

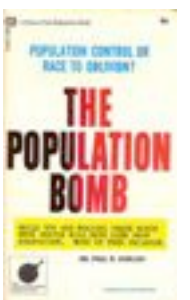


The party that is not a party

Whilst the Ecologist office was being flooded with enquiries about Movement for Survival, in Coventry a group of young business people were having lunchtime pub discussions about ecological and economic decline.



Attendees included Michael Benfield and Tony Whittaker. Tony had read Silent Spring and found it disturbing. An interview with Paul Ehrlich, author of The Population Bomb, in the July edition of Playboy spurred them to action.



Thirteen people attended a meeting on 13th October and thus the 'Thirteen Club' was formed. Benfield and Freda Saunders were not present on this occasion, but they were invited to the follow-up meetings.

The 13 Club saw itself as a discussion group with no political intentions.



i. The Gang of Four plus D. Taylor (1974) and C. Lord (1973) in 2012

The Whittakers, Benfield and Saunders agreed that a political movement was essential, and became the 'Gang of Four' with the intention to form a political movement..

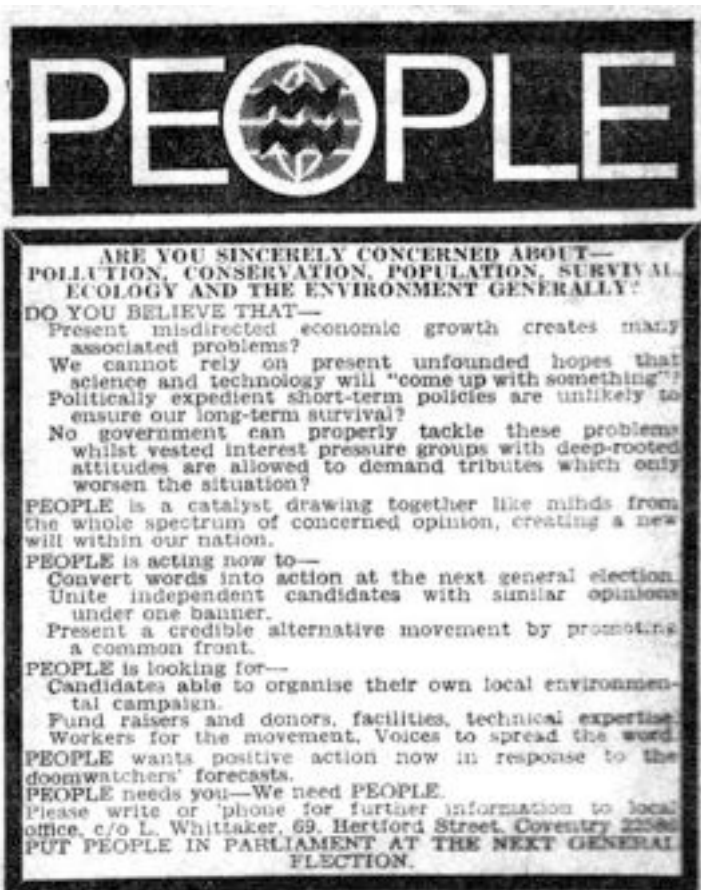
In December Tony Whittaker was interviewed on the BBC Home Service (R4) about his ideas for an ecological political movement to be called PEOPLE.

On 13th December 1972 the Gang of Four formally decided to proceed with **PEOPLE**. The gang of four's concept for PEOPLE was a very decentralised organisation with power belonging to the people in the constituencies.



The role of the central organisation was only co-ordination. things that could not be done at branch or constituency level.

The official public launch event took place on 24th February 1973. Freda Saunders was elected Treasurer, Tony Whittaker as Chairman, Lesley Whittaker secretary and Michael Benfield "lord high everything else"



First Political Conference – PEOPLE June 1973

CANCELLED

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JIGSAW

First ever **NATIONAL CONFERENCE** to examine fully the inter relationships of all aspects of the environmental survival movement.

2nd and 3rd June 1973

Organized by:

PEOPLE
A new Political Movement
People aims to field over 600 candidates at the next General Election.

*Lesley Whittaker
P. F.*

A nice idea... a big conference to bring together all eco related organisations. Much as MS was trying to achieve.

