

HENBANT FACH LLANBEDR CRICKHOWELL POWYS
Tel: Crickhowell 810758 18th July, 1978

NEW ALLIANCE

The meeting arranged to discuss the above will take place on Friday, 28th July at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London W.C.1. at 12.30. Lunch will be provided for those who have signified their intention of coming. The meeting will start at 13.30 and end at 16.00. A collection of £1.50 will be taken to pay for lunch (£1) and contribution to hire of hall (50p).

A draft document outlining the New Alliance has been sent to selected individuals representative of fairly diverse backgrounds. The response has so far been almost uniformly enthusiastic.

It is therefore proposed to commence the meeting from the standpoint that the idea should be pursued. From preliminary conversations it seems that it may be possible to work with the existing Ecology Party and perhaps to form an alliance with a wider base. The hope has been widely expressed that the numerous groups and interests which exist within this general sphere should at all events work together to ensure that the strongest possible initiative results.

It is evident that whilst supporting the concept wholeheartedly, many recipients of the document have reservations about one or more points - since it is not worth the risk of becoming bogged down on a single issue at this short meeting, it is proposed to redraft the document immediately afterwards and take into account these suggestions and criticisms. The redraft will then be circulated for final comments before going to print.

So that we use the limited time as effectively as possible, it would be most helpful if you come to the meeting with your contributions to the points below already written (preferably typed!) for subsequent consideration. It should then be possible to use the meeting itself to discuss cooperation and the formulation of a programme. The meeting will be chaired by Maurice Ash

Points for consideration and written suggestion to be brought to the meeting:

1. Suitable name for the party.
2. Suggested alterations to content of draft document.
3. Would you like to be involved in helping to set up the project and would you consider standing as a candidate?
4. Names of any individuals or organisations you think might be approached for advice/organisational help/finance?

Gerard Morgan-Grenville

P.S. If you have not already done so, please confirm whether or not you are coming.

Draft: for restricted circulation only.

(GREENS)
THE NEW ALLIANCE

(provisional title)

A NEW POLITICAL PARTY

INTRODUCTION

The British people are losing faith in Parliament. It does not seem to have a clear view of the direction in which it is taking us, and its Members seem preoccupied with the trivial and the short-term whilst the real issues of the age are ignored. Yet once again we are being called upon to vote; but for whom? And to what end? During recent years, we have seen the Labour Party steadily abandon its socialist principles in favour of ad hoc compromises; the Liberals are virtually disappearing as a political force whilst the Conservatives are reiterating yet again their capitalist policies which are fundamentally exploitive of people and resources. All three parties cling to the notion that through endless industrial expansion all other ills can be solved.

As social tensions increase, we have seen a growing disrespect for the law, a further reduction of public integrity, and the intolerable degradation of our physical environment. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, has become rampant - and as always, it is personal freedom, public morale and the national pocket that has lost out. Disenchantment and, frequently, disgust with present politics has bred contempt rather than desire for reform. People have scant respect for Government Ministers whose arguments are transparently specious. Half-truths and lies have become the means for camouflaging ineptitude and barrenness of mind. We have ceased to expect moral leadership, nor do we look any more for inspiration to find new ways forward. For the great majority, apathy - and a feeling of helplessness, is the rule of the day. This apathy is an open invitation to the forces of extremism which could only too easily engulf this country if we continue to ignore the perils. The National Front provides a warning.

In direct response to this danger, a broad new alliance has been formed consisting of those whose convictions about the present scene have suggested that current political policies and attitudes are unlikely to avert this danger. They come from all parties as well as from the many environmental and regionalist movements from all over Britain. The message of the Alliance is shared by millions outside this country and is supported by some of the ablest people in the Western world. Although it is not classifiable in terms of current political category, it regards the issues that separate Right from Left as largely irrelevant - for the real issues are far deeper and concern the very nature of our industrial world and our centralised nation. Our present material wealth has been obtained at a concealed cost to the earth and to ourselves that cannot be sustained.

