up for the 1,750 plus mile journey which he will start from the former spa town northwards to John O Groats, then south to Lands End and finally returning to Malvern. Founder of the Malvern and District Organic Living Association and a keen ecologist Dennis will be setting off on January 16. A cyclist since childhood, Dennis is preparing his eight speed British built bike for the testing time ahead. "At one time I used to cycle about 10,000 miles a year but I have done little long distance cycling since the early fifties. The last few months I have been getting back into training," he said. Dennis has no illusions of the problems he will face on the ride. "It could be very difficult depending on the weather. If it is reasonable I shall have no trouble at all, but with lots of head winds, rain and snow it could be quite a struggle. "I haven't set myself a time in which to complete the ride because of the possible weather problems but I hope to do the trip in about a month," he said.

Arrangements are being made with Ecology Party branches and members throughout the country to be on call to put Dennis up on his overnight halts. "At worst I shall only make about 20 miles a day but given good weather I could make 100 miles," said Dennis.

Dennis cannot be reached by telephone. An arrangement has been made to contact him via Ecology Party member Chris Mair at Worcester 20622. Please get in touch with either Dennis or Chris if you can offer overnight accommodation or sponsorship.

Party archives

The Party is endeavouring to keep an accurate record of all Eco election results, and establish an archive of election leaflets and other propaganda material. Jonathan Tyler, last year's Chairman has offered to take on the onerous task of collating this information. Branch secretaries should ensure that details of any local election result, together with five copies of leaflets etc, are sent to Jonathan at 121 Selly Park Road, Birmingham 29.

Rudi Dutschke Green rock - the next new wave?

Rudi Dutschke, a leading figure in the student revolt of 1968, died in Denmark on Christmas Eve. Tragically, he drowned in his bath during an epileptic fit attributed to a bullet wound received 11 years ago. Below, Sean Thompson adds a personal epitaph to a man who was one of the catalysts in the formation of the German 'Green Party'.

I only met Rudi Dutschke twice, once in 1968 when he came to the office of the paper I was working on, and again in 1971 just before he was so shamefully deported by Reginald Maudling, who was Home Secretary at the time. Rudi was a leader of the Berlin students during their huge (and largely peaceful) anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in the spring and summer of '68. The German press, encouraged by reactionary politicians such as Strauss, waxed hysterical about 'communist' students, and especially concentrated their fire on 'Red Rudi'. Within a few months, a gunman shot Rudi through the head. He was paralysed, unable to speak, and suffered total amnesia. After learning to read again, he somehow fought back to complete recovery, and spent two years out of politics doing post graduate work at Cambridge before being deported.

In recent years, Rudi, together with other libertarian socialists from the student movement of the late 60's (such as Danny CohnBendit and Petra Kelly), was instrumental in building the coalition of anti-nuclear, women's, environmental and anti-war groups that came together as the Green lists in the German elections.

Rudi died of an assassin's bullet 11 years after it was fired. He died just a few weeks before the Green's inaugural conference - a conference he would have contributed much to. I'm sure Rudi would have echoed Joe Hill's words: "Don't mourn, organize". The best memorial that Rudi could have is the building throughout Europe of a movement, committed as he was, to social equality and justice, to a society where man lives in harmony both with himself and his environment.

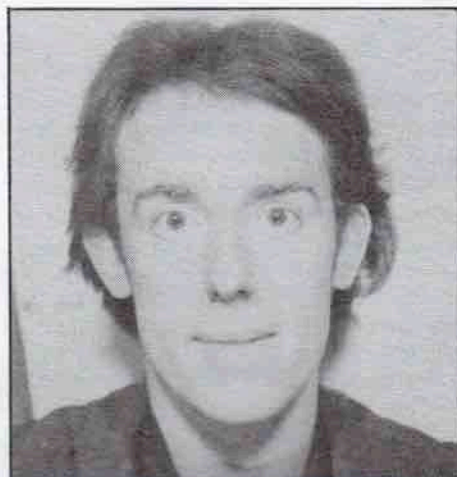
Eco newspaper

A working party (convener: Steve Whittaker) is preparing recommendations on a popular newspaper for sale to the public.

A short list of names, description of contents and methods of ownership (a cooperative - of course) will be outlined, after further discussion by the working party, in the next ECONews.

Two National Council members, Nick Alexander and Sid Rawle, are trying to organize a series of fundraising rock concerts and tours around the country. They want to hear from any member of the Party with expertise or an interest in promoting rock gigs, or who are members of a band which would be willing to do benefits for the Party.

Members can also help by buying a copy of a new single called 'Nuclear Waste' from their local record shop. The single is by the Radioactors who include Sting of the Police, and Steve Hillage. A royalty from sales of the record will be donated to the Party. If your record shop doesn't have the single in stock, get them to order it: it's distributed by Spartan, and the serial number is CYS 1058.



Nick Alexander

Eco drops Barclays Bank

The Ecology Party now banks with the Midland Bank. This follows a decision by the Keele Conference to close the account with Barclays, in the light of that bank's association with South Africa.

The Midland Bank does not have associations with South Africa. It banks for the Methodist Church, whose views on South Africa are the same as those of the Ecology Party. It has branches throughout Britain (in Scotland it is the

Clydesdale Bank), and many ECO branches already bank with the Midland. The Midland Bank also gave the most prompt and helpful replies to the questionnaire sent out to the six banks on our short-list.

The NC has agreed that the Party's account should now remain at one address, rather than moving around according to where the current Treasurer happens to live, and the branch selected is at 39 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0AR.

Anti nuclear conference

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Earth decided to take no part in either the conference or the ANC. Many of us see this sectarian response as evidence of the desperate need for a national co-ordinating group.

The prime task for all of us who are opposed to nuclear power, is to move the issue to the centre of the political stage - to make it an issue that cannot be ignored. To do this, we need a mass movement, with hundreds of thousands of supporters. A movement which can mobilise its supporters in huge demonstrations, and which can counter the propaganda machine of the nuclear lobby on a street to street, and door to door basis.

With the possible exception of SCRAM (Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace), anti nuclear groups have totally failed to build such a movement. The movement as it now exists has too often involved itself in the sterile, nit picking debates which those who lock themselves away from the real world substitute for activity. The tragedy is that while the anti

nuclear movement has been picking the fluff from its communal novel, it has almost managed to miss the growing tide of public concern about nuclear power.

Almost but not quite. The Torness festival and occupation showed that the anti nuclear movement can mobilize large (if not vast) numbers on demonstrations, and the launching of the ANC shows that most of us realize that national organization and co-ordination are essential if we are to build a real mass movement.

Eco has an important role to play in building such a movement. Every branch should work within its local anti nuclear group, getting it to affiliate to the ANC, and making sure it is an active and vital force. If no local group exists, then we should be setting it up, for it seems likely that if we don't take the lead in building the ANC, then nobody else will. And if a mass movement is not built, then Sir Arnold Weinstock will win, and humanity will lose.

Branch office

The Edinburgh branch has become the first in the country to establish a party office. The office, situated in the heart of the city at 47 Niddrie Street, has already been redecorated, and is currently being furnished with donated chairs, desks, and a typewriter. It will be manned during office hours by volunteers, and act as an information exchange and meeting place. Parts of the office may also be let out to other Edinburgh groups.

Party growth

The Ecology Party is continuing to grow at a rapid rate, with new branches being formed every week. As *Econews* went to press, the total stood at 192, with membership approaching 5000. These figures provide strong support for our claim to be Britain's fastest growing political party, and make Eco one of the most influential groups within the ecological movement.

Abolish conferences?

The present conference system of decision making has a number of obvious drawbacks, some of which were outlined in a letter from the Brighton branch printed in *Econews* 5. One suggestion being considered by the working party on Voting Procedures is to abolish conferences and take all decisions by referendum instead.

Volunteers required

Volunteers are required for the following posts

- 1) **EDITOR** of *Econews*
- 2) **EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS** for *Econews*
- 3) **ADVISOR(S)** on **ARTWORK AND LAYOUT** for *Econews*. This job may be combined with that of the Editor.
- 4) **PARTY TREASURER** to take over the management of National Accounts.
- 5) **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY** to take over the work of the present Secretary, which involves 15-20 hours work a week.
- 6) **A PRODUCTION AND MAILING BRANCH** to arrange the printing of *Econews* with a local printer, and to undertake prompt wrapping, addressing and dispatch every other month. This needs one person in the branch capable of organizing a large volume of simple repetitive work quickly.

The above positions are normally unpaid, but expenses (telephone, postage and travel) may be paid by the National Council. In exceptional cases a small honorarium may be available. A payment could be made to the branch funds of the Production and Mailing branch.

Applicants should send details of their relevant experience to Anne Rix, 90 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex, as soon as possible.

Also required are volunteers to enter their names on a **DIRECTORY OF NATIONAL COUNCIL HELPERS**. People offering their services will be asked to give details of their abilities and times available on a form, so that they may be approached when a job likely to suit them needs to be done. Forms are available from Anne Rix at the above address.

It is possible, of course, that referenda may prove to be just as unsatisfactory as conferences. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two options? Are there any alternatives? This is a vital question which needs the fullest possible discussion within the Party — so please send your views to the working party convenor, David Taylor, at 13 St James' Square, Bath, Avon.

Council meetings

January 19th: Birmingham
February 16th: London
March 15/16th: Batley
April 12/13th: Manchester
May 17/18th: Edinburgh
June 21st: London
July 19/20th: South Wales
August 16th: London.

Paid up members are entitled to attend any of the above meetings as observers. Further details of venues and times from John Wareing, the Assistant National Secretary.

Publicity

Paul Ekins, the Assistant Press Secretary, is trying to compile a set of guidelines for branches wanting advice on local press matters. Could any branches which have had success in generating local publicity, please share their ideas and experiences with Paul at 42 Warriner Gardens, London SW11.

Appointments

It is clear that our organisation is now very stretched. With 100 new members joining every week, and branches springing up everywhere, the dangerously haphazard nature of communications within the Party is a considerable worry. The job of finding and establishing a more permanent office is again something too demanding and time-consuming for any of our volunteers to undertake. With these considerations in mind, we now hope to establish the first two full-time paid posts within the Ecology Party.

Applications are invited for:

FUND RAISER

To be responsible for generating the level of funds required to sustain the Party's ever-increasing activities. Previous experience of fund raising is desirable. Applicants need not live in London.

GENERAL SECRETARY

To be active as a general contact in all areas promoting the aims of the Ecology Party, and to be responsible specifically at this stage for establishing the Party Office on a more permanent basis in London. Applicants should live in or near London.

Both Fund Raiser and General Secretary will be expected to work closely with the National Council, and may be asked to undertake further important responsibilities as and when the occasion demands. The workload will be heavy and the responsibilities great; applicants should be prepared to commit themselves totally to making a success of their job.

The successful applicants will be paid on a monthly basis at a salary to be negotiated with the National Council. It must be understood that the establishment or the second post rather depends on the success of the first. It may be that some applicants possess qualities suitable to both positions — in which case a combined post could be considered.