Note the tag line:

"A new Political Movement"

... time come to support a new political movement? The conference aims to stir controversy and...
OBJECT. To bring together all aspects of the Survival and Ecological movement to consider their inter-relationships and examine practical methods of greater liaison and political effectiveness.
DATE. Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd June (Weekend after Spring Holidays).
PLACE. Allensley Hotel and Post House Hotel (off A46) COVENTRY.
WHO SHOULD ATTEND. Members of all environmental bodies and related organisations and people who are concerned about the rapid deterioration in our quality of life. Unemployment, inflation, drought, crime, violence, spiritual decline, over-population, pollution, resources, consumption, a general distillation.
CONFERENCE FEE. Including accommodation and all meals (except dinner on Saturday night) £9.50. Non Residential £7.50.
ACCOMMODATION IS STRICTLY LIMITED SO PLEASE RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW.
 Lesley Whittaker 69 Hertford Street Coventry Telephone 22586

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

PEOPLE

SATURDAY 2nd JUNE 1973

9.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m. Reception and Registration.
 10.00 a.m. - 10.25 a.m. Morning Coffee-Harley Suite.
 10.25 a.m. Assembly and call to order Conferencehall.
 10.30 a.m. - 10.45 a.m. Introduction and outline of Conference objectives.
 10.45 a.m. - 11.00 a.m. Conference relationship with PEOPLE and aims of the movement.
 11.00 a.m. - 11.45 a.m. The different survivalist/environmentalist factions and their inter relationships.
 11.45 a.m. - 12.15 p.m. Discussion
 12.15 p.m. BREAK
 12.30 p.m. - 1.30 p.m. Buffet Luncheon-Harley Suite.
 1.30 p.m. - 2.30 p.m. Film "And on the Eighth Day..." Outstanding Thames T.V. production (1970) on the pollution of our environment, covering WATER, AIR, EARTH, FIRE (radioactivity).
 2.30 p.m. - 3.05 p.m. Questions and discussion on film with panel of Specialists on Conservation/Pollution/Food. The Soil Association/Preservation.
 3.05 p.m. - 3.15 p.m. BREAK
 3.15 p.m. - 3.55 p.m. Film "Interview with Paul Ehrlich" The well known American ecologist explains the urgent need for population reduction and a radically different attitude towards resources, work and material possession, if we are not to be overwhelmed by mass starvation in the next decade.
 3.55 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. Questions and discussions on film with panel of Specialists on Family Planning, Poverty, Starvation.
 4.30 p.m. - 4.45 p.m. Afternoon tea-Harley suite.
 4.45 p.m. - 5.35 p.m. "Tomorrow's Quality of Life". A résumé of the trends in our society by a panel of speakers covering: Energy, Nuclear Disarmament, Rural Protection, Social Responsibility in Science, World Federation.
 5.35 p.m. - 5.55 p.m. Brief Question period.
 5.55 p.m. - 6.04 p.m. Film "Tilt". Cartoon depicting the serious issues which face the world overpopulation, starvation and people's selfishness when confronted with these (Canadian 1972).
 6.04 p.m. - 6.10 p.m. End of day one Address.

SUNDAY 3rd JUNE, 1973.

9.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m. European Environment 1975 - 2000" A simulation Exercise by Michael Bassey. This exercise will be played in groups. Your advice is sought as a wide range of environmental problems with which we will be faced in the next 25 years. Fast thinking and action very stimulating.
 11.00 a.m. - 11.20 a.m. Coffee and Biscuits - The Harley Suite.
 11.20 a.m. - 11.55 a.m. Simulation Exercise feedback and pointers for the future.
 11.55 a.m. - 12.05 p.m. BREAK
 12.05 p.m. - 12.50 p.m. "Economics and Action" An economist considers possible changes in the direction and management of our economy.
 12.50 p.m. BREAK
 1.00 p.m. - 2.00 p.m. Buffet luncheon-Harley suite.
 2.00 p.m. - 2.10 p.m. Film CITIZEN HAROLD - A very funny animated cartoon which tells a serious message that the "man in the street" normally thinks he cannot achieve anything about anything and the consequences.
 2.10 p.m. - 2.30 p.m. Consideration of the questions raised by this film related to the way our society is going.
 2.30 p.m. - 3.00 p.m. "Why a new movement now" consideration of current political trends.
 3.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. Discussion
 3.30 p.m. - 3.40 p.m. Afternoon Tea
 3.40 p.m. - 4.00 p.m. "HOW TO MAKE ENEMIES AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE" The radical American organiser Saul Alinsky shows how he organises an area, how he used Al Capone to organise the Chicago Stock yards district, his training schools etc.
 4.00 p.m. - 4.20 p.m. Discussion on organising local groups.
 4.20 p.m. - 4.35 p.m. Spinning up and closing address.
 4.35 p.m. - 4.45 p.m. Call to Action
 4.45 p.m. Enrolment in the PEOPLE movement.