We are now at the turning point. Either we pursue new policies designed to tackle the roots of the problem - or we face breakdown as pressures of population, food and energy shortage, unemployment, social tension and pollution become too great for us to cope with. And the quality known as human fulfilment (happiness derived from personal growth and the realisation of our potential as individual human beings) will continue to be progressively frustrated.

The new policies concern the rethinking of economics, the rejection of 'giantism' and the creation of a system which is tailored to the needs of people, rather than the reverse. They concern the relationship between productivity, automation, employment and job satisfaction. And they concern the right of the individual to participate in as many decisions which directly affect him, or her, as possible. If we are to lay the foundations for a world which our children will find worth living in we have to consume less, pollute less, share more and conserve more. And we have to fight violence in all its forms. We have to become more self-reliant as a country and we need to face up to the reality of technologies which can harm us. We need to stop mouthing platitudes about the finite nature of the resources and capacities of the Earth and act as though it were true. We have to distinguish between the logical future - which is a development of the present - and the desired future, which is the world we want to create.

We do not seek an unrealisable utopia, but the realisation of the new attitudes and values emerging in society, particularly amongst the young. We have to construct a stable society - that is, a society which can operate indefinitely on the income rather than the capital of the Earth. We have to change to these alternatives before the old system collapses. Neither of the main political parties is interested in, nor sympathetic to the creation of a way of living which is infinitely sustainable. Their policies are governed by short-term expediency and this often implies the use of measures which are cosmetic rather than prophylactic. Increasingly as the urgency to embrace these ideas becomes politically necessary, we may expect still more lip service to be paid to them - but their realisation within the existing framework of British politics is totally impossible.

BACKGROUND

We have become servants of the knowledge with which we have mastered the world. Each special interest has its own way, ungoverned by the interests of the whole. Communities are sacrificed to technical demands, not only of industry and business, but also of education, of health and of transport. The places where we work are separated from where we live, and where we live is without provision for a full life. The things we make and sell are mostly without meaning for those who make and use them and, just as work lacks meaning, so mostly does the leisure we purchase with it. The environment lies between and at the mercy of each of our special interests, impinged upon by them all, but with none of them accountable to it. Our knowledge of anything is only of its parts: the fact that those parts only have significance because of the whole they comprise is too often ignored, denied or not even realised. Yet it is only the whole that matters.

The kinds of organisation we must create are such as will themselves govern our technology, so that we use knowledge more appropriately again. Our schools and hospitals must once more become human in scale, taking their cues from the communities for which they exist. The meaning of any proposal to each person must become our grounds of its judgement. This, then, provides another basis of politics, to which the present ideological politics are irrelevant. These ideological politics struggle over the division of wealth, even as the units in which that wealth is measured are losing, not only their nominal value, but their very meaning. The pursuit of GNP is becoming an absurdity in proportion to the natural limits to growth. The only wealth is life. It is life itself we must rediscover.

OUR BELIEFS

In the realisation of all our aims, we favour a gradual and consistent approach. We believe that the implementation of radical policies, however necessary, is potentially dangerous. Time must be allowed for a changing of attitudes and the carrying out of experiments. Therefore, the sooner we act the safer the transition will be.

1. Decentralisation

We believe that for Man to be free, he must be a member of a cohesive community. Industrialisation has destroyed this key social group. The State has usurped its function, and left people isolated, alienated and dependent on the impersonal services of distant bureaucrats and large scale commercial enterprises. People no longer have the power to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Small wonder then that they do not feel responsible for their actions or that they fail to recognise that, as citizens, their rights are complemented by duties. We believe that this process should be reversed: that government should work on the principle that every decision must be taken and implemented at the lowest possible level. Nothing should be done at the national level that can be done at the regional, county or community level. And nothing should be done by the community that can be done by the family. Only in this way can we regain our lost sense of responsibility and fulfilment; only in this way can decisions be taken and implemented by those who will really be affected by them.