All applications should be sent to Anne Rix, 90 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex, as soon as possible. Please enclose a full curriculum vitae, and all relevant details as regards special experience and general suitability for these posts.

Subscriptions

The Treasurer would like to remind members that subscriptions for 1980 are now due. These can be sent to ECO, P.O. Box 30, Norwich, but should preferably be sent to your Branch Secretary. If you use the Registration form enclosed with this issue to renew your subscription, please write RENEWAL at the top.

Manchester policy conference

April 11.12.13th

Plans for the Party's policy conference in Manchester on the 11th, 12th and 13th of April are well advanced, and reservations are now being accepted. A booking form is printed in this issue of EConews, and should be returned to Ron Andrews at 18 Cofton Lake Road, Birmingham 45 as soon as possible.

Branch and individually prepared policy papers have been circulated to all branches and policy discussion is well under way. The culmination of all this feverish activity will be the Policy Conference in Manchester in April, which will give the membership the chance to discuss and vote on the policy to be incorporated in the Manifesto. It may seem an expensive way of spending a weekend but the gains are enormous — it is not often that widely distributed members interested in the same subject have the opportunity of meeting to exchange views — clearly an opportunity not to be missed!

Your decisions are vitally important and the organisers are hoping this time to organise the Conference on a small group basis so that everyone has a chance to participate in thrashing out the subject of their choice. As you will see from the provisional programme below, the range of topics is enormous and very careful organisation will be necessary. The organisers would like help from you in their planning of the sessions: should there be several running simultaneously? Or consecutively? Or a mixture? Please send your suggestions to Digby Dodd, Policy Organiser (address on back page).

Decisions will be recorded by a system of proxy voting. In other words, if you really cannot come to Manchester you may lend your **Membership Card** (issued to you on receipt of your subscription or subcription renewal) to a fellow member

who is going to be there, and ask them to vote for you.

Besides debating party policy, members will also have the opportunity to discuss more general issues, such as the policy formation system itself, the manifesto and party literature, and whether conferences should continue to be the supreme decision making body of the Party.

Costs have been kept to a minimum but it is realised that some members will find it difficult to go. However a Branch, if it so wished, could sponsor one or more members to attend, carrying as many proxy votes as required. All of this will necessitate a lot of discussion prior to Conference so that proxy voters are sure of their instructions. Branches will need to make sure that they have received all the Conference papers and aired them thoroughly.

The Conference will be at Owens Park, 297 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester 14. Tel: 061 225 5555. Accommodation is in single rooms. Meeting halls and dining facilities are all part of the same complex. Fully vegetarian meals and creche facilities will be provided. Unfortunately there are no facilities for alternative accommodation, e.g. camping, anywhere convenient to the University site, so unless members can make their own individual arrangements they are urged to take up the campus booking.

Booking forms to be sent as soon as possible to Ron Andrews (address below). Enquiries about accommodation and University facilities to John Foster (address on back page). General enquiries to either Gundula Dorey or Sally Willington (addresses on back page). Don't miss what promises to be a hectic and stimulating weekend — reserve your place now!

Provisional Programme

Friday, 11th April

Morning Arrival

- Afternoon 1. **ECONOMICS**
Policy papers:
Taxation,
Employment.
2. **RESOURCES**
Policy papers:
Energy, Land
Population, Transport

Saturday, 12th April

- Morning 1. **JUSTICE**
Policy papers:
Animal welfare,
Defence, Foreign Aid,
Northern Ireland.
2. **PRIMARY INDUSTRY**
Policy paper:
Agriculture and Food.

- Afternoon 1. **COMMUNITY**
Policy papers:
Education, Housing,
Health.
2. **DEMOCRACY**
Policy paper
Core document.

Sunday, 13th April

- Morning 1. Discussion on:
Policy Generation
Policy Distribution
Policy A.O.B.
2. ECO business.

Afternoon Departure.

BOOKING FORM

Please reserve places at Conference for
 (names) as indicated below.

	Cost per Person	Number of Persons	£
Accommodation and meals			
Friday lunch	£2.78		
Friday dinner	£3.16		
Friday bed & breakfast	£6.96		
Saturday lunch	£2.78		
Saturday dinner	£3.16		
Saturday bed & breakfast	£6.96		
Sunday lunch	£3.16		
Session fees (including tea and coffee)			
Friday p.m.	£2.00		
Saturday a.m.	£2.00		
Saturday p.m.	£2.00		
Sunday a.m.	£2.00		
All four sessions (living in)	£5.70		
All four sessions (living out)	£6.70		
		Total	

Please find enclosed cheque/P.O. for

I will require vegetarian meals.

Signed Name

Address

Return this form, with cheque made out to 'Ecology Party', to Ron Andrews, 18 Cofton Lake Road, Rednal, Birmingham 45.



Moving into action

John Foster describes the four campaigns being mounted by the Party

Following last September's Conference decision that the Party should mount a number of campaigns nationally this year, we have taken the first steps towards co-ordinated action in four broad areas of concern: nuclear energy; the various health hazards associated with industrial society; unemployment, specifically in connection with automation; and the need for real local decision-making and control in many aspects of our lives. All Branch Organisers should have received a circular from me explaining the plans. A number of Branches have already discussed this and worked out in principle how they might participate.

Anti Nuclear Campaign

In one area — nuclear energy — events have somewhat run ahead of us with the formation of the national Anti-Nuclear Campaign. As reported elsewhere in this issue by Sean Thompson, we believe it to be important that the ANC should succeed in gaining national attention, and we are involving ourselves both nationally and locally in trying to make it work. But we shall be trying to ensure that the main burden of our contribution will consist of our own case against Nuclear Power — which differs in some respects from the case advanced by other supporters of the ANC, for instance in our ecological emphasis on the need for change in society's fundamental attitudes towards energy consumption and the environment. All four campaign areas outlined above were in fact chosen to give the widest possible spread of issues going to the heart of the ecological case. The aim is that Branches should pursue more or less their own interests (and there cannot be many campaign targets which do not come under one or other of those broad headings), but as part of a range of activities which can be presented to the media as nation-wide Ecology Party campaigns, and involving literature and publicity carrying a national Ecology Party message.

2,4,5,-T

The benefits of such co-ordination will be principally political. Perhaps the most formidable barrier facing us on our road towards credibility as a viable alternative

is the widespread lack of knowledge of what, positively, we stand for. It really is widespread as yet. We need not just the man in the Devon lane, or even the man on the Clapham omnibus, to have heard of us — but also the man (and woman) in the Manchester high-rise, the Leeds terrace, the Birmingham car factory. And not just to have heard of us, but to have heard a plain message offering clear-cut, practical and obviously valid aims with which they can identify. Now our case, when seen as a whole case, is powerful enough to make that sort of impact; but it is crucial that we get the full impression of that case across. Take the example of the fight against 2,4,5-T in the West Country, reported elsewhere in this issue by Tony Charles. Here was a highly effective local campaign which drew some national attention, but for which — despite heroic exertions by the principal organisers, Tony and Liz Sigmund — the Ecology Party has received little political credit. But suppose we can shortly present such campaigns to the Press in these terms: "Here we are fighting against this herbicide; here (at the other end of the country) simultaneously against toxic waste dumping; and here, again (in some congested inner-city) we are publicising the dangers of lead in petrol. All these widespread hazards accompany the kind of society we now choose to live in. The right answer to each of them must therefore be a political answer; and here are our proposals in brief." Such a campaign could well catch the nation's eye as isolated attacks on local targets, however well-managed, are unlikely to do.

Such a campaign will have been launched, and will, we hope, be periodically sustained, by 'events' organised by all interested Branches in co-operation. And it will be clearly positive, setting protest at particular abuses in the context of practical policies for changing the structure of society.

The corollary of such an attempt to regain national notice (which we have scarcely had since the General Election) is that our 'national message' — both our analysis of the problems and our proposals for change — must be presented in such a way as to appeal to a wider public,

and generate much more broadly-based support than we have yet managed to attract. Party literature hitherto has mainly envisaged a concerned middle-class public. We need to work hard on producing material which can also reach beyond that audience. This is crucial if we are ever to win Parliamentary seats. These campaigns offer us an invaluable chance to experiment.

It would be wasteful of talent and effort to leave this up to Branches experimenting individually; so one of my current tasks as co-ordinator is to involve all Branches so far participating in the design of leaflets and other material which will best combine local impact with a clear, hard-hitting message appropriate to each campaign.

Politics of hope

If this article has seemed rather general, about strategy rather than detailed tactics, that is because at the time of writing (late December) too few Branches have responded to my initial circular for us to make sensible plans as yet about the precise shape and scope of the campaigns. I hope that anyone who is convinced of the need for a strategy such as I have described, but whose Branch has not yet discussed the Circular or resolved on participation, will agitate for early action. We simply have to rise to the challenge of getting ourselves organised as an effective national force without losing our vital dimension of local concern and involvement. This is the politics of hope. We ought not to let too much of the New Year slip by before we begin to reach again for the political initiative which we seized, fleetingly, last May.

Four pages of campaign reports

Page 8 No to Portskeewett

Page 9 North London Line

Pages 10 & 11 Agrochemicals

Nuclear battles

Eco branches in the South West are linking up with other anti nuclear groups to prevent the construction of an Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor at Portskewett in Gwent. Alan Clarke reports

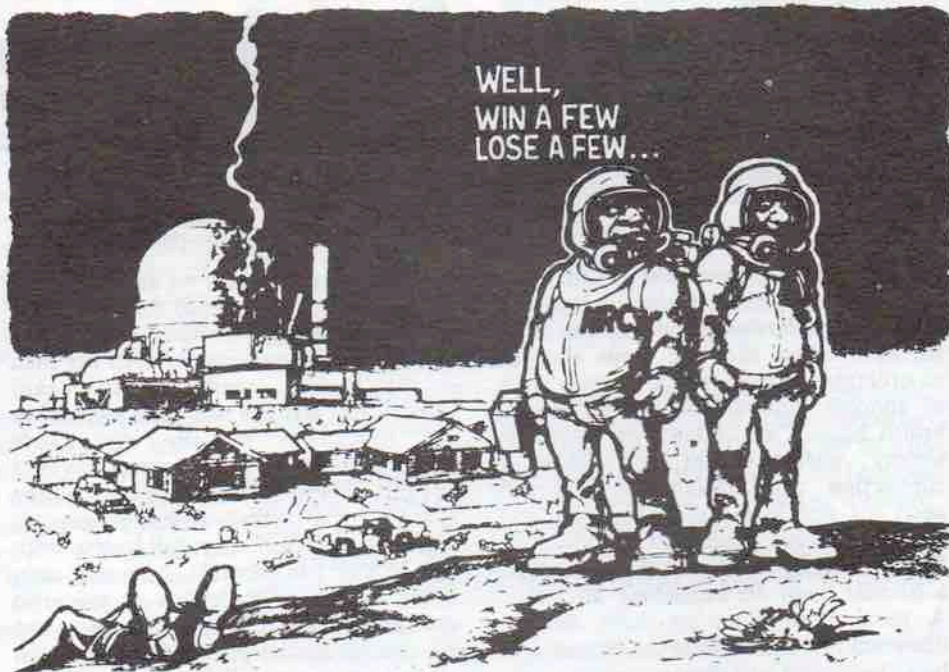
The Government's new nuclear energy programme is more-or-less what we expected — augmentation and substitution of our existing Magnox/AGR plant by PWRs with the aim of doubling our nuclear generating capacity by the turn of the century. After that presumably, a fast reactor programme will be necessary if the nuclear industry is to survive — conventional plants consume uranium, and there's only so much of it around.