A HARDWORKING WEEKEND PACKED WITH PUNCH & THOUGHT PROVOKING MATERIAL AND PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT FOR YOU

PLEASE RETAIN THIS PROGRAMME FOR USE DURING CONFERENCE.

TEAR OFF RETURN TO

PEOPLE
National Secretary, L. Whittaker
69 Hertford St, Coventry.

BOOKING FORM 'SURVIVAL' NATIONAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 2nd, 3rd 1973

Fee £9.50 per delegate (Residential), £7.50 per delegate (Non Residential)

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ TEL: _____
 SOCIETY: _____ No. of Places: _____ Res/Non Res: Single/Sharing
 DELEGATES NAMES _____

CHEQUE/P.O. ENCLOSED FOR £ _____ DATE: _____

Last date for Bookings 26 - 5 - 73.

P/ALU/18/1 26th May, 1973.

PEOPLE

Dear A. Leonard Alan

National Conference - June 2nd/3rd

It is with great regret that we return your cheque for £7.50 and inform you that we have decided to cancel the Conference planned to take place next week.

There were those who claimed that we would not achieve sufficient support to make it viable, but we had hoped to prove them wrong. The whole objective of the Conference was to illustrate to the workers and members of the many varied societies and associations each concerned with a small section of the problems of World survival how they relate to each other and those problems. Oxfam is really saying the same as the Soil Association and the concern evoked by the Conservation Society is linked with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Family Planning Association as such as with Friends of the Earth.

Unfortunately, we have had a poor response to our Conference; we have had bookings, in sufficient numbers to go ahead, in fact. But because the Conference was to provide the news story to launch PEOPLE in the National Press we thought it better to cancel it rather than go off at half-cock and damage our credibility before it has a chance to become established. It is our belief that the overall cause is more worthy of consideration than individual inconveniences at this stage.

If PEOPLE is to have any hope of succeeding in its intentions to field 600 Candidates at the next Election and to stand a good chance of winning, it is dependent upon people such as yourself who are prepared to do something to achieve what they regard as a worthwhile objective.

So it comes to the crucial question. How many of the so-called 'environmental lobby' do not really want any more than an opportunity to indulge in the satisfying intellectual exercise of debating the problems which stare us in the face? They are content merely to chat about how dreadful it all is that no political action is taken, and that Governments will not listen to pressure groups. There is only one answer; if Governments will not listen, they must be democratically replaced. If you cannot influence a Government to take the course you advocate, you must form one. PEOPLE is not flinching from this task. The public are not, either. The environmental movement however, is.

The 'Limits to Growth' has tried to make us all see that all the problems relate to each other and must be tackled simultaneously if there is to be any hope of success. That means planning at Government level, not random pressures and certainly not a lot of hot air.

PEOPLE will still succeed in its ends, because a majority of the ordinary people subconsciously believe that those ends are right and recognise them to be so. PEOPLE will, therefore, get the support it needs electorally. That does not stop the National Committee of the Party being intensely disappointed that the fields of expertise and enthusiasm upon which they had hoped to be able to call in the membership of existing societies appear not to be able to be relied upon. The credibility of the survival lobby has taken a bad knock.

PEOPLE thanks you for your support. We shall overcome this setback, and tackle the problem again in the near future. We shall notify you then, and hope that we may once more encourage you to help our work. If Britain is to survive, we need to succeed.

Yours sincerely,
Lesley Whittaker
 National Secretary.

Please reply to 69, Hertford Street, Coventry, CV1 1LS Further information invited