2. Agriculture

We believe that air, water and land are the nation's most precious resources, and that steps must be taken immediately to protect them from destructive modern agriculture, which is only concerned with maximising short-term yields. Britain has to import half its food but the future availability of supplies is by no means assured. In spite of the Green Revolution, world food production has not kept pace with population growth, and there is little hope of increasing food production, either intensively or extensively: If Britain is not to go hungry we must move towards self-reliance in food supplies. With only 15 million acres of arable land and about the same amount of pastureland available to us, we cannot allow any more of it to be swallowed up by motorways and urban sprawl. If present trends continue the last acre of agricultural land in this country will have gone by the year 2157. We do not believe that vast acreages of land, owned by one person or, worse still, a faceless company, is the wisest way to look after the land. We prefer a system based on smaller units worked by people who care for that land - either by direct or collective ownership. Values of very large individual land holdings must be progressively reduced and investment in land for any purpose prohibited. Such measures will reduce land values and enable many to be employed, or self-employed, on the land which is currently prohibitively expensive for farming purposes. Land must be sold only to individuals who will live on that land. A major programme of research into biological control as a substitute for chemical pesticides must be launched immediately, and incentives given to farmers who opt for a non-chemical regime. We do not share the enthusiasm of the agricultural-chemical concerns for a land whose yield is dependent on increasing amounts of chemicals. As energy costs rise, and non-renewable resources become scarcer, modern agriculture will become prohibitively expensive and vulnerable to the fluctuations of the market.

We do not believe that it should be the object of agricultural policy to maximise what we call productivity; i.e., productivity per unit

of labour. We consider it morally unacceptable to keep animals in intensive battery conditions. Meat is a highly inefficient way of feeding people and some premium needs to be placed on its production. We believe that conditions must be made favourable for more people to return to the land and that small, labour intensive farms which can build up soil fertility by natural sustainable methods, should be encouraged in every way possible. The new cornerstone for Britain must be a secure, diverse and ecologically sound agriculture.

3. Finance and Industry

Britain is well placed to lead the transition to a 'post-industrial' society. It was the first fully industrialised country and seems to be the first to go into industrial decline. There are those who advocate that we should become a super-industrial society, dominated by science and technology. This would mean giving priority to growth at any cost and regardless of human consequences; i.e., immediate development of the Fast Breeder reactor, automation, behavioural psychology, space colonisation and even genetic engineering. The goal is super growth: its purpose is unclear. Its consequences are all too clear. Everything, including human endurance, would be pushed to the limits. Since it could not be permanently sustained, collapse would ultimately occur but prior to this occurrence it would create a small technocratic elite and a majority of second class citizens, permanently divided. The same divisions would follow between such superindustrialised countries and the Third World. We reject this choice utterly.

Our purpose is to use our industrial abilities to create a society in which pride of place is given to people. This presupposes a caring society in which there is scope for self-development and personal growth which are essential for human happiness. Within the industrial scene this indicates an emphasis on the Small in place of the Big, on the production of socially useful goods with which individual workers can identify, on long lasting products which reflect the economic use of resources and the individual skills of producers, on experiment with collective ownership so as to find a better balance between entrepreneurial incentive, the use of profits, and the we/they attitude of conventional employment. We need to recognise that those who give their lives to a project should have a greater say in its day to day progress and also stand to benefit from the ultimate proceeds of their work. This presupposes not only a financial involvement but the acceptance of total mutual responsibility for the enterprise. Financial encouragement must be given to any enterprise willing to set up agreed participative schemes on these lines. (We consider the proposed worker-director schemes to be principally cosmetic.)

Industry must be encouraged to provide for essential needs if we are to become more self-sufficient as a nation. We have become too dependent on products which will become increasingly uncompetitive in the world-market and many of which are, in any case, based on non-renewable resources. Some protection must be given to the home production of essential goods but, this said, we subscribe to the general principle of free-trade. Indications are that a reduction in import/export levels should favour the employment balance as well as helping to promote a more stable economy. It should also help to reduce the environmental strain implicit in the bulk movement of goods transnationally.