In the meantime, one wonders what will happen to the Government's current AGR programme. No doubt Dungeness "B" and Torness will proceed according to present plans (or as nearly according to plan as the public will allow!), but the case of Portskewett, Gwent, is more problematic, as no decision to proceed has yet been taken.

Public enquiry

The latest application, which specifies two 660MWe AGRs, is now in the hands of the Secretary of State for Wales and the Secretary of State for Energy jointly and they have announced that a public inquiry into the application is to be held. At the time of writing, no decision has been made on either the date of the inquiry or its terms of reference. This latter point is of vital importance to us, for it has been general practice in previous inquiries to consider the matter from the narrowest possible planning angle, in such a way as to rule out the main arguments (need, health and safety, waste disposal etc), reducing the whole affair to the level of farce.

In view of Mr Howell's Commons announcement, it is possible that the Portskewett application may be with-



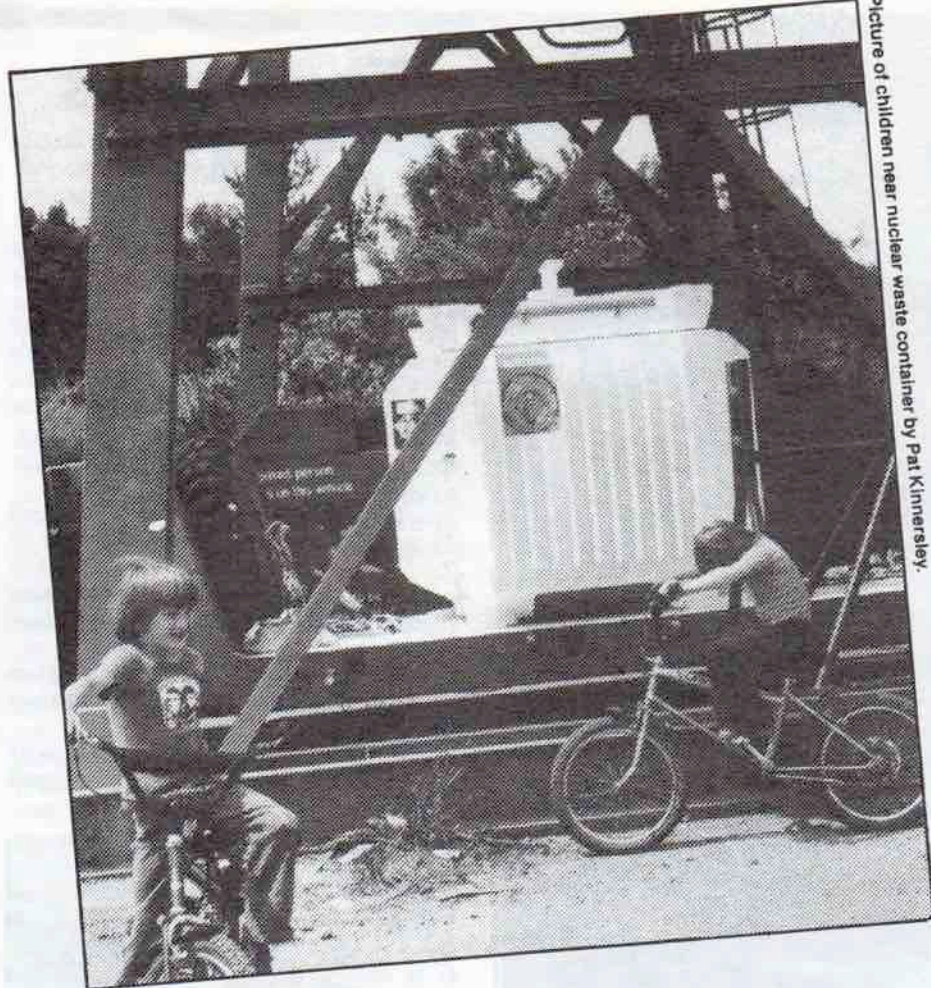
drawn as an AGR application, so that the Central Electricity Generating Board can propose a PWR for the site instead. Whilst there is doubt, we must assume that the inquiry into the AGR station will take place and the anti-nuclear groups must continue to prepare their case for it.

For the past twelve months, local groups have been working under the umbrella of the Severnside Anti-Nuclear Alliance, a loosely-defined organisation of groups and individuals, and have shared out the various aspects of nuclear power station planning such as reactor safety, low level radiation, etc, so as to minimise any duplication of effort. The Ecology Party's "topic" is civil liberties and

terrorism, an item that may or may not be considered relevant by the inquiry inspector, who is likely to see it as more pertinent to a fast reactor or reprocessing plant inquiry. (Rather a blinkered approach, of course: what happens to spent reactor fuel if it is not reprocessed?)

Whatever arrangements are made, it is clear that Portskewett is going to be a major issue for some time to come. It is quite possible that, metaphorically speaking, it will be the first nuclear battle of the eighties. One way or another, these battles must be won — and they must be won with the support of the Ecology Party.





Picture of children near nuclear waste container by Pat Kinnersley.

Nuclear waste threat

Three nights a week trains carrying containers holding three tons of poisonous nuclear waste travel through London on their way to Windscale for reprocessing. The waste is held in mild steel flasks, each of which contains sixty six thousand curies of Caesium 137 and a similar amount of Ruthenium 136. If a flask were to be breached, a thirty degree wedge of London four and a half kilometres long would be rendered uninhabitable for up to one hundred and twenty five years. If there was no evacuation, five hundred people would die within days, and whether or not evacuation took place, something like six thousand would die over a period of thirty years.

The issue of nuclear waste is rapidly becoming a major campaign both for the anti-nuclear movement and Eco in London. The Harrow branch and members active in the North London Anti Nuclear Group have been involved in street corner and door to door leafletting in some of the areas through which the trains pass and a number of public meetings are being held in the next week or two.

However, much has still to be done. Most Londoners are still unaware of this deadly traffic, so a massive publicity campaign has to be mounted by the anti nuclear movement. There is a vast amount of work to be done – thousands of doors need to be knocked on, tens of thousands of leaflets need to be distributed, and a great deal of money needs to be raised. It is a huge job, but if Eco takes the lead in tackling it we will not only be helping to build the Anti-Nuclear Campaign, but also building our own standing within it.

Demonstration

In the immediate future, a demonstration against nuclear waste in London has been called for Saturday January 26, assembling 1.00 pm at Primrose Hill (nearest tube Chalk Farm). Publicity material is available from the ANC, and all Eco members and supporters in London and the South East should attend if they can possibly make it.

A network of groups campaigning against the dumping of nuclear waste has been formed under the auspices of the Anti Nuclear Campaign. The network intends to establish a newsletter to co-ordinate opposition within Britain, and to liaise with anti nuclear groups in Europe and Japan. Besides opposing waste dumping at public enquiries, the network hopes to persuade dockworkers to black consignments of waste from abroad. Eco branches wishing to participate in the network should contact Peter Walker, 46 Ebrington Road, West Malvern, Worcs. Tel. Malvern 65504.

Oil giants sued over lead in petrol

Two three year olds from West London recently took on the corporate might of Shell and BP in the courts. The oil companies were being sued for damages by the children's parents who claim that pollution from lead in petrol is affecting their children's health. The oil companies also faced the prospect of an injunction forcing them to take lead out of petrol.

The case came up for a second time in the Mayor's and City of London Court in the latter part of last year. Shell and BP tried to get the case struck out, claiming that (amongst other things), it was vexatious and an abuse of the process of law, as the parents were also campaigning against lead in petrol outside the court. The defendants quoted as evidence for this the fact that one of the parents, Nicholas Albery, stood as an Ecology candidate in the General Election in Kensington. One part of his campaign was the phasing out of lead in petrol.

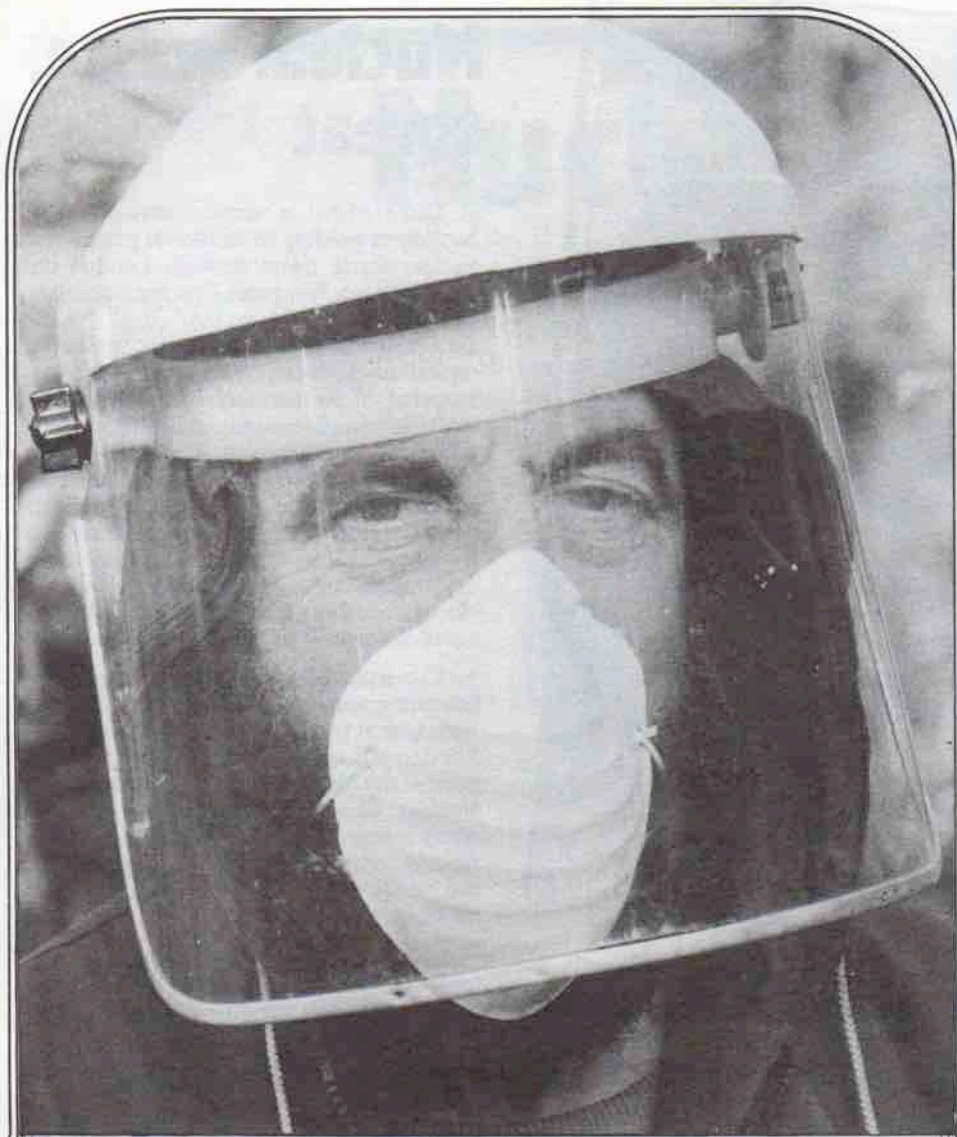
Dreadful behaviour

The judge, swayed by this dreadful behaviour, would clearly have liked to strike the case out as he considered there was "an object sought by the . . . (parents) . . . in the litigation beyond the mere recovery of damages for the infants". He suggested during the hearing that it might be better to wait until the children were twenty one when they could obtain, perhaps, heavy damages. The fact that stopping lead pollution now would stop future brain damage did not seem to weigh with him, and he quoted as un-

desirable the other parent's attitude "that she considers the protection of the generality of children by means of the action the main object to be achieved. Her attitude seems to be that if an action on behalf of her son is necessary to achieve this, well and good; she has no objection to benefitting him in the process".