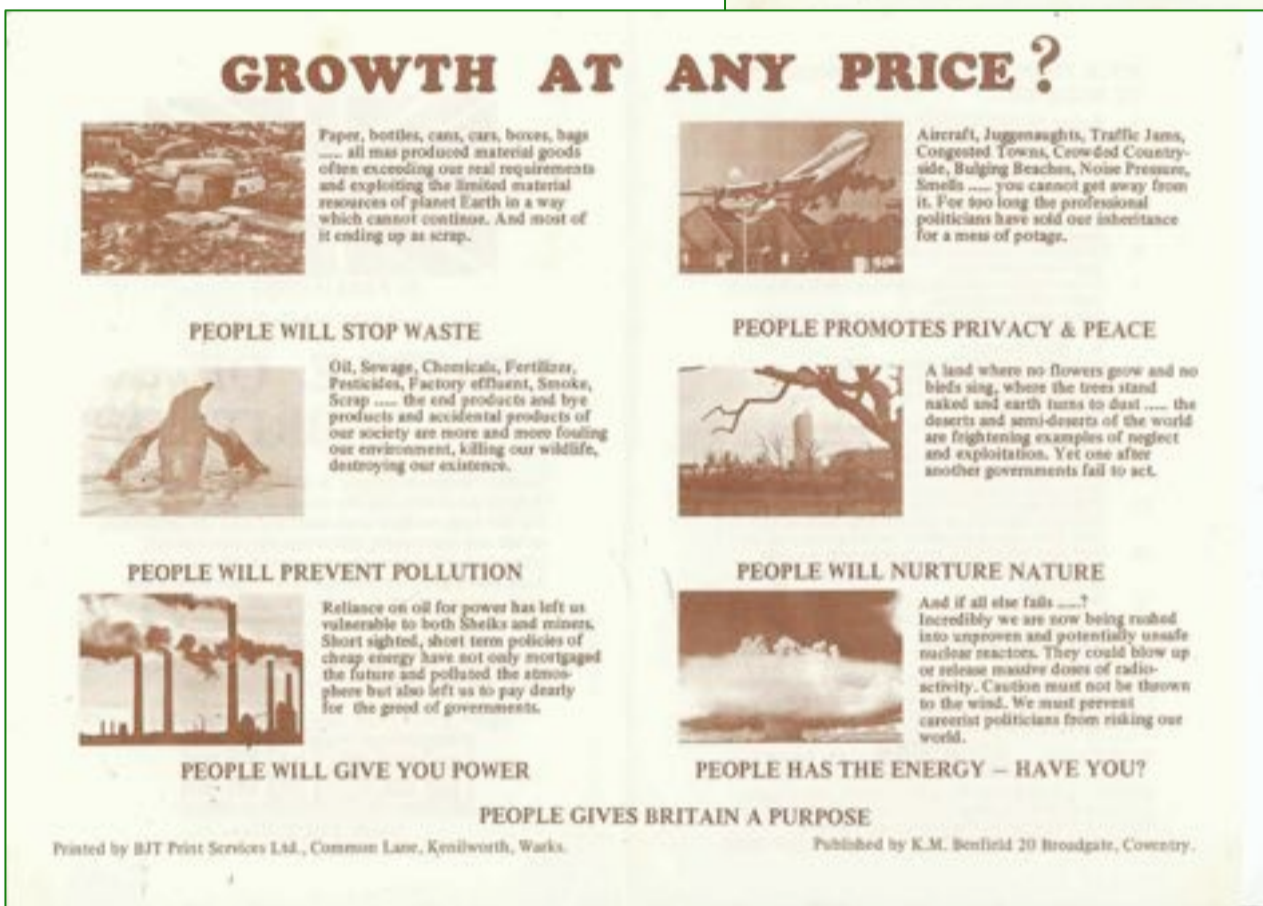
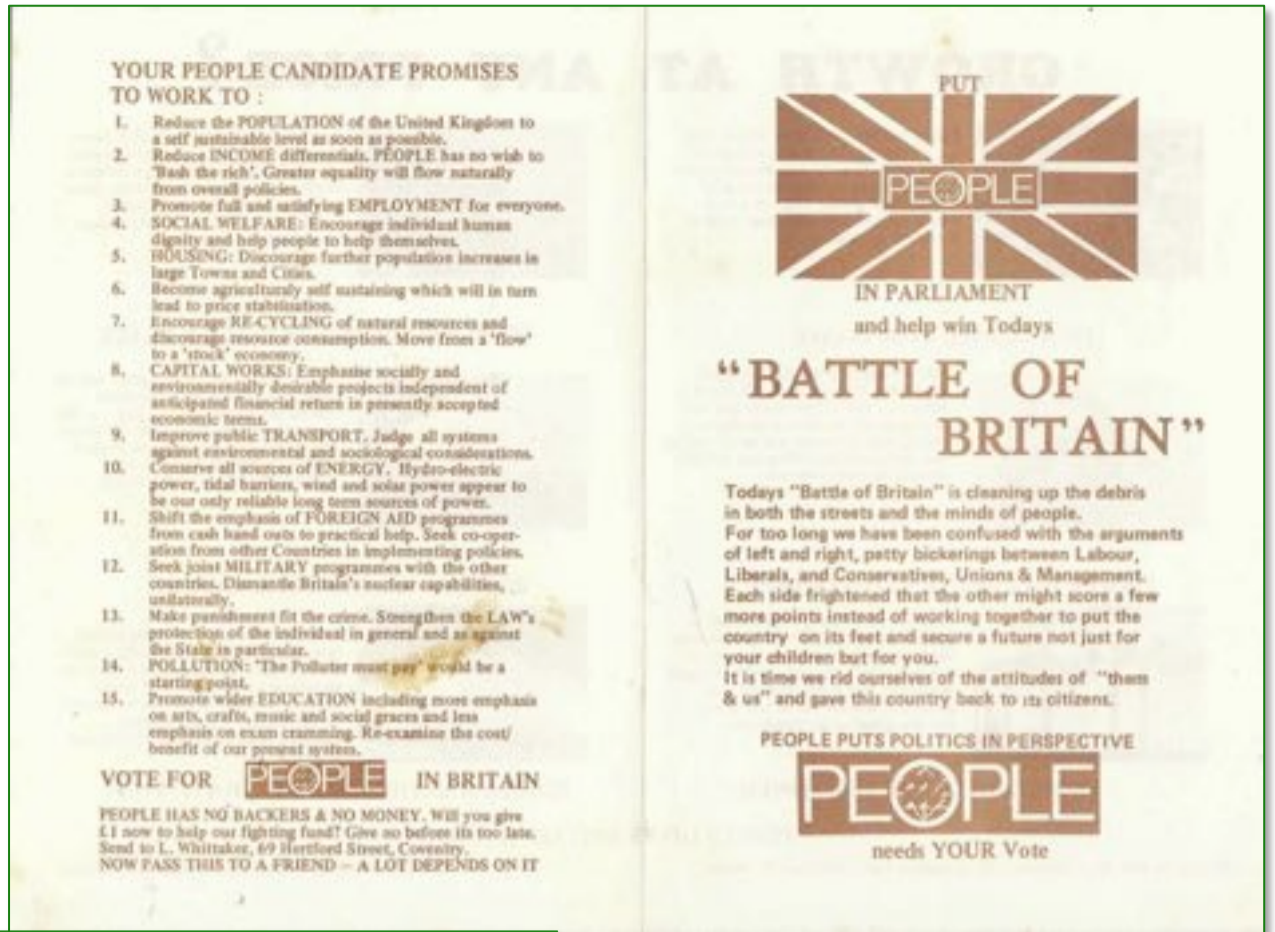
... but perhaps a little ambitious? We called a conference and nobody came!