Regional viability needs also to be encouraged. It may well be desirable for the community to be financially involved in its own enterprises via the local raising of finance (see under Taxation). We are not entirely sympathetic to the somewhat parasitical nature

of the Stock Exchange nor to the centralised nature of financial institutions. We believe, too, that we should be concerned not just with the quantity of jobs but also their quality. Work in automated factories is often tedious. Mostly it is only in small industries that craftsmanship and pride in one's work can flourish and where people can be treated as if they really mattered. So, too, must we aim for healthy jobs. The present death and disability rate from occupational diseases is already intolerable and there are indications that the figures will accelerate as the cumulative effects become apparent.

Abuse of business benefits is widespread. Expense account purchases, entertainment and theft of company property are but examples of 'fiddling' - a practice now endemic at all levels of business and industry. Although they are symptomatic of a sick society, this is an area which needs, and can easily be given, far stricter control if the honest are not to be permanently penalised and if immorality is not to be permanently subsidised.

It is not our intention to upset the industrial applecart by the sudden application of new principals but rather to introduce new emphases and incentives to enable industry to find for itself the forms which are best able to provide the kind of economics and the kind of working situation for which we are aiming.

4. Employment

We do not believe that current solutions to the unemployment problem will work. In the end, automation can only deprive people of jobs and with the increasing capital-intensiveness of industry, fewer and fewer jobs are provided for each machine installed.

Unemployment in the industrial countries will shortly begin to soar as the effect of the next generation of automation begins to take hold. The German industrial giant, Siemens, suggests that within 12 years 40% of office work could be carried out by computerised equipment - 'two million unemployed' in this sector alone is now being discussed by German trade unions. The French Finance Ministry are considering predictions that within 10 years automation will make redundant 30% of the employees in the banking and insurance industries, with the large labour employers, such as the automobile industry, not far behind. The problem is compounded by the rise in the size of the labour force. Under these conditions the rate of economic growth required to achieve full employment is unprecedented, at present possibly more than 5%. To achieve that rate on a regular basis in today's economic conditions is nigh on impossible. To provide jobs for everyone we must reverse current trends and move towards a decentralised economy based on small work units. Work sharing and a sharp reduction in the working week needs immediate investigation. Premia on the employment of two people for one job must be offset by a reduction in company taxation. We must move from guaranteed dole to guaranteed work-place.

But apart from work-sharing, new ideas are needed to create new jobs. Reduction in overtime, increased holidays, sabbaticals and earlier retirement could all play a part. Encouragement given to the starting of new small enterprises and to the increase in those employed on the land, together with schemes for energy conservation and small-scale renewable energy technologies would all help to reduce unemployment. The Lucas shop stewards' proposal to produce socially useful products (with their specialist equipment and skills) as an alternative to redundancy needs encouragement. People wanting to do voluntary work should be entitled to unemployment benefits so that such people do not compete for scarce paid jobs. Since, in point of fact, a large percentage of the unemployed are doing part-time or even full time work 'on the fiddle' it presents the concept

of a standard 'social wage' - a basic right which could be supplemented by paid jobs. If this were possible, as it might prove to be, it would transform not only the unemployment scene but family and community life also.

5. Energy

It is beyond doubt that nuclear technology is exceedingly dangerous both on its own account and because of the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and must be phased out as soon as possible. We believe that the present government has been as putty in the hands of the nuclear lobby. The latter have played down the technical and economic disasters of the nuclear programme in a manner which we consider to be little short of criminal. We have no reason to think that Conservative policy will be any different. No government should conceal the facts of the nuclear programme from the public.

In any case, we calculate that nuclear power, even in the best conditions, can never furnish more than 10% of the energy requirements of an expanding world economy by the end of the century, and probably the percentage is likely to be lower still. It is no coincidence that construction of nuclear power stations is constantly being cancelled in the U.S., and elsewhere, due to public opposition, the many unsolved technological problems encountered, the economic losses they incur and the massive and growing cost of building them.