He concluded, "I am much concerned at the possibility of what I may call the propaganda possibilities of these actions if the . . . (parents) . . . continue to have control of the proceedings, obscuring what is in the best interests of the infants". He therefore referred the matter to the Official Solicitor, with a view to his taking over the cases. The Official Solicitor in fact declined to take any part in the proceedings as he presumably did not think it so dreadful after all.

P.S. One consequence of the recent change of government is that the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment responsible for dealing with lead in petrol is now Marcus Fox, M.P. for Shipley – at the General Election, the Ecology candidate in this constituency was David Pedley, solicitor for Nicholas Albery.



Curland

This is the place; there's nothing much to show:
the cloud, fine drops like smoke, dispersed two years ago;
the sprayer shucked his yellow oilskins, unstrapped
the knapsack sprayer from his back, rapped
five strong knuckles on the empty canister and went for tea;
his wife greeted him, laughed, took him to task
for not having taken off his mask
before he kissed her. Yes, it's easy to be
flippant, frightening to take it seriously. Hard
evidence? None remains.

Down there is the farm. Corpses were loaded in the yard.
This is the field. The dead grass is almost grown again
and only in the mind's ear can you hear
the mother's elegy for her dead lambs,
only in the shadow of your thought may you see
the malformed foetus, slime on the hands
of the bewildered shepherd; there is nothing now to fear.

But the rain knows, the soft rain that blows
across the pasture, cleansing until the next time;
and the land remembers, the grey-green land,
muted by winter, quiet now.

"What is that sound?" Only the lapwing crying.
"What is that sound?" Hush. No-one is dying
Until the next time. Not now. Not here. Not yet.
Be still. It is easier to forget.

Tony Charles

The victims

The Helliar case: A Somerset farmer lost a great number of sheep through miscarriage, deformity, loss of general condition and staggering symptoms leading to death. These events followed Forestry spraying of adjacent land with 2,4,5-T. A complicated case, made more so by the aggressive attitude of the Forestry Commission, what seems to have been a negligent approach by Mr. Helliar's vets., and a total failure of the Ministry of Agriculture or its Veterinary Investigation Service to answer pleas for a full and searching investigation.

The Chidgey case: A Somerset Forestry Commission worker, sprayer of 2,4,5-T, believes that his daughter's birth deformities were due to transmission of dioxin through his sperm — an all-too-familiar risk.

The Sheltinga case : A North Wales Forestry sprayer's wife miscarries, blames 245-T.

The Cobbledick case: Somerset wife of Forestry sprayer had 5-month miscarriage.



Paula and Richard Chidgey

The Morris case: Woman living on the edge of Cannock chase had miscarriage with "dreadful deformity"; Forestry Commission say that they haven't sprayed the Chase for "at least five years" — but dioxin can lie formant in male or female tissue for much longer, and the Morris family have often picked blackberries there.

The Dally case: Somerset farmer, whose sheep losses showed a similar pattern to those in the Helliar case. Veterinary Investigation Service post-mortems offered no solution — but they admit that they do not have the facilities to test for 2,4,5-T and anyway, it can be lethal in such miniscule proportions as to be virtually undetectable.

Seaford, Sussex: 2,4-D sprayed by Lewes District Council on a children's playing field as well as on hedges and verges. Many local people complain of mouth, nose and throat symptoms; many animals shown sores and eczema; vegetation dies. Case research still going on.

DANGER 2,4,5-T

By now, most people in the Party should be aware of the campaign that is being fought against the use, especially by the Forestry Commission, of the herbicide 2,4,5-T and its 'sister' compound, 2,4-D in this country. This campaign is reflected against a background of awareness growing all over the world of the use of these deadly dioxin-bearing chemicals, originally devised for warfare. Tony Charles gives the background to the campaign and describes how other branches can help.

In all these cases, the common link is clear. Yet the government remain extremely sceptical and demand more proof before considering any action against chemicals which they have repeatedly publicised as being "safe". On the brighter side, however, we are joined in our determination to seek a ban by the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, who are supporting all their men in a refusal to spray 2,4,5-T for the Forestry Commission and who are, with our help, preparing a detailed submission to Minister for Agriculture, Peter Walker. Good news also in that Roy Mason, Labour's Shadow Minister has at last declared himself at least to the extent of joining the growing clamour for a wide-ranging enquiry. It is perhaps worthwhile also to consider the international background, especially:

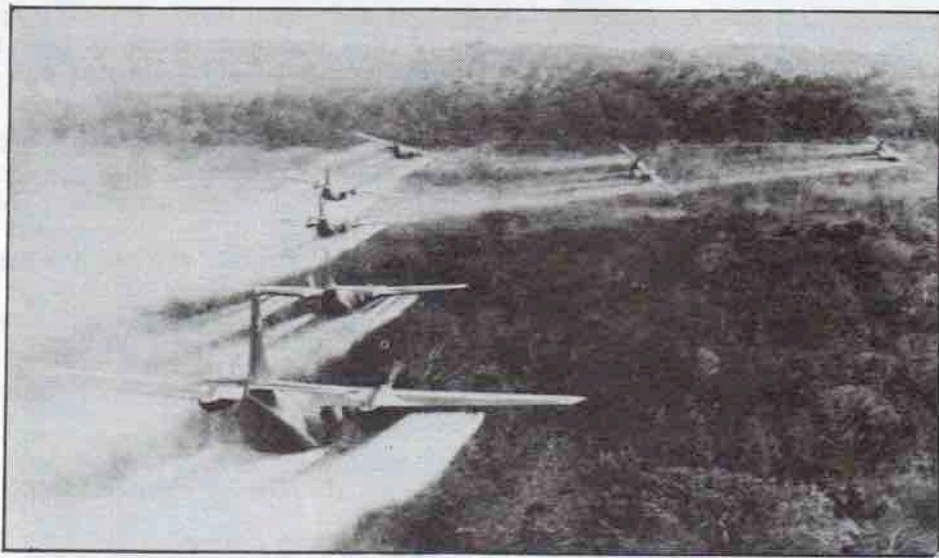
USA: where an interim ban is in force and has just been upheld despite an appeal by the organised efforts of the producing industry; where the Oregon miscarriages, the Vietnam veterans' cancers and miscarriages and the current huge number of civil cases for compensation before the courts have made World-wide news...

Italy: 2,4,5-T is banned; not surprisingly. Remember Seveso!

Holland, Norway, Sweden: banned.

New Zealand: very active groups pursuing a ban against a wide background of research into cases similar to those UK cases cited above.

The British Press have been interested in fits and starts, though all too often



... originally devised for warfare. Defoliants being used in Vietnam

reluctant to give credit to the Ecology Party, who have not only given them most of their leads and information on case history, but are also acting as an important clearing house for vital research data, especially from America. If we are to push the campaign to a logical conclusion, a ban on 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D followed by full compensation for those who have suffered, we must mobilise more of the Party's strength in attracting attention to the issue and to ourselves. One very constructive thing which branch organisers could and should do is to try to find out what they can about any local use of the herbicides concerned over, say,

the last ten years. Forestry Commission land is an especially likely area for research. Letters to local newspapers and demonstrations against 2,4,5-T are very useful, as they can stimulate the interest of people who may well themselves be victims; whether they themselves have suffered illness or miscarriage, or whether they have lost farm or domestic animals, it is quite likely that they have never considered the possibility that the herbicide might be responsible and so have not come forward. Any such case history information as becomes available should then be forwarded, to me in the first instance, with as much detail as can possibly be gathered... precise dates and so on.* But you should also seek to gain the maximum of publicity from your local press, radio and T.V. stations, who will be very pleased to pick up a local angle on a National issue.

My one reservation about the conduct of the campaign so far is that too much has fallen on too few shoulders; most of the work has been done by a handful of Party workers in the South West region and the National Council, while expressing its willingness to help, has not seemed to be able to find any role for itself in the battle. I am personally afraid that this is, as yet, a general weakness in our young political party, which must seek to be more organised, more dedicated and more politically conscious in its approach if it is ultimately to have any impact on the fate of this country.

*Tony Charles, 60 Sylvan Road, Wellington, Somerset. 082 347 3661.



Forbidden fruit... Gillian Sheltinga with her two children

Poverty and population

A decline in the rate of world population growth is now evident beyond all doubt", says the 1979 'State of the World Population' report from the UN Fund for Population Activities.

Drawing on new estimates by UN analysts, the report concludes that two billion of the developing world's three billion people "have been reducing their fertility substantially". With birth rates continuing to slide in Europe, the USSR, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, this means that the trend towards smaller families has now spread to three quarters of the human race.

Despite the new figures, UNFPA Executive Director Rafael Salas warns that "it would be a grave error of judgement to make the tempting leap from pessimism to optimism and suppose that the 'population problem' has been solved". Rapid population growth over the last few decades has left the Third World with 40% of its people under the age of fifteen and about to enter their child bearing years. So even if the present fall off in fertility rates is maintained for the next twenty years, says Salas, "this will not prevent the world's population from increasing by nearly two billion" by the end of the century". Below, Peter Adamson of the New Internationalist discusses the impact of these two billion new arrivals on the struggle against world poverty.