First Leaflet

Well it was a time of growing industrial conflict and economic turmoil – Oil wars, shortages, rampant inflation.

Who rules Britain? asked the government – us or the unions?

Conflict was in the air – hence the battle theme.



The ideas were sound green principles though... this was indeed an ecology/green party, even as its principles led it to spurn the party label and the centralised organisation of conventional politics.

It also saw itself as an organic Movement not a monolithic party.

Name & Logo

The name PEOPLE was always to be written in capitals, and never to have the designation 'Party' appended to it.



This was to be a movement built on people, not a top-down conventional party. The final logo and colours drew on the Aquarian symbol (the waves) and the UN symbol for the earth (the circle with the lines of latitude and longitude) using the colours turquoise to represent water, coral to represent earth and white for the air. (NB they were NOT red and blue as is sometimes said)

The dawning of The Age of Aquarius



Dancing around each other

“Events, dear boy, Events”

As 1973 started **Movement for Survival (MS)** was being organised by Tony Mills in London and was having difficulty finding organisations to agree to sign up to the movement.

The sticking point was, not surprisingly, that the organisations were expected to share their membership details with MS so that direct political activity could be organised. Even without the data protection constraints that came in later they were reluctant to do this.

On January 2nd Michael Benfield had written to Tony Mills, requesting information about affiliating with MS. A reply doesn't seem to have been forthcoming until 6th March, from Mike Allaby in Cornwall.

Benfield replied enclosing PEOPLE's latest policy document and requesting publication in The Ecologist. He expressed the intention that PEOPLE would put up 600 candidates in an

October 1974 election (then seen as the most likely date). Desultory contacts between PEOPLE and Movement continued throughout 1973.

PEOPLE, meanwhile was gaining traction as a political organisation following the 24th Feb launch event.



Membership was slowly increasing as the word got out and new branches were being formed. Initial meetings had been held, a National Committee had formed and local working groups on policy, membership and funding were active in the branches.

Work on developing the organisation continued throughout 1973, by December an area organisers' meeting in Liverpool had 37 separate area groups sending a delegate.

Here at last was a genuine political party gearing up to make an impact.

But as 1973 ended the country was plunged into political turmoil by workers' unrest and the introduction of a three day week ... PEOPLE was far from ready