Nor do we believe that it will be possible, either by adopting a hard or soft energy path, to furnish the incredible amount of cheap energy required to power the proposed expansion of industrial society in the coming decades.

We believe that, through energy conservation and improved efficiencies, acceptable lifestyles can be maintained without a growth in useful energy consumption. We further believe that this stabilised energy requirement could be met by a combination of coal and renewable energy sources for a long time, without serious detriment to the environment. In order to pursue such a strategy, we have to act quickly to encourage the rapid introduction of energy conservation measures and proved systems for the collection of renewable energy, and to channel a much larger proportion of the national energy research and development budget into work related to the use of income energy.

The adoption of the alternative energy strategy described would be one of the first steps in the inevitable, long-term adaptation to living in balance with income energy sources. It is obvious, however, that, as with any transition, time is of the essence. It must therefore be seen as representing the ultimate irresponsibility and folly to burn up needlessly the one-for-all bonanza of North Sea oil. This oil must be made to last: a thousand remedies exist - slowing down extraction rates, taxation increase on large cars, speed limits, maximum temperatures on space heating in shops, offices and public buildings, etc.

6. Consumerism

Once basic material requirements have been provided, human needs are distorted by continual emphasis on material consumption. If Society were operating sensibly, the more goods we obtained, the less we would need. Apart from its direct effect on consumerism, advertising has a profound effect on values of all kinds. Human values should be less dependent on the forces of manipulation and advertising should be changed to an information process rather than a persuasion process. Packaging of goods should be reduced to a

minimum by taxation on printed packaging and display materials. There should be tax incentives for firms making long-life products. More consumer education is needed.

7. Pollution

The fact that we live in a contaminated environment is because of the effects of technological devices on whose use we have come to depend. Industry is releasing perhaps as much as 3 million chemical compounds into our environment and the longterm effects of these are largely unknown. What is known is that between them they are probably responsible for a high percentage of deaths by cancer - a disease that is largely unknown among primitive people living in their natural environment. Nor must we forget that one person in four now dies of cancer - and that rate is increasing every year. Significantly only about one in a thousand of all these substances, (including those used in pharmaceutical preparations, those that are used as additives in our processed foods, those that are sprayed over our crops) have been tested for their carcinogenic properties. Of those tested, one in three have been shown to cause cancer in certain animals - yet very few indeed have been banned. Political and industrial pressures are too strong - environmental illnesses are but one of the prices we exact from ourselves in our commitment to G.N.P.

The principle of 'polluter must pay' seems sound. We are also aware that our industrial activities are now on a scale at which they are beginning to affect global weather patterns through the dust, heat and carbon-dioxide they generate. Increasingly, eminent climatologists are coming to the conclusion that climatic catastrophe is possible unless the pollutive effect of industrial activity is radically reduced.

8. Defence

We acknowledge that Defence policy is the subject of many genuinely held but conflicting views. Since it is, in moral and financial terms (£500 million per day, globally) if not in practical application, of the highest importance, we propose that the arguments are publicised. We are, however, unpersuaded by the present arrangements in support of our defence policy which seems out of character with Britain's situation in the world and which appear to be closely allied to some alien concept of internal security. We prefer to see a regular cadre of trained personnel and the introduction of National Community Service or 'Home Guard', not just to absorb the young unemployed, but so that the responsibility for defending our country and seeing to the needs of security, civil defence and special projects to help people and to conserve the environment, may be more widely shared and thus a more concerned and responsible citizenry created. We also consider that in most of the permanent barracks, units should be required to provide the bulk of their food by their own efforts.

9. Education

We are concerned by the large number of children who fail to learn at school and the lack of direction and moral guidance of our mass educational system. The human scale must therefore be restored, to secondary education in particular. Village primary schools must also be kept. Schools must be restored to local control and parental influence. The size and character of schools must be determined, not by the spread of subjects into which knowledge is supposedly divided, but by the communities in which they lie. Teachers must, if necessary, be moved to the schools, not the children to the teachers. Christianity must again be taught in all schools.