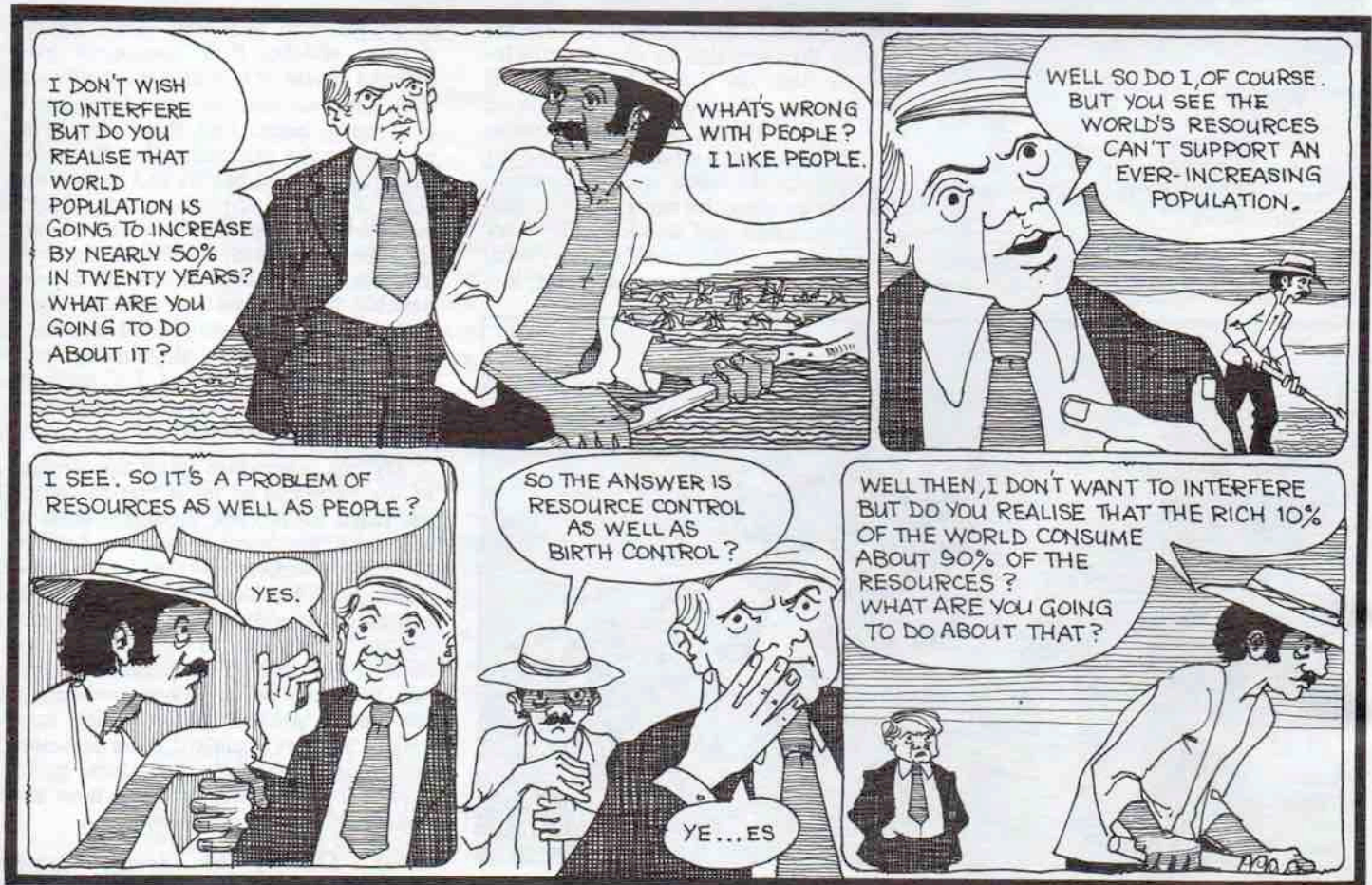
At first sight an increase of two billion in the world's population spells nothing but trouble. Ninety percent of the 'new arrivals' will be born into the developing world where 200 million are already severely malnourished, where the majority already lack safe water and adequate health care, where half of the over-fifteens are now illiterate, and where up to a third of the labour force cannot earn a decent living for themselves and their families. On top of all this, half as many people again in twenty years can only make things worse.

This way of looking at the problem is not only pessimistic it is also wrong-headed. Let's start again.

Population is not the problem. The problem is whether the planet's finite resources and the way in which they are used can provide a decent and dignified life for all its people. And that is a very different question. As the economist Barbara Ward has said, "the problem is not one of absolute physical shortage but of social and economic maldistribution and misuse".

Malnutrition

Take food. Are 200 million people hungry because the world cannot grow enough food to feed all its people? No. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome, the world grows twice as much food every year, in grains alone, as is necessary to provide enough food for every man, woman and child on the earth. And up to four times as much food could be grown using presently available land and presently available technology.



So malnutrition cannot be explained by the simple formula 'too many people too little land'.

It can be better explained by looking at how available land and technology is used — by whom, to grow what crops, and for whose benefit. In Central America and the Caribbean, for example, more than half of the children are malnourished and more than half of the agricultural land is being used to grow fruit and other crops for export to the developed countries. In the Sahel, even during the great drought of 1974, the production of export crops like peanuts from a country like Mali actually went up, according to World Bank figures, whilst tens of thousands of people starved. In Colombia, where malnutrition is also common, fertile land is used to grow eighteen million dollars-worth of cut-flowers a year for the industrialised world.

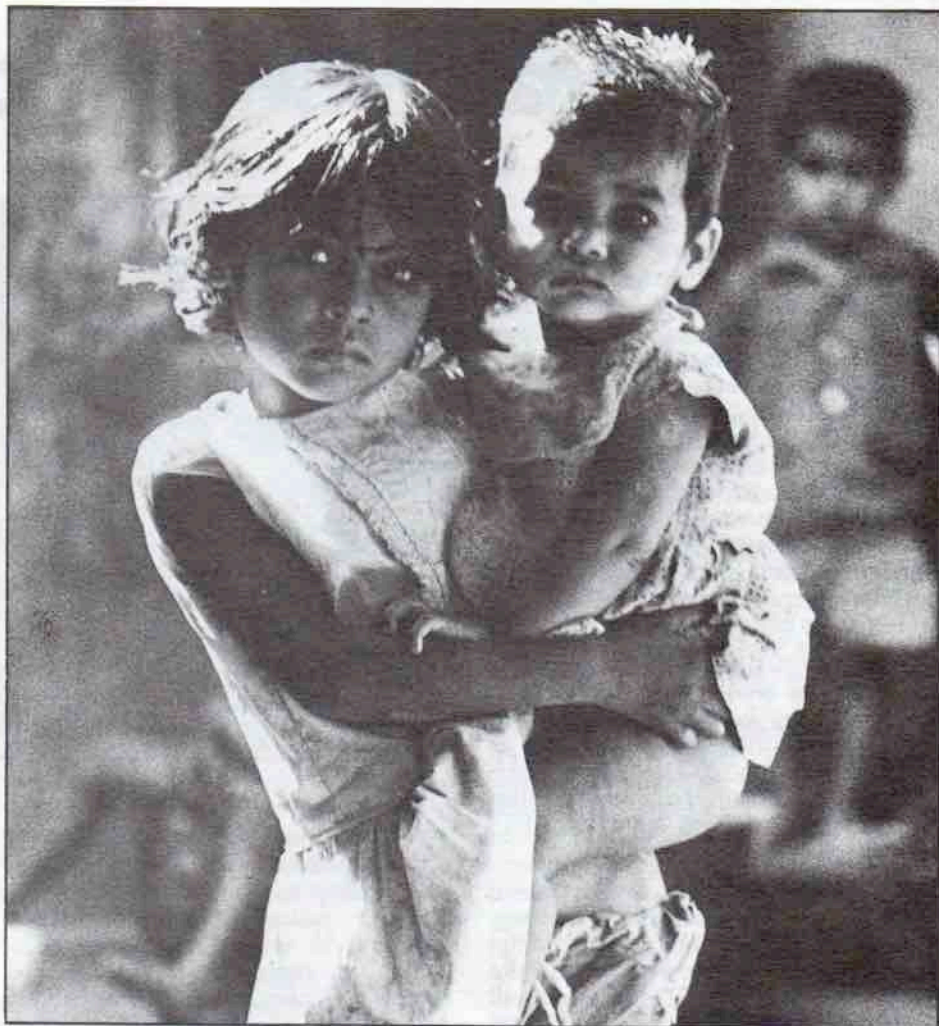
Market forces

The message contained in these examples was succinctly summed up by the former FAO Director General Adeke Boerma who told the World Food Conference in 1974 that "the market, playing freely, will always feed the rich".

The fact of the matter is that only the poor starve. And they starve only because they are poor — because they cannot afford to buy the food that is grown, or the much greater quantities of food, that could be grown, or the land and the means to grow food for themselves. In short, economic demand is put before human demand and poverty, not population growth, is at the root of food shortages.

Or take health. Do one billion people lack health care because there are too many people and not enough doctors and hospitals? Again, the answer has to be 'no'. According to the World Health Organisation, 80% of illness caused by infectious disease could be prevented if every family had access to safe water supplies. To achieve that would cost about three to four billion dollars a year for ten years (World Bank figures). It is a lot of money. About 4% of what the industrialised world spends on alcoholic drinks every year.

Even within the resources of the developing world itself, it cannot be seriously argued that it is the population growth which has swamped efforts to raise health standards. The World Health Organisation estimates that 80% of the health budgets in the developing world as a whole are now being spent on providing curative medicine serving only 20% of the people. A recent survey in five Latin American countries, for example, has shown that expenditure on medical care and cure is ten times greater than on water and sanitation systems. And this is despite the fact that more than three-quarters of all cases of ill-health can be traced to the 'big three' causes — inadequate nutrition, lack of safe water, and unhygienic sanitation.



The task of improving the health of the majority of the world's people, as World Health Organisation Director General Halfdan Mahler has repeatedly pointed out, is primarily a task of low-cost prevention for the many rather than high-cost cure for the few. Barbara Ward's accusation that the problem is primarily one of 'maldistribution and misuse' is therefore also closer to the heart of the health problem than is rapid population growth.

Similar analyses could be made for other basic building blocks of a 'decent and dignified life'. UNICEF has pointed out, for example, that 50% of the resources available for education in the developing world as a whole are being devoted to a small minority of the school-age population. And World Bank estimates for five major cities — Madras, Ahmedabad, Nairobi, Mexico City and Bogota — show that the cheapest government-subsidised housing now being built is only affordable by the richest 30% to 50% of their urban populations.

New Economic Order

At the global level also, the question of whether the world's resources can provide an adequate life for the world's people, which is the real context of the population issue, must take into account the present use and distribution of those resources. It

must take into account, for example, that the poorest 70% of the world's people have less than 10% of the world's wealth; that a child born into the developed world will consume between twenty and forty times as much of the world's resources as a child born into the developing world; that the Third World as a whole receives only thirty billion dollars a year for its major exports which then sell, in finished form, for more than two hundred billion dollars a year in the importing countries.

These facts seal the link between rapid population growth and the Third World's search for a New Economic Order in which future opportunities for the creation of wealth and jobs and income would be more equitably distributed. Add to that the now widely-accepted fact that the raising of living standards is the key element in the lowering of birth-rates, and the case for placing the major emphasis on reducing poverty rather than on reducing the numbers of the poor becomes watertight. For in the last analysis, the question of whether the world's wealth can provide a decent and dignified life for all the world's people is, by definition, as much a question of wealth control as of birth control and as much a question of the consumption explosion in the industrialised world as of the 'population' explosion in the developing world.

America's new political parties

American environmentalists have two distinct advantages over their British counterparts. The first is a Freedom of Information Act, which has proved invaluable in exposing some of the undesirable activities of governments and corporations, and the second is a legal system which gives pressure groups the wherewithal to tie opponents up in protracted court proceedings. Armed with these two weapons, American ecologists have won some notable victories, particularly over toxic chemicals and pollution. Lobbying, demonstrations and direct action have also shown results, especially with regard to America's nuclear power programme.

The ecological movement in the States has therefore tended to concentrate its attention away from traditional politics. This is now changing however, and in the last twelve months, two new groups have emerged with the aim of putting environmental policies onto America's political agenda.

The more important of the two is the Campaign for Economic Democracy, which arose out of Tom Hayden's attempt to win the Democratic nomination for a U.S. Senate seat in 1976. Hayden is well known in America for his role in the anti Vietnam War demonstrations, and the subsequent attempt by the Nixon administration to imprison him on a charge of conspiracy. His eventual acquittal earned him the status of a contemporary folk hero, which, together with the involvement of his wife, Jane Fonda, has led to widespread media coverage of CED activities.

Political enigma

In many respects, the CED is something of a political enigma. It appears to have no coherent philosophy beyond a simplistic belief that America's big corporations are the cause of almost all the country's economic ills. Many of their policies are respectably ecological (e.g. tenant's and worker's rights, anti pollution, pro solar power etc.), yet Hayden insists that the organization is on the left of the political spectrum. He qualifies this assertion however, by stressing that the CED is not socialist. "Economic Democracy . . . is a concept that draws upon the best of certain traditions, while trying to learn from all the developments since the days of Adam Smith and Karl Marx."

The public reaction to the CED has, with few exceptions, been favourable. In October, Fonda and Hayden made a coast to coast tour of the country, giving speeches in over 50 cities — the predominantly student audiences gave them an enthusiastic reception. But although



Jane Fonda

Hayden's policies may differ from those of the established parties, his methods of campaigning do not. The slick, media oriented packaging of his message threatens to corrupt it beyond recognition, a danger to which Hayden appears oblivious. One Eco member in America who attempted to talk with him after a meeting, was dismayed by his insincerity. "He's not interested in anything that would not directly enhance his chances of selling himself to the nation", she said.

Nevertheless, support for the organization appears to be growing, and, encouraged by the election of some CED candidates to public office, Fonda and Hayden now say they intend to make the Campaign for Economic Democracy America's third political party.



Barry Commoner

Ecological line

This objective is shared by the newly formed Citizen's Party, founded last summer by Barry Commoner. Commoner, author of 'The Closing Circle' and other environmentalist texts, will be standing for the Citizen's Party in the forthcoming U.S. Presidential election. Like the CED, the Party takes an ecological line on many issues: public control of large corporations, the need to curb pollution, decentralization and community democracy, a new economic order for the Third World and so on. But in contrast to many other environmentalists, Commoner places much more emphasis on distribution of resources, than on their exponential consumption and ultimate exhaustion.

Like the CED, the Citizen's Party claims that it "has no affinity" with green parties in Europe, and instead aligns itself with the 'New Left' movement. The differences between these groups, and the Ecology Party are obscure at present but may become more apparent in time as each articulates its philosophy more clearly.

As yet, neither the Campaign for Economic Democracy or the Citizen's Party has made any significant impact on the political status quo. But their attempt to break the Democratic/Republican monopoly of U.S. politics is now recognised as an important part of the movement for social change in America. Ecologists on both sides of the Atlantic will be watching their progress with interest.

Peter Frings

European notes

The various groups composing the German 'Green Lists' in recent elections have come together to form an official 'Green' party. Several hundred people, representing anti-nuclear, peace and women's groups, attended the inaugural conference. We hope to publish a full report in our next issue.

Eco Federation

Meetings are being held to discuss ways of financing and setting up a Confederation of European Ecology Parties. Progress to date consists largely of a meeting and an analysis of the problem which (to no ones surprise) is money. The good news is that there really does seem to be a measure of cooperation among European Political Ecology groups. More to follow in the next issue.

Ambitious plans...

This report covers the last three National Council meetings held in Manchester, Bristol and London in October, November and December respectively. The period has seen changes in the personnel of the Council; Peter Draper, David Taylor, Regional representatives for the South East and South West, have resigned and will be much missed, while on the positive side we welcomed at various stages new representatives Derek Rudd (W. Midlands), Nick Alexander (London), Brian Kingzett (Wales) and Mike Hatfield (E. Midlands).

Digby Dodd, the new Policy Co-ordinator, was co-opted onto the Council at the October meeting, and since then much thought has been given to arrangements for the Spring Policy Conference. Digby reports elsewhere in this issue on the ambitious policy formulation programme which has emerged, and on the design of the Conference. One of our most significant decisions has been on how representation and voting should be managed; a large number of options were canvassed, and in December it was concluded that attendance should be open to all Party members, with those unable to attend entitled to empower a representative to vote on their behalf. We resolved too that there should be an effective Travel Equalisation Scheme for Conferences henceforth.

A draft programme for mounting the national campaigns agreed on at Keele was accepted by the October NC, and more recently the Council has been considering literature and publicity material for those campaigns selected. Again, fuller details are given elsewhere in this *Econews*. One aspect, though, deserves mention here: our decision to affiliate to the new national Anti-Nuclear Campaign. This was taken only after some hesitation, occasioned by what at one stage seemed the unpropitious political colouring of the steering committee. It would hardly have been in the spirit of the Keele decision to link Eco with an organisation which paid no real heed to our own reasons for opposing nuclear power. Between the October and November meetings, however, progress was made in getting the Party – and thus the ecological viewpoint – taken seriously as an important and necessary element in any national anti-nuclear organisation; and we therefore felt it right to affiliate (subject to approval of the eventual ANC constitution).

Difficult decisions

This is an example of the National Council's being obliged to make up its mind on a difficult issue and take a crucial decision on the Party's behalf; and it emphasises the need for everyone constantly to feed in their views and reactions to their most convenient NC member, so that such decisions can truly represent the feelings of the Party at large.

Another exacting responsibility resting on the NC is financial management of the Party's operations. A fair amount of money has already had to be committed to fund both Policy-making and Campaigns – sums of £800 and £500 respectively were voted at the Bristol meeting, with more to come later. Given our present situation these must be regarded as rather speculative investments; they make it all the more important that the Fundraising campaign planned for 1980 should succeed. At the October meeting we approved the text of our submission to the Rowntree Trust for a grant of £15,000 over three years to fund a full-time official who would take on fundraising, publicity and general administrative duties. But we felt it wise not to be unduly optimistic about our chances here, and in November approved a detailed proposal from the Working Party to launch our own 'National Appeal' next year, directed both at our own membership and at anyone else possessing ecological sympathies and money. We have now heard that our appeal to the Rowntree Trust has been turned down.

Financial constraints

Two matters where we have felt notably hampered by our present very tight financial constraints during these last three meetings, have been the establishment of the London office, and the whole question of appointments to Party tasks. We have been looking for very simple office accommodation, preferably rent-free in someone's room, for the short term; but clearly the demands on this office and its facilities will grow (even

exponentially?) as the Party expands its activities, and something more elaborate and permanent will soon be needed. So far, however, attempts to find premises suitable for the kind of 'Urban Ecology Centre' envisaged by the Working Party have failed; and we have felt unable to commit ourselves to the costs of taking more straightforward office premises at commercial rates. And we have still not sorted out what functions we want the office to serve. Since Rowntree will not give us a salaried general secretary, do we want to fund one ourselves and instal him or her in this office? Or should we invest in a professional fundraiser instead? Do we still hanker after finding someone to do these demanding and more or less full-time jobs for nothing? And if we do admit the principle of paid workers, what about the Editorship of *Econews* and the job of Membership Secretary, both of whom have a deal of real drudgery to perform – and both of whom we are already, as it happens, paying on an *ad hoc* basis? Can we afford to be professional in our political approach? Can we afford not to be? This batch of questions has exercised the NC at all three meetings, but none of them is yet properly resolved.

We have, however, been enabled to make a temporary compromise arrangement regarding the office. Paul Ekins, a London member, has offered us the use of a room, and his own services as administrative-cum-publicity assistant free for a couple of months while we go on looking. At the December meeting this offer was accepted and Paul co-opted onto the NC.

BRANCH NEWS

1979 was a good year for new branches and still more are being formed at a staggering rate. In this issue, however, Alan Clarke takes a closer look at the activities of some existing branches. What are they doing? And what can we expect of them as the new national campaigns programme gets under way?

Running a branch is a difficult job, usually left to a handful of individuals, and it can sometimes be hard enough to keep routine administrative matters up to date. Nevertheless, the success of a branch depends on its public image and requires a sustained publicity and fundraising campaign behind it. Jumble Sales, Rubbish Collections, Petitions, Press Statements and Public Meetings are a few ideas that have already been tried out with varying degrees of success and others will readily spring to mind.

Fund-raising events are, of course, vital and they don't have to be jumble sales, although this is a guaranteed form of income. The Bath branch have organised discos, North Devon held a Barn Dance in

the autumn and a sponsored swim in Bristol raised over a hundred pounds. More grandiose schemes are riskier, for obvious reasons, but are presumably likely to attract more publicity.

Pure publicity

The press release is probably the most basic means of pure publicity – the media are there to be used. Recent examples include a statement from Ron Spathaky and Tim Pye in East Anglia, urging "renewed and intensified negotiations between Britain and the Warsaw Pact for real and massive nuclear disarmament in the near future" and statements from Somerset branches on cyclists' rights and the feasibility of a "bottle-bank" scheme.

continued over

I have also been sent a copy of the wording of a petition being organised by the South-East Dorset branch, demanding "that present rural transport services be preserved and wherever necessary improved". Other branches might wish to join in, but they will have to print their own forms, "due to local branch poverty". For details, contact Trevor Dykes, Flat 1, Alberta House, Kings Park Drive, Bournemouth, BH7 7AG.

Enter Santa

Many branches have taken advantage of the nuclear power debate as an opportunity to air their views on official proposals to build new reactors and commence tests in various areas to identify potential waste dumping sites. In many cases, of course, the branch will be working with other local anti-nuclear groups — especially where long-term campaigns are being fought. Branches all over the country have been distributing leaflets outside cinemas showing "The China Syndrome" and — in seasonal vein — Exeter branch had a Santa Claus in the High Street, trying to make presents to people of "radioactive waste", wrapped in Christmas paper!