Theoretical teaching must give way to learning based upon life: the community itself must be helped to become the school. And education must be, not just for the child, but for life. Education is central to survival.

10. Health

As with local government, the Health Service must be restored to a human scale. Its larger organisations must be broken up. Small hospitals must be restored as integral parts of our communities, and community health (as distinct from medical technology) must be sponsored. Everyone has the right to health care, when and where it is needed. Need should determine priority, but prevention is better than cure and the creation of a restructured society might do much to prevent many of today's diseases, such as the diseases of stress and pollution in its numerous forms. At present, the Health Service is more of a sickness service. It encourages people to become dependent on drugs and treatments and it fails, almost totally, to train people into healthy lives.

11. Housing

A programme of demolishing highrise dwellings must be implemented and housing authorities released from the loan charges thereon. Many of the occupants can be rehoused in the properties which stand empty, a large number of which are owned by local councils who can renovate them instead of demolishing them. The wastelands of cities must be brought into cultivation or used as recreational spaces and new housing related to these. A punitive tax could be levied on empty office blocks to encourage their release so that fewer new blocks need be built. Shell-housing and shared equity should be stimulated, as should DIY housing schemes, variety in housing, as well as alternatives in living styles. Second homes, which often aggravate housing shortages, force up prices beyond local reach and destroy communities by their emptiness, should be punitively taxed.

12. Transport

We deplore the present transport policy based, as it is, on the systematic extension of expensive and environmentally disruptive motorway networks. We propose that our transport needs be appraised with the accent on the more rational use of existing facilities, especially rail - at present vastly underemployed. Foreign container lorries should pay a British road tax. To lessen pollution, inconvenience, expense, noise and danger, workable urban transport schemes are a priority. For the same reasons, consideration should be given to the provision of more pedestrian and bicycle ways, as well as 'white bicycle' depots. The limits on exhaust emissions, particularly on lead, need to be progressively tightened. The 32-tonne limit for heavy goods vehicles must remain. Where the inland waterways can be rendered viable by restoration, it is desirable to do so: consideration to new waterway construction would be given - not necessarily to new Continental standards.

13. Race Relations

We have no glib answer but we believe that the task ahead is not just to 'assimilate' coloured people as painlessly as possible, but to help them foster their racial and cultural identity. The coloured immigrant is as much a fact of Britain as was, say, the Roman. They all have a contribution to make to the quality of our lives by virtue of their culture and values. Nonetheless, it would be counter-productive to increase this source of community tension at present and it must be right to impose strict controls for immigration - giving priority to refugees, regardless of colour.

14. Women and Children

There must be equality before the law between men and women, with equal rights and opportunities and parity of esteem. Insofar as the full implementation of this may necessitate modifications in traditional domestic roles, we believe that these adjustments can be more harmoniously accommodated in a stabler and less fiercely acquisitive society.

There is urgent need for a Children's Charter aimed at securing that in any given situation their interests and welfare are accorded no less weight than the interests and welfare of adults. An attempt to define the civil rights of children would help to straighten out some of the anomalies in the present system.

15. The Planning System

The planning system must be changed, such that it ceases to be the strongest negative influence on our lives. Instead of merely reacting to developers, particularly on the fringes of built-up areas, planning must be able positively to create communities in our cities, towns and villages. We call into question planning regulations which zone land for residential, or industrial, or agricultural use only. These rigid divisions stop the growth of natural mixed communities of houses, shops, pubs, small factories, smallholdings, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, DIY initiatives and so on. This approach should be extended to cities: we need a new generation of social entrepreneurs to undertake a multitude of diverse schemes in every urban area.