Another major issue is being dealt with on a regional basis by the South-West: a standing committee on poisonous chemicals has been formed under the chairmanship of Tony Charles (60 Sylvan Road, Wellington, Somerset) who writes: "If you have any information which you think might help us, please let us know immediately."

Public meetings

Public meetings and debates are good ways to create interest (and should, of course, be accompanied by a press release). Over sixty people attended a meeting of the Oxford branch in December advertised as "Nuclear Power — Are You Sure It's Safe?" Two films were shown and Hugh Norman, of the ANC steering committee, gave a talk. Another anti-nuclear public meeting was organised in Exeter in November and Jonathon Porritt and Geoff Garbett spoke to a meeting at Wells Town Hall, also attended by about sixty people. The subject was "The Fuel Crisis — Which Way Forward?" but an observer described the speeches as "pure propaganda for the Ecology Party"

Imaginative but insufficient

1980 will be a new ball-game — with no general election campaign to latch onto, our success will depend on the publicity generated by our campaigning locally and nationally. The national programme is ambitious, but it requires firm support from the branches. On the basis of the material submitted to this ECONEWS, it would seem that branch activity at the moment is imaginative but insufficient. I hope to be proved wrong in the near future.

Bureaucrats and rubber stamps

Dick Frost condemns the new policy formation system

Could our leaders please set up one more working party, to add to the 18 which will report next spring and the six looking into administration and organisation? The subject? Democracy — unless it is too late.

Some funny things have already happened in the Ecology Party in spite of its (unclear) belief in "democracy": and now this grotesque farce whereby "the membership of the party will be actively involved in the formation of party policy, rather than merely rubber-stamping documents prepared by the NC".

Do the NC believe the process of setting up working parties, the circulation and discussion of their reports — 18 reports for each branch to examine: more meetings and final drafts; can actually produce results, let alone democratically? Let alone in four months? Or are they stuck with a conference decision which the old NEC laid on them with the best of intentions and the worst of consideration? In any case, what faith can they place in another conference made up of a minority of activists, not all of sound ecological minds, after seeing the level of ignorance displayed at Keele, when not all the members of the working parties reporting then knew their own policy fields, let alone recognised the implications of their proposals for other areas of party policy?

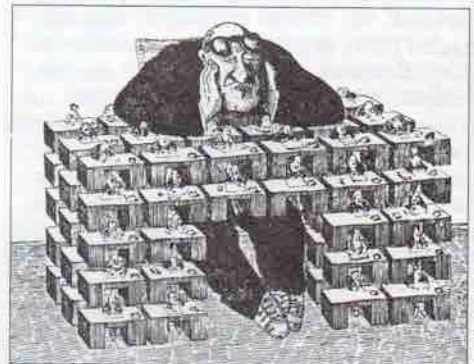
Clearly, few members will be involved in policy formation: even fewer will make the policy decisions; and the conference will leave more loose ends wavering in the hot air than they will tie up. Will there then be another conference, or will we have to leave it to the NC? Will we not be rubber stamps in any event?

Sadly, the whole process will speed the tendencies to centralisation and bureaucratisation which are already clear in the party; it will widen the gap between the elite and the "mass"; and the members will be blamed. Bureaucrats inevitably blame "the people" if the processes which they lay on them fail.

But the answer is not to have more working parties or more time. We are on the wrong route altogether. The party ought to be acting as if it believed its own ecological principles. Policy formation should be going on now and all the time, starting at branch level, for that is the level which approximates to the funda-

mental level of political organisation envisaged in the manifesto. A branch or branches in a city, urban or rural area — the appropriate area of political organisation — should be working out policies across the whole spectrum of life which make sense in their environment; those are the levels which we must understand and on which a de-centralised social life must be built. I am not calling for local independence; the process of finding out how we should run our local political and economic life automatically brings us into areas of policy which can be resolved only at the regional level; and from considering that level we are taken up to a "higher" level at which even more general policies have to be developed.

That is how a viable eco-system must work, and how we should be working. The party, with its new policy-making process, is doing too much at the wrong level of organisation; it is trying to reduce variety and dream up "national" policies to the historically accidental thing called the United Kingdom.



Is it part of the elephantiasis which sprang up with the misplaced euphoria which came from failing to understand two election results? "We must be a national party with a national leader and a national office and a national manifesto etc. etc.?" Well, it's unnecessary. The party is suffering from fleabitis; it doesn't have to make these mighty decisions, which is nice because it ought not to make them.

We need fewer national policies, not more. We don't have to answer the Press question: what is your policy (your sole policy) on land or energy or transport. Fewer policies and more ideas; more inspiration; more people wrestling with those ideas and providing an education for us all, all the time.

A choice of futures

The Next 200 Years, Kahn, H. et al. (1978) 241 pp. Abacus £1.50. *Facing The Future*, Interfutures, (1979) 425 pp. OECD £8.90 (paper). *Future Worlds*, Gribben, J., (1979) 225 pp. Abacus £1.75.

The Ecology Party has made considerable progress in boosting its membership, establishing new branches and achieving greater credibility following the last election. However the more visible we become the more we must strive to attain and project a distinctive and coherent political stance. In a letter circulated recently, Ken Smith suggests that for all our good intentions we do not yet even have a properly political philosophy incorporating a shared understanding of political concepts and prescriptions. In his view this helps to explain much of the confusion and frustration experienced at the Keele conference (see last issue) and in policy formation generally. It also leaves us vulnerable to hostile criticism, particularly where this is linked to more fully thought-out political and social theories.

For my part, I have long been unhappy with what I believe to be the inadequate "idea base" of the party, owing as much as it does to some of the now dated extracts of the late 60's and early 70's. So it seems to me that there is another side to Ken's argument: not only do we need a workable political philosophy, but we need to keep up-to-date on the overall context within which such a philosophy must operate and in relation to which policies must be formulated. For a party that is serious about seeking real political power we really have no choice but to keep abreast of events. We need a broad overview of the age: the major trends and dimensions of change, the crucial problem issues and emerging conflicts of interest, an understanding of the way present choices and perceptions open up some possibilities while closing others for ever. A difficult task? Yes. But one that is made much easier by the growing literature on world futures. Approached critically, it can provide just such an overview and give us the opportunity to re-examine our ideas in the light of recent research.

Taken together, the books reviewed here help to set the scene, as it were, for the debates now taking place within the party. While some aspects of ECO policy receive support, others are brought seriously into question. This can only be beneficial if it leads to careful re-thinking. Thus, while the three books take different positions on the desirability of nuclear power and on the relative importance of environmental problems, they all agree that, oil apart, and contrary to the old environmentalist myth, most raw materials

are not about to "run out" in any ultimate sense. What problems there are in this area arise mainly from the unequal geographic distribution of mineral deposits and the operation of political and economic factors. All three studies also agree that some form of economic growth remains necessary if global equity and the transition to a more secure way of life is to be achieved.

"The Next 200 Years" is less blindly optimistic than the authors' earlier works, but it still argues for high growth rates, more consumption and bigger and better technologies. It strongly criticises the Meadows' "Limits to Growth" approach and sees future disasters being made more likely by the present activities of those who support this viewpoint! Indeed, there is much here that ECO members will find tendentious and unacceptable. Nevertheless, the book provides numerous valuable "thinking points" and offers a comparison of world views that I found very stimulating. It is also worth noting that the views expressed in this book are probably shared by some of the most influential groups in the world. To have them set out in detail provides a useful opportunity to look again at one's own views and to anticipate the kinds of criticism that arise from such groups.

Much the same could be said for the massive Interfutures study "Facing the Future", except that it is a far more substantial work generally and less extreme in its viewpoint and recommendations. It foresees an ultimate world population of some 12 billion, an inexorable movement of economic power away from most of the OECD countries, recurrent problems over the distribution of oil and some raw materials, increasingly serious ecological problems and long term difficulties of adjustment to the new economic conditions both within and between nations. It looks in detail at possible physical limits to growth and concludes that they are far from insuperable. It comes out in favour of nuclear power but, unlike many other studies explicitly recognises that "new post-materialist values" could change everything. It also examines the internal structure of advanced industrial societies and their relations with the third world. The report is not, in fact, concerned with prediction per se but with the "prospective analysis" of six carefully constructed global scenarios which act as testbeds for various assumptions and policy options. While it is written from a fairly conventional economic viewpoint, it does clearly delineate some of the central issues facing us, and again challenges us to compare its prescriptions with those currently advocated by the Ecology Party. For example, the report is emphatically in favour of free trade between

the nations of an interdependent world, and its authors would probably look askance at some of our ideas on decentralisation. On the other hand, by making its case for interdependence on political and economic grounds, I felt that the report overlooked the more fundamental ecological grounds for this.

"Future Worlds" is easily the most readable of the three, and I have no hesitation in recommending it. It serves as a very fair and competent introduction to the debate about alternative world futures and helps put the other books mentioned here into perspective. It again takes a pro-growth stance, but in more qualified terms. The author believes that debates about the future can now do without some of the earlier, more extreme arguments, and suggests that many of the main writers have moved on, leaving some of their more vociferous supporters to argue from outmoded positions. Could this be true of ECO? It is suggested here that low growth will not only "reduce our options", but also prevent the third world from raising its standard of living to more tolerable levels. Thus a more equitable world is seen as an essential precondition to any deliberate cessation of growth. The neo-Malthusian arguments should, says the author, be de-emphasised. He writes:

"the social, political and especially military problems now facing us are far more important than the arguments about physical limits; if the energy directed by so many people into the limits debate could be diverted into the problem areas, then perhaps there would be a better chance of survival."

"Future Worlds" looks closely at energy, food and raw materials, but has relatively little to say about the massive environmental deterioration and loss of wildlife now taking place all over the world (as documented by writers such as Myers in "The Sinking Ark"). Nevertheless, the book is well worth reading.

Each of these books suggests that the developed societies are poorly prepared to deal with the massive and unprecedented changes that lie ahead. Each questions one or more of the tenets of the environmental movement. Each paints in part of the overall picture that we must keep in mind as we enter the new cycle of debate and policy formation within the party. If, in the light of studies such as these, we fail to relinquish some of the naive and more extreme early positions taken within the environmental movement, we shall probably sink without a trace in an ocean of political indifference. If, on the other hand, we can agree on a common political philosophy and relate it to the emerging themes of the age, then we can begin to evolve policies that will be more relevant to the lives of ordinary men and women than anything else currently on offer. All three books agree that even now the future remains open. The question is, are we ready to help shape it?

Richard Slaughter



Class lesson

Dear Sir,

In more than forty years of working life, I have never felt quite so moved to actually post off a reply to any published viewpoint as I do to Alan Clarke's leader on "Eco and the wider environmental movement" (Econews 5). On this I just have to have a go. His reference to the accusation that Eco, as a predominantly middle class body, is fundamentally out of touch with the vast majority of this country, calls, I submit, for the fullest possible debate, then urgent action.