16. Population and Overseas Aid

The earth can sustain, at tolerable standards of living, only a maximum number of people. The lot of most people will decline as world population increases. This growth must be stabilised if mass starvation, suffering, and war are to be avoided. Britain must be less parsimonious in allocating funds for selfhelp programmes in family planning, agriculture and the establishment of intermediate technologies in third world countries.

17. Taxation

Taxation in most of its aspects is too high. Since government spending is also too high, there is considerable room both for tax cuts and the reallocation of funds for other purposes. People should be taxed more on what they spend and less on what they earn, although earning differentials must be effectively limited. They should, however, be encouraged to spend more of their own money on public benefits and to this end the law on charities and trusts should be recast. We propose a system whereby set percentages of taxable income are paid: 1) to the community; 2) to the regional authority; 3) to the national authority, and, 4) to the taxpayer's choice of welfare (home and overseas), cultural or artistic projects, a schedule of which would be published each tax year.

18. Open Government

A reduction in the size of our bureaucracy and the decentralisation of government will both militate toward a more open government. But it is not enough. The Official Secrets Act must be greatly reduced in scope. The use of devices to control, monitor or collect information on private citizens must be subjected to far better safeguards and their use heavily restricted. Public inquiries of the type represented by Windscale are totally inexcusable.

Good democratic government requires surprisingly few whitewashing operations, closed doors or secret files.

19. Electoral Reform

We favour the arguments for proportional representation, and also consider that referenda on issues of public concern may be workable and desirable. It must be made possible for minority opinion to be given more weight.

We do not consider it in the country's best interests to encourage a system whereby, on crucial debates, members of the House are directed how to vote, sometimes against their own consciences. Least of all do we find it desirable to entrust the responsibility for appraising long-term interests of the country to a group of people who, in order to stay in power, can only respond to short-term expediencies. We need a government that is capable of formulating and implementing a long-term, carefully orchestrated programme of action. There is a need to experiment with new forms of representation.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

THE NEW ALLIANCE looks beyond the infighting of today to the problems of tomorrow. It is not a party for doomwatchers and class-warfarers. It is a party of hope and action; of optimism that welcomes the challenge of meeting our problems head-on and deplores the pessimism of those who believe that man's survival depends on propping up our waning industrial state.

Those of us who are promoting this alliance are not professional politicians: few, if any, seek office in the system they wish to help create. They are, however, individuals from diverse backgrounds who collectively can claim wider practical experience and a greater intellectual range than the present custodians of office - or their likely successors. Although the Alliance is a National Party the policies put forward are generally consistent with those advocated by our friends in Western Europe and already endorsed by massive sections of the Continental population.

Even if we cannot claim political experience, we can claim clean hands, commonsense and imagination! We do not pretend to know all the answers: these must be evolved with caution, courage and wisdom. But at least we recognise the problem and therefore have perhaps a better chance of finding the answer than those who have not yet identified the problem.

The presence of even a few Members consistently directing their attention to the wider and long-term effects of their activities would wield an influence out of proportion to their numbers and make an immediate impact on the tone and atmosphere of Parliamentary debate.

Neither do we believe that our predicament can be cured by a simplistic solution imposed from above. An alternative society, if it is to emerge, may well take the form in the first instance of small groups of people seeking by their own positive efforts to solve immediate local problems. The aim of the Alliance, as the political arm of this movement, is to work for legislative and administrative frameworks that would facilitate the development of such initiatives rather than inhibiting them.

We see no reason why these aims should not be realised without our being able to retain most of the useful and enjoyable features of contemporary life. Their character may alter substantially, but it is not envisaged that a stable economic and social system implies a return to Stone Age discomfort.

Britain is well placed to lead the transition to a new society. It has a long tradition of dissent, non-conformity, peaceful evolution and voluntary action which is favourable to social experiment and change.

Britain may play a pioneer role in this transition.

IT IS THE AIM OF THE NEW ALLIANCE TO CONTEST ALL CONSTITUENCIES IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN THE U.K. IN JUNE, 1979.

Preparatory work is now in hand.