For myself, thirty of my working years have been as an active trade unionist, with both the old NUVB and more recently NUPE. I am aware of all the inherent dangers of fringe parties of the extreme left taking control of the destinies of ordinary, decent working men and women, chiefly by seizing the opportunity offered by the non-attendance of the rank and file at meetings. Even this should not deter Eco from making a sustained attempt to win Trade Unionists, who, like it or not, form the majority of the electors.

But none of the solutions offered by Alan Clarke will achieve anything until Eco properly identifies and understands the normal aspirations of ordinary working people: butchers, bakers, typists, clerks, cleaners and porters in hospitals, carpenters, bricklayers and electricians, chefs, waitresses and gardeners, coach-builders, upholsterers and joiners, tool-makers, welders and boilermakers, shop and transport workers . . . the list is endless, but I have yet to meet one of the above as a member of Eco. Until Eco does understand their aspirations, John Foster's result in Manchester of 129 votes from an electorate of 31,700, will go on being the norm for Eco.

I can offer one part of the solution. Develop the theme of labour intensive jobs for all it is worth. It is the only answer to our current unemployment problems, with far, far worse to come in this field. It would seem to be the only hope for the coming millions of unemployed, and who will they be but the people I have previously mentioned? Just get it right, and do not let them down, because one thing is for certain: they will not vote for the Tories next time, and will be hesitant about returning to what will by then be a left dominated Labour Party.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Rolls,
Sec. Edgbaston branch, 43 Ryland Road,
Birmingham.

Facing up to the future

Dear Sir,

For a couple of years I teetered on the brink of joining the Ecology Party, still feeling instinctively that a wholesale change from exploitation to conservation could probably only be achieved sufficiently rapidly by infiltration of one of the established political parties. Only as recently as July 1979 current political events just tilted the scales and persuaded me that the establishment, left and right, was probably a forlorn hope and that a realistic and forthright political neophyte with a fundamentally sound philosophy, might well be gaining strength in the right place at the right time.

So I joined.

The first copy of Econews to reach me, as a regular member, was No. 4 (Sept. 1979). Despite all the fragments of sound ecological statement it contained, along with the very relevant, pragmatic letter from Margaret Laws-Smith, I must admit that I was very depressed by its contents. I sought in vain for some solid statement of political policy in what is, after all, the periodical of a political party. There were, throughout, statements which indicated an awareness of the need for a really rapid change in our socio-economic system, in order to meet the imminent resources/population crisis, but there was barely a whisper about the economic and political measures which the Ecology Party will be recommending to Parliament when once they gain a foothold there. Indeed, you yourself, sir, in your article on the New Zealand experience, seemed to suggest that it might even be advisable to concentrate on working at the grassroots rather than on parliamentary ambitions. It is surely relevant to counter this by making the point that one will make little impact at grassroots level without a more specific national political platform.

I find the literature of the Ecology Party (just as that of the Conservation Society *et al*) full of statements regarding the need for decentralization, the need for small, meaningful local communities, the necessity for eliminating waste in our society, and for transforming our large-scale industry into small and beautiful workshops. And I am in wholehearted agreement that this must be achieved over the next few decades unless we are to permit what is best in our technology and culture to founder and perish.

It is because of the awful magnitude of these problems that some of us have felt it unrealistic to expect a new-born political party to achieve such things — that it is more likely that good sense could be made to prevail somewhere in the political establishment. Surely the Ecology Party must face up to this. It must begin to make sensible statements about what it thinks should be done about the 12 million people packed into the SE corner of Britain without the faintest chance of feeding, clothing

and furnishing themselves out of local production. It must also begin to tell people (as Margaret Laws-Smith implies) that no honest political party should promise the British people that we can possibly "create the sort of society we should like" because the materials are not available to do so. It must spell out the implications of doing away with "the wasteful society": if we halve the amount of packaging, advertising and all the other mentally-debilitating bric-a-brac that we produce at the present time, we either create vast unemployment or about twice as much half-employment. And "half-employment", in the long run, means half pay.

Finally, and probably most important, the Ecology Party has to agree on the true political complexion it is to have. I am aware that in *The Real Wealth of Nations* (p. 178) I committed myself to the statement: "it does not really matter who owns the gasworks, provided the gasworks are managed for the welfare of the community as a whole", but I was speaking as an independent writer on world resources. The Ecology Party is in an entirely different position. It has to have a clear policy about ownership, restrictions on economic liberty and, on the other hand, what it regards as the essential personal freedoms. We know fairly precisely what kinds of policies the different factions of the Tory, Labour and Liberal Parties would like to implement, given the chance, and we reject most of them as either impracticable or undesirable (or both). Nor must the Ecology Party be afraid because, having formulated a policy, it contains many features which are very unpalatable to an electorate which is the product of eight or nine generations of Industrial Revolution. At the outset there will probably be many commentators who will laugh it out of court as being "politically unacceptable". Rest assured the events of the 1980s will all too rapidly put the Party in the position of being able to say "we told you so" as the policies of growth economics founder one after another!

As the world trade network begins to disintegrate we must have clear ideas regarding what is to be done with massive concentrations of urban people, the dispersal of massive industrial complexes, and the ownership of the smaller units which take their place. There is no room whatsoever for the relaxed state of mind betrayed by Basil Mager (Econews, No. 5, p. 11) in his Conference Report when he says: "This is a discussion that will go on for a long time in the Party". The Ecology Party has no excuse for having come into existence unless it already has a clear alternative policy on all the important issues with which government has to deal from day to day.

Yours faithfully,

S.R. Eyre,
Leeds University, School of Geography,
Leeds.

The means is like the seed

Dear All,

Phil Foggitt believes that "our progress is in jeopardy if we confuse our goals with the means by which we achieve these goals. . . so let's worry less about methodology and concentrate more on getting the job done." (Econews 5)

I thought that it was precisely because we do want to get the job done that we have to worry about the methodology. I can do no better than to quote from Emma Goldman's *My disillusionment in Russia* in which she wrote:

"There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are one thing, while methods and tactics are another. This conception is a potential menace to social regeneration. All human experience teaches that methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim."

"The means used to prepare the future become its cornerstone."

Or, as Gandhi said, "The means is like the seed, the end like the tree."

Of course, there will be compromises; there will have to be — but we must recognize them as such. Compromises are of inestimable value — they are also highly dangerous. We must try to put into practice now the values that we believe in, for if we put them aside they can never win widespread acceptance.

In short, we will have to go on agonizing over each compromise we make, so we'd better learn to live with the discomfort. Please, let us not pretend that the dilemma doesn't exist. Means and ends cannot be separated; not if we really want to achieve the ends in question.

Sincerely,

Ian Barlow,
5 Montrose Avenue, Bristol.

Practically gobbledegook . . .

Dear Sir,

There are those who join the Ecology Party because of an increasing feeling of dissatisfaction with other political umbrellas. There are a great many more who *should* feel such dissatisfaction, but they need to have the ideas of the party explained to them. Explanation means being able to set out ideas clearly in language that can be understood.

The general language level of most of Econews is practically gobbledegook. I defy anyone to paraphrase the two letters on anarchy and Ian Barlow's article on housing policy in the last issue. To whom are we aiming our message? The top 2% of the population, or paid up members of MENSA?

At long last some companies are beginning to pay some attention to the

'reading age' level of their literature. The Child Poverty Action Group spends much of its time trying to decipher leaflets, letters and forms from national and local government departments. Surely we should be trying to get our message to everyone — not just an elite.

Yours sincerely,

Rodney Holt,
10 Hawthorn Drive, Stalybridge, Cheshire.

Political behaviour

Dear Sir,

Come on, we're spending too much time arguing about anarchism and middle class influences. Lets start behaving like a political party!

We have two main ecological and *common-sense* planks to our programme — a stable economy and not a growth economy, and de-centralisation. There should be no argument about these — no need for intellectual discussion. That being so we inevitably become — like it or lump it — an anti-capitalist party; we become — automatically — opponents of continued membership of the Common Market. At the moment we should be proclaiming our outright opposition to the continued use of nuclear power, let alone the building of more nuclear power stations, and we should be voicing our opposition — loud and strong — about the use of nuclear weapons, and particularly about the siting of missiles with nuclear war-heads in the UK.

We should be presenting a programme about transport — for example — the reduction in size of large commercial road vehicles (the juggernauts), not the possible imposition of larger ones; for the cessation of the construction of motorways and trunk roads, and the diversion of the money released from that commitment to the upkeep of the secondary roads and the rural roads; for the extension and greater use of our railways, particularly for freight; of greater use of inland and coastal waterways; for a literal explosion in the extent and the service provided by the public road passenger transport system; for a fifty mile an hour limit on vehicles on all roads, and government subsidies for car manufacturers who agree to make a reasonably comfortable, simple low-powered, low fuel consumption engined car with a projected life of at least thirty years, which would have to be put together by skilled workers, and not by computer activated machinery, however technically marvellous and fast it may be.

We should be having our public say about loads of other things — education, health, food production — when issues about them arise, and not when there is no public interest there; we should be in all possible ways advocating the bringing of government of local affairs back to the people most affected by them; we should be educating and explaining about

self-sufficiency — from all angles — individual, communal, state.

We are — or should be — a radical political party, with ecological views, intent upon changing our society consistent with these views, so that we can give mankind a chance to survive with a reasonable standard of living well into the future.

Come on, everybody, wake up (and especially our National Council) — go with the Ecology Party for a future with a future.

Yours etc.

Howard S. Hoptrough
Little Albion, Bell's Hill, Mylor,
Falmouth, Cornwall.

Fast breeder fan

Dear Econews,

I realize that to fly in the face of the conventional wisdom of Eco, and indeed the whole environmental movement is to invite ridicule and contempt, but I would like to call into question the recent conference decision (as reported in Econews 5) to back 'the maximum use of coal in place of fast breeder reactors.'

As the current public enquiry is revealing, the NCB's proposal to develop the largest coalfield in Western Europe in the Vale of Belvoir in North East Leicestershire will have disastrous implications from an ecological point of view. A huge area of visually beautiful and agriculturally valuable land will be destroyed, and long established rural communities will be rapidly transformed into mining settlements. The pollution emitted from the power stations which burn the Belvoir coal will presumably enhance the destructive qualities of the 'acid rain' which has already poisoned so much of Sweden's lake and river system.

The proposed fast breeder reactor, however, provides the means to usefully burn the plutonium which we all abhor, and recent research has suggested that it could also dispose of other forms of nuclear waste. Furthermore a prototype FBR has operated safely and successfully at Dounreay since 1958. Visually it has very little environmental impact — indeed some would say that it is a welcome addition to the landscape — and it has brought a balanced measure of prosperity to Caithness, such as is enjoyed by no other of these remote rural areas about which the Ecology Party is supposed to be so concerned.

In the light of the evidence I have presented, may I ask which presents the more ecologically sound alternative — the coal development which Eco policy supports, or the fast breeder reactor?

Yours sincerely,

Simon Barker,
15 Park Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex.

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